

***Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues.* Sandra Harding. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006; 224 pages; ISBN 0-252-07304-5; \$20.0US (paper).**

In *Science and Social Inequality*, Sandra Harding points to the Eurocentric and colonialist assumptions of early critical analyses of science and technology to explain how social inequality is reinforced, particularly in the Global South. She confronts the dilemma of putting theory into practice when science is seen as neutral, drawing on contributions made by feminist and postcolonial perspectives to show how science and technology studies can explicitly question social inequality in many cultural contexts. Harding's interest in the ways that critical analyses of science and technology can contribute to a social justice agenda leads her to describe agency in ways that go beyond the individual scientist to the actions of social movements in local and global contexts. She identifies the ways in which such actions touch people's everyday lives and points to ways in which they not only transform, but also make important contributions to social and political understandings of, science and technology. Harding's essays highlight the cultural embeddedness of the sciences; the focus of science and technology can be "human cultures in all their systematic ways of successfully interacting with the worlds around them" (155).

The strength of this book lies in Harding's essays on feminist science and technology studies, particularly her thorough critique of feminist standpoint theory. With a careful teasing apart and deconstruction of Western and Northern science from feminist and postcolonial perspectives, she emphasizes the need for science and culture to coexist, to take power relations into account, and to include women as scientific knowers and practitioners. Harding effectively untangles the threads of feminist theory, then shows how they are strengthened by a postcolonial critique of social inequality to produce a more complex and layered analysis. She shows the complexity of everyday experiences of oppression; how colonial policies have led to social movements in the Global South that have taken action and are having an impact on the practices of science and technology in the Global North.

After showing the links between science and culture that have been revealed by feminist and postcolonial science studies, Harding draws on this evidence to expose the limitations of unity in the production of science projects and truth ideals, and to challenge relativism. By returning to these longstanding debates, Harding shows how the depth of analysis in recent feminist and postcolonial perspectives makes contemporary critical analyses of science and technology relevant to the practice of science, social and political theory, and to social justice initiatives in local and global contexts.

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