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❖ **Dodge, Martin, Kitchin, Rob and Chris Perkins (editors) – *The Mapping Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation*, Wiley-Blackwell 2011 (pp. 478) ISBN 9780470742839.**

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The rising importance of digital mapping processes, whether in the hands of large corporate entities like Google or through the profusion of user-generated mapping tools and digital geospatial data, marks a shift away from the traditional skills of the professional cartographer. In the face of this digital turn, many university mapping repositories, those places where rows of maps hang on specially designed racks and lay piled on each other in map drawers, have now mostly disappeared. This shift presents a perfect time to track the connections between the cartographic traditions of the past and how they may inform critical cartographies of the present. This is the project of *The Map Reader: Theories of Mapping Practice and Cartographic Representation* which draws together more than 50 extracts from peer-reviewed journals and monographs to trace the intellectual traditions that have informed a critical engagement with maps since the middle of the 20th Century.

Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin and Chris Perkins have gone to great lengths in this reader to ensure it is an accessible and informative text holding relevance across a range of disciplines, from geography through to anthropology, sociology, media and communications, graphic design, history and cultural studies. Whilst strictly speaking not an historical collection, the papers collected here trace the development of the various intellectual projects that have influenced the critical positioning of mapping and cartography since the 1950s.

The chapters cover a wide range of engagements with mapping including: maps as a system of signs; maps as representations; the structure of maps; the design of maps; maps as visual language; maps as metaphor; maps as models; maps as political tools; the power of maps; maps as scientific instruments; cognitive maps; mental maps; maps as cultural texts; and, maps as participatory and performative. The editors are at pains to weave, through their selection and organisation of the papers, an intersecting story of the development of critical cartographic analysis that brings us to the digital present.

The attempt to produce a lucid collection is aided tremendously by the coherent and meticulous organisation of the book. The chapters are organised into five sections, each of which begins with an introductory essay from the editors discussing the arguments and the rationale for the papers chosen. These original interpretive essays are more than the usual introductory comments you sometimes find in readers, and represent important critical engagements with the literature. The subsequent chapters in each section begin with an abstract from the editors, summarising the arguments of each paper and explaining its importance within the wider literature. These positioning statements are tremendously useful for those wishing to quickly find a relevant paper. The inclusion of annotated 'further reading' lists (detailing how the suggested reading paper fits within the various intellectual positions on cartography), followed by a list of cross-references to other relevant chapters at the end of each chapter, provides the reader with clear paths to follow. This organisational clarity is fortunate, allowing readers coming from different disciplinary perspectives to hone in on those chapters that are of most interest. This is no lazily thrown together collection, but a well organised and explicitly reasoned selection that caters to the different needs of students, academics and lay readers.

As the editors note in their Preface to the collection, no single intellectual narrative dominates the way we think about maps. The reader thus attempts to present a complex field of competing modes of thought on cartography, from rationalist scientism, through representational and constructionist themes, and beyond to more cultural and performative post-representational engagements. This contested theoretical and conceptual field of critical cartographic analysis is dealt with directly in the first section of the reader, *Conceptualising Mapping*. Here the editors present chapters on functionalist communication science with a focus on design and graphic systems and cognitive mapping processes, such as the excerpt from Jacques Bertin's influential *Semiology of Graphics*, and Joel Morrison's, *The Science of Cartography and its Essential Processes*, as well as Foucauldian analyses of the power of maps in Harley's *Deconstructing the Map*, and Del Casino and Hanna's investigation of the performative nature of mapping. The papers in this first section give a solid grounding for the engagement with the other sections, which focus in turn on technologies, aesthetics and design, cognition and culture and politics and power.

The section on technologies offers an entree to the influence of new technologies on the mobilisation of cartographic

information and on mapping practices themselves. Here contributions range from Tobler's early discussion of *Automation and Cartography* through to discussions of the impact of online mapping (Geller), web-delivered multi-media (Cartwright), and the antecedents of Google Street View in Li's chapter on mobile mapping. For readers of this journal, the third section on aesthetics and design would appear to be an excellent starting point with essays on the aesthetics of maps (e.g., Cosgrove's, *Maps, Mapping and Modernity*) and their design (e.g., MacEachren's, *The Role of Maps*), yet I found this section to be the least cohesive, lacking the interpretive strength of the other sections.

The next section contrasts cognitive and behaviouralist approaches to mapping (e.g., Lloyd's, *Understanding and Learning Maps*) with the parallel rise to prominence of cultural mapping, built around the subjectivities inherent in the production and consumption of maps (e.g., Reeves', *Reading Maps*). The final section, on the power and politics of maps, is another section that should appeal to media and communications scholars interested in the power of the visual medium to do work in the 'real world'. Here there are investigations of the geopolitical power of maps (e.g, Winichakul; Sparke), the distributed and participatory cartography of digital platforms like Google Earth (Farman), and the grassroots political power of counter-mapping (Peluso), amongst others.

Of course, as is the nature of a reader of this sort, not all of the chapters will appeal. However, with more than 50 papers to choose from, and full colour visual 'think pieces' at the end of every section, there is more than enough material to make this a worthwhile resource. On the whole, *The Map Reader* is an excellent and timely collection that opens a window onto a complex cartographic present, and should appeal to readers of *Global Media Journal* interested in the intellectual projects that underpin visual cultures.

About the reviewer

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