

Psychogeography and the novel: fictions of place, motion and identity, 1920 to 1965

Author:

Mudie, Ella Michele

Publication Date:

2015

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/2927>

License:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/au/>

Link to license to see what you are allowed to do with this resource.

Downloaded from <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.4/55715> in <https://unsworks.unsw.edu.au> on 2024-05-04

Psychogeography and the novel: fictions of place, motion and identity, 1920 to 1965

Ella Mudie

A thesis submitted to the University of New South Wales
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

School of the Arts and Media
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences



September 2015

PLEASE TYPE**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
Thesis/Dissertation Sheet**

Surname or Family name: MUDIE

First name: ELLA

Other name/s: MICHELE

Abbreviation for degree as given in the University
calendar: 'PhD'

School: School of the Arts and Media

Faculty: Arts and Social Sciences

Title: Psychogeography and the novel: fictions of
place, motion and identity, 1920 to 1965**Abstract 350 words maximum: (PLEASE TYPE)**


Psychogeography first emerged in France in the 1950s as an avant-garde experimental behaviour designed to contest the alienations of modern urbanism with a praxis of embodied responses to the city. As it was practised by the Lettrist International (1952-57) and later the Situationist International (1957-72), psychogeography and the purposeless drift of the *dérive* engaged the category of space as a means to supersede the separation of art from the politics of everyday life, thereby reflecting a broader tension within the historical avant-garde concerning the relationship between aesthetics, representation and radical social critique. Notwithstanding its anti-literary beginnings, in recent years psychogeography has evolved into an ambiguous form of literary endeavour with an ambivalent relationship to its original avant-garde formulation. In this thesis, I am concerned to reassess the contested and contradictory role of the novel during the avant-garde phase of psychogeography with a view to not only complicating generalised treatments of psychogeography but also in order to consider the full extent of the critique of the classical novel and literary production that the praxis of psychogeography performs.

Spanning the antecedents of psychogeography in the 'false novels' of the Surrealists to the *détournement*, or turning around, of novelistic sources in key Situationist texts such as Guy Debord's *Mémoires* and the novels of Michele Bernstein, case studies are drawn from French and British authors at the intersection of the historical moment of the SI who sought to repurpose and redirect existing elements of literary culture to critical ends. By focusing on this overlooked period in literary history during which the negation of the novel and of cultural production more broadly played a crucial role, this study seeks to reposition psychogeography as less a specific sub-genre of the novel than as a dynamic field of struggle between various avant-garde and neo-avant-garde ideologies. In this way, my thesis interrogates precisely how psychogeographical literatures have evolved to represent a unique form of literary praxis that disrupts the conventions of the novel whilst binding experimentation in space to a broad reaching critique of the alienation of everyday life under capitalist modernity.

Declaration relating to disposition of project thesis/dissertation

I hereby grant to the University of New South Wales or its agents the right to archive and to make available my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all property rights, such as patent rights. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

I also authorise University Microfilms to use the 350 word abstract of my thesis in Dissertation Abstracts International (this is applicable to doctoral theses only).


Signature
Witness31/3/16
Date

The University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances requiring restrictions on copying or conditions on use. Requests for restriction for a period of up to 2 years must be made in writing. Requests for a longer period of restriction may be considered in exceptional circumstances and require the approval of the Dean of Graduate Research.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date of completion of requirements for Award:

THIS SHEET IS TO BE GLUED TO THE INSIDE FRONT COVER OF THE THESIS

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

'I hereby grant the University of New South Wales or its agents the right to archive and to make available my thesis or dissertation in whole or part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all proprietary rights, such as patent rights. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

I also authorise University Microfilms to use the 350 word abstract of my thesis in Dissertation Abstract International (this is applicable to doctoral theses only).

I have either used no substantial portions of copyright material in my thesis or I have obtained permission to use copyright material; where permission has not been granted I have applied/will apply for a partial restriction of the digital copy of my thesis or dissertation.'

Signed *[Signature]*

Date 28/3/16

AUTHENTICITY STATEMENT

'I certify that the Library deposit digital copy is a direct equivalent of the final officially approved version of my thesis. No emendation of content has occurred and if there are any minor variations in formatting, they are the result of the conversion to digital format.'

Signed *[Signature]*

Date 28/3/16

ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

Signed 

Date 16 / 4 / 2015

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| List of Figures | 6 |
| Acknowledgements | 7 |
| Abstract | 8 |
| Key dates | 9 |
| Glossary of terms | 10 |
| Note on the use of French language materials..... | 11 |
| Introduction | 12 |
| 1. The Surrealist City Novel..... | 39 |
| 1.1 Experimental autobiography and the <i>roman-à-clef</i> | 41 |
| 1.2 The uncanny politics of Paris | 45 |
| 1.3 <i>Paris Peasant</i> and the liminal city | 50 |
| 1.4 Leonora Carrington: mapping madness | 59 |
| 1.5 Surrealism, psychogeography and the novel..... | 65 |
| 2. Lost bearings: delirious narrativity from Lowry to Lettrist psychogeography..... | 71 |
| 2.1 Unitary urbanism: redesigning subjectivity | 73 |
| 2.2 Micropolitics of the <i>dérive</i> | 83 |
| 2.3 The influential game of Lowry..... | 92 |
| 3. An atlas of allusions: Guy Debord's <i>Mémoires</i> | 106 |
| 3.1 The perverse methods of <i>détournement</i> | 109 |
| 3.2 The lessons of London: Anglophone literature and the critique of urbanism | 116 |
| 3.3 Reigniting the Fronde: polemicising the romance genre..... | 126 |
| 4. "A Sum of Possibilities": The Situationist fiction of Michèle Bernstein | 139 |
| 4.1 <i>All the King's Horses</i> and the critique of separation..... | 140 |
| 4.2 Humour, masks, mythology | 152 |
| 4.3 The <i>dérive</i> and the mobility of desire..... | 161 |
| 5. Adrift in the sixties | 174 |
| 5.1 Alexander Trocchi: <i>Cain's Book</i> , psychogeography and inner space..... | 177 |
| 5.2 Anti-literature and the play ethos | 186 |
| 5.3 <i>Things: A Story of the Sixties</i> | 192 |
| 5.4 "Apart together": drift and the problems of belonging | 198 |
| Conclusion..... | 209 |
| WORKS CITED..... | 222 |

List of Figures

- 1.1 Plate 3 from *Nadja* (1928). Photograph of the statue of Etienne Dolet.
- 1.2 Plate 17 from *Nadja* (1928). Photograph of the *Humanité* bookshop with billboard “Sign up Here.”
- 1.3 Map of Santander from *Down Below* (1944) by Leonora Carrington. First published in *VVV* 1944 (no 4). Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 2.1 *Publicité*, advertisement for a *dérive* first published in *Les Lèvres nues* #7 December 1955. Scan courtesy Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 3.1 Page from *Mémoires* by Guy Ernest-Debord and Asger Jorn 1959. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 3.2 Page from *Mémoires* by Guy Ernest-Debord and Asger Jorn 1959. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 3.3 Page from *Mémoires* by Guy Ernest-Debord and Asger Jorn 1959. General Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
- 4.1 Portrait of Michèle Bernstein in the galley proof of *Internationale Situationniste* # 2 December 1958. Reproduced in *The Night* by Michèle Bernstein. Trans. Clodagh Kinsella. London: Book Works, 2013.
- 4.2 Photograph of Michèle Bernstein, London 2013, playing chess with “Everyone Agrees.” Published in *Frieze* magazine 157, September 2013.

Note on copyright: Permissions to reproduce the above figures have not been sought and all third party copyrighted material has been removed from the digital public version of the thesis.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is the outcome of a full-time PhD candidature undertaken at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) within the English Department of the School of the Arts and Media (SAM). Particular thanks to my primary supervisor, Dr Fiona Morrison, whose astute and incisive feedback and robust discussions have proved invaluable at each stage of the project. The thesis has also benefitted from the responses of the project's co-supervisor, Associate Professor Brigitta Olubas, and from Dr Sean Pryor as reader for the annual progress reviews. Thanks to Dr Dorottya Fabian for fostering a supportive and collegial culture among the School's PhD cohort during her tenure as postgraduate coordinator.

I am grateful for funding awarded under the Postgraduate Research Support Scheme administered by the Graduate Research School, which facilitated travel to the UK to present work in progress at the 2014 *Poetics of Space in Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Culture* postgraduate conference at Portsmouth University and a visit to inspect Situationist materials in the John McCready Archive at Liverpool John Moores University. I also wish to acknowledge the financial support I have received as a recipient of an Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) for the full term of my candidature.

Abstract

Psychogeography first emerged in France in the 1950s as an avant-garde experimental behaviour concerned with contesting the alienations of modern urbanism with a praxis of embodied responses to the city. As it was practised by the Lettrist International (1952-57) and later the Situationist International (1957-72), psychogeography and the purposeless drift of the *dérive* engaged the category of space as a means to supersede the separation of art from the politics of everyday life, thereby reflecting a broader tension within the historical avant-garde concerning the relationship between aesthetics, representation and radical social critique. Notwithstanding its anti-literary beginnings, in recent years psychogeography has evolved into a highly ambiguous form of literary endeavour with an ambivalent relationship to its original avant-garde formulation. In this thesis, I am concerned to reassess the contested and contradictory role of the novel during the avant-garde phase of psychogeography with a view to not only complicating generalised treatments of literary psychogeography but also to consider the full extent of the critique of the classical novel and literary production that the praxis of psychogeography performs.

Spanning the antecedents of psychogeography in the “false novels” of the Surrealists to the *détournement*, or turning around, of novelistic sources in key Situationist texts such as Guy Debord’s *Mémoires* and the novels of Michèle Bernstein, case studies are drawn from French and British authors at the intersection of the historical moment of the SI who sought to repurpose and redirect existing elements of literary culture to critical ends. By focusing on this overlooked period in literary history during which the negation of the novel and of cultural production more broadly played a crucial role, this study seeks to reposition psychogeography as less a specific sub-genre of the novel than as a dynamic field of struggle between various avant-garde and neo-avant-garde ideologies. In this way, my thesis explores precisely how psychogeographical literatures have evolved to represent a unique form of literary praxis that disrupts the conventions of the novel whilst binding experimentation in space to a broad reaching critique of the alienation of everyday life under capitalist modernity.

Key dates

| | |
|------|---|
| 1918 | End of the First World War |
| 1920 | Publication of <i>Les Champs magnétiques</i> [<i>The Magnetic Fields</i>], by André Breton and Philippe Soupault, the first book of Surrealist automatic writing |
| 1924 | Publication of <i>Manifeste du surréalisme</i> [<i>First Manifesto of Surrealism</i>] by André Breton |
| 1929 | Publication of Breton's <i>Deuxième manifeste du surréalisme</i> [<i>Second Manifesto of Surrealism</i>] |
| 1939 | Beginning of the Second World War |
| 1945 | End of the Second World War |
| | Romanian-born writer Isidore Isou (née Ioan-Isidor Goldstein) relocates to Paris and founds the Lettrist movement with Gabriel Pomerand |
| 1951 | Guy Debord meets the Lettrists at the screening of Isidore Isou's film, <i>Traité de bave et d'éternité</i> [<i>A Treatise on Slime and Eternity</i>] at the Cannes film festival |
| 1952 | Guy Debord and others, notably Gil J. Wolman and Serge Berna, form the Lettrist International [LI] as a breakaway group from Isou's Lettrist movement |
| 1954 | Beginning of the Algerian war of independence |
| 1957 | The Lettrist International disbands and the Situationist International [SI] is founded at Cosio d'Arroscia, Italy |
| 1958 | Publication of the first edition of <i>Internationale Situationniste</i> , the Situationist journal. Twelve editions of the journal were published during the lifespan of the SI |
| 1961 | Asger Jorn, the most influential artistic member of the SI, resigns from the group |
| 1964 | End of the Algerian war of independence |
| 1967 | Publication of <i>La Société du spectacle</i> [<i>The Society of the Spectacle</i>] by Guy Debord |
| 1968 | Paris is disrupted in May by civil unrest in the form of mass demonstrations and general strikes |
| 1972 | Dissolution of the Situationist International |

Glossary of terms

There are a number of French terms used throughout this thesis that have specific meanings when deployed in the context of the terminology of the Situationist International. While it is possible to translate these terms into English, doing so tends to result in a more generalised sense of their meaning. For this reason, I largely preserve the original French in the body of my thesis when I am speaking specifically about the Situationist mobilisation of the below terms:

Dérive

In English, *dérive* translates as “drift.” The Lettrist International devised the *dérive* in the early fifties as a purposeless drift through the city streets embodying a playful-constructive mode of exploring urban space. The objectives of the *dérive* are simultaneously to uncover the psychogeographical intensities of the city whilst emotionally and psychically disorienting the subjectivity of the drifter.

Détournement

This term has an unstable meaning in French and when translated into English the noun may refer to a “diversion” or a “rerouting” while the verb, *détourner*, means to “hijack or to “turn around.” As an extension of avant-garde collage methods, Situationist *détournement* describes the technique of reusing and recombining existing elements of culture into a new “milieu” such that their original intent is turned around (*détourné*) and made to speak counter to their intended communicative effect.

Détourner in the past tense: In French, the past tense of *détourner* is *détourné*. For the purposes of legibility for non-French readers, in this thesis I follow Ken Knabb in his translation of the past tense of *détourner* in English as detoured. For example, “The two fundamental laws of **détournement** are the loss of importance of each **detoured** autonomous element” (SI, “Détournement as Negation and Prelude” 67).

Psychogéographie/Psychogeography

Most Anglophone scholarship adopts the English term “psychogeography” rather than the original French and I follow this convention in my study. Psychogeography was a term first coined by the Lettrist International to describe the study of the influence that geographical environments exert upon the emotions and behaviours of individuals.

Note on the use of French language materials

Case studies or primary sources in this thesis comprise novels drawn from both English-language and French-language texts. When quoting from primary French-language materials, including novels, I provide the original French quotation followed by an English translation in the body of the thesis.

For the purposes of my study, I classify the Situationist and Surrealist manifestos, articles published in the *Internationale Situationniste* journal and theoretical texts by Guy Debord and other Lettrists and Situationists as primary sources. For this reason, quotations from these materials are provided in the original French alongside an English translation. Where reliable English translations are available, I quote from the published translation and indicate the name of the translator and the title of the English edition in the relevant bibliographic listing in Works Cited. In cases where I have modified a translation from an English edition, the page reference is noted after the French (eg. 123/122) and the details of the English edition are provided in the list of Works Cited. Where the existing translation is retained and not modified, the page number follows the English text.

For French material that has not been translated into English my own translations are provided. In respect to secondary French language-materials such as scholarship, criticism and review, quotations from the original French are provided in end-notes only.

Introduction

In December 1959, the Situationist International (SI) published an article in their journal addressing a number of misconceptions about their program of counter-urbanism. In particular, the SI sought to defend their interest in engaging the city as a field of contestation against attempts to define such activities as inherently artistic undertakings. Just as their proposals to radically redesign the city constituted a polemics of urbanism rather than an actual theory of town planning or urban design, the authors were similarly emphatic that “*notre présence dans l’art expérimental est une critique de l’art*” (“L’Urbanisme unitaire” 80) [“our participation in experimental art is a critique of art” (“Unitary Urbanism” 100)]. Designed as a game of urban observation and collective immersion in the city’s ebbs and flows of ambience, atmosphere and intensity, psychogeography was a key example of the “experimental art” practised by the Lettrist International (1952-57) and later the Situationist International (1957-72) as a means to break with the separation of art from the politics of everyday life. In its basic definition psychogeography describes the study of the influence of the urban environment on the emotion and behaviours of individuals. Yet its concern for gathering apparently objective insights into the affective influence of space belies a more complicated intention to locate and to *détourn*, or to turn around, the city’s points of instability to subversive ends.

From the early 1990s onwards, psychogeography has enjoyed a popular resurgence among literary and artistic circles, especially in Britain where a unique strand of psychogeographical fiction has emerged. Whilst still retaining the concept of psychogeography as an experimental art, the question of whether the critical intent of the original project is maintained in the pedestrian-focused urban fictions of a number of contemporary authors is now a matter of contention. Where psychogeography previously described an avant-garde praxis of studying the urban terrain with a view toward changing it, today the term psychogeography has evolved into a more quixotic, polarising and somewhat over-determined descriptor of what Will Self describes as the modern conundrum of the “relationship between place and psyche” (*Psychogeography* 11). As such, the psychogeographical games played by the mid-century avant-garde, which reflected a desire to break through the alienating forces of modernity to allow new subjectivities, alternative realities and other possible worlds to emerge, are now increasingly deployed to ameliorate the disconnects that have become the hallmark of postmodern space.¹

By returning to the frequently overlooked anti-art origins of Situationist psychogeography, this thesis argues that a reassessment of the ambiguous and contested role of the novel during the avant-garde phase of psychogeography is needed in order to understand how the “psychogeographical novel” in the present embodies a complex mode of literary praxis. Drawing upon psychogeographical concerns and methods, the psychogeographical novel names an emergent category of the novel distinguished by a hybridised approach to narrative in which movement through space disrupts and displaces the generic boundaries between fiction, non-fiction, memoir and travelogue. Recognisable in the works of a spectrum of Anglophone authors such as Iain Sinclair, Peter Ackroyd, Stewart Home, Rachel Lichtenstein and Will Self, among others,² psychogeographical traits in contemporary literature typically encompass non-linear narratives structured peripatetically by walking and spatial exploration, the presence of ambiguous auto-fictional narrators and the construction of the urban cityscape as a palimpsest with temporal layers that blur the boundaries between past, present and future. Despite growing interest in psychogeography across a number of disciplines, in this study I argue that the relationship between the avant-garde critique of literary production that psychogeography performs and its contemporary re-emergence at the vanguard of experimental literary fiction and non-fiction remains markedly under theorised. In the context of literary scholarship, a rigorous assessment of the destabilising influence that psychogeographical approaches exert upon the conventions of novelistic production is at present largely absent from the field of literary studies.

Furthermore, the few studies that have dealt with psychogeography and the novel (a review of the main ones will follow in this introduction) are mostly of a general nature and adopt a cursory timeline approach that elides the complexities and contradictions of the critique of the novel set in motion by psychogeographical approaches. It is to this pressing need for a more nuanced and less generalised literary history of the relationship between psychogeography and the novel that this thesis responds. In this respect, my thesis is situated amid the growing field of interdisciplinary literary scholarship concerned with the critical significance of such categories as space, place and the quotidian. At the same time, it should be noted at the outset that the objective of my thesis is not to posit psychogeography as a tool of literary analysis, nor am I concerned with simply providing psychogeographical readings of a number of novels with urban settings and themes. Rather, the overriding

concern of this thesis is to understand how psychogeography, as a specific avant-garde tactic of encountering and responding to urban space, presents a distinct challenge to the conventions of the novel. For this reason, my research posits psychogeographical literatures as embodying a unique form of literary praxis in their combination of formal experimentation with a critique of modernity that is inextricably connected to the practice of the body moving through space. I deploy the term praxis in its general meaning as a process that links thought with action, placing emphasis upon the realisation of ideas beyond their theoretical or contemplative consideration, and in its Marxist sense of studying the world with a view to changing it. In order to better understand what I argue are the insufficiently analysed complexities of the literary praxis of psychogeography I have elected to focus my study upon the historical period in which it first emerged in the context of the Surrealist and post-Surrealist avant-gardes, rather than taking up its more disparate and heterogeneous manifestations in the steadily increasing number of contemporary novels bearing psychogeographical traits. A thorough examination of this period is necessary, I argue, as the avant-garde origins of psychogeography are not only largely misunderstood in contemporary accounts but the critique of the novel and literary production more broadly that psychogeographical approaches perform remains, as a result, critically unexamined.

The scope of my thesis spans, then, the antecedents of psychogeography in the anti-literary methods of the Surrealist avant-garde of the twenties to their later reinvention by the Situationists in the fifties and early sixties thus covering an overall timeframe of 1920 to 1965. For various reasons the category of space emerges during this period as a key site for the expression of the avant-garde desire to reintegrate experimental art into everyday life as a means to radically transform society and this, in turn, provokes a challenge to the conventions of the novel and indeed the autonomy of the category of the work of art. By re-evaluating the historical origins of this literary praxis, I hope to trouble the growing domestication of the methods and practice of psychogeography. From the “false novels” of the Surrealists who sought the ontologically transformative shock of the marvellous through urban *déambulation* to the critical appropriation or turning around of novelistic sources in key Situationist texts such as Guy Debord’s *Mémoires* and the detoured novels of Michèle Bernstein, case studies are drawn from those French and British authors at the intersection of the historical moment of the SI who sought to simultaneously denounce and repurpose the novel at the service of a radical critique of society. In this respect, the relationship

between psychogeography and the novel emerges as a fundamentally ambivalent one that engenders a deep-seated questioning of the critical limits of the form. It is precisely these ambivalent literary forms and complex subjectivities that psychogeography gives rise to that I argue constitute its critical relevance for contemporary scholarship on the novel.

The Situationist International and psychogeography

In 1989, the organisation of a landmark exhibition titled *on the passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time: the situationist international 1957-1972* saw the hitherto largely clandestine history and ideas of the SI finally brought into the broad light of day in a multi-institutional presentation that fuelled a widespread revival of both general and academic interest in the movement. Titled after Guy Debord's 1959 film of the same name, the exhibition was first staged at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, travelling next to the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London and lastly to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, Massachusetts.³ On one hand, this presentation of key Situationist documents in high profile art galleries across three countries is often lamented as the tipping point in the movement's inevitable recuperation; a pejorative term that describes the process wherein disruptive ideas are recovered in a benign context in which they lose their radical import (a more recent comparable event of Situationist "recuperation" was the inaugural display of Guy Debord's archives at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* [BnF] in Paris in 2013⁴). On the other hand, the exhibition marked a moment of intense revitalisation and renewal with the commissioning of a number of essays for the English-language exhibition catalogue, in particular, clearing a path for a rethinking of received ideas about the history of the SI.⁵ This has led to significant developments in English-language scholarship on the SI beyond the earlier focus upon the movement's anarchist Marxist reputation arising from their role in the events of the general strike and student protests of May '68. Today contemporary research into the SI spans wide-reaching reassessments of previously neglected aspects of their material output to more theoretical considerations of their critique of the spectacle and the reification of everyday life under commodity capitalism especially as it relates to the canon of twentieth-century critical theory.⁶

At an empirical level, this study deals with publications, activities and events that take place prior to the appearance of Guy Debord's 1967 treatise *The Society of*

the Spectacle. However, it is impossible to fully appreciate the praxis of the SI's earlier psychogeographical researches nor the uncompromising stance that the group would eventually adopt in rejecting artistic production without first giving some consideration to the SI's critique of the spectacle. Today, the Debordian notion of spectacle is a polarising one, often reduced to a critique of the visual,⁷ however Debord's critical point in *The Society of the Spectacle* is that "*Le spectacle n'est pas un ensemble d'images mais un rapport social entre des personnes, médiatisé par des images*" (thèse 4) ["The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (thesis 4)]. For Debord, the spectacle is not an effect of *culture* per se but a result, rather, of the modern conditions of globalised capitalist production that therefore must be analysed, interpreted and counteracted at the level of the totality. Indeed, the Situationist critique of the spectacle is unique in the extent to which it stresses the totality of the phenomenon. Insofar as modern society is increasingly organised around the production, exchange and consumption of commoditised images, the SI argue that the spectacle fosters a pervasive culture of banalisation and pseudo-communication according to which lived experience is mediated by its representation, resulting in the impoverishment of subjectivity and an overall uncritical attitude towards the present conditions of existence. The early urban focus of the LI and the SI recognised the role played by space in reinforcing the operations of spectacle in modern life. As the individual's navigations of the city become regulated by patterns of consumption and production, and with the growing primacy afforded to appearances, spectatorship and to visual modes of communication, the city is transformed from a site of potential encounters into a sphere of "separation" characterised by an atmosphere of isolation and boredom.⁸

Just as the 2013 exhibition of Debord's archives at the BnF in Paris reveals the extent to which the name and persona of Debord has become synonymous with the Situationists, his authorship of *The Society of the Spectacle*, one of the key works of Situationist theory, also serves to reinforce an image of Debord as the figurehead of the movement. Yet it is worth taking a moment to clarify the complex network of actors involved in the LI and the SI, especially in light of my concern to recover the heterogeneous mix of influences and elements that saw the concept of psychogeography become a field of struggle between various ideologies of the avant-garde in the early fifties. Formed in 1957 at an intimate conference at Cosio d'Arroscia, Italy, with just a handful of signatories; namely the Paris-based Debord

and Michèle Bernstein, the Danish painter Asger Jorn, Dutch artist and architect Constant Nieuwenhuys, the “Scottish Beat” Alexander Trocchi, the Italian painter Giuseppe Pinot-Gallizio and the English artist Ralph Rumney, the founding of the SI was in many respects a consolidation and extension of key ideas that had been developed under the auspices of its antecedent group, the Lettrist International, between 1952 and 1957.⁹ With their bulletin-style mimeographed newsletter, *Potlatch*, which combined polemical commentary on current affairs and blistering critiques of modern architecture, urbanism and the banalities of consumer culture with psychogeographical descriptions of various sites of the city, the Lettrist International distinguished itself from the preceding generations of the avant-garde by refusing to produce or to publish any conventional literary or artistic output in the form of art, poetry, or fiction. In the polemics that graced the first page of the inaugural edition, the editors announced their program in no uncertain terms: “*Potlatch est la publication la plus engagée du monde: nous travaillons à l’établissement conscient et collectif d’une nouvelle civilisation*” (*Potlatch* 11) [“*Potlatch is the publication that is most engaged with the world: we work towards the conscious and collective establishment of a new civilisation*”].¹⁰ In this way, the engaged nature of the LI’s publishing activities and their playful urban interventions exemplify what Peter Bürger identifies as one of the fundamental ambitions of the historical avant-garde, namely “the abolition of autonomous art by which it means that art is to be integrated into the praxis of everyday life” (*Theory* 53-4).

Indeed it was the militant tone of the group’s political engagement and its unwavering anti-productivist stance that became the grounds upon which Debord, in particular, sought to demarcate his breakaway movement from Isidore Isou’s Lettrism, the artistic avant-garde that the LI emerged from in mid-1952. As a post-Dada movement, Lettrism sought the total reinvention of the field of art at the level of the letter, pioneered a new synthesis of writing and visual art in the hieroglyphics of metagraphic or hypergraphic writing, formulated a notion of discrepant cinema characterised by the disruptive mismatch of soundtrack and imagetrack and developed a radically idiosyncratic style of expressive vocalisation in Lettrist sound poetry. While Debord strategically attacked Lettrism on the grounds of its aesthetic preoccupations, it should be noted that Isou’s artistic avant-garde was by no means apolitical.¹¹ The major point of difference between it and the Lettrist International, however, concerned the question of the efficacy of artistic revolt to materially

intervene into the alienated social relations implicit in the mechanisms of cultural production. The critical efficacy of artistic revolt also became a major point of dispute within the SI, too, until a series of expulsions and resignations of its key artistic members in the early 1960s eventually solidified the SI's position that the only future direction left open to an authentic avant-garde was to supersede the aesthetic realm entirely.¹²

It is in this context that the city, as an immanent realm in which alienation is both produced and negated, became pivotal to the program of the Lettrist International for whom psychogeographical activities were to sublate the aesthetic pursuits of their artistic avant-garde peers. The goal of psychogeography to uncover the influence of environments on the behaviours of individuals can be situated, then, within a larger project concerned with harnessing the radical potential of lived experience that is not to be found in the separated spaces of the artist's studio, the gallery or the cinema but rather in the street where the pulse, history and vitality of the city is directly accessible via the sensory apprehensions of the walker. In this way, psychogeographical research was to be conducted on long and aimless walks through the streets of Paris which were explicitly formulated as instances of the *dérive*: “une technique du passage hâtif à travers des ambiances variées” (“Théorie” 51) [“a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiences” (“Theory” 62)], involving “un comportement ludique-constructif” (51) [“playful constructive behavior” (62)]. The LI's engagement with the city through mobility at the level of the street and its implicit concern for counteracting the dominant structures and codes of the urban environment has emerged in the past two decades as a significant area of focus for Anglophone scholarship on the movement. Notably, a number of book-length studies address the impact of the Situationist doctrine of thought upon the disciplines of architecture and urbanism. These include Simon Sadler's *The Situationist City* (1998), the scholarship of Tom McDonough in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents* (2002) and later as the editor of *The Situationists and the City* (2009), as well as the anthology *Theory of the dérive and other situationist writings on the city* (1996), edited by Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa.¹³ Where the latter part of the history of the SI is most commonly understood in terms of their critique of the spectacle, the documents collected and discussed within these books deal with what is sometimes referred to as the group's “architectural interlude,” the period during which the spatial critique of the LI and the SI was productively bolstered by their collaboration with artist Asger Jorn

and artist-architect Constant Nieuwenhuys, in particular.¹⁴ In 1955, Jorn had co-founded the International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus as a reaction against what he identified as the stifling of expressionist and humanist tendencies within the rationalist functionalism that had come to predominate the design program of the Bauhaus, with which he was associated. During the same period, the LI took aim at Le Corbusier within the pages of their bulletin, *Potlatch*:

Mais aujourd'hui la prison devient l'habitation-modèle, et la morale chrétienne triomphe sans réplique, quand on s'avise que Le Corbusier ambitionne de supprimer la rue. Car il s'en flatte. Voilà bien le programme: la vie définitivement partagée en îlots fermés, en sociétés surveillées; la fin des chances d'insurrection et de rencontres; la résignation automatique. ("Les Gratte-ciel par la racine" 37/44)

But today as the prison becomes the model for housing, and Christian morality triumphs without rejoinder, one realises that Le Corbusier's ambition is to *abolish the street*. He even brags about it. Here's the program: life is definitively divided up into closed islets, into societies under surveillance; the end of opportunities for insurrections and encounters, an automatic resignation. ("Skyscraper by the Roots")

By emphasising the link between the design of urban environments and human behaviour, notably the disciplinary effects of over-determined city planning, these comments are typical of the early polemics of the Lettrist International. Focusing on the particulars of the Situationist critique of modern architecture and urbanism, Simon Sadler has gone so far as to identify in their articles and manifestos what he calls a "situationist design theory" (12), a program that he outlines in detail in his book length study, *The Situationist City* (1998). In this context it is important to note, however, that the LI and the SI had little concern for the pragmatics of built design. Nevertheless, the small but significant body of literature concerned with the Situationists and the city has done much to make visible the extent to which the group's polemical program of counter-urbanism preempted important debates focused upon the necessity of social space in town planning, the value of street life in cities and the significance of embodied experience in architecture, issues that were raised to a position of prominence in urban and architectural theory in the latter part of the twentieth-century.

By contrast, the literary implications of the Situationist engagement with the city, and in particular the relationship of psychogeographical activities to novelistic discourse, remains a comparatively underdeveloped area in both Situationist

scholarship and literary studies. While it is true that most literature on psychogeography and the SI acknowledges the significance of pre-emptive literary texts such as the labyrinthine city writings of Thomas De Quincey and Edgar Allan Poe's short story, "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), attempts to theorise the psychogeographical novel in a more definitive fashion are less common. A notable effort in this direction is an unpublished essay by the Canadian academic Roger Farr, "The Chronotope of the *Dérive*: Toward a Generic Description of the Psychogeographical Novel," first written in 2000 and revised in 2005, in which Farr seeks to classify this type of writing as a sub-genre of the city novel with its own distinct features.

On one level, the disparate selection of texts discussed in Farr's essay: Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Poe's story "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), and Breton's Surrealist novel *Nadja* (1928), points to some of the potential weaknesses in adopting the psychogeographical novel as a retrospective classificatory framework given that the specific literary contexts from which each of these texts emerges are in many respects dissimilar. Nevertheless, Farr's essay identifies a number of significant ways in which literary expressions of the *dérive*, whether deployed intentionally or otherwise, alter more conventional forms of novelistic discourse. Notable is Farr's perceptive distinction between the chronotope of the *dérive* from the more widely appreciated trope of the road novel insofar as encounters on the *dérive*, unlike the road journey, are rarely symbolic or allegorical. Ideology, rather than mere accident, also comes into play in the journeys of the *dérive* as "an active participant in the apprehension of space" (Farr, par 7). The psychogeographical novel not only finds its milieu at the level of the street where the vision of the hero is "fragmented and narrowed in urban space" (12) but in it the journey also undergoes a transformation by becoming open-ended and without a destination, thus refusing any psychological epiphany or arrival at a point of greater self-awareness.

In Merlin Coverley's oft-cited 2006 general introduction to the subject, *Psychogeography*, a less scholarly approach to categorising psychogeographical literatures is evident in the author's attempts to historicise its development. Constructing a lineage of psychogeographical texts ranging from the urban literature of the British and French authors, or *flâneurs*, of the nineteenth-century to the London fictions of the present, the survey is unusual for the extent to which it seeks to radically

minimise the significance afforded to the Situationist International. For Coverley, the origins of psychogeography are as equally British as they are French given the city of London's tradition of urban visionary writing which can be traced back to such authors as Daniel Defoe, William Blake, Thomas De Quincey, and Robert Louis Stevenson. In this respect, Coverley argues that psychogeography might be placed "predominantly within a literary tradition and, within this broad context, the examination of the relationship between the city and the behaviour of its inhabitants can be seen to be as old as the novel itself" (14). By locating psychogeography within a literary tradition that privileges the category of the literary work and by downplaying its origins as an avant-garde tactic in which the negation of literature in fact played a key role, Coverley argues that he is productively broadening the term and finally releasing it from the "stifling orthodoxy of Debord's situationist dogma" (10). The result is a somewhat contradictory argument insofar as Coverley acknowledges the LI and the SI for politicising the tradition of urban *flânerie*, observing that "in the aftermath of war the streets were radicalised as never before and change was in the air. If the urban wanderer was to continue his [sic] aimless strolling then the very act of walking had to become subversive" (77). Yet despite the critique of the urban environment that Lettrist psychogeography introduces, Coverley insists on treating the protagonists of the LI as mere caricatures, insisting that "the Lettrist movement [sic] as a whole, while providing a debut for the many of the terms later made familiar by the Situationists, remains difficult to take seriously" (22).

Putting to one side the comic dimensions of the competitive rivalry with the French displayed in Coverley's reductive dismissal of the Situationist contribution to psychogeography,¹⁵ it is worth pointing out the more serious problem that arises from viewing psychogeography predominantly through a literary lens and that concerns the question of value. When the emphasis is shifted toward literary *value* over literary *praxis*, Coverley can easily denigrate the psychogeographical activities of the LI and the SI on the grounds that they failed to produce a cogent body of literature and indeed the lack of "actual results" (23), both scientific and literary, is for Coverley proof of the "abject failure" (24) of Situationist psychogeography. Yet when the anti-art stance of the Situationist avant-garde is taken into account it must be recognised that not only was the supersession of literary and artistic production precisely the point of their psychogeographical activities but also that this position of negation in fact generates the critical force that Coverley later bemoans as largely absent from contemporary

psychogeographical literatures. While the literary focus of Coverley's study provides a starting point for my own research especially in terms of its identification of a mini-canon of psychogeographical novels and its elucidation of their primary traits, it is my intention to diverge from Coverley's approach in a number of ways.

Firstly, this thesis opts for the methodology of close reading of a fewer number of texts to allow for a more rigorous interrogation of their apparent psychogeographical features. By limiting the period of study to the beginning of Surrealism which I roughly date at 1920 (as per the publication of the first collection of Surrealist automatic writing, *The Magnetic Fields*) to the conclusion of the "heroic phase" of psychogeography by the early to mid-1960s, I thus hope to avoid some of the obstacles to interpretation and argument that the survey approach by its nature implies (in Coverley's book most texts receive a couple of paragraphs of analysis at best). Secondly, a more critical attitude is adopted toward the gendered construction of psychogeography as a predominantly masculine activity that excludes women, a problematic construction that Coverley unquestioningly endorses. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I want to critically interrogate the relationship between psychogeography and the novel in terms of the contradictions it raises between the collective agitations of the avant-garde and the more privatised activity of literary production. In this way, I will explore how such anxieties and contradictions might disrupt and *détourn*, or turn around, the genre of the novel itself.

An important contribution to the existing literature on psychogeography that this study will make, then, is to emphasise and interrogate its anti-literary character, an aspect that I argue is frequently overlooked or downplayed in the present scholarship. While the term "anti-literary" is itself an unstable and ambiguous one, I am concerned to trace how its early iterations in the anti-art stance of the Dadaists and the Surrealists later manifests in the ambivalent textual productions of the SI, which tend to sublate the category of literature into critical theory. Influenced by the spirit of revolt that fuelled the iconoclasm and destructive tendencies of Dada and by the *extra-literary* preoccupations of the Surrealists, I argue that the anti-literary in the context of the Situationists refers primarily to a spirit of negativity that fuels the *détournement*, or turning around, of existing literary and artistic forms for the purposes of critique and countering the spectacle. Instead of dismissing the apparently "dogmatic" avant-garde origins of psychogeography as Coverley seeks to do, I contend that it is imperative to critically reassess the field of struggle that emerges over its meaning in

the 1950s and to therefore consider the full implications of psychogeography's anti-literary beginnings. It is this reassessment that will lay the foundation for a greater understanding of both the strengths and limitations of the psychogeographical novel as praxis and the extent to which it both extends and reconstitutes the Situationist mode of engaging with urban space as a means to critique the alienation of everyday life under advanced capitalism.

Psychogeography and *flânerie*

As a field of literary scholarship, a defining feature of the study of literary mobilities today concerns the extent to which this area has become closely intertwined with interdisciplinary scholarship on the figure of the *flâneur*. The reasons for this interest are varied, however, the influence of a growing scholarly appreciation of Walter Benjamin's elliptical and lyrical writings on modernity cannot be overstated (see Buck-Morss; Cohen; Tester). Benjamin found a kindred spirit of sorts in Charles Baudelaire as the fullest embodiment of the poet of urban experience in the nineteenth-century, "the lyric poet of the metropolis" (Gilloch 134), and it was through the lens of Baudelaire's experience (and, to a lesser extent, that of Franz Hessel) that Benjamin explored and theorised the figure of the *flâneur*. By tracing Baudelaire's shifting engagements with the city from his initial exaltation and alertness to the generative tensions arising from the shocks and jolts of the encounter with the urban crowd to his eventual withdrawal when "the semblance of a crowd with a soul and a movement of its own, the luster that had dazzled the *flâneur*, had faded for him" (Benjamin, "Motifs" 210), Benjamin tracks the rise and decline of a particular modern subjectivity which continues to fascinate.

The Situationists themselves did not write on the *flâneur*, however, the now ubiquitous status of this figure in contemporary scholarship means that most literature on the origins and history of psychogeography will at the very least touch upon its relationship to *flânerie*, as my previous discussion of Coverley's study attests. On one level, similarities are discernible between the *dérive* and *flânerie* as pedestrian-based forms of urban observation that both repudiate the productivist ethos of capitalist modernity through the adoption of a certain idleness that suspends purpose in favour of undirected drifting. There are strong echoes and reverberations of *flânerie*, for example, in this description of the *dérive* by Greil Marcus:

The *dérive* (literally, "drift," in the nautical sense) was a matter of opening

one's consciousness to the (so to speak) unconsciousness of urban space; the *dérive* meant a solo or collective passage down city streets, a surrender to and then pursuit of alleys of attraction, boulevards of repulsion, until the city itself became a field of what the LI called "psychogeography," where every building, route and decoration expanded with meaning or disappeared for the lack of it: for the LI, the *dérive*... was to replace work. ("Mémoires: A Situationist Primer" 127)

While Marcus's lyrical definition highlights some striking correspondences between the methods of the *dérive* and *flânerie*, it is important to note some important divergences in their motivating factors. Paris in the 1950s was a very different city to its nineteenth-century incarnation and the Situationists were to adopt a more critical stance toward the commodity-spectacle which they encountered on their walks such that, ultimately, *dérive* and *flânerie* cannot be treated as interchangeable terms. McDonough rightly stresses the material and ideological dimensions of the Situationists' activity and in this respect the nature of the Situationist quest was quite different from that of the *flâneur*'s scopophilia which generated a seemingly endless reel of observations that could be shaped into literary texts that in themselves became commodities in the sphere of cultural production. By contrast, the *dérive*'s swift passage through varied ambiances and intensities is essentially an anti-representational technique of urban exploration, a point that will become pertinent as my discussion of the anti-literary character of Situationist activities develops. As such, Libero Andreotti suggests that the *dérive* is best understood as a tactical form of collective play that during the second phase of the Situationist International (following the resignation of its artistic members) was extended into "highly politicized behavior, as seen in the urban poetry of the graffiti, the wild architecture of the barricades and the *détournement* of entire city streets in May '68" ("Architecture and Play" 235).

With a vast body of literature already devoted to *flânerie* and the novel, it will not be within the scope of this particular study to radically revise or develop this literature. The figure of the *flâneur* is invoked at certain points, however, in order to shed light on the development of the psychogeographical novel with particular care to avoid the construction of what Alistair Bonnett points out is often misrepresented in historical accounts as a smooth lineage of inheritance between psychogeography and *flânerie*. Rather than locating psychogeography as a strange hybrid genre of "ludic *flânerie*" (Bonnett 46) I am concerned with the significant shift in subjectivity that it brings about, its manifestation of what Simon O'Sullivan describes (following Gilles

Deleuze) as an *immanent* subjectivity that is produced in active collaboration with, not detached observation of, the flows and ambiances of the city. O’Sullivan perceptively observes that the psychogeographer is “an *expression* of the city [such that] this new city (and new city inhabitant) is future orientated” (“Possible Worlds,” par 32, emphasis in original). I want to extend this observation by considering how the SI’s desire to collectively mobilise the forces of the city in the direction of future change might be understood as embodying an essentially schizophrenic relationship to place. I deploy the term schizophrenic here in the sense intended by Deleuze and Guattari in their work on the desiring production of “schizoanalysis” outlined in *L’Anti-Oedipe* (1972) [*Anti-Oedipus*] and its sequel *Mille plateaux* (1980) [*A Thousand Plateaus*], a conceptual framework that I address in my second chapter concerned with illuminating precisely what the *psych* in *psychogeography* entails.

The influence of Surrealism

While Coverley’s study does cite the Surrealist avant-garde as a significant precursor to the psychogeography of the Lettrist International, and later the Situationist International, there remains much potential for nuancing the complexities of this inheritance, a principal concern of my first chapter, “The Surrealist City Novel.” A common starting point for comparing the Situationist approach to the city with that of the Surrealists, for instance, is to contrast the role of chance as it figures in the *dérive* with its manifestation in the *déambulation* of its Surrealist practitioners. Debord famously downplays the role of chance in “Theory of the *Dérive*,” suggesting that “*l’action du hasard est naturellement conservatrice et tend, dans un nouveau cadre, à tout ramener à l’alternance d’un nombre limité de variantes, et à l’habitude. Le progrès n’étant jamais que la rupture d’un des champs où s’exerce le hasard, par la création de nouvelles conditions plus favorables à nos desseins*” (52) [“the action of chance is naturally conservative and in a new setting tends to reduce everything to habit or to an alternation between a limited number of variants. Progress means breaking through fields where chance holds sway by creating new conditions more favorable to our purposes” (63)]. As such Debord sought to position psychogeography as a more objective and rational means of studying the affective forces of urban space and its influence upon the emotions and behaviours of individuals. For McDonough, the Situationist desire to move beyond individual responses to the urban terrain as exemplified by strolling or *flânerie* reflects the fact that:

cities were for them [the LI] profoundly historical landscapes, whose current appearances were shaped – as geological strata underlay physical landscapes – by the successive events that time has buried, though never completely effaced. Throughout the years prior to the founding of the SI, an important strain in their writings reflected a desire to rediscover and reconnect with that history, and specifically with the revolutionary legacy of the city in its most radical guises. (*The Situationists and the City* 11)

Yet the critical intentions of the LI's engagement with a latent revolutionary past may share more common ground with the Surrealist treatment of the city than is commonly acknowledged. In her study, *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution* (1995), Margaret Cohen argues that much of the uncanniness of a novel like *Nadja* derives from Breton's ghostly conjuring of sites and monuments carefully selected for their connection with the city's history of revolutionary insurrection and bohemian activity. Yet in the jostling context of the French avant-garde of the 1950s, the struggle and rivalry between competing groups seeking to claim greater political efficacy over one another resulted in the Situationists vocally discrediting the radical ambitions of the Surrealists. In a taped contribution to the 1958 debate provocatively titled "Is Surrealism Dead or Alive?" Debord declares that "*le surréalisme aujourd'hui est parfaitement ennuyeux et réactionnaire*" ("Mort ou Vivant" par 6) ["Surrealism today is thoroughly boring and reactionary" ("Dead or Alive" 68)]. He does not stop there. "*Les rêves surréalistes*" ["Surrealist dreams"], he goes on, "*correspondent à l'impuissance bourgeoise, aux nostalgies artistique, et au refus d'envisager l'emploi libérateur des moyens techniques supérieure de notre temps* (par 7)" ["are mere bourgeois impotence, artistic nostalgia, and refusal to envisage the liberating use of our era's superior technological means" (68)]. The combative stance that Debord adopted towards the SI's Surrealist forebears has done much to obfuscate their shared concerns, in particular the extent to which both movements are linked by their privileging of desire as a conduit to contesting the alienations of everyday life to such a common degree that one might classify the Situationist International as a post-Surrealist movement.¹⁶ In this respect, my study engages certain revisionist impulses as I want to re-inscribe the political content of the Surrealist novel that is neglected in contemporary accounts of the Situationist International that reduce Surrealist texts to inherently ludic and therefore benign precursors to psychogeographical activities.

By setting out the principal conventions of the Surrealist city novel, my first chapter will serve, then, as a foundational one that explores how the particular type of

spatial narrative and topographical bias evident in the work of the Surrealists, combined with the overlooked political content of their anti-novels, provides a model for some of the key tenets of Lettrist psychogeography as it was developed in the early 1950s. Concerned principally with André Breton's *Nadja* (1928), Louis Aragon's *Paris Peasant* (1926) and the British Surrealist Leonora Carrington's autobiographical novella *Down Below* (1944), chapter one will contextualise the influence of the literary works of the Surrealists in terms of their experimental approach to autobiography, the latent politics of their uncanny treatment of place, their Freudo-Marxist preoccupation with the street as a site of revolutionary potential and the prominence afforded to subversive destabilisations of identity brought about by encounters with the liminal and threshold sites of the city. In their attention to the energies of the outmoded and the heightened affects of liminal zones of the city, the politics of re-enchantment in the Surrealist city novel anticipates the Situationist preoccupation with contesting the alienations of capitalist modernity with a praxis of embodied responses to the city that disrupt the disciplinary constraints of functionalist space. At the same time, my discussion of Leonora Carrington's *Down Below*, a text rarely considered in literary histories of psychogeography, the novel and Surrealism, will bring to light the ambivalent subject position that the Surrealist woman occupies in relation to the disruptive spatial strategies of Surrealism and how this ambivalence ultimately calls into question their liberatory promise.

The *détournement* of the novel

Having established the complex lines of inheritance and negation underpinning the Surrealist antecedents of psychogeography, in my second chapter entitled "Lost bearings: delirious narrativity from Lowry to Lettrist psychogeography," I turn to those elusive early years of its clandestine practice, prior to the transformation of the LI into the SI in 1957, when the lines between Surrealism and the Lettrist International were more porous. It is here that I am most explicitly concerned to unpack precisely what the term *psych* in psychogeography entails. While chapter one emphasises their shared concern for harnessing and turning around the destabilising potential of affect, desire and phenomenological responses to the city, in my second chapter I focus on a significant point of departure between the Situationists and the Surrealists, and that is their differing attitudes to the role of the unconscious in relation to the city. Just as Deleuze and Guattari developed the notion of "schizoanalysis" as a rebuke to Freudian

psychoanalytic explanations of the unconscious in terms of fixations, familial identifications, repression and the family romance of the Oedipal complex, I will argue that Lettrist psychogeography can be understood as repudiating a psychoanalytic model of experiencing the city through the lens of personal psychology and subjective memory. In this context Deleuze and Guattari's work on schizoanalysis emerges as a particularly useful framework for examining how psychogeography's methods of encountering the flows and energies of the urban terrain in small packs and groups implies a desire to go beyond individualised responses to the city in order to unlock the subversive potential of the collective.

Returning more directly to the question of the novel, the latter part of chapter two considers the literary implications of the *dérive* as an anti-representational technique of urban exploration that seeks both to resist its commodification as literature and to sublate the category of the work of art into the praxis of everyday life. For this reason I argue that the relationship between Lettrist psychogeography and the novel is best understood in the context of *détournement*, which for the SI names "*le réemplois dans une nouvelle unité d'éléments artistiques préexistants*" (SI, "Le Détournement" 78) ["the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble" (SI, "Détournement" 67)]. For Debord, certain literary works were prescribed an instructive value in the practice of *dérive*. An important novel in this respect is Malcolm Lowry's 1947 *Under the Volcano*, a work that Debord suggests when it is "*soumis dans les conditions favorables [...] suffit à faire apparaître avec force les incidents significatifs qui autrement n'auraient sans doute même pas été remarqués*" ("Letter to Straram" 42) ["subject to favorable conditions [...] suffices to forcefully make appear the *significant* incidents that otherwise wouldn't even be noticed" ("Letter to Straram," par 13, emphasis in original)]. It is this overlooked notion of the "usefulness" of the novel to the *dérive* that I want to unpack in my consideration of the relationship between Lowry's *Under the Volcano* and Lettrist psychogeography. In this way, chapter two anticipates the argument of my third chapter which explores the *détournement*, or turning around, of a vast array of literary sources in Debord's collaged work of autobiography, *Mémoires* (1959), produced in collaboration with Asger Jorn and famously composed entirely from pre-existing elements and fragments of other works. Focusing in particular on Debord's *détournement* of Anglophone texts such as Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), as well as the genres of the

adventure and romance novel more generally, in this chapter I consider how novelistic sources are put to “work” in *Mémoires*. In this way, the dismantling of the novel performs a critical function in Debord’s book insofar as it plays a constructive role in contributing to the objective of his *oeuvre* of insolent autobiography: to create “*un désagréable portrait de la société présente*” (*Cette mauvaise réputation* 73/63) “a disagreeable portrait of present society” (*This Bad Reputation*).

One of the first authors to draw the attention of Anglophone readers to Debord’s *Mémoires* was the American Greil Marcus who discusses the book in both his essay in the English-language catalogue accompanying the 1989 Situationist exhibition and in his contentiously received comparative history of the Sex Pistols and the SI, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, also published in 1989. Like the Pompidou exhibition, Marcus’s book is commonly criticised for simultaneously popularising and dehistoricising the SI as it conflates the seemingly incongruent fashionable nihilism of punk aesthetics with the SI’s more rigorous Hegelian-Marxist critique of spectacular commodity culture. In the context of my study, however, Marcus’s book represents an important contribution to the literature as it was one of the first Anglophone studies of the SI to provide commentary not only on Debord’s *Mémoires* but also on a pair of detoured novels by the Situationist Michèle Bernstein, *Tous les chevaux du roi* [*All the King’s Horses*] and *La Nuit* [*The Night*], published in 1960 and 1961 respectively. Both books were all but erased from the history of the SI until their recovery by Marcus almost four decades later. More recently, the books have been republished by *Éditions Allia* in France and subsequently translated into English, bringing a renewed focus to both Bernstein’s contribution to the Situationist International and the role of the novel within it.

Yet a significant barrier to dedicated scholarship on these novels remains insofar as Bernstein has disowned her literary productions as jokes (Marcus recounts her comments in this vein in *Lipstick Traces*¹⁷). Marcus suggests, however, that such remarks belie the greater interest residing in the novels and he describes them as “flat, precise, disturbing studies of restlessness and sloth, of people who have found a way to turn life into a game” (*Lipstick Traces* 423). McKenzie Wark elaborates upon this thread in his short book *Fifty Years of Recuperation of the Situationist International* in which he insists more forcefully upon “the centrality of a hitherto marginalized figure, Michèle Bernstein” (28).¹⁸ Notwithstanding the fact that the characters and

plots of both novels contain traces of the lived reality of Debord and Bernstein's open marriage, Wark contends that it is imperative that readers and scholars go beyond the temptation to treat the books as thinly veiled biography:

Rather than read them for dubious historical details, it might be more interesting to take the books on their own terms, as fictions, but as presenting in fictional form a practice, perhaps even an ethics, for a Situationist conduct of everyday life. Situationist writing contains elaborate theories of fiction, but just two novels that are fictions of theory. (*Fifty Years of Recuperation* 34)

In a footnote Wark suggests that more could be said about a Situationist approach to the novel and those novels that were key to the movement, a significant gap in the literature on the SI which this thesis seeks to redress.¹⁹ In my fourth chapter concerned explicitly with the Situationist fiction of Michèle Bernstein, particular attention is paid to the critique of the novel that emerges in her tactical appropriation, or *détournement*, of popular and high-literary genres. Through the strategic use of irony in her novels Bernstein, I wish to suggest, cleverly turns around the banality of fiction for the purposes of making visible the link between reification and the trivialisation of desire within everyday life under late capitalist modernity. At the same time, her authorial stance is complicated by her *habitus* as both Debord's wife and as one of the few active female participants in the SI. For this reason, I want to explore how the destabilising deployment of allusion, masks and humour in Bernstein's fiction combine to produce a highly ambivalent attitude to the subject matter the author describes. In this way, Bernstein might be viewed as simultaneously participating in and critiquing the games of self-mythologising that were so central to the SI's cultivation of their radical self-image.

The factors contributing to the virtual erasure of Bernstein's fictions from the dominant histories of the SI are complex. Yet it is worth noting the timing of their publication in 1960 and 1961 which coincided with what I have already noted represented a major turning point in the Situationist project concerning the resignation of the artistic members to make way for a consensus on the necessity of completely superseding the realm of art. Although it is inaccurate to reduce the activities of the SI to the binary of an artistic and subsequent political or theoretical phase it is nevertheless the case that after 1960 the more utopian ideal that aesthetic expression might be subverted from within in order to critique the spectacle was increasingly abandoned by the group. As a result, the significance previously afforded to subversive

play tactics such as the *dérive* and the collective undertaking of psychogeographical researches began to wane. For my study of psychogeography and the novel, this particular historical moment also represents an important turning point as my second, third and fourth chapters each deal in various ways with the “heroic phase” of psychogeography (to borrow a phrase more commonly applied to the first phase of Surrealism) when its practice by the LI and the SI sought to repurpose the novel, among other forms of cultural production, to critical ends. After the conclusion of this heroic phase the ground begins to shift in the relationship between psychogeography and the novel. In my concluding chapter entitled “Adrift in the Sixties” I turn my attention to the literary productions that emerge from two authors at the periphery of the movement who arguably identified with the Situationist ethos in varying ways yet who cannot be said to have exhibited the same level of investment in the anti-literary stance of the core members of the group.

It is the vestigial manifestation of psychogeographical themes that I explore, then, in my analysis of the novel that the Scottish expatriate author Alexander Trocchi wrote while he was a member of the Situationist International, *Cain's Book* (1960), and the ambivalent document of commodity culture that emerges in Georges Perec's *Les Choses: une histoire des années soixante* [*Things: A Story of the Sixties*], first published in France in 1965. In the case of Trocchi, who relocated from Glasgow to Paris in the early fifties and was an active collaborator with the Lettrist avant-garde, the psychogeographical themes that manifest in his auto-fictional account of a heroin addict living an itinerant drifting existence on a scow on New York's Hudson River are complicated by Trocchi's Scottish heritage and his Modernist identifications, resulting in a highly unorthodox novelistic interpretation of key Situationist ideas. Perec, by contrast, was of course not a member of the SI yet his biographer David Bellos has suggested that the Parisian writer was “familiar with the ideas of the *dérive* and *détournement* in the early 1960s, and these notions informed his reinvention of the art of seeing as well as the art of writing” (281). In Perec's *Things*, the detachment that underpins the author's cataloguing of consumer objects and his contradictory fascination with the complex ideologies that simmer beneath the surface of a material culture produces an inventory so forensic that it imbues the banalities of the quotidian with a sense of wonder. In this sense, psychogeographical themes and practices are transformed by Perec in ways that anticipate more contemporary psychogeographical literatures concerned with the plenitude of the everyday as a site of tactical resistance.

Psychogeography amid the spatial turn

To conclude my thesis in the year 1965 with a discussion of the topographical fiction of Georges Perec is to end with another beginning of sorts, which inevitably provokes reflection upon the untimeliness of psychogeography insofar as it is early (formulated in 1953 some fifteen years before the events of May '68) yet can only be fully understood in the context of what comes after it. The late sixties are now understood as the beginning of the “spatial turn,” a term first introduced by the American geographer Edward Soja in his *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) in a polemical bid to call greater attention to the category of space in the Anglophone sphere but which in fact takes as its launching point the earlier assertion of Michel Foucault in 1967 that “the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than time” (“Of Other Spaces” 23). In French critical theory the “spatial turn” designates a process of convergence from about 1970 onwards when a growing number of disciplines began to assess space as actively produced (rather than as a neutral and inert backdrop for privileged temporal events) according to which philosophers such as Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, Paul Virilio, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, and Guy Debord, among others, sought to expose the seamless collaboration of space with capitalism, the operations of surveillance and its invisible flows of power and domination of the subject. While the spatial turn in France inevitably evolves from the politicisation of urban space that occurred in Paris during the unrest of May '68, its influence in the Anglophone sphere is marked by a time lapse in translation as many key texts of the French spatial turn only started to become readily accessible in English translations in the nineties. A prominent example in this respect is Lefebvre's 1974 magnum opus on critical spatiality, *The Production of Space*, first translated from the French into English by the scholar (and former Situationist) Donald Nicholson-Smith in 1991.

If the spatial turn arrived late in the Anglophone sphere its reception must nevertheless be understood in terms of a remarkably accelerated speed. Indeed within a mere couple of decades it has already become possible for initial advocates such as Edward Soja to criticise the level of ubiquity that the category of space has since achieved. For Soja, the problem now lies in the fact that while never before have “so many scholars from so many different fields of interest been so involved with interpreting what they study using a spatial perspective [...] there are still very few

who, like Lefebvre, put space first, that is, see all the complexities of human existence, especially cities, through assertively spatial lenses” (“Writing the City Spatially” 272). Within the context of more conventional literary scholarship, however, this type of criticism can be inverted and it is the all too fashionable tendency to put space first that attracts criticism for the rise of sociological approaches to literature that forsake close reading and rigorous textual analysis for an interest in what the setting of literature might tell us about our relationship to place and space in different geographical and historical contexts. In response some literary scholars such as David James have called for the return to “an author-centred approach to different spatial sites and socio-geographical relations” (6) so that renewed focus on the texts themselves might reveal how experimental treatments of place powerfully extend the formal possibilities of the novel.

Given the equal weight that I have afforded to both psychogeography *and* the novel in my research topic, it is worth concluding these prefatory remarks with some clarification as to where the methodology of my research can be situated in relation to these two seemingly polarised schools of thought. As I have already stated, I do not intend to adopt psychogeography as a conventional tool of literary analysis, according to which its value would be measured in terms of its capacity to shed new light on the role of place in existing literary works. Yet I heed the methodology of literary scholars by adopting an author-centred approach insofar as I have elected to work with fewer texts in more detail in order to support my case that Situationist texts, despite their deep-seated ambivalence towards the recuperative tendencies of representation, can nevertheless benefit from close readings that work to deconstruct the breadth, and limits, of their critical tendencies. In regards to the question of whether my thesis puts space or the novel first, I would respond that in reality the dichotomy is a false one. By approaching psychogeography and its literary variants as a form of praxis, my study responds to Situationist space as one among a number of fields of struggle within which literature and novelistic discourse, alongside other modes of cultural expression such as the cinema, are repurposed and given a practical role to play in negating the alienating effects of modernity and the reifications of commodity capitalism. Thus when the SI go so far as to deny the production of any new literary or artistic works, the group nevertheless continue to rely upon a canon of literary and other cultural expressions in order to imagine alternative worlds and to critique the existing one. In this way, my thesis proposes that the “living critique” (Kotányi and Vaneigem 88) of

psychogeography, with its *détournement* of language, environments and artistic forms, continues to find contemporary expression less in specific types or sub-categories of the novel than it does in a diverse and hybridised body of literature with questions of dis-alienation at its core, even in that “outmoded form”²⁰ of the novel that the Situationists so passionately criticised yet paradoxically turned to for so much of their ammunition.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

¹ See Fredric Jameson’s writing on architecture, postmodern space and the necessity of the cognitive map in *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of Late Capitalism* (1991).

² Will Self is perhaps the key figure in bringing psychogeography to a wide and general readership in Britain. Between 2003 and 2008 the novelist contributed a weekly column on psychogeography to *The Independent* in which he explored the logic of his own fascination with long distance walking and recounted his ambulatory adventures both within the UK and abroad. A selection of these articles has since been anthologised in the books *Psychogeography* (2007) and *Psycho Too* (2009) with illustrations by Ralph Steadman.

In respect to psychogeography and the novel, Iain Sinclair’s formally experimental explorations of the haunted and temporally convulsed psyche of London in such novels as *Downriver* (1991), *Dining on Stones* (2004) and *White Chapell Scarlett Tracings* (1987) have done much to pioneer the category of the contemporary psychogeographical novel although the author himself is deeply ambivalent about the categorisation of his work as psychogeography.

³ It is worth noting the Anglophone underpinnings of the Situationist exhibition which was principally organised by UK film scholar Peter Wollen and art critic Mark Francis with French art critic Paul- Hervé Parsy, and in consultation with the Americans Thomas Y. Levin, Greil Marcus and Elisabeth Sussman. The exhibition dates were Musée national d’art modern Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France, February 21, 1989 – April 9, 1989; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England, June 23, 1989 – August 13, 1989; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts, United States, October 20, 1989 – January 7, 1990. Debord himself famously refused to attend the exhibition at the Pompidou.

⁴ *Guy Debord: un art de la guerre*, curated by Emmanuel Guy and Laurence Le Bras, was held at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, Paris, March 23 – July 13, 2013. Debord’s archives were rather controversially procured from Debord’s widow, Alice Becker-Ho, for a handsome sum in 2011 after a bidding war between the BnF and Yale University led to the archives being declared a “national treasure” to bolster the BnF’s fundraising efforts.

⁵ In contrast to the absence of explanatory texts in the French-language catalogue and its minimalist design mirroring that of the original Situationist journals, the English-language catalogue, edited by Elisabeth Sussmann, was a far more scholarly affair.

The catalogue was particularly concerned to assert the relevance of the Situationist critique to contemporary art and culture. Notable essays include Peter Woollen's "Bitter Victory: the Art and Politics of the Situationist International" (20 – 61) and Thomas Y. Levin's "Dismantling the Spectacle: The Cinema of Guy Debord," one of the first English-language critical assessments of the film *oeuvre* of Debord (72-123).

⁶ Sadie Plant's 1992 study *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* is notable for reconsidering the Situationist critique of the spectacle in light of the postmodern theories of Baudrillard, Lyotard et al. The most sophisticated and theoretically informed account of Guy Debord's Marxism is Anselme Jappe's biography, *Guy Debord* (1993).

⁷ The key contemporary challenge to Debord's notion of the spectacle as a critique of the visual is undoubtedly Jacques Rancière's *Le Spectateur émancipé* (2008) [*The Emancipated Spectator*], in which the French philosopher seeks to ascribe agency to seeing and to oppose identification of the contemplation of the image with passivity. While Rancière's aesthetico-praxis of the image undoubtedly provokes a "fresh look at what images are, what they do and the effects they generate" (Rancière, *Spectator* 95), his revision nevertheless fails to engage with what is at stake in Debord's project, which is to understand *how* the operations of a given *society* produce a spectacle of separation mediated by images, quite a different task to analysing the aesthetic effects of images themselves and their relationship to spectacle and separation.

⁸ At the same time, Debord's concept of the spectacle is not monolithic and over time he revises its definition. For an account of the various modes of modern spectacle identified by Debord in his later writings see his 1988 essay *Commentaires sur la société du spectacle* [*Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*] and McKenzie Wark, *The Spectacle of Disintegration: Situationist passages out of the 20th Century* (2013).

⁹ Despite continuities with the program of the essentially Parisian Lettrist International it should be noted that the founding of the SI did represent a broadening of the international outlook of the movement. The modest constituency included members of the largely Scandinavian International Movement for an Imaginist Bauhaus (an off-shoot of the COBRA art movement), and the London Psychogeographical Association, of which the English Ralph Rumney was the sole member.

It is also worth noting that the group's name, the Situationist International, like the Lettrist International that preceded it, is clearly a *détournement* of the Second International (1889-1916), an organisation of socialist and labour parties that continued the work of the dissolved First International, or the original Socialist International.

¹⁰ See *Potlatch* # 1, 22 June 1954, reprinted in *Guy Debord présente Potlatch 1954-1957, Édition Augmentée*.

¹¹ In fact, Isou's Lettrism was one of the first avant-garde movements to take seriously the destabilising potential of a mass youth population which Isou addresses in the manifesto entitled *Le soulèvement de la jeunesse*, or "Youth Uprising."

¹² The most significant departures in this respect were the resignation of Constant Nieuwenhuys in 1960 and Asger Jorn's amicable withdrawal from the movement in 1961

due to the incompatibility of the SI's anti-aesthetic stance with the continued pursuit of his own artistic practice.

¹³ See also Simon Ford's general introductory text, *The Situationist International: a user's guide* in which the Situationists's writings on the city are contextualised in a succinct sequential history of the SI with a particular emphasis on their critique of the spectacle.

¹⁴ See for example the section titled "The Architectural Interlude" in Tom McDonough's introduction to *The Situationists and the City* (17-22).

¹⁵ Coverley does however give some credit to the spatial theorists that followed the Situationists in France, arguing that the work of Michel de Certeau, for example, represents a maturation of earlier theories of walking. The most frequently cited work in this respect is de Certeau's essay "Walking in the City" from *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980). Coverley invokes de Certeau in the context of Raoul Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life* (1967) and the writings of Henri Lefebvre, author of *The Production of Space* (1974) who was associated with the Situationists between 1958 and 1962, and whose work on the ambiguity of the everyday I address in chapter four.

¹⁶ The SI can be considered post-Surrealist in the sense that they responded to the constructive possibilities of Surrealism whilst seeking to reform and supersede its limitations. In his article, "The Situationist International, Surrealism, and the Difficult Fusion of Art and Politics," Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen notes how their Surrealist tendencies distinguished the SI from their Pop contemporaries: "The situationists' continued insistence on being a post-Dadaist and post-surrealist organisation in a world where art could no longer serve as a tool for revolution made them stand apart in a world where other artists experienced a feeling of freedom from past kinds of social control" (384).

¹⁷ "They were jokes," says Bernstein in her interview with Marcus, *Lipstick Traces* (423).

¹⁸ The overlooked importance of Bernstein's contribution to the SI is also noted but not at all elaborated upon in a conversation between Ralph Rumney and Stewart Home on the subject of the 1989 SI exhibition, published in Stewart Home, ed. *What is Situationism? A Reader* (137).

¹⁹ As examples of influences, Wark cites the novels of Malcolm Lowry and Louis-Ferdinand Céline. Also mentioned is the posthumously published novel of the Lettrist Patrick Straram, *Les Bouteilles se couchent* (2006) while George Perec's *Things: A Story of the Sixties* (1965) and Philippe Sollers's *The Park* (1977) are offered as examples of novels inspired by a Situationist approach.

²⁰ The characterisation of the novel as an outmoded form is made by Debord in the context of a discussion of the crisis of modern culture in the "Report on the Construction of Situations" (1957), in which he writes: "*L'opposition qu'il faut maintenant unir contre la décomposition idéologique ne doit d'ailleurs pas s'attacher à critiquer les bouffonneries qui se produisent dans les formes condamnées, comme la poésie ou le roman*" ("Rapport" 694). ["The opposition that must now be united against this ideological decomposition must not get caught up in criticizing the buffooneries appearing in outmoded forms such as poems or novels" (32)].

Figure 1.1 Plate 17 from *Nadja* (1928). Photograph of the Humanité bookshop with billboard “Sign up Here.”

Figure 1.2 Plate 3 from *Nadja* (1928). Photograph of the statue of Etienne Dolet.

Figure 1.3 Leonora Carrington, Map of Santander, from *Down Below*, first published in VVV 1944 (no.4).

1. The Surrealist City Novel

The Paris of the Surrealist literature of the 1920s is a dreamscape. André Breton's *Nadja* (1928) is perhaps the most well-known example yet over the course of a decade there appeared a plethora of anti-novels by French Surrealists including Philippe Soupault, Robert Desnos, Louis Aragon and René Crevel in which the pursuit of an enigmatic love object through the streets of Paris transforms the city into a stage for chance encounters and disruptive, dream-like experiences of shock and surprise.¹ Emerging in the wake of the destruction of the First World War, the ludic impulses of these Surrealist fictions were of course underpinned by more serious intent. Embedded within a larger critique that sought to bind the world of dreams and the imagination to cultural and political revolt, the dreamscapes of the French Surrealists belonged to a strategy of contestation that sought to turn the machinations of "a sterile and dead world" (Rasmussen, "Difficult Fusion" 372) into a "revolution of the subject, a revolution that destroyed identity and released the fantastic" (372).

As I outlined in my introduction, the formulation of psychogeography by the Lettrist International owes a significant debt to the oneiric wanderings of the Surrealists yet despite their shared concern for enacting a "revolution of the subject" (372) the extent of the SI's Surrealist inheritances remains contested. Indeed anxieties concerning Surrealist tendencies within the Situationist International can be traced back to the founding documents of the movement. Ivan Chatcheglov's 1953 "Formulary for a New Urbanism," for instance, reveals the extent to which the LI developed psychogeography partly in response to the failure of Surrealist strategies in the post war era to continue to ignite the sense of intoxication with the city that had once transformed it into a site of mystery and adventure. In the 1957 "Report on the Construction of Situations," Debord begins with a favourable assessment of Surrealism's concern for linking the sovereignty of desire and surprise to radical proposals for a new way of life. Yet this praise is qualified by a critique of what Debord identifies as Surrealism's misplaced faith in "*la richesse infinie de l'imagination inconsciente*" ("Rapport" 691) ["the infinite richness of the unconscious imagination" ("Report" 28)]. After the conclusion of Surrealism's heroic phase of dreams and trances by the late 1920s, it had in some respects become commonplace to critique the movement on the grounds that its mystical game playing had failed to fulfil the group's revolutionary ambitions and the esoteric currents of Bretonian Surrealism, in

particular, appeared out of step with the brutal historical realities of the Second World War.² Yet Debord does not dismiss Surrealism outright in the “Report” but seeks rather to diagnose its weaknesses:

La cause de l'échec idéologique du surréalisme, c'est d'avoir parié que l'inconsciente était la grande force, enfin découverte, de la vie. C'est d'avoir révisé l'histoire des idées en conséquence, et de l'avoir arrêtée là. (“Rapport” 691)

The cause of surrealism’s ideological failure was its belief that the unconscious was the finally discovered ultimate force of life; and the fact that the surrealists revised the history of ideas in accordance with that simplistic perspective and never went any further. (‘Report’ 28)

In this respect the Situationist project begins with an acknowledgement of the “constructive possibilities” of Surrealism and a desire to go further than their predecessors by enacting a more consciously organised program of interventions into the spectacle of everyday life in the post war era. But while the SI might have begun as what Tom McDonough tentatively terms a “post-Surrealist” movement (“Introduction: Ideology” xv), over time the group distanced themselves from their Surrealist inheritances preferring rather to emphasise the influence of the Dadaist spirit of negativity.³ In contrast to those histories of psychogeography that cast Surrealist *déambulation* (wandering or strolling) as an important but inherently *apolitical* precursor to the apparently more radically conceived Situationist *dérive*,⁴ in this chapter I want to recover the radical impetus of the Surrealist project, notably its conception of imagination and desire as a force for overturning the alienation of everyday life with a view to considering how this might, in turn, influence the development of some of the key tenets of psychogeography. In particular, I want to link the topographical bias of the spatial narratives of the Surrealist city novel and the Surrealists’s rejection of the project of the classical novel to the Situationist preoccupation with *le dépassement de l’art*, the notion of superseding the artistic gesture that underpins Situationist psychogeography and its principal mode of exploring the city: the *dérive*. Concerned with three literary works: André Breton’s *Nadja* (1928); Louis Aragon’s *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926) [*Paris Peasant*]; and Leonora Carrington’s *En Bas* (1944) [*Down Below*]; this chapter advances the work of the thesis by setting out some of the foundational principles of the psychogeographical novel as influenced by the anti-literary endeavours of the Surrealists. At the same time, I will observe certain revisionist impulses by re-

inscribing the political content of the Surrealist novel that is increasingly neglected in contemporary accounts of the history and evolution of the Situationist International.

1.1 Experimental autobiography and the *roman-à-clef*

First published in France in 1928 and later appearing in a revised edition in 1964, Breton's *Nadja* is one of the key works in the history of Surrealist prose.⁵ While the work belongs to Breton's Paris prose trilogy, which also comprises *L'Amour Fou* (1937) [*Mad Love*] and *Les Vases Communicants* (1932) [*Communicating Vessels*], it is the presentation of the purportedly true account of the narrator's (André's) obsessional infatuation with an enigmatic young woman who goes by the name of Nadja that has captured the imagination of readers over a number of decades, informing *Nadja's* status as a classic of Surrealism. Based upon the real events of a brief affair that Breton conducted with a young woman named Léona-Camille-Ghislaine Delcourt, the figure of Nadja is also modelled upon a case study in Pierre Janet's 1926 study of hysterics, *De l'Angloïsse à l'extase* [*From Anguish to Ecstasy*].⁶ According to Surrealist scholar Anna Balakian, Breton was familiar with Janet's text and was particularly drawn to the case of a 28-year-old hysteric named Nadia who "appeared to have an unusual insight into her own condition" (Balakian 33). Under Breton's novelistic treatment, the pair's haunted and uncanny romance is plotted spatially, unfolding during their undirected walks, or *dérives*, through the streets of Paris. The city acts as an affective register of their encounters during which "movement in itself carries with it indecipherable promises" (Hubert 243). Yet the "*séduction mentale*" (*Nadja* 128) ["intellectual seduction"] between the pair is short-lived. Several months after their separation, André learns that Nadja has suffered a mental breakdown and is committed to a sanatorium. Upon rehearsing a diatribe vehemently attacking the clinical institutions that administer psychiatric treatment it becomes evident that the narrator does not wish to visit Nadja at the sanatorium and as such he nonchalantly resumes the usual concerns of his everyday life.

While the "real events" that inspired *Nadja* are now well-established, the question of whether the novel's narrator, André, presents a "true" or a fictionalised version of Breton is more contentious. Given its autobiographical dimension, *Nadja* is perhaps most accurately classified as a memoir yet its ambiguous intermingling of fiction, non-fiction and autobiography nonetheless renders the text an important precursor to the psychogeographical novel with its imprecise and hybridised

relationship to genre. In the context of Breton's Surrealist novel, however, it is necessary to locate the ambiguity of the text's autobiographical claims within the broader Surrealist project to create documents of the unconscious mind, a project of anti-literary iconoclasm that Breton explicitly connects in the first *Manifesto of Surrealism* to a critique of the classical novel. Here, Breton denounces the realist fiction of the nineteenth-century for its preoccupation with psychology and naturalistic description which "*m'a bien l'air hostile à tout essor intellectuel et moral. Je l'ai en horreur, car elle est faite de médiocrité, de haine et de plate suffisance*" (14) ["clearly seems to me to be hostile to any intellectual or moral advancement. I loathe it, for it is made up of mediocrity, hate and dull conceit" (6)]. Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron notes that Breton was not alone in his outspoken critique of the classical novel for "the voice of Breton was in unison with certain others who attacked the novel as a facile art, the product of an outmoded imagination, which was to be declared inadequate in its use of description and dialogue" (15).⁷ While Surrealist prose occupies a somewhat marginal position in Anglophone accounts of literary modernism, it is worth noting that French scholarship locates the Surrealists and their "notorious challenges to the artistic credentials of the novel" (Walker 131) within a more continuous tradition in French literature according to which debate over the constraints and limitations of the novel productively generates innovation and renewal of the form.

For Breton, the value and efficacy of the novel is not to be located in the artful application of invented details consciously selected by the author to shape the illusion of the novel's *verisimilitude* with the so-called plane of everyday reality (arguably the measure of achievement of the classical novel). Rather its utility resides in the possibility that an unembellished and automatic-like prose might bring "*ces préoccupations somme toute extra-littéraires*" (*Nadja* 14) ["these altogether extra-literary preoccupations"] onto the literary plane. As the reference to "extra-literary preoccupations" suggests, Breton's critique of realism is heavily influenced by his encounter with Freudian psychoanalysis, which locates the subconscious as an irrational and latent force of influence upon the actions and desires of the subject that may run counter to the conscious plane of logic and reason. By no means an example of automatic writing Breton's *Nadja* is, nonetheless, consciously structured in an "artless" fashion that appears closer to the psychoanalytical methods of free-association than conventional literary composition. Thus he recounts the events of his encounter with Nadja in the detached manner of neuropsychiatric observation,

recollecting a pattern of events that at first glance appear random and inconsequential yet gain meaning when “analysed” as a chain of occurrences that correspond with the unconscious wishes of the narrator:

Je n'ai dessein de relater, en marge du récit que je vais entreprendre, que les épisodes les plus marquants de ma vie telle que je peux le concevoir hors de son plan organique, soit dans la mesure même où elle est livrée aux hasards, au plus petit comme au plus grand, où regimbant contre l'idée commune que je m'en fais, elle m'introduit dans un monde comme défendu qui est celui des rapprochements soudains, des pétrifiantes coïncidences, des réflexes primant tout autre essor du mental, des accords plaqués comme au piano, des éclairs qui feraient voir, mais alors voir, s'ils n'étaient encore plus rapides que les autres. (Nadja 19-20)

I intend to mention, in the margin of the narrative I have yet to relate, only the most decisive episodes of my life *as I can conceive it apart from its organic plan*, and only insofar as it is at the mercy of chance – the merest as well as the greatest – temporarily escaping my control, admitting me to an almost forbidden world of sudden parallels, petrifying coincidences, and reflexes particular to each individual, of harmonies struck as though on the piano, flashes of light that would make you see, really *see*, if only they were not so much quicker than all the rest. (*Nadja* 19, emphasis in original)

Breton's emphasis on flashes and jolts of illumination brought about by the violent coincidence of chance and subliminal desire illustrates not only the author's debts to psychoanalysis but also the extent of Surrealism's disobedience to the therapeutic application of its methods. In the first *Manifesto* Breton famously rejects the use of analysis to mitigate the pathologies of the psyche suggesting, rather, that the methods of psychoanalysis be employed at the service of liberating consciousness in order to release the subject from the constraints of “*le règne de la logique*” (18) “[the reign of logic” (9)]. It was his wartime psychiatric training that first exposed Breton to the fledgling discipline of psychoanalysis in France. When Breton and his fellow Surrealist Philippe Soupault came together in 1919 to conduct their experimental researches, however, the pair took poetic license with its principal techniques of automatic writing and the interpretation of dreams resulting in the first collection of Surrealist texts, *Les Champs Magnétiques* (1920). As Breton recounts in the first *Manifesto*:

Tout occupé que j'étais encore de Freud à cette époque et familiarisé avec ses méthodes d'examen que j'avais eu quelque peu l'occasion de pratiquer sur des malades pendant la guerre, je résolus d'obtenir de moi ce qu'on

cherche à obtenir d'eux, soit un monologue de débit aussi rapide que possible, sur lequel l'esprit critique du sujet ne fasse porter aucun jugement, qui ne s'embarrasse, par suite, d'aucune réticence, et qui soit aussi exactement que possible la pensée parlée. (Manifeste du Surréalisme 33-34)

Completely occupied as I still was with Freud at that time, and familiar with his methods of examination which I had had some slight occasion to use on some patients during the war, I resolved to obtain from myself what we were trying to obtain from them, namely, a monologue spoken as rapidly as possible without any intervention on the part of critical faculties, a monologue consequently unencumbered by the slightest inhibition and which was, as closely as possible, akin to *spoken thought*. (*Manifestoes of Surrealism* 22-23, emphasis in original)

As Breton's call for a mode of writing as uninhibited and uncontrived as "spoken thought" suggests, the Surrealists argued that if the latent power of dream states and the unconscious were to be tapped for the purposes of psychic revolt then a new anti-literature must be invented, a revitalisation of poetic communication that eschewed psychological realism in favour of an automatic style of writing emerging from the irrational circuits of unconscious thought. The anti-literature of the Surrealists draws upon the destructive impulses of Dadaist anti-art with its concern to demolish existing forms, however, in its preoccupation with subconscious experimentation Surrealist anti-literature is inevitably *textual* and by privileging punning, word play, jokes, Freudian slips, chance, indeterminacy and textual affects it overturns the classical novel whilst paradoxically reaffirming the literary. As Michael Sheringham points out, the work of art for the Surrealists "can only be an experiment, an activity, its residue or record – *Nadja* is not a work of art but a log-book, the register of an experience" (*Everyday Life* 81). For Breton, the reconstitution of the literary form of the novel as a kind of log-book of experience represented on the one hand a distinct departure from the principles of automatic writing that underpinned earlier experiments like *Les Champs Magnétiques*. In its more deliberate composition, *Nadja* is not dissimilar to Breton's theoretical writings which were carefully written. Yet on the other hand, the anti-literary treatment of the novel as a kind of register or 'log-book' of experience does necessitate a certain distancing of oneself from the conscious authorship of the work such that the writer becomes a vessel or a conductor of experience, rather than an *auteur*. This ethos of refusal provides an important model for the posture of *anti-filmmaker* that Debord would later adopt in his *oeuvre* of detourned cinema. In a similar vein, the performative engagement of autobiography in

Nadja collapses distinctions between art and life in a manner that prefigures Debord's definition of the "situation" as a constructed moment of organised ambience and passionate participation in the events of everyday life while the *détournement* (turning around or diversion) of the *roman-à-clef* pioneered in Breton's *Nadja* and other Surrealist texts represents an important precursor to the self-conscious manipulation of autobiography as *ruse* in the Situationist project. At the same time, Breton's novel anticipates the trope of the ambiguous auto-fictional narrator that is the prototypical point-of-view deployed in contemporary psychogeographical narratives (eg. Sinclair; Self).

1.2 The uncanny politics of Paris

In the preface to the revised edition of *Nadja* published in 1964, Breton reflects that in writing the novel he observed two significant anti-literary principles: "*de même que l'abondante illustration photographique a pour objet d'éliminer toute description – celle-ci frappé d'inanité dans le Manifeste du surréalisme –, le ton adopté pour le récit se calque sur celui de l'observation médicale, entre toutes neuropsychiatrique, qui tend à garder trace de tout ce qu'examen et interrogatoire peuvent livrer, sans s'embarrasser en le rapportant du moindre apprêt quant au style*" (6) ["an abandonment to photographic illustration so as to eliminate all description,⁸ denounced as strikingly inane in the *Manifesto of Surrealism*, and the adoption of a tone for the narration that was calculated to be close to medical observation, and above all to that of neuropsychiatry, with its tendency to be delivered in the style of an examination and interrogation, so as not to trouble oneself with relating in a finished nor affected style"]. As discussed, the preoccupation with psychoanalysis is everywhere apparent in *Nadja* at both the level of style and content. What is arguably more submerged in the novel, however, is the relationship between psychoanalysis and politics or, more specifically, the Freudo-Marxist concerns of the novel, a stratagem that attempts to bring together Freud's insights into the generative struggle between the conscious and unconscious drives with Marx's dialectical recognition of class conflict as destined to eventually give rise to the reorganisation of society along socialist lines. This submerged political content is noted by Natalya Lusty who foregrounds both the Freudian and Marxian concerns of the novel by suggesting that Breton's encounter with *Nadja* brings together "the two most significant intellectual and social paradigms in his life up to this point – psychiatry (and psychoanalysis) and

communism. In many ways *Nadja* is an attempt to work through the spectre of these paradigms as they haunt the revolutionary project that is surrealism” (339).

It is in the context of the Freudo-Marxist preoccupations of *Nadja*, or its working through the spectres of Freud and communism according to Lusty’s formulation, that the city comes to play a key role in the novel in a fashion that anticipates the methodologies of psychogeography. At the level of the unconscious, walking the city plays an important role in dramatising the workings of what the Surrealists called *le hasard objectif* [objective chance], a term that names those discoveries that occur by luck yet gain an aura of significance when analysed as corresponding with some inner need or desire yet to be consciously formulated by the subject. For André, walking the city increases his receptivity to the occurrence of objective chance to the extent that his daily or automatic strolls down the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle, for example, assume an involuntary character. The psychic re-enchantment of urban space that takes place during the “ambulatory automatism” of the Surrealists continues to hold critical relevance, Anna Dezeuze suggests, for the way in which it “encourages a perception of urban reality that is neither static nor fixed” (75). In *Nadja*, the involuntary character of André’s urban *déambulation* prompts consideration of the relationship between perpetual motion and a psychic posture of anticipation or heightened receptivity:

Je ne sais pourquoi c’est là, en effet, que mes pas me portent, que je me rends presque toujours sans but déterminé, sans rien de décidant que cette donnée obscure, à savoir que c’est là que se passera cela (?) Je ne vois guère, sur ce rapide parcours, ce qui pourrait, même à mon insu, constituer pour moi un pôle d’attraction, ni dans l’espace ni dans le temps. (Nadja 38)

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. I cannot see, as I hurry along, what could constitute for me, without even knowing it, a magnetic pole in either space or time. (*Nadja* 32)

Moving through the streets “*sans but déterminé*” [“without specific purpose”] André enacts the purposeless drifting that both the Surrealists and the Situationists prized for its capacity to afford desire, rather than utilitarian or productive motivations, a determining role upon the actions of the subject. Raymond Spiteri has perceptively observed that objective chance (and indeed punning) is clearly at play in André’s first encounter with Nadja on the street near the *Humanité* bookshop, illustrated in the novel

by a photograph of the shop with a sign proclaiming “*On signe ici*” [“Sign up here”] (see figure 1.1), his purchase of a book by Trotsky quite literally placing their meeting “under the sign of Communist politics” (Spiteri 67). For Spiteri, as for Lusty, the novel’s retrospective narration of what were ultimately failed encounters for Breton with both Nadja the woman in a romantic sense and the organised revolutionary party politics of the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) casts its “cultural politics” in an ambivalent light. Notwithstanding these critical reservations, it is important to acknowledge the extent to which the uncanniness of Breton’s treatment of the city of Paris in *Nadja* performs a spatial critique that anticipates the ghosting of urban space that has become a central preoccupation of contemporary psychogeographical texts. According to Freud, “the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (“The ‘Uncanny’” 340) and as a phenomenon of the return of the repressed that renders the familiar strange it thereby speaks to “the dominance in the unconscious mind of a ‘compulsion to repeat’ proceeding from the instinctual impulses” (360). The “uncanny politics” of *Nadja* is, then, on the one hand influenced by Freud’s account of the uncanny as an involuntary repetition-compulsion but on the other it seeks to modify Freud’s pathological explanation by linking the return of latent psychic material to desire rather than to “dread” and thereby reframing the uncanny in a more affirmative sense. When considered in the context of movement through the city, the experience of uncanny effects in Breton’s novel are further political in the sense that they arise not only from the neuroses and complexes that form the basis of Freud’s explanatory model of the unconscious but also as a result of the return of repressed historical events.

In this way, Breton’s politics of the uncanny prefigures the archaeological approach to the city outlined by Ivan Chtcheglov (Gilles Ivain) in one of the founding documents of Lettrist psychogeography, “Formulary for a New Urbanism (1953),” in which Chtcheglov writes “*Toutes les villes sont géologiques et l’on ne peut faire trois pas sans rencontrer des fantômes, armés de tout le prestige de leurs legends. Nous évoluons dans un paysage fermé dont les points de repère nous tirent sans cesse vers le passé*” (15/2) [“All cities are geological and one cannot take three steps without meeting ghosts, retaining all the prestige of their legends. We evolve within a *closed* landscape whose landmarks draw us tirelessly towards the past”]. By placing the events of *Nadja* at the level of the street, Breton treats the city as a zone of not only libidinal encounters but also temporal encounters as the sites visited upon during the

urban *déambulation* of André and Nadja act as repositories of collective memory that allude to the residual traces of revolutions past. Walking the streets of Paris brings André into contact with a concealed history of class conflict that flickers at the edge of consciousness. He observes for example that “*La magnifique lumière des tableaux de Courbet est pour moi celle de la place Vendôme, à l’heure où la colonne tomba*” (14) [“The magnificent light in Courbet’s paintings is for me the same as that of the Place Vendôme, at the time the Column fell” (14-15)]. An allusion to the events of the Paris Commune of 1871 when Gustave Courbet’s critique of the Vendôme Column as an artless monument to war and imperialism contributed to its toppling during the brief socialistic uprising, Breton’s cryptic remark is typical of the oblique nature of the novel’s political content.

In *Profane Illumination* (1995), Margaret Cohen turns to the panoramic literature of turn-of-the-century Paris to clarify the breadth of such allusions in *Nadja*, suggesting that the great majority of sites that André traverses in the novel might in fact be linked to historical instances of bohemian activity, violent insurrection and revolutionary events that would have been quite legible to the readers of his day. The enigmatic statue of Étienne Dolet (figure 1.2), for example, which mysteriously gives André a sensation of “*un insupportable malaise*” (*Nadja* 26) [“unbearable discomfort” (*Nadja* 24)], assumes greater resonance when one appreciates that Dolet was a sixteenth-century scholar, translator and printer who was burned at the stake on charges of heresy. The statue of Étienne Dolet thus became a symbol of secular free thought and press freedom, and for a time the statue was the site of annual processions and one of the most popular monuments in Paris before eventually receding from public memory. Likewise, the occult nature of Nadja’s hallucinations during which she imagines herself among the entourage of Marie-Antoinette are rendered more explicitly political in light of the “multiple ghosts of revolutionary violence [that] descend on the Place Dauphine from all sides” (Cohen 101).

In this way, Surrealist historiography applies a Freudian paradigm of memory and the unconscious to collective events as embodied encounters with the architecture of the city resurrect the insurrectionary ghosts of past events. The disruptive effects of such encounters with the urban environment mirror, then, the workings of the involuntary memories of the unconscious mind that surface to trouble the surface of our conscious reality. At the same time, a critique of capitalism is discernible in the novel’s traversal of those marginal and derelict zones of the city, such as the Saint-

Ouen flea market, which become revelatory of the historical cycles of decay and ruination that modernity seeks to repress in its faith in progress. As Jill Fenton points out, “the *dérive* may be a situationist concept of research and experimentation [...] but, throughout the history of surrealism, it has remained a point of enchantment and discovery that can take place in commodified space and reveal things that are latent, that embrace the ruin or banal spaces of the city and awaken the unconscious” (955). It was precisely this poetic intuition of the spatial embodiments of the workings of historical materialism in *Nadja* that caught the attention of Walter Benjamin and in his 1929 essay he singles out Breton and the Surrealists as “the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the ‘outmoded’ [...] The relation of these things to revolution – no one can have a more exact concept of it than these authors” (“Surrealism” 210).

Benjamin sings the praises of the “revolutionary energies” of the outmoded in Surrealist prose however the conclusions that he proffers in the dialectical argument of his 1929 essay are ambivalent. Like the Surrealists, Benjamin is drawn to the radical potential of the occult, identifying the phantasmagoric and esoteric phenomena of the obsolete commodity with the repressed Other of capitalist modernity. Yet in a critical departure from the ideology of Surrealism, Benjamin identifies within the Surrealist valorisation of the marvellous and the esoteric a pernicious romantic turn of mind that in its flight from reality fails to fully engage the revolutionary energies of the technological.⁹ As criticism of the esoteric tendencies of Surrealist revolt gathered pace, by the latter part of the 1920s the heroic phase of the movement’s intoxication with dreams and trances was in decline. Attempts to establish a formal alignment with the French Communist Party between 1926 and 1935 did not go smoothly. In 1932, one of the movement’s key figures, Louis Aragon, broke decisively with Surrealism as his growing commitment to the Party made a public allegiance to Surrealist ‘art for art’s sake’ principles untenable and he subsequently adopted in his writings the aesthetic of Socialist Realism endorsed by the Party. Breton, by contrast, continued to defend the latent politics of the Surrealist program, with its privileging of a radical transformation of human subjectivity to be achieved through unfettered surrender to the destabilising effects of desire. During the height of this unhappy allegiance, Breton riled in the *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (1929) against any purely economic revolution that might come at the price of stifling individuality, Eros and freedom of imagination. Notwithstanding the historical specificity of this particular debate and its

relationship to the failed socialist revolutions of the first half of the twentieth-century, the politics of the uncanny evident in such novels as *Nadja* continues to resurface in contemporary psychogeography and is especially prevalent today in the more occult strands of British psychogeography concerned with unsettling buried historical narratives that trouble the spectacular veneer of the urban spaces of advanced capitalism.¹⁰ At a foundational level, the combination in *Nadja* of experimental auto-fiction with spatial narratives that provoke destabilising encounters with the buried histories of the city pre-empt the formal methods and radical nostalgia of psychogeographical fictions in the present.

1.3 *Paris Peasant* and the liminal city

While *Nadja* reveals the profound influence that the encounter with psychoanalysis exerted upon Breton's definition of Surrealism, in the next part of this chapter I want to explore how another key Surrealist novel of the period, Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926), or *Paris Peasant* in English, reveals a more heterogeneous treatment of oneiric processes not necessarily formulated from the perspective of psychoanalytical principles to the same extent as Breton's texts. Frequently paired with *Nadja* as an important precursor text to Situationist psychogeography,¹¹ it is worth exploring how Aragon's text in fact displays a number of significant stylistic and conceptual divergences from Breton's novel that complicate generalised treatments of literary Surrealism and its connection to psychogeography. Both novels are distinctly anti-literary, Aragon's strikingly so in the totality of its rejection of plot and character development. The spatial preoccupations of Aragon's text, however, appear more concerned with testing rather than superseding the limits of the literary. Indeed it is precisely this preoccupation with limits and liminality in *Paris Peasant* that I want to suggest represents another important foundational principle of literary engagements with psychogeography. In *Paris Peasant*, the author holds little concern for the psychoanalytical interpretation of dream content, rather, it is the "dream image" that preoccupies Aragon, principally for its threshold status. Just as reverie and intoxication hold a similar attraction for their role as border-states situated between waking and dreaming, the narrator in *Paris Peasant* is also drawn to outmoded and threatened sites of the city for their ontological instability. This preoccupation with liminality represents, then, a significant departure from the uncanny treatment of place in Breton's *Nadja*, as the encounter with limits in *Paris*

Peasant provide a catalyst for poetic reinvention and the re-enchantment of place and language. It is this combination of literary innovation with a subversive politics of re-enchantment in *Paris Peasant* that I want to explore as an important Surrealist precursor to the privileging of spatial affects in Lettrist psychogeography and psychic delirium as a literary model for psychogeographical narratives more broadly.

Principally structured around two *dérives*, the narrator of Aragon's *Paris Peasant* parodies the trope of the tour-guide. Displaying a proclivity for unruly digression he leads the reader firstly on a tour of a Parisian arcade threatened with demolition, the *Passage de l'Opéra* [Opera Arcade], and then on a rambling nocturnal stroll through the sprawling parklands of the Buttes-Chaumont on the outskirts of Paris. In Aragon's novel there is none of the condensed brevity and impersonal tone of neuropsychiatric observation that characterises Breton's *Nadja* nor does Aragon abandon naturalistic description. On the contrary, he employs it to excess by infusing his forensically detailed descriptions of the quotidian spaces of the arcade and the parklands with an intense lyricism that destabilises the text's relationship to reality through hyperbole and exaggeration. As the narrator ambulates through the labyrinthine space of the arcade, inventorying its quaint assortment of shops and services and the idiosyncrasies of its shoeshine parlour, hair salon, baths, brothel, a rundown theatre and the Café de Certa, meeting place of the Surrealists, each site provides a launching point for intoxicated reveries and effervescent flights of fancy. In the tradition of *flânerie*, the ocular encounters generated by movement through space motorise the prose of *Paris Peasant*. In this way, Aragon strives to challenge the psychological conventions of the realist novel, a project that he reflects upon in later comments about his motivations for writing the book:

I was seeking [...] to use the accepted novel-form as the basis for the production of a new kind of novel that would break all the traditional rules governing the writing of fiction, one that would be neither a narrative (a story) nor a character study (a portrait), a novel that the critics would be obliged to approach empty-handed [...] because in this instance the rules of the game would all have been swept aside. (qtd in Watson Taylor, "Introduction" xi – xii)

Aragon's comments make apparent the extent to which *Paris Peasant* was conceived as a work of experimental prose that sought to exceed the limits of the novel. Its eclectic prose style may at times resemble a "jumble of miscellaneous observations, details, philosophical speculations, and poetic and realistic descriptions" (Edgerly Firchow 295) yet in light of its composition during the heroic phase of the Surrealist

movement it is notable that Aragon's novel is not a work of automatic writing. In fact automatic writing and objective chance are parodied in *Paris Peasant* in such a manner as to present a challenge to the interpretive approach to the subconscious implicit in the clinical prose of Breton. Furthermore, the preoccupation with dreams in Aragon's novel bears heavy traces of Romanticism insofar as dreams "loosen the sense of self and usher in chance and the unexpected" (Ades 1), thereby disrupting the everyday through its poetic re-enchantment. In his short pamphlet *Une Vague de rêves* [*A Wave of Dreams*], published in 1924 just prior to Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*, Aragon provides his own definition of Surrealism in which he argues: "*L'essence des choses n'est aucunement liée à leur réalité, qu'il y a d'autres rapports que le réel que l'esprit peut saisir, et qui sont aussi premiers, comme le hasard, l'illusion, le fantastique, le rêve. Ces diverses espèces sont réunies et conciliées dans un genre, qui est la surréalité*" (12-13/3) ["the essence of things is not at all linked to their reality, there are other experiences of the real that the mind can embrace which are equally fundamental such as chance, illusion, the fantastic, dreams. These different types of experience are brought together and reconciled in one genre: Surreality"]. In the same pamphlet, the redevelopment works in Paris are valorised by Aragon for their exemplary ontological uncertainty:

On vient d'abattre sur le boulevard de la Madeleine un grand morceau du réalisme, et par cette brèche vous pouvez apercevoir un peu du paysage qui se poursuit aussi dans le travaux du Moulin-Rouge, cité Véron, dans les démolitions des fortifications parisiennes, dans le champs de statues des Tuileries, aux Gobelins flambant la nuit du mot PARDON en lettres de phosphore, dans les voûtes du métro où cavalcadent les chevaux d'or du chocolat Poulain, dans les mines de diamants où les fraudeurs s'exposent aux laparotomies avides, dans les solfatares où meurent les petits chiens. (Une Vague de rêves 29-30)

A great chunk of realism has just been demolished on the Boulevard de la Madeleine and through the gap you can glimpse a landscape which extends to the works at the Moulin-Rouge, cité Véron, to the demolitions of the Parisian fortifications, to the sculpture park in the Tuileries, to the Gobelins blazing the word "PARDON" in neon through the night, to the vaults of the metro where golden Poulain chocolate horses cavalcade, to diamond mines where smugglers run the risk of avaricious laparotomies, to the sulphur springs where little dogs lie. (*A Wave of Dreams* 8-9)

Aragon casts a kaleidoscopic gaze over the changing landscape of the city in this passage, seizing upon its building sites as fissures to be prised open in order to

release fantastical visions that bathe the city in a more enchanted glow. Formerly a physician in training like Breton, Aragon also subverts medical terminology, in this case the surgical incision of the laparotomy, in an intervention that exemplifies the double nature of Aragon's Surrealist prose. On one level, the use of the word laparotomy is unsettling in the context of the city's redevelopment as the term evokes the urban reengineering of the city as akin to the work of the surgeon operating on a wound and thus brings to mind an image of latent scars scattered around the urban terrain. In a more formal sense, Aragon appropriates the medical terminology of the laparotomy for its poetic power, revealing the capacity of words placed in jarring new contexts to defamiliarise, cauterise and rearrange reality into more electrifying possibilities. Thus the surprising combinations of words, images and places in Aragon's prose embody a form of Surrealist game playing. As Jill Fenton points out, games for the Surrealists are subversive as they "divert from everyday banal experience" (957) and "inject imagination into place while suggesting an alternative use rather than for commodity exchange" (957). Yet notwithstanding the irreverent and iconoclastic tendencies of Aragon's text, its naturalistic and lyrical dimensions, which stand in stark contrast to the sparse neuropsychiatric recollections of Breton's *Nadja*, tether it to the literary in a manner that calls into question the extent to which Aragon's novel can in fact be considered committed to the anti-literary goals of the Surrealist project. The pursuit of literary or artistic success was cause for exclusion from the group and indeed the level of artistic ambition evident in *Paris Peasant* attracted much derision from Breton and Aragon's Surrealist colleagues.¹² Yet notwithstanding its literary preoccupations, it would be unfair to assert that *Paris Peasant* lacks a praxis-oriented relation to the everyday. By linking a playful and inventive mode of seeing and apprehending the world to the potential to transform one's relation to his/her environment, *Paris Peasant* nevertheless embodies the avant-garde impulse to revolutionise life as a whole, an impulse that will be developed in more explicitly organised and polemical terms in the spatial critiques of the Situationist International.

The poetic re-enchantment of the building sites of Paris in *A Wave of Dreams* anticipates, then, the significant role that the outmoded Opera Arcade would come to play in Aragon's novel, *Paris Peasant*, two years later. In this more sustained Surrealist composition Aragon inventories the space of the arcade just prior to its redevelopment and thus it is tempting to read a nostalgic impulse into the text as if the

author were seeking to record the threatened architecture of the arcade for posterity. Yet Aragon is arguably less concerned in *Paris Peasant* with neither documenting nor mourning the disappearance of the arcade than he is with exploring how its transitional status places it at a threshold, thus bringing him into contact with the state of liminality prized by the Surrealists. The uncertain fate of the arcade lends it an affective power that transforms it into a pole of attraction for the narrator who asserts that:

c'est aujourd'hui seulement que la pioche les menace, qu'ils sont effectivement devenus les sanctuaires d'un culte de l'éphémère, qu'ils sont devenus le paysage fantomatique des plaisirs et des professions maudites, incompréhensibles hier et que demain ne connaîtra jamais. (Le Paysan 21)

it is only today, when the pickaxe threatens them, that they [the arcades] have at last become the true sanctuaries of a cult of the ephemeral, the ghostly landscape of damnable pleasures and professions. Places that were incomprehensible yesterday, and that tomorrow will never know. (*Paris Peasant* 14)

In historical accounts of psychogeography this passage is frequently quoted as an early and prototypical example of psychogeography's concern to critique urban redevelopment as an expression of the aggression of capitalist expansion. Merlin Coverley, for example, argues that Aragon's text "rails against the destruction of this city, whose arcades were soon to be demolished" (*Psychogeography* 75). According to Coverley; "if there is one book that may be identified as a handbook for today's breed of psychogeographer, then this is it" (76). However, the nuances and internal contradictions of Aragon's dream-awakening dialectic are too easily effaced in this literal assessment of *Paris Peasant* as a document of a disappearing city as it overlooks the role of Aragon's vertiginous and hyperbolic prose which frequently approaches an *unreality* in its ambivalent treatment of the arcades.¹³ Furthermore, an overly literal interpretation of the role of the outmoded in *Paris Peasant* isolates the descriptive elements of the text from Aragon's broader commitment to the Surrealist quest to transform reality by undermining the binary oppositions between waking life and the realm of dreams in order to make apparent the marvellous in the quotidian. By contrast, Hal Foster's reading of the arcades in Surrealism productively troubles literal assessments of their significance by insisting that "this gaze is not melancholic; the surrealists do not cling obsessively to the relics of the nineteenth-century. Rather it uncovers them for the purposes of resistance *through* re-enchantment. If we can grasp

this dialectic of ruination, recovery, and resistance, we will grasp the intimated ambition of the surrealist practice of history” (*Compulsive Beauty* 166). Pushing against a nostalgic interpretation of Surrealist cartographies, Foster’s subtle interpretation of the Surrealist attraction to the outmoded rightly emphasises the extent to which the Surrealists did not necessarily oppose progress in itself but took aim, rather, at a specific type of capitalist technological bureaucracy that impoverishes the human spirit in its repression of the past and its curtailing of the free expression of the imagination.

Not unlike Breton’s *Nadja*, Aragon’s novel embodies an attitude of hostility towards the conventions of realism and thus cultivates a pseudo-documentary style that self-consciously plays with slippages between fiction and reality in order to destabilise its representational claims. The first part of *Paris Peasant* concerned with describing the *Passage de l’Opéra*, for example, was initially published in instalments in the *Revue Européenne* and Aragon capitalises on the serialisation of the text as an opportunity to engage in a meta-commentary in which he satirises his own journalistic pretences. In one passage Aragon imagines the business owners of the arcades reading his pieces for the *Revue* “*dans la consternation*” (104) [“in a state of consternation” (84)]. They will disapprove of his articles, he suggests, because “*ils ne peuvent pas faire le départ ce qui vient de toi et de ce que tu leur prends. Ils sont malades comme des enfants devant un miroir déformant*”(104-5) [“they find it impossible to disentangle what is pure invention from what purports to be a recording of their views, and so they are as unhappy as children in front of a distorting mirror” (85)]. In a direct address to the reader Aragon further ruptures the documentary claims of the text when he proffers this provocative explanation of his attraction to the arcade:

Cette marchande de mouchoirs, ce petit sucrier que je vais vous décrire si vous n’êtes pas sages, ce sont des limites intérieures de moi-même, des vues idéales que j’ai de mes lois, de mes façons de penser, et je veux bien être pendu si ce passage est autre chose qu’une méthode pour m’affranchir de certaines contraintes, un moyen d’accéder au-delà de mes forces à un domaine encore interdit. (Le Paysan 109)

This handkerchief saleswoman, this little sugar bowl which I am going to describe to you if you are not careful, are interior boundaries of myself, ideal views I have of my laws, of my ways of thought, and I would be strung up by the neck if this arcade is anything else but a method of freeing myself of certain inhibitions, a means of obtaining access to a hitherto forbidden realm that lies beyond my human energies. (*Paris Peasant* 88)

The notion of the arcade as representing “*des limites intérieures de moi-même*” (109) [“the interior boundaries of myself” (88)] signals the extent to which the architecture of the outmoded functions primarily for Aragon as a psychic landscape. Thus his concern to locate “*un moyen d’accéder au-delà de mes forces à un domaine encore interdit*” (109) [“a means of obtaining access to a hitherto forbidden realm that lies beyond my human energies” (88)] situates the text as primarily preoccupied with the quotidian as a conduit to the “marvellous,” a highly charged and destabilising experience of affect that the Surrealists conceived as ontologically transformative. For Rick Poyner, the Surrealists “experienced the marvellous as a kind of shock or jolt, an excitingly disorientating sensation, as though a crack had suddenly opened in the world’s carapace of normality and everything was slipping away” (“Documents of the Marvellous,” par 3). The intense interpenetration of the planes of dream and reality that characterise the narrator’s imaginative responses or “reveries” as he ambulates through the Opera Arcade have established this stroll as one of the most famous examples of the lyrical expression of the marvellous in Surrealist prose. However, in the discussion that follows I want to consider how the more frequently overlooked nocturnal exploration of the urban parklands of the Buttes-Chaumont also plays an important role in developing Aragon’s concern for accessing the marvellous through experiences of liminality. As Emma Cocker observes, in the act of Surrealist nightwalking “the individual dissolves into the city’s shadows and becomes indistinguishable from darkness” (6). In *Paris Peasant*, the descent of evening loosens the boundaries of the self and places the subject in closer contact with the irrational states of consciousness associated with dreams and madness. In my next chapter concerned specifically with the Lettrist psychogeography of the fifties, I will examine how delirious and intoxicated states of consciousness were harnessed to disrupt the functionalist and rationalist coding of urban space during the practice of the *dérive*. Undertaken primarily with the aim of transporting the narrator into a liminal terrain that brings the subject into contact with the marvellous, the nocturnal stroll in *Paris Peasant* provides a conduit for challenging the integrity of the Ego and destabilising identity and as such it anticipates some of the key Situationist methods for contesting the functionalist ethos of the urban environment in the post war era.

In Aragon’s novel it is boredom and a sense of *ennui* that initially propels the narrator of *Paris Peasant* to pay a visit to Breton at his apartment where, joined by fellow Surrealist Marcel Noll, the trio set out into the streets drifting listlessly until

Breton proposes a nocturnal visit to the Buttes-Chaumont. As the men wander through the parklands and dusk turns into evening the narrator launches into a monologue praising the night that begins with the jolt of a temporal destabilisation that conjures the sensual barbarity of the nights of pre-modern eras:

La nuit de nos villes ne ressemble plus à cette clameur de chiens des ténèbres latines, ni à la chauve-souris de Moyen Age, ni à cette image des douleurs qui est la nuit de la Renaissance. C'est un monstre immense de tôle, percé mille fois de couteaux. Le sang de la nuit moderne est une lumière chantante. Des tatouages, elle porte des tatouages mobiles sur son sein, la nuit. Elle a des bigoudis d'étincelles, et là où les fumées finissent de mourir, des hommes sont montés sur des astres glissants. (Le Paysan 173).

The night of our cities no longer resembles that howling of dogs of the Latin shadows, or the wheeling bat of the Middle Ages, or that image of sufferings which is the night of the Renaissance. She is a vast sheet-metal monster pierced by countless knives. The blood of the modern night is a singing light. Night bears tattoos, shifting patterns of tattoos upon her breast. Her hair curlers are sparks, and where the smoke trails have just died men are straddling falling stars. (*Paris Peasant* 141)

Notwithstanding the problematic feminine personification of the Night in this passage, a gendered conceit that is in fact quite typical of the disruptive strategies of the Surrealists that will be addressed in greater detail in my discussion of Leonora Carrington's *Down Below*, Aragon's treatment of the night also reveals the vital influence of Hegel on his Surrealist prose. Peter Edgerly Firchow argues that it is the "fusion of opposites" (295) that provides the structural and conceptual basis of *Paris Peasant* and in this particular passage the image of the night is poetically or surreally transformed by Aragon to bring together such opposites as nature and technology, life and death, body and the machine, and the macrocosm and microcosm of man and the universe. To the extent that this methodology "strikingly resembles the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis of Hegel" (Edgerly Firchow 296) the work registers the broader neo-Hegelian currents that took hold in French intellectual culture from the 1920s onwards. As Bruce Baugh points out in his study *French Hegel*, this was a period in French thought when the relationship between negation and internal division became directly entwined with questions of life and praxis. For Aragon, the desire to reconcile opposites is frustrated by the encounter with limits and as such *Paris Peasant* suggests the impossibility of achieving the desired state of synthesised unity. In light of the novel's philosophical pessimism then, the radical character of its prose arguably

resides in how the principles of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis are applied as poetical propositions. Edgerly Firchow suggests that “the progression of images which is used here [is] the counterpart of the traditional novel. This kind of thing had been done already in poetry, notably in T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and in the poetry of the "Imagist" group in England, but here it is radically and perhaps for the first time extended to the novel” (299).¹⁴ Yet as noted the considerable literary achievements of *Paris Peasant* presented the Surrealists with a dilemma insofar as Aragon's novel betrayed the anti-literary ethos of the Surrealist avant-garde, who sought explicitly to attack the institution of art and to supersede the category of the literary work. In a similar vein, the question of the extent to which spatial experimentation via the *dérive* should be conveyed in a lyrical or a poeticised prose became a point of contention for the Situationists who would eventually jettison personalised and subjective responses to the city by adopting a pseudo-scientific and sociologically influenced mode of describing their urban explorations.

It is evident, then, that *Paris Peasant* represents a foundational text of psychogeography for a number of reasons, although not necessarily as an early protest novel against the razing of the city as authors such as Coverley have suggested. I would like to conclude my discussion of this particular work by suggesting that *Paris Peasant* might be considered a foundational text of psychogeography for two quite oppositional or contradictory reasons. On one level, it signals the emergence of a new type of novel (or anti-novel) that deliberately flouts the conventions of the genres of fiction and non-fiction by combining the perambulatory prose of *flânerie* with a convulsed realism that re-enchants the banality of place through an irreverent interplay of poetic intoxication, fantasy and spatial disorientation. On another level, the nature of the influence of a novel such as *Paris Peasant* on the psychogeography of the LI and the SI is of quite a different order. As noted, the Situationists rejected the poetic treatment of the quotidian exemplified by *Paris Peasant* and thus the influence of Aragon's novel on the SI is less a matter of style than it is of attitude or comportment. In its attention to the energies of the outmoded and the heightened affects of liminal zones of the city, the politics of re-enchantment in *Paris Peasant* anticipates the Situationist preoccupation with contesting capitalist modernity with a praxis of embodied responses to the city that disrupt the disciplinary constraints of functionalist space. In the following chapter I will explore how the Situationists sought to harness these unruly currents of subjectivity in ways that might disrupt and intervene into the

structures of power, authority, and production and consumption embedded in the urbanism and architecture of post war France. Firstly, however, I want to consider how the psychic disruption of space plays out in a more complex and contradictory fashion in one of the few prose works of the Surrealist canon authored by a female Surrealist, Leonora Carrington's *Down Below* (1944).

1.4 Leonora Carrington: mapping madness

While it is not possible to provide within a single chapter an exhaustive survey of the formal and conceptual underpinnings of the Surrealist city novel, I have nevertheless sought to identify some of the key features of the Surrealist treatment of the city that informs the methods and concerns of Lettrist psychogeography, albeit in a revised and transformed manner. By focusing in the first instance upon two highly recognisable works of the Surrealist canon, I have foregrounded a number of foundational strategies of Surrealist prose including the performative engagement of autobiography, the link between the uncanny and a spatial politics of the city and a concern for the inherently disruptive potential of ambulatory encounters with the liminal and threshold zones of the urban terrain. With a view toward nuancing the cultural politics of the Surrealist city novel, I have drawn distinctions between the Freudo-Marxist preoccupations of *Nadja*, which reveal Breton's concern for conjuring the spectres of revolutions past, and the politics of re-enchantment that underpin the oneiric border crossings of Aragon's *Paris Peasant*. In this way, I have identified within the mingling of shock, surprise and libidinal energies that underpin the anti-literary methods of the Surrealists the origins of a praxis of desire, a praxis that seeks to bind the liberation of unconscious wishes with a radical upheaval and disruption of habitual patterns of living and accepted modes of thinking.

As these strategies are intrinsically significant to understanding the shape and form that Lettrist and then Situationist psychogeography assumes in the 1950s, it has been necessary to present them in a somewhat uncomplicated manner in order to establish with clarity at the outset the nature and extent of their influence. However, before proceeding to the next stage in my literary history of psychogeography there is another aspect of Surrealist prose that warrants closer scrutiny and that is the gendered aspect of the movement's tactics of shock and surprise, in particular the deep-seated tendency of Surrealism to privilege an immanent feminine mystique as a conduit to the marvellous. This is especially prevalent in the Surrealist veneration of such

phenomena as convulsive beauty, their ecstatic notion of female hysteria and the celebration of *l'amour fou*, or “mad love.” For as Katharine Conley suggests, “in part because of her fundamental otherness, Woman best embodies the modern notion of surprise so important to André Breton and the other surrealists” (49). In the final section of this chapter I am concerned to foreground some of the gender issues at play in the transgressive spatial narratives of Surrealism, issues that similarly haunt the formulation of psychogeography by the LI and the SI a number of decades later. By exploring the complexities of the feminine engagement with mapping in Leonora Carrington’s 1944 autobiographical novella *Down Below*,¹⁵ I conclude my chapter on Surrealism with an outline of the ambivalent subject position that the Surrealist woman occupies in relation to the disruptive spatial strategies of the Surrealists in order to reveal how this ambivalence ultimately calls into question the liberatory promise of the liminal cartographies of Surrealism.

Self-reflexively deploying the narrative conceits of the Surrealist *roman-à-clef*, *Down Below* provides a harrowing first-person account of the mental breakdown that the British Surrealist artist and author, Leonora Carrington, experienced in 1940 after the internment of her then-partner, Max Ernst, into a series of wartime detainment camps. The anguish of this separation was exacerbated by the political instability of the German advance into France where Carrington was living in Saint-Martin-de-l’Ardèche, the small French village that the author eventually fled in order to seek refuge in Spain. Yet in the process of crossing the border from France to Spain Carrington began to experience psychotic symptoms and her mental state rapidly deteriorated such that not long after arriving in Madrid the author was declared insane and involuntarily committed to an asylum at Santander on the northern coast of Spain. It was here that Carrington underwent a series of brutal treatments with the seizure inducing drug Cardiazol.¹⁶ Following the trauma of her incarceration in the Spanish asylum, in 1941 Carrington fled Europe for the United States where she temporarily reunited with the Surrealists before resettling permanently in Mexico the following year. It was during her recuperation in New York that Carrington was first encouraged by Breton to distil her descent into madness into a Surrealist narrative. Her initial written version was lost however a transcribed oral account of its events was first published in English as *Down Below* in the Surrealist journal *VVV* in 1944.

While *Down Below* is temporally belated to the Surrealist novels of the twenties and thirties it undoubtedly occupies a revisionist relationship to some of the

formative texts of Surrealism. Most notably, the novella is frequently compared with Breton's account of female madness as recollected in *Nadja* as the embodied, lived experience of madness retold from a feminine perspective in Carrington's account restores a necessary depth and complexity to the figure of the *femme-folle*, or mad woman, which is elided in the more narcissistic encounter with female madness described by Breton.¹⁷ At the same time, the visceral recollection of the events of *Down Below*, which unfold amid the political turmoil of the Second World War, has led to recognition of Carrington's Surrealist novella as presenting an engagement with the later paranoiac-critical phase of Surrealism most explicitly outlined by Salvador Dali. Jonathan Eburne argues that the persecution mania that grips Carrington during her border crossing from France to Spain signals the author's astute awareness of the threat to individual freedom posed by the rise of fascism and as such the political self-awareness of Carrington's account purposefully revises a number of key Surrealist tropes from a more historically situated perspective (215- 229). In a similar vein, Erich Hertz argues that *Down Below* "both testifies to Carrington's autobiographical aims and grounds experience in a key historical moment of the kind that several Surrealists were keen to shore up in the late 1930s and postwar years" (102).

Structured as a series of psychoanalytical sessions addressed to the Surrealist author and physician Pierre Mabille,¹⁸ *Down Below* offers an unflinching account of Carrington's breakdown as framed through the lens of the Surrealist trope of the border crossing. In a literal sense, the border crossing can refer to the dispersal of the Surrealists across various national borders after the onset of WWII whilst also naming the deconstructive impulses of their anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist activities that sought to challenge national borders as instruments of hegemony and state power. At the same time, the border crossing in Surrealism can also refer in a more conceptual sense to their desire to transgress the limits of the rational as a conduit to the shock of the marvellous and it is this definition of the border crossing as a transgression of the limits of the rational that I argue is especially relevant to *Down Below*. From the outset, Carrington explains her rationale for revisiting the trauma of her experience in terms of the Surrealist desire for psychic revelation as brought about by exploratory investigations of the unconscious:

I began gathering a week ago the threads which might have led me across the initial border of Knowledge. I must live through that experience all over again, because, by doing so, I believe that I may be of use to you, just as I believe that you will be of help in my journey beyond that frontier by

keeping me lucid and by enabling me to put on and to take off at will the mask which will be my shield against the hostility of Conformism. (*Down Below* 5)

In this opening address Carrington invokes Mabilie as both a witness who might aid in working through her trauma and also as a kind of seer with a heightened capacity to guide Carrington in purposefully shaping her experience of madness into Surrealist myth. Despite her knowing deployment of Surrealist rhetoric, there is an undertow of ambivalence at play in this passage. Susan Suleiman has described the ambivalence of the Surrealist women as frequently combining “simultaneous positive and negative feelings toward the same object” (“Black Humour” 5). Here, Carrington announces her allegiance to Surrealism’s contempt for “Conformism” and the movement’s concern for perverting the conventions of psychoanalysis for the purposes of creative liberation. Yet it is also possible to detect in her address to Mabilie the type of ambivalence described by Suleiman for in reliving the nightmare of her mental breakdown Carrington drily suggests that she “may be of use” (5) to her Surrealist peers. In this respect, Carrington is alert to the ways in which the psychic map of madness that she offers in *Down Below* answers to the desire of her Surrealist peers for an objective “report” of her crossing over into the realm of female hysteria, a phenomenon of uninhibited psychosis that the Surrealists frequently linked with the ontologically unstable terrain of the marvellous.

While Carrington is perhaps better known as a visual artist than as an author, it is telling that a drawing of a map of Santander (see figure 1.3) comprises one of the few illustrations in *Down Below* (the other is a portrait of the asylum’s Doctor Morales). In a direct address to the reader, Carrington suggests that she has inserted the map into the text as it “will enable you to get your bearings in the garden” (23), however the fantastic fusing of the real and imaginary topographies of the asylum in Carrington’s drawing suggests that it is anything but a conventional navigational map. Tracing the perimeter of the asylum and its architecture of wards, kitchen, library and the radiography centre where Carrington receives her drug therapy, the map melds a loosely accurate rendering of the site with a striking array of arcane, medieval and hermetic imagery and symbolism that offer a more esoteric map of her psychic journey. Points of identification such as a fallen white colt, an animal that recurs throughout Carrington’s work as her anthropomorphic alter-ego, are juxtaposed with symbolic references to her paranoid delusions such as the lemon that Carrington came

to venerate as an antidote to Cardiazol. Like a trail of footsteps imprinted in the snow or the breadcrumbs cannily dropped by the heroine of a fairytale so that others can trace her location, these points of identification are joined on the map by a dotted path that conceptualises Carrington's journey to recovery as deeply imbricated with the necessity of orienting the self through relational spatial knowledge.

Despite its vivid hallucinatory qualities and dream-like rendering of the space Carrington's map of Santander nevertheless serves an important documentary role in the text as it both authenticates the asylum as a real geographical location whilst providing a document of Carrington's insanity. Like the photographs and drawings of Breton's *Nadja* or the placards, signs and advertisements collaged into Aragon's *Paris Peasant*, the map of Santander is an example of Surrealist "realia," those documentary or quotidian items that when inserted by the Surrealists into their auto-fictional texts elicit a slippage between the real and the imaginary as their descriptive claims in fact work appositely to destabilise the narrative. Yet as a piece of Surrealist "realia" the role of Carrington's map of Santander goes beyond that of a Surrealist anti-literary conceit in the sense that it also functions pragmatically for Carrington as her central task in *Down Below* is to regain her sanity by learning to (re)locate herself in space and time: "During the whole time I was tightly tied to my bed, I had an opportunity to get acquainted with various members of that strange company;" she notes, "a knowledge which did not help me solve my problem, to wit: Where was I and why was I there?" (28). It is in this context that the drawing of the map of Santander emerges as part of an active process of cognitive mapping that eventually works to ameliorate Carrington's psychic alienation.

In drawing a map of Santander cartography becomes for Carrington a tool of resistance as her imaginative transformation of the highly controlled and regimented space of the asylum, which as a clinical environment functions as a kind of depersonalised *non-place*, signals her desire to appropriate its disciplinary architecture. At the same time, the process of mapping serves an important pragmatic function as it helps Carrington to gain incremental increases in her geo-spatial awareness which contribute to her growing sense of agency in the latter part of her account. This desire to resituate the self in a position of greater self-autonomy distinguishes the border crossings of female authors such as Carrington who arguably do not invest in the notion of "getting lost" to the same extent as their male counterparts, for whom the prospect of the dissolution of identity holds a promise of

liberation and freedom. For Carrington, the self-knowledge that she gains from observing one of the doctors, don Luis, make a tracing of her itinerary from France to the asylum at Santander on a map becomes a pivotal turning point in her journey from insanity back to sanity:

One day don Luis tried to get me to sketch a map of that journey. As I was unable to do so, he took a pencil from my hand and began to draw the itinerary. In the center he put down an *M* representing Madrid. At that moment I had my first flash of lucidity, the *M* was 'Me' and not the whole world, this affair concerned myself alone, and if I could make the journey all over again, by the time I reached Madrid, I would get hold of myself, I would re-establish contact between my mind and my Ego. (*Down Below* 45)

There is an inversion of the Surrealist logic of revelation gained through dissociative states in Carrington's "flash of lucidity" as it embodies a moment of heightened awareness brought about by locating rather than dislocating the self and thus placing herself on the map prompts Carrington to "re-establish contact between my mind and my Ego" (45). As the science of mapping typically designates the mastery and definition of space, Carrington's appropriation of the situated geographical knowledge that cartography yields plays a crucial role in determining her will to overcome her passive subjugation as an automaton-like object of medical experimentation and psychoanalytical study. By charting her descent into madness through the use of both actual and metaphorical mapping, Carrington enacts a process of psychic *reconnection* between the unconscious and the ego that departs from the Surrealist strategy to surpass the limits of the conscious mind through dissociative states. For Carrington, the *detritorialisation* of mental and physical space activated by Surrealist methods is not in itself sufficient to liberate the unconscious and must be followed by a more positive reconstructive element, a *re-territorialisation* of space in which Carrington draws her own boundaries in order to construct a terrain of self-knowledge and self-understanding.

Despite its neglect in existing accounts, *Down Below* is relevant to the literary history of psychogeography on a number of levels. As my discussion of the role of the map and the trope of the border crossing in Carrington's novella has pointed out, the women of Surrealism self-consciously drew upon the key Surrealist tactics of shock, surprise and performative madness however their subversive treatment of space is frequently complicated by a desire to redraw rather than dissolve boundaries and borders. At the same time, the ambivalent treatment of the *femme-folle* in Carrington's

Down Below also works to point out how radical psychic disruptions in Surrealism all too often rely upon transgressive encounters with a problematically constituted “Other,” an issue that would similarly come to haunt the psychogeographical activities of the Lettrist International. During the early years of psychogeography, the LI sought out areas and experiences of intensity in the city by frequenting its “forbidden” or marginal zones such as the Algerian bistros and immigrant neighbourhoods, for example, and pursued sexual encounters with delinquent young women as a means of disrupting normative identities. For Carrington, the liberatory promise of the border crossing from reason into madness is not fulfilled as her internment as an actual psychiatric patient results in her becoming subjected to the immobilising and disciplinary interventions of institutional care. For the LI their transgressive encounters with the “Others” of the city may have worked to unsettle and disrupt prescribed patterns of inhabiting the city yet the traumatic experience of Leonora Carrington in *Down Below* reminds us to ask the critical question: disruptive *for whom?* As Mott and Roberts astutely point out in their critique of the gendering of urban exploration more broadly, such activities typically grant authority to “particular exploring bodies: those performing an able-bodied, heteronormative and typically white masculinity” (234).

1.5 Surrealism, psychogeography and the novel

Over the past three decades a suite of major feminist revisions of Surrealism have done much to illuminate the gendered underpinnings of Surrealist tactics of disruption (eg. Chadwick; Suleiman; Caws) and have thus made it possible to recognise how the ambivalent contributions of the female artists of the avant-garde work to pluralise the spatial imaginary of Surrealism. By contrast the existing scholarship on the Situationist International is presently lacking a rigorous and critical body of work concerned with the relationship between gender and psychogeography of the same breadth and quality as the extensive work already undertaken on Surrealism. However, with a growing number of scholarly articles beginning to reflect more critically upon these issues one can only hope that full-length accounts are not far away.¹⁹ As the structure of this particular chapter suggests, my approach to gender in this thesis is one of more modest interventions. The inclusion of Leonora Carrington’s *Down Below* in this introductory chapter has made apparent the extent to which characteristic features of Surrealist prose generally attributed only to such

canonical works as Breton's *Nadja* and Aragon's *Paris Peasant* are equally present in the works of the female Surrealists. At the same time, the ambivalent subject position of the female Surrealist author brings to light some of the gendered conceits of the disruptive spatial strategies of the historical avant-garde. In the case of Carrington's *Down Below* the ambiguous treatment of the trope of the border crossing demystifies the liberatory promise of the Surrealist veneration of dissociative states and experiences of the marvellous sought through transgressive encounters with the Other.

As a foundational chapter of the thesis, my objectives in interrogating the spatial and narrative principles of the Surrealist city novel have been two-fold. In the first instance, I have been concerned to clarify the ways in which the Surrealist novel pioneers a number of important narrative (or anti-narrative) strategies that are taken up, reworked and revised in psychogeographical literatures. From the performative engagement of autobiography and the self-conscious manipulation of a pseudo-documentary style to the destabilising inclusion of quotidian items or "realia," the flouting of the conventions of the classical novel and the strategic blurring of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, the Surrealist city novel is as an anti-literature that speaks to a broader tension within the avant-garde concerning the problematic relationship between aesthetics, representation and radical social critique. In my discussion of the sample of novels assessed in this chapter I have emphasised how the urban drift of the Surrealists seeks to rupture the present by unsettling the latent revolutionary past of the city whilst questioning the disciplining of subjectivity amid the rationalist spaces of capitalist modernity. In a similar vein, Surrealism appends the creative potential of dreams and the imagination to historical materialism in order to highlight the limits of a solely economic transformation of society.

Surrealist novels may be heterogeneous in their composition yet as J.H. Matthews observes they are united by "a spirit of anti-conformity in which protest, in form as much as in material, is to be judged valuable in the measure that it introduces an atmosphere having the effect of liberating modes of thought and action" (176). By focusing on the spirit of protest, revolt and anti-conformity inherent to Surrealist prose I have sought to reinscribe the radical content of Surrealism into the history of Situationist psychogeography which all too often casts its Surrealist forebears as providing intriguing and libidinal yet inherently *apolitical* responses to the city. As the remarks from Debord quoted at the beginning of this chapter imply, the Situationist project at its inception involved both an acknowledgement of the "constructive

possibilities” of Surrealism and a commitment to going beyond the limitations of what the SI perceived as Surrealism’s misplaced faith in the revolutionary potential of chance and the unconscious. In the following chapter concerned with Lettrist psychogeography and its relationship to the novel, in particular one of the novels prized by Debord during the practice of the *dérive*, Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*, I will argue that the declared commitment of the Situationists to a conscious analytical subject is complicated by the more delirious strains of their works, methodologies and theoretical claims. In this way, I follow Michael Löwy in his provocative assertion that the SI represents “a dissident wing of Surrealism” (98). Both the Surrealists and the Situationists shared a similar target in so far as each movement sought to contest the machinations of “a sterile and dead world” (Rasmussen, “Difficult Fusion” 372). Between the 1920s and the 1950s the methods of protest may have changed yet in their passionate defence of desire as a strategy of contestation the Surrealist currents of influence upon the Situationist International are never far below the surface.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

¹ Philippe Soupault *Last Nights of Paris* (1928); Robert Desnos *Liberty or Love!* (1924); Louis Aragon *Paris Peasant* (1926); René Crevel *Détours* (1924).

² The attack upon Surrealism essentially comes from two quite contradictory directions. In the first instance the dissident Surrealists, notably Georges Bataille, argue that the destructive tendencies of Surrealism do not go far enough and from 1929 to 1930 the DOCUMENTS magazine provides an overtly materialist challenge to the idealist tenets of mainstream Surrealism. The Situationist critique of Surrealism, however, is much closer to that of Jean Paul-Sartre who takes issue with the movement’s emphasis on dreams and the unconscious as having “undercut the basis of all action” (Beaujour 86). Indeed, there are many echoes of Sartre’s polemic against Surrealism in Debord’s early critiques of the Surrealist recourse to the unconscious.

³ McDonough’s definition of the SI as a “post-surrealist movement” is a qualified one. Whilst acknowledging their Surrealist influences, McDonough cautions against placing undue emphasis on their extension of the program of Bretonian Surrealism at the expense of “perceiving the larger, rational utopia of a planned future which subtended the talk of free creativity, liberating play, and so forth” (xv). See McDonough, “Introduction,” *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*.

⁴ The construction of Surrealism as a ludic but benign precursor to Situationist psychogeography is a common feature of popular accounts of the movement. Merlin Coverley, for example, describes the Paris of Surrealism in *Nadja* as “a place of erotic intrigue” (*Psychogeography* 75) in which the city “is given no political content” (75).

In an otherwise excellent account of the progression from the Dadaist walk as urban readymade to the Surrealist *déambulation* as “the achievement of a state of hypnosis by walking, a disorienting loss of control” (82), Francesco Careri similarly lapses into the familiar conclusion that Surrealist wandering was undertaken “perhaps without yet fully understanding its importance as an aesthetic form” (82). This echoes a common lineage that credits the discovery of the revolutionary potential of the streets as an achievement of the Lettrists/Situationists.

⁵ To the revised manuscript of *Nadja* Breton adds several new photographs and a short preface titled *Avant-Dire (Dépêche Retardée)* [Belated Dispatch]. Some alterations are also made to the actual content of the narrative, perhaps most notably the omission of the sexual consummation of his relationship with Nadja. As a rule, French scholarship adopts the 1964 Gallimard Folio pocket edition based upon Breton’s revised 1962 manuscript as the authoritative text. As this revised edition is yet to appear in an English translation Anglophone scholarship tends to work with the Richard Howard translation of the 1928 manuscript. In this chapter, quotations from the French are from André Breton, *Nadja: Édition entièrement revue par l’auteur*, which is based on the later revised manuscript. English translations from the novel are from Richard Howard’s Grove Press translation, unless otherwise stated.

⁶ Pierre Janet (1859-1947) was a French psychologist and psychotherapist concerned with traumatic memory, disassociation and the formulation of a definition of the subconscious. For an account of the complex reception of Janet by Breton, see Alexandra Bacopoulos-Viau.

⁷ Jacqueline Chénieux-Gendron : “*La voix de Breton est à l’unisson de certaines autres lorsqu’il attaque le roman comme un art facile, produit d’une imagination veule, et lorsqu’il fait le procès de la description et du dialogue, déclarés inefficaces*” (15).

⁸ Anneleen Masschelein views the interplay between text and photography in *Nadja* as intended metonymically, inviting the reader to follow the paths through which objects are linked rather than encouraging any allegorical interpretation. Masschelein terms this phenomenon “negative indexicality” (365) as the construction of identity in the novel relies upon the relaying of an index of those objects and places with which the protagonists come into contact. See Masschelein, “Hand in Glove: Negative Indexicality: André Breton’s *Nadja* and W.G Sebald’s *Austerlitz*” (360-387).

⁹ In his 1929 essay, “Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia,” Benjamin asks the critical question: “are they [the Surrealists] successful in welding this experience of freedom to the other revolutionary experience that we have to acknowledge because it has been ours, the constructive, dictatorial side of revolution? In short, have they bound revolt to revolution?” Ultimately, Benjamin argues that the Surrealist preoccupation with the energies of intoxication is anarchic but not necessarily commensurate with revolution and as such the Surrealists have an “inadequate, undialectical conception of the nature of intoxication” (215-16).

¹⁰ See Alistair Bonnett, “The Dilemmas of Radical Nostalgia in British Psychogeography” for an astute account of the conflict between the use of the past to critique industrial modernity and the suppression of nostalgia in countercultural politics (45-70).

¹¹ See Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (2006); Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001) and Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (2010).

¹² Many years after the event Aragon recollects in *Je n'ai jamais appris à écrire* how he was severely mocked by his Surrealist colleagues when he read aloud an excerpt from *Paris Peasant*: "There was total silence, broken only by coughs, the scraping of chairs, exchanged glances, scowls... then, finally, a woman's voice said, ever so gently: 'But my dear friend, why do you waste your time writing stuff like that?' Upon which the storm broke in all its mythical grandeur" (qtd. in Watson Taylor, "Introduction" xiii-xiv).

¹³ For an excellent analysis of the transcendental, dream-like and vertiginous unreality of Aragon's prose in *Paris Peasant* see Peter Collier "Surrealist City Narrative: Breton and Aragon," in *Unreal City: urban experience in modern European literature and art* (214-229).

¹⁴ For a more sceptical assessment of the role of the Surrealist image see Theodor Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism." In *Marxism and Totality*, Martin Jay summarises the critique, suggesting that: "For Adorno, Surrealism fetishized unmediated images from the archaic world of the psyche [...] Static and frozen, the images of the Surrealists, and the extent that he followed them, the dialectical images of Benjamin as well, smelled of death and reification" (289).

¹⁵ In this chapter I refer to the 1983 Black Swan Press edition of *Down Below*. In 1988, Virago published a revised version of *Down Below* edited by Marina Warner and prepared in consultation with Carrington. This edition includes a postscript and restores a number of significant omissions from her earlier account. As I am specifically concerned with *Down Below* as a text of the 1940s that stands at the transition between interwar Surrealism and postwar psychogeography, I have chosen to deal with the earlier Black Swan Press edition based on the original text as it was first published in 1944.

¹⁶ See Ann Hoff for a detailed analysis of the accurate portrayal of the brutal effects of Cardiazol treatment in Carrington's *Down Below*.

¹⁷ In her article "Surrealism's Banging Door," Lusty argues that ultimately "*Down Below* ameliorates [Breton's abandonment of Nadja] by restoring the 'details' of Léona-Camille Ghislaine D's experience to Surrealist experimental prose" (353).

¹⁸ Renowned within Surrealist circles for his extensive knowledge of alchemy, Mabille's most notable study is *The Mirror of the Marvelous* (1940), a text that Carrington read closely and responds to in *Down Below*.

¹⁹ For an account of the masculinist pretenses of avant-garde walking practices including the *dérive* see Deirdre Heddon and Cathy Turner, "Walking Women" (224-236). A gendered critique of urban exploration more broadly is undertaken by Carrie Mott and Susan M. Roberts in "Not Everyone Has (the) Balls: Urban Exploration and the Persistence of Masculinist Geography" (229-245). The most extended work to date on gender and the Situationist International can be found in the scholarship of Kelly Baum, notably her doctoral thesis and article "The Sex of the Situationist International" (23-43).

Figure 2.1. Publicity notice published in *Les Lèvres nues* #7 December 1955, p.23.

2. Lost bearings: delirious narrativity from Lowry to Lettrist psychogeography

Five years into his internment in a psychiatric hospital, Ivan Chtcheglov, author of one of the founding documents of Lettrist psychogeography, “Formulary for a New Urbanism” (1953), reconnected with his former collaborators Guy Debord and Michèle Bernstein in a series of letters.¹ Reflecting upon their early experiments with psychogeography Chtcheglov writes, “*nous avons pratiqué, en 1953-1954, trois ou quatre mois; c’est la limite extrême, le point critique. C’est miracle si nous n’en sommes pas morts*” (“Lettres” 402) [“in 1953-1954, we derived for three or four months straight. That’s the extreme limit. It’s a miracle it didn’t kill us” (“Letters,” par 2)]. For Chtcheglov, the early years of the *dérive* represented an unsettling encounter with not only the limits of the city but also with the limits of identity such that in his letters he cautions against the practice of the continuous *dérive*,² describing it as “*un danger dans la mesure où l’individu avancé trop loin (non pas sans bases, mais...) sans protections, est menacé d’éclatement de dissolution, de dissociation, de désintégration*” (402) [“dangerous to the extent that the individual, having gone too far – not without bases, but without defences – is threatened with explosion, dissolution, dissociation, or disintegration” (par 2)]. In 1954, Chtcheglov was excluded from the LI on the grounds of “*mythomanie, délire d’interprétation – manque de conscience révolutionnaire*” (Wolman 21) [“mythomania, delirium of interpretation – lack of revolutionary consciousness”]. What followed was a spiral into alcoholism, unhinged behaviours and institutionalisation for paranoid schizophrenia, a tragic fate that on one level appears to conclude a troubling chapter in the early history of the Lettrist International.

If Chtcheglov’s exclusion from the LI was testament to Debord’s desire to minimise the irrational and Surrealist tendencies of the movement it did not, however, settle for the group the contentious question of precisely what the prefix of *psych* in psychogeography designates. Indeed in the struggle to define the meaning, remit and purpose of psychogeography there was over the course of half a decade much debate over whether the delirious aspects of psychogeography were radical components that should be more fully developed or whether, on the contrary, these represented reactionary and conservative tendencies that ought to be downplayed in favour of adopting more rational and systematic methods of contestation. For Debord, not only had the critical relevance of the psychic disturbances of Surrealism begun to wane in

a post-Surrealist context, it had also become apparent that the Surrealist tactics of shock and surprise were all too easily recuperated, or co-opted, by the dominant logic of consumer capitalism. Yet as already noted the concern shared by both the Situationists and the Surrealists for the subversive power of desire complicates the drawing of any neat distinctions between the two avant-garde movements. In my previous chapter, I laid out in detail the principal characteristics of Surrealist engagements with the city with respect to their influence upon the formulation of Lettrist psychogeography, arguing that the more irrational currents of the practice are not so easily elided. In this second chapter I want to further develop this argument by assessing the elusive early years of Lettrist psychogeography, prior to the transformation of the LI into the SI,³ when the lines of influence between Surrealism and psychogeographical experimentation were more porous. In adopting this approach I want to redistribute the weight of emphasis currently placed upon psychogeography as ludic experiments with geography taking place within *actual* space towards a fuller appreciation of the radical nature of the *psychic* spaces that the practice engenders. In this way I hope to complicate and deepen our understanding of the challenge that the anti-representational underpinnings of psychogeography presents to conventional narrative strategies.

While the lexical similarities between the terms *psychogeography* and *psychoanalysis* invite a Freudian assessment of the psychological dimensions of the practice, it is important to note at the outset that Lettrist psychogeography in many respects repudiates the Freudian model of the unconscious, for reasons that I will elaborate upon in this chapter. As such, I contend that the apparent congruities between psychoanalysis and psychogeography are not borne out in practice. For this reason, I intend to approach Lettrist psychogeography firstly via the alternative conceptual framework offered by Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis, a *détournement* or turning around of Freudian psychoanalysis that moves away from "viewing the unconscious as the exclusive locus of libidinal and creative production," in order to "argue for an analysis of production that takes into consideration both desiring-production and social production" (Kaufman 7). By viewing two principal facets of psychogeography, namely unitary urbanism (UU) and the *dérive*, through the lens of schizoanalysis I want to explore how psychogeography's concern for tracking changes in atmosphere, hubs of intensity and areas of attraction and repulsion in the city seeks to remap subjectivity in ways that unravel its disciplinary constraints to political ends.

The second part of this chapter will follow a more literary direction by turning to the “delirious narrativity”⁴ of Malcolm Lowry’s 1947 novel, *Under the Volcano*, a book that was prized by Debord and which he describes as being instructive for the practice of the *dérive* in a 1960 letter to fellow Lettrist Patrick Straram. A comparative assessment of the relationship between spatial disorientation and the deterritorialisation of identity as it unfolds in *Under the Volcano* with the practice of the *dérive* as an exercise in psychic drift that loosens the constrictions of identity will further emphasise the necessity of addressing the complex subjectivities generated by psychogeographical practices.

2.1 Unitary urbanism: redesigning subjectivity

From uncanny encounters with the city’s *détraqué* zones where the past returns to haunt the present to the pursuit of psychic destabilisations stimulated by liminal sites on the cusp of redevelopment, in my first chapter I explored the critical role attributed to desire, affect and phenomenological responses in Surrealist engagements with the city. However fantastic and irrational such responses appear, I have stressed that it is imperative to view them within the context of Surrealism’s strategic and rationally defined project to bring about a revolution of consciousness by overturning the psychic limits internalised by the subject of industrialised society. Nearly three decades after the conclusion of the heroic phase of Surrealism, the main tenets of psychogeography were formulated by the LI in response to the achievement of Surrealism (and Dada) in having discovered that “the only true art was anti-art” (Rasmussen, “Difficult Fusion” 370) and as a revision of the perceived failure of the Surrealist project to bring about material change at the level of everyday life. The development of psychogeography in the early 1950s represents a bridge, then, between the anti-art of the Surrealists which sought to unleash the marvellous within the quotidian and the more militant anti-productivist stance that the Situationists would later adopt in their critique of their spectacle in the mid to late 1960s. In its initial formulation, psychogeography was defined by the SI as the study of “*des effets précis du milieu géographique, consciemment aménagé ou non, agissant directement sur le comportement affectif des individus*” (“Définitions” 13) [“the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behaviour of individuals” (“Definitions” 52)]. Thus psychogeography takes leave of the Surrealist conception of the city as dreamscape and adopts a goal to chart the

unstable interactions between the city's areas of intensity, or what the Situationists termed its "microclimates," as the first step in constructing an environment in which life might be freely created by its inhabitants.

In what follows, I want firstly to reconsider the link between psychogeography and the SI's theory of *l'urbanisme unitaire* [unitary urbanism], one of the more practical components of the group's project that is often neglected in literary histories of psychogeography which tend to privilege the *dérive* for its resemblances to *flânerie*. My intention is to more fully address the implications of the group's programmatic turn, which is imperative for understanding the Situationist relationship to the novel and literary production within the context of a broader project to realise what Constant Nieuwenhuys (hereafter Constant) calls "*das Gesamtkunstwerk*, the total work of art" ("Unitary Urbanism" 122), according to which the city emerges as a vital focal point.⁵ Unitary urbanism, or UU, is integral to the concept of the "Situationist city,"⁶ which as I noted in my introduction presented a polemical challenge to the rationalist approach to urban planning and architecture that was coterminous with the re-engineering of Paris into sites of consumption, leisure and productivity during the consolidation of the burgeoning commodity culture of the 1950s. Yet over time the programmatic aspects of the SI's theory of UU have come to overshadow its concern to *redesign* subjectivity in the sense that the redesign of actual cities is conceived dialectically by the SI as a necessary disruption to existing patterns of habitation that might, in turn, facilitate more creative and participatory modes of existence.

The extent to which unitary urbanism addresses the architecture and design of the city as a means to critique the alienations of modern subjectivity under advanced capitalism is evident in early documents of the LI including Chtcheglov's 1953 "Formulary for a New Urbanism."⁷ In this visionary manifesto Chtcheglov calls for the realisation of a suite of fantastic architectural and urban proposals polemically opposed to the banalities of modern consumer society as embodied by the rise of abstraction, functionalism, and the age of techno-bureaucracy. Despite the rapid economic and technological developments evident in the modern city, Chtcheglov argues that "*l'homme des villes pense s'éloigner de la réalité cosmique et ne rêve pas plus pour cela*" (16) ["the urban population think they have escaped from cosmic reality, but there is no corresponding expansion of their dream life" (3)]. In reply, the "Formulary" propagandises for a corrective in the form of a new theory of urbanism grounded in the dynamic and shape-shifting relations of a modifiable architecture,

mobile houses and richly sensorial, or embodied environments:

Nous ne prolongerons pas les civilisations mécaniques de l'architecture froide qui mènent à fin de de course aux loisirs ennuyés. Nous nous proposons d'inventer de nouveaux décors mouvants. [...] La maison mobile tourne avec le soleil. Ses murs à coulisses permettent à la végétation d'envahir la vie. ("Formulaire" 16)

We don't intend to prolong the mechanistic civilizations and frigid architecture that ultimately lead to boring leisure. We propose to invent new, changeable decors [...] The mobile house turns with the sun. Its sliding walls enable vegetation to invade life. ("Formulary" 2-3)

Anticipating the centrality of nomadism to the SI's theory of counter-urbanism and the group's critique of everyday life via the perambulatory practice of the *dérive*, in the "Formulary" Chtcheglov posits the inherent dynamism of a mobile physical environment in dialectical opposition to the inert boredom, passivity and deadening effects of leisure in the consumer society. In the commoditised environment of twentieth-century urbanism, Chtcheglov, and the Situationists more broadly, argued that space had come to play a constitutive role in reinforcing the separations of alienated social relations. As a counter theory of modern planning, UU designates the combined (rather than separated and specialised) use of the arts and technology with a view to constructing environments that go beyond pure functionality in order to embrace the organic, the mobile and the spontaneous as a conduit to transforming the banalities of modern urbanism into an exciting and passionate terrain. Chtcheglov may not employ the specific terminology of unitary urbanism in the "Formulary," nonetheless the document articulates its central concerns by asserting that to change architecture is to change life insofar as shifts in environment facilitate new behaviours:

L'architecture est le plus simple moyen d'articuler le temps et l'espace, de moduler la réalité, de faire rêver. Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'articulation et de modulation plastiques, expression d'une beauté passagère. Mais d'une modulation influentielle, qui s'inscrit dans la courbe éternelle des désirs humains et des progrès dans la réalisation de ces désirs. ("Formulaire" 16)

Architecture is the simplest means of *articulating* time and space, of *modulating* reality and engendering dreams. It is a matter not only of plastic articulation and modulation expressing an ephemeral beauty, but of a modulation producing influences in accordance with the eternal spectrum of human desires and the progress in fulfilling them. ("Formulary" 3, emphasis in original)

By positing the effects of the built environment as existing in mutual

relationship to the realisation and suppression of human desires, Chtcheglov's "Formulary" links the lived experience of space to shifts in subjectivity in a formulation that anticipates one of the unique features of the Situationist critique; namely its extension of the concept of commodity fetishism to urban space. As Julian Jason Haladyn points out, "unitary urbanism functions as the end goal of psychogeography as a practice, in which psychogeographical research is applied to the production of a non-alienated urban environment – alienation being one of the characterizing features of urbanism within capitalist culture" ("Psychogeographical Boredom," par 19). To the extent that UU proposes a modified architecture fit for a new civilisation the theory is simultaneously indebted to Surrealism whilst superseding its more imaginary re-enchantments of urban space as mediated by encounters with the liminal and threshold sites of the city. At the same time, UU cannot be said to represent a practical doctrine of urbanism nor architecture as ultimately the subversive force of its speculative proposals resides in their dialectical tension between actual and imaginary spaces.

By performing a *détournement* of the visionary polemics of the architectural avant-garde the theory of unitary urbanism turns the futuristic language of the discourse of modern architecture against itself in order to critique the subjectivity of alienation, boredom and passivity fostered by the urbanism of the society of the spectacle. Whilst performing this critique, however, UU also puts into play its own alternative subjectivities that warrant closer attention. Pointing to the baroque sensibilities of Chtcheglov's "Situationist city," the baroque being distinguished by a desire to collapse and dissolve boundaries, Simon O'Sullivan argues that the psychogeographical plans of Chtcheglov engender new subjectivities by introducing into cultural production the "logic of *participation*" (par 1, emphasis in original). With its concern for fostering collaboration between the modern subject and the ephemeral flows of the city's unpredictable modulations in atmosphere, intensity and affective forces, O'Sullivan argues that the Situationist city might be viewed as engendering a new type of subjectivity that represents an important development from the separated perspective embodied by the *flâneur*, for instance. "The new *flâneur* of the new baroque has perhaps lost that detachment which characterised Baudelaire, Poe *et al*," O'Sullivan suggests. "The new *flâneur* thoroughly participates in – is *immanent* to – the city. We might even say is an *expression* of the city [...] this new city (and new city inhabitant) is future orientated" ("Possible Worlds," par 32, emphasis in original).

Indeed if we pursue the Deleuzian line of argument suggested here by O'Sullivan the idea that psychogeography engenders an *immanent* subjectivity, in the sense that it is generated within and in response to the environment rather than outside it, begins to suggest more radical implications and it is these that I want to unpack further by turning specifically to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of schizoanalysis as it relates to Lettrist psychogeography.⁸ As a product of the 1950s, psychogeography is chronologically anterior to Deleuze and Guattari's work on schizoanalysis yet, as Anna Powell points out, "both psychogeography and Deleuzeguattarian concepts manifest the same cultural currents which developed from post-war Paris into the events of May 1968 and their theoretical aftermath" ("Jack the Ripper," par 25). Crucially these events and their fall-out occurred within a period of "de-centralized, small-scale and improvisational 'micropolitical' struggle" (Holland, "Preface" ix) that in the case of Deleuze and Guattari informed their two-volume co-authored work concerned with capitalism and schizophrenia, *L'Anti-Oedipe* (1972) [*Anti-Oedipus*] and its sequel *Mille plateaux* (1980) [*A Thousand Plateaus*] in which the pair mount their full-blown attack upon the Freudian and Lacanian model of the unconscious.⁹ In a prescient article published in 1966 and entitled "*Les aventures du résultat parcellaire*" ["The Adventures of a Partial Analysis"], Freudian psychoanalysis is described by the SI as an incomplete project, a "partial analysis," that has failed to realise the radical potential implied by its principal achievement, namely the revelation of the workings of unconscious or latent desire.¹⁰ The seamless absorption of the potentially disruptive discoveries of psychoanalysis into the dominant social and moral order is explained by the SI as a failure "*n'est pas imputable à Freud précisément, mais bien plutôt à l'effondrement du mouvement révolutionnaire dans les années 20, seule force qui eût pu porter les données critique de la psychanalyse à une réalisation*" ("Les aventures" 475) ["not exactly attributable to Freud, but rather to the collapse of the revolutionary movements of the 1920s, the only force that could have brought the critical data of psychoanalysis to its realization" (SI, "The Adventures," par 1). Composed two years prior to the events of May '68, this brief article by the Situationists calling for a more radical application of the "critical data of psychoanalysis" thus anticipates the project of schizoanalysis that Deleuze and Guattari would later elaborate in *Anti-Oedipus*, a project that I want to suggest offers an important basis for conceptualising how the logic of psychogeography, with its mutual imbrication of place, psyche, affect and the production of social relations,

might be extended in a post '68 context.

Whereas Freudian psychoanalysis is predominantly preoccupied with the subjectivity of the neurotic, the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari privileges, in contrarian fashion, the model of the schizoid as a challenge to the hegemony of the law of the signifier, the name of the Father, and “the reduction to the ‘One’ and the multiple” in order to thus retain “a spontaneous or unpredictable form of desire freed from social coding” (Holland, “Schizophrenia” 66). For Deleuze and Guattari, the Freudian model of explaining the workings of the unconscious in terms of familial fixations and Oedipal identifications is not only reductive but also misunderstands the crucial link between desire and production, or the machinic functioning of the unconscious. Ian Buchanan points out that while schizoanalysis performs a critique of psychoanalysis it is not a rejection of it per se, but an attempt rather to correct or “re-engineer” its methods by developing “a new hermeneutic model for analysing the utterances or products of desire” (Buchanan, “Schizoanalysis” 176). Just as psychogeography adopts a materialist perspective that conceives of the subject as a physical and psychic entity mobilised by the cross-flow of sensations provoked by urban settings, schizoanalysis reconceptualises the unconscious as an open-system of desiring forces that generate multiplicities of associations and connections constantly reorganising themselves into sets of relations that resist the overcoding of fixed interpretations:

Schizoanalysis does not pertain to elements or aggregates, nor to subjects, relations, or structures. It pertains only to *lineaments* running through groups as well as individuals. Schizoanalysis, as the analysis of desire, is immediately practical and political, whether it is a question of an individual, group, or society [...] Schizoanalysis is like the art of the new. Or rather, there is no problem of application: the lines it brings out could equally be the lines of a life, a work of literature or art, or a society, depending on which system of coordinates is chosen. (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 203-4)

With his background as both a psychiatrist and an activist, for Guattari this reconceptualising of the unconscious in terms of desiring-production, systems of multiplicity and transversality is especially significant. For not only does it facilitate a shift in emphasis away from analytical interventions into individual subjectivity but it reorients the practice of psychoanalysis towards the subjectivity of the collective, or an analysis of what Guattari classifies as *subjugated-groups* and *subject-groups*, the latter being linked to “an intense dynamics” of “subversive collectivity” (Seem 38).

Following the logic of Deleuze and Guattari's rebuttal of the Oedipal model of the unconscious, I want to suggest that the relationship between place and psyche that psychogeography manifests might be understood less as a study of the influence of geography upon mind and vice versa, than as a process of *reactivating* and, subsequently, of *reorganising* the psychic affects of a place or environment. While it is important to recognise significant differences between psychogeography and Deleuzeguattarian models, for as Anna Powell notes, psychogeography "moves extensively in specific places and historical events, whilst Deleuzian affect [...] moves intensively on the abstract, mental plane of duration" ("Jack the Ripper," par 27), both perspectives nevertheless "foreground time and memory, to gain insight from past experiences, mobilising vital forces in the optimum direction for future change" (par 31). In pursuing this line of inquiry I want to suggest that the schizoanalytical intervention into psychogeography is a necessary one as it reveals the extent to which an appreciation of the radical potential of psychogeographical practices is limited or curtailed when their workings are explained according to the Freudian model of the unconscious

In its initial formulation, psychogeography was defined in a dialectical relationship to the sociological study of the urban environment. As such it was influenced by the quantitative methods of what in the 1950s had become known as the study of the ecology of urban space, according to which empirical and scientific methods were applied with the aim of deriving laws about urban life and categories of classification from the use of data gathered in the field. An important precedent in this respect was the Chicago School of urban ecology which in the 1920s and 1930s developed the discipline of urban sociology as the study of human behaviour as influenced by social structures and physical environments. McDonough also notes the significance of a tradition of social geography in France concerned with understanding "space as a socially produced category" ("Situationist Space" 250) that provided an important counterpart to academic geography's tendency to abstract and homogenise space. While the emergent disciplines of urban sociology and social geography undoubtedly influenced one of the central aims of Lettrist psychogeography to uncover the effects of environments on the emotion and behaviour of individuals, the LI and later the SI sought to re-engineer or subvert the empirical and positivist drives of these disciplines into a more ludic and experimental comportment.

According to Constant, "The concept of psychogeography distinguishes itself

from ecology by its creative character. Psychogeography does not merely record facts, but it also tries to identify and explain the unconscious influences exerted by the urban atmosphere and ultimately to see them as a means to activating our environment. It turns these influences into an artistic medium by which our environment is created” (“Unitary Urbanism” 119). The reference here to “unconscious influences” is ambiguous. On one hand it appears to invite psychoanalytical comparisons in a fashion that might indeed justify seductive analogies between psychogeography and the analysis of the city such as the oft-cited comparison drawn by Christopher Gray when he describes the *dérive* as “a sort of free association in terms of city space” (Gray 4). On the other hand, it is imperative to point out that in its concern for creatively interacting with the city’s affects, intensities and flows of energy, the “free association” of the *dérive* differentiates itself from the primary preoccupation with signification and interpretation that a psychoanalysis of space and place implies. Indeed, one might even go so far as to argue that the surrender to an aimless drift through varied ambiances is the very opposite of a psychoanalysis of the urban landscape as the drive toward reading, interpreting and deconstructing the signs of the city is abandoned in the pursuit of heightened sensory encounters beyond the realm of the semiotic.

Rather than seeking to interpret the attraction and repulsion of certain places in relation to the latent or unconscious wishes of the subject, psychogeography aims then to sublimate an Egoistical response to the environment with the project of a more collective enunciation of urban space. The collective orientations of psychogeography are noted by Debord in “Theory of the *Dérive*,” in which he argues that “*les enseignements de la dérive permettent d’établir les premiers relevés des articulations psychogeographiques d’une cité moderne*” (55) [“lessons drawn from dérives enable us to draw up the first surveys of the psychogeographical articulations of a modern city” (66)]. The extent to which psychogeography is concerned with surveying the affective forces of the city as a whole aligns it with the pragmatics of schizoanalysis and its desire to tap into the “intense dynamics” of a “subversive collectivity” and, in this way, both methodologies reject the conceit of mapping the city (and the mind) as a means to explain and illuminate individual psychologies and pathologies. As the following excerpt from Debord’s “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography” makes apparent, psychogeography seeks immersion in the city’s flows of energy, its libidinal pulses and hubs of intensity and thus involves the type of expansion or

opening up of subjectivity to new possibilities that Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise as *becoming*, or the process of change, movement and reorganisation within an assemblage:

Le brusque changement d'ambiance dans une rue, à quelques mètres près; la division patente d'une ville en zones de climats psychiques tranchés; la ligne de plus forte pente – sans rapport avec la dénivellation – que doivent suivre les promenades qui n'ont pas de but; le caractère prenant ou repoussant de certains lieux; tout cela semble être négligé [...] En fait, la variété des combinaisons possibles d'ambiances, analogue à la dissolution des corps purs chimiques dans le nombre infini des mélanges, entraîne des sentiments aussi différenciés et aussi complexes que ceux que peut susciter tout autre forme de spectacle. ("Introduction à une critique" 13)

The sudden change of ambience 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 that is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the terrain); the appealing or repelling character of certain places – these phenomena all seem to be neglected [...] In fact, the variety of possible combinations of ambiances, analogous to the blending of pure chemicals in an infinite number of mixtures, gives rise to feelings as differentiated and complex as any other form of spectacle can evoke. ("Introduction to a Critique" 10)

The terminology in this key passage reflects the strategic underpinnings of the LI's psychogeographical experiments and the rational impulses of their perambulatory explorations of a "passional" terrain. The prospect of discovering "*la ligne de plus forte pente*" ["the path of least resistance"] is militaristic in its overtones whilst the mapping of "*le brusque changement d'ambiance dans une rue*" ["the sudden change of ambience in a street"] speaks to the Situationist concern for locating points of urban instability as part of their broader dialectical conception of the city as a changeable environment. Not unlike the way in which Guattari, as "the theorist of micropolitical transformation," envisaged the "singularities of small-group breakthroughs as catalysts for larger social movements" (Holmes, par 39), Lettrist psychogeography is similarly concerned with locating within the small-scale transformations and shifts in atmosphere, ambience and intensity in the urban terrain the potential for larger-scale disruptions and destabilisations of the dominant cultural and political order.

It is in this context that affects play a crucial role in Lettrist psychogeography insofar as affect is inherently disruptive because it involves a "violent forcing of thought out of accustomed patterns" (Colebrook qtd. in Powell, par 12). While affect

is notoriously difficult to define, Brian Massumi's notion of affect as "asignifying intensity" (102) is pertinent for understanding the link between the anti-representational drive of psychogeography and the political implications of its concern for mapping what Nigel Thrift terms "the affective register of cities" (57). Indeed, in his seminal 1995 article "The Autonomy of Affect," Massumi deploys the terms affect and intensity somewhat interchangeably, arguing that the power of the affective resides in its unassimilable nature, the way in which intensity "would seem to be associated with nonlinear processes: resonance and feedback which momentarily suspend the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future" (86). By transforming one's passage through the varied ambiances of the city into a passionate or "thrilling" game, psychogeographical activities aim to go beyond the imperative afforded in daily life to decoding signs and extracting utilitarian purpose and meaning in the functionally organised urban environment. At the same time, the "nonlinear processes" of their aimless and undirected affective encounters escape the logic of narrative development. In this context, sites such as the Place de la Contrescarpe, a bohemian haunt located at the axis of a formerly working-class district on the Left Bank of Paris, represent exemplary locales for the Lettrists. In the "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," Debord links the affective power of Contrescarpe to a productive destabilisation of the subject:

Le désert est monothéiste, a-t-on pu dire il y a déjà longtemps. Trouvera-t-on illogique, ou dépourvue d'intérêt, cette constatation que le quartier qui s'étend, à Paris, entre la place de la Contrescarpe et la rue de l'Arbalète incline plutôt à l'athéisme, à l'oubli, et à la désorientation des réflexes habituels? ("Introduction à une critique" 11)

It has long been said that the desert is monotheistic. Is it illogical or devoid of interest to observe that the district in Paris between Place de la Contrescarpe and Rue de l'Arbalète conduces rather to atheism, to oblivion and to the disorientation of habitual reflexes? ("Introduction to a Critique" 8)

For Debord, the passage between the Place de la Contrescarpe and the Rue de l'Arbalète exudes an intensity of affects that bring about a deterritorialisation (a breaking of habits¹¹) that not only disorients "habitual reflexes" but also opens the subject up to "oblivion," a state of forgetting that erases the existing coordinates of identity in order to return to a state of *tabula rasa*, a blank slate from which new subjectivities might emerge.¹² In light of such oblique and enigmatic declarations it becomes clear that the delirious tendencies evident in the spatial disorientations of the

Surrealist *déambulation* are by no means expelled in Debord's apparently more "rational" or objective reformulation of psychogeography. Guattari suggests that it is erroneous to oppose madness and rationality in a dualistic fashion as "the madness of desire, and the flows of desire, are the most rational order of the revolution" (qtd. in Seem 41). In seeking to rationally harness the unruly currents of desire in the direction of future change, Lettrist psychogeography revises, then, the Surrealist preoccupation with the pursuit of desire and imaginary enchantments as a means to liberate the subject at the level of the unconscious into a more organised concern for the collective *détournement*, or turning around, of the banality of the everyday into the passionate intensity of the constructed situation

Yet in resituating psychogeography within the programmatic turn of unitary urbanism with its overarching concern to dissolve the separated categories of artistic specialisation as a means to realise the "total work of art" as a foundation for disalienated modes of living, it is necessary to ask what role the literary might have to play in such a project. On one level, the textual productions generated by Lettrist psychogeography are fragmentary and often drily factual in nature. Yet as I argued in my introduction, to assess the achievements of Lettrist psychogeography on the basis of the literary value of the output of the LI and the SI is to misunderstand the absolutely fundamental role that the negation and supersession of the artistic gesture plays in their project. For this reason, I argue here and elsewhere in my thesis that the relationship between Lettrist psychogeography of the 1950s and the literary must be understood primarily in terms of the logic of *détournement*, or the turning around and perversion of existing elements of culture. In the section that follows I will examine how literary and cinematic tropes are detoured in a specific account of the *dérive* by Debord before turning finally to the relationship between spatial disorientation and the deterritorialisation of identity in a book that was prescribed a pragmatic value during the *dérive*, Malcolm Lowry's 1947 novel *Under the Volcano*.

2.2 Micropolitics of the *dérive*

In a surprising chapter in the pre-history of the Situationists, the mid-1950s saw the Lettrist International embark upon a fruitful collaboration with a group of Belgian post-Surrealists that resulted in the publication of a number of extended texts by the LI in the journal of their Surrealist colleagues, *Les Lèvres nues* [Naked Lips].¹³ Counting among them such members as the artist, filmmaker, publisher and prankster,

Marcel Mariën, as well as the founder and principal theoretician of Belgian Surrealism, Paul Nougé, the LI's collaboration with the Belgian Surrealists is notable for two main reasons. The first is that it provided a more open context for the LI to creatively develop some of the Surrealist tendencies of psychogeography outside the cultural terrain carved up in France by the "Pope" of Surrealism, André Breton, a figure of intellectual authority from whom Debord in particular was keen to differentiate himself. The second point of significance lies in the collaboration with Mariën specifically for, as Tom McDonough notes, Mariën was particularly adroit in the exercise of juxtaposed mapping. The reconstructed geographies and spatial disorientations of such collaged maps as Mariën's 1939 "Search for a Native Land," for example, were influential upon the methods that Debord would later adopt in his psychogeographical maps and the techniques of his "renovated cartography."¹⁴ Furthermore, some of the key texts of psychogeography such as Debord's "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography" (1955) and the "Theory of the *Dérive*" (1956) were first published in *Les Lèvres nues*. This interaction reveals how some of the main tenets of the practice of psychogeography evolved in dialogue with Surrealism, albeit within the peripheral realm of the Belgian post-war Surrealists distinguishable from their French counterparts by a more controlled and clandestine approach to fantasy and subversion.

It is in the November 1956 edition of *Les Lèvres nues* that Debord published "Two Accounts of the *Dérive*," a pair of descriptive reports of actual *dérives* undertaken by the Lettrists that appeared alongside the manifesto "Theory of the *Dérive*." In the manifesto Debord outlines the two principal (and frequently overlapping) objectives of the *dérive* as being either "*l'étude d'un terrain ou à des résultats affectifs déroutants*" (53) ["to study a terrain or to emotionally disorient oneself" (64)]. Once defined these objectives in turn determine the selection of the spatial field for investigation. In this respect, Debord's "Two Accounts" can be read as illustrations of the two main types of *dérive*. The first account records the delirium of a continuous *dérive* performed by Debord, Chtcheglov and Gaëtan M. Langlais between Christmas and New Year in 1953-54 and thus presents as an example of a *dérive* undertaken with the goal to "emotionally disorient oneself." The second account is a report of a "systematic *dérive*" through the northern latitudes of Paris during which a psychogeographical hub in the form of the dilapidated architecture of a ruinous rotunda is discovered and a number of conclusions are drawn about the

terrain traversed. I have chosen to highlight these two particular descriptive records of the *dérive* for what they suggest about the difficult role that narrativity occupies in the project of Lettrist psychogeography as well as for what the reports might also reveal about certain overlooked characteristics of the *dérive* that have a bearing upon the de-centred subjectivities engendered by the practice.

The *dérive* is defined by the SI as a “*mode de comportement expérimental lié aux conditions de la société urbaine: technique du passage hâtif à travers des ambiances variées*” (“Définitions” 13) [“mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances” (“Definitions” 52)]. Yet over time the speed or haste (*hâtif*) with which it was initially intended to be performed has been downplayed and, as Stuart Tait points out, current practices tend to reduce it to a leisurely paced aimless stroll or urban meander.¹⁵ The fact that *dérives* were often performed by the LI at night while in an intoxicated state and involved the rapid traversal of the city’s landscapes with abrupt transitions from the banal comforts of petit-bourgeois neighbourhoods to the more exciting terrain of run down bohemian and working class haunts means that their urban adventures were hardly conducive to being recorded in written accounts as in the manner of the *feuilletons* of the *flâneurs*, for example. Rather, the challenge in making a written record of the Lettrist *dérive* lies in finding a narrative method suitable for capturing the findings or results that might emerge from the psychic and emotional disorientations produced by the walker’s swift traversal of “*le terrain passionnel objectif*” (“Théorie” 51) [“the objective passional terrain” (“Theory” 62)] without resorting to a romantic or poetic valorisation of such excursions. As such, descriptions of the *dérive* by the LI and SI tend toward the gathering of data in the method of a report and deliberately avoid literary embellishment. The first report in Debord’s “Two Accounts of the *Dérive*,” entitled “Encounters and Difficulties Following an Extended *Dérive*,” is notable for adopting an impersonal third-person narration that draws upon the conventions of film-noir to describe the enigmatic events of a continuous *dérive* that involved frequenting a string of Algerian bistros over the course of a number of days and nights. With its coolly measured and distanced tone, as well as its adaptation of the objective authorial perspective of film-noir narration, the account has the effect of systematising and ordering the plethora of perplexing encounters and bizarre incidents that it describes. This apparently rational detachment is evident, for instance, in Debord’s description of the LI holding court in discussion with a man in a bar who

appears to have been driven to a state of delirium by his continuous travelling or extended *dériving*:

L'homme demande aux lettristes, contre toute vraisemblance, s'ils ne sont pas 'dans l'armée.' Puis, sur leur réponse négative, il insiste vainement pour savoir 'à quelle organisation ils appartiennent.' Il se présente lui-même sous le nom, manifestement faux, de Camille J. La suite de ses propos est parsemée de coïncidences [...] et des phrases qu'il veut à double sens, et qui semblent être des allusions délibérées à la dérive. Mais le plus remarquable est son délire croissant qui tourne autour d'une idée de voyage pressé – 'il voyage continuellement' et le répète souvent. ("Deux Comptes" 10/136)

The man asks the Lettrists, against all probability, whether they are not 'in the army.' Then, receiving a negative answer, he vainly insists on knowing 'to what organization they belong.' He introduces himself with the name, obviously false, of Camille J. What follows is strewn with coincidences [...] and with phrases loaded with double meanings and that seem to be calculated allusions to the *dérive*. Most remarkable, however, is his growing delirium, which revolves around the idea of an urgent voyage: as he points out repeatedly 'he is continuously traveling.' ("Two Accounts")

The mysterious chain of events culminates with G.D [Guy Debord] and G.I [Gilles Ivain/Ivan Chtcheglov] being followed by two men from a bar "*dans la tradition des films de gangsters*" (12) ["in the tradition of a gangster film" (137)] and whom G.D and G.I evade in a series of canny escape manoeuvres through the labyrinthine city streets:

Les deux lettristes marchent vers eux et les croisent sans que, dans leur surprise, ils fassent un seul geste; puis suivent le trottoir du Pont-Neuf vers la rive droite. Ils voient alors que les deux hommes se remettent à les suivre; et il semble qu'une voiture engagée sur le Pont-Neuf, avec laquelle ces hommes paraissent échanger des signes, se joigne à la poursuite [...] ils traversent en hâte le rez-de-chaussée du grand magasin 'La Samaritaine', sortent rue de Rivoli pour s'engouffrer dans le métro 'Louvre', et changent au Châtelet [...] Descendus à 'Monge', les lettristes gagnent la Montagne-Geneviève à travers le Continent Contrescarpe désert, où la nuit tombe, dans une atmosphère d'inquiétude grandissante. ("Deux Comptes" 12)

The two Lettrists approach and then walk right by the men who, in their surprise, do not budge. The Lettrists continue down the sidewalk of the Pont-Neuf towards the Right Bank. Here they notice that the two men have once again begun to follow them and it seems that a car on the Pont-Neuf – with which these men appear to be exchanging signals – has apparently joined in the pursuit [...] they hurriedly traverse the ground floor of the La Samaritaine department store, exiting onto the rue de Rivoli in order to rush down into the Louvre subway station, subsequently changing trains at Chatelet [...] Getting off at the Monge station, the Lettrists arrive at the

Montagne-[Sainte-] Geneviève via the deserted Continent Contrescarpe where night falls amidst an atmosphere of increasing unease. (“Two Accounts” 137-8)

As Debord’s reference to the gangster film makes apparent, his account of the *dérive* is styled upon the cinematic genre of film-noir yet the stylistic resemblances with the literary genre of the detective novel are also worth noting. In fact, the cinematic and literary genres of film-noir and the detective novel are linked by the ways in which both treatments of the city offer what Carlo Salzani terms, writing about Walter Benjamin’s pre-occupation with crime fiction, “a fictitious escape route” (170) from the boredom, repetition and claustrophobic regulation of everyday life under advanced capitalism. According to Salzani, the authors of crime-as-adventure, from Poe and Alexandre Dumas to Eugène Sue, each “transform the city into a place of unnameable dangers, menacing shadows, and evil lurking in every door, that is, an *exciting* place” (170). Writing specifically about Debord’s account of the *dérive*, McDonough offers a similar insight suggesting “Debord and Chtcheglov indulged in a paranoid fantasy of the chase that transformed the workaday city into a scene from an exotic American gangster film” (“Delirious Paris” 11). While the adventure genres of crime fiction and film-noir may succeed in investing the banal and regulated spaces of the city with a sense of magic and mystery, Salzani nevertheless suggests the escapist tendencies discernible in such fictions represent little more than “a self-deception, a childish intoxication that hides the social, political, and economic reality of capitalist modernity” (170). As such, Salzani and McDonough are eager to link the trope of crime as adventure in the work of Benjamin and the Situationists to more serious critical intent.

In the case of Benjamin, the work of the detective might be usefully compared with that of the materialist historian similarly tasked with uncovering the traces of past crimes committed and buried beneath the spectacle of the present. For McDonough, the chase scene of Debord and Chtcheglov suggests the influence of the paranoiac-criticism of Dali who sought to “induce that hallucinatory state, to adopt the obsessional neurotic’s belief in the omnipotence of thoughts and desires, in order to momentarily assert the possibility of radical change in the form of a world fully accommodated to the subject” (“Delirious Paris” 16). While Debord and Chtcheglov’s *dérive* does suggest certain resonances with Dali’s paranoiac-critical method, most notably in its concern for systematising irrational occurrences and coincidences, I

would argue that the treatment of bizarre and incredulous chance encounters in Debord's account departs from Surrealist methods to the extent that they arguably do not correspond with the unconscious wishes of the subject. Returning to my argument that the psychogeographical practices of the Lettrists tend toward the production of schizoid subjectivities, I want to suggest an alternative reading of the *détournement* of the gangster narrative as revealing an interest in collective subjectivities such that the *dérive* might be viewed as working to assemble small-scale groups or "packs" that deterritorialise the passive homogeneity of the urban mass.

The schizo position, according to Deleuze and Guattari in the second plateau, "1914: One or Several Wolves?" is a peripheral one whereby remaining at the edges and "holding on by a hand or a foot" (*Plateaus* 34) the schizo evades the paranoid identification with the mass subject. As the thrust of the second plateau is to read against Freud's interpretation of his infamous patient, the Wolf-Man, according to the explanatory logic of familial associations and primal scenes, Deleuze and Guattari drift across various models of subjectivity characterised by multiplicities such as packs, clans, tribes, crowds and bands. To inhabit the locale of the periphery and to deterritorialise identity by conceiving of subjectivity in terms of molecular and shape shifting small-scale units such as packs and bands is political for Deleuze and Guattari insofar as these rhizomatic assemblages contest the homogenising forces of authority, power, the leader, the fascist state and so on. Noting that Elias Canetti "distinguishes between two types of multiplicity that are sometimes opposed but at other times interpenetrate: mass ("crowd") multiplicities and pack multiplicities" (*Plateaus* 33), Deleuze and Guattari consider how the movement of the pack is inherently unstable and shape-shifting:

Doubtless, there is no more equality or any less hierarchy in packs than in masses, but they are of a different kind. The leader of the pack or band plays move by move, must wager everything every hand, whereas the group or mass leader consolidates or capitalizes on past gains. The pack, even on its own turf, is constituted by a line of flight or of deterritorialization that is a component part of it, and to which it accredits a high positive value, whereas masses only integrate these lines in order to segment them, obstruct them, ascribe them a negative sign. (*Plateaus* 33)

While it has become part of the romanticised mythology of the Lettrist International that they considered themselves a kind of "tribe,"¹⁶ to apply Deleuze and Guattari's mapping of the complex internal dynamics of the pack and the ensuing rhizomatic nature to their patterns of flight restores to the purposeless drifting of the

dérive a sense of its micropolitical dimensions. Not only is it suggested by Debord that the *dérive* is ideally undertaken in small groups,¹⁷ the practice itself is especially concerned with charting the intensities of the marginal zones of the city where the walker is most likely to encounter the ethnic and working class groups that Debord tended to associate with the destabilising potential of a proletariat. To this end the *dérive* frequently draws the LI to such aptly named bistros and cafes as the “Tavern of the Revolvers,” for example, a Spanish bar patronised by the bargemen of the Canal Saint-Denis that is described in Debord’s second account of the *dérive*. Yet it is worth noting that all too often this attraction to the city’s underclasses results in racial stereotyping as is evident in Debord’s first account of the *dérive* in which he describes the following chaotic scene taking place in one of the Algerian dive bars:

Le soir du 31 décembre au même bar de la rue Xavier-Privas, les lettristes trouvent K. et les habitués terrorisés – malgré leurs habitudes de violence – par une sorte de bande, forte d’une dizaine d’Algériens venues de Pigalle, et qui occupent les lieux. (“Deux comptes” 11)

On the evening of 31 December in the same bar on rue Xavier-Privas, the Lettrists come upon K. and the regulars terrorized – despite their own violent tendencies – by a sort of gang comprised of ten Algerians who have come from Pigalle and are occupying the place. (“Two Accounts” 136)

This stereotyped association of Algerians with gangs and a criminal underworld is typical of other racial clichés scattered throughout Debord’s account of the *dérive*. Another prominent example is the description of the Lettrists encountering “une dizaine d’hommes qui parlaient en Yiddish, assis à deux ou trois tables, et tous coiffés de chapeaux” (11) [“ten Yiddish-speaking men seated at two or three tables and all wearing hats” (137)] which occurs alongside other references that appear intended to heighten the atmosphere of mystery and secrecy in the story. On one level, the tendency toward stereotyping racial groups in Debord’s narrative is a reminder of the way in which the *dérive*, especially as conceived by Debord, tends to assume the normative point-of-view of a western male subject who is productively destabilised by his disorienting encounters with the Other and thus the *dérive* was “spurred on in equal parts by the exploration of pockets of class, ethnic and racial difference in the postwar city, and by frequent intoxication” (McDonough, “Introduction” 10-11). From a contemporary perspective there are of course very clear problems in linking transgression to non-western cultures as it problematically fetishizes otherness. At the same time, it is important to point out that Paris in this era was dominated by

segregationist policies and as such the imperative of the *dérive* to drift freely across geographical boundaries did represent a subversive gesture of solidarity with migrant populations. Reflecting in his memoir upon the time idled away in Algerian bistros during his Lettrist years Jean-Michel Mension, for instance, suggests that it was “a clear way of being against the bourgeoisie [...] It is hard today to imagine how we experienced the colonial issue back then – it was political but also visceral” (*The Tribe* 25).

Indeed, the Lettrist International sought to actively place themselves at the vanguard of race politics and they were critical of the discriminatory treatment of Parisian Algerians in particular, and counted among the LI a number of Algerian members. The group published numerous articles in *Potlatch* sympathetic to the decolonisation of Algeria and even proposed a psychogeographical reconstruction of the Algerian city of Orleansville after the earthquake of 1954.¹⁸ Amid the backdrop of micropolitical struggle that defined the cultural climate in France in the decade leading up to the events of May ‘68, the pursuit during the *dérive* of marginal places and marginal peoples can be situated as part of a larger desire to locate the fault lines of the city, those zones most susceptible to instability where the dominant social order of the middle-class bourgeoisie might be detoured, or turned around, through ruptures in conventional modes of inhabiting the city. This connection that the Lettrist *dérive* forges between the lines of flight of small groups that transverse the city in ways that disregard boundaries and that break with habitual patterns and the potential for larger-scale disruption again emphasises the extent to which the *dérive* embodies a unique form of aesthetico-political praxis. In this respect, the micropolitics of the Lettrist *dérive* complicate the highly subjective approach to the urban drift as it is often practised today in the context of postmodern space as a more individualised activity concerned with forging relations of belonging through exercises in cognitive mapping.

Compared with the *détournement* of the gangster film and crime fiction found in Debord’s first account of the *dérive*, which as noted is unusual in its recourse to narrative, the second account, “Gathering of Urban Ambiances by Means of the *Dérive*,” is in many respects a more conventional study of the psychogeographical effects of a terrain. In this instance, the spatial field of the *dérive* encompasses an itinerary of streets stretching from the fourth *arrondissement* out to the northern rim of Paris. The aimless and rapid drifting across the varied ambiances of the city’s neighbourhoods is punctuated by the spontaneous discovery of “une importante

plaque tournante psychogéographique” (12) [“an important psychogeographic hub” (139)]. At the centre of this psychogeographic hub stands “*l’admirable rotonde de Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, presque ruinée, laissée dans un incroyable abandon, et dont le charme s’accroît singulièrement du passage, à très proche distance, de la courbe du métro suspendu*” (12) [“the impressive rotunda by Claude-Nicolas Ledoux,¹⁹ a virtual ruin left in an incredible state of abandonment, whose charm is singularly enhanced by the curve of the elevated subway line that passes by at close distance” (139)]. Here, the attraction to the ruin as a psychogeographic hub reveals another point of intersection with, and departure from, the Surrealist engagement with the city. For the LI, it is less the ontological instability of the ruin as a conduit to the marvellous and its embodiment of a poetics of obsolescence that interests the group than the strategic endeavour of seeking out and making a collective study of those environments of heightened intensity that point to the instability of the city and the potential to unravel its productive, utilitarian and commodified spaces.

What is arguably at stake, then, in these impersonal psychogeographical reports that refuse to make space signify in a symbolic sense and which defy categorisation as neither strictly literary nor scientific texts, is a concern to make apparent the intensity rather than the meaning of space. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the experience of an intensity is not only “asignifying,” according to Brian Massumi’s definition, but also inherently unassimilable. Thus the psychogeographical text, with its overriding concern for the recording of intensities and its anti-narrative impulses, resists easy assimilation into more conventional modes of novelistic discourse and literary representation. Fredric Jameson suggests that intensity can be understood as affect in the plural in so far as “[a]ffects are singularities and intensities, existences rather than essences, which usefully unsettle the more established psychological and physiological categories” (*Antinomies* 36). The Situationist accounts of *dérives* undertaken in the 1950s and early 1960s undoubtedly lack the stylistic and narrative complexity that characterises the contemporary psychogeographical fictions of such authors as Iain Sinclair, for instance. Yet in their concern for documenting the intensity of space, which in turn unsettles established psychological categories, these reports anticipate key features of what I term in this study the psychogeographical novel. For Debord, however, to create literature from the practice of the *dérive* represented the ultimate betrayal of its essential goal to supersede the aesthetic realm and thus, in the context of the historical avant-garde at

least, it must be understood that “*Ce que l’on peut écrire vaut seulement comme mots de passe dans ce grand jeu*” (“Théorie” 54) [“written descriptions can be no more than passwords to this great game” (“Theory” 65)].

2.3 The influential game of Lowry

For the Dadaists and the Surrealists, the playing of games and the staging of events, pranks and interventions was pivotal in their strategy to cultivate a spirit of negation that blurred the distinctions between art and everyday life. In keeping with this precedent, the practice of psychogeography was similarly conceived by the LI as a constellation of activities, researches and “situations” in which the *détournement* of existing elements of culture came to play a significant role. Foreshadowing the argument of my next chapter concerned with how literary elements perform the work of critical theory in Debord’s *Mémoires*, in the final section of this chapter I want to consider the significance of Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* (1947) for the LI’s conception of the subversive potential of delirious and hallucinatory responses to space during the *dérive*. Allusions to Lowry’s novel were something of a game for the LI and the SI in the 1950s with the sole British member Ralph Rumney, for example, earning the nickname “the Consul” after the protagonist of Lowry’s novel, Geoffrey Firmin.²⁰ In an advertisement for a *dérive* appearing in *Les Lèvres nues* (see figure 2.1) it is announced that “*L’architecture la plus fâcheuse est celle que propage*” [“the most regrettable architecture is spreading”] and beneath this pronouncement the name FIRMIN is typed in a large print that dwarfs the name of Le Corbusier.²¹ The advertisement speaks to the multifaceted role that Lowry’s novel served for the Situationists. In one respect, the Consul presents a contemporary persona continuous with a lineage of radical defectors from Baudelaire to De Quincey whose derangement of the senses via alcohol and intoxicants signal a protest against the disciplinary constraints of the productive identities demanded by capitalism.²² At the same time, Lowry’s Firmin is invoked dialectically in the LI’s theory of urbanism in the sense that the expatriate drunkard’s highly affective and dissolute relationship to space is fundamentally opposite to the rationalist formalism of Le Corbusier’s urbanism and the functionalist ideologies of modernist design more broadly.

In addition to these roles, Debord discusses another function that Lowry’s novel performs in the context of psychogeography in a 1960 letter to Patrick Staram, and that is its capacity to work as a *leitmotif* during the practice of the *dérive*. While

the letter to Straram covers diverse topics, ranging from news of recent events such as Debord's participation in a demonstration in Paris for Algerian independence to reflection upon the importance of *détournement* as “à tout le moins, le base de cet ‘art critique’ que peut faire l’I.S” (39) [“at the very least, the basis of the ‘critical art’ that the SI can make (par 7)],” extended elaboration is given to *Under the Volcano* in light of Debord's having reread the novel on a train ride from Munich to Geneva. “Je l’ai trouvé plus beau, encore plus ‘intelligent’ surtout qu’en 1953” (40) [“I found it even more beautiful, even more ‘intelligent,’ than I did in 1953],” he writes, “et cependant je l’avais aimé beaucoup alors” (40) [“and I loved it very much back then” (par 8)]. During a short stay in the Riviera town of Cagnes-Sur-Mer, where he had intended to visit an old girlfriend unannounced only to discover on arrival that she wasn't there, Debord spends the evening passing from bar to bar in a drunken escapade that increasingly comes to resemble the events of *Under the Volcano*. After one particular site reminds Debord of the *barranca* he becomes attuned to a steadily increasing number of recurrences and correspondences with Lowry's novel. Debord refers to such unplanned and destabilising collisions between real and imaginary events as the art of “le détournement spontané” (40) [“spontaneous *détournement*”], according to which certain texts are identified as having a special role to play:

Pour reprendre l'exemple de Lowry, j'ai constaté encore tout récemment que son livre fonctionne [...] Ainsi donc, le jeu influentiel de Lowry, pour qui s'y est soumis dans les conditions favorables (?), suffit à faire apparaître avec force les incidents significatifs qui autrement n'auraient sans doute même pas été remarqués, à coup sûr non compris comme tels - , et d'abord à faire apparaître au centre un sens de toute cette journée-là, cette dérive. Sens non prémédité, et qui de lui-même ne s'imposait pas. (“À Patrick Staram” 42)

To return to the example of Lowry, I have recently established that his book functions [...] Thus, the influential game of Lowry, when subject to favorable conditions (?), suffices to forcefully make appear *significant* incidents that otherwise wouldn't even be noticed, and certainly not understood as such – and makes appear, at its centre, a sense of this whole day, this *dérive*. Its meaning was unpremeditated, and in itself unnecessary. (“Letter to Straram,” pars 8, 12, emphasis in original)²³

Debord's observation that Lowry's book “functions,” or “works,” calls to mind Deleuze's pragmatics of reading and indeed Deleuze and Guattari cite Malcolm Lowry in *Anti-Oedipus*, quoting his suggestion that in respect to the meaning of his novel *Under the Volcano*, the text is “anything you want it to be, so long as it works” (Lowry qtd. in *Anti-Oedipus* 132). Insofar as he attributes a pragmatic function to Lowry's

novel, Debord's strategy of reading is usefully illuminated, then, by Deleuze and Guattari's notion of Lowry's novel as an exemplary instance of the literary work as a type of machine. In drawing the machine analogy, the pair emphasise the way in which the literary text is "capable of producing effects, and they [Deleuze and Guattari] want to take apart and analyse these machines to see how the effects are produced" (Baugh, "How Deleuze" 36). In this way, it becomes apparent that a psychogeographical approach to reading, at least in the sense intended by Debord, is both anti-hermeneutical and not unlike the pragmatic model of literary criticism proposed by Deleuze and Guattari to the extent that their pragmatics emphasises the efficacy or use-value of the text over the exegesis of meaning, signification and interpretation.²⁴

Just as the unconscious "poses no problem of meaning, solely problems of use" (*Anti-Oedipus* 131), Deleuze and Guattari argue in favour of a transversal approach to, or a reading *across*, the text that seeks to gather its effects, intensities, flows, and modes of expression into shape-shifting assemblages. A pragmatics of reading is therefore intended to reveal how the "active powers" of a literary work reside less in the content of the text than in the uniqueness of the author's style and his or her capacity to affect and thus challenge the reader to think beyond and outside of habitual patterns. In this way, writing for Deleuze is akin to the making of lines of flight such that "telling or creating stories is a force-mapping art, a cartography of active becomings open to new and unforeseeable connections" (Colombat 581). In what follows, I want to take Debord's attraction to *Under the Volcano* as a starting point for exploring how the methods of Lettrist psychogeography, which combine a spontaneous susceptibility to the immanent effects of the environment with the forging of unexpected connections and correspondences between places and events, suggest implications for a Situationist pragmatics of reading.

While not a widely read work in the Modernist canon, *Under the Volcano* is nevertheless appreciated as one of the most intensely topographical novels of the twentieth-century. Yet like the Surrealist anti-novels discussed in chapter one, Lowry's post Second World War novel defies categorisation in its ambivalent relationship to the ethos of high Modernism. While by no means a Surrealist text, *Under the Volcano* nevertheless shares with Surrealist prose a preoccupation with the disruptive and unravelling effects of the irrational, the contingent and the absurd. In a similar vein, it exhibits a certain untimeliness that Tyrus Miller argues is characteristic of late Modernist fiction's tendency to represent "breaking points, points of

nonsynchronism, in the broad narrative of twentieth-century culture” (*Late Modernism* 12). Contending that such untimely and “force-mapping” fictions exert a significant influence upon the underlying premises of Lettrist psychogeography, I want to explore how *Under the Volcano* “functions” for the LI according to its unique capacity to train the reader in the art of perceiving and responding to place in a heightened and multi-sensory fashion that displaces the limits and boundaries of a rationalist world order.

In this context, a crucial aspect of the relevance of Lowry’s spatiality to the practice of Lettrist psychogeography resides in how the text creates an idiosyncratic topography that is nevertheless grounded in largely accurate portrayals of actual sites and spaces in Mexico, or more specifically the town that Lowry calls Quauhnahuac but models upon the geography of Cuernavaca. The topographical coordinates of the novel, from the sleepy old capital of Parián and the ruin of Maximilian Palace to the rocky ravine of the “barranca” that runs through the town and the Arena-Tomalín where the Consul makes his pilgrimage with his estranged wife Yvonne and brother Hugh to watch the sad spectacle of the bull-slaying, establish a credible geography that is imaginatively transformed by the various characters’ responses to those places. Given Lowry’s allegorical preoccupations in *Under the Volcano*, it is possible to interpret the treatment of place in the novel along purely symbolic lines. Yet it is equally valid, I argue, to approach the topography of the novel along phenomenological lines by focusing specifically on how the characters’ perceptions and responses to certain places are shaped by an unstable interplay of internal and external stimuli. Memory, for instance, has the effect of interpolating internal and external influences as the characters’ mnemonic responses to the geographies of Mexico trigger reflections upon their former lives in Europe and America and thus the novel constructs a multi-layered palimpsest of evocative places both past and present. At the same time, external stimuli such as the consumption of alcohol and intoxicants are equally influential in producing delirious and hallucinatory responses to environments that blur the boundaries between inner and outer realities, psychological versus physical space. Consider for instance the Consul imbibing at the cantina of the Salón Ofélia where he experiences an intense hallucinatory response while looking at a rainbow as Hugh and Yvonne swim nearby in the cascades:

There were, in fact, rainbows. Though without them the mescal (which Yvonne couldn’t of course have noticed) would have already invested the place with a magic [...] But now the mescal struck a discord, then a succession of plaintive discords to which the drifting mists all seemed to

be dancing, through the elusive subtleties of ribboned light, among the detached shreds of rainbows floating. (*Under the Volcano* 288)

Not unlike the optical illusion of the rainbow which occurs only in response to very specific meteorological conditions, the hallucination is grounded in actual physiological phenomena that originate in the body yet it produces psychic effects so intense and exaggerated that what essentially occurs is a subjective reordering of space according to the desires, fears and fantasies of the person experiencing the hallucination. As Thomas B. Gilmore notes, in *Under the Volcano* “[h]allucination and reality pile up in layers or strata, sometimes becoming as complicated in their relationships as rock formations in a terrain with a long history of violent geological upheaval” (297). The geological layers or strata that Gilmore refers to here might also be read as describing the design and elaborate structure of the novel itself which nevertheless works to contain the chaotic effects of the Consul’s hallucinations such that the narrative never truly descends into an illogical shambles despite the disintegrating mental state of its protagonist. However intellectually dextrous the Consul imagines (or deludes) himself to be during his states of temporary states of intoxicant induced madness, the objective description of his irrational disordering of the senses restores a sense of balance to the internal equilibrium of the text:

But there was a slight mistake. The Consul was not talking. Apparently not. The Consul had not uttered a single word. It was all an illusion, a whirling cerebral chaos, out of which, at last, at long last, at this very instant, emerged, rounded and complete, order... (*Under the Volcano* 309)

With its atmosphere of calm lucidity amid the whirl of the Consul’s “cerebral chaos,” and in the rational ordering of its delirious content, the structure of *Under the Volcano* provides an important model for Debord’s own attempts to order and systematise the subjectively gathered “data” collected during the emotional disorientations of the *dérive* as in the previously discussed accounts published in *Les Lèvres nues*.²⁵ Another important lesson of the hallucination in *Under the Volcano*, which encompasses both the visual and auditory type, is to reveal how radically intensifying the sensory affects of a place works to render it strange in a manner that is wholly dissimilar to the subject-affirming effects of the uncanny. Rather than bringing latent memories to the surface in a collision of the familiar with the unfamiliar, the hallucination in fact disrupts the stable categories of Cartesian mind/body, subject/object dualities. In this respect it is possible to argue that hallucination, disorientation and spatial delirium perform the work of

deterritorialisation in Lowry's novel. Breaking with habit, the familiar and the usual categories of identity, the delirious narrativity of *Under the Volcano* thus resonates with the goal of psychogeography to pervert and turn around ingrained patterns of thought, action and spatial relations.

Of course Lowry's challenge to identity in *Under the Volcano* is of a different order to the Situationist concern for overturning the alienated subjectivities of everyday life under advanced capitalism. Andrew John Miller argues that Lowry is essentially preoccupied with "the growing irrelevance of national citizenship as a source of identity and solidarity" (2) such that the Consul emerges as "a figure who exemplifies a condition of late-colonial displacement" (6). While it is possible to read the numerous incidents of spatial and psychic disorientation in the novel strictly as metaphors for the Consul's unmoored sense of national identity it is also important to recognise the novel's alertness to the immanent effects of the environment, or the ways in which places not only reflect inner states of mind but also have an active role in shaping and influencing subjectivity. Stumbling through the peripheral zone of the fairground, for example, the Consul is described as "having lost his bearings" (224) and when he climbs aboard the loop-the-loop machine and is unravelled by the simultaneously terrifying and exhilarating fairground ride, the link between spatial dislocation and the deterritorialisation of identity becomes clearly apparent:

All at once, terribly, the confession boxes had begun to go in reverse: Oh, the Consul said, oh; for the sensation of falling was now as if terribly behind him, unlike anything, beyond experience; certainly this recessive unwinding was not like looping-the-loop in a plane, where the movement was quickly over [...] Everything was falling out of his pockets, was being wrested from him, torn away, a fresh article at each whirling, sickening, plunging, retreating, unspeakable circuit [...] he was being emptied out, returned empty, his stick, his passport [...] It could be difficult even for a Consul to be without a passport in Mexico. (*Under the Volcano* 225-6)

The ambivalence of the Consul's centrifugal experience of being "emptied out" of his sense of identity is indeed striking. On one hand, the Consul desires to rid himself of "that frightful bloody nightmare he was forced to carry around with him everywhere upon his back, that went by the name of Geoffrey Firmin" (226) and his preoccupation with dissolute states of subjectivity resonate with the Surrealist cultivation of delirium as an attack upon a mechanised sense of identity. On the other hand, Lowry's treatment of dislocation and the nightmare of identity responds to the post World War II context wherein the rise of fascism, in particular, had quelled the

optimism of earlier utopian avant-garde strategies such as the Surrealist investment in the liberatory promise of delirium. *Under the Volcano* is a peripatetic novel yet Lowry is careful not to romanticise the identity-less, state-less or nomadic subject. On the contrary, the novel suggests that the further one ventures away from one's point of origin the greater the imperative to prove one's identity becomes and the more necessary it is to demonstrate the subject's place within discrete categories of national classification. Indeed, it is confusion over the Consul's "true" identity that ultimately leads to his brutally casual murder by the local police chiefs. In this respect, Lowry's novel presents a critique of the violence of identity as a construct and the ways in which language and the act of naming become intertwined with the use and abuse of power. Thus the text again intersects with the preoccupations of the Situationists, especially during those early Lettrist years when the *dérive* was conceived as, among other things, a ludic means of escape from the alienated labour of capitalist relations. In a similar vein, the reuse of existing elements of culture in a critical fashion represented for the SI another pivotal means of avoiding complicity with the instrumentalisation of language as an expression of power. It is this strategic repurposing of literary culture in the Situationist project that I intend to examine more closely in my next chapter concerned with Debord's autobiographical collage-novel *Mémoires*.

While it would no doubt be possible to perform a detailed psychogeographical reading of *Under the Volcano*, in this chapter I have been primarily concerned with unpacking just what it meant for Debord to conceive of Lowry's book as a text that "functions" and how the novel's heightened sensory receptiveness to place anticipates some of the principal aims and methods of Lettrist psychogeography. My assessment of the "influential game of Lowry" ("Letter to Straram") has developed, then, the broader concern of this chapter to address the overlooked yet critical question of precisely what the *psych* in psychogeography entails. By turning to the conceptual framework of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis as a defiantly anti-Oedipal model of the unconscious I considered its intersections with the open-ended, generative and indeterminate subjectivities engendered by psychogeography. In this way, I have sought to demonstrate how the *dérive* and unitary urbanism not only critique the alienations of modern subjectivity but also put into play alternative subjectivities, *immanent* ones that embody a subversive potential insofar as they are shaped within and in response to the environment. This emphasis on the immanent subjectivities that

psychogeographical practices engender represents an intervention into the contemporary tendency to treat the *dérive* as a spatial narrative strategy useful for generating cognitive maps of the city. On the contrary, the preoccupation with intensities, affects and areas of atmosphere and ambience in Lettrist psychogeography points to its “schizophrenic” nature in the sense that it seeks to make alternative subjectivities emerge at the margins of culture that counter homogenising identifications with the mass subject and the conformitive drives of the urban crowd. In the literary history of psychogeography and the novel, there is no doubt a certain irony in the fact that the Lettrist *dérive* originates as an inherently anti-representational technique of exploring the city. Yet as Debord notes in his letter to Patrick Straram, “*nous ne sommes pas absents de l’expression, dans et contre les cadres actuels*” (39) [“we aren’t absent from expression, in and against current frameworks” (par 6)] and it is from this ambivalent position that the Situationist repurposing of existing elements of culture begins to imagine newly practical and subversive uses for the novel.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

¹ An edited summary of Chtcheglov’s letters to Debord and Bernstein was published as “Lettres de Loin” (“Letters from Afar”) in *Internationale Situationniste* # 9 August 1964.

² The continuous *dérive* refers to urban explorations taken over extended periods of time that might range from a matter of days or weeks to months at a time.

³ The Lettrist International (LI) were active from 1952 to 1957 while the subsequent Situationist International (SI) was active from 1957 to 1972. In this chapter I use the term Lettrist psychogeography to indicate that I am speaking about psychogeography as it was conceived in the early 1950s by the Lettrist International.

⁴ Félix Guattari uses the phrase “delirious narrativity” in *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm* to refer to the creative force residing in the non-discursive capable of constructing alternative worlds. While this chapter is concerned with the usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari’s work on schizoanalysis for understanding the complex open-ended subjectivities engendered by psychogeography, I use the term “delirious narrativity” in a more general sense to refer to the seamless mixing of realistic description with delirious and hallucinatory responses to space as one of the chief narrative techniques deployed in Malcolm Lowry’s novel, *Under the Volcano*.

⁵ One of the founding members of the SI, Constant Nieuwenhuys was a member of the group from 1957 to 1960. His most famous proposals for a Situationist City are his designs and maquettes for *New Babylon*, a city based on total automation, the abolition of work and the engineering of social space. Debord, however, criticised Constant’s translation of the theory of unitary urbanism, intended polemically as a critique of urbanism, into plans for actual buildings. Thus Constant was deemed culpable in the

recuperation of UU by the architectural establishment.

⁶ According to Q. Stevens, the “term ‘Situationist City’ was coined by [Simon] Sadler, who first drew academic attention to the Situationists’ critique of the urban environment, their principles for urban planning and urban living, and their design proposals for urban forms” (151). For the most comprehensive accounts of the counter-urbanism of the LI and the SI see Sadler, *The Situationist City* and Tom McDonough, ed. *The Situationists and the City*.

⁷ Chtcheglov’s “Formulaire pour un nouveau urbanisme” exists in two iterations. The initial 1953 text by Chtcheglov was only published in its original unedited form posthumously. The first publication of the “Formulaire” was a version heavily edited by Debord that appeared in *Internationale Situationniste* #1 June 1958. French quotations are from the edited 1958 version of the text as it is reprinted in the Librairie Arthème Fayard *IS* anthology.

⁸ UK-based psychogeographer and academic, Tina Richardson, has already identified the usefulness of schizoanalysis for recovering the activist dimensions of psychogeography and subsequently Richardson has devised a methodology of urban exploration that she terms “schizocartography,” as derived from the schizoanalytic cartographies of Guattari. For Richardson, schizocartography represents an applied tool of human geography useful for challenging dominant or authoritative codings of urban space. My interest in the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari differs insofar as I am concerned to explore how resituating psychogeography as an inherently schizophrenic relationship to place destabilises a number of generalisations about its concern for the “unconscious” effects of environments and the psychology of place. For an account of Richardson’s methods see her article “A Schizocartography of the University of Leeds: Cognitively Mapping the Campus” (131 -153).

⁹ The English translation of *L’Anti-Oedipe* (1972), *Anti-Oedipus*, was first published in 1977 while the English translation of *Mille plateaux* (1980), *A Thousand Plateaus*, appeared in 1987. I do not cite the original French in this chapter as for the purposes of my study the works of Deleuze and Guattari do not constitute primary sources in the manner of the Situationist documents.

¹⁰ Frances Stracey observes that the Situationist denunciation of the radical force of the unconscious, particularly as it was valorised by the Surrealists, and in turn their formulation of the “constructed situation,” is in the first instance indebted to Sartre who “was famously critical of any recourse to the unconsciousness [sic]” (*Constructed Situations* 14). Yet the Situationist critique of Freud, which Stracey describes as residing in their apposite concern “to approach desire as a consciously realizable, material force or dynamic drive that can be directed to radically re-institute the social as well as the psychic and somatic” (14) is arguably best understood as a *détournement* or diversion, rather than a rejection, of psychoanalytical methods.

¹¹ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari “lay out the theory of “territories” or sets of environmentally embedded triggers of self-organizing processes, and the concomitant processes of deterritorialization (breaking of habits) and reterritorialization (formation of habits).”

¹² Constant similarly emphasises the link between highly affective space and a blank *tabula rasa* of subjectivity when he describes how a “long sojourn in New Babylon would surely have the effect of brainwashing, erasing all routine and custom” (“Unitary Urbanism” 121).

¹³ The principal vehicle of publication for the Lettrist International during this period was their bulletin, *Potlatch* (1954-1957). In comparison with the more extended articles that appeared in the Belgian post-Surrealist publication, *Les Lèvres nues*, the *Potlatch* articles were brief and penned in the style of news pieces, reflecting the desire of the LI to eschew aesthetic preoccupations by engaging directly with contemporary issues.

¹⁴ See Debord, “Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography” (1955) for elaboration on the methods and applications of a “renovated cartography” (11).

¹⁵ Stuart Tait notes in a paper delivered at the 2012 conference on Situationist Aesthetics titled “Paranoid Disorientation: The Wandering of Ivan Chtcheglov,” that the *dérive* “is characterised by Debord as the rapid flight from one ambience to another (Debord 1958/2006), which is a dimension of the *dérive* that seems to have been lost in contemporary variants” (par 2).

¹⁶ In his memoir titled *The Consul*, Ralph Rumney refers to the LI as a “tribe” and remarks that “we formed a kind of gang [...] More or less vagrants, we would beg in the streets from time to time to pay for drinks. Our social exclusion made us into a closed group” (63). See also the memoir of the French Lettrist, Jean-Michel Menson, *The Tribe*, for a similar account of the tribe mentality of the LI.

¹⁷ Guy Debord: “*On peut dériver seul, mais tout indique que la répartition numérique la plus fructueuse consiste en plusieurs petits groupes de deux ou trois personnes parvenues à une même prise de conscience, le recoupement des impressions de ces différents groupes devant permettre d’aboutir à des conclusions objectives*” (“Théorie de la Dérive” 52).

“One can *dérive* alone, 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 level of awareness, since cross-checking these different groups’ impressions makes it possible to arrive at more objective conclusions” (“Theory of the *Dérive*” 63).

¹⁸ See the unsigned article, “Les Colonies Les Plus Solides” [“The most unshakeable of colonies”] in *Potlatch* # 12, which responds to the aftermath of the September 9 earthquake in Orleansville. Notably the article calls attention to the politics of the post-quake reconstruction plans to rebuild housing for the local population outside the city while the site of the quake was to be reconstructed in the manner of an exclusive European town. “*La Groupe algérien dénoncera constamment cette discrimination, et provoquera contre le ghetto prémédité une opposition unanime*” (75) [“The Algerian division will continue to constantly denounce this discrimination and will provoke unanimous opposition to the premeditated ghetto”].

¹⁹ Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736 – 1806) was a prominent eighteenth-century French architect known for combining an eclectic and visionary architectural style with utopian and social ideals. When his idiosyncratic geometric style became unfashionable in the

nineteenth-century many of his buildings were demolished or vandalised.

²⁰ “There is a tradition of alcohol in French literature which doesn’t exist in English literature,” says Rumney in *The Consul*. “You have Baudelaire, Lautréamont ... In English literature you have De Quincey and his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. And there’s Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano*. Indeed, my sobriquet or pseudonym at the time was ‘the Consul,’ after the principal character in the novel. I didn’t choose it myself, but I find it very amusing,” (112). In 1957, Rumney was among the founders of the Situationist International at Cosio d’Arroscia, Italy, and was expelled seven months later for the late submission of a psychogeographical report.

²¹ The advertisement appears in *Les Lèvres nues* # 7.

²² In the case of Rumney, the identity of the Consul is adopted as a persona. However, it is impossible to discuss the influence of Malcolm Lowry without noting the parallels with Debord’s own drinking habits now the source of much romantic mythologising. For a lucid elaboration of his philosophy of drinking, refer to chapter three in the first volume of Debord’s memoir, *Panegyric*.

²³ Translation modified.

²⁴ Buchanan is especially emphatic about the centrality of “pragmatics” to understanding Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of schizoanalysis as a “pragmatics of the unconscious” (*The Machinic Unconscious*) which in turn has implications for its application to the analysis of art and literature. For further reading see Buchanan, “The ‘Clutter’ Assemblage” in *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Visual Art* (11-30) and also “Schizoanalysis: An Incomplete Project” in *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism* (163-185).

²⁵ See also Boris Donn  ’s chapter “*Ivresses*” [“Intoxications”] in his study, *Pour M  moires*, for a brief discussion of the influence of Lowry’s novel in providing Debord with a model for a controlled approach to representing the gaps and elisions that intoxication brings to conscious experience (80-5).

Figure 3.1. Guy-Ernest Debord and Asger Jorn. Page from *Mémoires* (1959).

Figure 3.2. Guy-Ernest Debord and Asger Jorn. Page from *Mémoires* (1959).

Figure 3.3 Guy-Ernest Debord and Asger Jorn. Page from *Mémoires* (1959).

3. An atlas of allusions: Guy Debord's *Mémoires*

By critically examining psychogeography as a mode of urban exploration linking heightened affect, the surrender to disorientation and a certain phenomenological intensity of perception and experience to the radical destabilisation of identity, the aim of my previous chapter was to complicate generalised understandings of its methods and objectives. In particular, I sought to challenge conceptions of the *dérive* as a meandering and purposeless drift valued for its capacity to generate spatial narratives and personalised maps or subjective accounts of the city. Instead I emphasised the extent to which the *dérive* originates as an anti-representational technique of ambient passage through space that represents an important bridge between the anti-art of Surrealism and Dada and the more praxis-oriented social revolutionary stance adopted by the mid-century avant-garde. For the SI, the concern to bring together theory and action through interventions into everyday life would eventually culminate in the early 1960s in a commitment to the complete supersession of artistic production. Given the emphasis that the Situationist project places on the negation of art as the means through which to fulfil its critical potential, in my previous chapter I argued that the relationship between psychogeography and the novel as it was conceived by the historical avant-garde is best understood as a pragmatic one. For in exceeding the hermeneutical and interpretative drives of the literary, the psychogeographical activities of the Lettrists, and later the Situationists, seek to conceive of new “uses” for the novel via the *détournement*, or turning around, of existing elements of literary culture. In the third chapter of this thesis I want to further unpack the implications of the Situationist *détournement* of the novel by taking up one of the most notable examples of extended *détournement* in the Situationist *oeuvre*, namely Guy Debord's *Mémoires*. A 64-page artist book composed entirely from found elements and made in collaboration with the Danish artist Asger Jorn, *Mémoires* was published in a limited capacity in late 1958/early 1959. Famously bound with an abrasive sandpaper cover intended to destroy other books on the shelf, the book was distributed freely among friends and colleagues of the SI in the manner of the competitive gift-exchange ethos of the *potlatch*.¹

A memoir compiled with “the grating effect of broken glass” (“Accursed,” par 11) is how Jorn once described the methods of the book's composition.² An incendiary or inflammatory function is an unusual one for the typically reflective genre of the

memoir but *Mémoires* is not a conventional autobiographical work in any sense of the term. Composed entirely, as noted, from “pre-fabricated” visual and textual elements (or perhaps “shards” is more appropriate in light of Jorn’s analogy), these parts are collaged into an enigmatic, open-ended narrative that loosely traces a formative period in Debord’s youth, namely the evolution of the Lettrist International (LI). Today, *Mémoires* is frequently characterised as a work of refusal. From its rejection of the labour of authorship and the intimate subjectivity of the memoir mode to its refusal of the status of literature and its circumventing of the reifying methodologies of official histories, the gestures of negation inherent in the work are manifold. Yet negation in the Situationist project is rarely an end in itself but rather a prelude to a more elusive “something else” and this is also true of *Mémoires* which, to quote Jorn again, Debord used “as an opening” (“Accursed,” par 11). In what follows, I will depart from the primary emphasis on the visual scheme of *Mémoires* that has preoccupied scholars in their analyses of the book. Focusing rather on the literary content of the work, most specifically its *détournement* of novelistic sources, this chapter is explicitly concerned with interrogating the critical theory that emerges amidst the voids and gaps of the book’s rich textures of allusive material.

For Debord, critical theory names the description, interpretation and dissection of existing social conditions which, in the Situationist project, forms the basis of a critique to be directed “*contre tous les aspects de la vie sociale aliénée*” (SS *thèse* 121/SS thesis 121) [“against all the aspects of alienated social life”] In this way, Debord’s conception of critical theory is praxis-oriented and distinguished by its “commitment to human emancipation as opposed to the disinterested character of ‘traditional theory’” (Penner 16). In respect to the form of the novel, the Situationists questioned the critical potential of narrative fiction and frequently denounced the novel in their journal articles as an obsolete form complicit with the structures of cultural alienation they sought to contest. Yet the proximity of the novel to the events of everyday life meant that it was not without interest for them. As outlined in my previous chapter, in the early years of the Lettrist International a number of novels such as Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* assumed heightened importance during their *dérives* and literary cartographies provided a means through which to passionately disrupt the utilitarian functions of the urban environment.³ In an historical context, *Mémoires* can be situated amid a climate of Lettrist experimentation with the novel that extends back to the early 1950s when Debord’s Lettrist peers published a

number of experimental texts known as hypergraphic novels, and which utilise an idiosyncratic style of picto-prose that Isidore Isou termed three-dimensional writing. The most prominent examples of these visual-verbal novels include Isou's *Les Journaux des dieux* (1950) [*The God Diaries*] and Gabriel Pomerand's book length-compendium of urban rebuses narrating an adventure through the seedy underworld of the Paris nightlife, *Saint ghetto des prêtres* (1950) [*Saint Ghetto of the Loans*]. Considered alongside Patrick Straram's experimental prose manuscript "Bass and Co's Imperial Stout" set amidst the milieu of the Paris Lettrists (Straram's text was later edited and posthumously published in 2006 by Éditions Allia as *Les bouteilles se couchent* [*The Bottles Lie*]), it is possible to discern a distinct sub-genre of the Lettrist novel at play in the early 1950s.

In respect to *Mémoires*, in this chapter I argue that Debord's strategic *détournement* of the novel represents, on one level, an attempt to extend (or to subvert) the aesthetic and formal preoccupations of Lettrist hypergraphic writing into the realm of a more explicitly critical project. Literary allusions are especially important, I contend, as they serve to illuminate the historical development of the "alienated social life" that the Situationists sought so strenuously to critique and transform. This premise that detoured novelistic sources work to enunciate critical theory in *Mémoires* will be specifically explored in the context of the *détournement* of nineteenth-century Anglophone literature dealing with narratives of urban adventure as well as the re-contextualisation of elements of the romance genre. From the Amazonian heroines of seventeenth-century romance fiction to the femme-fatales of 1950s pulp novels and the *amour fou* (mad love) muses of the Surrealist romances, I am concerned with how the *détournement* of the novel enacts a polemic of the passions that calls into question the trivialisation of desire that goes hand in hand with the exchange logic of consumer capitalism.

Of course the pre-fabricated parts of *Mémoires* are remarkably diverse, variously spanning poetry, the plays of Shakespeare, pulp and classic novels, seventeenth-century confessionals, cut-up high-school science and geography text books, architectural floor-plans, maps, and recycled mass media articles, just to name some of its sources. With this in mind, I embark upon this close reading aware of the risks involved in isolating its novelistic components yet I wish to suggest that it is indeed possible to perform a close reading of the literary sources of *Mémoires* without necessarily compromising the heterogeneous totality of the work. In doing so, I will

demonstrate in this chapter the extent to which literary sources are redirected towards “educative functions” in the mode of historical contrast as evident in the works of Marx as a means to raise the social consciousness of the reader and to demonstrate the progress of “the passions” toward their presently alienated condition. From a contemporary perspective, this perversion or “turning” (*per* + *vertere* in the etymological sense of the term) of the novel that *détournement* performs raises valuable questions concerning not only *how* one reads books but also what else we might *do* with them. For in putting literature to subversive ends, *Mémoires* repurposes the novel as a readymade in order to enact what Debord identifies as the principal objective of his *oeuvre* of insolent autobiography: the creation of “*un désagréable portrait de la société présente*” (*Cette mauvaise réputation* 73/par 63) [“a disagreeable portrait of present society”].

3.1 The perverse methods of *détournement*

Compiled at a transitional moment in Debord’s creative and political development, not long after the formation of the Situationist International in 1957, the immediate impetus for the creation of *Mémoires* was to record the recent history of the Lettrist International and to announce the author’s Situationist future. Despite its haphazard appearance, the work observes a chronological structure of three chapters beginning in June 1952 and concluding with September 1953, and across its pages the many pivotal events of Debord’s early years in Paris are alluded to in a veiled and cryptic manner. Amidst its free-floating maze of diverted material are references to the controversial reception of Debord’s Lettrist film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (1952) [*Howls for Sade*], nods to the formulation of psychogeography as a method of exploring the affective zones of the city to be conducted according to its principal method of the *dérive*, and the outline of a more organised project concerned with the transformation of everyday life through the tactic of the constructed situation. The book’s most distinctive visual elements are supplied by Jorn in the form of its *structures portantes* (“supporting structures”), a progression of vibrantly coloured ink splatters, blots and drips that fluidly span the pages in a labyrinthine arrangement that recalls the interweaving city streets of the urban terrain. As he mobilises the expressive qualities of the ink to punctuate significant events in Debord’s narrative, Jorn’s mark making veers from the violent and the accidental to the erotic and the playful. The spontaneous vitality of Jorn’s contribution charges the book with a certain affective

intensity and a libidinal pulse redolent of Bataille's notion of the expenditure of excess energy in the destructive orgy of the *potlatch*, creating a dissolute energy to be explored in further detail in this chapter.

When viewed as an exercise in life writing, it is clear that *Mémoires* negates the self-revelatory machinations of autobiography and a number of critical responses have already articulated the manifold ways in which the work troubles and destabilises Debord's relationship to the archives and the historical record. One of the first commentaries to appear in English was the American author Greil Marcus's brief essay, "Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer." Published in the English-language catalogue of the seminal 1989 Situationist exhibition, this introductory work laid the foundation for further scholarship by plotting how the literary elements in *Mémoires* resonate with pivotal points in Debord's biography, drawing attention in particular to the significance of numerous *détournements* from Thomas De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821). Yet it is important to point out that Marcus reads the treatment of these novelistic sources largely through the lens of metaphor and identification with Debord's biography rather than for their critical and dialectical role. More recent scholarship extends these earlier observations with nuanced accounts of the book's subversive treatment of memory and history although with a focus upon the complexities of the visual scheme of the book often at the expense of analysing the specificity of the textual and quoted material. Frances Stracey, for example, has analysed how the "insistently fragmented layout" of *Mémoires* serves "to commemorate the past in a form that challenges conventional models of the memorial, understood as an entombment or freezing of the past" ("Surviving History" 59).⁴ While I agree with this assessment, I would argue that the challenge to conventional forms of memorialisation that *Mémoires* presents is more an effect of its compositional methods rather than the principal ambition of the work.

By contrast, I want to suggest that in returning to the moment of the work's composition, which coincides with the formation of the Situationist International as a rupture or break with Lettrist antecedents, it is imperative to contextualise the relationship of *Mémoires* to the broader goals and objectives of the avant-garde at that time. For Peter Bürger, one of the overarching goals of the historical avant-garde in its various iterations was "to reintegrate art into the praxis of everyday life" (*Theory* 87). While Bürger's work on the avant-garde does not directly address the SI,⁵ his emphasis on the avant-garde's concern to attack the discrete autonomy of artistic production as

part of a broader strategy to rearrange the relationship between art and life as a means to revolutionise life as a whole provides a valuable framework for assessing the role of formal experiment in *Mémoires*. Most pertinently, this framework begs consideration of not only *how*, at a formal level, a work like *Mémoires* might challenge spectacular or reified techniques of historical commemoration, but also of precisely *what* role it might have conceivably been intended to play in the SI's future-orientated project concerned with overturning the structures of alienated social relations identified by the SI as having colonised everyday life under late capitalist modernity.

In a letter to the book's printers written in February 1958, Asger Jorn curiously refers to *Mémoires* as "our excellent novel" ("Dear Friends" 70) and talks about its role in performing a renewal of the book. In the same letter he suggests that *Mémoires* has "a literary significance proportionate to the technological, which will allow us to achieve a literary-artistic effect that is bound to trigger a small earthquake here in Paris" (72). The assertion speaks to the context of avant-garde agitation within which *Mémoires* was conceived, for in seeking to perform "a renewal of the book" Jorn is arguably less concerned with the creation of a new literary or artistic form than he is with harnessing new technologies and creative techniques in order to provoke the "shock of the new," a type of shock that innervates the subject and was cultivated by the historical avant-garde as "a stimulus to change the conduct of one's life" (Bürger, *Theory* 80). In order to gain a fuller understanding of the praxis underpinning the compositional methods of *Mémoires* it is necessary, then, to carefully examine Debord's application of the logic of *détournement*, which for the Situationists names the "*intégration de productions actuelles ou passées des arts dans une construction supérieure du milieu*" (SI, "Définitions" 13) ["integration of present or past artistic productions into a superior construction of a milieu" (SI, "Definitions" 52)]. In this way, *détournement* involves the *devaluing* and subsequent *revaluing* of existing cultural material through their diversion into a new context. A key technique for the SI in countering spectacular modes of communication, *détournement* receives its first detailed elaboration in the 1956 manifesto co-authored by Debord and fellow Lettrist Gil J. Wolman entitled "Mode d'emploi du détournement" ["A User's Guide to *Détournement*"].

Originally published in the eighth edition of the Belgian Surrealist journal, *Les Lèvres nues*, in the "Mode d'emploi" ["User's Guide"] Wolman and Debord identify an important predecessor for their methods in the subversive plagiarism of the Comte

de Lautréamont (pseudonym of the French poet Isidore-Lucien Ducasse) who sought in the *Poésies* (1870) to utilise the discourse of others such that “their turns of phrase will be placed in new contexts where their meaning will change” (Stubbs 498).⁶ Yet the Surrealists also invoked Lautréamont in their polemics and thus the Situationists were concerned to reclaim *détournement* from what they denounced as its poeticised or artistic application in Surrealist automatic writing. In a concerted effort to distinguish Situationist *détournement* from Surrealist endeavours, Wolman and Debord adopt a virile and militant tone in the “User’s Guide,” arguing that their conception of *détournement* represents an “extremist” practice and “*Dans son ensemble, l’héritage littéraire et artistique de l’humanité doit être utilisé à des fins de propagande partisane*” (2/15) [As a whole, the literary and artistic heritage of humanity should be used for partisan propaganda purposes]. In this respect, *détournement* should not be viewed as “the result of an artistic creation; on the contrary, it was an anti-artistic technique with which the avant-garde could negate not only cultural artifacts, but also the ruling representations” (Rasmussen, “Counterrevolution” 12).⁷ At the same time, the reversal and refunctioning of meaning that the method of *détournement* performs signals the disruptive potential of the negative and its significance for the Situationist project. For the clash of sources that *détournement* sets in motion situates it as a dialectical method that harnesses negativity in the Hegelian sense as a dynamic and productive force that brings about transition through discord and the conflict between opposites.

In prefacing the crucial role of the negative in *Mémoires*, which is also present in Debord’s *oeuvre* of “disagreeable” autobiographical works more broadly, it is worth pausing to consider how the Debordian concept of negativity compares with that of the twentieth-century’s principal theoretician of the negative, Theodor Adorno. While their theories of the negative are by no means causally related or directly influenced by one another (there is no evidence to suggest that Debord read Adorno or vice versa, and scholars generally accept that Debord developed his account of the society of the spectacle independently of the Frankfurt School’s critique of the culture industry⁸), there are nonetheless significant points of intersection and convergence in the thinking of Debord and Adorno that warrant attention. Most relevant to this chapter is the extent to which both Debord and Adorno share a strong investment in the dialectical power of the negative as a dynamic and oppositional force capable of resisting fixed and static categories and as therefore crucial to the demystification of the false identifications

that when internalised by the subject as natural produce the reified consciousness that both thinkers criticise as a distinctive trait of modern subjectivity. In this way, Debord and Adorno might be viewed as principally concerned with harnessing the negative as a means to contest reification, or what in the Situationist lexicon is more commonly referred to as “separation,” a phenomenon that both Debord and Adorno argue is constituted by the dominance of the exchange-value in contemporary society. What is at stake for both thinkers in the growing reification of social relations is the extent to which it inhibits the formation of a critical consciousness and thereby reinforces a passive and unquestioning relationship to the world. But where the work of negation largely assumes for Adorno a theoretical orientation insofar as his articulation of the negative dialectic involves an obtuse rendering of the “consistent sense of non-identity” (Adorno qtd. in O’Connor 57), Debord’s blistering and inflammatory appraisals of current society are delivered in plain and incisive prose. Notwithstanding these stylistic differences, Debord’s work nevertheless shares with the philosophy of Adorno a common goal to undermine the stable and illusory identifications that generate a totalised view of the world as natural or given, and therefore unchangeable.

Yet in drawing attention to certain convergences in the role of the negative in the work of Debord and Adorno, it is imperative to point out a major divergence in their thinking in order to avoid misreading *Mémoires* through the lens of Adorno’s assertion of the emancipatory potential of difficult Modernist forms, a conceptual framework that I would argue is not useful for understanding the critical impulses of Debord’s anti-memoir. Their divergent views on the role of autonomous art is stressed by Anselm Jappe who goes so far as to suggest that by the 1960s, Adorno and Debord came to “epitomize two diametrically opposed views on the ‘end of art.’ Adorno defended art against those who sought to ‘transcend’ it in favor of a direct intervention in reality, or who preached ‘commitment’ in art; Debord was meanwhile announcing that the time had come to *realize in life* what had hitherto been merely *promised in art*” (“Sic Transit” 103). In this way, Debord does not insist on maintaining the autonomy of art in the manner that Adorno claims is necessary to preserve the critical power of high-art and Modernist forms, which for Adorno embody crucial oppositional currents to the barbarism of identity thinking. Debord’s project is, by contrast, a more utopian one as it seeks to contest the separation of art from life, not necessarily out of a desire to realise *art in life* but rather, as Jappe points out, to continue the critical role of modern art by realising its emancipatory promise of a non-

alienated subjectivity in life. This distinction between Debord's project of the negation of art compared with Adorno's conception of art as negation is crucial, I argue, for understanding the role of *détournement* in *Mémoires*, according to which the turning around or perversion of existing elements of culture must ultimately be understood as a method that seeks to subvert the society of the spectacle from *within*, rather than by standing apart or separate from it.

It is in this context that I want to return, then, to the pragmatism of *détournement* as it is conceived by Debord and Wolman in the "Mode d'emploi," or the "User's Guide." Indeed even the title; "A User's Guide," emphasises not only its intended utility function but also speaks to the broader desire to reorder the hierarchies of cultural production that was such a distinctive feature of the avant-garde anti-art techniques of the post war era. In my previous chapter, I discussed the pragmatics of cultural re-assemblage in the context of the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari who frame the machinic (re)functioning of art and literature as a project of making of lines of flight across established habits, behaviours and systems of thought. For the Situationists, the inherently critical and negative mobilisation of Lautréamont's logic of a necessary plagiarism as a militant tactic of subversive re-use also extends the bridge that *détournement* provided the Surrealists to move from individual to collective authorship by refocusing it in the direction of a form of literary communism.⁹ For the technique of collage, with its recombining of already existing parts divorced from their originary voice, implies abandoning any attachment to the privatised activity of individual authorship. Thus Debord and Wolman suggest that "*S'en tenir au cadre d'un arrangement personnel des mots ne relève que de la convention*" (3) ["restricting oneself to a personal arrangement of words is mere convention" (15)]. On another level, the methods of *détournement* not only enact a collective form of authorship but also point to a desire to resist the use of language as an instrument of power. As such, *détournement* "*est le contraire de la citation, de l'autorité théorique toujours falsifiée du seul fait qu'elle est devenue citation*" (SS thèse 208) ["is the opposite of quotation, of the theoretical authority which is always falsified by the mere fate of having become a quotation" (SS thesis 208)]. While appreciating this distinction, for ease of reference I use *détournement* and quotation somewhat interchangeably in this chapter to signal that I am referring to the use of a pre-existing rather than "original" textual source.

Putting the semantics of definitions to one side, it is in any event the potentially

subversive applications of *détournement*, and their promissory disruptive power, that are of most interest to Debord and Wolman. One such application outlined in the “User’s Guide” that is especially relevant to the conceptual preoccupations of this chapter is the identification of “*le cadre romanesque habilement pervers*” (5) [“the adroit perversion of the classical novel form” (18)] as one possible use for the applied art of *détournement*. Further elaborating on the possible perversion of the novel, Debord and Wolman explain:

Les premières conséquences apparentes d'une généralisation du détournement, outre les pouvoirs intrinsèques de propagande qu'il détient, seront la réapparition d'une foule de mauvais livres; la participation massive d'écrivains ignorés; la différenciation toujours plus poussée des phrases ou des oeuvres plastiques qui se trouveront être à la mode; et surtout une facilité de la production dépassant de très loin, par la quantité, la variété et la qualité, l'écriture automatique d'ennuyeuse mémoire. (“Mode d’emploi” 5)

The first visible consequences of a widespread use of *détournement*, apart from its intrinsic propaganda powers, will be the revival of a multitude of bad books, and thus the extensive (unintended) participation of their unknown authors; an increasingly extensive transformation of phrases or plastic works that happen to be in fashion; and above all an ease of production far surpassing in quantity, variety and quality the automatic writing that has bored us for so long. (“A User’s Guide” 17-18)

This proposition is prescient of the extent to which Debord will turn to the novel in *Mémoires* as a readymade that he refunctions in a pragmatic fashion, diverting it towards an elaboration of the Situationist critique of everyday life under capitalist relations. As Patrick Marcolini observes, the practice of *détournement* introduces a playful relationship to knowledge and the classics. For Debord, the game in reading the texts of the past lies in finding the affinities and the analogies with the phenomena of the present time which he seeks to analyse.¹⁰ Yet this game of finding affinities and mobilising analogies in a strategic fashion also emerges as an inherently ungovernable tactic in *Mémoires*, especially when the classics of literature are introduced into the game. For the novel is one of the most ghosted of literary forms, its narrative fabric densely interwoven with traces (conscious and otherwise) of prior texts while its subject is always “an effect of *différance*” as Derrida suggests, comprised of “a system of relations between strata” (qtd. in Wolfreys 74). In turning to the *détournement* of novelistic sources in *Mémoires*, I want to explore how Debord strategically exploits intertextuality by redirecting his allusions toward a political-economic critique of the

spectacle whilst simultaneously becoming unravelled by the undecidability of meaning inherent in the art of citation which, as a “system of fracturing” (Nancy 39), fissures and frustrates the reader’s desire to decipher the text along fully rational lines.

3.2 The lessons of London: Anglophone literature and the critique of urbanism

Just as the *dérive* through the streets of Paris reimagines the city as a site of play and contestation, the *détournement* of novelistic sources in *Mémoires* emerges as a literary game, and one that sets into motion an ungovernable tension between strategy and indeterminacy. Some novels or novelistic texts are explicitly detoured by Debord in an extended fashion: excerpts from Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island* (1883), and Jean Reverzy’s *The Passage* (1954), for example, come into clarity at pivotal moments in the narrative only to submerge and to disappear in an undercurrent of intertextual references. Other texts such as Céline’s *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932) and the prose of Edgar Allan Poe’s short story *A Tale of the Ragged Mountains* (1844), make more fleeting appearances. At the level of sub-text, the book simmers with oblique allusions to Malcolm Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* (1947), the romance fiction of Françoise Sagan, and Sartre’s working through of the idea of the “situation” in *Nausea* (1938).¹¹ As I am specifically concerned with the ways in which the *détournement* of the novel introduces historical consciousness into *Mémoires*, in the discussion that follows I will address Debord’s preoccupation with nineteenth-century Anglophone literature. Focusing in particular on the works of Thomas De Quincey and Robert Louis Stevenson, which appear in various guises throughout Debord’s *oeuvre*, I argue that in the case of *Mémoires* these texts perform a specific role in elaborating a Marxian critical theory through a game of strategic intertextuality that “*remet en jeu les dettes non réglées de l’histoire*” (“King’s Men” 328) [“brings into play the unsettled debts of history” (“King’s Men”152)].¹²

A key text that Debord mines for its affinities with modern phenomena is De Quincey’s *Confessions*, which represents one of the most prominent novelistic sources in *Mémoires* as the tragic separation of its two protagonists, Thomas and Ann, is made analogous with the oppressions of the modern city as it manifests under capitalism and its attendant spheres of urbanism and functionalist architecture. Debord is explicit about his critique of the modern city in *The Society of the Spectacle* in which he argues that ‘*L’urbanisme est cette prise de possession de l’environnement naturel et humain*

par le capitalisme qui, se développant logiquement en domination absolue, peut et doit maintenant refaire la totalité de l'espace comme son propre décor" (thèse 169) ["Urbanism is capitalism's seizure of the natural and human environment; developing logically into absolute domination, capitalism can and must now remake the totality of space into *its own setting*" (thesis 169, emphasis in original)]. Viewed in the context of Debord's critique of urbanism as an over-determined mechanism of town planning that appropriates the social space of the city and transforms it into sites of banality, repetition and mediated experiences, this re-contextualisation of De Quincey's story within *Mémoires* provides more than just a convenient metaphor for narrating the biographical aspect of Debord's urban encounters during the early days of the Lettrist International. Rather, it offers a significant mediating narrative for illustrating the historical development of the changing architecture of the city and the political-economic factors that inform such transformations. In an unsigned editorial published in the December 1959 edition of the Situationist journal, titled "L'Urbanisme unitaire à la fin des années 50" ["Unitary Urbanism at the End of the 1950s"], the authors outline the significance of London and nineteenth-century English literature in revealing an intertwined relationship between the rise of the novel and a specifically alienated subjectivity that emerged from the significantly transformed living conditions resulting from the industrial revolution:

Londres a été le premier aboutissement urbain de la révolution industrielle, et c'est la littérature anglaise du XIXe siècle qui témoigne d'une prise de conscience des problèmes de l'atmosphère et des possibilités qualitativement différentes dans une grande agglomération. La lente évolution historique des passions prend un de ses tournants avec l'amour de Thomas de Quincey et de la pauvre Ann, fortuitement séparés et se cherchant sans jamais se retrouver 'à travers l'immense labyrinthe des rues de Londres; peut-être à quelques pas l'un de l'autre... (SI, "L'Urbanisme unitaire" 83-84/102-103)

London was the first urban result of the industrial revolution and English literature of the nineteenth century bears witness to an increasing awareness of the problems of atmosphere and of the qualitatively different possibilities in a large urban area. The slow historical evolution of the passions reaches a turning point with the love between Thomas de Quincey and his poor Ann, separated by chance and searching yet without ever finding one another "across the mighty labyrinths of London; perhaps even within just a few steps of each other..." (SI, "Unitary Urbanism")

De Quincey is identified in the same article as an important precursor to the Lettrist *dérive*. Just as Marx had looked to the first industrial revolution in Britain to

explain the originating conditions of capitalism, it is significant that the nineteenth-century urban wanderer promoted as the model of the *dérive* is not the Parisian *flâneur* but his English counterpart. De Quincey's sensitivity in the *Confessions* to the affective properties of the street, or to the influence of environments on the behaviour and emotions of individuals to use the terminology of psychogeography, is rarely posited as a surrender to the idle strolling or ocular fascinations of *flânerie*. Unlike the quixotic hero of Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life*, the artist and anonymous observer of city life, Constantin Guys, "a prince enjoying his incognito wherever he goes" (Baudelaire 13), the De Quincey of the *Confessions* embodies a more haunted urban protagonist. His writing on the city is characterised by an acute awareness of not only the pressures and constraints imposed upon the individual by the rapid sprawl of the London metropolis but also an attention to its role in providing the physical conditions that supported the emergence of a new class: the working poor. As a prostitute obliged to sell the labour of her body, Ann's struggles represent a microcosm of the challenges faced at large by the emergent labour class in the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century in Britain. This historical view which the *détournement* of De Quincey's *Confessions* introduces into *Mémoires* typifies Debord's Marxian strategy of drawing upon contrasting examples from literature and history in ways that demonstrate present conditions as neither natural nor static but dynamic.

Further resonating with the principles of Marxist praxis, historical consciousness for the Situationists goes hand-in-hand with an obligation to transform conditions such that, in the case of urbanism: "*Nous ne sommes qu'au début de la civilisation urbaine; nous avons encore à la faire nous-mêmes, quoi qu'en partant de conditions préexistantes*" ("L'Urbanisme Unitaire" 83) ["we are only at the beginning of urban civilization; it is up to us to bring it about ourselves using the pre-existing conditions as our point of departure" ("Unitary Urbanism" 102)]. It is in this sense that the diversion of De Quincey's *Confessions* is made to perform an "educative" function in *Mémoires*, as opposed to a strictly autobiographical one. For the crucial lesson is arguably that the romantic dispossession that Thomas and Ann experience is neither timeless nor universal but in fact historically produced, emerging from a specific set of socio-economic conditions which are to be appropriated, detoured and remade into "*des atmosphères inhabitables; [...] les rues de la vie réelle, les décors d'un rêve éveillé*" (80) ["uninhabitable ambiances [...] the streets of real life, the scenery of daydreams" (100)]. As Boris Donné remarks, "the separation of lovers is the most

intense sign of the generalised separation produced in social space” (99).¹³

Yet closer examination of the content and context of the De Quincey quotations in *Mémoires* reveals a number of complicating factors which suggest that, at the level of reader reception, their possible meaning exceeds the elucidation of a critique of urbanism. By turning my focus to the reader reception of the quoted material in *Mémoires*, I want to suggest that the book might be considered a psychogeographical narrative not simply because its visual layout assumes a labyrinthine appearance that recalls the topography of the city but also, and perhaps more significantly, as a result of the hermeneutical mobility of its disparate parts which work to destabilise meaning and disorient the reader. In this respect, the deterritorialisation of reading that the psychogeographical narrative of *Mémoires* performs is redolent of how undirected movement through the city via the *dérive*, as addressed in my previous chapter, destabilises identity by breaking with habits and familiar patterns of spatial orientation.

My point of departure, then, is the complication that arises from the adapted nature of the quotations that are detoured by Debord not from Thomas De Quincey’s original English language text but in fact from Baudelaire’s free translation of the *Confessions* into French in *Les Paradis Artificiels* (1860), a distinction that English translators of the work frequently fail to make.¹⁴ While the pathos of Thomas’s search for Ann as synonymous with the machinations of urban alienation holds true regardless of who authored the “original” text, the mediated nature of such quotations (the pursuit of the lost Ann by a fictional Thomas as a persona of De Quincey whose words are liberally adapted by Baudelaire and finally detoured by Debord) illuminates the spectrality of the citational process in *Mémoires*. Indeed the deferral of the originary starting point works constantly to deconstruct the binary between original and new meaning that the method of *détournement* relies upon for its critical force but in fact unravels. The identification with De Quincey which is frequently cited as the key to unlocking the puzzle of *Mémoires* becomes, when the source of this identification is interrogated, the point of *misidentification*, the point wherein it becomes evident that “*nothing* is strictly or properly altered,” as Jean-Luc Nancy writes on the elliptical essence of writing. “There is no first meaning which a second writing would then come across to divert and upset, dooming forever to lament its infinite loss or painfully to await its infinite reconstitution” (Nancy 38). This proximity that Nancy identifies between *altered* meaning and *alterity* (the state of otherness) is evident when the Thomas and Ann citation is encountered within the psychogeography of its

surrounding detoured elements (see figure 3.1) such that the interpretive scope widens:

Mais on n'entendit parler dans le pays d'aucun cadavre de Malais trouvé sur la grande route: cet étrange voyageur était donc suffisamment familiarisé avec le poison

But we did not hear any talk in this country of the Malay's corpse found on the highway: thus this strange traveller was sufficiently familiar with the poison

l'occasion de voir des zombies

The opportunity to see zombies

Mais la pauvre Ann, qu'en est-il advenu? Chaque soir, il l'a cherchée; chaque soir il l'a attendue au coin de Titchfield-street. Il s'est enquis d'elle auprès de tous ceux qui pouvaient la connaître; pendant les dernières heures de son séjour à Londres il a mis en œuvre, pour la retrouver, tous les moyens, à sa disposition. Il connaissait la rue où elle logeait, mais non la maison

But our poor Ann, what had happened to her? Every night he searched for her and every night he waited there on the corner of Titchfield Street. He asked about her to everyone she knew; during the last hours of his stay in London he put every effort into finding her, all the methods at his disposition. He knew the street where she lived, but not the house

Au bout d'un instant, ils virent entrer par la porte neuf chevaliers armés qui quittèrent leurs heaumes et leurs armures, puis, s'inclinant devant Galaad, lui dirent : <<Sire, nous sommes venus en grande hâte pour nous asseoir avec vous à la table où nous sera partagé le haut manger>>.

After a moment, nine armed knights entered through the door and, taking off their helmets and their armour, bowed before Galahad, saying to him 'Sir, we came in great haste to sit down with you at the table where we will share a meal and eat up.' (*Mémoires*)¹⁵

Set adrift amongst a palimpsest of imaginary topographies overlaying Saint Germain-des-Prés with Thomas and Ann's Titchfield Street and a convivial medieval setting, the reader is challenged to navigate a stratified textual and architectural landscape in which, recalling Julian Wolfreys's Derridean reading of Iain Sinclair's haunted meditations on the city of London, "ghosts return to disturb the idea of structure" (139). In *Mémoires*, the free-flowing reciprocity of energy between the detoured quotations and Jorn's expressive punctuation marks and the associative web of desire lines forged in the act of searching and seeking adventure serves to disturb

not only the utilitarian and logical structure of the city but also the structure of the text as the “author” becomes displaced among the narrative’s convulsed temporality and maze of referents. As Kelly Baum observes, “By multiplying the authorial voice and dispersing authorial control, *Mémoires* thus serves to undermine commonly-held assumptions about authorship” (“Politics of Pleasure” 199). At the same time, the drive towards deconstruction of meaning effected by the dissolution of the author beneath the strata of the book’s detoured elements does not necessarily negate the utility function of *Mémoires* in presenting a “disagreeable portrait of present society.” Rather, the book’s deconstructed elements strategically mobilise the actions of deciphering and decoding as a means to challenge the reader to participate in the text. As in Debord’s earlier three-dimensional novel created from newspaper stories collaged onto a rum bottle, *Histoire des Gestes*, the art of *détournement* “leaves the sequence of ideas to the will of the reader, the lost son in a labyrinth of simultaneous anecdotes” (LI, “Dimensions of Language,” par 2).

This displacement of a phantasmic author by an active reader lost “in a labyrinth of simultaneous anecdotes” disrupts the coherent development of the argument of the book yet the logic of historical contrast that emerges in the strategic selection of Debord’s source material remains, somewhat paradoxically, vital to the book’s meaning. For Debord, one of the primary functions of the spectacle is “de faire oublier l’histoire dans la culture” (SS thèse 192) [“to make history forgotten within culture” (SS thesis 192, emphasis in original)]. In response, the dialectical method of historical contrast offers a key strategy for contesting the disappearance of historical consciousness in the cultural and political sphere. This method is exemplified in the deployment of Robinson Crusoe by Marx in *Capital*¹⁶ which occurs in the first chapter addressing commodity fetishism in which Marx mobilises the literary figure as a conduit for proposing a new arrangement in which “all the characteristics of Robinson’s labour are here repeated, but with this difference, that they are social, instead of individual” (*Capital* 50). The destabilising effects that drawing contrasts between literary and historical episodes sets in motion, and the extent to which contrast depicts cultural developments as underwritten by successive episodes of crisis and transformation, are essential aspects of Marx’s writing style that Debord seeks to emulate in his own work.

Just as the *détournement* of De Quincey’s *Confessions* offers, then, certain “lessons” in the historical development of the structures of alienation inherent in

modern urbanism, Debord also gleans similar “educative” purposes in the novels of Robert Louis Stevenson, another Anglophone author extensively detoured in *Mémoires*. Stevenson’s stories resonated with the Situationists as embodying a further stage in the progressive disappearance of adventure in everyday life especially among the functional infrastructure of the utilitarian city and according to the rise of the regulated labour time implicit in capitalist relations. In their article, “Unitary Urbanism,” the authors observe that “*vers la fin du siècle, cette sensation est si couramment admise dans l’écriture romanesque que Stevenson montre un personnage qui, dans Londres la nuit, s’étonne de « marcher si longtemps dans un décor aussi complexe sans rencontrer ne fût-ce que l’ombre d’une aventure » (New Arabian Nights)*” (84) [“toward the end of the century, this sensation is so frequently expressed in novelistic writing that [Robert Louis] Stevenson presents a character who, in London at night, is astonished ‘to walk for such a long time in such a complex décor without encountering even the slightest shadow of adventure’ (*New Arabian Nights*)” (103)]. Their reply? “*Les urbanistes de XXe siècle devront construire des aventures*” (84) [“The urbanists of the twentieth century will have to construct adventures” (103)]. As much as the deconstructive impulses of *Mémoires* appear to negate the form of the novel by refusing narrative cohesion in the violence of its cuts and excisions such comments in fact reveal the utility of the novel for their project. In particular, the critical relevance of the adventure story is paradoxically affirmed in the repurposing in *Mémoires* of Stevenson’s most famous novel, the classic tale of boyhood adventure, *Treasure Island* (1883).

Contrary to first impressions the *détournement* of Stevenson in *Mémoires* does not satirise the nineteenth-century author but instead reanimates the voices of his characters in order to satirise the modern world. This reanimating impulse is evident in the recurring motif of the bottle of rum¹⁷ as well as the numerous *détournements* of the lyrics of the pirates’ drinking song “Fifteen Men on the Dead Men’s Chest” which occur a number of times throughout the book. The chorus of the drinking song is especially prominent on one of the most psychogeographical pages in the book (see figure 3.2), which shows a grainy black-and-white photograph of Debord surrounded by a dense sprawl of text and red ink splatters that combine to create the atmosphere of an intoxicated *dérive* through the bars and nightlife of Paris. Among this heady mass of citations are lines from Bossuet¹⁸ that mediate upon the ephemerality of youth and the fleeting nature of its passions, an excerpt from Cassio’s self-flagellating

monologue in *Othello* in which he laments the excesses of drinking and a *détournement* of the debauched lyrics of Stevenson's pirate sea shanty:

Je me rappelle une masse confuse de choses mais n'y distingue rien de particulier. Je me rappelle une querelle, mais n'en vois pas la cause

I remember a confused blur of things but nothing distinct in particular. I remember a quarrel, but cannot recall the cause

Nous étions quinze sur le coffre du mort... Yo-ho-ho! et une bouteille de rhum!

La boisson et le diable ont expédié les autres, Yo-ho-ho! et une bouteille de rhum!

Fifteen men on the dead men's chest... Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!
Drink and the devil had done with the rest, yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!

Leurs volontés changeantes, ou leurs paroles trompeuses; la diverse face des temps; les amusements des promesses; l'illusion des amitiés de la terre, qui s'ent vont avec les années et les intérêts

Their changing wishes, and their lying words, the shifting sands of time, the amusement of promises; the illusion of solid friendships that will pass over the years and the interests (*Mémoires*)

In a purely analogical sense the rum soaked lyrics of Stevenson's amoral pirates correspond to the nocturnal drinking sessions of Debord and the Lettrists in the bars and cafés of the Latin Quarter yet the autobiographical resonances belie their more complex role in the text. In a critical sense, Debord's *détournement* of the drinking song expresses a key aspect of the Situationist project that posits the play ethos and the apparent inactivity of wasting time and expending useless energies in such activities as drinking, walking, argument and conversation as an important field for contesting "*le nouveau temps irréversible de la bourgeoisie*" (SS thèse 140) [the new irreversible time of the bourgeoisie" (SS, thesis 140)]. Michel Lacroix identifies a similar economy of gift-exchange configured around the shared consumption of alcohol in the Lettrist Patrick Straram's posthumously published novel, *Les Bouteilles se couchent* [*The Bottles Lie Down*], in which the conviviality of intoxication embodies an opposition to the logic of the market based upon production and accumulation. Similarly, the laziness inherent in the use of pre-existing elements as the compositional method of *Mémoires* is perversely appropriate for recording the anti-work ethic of the group and their social economy based on the principles of the *potlatch* such that *Mémoires* emerges as "a radically antiproduktivist work, or more precisely, an

antiwork, whose discursive antiphonal form reflected the *dérive*'s emphasis on collective play" (Andreotti, "Architecture and Play" 217).

While the connection between *détournement*, anti-work and the collective play ethos as counterpoint to the reifications of the capitalist logic of the market broadly encapsulates the Situationist project, it is important to note another important link in the chain, namely the role of sexuality in their strategies of contestation. For Bataille, "work binds us to an objective awareness of things and reduces sexual exuberance. Only the underworld retains its exuberance" (Bataille, *Eroticism* 155). A number of detoured elements on the page of *Mémoires* discussed above suggest that an unrestrained sexuality or sexual *exuberance*, in the sense implied by Bataille, indeed represents an integral aspect of the Situationist "underworld" and their opposition to the productive logic of the dominant class. As a classic of children's literature, Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, for example, is perverted in *Mémoires* by its intermingling with "baser" material – the splatters and spurts of red ink across the surface of the page are scatological in their evocation of ejaculations of sperm whilst their resemblance to blood implies a link between sexual release and the violence inherent in revolutionary upheaval. A diagram of a volcano cut from a high school textbook is similarly suggestive of a latent sexual energy and a *détournement* from an article on young runaways from reform schools analysing prostitution as "one of the most common forms of delinquency for girls" again frames youthful rebellion in sexual terms. This link between the corruption of the young girl (the *détournement de mineure*, or the *détournement* of a minor as it was described by the SI) and rebellion or the destabilisation of normative sexual values on the one hand connects perverse sexuality to radicalism in the Situationist project in the sense implied by Bataille when he writes that "sexuality, thought of as filthy or beastly, is still the greatest barrier to the reduction of man to the level of the thing" (*Eroticism* 158). Yet this notion of resisting thing-like objectification or reification through *sexual exuberance* raises more complex questions about gender in the Situationist revolution of the passions. For its emphasis on an active masculine agent subverting the feminised sphere of passivity, in particular, points to a gender hierarchy underpinning some of the SI's more questionable tactics to "liberate desire" as a means to contest the processes of reification that underpin the society of the spectacle.¹⁹

The gendered dimensions of the practice of *détournement* as a tactic of intervention, diversion and perversion is especially evident in the appropriation of

erotic images of women sourced from mass-media articles that populate the films and the journals of the Situationists. In assessing the controversial status of the image of the *jeune-fille* in the Situationist *oeuvre*, Kelly Baum argues that the prevalence of detoured images of scantily clad women is neither a gratuitous nor merely titillating gesture on the part of the SI but in fact a tactical one, a deliberate and conscious response to “the epidemic of commodity fetishism that accompanied the consolidation of capitalism after World War II, [which] along with the advent of the spectacle, precipitated an acute crisis of desire. Stripped of its cognitive, psychological, and emotional core, desire was becoming a commercial transaction whose currency was images as well as things” (“The Sex” 34). Following this reading, the appropriation of sexualised or titillating images of women by the SI is interpreted as subversive for it redirects them from their alienated status as stimulants of a sensual arousal that traffics the mediocre desires of mass consumerism into an altered context in which the detoured images instead rupture and displace the seamless logic of spectacular commodity-capitalism. This reading may convincingly account for the *logic* of Debord’s strategy to divert the alienation of desire by detouring objectified images of women into a critique of the spectacle. However, I would argue that it does not adequately explain the *effect*, which is that in the “passionate revolution” of the Situationists, ultimately woman (or her image, and specifically the image of the nubile young woman on the cusp of adulthood) is made to perform the role of sacrifice in the Situationist art of *détournement*.

There is a clear distinction, for example, between the representation of the *jeune-fille* in *Mémoires* which interpolates between an affectionate and wistful presentation of women in the detoured photographs of Debord’s inner circle of female friends, lovers and associates, and the treatment of overtly sexualised images or pin-ups of women detoured from mass-media sources that have violence acted upon their bodies in the cut-and-paste process. A striking example can be identified on a page featuring detoured pictures of eight bikini-clad women cropped into torsos that resemble totem poles. Pools of red ink slide over their semi-naked skin like molten lava while a minor *détournement* alluding to a burial on the slopes of Easter Island implies a necessary sacrifice of the image of woman as commodity in the overthrow of spectacular relations. According to Bataille, the sacrifice is neither a gesture of senseless violence nor of pleasure in violence but observes, rather, the logic of an attempt to reverse the degradation implicit in appropriating people, plants and animals

for utilitarian purposes:

Sacrifice restores to the sacred world that which servile use has degraded, rendered profane. Servile use has made a *thing* (an *object*) of that which, in a deep sense, is of the same nature as the *subject*, is in a relation of intimate participation with the subject. It is not necessary that the sacrifice actually destroy the animal or plant of which man had to make a *thing* for his use. They must be at least destroyed as *things*, that is, *in so far as they have become things*. (“Accursed Share” 55-6)

The logic of the (albeit strategic) violence that Debord performs in cutting up the representation of the young woman as commodity and agent or *thing* of the society of the spectacle intuitively Bataille’s assertion that “destruction is the best means of negating a utilitarian relation” (“Accursed Share” 56). The Situationist diversion of images of women from the commodity economy of the spectacle thus implies a violent *wresting* from alienation such that the act of cutting might be viewed as one of insinuation and implication that inaugurates between the cutter or detourner and his victim “a relation of intimate participation with the subject” (“Accursed Share” 55). For the authors of *La fabrique du cinema de Guy Debord*, models and pin-ups reflect or embody the dialectical contradictions of the spectacle as it is conceived by Debord as they are both an expression of commodity culture and, at the same time, an “*affirmation d’une vie authentique*” (Danesi et al 166) [“an affirmation of authentic life”].²⁰ But I would argue that the detourned images are not in any straightforward sense an “affirmation of authentic life” in that the libidinal charge activated in the *détournement* of erotic imagery manifests as negative in the extreme. By perverting desire in order to critique the spectacle, the Situationist preoccupation with the young girl is a radical gesture that relies upon gendered assumptions for its critical force, a tactic that I will argue in my next chapter is treated with ambivalence by Michèle Bernstein in her detourned novels featuring a *jeune-fille* protagonist. The mobilisation of depravity in such gestures may be performative or symbolic rather than literal yet this does not negate the fact that in the Situationist *oeuvre* it falls upon the image of the young woman to mediate, in a sacrificial fashion, the desire to unravel reified economies of desire. In this way, her status as a utilitarian *thing* of the spectacle is destroyed whilst her role as a sexual *object* of critique in the Situationist project inevitably remains intact.

3.3 Reigniting the Fronde: polemicising the romance genre

The cut-up treatment of the *jeune-fille* is one of the most contentious visual

features of *Mémoires* and I raise it in order to foreground the complex treatment of gender and romance evident in the book at a much broader level. In the latter part of this chapter I want to return to the question of the critical effects of the *détournement*, or turning around, of novelistic sources in *Mémoires*, but with a specific focus on the ambivalent treatment of the romance genre. For as a feminised genre, the “minor” status of romance texts as they appear in *Mémoires* complicates some of the arguments about the perversion of the novel that my preceding discussion of the re-use, or refunctioning, of the adventure novel brought into play. On one level, the Situationist concern to critique the reification of desire under commodity capitalism remains central to the *détournement* of pulp romance sources in *Mémoires*, through which Debord seeks to turn around the trivialisation of the passions and to redirect them toward the more radical goal of disrupting the banalities of consumer society. On another level, the *détournement* of the romance genre also calls into question the role of women and the feminine in respect to radical politics as it implies, in a more problematic sense, a desire on the part of the SI to counteract a passive or reified feminine subjectivity with radical agency that in turn raises difficult questions about a praxis of everyday life when viewed from a feminine perspective.

Of course *Mémoires*, unlike the Situationist novels of Michèle Bernstein, does not present a female perspective on the radical subversion of desire and romantic love. However, the prevalence of romantic preoccupations is everywhere apparent in *Mémoires*, especially in the large number of photographic images appropriated from the Dutch photographer Ed van der Elsken’s 1954 *Love on the Left Bank*, a photo-novella that famously interweaves photo-reportage documenting the social spaces of the 1950s Left Bank with a romantic storyline concerning the author’s pursuit of an enigmatic young woman named Ann through the city streets. Like De Quincey’s wistful search for Ann amid the urban maze of London, van der Elsken’s Parisian romance of urban separation, youthful rebellion and frustrated love provides a further instalment in the “historical evolution of the passions.” However, its reliance on an inherently visual mode communication via the photographic image arguably does so in a more spectacular fashion than its nineteenth-century literary predecessor. By cutting and re-contextualising van der Elsken’s images into a more discrete network of allusions in the pages of *Mémoires*, Debord thus performs a negation of a love story that is over exposed and thereby commoditised in van der Elsken’s photo novella. At the same time, the intertextual relationship between *Mémoires* and van der Elsken’s

photobook points to Debord's broader interest in performing a *détournement* of the romance genre in *Mémoires* that is certainly far more ambivalent, yet no less pragmatic, than his perversion of its masculine counterpart; the adventure novel.

This ambivalence with which the romance genre is treated by Debord in *Mémoires* is apparent in the way in which its romantic plotlines are largely detoured from anonymous pulp novels such that the romance novel emerges as a minor source with "*n'a pas d'importance propre*" ("Mode d'emploi" 4) ["no importance in itself" ("A User's Guide" (16)]. As such traces of their authorship are not retained in the same fashion as the De Quincey or Robert Louis Stevenson quotations, for example. While it is possible to interpret this "hijacking" of minor or unimportant sources as implying a derisory attitude to the romance genre on the author's part, it is important to note the placement of these elements in frequent juxtaposition with historical references. In their proximity to references to historical events, the diversion of romance novel sources in *Mémoires* suggests a strategy to polemicise the genre to more productive ends by (re)introducing a historical consciousness to the society of the spectacle's economy of desiring relations. In this way, *Mémoires* proposes educative cuts to the romance novel that seek to turn around the banalisation of desire in its reduction to the exchange logic under commodity capitalism.

A notable juxtaposition in this respect is the proximity of references to seventeenth-century romance fiction to allusions to the civil unrest of the Fronde (1648-53). While the events of the general strike of May '68 are most frequently linked to the precedent of the short-lived socialistic uprising of the working class during the Paris Commune of 1871, it is the example of the Fronde that most interests Debord in *Mémoires*. A highly contested revolution in French history, the Fronde involved a succession of civil conflicts led by the aristocracy that challenged absolute monarchism and it is notable as an extended period of social unrest and political terror in which women not only participated but exercised an unusual degree of influence. In her history of women and the origins of the novel in France, *Tender Geographies*, Joan DeJean argues that "beginning in the early seventeenth century and culminating in the mid-century decade of political insurrection, the dominant female icon was the Amazon" (9-10). This was a period in French history when "it was considered possible for women to play decisive political, and even military, roles" (10). At the same time, it was an era when the "woman's genre" of the romance novel became implicated in radical events. The plots and characters of these novels provided models for the bold

actions of such women as the Duchess of Montpensier, for example, who famously fired canons upon the Army of Turenne from the Bastille in 1652. Stephen A. Shapiro invokes the prominent role of the Duchess in the siege of the city of Orleans as an example of how in the seventeenth-century “historical events and romance seem to coalesce” (20).

This period of revolutionary activity in which so-called Amazonian women led the charge is alluded to in *Mémoires* on one particular page presenting a map of the Amazon cut into the triangular shape of a woman’s sex (see figure 3.3). As an example of female participation in radical events, the ideal of the Amazonian woman put forward in seventeenth-century romance fiction is appropriated by Debord as a means through which to disrupt or destabilise the reified image of woman as both the ideal consumer and an object of passive contemplation as she was typically constructed in mass-media representations during the 1950s post war commodity boom. This manoeuvre is exemplary, then, of what Frances Stracey identifies as a broader enthusiasm within the SI to “champion the influence of specifically female role models [...] they openly praised and cited Rosa Luxembourg; they rallied behind the actions of the infamous ‘*pétroleuses*’ of the Paris Commune; and they enthusiastically acknowledged the significance of women’s active participation in the Paris events of May 1968” (*Constructed Situations* 117). In the specific context of *Mémoires*, compiled by Debord and Jorn a decade before the general strikes of ‘68, historical references to the Fronde dialectically invoke a level of revolutionary passion and feminine agency that the SI critiqued as having disappeared amidst the machinations of a consumer society that fosters an increasingly passive and ahistorical stance towards the world. Following a similar logic, Debord’s strategic polemicising of the romance genre is also apparent in the nearby *détournement* of an excision from a history textbook on the Fronde describing how “*les romans à la mode leur avaient tourné la tête*” [“the fashionable novels were turned on their head”], located on the page preceding the map of the Amazon cut into the shape of a woman’s sex. This particular textbook on the Fronde was also detoured by the Situationists in the December 1958 edition of their journal, in which an excerpt from the textbook appeared beneath a head shot of the female Situationist Michèle Bernstein (see figure 4.1). It reads:

Ce mélange d’écharpes bleues, de dames, de cuirasses, de violons qui étaient dans la salle, de trompettes qui étaient dans la place, donnait un

spectacle qui se voyait plus souvent dans les romans qu'ailleurs.

This mixture of blue scarves, ladies, armour, violins in the room and trumpets in the square, offered a spectacle seen more often in novels than elsewhere.²¹

This juxtaposition of a headshot that presents a tongue-in-cheek framing of Bernstein as an ingénue romance (or chick lit) author with a reference to an insurrectionary scene during the Fronde resembling the events of romantic fiction alludes once again to the proposal put forward by Debord and Wolman in their manifesto on *détournement* that its practical application will involve; “*la réapparition d’une foule de mauvais livres; la participation massive d’écrivains ignorés* (5) [“the revival of a multitude of bad books, and thus the extensive participation of their unknown authors”]. For it was during roughly the same period that Debord was compiling *Mémoires* that Bernstein was preparing her own speedily written *détournements* of the romance novel: *Tous les chevaux du roi* (1960) [*All the King’s Horses*] and later *La Nuit* (1961) [*The Night*]. In this pair of detoured novels, Bernstein hijacks the plot of the amorous manipulations of the aristocratic libertines of *Les Liaisons dangereuses* (1782) as a readymade storyline, whilst appropriating the stylistic methods of the celebrated *ingénue* of French romance fiction, Françoise Sagan, and later the *nouveau roman*, in order to spin from “*des poncifs de son époque*” (*Chevaux* 20) [“the clichés of one’s time” (*Horses* 29)] a wry critique of the commodification of love and youth in the consumer culture of the 1950s. Bernstein has stressed on a number of occasions that her novels were conceived as “jokes,”²² yet like Debord’s strategic mobilisation of ludic drifting in *Mémoires*, Bernstein’s playful conception of artistic composition as a game is similarly envisaged as a serious enterprise concerned with exposing the critical vacuity of the literary productions of the day.

While Bernstein’s intervention into the romance genre produced a pair of complete novels (a detailed assessment of her Situationist fiction follows in my next chapter), in *Mémoires* Debord extensively detourns fragments from one particular readymade romance, a plot concerning a femme-fatale named Barbara that he appropriates from an unnamed 1950s *roman policier* [detective novel] and which appears in *Mémoires* across about a dozen *détournements*. The Barbara storyline is most prominent in the first section of *Mémoires* and, on one level, it connotes an autobiographical allusion to Debord’s relationship during his early days in Paris with a young student from the Sorbonne named Barbara Rosenthal. Boris Donné interprets

Debord's veiled method of conjuring this relationship in *Mémoires* via subtle allusions as an affirmation of the value of the clandestine, an embodiment of his views concerning the ultimately intransmissible nature of one's private life (again contradicting the ethos of over-exposure characteristic of the society of the spectacle).²³ Yet in its *détournement* of prose emphasising trembling, howling, shaking, shuddering and convulsing, Debord's appropriation of the Barbara storyline also detourns another type of romance; namely the Surrealist romance and its manifesto of "convulsive beauty" put forward by Breton in his novel *Nadja* to such an extent that Debord's detourned pulp romance in fact appears to parody the Surrealist celebration of *l'amour fou* [mad love]:

Barbara s'est mise à hurler

Barbara began to howl

Elle se mit à trembler, sans répondre

She began to tremble, without responding

Elle prenait la plus grande partie de son plaisir de cette façon. A un moment, si je ne l'avais retenue, elle se serait affalée sur le sol en proie à des convulsions.

She obtained most of her pleasure this way. At one point, if I had not held her back, she would have collapsed on the floor convulsing

Avec Barbara on se rendait compte que cette fille n'était pas normale

With Barbara one realised that this girl was not normal (*Mémoires*)

In this parodic mimicry of the Surrealist trope of the obsessive pursuit of an enigmatic woman through the city streets, the *détournement* of the hyper-sexualised femme-fatale figure of Barbara suggests a critique of the Surrealists' idealised exaltation of a distant and enigmatic love object as a means to transcend the sphere of a banal rationalism. In its low-brow eroticism the Barbara storyline signals, by contrast, Debord's concern for the more material, rather than poeticised, conditions of the passions. Or in a dialectical sense, the obscene and Sadean actions of Barbara's howls and her self-pleasuring subversively fulfils the material aspects of the revolution of desire that the Surrealist liberation of the passions tends to sublimate in its more cerebral valorisation of the marvellous. In this way, the detourned Barbara storyline anticipates a key *détournement* of *Mémoires* in which Debord applies his corrective

logic to one of the central tenets of the Surrealist project, namely Breton's assertion in *Nadja* that "*La beauté sera CONVULSIVE ou ne sera pas*" (*Nadja* 190) ["Beauty will be CONVULSIVE or will not be at all" (*Nadja* 160)]. Debord reformulates this famous Surrealist tenet into a Situationist manifesto in the following *détournement*:

les arts futurs seront des bouleversements de situations, ou rien

the arts of the future will be the overthrow of situations, or nothing (*Mémoires*)

There is certainly a strategic aspect to this *détournement* in its *bouleversement*, or upheaval, of the Surrealist revolutionary program of mad love with the ludic-constructive event of the situation as it tactically positions Debord's group as the inheritors of the revolutionary avant-garde project in a post-Surrealist context. But what exactly is the nature of this supersession? The "passions" represent a pivotal component of the SI's concept of the constructed situation which, according to Jason E. Smith, "names a crossroads or encounter between rationality and contingency; it describes the specific kind of space and time that must be constructed by rational means in order to make possible the tangential, the contingent, the real encounter that alone can produce passions" (68). Despite Debord's frequent denouncement of the idealism of the Surrealist romance with the city, it is not the case that neither love nor eroticism and desire are conceived as having no role to play in the revolutionary program of the Situationists. Far from it, Debord argues that with the passions already sufficiently interpreted, "*il s'agit maintenant d'en trouver d'autres*" ("Rapport" 701) ["the point now is to discover new ones" ("Report" 43)]. In seeking to "correct" what is perceived as Surrealism's misplaced faith in the revolutionary force of convulsive beauty, chance and the unconscious, the Situationists argue for a more conscious transformation or rearrangement of the material, rather than psychic, conditions of desire as a means to realise the Situationist goal of "*la participation immédiate à une abondance passionnelle de la vie, à travers le changement de moments périssables délibérément aménagés*" (Debord, "*La Révolution Culturelle*" 20) ["the immediate participation in a passionate abundance of life by means of deliberately arranged variations of ephemeral moments" (Debord, "Cultural Revolution" 53)].

The distinction between the Surrealist and Situationist notions of a "convulsive" or radical channelling of desire brings us back, then, to some of the crucial points of my second chapter in which I emphasised the *immanent* nature of the relationship to the city engendered by psychogeography and the Situationist project

more broadly. By detourning the Surrealist tropes of mad love and convulsive beauty, the Situationists seek to apply the generative forces of desire (or what Deleuze and Guattari would term “desiring-production”) to the realisation of a “passionate revolution” *in life* that goes beyond the more transcendental aims of a Surrealist revolution tethered to the aesthetic re-enchantment of the quotidian. Implicating the reader into a labyrinthine arrangement of ambiguous citations and unstable points of recognition and misrecognition, *Mémoires* thereby seeks to introduce the “logic of participation” into cultural production. In this way, the *détournement* of the novel in *Mémoires* is pragmatic not only because it conceives of the novel as a readymade that can be refunctioned for educative uses but also for the extent that it implies that the critique of the ruling representations must be an immanent one, arising from within and turning around existing modes of production, rather than seeking to maintain the autonomy of art via the creation and invention of new cultural forms.

Notwithstanding the oppositional currents towards his Surrealist antecedents evident in these *détournements*, I want to note in conclusion that Debord’s antagonistic stance towards Breton belies the fact that he was nevertheless a close and attentive reader of his Surrealist predecessor. In a set of reading cards now held in the archives at the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (BnF), upon which Debord transcribed the writings of Breton, he makes note on one particular card of a debt owed to the Surrealists’ writing of “false novels” as prefiguring the practice of *détournement*.²⁴ For this reason, I argue that it is useful to view Debord’s use of anti-literary methods in *Mémoires* as a critical resumption of sorts of the project of making “false novels” as it was conceived by the Surrealists in the 1920s. In particular, Breton’s *Nadja* is especially significant as the Surrealist author’s performative engagement of his own biography as a prop through which to enunciate a proposal for a revolution of everyday life that pits the life of the imagination against the perceived limits of work, family, the state and religion, provided an important model for the perversion, or turning around, of personal biography in Debord’s *Mémoires*. In a similar vein, both Breton and Debord shared a similar anxiety that the critical force underpinning their respective auto-fictions would be recuperated, or rendered benign, by praise for their work at the level of formal innovation.

In this way, the refunctioning of novelistic sources and genres in *Mémoires* performs a critical but also a contradictory role. On one level, the art of *détournement* is concerned with turning around existing elements of culture in order to present a

“disagreeable portrait of current society” whilst at the same time the enactment of such strategies point to the challenges involved in the hermeneutical interpretation of *Mémoires*, and psychogeographical narratives more broadly. The “false novels” of Surrealism and the *détournement* of the novel by the Situationists thus present a challenge to the interpretive work of literary criticism insofar as these anti-literatures seek to make pre-existing texts “work” or “function” in a pragmatic fashion that, as I emphasised in chapter two, cannot be fully accounted for by the methodology of close reading alone. It is for this reason that I have argued that *Mémoires* is best understood as a tactical book and as such its ambiguous recombination of heterogeneous parts speaks to the broader ambition of the historical avant-garde to sublate discrete categories of art and cultural production with a view to reorganising the elements of everyday life as a whole.

As an atlas of allusions *Mémoires* embodies, then, a unique tension between strategy and indeterminacy. Its dense network of quotations might obfuscate and “hide” the author, their open-endedness activates the will of the reader, yet against this backdrop of apparent textual chaos there is a method to the madness. In particular, the composition of the book observes a distinctly rational logic in its concern for making “educative cuts” to existing elements of culture that culminate in a legible critique of the alienation of modern life within the society of the spectacle. On another level, it is necessary to acknowledge the hermeneutic limits of the project for when viewed against the totality of Debord’s confessional *oeuvre*, the cryptic and coded methodology of *Mémoires* would not be repeated. As much as it seeks to subvert the conventions of autobiography in order to create a “disagreeable portrait of current society,” the level of work involved in its decoding arguably inhibits the critical reach of the project. In a similar vein, its complex and enigmatic form risks being interpreted as an endorsement of the necessary autonomy of art, a position that the Situationist project strenuously rejects. It is for this reason that in “reading” *Mémoires* it is imperative to keep in mind that not long after its composition the Situationist experimentation with art would soon give way to a focus on writing more practically-oriented theoretical texts. Yet the deferral of meaning in *Mémoires* paradoxically keeps the possibility of and desire for meaning alive and largely accounts for the interest that it continues to attract from contemporary readers. By sacrificing clarity for subterfuge, *Mémoires* turns evasion into an expansive tactic and a political manoeuvre, a challenge to the reader to seek and find their own “something else:” that

elusive but most meaningful goal of an authentic and self-determined life.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

¹ Between 1954 and 1957, the Lettrist International issued 29 information bulletins under the title *Potlatch*. According to Debord, “Potlatch tirait son titre du nom, chez des Indiens d’Amérique du Nord, d’une forme pré-commerciale de la circulation des biens, fondée sur la réciprocité de cadeaux somptueux” (“Le Rôle de Potlatch” 283) [“potlatch took its name from the North American Indian practice of a pre-commercial form of circulation of goods, founded on the reciprocity of sumptuous gifts” (“The Role of Potlatch,” par 3)].

² Asger Jorn’s unreservedly hagiographic article, “Guy Debord and the Problem of the Accursed,” first appeared in *Contre Le Cinéma* (1964), a monograph on the cinema of Guy Debord published by the Institute for Comparative Vandalism. I refer to the translation by Roxanne Lapidus published online at notbored.org.

³ A primary example is Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821) which I address in detail in this chapter in its political-economic context. However, the book was also of critical importance to Ivan Chtcheglov in his formulation of the *dérive* as an undirected exploration of the affective properties of urban space.

⁴ In addition to Frances Stracey’s article, see Karen Kurczynski “No Man’s Land” (22-52); and Claire Gilman’s chapter, “Asger Jorn’s Avant-Garde Archives” (189-212).

⁵ For further discussion of the omission of the SI from Peter Bürger’s classic 1974 study, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, and an account of their attempts to sustain the avant-garde position in a post war context when most artists began to adopt a more affirmative relationship to consumer culture, see two articles by Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen: “Counterrevolution, the Spectacle, and the Situationist Avant-Garde” (5-15) and “The Situationist International, Surrealism, and the Difficult Fusion of Art and Politics” (365-387).

⁶ Born Isidore Ducasse, the Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870) was a prodigal French poet whose works were distinguished by their black humour, the polemical use of negativity and the “correcting” of earlier texts. Lautréamont’s *Les Chants de Maldoror* and *Poésies* are known today largely as a result of their recovery and subsequent veneration by the Surrealists.

⁷ Jacques Rancière similarly notes the challenge that Situationist *détournement* presents to “every modernist vision of a subversion carried out through the autonomous development of art” (“Shenandoah” 130). In this sense, the model is “not provided by Duchamp and the Mona Lisa’s mustaches but by Brecht introducing cuts in classical texts to give them a didactic value” (“Shenandoah” 130).

⁸ On this point see Jappe: “No book of Adorno’s was translated into French before 1974, by which time Situationist theory had already been worked out; similarly, we can be sure that Adorno never became aware of Debord’s work” (“Sic Transit” 127).

⁹ Debord denounced both the Surrealists and the Lettrists for what he criticised as their

artistic idealism and the apolitical nature of their aesthetic experiments. In the case of the Lettrists, this denouncement unfairly disguises the political commitments of Isidore Isou, from his Communism to his formation of a Youth Front. The recent scholarship of Frédéric Acquaviva is sharply critical of the widespread neglect and discrediting of the broader influence of Isou's work on Debord's thought. See Frédéric Acquaviva and Simona Buzatu, eds. *Isidore Isou: Hypergraphics Novels 1950-1984*.

¹⁰ Patrick Marcolini, "La Méthode Debord," in *Guy Debord : Un Art de la Guerre*: "La pratique du détournement introduit donc un rapport ludique au savoir et aux œuvres classiques. Pour Debord, le jeu consiste, en lisant les textes anciens, à sentir les affinités, les analogies avec les phénomènes du temps présent qu'il cherche à analyser" (33).

¹¹ I am indebted here to the chapter "Situations" in *Pour Mémoires* by Boris Donné, which elaborates on the influence of Sartre's first novel, *La Nausée* [Nausea] on Debord's notion of the construction of situations (126-29).

¹² The original French article published in *Internationale Situationniste* # 8 uses the English title "All the King's Men."

¹³ Boris Donné, *Pour Mémoires*: "La séparation amoureuse est le signe le plus intense de la séparation généralisée dans l'espace sociale" (99).

¹⁴ In his essay "Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer," Greil Marcus translates the quotations from the *Confessions* according to the original English text authored by De Quincey without acknowledging that the lines that appear in *Mémoires* are in fact adaptations by Baudelaire. In a similar vein, Tom McDonough's translation of the article "Unitary Urbanism at the End of the 1950s" in his edited book, *The Situationists and the City*, provides an editorial footnote that comments on the original De Quincey text whilst failing to draw the reader's attention to the precise source of the quotations, which is Baudelaire's "Un mangeur d'opium" in *Les Paradis artificiels* (1860).

¹⁵ *Mémoires* is an unpaginated book therefore no page numbers are provided for quotations.

¹⁶ Both Debord and Jorn were engaged with Marx's *Capital* at the time of composing *Mémoires*. For Jorn, this period involved a crisis in his art and his politics as his commitment to Marxist principles had become increasingly challenged by the unwillingness of Marxism to ascribe a discrete category of value to the work of art. In an article titled "The End of the Economy and the Realization of Art," published in French in *Internationale Situationniste* # 4 (1960), Jorn argued that "the realization of communism will be the transformation of the work of art in the totality of everyday life" (par 14).

Jorn developed this argument in a longer theoretical work published in 1962, *Value and Economy*, in which the first section titled "Critique of Political Economy" attempts to revise Marx in order to "prepare the ground for a discussion of how the work of 'the creative elite' can have 'value' in any future society aligned on communist principles" (Shield xi). This stance would ultimately prove unacceptable to Debord in his more radical shift toward an uncompromising anti-art position and thus necessitated Jorn's resignation from the SI.

¹⁷ The bottles of rum are a reference to Debord's three-dimensional novel, *Histoire des Gestes*, which is described in a brief article by the Lettrists: "Written with photos and fragments of newspapers affixed to bottles of rum, the three-dimensional novel by G.E. Debord, *History of Gestures*, leaves the sequence of ideas to the will of the reader, the lost son in a labyrinth of simultaneous anecdotes" (LI, "Dimensions of Language," par 2).

¹⁸ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627 – 1704) was a French bishop and theologian renowned for his eloquent oratory style and his funeral panegyrics.

¹⁹ See Patrick Greaney's article, "Insinuation: *Détournement* as Gendered Repetition" for a more detailed elaboration of the gendering of *détournement* as a masculine tactic of "virile intervention" into the spectacle (75-88).

²⁰ Fabrice Danesi et al, *La fabrique du cinéma de Guy Debord: "Les mannequins et autres pin-up sont au cœur de la contradiction fondamentale du spectacle désigné par Debord. Elles sont à la fois l'expression de la marchandise et l'affirmation d'une vie authentique"* (166) ["Models and pin-ups are at the heart of the fundamental contradiction of the spectacle as it is conceived by Debord. They are an expression of commodity culture and at the same time an affirmation of an authentic life"].

²¹ This is an unattributed quotation from a history book on The Fronde printed to accompany the article "Nostalgia Beneath Contempt" in *Internationale Situationniste* # 2 December 1958. I have modified slightly the translation by Reuben Keehan.

²² See Bernstein's comments in this vein recounted by Greil Marcus in *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (423).

²³ In *Pour Mémoires*, Boris Donné writes : "*Un prénom, quelques extraits détournés d'un mauvais roman, ces deux phrases d'adieu, peut-être une photo, et un réseau d'allusions impénétrables, c'est tout ce qui reste ici pour fixer le souvenir d'une relation intensément vécue*" (88) ["A name, some excerpts detoured from a bad novel, those two phrases of farewell, a photo perhaps, and a network of impenetrable allusions; that's all that remains to fix the memory of an intensely lived relationship"].

²⁴ I draw here upon the observations of Fabrice Flahutez in "L'Héritage Surréaliste: La Lecture de Breton," which describes the reading cards in the Debord archives held at the Bibliothèque National de France (BnF) concerned with the works of André Breton (46-48).

Figure 4.1 Portrait of Michèle Bernstein in the galley proof of *Internationale Situationniste* # 2 December 1958. Reproduced in *The Night* (2013).

Figure 4.2 Michèle Bernstein playing chess in London, 2013, with Erik Hartin of Everyone Agrees, English editors of *The Night*. Photograph by Everyone Agrees. Published in *Frieze* magazine issue 157, September 2013.

4. “A Sum of Possibilities”: The Situationist fiction of Michèle Bernstein

First published in 1960 and 1961 respectively, *Tous les chevaux du roi* [*All the King's Horses*] and *La Nuit* [*The Night*] are a pair of detoured novels by Michèle Bernstein that were all but erased from the history of the Situationist International until their recovery by Greil Marcus in his 1989 book, *Lipstick Traces*. Written under the sign of commerce, apparently as minor commercial ventures to garner cash for the Situationist movement, Bernstein has repeatedly dismissed her two books as “jokes.”¹ This off-hand assertion has complicated their reception by scholars of the movement whilst preemptively striking against any attempts to read the novels as serious literary works. Out of print for over four decades, since 2004 Bernstein's books have steadily reappeared in mass-printed French editions and English language translations that have significantly transformed the conditions of their reception. No longer simply clandestine objects buried in the depths of the Situationist archives, Bernstein's novels (and indeed the author herself) are now exposed to the prying eyes of both Situationist aficionados and literary scholars alike.

In a photograph accompanying an interview with Bernstein published on the occasion of the first translation of *The Night* into English in 2013 (figure 4.2), the 81-year-old author challenges her English editor to a game of chess.² It is an artfully staged image that not only encapsulates the themes of play and strategy embodied in Bernstein's novels but also demonstrates the extent to which Bernstein herself has become implicated, in a highly performative fashion, in the strategic game of coy disavowal surrounding her Situationist fictions. Both books recount the cynical seductions of a pair of avant-garde intellectuals named Gilles and Geneviève who happily co-exist in an open-marriage and thus resemble the “real-life” scenario of Bernstein and her then husband, Guy Debord, at the time the books were composed. As a result, there has been a tendency to treat the works in the manner of a straightforward *roman-à-clef* or thinly disguised autobiographies. In this chapter I want to complicate the reception of Bernstein's novels as documents of the SI in order to consider how the reappearance of Bernstein's books has brought the form of the novel – which has historically occupied an extremely marginal position in the scholarship on the SI – into sharp focus. Now garnering attention as rare examples of “Situationist fiction,”³ I want to consider the insights that her detoured

fictions might yield into the avant-garde's ambivalent relationship to novelistic production and how Bernstein's *détournement* of the novel in fact opens up a productive space for critique and subversion

While my previous chapter concerned with Debord's *Mémoires* sought to interrogate the "educative" or didactic functions that the *détournement* of the novel performs in setting into motion Debord's critical theory, in this chapter I argue that Bernstein's ambivalent treatment of the novel in *All the King's Horses* and *The Night* functions more specifically as a critique of the novel itself. In particular, I am concerned with how both novels register the reifying effects of representing the everyday or the quotidian in novelistic form and how this concern for the banality of fiction is turned around (or perverted) by Bernstein to critique the alienation of everyday life under advanced capitalism. The performative rehearsals of boredom and banality in these novels, I contend, represent not only an important facet of their Situationist critique of alienation but also manifest as instances of Situationist "posturing," a stance that Bernstein knowingly adopts in her ambiguous fictionalising of the everyday life of the SI. Critical to her Situationist "posture" is the use of allusion, humour and irony, devices that provide Bernstein with a mask that allows her to parody and to critique, as well as to participate in, the games of self-mythologising that were so central to the SI's cultivation of its own radical image. Lastly, this chapter will advance the central concern of my thesis for elucidating the relationship between psychogeography and the novel by giving extended consideration to the treatment of the *dérive* in *The Night*. In particular, I will explore the ambiguous feminine perspective that Bernstein brings to this key Situationist practice and how this in turn calls into question and complicates the radical potential attributed to desire in the Situationist project.

4.1 *All the King's Horses* and the critique of separation

Thus far the *détournement* of the novel has been addressed in my study largely in the context of the anti-artistic preoccupations of the mid-century avant-garde and their concern to supersede artistic production as an autonomous realm separated from the praxis of everyday life. Before proceeding with a detailed consideration of Bernstein's ambiguous treatment of the novel I want firstly to further outline the Situationist critique of the novel and the extent to which their denunciation of narrative fiction and the production of literature in its avant-garde, modernist and mass forms is embedded within

a total critique of modern culture. This total critique is concisely expressed in a short article in the first edition of *Internationale Situationniste* entitled “La Liberté Pour Quoi Lire? Des Bêtises” [“The Freedom to Read What? Stupidities”], in which modern cultural expression is identified as having passed from a phase of extreme formal decomposition in the first part of the twentieth century to a more anodyne phase of “*la neutralité pure*” (6) [“pure *neutrality*,” emphasis in original] in the latter part of the century. For the SI, the art and literature of post war Europe was characterised by an overwhelming level of complicity with the exchange values of commodity capitalism to such an extent that cultural production was perceived by the SI as having largely descended into mere escapism and entertainment. Running parallel with this rapid ascent of popular literary forms, the significance of the literary novel also remained overestimated according to the persistence of “*l’ancienne optique bourgeoise*” (6) [“the old bourgeois perspective”]. In this respect, the Situationist critique of the novel is less concerned with assessing particular styles of writing or modes of literary expression than it is with overturning the private and autonomous realm within which literature is produced and received more broadly. In a short journalistic piece that Bernstein penned in English for *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1964 (clearly aimed at disseminating Situationist ideas in England), Bernstein summarises the Situationist position on modern culture and their proposed solution:

As a start they [the SI] aimed to go beyond artistic specialisation – art as a separate activity – and delve beneath that whole movement for breaking up of language and dissolution of forms that had constituted modern art at its most authentic. It was decided that the first field of their future creativeness would embrace experiments in behaviour, the construction of complete settings, moments of life freely created. (Bernstein, “The Situationist International” 781)

Like Debord and Wolman’s assertion in the “User’s Guide to *Détournement*” that the artistic techniques of the historical avant-garde movements of the twentieth-century must be superseded, Bernstein’s comments reinforce the extent to which the Situationist project was conceived in response to the perceived failure of the autonomous work of art to fulfil the avant-garde imperative to change life as a whole. By invoking a “field” of “future creativeness,” Bernstein’s reference to the significance of total environments, as opposed to distinct works of art, also signals the relevance of the turn to the everyday that took place in the 1950s and early 1960s in France in the work of Marxist sociologists such

as Henri Lefebvre who conceived of the city, for instance, as “a relational work of art” (Nadal-Mélsio 171). Yet in making “experiments in behaviour, the construction of complete settings, moments of life freely created” (Bernstein, “The Situationist International” 781) their focus, the SI rarely undertook the practice of literary criticism in its conventional sense and as such extended responses to specific novels are uncommon in their *oeuvre*. Debord’s 1957 “Report on the Construction of Situations” is notable, however, for containing some detailed remarks on the novel, many of which bear relevance upon the tactics of *détournement* that Bernstein adopts in *All the King’s Horses* and *The Night*.

In the “Report” Debord identifies in the relationship between literature and the avant-garde two major points of concern. The first relates specifically to the counterrevolutionary foundations of mass-culture in general insofar as Debord singles out industrially produced novels and films, in particular, as being “*délibérément anticulturelle*” (“Rapport” 690) [“deliberately anticultural”]. In turn, “*L’idéologie dominante organise la banalisation des découvertes subversives, et les diffuse largement après stérilisation*” (690/26) [“The dominant ideology ensures the banalisation of subversive discoveries, and disseminates them widely after their sterilisation”]. The second part of Debord’s critique concerns the productions of those avant-garde writers who reject industrialised fiction yet carry on committed to the work of art as an autonomous category despite the fact that, according to the SI at least, the critical influence of modern art had eroded in line with “*l’épuisement des expédients culturels qui ont servi depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale*” (694) [“the exhaustion of the cultural expedients that have served since the end of World War II” (33)]. With its comprehensively destructive attitude to culture and its pervasive negative aspect, it is the historical example of Dada that is treated most favourably by Debord in the “Report.” At the other end of the spectrum lies the “*phénomène Sagan-Drouet*” (693) [“Sagan-Drouet effect”], which for the SI represents the pinnacle of the “pure neutrality” denounced by Debord in his critique of the anodyne phase of cultural production. For Debord, the “Sagan-Drouet effect” (a concatenation of the names of the youthful literary celebrities Françoise Sagan and Minou Drouet⁴) names “*l’emploi massif de la publicité commerciale influencer toujours davantage les jugements sur la création culturelle*” (693) [“the increasingly massive use of commercial publicity to influence judgements about cultural creation” (32)]. In this context Françoise Sagan is targeted as a representative example of

one of the most pernicious effects of the rise of the literary celebrity, namely the phenomenon by which the life of the author becomes of greater interest and importance than her work. As such, the growing fascination with celebrity further consolidates the “ideological decomposition” (32) underpinning cultural production more broadly.

Again, this framing of the lamentable new phenomenon of celebrity idolatry in largely feminine terms points to the gendered assumptions of the Situationist critique of the spectacle and its call for virile interventions into the feminised sphere of mass-media cultural production that I mapped in the previous chapter’s assessment of the questionable tactic of the minor *détournement*. In this instance, I draw attention to Debord’s derisory treatment of the “Sagan-Drouet effect,” however, to signal the extremely ambiguous context within which Bernstein’s *détournement* of Françoise Sagan’s stylistic and narrative conceits unfold in *All the King’s Horses*. Indeed Sagan’s novels provide an important touchstone for the plot and themes of Bernstein’s fictions and as such the relationship between Bernstein and Sagan is one of parodic mimicry. In *All the King’s Horses*, Bernstein performs a *détournement* of the style and tone of the narrator of Sagan’s *Bonjour Tristesse* (1954), adopting the “*petites phrases sèches*” (84) [“dry little sentences” (80)] of the latter in a playful knock-off of Sagan’s understated flippancy with the effect of parody which, as Fredric Jameson notes, “capitalizes on the uniqueness of [certain] styles and seizes on their idiosyncrasies and eccentricities to produce an imitation which mocks the original” (“Postmodernism and Consumer Society” 113). At the same time, the satiric impulses of Bernstein’s mimicry are not solely directed at Sagan herself but register, rather, a shift in the radical tenor of the ingénue author’s works. When first published in 1954, *Bonjour Tristesse* scandalised readers with its anti-sentimental and frank account of female sexuality as retold by an apparently amoral teen. Cynically adopted by a member of the Situationist avant-garde in *All the King’s Horses*, however, this frankness is no longer shocking but merely a formula. It is a recipe that Bernstein coolly exploits alongside the novel’s predictable plot, a *ménage-à-trois* scenario complicated by a revolving door of extra-marital affairs and flirtations with lesbianism and bi-sexuality that clearly belongs within the realm of literary cliché rather than to the legacy of transgressive libertine literature à la the Marquise de Sade and the fictions of the debauched aristocrats of the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries.

By fabricating a “fake” popular novel Bernstein suggests that her strategy in *Horses* was to load the book with “sufficient clues and irony so the moderately observant

reader would realise that they were dealing with some kind of joke, the steely gaze of a true libertine, a critique of the novel itself” (“Preface” 10). It is in this context that allusion and intertextuality assume a particularly important role in the novel. With its myriad allusions to the Parisian cultural milieu of the day *Horses* sets in motion a game of recognition and misrecognition that points to the inherent performativity of the text as its web of semi-autobiographical allusions work to destabilise the novel’s claims to both fiction and autobiography. Further clues that the work is in fact a “fake” popular novel can be found in the literary epigraphs that introduce each section of the novel. Authors of mass-produced romance novels rarely open their stories with excerpts from the memoirs of seventeenth-century radicals of the likes of the Cardinal de Retz as Bernstein does in *Horses*, nor do they offer such pithy quotes from Racine as the one that ironically introduces the third section or denouement of the novel: “*Ce n’est point une nécessité qu’il y ait du sang et des morts dans un tragédie: il suffit que l’action en soit grande, que les acteurs en soient héroïques, que les passions y soient excitées, et que tout s’y ressente de cette tristesse majestueuse qui fait tout le plaisir de la tragédie*” (89) [“A tragedy need not be filled with blood and corpses: it’s enough that the action is grand, the actors are heroic, the passions stirred, and that everything is charged with that majestic sadness that creates all the pleasures of tragedy” (85)]. Ultimately, the effect of these literary and historical *détournements* is to disrupt the novel’s self-presentation as a work of unsophisticated pulp romance fiction, thereby calling into question the sincerity of the author.

This ambiguous tension between seriousness and joking, sincerity and insincerity permeates *Horses* and is evident from the very beginning of the novel, which opens with Geneviève’s coy admission: “*Je ne sais comment j’ai compris si vite que Carole nous plaisait*” (11) [“I don’t know how I realized so quickly that we liked Carole” (21)]. Trapped amid a tedious crowd at a boring art gallery opening, Geneviève’s wry assessment of the scene quickly establishes that the narrator is not the wide-eyed ingénue one might normally expect to encounter in a teen romance:

Quand je cherchai du regard le secours de Gilles, je vis que le peintre lui parlait avec animation. Un petit groupe se formait déjà autour d’eux. C’était un mauvais peintre et un charmant vieil homme, pétri d’un modernisme désuet. Gilles lui donnait la réplique sans laisser paraître de lassitude, et j’admirai son aisance. Le vieux peintre s’était déjà perdu avec la génération d’avant la nôtre, mais il n’était pas découragé pour autant. Il nous aimait bien. Notre jeunesse lui confirmait la sienne, je crois. (Chevaux 11-12)

Desperately scanning the room for Gilles, I saw the painter talking to him animatedly. A little group was already forming around them. This was a bad painter and a charming old man, the product of an obsolete modernism. Gilles was answering him without seeming bored and I admired his ease. The old painter had already been forgotten a generation before ours, but this did not discourage him at all. He adored us. Our youth confirmed his own, I guess. (*Horses* 21)

The tongue-in-cheek nature of Geneviève's cool dismissal of the painter's "obsolete modernism" works to differentiate *Horses* from the racy and light-hearted fiction of Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse* that Bernstein so readily cannibalises. In this way it becomes evident that Bernstein's "joke" novel operates in an ironical mode that provides a front for a deeper-level cultural critique. When the boring exhibition opening draws to a close Gilles and Geneviève attend a party hosted by the "bad painter," François-Joseph, where they meet the step-daughter of the "charming old man," a "kitten-like" twenty-year-old girl named Carole, whom Geneviève casually sets out to seduce in the manner of a conquest for both herself and Gilles. While the sexual ethics of the scenario are deeply problematic, Bernstein knowingly engages in a critical manner the trope of the young girl, or *jeune-fille*. As an embodiment of a mythologised representation of sexualised girlhood, portrayals of the *jeune-fille* reached a threshold of intensity or mass saturation in the marketing and cultural productions of France's post war consumer boom of the 1950s. As such, the phenomenon of the *jeune-fille* also fuelled a nascent publishing industry that Susan Weiner documents as having contributed to the publication of "an unprecedented number of young women writers" (71). In the cinema this preoccupation with the sexualised young girl witnessed the rise of the "nymphet," a cultural phenomenon exemplified by the eroticised cuteness of Brigitte Bardot and dubbed the "Lolita Syndrome" in a 1959 article that Simone de Beauvoir penned for *Esquire* magazine. According to Weiner, "Beauvoir saw the invention of the nymphet as the expression of an ideological struggle: a means for post war culture to maintain the 'feminine mystique,' despite the demystification of femininity that was underway" (103). Bernstein's novel makes apparent the malleability of the sign of the *jeune-fille* in the cultural context of the period as both Gilles and Geneviève derive pleasure in treating Carole as a "thing," a toy-like object to be played with and manipulated at whim. Geneviève's descriptions of the young girl lack empathy yet her assessments of Carole's situation register nonetheless a degree of pathos insofar as she recognises the reified entrapment of the young girl in a

passive conformity to the mystique of sexualised girlhood criticised by de Beauvoir:

L'alcool la rendait triste. Elle nous parla du temps qui s'en va. Comme tous les adolescents quittant cet âge, quand ils en ont compris ou lu les charmes, elle ressentait amèrement son vieillissement, son changement d'état. Quoique très jeune, autrefois elle était plus jeune encore. (Chevaux 26)

The alcohol was making her sad. She talked about time passing. Like all teenagers who aren't teenagers anymore, when they've read about and finally understood what being desirable is, she bitterly resented getting old, her changing state. She was young now, but before she was even younger. (*Horses* 33)

Geneviève observes Carole's self-conscious performance of the predictable formula of the *jeune-fille* with derision. Yet despite her artifice, Gilles develops an interest of unusual intensity in Carole that eventually comes to disrupt the equilibrium of Gilles and Geneviève's relationship and it is precisely this disruption that motorises the novel's plot. In an attempt to outwit Gilles at his own game, Geneviève responds with a series of tactical manoeuvres aimed at regaining her central position in Gilles's affections without resorting to the "bad faith" of jealousy or a bourgeois sense of wifely entitlement. First taking up with a younger lover of her own named Bertrand, she soon discards him in favour of an affair with a same sex mistress, Hélène. In light of the candid and detached manner in which she recounts her romantic strategising, Geneviève invites comparison with the Marquise de Merteuil, the calculating accomplice to Laclos's lothario, Valmont, in *Dangerous Liaisons*.⁵ Indeed the intertextual relationship between *Horses* and Laclos's novel invites, on one level, a reading of Bernstein's book as an example of libertine fiction and a number of scholars have identified the primary goal of the novel as a propagandising one, suggesting that it presents a proposal in fiction for a Situationist revolution of everyday life at the level of the passions. In his reading of the mobility of desire in *Horses* as "permanent play," McKenzie Wark suggests that Bernstein "borrows from socialist, bohemian and aristocratic writings to create an alternative to the middle-class ideal of the married couple" (*Beach* 76). For Wark, the novel presents a radical model of desire insofar as libertinage negates the subordination of romantic love to the ideology of private property rights. According to the libertine reading of the text, Bernstein's novels posit free-love and an uninhibited sexuality as a project that "can be shaped aesthetically, in pursuit of adventures, in the creation of situations, in the river of time" (Wark, *Beach* 81). In an unsigned review of Bernstein's *The Night* posted on a French website it is similarly

suggested that Bernstein's fictions "display humour but also evoke the Situationist critique" such that the libertine novel is detoured by Bernstein at the service of illustrating Situationist theory: "The libertine spirit corresponds to the libertarian approach of the Situationists [...] Against social norms and constraints, games and pleasure become revolutionary weapons" ("La vie de situationnistes," par 19).⁶

Yet the extent to which the presentation of the open-relationship of Gilles and Geneviève resembles anything like a "revolutionary weapon" in either *Horses* or its sequel is questionable. In the first instance, to read *Horses* primarily through the lens of the libertine fiction of the eighteenth-century is to neglect another important touchstone for the novel, namely the preceding generation of Existentialist literature and in particular the novels of Simone de Beauvoir. Notable is the striking similarity between the plot of *Horses* and de Beauvoir's 1943 novel *L'Invitée* (English title: *She Came to Stay*) which also deals with the scenario of two Parisian intellectuals, modelled upon Sartre and de Beauvoir, whose moral commitment to liberty within their relationship is tested by the arrival of the contrarian young woman, Xavière. Both novels are concerned with the negotiation of one's most intimate relationships as a finely tuned balancing act between constraint and freedom, however, the scenario that in de Beauvoir's novel is treated with the gravitas of an ethical and philosophical dilemma largely devolves into something of a banality when viewed through Bernstein's laconic "steely gaze." Indeed, it is precisely Bernstein's ambivalent treatment of love, romance and the novel as a banality that I wish to emphasise in my reading of the treatment of libertinage in *Horses*. This emphasis on banality runs somewhat counter to those responses that have predominantly focused on the machinations of the libertine plot as a transgressive proposition. By contrast, I am concerned to explore how desire is treated as an object in *Horses* and thus assumes an exchangeable and hence reified quality. In this way, libertine love in Bernstein's novel emerges less as a solution to the boredom of everyday life than as merely another symptom of its all-pervasive alienation.

Joshua Clover in his reading of *Horses* has asserted that Bernstein's book is a deliberately boring novel: "its events are scarcely worth remembering; that's the point" (36). Just as Clover identifies an ironic and studied mobilisation of boredom in *Horses*, a handful of critical responses have begun to scrutinise Bernstein's novel at the level of style, rather than plot, affording greater weight to the overriding atmosphere of alienation, dissatisfaction and *ennui* that the novel constructs. Jeff Kinkle, for example, is alert to the

ways in which the *détournement* of popular and classic literary works in Bernstein's fiction appears to "propagandise for adventurous love" while, at the very same time, "its refusal to take itself too seriously – its refusal to be sincere – creates a sort of alienation effect" (174). In a similar vein, Kelly Baum in her review of the 2008 Semiotext(e) English translation of the novel considers the influence of Brecht, noting how the Brechtian strategy of appropriating and cutting classic dramatic works influenced the Situationists in their formulation of *détournement*.⁷ Baum extends this Brechtian connection to suggest that the technique of "*verfremdungseffekt* (translated as either distancing or alienation effect) has equal bearing on Bernstein's novel" (162). For Baum, *Horses* "is habitually self-reflexive: the book consistently addresses the conditions of its own production, and its protagonists repeatedly break the fourth wall and revel in their own artificiality" (162). Exemplary of this breaking of the fourth wall is the exchange between Geneviève and Gilles during which they candidly assess the merits (or lack thereof) of one of Carole's paintings. In response to Gilles's criticisms of the mediocrity of the young girl's work, Geneviève remarks:

Mais je pris la défense de l'absente: les romans, les tableaux sont composés d'après les recettes qui conviennent. On a tout de même un certain mérite à user déceimment des poncifs de son époque. (Chevaux 20)

I rose to the absent girl's defense: novels and paintings follow whichever recipe is convenient at that moment. In any case, there's something to be said for cleverly using the clichés of one's time. (*Horses* 29)

This notion of "cleverly using the clichés of one's time" (29) is not only an incisive piece of meta-commentary on the novel's own compositional methods but also signals the distinct modality of irony within which the novel operates, a form of irony that however cynical and sarcastic nevertheless remains future orientated as distancing is linked to the development of a critical consciousness. In this respect, the ironical mode of *All the King's Horses* resonates with the significance afforded to Marxist irony in the work of Henri Lefebvre for whom irony functions as "a mode of reflective consciousness that allows us to prise open the gap between appearance and reality, ideology and actuality, falseness and authenticity" (Gardiner, "Post-Romantic irony" 63). Bernstein's proclivity for self-reflexive critique is evident throughout the novel across a plethora of remarks that rupture the illusory narrative world of her fictions. While this meta-commentary indeed works to critique the artificiality of the novel form it also speaks to the potential for irony

to cultivate a critical distance between the author and her characters that thereby gives way to the “reflective consciousness” that Gardiner identifies as characteristic of Marxist irony. Consider for instance the tongue-in-cheek exchange between Gilles and Carole during the group’s holiday at Saint-Paul de Vence in the south of France, a scenario that in itself presents as another example of a literary cliché. Here, the characters even go so far as to mock the predictability of the scenario within which their unimaginative author has placed them, prompting this reflection:

- *N’avez-vous pas remarqué, interrompit Carole, comme nous avons tous des noms de personnages de roman: Gilles et Bertrand; Renaud, Carole, Geneviève? C’est bien drôle. Les héros à la mode portent ces noms-là.*

- *C’est ça, dit Gilles, justement nous sommes des personnages de romans, ne l’avez-vous pas remarqué? D’ailleurs, vous et moi, nous parlons par petites phrases sèches. Nous avons même quelque chose d’inachevé. Voilà comment sont les romans. On ne tient pas compte de tout. Il y a une règle du jeu. Ainsi, notre vie est aussi prévisible que dans les romans.* (Chevaux 83-4)

“Haven’t you noticed,” Carole interrupted, “how we all have names like characters in a novel; Gilles and Bertrand; Renaud, Carole, Geneviève? It’s really funny. Heroes have names like those.”

“That’s right,” said Gilles. “We’re all characters in a novel, haven’t you noticed? You and I speak in dry little sentences. There’s even something unfinished about us. And that’s how novels are. They don’t give you everything. It’s the rules of the game. And our lives are as predictable as a novel, too.” (*Horses* 80-1)

Such ironic acts of self-observation are critical to the Situationist use of the novel according to which the rules of the game are detoured not in the mode of formal experimentation for its own sake but in an ironical turn that Michael Gardiner argues, again writing about Lefebvre, is more democratic in so far as “irony is not only the purview of the educated and leisured classes, but available to all social strata indiscriminately” (“Post-Romantic Irony” 63-4). As noted, the use of irony as an inherently distancing and self-questioning mode implies the influence of Brecht on Bernstein’s novel, which is discussed by Baum in her reading of *Horses* according to the framework of distancing. Yet it is worth extending this valuable insight to consider more specifically how alienation effects play out in the more mediated textual space of the novel compared with the live encounters of the theatre where passive audiences can be directly confronted with the spectacle of their alienation. In her treatment of the romance

novel as a commodity, I want to suggest that Bernstein's fiction more explicitly embodies the effects of *reification*, or the transformation of abstract ideas into "thing-like" concrete forms. In this sense, *Horses* extends the Brechtian strategy of employing estrangement as a means to provoke critical self-recognition in an audience into a critique of the pernicious reach of commodity fetishism and its objectifying effects on modern subjectivity. Bernstein's characters are wooden, devoid of interiority and psychological depth as is apparent in such remarks as Geneviève's candid admission: "*Je me brossai les cheveux avec l'héroïsme des grands combats, et la bonne technique enseignée par l'hebdomadaire que la femme lit, si elle lit*" (*Chevaux* 92) ["I brushed my hair like a heroine, like a woman who'd learned how to brush her hair from reading women's magazines, if she reads at all" (*Horses* 88)]. The false identifications apparent in her characters' modes of thinking, acting and relating to one another reflect, then, the central role afforded to the pervasive influence of appearances in the Situationist concept of reification. For the SI, social life in the consumer society is downgraded from a concern with *being* to *having* that is further impoverished by the reduction of social relations to the level of *appearing*.⁸ Images colonise everyday life to such an extent that subjects internalise and naturally adopt the models presented to them by the society of the spectacle.

In the lexicon of the Situationists, reification was more commonly referred to as "separation" and it is a concern that permeates the work of the SI around the time of the composition of *Horses*. In Debord's 1961 detourned documentary, *Critique de la séparation* ["Critique of Separation"], "separation" describes the phenomenon of individuals having become "*des ombres hantant les choses qui leur sont anarchiquement données par d'autres*" (47) ["mere specters haunting the objects anarchically presented to them by others" (32)]. In chance situations, Debord says, "*des gens séparés qui vont au hasard. Leurs émotions divergentes se neutralisent, et maintiennent leur solide environnement d'ennui*" (47) ["we meet separated people moving randomly. Their divergent emotions neutralize each other and reinforce their solid environment of boredom" (32)]. If Bernstein's *All the King's Horses* performs in its own way a "critique of separation," which I believe that it does, then one must assess Bernstein's treatment of the novel according to the SI's conviction that the artistic work in itself can no longer perform the work of disalienation, for it too has become simply another of those "objects anarchically presented" to people thereby reinforcing a "solid environment of boredom." According to this view, the work of art is unable to fulfil the promise of an "authentic life"

beyond the separations of capitalist relations, and this in turn calls into question the extent to which Bernstein's novel can in fact embody any sincere investment in the emancipatory potential attributed to the so-called libertarian spirit of the SI.

For this reason, it is necessary to locate an alternative conceptual framework for assessing the implications of Bernstein's treatment of the novel in *Horses*. On one level the Brechtian framework, as already noted, helps to elucidate the role of distancing in the novel, however, it alone is insufficient to explain the novel's preoccupation with reification and "separation." In this context, the work of two thinkers might be viewed as crucial to understanding the relationship between reification and the novel as it is conceived in Bernstein's fiction. Firstly, there is the work of the Hungarian intellectual Georg Lukács, the translation of three of his most important works into French: *History and Class Consciousness*, *The Present Meaning of Critical Realism* and *Critical Realism*, in 1960 and 1961 respectively, having effectively placed the thinker at the forefront of the revision of Marxism in France in the post war era. The revival of the work of Lukács in France at this time also led to a reassessment of the form of the novel from a Marxist perspective, most notably in the scholarship of Lucien Goldmann. For Goldmann, the insights into alienation elaborated in Marx's theory of commodity fetishism "affirms in effect that in market societies [...] the collective consciousness gradually loses all active reality and tends to become a mere reflection of the economic life and ultimately, to disappear" (11). In his study *Towards a Sociology of the Novel*, Goldmann sought to formulate a Marxist sociological method for the study of literature that might account for how literary forms are related to the broader processes of reification in capitalist society. For Goldmann, there is "a *rigorous homology* between the literary form of the novel [...] and the everyday relation between man and commodities in general, and by extension, between men and other men, in a market society" (7, emphasis in original).

In this way, the processes of reification that underpin the structure of a market economy, and in turn their cultural products, posit an uncritical relationship to experience as a fundamental characteristic of everyday life under advanced western economies. As such, the revival of the concept of reification in the midst of a period of rapid technocratic modernisation, urban gentrification and a boom in consumerism provides an important context for understanding the preoccupation with overcoming alienation as "the violation of subjectivity" (Jappe, "Sic Transit" 114) that is at the heart of the Situationist project. Today, the ontological problems involved in the notion of recovering an "authentic"

subjectivity and a level of immediate experience somehow prior to reification has contributed, among other factors, to the critical decline of the concept (with a few notable exceptions⁹). By contrast, the 1960s was a period during which the concept of reification became “a powerful weapon in the struggle not only to define what capitalism did to its victims but also to explain why they were unable to resist it successfully,” explains Martin Jay. “In particular, it could function as a way to make sense of the failure of the working class to realize the historical mission assigned to it by Marxist theory” (Jay, “Introduction” 4).

As Joshua Clover observes, “*All the King’s Horses* is absolutely modern: boring as the surface of administered life, Paris paused between Old World and New Wave, between manners and style” (36). Principally concerned with reification as a kind of social pathology, *Horses* refuses the transfiguring power of literature as compensation for the banalities of everyday life in order to point, through its studied boredom, to the extent that reification “promotes an *apolitical* orientation toward the capitalist social form” (Chari 590). Thus *Horses* is steeped in the thing-like nature of modern life, a fiction of surface appearances and shallow externalities that reveal the pervasiveness of commodity fetishism under which even love, desire and romance are reduced to the banality of the exchange logic. Less an endorsement of libertine love as freedom, *All the King’s Horses* performs an ironic *détournement* of libertine fiction in order to dramatise the extent to which reification trivialises desire. As the monotonous voice of Debord intones in the soundtrack to *Critique of Separation*, “*La question n’est pas de constater que les gens vivent plus ou moins pauvrement; mais toujours d’une manière qui leur échappe*” (45) [“the point is not to recognize that some people live more or less poorly than others but that we all live in ways that are beyond our control” (31)]. It is precisely this concern for the “separated” nature of everyday life that animates the critical impulses of *Horses*. Far too insincere to posit anything like a proposal for a revolution of the passions, Bernstein’s “joke” novel is nevertheless a work of serious intent for in provoking the reader into recognition of one’s own complicity with the banality of such fictions it too seeks the moment of rupture in which the Situationist challenge to the spectacle of modern life begins.

4.2 Humour, masks, mythology

Where *Horses* began as “a lark, a scam” (Clover 34), the writing of Bernstein’s

second novel, *The Night*, unfolded within a somewhat different context. Following the publication of *All the King's Horses* demand arose from Bernstein's publishers, Buchet/Chastel, for its sequel. One suspects that such a request must have placed Bernstein in an awkward position given that by 1960 the Situationists were fast approaching a consensus on their anti-art position that would not only involve the rejection of their earlier proposition that culture might be productively contested from within but soon necessitated the withdrawal of the artistic members from the group. In composing her sequel Bernstein further distanced herself from her authorship of the text by consolidating the readymade approach, dealing with the very same *ménage-a-trois* plot replete with the same characters of the first novel. Again recounting the "amorous adventures" of Gilles and Geneviève and their manipulations of their *jeune-fille*, Carole, *The Night* nonetheless presents some notable variations from its predecessor. The first variation lies in the significant expansion of the nocturnal *dérive* through the streets of Paris undertaken by Gilles and Carole which is deployed in *The Night* as a structuring device around which their tale of mutual seduction revolves. The other points of differentiation relate to formal changes, most notably the introduction of a more complex interplay between the past and future tense, as well as a transition from the realist narrative mode that characterises *All the King's Horses* to a non-linear and fragmented recollection of events in *The Night*. The chronological confusions of the second novel signal the author's *détournement* of the *nouveau roman* [new novel], in particular her "knock off" of the stylistic pretensions of Alain Robbe-Grillet as compared with the parodic mimicry of Françoise Sagan in *Horses*. At the same time, Bernstein's chance approach to the narrative construction of *The Night* cements the Dada legacy. As Bernstein herself remarks on the novel's compositional methods: "to scramble the time frame, one cuts the linear tale into short segments," making "little slips of paper to throw into a hat and shuffle. One advantage being that it also pays homage to Dada" ("Preface" 12).

In the second part of this chapter principally concerned with *The Night*, I want to develop the previous section's account of Bernstein's subversive play with cliché and performative banality by focusing on the somewhat more complicated authorial perspective that her second novel presents. In particular, I am concerned with the contested role of humour in *The Night* and its ambiguous relationship to the self-mythologising strategies that were so central to the Situationist project and which are typically understood as masculinist in nature. The deeply ambiguous nature of the humour

deployed in *The Night* calls into question the author's intimate association with the group or milieu that she parodies. While it is tempting to read Bernstein's novel as a rare exposé of the sexism of the movement by one of its few female participants,¹⁰ my reading argues that there is insufficient evidence in the text to fully support such a claim and as such the use of humour and allusion in the novel is in many ways complicit with the masculinist pretences of the group. At the same time, I am concerned with how the novel's extended treatment of the *dérive* might also give rise to authorial ambivalence on Bernstein's part. As the epitome of lived experience the *dérive*, for the SI at least, was not to be represented in classical literary forms.¹¹ By emphasising the tensions and contradictions that underpin the authorial choices that Bernstein makes in her second novel, my reading of *The Night* challenges the reductive assumption that the core value of Bernstein's auto-fictions resides in their providing evidence or "eyewitness" (Passott 115) accounts of everyday life within the Lettrist and Situationist International. On the contrary, I am concerned to explore *The Night* as *fiction* with a view to establishing how Bernstein's ambiguous shifting of the boundaries between life and art might extend the Situationist project of critiquing the alienation of everyday life through modes of expression that supersede conventional aesthetic and literary preoccupations.

As I noted in my introduction, Bernstein's fictions present a dilemma in terms of precisely how they are to be treated that is compounded by the author's dismissal of the books as "jokes," a statement to which critics have repeatedly expressed intrigue. Recently the speculation concerning just precisely what it means to write a "joke" novel has shifted away from value-laden judgements over literary merit to guesses as to where, or toward whom, Bernstein's humour might be directed. In her review of *Horses*, Kelly Baum reiterates what is becoming a commonplace assertion, which is that "the target of Bernstein's humor was the Situationist International itself, specifically the sexual and political pretensions of its male members, the self-styled heroes of the postwar avant-garde" (163). On one level, *The Night* invites similar comments as it too contains many "jokes" that poke fun at some of the masculinist pretences of the movement. However, any assertion that the target of Bernstein's humour is the Situationist International itself is complicated by the fact that Bernstein was a member of the group which she was apparently so concerned to criticise and in her preface to *The Night* Bernstein stresses that she was a "committed Situationist" (11) during the composition of both novels. It is precisely through this bifocal lens of Bernstein as both a woman and a "committed

Situationist” that I argue one should seek to understand the complicated role of humour in *The Night*, which similarly operates in an ironical mode as in *Horses* but to somewhat different effect. Still working to cultivate gaps between appearances and reality, in Bernstein’s second novel the devices of humour, joking and irony not only provoke a critical awareness of the alienations of the everyday but also function to point out the fundamentally *uneven* nature of those alienations.

In his 2007 French language study, *Postures littéraires: Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur* [*Literary Postures: modern stagings of the author*], Swiss scholar Jérôme Meizoz deploys the concept of “posture” to foreground the ways in which an author’s social and cultural context influence his or her performative staging of self-identity. For Meizoz, authorial self-image is constructed as an interactive process deriving from discursive acts both within and outside the text and thus “posture” can be understood as comprising the multi-faceted performance of identity that arises not only in the author’s writing but also in the paratexts, speech acts and public gestures that all combine to mediate the relationship between the author and his or her imagined audience. Timo Müller offers a useful account of the performative dimensions of self-identity that Meizoz’s notion of posture implies in his study *The Self as Object in Modernist Fiction* (2010), in which he argues that:

In Meizoz’s conception the posture has a foundational, if somewhat contradictory, role in literary writing [...] More specifically, there are several areas in which posture and text interlink: on the level of content, in descriptions of other agents in the literary field (writers, critics, readers), of groups and networks, but also of agents and situations that distinguish the posturer from the literary field. Less obviously, posturing takes place on the formal level as well. Every choice of genre and style can contribute to a posture as well as narrative perspective, references to certain intertexts, etc [...] Besides the diachronic, Meizoz develops another important dimension of posturing: the performative dimension. A posture comes into existence only in its performance, which makes it ‘the locus of artifice, of staging, even of ruse.’ (Müller 53-4)

Arguing for the relevance of Meizoz’s conceptual framework of “posture” to Situationist texts, Michel Lacroix applies it to his analysis of the contradictory authorial posture evident in the experimental auto-fictional literary manuscript composed by the Lettrist Patrick Straram during his years embedded within the Lettrist milieu, *Les Bouteilles se couchant* [*The Bottles Lie Down*].¹² In fact, Lacroix’s work on the authorial posture of Straram usefully extends Meizoz by arguing that the notion of posture is

especially salient in the work of authors belonging to a literary collective or an avant-garde movement. As the identity discursively constructed in their texts is obliged to mediate a set of values shared by a group, this process of mediation frequently manifests with ambivalence insofar as the values of the group may be at odds with those of the individual. In respect to the Situationists, Lacroix argues that crucial to maintaining the collective posture of a group is the knowing and active construction of fictions and legends pertaining to their self-image. In this way, “the Situationists themselves play with the relationship between fiction and authenticity, texts and concrete situations, masks and postures.” For the SI, the “primacy given to the *vecu* [everyday life] and to feeling does not lead, as it did for the Surrealists, to the banishment of fiction in the name of authenticity, but rather to the cultivation of secrets, the multiplication of masks and the introduction of gaps”¹³ (Lacroix par 24).

Not unlike the strategic deployment of irony in *Horses*, the use of *détournement* in *The Night* as a technique of recombining existing elements into a new context that alters their original meaning, provides an important means through which Bernstein is able to “cultivate secrets” and “introduce gaps” into her fictional representation of the Situationist International. In particular, the intertextuality that is introduced by the *détournement* of a broad array of literary and cinematic references has the effect of multiplying and proliferating the points of identification in the novel and as such intertextuality and allusion destabilise the novel’s autobiographical content. At the same time, parodic references to recognisable figures and scenarios of the Situationist (and Lettrist) International point to the game-like nature of Bernstein’s fiction, revealing a tactical dimension to her use of allusion and parody that recalls Jean-François Lyotard’s likening of the act of communication to a game that “aspires not to ‘truth’ but to ‘performativity’ (Mitchell 45); “it is, furthermore, a game of strategy, of ‘moves’ that provokes ‘countermoves’” (45). When understood as a tactical game of moves and countermoves, the role of parody and allusion in *The Night* thus brings us closer to Bernstein’s *habitus*, to draw upon the sociological terminology of Bourdieu, as a fully-fledged member of the SI, and points to a broader anxiety concerning the relationship between the avant-garde and its self-representation. In the introduction to his cryptic portrayal of the Left Bank avant-garde in his 1950 metagraphic novel, *Saint-ghetto-des prêtres* [*Saint Ghetto of the Loans*], Gabriel Pomerand confesses that “I dread the day when the name of the invention – which is a phenomenon of commodification – overshadows the real search for transgression” (12).

A decade later, the *mise-en-abyme* allusions to the SI in Bernstein's second detoured novel reflect a similar anxiety about the capacity of mass forms like the novel to recuperate radical ideas and scenarios. Thus the self-reflexive use of stereotypes, in-jokes and clichés work to distance the reader from, rather than grant insight into, the so-called “lived reality” that Bernstein's fictions purport to represent.

While the novel and film version of *Dangerous Liaisons* provides one of the key sources for the *détournement* of the readymade *ménage-a-trois* scenario in *All the King's Horses*, it is arguably Marcel Carné's 1942 medieval period piece film *Les visiteurs du soir* (English title: *The Devil's Envoys*) that offers one of the richest sources of allusive material for intertextual play in *The Night*. The story of a pair of devil's messengers, Gilles and Dominique, sent to earth disguised as travelling minstrels charged with the task of seducing the innocent young daughter of a medieval baron, Anne, in order to disrupt her forthcoming wedding nuptials, Bernstein expresses a deep affection for Carné's film in her preface to the 2013 English edition of *The Night*. In the preface she explains that “Gilles and Carole ferociously identify with Carné's radiant, deadly couple dispatched by the Devil at the height of the Middle Ages” (13). Not unlike Debord's identification with Thomas De Quincey in his *Mémoires*, addressed at length in my previous chapter, the semi-autobiographical references to Carné's film in Bernstein's second novel are slippery and unstable and thereby complicate the truth claims of the text, introducing complex layers of mediation between the author and her alter-ego(s).

As a significant source of inspiration for Bernstein's novel, the *détournement* of Carné's film assumes a number of guises in *The Night*, ranging from similarities at the level of plot to the appropriation of dialogue, *mise-en-abyme* references to the film's visual scenography and a number of shared thematic preoccupations. Crucially, the manifold allusions to Carné's film allow Bernstein to adopt a medieval posture that, as I noted in my previous chapter, was frequently invoked by the SI as a strategy for opposing the passionate intensity of the chivalric age to the atomisation, individualism and loss of adventure in modern everyday life. In this way, the SI's tendency to identify with the medieval Knights of the Round Table, for instance, and the events of the quest for the holy grail, belong to what Andreotti identifies as the “mythmaking turns described by Huizinga as typical of play” (“Architecture and Play” 217) according to which “the tendency to exaggerate and embellish actual experience and to invest surroundings with personality” (222) assumes particular importance. In *The Night*, medieval allusions invest the prosaic

activity of Gilles and Carole's prolonged roaming of the city streets during their long nocturnal *dérive* with the mythical overtones of Arthurian Romance:

- *Tous les mots nous échappent, dit Gilles, ils sont retournés, jusqu'à devenir leur contraire, par une dégradation dans leur emploi social. Cela s'explique, mais pas facilement, pas sans le reste.*

- *Pas pour moi, dit Carole, pour moi l'aventure, c'est toujours la forêt.*

- *Brocéliande, dit Gilles.*

- *Le pays aventureux, dit Carole. (La Nuit 98)*

"All words escape us," says Gilles, "they are inverted, until they become their opposite, due to decay in their social usage. It can be understood, but not easily, not without the rest."

"Not for me," says Carole, "for me adventure always means the forest."

"Brocéliande," says Gilles.

"Land of adventures," says Carole. (*The Night* 99)

A legendary mythological forest associated with Arthurian Romance, Brocéliande is famed for the mystery of its uncertain location, unusual weather and its magical fountain. In this way, invoking the psychogeography of Brocéliande, alongside the use of medieval allusions more broadly in *The Night*, expresses the Situationist identification with the "all-or-nothing medieval courtly love tradition" (Atkinson, par 5) which, as noted, operates in dialectical tension with the trivialisation of desire in the modern era. For Bernstein, intertextual references to Carné's medieval period film undoubtedly work on one level to romanticise and mythologise the SI in an affirmative manner. This tactical manoeuvre is especially evident in her appropriation of one of the film's most iconic visual scenarios:

Tristes enfants perdu, Gilles et Dominique s'avancent au pas dans la rue du Cardinal-Lemoine. Ils sont montés sur des chevaux blancs; ils ont leurs guitares en bandoulière. Un grand château encoure tout neuf les attend, et c'est le diable qui les envoie. (La Nuit 36)

Lonely, lost children, Gilles and Dominique advance along the Rue du Cardinal-Lemoine at a crawl. They ride white horses; guitars slung across their backs. A large château awaits them, which is still brand new, and it's the devil who sent them. (*The Night* 42)

The layers of allusion in this *détournement* are twofold for not only does Bernstein recontextualise a romantic image from Carné's film but she also interweaves it with one

of the key motifs that Debord applied to the SI, namely that of *enfants perdu* [“lost children”], an old French military term that describes the young men lured to enlist in military battle and which represents for Debord an image of forlorn hope. As it recurs in his film work in particular, the motif of *lost children* is frequently intertwined with that of *le temps passé*, or “lost time,” connoting a sense of something precious that is now lost and cannot be regained, it is “*rencontre la sphère de la découverte, de l’exploration d’un terrain inconnu; toutes les formes de la recherche, de l’aventure, de l’avant-garde, C’est à carrefour que nous nous sommes trouvés, et perdus*” (*Critique de la séparation* 51-2/35) [“an encounter with the sphere of discovery, an exploration of unknown terrains: all the forms of quest, adventure, of the avant-garde. This is the crossroads where we have found ourselves and lost our way”]. Recasting Carne’s protagonists as a pair of *lost children* implies a wistful note in Bernstein’s turning around of the original filmic scenario and thus points to her complicity in propagandising the heroic image of the SI. Yet in other instances the heroic image of Gilles is called into question and this is especially the case when he is presented as a knight-like figure. In these scenarios it becomes difficult to discern whether the presentation of Gilles in this guise represents a critical and disapproving caricature on Bernstein’s part or simply another strategic manoeuvre in her chess-like game of Situationist mythologising. Such ambiguity characterises Carole’s reflections upon her travels with Gilles, for example, when in a dreamy and tired state after her all-night walk she muses how she was

- Avec Gilles, dans toutes les rues d’une quête incohérente, et Giflet, fils de Do, et le comte de Saint-Germain, et le cruel Zénon (d’Élée). Avec le pâle Vasco, Héraclite l’Obscur, Sagremor le desréré, le fidèle Gauvain, l’industriel Ulysse. (*La Nuit* 114-5)

“With Gilles, in all the streets on a hazy quest, and Giflet, son of Do, and the Count of Saint-Germain, and the cruel Zeno (of Elea). With the pale Vasco, Heraclitus the Obscure, Sagremor the Foolhardy, the loyal Gawain, and the industrious Ulysses.” (*The Night* 114-5)

In this ambivalent inventory of chivalrous figures a gap emerges between Carole’s romantic idealising of Gilles as a peripatetic hero and the more banal reality of their walk which was seemingly designed “*pour reculer le moment d’aller faire l’amour*” (114) [“to delay the moment of making love” (114)]. Presenting the reader with a weary procession of questing picaresque figures, these ambivalent analogies might imply a more cynical attitude on Bernstein’s part toward the intertwined relationship between the avant-garde

desire for adventure, rupture and transgression and the hunger for serial romantic and sexual conquests. Viewed from this perspective, the medieval masquerade of Gilles as “Giflet, son of Do, and the Count of Saint-Germain, and the cruel Zeno (of Elea)” might be viewed as critiquing some of the more masculinist pretences attached to urban exploration in general. As Heddon and Turner have identified, there exists “an orthodoxy of walking [that] frequently frames and valorizes walking as individualist, heroic, epic and transgressive” (224). Indeed, it is noteworthy that Carole does not imagine her own walking in radical terms but instead attributes these qualities to her male counterpart whom she imaginatively dresses up in the role of a legendary discoverer of unknown territories, the knight in search of the Holy Grail, an adventurer of epic proportions.

As in *All the King's Horses*, the mask of irony clearly plays an important destabilising role in *The Night*, giving Bernstein ample room to indulge in a playful form of mockery that deflates some of the pretences of the movement whilst the full implications of her barbs and quips remain ambiguous due to their status as “jokes.” In respect to the novel’s medieval intertextuality, the techniques of *détournement* allow Bernstein to question the Situationist identification with the chivalric and passionate intensity of medieval courtly love traditions. However, the extent to which the novel probes, on a deeper level, the inherently conservative nature of what Samuel Cooper describes as the SI’s “quaint dedication to a love gallant and heroic” (“Sex and the Situs” 10) is questionable. By proliferating the points of heroic identification in the novel, Bernstein’s authorial stance is ambiguous to the extent that she participates in a complicit fashion in cultivating Situationist legends at the very same time that she critiques them.¹⁴ In this way, masquerade in the novel involves a process of doubling that Paolo Plotegher similarly identifies in Debord’s films which exhibit a “passionate” quality, according to which the “performing self looses [sic] the sense of a positive/negative, love/hate distinction” (par 13). In a similar vein, Bernstein’s complicit *and* critical fictionalisation of Gilles goes beyond a love/hate distinction, embodying the type of in-between position or ambivalence exhibited by Leonora Carrington and which I addressed in my first chapter on the spatial transgressions of the Surrealists. Here I noted Susan Suleiman’s point concerning the tendency of the women artists of the avant-garde to display “simultaneous positive and negative feelings directed toward the same object” (“Black Humour” 5). In Bernstein’s novel, the *détournement* of the fraternal legends of the medieval era is playful, parodic and heavily ironic. But this theft and passionate identification also bears evidence

of desire, revealing on the one hand an impulse to deconstruct and expose the unevenness of the movement's heroic image whilst on the other hand suggesting an equally powerful desire to participate or become more fully implicated within its legends.

4.3 The *dérive* and the mobility of desire

The complex role of medieval allusions in *The Night* reveals how *détournement* in the hands of Bernstein functions as a game of recognition and transmutation that sustains desire through the mobility and multiplicity of diverted points of identification. In what follows, I want to explore how this close link between desire and mobility is equally evident in Bernstein's treatment of the *dérive*, a principal feature of *The Night* and a rare example of an extended literary treatment of the *dérive* by a member of the LI and the SI. Indeed, the detailed account that Bernstein provides of the long nocturnal walk of Gilles and Carole through the streets of the Left Bank is an example of what Ivan Chtcheglov termed the "continuous *dérive*,"¹⁵ a *dérive* that takes place over an unusually long period of time with the effect of its extended duration being to increase the emotional disorientation of the walker. In Bernstein's treatment, Gilles and Carol surrender to a prolonged urban drift and the story of their seduction is enfolded within the prosaic events of their walking.

In many respects, Bernstein's portrayal of the *dérive* conforms to the Situationist definition of the practice as discussed in my second chapter concerned with psychogeography and affect. Undertaken by Gilles and Carole together, their *dérive* is social in nature (the Situationist *dérive* is not solitary but rather walked in pairs or small groups) and is conducted with a brisk, rapid pace that encourages haptic responses to the city rather than the ocular excursions that arise from the strolling pace of *flânerie*. It is nocturnal and therefore contrapuntal to "*cette horreur du jour est l'horreur de la légalité*" (*La Nuit* 66) ["this horror of the day [that] is the horror of law" (*The Night* 70)] and is combined with drinking and explorations of the "seedy" neighbourhoods of the city that connote vagabondage and nomadic subjects with a somewhat marginal relationship to society. Notwithstanding its Situationist character, however, Bernstein's *dérive* in other respects confounds expectations. Viewed from a contemporary perspective, the treatment of the *dérive* in *The Night* is far from typical of the literary *dérives* that characterise post-1990s psychogeographical fictions concerned with "deep topography" and in which walking the city often performs the work of urban archaeology by bringing to the surface

buried stories that disrupt the city's spectacular veneer.¹⁶

By contrast the *dérive* in *The Night* is decidedly anti-literary, walking is portrayed as an everyday or quotidian activity and it is precisely its unexceptional ordinariness that is emphasised by Bernstein. Its psychogeographical character principally derives from the way in which walking figures as a vehicle for exploring the ambiances, changes in atmosphere and transitions in areas of intensity in the urban environment that might give rise to a sense of spontaneity and an upwelling of desire in the everyday. Reflecting in particular the influence of Henri Lefebvre, whose 1959 autobiographical work *La Somme et le Reste* [*The Sum and the Rest*], is invoked in an epigraph to *The Night*, Bernstein's second novel is more engaged with the sociological approach to the everyday as evidenced in the specific categories that Lefebvre attributes to it, such as the lived, the spontaneous, the ambiguous, social space, social time, and praxis.¹⁷ For Bernstein, walking sets these categories into a dialectical tension with one another and in *The Night* the everyday emerges as a site of struggle between alienation and appropriation, or a space of conflict over *disalienation*¹⁸ to draw again upon the terminology of Lefebvre. Yet it is important to point out that the praxis of everyday life discernible in Bernstein's treatment of the quotidian is both subtle and contradictory. For any radical claims that the novel might stake out for psychogeography appear far more qualified than the virile assertions that one encounters in the SI's manifestos and journal articles. This is a point that I want to explore further by considering desire in Bernstein's second novel as, on the one hand, mobilised to reveal a sense of possibility and spontaneity latent within the everyday while, on the other hand, concerned to reveal its transience, its fickleness and quixotic nature in a somewhat fatalistic manner that ultimately works to concede the unevenness of radical politics from the perspective of gender.

Traversing "almost every street in the fifth and sixth arrondissement of Paris (the best ones) and several other neighbouring, affiliated streets" (Bernstein, "Preface" 13), Gilles and Carole's *dérive* is, as noted, intertwined with the unfolding of their affair. Constructing a map of the Lettrist haunts of Paris, the couple's purposeless drifting works to chart the shifting terrain of their emotional landscape as the pair shuffle between moments of intimacy and attraction, boredom and distraction. For Gilles in particular, walking represents both a way of life and a study of reification in action and thus the novel opens squarely within his milieu at the crossroads of two busy Parisian streets with a description that is delivered in the objective style of the *nouveau roman*. Its prosaicness

emphasises the unexceptional “everydayness” of the scene:

Au coin du boulevard Saint-Germain et du boulevard Saint-Michel se trouve une bouche de métro, désaffectée depuis longtemps, et bordée par les grilles d'un jardin interdit au public. Les autres coins du carrefour sont respectivement occupés par: - en traçant une diagonale, un café discret et correct, le Café de Cluny – en traversant le boulevard Saint-Michel, un immeuble dont le rez-de-chaussée a été récemment ravalé et repeint d'une couleur claire: la banque du Crédit Lyonnais – en traversant le boulevard Saint-Germain, un magasin de chaussures. (La Nuit 7)

At the corner of the Boulevard Saint-Germain and the Boulevard Saint-Michel lies a metro entrance, long since defunct, and bordered by the railings of a private garden. The other corners of the junction are respectively occupied by: the decent, unassuming Café Cluny, diagonally opposite; the Crédit Lyonnais bank, whose ground floor was recently refurbished and painted in a bright shade, just across the Boulevard Saint-Michel; and a shoe shop, on the other side of the Boulevard Saint-Germain. (*The Night* 17)

On one level, Bernstein's dispassionate surveying of the neighbourhood signals the novel's parody of the elongated sentences, objective point-of-view and preoccupation with surface detail that characterises the *nouveau roman* especially as it was practiced by Alain Robbe-Grillet. For the SI, the extremely visual prose of the *nouveau roman* and its renouncement of dialogue and verbal communication rendered it a highly problematic genre. In an article principally concerned with denouncing Robbe-Grillet's cryptic screenplay for the critically lauded 1961 film *Last Year at Marienbad*, Bernstein pejoratively describes the *nouveau roman* as “*l'école du Regard*” (“Sunset Boulevard” 285) [“the School of the Look”], which “*ne tient son office spectaculaire que typographique*” (285) [“holds its spectacular office *typographically*” (emphasis in original)]. On another level, the prosaic anti-aesthetic of *The Night* implies a broader spectrum of influences than the *nouveau roman* alone and its ambiguous treatment of the everyday not only alludes to the sociological and ethnographic approaches to the quotidian exemplified by the “everyday Marxism” of Lefebvre, for instance, but also reveals the influence of the films of Jean-Luc Godard and the practitioners of the *nouvelle vague*. Indeed there is a clear nod to the intellectual fashions of the day in the reader's first encounter with Gilles and Carole as a pair of pedestrians navigating the “fluid, undramatic present” (Sheringham 16) of the quotidian:

Ils passent à côté d'une colonne, d'un réverbère plutôt, sur lequel est fixée, au-dessus de leurs têtes, une pancarte bleue et blanche indiquant par une

flèche: “Musée de Cluny”. Sur la même colonne, un autre signal, lumineux et changeant, est le seul qui attire le regard des passants [...] Gilles et Carole passent auprès de la colonne sans la voir. Gilles a seulement attendu, pour traverser, l’arrêt des voitures. Carole suit Gilles, qui la tient par la nuque. Ils prennent la direction indiquée par la pancarte “Musée de Cluny”, et longent la grille du jardin du musée. (La Nuit 7-8)

They pass a column, or a street lamp, affixed with a blue and white sign above their heads. The arrow indicates: ‘Musée de Cluny.’ On the same column, another sign – illuminated and flashing – is the only one to catch the attention of passersby [...] Gilles and Carole are oblivious to the column as they pass close by. Gilles simply waits for a pause in the traffic to cross. Carole follows Gilles, who holds her by the nape. They head in the direction indicated by the Musée de Cluny sign, skirting the railings of the museum’s garden. (*The Night* 18)

Not unlike the jump cuts of Godard’s *À Bout de Souffle* [*Breathless*] which draw attention to the constructed nature of the film by breaking with conventional continuity editing, the self-conscious quotidian realism of Bernstein’s unembellished prose similarly cultivates an air of distancing and alienation. In this way, *The Night* as a Situationist fiction clearly departs from the aestheticised transfiguration of the everyday that one encounters in the Surrealist city novel and especially in Aragon’s *Paris Peasant* which, as outlined in chapter one, takes walking the city as a starting point for energetic flights of fancy and poetic reverie that provoke the unleashing of the marvellous via encounters with liminal and threshold zones. In a similar vein, Bernstein’s novel refuses to reimagine the city as an unconscious or ontologically liminal space and her clear-eyed observational descriptions of a column, a sign, a railing etc are in contradistinction to the Freudo-Marxist preoccupations discernible in Breton’s uncanny encounters with the statues and monuments of Paris in *Nadja*. The distinctly anti-literary character of Bernstein’s description of Gilles and Carole casually traversing the terrain of the city emphasises, then, the prosaicness of walking as conveying what Michael Sheringham describes as the “banal everyday [that] contains its own antidote” (21). It is in this context that the motif of the crossroads recurs in the novel as an important vehicle for connoting the web of possibilities that lie within the quotidian, the notion of the everyday as pregnant with what Lefebvre terms an “indeterminate ensemble of human possibilities” (qtd in Sheringham, 22). While this concern for the everyday as a “sum of possibilities” strikes an optimistic note it is important to point out that Bernstein is equally concerned with its residue (“the rest”), according to which the subject continually vacillates between spontaneous

irruptions of heightened emotion and the more negative or alienated effects of isolation, artifice, contrived communication and simulated feeling. As Juliette Einhorn observes, *The Night* depicts a “psychogeography of emotions” such that “in its artful machinery one can read into the same look criticism, irony and negation but also locate within its interstices a map of tenderness that is moving and protean” (par 4).¹⁹ In this way, shifts in mood and feeling in the novel become analogous with the changes in ambience and atmosphere that modulate with the simple turning of a street corner:

D'un pas plus lent, ils repartent vers l'extrémité de la rue, dépassent après la dernière ruine, encombrée de cageots et de débris de toutes sortes, deux ou trois façades encore debout surplombant une vitrine incertaine, et débouchent sur la place Sainte-Geneviève qui, encore qu'elle soit à cette heure relativement tranquille, paraît par contraste pleine de vie et de rumeurs. (La Nuit 25)

At a slower pace, they resume their route, heading towards the end of the street. After the last of the ruins, cluttered with crates and all sorts of junk, they pass two or three façades which are still intact, teetering over an uncertain shop window. They surface onto the Place Saint-Geneviève which, although still relatively tranquil at this hour, seems positively full of life and animation by contrast. (*The Night* 33)

Here Gilles and Carole's encounter with the ruin, in this instance little more than a heap of junk and rubbish, has the effect of momentarily transforming the city street into an urban wilderness, however fleetingly, until their brisk turn into the next street draws the walkers back into the social space of the square where the everyday routines of dining and drinking resume. By placing the everyday at the centre of the novel, Bernstein explores what is identified in the quotation from Lefebvre placed as an epigraph to *The Night* as the “conflict between alienation and the struggle against alienation” that underpins the interactions of daily life.²⁰ It is in the context of this ambiguous struggle between alienation and appropriation in daily life that a micropolitics of desire may be discerned in Bernstein's second novel, a micropolitics that both intersects with and departs from what might be considered the “orthodox” politics of the Lettrist *dérive* that I discussed at length in chapter two. Here I turned to the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari to challenge generic conceptions of the *dérive* as a privatised or distinctly subjective response to place in order to resituate it as a collective undertaking that harnesses the destabilising affects of desire in order to activate multiplicities and states of becoming that challenge stable and fixed categories of identity. In her preface to *The Night*, Bernstein conceptualises the *dérive* in this manner albeit in more generalised terms

when she reflects that it “wasn’t a hobby, we wanted to make it a way of life. Letting our steps guide us through the city [...] without following a set path or pursuing any particular goal. Letting oneself be drawn by the forces emanating from houses, paving stones, and windows. Planning nothing in advance” (13). To return to the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari, Bernstein is alert to the principal goal of the *dérive* which is to deterritorialise everyday life by breaking with usual habits. Walking at night, for instance, appropriates the city from the law of the day and in the case of Gilles and Carole the release from the strictures of daily routines facilitates the posture of “letting go” necessary for psychogeographical explorations. At the same time, the nocturnal setting lessens the hegemony of vision and propels Gilles and Carole toward the isolated, abandoned and “sleepy” zones of Paris. Following the vectors of desire, their *dérive* makes lines of flight across the city and haptic responses liquefy its architecture:

Le trottoir de la rue Lhomond est étroit; c'est-à-dire qu'il est quelquefois très étroit. Il change souvent de forme et de surface, et se retourne sur lui-même comme s'il n'arrivait pas à couleur. De place en place, il s'étale, et Gilles et Carole peuvent marcher côte à côte; quand il se resserre brusquement, ils sont obligés de se coller l'un contre l'autre, de s'agripper; non pas obligés, naturellement, car rien ne les empêcherait de descendre sur la chaussée, mais portés à le faire, par jeu et par plaisir, ou peut-être contenus par la barrière des véhicules qui le délimite. (La Nuit 53)

The pavement in the Rue Lhomond is narrow; that's to say it's sometimes very narrow. It often changes shape and texture, and turns back on itself as though its flow were interrupted. From one spot to the next it widens out, and Gilles and Carole can walk side by side; when it brusquely narrows again, they're obliged to press close to each other, to cling together; not obliged, naturally, since nothing would prevent them from stepping onto the road, but led to do it, for the fun and pleasure of it, or perhaps because they're hemmed in by the barriers of vehicles on one side. (*The Night* 59)

Here the convergence of desire, movement and the textures of the street elicit a moment of *disalienation* when space becomes fluid like a river and a sense of the possibilities of the quotidian is unleashed. Yet in a subsequent moment the pair are “hemmed in by the barriers of vehicles” and in this sense the passage, like the novel more broadly, registers how the deterritorialisation or breaking of habits is quickly followed by a subsequent reterritorialisation, a forming of new habits that call into question the radical or transformative potential of the *dérive* with an ambiguity that is lacking in the more future-orientated assertions of the Lettrist and Situationist manifestos. In both novels Geneviève frequently surrenders to habit and in *Horses*, for instance, she is observant of

how this differentiates her from Gilles: “*Avec Gilles, je connais des itinéraires longs, compliqués et pleins d’embûches. Seule, après un café et un croissant pris au premier comptoir, mais trop tardifs pour être prolétaires, les rues me mènent toujours aux mêmes creux de la ville [...] Pour moi, la rive gauche se résume à quelques terrasses*” (Chevaux 30) [“With Gilles, I’d follow long itineraries, complicated and full of traps. Alone, after a coffee and a croissant at the first available counter, the streets –empty of workers by now – always lead me to the same parts of the city [...] For me, the Left Bank consists of a few café tables” (Horses 37)]. I have already noted how for Deleuze and Guattari the expanded field of architecture assumes a “prophetic orientation” (O’Sullivan 13) and, in a similar vein, for Debord the *dérive* is “not just an architectural deterritorialisation but also a way of modifying actual human relations, precisely an ‘opening up’ of that which is closed, a breaking out of alienation” (O’Sullivan 14). The treatment of the *dérive* in *The Night* similarly rehearses these potentialities but at the same time its reterritorialisations return us to that prickly question that haunts both the liminal geographies of Surrealism and the disorientations of Situationist psychogeography, which is a breaking out of alienation *for whom?* The more isolated perspective of Geneviève thus warrants further scrutiny for the way in which it provides a striking counterpoint to Gilles and his easy enjoyment of the freedoms of his mobility. As such, the feminine perspective that Geneviève brings to the *dérive* implies a more qualified and provisional view of the link between desire and Situationist praxis.

Geneviève’s conception of the *dérive* recognises the link between walking, desire and seduction and the potential for an impassioned mobility to spontaneously supersede the banal realities of the everyday. Yet Geneviève is arguably no longer under the spell of the *dérive*, in part because the novelty of her youthful passion for Gilles has subsided but also because she is not blind to the unevenness of its appeal from the perspective of gender. If Gilles readily derives aesthetic pleasures from the fruit and vegetable stands that line the Rue de l’Arbalète each morning (not unlike Breton’s veneration of the flower stalls at Les Halles during the nocturnal *dérive* in *Mad Love*) it is because he is “*en ignore l’usage, c’est-à-dire qu’il ne lui arrive jamais d’acheter de la viande ou des oranges, et de les emporter dans un filet, comme font les femmes*” (La Nuit 59) [“oblivious to their function, which is to say that he never buys meat or oranges, and takes them away in a string bag, as women do” (The Night 64)]. In a similar vein, the radical aspirations to transform the city that the SI connect with psychogeographical experiments are frequently constructed

by Geneviève as masculine. While Geneviève is alert to the ever shifting relations between alienation and appropriation in daily life, she rarely imagines herself as an active agent of change as is evident in her reflection upon Gilles's "love of propaganda":

Auparavant, Geneviève aussi s'était étonnée de la même chose. Gilles pourrait peut-être dresser de mémoire une carte qualitative des affichages libres du quartier. C'est parce qu'il a du goût pour l'agitation populaire. La Fronde est aussi une époque qui lui aurait sûrement convenu. Mais pour le moment, dans la nuit relative, c'est un réflexe machinal qui lui fait reconnaître les petits rectangles colorés, et c'est Carole qu'il embrasse le long des slogans plus ou moins futiles... (La Nuit 53)

In the old days Geneviève too had been astonished by the same thing. Gilles may well be able to erect from memory a qualitative map of the fly posters in the neighbourhood. It's because he has a taste for civil unrest. The era of the Fronde would surely have suited him too. But for the moment, in the relative darkness, it's an unconscious reflex which makes him recognise the little coloured rectangles, and it's Carole whom he kisses alongside the more or less futile slogans... (*The Night* 59)

In light of the role that street posters and urban graffiti would later play in mobilising dissident energies during the student protests and the general strike of May '68, Geneviève's reference here to the "more or less futile slogans" of the city's fly posters is jarring and implies a fatalism or resignation that is at odds with the commitment to transforming everyday life so central to the Situationist project. On the one hand, it is important to acknowledge that the cynical perspective of Geneviève, as a fictional character, cannot be equated with the point-of-view of the author. On the other hand, the ambiguity of Geneviève's situation and her alertness to the generalised passivity within daily life does plainly draw attention to the repetitious, the mundane and unexceptional tasks that comprise the quotidian. In this way, Bernstein's novel again resonates with the sociological perspective of Lefebvre who, in contrast to the more radical Situationist position on the necessary transformation of the everyday, is at least willing to concede that when viewed from the perspective of the performance of elementary tasks (especially those associated with domestic women's work) the everyday has the capacity to represent "*l'envers de toute praxis*" ["the obverse of all praxis" (Lefebvre qtd in Sheringham 146)]. Just as the wry remarks, jokes and barbs that Geneviève makes about Gilles's indifference to the mundane realities of domestic tasks (which of course he does not perform) renders this inequality visible, the reluctance of Geneviève to identify herself as an agent of change in the novel also points to the hierarchy of uneven gender relations that more broadly

underscored the more militant position of the avant-garde politics of the fifties and sixties.

Noting that Geneviève was not necessarily a character with whom Bernstein identified (in recent interviews the author is at pains to differentiate herself from her fictional alter-ego²¹), I want to return in my conclusion to some important intersections with the work and situation of Simone de Beauvoir that shed light upon the treatment of gender in Bernstein's novels. As is the case with the construction of Bernstein's female characters, female subjectivity was negatively critiqued by de Beauvoir as apolitical, irrational and ahistorical when compared with the traits of reason and logic that, over time, became accepted as intrinsic to the male subject. The implication is that woman, de Beauvoir asserts in *The Second Sex*, is not only "unaware of what real action is, that is able to change the face of the world, but she is also lost in the middle of the world as in the heart of an immense and confused mass. She does not know how to use masculine logic well" (655). In light of such claims the extent to which de Beauvoir can be classified a feminist in the modern sense of the term unsurprisingly remains heavily contested. Nevertheless, de Beauvoir's acute sensitivity to the patriarchal biases of both history and modernity, combined with her conception of femininity as a socio-cultural construct that is shaped and made in response to the environment rather than immanent to women in a biological sense, locates her at a transitional moment that Bernstein similarly occupies. Insofar as *The Second Sex* puts forward a "critique of the ways in which the very idea of what it meant to be a woman was socially contrived and mediated," Frances Stracey suggests that de Beauvoir's "attack aimed at the 'total situation' [in a way that] resonates with a Situationist position" (*Constructed Situations* 118-9). Likewise, the ambiguous situation of Geneviève in *The Night* and *All the King's Horses* is not dissimilar to the dilemmas faced by the female protagonists of de Beauvoir's novels who may not exhibit radical feminist subjectivities yet nevertheless make apparent the social determinations and limitations assigned by gender and sexual difference at that time.

Finally, it is worth emphasising once more the relevance of ambiguity to Bernstein's project especially in the sense that the *ambiguous*, according to Lefebvre, can be distinguished from the psychological category of *ambivalence* to the extent that ambiguity is "a sociological category, a lived situation, which is constituted from contradictions which have been stifled, blunted and unnoticed (unrecognized) as such" (*Critique* vol 2, 220). In this respect, "Ambiguity [...] is a condition offered to an individual by a group" (220). The "lived situation" of Michèle Bernstein and Simone de

Beauvoir was undoubtedly ambiguous as both authors were accepted, active and influential within an avant-garde circle and therefore dwelled within a socially and culturally progressive *habitus*. Yet it is inevitable that both women must have felt the constraints of femininity in an era when the feminine as a category was still precluded from the realm of history and agency perceived as necessary for inculcating the transformative subjectivity demanded by radical politics and cultural activism.

When critically reassessed from a contemporary perspective, *The Night* is a novel that creates trouble in the Situationist archives on a number of levels. The complicating factor of gender points to the contradictions and fundamental unevenness of constructing everyday life as a site of praxis and revolutionary action. At the same time, the Situationist “posturing” of the author results in a text that mediates the values of the group, setting into motion the SI’s critique of the generalised passivity and reification or “separations” that structure the relations of everyday life under commodity capitalism. Just as *All the King’s Horses* amplifies the reifying qualities of fiction in order to turn the novel into a tool of critique, the prosaic treatment of the everyday in *The Night* as a field riven by an ongoing struggle between alienation and appropriation, desire and separation, spontaneity and banality, similarly suggests that even the apparently outmoded and obsolete form of the novel has a role to play in the Situationist project, however loudly its members might have denounced its shortcomings. It is for this reason that even four decades after Michèle Bernstein’s resignation from the SI, the image of the now 81-year-old former Situationist challenging her editor to a game of chess presents a striking reminder of the extent to which the blurring of art and life in fiction can be turned into a game with an endless potential for subversion.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

¹ In *Lipstick Traces* Greil Marcus recounts an interview that he conducted with Bernstein in 1983 in which she stated about her books: “they were jokes” (423).

² See “The Game,” an interview with Michèle Bernstein conducted by Gavin Everall and published in *Frieze* 157 (September 2013). Everall is an editor at Book Works, the UK-based publisher responsible for commissioning the English translation of *The Night*. In fact, the translation of Bernstein’s book belongs to a larger story of *détournement* as its release was accompanied by a sister publication, *After the Night* (2013), an adaptation of the Paris *dérive* in *The Night* transported to the streets of London’s hip East End. Collaboratively authored by the art collective, Everyone Agrees, the detoured novel also

responds self-reflexively to the events surrounding the translation of Bernstein's novel.

³ McKenzie Wark, *Fifty Years of Recuperation*, "Rather than read them for dubious historical details, it might be more interesting to take the books on their own terms, as fictions, but as presenting in fictional form a practice, even an ethics, for a Situationist conduct of everyday life" (34).

⁴ Minou Drouet was a prodigal child poet whose first book of poetry entitled *Arbre, Mon Ami* [*Tree, My Friend*] was published at age eight by René Julliard, publisher of Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour Tristesse*. Drouet shot to celebrity in France when her book of poems immediately sold over 40,000 copies. For a provocative account of Drouet's embodiment of the sensation of the young girl in France in the late fifties see Carol Mavor, "Tragic Candy, Time."

⁵ Bernstein has actively encouraged this comparison. In her preface to *The Night*, she writes: "So: to kidnap a plot. *Les Liaisons dangereuses*, that book cherished by all good minds and so scandalous in its time, immediately came to mind" (10). Laclos's novel was very much in the cultural zeitgeist following the 1959 film remake by Roger Vadim and starring Jeanne Moreau.

⁶ Le Blog de Zones Subversives, "Michèle Bernstein et la vie de situationnistes:" "L'auteur manifeste surtout son humour mais évoque aussi la critique situationniste" (par 14). "L'esprit libertin correspond bien à la démarche libertaire des situationnistes [...] Contre les normes et les contraintes sociales, le jeu et le plaisir deviennent des armes révolutionnaires" (par 19).

⁷ In "A User's Guide," Debord and Wolman note the influence of Brecht on the Situationist tactic of *détournement*: "*Bertolt Brecht révélant, dans une interview accordée récemment à l'hebdomadaire 'France-Observateur', qu'il opérait des coupures dans les classiques du théâtre pour un rendre la représentation plus heureusement éducative, est bien plus proche que Duchamp de la conséquence révolutionnaire que nous réclamons. Encore faut-il noter que, dans le cas de Brecht, ces utiles interventions sont tenues dans d'étroites limites par un respect malvenu de la culture, telle que la définit la classe dominante.*" ("Mode d'emploi" 2)

"Bertolt Brecht, revealing in a recent interview in *France-Observateur* that he makes cuts in the classics of theater in order to make the performance more educative, is much closer than Duchamp to the revolutionary orientation we are calling for. We must note, however, that in Brecht's case these salutary alterations are narrowly limited by his unfortunate respect for culture as defined by the ruling class." ("A User's Guide" 15)

⁸ See Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, thesis 17: "*La première phase de la domination de l'économie sur la vie sociale avait entraîné dans la définition de toute réalisation humaine une évidente dégradation de l'être en avoir. La phase présente de l'occupation totale de la vie sociale par les résultats accumulés de l'économie conduit à un glissement généralisé de l'avoir au paraître, dont tout « avoir » effectif doit tirer son prestige immédiat et sa fonction dernière.*"

"The first phase of the domination of the economy over social life brought into the

definition of all human realization the obvious degradation of *being* into *having*. The present phase of total occupation of social life by the accumulated results of the economy leads to a generalized sliding of *having* into *appearing*, from which all actual “having” must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function” (emphasis in original).

⁹ Notable contemporary reassessments of reification include Axel Honneth’s *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* (2008) ed. Martin Jay and Timothy Bewes, *Reification: or, the Anxiety of Late Capitalism* (2002).

¹⁰ On the status of the SI’s female participants see Frances Stracey, *Constructed Situations*. In a chapter entitled “The Situation of Women,” Stracey notes, “Of the 70 members of the SI listed, only seven were women during the period 1957-67- one of whom, Katja Lindell, subsequently became a man [...] out of these seven, only two can be described as active contributors [Michèle Bernstein and Jacqueline de Jong]” (112). While Stracey notes that the contingent of women was undoubtedly small, thereby encouraging “a persistent misrepresentation of the SI as a men’s club” (112), it is important to not overlook that this representation at least “compares favourably with the female participants in numerous other avant-garde artistic groups” (112).

¹¹ Michel Lacroix, “*Un sujet profondément imprégné*”: “*Du fait de la primauté accordée à l’expérience affective et ludique de la ville, ainsi qu’à l’argumentation et à l’assertion plutôt qu’à la narration, du fait aussi du haro jeté sur les productions artistiques individuelles, les récits de dérive demeurent des hapax dans le cortège de textes produits par les lettristes*” (par 19).

“As a result of the primacy accorded to the affective and ludic experience of the city, as well as to argument and assertion rather than to narrative, because of the hue cast on individual artistic productions, the stories of the *dérive* remain a hapax in the procession of texts produced by the Lettrists.”

¹² Originally titled “Bass and Co’s Imperial Stout,” Patrick Straram’s manuscript was posthumously published in 2006 as *Les Bouteilles se couchent* [*The Bottles Lie Down*] by the French publishing house Éditions Allia, which specialises in releasing “documents” of the Situationist International (they are also the French publishers of Bernstein’s novels). Lacroix’s article points out the extent to which editorial intrusions and excisions into Straram’s manuscript have in fact produced a novel that is vastly different to the original presumably in order to fit with the publisher’s desire for a work that conforms more rigidly to Situationist values and practices, despite the fact that Straram’s manuscript was penned during the early years of the Lettrists when the group had not yet reached a consensus position concerning such values.

¹³ Michel Lacroix, “*Un sujet profondément imprégné d’alcool*”: “*les situationnistes (se) jouent des rapports entre fiction et authenticité, textes et situations concrètes, masques et postures[...] Cependant, le primat accordé au vécu, à l’émotion ne les conduit pas, comme les surréalistes, à bannir la fiction au nom de l’authenticité, mais à cultiver le secret, à multiplier les masques, à introduire des décalages*” (par 24).

¹⁴ The extent to which Bernstein identifies the cultivation of Situationist legends as one of her principal contributions to the movement is more clearly apparent in her signed

contributions to the Situationist journals. Indeed, there are parallels between the knight-like descriptions of Gilles in *The Night* and Bernstein's construction of Asger Jorn as a Viking hero in her essay "The Long Voyage," in which she describes Jorn's epic tapestry work as "a story, an odyssey without an Ithaca and without a return; it is the flight of the days from every moment and from all coasts; it is the story of a hero (Asger Jorn, for sure), in his voyage across life, like those explorers who, having discovered America, lost it again" (par 7).

¹⁵ See Ivan Chtcheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism" (1953): "*L'activité principale des habitants sera la DERIVE CONTINUE. Le changement de paysage d'heure en heure sera responsable du dépaysement complet*" (19).

"The main activity of the inhabitants will be CONTINUOUS DRIFTING. The changing of landscapes from one hour to the next will result in total disorientation" (7).

¹⁶ The notion of psychogeography as a form of deep topography that maps the city as palimpsest is particularly evident in the British strand of psychogeography. Prominent examples of authors working in this vein include Nick Papadimitriou (deep topography), Iain Sinclair, Peter Ackroyd and Rachel Lichtenstein.

¹⁷ Refer to the *Critique of Everyday Life* volume 2, first published in 1961, for an elaboration of the specific categories of the everyday laid out by Lefebvre (180-275).

¹⁸ For Lefebvre, *disalienation* refers to the emergence of possibilities, events and moments that elude commodification, appropriation by capitalism and overcoding. The most detailed account of the struggle between dominated space, social space and *disalienation* can be found in Lefebvre's 1974 *La production de l'espace* (*The Production of Space*). In the context of Bernstein's novels, the inclusion of an epigraph from Lefebvre's 1959 *La Somme et le Reste* [*The Sum and the Rest*] posits the work of the Marxist sociologist as an important touchstone for the book. Indeed the composition of Bernstein's novels in the late fifties and early sixties coincides with the period during which the Situationists collaborated with Lefebvre prior to their acrimonious and final rupture with the sociologist, the events of which are recounted by Lefebvre in an interview with Kristin Ross first published in the *October* journal in 1997.

¹⁹ Juliette Einhorn, "Ivre de liberté": "*Son grand petit roman cartographie une psychogéographie tactique des sentiments. En cette machinerie rouée se lisent dans le même coup d'oeil la visée critique, ironique et négatrice, mais aussi, dans l'interstice, une carte du Tendre mouvante et protéiforme*" (par 4).

²⁰ In fact, the epigraph from Henri Lefebvre's *La somme et le reste* (1959) appears in the original 1961 edition of *The Night* but is excised from the 2013 Éditions Allia reissue of the novel. The epigraph is however retained in the English translation. In keeping with the game constructed around the translation of Bernstein's novel, her UK publishers Book Works/Common Objectives appear more concerned than her French publishers to complicate and trouble the reception of the novel as a Situationist *roman-à-clef*.

²¹ Refer to Gavin Everall's interview with Bernstein, "The Game," published in *Frieze* magazine in which she proclaims: "I was never interfering in the affairs of my husband, like a bourgeois harpy wife!" (136)

5. Adrift in the sixties

At various points throughout this study I have flagged how the early 1960s marked a critical turning point in the trajectory of the Situationist project. All too often the exclusions of the key artistic members of the SI such as the acrimonious ousting of the Dutch painter and architect Constant Nieuwenhuys in May 1960 as well as the more amicable withdrawal of artist Asger Jorn the following year are discussed in gossipy tones that construct Debord as plotting to maintain a dogmatic stronghold on the group. Yet it is much more productive, I have argued thus far, to view the ruptures that unfolded within the group during this tumultuous period in the context of a broader shift that took place in the ideologies of the mid-century avant-garde. This shift principally concerned an eclipsing of the notion that the society of the spectacle might be productively contested from within through the diversion of existing elements of culture by a more fully anti-productivist commitment to the complete supersession of the artistic gesture. In this respect, each of my previous chapters have thus far dealt with intersections of psychogeography and the novel that took place prior to this rupture and during what might be termed the “heroic phase” of psychogeography, to borrow a description that is more commonly applied to the early period of Surrealism before it too became fissured with internal schisms over the political efficacy of its esoteric methods of contestation.

A significant implication of addressing the ambiguous role of the literary in the Situationist project during this so-called heroic phase of psychogeography is that it has been possible to discern a common thread among the group’s diverse projects of negation. This common thread is precisely the centrality afforded to the *détournement*, or the diversion, turning around, hijacking, and perversion of pre-existing novelistic texts and even whole genres (adventure novels, detective fiction, pulp romances etc), which was deployed by the SI to critical ends. At the same time, the *détournement* of the novel during this period coincided and intersected with the group’s psychogeographical researches that sought to divert the commodified spaces of the city, and the reified subjectivities it engenders, in a disruptive manner. The *dérive* as it was formulated by the LI and the SI was by no means a narrative strategy, and as already discussed its anti-representational underpinnings clearly distinguishes it from more literary focused manifestations of walking and writing such as *flânerie*. Nevertheless, my examination of the *détournement*

of literary culture in the anti-works of Debord and Bernstein, for instance, has revealed the extent to which the negation of literature need not necessarily entail its complete abandonment insofar as existing elements of literary culture can be productively appropriated to prise open a space for play, critique and subversion.

Yet when the SI reached its consensus in the early sixties concerning the necessary supersession of art the prior significance afforded to its more ludic practices such as psychogeographical researches and the *dérive* inevitably waned. Sam Cooper situates the decline of psychogeography and the *dérive* in the Situationist program as a conscious abandonment of these activities precisely “because they were seen to have become artistic practices geared towards the production of spectacular material rather than its negation” (“English Legacy” 183). In the context of my study, such a transition begs consideration of the fate of the novel and of the negation of literary production after the conclusion of the heroic phase of psychogeography. As I prefaced in my introduction, the effect of blurred genres that the spatial orientations of psychogeography enacts upon the novel develops an afterlife in England from the early 1990s onwards where its techniques have been appropriated and imaginatively reconstituted in what is now recognisable as a distinctly British strand of psychogeographical fiction exemplified in the London-focused novels of Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd in particular. I have also argued that to construct a smooth lineage of inheritance between Situationist psychogeography and its later heterogeneous manifestations in the urban hauntings of contemporary British fiction is inherently misleading and as such a full elaboration of the intersections and departures between these two diverse approaches to spatial exploration as literary praxis is beyond the scope of this thesis.

For this reason, I want to turn now to the more immediate reception of Situationist psychogeography as it is reinterpreted and transformed in the literary works of two authors who might be placed at the periphery of the movement in the early sixties, focusing in particular on the work of the “Scottish Beat” Alexander Trocchi, and the Parisian novelist Georges Perec. In Trocchi’s case, his 1960 novel *Cain’s Book* was composed while the author was still officially a member of the Situationist International and thus the novel presents a highly unorthodox novelistic interpretation of Situationist themes. By contrast, Perec was not a member of the SI yet the writer was “familiar with the ideas of the *dérive* and *détournement* in the early sixties, and these notions informed his reinvention of the art of seeing as well as the art of writing” (Bellos, *Georges Perec* 281). As such, the

ambivalent document of commodity culture that Perec published in 1965, *Les Choses: une histoire des années soixante* [*Things: A Story of the Sixties*], hereafter *Things*, also intersects with certain Situationist themes and attitudes yet differs significantly to the extent that it reimagines a vital role for language and fiction in the project of revaluing the everyday.

By turning in the final chapter of this thesis to the temporally immediate literary afterlife of Situationist psychogeography in the early sixties it is not my intention to simply tie up loose ends in an historical account of the anti-representational turn of the mid-century avant-garde that appears to culminate in the aporia of total negation. Rather, I want to conclude with an opening out towards the new formally experimental topographical narratives and ambiguous representations of the everyday that emerge amid the spatial turn of the sixties. Crucial to what might be considered vestigial or trace manifestations of Situationist psychogeography in the work of Trocchi and Perec is a changing notion of the *dérive* which undergoes a transformation in their narratives from the actively sought out deterritorialisations and destabilisations of identity brought about by Lettrist activities to more introspective experiences of drift as dislocation, rootlessness, and exile. In the work of Trocchi, who relocated to Paris from Glasgow in the early fifties and became actively involved with the Lettrist avant-garde before relocating again to New York, one encounters a rare bridge between Existentialist, Beatnik and Situationist conceptions of the isolated drifting of the self-conscious individual. In this sense, the psychogeographical preoccupation with “inner space”¹ evident in *Cain’s Book* will be shown to both intersect with and depart from Situationist preoccupations as they are conventionally understood. At the same time, this chapter will develop the existing scholarship on Trocchi and in particular the focus on Trocchi’s literary cosmopolitanism and his ties to the avant-garde as providing an important counter narrative to the nationalist focus that has dominated accounts of twentieth-century literature in Scotland (Gardiner 72-107; Bryce-Wunder 153-173). In particular, my reading of *Cain’s Book* through the lens of place, psychogeography and the anti-art of the avant-garde extends the small but growing body of criticism explicitly concerned with Trocchi as a Situationist author.²

Of course Trocchi and Perec are two very different authors, rarely discussed together, yet in this chapter I contend that the nihilism of Trocchi’s junkie novel, which sits at a certain impasse on the question of literature and political commitment, finds a useful contrast in Perec’s *Things*, a novel that returns our focus to the tension between

alienation and appropriation latent within the ambiguous and indeterminate realm of the quotidian. In Perec's work this forensic attention to the minutiae of everyday life anticipates more contemporary novelistic treatments of psychogeographical themes, especially those concerned with mapping the plenitude of the everyday as a site of tactical resistance. Not unlike the piecemeal scholarship on Trocchi, the existing literature on Perec in the Anglophone context is disparate and reflects the fact that Perec's works were largely translated into English in a reverse chronological order to their appearance in France. Furthermore, the diversity of interests and ambidextrous writing methods displayed in his fiction and non-fiction defy neat categorisations. Bellos notes that Perec once classified his body of work as resembling four fields in which he grew different crops: "the fields of sociology, autobiography, the 'ludic' and narrative" ("Old and New" 17). In dealing specifically with *Things*, this chapter enters the *oeuvre* of Perec by way of his sociological period, a classification that is nonetheless troubled and complicated by the author's adroit use of irony and a highly ambivalent authorial stance that calls into question the positivist findings of sociology and its empirical methods.

5.1 Alexander Trocchi: *Cain's Book*, psychogeography and inner space

A founding member of the Situationist International in 1957 but thereafter mainly a "Situationist in absentia" (Cooper, "English Legacy" 52) thanks to his itinerant lifestyle, Alexander Trocchi is an author who in many respects defies categorisation yet for whom the tag of "boundary rider" is not inappropriate. Born in Glasgow in 1925, Trocchi's younger years in particular involved an intense period of geographical mobility. When a travelling scholarship took Trocchi to Paris in the early 1950s he quickly became immersed in the avant-garde literary and intellectual scene of the Left Bank, founding and co-editing the little magazine *Merlin* and publishing the first edition of Samuel Beckett's *Watt* (1953)³ as well as translations of Beckett's prose trilogy and a number of the French modernists including Jean Genet and Eugène Ionesco. After departing Paris for the United States in 1957, in America Trocchi became loosely affiliated with the Beats and befriended William Burroughs who, like Trocchi, had garnered notoriety as a habitual user of heroin and as a pioneer of the junk novel. The author's stay in America was cut short, however, by troubles with the law and eventually Trocchi resettled permanently in England where heroin was legally available to addicts.⁴ For Trocchi, the peripatetic impulse to cross geographical borders was coupled with a sensibility of cultural boundary

riding that in large part stemmed from the author's refusal to identify with the nationalism of a distinctly Scottish literature.⁵ In turn, Trocchi embraced an international outlook and a literary cosmopolitanism that saw his essentially Modernist leanings productively cross-fertilised and complicated by his receptive encounters with French Existentialism, the Situationists, the Beats and the interventionist culture of the avant-garde more broadly.

Despite his status as an historical member of the Situationist International, Trocchi's involvement with the French avant-garde of the fifties nevertheless remains "a little known side" of his biography (Slater 20). Better known as a novelist and principally for his two most accomplished literary works: *Young Adam* (1954) and *Cain's Book* (1960), Trocchi also authored a suite of pornographic novels or "dirty books" for the Olympia Press, a selection of which have since reappeared in commercial reprints, most notably *Helen and Desire* (1954) and *Thongs* (1967). While the dirty books were authored mainly for economic reasons, the link that the novels make between sensation and transgression has begun to attract a small measure of critical attention.⁶ In the case of *Young Adam* and *Cain's Book*, both novels present different iterations of the same isolated outsider male protagonist, Joe, who first appears in the sparsely written *Young Adam* as a drifter working for the skipper of a barge and whose liberty is threatened when he is implicated in the accidental drowning of a young woman. With its detached meditation on themes of morality, agency, responsibility and authenticity of action, *Young Adam* bears the heavy imprint of French Existentialism and in particular Albert Camus's *L'Étranger* (1942) [*The Outsider*] functions as a key inter-text.⁷

By contrast Trocchi's latter novel, *Cain's Book*, cannot be read as an adaptation of any single literary or philosophical mode. The novel presents an auto-fictional account of a junkie and writer living aboard a scow on the Hudson River in New York and comprises a fragmented narrative of diary-like recollections that chart the introspective experiences and heightened sensations engendered by drug use. At the same time, *Cain's Book* is a novel within a novel as it recounts Joe's struggle to complete a work that is also called *Cain's Book*. This meta-fictional conceit mirrors the self-conscious anti-literary impulses coursing through the novel's master narrative. With its candid descriptions of sex and drug use *Cain's Book* received a controversial reception and was not available in Britain until 1963 when it was published by John Calder and became subject to a minor obscenity trial.⁸ As noted, the novel readily combines Situationist, Beat, Existentialist and Modernist influences in a more idiosyncratic and far less synthesised manner than its predecessor. In

respect to my study, *Cain's Book* is of particular interest for its composition not long after Trocchi's encounter with the LI and the SI in Paris, an encounter that Michael Gardiner argues was pivotal for Trocchi insofar as the Lettrists "drew no distinction between literary and political acts, but rather attempted to turn everyday events, via the *dérive*, into politico-cultural happenings" (*From Trocchi* 72). In what follows I will focus for the main part on *Cain's Book* in order to explore how this desire to collapse distinctions between the literary and the political again manifests in a perversion of the novel, a turning around that in Trocchi's case will be shown to have distinctly anti-productive consequences.

In my introduction I suggested that literary works composed at the periphery or boundaries of the Situationist movement might be viewed as bearing trace or vestigial manifestations of psychogeography. These adaptations challenge and complicate the more orthodox Situationist notion of psychogeography as a ludic-constructive tactic of negation concerned with engaging the sphere of everyday life as a means through which to supersede the artistic gesture. In respect to Trocchi, *Cain's Book* is a psychogeographical text as the relationship between space and psyche, especially the correlation between its setting amid the void-like space of the Hudson River and the free-floating and expansive consciousness engendered by Joe's drug taking, render psychogeographical preoccupations central to the narrative. At the same time, it is important to note that despite its evocative setting on a scow, the novel is rarely concerned with conveying the specificity of place but seeks, rather, to construct an atmosphere of placelessness that is linked to the novel's guiding logic of revolt against fixed identities. As earlier discussions of Situationist psychogeography in my thesis have demonstrated, placelessness is not an explicit Situationist concern however the psychic disorientations that the *dérive* brings about can produce a state of spatio-temporal oblivion in the subject. In *Cain's Book*, placelessness similarly reflects an anti-representational drive that for Trocchi works to contest the recuperation of literature by nationalist agendas whilst also breaking with habits, routines and norms. In this way, the aspatial treatment of place in the novel reflects the inner conflict of a subject at odds with the homogenising and productivist logic of modernity more broadly.

Translating literally into English as "drift," in French *dérive* has strong nautical associations that resonate with the psychogeographical preoccupations evident in Trocchi's novel. Most notably, these preoccupations are discernible in the prevalence afforded to the scow which Joe takes up living on after separating from his wife when the

alternatives, he writes, were the “prison, madhouse, morgue” (6). The scow is a lodging that frees Joe from the obligations of work and it offers a convenient isolation that permits him to slink deeper into his junkie lifestyle. Yet as he enters into a drifter’s existence on multiple levels, surrendering to the psychic drift of heroin whilst also drifting literally from pier to pier along the Hudson waterfront, Joe registers his external mobility as distinctly at odds with his unchanging sense of mental isolation and alienation. “It had been the same for years,” Joe reflects nonchalantly. “The same situation [...] A scow on the Hudson, a basement room in London, a tiny studio in Paris, a cheap hotel in Athens, a dark room in Barcelona ... and now I was living on a moving object, every few days a new destination... but always in the same situation” (96). This ambivalent treatment of drifting in *Cain’s Book* as an untethering from roots and origins represents, then, a departure from the conventional Situationist notion of the *dérive* as the pursuit of a desirable form of psychic disorientation. In Trocchi’s more ambiguous novelistic conception the experimental comportment engendered by the passage through varied ambiances is combined with the drifting posture of the Beat protagonist who skirts the margins of society in a self-conscious rejection of social norms, as well as the angst of the Existential protagonist who grapples with the responsibilities that freedom entails. Indeed the air of freedom that the scow implies is quickly de-romanticised by Trocchi when he points out how life on the scow not only binds Joe to the schedules of the tug boats but also engenders the resentment of his more conscientious colleagues:

The loader originally dislikes the scowman because the scowman doesn’t work. That makes the job unpleasant from time to time, finding oneself having suddenly to deal with the animosity of a man who makes a virtue of his work. It is difficult to explain to the underprivileged that play is more serious than work. (*Cain’s Book* 150)

In a short article titled “Of Other Spaces,” Michel Foucault identifies the ship as the “heterotopia *par excellence*” (27) and it is through the concept of the heterotopia, in particular what Foucault terms the “heterotopia of deviation” (25), that the contestatory role of the scow in Trocchi’s novel can be usefully illuminated. For Foucault, the heterotopia is a real site that is nevertheless “represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality” (24). In *Cain’s Book*, Joe’s scow is not only a place outside all places (“It’s an oblique way to look at Manhattan,” he reflects, “seeing it islanded there for days

on end across the buffering water like a little mirage in which one isn't involved" [6]), it is also a place of deviation insofar as "in our society where leisure is the rule, idleness is a sort of deviation" (Foucault 25). According to Foucault's formulation, the heterotopia is a mirror in which the subject might "discover my absence from the place where I am" (Foucault 24). For Joe, the act of taking up on the scow is not a romantic gesture for the scowman's life is dreary and uneventful, comprising neither adventure nor any true sense of freedom. Joe's drifting existence on the scow is best situated, rather, in the context of Trocchi's concern to posit an anti-productivist stance in the novel, according to which the heterotopic qualities of the scow as an "Other space" stand in opposition to the normative values of work, domesticity, and productivity embodied by the legitimate city centre of Manhattan. As a mirror, the heterotopia of the scow inverts the view of the man who "makes a virtue of his work" (150) into the image of a prisoner of social norms that limit and constrain the pursuit of what Joe identifies as the more serious endeavour of play. I will return later to the transgressive potential attributed to play in *Cain's Book* but first I want to consider another significant implication of the novel's placeless setting, namely its connection to Trocchi's concern to resist the reading of place along nationalist lines.

In his analysis of the role of intertextuality in *Cain's Book*, Sam Cooper has argued that the "incorporation of other literary cultures into his own text," namely its manifold allusions to the work of such authors as Beckett, Genet, Kafka, Sartre, and Cocteau, among others, points to a process of "*self de-nationalisation*. Trocchi attempts to unlearn, deny or exhume whatever 'Scottish' tendencies he might have internalised" ("English Legacy" 64, emphasis in original). This same desire to "exhume" his Scottish heritage is also reflected in the physical topography of *Cain's Book* which, in addition to the heterotopic domicile of the scow, is set amid the "anywhere" or "nowhere" setting of the Hudson River and the vast and container-less expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. The dissolute qualities of this void-like setting are typically conveyed not through lyrical description but through dispassionate inventories of Joe's environment that often focus on the detritus or "scum" of industry:

It was one of those unseasonal days of early February when the sun is shining and it seems as though spring has begun. The river seemed very broad and it was busy with slow-moving tankers, floating railway stock, and a wide assortment of tugs. The ferry from 42nd Street was moving like an old tramcar towards the Jersey shore. The water at the pier was filthy with all the refuse of the waterfront, rotting cork, food in varying degrees of decomposition, boxwood, condoms, all coated with scum and oil and dust. (*Cain's Book* 54)

The correlations in this passage between inner and outer “degrees of decomposition,” the manner in which physical states of abjection, emptiness and decay work to signal the psychic disintegration of the subject in the act of perceiving, all combine to reveal the unmistakable influence of Samuel Beckett’s *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnameable* trilogy on Trocchi’s novel. Indeed Joe’s scow is called *Samuel B. Mulroy*, signalling Beckett’s prose as inter-text and pointing to Joe’s identification with the anonymous protagonists of Beckett’s stories for whom inactivity and withdrawal emerge as a perverse form of protest. In a 1953 article for the British literary magazine *NIMBUS*, Trocchi observed how “Beckett’s characters (Molloy, Malone, Watt) are so inactive, so vegetable, that they are also in a queer and disquieting way in revolt, and the impact of the man-vegetable is perhaps even more powerful than that of the burglar-saint” (“Letter from Paris” 57). In respect to the topography or psychogeography of *Cain’s Book*, the allusions to Beckett also signal Trocchi’s debts to the (self) exiled Irish author’s strategy of adopting a placeless prose as a means through which to separate the construction (or deconstruction) of identity from that of the nation state.

As Paul Shanks points out both Trocchi and Beckett “construct a literary landscape that depends on its distance (as well as its difference) from the perceived cultural limitations of the landscape” (152). When Joe enters into an impersonal and aspatial state of consciousness under the influence of drugs, for instance, he observes how “I became fascinated by the minute-to-minute sensations, and when I reflected, I did so repetitively and exhaustingly (often under marijuana) on the meaningless texture of the present moment, the cries of gulls, a floating spar, a shaft of sunlight” (5). The compulsion to list in *Cain’s Book* also has temporal implications, contributing not only to a sense of placelessness beyond cultural markers and national identity but also evoking a sense of timelessness as the junkie high collapses past, present and future into an extended duration of present-ness. Under the influence of junk Joe loses his sense of identity and becomes an “invisible man” (56) who “For an indefinite time [...] existed passively as a log” (56). Returning to Debord’s definition of one of the principal aims of the *dérive* as being to emotionally disorient oneself, it becomes apparent that the spatio-temporal dissolutions of Joe’s drifter existence as a junkie and scowman signal a desire not only to evade the provincialism of national literatures but also to negate the recuperative manner in which language and the act of naming colonises space. For Michael Gardiner, the logic of

contestation that Joe's heroin use invokes extends beyond the desire to cultivate a literary cosmopolitanism:

Cain's Book [...] speaks to Scottish critical theory in terms of the loss of any extensive sense of time and space which is engendered by heroin – a counter to the desire to expand throughout empire among the eighteenth-century Humean *literati* [...] More generally, postcolonial theory tells us that the placement of colonies as atemporal 'outsides' depended on the centrality of London, Glasgow and Edinburgh as 'insides' [...] In *Trocchi*, the insides are thrown up, vomited out. When time and space becomes disoriented, the confidence of British imperial centrality, itself a largely Scottish invention, no longer holds. (*From Trocchi* 93)

Viewed through the lens of the nation, the peripheral nature of Joe's unproductive existence as a scowman drifting at the margins of New York has postcolonial implications in the sense that it represents a gesture of defiance or resistance against the imperial desire to colonise space through productive enterprise. While Gardiner links the spatio-temporal disorientations of Joe's heroin use to a distinctly Scottish predicament of being both inside and outside the imperial centre, one might also read the schizoid subjectivity it engenders as a reaction against the disciplinary constraints of capitalism more broadly, a stance that is arguably paradigmatic of the genre of the junkie novel in its emergence from the 1960s counterculture. Indeed the contradictory implications of heroin use in respect to the modern subject who internalises the production/consumption logic of capitalism is usefully illuminated by Deleuze and Guattari's dichotomy of the deterritorialisation followed by a reterritorialisation. For the dissolute effects of the heroin fix may indeed work to displace and disrupt the certainties of "imperial centrality" as Gardiner points out, however, the gesture of negation inherent in the junkie's lifestyle all too quickly reterritorialises into addiction. "On the virtues of heroin. Possibility waits beyond what is fixed and known," writes Joe. But "Heroin is habit-forming. Habit-forming, rabbit-forming, Babbitt-forming" (196). Writing about William Burroughs' junk novel, *Naked Lunch*, Brodie Beales suggests that "Burroughs' dogged pursuit of the personal is an attempt to achieve molecularity. Yet the inescapable, urgent reality of libido melts his molecular dream and confronts him with the primal state of undifferentiated desire of which he is himself a coded constellation" (7). In *Trocchi*'s case, it is not only the segmentarity of addiction that reterritorialises the dissolute subjectivity of the junkie into banal routines and everyday habits but memory, too, has an overcoding effect as recollections of Joe's past return to haunt the present, frustrating his efforts to achieve a

“pure” consciousness beyond contingent markers of personal and national identity. In what follows, I want to consider how recollections of Joe’s upbringing in Glasgow complicate the novel’s dialogue with Situationist themes and thus reveal a Modernist inward turn that is in many respects irreconcilable with the Situationist rejection of the production of literary works concerned with the machinations of individual psychology.

Thus far I have explored the synergies that *Cain’s Book* shares with Situationist psychogeography principally in terms of the novel’s preoccupation with drifting, or the *dérive* in its nautical sense of being “adrift,” and its setting on the heterotopia of the scow which works to negate and critique the social norms of the dominant culture with which Joe refuses to integrate. Yet the New York harbour is not the sole setting in the novel and at this point I want to turn to another place that figures prominently in *Cain’s Book*: the Glasgow of Joe’s childhood and adolescence. This shift in focus will shed a more subjective light on the seditious impulses of the novel, which cannot be read solely in terms of the avant-garde project to contest the impoverishment of human subjectivity by capital as Joe’s preoccupation with revolt also has distinct psychological origins. As a reaction against the austerity and rigidity of his post-war Depression era upbringing, Joe’s actions reveal a link, consciously made or otherwise, between work and the early death of his mother. The roots of Joe’s rebellion in the psychic trauma of his mother’s death lends a degree of pathos to the novel that distinguishes it from the more mystical pilgrimages of Beat literature and the de-subjectivised praxis of Situationist anti-works. Furthermore, the prevalence of the Freudian compulsion to repeat discernible in Joe’s actions, as well as the involuntary working of memory in his stream-of-consciousness recollections, suggest an ambivalent relationship on Trocchi’s part to the anti-Oedipal currents of psychogeography that I have charted in previous chapters.

Cain’s Book oscillates between two temporalities; the present of Joe’s uneventful junkie existence aboard a scow on the Hudson and the formative events of his past, in particular the Glaswegian upbringing that shapes his present self. Central to the topography of this past is Joe’s childhood home, a boarding house run by his mother and father that emerges as another heterotopic site which, like the scow, inverts conventional boundaries between public and private space, work and leisure. In Joe’s recollections, the boarding house is not only a symbol of post war austerity but also a psychologically claustrophobic space that literally turns the home into a workplace without reprieve for his mother whilst hardening his father into the segmentarity of rigid routines and “tested

rites” (70). Here, Joe’s parents sleep in a retractable bed in the kitchen for “All the other rooms except ‘the boys’ bedroom’ had been converted for the use of lodgers” (75). Reacting against the colonisation of the house by the needs of strangers, Joe’s father monopolises the bathroom as his refuge: “He had four different locks on the bathroom door: a key, a snib, a snick and a hook-and-eye” (75). Further confined to the home as a result of his long-term unemployment, Joe’s father takes to terrorising his mother and his authoritarian presence only makes things “twice as difficult [...] by generally getting in the way, scaring the lodgers with his ugly temper, by bursting constantly into the kitchen like an angry bear and striking my mother, or in one way or another reducing her to tears, and by his habitual practice of seizing the bathroom and barricading it against all comers” (74). During his childhood Joe experiences the unrelenting work ethic of his Protestant upbringing as a limit to push against. As an adult Joe rationally accounts for the frustration and shame that his father experiences as a result of his unemployment as a matter of perspective that might be detoured, or turned around, with a shift in attitude: “The trouble with you, Dad, is that you’ve always been ashamed of being unemployed so you never learnt to enjoy your leisure” (77).

In this way, the psychological origins of Joe’s adoption of heroin use as a tactic of revolt point to the limits of the novel’s postcolonial and anti-capitalist critique. The extended duration of the junkie high, for instance, might be viewed as a perverse reclaiming of the “leisure” or free-time that was denied his parents in their working class-existence lived at the borderline of poverty, a burden that was borne most heavily by Joe’s mother who “had to launder for twelve people, and cook for them, and clean up their mess” (204). While the death of Joe’s mother is an accident, he nevertheless cannot disassociate her untimely passing from the deadening stresses and strains of their working-class situation: “Hard work never hurt anyone, I was told, but it killed my mother” (205), he deadpans. This death is the traumatic scenario at the heart of the novel that returns involuntarily to haunt Joe in the present, thus undermining his attempts to shape an autonomous and self-determined sense of identity beyond familial, cultural and national constraints, however perverse and nihilistic that identity might be. It is precisely this synthesis of psychic and cultural revolt, Modernist experiment and avant-garde negation that makes *Cain’s Book* such an unorthodox treatment of Situationist themes. In this respect the novel is anti-literary but hardly in the sense intended by the Situationist International in their impersonal *détournements* of existing works that explicitly overturn

the psychological concerns and interiority of the classical novel. In *Cain's Book* it is in the inward turn where the work of negation begins. However, this extreme introspection breeds a futility of action that Trocchi would later seek to overcome by turning to alternative forms of cultural production that he envisaged, however problematically, might intervene in a more practical manner into the social structures that *Cain's Book* largely criticises from the detached perspective of an isolated outsider.

5.2 Anti-literature and the play ethos

One of the formal advantages that the diary format affords Trocchi in *Cain's Book* is the opportunity to digress from the novel's plot (which is admittedly scant) in order to proselytise directly to the reader on a number of subjects. A recurring subject of Joe's sermonising concerns the importance of the play ethos that, as already noted, is dialectically opposed to the work ethic that Joe despises and defines himself against. As a young boy Joe feels an instinctual attraction to play as a means of escaping the rigidities of his working-class upbringing. When he relocates to Paris as an adult and encounters the play ethos that was adopted by the avant-garde in the 1950s he begins to consider how play might be more consciously deployed in an anti-productivist stance that resists both social norms and traditional values concerning literary and cultural production. Writing about Paris and later Greenwich Village, Joe insists that "I never found any place dead where a number of men and women for whatever reason tried to strike permanently against uncreative work. In those places I found dissent, sedition, personal risk. And there I learnt to explore and modify my great contempt" (181-2). The key word here is *modify* for it implies that the narrator sees himself as being able to consciously shape and redirect his earlier instinctually felt frustration and contempt into a conscious project that takes on a more positive iteration when defined as play, an ethos that productively combines strategic thinking with spontaneity, passion, and a certain exuberance of spirit. "Man is serious at play," writes Joe. "Tension, elation, frivolity, ecstasy, confirming the supra-logical nature of the human situation" (203).⁹

As the above quotation makes apparent, the preoccupation with play in *Cain's Book* can be linked on one level to the prominence of the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's 1938 cultural history of play, *Homo Ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*, a text that exerted considerable influence on the avant-garde in France in the 1950s. Perhaps the "key modernist statement on play" (Motte 26), Huizinga's central thesis was "a bold one

in so far as he imagines play as the driving force of our culture” (Motte 26). A voluntary and free activity, superfluous, primordial and irrational, absorbing the player with intensity yet disinterestedness, Huizinga elevates play to a privileged category, a “life function” (*Homo Ludens* 9) and “one of the main bases of civilisation” (5). It comes as little surprise that Breton praised *Homo Ludens* and in the case of Surrealism the playing of games was of course prized as an activity outside the utilitarian functions of everyday life and therefore uniquely placed to re-enchant the ordinary and make life itself more playful. By the late 1950s, Huizinga’s treatise on play re-entered the sphere of the French cultural avant-garde by way of the publication of Roger Caillois’s 1958 study, *Les Jeux et les Hommes* (English title: *Man, Play and Games*, 1961), which builds upon Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens* with a more classificatory approach to play. Informed by his position as a dissident Surrealist, Caillois’s sociology of play entailed a deep-seated concern for the power of ritual. The SI, too, appropriated Huizinga’s valorisation of play however with a somewhat different emphasis, linking the rediscovery of the play spirit with a revolutionary praxis concerned to realise play as life.¹⁰ As Libero Andreotti points out, the second phase of the Situationist International “showed that another direction lay open for the extension of play tactics into highly politicized behaviour, as seen in the urban poetry of the graffiti, the wild architecture of the barricades and the détournement of entire streets in May ‘68” (“Architecture and Play” 235).

While Trocchi shares the Situationist concern for rediscovering the radical spirit of play and harnessing it to destabilising ends, as a novel *Cain’s Book* registers a tension that is far less urgent in the avant-garde and anti-Modernist *détournements* of the SI; and that is a tension concerning the extent to which the play ethos can be reconciled with the production of literature. For the Modernists, the play ethos arguably manifested with a certain generative force in literary and artistic production as the embrace of a playful experimental comportment worked to forge an autonomous space of creativity from which new and disruptive ways of seeing and representing the self and the world emerged. Yet according to Trocchi’s co-editor on *Merlin*, Richard Seaver, the avant-garde of the 1950s had not only progressed beyond their Modernist antecedents of the 1920s but “we were its extreme opposite: pure literature in the sense that a Joyce or a Gertrude Stein understood it, experimentation as an end in itself, seemed to us impossible” (Seaver xiv). Of course from a contemporary perspective we can appreciate that Modernism represented much more than “experimentation as an end in itself.” Nevertheless, Seaver’s comments

provide a pertinent reminder of the extent to which the avant-garde in the mid twentieth-century were concerned to mount an attack upon the institution of art whilst breaking with what was perceived as Modernism's misplaced faith in the inherent radicalism of autonomous formal experiment. In this respect, it was the principal demand of the avant-garde that art become "integrated into the praxis of life" (Bürgher, *Theory* 54). While this integration no doubt failed to occur, and as such the ambitions of the historical avant-garde remain unfulfilled in contemporary late-capitalist society, it is necessary to revisit this moment of rupture in order to appreciate the upheaval to literary production that the avant-garde preoccupation with *praxis* brought about in Trocchi's era. It is against this background of a conscious turn away from autonomous art that one can begin to appreciate the ambivalence with which Trocchi treats play in *Cain's Book*.

In the age of the politically committed writer, Trocchi is alert to the contradictions inherent in adopting the play ethos as a posture and then proceeding nevertheless with the serious endeavour of literature: "My friends will know what I mean when I say that I deplore our contemporary industrial writers," Joe remarks. "Let them dedicate a year to pinball and think again" (47). Joe's commitment to the play ethos is then, paradoxically, the source of much of the novel's nihilism and self-destructive energies as Joe recognises that ultimately the project of living must supersede the project of writing yet his sense of identity is so inextricably bound to authorship that he cannot bring himself to completely abandon it as his conscience directs. For Joe, "the great urgency for literature was that it should once and for all accomplish its dying" (107).¹¹ There is a prophetic tenor to Joe's declarations given that *Cain's Book* proved to be the last novel that Trocchi successfully completed. Trocchi's deepening addiction to heroin no doubt contributed to his curtailed capacity to write in a sustained fashion. Yet in my concluding remarks on Trocchi I want to briefly consider how the alternative forms of cultural production that he pursued in the following decade in the form of what is known as project sigma, or simply "sigma," complicate this narrative of literary failure.

From an historical perspective the dwindling of Trocchi's literary output after *Cain's Book* has been framed as a case of a bright talent burnt out early by personal excesses and it is only in recent scholarship that the extended countercultural project that occupied Trocchi's focus from roughly 1962 to 1977 has begun to be assessed on its own merits.¹² Simply called "sigma" after the mathematical symbol, a title selected by Trocchi because it was "free of bothersome semantic accretions" ("tactical blueprint," par 14), the

project comprises a portfolio of documents calling for a creative-led cultural revolution authored by Trocchi and his collaborators on an ad-hoc basis. Freely distributed among his network of countercultural peers in the manner of the gift-economy of *potlatch*, the documents were intended to elicit a “consciousness raising” in the reader and thus propagandised for alternative, anti-capitalist lifestyles founded on principles of self-autonomy, creative expression and personal liberty. James Riley points out that “Project Sigma grew out of Trocchi’s involvement with the Situationist International” (par 6) and the influence of the SI is particularly apparent in Trocchi’s concern for outlining specific proposals in his manifestos. These proposals include the elaboration of plans for the “spontaneous university,” a network of non-hierarchical learning environments envisaged as an alternative to established educational institutions, town planning proposals concerned with the construction of ambient environments reflecting the influence of the Situationist theories of unitary urbanism and psychogeography, and a creative agency to be self-managed by artists with a view to bypassing the dominant economic structures of the culture industry and its cultural gatekeepers. Trocchi’s overriding ambition to collapse cultural boundaries and categories also influences his view of conventional forms of literary production which, in keeping with the Situationist stance on the obsolescence of authorship and extending the anti-literary proselytising of Joe in *Cain’s Book*, Trocchi argues must be superseded:

That is what we mean when we say that ‘literature is dead’; not that some people won’t write (indeed, perhaps all people will), or even write a novel (although we feel this category has about outlived its usefulness), but the writing of anything in terms of capitalist economy, as an economic act, with reference to economic limits, it is not, in our view, interesting [...] The conventional spectator-creator dichotomy must be broken down. The traditional ‘audience’ must participate. (“tactical blueprint,” par 9)

At the time of the composition of sigma Trocchi was no longer engaged in the writing of novels in any sustained or committed fashion, yet the documents nonetheless reveal his continued investment in writing and publishing as agents of change. Today, the sigma portfolio can make for difficult reading as the far-fetched nature and bombastic tone of its proposals, coupled with the naïve idealism of their utopian energies, render it something of an anachronism and a time capsule of the early sixties counterculture. Nevertheless, Trocchi’s methods of self-publication and guerrilla modes of distribution were prescient of the extent to which DIY and underground publishing would later emerge

as a significant subcultural alternative to mainstream information networks. As James Riley suggests, it is not the extent to which Trocchi's plans were or were not implemented that constitute the measure of its worth, rather it is the capacity of sigma "to generate a significant institutional disturbance" that "constitutes a major achievement" ("Alexander Trocchi," par 16).

While the economy of reciprocity that sigma's mode of production and distribution seeks to set in motion, as well as the cumulative and spontaneous nature of the portfolio, indeed entail a "significant institutional disturbance" that constitute the strength of the project, there are also significant critical shortcomings in Trocchi's turn to countercultural activities that warrant consideration. The contradictions of Trocchi's so-called activist or guerrilla publishing stance are particularly evident in what is generally considered the centrepiece of the sigma portfolio, Trocchi's extended essay and manifesto, "Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds," first published in English in the Edinburgh *New Saltire Review* in June 1962 and then appearing in French as "*Technique du coupe du Monde*" in the eighth edition of *Internationale Situationniste* in January 1963. The "Invisible Insurrection" essay consolidates many of the key sigma proposals and like the portfolio as a whole it too dwells in the afterlife or shadow of Trocchi's literary career, developing themes that are principally conceived in Trocchi's novels as an existential problem of the relation between self and world in a more dialectical manner. As befits his encounter with the SI, "Invisible Insurrection" bears the heavy imprint of Situationist influences most notably in its concern to outline the historical and political-economic foundations of what the SI identified as the reification of subjectivity under capitalist modernity. Interested in the principal problem of modern leisure as consumption, the essay explores the issue of how free time might be applied to more liberatory effect in light of the "alienation of man from himself brought about by the Industrial Revolution" (167). Like the SI, Trocchi also mounts a polemic against the pacifying effects of a spectacular entertainment industry. Combined with the disappearance of historical consciousness in everyday life, Trocchi argues that such effects work to produce a common man who enters into "a profound sense of his own impotence as he realises the immensity of the forces involved" (165).¹³ In response, "Invisible Insurrection" calls for participatory modes of artistic production and consumption that would oblige readers and audiences to respond and actively participate in cultural networks. The rhetoric of the Situationist critique of the spectacle is everywhere apparent, then, in Trocchi's assertion that:

Art can have no existential significance for a civilisation which draws a line between life and art and collects artifacts like ancestral bones for reverence. Art must inform the living; we envisage a situation imaginatively and passionately constructed to inspire each individual to respond creatively, to bring to whatever act a creative comportment [...] The zombies remain; the spectacle grows more spectacular. To adapt an epigram of a friend of mine: *Si nous ne voulons pas assister au spectacle de la fin du monde, il nous faut travailler à la fin du monde du spectacle*.¹⁴ (“Invisible Insurrection” 168-9).

The emphasis placed on active participation and the desire to fuse art with life as a strategy to contest the inertia of the spectacle expressed in the above passage, as well as across Trocchi’s sigma project more broadly, is indicative of how Trocchi’s awakening to the notion of avant-garde praxis in the early sixties eventually rendered novelistic production in the conventional sense impossible for the author. From this point onwards, Trocchi shifts from the introspective and self-conscious posture of the Modernist author to adopt the more outward directed and collaborative focus necessitated by militant cultural activism. Yet Trocchi’s turn to cultural activism in the form of project sigma and the “Invisible Insurrection,” which formed part of an ambitious project to enact a cultural revolt that would “seize the grids of expression and powerhouses of the mind” (“Invisible Insurrection” 165), was by no means an uncomplicated or indeed successful manoeuvre.

By insisting that any revolt must be purely cultural, Trocchi’s argument on the one hand reinforces the problematic art and politics binary that similarly haunted the revolutionary polemics of Surrealism just a few decades earlier. On the other hand, the sigma project reflects the shift from the Old to the New Left, according to which a key term like “revolt” would become increasingly reframed in terms of the politics of the individual or the *personal* rather than in a discourse of organised and party-like structured efforts. Thus sigma signals the emergence of what Edwin Morgan has described as the “paradigmatic sixties phenomenon, with its emphasis on revolt, liberation, alternative lifestyles, anti-universities, and worldwide cultural networking” (qtd. in Bartie 107).¹⁵ Yet this paradigm shift from the social revolutionary praxis of the historical avant-garde to the more personal revolt and rebellion of the sixties counterculture was all too quickly recuperated into the lifestyle fashions of an apolitical hippie and drop-out culture. For Stewart Home, the speed with which the counterculture’s taboo breaking and libertarian “life as art” gambit hardened into the “onset of counter-cultural rigor mortis” (“Gilded Splinters” 407) reflects the extent to which rebellion itself became co-opted and reified into another category of commoditised consumerism. Contemporary reassessments of

Trocchi's sigma project have done much to recontextualise it as a prescient document of the radical social and cultural upheavals of the sixties counterculture. Yet it must also be acknowledged that in its central concern to propose an overturning of the spectacle and alienation of everyday life principally via the free reign of artistic and personal expression, the countercultural tactics of the sigma project remain as limited in practical effect as the strategies of the historical avant-garde that preceded it.

Notwithstanding an initially productive collaboration between the Situationists and Trocchi in the late fifties and early sixties, then, the alliances that Trocchi forged with the figureheads of the American and British sixties counterculture such as Colin Wilson, RD Laing, Timothy Leary, William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg eventually proved incongruous with the SI's more consciously organised political strategies and in 1964 Trocchi was rather unceremoniously expelled from the group.¹⁶ Nonetheless the arc that Trocchi's encounter with the SI traces is a pivotal one for the literary history of psychogeography and the novel. Psychogeographical preoccupations are present in Trocchi's fiction in his cataloguing of outer environments, heterotopias and placeless settings that interpolate with the exploration of inner states of alienation, isolation, and the struggle for personal authenticity and autonomy. At the same time, the extent to which Trocchi's anti-literary and anti-productivist stance eventually culminates in an impasse concerning literature and political commitment in the early sixties suggests that new directions for psychogeography and the novel must be found in a post or neo-avant-garde context. In my reading of the final text to be addressed in this thesis, Georges Perec's *Les Choses: une histoire des années soixante* [*Things: A Story of the Sixties*], I want to explore how the critical categories of space, place and the everyday are reimagined and transformed in the return to formal and aesthetic experiment signaled by Perec's novel. In this way, I will consider how the very ordinariness of the quotidian is reimagined by Perec as one of its most subversive qualities.

5.3 *Things: A Story of the Sixties*

Prior to joining Oulipo in 1966,¹⁷ the Parisian author Georges Perec published a slim novella called *Les Choses: Une histoire des années soixante* [*Things: A Story of the Sixties*] (1965). An ambivalent portrayal of the anxieties and aspirations of a burgeoning generation of consumers, the book by the hitherto unknown writer tapped into the zeitgeist of an era and upon receipt of the prestigious Prix Renaudot in 1965 Perec was quickly

launched as an astute cataloguer of modern day consumer *ennui*. The story of a young Parisian pair of market researchers,¹⁸ Jérôme and Sylvie, who live a cramped existence in a thirty-five square metre apartment in a fashionable neighbourhood, the novella is concerned almost exclusively with describing their lifestyle of consumption, casting a forensic gaze over the objects they own and cataloguing those they would like to own. As a detached and impersonal survey of the relationship between commodities and reification, the trivialisation of desire under late capitalist modernity and the pervasive influence of the mass-media on modern subjectivity, *Things* intersects with a number of Situationist preoccupations that I have mapped in detail in previous chapters. Yet in my introduction to this chapter I quoted Perec's biographer, David Bellos, who suggests that the author's familiarity with Situationist ideas like the *dérive* and *détournement* "informed his reinvention of the art of seeing as well as the art of writing" (*Georges Perec* 281). The critical point to note here is that Perec's novel cannot be read simply as an illustration of Situationist preoccupations but demands, rather, to be considered in light of how Situationist ideas, among a constellation of other influences, inform the author's transformation of the art of fiction.

In this respect Perec's *Things* is an important book for my study as its deeply ambiguous treatment of the quotidian reveals the contradictions inherent in the everyday without precluding literary innovation to the extent necessitated by more orthodox Situationist *détournements* or negations of the novel. Indeed, as a formally experimental novel *Things* signals the imaginative reconstitution (or possibly the recuperation) of psychogeographical concerns at the point when vanguard cultural production entered the phase of the post or neo-avant-garde. According to Peter Bürger, the emergence of the neo-avant-garde in the 1960s saw the reinstatement of the category of the work of art in contradistinction to the historical avant-garde's project to sublate artistic production into a praxis of everyday life. As such, those "procedures invented by the avant-garde with antiartistic intent [were] used for artistic ends" (*Theory* 57). While the term neo-avant-garde is sometimes applied in a pejorative sense, I argue that it usefully describes Perec's contradictory authorial position in the early sixties as both an inheritor of the avant-garde critique of everyday life and as a formally innovative documenter of the quotidian. By the time of the publication of his first novel in 1965, Perec was certainly not concerned as the Situationists were with mobilising the latent potential of the everyday in the direction of revolutionary praxis. Nevertheless, *Things* engages with the politics of daily life in its

mining of the quotidian as the site poised to reveal the limits of agency in the modern world. In doing so, Perec's novel emphasises the necessary role of a creative mobilisation of language in its capacity to demystify, appropriate and apprehend the everyday as a vital first step in forging an authentic relationship, however provisional, between self and world.¹⁹

As the title of Perec's novel suggests, the sixties was indeed an era when "*les choses*" ["things"] attained a new level of ubiquity in everyday life as the growing purchasing power of the middle class and the vast expansion in the range of commodities available to consumers combined to bring about profound shifts in identity-formation. Narrated for the most part in the impersonal third person, the young couple at the heart of *Things*, Jérôme, 24, and Sylvie, 22, are ambivalent about taking up their expected place in the world as young professionals and as such Perec sketches the couple as types, emblematic of a generation, rather than as distinct characters with psychological depth. Indeed one of the most distinctive features of the novel is the extent to which Perec grants access to the interiority of his characters purely by way of what they desire, through their harbouring for a magazine inspired lifestyle replete with sophisticated furnishings and an abundance of leisure, and in turn through the frustrations and set-backs they suffer as the fulfilment of such desires inevitably eludes them. In contrast to previous chapters in which I have discussed the link between desire and praxis in the Situationist project principally in terms of *becoming* in the sense that the SI conceived of desire as a destabilising and generative force, in Perec's novel desire most frequently manifests as *wanting*, a peculiarly modern condition of unsatiated desire fostered by the rhetoric of advertising that is internalised by the subject as a pervasive sense of lack. For Jérôme and Sylvie, the sense that they are within close proximity to the material abundance of modernity yet immeasurably distant from attaining it for themselves renders their situation precarious and extremely ambiguous:

Car tout leur donnait tort, et d'abord la vie elle-même. Ils voulaient jouir de la vie, mais, partout autour d'eux, la jouissance se confondait avec la propriété. Ils voulaient rester disponibles, et presque innocents, mais les années s'écoulaient quand même, et ne leur apportaient rien. Les autres avançaient chargés de chaînes peut-être, mais eux n'avançaient pas du tout. Les autres finissaient par ne plus voir dans la richesse qu'une fin, mais eux, ils n'avaient pas d'argent du tout. (Les Choses 60/65)

For everything contradicted them, beginning with life itself. They wanted

life's enjoyment, but all around them enjoyment was equated with ownership. They wanted to stay free, and virtually innocent, but time went by notwithstanding, and brought them nothing. Others may have advanced in chains, but they did not move forward in the least. Others ended up seeing wealth as an end in itself, but as for them, they didn't have any money at all.

It is worth noting here how the crisis of desire experienced by Jérôme and Sylvie, and its relation to the broader contradictions of belonging in a consumer society in general, complicates the polemic against the banality of consumerism mounted by Ivan Chtcheglov in his 1953 manifesto, "Formulary for a New Urbanism." In an oft-quoted passage, Chtcheglov laments how "*Une maladie mentale a envahi la planète: la banalisation. Chacun est hypnotisé par la production et le confort – tout-à- l'égoût, ascenseur, salle de bains, machine à laver*" (17) ["a mental disease has swept the planet: banalization. Everyone is hypnotized by production and conveniences - sewage systems, elevators, bathrooms, washing machines" (4)]. For the Situationists, the alienating influence of commodity culture lies precisely in the extent to which it trivialises desire and in turn promotes a passive and apolitical stance towards the world, a stance that I have discussed in previous chapters using the terminology of reification and separation. According to Timo Jütten, a distinguishing feature of late capitalist modernity is the extent to which subjects "relate to themselves and to others in objectifying ways, because the conceptual schema of universal commodification has been naturalized and internalized" (249). At certain points throughout the novel, Jérôme and Sylvie read like text book illustrations of the phenomenon of reification that the Situationists and Jütten describe, and which for the SI stands at the heart of their critique of the society of the spectacle. The couple sense the limits of their consumption driven world yet feel unable to fight against or overturn these constraints in any meaningful or active way: "*Ils vivaient dans un monde étrange et chatoyant, l'univers miroitant de la civilisation mercantile, les prisons de l'abondance, les pièges fascinants du bonheur*" (74/77) ["They lived in a strange and shimmering world, the bedazzling universe of a market culture, in prisons of plenty, in the bewitching traps of happiness"]. However, despite important intersections with the SI's critique of the spectacle, Perec's ambiguous portrayal of the *ennui* of Jérôme and Sylvie is nonetheless complicated by the extent to which he also reveals a certain tragic dimension to their situation that encourages a level of readerly empathy that is lacking in the Situationist critique. In order to more fully grasp the complexities and contradictions of the ambivalent

authorial perspective that Perec adopts toward the rhetoric of consumerism and advertising, it is therefore necessary to consider another important source of influence on the novel and that is the thought of Roland Barthes, in particular his work on the semiotics and myths of mass-culture.

In 1963 and aged twenty-seven, Perec began attending a series of seminars on semiotics and the rhetoric of advertising delivered by Barthes at the Sorbonne²⁰ (as well as Lucien Goldmann's lectures on the sociology of literature) in an intellectual encounter that made a deep impression on the young writer. An indication of the extent of his admiration, Perec sent an early draft of *Things* to Barthes to which the senior writer responded favourably telling Perec "A novel or a story about poverty inextricably bound up with the image of wealth is very beautiful [and] very rare nowadays" (qtd. in Bellos 298). No doubt Barthes detected a methodology in Perec's novel similar to his own semiotic approach to the everyday, according to which the process of demystifying the signs and symbols embedded within mass-culture serves to unmask the workings of an ideology that all too often passes undetected in daily life.²¹ The methods and preoccupations of Barthesian semiology are indeed evident in the novel's treatment of Jérôme and Sylvie's ambivalent consumption of the tabloid magazine *L'Express*, which they dislike and loathe as "sinister" yet cannot help but read faithfully because it "*les réconfortait*" (39) ["reassured them" (47)]. Ultimately, the young couple's attraction to the publication is riven with contradiction for recognise as they might the extent of its manipulation of their insecurities on a number of levels, the magazine nevertheless corresponds unfailingly to their own "*art de vivre*" (38-9) ["art of living" (46)] and thus speaks to their aspirational desires in a perversely more authentic way than any other publication. At the same time, it is precisely the ideological content of the tabloid magazine that contributes to, and entrenches, the pervasive sense of *want* that is very much at the root of the myopia of Jérôme and Sylvie's existence. Like Barthes, Perec is concerned to reveal how representation, desire and alienation interpolate to produce the ideological mystifications of everyday life within contemporary capitalist society:

Dans le monde qui était le leur, il était presque de règle de désirer toujours plus qu'on ne pouvait acquérir. Ce n'était pas eux qui l'avaient décrété; c'était une loi de la civilisation, une donnée de fait dont la publicité en général, les magazines, l'art des étalages, le spectacle de la rue, et même, sous un certain aspect, l'ensemble des productions communément appelées culturelles, étaient les expressions les plus conformes. (Les Choses 42)

In the world that was theirs it was almost a regulation always to wish for more than you could have. It was not they who had decreed it; it was a social law, a fact of life, which advertising in general, magazines, window displays, the street scene and even, in a certain sense, all those productions which in common parlance constitute cultural life, expressed most authentically. (*Things* 49)

Again resonating with the Situationist concern for the violence afflicted to subjectivity by the internalisation of a consumerist ideology, in Perec's novel the ubiquity of commodities, advertising and mass-media culture combine to construct an image of modernity as spectacle according to which the desire for an abundant possession of material goods is abstracted and naturalised into "a social law, a fact of life" (49). Yet it is also possible to detect in Perec's fiction a sense in which his encounter with Barthes brings about a shift in precisely how the problem of reification in everyday life is conceptualised. Ultimately, the novel's preoccupation with semiotics works to present Jérôme and Sylvie's condition of perpetual dissatisfaction as a problem of language and, in particular, as a problem of their uncritical relation to symbols and signs. As passive receptors of the mythical messages of consumerism the couple lack the critical self-reflexivity that might allow them to demystify and decode the signs that seduce and trap them in "prisons of plenty" (77). In this way, the ambiguous predicament of Jérôme and Sylvie in *Things* can be understood, as Andrew Leak argues, as "more than a simple, if sadistic, conceit on Perec's part: to a greater or lesser extent it is the lot of everyone who lives in the industrial society" (129). In acknowledging how language, rhetoric and myth intertwine to produce a perpetual state of dissatisfaction as a common fate of everyday life under capitalist modernity, Perec's radical manoeuvre is to envisage a new and vital role for fiction as a genre uniquely placed to make visible, and thereby debunk, the false ideologies in which the modern subject tends naturally to invest.

In this sense, Perec is not preoccupied as his Situationist predecessors were with sublating the work of art into a socio-economic transformation of daily life at the level of the totality, which raises then the difficult question of whether he recuperates the SI's strategies of contestation by importing them into a literary context. From the perspective of avant-garde or revolutionary praxis there is certainly a process of recuperation (or an effect of rendering benign) at work in Perec's project. However, it is also possible to suggest that the work of responding to the problem of reification in a literary context forces the author to grapple with the operations of alienation with greater irony. As such, Perec

responds to the reified subjectivity produced by an uncritical relation to the signs and symbols of consumer society in a tactical yet deeply ambivalent manner. Manifesting on one level an aesthetic strategy that may be described as neo-avant-garde in the sense described by Bürger, Perec's project is not to supersede or jettison the work of art but rather to return to it anew with a deeper level of self-consciousness and critical reflexivity. In this way, Perec engages the tools of fiction as a means to undermine instrumental representations of reality and to subtly challenge the obfuscations that conceal the complicity of language with the myths of the consumer society. It is in this sense that Perec's project in *Things* involves the construction of a new "art of seeing" (Bellos, *Georges Perec* 281). The critical value of this new art of seeing does not reside in its negation of art but rather in its potential to employ the devices of fiction as a means to encourage the reader to recognise and decode the signs that all too easily entrap him or her in desire as a perpetual *wanting* and to thereby aid in a more conscious resistance to the internalisation of the ubiquitous consumer rhetoric of late capitalist modernity.

5.4 "Apart together": drift and the problems of belonging

In her seminal cultural study of post war modernisation and the emergence of consumer culture in France in the 1950s and 1960s, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*, Kristin Ross discerns a common thread in the literature of the era in the form of a shared recognition of the image of the city as a nexus for a growing number of anxieties concerning the fundamental unevenness of everyday life within modernity:

What novelists like Perec, Beauvoir and Rochefort – no less than the Situationists performing their urban experiments in Paris during the same years, or Henri Lefebvre progressively recoding his initial concept of 'everyday life' into a range of spatial and urban categories – realized, was the emergence of a new image of society as a city – and thus the beginning of a whole new thematics of inside and outside, of inclusions in, and exclusion from, a positively valued modernity. (Ross 149-50)

In the final part of my discussion of Perec's *Things* I want to explore how the thematics of inclusion and exclusion, inside and outside, play out in the novel's treatment of the *dérive* in the sense that walking the city is integral to revealing Jérôme and Sylvie's ambivalent relationship to what Ross identifies as the "positively valued modernity" (150) that defined the post war era. On one level, the prevalence afforded to the stroll in *Things* suggests some familiarity on Perec's part of the Situationist valorisation of purposeless drifting and also signals the novel's place within the broader cultural context of Paris in

the fifties and sixties when “urban roaming was characteristic of Left Bank bohemianism, where the art of drifting was a favourite way of cultivating that feeling of being ‘apart together’ that Huizinga described as characteristic of play” (Andreotti, “Architecture and Play” 215). There are echoes in Perec’s novel of earlier representations of the Left Bank bohemian street culture and nightlife exemplified, for instance, by Ed van der Elsken’s 1954 photo novella *Love on the Left Bank*, which presents a somewhat romanticised image of a generation in revolt. Yet reconstituted in the more ambiguous context of Jérôme and Sylvie’s half-hearted political commitments and their fascination with material culture, the freedom that the *dérive* promises for the couple in *Things* is at best a fleeting release from oppression and, at worst, little more than a self-delusion. The transient and ambiguous nature of this “freedom” is especially evident during their nocturnal strolls:

Ou bien, certaines nuits d’été, ils marchaient longuement dans des quartiers presque inconnus. Une lune parfaitement ronde brillait haut dans le ciel et projetait sur toutes les choses une lumière feutrée. Les rues, désertes et longues, larges, sonores, résonnaient sous leurs pas synchrones. De rares taxis passaient lentement, presque sans bruit. Alors ils se sentaient les maîtres du monde. Ils ressentaient une exaltation inconnue, comme s’ils avaient été détenteurs de secrets fabuleux, de forces inexprimables. (Les Choses 53)

Or again, on some summer nights they would walk for miles through neighbourhoods they did not know. The moon’s round orb would shine high in the sky, casting its velvety light on every thing. The long, wide, empty streets would reverberate with the sound of their footsteps, as they walked all in step. Taxis would go by seldom, slowly, almost noiselessly. On such nights they had the world in their arms. It was unimaginably exhilarating, as if they had been entrusted with fabulous secrets and inexpressible powers. (*Things* 58-9)

Paris emerges as a kind of jewel in this passage, a jewel illuminated by moonlight whose glow endows Jérôme and Sylvie with a sense of privilege as they idly traverse the city streets and make tracks across its unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Notwithstanding superficial resemblances in their methods, this is not the active pursuit of destabilisation sought by the Lettrists during the *dérive*, rather it is an attempt to belong through walking. Yet when one’s identity is defined by status, buying power and what one owns, as it is for Jérôme and Sylvie, their sense of belonging to a particular place is precarious and reliant upon habits of consumption. Whenever they are confronted with reminders of their low social status and financial shortcomings, which is often, their sense of inclusion is easily shattered. All it takes is “*la moindre fausse note*” (54) [“the slightest false note” (60)] and

their so-called happiness is revealed as “*quelque chose de fragile et de pitoyable, un simple instant de répit qui les renvoyait avec violence à ce qu’il y avait de plus dangereux, de plus incertain dans leur existence, dans leur histoire*” (54-5) [“a pitiful and flimsy thing, just a second’s respite which returned them all the more forcefully to the real dangers, the real uncertainties in their lives, in their history” (60)]. In this way, the *dérive* in *Things* is divorced or severed from its avant-garde origins and as such is clearly distinguishable from the SI’s practice of the *dérive*, for whom a surrender to undirected drifting through the ambiances of the city worked to dissolve or at least contest its reifying effects. Thus walking the city for Jérôme and Sylvie is not an embodiment of a certain type of praxis that seeks to integrate art with life nor is it related in any manner to the project of becoming in the disruptive and generative sense intended by the micropolitics of Deleuze and Guattari discussed in chapter two. On the contrary, their mode of inhabiting the city is analogous to their facile relation to the seductions of the signs and symbols of advertising and mass-media. Unable to critically detach themselves and their attention from the attractive reel of objects and fashions displayed in shop windows, the project of following their desires in a purposeless drift through the city streets more often than not draws Jérôme and Sylvie into a phantasmagoria of commodities, reinforcing the binary of exclusion and inclusion that Ross identifies as a defining feature of post war modernity:

Ils se promenaient souvent le soir, humaient le vent, léchaient les vitrines [...] Ils marchaient lentement. Ils s’arrêtaient devant chaque antiquaire, collaient leurs yeux aux devantures obscures, distinguaient, à travers les grilles, les reflets rougeâtres d’un canapé de cuir, le décor de feuillage d’une assiette ou d’un plat en faïence, la luisance d’un verre taillé ou d’un bougeoir de cuivre, la finesse galbée d’une chaise cannée.

De station en station [...] leurs itinéraires composaient leur véritable univers: là reposaient leurs ambitions, leurs espoirs. (Les Choses 78-9)

They often went out in the evening, sniffing the air, ogling the window displays [...] They walked slowly. They stopped at each antique dealer’s, pressed their noses against ill-lit windows, made out, through the mesh shutters, the reddish glow of a leather sofa, the foliate decoration of an earthenware dish or plate, the gleam of cut glass or a brass candlestick, the elegant curve of a cane-seated chair.

From one station to another [...] their paths through Paris constituted their real universe: in them lay their ambitions and their hopes. (*Things* 81)

The image of a life lived with one’s nose pressed against the glass of a shop window is an image of stasis, drawing attention to the barrier that exists between the consumer and the object of desire that ensnares the subject in a life without progress, a

subject stalled by the desire to have rather than to become and the promise of a better future that fails to materialise. By dramatising this dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion through the pair's city walks, *Things* formulates the problem of belonging in a consumer society, a problem that intensifies in the final part of the novel when Jérôme and Sylvie relocate from Paris to the postcolonial outpost of Tunisia. Set adrift in a foreign location the couple are stripped of their usual markers of identity and enter into a condition of alienation and isolation hitherto unknown to them in their native France. It is the nature of this alienation and its relationship to urban drift as dislocation that I want to explore in my concluding remarks on Perec's novel. The ambiguity of the alienation that Jérôme and Sylvie experience in Tunisia is, I want to suggest, conceived by Perec as a problem of apprehending and appreciating the everyday according to which the author extends Situationist concerns in a neo-avant-garde context. Here, the quotidian remains the privileged site for contesting the influence of the spectacle but in a crucial development the everyday is largely divested in Perec's fiction of the ideological commitments that for the avant-garde called for actions, agitations and interventions in the name of radical social change.²²

After several years spent enduring the diminishing returns of their unstable employment as market researchers whilst remaining reluctant to meet the impending expectation to finally take up professional permanent posts, Jérôme and Sylvie make an impulsive decision to flee Paris, applying for teaching posts in Tunisia. Lured by the promise of jobs in the capital of Tunis, at the last minute the agency dispatches Sylvie to the provincial town of Sfax and Jérôme to a primary school at Mahares, twenty-three miles in the opposite direction, a contract that he abandons with a view to finding work in Sfax with Sylvie. Upon arrival in Sfax it doesn't take long for the attraction of the glittering Mediterranean location and the promise of a new life to be dispelled by the mundane realities of day-to-day life in what strikes the pair as little more than an unremarkable desert town. Its streets studded with "*de palmiers laids, bordée d'immeubles neufs*" (101) ["ugly palms and new built-blocks" (102)] and flailing in their vast over-sized flat with two balconies looking out onto "*une lagune aux odeurs fétides*" (102) ["a foul smelling lagoon" (103)] it is in Sfax, writes Perec, that the pair spent "*les huit mois les plus curieux de toute leur existence*" (104) ["what were probably the queerest eight months of their lives" (105)].

The strangeness of the eight months of exile and isolation that Jérôme and Sylvie

spend in Sfax is arguably constructed as a product of their failure to forge a sense of belonging in their new location. For Perec, the problem of their inability to belong in Sfax is not conceived as a clash of cultures as such, an issue of the coloniser confronting the colonised as one might expect, but a result of the astonishingly limited capacity of the pair to relate to the world beyond the commodity logic of possession and acquisitiveness. No longer confronted with a world of things they want to own, devoid of exposure to those seductive objects that promise to propel them into a brighter future, Jérôme and Sylvie sink into a state of complete indifference to their surrounds. As Yuji Oniki astutely observes, “what is most disturbing during Jérôme and Sylvie’s stay in Sfax is how, despite this divestment of their own past, they remain utterly incapable of liberating themselves from the vantage point of which this previous discourse established, and how impoverished their vocabulary becomes once they are outside the particular time and place of the consumer culture they used to inhabit” (113). This impoverished capacity to relate, to describe, and to even *notice* the distinctive features of Sfax is most apparent when the pair *dérive* through the city streets, a habit that despite the regularity of their walking fails to produce the sense of belonging, however provisional, that it produced for them in Paris:

Ils y pénétraient souvent, et en faisaient le but presque exclusive de toutes leurs promenades, mais parce qu’ils n’étaient justement que des promeneurs, ils y restèrent toujours étrangers. Ils ne comprenaient pas les mécanismes les plus simples, ils n’y voyaient qu’un dédale de rues [...] Rien, finalement, ne les attirait dans cette succession d’échoppes misérables, de magasins presque identiques, de souks confinés, dans cette incompréhensible alternance de rues grouillantes et de rues vides, dans cette foule qu’ils ne voyaient aller nulle part. (Les Choses 105-6)

They often entered the Arab quarter, made it almost the only goal of all their walks, but because they were only walking through, they remained for ever strangers in it. They did not understand its basic mechanisms, all they could see was a labyrinth of alleys. [...] In the end there was nothing to attract them in this sequence of poverty-stricken stalls, of almost identical shops, of cramped bazaars, in this incomprehensible alternation of crowded and deserted streets, in this throng which did not seem to be going anywhere at all. (*Things* 106)

The sad truth that “there was nothing to attract them” in the Arab quarter is at the heart of Jérôme and Sylvie’s inability to see, and therefore to appreciate, the “basic mechanisms” of the topography of the quarter. In this respect, Oniki is correct to assert that for Perec, “There is nothing superficial about one’s investment in consumer culture. In fact, it is precisely the loaded series of networks implied by a single commodity that Perec seems

most interested in evoking” (110). The significance of the unfamiliar setting of Sfax is precisely its capacity to dramatise the full extent to which a fascination with material culture has impoverished the subjectivity of Jérôme and Sylvie, for when their connection to the “series of networks implied by a single commodity” (Oniki 110) is severed the pair are left with little more than a lingering sense of emptiness and desolation. In Sfax it becomes apparent that “*cette quête indécise qui ne les avait menés nulle part, qui ne leur avait rien appris*” (120 [their “uncertain quest [...] had taken them nowhere [and] taught them nothing” (119)]. In this respect, the emotional disorientations that Jérôme and Sylvie experience when walking the streets of Sfax could not be further from the generative and productively destabilising explorations of unknown neighbourhoods pursued by the Situationists. Their listless drifting is experienced, rather, as dislocation and implies a critique of the inadequacy of consumer culture to equip the subject with the adaptive skills that might have allowed Jérôme and Sylvie to effectively decode “alien” situations beyond the familiar, the known and the easily quantifiable:

Ils marchaient, silencieux, désorientés, et ils avaient parfois l'impression que tout n'était qu'illusion, que Sfax n'existait, ne respirait pas. Ils cherchaient autour d'eux des signes de connivence. Rien ne leur répondait. C'était une sensation presque douloureuse d'isolement. Ils étaient dépossédés de ce monde, ils n'y baignaient pas, ils ne lui appartenaient pas et ne lui appartiendraient jamais. (Les Choses 110)

They would walk, not speaking, disoriented; and sometimes it seemed that everything was but an illusion, that Sfax did not exist, did not breathe. They sought signs of complicity all around. Nothing answered their call. They felt isolated in a way that was almost painful. They had been dispossessed, the world was no longer for swimming in, no longer in their arms, and never would be. (*Things* 111)

Things and its 1967 sequel *A Man Asleep* are, in Michael Sheringham's formulation, “fables of disconnection” (*Everyday Life* 256). The lesson of *Things*, in particular, “is that we fail to engage with the everyday when we succumb to manufactured lifestyles, allowing these to dictate our patterns and responses” (256). When compared with his later works more explicitly concerned with space, most notably *Espèces d'espaces* [*Species of Spaces*], first published in France in 1974, Perec's debut novel might be viewed as concerned simply with documenting the vicissitudes of consumer culture. However, in posing the problem of how we might learn to better see and more thoroughly engage with the everyday when immersed in a world veiled in the spectacular myths of

mass-culture, *Things* anticipates the central dilemma of apprehending and making visible the quotidian that lies at the heart of Perec's writing on space. In my concluding remarks on Perec I will briefly examine the ambiguous solution that Perec formulates in response to this conundrum, namely his notion of the "infra-ordinary." In doing so I argue that the infra-ordinary as Perec conceives it is linked to the Situationist method of *détournement*. For in seeking to "turn around" (*détourner*) our relation to the everyday, the infra-ordinary foregrounds alternative possibilities for a literary-spatial praxis in a post avant-garde context.

The term *l'infra-ordinaire*, or the "infra-ordinary," first appears in a short article entitled "Approches de quoi?" ["Approaches to What?"] published in the *Cause Commune* journal in February 1973.²³ In this polemical piece Perec calls into question the extent to which we have trained our everyday attention to focus always on "*l'événement, l'insolite, l'extra-ordinaire*" (9) ["the big event, the untoward, the extra-ordinary" (209)] such that now "*la vie ne devait se révéler qu'à travers le spectaculaire, comme si le parlant, le significatif était toujours anormal*" (9-10) ["life reveals itself only by way of the spectacular, as if what speaks, what is significant, is always abnormal" (209)]. For Perec, the problem of the spectacle resides less in its fostering of an apolitical or ahistorical relationship to the world that diminishes the subject's sense of agency, which is the core of the Situationist complaint against it, but rather in its posing of a distinctly phenomenological problem. To fail to apprehend the ordinary world that we inhabit, according to Perec, is to fail to understand the very nature of our being. In his critique of the devaluation of the everyday Perec draws upon the terminology of Lefebvre's notion of the rest or the remainder, which implies a dialectical movement of yet-to-be realised potential latent within the residue of lived experience:

Ce qui se passe vraiment, ce que nous vivons, le reste, toute le reste, où est-il? Ce qui se passe chaque jour et qui revient chaque jour, le banal, le quotidien, l'évident, le commun, l'ordinaire, l'infra-ordinaire, le bruit de fond, l'habituel, comment en rendre compte, comment l'interroger, comment le décrire? ("Approches" 11)

What's really going on, what we're experiencing, the rest, all the rest, where is it? How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual?" ("Approches" 210)

While Perec's polemic does not seek to intervene into the structures of everyday life in

the manner of the experiments of the Situationists, it nevertheless continues to observe the avant-garde imperative to “change life” in the sense that Perec links the rediscovery of a sense of astonishment with the quotidian to a reawakening to the unrealised potential of one’s own sensibilities. In (re)learning to apprehend the ordinary Perec envisages that the subject might overcome the conditioning to the habitual that he defines as a modern form of anaesthesia. In this way, the question of apprehending the most ordinary and unexceptional traits and events of the everyday is, for Perec, inextricably bound to the least trivial of questions for it is only in turning our attention to the anti-spectacular realm of the infra-ordinary that one is provoked to consider “*où est-elle, notre vie? Où est notre corps? Où est notre espace?*” (“Approches” 11) [“where is our life? Where is our body? Where is our space?” (“Approaches” 210)].

In my introduction to this chapter I quoted the suggestive assertion of David Bellos that Situationist notions of the *dérive* and *détournement* were influential upon Perec’s “reinvention of the art of seeing as well as the art of writing” (281). As I have elucidated at various points throughout my thesis, Situationist *détournement* involves the re-use of pre-existing elements of culture to critical ends. In respect to Perec’s category of the “infra-ordinary,” I argue that it is precisely the readymade of daily life itself as a “pre-existing element of culture” that Perec seeks to turn around to critical ends. What preoccupies Perec in the everyday, Gilbert Adair suggests, is “‘what remains,’ what is left when everything else has been recorded [...] What concerns him are the interstices, *the spaces between*” (184). As a writer rather than an activist, the challenge for Perec is less to formulate a sociological critique of the everyday than it is to ascertain what literary methods might prove most effective in revealing the quotidian in order to succeed in “rendering an experience of immersion in the everyday” (Sheringham, “Attending” 199). It is for this reason that experiments, constraints and ludic projects assume pride of place in Perec’s writing. For in making lists, compiling inventories and creating logs that register and record experience, rather than interpret it, Perec cultivates a level of extreme attentiveness that is itself the goal of his writing. As a result, Perec’s experimental methods run counter to the aims of conventional storytelling concerned with the development of character, the advancement of plot and the revelation of subjective experience and inner truths. In this way, Perec not only “anticipates certain later explorations of the everyday” (Sheringham, “Attending” 199) but is prescient, too, of how psychogeography, as the study of the influence of environments on the behaviours and emotions of individuals, is

inseparable from the notion of writing as praxis. The process of revealing the everyday in language is also a process of revaluing it and in doing so this revaluation entails the *détournement*, or turning around, of a spectacular conception of the relation between self and world.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

¹ At the 1962 Edinburgh Writers Conference Trocchi referred to himself as a “cosmonaut of inner space.”

² See Cooper, “English Legacy” (48-89); Wark, *Beach Beneath the Street* (125-183); and Tasker’s unpublished paper on Trocchi presented at the 2012 Situationist Aesthetics conference.

³ For a candid account of the numerous set-backs that resulted in what were admittedly substandard editions of Beckett’s work see Richard Seaver, “Beckett and *Merlin*” (19-28).

⁴ In a short pamphlet dated 7 October 1960, “Hands Off Alexander Trocchi!” the Situationists offered vocal support for Trocchi during his drug trial. Authored by Guy Debord, Jacqueline de Jong and Asger Jorn, the pamphlet lauds Trocchi as “an artist of the first order” and calls upon British intellectuals and artists to “join with us in denouncing this menacing lack of culture on the part of the American police.”

The pamphlet also offers a broader defence of Trocchi’s actions as representing those of “a new type of artist; pioneer of a new culture and a new comportment (the question of drugs being in his own eyes minor and negligible).” The pamphlet is notable as the closest that the SI would come to a defence of the beatnik counterculture, which they largely dismissed as mystical and insufficiently political in its drop-out stance.

⁵ The most explicit evidence of Trocchi’s disdain for the framing of literature in national terms are the events of the International Writers Conference at the Edinburgh Festival in 1962 where Trocchi famously clashed head-on with Scotland’s “national poet,” Hugh MacDiarmid, whom he referred to as “an old fossil” (“Edinburgh” 154). On the question of Scottish literature, Trocchi states: “I think the question of human identity is the only central question and it is a question of man alone and I don’t give a damn if he’s a Scotsman, or an American, or anything else. It is high time we transcended nationalistic barriers” (157).

⁶ See McKenzie Wark, “An Athlete of Duration,” in *The Beach Beneath the Street* (127) for a brief discussion of *Helen and Desire*. It should also be noted that *Young Adam* was first published as a dirty book for Olympia Press. Trocchi revised the novel, excising most of its pornographic elements, in preparation for republication with John Calder in the same year.

⁷ The lack of sympathy for French Existentialism in post-war England is cited by Trocchi as a decisive reason for his relocation from Glasgow to Paris, rather than London, in the early fifties. See Trocchi quoted in Andrew Murray Scott, *Alexander*

Trocchi (33).

⁸ The London imprint of Calder Books published *Cain's Book* in February 1963. According to Campbell and Niel, Cain's Book was tried for obscenity on the 14th of April 1964 at the Sheffield Magistrate's Court and found obscene, however "the resulting ban never had any effect outside Sheffield City Boundaries" (141).

⁹ Play as "confirming the supra-logical nature of the human situation" is taken by Trocchi directly from Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (2-3).

¹⁰ See Tom Tenney, "(It Will) Never Work: A critique of the Situationists' appropriation of Johan Huizinga's theory of play."

¹¹ The death of literature is conceived in dialectical terms by Trocchi, envisaged as necessary for clearing a path for more vital forms of expression to emerge. At the 1962 Writers Conference in Edinburgh, Trocchi argues that "All vital creation is at the other side of nihilism: it begins after Nietzsche, after Dada. The appropriate attitude is tentative, intuitive, a creative passion, a spontaneity leading to what André Breton called 'the found object' [...] The future of the novel *per se* is insignificant ("The Future of the Novel" 159).

¹² For a paradigmatic assessment of Trocchi's wasted talent, see the interview with his publisher John Calder in *A Life in Pieces* in which Calder asserts that heroin "stopped his [Trocchi's] ability to write. His ideas were always there. He was a great talker, right up to the end, but the ability to actually sit down and face the white paper disappeared" (152). By contrast, the chapter dedicated to Trocchi in McKenzie Wark's *Beach Beneath the Street* (125-134), marks a critical turning point as it is one of the first pieces to dedicate more sustained attention to project sigma than to Trocchi's novels, challenging assumptions regarding Trocchi's downward trajectory post *Cain's Book*.

¹³ It is worth noting here that Trocchi's attack on mass media and entertainment bears certain resemblances to the Frankfurt School's criticisms of the culture industry. As an outsider to the academy, however, it is unlikely that Trocchi encountered the scholarly work of the Frankfurt School and his critique of the reifying effects of consumer culture was most likely received via his encounter with Debord, whose theory of the society of the spectacle was formulated independently of the work of Adorno. For an astute comparative assessment of the intersections in the critique of the culture industry made by Debord and Adorno, and their fundamentally divergent assessments of the autonomy of art, see Anselm Jappe "Sic Transit Gloria Artis: 'The End of Art' for Theodor Adorno and Guy Debord" (102-128).

¹⁴ The "friend" alluded to here is Debord and the epigram is adapted from *Notes éditoriales d'Internationale Situationniste*, 3 décembre, 1959. In English, the epigram reads: "If we do not want to partake in the spectacle of the end of the world, we must work towards the end of the world of the spectacle." Translation mine.

¹⁵ Edwin Morgan, letter, January 2008, quoted in *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Postwar Britain* by Angela Bartie.

¹⁶ Trocchi was expelled from the SI in 1964 however the parting of ways was not formally

publicised until 1966 when his departure was announced in the tenth edition of *Internationale Situationniste*.

¹⁷ Founded in 1960 by Raymond Queneau, Oulipo is an acronym of *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle*; which roughly translates into English as "workshop of potential literature." The group comprises writers and mathematicians concerned with the creation of literary works using constraints including established techniques such as the lipogram and the palindrome, and new methods often based on mathematical problems.

¹⁸ *Things* is not strictly an auto-fiction but as its two central characters work as market researchers it is worth noting Perec's collaboration with Henri Lefebvre who in 1960 invited Perec to participate in his *Group d'études sur la vie quotidienne* [Study Group on Everyday Life]. While the collaboration was relatively short lived, Perec did participate in conducting a survey at Caen on the rise of market research, a project that Michael Sheringham suggests "would have a significant impact on *Les choses*" (*Everyday Life* 251).

¹⁹ This chapter is most explicitly concerned with Perec's ambiguous treatment of the quotidian in his first novel and how this treatment both develops and departs from the Situationist critique of everyday life. However, it is worth noting that formal experimentation in *Things* anticipates what was to become a defining characteristic of Perec's later fictions, namely a materialist concern for exploring the potentialities and limits of language and literary form (see Sturrock, "Introduction" xiv-xvii). In this respect, Perec's most well-known and accomplished literary works, notably *La vie de mode d'emploi* [*Life: A User's Manual*], published in France in 1978 and presenting a bricolage of interwoven accounts of the lives of the inhabitants of a single Parisian apartment block, as well as his 1969 lipogrammatic novel *La Disparition* [English title: *A Void*], reveal the centrality of formal constraint to Perec's writing.

²⁰ The seminars by Barthes were entitled *Inventaire des systèmes de signification contemporains* [An inventory of contemporary systems of signification]; and *Recherches sur la rhétorique* [Research on Rhetoric]. See Sheringham (*Everyday Life* 252).

²¹ Indeed comments made by the author suggest that Perec used Barthes's *Mythologies* (1957) as a handbook during the composition of the novel: "I wrote *Things* with a pile of *Madame Express* beside me and, to wash my mouth out after having read rather too much *Madame Express*, I would read some Barthes" (Perec qtd. in Leak 133).

²² On the topic of the avant-garde credentials of *Things* it is worth noting the limits of Perec's own political commitments. Perec was not a member of the PCF (French Communist Party) nor any political party during his lifetime. According to Bellos, he adopted a left-wing position at the start of his career that reached a degree of intensity during the years of 1954-1957, between the loss of Indochina and the intensification of the war in Algeria, but over time Perec's commitment to political action lessened significantly. (*Georges Perec* 144-146)

²³ *Cause Commune* (1972-77) was a leftist journal founded by Georges Perec, Jean Duvignaud and Paul Virilio with a view to publishing work with a sociological perspective on everyday life absent from ideology.

Conclusion

Culminating in a discussion of the *dérive* and *détournement* in the early fiction of Georges Perec, and focusing in particular on how these key Situationist methods are diverted towards a revaluation of the everyday via an apprehension of the *infra-ordinary*, my final chapter concluded at a significant crossroads, rather than an end-point, in the literary history of psychogeography and the novel. On the one hand, the early 1960s marks the conclusion of the avant-garde phase of psychogeography as it was conceived by the Situationists. But on the other hand, there begins a more complex reconstitution of psychogeographical methods and concerns in a neo-avant-garde context. Today, the afterlife of Situationist psychogeography is intertwined with a number of influential currents of inquiry in the humanities and beyond as its aesthetico-political praxis continues to resonate across diverse disciplines. From studies of everyday life, human geography and urban design to the spectator theory and revaluations of art and politics in the work of such philosophers as Jacques Rancière, and the critical spatiality of the postmodern geographies of Edward Soja, David Harvey and others,¹ the imprint of the Situationist preoccupation with affect and the politics of urban space remains everywhere apparent. In the context of this study, however, it is the literary afterlife of Situationist psychogeography, most notably its re-imagining in a uniquely British strand of psychogeographical fiction from the 1990s onwards, that speaks to the continued relevance of the Situationist project in a contemporary context.

Yet as I emphasised in my introduction, one result of the broadening of the remit and meaning of the term psychogeography has been an obscuring of its avant-garde origins as a specific tactic of counter-spectacle mobilised with strategic and critical intent. In response, the primary aim of my research has been to return to the avant-garde origins of psychogeography with a view to reassessing the contested and ambiguous role of the novel during this particular historical period. In reopening the avant-garde chapter of psychogeography it has not been my intention to correct contemporary misunderstandings of Situationist psychogeography nor to discredit the validity of contemporary approaches, which now unfold within a significantly altered political, social and cultural context. Rather, the central aim of my study has been to explore how the avant-garde critique and negation of the novel, performed via such activities as the *dérive* and psychogeographical researches, gave rise to ambivalent literary forms and complex subjectivities that may be

of critical relevance for contemporary scholarship on the novel. At the same time, I have argued that a more nuanced account of the Situationist origins of psychogeography is needed in order to understand precisely how psychogeographical literatures have come to represent a unique form of literary praxis that disrupts the conventions of the novel whilst binding experimentation in space to a broad reaching critique of the alienation of everyday life under capitalist modernity. In my concluding remarks, I want to briefly outline how the findings of my research support my claim that psychogeographical methods present a distinct challenge to the conventions of novelistic production. Lastly, I will assess the implications of these findings for future studies of psychogeography and the novel with a particular emphasis on the possibilities that a fuller understanding of the avant-garde origins of psychogeography presents for its study in a post-avant-garde or neo-avant-garde context.²

Unlike the existing literature on psychogeography which tends to trace its beginnings back to the *flâneur* and the urban novelists of nineteenth century France and Britain, I elected to begin my study with a detailed account of the Surrealist *déambulation* of the 1920s. Without wanting to deny the influence of *flânerie* upon the formulation of Lettrist psychogeography, for it is indeed present to a certain extent, I nevertheless sought to disrupt the tendency to explain the history of psychogeography in evolutionary terms. Rather, I contend that it was ultimately the complex lines of inheritance and negation between the Surrealists and the Situationists that had the greatest bearing on the emergence of psychogeography in the 1950s as “an experimental art” designed to supersede the separation of art from the politics of everyday life. As Debord noted in one of the foundational documents of the movement, “*Le programme surréaliste, affirmant la souveraineté du désir et de la surprise, proposant un nouvel usage de la vie, est beaucoup plus riche de possibilités constructives qu’on ne le pense généralement*” (“Rapport” 691) [“the surrealist program, asserting the sovereignty of desire and surprise and proposing a new way of life, is much richer in constructive possibilities than is generally realized” (“Report” 28)]. By positing the Surrealists and the Situationists as a pair of avant-garde movements both concerned with the revolution of everyday life operating in a *dialectical* tension with one another my study intervenes into the more generalised view that the Surrealist stroll represents a ludic yet benign precursor to the Situationist *dérive*. I suggest that such an intervention matters as a fuller understanding of the commonalities in the Surrealist and Situationist project to harness desire as a revolutionary force, as well as an

appreciation of the differences in how each movement conceived such a project might be brought about, is needed if we are to more rigorously interrogate walking as critique and negation in the avant-garde anti-novels of the first half of the twentieth-century.

As a further development of these concerns, another stated aim of my research has been to investigate a largely overlooked or glossed question in contemporary accounts of psychogeography; namely the question of precisely what the *psych* in psychogeography entails, and to consider in turn what the subjective dimensions of the practice might imply for psychogeographical readings of the novel. By analysing the disoriented subjectivities of psychogeography from the perspective of the Deleuze and Guattarian schizoid model of the unconscious, which affirms the generative properties of desiring-production above and beyond the model of lack and Oedipal identifications that underpin Freudian and psychoanalytical explanations, I have sought to reorient the discussion of the *dérive*, in particular, back towards its relationship to the avant-garde project to collectively mobilise desire in “the optimum direction for future change” (Powell, par 32). On one level, this schizo-analytical intervention into psychogeography can be situated within an emergent field of inquiry within certain disciplines such as cultural studies and human geography concerned with its practical applications. As I pointed out in chapter two, UK scholar and psychogeographer Tina Richardson is presently developing new approaches and psychogeographical methods of studying urban space that draw upon the schizoanalytic cartographies of Félix Guattari, in particular, as a means to recover the activist and pragmatic dimensions of psychogeography that are downplayed when it is conceived primarily as a spatially-oriented genre of literary fiction and non-fiction. On another level, it is important to note that my turn to Deleuze and Guattari has been primarily conceptual as I have sought to stress the *immanent* nature of the relationship between the city and subjectivity that psychogeography fosters. In this way, I want to open up a broader discussion around how psychogeographical practices harness the deterritorialising influence of affects, intensities, and transitions in ambience and atmosphere as a means of setting into motion a micro-politics of desire that destabilises the disciplinary ethos and the homogenising drives of late capitalist modernity.

At the same time, this assessment of the schizoid dimensions of the *dérive* has called into question whether the relationship between psychogeography and the novel can in fact be approached hermeneutically, or by applying the conventional tools of literary analysis. For not only does the *dérive* function as an anti-representational mode of

exploring the city, or at least in the sense that it was conceived by Debord and the LI, but in its concern for enacting a rapid flight through varied ambiances the extent to which psychogeographical encounters elude conventional narrative strategies must be taken into consideration. In this respect, Michel Lacroix's statement on the aporia at the heart of the Lettrist *dérive* astutely delineates the dilemma:

As a result of the primacy accorded to the affective and ludic experience of the city, as well as to argument and assertion rather than to narrative, because of the hue cast on individual artistic productions, the stories of the *dérive* remain a hapax in the procession of texts produced by the Lettrists.³ (par 19)

As Lacroix insists, the anti-representational nature of the Lettrist *dérive* places it in an antithetical relationship to literary production and to novelistic discourse in particular. Yet closer inspection of the psychogeographical activities of the LI and the SI has revealed that while the group largely rejected the production of literature it is nevertheless the case that the novel, with its close proximity to the events of everyday life, did have an important role to play in their project. Debord's interest in the "instructive" value of the heightened sensory perceptions, intensified spatial awareness and dissolute subjectivities discernible in a novel such as Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, for instance, suggests that the study of literary affect represents an important area of future inquiry for psychogeographical readings of the novel. Therefore a conclusion that can be drawn from my research into the avant-garde chapter of psychogeography and the novel is that one should not necessarily look to the LI and the SI for exemplary manifestations of psychogeographical literatures per se but rather for psychogeographical methods and strategies of reading that seek to identify, analyse and turn around the destabilising effects of the literary text for critical purposes.

The significance of the subversion or turning around of the novel in psychogeographical activities brings us, then, to the crucial role of *détournement* in the Situationist project. While the *dérive* already represents an important area of focus in the existing literature on psychogeography (see Coverley 81-103; Solnit 212-213; and Pinder 39-64), the role of *détournement* is, by comparison, less frequently addressed in respect to the avant-garde phase of psychogeography's development. By paying particular attention to the *détournement* of the novel in Debord's *Mémoires* and in the Situationist fiction of Michèle Bernstein, my study demonstrates that the *dérive*'s turning around of urban space finds an important correlative in the SI's rerouting of existing elements of

culture via their practice of *détournement*, and as such it is vital to view the two methods as complementary and having mutually influenced one another. An important implication of my research has been to demonstrate, then, the extent to which the *détournement* of the novel in fact performs an “educative” function in the Situationist project. In *Mémoires*, the reuse of existing elements of literary culture in a new context works to set in motion Debord’s critical theory, thereby presenting a disagreeable portrait of current society whilst harnessing the destabilising force of negativity as a means to challenge the reifications of everyday life within the society of the spectacle. For Bernstein, the ambivalent treatment of the novel in *All the King’s Horses* and *The Night* functions more specifically as a critique of the novel itself. While the term “Situationist fiction” is in many respects a contradictory one, I argue that it is possible to talk about the “fictions” of the SI when the role of negation is emphasised. In a similar vein, the SI’s relationship to literary experimentation is best understood when approached not in formalist terms but as an attempt, rather, to critique culture from within with a view to not only analysing the alienating forces at play within the indeterminate realm of the everyday but also to changing them.

Recalling the emphasis that the Situationist project of psychogeography places upon the study of the urban terrain as undertaken with a view to changing it is also a pertinent reminder of the extent to which its avant-garde formulation was very much embedded in a Marxist notion of praxis. Today the relationship of contemporary psychogeographical practices to classical Marxism is ambivalent at best yet I suggest that the concern for praxis in the more general sense of combining theory with action nonetheless remains central to the reconstitution of psychogeographical themes and techniques by its neo-practitioners and contemporary authors. In assessing the relationship between psychogeography and the novel, praxis offers a lynch pin between its avant-garde origins and contemporary retranslations, challenging those definitions of psychogeographical fictions as concerned merely with the spirit of place, or the relationship between place and psyche, as it opens up a more complex set of questions around how psychogeographical texts “work” or “function.” In this sense, the praxis of literary psychogeography involves a pragmatics of reading and writing that disrupts conventional hermeneutical and psychoanalytical models of interpreting text, self and city. Lastly, psychogeography as praxis also speaks to the utopian energies that underpin the psychogeographer’s enduring preoccupation with refiguring the relation between self and

world as a means to potentially bring alternative futures into play.

Notwithstanding the extent to which my definition of literary psychogeography as praxis implies an ambivalent relationship to the genre of the novel, I want to emphasise that my study has somewhat paradoxically revealed the significant role occupied by auto-fictional devices in psychogeographical texts. One of the most influential traits of Surrealist novels such as Breton's *Nadja* and Aragon's *Paris Peasant* upon the development of literary psychogeographies is, I argue, their status as auto-fictions or what in French is termed the *roman-à-clef* ("novel with a key"). In the Surrealist *roman-à-clef* the performative subversion of autobiography and the conventions of the memoir mode is pivotal to the text's negation of the project of the classical novel. Despite their ambiguous "literariness," it is nevertheless still possible to describe these Surrealist texts as anti-novels. Insofar as Surrealist texts largely reject the conventions of plot and character development in favour of a spatial and perambulatory approach to narrative, these novels mine the quotidian as a conduit for releasing the marvellous and uncovering the unconscious desires latent within the everyday. Thus the destabilising role afforded to auto-fictional devices in the anti-novels of the Surrealists provides an important context for understanding the significance of *détournement*, or the turning around, of autobiography in the Situationist project. Not unlike their Surrealist forebears, the Situationists self-mythologise and fictionalise their autobiography in order to cultivate gaps and ruses that emphasise the element of play in everyday life and turn the construction of identity into a game. Yet it is also critical to point out that the SI diverge from the Surrealists to the extent that they do not valorise the unleashing of unconscious desire as inherently radical in itself. Rather, the Situationist project seeks to consciously organise desire to rational ends as a first step in constructing ambient situations as a foundation for a life freely created by its participants, rather than passively observed by its spectators.

Future directions: psychogeography and the neo-avant-garde

While my study has focused for the most part on the contested role of the novel during what I have classified the "heroic phase" of psychogeography, I have also sought to consider the transition that takes place in literary treatments of the *dérive* and *détournement* beyond the conclusion of its avant-garde chapter in the early 1960s. Drawing upon the terminology of Peter Bürger, I suggest that a useful avenue for future

research into psychogeography and the novel is to further conceptualise this transition from the heroic manifestation of psychogeography to its more ambiguous literary afterlife in terms of the transition of the avant-garde to the neo-avant-garde. First introduced in his classic 1974 study *Theory of the Avant-garde*, Bürger's concept of the neo-avant-garde is contentious as it not only defines the avant-garde as historically and temporally bounded but it also emphasises the overall failure of its project to revolutionise life as a whole. Furthermore, Bürger asserts that art entered a new phase after the conclusion of the avant-garde distinguished by the reinstatement of the category of the work of art and the artist's resumption of procedures "invented by the avant-garde with antiartistic intent [now] being used for artistic ends" (*Theory* 57). It is a claim that divides critics as it implies that the neo-avant-garde merely repeats the gestures of the avant-garde but in a futile manner as their transgressions have been incorporated by the institution of art and thereby stripped of their radical effect.⁴ More recently, Bürger has defended his concept of the neo-avant-garde against such criticism, refining his position by arguing that the neo-avant-garde is essentially a polemical construct that describes a key cultural transition that took place in the mid twentieth-century and that its existence need not negate the possibility that the avant-garde project to effect radical social change via aesthetic means "could gain a renewed relevance in a future that we cannot imagine" ("Attempt to answer" 714). At the same time, one must concede the immense obstacles involved in renewing the radical program of the avant-garde in the present given the fundamentally altered context of the neoliberal culture industry within which such projects now unfold.

In my final chapter concerned with the vestigial or trace manifestations of Situationist psychogeography in the 1960s fiction of Alexander Trocchi and Georges Perec, I suggested that the term neo-avant-garde usefully describes both the contradictions and the possibilities inherent in the resumption of Situationist techniques after the conclusion of the heroic phase of psychogeography. Without doubt the novels of both Trocchi and Perec bear the imprint of diverse influences and as such neither can be neatly nor definitively classified as Situationist. Yet my close readings of *Cain's Book* and *Things: A Story of the Sixties* demonstrates that psychogeographical preoccupations not only assume an afterlife in a neo-avant-garde context but that they retain their critical effect despite their authors maintaining the category of the novel, a stance that the SI by comparison repeatedly problematised. In the case of Trocchi's *Cain's Book*, psychogeographical disorientations and drifting embodies a spirit of revolt against fixed

identities while the play ethos is invoked as contrapuntal to the alienations of the disciplinary and productive logic of late modernity. In Perec's *Things*, the avant-garde intent to effect radical social change is all but absent. Nevertheless, the novel's ambivalent portrayal of life in a consumer society points to the need to revalue the everyday through a demystification of its internalised systems of signs and myths. As an experimental and innovative writer, Perec imagines a new and vital role for fiction in bringing about a heightened apprehension of the ordinary that *détourns*, or turns around, the spectacle of a passive relationship to the everyday.

Today, the most notable resumption of psychogeography in a literary context is of course its reconstitution from the early 1990s onwards in a uniquely British strand of fiction in which exploration of the London cityscape on foot constructs the global capital as a neo-liberal dystopia in need of reclaiming from habituated patterns of production and consumption. I can only gesture here towards the complex set of reasons and motivations that informed its resumption in the nineties by pointing out that the neo-currents of psychogeography arose in Britain precisely at a moment of socio-political crisis when the regressive influence of conservative Thatcherite politics, in particular, began to make itself felt across the spheres of daily life, including upon London's urban design. As the London Psychogeographical Association (LPA) asserted in their 1992 (re)founding bulletin, "the revival of the LPA corresponds to the increasing decay in British culture, and indeed of the British ruling elite. It has been, in fact, an historical inevitability" ("We're Back," par 5). This intriguing assertion by the LPA points to the inherently spectral character of British psychogeography, and in conclusion I want to follow Sam Cooper by asserting that the category of the spectral represents an important avenue for future research into psychogeography and the novel. In light of its preoccupation with the occult and the gothic combined with the frequent mixing of "the esoteric and the arcane with the deviant and the sordid, or antiquarianism with crime and lowlife" (Baker 325), today psychogeography is perhaps best understood as a "hauntology" in the sense intended by Marx and Engels and in its later theorisation by Derrida in the *Specters of Marx*.⁵ For Derrida, hauntology describes how the ghosts of the past return to disrupt the structures of the present whilst refusing conclusivity. As a spectral haunting of the banal and commodified spaces of the city in an era of globalisation and hyper-consumerism, psychogeographical fictions resurrect the past in an often contradictory and ambivalent mix of "revolutionary intent and folkish anti-modernism" (Bonnett 56). In this way,

psychogeographical authors channel the destabilising impulses of what Bonnett terms “radical nostalgia”⁶ into unruly methods of counter-spectacle and literary experimentation.

At the same time, I want to emphasise that future research into the hauntology and spectral politics of contemporary psychogeographical fictions should not lose sight of the extent to which the revival of psychogeography in Britain emerged from the praxis-oriented activities of a suite of neo-avant-garde and underground or counterculture groups that exhibited an extremely critical and hostile stance towards the literary and art world establishment at that time. For provocateurs such as the LPA, the Praxis Group and the Neoist Alliance, hysterical excursions into the occult and ritualistic aspects of the psychic geography of East London past and present took place alongside art strikes, pranks, and agit-prop interventions intended to disrupt London’s institutionally sanctioned cultural landscape. As Stewart Home, a key figure in the revival of psychogeography in Britain points out, the LPA was preoccupied at that time with “conducting rigorous investigations into ley-lines, the occult, the ritual organisation of power, alchemical psychodrama, mind control and architectural symbolism” (*Neoism* 202). Such strategies represented an “assault on culture” in their affront to literary good taste and the respectable elitism and bourgeois orientations of the British culture industry. As such, the esoteric, arcane and occult strands of the British reconstitution of psychogeography were coupled with the revival of “bad books,” literary plagiarism, and the *détournement* or subversion/perversion of pulp genres. Indeed, it is worth restating here Debord and Wolman’s comments in this vein in the “User’s Guide to *Détournement*” as they continue to provide an important framework for understanding the fundamental ethos of negation that underpins Situationist approaches to the novel:

Les premières conséquences apparentes d'une généralisation du détournement, outre les pouvoirs intrinsèques de propagande qu'il détient, seront la réapparition d'une foule de mauvais livres; la participation massive d'écrivains ignorés; la différenciation toujours plus poussée des phrases ou des oeuvres plastiques qui se trouveront être à la mode; et surtout une facilité de la production dépassant de très loin, par la quantité, la variété et la qualité, l'écriture automatique d'ennuyeuse mémoire. (“Mode d’Emploi” 5)

The first visible consequences of a widespread use of *détournement*, apart from its intrinsic propaganda powers, will be the revival of a multitude of bad books, and thus the extensive (unintended) participation of their unknown authors; an increasingly extensive transformation of phrases or plastic works that happen to be in fashion; and above all an ease of production far surpassing

in quantity, variety and quality the automatic writing that has bored us for so long. (“A User’s Guide” 17-18).

In the example of Stewart Home and the neo-avant-garde groups of the early nineties such as the London Psychogeographical Association, combining the occult, hysterical and indeed violent or criminal low-life strands of psychogeography with the “revival of a multitude of bad books” represented a form of literary activism and a pulp-oriented critique of the culture industry that ran counter to the Modernist valorisation of formal experimentation for its own sake. For others it is the collective underpinnings of psychogeographical researches and their relation to the critique of the society of the spectacle that continues to attract and in this context the appropriation of Michèle Bernstein’s detoured novels by a handful of contemporary art collectives warrants mention. The most recent example is *After The Night* (2013), a collectively authored novel that adapts Bernstein’s second book, *La Nuit*, by re-enacting the events of the novel’s Parisian *dérive* relocated to the hip terrain of London’s East End. Authored by an art collective called Everyone Agrees, the novel is not unlike the Surrealist novels of the 1920s in its incorporation of banal photographic documents of the events it describes. Yet with its heavily ironic, jaded and detached tone and its prosaic and anonymous style, *After The Night* contrasts sharply with the more sophisticated literary psychogeographies of such authors as Iain Sinclair, for instance. As distinct from those Situationist inspired texts that set out to map the psyche of a specific locale, in *After The Night* it is the ambiguous air of urban *ennui*, boredom and insincerity cultivated by Bernstein in her Situationist fictions that the authors seek to reprise. In this way, *After The Night* as Situationist anti-novel revels in its own banality in order to emphasise not only the reification of everyday life in late modernity but also the ease with which socially and politically engaged artistic strategies are co-opted and seamlessly recuperated by the dominant logic of commodity capitalism.

With its *détournement* of an existing Situationist text as a means to de-subjectify and anonymise the production of the novel, *After The Night* also extends an earlier project by the Bernadette Corporation in the United States entitled *Reena Spaulings*. The Bernadette Corporation refers to a collective of artists who formed at the height of the global anti-capitalist movement of the 1990s and whose work in the mid-2000s responded in various ways to the repression of dissent by the rise of a consensus-based culture centred on anti-terrorist ideologies in the cultural aftermath of 9/11. Between 2003 and 2004, the

artists began to hastily translate a photocopied version of Bernstein's *Tous les chevaux du roi*, which they distributed as a series of pamphlets in a Manhattan gallery called Reena Spaulings and which then spawned the collective authoring of an anti-novel, also titled *Reena Spaulings* (2004). Composed using the Hollywood screen-writing system whereby a stable of writers are employed to professionally engineer a blockbuster, the book follows the transformation of the unremarkable Manhattan *jeune-fille*, Reena Spaulings, into a cult underwear model and cultural entrepreneur. As a readymade protagonist stripped of any psychological interiority, Reena is a literary machine designed by the authors as a vehicle to critique global capitalism's co-optation of identity politics and the extent to which the quest for so-called "authenticity" disguises the homogenising tendencies of western liberal democracies and their repression of difference and dissent. According to John Kelsey, translator of the 2008 Semiotext(e) English edition of *All the King's Horses*, "Partly under the influence of Bernstein, Bernadette Corporation was interested in re-appropriating an exhausted form, the novel, in order to say something insincere about New York after 9/11" ("Introduction" 9). It is true that collectively authored novels inspired by a Situationist approach such as *Reena Spaulings* and *After the Night* are largely niche undertakings that lack the mainstream appeal and marketability of the London novels now associated with psychogeography. Nevertheless, these texts warrant further attention as examples of the psychogeographical text as praxis and for their de-romanticised mappings of the psychogeography of the city as a site that all too often reinforces the culture of conformity, consensus and non-participation that animates the society of the spectacle at large.

Limitations of the research

Where my primary focus in this study has been a *reevaluation* of the role of the novel during the avant-garde chapter of psychogeography, which has uncovered a relationship that is highly ambivalent yet underscored by an ethos of strategic repurposing, a limitation of the research is that it has not been possible to fully unpack the potential for innovation that neo-practitioners of psychogeography bring to the form. In my reading of Perec's *Things*, I argued that psychogeographical methods and techniques provide new methods of sensually apprehending the everyday and an experimental comportment towards language that is linked to a renewal of the art of fiction. Having achieved my stated aim of critically reassessing the ambiguous role of the novel and the negation of

literary production within the parameters of my study's periodisation of 1920 to 1965, there is nevertheless further scope to elaborate more fully upon how the resumption of psychogeography in a neo-avant-garde context challenges the conventions of the novel. Such a line of inquiry would usefully extend this project's investigations into the centrality afforded to auto-fictional devices and a performative engagement of the self in the Surrealist and Situationist projects by considering the more complex iterations of alter-egos, subversive documentary methods and temporally unstable ludic city narratives that characterise the psychogeographical fictions of the present day.

Lastly, it is worth making a final comment on the methodology of my study, which has been to recover and bring to light an overlooked chapter in the history of the novel in the twentieth-century by combining the methods of the literary historian with the literary critic's tools of textual analysis and close reading. As such, my objective has been to reconsider and re-evaluate the efficacy of the novel for the Situationist project, rather than to undertake a sustained evaluation of the efficacy of the Situationist project itself. Rather than seeking to assess whether the Situationists were correct in their critique of spectacle and their committed stance to countering the alienation of everyday life under capitalist relations, I have sought to more fully understand what the adoption of this particular stance by the SI might entail for the production and reception of the novel. It is certainly true that psychogeographical endeavours in the present day no longer represent the organised collective program to bring about radical social change in the sense originally conceived by the SI. Yet critical impulses remain in the ludic tendencies of contemporary psychogeography and its drive to transgress the boundaries of the city, the self and the text. In seeking to apprehend, revalue and re-enchant the spaces of the everyday, today's breed of author as psychogeographer still exhibits a desire to appropriate such spaces, in however provisional a manner, from their instrumental uses. It is in this context that the novelistic treatment of psychogeography in the present resumes the legacy of the SI not necessarily as a failed project but as an unrealised one. At the end of the 1950s, the SI remarked that "we are only at the beginning of urban civilization." More than five decades later, and it is still "up to us to bring it about ourselves" ("Unitary Urbanism" 102).

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹ See Michael Sheringham's *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* (2006) for a comprehensive account of the emergence of the quotidian and the

everyday as a critical area of inquiry in the twentieth-century. See Jacques Rancière's *The Emancipated Spectator* (2010) for a revaluation of Debord's theory of the spectacle. Key works of the spatial turn in the Anglosphere sphere include Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) and David Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000).

² While the terms post-avant-garde and neo-avant-garde are sometimes used interchangeably, post-avant-garde is generally considered more ideologically neutral than its neo-avant-garde counterpart. Whereas the prefix "post" simply connotes that which comes *after* the avant-garde, the expression "neo-avant-garde" emphasises the reinvention or the repetition of the avant-garde project in a new context. For a summary of competing definitions of the neo-avant-garde see Anna Katharina Schaffner, "Inheriting the Avant-Garde: On the Reconciliation of Tradition and Invention in Concrete Poetry" (109-112).

I deploy the term "neo-avant-garde" to refer to the resumption of psychogeographical activities beyond the Situationist phase not in a pejorative sense but because it more accurately describes the extent to which contemporary psychogeography is "neo" in the way that it self-reflexively refers back to its avant-garde legacy.

³ Michel Lacroix, "*Un sujet profondément imprégné*": "*Du fait de la primauté accordée à l'expérience affective et ludique de la ville, ainsi qu'à l'argumentation et à l'assertion plutôt qu'à la narration, du fait aussi du haro jeté sur les productions artistiques individuelles, les récits de dérive demeurent des hapax dans le cortège de textes produits par les lettristes*" (par 19).

⁴ The most sustained critiques of Bürger's concept of the neo-avant-garde include those made by the October critics, most notably Hal Foster in his article "What's neo about the neo-avant-garde?" (5-32) and Benjamin Buchloh's "The primary colours for a second time: a paradigm repetition of the neo-avant-garde" (41-52).

⁵ In *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) Marx and Engels suggest that a spectre (the spectre of communism) is haunting Europe. Although as Sam Cooper points out, it is from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) that "Derrida derives much of his account of hauntology" ("English Legacy" 213). See Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International* (1993). Fittingly, the London Psychogeographical Association (LPA) detoured Marx and Engels in their 1996 broadsheet, "Why Psychogeography?" in which they write, "There is a spectre haunting Europe, nay the world. The spectre of psychogeography" (qtd. in Baker 327).

⁶ Alastair Bonnett's article "The Dilemmas of Radical Nostalgia in British Psychogeography" argues against the idea that the use of the past in contemporary psychogeography is essentially reactionary and conservative in nature. For Bonnett, "contemporary British psychogeography should be understood as a site of struggle over the politics of loss within the radical imagination" (46).

WORKS CITED

- Acquaviva, Frédéric, and Simona Buzatu, eds. *Isidore Isou: Hypergraphics Novels 1950-1984*. Stockholm: Romanian Cultural Institute, 2011. Print.
- Adair, Gilbert. "The Eleventh Day: Perec and the Infra-ordinary." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 29.1 (Spring 2009): 176-188. Print.
- Ades, Dawn. "Introduction." "Louis Aragon: *A Wave of Dreams* (1924)." Trans. Susan de Muth. *Papers of Surrealism* 1 (Winter 2003): 1-11.
www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism. Web. Accessed 17 June 2014.
- Adorno, Theodor W. *Negative Dialectics*. Trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Seabury P, 1973. Print.
- , "The Schema of Mass Culture." *The Culture Industry: Selected essays on mass culture*. Ed. J.M. Bernstein. London: Routledge, 1992. 53-84. Print.
- Andreotti, Libero. "Architecture and Play." *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Ed. Tom McDonough. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004. 213-240. Print.
- Andreotti, Libero, and Xavier Costa, eds. *Theory of the dérive and other situationist writings on the city*. Barcelona: Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona: ACTAR, 1996. Print.
- Aragon, Louis. *A Wave of Dreams* (1924). Trans. Susan de Muth. *Papers of Surrealism* 1 (Winter 2003): 1-11. www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism. Web. Accessed 17 June 2014.
- , *Le Paysan de Paris* (1926). Paris: Gallimard, 1994. Print.
- , *Paris Peasant* (1926). Trans. Simon Watson Taylor. Boston: Exact Change, 1994. Print.
- , *Une Vague de rêves* (1924). Paris: Hors Commerce, 1924. Print.
- Atkinson, Michael. "Les visiteurs du soir: Love in the Ruins." Criterion.com. The Criterion Collection, 19 Sept 2012. Web. Accessed 31 Dec 2013.
- Bacopoulos-Viau, Alexandra. "Automatism, Surrealism and the making of French psychopathology: the case of Pierre Janet." *History of Psychiatry* 23 (2012): 259-276. Print.
- Baker, Phil. "Secret City: Psychogeography and the End of London." *London from Punk*

- to *Blair*. Eds. Andrew Gibson and Joe Kerr. London: Reaktion, 2003. 323-333. Print.
- Balakian, Anna. *André Breton: Magus of Surrealism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1971. Print.
- Barthes, Roland. *Mythologies* (1957). Trans. Annette Lavers. London: Vintage, 2009. Print.
- Bartie, Angela. *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Postwar Britain*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013. Print.
- Bataille, Georges. *Eroticism* (1957). Trans. Mary Dalwood. London: Penguin Classics, 2012. Print.
- , *The Accursed Share vol 1: Consumption*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Zone, 1998. Print.
- Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863). Trans. P.E. Charvet. London: Penguin, 2010. Print.
- Baugh, Bruce. *French Hegel: From Surrealism to Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, 2003. Print.
- , "How Deleuze can help us make literature work." *Deleuze and Literature*. Eds. Ian Buchanan and John Marks. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000. 34-56. Print.
- Baum, Kelly. Rev. of *All the King's Horses*, by Michèle Bernstein. *TDR/The Drama Review* 56.1 (2012): 161-163. Print.
- , "The Politics of Pleasure: Gender, desire and *détournement* in the art of the Situationist International. DPhil thesis. U of Delaware. 2005. Print.
- , "The Sex of the Situationist International." *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 23-43. Print.
- Beaujour, Michael. "Sartre and Surrealism." *Yale French Studies* 30 (1963): 86-95. Print.
- Beales, Brodie. "'The Way OUT is the Way IN: Junk and the Subversion of the Nation/Symptom in William Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*.'" *Transnational Literature* 1.1 (2008): 1-7. <http://fhrc.flinders.edu.au/transnational/home.html>. Web. Accessed 22 Sept 2014.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *She Came to Stay* (1943). Trans. Yvonne Moyse and Roger Senhouse. London: Secker & Warburg, 1949. Print.
- , *The Second Sex* (1949). Trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. London: Vintage, 2011. Print.

- Beckett, Samuel. *Molloy; Malone Dies; The Unnameable*. London: John Calder, 1959. Print.
- Bellos, David. *Georges Perec: A Life in Words*. Boston: D.R. Godine, 1993. Print.
- , "The Old and New: An Introduction to Georges Perec." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 29.1 (2009): 11-20. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1940). *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*. Ed. Michael W. Jennings. Trans. Howard Eiland et al. Cambridge: Belknap P, 2006. 170- 291. Print.
- , "Surrealism: The Last Snapshot of the European Intelligentsia" (1929). Trans. Edmund Jephcott. *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings, Volume 2, Part I, 1927-1930*. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Belknap P, 2005. 207-221. Print.
- Bernadette Corporation. *Reena Spaulings*. New York: Semiotext(e), 2005. Print.
- Bernstein, Michèle. *All the King's Horses* (1960). Trans. John Kelsey. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. Print.
- , *La Nuit* (1961). Paris: Éditions Allia, 2013. Print.
- , "Preface in the guise of an autobiography (or vice versa)." *The Night*. Trans. Clodagh Kinsella. London: Book Works, 2013. 9-14. Print.
- , "Sunset Boulevard" (1962). *Internationale Situationniste* # 7. April 1962. Trans. Not Bored. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 24 Aug 2013.
- , "The Long Voyage" (1960). Trans. Not Bored and Philip Edwards. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 15 Jan 2014.
- , *The Night* (1961). Trans. Clodagh Kinsella. London: Book Works, 2013. Print.
- , "The Situationist International." *The Times Literary Supplement* 3 Sept 1964: 781. Print.
- , *Tous les chevaux du roi* (1960). Paris: Éditions Allia, 2004. Print.
- Bewes, Timothy. *Reification: or the Anxiety of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso, 2002. Print.
- Bonnett, Alastair. "The Dilemmas of Radical Nostalgia in British Psychogeography." *Theory Culture Society* 26.1 (2009): 45-70. Print.
- Breton, André. *Communicating Vessels* (1932). Trans. Mary Ann Caws and Geoffrey T. Harris. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1990. Print.
- , *L'Amour Fou* (1937). Paris: Gallimard, 1970. Print.

- . *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. Trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1990. Print
- . *Manifestes du Surréalisme*. Paris: Gallimard, 1972. Print.
- . *Nadja* (1964). Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2012. Print.
- . *Nadja* (1928). Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Grove P, 1960. Print.
- Bryce-Wunder, Sylvia. "Through Expatriate Eyes: Muriel Spark, Alexander Trocchi, and the Empowerment of Scottish Literature during the 1960s." *Scottish Cultural Review of Language and Literature* 20 (2013): 153-173. Print.
- Buchanan, Ian. "Schizoanalysis: An Incomplete Project." *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*. Eds. Benoît Dillet, Iain Mackenzie and Robert Porter. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2013. 163-185. Print.
- . "The 'Clutter' Assemblage." *Deleuze and the Schizoanalysis of Visual Art*. Eds. Ian Buchanan and Lorna Collins. London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 11-30. Print.
- Buchloh, Benjamin. "The Primary Colors for a Second Time: A Paradigm Repetition of the Neo-Avant-Garde." *October* 37 (Summer 1986): 41-52. Print.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1989. Print.
- Bürger, Peter. "Avant-garde and neo-avant-garde: an attempt to answer certain critics of Theory of the Avant-Garde." Trans. Bettina Brandt and Daniel Purdy. *New Literary History* 41.4 (2010): 695-715. Print.
- . *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Trans. Michael Shaw. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1984. Print.
- Caillois, Roger. *Les jeux et les homes: le masque et le vertige* (1958). Paris: Gallimard, 1967. Print.
- Campbell, Alan, and Tim Neil, eds. *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. Print.
- Campbell, James. "Alexander Trocchi: The Biggest Fiend of All." *The Antioch Review* (1992): 458-471. Print.
- Careri, Francesco. *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*. Trans. Steve Piccolo and Paul Hammond. Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 2002. Print.
- Carrington, Leonora. *Down Below* (1944). Chicago: Black Swan P, 1983. Print.

- Caws, Mary Ann. *Surrealism and Women*. Cambridge; London: MIT P, 1991. Print.
- Certeau, Michel de. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. Print.
- Chadwick, Whitney. *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1985. Print.
- Chari, Anita. "Toward a political critique of reification: Lukács, Honneth and the aims of critical theory." *Philosophy of Social Criticism* 36.5 (2010): 587-606. Print.
- Chénieux-Gendron, Jacqueline. *Le Surréalisme et le Roman 1922-1950*. Lausanne: L'Age D'Homme, 1983. Print.
- Choderlos de Laclos, Pierre. *Dangerous Liaisons* (1782). Trans. Helen Constantine. Camberwell: Penguin, 2010. Print.
- Chtcheglov, Ivan. "Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau" (1953/58). *Internationale Situationniste* #1. Juin 1958. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition Augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 15-20. Print.
- , "Formulary for a New Urbanism" (1953). Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 1-8. Print.
- , "Lettres de Loin." *Internationale Situationniste* # 9. Août 1964. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition Augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 402-404. Print.
- , "Letters from Afar." *Internationale Situationniste* # 9. Aug 1964. Trans. Ken Knabb and Reuben Keehan. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 21 July 2014.
- Clover, Joshua. "Partisans of Oblivion: A Situationist Novel." *The Nation* (5 Jan 2009): 34-36. Print.
- Cocker, Emma, "Desiring to be Led Astray." *Papers of Surrealism* 6 (Autumn 2007): 1-30. www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism. Web. Accessed 20 Jan 2015.
- Cohen, Margaret. *Profane Illumination: Walter Benjamin and the Paris of Surrealist Revolution*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1995. Print.
- Collier, Peter. "Surrealist City Narrative: Breton and Aragon." *Unreal City: urban experience in modern European literature and art*. Eds. Edward Timms and David Kelley. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1985. 214-229. Print.

- Colombat, André Pierre. "Deleuze and the Three Powers of Literature and Philosophy; To Demystify, to Experiment, to Create." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 96.3 (Summer 1997): 579-597. Print.
- Conley, Katharine. *Automatic Woman: The Representation of Woman in Surrealism*. London: U of Nebraska P, 1996. Print.
- Cooper, Samuel. "'A Lot to Answer for': The English Legacy of the Situationist International." DPhil thesis. U Sussex. 2012. Print.
- , "Sex and the Situs." *World Picture* 4 (2010). worldpicturejournal.com. Web. Accessed 25 Mar 2014.
- Cosgrove, Denis. "Introduction: Mapping Meaning." *Mappings*. Ed. Denis Cosgrove. London: Reaktion, 1999. 1-23. Print.
- Coverley, Merlin. *Psychogeography* (2006). Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2010. Print.
- Danesi, Fabrice et al. *La fabrique du cinéma de Guy Debord*. Arles: Actes Sud, 2013. Print.
- Debord, Guy. "À Patrick Straram." 31 Oct 1960. *Guy Debord Correspondance: volume II, septembre 1960 – décembre 1964*. Ed Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2001. 37-42. Print.
- , *Cette mauvaise réputation*. Paris: Gallimard, 1993. Print.
- , *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*. Trans. Malcolm Imrie. London: Verso, 1998. Print.
- , "Contribution to the Debate 'Is Surrealism Dead or Alive?'" (1958) Trans. Tom McDonough. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Ed. McDonough. Cambridge: MIT P, 2002. 67-68. Print.
- , *Critique de la séparation* (1961). *Guy Debord: Œuvres Cinématographiques Complètes 1952-1978*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994. 42-57. Print.
- , *Critique of Separation* (1961). Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Guy Debord: Complete Cinematic Works: Scripts, Stills, Documents*. Oakland: AK P, 2003. 29-42. Print.
- , "Deux comptes rendus de dérive" (1956). *Les Lèvres nues* # 9. Nov 1956. Paris: Éditions Allia, 1995. 10-13. Print.
- , ed. *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996. Print.
- , "Introduction à une critique de la géographie urbaine" (1955). *Les Lèvres nues* #6 Sept 1955. Paris: Éditions Allia, 1995. 11-15. Print.
- , "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography" (1955). *Les Lèvres nues* # 6. Sept

1955. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 8-12. Print.
- . *La Société du spectacle* (1967). Paris: Gallimard. c1992. Print.
- . "Le Rôle de *Potlatch*: autrefois et maintenant." *Potlatch* # 30. 15 Jul 1959. *Guy Debord présente: Potlatch: 1954-1957 Édition augmentée*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008. 282-84. Print.
- . "Le Surréalisme - est-il Mort ou Vivant?" (1958). Typed talk on Surrealism by Guy Debord, with corrections in pen (1958). JMS/N/000001. The Situationist International: John McCready Archive, Special Collections & Archives, Liverpool John Moores University.
- . "Letter to Asger Jorn." 11 July 1959. Trans. Not Bored. *Guy Debord, Correspondance*, Volume 1, 1957-1960. Footnotes Alice Debord. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 22 Dec 2013.
- . "Letter to Patrick Straram." 31 Oct 1960. Trans. Not Bored. *Guy Debord, Correspondence*, Volume 2, 1960 -1964. Footnotes by Alice Debord. www.notbored.org. Web. Accessed 29 June 2014.
- . *Panegyric* (1989). Trans. James Brook. London: Verso, 2004. Print.
- . "Rapport sur la construction des situations et sur les conditions de l'organisation et de l'action de la tendance situationniste internationale" (1957). *Internationale Situationniste: Édition Augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 689-701. Print.
- . "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the Terms of Organization and the Action of the Situationist International" (1959). Ed. and Trans. Tom McDonough. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2002. 25-43. Print.
- . *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Trans. Black & Red. Detroit: Black & Red, 1983. Print.
- . "Théorie de la dérive" (1956). *Internationale Situationniste* # 2. Dec 1958. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 51-55. Print.
- . "Theory of the Dérive" (1956) *Internationale Situationniste* # 2. Dec 1958. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 62-66. Print.

- , "The Role of Potlatch, Then and Now." *Potlatch* # 30. July 1959. Trans. Reuben Keehan. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 10 June 2013.
- , "Theses on Cultural Revolution" (1958). *Internationale Situationniste* # 1. June 1958. Trans. and Ed. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 53-55. Print.
- , "Thèses sur la révolution culturelle" (1958). *Internationale Situationniste* # 1. Juin 1958. *Internationale Situationniste*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1997. 20-21. Print.
- , *This Bad Reputation* (1993). Trans. Not Bored. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 16 Apr 2013.
- , "Two Accounts of the Dérive" (1956). *Les Lèvres nues* # 9. Nov 1956. Trans. Thomas Y. Levin. *On the Passage of a Few People Through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International: 1957-1972*. Ed. Elisabeth Sussman. Cambridge: MIT P, 1989. 136-139. Print.
- Debord, Guy and Asger Jorn. *Mémoires* (1959). Paris: Éditions Allia, 2004. Print.
- Debord, Guy and Gil J. Wolman. "A User's Guide to *Détournement*" (1956). *Les Lèvres nues* # 8. May 1956. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 14-21. Print.
- , "Mode d'emploi du détournement." *Les Lèvres nues* # 8. Mai 1956. Paris : Éditions Allia, 1995. 2-9. Print.
- Debord, Guy and Jacqueline De Jong, Asger Jorn. "Hands Off Alexander Trocchi!" 7 Oct 1960. cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 20 Mar 2014.
- DeJean, Joan. *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993. Print.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: capitalism and schizophrenia* (1972). Trans. Robert Hurley et al. London; New Delhi: Bloomsbury, 2012. Print.
- , *Nomadology: The War Machine*. Trans. Brian Massumi. New York: Semiotext(e), 1986. Print.
- , *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. (1980). Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1987. Print.
- De Quincey, Thomas. *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (1821). London:

- Everyman, 1967. Print.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning & the New International* (1993). Trans. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Dezeuze, Anna. "As long as I'm walking." *Subversive Spaces: Surrealism and Contemporary Art*. Ed. Sam Lackey et al. Manchester: The Whitworth Gallery, 2009. 65-80. Print.
- Donné, Boris. *Pour Mémoires: un essai d'élucidation des Mémoires de Guy Debord*. Paris: Éditions Allia, 2004. Print.
- Ducasse, Isidore (Comte de Lautréamont). *Maldoror & the Complete Works of the Comte de Lautréamont*. Trans. Alexis Lykiard. Cambridge: Exact Change, 2011. Print.
- Eburne, Jonathan P. *Surrealism and the Art of Crime*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008. Print.
- Einhorn, Juliette. "Ivre de liberté." *magazine-litteraire.com*. *Le Magazine Littéraire*, 21 Août 2013. Web. Accessed 21 Jan 2014.
- Elsken, Ed van der. *Love on the Left Bank* (1954). Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 1999. Print.
- Everall, Gavin. "The Game" (interview with Michèle Bernstein). *Frieze: contemporary art and culture* 157 (2013): 134-139. Print.
- Everyone Agrees. *After The Night: The Meeting of Failures, Act II*. London: Book Works, 2013. Print.
- Farr, Roger. "The Chronotope of the *Dérive*: Toward a Generic Description of the Psychogeographical Novel." Unpublished essay. U of Capilano, 2000. Revised 2005.
- Fenton, Jill. "'A World where Action is the Sister of Dream': Surrealism and Anti-capitalism in Contemporary Paris." *Antipode* 36 (2004): 942-962. Print.
- Firchow, Peter Edgerly. "Nadja" and "Le Paysan de Paris": Two Surrealist "Novels." *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 6.3 (Autumn 1965): 293- 307. Print.
- Flahutez, Fabrice. "L'Héritage Surréaliste: La Lecture de Breton." *Guy Debord: un art de la guerre*. Eds. Emmanuel Guy and Laurence Le Bras. Paris: BnF/Gallimard, 2013. 46-48. Print.

- Ford, Simon. *The Situationist International: a user's guide*. London: Black Dog, 2005. Print.
- Foster, Hal. *Compulsive Beauty*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1993. Print.
- , "What's neo about the neo-avant-garde?" *October* 70 (Fall 1994): 5-32. Print.
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Trans. Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16.1 (Spring 1986): 22-27. Print.
- Freud, Sigmund. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Helena Ragg-Kirkby. London: Penguin, 2003. Print.
- , "The 'Uncanny'." *Art and literature: Jensen's Gravida, Leonardo da Vinci and other works*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. 339 – 376. Print.
- Gardiner, Michael. *From Trocchi to Trainspotting: Scottish Critical Theory Since 1960*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2006. Print.
- Gardiner, Michael E. "Post-Romantic irony in Bakhtin and Lefebvre." *History of the Human Sciences* 25.3 (2012): 51-69. Print.
- Gilloch, Graeme. *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*. Cambridge: Polity P/Blackwell, 1996. Print.
- Gilman, Claire. "Asger Jorn's Avant-Garde Archives." *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Ed. Tom McDonough. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004. 189-212. Print.
- Gilmore, Thomas B. "The Place of Hallucination in 'Under the Volcano.'" *Contemporary Literature* 23.3 (Summer 1982): 285-305. Print.
- Goldmann, Lucien, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* (1964). Trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock, 1975. Print.
- Gray, Christopher, "'Everyone will live in his own cathedral': the Situationists, 1958-1964." *Leaving the 20th Century: the incomplete work of the Situationist International*. Ed. Christopher Gray. London: Rebel P, 1998. 1-6. Print.
- Greaney, Patrick. "Insinuation: *Détournement* as Gendered Repetition." *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 110: 1 (2011): 75-88. Print.
- Guattari, Félix. *Chaosmosis: an ethico-aesthetic paradigm* (1992). Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Sydney: Power Publications, 1995. Print.
- Haladyn, Julian Jason. "Psychogeographical Boredom." *Drain* 5.2 (Oct 2008). Drainmag.com. Web. Accessed 3 July 2014.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley; Los Angeles: U of California P, 2000. Print.

- Heddon, Deirdre and Cathy Turner. "Walking Women: Shifting the Tales and Scales of Mobility." *Contemporary Theatre Review* 22.2 (2012): 224-236. Print.
- Hertz, Erich. "Disruptive Territories: The Stakes of Surrealist Experience in Breton and Carrington." *Symposium: A Quarterly Journal in Modern Literature* 64 (2010): 89-104. Print.
- Hoff, Ann. "'I Was Convulsed, Pitiably Hideous': Convulsive Shock Treatment in Leonora Carrington's 'Down Below.''" *Journal of Modern Literature* 32.3 (Spring 2009): 83-98. Print.
- Holland, Eugene W. "From Schizophrenia to Social Control." *New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*. Eds. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1998. 65-73. Print.
- , "Preface." *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1999. vii- xii. Print.
- Holmes, Brian. "Guattari's Schizoanalytic Cartographies; or, the Pathic Core at the Heart of Cybernetics." <http://brianholmes.wordpress.com>. 29 Feb 2009. Web. Accessed 3 July 2014.
- Home, Stuart. *Neoism, Plagiarism, & Praxis*. Edinburgh: AK P, 1995. Print.
- , ed. Walk on Gilded Splinters: In Memorandum to Memory, 13 April 1969." *London: City of Disappearances* (2006). Ed. Iain Sinclair. London: Penguin, 2012. 398-409. Print.
- , *What is Situationism? A Reader*. Edinburgh: AK P, 1996. Print.
- Honneth, Axel. *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea*. Ed. Martin Jay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Hubert, Renée Riese. "The Coherence of Breton's 'Nadja.'" *Contemporary Literature* 10 (Spring 1969): 241-252. Print.
- Huizinga, Johan. *Homo Ludens: a study of the play-element in culture*. Boston: Beacon P, 1955. Print.
- Isou, Isidore. *Les Journaux des dieux*. Paris: Escalier de Lausanne, 1950. Print.
- James, David. *Contemporary British Fiction and the Artistry of Space: Style, Landscape, Perception*. London: Continuum, 2008. Print.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." *Postmodern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. London: Pluto P, 1985. 111-125. Print.

- . *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*. Durham: Duke UP, 1991. Print.
- . *The Antinomies of Realism*. London: Verso, 2013. Print.
- Jappe, Anselm. *Guy Debord*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. Print.
- . "Sic Transit Gloria Artis: 'The End of Art' for Theodor Adorno and Guy Debord." Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. *SubStance* 90 23.3 (1999): 102-128. Print.
- Jay, Martin. "Introduction." *Reification: A New Look at an Old Idea* by Axel Honneth. Ed. Martin Jay. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. 1-13. Print.
- . *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*. Cambridge: Polity P, 1984. Print.
- Jorn, Asger. "Dear Friends: Letter to Otto Permild and Bjørn Rosengreen." 15 Feb 1958. Trans. Niels Henriksen. *October* 141 (2012): 70-72. Print.
- . "Guy Debord and the Problem of the Accursed." *Contre Le Cinéma* (1964). Trans. Roxanne Lapidus. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 24 Aug 2013.
- . "The End of the Economy and the Realization of Art." *Internationale Situationniste* # 4 June 1960. Trans. Reuben Keehan. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 21 Aug 2014.
- Jütten, Timo. "What is Reification? A critique of Axel Honneth." *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 53.3 (2010): 235-256. Print.
- Kaufman, Eleanor. "Introduction." *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*. Eds. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1998. 3-13. Print.
- Kelsey, John. "Translator's Introduction." *All the King's Horses* by Michèle Bernstein. Trans. John Kelsey. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. Print.
- Kinkle, Jeff. Rev. of *Correspondence: The Foundation of the Situationist International*, by Guy Debord; *All the Kings Horses*, by Michèle Bernstein; *50 Years of Recuperation of the Situationist International*, by McKenzie Wark. *Historical Materialism* 18.1 (2010): 164-177. Print.
- Knabb, Ken, Ed. and Trans. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. Print.
- Kotányi, Attila and Raoul Vaneigem. "Basic Program of Unitary Urbanism" (1961). *Internationale Situationniste* # 6. Aug 1961. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb.

- Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 86-89. Print.
- Kurczynski, Karen. "No Man's Land." *October* 141 (2012): 22-52. Print.
- LaCoss, Donald, and Raymond Spiteri, eds. *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. Print.
- Lacroix, Michel. "Un Sujet Profondément Imprégné d'Alcool." *Contextes* 6 (2009). Contextes.revues.org. Web. Accessed 24 Aug 2013.
- Leak, Andrew. "Phago-citations: Barthes, Perec, and the Transformation of Literature." *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 29.1 (2009): 124-147. Print.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *La Somme et le Reste*. Paris: La Nef de Paris, 1959. Print.
- , *The Production of Space* (1974). Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991. Print.
- , *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume 2, Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday* (1961). Trans. John Moore. London: Verso, 2002. Print.
- Lettrist International (unsigned). "Dimensions of Language." *Internationale Lettriste* # 3 (1953). Trans. Not Bored. notbored.org. Web. Accessed 1 Aug 2013.
- , "Les Colonies les plus solides." *Potlatch* # 12. 28 Sept 1954. *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957)*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 74-75. Print.
- , "Nostalgia Beneath Contempt." *Internationale Situationniste* # 2. Dec 1958. Trans. Reuben Keehan. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 21 Aug 2014.
- , "Skyscraper by the Roots" (1954). *Potlatch* # 5. 20 July 1954. Ed. and Trans. Tom McDonough. *The Situationists and the City*. London: Verso, 2009. 44-45. Print.
- , "Les Gratte-ciel par la racine" (1954). *Potlatch* # 5. 20 Juil 1954. *Guy Debord présente Potlatch (1954-1957) Édition augmentée*. Paris: Gallimard, 2008. 37-39. Print.
- London Psychogeographical Association. "We're Back." *ELPAN* 1 (1992). www.unpopular.demon.co.uk. Web. Accessed 18 Jan 2015.
- Lowry, Malcolm. *Under the Volcano* (1947). London: Penguin, 2000. Print.
- Löwy, Michael. *Morning star: surrealism, marxism, anarchism, situationism, utopia*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2009. Print.

- Lukács, Georg. *Theory of the Novel: a historico-philosophical essay on the forms of great epic literature* (1914). Trans. Anna Bostock. London: Merlin P, 1978. Print.
- Lusty, Natalya. "Surrealism's Banging Door." *Textual Practice* 17 (2003): 335-356. Print.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979). Trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1984. Print.
- Marcolini, Patrick. "La Méthode Debord." *Guy Debord: Un Art de la Guerre*. Eds. Emmanuel Guy and Laurence Le Bras. Paris: Gallimard/BnF, 2013. 32-40. Print.
- Marcus, Greil. Guy Debord's *Mémoires*: A Situationist Primer." *on the Passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time*. Ed. Elizabeth Sussman. Cambridge: MIT P; Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, c1989. 124-131. Print.
- , *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (1989). London: Penguin, 1993. Print.
- Mavor, Carol. "Tragic Candy, Time." *Cabinet* 40 (2010-11). Cabinetmagazine.org. Web. Accessed 3 Aug 2014.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, vol.1 (1867). Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling. Ed. Fredrick Engels. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1999. Marxists.org/archive. Web. Accessed 27 July 2013.
- , *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852). New York: New York Labour News Co, 1951. Print.
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). Ed. Frederic L. Bender. New York: WW Norton & Co, 2013. Print.
- Masschelein, Anneleen. "Hand in Glove: Negative Indexicality in André Breton's *Nadja* and W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*." *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald*. Ed. Lise Patt. Los Angeles: ICI P, 2007. 360-387. Print.
- Massumi, Brian. *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham; London: Duke UP, 2002. Print.
- , "The Autonomy of Affect." *Cultural Critique* 31, The Politics of Systems and Environments, Part II (Autumn 1995): 83-109. Print.

- Matthews, J.H. *Surrealism and the Novel*. Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1996. Print.
- McDonough, Tom, "Delirious Paris: Mapping as a Paranoiac-Critical Activity." *Grey Room* 19 (Spring 2005): 6-21. Print.
- , "Introduction: Ideology and the Situationist Utopia." *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Ed. Tom McDonough. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004. ix – xx. Print.
- , "Introduction." *The Situationists and the City*. Ed. Tom McDonough. London: Verso: 2009. 1-31. Print.
- , ed. *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Cambridge: MIT P, 2002. Print.
- , "Situationist Space." *Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents*. Ed. Tom McDonough. Cambridge: MIT P, 2004. 241-265. Print.
- , *The Situationists and The City*. London: Verso, 2009. Print.
- Meizoz, Jérôme. *Postures littéraires. Mises en scène modernes de l'auteur*. Geneva: Slatkine, 2007. Print.
- Mension, Jean-Michel. *The Tribe: Conversations with Gérard Berréby and Francesco Milo*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2001. Print.
- "Michèle Bernstein et la vie des situationnistes." Le Blog de Zones Subversives. <http://zones-subversives.over-blog.com>. 22 July 2013. Web. Accessed 1 Apr 2014.
- Miller, Andrew John. "Under the Nation-State: Modernist Deterritorialization in Malcolm Lowry's 'Under the Volcano.'" *Twentieth Century Literature* 50.1 (Spring 2004): 1-17. Print.
- Miller, Tyrus. *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts Between the World Wars*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999. Print.
- Mitchell, Peta. "Constructing the Architext: Georges Perec's *Life A User's Manual*." *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 37.1 (2004): 1-16. Print.
- Monk, Craig. "'Transition' and 'Merlin': Two Generations of American Little Magazines in Paris." *Journal of Modern Literature* 20.2 (Winter 1996): 215-221. Print.
- Mott, Carrie and Susan M. Roberts. "Not Everyone Has (the) Balls: Urban Exploration

- and the Persistence of Masculinist Geography.” *Antipode* 46.1 (2014): 229-245. Print.
- Motte, Warren. “Playing in Earnest.” *New Literary History* 40.1 (2009): 25-42. Print.
- Müller, Timo. *The Self as Object in Modernist Fiction: James, Joyce, Hemingway*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2010. Print.
- Nadal-Melsió, Sara. “Lessons in Surrealism: relationality, event, encounter.” *Space, Difference, Everyday Life*. Eds. Kanishka Goonewardena et al. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2008. 161-175. Print.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. “Elliptical Sense.” Trans. Peter Connor. *Derrida: A Critical Reader*. Ed. David Wood. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992. 36-51. Print.
- Nieuwenhuys, Constant. “Unitary Urbanism.” 1960 lecture Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Trans. Robyn De Jong-Dalziel. *The Situationists and the City*. Ed. Tom McDonough. London: Verso, 2009. 112-222. Print.
- O’Connor, Brian, ed. *The Adorno Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Print.
- Oniki, Yuji. “Perec, Marx, and *Les Choses*.” *Qui Parle* 9.1 (1995): 92-118. Print.
- O’Sullivan, Simon. “From Possible Worlds to Future Folds (Following Deleuze): Richter’s Abstracts, Situationist Cities, and the Baroque in Art.” *The Journal of the British Society of Phenomenology* 36.3 (2005). Simonosullivan.net. Web. Accessed 1 July 2014.
- Passot, Odile. “Portrait of Guy Debord as a Young Libertine.” Trans. Paul Lafarge. Afterword to *All the King’s Horses*, by Michèle Bernstein. Trans. John Kelsey. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008. 113-141. Print.
- Penner, Devin. “Rethinking the Spectacle: Radical Political Agency in the Information Society.” DPhil thesis. York University Toronto. 2012. Print.
- Perec, Georges. “Approches de quoi?” *L’infra-ordinaire*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989. Print.
- , “Approaches to What?” 1973. *Cause Commune*. Ed. and Trans. John Sturrock. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. London: Penguin Classics, 2008. 209-211. Print.
- , *Les Choses: Une histoire des années 60*. Paris: Julliard, 1965. Print.
- , *Things: A Story of the Sixties* (1965). Trans. David Bellos. London: Vintage, 2011. Print.

- Pinder, David. "Urban Encounters: Dérives from Surrealism." Surrealism: crossings/frontiers. Ed Elza Adamowicz. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006. 39-64. Print.
- Plant, Sadie. *The Most Radical Gesture: the Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.
- Plotegher, Paolo. "Constructing Situations: Guy Debord's détournement of fiction." <http://th-rough.eu>. Through Europe. 13 Mar 2011. Web. Accessed 1 Jan 2014.
- Pomerand, Gabriel. *Saint-Ghetto of the Loans: Grimoire* (1950). Trans. Michael Kasper and Bhamati Viswanthan. Brooklyn: Ugly Duckling P, 2006. Print.
- Powell, Anna. "Jack the Ripper's Bodies—without—Organs: Affect and Psychogeography under the scalpel in *From Hell*." *The Irish Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies* 7 (2009). irishgothichorrorjournal.homestead.com. Web. Accessed 3 July 2014.
- Poynor, Rick. "Documents of the Marvellous." *Eye Magazine* 65 (Autumn 2007). www.eyemagazine.com. Web. Accessed 22 Jan 2012.
- Rancière, Jacques. *Aisthesis: scenes from the aesthetic regime of art*. Trans Zakir Paul. London: Verso, 2013. Print.
- , *The Emancipated Spectator*. Trans. Gregory Elliot. London: Verso, 2009. Print.
- , "When we were on the Shenandoah." Trans. Jason E. Smith. *Grey Room* 52 (Summer 2013): 128-134. Print.
- Rasmussen, Mikkel Bolt. "Counterrevolution, the Spectacle, and the Situationist Avant-Garde." *Social Justice* 33.2 (2006): 5-15. Print.
- , "The Situationist International, Surrealism, and the Difficult Fusion of Art and Politics." *Oxford Art Journal* 27.3 (2004): 365-387. Print.
- Richardson, Tina. "A Schizocartography of the University of Leeds: Cognitively Mapping the Campus." *disclosure: A Journal of Social Theory* 23.1 (2014): 131 - 153. uknowledge.uky.edu/disclosure. Web. Accessed 1 July 2014.
- Riley, James. "Alexander Trocchi and The Sigma Portfolio." residual-noise.blogspot.com.au. *Residual Noise*, 18 Oct 2012. Web. Accessed 14 Oct 2014.
- Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1995. Print.
- , "Lefebvre on the Situationists: An Interview." *October* 79 (Winter 1997): 69-83. Print.

- Rumney, Ralph. *The Consul: Conversations with Gérard Berréby*. Trans. Malcolm Imrie. San Francisco: City Lights, 2002. Print.
- Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1998. Print.
- Sagan, Françoise. *Bonjour Tristesse* and *A Certain Smile*. Trans. Irene Ash. London: Penguin, 2008. Print.
- Salzani, Carlo. "The City as Crime Scene: Walter Benjamin and the Traces of the Detective." *New German Critique* 100 34.1 (Winter 2007): 165-187. Print.
- Schaffner, Anna Katharina. "Inheriting the avant-garde: on the reconciliation of tradition and invention in concrete poetry." *Neo-Avant-Garde*. Ed David Hopkins and Anna Katharina Schaffner. Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2006. 97-117. Print.
- Scott, Andrew Murray. *Alexander Trocchi: The Making of a Monster*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1991. Print.
- Seaver, Richard W. "Beckett and *Merlin*." *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*. Ed. S.E Gontarski. New York: Grove P, 1986. 19-28. Print.
- , "Introduction." *Cain's Book* by Alexander Trocchi. Surrey: Oneworld Classics, 2011. xiii- xx. Print.
- Seem, Mark D. and Félix Guattari. "Interview: Félix Guattari." *Diacritics* 4.3 (Autumn 1974): 38-41. Print.
- Self, Will. *Psychogeography*. London: Bloomsbury, 2007. Print.
- , *Psycho Too*. London: Bloomsbury, 2009. Print.
- Shanks, Paul. "Cain's Burden: Trocchi and Beckett in Paris." *The Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies* 2.1 (2008): 151-170. Print.
- Shapiro, Steven A. "The Romance of the Fronde: The Siege of Orleans in the *Mémoires* of Mademoiselle de Montpensier." *Romance Studies* 28:1 (2010): 17-26. Print.
- Sheringham, Michael. "Attending to the Everyday: Blanchot, Lefebvre, Certeau, Perec." *French Studies* 54.2 (2000): 187-199. Print.
- , *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. Print.
- Shield, Peter. "Introduction." *The Natural Order and Other Texts*, Asger Jorn. Trans. Peter Shield. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002. vii-xiii. Print.
- Sinclair, Iain. *Dining on Stones (or, The Middle Ground)* (2004). London: Penguin, 2005. Print.
- , *Downriver* (1991). London: Penguin, 2004. Print.

- . *White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings* (1987). London: Granta, 1998. Print.
- Situationist International (unsigned). "All the King's Men," *Internationale Situationniste* # 8. Jan 1963. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 149- 153. Print.
- . "All the King's Men," *Internationale Situationniste* # 8. Janv 1963. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1997. 325-29. Print.
- . "Definitions" (1958), *Internationale Situationniste* # 1. June 1958. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 51-52. Print.
- . "Définitions" (1958). *Internationale Situationniste* # 1. Juin 1958. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 13-14. Print.
- . "Détournement as Negation and Prelude" (1959). *Internationale Situationniste* # 3. Dec 1959. Ed. and Trans. Ken Knabb. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006. 67-68. Print.
- . "L'Avant-Garde de la Présence" (1963). *Internationale Situationniste* # 8. Janv 1963. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 310-325. Print.
- . "La Liberté Pour Quoi Lire? Des Betises" (1958). *Internationale Situationniste* # 1. Juin 1958. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 6. Print.
- . "Le Détournement comme negation et comme prelude" (1959). *Internationale Situationniste* # 3. Dec 1959. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 78-79. Print.
- . "Les aventures du résultat parcellaire." *Internationale Situationniste* # 10. Mars 1966. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2004. 475-476. Print.
- . "L'Urbanisme unitaire à la fin des années 50." *Internationale Situationniste* # 3. Dec 1959. *Internationale Situationniste: Édition augmentée*. Ed. Patrick Mosconi. Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 1997. 79-84. Print.

- . The Adventures of a Partial Analysis.” *Internationale Situationniste* # 10. Mar 1966. Trans. Reuben Keehan. Situationist International Online. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Web. Accessed 16 Dec 2014.
- . “The Avant-Garde of Presence” (1963). *Internationale Situationniste* # 8. Jan 1963. Trans. John Shepley. www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 30 Aug 2014.
- . “Unitary Urbanism at the end of the 1950s.” 1959. Trans. Tom McDonough. *The Situationists and the City*. Ed. McDonough. London: Verso, 2009. 99-103. Print.
- Slater, Howard. “Alexander Trocchi.” *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 19-22. Print.
- Smith, Jason E. “Missed Encounter: *Critique de la séparation* between the Riot and the “Young Girl.” *Grey Room* 52 (Summer 2013): 62-81. Print.
- Smith, Phil. “The contemporary *dérive*: a partial review of issues concerning the contemporary practice of psychogeography.” *Cultural Geographies* 17.1 (2010): 103–122. Print.
- Soja, Edward W. *Postmodern Geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso, 1989. Print.
- Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001). London: Verso, 2002. Print.
- Spiteri, Raymond. “The Political Physiognomy of the Marvellous.” *Surrealism, Politics and Culture*. Eds. Donald LaCoss and Raymond Spiteri. Burlington: Ashgate, 2003. 52-72. Print.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. “Gilles Deleuze.” First published 23 May 2008; substantive revision 24 Sep 2012. <http://plato.stanford.edu>. Web. Accessed 10 July 2014.
- Stevens, Q. “The Situationist City.” *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*. Eds. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift. Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2009. 151-156. Print.
- Stracey, Frances. *Constructed Situations: A New History of the Situationist International*. London: Pluto P, 2014. Print.
- . “Surviving History: A Situationist Archive.” *Art History* 26:1 (2003): 56-77. Print.
- Straram, Patrick. *Les bouteilles se couchent*. Paris: Éditions Allia, 2006. Print.
- Stubbs, Jeremy. “Surrealism’s Book of Revelation: Isidore Ducasse’s *Poésies*, *Détournement*, and Automatic Writing.” *Romantic Review* 87.4 (1996): 493-508.

- Print.
- Sturrock, John. "Introduction." *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* by Georges Perec. Trans. and Ed. John Sturrock. London: Penguin, 2008. ix – xvii. Print.
- Suleiman, Susan Rubin. *Subversive Intent: gender, politics, and the avant-garde*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990. Print.
- , "Surrealist Black Humour: Masculine/Feminine." *Papers of Surrealism* 1 (Winter 2003). www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism. Web. Accessed 17 June 2014.
- Sussman, Elizabeth, ed. *on the Passage of a few people through a rather brief moment in time*. Cambridge: MIT P; Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, c1989. Print.
- Tait, Stuart. "Paranoid Disorientation: The Wandering of Ivan Chitcheglov." Paper presented at Situationist Aesthetics: The SI Now, University of Sussex. 7-8 June, 2012. <http://stuarttait.com>. Web. Accessed 20 Oct 2014.
- Tasker, Gillian. "Alexander Trocchi's *Cain's Book*: A Situationist Text?" Unpublished paper presented at Situationist Aesthetics: The SI Now, University of Sussex. 7-8 June, 2012.
- Tenney, Tom. "(It Will) Never Work: A critique of the Situationists' appropriation of Johan Huizinga's theory of play." [Inc.ongruo.us](http://inc.ongruo.us). 21 May 2012. Web. Accessed 6 Mar 2013.
- Tester, Keith, ed. *The Flaneur*. London; New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Thrift, Nigel. "Intensities of Feeling: Toward a Spatial Politics of Affect." *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 86.1 (2004): 57-78. Print.
- Trocchi, Alexander. *Cain's Book*. 1960. Surrey: Oneworld Classics, 2011. Print.
- , "Editorial." *Merlin* 1.2 (Autumn 1952). Reprinted in *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 39-42. Print.
- , "Invisible Insurrection of a Million Minds." *New Saltire Review* 1962. Reprinted in *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 164-175. Print.
- , "Letter from Paris." *NIMBUS* 2.1 (1953). Reprinted in *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 51- 57. Print.

- , "sigma: a tactical blueprint." *City Lights Journal* #2 1964.
www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline. Situationist International Online. Web. Accessed 27 Sept. 2014.
- , The Edinburgh Writers Conference (transcript) 21 Aug 1962. *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 154-7. Print.
- , "The Future of the Novel." Speech to the 1962 Writers' Conference at the Edinburgh Festival, Aug 1962. *A Life in Pieces: Reflections on Alexander Trocchi*. Eds. Alan Campbell and Tim Neil. Edinburgh: Rebel Inc., 1997. 158-9. Print.
- , *Young Adam*. 1954. Surrey: Oneworld Classics, 2008. Print.
- Walker, David H. "Formal Experiment and Innovation." *The Cambridge Companion to the French Novel*. Ed. Timothy Unwin. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997. 126-144. Print.
- Wark, McKenzie. *Fifty Years of Recuperation of the Situationist International*. New York: Buell Center/FORuM Project and Princeton Architectural P, 2008. Print.
- , *The Beach Beneath the Street: the Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*. London: Verso, 2011. Print.
- , *The Spectacle of Disintegration: Situationist passages out of the 20th Century*. London: Verso, 2013. Print.
- Weiner, Susan. *Enfants terribles: youth and femininity in the mass media in France, 1945-1968*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2001. Print.
- Wolfreys, Julian. *Deconstruction – Derrida*. London: MacMillan, 1998. Print.
- Wolman, Gil J. "À la Porte." *Potlatch* # 2. 29 June 1954. *Guy Debord présente Potlatch* (1954-1957) *Édition augmentée*. Paris: Gallimard, 1996. 1-8. Print.
- Wood, Denis. *Rethinking the Power of Maps*. New York: Guilford P, 2012. Print.