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New Geographies of Racism

Canadian Urbanization, the Biopolitical, and Racial Capitalism

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REVIEW ESSAY / NOTE CRITIQUE

New Geographies of Racism: Canadian Urbanization, the Biopolitical, and Racial Capitalism

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Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen, eds., *Indigenous in the City: Contemporary Identities and Cultural Innovation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013)

Ted Rutland, *Displacing Blackness: Planning, Power, and Race in Twentieth-Century Halifax* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018)

Owen Toews, *Stolen City: Racial Capitalism and the Making of Winnipeg* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2018)

James Tyner, *Dead Labor: Toward a Political Economy of Premature Death* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019)

MANY SELF-DESCRIBED CANADIAN urban studies scholars have placed limited importance on the role of racism in shaping Canadian urbanization. In many books, even critical ones, the term “racism” does not appear, the issue is treated as only marginally important, and/or race and racism are presented as synonymous with ethnicity and ethnocentric bigotry.¹ What is lost in these accounts is the central tenet that underpins contemporary scholarship on racism, which is that it is a hierarchical system of valuation that is historically

1. Examples include Trudi E. Bunting & Pierre Filion, eds., *Canadian Cities in Transition: The Twenty-First Century* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kent Gerecke, ed., *The Canadian City* (Vancouver: Black Rose Books, 1991); Michael Goldberg & John Mercer, *The Myth of the North American City: Continentalism Challenged* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986); Harry H. Hiller, ed., *Urban Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2009).

and geographically contingent. Moreover, they downplay the significant part that the devaluation of non-whites has played in the Canadian urban context. The presence of non-whites, for instance, even when limited, has had a substantial impact on shaping urban patterns and forms. Still, since the 1990s, some Canadian urban studies scholars have made admirable attempts to explicitly reveal how racism makes a difference.² It is in this latter group that three of the books under review – Evelyn Peters and Chris Andersen's edited collection, *Indigenous in the City*; Owen Toews' *Stolen City*; and Ted Rutland's *Displacing Blackness* – clearly belong. James Tyner's *Dead Labor* does not, but I have included it here because I believe its theoretical insights should inform future scholarship in the Canadian urban context. All of these books engage in new conceptual and empirical work on racism, and two streams of current research stand out as significant areas of overlap among the books. On the one hand, *Indigenous in the City*, *Stolen City*, and *Displacing Blackness* have an explicit concern for non-white Canadians, specifically urbanized Indigenous and Black Canadians. On the other hand, *Stolen City*, *Displacing Blackness*, and *Dead Labor* are guided by recent theoretical modes of political economic inquiry that could be called the biopolitical and/or racial capitalist frameworks.³

Indigenous in the City is an ambitious and valuable collection of chapters that explore a wide range of themes and issues related to Indigenous urbanization in a number of cities in four different Anglo settler-colonial countries in the Global North. It is, I believe, the first and most comprehensive collection of scholarship in this area. Those working on Indigenous urbanization in the Canadian context will certainly be familiar with the work of its two editors, Peters and Andersen. The collection certainly reflects their Canadian expertise and notoriety. Moreover, it is clear that their distinction afforded them the ability to assemble several noteworthy contributions from recognized scholars working in the four different national contexts explored in the collection: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. Each national context has three empirical chapters, except Canada, which has seven. The overrepresentation of Canadian cases, is probably a reflection of how the editors' regional expertise informed the book's architecture and genesis, but this does not diminish from the collection's more global importance. The

2. Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montréal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991); Jon Caulfield & Linda Peake, eds., *City Lives and City Forms: Critical Research and Canadian Urbanism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Nicholas K. Blomley, *Unsettling the City: Urban Land and the Politics of Property* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

3. For recent examples of these approaches in urban studies, see Anthony M. Levenda & Eliot Tretter, "The Environmentalization of Urban Entrepreneurialism: From Technopolis to Start-Up City," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 52, 3 (2020): 490–509; Laura Pulido, "Geographies of Race and Ethnicity II: Environmental Racism, Racial Capitalism and State-Sanctioned Violence," *Progress in Human Geography* 41, 4 (2017): 524–533.

editors do a commendable job at describing each national context by providing strong introductory sections that precede each regional collection of essays. Furthermore, the editors do make some laudable attempts to identify links that exceed these national divisions and overcome the book's Canada-centrism, especially in the conclusion. Given the context of this review essay, I will not dwell on individual contributions in book but instead restrict my comments to the collection's broader aspects.

As the title suggests, *Indigenous in the City* is about how the process of urbanization recursively transforms Indigenous identities and ways of life. The book is admirable for the attention it brings to the particularities of Indigenous urbanization, certainly a vastly understudied and underappreciated topic. The essays reveal how issues that confront other non-white and/or underprivileged communities (such as racism, classism, bigotry, educational inequality, gentrification, and suburbanization) may not be simply transposed onto Indigenous peoples and their relationships to contemporary urbanization. In particular, the collection makes a significant contribution to urban studies by highlighting the perseverance and continued insidious work done, across the range of these Anglo-urban national contexts, by the conceptual parryings around the Settler/Indigenous binary: Indigenous qua rural/uncivilized/primitive versus Settler qua urban/civilized/modern. Conceptually, these constellations foreclose even the possibility of the "Indigenous urbanite," and most authors in the collection demonstrate why these terms must be decoupled from one another. Empirically, the experience of urbanized Indigenous people exceeds the strictures this conceptual duality imposes on their identities. Theoretically, the collection attests to the untenability within most academic scholarship in urban studies of locating Indigenous people as out of place in the urban context. In fact, among urban studies scholars the presence of Indigenous people in cities has rarely been front and centre, and for the most part, the Indigenous peoples remain invisible and are treated as a marginal population that is largely irrelevant to the production of most urban spaces in these national contexts. Yet, as the authors show, this is not the case. Indigenous peoples have long been present in these urban spaces, and in many cases it was their forced removal and exclusion from settler spaces that resulted in their de-urbanization. Moreover, as the authors in this collection do a marvellous job revealing, contemporary Indigeneity has been significantly shaped and altered, especially regionally, by urbanization. In both respects, therefore, the collection does valuable work in resituating Indigenous communities as central parts of contemporary urbanization in the Anglo-urban Global North and in unsettling the settlerism at the centre of modern urban theory.

Still, I was puzzled by two issues in the organization of *Indigenous in the City*. Why was the contemporary nation-state taken as the best spatial frame for the essays? As far as I could tell, the reason for this architecture was neither stated nor justified. While nation-states have provided an important socio-spatial context, especially legally and militarily, that shaped the particularities

of Indigenous lives and livelihoods, it was not at all clear why this geopolitical organization was meaningful for the book. In particular, it was not evident how the national context was preeminent in informing the issues and differences in urbanization that influenced the production of Indigeneities described in the contributions. Instead, the local urban context receives much more attention in the book as the co-producer of these differences, leaving the reader wondering if, in fact, the national context mattered very much at all. Something more challenging I encountered was that the particularities of contemporary urbanization remain generally understated or not stated, especially in regard to Indigenous urbanization. Most authors note how Indigenous urbanization has distinct features in contemporary urbanization in the Global North. However, the distinctive features of contemporary urbanization are not ever explicated and are not connected to Indigenous urbanization. I kept wondering about the relationship between Indigenous urbanization and contemporary issues like transnationalism, financialization, planetary urbanization, sustainability, the gendered divisions of labour, and urbanism in the Global South – that is, processes that mark and define contemporary urbanization. Certainly, 21st-century cities share commonalities with their 20th-century counterparts, but they are also assuredly different. Although the essays in the book offer some suggestions as to how these processes may be influencing the patterns and processes of urban Indigeneity, little concerted effort was made to reflect on how the cases in Indigenous urbanization complicate our understanding of these contemporary urban issues.

Owen Toews' *Stolen City*, a case study of Winnipeg, also refocuses urban studies on the issue of Indigenous urbanization. Toews too is especially concerned with the unsettling work done by the conceptual binaries "Indigenous qua rural" and "Settler qua urban." However, he more explicitly makes an effort to draw on neo-Marxist scholarship in urban geography, especially that of David Harvey and Ruth Gilmore, and he tries to bring them into dialogue with Canadian literatures in Indigenous studies and settler colonialism.⁴ In particular, Toews takes key themes in the latter literatures such as land dispossession, the racial capitalist mode of accumulation, and settler-colonial domination, which are mostly applied to more rural contexts, and reapplies them to an urban context, using them to reinterpret the processes of industrialization, urban renewal, gentrification, and suburbanization in Canada.

Winnipeg is Manitoba's capital but is also known, as Toews emphasizes, as Canada's "Native city." Today it contains the largest official Indigenous urban population of any Canadian city, in terms of both the absolute and relative share of its population. Despite this widespread multicultural reputation, Toews suggests that the city's long history of anti-Indigenous racism remains and is revealed in how Indigenous communities remain undervalued there and are elided in many of the city's official programs and presentations. The

4. David Harvey was my graduate advisor at Johns Hopkins University.

book is divided into two parts, each with four empirical chapters. The first part attempts to set up what the author calls the four visions of Winnipeg: agricultural, industrial, suburban, and new urban. Each of these visions has a dominant, settler-colonial account and a counterhegemonic, Indigenous version. The second half dwells on the city's current urban development and focuses on four case studies. These chapters rely on and present much more original research. It is Toews' central contention in this section that the current redevelopment efforts, explicitly or implicitly, recapitulate and re-inscribe anti-Indigenous racism and promulgate racial injustices and socioeconomic disparities for Winnipeg's Indigenous communities.

To Canadian audiences, much of the general outlines of the story that Toews recounts in the early parts of the book will be familiar, and those unfamiliar can easily learn about them, so I will not repeat them in detail here; instead, I will focus on where his retelling emphasizes the importance of urbanization. First, Toews suggests that the multiracial settler-Indigenous coalition involved in both of the 19th-century regional uprisings – the Red River Resistance (1869–70) and North-West Rebellion (1885) – was built upon a longer history of local conflict with the British Empire in the 19th century as well as Winnipeg's urban autonomy within this colonial system. Second, Toews emphasizes how, following the crushing of the 1885 Rebellion, the imposition of a new white supremacist racial order over Winnipeg both physically and figuratively expelled Indigenous people from the city. Indigenous peoples were forced out of the city into isolated reserves or, later, into a neighbourhood called Rooster Town, and their presence was intentionally removed from the city's official records. Additionally, ecological imperialism served to efface traces of them not only from rural landscapes but also later from the urban landscape. Finally, by the 1870s an urban coalition had emerged – what Toews rather clumsily calls “Winnipeg's Dominant Bloc.” According to Toews, the bloc has perdured with relatively stable characteristics. It consists of a malleable constellation of local and extralocal powerbrokers whose interests unduly shaped the city's development during the 20th century.

Toews then argues that the white racial order and the interests of the dominant bloc were the two key factors that explain the patterns of social segregation created in Winnipeg by three successive urban transformations: industrialization, suburbanization, and reurbanization. In particular, he suggests that each change was characterized by the erasure of Indigenous peoples and the reinscription of white supremacy over non-whites. For Toews, the “revolutionary workers” involved in Winnipeg's 1919 general strike “remained silent while Indigenous peoples were ... sacrificed for the industrial agenda” (93). Moreover, Winnipeg's suburbanization was unique and should be “more accurately understood as the restructuring – rather than mere expansion – of human geographies [because] ... Winnipeg's postwar edges were home to a longstanding, unsanctioned, yet well-known Indigenous human geography” (113). Finally, during Winnipeg's reurbanization, the Indigenous communities

that moved back into the inner city in the 1950s were the targets of urban élites who had little concern, and who even had contempt, for their presence. In particular, urban renewal efforts in the 1960s and 1970s “renovated the concept of the unfit ‘Urban Indian’” and used it as a pretext for what Toews will later in the book call a “policy of Indian removal” (145, 239). Toews then argues that more recent urban redevelopment efforts, on which the last four chapters focus, continue to recapitulate these historically grounded, spatially organized processes, enacting programs and policies that regenerate racial and class inequalities and differences. To make his case, Toews focuses primarily on the private-public partnership CentreVenture, an urban revitalization effort designed to counteract the economic and physical decline of Winnipeg’s inner core. I will not dwell on the details of his cases here, but I will say that Toews’ critical reappraisal of CentreVenture provides a much-needed correction of this urban revitalization effort, which has been substantially praised by urban planning professionals and policymakers across Canada.⁵

Stolen City is a commendable attempt to popularize academic discussions about settler colonialism and urban political economy, but it is not always well executed. For instance, the prose does not sit well as either a well-developed academic account or a more activist one. At points, Toews writes about topics in technical academic language without much explanation or discussion, and I kept wondering if this would create a problem for readers who may not be well versed in these discourses. At other points, the polemic style of the prose, while captivating, leads Toews to make claims or draw conclusions that sometimes reach beyond what his evidence supports. For example, I was especially struck by the boldness of his claim that Winnipeg’s Unicity effort, a regional planning initiative that consolidated and amalgamated the municipality’s authority, resulted in Indigenous removal, because this assertion runs counter to the more widely cited progressive elements of regional planning in Canada.⁶ The veracity of Toews’ arguments is substantially undermined upon inspection. First, he relies almost exclusively on the singular case of Rooster Town. Second, his case is undercut by the misciting and misdating of some of his key sources in this section. He incorrectly cites Katherine McKittrick’s *Demonic Grounds*, which, as far as I could tell, offers no empirical support for Toews’ claims about Winnipeg and it is not the source of his quotes.⁷ My guess is that these references are in fact to *Rooster Town*, by Evelyn Peters,

5. Ray Tomalty, *Residential Intensification Case Studies: Municipal Initiatives* (Ottawa: CMHC, 2003).

6. “Our Planning Legacy/Notre Legs Urbanistique,” special issue, *Plan Canada* 45, 3 (2005); Byron Miller, “Sustainability Fix Meets Growth Machine: Attempting to Govern the Calgary Metropolitan Region,” in Roger Keil, Pierre Hamel, Julie-Anne Boudreau & Stefan Kipfer, eds., *Governing Cities through Regions: Canadian and European Perspectives* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016), 213–238.

7. Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner, because Toews' most important source of evidence, a statement from a Winnipeg "health inspector," is quoted verbatim in that book. But there are significant problems with how Toews handles this source. Toews writes, "In 1954, a Winnipeg health inspector described the *Indigenous outskirts* as a 'serious menace to the health and welfare of the city'" (114, emphases added). Yet, here is how it is presented in *Rooster Town*: "In ... 1944, ... Winnipeg's health officer argued to council that the widespread use of *outhouses* ... presented a 'serious menace to the health and welfare of the city.'"⁸ I could not find the source Toews refers to; given his other evident mistakes and based on the similarity between the two quotes, I am assuming it is the same source that is from 1944. If this is the case then Toews adjusted its publication by ten years, and this serves to amplify its historical connection to his other sources from the mid-1950s about Winnipeg's suburban restructuring. More importantly, he contends that this quote pertains to Winnipeg's "Indigenous outskirts," while Peters, Stock, and Werner claim it applies particularly to "outhouses." Again, Toews may have a different source, but if it is the same source as the one quoted in *Rooster Town* then Toews has substantially altered its meaning. Given the sourcing issues I have pointed out, I lack confidence in Toews' construal. I should say too that my trust was further eroded by his misleading reliance in this section on Becky M. Nicolaides and Andrew Wiese's edited collection *The Suburb Reader* – a book in which there is not a single reference to Winnipeg or Indigenous peoples in North America.⁹ In the end, it appeared to me that Toews' case is, in fact, thin and circumstantial. He offers no positive empirical evidence to support his contention and his case is weakened by numerous sourcing issues. I should say that I only delved this deeply into the notes in this section, but it substantially shook my confidence in the author's empirical evidence and I would not be surprised if others find similar sourcing issues in other sections. Still, despite these problems, I do think Toews' contention about the effects of the Unicity effort is provocative and laudable (even if largely speculative and unsupported). It does suggest there may be another way to interpret the regional planning effort in relation to urbanized Indigenous communities. Thus, it opens new spaces of inquiry and pushes urban studies scholars to reconsider inherited dogma and be more attentive to Indigenous issues when understanding Canadian urban governance.

Rutland's *Displacing Blackness* is also an effort to bring new scholarship on racism into a case study of Canadian urbanization. Focusing specifically on Halifax, a city that provides Rutland a salient example for his analysis because

8. Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock & Adrian Werner, *Rooster Town: The History of an Urban Métis Community, 1901–1961* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018), 91, emphasis added.

9. Becky M. Nicolaides & Andrew Wiese, eds., *The Suburb Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

it is a unique centre of Black Canadian communities, the book develops over six empirical chapters, situated chronologically, and is bookended by an introduction and conclusion. The methodological similarities between Toews' and Rutland's books are unmistakable. By focusing on "exceptional urban cases" of non-white communities in urban Canada, both, at least implicitly, criticize Canadian urban studies for generally overlooking racism as an influential process in the country's urbanization. Although the Indigenous and Black Canadian experiences are different, and one should be careful not to conflate the two into a more generic non-white Canadian experience, Toews and Rutland tell similar stories in that they show how these non-white communities, their lives, and their livelihoods were absent in the decision-making processes that determined urban planning priorities. Moreover, and perhaps more troubling, both books demonstrate how the presence of non-whites was a pretext for urban interventions that would have disastrous consequences for them. Both also emphasize the importance of non-white social movements in presenting alternative urban visions and effecting, although sometimes unsuccessfully, dominant urban planning priorities. Finally, both demonstrate how Canadian urban renewal, regional planning, and neoliberal urbanism have been racialized. The focus on urban renewal and regional planning initiatives I found particularly pleasing to see, because far too little Canadian scholarship has highlighted the non-white racism underpinning these planning efforts in Canada.

However, unlike Toews, Rutland does not align his arguments with research in neo-Marxist urban political economy of racial capitalism. Instead, he is critical of neo-Marxian interpretations and draws on Michel Foucault's work on the biopolitical. More specifically, Rutland draws on recent scholarship in Black studies that incorporates Foucault and focuses on how "Blackness" forms a normative limit within biopolitical projects. Rutland then situates this key idea within an urban context, contending that "Blackness" or "whiteness" were norms that shaped planning interventions in Halifax. Moreover, Rutland also shows how Foucault's genealogical reconstruction of neoliberalism aligns well with Rutland's account of Halifax's urban development and planning from Canadian progressivism to modernism to neoliberalism. Despite its historical focus, Rutland's book is clearly situated in and around contemporary urban studies, and his criticisms are mainly directed at planners and planning professional and their failure to see the racial limits or biases embedded within planning practices. However, I am certain the book will find appeal among a much wider audience, as many people will find it as remarkable as I did. For sure, Rutland is a well-established scholar, and *Displacing Blackness* seems to be the culmination of years of research, going back, it would appear, to his time as a doctoral student. It is an extraordinarily well executed study, equally as impressive empirically and theoretically, and his interpretations are both clever and penetrating. Rutland repeatedly shows how various attempts at reforming the (urban) environment in 20th-century Halifax were sutured

to an implicitly racialized white subject, which excluded, marginalized, and devalued Black Haligonians by rendering them and their concerns always pathological and outside of the normative centre's boundaries.

I will not attempt to summarize the contents of Rutland's chapters, but I will highlight what I thought were a few very noteworthy contributions. Although his book starts in the 19th century, his argument really begins with key shifts in urban planning in the early 20th century, during what could be called the long phase of urban progressivism in Canada. Here Rutland superbly ferrets out its anti-Black racist contours and especially their role in shaping the pattern of Halifax's racial apartheid: its creation of a Black town, known as Africville. In the book's next chapter, on midcentury urban renewal, Rutland returns to Africville, its destruction, and the relocation of its residents via an urban renewal effort. He stresses the especially anti-Black racist elements of the effort but also contrasts Africville with the failure to implement urban renewal programs in other, whiter, parts of the city. The fifth chapter explores the anti-urban renewal planning efforts of the 1970s and especially draws attention to their concern for the preservation or creation of amenities in the built environment. Rutland shows how concerns about lifestyles and their relationship to these amenities were selectively incorporated into urban redevelopment efforts and bounded to a racially infused (white) subject. In one of the more creative parts of the book, here Rutland offers a novel Foucauldian biopolitical interpretation of this shift. He locates the switch not in an economic logic of capital accumulation but in a cultural logic of "vitalpolitic," which, he shows, shot through New Left planning reformers and their efforts (171–174). The next chapter moves away from a discussion about dominant urban élites and toward a local Black planning organization, the Black Unified Front (BUF), and its attempts to reform the urban environment in Halifax. In addition to documenting the work of BUF, Rutland argues that its failures and transformations should be seen in relation to the racist strictures imposed on its efforts. In his final empirical chapter, he moves his analysis to a study of the Halifax region and the attempts to contain and manage suburbanization, primarily through a regional planning process known as amalgamation – the incorporation of many smaller towns or cities into a larger municipal authority, as in Winnipeg's Unicity. Here, Rutland shows the disparate impact of these planning efforts on Halifax's suburban Black communities, especially on their displacement. He contends that regional planners never considered, or foresaw as a substantial issue or concern, the erasure or continued presence of these Black suburbanites.

There is a great deal to appreciate about Rutland's steadfast reliance on a methodology informed by Foucault's biopolitical framework. His commitment to this theoretical position masterfully suffuses his interpretations and he lucidly illustrates how his case study modifies and improves the biopolitical approach inside and outside of urban studies. He is also able to offer a conceptually richer account of the biopolitical that provides a new interpretation

for anti-Black racism. In this respect, his case study challenges and broadens theoretical concerns and debates; it does not just provide an example for a simplistic form of falsification. Still, I think Rutland holds back the full weight of his Foucauldian analysis by never really turning it back onto Foucault and the implicitly Eurocentric, one might even say racist, presentation found in his Collège de France lectures. In the “Birth of Biopolitics” lectures, for instance, Foucault makes little to no reference to European colonies or the world outside of Europe.¹⁰ Even in Foucault’s more explicit attempts to provide an account of race in other Collège de France lectures, he makes it appear as if the concept of race germinated solely within Europe’s boundaries and without connections to the global extensions or ambitions of Europeans, their empires, or their states. Rutland’s sole critical passage is a comment on Foucault’s “inattention to race” and, given his pungent attacks on others, this is an extremely lacking criticism, even straying into an apology (282–283).

I think Rutland’s unwavering support for Foucault also leads him to make some less than circumspect criticisms of Marxian urban political economy in general, and David Harvey in particular. Rutland is correct that Harvey describes planning as a more neutral practice and sees more radical possibilities in refashioning existing planning practices than Rutland, Foucault, or James C. Scott. Still, Rutland’s criticism of Harvey does not capture the imminence of the critique that always infuses Harvey’s methods and that points to a more ambiguous interpretation than Rutland suggests. Yes, planning is organized to serve the needs and interests of ruling élites; in our time, this is capitalists. Harvey would certainly not contend otherwise. But, for Harvey, critique must always point toward an alternative. In the case of planning, its practices could and should be organized otherwise, toward different interests and ends. I believe this is, in fact, a sentiment Rutland shares. Rutland does not tell the reader so much about BUF’s alternative planning efforts for the organization to remain a mere intellectual counterpoint. His position, clearly articulated, is that the failure of BUF’s proposals to receive more traction was a missed opportunity and that had these been embraced they would have served to create a different kind of planning practice and different outcomes in Halifax. Here is how Rutland put it:

Rather than masking white privilege behind practices of citizen involvement devoted to abstract equality and inclusion, in other words, BUF sought to produce actual equality and inclusion through the intentional privileging of oppressed viewpoints and demands. This conception of politics necessarily and consciously put BUF in conflict with entrenched social and political power. The achievement of self-determination, for BUF, entailed a thorough wresting of power from other people and institutions. It involved Black individuals and communities gaining control over their own lives at the expense of external authorities, including BUF itself. Such a racialized redistribution of power, of course, proved to be intolerable to state officials at every level: municipal, provincial, and federal. The

10. See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*, ed. Michel Senellart, trans. Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

communication of Black concerns and demands was sometimes welcomed. The claiming of Black political power was not. ... BUF's achievements can be recognized in small victories and concrete changes, in homes constructed and material conditions improved, but also in the forms of life that it brought to mind and into the world. BUF worked the outsides of planning's race-limited conceptions and imperatives, insisting that Black life was something other than a pathological variant of white normality that, at best, could be rendered a little more normal, a little more white. It provided a vehicle through which other genres of the human could be collectively affirmed, sustained, and even improved. This work, though contorted and eventually extinguished by the state, would endure nevertheless in smaller, less visible acts of resistance in Halifax-area Black communities and in collectively preserved memories of what planning can look like when Black people claim the ability to "function as [they] wish" (242–243).

Here, Rutland is evidently suggesting that planning efforts in Halifax could have been reworked to serve different interests, with much different results. I agree that many of Harvey's most significant insights are found in his critical analysis of the relationships between capitalist social relations and urbanization, but I would like to point out one instance where he drew attention to the importance of anti-Black racism in planning and urban development. Harvey once used the term "the black tax" to explain extralegal exploitation that African Americans suffered in Baltimore's private housing market.¹¹ For Harvey, the "tax" represented an instance of "class-monopoly rent realized by speculators as they took advantage of a particular mix of financial and governmental policies compounded by problems of racial discrimination."¹² I raise this example because it offers a contrast to Rutland's analysis of anti-Black racism. For Harvey, anti-Black racism is distinct from class relations, but it is still coproduced by economic practices that exploit a social difference. Harvey's formulation of how racism structures urban life, I believe, foreshadowed the final book under review: James Tyner's *Dead Labor*.

Tyner's book is also part of the recent "biopolitical turn," but it explicitly draws on a neo-Marxian strand. Although not very clearly stated, the book is a pithy response to scholarship like Rutland's. Tyner is concerned with how racism shapes the differential value that is attributed to individuals and groups and, in turn, influences their exploitation. To make his argument, Tyner draws on urban studies scholarship and provides many examples from the urban context; however, these sources and examples are mainly from the United States. In fact, *Dead Labor* is not an example of contemporary scholarship on racism in Canadian cities, but its author's approach merits attention here because I believe it could, and will, be applied more widely in the Canadian context.¹³

11. David Harvey, "Class-Monopoly Rent, Finance Capital and the Urban Revolution," *Regional Studies* 8, 3–4 (2007): 239–255. I would like to thank Ben Teresa for pointing this out to me.

12. Harvey, 246.

13. For examples of books that come close to this framework, see Eliot Tretter, *Shadows of a Sunbelt City: The Environment, Racism, and the Knowledge Economy in Austin*

Tyner's book is an excellent introduction to the recent and vibrant neo-Marxian scholarship that reframes Foucault's biopolitical framework and marries it to Marxism. In this literature, the focus is squarely on the exploitation of the vitality of the living labour process, the lifeblood of economic activity, which is contrasted with the dead and vampiric qualities of capital. Tyner skillfully highlights and extends the contributions that geographers have made to this neo-Marxian biopolitical framework. Many readers will be surprised at how small a role Foucault plays in the book: he appears only once by name near the book's end. Save a few remarks about Giorgio Agamben, Tyner never formally situates his analysis over and against the vast neo-Foucauldian biopolitical scholarship. I would say that by understating his explicit debt to, and criticism of, Foucault, Tyner may make it harder for some readers to notice or discern the stakes of his book. However, because he does not get mired in this academic debate, the book presents a very well digested and clean presentation of the biopolitical turn within Marxist political economy. In addition to skillfully drawing on recent scholarship, Tyner deftly weaves into his presentation pertinent passages from Marx's *Grundrisse* and *Capital*.

Over the course of this relatively short, five-chapter book, Tyner is concerned with identifying the novel contours of profiteering in a "new political economy of death," or what he calls a more generalized form of "necrocapitalism." Certainly, he borrows generously from recent scholarship on vulnerability, precarity, and bare life. However, he, like Toews, is indebted to Ruth Gilmore's work on racial capitalism and especially her characterization of racism, in *Golden Gulag*, as the "state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death" (quoted on p. xv).¹⁴ For Tyner, *Dead Labor* is an effort to rework and extend this insight, refocusing on how "premature death is conditioned by unequal commodification of living labour" (xiii). He repeatedly returns to the theme of the social production of death, whether slow or fast, and how it is shaped by the way in which socially differentiated forms of vulnerability are created in, or from, the labour process. Empirically, his examples come mainly from the United States and are grouped into three chapters that broadly follow these themes: prison labourers, undocumented migrants, and health insurance and organ sales. The examples concerning private organ sales and derivative life-insurance markets are especially well served and provide Tyner with very bright and compelling instances where life and death – or, better, the social production of life and death – become new sources of profiteering and ever greater value extraction. Nonetheless, the global purchase of Tyner's framework is

(Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016); Bobby M. Wilson, *America's Johannesburg: Industrialization and Racial Transformation in Birmingham* (2000; Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019).

14. See Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 28.

tempered by his rather geographically specific focus on the United States. Tyner, in fact, never explicitly acknowledges the book's US-centrism. While references to other places do appear, for the most part they are mentioned only in relation to the United States. I found this rather surprising and I believe a more overt statement in the introduction about the limited geographical well that he drew from would have helped. Still, even with this caveat, I found Tyner's generalizations about necrocapitalistic practices provocative and often piercing. They are especially relevant to understanding the commonalities between the urban contexts in the United States and Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic – and more specifically, the pandemic's uneven health and social impacts. Even though Canada has a significantly different health-care system than the United States, it too is marked by a racialized economy of vulnerability, which has influenced disparate healthcare outcomes and life fortunes in regard to COVID-19.¹⁵

The four books reviewed here present innovative and emerging approaches, directions, and themes within the contemporary scholarship in urban studies and/or political economy. Three of the books are part of a generation of new and creative works that are pushing boundaries in Canadian urban studies by bringing racism into renewed focus. More effort should be expended on exploring the significance of anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism in the urban Canadian context and to treat these non-white communities as integral elements of Canadian urbanization. Theoretically, all four books make clear that Foucault's influence has not waned; in fact, his work on the biopolitical has found new and imaginative applications, especially among scholars exploring racism.¹⁶ Moreover, two of the books make clear that racism has also been revived as a viable theme of inquiry within Marxist scholarship. However, instead of turning to Foucault, this scholarship reframes the issue as one of racial capitalism. Here, racism exists as an effect of socially produced differences, which can be transactable but cannot be subsumed to capitalist social relation. Racism remains, instead, tethered to an extra-economic social system of hierarchy that runs alongside, but often suffuses, capitalist legal regulations and class stratifications. There is some rapprochement between these two approaches to racism; Tyner's book would be such an attempt, although, as I noted, Foucault is a bit player in his account. However, there also appears to be a growing divide, suggested by the complete absence of any reference to racial capitalism in Rutland's or Peters and Anderson's books or to Foucault in Toews. I believe the Foucauldian and Marxian approaches will continue to

15. James Keller, "Alberta's Worst COVID-19 Rates Are in Racialized Communities, Data Show," *Globe and Mail*, 3 December 2020.

16. I did not mention the essay in the review of *Indigenous in the City*, but Foucault's biopolitical work is relied upon in Brendan Hokowhitu's chapter, "Producing Indigeneity" (354–376).

be two of the most vibrant theoretical schools of inquiry among critical political economists. However, I also foresee growing acrimony between the two schools. I do not know if or how their tensions can or should be resolved, but I hope future scholars will read these books and may be inspired, as I was, to build productively on the tensions between these two frameworks.

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