The Great Game to Come
Constant

1. The necessity to construct whole cities rapidly and in large number, a necessity that involves the industrialization of underdeveloped countries and the prolonged crisis of housing since the war, has propelled urbanism to a central position among the problems of the present day. We in fact consider that all development is impossible in this culture without new conditions for our everyday surroundings. Urbanism must take stock of such conditions. First of all, it is necessary to state that the initial experiments undertaken by teams of architects and sociologists have faltered from lack of collective imagination, a fact we hold responsible for their limited and arbitrary approach. Urbanism as it is conceived by professional urbanists today is reduced to the practical study of housing and of circulation as isolated problems. The total lack of ludic solutions in the organization of social life prevents urbanism from rising to the level of creation, and the sad and sterile aspect of the majority of new housing districts testifies to this hideously.

2. The Situationists, explorers who specialize in play and leisure pastimes, understand that the visual aspect of cities counts only in relation to the psychological effects which it will be able to produce and which must be calculated as part of the sum of functions to be anticipated. Our conception of urbanism is not limited to buildings and their functions, but extends to the entire usage one will be able to make of them, or at least to imagine for them. It goes without saying that this usage will have to change as social conditions demand, and that our conception of urbanism is therefore above all dynamic. We also reject the establishment of buildings in a fixed landscape that now passes for the new urbanism. On the contrary, we think that all static and unalterable aspect must be avoided, and that the variable or furniturelike character of architectural elements is the condition of a supple relation with the events that they will live through.

3. Consciousness of future leisure time and the new situations that we are beginning to construct must profoundly change the prevailing idea that is the point of departure for urbanistic study, we can already enlarge our knowledge of the problem by experimentation with certain phenomena linked to the urban ambience: the animation of different streets, the psychological effects of diverse surfaces and constructions, the rapid change of the look of a space by ephemeral elements, the rapidity with which the ambience of places changes, and the variations possible in the general ambience of different neighborhoods. The édrive, as practiced by the Situationists, is an efficacious means for studying these phenomena in existing cities and drawing some provisory conclusions. The psychogeographic notion thus obtained has already led to the creation of plans and models of an imagist type, which one can call the science fiction of architecture.

4. The technical inventions that are today at the service of humanity will play a great role in the construction of future city-ambiences. It is notable and significant that these inventions have up to the present added nothing to existing cultural activities, and that artist-creators have not known how to employ them. The possibilities of the cinema, of television, of radio, of rapid travel and communications have not been utilized, and their effect on cultural life has been the most miserable. The exploration of technology and its utilization for higher ends of a ludic nature is one of the most urgent tasks for bringing about the creation of a unitary urbanism at the scale that future society demands.