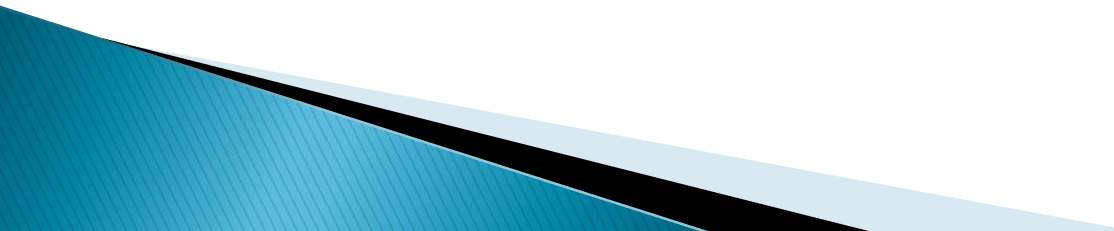




The Dérive

Dr Bethan Hulse

What is a Dérive ?

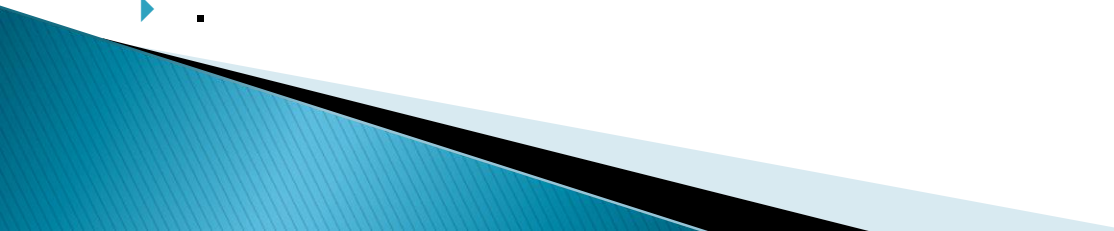
- ▶ An unplanned tour through an urban landscape
 - ▶ The dériveur lets him/herself be subconsciously directed by the contours of the architecture
 - ▶ Hoping to encounter a new and authentic experience
- 

So noticing what is around you!



Theory of the Dérive

- ▶ The Dérive is :
 - ▶ quite different from the classic notions of journey .
 - ▶ Not about getting from A to B !
 - ▶ But
 - ▶ “a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances.”

 - ▶ Dérives involve:
 - ▶ playful–constructive behaviour
 - ▶ An awareness of psycho–geographical effects
 - ▶ .
- 

Guy Debord (1958) Théorie de la dérive Internationale Situationniste #2, Paris



Awareness of the psycho-geography



- ▶ “Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psycho-geographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones.”

Playful–constructive behaviour

- ▶ “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.”

A group activity

- ▶ “One can derive 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”.

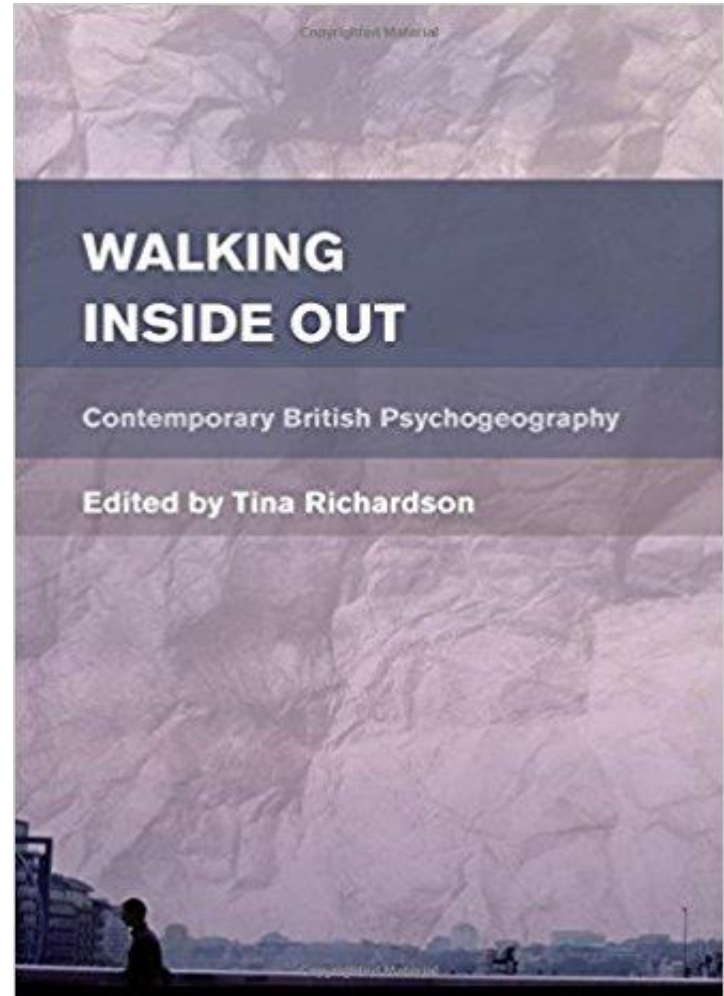
Psychogeography

- ▶ -noticing the effect of the geographical environment (urban landscape) on the emotions and behaviour of individuals
- ▶ Psycho-geographic Societies



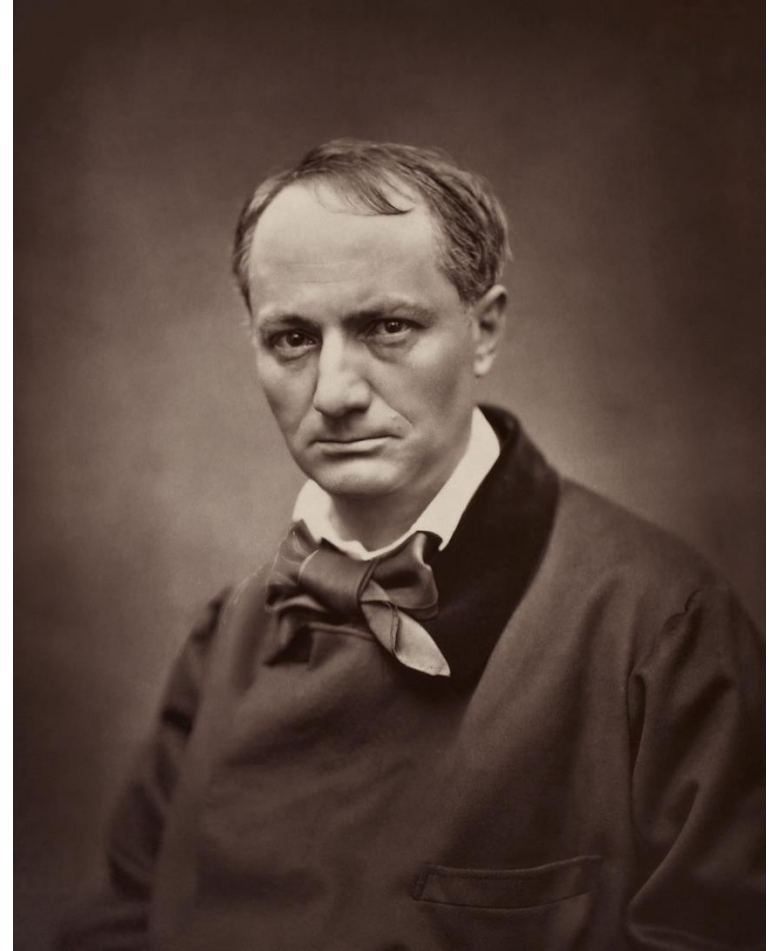
Psychogeographical practice

- ▶ ‘walking with a critical eye
- ▶ opens up the spaces
- ▶ in which we live...
- ▶ which might easily be
- ▶ overlooked’



Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867)

- ▶ Concept of the ‘flaneur’
- ▶ (stroller)
- ▶ –a detached observer
- ▶ of city life
- ▶ How city landscape
- ▶ affects us





Freud's idea of the subconscious

- ▶ “The *dérive* (with its flow of acts, its gestures, its strolls, its encounters) was *to the totality* exactly what psychoanalysis (in the best sense) is to language. Let yourself go with the flow of words, says the psychoanalyst”.

Not to be done in the countryside!

- ▶ “the primarily urban
- ▶ character of the *dérive*,
- ▶ in its element in the
- ▶ great industrially
- ▶ transformed cities
- ▶ that are such rich
- ▶ centres of possibilities
- ▶ and meanings.”



A 'situationist' practice

- ▶ The situationists (1957–1972)
 - ▶ Modern life lacks authenticity
 - ▶ The 'consumer society'
 - ▶ gives us only second-hand experiences
 - ▶ Leads to feelings of
 - ▶ Alienation
- ▶ (Guy Debord, Michele Bernstein and Asger Jorn, 1957)



The situationists

- ▶ Deliberately constructed 'situations' or Life Moments
- ▶ to reawaken authentic
- ▶ desires
- ▶ experiencing the feeling
- ▶ of life and adventure
- ▶ And liberation.



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- ▶ Petrovic, G. (1963). Marx's Theory of Alienation. *Journal of Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, (23), 419–426.