

Gaye Theresa Johnson. *Spaces of Conflict, Sounds of Solidarity: Music, Race, and Spatial Entitlement in Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013. Pp. 201. Paper \$29.95.

Gaye Theresa Johnson, Associate Professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, analyzes African and Mexican American relations along with the physical and social boundaries these groups inhabited in Los Angeles from the 1940s to the present. Johnson coins the term “spatial entitlement,” which she defines as the way in which residents from both communities came together to share the physical and discursive places they occupied to form alliances amidst social and political subordination. The physical and discursive places included specific geographic areas within Los Angeles as well as sonic spaces such as the radio. Spatial entitlement became the way in which these communities expressed themselves through music, culture, and class identity. Utilizing newspapers and oral histories, Johnson tells the story of Black and Brown comparative struggles along with the various ways spatial entitlement was used by each of these groups.

Movements within marginalized communities in Los Angeles divide the book. Johnson tells the stories of Charlotta Bass and Luisa Moreno, influential political activists who fought for Black and Brown rights and interracial spaces in Los Angeles during the early 1940s. Other individuals turned to sonic spaces like the radio to claim power through popular music. Black entrepreneur, John Dolphin, created an independent label that helped distribute rhythm and blues music in southern California, attracting white, Brown, and Black youth to the KRKD station throughout the 1950s. Johnson shows how spatial entitlement grew via sonic spaces that were occupied by African and Mexican Americans to create social opportunities through music.

The theme of resistance in music is central to Johnson’s argument, as she considers punk music to think about space. Johnson reviews the emergence of Black and Brown punk music against the backdrop of 1970s and 80s supply-side economics, rooting them in working class history and identity. Los Angeles deindustrialized in the 1980s; blue-collar jobs were exported out while the military industry rose, accompanied by a rising gap in income inequality as workers competed for service jobs. The growing economic crisis helped create the subculture of Brown and Black punks in the 1980s. The realities of poor and working class people influenced punk groups such as Los Crudos, who sang in Spanish and rejected white and traditional British punk narratives. The Bus Boys, a group of Black punks, used parody and satire in their performances to illustrate their discontent with being associated with white punk bands and their white narratives. Rising punk culture allowed Brown and Black punk groups to occupy physical and discursive spaces, showing how spatial entitlement was created.

Johnson shows the relationship between Black and Brown people and how they worked to establish spatial entitlement in a city that continually oppressed them. By focusing on daily acts of resistance and social and symbolic protest, Johnson documents an expanded vision of resistance strategies. By contextualizing the spatial entitlement of protest music such as punk, her book offers an important look at the cultural dimensions of resistance in an age of Reaganomics. Spatial entitlement was manifested through both music and culture and became an avenue of self-expression. Social historians and students interested in the comparative politics of minority groups will find this book of great interest.

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