

Reevaluating spaces and locations of everyday urban life in Tokyo as environments of memory, nostalgia and emotions

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In recent years low-rise tenement neighborhoods such as Tsukudajima, Yanaka, Nezu, Sendagi, Asakusa and other areas are being reevaluated as locations where one can still explore Tokyo's historic urban fabric. They have been elevated as genius loci of Tokyo, i.e. unique places possessing an auratic atmosphere, which is regarded as an expression of the essential spirit of the city. Irrespective of their diverse local histories, these areas are considered as embodiments of the history of modern Tokyo, in particular of past forms of urban living and culture. However, the more such urban fabric is disappearing due to the impact of modernization and globalization, the more they are filled with emotions of nostalgia. These diverse processes and the tensions that come along with them are reflected in the visual and literary representations of Tokyo. Very often feelings of disconnection from the past are combined with a longing for spaces and places that maintain a sense of continuity with the past. The focus is often on unspectacular, small-scale areas of everyday life in Tokyo and the transformations ? from modernization to erasure ? inscribed in these places. To explore such tensions, I will examine recent examples of what I call *spatial (auto)biographies*, including Fukuda Kazuya's *Tokyo style* (2008), Ishizeki Zenjiro's *Yoshimoto Takaaki Tokyo* (2005) and Kobayashi Nobuhiko's *My map of Tokyo* (2013). These works are centered on the intense interplay between an individual's life in Tokyo and memories that incorporate appropriations of the built environment and representations of history. Through inscribing an individual's life into the city historical, cultural and topographical layers of Tokyo can be unveiled. Refracted by memory, feelings of nostalgia and melancholy, the (auto)biographies shed light on each author's own place in the history of Tokyo.

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