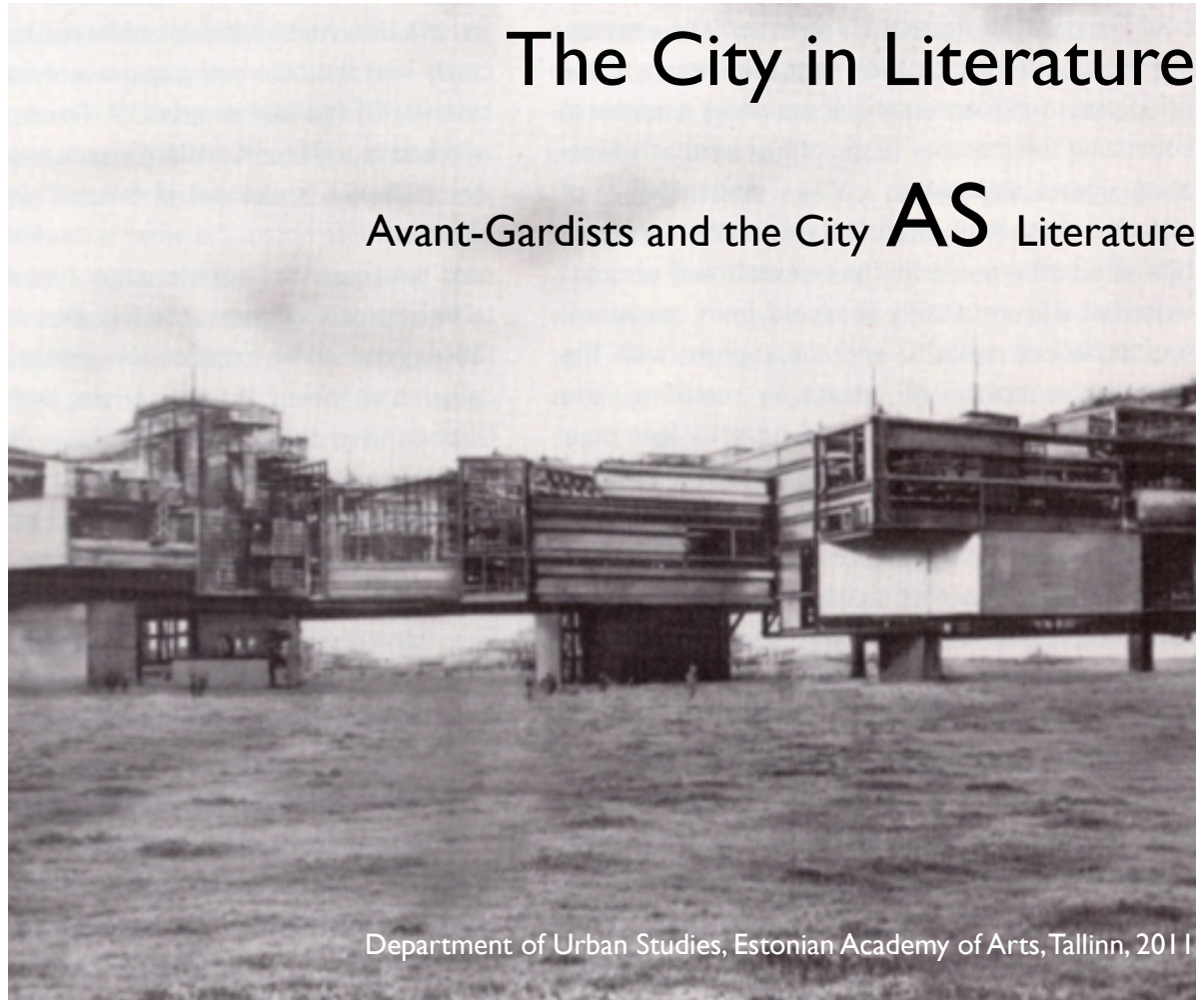
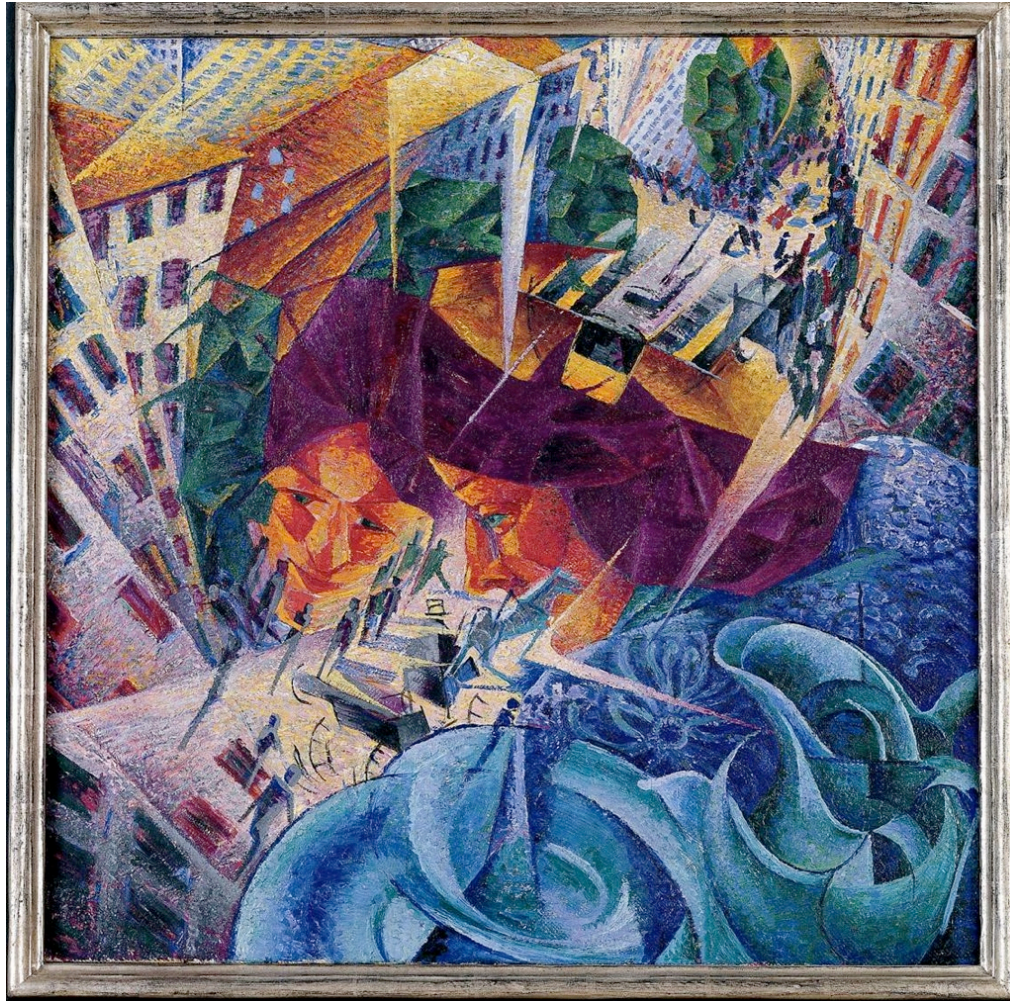


The City in Literature

Avant-Gardists and the City **AS** Literature



Department of Urban Studies, Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn, 2011



Starting point – the futurist
moment in the city

Umberto Boccioni, 1912

The avant-garde sequence in early modernism →

Romanticism

Symbolism

Expressionism

/

Futurism (Italian / Russian)

Dada

Surrealism

Lettrism

The Situationist International

...



Ludwig Meidner

in Lit, e.g. Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud,
Rilke's The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge

Expressionist city:
anxiety, loss of community,
disintegration of personality,
squalor, poverty and sickness



Tullio Cralli 1939

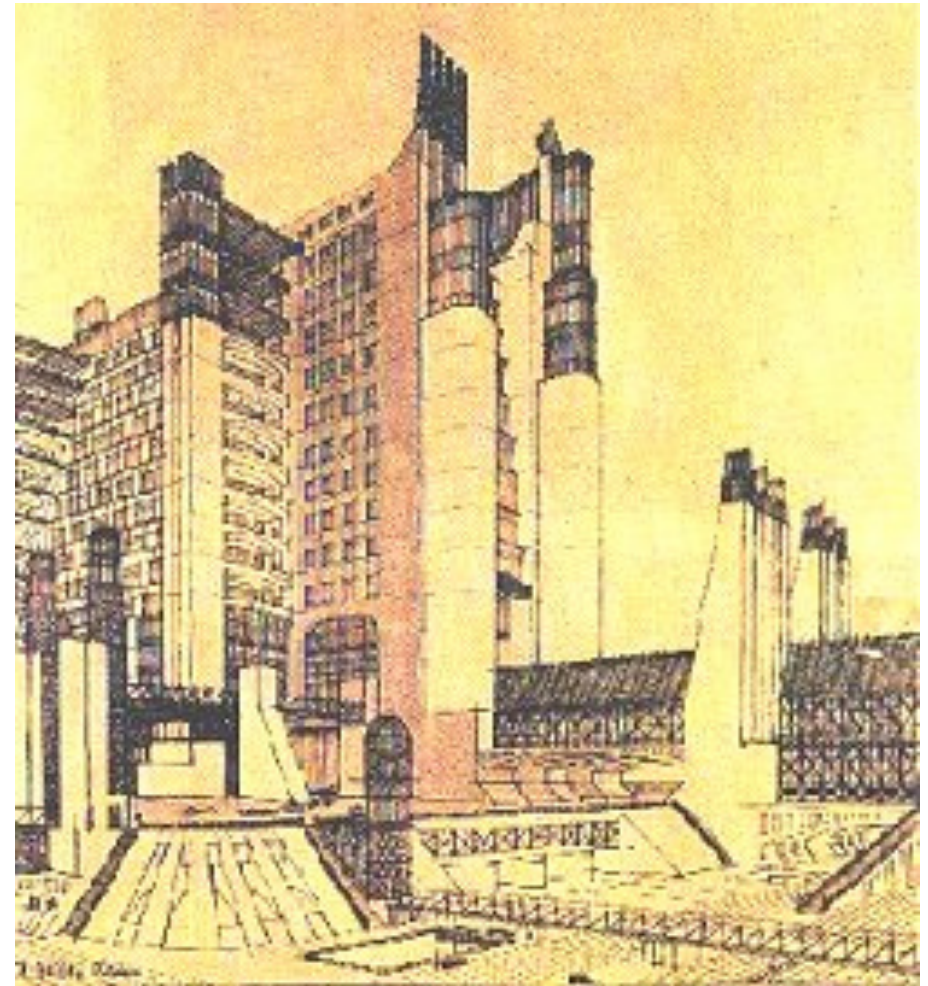
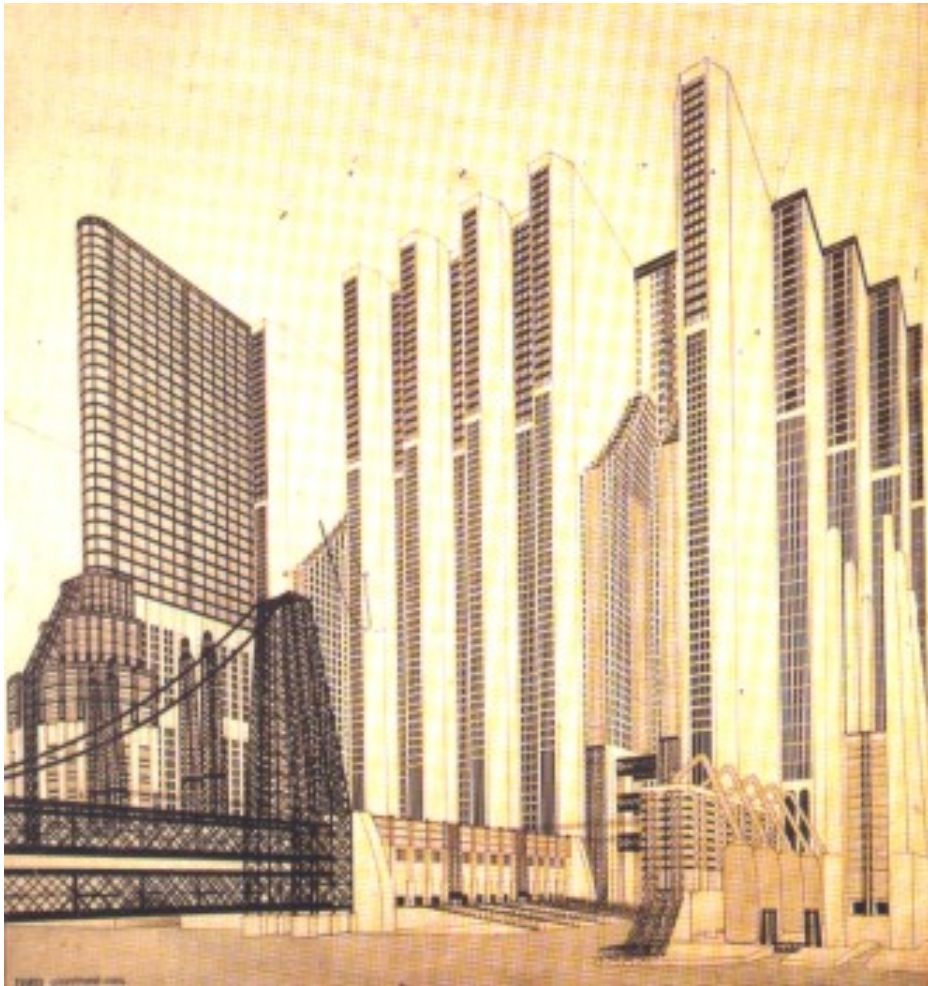
in Lit, e.g. Guillaume Apollinaire, F.T. Marinetti



Carlo Carra 1914?

Futurist city :

machine production, speed, crowds,
wireless technology, print media, neon
signs, the aerial perspective.



Antonio Sant'Elia, 1914-16



Dada city: Zurich Cabaret Voltaire
Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings, Tristan Tzara, Richard Huelsenbeck, Hans Richter



Direktion r. hausmann

No 2

DER

Preis 1 Mark

DADA

dada siegt!



Tretet dada bei.



George Grosz

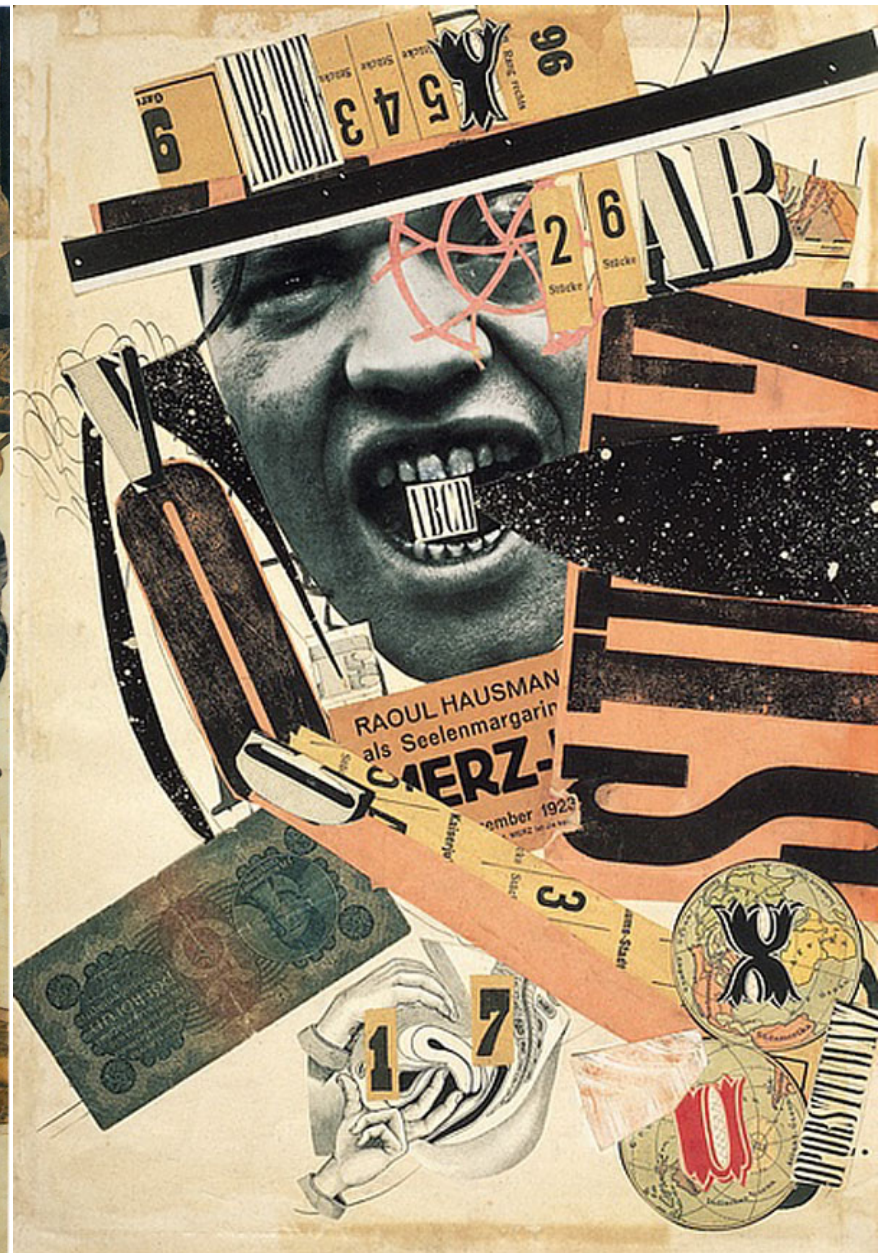


Dada city: Berlin

Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Richard Huelsenbeck,
Hans Richter



Hanna Höch



Johannes Baader der Oberdada



Above: Dada leaflet

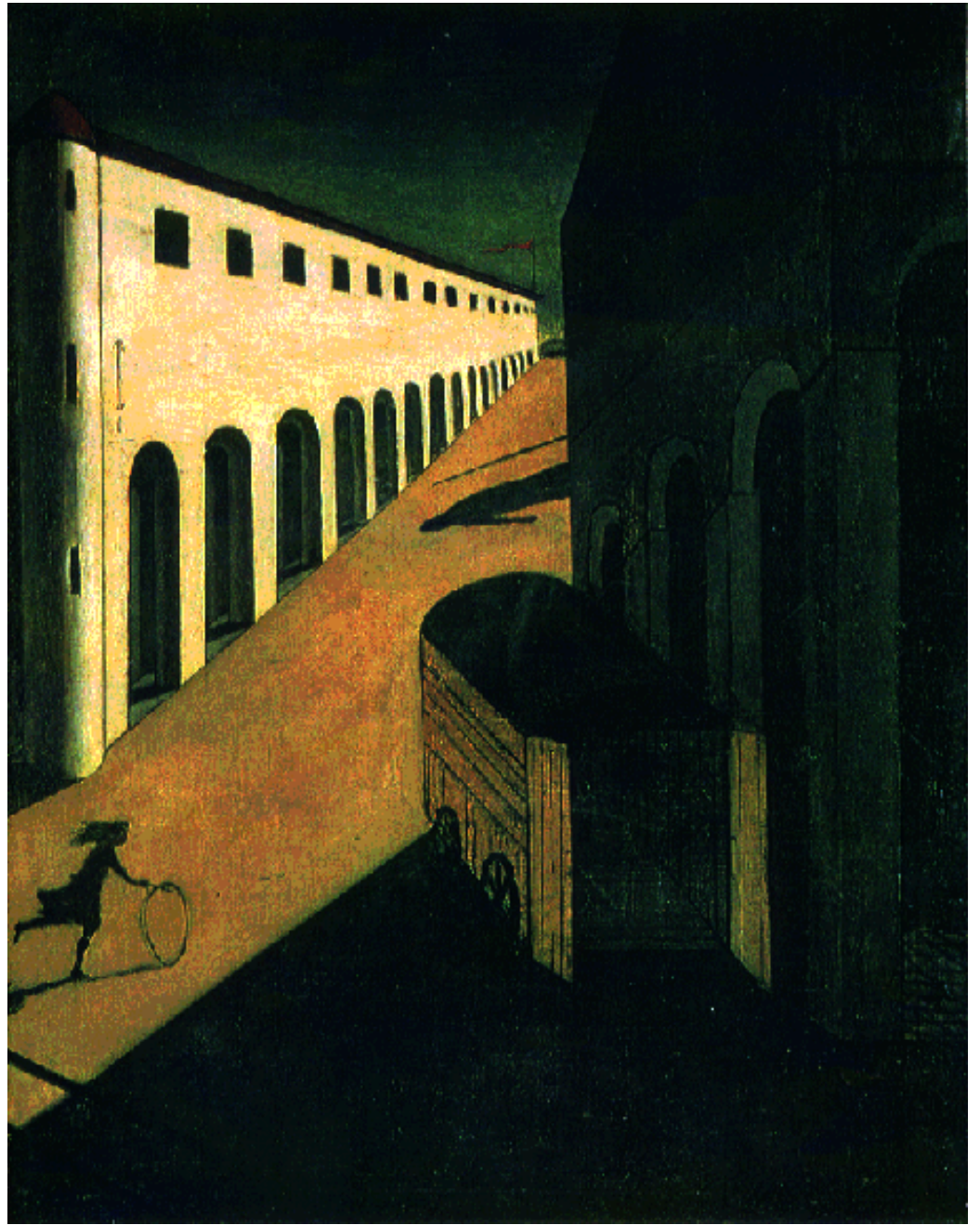
Malik Verlag publication, 1919,
 Jedermann sein eigener Fussball →





Dada city: Paris

Tristan Tzara, Andre Breton et al.
(proto-surrealism)



Giorgio Di Chirico 1930's



Paul Delvaux, 1930's

What is avant-garde? from Peter Burger's perspective:

- avant-garde as the self-criticism of art
- generality of the concept of means, use of style, means as content
- autonomy at the price of efficacy
- avant-garde seeks to engage the praxis of life

Situationist International 1957-1972



Of all the affairs we participate in, with or without interest, the groping search for a new way of life is the only aspect still impassioning. Aesthetic and other disciplines have proved blatantly inadequate in this regard and merit the greatest detachment. We should therefore delineate some provisional terrains of observation, including the observation of certain processes of chance and predictability in the streets.

...

Guy Debord

Situations



What we are calling poetic adventure is difficult, dangerous and never guaranteed (it is, in fact, the aggregate of behaviors that are almost impossible in a given era). / One thing we can be sure of is that fake, officially tolerated poetry is no longer the poetic adventure of its era.



Architecture is the simplest means of articulating time and space, of modulating reality, of engendering dreams....Architecture will be a means of modifying present conceptions of time and space. It will be a means of knowledge and a means of action. ...experimentation with patterns of behavior with cities specifically established for this purpose....buildings charged with evocative power, symbolic edifices representing desires, forces, events past, present and to come.

Ivan Chitchevlov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism" 1953

...

architecture will, at least initially, be a means of experimenting with a thousand ways of modifying life

...

This new vision of time and space, which will be the theoretical basis of future constructions, is still imprecise and will remain so until experimentation with patterns of behavior has taken place in cities specifically designed for this purpose, cities assembling--in addition to the facilities necessary for a minimum of comfort and security--buildings charged with evocative power, symbolic edifices representing desires, forces, events past, present and to come.

Ivan Chitchevlov

Projects of Rational Embellishment of the City of Paris,
Potlatch no.23, 1955

Par un certain aménagement des échelles de secours, et la création de passerelles là où il en faut, ouvrir les toits de Paris à la promenade.

Munir les réverbères de toutes les rues d'interrupteurs ; l'éclairage étant à la disposition du public.

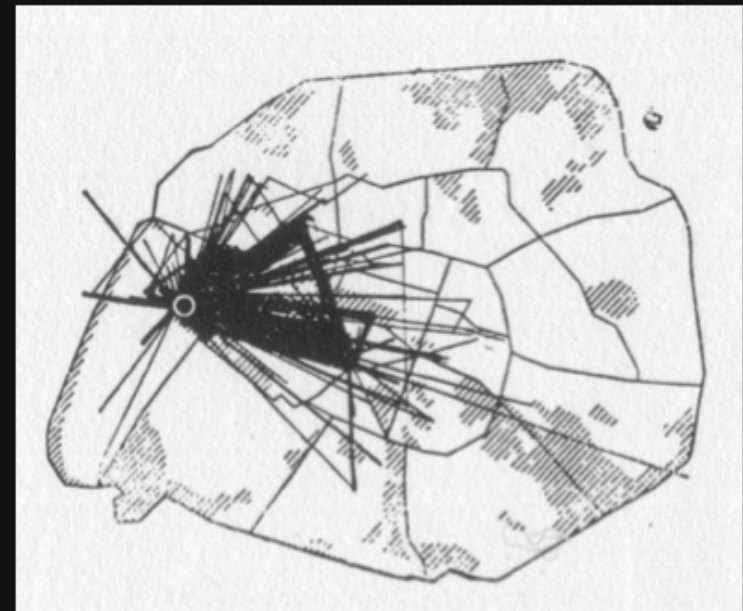
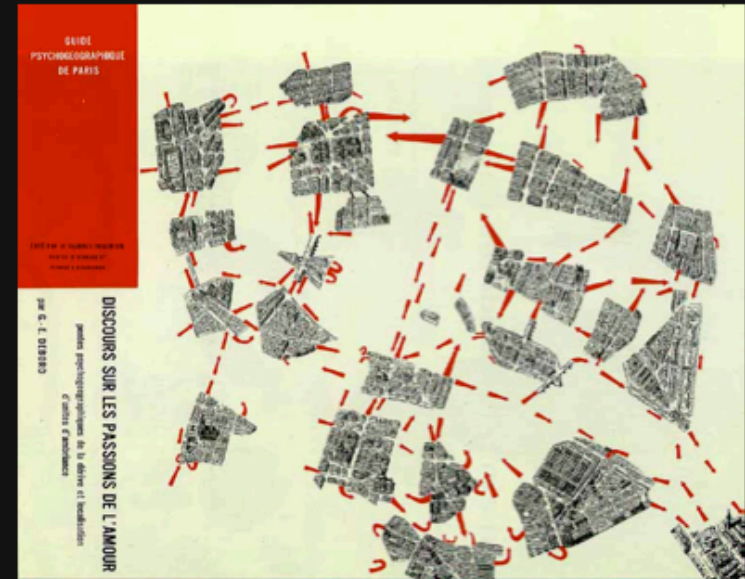
Libre accès illimité de tous dans les prisons. Possibilité d'y faire un séjour touristique.

Abolition des musées, et répartition des chefs-d'oeuvre artistiques dans les bars

Psychogeography and the Dérive

Psychogeography: The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.

Derive: A mode of experimental behavior linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances.





GHETTO VECCHIO

The Ghetto has the most beautiful 'ambiance' in Venice and would reward exhaustive study by one more competent than the author.



'A' now recrosses the Canal Grande by gondola and enters an extremely sinister scene frequented by cats and men with Tommy guns (see next photo). Even some of the canals in this sector are dry.

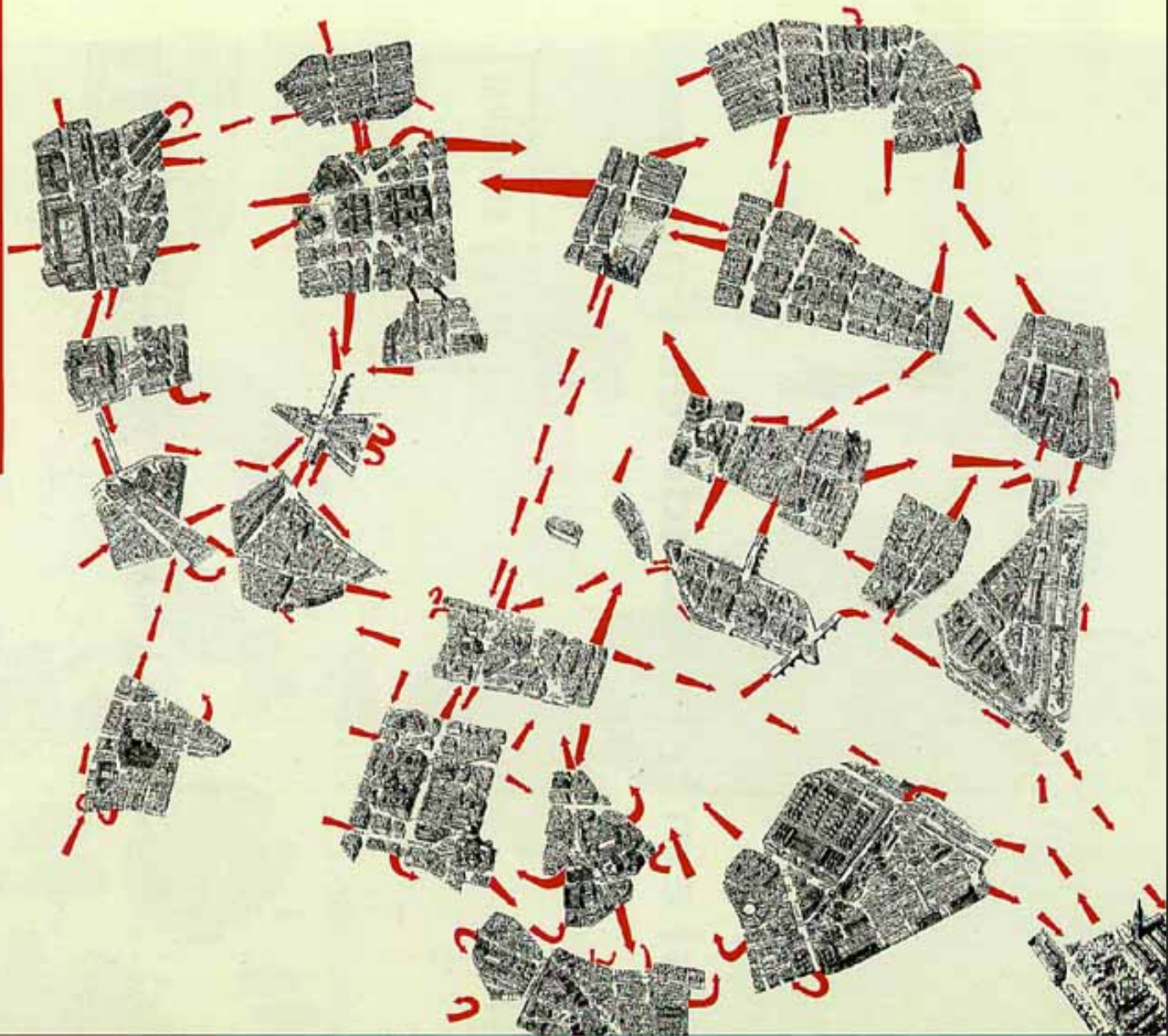
GUIDE
PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIQUE
DE PARIS

(DITÉ PAR LE SAUVAGE INCONNU)
PRÉSENTÉ ET DÉVELOPPÉ
PAR G. E. DEBORD

DISCOURS SUR LES PASSIONS DE L'AMOUR

penthes psychogeographiques de la dérive et localisation
d'unités d'ambiance

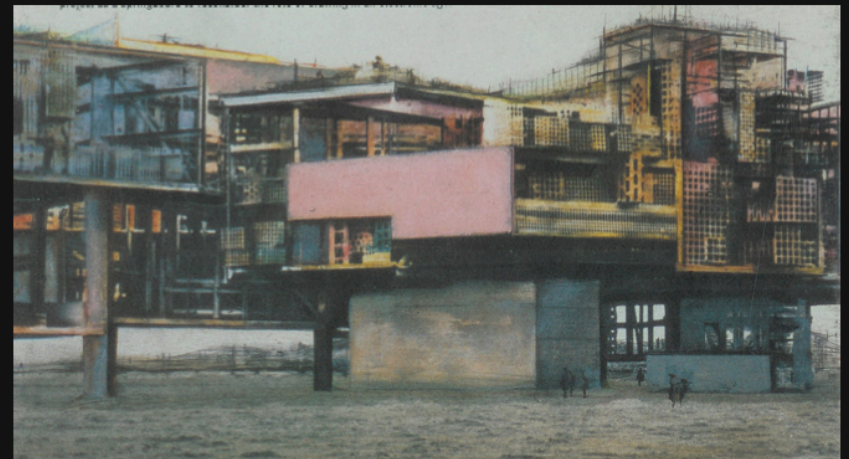
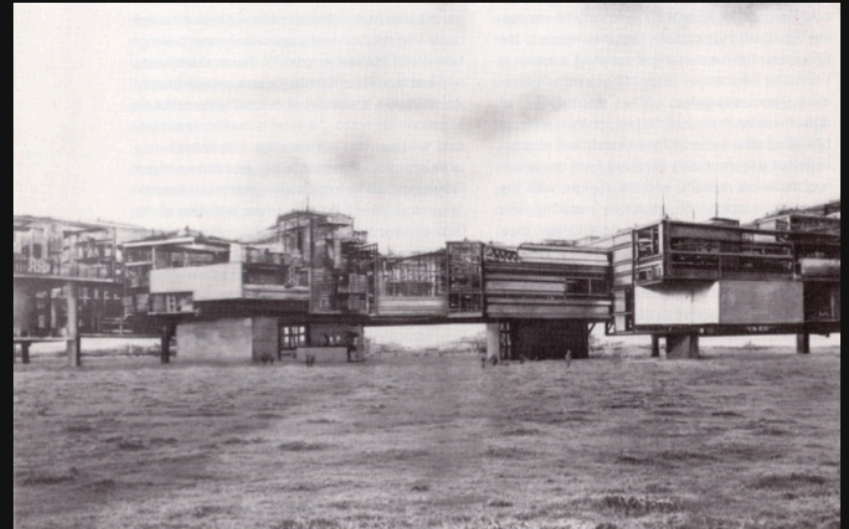
par G. E. DEBORD



psychogeographical maps



Constant: New Babylon



Dérive

Psychogeography

Unitary Urbanism

Critique (of the spectacle)

Unitary Urbanism

Détournement

All aware people of our time agree that art can no longer be justified as a superior activity, or even as an activity of compensation to which one could honorably devote oneself. The cause of this deterioration is clearly the emergence of productive forces that necessitate other production relations and a new practice of life.

Guy Debord, and Gil J. Wolman, 1956
from "Detournement: a User's Manual"

SI critique: critique of the spectacle

The spectacle, ... a tendency to make one see the world by means of various specialized mediations (it can no longer be grasped directly),

Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation.

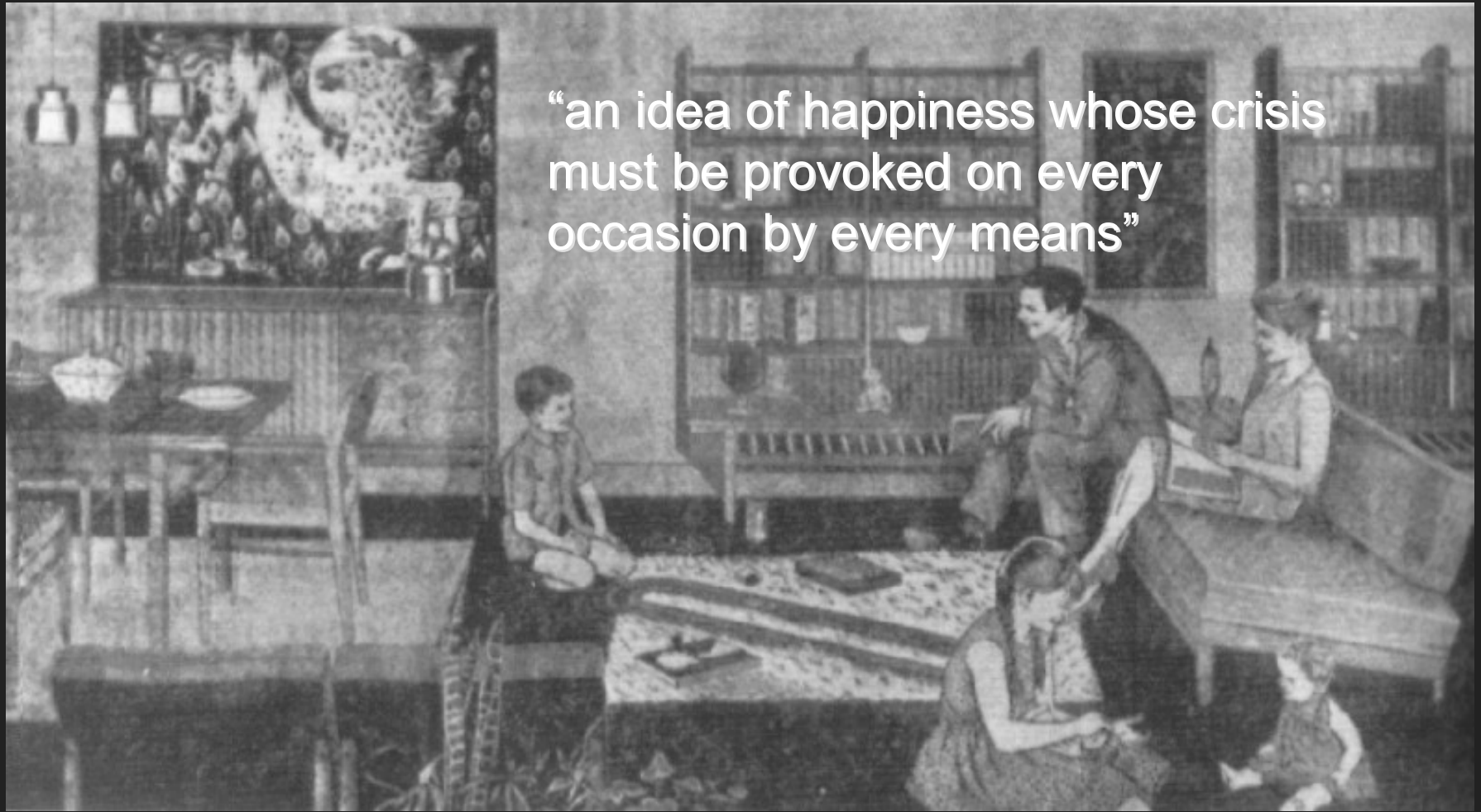
The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images.

The spectacle within society corresponds to a concrete manufacture of alienation.

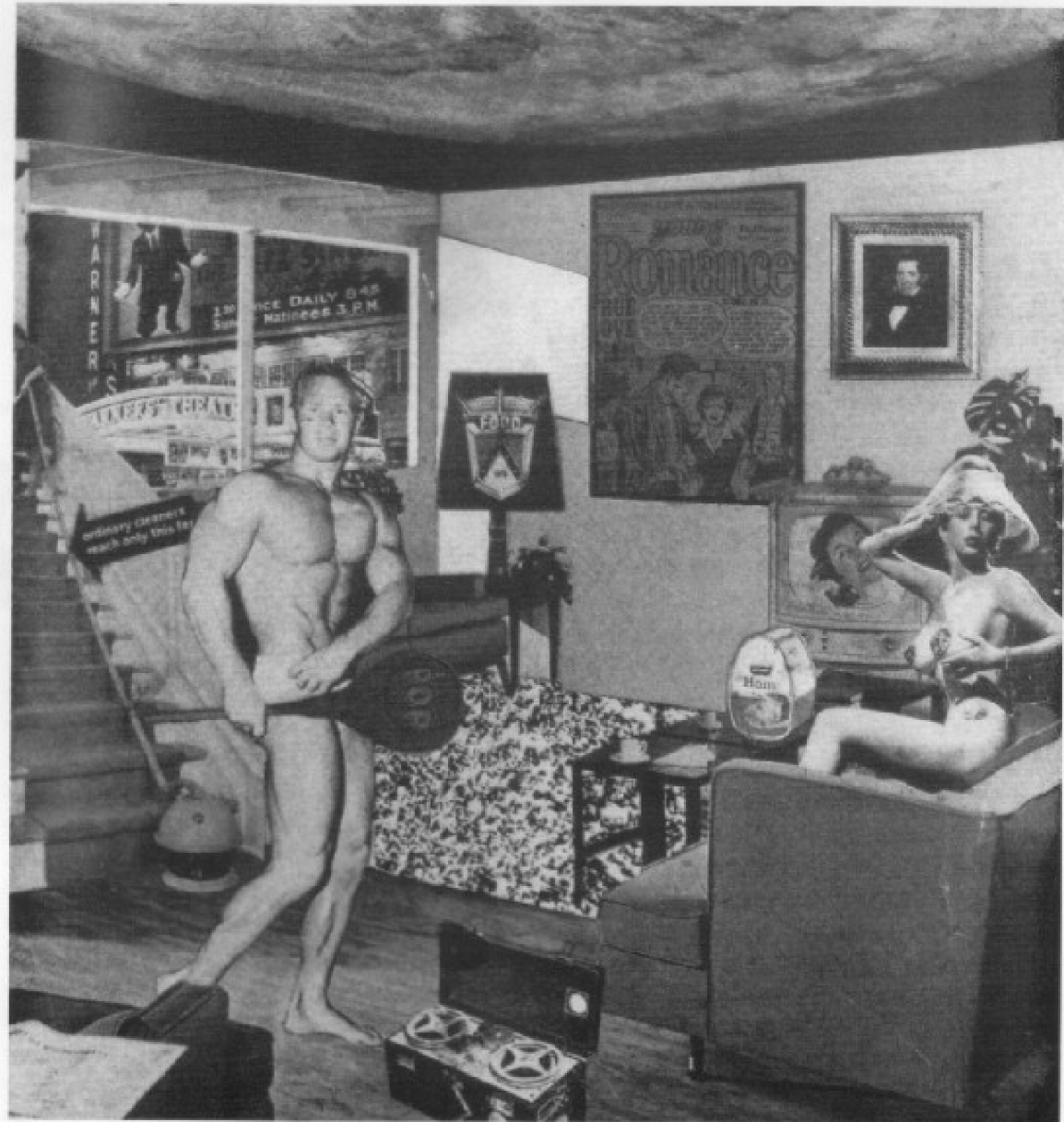
The problem of language is at the heart of all the struggles between the forces striving to abolish the present alienation and those striving to maintain it. It is inseparable from the very terrain of those struggles. We live within language as within polluted air. Despite what humorists think, words do not play. Nor do they make love, as Breton thought, except in dreams. Words *work* — on behalf of the dominant organization of life.

SI collective “All the King’s Men” 1963

“an idea of happiness whose crisis
must be provoked on every
occasion by every means”



Richard Hamilton, 1956
'What is it that makes today's homes
so different, so appealing?'





The alienation of the spectator to the profit of the contemplated object (which is the result of his own unconscious activity) is expressed in the following way: the more he contemplates the less he lives; the more he accepts recognizing himself in the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. The externality of the spectacle in relation to the active man appears in the fact that his own gestures are no longer his but those of another who represents them to him. This is why the spectator feels at home nowhere, because the spectacle is everywhere. - SI

media détournement



CAHARADES, C'EST JUSTE UN COMMENCEMENT. POUR EN SAVOIR PLUS LONG SUR VOUS-MÊMES, POUR RECONNAÎTRE RAPIDEMENT VOS POSSIBILITÉS LISEZ LA REVUE "INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE", LE NUMÉRO 11 VIENT DE PARAÎTRE, BOÎTE POSTALE 307 03 PARIS.

internationale situationniste

Affiche originale. Publicité pour le numéro 11 de l'Internationale situationniste, octobre 1967.

Modern capitalism, which organizes the reduction of all social life to a spectacle, is incapable of presenting any spectacle other than that of our own alienation.

Its urbanistic dream is its Masterpiece. - SI



The spectacle system that is in the process of integrating the population manifests itself both as

organization of cities, and as

permanent information network. - SI



Paris, Les Halles, 1950's

The development of the urban milieu is the capitalist domestication of space. - SI



Le Corbusier, models for buildings to replace the Marais and St Denis districts in Paris



www.imagenesaereasdemexico.com

Actual photo image, new settlement near Mexico City, Mexico

The whole of urban planning can be understood only as a society's field of publicity-propaganda, i.e. as the organization of participation in something in which it is impossible to participate. - SI



Urbanism promises happiness. It shall be judged accordingly.

Our first task is to enable people to stop identifying with their surroundings and with model patterns of behavior.

...

People will still be obliged for a long time to accept the era of reified cities. But the attitude with which they accept it can be changed immediately. We must encourage their skepticism toward those spacious and brightly colored kindergartens, the new dormitory cities of both East and West.

Only a mass awakening will pose the question of a conscious construction of the urban environment. - SI

In the civil war phase we are engaged in, and in close connection with the orientation we are discovering for certain superior activities to come, we can consider that all known means of expression are going to converge in a general movement of propaganda which must encompass all the perpetually interacting aspects of social reality. ...

Only extremist innovation is historically justified.”

Guy Debord, and Gil J. Wolman, 1956
from “Detournement: a User’s Manual”

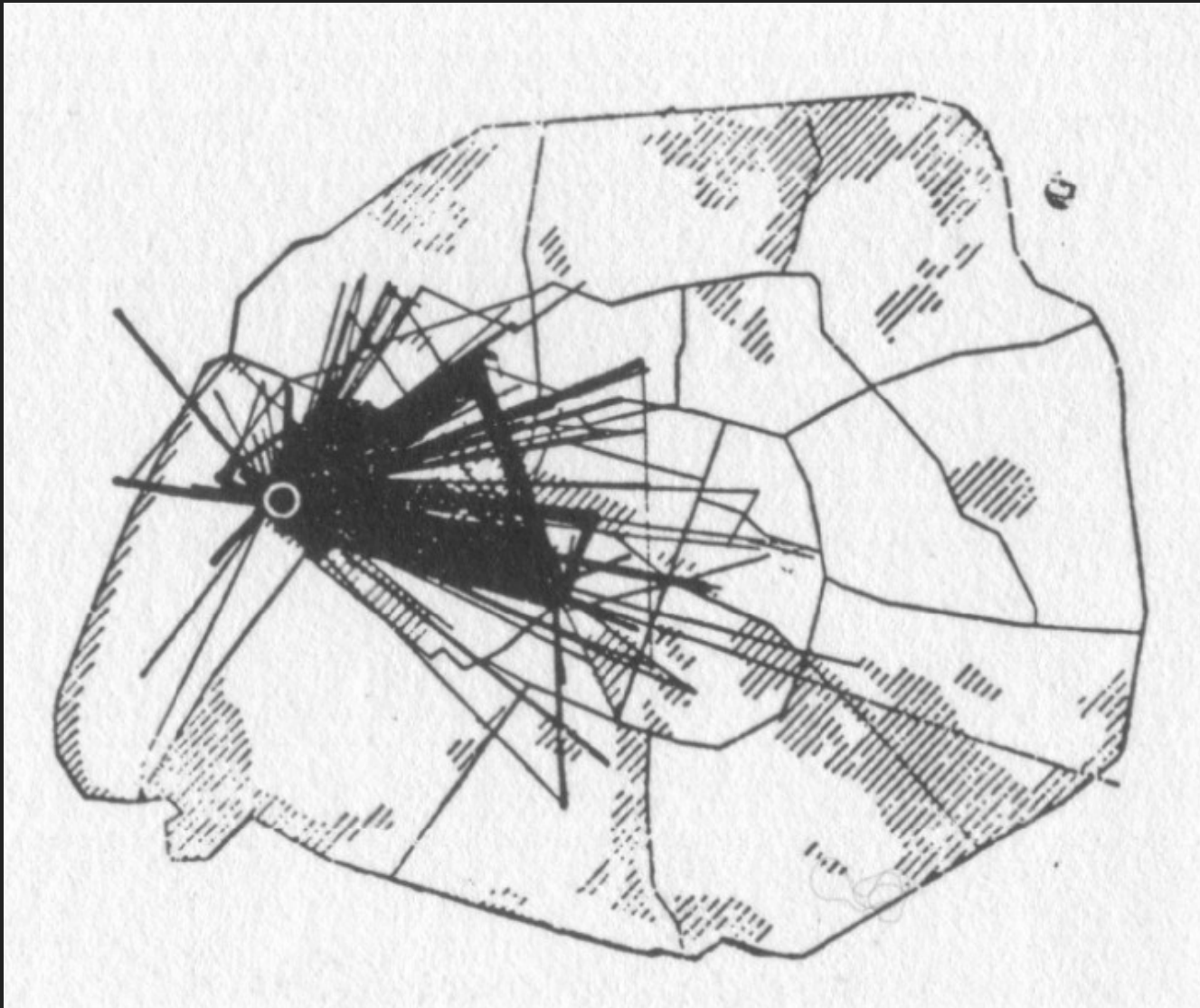
We know with what blind fury so many unprivileged people are ready to defend their mediocre advantages. Such pathetic illusions of privilege are linked to **a general idea of happiness** prevalent among the bourgeoisie and maintained by a system of publicity [the “Spectacle”] that includes Malraux’s aesthetics as well as the imperatives of Coca-Cola - an idea of happiness **whose crisis must be provoked on every occasion by every means.**

The first of these means are undoubtedly the systematic provocative **dissemination of a host of proposals tending to turn the whole of life into an exciting game.**

...To accomplish this we can imagine an adroit use of currently popular means of communication. But a disruptive sort of abstention, or manifestations designed to radically frustrate the fans of these means of communication, could also promote at little expense an atmosphere of uneasiness **extremely favorable for the introduction of a few new notions of pleasure.**

...

We need to work toward flooding the market--even if for the moment merely the intellectual market--with a mass of desires whose realization is not beyond the capacity of man’s present means of action on the material world, but only beyond the capacity of the old social organization. - Guy Debord



Psychogeographical charts and maps

Realizing poetry means nothing less than simultaneously and inseparably creating events and their language.



Encarta Encyclopedia, Bettmann/Corbis

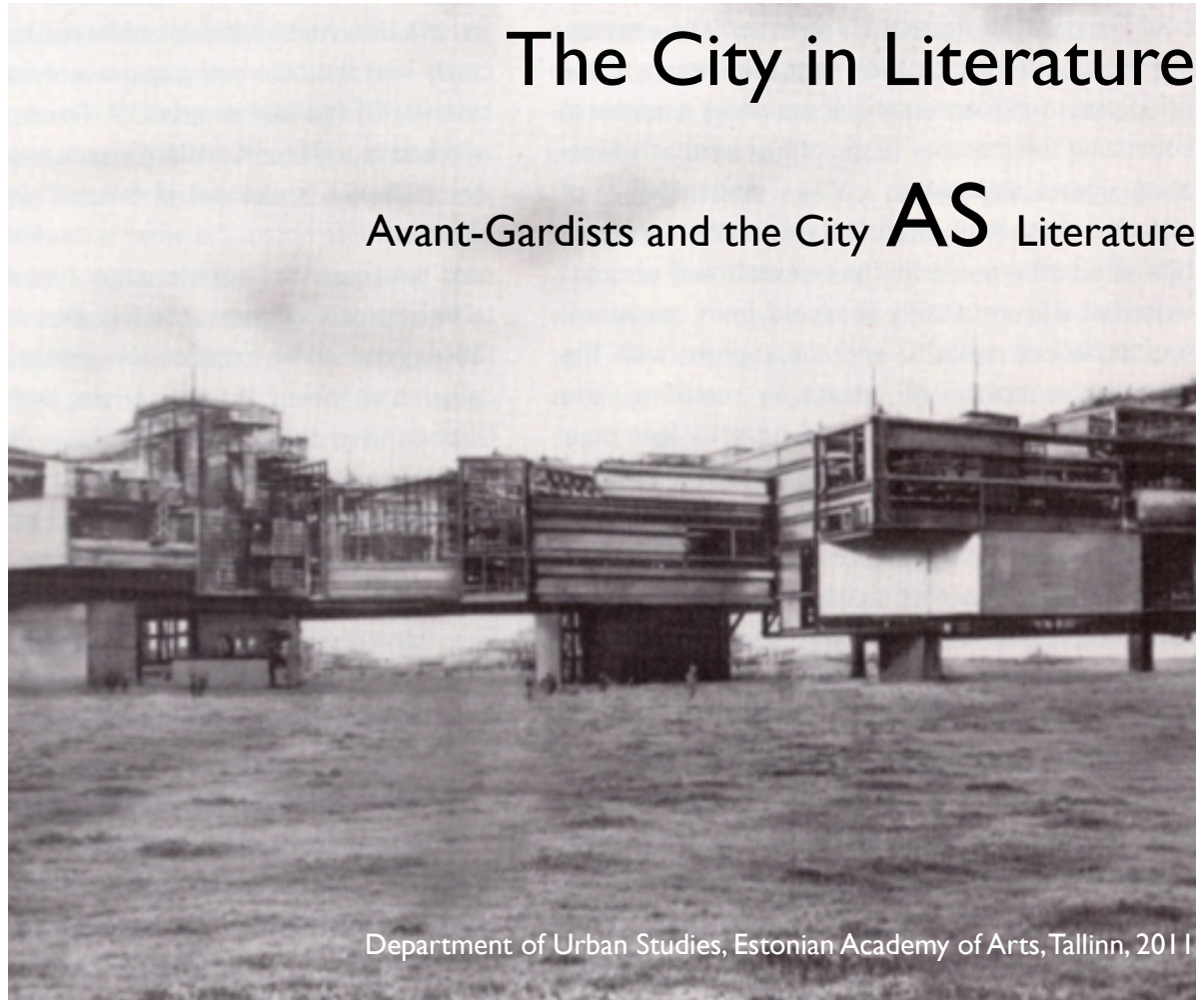
What is poetry if not the revolutionary moment of language, inseparable as such from the revolutionary moments of history and from the history of personal life?

Rediscovering poetry may merge with reinventing revolution.

The point is not to put poetry at the service of revolution, but to put revolution at the service of poetry. - SI

The City in Literature

Avant-Gardists and the City **AS** Literature



Department of Urban Studies, Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn, 2011