

Going for a Walk

**A Study of
Mindful Walking
in the City**

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Introduction

'Sometimes I try to imagine a map of the world that shows every walking step I have ever taken. It would be a curious document.' - Geoff Nicholson, *The Lost Art of Walking*, p. 39

I have always been an avid walker. Much of my youth was spent roaming the streets of San Francisco, exploring neighbourhoods I was unfamiliar with and delving into the hidden nooks of neighbourhoods I did know. This rambling never felt pointless; rather, I felt that as I walked, I created my own personal map of the city and learned to love it as a constantly shifting, changing thing. In a sense, my time spent walking through San Francisco brought the city truly alive for me.

Upon my move to London nearly four years ago I took it upon myself to walk as much of the city as possible. Certainly this is a much more difficult endeavour, as London is ten times the size of San Francisco, but every neighbourhood I have lived in, from New Cross to Hackney Central, I have learned the streets of by heart. It has always felt natural to me that to truly live somewhere one must come to know the area well, and what better way to do so than by walking through it?

In her essay entitled 'The Solitary Stroller and the City', Rebecca Solnit says that 'Walking the streets is what links up reading the map with living one's life, the personal microcosm with the public macrocosm; it makes sense of the maze all around.' (Solnit, 176) This idea rings incredibly true for me and is the basis of much of the research I have undertaken for this dissertation. This research has grown to include the history of city walking, the psychology behind it, various artists' and authors' attitudes towards it, and how it has changed in the modern day with the advent of industrialisation and modernism.

Through this research I have developed these questions that I would like to explore in this work:

- How does walking city streets, not just as a means of getting somewhere but as an activity in and of itself, affect people's perceptions of the city they live in?
- How have artists and writers explored such mindful walking in their respective cities?
- How can the 'everyday walker' – that is, people who walk not because they want to but because they must – be encouraged to pay attention to where, how and why they walk?

This dissertation explores the act of walking in the city, seeking to answer these questions and generate new ones. I hope to leave the reader with both an understanding of the various facets of city walking and a desire to explore it on their own time.

Argument

'Observe the street, from time to time, with some concern for system perhaps. Apply yourself. Take time. [...] Is there anything that strikes you? Nothing strikes you. You don't know how to see.' - Jacques Percec, *Species of Spaces*, p.50

Discussions of walking in the city have always been nuanced. Whilst walks through nature have always held an honourable, robust sort of glory, walking in the city is seen as something seedier, more volatile. The phrase 'the streets' tends to conjure up images of danger and violence, something to be avoided altogether; walking through the city is seen not as a recreational activity but a necessary one, such as a trip to the launderette or the corner shop. (Solnit, 2006) Yet city walks need not hold such a stigma: there lies much to be discovered – about ourselves, others, and the space around us – in the streets.

Walking in the city has a surprisingly rich history. For much of human civilisation, streets have been used not just as a means of getting from one place to another but as a place in and of themselves. Just like the buildings around them, streets were used as meeting places and social hubs; in European and American cities in the mid- to late 1800's, pleasure gardens, markets, and squares played host to 'the mingling of the errand and the epiphany.' (Solnit, 178, 2006) People had space to walk, talk, court, buy and sell, meet up with one another; they were able to live their lives richly within the streets. Harriet Lane Levy's autobiography *920 O'Farrell Street*, which details her life in San Francisco, describes the Saturday nights in which every type of person in the city would head out for a walk: 'The outpouring of the population was spontaneous as if in response to an urge for instant celebration [...] We walked and walked and still something kept happening afresh.' (Levy quoted in Solnit, 179, 2006)

Walking through the city first saw itself elevated to an art form in the form of the Parisian flâneur, or 'ambler.' First mentioned in Charles Baudelaire's work *The Painter of*

Modern Life, the typical flâneur was a well-dressed, well-to-do Frenchman who spent the majority of his days strolling idly through the streets of Paris to pass the time. (Crickenberger, 2005) He observed the ebb and flow of the crowd in a detached manner; his knowledge of the past commingled with his keen observation of the present, acting as ‘the link between routine and perambulation.’ (Crickenberger, 2005). He would, in a sense, ‘read’ the streets as he walked. Yet as the covered arcades of Paris (the flâneur’s preferred place of rambling) were deserted in favour of department stores, the act of flânerie soon dwindled out, becoming a thing of the past.

The disappearance of the flâneur and his rambling ways was, in fact, a sign of things to come. In his essay ‘Non-Places,’ Marc Augé argues that much of contemporary space can be described as ‘supermodern’ – space that is designed for ubiquity of use. No events outside of those designated for a supermodern space can occur; interaction and social activity are relegated to only what is required. (Lucas, 175) A prime example of such a phenomenon is an airport: one arrives at it, checks in, goes through security, makes a few purchases at one of several shops, waits for one’s plane, and leaves. Anything outside of this structure of use would be considered out of the ordinary. (Augé 1-6) With this definition in mind, one can find myriad examples of supermodernism in the modern-day city: in shopping malls (look, buy, eat); in motorways (drive, choose an exit); even, argues Raymond Lucas, in tourist destinations (go, look, photograph). (Lucas, 175) All is streamlined, simple, easy to navigate and use.

However, such hypermodernity can result in poorly-executed urban planning that considers the city itself to be a separate entity from those who inhabit it. Instead of being built with the local community and the area’s past in mind, many regeneration efforts are constructed with a *tabula rasa* approach – that is, they scrape the past clean and replace it with something entirely new. (Lucas, 170)

Urbanist Martín del Guayo argues that such homogenisation of urban life – that is, the over-predictability and

and banalisation of things, events, and people – ‘prevents us from experiencing an urban life that enriches ourselves and allows us to learn from others.’ (del Guayo, 2013)

We thusly lose the sensory and emotional richness of our experience of the city – we do not live in it, but merely exist in it; the city is a living, changing organism yet at the same time impersonal and cold.

In her essay ‘The Solitary Stroller and the City,’ Rebecca Solnit posits that ‘Walking is only the beginning of citizenship, but through it the citizen knows his or her city and fellow citizens and truly inhabits the city rather than a small privatised part thereof.’ (Solnit, 176) Indeed, by walking through our own city we not only learn about the areas surrounding us but also inscribe ourselves upon it: our knowledge of the streets become one of thousands of others’ layered onto one another, giving the city life, a past and a present. (de Certeau, 100)

Today walking through the city is often seen as a chore, something that must be done; city streets are places we go *through* and not *to*. It is thusly all too easy to write off the act of mindfully walking through the city as something silly and even dangerous, yet every city has an entire world waiting to be discovered in its streets. By taking our time to walk through them and getting to know the areas around us, we begin to live in the city, rather than just exist in it.

Case Study 1: Psychogeography

'Our leaden bodies fall back to earth at every step, as if to take root there again. Walking is an invitation to die standing up.' - *Frédéric Gros in Rebecca Solnit's A History of Walking, p. 178*

The word 'psychogeography' is a strange one. Its meaning is simple on the surface, yet the concept it describes is quite vague and difficult to pin down. Reduced to its most basic terms, psychogeography is the study of the ways in which a geographical environment affects individuals' emotional and mental states: in a sense, it is the merging of geography and psychology. (Coverley, 2010)

The basis of psychogeography was born of the Letterist International, a post-World War II movement rooted in Dada and Surrealism that consisted of a motley group of authors and thinkers. (Lemaitre, 2014) In 1953, Letterist thinker Ivan Chtcheglov published the essay 'Formulary for a New Urbanism,' which argued that 'A mental disease has swept the planet: banalisation', and that the cure for such banality was to create an urban environment based on its inhabitants' emotional engagement with the surrounding architecture. He further proposed that readers take part in a 'continuous *dérive*,' an ambient drift through the city; this proposal later became the cornerstone for the theory of psychogeography. (Coverley, 2010)

The concept of the *dérive* was initially a playful, childish one; the Lettrist International journal *Potlach* published several psychogeographical experiments that consisted more of loose experiments than serious thought on the subject. For instance, *Potlach* #1, published in June of 1954, proposed to readers the following:

'Depending what you are after, choose an area, a more or less populous city, a more or less lively street. Build a house. Furnish it. Make the most of its decoration and surroundings. Choose the season and the time. Gather together the right people, the best records and drinks. Light and

conversation must, of course, be appropriate, along with the weather and our memories. If your calculations are correct, you should find the outcome satisfying. (Please inform the editors of the results.) (Not Bored, n.a.)

As a concept, psychogeography did not yet exist; if anything, Lettrist International used the concept of the *dérive* as a platform for their other ideas rather than studying it as an idea in and of itself. It was Guy Debord, a thinker in the Situationist International, who took it upon himself to apply a more rigorous approach as to how the *dérive* could be used.

The word *psychogeography* was first properly defined in Debord's 1955 essay entitled 'Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography.' In it, Debord states that 'Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific events of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.' (Knabb, 2010) Debord considered psychogeography to be a science, something to be tested and monitored and measured; to him, previous Lettrist experiments were 'only a mediocre beginning' in comparison to the urbanist and architectural breakthroughs that he believed psychogeography could lead to. (Coverley, 2010)

As a whole, the Situationists – like the Letterists but with a more political, anti-capitalism slant – treated the *dérive* mainly as a political manoeuvre. Like Chtcheglov, they believed that the modern city was becoming increasingly banal, full of pre-established routes and swift, thoughtless movement; walking through the city could therefore be seen as a subversive act, one that went against the monotony of everyday life and challenged notions of how the city worked. Debord suggested that a proper *dérive* be conducted with two or three people and last about a day, although exceptions (longer walks, occasional use of taxis, etc.) could be made. (Coverley, 2010) Such conditions and limitations could 'permit the drawing up of the first surveys of the psychogeographical locations of the modern city.' (Knabb, 2010)

Yet for all its theoretical pomp, psychogeography had few concrete manifestations – it would seem that many people were too busy writing about it to actually partake. Studies that were undertaken were considered mundane to the point of uselessness; Abdelhafid Khatib’s ‘Attempt at a Psychogeographical Description of Les Halles’ was, according to Coverley, little more than ‘a particularly unreadable form of travel guide.’ Furthermore, there was the question of psychogeography’s legitimacy as a practical tool: its lack of measurable effects and its stark combination of objective fact and subjective emotion saw a sharp drop in psychogeographical thinking. By 1960, the concept was all but abandoned. (Coverley, 2010)

This is, of course, not to say that psychogeography has never been used or explored since. Quite the contrary: in recent years it has made a comeback. Yet it no longer functions as a singular school of thought; rather, it has dispersed into various manifestations and uses by writers and artists alike. It even has its own festival: the yearly Conflux Festival in New York City brings people together to ‘re-imagine the city as a playground, a space for positive change and an opportunity for civic engagement.’ (Conflux, 2013)

Psychogeography, although a failure as a movement, took the simple act of walking and turned it on its head, making it playful and thought-provoking. Self-professed psychogeographers encouraged people to treat city streets as places to explore, to experiment with; cities were not simply stacks of brick and concrete but host to a plethora of emotions and thoughts.

Case Study 2: Walking as Mapping

'The opacity of the body in movement, gesticulating, walking, taking its pleasure, is what indefinitely organises a here in relation to an abroad, a familiarity in relation to a foreignness.' - Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 130

The history of mapping is a long and rich one. The oldest maps were based more on time taken to get somewhere than actual space; measurements were marked in hours and days rather than metres and kilometres. As time passed and cities grew, maps became spatial, based on objective geometry of space rather than subjective itineraries. (de Certeau, 1984) Today, they are all but ubiquitous: we can find them on our phones, on street corners, at the entrances of buildings. They are tools for when we want to find out where something is, or when we want to locate ourselves within the great sprawling mass of the world.

In his essay 'Walking In The City', Michel de Certeau tells us of the difference between *place* and *space*. Place, he says, is a group of elements and their physical distribution (i.e., the city), while space is such place combined with the movements and activities that occur as a result of place (the city filled with people moving through it). In short, he says with emphasis, 'space is a practiced place,' a physical space put to use by the activities within it.

In this sense, one can consider a plain map of a city to be a representation of a *place*: it is a geometrical representation of the locations of buildings, subway stations, parks and so on; it is based on the city's shape. It is only when one puts it to use – annotates it, personalises it, creates one's own iterations of it – does it become a proper representation of a *space*, one that has been engaged with, is alive. Many artists and writers have partaken in their own versions of map-editing and map-making via walks in the city, either their own walks or others'. These maps may be actual physical representations of places explored, itineraries, photographs, sounds, alterations to the area walked –

what unites them is that they all happen within the *place* of a city, turning it and its map into a *space*.

A rather literal interpretation of the *space* vs. *place* dichotomy occurs in Esther Polak's project *Amsterdam RealTime*. Ten people of varied ages and professions were each given a GPS tracker which tracked their movements around the city of Amsterdam, something that Polak referred to as their 'diary in traces.' (O'Rourke, 140, 2013) As they moved through the city, day in and day out, their movements were traced in real time onto a video projection on a plain black background, slowly sketching out a map of Amsterdam's streets as time passed. This created a strictly physical map of Amsterdam, yet when Polak gave each participant a printout of where they had gone over the course of the project, they brought an emotional side to the project by recounting reasons why they went places and what they did on the way. (O'Rourke, 2013) Polak's project utilised individuals' experiences of the city to '...create new visualisations of these tracks and see what new kinds of experiences of space these visualisations bring about.' (O'Rourke, 141, 2013) By utilising people's mental maps of the city of Amsterdam, Polak was able to create not just a map of its streets but of how and where people moved within them: by looking at the map one learns not only about Amsterdam as a physical space but about the lives of several people who live within it.



Amsterdam Realtime, 2003

Seven Walks, a project undertaken by Belgian artist Francis Alÿs, focuses not on the city in its entirety but the conversation between spaces within it. Over the span of five years, Alÿs took it upon himself to get to know the city of London by undertaking seven differently themed walks, all with simple yet strict instructions: ‘A walk in South-east London on the sunny side of the street always and a walk in South London on the shady side of the street always,’ or ‘sixty-four individual Coldstream Guards move through the Square Mile of London.’ (Artangel, 2013) Although simple, each walk was rigorously documented in various mediums – drawings, photographs, notes, and so on – which were then presented collectively as a final work. One could say that *Seven Walks* is strictly a map of London’s space – it documents the activities and life that thrums within London’s streets, not the streets themselves.



Guards (still) (2005)

Polak and Alÿs take radically different approaches to mapping, yet both approaches involve the use of walking (both the artists’ and others’). Despite being radically different, both projects show that by walking the city we are able to create our own personal map of the place – or, indeed, the space –that we live in.

Case Study 3: Street Photography

'The irresistible urge to create an image is dictated by a quest to recover the elements that originally provoked some intense feeling.' Robert Doisneau, Paris, p. 344

The tradition of street photography is a relatively unusual one. It sets itself apart from other types of photography with its element of instantaneity and its photos that have a life of their own, giving us insight into the chaos of life on the streets. Whereas landscape and portrait photographers take their time setting up shots, aiming for perfect composition and light, street photographers set out into the world in search of an opportune moment to capture.

A crucial element of street photography is, of course, the street. The 'street' may not be the actual sidewalk – photos are taken on subways, inside restaurants, on the beach; essentially, anywhere the photographer can get photos of 'subjects who were unknown to him and, whenever possible, unconscious of his presence.' (Westerbeck and Meyerowitz, 35, 1994). The street photographer does not create his subject; rather, he heads out into the world to search for it, waits for it to come along. The street itself is the subject first and foremost, yet we also learn about the photographer himself through what and how he chooses to photograph. We see the city as he sees it.

In the essay 'The Solitary Stroller and the City,' Rebecca Solnit compares the act of walking in the city to the act of primordial hunting and gathering, the urban walker being 'on the look out for particulars, for opportunities, individuals, and supplies...' (Solnit, 174, 2006) One can compare this to the practice of street photography, with photographers setting out on the hunt for a good shot – Solnit does mention this, referring to a photographer's camera as 'a sort of basket laden with the day's spectacles.' (Solnit, 189-190, 2006) Indeed, walking the streets is an absolutely crucial part of street photography; it is only by doing so that the successful street photographer can immerse himself in the livelihood of the city and, subsequently, photograph it.

Perhaps one of street photography's most famous perpetrators is native New Yorker William Klein. Whilst working for *Vogue*, Klein was financed to make a 'photographic diary' of sorts about his hometown, a place which he loathed; however, despite his lack of photographic knowledge, he felt that 'once I had a camera I could say what I wanted about New York, about America.' (Dazed, 2013) However, several editors who saw the photos considered them far too 'grungy and Anti-American to publish.' (Dazed, 2013) His photos of 1950's-era New York City were grainy, blurry, messy; he documented not the beauty of the streets but the misery and lack of hope that permeated the city at the time. Klein shot photos indiscriminately, snapping as often as he could, and by doing so created an entire spectacle of New York City, gave viewers a feeling for the incessant hurriedness of city life. The layouts of his photo books emphasised this, giving the viewer the sense that 'you yourself are a conspicuously uncalled-for presence, hurried in and out of bitter districts in which you have no business.' (Kozloff, 36) This is not just New York but William Klein's New York, his 'basket of spectacles': as we look at his photos, we walk the streets with him, feel the sense of urgency with which he both walked and photographed.



Big Face in the Crowd (1955) and *Pray, Sin, New York* (1954), both by William Klein

Robert Doisneau was a photographer who took perhaps the exact opposite approach to photographing his hometown. Born and raised in Paris, Doisneau initially trained as a lithographer before abandoning the practice entirely to spend his time photographing the city that he so loved. His photos focussed on everyday life in Paris through the 1940's to the 90's, capturing moments of tenderness, absurdity, and 'the marvels of daily life.' (Doisneau, 8, 2010)

Doisneau's method of photography was not so manic or hurried as Klein's; he took his time rambling the streets of Paris, his eyes peeled for a situation he thought worth photographing. However, Doisneau was opposed to documenting situations he found distressing or depressing; his lens was an idealistic one, capturing only moments that he felt that he wanted to remember: 'I might have collected millions of images, methodically, but it would have cost me countless days without pleasure.' (Doisneau, 8, 2010) His photo book Paris is interspersed with brief musings on situations he once came across and Paris as it used to be – what one might consider a 'textual snapshot':

'The Ghost train at the annual Foire du Trône. The ride is noisily mechanical – from the outside, you can hear the screams, then suddenly: bang! The door opens and out comes a car with its terrified occupants. People pay good money to be scared out of their wits.' (Doisneau, 300, 2010)

In this sense he portrays Paris through a set of rose-coloured glasses, painting Paris as a city of effusive character and joy. Just as Klein does, Doisneau walks the streets filling up his 'basket of spectacles'; yet he does not hoard his spectacles indiscriminately, but rather waits patiently and plucks them from the city streets one by one.

Doisneau himself says that '...the technique of an aimless stroll – without timetable or destination – works like a charm, flushing out pictures from the non-stop urban spectacle.' (Doisneau, 1, 2010) Klein and Doisneau have both spent uncountable hours walking through their respective cities, coming to know not just the layouts of their streets but the thrum of life within it.



Les Halles (1968) and Les Les Tabliers de la Rue de Rivoli (1978), both by Robert Doisneau

Although they are only a miniscule representation of their respective photographers' work, the set of photos presented in the previous pages give a look at the way that Klein and Doisneau went about photographing where they lived. As mentioned before, Klein's photographs were hurried, hectic; whilst Doisneau's were taken with care and a sort of tenderness. The fruits of their city walks are revealed as their film develops, and with it we come to learn about not just Paris and New York but the men who photographed them.

Analysis

'For me walking has to do with exploration, a way of accommodating myself, of feeling at home ... Setting foot in a street makes it yours in a way that driving down it never does.' - Geoff Nicholson, *The Lost Art of Walking*, p. 17

Psychogeography, walking as mapping, and street photography all have one common thread: they use walking as a means to come to a better understanding of the city. Walking is elevated from a utilitarian act to an exploratory one; its potential for exploration and observation is used to reveal a side of the urban landscape that one might not usually see.

For the sake of an organised analysis it would make sense to come back to the questions asked in the introduction. Firstly: How does city walking affect walkers' perceptions of where they live? How do our perceptions of the city change as we take our time to walk through it, paying attention to what is around us?

Certainly this is a difficult question to answer in its entirety, as it would be impossible to ask every single person who enjoys walking as a hobby to give their thoughts on the matter. However, through various forms of research, one thing does become apparent: walking the city streets strengthens the emotional ties to the city through which one walks. The entire ethos of psychogeography was based on this fact; psychogeographers wandered the city guided purely by their emotions, taking note of which places made them feel sad, happy, nostalgic, and so on. Likewise, the work of street photographers William Klein and Robert Doisneau quite clearly shows how they reacted emotionally to their respective cities (Klein unhappily, Doisneau much less so). Esther Polak's *Amsterdam RealTime* gives us an example of how even simply seeing the routes we have taken can elicit an emotional response: when participants in the projects were shown where they had walked, they all revealed personal connections to the places they had been.

Secondly, how have artists and writers explored the act of city walking? What methods have they used; how have they recorded and shared their experiences? There are myriad answers to this question and, in a sense, the three cases studies presented do answer it to an extent. From the research undertaken it seems clear that two main ways that creative practitioners have used walking stand out: firstly, as a medium in and of itself, and secondly, as a means of going about other creative acts, and of inspiration.

It could be said that the Lettrists were the first to treat city walking not as an act, but as an art medium: their psychogeographic experiments invited people to use the city streets as their canvas, their walks as mark making. Amsterdam Realtime is a rather literal interpretation of this: its participants' various walking routes created a map of Amsterdam over a length of time. Most others have used walking as a jumping-off point for inspiration, documenting not their actual movements but what they saw and experienced as they walked. Psychogeographers charted their emotional reaction to the city around them; Klein and Doisneau photographed the people and places that they saw. Francis Alÿs's Seven Walks could be considered a combination of both walking as mark-making and walking as content-gathering: his piece includes not only routes he took but also what he saw, heard, and experienced along the way.

To list every single art piece, essay, and experiment involving city walking would be tedious and unnecessary, but it is clear that many people have seen city walking as both a way to make art and a way to inspire it. What is particularly intriguing is the fact that city walking is so simple as a concept, yet yields so many different interpretations, analyses, and ideas. Five people could be told to head out for a walk in the city and to make a creative piece about it, and in all likelihood each person would return with something completely different.

Lastly, how can the average walker be encouraged to pay attention to how, where, and why they walk?

This question is perhaps the most curious, the most difficult: there is no one right way to get someone to do something we want them to. Certainly the benefits of walking in and of itself are easy to promote – it gets us exercising, it calms us down. Yet getting people to pay attention to the way they walk is another matter entirely.

A common thread running through all three case studies seems to be the act of approaching city walking as a form of exploration and of play – that is, people go out walking because there were interesting things to do, see, and learn. Robert Doisneau’s photography demonstrates this – looking at his photos, one can clearly sense the sheer joy that he took in rambling the streets of Paris, camera in hand, looking for yet another playful scene to capture. The maps of both Francis Alÿs and the psychogeographers, too, are an example of this: why go for a normal walk when you can give yourself an arbitrary rule to make it more interesting, such as walking only on the shady side of the street or walking a path in an unusual geometric shape?

With this in mind, one could perhaps frame city walking not as something that one should do, but that one can do; an activity rather than an obligation. Certainly it is easy to say that city dwellers owe it to themselves and others to take their time learning the city streets, but such pressure is unnecessary: people respond much better to the idea of play. Were a manifesto of some sort to be proposed, it would likely be something along the lines of – ‘Take to the streets! Go somewhere new! Find something silly!’ or thereabouts.

Yet a manifesto would at the same time constitute a movement, a group of people thinking all the same – and city walking is a different experience for each person, an endeavour to be undertaken at one’s discretion. Let us leave it as it is; tell people of its joys and then let them discover it for themselves. For as these three case studies make clear, city walking is an individual act, one that must be undertaken and explored independently.

Conclusion

'I walked everywhere in the balmy days and nights of May, amazed at how many possibilities could be crammed within the radius of those walks and thrilled by the idea that I could just wander out the front door to find them.' - Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, p. 171

The conclusion I have drawn from my research is a rather open-ended one, one that leaves me with just as many questions as answers. Yet I do not find this to be a bad thing at all; were my research wrapped up neatly and my questions answered simply, I would have felt that I had not explored the subject nearly enough.

As a whole, I have come to realise that city walking is an entirely personal endeavour. No two people will walk the same route, see the same things, feel the same way about their experiences. One person might photograph what they see; another might photograph it; still another might make a map of where they go. One person may come to realise after some time walking that they actually quite hate the city they live in, or love it, or feel ambivalent about it. It is all up to the walker to decide how and why they go about walking, and what they make of it.

I have also found that walking mindfully in the city enables us to learn about where we live and make emotional connections to the places we go. Many artists and writers have explored this – so many, in fact, that it was a chore narrowing down which ones to include in this essay.

There are endless ways to walk a city and even more ways to go about documenting it; one cannot walk the city 'wrongly'. A city is vast, and there are many things to be learnt from within it – about the city, ourselves, and how the two relate.

Finally, I realised (although frankly I did already know this) that city walks are simply a wonderful way to spend one's time. There is much to be seen, much to learn, places to explore – the city pulses with adventure and is right

at our fingertips. I noted very happily that not one author, artist, or designer that I studied made what could be considered poor use of their time walking the streets. Even William Klein, who absolutely loathed New York, managed to squeeze something positive out of his experiences.

It is widely known that modern cities are being built more for motorised transportation and ease of use, walking falling by the wayside as something that people generally 'have' to do. Yet there is no need to take a preachy tone, imploring people to 'get out there' and 'reclaim the city,' for it is already ours: it always has been. We learn this and appreciate this when we walk it.

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