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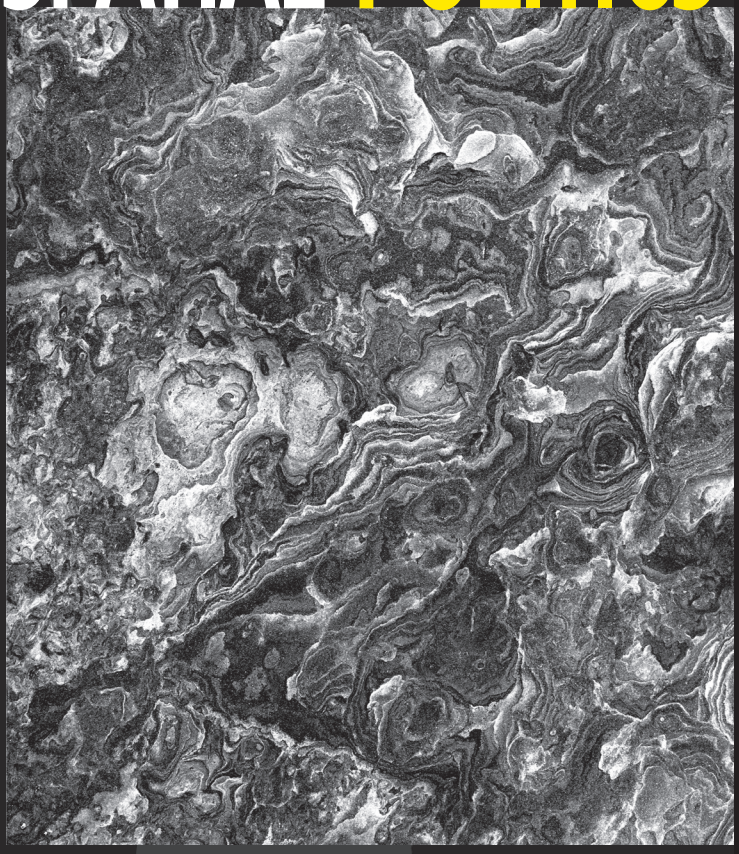

ESSAYS FOR DOREEN MASSEY

Edited by
David Featherstone and Joe Painter

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Spatial Politics

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Spatial Politics

Essays for Doreen Massey

Edited by

David Featherstone
and Joe Painter

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Cover: Quandan is one of a group of photographs which Ingrid Pollard exchanged with Doreen Massey after hearing her give a lecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects. Through the photographs, Ingrid and Doreen began an ongoing conversation about everything from space to geology. The images relish their duplicity in the developments of the rules of aesthetics, of astronomy, surveying and mapping, and geometry. Together they combine to produce a sense of wonder.

Ingrid Pollard

Doreen Massey and the editors of the collection offer many thanks to Ingrid for her permission to use this image for the cover.

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Olafur Eliasson, born in 1967, represented Denmark at the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003 and later that year installed *The weather project* at Tate Modern. *Take your time: Olafur Eliasson*, a survey exhibition organised by

SFMOMA in 2007, travelled until 2010, to the Museum of Modern Art, among other locations. *Seu corpo da obra* (Your Body of Work), which opened in September 2011, occupies three different venues in São Paulo and extends into the city itself. *Your rainbow panorama*, a 150-metre circular, coloured-glass walkway on top of the museum ARoS in Aarhus, Denmark, opened in May 2011. The facade for Harpa Reykjavik Concert Hall and Conference Centre, inaugurated in August 2011, was created by Eliasson in collaboration with Henning Larsen Architects. Established in 1995, his Berlin studio today numbers about 45 craftsmen, architects, geometers and art historians. In April 2009, as a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts, Olafur Eliasson founded the Institut für Raumexperimente (Institute for Spatial Experiments).

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Foreword

Ken Livingstone

I am delighted to be writing the foreword to this collection recognising what Doreen Massey has done, especially given the importance to me of the connections we've had since we first met in 1976. I can remember the first time I saw Doreen. She was standing, on a cold November evening, outside the Tenant's Hut in Kilburn in London where we were due to have our Labour Party ward meeting, as I had just been selected as the Labour candidate. It was an absolutely miserable night; there were about three of us there. I think she was the first professional geographer I'd ever met. And I'd never had any desire to meet any, because when I did O level geography (one of the few O levels I got before I dropped out of school), it mainly consisted of drawing maps, and remembering heights and mountains and rivers. As far as it ever got political was when our teacher told us the role that climate and coastline had played in holding back indigenous cultures from reaching the excellence of the British Empire. In fact, as I recall we only focused on those countries that had been part of the British Empire, though by the time I was at school most of them had escaped from it.

In the mid-1970s the debate on the left in Britain was between Stuart Holland's Alternative Economic Strategy (*The Socialist Challenge*, 1975) and the wholesale nationalisation proposed by the far left. Against the background of North Sea oil to fund infrastructure and the modernisation of industry, everything seemed possible. Contrary to those who rewrote history to depict the 1970s as an ungovernable decade, this was the high point of the post-war social democratic settlement. The top rate of tax was down from 98 per cent after the war to just 80 per cent, but with death duties we had lived through 30 years of redistribution of wealth with the top 10 per cent earning just four times the bottom 10 per cent.

The strength of the trade unions was a restraint on excessive corporate pay and bonuses; the working day was cut by 40 minutes during that decade; holiday entitlement doubled; and women's pay dramatically closed the gap

on men's. I believed we were on an irreversible journey to a socialist society, viewing Margaret Thatcher and her Friedmanite beliefs as a throwback to pre-Keynesian times. The idea that Thatcher, Reagan and their heirs would over 30 years wind the world back to levels of inequality not seen since the First World War was inconceivable. Even if Labour's faltering leadership opened the way to a Thatcher government, I had no doubt the left would capture the party and return to power after one Thatcher term.

When I became leader of the Greater London Council (GLC) in 1981, Doreen was one of the first people I turned to for some input into our industry and employment policy. She was one of my appointees to the Greater London Enterprise Board which we set up to try to really analyse and then correct all the things that Doreen still thinks are wrong with the London economy. And they weren't quite as bad then as they are now. We didn't make a lot of progress on turning that round, but it wasn't our fault because an evil tyranny abolished us.[1]

It was at about that time that Doreen got a job at the Open University, and that was very interesting. After she went for the interview, months had passed and they never announced who had been offered the job. There was discussion about why so much time had passed; people talked about whether she would have sufficient 'gravitas' for the post. Given that she had spiky multi-coloured hair at the time, she didn't look like the typical professor they were used to. Then, shortly after it had been confirmed that she'd got the job, Margaret Thatcher's Education Secretary, Keith Joseph, was wandering round another university and when he was introduced to the geography department there he said he was very worried about the coming politicisation of geography. That made us did think there might have been a political undercurrent to the delay.

After the abolition of the GLC in 1986 we decided it was worth carrying on the debates and the political project it had been part of. We formed the Ariel Road group – Ariel Road is where Doreen lives – and had very intense debates over many years about what was happening in this post-Fordist world and what we should do politically. Then, when I became Mayor of London in 2000, my relationship with Doreen became a bit strained. She was pounding on with her examination about what was rotten at the heart of the London economy and what it does to the rest of the world – and I was Mayor of the city. On one occasion she turned up to interview me and I felt she was about to leap over and bang my head on the table to make her point that 'you've got to do more to change it'.

Such are the dynamics and contradictions of politics. I always used to say, when we were discussing the London economy, that this is not the world I would have created, it's the world we're stuck with. But not any longer, perhaps; and this is where our opportunities come today, because the scale of what has happened in the recent financial crisis dwarfs anything since the Great Depression.

So this book appears at a perfect point to reassess the past, with the post-war period dividing neatly into three social democratic decades and three neoliberal ones. Contrary to the right's complaints that the public sector crowded out private investment and their promise that increased inequality of wealth would have a trickle-down effect, in Britain average incomes grew by 2.4 per cent per year in the 1960s and 1970s but dropped to 1.7 per cent per year in the last 20 years. In the world at large, growth during the social democratic era averaged 3 per cent a year, but was reduced to half that rate in the last 30 years.

Crushing the trade unions did not lead to a revival of our economy, but allowed a shift to short termism as manufacturing was wiped out and replaced by the growth of finance, which no longer provided funds for investment. Instead, almost every aspect of the economy was turned into an opportunity for speculation – or to be more honest, gambling. A Britain that once led the world in exporting manufactured goods now had the dubious honour of being the world's hedge fund capital.

As the public utilities were privatised the public faced a huge increase in prices. Hundreds of thousands of skilled working-class jobs were eliminated whilst the utility bosses paid themselves vast increases in salary. Nowhere are the consequences of privatisation clearer than in the building societies. Not a single building society that demutualised remains as an independent institution. The New Labour government's privatisations have been equally unsuccessful, with the catastrophic waste of billions of pounds on Tube privatisation and with the NHS now crippled by the obscene costs of funding the private finance initiative (PFI) scams.

Any objective person looking at these two periods cannot fail to recognise that the balance between the public and private sectors and the redistribution of wealth in the immediate post-war period produced not just a fairer society but a more economically successful one. Yet as the Thatcher/Reagan era imploded throughout 2008 and governments of all colours rushed to prevent the collapse of the banking system, creating a depression as bad as that of the 1930s, the right in both Britain and the USA seized the opportunity to make the case for a yet smaller state.

With breathtaking dishonesty (unchallenged by the bulk of the media), Prime Minister David Cameron and Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne justify their cuts by claiming that Britain now has the largest government deficit in British history, even though in real terms it is just a third of the size of that faced by the 1945 Labour government and, unlike the structure of Greek government debt, has an average repayment date 14 years in the future. Ireland is further down the road now taken by Cameron and Osborne. Ireland's savage public sector cuts have actually seen the bond markets *increase* the cost of loans whilst the deficit has increased because workers thrown on the scrap heap are neither paying taxes nor generating GDP. The danger of our

government's cuts is that they will either push Britain back into a recession or leave us limping along for a decade or more with Japanese levels of low growth.

The success of the Cameron government is to have won the 'spin' battle over the deficit. Instead of massive public anger that bankers are once again lining their pockets whilst the majority of society bears the pain of their folly, the bulk of the public has been persuaded that we are in this mess because of high levels of public spending and 'gold-plated' public sector pensions. Those of us who believe in a different strategy are presently undermined by the complicity of some senior Labour politicians in supporting the Tory claim that deficit reduction must take priority over investment. The most significant speech by any politician in the months after the general election in May 2010 was Ed Balls's address to journalists at Bloomberg on 27 August 2010. Drawing on the lessons of history, Balls systematically demolished the Tory case and laid out the alternative strategy of investment-generated growth. That speech provided the arguments for everyone seeking to challenge the government strategy and lays the foundation for the next Labour government to avoid repeating the mistakes of the Blair/Brown years.

In a way, the most surprising thing is that such a strategy did not underpin the last Labour government – the link between investment and economic success is clear throughout the entire period of modern capitalism. Britain achieved domination of the nineteenth century because it became the first nation in history to invest 7 per cent of its GDP. Following the American Civil War, an investment rate in the high teens guaranteed that the twentieth century would be American. After the Second World War, West Germany led the rest of Western Europe in a growth spurt which in the early 1970s saw the Germans investing 25 per cent of their GDP (Britain always lagged about 5% behind). Japan leapt from being a post-war bombsite to being the world's second largest economy by 1968 by driving investment up to 38 per cent of GDP in its peak year.

The rest of Asia watched and learned. In India investment limped from 10 per cent of GDP at Independence to just 20 per cent in 2004 when the Singh government was elected. He oversaw a surge to 35 per cent and was overwhelmingly re-elected five years later. But the great investment success story is, of course, China. Thirty years after Deng Xiao Ping initiated the new economic policy, China has overtaken Japan as the second largest economy on Earth. Unlike the West, where the response to the banking crisis was a dramatic fall in investment, in China the rate was increased from 43 to 46 per cent. At this rate, ignoring the distortions of the exchange rate, in real terms China will become the world's largest economy during the present decade.

As we cast about to find a way out of our economic problems, any strategy that ignores the lessons of investment is doomed to fail. Investment

in infrastructure, plant and the education of the workforce is the key – and never more so. For 500 years the European empires and then America used their military power to rig the world economy in their interests, allowing us to live a lifestyle based on the exploitation of the majority of humanity. That period is closing. In devising a new strategy for our economy it has to be placed in the context of the new world that is being born in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Given such geographical upheavals, there is a huge desire to rethink where we are, examine the problems we face and to come up with solutions. Doreen's political and theoretical work over the past 40 years has been driven by attempts to forge such alternatives. As we analyse the forces coming into play, the work of Doreen Massey will remain indispensable.

Note

1 This is a reference to the abolition of the Greater London Council by Margaret Thatcher's government in 1986. As Hilary Wainwright argues, in her chapter in this collection, 'in most countries, the destruction of a level of government, against the will of the majority of citizens, is associated with authoritarianism verging on dictatorship'.

Reference

Holland, S. (1975) *The Socialist Challenge*. London: Quartet Books.

Series Editors' Preface

The RGS-IBG Book Series only publishes work of the highest international standing. Its emphasis is on distinctive new developments in human and physical geography, although it is also open to contributions from cognate disciplines whose interests overlap with those of geographers. The series places strong emphasis on theoretically informed and empirically strong texts. Reflecting the vibrant and diverse theoretical and empirical agendas that characterise the contemporary discipline, contributions are expected to inform, challenge and stimulate the reader. Overall, the RGS-IBG Book Series seeks to promote scholarly publications that leave an intellectual mark and change the way readers think about particular issues, methods or theories.

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Most of all, we would like to thank Doreen herself for her enthusiasm and passion for the project. She has been generously engaged with what at times must have seemed a mysterious book and has answered many a query as the project has progressed. We hope she likes the end result and that there are not too many stray apostrophes.

David Featherstone and Joe Painter
Glasgow and Durham, May 2012

The Lipman–Miliband Trust

Royalties from this book will be donated to the Lipman–Miliband Trust. This Trust, on which Doreen has served as a trustee for many years, exists to support socialist education and research. For more details see: www.lipman-miliband.org.uk/

Introduction
'There is no point of departure': The Many Trajectories of Doreen Massey

David Featherstone and Joe Painter

In late October of 2011 Doreen Massey addressed the Occupy London encampment outside St Paul's Cathedral in the heart of London's financial district. Part of the transnational movement seeking to shape a future beyond aggressive financial capitalism, Occupy London had set up camp in the City on 15 October. Massey attacked the 'invasion of the imagination' that has defined political reaction to the financial crisis.[1] Contending that politicians are 'scared' of the financial centre and its power, she asserted the importance of the camp in challenging the social relations of the City. For Massey, such challenges to the 'current construction and role of a place' are integral to forging alternative political futures (Massey, 2004: 17).

Doreen Massey's compelling contributions to geographical theorising and political debate have been animated by such insights and political commitments. Her official retirement from the Open University in September 2009 has in no sense slowed the dynamism of her political and theoretical work. It provided, however, an opportunity to reflect and take stock of her diverse contributions. This collection brings together former graduate students, colleagues, geographers and other social scientists with artists, political figures and activists. It seeks to honour, engage with and take forward Doreen Massey's vital geographical and political contributions.

Introducing the many trajectories and engagements of Doreen Massey is no mean challenge. Her whole theoretical approach is antithetical to the ways such accounts are often structured around paradigm shifts which

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position disciplines in relation to sequential narratives or clashes between key disciplinary figures. Any attempt to fit her work into a neatly sequential account of geography's recent past, with perhaps a tidy temporalising of difference between Marxism, feminism and post-structuralism, would be doomed to fail. Doreen Massey's own ethos is contrary to these ways of thinking about politics and intellectual work. Her liveliness and openness to the world exceeds such boundaries and confining categories. In what may have been a precocious commitment to spatial particularity, she is one of a very few Mancunians who have been lifelong supporters of Liverpool Football Club. The intense concentration of a supervision meeting with Doreen might be broken as she paused to wonder whether it was a white-throat that had just flown past the window.

This introduction engages with the multiple trajectories at work in Massey's writing and in her political interventions across different times and spaces. We explore six coeval influences which have shaped her work and which she has in turn shaped; Althusserian Marxism, feminism/difference, internationalism, class and inequality, materialities and thinking spatially. These influences cross-cut the four key sections of the book: 'Space, Politics and Radical Democracy', 'Regions, Labour and Uneven Development', 'Reconceptualising Place' and 'Political Trajectories'. In the spirit of Massey's work the collection seeks to be alive to the unexpected possibilities shaped through bringing together trajectories, perspectives and experiences from diverse contexts and positions.

Space, Politics and Radical Democracy

Doreen Massey begins her book *For Space* by remarking that she has been 'thinking about "space" for a long time'. She continues that 'usually I've come at it indirectly, through some other kind of engagement. The battles over globalisation, the politics of place, the question of regional inequality, the engagements with "nature" as I walk the hills, the complexities of cities' (Massey, 2005: 1). Massey's engagements with space have never been conceived only as an intellectual end, however passionately committed she is to a geographical approach to the world. Rather, she mobilises a spatial perspective as a set of intellectual and political tools to bring analytical clarity and purchase on diverse situations. It is because of the traction that such tools give to political questions that they have been so central to her project.

It is in the process of wrestling over such political questions as regional inequality and globalisation that Massey has thoroughly reworked many key assumptions about space and place. In doing so she has profoundly reshaped common-sense ways of thinking about space and place both in the discipline of geography and across the broader social sciences. Her work

has provoked a significant rethinking of space as the product of relations rather than as a fixed surface or container. She has stressed that space is the dimension of multiplicity, is the product of relations and is always unfinished and under construction. In opposition to long-standing assumptions that time is what gives politics life she has insisted that taking spatiality seriously has important implications and it cannot be rendered as secondary to temporality. To do so, she has consistently argued, is to greatly impoverish our political imaginations.

Many of Massey's insights are now a familiar part of the terrain of geographical thinking. In this regard it is sometimes easy to forget the intellectual labour and struggle it took to get these insights recognised as central and significant. The idea that space and politics are co-constitutive, that they are built together as the outcomes of different ongoing processes, for example, is now commonplace in accounts of the relations between geography and the political. This position was, however, articulated over a long duration, through many different iterations, and in the face of serious opposition to the idea that space should be accorded political status. Her position was forged through argument with influential political theorists including Ernesto Laclau.

Massey's challenge to Laclau's contention in *New Reflections on the Revolutions of Our Time* that politics and space are 'antinomic terms' was a particularly significant intervention. Laclau contended that 'Politics only exist insofar as the spatial eludes us' (Laclau, 1990: 68). Massey used a critique of Laclau's position as the starting point of her essay 'Politics and Space/Time', which insists on the co-production of space, time and politics. As she argues, 'the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography' (Massey, 1992: 84). This assertion of the spatio-temporal construction of politics opens up a focus on the diverse, multiple and contested processes of the political. The essay notes significant parallels between her position and developments in Einsteinian and post-Einsteinian theories of time–space relativity, noting that in 'modern physics' the identity of things 'is *constituted through* interactions' (Massey, 1992: 76, emphasis in original).

Massey has consistently stressed that different ways of thinking space have consequences and effects. For Massey, to think spatially is never an innocent, politically neutral activity. Rather, ways of conceptualising space have important effects and consequences. Whether it is a Conservative politician arguing that the Taliban are medieval rather than contemporaneous, or the stage-ist conceptions of development that position some places as 'ahead' of others, Massey has insisted that spatial imaginations have political consequences and effects. Similarly, she has consistently argued that the way in which some regions are positioned unequally needs to be seen not as natural or inevitable, but part of relations of power (Massey, 1978). This has been part of a broader reinvigoration of ways of thinking space, particularly

associated with critical geography. In these debates Massey's voice has persistently been distinguished by its clarity and originality.[2]

The contributions of Massey to thinking spatially present important challenges to dominant ways of thinking about politics and the political. As Chantal Mouffe argues in her contribution here, Massey's assertion that space is the dimension of multiplicity is fundamental to the question of how we are to live together. It is central to understanding the ways in which different social relations can be envisioned and different forms of political agency constructed. Massey insists that as space is always under construction and never finished, this means that it is always possible that spatial relations can be articulated and generated in different, potentially antagonistic, ways.

Massey's commitment to this reworking of space has a strong Althusserian influence and lineage. That she came to Marxism via Althusser makes her trajectory distinctive. The generation of radical geographers who emerged in the 1970s were largely hostile to (or didn't read) Althusser (Philo, 2008: xxxvii–xxxviii; see also Duncan and Ley, 1982). Indeed it is remarkable, certainly by comparison with cognate social science disciplines, how strongly Marxist geography has been constructed largely from classical Marxist sources. David Harvey's treatise(s) on capital are clearly the most significant in this regard (see Harvey, [1982], 2007). Henri Lefebvre, whose work was explicitly positioned in opposition to structuralism, was also a significant influence on Harvey and Neil Smith, though he was also to influence Doreen's work (see Lefebvre, 2006).

Reading Althusser, in the rather unlikely place of Pennsylvania, transformed Massey's attitude to Marxism. What so excited her about Althusser was the way that his thinking transcended the humanism of the early Marx. As a feminist she was deeply suspicious of the gendered assumptions of such humanism. Thus she argues that:

> Far from liberation, it seemed a trap. It was Althusser, with his ideas of structured causality (most especially 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' and his famous dictum that 'there is no point of departure', in other words on my reading there is nothing which you have to accept as eternally pre-given, which is not in itself a product of previous causal structures) who provided a welcome way out. (Massey, 1995b: 351; see also the interview below).

Massey's account here challenges ways in which accounts of the emergence of radical geography have frequently positioned Marxism and feminism as oppositional or sequential, rather than coexisting influences (Rose, 1993: 113). Feminism and Marxism here emerge as coeval trajectories in Massey's work. She emphasises the liberating importance of Althusser's argument that 'there is no point of departure' with its implications that 'nothing is given' and therefore everything can be challenged and reworked (see Althusser, 1971: 85). She has argued that 'as a young woman who was trying

to escape the norms, who didn't conform to any of the given descriptions of "woman", and who wanted a way of challenging them, that first entry into anti-essentialism, although I didn't know that term, none of us knew that term at that point, was utterly important' (Massey *et al.*, 2009: 404).

Stuart Hall, Massey's colleague at the Open University and co-founder of the journal *Soundings*, suggests that Althusser's 'non-teleological reading of Marx' led to a concern with how different structures were articulated together, rather than seen as temporally discrete stages 'with a necessary progression built into them' (Hall, 1980: 326; see also Althusser, 2005: 89–128). As Arun Saldanha argues here, Massey extracted from Althusserian Marxism 'an appreciation of the open temporality of social formations and the multiple relationships intersecting in those formations'. This allows a focus on the 'enablement of new relations', such new relations being generated through the coming together of previously separate or disparate trajectories (see Massey, 2005: 40).

During the 1980s the terrain of Althusserian Marxism was reworked and rearticulated through Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's contentious and influential work on radical democracy. Their book *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* mobilised Althusserian concepts like articulation as part of a plural reimagining of left political strategies. Many left figures and theorists directly attacked Laclau and Mouffe's position for disrupting left certainties and condemned it as a retreat from class politics (see for example Geras, 1987). Massey, however, embraced the possibilities opened up by thinking about the plural construction of left politics. This certainly was not out of anything like a disavowal of left commitments. As Michael Rustin argues here, while 'there is a "post-modern" cast to Massey's ontological and epistemological positions (the ontology is somewhat constructivist, the epistemology somewhat pragmatist) her substantial political and ethical commitments have remained unyielding'. She also has argued for the importance of 'thinking radical democracy spatially' in ways which usefully ground the rather abstract ways of thinking the political that structure Laclau and Mouffe's work (Massey, 1995a). The conversation between her work and particularly the work of Chantal Mouffe has been mutually productive.

Mouffe's chapter here mobilises Massey's account of the 'power-geometries of globalisation' to critique Hardt and Negri's use of the concept of 'smooth space' to analyse the forms of global political activity that they term 'the multitude' (see Hardt and Negri, 2001). Massey's critique of the political framings of globalisation is explored in the chapters by Lawrence Grossberg and David Slater. Massey's work from the early 1990s has been increasingly concerned with interrogating the 'power-geometries of globalisation' (Massey, 1993a). In the face of dominant political and theoretical discourses which have constructed globalisation as an inevitable force, Massey's analysis has insisted on the need to think about globalisation as an

uneven, contested and riven process (see especially 1999a, 2005). She has powerfully argued that the spatial imaginaries at work in globalisation discourses, whether they be the assumption that globalisation is Westernisation, the sense that globalisation results in the 'annihilation of space by time', or homogeneity of place are not innocent. Rather, Massey contends that they do significant work in furthering the political projects of (neoliberal) globalisation. As Grossberg notes here, 'If the past, the other, was never as simple, or homogeneous or local or unified as we imagine, the present is probably not as fractured or heterogeneous or global as we assume.'

Massey has been insistent on the importance of understanding globalisation as a neoliberal project. This permits a focus on the analysis of the mechanisms and practices that globalisation has been formatted and constituted through neoliberal practices and conventions. The political resonances and potential of this position are also important. Some opposition to globalisation has fallen into the political trap of counter-posing the local and global in problematic ways. Massey's insistence that current globalisation is part of a neoliberal project invites the possibility of imagining alternative ways of generating globalisation (see also Featherstone, 2008). Her work, consistent with her internationalist political convictions, has insisted on the importance of and possibilities for reworking and reimagining practices of internationalism in 'global times'. David Slater uses this approach as a starting point for a post-colonial account of the relations between 'space, democracy and difference'. He critically reflects on the relations between radical democracy, spatiality and politics and the importance of thinking about the generative character of West/non-West interactions. This commitment to a relational construction of space and politics has also been forged through an important challenge to dominant ways of thinking about regional politics and geographies.

Regions, Labour and Uneven Development

Much of Doreen Massey's early work was concerned with regions, labour and uneven development. During the 1970s she worked at the Centre for Environmental Studies (CES), an independent research centre funded by the UK government and the Ford Foundation. It acquired a reputation for radicalism and, following Margaret Thatcher's first election victory, it was closed as part of government spending cuts. During her time at CES (which included a period of graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania in the United States) Massey developed a critique of the then dominant form of industrial location theory and of its grounding in assumptions drawn from neoclassical economics. This critique led to her elaboration of the alternative approach for which she has become particularly well known and which was set out in her path-breaking book, *Spatial Divisions of Labour* (Massey, 1984).