

of the rite of passage holds up when applied to this form of travel, ostensibly motivated by a wish to break with the familial and social spaces that define one's youth and home identity. She argues, however, that "as our lives become increasingly globalized, and as communication and social networks extend, it is harder to see travel as a linear process from home to away, ordinary to extraordinary and back again" (162).

Taken together, these books showcase how different disciplines, all with a stake in understanding forms of contemporary travel and mobility, approach the same sets of concerns. Both volumes have a strong international feel to them: the editors, as with many of the contributors, are based in Australia, but both volumes include other contributions from scholars based in Europe, North America, and Asia. One leaves these books with a much deeper appreciation for why travel and mobility studies seem to have taken off so dramatically as fields of study across the academy: precisely because of the way they can serve as platforms for cross-disciplinary conversations that are vital, but perhaps all too rare, in an era of increasing academic specialization.

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### Thinking Mobility through Driving in Film

**Iain Borden, *Drive: Journeys through Film, Cities and Landscapes* (London: Reaktionbooks, 2013), 280 pp., £18**

In 1963, Roland Barthes asked for someone to write a mythology of driving.<sup>1</sup> Today, the capacity to steer a car may become a superfluous human skill: autonomous cars have already completed nearly one million miles of test-driving on public roads. This seems to be a good time to ask how driving has been experienced and mediated in the last 130 years. In his book *Drive*, Iain Borden, professor of architecture and urban culture at the Bartlett School of Architecture in London, explores driving experiences through a close analysis of film, because cinema "provides the most direct sense of what it actually feels like to drive" (12). *Drive* is structured by the different speeds of driving: the first chapter, "Cities," starts with filmic examples of urban driving around 30 miles per hour (mph), and chapter 2 takes the reader to existentialist "Journeys" with speeds around 55 mph. In the third chapter, "Motopia," Borden lets us explore freeway driving in film, while the last chapter gives insights into the transcendental "altered states" of drivers at speeds of 100 mph or more. Over the course of the book, Borden discusses over 450 films. This quantity adds to

the strength of the book's argument, but sometimes the reader might wish for a more detailed analysis of some films.

Borden's book will inspire scholars who are interested in the phenomenology of driving. We know that driving a car signifies much more than simply steering from point A to point B. Borden gives us insight into the often mentioned but not yet enough analyzed "nontransport-based qualities" of car driving. What is going on when we drive a car, according to Borden, may be explained in three steps: a defamiliarization of the physical realm, which puts the driver in a contemplative state, thus allowing him to reimagine his identity. First, film teaches that driving has an important bodily effect because it transforms our gaze and changes our perception: while driving, the speeding car around us appears immobile but seems to animate stationary objects outside. The familiar becomes strange. "Driving helps us to forget what we know," Borden says, "and to focus instead on what we simply see" (76). Second, this *hypnotic* mechanism animates us to connect the immediate present to "distant thoughts" while driving. Many films show "the road as space of contemplation" (154). Borden emphasizes that physical journeys are also psychological journeys. Referencing Steven Spielberg's first movie, *Duel*, he explains that driving may connect us with "a primitive inner self" (87). Third, the parallel world of high-speed driving even has the power to plunge the driver into a transcendental transgressive state of being, which may be experienced as "reconfiguration." That means that driving—like dreaming and movie watching—allows us to be at one place and another at the same time. It represents a state *in between* presence and dream, alertness and thoughtful digression, stasis and motion, life and death. In this sense, driving has a nearly *therapeutic* function. It helps "to negotiate the conflicts we feel in our lives, and, to some extent, transcend them through newly constructed attitudes, aspirations, beliefs and perceptions" (47). Finally, Borden affirms that the car is not only a means of transport, but also an important psychological tool "of emancipation, pride, independence, autonomy and self-expression" (47). This is especially validated in cinematographic representations of female drivers: the control of the car is a symbol of independence from the domestic sphere, as he details in a chapter about "Men and ~~Woman~~ Drivers" (24–31). For African Americans, the neutrality and anonymity of the freeway offered protection from small-town violence and prejudices, says Borden (134), but this statement is not based on film sources. The question of driving and racial discrimination in film remains unfortunately rather a blind spot in his book.

Nevertheless, this journey into film history is an important contribution to our understanding of the cultural fascination of cars that are steered by humans. It helps to understand the specific subjectivity drivers produce by holding the steering wheel. *Drive* answers Roland Barthes's call for a mythology of driving, emphasizing that it is "an existential condition whereby the driver seeks to confront, explore, express and produce the self through encountering

the world” (85) around him. The book is not only interesting for researchers working on car culture but for all scholars of mobility who are interested in the question of why people choose a specific mobility device and not another one. It helps to understand the emotional quality of mobility in general.

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#### Note

1. Roland Barthes, “Mythologie de l’automobile,” *Oeuvres complètes* v. 1 1942-1965. Ed. Eric Marty. (Paris: Editions Du Seuil, 1993), 1136-1142.

### **Walking Tour Guides of New York: Unique Ways to Engage with the City**

**Jonathan R. Wynn, *The Tour Guide: Walking and Talking New York* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 226 pp., \$25**

On my daily commute from Brooklyn to The Graduate Center, CUNY, located on New York’s Fifth Avenue, I moved through the same central streets that the author of *The Tour Guide* walked, only a year after the publication of the book. In these walks, as an ethnographer and a researcher interested in tourism mobilities, I always felt the urge to escape the classroom and hop onto one of those red bus tours that populate Fifth Avenue to learn how these official tours represent New York City, the kinds of tourists that enjoyed such excursions, and the labor conditions of those that day after day offered me tickets for a ride. It is from this standpoint that *The Tour Guide* has been an eye-opening reading. The book is a fresh ethnography of New York City from the perspective of walking tour guides, the exact opposite of the corporate tourism industry to which bus tour guides belong, and whose depiction of the city I considered somehow hegemonic. *The Tour Guide* thus offers a unique perspective on walking tourism, a modality of tourism that still has received very little academic attention.

Organized in seven chapters and three rich appendices, *The Tour Guide* is the perfect example of a thick ethnographic description: it provides an in-depth approach to the everyday practices of walking tour guides and the informal labor market to which they belong. And yet, the book is not just about tourism and its intersections with the informal economy; it is also about how this heterogeneous collective made of individuals with “untidy” and “chaotic