



Practices of place : ordinary mobilities and everyday technology



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Author

Gaughen, Brendan Christopher

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Abstract

This study examines four distinct ways people have encountered and interacted with place and explores how these experiences are impacted by certain technologies, paying close attention to the human experience of mobility. A fundamental idea in this study is that mobility is a crucial component to human identity and it is too limiting to view mobility as an abstraction absent of lived experience, as many postmodern theorists have done. Viewing mobility as an interrelation between people, place, and technology that shapes human beings and the physical environment, this study seeks to show how certain interactions with place contribute to a sense of self and identity for the individuals and communities discussed therein. The primary attempt in this study is to demonstrate how and why place is used in different ways by different people through various acts of mobility. Many of these practices, I believe, emerge as a response to postmodernity, even if their participants are unaware of larger structural processes. These practices are attempts to create stable meanings, definitions, and identities, to make known the unknown, to provide people with a sense of agency and autonomy, and give aspects of permanence to the ephemeral all in order to resist the destabilization, uncertainty, and powerlessness that exist in the present. Employing strategies such as bricolage and poetics, the human actors described in this study employ various practices of place in order to create meaning for themselves and the places they inhabit. This interdisciplinary project contributes to discourses of human geography, digital humanities, and material culture by locating previously unexplored intersections and relationships between place, practice, mobility, technology, and the human experience of being in place.

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This practice³the everyday practice³does not directly concern "individuality" or "the subjects," rather it offers "modes of operation or schemata of action," or more precisely "an operational logic." 2. THE PROCEDURES OF EVERYDAY CREATIVITY CONSUMER PRODUCTION Foucault argues that power is relational³meaning power is everywhere and can be observed through discourse. de Certeau illustrates the relationship between dominant producers of popular culture is exercised as a technology of power, but so are the 'ways of operatingµ through innumerable practices. The division of space makes possible a panoptic practice proceeding from a place whence The practice of everyday life. Michel de Certeau. Translated by Steven Rendall. The ordinary practitioners of the city live "down below," below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk-an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmanner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it. By analyzing this "modern art of everyday expression" as it appears in accounts of spatial practices,²⁸ J.-F. Augoyard discerns in it two espe cially fundamental stylistic figures: synecdoche and asyndeton. The pre dominance of these two figures seems to me to indicate, in relation to two complementary poles, a formal structure of these practices.