

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

CHERYL TEELUCKSINGH (Ed.), *Claiming Space: Racialization in Canadian Cities*. Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006, vii + 196 p., index.

This text moves beyond a view of space as passive and contextual by asserting that space is something to be claimed and contested during negotiations of race. Contributors examine a variety of cases from different disciplinary standpoints in an effort to illuminate the interaction of racialization and space in Canadian cities. By so doing, they acknowledge the ability of space to be supportive, exclusionary, or prescriptive within processes of racialization. In her introductory comments, Teelucksingh explores some of the possible intersections of racialization and space, highlighting issues which can be raised: how race is symbolized in spaces, the relationship between racialized power and the accessibility of places, and how multiculturalism as a public policy masks practices which reinforce established patterns of racist power and privilege. These themes are well supported with evocative examples, and provide a comprehensive context for the ensuing chapters.

Racialization and space become intertwined with gender and sexuality in Rinaldo Walcott's examination of *Divas: Love Me Forever*, a film examining six black drag queens in Toronto. Reading the film "as a map," Walcott examines the compartmentalization of black bodies within particular material and symbolic spaces in Toronto. The black gay subjects are shown to be isolated from both the black and gay communities, and their explorations of sexuality and race therefore remain secluded, symbolically and materially, within gay ghettos. Domenic Beneventi then carries the discussion of racialized space into the realm of literature, examining how Vancouver and its Chinese communities are represented in two novels by Sky Lee and Wayson Choy. Against a nationalist discourse that effaces the importance of Chinese Canadians by mapping Canada as white colonial space, Beneventi highlights the threat of Chineseness manifest in Chinese bodies, along with the challenge that the alternate mappings and practices of these bodies pose to dominant representations of space.

In 1995, concerns about the growing Asian community in Richmond, British Columbia, came to a head in several exchanges in local newspapers and a moderated town hall discussion aired on CBC television. While reading these texts, Glenn Deer highlights how discourses which construct Asian identities as threatening encourage the growth of Asian communities

to be represented as an infestation. He then evaluates whether the CBC's discussion allowed for genuine dialogue about negative representations of Asian identities. In this way, Deer uncovers key rhetorical devices that interpret the growth of the Asian community in Richmond as a moral panic.

Kelly Amanda Train takes a close look at divisions within one community. The Jewish community in Toronto, she shows, is not as homogenous as it may appear to outsiders, and a small group of Sephardic Jews face particular challenges in their interactions with Ashkenazi Jews. By tracing the events leading up to the establishment of the Sephardic Kehila Centre in 1997, Train emphasizes the complexities of racialization within groups whose boundaries are often elided. After establishing the unique identity of Sephardic Jews, she explores the fascinating process whereby their virtual sense of racialized community becomes materialized in the gathering place of the Kehila Centre. Being able to claim a racialized space of their own not only positively supports the Sephardic community, but also acts as a challenge to hegemonic notions of a (primarily Ashkenazi) Jewish identity.

The chapter by Cathy van Ingen is a case study in which the development of a casino on First Nations' land leads to complications due to its status as a racialized space in the eyes of Edmonton residents and city officials. Discourses of race inform debates over the casino, and paint it as threatening and uncontrolled next to the safe and regulated (white) city suburbs. The bureaucratic problems which arise from this development highlight the oral geographies in Edmonton, which mark First Nations land as outside the city, even while the bordering (white) municipalities of St. Albert and Sherwood Park remain within it.

Leeno Luke Karumanchery considers the experience of racial trauma, using excerpts from childhood narratives to illustrate how instances of racism can make the everyday spaces of schools and daycares traumatic. Though these spaces are often represented as being open and racially neutral, the narratives illustrate how everyday interactions can be touched by a banal type of racism, found in racially-based taunts on the schoolyard and declarations that a student's bad behavior is a logical result of her race, that transforms them into unsafe spaces for racial minorities. Racial trauma, Karumanchery concludes, is more spatially widespread and pervasive than the frame of many academic studies indicates.

The strongest contributions to this discussion of racialization and space come from Anastasia N. Panagakos, Awad Ibrahim, and Jenny Burman. All three specifically address the complexities that exist within the heterogeneous groups and multiple spaces that are involved in processes of racialization.

Panagakos considers the way a Greek community in Calgary creates a distinct space of "Greektown" that is marked by generational differences. The various generations within this community are shown to interact very differently with mundane spaces such as kitchens, with global networks of

ethnic kin, and with each other. As a result, Panagakos argues that though they are all part of a distinct racial community and space, the heterogeneity of this Greek community results in unique processes of racialization and unique relationships to space, even within the confines of “Greektown.”

The complex negotiation of global spaces is also a concern for Ibrahim, who considers how the Black bodies of young Francophone Canadians are situated within both local and global spaces and cultures. Drawing on the concepts of cultural hybridity and third spaces, Ibrahim argues that these youths are not only connected to French Canadian culture, but also identify with the cultural spaces hailed by their Black bodies. He thus considers how they perform Blackness, and suggests that their performances are identity work that is centrally spatial. Racialization, he concludes, is grounded in individual bodies placed at the intersection of cultures.

Burman’s chapter ties racialization to issues of mobility. Using an understanding of global subjects who are tied to multiple communities and spaces across the world, she argues that Toronto is not a refuge for immigrants, but a “diasporic city” for Afro-Caribbean communities. The individuals in this community are connected to many global spaces, and Burman argues that these connections affect, and therefore must be central to examinations of, the space of Toronto. Diasporic connections to previous homes, spaces, and cultural celebrations are shown to have an impact on Toronto’s landscape through public events such as Caribana and personal negotiations of what kind of home Toronto is in comparison to other ethnic or cultural homes. Any study of racialization, Burman suggests, must take into consideration both the interaction of multiple spaces and the mobility of people, goods, and ideas that converge within particular spaces. Her contribution highlights the affect of epistemological stances on conceptualizations of space, and calls for more work that highlights the interaction of global spaces within processes of racialization.

Though the contributors offer significant insights into how racialized space is produced, reproduced, and contested within different communities, the consideration Panagakos, Ibrahim, and Burman give to global networks of space and the complexities of transnational communities might make readers aware of the limitations of other contributions. Many stick rigorously to a limited and local scale of analysis, thereby neglecting the affect of global interactions and transnational negotiations on local spaces and relationships. Although an understanding of local processes is important, racialization is connected to communities and spaces worldwide. The global scale of mobilities and cultural connections has the potential to affect Canadian spaces in marked ways. Therefore, the interaction between international and national spaces should be acknowledged even within studies focused primarily on a smaller scale. The chapters that discuss symbolic contestations of racialized space in literature and mass media would especially benefit from being situated within, or being considered against, wider communities and other texts. Doing so would give more prominence to the influence of globally-connected discourses and actors.

This collection would have been enhanced by a concluding summary addressing the connections and theoretical implications of the diverse chapters. The claims Teelucksingh makes in her introduction about the political importance of space are not addressed directly in many of the essays. Power certainly is a crucial issue. The contributors attribute it to both individual and institutional actors. More attention should be devoted to considering the power of different actors to claim and to racialize space. If the racialization of space can be imposed both by state policies and media representations, as well as actively used by individuals to solidify identity claims within groups, then attention must be turned to where these enactments of power come into conflict.

Despite some limitations, this collection includes several outstanding contributions, and would prove a useful text for introducing the role of space within ethnic communities, discourses of race, and transnational identities and networks. Individual articles address issues of race within psychology, policy, media, diasporas, sexuality, literature, and epistemologies, and demonstrate multiple ways in which to consider and address space. Undergraduate and graduate students in ethnic studies, cultural studies, geography, sociology, psychology, and urban studies will find this text a useful resource.

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