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Reimagining Home in the 21st Century

Edited by Justine Lloys and Ellie Vasta

Chektenham: Edward Elgar, 2015, ISBN 978-1-78643-292-6 (cased)

Justine Lloyd and Ellie Vasta's edited book aims to unsettle "traditional, convenient and stereotypical notions of 'home'" (p. 5) by looking at practices of home-making and belonging within unconventional private and public, physical and discursive spaces, and through the materiality of objects and the evocative memory of senses. By depicting the intrinsic (and unequal) contradictions between freedom and belonging in the commodified places of liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), the book's message is overall disheartening. It unsettles, thus fulfilling the editors' declared intent.

The book is loosely organized into four parts: the first two focus on 'home-making and belonging', the last two on 'homeliness/unhomeliness'. A theoretical seam linking the book's 15 chapters is the figure of the stranger and homecomer within geographies of mobility, flow and hyper-change—ideas developed in reference to Schutz (1945), Simmel (2005), Urry (2000) and others. These concepts are employed in order to reflect on home and identity in late modernity (chapters 2, 10, 14, 15), to understand the making of transnational or mobile homes (chapters 4, 6, 13) and the formation of a sense of belonging to, or exclusion from, the public space by migrants (chapters 3, 9, 12) and other disadvantaged groups (chapters 5, 7, 8 and 11).

All chapters construct persuasive theoretical and empirical arguments. I was particularly attracted by Norbert Elbert's theoretical discussion of home and identity in the context of new precarities brought about by the conditions of hyper-differentiation and multiple lifeworlds of late modernity (chapter 2); by Ann Deslands and Justine Humphry's attentive reading of the meanings, practices and the regulation of publicness in prime public

space in Sydney (chapter 11); and by Ilaria Vanni Accarigi's receptive analysis of our sense of belonging through the story of objects (chapter 13). However, what makes this book brilliant is the entirety of its contributions, its interdisciplinary, and its critically-minded insights to home-making in late modernity. As contributions have an eclectic feel, the editors Justine Lloyd and Ellie Vasta's introduction (chapter 1) provides a much welcome conceptual and thematic thread, helping the reader to absorb the book's diversity. A concluding chapter would have been equally appreciated for helping the reader complete the book's thematic jigsaw.

Why is this book unsettling, particularly for a housing scholar endorsing that everyone's right to a home is indisputable? It is not because it disconnects 'home' from 'house' or for highlighting home's critical contradictions and exclusions—this has been previously done—but because it emphasises the multiple and overlapping spaces of exclusion and inequality along the private-public spatial continuum where homes-making is being performed, understood and appropriated. The consequences of inequality are particularly apparent in Sarah Redshaw's view of mobile homes, a lifestyle choice for adventurous backpackers but a space of last resort for homeless car sleepers (chapter 6, see also Evelyn Honeywill's chapter 10 on home as a digital 'hub'). There are plenty of indications throughout the book that those lacking an adequate private realm of home are also excluded from the actual or discursive public spaces of the city and/or nation (see Ellie Vista's chapter 3 on Australian migrants and Yasmine Musharbask's chapter 10 on the Warlpiri's mistreatment by historic housing policy). And yet, there is hope, as we learn particularly from Martina Giuffre's account of Cape Verdian migrant women who have successfully built their transnational homes (chapter 4) and Aleksandra Alund, Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Lisa Kings' account of Swedish youth mobilizing to obtain their right to the city (chapter 9).

By its theoretical contributions and empirical focus on practices, materialities and senses, *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century* will interest any student, scholar and practitioner in the field of anthropology, cultural studies, housing studies, human geography and sociology. But the relevance of this book is greater than that. By employing the metaphor of home to practices of home-making *within* and *outside* the space of a dwelling, this collection documents the problematic negotiation of home-making and belonging in a neoliberal regime of late modernity where multiple lifeworlds are politically and socially normalized only through consumption (Bauman, 2000), with important implications for policy makers and policy scholars. Indeed, our sense of belonging, of feeling at home has never been more challenged and yet more essential than in this world where new precarities are being fashioned through ever more flexible labour markets and policies of austerity and when new walls to keep the strangers out are being imagined, including those of Brexit and Trump's Mexican border-wall.

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