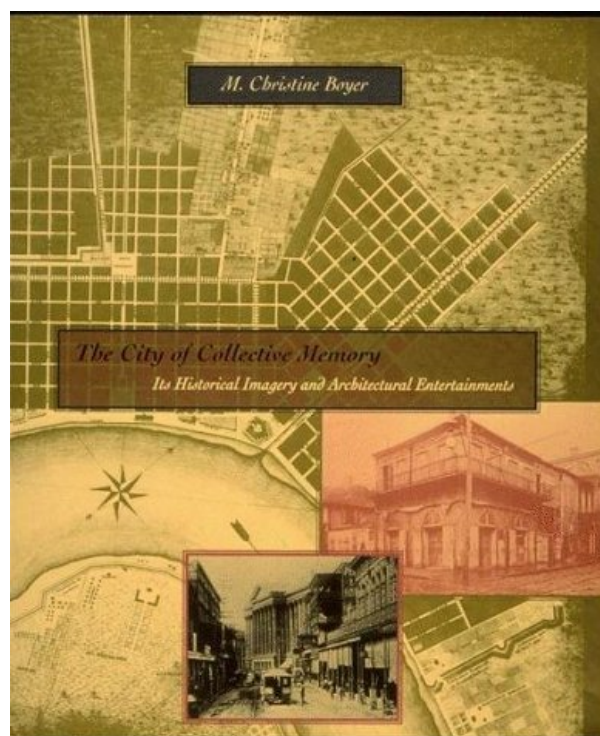
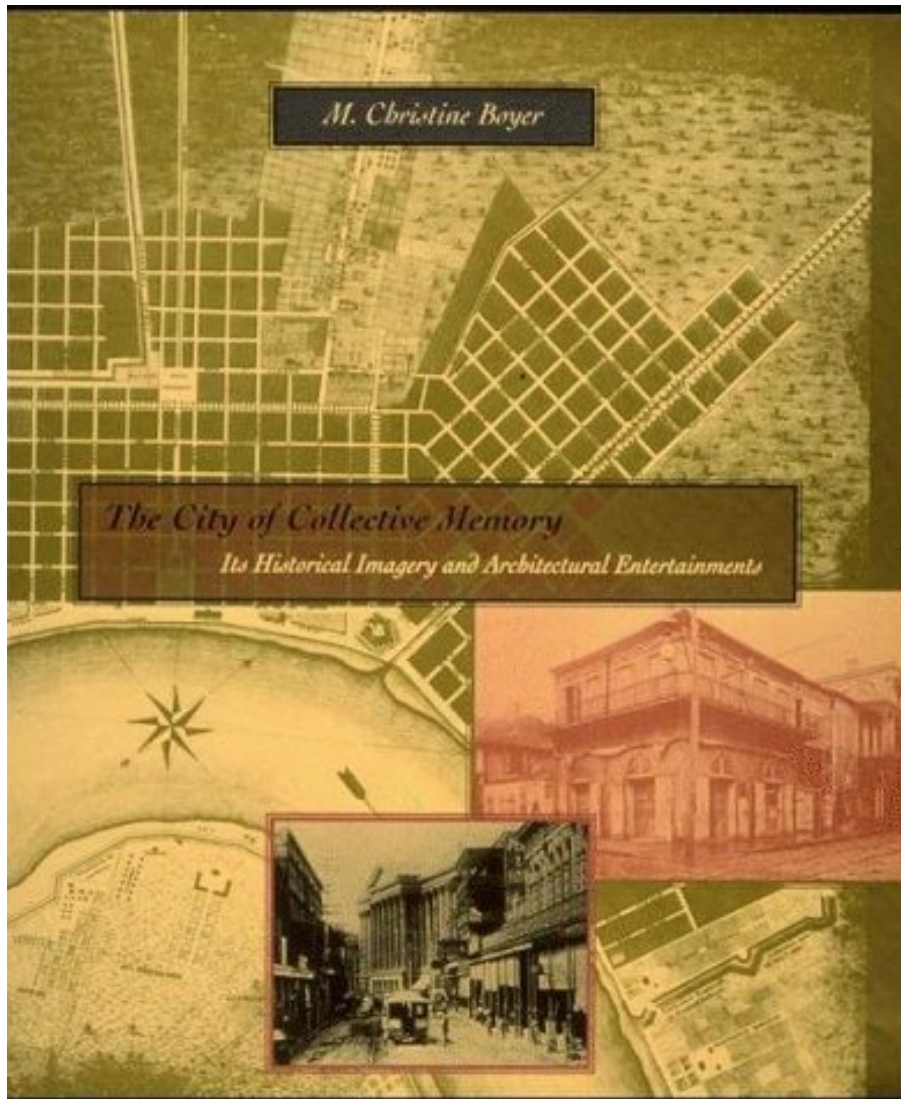


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HISTORICAL IMAGERY AND
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Reading Boyer's provocative, erudite book has the fascination of a city walk when one is never sure what will be next in view...[T]his is assuredly a rich, illuminating book.

(Andrew Mead *The Architects' Journal*)

From the Back Cover

The City Of Collective Memory is a richly illustrated and documented study that pays considerable attention to the normally hidden and unspoken codes that regulate the order imposed on and derived from the city.

About the Author

M. Christine Boyer is William R. Kenan Jr. Professor in the School of Architecture at Princeton University and the author of *Dreaming the Rational City*, *The City of Collective Memory* (both published by the MIT Press), *Le Corbusier: Homme de Lettres*, and other books.

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Christine Boyer faces head-on the crisis of the city in the late twentieth century, taking us on a fascinating journey through theaters and museums, panoramas and maps, buildings and institutions that are used to construct a new reading of the city as a system of representation, a complex cultural entity. Boyer brings together elements and concepts from geography, critical theory, architecture, literature, and painting in a synthetic and readable work that is broad in its reach and original in its insights. What finally emerges is a sense of the city reinvigorated with richness and potential.

The City of Collective Memory describes a series of different visual and mental models by which the urban environment has been recognized, depicted, and planned. Boyer identifies three major "maps": one common to the traditional city -- the city as a work of art; one characteristic of the modern city -- the city as panorama; and one appropriate to the contemporary city -- the city as spectacle. It is a richly illustrated and documented study that pays considerable attention to the normally hidden and unspoken codes that regulate the order imposed on and derived from the city. A wide range of secondary historical literature and theoretical work is considered, with evident debts to structuralist analysis of urban form represented by Aldo Rossi, as well to much post-structuralist criticism from Walter Benjamin to the present.

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Press), Le Corbusier: Homme de Lettres, and other books.

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Language and format

By william haskett

The book is heavily indebted to French literary work of the 1960s...and this tends to overload its language in the direction of ponderousness...and a certain detachment from English....polysyllability was made for it...and a curiosity is that it was set up in Cochin and proofread apparently by a tone-deaf spellcheck program...so that 'bear' becomes 'bare,' and 'monastery' is transmuted into 'monestery...etc. It points to the enormous gap between academese and ordinary speech...which is a pity, because the book is nonetheless worth reading...and takes in a broad swathe of thought about the visible aspects of city and the ways in which this is transmuted and thinned-out in modern and post-modern decades. The distinction between 'memory' (i.e. a living tradition of sense and sensibility about space and its demarcations) and 'history' (a dead sense of record and mechanical or miscellaneous assembly) is grounded in the thought of Walter Benjamin...and rooted in the perceptual moralities of John Ruskin and Patrick Geddes. The book would only have been more useful had its polysyllables been (literally) translated into a prose that ebwhite or jamesthurber would have approved.

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

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By A Customer

this is an excellent text. in my opinion indebted to historical analysis. the author gives great examples of cases and interrelations that city building has had during the years. from the neoclasical revival of greece under Othon's kingdom to the work of rossi. very influenced by the work of Benjamin and the "dialectics of seeing" the text is thought provoking, and that is in a critical way of how we experience the urban environment today. However, and again in my opinion, it is within the conclusion that the text fails to provide some answers to its proposed considerations on contemporary technology.

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