

**Burley, David G., and Mike Maunder. *Living on Furby: Narratives of Home, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1880–2005*. Winnipeg: The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 2008. Pp. 155. Illustrations, photographs, maps**

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Downtowns, Past and Present

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infectieuses, au XIXe siècle, dont l'une des plus importantes est certes la construction d'un réseau d'égouts, vu comme moyen par excellence d'éliminer les eaux stagnantes et autres marais nauséabonds. Il est peu question également de la révolution médicale qui s'opère dans les années 1880 et qui relègue les miasmes aux oubliettes au profit d'un nouveau paradigme, la théorie bactériologique. Par ailleurs, il n'est pas non plus question de la mise en place d'un système général d'adduction d'eau pour la ville de Rome. Celui-ci entraîne toujours la prolifération des water-closets et une augmentation vertigineuse du volume des eaux usées rejetées dans les égouts. Quand l'auteur se pose la question de savoir pourquoi il faut attendre la fin des années 1870 pour trouver dans les archives le début d'une étude d'ensemble sur les égouts, sa réponse est la suivante : la forte croissante démographique de la ville qui sature un réseau archaïque et, bien sûr, l'objectif d'affirmer, par la promotion d'une vision d'ensemble, la compétence des services de la mairie dans ce domaine. Or, il est beaucoup plus probable que la généralisation des W.C. et la montée de nouveaux experts, médecins hygiénistes et ingénieurs sanitaires, aient beaucoup plus concouru à placer la construction d'un système général d'assainissement au rang de priorité dans l'agenda des services techniques municipaux.

Ces quelques remarques ne devraient pas faire oublier que *Rome ville technique* constitue un apport singulier et remarquable à l'historiographie et qu'il faut saluer la parution de cet excellent ouvrage.

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**Burley, David G., and Mike Maunder. *Living on Furby: Narratives of Home, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1880–2005*. Winnipeg: The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, 2008. Pp. 155. Illustrations, photographs, maps.**

The historical trajectories of inner city residential neighbourhoods have been the subject of academic investigation and public policy formation since the interwar period (in the United States) of the last century. Since the 1960s greater sensitivity to the housing needs and uses of class- and ethnically-differentiated groups, and the structural diversity of households has gained ground in both fields in Canada and the USA. *Living on Furby* exemplifies this trend by attempting to analytically link experiences of home and the structural development of inner city Winnipeg by examining the trajectory of a single residential block between Broadway and Portage Ave.

As the product of a collaboration between an academic historian (Burley) and a journalist (Maunder) with ties to a non-profit housing society in West Broadway (the area around Furby Street), the book is a reflective moment in a revitalization project (rehabilitating housing for a mix of tenants, and integration through community services and activism) that it documents in its final chapter. Stretching from its settlement between the

1880s and 1910s by respectable middle class Anglo-Canadian families (as owners and tenants), the book follows the block through a transition to lower middle class rooming houses in the interwar period, a postwar revitalization linked to immigrant home ownership that was often enabled by boarding, and its gradual physical decline through absentee landlordism as the neighbourhood was transformed by socio-economic adjustments and the migration of poor, and particularly Aboriginal, groups to the wider area.

A significant contribution of the study is to show how demographic change and family lifecycles bear upon neighbourhood transition. Without the appearance of a coherent group willing to take possession of properties and adapt the lines of their household to fit the physical characteristics of the houses, disinvestment ensued from the 1920s through to the 1940s because of 'the waning interest of owners in maintaining the residential character of the neighbourhood' (38). The children of the post-war owners often formed roots elsewhere, in a sense enabled in their class mobility (or status maintenance) by their parents' choices, and these owners or the investment companies that replaced them did not sustain the networks of sociability and surveillance work of an earlier time.

The book draws upon a variety of sources (newspapers, directories, assessment records, interviews, written accounts, court documents) not just to reconstruct the block's characteristics over time, but to reveal how the lifecycles of houses intersect with personal life stories. The narratives of home constructed about residents of Furby street involve taking the concept of home as an accumulation of expectations and experiences of domestic life, so that Furby becomes a setting for realizing home and creating new traces carried forward when residents leave the block. In the early chapters of the book, insights concerning the historically specific constructions of home come in the form of suggestive facts such as the prevalence of tenancy among upper middle class families, and the acceptability of roomers as the departure of children left space available in the family home. In the post-war period, the sources allow far more substance for the discussion: a particular sense of home is linked to routines of gendered domestic labour and the familiar interactions and surveillance of tenants and the neighbourhood. The capacity of roomers to enact home life are shown to depend upon their interaction with the space, other tenants and their landlord or caretaker. The constructed narratives of home reflect on how residents managed their safety, how a porch could enable Aboriginal people to gather in extended kin patterns, the availability of sociability as part of a 'party' culture and related demands for intervention to limit its disruptions, or finally, how some made the most of being left alone. The revitalization chapter suggests ways in which tenants altered their behaviour with consequences for their sense of home when institutional supports appeared. They often unfurled practices of making a home that were limited when a rough and often violent environment seemed to prevail.

The book includes significant material on how diverse residents have made homes out of varied social, cultural and physical

circumstances and how those experiences played in their lives. As concerns the policy implications identified in the book, the work will help direct greater attention to enabling diverse groups to achieve a sense of home. The text flows smoothly into several policy discussions (merit of forms of tenure, fate of displaced 'inferior' tenants during revitalization) on the basis of the book's overall analytical approach. This involves treating actors as seeking through strategies to realize *concepts* of home. The project's dimensions and interest in sustaining policy touch-points recommend this approach but it displaces an historiographical preoccupation with understanding by what processes home was realized. Nevertheless, the book contains passages (especially in the chapters on postwar 'Rooming Homes' and 'Aboriginal Experiences') that raise the issue of the *practical* realization of home via gendered routines particular to classes and community groups. Knowledge of the latter is critically important for understanding how different groups have influenced and benefitted from housing institutions and policies. *Living on Furby* contributes to our knowledge of neighbourhood transition and suggests new directions for research by presenting evidence of the varied conceptual and practical resources used to realize home in a Canadian city in the last century.

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**Leloup, Xavier and Martha Radice, eds. *Les nouveaux territoires de l'ethnicité*. Québec, Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2008. 286 p.**

As a specialist in Canadian immigration history, I read *Les nouveaux territoires de l'ethnicité* with great pleasure, thankful for an academic study of central issues surrounding diversity, rooted in a Quebecois context, yet with an international outlook. Doing justice to its title, the eleven contributions effectively demonstrate the fundamental link between territory, conceptualized as a social, political and economic space, and ethnicity, ultimately moving away from traditional understandings of both concepts. In an introductory essay, Xavier Leloup and Martha Radice outline the rapid changes that contemporary cities have undergone in recent years, due to increased mobility, immigration and new technologies, rendering the notion of the "city-mosaic", where neighborhoods are nearly ethnically homogeneous and spatially contained, extinct. In light of these transformations, as the editors maintain, the relationship between space and ethnicity needs to be re-visited.

Indicative of its conceptual framework, the essays in *Les nouveaux territoires de l'ethnicité* stress the relational character of ethnicity, the product of the relations between groups or more specifically, between a majority and minority group or else between two or multiple minority groups. Deidre Meintel and Josiane Le Gall provide an interesting comparison of mixed couples in and outside of the metropolis, underlining the effects of the couples' milieu on the intergenerational transmission of identities. Highlighting the importance of biculturalism, versus

cosmopolitanism, in the parental projects of the couples living in the nearly ethnically homogeneous countryside, the authors point to the significant role played by the non-Quebecois' country of origin. Returning often and maintaining close links with the foreign-born partners' family, Meintel and Le Gall assert that these mixed couples have adopted a transnational way of living. Undoubtedly, trans-nationalism is re-defining the relationship between ethnicity and territory in the twenty-first century, an overriding theme in many of the essays.

The editors assert in their introduction that the seemingly natural link between territory and nation, neighborhood and community, region and local costume can no longer be taken for granted. Aptly illustrating this hypothesis, Nevena Mitropolitska examines the role played by the online discussion board used by potential Bulgarian immigrants to Canada. Initially utilized to "decode" Canadian society, the social links created between members later served as a springboard for more tangible forms of mutual assistance and, in some cases, a common neighborhood. Thus, this "emancipated community" does not proceed by official bureaucratic channels when seeking aid. In fact, social and transnational networks, as Michele Latz Laaroussi maintains in her chapter on immigration to the Quebecois hinterland, can undermine and even conflict with local geographical, administrative and political spaces. For example, when the regions outside of Montreal readily accepted immigrants to replenish their depleted workforce, many, such as those from the former Yugoslavia, left for Hamilton and London, joining their long-established counterparts and family members in Ontario. Indeed, immigrant networks, as one can discern from many of the essays in this collection, challenge scholars to call into question the role of Nation-State, especially with regards to its control over its territory.

In an era of increasing globalization, as Cecile Poirier specifies in her essay addressing immigrant neighborhoods, the city is a point of reference, both administrative and symbolic, in the construction of community. Hence, the social and economic integration of immigrants is viewed as a key function of the neighborhood. However, due to increased mobility, even at the local level, this notion has been called into question. For instance, Josiane Le Gall and Christelle Cassan's study of immigrant men in relation to Montreal's health services reveals their "nomadic" approach, where the men are willing and able to go anywhere in the city to receive care. Thus, as Le Gall and Cassan's essay confirms, the neighborhood, to borrow the words of Poirier, is the "trampoline" used to access the rest of the city, no longer serving all of an individual's needs, as in the days of the "city-mosaic". The relationship between immigrants and their neighborhoods is, therefore, considerably more complex than popular discourse suggests.

Published shortly after the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, *Les nouveaux territoires de l'ethnicité* also aims to contradict common misconceptions held by the general public. For instance, instead of viewing ethnic enclaves as a sign of poor integration, Nong Zhu and Said Aboubacar maintain that, in some cases,