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Walking in the European City: Quotidian Mobility and Urban Ethnography edited by Timothy Shortell and Evrick Brown

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Shortell, Timothy, and Evrick Brown, eds. *Walking in the European City: Quotidian Mobility and Urban Ethnography*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2014. xv + 297 pages. Hardcover, \$124.95.

Walking in the European City: Quotidian Mobility and Urban Ethnography covers many aspects of walking, from the mundane to the exceptional, and grounds them in specific locales. Focused on European cities, the authors explore not only walking as a subject to be studied, but also as a methodology. The anthology moves from theoretical discussions of *flânerie*, Nuvolati's modernization of the romantic concept of the gentleman wanderer of Paris, to a more gender-neutral, less class-conscious method of being in the city. The anthology provides a collection of methodological examples of walking as research, and finishes with several solid pieces integrating the study and method of walking into larger ethnographic projects.

Shortell and Brown, professors of sociology and the behavioral sciences respectively, came to the practice of walking as a research subject and methodology *because of* its ubiquity and mundanity. Walking is seen as a practice of resistance, of claiming space, of being a part of the city. The editors note, "Ordinary people took to the streets, if they weren't already there, working or commuting or shopping or walking, to express their own views of the necessities of public space. Sometimes this required spectacular mobility, in the form of mass collective action - in many cities in 1968, for example - but more often it was in the form of quotidian mobility. It was everyday resistance to the single-minded logic of capitalist accumulation. Ordinary people wanted a vernacular city, with all its inefficiency, stimulation, and disruption" (p. 1). It is this sense of the city - seen at a walking pace - that inspires many of the authors in this collection. Several pieces are informed by specific theoretical orientations, including *flânerie* (Nuvolati), Situationist *dérive* (Shortell and Aderer, Pauknerová and Gibas), and even Statwanderungen or Big Urban Walks that are adverse to *a priori* theoretical stances (Kohler). Although it stumbles in places, the collection as a whole moves easily from theory to practice to integration.

The chapters that focus on *how* people walk offer both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, for example, from large surveys answered online (Mattioli), mixed methods of mobility diaries and photograph selection (Vestergaard, Olessen, and Helmer), and walkalongs as a particularly powerful interview technique when questioning those in power (Holgerson). While the sections that report on actual walks, including thick description, photographs, and maps, could be edifying for those seeking a practical how-to for walking as a methodology, they were a bit dry to digest one after the other. The exception is Pauknerová and Gibas' contribution "Walking the Stream: Prague Cityscape and the Research Guided by the Water," which was lyrical in its descriptions of the sensescape and weaves analysis into the presentation of events. The chapters that focus on how the researcher walks offer other social scientists particular strategies about how to understand this activity that is part of every field site, to a lesser or greater extent. Carabelli's article on "*Gdje si?* Walking as a Reflexive Practice" speaks directly to the positionality, both physical and theoretical, of the researcher in the midst of research. Returning to the importance of 'ordinary people' stressed in the Introduction, and bringing the reader full circle, the inclusion of Ramsden's "A Walk Around the Block: Creating Spaces for Everyday Encounters" highlights how the methodology used by researchers can be shared with community members to explore "whether intentional and performative acts of walking in the city can effect changes in the attitudes and perceptions of walkers to their neighbourhood and environment that might encourage dialogue and exchange" (p. 225).

Every book cannot be all things to all people, but I felt there were several lacunae, particularly in regards to class and physical ability. Although gentrification was addressed in several of the chapters, there was little consideration given, particularly by Mattioli, as to what class factors might affect a person's reliance on walking or other forms of public transit. Also, in an anthology focused on quotidian mobility, there is no attention given to people who have physical limitations to their mobility. I was left wondering about how the urban environment responds, or does not, to the needs of people using assistive devices. My last concern is a methodological one; there is no discussion of using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to enhance the richness of the results of ethnographic walking. In a practice grounded in geography, it seems a natural outgrowth.

This book is appropriate for students, particularly in methodology or ethnography classes. I also recommend it to researchers. Despite the fact that I have used a type of this methodology previously, the book taught me many practical shortcuts. Finally, it is an important example of how everyday practices can offer illumination into larger cultural structures. As Gatta and Palumbo note, "The more we are technically able to move around the city, and the world, using transport systems (avoiding walking), the more walking became either a choice or a necessity by default, characterizing a political view or social condition" (p. 245).

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