Mining, nature and society: A new feminist perspective

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Summary

• Ask: are traditional feminist perspectives relevant?
• Provide: a critique of ‘impacts of mining on women’
• Explore: new race-class-gender realities in mining – spatial politics
• Redefine: mining as a human project
• Connect: political economy with political ecology through a feminist perspective
Mining & the Death of Nature

Lewis Mumford (1934, 1967): ‘the megamachine of mining’ - seeped with either the notion of the ‘economic’ or the culture of machine

‘… curse of war and the curse of mining are almost interchangeable; they are united in death.’

Carolyn Merchant (1980): ‘… the living earth in her wisdom has ordained against the mining of metals by concealing them in the depths of her womb. In addition the mining of gold contributed to human corruption and avarice.’
The Forge & the Crucible

• Mircea Eliade (1962) – analogy between obstetrics and mining: the ore is embryo, mine is uterus, shaft is vagina, and miner is obstetrician

• The idea of the ‘nurturing mother’ earth as a deity - continued in different ways by Nash (1979) and Taussig (1980)
‘Hewers of cake and brewers of tea’

Mercier and Gier (2007)

Mining’s tumultus history evokes images of rootless, brawny and often militant men, whether labouring in sixteenth century Peru or twenty-first century South Africa, but women are often ignored or reduced to shadowy figures in the background supporting male miner family members. Where were women in the mining world?
Rectifying androcentrism: ‘Add women and stir’?

Sandra Harding (1987)

1. Add women to existing research methods – ‘recovering’ and re-appreciating histories of women

2. Women’s contributions to the public world – as wage or non-wage workers, revolutionaries and so on

3. Women as victims of masculine dominance – economic exploitation and discrimination
खेती हमको खिलाता है

जमीन लुट गेला बेटी बने रेजा विकास तेरा

J.M.A.C.C. J.O.H.A.R.

JMACC JOHAR
Feminist analysis

‘Open Cut’ (1981) - Structural divisions of class, but no race

New analysis would focus on:

• the intersection of race, sex & class
• Pay attention to spatial politics between and within mining contexts
• redefine mining
• transdisciplinary and political
Le Irani en Mexico!