

NC Colloquium 2008: Hey Map, Who Are You? (Wednesday, June 24, 2009)

SL) community cartography, radical mapmaking, spatial activism, counter-cartography, critical cartography, activist maps...

SL) Hello map people

- Hello map people

SL) comrades

SL) maps, our comrades.

- It's good to know who your com-rads are.

SL) Hey map, Who Are You?

SL) “a map is a representation of the milieu” (Arthur Robinson)

SL) the map recast

- no longer: the map is a social construct, a reflection of power relations, a proposition, de-mythologized, un-masked, deconstructed...

SL) saw video

SL) north/south

SL) north/south

SL) north

SL) Hey map: who are you *really*?

- But still, there is the map...

SL) color

SL) Do Maps make *Map People*?

SL) Kitchin & Dodge quote (“Rethinking Maps” in *Progress in Human Geography*)

Maps are remade in diverse ways by people within particular contexts and cultures...maps are constantly in a state of becoming; constantly being remade.

Onto-genetic: People constantly bring maps into being.

...but that is only half the story

SL) detourn the quote

People are remade in diverse ways by maps within particular contexts and cultures...people are constantly in a state of becoming; constantly being remade.

Onto-genetic: Maps constantly bring people into being. ***Map People...***

SL) ...*you people*

• ...***you people.***

SL) gps/map mayhem

It's what **map people do**

SL) How are **you** brought into being by the maps you create and work with?

Bruno Latour: *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993), Actor-Network Theory (*Reassembling the Social*, 2005); Althusserian interpellation, much of it nicely applied to Lawns in Robbins *Lawn People*.

SL) color

SL) Do Maps Have Minds?

SL) many have claimed that maps have mysterious **emergent** qualities; they are **evocative, alluring, arouse emotions...**

A map is more than the sum of its parts, it contains greater knowledge than is contained in the factual information used for its elaboration. Fairbairn (1984)

SL) ...and others that they are almost **magic** (*Sovereign Map*)

Manipulations of the map come close to magic, playing with the analogical properties of the image in order to act on reality. Jacob (2006)

It seems reasonable to **overturn** any ontology that fails to explain the map's agency & "emergent" and "magical" properties or can only say it is inexplicable or unknowable.

SL) Dualism to Monism

Dualism: a world of binaries: mind/matter

- w/mind **emerging** in humans, mysteriously, magically, at some point
 - **emergentism** underlies most Western philosophy
- if one is **not** into such mystery and magic, by default...
 - overturn: **Monism:** mind and matter are not ontologically distinct

SL) appealing analytical philosophy argument ...

- Physical reality consists solely of rearrangeable particles of matter
- Mental states are neither reducible to, nor entailed by, physical states
- Mental states are real
- There are no truly emergent properties

- which opens up **curious** possibilities
 - including attributing **mind to all matter**

SL) Panpsychism:

All objects, or systems of objects, possess a singular inner experience of the world around them. (Skrbina)

A meta-theory of mind:

However you conceive of mind, and there are many theories of mind, it applies to all things. (Skrbina)

The realm of the **Posthuman** and **Postanthrocentric**

SL) what kind of mind do your maps have?

Skrbina *Panpsychism in the West* (2005),
Mathews *For Love of Matter* (2003), Posthumanism

SL) Color

SL) Tito quote

All the world was a busy place
And I was an idle kind
Disqualified in the human race
A different form of mind

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

- Tito has severe autism; quotes from his books (16 to 18 yrs old)

SL) Comrade graphic

SL) Hey map: who are you *really*?

SL) Are Maps Autistic?

Maps, our comrades: we/they constantly becoming, in tandem,

- **sympi-onto-genetic**

SL) Google: **sympi-onto-genetic** “did not match any documents”

SL) autism

Popular Culture: autism = disability, tragedy, illness, retardation, subhuman, distant, detached, alone

“Post-autistic economics” “autistic rock”

But counter this...

Autism as **subversive**: subverts the “human,” subverts “mind”

SL) *Look Me in the Eye*

Memoirs by people on the **autistic spectrum**

SL) Autistic rights movement: “Were here, were weird, get used to it.”

SL) neurodiversity

SL) genetics

... such neuropolitics based on emerging research showing autism is genetic

SL) growing **scholarly literature on autism theory**

- social sciences and humanities

SL) Autism at the foundation of Western Civilization

What we see in autism is an extreme form of a tendency that exists in all people, and this tendency is stronger in males.

Given the influence that males have had in shaping Western society, how has this tendency manifested in the social structures, norms and values that structure our society? (John Lawson)

- and to that one might add stuff like maps.

SL) Panautism

Call this broad interdisciplinary array of ideas **panautism**

- its paradoxical, uncanny, upsetting, anarchic, subversive
- undermines the construct, “human”
- and panpsychist, posthuman, and post-anthrocentric (transcends the “human”)
- ...and also the basis of Western civilization

SL) black

SL) Diagnostic Criteria

- a preliminary diagnosis of comrade map
- *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*

SL) color

SL) Tito Quote

I can go to places that do not exist
And they are like beautiful dreams
But it is a world full of improbabilities
Racing towards uncertainty

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

SL) Imagination – peculiar creativity

Putting things together in unique ways, seeing things differently, often such that the outcomes are unexpected or puzzling

SL) maps spur the imagination and create understanding – whether the stories are true or not (Snow Cholera Map)

SL) shocking the global imagination (Edes Harrison's *Look at the World*)

SL) constructing imagined worlds (Tolkien)

- but most mapping has rather severe limits on creativity

SL) *or does it?* (**map art**)

SL) color

SL) Tito quote

There is no fun in answering if freedom is restricted to the rules of a disciplined sentence.

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

SL) Communication – peculiar limits and capacities

Peculiar communication: limits in social interactions but hyper-expressive in alternative forms (art, math, music), or with animals or on specialized topics

SL) the information graphic fetish, exemplified by Edward Tufte

SL) a space for graphic experimentation (1911 cartogram)

SL) with all sorts of curious limitations (gender differences)

SL) color

SL) Tito quote

The world was a suitable place for the social beings and not beings like us.

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

SL) Neither social nor anti-social

Struggles with social interactions, objects as (or more) interesting as people, but not anti-social: just not social (neither)

SL) no matter how hard maps try to be social (abolition map)

SL) and they do try (Bunge)

SL) they are just not quite social ... nor anti-social (dead in Iraq)

SL) color

SL) Tito Quote

I sat a whole day in a classroom, planting mental nails all over the walls. I knew that those nails never existed, but when I planted them I experienced their hardness and their blackened shine. They kept my mind busy the whole day... How could I have time to think of any other thing?

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

SL) ... calms a chaotic sensory system.

SL) Repetitive, ritualistic

Comfort and calming in repetition and rituals.

SL) maps are repetitive

SL) repetitive

SL) repetitive

SL) and ritualistic

SL) ...they calm a chaotic world

SL) color

SL) Tito quote

I wait for the green colour of hope. During the afternoon I had thought so much about green hope, that I coloured a few pages green. I had locked the door, so that Anna could not enter and hide the green crayons. I was not going to open the door and let the greenish hope leave me. I saw greenish red drops of blood gushing out of my wrist, Yes, it pained. But since it was green pain, I did not mind much.

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

SL) Sensory contradictions & inversions

What's quiet is loud, soft is hard, big is small, invisible is visible, pain is green

...and **Synesthesia**: tasting shapes, seeing sound, feeling the visible,

SL) seeing what we feel (temperature) ... inverting the invisible (boundaries)

SL) seeing what we hear (sound map)

SL) ... maps amplify, invert, and deaden the senses; maps are **synesthetic**.

SL) color

SL) Tito quote

Was he not a riddle for all those men and their profession?
Was he not a wise dumb?

Tito Rajarshi Mukhopadhyay

Finally...

SL) Idiot Savant

Greek *idiotes* “private person” + Latin *sapere* “to be wise”

The problematic “rain man” stereotype of autism: brilliant at math or music but cannot talk or tie shoes

SL) world

SL) zoom

SL) zoom: US 1:24000 topographic map grid

SL) quote: there is work to do in applying theories of idiocy to maps

The quest for wholeness is undermined by a form of idiocy on which every type of organization founders. Ultimately it is the map itself that stands in the way of our successful mapping of the world.

Idiocy poses a threat to order; the attempt to come to direct grips with idiocy would lead to bewilderment. Yet none of our constructions would work in the complete absence of idiocy; idiocy makes one think.

We must keep idiocy at bay even while embracing it.

Van Boxsel (2003)

SL) zoom: Salt Lake

SL) zoom: Topo: you can't have a hole in the comprehensive system

- but it might seem **idiotic** to have an all water topographic map
- ...makes one think

SL) zoom

SL) zoom

SL) ...maps are idiot savants

SL) white

SL) Hey map, who are you?

SL)

Idiot Savant
Sensory contradictions & inversions
Repetitive, ritualistic
Neither social nor anti-social
Communication – peculiar limits and capacities
Imagination – peculiar creativity

SL) maps, our comrades:

what kind of map people might their autistic minds make you?

SL) but wait:

“With all due respect I have never heard anything more ridiculous. Autism Spectrum Disorder is a neurological condition - which means it is organic. I cannot see how interacting with the autistic can change the wiring in your brain.”

SL) Neuroplasticity

“The term neuroplasticity is used to describe the brain changes that occur in response to experience. There are many different mechanisms of neuroplasticity, ranging from the growth of new connections to the creation of new neurons.

Davidson & Lutz (2007)

- experience, interaction, collaboration physically changes our brains...

SL) map me...