Walking in the City: Psychogeography in *Arcadia*

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Walking in the City: Psychogeography in *Arcadia*

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by
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To my parents and my family
献给我的父母和家人
Acknowledgement

If writing is compared to a journey, I will never know what place the path will led me to. Just like a flâneur, I walk, observe, collage fragmented thoughts together day after day, and try hard to form my own map. What is meaningful is not the destination I finally arrive at, but the process of exploring. Writing for me is also a process of honestly facing one’s self. No matter what degree I have got to, I know, I have experienced a special journey and my living mark will never disappear.

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國立政治大學英國語文學系碩士班
碩士論文提要

論文名稱：城市漫遊：《阿卡迪亞》中的心理地圖

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論文提要內容:

當代英國小說家吉姆·克雷斯（Jim Crace）在《阿卡迪亞》（Arcadia, 2008）這部城市小說中，以一位隱身人群的專欄作家為敘述者，從城市居民的心理為出發點描寫城市空間，並以傳統露天市場被改建為一現代化購物商場之事件為主軸，刻劃城市居民經歷生存空間遭強制改變的衝擊之後，仍然找到適應的方式和創造空間運用的可能性。本文主要採取甄克斯（Chris Jenks）對城市漫遊者（flâneur）的論述，以及情境主義的心理地圖（psychogeography）、漂移（dérive）、異軌（détournement）、及景觀（spectacle）的理論概念，剖析克雷斯如何以都市漫遊文本，呈現人和空間的互動，凸顯城市居民和其生存空間實為一生生不息的有機體，並揭露都市空間規劃背後暗藏視覺操縱，藉以反對空間商品化和景觀化。論文第一章主要借助甄克斯的都市漫遊者論述以及情境主義的心理地圖和漂移理論，闡述敘述者打破心理和地理的界線，以不同的人物心理呈現一幅城市拼貼。第二章以異軌理論為出發點，闡釋此小說將阿卡迪亞的文學概念和都市公共空間議題並置，一方面解構溫室和商場中的鄉村實為自然的複製品，另一方面強調城市生命力在於多樣性以及居民與空間的互動。第三章接地引情境主義的景觀概念，著重討論社會關係和城市的空間生產被資本主義塑造的景觀所滲透控制，並強調敘述者以漂移和異軌的空間實踐與其對抗之外，也刻劃了都市居民在景觀的控制之下，仍然找到新的出口，保有空間運用的自主性。

關鍵字：《阿卡迪亞》、城市空間、城市漫遊者、城市漫遊文本、心理地圖
Abstract

Jim Crace’s novel Arcadia delineates a city from the perspective of human mentality by means of an incognito critical social observer. The displacement of a modernized shopping mall for a traditional open market is the most important incident that causes a great impact upon the urban people. In this thesis, I would like to use Chris Jenks’ analysis of the flâneur and situationist concepts of psychogeography, dérive, détournement, and the spectacle to analyze how Crace presents the interaction between man and space which is threatened by the visual manipulation hidden behind urban planning. He also points out that urban inhabitants and their living environment form an organic whole that will keep evolving through their mutual influence. Applying Jenks’ discussion on the flâneur and situationist concepts of psychogeography and dérive, I would first show that Crace breaks the boundary between psychology and geography to present a collage of different interpretations based upon several characters’ mentalities. Then, the construction of the new shopping mall named Arcadia brings up the juxtaposition of the topos Arcadia and the issue of urban public space. With the practice of détournement, the narrator deconstructs the countryside in the shopping mall as the duplication of nature and emphasizes that the life of the city does not reside in the spectacular sites but in diverse and mutual interactions between urban space and its inhabitants. With spatial practices of dérive and détournement, the narrator not only criticizes that both social relationship and urban space are saturated with separation caused by the spectacle, but also makes known that urban people still hold the autonomy of creating alternative spatial use even under the dominant representation of the spectacle in the city.

Keywords: Arcadia, urban space, the flâneur, textual flânerie, psychogeography
Introduction

Jim Crace is a contemporary English writer and the winner of many awards who not only owns a substantial readership but also sustains the high regard of professional critics. He has consistently in his works created an imaginary, self-sufficient world which not only shines the brilliance of originality but also shows its parallel relation to the real world we inhabit. Therefore, he is regarded as a powerful political writer because he writes stories as fables to bring up the essential and universal themes, and his fictions resonate with our contemporary life. Before Crace starts his career as a writer of fiction, he has worked as a journalist and foreign correspondent for sixteen years. It is clear that his earlier jobs influence his subsequent writings because he is good at specifying a space or a place in a particular time, which plays an active and suggestive role in his writings.

Crace’s first four books, Continent (1986), The Gift of Stones (1988), Arcadia (1992), and Signals of Distress (1994), are about communities in transition, and the next two novels, Quarantine (1997) and Being Dead (1999), are considered matched pair. In Quarantine, Crace re-imagines an episode from the New Testament, Jesus’ forty days in the desert. Being Dead begins with a brutally murdered couple on a beach, and Crace delineates the biological process of death and decomposition. He talks about the sacred and the secular in both novels. Later, The Devil’s Larder (2001) comes in sixty-four short stories, all of them about food and humanity. Genesis (2003) is a character study of an actor who is cursed by fertility. Crace’s new novel The Pest House (2007) is a love story set in a quasi-medieval America in the future. Adam Begley in the introduction of an interview with Jim Crace mentions that most of his works are “set in what has come to be known as Craceland, a place both strange and
familiar, historically specific and timeless” (184). Philip Tew also thinks that Crace accords his world of “unreal” the “direct determinacy of familiar ways of dealing with people and situations” (151). The fabulous in Crace’s novels is related to the real in our world, and his lies honestly present the human condition.

There are preoccupations and themes which recur in Jim Crace’s novels, and they show that his works gain the force of political critique in spite of dissimilar plots and locations. Critics have noticed that Crace persistently cares about the impact of change or development which is shown in the form of new technologies, the form of governance, or social organization. According to Tew, “[t]he imaginary and the narrative urge are central to the acts of storytelling that permeate Crace’s novels, and his fiction exists on the very margins of worlds in transition” (151). For instance, *The Gift of Stones* explores a stone-age community which is under the technological threat of the bronze age. In the novel *Arcadia*, we can see the contraries of the messy but organic pre-capitalist trade and the sterile, exploitative commercial environment of the new era. The establishment of the new gigantic glass-and-concrete mall named Arcadia to displace the traditional open market changes the way of trade, the classes of shoppers, and it also influences the lives of those original traders who sell in the old one. Crace records various physical details of an imagined city and captures the relationship between the urban environment and human behavior in anecdotes told by a society columnist and a flâneur. I argue that in *Arcadia*, Jim Crace, with the employment of the textual flânerie, disassembles the abstract coherence of a city and reveals the visual manipulation behind to resist the banality of urban life and the commodification of space, and most importantly, to highlight the organism which is formed by city people and their living environment.
I. *Arcadia: An Overview*

*Arcadia* is a novel that depicts urban environment and explores how urban inhabitants interacts with their living space. The most important incident that leads the plot and influences the fate of almost every character is the transformation of a traditional open market into a huge and arcade-like shopping mall. The owner of this market Victor, who has a humble start in this market and gradually builds up a huge fortune, decides to tear the old market down and makes the new one stand as his mark in the city. Rook, the street-wise ex-trader who works for Victor as his buffer in the market, opposes this plan and agitates traders’ resistance. The narrator is a flâneur-like journalist who merges himself in the crowd, observes, listens, and puts all the materials and criticism into his writing in the newspaper social column with the pseudonym Burgher. Therefore, the whole novel could be taken as his textual flânerie.

Crace separates this novel into four parts. The first part titled “The Soap Market” begins with the arrangement of a country-style lunch for Victor’s eighty-year-old birthday. Rook goes into the central green space of the market named the Soap Garden for picking some laurel branches as the material to make a birthday chair for his boss. Following Rook’s drifting steps, Burgher delineates several parts of the city: the attractive boutique streets, the dark and filthy tunnel that connects the new and the old districts, the central park Soap Garden, and the Soap Market which is inefficient but lively for commerce and social communities. The old district of the city called the Woodgate is full of Rook’s childhood memories, but now there is no neighborhood here because most of all move to the suburbs. When Rook walks through the tunnel, he is attacked by a countryman named Joseph who stumbles along in the city chasing after his ideal life. Besides, the guests invited to Victor’s birthday
lunch want to give him a statue which will be set in the garden. It is this suggestion that enkindles Victor’s ambition to rebuild the market into a grand memorial which is worthy of this statue.

In the second part “Milk and Honey,” the narration traces back to Victor’s childhood and the old Soap Market where he grows up. Victor’s mother Em, a young widow who migrates to the city from her native village, hopes to make a new life for her and her baby. Later, Em meets her sister Aunt who originally works as a maid for a rich person but gets sacked because of her uncontrollable personality. Both Em and Aunt beg to survive, the former in the Soap Market and the latter in the streets. Victor grows up listening to his mother’s idealized recollections of the countryside. After his mother dies in a fire set by the government to clear the slum area, Victor learns to fend himself, and later he even rarely go out of the towering office building called Big Vic. However, he can hardly free himself from the memory of a polished countryside with which he is imbued by Em and that of the terrifying fire which takes his mother’s life away. Burgher describes deeply into Victor’s psychology which is influenced by both the static, peaceful image of countryside and the transient urban scenes.

In the third part “Victor’s City,” Burgher depicts how urban people react when facing the change of their living space. Rook not only instigates traders to demonstrate and stop Victor’s plan but also secretly hires down-and-out Joseph to set a fire to market stalls which causes a riot. Despite Rook’s opposition and the protests of the market traders, the shopping mall is built and named Arcadia: Victor has left his mark, and it is “Victor’s City” as the title of Part Three expresses. Arcadia screens its customers and sets rules to keep a perfect situation. The narration in the fourth part “Arcadia” switches to the first point of view and it emphasizes Burgher’s observation
and criticism of Arcadia. It is a high-tech enclosure which imitates the countryside. Besides, he notices that the Soap Market is not completely eradicated. The traders who are evicted from the mall decide to set up an open market called the Soap Two, and it proves that the city continues evolving with its people. Finally, Burgher leaves the enclosed, glass-and-concrete mall and keeps walking in the city and enjoying the delight of the crowd.

II. The Issues in Arcadia

When it comes to Jim Crace’s Arcadia, critics would focus on discussing its language full of country image, the image of death, and its characters’ lack of depth. First of all, they think this novel as the accusation against the city for its exploiting the countryside. Crace in an interview says that “A fruit and vegetable market is the countryside imported into the city…It’s no coincidence that that book [Arcadia] is about the conflict between the city and the countryside” (Begley 197). Crace shows this conflict by reconstituting pastoral imagery in the urban context. For example, Crace describes a fit of asthma which attacks Rook: “The tree of passages, the branches, twigs, and sprays, which served the air sacs in his lungs, were swollen” (Crace 31). Besides, the crowd in the street is compared to “tadpoles in the stream,” and the crane of building sites is “mantis” (9). Mars-Jones states that “in fact virtually unique in a book so much given over to sophisticated urban recasting of natural imagery, is the criticism of the essence of cities, their bossy dependence on what lies outside them” (22). The most obvious expression of this criticism is presented by the countryman Joseph who newly arrived in the metropolis and sees the new surroundings: “What made this thirsty, ill-positioned city– too southerly to benefit from hops, too northerly for grapes– so rich and large? The answer crowded him at every step…A city with no natural virtues is reduced to trade…” (Crace 41). The
agricultural produce sold in the market nourishes the city, and Victor accumulates his wealth by controlling the market trading. The elimination of the traditional market does not mean that the city has gained the victory because the new shopping mall Arcadia gives people “a country walk right at the city’s heart” (231). Therefore, the country is simultaneously taken as the victim as well as the antagonist to the city, and the confliction between them will continue.

Second, the metaphor of death is also discussed by critics. According to Edward T. Wheeler, the monologue of the narrator “provokes a recollection of Et in Arcadia Ego:” “the greatest men, like the tallest buildings, make their marks by blocking out the sun” (26). He claims that “[i]n some fundamental way, this novel places at its center the struggle between life and death” (26). The threat of asthmatic attack that distresses Rook, Em’s struggle to survive with infant Victor, the city fires that take Em’s life away and maliciously set to the stalls, and the riot that breaks out right after the spreading of the fire, all of them imply that there is a shadow waiting in the city. However, in the last chapter of this novel, the rise of the Soap Two somehow represents a new life. Wheeler criticizes that “Jim Crace has found a form which celebrates the cycle of life in the city. His achievement is pungent but almost too self-regarding, too easily satisfied with the smell of mortality” (27). Wheeler thinks that death in cities nowadays has its roots in evil, but Crace simplifies it as the mortality everyone must face and transforms all the tragedies to a rebirth in a rush. However, I argue that city life includes the chaotic, dangerous, and evil side as well as the prosperous, active, and free side. Both of these two sides are what the flâneur attempts to examine and record. If we only emphasize the dark side such as the

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1 “Et in Arcadia Ego” most noticeably appears as the title of two paintings by Nicolas Poussin. They are pastoral paintings depicting shepherds who cluster around an austere tomb. This Latin phrase is usually interpreted as a momento mori (remember your mortality): “Even in Arcadia I exist.” The “I” refers to death, and “Arcadia” is understood as a utopian land.
repression caused by capitalism or bureaucracy, we might neglect the individual
autonomy and agency to deal with threats and resist restrictions.

Third, some critics regard *Arcadia* as a schematic construction and feel that the
characters lack depth. “The human cost of the enterprise,” Geoff Dyer states,
“becomes apparent when we see that Crace’s intentions are strangely similar to those
of the architect…who wins the contract to transform the market” (45). He thinks
Crace’s reconstruction of the city with natural imagery as similar to the establishment
of the countryside in Arcadia. He remarks that both Arcadia and this novel “suffocate
the natural life of the people it claims to shelter” (45). Besides, Philip Lopate
criticizes that *Arcadia* loses intensity compared with Jim Crace’s former novels. His
argument points out that Crace’s characters in this novel are “stock who never
develop any depth,” and that Crace “can only hover at a distance, summarizing the
action, ascribing playful epithets to each character, sweeping past the moment to get
to its emblematic meaning” (711). However, I would like to argue that the point of
view and writing style of the narrator Burgher, as an urban chronicler and society
columnist, conform not only to the fragmentary nature of urban experiences but also
to the image of the flâneur who appears as a detached observer. Therefore, those
characters are intentionally to be enigmatic.

Finally, Doris Teske in her article “Jim Crace’s *Arcadia*: Public Culture in the
Postmodern City” schematically brings up diverse ways of analyzing this novel such
as the possibility of reinventing the Arcadian myth in a city, the prevailing
commodification, and the conflicting discourses on the central public space. Inspired
by her discussion, I would like to go deep to the relationship between the city and its
inhabitants which, I think, is the most prominent in this novel. Although some critics
think the foreground of urban environment would sacrifice the human drama, I think
it provides the way to re-examine the meaning of living in a city, pieces together
fragments of urban life, and suggests urban people a way to get the intimacy with the
living environment.

III. Theoretical Approach

Jim Crace employs a sarcastic social observer who is also like a social historian
and political polemicist to highlight the relationship between people and urban
environment. I would first use Chris Jenks’ discussion on the flâneur in order to
analyze this observer, and then with situationist perspectives of dérive, détournement,
and the spectacle to further examine his criticism and the way to reconstruct the city
in his narration. According to Chris Jenks’ reestablishment of the analytic power of
the flâneur, this figure which, although under challenges such as commodification
and the speedy tempo of urban life, is able to analyze urban culture, expose social
problems, and criticize the fabrication of spectacle in the postmodern time of fugitive
meaning. Jenks emphasizes that the flâneur is a social phenomena, a way of
experiencing urban life and should not be restrained in concrete reality. This figure
seems to possess a power to walk at will but actually with an inquisitive wonder, and
he or she could be engaged in the crowd but not to be assimilated into the blind
rubber-neck who does not find the meaninglessness of daily life. Besides, this image
could be taken as “a narrative device” to analyze modern life and “an attitude towards
knowledge and its social context” because of its flexibility and observing function
(17). Burgher, the narrator of this novel who acts as a distanced observer and records
as a city archivist, could be taken as the embodiment of the flâneur, and his flânerie is
put in writing as this city novel. Therefore, I argue that the narration of Arcadia could

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Jenks claims that the flâneur is not only “a product of modernity” but also “an attempt to ‘see’
modernity; a metaphor for method” (14). It should not be pinned down with gender, class, space, or
time. It should be taken as a way to study culture and social environment.
be taken as the textual-flânerie that records Burgher’s observation in the city.

Crace presents in Burgher’s textual flânerie that urban space arouses characters’ emotions that are paralyzed by the banality of daily routine. I would like to use the concept of psychogeography to explain the interaction between the subjective feelings and the objective environment which is shown in Burgher’s textual flânerie. The leading figure in the Situationist International, Guy Debord, displays the definition of psychogeography: It “could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (*Situationist International Anthology* 5). David Pinder explains that psychogeography is coined to “investigate different ambiances and zones in cities, and to attend to the relationships between social space and mental space and between urbanism and behaviour” (152).³ Psychogeography “expresses an interest (or ‘vision’) that is perpetually fresh, or indeed, infantile in its perceptions,” and “[t]his is an interest undaunted by the uniformity of the consumer culture” (Jenks 24). That is to say, psychogeography can revive the sensitivity and imagination which are oppressed by the sterile commercial environment, and this process prevents a person from being objectified by commodities and endows the revolutionary power against the bureaucratic capitalism.

Jim Crace depicts a psychogeographical map with Burgher’s textual flânerie in which characters’ feelings and emotions aroused by the atmosphere of a space are emphasized. For Burgher, psychogeography is a way to explore the relationship between urban people and their living environment; for all the characters in *Arcadia*,

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³ Different from the canonical map such as that in a tourist guide, the psychogeographic map is constituted with unities of ambience which cannot be defined by architectural or economic conditions. The flâneur or flâneuse can allow himself or herself to be guided by those features of the street neglected by most pedestrians, like “the sudden change of ambience in a street within the space of a few meters” and “the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground)” (*Situationist International Anthology* 6).
this emotional generation propels them to react to the objective environment and to keep shaping their relationship to the city.

Walking is shown as an important way to know the city in this novel. Characters such as Rook and Aunt unconsciously take walking as a spatial practice that helps to create their subjective spaces, and the flâneur Burgher consciously uses walking as a means to investigate the city. Therefore, the concept of dérive will be employed to analyze how people, when walking in the city, gain other spatial possibilities. According to Debord, the urban investigation in terms of psychogeography could be achieved by dérive. It is “a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances,” and it “entails playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects” (*Situationist International Anthology* 50). Debord thinks that the dérive oscillates between the psyche and the collective rethinking of the city. During the process of dérive, the flâneur can expose the repressed or conjure up the passed under the rational surface and gain an intimacy with the city. Burgher, the flâneur-like columnist, with the vision of dérive dismantles the abstract, homogeneous order of the traditional map and reconstructs the city by collecting and collaging spatial experiences which are fragmented, subjective, and temporal.

The dérive as a means to investigate urban space allows Burgher to see contradictions and conflicts in the city. The rebuilding of the open marketplace into a glass-and-concrete shopping mall causes problems: urban people’s need for an open public space that includes diverse communities, communication, and individual freedom is sacrificed. This shopping mall is named Arcadia because its architect

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4 The dérive privileges passage on foot, and its participants put aside practical motivations that guide movement through the city and allow themselves to be “drawn by the attentions of the terrain and the attractions they find there” (*Situationist International Anthology* 50). However, it does not mean simply drifting with passivity or submitting to unconscious desire. Therefore, it moves between intension and automation to create an organized spontaneity.
creates an environment of the countryside inside this modernized, arcade-like building. The traditional Arcadia refers to beautiful natural splendor and harmony with nature. It appears in mythology and later in literary works such as Virgil’s *Eclogues*. Doris Teske points out that there is a “contrast between the political ideal of the polis and the cultural topos Arcadia” in Crace’s *Arcadia* (166). I argue that this juxtaposition generates a new meaning in Burgher’s textural flânerie: the desire for public spaces where people can enjoy individual freedom and establish social communities. Such space is represented by the Soap Market. Therefore, I would like to use the concept of détournement to analyze the coexistence of the political issue and the topos Arcadia. Détournement, for SI, is a means of subversive diversion, reworking and hijacking. According to Debord and Wolman, détournement means that “[t]he mutual interference of two words of feeling, or the bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy” (*Situationist International Anthology* 9). The preexisting elements are liberated from their original context and rerouted to generate a new meaning. Sadie Plant also explains that “[i]t is a turning around and a reclamation of lost meaning: a way of putting the stasis of the spectacle in motion” (86).\(^5\) Détournement is used as a critical technique to deconstruct the spectacular surface fabricated by capitalism and turn it into something meaningful. In *Arcadia*, Victor’s Garden on the top of Big Vic and the new shopping mall Arcadia seem to be the extension of nature in the city. However, Burgher’s textual flânerie reveals that both the garden and the countryside in Arcadia do not belong to the first nature but its

\(^5\) The spectacle here comes from Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle*. It is related to the use of vision by capitalism to make people passive spectators in the world of commodities, and this manipulation of appearance is also used by administrative power to control subjects. For more details on analyzing the concept of the spectacle and how Burgher criticizes its manipulation in his textual flânerie, please see my chapter three.
duplications, the manmade second nature. In order to prove this point, I will refer to Timothy W. Luke’s article “Simulated Sovereignty, Telematic Territoriality: The Political Economy of Cyberspace” in which he discusses three kinds of nature that appear successively in human history. The artificial countryside in Arcadia makes people inactive consumers for sight and commodities. Ironically, those consumers who are allowed to shop in this “countryside” are strictly filtered, which is different from the openness of the real countryside. Such visual code results in the loss of the right to the central public space.

The Soap Market, located in the center of the city, combines functions such as commerce and sociability for everyone, and it is the most vital and distinctive place in the city. It realizes the right to the city claimed by Henri Lefebvre. However, Arcadia displaces its democratic participation with hierarchy. The culture of this place, from the architecture to the social relation and social class of its shoppers, is reshaped by the capitalist. Sharon Zukin’s symbolic economy can explain this situation: certain urban areas, especially the central public space, are redesigned for a city to present its cultural performance that brings economic profits, but such cultural performance usually has nothing to do with the everyday life of its adjacent inhabitants. It refuses diversity and causes privatization. In this novel, the shoppers the shopping mall Arcadia attracts are mostly foreign visitors or rich people who live in the suburbs who are just isolated consumers and have rare relation to this area, so the original social community built in the Soap Market is destroyed. The practice of

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6 According to Luke, the second nature is “an artificial technosphere” which is “manufactured out of modern science, capitalist exchange, and industrial technology on a world-wide scale” (28). The greenery in the Big Vic rooftop garden and Arcadia does not naturally grow; it is transplanted, nourished by fertilizer, and kept thriving within a machine-controlled environment. Therefore, it is not the primitive first nature but the artificial, manmade second nature.

7 Lefebvre argues that the right to the city can be “complemented by the right to difference…and information,” and it should “modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services” (34). It includes the right to use the central space of a city without any restriction of social class.
dépouillement can reveal the hegemonic side of symbolic economy and criticize capitalist manipulation. Crace’s use of the coexistence of two unrelated issues, the pastoral utopia and the unprivileged right to public spaces, satirizes that the desire for a pastoral utopia is commodified and presented as artificial second nature. Equipped with high technology and secure staff, the Arcadia evicts the working-class people, the marginal, and the poor who share communities in the Soap Market and should obtain the right to the central public space in the city.

With the critical concept of visual manipulation, Burgher’s dérive shown in his textual flânerie is the détournement which reveals the separation of social life hidden under the attractive surface of the spectacle. The demise of the Soap Market and the erecting of the Arcadia influence the lives of working-class people: they are more exploited by capitalism without noticing it. Besides, the shopping mall Arcadia represents not only the urban spectacle but also the expansion of capitalist territory. I would like to employ the critical concept of the spectacle discussed by SI to argue that Burgher’s textual flânerie contributes to the revelation of an alienated society mediated by commodities and images, and that Burgher’s dérive is practiced as the denunciation of the way in which spectacular power dissects the urban landscape for its own profit. First, the spectacle refers to that the social life is so colonized by commodities and images that people are like passive spectators rather than active agents. People are unconsciously imbued with the ideology and values represented by the attractive appearance of commodities. Besides, through the spectacle people acquire the knowledge of aspects of social life although this knowledge is falsified. That is why Debord claims that “[t]he spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images” (Society of the Spectacle
Second, the spectacle causes separation from reality and from individual truth. Debord thinks the spectacle as "the culmination of humanity’s internal separation" (12). On the one hand, the spectacle can subject people to manipulation while obscuring the deprivations of capitalism. Therefore, they are separated from the reality of capitalist exploitation. On the other hand, when people contemplate the surface of commodities, they actually get caught in a speculative world of images. For this reason, they are also separated from direct experiences and immediate emotions and desires.

Third, the separation is concretized by urbanism when it comes to the production of urban spaces which are associated with the reproduction of dominant social and economic interests. "While all the technical forces of capitalism contribute toward various forms of separation, urbanism provides the material foundation for those forces and prepares the ground for their deployment. It is the very technology of separation" (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 95). This separation refers to “atomizing” the workers and reintegrating them into “pseudo-community” (95, 96). Moreover, the social polarization which is fundamental in capitalist domination is simultaneously strengthened and obscured by the raised income and leisure society. Finally, the expansion of capitalist territory results in unification that leads to the destruction of local distinctive realities. Debord states that “[c]apitalist production has unified space, breaking down the boundaries between one society and

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8 In terms of the concept of spectacle, Jenks explains that the spectacle “indicates rules of what to see and how to see it, it is the ‘see-ness,’ the (re)presentational aspect of phenomena that are promoted, not the politics or aesthetics of their being ‘see-worthy’” (27).

9 Seven Best argues that the spectacle causes an abstraction and raises it “to the point where we no longer live the world per se…but in an abstract image of the world” (*Baudrillard: A Critical Reader* 48). It is in this abstraction that people are alienated from reality and individual truth.

10 In the seventh chapter “Territorial Domination” of *Society of the Spectacle*, Debord discusses urban space in the formulation of the spectacle.

11 The pseudo-community means that people are gathered by the needs of production and consumption planned by capitalism. Actually, they are separated from each other instead of forming a real community.
the next,” and this unification will “undermine the autonomy and quality of places” (94). In *Arcadia*, Burgher’s textual flânerie depicts a city where the manipulation of the spectacle causes alienation, and the urban planning under the principle of the spectacle obscurely forces capitalist deprivation and leads to the destruction of local history and memory.

IV. Chapter Organization

In the first chapter of my thesis, I argue that the narration of this novel could be regarded as Burgher’s textual flânerie which presents the city as a collage constituted by different interpretations represented by different characters. What he records includes his and several characters’ walking in the city, so the street-level perspective is the most significant for knowing a city and for connecting individual feelings with objective environment. I would examine the significance of the dérive taken by Burgher and the meanings of different characters’ walking taken in their everyday life. Walking as a spatial practice provides Rook a way to revive his emotions and feelings so as to prevent the banality of life. For Aunt, strolling in the streets is necessary for her while begging to survive, but it also allows her individual freedom and resistance against urban hegemony. Burgher’s dérive works not only as an investigation of urban life but also as a critical tool that, operated in the realm of everyday life, fragments the city into different zones of ambience and reconstructs it into a more humanistic city.

Chapter Two will focus on explaining how Burgher’s textual flânerie deconstructs the extension of countryside which is represented by Victor’s rooftop garden and the shopping mall Arcadia. I will examine Burgher’s observation in these two places. From Burgher’s penetrating eye, both of them are artificial environment far away from nature, and the greenery in these places functions as spectacles for
personal collection and visual consuming. Moreover, Burgher’s dérive in Arcadia not only reveals that the desire for pastoral utopia is degenerated into the commodification of nature but also brings up the issue of public right to the central urban space. A hierarchy and visual code could be preserved in the Arcadia, which is ironically opposed to the freedom and openness in the pastoral utopia Arcadia. I will compare the traditional Soap Market with the modernized shopping mall to argue that: the juxtaposition of the Arcadia topos with the political issue of the use of the central public space is employed by Crace to highlight that the life of city does not reside in the transplanted greenery or manmade countryside, but in the organism which thrives with the help of its denizens in spite of their position in the socioeconomic strata. In this novel, such life is threatened by the establishment of a spectacular building, which leads to the theme of my next chapter.

In the third chapter, I would examine the social relationship and the production of urban space in Arcadia, and I argue that Burgher’s textual flânerie delineates a city saturated with the spectacle against which his practice of dérive is taken, and that Burgher’s writing is a resistance against the all-encompassing control of the spectacle. I will first examine the motivation that propels Joseph to emigrate from the country to the city. Then, Victor’s and Em’s interaction with others will be the point to analyze the manipulation of the spectacle on man’s psychology and the alienation it leads to. Moreover, I will also analyze the influence caused by the geographical change which is represented by the incidence that the Soap Market is replaced by the Arcadia. The emphasis will be the demonstration organized by the market traders and its customers and the way how the government deals with the following riot. Burgher’s writing reveals how the use of the spectacle by the capitalist and bureaucratic power threatens the life of a city.
The most important of all, Burgher’s dérive also makes known the rebirth of the Soap Market: the Soap Two. It is the place where he can see “life,” where he can feel freedom and interact with the environment at his pleases. I think the power of regeneration represented by the rise of the Soap Two is symbolized by the title of this novel “Arcadia.” “Arcadia” symbolizes life and the power of rebirth. Burgher witnesses the demise as well as the rebirth of the city. The eye that observes the city is like that of the flâneur who drifts in and out of the crowd. The strolling and the keen observation dissolve the alienation between the individual and the environment. Such observation reveals the heterogeneity in the city. It pays attention to the stimulants which could be turned into the power to resist the excessively objectified, programmed world. Reading *Arcadia* from the situationist perspectives of dérive, détournement, and the spectacle, I argue that this novel suggests another literary type which is more close to the fragmented urban life, and it maps a psychogeographical city: the real city is not simply the objective planned space and architecture, but it could be perceived through spatial practices based on everyday life practice, and through the study of the mental map we can look through the false wonderland which is actually the phantasmagoria of commodification.
Chapter One
Dérive: Remapping the City

I. Introduction

Jim Crace’s *Arcadia* is an urban fiction which shows his attention to the specifics of space. He writes the impact of change in the form of social organization and addresses the transition from the traditional to the modern, from the country to the city. Such impact makes people rethink the way of living in the city and remake the concept of urban spaces. The modern functionalist design of urban spaces combined with capitalist ambition denies people’s right to the city. However, *Arcadia* is opposed to such hegemony and it shows that the meaning of space determined by urban planners is replaced by the meaning formed in terms of individual feelings and needs. It shows that people can claim the right to inhabit the city in the way they wish, the right to the moments and places out of calibrated life.

Heterogeneity is also presented in *Arcadia*, which includes different cultures and interpretations of the city. The cultural conflict happens when the country and the city collide. Moreover, Crace also takes on the issue of social hierarchy that is shown in specific space. His depiction not only climbs high to the space of higher-class people but also walks with common people and goes down to the bottom of the marginal and silent. It makes readers think about the relationship between space and social relation.

Psychogeography, one of Situationist International’s concepts, provides a special perspective to investigate the relationship between people and the city. Its emphasis upon man’s feelings influenced by the environment expresses the sovereign decision of the individual. It is achieved by dérive, a spatial practice which undercuts
the assumption that space can be understood as a thing, and such practice permits a lot of unrealized possibilities and triggers individual emotions and feelings that is dormant in urban people. I argue that the narrator in Arcadia observes and records the city as a flâneur and this novel could be seen as his textual flânerie. This figure takes the spatial practice of dérive to deconstruct the conceptualized space and to present a city which is remapped by individual mentalities.

II. Dissecting the City

The flâneur that rises in the Paris streets and arcades in the nineteenth century has long been a significant object of urban studies. This figure was originally tied to a particular time and space but later has been allowed to walk away from that context. The flâneur could be regarded as the ever-fresh interest and vigorous energy to investigate human condition. This novel could be seen as a flâneur’s record of a city that works to awaken the public consciousness to the evil generated by the apparently stable and civilized society and to rethink the meaning of living in the city. According to Simon Sadler, “[t]he situationist ‘drifter’ was the new flâneur” who “skirted the old quarters of the city in order to experience the flip side of modernization” (56). With the concepts of dérive and psychogeography, the narrator Burgher presents a new form of cartography which enables representing states of consciousness and feelings and connects them to the objective spaces through the practice of dérive.

A. The Flâneur: A Lens to See the Metropolis

Different parts of a city contain different and multiple meanings. Those meanings may be defined by institutional functions, or decided by means of the excavating of cultural development. In any case, they need to be discovered through “practices of methodology and through reflexivity” (Jenks 12). Jenks emphasizes the methodology through which we observe the city and bring up the flâneur and explains
why this figure’s characteristics advantage observation of the relationship between people and the urban environment. Some critics such as Susan Buck-Morss and Elisabeth Wilson bring up the problems the flâneur will undergo in the metropolis: the domination of capitalist system, the darkness and danger that hide somewhere in the city, both of which make the flâneur a deconstructed one. However, the essential characteristics of this figure, such as mobility, detachment, and observation, might be advantages to survive in the labyrinthine metropolis and even to create meanings in the disorienting space of metropolis.12

First of all, the flâneur possesses the sovereignty based in anonymity and observation. Chris Jenks looks back on the poet created by Baudelaire as the embodiment of the flâneur and mentions that the flâneur is “the metaphoric figure originally brought into being by Baudelaire (1964), as the spectator and depicter of modern life, most specifically in relation to contemporary art and the sights of the city” (Jenks 13). The flâneur is considered by Baudelaire an observer who is “a prince enjoying his incognito wherever he goes” (Baudelaire 1972: 400). The anonymity is advantageous to deciphering the secrets and mysteries of the city because it provides the privilege to move and observe freely in the crowd. The public conceals no mysteries for this person who holds his own mystery. According to Keith Tester, the flâneur knows that he is just the constituent part of the metropolitan flux and that the

12 In “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” (1939), Benjamin depicts that the flâneur walks in the streets of the capitalist city and “the intelligentsia becomes acquainted with the marketplace. It surrenders itself to the market, thinking merely to look around; but in fact it is already seeking a buyer” (The Arcade Project 21). Buck-Morss in “The Flâneur, the Sandwichman and the Whore” further explains this commodification embodied by the flâneur: “In order to survive under capitalism [the flâneur] writes about what he sees, and sells the product . . . His protests against the social order are never more than gestures because (not surprisingly under capitalism) he needs money” (Buck-morss 111-112). It seems that the capitalism makes the flâneur have no choice but to survive by following its rules, and the creativity and intelligence of this figure degenerate into the means to look for profits. Moreover, Elizabeth Wilson in “The Invisible Flâneur” argues that the heart of Benjamin’s meditation on the flâneur is “the ambivalence towards urban life . . . a sorrowful engagement with the melancholy of cities” (73). “The city is a labyrinth and the flâneur an embodiment of it” (74). That is to say, living in the city of fragmentation, disorientation, and indifference, the flâneur is paralyzed and loses his activeness, and the path of his strolling takes the form of labyrinth which means “the attenuation and deferral of satisfaction” (74).
The metropolitan crowd might crush him, but it is this sense that makes him different from all the others in the crowd (*The Flâneur*) \(^{13}\). The flâneur is apart from the rubbernecks who just blindly follow the flux of crowds because his knowledge of being in the crowd and his princely incognito endows him the ability to make the significance and the meaning of the metropolitan space for himself. He is like a prince who defines the world rather than allowing things or appearances to control him. He is the person who “cannot be pinned down” (Jenks 15).

Second, the flâneur, rich in imagination and good at observing, is able to have an insight to the inner world of people so that he could be aware of the interaction between human minds and the metropolis. Jenks claims that “the flâneur possesses a power; it walks at will, freely and seemingly without purpose, but simultaneously with an inquisitive wonder and an infinite capacity to absorb the activities of the collective—often formulated as ‘the crowd’” (Jenks 14). Just like the poet in Baudelaire’s writings, the flâneur “enjoys an incomparable privilege: in his own way he’s able to be himself or someone else. Like those wandering souls in search of a body, he enters anyone’s personality whenever he wants to” (Baudelaire 1991: 355).

In this way, the metropolis is not simply the objective appearance and the planned functional parts we can find in a map but more complicated and related to the subjective motives, feelings, and experiences. This figure who is “the lover of life, may . . . be compared to a mirror as vast as this crowd; to a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness” (Baudelaire 1972: 400). Therefore, the flâneur is less to passively present the contingencies of spectacles than to consciously take each person’s behaviors and inner activities as lenses to see the metropolis and piece

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\(^{13}\) Keith Tester claims that although the flâneur is a face in the crowd along with all the other faces, “behind the face of the poet [the flâneur] lurks a great secret of nobility,” and “the nobility of the poet is located quite precisely in his thinking of his mediocrity in the eyes of others” (Tester, *The Flâneur* 3).
fragments of people’s experiences together into the understanding and meanings of the metropolis.

According to Chris Jenks’ argument, the flâneur as a concept could be used as “an analytic form, a narrative device, an attitude towards knowledge and its social context,” and it is also “an image of movement through the social space of modernity” (Jenks 17). That is to say, because of unconstrained characteristics of this figure, we can use it as a lens to see our society, a device to present observation and thoughts, and an analytic form to illuminate social issues. It is like “a multilayered palimpsest” that enables us to “move” from “real products of modernity,” through “the practical organization of space and its negotiation by inhabitants of a city,” to “a critical appreciation of the state of modernity and its erosion into the post-” (17).\

B. Dérive and Psychogeography

Guy Debord elaborates the practice of dérive through which the flâneur could undertake the investigation on the relationship between city people and urban space:

Among the various situationist method is the dérive [literally: ‘drifting’], a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances. The derive entails playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects;

14 Jenks discards the simplification and homogeneity of the flâneur. Instead, he presents it as a concept with which we can form an understanding of curious issues of the city and subject matters of (post)modernity without the restriction of time, space, gender, and class. Besides, its traces could be found in different domains such as politics, society, economics, and literature. As what John Rignall states in his article “Benjamin’s Flâneur and the Problem of Realism:” the flâneur is “constituted intertextually” because we can find its application in Baudelaire’s essays and poetry, Poe’s fiction and Balzac’s, Dickens’ letters, Marx’s theory of commodity fetishism, and documentary and historical writings about Paris (Rignall 113).
completely distinguishes it from the classical notions of the journey and the stroll.

In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. (*Situationist International Anthology* 50)

According to Debord’s definition, Jenks further explains that the dérive does not refer to simply drifting with passivity but “demands a response to inducement, albeit unplanned and unstructured” (Jenks 24). “In the ‘dérive’ the explorer of the city follows whatever cue, or indeed clue, that the streets offer as enticement to fascination” (25). Nevertheless, it does not demonstrate the total submission to unconscious desire that characterizes surrealist wanderings. Debord criticizes the surrealist aimless ambulation for its “insufficient awareness of the limitations of chance” (*Situationist International Anthology* 51). Coverley states that “[t]he dérive may lack a clear destination but it is not without purpose” (96). It aims at seizing the city whose seductive surface misrepresents the repressive realities of capitalist consumption. Therefore, situationists want to embrace chance as an emblem of freedom and to encounter the heterogeneous in the reified society as what surrealists try to practice. Moreover, they also aim at transforming the urban space through a psychogeographical investigation that examines the ways in which the areas resonate with particular ambiances.

According to Debord’s definition, psychogeography is the point where psychology and geography collide:

Geography, for example, deals with the determinant action of general natural forces, such as soil composition or climate conditions, on the
economic structures of a society, and thus on the corresponding conception that such a society can have of the world. Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals. (Situationist International Anthology 5)

Therefore, what psychogeography shows is the relationship between the individual state of mind and the environmental elements. What it contains is not the rigid zones or routes that define the order of a place. Actually, it is composed of fragments of special climates and spontaneous turns of direction taken by a subject who disregards the useful connection by which his conduct is ordinarily governed. Therefore, “[t]he city begins . . . to take on the characteristics of a map of the mind” (Jenks 25). Debord mentions the significance of such “renovated cartography”: “[t]he production of psychogeographic maps…can contribute to clarifying certain wanderings that express not subordination to randomness but complete insubordination to habitual influences” (Situationist International Anthology 7). These influences determine habitual patterns of the residents, but what the map presents is a contrast to such repetitive, usual directives. Psychogeography shows the spontaneous tendencies for orientation of a subject who traverses the city without regarding practical consideration, and this “renovated cartography” also subverts the structure of the canonical omnipotent map and contributes to explore the impact of urban places upon human behaviors.

Sadler claims that “the power of psychogeography . . . lay precisely in its intoxicating combination of subjective and objective . . . approaches to urban exploration” (The Situationist City 81). There are many emotional zones in the city that cannot be determined simply by architectural or economic conditions. Debord claims that “[t]he sudden change of ambience in the street within the space of
a few meters; the evident division of a city into zones of distinct psychic atmospheres” are neglected (Situationist International Anthology 6). The results of such ambiences “form the basis of a new cartography characterized by a complete disregard for the traditional and habitual practices of the tourist” (Psychogeography 90). These zones are emphasized as unities of ambiences that are constituent parts of psychogeographical maps. However, there are no directed routes to connect them and no indication of the distances between them. These fragments and the gaps between them replace the totality and coherence of a canonical map. Sadler points out that “the unities of ambience were constituted by many things, especially the ‘soft’, mutable elements of the city scene; the play of presence and absence, of light and sound, of human activity, even of time, and the association of ideas” (70). They are more about psychology, sensations, social relations, and history. Moreover, psychogeography does not discover unities of ambiences as fixed, geographical phenomena which exist in a spatial context, but it constructs them with “soft and mutable elements” that interacts with space. According to McDonough’s explanation of ambiences, he thinks that in Debord’s psychogeographical maps, “space does not simply reflect social relations; it is constitutive of and is constituted by them” (252). “Rather than a container suitable for description, space becomes part of a process: the process of ‘inhabiting’ enacted by social groups” (252). Therefore, psychogeography denies space as just context but unites it to social practice and reveals its relationship and interaction with human activities.

C. From Arcadia to Soap Two

Operated in the realm of everyday life to construct a fragmented but more humanistic city, dérive could be seen as a means to explore the relationship between man and urban spaces. I argue that the narrator of Arcadia is a flâneur who moves
between solitude and multitude at will and whose dérive seems to be purposeless but actually with “an inquisitive wonder” to enquire activities of the collective and to collect fragments of urban life (Jenks 14). The narrator is a flâneur-like person who mostly hides himself behind the story he tells until the description of his own strolling from the new shopping mall Arcadia to the makeshift Soap Two in the last part of this novel. He appears very shortly in the first part of the book for introducing himself as a journalist whose pseudonym is Burgher. He strolls, observes, makes inquiries about anecdotes in the city and writes “mordant, mocking” diaries on the city’s daily (Crace 73). He possesses the freedom to observe in incognito and the ability to enter people’s souls. Crace puts Burgher behind the curtain of the stage and emphasizes the people and things this character feels interested in and keeps tracing. Although the author does not shape Burgher with many details, this character still conforms to the image of the flâneur who appears as a detached observer. Therefore, this novel could be taken as Burgher’s record of the city, his textual flânerie in the city, and the flâneur is both embodied in the character Burgher and employed by Crace as “a narrative devise” to present a city (Jenks 17).

Arcadia could be taken as Victor’s biography as well as the record of the evolution of a city. Burgher is retained to write Victor’s life, and in the last chapter he says that he has the first line of Victor’s life: “No wonder Victor never fell in love,” and readers can see this sentence right at the beginning of this novel (Crace 3, 369). Thus, it is reasonable to think that Burgher is the narrator of Arcadia, and that he has the accesses to enter Victor’s and his mother’s inner worlds as what we can perceive in the second chapter. Burgher has clues and information from Anna who becomes Victor’s assistant after Rook is dismissed, Victor himself who feels uneasy about expressing himself but still tells some details of his early life, and some crucial
“pointers” who bear this old man’s story out. However, what this book contains about Victor’s life is not complete, and most of the description focuses upon his childhood, his abject early life. Burgher is not an omnipotent narrator because the information he gets about Victor and other characters is limited and fragmented. It reveals the truth that as a flâneur, with the detached involvement and observation, to completely know a person is hardly possible. There exists ambivalence in the narration: *Arcadia* might be taken as Victor’s biography, but urban space and the reaction of its inhabitants to the prominent incident seem to be more the focus of Burgher’s textual flânerie in this novel. Burgher, as a flâneur, has “a creative attitude of urban inquisition,” and *Arcadia* is not written to eulogize Victor’s achievement. Taking the incident that the Soap Market is going to be replaced by the giant shopping mall Arcadia as a crucial transition, Burgher not only describes how the city changes under the domination of capitalism and bureaucracy but also brings up struggles and many interpretations of the city presented by its main characters, including Burgher’s thoughts and comments. Therefore, what Burgher depicts is not Victor’s city, not the readable text by city planners from above, but the heterogeneity which is observed down below in the ever-changing urban space. From the visible, material change of urban spectacles to the unseen activities of everyday life of the peripheral, Burgher makes his textual flânerie the collective and personal archives. *Arcadia* is not praise for “[t]he tallest buildings,” not for “those who spend their lives in contemplation of their monuments,” but for the evolution of a city which is attained by its inhabitants who create their spaces out of the vision of the dominant.

Crace gives critical understandings of the city through Burgher’s exploration of the marginal and the forgotten, and expressed them by his sardonic tone. Burgher keeps observing and describing the influence of objective environment upon the
subjective mind: ex-trader Rook oscillates between two material spaces, the office building Big Vic and the Soap Market, as well as two political spaces, the capitalist predators and the powerless market traders; Victor’s impoverished childhood in the marketplace causes his desire for order and his dominating but alienated view of the city; Aunt thinks city streets endow her with chance, freedom, and delight while her sister Em feels helpless and alienated in such strange and indifferent labyrinth. What Burgher focuses upon is not the rational knowledge of the city but the cognitive city in each character’s mind according to which he or she reacts to the objective environment. Therefore, the flânerie used as a narrative device in Arcadia disrupts the homogeneous appearance of the city with fragmentary urban experiences, and the city shows the characteristic of the psychogeographical collage.

Depictions of several places, such as the Soap Market, Big Vic, Arcadia, the Soap Two, and of man’s activities in them, present the attraction or repellence of a space to people. Not only geographical information but also man’s thinking and emotion aroused by these zones are described. From Burgher’s narration of his own walking, he gets totally different feelings in two zones of ambiances which exist right beside each other. In the last part of Arcadia, Burgher shows up and describes his feelings about two places: the huge, themepark-like Arcadia and the spontaneously assembled Soap Two. At this time, the open-air Soap Market has already been gutted and replaced by a gigantic glass-and-concrete mall. The narrator has a monthly lunch with his fading comrades in Arcadia. This building is made to bring the country into town and to represent “a country walk right at the city’s heart” (Crace 231). In its interior, a greenhouse and numerous kinds of plants, an aviary of tropical birds, and stalls and shops, create a village atmosphere. However, its temperature, humidity, and even the smell are controlled by machines. It provides “produce of the gene-bank and
the science farm” and only welcomes “the city’s swiftest, trimmest, smartest clientele” (355, 364). Its customers must follow rules enforced by a man in uniform: there should be no eating on the hoof, no dining on the food brought outside, no cigarettes (362). Contrary to this closed, defended world, Soap Two is “the makeshift market” which “flourishes on noise and filth and rain” (364-365). It seems like the resurrection of the Soap Market. It provides unselected, cheap fruit and vegetables still moist with country rain. There are no rules to follow here. People are treated the same, free to buy things and do whatever they want, and even the commissioner who summons and directs people from everywhere in the city “hopes to share – and complicate – the ecstasy of crowds” (372). The artificial, mechanical environment of Arcadia, lack of life and under surveillance, is opposed to the lively space of Soap Two. Although Arcadia is a well-guarded and invulnerable place for people to shop and stroll without worrying about any danger, what Burgher sees is a stifling place that makes him a pure spectator and consumer. On the contrary, Soap Two endows him with “the blessing of the multitude” and the freedom to be an active person creating his own space (374). Therefore, he decides to walk into Soap Two rather than passively looking among the exhibition of commodity and the stale entertainment.

Crace treats a space not as an object that contains human activities but as a part of social relation. He is attentive to the undulation of emotion affected by a space and man’s reaction to it. Arcadia is not simply a space for shopping and entertainment but also a representation of social class. The customers are variations of the same type and their behavior is restrained. When all the dangerous and chaotic elements are excluded outside, the diversity and freedom of urban spaces are sacrificed as well. It is the “life” Burgher feels in Soap Two that more attracts him than the “flamboyant
uniformity,” “recreant geometry,” and “managed cheerfulness” of Arcadia do (Crace 372, 362). Such different feelings for spaces will not be noted in the traditional map. The psychological understanding of a space must be obtained through engaging in activities and noting emotional changes. Besides, the unpermitted Soap Two could be regarded as the subversion against the administrative plan and surveillance of the city, and also as everyday life struggling for the right to urban spaces against the monolithic monument. While Victor builds Arcadia to memorize his life, Burgher makes his “living mark upon the city” through dérive (375). Such living mark may symbolize Burgher’s creation of spaces that shows the combination of the subjective feelings and the objective environment. Victor’s mark is only a spectacle, but Burgher’s mark, the act of walking, opens up spatial possibilities in the “playful-constructive” narrative of an urban terrain.

It is explained by David Frisby in “The Flâneur in Social Theory” that: “The flâneur as marginal figure, collecting clues to the metropolis, like the ragpicker assembling the refuse, like the detective seeking to bring insignificant details and seemingly fortuitous events into a meaningful constellation — they are all seeking to read the traces from the details” (Tester 99). During the process of piecing together the scraps of city the flâneur keeps chasing his essence of existence. In this novel, flânerie is not only part of the narrator’s work as a society columnist but also the means to “complete his otherwise incomplete identity” (Tester 7). It is not “the attenuation and deferral of satisfaction” Wilson claims in “The Invisible Flâneur” (Postmodern Cities and Spaces 74). Jenks establishes the flâneur as “a creative attitude of urban inquisition and a ‘relative’ absence of variable constraints” (Jenks 28). Robert E. Park argues that the city “shows the good and evil in human nature in excess. It is this fact…that would make of the city a laboratory or clinic in which
human nature and social process may be most conveniently and profitably studied” (The City 46). The image of the labyrinth is less the threat of urban space which deconstructs the flâneur’s identity but more the attraction which ignites flâneur’s energy to observe, to let the continuous interaction between the individual mind and the city operate. The last scene where the narrator walks from Arcadia to the Soap Two and joyfully throws himself into the crowd implies that the flâneur, who chooses to leave the labyrinth of commodities and adventures into the labyrinth of the streets, thinks the delight of flânerie lies in the diversity and heterogeneity of the city.

Ⅲ. Collaging the City

Walter Prigge in his article “Reading the Urban Revolution: Space and Representation” mentions the rigid concept of urban spaces which is internalized: “Functionalist ideology…establishes the connection between daily lived space and the structure of separations that is perceived as urban. These separations are reproduced and objectified in everyday modes of speech or in work, living, or leisure spaces, which become objects of spontaneous knowledge of space” (Space, Difference, Everyday Life 53). Traditionally, cartography presents the geographical knowledge of a place as well as the attempt to take a place as an objectified, readable text. In a city map we can see the modern separation of sites that produces life taken for granted. People follow this structure as the principle of everyday lived space. However, in Arcadia, Burgher’s textual flânerie presents that people who take walking as a spatial practice can rediscover meanings of urban spaces so as to rethink the meaning of living in the city. Although such walking, which is different from Burgher’s dérive taken consciously, happens in everyday life, it may be the antidote against routines and habit for chance events and encounters. The city reconstructed by Burgher’s textual flânerie is like a collage constituted by different interpretations of
the city presented by different characters. Such street-level perspective not only rescues people from functionalism but also subverts the homogeneous surface and lets conflicts and struggles emerge.

A. The Rational and Functional Design of Urban Spaces

In *Arcadia*, Burgher reveals that the office building Big Vic could be taken as the representation of rational design in the city. Its owner Victor, who is an “unimpassioned, loveless man,” knows his city “like a hawk knows fields” (Crace 189, 54). He, mostly staying at the top floor of Big Vic, “gets the flattened, cartographic view of towns, the neat geometry of north, south, east and west” (54). As readers can see, Victor studies the city in a very rational and isolated way. He does not like the traditional, open, and colorful Soap Market because of its disorder and inefficiency. For him, it is “a garish blockage at the center of the city which spurned both logic and geometry” and should be remade (56). No doubt, Big Vic is a contrast to the marketplace. The function of its design is very obvious. Its windows are “double-glazed and safety-sealed and only activated by a call to the building’s brain, the high-tech deck of chips and boards which regulated everything from heating to alarms” (64). The only activity in it is working, and the work is divided to each of Victor’s staff who is treated as functional objects and repeats the same motion every day in this lifeless place. Doris Teske deems that in Big Vic, “the division of work, the alienation of the individual from the object produced and the distinction between work and leisure have reached their apex” (*London in Literature: Visionary Mappings of the Metropolis* 176). People’s idea about this place is fixed, and it has become a fragment in their lives which are shattered by many rigid spaces in the city. Victor’s will that any activity which is not functional to the work in Big Vic should not happen, has become the doctrine that makes the staff alienated from their desires.
Rook and Victor’s secretary Anna develop a love relationship, but they need to hide this relationship because of the fear that they might get sacked once their love affair is known by Victor. In this way, people’s feelings and desires are oppressed in this rigid place where nothing matters but efficiency and function. Therefore, in Big Vic, we can see that capitalism merged with functionalism creates a rigid space where people are asked to be functional for the capitalist machine and thus alienated with their feelings and desires.

The rational and ordered urban spaces may make human feelings repressed and the creativity inactive. Most aspects of people’s lives, no matter at work or leisure, are restricted by them. Efficiency and function play the primary role in the rapid pace of modern time. People almost forget how to feel and live at will. Debord has discussed the disadvantage of functionalism: “[i]ts positive contributions—the adaptation to practical functions, technical innovation, comfort, the banishment of superimposed ornament—are today banalities.”15 For situationists, the triumph of reason leaves no space for imagination and expression. Under the principles of order and reason, the apparently regular and comfortable life gets bogged down to a repetitive pattern, and people lose the ability to arrange their lives out of such pattern. Moreover, functionalism has gradually merged with the productivist values of capitalism, so the application of it might degenerate to the static doctrines. Workers under the primary principle of efficiency are just remaining appendages to the machine rather than its masters, and the division of work makes them alienated with the products. In Arcadia, we can see that the application of functionalism is used by capitalism, and that the rational design of urban spaces is internalized by city people into an attitude toward work and life.

15 This quotation is from the article “Unitary Urbanism at the End of the 1950s” which is included in the book On the Passage of a Few People through a Rather Brief Moment in Time: the Situationist International, 1957-1972, from page 143-47.
Upon the issue of urban space, Lefebvre claims that “[t]he city has an autonomous reality. It has a life, an existence which cannot be reduced to the distribution of land or space, the street, the square” (213). The material environment and people living within it will influence each other and form an organic whole. Any principle could not totally shape the city as what it ideally wants. It may even sacrifice people’s living space in order to plan urban space under the principles of rationalism and functionalism. Sadler points out that “traditional planning, which had grown up under a rationalist umbrella, reduced the intricacy of city structuring to fallaciously simplistic levels” (20). Modern rationalism is rooted in the belief that the problems of the real world could be resolved by reason. Nevertheless, the design of urban space based upon modern rationalism neglects that the city contains not only the material arrangement but also the social level. What is built not only changes the appearance or improves the function but also deeply influences the society and urban people’s life. The novel Arcadia presents that the rational and functional design which attempts to eradicate chaos simultaneously deprives local people of their social community and removes the diversity of the city.

To replace the Soap Market with the huge shopping mall Arcadia represents the rational attempt to expel waste with efficiency and to eliminate the chaos with order. In this market, there is no signs, no thoroughfares, and the dense crowd makes the pass of cars impossible. The traders erect and dismantle their stalls every day, which Victor’s architect Signor Busi thinks “[i]nane” and “[i]nsane” (229). In the daytime, it is a busy market; at night, it turns into the refuge of the homeless. In Soap Garden, which is located in the center of the market, there are always local people eating and chatting in the restaurants. All kinds of people meet in the market and communicate for the common good regardless of background and social status. Hired by Victor to
rebuild this place, Busi regards Soap Market as a squalid and illogical labyrinth which makes the simple task of buying fruit and vegetables an expedition. He is convinced that “a modern, regulated city should be governed not by the impulses of crowds but by the dictates of its tramlines, pavements, traffic lights, timetables, laws. A modern, regulated city would not allow such squalid topsyturvydom” (Crace 229-230). Therefore, he shows applause to Victor for his wish to extend the “geometric harmony” of Big Vic to the ancient center of the town (230). However, to believe that the replacement of the functional and beautiful Arcadia for the inefficient Soap Market is for the common good of town people really “reduce[s] the intricacy of city structuring to fallaciously simplistic levels” (Sadler 20). Arcadia excludes not only chaos and dirty but also unwelcomed people such as drunks, tramps, demonstrators, and the homeless. In the light of this change, Teske claims that “[i]n well-defined places such as the ‘Soap Market,’ a geographical community emerges out of the daily routine with its rituals of buying and selling, or the established order of the stalls. Individual choice and experience are multiplied within the urban crowd” (182). Now, the rational and functional building deprives city people of public identity and the diversity in the city. It is in the uncontrollable street culture that the individual can get rid of the restriction of rigid urban spaces. The Soap Market where local people can enjoy freedom and accept diverse stimulations is destroyed in the name of efficiency and functions.

In Arcadia, Burgher’s textual flânerie presents that individuals crave to be released from the rigid spaces and the dull routines of daily life and try to regain the personal rights to the city. Through gaining mobility in urban space, individual feelings and emotions revive. We can see that the rational appearance is stripped off the city when those characters, no matter walking into the labyrinthine open market or
the crowded streets, have emotions generated by places and feel social connections with the city. By walking into an open space filled with all kinds of people and various simulations, they find other possibilities rarely seen in their monotonous life.

**B. From Big Vic to the Soap Market**

The street-wise ex-trader Rook represents the person who is recruited by capitalism and then becomes alienated from his job and the city. Rook is originally one of Soapies who grows up in the Woodgate district of the town and sales in the Soap Market. He has participated in the “produce boycott” to fight against Victor and claimed “we traders should let the market die before we let the prices outstrip the common people” (Crace 247). As the mouthpiece to negotiate with Victor, Rook disappointingly fails to prevent the price-hike decided by Victor and becomes the slavery of money: he accepts the job as Victor’s “diplomat” without regarding the principle he has ever held (248). Moreover, he charges “service fees” from market traders who pay to obtain “peace of mind” (23). Burgher describes Rook that “the city sparrow had spread its wings to rise on cushioned thermals beyond the pavement commonwealth and join the austere governance of hawks” (207). Nevertheless, even Rook makes his life the appendage to the machine of capitalism, the desire to go back to the market and streets, to live independently from Victor’s employment endlessly smolders in him. For Rook, Big Vic not only stands as a fortress but also confines him like a prison and cuts his relationship with the city. Therefore, walking in the city is a way to regain individual freedom and to create personal space that is, for Rook, neither defined by capitalism nor planned with rationalism.

The act of walking is bound with psychogeography which aims at subjective reworking of the city and the transformation of man’s relationship with the urban environment. Jim Crace begins *Arcadia* with Rook’s walking from the commercial
office building Big Vic to the city garden located at the center of the traditional open
marketplace. It not only gives geographical information between these two points but
also connects subjective emotions, feelings, and memories with the objective
environment and thus presents a map of mind. Rook plans to pick up greenery from
Soap Garden to decorate a birthday chair for Victor. For Rook, “to let his tie hang
loose, to dodge and stroll amongst the people of the city” is his “greatest joy” (5).
Therefore, this errand “made a change from simply standing by” and “released Rook
onto the streets for a while” from the stifling atmosphere of Big Vic (5). He passes
the dark and dirty tunnel that connects the new town and the old, goes by the bustle of
the boutique street, and walks to the Woodgate district where he is born and raised.
From Big Vic to the Woodgate, Rook leaves the area of regularity and drifts into the
remote. For the moment disregarding the purpose of this walk, he keeps looking for
the connection between himself and this district in a sentimental mood. Many things
have changed: the building where his parents lease a flat is let to business, and there
are no neighbors since inhabitation gives way to commercial development. However,
the smell of the ancient fire and the rotting vegetation does not disappear, and Rook
still recognizes the buildings which are built when he is small. The city contains soft
elements such as memories which are hidden under its rigid surface, and individual
sensation as well as emotion aroused by the ambience of a place could help perceive
those elements. During the process of walking, to go or stop is decided by the
ambience of a space, and we can see “the appealing or repelling character of certain
places” and “drifter’s tendency to ‘drain’ along the ‘fissures in the urban network’”
(Sadler 90).

Burgher’s textual flânerie that depicts Rook’s walking cuts the city map into
different zones of ambiences: Big Vic, the tunnel, the Woodgate district, Soap Market,
and Soap Garden. They are fragments that construct a psychogeographical map. Burgher emphasizes that Rook’s feelings and emotions revive when he is affected by each space that has particular meaning and ambience to him. In the Woodgate district, Rook seems to encounter the old neighborhood when he is in his childhood and adolescence. Then, he delightfully feels the convergence of all smells, tints, and sounds in the teeming and vigorous marketplace. Soap Garden gives Rook the image of countryside which arouses his curiosity. Feeling curious about the smell of laurel sap, he tastes it and has a fit of asthma. Not only are stories about the poisonous laurel sap acquired from his interaction with the inhabitants but also Rook’s childhood memories are elicited from his physical and psychological response to the asthmatic accident. Moreover, hiding unexpected criminality, the tunnel in which Rook defeats the maladroit robber Joseph, satisfies Rook’s imagination to be a hero. Embracing the encounter with the city, this man temporarily gets rid of monotonous life pattern and writes his story by strolling through zones in the city. As what Sadler ascertains, psychogeography is “a sort of therapy, a fetishisation of those parts of the city that could still rescue drifters from the clutches of functionalism, exciting the senses and the body” (80). Rook’s walking as a spatial practice in everyday life makes him feel, sense, and experience urban spaces differently from Victor’s secluded view on high.

Opposed to Burgher and Rook’s “street-level” perspective, Victor holds “the view on high” like a “voyeur-god” (de Certeau 92). “Victor knew his city like a
hawk knows fields. The innards of the city were laid bare from the 28th floor…Innards are chaos and a mystery to any but the practiced eye. In time, with study, Victor had got to know the spread-out entrails of the streets” (Crace 54).

However, the map that forms in Victor’s brain contains only buildings for all kinds of function and “the routes and patterns” of the city (55). This map draws the geographical contour of the city, the material structure that excludes human activities and entangled viewpoints. Moreover, his “view on high” is presented not only as one perspective but also as the ambition and power to plan and control. Victor is complacent for his knowledge of the city and desires to reorganize urban spaces according to his own judgment. Doreen Massey remarks that the problem with the high view “only comes if you fall into thinking that that vertical distance lends you truth” (107). Victor’s decision to remove the Soap Market neglects the fact that urban spaces are inseparable from human life and they influence each other. To reorganize urban space means to change the way people inhabit it. In terms of Ceateau’s account of walking, David Pinder in “Arts of Urban Exploration” points out that “[i]n recognition of the multiplicity of stories of the city and the impossibility of ever knowing them completely from a single overarching position, the street has become cherished for offering a location that is embodied, situated, mobile, with multiple and clashing viewpoint” (403). Obviously, walking that relinquishes the centered, the panoptic and the hierarchical is favored by Burgher and taken as a means to enable critical analysis, discovery and thought. Burgher’s flânerie depicts

network which shows the terrestrial, fragmented, and subjective alterations of spaces. Sadler mentions that Debord “attempted to put the spectator at ease with a city of apparent disorder, exposing the strange logic that lay beneath its surface” (The Situationist City 82). The seemingly know-it-all overview can hardly perceive pedestrians’ trajectories and their daily use of urban spaces, so heterogeneous elements and even conflicts are inevitable in the real situation of urban life.

17 Massey argues that the space is not “a surface,” not the sphere of “a discrete multiplicity of inert things;” instead, it “presents us with a heterogeneity of practices and processes,” and it “will be always unfinished and open” (107). Therefore, space is “the sphere of dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and therefore always undetermined) by the construction of new relations” (107).
the impact of Victor’s decision to replace Soap Market with Arcadia and criticizes the privatization of public space. Besides, it also presents that Rook through walking as a spatial practice creates his own space in spite of the homogeneous space from Victor’s view on high.

Burgher depicts that Rook starts to rethink the meaning of his life after he is dismissed by Victor for taking bribes from market traders. The meaning of living in the city does not narrowly refer to the meanings we have already understood but displacing habitual modes of work and leisure in order to question those meanings and rediscover spaces, situations, and activities that constitute urban life. In a sardonic tone, Burgher criticizes the fixed pattern of life style in the capitalist city: “Work is for the idle. It gives a chaptered, tramline narrative of life; it emptied suburbs and estates and provides the displaced, liberated residents with dramas structured by the clock. It then provides the wages note . . . which, more than where you’re born or live, is what it takes to be a citizen” (Crace 204). At first, the fact that Rook is fired does bruise him like a blow and disarrange his life. “But it slowly downed on Rook . . . that he was not weakened as a man, but made more potent” and “that Victor had freed him from a curse” (207). He thinks the job is paid by his soul, and because of it, he has lost the sanction of the street. Now, he can take off the suit which is like “the uniform of servitude” (208). In addition to “this rediscovered soul” and freedom, it is also a chance to rethink the meaning of his life. “Rook wandered through the alleys and the lanes of vegetables and fruit with fresh eyes now” (211-212). Before he gets sacked, he needs to be watchful, “noting prices, faces, infringements of the market code” (212). Now, he feels relaxed and pays attention to what he is really interested in. Moreover, Soap Garden that was repellent to him because he had long been used to the enclosed and defended environment of Big Vic,
“[is] becoming his backyard” (214). He does what he scarcely did when working for Victor: wandering in the Soap Market at night. He sees homeless people who gather in the marketplace, sitting or sleeping around a fire that sheds “the fantasy of home” (216). It leads him to the market’s edge adjacent to the house he lived when young. Rook is forced to abandon the unconscious, repetitive mode of life, and now his steps appear in the area of urban poor which situationists regard as assets to the city rather than spaces to be removed by rational urban planning. After Rook changes his living in the city, his concept of urban spaces is different and his relationship with the city is also remade. He realizes that this city does not belong to “invulnerables,” which means those wealthy people who are well-protected from all dangers in the city, and he is also convinced that it is the community of city people that supports the life of the city but not the capitalist functionalism.

C. From the Countryside to the City

From Burgher’s textual flânerie which focuses on describing characters’ walking in the city readers can perceive that he reveals the fractures and incoherence of socially produced space. In *Arcadia*, we can notice that urban geography and atmosphere make a great impact upon country people. After moving into the city, Aunt and Em encounter cultural shock that strains their living, but they still figure out the way to survive and claim their spaces in the city. From their inner world we can notice that the country psychology meets the urban geography, which provides us another way to rethink the city. Through Aunt and Em, who are neither familiar with urban life style nor cultivated by bourgeois ideology, Crace presents other possibilities to use urban spaces and thus suggests a critical understanding of urban people’s thinking. Besides, these two characters show that individual reaction to environmental influence differs from person to person, and such difference is caused
by dissimilar mentalities that control the shaping of the city in the mind. Moreover, the subjective reaction to the objective environment will keep influencing psychological forming of the city. Therefore, psychogeography provides a way to analyze various interpretations of the city according to different psychologies.

Marketplace represents the convergence of all kinds of people and things, and it exists as a small-scale society. “Situationists regarded the best urban activity as human, unmechanized, and nonalienating, and their texts, films, and maps indicated some possibilities, variously idealizing the marketplaces . . .” (Sadler 92). In Arcadia, the Soap Market is not only the centerpiece of a commercial city but also the place where people frequently communicate with each other and form a community. The traders are conversant with each other and know the produce very well, and customers here not only trade but also make relationships. Moreover, this vegetable and fruit market is also taken as a link between the country and the city since its odors and the way how people interact with each other reminds country people of the atmosphere of the countryside. However, Victor and his architect Busi see the Soap Market as the epitome of urban anarchy which must be taken under control. Estimated with the standard of functionalism and rationality, the Soap Market is regarded as inefficient, backward, and chaotic, but it actually shows a vigorous life and urban diversity which could hardly be found in the homogeneous Big Vic or Arcadia.

Taking a close look at how Em and Aunt live in the city, we can notice two completely different moods. For Em, the city is far from the heaven she has originally imagined. Both the urban traffic and buildings scare her, and indifferent city people make her feel helpless and alienated. She encounters a hypocritical yardman who less offers helps to her than attempts to take advantage of her. The city goes beyond Em’s
imagination: she is overwhelmed by the cultural shock and fearful of unexpected dangers. Therefore, she reacts to the city by rejecting it and escaping into the nostalgic memories of an idealized village life without material problems. The shoppers, farm produce, and the community created by market-people make the Soap Market the extension of the countryside for Em. “She felt at ease and safe amongst the country products and the smells,” and “[s]he knew that this was where her fortune would be made” (Crace 91). Thus, she fixes herself in the marketplace and begs from the shoppers. “She traded smiles and peace of mind. She did it well. She had a baby to support” (93). She acts like “Modonna and her Child” as “a living sculpture labeled Motherhood” (95, 96). Creating a particular atmosphere, Em remakes the space and affects one’s mood. It is proved that “smiles and peace of mind” are more accepted by those passersby. People’s responses reflect their attitude toward the misfortune: “We in this city are the sentimental sort. We don’t like tragedy” (94). Em, like a trader, has her pitch and trades peaceful atmosphere in the bustle of marketplace. It is the way how Em interacts with the city: distancing herself from others and performing to survive. As a stranger in the city, Em tries to establish her identity through conforming to the values of city people. Burgher’s narration of Em reveals the hidden atmosphere that is out of the functional meaning of a place but exists as a “therapy” for a “sentimental” urban mind.

The city Aunt feels is totally different from that in Em’s mind. While Em tells her sister Aunt how the city has beaten her, Aunt, contrarily thinking city as “better than a friend,” replies that the city “took more care of waifs and strays than any village in the land” and it is “city air” that “makes free” (Crace 111). The streets are repellent to Em, but Aunt loves strolling in the streets and unexpected encounters. The city is like a prison that confines Em, who comforts herself with the refurbished
memories of the countryside and desires to go back to her village, while Aunt takes the city as “a place for play” that endows her freedom (104). At first, she works as a rich man’s maid, but as “a squally girl” who is not “the curtsy-kowtow kind and has no kitchen skill,” her master’s hope to quickly and cheaply transform her “from hayseed into scullion” is hardly possible (104). To accept the etiquette which the bourgeois women conform to is to oppress her natural disposition: “Aunt simply could not understand the odd proprieties, the niceties, of bourgeois city life where more was wasted than consumed, where laughter, yawns, and stomach wind shared equal status, swallowed, hidden, stifled by a hand” (105). Her employer’s cook calls her “leaking pot” and scolds that “[y]ou country girls are all the same … ‘Bumpkins do not good burghers make’” (104,105). From the view of city people like the cook, Aunt’s look and behaviors indicate that this girl is crude and underbred. However, Aunt grows up in the countryside where there is no exquisite life attitude. What city people call dirty and crude does not matter to her. To some degree, it is the urban hegemony behind the attempt to cultivate Aunt that regards her as vulgar and devoid of any merit. Therefore, we can notice the cultural conflicts between the country and the city from Aunt’s interaction with urban people and that under the surface of the ordered routs and patterns there are struggles and discrepancy going on.

This country girl will not be recruited by the regular urban life style, and she creates her own way to use urban spaces:

So she did well on city streets. She begged and importuned enough to count herself–by country standards–well set up…She liked to place her hat upon her head and wander streets as if they were country lanes and she was simply searching for free fruit. She never tired of putting out her hand or challenging–this was her favourite trick–the drinking men in bars to toss
and land a coin in the canyon brim of her straw hat. (Crace 108)

The playful walking in the streets makes her see the cultural difference between bourgeois women and herself, but it allows her to avoid the cultural hegemony and not to take the oppressive transformation from “country bumpkin” to “civil burgher.” She strolls in the streets and makes money by playing tricks with men as if the streets are country lanes and she is harvesting not begging. Aunt, walking in the city, projects the imagined countryside to the cityscape and negotiates in the mixture of urban and rural culture. Burgher’s description of Em and Aunt shows that the marginal ones interact with the city in their own ways by taking spatial practices, and Burgher’s dérive that follows the experiences of the inferior intends to subvert the central power represented by capitalism and bourgeois culture through depicting spatial practices taken by the powerless. “The ‘soft’ mutable elements of the city scene” such as “the play of presence and absence . . . even of time, and the association of ideas” are what situationists care about when constituting the unities of ambience (Sadler 70). Em, whose experiences show the indifferent and dangerous aspect of the city, escapes from the city and hides into the embellished memories of the countryside. Aunt, who is shrewd and coltish, plays with the past experience and the present situation, the imagined and the real, and creates another possibility to use urban spaces. Situationists’ investigation of the city aims at revealing the difference, and even the conflict in social geography. The Soap Market represents the diversity of the city, and it is feasible to find spatial possibilities and struggles that administrative domination keeps removing but fails to do so.

IV. Conclusion

The establishment of Arcadia symbolizes the attempt to homogenize urban spaces. This world excludes conflicts that actually exist in the society which is under
the domination of capitalism. Arcadia evicts casual workers and the homeless, and
then segregates urban spaces along class lines. It is closed off unconformable traders
and any democratic participation. Therefore, such homogenization itself produces
contradictions and conflicts. By means of dérive which is not routed by functionalism
but let by the attraction or repellence of spaces, psychogeography presents the city
with fragmented zones of ambiences which imply the real violence involved in
constructing homogeneous urban spaces. The dérive is based on the street-level
perspective of the city which is opposed to the bird-eye view. The latter represents the
order imposed upon the city and the power to define the meaning of urban spaces, and
the former symbolizes the remapping that cuts the abstract surface of order and
homogeneity so as to let the heterogeneity emerge. Contrary to Victor who views his
city with a “solar, totalizing eye” high on the top of Big Vic and wants to “make the
complexity of the city readable,” Burgher walks “down below” and fragmentizes such
apparently coherent map with difference and conflicts (de Certeau 92, 93). His textual
flânerie could be taken as the remapping of the city which presents different
characters’ spatial practices and refuses the mechanistic functioning of urban space as
well as the capitalist ambition to determine the meaning of urban space. However, the
formation of Soap Two reveals that urban space is in process and incomplete. It
eludes final determination but evolves with city people, and I will analyze the
organism formed by urban space and its inhabitants in the next chapter.
Chapter Two

Détournement: The Claim of Public Space

I . Introduction

Doris Teske in the article “Jim Crace’s Arcadia: Public Culture in the Postmodern City” indicates that “[t]he contrast between the political ideal of the polis and the cultural topos Arcadia is the starting point of Jim Crace’s 1992 novel Arcadia…the dream of fleeing the city and retreating to Arcadia is foregrounded through the major part of the novel” (166). Teske refers to Lewis Mumford’s text, which shows that European cities, from ancient Rome to the postmodern megacities, could trace back to “Greek theories of the archaic city-state or polis with its central public space, the agora” (166). According to Mumford’s studies on ancient cities, the agora combines important urban functions, including law, government, commerce, industry, religion, and sociability, and in the end it became the most vital and distinctive element in the city (Mumford 150). It is shown that the oldest and most persistent function of the agora is for communal meeting, and the market is a byproduct of the gathering of people who have many reasons for assembly besides doing business (148). They foregather in this indiscriminate place to handle common affairs and face common difficulties: to break the tensions of anger, fear, and suspicion, to restore the social equilibrium spoiled by attack and revenge, by robbery and arbitrary reparation (149). The interchange of news and opinions are as important as the interchange of goods. Therefore, the agora provides a public space in which commercial activities take place and political participation is open to almost all citizens. However, Michael F. Ostwald points out that “[t]hroughout history particular urban spaces have been linked to the loss or dilution of regional, social and cultural
values” (192). “The agora, the salon and the mall all encourage a singular mode of consumer behaviour that values the commodification of space, culture and experience” (192). Nowadays, the agora might lose its local characteristics and become a commodified space for visual consuming of tourists.

Arcadia is not the term contained in political theory. It is mythologized by regional stories of local deities, nymphs, and the god Pan as its ruler. It later appears in Virgil’s *Eclogues* as an idealized rural community distanced from Roman reality. The myth of Arcadia has become a literary device, the typical setting for pastoral and bucolic writings. It represents the beautiful country landscape away from urban reality. In Crace’s novel, the juxtaposition of the topos Arcadia and the public agora makes up a new meaning. I argue that Crace employs this topos to make readers think about what is lacking in the city and what we long for in our everyday life. Arcadia in this novel becomes the symbol of urban vitality which is shown in the power to hang on and the right to form a close relationship with one’s living space.

Jim Crace’s *Arcadia* shows the importance of public spaces. For city people, public spaces are places where they establish relationship with the city and with each other. It is in the public space that life-force of the city thrives. In this novel, public spaces such as Soap Market and streets embrace different cultures and allow individual freedom. However, when the economic power which is used to redevelop those spaces is more and more held in private sponsorship, the privatization of public spaces happens more and changes the cultural structure as well as the relationship between inhabitants and those spaces. What follows is visual codes which are used to reshape the surroundings into homogeneity. It results in inclusion and exclusion. In

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18 Teske retraces the development of the geographical Arcadia and concludes that “the central Peloponnesian region of Arcadia and the Arcadian confederation could be said to have played a significant role in the ancient Greek history. However, the terms Arcadia and Arcadian gained their distinct meaning only after the region’s loss of political importance and autonomy and after a period of seclusion” (167).
this novel, the reconstruction of the central market refers to such situations. What I want to emphasize is how Burgher’s textual flânerie subverts this Arcadian paradise. Therefore, I think Burgher’s critical vision hijacks the elements of the Arcadian shopping mall and turns them against themselves as what situationists do with the practice of détournement. This technique consists in turning expressions of the capitalist system against itself and reclaiming the lost meaning. It is plagiaristic because the materials it uses already exist, and it is also subversive since it aims at reversing the perspective against the context in which it arises. The pastoral heaven full of natural elements is then turned around as a lifeless simulation decorated with artificial pastoral features. The second nature Timothy W. Luke brings up can explain the essence of this Arcadia. The artificial Arcadia which Burgher presents is actually a contrast to the primitive nature the pastoral Arcadia symbolizes. Therefore, I argue that Burgher’s textual flânerie “détourn” the attractive appearance of Arcadia into simulation that covers capitalist operation and causes homogeneity, and such détournement also makes up a new “Arcadia” in which he feels force-life of the city and sees that every citizen can exert the right to the city.

II. Arcadian Paradise or Duplication?

The concept of détournement emerges from the modernist avant-garde artistic practice. It could be translated as “diversion,” but more subtle meanings in the French contain “hijacking,” “embezzlement,” “corruption,” and “misappropriation” (Sadler 17). It is composed of the “recycling, re-positioning, or re-employing of the existing elements of an art work” (Jenks 26). It is a detouring of preexisting elements in an effort to subvert and reclaim them. To achieve détournement, two principles of

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19 The routes of détournement could be traced to the surrealist practice of the juxtaposition of unassociated objects in order to subvert the static and mechanic modes of apprehension of the reality. It is expressed concisely by an idea of a chance meeting between a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table.
this practice need to be followed: first, each recycled element must be stripped of its
original significance; second, the re-assembled elements must form an original image
that generates a new meaning structure for each part (26). Since situationists
understand that the creation of a spectacular illusionary universe of meaning is the
heart of contemporary capitalism, they continue the practice of détournement in an
effort to reveal the absurdity of the vacant promise represented by commodified
images. For situationists, détournement is aimed at dismantling the alluring
appearance of capitalist society and constituting the elements in a new presentation in
order to subvert the authority of capitalism. Debord and Wolman in “Methods of
Détournement” explain how the operation of this practice works to put the static
knowledge into active motion and create new meanings:

Any elements, no matter where they are taken from, can serve in
making new combinations…[W]hen two objects are brought together, no
matter how far apart their original contexts may be, a relationship is always
formed. Restricting oneself to a personal arrangement of words is mere
convention. The mutual interference of two words of feeling, or the
bringing together of two independent expressions, supersedes the original
elements and produces a synthetic organization of greater efficacy.

Anything can be used. (Situationist International Anthology 9)

According to their explanation, détournement seeks to liberate a word, statement,
image, or event from their capitalist usage and subvert their original meanings. It
hijacks the preexisting elements from their original context and reroutes them to a
new and unexpected direction. It helps to repossess the authentic life which is lost in
the capitalist societ.y. Situationists think the life of modern people is filled with
illusory images and false promises whose spectacular appearances gloss over the
hidden manipulation or repressive logic. However, situationists also believe that a critique of capitalist society is present within capitalist language. “Western capitalism…was taking a risk by dangling the spectacle under people’s noses” (Sadler 17-18). Through détournement, spectators could transgress the rules of consumerism by stealing and redistributing the products and images of capitalism and then turning their vacuous promises of a better world into something meaningful.

Détournement could shape the perspective which deconstructs the false coherence and harmony in capitalist society. It is present that many urban spaces have been designed to show a peculiar or exotic atmosphere that induces consumers to believe that there is an equal essence that conforms to its surface. Chris Jenks claims that détournement “provides the flâneur with the perceptual tools for spatial irony. The walker in ‘derive,’ who is therefore not oriented by convention, can playfully and artfully ‘see’ the juxtaposition of the elements that makes up the city in new and revealing relationships” (Jenks 26). In this way, the images which are used to decorate spaces for the preset atmosphere or situation are broken open, recycled, and redistributed to make another meaningful ensemble which confers on each element its new effect. “The juxtaposition of elements” shows the subversive meaning against the hidden manipulated authority and makes for “a perpetual and infinite collage of imagery and a repository of fresh signification” (26). Détournement as a critical perspective endows flâneur with the potential to rearrange the commodified images in the city into a significant juxtaposition that shows the discrepancy between the surface and the internal which is unknown to passive spectators.

Burgher’s textual flânerie has shown that both Victor’s rooftop garden and the countryside in the Arcadia are the duplication of nature. Timothy W. Luke has discussed three kinds of nature which appear successively in human history. “First
nature…gains its identity from the varied terrains forming the bioscape / ecoscape /
geoscape of terrestriality” (Luke 28). Various terrains like earth, water, and sky
provide the field of action for human communities, and human existence in the first
nature is greatly influenced by and dependent upon natural elements that human
beings share with all organic life. In the representation of nature as the first nature,
Luke refers to Neil Smith’s writing in which Smith claims that “nature is generally
seen as precisely that which cannot be produced; it is the antithesis of human
productive activity” (Smith 49). Out of this first nature, the second nature is produced
by human activity. Human beings transform fundamental fields, and the atoms from
the first nature are reordered in the anthropogenic operations. Second nature is “an
artificial technosphere” which is “manufactured out of modern science, capitalist
exchange, and industrial technology on a world-wide scale” (Luke 28). Therefore,
“this material sub-stratum is more and more the product of social production” and
“the development of the material landscape presents itself as a process of the
production of nature” (Smith 49-50).20 Nations, cities, and societies are built
environments in the second nature. This elaborate technosphere includes cultural,
economic, and political geographies in which human activity and agency obtain new
characteristics beyond those in the environment of the first nature.

Nowadays, informationalization creates the hyperreal domain of third nature
after human beings’ industrial and agricultural activity fabricates the second nature of
technological artifice. “The physical environment of first nature as well as the
artificial environment of second nature can be supplemented by digital environment
in a new third nature” (Luke 28). This “informational cybersphere / telesphere ”

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20 Smith further elaborates that “[w]ith production for exchange, the production of nature takes place
on an extended scale…Through human agency, a cleavage is created between nature and society,
between a first nature and a second nature. The latter comprises exactly those societal institutions
which facilitate and regulate the exchange of commodities, both directly and indirectly. Isolated local
unity gives way to a more extensive societal unity. Second nature is produced out of first nature” (65).
overlays and interpenetrates the technosphere of second nature and the biosphere of first nature. The establishment of third nature is that human agency and structure are shifted from manufactured matters to a register of informational bits, and simulation systems of hyperreality are composed of image streams and information currents that evaporate the differences between true and false, real and representation. Luke points out that simulation which eliminates the true by emulating its appearances as new kinds of given things is the prevailing phenomenon in third nature. Today, when people feel free for the elaboration from the external force of capitalist authority, they do not perceive that the expansion of signs which are reduced to valueless parts capable of sticking to anywhere, has become the new form of manipulation. In the industrial capitalist society, the conflicts between the original and the reproduced, the true and the imaginative are still obvious, while in the consumer society, the difference has been erased by the operation of simulation. It is just the loss of reality and the hidden manipulation enveloped by spectacular appearances.

I want to argue that the shopping mall Arcadia where people can enjoy a country walk is not the first nature but the artificial second nature. Natural elements are transplanted into this building to create the phantasmagoria for visual consuming. Graeme Gilloch states that “[i]n the contemporary city, human beings are subject not to the daemonic powers of nature, but to the domination and delusions of ‘second nature,’ the human-made environment of commodities, machines and edifices” (124). The Arcadia gives a visual entertainment in which a duplication of countryside is revealed to the spectator. However, Burgher’s critical faculties are not lulled into stupefied slumber by the phantasmagoria, and his textural flânerie presents the

21 Just as Baudrillard says in Simulacra and Simulations: in hyperreality, “[n]o more mirror of being and appearances, of the real and its concept…The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models—and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational” (Baudrillard 3).
détournement of this artificial Arcadia.

The title *Arcadia* implies that this novel is related to the dream of retreating away from the urban turmoil to the pastoral utopia. Traditional Arcadia represents a life of rustic innocence and simplicity untainted by civilization. Its inhabitants are thought as having continued living after the manner of Golden Age, without the arrogance and avarice that corrupt other places. Victor, who says he has “sap for blood” and is just “a countryman at heart,” holds this dream and wants to realize it by setting up an environment of countryside in the city (Crace 68). The rooftop greenhouse in Big Vic and the giant shopping mall Arcadia are both the representation of his pastoral nostalgia. However, through the conceptual reordering of the preexisting elements perceived from the relationship between urban people and their environment, the wandering urban cultural critic Burgher in his textual flânerie reveals the characteristics of the second nature in these places. Moreover, he also deconstructs the simulated appearances of this second nature and exposes the hidden operation of capitalist domination.

The rooftop of Big Vic is designed as a garden where Victor bestows care and passion upon various kinds of plants. It is his private space where this old man spends most of his time after work. The air and foliage make this place very different from other parts of the office building. According to Burgher’s description, Big Vic is “sick” with its “heavy and inert” air which is full of harmful materials, and the “sickness” infects several greengrocers who are invited to Victor’s country-style birthday party, and painful symptoms show their unbearable discomfort in this enclosed environment (Crace 59). Nevertheless, when they enter Victor’s rooftop garden, “the greengrocers breathed deeply, swallowed mouthfuls of the dirty but unfettered air, turned their faces to the sun and wind, and looked out across the city
and the suburbs to the blue-green hills, the grey-green woods, beyond” (66). “The traders followed Victor there and rubbed the leaves of herbs and primped the seedlings like owners of the land” (67). The “magic” of this place cures and delights the guests, so it seems like that the greenhouse is the extension of the countryside which relaxes those confined urban people and leads them to the imagination of the tranquil countryside. However, Burgher not only presents how the birthday party begins to take on the atmosphere of countryside at the moment when Victor and his guests ascend to his private garden, but he also shows a critical perspective that penetrates the contradiction hidden behind the “magic” of the space. First, from Burgher’s textual flânerie we can notice that the rooftop garden is actually the manmade second nature rather than the extension of countryside. Instead of growing naturally, the greenery is transplanted to this concrete-and-steel building, and its exuberance is attributed to the fertilization and nourishment given with great attention by Victor. Such deliberate process contradicts the first nature which “is the antithesis of human productive activity” (Smith 49). Instead, the leaves and stems accumulate into the duplication of the first nature, and this garden could be regarded as the artificial second nature.

Second, for Victor who proclaims himself a countryman inside, he takes his private garden as the embodiment of the beautiful countryside his mother tells him and promises one day she will bring him back to. Nevertheless, Burgher discloses that in fact, Victor destroys the meaning he renders to the greenhouse himself. When Victor is still a child, his mother’s “tinseled paradise” of village landscape which is made “shiny and intense by distance and by time” is Victor’s “milk and honey” (126, 133). “It kept him quiet and still and satisfied.” (133). He thinks he is a country boy. However, Burgher criticizes that such richness of his life is “second-hand,” and the
inner world Victor makes of Em’s refurbished country talk is like “a theme park marketed as Rural Bliss” or “the film-set for a country musical” nowadays (133). The countryside Victor longs for only exists in his imagination and is quit dissimilar to the real one because it is refined without material problems. Therefore, he transfers his feelings from the imagined countryside to the obsession with the greenhouse where the transplanted greenery is more the decoration and properties for the representation of his village dream.

Third, this greenhouse symbolizes Victor’s consciousness of ownership and the ambition to define the city. It contradicts the simplicity and innocence connotated in the traditional Arcadia, and it also paradies Victor’s longing for the simple and peaceful village atmosphere. When showering the yellow aphids which congregate on the underleaves with toxic milk, Victor wonders “[h]ow high…would he have to build to rise beyond the pigeons and the flies, to reach above the aphids and the ants” (Crace 54). Obviously, he wants to exclude harmful insects and unnecessary things from this domain, and the greenery should grow the way he wishes. Everything in this greenhouse needs to be under his control. Thus, the plants are not natural but cultivated objects he owns, and this garden is just a space where he stores and displays his collection. Nature is subordinate to man’s will, and the fetishist emotion toward plants seems to overweigh the desire for embracing real countryside. It is shown in that when Burgher describes the relationship between Victor and his greenhouse, we can find that the more Victor decorates the interior with greenery, the more he confines himself away from the real countryside he desires. This space resembles the nineteen-century bourgeois domestic interior that Walter Benjamin criticizes: “To live in these interiors was to have woven a dense fabric about oneself, to have secluded oneself within a spider’s web, in whose toils world events hang
loosely suspended like so many insect bodies sucked dry. From this cavern, one does not like to stir” (*The Arcade Project* 216). Victor thinks that he has kept nature in this space, but the flourishing plants are transplanted here losing the original relation with nature and confines him in the simulation created by himself. Moreover, the greenhouse is the place where Victor usually views his city “like a hawk knows fields” and brews the plan to replace the Soap Market with Arcadia. When he stays in this world which he regards as Arcadia, “the magic of the place” does not affect him because his mind never leaves the city and his sense of ownership even inflates so much that he thinks he can redefine the urban space with his own judgment.

The greenhouse could be taken as the prototype of the shopping mall Arcadia. Both of them aim to bring nature to the city and create an atmosphere of pastoral refuge. Its architect Signor Busi claims that he will “give the people a country walk right at the city’s heart” (Crace 231).

Here is a landscape at the city center...[W]e have the horizontal disunities of the natural landscape... We let the natural city light, which is absorbed by brick and stone, pass through our glass and flood the building in the way that light can flood and warm and make fertile a country greenhouse... It is a sculpture made from glass and greenery... It is... Arcadia. But modernized. Climate-controlled. Efficient. Accessible.

Contemporary. Defended. (232)

It not only includes a fruit-and-vegetable market, expensive restaurants, an aviary, but also offers entertainments such as African drum performance, jugglery, and accordion band performance. It is not only a huge greenhouse but also a theme park, the enclosed, well-controlled second nature located in the center of the city. When Burgher is taking the dérive in this place, he is attracted by the greenery which has its
function: the creepers, cycads, vines supported by the stretched netting screening are “the building’s drapery,” and other hot-house plants which can neutralize the atmosphere and filter from the air harmful materials work as the air purifier of Arcadia (359). Besides, an aviary of tropical birds such as cockatiels, budgerigars, and cockatoos, together with hot-house foliage and the medieval washing place which has originally existed in Soap Garden for hundreds of years, compose an exotic scene. He notices that the tourists view across “the rebuilt medieval washing place towards the thickest foliage of Arcadia” and take pictures “with a narrow lens…which shows just water, washing place, and leaves, a flash of cockatoo, a beam of sun” (361). “Arcadia, so framed, could be a part of Yucatan or Abyssinia” (361). The greenery is functional for this place, decoration or the air-cleaner, and the historical vestige loses its depth and becomes a part of a fake scene which has no relation to the original significance of the washing place. In addition, the music and smells, “fresh bread with Paganini” or “oranges augmented by the quintets of Osvaldo Bosse,” are “piped” throughout. This is not the realization of Arcadian dream. Instead, it destroys nature instead of creating it: the urban sparrows that intrude the huge greenhouse are killed by those exotic birds, and the fruit and vegetables are genetically processed until they lose their original form. Victor projects his own desire to the environment he creates, the rooftop garden and the shopping mall Arcadia. Both of them are the embodiment of the imagined countryside told by his mother Em. Such beautiful world which is alienated from the reality is like what Baudrillard says “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.” (2).

When Burgher takes on dérive in Arcadia, his perspective shows the subversive power of détournement against this Arcadian paradise. His textual flânerie implies that the plants and garden court are not equal to nature but only images; the smell and
music deliberately set and spread, the rural uniforms the staff needs to wear, all function as information of countryside. People feel that they are shopping, eating, walking, and having entertainment in the village. However, Victor’s Arcadia, composed of the accumulation of images and information, only imitates the appearance of countryside and makes people content in the duplication of nature. In fact, people are far away from nature; they are surrounded by commodities and are aroused fetishistic emotion by this space packaged by natural elements. Arcadia is built less to represent nature than to “shake out pockets, unzip wallets” as a “perfect cash machine” (Crace 366). The meaning Busi renders to this building is overturned and it is proved that the name Arcadia loses its significance. Burgher breaks the empty promise and further presents another world: a privatized public space which causes social hierarchy, hegemony, and destroys original urban communities which are formed in the Soap Market.

### III. Privatization and Commercialization of Public Spaces

To negotiate public spaces with creative practices today in the city is to face crucial struggles over meanings, values, and potentialities of those spaces at a time when democracy is contested in them. On the one hand, we confront the commercialized and commodified urban spaces which are often associated with the creation of pseudo-public spaces such as malls and theme parks. On the other hand, the surveillance measures are tightened in terms of security procedures that restrict the already marginalized and poor people. It includes the increase of surveillance cameras, enclosing walls, and other signs to warn and give orders. Practices to purify public spaces make those spaces unavailable for the poor. These situations are related to the urban restructuring in which the redevelopment of central urban spaces through capitalist power and real estate interests has caused exclusions and eviction. In the
remaking of urban spaces, the trend of the privatization of space, the controlling institutions of geography, and all kinds of segregation have reduced marginal people’s right to the public space in the city. Therefore, it is significant to explore critically the qualities of streets, parks, squares, and other public spaces in order to know how they are used and lived.

The meaning of public space is associated with the right of democratic participation in a society. For Lefebvre, “[t]he realization of urban life becomes possible only through the capacity to assert the social in the political and the economic realms in a way that allows residents to participate fully in society” (Space, Difference, Everyday Life 259). In this sense, the right “becomes a claim upon society for resources necessary to meet the basic needs and interests of members rather than a kind of property some possess and others do not” (State / Space: A Reader 302). Therefore, such rights are not to be granted from above but to be defined through political actions and social relations. Lefebvre argues that “[t]he right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services” (Lefebvre 34). It would not only make known of the ideas of users in the urban area but also include “the right to the use of the center, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck in ghettos (for workers, immigrants the ‘marginal’ and even for the ‘privileged’)” (34). Therefore, everyday life is the central point of the right to the city. Those who live in the city and create urban spaces are people who possess a legitimate right to the city.

The function of public space where inhabitants foregather to participate in political, ideological, and commercial activities, where they exert the right to the city is under threat. Public space should be open and provide different positions the
chance to be voiced and heard. Nevertheless, the privatization of public space has tightened the surveillance measures and reduced various meanings to one dominant definition. Zukin argues that the power of symbolic economy assigns space for social interaction and undertakes a visual interpretation. This symbolic control is fulfilled by redesigning certain urban areas, especially the central public space, and structuring their public order and security. More often than not, it is the market forces that mainly define the new identity of public spaces. In capitalist cities where the accumulation of capital is set as the prerequisite, culture may lose its essential value and become the alluring visual representation of spectacle. It is more often adopted for economical production than connected to its adjacent inhabitants. Thus, the exchange-value dominates the framing strategies of space, and such control of public spaces turns into a question of cultural hegemony and the loss of citizens’ right to the city. It destroys the communal culture and identity created by inhabitants who view those public spaces as a part of their life. In this way, urban culture loses its diversity, and there is increasingly less room for public values in which sharing and openness outweigh property and profits.

Situationists strive to reassert choice and humanist power with which ordinary citizens could decide to become self-governing. The situationist Lucien Kroll, who is also an architect, suggests that “the configuration of urban spaces must adapt to meet the changing needs of dynamic populations,” and he recognizes that “design is an integral part of the processes of habitation that should involve all human labor

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22 Zukin in her essay collection The Cultures of Cities describes that “[r]eal cities are material constructions, with human strengths and weakness, and symbolic projects developed by social representations, including affluence and technology, ethnicity and civility, local shopping streets and television news. Real cities are also macro-level struggles between major sources of change—global and local cultures, public stewardship and privatization, social diversity and homogeneity — and micro-level negotiations of power” (46). Since 1970, urban culture which is originally defined by the power structures of industrial society undergoes challenge, and simultaneously, the importance of cultural identity increases. The identity of individual cities depends upon their cultural performance, and the new performance of cultural presentation leads to the development of privatized public places (268).
dwellers” (*Space, Difference, Everyday Life* 265). For situationists, the design of urban spaces, especially public spaces, should conform to the needs of inhabitants regardless of social status. Besides, central public spaces in the city are places where differences converge. The right to the city that Lefebvre claims also relies upon the right to difference that could work as resistance to centrality that is formed through and against marginality. To regain the right to the public space and cultural diversity, the practice of détournement provides an effective way that can reveal the hegemonic side of symbolic economy and “kidnap” the authentic life from capitalist ambition (Harold 7). “Détournement would permit anyone to take part in the raids on official culture, weakening the polarization between ‘author’ and ‘reader,’ nullifying the importance of attribution, originality, and intellectual property” (Sadler 44). It is a critical sabotage that deconstructs the authority and at the same time arouses the consciousness of autonomous actions and subjective expression. Since it is the “antithesis of quotation,” “the fluid language of anti-ideology,” it will not set up any definitive certainty (Plant 86). On the contrary, it is the certainty, hegemony, and homogeneity that détournement aims to attack for the revelation of existing differences and conflicts. The privatization of public spaces which excludes diversity and democratic participation is thus the target for détournement. Through the practice of détournement, one can provide an alternative perspective that leads to the discovery of new aspects and brings the desires and needs to the light.

Victor’s Arcadia is not only the projection of his imagination and desire but also the construction of a hierarchical and homogeneous enclosure. Through depicting Victor’s Arcadia, Burgher subverts its meaning and reveals it as the virtuality of manmade second nature. Furthermore, Burgher makes the collapse of this duplication of nature point to an important issue: the privatization of public space
and the disappearance of urban diversity. That is to say, in terms of the practice of détournement, the appearance of countryside is torn up and the essence of this countryside is exposed as the second artificial nature. Besides, Victor’s Arcadian paradise is revealed as a hyperreality which is based upon the imagined, absent country scenes. By doing so, Burgher suggests that the “Arcadia” most urban inhabitants really need and long for is not the artificially created theme-park-like shopping mall but something represented by the Soap Market which supports an urban community defined by diversity and interaction.

The détournement of the artificial Arcadia leads readers to what is felt to be lacking or sacrificed in the city. The replacement of the closed shopping mall for the original open market means not simply the construction of a spectacular building, but the redesign of urban space that causes a huge change for inhabitants in the city. The Soap Market has a close relation with the neighborhood, and it is not a place to be authoritatively or simplistically defined but a space of multilayered meaning. For country people who move to the city, the Soap Market is a link between the country and the city. For example, various kinds of fruit and vegetables, and the community formed by sellers and buyers, remind Em of village life. The rural laborer Joseph also feels familiar with this place and finds a chance to work here. He joins the community of day laborers and homeless people who Teske describes as “a present-day parody of the topical happy-go-lucky shepherd” (171). The Soap Market is the refuge for those marginal people and it gives them a sense of equality. Even Rook develops a nostalgia for the Soap Market not only because he has been one of the traders before working as Victor’s assistant, but also for the feeling of home combining a sense of community. It is a public space where people enjoy individual freedom, take personal commercial activities, form social network, and communicate for the good of
communities. The residents participate fully in the Soap Market which provides a space to exert right to the city regardless social statuses and ranks. Moreover, when the news that a modernized shopping mall will substitute the Soap Market is spread, the stallholders, owners of the cafes and the bars in the Soap Garden, and regular customers unite to form a demonstration that marches with placards toward Big Vic. It is thus evident that the Soap Market should not be treated as a property owned by the business tycoon but a space shared by residents who think they have the legitimate right to it.

When Burgher is taking dérive in Arcadia, he feels that the urban diversity shown in public space is subdued by hierarchy and exclusion. The fruit and vegetables it displays are “produce of gene-bank and the science farm” (364-365). Such pre-defined format is contrary to the multiformity of agricultural products that symbolizes the diverse communities in the Soap Market. He also notices that the customers are strictly filtered: “drunks and tramps and demonstrators and people who do not come to spend, but simply wish to shelter from the rain, or sleep, or cause unpleasantness” are not welcome (Crace 233). Instead, it panders to “Invulnerables” who form a class of elite and have no need to experience the street life. People need to follow its rules such as “no eating on the hoof” to keep the perfect situation of this environment. Surveillance cameras, anti-theft shutters, suicide netting, and commissionaires are planned to make this place secure and guarded. Moreover, the former traders are expelled as they have no ability to pay the rents in the new market, and the regular shoppers are unable to pay the new price. For Victor, Arcadia is a space where urban anarchy can be turned into visual order and social hierarchy. However, from Burgher’s description, it is actually shown as a secluded building which not only destroys the democratic participation everyone can have in the
exchange of money and good, but also deprives residents of the right to a public space. Arcadia fulfills the wish for homogeneity, but it simultaneously causes eviction and sacrifices individual freedom.

With the redefinition of urban public spaces attained through the employment of cultural economy, those spaces are under the threat of privatization and commodification. Zukin claims that “[b]y accepting these spaces without questioning their representations of urban life, we risk succumbing to a visually seductive, privatized public culture” (Zukin 3). Burgher explores urban spaces that undergo such redevelopment, and his textual-flânerie reveals the operation of cultural economy under the surface. Burgher finds that the economic power which is used by Victor to create Arcadia defines the surroundings of the building and impresses a new image of the city upon the minds of the citizens or tourists. By doing so, Arcadia, on the one hand, successfully brings gentrification to the traditional Woodgate district. On the other hand, the aesthetics of visual order is also set for the purpose to exclude unwanted visitors and everything different. This new visual code causes inclusion and exclusion. Burgher depicts how the local identity is destroyed by the cultural filtration. For instance, the less powerful groups are expulsed from Arcadia as well as from Woodgate district. Besides, the new stall-holders in Arcadia have no relation to the locality of the market, and most of the new shoppers are foreign tourists or citizens who live in the suburbs and make a special trip to experience Arcadia as a theme-park. Thus, Arcadia lies out of the everyday life of inhabitants and even deprives them of original social relation. “Togetherness and survival by trade were substituted by leisurely consumption” (173). Consequently, the Soap Market which is the urban central public space for commerce, interpersonal exchange, and political or ideological communication, is remade into a virtual world of pure consumption.
“Arcadia – a rustic paradise, he read. Arcadian – of pastoral simplicity. Arcade – a covered row of shops” (Crace 236). Victor’s Arcadia essentially conforms to arcades because it stresses the display of commodities, and consumption is valued most in this place. Therefore, Burgher’s practice of détournement subverts Victor’s Arcadian paradise and presents the artificial countryside as the second nature which is nothing but the decoration used to attract customers to visit and spend money. The dream of rural paradise is also turned into a commodity.

Although the economy can redefine a city with visual code, the need for public space and for a sense of community will find their expression in the uncontrollable street culture. Zukin’s statement shows the heterogeneity and uncertainty of urban culture: “People with economic and political power have the greatest opportunity to shape public culture by controlling the building of the city’s public spaces in stone and concrete. Yet public space is inherently democratic. The question of who can occupy public space, and so define an image of the city, is open-ended” (Zukin 11). It is symbolized even in the fortress-like Arcadia that this “hermetically sealed megalith” cannot prevent a hungry sparrow to “squeezed through the cavity of an expansion joist, and then found passage through the ill-docked heating duct” (Crace 360). Besides, the thriving of Soap Two which is composed of “disgruntled fruiterers who’d been displaced from Fat Vic’s corridors” also proves this (370). It represents that architectural plan cannot extirpate the public need for a communicative space, and it is in this makeshift market that Burgher perceives urban vitality. He finally realizes that people endure as buildings do, and they “leave a legacy which is not brick or stone” (371). Instead, a sense of life cannot be felt in Arcadia “with its policed doors, its creed of Safety from the Streets, its ban on pimps and tramps and tarts and bag-ladies, street vendors, rascals, teenagers, drunkards, dogs” (372). Only
going into the public space can he rediscover the sensory experiences and feel his existence in the city. For Burgher, the urban life resides not in an enclosed theme-park decorated with manmade features of countryside but in the public space which contains diverse communities and communication, and which allows individual freedom and differences.

IV. Conclusion

In Burgher’s textual flânerie he depicts two kinds of Arcadia. One is Victor’s Arcadian paradise. The redevelopment of the central market shows that economic power by means of visual code effectively strengthens itself. The topos Arcadia is turned into a spectacle, a world of commodities, which attracts suburbanites and tourists to come and shop. Burgher’s critical perspective “détours” its elements and dismisses the phantasmagoria. Consequently, his readers will realize that Arcadia’s customers are not embraced by nature. Instead, they get lost in the second nature that eliminates the difference between real and representation by imitating the appearance. Such employment of culture not only redefines a city but also changes social networks. The visual order will actually suffocate urban vitality. Therefore, he decides to leave Victor’s Arcadia and chase his own. The “Arcadia in the city” he brings up is not an architectural mark upon the city established in the form of a countryside. It is not the life which is maintained by machines, but the city should be taken as an organism which thrives with the help of its inhabitants. It is, according to his celebration of individual experiences in the streets, the situation that individuality, creativity, and true activity will not be sacrificed for urban planning and capitalist exchange, and the central public space belongs to human use and not to the territory of capitalism.
Chapter Three
Spectacle: The Rebirth of the City

I . Introduction

Herbert Marcuse in *One-Dimensional Man* criticizes new forms of social repression in capitalist society as well as the decline of revolutionary potential in the West. He says that “advanced industrial society becomes richer, bigger, and better as it perpetuates the danger…The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, their satisfaction promotes business and the commonweal, and the whole appears to be the very embodiment of Reason” (xli). According to Kellner’s explanation, in this advanced industrial society, “changes in production, consumption, culture, and thought have produced an advanced state of conformity in which the production of needs and aspirations by the prevailing societal apparatus integrates individuals into the established societies” (xii). Mass media, advertising, and industrial management are mechanisms through which consumer capitalism integrates individuals into its “one-dimensional” world of thought and behavior in which the ability for critical thought and oppositional behavior fades away. Human freedom and authentic individuality are the prices man pays for satisfaction. One-dimensional man does not know the true need because the need is administered and superimposed. To resist domination or to act autonomously is hardly possible if man derives the view of the world and mode of behavior from existing practices.

Similar to the one-dimensional society, Debord describes a world in which the ubiquitous messages, signs, and images conspire to confuse appearance with reality and this world throws into question the possibility of distinguishing authentic desire and real life from their fabricated and represented manifestation. Marcus points out
that consumerism, advertising, mass culture, and ideology integrate individuals into and stabilize the capitalist system. Debord defines modern society as a spectacle which extends commodity relations to all aspects of life and functions as a mechanism to stabilize capitalist and bureaucratic domination. “In societies dominated by modern conditions of production, life is presented as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation,” and people are reactive spectators of their own lives (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 7). Chris Jenks understands the spectacle as that which “constitutes the visual convention and fixity of contemporary imagery” (Jenks 27). The going order makes use of the spectacle to appropriate the visual into the form of the acceptably viewable; that is to say, the spectacle indicates “rules of what to see and how to see it,” it is the “seen-ness” not the “see-worthy” (27). “Social life is degraded rather than honoured by its transformation into the realm of ‘the spectacle’,,” but the flâneur who obtains this critical concept of the spectacle can keep off “the necessity of objects-to-be-seen” and will not take “sights of the city” as objects for the gaze as a consumer since the flâneur should not mingle with the crowd of passive spectators (27).

The spectacle is one of the forces which manipulates human desire and dissolves the critical perspective, making modern people one-dimensional men. In *Arcadia*, the spectacle in the form of commodity or as a means for domination of the powerful colonizes social life. It creates delusion through the attractive appearance of commodities from which the illusion of city life is formed. Moreover, the city as the territory of capitalism loses its distinctive local characteristics and the trace of history for economic production when the giant shopping mall Arcadia replaces the traditional Soap Market. The separation of social class is the foundation of the
establishment of Arcadia, and the spectacle in the form of mass media serves urbanization, supporting its firmness by concealing conflicts and fabricating positive illusion. Burgher is the only character that refutes the spectacle through his textual-flânerie, and I argue that Jim Crace makes textual-flânerie an opposition to all-encompassing control of the spectacle and a possibility to unveil the surface of illusion. It is Burgher’s writing that delineates the demise of the city: the prevailing separation in human relationship and social hierarchy, the suffocation of true needs and revolutionary expression, and the destruction of local community which contains the history and memory of a place. However, he also presents the rebirth of the city which is represented by Soap Two. He not only reveals the totalizing power that wants to define the city but also makes known that urban space presents us with heterogeneity of practices and processes.

II. The Concept of the Spectacle

Debord argues that modern people live in a world which is saturated by images and where alienation is total. The modern capitalist society is actually an organization of spectacles in which it is impossible to experience real life or to actively participate in the construction of the lived world. The spectacle on the one hand refers to particular public events and urban spaces. On the other, the spectacle is associated with a theatrical presentation or controlled visual production. Debord relates it to the use of vision by capitalism in order to make people inactive spectators in the world of commodities, and such manipulation of sight is also employed by administrative power to control subjects. The spectacle has already become the dominant mode of life in contemporary society. “The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 7).
The spectacle is a conceptual extension of the phenomenon of reification. That is, the objectification of social relations and products extends to the production and consumption of images. In this view, social life, saturated by an accumulation of spectacles, is so colonized by commodities and administrative techniques that people are more like passive spectators than active agents, accepting roles assigned to them in a state of contemplation. “Those who are always watching to see what happens next will never act: such must be the spectator’s condition” (Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* 22). What the spectacle demands is the passive acceptance, and the spectacle “can never be questioned” because it keeps spreading the message: “What appears is good; what is good appears” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 9-10).

In passively consuming spectacles and observing products of social life, the individual is alienated from reality and inner truth. The spectacle can subject people to societal manipulation while obscuring the effects and deprivations of capitalism. It does not appear in the form of direct force but functions as the tool of pacification. It is a “permanent opium war designed to force people to equate goods with commodities and to equate satisfaction with a survival” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 22). The cultural mechanisms of leisure and consumption, services and entertainment, are “narcotics” of the spectacular society (Best and Kellner 84-85). Thus, the commodification of social life and the extension of bureaucratic control to the realms of leisure and everyday life are made comfortable. However, the truth is that capitalist exploitation is raised from the physical privation to a psychological level: although nowadays workers have salary raised and more leisure

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23 According to Best’s and Kellner’s explanation, Debord’s society of spectacle refers to “a media and consumer society” which is “organized around the consumption of images, commodities, and spectacles” (*The Postmodern Turn* 84). Moreover, it is also related to “the vast institutional and technical apparatus of contemporary capitalism,” to “all the means and methods power employs” (84).
time, alienated consumption is generalized and becomes “a duty for the masses as alienated production” (21). It appears that a life of sumptuousness and happiness is promised for everyone, the poor who cannot afford their commodity fantasies are motivated to work harder and harder. They are not only captivated in the cage of capitalist exploitation but also distracted from their intuition and the most important task of real life: to rescue their human power through creative practices.

The concept of the spectacle is also connected with the concept of separation. “The spectacle is the technological version of the exiling of human powers into ‘a world beyond’; the culmination of humanity’s internal separation” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 12). In the society of the spectacle, the reality becomes second-hand because it is determined and overtaken by images. “Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 7). According to Best’s explanation, Debord means that “[t]he spectacle escalates abstraction to the point where we no longer live in the world per se… but in an abstract image of the world” (*Baudrillard: A Critical Reader* 48). He makes sense of the abstraction in terms of the philosophization of reality: “The spectacle does not realize philosophy, it philosophizes reality, reducing everyone’s concrete life to a universe of speculation” (*Society of the Spectacle* 11). Direct experiences are replaced by a speculative world of images in which people do not actively constitute their lives but contemplate the attractive surface of commodities. “The more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more he identifies with the dominant images of need, the less he understands his own life and his own desires” (*Society of the Spectacle* 16). Consumers are hypnotized by the spectacle and thus separated from reality as well as their immediate

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24 Marx conceives that the realization of philosophy requires “the abolition of ‘philosophy’ – the destruction of an abstract ideology constituted above and against the concrete conditions of social existence (which none the less determine its form and content) – and the synthesis of theory and practice;” on the other hand, the philosophization of reality alienates thought from action when it “idealizes and hypostatizes the world” (*Baudrillard: A Critical Reader* 48-49).
emotions and desires.

The abstraction of the spectacle also causes a further degradation of human being’s existence. Debord’s theorization of the spectacle extends discussions of commodity fetishism with the Marxist tradition. He says that “[t]he present stage, in which social life has become completely dominated by the accumulated productions of the economy, is bringing about a general shift from having to appearing” (Society of the Spectacle 11). That is to say, the material object has yielded to its representation, and what people care about has veered to the “immediate prestige and [the] ultimate purpose from appearances” of their “having” (11). The appearance of the commodity which represents the “prestige” is more decisive than its use-value in the abstract system of the spectacle. Consequently, the production of objects has given way to the production of “image-objects” that functions as symbolic signs (10). Subjects are so obsessed with all kinds of images and commodities that they are unconsciously imbued with the ideology and values which are represented.

The world Jim Crace depicts in Arcadia is permeated by images and information of commodities, where self-fulfillment, pleasure, and independence the spectacle promises are realizable only through consumption. It is represented by Joseph, a young countryman who works on one of Victor’s farms and very attracted toward city life. For him, city life equals to a good life. However, his impression of city life is not based on the practical experience in the city but from his own imagination inflamed by a commodity catalogue. He is obsessed with a “cream and crumple suit” designed with the “light, summer style” which is marketed as “On the Town.”

25 Debord also claims that the first stage is what Marx speaks of “the degradation of being into having — human fulfillment was no longer equated with what one was, but with what one possessed” (Society of the Spectacle 10-11). In this stage, emotions are reduced to greed, and the creative practice is degraded to the possession of an object.
The fashion model in the catalogue had been sitting on a bar stool with his sunglasses hooked inside the breast pocket of the jacket. One hand – the one with a single, gleaming ring – was resting on his knee, palm up. The other held the barmaid by the wrist. The gold watch on his arm showed the time as five to midnight, or five to midday. There was a bottle of muscatino on the bar and strangely, promisingly, three glasses, as if another woman had just left, or was expected soon. Or, perhaps, the glass was waiting there for Joseph…The model’s empty, upturned palm, the drama of the barmaid’s wrist caught by the strong hand of the man, exactly matched Joseph’s notion of the casual spontaneity of city life where day and night were all the same, where drink and wealth and women were within easy reach. (Crace 34)

Joseph desires to buy this suit, not for its use-value, but for “the casual spontaneity of city life” implied by the advertisement. It seems that as long as he puts himself in this suit, he will be transformed into an attractive, wealthy, and powerful man who gets along well in the city. “Joseph had cut the picture from the catalogue and put it in the breast pocket as if to equip his clothing with a pedigree and, more than that, an aspiration” (34). However, identifying himself with the image, he has been trapped in the cage of contemplation in which reality is overtaken by illusion through vision. Sun glasses, the gold watch, the gleaming ring, and the suit in the picture are commodities which represent prestige, social status, and individual fulfillment in modern society. Desiring to “appear” as the model, Joseph “worked, saved his wages, sent for his On the Town suit, and planned his escapade” to the city (36). He unconsciously accepts the role set by capitalism as an innocent consumer, and his leisure time is exploited when he, contemplating “the casual spontaneity of city life,”
works harder and harder in Victor’s farm in order to satisfy his desire. Although he
takes the initiative to change his life-style, the act mediated by the commodity still
fails to fulfill his dream to live a spontaneous life in the city.

Joseph’s city life proves to be a depressing one. The imagination that in the city
“he’d flourish in the privacy of crowds, in the monkish cells of tenements, in streets”
is never realized (Crace 37). His eyes are sharp for urban spectacles such as “tall and
optimistic buildings…tall and optimistic girls…flashing neon light and fancy cars,”
and in the boutique street his steps are waylaid by “all the sorcery of Look, Don’t
touch” of glossy commodities (14, 38). It is the spectacle that makes Joseph believe
that the city is paved with hope and prosperity. He knows that the only thing that can
help him to be the charming man in the catalogue is money. In order to attain it fast,
he chooses the illegal way. Taking the crowd as the sanctuary of his crime, he steals
from Con, a fruit trader, in the Soap Market but gets caught, beaten, and threatened to
be locked in the prison if he refuses to rob Rook for Con of the bribe given by the
traders of the market. Nevertheless, his attack on Rook is fought back. To earn a
living, he has no choice but to work as a porter in the Soap Market where he feels
familiar with the agricultural produce, atmosphere, and the work of labor, and sleeps
with homeless people there. Later, he is purchased by Rook to set a fire on the Soap
Market for Rook’s retaliative scheme against Victor. The end of Joseph is not the
private cell of tenements but a cell in the prison. It seems that the city not only
disallows him a spontaneous and wealthy life but also makes use of him and strikes
him. “In any case, the truth of Joseph did not match the suit,” Burgher says (37).
Joseph’s contemplation stimulated by the commodity catalogue actually simplifies
urban life, and his actions mediated by commodities and urban spectacles are
alienated from his individual reality. He can stride across the geographical boundary
between the country and the city but can hardly break the exclusion of social class which dominates his life style and decides how he is treated in the city. Rook, with whom his only relation in the city is established, is not his partner but the one who buys and makes use of him. Their relationship is commodified under the exchange principle of capitalist society.

“The spectacle is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images…a view of a world that has become objective,” claimed by Debord (Society of the Spectacle 7). The abstract system of the spectacle has become the mode of social life. Human relationship is mediated by images with which unification seems to be attained. Nevertheless, “it is in reality the domain of delusion and false consciousness: the unification it achieves is nothing but an official language of universal separation” (7). The unification of social life is but an illusion: emotions, feelings, and understandings are stimulated and formed by images which cover the absence of real social interactions. The phenomenon that people tend to identify themselves with images gives the illusion of unity because what they chase is the same. However, it is the obsession with images that overtakes their consciousness of reality and the motivation to create a communal relation. It is a world in which all communication flows in one direction, from the powerful to the powerless. “The relation between authors and spectators is only a transposition of the fundamental relation between directors and executants. It answers perfectly to the needs of a reified and alienated culture: the spectacle-spectator relation is in itself a staunch bearer of the capitalist order” (Situationist International Anthology 307-308).

Passivity is the means and the end of a hidden project of social control.

III. The Manipulation of the Spectacle

Arcadia begins with the arrangement of a “simple” and “country” birthday
meal (Crace 3). Victor wants it to be “a relaxed birthday lunch” which gives him and “a few close friends” “peace and informality, and the chance to talk amongst themselves like smutty boys” (3, 59-60). However, what Victor cares about is the information of the Soap Market, and Burgher’s ironic writing reveals that this is less an “informal” meal than a deliberate occasion arranged to get total domination by means of the spectacle. The atmosphere of the country meal is set to display a harmonious image that the relationship between Victor and those greengrocers is not that of boss and subordinates but “close friends” that can have free and easy conversations. In Burgher’s eye, all of Victor’s guests act like “the courtiers, obsequious, fearful, ill at ease,” and Victor is the “emperor” in their eyes (60). “Indeed, the whole lunch had been arranged as if this old man were a medieval ruler, addicted to the indulgences and flattery of everyone who crossed his path” (60).

Although this occasion is prepared with the atmosphere of countryside with accordionists who play and sing Birthday Polka, cats that jump up and down, simple food, and even later the shift of location to the rooftop garden, it on the contrary emphasizes the consciousness that Victor is the “Vegetable King” they must conform to. “We’re here because we haven’t got the choice,” one ageing soapie remarks (60). Victor’s silence destroys any possibility of close conversations, and what he wants to hear is nothing but the answer to the question he brings up about the situation of the Soap Market. Burgher criticizes that “a boss can speak as little as he wishes, and stay away from markets, offices, and streets” (65). In opposition to the generosity and kindness he expresses apparently, Victor at heart “mistook their talk for trivia . . . He looked on them with less kindness, less forgiveness, less respect than he had looked upon the yellow aphids that he’d killed that day” (65). Victor, conscious of his status as the superiority, does not care what those greengrocers do or say at all unless it has
something to do with business. It is in this orchestrated occasion that Rook’s work, as a supervisor and negotiator in the market, is examined, and thus Victor can obtain the entire control over the market. Therefore, this country meal that unifies Victor and greengrocers is actually the operation of the spectacle which is used to hide and simultaneously attain the attempt to strengthen the power of domination, and it is alienation not communication, hierarchy not community, that is the foundation of this spectacle.

The spectacle has already become the dominant mode of social life, and it is used not only by the powerful as a means to control but also by the powerless as a way to survive. Em, as a stranger from the country, feels alienated from urban environment and its culture. In order to be accepted by city people, she needs to observe and imitate. “Em understood. To earn the pity and the cash of citizens she had to seem respectable and, more than that, serene – a living sculpture labeled Motherhood” (Crace 96). Burgher sardonically says that “the drunkard at the railway station gates, singing bits of opera in fake Italian and French, and bothering the women with his arias, earned more from begging than the trolley man who’d lost a wife, his mind, and both his legs in some forgotten war” (94). Em and Victor make “a wholesome sight” which is “the sentimental counterpart of comic, operatic drunks” (95). Besides, for those men who are not moved by Motherhood, Em acts Eve (97). “She wore a mask of gormless innocence which was as challenging to them as the pouting and the paint upon the faces of the bar girls who sold real sex for cash” (97).

What Em does is not simple begging but sophisticated performance that attracts people’s attention by means of sight which Debord thinks as “the most abstract and easily deceived sense” (Society of the Spectacle 11). The image formed by Em is both the acting and the commodity that traps city people in complacent contemplation.
Men toss coins for the imaginative satisfaction of male domination, and women pay for the gracious image of Motherhood with which they identify themselves. Nevertheless, her successful operation of the spectacle reveals what Debord claims: The spectacle is “whatever escapes people’s activity, whatever eludes their practical reconsideration and correction” (*Society of the Spectacle* 11). City people would rather “pay” for the image of “Madonna and her Child,” the gracious scenes that can be appreciated closely in churches or in galleries, or for the innocent as well as tempting image of Eve, than acknowledge the tragedy that happens to a desperate mother and her dying baby who can hardly survive in a dark and dirty corner of the city (Crace 95). They would rather “buy” “smiles and peace of mind” than give charity to “noisy poverty” (93,103). The image seems to unify Em and city people, but it actually works only on the basis of separation. “Separation is the alpha and omega of the spectacle” (*Society of the Spectacle* 13). On the one hand, the spectacle captivates city people in contemplation on condition that it alienates them from reality of hunger, sickness, and despair in the city. On the other hand, Em, shaped by social forces of the city and dependent upon them, must put on attractive appearances: Madonna or Eve. In society of the spectacle “individual reality is allowed to appear only if it is not actually real” (11).

The way how Em survives in the city not only reveals the separation from reality in social life but also shows the individual negotiation in urban space. For Em, the city is distressing: “[s]he feared the clanking trams with their winding, outside stairs, and their wind-blown upper platforms which shook and muttered like the devil’s haycart” (Crace 85). The Post Hall in the city which “was a bloated, oblong hall, sepulchral and forbidding” overwhelmed her and “[s]he almost crossed herself and fell down on her knees to pray” (86). Both “the devil’s haycart” and the
“septulchral and forbidding oblong hall” are related to death which is the image that Em sees in the city. However, in the Soap Market she feels life and a sense of home. It is like a refuge where she can ward off the threat of death and find a way to adapt herself to the city. She notices that her “urban sisters” seem like “modest girls” or “sinful ones” who cannot lift their eyes and have no energy to smile (85). Her observation reveals the paleness and numbness of city people. Em’s performing as Madonna or Eve means that after knowing the alienation prevailing in urban society she makes use of such alienation. Both Madonna and Eve are typical female icons that classify and simplify women into types. Em pretends to be either of the two but does not make herself any of them. She has no need to be real Madonna or Eve to create her living space in the city. She seems to be a static form, but there are actually fluid activities that happen in her everyday life. In this case, she is not the passive spectator any more who is overwhelmed by urban spectacles at first but a manipulator of the spectacle who makes use of city people’s desires. It is less to say that Em who performs Madonna or Eve to obtain the sympathy of city people is recruited to the dominant ideology. Instead, a country woman has found a fissure to insert herself in the estranged urban space with the use of visual manipulation. It is the oppositional manipulation in the system of the spectacle, and it is attained by the marginal as Em who takes the spectacle as her individual agency to negotiate in the city.

In addition to modern social life, situationists also relate the spectacle to particular areas or characteristics of cities since we can see their criticism in 1959 about the presentation of cities as “lamentable spectacles” and “a supplement to the museums for tourists.”26 Debord talks about urban space in the formulation of the

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26 The quotes here are from the article “Unitary Urbanism at the End of the 1950s” included in the book On the Passage of a Rather Brief Moment in Time: The Situationist International, 1957-1972. In this article, situationists expound the concept of unitary urbanism which is “a terrain of experience for the social space of the cities of the future,” and it “opposes the passive spectacle, the principle of our
spectacle in the seventh chapter “Territorial Domination” in *Society of the Spectacle*. He understands urbanism in terms of the spectacle as he emphasizes the significance of the production of urban space which is associated with the reproduction of dominant social and economic interests. As for territorial conquest, Zygmunt Bauman in *Liquid Modernity* says: “Territory was among the most acute of modern obsessions, its acquisition among the most compulsive of modern urges – while guarding the boundaries figured high among the most ubiquitous, resilient and relentlessly growing modern addictions” (114). The conquest of space refers to “accelerating the moves” which is “the sole means of enlarging the space” (113). Capitalist production has extended its territory all around the world, shrinking the globe with the annihilation of space by time and creating an abstract, free space of the commodity. As Debord says, “capitalist production has unified space, breaking down the boundaries between one society and the next,” and “urbanism – ‘city planning’ – is capitalism’s method for taking over the natural and human environment” (*Society of the Spectacle* 94-95).

Urban space, as the territory of capitalism, is refashioned into capitalism’s “particular decor” following the development toward its total domination (95). This thoroughly dominated capitalist space causes separation which is hidden by a homogenizing ideology. The unification resulted from capitalist production causes homogenization that dissolves the quality of places, draining them off their distinctive realities and simultaneously reproducing new forms of separation. Debord points particular importance to urbanism in producing and concretizing separation.

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27 Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* claims that power is about territory and boundaries. Tim Cresswell summarizes Certeau’s view that “the weapons of the strong are what he calls strategies — classification, delineation, division. The strong depend on the certainty of mapping. The weak, on the other hand, are left with furtive movement to contest the territorialization of urban space” (*Space and Social Theory* 362). Therefore, capitalism as the powerful dominate urban planning which is for economic reproduction, and the flâneur represented by Burgher in this novel refuses the spatialization of domination and makes walking in the city an act of resistance.
“While all the technical forces of capitalism contribute toward various forms of separation, urbanism provides the material foundation for those forces and prepares the ground for their deployment. It is the very technology of separation” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 95). Urbanism provides a means of “solving the ongoing problem of safeguarding class power by atomizing the workers who have been dangerously brought together by the conditions of urban production” (95). Individuals are re-integrated into “pseudo-community,” “on the planned needs of production and consumption,” and such re-integration means “bringing isolated individuals together as isolated individuals” in factories, cultural centers, tourist resorts and housing developments (96). For situationists, proletarians are “all people who have no possibility of altering the social space-time that society allots for their consumption;” on the contrary, the rulers are constituted by “those who organize this space-time, or who at least have a significant margin of personal choice” (*Situationist International Anthology* 108). This social polarization which is fundamental in capitalist domination is hidden by the gradations of income and rank and by the operation of leisure society. Debord and situationists thus regard urbanism and urban planning as prominent elements in making certain these class lines and key constituents of society of the spectacle.

Debord’s criticism upon the spectacle is a concern not only with spatial issues but also with the paralysis of history and memory under the rule of commodity. “The city is the focal point of history because it embodies both a concentration of social power, which is what makes historical enterprises possible, and a consciousness of the past” (Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* 98). However, the development of economy subordinates historical consciousness, which, Debord claims, causes the current destruction of the city. The spectacle pretends to be “all the fluid aspects of
human activity” for the purpose of “possess[ing] them in a congealed form” (19). Urban planning which works for the satisfaction of capitalist need is condemned as “conspicuous petrification of life” which might be expressed in Hegelian terms as “a total predominance of a ‘peaceful coexistence within space’ over ‘the restless becoming that takes place in the progression of time’ ” (95). The spectacle destroys history and manages an eternal present. Besides, when

Beyond a legacy of old books and old buildings, still of some significance but destined to continual reduction and, moreover, increasingly highlighted and classified to suit the spectacle’s requirements, there remains nothing, in culture or in nature, which has been transformed, and polluted, according to the means and interests of modern industry. (Comments on the Society of the Spectacle 10)

When the spectacle reintegrates old structures into its map, it freezes their historical progression and makes them monuments in the abstract space of spectacle. Those places, refurbished into tourist spectacles, seem to maintain their historical values ever lively with endless visiting people. Instead, they are transformed and polluted by capitalism and refused the chance to progress with local people. Reality seems to be increasingly falsified in accordance with the principle of exchange and the image of the spectacle. The spectacle, the official representation of modernity and urbanism, veils the collapse of reality which actually turns into a stream of images, products and activities sanctioned by business and bureaucracy.

Debord declares that “the self-destruction of the urban environment is already well under way” (Society of the Spectacle 96). His laments about the destruction of the city has much to do with urban planning that disperses populations from urban centers for a new concentration of capital, personnel, and administrative techniques. It
breaks up and isolates communities as it separates people from central areas. In The
Situationist City, Sadler mentions the marketplace of Les Halles and its demolition. This place is regarded as the belly of Paris and put at the very centers of the situationist maps.28 “It was a recognizably working-class area, where pedestrians rather than motorized traffic had priority on the streets, and where commercial exchange still took place over transitory market stalls, or in small shops, rather than in the chic boutiques or monolithic department stores” (60). This center of late-fifties Paris is what Debord identifies a gap in the Parisian spectacle. However, the market halls are destroyed in 1971. The big hole is eventually filled with the new RER Métro and a sunken shopping and entertainment center (64). Some critics take the closure of the market and the demolition of its metal and glass pavilions as the extraction of the very heart of the city. John Merriman claims that the government does not leave a single one of its pavilions of glass and iron standing for people to see what it was like is “absolutely barbaric,” and that “the account of the market’s fall reads like a death watch.”29 To Louis Chevalier, the new construction underground has “no other purpose than to concentrate in a deep, fetid underground all that Paris has to show and offer as high-class merchandise, all that one found in the shops along the great boulevards and elsewhere…” (The Assassination of Paris 260-261). The Soap Market in Arcadia, like Les Halles in Zola’s novel, serves the city as its nutritional epicenter. Busy and crowded with mostly working-class people, it is not only a place for selling and purchasing but also a realm of history, tradition, and culture. Burgher regards its demolition as a death upon which a temple of frenetic consumption will be built.

28 Emile Zola’s novel The Belly of Paris is set in the enormous, busy central market Les Halles of 19th Century Paris. The rebuilding in cast iron and glass during the Second Empire makes it a landmark of modernity in the city, the wholesale and retail center of a thriving food industry. It is Zola’s first novel entirely depicting the working class.

29 This statement comes from the foreword of The Assassination of Paris written by Louis Chevalier. The destruction of Les Halles is particularly what the author means by the “assassination” of Paris.
The atmosphere of death comes from the disappearance of historical meaning, distinctive reality of this place and the break with local people. Its wood and canvas market stalls and the central garden which represent history and memory of this place are eliminated for the need of modernization and capitalism. What supersedes is an artificial environment where the atmosphere of countryside is created. It seems that the city’s heart is colonized by countryside (Crace 223). Equipped with high technology, commissionaires, and surveillance cameras, neither the weather outside nor its consumers inside can change or influence this environment. The permanent presence of a comfortable countryside in the shopping mall Arcadia means the sacrifice of historical consciousness for economic production. The Soap Market is not only a place for the buying and selling of agricultural produce but also the space of individual and collective memories. With the construction of a modernized market and a statue *The Beggar Woman and Her Child* set in front of it, Victor eliminates the trace of collective history and privatizes this space with his own definition (369). The medieval washing place is refurbished and kept beside the lightshow on the new fountains (361). “We have respect for history,” says Signor Busi (234). However, the truth is that the historical element which is rich in local characteristics is subordinated as the material to create the global consuming space. Consumerism dominates local social space and culture and reduces them into homogenous fragments. The traditional washing place is displaced in a modernized, commercial environment and degenerates into an image of spectacle. In other words, deprived of the historical background, the traditional space is nothing but a tourist sight for visual consuming.

The reconstruction of the marketplace seems to unify the old district of the city into the new district through urbanization and modernization, but the expansion of capitalist territory that demolishes human environment and regenerates it into the
spectacle is revealed in Burgher’s textual flânerie. Capitalism expands its territory and unifies urban space into its map under the principle of the spectacle, and this is simultaneously “an extensive and intensive process of banalization” (*Society of the Spectacle* 94). The vision that penetrates into the homogeneity as well as banality of urban geography comes from Joseph when he first sees the city: “He was surprised, it’s true, by such a city landscape, fashioned out of repetition and conformity, with matching buildings and matching streets and people dressed the same…A city with no natural virtues is reduced to trade” (Crace 41). Nevertheless, such unification actually causes “a new internal distance in the form of spectacular separation” (*Society of the Spectacle* 94). He notices that the rain in the city cannot soak into the earth. “It slid down tiles…raced through gutters, dropped down pipes…ducked through iron sumps…and thence into the mains…the treatment plant…the tap…and down the sink as giddy waste” (39). The impenetrability of city ground symbolizes not only the estrangement a countryman feels but also the prevailing alienation. The incident of rebuilding the market concretizes the spectacular separation. First, although the soapies can keep their stall and the right to sell in Arcadia, they are alienated from their work, which takes away their original energy to live an active life. Burgher describes that in the Soap Market’s final weeks, there is “something stale upon the air, more pungent than the market waste”:

This was the putrefaction of resolve, the enfeebling of that prod-and-nudge which got the traders from their beds each day at five to bargain with the wholesalers, which gave them pride and pleasure in the stall-top patterns they could make with what they had to sell, which made them cheeky, cheerful, quick with repartee. Now they did not wake with an appetite for work. They did not relish the day. They were offhand with fruit and
The influence urban planning makes is not simply spatial but also social. People’s work, habits, emotion, and even way of life may change with spatial reintegration.

To tear down stalls and canvases of the Soap Market and build a new shopping mall concretizes the separation which is hidden by the increase of economic production. Victor’s explanation and promise easily dismiss the dissatisfaction of indignant soapies who protest against the demolition of the Soap Market raising placards which claim “Save our Market from the Millionaire” (269-270). “The market is getting taller, that’s all…And now we have Arcadia with all its beauty and its benefits. Everyone will want to buy their produce there. Not just the poor. The wealthy too…Arcadia will make you rich,” says Victor (281-282). None of soapies needs to tremble at the bills but Victor himself, and all of them can have permanent premises without the trouble of putting up and packing away the stalls each day (281). Moreover, with the new storage space and access for the lorries and dumper lifts to bring the produce to the stalls, there is no need to barrow in the produce from the market edge any more (281). Also, they do not have to select produce because every fruit of the gene-bank and the science farm is much like all the rest (367). All those conveniences and profits offered by Victor persuade that to work in Arcadia is a better choice. However, what is needed is determined by Victor, not by soapies themselves; they just take the seat slotted by Victor. The freedom such as deciding the working time and the location of stalls, having a break and chatting with acquaintances in the Soap Garden during a day, will exist no more. The passion to decorate the stall and show its distinctive charm also disappears. Instead, in order to maintain the work in Arcadia, the personal will must be repressed and rules must be followed. The enthusiasm for work and the social relation created by traders and
customers are sacrificed. Fixed in the commercial temple, soapies are atomized, transformed into appendages of the capitalist machine. The only reason for them to stand beside the stall is the accumulation of economic profits, for they are estranged from actively producing their life in the environment of banality and homogeneity. This is sarcastically criticized by Burgher: “is there not cause to celebrate this new diversity, this innocent variety of goods, despite the claims of oracles and pamphleteers who say our city is in decline – and money is the force” (366)?

Since urban planning is controlled by the powerful and practiced for capitalist and bureaucratic benefits, the powerless, persuaded that all will become better, passively accepts the spatial and social change. Even though there bursts out conflicts and resistance, the media spectacle can do the job of covering and even distorting the truth. By the term media rather than spectacle, people mean to describe “a public service which with impartial ‘professionalism’ would facilitate the new wealth of mass communication through mass media,” but this form of communication “has at last attained a unilateral purity, whereby decisions already taken are presented for passive admiration” (Debord, Comments on the Society of the Spectacle 6). “For what is communicated are orders; and with perfect harmony, those who give them are also those who tell us what they think of them” (6). Debord points out that the one-dimensional images of mass media neutralize the homogeneous ideology and repress subjective activity.

In Arcadia, the struggle happening during the process of urbanization is hidden by the spectacle. The plan of rebuilding the market is Victor’s own decision and hidden from soapies. If it were not for Rook’s scheme of revenge, they would not know the information before it is shown in the newspaper. Victor uses mass media as the tool to propagate the grand work of Arcadia, and to give the order that the old
marketplace needs to be modernized and transformed. The images and information of mass media usually downplay “the role of capitalist relations of production, corporate ownership and control, and hegemonic configurations of corporate and state power with all their massive and momentous effects” (Kellner, Media Spectacle 12). The scene of soapies’ demonstration is squared by photographers’ lenses, and “this hapless chaos, unintended and shortlived,” is transformed “into an act of scheming anarchy” (Crace 269). The newspaper reports this revolution on the streets, but “the frontpage headline read[s] ‘You have been misled’” (283). “The newspaper group had financial interests in Arcadia and the trading wings of Victor’s companies. It did not wish the old man any harm” (283). As what Debord says, “it sometimes happens that the transition to the media provides the cover for several different enterprises, officially independent but in fact secretly linked by various ad hoc networks” (Comments on the Society of the Spectacle 11).

The death of Rook caused by URCC, Urban Rapid Control Unit, in a riot that bursts out the day before the destruction of the traditional marketplace indicates the climax of governmental hegemony. This riot is composed by the undrilled coalition of beggars, fruiterers, revelers, who are angered by the fire set to the stalls and canvases and alarmed by the fire that their life might perish with the fall of the market into ashes (Crace 317). “They took revenge on everything and everyone as if violence was the only way to make the city notice them. They knew instinctively that they were invisible unless they rioted and smashed and stole. And then their faces made the television screen” (311-312). This incident is falsified by police as an orchestrated disturbance, and reporters report what they are told by police: the rioters are “groups of Trotskyists and anarchists, trained by foreign radicals and at secret camps in Germany” (332). Joseph who hides in Rook’s apartment after the riot passes, is
falsely incriminated as the murderer of Rook. The mass media controlled by administrative power is a tool to spread fabricated information and covers governmental violence. Burgher, with the critical concept of the spectacle, reveals that urbanization tramples the expression of human need, and that mass media is polluted and partialized functioning to spread homogeneous ideology with falsified reality. The spectacle erases true incidents and stabilizes the on-going power with fabricated objects for people to see, stamping out the flame of criticism and making people one-dimensional.

Obviously, we can see the all-comprising power of the spectacle, but there still exists the resistance of the controlled. The demonstration of soapies and the riot aim at reacting against domination even though they are easily dismissed by Victor’s language of the capitalist spectacle, and the truth of the riot is distorted by mass media which works for administration. It is Rook who warns the aftermath of Arcadia and stirs up the emotion of protest, so he breaks the one-dimensional situation and threatens Victor’s dominant position. Nevertheless, his consideration for the commonwealth of soapies is adulterated with personal desire of revenging his insulting dismissal. Therefore, the demonstration and the riot that happen after the fire are not directly and consciously planned by soapies but manipulated by Rook’s hidden attempt. Although the efficacy of these incidents cannot last long under the control of the spectacle, it still shows that urban space is not fixed conforming to the design of city planners. De Certeau claims that the city is “no longer a field of programmed and regulated operations” (95). “Beneath the discourses that ideologize the city, the ruses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer” (95). Capitalism and governmental
administration are not all-controlling because “the ruses and combinations of powers” would deconstruct them. The Soap Two that emerges with the need of common people’s living expresses that urban space is incomplete and ever-changing with inhabitants’ “ruses” which are practiced in the activities of everyday life.

IV. Conclusion

Burgher presents the city which is unveiled the images and information of the spectacle: the need for a social community rather than a separated unity, human environment rather than a spectacular environment. He takes off the mask of the complacent bourgeois under which there is hypocrisy and alienation from reality. He also makes known the political struggle that contests the spectacle and shows urban space as an arena not only of domination but also of contestation and political struggle. With the critical understanding of the concept of the spectacle, the tactics of dérive and détournement, Burgher displays his oppositional standpoint and contests the stranglehold of the spectacle with his writing. The rise of Soap Two is the denial of the capitalist and bureaucratic domination, the gap in the spectacle of the city. The constitution of it against regulation opposes to Arcadia: the former shows the real life of city people, and the latter is the spectacular establishment for those who take the urban space and city people merely sights to consume. “I used to think that buildings were all that could endure in cities. But people, it would seem, endure as well” (Crace 371). The reorganization of urban space represents values and existing thoughts, and it not only physically changes the appearance of the city but also influences human life in terms of mentality and consciousness. The building which symbolizes the “living mark” of the powerful, such as Victor, the capitalism, or dominant thought and social practice, may change people’s consuming habit and make them forget the intimate interaction with the city and pleasantly become commodities which are
transported in elevators. Nevertheless, it can neither prevent city people to create their own living space in spite of the integration of the spectacle nor stop Burgher’s stretch of legs in the streets, his decision to make reality known, and all the delightful interaction with the urban environment, because this is their true need.
Conclusion

Through situationist perspectives of dérive, détournement, and the spectacle, we can perceive that Crace explores how urban spaces are imagined, represented, and contested. I argue that the term Arcadia not only represents the convergence of the psychology and the geography but also the life of city which gains its energy from human power to create other spatial possibilities.

The term Arcadia changes its meaning through time. It derives from the Greek province of the same name where the mountainous topography and scattered population makes this term develop into a poetic byword for an idyllic vision of unspoiled wilderness. In visual arts and literature it has remained a popular artistic subject. According to Greek mythology, it is the domain of Pan and the wilderness home of the god of forest, nymphs, and other spirits of nature. The Greek mythology inspires the Roman poet Virgil to write *Eclogues*, which is composed of a series of poems set in Arcadia. In *Virgil's* poems, Arcadia is different from the actual terrain which is harsh and mountainous but turned into a gentle and fertile landscape which is home to uncorrupted shepherds. There exists an idealized rural community in such a rural paradise where urban vice cannot be found.\(^30\) This work influences medieval European literature, and at that time, Arcadia symbolizes an ideal world of pastoral simplicity with a happy confluence of man and nature. Later, Renaissance humanists regard Arcadia as “an antidote to the greed of the rich, powerful upper classes” (Burrell and Dale 118). Teske mentions that Johan Huizinga stresses “an escapist

\(^30\) Burrell and Dale mention that the Arcadia of Virgil is a reinvention by the Greek lyric poet Theocritus in the third century BC of an earlier Arcadia. This earlier Arcadia is actually a part of Greece represented as a wilderness. However, in the Arcadia of Virgil’s *Eclogues*, the forest becomes field, and the wild is replaced by the cultivated (Burrell and Dale 118). Burrell and Dale argue that Virgil’s Arcadia is the countryside where man lords the beastly and “leisure might be taken in a tamed, controlled environment of security” (118).
tendency of the Arcadian pastoral for the late medieval literature and early
Renaissance life,” and Arcadia is understood as “a place of temporary retreat where
people can relieved from the stress of court etiquette and its love rituals” (168). She
further argues that “[f]rom a counterpicture to urban luxuria and a myth of the Golden
Age, the idea had thus turned into a critique of court etiquette, of the denaturalization
of feeling and love, and into a discussion of political topics that could otherwise not
be touched upon” (168). Arcadia as a counter-urban myth still exists nowadays, and
Arcadian discourse is further developed with other aspects added to it, “especially a
critical view of the mechanical repetitiveness of urban life and the loss of
community” (168). What the author actually depicts is a city, and the Arcadian
paradise, refurbished and removed of tragedies, only exists in Victor’s imagination.
Jim Crace entitles this novel Arcadia in order to emphasize the subjective simulation
and desire with which Victor depicts the city. Following the steps of Burgher, readers
wander in this city casted with natural images which is actually the duplication of
rural life. Nature, in the form of simulation, is projected to the material urban
environment. Therefore, the physical and the mental collide, and the Arcadia
established by Crace could be seen as a psychogeographical description of a city.

In the psychogeographical reconstruction of a city, the comprehension of time
is different from a purely linear, progressive historical understanding. Arcadia is the
record of personal and collective memories, and it does not develop with the linear
time. In the second part “Milk and Honey,” the time of the narration goes back to
eighty years before, and the third part “Victor’s City” returns from Victor’s childhood
to the present project of the establishment of Arcadia. I argue that this change
responds to the dérive of the flâneur who conjures up the memory of the city. The
dérive not only refuses channeled movements and restricted freedoms but also
unchains the repressed memories. For the flâneur, the city is as fluid as a sea to be navigated and the flow of emotions, desires, and memories are loosened. The idea of cityscape is not taken as a fixed site but a passage which might lead the flâneur to go back through the temporal passage and disinter the forgotten, the gap neglected in the grand narration of the city. In the second part of *Arcadia*, Burgher describes Victor’s impoverished and confined childhood. When Victor is in his infancy, he is encaged in the embrace of his mother and aunt to gain charity from passengers in the Soap Market and the streets. Malnutrition and lack of activity cause him limp, and when the curiosity toward the city grows in him, the fire that burns his mother to death shuts him in isolation. When selling boiled eggs in the streets, he is laughed and bullied by other kids (170). The more violence from which he suffers, the more he yearns for the imagined rural life depicted by his mother. Nevertheless, it is the imagined past both Victor and his mother cannot go back. As the inextinguishable desire in Victor, it turns into the motivation that propels him to establish Arcadia which contains a manmade countryside in the central city where he can set the statue in memory of his mother and his childhood. Ambivalently, this reconstruction on the contrary erases the traces of their life in the Soap Market and erects as a spectacle that attracts the vision of consumers and accumulates economic profits. I tend to explain the Arcadia as the façade of Victor’s commercial fetishism. Victor wants to define a space which causes homogeneity and congeals the fluid elements such as time and social relations in a fixed space which is taken as a container. For this reason, the natural elements with which Crace recasts the city not only represent the projection of Victor’s psychology to urban space but also satirize the spectacle, the visual manipulation with which the powerful such as the capitalist and bureaucratic expand their territory.
Transplanted to the city, the Arcadia then has become the second nature. In the enclosure of the concrete-and-glass building equipped with high technology, the environment is maintained by machines and watched by surveillance monitors. It is the controlling approach to manage through boundary and artifice, the strategy to secure spatial orders. The Arcadia that has appeared in former literary works such as *Eclogues* is much diluted and perverted in this shopping mall. The community of shepherds who lead a simple rural life is replaced by crowds of rubbernecks who gather together as alienated individuals and passive spectators for the consumption of vision and commodities. The equality is superseded with hierarchy, and individual freedom is subjected to spectacular rules. What city people want to obtain is only the escape from the uncertainty and dangers in the city rather than the direct experiences in nature. When this artificial nature declares the safety and order, the other side of this is the concurrent creation of misery, poverty, and disruption in the city every day. Although those “Invulnerables” who afford to shop in the new shopping mall Arcadia are protected from uncertain elements in the city, no matter who they are, death will one day take them to the grave (Crace 355). Even in Arcadia, no matter it is the pastoral utopia in Virgil’s poems or the artificial countryside in this novel, death exists. Although “the tallest buildings throw the longest shadows” just as the influence caused by Arcadia which erects as the signature landmark of Victor, no one can “outlive the masonry or glass” (374). “We are all citizens at last. At least until we are all soil” (375). Death could be seen in this novel: Em, Rook, and Victor all turn into dust and dirt at last. The Soap Market also goes to its end.

In my opinion, Crace does not mean nihilism of the inevitable decease or the passivity for irresistible shadow of the spectacle. Richard J. Lane claims that “[l]ife may quickly be reduced to a puddle…but the reduction does not represent some kind
of literary nihilism…Any hint of nihilism in Crace appears to undergo transformation; nihilism becomes affirmation” (27-28). I argue that Crace has redeemed the dead and the sacrificed with Burgher’s textual flânerie and shows a new life as well as the conscious resistance against the dominant with the rise of the Soap Two. The dead and the obscured are conjured up by Burgher who looks to gaps and cracks in the space-time of developments for composing alternative readings of urban space. Although Burgher’s footprints on the pavement will soon disappear, he will never give up “the blessing of the multitude,” and he will continue the practice of dérive in the marginal and threatened spaces to uncover hidden geographies and histories, to work with repressed elements and memories, and to détourn dominant representation of the city in the search for other possibilities (374).
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