



# The Ciphpered River of the Streets

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## OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF “CASSEROLES” *textes qui bougent au rythme du carré rouge*

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### The ciphered river of the streets

– being a very preliminary collection of notes and thoughts toward an abécédaire for young people, with particular reference to the conditions of life during the printemps érable

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*Aren't you ever going to eat your soup, you damned bastard of a cloud-monger?<sup>1</sup>*

### ASYNDETON

See synecdoche; de Certeau; Augoyard; Lefebvre

The sounds of the street. Finally, the flags have found their trumpets, so to speak.<sup>2</sup> The wild cacophony of pots and lids, wood and metal plonking plinking and clanging in sonic improvisation. Delirious moments of free jazz erupt, erupt from the street, only to re-territorialize on marching rhythms. One, two, one two three. One, two, one two three. And then Ornette Coleman, and then John Philip Sousa. Skipping, like a child, undoing any formal continuity. Islands of sound emerge in the distance, too reverberant to feel any particular rhythmic form – just sound.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Baudelaire, "The Soup and the Clouds," in *Paris Spleen* (New York: New Directions, 1970), 31.

<sup>2</sup> See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 347. "... sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us. It takes leave of the earth, as much in order to drop us into a black hole as to open us up to a cosmos... Colors do not move a people. Flags can do nothing without trumpets."

## BEWILDERMENT

What a strange and bewildering feeling it is to be walking through the neighborhoods and streets of Montréal. To my Toronto-bred piety, this all redoubles my sense of disconnection with my adopted culture, but at the same time, I am struck with an overwhelming admiration for this place and its people. As I write this, there have been 50 consecutive days of street marches. Fifty days, think of it. Fifty days of walking *in* the streets. And several massive, very public marches. And everything is different there. The buildings; you can see them in a perspective not given to the pedestrian. Intersections, like clearings in the woods. No need to look both ways. Just passing through. Of course the river is the metaphor so often exercised by bewildered commentators. Like all metaphor, it begins with *not*.<sup>3</sup> Strangely though, in a very un-riparian manner, it is in the middle of the street, not on its banks, that the crowd moves most slowly. A temporary falsification of the friction of commerce, and the laminar street. No meanders (oxbows maybe; traces of riparian history). Just flow, gestures and rhythm.

If it is true that *forests of gestures* are manifest in the street, their movement cannot be captured in a picture, nor can the meaning of their movements be circumscribed in a text. Their rhetorical transplantation carries away and displaces the analytical, coherent proper meanings of urbanism; it constitutes a 'wandering of the semantic' produced by masses that make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order.<sup>4</sup>

To communicate a state, an inner tension of pathos, with signs, including the tempo of these signs - that is the meaning of every style.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> "The truth of the implicit 'is not': this suggests that the positive assertion in the metaphor is always an act of overcoming. – As though calcified uses must in fact precede metaphorical gestures." Jan Zwicky, *Wisdom & Metaphor* (Kentville, N.S.: Gaspereau Press, 2003), LH § 11.

<sup>4</sup> Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 102.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, "Ecce Homo," in *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 104.

## CASSEROLES

See also: **charivari**;<sup>6</sup> **tintamarre**; **cacerolazo**

Things are denied the pure formal principle of language – namely, sound. They can communicate to one another only through a more or less material community. This community is immediate and infinite, like every linguistic communication; it is magical (for there is also a magic of matter).

The incomparable feature of human language is that its magical community with things is immaterial and purely mental, and the symbol of this is sound. The Bible expresses this symbolic fact when it says that God breathes his breath into man: this is at once life and mind and language.<sup>7</sup>

Profane airs, adapted to peals of bells. Through the crossing and recrossing melodies, I seemed to hear notes from “La Marseillaise.” The hymn of the rabble, as broadcast from the belfries, had lost a little of its harshness. Chopped into small pieces by the hammers, this was not the usual gloomy howling; rather, it had taken on, to my ears, a childish grace. It was as though the Revolution had learned to stutter in the language of heaven. Baudelaire, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2., p. 725.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See [Jonathan Sterne and Natalie Zemon Davis, "Quebec's manifs casseroles are a call for order," The Globe and Mail, 31 May 2012.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Walter Benjamin, "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: Penguin, 2009), 114.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 244-245.

## DESIRE LINES

See also: desire paths; path of desire; *les chemins du désir*; *derive*; *wandering lines (de Certeau)*

May 22. When the vast impoundment of humanity in *Quartier des spectacles* finally spills up rue Jeanne-Mance, it travels for precisely one long block before deviating from the legally (i.e., as specified under provisions of [Bill 78](#)<sup>9</sup>) approved route. Perfect. Perhaps three hundred thousand people, loose in the city, the mass branching-off at intersections.

The idea of the desire line, sometime called a desire path, has a murky history. Check the web and you'll find scores of references to them. Many will cite Gaston Bachelard's 1958 *Poetics of Space* as the philosophical origin of the expression. It is not; not exactly. Neither desire lines nor *les chemins du désir* appear in his writing as far as I can tell.<sup>10</sup> A more likely derivation of this term is in the literature of post-war transportation planning. In particular, the Chicago Area Transportation Study, established in 1956 – a city of Chicago, Cook county, state of Illinois, and Federal initiative. Here the desire line is given as “the shortest line between origin and destination, and expresses the way a person would like to go, if such a way were available.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> From the text of “[Bill 78 \(2012, chapter 12\) – An Act to enable students to receive instruction from the postsecondary institutions they attend.](#)” DIVISION III – PROVISIONS TO MAINTAIN PEACE, ORDER AND PUBLIC SECURITY

16. A person, a body or a group that is the organizer of a demonstration involving 50 people or more to take place in a venue accessible to the public must, not less than eight hours before the beginning of the demonstration, provide the following information in writing to the police force serving the territory where the demonstration is to take place: (1) the date, time, duration and venue of the demonstration as well as its route, if applicable; and; (2) the means of transportation to be used for those purposes. When it considers that the planned venue or route poses serious risks for public security, the police force serving the territory where the demonstration is to take place may, before the demonstration, require a change of venue or route so as to maintain peace, order and public security. The organizer must then submit the new venue or route to the police force within the agreed time limit and inform the participants.

<sup>10</sup> It's very seductive, actually. Some blog entries go as far as to conjure false memories in support of the spurious citation. For example, writes Jeremy Elder in his blog [shape-and-colour.com](#): “Sometimes remembering is even sweeter than learning. I first read about Desire Paths in an endlessly fascinating book by French scientist, philosopher, and poet (not a three-way combo you come across every day) Gaston Bachelard. Dedicated to the study of the poetry and philosophy of science, Bachelard's 1958 book *The Poetics of Space* looks not at the origins or technicalities of architecture, but how the lived-in and human experience of architecture affects and shapes it's [sic] development. One of these experiences creates a Desire Path – ‘a term in landscape architecture used to describe a path that isn't designed but rather is worn casually away by people finding the shortest distance between two points.’” The implication being that this quote is Bachelard.

<sup>11</sup> A perfect structural expression of the yearning of metaphor, one notes.

*If such a way were available!* (“Through fantasy, we learn how to desire,” quips Zizek somewhere.) “The desire line is, of course, unrealistic, but it is a simple, completely unbiased presentation and gives the viewer a strong impression of the location and magnitude of travel within an urban area.”<sup>12</sup> In order to produce a picture of desire lines, they built a fabulous machine: the Cartographatron – part computer, part television screen, part camera – about which not a great deal has been written. But this will not concern us here. More interesting is the way that the desire line, not content with its instrumental roots, has escaped, reimagining its pedigree with Bachelard, to describe urban pathways as deviations, as traces of the flows of the consumer sphinx as she makes her way through the city.

These are the trails, routes, pathways, routes that become inscribed on the ground through use, a kind of memory trace, leading, paradoxically, back to Bachelard:

And what a dynamic, handsome object is a path! How precise the familiar hill paths remain for our muscular consciousness! A poet has expressed all this dynamism in one single line:

*O, mes chemins et leur cadence*

Jean Caubere, *Déserts*

(Oh, my roads and their cadence. )

...

George Sand, dreaming beside a path of yellow sand, saw life flowing by. "What is more beautiful than a road?" she wrote. "It is the symbol and the image of an active, varied life." (*Consuelo*, vol. II, p. 116).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Chicago Area Transportation Study, *Volume I – Survey Findings. Final Report in Three Parts: Study Conducted under the Sponsorship of State of Illinois Dept. Of Public Works and Buildings, County of Cook, Board of Commissioners of Cook County [and] City of Chicago Mayor* (Chicago: State of Illinois, 1959), 39.

<sup>13</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 11. Clearly, though, he is moving in proximity of something like the desire path, “Thus we cover the universe with drawings we have lived (12), but then defers: An exteriorist topoanalysis would perhaps give added precision... by defining our daydreams of objects. However, in this present work, I shall not be able to undertake, as should be done, the two-fold imaginary geometrical and physical problem of extroversion and introversion. Moreover, I do not believe that these two branches of physics have the same psychic weight. My research is devoted to the domain of intimacy, to the domain in which psychic weight is dominant... topoanalysis bears the stamp of a topophilia, and shelters and rooms will be studied in the sense of this valorization.” (12)

## EXPLANATION

Some years ago, being with a camping party in the mountains, I returned from a solitary ramble to find every one engaged in a ferocious metaphysical dispute. The corpus of the dispute was a squirrel – a live squirrel supposed to be clinging to one side of a tree-trunk; while over against the tree's opposite side a human being was imagined to stand. This human witness tries to get sight of the squirrel by moving rapidly round the tree, but no matter how fast he goes, the squirrel moves as fast in the opposite direction, and always keeps the tree between himself and the man, so that never a glimpse of him is caught. The resultant metaphysical problem now is this: Does the man go round the squirrel or not? He goes round the tree, sure enough, and the squirrel is on the tree; but does he go round the squirrel? In the unlimited leisure of the wilderness, discussion had been worn threadbare. Every one had taken sides, and was obstinate; and the numbers on both sides were even. Each side, when I appeared therefore appealed to me to make it a majority. Mindful of the scholastic adage that whenever you meet a contradiction you must make a distinction, I immediately sought and found one, as follows: "Which party is right," I said, "depends on what you practically mean by 'going round' the squirrel. If you mean passing from the north of him to the east, then to the south, then to the west, and then to the north of him again, obviously the man does go round him, for he occupies these successive positions. But if on the contrary you mean being first in front of him, then on the right of him, then behind him, then on his left, and finally in front again, it is quite as obvious that the man fails to go round him, for by the compensating movements the squirrel makes, he keeps his belly turned towards the man all the time, and his back turned away. Make the distinction, and there is no occasion for any farther dispute. You are both right and both wrong according as you conceive the verb 'to go round' in one practical fashion or the other."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> William James, "Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking," in *William James: Writings 1902-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 505.

## FUGUE

See BWV 1080; DSM IV

A polyphonic composition constructed on one or more short subjects or themes, which are harmonized according to the laws of counterpoint, and introduced from time to time with various contrapuntal devices' (Stainer and Barrett).

e.g., 1626, Bacon *Sylva Sylvarum* §113. The Reports and Fuges have an Agreement with the Figures in Rhetorick, of Repetition, and Traduction.

and

A flight from one's own identity, often involving travel to some unconsciously desired locality. It is a dissociative reaction to shock or emotional stress in a neurotic, during which all awareness of personal identity is lost though the person's outward behaviour may appear rational. On recovery, memory of events during the state is totally repressed but may become conscious under hypnosis or psycho-analysis. A fugue may also be part of an epileptic or hysterical seizure. Also *attrib.*, as fugue state.<sup>15</sup>

## GOVERNMENTALITY

The themes which monastic discipline assigned to friars for meditation were designed to turn them away from the world and its affairs. The thoughts which we are developing here originate from similar considerations. At a moment when the politicians in whom the opponents of Fascism had placed their hopes are prostrate and confirm their defeat by betraying their own cause, these observations are intended to disentangle the political worldlings from the snares in which the traitors have entrapped them. Our consideration proceeds from the insight that the politicians' stubborn faith in progress, their confidence in their "mass basis," and, finally, their servile integration in an uncontrollable apparatus have been three aspects of the same thing. It seeks to convey an idea of the high price our accustomed thinking will have to pay for a conception of history that avoids any complicity with the thinking to which these politicians continue to adhere. (Thesis X)<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "fugue, n." The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. 1989. [OED Online](#). Oxford University Press. 13 June 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 258.

## *HOMO LUDENS*

Proletarian revolt is a festival or it is nothing; in revolution the road of excess leads once and for all to the palace of wisdom/ a palace which knows only one rationality: the game. The rules are simple: to live instead of devising a lingering death, and to indulge in untrammelled desire.<sup>17</sup>

## IDEOLOGY

It is not a question of ideology. There is an unconscious libidinal investment of the social field that coexists, but does not necessarily coincide, with the preconscious investments, or with what the preconscious investments 'ought to be.' That is why, when subjects, individuals, or groups act manifestly counter to their class interests – when they rally to the interests and ideals of a class that their own objective situation should lead them to combat – it is not enough to say: they were fooled, the masses have been fooled. It is not an ideological problem, a problem of failing to recognize, or of being subject to, an illusion. It is a problem of desire, *and desire is part of the infrastructure*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Members of the internationale situationniste and students of Strasbourg, *On the Poverty of Student Life: Considered in Its Economic, Political, Psychological, and Particularly Intellectual Aspects, and a Modest Proposal for Its Remedy* (London: Dark Star Press, 1985), 24.

<sup>18</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane Robert Hurley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 104.

## JOURNEY

I write when I drop out. I catapult myself out of the concepts, convictions, and truths in which I am usually wrapped up. For this I use figures, masks, or voices. I multiply the discourses and perspectives in my mouth. I strip off language like I change clothes. I multiply myself, multiply my clothes. I write when I let myself be displaced, drift, from left to right, from top to bottom, and set my arms, my legs in motion (my spirit, you move nimbly). In short: writing means *not keeping still, going where one isn't*. experiencing the space, fiction as geographical fact, the source like a net, the description like a tour. I write: I allow myself to have all perspectives, I talk like I'm not supposed to talk – stammering, my head turned in another direction, already out of earshot. *I am far away*. I count on not begin understood. I write, I assuage myself, exchange, disseminate *ignorance*. If I formulate within or with it? I surprise myself with how I take meaning away from signs precisely there where entire masses of signs mean knowledge and behaviour. If I think with it? I communicate something in groundlessness, without a perceivable referential range. I unravel and scatter: the writer releases meaning into a world in which the net of the unequivocal that has been thrown over us seems too tight. I create tracks... whose meaning may never be known with any certainty. Is there a plan? Obviously not. Nevertheless I am being led.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Charles Grivel, "Travel Writing," in *Materialities of Communication*, ed. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 254.

## KNOWING

To protect themselves from danger, alone and closed, like certain crustaceans, the warriors of the Middle Ages and antiquity wrapped themselves in back-breaking armor. Like war, nature later came to prefer the flexible strategy of soft flesh outside and hard skeleton inside. A third solution, more advanced in a whole new way, lies in placing one's defenses and security outside the body: in relations. What comes out of me or hangs from me or leaks from me is what saves me: I'm casting off toward the rope, the cord. Although we have no proof, this bond must have constituted the first invention of human technology, at the same time as the first contract.<sup>20</sup>

1. A paradigm is a form of knowledge that is neither inductive nor deductive but analogical. It moves from singularity to singularity. By neutralizing the dichotomy between the general and the particular, it replaces a dichotomous logic with a bipolar analogical model.
2. The paradigmatic case becomes such by suspending and, at the same time, exposing its belonging to the group, so that it is never possible to separate its exemplarity from its singularity.
3. The paradigmatic group is never presupposed by the paradigms; rather, it is immanent in them.
4. In the paradigm, there is no origin or *archē* every phenomenon is the origin, every image archaic.
5. The historicity of the paradigm lies neither in diachrony nor in synchrony but in a crossing of the two.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, trans. Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson, *Studies in Literature and Science* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 104.

<sup>21</sup> Giorgio Agamben, "What Is a Paradigm?," in *The Signature of All Things : On Method* (New York: Zone Books, 2009).

## LOVE

To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never, to forget.<sup>22</sup>

## MANIFESTATION

I wanted you. And I was looking for you.  
But I couldn't find you.  
I wanted you. And I was looking for you all day.  
But I couldn't find you. I couldn't find you.  
You're walking. And you don't always realize it,  
but you're always falling.

With each step you fall forward slightly.  
And then catch yourself from falling.  
Over and over, you're falling.  
And then catching yourself from falling.  
And this is how you can be walking and falling  
at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Arundhati Roy, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (London: Flamingo, 2002), 17.

<sup>23</sup> Laurie Anderson, "Walking and Falling," in *Big Science* (New York: Warner Records, 1982).

## Now

See also Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”; “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” Thesis XIV (Jetztzeit)

The problem of revolution is once again a concrete issue. On the one side the grandiose structures of technology and material production; on the other a dissatisfaction which can only grow more profound. The bourgeoisie, and its Eastern heirs, the bureaucracy, cannot devise the means to *use* their own overdevelopment, which will be the basis of the poetry of the future, simply because they both depend on the *preservation of the old order*.<sup>24</sup>

## OH

See Note 9

Fundamental Freedoms.

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Members of the internationale situationniste and students of Strasbourg, *On the Poverty of Student Life: Considered in Its Economic, Political, Psychological, and Particularly Intellectual Aspects, and a Modest Proposal for Its Remedy*, 24-25.

<sup>25</sup> [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), Part I of the Constitution Act, 1982 being Schedule B to the Canada Act 1982 (U.K.), 1982, c. 11.

## PEDAGOGY

While it is thought which must explore the virtual down to the ground of its repetitions, it is imagination which must grasp the process of actualization from the point of view of these echoes or reprises. It is imagination which crosses domains, orders, and levels, knocking down the partitions coextensive with the world, guiding our bodies and inspiring our souls, grasping the unity of mind and nature; a larval consciousness which moves endlessly from science to dream and back again.<sup>26</sup>

Several weeks ago my daughter June and I spent the day in Ottawa at the birthday party of an old friend who'd just turned 80. It was a scorching day in the Nation's capital. A long walk back to the bus terminal; an air-condition bus ride back into the warm activist evening in Montreal – we walked downtown for an hour before heading home. Traversing the *Quartier des spectacles*, police cars zooming around everywhere, riot cops marshaling, looking bored and confused. “Those horses look tired and hot,” June observed.

We found a place to sit, close to the action, but far enough to feel certain we were off to the side. And then I tried to explain to this nine-year-old – one who is just beginning to navigate a delicate compromise between her unusually well-developed super-ego, and her innate pluralist leanings – why the police were beating up “the kids.” Not an easy task. By this point we had been looking at images and videos of the student strike for many weeks. And as a family we had by then participated in several general manifestations. Still, what we were seeing tonight had a certain palpable reality, a charge, *vibrated by the reflexes of the future* perhaps. As the police began to surround a group of protesters, my daughter became increasingly indignant; *the students were doing nothing wrong*, she said. *They should stop doing that.*

Bewildered, as I often find myself as a parent, I told her the first thing that popped into my head. I said something about needing to learn how to think differently, and that the students were asking “us,” and the police too, to think differently about education, and how we live our lives. *And taking care of the earth too*, she added. *But how can you think differently?* So I told her a story that was told to me many years ago at a workshop with Isabelle Stengers. When asked about the meaning of speculative philosophy, she told us a story. About camels. I paraphrase from memory:

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<sup>26</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 220.

The setting is Morocco. Nomadic Bedouins. A Father is dying. He calls his sons together to speak with them. To his eldest son, he says, “I am dying, and when I do, you will have one half of my possessions.” To his middle son he says, “I am dying, and you will have one quarter of my possessions.” And to his youngest son he says “When I die, you shall have one sixth of my possessions.”

And then, after a period of time, the old man dies. Immediately the sons gather themselves together to take stock of what has taken place. Eventually they come to speak about what they will do with their Father’s worldly goods. They take stock. They discover that all he owned was 11 camels. They quickly do the arithmetic – one half, one quarter, one sixth – and they see that there is no solution. They have, you see, no option. They understand immediately that there must be a dispute, there must be war.

Word of this unsolvable situation began to circulate amongst the neighboring peoples. Quite soon, a very old man, a respected elder, said to the young men, “I don’t know if there is a solution to the dispute, I can’t tell you how to solve your problem. But I do have something to give you: I have this old camel that you can take. It’s not a very good camel anymore, it’s not worth much.” By which he meant, that it was an old camel, and no longer very strong. “But perhaps this will help,” he said. “It might make your decision easier, and thus avoid a war.”

So they took the Old Man’s camel and added it to theirs. Then they did the arithmetic again. This time it worked. The eldest son took his half share, six. The middle son took his share, one fourth, three camels. And finally, the youngest son took his share, in accordance with his father wishes, one sixth, two camels. They were all greatly relieved at having avoided a bad situation, and very pleased with their inheritances. But before their celebration, they returned the old man’s camel – after all, they had no further use for it.<sup>27</sup>

It was hard to tell, but I think my daughter understood something of this as we carefully drew the numbers and camels in the sand at our feet.

It was a good day.

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<sup>27</sup> Although I haven’t yet seen it, I understand that a version of this story is published in Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour, *Thinking with Whitehead: A Free and Wild Creation of Concepts*, trans. Michael Chase (Harvard University Press, 2011).

## QUALITY

The childhood experience that determines spatial practices later develops its effects, proliferates, floods private and public spaces, undoes their readable surfaces, and creates within the planned city a “metaphorical” or mobile city, like the one Kandinsky dreamed of: “a great city built according to all the rules of architecture and then suddenly shaken by a force that defies all calculation”.<sup>28</sup>

## RED SQUARE / CARRÉ ROUGE

See [Darin Barney, “why I wear the red square: a list,”](#) Special open issue of *Wi: Journal of Mobile Media*, 1 June 2012

## SILENCE

Every salutary effect, indeed every effect not inherently devastating, that any writing may have resides in its (the word’s, language’s) mystery. . . . My concept of objective and, at the same time, highly political style and writing is this: to awaken interest in what was denied to the word; only where this sphere of speechlessness reveals itself in unutterably pure power can the magic spark leap between the word and the motivating deed . . . Only the intensive aiming of words into the core of intrinsic silence is truly effective.<sup>29</sup>

This animal is common in the northern regions and is about four or five inches long; it is endowed with an unusual instinct; its eyes are like carnelian stones, and its hair is jet black, sleek and flexible, and soft as a pillow. It is very fond of eating thick China ink, and whenever people write, it sits with folded hands and crossed legs, waiting till the writing is finished, when it drinks up the remainder of the ink; which done, it squats down as before; and does not frisk about unnecessarily. – Wang Tai-hai (1791)<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> de Certeau, “Walking in the City,” 110.

<sup>29</sup> Letter to Martin Buber. Walter Benjamin, *The Correspondence of Walter Benjamin, 1910-1940*, trans. Gershom Gerhard Scholem and Theodor W. Adorno (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 81-82.

<sup>30</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, “The Ink Monkey,” in *The Book of Imaginary Beings* (New York: Viking, 2005), 134.

## TRAVAIL SUR LE TERRAIN

See [Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive."](#) *Les Lèvres Nues* #9 (November 1956) reprinted in *Internationale Situationniste* #2 (December 1958), Translated by Ken Knabb; Claude Lévi-Strauss. *Tristes Tropiques*. Translated by John and Doreen Weightnam. (New York: Athenium, 1974).

## UNPREDICTABILITY

Unpredictability is not lack of foresight, and no engineering management of human affairs will ever be able to eliminate it, just as no training in prudence can ever lead to the wisdom of knowing what one does. Only total conditioning, that is, the total abolition of action, can ever hope to cope with unpredictability. And even the predictability which comes about through terror can never be sure of its own future.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Hannah Arendt, "The Modern Concept of History," *The Review of Politics* 20, no. 4 (1958): 588.

## VIRTUAL

Over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits.... We are the diagram of the functions of inhabiting that particular house, and all the other houses are but variations on a fundamental theme.... The house, the bedroom, the garret in which we were alone, furnishes the framework for an interminable dream, one that poetry alone, through the creation of a poetic work, could succeed in achieving completely.<sup>32</sup>

Smooth space is precisely the space of the smallest deviation: therefore it has no homogeneity, except between infinitely proximate points, and the linking of proximities is effected independently of any determined path. It is a space of contact, of small tactile or manual actions of contact, rather than a visual space like Euclid's striated space. Smooth space is a field without conduits or channels. A field, a heterogeneous smooth space, is wedded to a very particular type of multiplicity: nonmetric, acentered, rhizomatic multiplicities that occupy space without "counting" it and "*can be explored only by legwork.*" They do not meet the visual condition of being observable from a point in space external to them; an example of this is the system of sounds or even of colors, as opposed to Euclidean space.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 371.

## WALKING

Walking, which alternately follows a path and has followers, creates a mobile organicity in the environment, a sequence of phatic topoi. And if it is true that the phatic function, which is an effort to ensure communication, is already characteristic of the language of talking birds, just as it constitutes the “first verbal function acquired by children,” it is not surprising that it also gambols, goes on all fours, dances, and walks about, with a light or heavy step, like a series of “hellos” in an echoing labyrinth, anterior or parallel to informative speech.<sup>34</sup>

The rhythm of walking generates a rhythm of thinking, and the passage through a landscape echoes or stimulates the passage through a series of thoughts. This creates an odd consonance between internal and external passage, one that suggests that the mind is also a landscape of sorts and that walking is one way to traverse it. A new thought often seems like a feature of the landscape that was there all along, as though thinking were travelling rather than making.<sup>35</sup>

## XENAGOGUE

Etymology: < Greek ξενάγωγός, < ξένος stranger + -αγωγός leading.

*Obs.*

One who conducts strangers; a guide.

1674 J. Josselyn *An account of two voyages to New-England*, 136 They are generally excellent Zenagogues or guides through their Countrey.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> de Certeau, "Walking in the City," 99.

<sup>35</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust. A History of Walking* (London:Verso, 2001), 5.

<sup>36</sup> “**xenagogue, n.**” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. [OED Online](http://www.oed.com). Oxford University Press. 16 June 2012.

## YOUTH

Youth is in revolt, but this is only the eternal revolt of youth; every generation espouses 'good causes,' only to forget them when 'the young man begins the serious business of production and is given concrete and serious social aims.... The revolt is contained by over-exposure: we are given it to contemplate so that we shall forget to participate. In the spectacle, a revolution becomes a social aberration – in other words, a social safety valve – which has its part to play in the smooth working of the system. It reassures because it remains a marginal phenomena, in the apartheid of the temporary problems of a healthy pluralism (compare and contrast the 'woman question' and the 'problem of radicalism.')

In reality, if there is a problem of youth in modern capitalism it is part of the total crisis of that society. It is just that youth feels that crisis most acutely. (Not only feels it, but tries to give it expression.)<sup>37</sup>

The experience of our generation: that capitalism...will not die a natural death.<sup>38</sup>

## Z

I forget what Z was for.

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<sup>37</sup> Members of the internationale situationniste and students of Strasbourg, *On the Poverty of Student Life: Considered in Its Economic, Political, Psychological, and Particularly Intellectual Aspects, and a Modest Proposal for Its Remedy*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, 667.

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