

## 4 FEMINIST GEOGRAPHIES OF DIFFERENCE, RELATION, AND CONSTRUCTION

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### Introduction

Feminist geography is concerned first and foremost with improving women's lives by understanding the sources, dynamics, and spatiality of women's oppression, and with documenting strategies of resistance. In accomplishing this objective, feminist geography has proven itself time and again as a source for innovative thought and practice across all of human geography. The work of feminist geographers has transformed research into everyday social activities such as wage earning, commuting, maintaining a family (however defined), and recreation, as well as major life events, such as migration, procreation, and illness. It has propelled changes in debates over which basic human needs such as shelter, education, food, and health care are discussed, and it has fostered new insights into global and regional economic transformations, government policies, and settlement patterns. It has also had fundamental theoretical impacts upon how geographers: undertake research into both social and physical processes; approach the division between theory and practice; and think about the purpose of creating geographic knowledge and the role of researchers in that process. Finally, feminist geography has helped to revolutionize the research methods used in geographic research.

Feminist geography, however, cannot neatly be summed up according to a uniform set of substantive areas, theoretical frameworks,

and their associated methodologies: hence the plural 'geographies' in the title of this chapter. To facilitate our survey of feminist geography, we draw out three main lines of research. Each of these holds the concept of gender to be central to the analysis, but they differ in their understanding of the term. Under the heading of *gender as difference*, we first consider those forms of feminist geographic analysis that address the spatial dimensions of the different life experiences of men and women across a host of cultural, economic, political, and environmental arenas. Second, we point to those analyses that understand *gender as a social relation*. Here, the emphasis shifts from studying men and women *per se* to understanding the social relations that *link* men and women in complex ways. In its most hierarchical form, these relations are realized as patriarchy – a spatially and historically specific social structure that works to dominate women and children. A third line of inquiry examines the ways in which *gender as a social construction* has been imbued with particular meanings, both positive and negative. Not only are individuals 'gendered' as masculine or feminine as a form of identification, but also a wealth of phenomena, from landscapes to nation-states, are similarly framed. In practice, there is quite a bit of overlap among each of these lines of research. Yet it is still useful to make a distinction in so far as each body of work lends itself to a particular set of research questions and associated data and analyses.

## Recovering the Geographies of Gender

Before we get started, it would be helpful to set a context for our survey of these three theoretical perspectives. This involves thinking about the discipline's traditional male-centeredness, which we can categorize in three ways: institutional discrimination, substantive oversights, and 'masculinist' ways of thinking and writing. We begin by noting that geography, in both the US and Europe, was formed out of a late-nineteenth- to early-twentieth-century academic setting that was highly exclusionary in terms of class, race/ethnicity, and gender. Early universities were dominated in the main by upper-class white men. Within Anglo contexts, a small number of women academics were primarily concentrated in the teaching and helping professions (e.g. nursing). Few were to be found in the disciplines from which modern geography was established, such as geology and cartography. During the nineteenth and well into the mid twentieth centuries, a crude form of biological stereotyping underlay not only conceptions of what women were able to achieve intellectually, but also their physical capacity. This was despite the fact that many women in the early years of the discipline – Mary Kingsley is a celebrated example – were engaged in intellectually stimulating and physically rigorous explorations of their own. Moreover, women also played a central role in educating geographers within teacher training institutions.

It was out of this broader, academic climate that 'expert' societies arose so as to establish geography as a specialized, intellectual endeavor. The goal of these societies was to define the discipline as a science (as opposed to lore) by debating theory, the kinds of phenomena to be investigated, and appropriate methodologies, and to work within universities to establish programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The two most influential of these, the Association of American Geographers in the US and the

Royal Geographical Society in the UK, were not open, as they are today, to anyone interested in promoting geographical knowledge. Instead, their members first had to be nominated and then elected. These and other rules and practices had a filtering effect on membership by specifying who was considered a legitimate scientist. For example, the early constitution of the Association of American Geographers reserved full membership for those who had previously published original research. Yet with few women included in graduate training, most women writers published their research in a style and in venues not deemed scholarly. Not surprising, then, is the fact that of the 48 original members of the Association of American Geographers, established in 1904, only two were women: Ellen Churchill Semple and Martha Krug Genthe (who, among the entire original membership, held the only PhD in geography, obtained in Germany).

All told, the male-oriented culture of these academic societies and university departments had a significant negative impact on the number and status of women in the discipline. Many women reported a range of obstacles and difficulties in negotiating the field, from a benign paternalism to outright misogyny, and from tokenism to blatant sexual discrimination. The resistance of male geographers to women conducting independent fieldwork lasted well into the 1950s: geography's expeditionary legacy continued to lead some to a nostalgic belief that only 'stout hearted men' were capable of such research (sometimes referred to as 'muddy boots' geography). Overall, geography's culture offered few opportunities for constructive engagement to the vast majority of college educated women, as evidenced by the much larger proportion of women found in the humanities and some cognate social sciences, such as anthropology and sociology.

Bearing this institutional discrimination in mind, it is not surprising to find substantive

oversights in which male-dominated activities constituted the norm of geographic research. This presumption is strikingly revealed in the gender-coded language geographers have used in their research. In reading the literature produced by geographers up to and including the 1970s, what appears to be a mere semantic peccadillo – as in the ‘Man–Land’ tradition or the assumption of ‘economic man’ – actually reveals an underlying assumption about what constitutes primary human activities and who constitute economic, political, cultural, and environmental agents (who, for example, makes history and geography in the book, *Man’s Role in Changing the Face of the Earth?*). So blatantly sexist is some of this writing that geographers’ citing their predecessors today often liberally pepper their quotations with ‘[sic]’ – a term used to indicate that what has just preceded is reproduced exactly as written. Though some may regard this practice as pedantic, it does allow contemporary writers the opportunity to explicitly distance themselves from sexist (or racist, etc.) language.

More significant than the stylistic substitution of ‘man’ for ‘human’ are the ways in which putatively male activities have been the primary focus of analysis across each of geography’s traditional objects of inquiry, be these landscapes, regions, spatial variations, or the environment. As many feminist geographers have pointed out, the discipline’s prioritization of traditionally male, productive activities has in one way or another worked to marginalize the study of women’s lives. It has meant, for example, that geographers have spent more time examining steel manufacturing than, say, day care. We can see this bias reproduced in a wide range of substantive research areas. Traditional cultural geography, for example, was concerned to evaluate how different cultures made use of the earth and its resources in the process of making a living and constructing built environments in accord with these demands. Traditional regional geography

focused in turn on a complex of interrelations that gave a specific and interactive character to areal divisions, but here the categories to be integrated mirror the list of productive activities listed above – the only significant additions being the physical environment, the distribution of population (typically distinguished by ethnicity only), and the (largely male) arena of formal politics. And, in the period of spatial science prior to the development of a social relevance perspective, location theory took this abstraction of the productive activities of society to its furthest extent, deploying the assumption of economic man in an idealized space and tracing its implications for the distribution of economic activities (as in assessments of the models of von Thünen, Weber, Lösch, Alonso, and Christaller, as well as various versions of the gravity model).

As a result, those geographers interested in working on activities such as childraising, education, neighborhood organization, and social welfare (i.e. activities known as ‘social reproduction’ as opposed to productive economic ones) did so in a vacuum. Thus, though there existed specialized study groups within Anglo-American academic societies devoted to transportation, industry, economic development, and land use, specialty groups devoted to gender, children, education, and sexuality are more recent phenomena. And at the interdisciplinary level, the focus on production relative to reproduction within geography meant that spatially minded social scientists who wanted to examine, say, the family, health care, or social welfare, would have to look to other disciplines more sympathetic to their study (e.g. sociology, social work) for their graduate training, thereby diminishing the scope and ultimately the academic significance of the field.

Completing our discussion on the silence of gender is the claim that, prior to the arrival of feminist geography, the discipline operated with what is termed a masculinist epistemology. This epistemology is based on a way of knowing the world (through universalism), framing

the world (through compartmentalization), and representing the world (through objectivity). Universalism is the belief that there exists a 'god's-eye' position from which the world can be surveyed in its totality. Such a position lifts one out of the messy, complicating facts of class, race/ethnicity, national origin, political persuasion, and, of course, gender and sexuality, which would otherwise 'bias' the investigative process. Yet, as feminist researchers have pointed out, the attempt to transcend such facts of life is ultimately driven by the belief that they *could* and *should* be transcended. Such goals carry an air of omniscience and infallibility, which cements the role of the scientist and 'his' position of authority.

Compartmentalization relies on the use of rigidly fixed boundaries to comprehend the qualities and characteristics of phenomena, such as nature and culture, male and female, plant and animal. The rationale for this obsession, wherein everything has its place, is rigor, a stance that guards against any ambiguity that might undermine scientific analysis of cause and effect. Feminist critics of excessive compartmentalization point to the homogenizing effects of taxonomies, which result in a tendency to overlook difference within and across research objects. In highlighting difference, feminists focused less on the objects contained within categories than on how these categories were formed in the first instance. This led feminists to develop relational as opposed to discrete understandings of phenomena, in which they argued that objects were defined not by their supposedly intrinsic characteristics (e.g. biology) but by interrelations within the social world (e.g. gender divisions of labor).

Related to both universalism and compartmentalization is a masculinist strategy of representing the world as an objective observer. To achieve this, the researcher purposively excludes any trace of their own thoughts and feelings by adopting a third person, passive tense style that is stripped of self-referencing, hesitation, emotive phrasing,

or rhetorical flourishes. Such writing attempts to use clear prose that can be commonly understood, even while invoking the necessary technical terminology. Marked adherence to this mode of communication assures other scholars that the research reported has not been biased by personal or societal influences. Moreover, it is assumed to enable researchers to systematically compare findings in a manner untainted by individual presentation styles, thereby bolstering the belief that objectivity contributes to a growing stock of scientific knowledge. Underlying this assumption, however, is a belief in a 'common' frame of reference wherein everyone does indeed clearly understand what is being said. Such a style also serves to distance the author from any responsibility for the reception of her or his work: even though they may recognize that some research could be used toward socially undesirable ends, authors adopting this stance ultimately affirm that science is inherently apolitical.

These dimensions of masculinist epistemology are not the subject of feminist debate and critique alone, for scholars have long debated the advisability and possibility of conducting distanced research. For example, the field of hermeneutics, the origin of which lies in the exegesis of the Bible, explicitly deals with the complicated role of researchers in relation to their research contexts. The contribution of feminist thought has been to recognize that universalism, compartmentalization, and objectivity have traditionally been associated with male faculties of sense and reason, whilst their oppositions – particularism, relationality, and subjectivity – have been constituted as the domain of unreasoning, female faculties driven by mere sensibility. A major area of feminist research, therefore, has involved charting the ways and means by which this gendering of epistemology took place, and an assessment of its repercussions in terms of the marginalization of women within and beyond academia.

In an ironic turn, therefore, the discipline's traditional disregard for gender has provided research material, as well as a professional challenge, for feminist geographers. Moving beyond mere critique, feminist geographers have produced an alternative, feminist epistemology that not only transforms how geography's accepted objects of analysis – regions, landscapes, places, etc. – are to be researched, but has brought to light a range of other objects of analysis, such as the body. Today, feminist approaches intersect with all of human geography's domains. Feminist geography spans traditional geographic foci in development, landscapes, and the environment, contributes to what has been labeled the 'new' regional, cultural, and economic geographies, and has realized numerous connections to other fields, especially philosophy, English, cultural studies, anthropology, postcolonial studies, economics, and sociology, among others. As a result of these developments, feminist geography now constitutes a fully fledged subdisciplinary and interdisciplinary endeavor, complete with a specialized journal, *Gender, Place and Culture*. In the following sections, we draw out three theoretical approaches toward gender that have emerged over the past 30 years, and discuss how each has made, and continues to make, its own contribution to geographic research.

### Gender as Difference

The geographic concepts of location, distance, connectivity, spatial variation, place, context and scale have all been enriched through the lens of feminist theory, which focuses on the difference that gender makes to a host of social processes. Feminist geographers transform the question, 'Where does work take place?', for instance, by the more targeted one, 'Who works where?' This more specific question can help researchers better understand the spatial dimensions of gender divisions of labor and

their effects on women's economic wellbeing. Likewise, studies that look at connectivity have been enriched by an examination of the gendered character of the subjects undertaking the activity, whether in migration, commuting, or communication.

As part of a project's research design, researchers often separately measure for men and women variables such as unemployment rates, income, and educational levels, typically collected across geographic units. The differential spatial experiences of men and women can then be analyzed. Comparing the spatial variation of women's and men's unemployment rates, for example, can yield insights into the particular processes that contribute to the economic marginalization of women as opposed to men. With the understanding that these processes may not operate equally for all women across space, moreover, researchers can raise questions of place context – a term used to refer to the combination of cultural, economic, political, and environmental dimensions that give character to a particular setting. A focus on place has researchers address how a particular context influences women's lives, and can be the basis for cross-context comparisons among women for any number of research problems. For example, one might find that the degree and type of women's political involvement in different places are influenced by contextual factors such as the gender division of labor in local economies, the quality of education in the localities, or the severity of local environmental problems.

An emphasis on gender as difference also enhances studies employing different scales of analysis. Key here is the fact that processes influencing spatial patterns of women's lives work across different scales, with some operating at relatively local levels and others more extensively. In examining women's economic viability, for example, researchers would find useful an investigation of the presence of local social networks that partly influence their job searches; at the same time, they cannot neglect

how the place context within which women are seeking employment is itself positioned relative to global capital flows, which will affect the type and availability of employment, as well as the local gender division of labor.

Still another avenue for feminist geographic research on difference can be found under the heading of sense of place, which refers to the perceptions people have of particular places and natural and built environments more generally. Studies of sense of place emphasize psychosocial influences upon one's interpretations, evaluations, and preferences regarding places or their representation in one medium or another. Such studies are often based upon the collection of primary data, and are therefore particularly well suited for asking questions of difference, since the researcher can purposively include both men and women respondents. One might, for example, compare men's and women's mental maps of a local neighborhood, using the detail therein to help answer questions about their perception of dangerous and safe zones across the study area. The range of places for which men and women respondents might be expected to differ is large, from classrooms, wilderness areas, and spaces of the home, to sports venues, drinking establishments, and shopping malls. This knowledge has practical relevancy in that it identifies places that are enabling for women, and might offer guidelines for the construction of environments that are non-threatening.

By introducing gender difference into all manner of geographic concepts, feminist geography has initiated new lines of inquiry in geography, thereby redressing the research imbalances noted earlier in this chapter. Recall that the theorization of these spheres has traditionally marked a separation between presumptively male-oriented productive economic activities and female-oriented reproductive activities. Feminist geographers of difference have made two significant contributions with

respect to this framework. First, they have brought to light the role of women in the economy by noting, for example, the contribution of First World women who work in suburban back-offices devoted to processing credit applications, and that of Third World women whose labor in branch manufacturing plants makes possible the production of low-wage consumer items, such as electronics. Second, feminist geographers have expanded substantive domains, including new research on women's roles in neighborhood associations, household survival strategies in Third World countries, inequalities in the provision of day care facilities, and efforts to eliminate environmental pollution and toxic waste hazards through grassroots organizing. To uncover these geographies, feminist geographers have become leaders in the collection of primary, field-based data, precisely because such data are necessary to reveal women's everyday spatial experiences. Though such methodologies as interviews, focus groups, ethnographies, participant observation, and surveys are more time consuming than simply downloading data from secondary sources, such as the census, they are necessary to bring to light the complexities of those experiences.

### **Gender as a Social Relation**

In turning their attention to gender relations, feminist geographers shift their focus from men and women as discrete objects of inquiry, which, as we noted above, is itself a masculinist formulation, to the structured interconnections that routinely intertwine their life experiences. Patriarchy is one of the key structures studied by feminist geographers. The term 'patriarchy' describes the systematized exploitation, domination, and subordination – in short, oppression – of women and children through gender relations. It is held together through language, as when men speak loudest, longest, and last, and is given



form through rules of behavior and legal statutes that stamp in gendered terms what types of activities are desirable, appropriate, expected, or sanctioned, and that specify, formally or informally, who maintains access to material resources. Thus, patriarchy is legitimated and perpetuated by a host of social norms and moral rules – as when, for example, women ‘naturally’ assume the major burden of raising children. The relations that link the lives of men and women take place within and between a variety of specific sites, such as the family, school, and church, each of which is infused with patriarchy, the effects of which range from a patronizing paternalism to outright violence.

Research into specific examples of patriarchal relations is complicated by the recognition that this structure is always socially, historically, and geographically specific. In other words, there is no single patriarchy, but a multitude of variations. This variation ensues in large part from the way patriarchy intersects with other kinds of social structures, and one important line of inquiry in feminist geography has been to study the intersection of patriarchal and capitalist social relations. For Marxist or socialist feminists, capitalism is the key structure in modern life: through it one can apprehend the ways in which labor is expropriated from the working class by those capitalists who control the means of production. These feminists study the way capitalist social relations are formed in conjunction with patriarchal gender relations, the result of which are variations in women’s economic position. In addition, they note that capitalism has extended its power into the home, resulting in a class of unpaid women whose household labor is expropriated by the male wage earner and, by extension, his employer. For these feminists, capitalism determines the specific form that patriarchy takes. It is the complex and differentiated intersection of these relations that gives us varieties of women’s exploitation across the globe.

In radical feminism, by contrast, patriarchy is prioritized. These scholars note that, historically speaking, patriarchy predates capitalism, and facilitated its emergence within specific sociohistorical contexts. These feminists ground their prioritization not in the control over labor, but in men’s control over women’s bodies – a control exercised in sexual relations and childrearing, and maintained through patriarchal ideology and violence. Still other theorists have attempted to create a *rapprochement* between these positions, arguing that the two structures, while analytically distinct, are co-present in everyday practice. As such, they can be studied as mutually enabling structures in a wide variety of contexts.

While socialist and radical feminists were debating the theoretical primacy of patriarchy and capitalism, black, Latina, and Third World feminists developed extensive critiques of the Eurocentricity of these debates, drawing attention to the extent to which women’s lives are also indelibly racialized and colonized. These feminists have pointed to the global diversity of patriarchal and class relations and their intersection with other global-to-local structures. Still another structural relation contextualizing patriarchy is heteronormativity, a concept developed by queer theorists. This term describes the widespread assumption that heterosexuality is the natural form of sexual relations, while homosexuality is an aberration. Like patriarchy and other structures, heteronormativity is a social relation with its own language, norms, and practices. As a consequence of these arguments, contemporary research undertaken to illuminate the structural dynamics and locational specificity of patriarchy needs to contend not only with class relations under capitalism, but minimally also those of race, colonial history, and sexuality. Like some feminists researching gender as difference, those who study gender as a social relation often rely upon research strategies that involve ‘talking to women’ through

interviews, focus groups, and the like. But in addition, they are equally likely to pay attention to the subtle ways that patriarchy, class, race, nation, and sexuality are formed and perpetuated through everyday forms of representation, including political rhetoric (e.g. speeches, policy documents), media imagery (e.g. film and video, magazines, the Internet), and bodily adornment and comportment (e.g. dress, mannerisms, habits).

### Gender as a Social Construction

Social constructivists are interested in the ways in which 'discourses' establish distinctions – or differences – between individuals and groups, made and natural objects, types of experience, and aspects of meanings. They argue that none of these are naively given to us as unmediated parts of reality; instead, all are framed through categorizations that enable us to comprehend them. In this view, people, objects, experiences, and meanings have no intrinsic meaning until their qualities and boundaries have been framed in discourse. We use the term 'discourse' to refer to particular framings, most of which rely upon one or another binary opposition, such as nature/culture, male/female, individual/society, objective/subjective, and orderly/chaotic. Discursive construction refers to the social process by which these categories are produced and filled with objects and meanings. Though discourses are enabled and reproduced through language, to constructivists 'discourse' is a term more complicated than its everyday use as 'mere words', for it refers not only to the processes of categorization (see above) but also to everyday social practices – from raising children to dancing – that, like language, are also imbued with meaning and hence also signify something about the world. Through discourse we come to understand where things fit in the world, literally and figuratively. We also come to comprehend the relationships among categories

that have been established. And, discourses tell us a great deal about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, what is valued and what is devalued, and what is possible and what is impossible.

Applied to feminism, discursive construction points to gender codings as key elements in establishing difference and policing categories. Feminist geographers working with theories of social construction of gender, for example, are interested in the ways in which discursive categories, particularly male/female and masculine/feminine, are brought into play at specific times and in specific places in order to establish spaces of exclusion and inclusion. Drawing on all feminists' concern for difference, feminist social constructivists also examine how these explicitly gendered categories seep into other socially constructed ones, such as 'race' and 'sexuality', 'production' and 'reproduction', 'nature' and 'culture', and so on.

Take for example the concept of 'maleness'. To constructivists, this is not a term that refers to a naturally given object with essential characteristics. It instead describes a social construct, formed out of ideas concerning what it is to be male, as opposed to what it is to be female. This binary construct is determined and maintained by a gender-specific language about people's beliefs, actions, and qualities. Thus, words such as 'caring', 'tenderness', and 'empathetic' have different gendered connotations than words such as 'stoic', 'noble', and 'boisterous'. Importantly, the meaning, significance, and social value of these terms are not fixed, but vary from one context to another: hence, tenderness could conceivably take on a masculine quality. At the same time, however, the connotations among these terms are socially determined, and hence linked to dominant forms of power (which can be defined as the ability to construct and maintain difference through language and practices). Finally, once maleness has been granted the status of 'normal',



the social relations that ensue – such as patriarchy – may also be regarded as natural and, hence, enduring.

Perhaps nowhere is discursive analysis more illuminating and yet controversial than in the analysis of sexual difference. Some constructivists see such difference as another example of discourse, one rooted in biological categorizations of physicality, from shape and form to genes and voice. They argue that biological and other discourses continually impact the body, through ideas and practices surrounding medical protocols, labor practices, legal statutes, and reproductive capabilities. The discourses that circulate in these domains are so encoded on bodies that we seldom take time to think about the everyday reinforcements that buttress male/female difference. (Think, for example, about the discursive work silently undertaken in public buildings, with their separate bathrooms for men and women.) These insights have led some feminists to question the very foundation of the terms ‘male’ and ‘female’: they see biological discourses as creating the conditions by which we ‘perform’ our sex and gender. Others accept biological differences as ‘prediscursive’, but are equally attuned to the ways in which all aspects of the body, including the mind, are gendered, raced, and sexualized through their embeddedness in discourse. Thus, while we cannot lift ourselves outside socially derived significations that structure our understandings of male and female, there is at base a materiality upon which these significations are attached (even if we cannot really know or experience that materiality outside discourse).

Given either emphasis on the construction of gender, how do geographically informed constructivist analyses proceed? The primary goal of most such analyses is to understand how sexed and gendered meanings are at work in all aspects of everyday spatial life, policing what is thought and delimiting places and identities. To undertake

such work, feminist geographers look first to those sites from which knowledge concerning gender is articulated, such as schools, churches, media outlets, the home and government agencies, and consider how these sites collect information, rework it as knowledge, and then proceed to disseminate that knowledge through particular networks. How, for example, do the ‘real’ life stories in teen magazines configure and reproduce a socially and spatially specific audience (e.g. ‘white mallrats’)? How does housing design both reflect and reproduce ideas about what kinds of (gendered) activities occur where, and by whom? How has the teaching of geography within schools helped to construct it as a primarily male discipline? Second, feminist geographers look to the geography of discourses through which people are gendered, as well as to the other discourses they intersect, such as race, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, nature, and so on. What complex gendered codings, for example, lie at the intersection of the term ‘Mother Nature’, and what undercurrents ensue for how the environment is ‘managed’? How is it that a day care center is regarded as a traditional worksite for domesticated women, while a garden allotment is considered an escapist landscape for married (but not gay) men? What complex gendered and raced meanings accompany partitions of space such as ‘ghettos’, ‘working-class areas’, and ‘farmsteads’? Even entire countries, such as Australia and France, tend to be gendered differently in popular media (e.g. as ‘laddish’ vs ‘sensualist’). Third and finally, one can consider how the everyday operation of these discourses can affect a form of ‘discursive violence’, foisting onto people an identity they may not wish to adhere to, and rendering other forms of identity that do not fit into the accepted categories as aberrant or unnatural. This is especially true when bodies or identities are marked as ‘queer’ and made to feel uncomfortable in what is largely a heterosexually

coded built environment. In all of these sorts of analyses, feminist social constructivists turn to qualitative methodologies to trace the subtle plays of discursive constructions in all sorts of representations, including not only those of the media and everyday speech, but those in the built environment itself.

Indeed, the traditional concept of the 'field' itself – whether the home, the workplace, the urban neighborhood, or the remote village – has been opened up considerably by feminist geographers. Classically, in geographical research, the researcher remains mysterious, distant and silent while the field subject discloses more and more information: in this case, the visibility of the researched obscures the presence of the researcher. In contrast, feminists emphasize that, like her or his objects of analysis, the researching subject is likewise constituted – or positioned – by gender relations of social power. Gender relations form part of a broader, social context within which research takes place – from the individual biographies and social structures influencing both the geographer and her research subjects, to the subdiscipline of geography within which she works, and on to the funding agencies, the universities, and the place contexts, both global and local, that inform and bracket the work. This, then, is the new 'feminist field': a fluid, complex, and spatially stretched set of relations that bear little resemblance to older notions of expert geographers researching people in particular places.

### **By Way of Conclusion: Suggested Reading**

In this concluding section, we offer a brief roadmap through some texts and articles that have been important in the development of feminist geography. We also point to a few classic debates and emerging lines of inquiry. We begin with the note that feminist geography exerted a compelling critique of geography as

a male-oriented discipline in the mid 1970s. Mildred Berman's (1974) article on sexual discrimination within the academy was matched by Alison Hayford's (1974) assessment of the wider, historical 'place' of women. Later work by Linda McDowell (1979) and Janice Monk and Susan Hanson (1982) expanded on the substantive oversights and masculinist presumptions of geographic research. Both Hanson and Monk were later elected President of the Association of American Geographers (two of only five women elected). Susan Hanson's (1992) address challenged geographers to consider the commonalities between feminism and geography and to transform both disciplines. Janice Monk's (2004) presidential address to the Association takes a historical approach to recover the work lives of women geographers who taught and practiced during long periods of professional exclusion. Two years after Monk and Hanson's (1982) essay, the Institute of British Geographers' Women and Geography Study Group published *Geography and Gender: An Introduction to Feminist Geography* (1984). A ground-breaking text in many ways, *Geography and Gender* focused attention on the specificities of women's experiences, within and beyond the academy. Students interested in a feminist examination of the history of the discipline should also read the article by Mona Domosh (1991), as well as Alison Blunt's (1994) analysis of nineteenth-century explorer and writer Mary Kingsley.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of a large body of work on the intersection between gender, work, and space. A key early text in this regard is by Linda McDowell and Doreen Massey (1984); they historicize the geographies produced by the intersection of gender and class relations. A couple of years later, the relative role of patriarchy vs capitalism in explaining women's exploitation became the topic of a lively theoretical exchange in the journal *Antipode*. The radical vs socialist feminist division is

clearest in the essays by Jo Foord and Nicky Gregson (1986) and Linda McDowell (1986), and in the response by Gregson and Foord (1987). Readers might also want to consult Sylvia Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy* (1990), which offers a good sociological account of patriarchy in capitalist societies. Doreen Massey's book *Space, Place and Gender* (1994) collects her works through the mid 1990s and gives insights into one of feminist economic geography's most original thinkers. Another good choice for those interested in women and work is Susan Hanson and Gerry Pratt's *Gender, Work and Space* (1995), Nicky Gregson and Michelle Lowe's *Servicing the Middle Classes* (1994), and Kim England's *Who Will Mind the Baby? Geographies of Childcare and Working Mothers* (1996).

In the 1980s and 1990s, geographers began to engage academic debates surrounding postmodernism (see Chapter 9), one key vector of which was the relationship between this then-new area of thought and feminism. Interested readers might follow debates in Liz Bondi (1991), Gerry Pratt (1993), and J.-K. Gibson-Graham (1994). Another key debate circulating through postmodernism and feminism was sparked by David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989). His political economic analysis of culture under late capitalism was roundly criticized by Doreen Massey (1991) and Rosalyn Deutsche (1991). Reading this along with Harvey's (1992) rejoinder is helpful, but a better sense of his thinking on the intersection between class and gender can be found in Chapter 12 of *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (1997).

Especially since the mid 1990s, feminist geographers have produced a substantial amount of work at the intersection of bodies, identities, and space/place. An early edited collection of important works is found in Nancy Duncan's *BodySpace* (1996). Other feminist readings of bodies can be found in Heidi Nast and Steve Pile's edited volume *Places through*

*the Body* (1998), in Ruth Butler and Hester Parr's *Mind and Body Spaces: Geographies of Illness, Impairment and Disability* (1999), in Elizabeth Teather's *Embodied Geographies: Space, Bodies and Rites of Passage* (1999), and in selected chapters of Linda McDowell's *Capital Culture: Gender at Work in the City* (1997a). Also see Robyn Longhurst's *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries* (2000) and Pile's *The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity* (1996). Some of the essays in the above collections were harbingers of a shift toward queer theory in geography. An early book in this area was the edited collection by David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Mapping Desire* (1995). Michael Brown unpacks the geographies of the 'closet' in *Closet Space: Geographies of Metaphor from the Body to the Globe* (2000). Finally, geographic approaches to masculinity have appeared in works by Peter Jackson (1991), Steve Pile (1994), and Richard Phillips (1997).

There is a wealth of feminist research on the interplay of gender, nature, and development (including 'post' or 'anti' development theory). Readers might consult the collection edited by Janet Momsen and Vivian Kinnaird (1993), as well as work by Cathy Nesmith and Sarah Radcliffe (1993) and Radcliffe (1994). A good collection of work in feminist political ecology is by Dianne Rocheleau, Barbara Thomas-Slayter, and Esther Wangari (1996). Feminist geographers have also drawn on postcolonial theorizations to better understand the global construction of gender, race, nation, and class. Students should consult Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose's edited volume *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies* (1994) and Alison Blunt and Cheryl McEwan's *Postcolonial Geographies* (2003).

There are a number of good sources to turn to for feminist research methods in geography. A 1993 collection in *The Canadian Geographer* traced the contours of feminist epistemology alongside in-depth qualitative

research methods. Heidi Nast's edited collection, 'Women in the "Field"', appeared in *The Professional Geographer* (1994). Many of the articles offer interesting and introspective examinations of feminist methods as they played out in the work of the assembled geographers. Other good assessments of the 'field' are by Cindi Katz (1992) and Ann Oberhauser (1997). As discussed above, feminist research methods are typically qualitative (e.g. Nash, 1996), but there has been a lively debate on the role of quantitative methods in feminist research (Kwan, 2002). See the collection in *The Professional Geographer* (1995), which appeared under the heading, 'Should Women Count?' Pamela Moss's edited collection *Feminist Geography in Practice* (2002), as well as the volume by Melanie Limb and Claire Dwyer (2001), offer students a wealth of direction in the pursuit of feminist research. The 2003 special issue on 'Practices in Feminist Research' in *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* considers what holds feminist methodology together as a distinct approach given the

spread of critical methodologies within geography more generally. Students interested in praxis should consult the collection in *Antipode* (1995), as well as essays by Vicky Lawson and Lynn Staeheli (1995) and Susan Smith (2002).

Thorough overviews of feminist geography can be found in Linda McDowell and Jo Sharp's *A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography* (2000), as well as in collections by Linda McDowell (1997b; 1999) and John Paul Jones III, Heidi Nast, and Susan Roberts (1997). Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography* (1993) provides an extended, close reading of geography's masculinist bias, largely as read through the field's twentieth-century history. The conclusion attempts to rethink space by reconfiguring a number of key binaries that have influenced thinking in geography. Students would be well advised to peruse the current and back issues of *Gender, Place and Culture*, while the online bibliography of feminist geographic research found at <http://www.emporia.edu/socsci/fembib/is> is an excellent source of material.

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