

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Darroch, Michael and Janine Marchessault (eds).**

*Cartographies of Place: Navigating the Urban.*

Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

320 Pages.

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Behind a striking cover vibrates an interdisciplinary volume, reflecting and refracting ways in which media and the urban are bound together. In three parts—Legibility, Navigation, and Locale—the book tunes into the politics and material of media, and how they intersect with lived, imagined, and dreamed experience. Thirteen contributions build on and speak to each other. They cohere in their purpose to present media not as extraneous to the urban, but wrapped up in urbanity's performance and its cultural cartographies; media and mappings here are active, shaping how the urban is imagined, how we encounter it, and what it can do. Themes of time, space, representation, experience, creativity, politics, and methodology are thoughtfully (re)considered by the contributors, diverse in both their disciplinary backgrounds and career stages.

By way of introduction, the editors navigate a wide terrain—from McLuhan and Tyrwhitt to Lefebvre and Massey—to frame the contributions and contextualize urban theories that bubble up through the chapters. Effectively shaping, imaging, and imagining space, they argue, necessitates an understanding of the experience and dynamism of the city, which includes its media, images, sensorium, and emotions.

Focused on method and vocabulary, Legibility opens with a chapter by Ben Highmore. He calls for new representational systems that embrace the city's multiple metaphors and see them as part of its matter, forces, and lives lived. The following chapters work to answer and echo this call. Rob Shields describes the urban as a set of virtual forces that have real effects. The urban, he maintains, is distinct from the physical city, though it acts on the politics, identities, feelings, and culture of city life. Constellations of urban forces contain possibilities—a notion carried through Mervyn Horgan's meditation on the Serendipitous City. He proposes aleatory urbanism as a research method to understand how realist and embodied experiences of the city collide. Stephan Kowal's contribution returns to mid-century media and architectural theory, contextualizing the development of the Cartographatron: a machine that traces overlapping spatial flows with film and video, challenging ideas that maps are fixed. Finally, Saara Liinamaa considers arts practice in relation to different urban researcher types—Baudelaire (as witness), Simmel (as stranger), Freud (as doctor), and Benjamin (as collector)—to think through how aesthetics inform urban analysis.

Jean-François Côté and Marie-Laurence Bordeleau-Payer begin Navigation by asking how we find ourselves, through time and space, in relation to mapping technologies. Here, urban and internal experiences are reflexive—the public and private are rewired. Next, readers are steered through the porous borders between urban reality and digital imaginations in alternate reality gaming by Olivier Asselin. The city is a gamespace and site of collaborative storytelling. Justin Read then navigates Rio de

Janeiro's favelas, their dramatized representation, and relationship to Rio's vision as a global city. Media space implicates political visibility, citizenship, and sovereignty, and is open to disruptions that flow across scales. Lastly, Will Straw plots a route through the urban night and its imaginations in theory, policy, literature, and film. Lighting the modern city reveals new economies, artistic practices, and institutional ways of seeing.

Legibility and Navigation assemble in *Locale*, beginning with Markus Reisenleitner's chapter. His exploration of London's Docklands asks how nostalgic projections of the past interact with global modernity in cinematic imaginaries of "strangers" from China. Sharon Hayashi highlights how imaginary is mobilised in a different way through inventive protests in Japan. Here, as part of the visual underground, new media and digital platforms use playful and artistic practices to expose politics. The final two chapters sit at the border. The cinematic borderlands of Ian Robinson are both emotional and geopolitical. He investigates instability and sense of place through two films, which explore inclusions and exclusions across space and scales. The volume concludes with Lee Rodney's ruminations on alternate urban histories and border narratives around Windsor and Detroit. From the window of his *Border Bookmobile*, Rodney sees not only spectacular demolition, but also creative practices working to make sense of a Fordist past and reimagine economic futures.

*Cartographies of Place* is a well-curated and original collection. It promises to inspire innovative research methodologies across disciplines, rethink the flows and forces in media environments, and spark further curiosity about the complexities of urban life.

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