Architecture and Narrative
A Psycho-geographical Study of Sheffield

Design Report

by

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The train station

As part of the project, I went to the train station and spent around 4 hours there. I found the space outside catchier so sat down on a bench in that square which is called … what was that? Anyway, as I tried not to engage with people but in the end it seemed to be impossible. If you walk, it might be possible but not when you sit down in the same spot. I sat down, put my video camera on a step to start recording, 17 minutes passed and nothing happened but people passing by going to the station and so on and so forth. I changed my place to get a different position to the station. A guy and a lady came to me, I had seen them earlier on talking to some people, poorly dressed and were wondering around.

I figured these guys are just strollers, but they seemed to have some intentions, that was why they were approaching me. When they started talking to me I had this feeling of they want to ask for money. I always feel this just before they start telling their story. They all have their own story that most of the time it sounds a real story. If it is not I should say they are very good story tellers and all of them swear to god and claim that they are not lying. That was really cool. The time I spent there now seems like a loop to me. They left, I was there, they came back again and the same thing. They started asking people for money and me again and the cool thing is that they had forgotten that they had asked me for money. Maybe that is the reason they had chosen the train station, because people are there for maximum say half an hour. They take a ticket, wait outside for their train to catch and in the next loop totally new people except me and the beggars.
One thing that was very appealing to me was those people that just hang out around the train station for some reasons. They are mostly the people who have got a ticket and waiting for their train. I met a refugee who was from Congo and had applied for asylum visa and was waiting for Home Office decision and so many more people who all were waiting for their train to catch, and also a father with his children that were just playing and splashing water, and a group of teenagers who were riding bike.
Introduction

When you want to get a generic idea about a situation, person or anything else, it is better to seek different people’s opinions or even to support an academic idea you refer to different resources. This allows one to grasp a more unbiased view about that thing or at least to have different opinions from totally different positions. Even place, time and mood of people tremendously affect what they express. When these enquiries are conducted in relation to a place, then they can be called psychogeographical approaches meaning internal feelings and angles of view affect what one perceives from that place.

"As you can see, we are flying over an island, a city, a particular city, and this is the story of a number of its people, and the story, also, of the city itself. It was not photographed in a studio. Quite the contrary... the actors played out their roles on the streets, in the apartment houses ... this is the city as it is, hot summer pavements, the children at play, the buildings in their naked stone, the people without makeup." 1

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1 Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 82
This is how Guy Debord and Asger Jorn depicted Manhattan in the 1948 film The Naked City, rather than float above the city as some sort of omnipotent, instantaneous, disembodied, all-possessing eye, situationist cartography admitted that its overview of the city was reconstructed in the imagination, piecing together an experience of space that was actually terrestrial, fragmented, subjective, temporal, and cultural.²

My project, accordingly, explores the city of Sheffield through different narrative stories that all together provide a psychogeographic map of the city. The main principle of doing the explorations, the drift, is taken from the novel ‘the Catcher in the Rye’. It started with spatial investigations through urban roaming, being invited by the city to get lost as a flâneur - ‘for the sake of grasping its impenetrable maze’, and revolutionising the everyday of the city through cultural experimentation.³ The project depicts the city through the experience of the people who live in that city, their interaction in everyday life and their different perception.

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²Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 82
The most beautiful things in the world are touchable not visible. Helen Keller

The blind story is about Sheffield through a blind man’s eyes. It is a combination of fiction and reality, subjective and objective; Subjective in a way that the city is narrated through a blind’s eyes and objective in a way that the basic information and material is taken from documents of Sheffield such as its map. It tries to portray the order and organisation of the city in his angle of view, how he perceives the city and the hierarchy of the understanding. It is obviously totally different. A blind gets to know the city he lives in through the other senses rather than sight.
I live in Sheffield but not the one you know, the one that is specifically mine. I have some feelings about Sheffield that no one does. I feel Sheffield through my body, my ears and other senses rather than my eyes. It is really funny that sometimes you don’t notice people but what they are doing. The action draws your attention to a place because they try to reach you but people do not even notice that you are blind. Maybe sounds are blind to notice my blindness. The cool thing is that for them there is no difference between the blind and non-blind. As a blind man you must rebuild the world for yourself. At the beginning it seems impossible, you go for the first time in the street and you see nothing. You hear incoherent chaotic noises and nothing is structured. There is no architecture, there is nothing. You have to organise the chaos for yourself.

People think that interaction with the blind is totally different and it is true. A great part of the understanding is non verbal, there is no eye contact, gesture, mimic, and no posture but you can’t avoid it because you are used to it. There is no body language. Architecture and city has to find an alternative way to start sharing its experiences with us. Things like paralinguistic (like intonation) become more important.
I feel the city through touching surfaces. So I can’t find my way out using an ordinary map, I should build my own map. In my map streets don’t come after another as they are shown in your map. This street changes when I feel it is changed. From the texture under my feet and from the sound it makes. Sometimes I go for a walk and if you want to illustrate my visual understanding of the surrounding you realise that it is nothing but a blurred combination of people I hear talking, the sound of a bouncing basketball, people whistling, trees being danced by the wind and the cobblestone that I can feel it through the sound it makes when I sway my stick from side to side. There is no perspective, no order, just everything flat and mixed in a way that cannot be read again.

The city that I have in my mind is a patched one. A patched city that consists of so many excerpts from different part of the city and when you gather them together and stitch them together you will get to know my city. There are no square blocks in it, between the lines (streets), there is only filled or empty space. Empty in where I hear my feet on a street and filled in when I touch something. This is my stitched city.
Stories are part of the human identity and allow them to deal with the aspects of time other than the instant present. It provides a tool to communicate, express or invent activities beyond the here and now. This activity is directly linked with the construction of memory and eventually leads to the creation of personality. Architecture might not be the most obvious field to relay on stories but it actually does and has always done, even in the context of modernist doctrines of absolute objectivity. Recently the topic has become more trendily again and the narrative emerges as a new term to portray processes and creations.

When architects refer to design they talk about a mental activity of arranging forms, programme and spatial sequences. When they speak about a building they often describe it as a narrative invoking a imaginary viewer and a journey through space. Therefore, while design is said as a mental activity, a building is considered as something to be experienced. This understanding is like a story that unfolds in time. For some architects spatial narrative is central not only to the way in which they describe buildings but also to way in which they design. While architects are fascinated by narratives, writers are fascinated by architecture. From Dedalus’ labyrinth to Edgar Alan Poe’s gothic places, and Calvino’s Invisible Cities, architecture has fed the popular imagination with a countless list of haunted houses and cobblestone passages. In most of the cases architecture is illustrated as a device to restate a story or be reminiscent of an event. This mnemonic temperament of architecture has been existed from the past to the contemporary literature such as Italo Calvino’s ‘Invisible cities’ in which Marco Polo portrays Kublai Khan’s territory for him in several short stories.


Mnemonic architecture

In ‘the art of memory’ Frances Yates argues the mnemonic nature of architecture and how in ancient time architecture became a representation of memory through architectural types that served as mnemonic devices as if it is re-citing the story to the visitor. He describes the techniques and the philosophy of memorising that associates with specific places in a building. Mnemonic architecture is based on the use of places, spaces, objects, etc which were memorised by practitioners as the structure that would ‘contain’ the images or signs ‘placed’ within it to record experience or knowledge. The narrator, recollection is possible through links between moments in a narrative and a sequence through spaces in a building.

To bring it into play, one might walk through a space several times, observing distinct items or places within that space in the same order each time. After the necessary repetitions of this process, one should be able to remember and envisage each of the places unfailingly and in order. This implies the idea of cutting out some different spots as more important things and transitions as blurred connections that was later introduced by the situationists (Guy Debord and Asger Jorn). The impression of architecture outspreads to the role of reading and writing in ordering experience. In ‘six walks in the fictional woods’ Umberto Eco uses the resemblance of reading with walking, signifying that a story is an unfolding world that is experienced in sequence, piece by piece.9 This sequential basis that Eco refers to is discussed in different texts that will be mentioned later on.

Architectural of forgetfulness

Whereas architecture had aided mnemonic orientation, it has also served as a model for losing one’s bearings through a plot. In his fiction Jorge Luis Borges uses chaotic spaces composed of hexagonal rooms, bifurcating paths and symmetrical houses in his speculations about knowledge and culture. Influenced by Borges, writers like Italo Calvino and Umberto Eco use the labyrinth, the castle and the city as settings and as themes for their narratives. In ‘The Name of the Rose’ Eco constructs a labyrinthine library consisting of interconnected rooms in the image of Borges’ ‘Library of Babel’. Reading Borges, that architect can hardly fail notice the feeling of being lost into the labyrinths of his plots, puzzled by conceptual symmetries that link characters and events as well as by the architectural symmetries in the places inhabited by his characters.10
Another example is the ‘Catcher in the Rye’ in which Holden, the protagonist, strolls around Manhattan and makes it a labyrinth for himself through bifurcating paths and places that he goes to. The story describes Holden’s feelings toward the path that he follows and the people he sees on his way on. If we envisage the story it is like as if he chooses a labyrinth-like way and fades off the rest of Manhattan map and just the labyrinth remains.

This report is trying to portray the differences of my project with the other ‘Architecture and Narrative’ projects which is the disorienting nature of the project and the fact that a person is meant to get lost and get disoriented in this project rather than the mnemonic feature of them and being oriented using an ordinary map.
FICTION...

THE CATCHER IN THE RYE

HOLDEN CAULFIELD... IS HAVING A MENTAL BREAKDOWN, IS STRUGGLING WITH HAVING TO GROW UP

THE BOOK IS FULL OF... ANGST, DISGUST, CONFUSION, DEPRESSION, MOODINESS, ANXIETY

HAPPINESS... REGRET
CONFIDENCE...FEAR
EUPHORIA... DISPAIR

INNOCENCE (CHILDHOOD) VS. CORRUPTION (ADULTHOOD)

HE IS CAUGHT BETWEEN TWO WORLDS, TWO MENTAL STATES
EVERY PART OF HIS JOURNEY REFLECTS: THE SPLIT

ALSO PLACES THAT HE GOES TO DIVIDE DOWN THESE LINES TOO:
1. RAIL, SLEEPS WITH A PROSTITUTE
2. VISITS THE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, GOES LOOKING FOR THE DUCKS IN THE CENTRAL PARK
TO SUM UP: HOLDEN'S JOURNEY IN THIS BOOK: NUMBER 2

PROJECT IDEAS...

- STREET EVENT
  -ONE DAY IN SHEFFIELD VS. NEW YORK
  -MODIFYING THE CITY OR THE STORY (IN ACCORDANCE)
- IN 'THE SIX WALKS IN THE FICTIONAL WOODS' UMBERTO ECO USES THE ANALOGY OF READING AND WALKING... HE SUGGESTS THAT A STORY IS AN UNFOLDING WORLD THAT IS EXPERIENCED IN SEQUENCE, PIECE BY PIECE (ARCHITECTURE AND NARRATIVE)
- ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN PROCESS (RESPOND)
- NARRATING THE ARCHITECTURE ON A SEQUENTIAL BASIS
- (THE ART OF MEMORY BY FRANCES FAYES)... IN ANTIQUITY ARCHITECTURE BECAME A MODEL OF MEMORY THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL TYPES THAT SERVED AS MNEMONIC DEVICES. VS. ARCHITECTURE SERVED AS A MODEL FOR LOSING ONE'S Bearings THROUGH A PLOT. (TWO EXAMPLES... INTERCONNECTED ROOMS IN A LIBRARY AND THE HEXAGONAL ROOMS DESCRIPTION FROM THE BOOK) (ONE PHOTO FROM THE BOOK AND SOME HAND DRAWN DIAGRAMS SHOULD BE SCANNED AND PUT IN THIS PART)

REALITY...

- SPATIAL INVESTIGATION THROUGH URBAN ROAMING, BEING INVITED BY THE CITY TO GET LOST AS A CLANKER
- BEING LOST IN A CITY LIKE A Labyrinth AND FIND YOUR WAY OUT, LIKE THE STORY THAT YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING BUT YOU HAVE TO WONDER IN THE CITY IN ORDER TO SPEND TIME.
- WALKING... READING
- FIRST ARRIVAL AS A STUDENT HERE IN SHEFFIELD AND THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE ATMOSPHERE
The drift, psychogeography and the Flâneur

In ‘the Catcher in the Rye’ Holden, the protagonist, after leaving school arrived in New York City and because he wanted to go back home a week later, he would spend that week in Manhattan wandering around and shooting everything with his red hunting cap (the word ‘shooting’ is a metaphor for his extreme loathing he would express and he would do it with his red hunting cap on). This aimless walk idea was once done by a group of surrealists in 1923 who attempted an aimless walk beginning from a town chosen by lot, and a person who also wandered through the Harz region of Germany while blindly following the directions of a map of London. It brings up the idea of drift and Flâneur which were first introduced by Guy Debord and Walter Benjamin.

The idea of the drift amongst the situationists was first introduced by situationist theorist Guy Debord in the ‘theory of dérive’ that was the main principle of their psychogeographic approach toward urban encounters.

[Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 78]
What is psychogeography?

Psychogeography is the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals. The charmingly vague adjective psychogeographical can be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery.¹²

Psychogeography attempts to combine subjective and objective modes of study. On one hand it recognises that the self cannot be divorced from the urban environment; on the other hand, it would have to pertain to more than just the psyche of the individual if it is to be useful in the collective rethinking of the city.¹³


¹³Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 78
The Drift

One of the basic situationist practices is the drift (dérive), a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. Drifts involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. Drifters were people alert to ‘the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there,’ capable as a group of agreeing upon distinct, spontaneous preferences for routes through the city.

Debord reported that “the primarily urban character of the drift, in its element in the great industrially transformed cities could be expressed in Marx’s phrase: ‘Men can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive.’” It could be said that the structure of the whole project is based on this phrase which means is a collection of different perspectives toward a fact that could be seen in different angles.

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15 Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 76-77
16 Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 77
The Flâneur

The concept of the dérive meets its literary equivalent to the drifting as ‘flânerie’.

Flânerie, the activity of strolling and looking which is carried out by the flâneur, is a recurring motif in the literature, sociology and art of urban, and most especially of the metropolitan, existence. Originally the figure of the flâneur was tied to a specific time and place: Paris, the capital of the nineteenth century as it was conjured by Walter Benjamin in his analysis of Charles Baudelaire. But the flâneur has been allowed, or made, to take a number of walks away from the streets and arcades of nineteenth-century Paris. The presence of the amazing French arcades, forming an illusion of interior-exterior captured the flâneur in a mood of eager exploration and observation. Later, they induce Walter Benjamin to stroll around an unfinished extent work known as the “Passagenwerk” whereas Breton, in his “Nadja”, is already seeking the people amongst the public who would be ready for a revolution, he stands critic across the behavioural interpretations formed in the psychogeographical scenery of the city.


“There was the pedestrian who jammed himself into the crowd, but there was also the flâneur who demanded elbow room and was reluctant to give up the life of the gentleman of leisure. His leisurely appearance as a quality is his objection against the division of labour which makes people into specialists. It was also his disapproval against their industriousness. Around 1840 it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for a walk in the arcades. The flâneurs liked to have the turtles set the pace for them.”

20Walter Benjamin, 'The Flaneur', Fragments of the Passagenwerk: A meander through the Arcades project of Walter Benjamin <http://www.g.peaker.dsl.pipex.com/arcades/Flaneur.html> [Accessed 13 July 2011] para.1
Holden in Sheffield

This layer illustrates Holden’s experience in Sheffield. What would happen if Holden decided to stroll in Sheffield instead of Manhattan? Which places would he go to? Which routes would he choose? How would he find his way out of the labyrinth of Sheffield he built for himself? These are the questions that this map would answer.

This layer is the outcome of a drift in the city of Sheffield which turned out to be something that hardly reminds one of Sheffield. It is not like the drift that was discussed in the previous chapter. Drift is defined as an aimless walk, but this was not aimless. The aim was to explore the city through a map, an unusual one, a book. In other words, it is an experience of Sheffield with a book, ‘The Catcher in the Rye’. This technique was deployed to give a disorientation essence to the project. The marked route is the ways and streets chosen to do this exploration. The map indicates routes between places and also ways that were chosen wrong. It seems like a circular labyrinth. Each place is described by Holden, the protagonist of the ‘Catcher in the Rye’, which are put in thought bubbles and explain what happened to him through his 7-day journey in New York. If we drew a straight line between each main point, we would figure out how distracting a city could be, and how much deviation from the straight line between the places happened.
This map is done by exploring the city of Sheffield using the story of the Catcher in the Rye. I have marked the route that I walked in city. The map indicates routes between places and also ways that I went wrong. It seems like a circular labyrinth. Each place is described by Holden, the protagonist of the Catcher in the Rye, which are put in thought bubbles and explains what happened to him through his 7-day journey in New York.
Holden’s Stamp

This story is about the things that Holden encounter during his drift in the city of Sheffield (previous story). In ‘the Holden’s stamp story’ the spontaneity feature of the drift is deployed as a method inspired by ‘The Catcher in the Rye’ story. In ‘The Catcher in the Rye’ Holden, the protagonist, has a red hunting cap with which he figuratively shoots everything, meaning that whenever he wants to express his hatred to a phenomenon, he puts on his cap. Accordingly, the ‘Holden’s Stamp’ Story is based on the same theme. In other words, the story is based on unprompted feelings of the protagonist toward the objects, people, phenomena that he encounters through his aimless drift in the city of Sheffield. He approves or disapproves everything with his ‘hunting cap stamp’ which not only is red, that implies hatred, but also sometimes changes to green that shows his interest in things that he likes. Those shots do not necessarily show his absolute feeling toward phenomena but just his instant feelings:

His door was open, but I sort of knocked on it anyway, just to be polite and all… ‘Who’s that?’ he yelled. ‘Caulfield? Come in, boy.’… The minute I went in, I was sorry I’d come. (an excerpt from ‘the catcher in the rye’)

This shows Holden Caulfield’s unstable feelings toward everything, and supports the spontaneous feature of the expressions. The book is full of phoniness, so I think his hat is a sort of weapon for him. I tried to do the same thing in a way which I call it ‘exploring the city through feeling’.

It has so many digressions, it narrates the story with full details happening all around his mind and again comes back to the main stream.
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Frank! That is what my friends call me maybe because I am so frank. I really am, I believe you should be honest with people even if it hurts. I hate when people say something and don’t mean it. They just say something for consideration or to make something look nicer. ‘For your protection’… 24 hours, yes, 24 hours under surveillance, this is what was written on the wall when I was walking in the street the other day but it was not written that we watch you, and we drive you, we brain wash you, reminds me of 1984 by George Orwell. The only difference is that they do it in a much more pleasant way these days. I don’t care about security and being safe, freedom is more important, that you feel you are free and truly free. The whole life is full of contradictions. 50 meters away I saw an accommodation called ‘Liberty House: Liberty living for students’. That was cool, the only thing that only students have in some places in the world and after you graduate and go to materialistic life your angle of view to life changes. I remember everyone said university students are very ambitious. They fight for everything, their freedom of speech, their own rights in the society and always ask for reforms. I always wanted to be that critic toward everything in my life. That makes everything better when you discuss positive and negative points of things around you.
I passed that house while walking on a short brick kerb. I always liked walking on kerbs in streets especially when it rains. I could smell damp soil. I have always liked it since I can remember, sometimes did it with my friends but mostly alone because we had so many problems after we broke up, with my ex-girlfriend I mean. The damp soil smelled different when we were all together. It looks totally different now, the damp soil is not damp anymore and the kerb doesn’t get along with me. The last brick was loose to hell as I nearly fell down. I mean it had balustrade so that no one could go up but still to hell with all these workers that don’t do their remit properly. They always try to evade. I was reading somewhere that the useful working hours is 1 hour and 4 minutes. I don’t know what the hell these workers do.

I suddenly felt damn hungry. In that part of the city that I was walking hardly you could find somewhere to eat. That sucks because it is mostly residential and nowhere to eat. I remember when I was I believed that when you are looking for something it seems too difficult to get that thing. Apparently it was only my childhood daydreaming. It was the second one I saw Sheffield, I mean there are some more definitely but as I haven’t been to so many places here I knew only one before. I am talking about McDonald’s. It gives you a very nice feeling when you find something, looks like treasure hunting, no matter how crap that thing is (even like McDonald) it gives you the same sense. It might be because of the discovery nature itself not the thing you find. It is a bit faraway from where I live, could be much closer to residential areas, these people don’t know anything about locating their stores, the only thing that matters for them is to open a new store.

I like taking aimless walks for hours and hours especially in a city that I don’t know very well. I used to do it when I was in junior school, and hopefully will do it whenever time allows.
The principles behind the multi-layered map of Sheffield

Like every design work this project has its own principles and framework. The project is an unconventional map of Sheffield which has several different layers. These layers are also unconventional rather than simple trace layers with streets and buildings being shown from the top that lack any social activity and people who live in it. Each layer represents a perception of a city. Of course a city cannot be summarised in four or five layers but this study tried to convey different feelings with different mediums.

Earlier on in this paper, two different ideas about architecture and narrative were discussed:

1. Frances Yates says recollection is possible through associations between moments in a narrative and a sequence through spaces in a building. 
2. Umberto Eco discusses the role of reading and writing in ordering experience. He uses the analogy of reading with walking, suggesting that a story is an unfolding world that is experienced in sequence, piece by piece.

In the author’s point of view, the idea that these three have in common is that all three talk about clear spots, moments, places, neighbourhoods and some blurred transitions such as arrows, walking in a space, reading the city while walking, etc. The exploration that has been done in this project follows the same approach although they are totally different from one to another.

Generally we can mention five common principles in all works:

1. Using short descriptive stories and fictional protagonist for navigating through the linear spatial sequences.
2. Deploying an illustration of space that combines eye-level experience with a description to express this relationship.
3. Like ‘Invisible Cities’ and Winter Night’s a Traveller’, its chapters (layers) possess autonomy and can be read individually, skipping large part of the book or circulating into its sections in many different ways, and incorporates the reader, whose task is to get his way out of this city.
4. The idea is to figure out Sheffield on foot. This is the city that I do not know very well. Despite living there for a year and many trips out there to see people I that I just know some streets.
5. The protagonist does not follow a specific route but a specific quality which differs in every story, and in order to follow or find that quality or whatever shapes different routes through which this map is made. It is a purposeless walk, a drive with no goal, other than to know the path not just walk the path. Its smell, its texture, its sound, where draws one in, where repels.

The result in each story is slightly different from the other. In some layers such as ‘My mental map of Sheffield’ the key places are mapped and nothing in between as if the city is a collection of scattered nodes. On the other hand, in ‘The Blind’ there is no isolated spot with strings in between connecting them but the whole process of transition is mapped as well as spots; therefore, the boundary between each point is faded.

Sophia Psarra, ‘Architecture and narrative: the formation of space and cultural meaning’, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 68

My mental map of Sheffield

In ‘My mental map of Sheffield’ the key places are mapped and nothing in between as if the city is a collection of scattered nodes. This is done on purpose to show the blank places that the author does not have any memory of in the city. This is to some extent the strategy that Debord and Asger took for doing ‘The Naked City’. They represented the surreal disorientation of their drifts around Paris by scattering the pieces of map and the arrows showing their routes.24 Debord and Jorn’s situationist maps, the Guide psychogeographique de Paris of 1956 and The Naked City of 1957, served as guides to areas of central Paris threatened by redevelopment, retaining those parts that were still worth visiting and disposing of all those bits that they felt had been spoiled by capitalism and bureaucracy. The deductions were made by ‘drifting’ around the city, looking for evidence about the condition of contemporary Paris.25

24 Simon Sadler, ‘the situationist city’, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1999), pp. 82
This is my mental map of Sheffield. It consists of different boxes which contain stuff related to a specific place or time. What I did in this map was to include places that I have been in Sheffield and depict them as memory boxes containing stuff that I remember from those places. The idea is taken from a technique used by grandmothers in which they kept a box in which they kept evocative and memorable stuff.
The other example is ‘Paris et l’agglomération parisienne’. In his study Chombart de Lauwe notes that “an urban neighborhood is determined not only by geographical and economic factors, but also by the image that its inhabitants and those of other neighborhoods have of it. In the same work, in order to illustrate “the narrowness of the real Paris in which each individual lives . . . within a geographical area whose radius is extremely small, he diagrams all the movements made in the space of one year by a student living in the 16th Arrondissement. Her itinerary forms a small triangle with no significant deviations, the three apexes of which are the School of Political Sciences, her residence and that of her piano teacher.²⁶

It all started from when I was thinking about how well I know Sheffield, the city that I got to know mostly on foot and despite living there for a year and many trips out there to see people I just knew some streets. In other words my mental map of Sheffield was blank with a lot of places in between. I did not have any story or personal experience of those blank spaces, an absence of experience. The aim of this chapter is to create a layer of the map that covers what I know about Sheffield, ‘My Sheffield’ in other words, a personalised city, something that you have customised for yourself. This could be a diagram of where a person goes and map those places like what Chombart de Lauwe did. But I used a slightly different quality for mapping. This map is a mind depiction that illustrates one’s memories of a place and locates them in a conventional map and fades off the rest. Each bunch of memories is located in a box and the boxes are spread throughout the map.

The idea is taken from an Iranian tradition according which old people (usually grandmothers) keep their stuff in a box, a box which has loads of stuff in it with a long story behind them, memory boxes. The map is a collection of memory boxes scattered all around Sheffield which you can open them and go through all its memories.
The ‘Catcher in the Rye’ Summary

Author: J. D. Salinger
Year: 1951
Main character: Holden Caulfield, a mentally-unstable 16-year-old.

There is no plot in this book. So what the main character does in the whole 300 pages is that he spends a lot of time inside his own hat. ‘The Catcher in the Rye’ pretends to have a plot. The whole story is about an expelled student, Holden Caulfield, that wants to delay his parents’ knowledge about his expulsion, so he decides to spend his last days before going home bumming around New York City. That is the skeleton of the story. Holden does some stuff in the city that never sleeps. He spends a lot of time not sleeping himself. He hangs out at a few bars and clubs, he has an unfortunate encounter with a prostitute, he goes on a date, he walks through Central Park in the dead of night, and then he has a nervous breakdown. That is what is memorable about this plot, if you can call that. The book opens and closes with Holden in some kind of mental institution and everything in between is not so much about what Holden does as it is about what he is thinking.

The world that Holden builds for himself is like a labyrinth with different chambers divided down into two groups: places that he hates to go or goes and regret, and places that he likes to go. He is stuck in this mental labyrinth, between two worlds, two mental states. He does not know where he wants to go. He just wonders around the city, goes wherever he fancies then and immediately changes his mind.27

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Catcher in the Rye

Holden Caulfield … is having a mental breakdown, is struggling with having to grow up
The book is full of … angst, disgust, confusion, depression, moodiness, anxiety
  Happiness……. regret
  Confidence……..fear
  Euphoria…..despair
Innocence (childhood) Vs. Corruption(adulthood)
He is caught between ….two worlds, two mental states
Every part of his journey reflects the split

Also places that he goes to divide down these lines too……

1.Bar, sleeps with a prostitute
2.Visits the museum of natural history, goes looking for the ducks in the central park

To sum up : Holden’s journey in this book : number TWO²⁸

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Illustrations list

Photos taken and edited by the author: Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 41.
Drawings and montages made by the author for the project: Figs. 6, 7, 8, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49.
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