Abstract

Framing the city and its experiences as a non-monolithic and non-linear arrangement, "Mapping Thresholds" postulates that the city's "fragments" may be negotiated through a condition of exile. Exile here, is a self-detached, critical perception that "reads" the city "texts" beyond its apparent visual content.

This paper investigates the possibility of locating the space of exile within the space of commodity. The space of exile is conceived as a mental map that critically depicts a physical space. As a mental construct, the space of exile is "built" upon experiences and is a product of urbanist imagination. It will be shown that exile perception is instrumental in critically reinterpreting the mindless space of commodity.

Additionally, it will also be demonstrated that the notion of exile is contingent upon the mechanics of the capitalistic city. For this purpose, the writings of Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin are analyzed to understand the role of exile perception in mid-nineteenth-century Paris - a place and time where early capitalism found its home. This thesis assembles and deciphers the "fragments" gathered from their writings. In the following argument, the fractured structure of urban experience and the expression of exile through allegory are actively engaged. To further contribute, this thesis extends its references to urban spaces which may have contained or provoked such experiences. The ultimate purpose of this exercise is to extrapolate a framework of contexts in which the space of exile may have operated in the last century. The same framework is then hypothetically located in today's city to test the possibilities and limitations of exile as a means of "reading" the contemporary city and its discontents.

Of significance to the notion of exile is the ability to perceive the city from many conceptual positions. Herein lies the strength of exile in its relationship with the city. This paper concludes by presenting the exile vision as a challenging means for a renewed urbanism.