

environmental pollution. In the closing section, Bradsher advances some prospects for the SUV and proposes measures to either resituate the car as the family transportation of choice or to turn the SUV into a vehicle compatible with the car in terms of safety, environmental and social standards.

If credit should be granted to Bradsher for proposing an interesting research topic -the withering away of the car-, his prose seems to undermine the inquiry's potential appeal. Bradsher distrusts the reader; he explains to exhaustion, goes over the facts at length and makes sure the reader gets the point; his argument is presented as absolutely transparent and there is no room for doubt or questions. By the time the reader finishes the book, she has either understood, misunderstood, or chosen not to understand.

However, the sense of alarm and outrage that grounds his prose and sanctions his incapacity to convey uncertainty is not an argument for dismissal. On the contrary, his discomfort translates into a firm commitment to the car over the SUV that indirectly produces a *theory* of the relationship between the car and the (desirable) city. Briefly put, the car is presented as the flesh -the material support- of this city's cherished values of certainty and safety for all its dwellers. The car not only stands for, but fundamentally grants to individuals the possibility of both a free *and* regulated non-Darwinian social existence. Other lovers of the city like Jane Jacobs, Lewis Mumford, and more recently fellow journalist Joel Garreau have also been stimulated by the presence of the car in the city and offered theories that even today are widely respected and often recalled in discussing the city in casual occasions, academia and political decision-making. The fact that Bradsher defined this old concern of urban studies in a novel way that drew wide attention from the general public is a wake-up call to a new sociological problem which urban studies should not ignore.

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Bridgman, Rae

Safe Haven: The Story of a Shelter for Homeless Women.

Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

161 pp.

ISBN 0-8020-4240-6 (bound); ISBN 0-8020-8084-7 (pbk.)

Safe Haven is more than an account of a shelter for homeless women. It is the chronicle of a feminist project in Toronto that sought to design a flexible and compassionate facility for chronically homeless women who were also mentally

ill. It was a challenging task. Their clientele were the most marginal of a marginalized population. Women who might rant and scream, hoard rotting food, or physically threaten others were often evicted from traditional shelters. How could space meet *their* needs, instead of making them adapt to an existing space? Bridgman explores why, and how, such an alternative was attempted.

The story begins in 1993, when women who had previously worked in homeless shelters formed the Women's Street Survivors Project (WSSP) as an advisory group to Homes First Society, a charitable organization committed to transitional housing. In 1997 the WSSP opened a shelter that differed from others in that it admitted everyone, evicted no one, provided 24-hour access, and offered unlimited length of residence. The shelter was named Savard's in honor of a woman who had lived on the streets for many years before becoming a community worker.

The WSSP wanted a facility that would create a low-demand, high-support community where street women would feel comfortable. Outreach workers talked with women on the street to discover their objections to available options. Sometimes that meant seeking them out in washrooms at the bus or train station, or visiting a particular heating grate. Information gathered from homeless women was shared at a design session consisting of front-line shelter staff, staff of Homes First, municipal housing officials, and the architects. Among the ideas generated, and discarded, were a courtyard where a woman could continue sleeping outdoors if she wished, and a pacing and screaming room. Working within the limits of a 2,000 square-foot space made it impossible to meet every wish. The final product did, however, provide sleeping nooks, a communal kitchen, bathrooms, and laundry for fifteen women and two staff members.

Fifteen women seem like a small number. Yet Savard's saved the government substantial sums compared with expensive in-patient admissions, acute and chronic hospitalization, or imprisonment. Savard's operated on an annual budget of \$600,000; psychiatric care alone for those same fifteen women was estimated at \$2 million annually. The WSSP was thus providing a public service as well as individual care.

I was struck by the similarities between Savard's and facilities for women adrift one hundred years ago. The YWCA often sought its recruits at the train station, as did the WSSP. (In fact, front-line workers for Savard's rely on the YWCA at the bus station for some of their referrals.) The Salvation Army provided food and shelter for the most needy, although its goals were evangelical. (Savard's song refers to homeless women as "somebody's daughter, somebody's sister" as an appeal for support, just as The Salvation Army did.) Savard's qualifies as a contemporary redemptive place that saves women from the worst conditions of the street while reducing the city's cost burden for their care.

Bridgman describes herself as an urban anthropologist conducting an ethnography of Savard's. Her goal was to document the processes by which a

utopian feminist vision became reality, with the hope that it might be duplicated in other cities. Bridgman doesn't ignore the difficulties that characterized the project's development. In addition to their intense twelve-hour shifts at the shelter, staff members were expected to raise operating funds. They also spent endless hours on the streets trying to find women who were most in need of Savard's services. Bridgman's research, which began in 1995 and continued until July 2000, was based on 250 hours of participant observation, staff meetings, daily staff logbooks, and interviews with staff. The only weakness of the book is its primary focus on the staff, almost to the exclusion of homeless women, despite Bridgman's attempt to include all voices.

The story ends well. In 2002 Savard's moved to a large storefront with room for thirty residents and six staff members. Fund raising has been replaced by support from the Canadian Ministry of Health. The saga will continue when other cities adopt the Savard's model thanks to this ethnography.

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Charbonneau, François, Paul Lewis et Claude Manzagol, dirs.

Villes moyennes et mondialisation. Renouveau de l'analyse et des stratégies.

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334 pp.

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Le phénomène de la métropolisation touche tous, ou presque, les systèmes urbains. Les grandes villes se développent à folle allure et tirent leurs forces de leur propre dynamisme et, selon la thèse centre-périphérie, de la faiblesse des campagnes et des villes plus petites.

Dans un univers de recherche très fortement centré sur les capitales et les grandes villes, quelle est la place, quel est le rôle des villes moyennes? D'abord, il faut s'entendre sur les termes. Ville moyenne ou ville intermédiaire? Tous les auteurs s'accordent pour dire que l'expression «ville moyenne», fondée sur des critères démographiques et spatiaux, laisse à désirer. Ville intermédiaire, attirant l'attention sur la fonction, est un bon substitut. Ce déplacement n'est pas toujours convaincant. Si la taille et l'espace sont des critères plutôt grossiers pour distinguer les villes moyennes des grandes et petites villes, la fonction n'est que partiellement éclairante. Certaines contributions mettent en lumière le rôle de relais des villes moyennes. Ainsi,

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