

A Walk as Act / Enact / Re-enactment: Performing Psychogeography and Anthropology

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Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to question the widely-held distinction between creativity, originality and authenticity on the one hand, and transmission, repetition and copying on the other. This is a problem that seems most pertinent to the art world, but I want to explore it by way of research that crosses between contemporary art practice and anthropological fieldwork. At its heart is a simple question that has concerned me in research on walking and landscape: what makes a footstep? Is it a single bodily action that is repeated, and on sufficient repetition can be said to constitute a walk? Or should we understand the stepping motion of the feet to be submerged within the entire rhythmical progress of walking? To put it another way, can ‘a walk’ – that is, a particular person walking – be both a succession of repeated moments, and also an original act that is conceived of in its entirety? I will argue that just as every walk engenders both originality and repetition, it also re-enacts a series of relationships between walkers themselves, and their environments.

My contribution to this book is as follows. Where re-enactment, replication and reconstruction pose a distinction between an original on the one hand and some kind of copy on the other, walking, and in fact everyday life in general, suggests alternatives. By working through the series of terms ‘act’, ‘enact’ and ‘re-enactment’, I want to inquire into the apparently simple divide between originality and copying invoked in our keywords of re-enactment, replication and reconstruction. To do this, I will investigate the kind of creativity that walking can invoke, both in an ordinary or everyday sense and through the artistic practice of psychogeography. I begin with an account of a couple of pedagogical experiments into walking, psychogeography and creativity, and then present some anthropological materials on the *act* of walking in psychogeography. I go on to discuss the *enactment* of shared practice between psychogeography and anthropology, and finally the *re-enactment* of psychogeography as anthropology, and vice versa. In writing this chapter I also aim to invoke something of a psychogeographical ‘drift’ in which the narratives unfold step by step, rather than sticking too closely to a predetermined path.

Pedagogical experiments in creativity and the ordinary

For the ‘Re-enactment, Replication, Reconstruction’ workshop held in Leiden in June 2017 that forms the basis for this book, I brought together some techniques of anthropological fieldwork and psychogeography into a small scale event. The intention was to explore what they might tell us about our keywords, particularly through the lens of memory and remembering. Rather than defining psychogeography for participants in advance of the walk, I merely set the parameters of the walk itself and let it unfold in its own terms. In these written accounts I want to do the same.

The structure of the RRR event was developed from one held the year previously in Aberdeen. There, participants read a small part of Lord Byron’s poem *Don Juan*, in which the poet fondly recalls his childhood spent in Aberdeen, and mapped their own personal memories onto a street map. In Leiden I chose one of the dozens of ‘wall poems’ (*muurgedichten*) that decorate the old city centre, painted on large gable ends and street corners. William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 30 is on the corner of Houtstraat and Rapenburg. Like the excerpt of *Don Juan*, it tells of memory, loss and the sustaining power of friendship: ‘When to the sessions of sweet silent thought; I summon up remembrance of things past...’ The invitation to the RRR

group was to begin on the street underneath the sonnet, and then wind towards a grassy bank of the Oude Rijn river on the other side of the city centre, pausing where we wanted to. We would allow the sonnet's invocation of memory to conjure up our own thoughts and observations of the city life around us, linking, I hoped, our own biographies with those of the city as they presented themselves on that morning.

In terms of anthropological techniques, I wanted to explore ways of creating fieldnotes, understood as notations in text or drawing of the observations and experiences of the researcher. Participants were given an A5 blank notebook in the anthropological tradition, but also some psychogeographical prompts. They had three different versions of the sonnet, including one derived from the original printing, another with the original language in a modern font, and a modern, plain English translation. They had a street map of the centre of Leiden with a transparent sheet of plastic over the top that they could draw on to make their own mapping, all held together on a clipboard. While fieldnotes in anthropology have been taken as a key symbol of professional identity, and the emphasis in methodological texts is often on content rather than form,¹ here the group were invited to make notes imaginatively and creatively rather than just observationally in a naturalistic mode. We used drawing and mapping as much as writing. The intention was, in other words, to engage with a psychogeographical tradition as much as an anthropological one.

What resulted were sketch maps tracing our route, marker pen lines and street names, and small drawings of things found or noticed along the way. Notes made in the A5 books moved from what was seen, heard and felt: 'Church bells are ringing – not the Pieterskerk', to the personal: 'disappearing books ... mother-in-law ... making ... pressed flowers ... loss', to the reflexive: 'So much to know and completely impossible to encompass it all – that, too, is a loss to me'. The latter comment perhaps opens into the failing of any observational exercise, in that when one begins to be attentive, the realisation of the very partial view that one gets – indeed, the inability to see very much or even work out what is going on – can be painful. Anthropological fieldwork and, as we will see in this chapter, psychogeographical drifting, are partial perspectives.

Plate 8.1 here.

In the afternoon, we travelled from Leiden to the coastal town of Katwijk and immersed ourselves in another couple of hours of independent observations. This time we started with paintings associated with the nineteenth century Haagse School artists who specialised in working outdoors from 'real life'. We looked at these during a visit to Katwijk Museum, with collections of traditional fishing and artisanal life. Amongst our activities: we observed leisure time on the beach, now the dominant activity where fishing boats had been pulled up in the past ('abandoned place, towels, ball, bags, clothes, unclear where the people are'); a couple of participants got into conversation with a street seller; one sat outside a cafe with a drink, making notes.

Plate 8.2 here.

A year following the RRR workshop, I was invited back to the Netherlands to work with a group of postgraduate students of art history. I wanted to pursue the idea of the ordinary itself, as the germ for this chapter. We were now in Delft and I could not resist starting with a Vermeer painting. *Het Straatje* (The Little Street) appears to be an entirely ordinary glance at a family group around a house and yet is at the same time extraordinary, simply for the feeling of realism, that one is actually there, seeing what is going on beside the artist. So, through attentiveness, I suggested to the students, we might slip between the ordinary and extraordinary, and be able to

question a little more how things appear and how they came to be. The students left our TU Delft seminar room to find the location in Vlamingstraat identified (though not without dispute) as the site of the house painted by Vermeer.² I asked them to then look around the area for the things that an artist like Vermeer might notice today, and, as in Leiden, to generate fieldnotes on those topics. The students responded with a variety of notes – mostly text this time, though sometimes with diagrams and drawings, and a couple of found items: ‘the space between houses – cracks, maintenance, materiality’, a description of a house decorated for the birth of a baby, a thin twig with leaves picked up from the ground. In the next day’s discussion, the students talked about the sense of themselves as being present in their fieldnotes, whether that was thought of as a problem in anthropology, and what they might do with the idea of subjectivity in all observation.

My aim in presenting these opening scenes is to connect, perhaps counterintuitively, the study of art and creativity (through a psychogeographical perspective) with an anthropology of the ordinary or the everyday. In my ‘standard’ anthropological fieldwork on walking, as opposed to the pedagogical and psychogeographic episodes described here, I continue to explore people’s senses of the ordinary: their perceptions of seasonal change through regular walks down the same city street, for example, or their developing confidence and familiarity in walking in the mountains, or their micro-gestures of sociality towards others passing by. Michael Taussig contends that the everyday entails a sensuousness that is tacit rather than explicit, an indirect perception such as might be experienced as the awareness of movement in the corner of one’s eye.³ In terms of walking it could be conceived as a ‘pedestrian’ knowledge, in that the sensory perception of movement on foot involves a tactile attentiveness and constant readjustment to conditions.⁴ The everyday or ordinary then, is a sensory inhabitation, which is not to say it is not also ‘constructed’ by way of larger social forces that are often hidden from an individual’s sight – in the classic Marxist reading of the everyday, as Highmore points out – but that it is not only such a construction.⁵ The point is that every day walks are not simply repetitions of previous actions constrained by social forces, but are constantly made anew, each adding to the last. They may also influence place-based politics and dynamics of power as well as being shaped by them.

Exploring the sensuousness of the ordinary through habitual actions that are repeated from day to day or moment to moment could be a task well suited to a pedestrian mode of anthropological fieldwork. But if we are content neither with a model of the endless mechanical replication of social life, nor of the spontaneous, innovative creation of new forms, we might ask instead how, then, is the ordinary improvised into being? And what slippages might we find between the ordinary and the extraordinary? In the following, I argue that the copying that takes place might belong to the realm of skill and engagement, rather than simple repetition.

First steps to a psychogeographical perspective

To take these questions further, I want to pursue psychogeography as a particular strand of contemporary arts practice – but also one that is more than ‘just’ art. At this stage, the concern is with understanding the act of walking in both psychogeography and in ordinary life within an anthropological frame. My anthropological research on walking and landscape has touched on psychogeography over the years, and I now want to connect with its history and key writings as well as its diverse practices of walking and mapping. A backwards glance is a way of considering the possibility of a relationship between anthropology and psychogeography. Without wishing to construct an art history account of psychogeography, exploring some key texts and further examples brings the relationship between the new and the copied, the enacted and re-enacted, to the fore.

If a definition of psychogeography would be useful at this stage, we could use the terms presented in the first edition of the journal of the *International Situationiste* ‘Situationist

International' in 1958: 'The study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behaviour of individuals'.⁶ 'Situationist International' (SI) was a grouping of avant-garde artists, writers and political theorists who formally came together in 1957 in Paris and dissolved in 1972, but whose legacy continues in some of the artworks I describe in this chapter and, perhaps, in some anthropological practices too. Guy Debord is usually seen as the leading figure, and a variety of others contributed writings and practice to the movement.

Ken Knabb's translations of SI texts, including an essay written by pre-SI Letterist International member Ivan Chtcheglov, are a key source.⁷ 'Formulary for a new urbanism' was written in 1953 when Chtcheglov was nineteen. He was committed to an asylum shortly after leaving SI but was recognised as influential by Debord and later had letters published in the SI journal. In the essay he rails against the 'banalization' of the world, in which 'everyone is hypnotised by production and conveniences – sewage systems, elevators, bathrooms, washing machines' which have become an 'omnipresent, obsessive image'.⁸ His response was to seek a new form of architecture, which we might think of more broadly as urban fabric or even landscape: 'The architecture of tomorrow will be a means of modifying present conceptions of time and space. It will be both a means of *knowledge* and a *means of action*', while: 'The main activity of the inhabitants will be CONTINUOUS DRIFTING. The changing of landscapes from one hour to the next will result in total disorientation'.⁹

The urban 'drift', usually rendered in the original French *dérive*, is developed in the SI to encompass psychogeography not so much in the positivist and rather deterministic position set out in the 1958 SI journal definition cited above, but a practice of more open-ended attentive and reflective urban exploration. Debord writes in *Theory of the Dérive*, in the second edition of the journal: 'In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they might find there'.¹⁰ It seems important that the *dérive* is neither work (such as a survey), nor leisure (such as a stroll), nor any other obvious category. It is instead anti-categorical, in a movement against the preconceived divisions of time and function as they are reflected in the architecture of the city. Debord lists some activities of the group as examples of its 'general sensibility': '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.'¹¹ Psychogeography comes to entail a set of practices that are enacted in ways significantly beyond Debord's initial, perhaps self-consciously positivist, definition.

In 2005 I was engaged in research on people's experiences of walking in and around the city of Aberdeen in north east Scotland, as I noted above. I spent my time finding people to share walking with, interviewing people about their personal histories of walking, and observing the ebb and flow of pedestrians and other walkers. In June of that year, artist Jim Colquhoun took up a week-long residency at Peacock Visual Arts, the city's most prominent contemporary arts venue. He conducted a series of walks, performances and talks with the promise that he would 'encourage others to cast themselves adrift with him into the collective unconscious of contemporary and historical Aberdeen' (quoted from the residency programme). The programme was to include 'organised "psychogeographical" walks', a term I had only recently heard of at that time.

I'll cut to the ethnographic (or perhaps psychogeographical) present tense. Jim explains the premise for his 'Peripatetic Randomiser walk' to a group of about a dozen of us, a few academics, a few associated with Peacock Arts, and a few others who are gathered during one afternoon of the residency. He has a small square folded paper chooser or fortune teller of the kind children sometimes have, held between thumbs and forefingers, that opens and can be

unfolded to reveal messages. The messages are instructions that tell us to ‘turn right’, ‘ask someone directions’, ‘cross the road’ and so on, and each person in the group chooses something in turn so that the walk progresses with a random element through the city centre. It’s fun and sociable, and the ordinary sociability of walking became a theme in my work at this time.¹² But the walk ends more dramatically. We have crossed a dual carriageway, vaulting over railings in the process, and are then instructed by the Peripatetic Randomiser to find a corner. So, we are now perched and crammed precariously on a set of angular cobbles on the edge of an extremely busy junction. The cobbles seem to signal that we should simply not be there, this is not a pavement, not a place for moving through or pausing. The city, of course, is like this – distinguishing between places to be and places not to be – and the boundary has been traversed, in a small way, by the Peripatetic Randomiser. The turn-taking has ended, we disperse, and the walk is over. Jim gives us a ‘thank you’ for taking part, but there is no particular explanation for the walk available otherwise. We are left to reflect on it ourselves if we wish to, and my own thoughts turn to the distinctive reading of the city that the walk has thrown up.

Online in 2018, however, I read an artistic evaluation undertaken for the funders of Colquhoun’s residency, the Scottish Arts Council (now Creative Scotland) that takes me down a different route. The reviewer found flaws with Colquhoun’s work and rated it as merely ‘competent’: ‘Artist walk/talk programme v. interesting but overall rating let down by the lack of visibility of events and marketing for the installation works’.¹³ I am amused by the idea that the ‘lack of visibility of events’ was a problem. Of course, Jim’s walks were visible only temporarily, and only really for those who took up his invitations to participate. There was no audience for the walks I did with him, other than perhaps those who saw us on the streets, but they would have had no idea what we were doing. ‘Visibility’ and ‘marketing’ could even be two of the watchwords for much contemporary art that walking art, including psychogeographical practices, rail against (though walking artists do also document and publish their work, as we will see later).

Perhaps the evaluation does nonetheless question the social reach of Colquhoun’s events. The walks may have been art for those already ‘inside’ the art world, who heard about it and could imagine what it might involve. This critique might invoke social class as well as the specific networks surrounding the artist and host organisation, and yet the intersection of social class with contemporary art is not straightforward. We could turn to Pierre Bourdieu, who links the consumption of art to cultural capital: ‘To appropriate a work of art is to assert oneself as the exclusive possessor of that object, which is thereby converted into the reified negation of all those who are unworthy of possessing it’.¹⁴ However, the psychogeographical walk cannot be owned or appropriated as such, and participants in the events I have joined and the artists who have instigated them have certainly varied in terms of being well off – although this has not been a research focus for me. In any case we might seek alternatives to a deterministic analysis of economic or cultural capital, while recognising that contemporary art takes place within, and contributes to, a range of economic and cultural forms. Exploring the kinds of creativity entailed in these practices is one such alternative.

The creativity of walking as art and art as walking

We could situate psychogeography as an artistic practice that is relevant to social science in its development of a critical and indeed subversive approach to the urban environment. The relevance to anthropology in particular might lie in the distinctive ways of knowing that it involves, which are based not in an objective interpretation of one’s surroundings but through the shared, mobile practice of being attentive that is key to anthropological fieldwork. Yet the claim that a walk can be a work of art in any sense needs further consideration. Specifically, we need a notion of creativity that can incorporate more than just the spark of an individual

artist and engage as well with the kinds of shared and collaborative practices described here. We could also seek to recognise the step of the walk as inherently creative, beyond the apparent replication that it involves.

Anthropological thinking on creativity has explored alternatives to the Western and modernist account of the individual mind as the seat and origin of creativity, and the body as the means by which it subsequently plays out. This has been a feature of mainstream thought on creativity since at least the time of Kant, who, as Eitan Wilf notes, set out the idea of the ‘genius’ as an aspect of individual spirit that is present from birth rather than learned (or indeed copied).¹⁵ While Kant does not directly discuss creativity, the association of genius with the production of fine art provides a model for subsequent notions of how art is understood to come about, and the idea of the significance of art as contained merely within itself – art for art’s sake. However, in *The Critique of the Power of Judgement*, Kant outlines the tension between the freedom from rules necessary for original genius to emerge, while at the same time deriving an expression for a work that must be recognisable to an audience.¹⁶ So, ‘there is no fine art in which something mechanical, capable of being at once comprehended and followed in obedience to rules, and consequently something *academic* does not constitute the essential condition of the art’.¹⁷ Creativity then becomes, as Sassen puts it, ‘a process of mediation between the realms of freedom and determination, both on the level of process and on the level of product’.¹⁸

This subtlety in Kant’s work is, however, often overlooked. What results in modern times, according to Matthew Rampley, is the ‘Kantian subject’ of spontaneous and original creativity.¹⁹ While artistic creation itself is understood by Kant as ‘properly free of all external constraints, be they economic or any other’, Wilf argues that the modern notion of creativity sits within a neoliberal framing of economic progress and individual responsibility in times of increased uncertainty.²⁰ This includes, for example, the popular framing of the ‘creative class’ as generators of wealth.²¹

Marxist approaches to creativity have explored the very opposite to the free-willed Kantian notion. Here it is instead labelled as a bourgeois theory based on the notion of an autonomous subject, which as Marx and Engels put it, ‘depends wholly on demand, which in turn depends on the division of labour and conditions of human culture resulting from it’.²² In other words, creativity is not based in the actions of an independent individual but on a particular system of production and consumption. In a later article Rampley summarises this perspective drawing on Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (described above): ‘As a bourgeois ideological projection, aestheticized ‘art’ does not even exist in Western culture; the appeal to aesthetic judgement is primarily a strategy to disavow the social functions of art, beginning with the social stratification of taste’.²³

Anthropologists have sought to tread a path between this positioning of creativity between the poles of individual genius (a model of agency) and collective context (a model, we might say, of structure). Their means has commonly been through fieldwork that tracks the realities of practice, such as the making and circulation of works of art. To take a recent example, Alice Cant describes the forms of authorship used in artisanal workshops in a village in rural Mexico. There, many people making wooden sculptures for the international and tourist markets are employees of those who lead the studios and sign the works – in a manner reminiscent of paintings ‘from the workshop’ of an Old Master painter. The Mexican artisans negotiate authorship of the works through relations of kinship, employment and economy, sometimes striking out to launch their own workshop but more frequently staying tied to their existing network of labour and production.²⁴

This connects with Alfred Gell’s argument in *Art and Agency*, in which the ‘enchanted’ material property of art is held to be an active participant in social life, even standing in for people in relationships.²⁵ Social interactions and relations may be sustained by means of the art

object. It is useful to consider what art does, or what it enables in the world, beyond the meaning that people might interpret from it. But as Ingold, Morphy and others have pointed out, the idea of agency can serve to differentiate in an unsatisfactory way between the qualities of some entities (for example those created as or touched by art) as opposed to others (those of everyday life).²⁶ The focus in Gell's work on adornment and decoration emphasises the 'object' itself. Art is an object, which then does something to social relationships by means of the agency given to it by its maker – as opposed to art as a process emerging from the material grounding of all life. A model of creative action based in this generative field of everyday life, rather than just the 'moment' of individual genius, may be most helpful in tracking the way in which art operates in the world.

Ingold and Hallam find another register through which to discuss the creativity of social life, that of improvisation.²⁷ Where creativity has in modernity become hitched to the notion of innovation – the original and spontaneous production of a finished object – improvisation emphasises instead the generative processes of making, the social and material relations through which they arise, and a temporality geared towards the continual emergence of present and future rather than the break with the past implied by innovation. Eitan Wilf's response to this is to note that there are forms of creativity that nonetheless seek to 'change a given set of constraints or field of possibilities', and in some ways it is the dynamic between continuity and change that gives life, and tension, to creativity in different circumstances – including perhaps the artisans' workshops in rural Mexico.²⁸

If art is understood from the Marxist perspective to involve the production of an object that is separable from its maker in order to enter into circuits of exchange, and marks also an aesthetic distinctive to a social class, then a walk does not seem to fit very well. This would be the case even if we follow Roger Sansi's anthropological conception of the relationship between contemporary art and the gift.²⁹ For Sansi, what is being transferred when an art work moves from one setting to another – for example from its setting of production to its setting of display or consumption – is not just the object itself but the 'spirit' of the maker reproducing itself, much as a gift-giver sends something of themselves off with the gift towards the receiver.³⁰ But what can we make of art that creates no object, or leaves no trace?

If, alternatively, in the Kantian mode, art also springs forth as an idea, albeit enacted in a recognisable material form, that is informed by an original genius and given shape by an aesthetic perspective, a walk also does not work very well. This is because the walker almost always re-enacts a previous route or journey – by following a path – and yet also makes an improvisatory response to the particular conditions and circumstances of the individual walk itself. So, a walk is neither a commodifiable object nor an act of creative genius. In some ways it is in their opposition to both these categories that walking artists have worked, and in doing so, a useful critique of the categories emerges.

In their discussion of the generative aspect of improvisation, Ingold and Hallam go on to note that the reproduction of social life may frequently take place by way of copying or imitation, and these are not to be devalued according to what we might think of as the moral discourse of innovation and creativity. They write: 'Copying or imitation, we argue, is not the simple, mechanical process of replication that it is often taken to be, of running off duplicates from a template, but entails a complex and ongoing alignment of observation of the model with action in the world. In this alignment lies the work of improvisation'.³¹ We might then find, in the improvisational and embodied activities of dance or calligraphy described elsewhere in Ingold and Hallam's edited collection – or indeed in walking – not examples of creative acts that transform the world, but explorations of creativity inherent in the progress of the beings that inhabit it and are continually changing it.³² To imitate, or we might say, to follow in someone's footsteps, is no lesser a form of creative ingenuity.

Walking Hamish Fulton's way

A useful formulation of creativity in walking comes from one of the senior figures of the walking art movement, artist Hamish Fulton. Here I will again consider contemporary art practice through anthropological fieldwork. Fulton visited Aberdeenshire to take part in another art residency with Deveron Arts (now Deveron Projects), in the town of Huntly in 2010. Fulton invited members of the public to join in a choreographed walk in Huntly. On the day, a group of around thirty people were asked to walk around one square block of this eighteenth-century planned town (about half a kilometre in total) continuously for two hours, evenly spaced, in silence. I took part in this and found it meditative (which was Fulton's intention), and slightly dizzying (which I guess was not). Each circuit of the block felt like not so much a repetition of the last as an accumulation, the conditions and the feel of one's body slightly different, attention being drawn to slightly different things – other people, window sills, the pavement, the breeze, one's own reverie. In a concentrated form, we learned the everyday sensory familiarity, and yet also diversity, of an ordinary walk.

The town walk was a prelude to one of Fulton's long 'wilderness' walks, undertaken to connect Huntly with the nearby Cairngorm mountains. He spent twenty-one days alone, camping and walking through the glens and mountains, and later publishing the results of the whole project in his book *Mountain Time, Human Time* with photographs and his characteristic clipped pieces of text that recount but do not explain the walk.³³ But before he set off from Huntly, Fulton gave a public talk for Deveron Arts. It was advertised with a strapline: 'Can walking be a kind of art?' and I remember turning this round in my head, as an anthropologist then interested more in walking than in art, to 'Can art be a kind of walking?' Rather than taking art as the universal category, I wondered whether the rhythmical, sociable and place-making activity of walking might have its counterpart in art. What I learned about Fulton's work, and that of others like him, was that both questions would probably be nonsensical from the inside of these practices. From this perspective, the art is the walk and the walk is the art. Each 'kind' is self-selecting of the other.

In the talk itself, one of Fulton's own comments stuck with me. He said (here I may be paraphrasing slightly through my fieldnotes): 'I appreciate that people enjoy painting watercolour scenes, but I don't want to make pictures like that. And I appreciate that people enjoy going on walks with the Ramblers Association, but I don't wish to walk in that way.' I have not had the opportunity to question Fulton directly about what he meant by this, and if I did, I suspect he might say that his words speak for themselves, just as he means his walks to stand for only themselves and do not in themselves require to be documented, analysed, or 'understood', as he also explained in his Huntly talk. Fulton's books could be said to document or, as I argue below, 'map' his walks but there is little that unpacks or contextualises them within a wider frame of reference. Something of an exegesis of Fulton's statement can be attempted even so.

Taking the first part of what Fulton said, that he doesn't wish to paint watercolour scenes, speaks to the desire to avoid a representational response to the landscape as scenery that is common to a number of prominent environmental artists in Scotland (e.g. Tim Collins and Reiko Goto, Dalziel and Scullion, Alec Finlay, Elizabeth Ogilvie). It is to avoid the pointless creation of a 'better' version of the landscape itself, or one that translates it into an artefact that can be commodified. But it is possible still to locate Fulton's own response within the realm of the aesthetic and artistic, in the improvisational, embodied and emplaced sense that I have begun to outline in this chapter. The aesthetic response to the landscape that is given as a walk is also, however, not so far from the notion of alignment and attentiveness in Ingold and Hallam's discussion of copying.³⁴ The walking body in this sense maintains a kind of symmetry with the landscape in that the surfaces, substances, and textures being walked through entail specific reactions within the walker. An icy surface needs balance, rocks need flexibility to shift

weight, while mud, sand, and everything else produce ways of walking that involve coming to know the material qualities of the landscape in particular ways. Hitting the hard pavements of Huntly at quite a fast pace for two hours, and constantly turning right, was at least as tiring as a hill walk, straining leg muscles and requiring considerable and uniform concentration. Familiar environments produce an everyday tacitly of knowing that is no less skilful a 'copying' of the environment than a practiced artist's watercolour, even if it is, usually, less explicitly considered.

This leads into the second part of Fulton's avowal. That he doesn't wish to walk in the way that the Ramblers Association does, affirms that he does wish to walk in some way. But what would that be? The negative invocation of the Ramblers Association provides some pointers. In my fieldwork I have walked with the Ramblers Association and various other walking clubs, of which there are very many in the city and region of Aberdeen. These walks have a distinctive sociability and indeed often overflow with conversation and interaction between participants.³⁵ They have distinct and dedicated leaders, who decide upon timings, routes, resting places and have responsibility for the progress of the walk as a whole. The route is decided upon in advance, and indeed may even be 'pre-walked' by the leaders to ensure nothing will go wrong on the day. In all these respects, Fulton's walking, and we could add, psychogeographical walking, is not alike. The emphasis is instead on what the place stimulates in the walking participants and if there is conversation at all, it is usually a conversation of attentiveness to the surroundings. Fulton and a number of other walking artists usually walk without other people (Richard Long would be another example), in which any talk is simply with oneself and the surroundings. The walking is not so much carried out 'alone', which would emphasise the lack of human counterparts, but rather happens 'with' the landscape and all the entities and beings that comprise it.

At the same time, we should note that walking art can also take place in more overtly sociable ways. A major UK exhibition of work by walking artists, 'Walk On: From Richard Long to Janet Cardiff. 40 Years of Art Walking', detailed a wide variety of approaches by artistic partnerships as well as individuals, and acts of walking that purposely involved other people, as well as non-human others.³⁶ These stand as a response to the 'heroic', often male, artist who walks alone (and whose work did still form a significant part of the exhibition). In literature, perhaps the most lauded work of psychogeographical writing in English is Iain Sinclair's *London Orbital*, in which Sinclair describes a series of walks in the vicinity of London's M25 circular motorway as a counterpoint to the 'non-place' of the motorway itself.³⁷ The voices of people who are invited to share in the walks and those who are met along the way are an important presence in the book.

If being 'alone in nature' is not the significant feature of these walks, the improvisational, attentive and responsive character of much walking art, including Hamish Fulton's, is nonetheless very distinctive. In drawing a contrast with the Ramblers Association, Fulton may also have invoked a kind of walking that does not follow a map, although, like Colquhoun's walk in Aberdeen, it may also be circumscribed in other ways. But among the things it creates is a particular sense of place and engagement that acts as a mapping and can then be mapped – in other words, recreated in some kind of documentary form – if the walker chooses to do so. Fulton's exhibition and other published works could be seen in these terms. They often comprise of sequences of plain and unadorned descriptive words, sometimes numbers that count days, moons, or mountains, or one-word observations that follow the course of the walk. The walk becomes a mapping of the experience of the landscape, 'copied' into the body through careful attentiveness, in the same way that the intention to undertake an artwork becomes a walk. 'Walking art' means that the art is walked, and the walk is made as art. In these circumstances, the walk is the art, the art is the walk, and each maps onto – and is enacted in – the other.

Psychogeography, maps and the politics of walking art

The enacting of walking and art in each other might thus mark a move beyond a reductionist approach to the 'act' of either, and the same might be true of anthropology and psychogeography. Rather than an anthropological account 'of' psychogeography and other art walking practices, in which walking is analysed by way of anthropology, according to – and in a sense reduced to – the latter's categories, thinking about the enactment of walking and art together could suggest a way that a primary act does not require a secondary analysis. They might find each in the other rather than being reduced to a subject-object relationship.

By analogy, I want now to pursue mapping in more detail, as an aspect of psychogeography that we might also see as enacted in anthropology. Mappings have been a significant practice in psychogeography over the years, including from both those identifying their work as psychogeography and those who we might connect more loosely with the tradition. We might seek a partial comparison with anthropological fieldwork techniques and sensibilities, and then explore where a fruitful common ground, or at least a fuzzy boundary, may be found.

The mappings that arose from the dérives of the SI took distinctive forms. Debord and collaborator Asger Jorn's well-known *Guide Psychogéographique de Paris* (1956) and *The Naked City* (1957) were, as Ford puts it, 'useless' maps. They split up Paris into regions connected with arrows denoting psychogeographic flows and spontaneous turns of direction, and so 'challenged traditional ideas of mapping related to scale, location and fixity'. Ford argues that they encouraged the sense of being a detective, 'stalking the city looking for clues to its significance and seductive power'.³⁸

The notion of psychogeography as an enquiry, such as might be pursued by a detective and in contrast to simply an activity carried out for its own sake, seems important here. It is where we might distinguish the psychogeographic drift from other sorts of urban walking, such as the *flânerie* of nineteenth century Parisian arcades discussed by Walter Benjamin, or the surrealist deambulations of the avant-garde generation previous to the SI – though the transgressiveness of the *dérive* is, as Bonnett notes, a characteristic theme of the avant-garde.³⁹ Psychogeography involves an attentiveness to one's surroundings, and also an openness to the possibility that things may not be as they first appear. What appears as 'ordinary' may hide as well as reveal: indeed, '*Sous les pavés, la plage!*' as the famous May 1968 uprising slogan went ('Under the paving stones, the beach!'). Walking occurs with a purpose beyond that of reaching a destination, and that is to make a difference in itself. A psychogeographical map would then not simply describe and document, but create an impetus to do something, to act differently upon and within the urban form. Practically useless for finding one's way through the streets, the *dérive* and its mappings – including text and other artistic forms as well as recognisable 'maps' themselves – would open on to other terrains that give shape to the emotional and perceptual aspects of experience.

All mapping practices are, of course, emergent from the particular circumstances and purposes of their makers, and this is in part what we might learn from the explicitly alternative and transgressive psychogeographical cases. The maps that anthropologists make could be an interesting comparative case. It is likely that most anthropological maps never make it to the published page, as they are created as part of fieldwork practice in the form of fieldnotes. But they may still be important in this regard. To take a couple of personal examples: during my first main fieldwork about the landscape of the Orkney Islands, situated just to the north of mainland Scotland, I spent some weeks visiting farms on one particular island to develop a case study of local farming and landscape histories. At each one, I took what became a battered copy of a 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey map (the UK standard), and gradually wrote and drew layers of notes referring to place names, farm boundaries and land rental arrangements. After each farm

visit, I wrote up careful descriptive fieldnotes in a separate computer document, and yet the physical map continued to accumulate its own notes as a palimpsest of the island's landscape and my own fieldwork. Today I can look at the map and feel – still be affected by – the intensity of my fieldwork as a PhD student that I can't maintain today, with more competing demands on my time.

Plate 8.3 here

In the same fieldwork period, I also produced a small, and clearer, set of plans of farm buildings in order to understand the shift from agriculture to a diversified agriculture and tourist business, as Orkney farms began to take in tourists as bed & breakfast businesses and reconfigure their buildings and the paths between them. Here the mapping of architectural forms allowed me to compare and consider the relationship between the buildings and a changing economy in a way that text alone would not. I saw the pattern of paths and driveways being moved away from byres and barns and towards the farmhouse or other accommodation directly. And more recently in separate fieldwork, I used another 1:25,000 scale map to record place names in a particular forest in the centre of Scotland. The forest is now designated and preserved as a 'natural' environment but actually has a whole series of interweaving personal and social histories running through it, as locally-named paths and other places. Again, I took the map to a series of interviews and added the names and histories in layers.

Plate 8.4 here.

I suspect that many anthropologists, as well as geographers and others, would be able to tell similar stories of mapping practices as part of their fieldwork enquiries. Yet the methodological literature in anthropology has tended to focus for the most part on text rather than any 'drawn' material, other than the classic diagrams for understanding kinship.⁴⁰ Moreover the technological shift towards 'e-fieldnotes' could (although not necessarily will) increase the reliance on text rather than drawing – though digital images of other kinds are of course more and more preponderant.⁴¹ Published examples of anthropological maps other than the topographic are not so common, but sometimes schematic maps of landscapes and places are used that are designed to convey a particular insight into a landscape. Simon Harrison explains with the help of a map how, along the Middle Sepik river in Papua New Guinea, the landscape is 'forgetful' as the constantly shifting meanders of the river are encouraged by ditch digging and tree planting, and forest re-growth quickly overtakes paths to a neighbouring village that fall out of frequent use. The inhabitants, though, are memorious of their social and kinship relations in circumstances of frequently shifting allegiances.⁴²

More formal maps may also come to light during fieldwork and become the subject of it. Cristina Grasseni's informants in the Italian Alps decided to create a local mapping of their historic and cultural landscape, which became an exercise in cultural remembering rather than tourist-oriented planning.⁴³ While anthropologists have also come to use GPS technology to help accurately map landscapes and territories as part of indigenous rights movements, there is a sense in these examples of mapping that attempts something other than objective description. They may be no less carefully made than a topographic, scalar map, but serve to draw the attention (both of the maker and the viewer) to other phenomena and other relationships.

To return to the *dérive*, the shifting between formal and informal maps could be seen as analogous to the anti-categorical nature of the psychogeographical walk, which would not be stable or straightforwardly representable. As we saw above, the *dérive* does not easily fit into the dominant categories of work or leisure, but, for the SI at least, they did have a firmer footing within the scope of politics. But what sort of politics is being created here, and with what

results? SI participants frequently concerned themselves with the future of the urban form, and what experiences in relation to it could be conceived in the future. Remaking the city in a freer, almost anarchic spirit of collective resistance to planned, structured forms of consumption was an important principle in SI texts – starting from Chtcheglov’s open statement ‘We are bored in the city, there is no longer any Temple of the Sun’ (in other words, no authentic and encompassing focus for the population’s attention).⁴⁴ Subsequent psychogeographical practices (for example, as detailed in Richardson, as well as those described here) are perhaps subtler in their political framings, and the explicit fermenting of revolutionary ideals in the Situationist International now feels jarring.⁴⁵

To find the politics of contemporary psychogeography and anthropology can be to seek both more subtlety and a more ‘ordinary’ mode of existence. As outlined in the above account of ordinariness and creativity, anthropologists have sought out political processes not just in the formal processes of legislation and public policy, but in micro-gestural relations, habitual actions and pedestrian ways of knowing. Politics can play out in an ordinary walk as a person makes decisions over routes, destinations, and things that happen along the way. De Certeau’s identification of ‘pedestrian rhetoric’ in the city was in part to do with walkers’ ordinary forms of resistance to the structures of planned urban forms, but it was also a reckoning of the attentiveness and sensuousness of the pedestrian as ordinary movement through a landscape.⁴⁶ As an example, we might look to the art walking practice of Misha Myers, who worked with asylum seekers to create new sketch maps of an English city superimposed with landmarks from the places they had left behind.⁴⁷ Hamish Fulton’s town walk in Huntly, he explained later, referenced the repeated perambulations of Tibetan Buddhist monks around their temples, and was intended as a comment on the restrictions on ‘ordinary’ politics and everyday life in Tibet under Chinese rule. This sense of the political is less directly revolutionary than that of the SI’s psychogeography, perhaps, but shares a grounding in the ‘step-by-step’ performance of ordinary life.⁴⁸

Re-enacting psychogeography and anthropology

While an important aspect of psychogeography is its explicit forms of action in the world, anthropology can appear to be rather subtle by comparison. Good intentions for the ‘impact’ of research can be subsumed by the act of immersion in the fieldwork itself. This is not to say that the outcomes of anthropology are not powerful, of course. But there may be things to learn from the practice in psychogeography that I have described here, formulated as interventions in – not documents of – the world that involve other people and places. This is where we can consider the value of the re-enactment of psychogeography as anthropology, and indeed anthropology as psychogeography, in which each is enfolded as a careful and attentive copy of the other. Not original, and not repetitive either, but emergent in a field of relations that involves researcher and participants (or co-enquirers) with the landscape.

The experimental walks I recounted at the start of this chapter, and others I have contributed to in recent years, were designed in different ways for different participants. Some include ‘the public’, some students or academics, or arts communities. But they have a common thread of purpose that goes beyond their immediate circumstances. They are not walks ‘to’ anywhere or to ‘see’ anything in particular. As a *dérive* would concern itself both with the experience of the walk and the wider critique of urban form, so these events are about walking but also the forms of everyday knowledge, perception and experience – the sense of the ordinary, in other words – that are normally taken for granted. In the events instigated, or co-instigated, by myself, I have been concerned to generate a sociable and collaborative form of walking and mapping. Personal and individual responses are possible but are created in social forms, through conversation and shared decisions about how to proceed. This collaborative mode is for me inspired by the collective psychogeographical *dérives* of mid-twentieth century

Paris, but also figures in current accounts of anthropological practice that aim to critique and go beyond the authoritative figure of the lone ethnographer.⁴⁹

I think of them, in fact, as re-enactments of anthropology as psychogeography, and vice versa. Where they have had a pedagogical purpose, it is to explore and communicate anthropology as a means of becoming attentive, rather than knowledge that needs to be learned. Instead of being introduced by way of a lecture, anthropology is seen straight away as a practice – not simply a methodology of ethnography to be bolted on to a separate research question, but an inquiry underpinned by ways of thinking discussed in this chapter. The idea of psychogeography lends a specifically pedestrian creativity to proceedings and enables a sociable collaboration. This creativity, however, is neither the Kantian spark of genius, nor is easily reduced by a Marxist critique to a commodity that reveals the class or identity of the consumer. It is instead improvised and attentive, yet still political in the unpacking and the questioning of the ordinary.

Another artist whom I work with in rural Scotland, Alec Finlay, describes his own practice as ‘place-aware walking’. Making a virtue of a muscular condition that makes it hard for him to walk long distances, he explores local ecologies and place names – not aiming to ‘bag’ or conquer the summit of a hill. ‘Rather than reeling in distant points of interest, I have had to accept seeing and naming them from where I am as ways to align places, and myself to them’ he writes, in a poetic mapping of place names and landscapes.⁵⁰ In a world of almost constant distraction and continuing desire for acceleration and speed, the ability to move slowly and attentively needs to be valued too. What, then, of the footsteps with which this chapter began? My response now is to seek the enactment of each in the other: the walk enacts the footstep and the footstep enacts the walk. By this logic, the copy, or the re-enactment of the step and walk is not a mechanical repetition but an attentive, place-aware gesture. The ‘act’ of walking that might be amenable to an objective description disperses itself into a means to enact and re-enact ordinary life.

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² Grijzenhout, *Vermeer's The Little Street*.

³ Taussig, *The Nervous System*.

⁴ Ingold, 'Culture on the Ground'; Vergunst, 'Taking a Trip'; *Ways of Walking*, ed. by Ingold and Vergunst, pp. 105-121; Vergunst, 'Key Figure', pp. 13-27.

⁵ Highmore, *Ordinary Lives*.

⁶ Debord, 'Definitions', p. 52.

⁷ Knabb, *Situationist International Anthology*.

⁸ Chtcheglov, 'Formulary', p. 4.

⁹ Chtcheglov, 'Formulary', pp. 3, 7, emphasis and capitalisation as in the original.

¹⁰ Debord, 'Theory of the Derive', p. 62.

¹¹ Debord, 'Theory of the Derive', p. 65.

¹² Lee and Ingold, *Fieldwork on Foot*.

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¹⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 280.

¹⁵ Wilf, 'Semiotic Dimensions', pp. 397-412.

¹⁶ Kant, *The Critique*.

¹⁷ Kant, *The Critique*, p. 171.

¹⁸ Sassen, 'Artistic Genius', p. 178.

¹⁹ Rampley, 'Creativity', p. 268.

²⁰ Kant, *The Critique*, p. 267; Wilf, 'Semiotic Dimensions', p. 407.

²¹ Florida, *The Rise*.

²² Cited in Rampley, 'Creativity', p. 268.

²³ Rampley, 'Art History', p. 548.

²⁴ Cant, "'Making" Labour'.

²⁵ Gell, *Art and Agency*.

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²⁷ Ingold and Hallam, 'Creativity and Cultural Improvisation'.

²⁸ Wilf, 'Semiotic Dimensions', p. 399.

²⁹ Sansi, *Art, Anthropology*.

³⁰ Cf. Mauss, *The Gift*.

³¹ Ingold and Hallam, 'Creativity and Cultural Improvisation', p. 5.

³² Ingold, 'Modes of Creativity'.

³³ Fulton, *Mountain Time*.

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- ³⁴ Ingold and Hallam, 'Creativity and Cultural Improvisation'.
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⁴⁵ Richardson, *Walking Inside Out*.
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