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Reviews of Books & Atlases

IN THE MEMORY OF THE MAP: A CARTOGRAPHIC MEMOIR / Christopher Norment. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012. Pp. 253; 10 halftones. ISBN 9781609380779 (paper), \$22.50. Available from: <http://www.uiowapress.org>

In the Memory of the Map is a “cartographical psychology” – an amalgamation of personal history, the scholarship of others, and mythology (p. 3). The book opens with Christopher Norment, a biology professor located in New York, complaining about reading the “same incoherent sentence three times” as he attempts to grade his students’ work (p. 1). Norment consequently opens his cabinet drawer, seeking solace in a topographic map of Mount Whitney, CA. The enjoyment Norment experiences when reading the map, and the ease with which he is able to interpret its symbols, contrasts with the trouble and boredom he experienced when attempting to mark his students’ work. From the outset, then, his loving relationship with cartography is evident.

Norment’s purpose in this volume is to examine the role of maps in his life and, by extension, in the lives of others. *In the Memory of the Map* is organized chronologically. “First Maps” investigates experiences related to the maps Norment discovered between the ages of 8 and 18, when he was growing up in the Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains of California and being molested by his stepfather. “Middle Maps” then explores the maps he encountered as an undergraduate and in the years leading up to his thirties, during which he married and finished a master’s degree. “Late Maps” describes Norment’s more recent encounters with maps, through experiences such as leaving his job, undertaking a PhD, and being a parent. The final chapter, “Without a Map,” describes a 13-day backpacking trip Norment went on, accompanied by a friend, in Washington’s Pasayten Wilderness.

Apart from the tellingly titled final chapter, each chapter is accompanied by at least one map, ranging in style from Norment’s hand-drawn memory map of Saratoga to the *Starr’s Guide* map of the High Sierra. Although achromatic, these images are useful accompaniments to the text. Throughout the book, Norment seeks to promote maps in two predominant ways: as “triggers of memory” (p. 2) and, because of the movement they promise, as holding the possibility of escape from one’s current situation. Norment does not hesitate, therefore, to criticize postmodernist geographers for viewing maps as “texts” to be deconstructed. It is noteworthy that Norment’s sentimental memoir does not treat maps as purely visual artefacts: Norment can touch them when he runs his hand

over a piece of Redwall Limestone in the Grand Canyon; he can smell them in the odour of buckbrush and laurel that rise from the California chaparral; and he can taste them in a spoonful of curried rice and lentils eaten in northern Canada. Put simply, maps are portrayed in a multi-sensory manner.

While Norment does not offer graphic descriptions of his childhood abuse, at several points in the book the dark memories are evident in his prose. For instance, he notes that the roots of his “obsessions with maps” lay in the possibility of escaping from his childhood home, thus distancing himself from those who threatened his safety (p. 23). However, Norment makes it evident that what originated as an escape from sexual abuse and family tension developed into an addiction to cartography and nature. For instance, Norment has now taught navigation for Outward Bound and travelled deep into the Sierra, the Himalaya, and Utah. Interweaving his personal narrative with work on maps by scholars, poets, and novelists, Norment provides a rich intellectual account permeated by his passion for maps.

Interestingly, there are great similarities between Norment’s text and Mike Parker’s (2010) *Map Addict*. While *Map Addict* is a celebration of British rather than American cartography, both authors claim that maps have played, and continue to play, a key part in their life. In addition, both texts are autobiographical, and both authors claim to have developed a cartographic addiction. Moreover, the books are structurally similar: Norment’s closes with a chapter titled “Without the Map,” and Parker’s (2010) concluding chapter is titled “Going Off-Map: When to Leave It Behind.” While Norment and his friend left Web maps unbrowsed and carried no GPS, cellphone, or satellite phone during their intentionally mapless journey through the Pasayten Wilderness, Parker closes his book by looking at the pros and cons of digital map technology. Overall, both Norment and Parker can be described as strong defenders of paper maps in an era when digital maps are becoming increasingly dominant.

The tone of Norment’s book, while informative, is light enough for a pleasurable read. Further, while Norment writes from a personal viewpoint, *In the Memory of the Map* has a universal quality. For instance, when Norment mapped out his childhood neighbourhood, I found myself doing the same in my head; his text had the agency to urge me to reflect on my childhood. A criticism of the text, however, is that Norment often strays off into detailed explanations of matters – such as his inability to find a girlfriend because of his “scrawny and weak” stature (p. 45) – that meander too far from maps themselves.

Despite this minor quibble, Norment deserves credit as an eloquent storyteller, able to convey the agency, purpose, power, aesthetics, mystery, and function of maps in an authoritative manner and thus to provoke readers to (re)consider, as I did, the role of maps in their lives.

References

Parker, M. 2010. *Map Addict: A Tale of Obsession, Fudge and the Ordnance Survey*. London: Collins.

Samantha Wilkinson / *Geography* / University of Manchester / UK

CARTOGRAPHER'S TOOLKIT: COLORS, TYPOGRAPHY, PATTERNS / Gretchen N. Peterson. Fort Collins, CO: PetersonGIS, 2012. Pp. 184; col. throughout; 8.5 × 8.5 × 0.5". ISBN 9780615467948 (paper), US\$49.95. Available from: <http://www.petersongis.com/publications.php>

Time is usually the worst enemy of the map designer, and cartographers must all too often sacrifice rounds of trial and error when searching for a visually successful solution. The arrival of a book called *Cartographer's Toolkit*, which is "full of map parts to assist in the map production process" (p. xiii) and meant "for all map makers in the world" (p. xiii), then, will appeal to practising cartographers who simply don't buy that the quest for the optimal map is over.

Aiming to inspire, educate, inform, and to assist "beginning cartographers" (p. 109) and "the most seasoned professionals" (p. xiii) alike, Gretchen Peterson offers what appears at first glance to be a handy and appealing full-colour cartographic sourcebook. Taking an altogether different approach from Cynthia Brewer's *Designed Maps: A Sourcebook for GIS Users* (Brewer 2008), in which the designs of ready-made maps are practically reverse-engineered to create different effects, Peterson successively presents examples of individual elements (e.g., colours and typefaces) that can be quickly and easily compared before revealing a showcase of distinctive maps. Her goal is to provide a ready reference to assist cartographers in selecting the best of these major components, and thus to help "make your map a stand-out" (p. xiii).

Divided into three chapters ("Colors," "Typography," and "Composition Patterns"), *Cartographer's Toolkit* includes 30 palettes (300 colour swatches in total), 50 typefaces (25 each of serif and sans serif), and 28 composition patterns (essentially, different styles that are illustrated by 36 map examples) for comparison. Text is kept to a minimum throughout. Each chapter opens with a short introduction that explains the key terms and justifies the selection of examples that follows, together with some suggestions on using these examples. These introductions are very light on theory, however, and interested readers

are directed to (among other texts) Peterson's earlier book, *GIS Cartography* (Peterson 2009), for more substance.

The 30 palettes forming the first chapter, "Color," are divided into three sections: coordinated palettes (for use where a sense of harmony is required for a more cohesive look); differentiated palettes (for easy feature identification); and colour ramps (for displaying magnitudes, as in choropleth maps). A page is devoted to presenting each palette of 10 swatches (complete with HEX, RGB, and CMYK values) using a colour wheel; a basic map example; simple combinations of points, lines, areas, and lettering; and another map that aims to simulate the appearance of these colours as experienced by people with deuteranopia (difficulty in discriminating between colors lying from red through green in the visible spectrum). On the whole, the palettes are well chosen, though the wider application of white type on a yellow background (p. 8) or the palette the author describes as looking like "a teenager's bedroom" (p. 3) is likely to be limited at best. The placement of palettes toward the outer edges of the page facilitates quick comparisons between them, even if the map examples within the differentiated palettes or the colour-ramp sections are strangely devoid of lettering (presumably for clarity in the case of the latter).

The 50 typefaces showcased in the typography chapter are presented in three sections: standard fonts (e.g., Georgia and Arial); free typefaces (e.g., Ingelby and District); and "for fee" typefaces (e.g., Gill Sans). Each double-page spread in this section includes the application of a serif and a sans-serif typeface throughout an identical map extract of Irondale, WA, USA. This acts as a suitable base for comparing the application of type to a range of features (e.g., streets, parks, neighbourhoods, a creek, and a bay – plus an overall title) and at several sizes. The facing page provides basic examples of the typeface, with dummy text, labels from 8 pt to 16 pt, and a small extract of the main map. The choice and placement of typefaces and lettering in this section are helpful, realistic, and accurate, and those seeking to compare them in a hurry will again benefit from the thoughtful organization and layout of these pages.

While much of Peterson's *Cartographer's Toolkit* demonstrates the effects of varying colours and typography in an effort to reduce time spent on trial and error, the last chapter, "Composition Patterns," showcases 36 examples of good cartography. Readers could perhaps be forgiven for expecting this to cover layout or balance, despite being told that *pattern* "refers to a promulgated cartographic technique that is reusable, customizable, and proven to be effective" (p. 109). Ultimately, however, we are presented with a gallery of maps made by contemporary cartographers and classified according to their varying stylistic approaches.

The choice of maps in this chapter is wide ranging, and the idea of concluding with a section that allows a more holistic appreciation of design is both logical and satisfy-