

of Borneo. Cruikshank looks at healthy physical aging and explores alternative medicine. Because they build strength and flexibility, yoga, tai chi, and qi gong would form a part of any healthy program for older people, just as it does in China. As we know, both physical and mental exercise help stimulate brain function. Add good nutrition to this mix and we would have a much healthier aging population. A study of 50,000 people aged 20 to 90 to measure intellectual ability found that decline varied greatly. Those who sustained a high level of mental functioning had several things in common: a high standard of living marked by above average education and income, lack of chronic disease, active engagement in reading, travel, cultural events or professional associations, willingness to change, an intelligent partner, the ability to grasp new ideas quickly, and satisfaction with accomplishments. As Betty Friedan noted in *The Fountain Of Age*, psychological strength in late life depends partly on acceptance of one's life stage and on self-esteem and those characteristics, in turn, depend on freedom from internalized ageism. The later state is difficult, as our society is full of ageism.

The message that being old is funny or embarrassing is so ingrained in our culture that many older people take this view of themselves. Old women are depicted as hag, spinster or grandmother but seldom as fully functioning individuals with a variety of characteristics. Cruikshank ends with a plea for feminists to look at gerontology from a woman's point of view. As we know, women's lives differ a great deal from the lives of men, especially in terms of power and income and these are important factors in healthy aging. This would be an excellent college or university course textbook.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GENDER, SECOND EDITION

Alice H. Eagly, Anne E. Beall, Robert J. Sternberg, Eds.  
New York: The Guilford Press, 2004

### REVIEWED BY SUSAN THOMAS

Reproductive rights, HRT, the use/abuse of anabolic steroids, same sex marriage, leadership by women, commercial stereotypes, domestic violence, sexual and gender harassment, challenges faced by women entering the skilled trades—news reports and coffee time conversation abound with these subjects. These issues are the meat of debate amongst ordinary citizens. Yet, they also fall under the purview of those who carry out relevant research. The “psychology of gender,” a widely ranging and contemporary concept, now also finds its niche in biology, sociology as well as in the various approaches to psychology. It is the focus of undergraduate and graduate courses; the professional literature lists hundreds of titles. Given this vast and varied range of information and interest, the publication of *The Psychology of Gender, Second Edition* is a significant undertaking on the part of editors, Eagly, Beall, and Sternberg.

In an expanded second edition, *The Psychology of Gender* presents a banquet of information on the study of gender. With a mission to foster discussion and debate amongst scholars from several fields, the editors selected samples of “best work” with various approaches to clarify the similarities and differences between men and women. These ideas are presented as a continuum where men and women overlap in their characteristics and behaviours. In creating this second volume, the editors stress that the field of research has advanced to the point that current inquiry is now based on “increasingly

subtle questions about the contextual patterning of difference and similarity.”

How does biology play a role? The first chapter discusses the extent to which the prenatal environment and exposure to gonadal hormones influence the development of the brain and subsequently gender identity, personality, sexual orientation, and social behaviour. The second considers the effects of the hormones in men and women with a particular focus on cognitive functioning. Next, an evolutionary approach begins with Darwin to explain gender differences.

Conversely, the following chapter highlights the manner in which society socializes male and female infants into their adult roles and stresses that cultural design (messages from parents, peers, the media, school systems, and organizations) rather than “biological endowment” brings about stereotypical attributes and roles. The subsequent chapter explores the role that parents' expectations play in endorsing stereotypes and in responding differently to male and female children. Feminist psychoanalytic theory follows with an examination of how unconscious and unresolved conflicts influence personality and how gender is always coloured by the personal unconscious. In studying how we connect with those around us; authors of another chapter find that both men and women define themselves socially, use social networks, and draw on social values but differ in where they look for intimacy and connectedness.

Social constructionism asserts that meanings for concepts are not fixed but are constructed through language, social activities, and other social processes and are constantly changing in differing situations. Hierarchical structures which lead to gender inequalities in status and social power form the basis for discussion in two chapters, Social role theory of sex differences and similarities is used to explain that in many societies men

have more power and authority than women, but that in post-industrial societies with low birthrates, there appears to be greater access for women to roles with higher levels of power and authority. Finally, an overview of cross-cultural studies argues that male and female stereotypes and a gender division of labour exist in all societies.

Perhaps the most critical chapter is the last, for it provides an overview bringing into perspective the different uses of terminology (gender vs. sex), the emphasis on comparing the sexes, and underlines the importance of taking this research to the level of political analysis. The “psychology of gender” exists, in fact, because of the impetus of feminist politics when the notion that women are inherently inferior was challenged by the field. The authors call for further writings, which will address how this research has implications for future policy development.

*The Psychology of Gender, Second Edition* is a text which must be studied and discussed within the context of other related works. The rich list of references following each chapter should be of particular importance to the scholar who wishes to take these ideas to the discussion table. This text should be found in all social science graduate libraries and in the schools of medicine, social work, public policy, and law. The debate that ensues is essential in this dynamic field of diverse ideas and discoveries about the importance of gender.

## DANCING AT THE DEAD SEA

Alanna Mitchell  
Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2004

### REVIEWED BY JANE CAWTHORNE

Alanna Mitchell explores environmental hot spots to see first hand the

impact of global climate change and to bear witness to what Richard Leakey has called the sixth great extinction. Accounts of her sightings of dying species like the freakish flightless cormorant of the Galapagos and the lemurs of Madagascar are intertwined in her straightforward explanation of Darwin. Species are not fixed, nor are the lands and oceans that make up their homes. Darwin’s heresy was resolved by his society’s collective capacity to learn new metaphors and make new legends, a skill Mitchell says is vital in enabling us to change our behaviours enough to survive the ecological challenges we have created. Like Darwin, we need to tell a new story of the earth and our place in it. We can no longer treat the earth like it is ours to use up, or as though we do not depend on its richness for our own survival.

The beauty of this telling is not just Mitchell’s ability to teach us science, but it is in her subtle infusion of her own story and the way this comes to mirror one of her most important messages. We learn about her, watch her overcome her deepest fears and swim with the piranhas in Suriname, learn what led her to undertake this book, about her children and that her mother is looking after them while she tumbles down the bank of the receding Dead Sea, and we know that she is going through a difficult divorce. She is part of the story, yet the book is never *about her*. Similarly, the story of earth was never supposed to be just *about us*. We must find a way to embrace this humility soon, or like the Inuvialuit she describes in Sachs Harbour, we may find ourselves to be the “last ones.” The book is brave. Mitchell faces the denial that paralyzes most of us and moves through it to find optimism, hope, and faith that our particular species is smart enough to give up the myth that we can keep harming the earth.

This review is excerpted from a longer article published in *Fast Forward News & Entertainment Weekly*, Calgary.

## FEMINIST (RE)VISIONS OF THE SUBJECT: LANDSCAPES, ETHNOSCAPES, AND THEORYSCAPES

Gail Currie and Celia Rothenberg, Eds.

New York: Lexington Books, 2001

### REVIEWED BY DANIELLE RUSSELL

Targeting a specialized but varied audience, the editors of *Feminist (Re) Visions of the Subject* seek to create a “re-visioning of feminist cultural analysis in an academic terrain transformed by discourses of postmodernism.” Their argument is that whether or not analytic frameworks have “explicitly engaged” it, “the influence of the postmodern turn may nonetheless be seen.” It is a provocative position—one which would, however, be enhanced by a more detailed explanation of the concept of postmodernism. Currie’s “Introduction” assumes a familiarity with the term and its theoretical implications. Perhaps a fair assumption given that the text addresses an academic audience, but even for the initiated this is a contentious and contested territory. A stronger statement would clarify Currie’s application of postmodernism to the diverse topics incorporated in the collection.

Diversity is one of the strengths of *Feminist (Re) Visions of the Subject*. The inclusion of the various studies is justified by a shared concern with space and place. Connections are suggested through this common theoretical thread. Currie does make a (slightly) troubling claim as part of the rationale behind the entries. She indicates that each of the contributors draws “attention to the mutually constituting relationship between space, place, and subjectivity” in a