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Stockholm, slowly, still

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abstract

The urban tourist has a quite particular sensibility, mode of behaviour, and way of seeing and sensing the city. This is often the result of mediation and negotiation between tourist media, specifically the tourist map, and the actual lived terrain. But this gap - between an abstract cartographic representation, and an embodied sensory experience - is not the void or lacunae it is sometimes made out to be. In fact it is sketched through and mediated in a number of ways - through the taking of photographic records, through the commercialised regulation of the tourist gaze, and through the materiality of the map itself, as an artefact, one which tears, smudges, frays, and becomes worn with use.

This paper proposes to use experimental writing practices to attempt a new mode of representing and narrativising urban experience, between map and territory. Written from the point of view of an embodied, reflexive tourist, it will also be an experiential and impressionist observation of tourist behaviour in practice. Using both the writerly form and scholarly content of Eeva Jokinen and Soile Veijola's seminal essay, 'The Body in Tourism,' as a point of departure, and drawing upon the author's own experiences as a tourist in the city of Stockholm, the paper will attempt to bridge between the theoretical discipline of tourism studies, and recent innovations in writing space, place, and experience, in testing a new mode of representing the city.

paper

It is nine o'clock in the morning on Saturday the fifteenth of December, 2007. The location is Stockholm. The temperature is zero degrees centigrade, which I know because you have just excitedly pointed it out, on the thermometer mounted outside the dining room window. It would be possible to specify the barometric pressure as well, and the wind speed, but that would be pushing the point, as though this technical detail could convey a certain facticity, as though specificity itself offered truth, veracity, verisimilitude. But of course that's not what we are about here, not at all.

I am feeling delicate. We were up talking late into the night, catching up, and since we haven't seen one another for a long time the conversation was rollicking, kaleidoscopic; we were delighted with being here, together, in this strange cold place, now. I was drinking red wine. We talked about Sydney, our hometown, about its reputation as a beautiful, superficial, libertine city, well suited to the mores of international tourism. We talked about how hot it is there now, how people will be engaging in the minor transgression of minor taboos - excessive drinking, sex, shopping. We know a number of people from here who are on holiday there right now, including the colleague whose apartment we are borrowing for the weekend. It's obvious what they are doing there: escaping the

cold, they have gone to expose and revel in their own bodies, to be tourists in a place where there is less of a discrepancy between the comfort of the flesh and the condition of the world.

You were more moderate than me last night, and now you are full of beans, in equal measure to my blurry state. I swallow some painkillers and we talk about how to spend the day. The point of meeting here in Stockholm is to discuss this paper we have agreed to write together, and to give in Glasgow in January; to plan it out and talk it through, but also to walk around and be tourists ourselves in the city that is its subject.

I have prepared a self-conscious little speech for you about my preliminary ideas for the paper, and begin haltingly: it seems to me there is a hinge between the deliberately constructed subjectivity of feminist writing practice, the rise of an 'agency of mapping' in critical cartography, and the thread of tourism theory which focuses on embodiment, both of people doing tourism and people observing and theorising them. My idea for our project is to reinsert and re-present the sensory elements that official cartography, and tourism theory, both tend to omit, but which remain in traces in both tourist maps, and in experimental ficto-critical writing. My speech peters out; it's too early for this kind of talk. But you are nodding encouragingly, and add kindly that we could think about questions of form and genre in written representation, about the conventions of academic writing as themselves an object of examination. We could seize and wield the first person pronoun, attempt to render the scholarly text opaque and explicitly constructed, rather than the (supposedly) transparent, unmediated and universal voice of the disembodied, third person monologue text. But I have fallen silent. This is new work for me and I'm nervous, it seems that there are so many ways to get it wrong: too self-consciously clever or cute, too contrived or too fictitious, too fruity or too trivial. I plod into the bathroom.

While I brush my teeth you are poking through the bookshelves, pulling things out and reading at random. You quote Alexis Pontvik,

'The ability of cities to speak to the senses varies. Stockholm's frigid beauty is well preserved. The missing sensuality reveals a materialistic mentality. Built form in Sweden is for the most part seen as "property," a question of so many square metres.'¹

But, you ask loudly over my toothscrubbing, is there really a 'missing sensuality' here? Isn't it a bit too easy to equate cold with frigidity, with a lack of sensation, feeling, desire, just as it is too easy to equate heat with rampant hedonism? I emerge, clean-toothed, and am pondering a response when I am stopped short by the sight of your suitcase, lying open on the floor. It is stuffed full of the books you have brought to inform our thinking: theoretical texts and cultural analyses, urban studies and sociology and tourism theory. I feel a queasy lurch of anxiety just looking at them. But for today we are leaving the books in the bag, we are going out to walk and talk and be tourists ourselves. We are taking just one essay with us: Veijola and Jokkinen's 'The Body in Tourism', heavily annotated and underlined, dog-eared and beginning to escape from its staples, it is the touchstone for what we want to do here, and thus something to be kept close, used as another kind of guidebook and map for the day's rambling discussions.

In their paper Veijola and Jokinen imagine taking their scholarly texts with them to Mallorca, destination for a particularly Scandinavian ritual of package tourism, taking the texts *there*, 'to see what they would tell us in the time and space of tourism, instead of *here*, in the time and space of

¹ Alexis Pontvik, 'Memento Metropolis in Stockholm 1998', *Memento Metropolis: An Art Exhibition About The City and The Memory*, exhibition catalogue, Stockholm, 1998, p. 246

sociological discourse.² I had an idea that we might reverse their trajectory, going from a beachy summer in Sydney to the winter urbanism of Stockholm, to reinscribe the touristic body and its senses in the city. Admittedly this does not seem too promising, on the face of it, in this climate – swaddled and wrapped, we might seem to be exactly the mobile eye on a stalk that tourism theory supposes. The principle of prophylaxis, installing a barrier between the (vulnerable, warm) body and the (harsh, cold) world would seem to bring a level of numbness, of literal anaesthesia, the loss of sensation. But I am enthusiastic about a phenomenology of cold, of the ice and frost that is so novel and exciting to us both. You tuck Veijola and Jokinen's essay into one coat pocket and the tourist map into the other, and we prepare to leave the apartment.

The sky is a dull low grey, the light dim. There is no sign of sun, or of snow. Stepping out of the lobby we are suddenly and shockingly submerged in cold. It is strangely intimate, its chilly fingers reaching down the neck and through the folds of your coat. It doesn't seem enough to say it is cold, the abstraction of that, its bald lack of evocation. And anyway, to the Swedes this doesn't even rate, zero is quite warm. But for me it is a shock, this cold which is so much more enveloping than you could ever suspect from looking out through the window of a warm and tightly insulated apartment, the strange double-glazed silence of which gives a feeling of absolute distanciation from the world. To someone from another climate, it seems like such cold should be something you could see from afar, or smell, or taste, not the strangely abstract quality that you know by looking up the weather forecast on the internet. My nose immediately begins to run.

We start to walk, turning right on Asogatan towards the area south of Folkungsgatan known as SoFo. I notice that the cars sound different here – they are fitted with tyres that will grip on ice, which make a continuous clicking, crushing sound as each small metal stud hits the road surface. We cross Gotgatan and pass vendors setting up a stall to sell Christmas trees, and through a farmers market, smoked meats, bread, cabbages. We pass a young father wheeling a child completely wrapped up in a puffy red suit, only the face visible, and that face is also red, and emits a piercing wail. I think about the vertiginous feeling I suddenly had yesterday when a colleague referred to her 'winter coat.' Where I come from that is a tautology; every coat is a winter coat. It was disorienting to realise that here there is a whole gradation of coats, a phenomenology of gloves and mittens, distinctions between 'good' hats and 'bad;' a culture of cold that is strange to us.

I am wearing two jumpers, a jacket, and a long woollen coat, as much clothing as I have ever worn in my life. I feel like a deep-sea diver, or an astronaut. Fine motor skills are lost and small tasks become clumsy. I have to turn my whole torso to see whether a car is coming, or to speak to you, walking beside me. Bodily gestures are exaggerated. But I also enjoy the monastic aspect, of walking, hooded; the bowed head, the clasped hands, the turning inward. The many layers do not always prevent sensation – for instance the feeling of the thermal leggings beneath my jeans has a strangely prosthetic effect, as though I have a new layer of hypersensitive fabric skin. While some of the faculties tend to be muffled – it is hard to really smell the city in this climate – others are intensified. So is my attention to the sensory organs themselves - I have never been so aware of my nostrils, for instance, or the tops of my ears. The fingers come to seem like delicate fleshy anemones that could snap off in an instant. I shoot a sidelong glance at you, so muffled that you are almost unrecognisable. You have tucked your neck down into your scarf like a roosting chicken, but your eyes are still visible, and they look startled.

I see that, like me, you have dressed up for the day's activities – we are conscious that our usual casual-scruffy clothing would immediately mark us out here as tourists, and without admitting it have each attempted camouflage. We have avoided certain sartorial giveaways: hiking boots,

² Soile Veijola and Eeva Jokinen, 'The Body in Tourism', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 11, 1994, p. 125.

colourful gore-tex jackets, backpacks, and your camera is slipped unobtrusively into your pocket. I try out a provocation, quoting Jody Berland, '[l]ike everyone, I have travelled, and like everyone, I hate tourists.'³ You don't miss a beat, retorting immediately with: '[t]he tourist is an unenviable figure: ugly, inauthentic, desperately out of synch'.⁴ I try a sucker punch with Chris Rojek and John Urry, that 'the mere sightseer has come to be universally denigrated, as someone who is necessarily superficial in their appreciation of peoples and places'.⁵ You snort. We agree to move slowly, in deference to my sore head, and to look for a café where we can have a coffee and consult the tourist map.

We are both feeling a little dislocated, through the simple mechanics of turning the seasons upside down, cars driving on the other side of the road, jetlag, being surrounded by a language we don't understand. We pause for a moment to situate ourselves, to plot out the coordinates of our subject positions. You go first: you are middle class and educated; you know some of the streams and bayous of theory, you lean towards the analytic and the deconstructive, you know the scholarly conventions well enough to risk trying to bend them. You also have a roving eye. I follow on from this: I like to read tourism theory, but I also like to be a tourist, to do tourist things in all their grotesquery and commodification. I am not only distanced and detached; I am also an enthusiastic amateur. I like postcards and snow-domes, and not just ironically, for their value as jokey kitsch. You nod, and add: we are both women (we ponder how strange and radical is it to actually specify this). We are both also architects, trained in a primarily visual mode of representing the world, a strictly disciplined regime of aesthetic taste.

We begin to climb the long hill at the Eastern end of Södermalm, between five storey apartment buildings, advent candles in every window. We turn right up a set of slippery timber steps towards the Sofia Kyrka and its surrounding park. There is frost on the oak leaves on the ground, a thin lichen tinges the tree trunks an extraordinary shade of bright green. Everything is still, there is not a bird, not a squirrel to be seen; we find ourselves lowering our voices. The trees are stark black linear patterns against the sky, with the occasional darker knot of a nest. We compare the silhouettes of the different tree species – the birch has the finest linework, the greatest contrast between branch and twig. We wander around the park for a while, watching people with their dogs. A woman in a pink furry hat talks to her ridgeback in Swedish. You find a frozen puddle and stand on its surface with a look of glee, bouncing lightly to hear it crack, to see the bubbles move beneath the surface.

A piece of paper blows past in the wind, and I stop it with a stamp of my foot. On it is written a passage by Jane Rendell, which I read aloud

'There is a kind of thinking that corresponds to walking, one that follows an itinerary, keeps up a certain pace and remains in constant motion, moving from one thing to another, engaging only in passing; the external world acts as a series of prompts for more philosophical musings. The spatial story acts as a theoretical device that allows us to understand the urban fabric in terms of narrative relationships between spaces, times, and subjects. The notion of 'spatial stories' can be connected to surrealist wanderings, to the situationist derive as well as to more recent theoretical ideas about nomadology.'⁶

³ Jody Berland, 'Travelling Correspondence: Notes on Tourism', *Border/Lines*, vol 12, Summer 1988, p. 9.

⁴ David Vanderburgh and Hilde Heynen, 'Itinerary', in *Tourism Revisited: International Colloquium on Architecture and Cities # 2*, The Network for Theory, History, and Criticism of Architecture (NeTHCA), Brussels, 2007, p. 7.

⁵ Chris Rojek and John Urry, 'Transformations of Travel and Theory', in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. Chris Rojek and John Urry, p. 7

⁶ Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2006, p. 188.

This sounds pretty good to us both, so we take our spatial story along a winding path through the old quarter of cobbled streets and timber houses, painted in the distinctive Swedish red oxide. One of the windows overhead opens and a woman leans out, shaking a white sheepskin rug vigorously from side to side, then disappearing inside again. We are walking carefully on the rough cobbles, wary of twisted ankles. You stop to pat a cat, which regards you with grave suspicion. You ask me about the question of tense, whether we should be present, as though we are actually here, now; or past, dawdling behind ourselves, hanging on our own coat-tails; or even projected forward, so we pursue our future-perfect selves, following our own trail of breadcrumbs through the city. Is it happening, you ask? Did it happen? Might it happen? Is this based on a true story, or what? I can't answer these questions. I am thinking of the peculiar space of academic conferences, how it couldn't be further from the world of tourism. The conference exists in a kind of timeless no-place of ghostly and bodiless minds, wafted together, in spite of the actual effects of halitosis, bad coffee and rumbling stomachs. This condition is usually only reversed at the conference dinner, under the influence of alcohol, when bodies intrude again. Time passes. We keep walking.

We come across a café and enter, both of us temporarily immobilised as our glasses fog up in the warm interior. You go to the counter to order while I spread out the 'Welcome to Stockholm Map' on the table, feeling gauche and embarrassed, wishing it was less conspicuous, thinking about my sheepishness in using a map in public. It should indicate autonomy, being orientated, plotting a confident path in time and space. But really it just seems to advertise vulnerability, that you are unanchored, that you don't know where you are. My thermal leggings begin to feel hot and itchy in the warmth.

A passing waitress looks over my shoulder at my map and, balancing a pile of plates in one hand and a stack of glasses in the other, observes that it is now commonplace to assert that maps are not neutral artefacts. They direct and persuade, she says, they advertise and cajole. But, she continues, shifting her weight casually to one hip, who would ever expect a tourist map to be entirely comprehensive, entirely 'truthful' or unbiased? Implicit in the tourist map is the idea of an edited view, that it does not show 'all' of the possible places or routes, but only the 'best' or 'most interesting' ones, as defined by tourist operators with clearly and evidently vested interests. I am staring at her, impressed. She goes on, arguing that tourist maps provide a valuable case of a knowingly and acceptedly subjective map – if it is true that '[m]aps simplify the world somewhat in the way a heavy snowfall does,'⁷ she cites Robert Harbison, then a tourist map shows the world after a particularly heavy fall – highly abstracted, simplified, with all of the extraneous detail of the lived city blanketed over. She concludes: in tourist maps it is not interesting to work at revealing omissions or 'lies', since that is the very stuff of which such maps are made. What is far more revealing is to understand what exactly is at stake in their partiality. With this she retrieves a precariously balanced teaspoon and waltzes back to the kitchen.

I return to contemplating the map, and notice that you have already started to annotate it with dots and crosses and cryptic acronyms. You come back with the coffee and a pair of ciabattas, chevre and walnut and honey; you know my taste. You suggest that we take it away, eat as we walk, since the pace of the argument is dragging, slowing the pace of the narrative here. I have begun to perk up, the painkillers are beginning to work. But as you lay a finger on the map and begin to trace the 'sights' you have planned for us today, I slide immediately back into lethargy. My sluggishness has a perversely liberating effect – I throw aside my customary touristic conscientiousness, my sense of obligation to the must-see list. I don't want to see the sights today, I say, even if Lippard is right in saying that 'anxiety is a basic condition of tourism, for there can never be as many minutes in the day as there are sights to be taken in. The turns not taken may haunt us to the point of casting a pall

⁷ Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1977, p.127.

over the whole trip. We will probably never be back; there are no second chances.⁸ What about working against that, I ask – what could be more radical than a boring account of an aimless tourist experience? You look sulky, but we agree to head in the general direction of the centre, and see what happens. That is enough of a destination, enough of a narrative impetus. We struggle back into our outer layers and sidle out the door.

You are navigating, consulting the map, while I am happy to follow vaguely along, looking around, eating my sandwich. We are overtaken by a woman dressed in high black boots, walking purposefully, towing a wheeled suitcase which makes a complex percussive music as it crosses the cracks and the seams of the footpath. An old man walks slowly on the other side of the road, carrying a plastic bag of walnuts. I begin to wonder why there is such a lack of scholarly work on urban tourism. Is it because the city is such a complex and layered entity, that it is hard to distinguish the tourists from the locals, that the boundaries between them tend to blur in the crowd? I try out some rhetorical questions on you. What is the difference between the sensory experience of an urban tourist and a local, and why has the local experience of the city been so privileged? You seem to take this as a cue, and dutifully quote Walter Benjamin, ‘The superficial inducement, the exotic, the picturesque has an effect only on the foreigner. To portray a city, a native must have other, deeper motives – motives of one who travels into the past instead of into the distance.’⁹ But that’s a case in point! I say excitedly, waving my coffee in a gloved hand. The ‘native’ occupant is seen to have access to the true and real place, beyond appearances, because of their haptic attention to it over time, and especially through a distraction that renders the place familiar on the level of bodily experience. The tourist, on the other hand, has neither time nor distraction. But why does that mean that the literature has deprived the tourist of having a body at all? And anyway, I splutter, what’s so wrong with the ‘superficial inducement’?

You whip out the ‘Body in Tourism’ essay and answer through Veijola and Jokinen: that the literature of tourism theory has placed a large emphasis on vision, on technologies of sight such as photography, and on the notion of the tourist gaze as appropriative and consuming. But, as you argue that they argue, this often occurs at the expense of the other senses, and of the body as the site and locus of these senses. On the one hand this exclusion of the lived body is highly counterintuitive, given that the point of much (perhaps even most) actual tourist activity is precisely the pleasures of the flesh. But then, at the same time, it is not at all surprising, given the general banishment of the body (in its apparently specific, ‘feminine’ corporeal materiality) from academic discourse, in favour of the abstract, supposedly ‘masculine’ universal intellectual faculties of the mind. You argue that tourism theory has tended to skip over the actual subjects and objects (and especially the bodies) of tourists, engaging in a classically dry treatment of the topic in the name of rigour and scholarship. To approach tourist practices, behaviours, and theory from the point of view of those who are actually doing it, then, is a radical project. Veijola and Jokinen are assisted in this by gender theory, one of the few established fields in which the body is not excluded or ignored, but is made central, in its relation to identity, existential phenomenology, sexuality, and affect. So, I say slowly, in light of that, and after Judith Butler, perhaps we might think of tourism, like gender, as ‘a corporeal style, an “act,” as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where “performative” suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning’?¹⁰ You shrug. We continue to walk. Time passes.

⁸ Lucy Lippard, *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art, and Place*, The New Press, New York, 1999, p. 10.

⁹ Walter Benjamin (Benjamin 1981: 194.) *Gesammelte Schriften. Band III. Kritiken und Rezensionen. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp* [check this ref]

¹⁰ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York, 1990, excerpt reprinted in Ann Cahill and Jennifer Hansen eds., *Continental Feminism Reader*, Oxford, United Kingdom: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003, p. 44. Italics in original.

We emerge from the residential quarter onto a high terrace overlooking the distant islands of Skeppsholmen and Djurgard. There is a fine layer of tiny stick-like ice crystals on the benches, we spend some time examining it, wondering if this might be a falling frost. A ferry slides slowly by across the water. Two other women are already there, looking at the view, and as we pass by I overhear one of them remark that she has been reading Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, that

‘Sometimes tourism seems to be understood as little more than the collection of disparate and unconnected sights which are given an objectified form in travel brochures, postcards and photographs. Furthermore, the promotion and practice of collecting sights can dominate the very pattern of travel, which is often organised to facilitate fleeting views of spectacular scapes.’¹¹

She seems to know what she’s talking about. I glance covertly to see your reaction, but you are fiddling with your own camera, oblivious. It is windy up this high, and as we start down the long slope towards Slussen the cold is coming up through my shoes. My hands feel very dry inside my gloves, my fingertips playing idly with the small pills of wool forming inside. Since you keep stopping to take photographs I take the ‘Body in Tourism’ essay from you and walk ahead, striding down the hill.

I read as I walk, not looking where I am going. The essay is structured around a brilliant artifice, that after the authors have travelled to Mallorca they find there, on vacation, a whole panoply of tourism researchers, watching each other watching the tourists, but also engaging in the classic rituals of this kind of package holiday – sunbathing (and getting sunburnt), drinking (and getting drunk), flirting (and being flirted with). Veijola and Jokkinen, in their ficto-critical narrative, engage in a number of conversations (not to say altercations) with the assembled scholars, taking issue with various aspects of their work, and exposing in particular the thing that is glaringly missing from the literature: an account of actual corporeal bodily experience. I look back and see that you are amusing yourself with your foggy breath – blowing long plumes of it into the air. The digital temperature gauge on the Gondola reads minus two degrees. A lot of people are wearing very tight jeans, slung low, and slim-fitting jackets. I feel a shudder of empathetic cold just looking at them. My nose is running again. A cold tear slides unnoticed, half way down my nose, before I brush it away.

I ponder why I am so charmed by this essay, its self-deprecating tone, and the intimacy of the conversation between its two author protagonists. It skips between genres – now a diary, now a travelogue, now an argument, now a gossipy chat in a bar. I like the way it collapses distinctions between ‘high’ abstract theory and ‘low’ corporeal embodiment, between incisive analysis and the trivial moments, the ‘social dressage’ of actual tourist experience – the sunburn, the hangover, the faux pas, the flirtation, the dance. It wields the sharpest of critical sensibilities, but with a touch as deft and light as a pickpocket’s.

I linger on the bridge, looking over. The water is black, and highly reflective. It is impossible to tell how deep it might be. Glancing back I see that you are jogging to catch up with me. The light has become perceptibly duller, the mud is laced with a white crust. Sometimes you can only tell there is ice on the footpath because the surface changes from matte to gloss. You catch up and point out the powerful atmospheric effect of the seagulls’ cries. We only know European birdsong from films, where it is used deliberately to evoke a particular type of atmospheric mood – black birds are aural

¹¹ Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, ‘Tourism and the Photographic Eye’, in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. Chris Rojek and John Urry, p. 178

shorthand for threat, sea gulls signify loneliness and desolation. It all feels very portentous when you come across such a soundtrack in real life, and we look around warily.

We enter Gamla Stan, the old town, and walk up and down the crooked back alleys, peering surreptitiously into the windows. My telephone rings and it is my father, calling from a warm late evening in Adelaide, to ask me about Christmas presents. Really I would like a methodology for Christmas, but I don't say that. We wander through the streets until we find a market and watch the pony rides, a fat little Shetland stamping grumpily along in a wild cloud of mane and forelock. Two women walk along swinging a small boy between them, laughing with delight. I buy us each a cup of glogg, loading them up with extra sultanas and cinnamon, and we drink this exceptionally sweet and alcoholic mix standing up at a high table, watching the people. Swilling the last slurry around the bottom of my glass, I dare to say that it all seems rather authentic. I notice that your cheeks are pinker than usual, but whether from my dangerous statement or the alcohol I don't know. We leave the markets and walk on.

The main drag of Drottninggatan is thronged with crowds, and you say irritably that tourists don't seem to know, or care about, the patterns of urban pedestrian etiquette – they move too slowly, they stop often and unpredictably, they walk on the wrong side of the footpath and stand on the wrong side of the escalator. They get in the way. Tourism seems to bring out the misanthropist in you.

You are looking up, above eye level, like the well-trained architect that you are. I am tired and cold now, and walk looking downward like a beachcomber, as though 'botanizing on the asphalt'.¹² Apart from the usual cigarette butts and dog turds the footpath is strewn with small tea-bag-like sachets of snus, a peculiarly Scandinavian way of taking nicotine, where you tuck the little packet of tobacco up against the gum beneath your top lip. Presumably then when it is finished you toss it on the ground, and now that I come to look at it there is a lot of spit down there too, and a lot of the small-calibre gravel they use here to stop you slipping when it is icy. It is a canvas of detritus and grit, formlessness, of matter out of place. You follow my gaze downwards, and ask me whether it is a specific anti-aesthetic sensibility that finds pleasure in a picturesque dilapidation and decay, or is it that the ugly and banal have come to seem more authentic than the spectacular and beautiful? I say that in any case these days it seems an embarrassing cliché to be seen photographing a sewer access pipe cover, even more than a 'legitimate' sight, as though caught trying to sneak into the house of authenticity through the back door.

We reach Sergels Torg and the House of Culture. It is packed with people, playing chess and reading newspapers, sociably, in the warmth. It is impossible to tell who is a tourist and whom a local. We travel up the escalators, somewhat melancholy, climbing to the top floor to look out over the city. The light has faded into a dim blue twilight, even though it is only 3 o'clock in the afternoon. We stand close to the glass, looking down at the city. I ask aloud what we're actually going to *do* for this paper, whether we are any closer than we were when we started, what is the plan and the point of it all. I say that I'm not sure the category of 'tourist' is even useful in an urban context, or perhaps whether everyone exists on a scale of being a stranger. The things we have done here today – walk around, take photographs, drink coffee – are very similar to the things we do in Sydney all the time. I wonder whether this is why urban tourism studies is itself a kind of *terrain vague* within the broader discourse of tourism, an ill-defined gap in the wider field, since in the city tourists are almost indistinguishable from everyone else. There is a pause. We are both silent, looking down. You pull out and unfold the tourist map, which is frayed now, starting to tear from the edges, rupture at the corners. I think to myself that, in use, maps are not really so flat. They are

¹² Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans Harry Zohn, Verso, London, 1973, p. 36.

scrunched and folded and refolded and written over. They make a new origami city every time they are refolded into a new configuration. You gather up this delicate concertina and we turn to descend the escalator and go home.