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Book Review

Lloyd, Justine and Ellie Vasta, (eds.). 2017. *Reimagining Home in the 21st Century*. Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing

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The book edited by two Australian scientists from the Macquarie University is based on the themed workshop organized in September 2013 in Sydney. The majority of seventeen authors of the chapters come from Australian sociological and anthropological environments, what opens for me, as a European scientist, an interesting insight into the patterns of conceptualizing home and the very problems connected with it in Australian circumstances.

The title of the monograph suggests the study on dwelling and/or housing. However, the content oscillates between some general statements about the contemporary human condition and a quite specific construction of sleeping equipment of Warlpiri people. In fact, the book does not concentrate (only) on home and homeliness but rather enlarges the meaning of home to the whole national/public sphere. As Pauline Hanson, the populist and anti-migration Australian politician, expressed, “if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say who comes into my country” (Chapter 8:124). With this extended definition of home as an urban space, cars, and public transportation on the one

hand, and such non-material phenomena like nation, feeling of belonging, experiencing homeliness or un-homeliness, practicing homelessness, on the other, the editors propose a very broad overview opening various questions and approaches.

The starting point for the editors is the statement that

home can no longer be seen as a purely self-sufficient concept and place, as it is indeed these external pressures that make us feel we are at home or not at home... At the same time, many people are struggling collectively to imagine new ways of being at home against these hegemonic visions of home... In this book we question the very possibility in the 21st century of any concept of a singular and self-sufficient home. The changes to our understanding of home have been as profuse as they are diverse. [Chapter 1:1-3]

This approach results, as mentioned before, with a quite heterogenic collection highlighting different aspects using innovative prospects. However, the editors have constructed a theoretical framework to connect all these contributions under the concept of *agency*. They

do not explain this proposal more deeply, but as far as I understand, this key concept is based on the practice perspective, includes identity processes, and evokes connections with migration, transnationality, homelessness, gender, alternative styles of living (like in a car), reinterpreting the patterns of traditional, ethnic ways of dwelling, et cetera. "The construction of home and belonging is a subjective phenomenon concerned with self-identities and attitudes, as well as a structural phenomenon that transforms objective biographies and life situations. Thus, it is a productive process, embedded in change that entails 'an interchange between the self and structure' (Rutherford 1990)" (Chapter 1:6). The intermediation between the structural and individual levels reminds me of the theory of structuration by Anthony Giddens (1984) and his struggles to elaborate the mechanism of the mutual interdependency between individual actors and the reproduction of structure. So I find the theoretical proposal of the editors in this phase rather general and I am excited how it will be developed in further publications.

Nevertheless, the editors divide the monograph into four parts according to four key aspects of home: "firstly, the figure of the stranger; secondly, practices of dwelling; thirdly, conditions of homeliness and unhomeliness interwoven into public domains; and, fourthly, the materialities that choreograph our senses of home" (Chapter 1:8). Two of those four parts are rather dedicated to the public sphere (*the Stranger and Publicness*), according to the clearly explicated thesis about the unsettled, mixed nature of the private and the public in the contemporary world (Sennett 1977; Habermas 1990; Honeywill [Chapter 10:150-164]). The articles included in these two parts concentrate mostly on migration processes, as well as the treating of mi-

grants (strangers) in society. In this context, I would like to mention the contribution by Aleksandra Ålund, Carl-Ulrik Schierup, and Lisa Kings about the young people and urban unrest in multi-ethnic Sweden. The authors investigated Wallachian people from Serbia searching for jobs in Sweden and Denmark during the 1970s and 1980s, and followed the sons and daughters of those migrants in the 1990s and 2000s. They claim that the second generation of the migrants experience in metropolitan Stockholm social exclusion, stigmatization, discrimination, and residential segregation, which results in frustration and dramatic riots in Swedish suburbs, but also with alternative movements struggling for ethnic justice and equal opportunities. The home can be understood in this case as a feeling of belonging in the society, *hemmastadiggörande*.

The second and the third part of this book concentrate on specific practices of dwelling, senses, and material anchors of feeling at home. I admire the very inspiring proposal by Adam Stebbing (Chapter 7:102-118) referring to homelessness. The author elaborates the problem of homelessness in terms of dwelling providing theoretical framework which has been used in further interviews with homeless people. Stebbing argues that homelessness is a form of dwelling connected with both inadequate housing and feeling/no feeling at home (lack of privacy, instability, insecurity, police harassment, etc.). His approach connects the subjective and the objective meaning of homelessness and opens a possibility for empirical searches.

The fourth part of the monograph, consisting of four contributions, relates to material objects and its arrangements composing the specific order of senses and the self-identity of the tenants. These chapters re-

fer closely to the sociology of dwelling (Jewdokimow and Łukasiuk 2014), as well as open detailed problems like, for example, the contemporary masculinity (performed in so-called “man caves” equipped with assemblages of cars and car parts, motorcycles, gym and musical equipment, weapons, alcohol paraphernalia, games, etc.) or the post-modernistic, convivial function of kitchen.

The concept organizing the monograph, as mentioned before, searches for new phenomena constructing contemporary agency referring to home and, at the same time, elaborates theoretical terms catching it. The latter start, in many cases, from classical conceptions by Martin Heidegger (1971), Georg Simmel (1950), Erv-

ing Goffman (1959), and develop creatively, according to the problems described. Some of the chapters are based on very few cases (3-4 interviews), what surprised me at the beginning, until I connected this methodology with the general purpose of detecting and reconstructing the future, re-imagined meaning of home. As I argued a few years ago (Łukasiuk 2009), migrations evoke alternative and future stages of culture; in other words, in migration processes, we can observe social practices and beliefs which probably (some of them) will grow in society in the future. The authors of this monograph constructed their proposals based on migration, but also another social phenomena existing today in niches, however, they could indicate the image of home in the 21st century.

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