
Preface

In May 2003, the Women and Geography Study Group (WGSG) gathered together for a reading weekend in Brighton. One of several animated discussions revolved around rereading the introduction to *Geography and Gender* and considering which issues were still relevant and what had changed in the 19 years since its publication. Gillian Rose's copy was passed around and greeted with a mixture of fondness and admiration as participants shared their personal accounts of first coming across the collection, and the influence it had on their subsequent careers.

At the conclusion of the weekend a long discussion ensued about revisiting *Geography and Gender* to mark its 20th Anniversary at the International Geographical Union meeting in Glasgow in August 2004. As we considered the possibility of producing a new book to mark the occasion, we quickly became mired in a lifeless debate surrounding potential publishers, research assessment criteria, and formal book proposals. The idea that 'our' publication would be driven by a commercial publisher, rather than by those who would contribute left most people uninspired. Where and how would our (multiple) feminist ideals fit in to such a process? But, there was a tangible change in the atmosphere in the small pub in Brighton when Clare Roche suggested an independent project: a book edited and published by members of the WGSG. The enthusiasm generated in that moment led to further excited conversations and the ideas initiated there are reproduced here. In challenging the commercialisation of academic publishing, we are exploring different ways of writing. Publishing this collection ourselves has allowed us to accept any format, word length or style from our contributors. We actively sought contributions that did not necessarily fit academic conventions and these appear alongside more 'traditionally' crafted essays.

We are encouraged that so many people wanted to be part of this project. To write something for a publication that will not be high on a list of top sources for research assessments or promotion panels represents a shared vision of what matters to us and a potent resistance to the commercialisation and research assessment drive of contemporary academia. Although our ideas for collective editing were unsuccessful (possibly due to the demands of teaching and research imposed upon all geographers these days – perhaps constraining the possibilities for resistance?) this remains very much a WGSG product. The editorial work was done by Jo Sharp, Kath Browne and Deborah Thien, with contributions by Elsbeth Robson and Parvati Rahuram. Great thanks also to Kath and Deborah for arranging the successful reading weekend last year which stimulated the ideas for this collection.

A number of the following contributions make reference to the 1984 WGSG publication and to the support of the WGSG. In others, the influence appears to be less direct. However, we think we would all agree that while our approaches to feminist geography may differ from that contained in the original text, we could not have got where we have without the pioneers of the WGSG and their subsequent and influential role within the discipline. And so, we dedicate this collection to those who founded the Women and Geography Study Group, to the writers of the 1984 book who inspired this project, and to the ongoing practices and challenges of feminist geographies.

Jo, Kath and Deb