

## BOOK REVIEW

***Home/Bodies: Geographies of Self, Place and Space.*** Wendy Schissel, ed. Calgary, Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2006; appendices; ISBN 10: 1-55238-184-6; \$34.95 (paper).

*Home/Bodies* is an engaging collection of eleven essays that provide an interdisciplinary examination of the meanings and desires embedded in conceptions of home, body and identity. The book grew out of a conference, "The Lived Environment of Girls and Women," held in July 2001 at the Women's Studies Research Unit of the University of Saskatchewan. The papers are divided thematically into three sections—home(s)/bodies that we know, that we imagine, and that we strive to find—Compound Fractures, Ruptured Sutures and Habitats for/of Humanity.

*Home/Bodies* forges new ground by recognizing and reflecting on the power dynamics within relationships, identity struggles and spaces, as well as efforting to challenge and reframe them. For example, Morrison's article on friendships between First Nations, Métis, and other Canadian older women interrogates the strengths and challenges of intercultural relations. The use of "other" for non-Aboriginal women was an intentional effort to address power relations by recasting the dominant as "other." In Williams' piece on home care, Williams states that the home is characterized as a therapeutic place for those who are ill and/or dying, but questions how this same place is experienced by the family member(s) who perform the care. Williams expands conceptions of home by analysing the various overlapping meanings—from personal sanctuary to place of loss and grief—of the site of care work. Finally, Goodwin et al's discussion of a dance troupe with mobility impairments challenges processes of normalization which construct and categorize bodies as able-bodied/dancer and disabled/non-dancer. By assertively claiming the identity "dancer" and refusing to perform token dance performances, the dancers shift notions of "disablement" from their bodies onto social attitudes and structures.

The undefined and at times essentialist use of "women" in a few of the articles signals the need for positionality of both researchers and participants. In some of the papers a discussion of how race, class, sexuality and ability interact with gender is sorely missing. By not stating *which* women are being discussed, the marginalization of particular groups of women is reinforced as is the continued dominance, yet invisible status of, white, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual women's standpoints. The number of non-Aboriginal women of colour and Métis

women in the conference group is limited, suggesting the need to consider how factors such as immigration might affect intercultural network.

*Home/Bodies* is accessible and appealing to a wide audience, covering issues from female Muslim identities to women connected to the forestry industry to young women's sexual health. Greater theoretical analysis would enrich the context and framing of individual papers as well as that of the collection. This book does, however, provide thought provoking discussions of the concepts of home and body. The significance of these concepts is demonstrated not only through the theorizing of different meanings and uses of the terms, but by their grounding in various women's experiences. As the reader you are granted entrance into homes and bodies other than your own, you are asked to take up residence in new and imagined places that change how you think and feel about home/bodies. Home and body fold into one another and function like a Mobius Strip; body as home and home as body. Ruby and Pederson explore the interaction between socio-historical constructions of body and place that impede young Muslim females and Aboriginal women respectively from embodying a sense of home. Dreschler's article on transgendered perspectives and Goodwin et al's paper on the dance troupe shed light on the struggle and desire involved in asserting one's body as home. This collection makes an important contribution to Women's Studies as well as more broadly to efforts at recognizing the social structures and experiences affecting one's ability to feel embodied and at home.

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