

The Dark Side of Architecture

Some Thoughts, quotes, and images from the people who know.

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This is meant to be a work in progress. As I progress to into my architectural profession, I will surely encounter more original thoughts and comments by my colleagues and mentors. I will strive to keep a consistent format in collecting these ideas and representing it through my own interpretation.

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detournement

"One must conceive of a parodic/serious stage in which the accumulation of de-toured elements, far from wanting to incite indignation or laughter by referring to the notion of an original work, instead that is empty of meaning and forgotten, is employed to render certain sublimity."⁽¹⁾

If you're going to improve on something, make it our worthwhile.

1. Unassigned, "Detournement as Regime and Prelude" Internationale Situationniste, #1 (December 1959) trans. NOTCHWED, www.rustrom.org, 14 September 2008 <<http://www.rustrom.org/detournement.html>>.
2. Detournement? www.ruhay.com/old/duresn/blogspot.com, Oct. 2008, <<http://ruhay.com/old/duresn/blogspot.com/2008/10/detournement.html>>.

Image: "Prada Marfa" by Elmgreen and Dragset located in Marfa, Texas.

<http://elmgreen-dragset.com>

Detourne-
ment is the
diversion of
elements to
new subver-
sive uses.⁽²⁾



heterotopia

"The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am."⁽¹⁾

Heterotopias, an actual place, where one can visit. Architects and city planners have created such intentional places like Disneyland or unintentionally such as a cemetery according to Michel Foucault.⁽²⁾ Sometimes, a place can morph itself into heterotopias like Las Vegas, for an example, it created itself over time and became the place it is now, this "other place" of fantasy.

Image: "Model of Universal City Walk, California."
<http://architecturalpaper.com/files/20021129/06.html>

This image is illustrating the third principle of Foucault's theory of a space composed of layers of iconic Los Angeles sections abstractly. The result is a shopping and entertainment center that is a miniature idealized version of Los Angeles that tourists and residents who can't cope with the reality of Los Angeles can find comfort in.⁽³⁾

1. Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces" 16-1886, 22-27. <http://www.sas.ac.uk/~septem/ber/2006/>
2. "Universal City Walk, Displacement of Heterotopia" www.architecturalpaper.com, Oct. 2008.
3. "Universal City Walk, Displacement of Heterotopia" www.architecturalpaper.com, Oct. 2008.
<http://architecturalpaper.com/files/20021129/06.html>

"Nowhere became a real place."⁽⁴⁾



psycho geography

"Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. The adjective, psychogeographical, retaining a rather pleasing vagueness, can thus be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and even more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery."¹

Guy Debord discusses the development of modern societies in which authentic social life has been replaced with its representation in the "Comments on the Society of the Spectacle." The experiences of the people have already been framed for them by an uncontrollable outside force, therefore he introduces "psychogeography" to address the issue². He begins to study and map out the emotions and the behaviors of the jaded masses through "psychogeography". People's actions and emotions could be mapped out, therefore architectural situations can be created that could intervene and bridge the psychological gaps felt while inhabiting architecture.³

"Exercise in Psychogeography" by Guy Debord

Piranesi is psychogeographical in the stairway.

Claude Lorrain is psychogeographical in the juxtaposition of a palace neighborhood and the sea.

The postman Cheval is psychogeographical in architecture.

Arthur Cravan is psychogeographical in hurried drifting.

Jacques Vach is psychogeographical in dress.

Louis II of Bavaria is psychogeographical in royalty.

Jack the Ripper is probably psychogeographical in love.

Saint-Just is a bit psychogeographical in politics.

Andre Breton is naively psychogeographical in encounters.

Madeleine Reineri is psychogeographical in suicide.

Along with Pierre Mabilie in gathering together marvels, Evariste Gaullois in mathematics, Edgar Allan Poe in landscape, and Villiers de l'Isle Adam in agony.⁴

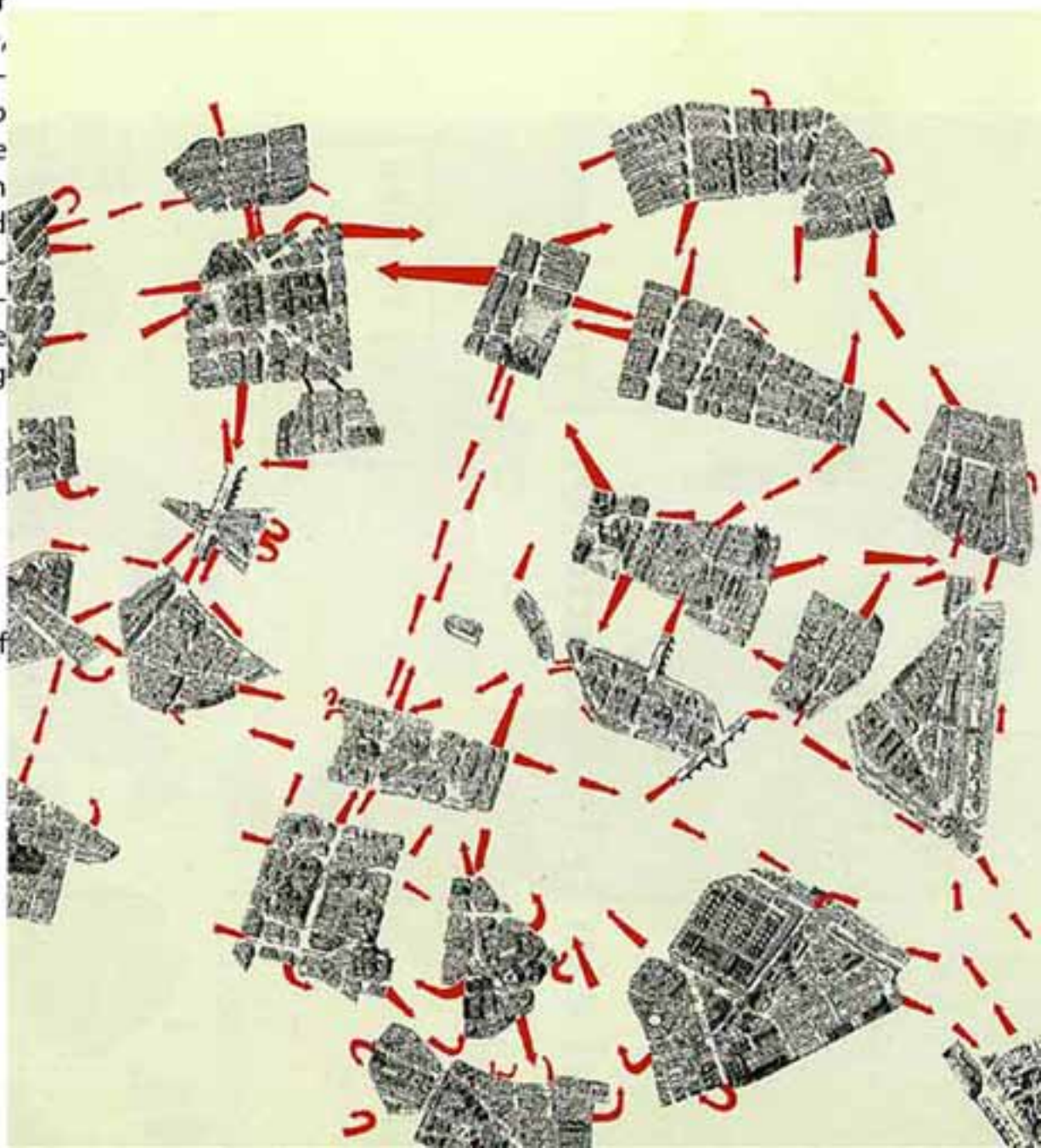


Image: "Psychogeographic guide of Paris" 1955 by Guy Debord.

<http://www.guydebord.com/LPG/MapParis1.htm>

1. Debord, Guy. "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography" Les Temps Modernes, 8 (September 1955). www.guydebord.com, October 2008. http://www.guydebord.com/1955_intro_psycho.html.
2. Debord, Guy. Comments on the Society of the Spectacle, Ed. Grand Lefebvre Paris, Rotterdam: 1988. www.writings.org, August 2008. <http://www.writings.org/comments.html>.
3. Van Tijen, Tjebbo. "Psychogeographic guide of Paris" www.imaginarymuseum.org, Oct. 2008. <http://imaginarymuseum.org/LPG/MapParis1.htm>.
4. Debord, Guy. Exercise in Psychogeography. www.scribd.com, October 2008. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/434018/Guy-Debord-Exercise-in-Psychogeography>.

uncanny

"The cellar-dwelling of the poor man is a hostile element, 'a dwelling which remains an alien power and only gives itself up to him insofar as he gives up to it his own blood and sweat' a dwelling which he cannot regard as his own hearth, where he might at last exclaim: 'here I am at home.' But where instead he finds himself in someone else's house, in the house of a stranger who always watches him and throws him out if he does not pay his rent." Karl Marx. (1)

The German word for uncanny coined by Sigmund Freud, 'das Unheimliche' which translates into unhomely refers to the detachment a person feels from his place of residence, therefore becoming a stranger in his own house. (2)

defamiliarisation

Reality becomes unreal

Image 1: "Cabrini Green" Chicago, IL

http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3264/2645260746_77962158c3.jpg



1. Wills, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992. p.3.
2. Wills, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992. p.5.

archigram

Archigram was an avant-garde architectural group formed in the 1960s that were considered as "Futurists", anti-heroic, and pro-consumerist. Archigram drew inspiration from technology to create a new reality that was solely expressed through hypothetical projects. (1)

"A new generation of architecture must arise with forms and spaces which seems to reject the precepts of 'Modern' yet in fact retains those precepts. We have chosen to bypass the decaying Bauhaus image which is an insult to functionalism. You can roll out steel – any length. You can blow up a balloon – any size. You can mould plastic – any shape. Blokes that built the Forth Bridge – they didn't worry."
- David Greene (2)

"The pre-packaged frozen lunch is more important than Palladio."
-Peter Cook.

Image 1: "Walking City 3" 1964 by Archigram.
http://www.archigram.net/projects_pages/walking_city_3.html
Image 2: "Walking City 5" 1964 by Archigram.
http://www.archigram.net/projects_pages/walking_city_5.html



1. "Archigram." www.wikipedia.com, Oct. 2008. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archigram>>.
2. Greene, David. Archigram." www.designmuseum.org, Oct. 2008. <<http://www.designmuseum.org/design/archigram>>.
3. Cook Peter. Archigram." www.designmuseum.org, Oct. 2008.