

### **Book Review: For space. By Doreen Massey. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage 2005. ISBN 1-4129-0361-0**

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scholars of Japan concerned with the politics of identity in the premodern and modern periods.

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**For space.** By Doreen Massey. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2005. 232 pp. £60.00 cloth; £18.99 paper. ISBN 1 4129-0361 0 cloth; 1 4129 0362 9 paper.

*For space* is the seemingly inevitable outcome of Massey's vocation, her passion for encouraging many disciplines and key thinkers to think more seriously about 'space'. Massey describes 'space' as the sphere of possibility, produced and disrupted through multiple, sometimes overlapping stories, heterogeneous historical and geographical trajectories that are embodied and become relational to each other, often spanning local–global connections. Being careful not to reduce her complex argument to spatial fetishism, she systematically demonstrates that we are therefore 'responsible' to (implicated in the production of) the *practised relations* that give meaning to space.

Whilst it is impossible in this short review to go into any details of what 'space' really means for Massey, I will focus instead upon how she relates her work to the particular political tradition from the Left that she has influenced over the years, specifically that of radical democracy. Massey draws attention to the growing plurality and heterogeneity of political alliances which disrupt grand narratives that close down our understanding of, and the possibilities for, space – those narratives which perpetuate the inevitability of capitalism, the inevitability of Western ideas of development, progress, modernity and so on; narratives which downplay the fact that space is heterogeneous, composed of a plurality of trajectories and practiced relations.

*For space* will no doubt stimulate important debates for this political tradition and beyond, particularly the latter few chapters, concerning how we are 'responsible' to the practised relations that produce and disrupt space. As a start, I raise the following questions. Given that the Left has reoriented away from specific visions of how places *should be*, toward an emphasis upon the ongoing (re)formation of a plurality of different political alliances, can (should) anyone decide what 'responsibility' means and how they respond? Or are publicly accountable institutions necessary to mediate, in some shape or form, the response? For the issue of responsibility also raises important questions for those growing number of varied political alliances (anti-capitalist activists, peace demonstrators, the European Social Forum, for example) that are 'responsible' to the people which they claim to speak for in different parts of the world.

Stimulated to think about the issue of responsibility more generally, I thought about how we should look upon the rise in influence of Deleuze across academic disciplines. For Deleuze certainly privileged escaping, and fleeing the social, over the formation of wider common spaces of social engagement that are necessary to develop what societies, operating beyond a certain scale, can, and cannot, allow 'responsibility' to mean. Given her new emphasis upon responsibility, whilst Massey engages with

Deleuze in many ways, I therefore hope to hear more from her about Deleuze's normative aspiration in the future.

In highlighting the issue of 'responsibility' for spatial relations more generally, *For space* provides an extremely useful platform from which to stimulate this and many other debates, shaping new understandings of the space of democracy for the Left.

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**Real cities.** By Steve Pile. London: Sage. 2005. 216pp. £70.00 cloth; £21.99 paper. ISBN 0 7619 7041 X cloth; 07619 7042 8 paper.

*Real cities* focuses upon the phantasmagorias of the city – the dreams, magic, vampires and ghosts that flit through urban experience – and the book's title is unironic in its insistence upon the centrality of the emotional and imaginary dimensions of city life, every bit as 'real' as material, economic and political effects. Featuring diverse examples, including the dreamy desires produced by advertising, voodoo practices, horror films and terrorist attacks, Steve Pile convincingly conjures up the spectral cast of the city. Drawing on the pertinent if predictable theoretical insights of Benjamin, Simmel and Freud, Pile shows how these urban phantasms are, like dreams, elusive, unexpected and only partially recognizable, and often concealed by seemingly more evident encodings. For instance, the desires provoked by advertisements hide other longings. In urban margins, thresholds in which normally discrete things mingle, temporalities, spaces, desires and fears are mixed up as in dreams. These mundane settings are not sites in which cold, evident meaning is apparent but where whispered, surreptitious messages must be decoded or affectively sensed.

Interestingly, Pile also draws upon ideas about networks to look at the spaces of connection in which hauntings, magic and dreams circulate and intermingle. These networks of affect, meaning and power produce fragmentary inter-spectralities and desires that connect cities and conjure up larger spatial entities and histories. And as is the case with voodoo in New Orleans, these local phantasmagoria are apt to be produced out of such global connections. Cities thus possess a distinctive phantasmagoric mix of particular hauntings, atmospheres and sensations.

There are shortcomings. One longs for a discussion of cities other than London and New York – about popular spiritualism in Stoke-on-Trent, or creepy provincial suburbs, for instance. In addition, the ghost may well be a figure of grief, but I would like to hear about some friendlier phantoms that haunt us with utopian, sensual or convivial impressions. The great unspoken subject in the book appears to be religion, to which many of the themes connect. Moreover, chapters are somewhat uneven in quality, although this is an inevitable consequence of a broad overview such as this. More importantly, Pile shows that phantasms can enter the politics of the city, critique policies that forget the past too quickly, interrogate manufactured desires and disrupt