

Cette conception de la culture matérielle lui permet d'avancer que le changement culturel est le produit de la rencontre des significations incorporées dans les mondes idéels et matériels avec les nouveaux contextes d'interprétation et d'action dans lesquels des acteurs vont agir stratégiquement à partir des dispositions structurées de l'*habitus* (p. 119). Cette partie théorique a pour effet d'éliminer l'opposition entre la fonction et la structure déjà soutenue par Hodder et surtout de démontrer la nécessité d'une approche franchement contextuelle pour analyser les données archéologiques en vue de mieux comprendre les pratiques et les relations sociales.

Appliquée à la question de l'ethnicité, cette approche révèle toute la complexité du problème, puisque l'ethnicité s'avère ne pas être un produit direct de l'*habitus* et de la culture, mais plutôt un produit de la rencontre des dispositions habituelles des gens avec les conditions sociales dans lesquelles ils vivent à un moment donné (p. 120). Il en résulte donc que les manifestations de l'ethnicité et, par conséquent, des différents styles de la culture matérielle vont varier selon les contextes de la pratique de cette ethnicité. Dans cette vision dynamique liée à celle des pratiques, l'ethnicité va se révéler comme une réalité par-

fois intangible et difficile à cerner. À ce problème, l'auteure répond que les différents styles de culture matérielle impliqués dans l'articulation de la culture matérielle ne se retrouvent pas par hasard dans des contextes sociohistoriques particuliers et qu'une connaissance très approfondie de ces contextes précis est nécessaire.

En appliquant systématiquement son approche au problème de l'ethnicité, l'auteure s'est trouvée à apporter un éclairage très considérable sur ce fameux problème de la polysémie des objets auquel les chercheurs en culture matérielle ont eu à faire face depuis les écrits de Baudrillard sur le sujet.

Cependant, je dois avouer que l'application de son approche au cas type de la romanisation, déjà abordé au début de son livre, est trop esquissée. La rigueur conceptuelle s'y retrouve, mais la dimension factuelle, réduite à sa plus simple expression, enlève beaucoup à la démonstration que l'auteure effectue.

Enfin, je souligne l'attitude engagée de l'auteure relativement à une archéologie qui se conjugue à la fois au passé et au présent. En regard des reconstructions passées des groupes ethniques et du discours actuel sur les questions ethniques, cet engagement est d'une importance primordiale.

Jeremy Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past and Maps and Politics*

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Black, Jeremy. *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997. viii and 267 pp., 120 illus. Cloth, US\$35, ISBN 0-300-06976-6. *Maps and Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997. 188 pp., 46 illus. Cloth, US\$35, ISBN 0-226-05493-4.

It's enough to make self-respecting academics bow their heads in shame. Jeremy Black has produced two books in one year! While both are about maps, they're two very different books, and that's the rub. It's the difference between them that makes an important statement about the current state of historical cartography.

What are maps? To some of us they are tools to be used, to others they are works of art to be appreciated aesthetically. Increasingly,

however, they are being deconstructed as value-laden texts that render ideologically-driven constructions of the world around us. No longer can we assume that they are unproblematic, objective, scientific statements of fact. For long, they were considered as yet another product of the Renaissance-Enlightenment project of observation, classification and explanation in the search for an objectively realised "truth." That is, by experiencing the world empirically, a complex reality could be rendered in humanly constructed numbers, words, taxonomies, sketches, photographs — and maps. The map became the facilitator, co-ordinator, and spatial container of this total scientific enterprise.

But maps are now being viewed as historically and culturally determined artifices by which societies represent knowledge to better define and legitimize themselves. In particular,

they are being seen as having been complicit in the creation of the nation-state and the expansion of imperial systems. Early British forms of the former have been recently examined by Garrett Sullivan's *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (1998), while the latter has been investigated by Matthew Edney in his *Mapping of an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (1997). Indeed, Edney's volume is a fine demonstration of the contribution made by Michel Foucault, Anthony Giddens, Benedict Anderson, Edward Said, Derek Gregory and others to the enterprise of locating maps in a more theoretically critical discourse. For those of Edney's ilk, both nationalism and imperialism are exercises in the assertion of power by means of the military, cultural, and geographical appropriation of space. Edney argues the Foucauldian thesis that knowledge of place is essential for effective control, administration, and government of space: theoretically, graticules, meridians, and geographical co-ordinates allow the surveillance of human actions and, thus, constitute a geographical panopticon.

As Black points out in both books, perhaps the first — and certainly the most influential — scholar to truly argue the case of “map as text” was Brian Harley. The prematurely deceased Harley (1932–91) was the doyen of historical cartography at the time of his death. His “Maps, Knowledge and Power” in Denis E. Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels' *Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge University Press, 1988) was the first of his several seminal iterations of the need to seek out the ideologically driven biases, hidden messages, and silences hidden in maps. That is, their constructions of power. A scrutiny of Black's text and footnotes suggest that — perhaps with a touch of whimsy that Harley would appreciate — his two books may be categorized as pre-Harley and post-Harley respectively.

Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past is pre-Harley. It's an efficient and even elegant book. Certainly, Yale University Press allowed it to be lavishly illustrated with some thirty colour plates. Black's central premise is that historians have generally neglected the full import of maps in the study and representation of history. His particular concern is with historical atlases. He argues that they have been treated as mere reference books at the expense of a full appreciation of their iconographic power in representing political

and cultural authority. But they do so much more for him:

The visual images [historical atlases] offer are influential in creating and sustaining notions of historical situations, and are particularly appropriate as a theme for inquiry given the recent stress on nations as imagined political communities, on the role of images as a means of creating perceptions of power and, more generally, on iconographic aspects of politics and cultural authority. [p. ix]

To demonstrate his point, Black embarks on a magisterial exposition of how historical atlases have been — and are continuing to be — important representations of particular views of the past. As he puts it,

Geography was and is more than a background or backdrop to historical events and processes. The nature of our understanding of space and of spatial relationships is of consequence, and historical atlases provide a means for assessing how these have changed over time. [p. ix]

Nevertheless, despite Black's assertion that *Maps and History* is not intended to be a cartobibliography, it's long on names and titles and short on theoretical interpretation. He does briefly reference Harley's contributions, and does allude — if only in passing — to Benedict Anderson's authoritative *Imagined Community* (1994) that recognizes the role of census, museums, and maps in the state's expression of itself. But there is no one coherent summary-statement of his overall assessment of the power of historical atlases.

We all now know how manipulations of scales, orientation, colouring, labelling, and the critical exercise of the arts of inclusion and exclusion transform maps into subtle communicators of particular messages. Recognizing that atlases go further than this, Black never enters into a thorough exegesis of how they do so. The very acts of selection, arranging, confining, and circulating maps in one bound volume — together with the nature of the accompanying textual elaboration — should all be central to an explicit theoretical exposition. For example, for nation-states and empires, the very act of confining plates of data in between covers is the biblio-technic equivalent of the delineation of political power by frontiers and historical periodizations.

The careful array of atlas plates allow the visualization of particular meta-narratives. The mass production and circulation of the volumes contributes to the cultivation of popular identity with particular political missions.

Much of this is, indeed, implicit in *Maps in History*, but it is suppressed by the mass of detail of cartographers and atlases arrayed chronologically from the Chinese *tung* maps (2100 BC), through Ortelius's foundational *Parergon* atlas (1579 AD), to the recent three-volume *Historical Atlas of Canada*. Occasional critical thrusts do emerge as in the discussion of carto-literacy, environmental determinism, ethnic determinism, nationalism, and the recollection of silenced histories and geographies. But these are welcome theoretical excursions into historical context in an otherwise case-by-case account of atlas production — right up to a discussion of the pros and cons of computerised production. But all this being said, how could I disagree with Black's concluding sentence: "If historians are spatially illiterate and geographically ignorant, this will seriously affect their knowledge and understanding of the past" (p. 241)?

The opening sentence of Black's *Maps and Politics* repeats this view, if in a somewhat different disciplinary context: "Maps have played and play a major role in politics, both international and domestic, reflecting the powerful ability of visual images and messages to represent and advance agendas" (p. 9). As suggested above, this volume is best thought of as post-Harley and it benefits much from being so. Certainly, its opening chapter addresses the important question of "Cartography as Power," and the recognition that "[m]aps are selective representations of reality" (p. 11). Acknowledging the contributions of the theorists identified above — and adding Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida, to boot! — Black references recent works that have stood on Brian Harley's theoretical shoulders: D. Wood's *The Power of Maps* (1992), M. Monmonier's *Mapping it Out*, and A. MacEachren's *How Maps Work* (1995).

But while re-stating Harley's admonitions against the assumed passivity of maps, and his advocacy of a concern for the ideology, morality, and ethics of cartography, a tone of scepticism creeps into Black's critique. He sees in the postmodernist search for "cartographic conspiracies," a strong element of "left-wing dislike and distrust of authority," an ignorance of the nature of power systems, and a general preference for "[é]pater les bourgeois" (pp. 22–23). Ultimately, however, Black does back off his hoisting of "the more strident claims about the role of power in cartography," and agrees that "such issues should play an important role in discussion about the contents and purposes of maps" (p. 28).

This is what Black then proceeds to do in five thematic chapters: the Eurocentric and/or ethnocentric problems inherent in the representation of the world by projections; the issue of the representation of economic, social, ecological, domestic, tourist, and sacred space; the mapping of political power; the mapping of frontiers; the rendering of the spatial control of territory and the representation of force in the mapping of war. Each of these chapters are well referenced summaries and assessments of the critical literature and are accompanied by appropriate illustrations of relevant maps. His conclusion? Maps constitute a problematic, subjective, and multifaceted medium, and they must be examined in the "social and political contexts in which they have meaning" (p. 168). I think Harley would be pleased with this ultimate resolution.

But all this being said, I welcome Black's two volumes for their engagement with the discourses underpinning maps and mapping. His scholarship is as thorough as his intellectual explorations are refreshing. These qualities — together with the excellent references and cartographic illustrations — make them a much-appreciated addition to my library. I will shelve them close to Wood and MacEachren, somewhere to the right of Edney's *Mapping of an Empire*.