I really appreciate this week's readings, which differ a bit from the readings in previous weeks that mainly discuss the different means the people can enjoy the city. On the contrary, Garnette and DuBois's pieces highlight the difficulties that one faces when walking around the city as a person of color. This also echoes back to my (and some of the classmates') reflections on week 1's reading, where we suggested that being able to stroll and explore the city freely is a privilege that many do not have.

I am very touched by Garnette's thoughtful piece. I had the opportunity to walk with Garnette around Boston last semester, as he tagged along with our MCP Design Skills' course. Of course, at the time, I took walking around cities for granted, and did not notice that Garnette might have some difficulties strolling around (or perhaps Boston is a friendly city). Having read *Walking While Black*, especially this line:

The streets had their own safety: Unlike at home, there I could be myself without fear of bodily harm. Walking became so regular and familiar that the way home became home.

I was first intrigued by the idea that the streets could be a haven for the narrator while the home fails to provide shelter. I was quickly disheartened by the fact that the streets no longer feel safe to the narrator as he moves to New Orleans and later New York City--a city that I thought is the melting pot of America. The eight-year experience of "strategically" walking on the streets was not enough to guarantee the narrator's freedom to just walk around. Besides, the fact that the narrator has to carefully construct his identity to suit the New Orleans streets--being a student and wearing "cop-proof" attire is not only disheartening but also reflects the deeply-rooted discrimination that makes space unsafe for people of color.

When the narrator returns to Jamaica to attend to his grandmother, he can freely walk around, without being glared at or snarled at--he is able to be invisible. In effect, being invisible seems to have become a privilege and prerequisite for being able to enjoy a walk around the city. This reminds me of my own experiences walking around other cities. As a lover of the flaneur way of exploring cities, I often find myself walking around lively neighborhoods in cities that are not necessarily near any tourist attractions. This is not only because neighborhoods tell more about the character of a city but also because I have aversions towards the "high visibility" at touristy places, where people would come up to me saying "hello" in an East Asian or South Asian language of their choice. I would often display micro-aggression at those moments. One of my friends did not understand why I would get upset, thinking that those people were trying to be friendly and welcoming. However, I suppose I do not like the idea of seeing me solely as my race or ethnicity, while I have so many other identities. In Naples, I remember, some people would point at me and say in Italian "Cinese," as if I would not understand Italian or did not exist in front of them as an equal. A friend of mine got beaten up at a bar just because his face did not look "white." In a nutshell, I guess I really resonate with Garnette's piece--although my experiences on the streets are a lot better than what the narrator has endured, I can empathize with how frustrating it can be to someone that loves strolling but cannot do so freely.

11.S942 Wanderings in Psychogeography: Exploring Landscapes of History, Biography, Memory, Culture, Nature, Poetry, Surreality, Fantasy, and Madness
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