

**Book review: Ham radio's technical culture. By K. Haring. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press 2007. ISBN 0262083558**

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level, all of which combines to shed light on particular matrices of influence that produced a specifically Swedish expression of geography and Empire, home and regional studies, geography and social concern, applied geography and the separation of physical and human geography. This then provides the international reader with an opportunity to place famous Swedish developments such as the quantitative group at Lund within the broader context of Swedish geography, as well as an opportunity to learn about other geographical events and trends less well known to the Anglo-American reader at least. One novel and fascinating element is the inclusion of all Swedish doctoral dissertations 1884–2000 in Appendix A, providing an accessible data set that can be analysed in many ways, not least in showing the trends in themes and methodologies in Swedish geography as well as the strong applied route for geographical knowledge. Overall, *By northern Lights* provides a detailed account of the history of Swedish geography, which has been long-overdue and should long stand as a reference not only on geography in Sweden but the practice of the historiography of geography.

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AVRIL MADDRELL

**Ham radio's technical culture.** By K. Haring. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 2007. xvii + 220 pp. £18.95. cloth. ISBN: 0262083558.

'G4PDH, G4PDH, this is 2M1QQQ calling you. How do you copy?' Music to the amateur radio enthusiast's ears. Radio hams are the subject of Kristen Haring's enjoyable and important book, which traces ham radio culture in the USA between 1930 and 1970. Drawing on archive material, Haring composes an account as interesting to the historian of technology as to the cultural geographer with interests in concepts of home, leisure, masculinity and technology.

Emerging 'from the two interrelated processes of technical identification, creating meanings for technology and perceiving self in relationship to technology' (p. 161), Haring explores the technical culture of the hobbyist and argues for a closer examination of the social and personal aspects of technical communities. Enthusiasts are largely ignored by scholarship on technical culture, this volume, however, is a welcome addition to recent work on computer enthusiasts and hackers. Moreover she offers 'a reminder that there exist alternative ways of using and relating to technology' (p. 18).

Radio technology and its associated practices are inherently spatial, operating on a variety of scales and across a range of spaces; something explored to great effect by Haring, with the book's chapters travelling between the amateur club, the equipment manufacturer, the Federal Communications Commission and the domestic radio shack. The chapter entitled 'Ham Radio at Home' is particularly noteworthy. Haring discusses here how 'men's ham radio activity gained domestic acceptance' (p. 133) after being regarded for many years as a threat to social relationships and 'incompatible with romantic interests' (p. 122). She examines the location of the 'shack' within the home; arguing that the shacks 'grounded the ethereal hobby experience and situated hobbyists in the domestic context' (p. 145). Haring provides useful insights on questions of gendered architecture, hobby space, masculine sociability and changing technological values.

*Ham radio's technical culture* has a wide-ranging audience; finding a place on the bookshelves of telecommunications enthusiasts and academics alike. Haring succinctly captures the hidden world of the radio ham, adding a charming dimension to cultural geography's current fascination with more advanced scientific and technical cultures. 'di-dah-di-dah-dit' (for the uninitiated that was Morse code for 'end of transmission').

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**Geographies of Muslim women: gender, religion and space.** Edited by Ghazi-Walid Falah and Caroline Nagel. New York: Guildford Press. 2005. 337 pp. \$55.00. cloth. ISBN: 1593851839.

Following the September 11 attacks in the US in 2001 there has been a proliferation of work exploring the lives of Muslim populations. Much of this interest has focused on the growing visibility of Muslim women, and on the veiling practices of Muslim women in public spaces. *Geographies of Muslim women: gender, religion, and space*, by G-W. Falah and C. Nagel offer a diverse collection of chapters dealing with how Muslim women negotiate and perform their identities in everyday spaces in diverse geopolitical contexts such as Morocco, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. These geopolitical tales tell us considerable amounts about the inter-play between gender, religion, and place in Islamic societies in both Muslim majority and non-Muslim countries. This book is partly motivated by the debates surrounding the headscarf controversy in France. Its editors, anticipating how this debate will play out in other European contexts, found it important to situate the collections within a moral political economy fuelling interest in the spatiality of Muslim women. The results are startling and interesting. The contributions draw on the inter-play between representations of Muslim women across the developing world, and upon specific relations between space, gender and Islam. This collection provides a salutary reminder that critical feminist conversations must not be abandoned at a time when it is most needed. The individual chapters are taken from wide variations of geography and women's daily lives and, illustrating in my mind, G. Pratt's much cited assertion that it is only meaningful to consider identity and [Muslim/Arab] difference, with reference to particular places and at particular times (Pratt, 1992). The contributions reflect an important attempt by feminist researchers on cultural politics to situate women's lives in historical and geopolitical contexts, rather than through the monolithic lens of religion.

Many of the authors make a political plea for distancing the situation of 'Muslim women' from the discourses on women's rights used by the US administration to justify its foreign policy goals. The collections manage to straddle a fine balance between drawing out 'Muslim woman' as a political category and the attendant risk of essentializing the diversity of women in Muslim societies, while at the same time presenting rich and contextualized accounts of the women's lives.

The first part is focused on the intersections on gender, development and religion. The authors highlight the limitations of mainstream development discourses, calling for increased engagement with the negotiated nature of space, girlhood, and notions of Islam within the context of shifting labour production and markets. For example, focusing on Afghanistan,