
Lynch Debord: About Two Psychogeographies¹

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Abstract

Psychogeography emerged entirely independently in Paris in the 1950s and in the Boston area in the 1950s and 1960s, in the wildly disparate practices of the Situationists and of planners and geographers. At the same time that Guy Debord was creating psychogeography in Paris, MIT planning professor Kevin Lynch was laying the groundwork for what at Clark University in the late 1960s became psychogeography for David Stea and his students. Both practices were equally committed to the development of an objective description of the relationship between the urban environment and the psychic life of individuals, both depended heavily on walking as a method, and both produced maps that have become iconic.

Keywords: psychogeography, Situationists, Guy Debord, Kevin Lynch, David Stea, Clark University

Résumé

La psychogéographie est née de manière complètement indépendante à Paris dans les années 1950 ainsi que dans la région de Boston dans les années 1950 et 1960, avec les pratiques très disparates des situationnistes, et de planificateurs et de géographes. En même temps que Guy Debord créait la psychogéographie à Paris, Kevin Lynch, professeur en urbanisation au MIT, établissait les bases de ce qui allait devenir la psychogéographie pour David Stea et ses étudiants de l'Université Clark, vers la fin des années 1960. Ces méthodes cherchaient toutes les deux à décrire objectivement la relation entre l'environnement urbain et la vie psychique des gens. De plus, elles utilisaient grandement la marche comme méthode et elles ont toutes deux engendré des cartes qui sont devenues iconiques.

Mots clés : psychogéographie, situationnistes, Guy Debord, Kevin Lynch, David Stea, Université Clark

In front of me, on the desk where I write, I've assembled a bunch of instruments useful in measuring the environment, instruments that I've found around the house. In front of me, on the desk where I write, I've assembled a tape measure, a yardstick, a stopwatch, a watch, a goniometer and an arm protractor, a clinometer, a map measure, a compass, a wall thermometer, a pocket thermometer, a percentage protractor, a level, a plumb, a light metre, a camera, a pocket scale, a postage scale, a barometer, a measuring cup, a set of measuring spoons, a pedometer, a stud finder, and a passel of questionnaires. Some of them, like the pedometer, no longer work, but still I hold on to them. Others, like a couple of the questionnaires,

never worked at all, but even these I am loath to throw away. All of them have told me, or promised to tell me, something about my world, and since the world is something I'm eager to know about, I'm not eager to part with these instruments, functioning, flawed, or broken down. It's 84°F where I sit at 11:30:36 in the morning. It is nine minutes and 47 seconds since I typed the first word in this paragraph.

There's another instrument in this room, and I am it. I would have said it was stuffy where I sit and that half an hour had passed since I started writing, although my stopwatch now says it's been 11 minutes and 38 seconds at, according to my other watch, 11:34 on the nose. I won't

argue with my instruments. They're measuring different things than I. My thermometer knows nothing of the humidity oppressing me; my watches, recording the pressure of their drive springs, know nothing of the pressure of trying to say something with words.

Who should say which is superior instrumentation? Not I, certainly. My watches and I, we're holding up the world against different standards, but both of these are interesting and valuable and important.² Fifty years ago a couple of sciences emerged that used humans as instruments for learning about the environment. If a science involves the study of the physical world and its manifestations (especially by using systematic observation and experiment), or is an activity that is the object of careful study, or is carried out according to a developed method, then certainly psychogeography was a science.

Two Psychogeographies

As I say, there were two of these. The first, notoriously, was the psychogeography developed by the Lettrists, actually by members of the Lettrist International, some of whom would soon enough begin calling themselves Situationists. In fact, it was Guy Debord (see Figure 1) who introduced the idea – together with the name “psychogeography” – to refer to “some provisional terrains of observation, including the observation of certain processes of chance and predictability in the streets.”³ In his 1955 paper “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,” Debord argued that “psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”⁴

Ten years later, wholly unaware of Situationist psychogeography, the psychologist Robert J. Beck and the geographer Gilbert F. White, both then at the University of Chicago, used the term in a grant proposal for studying something similar.⁵ In 1966, White's colleague, the geographer Robert W. Kates, and the psychologist Joachim Wohlwill, both at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts (where Beck would soon come to teach), edited a special issue of the *Journal of Social Issues* titled *Man's Response to the Physical Environment*.⁶ In 1967, the psychologist David Stea, by then also at Clark, offered what was undoubtedly the first university course in psychogeography. Cross-listed as Psychology 207 and Geography 207, it was formally called Behavioral Science and the Environment and said “psychography” on the syllabus; but it was universally known as, and soon formally called, “psychogeography.” The following year, Ingrid Hansen sat for the world's first master's comprehensive in psychogeography.⁷ For five years the field flourished, producing a number of theses and dissertations, but it mutated fairly rapidly into environmental psychology, environmental



Figure 1. Guy Ernest Debord (Photo: Verso Press. Despite multiple requests from the author, the copyright holder did not reciprocate communication when permission to use this image was requested.)

cognition, environmental modelling, participatory design, and other splinters.⁸ A faculty seminar that it spawned, soon enough a faculty–student seminar, was responsible for launching the radical geography journal *Antipode*.⁹

Situationist Psychogeography

Despite their manifold divergences and sharply different forms of generalization, the Situationist and Clark psychogeographies had a common interest in the city. Debord's introduction of psychogeography occurred in his “Introduction to a Critique of *Urban Geography*,” after all; and one of the Situationists' founding texts – which called for life as a continuous *dérive* (literally “drift”) – was Ivan Chtcheglov's “Formulary for a New Urbanism.”¹⁰

The *dérive* was the essential psychogeographic method. As defined in the inaugural issue of the *Internationale situationniste*, the *dérive* was “a mode of experimental behavior

linked to the condition of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances.”¹¹ Situationists used the term “ambiance” to refer to the feeling or mood associated with a place, to its character, tone, or the effect or appeal it might have; but they also used it to refer to the place itself, especially to the small, neighbourhood-sized chunks of the city they called *unités d’ambiance* or unities of ambiance, parts of the city with an especially powerful urban atmosphere. But ambiances could also be fleeting, as Debord acknowledged:

The sudden change of ambiance in a street within the space of a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres; the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground); the appealing or repelling character of certain places – all this seems to be neglected.¹²

The Situationists’ objective was to employ the *dérive* to rectify this neglect by discovering unities of ambiance, and in this way to establish a basis for reconstructing the city as a terrain of passion.

Debord wrote about the *dérive* at length in his “Theory of the Dérive” in the second issue of the *Internationale situationniste*: “The *dérive* entails playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects; which completely distinguishes it from the classical notions of the journey and the stroll.”¹³ The *dérive*’s antecedents, unhesitatingly acknowledged, included the Saturday night wanderings of Thomas De Quincey (“I used often, on Saturday nights, after I had taken opium, to wander forth, without much regarding the direction or the distance . . .”¹⁴) and André Breton’s Surrealist romance, *Nadja* (“I don’t know why it should be precisely here that my feet take me, here that I almost invariably go without specific purpose, without anything to induce me but this obscure clue: namely that it (?) will happen here”¹⁵).

But unlike the walks taken by De Quincey and Breton, the *dérive* was usually done in small groups: “One can *dérive* alone,” Debord acknowledged, “but all indications are that the most fruitful numerical arrangement consists of several small groups of two or three people who have reached the same awakening of consciousness, since the cross-checking of these different groups’ impressions makes it possible to arrive at objective conclusions.” For a limited time – the average duration of a *dérive* was a day – the members of these groups were to drop “their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by attractions of the terrain.” Unlike the random walks taken by Surrealists, a *dérive* was anything but random: “From the *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points

and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.”¹⁶ By letting themselves be drawn through the city *by the city*, the Situationists felt they could discover its unities of ambiance.

Situationist Psychogeographic Maps

Debord and his Situationist colleague Asger Jorn made two maps of Paris, the *Guide psychogéographique de Paris* (1956; see Figure 2) and *The Naked City* (1957; see Figure 3).¹⁷ The *Guide* was subtitled *Discours sur les passions de l’amour*, below which it said, “pentes psychogéographiques de la dérive et localisation d’unités d’ambiance” (“psychogeographic slopes of the drift and the location of unities of ambiance”). The unities of ambiance appeared on the map as fragments of commercial street maps carefully cut out to indicate each unity’s defences and exits.¹⁸ The psychogeographic slopes were symbolized by red arrows indicating the forces the city exerted on drifters freed from other motivations for moving: drifters would be pulled in the direction of the arrows from one unity of ambiance to another.¹⁹ The weight, shape, and patterning of the arrows indicated the lengths and strengths of the psychogeographic slopes.²⁰

The Naked City’s subtitle read *Illustration de l’hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographie. Plaques tournantes* – literally hinges or railway turntables – were what Situationists called those unities of ambiance from which the city could pull one in many different directions; that is, *plaques tournantes* were unities of ambiance that functioned as psychogeographic switching stations. The old market at Les Halles was a *plaque tournante*. So was the old Plateau Beaubourg. Debord’s invocation of objectivity was not idle. If, as Simon Sadler says, “a sense of the wealth of information included in these maps dawns only slowly,” it is also true that

the infinite care with which they were cut implies that every street integral to each unity, and every street bordering it, was walked and considered . . . The plethora of arrows implied a massive number of permutations for drift, and Jorn and Debord’s wish to squeeze so much psychogeographic information onto the map may account for their decision to explode the fragments, freeing room on the paper. If Situationists spent as much time drifting as they claimed, then it is possible that all these permutations were tested. And the precision of the map was achieved only by some tough-mindedness about which streets were truly capable of transforming urban consciousness.²¹

Clark Psychogeography

Unities of ambiance, drifting, and psychogeography were, it is important to say, but facets of a Situationist revolu-



Figure 2. *Guide Psychogéographique de Paris: Discours sur les passions de l'amour*, par. G.-E. Debord, édité par le Bauhaus Imaginiste, printed in Denmark by Permild & Rosengreen, 1956 (Map: RKD, The Hague. Despite multiple requests from the author, the copyright holder did not reciprocate communication when permission to use this image was requested.)

tion in everyday living, and Situationists generalized these ideas in Situationist directions.²² Nor were these two maps the only form in which Situationist ideas and findings were recorded and disseminated. Indeed, there were veritable volcanoes of letters, broadsides, leaflets, journals (*Potlatch*, *Internationale situationniste*), exhibitions, conferences, provocations, books (*Society of the Spectacle*), and films erupting more or less continuously from the early to mid-1950s of the pre-Situationist Lettrist International through the early 1970s, when Debord disbanded the Situationist International.²³ I have no wish to ignore or marginalize any of this, but here I am concerned with the parallels that emerged in Clark psychogeography 10 years later and in its precursors at the very same time

the Situationists were engaged in their experiments. Here I refer especially to the work of Kevin Lynch. In describing his long road to Clark, David Stea (see Figure 4) has insisted that his primary influence was Kevin Lynch: “My conversations with Lynch from 1964 to 1966,” Stea has written, “made me into a ‘cognitive mapper’ and encouraged me to pursue research on urban imagery while I was a Visiting Professor of Architecture at the National University of Mexico in 1966–67,” the year just before he came to Clark. At Clark, Stea introduced his psychogeography students to Lynch’s *Image of the City*, and for some this was decisive (see Figure 5). I, for example, left for Mexico almost immediately after reading *Image of the City*, where, in San Cristobal las Casas, I



Figure 3. G.-E. Debord, *The Naked City: Illustration de l'hypothèse [sic] des plaques tournantes en psychogeographique [sic]* (1957), originally bound into Asger Jorn, *Pour la Forme* (Paris: Internationale situationniste, 1958) (Map: RKD, The Hague. Despite multiple requests from the author, the copyright holder did not reciprocate communication when permission to use this image was requested.)



Figure 4. David Stea at the Clark University School of Geography Field Camp in Barranquitas, Puerto Rico, 1968 (Photo: Denis Wood)

replicated what I could of Lynch's work. I returned the following summer to expand the work into scales and modalities – auditory and olfactory – that Lynch hadn't dealt with, and collected further "mental maps." These turned into my master's thesis, *Fleeting Glimpses*, which laid the ground for my doctoral dissertation, *I Don't Want To, But I Will*, on how mental maps of London, Rome, and Paris evolved in American teenagers in their first experience of these cities. In 1971 Stea and I published *A Cognitive Atlas: Explorations into the Psychological Geography of Four Mexican Cities*, and we were far from alone in being affected this way by Lynch's example.²⁴

Kevin Lynch (see Figure 6) was a city planner who taught at MIT from 1948 to 1978, though he continued to teach into the 1980s. Lynch was later to say that four motives informed his work on the image of the city: an interest in

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY 207a

CLARK UNIVERSITY

Dr. David Stea
with Stuart P. Rubinow and Roger A. Hart

COURSE OUTLINE - SEMESTER I
FALL 1969

Description

An investigation of human and animal behavior related to aspects of the physical environment with emphasis on social interaction, territoriality, density, movement, and migration. Offered jointly by the School of Geography and the Department of Psychology. A lecture course with discussion groups, "problem sessions," and projects involving original thought and research. Open to Juniors and above, Sophomores by special permission.

Figure 5. The heading of the outline for David Stea's course at Clark University: Behavioral Science and the Environment, Psychogeography 207a, 1969. This would have been the third year the course was offered.

the connection between psychology and the urban environment; fascination with the aesthetics of the city at a time when most planners dismissed them as a "matter of taste"; wonder about how to evaluate a city; and a commitment to pay "more attention to those who live in a place – to the actual human experience of a city."²⁵ In 1952 Lynch taught a seminar that, among other things, explored how people found their way around in cities, issues he continued to think about during an ensuing year of travel. In 1953 he pulled his thoughts together in the only recently published "Notes on City Satisfaction," which opens with, "We are concerned here with the psychological and sensual effects of the physical form of the city."²⁶ In 1956 Lynch co-authored "Some Childhood Memories of the City," which opened with the question, "What does a child notice in his city?"²⁷ In 1959 he co-authored "A Walk Around the Block," which opened as follows:

What does the ordinary individual perceive in his landscape? What makes the strongest impression on him and how does he react to it? In recent research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology we have recorded the impressions of people as they walked through the city streets. Other studies of urban perception have been made, but we believe this to be first where responses have been recorded while actually moving through the city itself.²⁸

This work was conducted as part of a project Lynch directed with Gyogy Kepes from 1954 through 1959,

which was designed to unveil the elements in a city that were important in its perception.

Though Lynch and the people whose responses he recorded did walk around the city, they did not *dérive*. In fact, most of what Lynch learned came from a series of map-drawing and other tasks he set 30 residents of



Figure 6. Kevin Lynch as he appeared on the front flap of the dust jacket of the first edition of *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960) (Photo © 1960 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press)

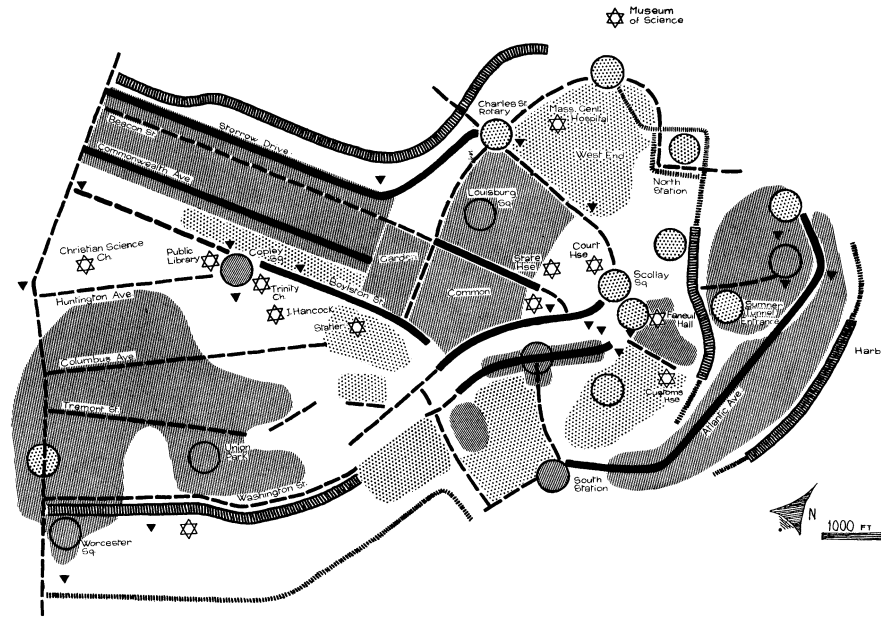
FIG. 38. *The visual form of Boston as seen in the field*

Figure 7. Fig. 38 (p. 147) from *The Image of the City*: "The visual form of Boston as seen in the field." The map appears twice in the book, on page 19 and again on page 147. On the latter page it is surrounded by three other maps: "The Boston image as derived from verbal interviews," "... as derived from sketch maps," and "the distinctive elements of Boston." The effect was literally enchanting. (Map © 1960 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press)

Boston, 15 of Jersey City, and 15 of Los Angeles. It was these studies that he described in 1960 in *The Image of the City* (see Figure 7), summarizing his results in a series of provocative maps that very rapidly became iconic. In part this was a tribute to the attractiveness of the maps themselves – as the attention paid to the *Guide Psycho-géographique* and *The Naked City* is in part a tribute to their attractiveness – but Lynch's maps were also part of an effort to come to grips with the visual quality of American cities by studying the mental images of them held by their inhabitants, and the sense that these maps were in some way mental maps gave them an auratic power that Lynch had surely never anticipated.

In addition to walking around the city, analysing impressions, and mapping the results, Lynch paralleled the Situationists' interest in unities of ambiance and the spaces among which they floated. In an appendix to *The Image of the City*, Lynch provided detailed analyses of the "highly identifiable district of Beacon Hill" (see Figure 8) – a unity of ambiance if ever there was one (whether it would have appealed to the Situationists or not) – and "the confusing node of Scollay Square," which Lynch's respondents described as "shapeless, hard to visualize,

[and] 'just another crossing of streets'" (but which with its "low-class' amusements" might have appealed to the Situationists). Lynch and his colleagues didn't just walk these streets, they obsessively mapped them, producing maps of steep streets, street cross-sections, inset doorways, brick sidewalks, bow front windows, ornamental ironwork, and even the sub-districts of Beacon Hill, an analysis that surely would have spoken to Debord.

The year that Stea brought Lynch to Clark also saw the publication of David Lowenthal's *Environmental Perception and Behavior*.²⁹ Lowenthal's "Geography, Experience, and Imagination," which had legitimated the study within geography of the world we perceive, experience, and act in, had fired geography five years earlier.³⁰ His slim volume now suggested the dimensions of what was soon to be psychogeography. There was an article there by Beck on spatial meaning, one by Kates on the perception of storm hazards, and one co-authored by Lynch on the view from the road.³¹ Two Clark psychologists, Seymour Wapner and Heinz Werner, had just edited a volume on body perception,³² and Clark geographer Martyn Bowden was insisting on the importance of J.K. Wright's 1947 paper, "*Terrae Incognitae: The Place of Imagination in*

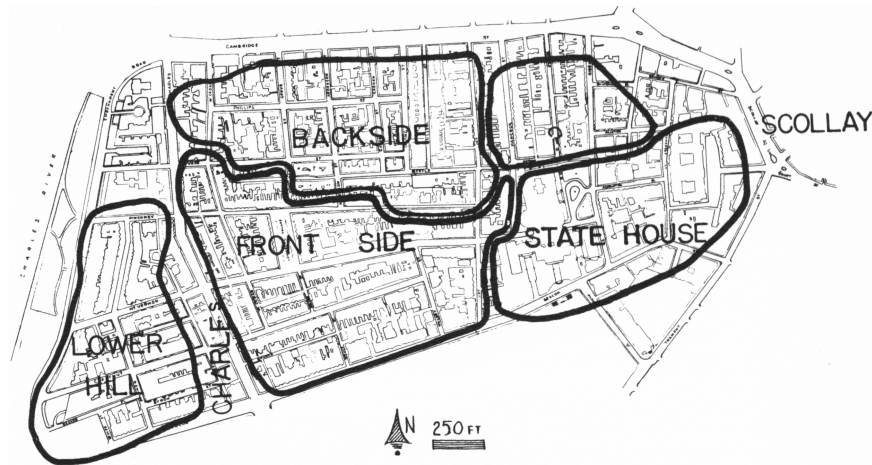


FIG. 56. *Sub-districts on Beacon Hill*

Figure 8. Lynch's Fig. 54: *Sub-districts on Beacon Hill*. These are Debord's *unités d'ambiance* in all but name. (Map © 1960 Massachusetts Institute of Technology, by permission of The MIT Press)

Geography” (which had just been republished in *Human Nature in Geography*), with its invocation of *geosophy*, the study of geographical knowledge from any and all points of view. This, Wright explained, “has to do in large degree with subjective conceptions. Indeed, even those parts of it that deal with scientific geography must reckon with human desires, motives, and prejudices.”³³ It was time for geosophy, perception studies, and mental maps to fuse into psychogeography.

Clark Psychogeographic Maps

In the end, psychogeography took in too much territory, and “mental maps” was where people tended to congregate.³⁴ Contributory here was the publication in 1966 of Peter Gould’s paper, “On Mental Maps,” whose findings about the perception of residential desirability were displayed as contour lines on maps.³⁵ For a moment in the late 1960s it seemed as though we could just slice heads open and inspect the maps lying therein, despite the fact that the things we were calling mental maps ranged from the sketch maps we solicited from people; through maps like Lynch’s, Stea’s, and mine that summarized the content analysis of numbers of sketch maps; to maps like Gould’s, which were no more than graphic displays of statistical analyses of rank-order lists people had made. None of this was wholly divorced from the interests of the Situationists, who, after all, found in Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe’s urban social anthropology “examples of modern poetry, capable of provoking sharp emotional reactions,”³⁶ and who imagined that “even Burgess’s theory of Chicago’s social activities as being distributed in

distinct concentric zones, will undoubtedly prove useful in developing *dérives*.” But it was nevertheless very far from Situationist psychogeography.

Yet in some of the Clark work there were uncanny similarities to that of the Situationists. Trying to understand how mental maps developed, I accompanied a group of American teenage tourists on their first trip to Europe and got them to draw me maps of London, Rome, and Paris on successive days (see Figure 9). Altogether I collected more than 300 maps from these kids. In my dissertation, *I Don’t Want To, But I Will*, I approached these maps from a variety of directions. I made Lynch-like maps of the places the kids put on their maps that allowed me to see how their knowledge changed with experience. I also studied what the kids knew about individual features – like the Thames, Tiber, and Seine – and how this, too, changed over time. I looked at the way the maps were organized, whether features floated around or were connected, and how connected they were. And I tried to understand something about the relationship between the kids’ ideas of the structures of London, Rome, and Paris, and the ideas of commercial map-makers.³⁷

To do this last, I gridded up a commercial map so that I could assign grid coordinates to every feature on each of the kids’ maps (see Figure 10). If their maps were structured like the commercial maps, the grids I would get by connecting the coordinates on the kids’ maps would resemble the evenly spaced, right-angle grid I’d drawn over the commercial map. It was easy to see that the kids’ maps not only didn’t much resemble the commercial map but varied widely among themselves. They also

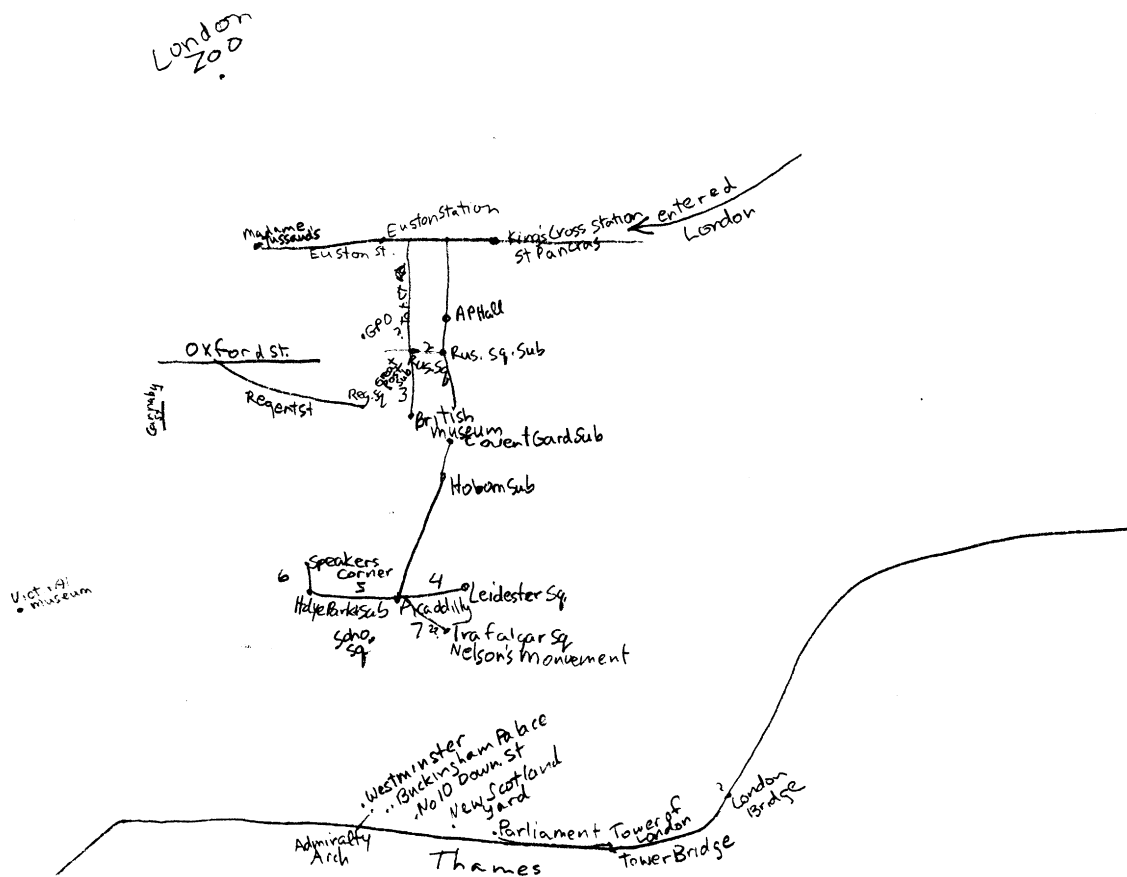


Figure 9. One of the maps I collected from the American teenage tourists I accompanied around Europe: Janine Eber's first map of London, drawn after about two days' experience, summer 1971.

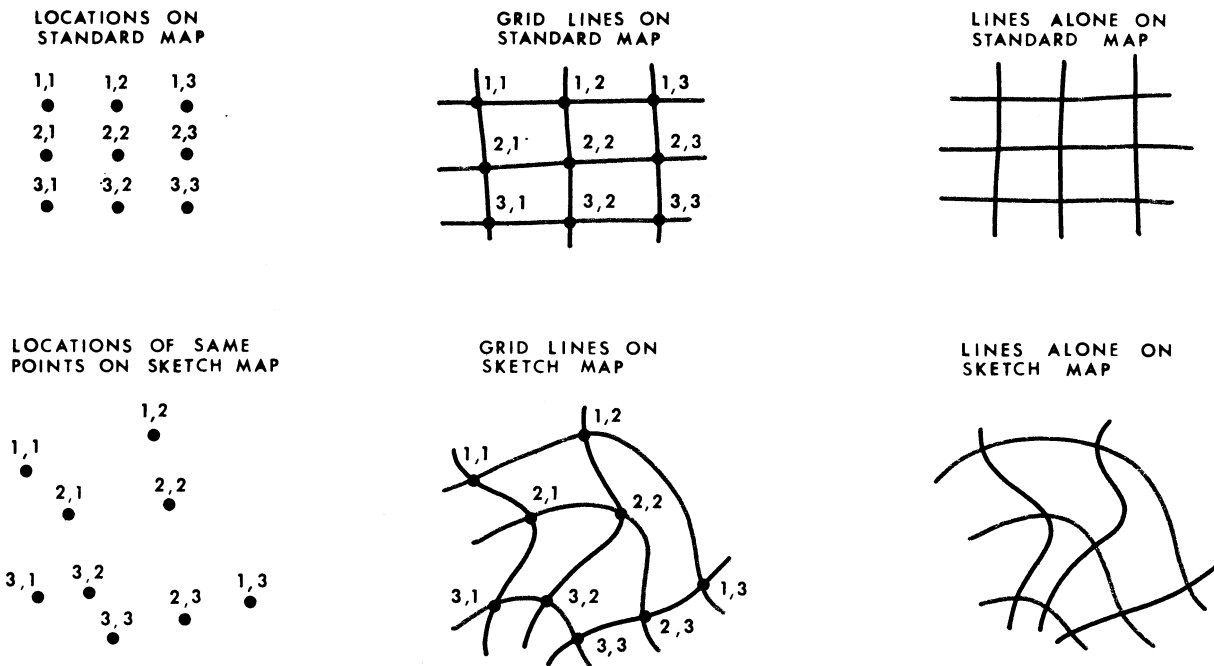


Figure 10. The simple method for transforming the sketch maps into grids. The grids reveal something about the sort of sense the students might have been making of the layout of the city.

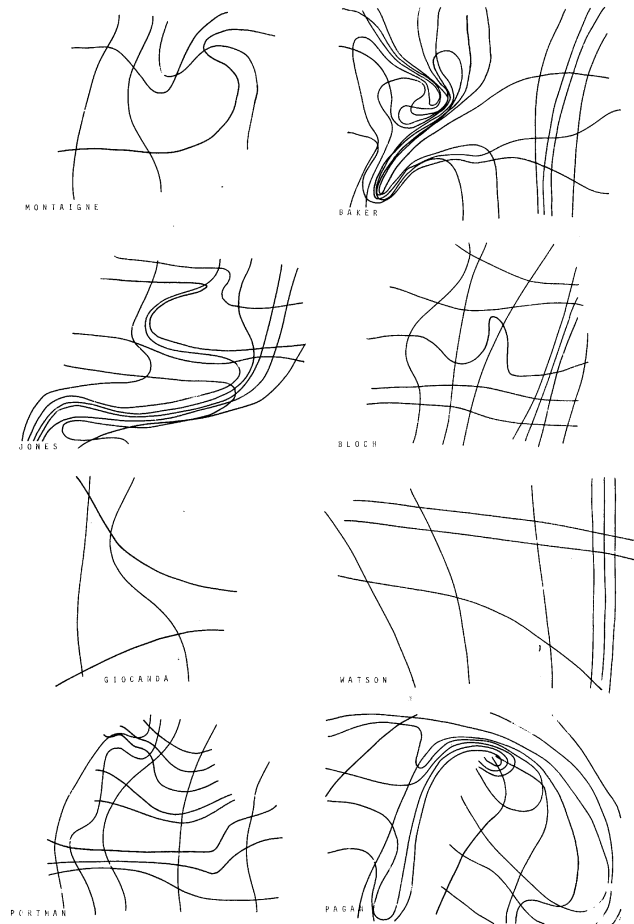


Figure 11. Looking at eight students' grid transformations suggests something about the varied sense they had of London after a couple days' experience, as well as about the different ways they approached the map-making task.

changed with experience, in most cases growing more like the commercial map (see Figure 11). Looking at these grid transformations, as I called them, I had the feeling that I was looking at the very surface of the kids' mental maps. And as Debord had when contemplating the psychogeographic relief of Paris, I too reached for a topographic metaphor.

"The study of topography has developed an interesting and extensive vocabulary that we may borrow freely and apply to the study of mental map surfaces," I wrote:

It is particularly relevant in a study such as this, which by virtue of collecting maps through time, is able to take a genetic viewpoint. The basic mental map/geomorphology analogy is quite rich. Thus novel experience may be compared with the tectonic activity of the earth's crust, the effects of memory compared with the process of erosion, and many geomorphic features compared with many features of the mental map surface. Several proximate grid lines, the result

of two environmentally distant features being placed next to one another, can be understood to represent a steep slope or cliff. Consideration of these grid lines as a perceptual or cognitive cliff gives us a handle on this phenomenon. It might be designated a p-cliff ...³⁸

It thus became possible to say about the London maps that if the first set showed us a mental landscape characterized by geomorphic youth, then the last set showed us "a much older landscape, characterized by gentler slopes in the p-cliffs and a general movement toward a flat p-peneplain."³⁹

Situationist and Clark Psychogeographies

Despite their similarities, my p-slopes and Debord's psychogeographic slopes referred to different, if potentially related, aspects of urban experience. By letting themselves drift, the Situationists rolled down psychogeographic slopes of attraction from one unity of ambiance to another. By comparing the kids' maps with maps one could buy in a store, my p-slopes became measures of confusion about the structure of the city, the p-slopes steepening with uncertainty. Debord and Jorn's arrows tracked desirability; my contours plotted knowledge.

These differences can be generalized to those between Situationist and Clark psychogeography. To a certain extent, both sciences grew from a deep dissatisfaction with post-World War II urban-planning practices. Situationists were implacably opposed to the reconstruction of Paris being carried out during the 1950s, and Situationist psychogeography constituted an alternative way of thinking about the city. But to the extent that Clark psychogeography is derived from Lynch's work, it too represents an effort to describe another approach to thinking about the city. The obvious difference is in their situations: the Situationists outside the planning profession and so free to think about the problem as dictated by their roots in Surrealism and their commitment to dialectical materialism; Lynch within the profession, and so shackled to thinking through the problem from the perspective of city government, with its grab-bag of service provision (especially of roads, sewer and water), condemnation, ordinances, and incentives.

Consequently, Lynch focused his research on aspects of the city that could be shaped by city government. The controlling characteristics of people's images that Lynch attended to were legibility and imageability, both of which government could shape, the first through the planning of roads and other macro-features of the city, the second through zoning ordinances and incentives. Understanding the public's image of the city would enable planners to make the city both more imageable and legible, and this would make the city easier to negotiate and thus less

intimidating and more friendly. Civic virtue should rise. This is a caricature of Lynch's thought, and if it hardly dominated the work of Clark psychogeographers, it was nevertheless a persistent theme, not only in the ongoing concern with imageability and legibility but in practice – Stea, for example, leaving Clark for the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at UCLA, me for a career in the Department of Landscape Architecture in the School of Design at North Carolina State University. That is, whatever the orientation toward particular contemporary planning practices, Clark psychogeography was largely complicit with the idea of planning, and at best aimed at ameliorating some of its destructive consequences.

Situationists, on the other hand, aimed at nothing less than the collective takeover of the world,⁴⁰ and, instead of ameliorating the situation, aimed at provoking its crisis on every occasion by every means. "The first of these means," Debord wrote, "are undoubtedly the systematic provocative dissemination of a host of proposals tending to turn the whole of life into an exciting game," and much of Situationist psychogeography had precisely this exciting character.⁴¹ As for urban planning, the Situationists regarded it, with aesthetics, "as a rather neglected branch of criminology," "imposed by means of a blackmail of utility,"⁴² where utility was the very last thing Situationist psychogeography had on its mind. As Simon Sadler has said,

Psychogeography directed us to obscure places, to elusive ambient effects and partial artistic and literary precedents for the sublime. If we felt frustrated at the effort required to put them all together, we had missed the point. Psychogeography was a reverie, a state of mind ... It represented a drift from the ideal and the rational to the extraordinary and the revolutionary.⁴³

Except in the refuge corners, Clark psychogeography represented a march *toward* the ideal and the rational.

Yet despite this fundamental divergence, the two psychogeographies were equally marked by seriousness of intent. Both elaborated methods that ensured reproducible results and a remarkable degree of objectivity. And both sciences accepted, in fact celebrated, the necessity of using human beings to measure salient dimensions of the environment. Cities, they both seemed to take for granted, as human artefacts for human living, needed human instruments to measure them. And if Situationist and Clark psychogeography measured different things, they both measured human things. None of the instruments on my desk could begin to measure even the components of unities of ambiance and psychogeographic slope, of imageability and legibility. Only people wandering around cities could do these things, with their tape recorders and questionnaires, or just drifting, drifting.

Author Information

Denis Wood holds a PhD in geography from Clark University, where he studied map-making under George McCleary. In 1992 he curated the award-winning Power of Maps exhibition for the Smithsonian Institution and published the best-selling book of the same title (with Guilford Press). More recently he co-authored *Making Maps* with John Krygier (Guilford, 2005, 2011); *The Natures of Maps* with John Fels (University of Chicago Press, 2008); and *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (Guilford, 2010). His *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas* is scheduled for a 2010 release (from Siglio Press). A former professor of design at North Carolina State University, Wood is currently an independent scholar living in Raleigh, NC.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented as an illustrated lecture during the 2006 Conflux at the Lucky Cat in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. I'd like to thank Katherine d'Agnasio for inviting me to the Conflux and Arthur Krim for reviewing the paper. For a description of the conditions under which I delivered the paper, see Geoff Nicholson, *The Lost Art of Walking: The History, Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Pedestrianism* (New York: Riverhead, 2008), 145–61, esp. 158–60.
2. I've adapted this introduction from Denis Wood, "Human Instrumentality and Environmental Evaluation," *Student Publication of the School of Design* (North Carolina State University, Raleigh) 25 (1977): 38–48.
3. Guy Debord, "Introduction à une critique de la géographie urbaine," *Les Lèvres Nues* 6 (1955), reprinted in Gérard Berreby, ed., *Documents relatifs à la fondation de l'Internationale situationniste: 1948–1957* (Paris: Éditions Allia, 1985): 288–92. I've quoted from Ken Knabb's translation, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," in *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secretes, 1981): 5–8.
4. Ibid.
5. Robert J. Beck, personal communication, Robert J. Beck, embedded in a letter about the origins of psychogeography at Clark that I wrote to Saul Cohen on 23 November 1971.
6. R.W. Kates and J.F. Wohlwill, *Man's Response to the Physical Environment* (special issue), *Journal of Social Issues* 22/4 (1966). The breadth of topics – "The Psychological Aspects of Urbanology," "The Role of Space in Animal Sociology," "The Contribution of Environmental Research to Wilderness Policy Decisions" – is indicative of the flailing for a guiding theory.
7. The questions on this exam – "What is meant by the 'innate-acquired' controversy among theorists and

- researchers on territoriality?"; "It has been contended that the use of the term 'environmental perception' by geographers leads to confusion. What appears to you to be the distinction between 'perception' as used by psychologists and by geographers?"; and "What can you say about the possible role of language in environment-behavior relationships?" among others - continues to point to the dispersion of interests at this stage.
8. Among the theses were Mary Ellen Muir, *The Use of Aerial Photographs as an Aid in Teaching Map Skills in the First Grade* (1970); Denis Wood, *Fleeting Glimpses: Adolescent and Other Images of that Entity Called San Cristobal las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico* (1971); Roger Hart, *Aerial Geography: An Experiment in Elementary Education* (1971); and Margaret Tindal, *The Home Range of Black Elementary School Children* (1971), and among the dissertations, Borden Dent, *Perceptual Organization and Thematic Map Communication* (1970), and Denis Wood, *I Don't Want To, But I Will* (1973) - all of which were published by either the Clark University Cartographic Laboratory, Worcester, or the Environmental Research Group, Chicago.
 9. According to David Stea's memories as recounted in David Stea, "Clark Remembered," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 7/4 (1987): 379-88, 380. Others remember this differently, or at a different time. All the articles in this special Clark University issue are concerned with the work done at Clark in the late 1960s and early 1970s.
 10. Although "Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau" first appeared in *Internationale Situationniste* 1 (June 1958): 15-20, Chtcheglov had drafted the text under the pseudonym Gilles Ivain in 1953. I've quoted from Ken Knabb's translation, "Formulary for a New Urbanism," *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Secrets, 1995): 1-4. Chtcheglov was later to "repudiate the Formulary's propaganda for a continual dérive," remarking of the 1953-1954 dérive of three or four months that "It's a miracle it didn't kill us" (Ivan Chtcheglov, "Letters from Afar," *Internationale Situationniste* 9 (1964): 38). Again the translation is Knabb's, in *ibid.*, 372.
 11. "Problèmes préliminaires à la construction d'une situation," *Internationale Situationniste* 1 (June 1958): 11-13. Again I quote from the Knabb translation: "Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation," in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Secrets, 1995): 43-45, 45.
 12. Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," trans. Knabb, 6. Ambiances could also change over the course of a day.
 13. Guy Debord, "Théorie de la dérive" (1956), *Les Lèvres Nues* 9 (1958), reprint: *Internationale Situationniste* 2: 19-23. I quote from Knabb's translation: "Theory of the Dérive," in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Secrets, 1995): 50-54, 50.
 14. Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821; reprint, New York: Dover, 1995), 41. De Quincey's description of his walks, among the poor and into veritable "terrae incognitae" that had not "yet been laid down in the modern charts of London," is the high point of the *Confessions*.
 15. André Breton, *Nadja* (1921), trans. Richard Howard (reprint, New York: Grove, 1960), 32. Forty-four photographs, largely of Parisian street scenes, added a dimension to the book that would have appealed to Debord, who, like most of the Situationists, had little time for the Surrealists: "Everyone is the son of many fathers," said Michèle Bernstein, a Situationist and the wife of Debord. "There was the father we hated, which was surrealism. And there was the father we loved, which was dada. We were the children of both." Bernstein is quoted in Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 181.
 16. All quotations in this paragraph are from Debord (trans. Knabb), "Theory of the Dérive," 50-51.
 17. G.-E. Debord, *Guide psychogéographique de Paris : discours sur les passions de l'amour*, édité par le Bauhaus Imaginiste, printed in Denmark by Permild & Rosen-green, 1956. The best readily available reproduction is that in Robert Storr, *Mapping* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1994), 33, which is large enough to make out, sharp and in colour (although misdated to 1957). The recent reproduction in Denis Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century," *Imago Mundi* 57 (2005): 35-54, 40, is larger, but black and white (more accurately, grey) and fuzzy. The best readily available reproduction of *The Naked City : illustration de l'hypothèse [sic] des plaques tournantes en psychogéographique [sic]* (1957) is in Simon Sadler's essential *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 60. Apparently *The Naked City* was bound into Jorn's *Pour la forme* (Paris: Internationale situationniste, 1958), although unbound sheets apparently also exist. At one time Debord promised three other psychogeographic maps: *Paris sous la neige*, *The most dangerous game*, and *Axe d'exploration et échec dans la recherche d'un Grand Passage situationniste*, but if he made them, no one has ever seen them (see Sadler, *Situationist City*, 182 n. 48; David Pinder, personal communication, 16 September 2006).
 18. Though the maps were based on *dérives*, they were produced through the process of "détournement" ("the integration of past or present artistic production into a superior environmental construction"), in which fragments of existing works are taken and rearranged or juxtaposed to produce new meanings.
 19. According to Sadler, *Situationist City*, 88, this is explained on the back of *The Naked City*, where it says, "The arrows represent the slopes that naturally link the different unities of ambiance; that's to say the spontaneous tendencies for orientation of a subject who traverses that milieu without regard for practical considerations."

20. Ibid., 90.
21. Ibid., 88, 89.
22. Thus the *dérive*, for example, potentially involves a lot more than drifting in search of unities of ambiance: "One can see virtually unlimited resources of this pastime," Debord wrote. "Thus a loose lifestyle and even certain amusements considered dubious that have always been enjoyed among our entourage – slipping by night into houses undergoing demolition, hitchhiking nonstop and without destination through Paris during a transportation strike in the name of adding to the confusion, wandering in subterranean catacombs forbidden to the public, etc. – are expressions of a more general sensibility which is nothing other than that of the *dérive*." Debord (trans. Knabb), "Theory of the *Dérive*," 53).
23. Again, the essential and best way into all this is through Knabb's anthology, which collects writings from the entire period. Among the theoretical works are lengthy descriptions of the group's internal politics, conferences, alliances, provocations, and so on, which provide ample insight into the wealth and range of the group's activities. There is a large and rapidly growing literature on the Situationists.
24. Lynch's work has inspired literally hundreds of imitators. For an introduction, see the chapters in the "Cognitive Representations" section of Roger Downs and David Stea, *Image and Environment: Cognitive Mapping and Spatial Behavior* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), and the examples cited in Kevin Lynch, *Managing the Sense of a Region* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1976).
25. These remarks and the following early history come from Kevin Lynch, "Reconsidering *The Image of the City*," in *Cities of the Mind: Images and Themes of the City in the Social Sciences*, ed. Lloyd Rodwin and Robert Hollister (New York: Plenum, 1984): 151–61, which my friend Arthur Krim directed me to. It's since been reprinted in Tridib Banerjee and Michael Southworth, eds., *City Sense and City Design: Writings and Projects of Kevin Lynch* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990): 247–56.
26. Reprinted in Banerjee and Southworth, *City Sense and City Design*, 135–53.
27. Kevin Lynch and Alvin Lukashok, "Some Childhood Memories of the City," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 22 (1956): 144–52. This piece was frequently anthologized, most recently in Banerjee and Southworth, *City Sense and City Design*, 154–73.
28. Kevin Lynch and Malcom Rivlin, "A Walk Around the Block," *Landscape* 8/3 (1959): 24–34. This too has become an anthology piece, and is also included in Banerjee and Southworth, *City Sense and City Design*, 185–204.
29. David Lowenthal, ed., *Environmental Perception and Behavior* (Discussion Paper No. 109, Department of Geography, University of Chicago, 1967).
30. David Lowenthal, "Geography, Experience, and Imagination: Towards a Geographical Epistemology," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51 (1961): 241–60.
31. This last was extracted from Donald Appleyard, Kevin Lynch, and John Myer, *The View from the Road* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1964).
32. Seymour Wapner and Heinz Werner, eds., *The Body Percept* (New York: Random House, 1965).
33. J.K. Wright, "*Terrae Incognitae*: The Place of Imagination in Geography," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 37 (1947): 1–15, reprinted in J.K. Wright, *Human Nature in Geography: Fourteen Papers, 1925–1965* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 83.
34. Though Arthur Krim, for example, continues the work in the geosophy that he brought to a high degree of polish in his doctoral dissertation, "Imagery In Search of a City: The Geosophy of Los Angeles, 1921–1971" (Clark University, Worcester, MA, 1980).
35. Peter R. Gould, "On Mental Maps" (Discussion Paper No. 9, Michigan Interuniversity Community of Mathematical Geographers, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1966). This later turned into Peter Gould and Rodney White, *Mental Maps* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1974), a second edition of which was published by Routledge in 1986.
36. The remarks are Debord's, from "Theory of the *Dérive*" (trans. Knabb), 50, and refer to Paul-Henry Chombart de Lauwe, ed., *Paris et l'agglomération parisienne* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1952). In later remarks, Raoul Vaneigem was far more hostile. See Vaneigem, "Comments Against Urbanism," *Internationale Situationniste* 6 (August 1961), available at the Situationist International Online – though he was referring to other work of Chombart de Lauwe's.
37. For a detailed analysis of one student's mapping of London, see Denis Wood and Robert Beck, "Janine Eber Maps London: Individual Dimensions of Cognitive Imagery," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 9 (1989): 1–26.
38. Denis Wood, *I Don't Want To, But I Will* (Worcester, MA: Clark University Cartographic Laboratory, 1973), 541. The identical manuscript is available from UMI under the title *The Genesis of Geographic Knowledge: A Real-Time Developmental Study of Adolescent Images of Novel Environments*, except that all the colour in the original images is rendered in black and white.
39. Ibid., 557.
40. As it said in "Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Situation," trans. Knabb, 42.
41. Debord (trans. Knabb), "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," 6.
42. Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Programme élémentaire du bureau d'urbanisme unitaire," *Internationale situationniste* 6 (August 1961): 16–19; I

quote Knabb's translation: "Elementary Program of the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism," in *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. Ken Knabb (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Secrets, 1995): 65–67, 65.

43. Sadler, *Situationist City*, 76.

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