

Chapter 15

Between the Planned and the Lived City: New Road, Brighton Drawn

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ABSTRACT

The material discussed in this chapter concerns the experiential qualities and representations of how urban dwellers may occupy the city. The chapter aims at a better understanding of the multisensory city and at exploring how its mediations could add to representing, describing and designing city spaces in different and innovative ways. By advancing a new spectrum of experience and engagement, designers have the potential to shape the cities that are re-presented. Currently, there is a gap between the 'planned' and the 'lived' city and a lack of focus on socio-spatial practices often prevents a 'potential' city from becoming an 'effective' city. In order to bridge the gap, we can read the city in a different way, paying more attention to actual patterns of activity, in sensory terms. To do this we must look to multi- and interdisciplinary studies with a spatial focus on different sensory dimensions and urban life.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter brings together ideas from psychogeography, mobilities and representations of urban experience. To set out the context of these current investigations, the author reflects on the writing of historical urban theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Michel de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre whose work has been so influential in the broader field of urban experience, before considering the architectural representations developed from the work of le Corbusier in the 1930s through to Gordon Cullen's drawings of 'serial vision'. The chapter then considers recent developments of the 'new mobilities paradigm' in social science and humanities. 'Old mobilities' have been a part of the thinking of cultural and spatial theorists for a while but more recently these have been given fresh attention by a number of cultural geographers. In tracing the threads of how to bring a greater awareness and articulation of the issues relating to an increasingly mobile world, and specifically in urban environments, the author makes reference to the

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texts and drawings of spatial theorists from geography (Adey 2007, Pinder 2001 and 2010) and landscape design (Corner 1996 and 1999), and considers the diagrams of architectural and urban design (Garcia 2010 and Jensen 2014), before discussing the close focus of work developed by students and academics in researching the negotiated mobilities of a shared space.

Just as the expanded field in art, discussed by Rosalind Krauss (1979), has taken a considerable time to be felt in the discipline of architecture, there has also been an unsteady, and at times imperceptible, progression in design for increasingly mobile urban environments. It is time to revisit, re-evaluate and develop new ways of working to close the gap between outdated and inappropriate design strategies and the realisation of potential in the dialogue between mobile practices and spatial design.

City centres can be spaces where the speeding up of everyday life leads to a desensitized, blurred, and generalized urban experience. In these spaces although experiences are multisensory, the acceleration, and consequent density, of interactions make the embodied engagement with urbanity difficult to explore. If we can slow down and freeze urban movement, it is possible to produce and reveal a set of embodied relationships with social space that are more readily visible and open to investigation (see Murray & Robertson forthcoming 2016). This may be achieved in a number of ways and through different media. This chapter will explore the potential of visual representations, specifically drawing, physical modelling and animations.

BACKGROUND

At around the turn of the last century there were a number of interactions between writers and thinkers that combined to develop particular ways of inventing the city. Their concerns were with the psychological effects of the modern city, qualities that are explored in the work of, for example, Walter Benjamin. His acknowledgement that the modern city was a collection of fragments has been a key influence on literary, social and cultural thinking in the 20th century and this interest has been rekindled by the more recent publication in 1999 of the English language translation of his last unfinished work *The Arcades Project* (started in 1927). Charles Baudelaire's artistic portrayal of modernity in the mid-nineteenth century is evident in Benjamin's work and also in the narrative of geographer David Pinder's (2001) writing. On the other hand, architectural historian and urban commentator Iain Borden, on skateboarding (2001a and b), is concerned with the sensorial affects of sound and the feel, or kinaesthetics, of moving through the city. Each of these writers is concerned with the psychogeography of the city although each expresses it differently and at different times in history.

The closeness of phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and the distance of Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) allows for a meaningful examination of urban spaces that can be tested through representations such as drawing. The embodied experiences of the space, explored through the visibility of the space, with an 'understanding of images as meaningful objects central to symbolic and communicative activity that is core to many theorizations of contemporary visual culture' (Rose 2014) opens up new ways of conceiving design potential. However, it is important not to privilege visibility over other senses but to understand that all the senses are interconnected. Lefebvre's *Production of Space*, (1974) proposes that all human space is social and can be examined in this context through his trialectic, or trinity, of spaces such that: representations of space (mental/abstract) may be understood through drawings; spaces of representation (physical) may be emblematic of, for example, particular power relations; spatial practices (social) may be experienced. Further, Lefebvre argues, everything – lived experience and representa-

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