**McQuire, Scott.**
*Geomedia: Networked Cities and the Future of Public Space.*
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In *Geomedia: Networked Cities and the Future of Public Space*, McQuire explores how the growth and near ubiquity of spatially linked technologies are (and have the potential to) transform the way public spaces are used and understood. More narrowly, as he puts it near the end of the book, he seeks to establish "that the intersection between geomedia and urban public space today offers a strategic site for [the] political task of reimagining communication, being-with-others, and practices of inhabitation" (p. 165). The core of this work is composed of three chapters that each illustrate the intersection between geomedia and urban public space in a specific context, which are bookended by more sweeping theoretical chapters that draw together the examples into a broader narrative.

The first illustration focuses on the project of digitally mapping the city, not from a traditional looking-down cartographic perspective, but from a more intimate and human looking-around perspective exemplified by Google's Street View. To the extent that Google aims to map the entire world from a street-level perspective, McQuire uses this example to unpack the supposed impossibility of, and warnings against, attempting to construct a 1:1 map of the world that Lewis Carroll, Jorge Luis Borges, and Umberto Eco have noted. While this use of geomedia may simply represent the next technological step in mapping the city, it also raises concerns about "the consequences of a private company…building proprietary databases…at a historical moment in which digital maps become a key to organizing and integrating multiple other data streams" (p. 85). He also suggests that, by eliminating the need to engage with strangers to ask directions, it exposes us to the risk of falling out of practice with being social. To be sure, these are important concerns and risks to consider, but they also sound suspiciously familiar, echoing the concerns and risks that past generations have raised about every technological innovation from the printing press, to the television.

The second illustration examines how new technologies, especially spatially embedded sensors, allow occupants of public spaces to interact with each other and especially with elements of the space itself. Here, McQuire uses a series of interactive, or at least reactive, art installations as examples, one of which appears as the book's cover photo (the 2010 *Solar Equation* installation in Melbourne). Through these examples, he aims to address a particularly provocative question: "is it possible to move away from an overly prescriptive design…leaving room for public appropriation without simply throwing everything back onto a public that is over unprepared to accept the responsibility that 'participation' carries" (p. 100)? Accordingly, each of the art installations he describes offer viewers opportunities to quasi-participate by influencing their and others experience of the work, but within a framework prescribed by the technology. For example, Lozano-Hemmer's *Pulse Room* used a sensor-embedded metal sculpture to translate viewers' heartbeats into pulses of light in a grid of suspended incandescent bulbs. Viewers were participants, but their participation was mediated by the pre-defined characteristics of the sensor, the bulbs, the space itself, and so on. Each of these examples offers an excellent example of mediated participation, but left me questioning McQuire's conception of public space because many of these installations were in art galleries. *Pulse Room* was exhibited at the 2007 Venice Bienniale, which while technically open to the public, is practically accessible only to the affluent.

The final illustration examines how new LED technology made large video displays possible, and how these video displays have been used in both indoor and outdoor public spaces for collective, and in some cases interactive, viewing experiences. Throughout this chapter, I found myself wondering what McQuire had in mind by the concept of "networked." When these displays were used to broadcast a media event into a public space so that people could watch it unfold together, as happened with the Australian prime minster Kevin

Rudd's 2008 National Apology to the Stolen Generations, the displays were networked in a purely technical sense, but no more so than an ordinary television or radio. Here, it was perhaps not the media or the city that was networked, but implicitly the viewers who, by their co-presence, felt a sense of solidarity. When two displays were directly linked to and communicating with one another, as they were in the 2010 installation of *Hello* in Melbourne and Seoul, the dyadic connectivity is clear but the existence of a more extensive "network" is perhaps more speculative.

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