

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

“post-modernized academic environment.” Currie further asserts that “it is in the context of this landscape that the contributors ... must be understood, though the authors do not necessarily address that landscape per se.” Context, as the separate chapters illustrate, is a key factor in the formation of knowledge. Currie’s statement could be construed as an act of appropriation but the willingness of the authors to be involved in the project defuses such a charge.

A broad range of approaches and material is located within this book. Architecture, advertising, technology, and tourism are addressed in the first section “Landscapes: Negotiating Space.” The four authors in this particular section (and indeed in each of the three sections) draw upon multiple disciplines. Despite their unique focus, the distinctive pieces explore surprisingly similar terrain. Subjectivity and space, these specific chapters illustrate, are intimately connected. Simplifications of spatial divisions, it becomes clear, do not reflect real world experiences of space. Space, place and identity are intertwined but the exchange is not one-sided. “Boundaries” can be blurred or obliterated, acquiesced to or contested. Recognition of that exchange is, however, crucial to the reconfiguring of oppressive spaces and social orders.

The second section enhances the parameters of the discussion while maintaining many of the theoretical threads of the opening pages. Continuity is achieved through proximity. While Currie deftly weaves the separate threads together in the “Introduction,” no such connective feature bridges the various sections. The reader is left to discover the common ground while moving through the expanding textual terrain. Gibb, Vallely, Rothenberg, and Arnstein consider subjectivity, space, and collective identities in terms of the productions of place and ethnoscapas. Personal and group identities incorporate both the real

and the symbolic body.

Theoretical concerns with actual and imagined spaces and their effect on subjectivity shape the third portion of the text. Reconceptualizing boundaries, exploring the discourses which produce conflicting spaces and competing subjectivities, Cheng, Subramanian and Whitmore, Armstrong, and Chen gesture towards theoretical bridges for diverse disciplines engaged in feminist inquiries. By drawing attention, from a variety of perspectives, to the interactions of space, place, subjectivity, and theory, *Feminist (Re) Visions of the Subject* opens new avenues for academic discussion. Highlighting the malleability (as opposed to the rigidity) of “boundaries,” the collection of essays illustrates the possibilities of, and need for, re-envisioning of actual and imagined spaces and subjectivities.

“The impetus for this collection was the desire to effect a challenge to contemporary feminist praxis.” So proclaims the “Preface” to *Feminist (Re) Visions of the Subject*. The collaborative efforts of the editors and contributors have thrown down the gauntlet. Whether or not the challenge will be met remains to be seen but Currie and Rothenberg have deftly identified a provocative and (potentially) rich approach to feminist praxis; for this reason alone the text merits attention.

SITES OF VIOLENCE: GENDER AND CONFLICT ZONES

Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman, Eds.

Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004

REVIEWED BY HELENE MOUSSA

This volume draws on original research undertaken by feminist scholars from various disciplines and from different countries. The editors and contributors are members of the Women in Conflict Zones Network established in 1996 at York University (Toronto), and the book’s four sections reflect WICZNET’s original research mandate: (1) Feminist Approaches to Gender and Conflict; (2) Violence against Women in War and Post-War Times; (3) Feminist Analyses of International Organizations and Asylum; and (4) Feminist Futures: Negotiating Globalization, Security and Human Displacement. While the collection offers an important study of different methodological approaches, this review highlights the researchers’ analyses of gendered violence and their concern for human security in conflict zones.

The fourteen chapters focus on the politics of gender relations at specific sites of violence in Afghanistan, Ghana, Guatemala, Iraqi Kurdistan, Israel/Palestine, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and the former Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslavia states, and in the camps that shelter the internally displaced peoples (IDP) in these countries and refugees in the surrounding countries. The contributions offer important insights into violence and how it affects human lives by exploring how space and places are gendered through social, political, and economic processes. One of the underlying arguments is