

**Suzanne M. Hall**

**Book review: Gareth Millington 2011: 'race', culture and the right to the city: centres, peripheries, margins. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan**

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**Gareth Millington (2011) *'Race', Culture and the Right to the City: Centres, Peripheries, Margins*, Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke and New York.**

A book review by Suzanne M. Hall

Gareth Millington's book *'Race', Culture and the Right to the City*, delivers an important comparative account of the historic transformation of urban centres and peripheries in Paris, New York and London. Millington orientates his research around the emergence of the modern, western, capitalist city and its particular socio-spatial orders. This book spans the nineteenth-century cities of industrialization and class stratification evoked by Frederick Engels, to the gridded speculative city of the twentieth century with its segregated neighbourhoods characterized by Louis Wirth, to the re-intensification of centre-periphery hierarchies identified by Saskia Sassen under the rubric of the global city. The journey across time and space provides Millington with the lens for exploring how race and the city intersect over a century and a half of capitalist urbanization.

Millington selects Paris, New York and London not only as centres of western modernity and contemporary global status, but also as suitably comparative cities through which to pursue both urban theory and theories of race. The book is arranged in two parts: the first is an historic trace of nineteenth-century processes of urbanization culminating in the urban renewal projects of the 1960s; the second focuses on the 'empty prosperity' yielded by the radical restructuring of the economy from a manufacturing to services-oriented base. The two primary book sections allow Millington to reveal important differences in the arrangement of urban inequalities across different geographies and temporalities. The sections also allow for analytic reflection from the present back to the past to consider how certain spatial hierarchies of the inner and outer city support classed and racialized divisions.

In Part One, Millington explores the organization of power in urban space, starting with the distribution of resources and labour in the nineteenth-century metropolis. This section is indebted to Lefebvre's theory of the production of space (1991), and the theoretical iteration of production as 'a material, mental and lived process' (p. 5). Millington's contribution is to

articulate the urban structures, forms and psychologies of intense concentrations of people in the burgeoning centres of London, Paris and New York. We get a sense of the collisions of social diversity in an expanding Victorian London with the emergence of intensely hierarchical systems of classification advocated by moral and scientific curiosities (Charles Booth and Henry Mayhew), and paralleled with the emergence of Charles Darwin's theories of evolution and Herbert Spencer's ideas of social selection or 'social Darwinism' (p.31). Millington weaves together the Victorian fascination with social 'degeneration' to consider new forms of spatial control, and new measures of classification and relegation: through Charles Booth's large-scale social taxonomy of urban grain; Jeremy Bentham's invention of the workhouse as a means of locking in and profiting from the poor; and Samuel Barnett and Alfred Marshall's propositions to disperse the urban degenerates beyond cities to the colonies.

Millington adopts a similar archival strategy for New York and Paris. We learn about the ethnically diverse and dense congestion of Lower Manhattan in the late nineteenth century, where half of Manhattan's population lived in overcrowded tenements without basic services. We learn too about urban land values and the role of slum landlords in inculcating and maintaining racial divides. During the same era Paris was also populated by significant numbers of migrant groups, but was simultaneously refining an aesthetic and administrative self-consciousness around how the city's urban concentrations should be analysed and governed. Paris' migrants were made peripheral to the city: both through moving the masses out to the edges, and in omitting details of religion, origin and language in the census. An historic understanding of the presence of ethnically diverse groups in the formation of a Parisian metropolis was thereby eradicated.

Part Two orientates around the radical restructuring of London, New York and Paris from the 1980s and focuses on patterns of 'dispersal, gentrification and securitisation' (p.116). Millington explores how urban disparities of income and access to urban space and infrastructure become more polarised, alongside ideas of cosmopolitan convergence, collective futures and social solidarities. The question raised is 'what is a cosmopolis?' (p.113): what kinds of imaginations and spaces might accommodate difference, recognition and belonging? The question is set against the heinous realities of increasing disparity and displacement of 'others' with new legitimations for marginalizing an urban underclass broadly encapsulated by welfare scroungers, asylum seekers and immigrants.

Millington has provided a necessary historic trace of a modern shift of urban 'self-awareness' or thinking 'in metropolitan terms' (p.56) and the comparison of three cities opens up questions of how political emphases, economic production and speculative orientation are manifest in the divisions of urban form and urban populace. Millington has effectively captured the shifting urban temperament of modern London, New York and Paris and has drawn his account of systematic urban marginalization through the claims of urban and social theorists, and renowned thinkers of their time and place. It is a zeitgeist effectively portrayed through authoritative accounts. Less visible in this Lefebvrian analysis are those who inhabit the city, and an understanding of individual and collective experiences in the formation of urban centres and peripheries. Nonetheless, Millington is able to address the question that remains at the forefront of urban concern today: What urban future do we collectively face, should the divisions of race and class be further advanced in the structure and life of the city?

Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space*. Translated by D. Nicholson-Smith, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.

SUZANNE M. HALL

LSE Cities, Department of Sociology

London School of Economics and Political Science

s.m.hall@lse.ac.uk