

MPA

the materialist psychogeographic affiliation

Issue No. 1 – February 2007 – 1 month of positive existence

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This is an open letter to those who care to engage with the problematics of public life in the 21st Century. 'MULTI REAL vs. MIGHTY REAL' was first published in Manchester Area Psychogeographic No. 9, Spring 1998. Here, the MAP group re-committed themselves to perambulation and proposed a 'wider psychogeography of re-development':

*'...Psychogeography reveals multiple realities, multi-textured experience. This exploration, the one we're embarking on now, is an attempt to examine the multi-real, in opposition to the Mighty Real. For Oldham Street is, simultaneously, a mess and a triumph. It's fun and it's a horrible experience. It's being built and it's falling down. It's there but it's been made into a myth. And the myth is right at the centre of everything that's changing in central Manchester, and therefore its role in all the beliefs forced upon and suffered by the population of Manchester is crucial...'*¹

The MAP group attempted to 'levitate' the Corn Exchange in Manchester. If three insiders turn up to 'levitate' a building and then write about it, hundreds will claim to have been there later. This 'event' is now in the Triangle's brochure. The Triangle is the shopping centre in the now re-named Corn Exchange, spectaclised after the 1996 IRA bomb. As my friend points out, The Triangle may need to be brought down to earth.

The London Psychogeography Association boasted '35 years of non-existence' during its operations. This belied the very real non-existence of The Situationist International's London branch, in an attempt to fake its

own international status. We know how these things work. This is how pop culture worms its way out between the cracks in the pavement, it's how disenfranchised teenagers empowered themselves during Punk. It's also how the 'classical', pagan gods sometimes arose. But the phenomena contains elements of Adorno's concerns about 'the irrational'² and therefore, potentially I think, some rather worrying tendencies. The hermetic group, elite insiders who know how to think magically, have a long history of taking power from those less able to do so than themselves.

To return to Multi Real vs. Mighty Real, MAP wrote of a line between parallel universes, which at first smacks of transcendence, but they're talking about interwoven social life, borders, barriers.

*'Whether homeless, addicted, or working and comfortable, all rub shoulder to shoulder in the flickering montage of meanings that is Oldham Street.'*¹

[...]

'As buildings get gutted and smartened up and rebuilt, in the streets around the Northern Quarter, it is hoped we will succumb to the intoxication of mutability. The fiction of a wonderful future, collaged out of the images from our collective past. This isn't quite what Marx and others were saying about the early modern city, about "all that is solid melts into air". This time the old buildings, outwardly, stay the same. As is the case of the Malmaison, the Victorian shell stays intact, while the innards are ripped out and replaced. What changes is the

¹ Manchester Area Psychogeographic No. 9, Spring 1998. No author cited though my informed guess is Bob Dickinson and/or C.P. Lee.

² Adorno, 1994, *The Stars Down To Earth* (Routledge). I am aware of the concerns regarding many sections of this collection, but share an interest in certain aspects with regard to 'irrational' need, the culture industry and authoritarianism, be this top-down or bottom-up.

*way a building is defined: the inside equals the use. A former warehouse becomes an apartment block. A set of decaying shops becomes a fashionable location in which to drink and buy records and clothes. The process involves a mental shift in which participants "buy into" a proposition. There comes, at some crucial point, a change in public perception. People start believing the architect's drawing will become a reality. Then, it is hoped, punters will buy the product, or maybe parts of the property. Journalists have been the shock troops in the process to change the greater Mancunian mind. Odd, really, that journalists in situations like this change their minds first.'*¹

MAP's attempts to get under the bonnet of myth and power are laudable here, their writing is wonderful.

*'Dreams which massage old myths about community, despite the evidence which shows that people who live in British cities, particularly those "creative" or "cultural" workers whom governments love, move residence with astonishing regularity... The appropriation and dissemination of these dreams is a process we at MAP have termed the Mighty Real. And the fragmentation of the Mighty Real is the goal towards which psychogeography must now dedicate its energies.'*¹

We are entirely in agreement with the sentiments expressed here, but it strikes us that hermetic groups of transcendent psychogeographers risk setting themselves up as *the Mighty Real*, exclusive insiders to a set of obfuscated techniques, *they alone who can see* and convey this seeing to the world. Clearly, I run this risk.

Guy Debord claimed the term 'psychogeography' was suggested by an 'illiterate', yet its late 90's resurrection, via Iain Sinclair and Stewart Home, was literary. Some of the wildest excesses come from this end of a currently expanded spectrum of 'psychogeography'. Yet Iain Sinclair was surprisingly pragmatic in an earlier interview with me:

'I've been doing what everybody else has been doing for years, but now there's a convenient label, a franchise, "psychogeography". It goes back to De Quincey, the Romantics, you wander this landscape without necessarily having preconceived notions, follow your impulses and drift into the street. Sometimes this is looked on as a derangement of the senses, a hallucinogenic high, a drug vision transposed onto the town. Sometimes it becomes Situationism or Psychogeography or this Baudelairean dandy looking at reflection in windows. Sometimes it's Walter Benjamin. It is still the same human impulse to get out, to align yourself with what is out there and to treat the city as a kind of book or library, an open gallery, exploded museum. All of these things are true and it means covering the city from night to day and it means noticing the meat markets and slaughterhouses, the pubs, going underground to sewers and cellars and up into church towers. The theory and description is redundant as far as I'm concerned, you can apply whatever franchising slogans to the same impulse in whatever historical period'.³

³ Iain Sinclair - interviewed by the author for the magazine Ptolemaic Terrascope, at his home in Hackney, London, late March 2000. There are several hours of interview I haven't listened to since they were recorded. We may well release the entire transcript here if time and space allow it.

We would prefer a pragmatic, de-mystified relation to the doing of psychogeography. We don't intend to set ourselves up as a cabal. Our emphasis is upon accounts of the city and its effects on its inhabitants. Not just its negative effects. This is not to say that the kinds of startling insights to be gained via these simple practical techniques will be dry and empirical. Oddly, the pragmatism Sinclair revealed above, is similar to ours.

Iain Sinclair also explained to me his debt to the 'Kerouacian notebook idea'. How he's an observer, but also a participant in what he observes, 'a ghost in his own work... in the landscape to a greater or lesser degree'³. This includes referencing his writer friends, myth-building, as Kerouac did. This is little different to contemporary concerns regarding ethnographic techniques and the author. Yet 'Rodinsky's Room' becomes cluttered with many extraneous hangers-on, tenuously trying to blag entry to the guest list of that already claustrophobic space, to stand under its bare bulb, shedding its unglamorous light. This kind of 'psychogeography' tends to descend into credulity-stretching, occult crankiness. This is frustrating, because when practitioners like Sinclair tackle spatial change and politics within cities, they are much-needed voices. The occult side may leave Sinclair and the British psychogeographic groups beached in the late 90s and early 00s, millennial symptoms we now have a vaccine for. Norman Cohn's 'Pursuit of the Millennium' traced similar groups in history. Yet psychogeographic techniques can reap dividends, as tools for sensing various agencies within the city. Again, Sinclair's work

does go beyond its occult image, his books aren't just 'Christmas presents for the Fortean Times subscriber', as a friend of mine recently carped. An associate of Sinclair's, Patrick Wright, has a more materialist take on his subject than his friend, and in a recent Guardian profile on Sinclair he made no bones about his scepticism. But Wright was careful to point out that Sinclair's take on Thatcherism, despite his description of her politics as 'bad magic'⁴, is entirely convincing. His journalistic take on the Millennium Dome, 'Sorry Meniscus', is also much less occult. 'The Dome is a blob of congealed correction fluid, a flick of Tipp-Ex to revise the mistakes of 19th-century industrialists.' It situates Sinclair's 'shamanist' powers quite firmly in the use of good-old-fashioned metaphor. Sinclair does see himself as a shaman, channelling the words of the dead. 'The force of voices from the past is so strong that I'm actually having conversations with people who died forty or four hundred years ago', he told me, 'I do think it's a magical act', 'words just flash'³. So, we are perhaps disingenuous. 'Magical' thinking exists on a metaphorical level. Accounts of the city using similar literary techniques include 19th century literary realism, which had an effect on sociological literature. Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall gained insights which could be termed 'occult'. They reveal the hidden, mythological layers of our culture. Is anthropology any less a myth structure than those they account for? Is it any less a priesthood? What is important for us, is that whether you describe it as 'magic', or 'sociology', transcendent psychogeography is almost a priori dismissable by the status quo.

⁴ Stuart Jeffries, Saturday April 24, 2004, The Guardian

This said, the twin obfuscation and popularisation of psychogeography was something I asked Patrick Keiller about during a later interview. He told me ‘the Situationists saw their explorations at least partly as preliminary to the production of some kind of new space’ [...] ‘but in 1990s London, they seemed to have become an end in themselves, so that “psychogeography” led, not to avant-garde architecture such as Constant’s “New Babylon”, but to, say, the “Time Out Book of London Walks”⁴. Keiller then talked of the lack of real engagement between the avant garde and the physical world. But surely this is where an employment of psychogeography, of praxis and poetics, a concrete, materialist examination of the places where the ideal and real do and do not coincide, can reap dividends? This is what the MAP Group at their best did.

To return to Patrick Wright’s comments on Iain Sinclair:

“As a symbolic manoeuvre to respond to political forces, I’m very happy with what Iain does,” says Patrick Wright, friend and rival literary pathologist of east London during the Thatcher era. Sinclair’s invocation of a mythologised London is no mere “manoeuvre”, however. He believes there are occult forces at work in east London and that they can be mapped by considering the alignments of Nicholas Hawksmoor’s post-Great Fire churches. “I don’t care about Iain’s hokey-pokey malevolent stuff,” says Wright, “but what was and is fascinating for me is that these systems of geometry and meaning are brought up by Iain just when the city is coming to the end of the enlightenment project, when the

*welfare state is being destroyed and the dream of London’s municipal socialism is being crushed by Thatcher”. At the same time as Wright was producing *A Journey Through Ruins* (1991), a historical text about a disappearing London, Sinclair was writing a parallel anti-Thatcherite work. Wright recalls: “It was at the moment in the late-80s when the Bryant & May factory, famous for the match girls’ strike, was being converted into loft apartments and the gentrification of the East End was beginning in earnest. We were both living in Hackney, trying to anchor a different form of critical analysis. We both thought the polite public literary culture was barking. It refused to engage with the politics of the time.” The key difference between Wright and Sinclair, though, was that only the latter - Beat aficionado, walker of ley lines, alternative poet - believed quite literally that Thatcher was a witch. He still does.”⁴*

So, in the 21st century, we have the twin poles of an expanded notion of a tradition called ‘psychogeography’. The occult lies at one end, flashmobbing and urban tours at the other. All encompass ways of thinking about the world, but the Materialist Psychogeographic Affiliation wish to steer the subject away from millenarian crankiness. This is where the MPA project begins. No occultism, John Dee or spectres. No hermeticism. We also re-commit ourselves to perambulation. We also propose a ‘wider psychogeography of re-development’.

Atget’s city isn’t even a city, it’s fossilised light. Nor was it filled with ghosts, it was merely undergoing one its regular, temporary evacuations. ‘Magic’ is another way

⁵ Patrick Keiller, interviewed by the author for the Centre for Urban and Community Research magazine, *Street Signs*, issue no. 6. This was later cited in ‘Psychogeography’ by Merlin Coverley (Pocket Essentials 2006).

⁴ Stuart Jeffries, Saturday April 24, 2004, *The Guardian*

of thinking about the world, as Iain Sinclair's manoeuvres are, as MAP's levitations are. We love MAP, we love Sinclair. We love the LPA and the Association of Autonomous Astronauts and anyone called Luther Blissett. But the state of the 21st century west is too serious a business to give any potential detractors the ability to wipe us aside with one flick of a cuff-linked wrist. The hermetic cabalism and tenuous conspiracy theories must go, this despite our concern with being listened to. The way in which we wish to be heard is intended to be open and debate-driven. It intends to engage with other aspects of society. If this means we risk resembling sociology more than psychogeography, then so be it. Sinclair's 'shamanism', walks and ritualised writing, have failed to reverse whatever bad magic Thatcher may have been practicing. We must create psychogeographic accounts of the world which can be taken seriously. Discussed and challenged, yes, that is essential, but accounts which at least have a chance of being taken seriously.

Do we foresee problems with this? Undoubtedly. The Situationist project has been taken seriously, yet look what happened to the idea of 'play' since 1968. The late Jeff Nuttall described his disappointment with the hippy generation, leaking away into New Labour individualism, Peter Mandelson, the Millenium Dome. He described his own interventionism with The People Show as a desire to play with existing spatiality, and bemoaned his colleagues who wished simply to fragment:

⁶ Jeff Nuttall interviewed by the author for the magazine Ptolemaic Terrascope, by post, January 2001. Charles Shaar Murray once described Howlin' Wolf as sounding like 'a hurricane coming through a letter box' and telephone calls with Jeff during what turned out to be his latter days reminded me of that line every time.

⁷ Taken from www.nothingness.org who explain that a slightly different version of this article was first published in the Belgian surrealist journal *Les Levres Nues* #9 (November 1956) along with accounts of two dérives.

*'I knew [Alex] Trocchi at the time, who was a Situationist and some of my performance work was definitely in response to an urge to begin the destruction of space allocation – a mechanic in a delicatessen, a bus on a lawn, a picnic in the fast lane of a motorway [...] I wasn't into drifting. Others - Diz Willis, Roland Miller - were, in that they were neurotic about co-ordination and seemed to be concerned merely to be ostentatiously free'*⁶

We're starting again, in the middle, which is all one can ever do with a tradition such as psychogeography. We'll be working through the original Situationist project each issue, taking the subject back to its originators. The *expanded* notion of psychogeography has become a bloated corpse. We feel it is time to pare the subject back to its first principles. If we expand anything, we expand our remit to an examination of the now contested 'countryside'. *'Wandering in open country is naturally depressing, and the interventions of chance are poorer there than anywhere else'*, Debord claimed in his 'Theory of the dérive'⁷, which we have reprinted in this issue. We disagree. Debord also claimed that *'The maximum area of this spatial field does not extend beyond the entirety of a large city and its suburbs.'* Again, we wish to expand this. Unlike transcendental psychogeographers, the limit of our remit is temporal only.

All that we urge is that the project and doing of psychogeography be carried out *responsibly*. This is an open letter to those who care to engage with the problematics of public life in the 21st Century.

Next Issue

by Dave Jencks

Manchester's first flashmob, flyposting in Prague, the line between official and unofficial representation in the street, utilising anonymity. Situationist Theses on Traffic.

Please see the 'Papers' section at:

www.c-floorintheory.co.uk

for further information.



Please contribute any material you may feel is suitable to our ongoing project.



Layered City

by Mark Rainey

PEOPLE will have these stories, usually second-hand like the recitation of an urban myth, pushing the boundaries of the plausible. But there will be some kernel of truth in them, some reason why they were told, some mystery that made the story possible. And every so often you will hear from someone first-hand, a person who witnessed the surface being pulled back, who has seen beneath the skin of the city and peered into that other world just beneath our feet.

That there is such a world in our city is only natural – our city is built upon physical pockets of forgetfulness. Forgotten places, forgotten spaces. Covered up because the city, by its nature, builds upon itself, continually upon itself - creating a series of different layers. Layers that are mixed together, layers that are no longer distinct, layers that are altogether forgotten amongst each other. Especially in Manchester, where the medieval covers over the Victorian, where the 21st century rests inside the Edwardian and where the Cold War lies beneath us all. An innocuous, but notably beautiful, Lancashire town up until the 18th century. Then the population suddenly exploded – trebling in the 15 years leading up to 1800 and continued to grow at a greater pace. It had harnessed the industrial revolution, in a more acute way than any other city. It was the "centre of the manufacturing world" in the words of Friedrich Engels. A chaotically/planned industrial city emerged and the revolution spread worldwide. After two centuries of rapid expansion followed by decades of decline and eventual redevelopment, Manchester too has seen a mixing of layers and a bubbling over of forgetfulness.

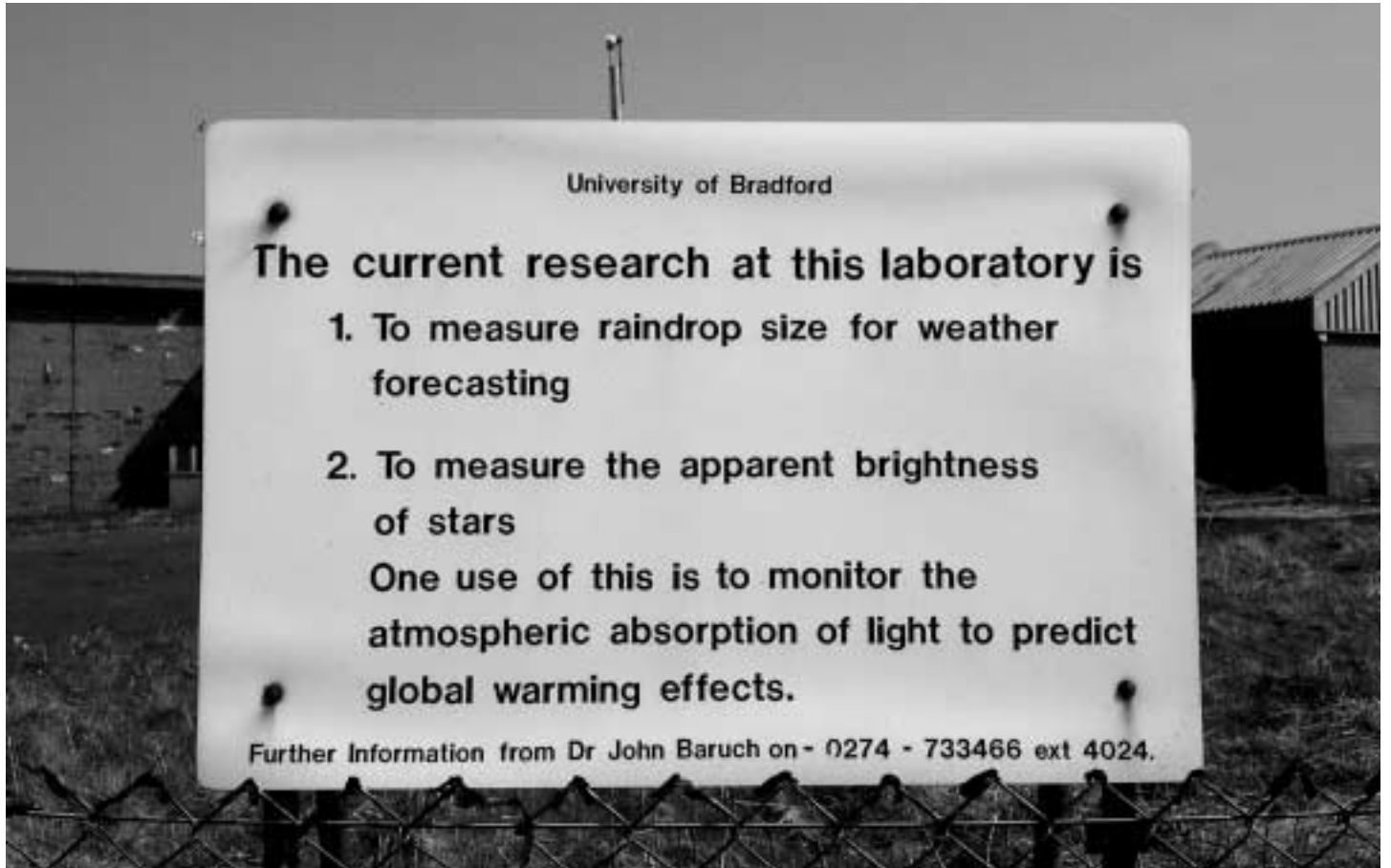
Under the physical erasure of urban planning, the city's past takes refuge in receding memory, often appearing through urban legend. These are recitations, almost always second-hand, and lacking the detail to reveal immediate truth. They are communicated between people, and by people, through writing and conversation, becoming a thin thread of collective consciousness.

Invariably, the legends relate to the underground. A medieval street preserved underneath the new Millennium Quarter. Abandoned nightclubs beneath the Arndale Centre. A tunnel beneath the Irwell, connecting the Hanging Bridge to Ordsall Hall, complete with Tudor treasure. Rivers beneath the Town Hall and Victoria Station. Plague pits, paupers grave's, and church tombs beneath Metrolink stops. A Cold War bunker beneath China Town.

They all may maintain the status of urban legend, but many are true. I have seen the Irk flow forty feet below the cellars of Victoria Station. Although secretive, the massive cold war bunker is now well documented. The Hanging bridge had been buried for centuries – itself turning into the stuff of myth, only to be uncovered by the Victorians and eventually become the site of the Cathedral Visitor Centre café.

Intrigue and mystery, legend and myth, are connected not to ley lines and mysticisms, but rest in, and originate in, the physical development of the city. 'As above, so below', relates not to a reciprocal transcendent, but the bubbling up of material forgetfulness in a city now dedicating its spaces to consumer amnesia.

Weather Station



Be fabulous...

THREE MPA AFFILIATES attended a psychogeographical *dérive* in Manchester on the 21st of December, 2006.

The pre-Christmas city was covered in Moët adverts (see *figure.1*). During Christmas 2004, Manchester consumed the most champagne in the country. 50,804 bottles compared to London's 49,727 bottles. Businessman Patrick Fery has supplied champagne to Coronation Street stars, he 'opened a café called Les Délices de Champagne in The Triangle shopping centre three years ago', previous to which he had sold 'more than 5,000 bottles a year...'¹ 'Champagne Supernova', a song written by local proletarians made good, was not yet exhausted during this period. At the time it was reported that Patrick Fery's 'store is the latest in a series of acquisitions for the French businessman who owns a hotel in France, a bakery in Liverpool and a baking factory in Kirkby. He also runs a French market that tours the country.'¹ The location of market stallholders at the former Corn Exchange (now The Triangle) was not lost on us. We no longer bring ourselves to market, the market brings itself to us, unless of course we are safely hidden in our cells, credit card in hand, plasma screen lighting our faces...

The target of the *dérive* was another icon of bling in Manchester, Beetham Tower. 'Dérive' and 'Détournement' are two Situationist terms which inform the Flashmobber. 'Dérive', literally meaning 'drift', comes from Dadaist goal-free perambulation² and 'détournement lies somewhere between "diversion" and "subversion". It is a turning around and a reclamation of

lost meaning: a way of putting the stasis of the spectacle in motion'². A '...turning around of the existing social world'². Any intervention of space has the potential to be transformative. Dominant uses of space, altered, 'détourned', potentially illuminate both official and unofficial discourses for the spectator. The planned walk skirted around Beetham in a very interesting way, through work spaces, canal sides, elevated areas which suddenly became viewing platforms. Yet we wondered, did we run rings around it? Or did it run and does it continue to run rings around us? It was our locus, omphalos, because we set it up as such. But of course this is what we MPA participants wanted to examine, the phallogocentric object of power, the latest penis extension of the North West's new bling, but did we merely risk becoming the forefinger and thumb around the base of the phallus? The MPA wish to examine this phenomena and will be aiming to develop techniques to approach omphalos and/or phallogocentric areas in a different way. (*See notices at the back of this edition - Steve*).

Debord has written that, 'from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.'³ The MPA affiliates decided to walk into Beetham Tower as though they owned it. They met with no resistance. They walked up a set of stairs into a first floor pre-Christmas party. They then walked back down the stairs, past a red-carpeted lift, complete with glitzy queues and a doorman, to a second set of lifts, before ascending directly to the 23rd floor. (The number 23 was one numerological

...turn an exit into an entrance

by Nick Hamilton-Farey



aspect of the *dérive* which the two MPA affiliates had just split from). On the 23rd floor they discovered an ice dispenser on the wall, above a series of rotating shoe brushes of varying stiffnesses. They put some of the ice from the dispenser into a flask. They then walked into the bar and took in the view over the city. An eastern european barmaid asked them what they were looking for. The standard-issue MPA reply of 'we're here to meet some members of the British Council' was used, with some success, before they were re-directed to the ground floor.

The tendency of psychogeography to be fabulous, to fabulate, must be halted. But turning exits into entrances remains a highly desirable pursuit for the MPA.

Fabulous 1. Of persons: Fond of fabling or listening to fables. **2.** Of the nature of, or belonging to fable, full of fables, mythical, legendary, un-historical 1555. **3.** Spoken of in fable, fabled [So in L.] 1601. Resembling a fable (*rare*) 1561; astonishing, incredible 1609.

1. AS OLD WIVES, F. COWLEY. **2.** THE DARK AND F. AGES 1712. DRAGONS AND F. MONSTERS JOWETT

Entrance 1. 1526. The action of coming or going in; the coming (of an actor) on the stage 1600 [...] The action of entering in a record; an entry - 1620.

Entrance 1. *trans.* To throw into a trance 1608. **2.** To put 'out of oneself'; to overpower with delight, fear etc. 1598; to carry away in or as in a trance (from, to) 1593

1. ANGEL FORMS WHO LAY INTRANS'T MILT P.L. 301.

- *Oxford Shorter.*

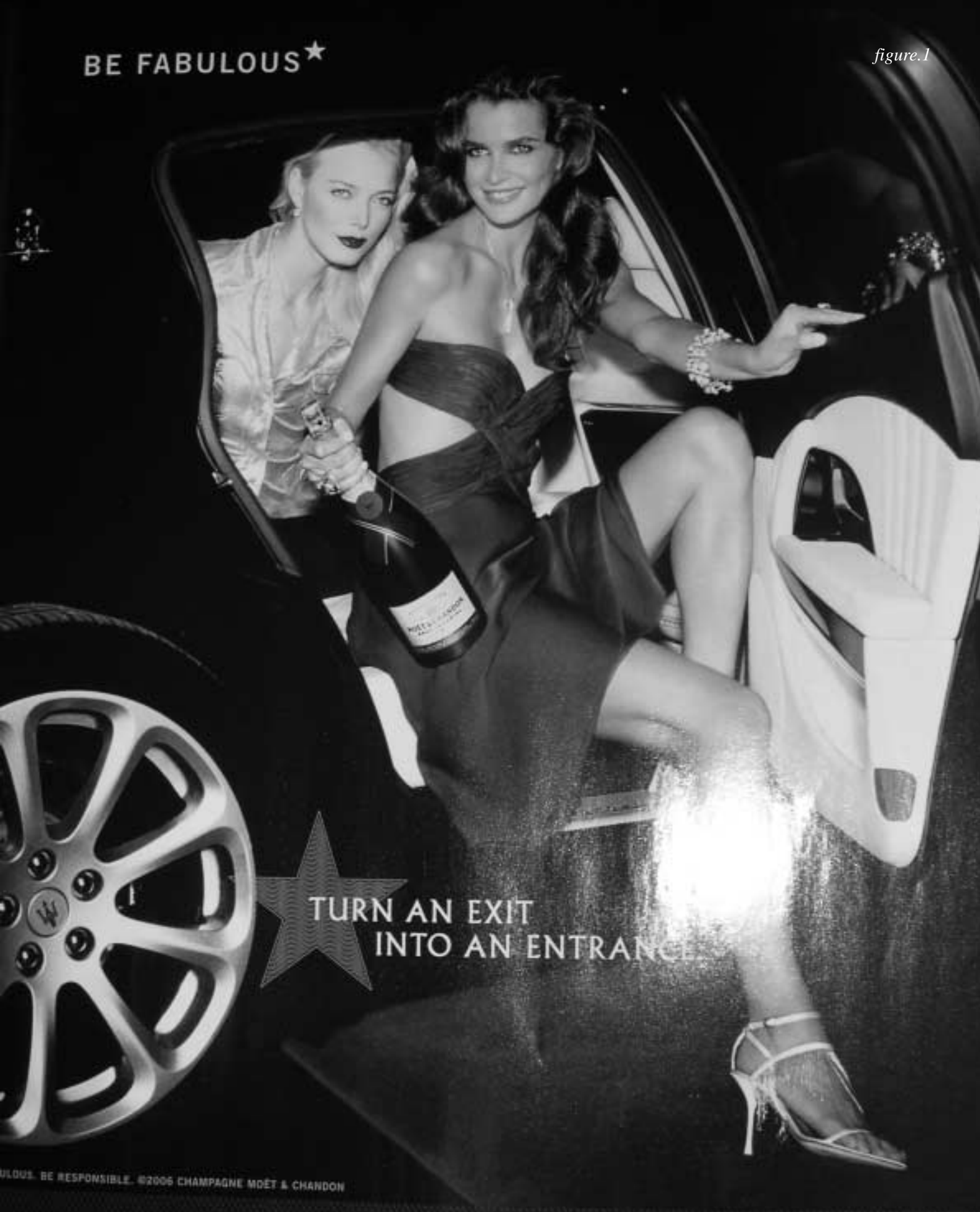
¹ Camber, Rebecca. 'Champagne Capital of Britain'. Manchester Evening News, 17th Dec, 2004 and 'A bubbly Future for Patrick', Manchester Evening News, 8th Sept, 2003

² Plant, Sadie. The Most Radical Gesture - The Situationist International in a Postmodernist Age

³ 'Theory of the *Dérive*' by Guy Debord, see later in this issue for a full translation taken from www.nothingness.org

BE FABULOUS★

figure.1



TURN AN EXIT
INTO AN ENTRANCE

ULOUS. BE RESPONSIBLE. ©2006 CHAMPAGNE MOËT & CHANDON

FONDE  EN 1743
MOËT & CHANDON
CHAMPAGNE



Ram-raiding the modern past

by Steve Hanson

WHAT FOLLOWS is a different version of an essay which will be published by the Centre for Urban and Community Research shortly.

I found a garden centre catalogue last summer which contained a strange advert for a ‘ram raid barrier’ (see figure.1). This comes in different styles and is almost designed like a Metropolitan Drinking Fountain & Cattle Trough Association replica. It also resembles a dolmen. It is set in concrete to resemble stone. Drainage holes enable it to be filled with plants and/or flowers.

I put the advert to one side, unsure what to do with it. Later, I read Simon Faulkner’s 2003 essay, “Asylum Seeker”, *Imagined Geography and Visual Culture*. This essay identified elements within UK tabloid cartoons which posited a garden England as ideologically walled off from an ‘alien’ other. It immediately began to resonate with this odd find, which I couldn’t quite bring myself to throw away. Faulkner wrote:

‘The tabloids... construct an overtly value-laden set of geographical contrasts between the inside and outside of Britain, and between “Britishness” and the refugee as “other”’. (Faulkner, 2003).

Faulkner described how ‘Britishness’ is defined in the UK tabloid press as rural and white, as opposed to urban and multi-cultural. He was writing about the other

as ‘immigrant’, as ‘asylum seeker’, yet strands of his argument seemed to illuminate this curious advertisement, which almost seemed like a joke.

Certainly, the idea of a ‘garden England’ under siege was present. Yet perhaps the ‘ram raid’, with all its connotational baggage, is a different terror, imaginary or otherwise, to that which Faulkner was attempting to tease out.

There seemed to be a jarring contrast between the product’s rustic design, its heavyweight construction and intended dual-usage as both rampart and flower bed. Dolmen means ‘stone table’ in Breton, which has been said to invoke the image of giants building them. As components of tombs, Dolmen are also said to form a barrier between the living and the dead. There may also be a way in here, to a broader reading of ‘asylum’. Although the ‘asylum’ Faulkner discusses is not directly applicable to the advert in question, ‘asylum’ may be connotationally present. Liza Schuster, in ‘Asylum and the Lessons of History’, supplies a broader reading of it:

‘The word asylum originally came from the Greek “asylos”, that which may not be seized or violated and usually referred to a place that was sacred or magical, such as a temple. Those who took sanctuary in such a place put themselves under the protection of the gods and so out of secular control’. (Schuster, 2002).

**EFFECTIVE
"RAM RAID"
BARRIER**



figure.2

¹ Faulkner, Simon. 2003. "Asylum Seeker", Imagined Geography and Visual Culture'. From Visual Cultures in Britain, Vol.4 No.1. London: Ashgate, 2003

² Schuster, Liza. 2002. Asylum and the Lessons of History, in Race & Class, Vol. 44, No. 2. London: Sage pp.40-56

The idea of the 'rural idyll' has a strong hold over western culture, stretching back well over two thousand years. Later, Schuster writes of how the state came to be the guardian of 'asylum'. Yet she describes how, historically, states act out of self-interest in relation to 'asylum', rather than compassion, how 'Liberalism only served to disguise...brutal reality'. (ibid).

The Metropolitan Drinking Fountain & Cattle Trough Association placed more than 800 constructions in London. The drinking fountains were erected due to public ill health through choleric water supplies and a tendency for citizens to drink its 'safer' alternative, beer. The cattle troughs were designed to improve animal welfare. Many such troughs still exist in towns and cities, the curated remnants of a vanished era, some filled with flowers. At this point the ram raid barrier seems to collapse into jarring, soil-covered fragments. Remnants to be picked over: A broken hulk of philanthropist welfare institution here, a section of castle wall there. As an object it serves, if only metaphorically, as a figure for both provision and control. More importantly I think, it speaks of the link between the two, as well as the attempt to erase that link via spatial curation. Patrick Wright has written of such curation, how we 'Rationalise nostalgias' (Wright, 1985). Quoting Philippe Hoyau, he explained that 'the whole frame of reference has shifted in a new and vernacular direction. "The past" may still be an imaginary object, but it is now organised around three major models: the family, conviviality and the countryside.

Purged of its leading political tensions, the past can then be offered to one and all in newly inclusive ceremonies of collective identification: "History annuls itself in ethnology... it dissolves itself in the circumscribed depth of the countryside and congeals in the time of repetition.'" (ibid). Wright has written that '...colonialist expectation... no longer finding its customary outlets in the periphery of a mastered world, recoils bitterly on its disappointing home territory' (ibid) and discusses the 20's, when the 'culture of the German countryside migrated into the hideous, but nonetheless "hopeful" symbolism of national Socialism' (ibid). Academia, Wright says, does not completely enframe history, or rather, what he terms the 'modern past':

The 'modern past' can be disseminated and popularised via TV, film, or tourism. Older forms of everyday, ritualised activity, from dolmens to water troughs, 'the sacred' to 'the state', are subsumed by the 'modern past'. Wright continues:

'...a phrase of rhyming slang, an old piece of industrial machinery (preferably in situ), a hand-painted plate from the turn of the century and a cherished landscape or place. It is not official cultural policy which determines the meaning or the extent of the modern past.' (ibid).

There are many cattle troughs in London, made of granite, which are now anchored in the public, municipal concrete. The 'effective ram raid barrier' is made of concrete and is now available for private sales

² Schuster, Liza. 2002. 'Asylum and the Lessons of History', in *Race & Class*, Vol. 44, No. 2. London: Sage pp.40-56

³ <http://drinkingfountains.org> - see the pdf on the history of the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain & Cattle Trough Society to be found on this site. My information regarding the dolmen comes from email discussions with friends.

⁴ Wright, Patrick. 1985. 'Everyday Life and the Aura of the Modern Past', from *On Living in an Old Country*. London: Verso, 1985. See also the two volumes of *Theatres of Memory* (Verso) by Raphael Samuel, a projected trilogy, for a very sympathetic take on Wright's notion of the modern past.

The Art of Navigation 2

by Dave Jencks

‘THE Art of Navigation’, originally published by the Centre for Urban and Community Research magazine, *Street Signs*, issue 6, gave an account of a swarm walk around Greenwich, organised by the short lived group, *Scape*, whose nucleus included Katherine Bourke and MPA affiliate Steve Hanson:

‘Plants with roots or radicles may be rhizomorphic in other respects altogether: the question is whether plant life in its specificity is not entirely rhizomatic. Even some animals are, in their pack form. Rats are rhizomes. Burrows are too, in all of their functions of shelter, supply, movement, evasion, and breakout. The rhizome itself assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers. When rats swarm over each other.’¹

A version of the swarm technique was used where one randomly generates a set of three left and right instructions before repeating them methodically from a single starting point, ‘breaking any habitual or purpose-based navigation of space: You don’t take a walk, the

walk takes you.’² This walk was undertaken by several groups, yet Bourke and Hanson ended up in a loop around the Cutty Sark and Norway Street, which refused to break. Recently I took nine people to the same location and used the same technique. My own group took the more predictable branch-and-route form which ‘The Art of Navigation’ article then questioned as a central feature of the swarm technique. Recent drifts in this area had discovered some interesting documents, including magazine cuttings depicting a model at both the Norway Street and Cutty Sark sites, pinned to the wall of a cubicle in the male toilets of a nearby pub. Postcards featuring circular garden features were also found near the observatory. I may release some of my objet trouvé in future editions. The *Scape* group’s next dérive was centred around the phallogocentric Swiss Re, designed by Sir Norman Foster. The MPA intend to repeat this walk too, in order to examine and critique the very practise of phallogocentric-walks, of omphalos obsession. See the notices at the end of this issue.

¹ Deleuze & Guattari. 1988. A Thousand Plateaus.

² Hanson. 2003. ‘The Art of Navigation’ in the Centre for Urban and Community Research magazine, *Street Signs*, No. 6. This is available online in pdf form.

From Manchester to the Grand MOMA via Disneyland

by Mark Rainey

Prophecy is nowhere so easy as in England, where all the component elements of society are clearly defined and sharply separated

- Friedrich Engels, On the Condition of the Working Class in England

Manchester in the 1840s captured the attention of Friedrich Engels. Living in the city to manage a factory owned by his father, Engels was shocked and appalled at what he saw. Manchester had harnessed the essence of the emerging industrial society – a framework that would spread throughout the world. The rise of mechanized production and the horrific conditions of the workers attached to this, inspired him not only into writing what we might now call a piece of ‘travel literature’ through the working districts of the city, but also into formulating and contributing to Communist thought.

Yet the lasting ‘prophecy’ of Engel’s writing is not so much in his claim that the growth of capitalism would be followed by its inevitable collapse, resulting in a new socialist society. Instead, we find it in his vivid and detailed description of 1840s Manchester – an account of a society not only split under new social terms, but also under new physical terms. The physical layout of the city became a reflection of the material possessions, wealth and social position of the separate classes. This description of urban development in the first industrial city has become increasingly relevant, as the urban map of Manchester in the 1840s would be repeated and adapted throughout the world which today can be seen in a global context.

The street layout of 19th century Manchester, modelled the divisions of the emergent society – divisions between wealth and poverty, commerce and factory work, bourgeoisie and working class. Manchester,

Engels writes, 'is particularly built so that a person might live in it for years and go in and out daily, without coming into contact with a working people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or pleasure walks'. Urban space was so designed that businessmen could enter and leave the city 'without ever seeing that they are in the midst of grimy misery that lurks to the right and left'. In effect, in 1840s Manchester, work was being hidden through the very shape of the city itself. Businessmen and factory owners could enter the commercial areas of the city without ever having to view the working slums and factory districts that ringed the city centre.

For Engels, there was no clearer example of this than the Exchange (now the Royal Exchange Theatre on Cross Street). The Exchange was the hub of the global cotton trade, where the prices of up to 80% of the world's textiles would be determined. From the Exchange, tentacle-like streets extended outwards, cutting through working districts, providing an uninterrupted link to the suburban bourgeoisie areas. The store fronts on these streets were owned and maintained by the middle classes meaning that both entering and leaving the city a person could avoid the unsightly aspects of the city. Yet the factories and mills, the slum districts beyond the façade were the fuel of the expanding economy and the vast accumulation of wealth.

In Manchester, the modern industrial city was being shaped according to an incredible contradiction. The poverty, filth and cramped favella conditions, the base of the new economy, were duly swept aside. The essential had become the undesirable, the undesirable became the ignored.

Manchester became a city of spectacle- an urban spectacle. Perhaps the first, as we find no earlier account in a modern city and Engels himself found it more prevalent in Manchester than any other city he had seen. City streets became pleasant and pleasurable displays for wealthy incomers – distracting and numbing them at the same time.

According to Guy Debord, 'the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people mediated by images'. The spectacle, at its heart, is the reflection of social division, the maintenance of social division and a contribution to social division.

Of course, Manchester is not the origin of this sort of spectacle – especially where essential work is deliberately hidden. We only have to think about the running of grand estate houses, where servants and kitchen staff had their own quarters and passages to go about their work, in an excluded space out of sight and mind of the aristocratic owners. However, in 1840s Manchester this was being transposed into a new social context, into a particularly urban layout. This has since become a definite feature of our cities and increasingly and determinately applied to modern developments throughout the world.

Nearly 100 years later, George Orwell almost repeats Engel's observations, in the context of coal mining. In *The Road to Wigan Pier* Orwell writes

'Down there where the coal is dug it is a sort of world apart which one can quite easily go through life without ever hearing about. Probably a majority of people would even prefer not to hear about it. Yet it is the absolutely necessary component of our world above.'

Here we have the same notion of essential work being hidden from view. Of course, coal mining is necessarily out of sight because of its natural location underground.

But Orwell importantly recognises that this is also a matter of convenience. It makes it easier to ignore and we would prefer to ignore this work.

‘Most of the time, of course, we should prefer to forget that they were doing it. It is so with all types of manual work; it keeps us alive and we are oblivious of its existence.’

The reason I am mentioning Orwell’s account of mining in this discussion is because of the underground location. The convenience of hiding work underground has passed on to our own time. Without claim to necessity, today we can find work hidden underground simply by preference, deliberately buried and conveniently out of sight. There is perhaps no better example of this than the Disneyworld theme parks. Under each of the theme parks is a network of underground tunnels used for collecting rubbish, stocking stores and restaurants and also, significantly, as a staff entrance. All so that the surface spectacle of theme park is never disturbed by the site of rubbish collection, deliveries or even staff making their way to work.

In 1994 my high school band performed in Disneyworld Florida and our entrance was made at the beginning of the tunnel system. We were not allowed to take pictures and the rule was strictly enforced. When one of our group did pull a camera out to take a snapshot of their friends, staff members came to us making sure no actual pictures were taken. Apparently, even the tunnels appearing as inconsequential background was too much. A friend of mine used to work in Disneyland Tokyo, and like the other parks it also had a vast underground employee entrance system. She in fact spent a lot of her time searching the tunnels for new staff who had got themselves lost on their first shift - lost underneath Disneyland Tokyo, not exactly sure where they were meant to make their appearance.

And so we can move on to China and to a particular development in central Beijing currently under construction - The Grand Moma. In 2006 Business Week described the Grand Moma as one of the top ten wonders of modern China. As such it becomes a representative contemporary development for the nation and by extension a representative of exclusive developments around the world.

The Grand Moma is designed by the American architect Stephen Holl. It covers 210,000 square metres, making it one of the largest residential developments in the world. Comprising of 750 luxury apartments, it also contains a Hotel, commercial and retail space, a kindergarten and a cinema. It is situated in a convenient location in central Beijing, adjacent to one of the city’s major transportation hubs and on the corner of the old city wall.

There are 8 towers in the development, each linked by two continuous rings. The first is located on the ground floor, meaning all the towers are interconnected at the lowest level. The connecting ring not only allows passage between the towers, but is also the location of a series of cafés and services – including a laundrette, a dry cleaners and as we have mentioned, a kindergarten.

Stephen Holl claims the rings create ‘random city-like relationships’ allowing a person to bump into strangers - just like on any city street. The difference here is that all the strangers will be from the wealthy and exclusive elite – there will be no poor, undesirables from off the street. The urban spectacle is a definite feature of the development.

This brings us to the second ring, which connects the towers on the 20th floor. This upper ring can only be accessed by those living at the top of the development. These flats are even more luxurious than the lower ones, meaning only the cream of Beijing’s elite will use them.

Even the rich have their own hierarchy maintained by divisive living space.

Stephen Holl also describes the Grand Moma as a 'city within a city', not only because of the sheer size, but also because of the facilities contained within it.

However, this description must be questioned. Most of the residents will leave the development each day to go to work – their working lives take place outside the Grand Moma. The development is not so much a city within a city, but 'a city without work'. Except, of course, those employed in the retail shops and cafés. The exclusive spectacle of the development is maintained as even these examples of work are excluded. Not only do the workers not live in this 'city', they have to make their entrance from underground – with the architects perhaps taking the idea from Disneyland. However, this is not a theme park, but a contemporary living space.

In promotional models of the development the underground is portrayed as a carpark, however in reality it is the site of essential work where stocks and supplies are brought in and out, where rubbish is collected, and where workers make their entrance – avoiding any informal contact with the wealthy residents. The underground is an essential way of maintaining this urban spectacle.

To conclude, we have seen the urban spectacle making its first appearance in 19th century Manchester and via the mines and Disneyland, we arrive in our contemporary time where the urban spectacle is perhaps more deliberately and more conveniently applied.

These examples - the mines, Disneyland and the Grand Moma, are only a few of the many possible examples we could use. Nonetheless they highlight how the themes we found in 1840s Manchester have continued and developed into the present day.



Theory of the dérive

by Guy-Ernest Debord

ONE OF the basic situationist practices is the *dérive* [*literally: 'drifting'*], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. *Dérives* involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll.

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.

But the *dérive* includes both this letting-go and its necessary contradiction: the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities. In this latter regard, ecological science - despite the narrow social space to which it limits itself - provides psychogeography with abundant data.

The ecological analysis of the absolute or relative character of fissures in the urban network, of the role of microclimates, of distinct neighborhoods with no

relation to administrative boundaries, and above all of the dominating action of centers of attraction, must be utilized and completed by psychogeographical methods. The objective passionate terrain of the *dérive* must be defined in accordance both with its own logic and with its relations with social morphology.

In his study *Paris et l'agglomération parisienne* (Bibliothèque de Sociologie Contemporaine, P.U.F., 1952) Chombart de Lauwe notes that 'an urban neighborhood is determined not only by geographical and economic factors, but also by the image that its inhabitants and those of other neighborhoods have of it.' In the same work, in order to illustrate 'the narrowness of the real Paris in which each individual lives... within a geographical area whose radius is extremely small,' he diagrams all the movements made in the space of one year by a student living in the 16th Arrondissement. Her itinerary forms a small triangle with no significant deviations, the three apexes of which are the School of Political Sciences, her residence and that of her piano teacher.

Such data - examples of a modern poetry capable of provoking sharp emotional reactions (in this particular case, outrage at the fact that anyone's life can be so pathetically limited) - or even Burgess's theory of Chicago's social activities as being distributed in

distinct concentric zones, will undoubtedly prove useful in developing dérives.

If chance plays an important role in dérives this is because the methodology of psychogeographical observation is still in its infancy. But 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. We can say, then, that the randomness of a dérive is fundamentally different from that of the stroll, but also that the first psychogeographical attractions discovered by dérivés may tend to fixate them around new habitual axes, to which they will constantly be drawn back.

An insufficient awareness of the limitations of chance, and of its inevitably reactionary effects, condemned to a dismal failure the famous aimless wandering attempted in 1923 by four surrealists, beginning from a town chosen by lot: Wandering in open country is naturally depressing, and the interventions of chance are poorer there than anywhere else. But this mindlessness is pushed much further by a certain Pierre Vendryes (in *Médium*, May 1954), who thinks he can relate this anecdote to various probability experiments, on the ground that they all supposedly involve the same sort of antideterminist liberation. He gives as an example the random distribution of tadpoles in a circular aquarium, adding, significantly, 'It is necessary, of course, that such a population be subject to no external guiding influence.' From that perspective, the tadpoles could be considered more spontaneously liberated than the surrealists, since they have the advantage of being 'as stripped as possible of intelligence, sociability and sexuality,' and are thus 'truly independent from one another.'

At the opposite pole from such imbecilities, the primarily urban character of the dérive, in its element in the great industrially transformed cities - those centers of possibilities and meanings - could be expressed in Marx's phrase: 'Men can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive.'

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. It is preferable for the composition of these groups to change from one dérive to another. With more than four or five participants, the specifically dérive character rapidly diminishes, and in any case it is impossible for there to be more than ten or twelve people without the dérive fragmenting into several simultaneous dérives. The practice of such subdivision is in fact of great interest, but the difficulties it entails have so far prevented it from being organized on a sufficient scale.

The average duration of a dérive is one day, considered as the time between two periods of sleep. The starting and ending times have no necessary relation to the solar day, but it should be noted that the last hours of the night are generally unsuitable for dérives.

But this duration is merely a statistical average. For one thing, a dérive rarely occurs in its pure form: it is difficult for the participants to avoid setting aside an hour or two at the beginning or end of the day for taking care of banal tasks; and toward the end of the day fatigue tends to encourage such an abandonment. But more importantly, a dérive often takes place within a deliberately limited period of a few hours, or even fortuitously during fairly brief moments; or it may last

for several days without interruption. In spite of the cessations imposed by the need for sleep, certain dérives of a sufficient intensity have been sustained for three or four days, or even longer. It is true that in the case of a series of dérives over a rather long period of time it is almost impossible to determine precisely when the state of mind peculiar to one dérive gives way to that of another. One sequence of dérives was pursued without notable interruption for around two months. Such an experience gives rise to new objective conditions of behavior that bring about the disappearance of a good number of the old ones.

The influence of weather on dérives, although real, is a significant factor only in the case of prolonged rains, which make them virtually impossible. But storms or other types of precipitation are rather favorable for dérives.

The spatial field of a dérive may be precisely delimited or vague, depending on whether the goal is to study a terrain or to emotionally disorient oneself. It should not be forgotten that these two aspects of dérives overlap in so many ways that it is impossible to isolate one of them in a pure state. But the use of taxis, for example, can provide a clear enough dividing line: If in the course of a dérive one takes a taxi, either to get to a specific destination or simply to move, say, twenty minutes to the west, one is concerned primarily with a personal trip outside one's usual surroundings. If, on the other hand, one sticks to the direct exploration of a particular terrain, one is concentrating primarily on research for a psychogeographical urbanism.

In every case the spatial field depends first of all on the point of departure - the residence of the solo dériver or the meeting place selected by a group. The maximum area of this spatial field does not extend beyond the entirety of a large city and its suburbs. At its minimum

it can be limited to a small self-contained ambiance: a single neighborhood or even a single block of houses if it's interesting enough (the extreme case being a static-dérive of an entire day within the Saint-Lazare train station).

The exploration of a fixed spatial field entails establishing bases and calculating directions of penetration. It is here that the study of maps comes in - ordinary ones as well as ecological and psychogeographical ones - along with their correction and improvement. It should go without saying that we are not at all interested in any mere exoticism that may arise from the fact that one is exploring a neighborhood for the first time. Besides its unimportance, this aspect of the problem is completely subjective and soon fades away.

In the 'possible rendezvous,' on the other hand, the element of exploration is minimal in comparison with that of behavioral disorientation. The subject is invited to come alone to a certain place at a specified time. He is freed from the bothersome obligations of the ordinary rendezvous since there is no one to wait for. But since this 'possible rendezvous' has brought him without warning to a place he may or may not know, he observes the surroundings. It may be that the same spot has been specified for a 'possible rendezvous' for someone else whose identity he has no way of knowing. Since he may never even have seen the other person before, he will be encouraged to start up conversations with various passersby. He may meet no one, or he may even by chance meet the person who has arranged the 'possible rendezvous.' In any case, particularly if the time and place have been well chosen, his use of time will take an unexpected turn. He may even telephone someone else who doesn't know where the first 'possible rendezvous' has taken him, in order to ask for

another one to be specified. One can see the virtually unlimited resources of this pastime.

Our loose lifestyle and even certain amusements considered dubious that have always been enjoyed among our entourage - slipping by night into houses undergoing demolition, hitchhiking nonstop and without destination through Paris during a transportation strike in the name of adding to the confusion, wandering in subterranean catacombs forbidden to the public, etc. - are expressions of a more general sensibility which is no different from that of the *dérive*. Written descriptions can be no more than passwords to this great game.

The lessons drawn from *dérives* enable us to draw up the first surveys of the psychogeographical articulations of a modern city. Beyond the discovery of unities of ambiance, of their main components and their spatial localization, one comes to perceive their principal axes of passage, their exits and their defenses. One arrives at the central hypothesis of the existence of psychogeographical pivotal points. One measures the distances that actually separate two regions of a city, distances that may have little relation with the physical distance between them. With the aid of old maps, aerial photographs and experimental *dérives*, one can draw up hitherto lacking maps of influences, maps whose inevitable imprecision at this early stage is no worse than that of the first navigational charts. The only difference is that it is no longer a matter of precisely delineating stable continents, but of changing architecture and urbanism.

Today the different unities of atmosphere and of dwellings are not precisely marked off, but are surrounded by more or less extended and indistinct bordering regions. The most general change that *dérive* experience leads to proposing is the constant diminution of these border regions, up to the point of their complete suppression.

Within architecture itself, the taste for *dériving* tends to promote all sorts of new forms of labyrinths made possible by modern techniques of construction. Thus in March 1955 the press reported the construction in New York of a building in which one can see the first signs of an opportunity to *dérive* inside an apartment:

‘The apartments of the helicoidal building will be shaped like slices of cake. One will be able to enlarge or reduce them by shifting movable partitions. The half-floor gradations avoid limiting the number of rooms, since the tenant can request the use of the adjacent section on either upper or lower levels. With this setup three four-room apartments can be transformed into one twelve-room apartment in less than six hours.’

¹ Taken from www.nothingness.org who explain that a slightly different version of this article was first published in the Belgian surrealist journal *Les Levres Nues* #9 (November 1956) along with accounts of two *dérives*.

Minutes

Never give out your password or credit card number in an instant message conversation.

You are talking to mark
<mjraine@hotmai.com>

Steve Hanson says:

alright? how'd it go?

mark says:

we did a derive today

mark says:

using maps of brisbane

Steve Hanson says:

hahaha

mark says:

it was interesting because, well

mark says:

in the end, it seems to me we did a loop around strangeways prison

Steve Hanson says:

why brisbane, any explanation?

Steve Hanson says:

when I ran derives in london I ended up in a loop

Steve Hanson says:

twice

mark says:

because there were some people in brisbane supposedly using a map of manchester

mark says:

but the only communication was a blank text message

Steve Hanson says:

that's classic psychogeography, I've been on simultaneous derives with groups in holland etc

mark says:

yeah, i've picked up a lot of pamphlets

mark says:

I met the guy who runs the MAP archives on the net as well

mark says:

we had a meeting in the basement cafe afterwards but i left early

mark says:

the amount of people coming at it from occult and 'pagan' perspectives was interesting

Steve Hanson says:

were there lots?

Steve Hanson says:

I find it disturbing

mark says:

a pagan witch turned up because he read about it in the metro and thought it would be interesting

Steve Hanson says:

I want to set up a group dedicated to the practice of materialist psychogeography

mark says:

yeah - to me that is the more interesting side

Steve Hanson says:

totally - sent you an email

Steve Hanson says:

it's street signs issue 6 and contains my account of the first looping derive in greenwich

Steve Hanson says:

so - you up for it? the UK materialist psychogeography society?

Steve Hanson says:

It's needed

mark says:

yes

mark says:

for sure

Steve Hanson says:

right, let's do it

Steve Hanson says:

magazine and website

mark says:

UK MAPS

mark says:

UK MAterialistic PSychogeographic

Steve Hanson says:

good thinking! I actually had an idea for it a couple of years ago as i knew it was needed

Steve Hanson says:

and came up with

Steve Hanson says:

SCUM!

Steve Hanson says:

the society for cutting up maps

Steve Hanson says:

but dropped it, rather sensibly I think

Steve Hanson says:

the SCUM manifesto

Steve Hanson says:

heh

mark says:

as in reference to "society for cutting up men"

Steve Hanson says:

yeah

mark says:

ha

Steve Hanson says:

too confusing

Steve Hanson says:

too mixed up

Steve Hanson says:

I used the spam logo, I remember!

Steve Hanson says:

probably drinking too much at the time...

Steve Hanson says:

hehehehe

mark says:

ha

Steve Hanson says:

i pasted the CU over the middle of the spam logo - the CU coming from the valeri solnas book

mark says:

oh yeah, on dec. 21st there will be a levitation of Beetham tower

Steve Hanson says:

for god's sake

Steve Hanson says:

materialist psychogeography is needed!!!

Steve Hanson says:

we need a short sharp manifesto then action!

Steve Hanson says:

let's do it!

Steve Hanson says:

derives are so easy to run

mark says:

yeah

mark says:

I can run them from urbis

mark says:

I just opened your article

mark says:

I'll read it as soon as poss

Steve Hanson says:

I suggest a re-commitment to the formulations of space and subjective life as laid down by lefebvre, debord and raoul vaneigm

Steve Hanson says:

but perhaps a distancing from some of the nastier elements of the situationist project at its most extreme...

Steve Hanson says:

this could manifest in simple, materialist explorations of space and subjective life, ideal spaces, lived spaces

Steve Hanson says:

in communities and cities

Steve Hanson says:

with a total ban on ghosts

Steve Hanson says:

hehehe

mark says:

ha

mark says:

I was just talking to tomoko about being a ghost like presence on the street!

mark says:

but the ideal and the real is the crux of the issue

Steve Hanson says:

ghosts as metaphors are perhaps fine but it's the search for the occulted vapours of john dee I find a little worrying

mark says:

too many things "falsely satisfy a falsified need"

mark says:

ok

mark says:

that's exactly what I was meaning too

mark says:

I think its important to examine where the metaphors come from - and legends

Steve Hanson says:

sure - myth as language and structure and community

mark says:

but it is bound to the material space

Steve Hanson says:

folk process

Steve Hanson says:

sure

Steve Hanson says:

I agree

mark says:

ok so UK MAPS it is

mark says:

or if you have another suggestion...

Steve Hanson says:

no it's fine

Steve Hanson says:

seeing as my other suggestion is ridiculous!

Steve Hanson says:

well we need to chop out a manifesto of sorts and I need to design us a masthead and magazine

Steve Hanson says:

then we're in business

Steve Hanson says:

then we can get some locations to explore

Steve Hanson says:

then we can get some dates together

Steve Hanson says:

and some derive techniques

Steve Hanson says:

great! the fold has folded through apathy so a new project ought to waft some fresh air into chez hanson

mark says:

yes - that's a good idea

mark says:

I was thinking today maybe a derive using maps of Hiroshima as manchester city council wants to be a nuclear free city

mark says:

but maybe that connection is too emotive and obvious

Steve Hanson says:

with that in mind - an afterthought. perhaps we should drop the UK and make it international. who knows, may be an excuse to visit other groups in other countries etc

mark says:

yeah

Steve Hanson says:

the materialist psychogeography affiliation - MPA

Steve Hanson says:

affiliation being looser and less dogmatic than society and other terms which mean 'organisation'

Steve Hanson says:

affiliation is more rhizomic if I dare be pretentious enough to say so!

Steve Hanson says:

and its an acronym of MAP

Steve Hanson says:

also affiliation implicitly nods to ties with other groups, other networks

mark says:

yeah

Steve Hanson says:

poss international ones

mark says:

that is a great idea

Steve Hanson says:

the two biggest UK groups have been MAP and the LPA

Steve Hanson says:

so the MPA seems logical

Steve Hanson says:

I feel like citizen smith putting together a splinter-group of dissenters

Steve Hanson says:

I need to buy a beret!!

mark says:

(I'm drifting in between conversations now sorry)

Steve Hanson says:

no problem! issue one of our newsletter, I can reprint the street signs article as a starter for 10. I think the hiroshima

Steve Hanson says:

I think the hiroshima idea has genuine mileage

Steve Hanson says:

it's about ideal space (nuclear free zones are only ever idealistic on one level) and lived space (hiroshima) and it is materialist and politicised

Steve Hanson says:

such council rhetorics can be further mined

mark says:

yes

Steve Hanson says:

ok I'll look at the layout, etc

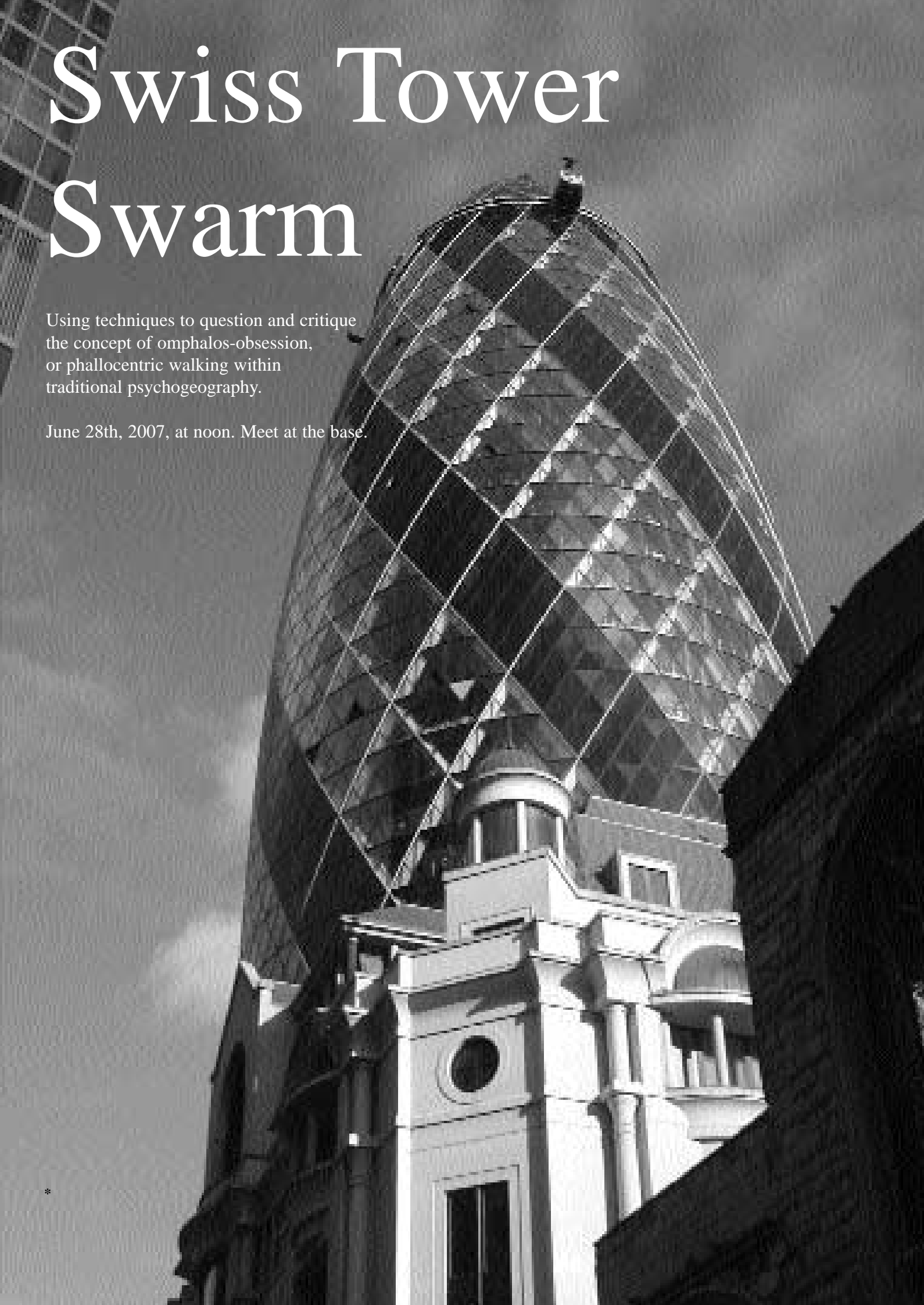
The above message could not be sent at this time

Swiss Tower Swarm

Using techniques to question and critique the concept of omphalos-obsession, or phallocentric walking within traditional psychogeography.

June 28th, 2007, at noon. Meet at the base.

*



Affiliates

Nigel Armitage	Leeds & Bradford
Katherine Bourke	Canada
Andy Bowman	Manchester
Johanne Chagnon	Montreal
Nick Chandler	London
Guy Debord	Manchester
Fergus Evans	Manchester
Nick Hamilton-Farey	London
Steve Hanson	Wales & Yorkshire
Tomoko Ishitani	Hiroshima
Martin Jackson	London
Dave Jencks	Yorkshire
Paul O'Brien	Dublin
Mark Rainey	Manchester
Raphael Schlembach	Manchester
Beatrice Schulz	London
Jim Segers	Brussels & London

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