

Pamela Moss (Editor), Karen Falconer Al-Hindi
(eds.)

**Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space,
Place, and Knowledges. New York: Rowman &
Littlefield Publishers, 2007. 270 pp.**

This unique collection employs a distinctively feminist methodology to draw together a broad array of twenty-four essays, including four commentaries by the editors, in three languages and coming from several continents. Produced by consultation with a large international advisory committee, the volume seeks the “creative destabilization” (page 6) of how knowledge is produced, by confronting tensions between mainstream geography and feminist geography, as well as within feminist geography. In a move to challenge canon formation in one of the newer subdisciplines of academic geography, the authors put forth an “anti-anthology” depicting feminist geography as variegated, fluid and contested by design. They aim to “create more room for exchanges among feminists in geography” (5) by imagining “what feminist geography could look like” (5) when avenues of discussion and debate are kept open and orthodoxy is refused, invoking Deleuze and Guattari’s analogy of “rhizomatic” thinking.

The book succeeds in showcasing multiple strands of strong, clear feminist voices, of both established leaders and newer arrivals to feminist geography. The voices resist a singular feminist narrative, instead accommodating and celebrating simultaneous allegiance not only to women, genders, and sexualities as bases for analyses, but also the intersection of these positionalities with other categories of privilege or oppression such as class and race. By mixing reprints with new essays, established authors with newcomers, geography department scholars with feminist geographers found in other parts of universities, the editors have created a quilt of criss-crossing conversations extending from the conceptual to the autobiographical.

One particularly constructive tactic entails having the reprinted authors talk back to their audiences in follow-up essays made for this volume. Another unusual technique is to dramatize a concern of many of the authors with the continued hegemony of the English-

speaking world in dominant strains of geographical thought, including feminist geographical thought, by including two essays in other languages. This amplifies discussions about exclusionary practices by demonstration. Another means of enacting multiple narratives is the provision of three different tables of contents at the start of the volume. For selecting articles for teaching feminist geography, I found the third listing most useful; for myself as a junior faculty member reading ideas, experiences, and as a guide to action, the first option served best, although I most enjoyed reading the essays from back to front.

Together, the arrangement of essays self-consciously constructs a fluid architecture of inclusive feminism for feminist geography to aspire to. Citations point to recent resources as well as historically significant contributions invisible to the Anglo-American scene, which may or may not be available in English. The diverse European and Mediterranean voices here are an especially welcome inclusion, not for attempting to be comprehensive but for signalling the breadth of quality and theoretical rigour of feminist geographical thought produced outside of the U.S. and Britain. A number of the pieces look at areas the subdiscipline needs to improve in, such as challenging the dominance of heteronormativity, whiteness, and English-language works. Once the premise of polyphony behind the collection is understood, it is easy to negotiate the different rhythms and tones of the various essays.

If the book provokes any dismay, it is over that which it does not hide. Many individual essayists negotiate multiple subject positions in the struggle to make space for doing feminist work within geography. If the ideas emerging from feminist geography have made some inroads into mainstream geography as a whole, critical race studies and queer theory which are also part of many feminist toolboxes have further to go. Worst of all is the subtle forms of structural hegemonies that remind us that we did not make the rules by which we must play. Feminists and queers do not control the means of production of our knowledge; we do not define the grounds for promotion and tenure or make the scorecard for assigning value to what is published, where, in what languages, for whom. We need access to funds for monograph series to put our ideas out there not only for geographers but for feminist scholars in other disciplines, in unabbreviated form, so that every author in this collaborative is available in multiple languages and in paperback.

The book is useful reading for feminist scholars, including faculty and graduate students, seeking to pursue diverse paths in research and writing, teaching and community building. In addition, individual essays or pairs of essays are appropriate for undergraduate courses in geography, urban studies, and feminist studies. Feminist geography has arrived, winning recognition as a necessary subdiscipline for respectable departments to include, and senior feminist scholars have achieved hard-won national and international recognition beyond the feminist ghetto. These marked achievements blaze a path for junior scholars to follow. On the other hand, the demand for our work may be driven as much by interest shown from outside the discipline of geography. Read closely for emerging agendas, the essays in this book suggest that contributors expend enormous effort to find creative ways to collaborate and produce knowledge that speaks to feminists, and that this geographical knowledge may look quite different from that of the mainstream discipline. The editors of this volume and the contributors have set a high standard for the challenge with this ambitious work.

Lisa Kim Davis, University of California, Los Angeles, Department of Geography.
davis@geog.ucla.edu

Lisa Kim Davis: Pamela Moss (Editor), Karen Falconer Al-Hindi (eds.), "Feminisms in Geography: Rethinking Space, Place and Knowledges". New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007. 270pp. *thirdspace* 9/1 (March 2010)