

art: Cartograms are examples of the “subjectification” of the viewing process, similar to seventeenth-century anamorphoses such as the drawing of Saint Francis de Paul from Jean-François Nicéron’s *Perspective Curieuse* (see Figure 1) that was transmogrified by the use of a “cylindrical mirror” (Nicéron 1638). The viewer is first deceived by the strange appearance of the image and then introduced to the formal construction of it. This means that “the spectator must play part and re-form the picture himself [herself]” (Leeman 1975, 9). With these observations in mind, we will be able to come closer to the “real world.” Let’s jump into the pool!

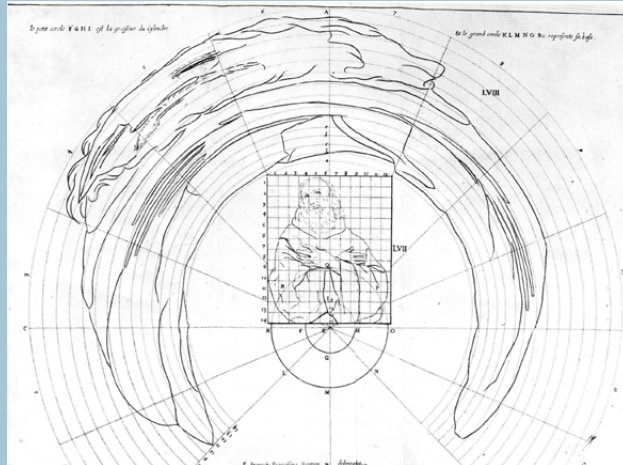


Figure 1.

REFERENCES

- Dorling, Danny, Anna Barford, and Mark Newman. 2006. Worldmapper: The world as you’ve never seen it before. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics* 12(5): 757-764.
- Gastner, Michael T., and Mark E. J. Newman. 2004. Diffusion-based method for producing density equalizing maps. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 101:7499-7504.
- Kidron, Michael and Ronald Segal. 1981. *The State of the World Atlas*. London: Heinemann.
- Leeman, Fred. 1975. *Hidden images: Games of perception, anamorphic art, illusion: From the Renaissance to the present*. New York: Harry Abrams.
- Nicéron, Jean-François. 1638. *La perspective curieuse. Magie artificielle des effets merveilleux de l’optique par la vision directe*. Paris.
- Szegö, Janos. 1987. *Human cartography: Mapping the world of man*. Stockholm: Swedish Council for Building Research.



AN ATLAS OF RADICAL CARTOGRAPHY

Lize Mogel and Alexis Bhagat, eds.

Journal of Aesthetics and Protest Press, Los Angeles, CA, 2007. 160 pp., 10 poster maps, 17 figures, endnotes, contributors’ biographies, publisher’s note. Price: \$30.00, Softbound.

ISBN 978-0-9791377-2-3

Review by: Daniel G. Cole, Smithsonian Institution

This atlas of ten loose folded poster maps and an accompanying text of ten essays provide the reader with plenty of food for thought. As the editors mention in the Introduction, “While all maps have an inherent politics that often lies hidden beneath an ‘objective’ surface, the contributions to *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* wear their politics on their sleeve” (6). Indeed, as the editors continue, “Our criteria for selecting these ten maps emphasized radical inquiry and activist engagement” (7). The ten texts and maps, typically with different authors and cartographers, respectively, are intended to be read together, although any good map reader may draw his or her own conclusions from the maps.

The first chapter, “Other Worlds, Other Maps: Mapping the Unintended City,” by Jai Sen, is matched with a

map titled *Chetla Lock Gate: Marginal Land Settlement in Calcutta* by the Unnayan in Kolkata organization. The author admits that this map was serendipitously sparked by a map on a peanut bag that showed a planned road project adjacent to an unrecognized settlement. Sen points out that “official” maps blank out unauthorized neighborhoods of unintended settlers, thus blatantly labeling such locations as “vacant land.” The Unnayan NGO wanted to help settlers better locate common services and spatial relationships through the use of maps. Unnayan also mapped marginal land settlements along drainage canals, major roads, and railroads. As a critique, Sen states that “What I think we failed to sufficiently do was to engage the people of the settlements either in mapping themselves or in studying the maps we were producing” (15-16). The sample map provided for the book is of the Chetla Lock Gate area of southwest Calcutta. It is a pen and ink drawing with very clean linework and typography. Humbly, Sen finishes by refusing to assert that their mapping efforts empowered all of the communities that were mapped.

The Institute for Applied Autonomy (IAA) wrote and illustrated Chapter 2, “Tactical Cartographies” and produced its accompanying map, *Routes of Least Surveillance: Manhattan, USA circa 2001*. The authors wanted to present an alternative view of the urban landscape as dominated by surveillance. They identify

a prior example (and perhaps derive inspiration) from Greenpeace, which used spatial data as a weapon: for example, GPS receivers with digital cameras that documented illegal logging in Brazil, Cameroon, and the USA. As noted, surveillance networks in the U.S. are decentralized: agencies have “virtually no public records of the number and distribution of surveillance cameras currently monitoring American cities” (32). The IAA decided to investigate the use of surveillance cameras based on data obtained through the New York Civil Liberties Union, and then posted the mapped results on their iSee Web site. The map itself consists of screened brown tones symbolizing city blocks and parks with white-line streets, red dots for surveillance cameras locales, and a gray toned circuitous path of least surveillance.

Chapter 3, “Mapping Ghosts: Visible Collective Talks to Trevor Paglen,” who together with John Emerson drafted the map *CIA Rendition Flights*, delves into the importance of exposing through a map the extralegal “invisibility” of prisons, prisoners, and their circuitous routes to confinement and torture. In addition, the fact is stressed that innocent people have been entangled in this geographic nightmare and no one has been held accountable. The map’s design consists of black countries on gray-toned oceans with white type and lines illustrating CIA aircraft routes, pick-up points and destinations on what looks like a stereographic projection centered on northern Africa.

Maribel Casas-Cortes and Sebastian Cobarrubias provide Chapter 4, “Drawing Escape Tunnels through Borders,” where they present a discussion around the map *Geography of the Furth Departure Center* and other maps by the German activist group Architektur. The authors contend that the European Union is creating a lethal “gated community” encircling Europe, but with permanent or even deliberate holes (51). This particular map “centers on a (distorted) map of western Germany but is labeled with” far-away places. “Deportation prisons are represented by boldly outlined circles” (55). A mess of flow lines show legal and illegal barriers and passageways. The map is confusing and it is hard to read the topography and symbology, although it probably mirrors the confusing system of immigrant detention in Germany. On it, “Itineraries of five migrants are mapped from their entry into Germany, their passage through different holding centers, and their arrival at the Furth deportation center after months, or years, of detention” (56).

Other maps are also discussed, and shown as tiny reproductions, including: 1) a proportional circle maps (originally in color but reproduced in black and white) indicating the number and causes of migrants’ deaths; 2) a dot map showing the locations of migrant camps which are not to be found on Europe’s “regular” maps (echoing the issues of Chapter 1); 3) a flow map to illustrate the movement of people between Morocco and Spain; and 4) extracted portions of Migmap, a typographic map,

route map, and cartogram showing the confusion of EU bureaucracies, NGOs, treaties, movements, borders, and migrant sites. “Seen together, these maps create a richer and denser picture of the border and possible points of attack or lines of flight into, underneath and against it” (65).

Alejandro de Acosta wrote Chapter 5, “Latino/a America,” giving the reader a philosophical discussion, including quotes from Nietzsche, about Pedro Lasch’s map of the same name. This map is purely an artistic rendering of North and South America, identifying all of the two continents as Latino-Latina territory, while ignoring national and ethnic boundaries. As such, de Acosta bluntly notes that “Lasch’s maps are, as maps, quite useless” (73).

Chapter 6, “Our Land is Changing – Soon Yours Will, Too,” by Sarah Lewsiton, is paired with Lize Mogel’s map, *From South to North*. Mogel created a cartographic conundrum by overlapping and connecting Canada’s Northwest Passage with San Francisco Bay and Panama. Each area is portrayed at a different scale and facing different directions. The land/water interface is depicted with black land and white water for northern Canada and Panama whereas San Francisco is shown as white land and black water with seven black scribbles symbolizing the Navy’s moth-balled fleet and old piers. The connectivity of “these landscapes—subjected to the same expediciencies of development, exploitation and design—begin to look very similar” (83). Overall, the Panama Canal, Northwest Passage, navy ships and piers, seem to indicate past and future (due to global warming) trade conduits and the power to enforce them.

The text of Chapter 7, “Drawing (on) Water in Los Angeles,” is a roundtable discussion between Jane Tsong (the map’s author) and six others. This “map,” *The Los Angeles water cycle: the way it is, not the way it should be and one day will be...*, is a whimsical set of drawings regarding the L.A. water cycle and, bluntly, how it affects the environment in different ways, including withdrawal from the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the Colorado River aqueduct, pavement, runoff, pollution, littering, and wastewater.

Heather Rogers wrote Chapter 8, “The Power of Garbage,” which is joined with Justyna Judycka and Damon Rich’s map, *New York City Garbage Machine*. They deal with a topic that most people don’t think about unless a garbage strike occurs. The map presents a screened light brown area of New York City as background with a flow chart superimposed illustrating the administration of the collection and disposal of residential and commercial waste. The flows include pictures and comments by individuals from local government and commercial refuse and recycling operators. In addition, pictures of NYC residents are placed on black waste cans making serious and sarcastic comments about garbage. Lastly, a small inset map of

the world is included to depict the global reach of a major waste company and its subsidiaries. The chapter discusses how the Mafia controlled refuse collection from after World War II until the 1990s, when the big garbage conglomerates took over. Reform of this type also wiped out small legitimate haulers, moved transfer stations into poorer areas, and then mostly shipped the waste to rural areas in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

Chapter 9, "The Struggles over Transition: Emancipating Energy" by Kolya Abramsky, is teamed with the map *The U.S. Oil Fix, 2006/2007* by Brooke Singer. A graduated flow map, depicting only those countries that supply oil to the U.S., is presented, along with 13 sidebars noting life expectancy, GDP per capita, percent of children underweight at age 5, adult literacy, percent of the population below the poverty line, and percent of the world's CO2 emissions. The text goes beyond the map's obvious message of production and consumption and notes how the future of energy through renewable resources is being controlled by the powers-that-be.

The last chapter, "A World Map" by Avery F. Gordon, is paired with Ashley Hunt's *A World Map: in which we see...* This map is not a map at all except in the theoretical sense; instead, it is a confusing array of points, centers, flows, reactions, and so on related to global capitalism. Gordon describes it as a "conceptual map of the process and forces of globalization" (139) and "As a whole, the map is unreadable. It makes me dizzy" (141). Unfortunately, this poster looks like it was designed by a committee where no one agreed on its design.

Overall, the atlas comes neatly packaged with the book and ten fold-out maps inside of a slip cover. Unfortunately, because the maps are all folded with the printing on the inside, one has to hunt for the appropriate map desired. The editors and publishers should have at least numbered the outside of the folds to enable easier text/map match-ups. And while I normally would not consider a collection of ten maps to constitute an "atlas," I will grant the editors the benefit of the doubt in terms of naming this collection as they see fit. As with many multi-authored works, a bit of unevenness is seen between these maps and chapters. Most of them stand out as good examples of cartography that readers will want to study and mull over later, while a few others are purely cartographic art or graphic design that may or may not inspire further investigation. Apparently, this book and map set are intended to inspire left-wing activists to further or related actions. Whether it succeeds in this goal by reaching its proposed audience will be interesting to see.