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Feminism and Social Theory in Geography: An Introduction*

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This essay introduces a collection of articles based on papers developed for a Fall 2004 speaker series at the University of Minnesota. The articles address the continued relevance of feminist geography and the unique contributions of feminist perspectives in various areas of geographic research. They also point out directions for needed future research. This introduction briefly reviews the successes of and remaining challenges to feminist geography, including material inequities yet unresolved in two other (nonresearch) "places" of academic life: teaching and the workplace. We discuss the ongoing underrepresentation of women and people of color on our faculties and in the front of classrooms. **Key Words: antiracist geography, critical theory, feminist geography, marginalization, social theory.**

This essay introduces a collection of articles that offer some speculations and insights into the current place[1] of feminist geography in the broader discipline. The articles follow from the University of Minnesota Department of Geography's Fall 2004 speaker series, *Feminism and Social Theory in Geography*, including the discussions and debates that took place in a graduate seminar connected to this series. We invited eight senior scholars (Liz Bondi, Susan Craddock, Jennifer Hyndman, Larry Knopp, Mei-Po Kwan, Richa Nagar, Geraldine Pratt, and Gill Valentine) to present papers at our department's weekly coffee hour and participate in the graduate seminar led by Arun Saldanha. Lively debates and discussions ensued. In order to allow the speakers to come together in one venue for further discussion, we followed up the series by organizing two panels at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers (AAG) in Denver. This first panel included five of the original eight speakers.[2] The second panel consisted of three graduate students who attended the Minnesota seminar, and three (relatively) junior feminist scholars.[3]

The impetus for organizing the speaker series, conference panels, and this special section of *The Professional Geographer* was to provide space to discuss a growing concern among many feminist scholars: namely, the idea that the work of feminists is no longer needed because it has already been integrated into the discipline, particularly through social/critical theory. This perspective seems especially pervasive in departments without faculty or courses that specifically teach feminist geography, including our own. We find this attitude troubling given the continued lack of diversity in the discipline and the marginalization of women and minority geographers despite the theoretical and methodological efforts of feminist and critical theorists to address difference and inequalities. We desired to position the series not as a defense of feminist geography (i.e., Is feminist geography obsolete?), but as an opportunity for established feminist scholars and graduate students to engage in a conversation about current challenges to feminist geography and feminism more broadly in the academy.

Rather than reinvent the wheel, we chose to further develop an important discussion on feminist methodologies specifically, begun at the 2002 Institute of British Geographers Meeting in Belfast. Sarah Jenkins, Verity Jones,

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and Deborah Dixon posed two questions of continuing relevance to the current climate for feminist geographies:

- Has feminist geography been subsumed under the broader project of social theory? Or does feminist thinking impart a distinct critical edge to geographic analysis?
- In light of developing and emerging economic, political, and cultural contexts across the globe, what are the analytic project(s) facing feminist geographers? That is, which objects of analysis do we and should we address as significant? (Jenkins, Jones, and Dixon 2003, 59).

The same questions formed the central themes of our series. We asked participants to discuss their own current research project while addressing these two questions. The articles in this collection represent several subdisciplines, including political, queer, and feminist geographies, as well as geospatial technologies. We do not claim in any way to exhaust the current debates in or on feminist geography and its place in the discipline. Rather, we wish to contribute to and encourage ongoing discussions on the topic.

In the graduate seminar associated with the 2004 speaker series, a few themes arose repeatedly as dilemmas that feminist scholars grapple with, including ways of collaborating across differences, and how to (and should we?) recuperate gender as a viable category of analysis despite deconstructive projects. These questions bear further discussion. In the space of this introduction, however, we have chosen to contextualize the articles that follow by outlining some of the contributions of feminist geographic theories and methodologies, and addressing political challenges. In particular we address the ongoing marginalization of women and minorities in academic geography, and the continuing resistance within the broader discipline to take seriously the insights and contributions of feminist and antiracist geographies.

Background: A Brief Review of Feminist Geographies

McDowell and Sharp (1999, ix) claim that "feminist theories and debates have changed and expanded in an exponential way since they first became visible in the academy." According to *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, feminist geographies are "perspectives that draw on feminist politics and theories to explore how gender relations and geographies are mutually structured and transformed" (Pratt 2000, 259). In *A Feminist Glossary of Human Geography*, feminist geographies are described as sharing a constant and particular aim "to demonstrate the ways in which hierarchical gender relations are both affected by and reflected in the spatial structures of societies, as well as in the theories that purport to explain the relationships and the methods used to investigate them" (McDowell and Sharp 1997, cited in 1999, 90).

Despite the significant diversity and heterogeneity among feminist geographical theories and research, several common concerns define feminist geographical scholarship: (1) Feminist geographies have developed *critical discourses* that challenge and make visible the oppression of women generally and in the discipline of geography particularly; (2) Feminist geographies draw attention to *sexism within geographical institutions* through practices of teaching, hiring, and publication; (3) Feminist geographies share a *commitment to situating knowledge*, highlighting the myth of objective and value-free research and emphasizing the partial, context-specific, and interpretive nature of knowledge production; and (4) Feminist geographies trace the *connections among all aspects of daily life* across all geographical subdisciplines, including economic, social, political, and cultural geography (Pratt 2000, 259). Thus, feminist geographies should be seen not solely as a separate subdiscipline, but as a critical perspective useful to all subdisciplines, including economic, political, regional, urban, transnational, rural, historical, cultural, and social geographies, and even physical geography and geographic information systems (GIS), though the last two largely continue to insulate themselves against the challenges posed by feminism (Longhurst 2001, 645). Longhurst claims that feminist geography can thus be seen as a "strong protagonist in a complex and mature politics of geographical knowledge" (645).

Although academic feminism more broadly shares many of these perspectives and goals, feminist geographies make a particular contribution through their attention to spatial location and spatial relations:

> Spatial relations and layout, the differences within and between places, the nature and form of the built environment, images and representations of this environment and of the "natural" world, ways of writing about it, as well as our bodily place within it, are all part and parcel of the social constitution of gendered social relations and the structure and meaning of place. The spaces in which social relations occur affect the nature of those practices, who is "in place" and who is "out of place" and even who is allowed to be there at all. But the spaces themselves in turn are constructed and given meaning through the social practices that define men and women as different and unequal.
>
> —(McDowell and Sharp 1997, cited in 1999, 91)

In short, feminist geographers have shown that physical and social spaces and places have been socially constructed to reflect and reinforce unequal gendered social relations. Therefore a major goal of feminist geography must be to "investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and spatial divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution and problematise their apparent naturalness" (McDowell and Sharp 1997, cited in 1999, 91).

Feminist geography has followed a trajectory similar to academic feminism generally, grappling increasingly since the 1980s with "gender trouble" and challenges to identity, experience,[4] and representation. The subdiscipline has diversified following the "cultural turn" and the insights of postmodernism and post-structuralism. Feminists have also increasingly drawn on a broader range of social and cultural theories, including psychoanalysis, post-structural theory, and postcolonial theory. They have paid increased attention to the larger network of heteropatriarchal relations and differences across races, ethnicities, ages, religions, sexualities, nationalities, and transnationalities (Pratt 2000, 261–62). Work has proliferated on the construction of gendered, sexed, racialized, and cultural identities, subjectivities, and bodies in particular spatial contexts (Longhurst 2001, 644). In the process, "feminist geography" has become "feminist geographies" because of its diversity.

Gender, Place and Culture (GPC), an explicitly feminist geography journal, has been tremendously successful since its inception in 1993 in "rais[ing] the profile of feminist geography within the discipline and provid[ing] a space for women's writing" (Peake and Valentine 2003, 107). In their tenth anniversary comments, editors Linda Peake and Gill Valentine reflected on the decade's changes in the journal. They noted a tremendous expansion in the types and amount of feminist geography work published (mostly but not exclusively by women), alongside transformations in meaning of the three concepts that make up the journal's title:

> *Gender:* Understandings of gender and sex have shifted due to Judith Butler's work, which has theorized beyond second wave feminist notions of the social construction of gender, to show that sex itself is a social construction and that gender is performative.
>
> *Place:* Notions of performativity have also been applied to place and space, shifting their understandings from pre-existing fixed locations to sites that are also constituted by performances.
>
> *Culture:* More theoretical and political understandings of cultural geography have resulted from and contributed to the so-called "cultural turn," distinguishing this scholarship from more traditional and conservative Sauerian notions of "culture."
>
> —(Peake and Valentine 2003, 107–108)

Thus, feminist geographies have become more sophisticated and have played an increasing role in some branches of geographic research and in methodology. Nevertheless, the subfield continues to face obstacles. In the next two sections we discuss one problem that we feel is of key importance to the integrity of both the subfield and the discipline more generally: lack of diversity and representation.

Challenges to the Place of Feminist Geography

Feminist geographers have repeatedly raised the question of gender and have challenged the discipline (and the academy in general) to address political questions about who is represented within geography, both as scholars and as subjects of scholarship (McDowell and Sharp 1999). Feminist arguments about the situated or positioned nature of academic products and knowledge have been increasingly accepted, and there has also been progress in the understanding that men do not constitute the ungendered "norm," with women as the gendered "other." Nevertheless, it has been "a long struggle to gain recognition within geography as a discipline that gender relations are a central organizing feature both of the material and symbolic

worlds and of the theoretical basis of the discipline" (McDowell and Sharp 1999, 92).

Even as feminist work has certainly begun to have an effect, several paradoxical problems have emerged to discount it. First, several scholars have noted that feminists are often inadequately acknowledged when their ideas are taken up by the wider discipline and become "common sense." Peake and Valentine (2003, 108) note, for example, that even though feminist geography "is no longer seen as an aberration but has been comprehensively, although somewhat unevenly, incorporated into the discipline," its role "in shaping debates in geography, particularly in relation to methodology, has not always been given appropriate credit or acknowledgement by the wider discipline."

Second, feminist geography continues to be seen as the only "place" where gender is addressed, therefore the broader discipline is not required to engage seriously with or to take up feminist challenges.[5] This perception perpetuates the old "geography and gender" approach in which established masculinist research theories and methodologies are only minimally modified: just "add women and stir." Additionally, many geographers persist in the problematic assumption that feminist geographers focus solely on "gender" and "women's issues" to the exclusion of other axes of subjectivity and marginalization (McDowell and Sharp 1999).

Post-structuralist insights have posed other challenges to feminist geography through deconstruction of gender categories. If the subject and object of feminist inquiry is dead (because identity politics are dangerous and experiential knowledge problematic), then any belief in the continued need for the subdiscipline is impossible or naïve.[6] Feminist geographers (and feminist scholars generally) often operate within an academic climate of fear and pressure that has led to what Richa Nagar (2002) has termed an "impasse": researchers increasingly avoid fieldwork because they can neither be nor represent "authentic" women's voices. Adding to this impasse, reviewers and readers have criticized self-reflexive exercises as mere navel gazing and self-indulgence (Kobayashi 2003b).

Finally, as noted at the outset, some geographers believe that the work of feminists has (already) been fully integrated into the academy and the discipline of geography, its purposes now subsumed within social theory and critical geographies, and therefore feminist geography is no longer needed.

In addition to these challenges to feminist geography from outside, the subdiscipline still struggles with internal challenges such as inadequate diversity. Peake and Valentine (2003, 108) point out that although feminist scholarship in *GPC* has been increasingly diverse over the past ten years and has addressed gender issues in more than twenty-five countries all over the globe, this scholarship is produced primarily by white female scholars based in academic institutions in the United Kingdom and North America. They point out the lack of a systematic effort to include women from the Global South, who face many economic, geographical, mobility, and language barriers to participation, as well as a lack of interest in participation from women of color who feel that *GPC* is not necessarily welcoming (Peake and Valentine 2003, 109). Different academic environments, practices, languages, publication requirements, and writing and language styles (such as dense theoretical language) are all further obstacles to the journal's diversification (Peake and Valentine 2003, 109).[7] The need for more diversity, however, goes beyond *GPC*'s mandate regarding feminist geography, and signals the inadequate diversity in the discipline in general. Until the discipline as a whole begins appropriately valuing geographically and racially situated knowledges, feminist geography remains relevant as the primary subdiscipline advocating for their recognition.

Thus there is not only a problem of broader disciplinary perceptions of feminist insights and challenges, but also lingering difficulties with the material, embodied diversity within feminist geography and the discipline as a whole. What is needed is not only recognition of the continuing significance of the diverse and interlocking embodied and emplaced subjectivities of current feminist geographical theories and practices, but a committed engagement with these challenges to mainstream theory and methodologies across the discipline. We are interested in further exploring the reasons why and how these problems persist in the discipline of geography and the academy more broadly.

The Places of Geography and Continued Marginalization

Delaney (2002) has articulated three specific "places" that constitute the discipline of geog-

raphy (or any academic discipline): the place of research, the place of teaching, and the workplace. We contend that the insights and work of feminist geography are usually seen as restricted to the place of research. This perception detrimentally undervalues the contributions feminist geography makes (and should make) to the places of teaching and the workplace—considerations of pedagogy, the role of teachers and representation of the discipline in the classroom, the composition of departments, and the climate of departments as workplaces. (For a discussion of risks of power, feminism, and "Others" in the classroom, see JGHE Symposium 1999.) This view also neglects the ways in which classroom and departmental places, too, are constantly shaped through complex social relations of power (including gender and race) that affect *all* geographers.

Certainly, in this era of the increasing corporatization of the academy, the accompanying proliferation of discourses of neoliberal market principles, and the increasing privileging of industry training over education, there is a very real threat to the place of all marginalized fields and the authority of critical knowledges generally (Longhurst 2001). Although feminist geography has made progress over the past few decades, in the face of this academic climate there is reason for concern about its future place in geography (Longhurst 2001, 645). Yet, is the corporate capitalist climate of the academy the only, or even the main, obstacle to the survival of feminist geography? Some scholars posit that there is perhaps a(nother) society-wide backlash against feminism (Oakley and Mitchell 1998). While this may be true, such a general claim fails to trace more specific and material trends in the marginalization of women and other minority groups in the discipline of geography. As Berg and Roche (1997) note, "places—such as universities—do not exist simply as ontological givens, but instead are produced through complex constellations of power-knowledge. . . . The socially constructed landscape of the university is not power-neutral, it works to support hegemonic groups" (cited in Longhurst 2001, 645).

Women continue to be underrepresented in academic geography, as faculty and often also as students. Change is slow—the growth in faculty not keeping up with the increased numbers of women completing doctoral degrees. Further, women disproportionately occupy the lower ranks within faculties, thereby being excluded or marginalized in decision making and positions of power within departments and the wider university context (Monk, Droogleever Fortuijin, and Raleigh 2004, 85). Women constitute 16 to 17 percent of faculty reported in U.S. studies or 24 percent based on AAG membership data (Monk 2002) and only 12 percent of the faculty in Canada (White 2000).

But perhaps more significant is the "profound under-representation of non-whites within the discipline" (Concerned Group on Race in Geography[8]). The discipline of geography has a particularly problematic history that far predates current academic trends, and some argue that geography's colonial and racializing past persists in the discipline today (Delaney 1998; Kobayashi and Peake 2000; Kobayashi 2003a). Despite the theoretical and methodological commitments of feminists and many other critical geographers to addressing inequalities, and despite the growing work on the intersections between race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and class, especially among women of color, the material reality of minority inequality in the discipline has not been resolved. Women and minority groups, especially minority women, remain marginalized among the faculty and students in the discipline (Mahtani 2004). These statistics glaringly highlight that the discipline continues to reproduce the sense that to be a geographer is to be white and male (Monk, Droogleever Fortuijin, and Raleigh 2004).

As Audrey Kobayashi (2003a, 553) argues, "the very fact that geography remains such a white discipline shows us that . . . *colour does matter*, and until we address the balance, our knowledge will remain hypocritical dogma." What does the whiteness, male dominance, and Eurocentrism of geography teach undergraduate students about our discipline? How can we attract diverse students without first diversifying geography? What are the ramifications for the climate of geography departments?

Minelle Mahtani's recent research with minority female faculty and graduate students in geography demonstrates that masculinist, sexist, racist, and Eurocentric practices within geography departments and scholarship reinforce their exclusion and isolation within the discipline. Minority women experience the devaluation of their difference, a lack of institutional interest in difference and diversity issues,

covert and overt discrimination and hostility, and outright questioning of their legitimacy as professional scholars (Mahtani 2004, 93–94, 97). Based on her respondents' narratives, Mahtani puts forth three proactive strategies for diversifying geography departments and making the climate in the discipline more open and welcoming to (female) minority faculty and students. Departments should: (1) implement recruitment programs to hire more women (and men) of color; (2) diversify the curriculum to include more critical race theor*ists* (not just theor*ies*), nonwhite women and men, and critical texts; and (3) implement a formal mentoring program to provide avenues for networking and support for students (Mahtani 2004, 95–97). Clearly, these strategies would require an acknowledgement of and a willingness to address gaps and inequalities in the places often sidelined in the discipline: teaching and the workplace.

We argue that the climate for feminist geography is a wider problem in the discipline than just the representation of women. Clearly, the contributions and challenges posed by feminists have been inadequately taken up by the broader discipline, as is evident in the lack of diversity in the discipline and the ongoing marginalization of minorities. Peake and Valentine (2003) argue for a concerted effort among feminist geographers to encourage and welcome more diverse geographers into feminist spaces, and several have already made concrete attempts to collaborate and create alliances across differences and have theorized ways to recuperate gender as a meaningful and significant organizing and analytical category (Gibson-Graham 1994; Jacobs 1994; Pratt 2002; Raju 2002; Valentine 2002; Nagar, Ali, and the Sangtin Women's Collective 2003; Nagar 2006). However, the onus can not fall entirely on feminists (who are still marginalized themselves) to make all the needed changes. Significantly, Mahtani's research shows that merely adding more minority scholars—though necessary—won't entirely solve the problem if the foundational attitudes and persisting mores of what constitutes geography (and therefore a geographer) are not sincerely addressed. Geography as a discipline needs to take seriously the insights and contributions of feminist and antiracist geographies that stress the need for more diverse voices, both faculty and student, if it is to avoid obsolescence or accusations of hypocrisy.

Feminism and Social Theory in Geography

The four articles collected here provide multiple examples of and arguments for the continued importance of feminist geographic research. The authors point to the contributions that feminist geographers (can) make in related fields; for example, geographers' particular focus and expertise on spatiality would enrich ongoing discussions in feminist studies and queer theory. Within geography, they persistently call for greater attention to the emotional, the embodied, the personal, and the experiential, noting that too often as geographers we discount and erase the real, daily importance of these ways of knowing in favor of elitist, transcendent, or scientistic habits and discourses. The articles also share a hope that by reshaping our theories and technologies through these feminist priorities, we would be less prone to use them in violent, impersonal, or coercive projects.

Gill Valentine's (2007) contribution, "Theorizing and Researching Intersectionality: A Challenge for Feminist Geography," proposes that feminist geography needs to use the concept of intersectionality to theorize the complex relationship between and within different social categories (such as gender, race, class, and sexuality), claiming that "the specific debate about intersectionality as a concept has not yet been played out within geography despite its obvious spatial connotations" (2007, 13). She provides a genealogy of the feminist debates about the interconnections between gender and other identities, including a critique of the earlier attempts to map difference through geometric metaphors of oppression. Valentine illustrates how over time these debates led to the recognition of what Andersen and Hill Collins (1992, xii) termed "interlocking categories of experiences," and recognition that social categories could not be separated or explained through a single framework of oppression (patriarchy, racism, capitalism, etc.). Intersectionality captures the overlapping, enmeshed, and interacting connections of social identities, the recognition that difference is located "not in the spaces between but in the spaces within" (Fuss 1989), as well as the situated, performative, and fluid nature of identities. Valentine focuses on ways of researching intersectionality in practice in order

to demonstrate how it works as a lived experience. She uses a case study from her research on lesbians and gay men and D/deaf people's experiences of marginalization in the United Kingdom to highlight "the constant movement that individuals experience between different subject positions, and the ways that 'who we are' emerges in interactions within specific spatial contexts and specific biographical moments" (Valentine 2007, 18). Valentine feels strongly that feminist geographers have much to add to theorizations of the importance of space in the production and experience of intersectionality.

In "Affecting Geospatial Technologies: Toward a Feminist Politics of Emotion," Mei-Po Kwan (2007) critiques the dominant uses and forms of geospatial technologies (i.e., GIS, GPS, and remote sensing) as disembodied and surrounded by a notion of scientific objectivity. Citing the well-known work of feminists and science studies that have effectively challenged this "god-trick" of objectivity (Haraway 1991, 196), Kwan argues that feminist efforts are needed to "re-corporealize" and "embody" work in and with geospatial technologies. Kwan cites work in three areas where feminist critiques and alternatives have been demonstrated. Two "academic" areas are urban geography and cultural ecology. The various research projects she cites all include mixed methods, often GIS and in-depth interviews, which bring up fruitful differences in "ways of knowing" and also make for much richer analysis and discussion. The third area of feminist efforts in geospatial technologies is a series of three art pieces that challenge the notion of these technologies as objective data devices, and instead use their capacities to document self-expression, creativity, and emotion. Kwan's hope is that by recorporealizing geospatial technologies, deconstructing their objectivity, and using them in projects that take into account emotion, difference, and identity, the technologies will be used for life-affirming purposes rather than for anonymous and violent purposes (as in war or displacement).

Jennifer Hyndman (2007), in "Feminist Geopolitics Revisited: Body Counts in Iraq," considers the traffic between "two solitudes": feminist geography and geopolitics. Finding little appreciation for feminist thought in mainline geopolitics, she nevertheless insists that it indeed brings a "distinct critical edge" (Jenkins, Jones, and Dixon 2003) to the subfield. Through reexamining her earlier work on body counts in Afghanistan and new thoughts on Iraq, Hyndman shows the inadequacy of the dominant frames of geopolitical discourse, such as the assumption of states as actors and the deaths of a certain number of civilians as a "necessary price" for military effectiveness. Hyndman applauds the work of critical geopolitics insofar as it questions and destabilizes dominant political discourses and logics. Yet she notes that such work, although critical, can slide into elusive theoretical debates that become detached from real people, real places, and real bodies of dead individuals (in the cases of Iraqi and Afghani civilians). Through her discussion of the role of body counts in political discourse, Hyndman demonstrates the strength of feminist commitments to the personal and the concrete, emphasizing the importance of "embodied epistemologies" in challenging a "culture of war."

In "On the Relationship Between Queer and Feminist Geographies," Larry Knopp (2007) calls for a radical queering of the geographical imagination. He acknowledges the close historical and contemporary—though not always easy—relationship between feminist and queer geographies, as well as the theoretical and analytical foundation laid by feminist geographers. Knopp outlines five main "underdeveloped" themes that queer geography is well-positioned to develop: spatial ontologies, the spatialities of gender, homophobias and heterosexisms, generational cultures, and cultural politics. The first theme deals with how the distinctive contributions of queer geography can help us rethink our spatial imaginations ontologically, particularly three fundamental ontological concepts in geography: place, placelessness, and movement. Knopp contends that it is imperative not simply to develop queer spatial ontologies in material or abstract theoretical ways, but to develop their emotional and sentimental meanings and significance. That is, a queer perspective ought to be informed as much by embodied experience and by theory, because many queers' experiences entail a radically different relationship to these notions than that of more sedentary nonqueers. "Queers frequently are suspicious, fearful, and unable to relate easily to the fixity and certainty inhering in most dominant ontologies of space and place, due to the vulnerability that accompanies being visible and locatable" (Knopp 2007, 49) and find a certain

amount of solace in being in motion or nowhere at all. In terms of spatializing gender, homophobias, and heterosexism, Knopp addresses how a queer geographical perspective may contribute to exploring transgender spatialities, drag and gender performativity, spatialities of resistance to gender regimes, the policing of desire in public spaces, and the policing of "perverse" spaces. He also calls for the need to pay attention to the understudied and unappreciated area of generation cultures and change as well as to examine how a queer approach might help us better understand the political, cultural, and moral landscapes of the so-called culture wars. Ultimately, Knopp arrives at five goals or values that may help us use a queer perspective to develop our geographical imaginations toward more productive—and less elitist—research and knowledge.

These four articles provide compelling examples of the continued importance of feminist research in geography, the need for ongoing collaborative research between various subdisciplines, and the opportunities for fruitful future research into new terrain. Inroads have just begun into areas such as geospatial technologies and geopolitics (as well as other subfields relatively untouched by feminism), but this provides room for tremendous new ideas and insights. In subfields where feminist geography has already made a greater impact, is it being given its due? And, in the other "places" of geography—teaching and the workplace—is the material work of feminism done? How well do the faculty teaching geography reflect the complex, "intersectional" diversity of each institution's (potential) student body? We hope this Focus section provokes readers to consider their spaces, experiences, and imaginations within geography. ■

Notes

[1] What we mean by "place" here will be discussed later in this article.

[2] Susan Craddock, Jennifer Hyndman, Larry Knopp, Mei-Po Kwan, and Gill Valentine.

[3] Jennifer Blecha, Karen Dias, Alison Mountz, Tiffany Muller, Rachel Silvey, and Mary Thomas.

[4] Feminists appealed to experience as a way of recovering marginalized identities and the worldviews of social groups excluded from representation and participation in knowledge production. A focus on experience is meant to operate as an oppositional theoretical practice by resisting academic dependence on the authority of canonical Eurocentric theoretical texts, as well as critiquing the colonizing and exclusionary practices of both hegemonic academic theory and hegemonic academic feminist theory. The use of experience by hegemonic feminism was critiqued because it constructed, essentialized, and reified "the" female experience, while ignoring diverse and non-Western experiences as well as the intersectionality of other forms of oppression. The idea that experience is an authentic, reliable, or transparent mirror to reality, however, has now been widely critiqued.

[5] This scenario is a problem for academic feminism generally. Some feminist scholars have argued that the institutionalization of Women's Studies, and the development of its own faculty appointments, classes, journals, conferences, associations, and so forth, has led to its ghettoization and weakened the political thrust of feminism's challenges to institutional practices across and beyond the academy. (For more on this, see Brown 1995 [especially pp. 52–76] and 2003.)

[6] Often critiques of feminist geographies are based on how cutting-edge, theoretically sophisticated, or in vogue its theoretical repertoire is (or is not), to the neglect of the material and embodied realities of its gendered, raced, classed (etc.) subjects of analysis who are supposedly now impossible to represent.

[7] In an attempt to bridge these gaps and silences in the next decade, *Gender, Place and Culture* will diversify the languages in which it accepts manuscripts, publish all abstracts in Spanish as well as English, and invite more diversity on its editorial board (Peake and Valentine 2003, 109).

[8] In 2000 The Concerned Group on Race and Geography prepared a pledge form, Call for direct action on race in U.S. and Canadian geography. Letter available from Dr. Joe Darden, Department of Geography, 315 Natural Science Bldg., Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1115.

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