

Book Review: Doreen Massey, *For Space*. London: Sage, 2012. ISBN: 9781412903622 (Paperback). 222 Pages. \$80.00.

Reviewed by Ali Shehzad Zaidi¹

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First published in 2005 and available in a new Kindle edition since 2012, Doreen Massey's *For Space* examines cultural and philosophical notions of space, particularly as they relate to time. Using the image of "falling through the map," Massey demolishes the notion of place as static and beyond time. Modern maps that represent space as a flat and continuous surface are no more coherent, Massey points out, "than a painting of a pipe is a pipe." However, as Massey notes, there exist other kinds of maps, such as those of various indigenous peoples which indicate their origins and the directions of their migrations, thereby situating them both in time and place (106-108).

As with maps, our sense of space is necessarily conditioned by world views and cosmogonies. Yuri M. Lotman notes that whereas literate cultures tend "to regard the world created by God or Nature as a text" and strive to understand its meaning, non-literate cultures inscribe the meaning or sacrality of places in a particular juncture of time according to phases of the sun, moon, or stars (252). Space, Massey reminds us, is always being made and remains unfinished, a "sphere of a dynamic simultaneity" that segues into "loose ends and ongoing stories" (107). This relational understanding of place as something makeshift, elastic, and contingent takes us beyond landscape to an intersection with the memories and psyche of the viewer.²

¹ **Ali Shehzad Zaidi**, Ph.D., is Associate Professor at the State University of New York. Address correspondence to: azaidi@transformativestudies.org.

² A case in point. Whenever we pass by a certain house in our neighborhood, my wife and I recall the antics of a now deceased cat. Marty would emerge from that house, first at a fast trot and then, when his gaze met ours, at a slow walk, as if he wished to avoid seeming overly eager to greet us. Unwary of strangers, Marty was a showoff and a performer. While we chatted with his owner, Marty would leap into a tree like a panther or claw at an imaginary adversary and then spin around to confront another one. Our human present is suffused with the presence of past feline moments.