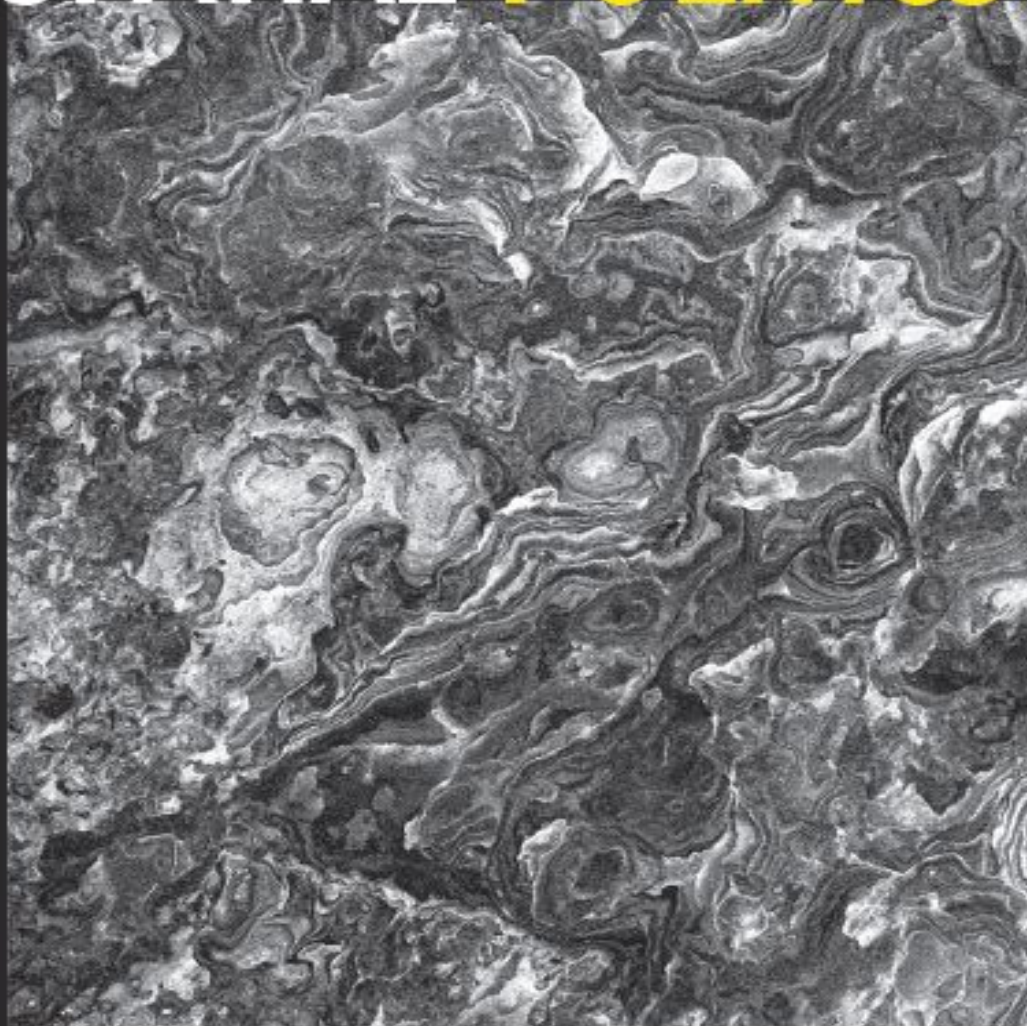


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SPATIAL POLITICS



ESSAYS FOR DOREEN MASSEY

Edited by

David Featherstone and Joe Painter

 WILEY-BLACKWELL

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Essays for Doreen Massey

Edited by

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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