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Reshaping gender and class in rural spaces, edited by Barbara Pini and Belinda Leach, Burlington, Ashgate Publishing, 2011, Gender in a Global/Local World series

Does class still matter? Despite its historically pejorative connotations, in this edited work class is considered a necessary entry point to interrogate the silences surrounding rurality. The use of class has virtually disappeared within rural scholarship, with rural spaces oft constructed as 'classless'. While geographers have acknowledged the importance of examining gender in rural areas in recent years, rural gender relations are frequently reduced to the concerns of the uncontested category of 'rural women'. As such, the arrival of the edited volume, *Reshaping Gender and Class in Rural Spaces*, which explores how regimes of gender and class intersect and unfold in the context of rurality, goes a long way towards reshaping understandings of rural social relations. The volume includes a number of chapters that effectively achieve the stated aim of the book, positing that intersections of class and gender create distinct rural experiences. Crucially, foregrounding the intersection of class and gender unveils sections of rural society that have been previously overshadowed through the dominance of middle class voices within the literature. While many of the chapters interestingly explore the intersection of gender, class and rurality, a drawback of the book is a tendency to focus on class and its theorisations in many of the chapters; leaving me to ponder if the volume may have more aptly been titled *Reshaping class in rural spaces*. Feminist ontologies of class dominate theorisations, yet there are influences from new conceptual developments within 'class studies'. The volume's approach creates the potential for generating political traction for the reintroduction of the notion of class not only within rural scholarship but social research more broadly.

The volume assembles 12 chapters that engage in and attempt to make sense of class and gender within the global north (Canada, United States, United Kingdom and Australia), complementing the increasing literature on gender and the economics of development from global south perspectives. Gender and class within rural labour spaces (agriculture, mining, manufacturing and forestry) are the focus of the majority of the chapters and one highlight, that also pays attention to race, mobility and citizenship, is chapter 5, 'Re-examining the social relations of the Canadian 'family farm': migrant women farm workers in rural Canada'. Kerry Preibisch and Evelyn Encalada Grez introduce a feminist approach to examinations of globalisation and agriculture, exploring the highly gendered and racialised experiences of rural Mexican women employed as migrant workers in Canadian agriculture. The chapter exposes the experiences of a group largely overlooked within the literature. Importantly the female respondents continued to seek temporary work visas in the hope of providing a better life for their children despite threats of sexual violence and harassment. In chapter 6, 'Configurations of gender, class and rurality in resource affected rural Australia', Barbara Pini and Robyn Mayes turn attention to the ways the introduction of mining in traditional farming areas has impacted communities in terms of the manifestation of class relations. The chapter reveals that while collective understandings of class declined, different groups engage in 'moral boundary

drawing' influencing the formation of social and leisure groups. Class relations are currently constantly shifting within many Australian rural areas due to the resource boom enabling working class individuals to earn high incomes. Thus Pini and Mayes' focus is particularly pertinent at this time.

Maureen Reed and Debra Davidson raise a thought provoking ethical dilemma in chapter 11, 'Terms of engagement: the intersections among gender, class and race in Canadian sustainable forest management'. They ask that given the reluctance by some research subjects to describe experiences in terms of class, do academic labels serve to reify experiences that some seek to overcome? Discussions throughout the volume clearly illustrate that class matters. Yet with the use of class in rural research still developing the book may have benefitted from positioning this dilemma more prominently throughout the collection.

Chapters 9, 10 and 12 take an interesting turn as they move beyond themes of labour and employment to respectively explore classed lone parenting practices, class, sexuality and rural belonging, and gendered teenage class perspectives. Annie Hughes offers important insight into rural lone parenting and the way class and gender shape experience in chapter 9, 'Class, rurality and lone parents' connections with waged labour: the mediating influences of relational assets and human capital'. The chapter moves past narrow classed definitions of lone parents that obscure multiple realities, illustrating the role of relational assets (for example free familial childcare and financial support) and human capital, both of which are class related, in contributing to the choices and preferences of lone parents. Chapter 10, 'Not all bright lights, big city? classed intersections in urban and rural sexual geographies', effectively contributes to the burgeoning literature aiming to destabilise 'urban' as utopian queer space and 'rural' as dystopian queer space, by introducing class to the discussion. Yvette Taylor suggests a more complicated understanding of belonging through a discussion of the ways urban commercialised scene spaces designed to attract queer identifying individuals are felt to be classed spaces, exclusionary to working class respondents. Chapters 9, 10 and 12 broach new understandings by moving beyond topics of labour and employment, yet chapters focused on the non-occupational dimensions of class are in the minority. Arguably the book would have been strengthened by a greater focus on the ways in which gender and class are made, remade and challenged beyond work spaces of mining, manufacturing, forestry and agriculture.

There are a number of feminist and classed approaches across the chapters. As a consequence of this, while the myriad of routes make for interesting reading, the book lends itself to those with prior knowledge of the themes, and may in contrast be somewhat challenging for beginners. The lack of a concluding chapter begs the reader to probe independently into the ways the chapters may be synthesised more broadly and conceive the proceeding explorations of gender and class in rural spaces. At the completion of the book one is left with an overwhelming feeling that there is a lot more work to be done in reshaping understandings of gender and class in rural spaces. As a whole the edited collection makes a powerful case for refocusing attention on class in studies of the rural.

Anna de Jong

University of Wollongong, Wollongong 2500, Australia

aldj998@uowmail.edu.au