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HANDBOOKS

A silhouette of a city skyline against a vibrant red sky. The most prominent feature is the Oriental Pearl Tower on the right side. The skyline includes various buildings and structures. A white diagonal line separates this image from the yellow background below.

THE PALGRAVE HANDBOOK OF LITERATURE AND THE CITY

Edited by Jeremy Tambling



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and the City

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For Pauline, who has helped so much with this project

VOLUME EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The city is the defining subject of modernity, occupying a first place in any discussion of it, or of globalisation. Urban life has been the subject of endless theorisation and of some extraordinary writing, in poems, novels, and plays many of which have pushed at the limits of literature. *The Palgrave Handbook of Literature and the City* gives the most complete single account available of how cities exist at the moment in theory and literature, not restricting itself to cities in the western traditions of Europe and North America. It gives some sense of the history of cities, paying attention to differences and continuities observable in comparing ancient, premodern, and modern cities. It shows how the city and critical and cultural theory are absolutely dependent on each other. The question has been asked consistently, what 'urbanization' means; or how much it explains; it is at the heart of all the chapters which follow. Here, different authors, all specialists on their topic, have engaged with particular cities, and with their literature, and sometimes film, as ways of conceptualising how to think of the city and of the changes that urbanisation implies.

We are principally talking about 'modernity' as urban. In the 1851 census, Britain found that its urban population exceeded its rural: the first country to do so, and an indication of how far it had industrialised. It was followed by France (1900) and the United States (1920); it is now even the case with China. Cities now are either 'world cities' or on the way to being so. Outside the sleeknesses of many tourist destinations, many dwarf the population of entire countries; they seem beyond representation, even beyond compassing, with megacities proliferating in the Third World, such as Mexico City, Seoul, São Paulo, Mumbai, Delhi, Jakarta, and Dhaka, perhaps the poorest megacity. If cities are growing, the major trend is in the production of slums, and of squatters, 'cities' with no infrastructure whatsoever, an argument deriving from Mike Davis's *Planet of Slums*, which calls Mumbai the 'global capital of slum-dwelling' (Davis 2006, p. 23). Yet the competition here is not lacking. Davis found the fastest growing 'slums' to be in the Russian Federation and former Soviet Republics, and the poorest in Luanda (Angola), Maputo (Mozambique), Kinshasa, and Cochabamba (Bolivia), while calling Los

Angeles the first world capital for homelessness (36) and Gaza the world's largest slum (48). And the obverse? Try Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, a new city built on oil wealth, and definitional for modernity: here everyone is assigned a place, though they are not allowed to identify with that place, so, not insignificantly, it has the world's third largest airport, and it assigns people liberty relative to their income: a quarter of its 2.5 million population construction workers live in unbearable conditions in Muhaisnah, called 'Sonapur' by its Indian workers (one of several with this 'Land of Gold' name), brought in to construct the world's currently tallest building, the Burj Khalifa.

Or, one of the bleakest of cities in literary terms: Ciudad Juarez, on Mexico's border with the United States, called Santa Teresa in the Chilean novelist Roberto Bolaño's *2066*. Its visitors feel it is growing by the second (Bolaño 2009, pp. 128–129), on the strength of its *maquiladoras*: assembly plants for American transnational companies, freed from any trade or workers' protection, reliant on cheap Mexican labour. Bolaño shows that it is divided into depressing quadrants, but the shock that waits is the infinite series of unsolved murders of women, described in documentary form in Part Four, 'The Part About the Crimes', as if the city's distinction may have always been its casual violence towards women (it may be the world capital for making 'snuff' movies), and the sense of such violence and lawlessness as being like factory processing.

The city is something amorphous: we need a First Part on theories of the city as these have developed through the twentieth century, because it is not evident that we know what we are talking about in thinking of cities, nor that we know what the problems are. Theorising it is a move towards finding ways to represent it, i.e. to bring it in front of us as a knowable entity, but it resists representation and its possibility. This *Handbook* points to the range of literary and cultural texts which the city has produced, and incited, some of which try to represent, others of which have given up on that. Here, definitions of the 'literary' (probably impossible anyway) cannot be conservative; they must be sensitive to cultural translation, because to deal with the city now means dealing with globalisation. Further, they cannot ignore film for that has been a route for many cities and countries to enter into the issue of global representation in the arts. Film, inseparable in many ways from the experience of the city, has changed ways of reading, almost becoming the new literary in itself, in relation to the global and to world cities. If cities breed a paranoia born of the need to claim space, film may be a unique medium for seeing that (Kennedy 2000, pp. 33–34). Perhaps, like the graphic novel, such as Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2003) about Tehran, filmed in 2007—and comic books as plural 'reads' are integral to urbanism—film's visual quality and narrative speed go together. Cinemas are urban: inseparable from shopping malls, part of their commodity display. Architecture presents itself as cinematic, one of its commitments to illusion and to the image. And film interrogates space which architecture brings out and attempts to control (Vidler 1993, pp. 44–56). As music belongs to cities, film also does, and we can think how decisively it has constructed visions of the city in, say, *Metropolis* (1927), *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929),

Casablanca (1942), *Rome, Open City* (1945), *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), *Les Quatre Cents Coups* (1959), *La dolce vita* (1960) or *Manhattan* (1979) or *Blade Runner* (1982—Los Angeles or Tokyo?) or *Philadelphia* (1993), *The Age of Innocence* (1993), *In Bruges* (2008), *The Act of Killing* (2012) or *Timbuktu* (2014). Cities occupy a prominent place in popular consciousness, and, coming back to literature, many of those films began as novels or short stories.

However complete we have attempted to be in choosing cities which have been written about or have generated writing, it is impossible to be comprehensive. Setting out how the *Handbook* works, I start with a Prologue, 'City-Theory and Writing in Paris and Chicago: Space, Gender, Ethnicity'. After that, the book divides into seven Parts, each headed by the editor's introduction, which both hopes to map out what is covered and suggest the importance of what there is. In each case, these Introductions point the reader forward to the Further Reading at the end for further directions. The Parts explain themselves by their titles: first, one on the major theorisations of the city, such as those associated with Simmel, Benjamin, Lefebvre, David Harvey, Saskia Sassen, Richard Sennett, Guy Debord, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau. Second, one on European cities, third one on North American cities. A fourth then looks at the cities of the Caribbean, Mexico, and Latin America, with contrasts between, for instance, the new planned capital of Brasília, and the *favelas* of Rio. In these chapters, above all, the sense of an exciting local and national politics inflects writing about the city, which is political to the core.

The Fifth Part is on Africa and the sixth on Asian cities, with a chapter on Australia and New Zealand. In both these, as in Latin America, colonialism has imposed models of city planning on indigenous groups and cities, to their infinite harm; these parts look at this, and the postcolonial legacy, and look also at China, which, like India, and Japan, had a resilient and partly abiding historical culture which in its contradictoriness, is reflected in the modernity of these cities. In these parts, looking at colonialism and neo-colonialism, a new raft of theory makes its appearance. A last part looks at some five ways of writing the city: through realism, through modernism—and the meaning of that conflictual term is examined—through the tourist and traveller's gaze, through detective fiction, and through the desire to think of the city in exceptionalist, or utopian terms, or to see it as dystopian, though even this comfortable literary term may no longer provide a valid conceptual framework.

Regretfully, even a 'handbook' must miss things, but it must be emphasised that it is not a study of world literature, or cinema, nor simply a study of cities, but of *where it has mattered significantly that a body of work has come out of the city, or has shaped the city, attempting either to construct, or to represent it, or to make it a text*. Many marvellous writers are not included because the city has not, palpably, left its mark upon them, nor they upon it. Though cities have produced modes of writing, literature does not necessarily feel the need to deal with cities and historically predates the city as a topic, though perhaps now it would be argued that even when a writer rejects the city as a theme,

there is still the sense that it is the unconscious of what is said. But the city does not spread equally through the world. Many Asian and African writers have wanted to assert the rural, or the national, more than the city, as a matter of strategy. Where writing has aimed at forging a national unity (the 'imagined community'), the city has often been seen as dysfunctional to that, because it either challenges a national consensus or is felt to be in the hands of western investors, who treat city and country as a cash cow and ignore its specificities. Some cities have not produced writing which has been translated, or gone beyond its immediate circumstances, perhaps out of the sense that 'literature' itself is an imperial conception, conferring on some, but not all, exploitative cultural capital.

When finding contributors for the book, the question each was asked to work with was: *does the writing discussed illuminate, illustrate, or take character from the city, or help construct it; and vice-versa: does the city take character from its presentation?* All the contributors have responded magnificently, and individually, and my thanks to each of them. They are different from each other in stages of their career and in age: the eldest is over 80, the youngest in the early twenties; this means that they see cities differently, each with a different sense of what in cities matters, and what counts in literature, and indeed, all forms of cultural production. The point emphasises that there is not a single history to be told, nor a single politics. In practical terms, they have dealt with strict deadlines; some have stepped in at very short notice when some other contributor had to drop out and produced marvellous work; they have written imaginatively and have taught the editor a lot. It must be added that it was difficult to find contributors for some areas of the book: this is partly reflected in the distribution of chapters and in some absences; correspondingly, there were other cities and topoi/topics where people were very enthusiastic to write. I wanted to give due space to other continents whose questioning of the concept of the modern European/American city as key to modernity and to globalisation was also central, and hope this is reflected in some of the emphases in the book, but it does not have a single stress, and I hope this diversity will be obvious.

One contributor noted mournfully 'terrorist' attacks during the period of writing about the very city that was under review, changing the nature of the subject being written about. There can be no doubt that one of the greatest disturbances to cities—relating to their burgeoning status—in the lifetimes of readers of this Handbook has been the accumulation of such attacks and reprisals; the sequence of which came first—counterterrorism or terrorism—is impossible to ascertain. But each attack robs, it seems, on average, between a hundred and two hundred lives. A highly incomplete list of cities targeted by various forms of mass violence includes Belfast, Londonderry-Derry, London, Brussels, Paris, Madrid, Bologna, Moscow, Beirut, Ankara, Istanbul, Bombay, innumerable cities in Iraq, Lahore, and other Pakistan cities; cities in Afghanistan, and cities in Nigeria, as well as Mogadishu and Bamako in Mali: to say nothing of current conflicts in Yemen and Israeli/Palestinian conflicts. Websites listing all these are easily come by, and the accumulated numbers they reveal are hard to

take in, as many of the attacks are equally hard to recall, many being wholly inadequately reported. In terms of numbers killed and injured on one specific occasion, New York on September 11, 2001 exceeded many, to say nothing of the symbolism that it created. 'Terrorist' attacks have changed, profoundly, ways of seeing and being in cities; they have become a topic for writing and film making, indeed, the event seemed to have been pre-prepared in so many films already, and it calls for new ways of thinking, which require a new politics, and a new thinking of—or recognition of—the 'other' within the city.

One effect of putting the book together, and especially in introducing each part, has been to persuade me how neither sections, cities, groups, and forms of literature nor even continents can be thought of in isolation, and I would suggest that the reader looks across from part to part and uses the index. Readers who note the absences must do one of the following things: blame the editor's competence or speculate on the lack of contributors' willingness to write on some specific topics which were dear to the book (very many invitations went unanswered, very many were declined and at least two absentees blamed their inability to contribute on the current mode of monitoring and assessing University research in the UK and the constraints that imposed). Or they must bear in mind that the book's length imposed limits, and they should look at the final part, which gives suggestions for further reading, particularly following up on the seven introductions, and which supplement the Bibliographies provided for each chapter.

My thanks go to *all* the contributors and their flexibility; their essays make a wonderful assemblage, varied in approach, but valid in different ways. The passion with which so many cities have been written up - each making unique claims on readers' political and literary sensibilities - is remarkable, and rewarding to read. Thanks, too, to those colleagues they have drawn on for help, some of them noted at the ends of their essays (there is a secret informal army out there of people who have assisted and encouraged me), and special thanks to those many contributors who have supplied help and information beyond the remit of their chapters. Thanks to Ben Doyle, for persuading me to take on the project for Palgrave, to the anonymous readers of the draft whom he found for their comments; to my ex-colleagues Ackbar Abbas and Jonathan Hall for helpful discussions, to Robert Hampson, Efraim Sicher, and Ian Brinton for specific points on Conrad, Odessa, and New York poets, and to Jack Sullivan for invaluable help in putting everything together.

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Prologue: City-Theory and Writing, in Paris and Chicago: Space, Gender, Ethnicity

Jeremy Tambling

The modern city challenges writers to think anew, how to work with the difference it makes; in forming a writer's consciousness, it creates new modes of writing, which are the subject of this Handbook, and which I focus on here: more specific forms will appear throughout, and in Part VII. Walter Scott's *Rob Roy* (1818) takes advantage of Glasgow's 'trade with the West Indies and American colonies' to give a sense of the city before that, in the mid-eighteenth-century: 'the principal street was broad and important, decorated with public buildings, of an architecture rather striking than correct in point of taste, and running between rows of tall houses, built of stone, the fronts of which were occasionally richly ornamented with mason-work, a circumstance which gave the street an imposing air of dignity and grandeur . . . ' (Scott 1998, p. 237). This was just before the Lanarkshire iron and steel industries which would change Glasgow, as one of those cities which possessed capital though never becoming one; Scott's pride is evident, as much as the sense of present-day Glasgow is dystopic in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981). An equal pride appears with Disraeli on nineteenth-century Manchester in *Coningsby* (1844), considering that 'Manchester is as great a human exploit as is Athens' (Book 4 Chapter 1); Manchester being a city given a rich empirical description in Asa Briggs's *Victorian Cities* (1963), as part of the sense that the nineteenth century was 'the age of improvement'. Cities fitted into that model of thinking. Briggs' study came from a period in urban-writing when what seemed interesting was the condition of the industrial poor. Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* (1848), which takes the urban as the possibility to give a social history (this city novel has many set pieces where it tries to explain the city to those outside it), immediately confronts the reader with, as a first issue of the city, prostitution. Esther, who has come to work in Manchester from Buckinghamshire, has become a

‘street-walker’ (p. 7). Gaskell’s studies of prostitution have been analysed by Deborah Nord (1995, pp. 137–178). A second perception Gaskell wants to describe is how the city is divided between rich and poor (p. 9), with mill-owners always increasing their house-sizes, while weavers cannot afford to live in houses, but in cellars (p. 21). Gaskell notes the ‘alienation; between classes’ (p. 78). John Barton becomes a Chartist, and a Communist (p. 160). In her Preface, Gaskell says ‘I bethought me how deep might be the romance in the lives of some of those who elbowed me daily in the busy streets of the town where I reside’ (p. vi) and the idea of finding the city the place for a ‘romance’, as opposed to simply gritty realism, claims an importance for the city which is felt to be opposite to the expected, and shows her pride in a city which challenged London. Manchester’s newness was recognised by Engels in *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, which records a prolonged stay there (Marcus 1974, pp. 15–199). Like Carlyle, Engels was horrified by how people’s existences could be ignored not just by the city’s impersonality, but by the *laissez-faire* class structures the city licensed. Another perception was of how the city was the place for immigration: among the Irish, in the 1840s. Carlyle’s *Past and Present* (1843) told the story of the Irish widow in Edinburgh whose husband had died in one of the Lanes, and whose untreated typhus fever infected seventeen others. This was powerful symbolism for Dickens in *Bleak House*, while infection and public health issues morph into discussion of heroin use and of HIV in an internally divided (between the tourist Edinburgh and the working class) city in Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* (1993) (Kelly 2005, pp. 26–30). Public health fears have frequently been ways of describing, and policing, cities: and justifications for planning, as with garden cities, the City Beautiful, a dream for Chicago, and Corbusier’s ‘Radiant City’. Those interested in how one city becomes a template to think about another may note Dostoevsky’s interest in having *Mary Barton* translated in St Petersburg in 1861. Manchester and Petersburg coexist as modern, industrial/post-industrial cities which challenge capitals.

Yet capital cities themselves have complex relations to the country they represent: they embody its nationalism, but since they attract disparate populations, and immigration—cities are all full of people who are the first generation to live there—they produce a plurality threatening to undo all nationalism. Historically, the modern city has produced a huge literature formed by it: there are wide differences between those who have written about cities, real or imaginary, and those who have not, whose interest has been in conceptualising a traditional, country-based culture. The urban has defined part of ‘modernism’ as it has characterised ‘modernity’, with the desire to find in it a ‘knowable community’, an idea of Raymond Williams (1973, p. 166), whose sense is that the modern novel attempted to know a society. How can this happen when the city becomes full of atomised groups who do not know each other? It produces the complexity of novels where writing becomes more intensely realist, photographic, almost, in ‘naturalism’, or modernist, defamiliarising the reader from previous forms of cognition. These examples can be paralleled in all countries

with cities, and they apply to film too, as for example, seeing New York through the windows of a taxi (Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* 1976), perhaps with the sense that such an evocation of anomie is the best way to read New York. Or the city is put into the taxi, as in the recent *Taxi Tebran* (Jafar Panahi, 2015), where the filmmaker, forbidden openly to make films by the Iranian authorities, acts as a taxi driver, showing people getting into his taxi and interacting with each other. The taxi is a semipublic space, which is, however, invaded by surveillance from the outside, repeated by the cameras inside the taxi. Two of the women given lifts are carrying fish in a goldfish bowl, an image for the fragile spaces of freedom yet containment that the city offers.

This question of *space* becomes dominant in considering how to theorise the city, because the city is owned and divided up: the Haussmannisation of Paris (described later in the chapter) had as one motive, to reduce the street from being a place where people socialised and lived, to being a place of transit, and often, privately owned (think of the dominance of shopping malls, which face inwards, replacing streets, which open outwards). Despite Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England*, the city was not, for Marxism, an exceptional state. It became so in *The Production of Space* (1974) by Henri Lefebvre (1905–1991), who had already considered the urban in three volumes of the *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947, 1962, 1981): the 'everyday'—what it is, what happens in it—is essential for focusing on the question: who owns the city, who has a right to it and what contested uses of city spaces are there? Is who walks the streets and why a crucial question of gender? The city is given to be a place of collective consumption, so argued Spanish-born Marxist Manuel Castells (b.1942), who emphasised it as a container of social and class relationships brought about by the industrial revolution which created huge cities, whereas Lefebvre contended that the urban revolution needed attention; the urban produced new, heterogeneous spaces. A 'space', for Foucault, or Lefebvre, is not a romantically pre-given which can be enjoyed; it is not what we have, like a part of nature, it is more like a commodity. It is what is given, and attended by limits; it therefore constructs ways of knowing, and ways of acting which cannot be outside that space. A city park, for instance, disciplines the person within it; it assumes it knows, and therefore creates, the activities people will perform in it. Lefebvre discusses *spatial practice*, and *representations of space*, and *spaces of representation*, meaning by the first how space is perceived by the user and how used: it has to do with what people do. The second is how space is conceived, how mapped. The third means how space is represented to the person within it (as with the signs and symbols in a city park): it is 'the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (Lefebvre 1991, p. 39). Even 'user-friendly' spaces impose a consciousness; they make the 'user' servile, grateful for having something given to him/her.

A second mode of thinking of space is the planner's, or the engineer's. It is amplified by Michel de Certeau (1925–1986), beginning with the then view of Manhattan from the top of the New York World Trade Center. It is a desire to

‘see the city’ which ‘preceded the means of satisfying it. Medieval or Renaissance painters represented the city as seen in a perspective which no eye had yet enjoyed. . . . It created gods’. Specifically, the city seen from above ‘makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilises its opaque mobility in a transparent text’ (Certeau 1984, p. 92). Of course, New York from above is already readable, because of its grid plan, an Enlightenment dream of creating visibility; but Certeau could have invoked Victor Hugo’s bravura chapter ‘A Bird’s Eye View of Paris’ in *Notre Dame de Paris* (1832), which gives the view from the Cathedral’s top, and considers the history of Paris, and divides it into geographical segments, each with different bodies of power controlling it, and notes how its buildings have always leapfrogged the walls built for it for ‘a town like Paris is in perpetual spate. Only such towns ever become capital cities’ (Hugo 1993, p. 129). Its medieval Gothic architecture, now in ruins as a unity of design, but offering a sense that the view from above can thread the labyrinth of the city, can explain it and make sense of it.

Hugo’s pride was justified: the central city was—is—Paris; Walter Benjamin’s ‘capital of the nineteenth-century’; and about which Gertrude Stein said ‘Paris was where the twentieth-century was’ (Kennedy 1993, p. 185). For Benjamin it was the place of revolutions (1789, 1830, 1848, 1870–1871), like no other city, and that produces not only so much writing about it, but so many attempts to copy it, and so much theorisation with implications for thinking about cities—indeed, which make creative writing and theoretical writing about the city turn into each other. We can add that it was also a centre for colonialism: it was not only Hanoi in French Indo-China which was modelled on Paris. For Stein, it meant that whereas other cities might have pockets of the *avant-garde*, Paris was the city which had accepted it as its essence, for better and worse. We may return to the desire to plan the city. What Lefebvre calls the ‘representation of space’ from above is ‘a form of knowledge that values the geometric, the rational, the totalising perspective’ which belongs to an Enlightenment project, believing that ‘the world could be controlled and rationally ordered if we could only picture and represent it rightly’ (Papayanis, quoting David Harvey 2003, p. 176). *Representation of space* includes, then, a dream of repression, in presenting the city in a mapped mode, and it contrasts with the idea of *spaces of representation*, where spaces are contested, though city space is modelled, as the place of the ‘spectacle’, a term from Guy Debord (1931–1994). The spectacle, in advanced capitalism, means that ‘all that was once was directly lived has become mere representation’: there is no longer room for participation in the city. This makes Debord contend: ‘Paris no longer exists’, being ‘replaced by the modern Paris . . . emptied of its inhabitants, given over to cars, to merchandise, disfigured by concrete, systematically polluted, and awash in industrial food products that had been imposed on a helpless population ever since the destruction of Les Halles’s (Kaufmann 2006, pp. 64, 74). Urbanisation, as Lefebvre saw, means driving workers out from centres to the periphery, so itself destroying urban democracy (Kofman and Lebas 1996, pp. 65–85).

A contrasted way of thinking presents itself as in Surrealism's insistence on the cities as the place of the encounter, chance, and arbitrary: Breton quotes from Lautréamont (Isidore Ducasse, 1846–1870), where the 'I' encounters a young man in Paris 'where the Rue Colbert turns into the Rue Vivienne'—'he is as handsome as the retractility of the claws in birds of prey; or again, as the unpredictability of muscular movement in sores in the soft part of the posterior cervical region'—alternative images of aggression or passivity, and involuntary—leading to 'the chance juxtaposition of a sewing-machine and an umbrella on a dissecting-table' (Lautréamont 1978, pp. 216–217). The images of beauty are exaggerated, they deny traditional comparisons, they disallow the 'proper', as if with the sense that this is what the city does: it offers encounters which are 'beyond', making the 'surreal'—which is a way of thinking directly, and permitting unconscious thought to appear in a sudden 'profane illumination', depending on what is encountered, *not* on deliberate thought. Here 'chance', as the opposite of the directionality of city planning, gives access to the city as the place of the '*la trouvaille*' (the lucky find), and to the sense that the city breaks down psychic barriers; the shock may be erotic, as in the poem by Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), 'A Une Passante' (To a Woman Passing By), where the 'I' is staggered by the glimpse of a woman passing by and suddenly seen in the crowd—'Un éclair—puis la nuit!' (A flash of light—then darkness) (Baudelaire 1986, p. 186). Or it may be traumatic, breaking a protective shell within the psyche and releasing memories which are repressed, or so disguised that they have not been recognisable: whichever, this shock, which Walter Benjamin in 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire' makes central to city experience (Benjamin 1972, p. 134), implies and requires a new form of writing.

Also for Guy Debord's writings and film-makings, 'the new beauty will be situational', transient, ephemeral; his *Mémoires* (1952–1953), invite 'drifting': the *dérive* is an art of detour', the urge to find a new mobility in the city, away from what is static or monumental; the *dérive* [drift] is a 'technique for moving quickly through varied environments', a technique of disorientation' (Kaufmann 2006, pp. 93, 104, 108–109, 117). One of the major theorisations of the city comes from this thinking of Benjamin, Aragon, Breton, Debord, and Lefebvre, where in contrast to the 'society of the spectacle'—showing a city which does not belong to its users, where streets are private malls, dedicated to consumption of goods preselected, there falls the stress on everyday life, i.e. 'what remains when we have extracted all specialised activities from lived experience' (Kaufmann 2006, p. 172). That is to be reclaimed; Kristin Ross, in her book on Rimbaud, as a poet contemporary with the Commune, discusses the pulling down of Napoleon's statue in the Place Vendôme, as a way of taking back, reclaiming space, eradicating the verticality and hierarchy implied in that spatial use, so that the revolution which was the Commune—and this has implications for writing, as we shall see—was a way of winning back social spaces (Ross 1988, p. 508). Lefebvre's concentration on space contrasts with Castells and David Harvey, the latter using Paris, and Baltimore, to argue for how the city facilitates capitalism (through rents, withdrawal of usable land by

landlords, through creation of private spaces). George Simmel, writing on Berlin, had speculated in ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’ on the creation of an urban consciousness in the conditions of the large city, a decisive point for this book, but Harvey relevantly stresses urban consciousness as particularly concealing awareness of modes of production within capitalism.

PARIS

Dostoevsky’s *Underground Man* (1864) calls Petersburg ‘the most abstract and intentional city in the whole round world. (Towns can be intentional or unintentional.)’ (Dostoevsky 1972, pp. 17–18). The city *has* impressed its ‘intentions’ onto the *Underground Man*, producing his bitterness and anger: Petersburg, designed by Peter the Great, to be like Amsterdam, or Venice, or Berlin, one of whose Baroque architects, Andreas Schlüter (1664–1714) he borrowed, is an ‘intentional’ city in belonging to an Enlightenment project which wanted a designed city. The most famous city planner was the Protestant Alsatian Georges Haussmann, working between 1853 and 1870 for Napoleon III (Pinkney, 1958), but he within an existing trend, which in his case, ripped down medieval houses and streets and replaced them with wide boulevards. (With this word, compare the English *bulwarks*: the first boulevards were on the lines of the old walls of Paris, and the city ran up to the *octroi* walls set up in the eighteenth century. After 1859, Haussmann incorporated into Paris the suburbs beyond these, now destroyed, up to walls set up in the 1840s, and destroyed in the twentieth century to make room for the *périphérique*. A similar story can be told about Vienna’s Ringstrasse.) Haussmann’s boulevards were to prevent barricades; their straightness allowed the army to march through easily. But the desire to modernise Paris, to light it by gas (in 1817), to create separate and walkable pavements which permitted people to look into shop windows, to create a healthy city (Paris suffered from cholera in 1832), and to increase safety from crime, regarded as dysfunctional for the city, was an eighteenth-century Enlightenment project, to which Napoleon I contributed. So Nicholas Papayanis argues, defining the modern city in terms of its speed, its circulation—of people, commerce, air, sunlight, police, waste, and information—its compression of time and space, and its hygiene, and its sharp population growth. The planned city appears in Pierre Charles L’Enfant (1754–1825), French architect of Washington D.C.; his work is a palimpsest beneath the McMillan plan for the city (1901) which re-created it in styles derived from Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim, architects themselves influenced by Haussmann’s Paris, and designing the ‘City Beautiful’. Burnham’s idea for Chicago was ‘Paris by the Lake’ [Michigan] (Scruggs 1993, p. 80). Haussmann picked up on work done already, and passed it on: Mexico City’s downtown area was Haussmannised during the Presidency of Porfirio Díaz (1884–1911); here, the combinations of control and of authoritarianism on the eve of Mexico’s revolution are evident. Mike Davis finds Haussmannisation in the

continued marginalisation of the poor throughout the world's cities (Davis 2006, pp. 95–120).

A critique comes in Zola's novel *La Curée* (1872) (Nelson 2004, Introduction). Zola (1840–1902) allegorises Haussmann in Aristide Saccard, the financier who arrived in Paris from Provence. Saccard speculates on the basis of having inside knowledge of what buildings are to be pulled down, what spaces are to be freed up under Haussmann's operations, so that he brings out what Papayanis does not: how Haussmann's changes facilitated capitalism: urban development is premised on investment and credit, belief in the self by others being sustained on no basis whatever. The other half of this falsity appears with Saccard's wife Renée who is having an affair with Maxime, Saccard's son by his first marriage. Sexual pleasures must be consummated in a hothouse, as an expression both of new architecture and of overstimulated desires. Like Balzac, Zola made connections in the city which refuses them, by linking characters from novel to novel in the twenty volumes of the Rougon-Macquart series covering the period of the Second Empire (1851–1870) when France was controlled by Napoleon III. Saccard is a Rougon who changes his name, denying, as the city allows, his history.

Papayanis's theoretical model is indebted to Foucault for the stress on the city being open to surveillance and policing. Harvey, however, equally argues that there was no sharp break which separated Haussmann from earlier planners: he resists a 'myth of modernity' where 1848 marks a break, before Paris was comprehensively overhauled, but rather stresses that capitalism was a driving force before and after, drawing on Balzac (1799–1850) as the novelist and Daumier as the caricaturist showing Paris in the grip of capitalist modernity (Harvey 2003, pp. 23–58). Here, Harvey's stated desire to see the city as a 'totality', which is both an Hegelian Marxism, and a sense that there is a single narrative dictating the pace and direction of the city, comes into conscious disagreement with Benjamin (p. 18), whose incomplete *Arcades Project*, also Marxist, and fully discussed in this book, stresses the discontinuities and fractures in a narrative which would enable the city to be conceptualised at all. Putting the point negatively, Harvey repeats the gesture of city planning: the city, which is so dominated for the circulation of capital, yields itself to a single narrative where urban consciousness is attuned to collective consumption. In Benjamin, the city's unreadability confronts whoever would be the archaeologist of its modernity, and that sense of the city as packing irreconcilably different times and experiences in it makes cities not susceptible to representation. A change in writing occurs then in a confrontation with the city: what can be seen overwhelms; its being is unrepresentable.

BAUDELAIRE

Benjamin's writer is Baudelaire in his accounts of urban spaces in several forms. Three may be distinguished: the poetry of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, especially 'Tableaux Parisiens', his essay on the city and on caricatural attempts to catch its

instantaneity, which first speaks about *modernité*; ‘The Painter of Modern Life’; and perhaps most original, the prose-poems, a contradictory conception, first *Le Spleen de Paris: poemes en prose*. Some of the most exciting theoretical writing on cities has emerged from here as Baudelaire’s response to two innovative writers of the city, both of whom he translated. The first is De Quincey, in his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, where being lost in London meant ‘I came suddenly upon . . . knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical entries and such sphynx’s riddles of streets without thoroughfares’, which he thought had not been mapped, but which came back and haunted his sleep (De Quincey 1996, pp. 47–48). He is looking for a particular woman he has lost, Ann, ‘sometimes in search of each other, at the very same moment, through the mighty labyrinths of London; perhaps even within a few feet of each other—a barrier no wider in a London street, often amounting to a separation for eternity’ (p. 34). Similarly—De Quincey could have read it—Wordsworth, confronting London, notes ‘The face of every one/That passes by me is a mystery’ (*The Prelude*, 7.628–629; Wordsworth 1972, p. 286). The labyrinthine, the sense of what should be readable withholding itself, the idea of living amidst strangers whose faces, while they may hold a mute appeal to be read, a point from Levinas, nonetheless resist it; the sense of being imprisoned (no thoroughfare) while at the same time within streets that go on for ever—these things require new forms of writing, as they require a new consciousness, a ‘lover of universal life’ who ‘moves into the crowd as though into an enormous reservoir of electricity. He may be compared to a mirror as vast as this crowd; to a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness’ (Baudelaire 1972, p. 400). Being in the city expands being; the observer cannot remain outside the world which he or she reflects, and so gives back something to the crowd, in a constant exchange, a force field.

Baudelaire’s other writer is Edgar Allan Poe (1809–1849), creator of detective fiction as urban. Poe had been in London until 1820: after that he lived in various cities on the East Coast of America. He was one of the first Americans to make Paris, a smaller city than many, but absolutely cosmopolitan, an ‘other’ for themselves, or an opportunity to reflect on America, or on themselves, at least until 1945: with a huge concentration in the 1920s and 1930s, the list includes, amongst the most well-known, Twain, James, Edith Wharton, Dos Passos, Eliot, Pound, Gertrude Stein, E.E. Cummings, Hilda Doolittle (HD), Djuna Barnes, Langston Hughes, Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Henry Miller and Anais Nin, Richard Wright, and James Baldwin. The significance of these names is not merely coincidental; Paris as urban—Paris attracted Americans as London never did—created some of the best American writing. Americans, Jean Méral argues, found the city experience more fascinating as the frontier closed, and unlike the American city, Paris presented itself as both feminine and as the place where women’s significance could be more discussed, more accepted (Méral 1989, p. 79).

Baudelaire reads ‘The Man of the Crowd’ as the account of a convalescent who has come back from ‘the shades of death and breathes in with delight all the spores and odours of life . . . he rushes out into the crowd in

search of a man unknown to him whose face...had in a flash fascinated him' (Baudelaire 1972, p. 397). The man pursued through London's crowds, into which he always vanishes, is unknowable; the 'convalescent' concludes he is 'the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. *He is the man of the crowd*' (Poe 2003, p. 140). Yet *both* are men of the crowd; the narrator, who in Baudelaire's sense is the artist of the city, and the other, the figure of crime: something new, produced by the city and the anonymity of crowds, in which he finds his deepest source of fascination. Criminality is an essential part of considering the city because it breaks narrative patterns, and introduces contingency: the artist may identify with the criminal without being able to rationalise his psychology. The artist's condition is to be convalescent; between states, seeing things with increased sharpness because of how they connect with his own pathological state, coming back to life as if with the sharpness of perception of the child: city writing means noting extreme states.

Benjamin notes that Baudelaire sees the artist as the man of the crowd as the *flâneur*, the idler, the stroller (Baudelaire 1972, p. 399; Benjamin 1972, p. 48; Ferguson 1994, pp. 80–114). The *flâneur* is a Parisian conception: the reader will draw her own conclusions from the absence of the word in English, and its lack of relevance to London, as opposed to Paris. Rachel Bowlby, taking a hint from Virginia Woolf on 'street sauntering and square haunting', suggests 'sauntering' for *flâneur* (Bowlby 1997, p. 212). *Flânerie* describes the activity of a person who practises a disengagement from city life while walking through it, though the *flâneur* is not separate from the commodities in the shop windows which he assesses: they are for display and for selling, as examples of 'commodity fetishism'. In Julien Gracq's study of Nantes, *La Forme d'une ville* (1985) the title taken from Baudelaire, Gracq notes how, in the 1920s, signs of manual labour were excluded from the city, 'while the right to spend hours of leisure in the streets and public places was accorded to a bourgeoisie without distinction' (Gracq 2005, pp. 155–156). In other words, the city presents itself as for consumption, not as the place of production, which must be concealed. That is implied in 'commodity fetishism', where goods are displayed, whether in London's Great Exhibition (1851), or the Exposition in Paris (1855): these being the first of many. Commodity fetishism presents buying of goods as the buyer and seller believing they have a special relationship with goods, which conceals the labour that produced them. Marx says that in buying and selling, 'a definite social relation between men... assumes... the fantastic form [*die phantasmagorische form*] of a relation between things': goods 'appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race' (Marx 1976, p. 165). The 'phantasmagoria' was the first magic lantern which allowed figures to be projected onto a screen: it is used by Marx and Benjamin to imply that the city is the sphere of the 'fantastic', a word etymologically related to 'phantasmagoria', the place of illusion. Benjamin notes how Poe's story makes the events happen under gaslight, which for Benjamin, makes the street an interior, and stresses the scene as the

phantasmagoria. The *flâneur* takes such illusion for real, though also affecting a *blasé* attitude towards what the city has to offer, as the dandy affects such indifference.

That attempt to resist the city as ‘fantastic’ wants to reject it as the emporium for the middle class. Baudelaire’s irony in ‘The Painter of Modern Life’ is directed against being *blasé* or being bored (pp. 399–400), but T.J. Clark (1984, pp. 205–258) notes it as the condition of the woman serving in Manet’s picture ‘Bar at the Folies-Bergère’ (1882). She is for sale, a commodity for the male gaze, as the drinks she serves are for consumption. Clark’s study is formative for putting together Baudelaire and Benjamin and a ‘situationist’ analysis of the city as the ‘society of the spectacle’ to consider how perception of the city changes for ever in the nineteenth century. In Paris, that appears in Impressionism; in using Manet, Clark draws on the position of the woman as the commodity, the prostitute, the object of display (as with ‘Olympia’, 1863) and so heightens how much the city brings the woman into focus as nothing else has.

The city as an illusory space, appealing to that new complex jaundiced state called ‘spleen’, which certainly includes melancholy, and implies that this is a new urban state, appears in Baudelaire’s poem ‘Le cygne’ (The Swan) (Baudelaire 1986, pp. 174–177; Chambers 1987, pp. 153–173; Burton 1988, pp. 149–169). Simplifying, the ‘I’ has his memory prompted as he crosses the ‘new Carrousel’: part of Paris changed by Haussmann, and leading to the expression: ‘La forme d’une ville/Change plus vite, hélas! Que le coeur d’un mortel’ (the form of a city changes, alas, more quickly than a human heart). And the Carrousel, which turns constantly, is a reminder of the city as a dizzying, decentering identity. He remembers the confusions of the building site, which he associates with the ‘bric-à-brac’ in shops, this last being a new feature of urban life, first noted by Balzac in *Cousin Pons* (Shears and Harrison 2013, pp. 1–32). He remembers too how a menagerie stood there, from which a swan had escaped, an exile in the Parisian dust from water, and that memory suddenly makes him think of Andromache, exiled from Troy, and it is that irrational memory of her, of whom he has *no* memory, which starts the poem. He remembers what does not exist. This leads to

Paris change! mais rien dans ma mélancolie
N’a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,
Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie,
Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs.

(Paris changes! But nothing in my melancholy has shifted! New palaces, scaffolds, blocks of stone, old suburbs, everything for me becomes allegory, and my dear memories are heavier than rocks.)

The layers of changes to the city make no difference: memory clings to what has gone, making it anachronous; old and new exist together in fragments in a way making chronology impossible. Another of the ‘Tableaux parisiens’,

‘Les sept vieillards’, recalls seven identical old men who loom out of the fog (in lines that recall *Bleak House* and anticipate *The Waste Land*), threaten the narrating ‘I’ with annihilation, or delirium, intensifying spleen and melancholia. The city is unreal, yet powerful: its streets rivers:

Fourmillante cité, cite pleine de rêves,
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant!
Les mystères partout coulent come des sèves
Dans les canaux étroits du colosse puissant.

(Baudelaire 1986, p. 177)

(Ant-like city, city full of (pregnant with) dreams [the city seems to be female], where the ghost plucks at the passer-by in full daylight. Mysteries throughout run like sap in the narrow veins of the mighty giant.)

The third line uses Poe, and Eugène Sue’s *Mysteries of Paris* (1843). The ghost which accosts the passer-by associates with the heavy memories of ‘The Swan’, which have the power to cancel out the city’s new developments. They produce the sense, which Benjamin develops fully, that the way to consider the city is through allegory, as a mode of thinking and writing which makes the unreal real, and sees one thing in terms of another. The old Paris is seen in the new, and there is no hard realism which imposes itself as unchangeable, because the city is always changing. Allegory, which de-realises, is the mode the city enforces upon writing, and it emphasises, like the dreams, and the melancholia, that the city produces, uniquely, a feeling of the self as split, as having no centre. Much of the best critical writing on the urban, whether on Dickens or Baudelaire has responded to this in the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari writing on capitalism and schizophrenia (Holland, 1993), or have noted in discussing urban modernism how, in Rilke’s novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910), which discusses being in Paris in 1902, it has the effect of quickening traumatic childhood memories, though these had no relation to Paris (Huysen and Bathvick 1989, pp. 113–142). Here one city becomes an allegory for another experience.

WOMEN AND THE CITY

The city’s anonymity, its potential for losing the self, focuses the point that it has sometimes given the woman liberty, but also made her, even more than the male there, to be tempted by consumption of luxury goods. Zola’s *The Ladies’ Paradise* (*Au Bonheur des Dames*, 1883) charts the significance of department stores in the Paris of the Second Empire (in New York, the first was Macy’s, 1858). The appeal to women in consumer culture and its relation to the new fiction identified with the city: i.e. naturalism—has been much studied (Bowly 1985). Other writers should be mentioned: Judith Walkowitz, who writes about the late nineteenth-century new woman and the modern woman, who feels self-confidence in public spaces, but who at the same time is menaced by violence

towards women on the streets. Prostitution was discussed by the journalist W.T. Stead in 'The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1885) a little before the 'Jack the Ripper' murders of five women in Whitechapel in 1888. The symbolism of these unsolved killings and butchering, and the sense of a Jekyll and Hyde mentality, of respectability and violence (Stevenson's thriller was published in 1886), has been beyond computation (Walkowitz 1992, pp. 191–228). Walkowitz's work can be compared with Nord's. The question of woman as object appears, too, in the question of what a female version of the *flâneur*—subject and object together—looks like, and with the point of the ambiguity of the meaning of a woman (a *flâneuse*) 'walking' the streets, a topic of Janet Wolff (2006, pp. 18–31). She notes, too the growing impossibility of such strolling, for either man or woman. To these points should be added Elizabeth Wilson, finding that 'prostitution remains at the heart of the city's meaning', pointing out that the *flâneuse* is an impossibility as a comparison to the *flâneur*: however much woman have been able to take possession of city space, it nonetheless remains true that 'the urban scene [is] at all times represented from the point of view of the male gaze' (Wilson 1992, pp. 55, 56).

Nonetheless, as the city heightens questions of sexual choice, shown in Djuna Barnes's treatment of lesbianism in Paris, the 'nightwood' of the novel's name, it remains a question whether men and women think of and experience the city differently. It is a topic in Virginia Woolf, and, earlier, in Dorothy Richardson (1873–1957), whose thirteen-volume partly autobiographical novel *Pilgrimage* deals with Miriam Henderson, forced to earn her own living as a single woman; she lives mainly in Bloomsbury in London, and sometimes speaks as 'I' and is sometimes 'she', sometimes subject, sometimes object. The middle volumes have most to say about London, which is more than a context; it becomes a space which at its best gives itself to the woman (Radford 1991, pp. 44–65). In 'Honeycomb' (1917), a fragmented writing begins in 'the West End street', then moves to 'wide golden streaming Regent Street', identifying the self with the paving-stones, from which 'life streamed up' and which she calls, following John Bunyan, whose *The Pilgrim's Progress* moves between 'the City of Destruction' and 'the Celestial City', and inspires Richardson down to the title of her novel, 'the pavement of heaven'. The stream/street pun is significant, as is the idea of light streaming. In this passage, the city has become a cathedral (Richardson 1979, 1.416). In 'The Tunnel' (1919), she has long meditations over the housetops of London; another time she witnesses a street fight in the Strand (2.75), and identifies herself as 'a Londoner' (2.266). In 'deadlock' (1921), she is the *flâneuse* in a different sense from the Baudelairean, with no sense of alienation. While London is not seen as pastoral, it still has that Wordsworthian pleasure, but whereas there, the pleasure is often in stillness, here movement as 'flow' is dominant, with the sense that traffic always contains a future:

[Miriam] wandered about between Wimpole Street [the dentist's, where she works as a secretary] and St Pancras, holding in imagination wordless converse with a stranger whose whole experience had melted and vanished like her own, into the flow of light

down the streets; into the unending joy of the way the angles of buildings cut themselves out against the sky, glorious if she paused to survey them; and almost unendurably wonderful, keeping her hurrying on pressing, through insufficient silent outcries, towards something, anything, even instant death, if only they could be expressed when they moved with her movement, a maze of shapes, flowing, tilting into each other, in endless patterns, sharp against the light; sharing her joy in the changing same same song of the London traffic; the bliss of post offices and railway stations, cabs going on and on towards unknown space; omnibuses rumbling securely from point to point, always within the magic circle of London. (3.85–86)

In ‘Revolving Lights’ (1923), Miriam cycles from Highgate into London, which was ‘opening suddenly before me’, so that ‘tonight the spirit of London came to meet her on the verge... Nothing in life could be sweeter than this welcoming—a cup held brimming to her lips, and inexhaustible... No one in the world would oust this mighty lover’ (3.272). It makes her life ‘flow outwards, north, south, east, west, to all its margins’ (3.273), so that individual life is dispersed, or made multiple. This sense of the city as male but warm and enclosing is strong; recalling the ‘magic circle’, and it may be part of the feminism which finds male writing too mentally controlled, finished off (‘Interim’ (1919), 2.408, compare 2.149). London, too, associates with new forms of the sexual, and sexual liberty for women, so that a dialogue on the subject, held in her lodgings—the novel is full of these; temporary homes, places of new associations—discussing ‘the whole idea’, produces the admonition, ‘London, my dear Miriam, is full of ideas’ (‘The Tunnel’, 2.86). The form the city takes impels new ways of thinking, and going astray in it means discovering ideas unheard of, with the deepest implications for the unfixing of gender norms. There can be no conservatism, nor single mode of living. Miriam’s own walking is transgressive, shown with her fascination with prostitutes around the St Pancras/Euston station areas at night (2.409–410)—again, the interest in stations, suggesting transit, is typical.

THE CITY AND NEW WRITING

Baudelaire’s writing takes also the form of poems in prose, where Paris lacks landmarks, sights, monuments, or maps, unlike the city as described in Engels, or Dickens, or Zola, or Gissing. The formality and rule-bound nature of verse cannot serve, when ‘partout s’étalait, se répandait, s’ébaudissait le peuple en vacances’ (‘everywhere you went the holiday crowds were pouring into the streets, spreading out in all directions’, Baudelaire 1989, pp. 66–67). The city disturbs poetry, and definitions alike, and, as here, as with Poe, confronts writing with the phenomenon of crowds, as in the prose-poem ‘Les Foules’ (Baudelaire 1989, pp. 58–59). Zola is fascinated by crowds, in those Parisian texts which outstandingly focus on the city through certain images, acquisitive modernisations on the right bank (*La Curée*); petit-bourgeois Paris seen in *Le Ventre de Paris*, whose subject is the food for sale in the central market of Les Halles,

designed by Victor Baltard, and under construction throughout the period of the Second Empire, and now, scandalously, demolished again (Mead 2012), and in *L'Assommoir*, which looks at working-class Paris within the limits of a tiny area close to the Gare du Nord. *Nana* considers the world of popular theatre, *Au Bonheur des Dames* the crowd going in and out of the department store (Schor 1978). Zola's 'naturalism' committed him to the sense that life could be understood in scientific terms, and that Paris can be seen: hence the novelistic pleasure in showing panoramic views of Paris, as in *L'Assommoir*. There is a distinction between his writing and that of Baudelaire and Rimbaud: these last two are discussed by Eli Marc Blanchard, who even raises the question, via Jane Jacobs, the New York urban theorist, whether cities come before or after the country (1985, p. 28). However much the crowd as a feature of the city questions the stability of the individual, the commitment to discussing heredity and environmental influences on the individual means that Zola never sees the city as itself destabilising the subject; indeed his scientific method requires that there be a subject to discuss: it may be one reason why Benjamin's *Arcades-Project* gives him no extended treatment (Rennie 1996, pp. 396–413). It is interesting to contrast Zola in *L'Assommoir* discussing the working classes at the periphery, with Céline, the modernist writer of cities, especially Paris, in *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932): *Journey to the End of the Night*. Despite being a doctor, Louis-Ferdinand Céline was the antithesis of a 'naturalist' writer, he is much closer to a sense of the city as disappearing in terms of being a place: Paris does not exist; there is no longer a centre/periphery distinction to be maintained in it (Tambling, in Ameel et al. 2015, pp. 21–40). This is coming close to the anthropologist Marc Augé who thinks of modernity as in Baudelaire, where the view from the mansard, high up in the house, shows how 'les tuyaux, les clochers, ces mâts de la cité' ('the chimney pots and spires, these masts of the city' (Baudelaire 1986, p. 169)) coexist. Different times and different values integrate side by side. In present 'supermodernity', in the city, there is no such integration. Places are assigned specific positions, like historic town centres, but there are also 'non-places' which are anonymous and yield no memory: transit points like airports, railway stations, shantytowns, hotel chains, large retail outlets, to say nothing of the networked electronic world (Augé 1995, pp. 78–79). Non-places threaten to become all there is, especially as they make minor the spaces of memory; cities become anonymous, or identical through their tourist attractions, or through their monoculture, sites for 'cheap' labour, like Ciudad Juarez, or as has been argued about Atlanta, Georgia,—home to the 1996 Olympics, capital of the Coca-Cola Corporation, and with the world's largest airport: but a non-place (Rutheiser 1999, pp. 317–341).

Rimbaud should be compared with Zola and Baudelaire; his poems, *Les Illuminations* (1873–1875), recall his living as the male lover of Paul Verlaine in London (1872–1873) as well as in Paris. Such prose poems as 'Ouvriers' (Workmen), 'Les Ponts' (The Bridges), 'Ville', which I give and translate below, and two 'Villes' and 'Métropolitain' are extraordinary non-specific ways of mapping two cities onto each other in a form which makes

writing about the city the art of montage (Tambling, in Arnold et al. 2010, pp. 197–209; Scott 2006, pp. 204–229):

Je suis un éphémère et point trop mécontent citoyen d'une métropole crue modern parce que tout gout connu a été eludé dans les ameublements et l'extérieur des maisons aussi bien que dans le plan de la ville. Ici vous ne signaleriez les traces d'aucun monument de superstition. La morale et la langue sont réduites à leur plus simple expression, enfin! Ces millions de gens qui n'ont pas besoin de se connaître amènent si pareillement l'éducation, le métier et la vieillesse, que ce cours de vie doit être plusieurs fois moins long que ce qu'une statistique folle trouve pour les peuples du continent. Aussi comme, de ma fenêtre, je vois des spectres nouveaux roulant à travers l'épaisse et éternelle fume de charbon—notre ombre des bois, notre nuit d'été! Des Erinnyes nouvelles, devant mon cottage qui est ma patrie et tout mon coeur puisque tout ici ressemble à ceci,—la Mort sans pleurs, notre active fille et servant, un Amour désespéré et un joli Crime piaulant dans la boue de la rue. (Rimbaud 1962, pp. 256–257)

(I am an ephemeral and not at all over-discontented citizen of a metropolis believed to be modern because every known taste has been dissimulated in the furnishings and the exterior of the houses as much as in the city plan. Here you will not point out the traces of any monument to belief. Morals and language are reduced to their most simple expression, at last! The millions of people who do not need to know each other lead their education, work and old age equally that the course of life should be many times less long than a mad statistic found for the people on the continent. Also, as, from my window, I see new spectres rolling across the thick eternal carbon-fumes—our shady woods, our summer nights! new Furies in front of my cottage which is my homeland and all my heart because everything here resembles this—Death without tears, our active daughter and servant, a desperate love and a pretty crime whimpering in the road's mud.)

This is unlike Baudelaire's adoption of a *persona* and a narrating voice in his Poems in Prose; the tone is more apparently objective—though which is the city described? 'Citizen' implies Paris; so does the city plan, though Dickens' Coketown in *Hard Times*, remorsefully symmetrical and factual in design may also be evoked; absence of monuments may recall the pulling down of the statue of Napoleon in the Place Vendôme, or an absence of churches in Protestant London; 'continent' may imply Europe, fogs from coal fires may imply London (more wood was burned in Paris); 'cottage' implies English values, but hardly applies to the places in Soho and St Pancras where Rimbaud and Verlaine lived: geography cannot be assigned, and the definition of modernity—that all individual taste has gone—and the equalising of life which leave room for the Furies to return in disguised perhaps novel-like forms evoke the ghosts in Baudelaire's 'Les sept vieillards'. Rimbaud's writing is of the same moment as Zola, but his metropolis is less an entity, to be approached with more irony, and more sense that

perhaps cities produce non-places, and that is how modernity must be perceived. And Rimbaud's single-paragraph prose poem shows that the problems of signification are in language, and that use of language here is distinctive, and self-questioning, seeing language as the problem as much as the cities which can only be described through it.

CHICAGO AND NATURALISM

Zola's city writing is fundamental for writing the American city, as with Dreiser (1871–1945) in *Sister Carrie* (1900) or Upton Sinclair (1878–1968) in *The Jungle* (1906); he says the accounts of animal killing in the stockyards 'would have been worthwhile for a Dante or a Zola' (Chapter 10): the title and subject matter (the stockyards) influenced Brecht. It also influenced Frank Norris (1870–1902), in three novels; first *McTeague; A Story of San Francisco* (1899), about the physical breakup of a dentist through drunkenness; his office is in downtown Polk Street; for this background see Robert D. Lundy in Pizer (1997, pp. 257–262), and for Norris's discussion of 'Zola as a Romantic Writer' in 1896, see Pizer (1997, pp. 271–272). Naturalism, as in Zola, works with a sense of Darwin, and with behaviour that returns to the primitive, and atavistic, as it does with *McTeague*, placing him against the superficial gentility of the town, a Spanish possession in the eighteenth century, and boosted by the gold rush of 1849, which made the city (Jack London's birth-place) eighth largest in the USA by 1890 (prior to the 1906 earthquake). *The Octopus: A Story of California* (1901), set in farmlands outside San Francisco, deals with a violent dispute the wheat farmers have with the owners of the Southern Pacific Railroad, and it defines the city in terms of its connections: telephone, rail, and intercommunications with other towns throughout the world by trade, all masterminded from San Francisco (the role of the city as a centre for American capitalism will be remembered from Conrad's *Nostramo* (1902)). It makes farming an industry, governed by 'the ticker' (Book 1 chapter 2), 'a telegraphic recording instrument, a tape-machine; a stock-indicator' (*OED*: first citation 1883—the year which standardised time throughout the USA), which relayed prices of stock all round the country, connecting cities as well as farms to cities. It becomes apparent that the USA creates a different city from the European, as in *The Pit: A Story of Chicago* (1903), which looks not at the poor or working class, as in the previous novels, but at the communications, which not only enabled Chicago to make its slaughter houses and stockyards and meatpacking completely industrial, and thus the marker of the modern American city, but made for the centralising in the masculine business ethos of the Wheat Pit, whose market Curtis Jadwin tries to corner, at the expense of his wife, Laura. The centre of the Chicago Board of Trade is 'a great whirlpool, a pit of roaring waters', taking the imagery from Poe's 'Descent into the Maelstrom'; it is a 'world-force, a primaeval energy' (Chapter 4). Chicago is rendered in 'natural', and gendered terms where it is a devouring castrating mother; in the novel's last paragraph, the Board of Trade building is a

‘monstrous sphinx with blind eyes’—Oedipus and the feminine riddling destructive force together (Tandt 1998, pp. 82–96). These Zola-derived natural energies are atavistic, anti-feminist; they avoid explaining the capitalist ethos at work in the city (hence Naturalism for Lukács fails in attempting to show the ‘totality’ of society). The novel opens at Chicago’s Opera House, the Auditorium Building (architects Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler, 1890), just preceding the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, and the creation of the skyscraper (e.g. the Monadnock Building, architects Burnham and Root, 1891–1893), and the World Columbian Exposition (1893), where Chicago could claim virtual equality with Paris in terms of modernity: New York’s skyscrapers, advertisements for business interests, soon followed.

This is the other side of Chicago, a mid-nineteenth-century American city, the third largest in the USA, rebuilt after fire in 1871; experiencing the Haymarket riots in 1886, which defined labour relations, and built US socialism. A marker of the latter was Sinclair’s *The Jungle*, treating migrants from Lithuania to Packingtown, the stockyards in the Southside (Smith 1984, pp. 152–170). Sinclair combines fiction with documentary and historical detail, like Dos Passos, who gives much space to reprinting newspaper reports and advertising slogans, and there is a similar imagery as in Norris when the Beef Trust is ‘a monster devouring with a thousand mouths, trampling with a thousand hoofs’ (Chapter 30). The Haymarket riots were decisive for the Ohio-born William Dean Howells (1837–1920) in *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) set in Boston and then New York; the novel ends with the strike of the workers on the new Elevated Railway (the El—begun in New York in 1878) and the murder of the socialist Lindau by the police (Part 5; Chapter 6); this is in the context of the power of the millionaire Dryfoos, exploiting the natural gas wells of Indiana, and making a fortune on the Stock Exchange. The El presents Bail March, the journalist, with a sense of New York’s ethnic diversity (Neapolitan to Chinese), and shows how the railway, while giving a new sense to the city, in a ‘frantic panorama’, also cuts areas in two in ‘wanton disregard’ of lives underneath (2.11). As always in naturalism, environment and blind force cut across lives, subordinating them, and narrative, to more passive description only, in Lukácsian terms.

There is more narrative in *Sister Carrie*, which opens in 1889 with Carrie in the train bound for Chicago, meeting Drouet, a travelling salesman (a new urban type), and being seduced by him before going off with Hurstwood to Montreal for a bogus marriage, and to New York, where she becomes an actress, bringing out an image of the city as theatrical, while Hurstwood is left wandering in the Bowery, where he takes his own life. Carrie is energised by Chicago’s consumerism, as ‘the victim of the city’s hypnotic influence, the subject of the mesmeric operations of super-intelligible forces’ (Chapter 9). Dreiser also appreciated Balzac: at the end, Carrie is reading *Père Goriot*, which promotes the masculine Rastignac’s onslaught upon Paris as a woman to be possessed. Dreiser’s novel is fascinated by city lights and the city in the evening, but his naturalism makes him read this literally, whereas in Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), ‘a great deal is going to happen in

the next few years. All these mechanical inventions—telephones, electricity, steel bridges, horseless vehicles—they are all leading somewhere’ (p. 26). This is said in 1898, when New York became the ‘world’s second metropolis’ (p. 23) and it gives way to something else which affects the writing of the city: to the idea that ‘it’s looks that count in this city’ (p. 16), which is a creation of signs, advertising, ‘the city of shiny windows, . . . the city of scrambled alphabets . . . the city of gilt letter signs’ (Dos Passos 1987, p. 315). The inflation of meaning, or the emptying of meaning, means that walking on Broadway, the words ‘Greatest hit on Broadway’ ‘were an elevator carrying [Ellen] dizzily, up into some stately height where electric light signs cracked scarlet and gold and green’ (p. 144): the attempt to present ‘the Metropolis’ must be as a city of words, in which there can be placed no faith (p. 327). This sense of a city unknowable, perhaps, beyond its language—subject of Paul Auster’s *New York Trilogy*—makes *Manhattan Transfer* modernist, preoccupied with plural signs focused in urban forms, but which threaten to make experience impossible.

‘URBAN IS OFTEN A EUPHEMISM FOR BLACK’ (QUOTED, NORRIS
2014, p. 136)

American literature directly, but every urban culture as much, has been affected by a challenge of diversity of cultures throughout the twentieth century, anticipated by W.E.B. Du Bois in *Philadelphia Negro* (1899): its African-American population moved north into the industrial cities in two Great Migrations, one in the 1920s and the other in the cities of the West Coast in the 1940s. The post 1917 Harlem Renaissance was one evidence of this, black people moving into Harlem, ‘capital of black America’, an area which white property speculators had not been able to sell, having over-estimated demand (Jackson 2001, pp. 240, 23–28). Richard Wright (1908–1960), Chicago-based after 1934, writing *Native Son* (1940), gives an entirely new sense of what it means to say that environment controls consciousness if a person is black, an argument continued in Ralph Ellison’s Harlem-based *Invisible Man* (1952), the symbolic import of its title being decisive. It suggests the power of paranoia and of violence when the city is so divided.

The ‘inner city’, as both African-American and Hispanic, has defined American writing; similarly, black and post-colonial populations have changed such cities as London and Paris decisively, a car-culture producing suburban living, or, in the USA, ‘white flight’, so that city centres, especially under the influence of de-industrialisation, have been left deserted and impoverished, like Detroit. In *October Cities*, an account of postwar writing in Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York, distinguishing between the ‘city of fact’ and the ‘city of feeling’, i.e. how the city is experienced and thought to be, not necessarily according to facts, Carlo Rotella calls the ‘inner city’ the downtowns of cities which ‘have tended to develop within the boundaries of the prewar

industrial city, although at times it does extend to the inner ring of older suburbs. Defined negatively, then, [it] describes the part of the suburbanized metropolis which is not the suburbs: the inner city is typically part of this metropolis that falls within the political boundaries of the older industrial city' (Rotella 1998, pp. 325–326). *Native Son* responds to Wright's sense of Chicago—world of railroads, stockyards, and large buildings—as a place of crisis: Wright was much influenced by Louis Wirth and the Chicago sociologists of urbanism. He presents Bigger Thomas, a black from Chicago's Southside, who gets involved with liberal white people who employ him as chauffeur, and two of whom he ends up killing, resulting in his arrest and execution. The experience is one that has to be interpreted, and in the sense of a contest of interpretations, the text shows its modernism, and Marxism. Bigger has been utterly confused by Chicago:

sometimes, in his room or on the sidewalk, the world seemed to him a strange labyrinth even when the streets were straight and the walls were square; a chaos which made him feel that something in him should be able to understand it, divide it, focus it. (Wright 1972, p. 280)

The invisible walls, and the sense that a city planned on a grid, like all American cities on Jefferson's advice, may also be labyrinthine, and possess ghettos—a word never out of fashion in discussing cities and their histories—make the city unmappable, except in an act of violence which must be narrativised (Scruggs 1993, pp. 68–99). And labyrinths and even ghettos may be invisible. Madhu Dubey quotes Toni Morrison's essay 'City Limits, Village Values' on the point that African-Americans are alienated from the urban because they had no part 'in founding or shaping the city'. Harlem may be counted a village; but 'the ancestor, the repository of communal values, for Morrison, "cannot thrive in the dungeon of the city"' (Dubey 2003, p. 235). So for Morrison, 'among black writers, the city has huge limits and the village profound values'. We are approaching profound differences between American and African cities, but more the causes of urban alienation which came out of segregation based on racism founded on slavery, producing the Martin Luther King assassination (Memphis, 1968) and, fuelled by the black consciousness of such a writer as Fanon, black resistance: in Los Angeles the Watts riots (1965) and the Rodney King riots (1992).

The Pittsburgh-born novelist John Edgar Wideman, in *Philadelphia Fire* (1990), taking a hint from James Baldwin's book on New York racism, *The Fire Next Time*, describes the police bombing of a house, 6221 Osage Avenue, Philadelphia, in 1985, which left eleven dead and fifty-three houses burnt. The house belonged to MOVE, an Afrocentric cult, which rejected the modern city, wanting a return to something more pastoral, African: unacceptable to a city which practises slum clearance in order to enable investment, leasing 'the land to private developers, and they put up dorms, apartments, town houses, condos', which is defined as 'progress, real progress' (Wideman 1995, pp. 78–79) though it excludes alternative lifestyles which respond to the urban by making it a place for homegrown localities (the similarity to Jane Jacobs's *The Life and*

Death of Great American Cities is obvious). Cudjoe, the writer voicing Wideman, asks for ‘realism’ which will show a ‘cityscape unfolding’:

Perhaps a view of the city from on high, the fish-eye lens catching everything within its distortion, skyscraper heads together, rising like sucked up through a straw. If we could arrange the building-blocks, the rivers, boulevards, bridges, harbour, etc. etc. into some semblance of order, of reality, then we could begin disentangling ourselves from this miasma, this fever of shakes and jitters, of self-defeating selfishness called urbanization. (p. 157)

A fever is a fire. The cities envisaged here are as present in North America as in Africa, or India, and that, with its erosion of any sense of place, is one sense of globalisation. ‘Urban removal’ (85, see Kennedy 2000, pp. 79–87), means loss of old neighbourhoods—and what is unspoken here is the extent to which these are black, or Hispanic, in the case of the USA, or the spaces of other castes, or ethnic groups, or migrants, which the city absorbs or flings out into *banlieues* or *bidonvilles* or favelas or shantytowns or townships.

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The City in Theory

INTRODUCTION

Cities—which include ‘global cities’ since Saskia Sassen popularised the term in the 1990s: she meant New York, London, and Tokyo, largely on account of their place in international finance—begin to be actively theorised in the nineteenth century. Indeed, poetry, novels, and theoretical writings began to lose their difference and became part of each other with the sense of how much of a challenge the city in modernity was proving to be. Early writers on the city—the subject of Jason Finch’s chapter which follows—include Georg Simmel in Berlin and Patrick Geddes, who developed the word ‘conurbation’ to think how cities mass together to make a single space, and the Chicago School of urban sociologists, such as Louis Wirth. They respond to the different modes of city planning current after Haussmann’s redesigning of Paris: the City Beautiful, the Garden City, the Radiant City, for instance. They respond, too, to the new ways in which the city becomes the active topic of such writers as Parent-Duchatelet, Chadwick, Dickens, Baudelaire, and Zola, and, in the twentieth century, the surrealist writer Louis Aragon, in *Paris Peasant* (1926), thinking of the disappearance of the nineteenth-century Paris arcades, seeing them—and therefore the city—as ‘true sanctuaries of a cult of the ephemeral’. This indicates several areas of interest: first, the city as always renewing itself in terms of its fashion, so that it gives a new sense of beauty, as itself ephemeral and changing, the ‘marvellous suffusing everyday appearance’, as Aragon says, a phrase which anticipates Carpentier’s definition in his novel *The Kingdom of this World* of what is now called ‘magic realism’. That changefulness exists despite the sense of the city as the permanent, the unchanging.

The theme passes from Baudelaire to Aragon to Walter Benjamin, whose *Arcades Project*, given a chapter in Part I, considers nineteenth-century Paris as a heap of fragments which are still there to be read, and to be reclaimed, and concludes his analysis of ‘Paris—the Capital of the Nineteenth-Century’ by thinking of Balzac (1799–1850), the great writer of Paris before Haussmann, referring, just as the bourgeoisie are making their piles of wealth,

to ‘the ruins of the bourgeoisie’, and saying that ‘we begin to recognise the monuments of the bourgeoisie as ruins even before they have crumbled’. The meaning of this can be glossed from Marvin Trachtenberg’s book on the Renaissance architect Alberti (1404–1472), *Building in Time: From Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion* (Yale 2010). Alberti believed in the ideal city, intact, and humanist in inspiration, and observable from a single perspective. Before Alberti, Gothic architects had built slowly, so that no building was ever complete; always in process, different moments overlaid on each other: Trachtenberg calls this ‘building in time’; it corresponds to the idea that a building shows *duration*. Alberti was the first city planner to want a whole synchronic display of styles at one moment: building outside time, time excluded. The ideal city appears the work of a moment, absolute, commanded into existence, and excluding the idea of ruins. The postmodern building, Robert Venturi’s extension to the National Gallery in London (1991), presents itself as in an ‘ideal’, not real time, as is the case with pastiche. Benjamin’s argument is that the ruin appears despite such an attempt at evading time as an essential within architecture, and the city, whose commodity structure, exhibited in its downtown (display windows, as Benjamin points out in ‘Central Park’ no. 38 (1938), have become part of building facades). Benjamin says that ‘allegorical emblems return as commodities’, meaning that signs of ruin (like the allegorical skull in Renaissance/Baroque paintings) are now the gleaming icons of capitalist modernity, but which are equally, signs of ruin (‘Central Park’, 32a). The city is always incomplete, always in ruins, and that double perception requires, for Benjamin, a focus on ‘the dialectical image’. We remember that in Baudelaire’s ‘The Swan’, discussed in the previous chapter, everything becomes allegory.

In Britain, in the 1960s, an early theorist of the city was H.J. Dyos, whose compilation of chapters *The Victorian City* (1973), with Michael Wolff, set a standard for empirical readings of what cities are and have been. Here, the attention was both on suburbs, and on industrial cities, and on the new urban poor that had been created by the city and by capitalist industrialisation. Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Disraeli, Kingsley, Henry Mayhew, William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army—a vital theme for writers about the working class, including Shaw, and of course Brecht—and Charles Booth, with his surveys of urban poverty in the 1890s, have all given impetus to consideration of what the city means, and entails: much here arises out of Marxist analysis, and the work of Engels. The slums, a nineteenth-century concept, were early defined by the journalist John Hollingshead, writing *Ragged London in 1861*. Marxist theory about the city has moved from considering its industrial basis, and the concealed and unconcealed poverty which the realist novel opened up, towards thinking, as with Benjamin, of the city as the site of consumption, of commodity fetishism, and of the ‘phantasmagoria’; this makes the city so much an ideological product, preventing people from seeing things as they are, certainly providing a fantasy world, perception of which induces melancholia, or delirium: the city being indeed a delirious space, as

with the postmodern architect Rem Koolhaas's history of Manhattan, *Delirious New York* (1978). 'Postmodern' here exploits the sense that the city has no one entity, nor one history, and abolishes all thought of there being a stable origin to anything: the city is what is made of it, and its 'bigness', as Koolhaas describes this in *SMLXL* (1995), means the defeat of architecture and even town planning as a way of controlling or stabilising people's lives. The work of Foucault, influential on Richard Sennett, and Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau sees a contest between urban policing surveillance and policing and the construction of 'space', and the way that 'the everyday' may contest this, or else conform with it. The chapters in this part all look at cities in the light of these different ways of trying to conceptualise what may, after all, not be mapped, not be described nor fully encompassed.

All these, and more topics, are discussed in the chapters which follow: Jason Finch and J. A. Smith giving between them an account of 100 years of urban theory, Smith focussing on Venturi, architect of a kitsch Las Vegas (see also David Spurr's chapter, later). Ben Moore writes on Benjamin, who is vital for many of the chapters of the book, and Alfie Bown following with an account of the city and everyday life. Both Moore and Bown take Paris as a primary focus, and Paris, as the Introduction has already noted, takes the prime place for defining the city—even if it is not quite a global city in Saskia Sassen's original sense of that term. Yet it has, uniquely, continued to engender debates, which is one reason why the city, including its capital status in relation to so many French colonies, weaves in and out of many of the chapters ahead.

Modern Urban Theory and the Study of Literature

Jason Finch

In the twentieth century, the city was theorized as never before. Thinking about cities became professionalized. This happened at the intersection of theoretical and applied thinking, between sociological research and architectural practice, which was known as *planning*. This was when, in many parts of the world, the growth of cities seemed an uncontrollable and even a dangerous phenomenon. While multiple urban traditions, for example that of the Arab world, continued (qualified by imperialism and colonialism), the changes that were visualized and written about in cities such as Paris and New York had enormous impacts on large and small cities in many countries.

This chapter considers what literary scholars in the twenty-first century could do with the models and theories which emerged under the general headings of planning and urban studies between the mid-nineteenth and the later twentieth centuries. Accounts of the city which were produced to describe and shape actual practice and policy in the new, sprawling urban zones could become fresh approaches to the reading of literature. Conversely, as works produced from the 1970s onwards in sociology, architecture and design, and human geography taking a cultural turn recognize (Lefebvre [1974] 1991; Sennett 1977, 1994; Pinder 2005; Campkin 2013), literature and other forms of cultural production contribute to the discussion. The texts at the centre of this chapter were shaped with different purposes in mind from those of literary scholars. The outcome of such purposes in the actual building and planning decisions of nineteenth- and twentieth-century cities in Europe, North America and elsewhere is neither utopia nor dystopia but the messiness of life. Such messiness is rendered best not by plans but by certain literary forms, notably the realist novel and creative non-fiction.

Until the 'spatial turn' of the 2000s and 2010s, literary scholarship paid little attention to urban theory. Even now, the reception of contemporary

spatial theory by Andrew Thacker (2003), Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth (2007) and others, like the mapping-based approach of Franco Moretti (1998, 2005), the ‘geocriticism’ proposed by Bertrand Westphal ([2007] 2011) and his disciple Robert T. Tally Jr. (2013) and even the postmodern geographies of Edward Soja (1989) rather emphasized narratives of the modern, within which the urban dominates, proposed in France between the 1960s and the 1990s by Pierre Bourdieu et al. 1999, Michel Foucault ([1967] 1998), Guy Debord ([1967] 1994), Gilles Deleuze, Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991), George Perec ([1974] 1997), Michel de Certeau ([1974] 2000) and Marc Augé ([1992] 1995). Such narratives see the modern and postmodern urban as essentially the site of contests of power between varied ideological forces with individual ‘users’ occasionally developing the ability to subvert the system via creative and irrational practices of walking and art production. But a much broader range of theorizations of and responses to the urban, produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have still largely been overlooked by literary scholars. Work from specifically German and Anglo-American traditions which coalesced as urban studies is at the centre of this chapter.

Specifically, this chapter moves from fairly fresh responses to the rapidly urbanizing city in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth by the likes of Friedrich Engels ([1845] 1987), John Ruskin ([1884] 2006), Charles Booth ([1886–1903] 2002), Ferdinand Tönnies ([1887] 2001), Frederick Law Olmsted ([1870] 2003) and William Morris ([1890] 2007) to the wholesale rejection of the urban embodied most clearly in the work of Ebenezer Howard ([1898] 2003) and Patrick Geddes (1915) and developed into a massive orthodoxy in the USA by Lewis Mumford ([1938] 1940, 1961) and in the UK by Patrick Abercrombie (1945) in the mid-twentieth century. This is followed by efforts to reshape the urban via revolutionary transformations, again focused on the era between the two world wars and emerging most clearly in the work of Le Corbusier ([1929] 2003) and Albert Speer (1970; see Hall 1988, pp. 198–200).

Running alongside such efforts was a slow and penetrating effort to get to grips with the details and landscape of the modern urban beginning, with the refocusing on the individual in Georg Simmel ([1903] 2010), progressing through the Chicago School sociological studies produced between the 1920s and the 1960s and taking a vital turn with the neo-urbanism of Jane Jacobs (1961) and the work on gentrification and urban revival of Ruth Glass (1964), Marshall Berman ([1982] 1983) and Neil Smith (1996) between the 1960s and the 1990s. This work tested the hypotheses about the unique nature of the modern urban social experience proposed by Tönnies and others, becoming itself the foundation for twenty-first century work in cultural geography (Pinder 2005) and sociological ethnography (Hall 2015).

NINETEENTH-CENTURY FEAR OF THE CITY

The historian of urban planning, Peter Hall (1988, p. 14) entitles his chapter on late nineteenth-century '[r]eactions to [. . .] the Slum City', 'City of Dreadful Night'. In doing so, he borrows the title of a literary text, the Victorian poem of the same name by James 'B.V.' Thomson, which describes a city as dark and bleak, its inhabitants isolated. Characteristic nineteenth-century accounts of the new, sprawling metropolis were acts of demonization. For Engels (1820–95), the meaning of the city was found in many individuals living in close physical proximity to one another, which he held to be necessarily a dehumanizing experience:

The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest, becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. (Engels [1845] 1987, p. 69)

Much of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* contains statistics about population, income and rents, unsurprising considering Engels's connection with Marx. But Engels seems to share the view of the new city with that of Romanticism, exemplified by Ruskin ([1884] 2006), the assumption that the urban environment is ethically and aesthetically inferior to the countryside. He shares with Ruskin the historical narrative perhaps applied excessively broadly by Raymond Williams (1973): of a mythologized move from country to town with the former becoming conceptualized in the manner of pastoral as a golden age. For Engels ([1845] 1987: 92), the present day is loathsome: everything in Manchester which for him 'arouses horror and indignation is of recent origin, belongs to the industrial epoch'. But there is another aspect to Engels's view of the city which, in line with his politics, is a concern beyond the individual with the community, in which the most 'repellent and offensive' thing is the way that each, in Hobbesian fashion, acts 'in his private interest'. Engels is still valued by urban theorists in a way separate from his association with Marx: for being a pioneer in linking 'the physical decrepitude of the urban infrastructure' with 'the alienation and despair of the urban poor' (LeGates and Stout 2003, pp. 58–59).

Engels's concern with the actual nature of a new sort of human society in the newly gigantic cities is taken up by the German founder of sociology Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936). Tönnies works with a distinction that in part echoes Engels, between a formerly community- and specifically kinship-based sort of human organization, built on known hierarchies among people and personal access to others of all social levels, with a much more transactional and individualized environment. He perhaps implies *Gemeinschaft* (classically premodern 'community') to be superior to *Gesellschaft* (classically modern 'society'), but he does so in less histrionic mode than Ruskin, Engels or Thomson, who were living in the first country to undergo what became understood as specifically modern industrialization and urbanization. Tönnies begins the effort to understand the 'modern' as something distinctive,

not necessarily to be rejected. Tönnies is more concerned with the historical moment of nineteenth-century modernity, in which *Gemeinschaft* is the same thing as the 'old' and *Gesellschaft* the 'new' (Tönnies [1887] 2001, p. 19), than he is with the emerging contrasts between the biggest cities and smaller settlements which to Engels and Ruskin seemed less changed by the era of industrialization than did cities like Manchester, London or Berlin.

Tönnies's contrasted concepts derive from awareness of change in the formerly conservative, prosperous and apparently slow-moving area on the German-Danish frontier where he was raised (Harris 2001, pp. x–xii). For English literature readers, there are shades of Thomas Hardy. But from the point of view of the twenty-first century, Tönnies's approach anticipates an era where huge swathes of the more densely populated regions of countries in the developed world form urbanized, networked regions. And yet when Tönnies ([1887] 2001, p. 18) insists that *Gemeinschaft* is the sphere from which we go out, and *Gesellschaft* where we enter 'as if into a foreign land' when we leave home he also, in a manner closely paralleling the *bildungsroman* novel of the nineteenth century, models the relationship between private and public which characterizes bourgeois social relations in the age of mass urbanization, as mapped by a novel such as Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*. And yet, if modernity means the era in which *Gemeinschaft* disappears, then Tönnies makes it one in which human bonds of a proper and ancient sort are lacking. He thus retains living and tense dualism of a sort that is not present in Williams's country versus city dichotomy, essentially an account of false consciousness.

Some other approaches to the new cities in the Britain and USA of the later nineteenth century were more applied than conceptual. William Morris (1834–96) is most famous for his political campaigning, his businesses built around the ideal of artisan skills of a calculatedly premodern or *Gemeinschaft* sort, and his literary allegories of these ideas. The latter include the science-fiction prose romance *News from Nowhere* (1890) and, earlier, the vision in his poem *The Earthly Paradise* (1868) of a clean and innocent past city, 'London, small and white and clean, / The clear Thames bordered by its gardens green' where now are 'six counties overhung with smoke' (quoted in Hall 1988, p. 86). Morris's description of the contemporary city is subordinate to the purposes of bringing about change. Charles Booth (1840–1916), meanwhile, a wealthy philanthropist, is known above all for the 'poverty maps' he produced as part of the social surveys of London which he funded and oversaw, graphically colouring some streets of London gold (the wealthiest), some black (the poorest, notoriously labelled by him 'semi-criminal'), with many shades of red (wealthier) and blue (poorer) in between (Booth [1886–1903] 2002). Booth's maps lend themselves to simplistic use, and seem often to have been built on prejudiced means of gaining snapshot knowledge of what was the social standing of a certain working-class street as his young investigators moved rapidly through hundreds of streets. Open front doors, no flowers in downstairs windows and doorsteps not whitened meant 'not respectable'.

More even than Booth and Morris, with their graphic description of the new city and campaigns on behalf of its inhabitants, Frederick Law Olmsted

(1822–1903) intervened practically in the physical shape of the city. In New York City, Olmsted was responsible for Central Park, built between 1857 and 1873, his effort in line with the strictures of Engels, to provide ‘the illusion of nature in the city’ (LeGates and Stout 2003, 408f), but the reality of its creation resting on the eviction of African-American and Irish-American landowners from the villages they had built on the territory of Manhattan which were now, by the city authorities, identified as undesirable shanty towns (Waxman 1994). In creating such a space, Olmsted’s arguments were similar to those of Engels: towns, he said, damaged ‘the average length of the life of mankind’ (Olmsted [1870] 2003, p. 303). In London writing, parks figured throughout nineteenth-century literature as sites of display, for example in W.M. Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair* (1848), and this role continued into the twentieth century, as evidenced by books like Samuel Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners* (1956). What changed in literature at the end of the nineteenth century had less to do with the impact of urban parks and more with the extension of transport networks to reach woodlands and similar areas on urban peripheries, as charted in books covering suburbia and excursions into it (for example on London and its *Umwelt* by W. Somerset Maugham, Arthur Morrison and Ford Madox Ford). Literature did not simply reflect the change. It indicated and provided models for the channelling of the change through the footsteps, thoughts and feelings of individuals.

MORE ANTI-URBAN URGES, 1898–1961

While Tönnies became known as a founder of sociology, until the middle of the twentieth century most efforts to theorize the novelties of the urban world came from outside conventional academia. Engels, Morris and Booth were independently wealthy citizens using their resources to investigate the massive changes going on around them; Olmsted was a professional practitioner like Robert Moses after him, also in New York. Academic departments devoted to the urban did not exist until after 1950. In the first half of the century, the most important contributions to the understanding of the urban to appear in the Anglophone sphere were the work of autodidacts: Ebenezer Howard and Lewis Mumford.

Writing the history of urban planning, Peter Hall (1988, p. 87) calls Howard (1850–1928) ‘the most important single character in this entire tale’. Howard is best known for the conception of the garden city, in effect a radical expansion of what Olmsted and the public parks movement had tried to introduce to the city as a remedy for what Engels, Ruskin and others complained about. It used the anti-urban social rhetoric of Morris. Howard’s thinking is founded on the notion that with will and money it would be relatively easy to remake the city somewhere else. As such, from a twenty-first-century perspective it downplays the forces of inertia, randomization and above all the usually unpredictable facts of near-future economic change. Hall makes a strong case for Howard as an urbanist: as does Pinder (2005). Hall’s view is that Howard planned huge garden city conurbations not simply to remove troublesome poor people in their great numbers from the inner cities, but as part of ‘a progressive reconstruction of capitalist society

into an infinity of co-operative commonwealths'. But Howard's work is founded on a belief shared with Morris: in the essentially shallow and temporary nature of the sort of urbanity which had come into being in Britain and elsewhere during the nineteenth century. In *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1898) Howard cartographically represented utopian spatial relations between different social classes, functions of the city, and between the urban and the rural (Hall 1988, pp. 92–93; Howard [1898] 2003). Yet the garden cities and suburbs which came into being in early twentieth-century England at Letchworth and Hampstead, instead of being forerunners of a revolutionary transformation of nineteenth-century urbanity, only provided a template for a twentieth-century version of the same city model; a version in which families would live nucleated in houses of vernacular appearance with small gardens and the automobile would play a role (Hall 1988, pp. 97–108).

Howard's work is utopian, as Pinder recognizes, and so has close links with not just the objectives but the literary techniques of Morris, whose *News from Nowhere* critiqued the contemporary city by presenting an alternative to it: London returned to a pristine, pre-industrial state. Howard's maps of an ideal garden city with its environs including space for 'cow pastures' and 'children's cottage homes' and a 'farm for epileptics', within its radial roads: 'Boulevard Columbus' and 'Boulevard Newton' (Howard [1898] 2003, pp. 314–315) are among other things an elaborate utopian fiction.

The connecting thread between Howard and Mumford ran through Patrick Geddes (1854–1932). Geddes was an academic but not an orthodox one (Hall 1988, p. 137). *The Evolution of Cities* (1915) is (Hall 1988, pp. 146–147), richly compendious and filled with visuals, comparative between different cities at different stages, was unprecedented when it appeared. But the problem Geddes perceives, and the solution he proposes, is that of Howard and after him Mumford. Each draws on the Engels-Morris negative view of modernity in the nineteenth century: the problem, all think, is that cities are too crowded and gardens have been built on; the solution, surely, is urban cottages with their own gardens and pleasant spaces around them. Many cottage estates of the sort proposed by Geddes (1915, pp. 72–73) as key components alongside public parks of his hoped-for 'neotechnic' city appeared particularly in northern European cities including London, but also and perhaps more fully many in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark during the first decades of the twentieth century; indeed they made a difference, but it was a leavening of the nineteenth century not its abolition.

If Howard's garden city concept (in almost equal contrast with the actuality of Letchworth once built) represented a grand science-fictional fantasy (Howard [1898] 2003, pp. 314–315), such fantasies and projections would shape twentieth-century realities, for example in the huge quantities of high-density housing areas of postwar European state communism, often mundane in appearance and of standardized designs aimed at cheap and rapid construction, and in the much more self-consciously designed *grands-ensembles* built around Paris after 1970, now documented by photographer Laurent Kronental (2011–16). Works of fiction built around life in twentieth-century mass housing developments have

often verged on the dystopian (Kelman 2008; Welsh 1995; Price 1992): such works from Scotland and the Atlantic coast of the USA have portrayed the experience of what was planned as utopia negatively, in terms of crime, drug addiction, privation, squalor and desperation. But elsewhere the picture has been different. Arvo Valton's Mustamäe *Armastus* ('Mustamäe Love', 1978), written in Soviet Estonia and set in the town-sized city district of Mustamäe, built rapidly during the 1950s, is an intensely romantic humanization of life in the tower blocks built around the love of one person for another glimpsed in a neighbouring block. Perhaps the city of tower blocks which in the hands of Le Corbusier seemed to consider human beings as part of the mess needing to be tidied up, invited humanization of the sort Walton provides, equally visible in the tonally different *Kieron Smith, Boy*, of Kelman (2008).

Twentieth-century urban planning led various sorts of escape from the kinds of drabness and squalor condemned by Lewis Mumford (1895–1990). Mumford's approach to the city, seen at its fullest in *The City in History* (1961) was, paradoxically, both completist and narrowly Eurocentric. He traces human urban history from the Stone Age until the postwar decades but unapologetically takes 'Western civilization' as his subject material and, implicitly, his norm (Mumford 1961, p. xi). In so doing, he highlights a shortcoming shared by most efforts to study the urban: its students make their own city, and the others they have investigated, equal to all cities. The gigantic history which follows is largely an account of how most of the typically valorized models of the urban were in fact squalid and vicious. Here Mumford's two targets are the Greek *polis*, in essence a totalitarian village in his eyes, and the supposedly elegant European city of the eighteenth century. Ancient Athens, Mumford (1961, p. 125) says, acted chiefly in the interests of 'its own vainglory'.

In attacking the *polis* and its neoclassical imitation, Mumford speaks from an American Puritan 'city on the hill' standpoint, condemning the luxury, decadence and tyranny which have been left behind across the water to the east and specifically in Britain. Against these negative models he claims to begin the work of rehabilitating the medieval town, emphasizing its liberty, self-sufficiency and down-home reasonableness (Mumford 1961, p. 415). Compare his earlier claim in *The Culture of Cities* (1938, p. 164) that in nineteenth-century cities 'a pitch of foulness and filth was achieved that the lowest serf's cottage scarcely achieved in medieval Europe'. He goes too far in claiming that in Victorian cities rubbish simply lay in the streets, 'no matter how vile and filthy' until a passing manure contractor found it worthwhile to remove it. More recent researches by James Winter (1993, pp. 118–134) and Lee Jackson (2014) do not support this, indicating the complex, if somewhat incompetent, efforts London civil parishes made to manage the removal of detritus. Mumford's reading results from his ideological opposition to the nineteenth-century city, and can be placed alongside Morris's small, white medieval London surrounded by greenery and clean water, or Ruskin's lectures. But Mumford's medievalism leads towards a pro-urban view which emerges during the 1960s and 1970s in the work of Jacobs and Lefebvre, whose approaches praised instead of a rational ordering wisdom

precisely the blend of the local and the cosmopolitan to be found in actual individual urban neighbourhoods. Lefebvre ([1974] 1991, p. 78) traced the positive qualities of the modern city back to the medieval mercantile territory's ability to sidestep or ignore the laws of Church and King by creating its own network and legal status. Mumford demonized the Victorian city in a way too extreme. He even peddled myths of it, for example that what he calls 'the commercial town', the city founded on the getting of rents, had a complete 'indifference to the elementary necessities of hygiene or amenity' (1961, p. 433). Large-scale improvement projects such as the sewer network for central London built by Joseph Bazalgette for the Metropolitan Board of Works (1859–65) and Central Park in New York City (after 1857) in fact began a mere couple of decades after the recognition that there was a new sort of urban problem. Yet he offers a powerful *avant la lettre* critique of the assumption that seems to dominate the neoliberal twenty-first century: that the nature of a city is almost totally determined by its property market.

Mumford's work shaped urban studies because of his ability to tell stories across a wide range of historical periods and geographical sites, able to render the feel of each in a way that sometimes amounted to caricature (was there really one 'medieval town?') but created memorable narratives. His anti-urbanism may seem out of date in a twenty-first century where Manhattan or Tokyo seem to have a greater prestige than ever before and the world's population is becoming concentrated more and more in certain urban regions, but he anticipated a sort of post-urbanism where what matters is being connected—for us, digitally—rather than that of physically occupying the centre of a major city. This future appears in *The City in History* in a closing section entitled 'The Invisible City' in which Mumford presciently anticipates 'the de-materialization or etherialization of existing institutions' (Mumford 1961, p. 533). Still, in an environment in which Silicon Valley tech billionaires have pronounced the death of geography via their products but a city such as San Francisco is being irrevocably and violently changed by the extreme gentrification due to the massive concentration of wealth in the region driven by Silicon Valley businesses (Solnit 2016), the shift from a metropolitan to a polynodal and profoundly displaced world that was often pronounced in the 1990s and 2000s may seem exaggerated.

As the twentieth century continued, the nineteenth-century city failed to disappear from Europe. Mumford's objections to almost every type of city that had ever been created by human beings, or at least western ones led towards state-backed adaptations of Howard such as the regional planning in England of Patrick Abercrombie (1945), resulting in the New Towns and the legally protected Green Belt which still encircle London in 2016. This change, little reflected in British literature of the 1930s except obliquely in a book such as George Orwell's *Coming Up for Air* (1938), represented a return: from the figures of prophets crying in the wilderness which characterized the run of urban thinkers from Engels to Howard, to humanist or Enlightenment notions of the intellectual as counsellor.

CITIES OF MONUMENTS AND TOWERS

Planning reached its apogee not in Mumford or the watered-down application of that by Abercrombie in south-east England, but in the development of the nineteenth-century City-Beautiful Movement by a tradition connecting the Haussmanization of Paris with the imperial visions of the Victorian British and Wilhelmine German Empires and after them the varied twentieth-century applications of this by totalitarian dictators. All of these are about hierarchy and dramatic views, avenues, domes and towers of central, governmental buildings. They are inherently imperial or totalitarian, and may contain built-in racism of the sort on which colonial empires are founded, whose characteristic urban geography appears in the first chapter of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). These are acts of top-down physical intervention in cities, led by such people as Robert Moses (1888–1981) in New York (the city's Haussmann) or, thinking of the Green Belt and New Towns of southern England, Patrick Abercrombie (1879–1957): in other words designed by a planning professional given temporary power by governments to make such an intervention.

Hall (1988, p. 202) calls construction of wholly new cities, either resulting from the direct fiat of an authoritarian 1930s' Moscow a 'Potemkin village': a showy frontage built to please a political boss in which, like late-nineteenth-century Washington or Chicago, 'or indeed Haussmann's Paris' presented 'new façades alongside [...] giant highways' concealing 'a mass of ancient slums behind them'. This city of monuments and towers could be interpreted as an effort not to eliminate the nineteenth-century city, but to hide it. It reduces the city to an area of public display, to those areas through which Hitler could be driven while viewers saluted or where George V could hold a Delhi Durbar. It fails, this is to say, to solve the central problems of the nineteenth-century city.

Literary writing is characteristically concerned with the intimate, not such spectacular projects. Zola mentions the boulevards in *Thérèse Raquin* ([1867] 2004) but stays hidden in the arcades of the earlier phase hymned by Baudelaire and later Benjamin or, in *L'Assommoir* ([1876] 2000), on the messy suburban periphery; Maupassant's Georges Duroy, the protagonist of *Bel-Ami* ([1885] 2001), walks onto the boulevards when he wants to waste time or think about something. Orwell in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), directly concerned with totalitarianism, takes us nowhere nearer to Big Brother himself than an image on a poster, and even a novel concerned with a dictator's intimates such as Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987) makes the palace somewhere isolated from the maelstrom outside its walls, the dictator a deluded figure, completely out of touch with the lives and daily experiences of his subjects.

A revolutionary sort of city of towers was proposed by Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris, Le Corbusier (1887–1965) in the late 1920s. Le Corbusier's ideas, essentially his view ([1929] 2003, p. 323) that 'WE MUST BUILD IN THE OPEN' stand most directly behind the social housing of the period after World War Two. What is literary about a city of monuments and towers? Hall

(1988, p. 211) describes Corbusier as a planner, even a creator, on paper only, stating ‘how phenomenally unsuccessful he was in practice’, generating only the ‘grandiose urban visions’ which architects like to keep on their private bookshelves. Yet he also conceived the city which would be experienced and transmitted in the dystopian and less dystopian literary vision of the later twentieth century, in which the physical squalor, disease and closeness of death and faeces of the nineteenth-century city gave way to a profound physical isolation and alienation finding outlets in graffiti, drug abuse, gang activity and vandalism resulting from the creation of marginalized groups and their physical removal from old inner cities of the nineteenth-century sort but in which love, sometimes, was still possible.

THE URBAN EXPERIENCE

Literary writing by Joyce, Woolf and Kafka treats city life in a different way from previously: not in terms of the narrative arc of a life in which one can succeed or fail on moving to the city in a time of uncertainty, as so often in nineteenth-century urban fiction (Balzac, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Zola), but in terms of moments and chance happenings, inconsequential in themselves but, in their immensely multiple totality, composing city life as experience rather than biography. Early twentieth-century urban theory has a less clear relationship to the imaginative literature of its period than does the critical nineteenth-century urbanism of Engels and Morris. The progressive, detail-focused writing of Engels emerges from the world that produced the campaigning fiction of Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Kingsley, and the social surveys of Edwin Chadwick and Henry Mayhew. Morris as a writer of utopian imaginative literature has clear parallels with the work of Howard and a science-fictional or fabling way of comprehending modernity present in ‘literary’ writings by Richard Jeffries, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, H.G. Wells and the short stories of E.M. Forster. But attention to temporally apprehended flashes of urban experience connects the imaginative writing of the 1910s and 1920s today labelled ‘modernist’, with the urban theories not only of George Simmel (1858–1918) in turn-of-the-century Germany but the sociological ethnographies developed in the United States by the Chicago School associated with Robert E. Park (1864–1944) and Louis Wirth (1897–1952). The latter, in turn, is the forerunner not only of directly sociological work such as that on slum living of Gerald D. Suttles in the 1960s, but the sociolinguistics of William Labov and, most important of all, of the sea change in understandings of the urban within the second half of the twentieth century, with Jane Jacobs.

Simmel’s innovation was to consider the ‘mental life’ (*Geistesleben*) of residents of the newly enormous cities as a central fact of those cities’ existence, not just evidence that the physical organization of those cities was or was not working. Implicitly he recognizes that this sort of cities, *Der Großstadt*, is here to stay, and the mentality it brings about would not therefore be seen correctly as something which planners of cities should attempt to eliminate, but something they must take into account. Simmel ([1903] 2010, p. 103) grasps this by returning individual people to the centre of the picture, attending to

‘the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign power of society’. This move particularly distinguishes his view of the modern city not just from Chadwick’s and Booth’s, but also from literary accounts such as those of Zola and Anglophone followers of his such as Gissing and George Moore, who saw the lives of individuals as relentlessly and even mechanically determined by their social positioning given to them by their genetic and environmental heritage. Simmel restores the possibility of grasping the individuality of the individual within a massive and influential and also unprecedented sort of society in which relations had very largely changed for ever. His concern is with individuality, the human personality, as it is affected by ‘the specifically modern aspects of contemporary life’, a new positioning which he calls ‘metropolitan individuality’ ([1903] 2010, p. 103). Life in the new metropolis contains more ‘stimuli’ than before. Potentially, this is exhausting and stressful: every time you cross the street something might happen which you have never experienced before. The argument is, like that of Tönnies, built on a distinction between this and ‘the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence’ ([1903] 2010, pp. 103–104). The city makes people ‘intellectualistic’; they think more, and challenge what they experience through the senses. Being ‘intellectualistic’ protects them. Money matters. Major cities such as London have always been not ‘the heart of a national polity but the ‘money bag’ of their surroundings ([1903] 2010, p. 104). Differently from almost any other earlier writer on the modern city, Simmel does not sympathize with the ‘passionate hatred’ felt for the new large city by the likes of Ruskin and Nietzsche ([1903] 2010, p. 105). Famously, he said that the urban dweller is characterized by becoming *blasé* in the face of the ceaseless unpredictability of events and the great contrasts of rich and poor which are around. But this observation is built into the nexus of intellectuality and money. More important still is his twofold focus on the mental life of the individual inhabitant, struggling to retain individuality, and his acceptance that the modern is something specific and new, and not necessarily to be condemned.

Simmel’s interests are developed in a 1938 essay by Wirth, ‘Urbanism as a Way of Life’. Referring to Weber and to Wirth’s Chicago School sociologist colleague Robert Park, Wirth ([1938] 2003, pp. 99–101) presents three areas in which urban life is different from other sorts of life: ‘size of the population aggregate’, ‘density’ and ‘heterogeneity’. His writing is less essayistic than that of Simmel, who reaches into psychology in a speculative manner whereas Wirth lays out the foundations of a professionalized university study of the urban. His interest is ultimately not in the individual as an individual, the concern of Simmel’s which makes him so unusual among scholars of the urban and brings him so close to the literary rendering of urban experience, but in ‘collective behaviour’ (Wirth [1938] 2003, p. 104). Here the literary urban renderings of John Dos Passos, which break with the traditional literary focus on the individual and create a polyphonic literary city, form a comparison.

Several studies descending from the Chicago School allow multi-voiced cities to appear as a tapestry of human life and not merely as a system or arrangement of statistics. An example is the pioneering work in sociolinguistics of Labov (1966), close to the textures of speech and habits in New York City, and the sociology of slum life, with its concentration on customary aspects such as styles of clothing and physical occupation of space by gang members and ‘ordinary’ locals in Chicago (Suttles 1968). Few novelists of the city, at least in Anglophone traditions, come as close to being an epic of the multi-voiced modern city as Labov does, unless and in a way far removed from urban life as it is usually experienced, the work be Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*. Suttles’s work is distinguished by a complex and nuanced grasp of territoriality in the inner city as a mesh of overlapping fields.

POSTWAR: CAN PLANNERS PLAN?

As Hall (1988, p. 326) observes, planners of Abercrombie’s generation were unprepared for the post–Second World War baby boom. Since 2000, the idea that a specialist could shape the future of human social organization in the way that she/he thinks best has come to seem more ludicrous than in the later twentieth century, when the supposed utopias of Corbusian vertical housing developments were brought into being in many parts of the world and then derided as dystopian. Literary works can write back against top-down planning, though this is not to say that top-down planning is worthless. Indeed, the confidence of utopian vision brings reshapings of the world that have the potential to be ultimately valuable and indeed enormously humane, if they are allowed to live in a manner that could be categorized as literary, which is to say if they permit human beings to dwell in them (in a Heideggerian sense), to change them slowly and in accordance with localized needs.

Judy Iovine (2015, p. 24) writes of Jane Jacobs (1916–2006) that she countered the ‘Goliath-like visions’ of Robert Moses, whose outcomes included the ten-mile long manmade Jones Beach on the Atlantic coast of Long Island, east of New York—with ‘neighbourhood-scale community’. Yet, instead of actually preserving communities, Jacobs worked to preserve architecture and street layouts for existing middle-class residents, gentrifiers (typically wealthy or at least college-educated incomers) and tourists (Hall 1988, pp. 234–235). It is hard to think that New York’s Hudson Street in 2016 has anything to do with the street Jacobs observed and protected against Moses’s idea for a Lower Manhattan Expressway except in its buildings, and in a sense this argues that she was wrong: the preservation of the physical layout does not preserve the sort of life that was lived there in her time: the social and ethnic mix that she observed is no longer there. Yet her writing enables us to notice and encourages us to value those districts of cities which might have similar qualities to those she observed and, arguably, idealized: in New York no longer Greenwich Village but perhaps some portions of Brooklyn and Queens; no longer Notting Hill in London but

perhaps Willesden or Shepherds Bush. And so on, until Brooklyn (hymned in literature by Jonathan Lethem after the 1990s) and Willesden (similarly treated by Zadie Smith as the surviving cosmopolitan yet scruffy ‘other’ of the gentrified zones of wealth closer in) become magnets for the ‘life’ and then find that the magnetism has exterminated the life, as seems to have happened at Greenwich Village and Notting Hill.

Jacobs presents herself as not an analyst but an activist, concerned with achieving certain specific outcomes in specific localities, in particular she wants to save areas of New York and other ‘Great American Cities’ (all in the north-east as far west as Chicago, including Boston, Baltimore and Philadelphia). In the process, she works from a ‘ubiquitous principle’: ‘the need of cities for a most intricate and close-grained diversity of uses’. She finds the principle best exemplified by the street where she lived when she wrote the book, Hudson Street on the lower west side of Manhattan, but also in other threatened areas labelled as slums such as Boston’s North End. Specifically it is embodied in ‘sidewalk use’ (Berman [1982] 1983, p. 317, quoting Jacobs): what people are doing on the pavements of a city, how varied it is. In Hudson Street, Jacobs can watch many different constantly varied things happening and people passing, some of them regularities and others unexpected. Here, Simmel’s account of what is necessarily life in the new great cities has been turned into an ideal. Cities – and above all those of North America – became after the early decades of the twentieth century, filled with automobiles, while the sidewalks of American cities continue in the 2010s to be, to a European eye, startlingly empty. Yet Jacobs’s use of the well-used sidewalk as a desirable urban component has had a huge impact on urban districts that have undergone gentrification since the 1960s, from Williamsburg in Brooklyn to Uus Maailm in Tallinn (Estonia) and beyond.

The impact of Jacobs, and writers such as Marshall Berman (1940–2013) who came after her, was to bring a stop to the sort of *grands projets* associated in New York with Robert Moses (highways, beaches) and around the world with Le Corbusier (above all, housing). This stopping of centrally planned and funded efforts to transform the nineteenth-century city happened at a fairly specific moment in time: the mid-1970s. It coincided with a new sort of transformation being wrought in more or less narrowly defined portions of the city and often described as gentrification (Ruth Glass’s term), although this word applies more to the efforts of private householders with access to credit to transform dilapidated inner-urban (often Victorian) living districts for themselves and their like. In the same period private investment and private-public partnerships began establishing neo-urban settings on the site of former markets and docks such as Covent Garden in London, the Inner Harbor in Baltimore (see Harvey [1992] 2014) and the South Street Seaport in New York City. Urban studies of the period between the 1960s and the 1990s took increasing account of such change (Glass 1964; Smith 1996).

Jacobs and Berman, like their contemporary in the UK Ruth Glass (1912–1990), have an interest in particular districts and neighbourhoods which

amounts to giving those zones a personality. Berman, coming after Jacobs, does not oppose himself to her as clearly as she did herself to Mumford, regarded by Jacobs, like Howard and most other urbanists before her, as ‘interested only in failure’ in cities (Jacobs 1961, p. 20). But Berman differentiates himself from Jacobs as, within a New York context, an outer boroughs man. Jacobs’s city is made cosy by not being ethnically diverse, Berman ([1982] 1983, p. 324) argues. He adds that during the 1960s and 1970s ‘rage, despair and violence spread like plagues’ through American cities and ‘hundreds of formerly stable urban neighbourhoods all over America disintegrated completely’. Jacobs’s belief in the urban was no more than ‘a dream’, he concludes, but ‘if she misses some of the shadows of neighbourhood life, she is marvellous at capturing its radiance’. There is another shadow here, and it has to do with gender: unlike almost every other student of the urban considered here, Jacobs was a woman, and responses to her work, not excepting Burman’s, frequently verge on the patronising. The concern of Jacobs, Berman and Glass, finally, closely parallels much of the working-class fiction and immigrant writing, both with a documentary sort of approach, produced between the 1930s and the 1970s in both North America and the UK.

POSTSCRIPT: ART VERSUS SCIENCE?

I have focused on the largest and most famous western cities in a Western European and North American axis, particularly the network of German cities, Paris, London, New York and the ‘great American cities’ of the Atlantic coast and inner Mid-West. This choice is in many ways not fair. To see the impact of Corbusier’s thinking one could instead turn to the Soviet housing districts of Tallinn or Tbilisi or, indeed, those small towns of southern Finland which were remade between the 1950s and the 1970s. There is a danger that fame merely begets more fame. And yet in these metropolises images were created which were transmitted elsewhere.

Lefebvre (1901–1990) advocates the city as itself an oppositional space, above all active in giving rise to situational art. This claim is surely doubtful when the city is the capital of empires, the site of Wall Street, the place of slums and sexual exploitation. Yet he means that it is, in a heritage traced back to late-medieval trading networks such as the Hanseatic League, somehow independent from the thinking of dominion; i.e. a person can live there. Foucault seeks oppositional spaces typically but not necessarily within the city: his well-known heterotopias or spaces of difference, are spatial carnival sites where one can be apart from the usual order whilst there: brothels, graveyards. Cities abound in these. Certeau seeks to make a space for the urban user to contest the dominating order.

It would be possible not just to see the sociology of the Chicago School of Park, Wirth and Suttles in conjunction with, or illuminated by the art of a photographer and documentary film-maker such as Helen Levitt (the same could be said of Charles Booth in relation to the photography of Paul Martin), but instead to ask the question: could the artist be a theorist too? And what sort of theorist is the documentary artist? Perhaps, one who avoids making bogus

claims of representativeness. But perhaps this is to misunderstand art. Still, the frontier between documentary artistic forms, notably film, and ethnographic sorts of academic writing, is where I would like to end, suggesting that a way forward lies there. But I will also glance briefly at some trends and moments in urban theory of the period between the 1970s and the 2010s.

Some of the most high-profile examples of urban theory produced since the 1970s continue Mumford's, and even the tradition reaching back to Morris and Engels by being structurally critical of existing cities and the planning principles which underpin them: David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Neil Smith and Edward W. Soja belong here. But a way forward which includes to a sufficient degree the multiple and varied perspectives of individual users of the city is not provided by this, nor even by the post-1960s French tradition including writers such as Bourdieu, Certeau, Perec and Augé. It comes rather from work which includes the narratives of urban experience of users (e.g. Suzanne Hall's urban ethnography) and which integrates artistic accounts of existence in actual cities with planning questions. Where Mumford (1961, p. 377) used Thackeray or Proust in an illustrative fashion, as if to say, 'look, the city of the nineteenth century was as follows and reading these people proves it', Ben Campkin's *Remaking London* (2013) proceeds in the manner of a literary critic or an analyst of film or the visual arts, tracing the city through the nuances and vagaries of the artistic work and its conditions of production. Work like Hall's and Campkin's holds out the promise of an integrative rather than an oppositional view of the twenty-first century city.

Recently, Simmel has been positioned in urban studies as a forerunner of the so-called 'mobilities turn' which has had a great impact on human geography and allied fields including urban sociology since the 1990s (Bridge and Watson 2010). The governing metaphor here is of the city as a body and as a never-still assemblage of other bodies in motion: its nature, change. This is a kind of system study drawing to a considerable extent on French postmodernist thinking in the shape of Foucault and Certeau. But where Simmel was an anti-positivist of a humanist sort, this 'mobilities' work draws much more fully on Foucault's anti-positivist and anti-humanist thinking.

Meanwhile, the pendulum appears to be swinging, in the hands of theorists and writers away from Jacobs's praise of the small-scale urban neighbourhood. This seems to have become excessively dominant in an age of the kind of gentrification associated with the word 'hipster'. Perhaps there is once again an appetite for large-scale projects of the sort that Moses carried out in New York between the 1930s and the 1960s, 'almost entirely without accountability to city, state or federal government' (Iovine 2015, p. 24). But these have never been an endeavour with which writers have been comfortable. The recovery of utopian thinking from Howard to Corbusier of Pinder (2005) offers the Moses sort of plan as a projection, a means of achieving something new that might not, would not, perhaps, be achievable

otherwise and this too seems a likely way of rehabilitating Le Corbusier, by making clear the positive shifts that became possible through his projection of the impossible. Yet the movement of literary writing in the twenty-first century, when the prestige of the metropolitan is greater than ever, while the advantage it can confer likewise, seems to be in a contrary direction, into the atomized obscurity conferred by the era of social media. Literature, all this is to say, can itself study; the novel, to borrow Marc Brousseau's formulation (1996) can itself be a geographer.

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Theorists of the Postmodern, Global, and Digital City

J.A. Smith

The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have been characterized by entrenchment of power within cities and an unparalleled monetization of their reputations and features as a result of accelerated tourism; but they have also brought a series of paradigms for interpreting the city that question its very existence. This chapter considers the city as it has been analysed in light of postmodernism, globalization, and digital culture.

THE DEATH OF THE GREAT CITY

A major line of nineteenth and early twentieth-century nonconformist critique grouped modernity, capitalism, and urbanization as the triumvirate which had destroyed the ideal agricultural civilization of the past (Williams 1958). By the mid-twentieth century, it was possible to diagnose a similarly disastrous loss of city life proper, now equivalently idealized. In what Elizabeth Wilson calls ‘a distinct literary genre: the rhetorical literature of great cities’, developments that can retrospectively be seen as nascently ‘postmodern’, such as highways, suburbanization, gentrification, and the liberalization of town planning, are found to have instigated the death of the city at the hands of ‘the periphery, the conurbation’ and the ‘suburban sprawl’ (Wilson 1995, p. 153).

An important voice in this genre is the American sociologist, art critic, and theorist of cities, Lewis Mumford. In a series of arguments culminating in *Technics and Civilisation* (1934) and *The Culture of Cities* (1938), Mumford reconstructed a pre-bourgeois and pre-capitalist tradition of both the city and of technology, to prove that both could thrive apart from what he regarded as the disastrous liberal capitalist experiment, which thought it had a monopoly on both. If he ever did ‘locate...the

specific engines of change' (Pells 1973, p. 110), however, it was never in a specifically elaborated political programme, but in a Romantic and nebulous idea of the city as entity itself. As postwar planning and social democracy set in, Mumford accumulated a catalogue of *bêtes noires* which were producing 'an anti-city; not merely destitute of urban attributes, but also inimical to the most important of them—the unification of specialised vocations and interests in order to produce a more stimulating and creative common life' (Mumford 1968, p. 131). Suburbanization was 'polluting the metropolitan countryside almost as effectively as strontium 90' (Mumford 1963, p. 24), while 'the right to have access to every building in the city by private motorcar... is actually the right to destroy the city' (Mumford 1963, p. 23). There was also the high-rise (since the gardens of ordinary two-story houses were often better cultivated than the countryside they were built on, Mumford saw no ecological argument for these (Mumford 1963, p. 28)), and the highway, giving way to a 'dream of towns dominated by sixty-foot office buildings and flats... linear towns, continuous urban ribbons for rapid transportation, forming a new pattern in which motorized rapid locomotion would not so much serve the city as become its main reason for existence' (Osborn 1963, p. 1).

Advocating a rationally planned 'basic communism' in the 1930s (Mumford 1934, pp. 400–406), by the 1960s Mumford was scathing about 'standardisation, regimentation, and centralised control' (Mumford 1968, p. 128). But what he calls 'the principle of limits, both lower and upper' (Osborn 1963, p. 3) in the ideal city was being abandoned both by undue centralized control, and unrestrained concessions to capital. Romantic in his refusal to identify as either Marxist or Liberal, the usually eloquent Mumford becomes tongue-tied, over-rhetorical, or simply scatter-shot when it comes to actually theorizing the 'anti-city' he intuitively is emerging:

The anti-city combines two contradictory and almost irreconcilable aspects of civilisation: an expanding economy that calls for the constant employment of the machine (motorcar, radio, television, automated factory, and assembly line) to secure both full production and a minimal counterfeit of normal social life; and as a necessary offset to these demands, an effort to escape from the overregulated routines, the impoverished personal choices, the monotonous prospects of this regime by daily withdrawal to a private rural asylum, where bureaucratic compulsions give way to exurban relaxation and permissiveness, in a purely family environment as much unlike the metropolis as possible. (Mumford 1968, p. 132)

More recently, the sociologist Richard Sennett has 'remained wedded to a romantic, even nostalgic conception of the *Großstadt*' (Wilson 1995, p. 151). Like Mumford, Sennett represents an urban life characterized by an ideal community, but this vision of the city is always threatening to give way to

individuation and alienation. Thus, he writes of London in the late nineteenth century, ‘the urban tide which had flooded in... began to flow out’, either south of the Thames, or into the new row housing of Camden, while the construction of the London Underground imitated this movement in its function of getting clerks and domestic servants out of London when they were not working, as much as it was designed to bring people in (Sennett 1994, pp. 332–334). ‘During the course of the nineteenth century’, Sennett concludes, ‘urban development... resist(ed) the demands of crowds and privilege(d) the claims of individuals’ (Sennett 1994, p. 369). Its outcome is the modern American suburb: ‘communities... not empty of sociability or neighbourliness, but no one in them becomes a long-term witness to another person’s life’ (Sennett 1998, pp. 20–21). In contrast to ‘Beer Street’ imagined by William Hogarth (1751), where Sennett finds community announced by convivial meetings of hands, elbows, and backs, ‘today, order means lack of contact’ (Sennett 1994, pp. 20–21): ‘our city-building’, he argues, now ‘wall(s) off the differences between people... we make in the urban realm... bland, neutralising spaces, spaces which remove the threat of social contact’ (Sennett 1990, p. xii).

This is not far from Mumford’s assertion that ‘neither the printed page, nor the tape recorder, nor the telephone, nor television, can take the place of that direct face-to-face intercourse whose occasions the city, when it remains close to the human scale, multiplies’ (Mumford 1968, pp. 137–138). As for telecommunication’s presumption to replace physical interaction with other urbanites, Mumford thinks it apt justice that ‘the Bell Telephone Company has been sending its too sedulously trained junior executives, back to the university, to have a therapeutic injection of dynamic ideas that the city once spontaneously generated’ (Mumford 1968, p. 139). That it is a function of cities to ‘inject... dynamic ideas’ is a sympathetic proposition. Yet even at whatever time is chosen as the height of the city’s performance of this metaphysical role, the ‘dynamic ideas’ and ‘face-to-face intercourse’ the city supposedly offered were already usually presented in a negative light. The moralist’s condemnation of the anonymous immorality of the city was the flipside of the dandy’s cynical and provocative glorying in it. For Mumford and Sennett, we have never been urban, because their full-blooded defence of the modern city as the ideal locus of human cohabitation had to wait until its ideal formation had already been lost. As the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas said, ‘as the concept of the city is distorted and stretched beyond precedent, each insistence on its primordial condition... irrevocably leads via nostalgia to irrelevance. For urbanists, the belated rediscovery of the virtues of the classical city at the moment of their definitive impossibility may have been the point of no return’ (Koolhaas 1995, p. 963).

FROM LAS VEGAS TO JUNKSPACE

The first postmodern architects responded to the alleged decline of the great city by celebrating the new forms it was taking. In 1972, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour published *Learning from Las Vegas*,

a text with—whatever their misgivings about the term (Koolhaas 2004, p. 156)—as much claim as any to having given identity to postmodernism as architecture and as attitude (Anderson 1998, p. 21). Whereas modernism envisaged architecture creating new kinds of ideal community (Hatherley 2008), Venturi conceded that Disney World was ‘nearer to what people want than anything architects have ever given them’ (Harvey 1990, p. 60). It is sites like the theme park, like the purpose-built picket-fenced suburbs of Levittown, and like Las Vegas—the simulacral desert palace itself—that architects and city planners must turn to to break from the misguidedly ‘progressive, if not revolutionary, utopian, and puristic’ modernism of postwar urban development (Venturi et al. 1972, p. 3).

Learning from Las Vegas’s recommendation is the archetypally postmodern one of a defence of surfaces, signs cut free from their referents, and unimpeded desire. Venturi and Scott Brown sound dimly like Mumford or Sennett when they write that ‘the Middle Eastern bazaar contains no signs’, requiring its dwellers to make direct and tactile contact with its sellers and their goods. But their loyalty is to the Strip, which, by contrast ‘is virtually all signs’ (Venturi et al. 1972, p. 9). In a celebrated discussion, Venturi and Scott Brown’s *Las Vegas* exposes all architecture as divisible into mere ‘ducks’ and ‘decorated sheds’: the former, like the novelty duck-shaped egg stores of Long Island, embodies its purpose; the latter is a mere generic cipher, requiring external signage to fill it with meaning (Venturi et al. 1972, pp. 12, 65).

That people *like* Las Vegas is its own justification. To say otherwise is to side with the hauteur of a modernism that assumed it could speak for everybody. As one cautious defence for postwar modernism in architecture stresses, ‘it would... be both erroneous and unjust to depict... “modernist” solutions to the dilemmas of postwar urban development and redevelopment as unalloyed failures’ (Harvey 1990, p. 70). Further, modernist architecture’s reputation among postmodernists as the product of a doctrinaire ‘chip-on-the-shoulder view... dissatisfied with *existing* conditions’ (Venturi et al. 1972, p. 0) may be overstated, since ‘the dictates of cost and efficiency... coupled with organisational and technological constraints, surely played as important a role as ideological concerns for style’ (Harvey 1990, p. 70). Nonetheless, *Learning from Las Vegas’s* reading of the period became the accepted one: another major supporter of the postmodern project in the period could claim that the demolition of Minoru Yamasaki’s Brutalist Pruitt-Igoe housing estate in St Louis in 1972 marked the end of modernism per se (Jencks 1977, p. 7).

In an interview with Venturi in 2000, Koolhaas remembers the ‘painful’ occasion of the two men’s attendance a decade before at a meeting of architects who would prospectively design the hotels at Euro Disney. ‘We were both immediately disqualified, even though in that room we were probably... the only people... who had actually looked at Disney and its real implications’ (Koolhaas 2004, p. 152). Whatever their differences as practitioners, as writers Venturi and Koolhaas have certain overlaps. *SMLXL* (1995)—Koolhaas’s text of optimism for what architecture was to be after the Berlin Wall—proclaims that ‘we are left with a world without urbanism, only architecture, ever more

architecture' (Koolhaas 1995, p. 967). This postmodern promise allows him to bypass traditional aesthetic debates about the value of Le Corbusier and Wallace Harrison's respective contributions to the United Nations building ('a *collaboration*, not only between two architects, but between cultures... a hybrid that could not have existed without their mating, however unenthusiastic' (Koolhaas 1995, p. 363)), and to declare Singapore a hyper-Vegas: 'the first semiotic state, a Barthesian slate, a clean synthetic surface', where even 'the notorious system of seemingly unserious interdictions (chewing gum) and serious penalties (death, caning) has to be seen as a sign' (Koolhaas 1995, pp. 1039, 1041).

The later Koolhaas strikes a more complex note. In a text first published in the *Harvard Design School Guide to Shopping* (2001), Koolhaas identifies the detrital outcome of twentieth-century architecture in what he terms 'Junkspace', the grotesque and interchangeable spaces of consumption: shopping malls, airports, service stations, pedestrianized city high streets with identical chain stores. In a crude and belated variation on Venturi and Scott Brown's 'decorated sheds', 'toilet groups mutate into Disney Stores then morph to become meditation centres: Successive transformations mock the word "plan"... There is zero loyalty—and zero tolerance—toward configuration, no "original" condition; architecture has turned into a time-lapse sequence to reveal a "permanent evolution"' (Koolhaas and Foster 2013, p. 19). When Venturi and Scott Brown quoted T.S. Eliot and James Joyce, it was only as a compromised scramble to find a literary analogue to a postmodernism in architecture that literature had not yet caught up to provide (Vinegar 2008, pp. 35–37). Koolhaas, by contrast allows the post-postmodern condition in architecture to slip back into something like no bad summary of *The Waste Land*: 'the bland has become the only meeting ground for the old and the new' (Koolhaas and Foster 2013, p. 19). Koolhaas's text equally has tones of the Frankfurt School—that embodiment of modernism's 'chip-on-the-shoulder view' if ever there was one—condemning Junkspace as dependent 'on the central removal of the critical faculty in the name of comfort and pleasure' (p. 21), in terms recalling Marcuse—'both promiscuous and repressive' (Koolhaas and Foster 2013, p. 22)—and Adorno: 'authorless, yet surprisingly authoritarian' (Koolhaas and Foster 2013, p. 26).

Its wit and collisional, associative syntax mark 'Junkspace' as 'a postmodern artifact in its own right' (Jameson 2003, p. 73); as does the knowing frisson provided by the fact that its author is not a mere scowling intellectual, but a famous architect and agent in the field he criticizes. Yet as much as Koolhaas would never be found believing in an ideal prior life for urbanism (much less approving of it), his attack on Junkspace ends up on the same ground as the alleged naïve urban Romanticism of a Mumford or a Sennett. 'Junkspace pretends to unite, but actually it splinters. It creates communities not out of shared interest or free association, but out of identical statistics and unavoidable demographics... Each man, woman, and child is individually targeted, tracked,

split off from the rest' (Koolhaas and Foster 2013, p. 23). It may well be so, but the criticism can only imply the possibility of its opposite: of an urban architecture that unites where Junkspace splits off, that nourishes where Junkspace striates.

RESISTANCES OF THE GLOBAL CITY

It is a commonplace at the start of the twenty-first century that the concept of the geographically specific nation state has been eroded by globalization: 'that place and the details of the local no longer matter' (Sassen 2007, p. 104). Yet there is a dialectical undertow to this movement. As power more disparately disseminates across international markets, corporations, and military adventures, it also seems to become exaggerated in specific geographic sites: most particularly, according to the sociologist Saskia Sassen, in entities she refers to as 'global cities'.

Globalization—along with its economic and ideological corollary, neoliberalism—is usually dated from the abandonment of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates in 1971, the increasingly strident behaviour of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in dictating the economic policies particularly of nations whose economies were upended by successive oil shocks in the 1970s, and a diffuse finance sector's overtaking the influence of international banks following the third-world debt crisis of the 1980s. As Sassen puts it, 'in the postwar period, all the major powers supported systems for domestic economic management—including the United States'; a 'trade-off', she writes, 'between, on the one hand, embedded liberalism in the international trading and production order and, on the other, increased domestic economic management aimed at protecting national economies from external disruptions and shocks' (Sassen 2006, p. 153).

This trade-off between the local and the international has become more complex. Today, Sassen notes, we see a situation where not merely national, but traditional ideological boundaries, have become entirely porous to the flows of globalized capital, as 'speculation-driven finance and a push for hyperprofits' (Sassen 2014a, p. 7) are as characteristic of Chinese communism as they are of American capitalism. But this is not to say that globalization has seen old national specificities 'simply break into fragments'. Rather, Sassen writes, 'the geography and composition of the global economy changed so as to produce a complex duality: a spatially dispersed, yet globally integrated organisation of economic activity' (Sassen 1991, p. 3). While the financialization of the world economy may seem dizzyingly international and increasingly immaterial, its day-to-day running has become more and more geographically specific in global cities such as London, Tokyo, and New York.

For Sassen, 'introducing cities into an analysis of economic globalisation allows us to reconceptualise processes of economic globalisation as concrete economic complexes situated in specific places' (1998, p. xix). It also accounts for the ways in which 'with the decline of manufacturing and the ascendance of

finance and specialised services, economic growth has become disproportionately concentrated in central business districts and suburban office complexes' (Sassen 1998, p. 167). Sassen has commented more recently that this pattern accelerates with the increasing digitization of the economy today: 'the more globalised and the more digitised the operations of firms and markets become, the more their central management and specialised servicing functions (and the requisite infrastructures and buildings) become strategic and complex, thereby benefiting from agglomeration economics... that is, they are mostly delivered through cities' (Sassen 2007, pp. 17–18).

Globalization, then, is urban, but so too are many of its inherent contradictions and transgressive counter-movements. Another of Sassen's ongoing interests is the movement and containment of people that the economic trends she documents have brought with them. Sassen has analysed how globalization has brought a constricting of who gets to fall inside the social contract, as the mass displacement of people in the global south and middle east has coincided with growing prison populations and containment of refugees in the West (Sassen 2014a, p. 36). But the displaced immigrant populations also bring to the global city a note of disorder, which Sassen—for all the personal inscrutability her occasionally technocratic style grants her—seems to write about with approval. Displaced women of colour, for instance, 'whose political sense of self and whose identities are not necessarily embedded in the "nation" or the "national community"' can 'find in the global city a strategic site for their economic and political operations' (Sassen 1998, p. xxi). An example is the expansion of the 'informal economy'—'income-generating activities occurring outside the state's regulatory framework' (Sassen 1998, p. 153)—within these cities, which Sassen frames as a 'low-cost—and often feminised—equivalent of deregulation at the top of the system' (Sassen 2007, p. 119). Global cities, then, take on an oblique resemblance to the third-world locations they had supposedly banished their old-fashioned labour processes to, and in so doing, Sassen suggests, can allow their most disadvantaged dwellers to generate their own strategies of resistance and subversion. That said, such resistances are of a haphazard and not especially emancipatory kind. Indispensable to the global city, migrant workforces have not, thus far, revealed themselves as a 'labour aristocracy', 'in which a low-wage worker's position in leading sectors ha(s) the effect of empowering that worker' (Sassen 2007, p. 121).

Much as Sassen works to return the allegedly pan-spatial phenomenon of globalization to the local specificity of its agents, actors, and processes within cities, David Harvey's Marxist project can be seen as attempting to reverse what another radical geographer, Edward Soja, has described as a broader conventional privileging of 'time' over geographical 'space' in critical thought. Whether as a result of the aspiration to internationalism on the Left or the murky early historical entanglement of geography as an academic discipline with the imperialist state (Soja 1989, pp. 35–37), historicism has long been the privileged tool of responsible social critique, and

history its privileged discipline (Soja 1989, pp. 10–11). Yet it is precisely at the moment of globalization's claims to have transcended the old demands of spatial specificity that space has returned dramatically as a category in critical theory. As Harvey evocatively puts it, such work seeks a vocabulary for speaking of the 'field of contradictions within the drive to create a world without spatial barriers' (2010, p. 190).

Rather than analyse the full scope of Harvey's project (see Harvey 2000a; Keucheyan 2013, pp. 289–302), I focus here on how he, like Sassen, has documented the travails of specific kinds of resistance to the effects of neoliberal capitalism in cities, even as cities have provided the venue of its development and imposition. In his recent work, Harvey has resurrected a utopian slogan associated with the French theorist of space, Henri Lefebvre, of *the right to the city*. Lefebvre put himself at odds with the French Communist Party of the 1960s in stressing the emancipatory potential of specifically urban populations: groups traditionally under-emphasized by Marxism's fetishizing of the factory as the site of prospective emancipation (Harvey 2012, pp. xiii, 120). However, Lefebvre's situationist demand for the right of urban populations to occupy urban spaces takes on another meaning in the global city. While cities are increasingly carved up and owned by corporations with little relationship to the city itself (Sassen 2014b), for their populations, 'the postmodernist penchant for encouraging the formation of market niches, both in urban lifestyle choices and in consumer habits...surrounds the contemporary urban experience with an aura of freedom of choice in the market, provided you have the money' (Harvey 2012, p. 14). This 'aura of freedom' competes with the way 'the actually existing right to the city' is 'in most cases in the hands of a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape the city more and more after their own particular needs' (Harvey 2012, p. 24).

Considering alternatives to this pallid version of the once radical 'right to the city', Harvey turns to the concept of monopoly rents—the additional expenditure that a particularly prized resource or location can demand in excess of its conventionally defined value—to consider the often vibrant grassroots attempts to transform communities that cities allow. Harvey discusses 'the collective symbolic capital that attaches to names and places like Paris, Athens, New York, Rio de Janeiro' (Harvey 2012, p. 104), which allows them to monetize their cultural specificities by attracting tourism or international honours such as hosting the Olympics. The irony is that such successes mean that 'their irresistible lure draws more and more homogenizing multinational development in its wake' (Harvey 2012, p. 105), erasing specificities that made the city alluring in the first place. This pattern has a more localized analogue in attempts by ordinary neighbourhoods to lay claim to their own 'right to the city'. In what Harvey (mischievously reversing one of neoliberalism's cherished mantras) calls gentrification's 'tragedy of the urban commons', 'those who create an interesting and stimulating everyday neighbourhood life lose it to the predatory practices of the real estate entrepreneurs, the financiers and upper class consumers bereft of any social imagination. The better the common

qualities a social group creates, the more likely it is to be raided and appropriated by private profit-maximising interests' (Harvey 2012, p. 78).

Harvey remains an almost unfashionable kind of utopian, and noting that 'in their early incarnations, utopias were usually given a distinctively urban form' (Harvey 2000b, p. 156), continues to locate his hopefulness in the figure of the city. One urban counter-tradition he is keen to rehabilitate is the 'long and distinguished history of "municipal socialism"', extending from the proto-social democratic Red Vienna, the radical municipal councils in Britain in the 1920s, and the French Communist Party's achievements in municipal administration since the 1960s (Harvey 2012, pp. 135–136), through to the 'noble rearguard action against neoliberal policies' (Harvey 2005, p. 59) made by city councils in Thatcher's Britain prior to their crushing in the mid-1980s. Recognizing, like Sassen, the radical potential in globalization's precarious, often migrant, low-income urban populations, Harvey concedes that 'their political presence' has not generally been marked by 'persistent organisation' (Harvey 2010, p. 243). Nonetheless, Harvey contends, 'they are fully conscious of their conditions of exploitation and are deeply alienated by their precarious existence': and therein lies potential for radical change emanating from cities. Nonetheless, while Harvey's city remains 'an incubator of revolutionary ideas, ideals, and movements', the example of another of his totemic interests, the Paris Commune, affords a more brittle lesson to those who locate their radical hope in cities: 'socialism, communism, or for that matter anarchism in one city is an impossible proposition. It is simply too easy for the forces of bourgeois reaction to surround the city, cut its lines and starve it out' (Harvey 2012, p. xvi).

ETHICS IN THE DIGITAL CITY

Like globalization, the internet has been greeted with claims that it constitutes a 'death of distance' (Cairncross 1997), a relegation of the importance of geographical specificity in our daily lives. Not only information, but in 'the internet of things', objects themselves, can be manipulated from anywhere in the globe: so where does this leave the idea of the city? Once again, this apparent evaporation of local specificity must be understood alongside its opposite. The internet itself is local, an object or series of objects—data centres connected by cables—occupying space in the world. This point is illustrated by the popular finance writer Michael Lewis: the moment when Wall Street seemed to reach its apotheosis of digitized abstraction in the emergence of near-instantaneous algorithm-based 'High Frequency Trading' after the financial crash in 2008, was also the moment of a scramble to lay claim to the data centres with the most direct, and so fastest, material connection between Chicago and New York: thus culminating in the quixotic enterprise of boring through the Allegheny Mountains in order to lay cables that would save a handful of nanoseconds, which would in turn become priceless on the stock list (Lewis 2014, pp. 10–15).

In 2011, the United Nations declared access to the internet a universal human right, but digital technology is a rather unevenly distributed and spatially specific ‘universal’. Sassen has warned that digital apps overwhelmingly prioritize the work and leisure activities of high-end workers, for whom ‘digitization has become a way of restructuring not only the workspace but also the living space’, leading to an ‘underutilisation of digital tools and apps in low-income neighbourhoods’ (Sassen 2015, pp. 2–3). For example, ‘there are long lists of apps for contacting or finding spas, high-end restaurants, and a long list of other such pricey luxuries. But there are few if any apps that give you information about a healthy food shop in a modest-to-poor income area in a city’ (Sassen 2015, p. 4). The supposedly liberatory tendencies of digitization tend at present to be organized and distributed along class and spatial lines.

Claims that digitization transcends individual neighbourhoods or populations overlook how hosting digital industries themselves transform cities. The for-profit charity HandUp, based in San Francisco, for example, seems to embody the best intentions of those who see digital technology as a means of transcending inequalities of class or location. Their app encourages the city’s homeless to create social media pages detailing their story, their hopes and ambitions, so encouraging potential donors to pay them money towards vouchers for food and other essentials (EDA Collective 2014). Aside from whatever moral questions emerge from the implication here that it is only those homeless who are willing to aestheticize and monetize their struggle in this way who deserve charity, in a remarkable bit of shamelessness, the company’s advertising materials lead with the fact that the rise of homelessness in San Francisco is a direct result of the gentrification and rising rents caused by the ongoing rise of Silicon Valley itself. In America’s West Coast cities, digital culture concocts utopian solutions to local problems that it is itself responsible for.

The intellectual providing the most vigorous vocabulary for negotiating the enormous amount of utopianism, self-interest, and over-statement associated with accounts of digital culture is the Belarusian Evgeny Morozov, with his critique of ‘Internet-centrism’ for the future of city culture. Morozov’s first book, *The Net Delusion* (2011) was written when he was still contemplating a future in Washington think-tanks (Morozov 2015, p. 51), and reads as a kind of petition to US policy makers, tackling the resilient myth that the internet—as an inherently ‘open’ kind of technology—would inevitably lead to greater democracy in repressive regimes. More searching (and implicitly more disabused of America’s benign intentions as regards digital culture) is *To Save Everything, Click Here* (2013): a text between *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Gulliver’s Travels* Book 3 in interrogating the ethical implications of Silicon Valley’s ideology of absolute openness and capacity to provide technology that puts it into practice.

The vision of city space emerging from Morozov’s analysis is one where every layer of life—from city governance, utilities management, and crime prevention, to individual fitness and fine dining—is dogmatically subjected to the same process of mass-accumulated data processed by algorithm. As

Morozov shows, any of these applications should demand considerable ethical interrogation, and yet ‘few scholars are working on the ethics of innovation’ (Morozov 2013, p. 168). To take an example of the potential unanticipated effects of the digitization of city space, Morozov discusses the current fetish of many governments for ‘open data schemes’: for example, smart maps monitoring crime rates by neighbourhood. While this might superficially encourage citizen vigilance and help people choose where to live, it also threatens to condemn neighbourhoods altogether, or even to de-incentivize reporting crime, lest doing so drives down the value of one’s own property. In India, the recent online publication of land records, nominally to fight corruption, ended up exposing the fragile legal basis of many poorer people’s claim to their own land (Morozov 2013, pp. 98–99).

Morozov refers to such blanket deployment of digital data without consideration of ethics or even pragmatics as ‘solutionism’—the myth that the supposed openness of mass-accumulated digital technology inevitably solves problems by itself—and it has more directly sinister intimations for cities. On crime prevention, Morozov notes that whereas ‘earlier welfarist approaches... focussed on reforming the individual criminal and changing the underlying social conditions’, digital innovation is simply making it impossible for crimes to be committed in the first place, as ‘the new policy advice is to concentrate on substituting prevention for cure’ (Morozov 2013, pp. 190, 191). The difference between the Berlin-style metro—which allows one to ride without a ticket, but fines you if you get caught—and the New York one—whose automatic turnstyles make it impossible to cheat—is one small example: the same logic extends to ‘cars that don’t start because the driver is drunk, gated communities that tolerate no intruders’, and ‘bridges that make it impossible to jump off’. But, Morozov shows, it would not be difficult to extend ‘digital pre-emption’ to e-books that erase ‘extremist’ content on the e-readers of those with colourful browsing histories, or even smart glasses that block out the opposite sex in the sight-line of men when their health app detects alcohol and testosterone reaching a certain level. The last examples would not even need any big authoritarian political shift to be effected, because whereas ‘the police need some probable cause’ to monitor one’s data, with the hegemonic providers Facebook or Google, ‘it’s simply a contractual clause somewhere in the terms of service’ (Morozov 2013, p. 193).

The effect is a threat to the fine tissue of moral sense. If we are constantly prevented from transgressing the social contract because our failure to sort our recycling or to stay healthy by running will be automatically uploaded to Facebook to shame us, or because predictive digital technologies make transgression physically impossible, then what kind of social contract is it? If every ethical problem is flattened out by digital solutions, how are political or cultural awareness to develop? Morozov shares the ‘eclecticism typical of current critical theories’ (Keucheyan 2013, p. 224), moving from restaurant booking programs which cherry-pick diners on the basis of their previous

restaurant searches, to apps that monitor bowel movements, from Gutenberg to *The Wire*, with a glee reminiscent of the online world he criticizes. Given the obvious application of the high critical theory of—say—Foucault or Agamben to his case studies, however, it is surprising to find a relatively unfashionable canon of liberal and conservative thinkers—Dewey, Berlin, Dworkin, Jacobs, Oakeshott—give Morozov his habitual critical references. For the 1968 generation of critical theorists, the humanism of these positions was the major ideological enemy to be countered. But in today's cities—between Junkspace, globalized diaspora, and a digitalism that demands a constant spilling forth of our unconsciously accumulated data—it may feel like the enemy has the monopoly on antihumanism. The residual liberal humanism in Morozov's demand for a more flexible, improvisatory, and humane moral response to our rapidly altering urban spaces, meanwhile, may just represent the spur to thought of the Benjaminian dwarf, 'that is wizened and must keep out of sight' (Benjamin 2007, p. 253).

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Walter Benjamin and *The Arcades Project*

Ben Moore

APPROACHING THE ARCADES

Writing to Theodor Adorno (1903–1969) in 1935, Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) stated of *The Arcades Project*, ‘That I can write it only in Paris, from the first word to the last, is entirely clear to me now, despite the great mass of preliminary work supporting it. Naturally, it can first be written only in German’ (Benjamin 2002, p. 52). Benjamin indicates here three fundamental features of his enormously influential study of nineteenth-century Paris, titled *Das Passagen-Werk* in German, which he worked on intermittently from the late 1920s until his death in 1940. First, he insists that writing and cities are inseparable, especially in Paris, of which he wrote in 1929, ‘No sooner do you arrive in the city than you feel rewarded. The resolve not to write about it is futile’ (Benjamin 1999b, p. 337). Great cities like Paris, Benjamin observes, require and produce writing, acting upon or through the writer no matter what she/he might resolve in advance. To produce a cultural history of Paris—or a ‘primal history’ [*Urgeschichte*] to use Benjamin’s preferred term—requires being in the midst of the city, experiencing it from street-level like the *flâneur*. Second, Benjamin acknowledges that the *Arcades* is ‘supported’—a suggestively architectural term—by a ‘great mass of preliminary work’. This is evident in the project’s scope and form, which combines a vast number of quotations from a wide array of sources (literary, historical, journalistic, philosophical) with commentary and analysis from Benjamin, all arranged into a series of 36 sections or ‘Convolutés’ [*Konvolut*], a word chosen by Adorno that refers to the ‘sheafs’ into which Benjamin’s writings were gathered when his unfinished work was entrusted to Georges Bataille as he fled Paris from the Nazis in 1940 (Benjamin 1999a (1), pp. xiv, 958). Each convolute is identified by both a title and an upper- or lower-case letter, running from A, ‘Arcades, *Magasins de Nouveautés*, Sales Clerks’ to r, ‘Ecole Polytechnique’.

Third, Benjamin remarks that the *Arcades* can be written only in German: it is fundamental that the work is formed out of an encounter between different linguistic, literary and historical traditions. Despite his fluency in French (he translated Baudelaire and Proust) Benjamin positions German as the language of criticism, which will act upon, and react to, French writing and culture. Thus the *Arcades* is both a work of translation—a topic Benjamin addresses in his essay ‘The Task of the Translator’ (1923)—and an instance of dislocation or disjunction, only to be written in Paris, where Benjamin lived for most of the period 1933–1940, but only by an outsider, using a foreign language. Benjamin’s position during these years is often seen as one of an exile, part of a Jewish intellectual exodus from Germany following Hitler’s seizure of total power in 1933 (Eiland and Jennings 2014, pp. 391–482). Exile is a key concept for Baudelaire, whom Benjamin believed best encapsulated the experience of the modern city, and whose poem ‘The Swan’ (1861) ends by referring to the author’s ‘exiled soul’ (Baudelaire 1993, p. 177), stranded amidst a Paris that has changed beyond recognition. Linguistic dislocation is also a feature of another writer Benjamin discusses at length: Kafka (1883–1924), described by Deleuze and Guattari as the creator of a ‘minor literature’, which is literature that ‘a minority constructs within a major language’, indicating ‘the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, pp. 16, 18). In this sense, Benjamin writes both a Jewish minor literature within German, and a German minor literature within Paris. At the same time, Benjamin’s decision to use German registers the significance of German critical thought to his own thinking; above all Marx, but also Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Freud and Jung. Only German, it seems, can provide the vocabulary and conceptual apparatus which *The Arcades Project* requires, as only Paris can provide its cultural and historical content.

The result of this Franco-German encounter is the most important study of a single city written in the twentieth century. It is striking, even intimidating, to contemplate the range of critical commentary relating to Benjamin, and *The Arcades Project*, which has emerged since *Das Passagen-Werk* first appeared as part of Benjamin’s *Gesammelte Schriften* in 1982, and in English in Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin’s landmark 1999 edition. Much of this work has explored the value of Benjamin’s text for analysing the modern city in Europe and beyond, taking up key tropes from his writing such as the ruin, the nineteenth-century interior, fashion, architecture, the dream, and the dialectic of ancient and modern. Key texts in this critical tradition of responding to the *Arcades* include Susan Buck-Morss (1989), Graeme Gilloch (1996), the 2003 special issue of the journal *Boundary 2* dedicated to the *Arcades* (issue 30.1), Beatrice Hanssen’s collection (Pensky 2006) and Andrew Benjamin and Charles Rice’s collection (2009). In an appropriate symmetry, Benjamin’s ‘great mass’ of preliminary work has been matched by an even greater, and still growing, mass of posterior work, in which the ideas he laid out continue to be reused and reinterpreted.

Perhaps the best way of approaching the ideas and techniques which critics have found so compelling and productive in the *Arcades* is through the text Benjamin himself designed as an introduction, or threshold, to the work: the essay ‘Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century’. This exposé exists in two versions, of 1935 and 1939, from the latter of which Benjamin dropped the first ‘the’, at Adorno’s suggestion (2002, p. 57), as well as making a number of other changes. Benjamin begins this second version of the essay by proposing a useful, if initially bewildering, definition of his project:

The subject of this book is an illusion expressed by Schopenhauer in the following formula: to seize the essence of history, it suffices to compare Herodotus and the morning newspaper. What is expressed here is a feeling of vertigo characteristic of the nineteenth century’s conception of history. (1999a, p. 14)

Rolf Tiedemann, editor of the German complete writings, notes that this formula does not in fact appear in Schopenhauer (1999a, p. 957). It was apparently found by Benjamin in a book by the French Symbolist Remy de Gourmont, which is quoted in *Arcades* Convolute S, ‘Painting, Jugendstil, Novelty’ (1999a, p. 545 [S1a,2]). Nonetheless, Benjamin gives a valuable insight here into his approach to history, the city, and the nineteenth century, by drawing on two apparently opposed forms of writing: the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 BC), usually considered the father of Western history, and the morning newspaper, the most ephemeral and disposable document of recent events. These two texts represent two ends of the spectrum of history: the most modern and the most ancient. The nineteenth century, Benjamin suggests, conceived of its place in history by making a direct comparison of the two, producing a feeling of ‘vertigo’ that was highly intoxicating, but also dangerously illusory. This illusion, which erased any sense of history as a process of gradual accretion in favour of a dramatic but immobile opposition, is at the heart of what Benjamin explores in the *Arcades*.

The section of de Gourmont’s writing that Benjamin quotes also states that for the nineteenth century, ‘All the rest [of history] intervening—the evident and fatal repetition of the most distant and the most recent facts—becomes tedious and useless’ (1999a, p. 545). This ‘intervening’ and ‘useless’ material, the content of history that has been passed over and discarded, is what interests Benjamin, forming the raw material of the *Arcades*. Yet he is also interested in the ideological effect produced by its exclusion, through which the products and landscapes of nineteenth-century modernity seem dreamlike and fantastical:

Our investigation proposes to show how, as a consequence of this reifying presentation of civilization, the new forms of behaviour and the new economically and technologically based creations that we owe to the nineteenth century enter the universe of a phantasmagoria. (1999a, p. 14)

What Benjamin calls the ‘reifying presentation of civilization’ is the conception, dominant in the nineteenth century, that the modern world has somehow erupted magically into being, fully formed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, rather than being actively produced by social labour. Benjamin is extending Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism, in which ‘the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour’ (Marx 1995, p. 43), to history. For Benjamin, the scene of this phantasmagoria, where the illusion of history’s ‘objective character’ is formed and propagated, is the modern city, typified by the Paris arcades, the covered shopping streets built in the 1820s to 1840s that were the ‘forerunners of department stores’ (1999a, p. 15); and by the World Exhibitions, such as those held in London in 1851 and Paris in 1855, 1867, 1889, and 1900, which Benjamin calls ‘places of pilgrimage to the commodity fetish’ (1999a, p. 17).

In proposing that the nineteenth century conceived of history as a vertiginous comparison between Herodotus and the morning paper, Benjamin implicitly refers to Baudelaire, about whom he wrote more extensively than any other writer, notably in ‘The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire’ (1938), a long essay originally conceived as the second of three parts of a book called *Charles Baudelaire, A Lyric Poet in the Age of High Capitalism*. Baudelaire forms a major part of the *Arcades* too: Convolute J, dedicated to him, is by far the largest. Benjamin responds to ideas laid out in Baudelaire’s 1859 essay ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, where the poet coins the term *modernité*, writing, ‘By “modernity” I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable’ (Baudelaire 1995, p. 13). As with his appropriation of commodity fetishism, Benjamin extends this distinction from art to history itself. If Herodotus stands for the eternal and immutable half of history, the daily newspaper is the half which is ephemeral and contingent.

Benjamin conceptualized this opposition between eternal and ephemeral in a number of other ways during his career, including as *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, terms which Michael Jennings translates as ‘long experience (*Erfahrung*) and isolated experience (*Erlebnis*)’ (Benjamin 2006, p. 20). *Erlebnis* is usually understood as the primary experiential mode of the modern city, a form of momentary, fractured perception that Baudelaire, and later Surrealist writers like Louis Aragon (1897–1982), sought to capture in their texts (on Surrealism see Benjamin 1999a (1), p. 82 [C1,2], [C1,3]). In the *Arcades Project*, though, Benjamin is most interested in exploring how these two modes of experience confront one another in nineteenth-century Paris. The title of Benjamin’s aborted book on Baudelaire registers this confrontation, acknowledging that he combines the outlook and linguistic apparatus of a lyric poet, a form stretching back to the ancient Greeks (*Erfahrung*), with subject matter provided by the modern world of ‘high capitalism’ (*Erlebnis*).

DREAMING THE ARCADES: CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, ALLEGORY
AND THE UNCONSCIOUS

Yet Benjamin seeks in the *Arcades* to go further than Baudelaire, and to achieve what he could not: to comprehend modern and ancient, *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*, ephemeral and eternal, as not simply opposing terms to be compared, but as two sides of a dialectic, what he often called the ‘dialectical image’. One of Benjamin’s comments on Baudelaire from Convolute J is revealing:

The correspondence between antiquity and modernity is the sole constructive conception of history in Baudelaire. With its rigid armature, it excludes every dialectical conception. (1999a, p. 336 [J59a,5])

Benjamin suggests here that Baudelaire’s exploration of correspondences between ancient and modern, though it makes his poetry a vital record of Parisian culture, is ultimately limiting. Baudelaire excludes the possibility of productive tension between social classes, or historical moments, or forces of production. This makes history, and the city, a kind of dream, filled with symbolism and allegorical transformations, but lacking a sense of how the dream world has been created. This is so in the poem ‘Correspondences’, influenced by Swedenborg (1688–1772), which opens with the following stanza:

Nature is a temple, where the living
Columns sometimes breathe confusing speech;
Man walks within these groves of symbols, each
Of which regards him as a kindred thing. (Baudelaire 1993, p. 19)

Here we have a classical scene—a temple, columns, walking among groves—reinterpreted as a dream space filled with language. The landscape consists of ‘living columns’ that breathe ‘confusing speech’, and the groves are made up not of trees but of ‘symbols’. ‘Man’ is not separate from this scene of excessive meaning, where things, places and words blend together, but is regarded by the symbols, which take on their own agency, as a ‘kindred thing’. For Benjamin, this is an allegorical form of perception, or it has that potential; in Convolute J he writes ‘Explore the question whether a connection exists between the works of the allegorical imagination and the *correspondances*’ (1999a, p. 272 [J24,3]). He also describes as ‘highly significant’ a letter from Baudelaire that states ‘nature is a *language*, an allegory, a mold, an *embossing*, if you like’ (1999a, p. 241 [J8]). In this letter Baudelaire makes nature a form of language, which writes onto the subject, moulding or embossing it, as the city does for Benjamin, undoing the (presumably male) subject’s ability to master the world around him.

Benjamin’s account of allegory, central to his reading of the city, does not simply mean one thing turning into another. It also involves the shattering of

illusions and facades from within, making it antithetical to wholeness and completeness. This topic is explored in depth in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Benjamin's 1928 book on German *Trauerspiel*, Baroque mourning plays. Benjamin views Baudelaire as having this potential, writing 'Baudelaire's allegory bears traces of the violence that was necessary to demolish the harmonious façade of the world that surrounded him' (1999a, p. 329 [j55a,3]). Taking this with Benjamin's reading of Baudelaire as a poet of the city, 'Correspondences' can be re-read as an allegorical vision of modern Paris from the point of view of the lyric poet. The 'groves of symbols' then become the posters, shop signs, and commodities among which the urban inhabitant walks, and the 'confusing speech' becomes the snatches of conversations he overhears, or perhaps the language of the commodity itself, which calls to him with what Benjamin describes as the 'sex appeal of the inorganic' (1999a, p. 8). In this case, this is a poem about the *flâneur*, who, Benjamin says, 'plays the role of scout in the marketplace', and is 'the explorer of the crowd' (1999a, p. 21). The secret of the *flâneur* is that he is no different than the goods that surround him, as they recognize him as a 'kindred thing'. I call the *flâneur* 'he', since the nineteenth-century figure with which Benjamin was concerned was male, exemplified by Baudelaire. Yet critical discussion of walking and looking in the city in recent decades has often turned to the figure of the *flâneuse*, or female *flâneur*, typically asking whether such a figure, who can wander the city with at least a semblance of detachment, was, or is, possible, and whether women are always destined to be the object rather than the subject of the gaze within the modern city. Feminists have speculated on what such a figure might look like, if she did or does exist. Key texts here include Janet Wolff (1985), Rachel Bowlby (1985), Deborah Parsons (2000), and D'Souza and McDonough's collection (2006).

If in 'Correspondences', the city takes the form of a dream, or is revealed to be one, then Benjamin's role is that of dream interpreter, analysing signs and correspondences in order to read modern capitalist society, and perhaps to break it open. In this sense Benjamin is like Freud, cited a handful of times in the *Arcades*, except that for Benjamin the arena of the unconscious which dream analysis explores is not individual, as in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899), but social and historical. Benjamin seeks in his account of the dream to bring together Freud and Marx, and hence to generate a picture of modernity in which dreams, symbols and fantasies are related to material forces of production and consumption. Two key Convolutés in this respect are K, 'Dream City and Dream House, Dreams of the Future . . . Jung' and L, 'Dream House, Museum, Spa'. At times here, Benjamin draws on Jung's 'collective unconscious' to refer to the dreamscape of nineteenth-century bourgeois life, though without directly analysing his use of Jung's term. In entry K6,1, however, Benjamin quotes Jung's description of the collective unconscious as 'a sort of timeless and eternal world-image which counterbalances our conscious, momentary picture of the world' (1999a, p. 399). Within the context of Benjamin's text, this description appears as another version of

Erfahrung and *Erlebnis*, with *Erfahrung* as the ‘eternal world-image’ of the unconscious, which Freud famously believed had no history, and *Erlebnis* as ‘our conscious momentary picture of the world’. The photographic metaphor of the ‘momentary picture’, placed in opposition to the pseudo-religious ‘eternal world-image’, might recall that Benjamin’s most developed analysis of *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis* also involves photography, in his essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility’ (1936). Here, the ‘authentic’ and ‘eternal’ artwork appears to have a unique aura, which breaks down in the face of the mechanically reproduced image—we might think of the endless reprinting of Renaissance artworks on tea-towels and keyrings, for instance. At the same time, Jung’s positioning of the collective unconscious—which for Benjamin is the space of the city—as eternal connects it to ideology, in Louis Althusser’s sense that there is no ‘outside’ to ideology, no position from which to stand and independently judge it. Althusser writes in this vein when he states that ‘the eternity of the unconscious is not unrelated to the eternity of ideology in general’ (Althusser 1994, p. 122). This seems to fit with Benjamin’s approach in Convolute K, and throughout the *Arcades*, where the dream of nineteenth-century Paris is presented as highly ideological. Indeed, one way of viewing the *Arcades* is as an extended attempt to analyse the ideology by which bourgeois society came to imagine its own interior spaces—its carpets, cases, cushions and commodities—as the fixed and eternal form of the entire world.

AWAKENING FROM THE ARCADES: THE DIALECTICAL IMAGE

Having said this, it is still often unclear in Benjamin’s text precisely *how* the collective dream of the nineteenth-century city relates to the unconscious. Is the city the unconscious itself, whether collective or not? Or is the city rather the dream that a social/historical unconscious, which might look something like Fredric Jameson’s ‘political unconscious’, made up of excluded forces of production and class conflict, has generated? Benjamin did not formulate his position on this precisely. The picture is complicated by his frequent references to ‘awakening’, which appears to function like a breaking away from the cloistered interiors of the nineteenth-century city, bringing about a recognition of its illusions *as* illusions.

As with allegory, awakening for Benjamin necessitates taking a literary approach to the city, as evident in his use of Proust (1871–1922) when developing the concept:

Just as Proust begins the story of his life with an awakening, so must every presentation of history begin with awakening; in fact, it should treat of nothing else. This one, accordingly, deals with awakening from the nineteenth century. [N4,3] (1999a, p. 464)

Benjamin apparently falls into the danger which Althusser describes: thinking that there is a way out of ideology, that it can be escaped as if from a dream. But

Benjamin is subtler than this: he is not interested in simply transforming the dreaming world into a waking world, recognizing that this would, in its own way, be a fantasy. Is not modern architecture, for instance, with its open spaces, white walls and functionalist design, a utopian fantasy of pure wakefulness? What Benjamin looks for—and this is where his concept of the dialectical image becomes particularly important—is the *moment of awakening itself*, the unstable point poised between dreaming and waking:

Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the ‘now of recognisability’, in which things put on their true—surrealist—face. Thus, in Proust, the importance of staking an entire life on life’s supremely dialectical point of rupture: awakening. Proust begins with an evocation of the space of someone waking up. [N3,a3] (1999a, pp. 463–464)

Benjamin wants to bring together sleeping and waking dialectically, finding the point when one turns into the other. He uses the language of thesis-antithesis-synthesis, derived from German idealism, particularly Johann Fichte (1762–1814). For Benjamin, though, awakening is not a synthesis that brings about a new unity, but rather a ‘point of rupture’ which pierces through any appearance of unity, either in sleep or when awake. This can be understood as a form of allegorical perception. It is also an example of the dialectical image, a concept Benjamin introduced as an alternative to simple comparison. In the dialectical image, opposed images or historical moments are not compared, but collide:

It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. [N2,a3] (1999a, p. 462)

Although Benjamin talks in the visual language of ‘images’ at this point, he still insists on a literary reading of the city and its history, arguing that ‘the place where one encounters [dialectical images] is in language’ [N2,a3] (1999a, p. 462).

There remains a danger, first identified by Adorno, who pointed out in his letter exchange of 1935 with Benjamin that the static nature of the dialectical image, and Benjamin’s efforts to locate it within the commodities of nineteenth-century Paris, risked returning it to the very phantasmagoria of capitalist modernity it was supposed to critique. Adorno writes, drawing on Weber’s concept of disenchantment, ‘the disenchantment of the dialectical image leads straight to unrefracted mythical thinking’ (Benjamin 2002, p. 56). Above all, Adorno questioned the idea that the dialectical image brought about a sudden eruption of meaning from within capitalism. For him, there was no possibility of locating the source of awakening within the dream, since the goal of

awakening was to take the dream apart. As he puts it at one point, ‘I would be the last person to discount the relevance of the immanence of consciousness to the nineteenth century. But the concept of the dialectical image cannot be derived from it’ (Benjamin 2002, p. 55). Adorno insisted that the commodity capitalism of bourgeois Paris could only be understood by placing it within a historical process, claiming that ‘only a precise definition of the industrial form of the commodity as clearly distinct from the earlier form could fully yield the “primal history” and ontology of the nineteenth century’ (Benjamin 2002, p. 57). History as movement, change and process is vital to the dialectical method as Adorno sees it, whereas the dialectical image, in directly bringing together past and present, seemed to be leading towards another version of what Benjamin himself criticizes as the ‘reifying presentation of civilization’. Richard Wolin discusses this Adorno-Benjamin dispute in the context of their divergent understandings of the goals of the *Arcades Project*, concluding that, ‘For Benjamin theory possesses an inalienable constructive or redemptive function; for Adorno its task is to aid in the ideology-critical unveiling of socially engendered false consciousness’ (Wolin 1994, p. 182).

If Adorno’s critique might be summed up by saying that he saw Benjamin as too enamoured of the commodity world of the Parisian arcades, this is also a reservation shared by T.J. Clark who while praising Benjamin, suggests that the ‘cluster of issues’ it raises around dreaming and waking—including ‘the conscious utopias of Saint-Simon and Fourier’, the subjects of Convolute U and W—never fully ‘comes into focus’ (Clark 2003, p. 45). Benjamin’s approach is ultimately too focused on the enclosure of the bourgeois interior rather than the openness which nineteenth-century Paris also generated, most notably in the paintings of Edouard Manet and the Impressionists. ‘Agoraphobia’, Clark critically observes of Benjamin, ‘was not his thing’: ‘Not to put one’s full stress on the city as more and more, even in the time of the arcades, a regime of false openness seems to me to miss something essential about bourgeois society—something dreadful and spellbinding’ (Clark 2003, p. 47). Yet Benjamin does in part address this question, though not in the way Clark would prefer, in his analysis of the panoramas, the great cylindrical paintings first shown in Paris by Robert Fulton in the late eighteenth century, which filled entire rooms, displaying scenes of colonial wars, great European cities and ‘exotic’ foreign countries. These new forms of spectacle are the main topic of Convolute Q. Clark finds these panoramas to be too internal, perhaps in the end too realist, to sufficiently capture the opening up of Paris, but they are surely part of a ‘regime of false openness’ nonetheless. The panoramas have their literary counterparts in Dickens and Balzac, both present in Convolute Q, including one reference to the ‘three hundred real names in the Paris of the period 1800 to 1845’ [Q4,3] (1999a, p. 535) that appear in Balzac’s *Comédie humaine* cycle, a series that forms a kind of panorama itself. Zola, by contrast, who was associated with the Impressionists, and who both publicly defended and was painted by Manet, is only referenced four times in the *Arcades*, and

not at all by *Les Rougon-Macquart*. At the least, it seems safe to say that Benjamin's Paris is a highly personal and selective version of the city.

How theorists, urban scholars and literary critics who work with Benjamin's text respond to challenges such as Adorno's and Clark's will continue to depend largely on how they understand and interpret the fraught but central concept of the dialectical image. As Max Pensky points out, in an essay that investigates the concept by focusing on one famous entry concerning 'Bullrich Salt' (Benjamin 1999a, pp. 173–174 [G1a,4]):

Decades of Benjamin interpretation have taken up the question of the dialectical image [...] And yet despite these efforts [...] the 'lightning flash' of the dialectical image has to this day remained more a dark star, indeed a black hole, [...] capable, it appears, of absorbing an unlimited number of efforts at critical illumination. (Pensky 2006, p. 113)

The openness of this key concept explains why so many divergent readings of Benjamin's approach to the city continue appearing, including those that place Benjamin's work within Jewish messianic, Marxist and German Romantic frameworks. Such conceptual openness means that Benjamin's Paris remains unsettled, a space to be explored and questioned rather than one which is fixed and stable. This presents ongoing possibilities for critics and writers. Pensky proposes that Benjamin's exploration of Paris must be understood not in isolation, but in relation to the other cities he wrote about, particularly Berlin: 'the dyad Paris-Berlin was in many senses formative for Benjamin's theoretical and literary corpus' (Pensky 2006, p. 122). In this spirit of interconnection I now consider Benjamin's other cities, and the light they cast on these issues.

BENJAMIN'S OTHER CITIES

Benjamin's first significant city writings date from the 1920s, starting with 'Naples' (1925), an essay co-written with Asja Lacis, whom Benjamin met in 1924. *One-Way Street* [*Einbahnstrasse*], completed in 1925 and published in 1928, is dedicated to Lacis with the following words:

This street is named ASJA LACIS STREET
after the person who as engineer
drove it through the author. (Benjamin 2009, p. 46)

Benjamin the writer becomes a city himself, to be reshaped as Haussmann reshaped Paris, through the production of new 'streets', which carries the dual meanings of transformative interpersonal encounters and written texts. In this network of writer, text and city, the other is not separate from the self, but becomes part of him, cutting through his existing interior landscape in a way both radically disturbing and potentially utopian.

In ‘Naples’, such interpenetration becomes a central principle of the city, defined by ‘porosity’:

As porous as this stone is the architecture. Building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways. In everything they preserve the scope to become a theater of new, unforeseen constellations. The stamp of the definitive is avoided. No situation appears intended forever, no figure asserts its ‘thus and not otherwise’. (Benjamin and Lacis 1978, pp. 165–166)

Porosity, in which inside and outside, past and future, workday and holiday mingle, is a particular feature of Naples for Benjamin and Lacis, contrasted to the ‘private [...] affairs’ (1978, p. 171) of the Northern European. Yet this porosity nonetheless seems to return in the mingling of inside and outside that marks Paris in the *Arcades*. In *Convolute L*, Benjamin remarks that ‘The domestic interior moves outside. [...] The street becomes room and the room becomes street’ [L1,5] (1999a, p. 406). This is despite the fact that Benjamin elsewhere recognizes porosity as associated with modernism, and antithetical to what he describes as nineteenth-century Paris’s tendency towards ‘dwelling’:

The nineteenth century, like no other century, was addicted to dwelling. It conceived the residence as a receptacle for the person [...]. The twentieth century, with its porosity and transparency, its tendency towards the well-lit and airy, has put an end to dwelling in the old sense. [14,4] (1999a, p. 221)

‘Naples’ emerges as a contrast to Benjamin’s Paris and its precursor. In fact, the more this short essay is examined, the clearer it is how many of the later concerns of the *Arcades* it touches upon, from the underground and the collapse of past and present it brings about (‘Here poverty leads downward, as two thousand years ago it led down to the crypt: even today the way to the catacombs passes through a “garden of agony” ’ (1978, p. 164)), to the peculiar power of the threshold (‘A single step takes him from the jumble of dirty courtyards into the pure solitude of a tall whitewashed church interior’ (1978, p. 164)), and the link between capitalism and gambling (‘Trade, deeply rooted in Naples, borders on a game of chance’ (Benjamin and Lacis 1978, p. 169)). Perhaps it is not only city spaces that are porous but the boundaries between cities themselves, which bleed into and redefine one another.

Benjamin recognizes this possibility in his 1927 essay ‘Moscow’, which begins thus: ‘More quickly than Moscow itself, one learns to see Berlin through Moscow’ (1999b, p. 22). Passing through Moscow changes Benjamin’s perspective on Berlin, a city in which he grew up, as detailed in *Berlin Childhood around 1900* (1934 and 1938), and with which he was intimately familiar. He says, ‘Returning home, he [the European] will discover above all that Berlin is a deserted city. People and groups moving in its streets have solitude about them. Berlin’s luxury seems unspeakable’ (1999b, pp. 22–23). Unlike Berlin,

Moscow for Benjamin is a site of confusion, a ‘labyrinth’ where streets that one believed to be far apart ‘are yoked together by a corner, like a pair of horses’ (1999b, p. 24). The city’s busyness in the 1920s is also related to its extreme centralized administration following the Bolshevik revolution, as people are turned into objects to be relocated as required: ‘Employees in their factories, offices in buildings, pieces of furniture in apartments are rearranged, transferred, and shoved about. [. . .] The country is mobilized day and night—most of all, of course, the party’ (1999b, pp. 28–29). Though this might seem to be the opposite of the aimless wandering of the Parisian arcades, it is in fact the logical outcome of tendencies within it. The *flâneur*, who was viewed as a ‘kindred thing’ by the objects around him, has now become the Bolshevik good citizen, who accepts his alignment with ‘pieces of furniture’ to be moved around, as one small element of a totalized bureaucratic state. Benjamin also finds points of connection between Moscow, Berlin and Paris, elements of what might be described as a metalanguage of cities: ‘Like every other city, Moscow uses names to build up a little world within itself. There is a casino called the Alcazar, a hotel named the Liverpool, a Tirol boardinghouse’ (1999b, p. 42). This idea of encompassing of the world within a city is a feature of the Paris of the *Arcades*. In *Convolute P*, Benjamin includes a reference to a Revolutionary plan to ‘[transform] Paris into a map of the world: *all* streets and squares were to be rechristened and their names drawn from noteworthy places and things across the world’ [P1,7] (1999a, p. 517). For Benjamin, all cities have this desire to pull other places, and other cities, within themselves, in particular through processes of naming and renaming.

Cities for Benjamin also frequently transform time and space, a phenomenon that is explored in ‘Hashish in Marseilles’, a newspaper article published in 1932. Benjamin reports that ‘Versailles, for one who has taken hashish, is not too large, or eternity too long’ (1999c, p. 674). As well as deforming perception, intoxication leads to a fascination with observing people, especially their faces:

it made me into a physiognomist, or at least a contemplator of physiognomies, and I underwent something unique in my experience: I positively fixed my gaze on the faces that I had around me, some of which were of remarkable coarseness or ugliness. (1999c, p. 675)

In *Arcades Convolute M*, Benjamin associates the gaze of the *flâneur* with that of the hashish eater, describing the ‘amnesiac intoxication in which the flâneur goes about the city’ [M1,5] (1999a, p. 417). This state is associated with an experience Benjamin calls ‘the colportage phenomenon of space’, a temporal and spatial interpenetration in which ‘everything potentially taking place in this one single room is perceived simultaneously’ [M1a,3] (1999a, p. 418). We see here the drugged state Benjamin feels in one city reappearing in another. Fascination with faces also returns, as a way of allegorically understanding both Paris and language:

in the world of hashish [...] everything is face: each thing has the degree of bodily presence that allows it to be searched—as one searches a face—for such traits as appear. Under these conditions, even a sentence (to say nothing of a single word) puts on a face, and this face resembles that of the sentence standing opposite to it. [M1a,1] (1999a, p. 418)

This weird blending together of different faces is also, I am suggesting, what happens to Benjamin's different cities, in a manner which allows each to cast light on the others.

Benjamin's most significant work about Berlin, *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, can be understood as 'facing' *The Arcades Project* in this sense, emerging as it does out of a shared sense of exile. In the introduction to his 1838, version of the text, Benjamin writes, 'I deliberately called to mind those images which, in exile, are most apt to awaken homesickness: images of childhood' (2002, p. 344). This sets the text up as an unapologetically personal account of the city, a counterpart to the grand ambition of the *Arcades*, with its apparent goal of explaining nineteenth-century Paris in its entirety. In *Berlin Childhood* we have an array of small, individually inconsequential reminiscences, such as this one about a book from Benjamin's school library:

Its pages bore traces of the fingers that had turned them. The bit of corded fabric that finished off the binding, and that stuck out above and below, was dirty. But it was the spine, above all, that had had things to endure—so much so, that the two halves of the cover slid out of place by themselves, and the edge of the volume formed ridges and terraces. Hanging on its pages, however, like Indian summer on the branches of the trees, were sometimes fragile threads of a net in which I had once become entangled when learning to read. (2002, p. 356)

This is a lyrical evocation of childhood, but also serves as a metaphor for memory itself, which often becomes frayed and fragile, but nonetheless holds us tangled in its web. Benjamin himself, it might be added, has like the book had 'things to endure' by the time he writes this, having fled from the Nazis and living close to poverty. Through a network of such small details, *Berlin Childhood* builds up a picture of a city, one which is specific not only to a certain time, but to a single person's experiences. Despite its different starting points and ambitions, the *Arcades* can also be seen as a network of personal fragments in this way, producing a picture of the city that is valuable because, despite all its subject's ideological weight, it is not fixed and immobile—it does not say 'thus and not otherwise', to use Benjamin and Lacis's phrase, which refers to G.W. Leibniz's argument for the existence of God—but is instead contingent, fragile and mutable.

Though Benjamin's writing about cities ends with Berlin and Paris, his work has been taken up by a number of other critics and writers, often starting from his definition of Paris as the 'capital of the nineteenth century'. London has been proposed as an alternative, or accompanying, capital of the

nineteenth century, as in Evan Horowitz's article 'London: Capital of the Nineteenth Century' (2010), as, more recently, has Manchester, in Janet Wolff's 'Manchester, Capital of the Nineteenth Century' (2013). In 2015, two books were published that define New York as the capital of the twentieth century, positioning themselves as belated sequels to Benjamin's work. David Kishik's *The Manhattan Project* takes the idea of the sequel literally, imagining a Benjamin who did not die in 1940 but lived to record the street life of New York and its people. Kenneth Goldsmith's significantly larger book *Capital, or New York: Capital of the Twentieth Century*, borrows directly from Benjamin's method, producing a text made up entirely of quotations that is divided into Convolute-style chapters such as 'Empire', 'Coney Island' and 'Gentrification'. Both these works respond in literary as well as theoretical ways to Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, implicitly acknowledging the centrality of literary perception to his work. To adopt Benjamin's own metaphor, his writing on the city, and above all on nineteenth-century Paris, has driven a street through the landscape of urban studies upon which we all walk.

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‘How Did the Everyday Manage to Become So Interesting?’

Alfie Bown

Franco Moretti discusses a letter that Thomas Mann received from a reader of his first novel *Buddenbrooks* set in Lübeck, in 1901. The writer of the letter had immensely enjoyed the novel but wonders why. He writes: ‘so little happens, I should be bored, yet I am not. It *is* strange. How did the everyday manage to become so interesting?’ (Moretti 2014, p. 79). For Moretti, this note embodies a shift that had taken place at some point in the course of the nineteenth century, at the start of which everyday life was barely discussed and by the end of which ‘the everyday’ had become a topic of intense fascination. It remains such a topic today. The development of the city is one of the most well-documented aspects of this same period and the connection between the everyday and the city is a vital one. Through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the city develops, so too does a fascination with and even a fetishization of ‘the everyday’.

What is offered here is not a summary of what has been written on everyday life, but a tracing of the particular relationship between ‘the everyday’ and the city. What follows is a discussion of a number of key writers who make the connection between the everyday and the experience of the city apparent. The tentative argument put forward is that if fascination with the everyday begins somewhere in the nineteenth century and continues today, this must be thought of as part of the experience of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century city. Ultimately I want to point out that ‘the everyday’ can be thought of as the city’s unconscious, something elusive and impossible to pin down but something under whose influence we live. Writers from both centuries are discussed, the earlier often influencing the later, showing both that the developing city leads to a fascination with ‘the everyday’ and that the everyday remains a troubling presence in the modern city.

It is not simply that the city is the space in which a lot of everyday life takes place but that the city in particular creates the everyday as the object of interest that it has become for us since the nineteenth century. Without the city, we would not be speaking of the everyday as we do. Using various contributions from those who have discussed the everyday, the rest of the chapter shows how the city has constructed and transformed not only everyday life but the way in which we relate to and discuss it. Although the chapter is intended as a critical introduction to theorizing the everyday, ultimately I propose a clear answer to the question posed by the reader of *Buddenbrooks*: ‘how did the everyday manage to become so interesting?’ That is, the everyday has become an object of fascination in response to and because of the city. This fascinating object that we are always experiencing is the city’s unconscious, something we are desperate to work out.

THE PROBLEM OF STUDYING THE EVERYDAY

Deciding where to stop adding to a list of writers whose work has been crucial in shaping how we relate to the everyday is not an easy task. The late Michael Sheringham’s study *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present* singles out four of the major figures to have contributed to discussions of the everyday: Henri Lefebvre, Roland Barthes, Michel de Certeau and Georges Perec. Sheringham offers an overview of their varying ways of theorizing everyday life and an analysis of how these ideas play out across a wide range of genres. All four figures are closely related to Paris, and the city is essential to their way of envisaging the everyday. Lefebvre dedicated much of his career to analysing the production of city space and its effects on everyday experience. In the two-volume project *Mythologies* (1957) and *La Tour Eiffel* (1979), Roland Barthes studies everyday life through a series of examples from wrestling to cars, and the number of chapters dedicated to phenomena that could be defined as urban is telling. Michel de Certeau is also a writer of both the everyday and the city and novelist Georges Perec makes the city the focus of most of his fiction dealing with the experience of everyday life. Another useful text is Ben Highmore’s *The Everyday Life Reader*, which includes contributions from these four writers and many others. The collection of 36 essays in the book again bears out the number of times it seems impossible to think of ‘the everyday’ without also thinking of the city, with writers including Georg Simmel, Pierre Bourdieu, Jean Baudrillard and Jacques Ranciere all speaking of the everyday as inseparable from the urban experience or using urban phenomenon to discuss everyday life.

It would perhaps not be right to speak of a lineage of those who have theorized everyday life, or to work through the famous and celebrated writers to have written on the subject and tracing an academic path that has developed conceptualizations of ‘the everyday’ to where they are today. In his book *Theatre and Everyday Life*, Alan Read points out that the problem with developing a lineage like this is that ‘its philosophical rigor swamps the very practices and

everyday voices which gave rise to it in a distant past' (Read 1993, p. 107). The everyday is something for which there is no specialist language, which by definition evades the kind of academia that would like to explain and reduce it to one of its traditions. Studying the everyday is a particularly difficult task for this very reason: *the everyday always remains outside the language which discusses it*.

One place to start is with Parisian novelist Georges Perec (1936–1982), who attended the lectures of Roland Barthes, absorbed the work of Henri Lefebvre (who helped Perec get a job doing market research) and was an associate of Michel de Certeau. Perec set out to investigate 'everyday life at every level, in its folds and caverns that are usually disdained or repressed' and he wrote a call to study the everyday in *Cause Commune* in 1973 (see Sheringham 2006, p. 249; Highmore 2003, p. 176). In his call to investigate things 'that are usually disdained or repressed' there is a connection to Freud's 1914 study *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which attempted to investigate the unconscious structures underlying everyday phenomena and daily existence. The daily was of particular interest for Perec, who wrote,

The daily papers talk of everything except the daily. The papers annoy me, they teach me nothing. What they recount doesn't concern me, doesn't ask me questions and doesn't answer the questions I ask or would like to ask. (Perec 1997, p. 205)

The French word *quotidien* contains both 'daily' and 'everyday', as does the word *journalier*, used in the French by Perec in this passage, a sense which is perhaps lost in translation. Like for Freud, it is the 'daily' nature of occurrences that makes them of particular interest. In some contexts the phrase 'everyday life' has become almost synonymous with an idea of 'popular culture' (which may more accurately describe the subjects of Roland Barthes's discussions). The afterlife of this move may involve a kind of fetishization of 'the popular' and may have class politics behind it, associating 'the everyday' with 'mass culture,' something Barthes himself would be against. However, for Perec, despite being an admirer of Barthes, it is not popular culture but daily experience that is of most interest. In this passage Perec complains that the papers treat what he calls 'events', the extraordinary and unique, the extreme or unusual. For Perec all that the papers show us is that 'things happen, as you can see.' Instead, we should study the opposite, and Perec asks,

What's really going on, what we're experiencing, the rest, all the rest, where is it? How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual? To question the habitual. But that's just it, we're habituated to it. (Perec 1997, p. 205)

With this in mind, Perec dreams of founding a new anthropology, a study or method of studying that will 'speak about us' by looking not at the 'exotic' but

the ‘endotic’, that which is inside our daily experience. Perec’s texts explore such endotic habits, and the most sustained text for this topic is his Parisian novel *Life: A User’s Manual*, which appeared in 1978 after taking nine years to write (Perec 2008). Yet, as Perec acknowledges, the difficulty is that our studies of the everyday are controlled and held by our own everydayness, our study of habits is constrained by the fact that we are habituated. The everyday faces us with an ideological limit, because we cannot stand outside the everyday and look in since we are always constructed by it. Again, the link between the everyday and the unconscious is apparent here.

THE EVERYDAY AS INDETERMINATE

Attempting to define the everyday, Perec tries the words banal, quotidian, obvious, common, ordinary and habitual, with each seeming not quite right. He even creates the neologism ‘infra-ordinary’ in an attempt to pin down what is meant by the everyday, which remains elusive. The idea of the everyday as the elusive category recalls a short but important essay by philosopher Maurice Blanchot (1907–2003), which influenced nearly all of the discussions of the everyday mentioned so far in this article. In *La Parole Quotidienne* or ‘Everyday Speech’ (1959), Blanchot builds on Henri Lefebvre’s idea of the ‘everyday’ as ‘la vie résiduelle’ (residual life), the idea that the everyday is what is ‘left-over’ or remaining when everything else has been discussed. For Blanchot, the everyday is ‘what is most difficult to discover’ (Blanchot 1987, p. 12).

Blanchot’s essay is much influenced by Henri Lefebvre, who could be the single most influential figure amongst writers and students of the everyday. Lefebvre’s volume *Writings on Cities* is a comprehensive yet fragmented guide to studying and thinking about city life. The text, which has been compiled by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas, brings together a range of Lefebvre’s writings on the everyday and city life, from fragments to interviews and extended essays (Lefebvre 1991). His work also includes the three-volume *Critique of Everyday Life*, the first volume published in 1947, the second in 1962 and the third in 1981, as well as the most famous of his text’s *The Production of Space*, first published in 1974. These texts can hardly be summarized, but the variety of assessments on the city are vital for anyone interested in the everyday. One general trend in his work that we can notice is described well by Kofman and Lebas, who write,

Lefebvre addressed the feeling of malaise and crisis and the transitional period into a new society, that is a society of difference, of which he saw the dangers and the positive aspects, but also lucidly reminds us that the institutions with homogenizing power, especially the State, are very much with us. (Lefebvre 1991, p. 25)

While not inattentive to the positive potential of the city and its minutiae, Lefebvre’s focus was on how the city and our everyday experience of it is controlled and governed by homogenizing power. It might not always be right

to equate this with the State, though they may often be closely related, because Lefebvre was always interested in the unconscious modes of power and the fact that there is no clear individual in control of such organization. What we can say is that, generally speaking, Lefebvre's focus was on the organized and regulated experience of everyday life as a structure supporting particular power structures.

On the other hand, while acknowledging his debt to Lefebvre in his essay, Blanchot develops Lefebvre's idea to see the everyday as something containing a more radical and active potential to invoke change. Sheringham writes that whilst we might see the everyday in Lefebvre as 'average, mundane existence, the absence of qualities,' for Blanchot it is also 'alive with the force of lived but uncategorizable experience.' According to Blanchot, the everyday is what eludes definition. He writes,

The everyday escapes. Why does it escape? Because it is without a subject. When I live the everyday, it is anyone, anyone whatsoever, who does so, and this any-one is, properly speaking, neither me, nor, properly speaking, the other; he is neither the one nor the other, and he is the one and the other in their interchangeable presence, their annulled irreciprocity—they without there being an 'I' and an 'alter ego' able to give rise to a *dialectical recognition*. (Blanchot 1987, p. 19)

In the experience of the everyday there is a certain loss of individual identity, since 'when I live the everyday, it is anyone, anyone whatsoever, who does so.' This loss of identity involves a loss of recognition, or a loss of the demarcation between self and other, so that the everyday is what is not *identified* in experience, not named and categorized. This troubles the subject since it threatens to reveal the limits of its knowledge and comprehension. Since it cannot be denied that the everyday is a central part of our lives, it threatens us with a reminder of just how much of what governs our existence is outside of our conscious knowledge.

THE CITY'S UNCONSCIOUS

Perec's link between the everyday and the habitual suggests that the everyday is what we are unconscious of. Another key figure to see the everyday in this way, and to link it to the city, is Marxist theorist Guy Debord (1931–1994). Most known for his founding role in situationism, Debord believed more in taking an active role in transforming everyday life for the better. In 1961 when Lefebvre organized a conference for the Group for Research on Everyday Life, Debord presented a paper to the attendees via tape recording titled 'Perspectives for Conscious Alterations in Everyday Life.' In it Debord claimed that 'to study everyday life would be a completely absurd undertaking, unable even to grasp anything of its object, if this study was not explicitly for the purpose of transforming everyday life' (Debord 1981a, p. 68).

His slightly earlier 'Theory of the *Dérive*', developed between 1956 and 1958, was geared towards encouraging a behaviour pattern that broke out of

the regulations and impositions that the city imposes on everyday life and sought to encourage what could be seen as a ‘freer’ experience. Debord explains:

One of the basic situationist practices is the *dérive*, a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. *Dérives* involve playful-constructive behavior and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. (Debord 1981b, p. 50)

At some level the *dérive* is indebted to the work of nineteenth-century essayist and poet Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867), whose idea of the *flâneur* has received a huge amount of scholarly interest since Walter Benjamin made the figure a key to understanding the experience of the modern city. The *flâneur* is the ‘stroller’ who walks around observing the city and perhaps in some way trying to make sense of it, seeing himself as a something of a connoisseur of the city, but perhaps not necessarily going anywhere. The *dérive* is unlike a journey or stroll in the ‘classic’ sense because it is without a direction or purpose. To *dérive* is to follow the path the city seems to set for the subject:

In a *dérive* one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a *dérive* point of view cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones. (Debord 1981b, p. 52)

The *dérive* is not so much about ‘chance’ but about the city’s own unconscious, the psychogeographical contours that make up the inarticulate organization of the city. The *dérive* then, is less about ‘freeing’ or ‘liberating’ the subject from the organizing force of the city, which is the task of Georg Simmel’s related 1903 essay ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life,’ but about showing the subject how the city has an unconscious that organizes and controls its inhabitants. That well-known essay starts with a premise that could also describe the later situationist movement, and is quoted here from the useful text, *The Blackwell City Reader*:

The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and techniques of life. (Simmel 2002, p. 11)

Like the *dérive*, Simmel’s essay was an attempt to explore how it is that the mind is mapped and controlled by ‘techniques of life’ and ‘sovereign powers of society,’ rather than an attempt to liberate from such experiences. The fact that

the *dérive* does not 'free' the subject makes it no less radical or dangerous to the city, in fact it may make it more so. The *dérive* is involved in showing us how regulated and organized we are, even when we feel like we are moving freely.

The *dérive* is also very much influenced by surrealism and the surrealist method of experiencing the city. Breton is of course an important influence, but the most important text in terms of the relationship between the city and the everyday is almost certainly Louis Aragon's *Paris Paysant* (or *Paris Peasant*), written in 1929. Aragon was a close friend of Breton and, like Baudelaire (discussed earlier) and Edgar Allan Poe (discussed in later sections) was a major influence on Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, another important text for thinking about the city and the everyday. In *Paris Peasant* Aragon quotes and reproduces advertisements, posters and signs seen whilst walking the city and its arcades, intersplicing this material with thoughts and observations about the material, capturing the experience of the everyday as a process of walking through the labyrinthine city (Aragon 1994).

One seminal text to explore such ideas, and a likely influence on all these writers, is Edgar Allan Poe's 1845 short story 'The Man of the Crowd.' The text illustrates the *dérive* before its time and shows us its criminality. The narrator, who considers himself a *flâneur*-like connoisseur of the city, follows a man who seems to be walking without purpose:

He urged his way steadily and perseveringly. I was surprised, however, to find, upon his having made the circuit of the square, that he turned and retraced his steps. Still more was I astonished to see him repeat the same walk several times [. . .] He hurried into the street, looked anxiously around him for an instant, and then ran with incredible swiftness through many crooked and people-less lanes, until we emerged once more upon the great thoroughfare where we had started. (Poe 1978, p. 513)

Like a *dérive*, this walk is far from a stroll; it changes pace rapidly and involves 'anxiety', juxtaposed against the characteristic calmness of the stroller or dandy. It involves the subject following the paths set by the city, not experiencing the city as a piece of scenery but following the often unsettling routes it seems to set for the subject. The narrator of Poe's story, 'at a loss to comprehend the waywardness' of the old man, comments that he 'is the type and genius of deep crime' (Poe 1978, p. 515). Since the man's actions cannot be read but instead face the narrator with the incomprehensibility of the city, he is considered criminal. The unsettling thing may be that the man's path is not random and has little to do with 'chance,' to borrow Debord's words, but is in fact a case of the city's psychogeographical contours controlling the subject. A more recent text to return to these ideas, heavily inspired by Poe and Debord, is Paul Auster's 'City of Ghosts,' published in 1985 as the first volume in *The New York Trilogy*. This text also explores the idea that the *dérive* is about being part of the city and recognizing that the subject's path is constructed by it. Perhaps this can help formulate the everyday, a phrase that designates this unnameable organization which constructs habitual behaviour but which cannot be pinned down or made visible.

VIEWING THE CITY

Opposed to drifting through the labyrinthine city is the appeal of standing above it and viewing it, or of seeing its skyline on a postcard or from a privileged viewpoint. The obsession with the skyline of modern cities may be a response to the problem of the city's unreadability, an attempt to view the city from a vantage point and comprehend it. This way of viewing the city has been a major part of discussions of the everyday.

In a famous chapter of *The Practice of Everyday Life* entitled 'Walking in the City', de Certeau explores his experience of being at the top of the World Trade Center in New York:

To be lifted to the summit of the World Trade Center is to be lifted out of the city's grasp. One's body is no longer clasped by the streets that turn and return it according to an anonymous law; nor is it possessed, whether as player or played, by the rumble of so many differences and by the nervousness of New York traffic. When one goes up there, he leaves behind the mass that carries off and mixes up in itself any identity of authors or spectators. An Icarus flying above these waters, he can ignore the devices of Daedalus in mobile and endless labyrinths far below. His elevation disfigures him into a voyeur. It puts him at a distance. It transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes. It allows one to read it, to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god. The exaltation of the scopic and gnostic drive: the fiction of knowledge is related to this lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more. (de Certeau 1984, p. 92)

The labyrinth here recalls the idea of the city as unreadable, something also illustrated brilliantly by Poe's 'Man of the Crowd,' which begins with the statement: 'it was well said of a certain German book that *er lasst sich nicht lesen*—it does not permit itself to be read', and ends with the suggestion that the same can be said of the city.

De Certeau continues the discussion of the experience of the voyeur viewing the city from above, concluding that 'Manhattan continues to construct the fiction that creates readers, makes the complexity of the city readable, and immobilizes its opaque mobility in a transparent text' (de Certeau 1984, p. 92). Again, the city being read here is that of Poe or Borges, characterized by being unreadable but here transformed into something which can and must be read. Yet when the city is made visible and read, there is always something left out or remaining, something which is missing from this complete picture of the city. For de Certeau it is this remainder that he calls 'the everyday'. He writes 'escaping the imaginary totalizations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible' (de Certeau 1984, p. 93).

As de Certeau notes, whilst the World Trade Center may be unique it is by no means alone in playing this role of transforming the city into a text. Even Medieval and Renaissance painters who could never have seen the city from

such a viewpoint constructed this imaginary position with the same effect. Another obvious example is the Eiffel Tower, discussed by Roland Barthes in a related way. Barthes makes much of the spatial effects that the tower has on the city and no doubt informs the later discussions in de Certeau. For Barthes, 'the Tower . . . transgresses . . . the common divorce between *seeing* and *being seen* . . . it is an object that is complete, that enjoys, one might say, the two sexes of "looking" ' (Barthes 1979, p. 164). This unique monument completely transforms the landscape of the city and for Barthes 'the Tower makes a sort of nature out of the city'. He writes,

The Tower composes the swarming of men into a landscape; it adds to the often somber urban myth a romantic dimension, a harmony, a relief: through it, or beginning from it, the city rejoins the great natural themes offering themselves to human curiosity: the ocean, the storm, the mountain, the snow, the rivers. (Barthes 1979, p. 164)

Just as the World Trade Center and the Eiffel Tower transform the city into a landscape/text to be viewed and analysed, studies of everyday life attempt to transform the everyday into a text that can be read. This link is dramatized in E. T.A. Hoffman's essay 'My Cousin's Corner Window', in which the obsession with viewing everyday life with this vantage point perspective is explored:

The house where my cousin lives stands on a corner, and from the window of a tiny room he can overlook the entire panorama of the splendid square at a single glance. (Hoffman 2008, p. 378)

The cousin becomes obsessed with the moments of everyday life as viewed from this vantage point, anticipating Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. What we see in all of these examples is the desire to see everyday life as a text and the drive to take up a privileged position from which to read it.

In *Reading the Everyday*, Joe Moran notes that Lefebvre specifically thought that the everyday could not be viewed in this way, resisting what he saw as the structuralist insistence that everything could be read as a text (Moran 2005, pp. 22–23):

When codes worked up from literary spaces are applied to spaces—to urban spaces, say,—we remain . . . on the purely descriptive level. Any attempt to use such codes as a means of deciphering social space must surely reduce that space itself to the status of a 'message', and the inhabiting of it to the status of a 'reading'. (Lefebvre 1991, p. 7)

Like Barthes and Certeau with their discussions of the Eiffel Tower and the World Trade Centre respectively, Lefebvre discussed the everyday as seen from a high viewpoint in his essay 'Seen from the Window'. His conclusion is not unlike Certeau's suggestion that the everyday escapes the imaginary

totalizations produced by the eye: ‘No camera, no image, or sequence of images can show these rhythms. One needs equally attentive eyes and ears, a head, a memory, a heart’ (Lefebvre 1996, p. 277).

For Blanchot, Lefebvre and Certeau, the everyday remains ultimately elusive and unreadable, but the modern subject becomes fascinated by this very unreadability. A perfect illustration is found in Dickens’s *Dombey and Son* (1848), which expresses the impossible wish to bring what is invisible in the city into visibility, dreaming of a panoramic and complete picture of what the city hides:

Oh for a good spirit who would take the house-tops off, with a more potent and benignant hand than the lame demon in the tale, and show a Christian people what dark shapes issue from amidst their homes, to swell the retinue of the Destroying Angel as he moves forth among them! For only one night’s view of the pale phantoms rising from the scenes of our too-long neglect; and from the thick and sullen air where Vice and Fever propagate together, raining the tremendous social retributions which are ever pouring down, and ever coming thicker! Bright and blest the morning that should rise on such a night. (Dickens 2008, p. 685)

The city remains dark and labyrinth like. Benjamin discusses how panoramas were a particular nineteenth-century fascination and the dream of ‘a good spirit who would take the house-tops off’ and make the city visible is not unlike the ideology of the panorama which tries to give a complete view of city life. The everyday though is what remains out of sight, in the dark and not visible and readable. It is these ‘dark shapes’ that we remain so fascinated by, but they always remain out of our camera shot, out of our view.

CONCLUSIONS

The everyday, like the city, is something we set up as an object of study that we want to read like a text, as if viewing it from above. Yet, even from this vantage point the everyday manages to remain invisible. Blanchot picks up on this problem of theorizing the everyday, writing,

Man (the individual of today, of our modern societies) is at the same time engulfed within and deprived of, the everyday. And... the everyday is also the ambiguity of these two movements, the one and the other hardly discernible. (Blanchot 1987, p. 13)

Blanchot, echoing Perec’s comments about the habitual discussed earlier, notices that we can never precisely interpret the everyday because we are always engulfed within it and governed by it. With such comments, he could be talking about either the city or everyday. The city is something that the individual of today is engulfed within and yet simultaneously deprived of. It is equally inescapable and unreadable, constructing us but

refusing to confess how. The everyday similarly engulfs the subject but cannot be made to articulate how it affects us. The unconscious is the third term that we need in such a discussion, and it is one that helps us see the connection between the city and the everyday: it too is that which we are desperate to uncover and explain but which our interpretations are inevitably constructed by.

Thus, we should return to the question posed by Thomas Mann's reader in 1901, quoted at the beginning of the chapter: 'how did the everyday manage to become so interesting?' The everyday, which is nothing 'tangible' or discernible, nonetheless surrounds us and organizes us, our thoughts, our movements and our habits. It is present as we walk through the city, or as we sit at dinner. Since 'the everyday' constructs the modern subject and organizes its behaviour and the patterns of its unconscious, even the most 'mundane' moments become fascinating, even the most fascinating.

Erich Auerbach comments on a scene in *Madame Bovary* in terms of the everyday, making the everyday something threatening and dangerous as well as mundane and boring:

Nothing particular happens in the scene, nothing particular has happened just before it. It is a random moment from the regularly recurring hours at which the husband and wife eat together. They are not quarrelling, there is no tangible conflict... Nothing happens, but that nothing has become a heavy, oppressive, threatening something. (Auerbach 1974, p. 488)

This heavy and oppressive something is an atmosphere captured in the novels of Raymond Queneau (1903–1976), another crucial figure in the literature of the everyday. In one novel, *The Sunday of Life*, first published in 1952, almost nothing happens. A difficult novel to quote from, the following passage is indicative of its narrative style:

A gravedigger came up and asked them if they were going to stay there much longer. Not that they, the family, were in their way, but it was time for them, the gravediggers, to go to lunch, and they, the gravediggers, would only finish filling it, the hole, in, after they had had it, their lunch. (Queneau 1977, p. 55)

The threatening and oppressive power of the everyday that Auerbach finds in Flaubert is powerfully present here. Perhaps, in light of the discussions here, the troubling feeling produced in the reader of these lines originates in the fact that the everyday serves as a reminder of just how much of what governs our existence is outside of our conscious knowledge. Life in the city, no matter how banal, is full of such moments: snippets which show us or hint at the 'psychogeographical contours' of our world, to borrow from Debord one last time.

In any case, the ‘everyday,’ since the end of the nineteenth century, has become the thing that most embodies the city. Along with the desire to rise above the city and view it as a whole (discussed by Hoffman, Barthes, de Certeau and others) is the desire to get into its depths (discussed by Poe, Baudelaire, Debord and others) and see the aspects of it which most characterize everyday life (Lefebvre, Perec, Queneau and others). In Paris, we have on the one hand the Eiffel Tower, offering Parisians the chance to see the entire city from the viewpoint of Icarus. On the other hand we have the Metro, the Daedalus-like labyrinth which seems just as much an embodiment of what Paris is truly about. This alone is the subject of Queneau’s 1959 novel *Zazie in the Metro*, which Louis Malle turned into a cult classic film in 1960. In the text, Zazie arrives in Paris and is offered a tour of the Parisian palaces and tourist destinations by her guardian. Among other famous Parisian monuments and museums thought to contain the spirit of the city, he offers to take her to the tomb of Napoleon:

‘Napoleon my arse,’ retorts Zazie. ‘I’m not in the least bit interested in that old windbag with his silly bugger’s hat’.

‘What *are* you interested in then?’

Zazie doesn’t answer.

‘Yes,’ says Charles, with unexpected gentleness, ‘what *are* you interested in?’

‘The metro’.

Gabriel says: ah. Charles doesn’t say anything. Then Gabriel goes back to what he was saying, and again says: ah.

(Queneau 2001, pp. 8–9)

It is now the Metro which contains the key to the ‘true’ Paris, rather than its history or the figures of its past. Yet, when one arrives at the Metro it still feels far away from you, so that the experience of the city is never quite captured. Alternatively, when you get there, it remains absent, nothing happens. Whether we dig into the city’s depths or try to view it panoramically from above, the picture we get is always partial.

Since we live under the power of the everyday, it is something we want to reveal and work out, bring to light and discover what lies behind our everyday existence. In fact though, following those theorists discussed here, it may ultimately be that the phrase ‘the everyday’ designates that unreadable part of modern life, those forces of organization that construct the modern subject but which escape comprehension and articulation. The everyday operates at an unconscious psychogeographical level and must remain in some ways unknowable. Perhaps it is nothing more or less than the city’s unconscious. This might be why we are so fascinated by it and why it remains so troubling. We continue to be frightened by the unknowable forces that construct us: determined to see them for what they are but confronted by their unknowability.

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European Cities

INTRODUCTION

In this part, there are chapters on Dublin and Lisbon, which are contributed by Daniel Bristow. To follow what he says about Camões will make the point that to write about Europe takes in the history of colonial Africa, India, and Macao (China), and Japan; and of course, the Portuguese were early in opening up the ‘black Atlantic’ which so dreadfully affected the destinies of Africans, as Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* so powerfully suggests, and also the character of the United States, the Caribbean, and South America. I write on early modern London, Jason Finch on modern London, and Jonathan White on Paris, which, as well as featuring in the Prologue and the City in Theory part, also figures with Sara Thornton (Part VII). Ulrike Zitzlsperger writes on Berlin, as I do on Vienna, and two colleagues from Madrid deal with Spanish cities: Paul Vita and Aitor Bikandi-Mejias. Two chapters on Russian cities by Paul Fung and Isobel Palmer, and David Spurr on Venice, but ending with its replicas in Las Vegas and Macao, complete the part.

Yet this range can hardly account for the diversity of European cities. Here we can add that they are inseparable from an extraordinary history of migration, colonisation, exile and borders and dissimulated names which question the very definition of ‘Europe’, and the religions which have crowded its cities. In Zürich, Elias Canetti (1905–1994) is buried next to Joyce. Canetti was a Sephardic Jew—he could trace his name to Cañete in Spain, but the Jews were effectively exiled from Spain in 1492, the year Granada was liberated from Islam (and Moors similarly driven out), and of Columbus’ first expedition to the Caribbean. The Ladino-speaking Jews moved to north of Salonika and round to Turkey, to Adrianopolis (now Erdine, Turkey), one of the most fought-over cities ever. Its siege in the Balkan War of 1912–1913 was witnessed and described by the Futurist, Marinetti, who, though his parents were from Piedmont and Milan, was born in Alexandria.

Canetti’s father had moved from Turkey to Rustchuk, a Danube-river port in Bulgaria, newly liberated from Turkey, which had possessed it in 1364, by

Russia in 1878: Sofia became the new, modern capital. The young Canetti was born in Ruse, Bulgaria, spent a year in Manchester, and then grew up in Vienna, from where he emigrated in 1938, for Paris and London. His single novel, *Die Blendung*, translated as *Auto-da-Fé* (1935) has as setting an unnamed Vienna epitomising the ‘headless world’ of violence and madness which made Canetti produce *Crowds and Power* (1960), which attempts to conceptualise the crowd, as a new feature of modernity, and of the city itself. Joyce, Dublin born, but committed, as his play *Exiles* indicates, to ‘silence, exile, and cunning’—as the condition of a colonial subject under the control of England—spent much time in Trieste, home of Italo Svevo (1861–1928), the supposed inspiration for Mr Bloom in *Ulysses*, and author of *Confessions of Zeno*. Italo Svevo, the name implying Italian and Swabian, was the pen name of Aron Ettore Schmitz, who was born into the Austro-Hungarian Empire and died in a Trieste which was now Italian. Leopold Bloom is the son of a Hungarian Jew from Szombathely; his father migrated to Ireland.

The Jewish migration that this implies made Warsaw, with nearly a million population in 1914—the eighth largest city in Europe—have a Jewish population then of 337,000: the largest in the world: Warsaw was then a Russian-occupied city. The total Warsaw population is now less than in 1914, and the largest concentrations of Poles outside Poland are in New York, which also has the largest Jewish population outside Israel, Chicago, and Milwaukee: Polish is currently the second language in the UK. In Bolesław Prus’s novel of Warsaw, *The Doll* (1890) with a debt to Dickens, and George Eliot’s Positivism we start with the liberation of Bulgaria, where the businessman and haberdashery merchant Stanisław Wokulski made a fortune in Bulgaria supplying the Russian army. In Chap. 8, he walks through Warsaw, thinking how the Vistula river needs embanking to create the modern city; how streets lead nowhere; how mud is in the streets and garbage piled; and how there are the signs of poverty, disease, crime, and broken-down houses. In the spirit of Positivism, and fired by love for the aristocratic Izabela, he has become aware of the need for modernising the city. In Chaps. 22 and 23, he has gone by train from Warsaw to Paris—a reminder of how much railways are essential to the nineteenth-century city—and is overwhelmed by the city’s marble, boulevards, proportions, and the high-storey buildings, and the point that it can be wandered in and mapped; the debt to Zola is evident here. He thinks of not returning to Warsaw but is pulled back by his romantic love for Izabela: a parable of how many obstacles there are to modernising. Thinking about one city happens in another, but Paris is unique in being the draw that it is.

Prus is aware of the Jewish presence in Warsaw, which was indeed throughout Poland, as Alfred Döblin noted, and which too marked such cities as Riga, Vilnius, Kiev, and Odessa: all polyglot cities. The catastrophe of two world wars, including aerial bombing, the segmentation of Europe after 1945, and reckless new building only responsive to the demands of finance capitalism have changed European cities several times over in the twentieth and twenty-first century and cast many literary texts in the mode of remembering an older

Europe, but one just as fragmented then. Those cities which became part of Western Europe after 1989 have a forgotten history, as with Dresden, the subject of Uwe Tellkamp's novel, *The Tower*. Perhaps Europe is more linguistically diverse in its cities. But how many languages did Canetti and Joyce have between them?—to say nothing of the languages within *Finnegans Wake*, that ultimate tribute to a city and its river.

A last Jewish author to be noted here is Isaac Babel (1894–1940). He was born in Odessa, which may be best known from its appearance in Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), and wrote, apart from the 'Red Cavalry' short stories, fascinating stories about Odessa: the main ones being: 'The King', 'How it was Done in Odessa', 'The Father', and 'Lyubka Kozak'. The language is Odessa speech, and with a fine ignoral of the actual suffering of Jews through multiple pogroms directed from Russia, it gives to the ghetto of Moldavanka, home of gangsters, criminals, and smugglers such as the fictional Benya Krik, and Lyubka Shneyveys, his feminine counterpart who runs an inn, a sense of the heroic and of a noble tradition. Babel had been in Kiev, and Petersburg, and his sense of the southern city as full of light and sun shows: Odessa, commanded into being by Catherine the Great in 1794, as another 'intentional city', a port, a transition point for Tartars and Turks returning from Mecca, and just the place where contraband can be unloaded off all ships which have business in the Black Sea, is a carnivalesque place in defiance of reality. Its violence and lawlessness, from which Babel shows no distance, is played with in speech whose excess gives to these hoodlums a dignity usually accorded to those who are criminals but much higher in the social scale. For was it not 'a mistake on God's part to settle the Jews in Russia, where they have been tormented as if in hell. And what would be the harm if the Jews were to live in Switzerland, where they would be surrounded with first class lakes, mountain air and nothing but Frenchmen? Everyone makes mistakes, even God' (Babel, 1998, p. 251).

Cartographing Dublin

Daniel Bristow

To chart a city in writing, textual extensions must be expected. With Dublin, Ireland's capital, text displaces itself, or overflows, into the city, and so too does the city into the country; a country, that is, the very borders of which have been rewritten, and the capital of which redrawn, throughout its illustrious political history. These material extensions themselves have been reinscribed into the texts of the city, and thus it is this very dialectical materialism that becomes the basis for this essay on Dublin and its literature, which takes as its pivot James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the most comprehensive and encyclopaedic text of Dublin; indeed, perhaps of any city. As a point of departure and as that which returns us to the city's written existence, *Ulysses* plays both a centrifugal and a centripetal role, and this is exemplified not only in the *bricolage* of texts that constitute it, and the literature it has subsequently spawned, influenced or even intimidated, but in the very material conditions of Dublin itself.

JOYICITY: HIS NAME STINKS ALL OVER DUBLIN (*JOYCE 2012*,
P. 414.23 AND 1986, PP. 73, 6.64–65)

Nowadays it might be difficult for the tourist to imagine any other Dublin than the *literary* Dublin. Having become a UNESCO 'city of literature' in 2010, its literariness is met with upon entering its airport over near Swords or stepping off the ferry down by Ringsend, and is spread under one's feet—or is within arm's reach—on the city's streets in forms of stencilled quotations on plate glass windows, commemorative plaques, words washed into the walls of its river, the Liffey, or statues of famous writers dotted about the place. One of the reasons for this emphasis on literature is that it was James Joyce's city, a writer as

impossible to miss in Dublin as he is thought to be impossible to read. With *Ulysses*—telling the story of one day in the city, 16 June 1904 (‘Bloomsday’, celebrated every year in the capital, and across the world)—Joyce told one of his many Boswells that his ambition was ‘to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of the book’ (Budgen 1972, p. 69). The city that has in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries become so ingrained in the literary world picture was indeed stamped so poignantly in the mind of its greatest writer that even in (self-imposed) exile he strove never to forget its slightest detail and to represent it as faithfully and fully as his myriad modernist styles permitted.

After leaving Dublin and Ireland in late 1904 (with Nora Barnacle, whom he had met on 16 June that year)—only to briefly return a handful of times in his lifetime—he thereafter wrote about almost nothing else than that very city, and its people, in his major works. For details for the completion of the ‘Nausicaa’ and ‘Proteus’ chapters of *Ulysses*, he wrote to his aunt Josephine on 5 January 1920 from Trieste inquiring ‘whether there are trees (and of what kind) behind the Star of the Sea church in Sandymount visible from the shore and also whether there are steps leading down at the side of it from Leahy’s terrace’ (Joyce 1975, p. 247). He regularly solicited memories, news and depictions of Dublin in the forms of passed-on particulars, papers and paintings. As Gordon Bowker says, ‘[t]hat city was and would ever remain his primary muse, the fulcrum around which everything revolved.’ His fondness grew to the point where he ‘acquired a painting of the Liffey from the artist Jack Yeats, W. B.’s brother, and a “Liffey” carpet, woven for him by Miss [Adrienne] Monnier’s sister’ (Bowker 2011, p. 376). The Liffey—the stretch of water of life in the form of a river, around which Dublin is built—became a central character in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and so—as he informed Harriet Shaw Weaver, in a letter of 20 September 1928—in his own home in Paris, as a carpet, it now flowed ‘with the arms of Norway; Dublin; Ireland and [his] own woven into the scheme’ (Joyce 1975, p. 337).

However memorably Joyce animated the city, in *Dubliners* (1914)—a series of unresolving vignettes concerning various lives in the Irish capital—one of the key words associated with Joyce’s Dublin is ‘*paralysis*’, softly repeated by the boy in its first story, ‘The Sisters’—as he gazes up at his friend, the dying priest’s, window—along with ‘the word *gnomon* in the Euclid and the word *simony* in the catechism’ (Joyce 1969, p. 9). Despite its pride of place on the first page of *Dubliners*, ‘paralysis’ gets its specific Dublin context in a letter to the publisher Grant Richards on 5 May 1906, eight years before it finally saw publication. During this interim, Richards had pulled out of printing it, like the Dublin firm Maunsell & Roberts, who burnt its galley proofs, although Joyce managed to save one copy, from which Richards eventually agreed to publish in 1914. The letter said: ‘my intention was to write a chapter of the moral history of my country

and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the centre of paralysis' (Joyce 1975, p. 83). From the paralytic 'moral history of [his] country' Joyce felt the need to abscond, so as to be able—like Stephen Dedalus (to an extent Joyce's alter-ego and his central literary character), at the end of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)—'to forge in the smithy of [his] soul the uncreated conscience of [his] race' abroad (Joyce 2000, p. 213), and to awaken from the 'nightmare of history' (Joyce 1986, pp. 28, 2.377). Indeed, as Joyce has Little Chandler think in the *Dubliners* story 'A Little Cloud': 'there was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin' (Joyce 1969, p. 73). After 1904, in his parallelogrammic nomadism, the gnomon of Dublin shaped ever more distinctly Joyce's successive works.

REVIVALS: RETURNS OF EARLY MYTHOLOGICAL, VIKING AND NORMAN DUBLIN

If Joyce had to leave Dublin to *write* it, he would also import into it not its own ancient myths and legends but those of distant shores—e.g. Greek *Ulysses*—the title from Odysseus' Latinised name—transposes the action of Homer's *Odyssey* to Dublin. Most of the events correspond to those told of in Homer's tale, becoming condensed into the Irish capital in a more miniscule and menial manner. The one-eyed Cyclops Polyphemus becomes a Dublin citizen who goes under the narratorially singular 'P', and instead of Odysseus blinding him with a red-hot poker, Leopold Bloom—Odysseus' correspondence—waves a glowing cigar at him.

Yet the ancient history/mythology of Ireland was of immense importance to Dublin's earlier, and contemporaneous, literati. From the late nineteenth century, interest in Ireland's past mixed with its present political nationalism to create revivals of the nation's myths, legends and sagas, and of its own half-forgotten language (still spoken in the countryside, all but gone from the city). At the centre of this was the Irish Literary Revival, spearheaded by the monumental figures of W.B. Yeats and Lady Gregory—with its retinue of others, heavily involved or on the fringes, including such figures as George Moore, John Millington Synge, Edward Martyn, William and Frank Fay, George Bernard Shaw, Alice Milligan and Douglas Hyde (who assisted with founding the *Gaelic Journal* and became the first President of Ireland)—and taking inspiration from an earlier generation of writers, historians, poets and musicians, including James Clarence Mangan, Standish O'Grady and George Petrie.

Áth Cliath named a Gaelic settlement on the river Life (Liffey): 'ford of hurdles', so-called in modern Irish, Baile Átha Cliath, 'town of the hurdled ford'. Reference to the locality is occasionally found in early Irish mythology, e.g. the story of *The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel* (the location of which is south of the modern-day city), in which Conare is told at Áth Cliath that he will become king of Ériu (Ireland), by a bird named Nemglan (Gantz 1981, pp. 65–66). Dublin still hosts the illuminated manuscript—from

the same era as the corpus of early Irish mythology—*The Book of Kells* (it had resided for centuries at the Abbey of Kells, County Meath), which contains the four Gospels; it is on permanent public display in the library of Trinity College, its pages turned daily by a librarian. Yet if the vicinity of Dublin isn't as prominent in the early Irish tales (manuscripts of which were being transcribed from as early as the eighth century CE), Joyce himself would go some way in rectifying the discrepancy by making the topography of the Dublin of *Finnegans Wake* the body of the sleeping giant Find mac Cumail (Finn MacCool), 'his head forming the Ben of Howth and his feet protruding as two hills near Phoenix Park, while Irish history runs through his mind' as the dreamt events of the book (Fargnoli and Gillespie 1996, p. 74). (Finn MacCool is also found submerged in the writings of the Dublin student of Flann O'Brien's extraordinary and labyrinthine novel of the same year, *At Swim-Two-Birds*—which was influenced by Joyce—the title refers to a ford on the river Shannon.) However, despite the *Wake's* reliance on Irish myth, Joyce had little sympathy with the Irish Literary Revival and its main innovations came from the likes of Yeats (via his muse Maud Gonne), Gregory and Synge, to name a few.

When Yeats met Joyce in a café not far from the National Library in Dublin in 1902, the former played literary mentor:

the folk life, the country life, is nature with her abundance, but the art life, the town life, is the spirit which is sterile when it is not married to nature. The whole ugliness of the modern world has come from the spread of the towns and their ways of thought, and to bring back beauty we must marry the spirit and nature again. (Ellmann 1982, p. 103)

Yeats had written up this account of the speech he'd given Joyce in a preface to his book of essays *Ideas of Good and Evil* (1903), which he decided against using in the end; Joyce, for his part, replied to these injunctions of the old order: 'I have met you too late. You are too old' (Yeats 1903). Yet what is shared in these writers' approaches and trajectories, albeit invertedly, is a distance from Dublin, even if Yeats used it so often as the setting for staging plays or airing works about the countryside, its life and its people. Although Yeats grants 'spirit' to the city, he saw folk life—with the mysticism of its imagination, which he believed in and relied on—as the material proper to Irish literary endeavour. It was Lady Augusta Gregory, however—met in 1896—who would collect the folklore they drew on in subsequent publications, when they visited and talked with people in the west of Ireland.

In this mode Yeats had published *The Celtic Twilight* in 1893, drawing on tales told to him in his native Sligo of the Sidhe—the faery people of Ireland who were thought to possess magical powers and live in burial mounds in the otherworld—but as he admits in the 1925 preface to his *Mythologies*, for his post-1896 productions: 'I asked Lady Gregory's help. We worked together [. . .] till all had been put into that simple English she had learned from her Galway countrymen, and the thought had come closer

to the life of the people. If the [...] style has merit now, that merit is mainly hers' (Yeats 1989, p. 1). Gregory herself published the folkloric collections *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) and *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904), which collected and translated into that 'simple' Irish-English tales of the hero Cuchulain, taken from *The Táin*, and the medieval chronicles of the Fionn mac Cumhail cycle. But it was in 1904 that their greatest collaboration—the Irish literary theatre, worked on together since 1898—produced the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, which returned to its original Abbey Street site in 1966 in newly built premises.

The Abbey put on some of Ireland's most important theatrical works, including by Yeats, Gregory and Synge, in an era of political ferment exploding in the 1916 Easter Rising. Leading up to this rupture the common *dramatis personae* of the plays and literary productions of the Revival were peopled with figures from ancient Ireland whose situations resonated with themes—feminist as much as Fenian—of the day. Yeats and Gregory wrote *Cathleen ní Houlihan* (1902) together which was performed in Dublin (prior to the opening of the Abbey) with Maud Gonne in the title role: Ireland personified as an old woman who comes into a County Mayo house preparing for a wedding in 1798 (the year of the United Irishmen Rebellion) and telling the inhabitants of her long life. She sings of men who have died of love for her—from 1014, in the person of the high king of Ireland, Brian Boru—and so inspires the bridegroom to join with the French to save Ireland, after which the old woman is transformed back into a young girl. It was a *tour de force* of nationalism; in the poem 'Man and the Echo' (1939), Yeats asks of it: 'Did that play of mine send out/Certain men the English shot?' (Yeats 2001, p. 179).

Other important Irish women, entangled in love and politics, appear in the Abbey writers' works of the period; in 1907 Yeats wrote *Deidre* (with Gregory's assistance), the story of which George Russell (Æ) had also made into a play that year (*Deidre*, 1907) and Synge was working on it too, with *Deidre of the Sorrows*, Gregory and Yeats pieced together after his death in 1909. Noelle Bowles conjectures that Lady Gregory's idea for *Grania* (1912) 'may have been a direct result of exposure to Synge's [*Deidre*]', which caused her to vent her 'frustration that her gender left her on the fringes of nationalism'. In 1907 Gregory produced *Dervorgilla*, a play set in 1193 (twenty-four years after the English occupation of 1169) and which takes as subject-matter the old age of the queen who was seen as having been complicit in allowing the entrance into the country of 'the strangers that have devoured Ireland' (Gregory 1983, p. 168)—a cross-temporal allusion to the English of the day—an event Dervorgilla valiantly accepts responsibility for, whilst being devoured by 'agenbite of inwit', or 'remorse of conscience' (*Ulysses* [Joyce 1986, pp. 169, 9.809–810]). That January, Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World* caused riots in the Abbey at its premiere, because it was insufficiently political for the nationalist temperament; the line, 'a drift of chosen females, standing in their shifts itself' (Synge 1996, p. 163), being immorally provocative and connotative of Katharine

O'Shea, the mistress of Charles Stewart Parnell, whose affair irrecoverably damaged his public and political reputation (see below) to the point that 'anti-Parnellites waved shifts [a form of underclothing] during his final campaign' (Saddlemeyer 1998, p. 207, note 533).

Irish history thus returns through literature in exaggerated and fantasised forms, as well as more mundanely, prior to the Easter Rising, but it wouldn't be until Seamus Heaney's *North* (1980) that a significant shaping force in Dublin's history would be dealt with as literarily as Yeats et al dealt with the old mythology and conquest of the English; that is, the Viking invasion. Heaney drew parallels between the invasion and the Troubles in his home country, Northern Ireland (though he lived in Sandymount, Dublin, for much of his life). The Vikings, however, that laid 'the foundation of the city of Dublin', as Liam de Paor puts it (de Paor 2001, p. 70), and their legacy remains imprinted on the capital in archaeological and infrastructural terms, if less so abstractly, or culturally, as an inspiration (positive or negative) to its famous writers' outputs. Although preceded by a Christian settlement with the Old Irish name of Dubhlind (the 'b' of which has a soft 'v'-like pronunciation)—meaning 'black pool', and situated a little further down the river from Áth Cliáth—the Vikings made its name 'plosive', as Heaney puts it, and its location explosively active, 'shift[ing] the social and political centre of gravity once and for all from the midlands to the east coast—indeed, one might say to the Irish sea', capitalising Dublin (p. 80).

REVOLUTIONS: OF THE WORD, OF THE WORLD

If the Vikings revolutionised Dublin—as a word, as well as its world, and its place in the world—it would not be the last time that this happened. In *Ulysses* there is a famous slippage between the words 'word' and 'world' made by Martha Clifford in her racy letter to Leopold Bloom's *nom de plume*, Henry Flower ('I called you naughty boy because I do not like that other world' [Joyce 1986, pp. 63, 5.244–245]). This slippage—in so many ways of the signifier into the signified—had always been acutely felt in Ireland. Throughout the centuries of political events in the country the role of language, in print and in speech, has been key to their performativity and constativity, and in the period of the early twentieth century this role intensified.

R.F. Foster, in *Vivid Faces*—which takes its title from Yeats' poem 'Easter, 1916'—uses the 'Aeolus' episode in *Ulysses* as a schema against which to read the windswept spread in newsprint of national revolutionary fervour that became increasingly felt throughout the late 1900s into the early and mid-1910s. As Foster puts it: 'we come back, "by a commodious vicus of recirculation", to James Joyce's windy breath of Aeolus. It seems only apposite that the revelation of the long-awaited apocalypse came, like so much else in the era, through the cry of a newsboy in a Dublin street' (Foster 2015, p. 177). So was

beckoned in news of the Great War, and two years later, the revolutionary insurrection, on Dublin's streets.

In Greek mythology Aeolus was the god of the winds which in the seventh episode in *Ulysses* blow incessantly within the offices of the nationalist *Freeman's Journal*, as Bloom, advertising canvasser for its sister periodical the *Evening Telegraph*, moves about them, each of the scenes coming under a headline-style summation of its action. In Ireland, at this time, there was a hurricane of journalistic material available to the public, with some 322 Irish newspapers—most nationalist—that were in circulation between 1900 and 1922 alone ('Irish' meaning not including British papers sold in the country) (Foster 2015, p. 150)—as well as the raft of pamphlets and tracts that sprung up at every political opportunity—to which sympathetic printers were no less essential than generous funders and committed journalists: [Arthur] Griffith's *United Irishman* campaigned with especial bitterness against the Dublin printers Browne & Nolan for employing staff from Britain instead of native compositors. Seán T. O'Kelly was inducted into the Irish Republican Brotherhood ([IRB] in 1901 by a printer, Patrick Daly, and noted how many republican initiates were connected to the trade. Radical periodicals and posters bore the imprint of Patrick Mahon in Yarnhall Street, or Joe Stanley's Gaelic Press in Liffey Street, or the same proprietor's retail 'Art Depot' in Mary Street, or the Irish Printing Depot, Lower Abbey Street (which also produced Ancient Irish vellum notepaper, Irish-made wrapping-paper, art calendars etc.). These businesses operated north of the Liffey, within easy reach of the editorial offices they served (pp. 150–151).

In Dublin, as shown in *Ulysses*, everything was to read. Advertisements travelled the city in various ways, disseminated in papers ('*What is home without/ Plumtree's Potted Meat?/ Incomplete/ With it an abode of bliss*' [Joyce 1986, pp. 61, 5.144–147]), prospectuses (such as that for 'The Wonderworker, the world's greatest remedy for rectal complaints' (593, 17.1819–1820)), and worn as sandwich-boards (ambling around Dublin throughout that sixteenth of June are a troupe advertising Wisdom Hely's stationers, each sandwiched between two hard boards displaying a single letter of the company's name (p. 127, 8.126)). Information circulated via multiplicatory 'throwaway' leaflets (such as for the coming of 'Elijah' to Dublin in the form of 'Dr John Alexander Dowie restorer of the church of Zion' (p. 124, 8.13–14)) and enigmatic notes (the anonymous postcard to Mr Breen containing the letters 'U.P.' (p. 130, 8.257)), the city suffuse—in Dedalus' words, borrowed from Jakob Boehme—with 'signatures of all things I am here to read' (p. 31, 3.2).

Not only was the city readable in the informational transmigration of signs, the literary circulation of novels and poetry, and the political spread of comment through tracts and periodicals; as mentioned above, theatre was prevalent in the run-up to 1916. As Foster states: 'the Rising is often called a revolution of poets; in fact playwrights and actors were far more prominent' (Foster 2015, p. 112). If 1907 was the year of focus for the Abbey,

the revolutionaries themselves would play a significant part in the scene not long afterwards. Indeed, ‘between 1908 and 1915 five of [Patrick] Pearse’s plays were produced at St Enda’s’—a nationalist secondary school for boys that he had set up in 1908—‘sometimes transferring to central Dublin venues; these tended to be morality-plays revolving round the figure of the “redemptive boy”, but beyond their religious or homoerotic echoes a message of liberation from foreign corruption could be easily detected’ (p. 111). (The usually less explicit Abbey would even stage Terence MacSwiney’s *The Revolutionist* (1914) in 1920, whilst he was dying on hunger-strike in Brixton Prison.) The themes of the nationalist theatre were becoming militant to such an extent of crossover that in 1916 ‘when the insurrection broke out, several people mistook the manoeuvres for street theatre; Constance Markievicz was asked by passers-by at Liberty Hall if she was rehearsing a play for children, and Joseph Holloway, encountering the “Proclamation of the Irish Republic”, took it at first for a playbill’ (p. 112).

The forging and fortifying of the Word—which produced the theatrical reality of the insurrection and its dreadful and dramatic dénouement—found incarnation through saturation in news and literary print, as well as in oration, all of which acted as a storehouse for national memory and as a coat of, and call to, arms. Earlier revolutionary figures and events were resurrected, having their spirit restored through these emphases of the Word. Indeed, the very words of the prominent rebel and organiser of the Society of United Irishmen, Robert Emmet (who met the same fate after the 1803 rebellion as the leaders of that of 1916)—delivered in his speech from the dock before his execution—would be reanimated in their full prophetic weight through this (im)printed cultural memory: ‘[w]hen my spirit shall be wafted to a more friendly port . . . this is my hope: I wish that my memory and my name animate those who survive me’ (Emmet 2004, pp. 17–18). Hence Pearse stated that that in Emmet’s execution ‘is the memory of a sacrifice Christ-like in its perfection’ (Pearse 2012, p. 63). But so too did they Bloom, who farts his way through Emmet’s words in the ‘Sirens’ episode of *Ulysses*: ‘Yes. One, two. *Let my epitaph be. Kraaaaaa. Written. I have./Ppprrffrrppffff./Done*’ (Joyce 1986, pp. 239, 11.1291–1294). Pearse’s words appeared in an address on Emmet given in 1914. The year prior he had similarly delivered a speech at the graveside of Theobald Wolfe Tone, who was born in Dublin and studied Law at Trinity College. He had founded the United Irishmen, who staged the Rebellion in Ireland between May and October of 1798, eventually quashed by the English. Wolfe Tone was in France—during its Revolution—in the years preceding the Rebellion, soliciting assistance for French intervention, and attempting naval landings on the island of Ireland, which met with little success. Tone’s expedition encountered the English at Buncrana on Lough Swilly off Donegal, and thereby surrendered, after which Tone was imprisoned and sentenced to death by hanging before the ignominy of which he committed suicide. He began his speech from the dock:

I mean not to give you the trouble of bringing judicial proof to convict me legally of having acted in hostility to the government of his Britannic Majesty in Ireland. I admit the fact. From my earliest youth I have regarded the connection between Great Britain and Ireland as the curse of the Irish nation, and felt convinced that, whilst it lasted, this country could never be free nor happy. (Tone 1996, p. 395)

The plea for severance of Ireland from Britain in this speech is replayed in that of Emmet's two years later, and again in *Cathleen ni Houlihan* when the spirit of the '98 centenary celebrations was freshly felt. Between the Rebellions of 1798 and 1916, nationalist politics revolved around the issue of independence from Britain (which Henry Grattan had gone some way to achieving for the Irish Parliament in the previous century, before the Act of Union of 1800), although it shifted over into concentrations on Union Repeal and devolution of powers through Home Rule. The primary figures in these nineteenth-century movements were Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847) and Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–1891), whose names are in the city's premier thoroughfare and square: O'Connell Street (formerly Sackville Street)—at the south of which stands a memorial to its namesake—which is headed at its northern tip by Parnell Square, to the south of which Parnell's statue stands, bearing his words: 'no man has the right to fix the boundary to the march of a nation; no man has a right to say to his country "Thus far shalt thou go and no further," and we have never attempted to fix the *ne plus ultra* to the progress of Ireland's nationhood, and we never shall' (Parnell 2012, p. 147).

Until 1966 there stood three monuments on O'Connell Street: those mentioned, and the third and tallest, Nelson, atop a massive pillar. These were labelled by Dubliners 'the three adulterers', due to the allegations of infidelity brought against each of them. In March 1966 Nelson's Pillar was blown up by the IRA (becoming thereafter known as 'the stump'), subsequently to be replaced first by a statue of Joyce's Anna Livia Plurabelle—the female embodiment of the river Liffey in *Finnegans Wake*—in 1988 (nicknamed 'the floozy in the jacuzzi', or 'the whore ("hoo-er") in the sewer'), and then by the Spire of Light in 2001—a year later to its millennial celebrations—(dubbed 'the stiletto in the ghetto', 'the stiffey at the Liffey', or 'the erection at the intersection') that towers over the building height-restricted city skyline to this day (Joyce's own statue is 'the prick with the stick'). The street today is also adorned by statues of Jim Larkin, William Smith O'Brien, Sir John Gray and Father Theobald Mathew, figures who had all written themselves into Irish everyday lives, more and more so, perhaps, however, than Parnell, who had faced a backlash of sensationalist proportions within Catholic ranks over his affair with Kitty O'Shea, epitomised by Joyce in the Christmas dinner scene in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which the political and religious allegiances of Mrs Riordan (known as 'Dante' to Stephen), Simon Dedalus (Stephen's father) and the dinner guest John Casey—No God for Ireland! he

cried. We have had too much God in Ireland—rise to an unbearable pitch. At the end of the argument:

—Poor Parnell! he cried loudly. My dead king!
 He sobbed loudly and bitterly.
 Stephen, raising his terrorstricken face, saw that his father's eyes were full of
 tears.

(Joyce 2000, pp. 32–33)

Whilst politics in Irish literature of the nineteenth century was generally dealt with less explicitly than in this scene, nationalism still resonated therein, exemplified throughout Thomas Moore's ballads in the *Irish Melodies* (1808–1834)—'Oh! Breathe not his name' silently designating his friend Robert Emmet (see Moore 1910, p. 181)—or, later, in Dion Boucicault's play, *Robert Emmet* (1884)—see Boucicault (1987). The dichotomies rivening the congeniality in the Christmas dinner scene—such that would later split the country; ideologically, in the civil war that followed the war of independence, and literally, in the division of Ireland into the Republic and the North—were metaphorically apparent in its literature too, especially in the gothic tradition of Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873)—by Oscar Wilde with *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) and Bram Stoker with *Dracula* (1897). Although both—like so many Anglo-Irish writers before them, including Sterne and Goldsmith—would reside primarily in England, these major works of theirs can nonetheless be read in the light of Ireland's national plight, and have been (e.g. O'Connor 2007, p. 476; Hughes 2009, p. 99).

Parnell's death came soon after his reputation was irrecoverably tarnished; with it Home Rule seemed to slip beyond immediate achievability. Thereafter, Home Rule would remain a sought-after condition for Ireland once again, and was exceeded by desires for fuller autonomy and greater independence. The possibility of Home Rule was represented in the iconography of the masthead of the *Freeman's Journal*—although, post-Parnell, the paper's energies for the campaign dwindled—in the ident of a 'homerule sun rising up in the north-west', in the words that Bloom reflects on it with, when contemplating republicanism in the 'Calypso' episode of *Ulysses* (Joyce 1986, pp. 134, 8.473–474), recalling Arthur Griffith's jibe aimed at the geographically incorrect positioning of the sunrise behind Dublin's Bank of Ireland (the assembly place of the Irish Parliament, until the Act of Union). And then, the soldiers of the 1916 rebellion—their sixteen leaders executed by the English, became inscribed into the country's history as martyred saviours.

ONE CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO POST FIGURE OUT A STATUESQUO
 (JOYCE 2012, p. 181.34)

Decisive events in the history of Dublin and Irish and world literature happened with the 1916 Easter Rising and with Joyce. Such impasses did they represent that moving beyond either in national politics or (inter)national literature would

become arduous: as Joyce says in *Finnegans Wake*, tasks to which ‘one cannot even begin to post figure out a statuesquo’, as statuesque as their statuses had become—and tasks unaccomplishable without recognition being given to their antecedents. That is, the remainder of the century in these fields could only thereafter become known as *post-1916*, and *post-Joyce*. This holds true of Joyce’s legacy so that Derek Attridge lays out four models that the inevitable encounter with Joyce in subsequent Irish writing must file into: the assertion (of an author positing themselves in relation to his legacy); the nod; the echo; and the counter-signature, which ‘takes responsibility for whatever [Joyce’s signature] has promised’, but ‘must be *different* from th[at] signature’ (Attridge 2015, p. xiii):. As with any great prophecy worthy of the name, Joyce’s has promised much, so it would be up to his interpreters and encounterers to work out ‘the he and the she of it’ all for themselves (Joyce 2012, p. 213.12).

Two of these were Dublin playwrights Sean O’Casey and Samuel Beckett. In response to 1916 and its aftermath, O’Casey wrote ‘the Dublin Trilogy’: *The Shadow of a Gunman* (1923), set in May 1920, during the Irish War of Independence (1919–1921); *Juno and the Paycock* (1924), set during the Civil War (1922–1923); and *The Plough and the Stars* (1926; its first and second act set in November 1915, and third and fourth in Easter week, 1916). The plays offer analysis of sociality and living conditions in the city’s tenement housing, in one street of which ‘835 [people] were recorded as living in just 15 houses, many of them crammed into single rooms’ (Davies 2014). Political events in the plays provide a backdrop that nonetheless regularly spills over into the foreground, breaking more often into the more politically abstentious characters’ lives, whilst those constantly gabbing about political activism often duck out of view when gunfire rings out. The plays mix socialism and pacifism—both long, if vacillating, Irish traditions (an aporetic culmination of the latter of which came in the murder by a British soldier of the influential pacifist and feminist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington after the Rising, in which he had taken no part)—with naturalism. They create a portrait of Dublin’s working class, its domestic commitments and political and religious convictions, and the messy interstices that these entailed. Dublin’s raw state in the aftermath of 1916 appeared in O’Casey’s depiction of the tenement. Hence on the fourth night of *The Plough and the Stars* at the Abbey it caused riots. Yeats took the stage, and in response to the rioters declaimed: ‘You have disgraced yourselves again [. . .] The fame of O’Casey is born tonight. This is his apotheosis’ (Foster 2003, pp. 305–306).

Beckett, ‘for his writing in new forms for the novel and drama in which the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation’, won the 1969 Nobel Prize for Literature, which he called a ‘disaster’ (Ackerley and Gontarski 2004, p. 407). On his own admission, some of his earliest work—some completed under Joyce’s mentorship (whilst he took down dictation from him for *Finnegans Wake*, and was even briefly dating his daughter)—bore overheavily the mark of his predecessor, as when submitting the early story ‘Sedendo et Quiescendo’ to Chatto & Windus: ‘it stinks of Joyce in spite of my most earnest endeavours to endow it with my own odours’ (Beckett 2009, p. 81). In 1934 that Beckett left

Dublin for London and psychoanalysis from Wilfred Bion—as Beckett recalls, ‘psychoanalysis was not allowed in Dublin at that time. It was not legal’ (quoted in Knowlson 1996, p. 167)—and after two years of treatment completed the novel *Murphy* (1938), set between those two cities. It is in a description in the book of the topography of London that something of the moving on—or even retreat—from the length of Joyce’s shadow is hit upon, Murphy believing that ‘while Brewery Road was by no means a Boulevard de Clichy nor even des Batignolles, still it was better at the end of the hill than either of those, as asylum (after a point) is better than exile’ (Beckett 2010a, p. 47). From thereon Beckett’s writing began exploring more abstractly the intricacies of the psychology of the asylum that is the human mind itself; in opposition to Joyce’s exilic exploratory gaze, which he cast first over Dublin from afar, and then over all world history in *Finnegans Wake*, creating a memory less of the mind than of the world-spirit. Beckett met Joyce’s maximalism with a minimalism far from parochial in moving away from cityscapes. In terms of language, whilst Joyce forced as many world languages as he could in *Finnegans Wake*, Beckett jumped ship into writing in French, as its ‘relative asceticism seemed more appropriate to the expression of being, undeveloped, unsupported somewhere in the depths of the microcosm’ (quoted, Cronin 1999, p. 360). Beckett’s developing minimalisation of externality extended literary topography to the regions of destitution and modernity that characterise the structure of human—as much as geographical—conditions, and the discontents and disasters that they bring in their wake.

AFTER THE WAKE

The date was 16 June, 1954, and though it was only mid-morning, Brian O’Nolan [a.k.a. Flann O’Brien] was already drunk.

This day was the fiftieth anniversary of Mr Leopold Bloom’s wanderings through Dublin, which James Joyce had immortalised in *Ulysses*.

To mark this occasion a small group of Dublin literati had gathered at the Sandycove home of Michael Scott, a well-known architect, just below the Martello tower in which the opening scene of Joyce’s novel is set. [. . .]

The rest of the party, that first Bloomsday, was made up of the poet Patrick Kavanagh, the young critic Anthony Cronin, a dentist named Tom Joyce, who as Joyce’s cousin represented the family interest, and John Ryan, the painter and businessman who owned and edited the literary magazine *Envoy* [which had published Kavanagh’s ‘Who Killed James Joyce?’ in 1951]. [. . .]

In pubs along the way an enormous amount of alcohol was consumed, so much so that on Sandymount Strand they had to relieve themselves as Stephen Dedalus does in *Ulysses*. (Costello and van de Kamp 1987, pp. 15, 20)

This irreverent knees-up in celebration of *Ulysses*’ peregrinations brought together its literary attendees around Joyce’s figure. Dublin has attracted literati, and tourists, by flaunting the literary scenes of its yesteryears—through

processes of carefully reductive excerption, as well as exuberantly exaggerated anecdotalism—with Joyce most often at their centre. The sanctimonious celebrations of *Ulysses*' hundredth anniversary (16 June 2004) presented Dublin—in Pascal Bataillard's words—via a prolonged process of 'generalised museification' (Bataillard 2014, p. 40). Marketability and commodifiability had become key factors in Dublin's tourism board's engagements with the city's literary heritage. Souvenirs with Joyce's or Yeats' faces on them—and a targeted quotation—range from magnetic bookmarks to drinks coasters. The touristic city walks a thin line between the important work of cultural remembrance and promulgation and a nostalgia industry liable to 'historical laundering'—as Bataillard puts it—on the edge of 'ensur[ing] that the *illegible* author can be safely buried with becoming epitaphs which more or less mean: "Never mind if you don't read Joyce[, or Swift, or Gogarty, or Behan, etc.]" ' (2014, p. 40).

However, prior to this, Dublin retained aspects of the sociability on display on almost every page of Joyce's works set in the city, whilst bearing the scars of its fraught political restructuring, and the marks of its religious zeal, to the oppressiveness of the latter of which Eimear McBride's *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* (2013) is a stark modern-day testament. In this peripatetic Dublin, 'streets were places which people felt that they owned, whereas seldom did they own their own houses, which Leopold Bloom likens to coffins' (Kiberd 2009, p. 25). This Dublin may have been 'dirty', as Joyce had called it, but it was 'dear' too (Joyce 1969, p. 75), whereas later it became cleaner, but also dearer, in monetary terms, as gentrification swept over the city as its next—urban—'revival' (see Dempsey 1992). In Wellesian syntax Declan Kiberd argues about the spatio-temporal moment that Dublin inhabited prior to this rejuvenation:

The world of pub, café, civic museum and national library produced social democracy, modernist painting and *Ulysses*. The world which supplanted it can generate only the identikit shopping mall, the ubiquitous security camera and the celebrity biography. The middle class has no real public culture or artworks which critique its triumph, because it has assimilated all the oppositional forces of modernism, by reducing them to mass entertainment. (Kiberd 2009, p. 24)

These assimilated forces have created Dublin's post-modern condition: its self-referentiality, its nostalgia industry and tourism, and the anxiety of its modernism's influence. To use Joyce's word, this is perhaps also what has been creative of the 'obtuse' and uncritical middle-class gaze which has entrusted its 'morality to policemen and its fine arts to impresarios' (*Dubliners*: Joyce 1969, p. 111).

Nonetheless, Dublin is still 'a wondrous land where there is music', as it is spoken of in *The Wooing of Étaín* (Gantz 1981, p. 55), despite the city's 'paralysis'. Its culture has been administered as an antidote, whether in the moral conscience of its literature, the integrity of its film (after Joyce abortively opened the city's first cinema, *The Volta*, in 1909, Irish film has flourished) or

the soulfulness of its music, from the folk traditions and their revivals in the songs of The Dubliners and the Londoners The Pogues, for example, to the importation of soul music into the desolate and decrepit Dublin landscape of Roddy Doyle's 1987 novel *The Commitments*. This latter represents something of the incredible cultural span and reach of Dublin, despite, or even because of, its smallness as a city; that is, a city in which 'everyone knows everyone else's business', as Joyce puts it in the *Dubliners* story 'The Boarding House' (Joyce 1969, p. 66).

Doyle's verdict on Joyce—before the centenary 'Bloomsday' celebrations—is that '*Ulysses* could have done with a good editor', and that 'if you're a writer in Dublin and you write a snatch of dialogue, everyone thinks you lifted it from Joyce. The whole idea that he owns language as it is spoken in Dublin is a nonsense. He didn't invent the Dublin accent' (Doyle, quoted in Chrisafis 2004). This exemplifies the closed-in feel of modern literary Dublin—as loomed over Joyce's figure—where every writer still seems to be in the pockets of another, but Doyle's prose is nonetheless leagues away from Joyce's. What links them, however, is the city, just as Doyle's novel, in popular film and later a musical *The Commitments*, directed Alan Parker, 1991, starring the frontman of the influential Irish band The Frames, Glen Hansard, as Outspar Foster: he went on to win an Oscar for his and Marketa Irglova's soundtrack to John Carney Dublin-based film *Once* (2007). In the novel, Dublin's music is part of the city's shared experience, as appears in Jimmy Rabbitte's take on the band's musical direction:

—Yeah, politics. —Not songs about 'Fianna fuckin' Fail or annythin' like that'. Real politics. (They weren't with him.) —Where are yis from? (He answered the question himself.)—Dublin. (He asked another one.)—Wha' part o' Dublin? Barrytown. Wha' class are yis? Workin' class. Are yis proud of it? Yeah, yis are. (Then a practical question.)—Who buys the most records? The workin' class. Are yis with me? (Not really.)—Your music should be about where you're from an' the sort o' people yeh come from.
 ——Say it once, say it loud, I'm black an' I'm proud.

(Doyle 1993, p. 13)

Joycean exile resonates in this pride. Another post-Joyce novel, Eimear McBride's *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing*—a diegetic narrative structured somewhere between stream of consciousness and free association—also dissipates and stretches into something more universal through its experiential connections. McBride has commented on Joyce and *Ulysses* herself, saying of the train ride on which she began reading it: 'I started reading the book, got off at Liverpool Street, and just thought: that's it. Everything I have written before is rubbish, and today is the beginning of something else' (McBride, quoted in Cochrane 2014). The result was a book of damaged life ending in a watery suicide, rendered in an unravelling and beautiful poetry akin to the last passages of *Finnegans Wake*, where the particularities of Irish urban existence in an

unnamed location (as opposed to Doyle's fictional Barrytown suburb) transmute into universals of interconnection, through the name's dissolution:

Alone. My name is. Water. All alone. My name. The plunge is faster. The deeper cold is coming in. What's left? What's left behind? What's it? It is. My name for me. My I.

Turn. Look up. Bubble from my mouth drift high. Blue tinge lips. Floating hair. Air famished eyes. Brown water turning into light. There now. There now. That just was life. And now.

What?

My name is gone. (McBride 2014, p. 203)

As *Finnegans Wake* recirculates, through these two post-1916, post-Joyce texts we return to the overspillings of Dublin into Ireland, Irish experience into human experience and the city into its culture, spreading wide. Thus, if now Dublin is perhaps somewhat precariously balanced, in terms of its culture industry, it has nonetheless always been through the industriousness of its culture that it has written its way so prominently as a city onto the world's literary map. It is a culture that—like Dublin and Ireland themselves—also has a diaspora all over the world: of artists, of artefacts and of influence.

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Medieval and Early Modern Cities: London, Paris, Florence and Amsterdam

Jeremy Tambling

INTRODUCTION

According to Raymond Williams (1983, p. 55) in English, the word ‘city’, indicating a large population, and distinguishing the urban from the country, belongs to the sixteenth century. This essay considers primarily that London, though backtracking to medieval London, and to one of its first writers, Chaucer (c.1340–1400) who grew up and worked in it (Pearsall 1992, pp. 17–23).

Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* makes the city recognisable and the source of intense interest, even if it is argued that he uses London with less symbolic effect than Boccaccio (1313–1375) does with various Italian cities in the *Decameron* (Wallace 1997, pp. 156–181). Chaucer had to negotiate allegiances between different increasingly powerful interests in the City (largely between victualing and non-victualing guilds, the latter more linked to crafts, and less capitalist). Guilds were demanding royal charters; trading guilds were becoming more important than handicraft guilds. They split between those who were protectionist (broadly: the victuallers) and the free traders (broadly, those concerned with cloth, with the exception of the Weavers, whose pogroms against foreign Flemings in London Chaucer casually notes in Fragment VII.3396). Chaucer shows members of a ‘fraternitee’—i.e. parish guild going to Canterbury as pilgrims (I. 361–378) accompanied by their Cook; they are of different crafts, united by being in one parish. The city was oppositional to the King, and court, as in the Peasants’ Revolt (1381), when John of Gaunt’s Savoy Palace, in the Strand, was burned. If Chaucer, allied to Gaunt, hardly refers to these politics, that may be evidence of difficulties in the face of London being a dissentient centre. Nonetheless, if London is not named as the essential context for *The Canterbury Tales* and its pilgrims (Larry Benson, in Butterfield 2006, p. 131, see also p. 81), the tales are

traditional and modern, urban, together, and the city matters to him, in a way which is comparable to Ben Jonson, whose London is essential to Dickens (Tambling 2012, pp. 4–25, 2015, pp. 42–64).

Cities become essential to writers in the fourteenth century, with Florence, for example, and Dante (1265–1321), who declares his belief in citizenship (*Paradiso* 8. 115–117) and Boccaccio. I discuss this, and then London in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, where writing the city becomes common practice, as with John Stow (1525–1605) in his *Survey of London* (1598, revised 1603), as an historical and antiquarian account of London, its districts and traditions, regretting the passing of customs, especially charitable ones, associated with Catholicism, though historians have pointed out that Protestantism produced much charity, in the name of philanthropy, so drawing attention to the giver, and assisting in the sense of the emergence of a new gentlemanly character-type (Archer and Manley, in Smith et al. 1995, pp. 17–34, 35–54). And writing for the playhouses, which are both of the city, and give a city-discourse, was central: in citizen-plays, mainly comedies, by Dekker, Jonson, Marston, Middleton, and Massinger, the city had to see itself.

MEDIEVAL LONDON: MEDIEVAL CITIES

London was bridged by the Romans, who arrived in 43 CE, at present-day Westminster, then at approximately where London Bridge stands today, connecting the City with its southern point: ‘at Southwark at the Tabard’ (Chaucer 1987, p. 23). The Tabard inn lay at the point of entering the city from the south, or starting for Canterbury and the coast. Southwark was a ‘suburb’, a word *OED* credits Chaucer for (VIII. 657, Chaucer 1987, p. 270). Chaucer seems aware of the town’s dependence on the City but beyond it: Deptford, and Greenwich (I.3906–3907). The City was walled, like so many Roman and medieval towns: Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Cripplegate (site of the Roman fortress), Moorgate (a medieval gate), Bishopsgate, and Aldgate, inside which Chaucer lived (1374–1376) when he controlled the customs for wool entering and leaving the city. Following these gates on a map defines the then City, virtually up to the Fire of 1666, when it was rebuilt, but still with medieval street plans. The Romans left Britain in 410 CE, and as happened throughout Europe, their towns lay fallow, and their street plans (the decamus and cardo grid with a forum at the intersection) were not adhered to; nor even the sites, in medieval European cities.

Medieval cities grew for local trading, with an historical weakening of central power after the ninth, and principally within the eleventh and twelfth centuries: in England; in Flanders (Bruges, Ypres, Ghent), in France, in Germany, and further eastwards, as by the Teutonic Knights (Königsberg, 1255) for instance, passing through to East Prussia, to the Vistula, and Lithuania and Ukraine, or by Swedish expansion eastwards. When the Treasury was brought from

Winchester to London in 1156, that became England's capital. Paralleling that, Philip II ('Augustus') of France (ruled 1180–1223) consolidated Paris as capital, which it had been since the first Capetian king in 987, and himself as king of France by building a wall, a gesture for defence, for civic pride and for defining borders. It extended Paris as a city colonised by the Romans centred on the Ile de Cité, and the Left Bank, and placed in the enceinte on its west, on the Right Bank, a new fortress, depicted in the October illustration of the *Très Riches Heures de Jean de Berri*. This became the Louvre, a protection against the English (Jones 2004, pp. 52–56). The University of Paris followed on the left bank in the early thirteenth century. Medieval London came into being with the Normans, who built both Westminster Hall, a site for Dickens' *Bleak House*, and the Tower in the east of the City, extending the wall outwards. The Tower was downstream of London Bridge, rebuilt during 1176–1202, with houses on the bridge, and a chapel dedicated to the London-born Thomas Becket (1118–1870), subject of a biography by William Fitz-Stephen (d. 1191), which included 'Descriptio Nobilissimi Civitatis Londoniae' a first account of London, used by Stow.

West of the City of London, and in a fringe area controlled by City guilds and corporations, medieval London developed Inns of Court for lawyers in the Holborn area (Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* received an early performance in the Middle Temple in February 1601). In contrast to Paris, these were London's nearest equivalent to Universities, whose lack, in a capital city, was the most debilitating with regard to London's intellectual life, and not the least of the reasons why London would not become Benjamin's 'capital of the nineteenth century'. Chaucer's Canterbury pilgrims include a Manciple (I.577–586), who purchases provisions for the Inner or Middle Temples and who cheats, perhaps, all the lawyers. Further west, the Strand, following the line of the Thames river, took travellers to Charing Cross where the river dipped southwards, past the thirteenth-century hospital St Mary Rouncivale, where Chaucer's Pardoner comes from (I.670) towards Westminster Abbey, consecrated in 1066 by Edward the Confessor. This area became the City of Westminster in 1604, constituting London a mercantile centre eastwards, and an aristocratic and royal centre west. Southwark remained separate, not quite under the city's jurisdiction, so ready to become associated with the theatres on Bankside. Ruins of the house of the Bishop of Winchester are still visible: the land he owned provided space and rents for brothels, hence Shakespeare on 'some galled goose of Winchester' (*Troilus and Cressida*, 5.10.55), referencing the diseases of prostitutes in Southwark.

The Medieval city differed from the Roman, and especially in the case of London as a post-Reformation city (1530s onwards) by its number of religious houses (Baker 1970; Myers 1972): monasteries, which were prior to the Conquest, but following it, Cluniac and Cistercian religious houses, and the twelfth-century Templars, whose 'Temple' became some of the Inns of Court. As the city's secular life developed, so did the orders of

friars, set up in the thirteenth century; these interacted with the secular life of the city as monks did not: hence the importance of the Greyfriars (Franciscans), the Blackfriars (Dominicans) and the Austin Friars, within the City, the Whitefriars (Carmelites) outside the City, on the opposite side of the Fleet river, south of present-day Fleet Street, near St Bride's Church, whose present Wren-design covers a Roman crypt and graveyard. Another Augustinian priory, founded in the twelfth century, became, after the Reformation, the parish church of St Mary Overie [over the water], and Southwark Cathedral in 1905. Friars, like Chaucer's—'he knew the taverns wel in every toun' (I.240), belong to European city-literature, in the *Romance of the Rose*, in the *Decameron*, and Chaucer, especially to *fabliaux*, associated with the towns of northern France and Flanders: urban, vernacular narratives, whose bawdiness made the merchant's wife as skilful sexually as the husband was with business affairs.

London's St Paul's Cathedral (604; rebuilt by the Normans and again after 1259, burnt in the Fire, and replaced by Wren) had a porch (the 'Parvys': the equivalent, derived from the Latin *Paradisus*, existed in Paris [Jones 2004, pp. 91–93]), where Chaucer's lawyer spends time looking for trade (I.310). A secular and religious centre, it forms a venue in many plays, including Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour* and *The Staple of News*. After the Black Death (1348–1349), which, Europe-wide, wiped out a third of the population, St Paul's had 74 chantry chapels, where privately maintained priests prayed for the souls of the dead: the practice is mentioned in Chaucer's *Prologue* (I.507–510). In addition to 120-plus parish churches in the City, other religious houses included hospitals such as St Bartholomew (Austin Friars), outside the walls, near Smithfield, and the site of Bartholomew Fair—a cloth fair—founded in 1133, and lasting until 1855, held annually from 24 August onwards. Like other Fairs licensed throughout Europe in the same period, it was a site of popular culture: Bartholomew was patron saint of butchers, which aligns him with the meat-market at Smithfield. Nearby were the Carthusians, who gave way after the reformation to a school and hospital (the Charterhouse), and numerous parish churches and churches for Guilds. In *Piers Plowman*, C text (1387), Passus V. 1–104, William Langland, as narrator, gives an account of himself living on Cornhill (the highest point of the City) where stolen goods were sold, being a cleric in minor orders, saying prayers for the dead, and being called a 'lollare' (vagabond) (Langland 1978, pp. 97–102).

The Norman reshaping of London coincided with an expansion in city populations throughout Europe. London, which at the Poll Tax of 1377 comprised 40,000, was smaller than Milan, Venice, Florence, Naples, Ghent and Paris, but equalled Bruges, Louvain, Brussels, Ypres, Barcelona, Seville, Corova, Granada, Cologne and Lübeck, being the largest in England, with York and Bristol (each 10,000) and Coventry, Norwich and Lincoln less than that. Prominent examples of new towns include Venice, and Freiburg in Breisgau, Strasbourg, Vienna, and above all Lübeck, a twelfth-century city whose trading importance, reflected even in its most famous novelist, Thomas

Mann (1875–1955), in *Buddenbrooks* (1901), because the city comprised the centre for the Hanseatic League of merchants who developed cities throughout the medieval period, including Boston (Lincolnshire), King’s Lynn, Antwerp, Stockholm, Bremen, Hamburg, Gdansk, Stettin, Riga, Tallinn and numerous other cities such as Cologne, well inland but connected by river: the Hanseatic League even had an enclosed docking area (the Steelyard) in London: it lost its privileges in 1597. In 1300, Italy had at least 26 towns of over 10,000 inhabitants, many re-founded as republics (Bemrose 2000, pp. 1–2). The area for goldsmiths, in the City of London, on land granted by Edward I, was Lombard Street, after those towns of northern Italy, which had defeated the Holy Roman Emperor, Frederic Barbarossa (1176), so beginning a period of their relative autonomy. All such towns sought to become chartered, i.e. to gain special rights enfranchising them, giving them independence and the right to hold weekly markets. In Britain, Portsmouth, Bristol, Ipswich, Norwich and Coventry are examples; cities flourished by being on trading routes, such as Nuremberg, or Augsburg, dominated by the Fugger merchant family in the sixteenth century, with urban interests throughout Europe.

According to Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 1130s, London itself was founded by Brutus, a grandson of Aeneas from Troy, hence was ‘Troynovant’; a feature which D.W. Robertson thought conditioned the background to Chaucer’s poem *Troilus and Criseyde* (c.1380) (Robertson 1965, p. 221). The association, making London distinctive beyond Florence or Paris, which however also promoted the idea that it was founded by survivors from Troy, and was encouraged by Edward III and Richard II. The poet John Gower (1325–1408) opens *Confessio Amantis* with a perhaps imaginary detail of court culture on the Thames:

Under the toun of newe Troye,
Which took of Brut his ferste joye,
In Temse whan it was flowende,
So as Fortune hir tyme sette,
My liege lord [Richard II] par chaunce I mette;
And so bifel, as I cam neigh,
Out of my bot, whan he me seigh,
He bad me come into his barge.

(Gower 2006, p. 1.44)

Florence, a Roman city, destroyed by the Ostrogoths, became a centre after 1000 CE, taking advantage of a lack of monarchy or overlord; it began taking over other towns itself, such as Pisa. Prospering from the importation of luxury goods brought on routes opened up by the Crusades, the city, which struck the florin in 1252, soon to be an international currency, grew as a centre for dyeing woollen cloth, and as a place for banking. Its Roman walls were replaced in 1172, expanding it across the Arno river by 1258; a third set of walls, expanding it again, were constructed between 1284 and 1333 (Anderson 1980, p. 22). Dante

comments on the expansion negatively in *Paradiso* cantos 15 and 16 (Hones 2006, pp. 45–51, 161–167). In the *Decameron* Florence suffers the Black Death, and seven women meet in Santa Maria Novella, the Dominican house to the west enclosed by the new walls (Santa Croce was the opposite Franciscan house, on the eastern side). ‘Novella’ puns on the name of the church, centre for a teaching order, and the point that the city generates *novelles*, new tales, going beyond traditional re-tellings. Word-plays, and ambiguity, seem inherent to the arts of the city. Accompanied by three men, the women go outside the city to a garden world to tell ten stories each over ten days; if that suggests withdrawal from the urban, urbanity returns with the rascal Ser Ciappelletto, from Prato, who journeys to an unspecified city in Burgundy (it is a city, because it has a moat, outside its walls); his dying confession, an exercise in lying, and done for strategic reasons, fools the Friar and makes him, posthumously, a saint. Confession, a new form of narrative, had been instituted as compulsory in 1216, and as here, and to a Friar, a more temporary auditor than a parish priest would be, it seems to fit the urban context. Lying, and the pleasures of the ambiguity which relates to that, becomes a new urban form (Ó Cuilleánáin 1984, pp. 148–176).

As in *Decameron*, which he probably knew (Hines 1993, pp. 229–238), Chaucer freely alludes to urban life, as when the Pardoner warns people off white wine ‘that is to selle in Fysshstrete or in Chepe’ (VI.564). ‘The Shipman’s Tale’ begins with a merchant and his wife living in St Denis, then the place where Gothic architecture had begun in the 1140s; now one of Paris’ *banlieues* [historically, ‘banned spaces’: places of the ‘liberties’, the suburbs where city-law did not quite extend]: his friend, John, is a monk from Paris; the merchant must go to the fair at Bruges on business, during which time the monk sleeps with the wife. ‘The Miller’s Tale’ is set in Oxford, the Reeve’s, at Trumpington, outside Cambridge; ‘The Cook’s Tale’ in London, opening with an apprentice of the craft of victuallers (sellers of food) called Perkyn Revelour (like the Flanders-based rioters on ‘The Pardoner’s Tale’) in a shop in Cheapside (in the 58 lines of the tale, which is only a fragment, ‘shoppe’ appears three times, plus once in the Tale’s Prologue). Perkyn engages in revels, which often end in Newgate prison (one of the early London prisons, along with the Fleet, and Ludgate and the Counter). Chaucer makes this apprentice another to be added to the portraits of the pilgrims; it is both closely observed, and allegorical, in the surname, although that is the name he is given, because of his playtime activities. The word is repeated in line 4391; and ‘revel’ in 4397 and 4402. At the end of this fragment of a tale, perhaps a deliberate fragment, as though Chaucer wants to do no more than sketch out the essentials for a *fabliau*, he lives with a dice-playing companion whose wife keeps a shop and is a prostitute: she ‘swyved for hir sustenance’ (Fragment 1: 4422). The Cook himself is a London product. One his favourite words is ‘jape’ (= trick, 4338, 4344); the Host of the Tabard, who knows him and calls him Roger, warns him to make his tale good, since his meat pies and other food sold is not so good, and ‘in thy shoppe is many a flye loos’ (1.4345–4352): thus connecting bad business to bad narrative: a marker of how ‘japes’, in urban shopkeeping, infect everything. The Cook, for his part, adding a proverb of the Flemings, makes clear that his tale

will be of a 'hostileer' (4360); there seems a personal animosity between the Host and the Cook which the Tale plays on.

EARLY MODERN LONDON

The removal of religious houses under Henry VIII makes a major difference to London, just as Protestantism ended the medieval 'pageant' plays which so many towns, especially York, had mounted around the Feast of Corpus Christi (made official after 1264). Areas around the walls, used by religious houses, fell vacant; these 'liberties' were not completely controllable by the City, and included areas where playhouses were built; they also included a criminal and a more radical population, and the tensions showed. The City became more Protestant, perhaps Puritan; certainly more money-concentrated, class-aware. Areas of land fell due to the Crown which sold them off as townhouses for lords: Covent Garden, north of the Strand, which belonged to Westminster Abbey, was designed by Inigo Jones (1573–1652), creator of Lincoln's Inn Fields. The Strand had been lined with bishops' townhouses. Jonson's *The Entertainment at Britain's Bourse* (= Bourse, 1609) memorialises the opening of the New Exchange, developed by Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, aimed at rivalling the Antwerp Bourse and Venice's Rialto, on the site of the Bishop of Durham's stables in the Strand, with goods and curiosities from the Caribbean, and from China, made for export (Jonson 2012, pp. 3, 353–372). China-houses, associated with the Bourse, become, in *Epicoene*, places for expensive living, and for brothels. The Archbishop of York had possessed York Place from the mid-thirteenth century. It passed to Wolsey as the Archbishop; at his fall (1530) the king took it, becoming part of the new palace of Whitehall; Inigo Jones designed court masques to be performed in its only extant part, the Banqueting House (1622). The rest was burned in 1698. A new form of transport emerged in the 1550s: the coach, supplementing the simple use of the horse (and cart). London's population became between 200,000 and 250,000 by the beginning of the seventeenth century; perhaps half a million after the Restoration (1660) (Pearl 1961, p. 14). Antwerp's population was 90,000, when it was sacked by Spain in 1576, whereat Amsterdam grasped the initiative, growing from 30,000 to 200,000 by 1675 and becoming the urban economic capital, with a supreme 'information exchange' as Clé Lesger puts it; Paris had a population of 130,000 in 1600, but the real large cities were still in Italy: Venice with 158,000, and Naples with 212,000 (Lesger 2006, p. 17).

DRAMA AND THE CITY

With London, Blackfriars, no longer a religious house, became the site for an indoor theatre in 1576, in opposition to another, the Children of Paul's (c.1557–1608). After being run for the Children of the Chapel Royal (i.e. choristers: the name went through several changes), Blackfriars housed the King's Men;

Whitefriars similarly became a Children of the King's Revels theatre c.1606, replaced by another indoor theatre at Salisbury Court (Queen Henrietta's Men, 1629), replaced in the Restoration by Dorset Garden. These theatres defined late Elizabethan London (Gurr 1992, pp. 118–121). Open-air theatres began with James Burbage's Theatre (1576), followed by the Curtain (1577—run by the same company, the Chamberlain's Men: it was still standing in 1627); another south of the river at Newington Butts, run as the Admiral's Men by Philip Henslowe (1579), who also opened the recently excavated Bankside Rose (1587). The Swan, run by a draper, Francis Langley, and the only theatre for which there is a contemporary illustration, followed c.1594 on Bankside, while the Globe, built with timbers of the old Theatre, came to Bankside in 1599: the Chamberlain's men becoming the King's Men (1603). Henslowe's Fortune Theatre, north of Cripplegate, followed in 1600: the company became Prince Henry's Men (1603). The Red Bull, in Clerkenwell followed, moving out of the Curtain, and run as Queen Anne's Men, as the company had been called since 1603: Webster, Clerkenwell-born, wrote *The White Devil* (1612) for it (Bradbrook 1980). Another was the Hope (1614, for Lady Elizabeth's Men and then the Prince's Men), built over the Bear-garden, and still used for that. The theatres on Bankside, e.g. the Globe, rebuilt after fire in 1613, and the Hope, are shown by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677), whose topographical views of London between 1636 and the Civil War (1642), during which he left England, are indispensable for showing early modern London (Parry 1980, pp. 52–59). The Red Bull moved to the indoors Cockpit in Drury Lane in 1616, reopened after fire, as the Phoenix (Hodges 1953, pp. 178–179). The pattern for the theatres was, especially in the face of city-opposition, to move towards the fashionable west, and to become indoors, with a certain exclusiveness this implied in the smaller space, as well as the opportunity for more sophistication in scenery and lighting; in other words, theatre became more socially segregating as it developed before most closed in 1642.

Though Shakespeare set none of his plays in contemporary London, though the *Henry IV* plays presume an Eastcheap setting nominally of the fifteenth century, these theatres staged comedies whose theme was London and its citizens (Grantley 2008). One of the earliest was William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money* (Rose, 1598); another, contemporary with Stow, by Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (Rose, 1599), makes it possible to see an interest in fifteenth-century London emerging out of the history-plays of the 1590s. Dekker shows a 'madcap' master shoemaker, a mock Tamburlaine in his bombastic vocabulary (with shades of Shakespeare's *Pistol*) becoming sheriff and then Mayor of London (historically: 1445) and being visited by the King (probably Henry V, with whose Shakespeare play of the same year there are parallels). The King named the building that Simon Eyre had had rebuilt after 1419: the Leadenhall. It is allowed to hold a Monday and Friday market for selling leather. A comic stress on mirth, merriment and madness and on a carnival spirit on the 'holiday' (Shrove Tuesday) displaces the snobbishness of a previous mayor, Sir Roger Oatley, who wanted to marry his Rose to a

gentleman; it also displaces the aristocratic Sir Hugh Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, whose nephew, Roland Lacy, disguises himself as a Dutch shoemaker to win her.

Citizen-comedies do not make the city a single reference point. Noticing London streets, buildings and trades may be celebratory, as in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, or more critical, suggesting that the world they memorialise is small, and small-minded, characterised by Puritans in any case averse to the theatre. Such references to actual places often come from characters about whom the text is critical. Middleton's title *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (Swan, 1613) satirises what chastity means by seeing it in relation to the marketplace: Middleton seems to be both Puritan as well as anti-Puritan hypocrisy (Heinemann 1980, pp. 73–106). One of its targets is 'the pure manner of Amsterdam' whose 'Family of Love', an antinomian Puritan group reputed to encourage free love, is parodied there as it was in Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*, with the Puritans Mr and Mrs Mulligrub (3.3.51). In *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, the Puritans get drunk (Act 3 scene 2). At the end, Allwit, the play's 'wittol', i.e. cuckold (a fabliau motif) and his wife propose to leave Cheapside and set up a boarding house in the Strand, which will also be a bawdy house (Act 5 scene 1.168–176); the play marks how building developments and status was tending westwards, but the unrelieved small-business tone mocks London, in a satirical mood detectable from the sense that the City is being treated allegorically, as with Jonson.

The relationship between the theatre-space and the city is ambiguous, not coincidental with regards to location, save with *The Alchemist*, performed in the Blackfriars theatre, and set in a house in the Blackfriars. The City imposes a new realism on the stage, to which it responds. The gap between the two sets of interests— the theatre and the city— may be closed, as with *The Roaring Girl* (see below), or may be left wide open, as a space opens too between the City and interests in formation further west. It is essential to decide whether the City is being used as a background, or creates the situation, as almost a character itself; in the case of the usurers, tricksters and manipulators who run through these plays, it is necessary to see how much ambivalence constructs them: admiration and condemnation together.

CITY COMEDIES

Brian Gibbons' book on 'city comedy' discusses Jonson (as heir to Marlowe, and *The Jew of Malta* which he sees as city-based) and Marston, and Middleton (1580–1627). Texts include Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (Curtain, 1598, but revised by 1612, and now set in London) and *Westward Ho!* (Blackfriars, Webster, and Dekker, 1604–1605), one of the first plays to satirise rich city wives, and moving the action westwards to Brentford. This was followed by the parodic *Eastward Ho!* (Blackfriars, 1605: Jonson, 2012), a title which plays on those wanting to get access to Greenwich, one of James I's royal courts. The play is dedicated in the 'Prologus' to 'the City': Jonson's editors say that this

means not simply '[t]he twenty-six wards of London, but... the community of merchants and tradesmen who were enfranchised citizens—a clue to the play's irony, since the children's companies in general and Marston and Jonson in particular regularly satirize citizens' (Jonson 2012, Vol. 2; p. 544). It includes an industrious and idle apprentice (Golding and Quicksilver), a pattern anticipating Hogarth: Quicksilver dresses up and quotes bombastic lines from Marlowe and Kyd, and shows himself irrepressible even in the prison (the Counter), a source of much action in these plays, and a way of defining the city (Howard 2007, pp. 68–113). A river-journey towards Deptford allows for the mention of Drake's ship, the *Golden Hind*, which, having circumnavigated the world, was now a national monument. The destination is Virginia, reached by Raleigh in 1585, but then lost, until the London Company was formed in 1606—six years after the establishment of the East India Company (31 December 1600) to finance settlement of Jamestown in 1607 (Van Fossen 1979, pp. 17–19).

The play's action ends in the Counter prison, and with pious moralising, by Touchstone, the goldsmith commands: 'Now, London, look about':

And in this moral see thy glass run out:
Behold the careful father, thrifty son,
The solemn deeds, which each of us have done;
The usurer punished, and from fall so steep,
The prodigal child reclaimed, and the lost sheep.

(Jonson 2012, p. 2.640)

But, while noting the use of the 'prodigal son' motif (Luke 15. 16–31), frequent throughout these plays (including the motif of the prodigal's self-righteous elder brother), the satire is more comprehensive than this, and was followed by *Northward Ho!* (Dekker and Webster, 1605–1606), extending the action for extra-marital assignations to Ware. Marston's city-comedy is *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605, Blackfriars); its subject Franceschina, the discarded prostitute, treated with insight and sympathy, recognising how poverty drives the woman to prostitution, justifying her desire for revenge on Freevill. His name speaks for itself, but he is also tricking his dour friend Malhereaux, who suddenly falls for sex when seeing Franceschina, in the manner of Angelo in *Measure for Measure* (1604); Angelo may be intended to be a Puritan too. Another plot gives the tricks of Cocledemoy upon Mulligrub: the play's Argument calls the former the 'witty city jester'. After *Volpone* (1606), set in Venice, though that may mean London, all Jonson's plays afterwards are London-based, as the Prologue to *The Alchemist* (1610) announces: 'Our scene is London... No clime breeds better matter for your whore, / Bawd, squire, imposter, many persons more' (Jonson 2012, Vol. 3; p. 362).

Jonson's plays occur in single private settings, which encourage moroseness and paranoia. Middleton's range over the city in such plays as *A Mad World My Masters* (Paul's, 1605), or *Michaelmas Term* (Paul's, 1604), with its reference

to ‘the man-devouring city’ (2.2.21), which is where people come to from the country, to be cheated, as the young man Easy is by Quomodo, the citizen (of the Drapers’ Company) who wants to become a country gentleman by securing Easy’s lands. But on the other hand, the innocent girl from Northamptonshire, Country Wench, her only name, but a highly provocative one, succeeds: persuaded by Andrew Lethe’s pander, Dick Hellgill with the promise of clothes and new fashion (a city theme), and told that ‘virginity is no city trade’ (1.2.41). She marries Lethe successfully: his name (all Middleton’s names are expressive) suggests that he has forgotten that he was Andrew Gruel, an upstart adventurer, trying out a new identity in the City. In *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (Paul’s, 1605), like *The Dutch Courtesan*, the young prodigal hero, who in the city can live on credit, discards a mistress to marry, socially speaking, upwards: his name is ‘Witgood’. Middleton, like Jonson, incorporates the word ‘wit’ into his characters’ names, as if defining a specific urban virtue, or a quality essential to the city: indeed, the witty / city rhyme is deliberate. One interest in *A Trick to Catch the Old One* is usury: in two old men, Pecunious Lucre and Walkadine Hoard (a usurer in love), and in two city-figures, Harry Dampit, and Gulf. Dampit’s boast, with sociological significance, is that ‘he came to town with but ten shillings in his purse, and now is credibly worth ten thousand pound’ (1.4). Gibbons (1968, p. 163) notes Hoard’s varied qualities as making him ‘a more convincing London citizen than the sentimentally presented’ Simon Eyre. Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (Blackfriars, 1607) mocks the citizen, and the moralising of the citizen play: being performed by the children’s companies—for which, among leading dramatists, only Shakespeare did not write—distance from the city and its values is emphasised; it has a carnival quality, encapsulated in the fantastic figure of Merrythought.

Another Middleton / Dekker collaboration, *The Roaring Girl* takes as subject Mary (Moll) Frith, who appeared on the stage at the Fortune theatre (contrary to all conventions which kept women off the stage). She was compelled to do public penance at St Paul’s Cross (the north side of St Paul’s) on 12 February 1612 (Fortune, 1611: see Coppélia Kahn, in Middleton 2007, pp. 1.369–371, 610–612; 2.721–7778). Moll was famous for smoking, swearing and cross-dressing and associating with thieves and cutpurses: she speaks underworld ‘cant’, which is used to duelling effect in Act 5 scene 1, and shows her ability to master several worlds of discourse. In contrast, *The Alchemist*’s Kastril is the ‘roaring boy’ who has come up to London from the country (a common plot-move) to learn to quarrel and to live by his wits:

I have heard some speech
 Of the angry boys, and seen ‘em take tobacco,
 And in his shop: and I can take it too.
 And I would fain be one of ‘em, and go down,
 And practise i’ the country. (3.4.21–25)

With Moll Frith, *The Roaring Girl* crosses the boundaries between truth and fiction: the real-life person appears on stage, and then in public penance; the stage-character gives something to the real-life person. Dramatic literature creates the city, as the city creates the stage-figure, and both create the behaviours and the discourse of the period. A last example may be Philip Massinger, *The City Madam* (Blackfriars, c.1632), comprehensively attacking hypocrisy within the city, with one brother, Sir John Frugal, of an alderman-like dignity, spying on Luke, his ex-prodigal but now Puritanical brother (the name signals the ‘prodigal son’ parable). Luke, who ends up going to Virginia in exile, is like *Measure for Measure*’s Angelo, which may use Vienna and its ‘suburbs’ with their ‘houses of resort’ as an allegory of London. Luke, however, unlike Angelo, is not corrupted by the sexual, but by money, by acquisitiveness, which as a theme separates city-comedy, in general, from Shakespeare. *The City-Madam* ends with a warning, which implies a certain Puritanism and criticism of the court, or criticism of the class that is not part of the court: telling

Our city dames, whom wealth makes proud, to move
In their own spheres, and willingly to confess,
In their habits, manners, and their highest port,
A distance ‘twixt the city, and the court.

(5.3.151–155) (Massinger 1964, p. 88)

Yet this criticises only the City’s excess. The *Measure for Measure* reference also suggests the motif of the ‘disguised ruler’ who moves among his people within the city, its space allowing it, observing and judging; Gibbons notes its pervasiveness in city-comedy. Perhaps that intimates a more modern interest in the city to be taken up in nineteenth-century writing, such as Nadgett’s observation of everyone in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and in detective fiction: the question the city raises is what can be known within it, because the city produces a different kind of plot. That is best discussed through *The Alchemist* with its speed and ability to bring into the same locale, as in Act 4 scene 6 all the dupes, some seven of them, onto the stage for the first time ‘and they do not realise what they have in common, nor that the tricksters have brought about a climax of ridicule directed towards them while they display their extreme “humours”’ (Gibbons 1968, p. 175). The atomisation, where no one knows what another is plotting, or even that a plot is under way, which they are not party to, is essential to how the modern city creates literature. So is the idea that the city is the place where extravagant behaviour appears, as a person’s ‘humour’: the scene accentuates character-differences, but by suggesting both that the city *produces* such exceptional traits, which, playing on the related sense of ‘humour’ implies comedy, but also *necessitates*, even *enforces* such behaviours: Chaucer, Boccaccio, Jonson and Dickens show that in increasing modes. And the triumphant figure in *The Alchemist* is Allwit’s servant Face, master of the scam, who is all façade, or, in another way, is faceless: that, too, seems a city-characteristic.

LONDON, PARIS, AMSTERDAM

Martin Butler notes that ‘politics belong to cities’ adding ‘comedies too belong to cities’, because of the inherently ordinary figures within comedy (Butler 1984, p. 141). That comedy and the city relate to each other is apparent from these citizen-plays, as it becomes a feature of art depicting the city: Hogarth, Cruikshank, and French caricatures. Beyond this perception, Butler draws attention to changes in drama in the Caroline period (strictly, after 1625, but Butler considers 1632–1642 as the decade when the court ‘invaded’ the theatre (1984, p. 3), and changed the nature of city-comedy towards the fashionable. Fletcher’s city-comedies develop ‘wit’ as now a social value, as accomplishment, or breeding (1984, p. 159), not as earlier, in Middleton; James Shirley’s *The Ball* and *Hyde Park* (both Cockpit, 1632) gives, according to Butler, perhaps a first use of the word ‘ball’ (1984, p. 110), suggesting a new world of aristocracy—though much more after the Restoration—who begin to mark the ‘season’ and come to London to be seen at concerts; the other title registers how far west London’s fashionable geography has shifted; *The City-Madam* notes the Burse (the New Exchange, in the Strand), and also the Neathouse, nursery-gardens and a place of entertainment in Pimlico and Chelsea. The city remains to be fought over with regard to whose city it is and who can access it: here politics may be comic, as Butler says, but may be more violent, because interests cannot be resolved through comedy. Developing from Butler, Lawrence Manley argues for London becoming the ‘metropolis’ in the seventeenth century (Manley 1995, pp. 481–530). The term implies that London expresses something of the whole nation; it is a centring discourse, and so appears in the dedication of Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis* (1667): ‘To the Metropolis of Great Britain’.

These changes in Britain may be compared with Paris. In 1528, Francois I of France announced that he would live in Paris, not in the Loire valley. This move inaugurated new work on the Louvre, and the building of the Tuileries Palace; and a changing and increasing importance for Paris may be detected in Gargantua’s altercation with the city in *Gargantua* (1535). Work was continued by, notably Henri IV, king of France after 1589, as the first Bourbon monarch, and with Paris open to him after 1594. With his chief minister, Sully, Henri’s modernisations in Paris, until his assassination (1510), included building the Pont Neuf (1604), designed not just to be functional but to provide a view across to the Louvre (Newman 2007, p. 38): a sign that the city is becoming self-reflexive, a marker of how it must produce writing about itself. The Place Royal (now the Place des Vosges, in the Marais), as an aristocratic enclave, and designed too, for silkworks, followed, as did the Place Dauphine, a triangular space on the west end of the Ile de la Cité, as a commercial area. Henri’s grandson Louis XIV, with his minister Colbert, would continue such building of *places* (i.e. squares): the Place des Victoires (1685) and the Place Vendôme (1699), both centred by statues of Louis: Louis stamped the city with avenues and boulevards. Henri’s other projects were the rue Dauphine,

which continued south from the Pont Neuf, and the Hôpital Saint Louis, for plague victims, north east, beyond the walls, and his design was to make Paris the capital of a centralised state (Ballon 1991, p. 217): more conscious than was intended for London.

In the seventeenth century, cities gained more significance when seen as attached to territories which claimed them as part of their national sovereignty. The focus on colonialism appears more strongly, as there is a geographical shift of emphasis from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, including the ‘Black Atlantic’ of the slave-trade: here, Amsterdam, a virtual city-state and a republic, with no court or nobility is key. It was developed in the seventeenth century to suit merchant rule and a mercantile economy, possessing a central canal (the Damrak) and its square (the Dam), encircled by sets of canals (Mak 1999, pp. 97–133). It developed a Jewish quarter: first a Sephardic and then, in the 1630s, an Ashkenhazi, displaced from Germany, Poland and Lithuania by the Thirty Years War, and then by the Chmielniecki massacres of 1648 in the Ukraine. The Jews settled on a reclaimed island, the Vlooienburg, designed for storing timber. Here Spinoza was born in 1632; here Rembrandt lived. Amsterdam had a first free press, but culturally, it looked to Paris. Its writer, who chronicled the city in his play *Gysbreght van Aemstel* (1637), was Joos van den Vondel (1587–1679), whose Mennonite family had moved from Antwerp to Cologne to Amsterdam (Grootes 2012, pp. 101–114). The creation of the East India Company in 1602 and the West India Company in 1621, as rivals to Portugal and Spain, meant colonising New Amsterdam (i.e. New York) before 1625 and Cape Town after 1652, and particularly, the claim to Indonesia, the colony described in the Amsterdam novel of 1860, *Max Havelaar* by ‘Multatuli’ (Eduard Douwes Dekker), highly satirical of the Dutch middle-class relationship to colonialism: their lack of imaginative sympathy, which is a failure of intelligence, suggesting how anti-intellectualism is ‘the anti-Semitism of the business mind’, as Franco Moretti quotes Richard Hofstadter (Moretti 2013, p. 137). It was the bourgeois condition, of which Amsterdam, like London, is a fine example.

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Modern London: 1820–2020

Jason Finch

‘London fascinates’, E.M. Forster wrote in *Howards End*:

One visualizes it as a tract of quivering grey, intelligent without purpose, and excitable without love; as a spirit that has been altered before it can be chronicled; as a heart that certainly beats, but with no pulsation of humanity. It lies beyond everything: Nature, with all her cruelty, comes nearer to us than do these crowds of men. A friend explains himself; the earth is explicable—from her we came, and we must return to her. But who can explain Westminster Bridge Road or Liverpool Street in the morning—the city inhaling—or the same thoroughfares in the evening—the city exhaling her exhausted air. (Forster [1910] 1998, pp. 79–80)

This passage is not only topographic reference (‘Westminster Bridge Road’, ‘Liverpool Street’), but also metaphor (‘the city inhaling’). This combination is found throughout London writing produced since 1815. Research into London literature is lively (e.g. Manley 2011; *Literary London Journal*; *London Fictions* website and publications) but the field has rarely been surveyed as a whole.

There are two long-lasting ways of understanding and representing London in literature. One is the comic-realist-moralist-topographic, its most influential contributor being Dickens; the second the visionary-historical-mythic. Broadly, the first of these is oriented towards the present and the second towards the past; the first towards London localities and the second towards ideas of city totality. The visionary-historical strand becomes established as the canonical means of reading London thanks to the influence of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922). Yet Eliot, and earlier Forster, drew on the toponymic-topographic tradition in London writing: indeed, they both find it indispensable in talking about London. Much of the London writing that follows Eliot’s binds the two together in varied ways.

More than the literature of Paris or New York, London literature often confers on its subject the combination of a frequently aggressively capitalist and rapidly changing present with echoes and remnants of an unfathomably deep past. Such a combination can be detected in Forster's idea of a 'spirit that has been altered before it can be chronicled' in London, which he combines with the idea that this city in particular 'lies beyond everything'. In this, a better comparison point than New York and Paris proves to be Cairo (Mehrez 2011). In both London and Cairo writing there is surprisingly little evidence of the iconic central buildings and sites of the city, with the city largely conceptualized around representative and obscure localities, lost in the wilderness of a vast, polycentricism containing part-hidden traces of its ancient past.

Literature is one of the forces of 'dirt, degradation and disorder' which, Ben Campkin (2013, p. 1) claims, contribute to 'the "cityness" of cities'. If researchers in architecture, design, urban planning and human geography are paying more attention to cultural sorts of messiness, then creative writers and academic theorists speculating about the nature of the city, in a parallel way, have new materialities available to them. Iain Sinclair writes up his preoccupation with Hawksmoor and the mystical geometries of once-desolate inner east London in *Lud Heat* ([1975] 2012, p. 15): 'Eight churches give us the enclosure, the shape of the fear—built for early century optimism, erected over a fen of undisclosed horrors, white stones laid upon the mud & dust'. Since the 1970s Sinclair and such as Maureen Duffy (*Capital*, 1975; see Groes 2011, pp. 17–142) have been followed by others, labelled psychogeographers, who use walks through a city labelled with thousands of toponyms and filled with stories of past lives, in an effort to get close to London. Encouraged by writing such as Sinclair's, archaeological investigations have taken place in areas such as St Giles and Spitalfields which might be understood as having dark, buried pasts (e.g. Anthony 2011; Harwood et al. 2015). Their findings tell less hyperbolic stories, in part precisely because archaeologists cannot recover what Sinclair wants: feelings. These include those of people died horrible deaths in squalid lodgings or were subject to corporal punishment on the military land where Spitalfields suburb was built from the sixteenth century onwards.

Beyond the topographic and visionary strands lies another modern tradition in London writing. This associates London, often directly opposed to Paris as in works by Henry James (*The Princess Casamassima*, 1886) and George Orwell (*Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933), with boredom and lack. It is detectable in the lovelessness and the absence of the 'pulsation of humanity' of Forster's tract of quivering grey. Nineteenth-century visitors and incomers, including Dostoevsky and James, spotted alongside the city's immense size and commercial orientation a staleness or greyness. Twentieth-century writing on London includes Stevie Smith's poetic prose of boredom, shuttling by

Underground between a sedate suburb and the duller, more official portions of the centre (*The Holiday*, 1949), and Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), recent arrivals trying to amuse themselves in a profoundly drab, workaday city. Throughout the period between the 1870s and the 1970s, a view of London as boring, sterile, repetitive, grey and small-minded appears more often than a contrary one in which it is colourful and varied, the latter recurring in the last quarter of the century in Michael Moorcock, Salman Rushdie and Hanif Kureishi. The 'boring London' view ranges from the emptiness of Leonard Bast's world in Forster (Bradshaw 2007; Finch 2011, pp. 259–270), to London as mere staging post on the way to the continent in James; from the desperately unsexy West End nightclubs of Evelyn Waugh (*Vile Bodies*, 1929), the desperate suburban lives of William Sansom (*The Body*, 1949; see Bergonzi 1993, pp. 90–92) and the bleakly peripheral extremes of Gerald Kersh (*Fowler's End*, 1957).

RECURRING MOTIFS AND FIGURES: DISCOVERY, MONEY, THE IMMIGRANT

Other more general motifs and imaginative sites stand out in London's modern literary history. First, there is the conceit of the discovery of a portion of London that no one hitherto knew. 'Silver-fork' writers like Theodore Hook (his *Sayings and Doings* of 1824 referring to 'the recesses of Bloomsbury and the wilds of Guildford Street') and W.M. Thackeray (*Vanity Fair*, 1848; see White 2007, p. 89) in the first half of the nineteenth century joke that Bloomsbury's defeat in the battle of the new speculative suburbs has been so complete that no one any longer remembers where it is (see Copeland 2001; Ashton 2012, pp. 138–140). Relatedly, the East End in the second half of the nineteenth century is repeatedly—and facetiously—claimed by writers to be an unknown country. In the early twentieth century, writers in South London sometimes claimed to be showing readers a formerly unknown world across the bridges; so at the end of that century and in the early twenty-first did Kureishi (*The Buddha of Suburbia*, 1990), Iain Sinclair on the M25 motorway (*London Orbital*, 2002) and Zadie Smith in the portion of inner suburbia she created using the Londoner's label of the postcode in *NW* (2012).

Second, from De Quincey to Caryl Churchill (*Serious Money*, 1988) and to John Lanchester (*Capital*, 2012) among modern writers on London, via the 'islands of money' on which Forster's Schlegel sisters sit in *Howards End* (see Delany, 1988), the brutality and transformative power of money, plus the cushioning it can provide in surroundings that for others are hostile, are another recurring concern. Spectacular financial gains and losses, and the modifications in social class identity they bring about, are frequent plot instruments for writers on London: Gissing's Biffen (*New Grub Street*, 1891) is isolated among the slum-dwellers of Marylebone because he has declined from a higher class, while Smith's

Keisha Blake in *NW* renames herself Natalie as she engineers a transformation from council-estate daughter of West Indian immigrants to wealthy barrister.

Thirdly, the immigrant has also been recurrent in London literature for many centuries. A high proportion of London writers have been migrants to the city, whether they were born there with immigrant parents from other parts of the world, or whether they moved to the city to make a career as a writer, and be that from the provinces, from overseas or from London's own suburbs. London writing is more broadly and in a more complex way immigrant writing than has so far been understood. Work on explicitly multinational London writing of the contemporary era (e.g. McLeod 2004) has an application to earlier periods.

KEY IMAGINATIVE LOCI AND MOVEMENTS: RIVER, PARK, LODGING HOUSE, PERIPHERY

The literary London of the modern era is less dangerous and less filled with spectacular display than in previous eras (Gatrell 1994; Kekäläinen 2012). It is frequently described in terms of horror and alienation but it is, perhaps, less so than in earlier centuries. It is also less knowable, more inhuman, as Forster grasps. This side of it is grasped in the endless 'night-walking' through districts of Dickens and others (Beaumont 2015; Slater 2004 (see ODNB); Humpherys 2011, pp. 232–233), as well as in the move just mentioned in which a writer claims to be discovering hitherto unknown worlds within London.

Any study of the key literary locales of London should begin with the River Thames. Sometimes the focus is on the water itself, encountered in boats or even swum in works by Ainsworth (*Jack Sheppard*, 1839), Dickens (*Our Mutual Friend*, 1865) and Iris Murdoch (*Under the Net*, 1954), at other times on the bridges over it and its embankments (Forster, *Howards End*, 1910; Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933). Another such locale is the park. In earlier times the inter-connected Royal Parks—Hyde Park, St James's Park, Green Park and Kensington Gardens—were called collectively 'the Park'. It was a site of high fashion and fashionable display. In mid-twentieth century literature, the Park, as in earlier centuries, is where acts of display and inter-class sexual encounters happen: in Thackeray (*Vanity Fair*, 1848); William Plomer (*The Invaders*, 1934); Samuel Beckett (*Murphy*, 1938); Selvon (*The Lonely Londoners*, 1956); Alan Hollinghurst (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, 1988). It is where one retreats from the buzz and dirt of the city (Murdoch, *Under the Net*, 1954), but also where political conflicts are staged (Simon Blumenfeld, *Jew Boy*, 1935). There, different social classes can interact. In the period after 1880, some of the characteristics of the park earlier than that were extended to outlying parks and green lungs of the city including Hampstead Heath (Will Self, *Zadie Smith*) and Epping Forest.

Another key spatial environment is the obscure London living environment, not only from Mayhew to Arthur Morrison (*A Child of the Jago*, 1896) to the bedsit house of William Plomer (*The Case Is Altered*, 1932), Samuel Beckett

(*Murphy*, 1938), Norman Collins (*London Belongs to Me*, 1945), Lynne Reid Banks (*The L-Shaped Room*, 1961), Harold Pinter (*The Caretaker*, 1960) and Alexander Baron (*The Lowlife*, 1963); Patrick Hamilton's private hotel (*Hangover Square*, 1941) but also Thackeray's haut-bourgeois Russell Square in *Vanity Fair* (1847) and Lytton Strachey's 'filth packets' in 'Lancaster Gate' (1922). Other works to mention here are by Arnold Bennett (*Riceyman Steps*, 1923), Selvon again (*The Housing Lark*, 1965; *Moses Ascending*, 1975) and Maureen Duffy (*That's How It Was*, 1962). There are numerous and varied other depictions of drab and unglamorous home life lived in environments other than the bedsit including the gentrified and semi-gentrified middle-class house (Kingsley Amis, *Jake's Thing*, 1978; Smith, NW, 2012) and various sorts of flat, council and other (Martin Amis, *London Fields*, 1989; Moorcock, *Mother London*, 1988; Smith, NW, 2012). This is to speak only of the post-Second World War decades but the analysis has been extended into the topography of accounts of life in slum and semi-slum regions (e.g. Cuming 2013; Finch 2015).

As well as locales there are acts of movement. A key one crosses and re-crosses a boundary separating London and what is not London. Here is the young Dickens:

And now, he approached the great city, which lay outstretched before him like a dark shadow on the ground, reddening the sluggish air with a deep dull light, that told of labyrinths of public ways and shops, and swarms of busy people . . . the noise swelled into a louder sound, and forms grew more distinct and numerous still, and London—visible in the darkness by its own faint light, and not by that of Heaven—was at hand. (Dickens [1841] 1973, p. 71)

Sixty years later, a similar porosity of boundaries remains important in Ford's *The Soul of London* (1905) and Morrison's *To London Town* (1899). In the latter, the lack of butterflies in contemporary Epping Forest is attributed to:

some subtle influence from the great smoky province that lay to the south-west. For London grew and grew, and washed nearer its scummy edge of barren brickbats and clinkers. It had passed Stratford long since, and had nearly reached Leyton. And though Leyton was eight miles off, still the advancing town sent something before it—an odour, a subtle principle—that drove off the butterflies. The old man had once taken the Emperor Moth at Stratford, in a place long covered with a row of grimy little houses; now the Emperor was none too easy to find in the thickest of the woodland. (Morrison 1899, p. 15)

This anticipates the London 'creeping' across the fields of Hertfordshire with which Forster's *Howards End*, written a few years after *To London Town*, closes. The passage across such a boundary is important again in Jewish and Caribbean immigrant writing of the mid-twentieth century, from Blumenfeld in the 1930s through to Selvon and George Lamming (*The Emigrants*, 1954) in the 1950s. Earlier the entrance is classically by road,

later by boat and train; in Colin MacInnes (*Absolute Beginners*, 1959) and Monica Ali (*Brick Lane*, 2003), it is already starting to happen by plane. Earlier the city impresses with its immensity, later it is merely drab and extensive.

1820–1870: VISIONS AND TOPOGRAPHIES INTERTWINED IN DE QUINCEY AND DICKENS

Two writers who had a powerful impact on those who took on London as a subject later in the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century are Thomas De Quincey and Dickens. Between them they launched two metaphors for London which have endured through the subsequent two centuries: that of it as a giant and incomprehensible animated being, a new Leviathan; that of it as a great aggregation of numberless different little worlds each with its own geography, languages and characteristic inhabitants.

De Quincey grasps the gigantic new London he encountered as a teenager through a sense of its vastness and magnetism. Memorably, he describes huge droves of cattle ‘upon the great north roads, all with their heads directed to London’ (De Quincey 1876, p. 204). This leads him to conceive of London as a vast mechanism like a wheel sucking things into its centre. A view from the same era was Cobbett’s of London as parasitic on its surroundings; De Quincey, like Forster, is horrified by London but yet attuned to its peculiarity in a way that the bluntly partisan and anti-London Cobbett never is:

A suction so powerful, felt along radii so vast, and a consciousness, at the same time, that upon other radii still more vast, both by land and by sea, the same suction is operating, night and day, summer and winter, and hurrying forever into one centre the infinite means needed for her infinite purposes [...] crowds the imagination with a pomp to which there is nothing corresponding on this planet, either among the things that have been or the things that are. Or if any exception there is, it must be sought in ancient Rome. (De Quincey 1876, p. 204)

De Quincey sought metaphors for the new London that he encountered. Ancient Rome is one that would recur in writers of the period around the First World War. Elsewhere he writes that ‘the stream of London charity flows in a channel which, though deep and mighty, is yet noiseless and underground; not obvious or readily accessible to poor houseless wanderers’ (De Quincey [1821] 1886). These two images, of a mighty ‘suction’ along ‘radii’ that are ‘vast’ and the ‘channel’ of London charity, are both redolent of engineering, and specifically of the canals and docks which were at the forefront of London’s technological advances in the early nineteenth century.

Other writers were more likely to prefer investigation of pasts hidden within this changing London, as Charles Lamb was in an essay like ‘Christ’s Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago’ or concentrate not on the radii of the wheel but on

still-rural-seeming locales connected to the centre, as when Leigh Hunt ([1815] 1997) praised Hampstead's 'serene' and agricultural 'southern face' and 'Nature's own ground' to its north at a time when, as Gregory Dart (2012) has shown, to be a cockney often meant not to be a working-class denizen of inner London but someone with an indeterminate class identity mobile in London and its environs.

De Quincey's conception it is, of 'this mighty wilderness, the city—no, not the city, but the nation—of London'. Dickens ([1839] 1990, p. 450) applies this directly in *Nicholas Nickleby's* chapter 36 when Nicholas refers to 'this wilderness of London' almost as something proverbial in expressing his surprise at the friendliness of a stranger. This identification of the city as wilderness is then instantly confirmed by the stranger, a prosperous old man, who connects this identity to the act of immigration: 'It *is* a wilderness. It was a wilderness to me once. I came here barefoot. I have never forgotten it.' But De Quincey begins a tradition of talking about the protagonist as lonely and alienated from his surroundings. He foreshadows twentieth-century urban walkers by aligning himself with waifs and strays more than with the ordinary, routine lives of masses of others in the city.

After De Quincey came a whole tradition of documentary or reportage writing by writers who went undercover. This began with James Greenwood in the 1860s (see Koven 2004) and continued to Ada Chesterton (*In Darkest London*, 1926) and George Orwell (*Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1933) in the 1920s and 1930s. The differences are as important as the similarities. These later investigators do not, like De Quincey, employ large-scale, even epic, metaphors. And De Quincey portrays himself as someone with advanced powers of reflection. He concludes the haunting story of his relations with the young prostitute Ann who revived him with 'a glass of port wine and spices' when he was fainting from hunger in the streets, by falling into the reverie of a 'tender' urban memory associated, as the mystical qualities of the streets sometimes are in Gissing (*The Unclassed*, 1884), with the sound of a street musician. Alongside these reflective or visionary qualities, however, De Quincey deploys a vivid and precise toponymy of pedestrianism resembling that of the younger novelists Dickens and Ainsworth, as he names 'Swallow Street', 'Golden Square' and 'Sherrard Street' narrating his last walk with Ann 'through a part of the town which has now all disappeared, so that I can no longer retrace its ancient boundaries' before he leaves town on foot through 'the tumult and blaze of Piccadilly' (De Quincey [1821] 1886).

More than of De Quincey, anyone since the 1850s consciously trying to be a London writer has been aware of Dickens. The origins of 'Dickens's London', lie in Dickens's own walks and observations in those portions of London which reformers and improvers were embarrassed about and wanted to remove in the first half of the nineteenth century, chunks of an 'Old London' which only became appealing in Dickensian retrospect (White 2007, pp. 30–87). In Dickens's London writing is powered by toponyms. As Anne Humpherys (2011, p. 232) points out, Dickens's novels are 'full of street names'. 'Old London' as it was conceived in the first half of the nineteenth century enters Dickens's writing in his

habitual interest in sites like the ‘faded tumble down street’ in Soho where Newman Noggs lodges in *Nicholas Nickleby*, or the ‘shady little square’ near the Bank of England where the Cheeryble brothers of the same novel have their offices (Dickens [1839] 1990, pp. 160, 451), or the rookery Tom All Alone’s and the house of Mr Krook in *Bleak House*, or the ‘old brick house, so dingy as to be all but black, standing by itself within a gateway’ where Arthur Clennam lodges early in *Little Dorrit*. All of these points within London, whether prosperous and clean or filthy and impoverished, are understood as survivals of the past, as chunks of the past in the present.

While large-scale, governing images become more important in it as time goes on, Dickens’s London, from *Sketches by Boz* in the 1830s through to *Our Mutual Friend* in the 1860s, extremes of invention combine with extremes of faithfulness to observed detail. Dickens always focuses on individual localities within the massive city (from the Scotland Yard of *Sketches by Boz* to the Smith Square and the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters pub in Limehouse of *Our Mutual Friend*, 1865), pushing subsequent writers towards a habitual assumption: that London is a city of hundreds of villages rather than a single orderly whole. Such an assumption is present in the Clerkenwell of Bennett (*Riceyman Steps*, 1923), and the ‘NW’ which Zadie Smith (*NW*, 2012) establishes as her own territory, to take an example from the 1920s and another from the 2010s, both novels which take a district or segment (smaller for Bennett, larger for Smith) as a microcosm for a London which is understood as a microcosm of the whole world.

Dickens lovingly recreates and manipulates corners of ‘Old London’, but he is not much interested in medieval dates, old chronicles and antiquarian surveys or architectural history. This distinguishes him from a side of London writing which is very interested in a specifically antiquarian and archaeological view of it in which its multiple presents are simultaneously occupied, even haunted, by different pasts. Dickens’s past is a recent one, often dwelling on the post-1815, pre-railway era of his own childhood and in his two historical novels, *Barnaby Rudge* and *A Tale of Two Cities*, reaching only a single generation further back, into the last decades of the eighteenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century the ‘Old London’ tradition, concerned with the city’s own myths of itself, can be traced through the fictions of Ainsworth (*Jack Sheppard*, 1839; *The Tower of London*, 1840; *Old Saint Paul’s*, 1841) and Douglas Jerrold (*The History of St Giles and St James*, 1845). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the ‘Old London’ tradition emerges in non-fictional writings. It is to be seen in the publications of the London Topographical Society including its journal the *London Topographical Record* which, spurred by large-scale demolitions of older houses, began appearing in 1901. Between the 1880s and the 1920s it can be traced in the antiquarian strands of books such as *All Sorts and Conditions of Men* by Besant (concerned with the East End), *The Soul of London* by Ford (1905) and *Riceyman Steps* by Bennett. The ‘Old London’ strand surfaces in T.S. Eliot and stays prominent in later London writers such as Emanuel Litvinoff (*Journey Through a Small Planet*, 1972), Duffy (*Capital*, 1975), Moorcock (*Mother*

London, 1988), Sinclair (*Lud Heat*, 1975; *Lights out for the Territory*, 1999). It stands in contrast with essentially present-focused London writing by the likes of Selvon, Baron (*Rosie Hogarth*, 1951; *The Low Life* 2010) and Zadie Smith (*White Teeth*, 2000; NW, 2012).

Most of the worthwhile scholarship on Dickens and London (e.g. Fanger [1965] 1995; Tambling 2009) lends support to the idea that Dickens is basically a writer of London details, someone who knew the nooks and crannies. Future work could build on this by paying attention to mobility and dynamism, focusing on moves across the borders of London. A richer understanding of London in the nineteenth century would work to grasp what its edges, where it ended, meant to those who used it (e.g. Finch 2015, 2016, pp. 49–63), taking in beyond Dickens writing like Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard*, George Borrow's magnificently weird *Lavengro* (1851) and looking forward to the perspectives surveyed in Ford's *The Soul of London*.

LATE VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN: ALIENATED TOPOGRAPHIES

The era between Dickens's death and the First World War is dominated by topographically precise London writing. But where Dickens, especially earlier in his career, provides integrative and coping strategies for the giant metropolis which threatens to be incomprehensible and contains other dangers (Henkle 1980, p. 112; Furneaux 2007), much of this writing shares De Quincey's alienated positioning in relation to the urban mass.

In the words of Bart Keunen and Luc De Droogh (2001, pp. 108–109), this is a phase in the writing of the metropolis that combines 'sociology' with a fixation on 'the monstrous' with a frequent and controversial influence detectable from contemporary writing, notably that of Zola. This is also a writing which comically mimics demotic voices a way reminiscent of the music hall stage. Here belong works by Gissing (*Workers in the Dawn*, 1880), James (*The Princess Casamassima*, 1886) and Margaret Harkness in the 1880s to Shaw (*Widowers' Houses*, 1892), Morrison (*A Child of the Jago*, 1896) and Maugham (*Liza of Lambeth*, 1897) and Clarence Rook (*The Hooligan Nights*, 1899) in the 1890s, and after 1900 W. Pett Ridge (*Mord Em'ly*, 1901) and, as late as 1915, Thomas Burke (*Limehouse Nights*, 1916). In a specifically London and even Dickensian fashion, such writing lays an emphasis on locality and topography (with toponyms ever-prominent), and on picturesque vigour. Oddities and cranks are emphasized, from the charm of Pett Ridge's girl street urchin protagonist, to the vigorous swearing and fighting of Morrison's Jagos in their odd anti-London rookery, and the gallows humour with which Gissing handles the Clerkenwell slum and its parasitic London strands in *The Nether World* (1889). Gissing also portrays pedestrianism along axes and chords cutting through and across central London in his stories of impoverished aspirants to literary success including *New Grub Street* (1891) and *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903), walked routes which are perhaps surprising forerunners of the means by which the specifics of London are encountered in Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

A postscript to this trend is Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. The idea of late-Victorian London, one of fogs and hansom cabs, gentry and street-urchins, has derived from an atmosphere associated with Holmes. The street environment of late-Victorian London was recreated as a fantasy world in repeated cinematic representations of London at the end of the previous century from the black-and-white era (c.1915–1955), which themselves had a powerful impact on other cultural forms including comics. Sherlock Holmes combines a taste of realist and naturalist fiction, with echoes of its more speculative and fabling counterpart to be found in writings by Robert Louis Stevenson (*Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1886) and Oscar Wilde (*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1890), with the detective as mystical key to the city, able to provide meaning in an environment to others inexplicably multiple in which meanings are repeatedly lost. Holmes is specifically post-Dickensian in that his clearest antecedents are Dickens's Inspector Bucket (*Bleak House*, 1853) and Sergeant Cuff in *The Moonstone* (1868).

Another sort of post-Dickens London writing can be found in highbrow, stylistically experimental fiction, such as that of George Meredith (*The Ordeal of Richard Feverel*, 1859) George Eliot (*Daniel Deronda*, 1876) and James himself, whose *The Princess Casamassima* (1886) hesitantly ventures towards Zolaesque territory but whose *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Golden Bowl* (1904) belong squarely here. This trend draws on the witty novel of high-society's fringes of Thackeray and the earlier 'silver-fork' novels of Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton. It often portrays the London social 'season' between Christmas and high summer, focused on the western parts of the city, in dialogue with moves between London and elsewhere according to the rhythms of moneyed society.

Not so clearly descended from Dickens is another tradition of late nineteenth-century literary considerations of the city: the early apocalyptic and science-fiction writing in which a—utopian or dystopian—future after the city is imagined. Vitally presaging twentieth and twenty-first century London writing by the likes of George Orwell, J.G. Ballard and Will Self is the work on post-London of Richard Jefferies (*After London*, 1885) and William Morris (*News from Nowhere*, 1890).

I have concentrated on fiction: Victorian poetry is not often descriptive of London. Leading Victorian poets who were Londoners, notably Christina Rossetti, kept London almost entirely hidden in their writing (see Finch 2016, pp. 45–49). It may have an implicit London setting on occasion, as in some decadent lyrics and James Thomson's *City of Dreadful Night* (1874). But poetry in this era largely represents the moves made by wealthier Victorians towards suburbs and rural settings in which they benefited from the amenities of transport centred on city hubs (like the radii of De Quincey) but, in shrubberies and behind tall hedges, tended to deny that there was anything urban about their lives. Nor has much mention been made of journalism or of other sorts of creative non-fiction including letters, diaries

and the like, let alone the investigative journalism filled with miniature narratives of people's lives, of Henry Mayhew (*London Labour and the London Poor*, 1851) or the social research of Charles Booth (*Life and Labour of the People in London*, 1889–1903) best known for its cartographic presentation of a London divided by wealth, with wealthy gold streets, 'semi-criminal' black streets and layers of red and blue middle-class and working-class respectability in between. Booth's was an era when a vast quantity of journalism was produced; one area of it which developed, also often post-Dickensian, from George Augustus Sala through G.R. Sims even to Ford Madox Ford, was that of the London specialist, the writer who is an 'aficionado' of the city, as Gabriel Pearson ([1979] 1995) describes the persona Dickens himself projected. From the same mould come district experts such as J. Hall Richardson whose 1920s recollections of the liveliness and 'horror' of Whitechapel in earlier decades, like those of Thomas Burke (*London in My Time*, 1934) in the 1930s (Vansittart 1992, p. 153).

PERSPECTIVES AND ANALOGIES IN THE ERA OF MODERNISM: FORD, WOOLF, ELIOT

The London writing of both Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot is built around the experience of moments containing memories. Thinking about social hierarchies, Woolf's London descends from that of the 'silver-fork' writers while also being crucially gendered as female: her Clarissa Dalloway (*Mrs Dalloway*, 1925) is the privileged *flâneuse* missing from the nineteenth century. Ford in *The Soul of London* (1905, p. 70; cf. Freeman 2007, pp. 86–88; 138–139) points out that usually 'the man who expresses himself with a pen on paper sees his London from the west. [...] His London of breathing space, his West End, extends from say Chiswick to say Portland Place. His dense London is the City as far as Fenchurch Street, his East End ends with what he calls "Whitechapel" '. Changing 'the man' to 'the woman' and 'His London' to hers, this applies very well to Woolf, whose London is enriched by its comprehension of spatialized moment in time. In moments such as when a car backfires near Clarissa Dalloway or when Jacob Flanders walks through a scruffy Bloomsbury street at evening, the massively simultaneous multiplicity of urban experiences comes into view, so that people in numerous different stages of different socially positioned lives intersect in this precise temporal and spatial conjunction. The essay 'Street Haunting' (1930) proposes 'walking half across London between tea and dinner' but its pedestrianism seems instead to take the specifics of Bloomsbury as the representative 'London street' and 'London square': it would not be worth walking far from here, because an explorer who did so would not find anything essentially different from these 'islands of light', these 'long groves of darkness' all bordered by an 'iron railing', only a reduced or messier version of the same. Thus Woolf has a strong sense of a capital within a capital, that there is only a relatively small portion of London that actually matters: a continuance of Thackeray and James.

But contemporaries of Woolf's looked from the east rather than from the west and so, turning to Ford again, primarily 'along the line from Blackwall to Fenchurch Street'. To them the 'quarter of large, almost clean, stone buildings, broad swept streets and a comparative glare of light' around Piccadilly Circus, 'is already a foreign land'; perhaps like Ford's viewer from the east, they did not even imagine 'further west' 'another enormous London' (Ford 1905, p. 71). Among them was Thomas Burke (*Limehouse Nights*, 1916; *London in My Time*, 1934). Burke moved from sensationalizing yet aestheticizing portrayals of what he indicated as the exotic and multiethnic riverside dock district of Limehouse, to recollections of an old, grimy inner London largely to the east of Ford's boundary line at Portland Place.

As the century wore on, it would become less possible to echo Ford that a writer typically looks at London from the fashionable, inner-western side. There were cliques of well-connected writers associated with fashionable districts including Bloomsbury, Chelsea and Hampstead, the latter producing novels by Margaret Drabble (*The Millstone*, 1965) and Frederic Raphael (*The Limits of Love*, 1960; see Sicher 1985, pp. 127–129). But in the spirit of supposed discovery which led Victorian writers to present Bloomsbury as unknown territory or boast of their walks to the east of Aldgate Pump, much twentieth century London writing looks in at the centre and the fashionable districts from elsewhere, as when the working-class Islington-dwelling protagonist of Baron's *Rosie Hogarth* (1951) ventures into Russell Square looking for the well-connected title character, or when Selvon's *Lonely Londoners* sally forth from damp basements in the decayed, once-grand inner western suburbs, to meet Londoners of the other colour and gender in Piccadilly or Hyde Park. From the many other writers of novels of non-smart London could be assembled a varied list including Collins (*London Belongs to Me*, 1945), Lynne Reid Banks (*The L-Shaped Room*, 1960), Muriel Spark (*The Ballad of Peckham Rye*, 1960), John Sommerfield (*Trouble in Porter Street*, 1939), Bennett (*Riceyman Steps*, 1923), Baron (*The Low Life*) and more recently Ali (*Brick Lane*, 2003), Gautam Malkani (*Londonstani*, 2006) and Irvine Welsh (*Skagboys*, 2012).

Ford's *The Soul of London* grasps the experiential qualities of a new London of the twentieth century as De Quincey did for the pre-railway Metropolis. This is the idea of a Greater London extending beyond the smoky built-up area governed after 1900 by the London County Council. Ford proposes that 'nowadays [...] London begins where tree trunks commence to be black', sketching a perimeter which extends far to the east of London down the Thames into Essex and Kent. The notion of a rapidly 'spreading' London powered by relatively quiet and peaceful electricity in the shape of the tram gives way between the two World Wars to accounts of London's environs increasingly choked by motor traffic, bemoaned by some as 'the Octopus' (Matless 1998), but possessing a stake in literary accounts including Orwell's *A Clergyman's Daughter* (1934) and *Coming Up for Air* (1939), J.B. Priestley's *English Journey* (1934) and T.E. Lawrence's *The Mint* (written late 1920s, published 1955).

The Waste Land dances in scattered toponyms between urban peripheries and ancient, central sites. It is a London poem or one where London stands for something else: for example Rome at the time of the apogee of its Empire, or indeed any candidate for the title of capital of the world ('Falling towers/Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/Vienna London/Unreal'). Eleanor Cook ([1979] 1986, pp. 81, 83) reads the poem as one in which 'a vision of Rome and the Roman Empire lies behind Eliot's vision of London and the British Empire'. Cook's reading forces London writing, often localist and topographic, to become part of the broader stream of city writing. To write about a city is to be aware of the concept of a city and of other cities, just as an understanding of the concept of the city emerges from the experience of topographies, of portions of actual cities as they have been at particular moments (Malpas 2006, p. 314). Cook also highlights the more precise geopolitical context of Eliot's London as imperial capital in the era of Great Power rivalries and the Scramble for Africa and the aftermath of this era in the First World War and the various political and financial crises that triggered. As Cook ([1979] 1986, p. 86) points out, the London–Rome comparison was a literary commonplace at the turn of the twentieth century, a conceit from which to launch Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and James's *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

In the first section of *The Waste Land*, 'The Burial of the Dead', London toponyms, and specifically those of a small portion of the City of London, appear suddenly, even unexpectedly after 60 lines (Eliot 1974, pp. 61–86). Section II, 'A Game of Chess', appears to get into London late on, in the pub dialogue that closes it ('Hurry up please its time'). The lexis contains nothing at all specifically or demonstratively London, since it lacks any toponyms and the characters while clearly vulgar ('It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said': *them* for *those* is a feature of demotic London speech, true) do not ostentatiously drop aitches Sam-Weller fashion and nor are there any London toponyms in this passage. Section III, 'The Fire Sermon' refers, indexing Edmund Spenser, to the 'Sweet Thames' alongside 'the waters of Lemán' (Lake Geneva). This reiterates the sense of London as just one somewhere. Here are 'the loitering heirs of City directors' (the capital *ε* making this specifically a London reference). Both are toponymic.

'The Fire Sermon' contains further localized markers of London. First is 'the Cannon Street Hotel', site of the rendezvous offered by 'Mr Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant' and several lines later in the group of lines focused on precisely the same neighbourhood immediately north of London Bridge in the City of London as the commuter walk of 'The Burial of the Dead'. In Mr Eugenides—presumably a Greek from what would become modern Turkey in the tumult following World War One, speaking 'demotic French' as a *lingua franca*—another boundary-crossing migrant appears, but his 'pocket full of currants/C.i.f. London' (or in other words destined for London with cost, insurance and freight there included in a price paid by a merchant elsewhere), he connects with the long-standing mercantile history of London which features in Dickens in the Cheerybles of *Nicholas Nickleby*, who trade with

Germany, and the international trade of an unmentioned sort carried out by the house of Dombey and Son.

'The Fire Sermon' fades away through music and water, and fire. The movement enacted by lines 258 to 311 begins down on the streets of London, this time approaching the hub of the area of the City of London immediately north of London Bridge from the west ('along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street'), the words 'O City city' staking Eliot's claim to be the poet of the city as well as the City (of London), past 'a public bar in Lower Thames Street' and 'the walls of Magnus Martyr', in the most toponymically concentrated portion of the poem with its suggestions of mystical lines in the routes on foot (recalling Gissing's light-headed, impoverished staggerers through the city's streets). It then snakes along the river, 'down stream' towards Greenwich from the City, from the 'Oil and tar' of 'barges' in the Pool of London between Tower Bridge and London Bridge, an area repeatedly aestheticized from *Our Mutual Friend* through Andre Derain and Thomas Burke, as short lines sometimes only one or two words long move back in time to the moment of 'Elizabeth and Leicester' in the sixteenth century, and a disappearance in 'bells', 'White towers', and a cry that is unidentifiable but more Eastern (Asian) than of the East London streets ('Weialala leia'). A voice enters, of a fallen woman seemingly from an indifferent, middling background ('Highbury bore me'), her existence scattered around London from central districts including once-disreputable Moorgate on the northern fringes of the City to the outlying riverine suburbs of Richmond and Kew on the south-western perimeter mentioned as the sites which 'undid' her.

London has largely been expunged from the poem at this point, apart from the reprise of 'Unreal City' in 'What the Thunder said'. In *The Waste Land* is both topographic and symbolic London, the former ingested from the Dickensian tradition then smashed up into shards and scattered around, the latter more than any De Quincey or Ford (or even Blake) the origin of the pavement visionary 'psychogeographic' writing of the later twentieth and twenty-first centuries, which takes Eliotian content out of poetry and puts it into more quotidian daylight meditations with coherent form.

FIRE AND WATER: SYMBOL AFTER ELIOT

Symbolic treatments of London endure into the twenty-first century. Among them are dystopias such as Will Self's *The Book of Dave* (2006), the narrative of which moves to and fro between a realist account of the life of a taxi driver in early twenty-first-century London, and a dystopian future in which the descendants of survivors of an apocalypse which many generations earlier has flooded the river basin in which London grew occupy what were once the heights of Hampstead Heath but are now remain as small islands in an ocean. Vision and toponyms combine because the London taxi driver is known as an expert on the streets of London, their precise names and layout.

Beyond such dystopias, enduring symbolic treatments of London indicate less science-fictional apocalypses in which a city is consumed by fire or water, with antecedents both Dickensian and Eliotian. In *Bleak House*, Krook's rag-and-bone shop may seem in its raggedy, greed-driven variety close to a metaphor for London itself; it burns to the ground. In later Dickens, bodies are enveloped by water: Magwitch in *Great Expectations* emerging from the water in central London near Pip's chambers or the trade in the possessions of the drowned in *Our Mutual Friend*. Historically, London existed as the crossing point of a river. Self describes a Ballardian drowned world as London's future while Eliot's *Waste Land* is filled with the destructive properties of fire and water, ending with 'burning'. London writings by Murdoch (*Under the Net*, 1954) and Rose Macaulay (*The World My Wilderness*, 1950; see Anderson 2007) set in the aftermath of the Blitz treat the effects of fire more matter-of-factly as what creates vast spaces of emptiness and disorder within what was before the war a cramped and grimy post-Victorian London of the sort evoked by Collins (*London Belongs to Me*, 1945). Later writing, notably Moorcock's *Mother London*, moves towards the idea that the flames of the Blitz somehow cleansed London of the filth for which it had long been notorious, a layer of grime itself associated with the vast quantity of coal fires which burned in London between the eighteenth and the early twentieth centuries, giving it a nickname used by non-Londoners: 'the Smoke' (OED s.v. smoke, *n.* I.d.).

Indeed, the Blitz became mythologized in later twentieth-century Britain as a time when the hitherto profound social class division by which the city had long since been riven, often dramatized in the twentieth century as East End versus West End but equally apparent in Virginia Woolf's account of late Victorian or Edwardian Covent Garden market in *The Years*, disappeared:

Men and women in full evening dress were walking along the pavement. They looked uncomfortable and self-conscious as they dodged between costers' barrows, with their high piled hair and their evening cloaks, with their button holes and their white waistcoats, in the glare of the afternoon sun.

Woolf, of course, died at the darkest point of the Second World War, looked at from a London point of view. After that, on one view, the flames forged Londoners as a unity, breaking down the binary opposition between Professor Higginses and Alf Doolittles marked out by Woolf (and Shaw) thinking of the decades immediately before 1900, creating in Moorcock at least the ghost of a new and socialistic Briton. *Mother London* has the Blitz at its heart, reaching it not via a conventional narrative ordering in chronological order or a story told by simple flashback, but a series of jumps between groups of decades. Eliot's 'Little Gidding', written in 1942 at the height of the Blitz, concerns the purifying possibilities of fire. Much of its second section is a dream-like narrative by a speaker abroad at night in a specifically contemporary London (a city of 'asphalt' not cobblestones), yet here, more than in *The Waste Land*, London is only an example of some somewhere in which humans are lost (Eliot 1974, p. 217).

AFTER 1945: IMMIGRANT AND POST-IMMIGRANT WRITING

Among other things, Eliot's writing of London is considered an immigrant writing. Yet, he in turn faced criticism from a Emanuel Litvinoff ([1972] 2008, pp. 194–195), a younger writer with an East End immigrant background for acting like 'a god' who 'utters from Russell Square and condescends', not least by allowing blatantly anti-Semitic passages in his earlier poems to keep being reprinted in later editions. Much London writing is, in a way highlighted by the Eliot–Litvinoff encounter, immigrant writing of non-identical sorts. Since the War, it has oscillated between allowing immigrant voices to escape in their novelty and unconnectedness to London's pasts, and following the established Dickensian and Eliotian paths. Thus Iain Sinclair's writing on the frontiers of fiction and non-fiction, running from *Lud Heat* (1975) to *London Orbital* (2002), is the writing of a (British) incomer to London who interprets the city in a way that is distinctly Eliotian.

Some of the best post-war London writing continues to excavate pasts in hidden London in a manner picking up on the earlier 'Old London' tradition. Iris Murdoch's later writing has been described as occupying a 'cosily circumscribed geography' including, in the capital, only selected portions of West London (Ratcliffe 2015, p. 3), but *Under the Net* (1954) ranges wider, most before it decamps to Hammersmith and Shepherd's Bush in its later stages. Here, London is a ludic site. Chapters 7 to 9 move from a fruitless search through multiple City pubs which match or are the other side of the coin to Eliot's City churches, some of them with secret or hidden London associations of a mythic-archaeological sort (for instance the King Lud at Ludgate Circus), to a moonlit swim in the River Thames at the point where it flows with the City on its north bank, recalling both Eliot's 'Oil and tar' and the night-time trade of Gaffer Hexham (and Magwitch's river connections) in late Dickens, to resurface after this alcohol-fuelled night of loss and revelation in Covent Garden flower market, London's heart of social contradiction from Dickens to Shaw and Woolf, ending 'flat upon the grass' and finally fast asleep at noon in Hyde Park, key locus for the displays and snubs of silver-fork fiction and Thackeray, and site of inter-class encounters in Plomer, Beckett (whose *Murphy* contains a vitally game-like portrait of London that seems, along with the wild wanderings of Céline, to underpin Murdoch's account) and Selvon.

In a parallel way, the searches through public toilets, the random sex encounters and the pursuit of them on the London Underground and elsewhere of Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* (1988) create the grounds for random encounters; they render London as adventure site, with a meaning that is 'under London' in a different sense from Sinclair's and his followers. The swimming pool and the Soho gay porn cinema where varied encounters take place are both literally underground, while the narrator, Will, moves around on the London Underground, the city's metro system, and is preoccupied in a way highly characteristic of London writing between the 1960s and the 1990s, with London's 'abolished' tube stations:

I did so regret it was the Central Line I used most. I couldn't get any kind of purchase on it. It had neither the old-fashioned open-air quality of the District Line, where rain misted the tracks as one waited, nor the grimy profundity of the Northern Line, nor the Piccadilly's ingenious, civilised connexiveness. (Hollinghurst 1988, p. 46)

A key word here is *quality*. The observation of London life here comes amid intense, raw—and comic—accounts of casual and less casual sexual encounters in the London environment.

However, there are alternatives. Post-war testimonial accounts like those of Litvinoff and Duffy (*That's How It Was*, 1962, the story of a cockney dragged up out of London) are powerful, and largely free of Dickens or Eliot. Such writing gives a radical otherness to life in the city: there have been, according to W.G. Sebald (*The Emigrants*, 1992), people who spend years in London thinking it is New York. For the title character of Simon Blumenfeld's *Phineas Kahn: Portrait of an Immigrant* (1937), it is survival and his family that counts, not what city he is in, and he must be working, travelling to and home from work or recuperating exhausted in some room. For him, matters like Dickens' night-time wanderings, or even the half-starved pedestrianism of Gissing, poor but English and educated, and so able to enter society's higher echelons, or the Eliot or Rushdie sorts of privileged cosmopolitanism, count for nothing. Kahn may have reached London from the Russian Empire via Vienna, but has no notion of an 'Unreal city'. For Litvinoff's East Enders, remembered as they were in the 1920s by a writer looking back across nearly half a century, it is not a matter of living in an Unreal city: the Jewish inner-city life he remembers has international dimensions unknown to Cockney neighbours but is utterly real, vivid with smells and sounds, from 'pieces of partly edible fruit' gathered from 'the rotting debris of Spitalfields Market' by a man no long arrived from Eastern Europe, to the environment the struggling Jews must occupy amidst 'drunken mobs' of seemingly insane Cockneys with 'wild children'; 'a mad gypsy woman over the road who gave off a smell like a barrow-load of old rags' (Litvinoff [1972] 2008, p. 22)

Voices which diverged from the Dickens–Eliot traditions emerged in the 1950s by speaking explicitly for youth or the immigrant in a mimicking voice. MacInnes is breathless, violent, personal, scruffy, and he wants to be true to the streets, to speak in their voice:

Then one of the scruffos turned and looked at his choice companions, and grinned a sloppy grin, and suddenly approached the two Sikh characters and hit one of them right in the face: with his fist pointed so that the top knuckles got inside the skull. (MacInnes [1959], p. 192)

Drawing on American 'hard-boiled' urban fiction, MacInnes uses a partly personal vocabulary, the 'spades' of *Absolute Beginners* (slang for black immigrants to London in the 1950s) matched by the 'jumbles' or John Bulls

of that novel's predecessor in MacInnes's London trilogy, *City of Spades* (1957). Later writers would go further than MacInnes in the direction of unknown, alien voices, entering London. Rushdie hears a babble of voices of different origins, some unknown (*The Satanic Verses*, 1988), his London in the words of Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 169; cf. Groes 2011, pp. 198–207) 'tropicalized', 'grotesquely renamed Ellowen Deewen in the migrant's mimicry'.

CONCLUSION: MOVING ON FROM DICKENS AND ELIOT

The visionary and the topographic have kept combining and recombining in modern London writing, with the literature of polyphonic mimicry emerging alongside them. Perhaps writers need to seek alternative models. Since 2000 writers such as Smith and Self have renovated Dickensian and Eliotian paradigms. With Smith, this has been via an encounter with the post-colonial 'voices' writing of Selvon, Rushdie and Kureishi (see Groes 2011, pp. 191–250; McLeod 2004); in Self's, via Sinclair's mystical-paranoid-topography and with science fiction, notably that of Ballard. Future London writers need to go further. Perhaps heroes as diverse as Ainsworth's Jack Sheppard, Blumenfeld's Phineas Kahn, Baron's Harryboy Boas and Maureen Duffy's Paddy could point the way. They contain what Londoners of the newest century need to understand and shape their existence there. Many of these new Londoners might be driving minicabs or riding buses to office cleaning jobs but also be swashbuckling and fearless in the face of risk, exclusion and adversity in precisely the way that these differently excluded protagonists of novels written between 1839 and 1963 are.

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Balzac: A Socio-Material Archaeology of Paris

Jonathan White

Balzac and Paris. The subject suggests itself. Or rather, Honoré de Balzac (1799–1850) himself ensured that such a topic would have an ongoing status for as long as he was read, not least by categorising as *Scènes de la vie parisienne* (*Scenes of Parisian Life*) many of the interconnected novels and other writings in his multi-volume treatment of French society, *La Comédie humaine*. Several of his most intense narratives that are mainly or even entirely set in Paris were nonetheless classified by Balzac under a different category, *Scènes de la vie privée* (*Scenes of Private Life*), including two to be discussed below, *Le Père Goriot* (*Old Goriot*) and *Le Colonel Chabert*. *La vie privée* was Balzac's category for writings that dealt with intense family relations, especially narratives of tragic consequence, whether set in the great city or provincially. Balzac and his family had transferred to Paris from the region of his birthplace in the Touraine at the time of Napoleon's fall. He was never to leave the city for lengthy periods thereafter. To study Paris across the course of his writing career, while not the only goal of the *Comédie*, was of paramount importance to him as it will be in consequence for this chapter.

A later student of Paris, Walter Benjamin, said of Balzac:

Paris is the breeding ground of his mythology, Paris with its two or three great bankers (like Nucingen), with its continually reappearing doctor, with its enterprising merchant (César Birotteau), with its four or five great courtesans, with its usurer (Gosbeck), with its sundry soldiers and bankers. But above all—and we see this again and again—it is from the same streets and corners, the same little rooms and recesses, that the figures of this world step into the light. (Benjamin 1999, pp. 850–851)

Benjamin's statement displays understanding of how Balzac actually portrayed Paris, through exemplary characters and their material contexts. A caveat might

be that the world portrayed in the *Comédie* is closer to history than to myth, although it cannot be identified as history *tout court*. William Faulkner, who claimed that he read ‘some of Balzac almost every year,’ commended his ‘concept of a cosmos in miniature’ (Gwynn and Blotner 1959, pp. 50, 232). Faulkner adds independent corroborative testimony, not dissimilar to the summative judgment of Benjamin although from a quite different culture of the American South: ‘I like the fact that in Balzac there is an intact world of his own. His people don’t just move from page one to page 320 of one book. There is a continuity between them all like a blood-stream which flows from page one through to page 20,000 of one book’ (Meriwether and Millgate 1968, p. 217). Cosmos or continuous blood-stream, Faulkner’s analogies for what the *Comédie* furnishes are appropriately mixed, in keeping with the protean nature of the work itself. The present chapter seeks to uncover some of the extensive and multi-layered site of representation that is Balzac’s Paris. Because of constraints of space, mine can only be a sampling of this complex city, its life and workings.

In Balzac, Paris is conceptualised as liable to violence, and indeed in the *Histoire des treize* (*History of the Thirteen*) as subject to sporadic but organised ‘terrorism’ by a secret society of thirteen master criminals. In the figure of Vautrin in *Le Père Goriot* Balzac created a criminal mind that thinks its way beyond morality, in the struggle to survive within the new, ferocious world of France’s capital. Balzac knew the city of menace and ever-present danger. In treating outsiders and insiders especially, and through many representations of haves and have-nots, of class and individual resentment, Balzac raises awareness of who might be inclined to harm whom.

Most readers feel that Balzac treated Paris intensively, through a wide variety of characters, their urban contexts and lifestyles. As Michal Peled Ginsburg has argued about teaching *Père Goriot*, ‘No matter how much recent readings of Balzac have made us aware of the impasses of realistic representation, they have not weakened our conviction that if realism actually exists, Balzac practices it’ (Ginsburg 2000, p. ix). For generations literary realism has been the main category under which Balzac has been thought about and discussed. However, I seek to de-emphasise realism along with its associated vocabulary, looking for a fresh and more vigorous approach for the twenty-first century. Readers can go back to earlier criticism for treatment of all that constituted the nineteenth-century realist movement and Balzac’s contributions to it (Hemmings 1974, *passim*; also Marx and Engels 1956, pp. 35–55). Moving away from realism’s long-held status as the prime object of enquiry, I consider how Balzac enduringly conveys a sense both of the strikingly varied society of Paris on the one hand, and of the context of streets, buildings and public places in which its multifarious individuals dwell and interact on the other.

Some of Balzac’s most intricately detailed descriptions of Paris occur in his relatively early novella trilogy titled *History of the Thirteen* (*Histoire des treize*),

comprising *Ferragus*, *The Duchess of Langeais* and *The Girl with the Golden Eyes*. From the opening words of the Preface to the collection, we are introduced to a mysterious, entirely secretive network of thirteen master-minded criminals who set themselves above the law in order to seize advantage over more ordinary citizens. Notably, the first detail imparted by Balzac is that the ‘Thirteen’ came together under the Empire. The period of Napoleon is seen as nourishing preconditions for events that, when we work out the dates of their unfolding, prove to be set in the early Restoration:

In Paris under the Empire thirteen men came together... They were strong enough to put themselves above all law, bold enough to flinch at no undertaking; lucky enough to have almost always succeeded in their designs, having run the greatest hazards, but remaining silent about their defeats; impervious to fear; and never having trembled before public authority, the public hangman or even innocence itself... (p. 21)

This Paris appears rich in topicality. Balzac is influenced by colourful readings in literature of his day. He immediately claims acquaintance with misanthropes: Byron’s Manfred, Goethe’s Faust and Maturin’s Melmoth, romantic figures endowed with superhuman qualities but also damned. For Balzac such precursors are analogous to his Parisian thirteen. In addition, Balzac directly glosses gothic storytelling as practised by Ann Radcliffe, as well as legendary writings by James Macpherson and René Chateaubriand, as relevant generically to his subject matter. Such literary cognates help in appreciating what Balzac has undertaken in the *Histoire des treize*. The trilogy shuns anything straightforwardly realistic. Gothic or Romantic evocations pervade it, imparting to the work what he calls in the Preface its ‘sombre and mysterious poetry’ (p. 21). Such ‘poetry’ is inherent to Balzac’s sense of place, not just to narration of events. We will meet lurid contextual elaboration of Paris’s streets and buildings in later works. They are unsurpassed in *Le Père Goriot*. Already here in the *Histoire des treize* elements of the monstrous loom and threaten. ‘In Paris there are certain streets which are in as much disrepute as any man branded with infamy can be,’ Balzac begins *Ferragus*. Many sentences impress us with the idea that ‘the streets of Paris have human qualities and such a physiognomy as leaves us with impressions against which we can put up no resistance’ (p. 31). Balzac singles out the Île Saint-Louis as his context for the opening sequence of events:

This island, the cemetery so to speak of the Old Regime tax-farming magnates, is as it were the Venice of Paris. Stock Exchange Square is all rattle, bustle and harlotry. It is beautiful only in the moonlight, at two in the morning; in the daytime an epitome of Paris, at night-time a dream-vision from Greece. Is not the Rue Traversière-Saint-Honoré a street of ill fame, with its shabby, double-windowed houses in which, as you mount from storey to storey, you climb upward to vice, crime and poverty? (pp. 31–32)

From this point, the novella entices its readers into, precisely, assignations with vice, crime or poverty. We have little alternative but to rubberneck the monstrous. For that is what is spread out before us in a gastronomy of the eye, a phrase that Balzac used to define *flânerie* in one of his earliest texts of the *Comédie*, *The Physiology of Marriage* (*Physiologie du mariage*). Remarking the structure of Paris's streets in terms of 'human qualities . . . against which we can put up no resistance' means that as readers we must follow Balzac to each of the assignations that he has selected. We become *flâneurs* of the lurid by reading. Before Baudelaire and before Benjamin, Balzac triumphs in all that being a flâneur makes possible by way not merely of observation of others, but also, more shockingly, of active co-involvement in their existences and passions. In *The Physiology of Marriage*, *flânerie* is defined as a set of open possibilities:

It is to delight in and collect instances of wit, it is to admire sublime pictures of misery, of love, of joy, of gracious or grotesque features; it is to plunge one's gaze into the depths of a thousand existences; for the young it is to desire all, and to possess all; for the old it is to live the life of the youthful, and to espouse their passions. (author's translation)

By reason of contexts realised on the page the reader is transformed into a *flâneur*, even if one constrained by what the author feels must not be missed. Balzac stresses that to get to grips with the physiognomy of Paris means discovering its distinctive human and always plural personality. As author he can enumerate all the social stereotypes and moods that make up such personality. Readers are left no opportunity for independent *flânerie*, which might allow them to interpret differently the phenomena presented. Balzac as omniscient narrator always already knows past and present, from which he will sometimes predict future as well.

The foundational study of Paris in Balzac's writings is the chapter 'La Poésie du Paris de Balzac' in Pierre Citron's study, *La Poésie de Paris dans la littérature française de Rousseau à Baudelaire* (1961). Citron made clear how Balzac worked through many prior or contemporary commonplaces relating to Paris, often giving them new spin. For example, at the very head of an early essay titled 'Paris en 1831', Balzac placed as epigraph the old saying that Paris was paradise for women, purgatory for men, hell for horses ('Le paradis des femmes,/Le purgatoire des hommes,/L'enfer des chevaux') ('Paris en 1831', *La Caricature*, 10 March 1831; see Citron 1961, p. 186). Over several years of the early 1830s, Balzac ran through a list of tag-terms for understanding Paris, variously denominating the city a woman, a monster, a beehive (ruche), a cancer, a lobster (homard), a kaleidoscope, a boiler (chaudière) and a sleeping giant ('Paris s'endort comme un géant fatigué') (Citron 1961, p. 197). My list here is far from exhaustive. Even Francesco Maria Piave's lines in the libretto to Verdi's *La traviata* (1853) claiming that Paris is a desert—'questo/Popoloso deserto/Che appellano Parigi' ('this crowded/Desert they call Paris')—is anticipated in

Balzac's denomination of the city in similar terms. Dorothy Kelly shows that, in his early story of 1830, 'Une passion dans le desert' ('A Passion in the Desert'), Balzac 'presents the two different locales of Egypt and Paris, yet the two places ultimately harbor the same kind of inhabitants (soldiers and wild beasts)'. Kelly shows that there is a 'narrative of the outer frame' to this piece, 'where the exotic and its story are transported to Paris' (Kelly 2011–12, p. 1). Similarly Raphaël de Valentin, a character in Balzac's 1831 novel *La Peau de Chagrin*, shapes in conversation a short disquisition on Paris as desert: it is 'the most frightful of deserts, a paved desert, an animated, thinking, living desert, where everything is much worse than inimical, it is indifferent to you' (Citron 1961, p. 214).

It is intriguing how many seemingly odd descriptors such as desert (likewise cancer and lobster) are deployed by Balzac to capture outlandish or uncanny aspects of this city of contrasts and antitheses. According to Citron, Balzac is the first writer to speak of a 'poetry' intrinsic to Paris, and variously to expatiate upon the idea (Citron 1961, pp. 200ff). The notion is negatively nuanced when Balzac comes to the idea of the city's 'sewers of poetry,' a point I return to with *Le Colonel Chabert*. Citron concludes that the most important of the many key terms that Balzac deploys, more banal perhaps than others but of wider significance, is the claim, repeated in various forms after his first use of it in 1833, that Paris is a world (*un monde*) (Citron 1961, p. 206). Even the notion that the city is capital of the world is a lesser claim than that it somehow constitutes an entire world in its own right.

As my chapter title indicates, I trace a socio-material archaeology which is either explicit or implicit in Balzac's Parisian writings. Balzac himself spoke in terms of his 'archaeological work' ('travail archéologique') on behalf of future generations: 'Nos neveux ne seront-ils pas enchantés de connaître le matériel social d'une époque . . . ?' (Will not our descendants be excited by acquaintance with the social materiality of an epoch . . . ?) (*Un Début dans la vie*; see Mount 1966, pp. 11–12). Contrast, or alternatively connection, between the explicit and the implicit is highly important. Early in *Le Père Goriot* when the novelist says of Mme. Vauquer, owner of the seedy boarding house in which many of the main characters of the novel dwell, 'sa personne explique la pension, comme la pension implique sa person' (1966, p. 13) ('everything about her seems to embody her *pension*, just as her *pension* invokes her image', 1966, p. 10), he is defining by means of the contrastive verbs *explique* and *implique* that persons and their contexts must be closely understood in terms of one another. Erich Auerbach in *Mimesis* called what we meet here in Balzac's description of Mme. Vauquer a 'complementary relation between person and milieu' (Auerbach 1953, p. 471). The point is relevant to multiple other characters in the *Comédie*. For example, Citron reminds us that such a relation is similarly captured in *Les Dangers de l'inconduite*, the 1831 text that in later versions is titled *Gosbeck*, then *Papa Gosbeck*. The usurer Gosbeck and his dwelling are described as follows: 'His house and he resembled one another. You might have compared him to an oyster and its rock' (Citron 1961, p. 216). Nothing is more certain than that people and

their contexts are intricately interconnected in Balzac's works. Furthermore, while some things in his descriptions are overt and *expliquent* a given context, others by contrast lie partially or wholly hidden beneath surfaces. While harder to uncover, they nonetheless *impliquent* the larger set of circumstances.

The initial character portrayal of the master criminal Vautrin, one of Mme. Vauquer's several boarders in *Le Père Goriot*, is a prime example of Balzac verbally revealing and yet at the same time partially concealing a grand Parisian character. What is explicit about Vautrin is fundamentally at variance with what is implied, either subtextually or by a reading between the lines. 'His face, scored by premature wrinkles, showed signs of a toughness that belied his good-natured, easygoing manners' (p. 15). Here Balzac's operative word is *belied* (*démentaient*), for in the sentence in question, as in the fuller description of Vautrin, every aspect of his physiomy or behaviour belies something else, in a series of increasing contrasts. 'He was obliging and full of laughter. If a lock stopped working, he'd quickly take it apart, figure out what was wrong, file it down, oil it, and then put it back together again, observing, "I know all about such things" ' (p. 15). Beneath the surface *bonhomie* of this last couple of sentences lies the implication that the man has picked many a lock in the past. Like the author who is involved in describing him, Vautrin seems to know society in a multiplicity of ways and in close detail: 'There were a lot of other things he knew about—ships, the sea, France, foreign nations, business, psychology, current affairs, the law, hotels, and prisons' (p. 15). It is Balzac's genial trickery to slip the law into this list of all that Vautrin knows, and to end it with prisons. At this point, Vautrin, although extensively described, remains an enigma. He will only be unmasked by forces of the law much later in the plot, when what is explicit about him and what is implicit are finally matched up in the circumstances of his re-arrest. As readers we discover in the process his earlier life as a convict of the prison hulks in Toulon, which in turn (if still implicitly) explains why he has so extensive a knowledge of vessels and of the sea. Though apprehended, Vautrin continues to have the upper hand rhetorically: he will denounce all before him as 'flabby members of a gangrened society'.

What we gradually realise about Vautrin's knowledge of multiple contexts, and about his complex awareness of what others have been *kept from knowing* (by their moral scruples among other things), is how closely an arch criminal might resemble a wide-ranging novelist; how he might under certain circumstances even be conceptualised as the novelist's *doppel*. Vautrin represents with unabated cynicism the nature of the modern city, in which there is a terrible struggle for survival between inhabitants, and where, it seems, only ruthlessness succeeds. As he explains to the provincial aspirant Eugène de Rastignac, any newcomer to Paris must understand that he is just one amongst thousands competing for fortunes:

There are fifty thousand young fellows facing the same problem: how to make a fortune and make it fast. You're just one among many. So think how hard you'll have to try, and what a desperate fight it'll be. You'll all have to eat each other, like

spiders in a chamber pot, because there aren't fifty thousand fortunes available. So how do you manage, eh? Simple. Either by a burst of genius, or by being a clever crook. Either you smash your way through that mob like a cannonball, or else you slide right into it, like the bubonic plague. Honesty will get you nowhere. (p. 85)

The desperate fight that reveals humans to be like spiders in a chamber pot is a crucial representation of what the contemporary city has become. Indeed, 'Vautrin's carefully constructed criminal identity', according to Damian Catani, is compelling evidence of 'the mutually productive relationship that Balzac identifies between evil and the modern city' (Catani 2013, p. 55). Cities may go on being thought about in more positive ways. New arrivals such as Rastignac will always ache to succeed in them. Vautrin has just taunted the young man, telling him that his passion to succeed ('parvenir') is so evident that it can be read as a word on his forehead. But any individual's chances of success are reduced by the sheer numbers of other competing members of the same society. That being the case, Vautrin recommends to Rastignac solely the routes of genius ('du génie') or evil ('la corruption'), and even splices together these two alternatives in his following advice.

By the same token we must not over-identify the novelist with his character. Later in the novel Vautrin's re-arrest as the escaped convict Jacques Collin will constitute a moment in fiction as gripping as this advice scene with Rastignac, but one in which the criminal can be seen for the appalling egotist he is. Vautrin's vanity even in defeat, during which he displays no repentance, ensures that he is as repellent as he is attractive:

This man . . . was no longer a man but the embodiment of an entire degenerate nation, of a people savage yet rational, brutal yet subtle. In an instant Collin became an infernal poem in which were displayed all human feelings except one, that of repentance. His gaze was that of the fallen archangel who wishes for endless war. Rastignac lowered his eyes in acknowledgement of his criminal kinship, as if in expiation for his wicked thoughts. (author's translation)

Given that this is externalised narration, we are left speculating if the 'nation' in question is to be understood as Balzac's own, or whether, more narrowly, it is the confraternity of more than 10,000 whom Vautrin brags he still has at his command: 'Is there a single one of you who could call on more than ten thousand comrades, the way I can, to do anything and everything for you?' (p. 155). However far degeneracy extends, whether just to criminal classes conceived as the 'fallen archangel's' associates or to an entire French nation that by 1819 (the year in which *Le Père Goriot* is set) is compromised like Rastignac by 'criminal kinship' ('cousinage criminel'), there can be no denying that in creating the character of Vautrin, Balzac has plunged us into a disturbing realm 'beyond morality', before Dostoevsky and Nietzsche. The point holds not merely for Paris's criminal mastermind but for representation of the city itself. Vautrin's vision is of a

socio-economic competition between its mass of humans so destructive that those who fail will always vastly outnumber those who succeed. This is the Paris that Balzac, here as elsewhere, terms a mire, in which its inhabitants flail, fight and mostly fail. (His word in French is ‘bourbier’.) In an 1834 letter to Mme. Hanska, Balzac would claim that his new work *Goriot*, although excellent, is ‘monstrously sad’ on account of its negative vision of Paris. His justification is that ‘it was necessary in order to include all to show the moral sewer of Paris, and that gives the effect of a disgusting sore’ (‘Il fallait pour être complet montrer un égout moral de Paris et cela fait l’effet d’une plaie dégoûtante’) (*Lettres à l’Étrangère*, Vol. 1, p. 210). Vautrin proclaims the rare victor in this mire or moral sewer to be someone whom we would nowadays denominate a ‘terrorist’; either a bomber or someone willing to infect the city with a deadly virus (‘la peste’).

In his recent *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Piketty has claimed that Jane Austen and Balzac had a remarkable grasp of the economic conditions of their periods, in many ways more telling than that of economic theorists, because as authors of fiction they represented actual lived conditions:

The novels of Jane Austen and Honoré de Balzac paint striking portraits of the distribution of wealth in Britain and France between 1790 and 1830. Both novelists were intimately acquainted with the hierarchy of wealth in their respective societies. They grasped the hidden contours of wealth and its inevitable implications for the lives of men and women, including their marital strategies and personal hopes and disappointments. (Piketty 2014, p. 2)

Piketty suggests that Balzac was accurate in his economic assessments of the cost of living in Paris, and that his contemporary readers and those of subsequent decades, aware of similar economic figures determining their lives, saw what they read in Balzac as accurate testimony:

In France, the average income was roughly 400-500 francs per year in the period 1810-1820, in which Balzac set *Père Goriot*. . . Balzac, like Austen, described a world in which it took twenty to thirty times that much to live decently: with an income of less than 10-20,000 francs, a Balzacian hero would feel that he lived in misery. . . [T]hese orders of magnitude would change only very gradually over the course of the nineteenth century and . . . would long seem familiar to readers. These amounts allowed the writer to economically set the scene, hint at a way of life, evoke rivalries, and, in a word, describe a civilization. (p. 106)

Piketty fills out something Engels had attested earlier in the Marxist reception of Balzac: ‘I have learned more [from Balzac] than from all the professional historians, economists and statisticians, together’ (Marx and Engels 1956, p. 37; letter to Margaret Harkness, April 1888). For a more measured account, however, of where Balzac’s representations of economics

differ from assessments by historians, we must step back from Piketty to work of 1983 by Ronnie Butler. A characteristic Butler claim (1983, p. 29) is that, ‘misled by his systematic aversion to the Revolution, [Balzac] exaggerates the consequences which the sale of “biens nationaux” had for the structure of landed property’. It was precisely on the issue of details concerning ‘the redistribution of real and private property after the French Revolution’ that Engels had praised Balzac for historical reliability (Marx and Engels 1956, p. 37). Butler’s accounts of the way the novelist handled the historical niceties of such redistribution, as well as the return of émigrés, the bourgeoisie of the Restoration, and the ‘Notables’ and economic expansion of the July Monarchy period, undermine Piketty’s theory that Balzac ‘got it all right’.

Butler checks the portrayals of fiction against what can be known about economic factuality. He offers a more nuanced accounting than Piketty provides for Balzac’s representations of money, and how it was used or abused between 1789 and 1848. For all that, Piketty’s colourful notion that the novelist follows ‘hidden contours of wealth and its inevitable implications for the lives of men and women, including their marital strategies and personal hopes and disappointments’, rings true in larger terms for what gets represented, in spite or even because of various economic distortions promulgated by Balzac. Piketty reminds us of memorable characters in the *Comédie*, such as the struggling provincial heroes Rastignac, and Lucien de Rubempré in *Les Illusions perdues*, who have come up to Paris from Angoulême to make their fortunes, as had Balzac and his family from the same region of France. In words of the latter novel, both these *ingénus* need to ‘proceed according to the rules of the world, and to submit to the conventions’ (p. 166). They must therefore discover what those ‘rules’ are. Much of the economic representation in both *Le Père Goriot* and *Les Illusions perdues* is concerned with individuals who submit as far as possible to conventions, but who still, because of class positioning that they cannot alter, or from a mistaken care for the well-being of others in their *vies privées* (the undoing of so many), step out of line with ‘rules of the world’ and fail in consequence.

Franco Moretti calls *Les Illusions perdues* ‘the greatest novel ever written’ (Moretti 1998, p. 124). Part 2 of that novel, sandwiched between two others dealing with provincial Angoulême, is titled *Un grand homme de province à Paris* (finely translated by Katherine Raine as *A Provincial Celebrity in Paris*, p. 161). Although still far from autobiography, the story of Lucien de Rubempré’s attempts to succeed as a writer in Paris, together with his first affairs there and what they teach him, cannot fail to remind us of Balzac’s own early city-experiences. Balzac will even invent neologisms to suggest how far another provincial, Lucien’s muse and patroness with whom he has come up to Paris, Mme. de Bargeton, needs to *dis-Angoulême* herself (*se déangoulêmer*, Balzac’s emphasis). Lucien eventually fails and returns to Angoulême. He will make a further attempt to succeed in Paris in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. Here in *Les Illusions perdues* Balzac is using the middle section as a way of judging

almost everything imaginable pertaining to the city; including not only the fashionable world of the aristocracy that Lucien seeks to conquer, but also, importantly, the publishing world of genuine artists, the more compromised world of journalism, the theatre and entertainment world, as well as the world of indigent students and hangers on in Paris, who take their meals in the wretched café Flicoteaux at the heart the Latin Quarter on the Place de la Sorbonne; ‘temple sacred to hunger and lack of money’. This section of the novel constitutes a *roman à thèse*, demonstrating that all great aspirations are *illusions* that must in the course of experience be *lost*.

From the outset money, or its lack, is the determining factor in the aspiring city-dweller’s life: ‘he became aware of the whole world of necessary superfluities, and he shuddered as he reflected that one must have enormous capital in order to play the part of a young man about town’ (p. 176). On his first walk through Paris streets, Lucien is shocked by economic disparities, just as later figures in the history of the *flâneur* will be; ‘the luxury of the shops, the height of the houses, the affluence of the carriages, the contrast, everywhere seen, between great wealth and extreme poverty’ (p. 170). Helped by his sister before leaving Angoulême, Lucien has sought to become fashionably attired in readiness for Paris, only to discover that once in the actual beau monde of wealthy salons, ‘he was handsome, but his clothes were ridiculous’ (p. 165). Throughout his stay in Paris, Lucien will periodically pay small fortunes that he does not have in ready money, mostly on one outfit after another, in a despairing attempt to win his way in the city as one of its key types, Baudelaire’s ‘dandy’. He borrows from family, itself in penury; from friends, to whom he thereby becomes materially and morally indebted; or from moneylenders, who charge high interest and foreclose at times of their own choosing.

Paris is a challenge to Lucien in *immaterial* as well as material terms: ‘The wealth that had overwhelmed him that morning in things he now discovered in ideas’ (p. 187). To be overwhelmed by ideas is a novelty: to be the object of mockery, as Lucien is within a further page of our reading, is an immaterial challenge of an altogether lower order, still more difficult to overcome:

During the second act Mme de Listomère’s box was full, and a conversation was going on, whose subject appeared to be Mme de Bargeton and Lucien. It was plain that young de Rastignac was entertaining the party; it was he who was setting off the peals of that Parisian laughter that needs fresh fuel every day, quickly exhausts every new topic and makes anything stale and threadbare in a moment. (p. 188)

The setting here is the artistic life of Paris’s theatres and their audiences in 1821–1822. When we last saw Rastignac at the end of *Le Père Goriot*, while bruised by his own defeats, he was more determined than ever to make his fortune. He even cast a final challenge in the face of the city, as he looked down upon it from its cemetery Père Lachaise, musing upon the Hôtel des Invalides; ‘centre of that great aristocratic society into which

he'd wanted to move'. In 'grand words' (p. 217) Eugène looks over Paris and addresses it defiantly: 'Now it's just the two of us' (*À nous deux maintenant*).

In *Les Illusions perdues*, Rastignac is the focal point of an aristocratic set in Mme. de Listomère's box, and chief instigator of mockery of the newcomer from Angoulême such as he himself had been so relatively short a time before. Whereas in *Le Père Goriot* it was Eugène on behalf of whom we suffered as readers, now it is Lucien to whom our sympathies extend, even if we already discern the pattern of mistakes that will force his return to a provincial starting point. We excuse in part Lucien's sacrifice of family members' well-being in his desperate attempts to succeed in Paris, as well as his abuse of mistresses and friends. We even excuse the way he becomes de-humanised by journalism while using it perfidiously to praise what he detests and to ridicule what he loves when financial pressures appear imperative. We overlook such turpitude because we see the world that Lucien is up against: impersonal, monstrous. It is a place that the former newcomer Eugène has in a brief couple of years apparently mastered, but in fact serves. It is the nihilistic world of Parisian mockery, '[t]hat needs fresh fuel every day, quickly exhausts every new topic and makes anything stale and threadbare in a moment.' The mockery consumes its fuel of human beings, Lucien de Rubempré in the present instance. Those with his kind of illusion commit a form of *hubris*, in transferring from a place where they possess identity to another where they expect to be recognised as before. The penalty is a sudden and total loss of personal standing (p. 171). Worse, they suffer a peculiarly post-classical punishment: 'those who pass too abruptly from the one state to the other fall into a kind of annihilation' (p. 170) ('ceux qui passent trop brusquement de l'un à l'autre, tombent dans une espèce d'anéantissement', p. 171). The middle section of *Les Illusions perdues* is Balzac's demonstration of how remorselessly the new Paris annihilates individual citizens: the dawn of urban modernity.

Throughout his writings set in the capital Balzac can be said to be investigating, exemplifying or expounding a contemporary dynamic. I refer here to all that the author elaborately represents so as to enable his readers to understand the workings of the city. He portrays its differing manners (*moeurs*), its complex economy and its extensive material structures that took their configuration from decades of unfolding French history; in particular from the vast changes wrought by the Revolution of 1789 and its aftershocks. Butler has claimed with justice that while 'the events of the Revolution were never of great interest to Balzac... [t]he themes associated... , conceived in terms of its lasting consequences, continued to engage Balzac's attention, to permeate his work and to influence his thinking'. Butler exemplifies how 'the *Comédie humaine* is constructed around Balzac's assessment of the changes in French society produced by the Revolution' (Butler 1983, pp. 11–12). Most of Balzac's works are set either during the Restoration period that followed upon the fall of Napoleon, or later, during the so-called July Monarchy, after the revolutionary days of July 1830 that brought Louis Philippe to the throne. This last period of the 1830s and 1840s is also the time during which

the many volumes of the *Comédie humaine* were written. Much that is uncovered within their interrelated narratives can be understood as an archaeology of the present. A focal aspect, fundamental to that excavation, is Balzac's own frequent digging down into the life circumstances of characters, to their origins in the earlier Revolutionary or Napoleonic periods. He conducts such investigation not least because so many fortunes were made and lost in the decades following 1789, with lasting consequences for families and classes involved in the upheavals in question.

Balzac as a novelist looked into historical lineages of the present. He reveals a historical faultline separating the Napoleonic period from the Restoration of the Bourbon king Louis XVIII. So much changes within so brief a time after Napoleon's defeat and the collapse of Empire that we may initially see only antithesis between the two ages, rather than an evolutionary sequence of politics, of society and of lifestyles from one period into the next. Because of this apparent antithesis, we must analyse beyond differences evident on the surface and discover less obvious but highly important connections between the two periods. Many of Balzac's more innocent characters prove unable to conduct such connective enquiry, exemplifying as they do a set of *illusions* that cannot but be *perdues* by the endings of the narratives in which they figure.

A more recent fiction provides access into the differences between two succeeding periods which are connected at deeper levels. At a significant point of his journeying into the past W.G. Sebald's eponymous Austerlitz (like all Sebald's characters a form of surrogate self) reports that reading Balzac's *Le Colonel Chabert* 'reinforced the suspicion I had always entertained that the border between life and death is less impermeable than we commonly think' (Sebald 2001, p. 395). In *Le Colonel Chabert* the protagonist, a hero of Napoleon's army, functions as a link of 'permeability' back into a former age, or in Sebaldian terms through 'the border between life and death'. In this novel we detect values of two nineteenth-century French periods, the Napoleonic years and the Restoration that followed, grating against one another. In particular, the Napoleonic age refuses to disappear from conscious recognition, despite attempts by characters of the Restoration in which events are set to bury its more heroic values in oblivion.

In analogous manner Sebald's figure of Austerlitz is caught between an apparently unspoiled moment in his childhood and a historically compromised reality of the present, in his case because of the intervening destructive age of Nazism in Germany and its occupied lands. Sebald's earlier narrative had reached a stage when it lays bare Austerlitz's pre-war years as a child in central Europe, increasingly dominated by Nazism and its attendant anti-Semitism. Long after the war Austerlitz discovers a photograph of himself which his pre-war nanny Vera, whom he has rediscovered in his travelling about Europe seeking to recuperate the past, had found between the covers of a copy of Balzac's *Le Colonel Chabert*. In looking at the sepia-toned photograph of a boy dressed in snow-white pageboy outfit (a photo exceptional even for Sebald and reproduced on the softcover edition of the book), Austerlitz feels acutely accountable to the

youth in the image that he once was. He mourns for a personal as well as cultural destiny that turned out dramatically worse than his earlier self might have expected. Austerlitz lost both parents in the Holocaust. We discover that he arrived in Britain on a 1939 *Kindertransport* and that he grew up in the home of a dreary, well-meaning Welsh couple. The later Austerlitz has lived as a displaced being even after the War, never satisfyingly attuned to the society around him. The photograph and his nanny function as catalysts of the ‘permeability’ between life and death that Sebald treats. As in Balzac, the ‘permeability’ in question is between contrasting periods, seemingly opposite in kind, but in actuality connected by a thread that must be followed. Austerlitz has followed his own historical thread back into a personal past. For him the expectations of childhood were formed in ignorance of the full horrors of Nazism, which, when they came to pass, inevitably overdetermined his disappointments of maturity. For Balzac the contrast is between a glorious age for France under Napoleon and the venal age that accompanied the Bourbon Restoration.

Both historical fractures—that which Sebald treats and the earlier one in Balzac—are complex. For if the childhood pageboy that was Austerlitz is an image of innocence, the pre-war years in question were ones in which the Nazi horrors were indubitably in a state of gestation, even if incomprehensible to the child. Sebald’s novel shows the later Austerlitz studying with historical hindsight many incidents of the 1930s that witnessed the rise of Nazism. Similarly in Balzac, the Napoleonic years may have seemed heroic, marked by an honourable social etiquette widely practiced in army as in civilian life. Yet those years harbored preconditions for social codes of the Restoration, in which respectability was always in some sense a sham, since everything now had a disreputable ‘underside’. Those living the glories of Napoleon at the time, or reliving them later in a continuance of their afterglow, could not detect inherent contradictions of the earlier period, which grew monstrous in the time that followed. That is why the notion of permeability between what seems dead and gone and what is alive and before one’s eyes is important: for it underscores connection back to a past that is, however seemingly dead, in actuality *undead*. Balzac’s Colonel Chabert is intensely important in all these respects. He is a revenant; not a figure from the dead returned to life, but the emblem of all that is in actuality *undead* and that cannot successfully be buried by a succeeding age, no matter how assiduous its attempts at cover-up.

To speak of the underside of reality inevitably leads to a questioning of what lies hidden beneath the social or material surfaces of life. In the case of cities the answer is obvious; a network of sewers. Historians such as Alexandre Parent-Duchatelet studied the effect of Paris’s actual sewers upon public health in the 1820s. Studying the underside of life, and of Paris in particular, is Balzac’s specialist trade. He is scarcely five pages into *Le Colonel Chabert* when he uses the term ‘cloaques de la poésie’ (p. 5) of, first, stories that are told within priestly confessionals; second, what was once finery but has now become rags in pawnshops; and third, the social dramas that are processed in legal offices. All three sites—the confessional, the pawnshop and the lawyer’s office—are ‘sewers’ through which life’s poetry,

both spiritual and material, flows. Balzac sees his task as one of capturing that poetry in narrative form: his novels are hence a fourth main site, unmentioned in the sequence recounting the former three, but important because encompassing them and much else. In the same paragraph from early in the text of *Le Colonel Chabert*, certain social dramas are termed the ‘most hideous of Parisian monstrosities’. We must hang onto this sense that, prior to Baudelaire, what is most poetic for Balzac is also what is most monstrous; the sites of its appearance being, metaphorically, sewers.

The photograph of Austerlitz had fallen from an old copy of *Le Colonel Chabert*. It had possibly been placed there by Austerlitz’s mother before her immolation in the death-camps. In Balzac’s novella of 1832, a hero of the Napoleonic wars, Colonel Chabert, believed dead on the battlefield of Eylau in 1807, and buried there beneath a pile of dead or near-dead bodies, comes back surprisingly alive if struck with age to Paris twelve years later to reclaim his property and his wife. She is now married to Count Ferraud, prominent figure of the post-Napoleonic period (the Bourbon monarchy of Louis XVIII). There is the more glorious time of Napoleon’s victories under the early years of his Empire before 1807, when Chabert apparently died at Eylau. And there is, in contrast, the socially venal Restoration Paris to which he returns in 1818, after years in more central Europe recuperating from his wounds. Chabert upholds values now out of place. He has come from a heroic age; the later period, preoccupied with money and social standing, has been burying Empire—values, just as it believes that a talisman of that earlier age, Chabert, is securely under earth. Even Balzac’s seemingly light touches hold significance for the set of points he is making in the novella: Chabert ‘looks like a corpse they dug up’ (p. 10) in the eyes of one of the petty legal clerks under Derville, the lawyer whose help the old soldier seeks in his attempt to re-establish his standing in Paris. Balzac is even willing casually to refer to Chabert as ‘the dead man’ (*le défunt*) to reinforce how out of place he is among those who have lived on into the Restoration: ‘“Monsieur,” the dead man said, “[y]ou may know that I commanded a cavalry regiment at Eylau. . . . Unfortunately for me, my death is a historical fact registered in *Victories and Conquests*, where it is related in detail”’ (p. 18). Soon enough Chabert will emphasise, in terms of elaborating the burial-trope, how negatively he is being treated by Parisian society including his wife:

When I, a dead man, rise in rebellion against a death certificate, a marriage certificate and birth certificates, they show me the door, depending on their character, either with that frigidly polite air assumed by people when trying to get rid of an unhappy man, or else brutally, like people who think they’re dealing with a schemer or a madman. I was buried under the dead, now I am buried under the living, under the whole of society, which is trying to push me back down into the earth. (p. 25)

Chabert judges the later Paris and finds that it is ethically stricken. It has what the novella calls in one place a ‘moral cancer’ (p. 51). It is now a world of people

with the same ‘extreme wickedness or the fierce egotism’ (p. 75) that Chabert irremediably discovers in his wife. The Countess Ferraud tries for days in her country residence to woo Chabert into empathising with her rather than pursue his own case. For a time she succeeds in getting him to suspend disbelief in her motives for continuing with her present life in Restoration society. He has alarmingly returned from a past that is, in value terms for her, well and truly dead. Chabert himself, to his renewed cost and shame, penetrates the Countess’s skills as an actress, with which she has staged an elaborate charade of concern for him. However, once her deceptions are uncovered, instead of exposing her falsity and denouncing her deceptions, Chabert decides that it is not worth his while fighting to regain her, nor claiming even a portion of his inheritance. He has contracted in the process an ‘illness’ which disinclines him from trying to re-establish himself in Parisian society; namely ‘disgust with humankind’ (p. 79). Judging Paris and its Restoration culture along with Chabert, at not very disguised removes furthermore, are the lawyer Derville as well as Balzac himself, for whom Derville *and* Chabert are in different senses mouthpieces.

The *Comédie* is Balzac’s attempt to represent that ‘whole of society’ (‘la société tout entière’) under which Chabert and so many of his other characters are progressively buried. On Balzac’s part, to reach such archaeological strata and tell the stories uncovered there meant supplementing with a radically different order of writing such official documents as Parent-Duchatelet’s 1824 study of sewers, or the same medical hygienist’s 1836 report on prostitution in Paris. Part of the long title of Parent-Duchatelet’s 1824 work states that it is a ‘report on public hygiene and medical topography of the city’. Such wording embodies the discourses of social order and mental health that Balzac, in his novels, transforms into a poetry of the city’s underside. Balzac’s own ‘sewers of poetry’ are a way of exposing hidden lives. The *Comédie* is indeed a report on his society’s connective blood-stream, as Faulkner casually hinted in an interview. So much of its continuous world is as unclean in terms of moral hygiene as it is topographically replete with ‘rattle, bustle and harlotry,’ to recall *Ferragus*.

Engels claimed that while Balzac was ‘politically a legitimist, his great work is a constant elegy on the irreparable decay of good society.’ He adds that Balzac’s great strength was to represent in irremediable decline his own class of preference, the French aristocracy that had made an initial comeback under the Empire and regained ascendancy under the Restoration: ‘his satire is never keener, his irony never more bitter, than when he sets in motion the very men and women with whom he sympathizes most deeply—the nobles’. Engels sees the triumph of the *Comédie* to be its author’s power to represent French society from 1816 to 1848 in ways that went against ‘his own class sympathies and political prejudices’. This is only partially true. Nobody writes the proverbial ‘20,000 pages’ against the grain of personal belief and prejudice. In his summative account of Balzac’s achievement, Engels was too wedded to seeing the unfolding of history as a displacement of rottenness at the top by more progressive forces from below. He proclaims that Balzac ‘*saw* the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found,’ namely ‘republican heroes’ who were

'representatives of the popular masses' (Marx and Engels 1956, p. 37). We have noted, on the contrary, that those in the *Comédie* who can detect the enduring gangrene in society are as likely to come from amongst its most criminal classes as from its heroes of old. Vautrin and Chabert equally display a disgust with humanity. The *Comédie* promulgates no such *idée maitresse* of human progress as does a Marxist version of history. Instead, it discloses a *poetics*, in particular a poetics of the city at the heart of French society, Paris, allowing equal status to what is gangrened and disgusting as it does to touching dramas of people who place an unwarranted trust in others that is tragic to behold. Old Goriot is abandoned by his consummately venal daughters. They have sucked him dry of all the fortune that, from the outset, he only sought to generate on their behalf. They squander the last of the hard-won wealth in public at the same time that Goriot dies in squalor in Mme. Vauquer's pension. What the *Comédie* anticipates, more than any ameliorative account of the future, is a world just around the corner historically speaking, and equivalently unprogressive; that of Baudelaire's beauty in evil.

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Berlin: Flesh and Stone, Space and Time

Ulrike Zitzlsperger

In *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, Richard Sennett explores the history of cities by analysing people's 'physical sensations in urban space' that are defined, then as now, by the built environment (Sennett 1996, p. 15). When discussing literary Berlin since the nineteenth century, this is a key prompt: a city that experienced historical ruptures at regular intervals is bound to reflect, time and again, the role of the individual in the metropolis. In doing so, literature characterizes by means of observation what may be considered to be distinctive for particular periods. In 1926 this approach of the observer found fitting artistic expression when Otto Umbehr (UMBO) created a photomontage of Egon Erwin Kisch: 'The Racing Reporter' depicted the new post-war journalist. In Umbehr's montage the signs of his trade make up the body parts; the chest is a typewriter, the legs each an aeroplane and a car, the eye a camera, hearing is enhanced by gramophone horns. Kisch, it seems, has mastered both space and time. He is representative of an age that relished the impact of new media and technologies: sound (in the movies, on the roads, at the train stations) and images (with photographs, films and newsreels). 1920s Berlin provided these in abundance, and the authors concerned with urban life were busy translating these sensory experiences into appropriate aesthetic patterns. Umbehr's depiction of Kisch's journalistic ambition holds true for many of the writers associated with the city: Theodor Fontane, Gabriele Tergit and Peter Schneider engaged both in journalism and in creative writing. Their contributions explore Berlin's rapid expansion from the last third of the nineteenth century until the early 1930s; devastating destruction in the Second World War; the division along the Cold War's ideological borders, right through Berlin; and finally unification in 1990 when the former death strip remained visible throughout the transitional years of the 1990s. It is telling that in discussion of the phenomenon of the

metropolis Berlin past and present has been associated, contrasted and compared with Babylon, Carthage, Rome, Paris, Vienna, Moscow, New York and Chicago—but also Jerusalem, Moscow and Buenos Aires.

In the foreword to a translation of Peter Schneider's narrative *The Walljumper* in 2005, Ian McEwan—responding to a new readership outside Berlin that had not necessarily even heard of the Berlin Wall and its impact—raises a number of considerations that are reflected in the selection of representative literature in the present article. In *The Walljumper*, McEwan argues, Berlin was 'acutely observed rather than invented' and it was predominantly Schneider's provision of a particular cast amidst 'the larger geo-political context' that contributed to the success of the book (Schneider 2005, p. vi). The imaginative distinction of such contemporary casts in transitional periods has captured the mood of the wider public time and again.

In a city marked by ruptures there are, nonetheless, continuities too—which also holds true for the way that the boundaries between journalism, literature and other types of writing may blur. In 1910 the art critic Karl Scheffler observed in one such text, *Berlin, Ein Stadtchicksal / Berlin. The Fate of a City* that Berlin was condemned forever to becoming and never to being (Scheffler 1989, p. 219). Remarkably, and despite the implicit drama of such developments, in literary Berlin there are no heroes—instead, literature concerned with the city populates it with individuals challenged to adapt to the uncertain present in the light of a distinctive past. This development culminates with the 'masses' in the revolution of 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. While there may be no heroes, literature concerned with Berlin has over time transformed selected public spaces into poignant markers of change. Erhard Schütz, reflecting discourses on urban life by Walther Rathenau, Karl Scheffler, Georg Simmel and Martina Löw, has highlighted the importance of distinctive local features when we seek to understand a city's individuality: the typology of cities is based, *inter alia*, on the exaggerations and omissions that literature provides (Schütz 2012, pp. 11–27). For Berlin such locations that come up time and again qualify as touchstones to illustrate its tales of expansion, destruction, division and rebuilding.

Few areas have attracted as much attention as Potsdamer Square. By the 1920s the square had turned into a hub with Europe's first traffic light and nightly illuminations. The lure and the angst associated with perpetual traffic by day and the flickering lights at night epitomized the interwar German capital. Erich Kästner emphasizes these characteristics in his poem 'Besuch vom Lande' (Visitors from the Provinces) when he makes the square the setting for his hapless guests from afar: overwhelmed by impressions that bear on all the senses, the inexperienced city-dwellers are simply run over (Kästner 1997, p. 119). Fred Hildenbrandt, Arthur Holitscher, Hans Kafka, Egon Erwin Kisch, Siegfried Kracauer and Joseph Roth are among those who integrated the same area in their literary journalism: Potsdamer Square served as a backdrop for

considerations of city life. After war and destruction, from 1961 on the ‘anti-fascist protection rampart’ split the square along the sector boundaries, turning it into a no-man’s land. A return of public awareness was then inspired by film director Wim Wenders in 1987 on the release of *Der Himmel über Berlin / Wings of Desire*. Here a scene depicts the 1980s wasteland that was then Potsdamer Square, including the Wall and its graffiti. The viewers’ guide is the story-teller Homer (Curt Bois), whose precise memories of the 1920s and early 1930s stress the scale of change the city centre has undergone. Jeff Malpas writes that ‘The Berlin that appears in *Wings of Desire* is [. . .] imbued with memory and image’ (Malpas 2008, p. 150). These memories tend to juxtapose the lively 1920s, the destruction following the Second World War and finally the impact of the physical division between East and West. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Potsdamer Square turned into one of the key areas of 1990s redevelopment. Marketing and literature alike now embraced for the inner-city wasteland the metaphor of the ‘heart of the city’. In *Eduards Heimkehr (Eduard’s Homecoming)*, a novel that confronts the narrator of the 1980s *The Walljumper* with the task of navigating the unfamiliar territory of post-Wall Berlin, Peter Schneider refers to the building process as a dubious transplantation while the clearance of this ‘wound’ in the city centre removes all traces of history (Schneider 1998, p. 273). East German writer Peter Wawerzinek (*Café Komplott*) anticipates the rebuilding of the square as a new Wall dividing rich and poor and F.C. Delius (*Die Flatterzunge*) hails the transient nature of the 1990s that would prove more exciting than the corporate city centre of the twenty-first century. As in the 1920s, the—now predominantly architectural—*feuilleton* also returned to Potsdamer Square as a representative space of what was then termed the New Berlin. It is, then, no coincidence that the square has all but dropped out of literary and journalistic awareness by the twenty-first century.

Like Potsdamer Square, the Grand Hotel Adlon at Pariser Platz mirrors Berlin’s history. What has contributed to the Adlon’s appeal as a setting is that Hedda Adlon’s memories of 1955 have served as a master-narrative that provides a stock of anecdotes ‘verifying’ fictional engagements. The interest in the micro-setting as a reflection of the complexities of cultural and historical metropolitan life had first gained popularity in the 1920s, when writers such as Vicki Baum (*Menschen im Hotel / Grand Hotel*) and film directors such as F.M. Murnau (*Der letzte Mann / The Last Man*; 1924) capitalized on the potential of the hotel to show social hierarchies with the help of metaphors such as lifts and elevators; the contrast of the machine-like processes of the working world (the telephone exchange) and the exquisite possibilities of leisure (dancing to modern music); modern technology (illuminations of the hotel façade) in contrast to age-old human anxieties (loneliness and anonymity within a busy environment); or the transience of life, notably in the context of the revolving hotel doors and interchangeable rooms. In Baum’s novel—though she never details the actual hotel name—it is indeed the choice of a representative cast that captured the imagination of interwar readers: the so-called ‘New Woman’ (Flämmchen) belongs in this environment just as much as the facially injured doctor Ottersschlag who observes

the comings and goings in the lobby, unable to escape the memory of the First World War. Baum's hotel is 1920s Berlin *en miniature*.

Like hotels, the city's railway stations serve as a focus to communicate the impact of historic change. Berlin provides for unique scope in that the wide range of larger and smaller 'cathedrals of modernity' came to stand not just for civilization, industry and progress but also for the destruction of urban and national networks in the course of war and division. Friedrichstraße Station serves Ingeborg Drewitz as an example (*Eis auf der Elbe, Gestern war Heute, Bahnhof Friedrichstraße*); Monika Maron reminds her readers of the travellers' rituals after 1961: what is a transition point for day-trippers from the West becomes, at the same time and place, an insurmountable barrier for those in the East (*Geburtsort Berlin*). The remnants of Anhalter Station, a few stops down the line, today serve as a memorial and a local transport station. From 1933 onwards it became one of the few escape routes out of Germany—Leonhard Frank claims in his memories *Links wo das Herz ist / Heart on the Left* that he met Hermann Goering on the platform when he was lighting his cigarette on departure (Frank 2009, p. 176): metropolitan literature is rich in public–private encounters. The popular East Berlin writer Heinz Knobloch reminds his readers of the station during the post-war years—and, among other literary and historical cross-references, of the fact that it was visible from the window of one of Theodor Fontane's most notable fictional creations, Effi Briest (Knobloch 1984, p. 9). Anhalter Station was pulled down in 1960 with the exception of the former portal. The Turkish writer Emine Sevgi Özdamar, who arrived as one of the 'guest workers' in 1960s West Berlin, describes the 'broken' and 'offended station' in *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn / The Bridge of the Golden Horn*—now a mere remnant of war and division (Özdamar 1998, pp. 24–25).

Finally, Kurfürstendamm was the boulevard that turned into a symbol of Berlin's more recent history. Irmgard Keun, Joseph Roth, Siegfried Kracauer and Gabriele Tergit (including her novel based on her journalistic writings, *Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm*) had dedicated *feuilletons* after the First World War to the street—an obvious destination since some of the most famous literary coffee-houses were situated here, Romanisches Café and Café des Westens, later also a branch of Kranzler. These, in turn, housed the writers who had made their way to Berlin—among them Carl Zuckmayer and Stefan Zweig, whose memoirs, *Als wär's ein Stück von mir: Horen der Freundschaft / A Part of Myself: Portrait of an Epoch* and *Die Welt von Gestern / The World of Yesterday*, celebrate the cultural networks before the majority of the regulars were forced into emigration and Berlin's literary scene changed for good. Klaus Mann (*Der Vulkan. Roman unter Emigranten*) and Wolfgang Koeppen (*Romanisches Café*) bemoan the demise of the boulevard after 1933. The memories recorded by Zuckmayer, Zweig and others have, however, contributed to a retrospective sense of an affirmative 1920s Berlin culture placed, among other locations, around Berlin's Kurfürstendamm.

It is no coincidence that since the 1990s the literary mapping of Berlin has received renewed attention. In the first instance this was an acknowledgement of

the political voids and the importance of memory where building sites facilitated engagement with layers of history (Huyssen 1997, pp. 57–81). ‘Reading’ the development of space proves productive—not least when the city is analysed either with a focus on a particular period such as the Weimar Republic (Mossop 2015; Bienert 1982), or in relation to other cities (Košťálová and Schütz 2012; Schlögel 1995). Literary mapping of the metropolis is a process both of visualizing urban topography and of the mediation of a new socio-political status quo. Eminent locations provide, then, a narrative focus in a city characterized by discontinuity. However, the literary chronology of Berlin also focuses on individuals, whose lives are at key times determined by the city.

CITY CENTRE, EXPANSION AND THE SUBURBS—URBAN CHRONICLES

The occupation of Berlin under Napoleon (1806–1808) first gave rise to a sense of German identity. Roughly half a century later, by the 1870s Berlin had become one of seven cities worldwide with more than one million inhabitants. This rapid development and its social implications commanded engagement with the city and its growing population.

In 1822 E.T.A. Hoffmann’s ‘Des Vettters Eckfenster’ (My Cousin’s Corner-Window) introduces two observers of the city centre, an uncle, who is confined to his room and the view from its corner window, and his nephew who is taught to ‘read’ the city from this vantage point. The observers’ guided gaze facilitates the structuring of a multi-layered panorama of inner-city life. The ‘grammar’ of observation measures the variety of social ranks and classes. The theatrical setting, with the two-man audience exploring the choreography of interaction among Berliners on a market day, becomes, once differentiated, a confrontation with individual stories. The discussion of the sights also refers to two ground-breaking eighteenth-century graphic artists in Berlin and London, Daniel N. Chodowiecki and William Hogarth, who documented the cities’ milieus in detail in scenes that, once accumulated, provide a sequence of contemporary snapshots: ‘writing’ Berlin is characterized by cross-references to other arts, word and image informing each other.

Historically motivated social dynamics remained of interest when Berlin expanded in the course of the nineteenth century. Following the Franco-Prussian War in 1870–1871, the city had become the boom capital of a united Germany. Theodor Fontane’s novels, including *Frau Jenny Treibel* (1892) and *Die Poggenpuhls* (1898) build on the topography of a metropolis that is organized by its strictly divided classes. Fontane does not judge, but he describes and places his protagonists with great care—the well-to-do Treibels and the impoverished noble Poggenpuhls reflect Berlin’s social disposition after unification in 1871. Each home indicates aspirations and mores; the interiors betray the fates of families and individuals. Jenny Treibel, for example, who has married wisely, arrives at the beginning of the novel in Adlerstrasse near Spittelmarkt at the heart of old Berlin—well apart from her generously spaced modern home next to her husband’s factory. All appreciation of the inhabitants

in Adlerstraße aside, the social order—and the differences between these households—are upheld. The Poggenpuhls, meanwhile, aware of the family's past importance, live, poor but proud, in a new apartment block in Großgörschenstraße, an area that became representative of Berlin's expansion: the German term 'Mietskaserne'—rental barracks—reflects the real dimension of these rapidly mushrooming parts of Berlin. Matter-of-fact Mathilde Möhring's home, finally, is on the fourth floor in Georgenstraße, close to Friedrichstraße Station. Even though she moves temporarily, Mathilde is destined to return here once her husband dies—close to the station, but unable to escape for good. Fontane's Berlin is firmly mapped, the overall city as much as the lay-out of individual houses and apartment blocks—and both challenges to and affirmation of the social order can be traced by competing, though strictly ordered settings. This stands in contrast to a fact observed in *Effi Briest*: that 'there is no longer much of a difference between Charlottenburg and Berlin' (Fontane 2009, p. 198). The city is expanding, but not, however, for the time being the perceptions of its society. Only leisurely excursions to popular venues disrupt the domestic routines: these include restaurants at one of Berlin's lakes in Halensee, Rummelsburg and Paulsborn; visits to Berlin's established coffee-houses Kranzler and Café Bauer are mentioned, and also the Zoological Garden. Potsdamer Square represents 'life', 'the best a big city may offer' (Fontane 2013, p. 36). Here, for a limited period, the protagonists escape the boundaries set by conventions.

Fontane describes personal environments in great detail—down to plates and the sequence of menus—and he populates the street scenes with characteristic details such as the adverts on advertising columns or the coffee-houses and hotels around Potsdamer Square: 'Small', Ronald Taylor writes about the writer's approach, 'is beautiful' (Taylor 1997, p. 192). Fontane's literary Berlin juxtaposes metropolitan ambitions with the impact of tradition and a need to belong. If Paris had Balzac and London Dickens to view metropolitan ways of life, so Hans Ester implies, then Fontane's Berlin acknowledges the city's nobility, the bourgeoisie and the lower middle classes as relevant forces (Ester 2000, p. 11, 16).

Milieus that are mirrored by distinct urban environments were of similar interest for the German-Jewish writer Georg Hermann. In contrast with Fontane—with whom he is frequently compared (Robertson 2004, p. 16)—Hermann celebrates actual city life. His intellectual protagonists do, after the turn of the century, find a home from home in the Bohemian cafés and walking the streets. Here too protagonists are required to understand the relevance of belonging—and digressions into wrong parts of town and therewith the wrong milieus disrupt trusted routines. Hermann, as Gert and Gundel Mattenklott observe, is a master in 'turning atmospheres into language' (Mattenklott and Mattenklott 1987, p. 78). Just as in Hans Fallada's writings in the 1920s and 1930s, for Hermann the centre of Berlin is a place with a particular atmosphere: it is the pulsating, even though in parts impoverished, heart of the metropolis, while further afield, in the suburbs, life slows down. Where Fontane contrasts ultimately accepting bourgeois and noble citizens, Hermann also pays attention

to those that life fails. In 1910 for example, Hermann describes Kubinke's arrival in Berlin by train. The centre of the city proves overwhelming—and anticipates the hairdresser's struggles to make a living and find a girl-friend. The fascination with the arrival by train is, notwithstanding indicators of unease with modernity, fitting: not only is the train the most important means of transport for an increasingly mobile society, but Berlin's growth had been aided by the development of an effective urban transport system and train stations that served the districts, rural communities and beyond like nerve centres: Anhalter Bahnhof, Schlesischer Bahnhof or Lehrter Stadtbahnhof provided essential local, regional and wider ranging links, and contemporary readers recognized destinations simply from the name of individual stations.

As with interiors, Georg Hermann pays great attention to Berlin's street scenes. Landmarks such as the Brandenburg Gate or the various railway stations serve as points of transition between individual parts of the city—not unlike the approach by the painter Hans Baluschek or the caricaturist and photographer Heinrich Zille, whose critical realism Hermann admired. Natural imagery adds in his writings to the sense of an all-encompassing urban experience, exposing the individual to the elements of metropolitan life: like nature, the city embodies a physical force. In tune with many authors 'writing Berlin' Hermann also confronts the outsider's view of Berlin with the sobering reality. *Rosenemil*, for example, begins on a park bench on Unter den Linden. Hermann, by now in exile from National Socialist Germany, provides a detailed study of the history and design of the area for the turn of century. This disappoints Hermann's imaginary provincial visitors, who are seeking the idea of the metropolis and are appalled by the homeless, the soldiers and the hapless students who occupy the benches along the acclaimed boulevard. The reader, though, becomes acquainted with one of the characters and his *milieu*.

Hermann had a keen interest in the history of nineteenth-century Berlin: his best-selling novels, *Jettchen Gebert* and *Henriette Jacoby* (1906–1909), also labelled the 'Jewish Buddenbrooks', focus on the aspirations and tensions of a Jewish family and the political climate of pre-revolution Berlin: the narrative concentrates on the years 1839 and 1840 when well-to-do families still spent the summers outside town in the farming villages of Charlottenburg or Schöneberg. Hermann's fascination with authentic Berliners and their habitat was continuous—as with Fallada, the entirety of his works reflects, over decades, Berlin's metropolitan growth combined with a strong sense for the social and topographical dynamics within the city.

Even though some observations about Berlin's development translate across decades, the scale of the creation of Greater Berlin, the capital of the Weimar Republic, after the First World War nevertheless added a new dimension to literary exploration of the city. By the early 1920s it was time to re-read Berlin to explore the structure of a post-war metropolis that was not only focal to the new democracy but characterized by new social dynamics. At this stage the cast does change: individuals no longer bound by tradition and class are confronted

with the forces of modern life and with the urban masses, be they part of the work-force, the jobless or members of political parties. In 1925 Georg Hermann lets his alter ego Fritz Eisner observe that the traffic dictates a ‘new rhythm’ (Hermann 1925, p. 17), moving tens of thousands at a time under- and over-ground. Writers such as Erich Kästner, Gabriele Tergit or Kurt Tucholsky, when seeking to distinguish different parts of Berlin, remained acutely aware of a conservative and well-to-do western part of the city—as opposed to the poverty in the east, at the heart of the writings of Alfred Döblin and Joseph Roth.

BERLIN BABYLON

In *Berlin Transit. Eine Stadt als Station*—the title relates to the transitory character of the metropolis—Gert und Gundel Mattenklott state that ‘between 1910 and 1933 Berlin was not only the most important place for the production of German literature but also its preferred topic’ (Mattenklott and Mattenklott 1987, p. 87). Hermann Kähler adds that the ‘big city novel’ (*Großstadtroman*) of the 1920s is about much more than a specific location—instead, he argues, it reflects the focus of particular mental configurations (Kähler 1986, p. 4). Physically Berlin had not suffered any damage in the course of the First World War, but it bore the brunt of the unrest in its wake: first revolution and then the Versailles Treaty; it witnessed the political and economic upheaval of the post-war years and the social divisions that followed. If Theodor Fontane and Georg Hermann had been preoccupied with the city’s steady expansion and the impact of belonging to particular milieus, 1920s literature sought to deal with a disjointed metropolis that was eyed critically from the provinces; it epitomized modernity and new social diversity; and appeared forward-looking, industrial and more democratic than most of the rest of Germany. ‘All of Weimar’s protagonists’, writes Eric D. Weitz, ‘whatever their political and cultural proclivities, grappled with this tension-bound world of modernity’ (Weitz 2007, p. 4). In the centre of Weimar culture, in Berlin, this tension found expression in ground-breaking films and literature.

Fritz Lang’s film *M—Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder / M—A City Looks for a Murderer* (1931) channelled the threat of the lack of order in society and was in tune with contemporary anxieties. This is a Berlin of long staircases, fearful glances to the clock on the wall, dark rooms and dreary backyards—a Berlin asphalt jungle. The film, which focuses on the hunt for a killer by both criminals and the police, shows the lure of the window displays which are part of the ‘Weimar Surfaces’ that Janet Ward (2001) has analysed as a decisive cultural factor of the period: the glittering knives tempt the murderer to commit yet another crime. This irritating glitter that Erich Kästner stresses in the aforementioned ‘Besuch vom Lande’ and in his novel of 1932, *Fabian*, serves to accentuate diffuse and real forces omnipresent in interwar Berlin: metropolitan promises are interwoven with crime and corruption, poverty, redundancy and the permanent allusion to

the threat of the 'machine'. The sense of being a mere 'cog' in this machine becomes a predominant theme when even leisure is characterized by mechanical excess. Fabian, redundant and bemoaning the loss of his girlfriend, drifts through the seedy nightlife and its entertainments; there is no room for an individual unwilling to compromise on moral grounds. For Fabian, Berlin, like the rest of Europe, appears to be stuck in a transition that is depicted with gloom after the Wall Street crash of 1929 and ensuing problems in Germany. His girlfriend Cornelia proves—like Flämmchen in Baum's novel—to be one of the 'New Women' that the media hailed and that Irmgard Keun had depicted in *Das kunstseidene Mädchen/The Artificial Silk Girl*—all three, keen to prove themselves, identify with their time and the city. In the end, Fabian seeks to escape to Dresden; usually lacking initiative, here he acts decisively for once and attempts to rescue a boy who has fallen into the river Elbe. The boy makes it back on to firm ground, but Fabian is a *Nichtschwimmer*, unable to swim—in other words, not able, for better or worse, to adapt to post-war life and society. Berlin literature of the time reflects the deeply ingrained angst that resulted from the experience of the First World War and the anticipation of future conflict. It is no coincidence that many protagonists are marked by failure and that film and literature are rife with nightmares, suicides and biblical allusions.

There are exceptions, though: Hans Fallada's novels, and in particular *Kleiner Mann, was nun? / Little Man, What Now* (1932), were far from painting a rosy picture, but Fallada seeks to counter the threatening political and economic forces that determine the fate of the 'little man' with the merits of his family life, even if, in the end, they live among the urban poor on the allotments outside the city. Pinneberg is one of Berlin's many white-collar workers who find themselves exposed to the realities of the Fordist structures. Fallada's sympathy for his characters adds drama to the narrative, whereas Kästner's approach remains detached and rather diagnostic. In 1932 Bertolt Brecht, preoccupied with both left-wing politics and metropolitan life in Berlin, chose the tented camps at Müggelsee outside the city to show the life of the mass unemployed: *Kuhle Wampe* is a semi-documentary film, directed by Slatan Dudow, and a far cry from Fallada's compromising approach.

If the metropolis is part of the challenge that faces the interwar literary and cinematic protagonists, then Walther Ruttmann's documentary montage *Berlin: Die Symphonie der Großstadt / Berlin—The Symphony of the Big City* (1927) exposed some of the perceived structural dynamics of city life. Here the metropolis turns into a sequence of urban functions and repetitive processes. Accordingly, circular and horizontal movements come to dominate: the up and down of shutters and elevators; the perpetual circle of water and leaves in the wind or the revolving doors underline the cycle of life. The image of a roller-coaster highlights the unpredictabilities that determine the individual's fate. The film begins with the slow approach of a train early in the morning; it arrives at one of the few instantly recognizable locations in the semi-documentary: Anhalter Bahnhof. Stations determine the organized movement in the city and

the camera focuses on countless feet hurrying up and down the stairs in railway and tube stations—skilfully set against the cattle being moved to slaughter at the same time. Even the pace of leisure in the city mirrors the images of transport: Ruttmann's variety girls emulate the movement of the railway, a comparison that Siegfried Kracauer—a critic of the film—was to echo in his deliberations on Berlin's contemporary culture. Ruttmann concentrates on one 'representative' day; man, firmly embedded in the rhythm of the city, becomes an intrinsic part of the modern metropolis and, more primitive reactions such as aggression or hunger aside, shows no will of his own.

The juxtaposition of humans and cattle that are moved between stable and slaughter plays a crucial role in one of the period's most remarkable novels: Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) is with James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and John Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* (1925) representative of twentieth-century city writing: the setting is distinctively Berlin, but the novel is nonetheless symptomatic of the growing awareness of themes generically associated with the metropolis. Andreas Huyssen has explored the importance of visual perception of the 'big city' in literature, in particular in light of Döblin's 'spatialized writing' (Huyssen 2015, p. 8). Döblin, influenced by his experience as a medical doctor in Berlin's poor quarters around Alexanderplatz, narrates the fate of Franz Biberkopf who, once released from prison, seeks to become an honest citizen. The plan proves presumptuous: the forces of his milieu and the city are overwhelming; Biberkopf's fall from grace is predictable. Döblin's novel too is rich in biblical references—and in statistics, quotations from advertisements, songs and weather forecasts: the negotiation through the complexities of modern city life is captured in Döblin's montage. Klaus Scherpe has analysed how information available in the public domain—the 'informed city'—in fact dominates Döblin's narrated city (Scherpe 2002, p. 27). The abundance of information that amounts to what we perceive as city life is set against a protagonist whose drama lies in his belief that he is in charge of his life. Piel Jutzi directed the film version of the novel in 1931 with Heinrich George as Biberkopf. The first sequence shows Biberkopf as he leaves prison and takes the tram into the city centre. As the speed of the tram increases, so does the activity outside; the traffic is dense, the building sites undermine the sense of orientation, and Biberkopf is increasingly overwhelmed until he finds refuge in a dark corridor—not unlike a frightened animal seeking shelter in a cave. The 1920s Berlin, changing, noisy, hectic, is a force to be reckoned with. Tellingly, Fontane, Hermann, Kästner and Döblin are among the authors who were 'rediscovered' in 1990s Berlin, when topics such as social change, building sites and the metropolis came to the fore again. In both periods the political new beginning and its implications stimulate literary and cinematic reassessments (Weiss-Sussex and Zitzlspurger 2007, p. 5). These include the comparison between Berlin and other metropolitan cities: in the context of the 1920s Vienna is usually presented as essentially traditional (Warren and Zitzlspurger 2007; Fetzer and Schlösser 2001), while Berlin, modern and industrial, corresponds to the fast-growing industrial American cities, notably Chicago and New York (Jäger and Schütz 1999).

Herbert Günther's anthology *Hier schreibt Berlin* provided, in 1929, a complex response to Berlin's status quo in terms of literary modernism. The impressive list of contributors is a Who's Who of 1920s writing in and about Berlin; it was no surprise that the National Socialists included the volume on their index of forbidden literature: Heinrich Mann, Ernst Toller, Alfred Kerr, Kurt Tucholsky, Lion Feuchtwanger, Erich Kästner, Carl Zuckmayer and Alfred Döblin were among the wealth of talent that had come to characterize a culture explicitly associated with the capital. Günther's anthology had sought to foster an image of Berlin by means of what he terms 'literary projections' (Günther 1991, pp. 11–12). Literary anthologies about Berlin remain a popular vehicle—*Hier schreibt Berlin*, however, was among the first to exemplify the importance of anthologies in reflecting contemporary urban complexities (Zitzlsperger 2004, pp. 96–125).

REMAINS OF THE DAY

Those who wrote and directed some the most important work on the impact of National Socialist rule on the city include a number of non-Germans. Christopher Isherwood, who lived in Berlin between 1929 and 1933, described in *The Berlin Stories* (1935, 1939) the vibrant culture of interwar Berlin and how individuals responded to National Socialism. The narrator claims—not dissimilar to Keun's *Artificial Silk Girl* and a number of 1990s protagonists—to do nothing but accumulate images of his time in Berlin, setting snapshots of utmost normality next to those of the unfolding of terror and destruction (Isherwood 1992, p. 5).

After the war Berlin serves as a canvas for conflicting political beliefs and the need for survival. It was films like Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns / Murderers Among us* (1946), Roberto Rossellini's *Germany Year Zero* (1948) and Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* (1948) that introduced the national and the international audience to the city in rubble (and the women busy clearing the debris). What these films have in common is their authentic setting: the devastated post-war city-scape that bears no resemblance to the interwar metropolis. Wilder, an emigrant from National Socialist Germany who had lived and worked in 1920s Berlin, used his romantic comedy wisely to address, seemingly by the by, the plight of Berlin. The aerial view of the devastated post-war city; a tour through its 'attractions', including the ruin of Hitler's chancellery; the former Wertheim department store and the Soviet War Memorial; and Marlene Dietrich's poignant songs, written by Friedrich Hollaender ('Black Market', 'Illusions', 'The Ruins of Berlin'): these aimed not to trigger pity but to show the scale of the destruction, both physical and moral.

The same setting, but with a focus on the post-war days and weeks following the Soviet occupation of Berlin, met with harsh criticism in West Germany when it was published in 1959: Anonyma's personal account *Eine Frau in Berlin / A Woman in Berlin* did not become acceptable to the wider public, and indeed a best-seller, until well after the end of the Cold War. Even though the experience of mass rapes takes centre stage, Anonyma records a life in Berlin

that is like a throwback to the very beginnings of civilization, with communities no longer chosen but established out of need; flats turning into caves of limited security and the street into a battlefield. Berlin Zero Hour stands for nothing but the most basic survival—indeed, a different kind of war begins after the official end of fighting in Europe. On 10 May 1945, Anonyma reports from Kleist Park in the Schöneberg district that it is ‘a wasteland with masses of rags’, ‘swarming with flies’. ‘All around is desolation’, she writes, ‘a wasteland, not a breath of life. This is the carcass of Berlin’ (Anonyma 2004, pp. 190–191).

If after unification in 1871 Berlin had seen rapid expansion and the ambition of writers to chronicle the exteriors and interiors of the city, by the 1920s it had attained a truly metropolitan status and the literary city amounts to a multi-faceted make-or-break challenge. By the end of the Second World the theme of destruction dominates: it draws on the vocabulary of physical devastation, skeletons and ghosts and comparison with the grand cities of the past: it is the turn of Babylon, Rome and Carthage—a catalogue of loss that now includes Berlin. Then, after more than a decade of uneasy coexistence between East Berlin, capital of East Germany and West Berlin, part of West Germany, the division of the city by means of a concrete Wall in 1961 presented a new and unique theme.

DIVISION, NEW BEGINNING AND NORMALIZATION

The Wall was the defining feature of Berlin between 1961 and 1989, but it proved difficult to capture the implications of its erection in literature. While East Berlin became the Warsaw Pact’s showpiece, an example of a communism working comparatively well, the sustained importance of West Berlin was based mainly on its cultural scene, a thriving subculture and its dual role as a window display for capitalism and a beacon of democracy as encouraged by John F. Kennedy in 1963. Christa Wolf, Uwe Johnson, Wolf Biermann and others wrote about the divide and its consequences—within families and relationships, the city, the country and indeed Europe. The sky above Berlin—as in the title of Wim Wenders’s film of 1987—provides a metaphorical bridge between the countries that in reality does not exist.

In 1982 Peter Schneider’s *Der Mauerspringer/The Wall Jumper* offered finally the ‘ultimate description of the [Wall]’ (Herzog 1982, p. 210). Schneider pieced together individual narratives from East and West Berlin, factual observations about the Berlin Wall and authentic stories: the Wall proved to be not one, but a multitude of narratives. In the first instance it is only a physical barrier of a certain length and height—together with the Chinese Wall, so the author informs his readers, the only man-made structure visible from the moon (Schneider 1982, p. 8). Yet for the narrator, living in West Berlin for more than twenty years, the Wall has become practically invisible in daily life. As a result of the long-term division, the ‘Siamese’ city (Schneider 1982, p. 7) has duplications of institutions and therefore mirror-images in both parts; also, highlighted by the author, visible reminders of Berlin’s past, including the bullet holes dating from the

Battle of Berlin. Most importantly though, Schneider explores how the division determines long-term differences in life in the city and the country, and linguistic patterns differentiating between ‘us’ and ‘them’, ‘here’ and ‘there’ that lead him to anticipate that the ‘Wall in peoples’ minds’ would be harder to pull down than any physical structure (Schneider 1982, p. 110). *Der Mauerspringer* stands out for the kaleidoscopic view of the Wall—no view is exclusive, each, however, acknowledges that the division is deeply ingrained in communication and perceptions of life. The political impact of the Wall turns personal, a disposition that is all the sharper in Berlin because here, according to Schneider, the ‘political continents’ clash (Schneider 1982, p. 5). No wonder, then, that the city became the most evocative symbol of the Cold War.

When these ‘continents’ merged in November 1989, the peaceful revolution of the masses initiated in the course of the 1990s a complex literary and journalistic response. The objective depiction of events proved, again, relevant. The post-Wall period also highlighted, again, the ‘relationships between the official or representative map of the city and the more shifting topographies that work on the level of imagination, both individual and communal’, as Andrew Webber’s study shows (Webber 2008, p. 2). In 1990s Berlin the official map was determined by discourses about architecture and city planning. This combined productively with literary exemplifications of the city as an ‘archive of social structures and laboratory of modern needs and subjectivities’ (Schütz and Jörg 1999, p. 8). For a decade Berlin proved to be the perfect focal place for deliberations about the New Germany. At the same time, the media expressed the need for a metropolitan novel on the scale of Döblin’s engagement with Berlin in the 1920s and a ‘Wenderoman’, a novel to explore the events of the years 1989 and 1990.

In 1995 Günter Grass’ novel *Ein weites Feld / Too Far Afield* appeared. The title’s allusion to Theodor Fontane (the line is a catch phrase in Fontane’s novel *Effi Briest*) was programmatic in that the fall of the Wall and the unification, culminating points of twentieth-century German history, were related to nineteenth-century developments. Thomas Brussig responded to the same challenge nearly ten years later in *Wie es leuchtet / How it Shines* with an assembly of characters, combining elements of fact and fiction to produce a tableau of experiences that characterized the period. Neither book, however, qualified—and neither aspired to do so—for the label *Großstadtroman*. Arguably, in the end the perceived literary void was filled by a number of novels with striking thematic parallels dealing with Berlin’s transitional years. Here, two novels stand out: Peter Schneider’s aforementioned *Eduards Heimkehr/Eduard’s Homecoming* (following on from *Der Mauerspringer* and *Paarungen* in 1992) and Cees Nooteboom’s *Allerseelen/All Souls Day* were both first published in 1998. Both writers are well known for their literary engagement with Berlin. Schneider’s Eduard and Nooteboom’s Arthur both seek to relate their experience of the city before the Wall to the confusion following its fall. If the narrator of *Der Mauerspringer* had approached the city initially by air and acknowledged that this perspective provided a degree of unity (Schneider 1982, p. 5), in the 1990s the same view displays a ‘scar’ right through the

city. The challenge of making sense of a new topography, which had once been so clearly defined by the Wall in the division into East and West, coincides with the need to re-evaluate patterns of understanding Germany's history. Nooteboom and Schneider both let their protagonists attribute particular characterizations to the city—for Daane, walking Berlin turns into an act of pilgrimage; Berlin is a 'museum' or even 'schizophrenic' (Nooteboom, [1998] 2000, pp. 35, 67 and 214); building sites, such as Potsdamer Square, encapsulate the difficulties of negotiating the present in the light of the past. Both novels involve documentation and photography as themes, reflecting an awareness of change.

Literary Berlin remained preoccupied in the 1990s with the phenomenon of the united but still divided city. Though the theme of 'colonizing' the 'feminine' East—as opposed to the dominant, 'masculine' West—proved important, no less striking is the sense of losing West Berlin's unique, Wall-determined topography and way of life. Kits Hilaire had written about this loss as early as 1990: *Berlin, letzte Vorstellung—Abschied von Kreuzberg / Berlin, dernière* describes how with the fall of the Wall the district of Kreuzberg, until then defined by an alternative culture, begins to change. This change is like a coming of age—a theme that is also present in Sven Regener's popular novel *Herr Lehmann / Berlin Blues*. Here too, the district of Kreuzberg provides the perfect niche for charting an unambitious life that is carefully constructed in opposition to the rest of Berlin, until turning thirty and the fall of the Wall disrupt an existence akin to that of a small, fiercely defended village. In *Magic Hoffmann* Jacob Arjouni carefully dissected this kind of life form as something between snug hedonism and urban provincialism.

Katharina Gerstenberger's assertion that 'the search for the definitive Berlin novel is over' (Gerstenberger 2008, p. 170) is correct. Indeed, the return to the district in contrast to attempts to capture the whole of Berlin may be read as a 'normalization' of the status quo. Since 2000 the success of Russian-born Wladimir Kaminer's short stories—first and foremost *Russendisko / Russian Disco*—has added light-hearted vignettes of daily life. The literary landscape has been re-populated. In *The Ghosts of Berlin* Brian Ladd stated that 'Berlin is a haunted city'. Where authors and films between 1945 and 2000 show only a limited desire 'to put to rest the ghosts of Berlin' (Ladd 1997, pp. 1, 235), with 'normalization' and a new generation of writers—including Tanja Dückers, Inka Parei and Judith Hermann—and multiple narratives, the scope of Berlin's literary and cinematic scene has moved on. It is appropriate, therefore, to give the last word in this survey to Annett Gröschner's magical realism. Her novels, including *Walpurgistag / The Witches' Sabbath*, and her feuilletons (*Hier beginnt die Zukunft, hier steigen wir aus*) show her interest in the social and cultural history of the city and the need to collect everyday stories that amount to an archive of Berlin past and present. The voices she records derive from rides along the route of night busses, from inhabitants of apartment blocks and from history. *Walpurgistag*, which treats 24 hours in the city and includes an introductory reference to Fontane, has been lauded by

Christa Wolf for its depiction of milieu—replacing, she suggests, Alfred Döblin’s Alexanderplatz with Gröschner’s Kollwitzplatz (Wolf 2015, p. np).

Walter Benjamin, a Berliner, felt inspired by Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, who, he writes, would ‘like to make whole what has been smashed’ (Benjamin 1968, p. 249). Observing, writing and filming Berlin after 1945 and then again after 1989 is about the need for progress, often though in memory of the past.

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Petersburg on the Threshold

Paul Fung

RASKOLNIKOV'S PETERSBURG

Petersburg in nineteenth-century Russian literature is premised on its evanescent quality. This chapter approaches this issue in three ways: first, I examine Raskolnikov's troubled consciousness in Dostoevsky's 1866 novel *Crime and Punishment*. The city's representation is filtered through the hero's eyes, suggesting that the understanding of the city is impossible with the understanding of his perception. Second, I will look at the eclectic architecture of St Isaac's Cathedral, a landmark situating at the centre of the city which fascinates the hero. I will show that the building, instead of a pure expression of classicism, is a mixture of various styles, thereby disconfirming his desire to become a tsar. Third, I will trace Petersburg's evanescence in Pushkin and Gogol. The chapter concludes with a discussion of Andrei Bely's 1916 novel *Petersburg*.

Petersburg does not exist objectively; the narrator does not have the last word on how the city should appear to the reader. This is because every image and idea of the city is put in dialogue with consciousness. The Russian philosopher and critic Mikhail Bakhtin describes Raskolnikov's relation with the city: 'Everything that he sees and observes—both Petersburg slums and monumental Petersburg, all his chance encounters and trivial happenings—everything is drawn into dialogue, responds to his questions and puts new questions to him, provokes him, argues with him, or reinforces his own thoughts' (Bakhtin 1984: 75). The reader is not in a privileged position where s/he can have an overview of the cityscape; every image of the city is always already cognized in the hero's consciousness before the reader's comprehension. Dostoevsky is not so much interested in an objective or 'realist' depiction of Petersburg as in how the hero conceives himself and the city from his own particular point of view. 'What is important to Dostoevsky', Bakhtin says, 'is not how his hero appears in the world but first

and foremost how the world appears to his hero, and how the hero appears to himself' (47). Bakhtin's phrase 'the world appears' suggests an agency of the world and the passivity of the hero. The hero has little autonomy in choosing the images he wants to see. The images fall into his perception and enter into a dialogue with consciousness beyond the subject's expectations.

Crime and Punishment opens with Raskolnikov leaving his flat and rehearsing his murder plan in the Haymarket area. The description of the cityscape does not function merely as a separate background but literally touches the hero: 'It was terribly hot out, and moreover it was close, crowded; lime, scaffolding, bricks, dust everywhere, and that special summer stench known so well to every Petersburger who cannot afford to rent a summer house—all at once these things unpleasantly shook the young man's already overwrought nerves' (Dostoevsky 1993: 4). The climate, smell and crowdedness, all mix together and cast a vivid impact on the hero, who should be contrasted with the rational urban dweller who fences off external stimulations from the self. The hero as it were is thrown into the city without a choice; he is by definition incompatible with the environment. The cityscape is then described as a revolting picture: 'The intolerable stench from the taverns . . . and the drunkards he kept running into even though it was a weekday, completed the loathsome and melancholy colouring of the picture . . . A feeling of the deepest revulsion flashed for a moment in the young man's fine features' (4).

Raskolnikov is comparable to the *flâneur* in nineteenth-century Paris. Both are interested in looking and being looked at under the cityscape; they neither have a specific destiny when walking. *Flânerie* has to do with walking as a kind of consumption, gazing through arcade glass with pleasure and making an exploration of heterogeneous space. On the contrary, Raskolnikov's walk is full of shock. Each moment is secretly linked to some doubts and questions that are unresolved from the past. Petersburg's hero is dumbfounded and confused by what he sees; urban experience does not confirm subjectivity but confuses it.

Dostoevsky's hero differs from Georg Simmel's idea of the metropolitan type. In response to the 'swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli', the latter 'reacts primarily in a rational manner' (Simmel 1971: 326). It 'creates a protective organ for itself against the profound disruption with which the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu threaten it' (326). This point finds its echo in Freud's discussion of the defence mechanism provided by consciousness and what would destroy it: 'For a living organism, protection against stimuli is an almost more important function than the reception of stimuli' (Benjamin 1999: 157). Petersburg's heroes are unfortunately not geared up with a self-protective mechanism. They are disoriented, not able to make sense of the images continually bombarding their mind. They become strangers to themselves. Thus a non-Petersburger comments on their existence: 'I am convinced that many people in Petersburg talk to themselves as they walk. This is a city of half-crazy people. [. . .] One seldom finds a place where there are so many gloomy, sharp, and strange influences on the soul of man as in Petersburg' (Dostoevsky 1993: 466).

The phrase ‘half-crazy’ is revealing. The hero is not a surrealist, who would release his thinking in relation to the automatic and accidental happenings in the city. He rather takes the shock caused by the constant bombardment of stimulation as an opportunity to trigger new thoughts, which are often contradictory in nature. During the committal of a double murder, Raskolnikov passes by the Yusupov Garden, thinking that the setting up of tall fountains would improve the public square’s air quality. Thinking from an urban planner’s view: ‘Gradually he arrived at the conviction that if the Summer Garden were expanded across the entire Field of Mars and even joined with the garden of the Mikhailovsky Palace, it would be a wonderful and most useful thing for the city’ (73). Raskolnikov speaks in the language of an egalitarian official, who intends to improve people’s living. Critics have pointed out that such fantasy corresponds Raskolnikov’s desire to become a Napoleon. His desire to perfect the city is also comparable to Napoleon III’s hiring of Georges Haussmann in transforming Paris into a modern city, where streets are stratified and areas like the Haymarket were removed (Peace 2006: 37–50). In *Notes from Underground*, the Underground Man famously exclaims the misfortune of living in Petersburg, and in the following parenthesis he says: ‘Towns can be intentional or unintentional’ (Dostoevsky 2003: 18). Raskolnikov’s idea of bettering Petersburg represents his contribution to the intentional side of the city. In the next line, he shifts to a different tone, thinking in the language of the everyday: ‘he suddenly became interested in precisely why the people of all big cities are somehow especially inclined [. . .] to live and settle in precisely those parts of the city where there are neither gardens nor fountains, where there is filth and stench and all sort of squalor’ (1993: 73). The question addresses the unintentional side of the city, specifically the everyday behaviour that escapes the explanation of normative psychology.

Other instances of such an unintentional nature permeate the novel. Raskolnikov, calling himself a Napoleon, has no intention to flee the city but keep returning to the crime scene with excitement, eventually confessing his crime to the police. Wanting to confess to Svidrigaylov, he unintentionally arrives at a tavern of which the address was told to him earlier: ‘why did I suddenly turn down—sky Prospect just now from the Haymarket! I never turn or come this way . . . I just turned and here you are! It’s strange!’ (466). Raskolnikov has a dream about a mare beaten to death by some drunkards and one of them is named Mikolka. Strangely, an orthodox believer in reality of the novel, whose name is also Mikolka, confesses that he has committed the murder even though he has not. The name signifies both a criminal and remorseful sinner at the same time, creating an uncanny connection between reality and dream essential to the peculiar reality of the city.

Raskolnikov’s desire for improving the city is closely linked to that for becoming an autocrat. ‘I want to kill like a Napoleon, that is why I killed’, he told Sonia (415). He explains his theory about criminals: the rare and extraordinary men have the self-given right to found new law at the price of sacrificing other people’s lives. These men are not disturbed by their conscience and are able to ‘step-over’. These details suggest that Raskolnikov,

though he lives in a slum, associates himself with the extraordinary type. He desires to have full control of his action and transgress without a sense of guilt. Such an idea is drawn upon a similar theory advocated by Napoleon III, who sees himself as a figure of the tsar in his self-justificatory text *The Life of Julius Caesar* (1865).

Judging the split character of Raskolnikov, Porfiry says the murderer is like someone 'falling off a mountain or plunging down from a bell-tower, and then arrived at the crime as if he weren't using his own legs' (51). He wants to carry out the theory of the extraordinary man, but has not got their transgressive quality. 'I killed a principle, but I didn't step over' (274). The Underground Man says that an intelligent man of the nineteenth century has to be characterless (Dostoevsky 2003: 17). The characterless being has an urge to be original and authentic, and yet, all his utterances are second-hand. We may infer that the characterless man is a by-product of Petersburg's creation. Dostoevsky observes that the influx of European cultures creates such character type. He calls the men who absorb European cultures without a critical distance and despise their own origins 'the general, universal man, the homunculus' (1997: 21). That Raskolnikov kills according to a theory is characteristic of him being characterless. Petersburg, a Europeanized city in Russia, promotes in the people a progressive and hurried desire to learn from the west, which results in a kind of inauthenticity and disorientation in Raskolnikov's understanding of his act of murder.

The intentional murder is also outnumbered by chance-effect. The distance between Raskolnikov's room and the pawnbroker's flat, as he calculates, is 730 steps (1993: 5). But the murder is committed largely by chance. Raskolnikov, for instance, acts after accidentally hearing that the pawnbroker will be alone on the night (5). He catches two young men saying that her death will benefit the common good, which is taken by him as a justification of his act (6). During the murder, the sister Lizaveta returns home and is killed too. Lizaveta is abused by the pawnbroker and arguably by many men who are attracted to her. In fact, she is pregnant when she is killed. Raskolnikov has meant to kill one woman but accidentally kills two; and actually he has destroyed three lives altogether. The predominance of chance in leading up to the murder redefines the case as unpremeditated. 'It is as if someone had taken him by the hand and pulled him along irresistibly, blindly, with unnatural force, without objections. As if a piece of his clothing had been caught in the cogs of a machine and he were being dragged into it' (70). The element of chance outwits Raskolnikov's meticulous plan, further exposing the futility of making the self a Napoleon out of a theory.

PETERSBURG'S ECLECTICISM

Petersburg functions as a carnivalizing space where indefinite dialogues among disparate voices clashes and juxtapose with others. Petersburg therefore is not a ready-made image which is imposed on the story as a background to reconfirm

values but a liminal space for the production of unexplored meanings. Bakhtin writes:

Petersburg (its role in the novel is enormous)—is on the borderline between existence and nonexistence, reality and phantasmagoria, always on the verge of dissipating like the fog and vanishing. Petersburg too is devoid, as it were, of any internal grounds for justifiable stabilization; it too is on the threshold'. (1984:167)

Just as the movement of consciousness never comes to an end, the imagination of the city hardly finishes in a picturesque long shot. It is not surprising, therefore, that the space we find in Dostoevsky's novel is marked by its high degree of openness and connectedness, or, in Bakhtin's words, unfinalizability. Examples include threshold, foyer, corridor, stairway, squares, streets, bridges, gutters, etc. (170). Bourgeois interiors, which we find abundantly in Tolstoy, are rare in Dostoevsky. In *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, we see a definite and detailed depiction of Ivan's life from the perspective of an omniscient narrator. The indoor space depicted in the story—predominantly drawing rooms or studio bedrooms—allows little possibility for characters to be exposed to those coming from other strata, thus delimiting the openness of the space, as well as the connectedness of consciousness to other voices.

In Bakhtin's idea of biographical time, it is expected that the character will encounter birth, childhood, youth, perhaps marriage and giving birth to children, and finally death (169). In the case of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, the reader is invited to consume his adventure from his birth to his maturity. Although Crusoe has no knowledge of what will happen in the next moment in his adventure, the story shows that he is successful in managing his life by appropriating different resources in nature. Despite the unfamiliar surroundings, there is little sense that Crusoe is disoriented or ignorant about what to do next. On the contrary, the strolling in Petersburg streets is a random and chaotic activity. Petersburg's hero tries hard to make plans of what he wants to achieve. But that plan is often outnumbered by the unintentional side of the city.

One important moment that puts Petersburg on the threshold happens at the centre of Nikolaevsky Bridge. In Part 2, Raskolnikov pauses there, turns his head towards the Admiralty district and fixes his gazes on the golden dome of the highest building in the city—St Isaac's Cathedral. Although it is a cloudless and sunny day, the panorama is far from picturesque: 'An inexplicable chill always breathed on him from this splendid panorama; for him the magnificent picture was filled with a mute and dead spirit...' (Dostoevsky 1993: 144). Elsewhere I have argued that the panorama is 'epileptic' by nature, suspending normative reasoning and the attempt to reiterate a single identity (Fung 2014: 55). The view does not feed the viewer's scopophilic desire, neither does it confirm his identity as a viewer. The mysterious vision of St Isaac's finds an echo in Dostoevsky's 'Petersburg Visions in Prose and Verse', a short piece where he explicates his experience at the bank of Neva: 'Some strange thought suddenly stirred

within me . . . I came to understand something that until then had only been stirring vaguely within me . . . I suppose it was precisely at that moment that my existence began' (2003: 99). The mode of existence is characterized not by my full control of what I see and understand before me, but by the confusion caused by it.

The artistic representation of Petersburg becomes increasingly microscopic and quotidian after the 1840s, which implies that the panorama at Neva becomes outmoded and obsolete to the hero. As the architectural historian Kaganov puts it: ' . . . there is no longer a place for any "splendid panoramas," solemnly open and easily surveyable space. His imagination is entirely absorbed by the narrow corners and dark depth of the city. And Raskolnikov especially keeps pondering this curious fact' (1997: 130). The writer rightly points out the hero's affinity to the lowly life of the city. But he has not addressed the 'intentional' side in the hero, that is, his desire to become an extraordinary man. Indeed, Raskolnikov's vision on the Neva is an extension of his desire for becoming a tsar. Apart from the St Isaac's, in the same direction that he gazes, he is able to see another tsarist landmark, the Winter Palace. If we connect his position to the two landmarks, we will have most of the politically important public buildings and works included in this triangular zone. They include the Bronze Horseman statue, Admiralty, the Senate house, and the Alexander Column. These classically built artifices seem to satiate the hero's desire for becoming an extraordinary man. But the same visual experience also alienates him from 'the narrow corners and dark depth of the city'. Raskolnikov is split in his seeing. In fact, by looking into the Cathedral's history, it will be shown that its eclectic architecture also resists a monologic take, and a close-ended vision in comprehending the building.

St Isaac's is the tallest Cathedral in Petersburg (101.5 metres), which partly explains why Raskolnikov can see the ornamentation on its dome from approximately 800 meters away: 'The dome of the cathedral, which is not outlined so well from any other spot as when looked at from here, on the bridge, about twenty paces from the chapel, was simply shining, and through the clear air one could even make out each of its ornaments distinctly' (1993: 114). The Cathedral is square in shape, with four facades surrounded by Corinthian porticoes. Its centre is topped with a gilded dome, which was compared to St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and St Paul's in London. A colonnade circles the dome, which is topped with an octagonal lantern. Four turrets, which function as bell-towers, are erected around the dome. Peter the Great named it after St Isaac the Dalmatian because the legendary Byzantine monk was his patron saint.

The Cathedral has always been a site for demonstrating tsarist power. Three earlier versions, with much smaller and less sophisticated styles, were built prior to the one in the novel. The first was commissioned by Peter the Great in 1703, the year that he founded Petersburg. In 1712, Peter and Catherine held their public wedding in that Cathedral—a small wooden church built in the Admiralty district. To suit the grand scale of the developing city, Peter commissioned the second St Isaac's on the bank of the

Neva, where the Bronze Horseman statue now stands. The ground in that location was not firm enough and the structure was destroyed in 1735. Catherine II commissioned the third version in 1763. She consolidated her legitimacy as the rightful heir by pulling down the baroque architecture left by Empress Elizabeth, and subsequently building a series of classical constructions such as St Isaac's.

Catherine entrusted the project to Antonia Rinaldi, the 'master of marble facades', to invigorate the classical style. Catherine also commissioned the French sculptor Etienne-Maurice Falconet, a friend of her favourite *philosophe* Diderot, to build the Bronze Horseman statue that captures Peter the Great on a galloping horse. During the consecration of the fourth St Isaac's, it was proposed that a walk around the Bronze Horseman should be followed by the traditional procession around the Cathedral. St Isaac's and the Bronze Horseman statue were inseparable for symbolizing the power of the Tsar. The Bronze Horseman statue, as the icon of tsarist power, is given a sense of aura by being situated next to the Cathedral, the icon of transcendental power.

Catherine's building plan did not work out well. Her successor Paul (1754–1801) quickened the process resulting in a single domed church, which was felt to be out of keeping with the capital's majestic image. In 1816, Alexander I commissioned the French architect Auguste Montferrand to rebuild the Cathedral. The Tsar asserted that the new design must preserve its 'rich marble facing' and lend 'grandeur and beauty to so famous a building' (Butikov 1990: 7). The project took more than forty years to accomplish. During those years, hundreds of thousands of craftsmen, who lived in barracks by the construction site, died of ill health, epidemic diseases and accidents, such as mercury poisoning when fire-gilding the dome.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, classicism in Russian architecture had begun to decline. This was followed by a trend of eclectic architectural styles, characterised by 'a loss of stylistic purity, a departure from the principle of architectural and decorative unity, and tendency to indulge in ornamental elements which had no structural meaning' (Butikov 1990: 16). The construction of the current St Isaac's was very much influenced by this trend, which combines elements from two or more styles in architecture. For Dostoevsky eclecticism marks the city's characterlessness: 'There is no such city as Petersburg . . . everything has been . . . borrowed and distorted in its own way. In these buildings you can read as in a book all the currents of all great and trivial ideas that . . . gradually overcame and capture us' (Dostoevsky 1994: 255).

The exterior of the Cathedral is decorated with excessive sculptures on the pediments. Its interior is equally over-decorated. Building materials such as coloured marble were transported from the Caucasus, Finland, France and Italy (Genoa and Siena). Count Francesco Aglarotti, who famously said Petersburg is 'the great window to the west', described the buildings in the city as 'bastard architecture' (Buckler 2007: 32). A century later, the nineteenth-century French aristocrat the Marquis de Custine elaborates on the same point in his travel writing: 'A taste for edifice without taste has presided over the building of

St Petersburg' (32). Théophile Gautier devotes a lengthy chapter to the Cathedral in his *Voyage en Russie* (1866), in which he calls it 'unquestionably the most beautiful and modern church' located in city, 'the youngest and newest of the European capitals'. He likes its 'absolute unity'. He adds: 'What a symphony of marble, of granity, bronze and gold!' Gautier appraises the church's adherence to classical form and its infusion with other historical styles, especially Eastern styles. Julie Buckler, who argues that eclecticism was the dominant aesthetic of nineteenth-century Petersburg, elaborates: 'St Isaac's is more than slightly eclectic in its fusion of neoclassical pediments, columns, and porticoes with Italian Renaissance-style paintings, Greek-Orthodox crosses, Church Slavonic lettering, and Byzantine architectural features, in a grand marriage of West and East' (47).

While classical style gives the impression of a form which transcends time, the rather random aggregation of various styles moves away from the traditional attempt to historicize a particular period of style. Eclecticism 'asserted that a new reality could be constructed from fragments of the past, since invoking the past in fragmented form pays tribute to history, while denying its power to determine the future—a particularly potent notion for Russia' (53). Unlike classicism in which a single identity can be derived from the consistent style, eclecticism assembles fragments of various styles from the past. These fragments are arranged almost randomly on the surface of the building, opening up a sense of heterogeneity in the building design.

PUSHKIN, GOGOL AND BELY'S *PETERSBURG*

The disappointing result of imposing a uniform style in order to confirm a pure and sacred tsarist power is found not only in St Isaac's but also in the creation of St Petersburg. In 1703, Peter the Great decided to build Petersburg out of a maze of islands, which he had conquered from the Swedes in order to strengthen the country's sea trade and to provide defence against Sweden. The site chosen was a marshy river delta in the Gulf of Finland and subject to frequent flooding. It was estimated that Peter ordered between 10,000 and 30,000 serfs, prisoners of war and common criminals to be sent to the delta to build the city. Thousands died under the poor working conditions. The intentional city project receives a retort from the unintentional. The city has experienced about 270 major floods since its erection. Pushkin's narrative poem *The Bronze Horseman* (1833) records one of the most severe floods in 1824 and expresses ambivalence towards Peter's intention. The narrator celebrates the aesthetic of uniformity and grandiosity of the intentional city and the determination of Peter. But the main part tells how the forcefully built city induces a flood, which in turn causes the low-ranked civil servant Yevgeny to become mad and eventually be drowned in the Neva. The flooding is symbolic of the city's destabilizing force in response to the autocrat's urban planning.

Pushkin's Petersburg tale is marked by its focus on the ordinary life of the civil servant and the use of fantastic elements. As the flood retreats, the Petersburgers return to their daily routine except Yevgeny:

... all things are proceeding
 In form and order as of old:
 The people are already treading,
 Impassive, in their fashion, cold,
 Through the cleared thoroughfares, unheeding;
 And now official folk forsake
 Their last night's refuge, as they make
 Their way to duty. Greatly daring,
 The huckster now takes heart, unbarring
 His cellar, late the prey and sack
 Of Neva—hoping to get back
 His heavy loss and wasted labor
 Out of the pockets of his neighbor.

(Pushkin 1964: 104)

The civil servant, however, could not care less about his duties and home. He roams the city, sleeps on the quay with his battered garments, becoming 'a stranger to the world' (105). In his wandering he comes to realize that he has slept by the Bronze Horseman statue who stares at him. The site of the statue marks the origin of the flood: 'He knew the place, for it was here/ The flood had gamboled, here the river/Had surged' (106). Peter is once again seen as the autocrat who creates the city out of great will: 'and Him/ Our city by the sea had found,/ Whose will was Fate' (106). Yevgeny, possessed by some 'dark power of evil', curses the statue in a whisper: "'Ay, architect, with thy creation/ Of marvels... Ah, beware of me!'" (107). Fleeting, the civil servant sees the statue gallop after him wherever he goes. After the incident, Yevgeny continues his wandering with a face disturbed and bewildered, before his body is found floating at the bank of Neva: 'cold and dead and lying/ Upon the threshold, they had found/ My crazy hero. In the ground/ His poor cold body there they hurried,/ And left it to God's mercy, buried' (108).

The civil servant is no longer the mechanical worker but is capable of a fantastic imagination, even though such ability is integral to causing his own tragic death. Unlike Dostoevsky, the Petersburg in Pushkin's poem is affiliated to the grand history of the city and shows little sympathy to ordinary men like Yevgeny. Although there are moments where the city is crumbled and becomes truly liminal, the ending tends to reaffirm the importance of official duties and a macroscopic and mythical angle in thinking the city.

Gogol's Petersburg tales depict the city as a melting pot of accident and shock. Its ambience changes abruptly in *The Overcoat*. The poor civil servant Akaky Akakievich is in a cheerful state of mind after obtaining a new overcoat. After joining a party, he strolls in the street where shops are still open, 'he was even on the point of running, goodness knows why, after a lady of some sort

who passed by like lightning with every part of her frame in violent motion' (Gogol 1985: 322). As he continues his walk suddenly the deserted streets 'stretched before him'. 'Not a soul anywhere; only snow gleamed on the streets and the low-pitched slumbering hovels looked black and gloomy with their closed shutters'. Akaky approaches the end of the street, which opens to a 'fearful desert with its houses sacredly visible on the far side'. He looks around and 'it was as though the sea were around him' (322). Then some men with moustaches grab away his overcoat. Akaky becomes ill and dies shortly. He hovers in the Kalinkin Bridge in the form of a corpse, looking for the stolen overcoat.

That the shifty female stranger leaves an enormous impression on Akaky suggests that the emotionless copyist has transformed into a city character, who is exposed to distractions caused by infinite object of desires appearing on the streets. Another detail that makes Akaky modern is that he has 'an involuntary sense of dread' as he enters the empty square, a 'terrible void' (Gogol 1998: 133). Such anxiety has to do with the fear of vast space and the mystery associated with it. This agoraphobic experience seems particular to an urban setting as it arises precisely when Akaky moves from crowdedness to desertedness and from an indoor party to an empty open square.

Petersburg's precariousness continues in *Nevsky Prospekt*. The main street of the same name is endowed with deceptive characters. It attracts people from all walks of life to get there and 'put up an appearance without being forced to' (1985a: 207). The street changes its atmosphere from morning to night. The night-time Nevsky Prospekt suggests 'something like an aim, something extremely unaccountable' (212). The narrator tells the story of Piskarev, a painter who speaks incoherently as his mind is occupied by dreams about the pictures he wants to produce (214). He follows a woman on the Prospekt thinking that she is divine. At a distance he fantasizes that her lips are curved in a smile, but the narrator soberly blames the city for producing the illusion: 'No, it was the deceptive light of the street lamp which had thrown that trace of a smile upon her lips; no his own imagination was mocking him' (216). With frenzy Piskarev follows the woman to a room in a four-storied house. Inside the shabby and crowded room three vulgar females are found engaging in their game and toilette:

He had come into one of those revolting places in which the pitiful vice that springs from a poor education and the terrible overpopulation of a great town finds shelter, one of those places in which man sacrilegiously tramples and derides all that is pure and holy, all that makes life beautiful, where woman, the beauty of the world, the crown of creation, is transformed into a stranger.... (217)

Piskarev's encounter of the lowly inhabitants would be a brilliant setting for a carnivalesque and unfinalized dialogue in Dostoevsky. But Gogol's Petersburg is more of a space producing fantasy and its disappointment.

Nevsky Prospekt cultivates objects of desire, making them aesthetically appealing to the dreamer in the form of the commodity. Piskarev cannot take away the sacred woman from his mind. He dream of her continually: ‘Anyone seeing him . . . walking along the street would certainly have taken him for a lunatic or a man deranged by drink: his eyes had a perfectly vacant look . . . He only revived at the approach of night’ (223). The painter resorts to opium in order to meet the woman again. But his opium dreams are not fulfilling. In one he urges the woman to be his muse and work together with him to improve their living condition, which is retorted with a scorn for him being too idealistic. His romanticized fantasy of the woman is mocked in his own dreams. The narrator comments on the woman’s vulgarity, perhaps also mocking Piskarev’s romanticism that is conditioned by the deceptive Prospekt: ‘Oh God! In those words the whole of an ugly, degrade life was portrayed, the life of the true followers of vice, full of emptiness and idleness!’ (227). At the end of the story the narrator muses on the unaccountable ‘fate’ in the city: ‘Do we ever get what we desire? Do we ever attain what our powers seem specially fitted for? Everything goes contrary to what we expect . . . But even apart from the street lamp, everything breathes deception’ (237–238).

This chapter has examined the instability of Petersburg, deliberately going in a reverse order through Dostoevsky, Pushkin and Gogol. Dostoevsky’s Petersburg is unstable because of a complicated reason: the city is perceived through the lens of his hero, whose consciousness is always already torn. I have also explored St Isaac’s eclecticism, showing that the intention to create a uniform and pure style in the city is idealistic. For Pushkin and Gogol, Petersburg is depicted as an objectified power that gains the upper hand in determining the fate of the hero. Despite the two different perspectives in depicting Petersburg, the unfinalizability of the city remains the same.

I finish with the radical treatment of the city in Andrei Bely’s modernist novel *Petersburg*. In this text of the 1905 Revolution, the question of whether the perspective in understanding the city is objective or subjective becomes obsolete. The city at one point is depicted from the perspective of the hero, but then shifts to look at the hero from the perspective of the city. More, the city’s description varies from a macroscopic panorama to a microscopic exploration of the hero’s nervous system. The city in view does not invoke premonitions in the hero, severing the traditional understanding of a subject–object position. The novel reads with a non-human eye, no longer bounded by corporeality of the characters. Bely writes: ‘Petersburg streets possess an indubitable quality: they transform passerby into shadows’ (Bely 1978: 22). Reading a city does not necessarily start with the conventional ‘I’. When the son Nikolai Apollonovich stands at the window looking out the sky above Neva, the experience no longer focuses on the hero’s interiority:

A phosphorescent blot raced across the sky, misty and mad . . . Beyond the Neva rose the immense buildings of the islands, darkening, and they cast shining eyes into the mists—soundlessly, tormentingly. And they seemed to be weeping. Higher up, raggedy arms madly stretched vague outlines; swarm upon swarm, they rose above the Neva’s waves. (82)

These buildings then disappear in the fog with a glint of the fortress spire. The shadows of a police and woman appear but then disappear (82). The hero's interiority does not find any retreat from city-gazing. On another occasion where the son stands upon the banks, staring: 'but no—letting his gaze soar there, where the banks covered... the buildings... squatted... the pitiless spire of Peter and Paul, tormentingly sharp, reached up so coldly to the sky' (83).

Since the subject-object position dissolves, consciousness and the city become one. City thinks; consciousness becomes spatialized. The father Apollon Apollonovich recalls a '*universe* of strange phenomena' before his sleep (93). From the front of his skull 'the bubbling vortex suddenly formed into a corridor stretching off into an immeasurable expanse' (93). He would have the impression of looking 'not with his eyes but with the center of his very head... With the opening up of the sinciput, something could run along the corridor until it plunged into the abyss' (93). Consciousness is described in the language of space, both being equally abstract and abysmal. Due to the dissolution of boundaries in the novel, thought becomes a separate entity and inhabits all space everywhere. Just before Nikolai Appollonovich triggers the sardine can to blow up his father: 'All the thoughts began pulsing... in the neck and in the throat, in the arms, in the head, even in the solar plexus... the flow of thoughts being thought not by him instantly turned into pulses' (286). Thoughts are no longer identified as possessed or created by an individual; they are, like the city, expressed in concrete, though fleeting form.

It is necessary to acknowledge that Petersburg in *Crime and Punishment* is largely Raskolnikov's city, just as it is important to state that Petersburg is anonymous in Bely's novel. The former is reflected through consciousness whereas the latter is merged with it and the possibility of finding a clear subject-object relation is scarce. The instability of the city has made the search for a single intact identity as individual futile. Such an untimely search for stability in the unfinalized city is matched with schizophrenic thinking, flooding which causes madness and the galloping of the Horseman, the haunting of the dead and the deterritorialization of city and consciousness.

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St. Petersburg and Moscow in Twentieth-Century Russian Literature

Isobel Palmer

At one pole, St. Petersburg, the rectilinear city built on desolate marshland by the sheer force of one man's will, gazing from Russia's northern border towards the West and modernity; at the other, Moscow, sprawling and chaotic capital of old Rus', geographical and emotional heart of Russia. This is the central dichotomy around which Russia's urban myth has grown, in which the country's two largest cities are as inherently opposed as the masculine and feminine genders of their Russian (or not-so-Russian) names, *Sankt-Petersburg* and *Moskva*.

In his essay 'Moscow—St. Petersburg', Yevgeny Zamyatin joins the long line of Russian writers who have reflected on this dichotomy. But he registers a change in the relative position of both cities. The prevailing nineteenth-century view of Petersburg had been as emblem of soulless, bureaucratic Russia—a 'foreign' city that threatened to disappear into the mist whence it had miraculously emerged. For Zamyatin writing in 1933, by contrast, Petersburg is notable first and foremost for its *solidity*—for the enduring nature of its stone architecture and its inhabitants' determination to preserve the past they share with their city. Petersburg's name may have changed (to Petrograd, in 1914, and then to Leningrad, in 1924), but it remains more essentially itself than Moscow—in the nineteenth century, regarded as a truly 'Russian' city and associated with tradition and domesticity, but here viewed as ephemeral, quick to change: a young woman chasing indiscriminately after the latest fashions and striving to 'out-Corbusier Corbusier' (Zamyatin 1970: 134).

Zamyatin's stance exemplifies the shift in cultural position of Russia's two main cities following the revolution. The 'Preservationists' had argued loudly for the conservation of Petersburg's historical spaces throughout the first decades of the twentieth century (see Clark 1995), and it was primarily as store of the country's cultural heritage that it went on to feature in the

twentieth-century imagination. This differs sharply from its pre-revolutionary status as the centre of all modern Russia's ills and focal point of this generation's sense of apocalyptic foreboding. As I will describe, the shattering events of the revolutionary years would shift this reputation, along with the title of capital, to Moscow—soon to surpass Petersburg in the national imagination as *the* site of state authority and the Soviet Union's central symbolic space. Written on the brink of Moscow's reconstruction under Stalin, the 'capricious sixteen-year-old girl' Zamyatin depicts is one that had to be brought under the strict control of Stalinist central planning. The nineteenth century had seen St. Petersburg fall from monument of imperial power to symbol and chaotic urban centre of modern Russia; the twentieth century saw Moscow become a place where control was again asserted from above and power given architectural body.

This is not to say that either of Russia's main cities was easily tamed. They remained sites of resistance, spaces occupied by inhabitants whose memories and habits preserved and created narratives that could not be as easily planned or fixed as new streets, nor destroyed and cleared as rapidly as were so many of their landmark buildings. The basic structuring device of a city's form, the street is the space in which urban design comes into contact with the urban process—in Michel de Certeau's terms, where order imposed from above meets everyday spatial practice asserted from below and the totalizing impulse of the planner's discourse meets the 'swarming mass . . . of singularities' that make up the text of the city as lived (de Certeau 1984: 97). Blurring the boundaries between public and private, material and imagined, the street is the central locus of my discussion, which follows the trajectories of its chosen writers through the city streets to plot the path of the Russian city as planned and as lived through the twentieth-century cultural imagination.

Where St. Petersburg was the main focus of the nineteenth-century urban imaginary and, in many ways, the focal point of Russia's search for identity, this chapter centres on Moscow, which fulfilled a similar function for twentieth-century Russia. A brief excursus on pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg and existing Russian urban myths thus sets the scene for a survey of the evolving image and status of Moscow as capital of the new Soviet state. This is not to dismiss the importance of Petersburg-Leningrad for twentieth-century Russian culture, but on the contrary, to recognize that the very richness of its literary landscapes deserves more space than this chapter permits.

REVOLUTION IN PETERSBURG

Peter the Great founded St. Petersburg in 1703, but it was Pushkin's famous 1833 *poema*, *The Bronze Horseman* (*Mednyi Vsadnik*), that plotted the course the city would take in Russian cultural consciousness and laid the foundations for

what the semiotician Vladimir Toporov has identified as the ‘Petersburg text’ of Russian culture. A body of texts as much about one another as about the city they describe, the works making up this meta-text have both mirrored and shaped the material city, which, Toporov argues, came to be defined above all by the irreconcilable antinomies of its physical and symbolic landscape (Toporov 1995). These antinomies are at the heart of Pushkin’s text, which tells the tale of one of the many great floods to threaten this precariously positioned city—in this poem and in the many works that followed it, a space in which civilization and nature collide, the stern lines of stone do battle with the chaotic swirling of water and wind, and the beauty of urban form sits in uncomfortable proximity to the misery of the life lived within it. The phantasmagoric chase through the city’s night-time streets with which the poem ends—the ‘little man’ hero, Evgenii, pursued through the city’s empty squares by the famous bronze statue of Peter come terrifyingly to life—suggests the madness of Peter’s plan, and the urban phantasmagoria that could be the only result of the forced creation of modern public space where, as Marshall Berman has argued, public life had as yet been allowed little room to develop (Berman 1982: 181–9).

For modernist writers at the turn of the century, the contradictions upon which St. Petersburg was built seemed to have reached their apogee. The capital, by now industrializing apace, was a city of ever-starker contrasts, which threatened to erupt (and, during the revolutionary years of 1904–1905, in fact did so) in the old conflict between rulers and ruled, imposed order and elemental rage. This is Andrei Bely’s *Petersburg* (1913), which adds to Pushkin’s city a mystical dimension connected to the decade’s widespread sense of cultural crisis and dread of impending apocalypse. The cold, Western rationality of the city’s external form and its governing bodies had exhausted itself, Bely’s novel asserts, and only barely contained the seething, Asiatic hordes of its squalid working-class peripheries.

Bely’s vision of the city was far from unique during the pre-revolutionary modernist period, the irony being that never before had the capital been such a vibrant and cosmopolitan cultural centre. Russia’s artists were at the forefront of European cultural production, generating some of the most innovative radical works of early modernism—often precisely in an attempt to portray the uniquely agitated atmosphere of the tsarist city’s last years and the revolutions that ensued.

Like Bely, Aleksandr Blok (1880–1921) was part of the second, deeply spiritual, generation of Russian Symbolists. In Blok’s early poetry, the poet’s search for the ideal realm of knowledge and perfect beauty embodied by the elusive ‘Beautiful Lady’ is played out in mystically shimmering rural landscapes; his later turn to the city acts, in part, as a declaration of his despair as to the success of this spiritual quest. In collections such as *The City* (1904–1908), the poet wanders the streets of a nightmarish city which, hovering on the border between the real and the imaginary, is threatened by the same lurking chaos that animates Bely’s novel. The city is a ‘terrible world’ (title of his 1909–1916 collection), whose contradictions become painful signs that the harmonious unity of the ideal will never be achieved. Both alienated

from the life of the city and helplessly embroiled in it, Blok's oft-solipsistic speaker occupies a position of total isolation, no more able to make contact with the ideal realm towards which he strives than with the real one through which he moves. Filled with grotesque and hostile figures, the streets of Blok's poetry register the traumatic experiences of the thwarted 1905 revolution—but also the poet's growing sense of the intelligentsia's fatal detachment from the Russian people who suffered most from these events.

Perhaps unsurprising, then, is the extent to which Blok strove in his work to engage with urban popular culture of the period and to incorporate its themes and motifs. As Yuri Lotman has shown, it was in urban culture that Blok saw salvation for himself and the ailing intelligentsia of which he was a part (Lotman 1981). Oppressed by the elitist lifeless culture of his own class, Blok turned to the naïve culture of the city crowd: it was only by immersing itself in the 'real' life of the city, he believed, that the intelligentsia would overcome their isolation and the transformation of the social and cultural environment would be achieved. The culmination of these efforts is found in what many regard as Blok's masterpiece, *The Twelve* (*Dvenadtsat*). Written in a few days in January 1918, the poem depicts the procession of twelve soldiers through the streets of Petrograd in a polyphonic montage of topical slogans, snatches of soldiers' songs, revolutionary marches and *chas-tushki* (simple rhyming songs) that, in one reading, is modelled directly on the folk *balagan* (Gasparov 1994). Many cacophonous voices with which the poem speaks express the tumult of the revolutionary city streets and provide the speaker with a route out of his solipsism and into the elemental rush of history.

Blok was not the only member of the intelligentsia to feel that culture had reached a point of crisis to which Symbolism was ill equipped to respond; indeed, as Boris Eikhenbaum argues, the success of *The Twelve* rests on lessons learnt, at least in part, from the Symbolists' most provocative pre-revolutionary successors, the Russian Futurists (Eikhenbaum 1918: 3). Tearing onto the literary scene in 1912 in a hail of provocative shouts, these poets made the city streets the stage for outrageous performances of their determinedly coarse and 'non-literary' verse. They were explicit about their desire to capture the life of the city in their work: '[t]he smooth, calm, unhurried rhythms of the old poetry do not correspond to the psyche of the modern city-dweller', Vladimir Mayakovsky declared, in an echo of Marinetti and his cult of speed: 'feverishness—that's what symbolizes the tempo of modernity' (Khardzhiev 1997:13). In poems such as 'Night' (1912) and 'Morning' (1912), a series of rapidly exchanging cubistic images animate Mayakovsky's urban landscape and offer a multiperspectival vision that declares a newly frenetic way of moving through and perceiving the city street.

Importantly, Russian Futurism was a Moscow-born movement. By contrast, Acmeism—the other main post-Symbolist grouping in Russian poetry—took St. Petersburg as its main theme. A comparison of the former's aggressively

iconoclastic, wilfully chaotic art with the classical intonations, precisely detailed objects and measured rhythms of the latter reveals the shift already taking place in the cultural positions of Russia's two main cities before the revolution. Far from the shifting and phantasmagoric space found in Bely's or Blok's work, the city of such Acmeist writers as Osip Mandelstam (1891–1938) and Anna Akhmatova (1889–1966) is defined above all by order and form. In collections such as Mandelstam's *Stone* (*Kamen'* 1913) and Akhmatova's *Rosary* (*Chetki* 1914), St. Petersburg turns from symbol of modern Russia's ills into bastion of its cultural heritage and spiritual well-being.

Moscow, meanwhile, was shaking off its homely reputation with the help of Mayakovsky and the Futurists. These artists sought not to produce cultural artefacts, but, through their sorties into the urban environment, actively to rejuvenate social consciousness through disruptive mass performance. Audience reaction was an integral part of their confrontational art, which relied upon the same transgression of boundary between text and audience as that which had so attracted Blok to folk theatre and the *balagan*. Joan Neuberger has connected Futurism with the wave of hooliganism spreading through Russian cities in the wake of the 1905 revolution, seeing both as a potentially threatening extension of the folk carnival; while the latter's challenge to established hierarchies and claim to the city's spaces was permitted and even expected within the confines of the carnival, the inversion of civilized values practiced by the hooligans and the Futurists—who refused to be limited to specific times and places—posed a serious threat to structures of authority (Neuberger 1993).

If twentieth-century Moscow takes the place occupied by St. Petersburg in the nineteenth century as the site where state authority was most vigorously contested, the difference between the 'little man' hero of Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, Evgeny, and these new, futurist-hooligan 'little men' is nonetheless clear. The powerless Evgeny's one act of resistance—the shout 'I'll show you!' ('uzho tebe!'), directed at Peter's statue—is defiant, but pathetically; by the end of the poem, he has lost everything. The Futurists, reviving his cry, amplify it to a programmatic rejection of the state, culture and the old order of things. Turning away from the elite culture of the tsarist capital and the past, they sought in Moscow a new culture of the street and the energetic, modern individual. The northern city, Petersburg, was left frozen on the border between the immortality promised by its cultural heritage and the death and oblivion that apocalypse or obsolescence would bring.

MOSCOW AND THE MODERNIST EXPERIMENT

In stories such as Zamyatin's 'The Cave' ('Peshchera' 1920), the Petrograd of the immediate post-revolutionary period is a cold desolate place—a wasteland whose inhabitants must burn the books that are the last remnants of their cultural heritage in order to stay alive. This was, in part, a reflection of historical reality; the winter of

1918–1919 was particularly bitter. The bleak picture of the city in such texts also testifies, however, to the widespread sense of the city’s spiritual demise; gutted of resources as well as the intelligentsia bearers of its cultural identity, Petersburg-Petrograd appeared in much literature of the period as cold and deathly, the grave of a civilization thrown from the steamship of Soviet modernity.

Moscow, although beset by many of the same material hardships as Petrograd, was bolstered by its new status as capital of the young state. Home to many of the avant-garde artists who, even before the revolution, had worked to reject the culture of the past, Moscow—a city that had previously featured as the country’s sedate and ancient centre—was now the focus of their enthusiastic plans for the construction of a socialist utopia. But the totalizing vision of these plans produced many of the same tensions between order and spontaneity as had characterized pre-revolutionary Petersburg and, indeed, Peter the Great’s own achievements.

In practice, post-revolutionary Moscow remained as it had been. In part, this was due to the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1924, which signalled a return to pre-revolutionary street-trading practices. But the city was also a historical space that, *pace* Zamyatin, retained memories of its rich past. As the narrator of Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky’s *Postmark: Moscow* (*Shtempel—Moskva* 1925) reflects:

people just like me have walked, day after day, year after year, century after century, from crossroad to crossroad, around squares, past churches and markets, encircled by walls, immured in thought: Moscow. On top of their footprints lie more footprints and more footprints still; on top of their thoughts, more thoughts and more thoughts still. (Krzhizhanovsky 2013: 172)

Krzhizhanovsky’s provincial newcomer to the post-revolutionary capital struggles to reconcile the city’s disparate elements—to bridge mentally the centuries-wide gap between the cold acronyms of the new Soviet present (‘the symbols CC RCP (B)’) and the religious buildings and characterful names of Russia’s past (‘the crooked belfry of the Church of Nine Martyrs, by the Humpbacked Bridge’). Such stark juxtapositions thwart the wandering narrator’s search for the ‘meaning of Moscow;’ unable to untie this ‘city-tangle’ and identify the threads from which it is composed, the narrator must concede that its multiply-authored landscape and lack of clearly definable centre are its essence. Just as any attempts to build new streets in Moscow along Petersburgian straight lines ‘immediately got muddled in a morass of bystreets, blind alleys, crossings, and windings’ (Krzhizhanovsky 2013: 178), so the narrator’s own attempts to describe Moscow proceed in winding sentences that perform the very unmappability they describe. Implicitly, however, navigating their twists and turns is the only means by which the reader can access the true text of the city’s streets.

Nonetheless, Krzhizhanovsky does in fact echo Zamyatin’s emphasis on Moscow’s readiness-to-change, albeit in a positive key; devoting himself to a study of Moscow’s past, Krzhizhanovsky’s narrator amasses considerable

historical evidence to suggest that, despite the nineteenth-century insistence on the city's slowness to change, the city had always been quick to reconstruct and redefine itself. What to Zamyatin appears fickle, though, appears to this speaker a matter of necessity, given the frequency with which the old city's wooden buildings were destroyed by fire; for him, it represents proof of the city's resilience. Either way, that this narrative of Moscow's ability to reinvent itself emerges in the context of the 1920s says much about the extent to which these years were defined by change and experiment.

Krzhizhanovsky identifies an intimate link between the ever-changing physical form of the city and the psychology of its inhabitants, ever ready to adapt to new circumstances. The connection between space and psyche would be a central tenet of the modernist plans for urban living debated in the 1920s, in Russia as abroad. Avant-garde planners sought through the creation of communal living, working, and social spaces actively to mould in these inhabitants a new, Soviet subjectivity.

Nineteenth-century epitome of the glaring social injustices of capitalism and the atomized forms of social life it encouraged, the city was the logical site for the new generation's utopian plans—not least given the prerogative of rapid urbanization for a state attempting rapidly to accelerate through several stages of historical development. Urban planning was needed to speed the cultural revolution and 'the transition to a new, socially superior way of life' (Ginzburg, cited Kopp, 1970: 135), but also, more pragmatically, to answer the basic necessity of improving quality of housing in order to ensure increased productivity amongst workers. The proposed solution was 'social condensers', buildings that sought to combine spaces of work and housing and fundamentally to rethink notions of public and private space, work and leisure time. Characterized by their use of transparent materials such as glass, their emphasis on communal spaces, and forms designed with an eye to standardized production, these buildings sought a new approach to the use of space that subordinated individual functions more and more to social ones in a utopian effort to effect 'the transformation of man' (Kopp, 144).

Such ideas seem a world away from the classical forms of tsarist St. Petersburg; yet for all the social radicalism of these architects' plans, their emphasis on the rationalization of life as well as their desire to accelerate the country's historical development aligns their project with that of Peter the Great. Indeed, the state's assumption of 'sole responsibility for all that related to housing, urban design, and land use' (Kopp, 5) created much the same centralized conditions for urban planning that had ensured the success of Peter's vision; and although modernist planners such as Moisei Ginzburg were careful to emphasize their desire to 'stimulate the transition to a socially superior mode of life, *stimulate but not dictate*' (cited Kopp, 141), the top-down manner in which they sought to impose their utopian plans met with resistance from below.

This conflict is dramatized in Yuri Olesha's 1927 novel, *Envy*, which stages the confrontation of the rational planner with the urban inhabitant.

The novel's first part is narrated by Nikolai Kavalero, an outsider with a penchant for extravagant metaphors who has been taken into the house of Andrei Babichev, a model Soviet citizen labouring to build a communal cafeteria and provide the proletariat with the perfect sausage. Kavalero lives on Babichev's sofa, and it is from this position—lying quite literally 'below' the planner, Babichev—that he describes, in 'lustrous and stereoscopic' manner, the new, utilitarian social order being constructed from on high (Olesha 2004: 69).

Joining forces with Babichev's misfit brother and spinner of tall tales, Ivan, Kavalero plots to undermine this new world through a 'conspiracy of feelings' that insists on the necessity of 'old world' values such as imagination and art. Kavalero and Ivan Babichev first meet in front of a street mirror; emblematic of the unique perspective that the pair turns on the world through which they move, its distorting effects represent a subjective mode of interacting with space that cannot be completely controlled. The increasingly disjointed and fantastic narrative of the novel's second part is a counterpart to Mayakovsky's urban poetry, whose futurist escapades the two heroes continue: their insistent 'resistance to the routine' (Wolfson 2011: 69) seems both born of the street and, in some sense, to produce it. The wild places that increasingly impinge upon the novel's urban landscape—as, for example, the peripheral wasteland that is the site of Kavalero's dream-like first encounter with Ivan's destructive machine, Ophelia—become figures for the realm of private fantasy that counters efforts to rationalize human existence.

Ophelia features in what seems the novel's climax—a confrontation between the two sides on the square outside Andrei's cafeteria that, as Ivan and Kavalero emerge from the crowd to challenge Andrei and his towering cafeteria, might be read as a parodic recapitulation of Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman* ('We'll show you!'). Yet the text continues, and the vertical drama of the earlier *poema* is superseded by the horizontal drama of the national football game that follows, much as the characters' attempts to wage war according to clearly opposed ideological positions—new and old, progress and decadence, rationality and feeling—are repeatedly undermined. Ivan and Kavalero end the novel chased into the disgusting bed of their old—and decidedly old-world—landlady; Andrei, his youthful comrades, and the new world they are building seem unaffected.

Does this represent the failure of old-world values? Such was the contemporary interpretation. The ambiguity of the novel's ending, and of the text as a whole, suggests, however, that the conflict is a less straightforwardly dichotomous one than may first appear, and lies less in the novel's content than its form. Abounding in myriad unexpected images, the text offers not a panoramic view of the city, but a highly idiosyncratic view of it as it is lived. Its structure—which 'moves back and forth and sideways, but not forward', switches constantly between action and reflection, and combines straightforward narrative with letters, songs, notes and even museum labels (Peppard 1999: 91)—asserts

and celebrates the inevitably haphazard nature of urban life as it takes place in the city street, a space that can be planned but never controlled completely.

Kavalerov's markedly visual imagination echoes Krzhizhanovsky's assertion that Moscow is a 'city of images' (Krzhizhanovsky 2013: 184); *Envy* as a whole implicitly agrees with his contention that this orientation towards the *visual* is what ultimately differentiates Moscow from Petersburg, the product above all of abstract *ideas* imposed from above. As noted by Kazimiera Ingdahl, the drafts of Olesha's novel frequently describe perception in terms of film technique (Ingdahl 1994). The comparison of Kavalerov's eye with the lens of a camera is for one critic '[n]o doubt influenced by Eisenstein's experiments with cinematic montage, which was itself based on the carnivalesque "theater of attractions"' (Brandist 1996: 130). Yet it also evokes another filmmaker of the 1920s, Dziga Vertov. Although *Man with a Movie-Camera* was not released until 1929, moments in Olesha's completed novel read like scripts for this film, which creates a portrait of the city defined above all by its daily cycles and rhythms:

(Gates were being opened. A glass was being filled with milk. A man who had worked th[r]ough the night walked to the window and was amazed, not recognizing the street in its unfamiliar lighting . . . The morning had begun.)' (Olesha 2004: 49)

The scene is reminiscent of the montage sequences that make up Vertov's film, which juxtapose seemingly disparate aspects of the urban landscape and the activities of its inhabitants to describe the relationship between the two.

More fundamentally, parallels can be drawn between the unusual, transformative perspective of Olesha's novel and Vertov's interest in the possibilities that film introduced for 'exploring, even reconstructing, space and . . . establishing a new relationship between the human body and the physical world' (Widdis 2003: 60). No less invested than modernist planners in reimagining space and man's relationship to it, these modernist artists differed from their architectural counterparts in the mobile nature of their vision, projected always from the level of the individual and attuned above all to the rhythms of the city as experienced, rather than planned, space. The visibility of such works attests to the plurality that still by and large characterized Russian culture as well as the Russian city during the 1920s; a city very much in transition, Moscow remained a space above all of possibility.

STALINIST MOSCOW

The crooked and unique view 'from below' that Olesha claims for his protagonists was not one that the individual artist would be allowed to keep long, just as the streets of Moscow were soon to be straightened out and Kavalerov's beloved street mirrors replaced by the clear glass, marble and stone of 'New Moscow', the massive centralized reconstruction project begun in the thirties—the so-called Moscow General Reconstruction Plan,

approved by the Central Committee in 1935. Plans centred on the proposed Palace of the Soviets, whence broad boulevards were to extend in grand radial arteries. Far from making the city more legible for the pedestrian, however, this systematic reordering of the cityscape envisioned ordered space on a scale readable only from the panoramic heights of state power. In this light, Andrei Babichev's plans for a revolutionary cafeteria begin to look decidedly modest.

In his *Culture Two* (1985), Vladimir Paperny notes this shift of scale and axes, which he adds to the list of binary oppositions that for him define the contrasting cultures of the twenties and the Stalinist thirties ('Culture One' and 'Culture Two'). If the twenties had been an era of horizontality, when memory of the revolution and the excitement of a new beginning fostered a society fuelled by an inclusive socialist vision, the nineteen thirties saw a shift to *verticality*. Rather than a 'big village' (an enduring topos of Moscow's myth), Moscow was now the city of cities, the centre of the world that would have at its own centre the dramatically towering Palace of Soviets.

This is further evidenced by the period's revival of the myth of Moscow as 'third Rome', an idea dating back to the pronouncements of sixteenth-century Russian monk, Filofei of Pskov, and positioned Moscow as succeeding Rome and Constantinople as divinely elected centre of 'true' (Russian Orthodox) Christianity and imperial dominion. Katerina Clark has preferred to speak of Moscow as the 'fourth Rome' in this context, since 'it was not . . . to be a model and center of Christianity. Rather, it was to be the capital of a *different*, post-Christian, belief system' (Clark 2011: 2).

Hampered by technical and financial problems, the Palace of Soviets would never be built, but the design eventually selected, after two architectural contests spanning the years 1931–1934, is a defining one for the culture of these years. Absurdly monumental, the winning tower—designed by Boris Iofan, Vladimir Shchuko and Vladimir Gelfreikh—was to be topped by a statue of Lenin so high it would overtop the clouds, making literal Stalinism's declaration that a secular heaven on earth had replaced any religious heaven. Directing eyes upwards, it would serve as looming reminder of the penetrating gaze to which all were now subject. The heroic goalkeeper of Olesha's football game and its level playing field is replaced by the state aviator, popular hero of the 1930s, and his refrain (in the words of a famous song), 'I can see everything from above, keep that in mind!' (Paperny 1985: 63).

Nonetheless, the reconstruction of Moscow was pitched as beneficial for all citizens, as the viewer of Aleksandr Medvedkin's 1938 film *New Moscow* (*Novaya Moskva*) might have felt reassured. A sequence near the beginning of the film shows the buildings and environs of old Moscow being destroyed and replaced instantaneously with simulations of the buildings to come. Dark, disorderly streets and derelict buildings are replaced by the straight lines of grand prospects and stone buildings; grand archways open up the city's spaces, flooding them with light and opening up vistas of the rest of the city beyond. Repeatedly contrasted with the bustling life of the Moscow

streets it was to replace, however, the glorious city of the future appears lifeless, a fantastic projection far removed from the everyday, lived space of the present. Unperturbed by the buildings that are literally shifting places outside her window, the young architect's wise old grandmother continues to sip her tea.

Other works of the 1930s position Moscow on a similar border between real city and fantastic symbol. The most famous example is Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita*, written between 1928 and 1940. The text usually features near the top of lists of 'Moscow' novels—yet while its setting is indisputably the Soviet capital of the thirties, the actual landscape of the city is oddly difficult to make out, so that not only the reader-tourist but even a native Muscovite might be forgiven for struggling clearly to envision it. This is perhaps unsurprising for a novel that hinges on the visit of a devilish figure named Woland and his retinue of tricksters to the capital, and their subsequent efforts to confound its residents. Given the ubiquity of discussions about plans for the 'New Moscow' during this period, however, and the many tangible signs of their rapid execution, the visitors' ability to distort the city's spaces seems also to offer commentary on this reconstruction project.

The novel's famous opening stages a meeting between two pompous members of the Moscow literary establishment, Mikhail Berlioz and Ivan Bezdomnyi, and a mysterious stranger who claims to have been witness to Pontius Pilate's judgment of Christ, and so to have the seventh proof of God's existence. So far, so fictional; yet the reader, like the characters themselves, struggles to shake off the realism apparently guaranteed by the scene's precisely described location (at Moscow's well-known Patriarch's Ponds). This uncanny layering of the real Moscow and the unbelievable events to which it plays host is typical of the novel as a whole.

As Medvedkin's *New Moscow* vividly shows, the question of the city's construction could not be ignored by the inhabitants of Moscow, who watched as the city's landscape shifted before their eyes and beneath their feet. In Bulgakov's novel, the names of a few key buildings, streets, and institutions are repeatedly referenced; the movement of characters between these locales, however, is characterized above all by curious rifts in space:

However upset Ivan might have been, still he was struck by the supernatural speed at which the pursuit was taking place. Not twenty seconds had passed after leaving the Nikitskiye Gates before Ivan Nikolayevich was already blinded by the lights on Arbat Square. A few seconds more, and here was some dark lane with sloping pavements where Ivan Nikolayevich went crashing down and injured his knee. Again, a well-lit main road—Kropotkin Street—then a side street, then Ostozhenka and another side street, cheerless, ugly, and poorly lit. And it was here that Ivan Nikolayevich finally lost the man he so needed. The Professor had vanished. (Bulgakov 2010: 50)

Street names are precisely specified (a circumstance from which more than one Moscow tour guide has profited), yet the combined effect of this topographical precision is not to clarify Ivan's route but, to render it the more confusing: if Ivan is dizzied by the 'supernatural' speed with which he manages to cover the quite sizeable distance between the Arbat and Kropotkina street, the reader's own attempts mentally to plot this journey are left similarly reeling by the speed with which Bulgakov's sentences progress.

Thus connected to the city's physical space, the oft-remarked pace of the novel's narrative seems, on this level, intended to echo the breathtaking rapidity with which the construction of the ideal city utopia was supposed to progress (witness the almost instantaneous erection of buildings on fresh piles of rubble in *New Moscow*). It is as though the spaces in between do not exist—much as, one might suggest, the necessarily piecemeal nature of Moscow's grand reconstruction demanded that its citizens look not at the many half-built spaces it still contained (the 'cheerless' side streets through which Ivan runs), but instead at those few completed structures that served to project the city to come. Imperative was the ability to see into the bright Soviet future and to make 'the old Moscow houses appear transparent, and through them . . . clearly see their future stone, cement, and marble successors' (Lev Kassil', cited in Livers 2004: 204). Stumbling through dark side streets and blinded by the lights on the Arbat and Kropotkina, Ivan demonstrates the confusion this inevitably caused.

Here, one also detects a critique of a prevailing discourse of the period whereby bright light and, in particular, the sun were invoked as a symbol of Stalin and Stalinist culture's 'solar dimensions' (Livers: 221). *The Master and Margarita's* use of sun and moon imagery is one of its most insistent motifs; acting as an overwhelmingly negative force throughout the novel, the harsh light of the sun is rejected by Bulgakov along with the polarized, absolutist worldview it represents in favour of the moon and the muted light it casts on another, more subtly shaded order of existence—one that acknowledges flaws, emphasizing that knowledge can only ever be partial and gained through experience. Deprived of the experiential knowledge of the city's spaces that was so central to the thought and ideology of the Soviet avant-garde in the 1920s, the novel's characters move through a Moscow that is an emblem of the moral dead ends that underlay Stalinist urban planning.

Indeed, the kind of clarity that the grand restructuring of Moscow was supposed to bring through the *cleansing* of the city on all levels is exposed as both vicious and, ultimately, futile: at the end of Bulgakov's novel, Woland looks down on a city where nothing has changed. The people of Moscow have failed to learn any lessons and continue to live according to their own selfish and petty concerns—but this is symptomatic of a larger failure, that of the transformation of the city itself into the pure, utopian capital of official discourse. As in Olesha's novel, the diversity of styles and the openness of

Bulgakov's narrative attitude recall and celebrate the haphazardness of a Moscow past, and stand as a declaration in support of the city's own incorrigible spirit.

LATE-SOVIET CITIES

Bulgakov's novel counters the controlling urban vision of Stalinism; Stalin's death in 1953 cleared the way for a more everyday kind of resistance to urban grandiosity. Ushered in by calls for 'unpolished reality' and 'sincerity' in literature from writers and critics alike, the so-called 'thaw' period reacted to the excesses of Stalinism and the ordeals of the Second World War through renewed attention to the everyday life of the ordinary Soviet citizen. In Paperny's terms, this shift of focus and scale signals a return to the 'horizontal' principles of Culture One. While, however, thaw-era artists reached back to the culture of the 1920s, the radical avant-garde experiments and utopian urban visions of this earlier period were replaced by the search for a newly intimate city in which to lead, quite simply, an ordinary life.

Films such as Marlen Khutsiev's 1961 *Il'ich's Gate* (*Zastava Il'icha*, released in censored form as *Mne dvadtsat' let* [*I Am Twenty*] in 1965) are typical of the period. The film tells the story of three young men as they come of age and try to make sense of the world and their purpose in it. Crucially, their stories are played out against an urban landscape made up predominantly of the city's courtyards, streets and parks—places, that is, where urban inhabitants actually live and spend their time. The city of Khutsiev's film is thus a new incarnation of the Moscow-as-big-village topos: an intimate space, characterized, by and large, by the opportunities for community and friendship it provides. The May Day parade that is one of the film's central scenes is typical of its approach; shot from within the crowd, the scene emphasizes the parade as a moment of spontaneous connection with and celebration amongst fellow citizens. The camera records the flow of the crowd, lingering on the faces and actions of the people in it—neither threatening and chaotic mob nor regimented Stalinist parade, but, rather, a community of autonomous and self-valuable individuals (Woll 2000).

At the same time, the youthful protagonists of the thaw era—the first generation to come of age after the war—must orient themselves in a social and historical space still in the shadow of Russia's immediate Stalinist past and the devastation of wartime. This was quite literally the case: as symbols of victory and a new era of Soviet power, Stalin had ordered the erection of seven *vysotky*, towering skyscrapers constructed between 1947 and 1957 (there are other good examples of these in Riga, and in Warsaw's Palace of Culture, architect Lev Rudnev). They do not appear in Khutsiev's film, just as its older, war-scarred characters fail to offer its protagonists guidance. Instead, as suggested by the film's original title (*Il'ich's Gate*, a working-class neighbourhood named for Vladimir Il'ich Ulyanov, alias Lenin) and its opening sequence (in which several Red Army soldiers walk through the early morning streets), its heroes find in Moscow's marginal spaces traces of a historical period when the distance between society's proclaimed ideals and the hypocrisy of its reality appeared less stark.

‘Suspended in time, between an unthinkable past and not quite imaginable future’ (Neuberger 2009: 81), Khutsiev’s heroes reach back through Moscow’s streets to an earlier *time* for alternative models; the heroes of Vasily Aksenov’s novella, *Starry Ticket* (*Zvezdnyi билет* 1961), another coming-of-age story, look for them along a *spatial* axis. Here, Moscow is displaced from its geographical and historical location by ‘westernizing’ descriptions of the city as a buzzing metropolis full of traffic and other modern conveniences—an extension of the real phenomenon whereby *stilyagi* (‘style hunters’, the derogatory name given to post-war counterculture youth) referred to central streets in Soviet cities as ‘Brodvei’ in clear defiance of the official symbolism attached to such urban spaces (Yurchak 2006: 193). Speaking in trendy urban slang peppered with Anglicisms and references to Western culture, these characters listen to jazz and spend much of the novel in Riga—the most ‘Western’ of Soviet cities, but nonetheless the site of their coming-to-consciousness as socialist citizens. Their maturation thus involves movement *away* from the centre represented by Moscow, rather than, as generally the case in Stalin-era Socialist Realist literature, towards it (Clark 1981).

The energy that characterizes Moscow in both Aksenov’s novel and Khutsiev’s film bespeaks the renewed vitality of this younger generation and the independent life they lead in the courtyard and the street; it also positions them as heirs to the Futurists and the post-revolutionary avant-garde. While their determined exuberance may not be enough to counter the corruption still at the heart of the city and society at large—Aksenov’s novella ends with the mysterious death of the older brother, newly a doctor of physics and implicitly the victim of workplace machinations by his older colleagues—both texts also end with hope; in the latter, the younger brother gazes at the cosmos his dead brother had hoped to conquer and vows to use the ‘starry ticket’ he has been bequeathed to reach a better future. By the end of the decade, this hope had faltered. Even before the 1968 invasion of Prague brought the thaw period to a definitive close, crisis threatened a younger generation that seemed increasingly to lose a sense of larger purpose. In later ‘thaw’ works, such as Khutsiev’s ‘sequel’ to *Il’ich’s Gate*, *A July Rain* (*Iul’skii dozhd’* 1966), the city’s life and the flow of its inhabitants constitutes an alienating experience; the streets of this film, either empty or oppressively busy, lack the community of *Il’ich’s Gate*, while the camera’s lingering focus on individual faces feels uncomfortably intrusive, its gaze returned by their own hostile and defensive stares. Lacking both symbolic weight and the meaning born of interpersonal connections, the public spaces of late thaw culture’s Moscow show signs of an emptiness that would be more acutely felt with each passing decade of late Soviet society.

The rapidity with which this feeling took hold appears in *Moskva-Petushki* (written during 1969–1970, shortly after the Prague Spring; published in English as *Moscow to the End of the Line* 1980), the rambling monologue of Venichka, a gentle drunkard who is trying to get from Moscow to Petushki, a town in the

Moscow region. At the beginning of the novel, Venichka wakes from a drunken stupor in a Moscow doorway, before heading for Kursk station to catch a train to Petushki—in the text, an Edenic paradise where Venichka's lover and son live. Growing more drunk with the passing of each stop, however, Venichka apparently falls asleep, misses Petushki and ends up back in Moscow. A dark and threatening place of ominously empty streets, the capital in this 'novel-poema' is the hellish counterpoint to the purity and light associated with Petushki, and is overshadowed by the oppressive but elusive presence of the Kremlin—which Venichka claims never to have seen, despite the many years he has lived in Moscow. It is only at the novel's end that, pursued by four mysterious thugs, he finally collides with the Kremlin's walls. After one last desperate sprint to escape, Venichka has his throat pierced in a dark doorway much like that in which the novel-poema began: the empty space at the city's centre turns out to have a magnetic force that is stronger than Venichka's faith in Petushki and the salvation from chaos and despair that might await him there, could he reach it.

The similarities with Pushkin's poem-tale, *The Bronze Horseman*, which ends with the 'little man' Evgenii's death in the shadow of the eponymous statue, again reveal the continued resonance of the Petersburg text in twentieth-century depictions of Moscow. Where, however, the drama of Pushkin's poem rests on the question of whether Peter the Great's forceful modernization was historically justified, given its casualties, Venichka's circular journey through the featureless Moscow landscape of *Moskva-Petushki* exposes the absurdity and purposelessness of history, which goes nowhere but exacts a high price nonetheless.

The hopefulness that still characterized the sixties generation is thus absent in Erofeev's novel. For all its criticism of late-Soviet society, however, the almost exuberant excessiveness of *Moskva-Petushki*'s verbal fabric is also a celebration of the imaginative possibilities opened up by its hero's defiantly inebriated state. The text is a mosaic of cultural references, open to diverse interpretation: as a modern picaresque, an alternative gospel (Gasparov and Paperno 1981), a 'carnivalized carnival' (Lipovetsky 1999), and more. As such, it arguably escapes the 'looking-glass logic, enchanted space, [the] vicious circle' (Lipovetsky 1999: 77) that Venichka—trapped in an eternal *zapoi* (drunken bout) that echoes society's entrapment in *zastoi* (stagnation)—cannot.

Indeed, if in its last decades the Soviet system and its symbolic order became increasingly emptied of meaning, this was arguably accompanied by a resurgence of individual creativity in the city. Groups such as the Moscow Conceptualists took creative advantage of the emptiness they saw at the core of the Soviet utopia, building an artistic practice on 'contiguity, closeness, touchingness, contact with nothing' (Kabakov, cited Epstein 1995) to show that 'language is only language and not the absolute truth, and once we understand this we will obtain freedom' (Dmitry Prigov, cited Lipovetsky 1999: 218; see also Boym 1994).

Prigov's own poetic cycle, *Moscow and Muscovites* (*Moskva i moskvichi* 1982), is an example of the tactics employed, presenting a potted history of the city, where a Moscow inhabitant, keen to define the 'mystique of Moscow', rehearses the many myths that have grown up around the city. The speaker's apparently naive interpretations of these myths—the hyperbolic declaration, for example, that all peoples of every nation originated in Moscow, the centre of the world—in fact merely take them to their logical conclusion, highlighting the porous boundary between fact and fiction and the dangerous ease with which the latter can usurp the former. Combining odic language with modern colloquialisms, the cycle's haphazard layering of discourses does less to describe and situate the city than to deconstruct it; repeatedly invoked, even the capital's name threatens to lose all meaning. This battle between sense and nonsense ends:

Но нет, Москва бывает, где стоим мы
 Москва пребудет, где мы ей укажем
 Где мы поставим—там и есть Москва!
 То есть—в Москве

(But no, Moscow is where we are standing / Moscow will be where we order it to be / Where we put it—that's where Moscow is! / That is—in Moscow'.)

Close to tautology, the glorious climax at which the speaker's logical knots attempt to arrive is finally undermined by the laconic 'clarification' offered in the last line. The effect is comedic, but also, more seriously, serves to expose the gap between the real Moscow in which the speaker stands and the empty verbiage of the various ideological myths competing to assert power over that space and its inhabitants. Echoing the contradictory opening statements of Bely's *Petersburg* ('[i]f Petersburg is not the capital, then there is no Petersburg' and 'beyond Petersburg there is nothing'), the poem's jocular tone conceals a more profound reflection on the fictionality of the Russian city and the power of these fictions to shape actuality.

Such radical critique of mythic constructs inevitably also calls into question the power with which the poetic word is invested—not least, given the poetic origin and dissemination of many of the myths in question. Prigov's parodying of literary clichés combines with his irreverent conceptualist poetics—built on laconic colloquial speech and gestural performance—in order to demonstrate the same scepticism towards the potential and significance of the *poetic* word as towards any other. Where late tsarist Petersburg, over-determined by symbolism, had seemed on the brink of apocalyptic destruction, the literary, political, and historical constructs surrounding Moscow had, by the end of the Soviet period, lost their weight; if the city was in danger of disappearing, it was into discourse. Once again, the remedy proposed is a return to the real city, unfixed and unfixable in language, produced by the day-to-day existence of its inhabitants in the streets.

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Spain's Literature of the City

Aitor Bikandi-Meijas and Paul Vita

Within the great cities that emerged out of the country's Industrial Revolution, especially Madrid and Barcelona, Spain's writers found new metaphors and new settings upon which to build contemporary myths. Through their works, these artists of fiction expose the socio-political realities that undergird Spain's urban spaces, often turning their critical attention to the city's margins—to poverty-stricken slums and the outskirts continuously undergoing change due to urban expansion. Writers and filmmakers chronicle urban realities in vivid, lurid, detail, including the experience of city life during and after Spain's Civil War. In spite of the realistic detail, however, Spain's novels and films often figure cities as *unreal* places—the locus of dreams, of nightmares, spaces upon which anxieties get projected, surfaces under which secrets remain hidden or repressed. Their fictional city-dwellers, thus, move through streets, in and out of parks and squares, and into their homes in ways that permit readers to discover the fragility of the country's social fabric, which belies its cities' streets and buildings and revises the historical narratives that their monuments commemorate.

The fame of many of Spain's cities goes back for centuries: Salamanca, as a university town; Toledo, as a melting pot of three cultures and religions; Seville, for adventure. And for centuries, writers have responded to and reinforced each city's reputation. Salamanca's renown makes it the ideal location for the intrepid, sinister Don Félix Montemar, the student of José de Espronceda's *El Estudiante de Salamanca* [The Student of Salamanca] (1837–1840). The Spanish Romantic, perhaps disgusted by the incipient industrial revolution and city that will 'violate' and domesticate wild nature, uses Salamanca as nothing more than a backdrop for his hero's impossible adventures. In *Don Quixote* (Part I 1605), Cervantes's narrator recounts how, when visiting Toledo, he chances upon the novel's manuscript, written, oddly enough, in Arabic and being sold for scrap papers to a silk

merchant. The narrator sees no difficulty in finding a translator: ‘for even if I had sought a speaker of a better and more ancient language, I would have found him’ (Cervantes, *Quijote* I:142). The older language referred to is Hebrew, and editors diligently footnote Cervantes’s reference to Toledo’s renown as a site where Christians, Moors and Jews intermingle.

Seville, home to the Don Juan of Tirso de Molina’s *El Burlador de Sevilla* [The Trickster of Seville] (1630?), merits additional comment. Ortega y Gasset regards Don Juan Tenorio as ‘the authentic and quintessential Sevillian’, an inhabitant of a ‘smooth, delightful, perfumed, and crazily lit’ city, in contrast to the dusty, sober Toledo (cited in Peña 1990: 159–160, N. 280). José Zorrilla’s *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844), the most famous version of the Don Juan myth for the Spanish-speaking world, figures Seville during the Carnival season as nothing more than a mere dream platform for the action of the play. Nonetheless, both Golden Age and Spanish Romantic Drama confirm a comment that Don Quixote makes about the city’s reputation, as a place where more adventures can be found ‘on every street and around every corner than in any other city’ (Cervantes, *Quijote* 189). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Seville held the monopoly on trade with the Americas. Every ship embarking to and from the West Indies docked on the banks of the Guadalquivir. Home to Spain’s largest slave market, Seville witnessed a continuous flow of precious objects also to be auctioned off in its plazas—gold, wrought silver, rich tapestries. With material goods came sailors from every country along with a cosmopolitan population: foreign bankers, branches of Basque and Catalan commercial families, people of fortune, fortune hunters and the misfortunate. It is in Seville, where Cervantes had spent time in prison, that the novelist sets the adventures of his two pícaros, Rinconete and Cortadillo, in *Novelas ejemplares* [Exemplary Novels] (1613). They enter the city by way of the Aduana [Customs] Gate and surreptitiously help themselves to the contents of a Frenchman’s saddlebag. The two admire the city’s bustling streets, its market and its crowds, and as soon as they start mixing with Seville’s criminal class, they are informed that they had better register with and pay duty to ‘Mr. Monopodio’s customs-house’. Cervantes’s novella presents a second Seville, the city’s underworld, comparing it to a foreign country with its own laws and limits—and language, for thieves’ jargon turns out to be a system of unfamiliar words and phrases that the two struggle to understand. At the story’s end, Cervantes presents Rinconete’s perspective of the cosmopolitan city: he is, ironically, shocked ‘at the slackness of the law in that famous city of Seville, where such pernicious people live almost openly’ (Cervantes, *Rinconete y Cortadillo* 240). Spain’s writers follow Cervantes’s lead in exposing ‘other’ sides of cities, aspects of urban social structures that are not necessarily apparent to their denizens, which often contradict expectations, but can be articulated through literary texts.

In his novel, *Tiempo de silencio* [Time of Silence] (1961–1962), Luis Martín Santos writes, ‘a man is the image of a city, and a city is that of the guts of a man,

turned inside out' (Martín Santos 16). Like Martín Santos, many of Spain's writers interpret the city as a symbol or central metaphor for understanding humanity, and thus the city becomes inseparable from the vicissitudes that individuals suffer in their works. Or, they turn to elements of the urban landscape to define aspects of the human experience. In the play *Luces de bohemia* [Bohemian Lights] (1920, 1924), Ramón del Valle-Inclán, of Spain's 'Generation of '98', uses the mirrors that make up a tavern's façade on the Madrid's Calle del Gato [Cat Street] to explain his concept *esperpento*—the grotesque: 'Classical heroes reflected in the concave mirrors give back the Grotesque [*Esperpento*]. The tragic sense of Spanish life is only able to reflect itself aesthetically as systematically deformed' (Valle-Inclán 106). Benito Pérez Galdós, Spain's great nineteenth-century realist, no doubt is the country's greatest master of interweaving of cities into plots and plots into cities. His novel, *Misericordia* [Compassion] (1897), opens with, 'The parish church of San Sebastian, like certain people, has two faces. . . . Notable in both faces is a smirking ugliness, pure Madrid, where architectural and moral character marvellously combine' (Galdós, *Misericordia* 7).

Galdós's attention to realistic detail means identifying the names of the Madrid streets its inhabitants traverse, which places them within what Walter Benjamin identifies as the 'linguistic cosmos' that resulted from the proliferation of city streets in the nineteenth century and the new nomenclature introduced by their names (Benjamin 2005: 521). Galdós delights in how Madrid's streets serve as metaphoric reflections of his characters' adventures. Among his urban ironies, for example, is little Luis, in *Miau* [Meow] (1888), who goes to Calle Amor de Dios (Love of God Street) to deliver his grandfather's hopeless petitions for a government appointment. Other writers take advantage of the ironic potential of street names. These names play the leading role in the popular light opera—*zarzuela*—by Felipe Pérez y González, *Gran Vía* (1866), where Madrid's streets, personified, literally talk to each other: 'To Danger Street/The country's oppressors go/ And to Deaf Street goes the Government/That does not want to hear' (Pérez y González 72). In Elena Quiroga's *Algo pasa en la calle* [Something Is Happening in the Street] (1954), the protagonists, Presencia and Ventura, two social exiles, live in Calle Desamparados [Homeless Street], where Ventura falls to his death from a balcony, a possible suicide. And Juan Marsé's novel, *El embrujo de Shanghai* [The Shanghai Spell] (1993), set in Barcelona immediately after the Civil War, contains a literary/operatic allusion, housing the consumptive and dreamy Susana in a tower on *Camelias* Street.

The realistic detail of identifying Barcelona's streets after the Civil War takes on additional ideological implications in *El embrujo de Shanghai*. When the young protagonist Daniel is walking with the quirky Captain Blay, a driver pulls up and asks them for directions. Obviously pro-Franco, the driver reprimands Captain Blay for answering in Catalan and for referring to the various streets' previous names: Generalísimo Street was 'once called Diagonal'; San Baudilio, 'that is, Sant Boi'. This brief exchange signals how the substitution of Spanish

(*castellano*) street names for those in Catalan (or Basque) was part of the dictatorship's agenda, with many streets explicitly glorifying Franco and his regime: city street maps and the linguistic cosmos they chart are controlled by whoever wields political power (just as Saint Petersburg became Petrograd, and Leningrad, Saint Petersburg). It should be noted, though, too, that Spain's Parliament passed, in 2006–2007, the Law of Historical Memory, which requires Spain's cities to remove all symbols commemorating Franco, including the names of streets.

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, Madrid and Barcelona, like other European cities, were going through changes more radical than renaming their streets. They were sweeping away their medieval and early modern dust through great bourgeois plans of expansion—those of the Marqués de Salamanca in Madrid or the Plan Cerdà in Barcelona. Madrid, Spain's capital, at the onset of this transformation, had the good fortune to have the Canarian-born Galdós as its chronicler. Few authors have described any city of their time with Galdós's precision and profundity. For him, Madrid was an essential setting to reflect the existential problems of his characters and to define them sociologically and psychologically.

Due to the city's climate and topography, Madrid's slums are physically downhill, which permits Galdós to merge the literal and metaphorical senses of the semantic field implied by a 'rise' or a 'fall'. In *Misericordia*, he opens with how Calle Cañizares leads downhill from the Church of San Sebastian to the barrio of Lavapiés—a physical and social descent. The various protagonists in *Misericordia*, such as Frasquito, follow this downhill slope, from the city's northern limits through its centre to its southern. An imaginary line serves as the social frontier that Ponce and Frasquito never dare cross for fear of standing out in their shabby clothes. As months pass, they never leave their own barrios or 'go beyond the Plaza Mayor'. Galdós elsewhere links Madrid's geography to the city's iconic symbol—a bear attempting to scale a fruit tree: 'I understand that the bear is the Madrid that lives above the Plaza Mayor and the berry [*el madroño*] is what we call the low neighbourhoods' (Galdós, *Obras Completas* 6:1494).

City streets, like the road for Bakhtin, are chronotopes—places for opportunity and chance encounters (Bakhtin 1990: 243). Galdós's characters are constantly hitting the streets, and they undergo changes while in transit. Not surprisingly, Spain's literature is rife with figures wandering through its cities, often searching internally or externally for some sort of transformation—similar to embarking on a journey or pilgrimage, metaphors for the course of human life. Indeed, in *Tiempo de silencio*, Martín Santos transforms the city into an ocean, and his characters participate in continuous urban odysseys above and below ground, including night jaunts to 'unexplored Nausicaas'. The dark forests of modernity's fairy tales are its cities, where adventure and surprise await. Presencia in Quiroga's *Algo pasa en la calle* utters, 'I walked... and walked... One street crosses the other. It appeared to me that one day I would find something, that something marvellous awaited me' (Quiroga 190).

Carlos Giménez's graphic novel *Todo 36–39: Malos tiempos* [Everything 36–39: Evil Times] (2007–2009), with its focus on the Republican defence against Franco in Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, emphasizes the many exoduses that took place within the city. 'For various reasons—all knew their own—during the war, in Madrid, people frequently changed address' (Giménez 313–314). Some moved suddenly from one part of the city to other neighbourhoods where they were unknown to avoid reprisal; others, to get further away from the front; and still others, because their homes had been bombed. To hide from the Republicans, a son of one Falangist family moves to Calle Serrano in the Salamanca district, the centre of Madrid's high bourgeoisie, since people there were less likely to denounce him. Alternatively, every time Señor Marcelino, the protagonist, repeats the dreadful order, '¡Evacuamos!' [Let's evacuate!], he announces an increase of hardship and misery (see Fig. 1). The Civil War dug trenches that were both physical and metaphorical, and interpersonal boundaries divided Madrid's social relations: 'In every barrio, during the war, people knew who was who as well as who had done and said what' (Giménez 293). Ideological frontiers became physical ones, and Madrid, like the country, was left divided.

Spanish writers take readers to the city's frontier, to their outskirts, which are often described as a foreign territory. The bourgeoisie's real-estate speculations pushed the poorest of the poor farther away, distancing them from the centre. In *Misericordia*, Benina, a house servant who secretly supports her mistress through



Fig. 1 The Spanish Civil War led to continual exoduses, including those from one part of Madrid to another. Giménez, *Todo 36–39: Malos tiempos*, 269 (Editorial DeBolsillo, Barcelona)

begging, seeks out the Moroccan Jew Mordejai in Cambronerías, a miserable suburb along the left bank of the Manzanares River. Galdós's description of the dire poverty exposes an aspect of cities that instilled fear in the nineteenth-century European bourgeoisie: the 'other' city, the 'city of the forgotten'—similar to the second of Disreality's two nations. This inaccessible 'wild west' turns out to be a recurrent literary *topos* throughout the nineteenth century (and continues as one in the films of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries). These locations include the nightmarish back alleys of Victorian fiction, through which a non-fictional Jack the Ripper stalked, or the demonic streets of Paris that Alexander Dumas identified in *The Mohicans of Paris* (1854–1858) as on the margin of law and civilization. Similar districts arose in Madrid and Barcelona. In his novel *La ciudad de los prodigios* [The City of Marvels] (1986), Eduardo Mendoza describes the shantytown that sprung up along with Barcelona's 1929 Universal Exhibition, formed by immigrants drawn to the promise of construction jobs. There they lived without gas, plumbing, or electricity and Mendoza cites a report of events in 1926 that reads: 'Child Killed When Upstairs Neighbour Flushed Toilet' (Mendoza 379).

Madrid's Cambronerías shared many of the traits of a tabooed territory. In *Las Calles de Madrid* [The Streets of Madrid], a collection of articles originally published from 1921 to 1925 in the newspaper *La Libertad*, Pedro de Répide describes Cambronerías as 'a separate town, and to those who live in the city centre, one which suggests the idea of a place that is extremely remote and that is both difficult and dangerous to reach. Within it there is more legend than reality' (Répide 1981: 104). The street leaves off being a street because the city has left off being a city, perhaps because the poor have given up being people; or, better, they have become the people of the abyss. At the margin, men and women of the frontier are simultaneously close to and far away from us. The scenes that Benina in *Misericordia* encounters in this peripheral zone are increasingly bleak: monstrous children with bloated faces, grieving voices that beg for help. She continues forward, but 'in the street, or whatever the space between the houses is called, she was accosted by the countless blind, maimed, and paralyzed inhabitants' (Galdós, *Misericordia* 225). The narrator questions whether to qualify the area as country or city. It is a place where the city loses its very name, one sees 'arid and rocky slopes, piles of rubbish, slag and sand... a stream of sewage water' (Galdós, *Misericordia* 204–225).

It is to the city's edge that Galdós, in *Miau*, sends Ramón Villaamil in search of an isolated spot to commit suicide. Construction-fever, however, has hit, and Villaamil wanders across vacant lots and enclosures prepared for new buildings, climbing over the shifting earth of landfill. Along the way, he enters a tavern evocatively called 'The Lord's Vine' and meets some conscripted soldiers whom he mistakes for workers who migrated to Madrid for a better life. He harangues them: 'Go back to your cottages and pastures, and avoid this treacherous abyss of Madrid, which will swallow you and make you miserable for the whole of your lives' (Galdós, *Miau* 268). Villaamil returns to the mountains of landfill, 'out of

range of the street lights' and stops on the embankment where he ends his life: 'The shot echoed in the solitude of that dark and deserted place. Villaamil gave a terrible leap, plunged headfirst into the shifting earth, and rolled straight down into the abyss' (Galdós, *Miau* 283). The city ends here as well—also sinking into an abyss and death. Madrid's periphery serves as a similar location for death in Giménez's *Malos tiempos*: political executions take place at the edge of the city, although still close to the centre. Once Madrid falls, Nationalist firing squads choose the very same sites: la Cuesta de la Vega (a street that borders the ravines that served as a natural defence when Madrid was a Moorish city), Madrid's eastern cemetery, and the Pradera de San Isidro.

Martín Santos, in *Tiempo de silencio*, takes the comparison between the outskirts and a foreign, savage country to a higher level of parody and social criticism—and of despair. Pedro, a physician who takes on the role of a sociologist/anthropologist, along with his research assistant, Amador, enters a shantytown that is likened to uncivilized territory. For him, there is no need to journey to the antipodes to find humans breaking taboos. On Madrid's margins are inhabitants similar to tribes in Central Africa or to Eskimos (Martín Santos 59). This continent holds ample terrain for discovery and civilizing colonization. *Tiempo de silencio* is a scathing social critique of the living conditions that resulted from the massive displacement from country to city after the Civil War. Eventually, the narrative deconstructs all of the ideological myths of Spain under Franco, betraying the emptiness and detritus in phrases like 'the harmonious city', the original, 'constructive force of the Iberian man', or the 'spiritual values for which other races envy us' (Martín Santos 43). The description of this other city and its forgotten population are eloquent: it too is a 'forbidden' city, where the 'sub-delinquent' and 'sub-formed' live, as well as those exiled from both society and the 'infra-society'. The 'extra-citizen' community are on the outskirts, where hunger rules and perilous paths have the 'right of way' (Martín Santos 103–104). The novel is a study of a society similar to one that has survived an atomic bomb. Seen from a distance are buildings that rise up to form a distinct world of parasites and excrescences, where the inhabitants 'are only able to survive on what the city throws away' (Martín Santos 58). The city on the margins that emerges out of the mud, however, has its days numbered, just as did the aboriginal hunting grounds, due to capitalist land speculation, the new economic reality of 'authentic civilization' (Martín Santos 57).

The city's periphery, its frontier, is a liminal space and often features bridges and gateways: for example, the Toledo Gate and Bridge in Madrid, which once marked where the city was divided from the country, although urban expansion has engulfed them both. Bridges and rivers, gateways and boundary walls, have been essential narrative figures in myths, stories and legends. The city gate is an ambiguous element—it opens and closes, shuts in and lets out. It is within and without—not far removed from the framed picture or mirror, a 'transitional, symbolic and functional' object for Lefebvre (2002: 209–210); the gate is 'the complete cosmos of what it opens to' (Bachelard 1998: 261). Ferdinand Noach, writing of triumphal

arches, commented that to pass through a doorway suggests a new birth; and the arch, for the Romans, acquired sacred connotations ‘of the limit or threshold’ (cited in Benjamin 123, 419).

Galdós figures Benina’s journeys to Cambroneras in *Misericordia* as a passage through symbolic doors or across a threshold of transformation. After each visit—after each ‘fall’ or symbolic death—she awakes, or is reborn, more pure. In all of his works, Galdós, like Buñuel in his films, never idealizes beggars, the disabled or the poor. Only within the novel do others throw stones or vituperate Benina—she gets called a ‘common woman’ [*tía ordinaria*] who stinks of raw onions. The novelist never represents deprivation as a moral defect; neither does physical beauty signify virtue or ethical qualities. Nevertheless, his works permit readers to understand the physically or socially disadvantaged. His works also confirm a spiritual conviction aligned with the kind of hope articulated in the Bible: ‘He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap’ (KJV Psalms 113:7). Fernández has referred to the Madrid of Galdós as ‘a microcosm’, which produces ‘a picturesque and productive regenerating chaos’ (Fernández 2000: 62). And in the author’s speech upon his induction to Spain’s Royal Academy, Galdós claimed that the ‘chaotic mob’ will ‘ferment’ ‘new social structures beyond our imagination’ (Galdós, *Sociedad* 162). In the world of those exiled from fortune, strangers in their own country or from afar, like Mordejai—those who dwell on the city’s periphery, its margins—these are the only people capable of understanding Benina. For Galdós, renewal manifests itself in the face of danger and uncertainty, despair and death. As *Misericordia* approaches its conclusion amidst the dumps and piles of landfill, Benina’s face becomes transmuted into ‘celestial light’. She appears on earth already as an angel: ‘the Girl belongs to heaven... and is of God’ (Galdós, *Misericordia* 315).

If Galdós believed in the regenerative possibility in a slum’s waste, mud and slime, Martín Santos did not. In the slums of *Tiempo de silencio*, the unfortunate and desperate just barely survive. From this dung-heap rises Cartucho, the ‘Cyclops’, a bestial and primitive ‘black man’, ‘vomited out of a mine’, who lives in a place that is ‘almost a cave’. Cartucho will stab the Pedro’s fiancée, believing that the young doctor is responsible for the pregnancy and death of his own girlfriend. Galdós, although critical of the social and political realities of late nineteenth-century Spain, was not able to distance himself from his time, the century of the Industrial Revolution, of the ideas of progress and of social and scientific positivism; he had faith in the potential for social reform. Martín Santos, however, published his novel in 1961–1962. The years marked a prosperous decade for most of Western Europe; they also corresponded to Spain’s definitive leap into industrialism as well as the consolidation of its middle class. Nonetheless, Spain’s intellectuals, with overwhelmingly anti-Franco sentiments, lived under existential despair.

Artists and writers combined social realism and ideological criticism directed towards a regime that seemed impossible to dethrone. Examples of the era’s pervasive pessimism were the works of Spain’s young filmmakers, ideological

heirs of those conquered during the Civil War. Films in the 1960s expose a world of the social losers (as opposed to singing praises of Iberian glories). Marío Camus, in *Young Sánchez* (1964), tells the story of a boxer's desire to escape from a working class barrio of Barcelona, which leads only to moral squalor. In Camus's *Los farsantes* [The Phonies] (1963), a desperate film about itinerant comedians, one employee resigns in spite of the manager's promises that everything is going to change: 'Liar', is the retort, 'Nothing is going to change. Everything stays the same. At least let's not fool ourselves'. Many Spaniards had lost all hope in the renewal of the country. *Tiempo de silencio* was nurtured in this soil and describes Madrid and its people as crowds of evil individuals dressed 'faded and limp' costumes, 'ugly men and attractive, although filthy, women' (Martín Santos 26, 29). In *El embrujo de Shanghai*, Marsé describes Barcelona's inhabitants in similar terms: 'men shrunken and mute . . . men dark and withdrawn . . . as if their lives had been corralled in'—they are 'furtive shadows' (Marsé 23–24). The mud no longer offers material for regeneration, only violence, starvation, and death, like the blood red letters that spell out the word 'TAVERN' above a gambling den where Cartucho, ruminating over his future crime, wastes out his existential nothingness.

Curiously, at the time when Spain's intellectuals were generally sceptical about improving the living conditions of marginal populations, the phenomenon of the 'red priest' or 'working class priest' arose. Inspired by the evangelical message of Vatican II and the Liberation Theology movement born out of it, these clerics entered working class, poverty-stricken barrios to preach the gospel to congregations of social outcasts. Manuel Longares bases a part of his short story, 'Delicado' [Delicate], which appeared in the collection, *Las cuatro esquinas* [The Four Corners] (2011), on the Madrid barrio of Pozo del Tío Raimundo, a neighbourhood of shacks. He recounts the efforts of Father José María de Llanos Pastor—*Padre Llanos*—Franco's confessor, but a red priest if there ever was one during the final years under Franco: a *Falangista* who turned Marxist and developed an intense social programme in Madrid's poorest neighbourhoods. The narrator of the story is a member of Franco's secret police, one who has been 'banished' to the world of the slums that remain 'mute, absorbed in radical misery' (Longares, 'Delicado' 90–91). Although this 'other' or 'forgotten' city is a site for missionary work, Longares deconstructs the rehabilitating zeal of the catechizing middle class who return from the 'gutter' [*báden de lodo*] with sludge stuck to their shoes and nothing more than subterfuge with which to clean their consciousness. Instead of preaching political revolution or the need for socio-economic change, the missionaries offer only the idea of Christian resignation as a means of finding spiritual peace.

A single-voiced city doesn't exist: every city is polyphonic and dialogic, to use Bakhtinian terms. The city is also a palimpsest—following both Certeau's comments on Rome for Freud, a city 'whose epochs *all* survive in the *same* place, intact and mutually interacting' (Certeau 1988: 202) and Lefebvre's on landscapes: 'In space, what came earlier continues to underpin what follows' (Lefebvre 2002: 229). In the fantasy-realism of Edgar Neville's 1944 Spanish film, *La torre*

de los siete jorobados [The Tower of the Seven Hunchbacks], a band of hunchbacks dedicated to crime inhabit a subterranean city under Madrid. Such secret, hidden populations hark back to Spain's expulsion of the Jews in 1492; those who did not want to convert or were not able to leave were forced into hiding, creating an underground class—indeed some who converted practiced their faith secretly. The entryways can be found in old Madrid, which traces its roots back to its Moorish origin—in the Plaza de la Paja and the Calle de la Morería, a street name that recalls the fifteenth-century Moorish quarter. Fast-forward to the twentieth century, and a similar hidden population can be identified. Under Franco, Spain had a population of 'moles': people who passed years hiding in basements (thus, the term 'mole') or camouflaged rooms, rarely going out—some waiting for the dictator's death. Marsé's novel offers the example of the supposedly deceased Captain Blay, who steps out of the wardrobe that conceals his secret apartment. The narrator describes how he emerges, pushing aside old coats with his bony hands, dressed in striped pyjamas: 'Captain Blay placed himself before me from another already devastated and irrecoverable world, one of dead sons and lost ideals, defeat and madness' (Marsé 32).

Perhaps every city has its secret entrances—to its hell or to whatever it would like bury or brick up behind walls, as has happened in Spain, with parts of its past. Spain's literature and films, however, draw the reader's attention to this hidden, urban underworld. In *Tiempo de silencio*, the brothel of Madame Luisa extends 'its transmuting activities to the very naval of the world of the shadows, the palace of the daughters of the night' (Martín Santos 86). The novel constantly alludes to secret shortcuts by 'Stygian' gaps or 'Cretan' intricacies. Cities are also figured as hells themselves. The Basque poet, Gabriel Aresti, in 1964, voices how he is in a 'dark pit/in this hell/that is called Bilbao' (Aresti 185). Cities as versions of hell participate in the tradition of the hero's descent into the underworld: from Homer's Odysseus to Joyce's Bloom, including Don Quixote's descent into the Cave of Montesinos. In *Miau*, Villaamil visits the governmental offices—*Palacio del Ministerio*—accompanied by his friend Argüelles, and the two 'might have been mistaken for Dante and Virgil seeking by hidden signs for the entrance to or exit from the infernal regions they were visiting' (Galdós, *Miau* 224). In Espronceda's *El estudiante de Salamanca*, Don Félix resembles a mythological hero embarking on a voyage to the underworld, as he descends into a whirlwind, while he sees the passing of his own funeral. The city is a tomb and a coffin, where the dead return to life. Bells toll from some ruined church: 'Saturday calls/the witches to their party' (Espronceda 54). Everyone sleeps at midnight, 'and the tomb was/From its living sleep/The old city watering/The river Tormes...The famous Salamanca' (Espronceda 54). The dead leave their crypts as those who wish to uncover themselves. The city has become a fluid space through which to navigate and re-elaborate myths.

Note too that the hellish city is able to take on different forms. In the same way that Lawrence Kasdan's film *Grand Canyon* (1991) opens with the painful loss of one of its protagonists in the 'infernal' sprawl of Los Angeles, Enrique Urbizu's

film *Todo por la pasta* [Everything for the Dough] (1991) explores the dreamlike underworld of the 'la Vieja' neighbourhood in Bilbao, a place where crime, prostitution and drugs, as well as new social experiments, come together. Alex de la Iglesia's 1995 film *El día de la bestia* [The Day of the Beast], on the other hand, depicts a Madrid that is apocalyptic, death-metal, satanic and postmodern, where the anti-Christ is going to be born on Christmas Eve. If this grotesque comedy anticipates millennial myths with the approach of the twenty-first century, other works show other versions of infernal cities—and for other reasons. In *Tiempo de silencio*, Pedro descends into hell when he passes through the prison cells under Franco. Within he finds sets of jaws that engulf 'the tremulous souls of the descendants': serpentine, subterranean corridors hold silent gnomes to whom one must show their papers to pass. In the crypts of this hell, the condemned don't shriek, but remain in profound silence. In *Luces de bohemia*, a bitter dream about the last years of Spain under the restoration, Madrid's streets become Dantesque at night. Valle-Inclán's stage directions make this violence clear: '*A street in Madrid's barrio de los Austrias. The walls of a convent. A noble mansion. The lights of a tavern. A woman, bare-breasted and moaning, has in her arms her dead son, killed from a bullet through the head*' (Valle-Inclán 99). In Longares's short story, 'El principal de Eguílaz' (also part of the collection, *Las cuatro esquinas*), set in the years immediately after the Spanish Civil War, twilight is the hour of the victors, when Franco's vampires go out to divert themselves, while the losers never leave off asking if at nightfall someone will come searching for them, 'that fear of the postwar night'. The night is hazy, stained by the heavy climate of nightmares and hallucinations. A car leaves, and the street is left empty. 'There is not a single noise in the yard, not a soul in the street. What happens to everyone at night after the war?' (Longares, 'Principal' 39–41).

The image of a city as a dream—as a nightmare—can also be seen in *La Plaza del diamante* [Diamond Square] (1960) by the Catalan novelist, Mercè Rodoreda. Through the experiences of Natalia are the minute details of the beginnings of the Civil War in Barcelona. Just as *Malos tiempos* portrays how the conflict transformed Madrid's streets into strange and alien places, *La Plaza del diamante* shows Barcelona's metamorphosis. Natalia is placed in a dreamlike state, close to trauma: 'All of the lights were blue. It looked like a fairyland and was nice. At the end of the day everything was the colour blue. They had painted the panes of the streetlamps blue...and the darkened house windows let out very little light...And when they bombed us from the sea, my father died' (Rodoreda 161). Natalia witnesses hunger, despair and death. On the day Barcelona falls to the nationalists, 'the wind blew scraps of paper about, filling the streets with white stains. And the cold inside my body was a cold that would never end' (Rodoreda 174). Afterwards, the traumatized Natalia is incapable of going outside—the streets terrify her. Every time she tries to cross the main street or look into shop windows, she feels faint or sees blue lights: 'I lived locked up in the house. The street scared me...I was only fine inside my house' (Rodoreda 177, 179). The novel follows the story of representing and verbalizing trauma, which, in this

case, is linked to living in the city itself. In the end, Natalia recuperates her voice: ‘The houses and the things had their colours back again . . . the bee hive lived . . . I entered my street’ (Rodoreda 251).

The urban underworld in effect represents a collective unconscious, the place that hides the repressed, be it the city’s past or secret subjects of the present. Benjamin advises us that our waking existence is a land in which there are hidden places that descend to the underworld: ‘The labyrinth of city houses is equivalent to the conscience during the day’, but at night, ‘beneath the dark masses of buildings, it arises, an instilling dread, its compact obscurity’ (Benjamin 2005: 867). In *El Embrujo de Shanghai*, people living near the Plaza Rovira in Barcelona’s Gràcia neighbourhood complain about bad odours, perhaps due to a gas leak. The gas company’s workers respond, but have to leave off digging because they uncover bones and a skull—a whole cemetery. The cause of the odour was ‘the stench of the dead’ (Marsé 22). What is buried in a city’s history, what it wants to hide or erase forever, ends up resurfacing. LaCapra refers to this as the return of the historically repressed: ‘things sometimes seem to happen as if the repressed were returning in a distinguished and distorted form’ (LaCapra 1996: 169). The effect of a traumatic experience is also often delayed and remains latent, under denial—until the pain overflows. Cities can also possess a kind of unconscious, displacing whatever it desires to hide, be it for moral, social, or political causes. And in a city this repressed unconscious often acquires the topographical image of the underworld.

Longares’s *Romanticismo*, which follows the lives of three generations of a family who live in Madrid’s district of Salamanca, narrativizes a return of the urban repressed. Salamanca, according to Luis Mateo Díez, became ‘a stronghold of limited frontiers’, where a bourgeois aristocracy ‘plays out the leading role in sociological Francoism’ (cited in Peinado 2008: 48–49, N. 73). These frontiers are those that Hortensia, Pia’s mother, calls *vaguadas* (valleys—once again with the connotation that physical descent connects to social descent) and has no desire to visit. Salamanca can be denominated ‘the bourgeois castle’. The walls that surround this castle are the neighbourhood’s high property values, an economic barrier more formidable than moats or fortified walls. The economic and social power that Madrid’s high bourgeoisie enjoyed became so great that it was easy for them to acquire aristocratic habits. Indeed, in the Ensanche section of Salamanca, nobility resonates through the ornate turrets and towers that decorate the buildings—Hortensia lives in a ducal house, a ‘fortress’ with ‘white towers’. Madrid’s upper class, in many ways, are descendants of royal courtiers: ‘noble’ attributes, it could be argued, appear more strongly in Madrid than among the Catalan or Basque bourgeoisie, whose social status is nuanced by business or industrial interests. This bourgeois castle is a utopia of sorts—insular, though outside its boundaries are the *banlieu* and *terra incognita*, and idyllic, in terms of Bakhtin’s ‘idyllic chronotope’ (Peinado 2008: 74), an ideal place where time comes to a halt and history ceases. It is obvious that the privileged classes always want to establish an idyllic

situation—where the flow of the time stagnates to prevent social or historical change from endangering their privileged position.

Longares describes how Salamanca's elite residents visit the Retiro Park on Sundays. The Retiro, created by the Spanish kings in the seventeenth century as a place to 'retire' from the bustle of the court, was an aristocratic oasis. It continued as one, bordering Salamanca, serving as a stronghold for music-lovers as well as 'a refuge from the flood of democracy' (Longares, *Romanticismo* 313). In June of 1977, the year Spain held its first democratic elections after Franco, Pía visits the Retiro. When she moves closer to hear the band, an 'underground youth' hands her what turns out to be not the concert's programme, but socialist propaganda. Rallying socialists have now taken the park, entering 'from an underground passage' (the metro station's entryway opens from beneath Calle Alcalá that lines the park's northern border). Longares writes ironically, '... the ancient order of mornings in the Retiro passed on to a better life' (Longares, *Romanticismo* 319–320). The repressed returned to the streets of Salamanca, and shouts of the *República* could be heard. The hidden resurges: 'In the clouds rumbled the underground message of the *rogelios*' (Longares, *Romanticismo* 363)—*rogelios*, a label for 'reds' during Spain's transition to democracy. Pía, like the majority of her neighbours, rarely lowered her eyes to the ground; the residents of the centre, if they spoke of the metro, looked away since perhaps it referred to the 'city's intestines'; it slid periodically beneath some of the homes, destabilizing 'their perfumed equilibrium' (Longares, *Romanticismo* 366–369). Residents of Salamanca are no longer able to disregard the city's metro system, as from it—like the unconscious, or the dungeons, or hidden rooms—resurfaces what cities and their bourgeois palaces attempt to suppress.

Spain's cities also serve as spaces upon which to project anxieties, desires and frustrations. Their streets function as terrain for dreamers—the space for the *flâneur*. In *Misericordia*, Frasquito prefers to escape into Madrid's humble neighbourhoods, with their 'obscure, little used streets, where one rarely would see a top hat. In such places, he enjoyed a tranquillity, time untaxed, and solitude, where his imaginative power revived happy times or created things and beings to his own taste and measure as a miserable dreamer' (Galdós, *Misericordia* 125). In *Algo pasa en la calle*, Presencia walks without stopping: 'Sometimes she went out alone and did not know how to explain where she was or what she did. She walked along one street, then another, she became entangled in them' (Quiroga 74). Pedro goes out in *Tiempo de silencio*, passing through the neighbourhood of Tirso de Molina and Antón Martín, heading downhill towards the Atocha train station. A slight breeze prompts him to change direction, and he turns into 'the twisted and sheltered streets to the left. They were almost empty . . . Cervantes had lived in one . . .' (Martín Santos 61–62). The streets of old Madrid protect one from the cold air and provide space for meditation—two pages of Pedro's musings over Cervantes and *Don Quixote* follow.

Benjamin uses the metaphor of a 'cover' or 'case' in reference to the emphasis placed on the individual dwelling during the nineteenth century. The home has

been transformed into a cover for a person. Following Benjamin, then, the prototypical form one inhabits is a ‘covering’, not a house. It can be argued that in the Middle Ages and at the beginning of modernity the home did not perform this role: the home did not possess the comfort-level it reached later, nor was ‘a room of one’s own’ a familiar concept. Rather, it can also be argued that the city served as a collective room and fulfilled the function of a covering, a case. These old cities—and traces can be found of them in nearly all of Spain’s great cities—blanketed and protected their inhabitants, like a shell. By the eighteenth century, with the era of light, the age of reason, the urban layout of narrow streets suffered a theoretical attack from treatise writers, who challenged and offered only a negative vision of the medieval mentality: its urban, architectural and literary systems. When Haussmann created the boulevards of Paris in the second half of the nineteenth century, the world began to break up its sidewalks and pavements, destroying its dark gothic streets and the dreams of romantic spirits like Hugo with them. Haussmann’s intentions were political as well as ideological and formed with public hygiene in mind. At the same time, the city received all of the influence of Cartesian thought and the illustrative god of Reason: the light of truth was let into urban daily life. The boulevards created at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth in Madrid and Barcelona, as in Paris, transformed its urban fabric and responded to a similar bourgeois mentality.

Quiroga’s *Algo pasa en la calle* comments directly on this phenomenon: the two lovers, Presencia and Ventura, cut off from society, look for narrow streets that provide cover and protect: the Calle de los Desamparados, where they live, is dark and obscure, ‘a street for lovers’. They walk arm-in-arm, but they separate from each other when they see the boulevard’s new street lights: lights that permit no shadows, like mid-day, aseptic and dehumanized, reminding them of an operating room in which faces look ghastly. ‘Is it possible to make love under the fluorescent street lamps that cast no shadows?’ (Quiroga 149). They love the weak light of a lantern on their way home because it respects the shadow: ‘the shadows of a human face are beautiful’ (Quiroga 150). Quiroga’s work mourns the disappearance of the ambiguous universe where shadow and light get confused. Ventura thinks at one point, ‘Maybe now the world will be a great operating room, and to live as one lives—to function, to operate—it’s appropriate to clear away the shadows’ (Quiroga 149).

What also impacts the cityscape as the site for daydreaming is that in the twentieth century *flânerie* inevitably connects to shopping or, at least, looking at the shop windows. Consumer capitalist society has in this way ended the poetic ramble. A victim of consumerism, the *flâneur* loses ‘the capacity to distance himself critically from the world’ (Amendola 2000: 202). Galdós narrates masterfully how the world of the consumer introduces itself in the modern bourgeois city and who it hypnotized. In *La de Bringas* [That Bringas Woman] (1884), set in 1868, Rosalía, drawn to the latest fashions, has fallen into a spiral of loans and purchases. Rosalía goes to the lending house of Torquemada to beg for an extension of her credit, but he

forms a zero, like a donut, with his fingers, holding it up to her 'as the host is offered to the adoration of the faithful' (Galdós, *Bringas* 232). In the Sobrino's shop, a *manteleta* is an 'Eve's apple'; the latest styles arriving from Paris seduce her. For Rosalía, purchases 'were perhaps the principal fact of a dull and routine life', as she moved from store to store, 'under the intoxicating action of getting drunk on old rags' (Galdós, *Bringas* 61, 103–104).

The Universal Exhibitions examined by Mendoza in *La ciudad de los prodigios* are, precisely, the city of the consumerist's dream. Benjamin sees such great exhibitions as pilgrimage destinations towards fetishized goods and the highest school of capitalism (Benjamin 2005: 52–53). Ward warns that the Expositions placed their emphasis on superficial appearances. It was an architecture that oriented itself to the superficial and the transitory, not to permanence or depth—to look at, not to touch—creating the pleasure of the spectacle (Ward 2001: 21). *La ciudad de los prodigios* focuses on how the Exposition of 1888 'looked like a setting of a fairy tale'; some of the buildings were already damaged during the inauguration. Urban authorities also sought to clear the city of its undesirables and lavished their attention on the 'tourist'. One entered the site through a Triumphal Arch, giving way to a very wide avenue. The arch's significance as a threshold remains; only here it marks the entrance to a space where merchandise fascinates the viewer, a species of 'toy land' out of *Pinocchio*. The new bourgeoisie quickly developed its taste for material goods, which in turn transformed the object of the viewer's gaze in Spain's cities.

However, for those with little money, merchandise can be as unreachable and as ethereal as nocturnal hallucinations. William Leach, in his study *Land of Desire*, establishes how shop windows simultaneously create a democratization of desire and a 'de-democratization' of real access to the merchandise on display (cited in Ward 2001: 225). In *Tiempo de silencio*, Pedro and Amador walk down the slope of the Atocha road in Madrid, disregarding the goods displayed on the shelves of the shop windows, where 'everything could be desired'. However, later, along the Gran Vía, they see gold, perfumes, baked hams, Swiss watches, marble objects and brochures about lion hunting, 'a tiny centimetre away from the public', but so far away that they were not the same things, rather only pure unattainable ideas 'at the side of Plato's cave' (Martín Santos 190). Look, but don't touch—so close, but yet so far.

The space of the *flâneur's* reverie, whether or not distracted by material goods, has brought us back to the city as the perimeter of sleep, to appearances, to images. Bachelard wrote that the great images are always memory and legend at the same time (Bachelard 1998: 64). Spain's cities forge chimeras for their inhabitants, and those who represent the metropolis through literature or film project the paradox of a tangible unreality, which every day becomes a more privileged place of social, economic and cultural formation. The city of mud, the evolving site for human metamorphosis, and the city of dreams, the urban space that generates legends and myth, serve as the setting for a continuous remaking of contemporary human experience.

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Lisbon: What the Tourist Should Read

Daniel Bristow

PESSOA, LISBOA, PORTUGAL

Over seven hills, which are as many points of observation whence the most magnificent panoramas may be enjoyed, the vast irregular and many-coloured mass of houses that constitute Lisbon is scattered.

For the traveller who comes in from the sea, Lisbon, even from afar, rises like a fair vision in a dream, clear-cut against a bright blue sky which the sun gladdens with its gold. And the domes, the monuments, the old castles jut up above the mass of houses, like far-off heralds of this delightful seat, of this blessed region.

Fernando Pessoa, *Lisbon: What the Tourist Should See* (2008: 11)

So Fernando Pessoa (1888–1935) describes the city that would remain inscribed on his heart as Mary I of England had declared Calais would on hers. Lisbon, for Pessoa, lived, underwrote, and resonated prismatically through his many personae, or ‘heteronyms’—the biographically fleshed-out pseudonyms under which he wrote, most with their own birth and death dates, nationalities, and professions. So entrenched are these heteronyms and their independent lives that Portugal’s Nobel Prize-winning author, the Marxist José Saramago (1922–2010) called one of his novels *The Year of the Death of Ricardo Reis* (1991; the year before, Saramago had published his novel about eighteenth-century Lisbon: *Baltazar and Blimuda*, set during the construction of the Convent of Mafra, just outside the city). In 1925 Pessoa wrote the pamphlet *Lisbon: What the Tourist Should See* in English, from which are taken the above paragraphs. The pamphlet wasn’t attributed to a heteronym, nor published in Pessoa’s lifetime, but it demonstrates his investment in every aspect of the city as he guides the tourist-reader through it in an imaginary car, detailing its highways and byways, must-sees, and cultural hotspots, and

listing museum entry fees and treasures to be found amongst the collections of its major libraries.

The topography of Pessoa's pamphlet begins to unravel as we enter by ship via the Tagus river (Rio Tejo), going first round the islanded Buglio lighthouse and sailing past the Tower of Belém, to arrive at the wharf from which the car can be caught (11–13). As the city's shoreline is passed, Pessoa points out—as he seems to under every heteronym that addresses the city—‘the masses of houses that cluster the hills. That is *Lisbon*’ (11). Once upon land, every point of interest is indicated with specificity to the tourist. A few highlights include: ‘the largest of Lisbon squares, the *Praça do Commercio*, formerly *Terreiro do Paço*, as it is still commonly known’ (15); ‘the square which contains the old Convento de São Francisco da Cidade, founded in 1217, where the National Library, the Art School and the Museum of Contemporary Art are now installed’ (36); its contents are assiduously described. ‘The *Aqueducto das Aguas Livres*, a magnificent specimen of old engineering is still the just object of admiration’ (49). Equally, ‘the *Museu dos Côches* (Coach Museum), a very curious museum created in 1905 by the initiative of Queen Amelia. It contains 62 artistic vehicles, uniforms and liveries of the Royal House, uniforms of the crew of the royal boats, harnesses, stirrups, spurs, buttons, prints, portraits, etc.’ (63), and ‘the *Mosteiro* (Monastery) *dos Jerónimos*, a masterpiece in stone, which all tourists visit and which they never can forget. It is, as a matter of fact, the most remarkable monument which the capital contains. Its construction was ordered in 1502 by King Manuel I, the architect being Boitaca, who is the author of other remarkable works of the kind in Portugal’ (54). As an addendum Pessoa also takes us on a visit to Cintra, via Queluz (79–83).

Today, the city can be almost as well navigated by Pessoa as when it was written, though the Tagus is straddled by two grand bridges. The first is the 25 de Abril Bridge (1962–1966), which resembles San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge and was first named the Ponte Salazar, after the then-Prime Minister António de Oliveira Salazar, whose successor in the hated *Estado Novo* government, Marcello Caetano, was toppled by the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974. The second, the Ponte Vasco da Gama (1995–1998), is Europe's largest bridge and called in honour of the great Portuguese explorer (c.1460–1524), who sailed from Belém. Totalling some 17.2 kilometres in length, it almost fades out into the Alochete horizon, to which it connects, when looked at from the Lisbon side, and is a spectacle from the air.

Similar to Pessoa's tour guide, we may trace a path through the literary city using the poet(s) as a guiding thread. Bernardo Soares—Pessoa's ‘semi-heteronymic’ bookkeeping chronicler of *The Book of Disquiet*, an epic storehouse of beautiful, nihilistic prose fragments written over many years and first posthumously published in 1982—spent all his fictional life in Lisbon, inhabiting a lonely fourth-floor flat on the Rua dos Douradores, and needed never travel beyond Portugal's capital as ‘there [we]re no flowers for [him] like the variegated colouring of Lisbon on a sunny day’ (Pessoa 2002: 50). He argued, too, in response to the rhetorical question of ‘the sensation of

freedom that travel brings? I can have it by going from Lisbon to Benfica, and have it more intensely than one who goes from Lisbon to China, because if the freedom isn't in me, then I won't have it no matter where I go' (123).

With Pessoa, it is the *within* that is most acutely identifiable in his literary productions (he was a person of persons—his surname is itself Portuguese for 'person'—like a Russian doll), but the city of Lisbon undeniably shaped what was within him and the offspring of his childlessness. His three main poetical heteronyms were Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos, and Ricardo Reis, that name which Saramago used, the styles of whom he—or rather one of his English heteronyms, Thomas Crosse—described thus:

Caeiro has one discipline: things must be felt as they are. Ricardo Reis has another kind of discipline: things must be felt, not only as they are, but also so as to fall in with a certain ideal of classic measure and rule. In Álvaro de Campos things must simply be felt.

(quoted in Zenith 2006: xxii)

Caeiro was born in, and died in, Lisbon within Pessoa's lifetime. However, he moved to and lived in the countryside (Ribatejo) for most of his life, where he composed *The Keeper of Sheep*. Although he never kept sheep, he explained in his first poem that it was 'as if he did'. His poetry concerned itself with Nature in and of itself, and aimed to directly connect with things-in-the-world without mediation. He inspired decisively Reis and de Campos, the former a monarchist scholar from Oporto whose terse verse praised Master Caeiro and expounded his non-philosophy philosophically, and the latter the streetwise modernist, whose early poems came in Cubist and Futurist—indeed, 'Sensationist'—tones, and who wrote two poems on revisiting Lisbon (in 1923 and 1926), where he settled after touring the world. Yet this heteronym would never feel truly at home—no doubt due to the necessity of feeling so much else all at once—and he wrote in *Lisbon Revisited* (1926): 'Once more I see you—Lisbon, the Tagus and the rest—/A useless onlooker of you and of myself,/A foreigner here like everywhere else' (de Campos 2006a: 219).

But no foreigner was Pessoa himself, displaying not only in his tourists' guide but in the poetry authored in his 'orthonym' (i.e. his own name, yet not connected to his person as it was at the time) his indigenoussness, and that of his city and country to the world at large. As he puts it in the poem 'The West': 'Whether Chance, sheer Will or Tempest/Was the hand that raised the glowing torch,/God was the soul and Portugal the body/Of that torch-bearing hand' (Pessoa—Himself 2006: 379). Indeed, Lisbon as a city, Portugal as a country found—or *founded*, in a Westernising sense—much of the world beyond it, through exploration and exploitation, even if it may have been displayed as the divine right of the God-chosen world, that is, Portugal.

LISBON AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

As it has been said of Freud's unconscious that it was an 'invention in the sense of a discovery' (Lacan 1989: 15), perhaps it is also true of Portugal's exploration and opening up of 'undiscovered' swathes of the rest of the world. Indeed, in postcolonial terms, thinking of the early expeditions of the Portuguese: 'the "discovery" of the Pacific by Europeans was the crucial point for the imaging of the Pacific. The early trading relationship with India and the Spice Islands of the Indonesian archipelago was an initial starting point into the creation of the image of the exotic' (Hall and Tucker 2004: 9). Whilst constructing early orientalist representations of the natives of these distant lands—who predated their own 'discovery'—these expeditions were simultaneously responsible for laying the groundwork for colonisation and dispossession, as well as establishing trade routes and agreements.

Before Vasco da Gama, the European 'Age of Discovery' had been inaugurated by the Portuguese through their journeying to the Azores and the west coast of Africa, voyages pioneered by the Infante Henrique (1394–1460)—i.e. Henry the Navigator—who, beginning with Ceuta (Morocco), had made his way across coastal Africa in search of riches. After the Italian Christopher Columbus had 'discovered' the Americas in 1492, under Spain's auspices, da Gama went in pursuit of the East, with his sights set on India, in 1498. The events of his quest are mythologised in Portugal's national epic *The Lusíads* (1572), by Luís Vaz de Camões (1524–1580). Camões—an adventurer himself—based his poem on Virgil's *Aeneid* and mixed a crusading Christian theology with the pantheon of Greek gods, from whose squabbles and alliances, blood is shed. This occurs—somewhat excusing the actions of the protagonists (who in reality had committed piracy) when Bacchus, the enemy of Portugal, disguised as a Moor, plants the seed of doubt in the heads of the Muslim community which the voyagers first visit when they have cleared the Cape of Good Hope to Mozambique and Mombasa (modern Kenya), thus causing suspicion on both sides. This produces bloody attack, despite the initial interaction between them being good-natured (Cantos 1–2). In this way, the religious rivalries and hatreds between Christendom and Islam are downplayed by Camões, as it is through the meddlesomeness of a council of other gods that tensions with the colonisers become so flared as to lead to battle. Camões begins the first canto of the epic in the style of *The Aeneid*, proclaiming:

This is the story of heroes who, leaving their native Portugal behind them, opened a way to Ceylon, and further, across seas no man had ever sailed before. They were men of no ordinary stature, equally at home in war and in dangers of every kind: they founded a new kingdom among distant peoples, and made it great.

(Camões 1952: 39)

The 'Lusíads' refer to the people of Portugal—formerly of the Iberian region of Lusitania, along with part of Spain—who comprise the nation which is the

book's main hero; Vasco da Gama figuring as its brave luminary. In the tale, in hospitable Malindi (also Kenya), da Gama tells the whole history of his nation and its adventures up to the point of the travails in Mozambique and Mombasa that he and his crew had faced before their arrival, before setting sail again for their goal. After this sojourn, Bacchus sees 'that the rest of the gods were determined to make of Lisbon a second Rome, and that he was powerless to prevent it' (142). After his best attempt to do so nonetheless—by rallying the sea-gods to throw their storms at da Gama and his crew, all of which are calmed by Venus—it comes to pass that in the name of Portugal's great city, India is triumphantly encountered, when da Gama lands near Calicut, in Marabar (Kerala) and the renown of the capital rings out through regions of the world it could formerly only imagine.

Thus, in India 'pacts and treaties of peace and friendship contracted in all sanctity and sincerity [...] allow an interchange of trade' to be set up between the countries (173), and once the mission is accomplished the Portuguese are rewarded through being bequeathed the love of beautiful nymphs by Venus (Canto 9). The last canto thereafter tells premonitorily what befall da Gama, who returns, and then of all the conquests and conquerors that the Portuguese will engender first through Pedro Alvarez Cabral, who touched Brazil in 1500, before going to Calicut round the Cape of Good Hope, as da Gamahad. The prophecy extends as far as Camões' present, and so takes in Camões's own journeys (1553–1570), which included Malacca to Macao (claimed to be the site where *The Lusiads* were written), and to Sumatra and Java. They include the famous Fernão de Magalhães, or Magellan, 'a true Portuguese in the undertaking if not in allegiance', allied in fact, in his expedition, with the Spanish (246).

Whilst da Gama returned to exploring and eventually received a Viceroyship in India—as is also described in the prophecy of Camões' poem (228)—*The Lusiads* itself made little impact on its publication, and after the defeat of Portugal's reigning King Sebastião, died proclaiming: 'all will see that so dear to me was my country I was content to die not only in it but with it' (Camões, quoted in White 2001: x). However, it transpired that these two Portuguese pioneers would later be united equally in Lisbon, as Pessoa relates: 'in front of the Almeida Garrett Chapel [in the Mosteiros dos Jerónimos are] the tombs of Luís de Camões and Vasco da Gama, made in 1894 under the guidance of the sculptor Costa Motta' (Pessoa 2008: 58).

Fast-forward 500 years from da Gama's passage to India, and Lisbon is found triumphantly celebrating it in its Expo '98 World's Fair, with its heavy emphasis on Portugal's, and da Gama's, role in the Age of Discoveries. In contrast to da Gama being memorialized not only by the new bridge, but a tower too, and in a raft of newsprint, museum exhibitions, and multimedia, a theatre was opened in Camões' name, but the right-wing Assembleia da República still said of the Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries that they were 'neglecting to honor Vasco da Gama appropriately in their 1998 programming [and that he] was not visible at the Expo, or given the honor that his achievements merited' (see Sieber 2001:

552). However, Marcus Power highlights the imperialism and nationalism arising from the insistence on da Gama at the event:

As the Discoveries were remembered and commemorated at EXPO '98, so this imperial past of adventure and discovery was 'nationalized', re-imagined for the nation. EXPO '98 constructed a particular 'discursive purchase' on the culture of the Discoveries which was in turn heavily marked by the idea of the Exposition as the last of its kind in the twentieth century.

(Power 2002: 143)

The Expo's triumphalism was problematic, and in the unequal division of da Gama and Camões, whilst it concentrated on the construction of empire, it seemed to take this as an incontestable and empirical given, unaware of what empire meant. The impetus behind this imposed cultural memory may have tapped into that famous Portuguese '*saudade*', that is, 'that special feeling of nostalgia for the past as the future can never offer better' (Buck 2002: 3). The already-constructed national narrative seemed to outweigh the problems in the construction of the nationalist narrative.

THE 1755 EARTHQUAKE AND HOW IT SHOOK THE WORLD

When they had recovered a little, they set out in the direction of Lisbon; they had little money in their pockets with which they hoped to escape starvation having survived shipwreck.

Hardly do they set foot in the city [...] than they feel the earth tremble beneath them; a boiling sea rises in the port and shatters the vessels lying at anchor. Great sheets of flame and ash cover the streets and public squares; houses collapse, roofs topple on to foundations, and foundations are levelled in turn; thirty thousand inhabitants without regard to age or sex are crushed beneath the ruins.

Voltaire, *Candide, or Optimism* (2005a: 13).

Pessoa's guide lists many sites gravely affected by the Great Earthquake that struck Lisbon on November 1, 1755, and he discusses the necessity of rebuilding the city in its wake. Indeed, the catastrophe put architects and masons in business, but the French *philosophe* Voltaire (1694–1778) saw this as proof against the prevalent philosophy of Optimism. As he satirically parrots the chirrupings of optimism in the preface to his poem on the Lisbon disaster (1756): 'all this is as it should be; the heirs of those who have died will multiply their fortunes; masons will make money by rebuilding the houses; [...] this is all the necessary effect of necessary causes; your personal misfortune is as nothing, you are contributing to the general good' (Voltaire 2005b: 99). Voltaire drew in part on the 'cosmic Toryism' of 'whatever is, is right' in Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733–1734), but derived his knowledge of optimism primarily from Leibniz (1646–1716), most notably in his description of ours as the 'best of all possible worlds'. Leibniz had formulated in his 1710 work

Theodicy that ‘if there were not the best (*optimum*) among all possible worlds, God would not have produced any’ (Leibniz 2009: 128). (And thus, Voltaire’s most famous statement—that ‘if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him’, in the poem ‘The Three Imposters’—reverses Leibniz’s argument.)

In *Candide* (1759), the Lisbon earthquake is one of the first calamities befalling the naïve Candide and the philosopher Pangloss, the optimist. A litany of exponentially severer tragedies follows. The Great Earthquake had had such an effect on Voltaire himself; he became like his hero ‘passing within sight of Lisbon, a[nd] shudder[ing]’ (2005a: 70). Thus the event caused a torrent of discussion on questions of evil, theodicy and optimism. Rousseau’s direct response by letter to Voltaire’s Lisbon poem—which he ends by stating: ‘all these metaphysical subtleties may embitter my pains, but none can cause me to doubt a time of immortality for the soul and a beneficent providence’ (Rousseau 1967)—appear as a last gasp of an old order of thought on such questions. The earthquake came the year after Henry Fielding (1707–1754) had been buried in Lisbon. Suffering from gout and asthma, he was advised to go there for his health; he called it ‘the nastiest city in the world’ (Fielding 1996: 107), and died two months later. It also shook Goethe (1749–1832), influencing his notion of the ‘demonic’. He writes in the third-person in his autobiography *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–1833): ‘an extraordinary event deeply disturbed the boy’s peace of mind for the first time. On the 1st of November, 1755, the earthquake at Lisbon took place, and spread a prodigious alarm over the world, long accustomed to peace and quiet’; such alarm was this that in the first-person Goethe thereafter states: ‘in my sixth year, after the earthquake at Lisbon, the goodness of God had become to me in some measure suspicious’ (Goethe 1874: 18, 33). This sea-change in Lisbon—the earthquake hailed not only fires but a tsunami—left it in need of reconstruction, and the consciousness of Europe likewise. The odysseys of da Gama and Camões may encourage belief in omnibenevolence, but these gave way to a necessity of rethinking cosmologies epitomised by Lisbon’s earthquake.

INTERIORS AND EXTERIORS

Travelling through Lisbon’s literature and its history means passing to and through interiors and exteriors, from exploring around and outside Lisbon, and Portugal, from the implosiveness of the natural disaster that ravaged Lisbon to the life of the poet’s mind, where ‘mental earthquakes’ make way for splitting and heteronymy (see de Campos 2002: 41). In a Cubist fashion (fusing the internal and external at once), houses, with which ‘Portuguese poetry is a little obsessed’ (Zenith 2015: xxx) have allowed Lisbon to have manifold perspectives. Reminding us of Pessoa’s—through Soares’—pronouncement on there being ‘no flowers for him like the variegated colouring of Lisbon’, one of Portugal’s realist and Naturalist novelists Eça de Queirós (1845–1900), begins *The Maias: Episodes from Romantic Life* (the subtitle is ironic, in Flaubertian

mode: at the heart of the novel is brother/sister incest) with a city residence: ‘The Lisbon house into which the Maias moved in the autumn of 1875 was known in the neighbourhood of Rua de São Francisco de Paula, and throughout the district of Janelas Verdes, as Ramalhete—the House of the Bouquet’ (de Queirós, 1998: 7). This house might not have been as redolent as the veil of its name suggests, the reason for which Pessoa gives in his pamphlet, when directing readers to de Queirós’ statue:

Going a little down Rua do Alercim, we find, in the Largo do Barão de Quintella, the statue of the novelist *Eça de Queiroz*, by Texeira Lopes, unveiled in 1903. The chief figure, in marble, represents Truth—a naked woman whose body is imperfectly veiled by a gauze covering. [...] On the base is graven a phrase of the great author’s which was the sculptor’s inspiration—‘On the strong nakedness of truth the transparent veil of fancy’.

(Pessoa 2008: 40–41)

Eça de Queirós, who as an ambassador spent time in England, writing two novels in Newcastle upon Tyne, and *The Maias* in Bristol, begins that novel with the house as having the mournful look of an ecclesiastical residence, built in the eighteenth century, in the reign of Maria I, the mad Queen (1734–1816) who died in Rio de Janeiro. ‘The house had got its name because there was a square of figured tilkes in the form of a panel displaying a big bunch of sunflowers tied with a ribbon, on which letters and a date could be made out, in the place normally set aside for the coat of arms which had never been put up’. The tone of disillusionment, which extends over Lisbon, is there: this novel is Lisbon-based, though with scenes in France, and shows three generations of a family—Alfonso, Pedro and the womaniser Carlos—deteriorating from Enlightenment values to a sense of *ennui* in the late nineteenth century.

The variegated colouring of Lisbon Pessoa links to houses in de Campos’ untitled poem that begins: ‘Lisbon with its houses/Of various colors,/Lisbon with its houses/Of various colors,/Lisbon with its houses/Of various colors.../By virtue of being different, this is monotonous’ (de Campos 2006b: 249), stressing the difference and repetition involved in all housing and living. The theme gets taken up frequently in the city’s poetry, and it is with a colloquy of poets on the subject that the panoramic mass of houses that Pessoa opened up the literary Lisbon may close it again here. Remembering the Virgilian beginning of Camões’ *Lusiads*, Herberto Helder (1930–2015) inverts its wide-ranging scope by declaring in his ‘Preface’: ‘I want to speak of houses, and the sages/who wield that solid and silent/power hailing from ancient times’ (Helder 2015: 115). Daniel Jonas (1973–) dreams of them in his poem ‘Houses’: ‘Houses. I dream of houses./I dream of houses on the inside/and live in them on the outside, passing by/and I think houses are sentences/condemning me to freedom’ (Jonas 2015: 267). Immovable and secluded for Jonas, those of others ‘condemn [him] to their not being [his]’, but he retorts: ‘Bah! I condemn them to not having wings’ (ibid.), whilst for Luiza Neto Jorge (1939–1989)—in her

‘Houses’—‘they are far more docile/than children/Closed up inside their plaster/they ponder’ (Neto Jorge 2015: 149). They reach a frenetic pitch—in which their nestling and jostling over the Lisbon hills can be visualised—in Ruy Belo’s (1933–1978) ‘Oh Houses Houses Houses’ (*‘Oh as Casas as Casas as Casas’*), in which their metaphoricality returns the reader to the compartmentalisation of the heteronymic mind of the Portuguese poet:

Where will the I of my verses be later on?
 Will I have a house where I can keep all of this
 or will I always be just this instability?
 Unlike me houses seem stable
 but they’re so fragile poor houses
 Oh houses houses houses
 silent witness of life.

(Belo 2015: 131)

Witnessing to the life led in and around them, these houses see the Lisbon and the Portugal that is steeped in that soulful *saudade* and Whitmanian ‘song of myself’, of which the poet Alexandre O’Neill (1924–1986; of French-Irish parentage) sings in his poem of the country’s name: ‘Portugal: an ongoing discussion with myself,/a soreness to the bone, an unsated hunger,/a bloodhound on a leash, with no nose and no ducks,/a spruced-up nag,/a dingy fair,/my regret,/my regret for us all . . .’ (O’Neill 2015: 101). It is thus this combination of desires, longings, yearnings and affects that the tourist will read in Lisbon and its environs.

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Vienna

Jeremy Tambling

INTRODUCTION: THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

Vienna, representing itself through art and literature, and as the capital of an empire, has produced a vast number of writers, artists, architects and composers, and philosophers, some absolutely modernist. Treatment must be selective, attempting to avoid too the prevalent nostalgia with which the city is so often treated and which it projects. Stefan Zweig's *The World of Yesterday* (1942) records that Vienna, and its conservatism has been criticized; a more critical review of Vienna as a society whose art was decorative (not ornamental) and kitsch comes from Herman Broch, in *Hofmannsthal and his Time* (1951). Broch compared Paris and Vienna as equivalent centres of European power in the eighteenth-century—one had Versailles, the other replied with Schönbrunn—but he noted that Paris had become the city of revolutions, which made it a 'world city', striving towards world revolution, whereas Vienna had remained the cheerful Baroque capital, suspicious of change (Broch 1984: 64). The three writers referred to were originally Jewish: Zweig an upper-class Jew from the 1st district, the old town (which, with its privilege, was less exposed to anti-semitism) and interested in assimilation; Broch a Catholic convert; Hofmannsthal a Catholic, but of Jewish descent. Hofmannsthal died in 1929: Zweig had to leave Vienna in 1934, Broch in 1938.

This chapter concentrates on Freud, Robert Musil, Ingeborg Bachmann and Thomas Bernhard. Its treatment of Viennese modernism owes much to Carl Schorske, who saw *fin-de-siècle* Vienna in terms of a liberal movement which through the nineteenth-century lost power, and had to compensate in terms of art as decorative, erotic, and as a substitute for action, rather than as political (Schorske 1980: 5–10, 302–311). Vienna aestheticized politics, a view which has been contested in itself (Beller 2001), and also because it says too little

about the Jewish influence in the city, which was a prompting towards Hitler's dislike of it; not the least reason behind his wish to make Berlin ('Germania') the unquestioned capital of the Reich, in contrast to Vienna, the older and much more established city.

CITIES OF THE EMPIRE

Napoleon's victory at Austerlitz (1805) dissolved the Habsburg Francis II's Holy Roman Empire; it consolidated the Austrian Empire, which was created in 1804, in reaction to Napoleon's French Empire. (Capital cities become imperial capitals in the nineteenth-century; this shows in their architecture, especially their opera houses.) Francis, now Francis I of Austria, with his Chancellor Metternich, maintained through the Congress of Vienna (1814–1815) a power-base which was Catholic, hierarchical, reactionary, baroque, and palatial, with the Hofburg, and the Hofburger Theater as public statements. Broch (1984: 61) argues that Vienna exceeded Paris in the place it gave to the theatre. Failed nationalist revolutions in 1848 weakened the Empire, and the new Franz Josef I—Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Croatia, and Bohemia, its capital Prague, and extending into Poland and Krakow—was forced into political compromise (*Ausgleich*) in 1867; conceding separate status to Hungary, after further losses of territory, in Italy, and in Germany with the Austro-Prussian War (1866).

Austria and Hungary now possessed equal status, though Hungary was still regarded as like a colony (Hanák 1998). Budapest became a single city from two, in 1873: its population by 1910 was over a million, a quarter Jewish, and began to develop a significant literature of its own, increased by such signs of modernism as the psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi (1873–1933), and the literary journal *Nyugat* ('West' 1908–1941), led by the post-Impressionist Károly Kernstok (1873–1940), one of an avant-garde group called the Eight. *Nyugat* included the journalism and poetry of the revolutionary Endre Ady (1877–1919), and Ervin Szabó (1877–1918). Georg Lukács (1885–1971), son of a Budapest banker, rejecting what he called 'bourgeois deformity', belonged to 'the Eight'; he joined the newly formed Communist Party there at the end of 1918. Ödön von Horváth (1901–1938), playwright and novelist, came from Sušak, Rijeka, now part of Croatia, then part of the Empire: educated in Budapest and Vienna, he left Vienna after the Anschluss. One of Budapest's poorest slums was the birthplace of the poet Attila József (1905–1937), Marxist and Freudian, and schizophrenic (Czigány 1984: 263–342, 350–360). Franz Josef died in 1916, during the First World War, while the Empire ended formally with war's cessation, making Vienna now the capital of the Austrian Republic, Budapest capital of a much diminished Republic, and both cities having contentious futures, which were not to be settled by the Second World War.

Vienna, seat of the Habsburgs since 1533, had expanded since Austria had overrun Hungary, after 1683, the second occasion (the first was in 1529) when, unlike Hungary, it had repelled Turkish sieges, which gave the city border-fortress status. In the nineteenth century it replaced Naples to become the third largest city in Europe, though by the end of the century, its population was exceeded by Berlin. In 1857, Franz Josef ordered the demolition of the bulwarks and the encircling *glacis*, and their replacement by a *Ringstrasse* to demarcate the old medieval and baroque and aristocratic city from the middle-class faubourgs beyond, as well as to link them. Broch thought it was an act that must have haunted the conservative Franz Josef all his life ‘as a sin of youth fraught with the gravest consequences’ (Broch 1984: 73). These suburbs ran to the *Gürtel*, which was created on the site of the old *Linienwall*, which had been built in the eighteenth century, to guard against Hungarian *kurucs* (freedom-fighters): it was destroyed in 1890. Beyond this were the suburbs, which were then absorbed into the city: Floridsdorf, for example, on the eastern side of the Danube, was included in 1904. The *Ringstrasse*, compared in Viennese modernism to Potemkin Villages which hid the reality of what was behind them, allowed for conservatively built public buildings in ‘historicist’ style, such as the Opera House (Olsen 1986: 58–81). It meant, too, a further separation between the medieval city, and the liberalism which was outside, in the suburbs. City-expansion produced new municipal administration, such as that of Karl Lueger, in office 1897–1910, anti-semitic and founder of the Christian Socialist Party. Jewishness as a marker of modern culture, meant, amongst other things, the desire to think in urban, not rural terms, and to praise rationality, revealed law and natural religion: Enlightenment values historically contested by the middle-class Catholicism (a contrast with, say, Dublin’s Catholicism), which Vienna retains (Beller 1989: 140). Anti-semitism also meant the desire to assert Jewish identity as with Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), born in Budapest, and whose Zionist movement began in Vienna. The Jewish presence in Vienna and continuing signs of anti-semitism and of the Far Right has continued to produce writers, more than this chapter can discuss (Herzog 2011).

Robert Musil in *The Man Without Qualities*, the novel unfinished at his death in 1942, but set in Vienna in 1913, calls this Empire Kakania, punning on *kaiserlich-königlich* (Imperial-Royal) which was abbreviated to ‘k.k’ or ‘k & K’: ‘on paper it was called the Austro-Hungarian monarchy... Liberal in its constitution, it was administered clerically [i.e. by the Catholic Church]... All citizens were equal before the law, but not everyone was a citizen’ (Musil 1995: 29). The Empire comprised what the novel calls ‘the unliberated national minorities’ (490–491); they appear in the novels by Joseph Roth (1894–1929), such as *The Radetzky March* (1932), whose action starts in 1866 and goes on to the death of the Emperor, and shows Vienna as a kitsch civilization in comparison to the minorities (who were Slavic, and Jewish) who supported it from far away at the Empire’s borders. The history in

The Radetzky March is approached in a modernist mode, there is no sense of dates or of great events; the text is not centred (as a contrast to what Vienna represented); events rather catch up on the small towns described in the text, whose events are themselves symptomatic, ways of reading the Empire and its capital. The novel's sequel *The Emperor's Tomb*, written in confessional mode, before and after the *Anschluss* of March 1938, details Vienna's post-war poverty, and sees the locked crypt of the Emperor, the Father, in the Neuer Markt as a blocked-off access to the past (Lazaroms 2013: 39–65). The analysis could be taken further through the arguments about 'cryptonymy' in the psychoanalysts Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok: in their work, what is encrypted in the unconscious is memory which has to be repressed and kept simultaneously, and the ego is not allowed to know what it is that has been buried, or to acknowledge it; in that sense it may be that anti-semitism remains encrypted at the heart of Vienna (that is certainly the argument of Thomas Bernhard), and it remains a centre of hypocrisy, which may relate to its particular relationship to language (see below).

The hinterland of 'Kakania' already considered through Roth includes Kafka (1883–1925), who was Jewish and the son of a Bohemian peasant who had moved to Prague. Kafka wrote not in Czech but in German, in an alien language, but watched a Yiddish theatre troupe from Lemberg (now Lvov, capital of Eastern Galicia, Ukraine, and then part of 'Kakania'), while being aware of Hebrew, as practised in, for example, Warsaw. He was fascinated by the idea of a 'minor literature' (see his diary entries for 3 October 1911, 25 December 2011), where the use of a dominant language questioned its hegemonic status. In Kafka, cities are anonymous, marked by windows opening and closing, and spaces contracting (Alter 2005: 141–160). Kafka, with his divided relationships to languages and cities, may be compared with the later Paul Celan (1920–1970), born just after the break-up of the Empire, into what became part of the kingdom of Romania, in German-speaking Czernowitz in Bukovnia (Chernivtsi, Ukraine). After the war Celan moved to Bucharest, Romania's capital since 1862, and then to Vienna, where he formed a friendship with Ingeborg Bachmann (1926–1973), which extends across the poetry of both. Vienna, its overly mild denazification completed—the official assumption was that Austria had been a victim of Hitler, and not actively collusive—was impossible for him and he moved to Paris (as Bachmann left for Rome) (Felstiner 1995: 42–56). The sense that neither Austria nor Vienna had confronted its Nazi past accounts for the casual violence which repeats into the 1950s and 1960s which the partly Czech novelist and dramatist Elfriede Jelinek (born 1946) writes about in such a novel as *Wonderful Wonderful Times* (*Die Augesperrten* 1980), set in Vienna's suburbs, and thinking about the Nazi legacy in terms of casual violence in city-living amongst those who had never shed a Nazi heritage. Jelinek even uses the name of a character, Hans Sepp, a proto-Nazi, from Musil's drafts for *The Man Without Qualities*, to indicate continuities with the past which are, of course, denied in more 'official' circles.

The extent of Jewish immigration into the Empire came from the persecution suffered in Russia, after the assassination of the Czar in 1881. These were years when Odessa, Warsaw, Vilnius, Homel (i.e. Gomel, in Belarus: these four cities were then in the Russian Empire), Berlin and London saw huge increases in numbers of Jews, and the creation of not only a Yiddish, but a modernist Hebrew culture called urban by Shachar Pinsker's *Literary Passports*. Pinsker draws out the importance of café culture (which was sometimes an alienating space) and of marginal city-spaces, rather than familiar city-landmarks, and on Jewish writing as giving 'snapshots'; of the émigré learning to see the city; and to writers' contradictory strategies of representation, with detailed accounts of streets and buildings, all refracted through the *flâneur's* intensely subjective experience of the city (Pinsker 2010: 70–85, 94–100). The café was an essential part of Vienna: Pinsker quotes the saying 'the Jew belongs to the coffee-house', such as the Arkaden Café, in Alsengrund, the 9th district, important as the site of the University of Vienna (Pinsker 2010: 90–91).

FREUD AND VIENNESE MODERNISM

How did Vienna relate to the modernism which it produced, much of which was Jewish? We may start with Freud, whose life and invention of psychoanalysis is full of insights for considering the city. Born in 1856, Freud's family came from Freiberg (Moravia, now in the Czech Republic), where his father, Jacob, was a wool-merchant. He moved to Vienna in 1860, settling in the poor Jewish district of Leopoldstadt (now twinned with Brooklyn) in the city's northeast, the 2nd district. It includes the Prater, whose Ferris wheel (1897), an answer to Chicago's wheel, itself an attempt to compete with the Eiffel Tower, appears in the film scripted by Graham Greene, *The Third Man* (directed Carol Reed 1949).

1873, the year Freud entered the University, saw the collapse of the Vienna stock-market, with its corresponding anti-semitic demonstrations: Johann Strauss' operetta *Die Fledermaus* (1874), set in Vienna, was bourgeois Vienna's way of forgetting its bankruptcy: 'Glücklich ist, wer vergisst/Was doch nicht zu ändern ist', as the would-be adulterous lover Alfred sings: 'happy is he who forgets what can't be changed'. Broch, as an instance of Viennese kitsch, notes that there is no satire to be found in Johann Strauss, unlike either Offenbach, or Sullivan (Broch 1984: 64). Freud was to settle in Bergasse 19 in 1891 in Alsenbgrund, facing much anti-semitism in his career, and after the *Anschluss*, being forced to leave, for London, in 1938. His patients were middle-class and Jewish, and they demonstrate the nervous symptoms of city- life, as with Ida Bauer, called 'Dora', whom Freud discussed in his 1905 case-history (*Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*). Ida's parents came from poor Jewish backgrounds in Bohemia, and the father, eventually settled in Vienna near Freud, owned a textile factory at Wandorf, in Bohemia, south of Dresden. The family, including Ida's brother Otto, show all the signs of tensions faced by Jews who had moved into the middle-class but were not really accepted, and the force

of contemporary misogyny, and nervous worries, showing in hypochondria and sickness (Decker 1991). Otto died in 1938; Ida quit for America after the *Anschluss*, victim of Eichmann's purges of Viennese Jews which are glimpsed at in Claude Lanzmann's film *The Last of the Unjust* (2012). Freud's 'fragment' about her, problematic in its failure to read/deal with her 'hysteria', reads as a modernist novel, where interpretation remains undecidable, where there cannot be completion, and where the debate is on the relationship of what is said to what is meant, and the sense of these two having for ever come apart.

A modernism oppositional to Vienna's official culture appears in the building devoted to the Vienna Secession, following the Munich Secession of 1892, architect Joseph Olbrich; motto 'to the age its art, to art its freedom'. Situated on the *Ringstrasse*, to house the work of Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), and Josef Hoffmann (1870–1956), and Kolo Moser (1868–1918), and having the backing of the architect Otto Wagner (1841–1918), who was interested in both *Jugendstil* and urban planning, being responsible for the *Stadtbahn*: Vienna's metro system), the Secession represented modernism and there was soon an attack on it: Klimt, commissioned by the University to produce new paintings, to illustrate Philosophy, Medicine and Jurisprudence, found his work violently rejected and had to withdraw by 1905. Though non-Jewish, his work (emphasizing the limits of rationalism in the study of these subjects) was seen as showing a Jewish taste. In Klimt, attention turns to women's bodies, to ornamentation, and to fashion, as an essential part of modernity, as Baudelaire would describe this, and becomes more private, more aesthetic after such rejection, as with the Stoclet frieze, i. e. murals for a Belgian industrialist in Brussels (1905–1911); art for export, away from Vienna.

That taste is contested in the Brno-born architect Adolf Loos (1870–1933) whose 1908 statement, 'ornament is crime', indicates a turning away from Viennese culture's aestheticism. Since for him, 'all art is erotic' (Comini 1975: 6), hence the inescapability of ornamentation as part of the world of sexual desire, his house on the Michaelerplatz (1908–1911), opposite the Hofburg, rejected ornamentation as associated with the naked body of a woman. Nonetheless, the building was seen as erotic in spite of its stated intention: as denial of the sexual, which in its turn opens up anxiety and desire. City-architecture here, in opposition to the baroque, has indeed, as for Sigfried Gideon, the function of the unconscious (Haiko 1994: 89–100). Two other artists need citing here: Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), who studied with the Secessionists, but was identified with Expressionism, and who, for the context of this book, is also significant for his paintings of cities: Dresden, Prague and London, as well as Vienna, and Egon Schiele (1890–1918), whose painting of nudes contrasts with Klimt, since he rejects all traditional markers of beauty, as Klimt does not, in favour of figures violently coloured, in movement, as if dancing, their gestures suggesting hysteria, or ecstasy, or mime, or Nietzsche's Dionysiac, as if they implied a distrust of language.

Loos' distrust of ornamentation may be compared with Broch in his trilogy *The Sleepwalkers*, written in Vienna between 1930 and 1933, but set in German towns along the Rhine, and with other scenes in Berlin. Broch's novel is extraordinary in its analysis of romanticism and commercial realism leading up to and beyond the First World War; his last commercially successful character, Huguenau, anticipates Hitler (though no reference is made). The 'I' who speaks in the novel speaks about always coming home exhausted and depressed after a walk through the streets, and in speaking about 'style', notes the loss of ornament in current building (Broch 1996: 389–390). Ornamentation is part of a building, part of its logic, not an add-on; to no longer give birth to ornament is to lose a sense of expressiveness which makes architecture essential to overcome 'our dread of nothingness, our dead of Time, which conducts us to death' (398). Postmodern architecture may quote from different periods, and be decorative, but it lacks style, in the sense that this permeates a society and gives it a meaning.

But discussion of Broch's novel must be suspended to return to Loos' distrust of ornamentation as comparable to a concern with language in Hugo von Hofmannsthal (1874–1929), Catholic but Jewish, and his disgust with words. The danger of words is that they are ornamental, hence Hofmannsthal shows preference for the non-verbal, in the arch-text of Modernism, 'A Letter' (1902), where 'Lord Chandos' renounces poetic activity on account of his loss of trust in language, with a sense that language can defamiliarize everything (Hofmannsthal 2005: 117). Hofmannsthal was part of the literary group known as 'Jung Wien', including Peter Altenberg (1862–1919), author of short stories and sketches and thought of by Rilke as the first voice of modern Vienna, and also a casualty in terms of a tendency towards psychosis. His interest in caricature and the metropolitan has been well related to Baudelaire (Blackshaw 2012: 109–129). Jung Wien's journalist (and dramatist) was Hermann Bahr (1863–1934); but its principal dramatist and fiction-writer was Arthur Schnitzler (1862–1931): his play *Reigen* ('The Round Dance' 1897) serves for an example of his work. It works through the creation of different episodes which form a roundabout whereby different couples meet in different parts of Vienna, carefully chosen by Schnitzler for the maximum damning of the city's morality, and hypocrisy. Each of the couples connects ultimately with each other without knowing it. The play could not be shown until 1921 in Vienna, when it caused a scandal (Yates 1992: 37–38, 132–136). The critic of 'Jung Wien' and especially of Bahr, was the satirist Karl Kraus (1874–1936), editor of the magazine *Die Fackel* (The Torch 1899–1936); he attacked its lack of political commitment, and found in it falsity of language.

Vienna seems to show almost uniquely awareness in Europe of a crisis inhering in language and language-use: the officers and particularly the fathers and sons in *The Radetsky March* do not know how to talk to each other: their failure in language-use being partly explicable in terms of the failure of these army-officers to relate to women. Analogously, the 'Second Viennese School' in classical music showed rejection of a bourgeois language of nineteenth-century music: it followed and interrelated with such modernist composers as the Slovene Hugo

Wolf (1860–1903), the Nietzschean Mahler (1860–1911), conductor at the Vienna Court Opera after 1897, and Alexander Zemlinsky (1871–1942). It comprised as its leader Schoenberg (1874–1951, both painter and, of course, the creator of several types of music, all expressing alienation from bourgeois culture, and commented on by Adorno, who was himself musically taught by Alban Berg (1885–1935). The third composer in this school was Anton Webern (1883–1945). And language forms the subject of Freud’s psychoanalysis, as in his interpretation of dreams; in his attention to sexual repression, Freud associates with Schnitzler, just as, like Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1950), he was indebted to Otto Weininger, whose *Sex and Character* (1903), an attack on sexuality and ‘sexual slavery’—women especially being slaves to the sexual drive—preceded his suicide, at the age of 23. Philosophy as associated with Wittgenstein (1889–1950), and the ‘Vienna Circle’ of the 1920s, in its attention to empirical reality, owed much to the physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach (1838–1916) on whom Musil wrote his doctorate. Stephen Toulmin and Allan Janik’s study *Wittgenstein’s Vienna* (1972) speaks for itself as a title, and Janik has continued the argument that the philosopher of language and the city he came from are intimately related, emphasizing the debt of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) as an ‘ethical’ work on the limits of language to the critiques of language—for example, the language of journalism—performed by Kraus. Wittgenstein and Kraus are alike in showing that so much of what is said—in philosophy, journalism, or everyday talk—cannot relate to any reality: it is just talk; but that means that what we can speak does not cover anything of what needs to be said. Wittgenstein’s admiration for, and patronage of, the Salzburg-born poet Georg Trakl, who killed himself at Grodék in Galicia, in the first months of the First World War (Janik 2001: 185–246) should be put into this context of poetry whose subject is the unsayable. Unsurprisingly, Heidegger also writes intensively about Trakl, from his related interest in language as poetry. For a critique of Toulmin and Janik’s thesis about Wittgenstein, see La Capra (1979: 65–82).

THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES

Musil, who was born in Klagenfurt, lived for long stretches in both Berlin and Vienna, until he emigrated to Zurich after the *Anschluss*. He began the final draft of *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* in 1929, looking back to the Empire, and to August 1913, and with the intention of carrying the novel’s action forward from then by about a year. He began the writing in 1922, but it seems to be a novel which could never be completed, and so, a Modernist fragment; just as *The Trial* could never be completed, nor, indeed, Proust’s work, fully; while the *Arcades-Project* remains as another modernist torso. We may take Musil’s novel as prime example of Viennese, and Austrian modernism, and aware of city-life as producing abstraction, and random thoughts, where walking becomes an experience of defamiliarization, making the walker ‘antisocial and criminal’ (786), or where walking is automatic and partly controlled by advertisements

seen, for example, in shops, whose language is identical to that of popular novels; so Ulrich ‘realised that he was no longer standing in front of the bookshop. He also had not realised that he was now standing immobile at a streetcar stop’ (939). Walking, is indeed, an essential part of the book, as with Agathe in Chapter 154, where her purposeful direction meets the resistance of the detours the streets compel; here the city’s street-plan constructs a plot, in terms of forwards movement and drawing back, compelling repetition, similar to the movement towards death via constant detours, which fascinates Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

Musil opens with disconnected ways of noting the city, including thinking of the ‘rhythm of movement in the streets’ (3) before reaching its ‘irregularity, change, forward spurts, failures to keep still, collisions of objects and interests’ (4), and to a car-accident, which produces the statistic of how many people are killed in America by cars. The next chapter gives the house of Ulrich, aged thirty-two, the rich man without qualities, living beyond the *Ringstrasse*, in ‘a rococo love-nest of times past’ (6). The importance of houses to the novel has been suggested by David Luft in his account of the novel (Luft 1980: 115). Ulrich’s house suggests the character of traditional Viennese culture, devoted to good living and to art as refined entertainment, a point applicable to both Mozart and to the imagined rococo Vienna of Strauss/Hofmannsthal’s *Der Rosenkavalier* (1911), or the more complex 1860s Viennese setting of *Arabella* (1933), both deeply elegiac works; while the fourth chapter defines a difference between ‘realists’ and ‘possibilists’, that is, those who think that reality must be doubled by alternative possibilities, which offer, therefore, the possibility of an Utopia. Existing realities will go on repeating themselves—in what the novel calls ‘pseudoreality’ (81)—until someone gives a sense of a new possibility. The insight is Emersonian, and so is the novel’s interest in ‘essayism’, which, as expressed in Chapter 62, is absolutely part of the modernism, as it is Nietzschean, hostile to all forms of pedantic precision, which it identifies as oppressive violence. Such a possibilist will be unable to think of reality as being such, being, therefore, ‘a man without qualities’ (13).

‘Essayism’, with its sense of ‘trying’ (you ‘essay’ something), gives ‘the sense of possibility’ and includes the sense that ‘history was something one had to invent, that one should live the history of ideas instead of the history of the world, that one should get a grip on what cannot quite be realised in practice and should perhaps end up trying to live as if one were a character in a book’ (646). The hostility to history recalls Stephen’s, in *Ulysses*. Changes and developments are not events, not new: they are repetitions, which invite people (Ulrich is thinking of how people accept changes in transportation) to accept changes and conditions lethargically in a ‘mindlessly submissive, truly demeaning stringing along with the centuries’ [391]). This antipathy to history, which includes a refusal of ‘progress’, is one way in which the novel is modernist, as opposed to realist; and it is city-based in that the city does not allow a single reality to impose itself, though it may engender paranoia, that concept which

Lacan placed at the heart of Freud's work. Paranoia produces the violence in the novel which calls forth the comment, which comes after Ulrich has been attacked in the street—an incident which Jellinek takes over for the opening of *Wonderful, Wonderful Times*—that is, 'man's deepest social instinct is his antisocial instinct' (22).

The most obviously paranoid figure in the novel is Moosbrugger, violent and schizophrenic (Chapter 59). He has killed a woman in the Prater, and associates with a fascination with city-violence towards women prompted by the unsolved Jack-the-Ripper murders in London's East End: such fascination shows in an early play of Kokoschka, performed in Vienna, *Murderer, Hope of Women* (Auer 2014: 181–185). Ulrich identifies with this penniless *picaro* from a hamlet in the Empire too insignificant even to have a village street; this victim of city-jails and madhouses. He almost takes him as his double, thinking that 'if mankind could dream as a whole, that dream would be Moosbrugger' (77), as if Moosbrugger was the unconscious desire and anxiety within Vienna, part of the strange behaviours induced by the city, like the exhibitionist desecrated in the bushes (Chapter 137). Paranoid schizophrenia was Freud's subject in the Schreber case (1911); it is documented in vol. 12 of the *Standard Edition* (discussion of it forms the last section of *Crowds and Power*). That Freudian analysis should be compared with the case of infantile neurosis (1918; *Standard Edition* 17) which Freud described in Sergei Pankeyev, a Russian from Odessa, who lived on in Vienna from 1910 when he visited Freud, until his death in 1979. Moosbrugger's schizophrenia is part of a modernism where madness is what Foucault and Blanchot define as 'absence of work', uselessness for the productive ethic of society, and it may be compared with the point that capitalist modernity, shown at its most developed in the city, constructs living as double, schizophrenic. The insight is basic to Deleuze and Guattari. Moosbrugger's condition shadows everyone else in the book.

Ulrich's friends are Walter and Clarisse, the former naming Ulrich as the 'man without qualities', playing on the unexpected term as he says it, 'as if he were starting a poem, he let the expression drive him on even before its meaning was clear to him' (63). This Nietzschean perception that the self does not have fixed properties which belong inherently to it, tips the novel away from representation, appropriate for a nineteenth-century mode of thinking, towards a new mode which cannot and will not re-present reality, and which cannot, in Derrida's terms, present reality either, since art does not bring things to presence. Following how Walter thinks, language must run ahead of concepts and known qualities: this modernist point being likely to accord with the city's lack of self (though its architecture's formality, so 'complete and finished' (136) may contradict that). The novel moves, with Ernst Mach behind it, towards the sense of the 'I' as not a substance; the anthropocentric sense may be dissolved, making 'I' a fiction giving a potentiality for experience (159).

A 'pseudoreality' takes over with the 'Parallel Campaign' which has been planned by Count Leinsdorf. He connects 'the eternal verities' established in art, with 'the world of business' [102], and this nineteenth-century

bourgeois complacency receives wonderful satire from Musil; in order to unify the Empire in a pan-Germanic way (he never mentions Hungary [491]), he plans to celebrate the birthday of the Emperor in 1918. Musil knows the irony of how the Empire itself fizzled out at the Treaty of Versailles. The projected event will never happen; though its aim, to create what Chapter 106 calls a ‘worldwide corporation’, both American and German, comments on German 1930s fascism, with its ominous plans for ‘the unredeemed nationalities’ (Chapter 108). Despite wishing to step back from life for a year, Ulrich becomes its Secretary, while the woman who plans making this happen, Ulrich’s cousin, Ermelinda Tuzzi, Ulrich nicknames Diotima, remembering Socrates in the *Symposium*. Diotima is having a platonic affair with the Jewish and Prussian Dr Paul Arnheim (based on the German industrialist Walter Rathenau). He is a ‘realist’ (199), whose ruthless modernity—he owns a munitions factory—is committed to asserting existing reality as the only one there is (Chapters 47–50); he drives on with progress, and acquiring stakes in Galician oil-fields (701): Moosbrugger’s psychosis and criminality being what his system cannot handle. Clarisse’s suggestion for the Parallel Campaign is to have as romantic theme a Nietzsche year, partly because Nietzsche had been a ‘mental case’, like Moosbrugger (244). Ulrich’s suicidal sense relates to having lost his ‘elementary narrative mode of thought to which private life still clings, even though everything in public life has already ceased to be narrative’ (709).

This disjointure between public and private spheres makes city life so alienating: Arnheim, in contrast, has no private being; but for Ulrich, ‘solitude was growing greater or denser all the time. It flowed through the walls, flooded the city . . .’ (724). The coming apart of the public and private, a theme of Simmel’s ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, is at the heart of modernism. When Bonadea, Ulrich’s mistress, asks him why he never does the natural next thing, Ulrich feels as if ‘he had at last emerged from the tangle of streets through which his thoughts and moods had so often taken him, into the central square where all streets had their beginning’ (635). This image of a ‘tangle’ associates with a dream which Ulrich is recalling (Chapter 115), thought about which follows Freud’s frequent uses of being lost in the city for the inability of thoughts to find their origin. The image of the central square assumes, of course, ‘naturally’, that all things start there, but of course, a square can claim no privilege in being an origin; it can equally well be a destination. At that point Ulrich learns of his father’s death in another city in the Empire; the old liberal bourgeois order gone; and the unfinished Part Three of the novel shows him going there and remeeting his sister Agathe, who has just left her husband, and with whom he sets up a relationship that tests gender-expectations and may even have been intended to be incestuous. It comes from a desire for a relationship and for another condition, which includes the mystical, as well as the criminal, beyond the bourgeois order, and it means that the novel could never be completed. The sexual transgressiveness, of course, is utterly of the city.

BACHMANN AND BERNHARD

A complex response to Vienna's anti-semitism appears in two post-war Viennese writers, neither Jewish: first, Ingeborg Bachmann, born in Carinthia to a Nazi-sympathizing father. She turned away from Heidegger, on whom she did graduate work, to Wittgenstein, and eventually turned away from poetry, out of the distrust of language which has already been commented on, but going towards a complex prose, which is fascinated by music, which the novel *Malina* (1971) quotes. One example of this is Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. *Malina* is set in Vienna: the 'Ich' (I) who narrates—a successful writer—relates to two men, the first Ivan, a financier from the old Hungarian city of Pécs. The text thus calls up the history of the Empire, and its plural cultures: the 'Ich' herself lives on historically the old road from Hungary, the Ungargasse, in the 3rd district, where Beethoven lived in 1823 (see pp. 200–201). The other man is Malina, whose feminine-sounding name enables him to be an alter-ego for 'Ich'; but he also seems to be destructive of femininity. The novel, which in many ways could be compared with Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, sets out the cast, followed by the first section, full of utopian possibilities, 'Happy with Ivan', which describes a love-affair, occasionally in public, driving fast on the Ringstrasse (Bachmann 1990: 333–335), which is a meditation on the word 'happy' and on the disappearance of walls ('why is there only a Wailing Wall, why hasn't anyone ever built a Wall of Joy?'). That might prompt thought about city-walls and the symbolism of walls in cities (a few examples: the blank walls that are looked at in Melville's *Bartleby the Scrivener: A Tale of Wall Street*; the wall at Père Lachaise where the Communards were lined up and shot; the Berlin Wall, or Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, or the functionality of walls for murals, like those of Diego Rivera, or for political protest and graffiti). The sense of the wall and what it might symbolize appears in Ich's question 'what's the name of the wall I walk into every night? (35): the wall speaks of separateness in which all collude. Conversations with Ivan are however, more telephonic than personal: this is more alienating and separating (it emphasizes that there is a wall between them).

Malina's second section, 'The Third Man', takes its title from Orson Welles' film about Vienna after the war, with the famous zither music by the Viennese Anton Karas; its *noir* setting includes the sewers, images of the unconscious; these, in the film, derive, in a literary way, from those in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Welles plays the black-marketeer Harry Lime, whose irresistible charisma and criminality influence *Malina's* sense of the destructive Freudian father who appears in nightmares. In a mode like Sylvia Plath, the 'father' is the third man, revealing 'the cemetery of the murdered daughters' (114), which are gas-chambers (114) and the place for electric-shock therapy (116). Malina is the voice of a psychoanalyst here, and his contribution is ambiguous. The section turns towards the idea of execution (e.g. 137), and builds towards the third part, 'Last Things'.

This is more fragmented, with memories of the black market on the Resselpark (172–173), and another sense of Vienna as the place of 'universal

prostitution' after the war, memories of which are all erased (172, 181–183) and above all of the city as productive of criminality—'society is the biggest murder-scene of all' (182). It speaks about 'city-crimes' as 'simple' (like the murder in *Crime and Punishment*); and as especially focussed on women: 'In Pötzleinsdorf [18th district, part of Währing, in north-east Vienna], at the Prater, in the Vienna Woods [one of the most symbolically invested in parts of Vienna's outer districts, giving its name to a waltz—including zither—by Strauss (1868), and to von Horváth's play of 1931], on every periphery a woman is murdered, strangled... by some brutal individual, and then I always think to myself: that could be you, that will be you. Strangers murdered by strangers' (183). Moosbrugger's violence may be recalled.

Throughout, the novel contains various recalls of execution, and deaths (see p. 30), as though this was what Vienna meant. Similarly with the Sacher Hotel in Vienna (1876), hard by the Opera House, and one of Vienna's prestigious places, partly because of its cakes, an aspect of 'dead Vienna, crisscrossed by tourists' (95). This, in the heart of the inner city becomes a place where the 'Ich' fantasizes being murdered. She thinks of herself as like Salome at the end of the Richard Strauss opera (first performed in Dresden in 1905), following Herod's last line: 'Man tote dieses Weib' (kill this woman) (200). The novel ends with the 'Ich' walking into the wall, as though accepting her separation, though the text ends 'it was murder', as if speaking posthumously, as though the individual feminine has been destroyed by men. The woman speaks as always murdered, and thus links the extermination of Jews with another injustice: one which is inherent to patriarchal society, its constant ability to sideline women.

The other writer is Thomas Bernhard (1931–1989), friend of Bachmann, whose writings, especially plays and novels, make Vienna the symbol of Austria as having never critically regarded its past. Bernhard's last play, *Heldenplatz* (1988) written for the Burg theatre, which opened in 1888 on the Rinsgrasse. The title, and the date, and the place (before the Hofburg) memorialize Hitler speaking to 100,000 Austrians on March 15 1938, post-*Anschluss*. The fiftieth anniversary recalls the point that events are not over: Austria remains anti-Semitic, and the play, which received twelve performances, caused a scandal akin to that against Klimt's University murals. Bernhard banned the play from future performance in Vienna. He responds to Vienna's amnesia with novels like dramatic monologues, exploiting the power of exaggeration as a political tool, stressing points obsessively with use of repetition. The tone is angry, and it wills extinction, including the extinction of an Austrian bourgeoisie: it desires that nothing should come after.

Bernhard's question is how to live in this Austria, and, specifically, Vienna, its art so fetishized, and devalued, its ethos business, tourism, and at best, pure aestheticism. *Wittgenstein's Nephew* (1982) is set in the hospital the Baumgartnerhöhe in Vienna, where the 'I' is recovering from a lung operation; in a nearby pavilion is the hospital's mental institution, Am Steinhof, (architect Otto Wagner), which opened in 1907. This is, presumably the unnamed

madhouse where Moosbrugger is confined in *The Man Without Qualities* (see Chapters 155, 156). It now houses Paul Wittgenstein, great-nephew of the philosopher. Obviously the title recalls Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*, another study of madness, and of its connections with music. These two—the 'P', and Paul Wittgenstein, a shadow of the also deeply troubled philosopher—are doubles for each other, and suggest ways of thinking of the city as leading to sickness. The novel, or memoir, is a funeral lament for Paul, who has died, and who himself laments entirely the loss of an old Vienna, and old Salzburg too: he especially hates Herbert von Karajan (1908–1989), the Salzburg Festival director, soon (1946) denazified in Vienna after the Second World War, and the absolute professional, advancing his musical career through harnessing the technocratic skills of making and selling an incredible number of recordings. Another text, *Old Masters* (1985), deals with the ritualistic way one old person survives, by visiting the Kunsthistorisches Museum, one of the most famous on the Ringstrasse, and then going on to the Ambassador hotel. This adherence to a routine, observed obsessively each week, is the madness which keeps Reger sane, and alive. In both cases, the only salvation is in a kind of self-fashioning which makes adherence to art an ethical issue, and a way of judging the city which has used its art in such a way as to ignore the demands of the other which are laid upon it. The energy and vituperation (taking this as a literary term) in Bernhard's prose makes clear that to keep integrity risks madness, but such anger the city engenders.

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Venice: Impossible City

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Venice has long been seen as an impossible city, like one of Calvino's *Invisible Cities* miraculously made visible if not entirely real. The rhetorical trope of Venice's impossibility goes back at least to the sixteenth century, when the historian Giovanni Nicolò Doglioni writes, 'And so Venice being an impossibility she is also placed in the impossible, since she is founded on the sea, and in this she is out of the ordinary amongst all other cities' (Doglioni 1594: 5, my translation). Because of its singularity, its improbability as an urban entity, Venice makes us ask: what is a city? This is a question that can only have multiple answers, and in the pages that follow I approach it in three ways. First, the topographical and architectural formations of Venice show how a city can be made in the most unlikely of circumstances. Second, the testimony of artists and writers demonstrates the degree to which the city exists not just in three-dimensional form, but also in the creative expression it occasions in a variety of media. Venice in its uniqueness is a compelling subject for artists who aspire to originality in their own work.

Finally, and paradoxically, this uniqueness has led to the infinite reproducibility of Venice in contemporary media and in architectural simulacra, a phenomenon which challenges us to reconsider conventional notions of the city as bounded by time and space.

The labyrinthine forms of Venice have traditionally resisted straightforward interpretation, and for this reason they have occasioned various creative misreadings. To the improbability of a city built on water must be added its impenetrability as an object of knowledge. Proust's narrator walks at night through the maze of streets and, like a traveller in the *Thousand and One Nights*, finds himself suddenly in the midst of an enchanting square. He somehow finds his way home; the next morning he sets out again to find the same place, but in vain; the 'beautiful exiled

square' seems to have vanished into thin air (Proust 1989: III. 229). The timeless yet ephemeral quality of Venice evoked here has something in common with the way it figures in Calvino, where Marco Polo confesses to the Khan that every time he describes a city he is saying something about Venice, but that he cannot speak of Venice itself. 'Perhaps I am afraid of losing Venice all at once, if I speak of it, or perhaps, speaking of other cities, I have already lost it, little by little' (Calvino 1974: 87). The form of Venice means that one is constantly forgetting, losing one's way, whether in wandering the streets or in confronting the thousand details in a painting of vast proportions by Bellini or Carpaccio. In such a setting, writers and artists demonstrate their imaginative liberation from the merely historical; the implausible form of the city—as shadowed, secret, interiorized even in its external form—licenses the workings of reverie, memory and desire.

Historically, the form of the city makes a certain sense. It comprises an archipelago of islands founded as a trading post in the fifth century and settled in the seventh century as a refuge from the Germanic tribes invading the Italian peninsula. Other cities begin with a single settlement and expand outwards from that core. Venice has rather consolidated inwards: over the centuries, its islands have come together through the work of dredging and landfill. Mud was dug from the bottom of the lagoon and compacted in order to add to the land mass of each island, while the dredged area was shaped into canals. In his *Italian Journey*, Goethe calls Venice a 'beaver-republic' (Goethe 1999: 443). Creating the city consisted of the decentralized processes of assemblage and accretion, a collection of fragments loosely pieced together, and characterized by Joseph Brodsky as 'cellular proximity' (Brodsky 1993: 46).

The architectural construction of the city was similarly distinctive. To build a foundation, millions of wooden pilings were driven into the lagoon bottom; as Tiziano Scarpa remarks, 'you're walking on a vast upside-down forest' (Scarpa 2009: 5). Platforms of planks were placed on the exposed ends of the pilings, and masonry of dense Istrian limestone built on these platforms. Architectally, each island followed the grammar of church, *campo* or square, *calle* or paved street, and *rio*—a small canal dug in the reclaimed land. To these elements were added such particularities as the *sottoportego*, a porch passing under and between two houses, and *barbacane*: streets carved out by removing part of buildings on either side at ground level. By the Middle Ages, the central city islands had come together in the general form we see today. Where other medieval cities were protected by walls and bastions, Venice needed none: its situation in the shallow lagoon made it secure from attacks both by land and from deep-draft ships on the open sea. Jacopo de' Barbari's aerial perspective view of 1500 (Correr Museum) shows the agglomeration of six districts or *sestieri* from west to east (Santa Croce, Canareggio, San Polo, Dorsoduro, San Marco, Castello); it is a panoramic vision, with detailed depictions of the Grand Canal, the Customs house, the Piazza San Marco and the Arsenal. By this vision, Venice is implicitly celebrated as a city unified through the powers of its economy and institutions: a great trading

power, with independent political and religious institutions, a powerful navy and a thriving shipbuilding industry. This view, which has the ideological function of presenting Venice as a single entity, tends to suppress the wooden and stone bridges, which are the only means by which the islands, each with its own history and character, are physically joined.

A more concrete means of containing the fluid boundaries of Venice was the construction, at the end of the sixteenth century, of the *fondamente* (quays) along the perimeter of the city proper: the *fondamente nuove* marked the limit of the northern shore, with other quays built along the San Marco basin and both banks of the Giudecca canal. The border between water and land was thus defined in a permanent manner. A consequence of this delimitation was that the city's industries had to be relocated away from the centre. Among them was shipbuilding, which thrived at the Arsenal for hundreds of years until the end of the eighteenth century. In the *Divine Comedy*, Dante describes this industry, where the boiling pitch used in constructing ships provides an image for the viscous substance in which the embezzlers of public money are plunged (Alighieri 1972: 187). Shipbuilding on an industrial scale ceased only with the Napoleonic invasion (1797). This and other commercial shipping activities were later moved to the mainland port of Marghera. Except for mass tourism and artisanal work like small boatbuilding, virtually all Venetian industry has been dispersed to peripheral areas.

In the sixteenth century, intraurban canals were common in European cities such as Milan and Paris: vestiges of them remain in both, as in Amsterdam and Utrecht. But when the geographical form of the city became fixed around 1700, it guaranteed the character of Venice as a historical exception. Among other anomalies, Venice is the only city where pedestrians follow a different network of routes from other forms of traffic. Travel by water is more rapid and direct than by foot; the only intersections between the *calle* and the waterways being bridges and the *fondamente*. The bridges are often not straight because they must connect *calle*, which open onto the canal at different locations on either side. Another example is that houses in Venice are not given sequential numbers according to their position on a street. They are assigned numbers according to a loosely spiralling system which names the *sestierie* but not the street, such as Dorsoduro 252, Ezra Pound's address in his last years on the Calle Querini.

The idiosyncratic system of house numbers is symptomatic of tensions which bear on the fabric of the city: between sacred spaces and the spaces of commerce; between conflicting architectural styles; and between the forces of preservation and innovation. These tensions are present in all European cities, but more so in Venice, with unique consequences. Let us take them one by one. In his magisterial work on Venice in the Renaissance, Manfredo Tafuri identifies the church of San Salvador, consecrated in 1177, as a place of sacred origin, 'the depository of a divine will that intended to make Venice a seat of universal justice' (Tafuri 1995: 19); in the spirit of this symbolic identity, the church was rebuilt in the sixteenth century by the

most important architects of the Renaissance. San Salvador and its cloisters thus embodied the abstract ‘Word’ of the sacred enclosure, in the Christian sense, against the material ‘dialect’ of the merchant city of Venice (41). The tension between these two languages—two worlds—is intensified by San Salvador’s situation in the midst of the commercial quarter, hard by the merchant centre of the Rialto.

Venice has also retained, more than other cities, a tension between different architectural styles ranging from the Middle Ages to the late Renaissance. The architect Massimo Cacciari, mayor of Venice in the 1990s, points to the chaotic beauty of St Mark’s square: a Byzantine church flanking a late gothic palace. Facing that, Sansovino’s classical Renaissance library, designed in the sixteenth century in deliberate architectural defiance of the palace. Cacciari calls it ‘a polemic, an opposition, a contradiction’ (Yagoubi 2010: 48). The Marciana library also stands in contrast to Sansovino’s own earlier work, the Zecca or mint, designed in a more sober early Renaissance style, such that the two buildings appear to collide on the Riva degli Schiavoni: the sharp-edged cornices of the library encroach on the volume of the older building, as if pushing it out of the way. Napoleon attempted putting some rational order into the square in 1807 by demolishing the ancient church of San Geminiano at the western end and replacing it with a great ballroom building (now part of the Correr Museum) in the classical style of the Procuratie, which house the civic administration. Yet the conflicting forms of the square persist, creating a dramatic beauty in their tension with each other.

This tension reflects deeper conflicts at the heart of Venetian life. An ethical and aesthetic conflict has existed between moderation and ostentation from the beginning. In the fifth century, the first resolution of the Venetian government mandated that ‘all residences should be equal, alike, and of similar size and ornamentation’ (Tafuri 1995: 10). The principle of equality was consistent with the values of a commercial republic, being cited by the Renaissance essayist Nicolò Zen when attacking the decadent ‘idleness and pleasure’ that places too high a value on ornamental architecture, songs, players, clothes and other follies known as the ‘courtier’s arts’ (Tafuri: 194–195). The same ethic of austerity restricted the heel heights of women’s shoes and required that all gondolas be of the same dimensions and colour: jet black. In the sixteenth century, however, the sumptuary laws could be violated by wealthy merchants, notably in the ornamentation of their palaces on the Grand Canal. The Palazzo Grimani and the Palazzo Corner, designed by Sansovino, broke the continuity of the canal by their grand dimensions and by a triumphal architectural language inspired by Rome. Sansovino later extended this same language into the Piazza San Marco.

The tension between moderation and ostentation in Venetian architecture is symptomatic of the larger conflict between what Tafuri identifies as the concepts of *origine* and *novitas* in Venice’s collective imaginary. On the one hand, the city’s history reflects the perpetual desire to return to the city’s origins, or to that moment in the Middle Ages when the city saw itself as a realized utopia. The sentiment is

reflected in the bronze disc embedded in the marble floor at the exact centre of the basilica Santa Maria della Salute, reading *unde origo inde salus*: from the origin comes salvation. In 1364, Francesco Petrararch, living in the Palazzo de Due Torri in the Castello *sestiere*, wrote that Venice was the only home of liberty, justice and peace; only refuge of the good, and only safe harbour for those who ‘beaten down by tyranny and war, seek to lead a tranquil life. A city rich in gold but more so in fame, powerful in force but more so in virtue, founded not just on blocks of marble but on more solid foundations of strong and unshakeable (*immobile*) civil concord, made secure by the surrounding sea, but even more so by the cautious wisdom (*prudente sapienza*) of its sons’ (Petrarca 1870: I. 227, my translation).

Petrarch’s insistence on the *immobile* or unmoveable foundation of civil concord expresses a conservative value that, in the architectural realm, translates into the language of preservation, moderation and *renovatio*—new building which nonetheless remains faithful to the symbolic language of the city’s origins—or even the replacement of ruined buildings with faithful copies. When the sixteenth-century bell tower of San Marco collapsed in 1902, it was replaced by the exact replica present today in obedience to the rule, *com’era dov’era*: as it was, where it was.

At the same time that it affirms an *immobile* civil concord, Petrarch’s vision of the city as a place of refuge reflects the condition of an urban population continually renewed by foreign immigration, inevitably sources of *novitas* in all areas of life, including art and architecture. The pressures of innovation against the impulse of a return to origins were most manifest in the Renaissance. When the artist Dominikos Theokopoulos (El Greco) arrived from the Venetian colony of Crete in 1567, Venice was one of the largest cities in Europe, with a diverse population of 150,000. Its residents came from the various Venetian possessions along the eastern Adriatic coast, from Istria and Dalmatia to Cyprus. The Germans had their own warehouse, the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, at the Rialto. Venice was at war with the Ottoman Empire, but many Turks established themselves in Santa Croce, running their own shipping business from the Fondaco dei Turchi, across the canal from the Jewish ghetto. The Greeks built an Orthodox Church in Castello. There were expatriates from Milan and Bergamo as well as from Albania, Persia and Armenia. The first printed Quran was produced in Venice in 1538. While other countries were expelling foreigners and religious minorities, Venice remained open, cosmopolitan, ethnically mixed. The tension between *origine* and *novitas* was salutary, reflected in Renaissance architecture as diverse as that between the Paduan Andrea Palladio’s classical Chiesa del Redentore (1577–1592) and the Florentine Sansovino’s baroque *loggetta* (1537–1549) at the base of the bell tower of San Marco. Not that the architectural styles of Venice are balanced or symmetrically placed. Because of their radical departure from the imperial style favoured by Sansovino, Palladio’s buildings were pushed to the margins of the city, to the islands of Giudecca and San Giorgio Maggiore, where, when they were built, they could not be seen from the piazzetta

San Marco. The entire city, decentred and asymmetrical, yet tenuously held together by its bridges and canals, seems to thrive on such tensions, like the glittering fragments of Pound's cantos.

Petrarch's vision of a utopian republic represents the original myth of Venice. But in more recent centuries, the city's uniqueness, increasingly anachronistic with respect to modern European cities, has rendered it enigmatic to the representational powers of literature and art, with two principal consequences. First, the city has been defined as the scene of love, intrigue, decadence or death—as so many figures of enigma. Second, visual images have been produced, as if the multiplication of such images could reduce Venice to a knowable object. The creation of myths of the city has been favoured not just by its labyrinthine and amphibian form as a whole, but also by its architecture, which Mary McCarthy compares to a stage set, with little care for principles and much for 'effects [. . .] which captivate the eye by tricks and blandishments' (McCarthy 1963: 105). She has in mind the Byzantine and Gothic façades of the Grand Canal so admired by Ruskin, with their frothy blends of pointed arches, quatrefoil windows, marble panels, balustrades, galleries and loggia. These are made possible since the load-bearing walls of each palazzo are those perpendicular to the canal, not the façade facing the canal, which therefore remains light enough to allow for large openings. Cacciari, however, has a subtler explanation of the 'effects' of Venetian architecture. For him, what is fundamental to understanding the city is the principle of *artifice*, understood in its architectural complexity as *tekhne*, the combined spirit of art, technical skill and craft, in order to create an artificial world. The art founds the city on stone construction, but makes possible its mythic and imaginative elements, such that, for example, the baroque church of Santa Maria della Salute makes the head of the Grand Canal into a theatrical scene. From the steps of the Salute, Henry James observes that 'this view of the open mouth of the city is most brilliantly amusing. The whole thing composes as if composition were the chief end of human institutions' (James 1909: 37). The idea of Venice as a stage set is summed up by Cacciari: 'In Venice nothing is natural, even the water flows in canals that have been designed. Even the islands are constructed' (Cacciari 1996: 82).

Not just the islands but Venice's successive myths are constructed. The vision of the city as a utopian republic was transformed in the eighteenth century with the memoirs of Casanova (1789–1798), where Venice figures as a place of sexual intrigue and playful imposture. Among the episodes taking place in Casanova's native city, one must suffice. In 1755, Casanova's mistress, called here M.M., a young woman celebrated for her beauty, lived in a convent for the daughters of patrician families on the island of Murano. John Murray, the British ambassador to the Republic of Venice and a notorious rake, told Casanova that he, Murray, had 'had' M.M. for an entire night for 500 sequins, and that he could enjoy her favours again at any time he wished. Outraged, Casanova bets Murray the same amount that he has been duped. He devises the following plan: on a given night, Murray will make an appointment with the woman who calls herself M.M. at Casanova's *casino*, his little house in Cannaregio. When she arrives there, Casanova and

Murray, masked for the carnival, will go to the convent in Murano and ask for the real M.M. to determine whether Murray's mistress is an impostor. After much trepidation on Casanova's part, the true M.M. confirms his trust in her, saving him the wager. Called for at the convent, she appears in the parlour, illuminated by four torches in all her beauty. The two men return to Casanova's casino to unmask the impostor, a prostitute dressed in religious robes. Her ruse detected, she begins to remove her clothing and, 'if we had not prevented her, she would have made herself entirely naked, hoping to obtain from brutality what she could not obtain from our reason' (Casanova 1993: 832, my translation). This contains many of the ingredients for the later literary constructions of Venice: secret stratagems, erotic assignations, disguised identities, even disease, as M.M. recovers from a serious illness only when promised by Casanova that he will elope with her. This is a recurring motif in Casanova's memoirs: his attentions have a therapeutic effect on his lovers. Casanova nonetheless inaugurates a libertine tradition in writing on Venice that will last until the present day.

Byron extended that tradition; judging by his letters and journals, his amorous adventures in Venice rivalled those of Casanova. But Byron is principally responsible for inaugurating the Romantic myth of Venice as a figure of immortal beauty martyred by time and foreign conquest. Arriving in Venice November 1816, he stayed 3 years, living mostly at the seventeenth-century Palazzo Mocenigo on the Grand Canal. His poems introduced a language of loss and mourning new to the literature of Venice. The republic had fallen to Napoleonic, then Austrian rule in 1797, and the Congress of Vienna (1815) confirmed Austrian possession of the city. Byron arrived in a city subjugated to a foreign monarchy with little sympathy for or understanding of Venice's past. The Most Serene Republic's thirteen centuries of glory were only a memory. A sign of its decay was that the Mocenigo palace, the historical seat of a great aristocratic family, was available for Byron to rent for his less than exemplary manner of life. In any case, he found Venice's political decline reflected in the literal sinking of the city into the lagoon. As he writes in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (Canto 1818: 4):

Venice, lost and won,
Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done,
Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose! (Byron 1994: 222)

Like any tourist, Byron lingers on the sights and architecture of San Marco. The canto's first verse places him on the Bridge of Sighs connecting the Ducal Palace to the prisons over the narrow Rio de Canonica. Byron puts himself in the prisoners' place, 'a palace and a prison on each hand' (221), underlining the architectural tension, while transforming the literal passage from palace to prison into an allegory for Venice's historical passage from empire to subject state. His verse form, the Spenserian stanza, does not require sustained narrative development, allowing him to wander freely from impression to impression. The meandering is well adapted to a poem on Venice's intricate and contradictory spaces.

Still on the Piazza, his mind roams from the winged lion of St Mark's basilica to the Rialto and to St Mark's façade, where the glittering 'steeds of brass' (in fact of bronze) captured from Constantinople in the thirteenth century appear 'bridled' to him (they are collared): indicating subjugation (222).

While Byron's poem opposes Venice's glorious past to its present degradation, a subtler tension lies in its movement between temporal ruin and immortal beauty. He finds the ruin of his own life in the city's decaying architecture and in the silence of the gondoliers who once sang Tasso's verses. But the city has an immortal beauty even in its decadence, which becomes a source of consolation:

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier; Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear;
Those days are gone – but Beauty still is here. (221)

The city's beauty derives from the contrast between the devastating effects of time and the memory of Venice's greatness: ruin itself speaks this loss in its own architectural language of elegy. This is a language understood only by the imagination, which alone can compensate for the loss of empire:

The beings of the mind are not of clay;
Essentially immortal, they create
And multiply in us a brighter ray
And more beloved existence. (221)

Byron's poem's force, finally, is in the self-fashioning of a solitary figure whose own ruined state is mirrored in the fallen condition of the city, who recalls his soul from wandering in order to 'meditate amongst decay, and stand / A ruin among ruins' (221). And he has founded a Romantic discourse which will be transformed into innumerable declinations, from the Ruskinian sublime to the commercially banal.

Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853) combines lamentation over Venice's decline with a nostalgic, utopian vision of the medieval *Serenissima*. Unlike Byron, Ruskin deplors not just the faded glory but the moral decadence of the city; he sees a spiritual corruption reflected not in the decay of buildings but in the dull rationality of Renaissance architecture as represented in the works of Scamozzi, Sansovino and Palladio. For Ruskin, cultural and moral values are concretely manifested in architectural form; this expression reaches its apotheosis in the Venice of the Middle Ages and survives today in the gothic buildings of the city. Ruskin defines three principal sources of the architecture of Venice before being ruined by the Renaissance: the Greek orders of the Doric and Corinthian, copied by the Romans and then decorated by Christianity; the physical strength and energy of the barbarian Lombards; and the severe spirituality of the Arab school. The latter two, coming from the North and South, respectively, 'met and

contended over the wreck of the Roman empire' (IX.38). Venice is the result of this contention, combining rational order, vigour and spirituality. 'The Ducal palace of Venice contains the three elements in equal proportions—the Roman, Lombard, and Arab. It is the central building of the world' (38). Even in 1851 Ruskin can write this in the present tense because the fourteenth-century palace is extant, resplendent in ideal synthesis; it remains the centre of the world because for him time stopped in the Middle Ages. Everything since then has been a falling away from what that age accomplished. Ruskin dates Venice's decline from 1418, the year of the death of the heroic admiral Carlo Zeno, subject of D'Annunzio's tragedy *La nave* (1908). It was the beginning of what we call the Renaissance, but what Ruskin calls 'a loss of truth and vitality in existing architecture all over the world'. His charge against Renaissance architecture, as well as humanism, is that they cast aside the religion which in the Middle Ages gave meaning to art. The result is at best mere imitation of the past, at worst 'folly and hypocrisy' (45): mythology transformed into feeble sensuality, gods without power, nymphs without innocence, men without humanity. This folly in architecture and painting reflects a moral decline. 'Now Venice, as she was once the most religious, was in her fall the most corrupt of European states' (46). Ruskin was born five centuries too late. He is a Jeremiah among modern philistines, a voice crying in the wilderness of railroads, which connected Venice to the mainland in 1861, and mass tourism, which brings his provincial countrymen to gape in middle-class complacency at the sights of San Marco.

When not absorbed in such quarrels, Ruskin is capable of a style commensurate with the beauty of the city which was his lifelong obsession. There is no more inspired description of the Piazza San Marco than that in the second volume of the *Stones*, where the writer approaches the square through a tangle of narrow streets, and suddenly, as he enters the square through the dark porches of the Napoleonic Wing,

there rises a vision out of the earth, and all the great square seems to have opened from it in a kind of awe, that we may see it far away—a multitude of pillars and white domes, clustered into a long low pyramid of coloured light [. . .] and, in the midst of it, the solemn forms of angels, sceptered, and robed to the feet, and leaning to each other across the gates, their figures indistinct among the gleaming of the golden ground through the leaves beside them, interrupted and dim, like the morning light as it faded back among the branches of Eden, when first its gates were angel-guarded long ago. (83)

Ruskin was the most influential guide to Venice in his day through the knowledge and sensibility he brought to celebrating the details of the city's gothic architecture. But he was a daunting figure of authority. Every writer on Venice since has had somehow to deal with his intimidating presence. Henry James deflects this presence with self-deprecating humour. In his *Italian Hours* (1909), he admires the gothic Ca' Foscari on the Grand Canal, finding it to be not only 'one of the noblest creations of the fifteenth

century, a masterpiece of symmetry and majesty', but also remarkably well kept-up. Then he remembers Ruskin's rigid strictures against architectural renovation: 'Perhaps I am wrong in thinking so well of it [...] We feel at such moments as if the eye of Mr Ruskin were upon us; we grow nervous and lose our confidence' (James 1909: 58). This sentiment is again felt, then resisted, as James looks up at the 'splendid pile' of Sansovino's Procuratie Nuove on the Piazza San Marco. 'I feel decidedly that I don't object as I ought to the palaces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Their pretensions impose upon me, and the imagination peoples them more freely than it can people the interiors of the prime' (62).

James' observations are typically made from a given point in space at a given moment. From the windows of the Palazzo Barbaro, James gazes out onto the Gallerie dell' Accademia, the art gallery. But on this occasion he hesitates to go there, fearing he might never return. 'This wondrous temple of Venetian art [...] overhangs, in a manner, the Grand Canal, but if we were so much as to cross its threshold we should wander beyond recall' (60). This is an early instance of what will become a recurring motif in twentieth-century writing about Venice—getting lost in the labyrinth. But James also offers an aesthetic excuse for avoiding the Accademia, which also becomes a familiar theme: that Venice is a work of art greater than any of its artistic representations. 'The truth is, we are in it so uninterruptedly, at home and abroad, that there is scarcely a pressure upon us to seek it in one place more than in another. Choose your standpoint at random and trust the picture to come to you' (61). There is no striving to arrive at a destination in Venice; you are always already there.

Such impressions, real enough, represent James's understandable hesitation in imposing the interpretations of a mere tourist, and they do not let him place his subject in any meaningful historical framework. Paradoxically, it is a work of fiction that allows him to do so: *The Aspern Papers* (1888), telling of an ambitious scholar who, eager to get at a collection of unpublished manuscripts written by a great poet, insinuates himself into the lives of the two lonely ladies who have possession of them. In the preface, James explains that, while visiting Florence in the early 1880s, he learned that Jane 'Claire' Clairmont, the half-sister of Mary Shelley and mistress of Lord Byron, had lived out her days there, dying at a great age in 1879. 'Had I happened to hear of her but a little sooner, I might have seen her in the flesh' (James 1971: vii). In writing the novella, it was a question of 'covering one's tracks' to replace Byron with the fictional Jeffrey Aspern, Claire Clairmont with an elderly Miss Bordereau and Florence with Venice. But the story reflects late-nineteenth-century Venice in profound ways.

The narrator's claim to be acting in the interest of scholarship, to make a 'contribution to Jeffrey Aspern's history' (82), covers the fetishism of a collector. By his own admission, he is a shameless impostor. However, as the story is told in the first person, the reader cannot avoid being drawn into the narrator's duplicity as he introduces himself under a false name in order to rent rooms in the old house of Miss Bordereau—her name connoting the documents he covets. She

lives with a niece of indeterminate age, Miss Tina. They inhabit a vast, crumbling palazzo on a quiet canal. The obscurity of their lives, the condition of their residence and the romance surrounding their earlier lives make them metonymic for the fallen Venice evoked by Byron. As such, they can be seen as alternating personifications of Venice in James's own time: the elder Miss Bordereau, near death, is as protective of Aspern's papers as Venice is for the sacred architecture of its origins. In her isolation and her horror at the prospect of the papers being published, she stands for the conscious immobility of a city which has refused modern transformation. Tina, in contrast, is an innocent, vulnerable to the narrator's crassly manipulative methods. Like Venice, she cannot resist the pressures of the modern consumer's desires and eventually sees the possibility of her own survival in helping the narrator get his hands on the objects he craves.

James's story is made possible by the fact that it is written at a moment of historical transition between the Romantic Venice of Byron's day and the Venice of visual exposure, reproduction and publicity, where nothing, least of all a poet's papers, is secure from being transformed into an image, reproduced and marketed. In its disguise and imposture, the narrator's intrigue resembles Casanova's, in degraded form. He chases not after love, but after objects whose worth, whatever their contribution to the poet's history, is too close to that of a fetishized commodity whose market value is freely acknowledged and estimated, even if the narrator's own interest is more personal. James himself is caught between these opposing manifestations of Venice, fascinated by the city's marketable spectacle, while not wholly free of the deeper spell cast on it by Byron, Shelley and J.M.W. Turner.

The refusal of Venice to be transformed by modern architecture and infrastructure has meant it had to confront modernity in the form of mass tourism and consumerism rather than wide avenues and office blocks. The object of consumption is Venice, or its images, defined in the eighteenth century by Antonio Canale ('Canaletto') in his multi-perspectival views (*vedute*). In the twentieth century, reproduction of photographic images of Venice, mostly of the same scenes from the same angles, became one of the most important elements of the tourist trade. Twentieth-century writers on Venice make free use of such images in verbal form, only to pierce through them in an attempt to get behind what I call, from Lacan, the image screen. The image screen is Lacan's word for what is 'given-to-be-seen' (Lacan 1977: 74) by cultural convention and established codes of visual perception, like Venice postcards. This screen is only broken through when one apprehends the hidden presence of the *stain*—the profoundly destabilizing experience of realizing that we are not all-seeing; in fact it is we who are the object of a gaze; we are deposed from our sovereign subjecthood, relegated to the abject condition of the object. The stain is the realization of this abjection, which spreads, resisting any horizon or enclosure, and ultimately contaminates the subject who apprehends it.

This excursion into psychoanalysis is necessary to understand Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* (1912). If this is a first in a series of tourist novels about the city, the rituals of tourism already seem tawdry, outworn. Gustav Aschenbach is made impatient by the tourist-language clichés, for example, that spoken by the ticket

agent in Pola: 'Ah, Venice! A splendid city! A city irresistibly attractive to the man of culture, by its history no less than by its present charms!' (Mann 1988: 268). The weariness induced by this 'glib empty talk' is combined with Aschenbach's inward declaration of independence from the Romantic image of Venice. He recites to himself lines from 'that poet of plangent inspiration who long ago had seen the cupolas and bell-towers of his dream rise before him out of these same waters' (271), but they no longer satisfy him. Instead, he wonders whether 'some new inspiration and distraction, some late adventure of the emotions' might be in store for him on his journey (271).

This late adventure of the emotions takes the form of an encounter with abjection. Aschenbach's fertile imagination replaces the Romantic image of Venice with a classical one in the figure of the young Tadzio, beckoning, hand on hip, like Donatello's *David*. This only leads to the writer's humiliation. The author of *A Study in Abjection*, which principled renunciation of every sympathy with the abyss, is reduced to a pathetic figure with dyed hair and rouged cheeks, undignifiedly pursuing the boy through streets where the cholera epidemic (a historical event of 1911) rapidly advanced. 'Then indeed monstrous things seemed full of promise to him, and the moral law no longer valid' (336). This moral breakdown is completed by the abjection which Venice itself reveals, personified in the street singer who performs at his hotel, a shabby, gesticulating 'buffo-baritone character' in 'a posture of insolent bravado', with something 'indecent and vaguely offensive' in his winking suggestively while licking the corner of his mouth (325). In Lacanian terms, it is as if the saturation of the 'given to be seen' had provoked the penetration of the image screen, producing an encounter with the 'real'.

The grotesque figure of Mann's mountebank resembles another singer in Proust's Venetian episode, where, after quarrelling with his mother, the narrator finds himself on the terrace of his hotel, facing the Grand Canal, when a boat stops in front of him and a musician begins to sing the Neapolitan song *Sole mio*. The song's banality, combined with the narrator's anxious state of mind, empties the scene of beauty. '[Les] palais, le Canal, le Rialto, se trouvaient dévêtus de l'idée qui faisait leur individualité et dissous en leurs vulgaires éléments matériels' (Proust 1989: IV.231): the palaces, the Canal, the Rialto were stripped of the idea that made them original and were dissolved into their vulgar material elements (my translation). The city which has dazzled him is now utterly without charm, and the trivial song, repeated a hundred times, becomes the intolerable voice of 'cette Venise sans sympathie pour moi'(231). He feels paralyzed, unable either to get up or to decide to do so. As in Lacan, this state of abjection coincides with the reversal of the gaze: the city which he sees stripped of its charm returns his gaze, fixing him in his naked objecthood. What we witness in such scenes is the manner in which the image of the city can, without warning, turn into something completely other, like Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit image. What we witness as architectural beauty can be apprehended as decayed stone sinking into polluted water.

The generation of modernists, including Mann and Proust, often differs from more recent writers on Venice in the degree of earnestness with which they treat

their experience of the city. The older myths still hold enough power that a tragic element remains possible, whether in the fate of the city or in their disillusionment. In contrast to modernist *Angst*, writers at the end of the twentieth century tend to lose themselves in the labyrinth of self-deprecation (Brodsky). The autobiographical narrator of his *Watermark* (1992) is slightly comic, mocking his own waning libido and likening his account of Venice not to a story but to ‘the flow of muddy water “at the wrong time of the year”’ (Brodsky 1993: 21)—borrowing a cliché being in keeping with his conscious lack of pretention. He has read Henri de Régnier’s *Le divertissement provincial* (1925) and learned that ‘what makes a narrative good is not the story itself but what follows what’ (38). That is how he lives in Venice: getting lost without really caring, enjoying his self-oblivion in the midst of a fog, where the city has become invisible. The absence of a destination as one walks in the city is the spatial equivalent of the absence of narrative trajectory, or the absence of conflict, crisis and dénouement in tragedy. But absence of destination is not all serenity: ‘you never know as you move through these labyrinths whether you are pursuing a goal or running from yourself’ (85), an Aschenbach-like sentiment. In other words, Brodsky’s generation is not entirely independent of the modernist tradition. Brodsky also revives one of the tropes of writing about Venice that James inaugurated: the anxious interview with the former mistress of a great poet, that is, the ‘Miss Bordereau motif’. Here, it concerns Olga Rudge, who lived on in Venice for 24 years after Pound died there in 1972. Brodsky finds her every bit as fearless in her defence of Pound—including the poet’s anti-Semitism—as Miss Bordereau was of Jeffrey Aspern’s reputation. ‘She had the comfort of her convictions—a comfort, I felt, she’d go to any length to defend’ (74).

The Miss Bordereau motif receives more satirical treatment in Geoff Dyer’s novel *Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi* (2009). The novel’s protagonist, a scrounging freelance journalist, has been assigned to interview the ageing Julia Berman, former mistress of the ‘famously overrated’ artist Steven Morison, and to obtain from her the rights to reproduce a drawing the artist made of her as a nude when she was young (Dyer 2009: 6). The fictional Julia, now living in Venice, was a celebrity in her own right in the 1960s, of the order of, say, the historical Edie Sedgwick, an Andy Warhol ‘superstar’. The interview is a postmodern parody of James: Jeff fails to press the ‘record’ button on his Dictaphone to catch the only meaningful thing Julia says; he also fails to get the drawing; instead, he and Julia get high on grass while she reminisces about the Doors and Bob Dylan. Jeff should be covering the art Biennale, but finds that ‘within a very short time the pavilions all started blurring together: it became impossible to recall, with any certainty, which art was to be found in which pavilion’ (61). The famous impenetrability of Venice, where Proust searched in vain to rediscover the ‘beautiful exiled square’, becomes a blur of pavilions with interchangeable works of art whose value is measured more by auction prices than by aesthetic standards. In the Biennale, Venice’s history of image production is perfectly combined with its history as a mercantile capital.

Rather than take the art exhibits seriously, Dyer's hero spends most of his time at the Biennale parties, tossing down bellinis (Prosecco mixed with white peach nectar) and trying to get laid. Improbably, he succeeds with the latter with Laura: Californian beauty, Petrarchan name. She disputes Jeff's claim that the Biennale is 'of a banality that beggars belief'. Banality is nothing to be amazed at: 'We've come to expect it. It's reassuring, a stamp of quality. We're sort of invested in it. It's like we're living through a conceptual breakthrough' (88). There is no better definition of the postmodern than the *investment* in banality, as, for example, in the art of Jeff Koons, whose balloon dogs and candy-red hearts have graced the banks of the Grand Canal and are reproduced by the glass makers of Venice. The Venice half of Dyer's novel ends as Jeff, high on coke, contemplates the biblical scenes on Tintoretto's ceiling of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. He stares at the painting, 'willing an epiphany that never came, never happened, just seeing it, looking at it. Perhaps that *was* the epiphany, surrendering himself to what he was seeing' (156). The epiphany of the absence of epiphany has something in common with Brodsky's conscious self-oblivion and rejection of *story* as narrative form. Brodsky wants his narrative simply to tell 'what follows what', just as Jeff surrenders himself to what he is seeing without waiting for an epiphany. This is one effect of Venice on the writer under the conditions of postmodernity, which are also post-historical and post-tragic. When Jeff and Laura visit Brodsky's grave on the island of San Michele, they find it littered with smeared postcards of the Grand Canal and yellow Post-its, their messages wiped clean by the elements. Laura adds a shiny new Biro to the collection along with some pages from her notebook: 'The future was a blank page, ready for whoever came after Brodsky and wanted to have their say' (133). This is Venice free at last from the burden of the past.

Since the success of Canaletto's *vedute* in the eighteenth century, Venice has generated an immense industry of the production of self-images in paintings, engravings, films, television programmes, postcards and tourist snapshots. Postmodernism has added to this industry the reproduction of Venice in three dimensions: new Venices, in the form of more or less faithful copies, in other parts of the world. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced to both cultural and economic sources. The postmodern movement in architecture freely appropriates historical forms as if they belonged to a vast warehouse from which individual objects and designs could be plucked at random. And the hotel and casino industry has identified the architectural form of Venice as a product to be freely reproduced and marketed worldwide. The joining of these two forces has produced the Venetian Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas and the Venetian Macao, another luxury hotel and resort in the former Portuguese colony of southern China.

The idea of the Venetian Las Vegas originated with a honeymoon trip to the historical Venice by the American billionaire Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam. As she explains on the Sands Corporation website, she told her husband that 'if you can bring the romantic atmosphere of Venice with all the luxuries that can only be found in Las Vegas, then it can be a winner'. The Venetian Hotel and Casino opened in 1999 on the Las Vegas strip on the site of the former Sands hotel, demolished for the purpose. The design incorporates architectural

simulacra of the most tourist sites of Venice: the Ducal Palace, the piazza San Marco, the column of St Theodore, the Campanile and the Rialto. The configuration of these elements, however, has been altered. For example, in Las Vegas the Rialto connects the Ducal Palace to the Campanile over a body of water. Missing is the Basilica, so that the lion of St Mark appears not in the head of the church's Byzantine arch, but on a square clock tower flanked by Palladian wings modified to resemble something to be found in a shopping mall. The Venetian Macao, built by the same corporation in 2007, has a similar design, even grander: with nearly a million square metres of floor space, it exceeds the Pentagon in surface area. The fact that the architecture of Venice is simulated for gigantic casinos is not entirely without justice if one considers that the first gambling casino in Europe was started in 1638 on the Cannaregio bank of the Grand Canal and remains very much in business today.

The oft-reported death of Venice appears exaggerated. The city already has an afterlife in the form of kitsch simulacra of its architecture on other continents. This is one more way in which the city proves both its unique character and its infinite reproducibility in every possible medium; now, Pharaonic structures of poured concrete. The Venetian clones of Las Vegas and Macao participate in the same mode of signification as the new development project in Tianducheng, China, where a replica of Paris has been built, complete with Eiffel Tower, Place du Trocadero and the Haussmannian architecture of mansarded residential buildings. 'Venice' and 'Paris' become exportable three-dimensional signifiers on a one-to-one scale, readily available for inscription anywhere on earth. Venice in particular becomes 'possible' in forms of decontextualization and reappropriation never imagined by its founders. These transformations call into question whatever received notions one might have of the word 'city'. A new definition is needed to take into account the fact that a city exists not just in the conventional dimensions of time and space. It exists simultaneously, and in an authentic if alternate form of reality, in popular and artistic imaginations, and in virtual reality which has come to subvert what used to be solid reality, a reality which, with this city, was fluid to begin with.

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North American Cities

INTRODUCTION

The literature of Canadian cities, handled here in a special concentration on Toronto by Tom Ue, is uniquely conscious of the migrant nature of the community that has enabled that literature, and which makes writing plural, a memory of an older world and another. A good example, and providing a bridge from the previous section, is by Modris Ekstein, a Toronto-based historian whose Protestant nonconformist family was settled in Saskatchewan after the war, *Walking Since Daybreak: A Story of Eastern Europe, World War II and the Heart of the Twentieth century* (2000), which describes a family history in the Baltic States, and the condition of Tallinn and Riga (nineteenth-century Russia's third city) in the war, and making a life in Canada afterwards. Canada, having passed Immigration and Multiculturalism Acts (1978, 1988) recognises diversity, in such cities as Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, yet has been stronger on regional than urban literature; examples of the latter include Gabrielle Roy, in *Bonheur d'occasion* (1945—translated as *The Tin Flute*) about working-class life in Montreal, or with Ethel Wilson in Vancouver, or with the Sri Lankan-born Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion* (1987), about Toronto's history.

Similar points about immigration obtain with the United States, one of the most urbanised societies in the world—81%: the worldwide rate is currently 54%—which gives a high regard in its culture to the small town as an ideal outside the global city: many Americans have never visited New York? Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919) based on Clyde, Ohio, with frequent reference to Cincinnati, Chicago, and New York, is an early attempt to chart small-town America, by tracing through the individual histories of the city's inhabitants, some who interconnect, some who remain solitary and isolated. Anderson shows that to write the city, however small, needs new ways of joining lives together. Another novel, Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* (1920), set in Minnesota, speaks for the woman's lack of a role in a small town, and Lewis is satirical and harsh towards a town (actually Sauk Centre, Minnesota) in terms like Dickens' Coketown:

Rectangularity of buildings; and excessive breadth and straightness of the gashed streets, so that there is no escape from gales and from sight of the grim sweep of land, nor any windings to coax the loiterer along, while the breadth which would be majestic in an avenue of palaces makes the low shabby shops creeping down the typical Main Street the more mean by comparison.

The universal similarity—that is the physical expression of the philosophy of dull safety. Nine tenths of the American towns are so alike that it is the completest boredom to wander from one to another. Always, west of Pittsburgh, and often, east of it, there is the same lumber yard, the same railroad station, the same Ford garage . . . (Chapter 22)

Not just American towns, either, like Dorothy's Kansas. Lewis' novel had two influences which we may note: one, the sociological study *Middletown* by Robert and Helen Lynd (1929), based on Muncie, Indiana, which laid bare the 'average' city (but with no ethnic diversity) in a way that it could be appropriated by advertisers, and its values so internalised that in spite of its intentions, *Middletown* became the ideal America; another was the building of 'Main Street USA' in Disneyland in 1955, so that the city which Lewis had described became basic for a nostalgia industry, and also the key for the development of the shopping mall, in private spaces (leave your car behind) whose idea came from Disneyland.

The general chapter on US Literature by Markku Salmela, and by Salmela and Lieven Ameel on New York concentrate on the twentieth-century America. Salmela in particular brings out in the indebtedness of writing about the city to naturalism, something I mentioned also in the Introduction, when I focused on Chicago. Fanny Trollope and Dickens were early observers of the American scene, like Henry James in *Washington Square*, and in his returning to America, and in *The American Scene* which followed, which pronounces the American spirit to be the spirit of the hotel: hotels being a prime urban topic, and the United States pioneering them. James travelled from north to south, finishing his travelogue in Florida; nineteenth-century southern city literature is best summed up by George Washington Cable (1844–1925) in *The Grandisimes* (1880), an attempt to see New Orleans in terms of romance between creole families, and giving a history of those old families (as he had done in *Old Creole Tales* [1879]): Louisiana, which had Spanish and French families, as well as its black and native American populations, had passed from France to the United States in 1803. For the north, Boston is a subject for Hawthorne in *The Blithedale Romance*, as it is for James in *The Bostonians*, but the outstanding writer of the nineteenth-century city is Melville, who takes as central, New York—the 'Manhattoes' in *Moby-Dick*, just as 'Bartleby the Scrivener: A Tale of Wall Street', combines the bleak view from the office to a blank wall with the view from 'The Tombs', the prison in New York. And the city is also a setting for *Pierre* (1852).

The other, affirmative writer of New York is Walt Whitman (1819–1892), as with 'Crossing Brooklyn Ferry' (1856) and 'Mannahatta' (1860) which notes it is a city of 'no slaves! No owners of slaves'. Brooklyn, a Dutch-derived name, being once the United States' third city was to have its union with Manhattan

sealed with John Roebling's Brooklyn Bridge (1883), a granite and steel suspension bridge, which Hart Crane regarded in Hegelian terms as bridging materiality and spirit. Whitman, though his theme is usually America rather than the city, is urban in enjoying 'crowds of men and women':

On the ferry-boats the hundreds and hundreds that cross, returning home, are more curious to me than you suppose . . .

He 'merges' with them, and they and the city's objects bring him back to physicality, to the body, so that the experience of the city is democratising, and produces this new poetry of free expansive verse, including the reader ('you') in it: it is his own crossing over, and he feels in the midst of energies which will continue 'years hence'. It is a belief in progress which is absolutely different from that of Baudelaire, his contemporary.

New York, which acquired the Statue of Liberty (1886), and with the development of Ellis Island as a point of entry for 16 million immigrants (71% of all immigrants to the United States) between 1892 and 1924, became something of an unofficial capital, rivalling Washington DC, overtaking Philadelphia, and being followed up by Los Angeles which become the second city in 1964. It had its own modernism, as with the Armory Show (1913) where Duchamps' 'Nude descending a Staircase' was shown, and it had its skyscrapers, outstandingly the Flatiron (Daniel Burnham 1902), thought to resemble a ship sailing up fifth Avenue. Its outstanding photographer, and of the Woolworth Building (Cass Gilbert 1913), was Alfred Stieglitz (1864–1946), whose 'Winter—Fifth Avenue' (1893) 'established the blizzard as a defining trope of urban experience in the 1890s' (it influences *Sister Carrie*). After such naturalism, Stieglitz's modernism influenced Picabia (1879–1953) whose visit to New York in 1915 'brought about a complete revolution in my methods of work . . . it flashed on me that the genius of the modern world is in machinery and that through machinery art ought to find its most vivid expression' (see Jay Bochner on Stieglitz, 3, 138). In linking New York, as the place of the 'new' with the technological, and Futurism, and the machinic, the city became different from Europe, its modernism associated with having no past to slough off.

Whitman attempts a national epic, in a will to unify thought about America. In the twentieth century, a great example is Marxist Dos Passos, and Iain Bailey discusses him in Part VII. *Paterson* is about Paterson, New Jersey, where William Carlos Williams (1883–1963), a Modernist in New York, and there associated with Mina Loy (1882–1966)—a futurist, but critical of its masculinist pretensions—practised as a doctor. In *Paterson*, he looks for the 'beautiful thing' which is America. Democracy, and the city as bringing about the democratic, unites Whitman, Dos Passos, and Williams, though in the United States, the defeat of socialism weighs heavily on Dos Passos. And another poet to try an epic is the Whitmanesque Cincinnati-raised poet Hart Crane (1899–1932), in

The Bridge (1930). Its Proem addresses the Brooklyn Bridge, as a site for suicides (casualties of urban modernity), and asks it to ‘lend a myth to God’: to be a revelatory image for a God who is deficient, which will lead the poet towards the absolute. It is the most absolute demand to make of city-architecture, that it should fulfil the role of myth, usually thought of as primitive, agricultural (as in *The Waste Land*). The Bridge must span America, to lead to the Golden Gate (including here that of San Francisco, completed in 1937: its title evoked in Vikram Seth’s 1986 novel written in Pushkinian verse form). If Crane’s rhetoric here is strained, over affirmative, there is also something else: an attention to the New York subway, in ‘The Tunnel’, where hints of Crane’s homosexuality and cruising have been found, as itself an ‘underground’ state:

And so
 Of cities you bespeak
 Subways, rivered under streets
 And rivers . . . In the car
 The overtone of motion
 Underground, the monotone
 Of motion is the sound
 Of other faces, also underground.

(‘The Tunnel’, lines 31–38).

Subways redefine cities, take away rivers, create ‘overtones’ which are also ‘underground’—unconscious, perhaps dead; this city experience gives blank faces which must be read in silence: hence ‘the sound / Of other faces’. The fragmentariness of this, and its suggestiveness, its deliberate abstract imprecision, is stronger than the *The Bridge*’s more Whitmanesque affirmations, which also shade into pastoral (the prairie). Underground rivers are part of the city and its legends, so too ‘rivers’ intimate a sexual flow. Another tunnel appears in the lines where love is ‘a burnt match skating in a urinal’ (60); an image urban, imagist, Eliot or Pound-like and a contrast to what Eliot’s cities—beginning with St Louis, Missouri for ‘Prufrock’—represent.

One more take on New York: when Donald M. Allen published *The New American Poetry* (1960), it was divided into five separate sections, the fourth of which was dedicated to what became known as the ‘New York School’. As Allen’s Preface noted, John Ashbery (b.1927), Kenneth Koch (1925–2002), and Frank O’Hara (1926–1966, curator at Museum of Modern Art [MOMA]) had met at Harvard where they became associated with the Poets’ Theatre before migrating to New York in the early fifties and meeting up with Edward Field (b.1924), Barbara Guest (1920–2006), and James Schuyler (1923–1991, also associated with MOMA). In the city, they associated with the Abstract Expressionist painters gathering in the Cedar Tavern in Greenwich Village, whose work drew attention to the urgency of the city in the passing of time as presented by linear streams of paint as well as by an inconclusiveness described by Christopher MacGowan as having ‘no definitive starting and finishing places

for the seeking eye'. O'Hara referred to his time haunting the cafés of New York as a world of movement as 'In the San Remo we argued and gossiped', while in the Cedar 'we often wrote poems while listening to painters argue and gossip'. O'Hara's 'A Step Away From Them' celebrates life and its movement towards death and was what his biographer Brad Gooch called 'a record for history of the sensations of a sensitive and sophisticated man in the middle of the 20th century walking through what was considered by some the capital of the globe'. Walking through Manhattan in August 1956, O'Hara responded to the deaths of both Bunny Lang and Jackson Pollock:

And one has eaten and one walks,
past the magazines with nudes
and the posters for BULLFIGHT and
the Manhattan Storage Warehouse,
which they'll soon tear down.

A second generation of New York poets included Ted Berrigan (1934–1983) and Paul Auster whose novel *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) opens with that 'no definitive starting and finishing' place:

I don't expect you to understand. You have seen none of this, and even if you tried, you could not imagine it. These are the last things. A house is there one day, and the next day it is gone. A street you walked down yesterday is no longer there today. Even the weather is in constant flux.

American cities, unlike European ones, may belong to one country but are individualistic, in competition with each other: Los Angeles with San Francisco, whose Beat poetry (Allen Ginsberg, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and the City Lights Bookstore) must be noted, or Chicago, or New Orleans, or Washington D.C. Perhaps Chicago comes nearest to Brecht's imaginary city in *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. The Canadian-born Saul Bellow (1915–2005) evokes New York and Chicago; his attempt to map the latter being best expressed in his short story 'Looking for Mr Green' (1956), set in the Depression, while *Humboldt's Gift*, moving between New York and Chicago, and then to Europe (Madrid and Paris) thinks that Chicago 'lying at the southern end of the Great Lakes—twenty per cent of the world's supply of fresh water—Chicago with its gigantesque outer life contained the whole problem of poetry and the inner life of America' (Chap. 2): the novel asks what is there in the city beyond its success and its size.

US postmodernism is summed up in Las Vegas, already discussed by J.A. Smith and David Spurr; Hunter Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972) has given a way to write about that. Los Angeles, America's second city since 1964, part of a state (California—named as a fabulous island in Spanish romances such as those Don Quixote read) was Spanish until 1848, and the United States keeps uneasy relations with Hispanics, or Latinos who comprise

nearly 20% of the US population, deriving partly from Puerto Rico, US American since 1898 (and in popular culture, made central to *West Side Story* [1961]). They make parts of American cities therefore bilingual, like LA. This city, its film culture caught by Nathanael West in *Day of the Locust* (1939—filmed in 1975), has generated a film which is self-reflexive: for example, Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (filmed in 1965 from the 1948 novel), Billie Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), David Lynch's *Mulholland Drive* (1991), Robert Altman's *Short Cuts* (1993)—transposing Raymond Carver's small-town north east of the USA to Los Angeles—and Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994). To mention these is to be reminded of how the United States has stamped the image of its cities into a worldwide consciousness, airing or attempting to resolve intractable urban problems.

Merging Naturalism and the Unreal: An Approach to America's Literary Cities

Markku Salmela

Edgar Allan Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* (1840), an early example of a paradigmatic urban text, includes a conspicuously negative statement on the possibility of American cosmopolitan experience. While the narrator follows an old man of peculiar disposition, they leave a crowded thoroughfare in London's center and follow a cross street. After an hour, the narrator observes that "the passengers had gradually diminished to about that number which is ordinarily seen at noon in Broadway near the park – so vast a difference is there between a London populace and that of the most frequented American city" (Poe 1966: 219). The skepticism toward genuine American urbanity stems especially from the implicit suggestion that cities other than New York are still light years away from the density of human activity that enables the big city experience. Chicago, for example, had only just been incorporated as a city when Poe's story appeared.

The 1830s was a watershed decade in the development of the US American literary city. Cities in the USA were gradually developing identities that enabled their conception as urban entities different and independent from the biggest European cities of London and Paris—as places whose distinctive characteristics could find expression also through creative writing. As Dana Brand has shown, the ways in which the idea of the *flâneur* appeared in New York's *Knickerbocker* journal provides evidence on this process of differentiation. Prior to this, the dominant notion was the assumption that urban life in America was insufficient for representing "the contemporary clichés of cosmopolitan spectatorship" in domestic contexts, whereas after 1835 New York was already turning into the default setting of such sketches (Brand 1991: 70–71). Soon afterward, writers and journalists seem to have reached full conviction of "the natural suitability of the *flâneur* to the culture of New York" (1991: 74). This is significant

because the *flâneur* as an emblematic figure drew attention to the fact that urban writing was always the expression of how modernity is *experienced* in intense forms. Despite its limitations as a generalizable locus of experience, the figure originally lent itself to use as a litmus test of sorts in establishing whether a place was “urban enough” to qualify as a cosmopolitan location. New York, at least, was. In most other American cities, the growth into a distinct literary location of significance either was much slower or is still in progress. Yet the beginnings of US literary urbanism were not centered on New York. “Typical approaches to the history of American writing,” Cyrus R. K. Patell argues, “tend to unfold by emphasizing the importance of Boston and Philadelphia to the emerging national culture” (2010: 5).

If urbanity is the behavioral context for the condition of modernity, cities in the USA presumably express a specifically American type of modernity. In what follows, I am going to develop this argument from somewhat contrasting viewpoints, which nevertheless are capable of amalgamating into a kind of synthesis. In introducing some general patterns in literary and theoretical approaches to US American cities, I am not suggesting that others should be excluded or even that the patterns I discuss are particularly dominant in a historical perspective. The somewhat self-evident general rule in discussing city life, in America or elsewhere, is that comprehensiveness and general applicability—which are useful objectives as such and worth aiming for—are only realizable on the level of academic fantasy. Investigations of “the city” in the singular generally end up providing, through various case studies, plenty of evidence that would seem to advise against the use of that shorthand phrase. Yet it persists for reasons of convenience.

Keeping this reservation in mind, my chief objective in this essay is to suggest that American urban realities and their manifestations in fiction have been profoundly influenced by two impulses, one representing the naturalistic inner city and the other emerging from the unreal or theme park element that displays itself in paradigmatic locations of entertainment, business, and tourism. While the former emphasis requires appropriate contextualization in historical and sociological terms, and the latter invites theorization through urban and postmodern theory, both are treated here as nexuses of both spatial and temporal factors. As I plan to show, sometimes the two impulses come powerfully together in a single location or representation, and it is from this blend that some meanings typical of “the American City” emerge. The primary focus of analysis falls here on iterations of the literary city in the long twentieth century: on the one hand, the different incarnations of the naturalistically constructed urban jungle, and on the other, the development in literature of what Edward Soja has called Postmetropolis and its “postmetropolitan sub-worlds” (2000: 397). In outlining in some detail the two impulses mentioned, I am going to deal briefly with several literary examples from different cities and finish with a more extensive analysis of Las Vegas and its imagined manifestations, with particular reference to Charles Bock’s novel *Beautiful Children* (2008).

THE NATURALISTIC IMPULSE

According to most critics, literary naturalism proper is strongly influenced by nineteenth-century scientific and societal developments and characterized by a degree of philosophical determinism. Protagonists often lead their lives in rather bleak conditions, which in urban settings tend to result from some variety of capitalist corruption. Commenting on Richard Lehan's argument about the fundamental significance of sociohistorical context for naturalistic texts, James Giles notes: "More obviously than any other literary genre, naturalism in the United States was, in part, a literary reaction to the rise of the city" (1995: 2-3). For the purposes of my two-pronged argument about urban prose in America, I would like to invert this idea somewhat and suggest that naturalist tendencies have been fundamental to the emergence of city literature in the USA. As Giles points out, naturalistic authors responded particularly to the emergence of lower-class inner-city neighborhoods inhabited mostly by immigrants and other industrial workers—urban environments the middle class might have perceived as dangerous and unruly. For the "original" American naturalists writing at the end of the nineteenth century, "the inner city ceased to be primarily a physical place; it assumed, instead, the status of an idea or image of something sordid and dangerous as well as mysterious and fascinating," ultimately representing "the world of the Other, the unacknowledged and repressed areas of middleclass sexuality and the subconscious" (Giles 1995: 4). What these characterizations also hint at is the presence of nature itself in the city: the irrepressible, fascinating slum compares with the natural environments in which so many nonurban naturalist texts are set. Jack London, whose works are mostly anything but city texts, is one of many writers who draws the explicit comparison while describing "a breed of city savages" in *The People of the Abyss* (1903): "As valley and mountain are to the natural savage, street and building are valley and mountain to them. The slum is their jungle, and they live and prey in the jungle" (1982: 164). Strict social and spatial divisions are embedded in this vision of the city: wealthy people living in other neighborhoods "do not see these creatures, do not dream that they exist" (London 1982: 164).

This idea of wild nature in the city provides one central context for the naturalistic impulse in city literature. American cities have never lost touch with the idea of wildness, and largely this is due to the persistent urban images inspired by the historical frontier. According to Richard C. Wade's pioneering argument, cities in fact essentially set the terms for the development of the original western frontier (see Wade 1996). More significantly, in the last two centuries a powerful antiurban tradition has often described the American inner city with metaphors that draw from a perceived state of wildness, "the urban jungle" being one of the most common. Such figures of speech foreground traits of animality and unruliness, as well as the capacity for violence inherent in the environment. Yet the conception of

the city in terms of nature has not been restricted to bleak visions. To collapse the opposition between urban and rural sensibilities that critical American thinking has generally sought to emphasize, James L. Machor has applied the term “urban pastoralism” as descriptive of the urban community’s strive for the ideal landscape. The concept is useful in pointing out that manipulated nature in the form of the symbolic middle landscape has long been present in the American city. In the built environment, it has manifested itself in nineteenth-century urban parks and postwar green suburbs as well as such recent redevelopments as Manhattan’s High Line or Atlanta’s BeltLine. Inserting fragments of modified nature into the jungle of concrete and asphalt and thus moderating the machine of modernity, city planners have at times sought to realize romantic visions of the city. Literature, however, has often subjected the ideal of urban pastoral to critical examination, locating its “incongruities and limitations” at the core of American experience (Machor 1987: 210). In fact, one of the ambivalent “hallmarks of the American urban novel is the reverse image of the pathetic fallacy – the naturalistic belief that nature is totally indifferent to man” (Goldsmith 1991: 12–13).

Frontier mythologies continue to inform both real cities and their cultural representations: “bad” neighborhoods are regularly figured as unlawful or uncontrollable zones in ways reminiscent of the frontier, and areas in development (neighborhoods awaiting gentrification or new planned suburbs) present images akin to those of historical expansion. It is in cities, in their ever-present environment of relative conflict, that rugged individualism and the fantasies attached to it primarily play themselves out in the postindustrial USA. In popular culture, urban areas frequently become the settings of “regeneration through violence,” a notion explored in historical perspective by Richard Slotkin, who notes that cultural figures belonging to the frontier often “begin literally to infiltrate” city settings (1992: 147). In the process of gentrification, Neil Smith argues, parts of late-twentieth-century cities turned into Turnerian safety valves in which real estate developers represented the spirit of conquest, treating inhabitants as if they were a hostile indigenous population (1996: xvi). That development, strangely mirroring the nation’s violent conquest of the West, can only be seen as a logical part of America’s urban history. The history of Chicago, famously dubbed “nature’s metropolis” by William Cronon, exemplifies the presence of nature in the city perhaps better than any other location: Cronon himself calls his seminal book “an effort to understand the city’s place in nature” (1991: 8). As these examples show, Lehan’s statement that “[t]he city is the place where man and nature meet” rings especially true in the case of American cities (1998: 13).

In naturalistically oriented fictions representing human wilderness in the city, the viewpoint has traditionally been that of the recently arrived observer capable of seeing the full inhumanity of such urban frontiers. Chicago’s Packingtown, as depicted and as experienced by the Lithuanian immigrant family in Sinclair’s *The Jungle* (1906), is an illustrative example. In addition to the figure of the jungle in

the novel's title, the chief metaphor of the narrative emerges from a strong association between the meat packing workers and the animals that bring the grist for the mill. The killing-floors of the slaughterhouses become dramatic platforms for displaying the severe human effects of capitalist speculation and corruption, and the neighborhood itself turns into a stage in which human animality—a fundamental theme in naturalistic stories—can assume its multiple forms. Characters, most of them slum dwellers, are repeatedly referred to as wild beasts, while premodern ideas of survival emerge: “here in this huge city,” protagonist Jurgis thinks anxiously, “with its stores of heaped-up wealth, human creatures might be hunted down and destroyed by the wild-beast powers of nature, just as truly as ever they were in the days of the cave men!” (Sinclair 1906: 138). Michael Lundblad has demonstrated how the novel's descriptions of characters' animal traits outline the class dimension of the whole jungle metaphor (2013: 111–118). More generally, the metaphor may be seen to rest on a complex set of cultural anxieties concerning human difference—anxieties always present in the heterogeneous urban community.

My choice to identify one significant aspect of America's literary urbanism as a “naturalistic impulse” is inspired by the work of Donald Pizer, whose studies of American literature from the realist era to postmodernism have served to illustrate the presence and importance of naturalistic tendencies in a great range of fictions. It is this variety and “freedom of response,” in Pizer's phrase, that characterizes this current within narratives of the city as well: American literary naturalism was or is “not a ‘school’ and was perhaps not even a ‘movement’ [but rather] it could best be described as an ‘impulse’ to which there gradually accrued a ‘tradition’” (1993: 7). Broadly speaking, then, naturalistically oriented city prose encompasses several overlapping categories. The most obvious of these is naturalistic writing proper, exemplified in such texts as *The Jungle*, Stephen Crane's *Maggie* (1893), Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1899), Frank Norris's *The Pit* (1903), and—perhaps slightly less obviously—in Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905) or the New Orleans section of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899). Prominent twentieth-century examples include James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* trilogy (1932–1935) and Nelson Algren's *The Man with the Golden Arm* (1949), both of which have a Chicago setting, and Harriet Arnow's *The Dollmaker* (1954), set largely in Detroit. In focusing on specific social segments or spatial entities within the city, many of these works represent quite precisely what Blanche H. Gelfant identified as the “ecological” city novel (1970: 20). Thus they are often ecological on two separate levels: in their depiction of a particular, class-bound urban “ecosystem” and in their general imposition of biological analogies and natural metaphors upon city life. Those texts of the naturalistic orientation that focus on slum life often owe much to journalistic works of nonfiction such as Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), discussing the slums of New York.

The second category of literature influenced by the naturalistic impulse, with some overlap with the first, comprises fictions focusing on the

adversities of urban life from the viewpoint of cultural minorities and immigrants. In these texts, the naturalistic viewpoint, with various levels of social determinism, is generally employed to examine the relationship between a racial or ethnic minority and the perceived cultural mainstream. Classic African-American works such as Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940) and *The Man Who Lived Underground* (1942), Ann Petry's *The Street* (1946), and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) depict black lives conditioned by the social environment and leading to an underground existence or criminality. Paule Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959) portrays a young Bajan-American woman living in Brooklyn in racialized conditions that severely limit her spatial and social mobility. There are also numerous Jewish-American novels focusing on the alienating or otherwise grim realities of city life from an immigrant perspective, including Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917), Anzia Yezierska's *Bread Givers* (1925), and Bernard Malamud's *The Assistant* (1957).

The third category worth mentioning perhaps concerns literary-historical paradigms more than sociohistorical reality. I choose to call it postmodern naturalism, and it is visible in a range of post-1950s novels and short stories that concentrate on the urban experience as conditioned and mediated by consumer culture, new technologies, and ironic self-referentiality. Joseph Tabbi has spoken of approximately the same phenomenon in evoking "a postmodern or conceptual naturalism" that "does not focus on matter to the exclusion of mind"; instead of seeking an objective perspective, "the contemporary naturalist writer disappears into the wreckage of everyday culture wherein the culture might find its own direction against the continuing storm of a progressivist history" (1995: 26, 27). Parodic incarnations of the serious social novel, drawing from prominent cultural paranoid, belong to this category. As Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987) does with New York, Jonathan Franzen's St. Louis novel *The Twenty-Seventh City* (1988) "roams about the entire city," as a reviewer put it, "giving us brisk, if somewhat parodic, portraits of a cross section of St. Louis society" (Kakutani 1988). The excessive and inherently violent capitalist life of Wall Street receives satirical treatment in *American Psycho* (1991) by Bret Easton Ellis, a novelistic mixture of naturalistic description and commodity obsession. If these works, or Don DeLillo's urban writings, have any equivalent for original naturalists' oppressive systems, it is capitalist city culture as a whole: its perceived conspiracies, mad celebrities, ethnic idiosyncrasies, corruption, provocations of violence, and ubiquitous trash. Joyce Carol Oates's *them* (1969), with its emphasis on violence and prostitution in Detroit, contains a rather traditional naturalist element in combination with a postmodern type of self-consciousness realized through metafictional devices. Determinism in the city of *them* is strongly gendered: the novel "cannot imagine any self-determination for its women characters" (Showalter 2006: xxiii), whereas the male protagonist Jules, on his way to California, ultimately finds himself with a prospect of opportunity.

THE UNREAL IMPULSE

In increasingly flirting with postmodern preoccupations, including metafiction and the world of brands and signs, some texts displaying the naturalist impulse combine it with the sense of the unreal. Paul Auster's metaphysical detective story *City of Glass* (1985) does this by marrying an emphasis on urban solitude and hardship with elaborate, symbolic games of textuality superimposed upon urban space, and his *In the Country of Last Things* (1987) by adding a dystopian element that reaches for a kind of universality as far as destroyed cities are concerned. John Edgar Wideman's *Philadelphia Fire* (1990) amalgamates all three categories listed earlier, creating a chaotic image of African-American urban reality through a mixture of voices that also reflect the social dynamics of America's cities on a more general level. One of the characters, J. B., imagines an escape from the burning streets to a distant vantage point that would seem to offer a release from chaos, a cognitive map psychologically useful in reflecting the organization of Lefebvrian conceived space:

What we need is realism, the naturalistic panorama of a cityscape unfolding. Demographics, statistics, objectivity. Perhaps a view of the city from on high, the fish-eye lens catching everything within its distortion, skyscraper heads together, rising like sucked up through a straw. If we could arrange the building blocks, the rivers, boulevards, bridges, harbor, etc. etc. into some semblance of order, of reality, then we could begin disentangling ourselves from this miasma, this fever of shakes and jitters, of self-defeating selfishness called urbanization. (Wideman 2005: 157)

The initial, unnatural perspective evoked here is not, in fact, one conducive to genuine realism: only a severe distortion would allow it to reach a kind of synoptic vision. Moreover, the idea that an ordered image of the city represents "reality" is necessarily an illusion, a vaguely nostalgic power fantasy J. B. is never likely to realize. The "fever of shakes and jitters" is one symptom of an urban chaos that seems ubiquitous, and Wideman's experimental interplay of voices in his novel also undermines the professed move toward objectivity. As the thought of city elements being open to rearrangement implies a quest for agency, general collective action also seems utopian in a city divided along multiple demographic factors. The synoptic perspective could in fact collapse into a heap of competing city orders, resulting in either total relativism or ever new tensions. Fittingly, *Philadelphia Fire*, like Oates' *them*, concludes with images of riot and fire, and their aftermath.

What survives from a more traditional naturalist viewpoint in Wideman's novel is the *idea* of scientific detachment. Yet its realization has become impossible, just like the oddities of postmodern urban space have "finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organize its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world" (Jameson 1991: 44). This sense of disorientation and the unreal, or hyperreal, has received a great deal of attention

in analyses of late-twentieth-century American cities, most notably Los Angeles, whose urban sprawl, relative youth, location on the west coast, cultural industries, warm climate, and distinctive lifestyles tend to create an impression antithetical to east-coast types of urbanism. Following well-known commentaries by Fredric Jameson and Jean Baudrillard as well as a number of important works by urban theorists such as Mike Davis, Michael Dear, and Edward Soja, Los Angeles is often read as the quintessential postmodern metropolis embodied: a fragmented and virtually limitless city characterized by its lack of conceivable form, of organic existence. The impression of unreality stems from spatial, economic, and cultural factors alike, the cliché being that the city itself is a representation without an original, following the principle of simulacra as Baudrillard envisioned it (see 1994: 1–7). In this sense, Los Angeles is also seen to represent “the global marketplace of instant information flows, industrial disarticulation and mammoth financial monopolies – a world whose logic is profoundly urban, segregated, yet encased in a media blanket of simultaneity and oneness; where existence is largely a predicate of representationality, and not vice-versa” (Murphet 2001: 15). These characteristics have encouraged grounding the analysis of “postmetropolitan” urbanity in the Los Angeles area, even if it is to enable comparisons with other cities.

This unreal impulse lends itself more easily to urban theory approaches than the naturalistic impulse, but the two tendencies share the quality of being discernible in both real cities and urban literature. The idea of simulation, or the manifestation of what Edward Soja calls “simcities,” is often all-pervasive in Los Angeles texts because of the stress on Hollywood, other media, and the entertainment business; likewise in Las Vegas, the city Mike Davis has dubbed “a hyperbolic Los Angeles” (1998: 59). A significant type of vision representing the unreal in Los Angeles is dystopia in a very wide sense, ranging from the darkest L.A. Noir to the imagined city of the film *Blade Runner* or to the academic work of Mike Davis on the motif of incarceration within L.A. According to Davis, the “obsession with physical security systems, and, collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries, [became] a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s” (2006: 223). This dystopian potential is one key aspect of the real-and-imagined quality—to borrow another term from Soja—of the city in Los Angeles fictions.

Bret Easton Ellis’s debut novel *Less Than Zero* (1985) provides illustrative material on this disconnection from material reality. One of the novel’s conspicuous slogans comes from a billboard on L.A.’s Sunset Boulevard mentioned repeatedly throughout the text: “Disappear here.” In addition to marking the location as a “city of signs” instead of “things” (see Geyh 2009: 16–40), this phrase immediately stresses the problem of both disorientation and urban anomie. The story’s disaffected young people live in a kind of constant stupor induced by drugs and media, without reliable moral standards. The flatness of sensory perception manifests itself in protagonist Clay’s recurring automotive experience that reflects L.A.’s spatial organization:

After leaving Blair I drive down Wilshire and then onto Santa Monica and then I drive onto Sunset and take Beverly Glen to Mulholland, and then Mulholland to Sepulveda and then Sepulveda to Ventura and then I drive through Sherman Oaks to Encino and then into Tarzana and then Woodland Hills. (Ellis 1998: 61)

In an environment where genuinely public spaces are dominated by streets, freeways and parking lots, the interior of the private automobile functions as a vital extension of private space, allowing some residents, if they so wish, to avoid the direct use of public space completely. The emphasis on toponyms in the extract is vaguely reminiscent of the complex modernist literary strategies of disorientation employed, for example, by Joyce in *Ulysses* (see Bulson 2006: 112–116), but the monotonous grammar implies an experience totally void of meaningful distinctions. There is no visible interest in anything the car passes. An example of the “waning of affect” in Fredric Jameson’s terms, this blankness also can be interpreted as “writing degree zero” in Barthes’s original sense (Murphet 2001: 87–88). The perceived uniformity of the environment seeps into grammar.

Ellis’s fictional itinerary contains no clear indication that directional choices are to be made during the journey, as if Clay were speeding along in a sealed tube that extends from Wilshire to Woodland Hills. The paved environment only functions as a limbo between start and destination, a space from which the subject is further insulated by the metal coating of his automobile. In real life, too, the “mind-numbing expanse” of L.A. tends to erase the distinctiveness of residential areas; people have needed the visual evidence provided by media such as the skycam to confirm “that the city we cannot see is really there” (Pinck 2000: 62)—even if it looks like an endless circuit card. In Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49* (1965), Oedipa Maas needs the high vantage point and the association with a circuit card to discern in fictitious San Narciso’s cityscape “a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate” (2006: 14), San Narciso being “near L.A.” and amorphous, resembling “less an identifiable city than a grouping of concepts” (13). In the cityscape of *Less Than Zero*, the detached and narrowly focused narrative voice of Clay effectively excludes details of the physical environment from discourse and consequently keeps the confirmation of the city’s existence and meaning in hiding, leaving any idea of authentic “reality” in question.

An even more striking example of the detachment from concrete, sensory and corporeal experience is a sex scene between Clay and a girl he meets at a club:

the girl and I get into her car and drive off into the hills and we go to her room and I take off my clothes and lie on her bed and she goes into the bathroom and I wait a couple of minutes and then she finally comes out, a towel wrapped around her, and sits on the bed and I put my hands on her shoulders, and she says stop it and, after I let her go, she tells me to lean against the headboard and I do and then she takes off the towel and she’s naked and she reaches into the drawer by her bed and brings out a tube of Bain De Soleil and she hands it to me and then she reaches into the drawer and brings out a pair of Wayfarer sunglasses and she tells me to put them on and I do. (1998: 120–121)

One sentence takes the scene from the club's parking lot to the act itself, the grammar again monotonous, serial, reflecting a general lack of differentiation in experience, mobility, and the built environment (it is almost as if the pair "drove off" directly into the bedroom). Anonymous sex without intimacy, touch, or eye contact indicates a total disconnect with the "real," or its replacement with mediated experience. After climax, "Bowie's on the stereo and she gets up, flushed, and turns the stereo off and turns on MTV" (121), the choice suggesting a preference for a visual, standardized, ever-present flow of recurring images. The commercial landscape on the whole, with its numerous brand names, functions as a backdrop for boredom and numbness in a way strangely reminiscent of another seminal Los Angeles novel, Nathanael West's *The Day of the Locust* (1939), which depicts a similar disconnection with a sense of human reality, a comparable nihilist worldview, and a thoroughly commodified Depression-era cityscape. The thematization of the line between reality and Hollywood make-believe, which is prominently visible in West's novel, has been a staple of Los Angeles fictions ever since. *The Day of the Locust* is also another urban text closing with a riot, a release of the major tensions and frustrations building up in an environment of inauthenticity and boredom. Such violent eruptions—also present in *Less Than Zero*—are quite frequent in literary expressions of what I have been calling the unreal impulse. As this might imply, the naturalistic and the unreal are in no way antithetical to each other in depictions of human experience in the city. On the contrary, a sense of human detachment, inauthenticity, and illusion often contributes to the oppressiveness of reality from which plausibly naturalistic representation emerges.

As Lehan aptly summarizes two prominent theoretical positions on L.A., Fredric Jameson sees it "as a labyrinth with no center, beyond the grasp of the paranoid subject," whereas for Baudrillard the city itself is "the subject fraught in the hyperreal, as manufactured objects and experiences take on a reality of their own" (Lehan 1998: 280). The conclusion in terms of human experience is roughly the same: the city produces the impression of unreality as indistinguishable from the real, an ontologically confusing urban world without proper centers or boundaries.

AMALGAMATION

The sense of an unlimited city represented, until quite recently, perhaps the greatest formal difference between L.A. and Las Vegas, the focal point of the rest of this essay. To return to the idea of the American city as the location where nature and humanity meet, Las Vegas is a special case because of its youth as a city, which used to be particularly visible in the abruptness of the spatial division between the urban and the natural. The provocative architectural book *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972) by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour contains a description of this limit: "the only transition between the

Strip and the Mojave Desert is a zone of rusting beer cans” (Venturi et al. 1977: 35). Although massive urban sprawl has changed this to some extent since the 1970s, the proximity of the desert is still a major factor in Las Vegas life and fictions. If the idea of the urban jungle is a chiefly naturalistic image implying conflict and lawlessness, the desert as transposed to the city is easily translated into still more symbolic terms: the “desert of the real,” illustrative of the whole of the USA, constituting “the primal scene, even in the big cities” (Baudrillard 1994: 1; 1988: 63). The desert is thus the landscape most directly associated with the unreal, or the lack of referential meaning. Baudrillard, for whom even L.A. is “merely an inhabited fragment of the desert,” assigns to the desert the function of “preserving insignificance” throughout America (1988: 8).

Starting from Baudrillard, Michael Sorkin’s edited volume *Variations on a Theme Park* (1992) and Sharon Zukin’s *Landscapes of Power* (1991), there is a rich body of books in urban studies that discuss and criticize the gradual turning of American cities into environments resembling theme parks. If we accept the casino as a paradigm for the corporate marketplaces whose conquest of public space such works generally warn against, the conclusion is that “the American city” as a whole, toward the end of the twentieth century, was more and more like a casino. In other words, it was more and more like the Las Vegas Strip with its staged performances, bombastic neon signs, and commercially produced collective fantasies. This is the background for any analysis of recent Las Vegas texts, and the possibility that such texts may be revealing in the overall context of America’s urban literature motivates this essay as well.

Using the assumption of insignificance to ground their argument, Venturi, Brown, and Izenour speak for what they call the skill “to gain insight from the commonplace” (1977: 3). The Strip, according to them, is characterized by the prevalence of communication over space, or signs over architecture, which is a fact evident in the great number and size of billboards and logos, the dominance of *text* in streetscape. The very prominence of the signs is arguably explained by the origin and identity of Las Vegas as a desert location. “If you take the sign away, there is no place,” the writers put it (1977: 18), meaning that without the town name on the sign those arriving in little historical towns in the desert would not immediately gain a sense of where they are. As the key quote goes, “Las Vegas is the apotheosis of the desert town” (1977: 18). In this limited sense, Las Vegas in the 1970s, and perhaps still today, emerges directly out of the dusty railroad depot the city used to be, in the middle of the Mojave Desert. Thus, the disproportionate cultural influence of the city does not only depend on the content of the entertainment industry but concerns also architecture and urban form. Whether the city comes across as destructively banal or charmingly commonplace, one of the ironies of such viewpoints is that Las Vegas, the city posing as an oasis or mirage in the desert, has also repeatedly appeared as the paradigmatic destination for a dream quest that merges images of wealth, love, and entertainment with freedom from social constraint.

When it comes to literary stories set in Las Vegas, the identification of the city as a holiday resort is evident in a number of repeated narrative patterns and

moral questions. Often the sense of a temporary, personal state of exception—reflective of the legal status of gambling in Nevada—in a somewhat unreal environment is prominent in the protagonists’ experience. In Hunter S. Thompson’s *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972), published in the same year as the original *Learning from Las Vegas* and subtitled *A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream*, the overall sense of unreality is drug-induced and hallucinatory, the still relatively small-scale city merely enabling rather than encouraging the madness. The main characters Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo, while moving against the ideological mainstream, serve as models for subsequent Las Vegas questers who often depart from Los Angeles. In an essay titled “Las Vegas (What?) Las Vegas (Can’t hear you! Too noisy) Las Vegas!!!!” (1964), Tom Wolfe cites a local police officer as saying that the problem on the Strip “is not so much the drunks, crooks or roughhousers, but these nuts on pills who don’t want to ever go to bed” (1995: 28). The “nuts,” presumably, are just regular people from the rest of the country, or increasingly, from abroad. In fact, Wolfe seems to have laid out the same principles that Venturi and others reiterated in their architectural manifesto several years later. He calls Vegas “the only town in the world whose skyline is made up neither of buildings . . . nor of trees . . . but signs” (1995: 24). These signs still welcome the exemplary traveler for whom Las Vegas is likely to be a somewhat hallucinatory destination of a journey that began far away. The idea is to be away from the world, surrounded by an urban environment of insubstantiality, glitter, and simulated visuality, and still to have the whole world present, at least in replica.

Close to the beginning of Charles Bock’s novel *Beautiful Children*, a character is driving through the desert toward “popish theme-park facades” looming in the distance (2008: 21), until he spots an iconic sign in a traffic median:

Was there any way to jump-start a libido quicker? Any other place on the planet that instantly offered the chance to reverse fortune and end losing streaks, the chance to set right a lifetime of disappointments? How could one read the gracious message – WELCOME TO FABULOUS LAS VEGAS, NEVADA – and feel anything but tingling anticipation? (Bock 2008: 22)

This moment becomes profoundly ironic once the panoramic view of the city begins to reveal itself in the novel as an image largely of exploitation and abuse: much of the story focuses on runaway children and the homeless. Together with lists of minor characters’ geographical origins and brief biographies late in the novel, the scene underlines the importance of departures and arrivals in urban narratives and bestows on Las Vegas the almost exclusive status of a destination, perhaps *the* destination, for the kind of quest that involves desire in a wide sense. In principle, the model for the shadow journeys to Las Vegas, taken by the dispossessed, would seem to be the journey of the middle-class amateur gambler coming to the casinos, but such characters barely make an appearance in Bock’s novel. The most

significant characters are young drifters representing different subcultures and possessing various dysfunctions, who come to the city as if they were pulled by a gravitational force.

The narrative also draws from the naturalistic tradition, focusing on both peripheral areas and the inner city, with each main character's perspective and problems represented in alternation with others. The reference to the libido in the arrival scene points toward the main current of naturalistic influence in the novel: sexuality as an animalistic and oppressive force manifest in social and commercial practices. Besides the depictions of various types of prostitution and pornography, a good illustration of this angle, and its connections with Las Vegas as a city, is a late scene involving "one of the city's beloved figures, an elderly man reputed to have been a minor member of the Rat Pack" (Bock 2008: 380). Lorraine, the mother of a child who has vanished, works hard to raise funds for the benefit of homeless children and contacts the old man, who has his "office" in a restaurant "overlooking the breadth of the Strip" (381). The scene ends with him seeing Lorraine herself as the commodity subject to exchange and inquiring "about the specific carnal acts that would make this [his support] worth his while" (383). This association between Las Vegas life and the almost taken-for-granted immorality, the general inability or unwillingness to suppress animal desires, and the presence of financial concerns in such situations remind the reader of the novel's naturalistic influences.

Although it may generally be misleading to read a novel as primarily a work of urban studies, the Las Vegas of *Beautiful Children* also resonates in forceful and occasionally bewildering ways with the notion of the postmetropolis as Edward Soja introduced it in the 2000 book with that very title. Soja's "six discourses of the postmetropolis" each find relatively concrete expression in Bock's text (see Soja 2000: 156–348). In revolving around entertainment businesses, widely speaking, and jobs such as pawnbroking, the novel places itself solidly in a postindustrial service-based economic cityscape rooted in global networks. Las Vegas itself with its edge communities and growing desert extensions—some key scenes, including a punk rock gig, are set outside the city, with the centrifugal pull increasing toward the end—are formally reminiscent of Soja's "exopolis" and its spatial mutations. One might even argue that the novel's very amorphousness, visible in numerous temporal and spatial transitions and shifting focalizations, replicates the unpredictability of contemporary urban form. Social inequalities and increasing urban divides, as in Soja's "fractal city," are another prominent theme in Bock's novel, which focuses largely on the experience of the disadvantaged (without, however, foregrounding ethnicity as a source of social divides). The problem of access and the enforcement of social groupings by spatial segregation, then, emerge almost automatically as motifs of their own right. Finally, the discourse of the "simcity," in Soja's explication, echoes what I have been calling the unreal impulse in America's literary cities and is perhaps inevitably present in any Las Vegas text.

In *Beautiful Children*, however, the tendency toward simulation and inauthenticity is not realized through the easiest available method, a focus on

the main resorts and their fantasy worlds. It is only in a few descriptive passages at the beginning of chapters that the reader gains a sense of the tourist's glitzy Las Vegas, the overwhelming spectacle of the Strip with its huge resorts. The narrator evokes the archetypal nature of this spectacle in the national context: Vegas is "the crown jewel of a country that has institutionalized indulgence" (Bock 2008: 97). Otherwise, the alleyways between the casinos are more significant as settings than the casinos themselves in Bock's novel. This is not primarily a city of simulated landmarks and fancy facades behind which huge finances circulate. Instead, the "simcity" effect emerges through alternative visual realities such as computer games, porn videos, home videos, online environments, comic books, and strip shows, which have thoroughly permeated middle-class life, creating some doubt about the authenticity of all the rest—everyday family life in the city, for example. The whole novel begins with "shaky" technologically mediated images: "The lens zooms in, then draws back" (3). A single frame of this videotape representing the vanished child spreads citywide in countless reproductions, copies "of a copied copy," leaving the father in doubt as to "what was left of his son" (6). There are also quick references to the history of the swift construction of Las Vegas and the rapidly advancing urban sprawl: "as there was no end to the desert, untold space existed for more master planned communities . . ." (183–184). The long-time status of the city as a particularly fast-growing metropolitan area is visible in the novel very concretely.

In his introduction to a volume of Las Vegas literature, Nick Tosches calls the 1990s version of the city "a corporate-run nightmare draped in the cotton candy of family values, a theme park where dead souls drift amid medication Muzak" (1995: 18). Implicit in this indictment is, primarily, a combination of the first and last of the six postmetropolitan discourses that Soja listed: the restructurings of, first, postfordist urban economies and, second, the urban imaginary of "simcities." To the extent that naturalistically oriented city fiction is about characters' predicaments in the clutches of the various capitalist machines, the two discourses correspond rather precisely with the two impulses I have been discussing. Bock's novel works toward amalgamating this Las Vegas duality into a single vision with everything else that the twenty-first-century American city holds. The result is disorienting but not in ways antithetical to the nature of real urban experience. The combination of a deterministic universe and a city of simulated masks and other surfaces aims to avoid the pitfall Madhu Dubey has warned against: "to 'read' the city solely at the level of visual form is to read it fetishistically, to become blind to the coordinates of power that are all the more insidious because they are concealed by the diffused visual appearance of postmodern cities" (2003: 105). Characteristically, post-industrial urban environments hide from the outsider's view the inner struggles taking place among their spatial forms, emphasizing their standardization (like the tract housing developments around Vegas) or posing as showpieces (like almost anything on the Strip) instead of revealing the political processes fundamental to authentic experience. The danger of a fetishistic reading may be at its greatest in places like Las Vegas, which are, as Sharon Zukin has said of

L.A. and Miami, “explicitly produced for visual consumption” (1991: 219). The combination of the two impulses works to overcome such simplified understandings of urban reality.

CONCLUSION

According to a key statement in *Learning from Las Vegas*, “Each city is an archetype rather than a prototype, an exaggerated example from which to derive lessons for the typical” (18). Since Las Vegas is perhaps more specialized and more conspicuously built around one central idea than any of its North American counterparts, reading a great number of Las Vegas texts to gain a sense of the place, in a version of geocritical investigation (see Westphal 2011), could yield some consistent results. Still, even Vegas refuses simple definitions as a city; for locals, it is reducible to neither a desert town nor a neon-colored mass of pulsating signs. It has grown into a real city with the complexities, depths, and diversities of experience to be expected of such urban centers, no longer only the transient and out-of-the-ordinary urban other to the “real” cities of the nation, all of which have much more extensive urban histories. In this sense, Bock’s novel pulls in a direction that represents the opposite of the theme park argument: despite its setting, and perhaps because of it, the novel foregrounds lived experience, aiming beyond the virtual or simulated consumerist realities that often present themselves as the core of Las Vegas as an experience.

The mutual affinity of the naturalist and unreal impulses present in US cities, and their literature, is perhaps best encapsulated in Baudrillard’s paradoxical phrase when he refers to America as “the primitive society of the future” (1988: 7). The two impulses come together in texts focusing on the economies of the city; in postmodernist renderings of urban life; and in texts depicting middle-class family life in the urban environment. As the examples in this essay demonstrate, both of these relatively consistent tendencies are conditioned, above all, by the workings of the capitalist market in American cities. As such, they testify to the continuities of specifically American types of modernity and remind readers of the often disorienting coexistence of harsh urban realities and futuristic elements of the unreal in cities across the USA.

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‘I Would Go to Toronto’: The City in Contemporary Writing

Tom Ue

When asked by her friend Sylvia where she would go and what she would do if she had the money to run away from her husband Clark, Carla readily replies: ‘I would go to Toronto. . . . But I wouldn’t go near my brother. I’d stay in a motel or something and I’d get a job at a riding stable’ (Munro 2004: 24). Sylvia provides Carla with practical support:

I don’t think you should go to a motel. I think you should take the bus to Toronto and go to stay with a friend of mine. Her name is Ruth Stiles. She has a big house and she lives alone and she won’t mind having somebody to stay. You can stay there till you find a job. I’ll help you with some money. There must be lots and lots of riding stables around Toronto. (Munro 2004: 24)

Carla does not, by the end of the titular story from Alice Munro’s collection *Runaway* (2004), make it to the capital of the Canadian province Ontario: three towns away, on route to the city, she realizes, ‘While she was running away from him—now—Clark still kept his place in her life. But when she was finished running away, when she just went on, what would she put in his place? What else—who else—could ever be so vivid a challenge?’ (Munro 2004: 34). Clark had once represented to Carla ‘the architect of the life ahead of them’, and she herself ‘a captive, her submission both proper and exquisite’ (Munro 2004: 32). Even now, he continues to operate as a kind of ideological safety valve. Munro’s story economically brings together some of the ways in which Toronto has variously been viewed. If, as we see here, the city is the Kingston-bred Carla’s first choice, one where she can co-habit with her indifferent elder brother without running into him, and where she and Sylvia anticipate job prospects, then Toronto can also be daunting, the absence of programme

and liberation that it promises dampening when it should have been fuelling Carla's resolve.

Munro's understanding of Toronto has broader resonance. As different as Bryan Lee O'Malley's *Scott Pilgrim* (2004–2010) is in its form and content, the graphic series' first instalment finds Ramona Flowers similarly moving to the city because of her job, albeit with Amazon—Ramona becomes the only delivery girl in the downtown area—and because of her break-up with Gideon. The city has been a source of imagination for generations of writers including Morley Callaghan, Robertson Davies, Timothy Findley, Margaret Atwood, Dennis Lee, Michael Ondaatje, Dionne Brand, Anne Michaels, Michael Redhill and Souvankham Thammavongsa. A succession of critically acclaimed and commercially successful works made and set in Toronto including *Scott Pilgrim*, Edgar Wright's filmic incarnation (2010), Sook-Yin Lee, Sudz Sutherland, David Weaver, and Aaron Woodley's *Toronto Stories* (2008), and Sarah Polley's *Take This Waltz* (2011) has introduced its many faces to an international audience. More recently, Toronto's suburban geography is thematized in Lenny Abrahamson's Academy Award-winning adaptation of Emma Donoghue's novel *Room* (2015). In the film, Officer Parker (Amanda Brugel) listens carefully to 5-year-old Jack's (Jacob Tremblay) account of his escape from Room. In the screenplay: she 'closes her eyes and fixes the geometry of Jack's journey in her mind' before reporting to Control where Jack's mother (Brie Larson) is held captive: 'Control. Listen carefully. South on Maple, three stop signs from the junction with Beach, look for a garden shed with a skylight' (Donoghue 2014: 38). In this essay, I focus on a set of recent representations of Toronto and Torontorians across literature, film, and theatre as a touchstone to changing views about the city. By attending to the different discourses developed through these case tests, I hope to explore their preoccupations and, in so doing, suggest some inroads into the city's imaginative lives (Fig. 1).

Criticism on literature in Toronto has been concerned with issues of perception and representation, especially in response to the city's cultural heterogeneity. Robert Fulford in 'The Invention of Toronto: A City Defined by Its Artists', his William Kilbourn Lecture for the Toronto Historical Board delivered on 12 June 1996, suggests that we construct cities in two ways, with concrete and with imagination, and he emphasizes our individual participation and responsibility in this process of dual creation. In contrast to the material city, the latter 'is the city we carry in our minds, the city that guides us, teaches us, forms us', and while we may be less wary of the changes and growth that occur around us, 'we carry, each of us, our own Toronto'. Cities are predominantly invented by writers, and landscapes by painters. Our ideal, Fulford argues, 'is the pluralistic city, the city of many cultures that somehow rise together and converge into a civilization'. By providing 'freedom, choice, opportunity', Toronto 'offers us a chance to move from one group to another and to belong to several groups at the same time, or to none'. The secular city places the onus of choice, as we have seen in Munro's story, on us: 'In making our choices we make our lives, and in describing the



Fig. 1 Jacob Tremblay as Jack in Lenny Abrahamson's *Room*. (Photo by Caitlin Cronenberg, courtesy of Elevation Pictures.)

choices we make, novelists make their art'. The value of looking at what others say about the city, then, lies in recognizing the very differences in our perceptions, appreciating that which we do not notice. By directing our attention to the choices that writers constantly make in their literary projects, Fulford challenges us to rethink their social, historical and cultural implications.

Amy Lavender Harris and Caroline Rosenthal have examined the links between Toronto's literature and its sociohistorical and literary contexts. Harris' (2010: 14) literary genealogy of the city is optimistic for the role that literature can play in 'help[ing] Torontonians transcend difference in this most culturally diverse of cities': 'Toronto's literature reflects an entirely new kind of city, a city where identity emerges not from shared tradition or a long history but rather is forged out of a commitment to the virtues of diversity, tolerance and cultural understanding'. She (2010: 208–211) categorizes the conversations about culture that permeate the city's literature into four kinds: (1) those that respond actively to intolerance; (2) those that are 'restorative, oriented towards reclaiming identity from obliterating effects of racial prejudice, economic exclusion, political erasure and ethnic spectacles that reduce culture to cliché'; (3) those wherein 'writers inscribe their cultural narratives into the city's literary landscape for the first time'; and, the focus of the present paper, (4) those that seek 'to communicate across difference, to identify common ground and explore what might be shared—however beautiful or terrible—in the multicultural city'. Rosenthal's (2011: 2, 32) comparative study of New York and Toronto novels after postmodernism argues that contemporary urban fiction has focused on the marriage between identity formation processes and developments in urban space: 'The tale of Toronto is that of a vast transition from a more or less homogeneous British outpost to a transnational city. While it started out as "Toronto, the Good", a predominantly WASP city dominated by church spires, it developed into "The World in a City", the official slogan of Tourism Toronto today, which boasts of the city's multicultural culture'. Recent works of 'ethnic' Toronto literature betray a gap 'between the political ideal of multiculturalism and a lived urban reality' (Rosenthal 2011: 33). In what follows, I will give close readings of five texts that appeared between 2004 and 2015, and that foreground some of the central concerns apparent in the city's literature.

DREAMS OF THE CITY: DAVID BEZMOZGIS' *NATASHA AND
OTHER STORIES* (2004) AND VINCENT LAM'S *BLOODLETTING
& MIRACULOUS CURES* (2005)

David Bezmozgis' *Natasha and Other Stories* and Vincent Lam's *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* literalize Toronto as the stuff of dreams; dream as '[a] vision or hope for the future; (in early use chiefly) a vain hope or idle fantasy' ('Dream, n. 2 and adj.', 3a), the two meanings (i.e. of expectation and of fantasy) often elided. Bezmozgis' bildungsroman follows Mark Berman, the Jewish narrator, who emigrate with his family from Latvia to Toronto

(an experience that parallels Bezmozgis' and his family's). In the first story, 'Tapka', the Bermans reside on the fifth floor of 'an apartment at 715 Finch fronting a ravine and across from an elementary school—one respectable block away from the Russian swarm' (Bezmozgis 2005: 3). Dense apartments in the suburbs help to define Toronto from American cities and the area along Bathurst from Steeles to Finch is one such cluster. The Bermans live away from this strip in the Don Valley, their home promising distance though not absolute separation from other immigrants: Mark's cousin, aunt and uncle are on the fourth floor, and the only other Russians in the building are the Nahumovskys, a couple in their fifties. Housing, as Mark reveals in 'Roman Berman, Massage Therapist', represents both an index to class and wealth and a source of mixed envy and ambition:

My mother noted the size of the [Kornblums'] house. Maybe three thousand square feet with a big yard. Also, it was detached. This was two substantial steps beyond our means. Between our apartment and a fully detached house loomed the intermediate town house and the semidetached house. A fully detached house was the ultimate accomplishment. Nobody we knew had even moved up to town house, though recently there had been plans and speculations. (Bezmozgis 2005: 31)

In 'An Animal to the Memory', the family has moved to a semidetached house, and in 'Natasha', the fifth story in the collection, 'a new house at the edge of Toronto's sprawl. A few miles north were cows; south the city' (Bezmozgis 2005: 81). Through the experiences of Mark's family and his neighbours, Bezmozgis underscores some of the repercussions associated with mobility, both geographical and social.

'The Second Strongest Man' reveals the importance that Mark attaches to his neighbourhood. He introduces Sergei to its drab landscape, drab, perhaps, because it appears a blank state, ready to be claimed:

At the northern edge of the city, home to Russian immigrants, brown apartment buildings, and aging strip malls, there wasn't much to show. I stressed our personal connection to each mundane thing, hoping in that way to justify its inclusion. There was the Canadian Tire store where I got my bicycle, the Russian Riviera banquet hall where my father celebrated his birthday, one delicatessen called Volga and another called Odessa, a convenience store where I played video games, my school, my hockey arena, my soccer fields. (Bezmozgis 2005: 53)

The refrain of the possessive pronoun 'my' elucidates the importance of the geography to Mark notwithstanding the neighbourhood's visual appearance. If these locations had contributed to his growth, then he too invents them by making them essential to his story. The book's other characters acclimatize less well to this constant uprooting. The Nahumovskys, Rita and Misha, have a pet Lhasa Apso, Tapka, who had followed them 'from Minsk to Vienna, from Vienna to Rome, and from Rome to Toronto' (Bezmozgis

2005: 5). When the dog was hit by a car because of an accident caused by Mark and his cousin, the older couple cannot pay for the dog's operation. Mark's father promises to help them find a new one, to which Rita responded: 'A new one? What do you mean a new one? I don't want a new one. Why don't you get yourself a new son? A new little liar? How about that? New. Everything we have now is new' (Bezmozgis 2005: 17). The city offers an opportunity for 'becoming', a process that does occur in *tabula rasa*. As Stuart Hall (1996: 4) intimates, 'identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being'. The immigrants here are not so far from Carla, in her inability to leave behind Clark. The Nahumovskys perceive their dog as a synecdoche for their past—the couple has no children—and, like the buildings in Mark's childhood, he operates as a link between their present life and the lives that they had left behind, between the new and the familiar.

Vincent Lam's *Bloodletting & Miraculous Cures* explores both the aspirations and fantasies of four young doctors as they progress from pre-medicine programmes to working in emergency rooms, and from journeys with dying relatives to evacuation missions. Another short-story cycle, the first episode 'How to Get into Medical School, Part I' introduces us to two recurring characters, Fitzgerald (Fitz) and Ming, both of whom are studying at the University of Ottawa and aim to get into medical school at the University of Toronto. Lam himself was raised in Ottawa and completed his medical training in Toronto. Ming's family, we learn, 'was modern in what they wanted for her education, and old-fashioned in what they imagined for her husband. They would disapprove of Fitzgerald, a non-Chinese. They would be upset with Ming, and she couldn't take these risks while she prepared to apply for medical school' (Lam 2012: 6). The intervention of Ming's parents, their threat to disown their children, has led, we learn in 'How to Get into Medical School, Part II', to the break-up between her sister and her boyfriend. Ming succeeds in getting into the University of Toronto a year before Fitz, so that Toronto becomes the stuff of fantasy for Fitz. As their relationship gradually deteriorates, he returns to memories of a week that they had shared and, in so doing, reflects on the life that they had once hoped for:

In September, after her parents had left, they had a perfect week, a week of playing house. It was before her classes started, and they made love on their first night in the apartment, having assembled only the bed—the rest of the furniture still in its unopened flat-packed boxes. They filled her kitchen from the stalls in Kensington Market, and went to Centre Island twice to watch children playing. Ming had been the one who would point to kids, especially mixed-race children, and say that their kids might turn out like that. (Lam 2012: 80)

Andrew Miller (2007: 120) will call such counterfactual narratives 'optatives', stories 'built into the realist novel as a part of its very structure'. The eight-part

television adaptation (2010) realizes the love triangle between Fitz (Shawn Ashmore), Ming (Mayko Nguyen) and Chen (Byron Mann), and further emphasizes the scene's counterfactual potentials by creating a subplot wherein Ming and Chen cannot have children, and Fitz becomes the couple's sperm donor.

The 5-hour drive from Ottawa to Toronto, where Ming's parents had placed a deposit on a small condo north of Bloor Street that backed onto a ravine, was to have been distance enough for Ming to reveal her relationship with Fitz, but it ultimately led to their break-up. Years (and stories) later, in 'Contact Tracing', now a victim of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) after he contracts it in an evacuation mission, Fitz will reminisce about this optative. After he tells Ming's husband Chen, who contacted SARS through him and who shares the respiratory isolation room adjacent to his, of an episode that he had witnessed in a park at Kensington en route to Centre Island, the narrator privileges us to the ailing man's memories:

Fitzgerald thought of a ferry trip to the Island with Ming before she met Chen, and was surprised that he could remember this without bitterness, without needing to know whether Chen knew that Ming and Fitzgerald had once spent a sunny afternoon on Centre Island. He felt good, that it was mostly a pleasant memory of a woman whom he now hardly knew, and of himself as a person remembered. . . . 'Listen, if I go down the drain, and I think I will, I don't want to be tubed or resuscitated or anything. It's not worth it'. (Lam 2012: 292)

That Fitz shifts his attention from thoughts of Ming to death, his and those whose lives he would endanger when they try to resuscitate him, forcibly suggests the importance of this dream to him, and his inability to be freed from its failure. As resolute as he is when he tries to convince himself and us that his alcoholism was not motivated by this romance, alcohol pushes him into seeing Ming as 'one of the if-only-it-had-been-another-way things that became vivid' (Lam 2012: 297). The city becomes the optative that Fitz cannot forget; more so, the short story cycle, in contrast to the adaptation, leaves unclear whether or not he survives SARS.

RACISM, SUBURBANISM AND ESCAPE IN SHYAM SELVADURAI'S *THE HUNGRY GHOSTS* (2013)

Toronto may not be the world's most multicultural city, but, as we have seen here, it is one of its most multiculturally diverse (Harris 2010: 190): the novelist character of Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001) will find him amongst nine columns of Patels in the city's phonebook. Toronto's heterogeneity bespeaks the urgency in which racism figures in its literature, 'tensions that have only deepened in the post-9/11 era' (Harris 2010: 200). Selvadurai's recent novel *The Hungry Ghosts* is a notable example. Anchored in a night in April, its central protagonist and first-person narrator Shivan prepares for a trip with his mother

to Sri Lanka to bring his dying grandmother back to Toronto. The novel is ‘an autobiography of feeling and place and time and period detail’ (Lawlor), but not ‘of plot and character’, and it draws on many of Selvadurai’s own experiences: ‘So the basement bedroom where Shivan lives in Scarborough is an exact replica of the bedroom I had in Scarborough, down to the pock-marked, cigarette-stubbed chairs, but I am not Shivan’ (Salgado 2015: 51). Following the riots of 1983, Canada provided Shivan, his sister and their widowed mother—like Selvadurai, Shivan’s father is Tamil and his mother Sinhalese—with freedom from persecution and it enables his sister to pursue her academic work in women’s studies. Toronto’s Tamil population promises, furthermore, kinship and community. Shivan’s first impression of Canada emphasizes its monotony—from the plane, he looked out at ‘green grass and trees between the stretches of grey highway, tarmac and squat rectangular buildings’ and on the highway, from Pearson Airport, ‘the streets all began to look alike’—though he is privately optimistic:

Soon we were on the highway, and I gazed out at large billboards, taking in the plump gleaming food of fast food chains, models in department store clothing, the hard, gleaming bodies of men in an underwear ad. The sheer size of the billboards seemed a promise of affluence and happiness. Then there were the cars, so new and clean, not belching diesel smoke as they did in Sri Lanka. The speed at which everyone drove was terrifying, the foreignness of a seat belt constricting. (Selvadurai 2014: 81–83)

The incandescent advertisements assure Shivan of democracy and modernity by promoting a replicable lifestyle: the food, the clothing and the automobiles are available to all, though at a cost. But when Shivan repeats this journey, four years later, he views the billboards with harrowing clarity, becomes impervious to the products for which they are advertising and recognizes the drivers in other cars only by their skin colour:

I leant back in my seat and stared out at the relentless ranks of squat grey buildings, their ugliness only emphasized by large, colourful billboards on their graveled roofs. Grass growing in the highway medians accentuated the filthy rails and ponderous pocked overpasses. I gazed at the other motorists, jarred by the fact that they were mostly white. (Selvadurai 2014: 268)

While these changes in Shivan’s views may have been coloured by the tragic death of his lover, this desensitization to the language of advertising owes equally to his troubled immigration experiences. In Sri Lanka, during the brief period in which he runs his grandmother’s business, Shivan recognizes that his experiences in Canada had a castrating effect, that he was denied ‘a feeling of manhood... because of my race’ (Selvadurai 2014: 193). Shivan’s efforts to strike up friendships with his classmates prove futile: ‘When I attempted to strike up a conversation, I was aware of a new creaking to my voice, my gestures too big, my laugh a bark. I was sure the other students sensed my desperation. It hung about

me like body odour' (Selvadurai 2014: 91). Selvadurai explores other immigration attempts in the Subramaniam who define themselves against more recent immigrants by living the domestic arrangements of American made-for-TV films. The couple's attempt to replicate a replication is reminiscent of the postcolonial perspective taken by Homi Bhabha. '[C]olonial mimicry', as Bhabha (1984: 126) has put it, 'is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite. . . . Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation: a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which "appropriates" the Other as it visualizes power'. Selvadurai (2014: 87–88) goes further by suggesting that the characters' mimicry is in fact outdated, 'that there was something defensive behind their contempt for the growing Sri Lankan population': 'They had become out of touch with Sri Lanka and did not fit into the new community. And the community's indifference to perceived white expectations . . . made a mockery of the sacrifices the Subramaniam had endured to integrate, sacrifices that were increasingly unnecessary'. The key term here is 'perceived': the Subramaniam's internalization of what they think (but is not in fact) the white population leaves them perpetually critical but ultimately dissatisfied.

Toronto's geography oppresses Shivan and his family, and its suburbs, in particular, contribute to their isolation. The family resides in a small row house in Scarborough, a district within Toronto and where Pi from Martel's novel has also found his home:

In our poor ward of L'Amoreaux there were only cheap identical houses and multi-laned grey roads on which traffic roared. The only recreational activity was shopping at the Bridlewood Mall. Our short dead-end street, Melsetter Boulevard, had two lines of row houses facing each other—flimsy board structures surfaced with anaemic-pink concrete brisk with brown asphalt roof shingles continuing a third of the way down the front facades. The tiny lawns were parched, the spindly trees gnarled, some limbs producing no flowers or leaves. Tall apartment towers beyond the back gardens spread their long shadows over our street. (Selvadurai 2014: 88)

Selvadurai remembers Scarborough as 'an amorphous and kind-of-nothing landscape': 'That sense of the landscape itself feeding your depression and your gloom and the sheer drudgery and grind of that life. . . . There are no models for that experience' (Lawlor). The inner-ring suburbs are 'an amorphous place, you arrive and there's no centre, there's no main street, no downtown, no nothing. It's just lost in a way. It's a kind of wasteland' (Rogers). The monotony of routine, emblemized by the trips at Bridlewood Mall, takes its toll on Shivan's social life, and as Philip Horne (1992: 102) has argued in his discussion of cinematic representations of large shopping centres, personal contact with individual customers and their relationship with salespeople are compromised by management's pursuit of profit. The constant mobility instigated by York University's geography, with its 1960s

and 1970s brutalist architecture, its ‘massive, starkly functional, a paucity of windows, a predominance of concrete’, and its design ‘to keep us on the move with very few places to congregate—lots of corridors and hallways, few common rooms and courtyards’ (Selvadurai 2014: 90) provides little relief. Silvan heads to Vancouver ‘because it looked nothing like Toronto’ and because it had ‘no reminders of my previous life’ (Selvadurai 2014: 280), but, like Carla in *Runaway* and the Nahumovskys in *Natasha*, he is dogged by his past.

THE GLOBALIZED CITY OF MICHAEL DOWSE’S *THE F WORD* OR *WHAT IF* (2013) AND ANDREW KUSHNIR’S *WORMWOOD* (2015)

Michael Dowse’s *The F Word* or *What If* and Andrew Kushnir’s *Wormwood* illustrate the close correspondence between Toronto and the world. Where the former shows multiculturalism as a demographic reality, the latter attends to some of the challenges that emerge with globalization and posits more positive ways of engaging in cross-cultural experiences. Dowse’s film positions the city, on the one hand, to Europe, and on the other, to Asia. The very first appearance of Ben (Rafe Spall), an expert on international copyright law, places the city centrally on the world map. Ben argues with his long-term girlfriend Chantry (Zoe Kazan) regarding whether Europe is a continent, designating it, instead, to Asia. He attributes this alleged error and its perpetuation to Europeans’ racial prejudice. Ostensibly a rom-com, *The F Word* follows the adventures of Wallace (Daniel Radcliffe) and Chantry as they configure their mutual attraction into friendship: Chantry’s long-term relationship and Wallace’s desire not to repeat his parents’ example by engaging in infidelity prevent them from moving beyond the proverbial *F Word*. The film’s central characters are all globetrotters: Wallace was born in London’s Charing Cross Hospital, where his parents met, and he will finish medical school in Asia by the end of the film’s North American version (the UK one ends with Wallace and Chantry exchanging Fool’s Gold Loafs); Chantry heads to Taiwan for a promotion; and Ben goes to Dublin, in the first instance, on a 6-month contract to take charge of European negotiations for the UN and he will send Chantry postcards from Greece, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Poland and other parts of Europe. Toronto’s modernity, its cosmopolitanism and its multiculturalism are heavily foregrounded to match these urban centres. If, as we have seen before, the world goes to Toronto, Dowse shows Toronto going to the world.

Toronto’s chameleonic ability to take the shape of almost any location internationally has long been recognized: David Fleischer’s ‘Reel Toronto’ column (2007–present) in the *Torontoist* has offered a taxonomical survey of the appearances of the city in films and my own edited collection *World Film Locations: Toronto* (2014) framed some of these empirical findings by juxtaposing the city’s history with developments in its filmic heritage. What sets *The F Word* apart and what enables us to appreciate some of the city’s diverse communities—including some of its more affluent areas—is its geographical integrity, that is, its attempts

to render characters' movements between exterior locations as real as possible. Writer and executive producer Elan Mastai explains:

So, when two characters walk from a house party to an apartment building, those exteriors are actually a walkable distance from each other. When they [Wallace and Chantry] meet for coffee, the actual coffee-shop is halfway between their two places, which are set in specific neighbourhoods. When they run into each other at a movie theatre [College Street's Royal Cinema] and stop for a bite to eat afterwards [at the George Street Diner], the diner is on the way home. And so on. (Ue 2015: 129)

The film may be a rom-com, but it offers a kind of social realism, for instance, in the dynamics inherent in the single-parent household of Wallace's sister (Jemima Rooper) and the problems with long-distance relationships, something that the characters' careers provoke: the film leaves unclear whether or not Ben is having an affair in Dublin but the distance, both spatial and temporal, between Ben and Chantry has grown—just as it had, in a micro-scale, with Fitz and Ming in *Miraculous Cures*—and this extended separation has brought Chantry and Wallace closer.

My final test case is Andrew Kushnir's play *Wormwood*, which premiered in Toronto's Tarragon Theatre, and recalls Munro's story in its concern about how the city and its people are viewed by outsiders, and offers some introspection into immigrants in the diaspora like those we find in Selvadurai's novel. Inspired by Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story 'Rappaccini's Daughter' (1844), it goes further in its exploration of the cultural amnesia of immigrants who have become disconnected from their native countries: it is unsurprising that Ivan (Luke Humphrey), the young Ukrainian-Canadian on whom the play's story surrounds, finds his Beatrice in a girl named Artemisia (Chala Hunter). Ivan and his brother Markiyani (Ken James Stewart) travel to Zaporizhia, a city in southeastern Ukraine, to observe the elections following the Orange Revolution (2004–2005). Ivan worked in the television section of an electronics store, and his decision to return to his ancestral home was spurred by the televised broadcasts of the Maidan. He describes to Artemisia the rapt attention that the event had commanded:

And these people back home, on a weekend, these people who had come to buy a newer, bigger, brighter television, for a moment they've stopped seeing the TVs, the actual material thing, because they can't see past what's happening on their screens, these hundreds of thousands of people in orange. And for a moment, it doesn't make total sense but they stop wanting a TV and they find themselves wanting something else. They can't even put words to it but they want something else. And there I am, and I know. I know what it is. (Kushnir 2015: 44)

Television, as we see here, disturbs the balance between the local and the global, connecting Ivan to the wider world and its concerns, but it simultaneously evokes what Stanley Fish (1997: 384) polemically identifies as



Fig. 2 The cast of *Wormwood* (Nancy Palk, Amy Keating, Luke Humphrey and Benedict Campbell) in Toronto's Tarragon Theatre. (Photo by Cylla von Tiedemann, courtesy of Tarragon Theatre.)

'boutique multiculturalism', that 'which honors diversity only in its most superficial aspects because its deeper loyalty is to a universal potential for rational choice'. Fish (1997: 384) holds Ivan's television-fuelled (even if well-meaning) motivation in contrast with (Fig. 2)

strong multiculturalism, which honors diversity in general but cannot honor a particular instance of diversity insofar as it refuses (as it always will) to be generous in its turn; and really strong multiculturalism, which goes to the wall with a particular instance of diversity and is therefore not multiculturalism at all.

For all Ivan's aspirations to make a difference and his demonstrated interest in Ukrainian culture, he does not fully understand the historical moment in which he becomes involved; his role as observer is rendered ironic. Artemisia's father (Scott Wentworth) tells him that his intentions, however well meant, are hubristic and that the country ought not to be understood in terms of binaries:

We are the fractions of fractions, defined by who broke us when and how. You come here thinking you have some grasp of our future—but in your hands, you hold a memory, an old dream. That is what is what you want to seduce my girl with and that has very little to do with us, the ones who are here living, scrabbling, bleeding, dying. (Kushnir 2015: 62)

Identity, as Hall (1996: 4) has put it and as Kushnir evinces here, is ‘increasingly fragmented and fractured’ with ‘the processes of globalization, which [Hall] would argue are coterminous with modernity...and the processes of forced and “free” migration which have become a global phenomenon of the so-called “post-colonial” world’. Ivan enables Kushnir, himself a gay, Ukrainian-Canadian, actor, to question the ethical responsibilities embroiled in being, what he has variously termed, an ‘insider-outsider’ and a ‘well-meaning “insertionist”’:

What does it mean to insert yourself in a community not your own, with the best intentions, only to discover that you don’t understand as much as you thought and you may be imperiling the very thing (idea, person, community) you’d like to help. How do you deal with new-found ignorance or discovering a blindness? How does it change your perception of a place, a community, and even more startlingly, yourself and your place in the world[?] (Kushnir 2015)

The play illuminates not only the differences between two cities, but also the problems inherent in using what we have and that to which we have access to forge better futures. ‘Becoming’ something new through migration (literal or figurative) seems so close for many of the characters that appear in this essay, and Toronto offers many opportunities to begin afresh—but they always seem to fall short. Does the city promise too much, or are our ideals for migration and multiculturalism too ambitious? Or does the world weigh down these characters with ‘history, language and culture’? In their explorations of stories of Toronto’s people, the writers under consideration often turn to their own lives for inspiration: they show the city not only as a container of some remarkable plots but also as one of under-represented voices. These plural narratives imply several Torontos and they bespeak a symbiotic relationship, a synergy, between the city and the world.

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New York Fiction

Markku Salmela and Lieven Ameel

INTRODUCTION

The approach to the literature of New York outlined in this chapter finds a pertinent point of departure in an emblematic Harlem Renaissance text. Rudolph Fisher's short story *The City of Refuge* (1925) opens with King Solomon Gillis "dazed and blinking" on a Harlem street. He has just arrived in New York City from North Carolina and experienced his first subway ride, which felt "as if he had been caught up in the jaws of a steam-shovel, jammed together with other helpless lumps of dirt, swept blindly along for a time, and at last abruptly dumped" (Fisher 2008: 35). Although the New York subway had long been running with electricity by this time, the steam shovel metaphor illustrates appropriately the newcomer's violent sensory perception. It reduces the human being into a particle in the entrails of great urban machinery. In this context, the "abrupt dump[ing]" is readable as an image of a violent birth. The mechanistic metaphor also represents the very experience of modern life, Gillis' first glimpse into the "maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal" that Marshall Berman introduces at the beginning of his wide-ranging analysis of modernity, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air* (15). This is the experience from which a modern consciousness is born.

The breathless grammatical fragments of Fisher's next two paragraphs evoke the same violence and rush, the multiple shocks of the crowd and the noise:

Shuffle of a thousand soles, clatter of a thousand heels, innumerable echoes. Cracking rifle-shots—no, snapping turnstiles. "Put a nickel in!" "Harlem? Sure. This side—next train." Distant thunder, nearing. The screeching onslaught of the fiery hosts of hell, headlong, breathtaking. Car doors rattling, sliding, banging

open. “Say, wha’ d’ye think this is, a baggage car?” Heat, oppression, suffocation—eternity—“Hundred ’n turdy-fit’ next!” More turnstiles. Jonah emerging from the whale. Clean air, blue sky, bright sunlight. (2008: 35)

Given that Gillis has shot a white man before leaving the South, the subway ride is an extension of a long and tense journey that is loaded with sensations of fear and guilt. Without any finite clauses, the description relates a fast series of encounters with both people and mechanical entities, encounters that blend into a gamut of characteristically urban stimuli. The consequent release into the sunny street after the hellish journey then represents a relief of equally biblical proportions, a moment of rebirth from the belly of the city. The location of this rebirth is 135th Street, which another Fisher story, *Blades of Steel*, identifies as “the heart and soul of Black Harlem,” its essential contact zone (2008: 159). Thus, Gillis emerges from underground at the precise epicenter of his dream city, ready to reinvent himself in the African-American capital. Maria Balshaw is right to argue that the naïve newcomer’s urban destination is “a utopian projection of his own psyche” rather than a city based on historical fact (2000: 16). More important, the nature of that projection—in Fisher’s story and elsewhere—is that it keeps changing, dissolving, and reappearing.

Although African-American migration to Harlem represents a distinct class of New York City arrivals, Gillis’ experience exemplifies a much broader category in both historical and fictional terms: the classical topos of arrival in the city, which is remarkably prominent especially in the literature of traditional immigrant cities like New York. Texts of realist orientation, in particular, have often exploited this motif “to submerge the audience in a highly charged and emotionally gripping situation” and fueled “a fascination for the Big Confrontation between individual and city” (Keunen 1999: 359). Examples of literary texts that use that moment of confrontation in New York in a central narrative or dramatic function are numerous, ranging from the “New York Revisited” chapter of Henry James’s *The American Scene* (1907) to Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* (1899) or Dos Passos’s *Manhattan Transfer* (1925). Perhaps less obviously from the American perspective, they also include novels such as Kafka’s *Amerika* (posthumous 1927) and Frank McCourt’s *Angela’s Ashes* (1996). As a rule, in these texts, it is some conspicuous aspect of urban modernity that captivates or shocks the character-observer arriving in the city with a mixture of regenerative promise and destructive force. James marvels at the appealing “note of vehemence” and “dauntless power” in New York’s urban life (1993: 418), whereas Kafka’s protagonist, impressed by the Statue of Liberty, nevertheless sees its arm reach up with a sword instead of a torch (2008: 3). Such shocks of promise and aggression exemplify the feeling—typical of New York’s fictional newcomers such as Dreiser’s Carrie Meeber or Dos Passos’s Bud Korpenning—of being thrown into a violent, disconcerting environment. Out of this destructive experiential intensity, the modern urban subject is born in a

psychological process that approximates the violence of a physical birth. The emphatic scene of arrival that keeps recurring in New York texts represents a significant initial component in, and a foreshadowing of, the total process of self-transformation that plays itself out in the city.

This chapter investigates patterns of self-transformation and rebirth dominant in New York literature. In the next section, we will outline how the notion of creative destruction not only describes the operations of the market economy but can also be meaningfully transposed first to the realm of the built environment and secondly to that of individual lives. In subsequent sections, this idea, also conceivable as the whirlpool of modernity at the individual level, will be applied to a number of New York texts, mostly from the twentieth century, which reveal that the tendency toward violent self-fashioning is remarkably consistent despite its different manifestations across literary paradigms. As the example of Fisher's King Solomon Gillis implies, the tendency is not restricted to mainstream "white" urban mythologies but appears in African-American tradition with equal force. Our further examples testify to this consistency across different ethnic traditions.

CREATIVE DESTRUCTION AND THE EXPERIENCE OF NEW YORK CITY

The promise of a radically new consciousness awakening in the metropolis, and the destructive processes that enable such a birth—these are well-established themes of city literature, with a broad range both in geographical and in historical terms. Marshall Berman notes their first appearance in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (*Julie, or the New Heloise* 1761), in which Paris' "agitated, tumultuous life" (quoted in Berman 1988: 18) entails the dissolution of moral and societal demarcations, but also the promise of self-achievement, of social mobility, and of artistic accomplishments. In the twentieth-century literature of New York, these themes gain further depth by situating themselves, enriched by the American dream of democratic self-achievement, in the spatial embodiment of global capitalism. In Fisher's story, the protagonist's rebirth is described as if he were enmeshed in industrial machinery, and it remains somewhat unclear whether his birth is the glorious product, or rather the dirty by-product, of the city. There is the intimation that the new arrival is the unclean residue, akin to fecal waste, of the urban system. The opening pages of John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, published in the same year as Fisher's story, present similar imagery, describing new arrivals in New York as being pressed "through the manure smelling wooden tunnel of the ferry house, crushed and jostling like apples fed down a chute into a press," and likening a newborn baby in a city hospital to urine, "as if it were a bedpan" (1987: 15).

These texts posit arrival in the city as a promising but violent process with destructive, even dehumanizing undercurrents. The city appears in them as a continuously renewing force, which holds out the promise of self-invention and self-fulfillment—although there is always the possibility that one is merely feeding the machine, a city of refuse rather than refuge. This makes

obvious a fundamental analogy between the city and the operations of capitalism as described by Joseph Schumpeter's thesis on creative destruction. According to Schumpeter, the capitalist system is locked in a state of constant change and movement; it is this "mutation" that "incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure from within, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one" (1976: 83). What this account says about economic structure can, in the right conditions, easily be applied to similar incessant changes in the built environment or the individual urban subject. In Berman's words, in capitalist urbanity everything from people to neighborhoods and cities is "made to be broken tomorrow, smashed or shredded or pulverized or dissolved, so [it] can be recycled or replaced next week, and the whole process can go on again and again, hopefully forever, in ever more profitable forms" (1988: 99).

The economic process tends to inscribe itself onto the cityscape, and the minds of urban dwellers, whose identities are place based. The prominent presence of the theme of creative destruction in the literature of New York is perhaps influenced by the fact that in America's financial capital, the urban fabric of the built environment has resonated with this economic principle for much of its history. Despite the great symbolic weight afforded to numerous landmarks of the city, in New York it would be very easy to see urban space itself as primarily a form of capital. In the large yet strictly limited area constituting the island of Manhattan, for example, the space-as-currency principle is particularly conspicuous because of the street grid that divides most of the island into rectangular, uniform spatial units accessible to finance-based consideration. Aware of these analogies between economic systems, urban form, and sociospatial processes, critics have used the notion of creative destruction rather freely to make sense of cultural phenomena. Schumpeter's very vocabulary resonates quite forcefully on the individual level as represented in New York's fictions: it is repeatedly the case that characters' personal pasts have to be discarded completely—at least seemingly or momentarily—for the transformative novelties of the city to take effect.

New York's striking collective preoccupation with the future and peculiar relation to its own past has been described in Michel de Certeau's essay "Walking in the City," which combines awareness of economics with a textual metaphor. The language in a particularly evocative passage is again that of simultaneous destruction and invention:

Unlike Rome, New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future. A city composed of paroxysmal places in monumental reliefs. The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding. [...] On this stage of concrete, steel and glass, cut out between two oceans (the Atlantic and the American) by a frigid body of water, the tallest letters in the world compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production. (1984: 91)

The initial comparison in this passage follows the conventional assumption regarding the distinctions between European and American attitudes to (urban) tradition, New York being commonly experienced as America's "front portal" (Tuan 1977: 42). The "paroxysmal places" of the city transform the collective "explosion" of the urban universe into a constant series of private demolitions: violent recreations of society's productive machinery and urban space as well as of individual selves and their lives. The historical statuses of the city—a designated point of entry for immigrants, a business hub, and a dominant cultural center—both explain this destructive vitality and imply that these processes are more likely to take place in New York than anywhere else.

Echoing this perspective, Peter Brooker has described New York as "a constellated symbol of the New" (1996: 1). In literature as well, in the words of Hana Wirth-Nesher, "New York is never measured against its own past; it is defined against its possible future" (1996: 112). In the physical cityscape, this peculiar form of cultural orientation and amnesia has appeared as constant demolition and construction of the built environment, a cyclical development that assumes the guise of inevitability. In 1904, James saw after a long absence that speculation had "ruthlessly" erased his childhood home and "amputated" much of his personal history (1993: 131); everywhere he saw "the new landmarks crushing the old quite as violent children stamp on snails and caterpillars" (1993: 123). Critical views of creative destruction often depend upon, and facilitate, a sense of nostalgia, and James's sentiment exemplifies this intertwining. Indeed, the notions of nostalgia and counter-nostalgia offer two alternative ways of conceptualizing creative destruction in the urban environment, each foregrounding one of the concept's two antithetical components. The nostalgic attitude, which tends to see all redevelopment as destructive, seeks to preserve the city's historical character, whereas the counter-nostalgic tendency recognizes the imperfections of the past and wishes to create something better. Both attitudes have manifested themselves in powerful strains in New York writing over the years (see Waterman 2010).

As the example of James's lamentation shows, by the early twentieth century rebuilding had already come to resemble a law of nature in New York's urban environment. This naturalization may be seen to obliterate the function of memory, as in James Merrill's poem *An Urban Convalescence* (1962):

As usual in New York, everything is torn down
 Before you have time to care for it.
 Head bowed, at the shrine of noise, let me try to recall
 What building stood here. Was there a building at all?
 I have lived on this same street for a decade. (Merrill 2008: 21)

Here the speaker, recovering from illness, draws explicit parallels between some urban buildings and selfhood: "The sickness of our time requires/That these as well be blasted in their prime" (2008: 22). This drive to destroy,

rebuild, and forget seems connected to the ideal of the American dream: a certain amount of amnesia may have seemed a historical necessity, an inevitable by-product of future hope in America's "front portal." "Believing it to be the price of progress," explained Nathan Silver half a century ago, "New Yorkers are remarkably cheerful about destruction" (2000: 19). In a historical perspective, this is also one crushing irony buried inside the 9/11 tragedy. New York's sustained identity as a destination that promises to transform its new inhabitants' lives requires the constant presence of crises and destructive forces.

In the economy-based image of creative destruction, self-development is to be seen as return upon investment, achievable through risk and speculation rather than safe play. The individual narratives of those arriving at the "stage" next to the "American Ocean," in de Certeau's phrase, from all directions, present different versions of this risk-filled undertaking. In Fisher's *City of Refuge*, King Solomon Gillis, the "baby jess in from the land o' cotton" (2008: 37), is deceived by his cold-blooded acquaintance Mouse Uggam and ultimately apprehended by the law even while his dream of regeneration persists. In addition to the subway, a key urban phenomenon for him seems to be the airshaft in his building, the description of which echoes the earlier subway passage in at least three ways: grammatically, in terms of its rushed intensity, and in its depiction of "a common channel" of experience in the entrails of the city:

An airshaft: cabbage and chitterlings cooking; liver and onions sizzling, sputtering; three player-pianos out-plunking each other; a man and a woman calling each other vile things; a sick, neglected baby wailing; a phonograph broadcasting blues; dishes clacking; a girl crying heartbrokenly; waste noises, waste odors of a score of families, seeking issue through a common channel; pollution from bottom to top — a sewer of sounds and smells. (2008: 38)

This is still part of Gillis' arrival, his first moment of New York's lived domesticity, and the emphasis is decidedly on unpleasant auditory and olfactory experience and human unhappiness. A transformation is indeed implied, but instead of encouraging individual accomplishment, the urban system seems to consist of a noisy and foul-smelling collective organism. It is apparent that the dream city has a waste management problem of a specific kind. Here the cities of refuge and refuse come together in one of New York's thousands of metaphorical birth canals.

MODULATIONS OF CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION

Descriptions of return to the city modulate the experience of literary arrival, with its implications of violent character transformation. Edith Wharton, whose New York fiction arguably revolves around the dynamics between the promise of personal self-fulfillment and the city's corrosive force, against the backdrop

of the “destructive element of twentieth-century urbanism” (Gelfant 1954: 97), provides a telling example of such a modulation of arrival in her short story *Autrestemps*. . . . The story of Mrs. Lidcote, who returns to New York after a self-imposed refuge in Italy, spurred on by the news that her daughter has divorced her husband and has remarried, shows in its title its preoccupation with the possibilities wrought by new beginnings: at least in the proverb, new times tend to bring new mores and new social codes. Tellingly, the ship on which the protagonist travels to her former home city is the *Utopia*, and Mrs. Lidcote is drawn between the hope that in her absence a new and more tolerant era has arrived, and the fear that her daughter will face the same ostracizing she experienced once. In this text that draws on the conventions of the novel of manners (see Wilson 2010), New York is the personification of the city’s fashionable society, a “huge menacing mass” that keeps Mrs. Lidcote in terror of its judgment (Wharton 1991: 185). The city is described as a problem, as a “sphinx” and a “riddle” one must “read or perish” (188). The riddle is the same for the reader as for Mrs. Lidcote: has the moral codebook changed, is a rebirth in the city possible? Within the rigid moral frame of Wharton’s fashionable New York society, a new beginning appears to be impossible. Mrs. Lidcote, too, is unable to leave the past and succumb to the future; in a sense, she has come to resemble her chosen home city Florence more than New York, and instead of being oriented toward a future “it was always the past that occupied her” (185).

The literature of New York is rife with characters for whom the disconcerting confrontation with the city does not lead to a successful transformation, and who are unable to align their lives successfully with the process of erasure and rebirth at work in the city. The city is also the graveyard of the newcomer’s illusions—a theme that, from Balzac’s *Illusions perdues* (*Lost Illusions* 1837–1843), has positioned artistic as well as social aspirations within the orbit of technological innovation and economic progress. In modernist literature, in particular, artistic emancipation becomes one of the key themes, so that “many . . . [a] literary hero . . . stand at the end of their novels on the edge of some urban redefinition of themselves—as if the quest for self and art alike can only be carried out in the glare and existential exposure of the city, where, as Julius Hart puts in a compelling phrase in his poem *Journey to Berlin*, one is ‘born violently into the wild life’” (Bradbury 1986: 101).

Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar* (1971) can be read as the personal account of a failed rebirth and the loss of illusions in the confrontation with the “hullaballoo” of the city. The opening pages of the novel resemble those of Fisher’s *The City of Refuge* in the way they describe arrival in a disconcerting urban environment that is in violent motion, promising the possibility of personal redefinition, while simultaneously stripping the character of personal agency. In the first lines, premonitions of death, the tense national and international political context and personal experience are all fused in the first experience with the city:

It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs, and I didn't know what I was doing in New York. I'm stupid about executions. [...] I couldn't help wondering what it would be like, being burned alive all along your nerves.

I thought it must be the worst thing in the world.

New York was bad enough. By nine in the morning the fake, country-wet freshness that somehow seeped in overnight evaporated like the tail end of a sweet dream. Mirage-gray at the bottom of their granite canyons, the hot streets wavered in the sun, the car tops sizzled and glittered, and the dry, cindery dust blew into my eyes and down my throat. (Plath 1988: 1)

To the protagonist Esther Greenwood, the city's promising "freshness" has evaporated by the first morning. She imagines other people's commenting on her transformation from provincial girl to a confident woman able to be "steering New York like her private car" (1988: 2). In reality, the experience is the very opposite of such omnipotent agency: "I wasn't steering anything, not even myself. I just bumped from my hotel to work and to parties and from parties to my hotel and back to work like a numb trolleybus." Rather than being in charge, she has lost all sense of independent movement: "I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo" (1988: 2). The city holds out the specter of an alternative kind of life, but it does not facilitate the protagonist's escape from under the "bell jar" of her troubled mind. If anything, it is suggested that as long as the protagonist is confined within the city, New York acts as a container for the tensions produced by the contact between Esther's personal hopes and provincial illusions, and the disconcerting stimuli of the city. Elsewhere Plath points out that it is only when Esther leaves the city to her suburb of Boston, that, "the cracks in her nature which had been held together as it were by the surrounding pressures of New York widen and gape alarmingly" (quoted in Ames 1988: 208). Gradual mental implosion follows after her return home.

Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar*, King Solomon Gillis in *The City of Refuge* and Bud Korpenning in *Manhattan Transfer* are, like other classical arrivals such as the protagonists of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* and Thomas Wolfe's *The Web and the Rock* (1939), all Americans arriving in New York, regardless of their diverse ethnic, social, and gendered outlook. The relation with the city which these characters share is that of a "tragic tension between [the protagonist's] conception of the city as releasing, exciting, freeing and the city as a place which crushes creativeness and purpose," to extrapolate Anselm Strauss's analysis of the hero in *The Web and the Rock* (2009: 11). Similar tensions, further exacerbated by cultural, geographical, and linguistic distance, inform the trajectory of the successive waves of migrants from the old world arriving in New York. For the newly arrived European dreaming of self-fulfillment in America, the

experience of New York City is profoundly informed by the city's association with all things juvenile, new and potent.

Amongst American immigration novels, Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (1934) takes a special place, for its innovative modernism as well as for the way in which it explicitly aims to paint a representative narrative of American migration. The narrator posits the beginning of the story in "the year 1907, the year that was destined to bring the greatest number of immigrants to the shores of the United States" (Roth 1977: 9). From the opening pages onward, identities have to be literally recast: for the protagonist, David, arriving in Ellis Island with his mother, the first contact both with his father and with his new home country involves letting go of a blue straw hat, which singles him out as outlandish, and which is discarded into the water unceremoniously. Expectations are put into perspective with equal swiftness. David's mother Genya proclaims, in Yiddish, that "this is the Golden Land" (1977: 11); when she asks the father whether they will live in New York City, he corrects her with a curt "Nein. Bronzeville" (1977: 16). Mispronounced, Brownsville appears as the distinctly more prosaic, real-life counterpart to the "Golden Land" of dreams (Wirth-Nesher 1996: 144).

David's trajectory, however specific to Roth's own background and to the conditions of Jewish immigrants in early-twentieth-century New York, is also representative of that of the successive waves of immigrants to New York up to our present days. Having left the old world, David embarks upon a process of self-transformation, which entails tearing off past identities—the novel can be read as a drawn-out patricide—while forging a new kind of ethnic and linguistic identity out of the shreds. His development means growing into a new language, or more specifically, into two languages simultaneously (English and Hebrew), and a sense of destruction is integral to this experience. David literally almost explodes in the culminating event in the novel, a scene of near-electrocution described in a style that has been referred to as a "celebrated modernist explosion" (Sollors 1996: 154). Language, the city, and the self momentarily dissolve, only to be reborn.

In Michael Chabon's novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* (2000), the reader follows the transformation of Sammy Clay, a Jewish boy who, like David, takes his first steps in New York City in Brownsville/Brooklyn, and that of Sammy's cousin Joseph. Beginning on the eve of the Second World War, Chabon's novel carries the theme of urban transformation and personal refashioning one important step forward in the history of American urbanization, leading the characters out of the city into the suburbs. Radical transformation and self-invention are emphatically linked to the motifs of metamorphosis and escape. Sammy Clay, who in the novel becomes the creator of the great American comic hero "The Escapist," and who is a vehement adorer of Houdini, looks back on his childhood environment as that "airtight vessel known as Brooklyn, New York," within which he felt to be "sealed and hog-tied" (Chabon 2000: 3). As a kid, he dreamed the "usual Brooklyn dreams of flight and transformation and escape" (2000: 6). The city in the novel appears as a trap in a manner familiar from naturalistic novels, but also as a refuge and a capitalist dream factory. For

Sammy's cousin, Joseph Kavalier from Prague (Chabon does not conceal the novel's indebtedness to Kafka), the city offers a sanctuary from the atrocities of the Nazi Reich, and the city's market for popular comics enables the cousin's entry into the creative (and moneyed) class.

New York enables transformation, but there is, throughout the novel, the intimation that the city could be discarded like an empty shell upon successful refashioning—it appears as an elaborate kind of cocoon where young Sammy is trapped, like a pupa “struggling [. . .], mad for a taste of light and air” (2000: 3). Breaking out from this cocoon in the process of violent metamorphosis is not without its dangers, which include the possibility of suffocation or drowning, as Salvador Dalí finds out in the novel, when, in one of the many variations on the escape act, he almost dies performing his diving-suit act in New York. Light and air, as the metaphors of the cocoon and the air-tight vessel suggest, are more freely available outside of the city. When Kavalier and Clay have performed their first successful transformation, from teenage boys to successful artists, it takes them to the commercial heart of the city. Their second transformation leads out of it. Joseph, in an elaborate escape act, disappears in the mist of the Second World War. Sammy, performing a more prosaic act of self-sacrifice, moves into the new suburbs of Long Island, together with Joseph's pregnant fiancée. Sammy, who is fascinated with the New York World Fair's (1939–1940) vision of future garden cities, has little nostalgia for life in the ethnic inner city:

He had grown up in an area of great hopelessness, and to him and millions of his fellow city boys, the Fair and the world it foretold had possessed the force of a covenant, a promise of a better world to come, that he would later attempt to redeem in the potato fields of Long Island. (Chabon 2000: 375)

Moving into the suburbs appears as a trajectory into adulthood, and into the future, a move as inevitable as it is boring and, eventually, also thoroughly American. As Philip Fisher points out, for members of newly arrived ethnic groups, to “move even once was to enter the general American condition. For New York Jews the move from the Lower East Side or from Brooklyn to the Long Island suburbs was their entry into the general American condition” (Fisher 181). The drudgery of suburban family life, however, turns out to be just another form of prison. The ultimate escape is provided in the novel, as so often, by the American west, for which Sam departs at the very end of the novel.

WALL STREET AND 9/11

Nowhere else does the connection between the city's economic and financial creative destruction resonate so clearly with that of literary characters as in the literature of Wall Street. Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener* (1853), originally subtitled “A Story of Wall Street,” lays some philosophical foundations for much of subsequent fiction set in—or otherwise focusing on—the Financial District. In

more precise phrasing, it “engages in both direct and oblique ways the psychological and social consequences of modern capitalism” (August 2010: 60). The title character’s peculiar brand of urban anomic invites a number of interpretative contexts, but his troubles’ root cause in the economic and legal operations taking place in Wall Street seems evident. The main conflict, perhaps, is between human aspirations in general and what the “snug business among rich men’s bonds, and mortgages, and title deeds” demands from Bartleby and the narrator’s other copyists (Melville 1990: 3–4). If, as Thomas August argues, “Melville’s New York” dramatizes the capacity of “economic cycles in the United States to dissolve the social ties in which individuals normally understand and locate their identities” (2010: 60), “Bartleby” does this by its very choice of setting.

Except for “one little item of rumor” concerning his former job (Melville 1990: 33), Bartleby’s past has been completely erased from view, and so in principle he would be an ideal *tabula rasa* for recreated individuality. However, he is nothing of the kind. Academic scholarship has often characterized Bartleby as “the victim or product of systemic social arrangements [including the city itself] that either ignore or destroy selfhood” (Weinstein 1993: 29). Whether seen as an antithesis or as a parody of the erased and reinvented individual, in recent years this pale and passive figure has also become an emblem in a specific struggle against creative destruction: the Occupy Wall Street movement. Melville’s story has provided this antiglobalization effort both a certain amount of ambiguity and a predictable slogan in Bartleby’s famous line “I would prefer not to”; the character “literally does occupy Wall Street” (Greenberg 2012). He is the original, fictitious squatter in protest of capitalist bureaucracy and the soul-killing work it seems to require, staging his blunt refusal to function for the benefit of business at the epicenter of what was already the money capital of America. In Jonathan Greenberg’s phrase, “By refusing to articulate specific demands, Bartleby defies the very terms on which Wall Street does business” (2012). Those terms, of course, are supply, demand, and property.

The remarkably modern feature in Bartleby is that he does *not* represent a receptacle for all the urban stimuli that may drive transformations. Instead, he resembles a mirror on which readers can project their chosen personal or social traumas caused by work or life within the urban system. As Weinstein notes, the story “has challenged the critics [...] to explain why a man becomes anonymous and unreachable; and the array of answers suggested over the years constitutes virtually a discourse on self and identity as seen through the lenses of psychology and the social sciences” (1993: 29). The character also thoroughly belies the American myths of self-reliance and individualism. If the ideal is to “insist on yourself [and] never imitate,” as Emerson had it (2010: 36), Bartleby’s occupation alone seems to question the possibility of such autonomy. He does not create anything original; he merely copies by hand and compares. His urban individuality is that of a shadow, or a specter; and indeed, the narrator mentions his ghostly demeanor several times. Bartleby thus exists at a distance from the life of the city, the built environment, and the rest of the material world. His enigmatic

statement, “I know where I am,” is perhaps applicable to the prison where he ends up, to Wall Street, and to the entire city—the scenes of his erasure. The main material embodiments of the sense of isolation are the walls that play such prominent roles in the story: the brick wall he faces in the narrator’s Wall Street office, and the prison wall at the end, which instigate Bartleby’s repeated “dead-wall reveries.”

Although late-twentieth-century Wall Street fictions represents very different ideas of work and the urban self when compared with Melville, arguably the specter of Bartleby still haunts them as an image of a reduced human being. In novels such as Tom Wolfe’s *The Bonfire of the Vanities* (1987), Bret Easton Ellis’ *American Psycho* (1991), and Don DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* (2003), or in Oliver Stone’s influential film *Wall Street* (1987), the city of finance comes across as a separate microcosm in which, nevertheless, New York’s perceived collective characteristics and values are concentrated and exaggerated. The destructiveness of that system for healthy selfhood, and for the well-being of those outside the microcosm, is never in question. A peculiar kind of predatoriness is necessary for outward success in these texts, even if this can be a mere mask worn to achieve a kind of simulated individuality.

In the fiction of *Wall Street*, images of concrete violence regularly function as analogies for the violence of the market, often against the background of chaotic urbanity. Wolfe’s character Sherman McCoy, one of *Wall Street*’s “Masters of the Universe,” encounters a series of predators outside the world of finance but experiences a kind of ironic rebirth through violent, archaic masculinity at the end. Wolfe’s representation of the racialized city has encouraged repeated comparison with the urban spectacles of literary naturalism. Ellis’ Patrick Bateman reduces people to commodities in an extreme version of vicious capitalist consumption, whereas DeLillo’s futuristic billionaire Eric Packer’s search for a corporeal kind of creative destruction and a sense of regeneration in physical violence leads to an evident demise, which appears to be the logical conclusion to his career path. Finally, Gordon Gekko in *Wall Street* embodies a similar kind of perverted individuality, speaking in emphatic terms for the positive human value of greed, with no regard for its destructive consequences. All these characters represent different mutations of the chameleon-like type of Wall Street Man, whose idea of achievement in the city exists at a great distance from the ambitions of New York’s other urban classes.

The wavelength processes of market cycles and the spasmodic successions of urban redevelopment suggest a cyclical, repetitive temporal framework. Personal life, however, tends to feel more linear: experiencing New York at the age of 71 is not a replay of how it felt at 60 or at 21. And even in a cyclical view of history, some events stand out with a distinctive singularity. Several New York novels that appeared after 9/11 have wed these two preoccupations. Can the process of creative renewal be repeated indefinitely? Is it possible to make a new start in the scarcely recognizable landscape of one’s youth? Both Paul Auster’s *Brooklyn Follies* (2005) and, more expressly, Philip Roth’s *Exit Ghost* (2008) address these questions, asking not only whether it is possible to

become young again in New York, but also whether New York can be reborn again from the ashes of the World Trade Center.

In *The Brooklyn Follies*, an elderly man returns to his native Brooklyn, after more than half a century with the express intention to die—but also to come to terms with his past, and conspicuously open for the possibility of reinvention. In *Exit Ghost*, Roth's farewell to the Zuckerberg series, Nathan Zuckerberg returns to New York after 11 years in the Berkshires, hoping for a cure for his incontinence and at first much more reluctant than Auster's Nathan Glass to be enthralled by the city. Despite his good intentions to the contrary, he falls in love and finds again some measure of hope for himself as well as for the city. It seems as if Nathan Zuckerberg and New York alike cannot help their true nature—to be reborn against all odds and intentions:

In the country there was nothing tempting my hope. I had made peace with my hope. But when I came to New York, in only hours New York did what it does to people—awakened the possibilities. Hope breaks out. (Roth 2008: 16–17)

The protagonist feels he is gripped by a “razed hope of rejuvenation that was affecting all [his] actions,” and realizes he is “yielding to the illusion of starting again” (Roth 2008: 31). Having deliberately stepped out of time and out of the “present moment” (1) when deserting the city, the return to New York puts him squarely back in life: “Back in the drama, back in the moment, back into the turmoil of events!” (103)

The rebirth of Roth's and Auster's protagonists in a post-9/11 New York offers the image of resilient individuals coming to grips with their past and taking charge of their present against the backdrop of a New York that learns to live, perhaps for the first time with such forcefulness, with the presence of an erased past that is actively and institutionally remembered. In speaking of the lost twin towers, the term “present absence” has become so recurrent that it has become already almost platitudinal (e.g., see Rounds 2015). In Ben Lerner's *10:04*, the “present absence” (2014: 108) of the towers, however, seems to have already lost its singularity. What defines the experience of Lerner's New York is the normality of the abnormal, in particular when set against the threat of ecological crises. The protagonist is struck by the continuous unseasonable weather (e.g., 2014: 3) and the sense that once-in-a-lifetime crises have become yearly events. In this novel, the experience of the city's time is again geared toward the future—albeit an apocalyptic one—as the protagonist reads into his environment continuously the coming flood he fears to be an inevitable part of the future.

Like several other post-9/11 novels, *10:04* does not revisit the sites of the attacks per se, but considers other moments of crisis to investigate individual and communal resilience. Garth Risk Hallberg's *City on Fire* (2015) revisits the 25-hour power blackout of 1977; Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2008), hailed as the “first great 9/11 novel” (Junod 2009) deals similarly with the critical conditions of New York City in the 1970s, using Philippe

Petit's tightrope walk between the towers to fix a variety of perspectives. Disconcerting and harrowing though the epochal crises described in these novels are, literature shows that they can be performative of a renewed sense of community. In a polyphonic text such as *Let the Great World Spin*, in particular, the city novel exhibits its ability to project a unifying vision amongst the myriad narratives of the city, a kaleidoscopic panorama that restores a sense of meaning and compassion to the city's relentless cycles of erasure and renewal.

CONCLUSION

When the eponymous character of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* first begins realizing her acting ambitions, two Chicago theater managers give her almost identical answers: "Chicago is no place to get a start [. . .]. You ought to be in New York" (2005: 206). The notion that New York is the place for radical personal or career transformation, and for testing the limits of such reinventions of the self, is neither a recent one nor restricted to show business. As this chapter has demonstrated with only a tiny fraction of all the literary material that would readily lend itself to such use, the city's literary tradition has frequently returned to the identity-shaping experience of urban shock and adaptation, with significant undercurrents of both self-destruction and positive self-discovery. The brief examples from Rudolph Fisher, Henry Roth, Sylvia Plath, Michael Chabon, Herman Melville, and other authors' texts prove the consistency of these concerns in New York fictions, though mapping out the paradigmatic manifestations of these patterns in different genres and literary-historical contexts in any detail would require a much more extensive essay.

The whirlpool of modernity, stirred and accelerated by societal and economic forces of creative destruction, is the typical catalyst for the strong reactions that New York as a city provokes in literary characters. The fact that this metropolis has so repeatedly been depicted in literature "as a chaos of values and possibilities" (Fisher 1999: 243), or defined through violently disconcerting experience, speaks for the continuous intertwining between literary and other—political, economic, architectural—discourses of the city. In a recent study of Joyce and urban planning, Liam Lanigan summarizes Schumpeter's argument and notes: "More than any other field of study, theories of the city and urban planning have been heavily inflected by this understanding of modernity as a continuous process of destruction" (2014: 31). In New York, fiction itself has become such a "field of study," and modernity at large has often found its spatial equivalent in the image of the city. Since 2001, reminiscence has been a more central component of life in New York than before. The next few decades will show whether the established cycles of erasure and reinvention in both cityscape and textuality are open to permanent alteration by the changing urban discourses of the twenty-first century.

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Latin American Cities

INTRODUCTION

The ten chapters which follow, on the Caribbean, on Mexico City (David William Foster, whose very complete account is followed by another on Buenos Aires), on Medellín in Columbia (André Mesa), on Lima, by Fernando Rivera, and on Brazil and Chile, however intense their interest—and all these chapters are fascinating—cannot hope to cover all the cities it would be good to discuss, nor indicate the age and maturity of pre-Columbian civilisations which were so violently impacted upon by Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, and the Dutch, amongst other colonial powers. Further, the city-based nature of the writers discussed in this part means that some names, more famous internationally, may not appear, since they were less engaged with the immediate politics of the city, where in so many cases the city is a growing and contested space, not yet fully formed. The account of Santiago and the river, for instance, by Claudia Darrigrandi Navarro, resembles London of the mid-nineteenth century, with its mudlarks as described by Henry Mayhew, and the river as the site of death, as in Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. (There is much to be thought of in how several chapters in this anthology treat waters and rivers: Dublin, or Venice, or Japan, for instance.)

My first 'Introduction' noted the significance of Bolaño, the Chilean-born novelist who was so important for Mexico where that country meets the United States. The absence of an chapter on Nicaragua means lack of attention to the León-based poet Rubén Darío (1867–1916), though the cities he engaged with were North American, and Paris. Limitations imposed on contributors permitted only the briefest of mentions of Carpentier (1904–1980), the incontestably major writer of Havana, which is treated by Elena Valdez, taking Caribbean islands as her scope. One of Carpentier's inspirations was Cervantes. His own surrealist, and Bosch-derived concept of 'lo real maravilloso' (the marvellous in the real), is conceptualised in the Preface to *The Kingdom of this World* (1949), its subject black revolution in Haiti, after the African slave Touissant L'Ouverture rose against the French in 1791, followed by the carnivalesque career of

Henri Christophe as king of Haiti. Carpentier's phrase, weakened into 'magic realism', thinks of Latin America in terms of a baroque excess, defines an attention vital for considering 'the everyday', and a way of thinking about and considering a politics for Latin America, remembering, as Borges expresses it in his chapter 'The Argentine Writer and Tradition' (1951), that writing and politics can be thought and can mean differently in such a country as Argentina, since it is so outside the mainstream of Europe and the United States. Other literatures can therefore be thought outside the limits of their national settings and agendas. Carpentier, too, in his *Music in Cuba*, helps establish the African roots of so much music appropriated by Europeans; the result is that music and the urban, and black culture associate in the United States and Europe if only because of the black, and Hispanic, influences from Africa and the Caribbean, which came into the United States' white cultures.

A third writer, as major as any European novelist of the nineteenth century, is Machado de Assis (1839–1908), born of a freed slave, in Rio de Janeiro: in *Quincas Borba* (1891), Machado makes the newly enriched Rubião, a stranger in Rio, remember walking in the city and seeing an execution:

The principal figures were two black men, One of them, of medium height, had his hands tied, his eyes cast down, bronze-coloured skin, and a rope tied around his neck. The end of the rope was in the hands of another black man. This one was looking straight ahead, and his colour was uniformly jet black. He was bearing the curiosity of the crowd with pose. When the paper had been read the procession continued on along the Rua dos Ourives. It was coming from the jail... (Chapter 47: 63)

This memory acts as a primal scene, defining city violence, and its dependency on a slave culture in Brazil's Minas Gerais, the area of gold-mining, and of astonishing baroque churches, in the eighteenth century; this lynching offers the other side of Brazilian nineteenth century life, when it was an Empire under Pedro II. Rubião ends returning to Barbacena, in Minas Gerais, where he had come from, after having lived the illusions that the city, and the 'Empire', creates. Machado, not a naturalist writer, belongs to a certain 'baroque', which marks Latin America, an excess which is also a negative one, and which, in Walter Benjamin's terms, is deeply aware of the fragment and of the failure of totalities—most of all in Empires which aspire to a totality. Freitas, one of Rubião's new friends in the city, and a 'castaway', when asked if he would go to Europe, relies that he 'wears a smiling mask', but: 'I'm a sad person. I'm an architect of ruins. I would go first to see the ruins of Athens, then to the theatre to see *The Poor Man of the Ruins*, a weepy drama. Later on to bankruptcy court, where ruined men are found...' (30: 39).

Machado, in *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, and *Quincas Borba* and *Dom Casmurro*, is aware of ruins in a mode which separates him from realism and makes his city writing more derived from *Tristram Shandy*, a pre-Joycean text whose excess is acutely aware of death. One Paris-based writer with much to say on the baroque is the Cuban-born Severo Sarduy, in *Cobra* (1973), himself much indebted to Lezama Lima's formulations of the baroque as basic to Latin

American literature, in *Paradiso* (see Elena Valdez's chapter for the crucial importance of Lezama Lima). *Cobra* invokes the name 'Cuba'; its defiance of gender/sexuality and chronological time (and time as single chronology is what the city as a concept defies) works through several cities, starting with Tanger in Morocco. Perhaps, taking the architecture of Mexico City, or the towns of Minas Gerais (Oura Preto, Tiradentes) or Lima as examples, cities *are* baroque, consciously so with South America as opposed to North, and they require the concept of the baroque to speak of them.

Octavio Paz, in *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1961), gives the melancholic thought of solitude, as something other to US culture, as a key to Mexico and to the continent; it is appropriated by Márquez in the title of his most famous book, which is an attempt to create a national epic for Columbia which fragments as it writes, coming apart visibly with the rain in the last pages. It appears in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981), set in a small town which the bishop, passing by in a boat, does not bother to visit: 'solitude' becomes a trope, like the word 'labyrinth', essential to Borges, as in 'The Garden of Forking Paths'; the labyrinth image, so essential to the city, for example in Borges' characterisation of Buenos Aires, of which he writes strikingly in 'Pan on Pink Corner' and 'The History of the Tango', informs Gerald Martin's *Journeys Through the Labyrinth* (1989) as an account of what solitude might mean in practice. Martin's introduction to Latin American fiction, plus bibliography of what was available to date, discusses such writers as Miguel Angel Asturias (Guatemala) in *The President* (1946), and the Montevideo novelist Juan Carlos Onetti in *The Shipyard*, and Puig, whose *Kiss of the Spider Woman* uses the Foucauldian Panopticon as an image for Buenos Aires. If these make Latin American literature so exhilarating, they may be supplemented by the Mexican Carlos Fuentes, who owed so much to Paz. And the Chilean Neruda (1904–1973) approaches an older, and ruined, city in *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*. From a sense of the modern city as providing only sterility which does not allow man to be, he turns to the older city as having another relation to life and death, but then, in the spirit of Brecht's poem, 'Who built the walls of Thebes', asks about the anonymous worker's poverty in the building of that city which now is only a ruin.

I end this introduction to the part by returning to Brazil, given four chapters. Sophia Beal writes on Brasília, a planned capital which needs to be discussed, as neither utopic nor dystopic, but certainly beautiful, and Leila Lehnen writes on both the favelas and São Paulo. Kátia da Costa Bezerra writes on Rio. The extended treatment these scholars give befits a country larger than Australia, and with a vibrant city literature; for instance with Jorge Amado, not discussed here, whose house may be seen in Salvador, founded by the Portuguese in 1549 and Brazil's capital until 1763, a baroque city and slave port receiving Africans. Amado's novels move, politically, from left to right, and such a best seller as *Dona Flora and her Two Husbands* is carnivalesque in language and situation, and it is the city, but it lacks political edge. That cannot be said of the Brazilian, though Ukrainian-born Clarice Lispector

(1925–1977). Her last novel, *The Hour of the Star* (1977), discusses the poverty of the north-east of Brazil, and that of Rio de Janeiro, in the life of a woman who can barely be said to live, in a ‘bed-sitter in an old colonial-style tenement in Acre Street, a red-light district near the docks inhabited by women who picked up seamen in the streets between the depots of charcoal and cement’. The question is what life there can be for this girl, Macabéa, and the city context limits her and questions the limitations she lives by.

The Repeating City: Urban Space in Hispanic Caribbean Literature

Elena Valdez

Writing about the Caribbean archipelago, Antonio Benítez-Rojo explains that “. . .one can sense the features of an island that ‘repeats’ itself, unfolding and bifurcating until it reaches all the seas and lands of the earth, while at the same time it inspires multidisciplinary maps of unexpected design” (Benítez-Rojo 1996: 3). The same thoughts can be applied to the fascination of the Hispanic Caribbean in writing about the city. Unfolding and bifurcating into compelling images, the Hispanic Caribbean city repeats itself, thereby dissolving any sense that the culture can be spoken of in totalizing terms. Since the discovery of the New World, colonial literary production has documented the city diligently, but mainly as a city-fortress or a city-port, as a transit and commerce site, a meeting point of peoples and cultures. Its literary foundation starts in the nineteenth century with the publication of several novels in which the city claims its role as a setting for events, once and for all. However, the city also states its protagonist pretensions, fully realized in the twentieth century, at the time of the explosion of urban literature. The representations of Havana (Cuba), San Juan (Puerto Rico), and Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) in the twentieth century combined the various methods of walking, experiencing, and inventing the city—as a Utopia, a real space for a living community and an imaginary construction—in different historical contexts that influence and transform the urban cultures of isolated societies. Many Hispanic Caribbean writers have analyzed how, in real and imagined ways, urban spaces offer different accounts of unequal development, power negotiations, and repression. Others have focused on the intersections of urban imaginaries with memory, desire, nostalgia, national history, and international community. This essay, therefore, examines the representation of Havana, San Juan, and Santo Domingo in twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature.

HAVANA: FROM THE CITY OF COLUMNS TO THE CITY OF CALAMITIES

The literary foundations of Havana hark back to the nineteenth century when Cirilo Villaverde accurately documents the city in *Cecilia Valdés* (1882) and the modernist poet Julián del Casal (1863–1893) portrays Havana as cosmopolite and decadent in his chronicles. Subsequent representations of the city tend to stretch beyond Villaverde's *costumbrista* representation of Havana (i.e., dealing with local customs) to introduce it into the context of modernity. If between 1920 and 1930 Havana reflects the cities of origin for many exiled Spanish writers and intellectuals such as Juan Ramón Jiménez and Federico García Lorca among others, the 1940s and 1950s elaborate on a literary myth of the city. Main figures who dominated this period include Eliseo Diego (1920–1994), Alejo Carpentier y Valmont (1904–1980), and José Lezama Lima (1910–1976).

In his book of poems *En la calzada de Jesús del Monte (On Jesús del Monte Avenue)* (1949), Eliseo Diego recaptures his childhood on the Jesús del Monte Avenue, which played a special role in his life and in the construction of the Santos Suárez neighborhood and the Cuban capital. Havana is reduced to a specific avenue during a specific moment of time. Diego reveals the effects of memory in the recollection of the space and the documentation of the esthetic facet of the avenue. At the same time, the book unveils the life of its inhabitants through a vivid description of their typical and notable activities. As the city thus acquires a *criollo* touch, Diego's text becomes its poetic testament.

Havana is ever present, to a lesser or greater degree, in almost all of Alejo Carpentier's (1904–1980) works, but in *El acoso (The Chase)* (1956), the actions occur entirely in a post-Machado, that is, postwar of independence, Havana. (Gerardo Machado was the US-backed President between 1924 and 1933.) Carpentier, who attended the School of Architecture of the University of Havana for a short period, authored a series of chronicles about Havana, highlighting elements of urban design and their functionality. Elements like columns and window bars became the building blocks that added glamour and revitalized a rational city. In his photographic work *La ciudad de las columnas (The City of Columns)* (1964), Carpentier captures an external aspect of the city. For him, the Cuban capital is an eclectic city that combines different architectural styles: "the superimposition of styles . . . created for Havana a style without a style in the long run, through a process of symbiosis and amalgamation, became a peculiar kind of Baroque . . ." (Carpentier 2010: 245–246).

Despite the lack of the stylistic unification, one of the constructive elements in Havana is its columns: "... one of the most extraordinary constants of the Havana style: the incredible profusion of columns in a city that is an emporium of columns, a jungle of columns, an infinite colonnade, the last city to possess columns in such amazing excess" (Carpentier 2010: 247). As columns are a part of Havana's identity,

to enter into the forest of columns means to understand the city. The columns are also characteristic of certain locations in Havana (La Habana Vieja, Centro Habana, and Santos Suarez). Another architectural element includes window bars that have been invading the city since the colonial times. Window bars and columns serve a decorative purpose just as they also bring order to the city's chaotic baroque architecture.

If Carpentier's forest of columns swallows a walker, José Lezama Lima's (1910–1976) city explodes from within. Following the esthetics of the neobaroque, Lezama internalizes an external feature of the city and codifies it in images, abstract concepts, and metaphors. The sounds, smells, colors are imbibed, attributing a symbolic meaning to Havana that is no longer restricted by materiality, but rather enveloped in mystery. The references to Havana in Lezama's poetry lie exposed in the very titles, for example, the poems *Bahía de la Habana* (*Havana Bay*), *Pensamientos de la Habana* (*Thoughts in Havana*, 1949), while the geography is almost unidentifiable in the verses.

Lezama's essays on Havana are rich in poetic descriptions: he paints the parks as “retreat and it is in its solitude where the subdued gold of the memory is created” *recuerdo*’ (Lezama Lima 2009: 45; author’s translation), and the bus is a “monster that worries and appears three times each day” (Lezama Lima 2009: 53; author’s translation). In his essays, he also reveals his vision of the connection between Havana and its inhabitants. Just as an artist changes the city he/she inhabits, the city impacts on its residents. This mutual transformation fuses space and the human body into a single whole: “The artist feels the city, its contours, the history of its houses, its rumors, the families in their blood unions, its migrations, the secrets . . .” (Lezama Lima 2009: 78; author’s translation).

Lezama's semi-autobiographical sole novel, the masterpiece *Paradiso* (1966), epitomizes Havana through José Cemí's family genealogy and metaphoric imagery, problematizing illness and homosexuality. The city emerges as both real and in references made to the places where the author had himself once lived, which are implied as markers of aristocracy and social class: “that was when Doña Augusta alleged that her home could not be abandoned, that her other children needed her, that she was tired of visiting the provinces, when she had a house on the Prado” (Lezama Lima 2000: 209). Other precise geographical references are transparent in poetic imagery; for example, El Malecón is “the long wall between the night advancing towards the sea and the surf, ever returning to the land” (Lezama Lima 2000: 299). But the most significant technique employed in the novel to recreate Havana's environment is the fusion of colors, noises, smells that become a form of architecture: “The people of Havana, between five and six on a Sunday afternoon, smell the tedium shared by whole families” (Lezama Lima 2000: 206). These imprecise descriptions suspend reality and completely deconstruct the city in order to rebuild its poetic metaphoric image.

After 1959, the Cuban Revolution years transformed Havana into a site of memory. The Cuban Revolution triggered the self-exile of several intellectuals

who, however, remained connected with the city and the island. Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who left in Havana in 1965, in his works revisits the city in its splendor and prosperity during the 1940s–1950s, when the city assimilated the American architectural models: nightclubs, cabarets, skyscrapers, supermarkets, and shopping centers. In the modernist carnivalesque *Tres tristes tigres* (1967) and *La Habana para un infante difunto* (*Infante's Inferno*) (1979), Cabrera Infante (1929–2005) recreates the image of a Havana that had vanished between 1959 and 1961. *La Habana para un infante difunto* documents with skilled precision the area of Zulueta Street and its surroundings. The arrival of the main character in Havana activates an exploration of the city. But the portrayal of life in the *solares* (tenements) provokes the destruction of the fairy tale that Havana embodies, which in turn receives criticism, although the political context is barely mentioned. Zulueta Street becomes a vital point because Cabrera Infante's teenage years had been spent there and have remained alive in his memory. Therefore, the novel reveals a heady mixture of nostalgia and obsessive fixation with the city to which the narrator repeatedly returns: "Havanity of Havanities, all is Havanity . . . I am twice bereaved, for the city and the night. To remember is to open a Pandora's Box of pain, smells and nocturnal music" (cited in Valdés 1999: 1). For the same reason, the novel does not include an architectural, but a sensorial description of the city, often connected with sexual adventures and night life. Besides, in his writings, Cabrera Infante uses cinematographic technics and references: *flashbacks*, panoramic views, moving images of the city. Just as a memory preserves imprecise shapes, all the sensorial perceptions are what remain selectively recorded in the memory that invites him to mentally return to Havana from exile. Although the city is not idealized, Havana becomes a literary creation of a lost paradise governed by an overruling obsession to specify places in such a way as in bringing the past to life.

The vividly evocative images of prerevolutionary Havana deeply entrenched in the collective memory of many Cubans appear in Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres*. The real city emerges through an ironical and ludic picture of the erotic and scandalous night life. It becomes a natural habitat for many characters for whom the city exemplifies the realization of their dreams. For example, Cué arrived in Havana to fulfill his literary vocation. The trajectories of the characters' walks and movements through the parks, streets, and quarters along with their toponomy facilitate the reconstruction of a real space. At the same time, the city is fictionalized as the characters offer their own perception of the urban space:

We sent a while talking about cities, one of Cué's favorite subjects. He has this idea that the city wasn't created by man, but quite the contrary, and communicating that sort of archaeological nostalgia with which he talks about buildings as though there were human beings, where houses are built with a great hope, in novelty, a Nativity, and then they grow with the people who live in them and decline and are finally forgotten or they are torn down or fall to pieces and in their place another building rises which begins the cycle all over again. (Cabrera Infante 2004: 326)

Before Night Falls (1992) is the autobiography of Reinaldo Arenas (1943–1990), another exiled Cuban writer, recounting his early life in Cuba, his tenure in prison, and his fleeing to the USA in the 1980 Mariel Boatlift. The pre-1980 Havana is depicted as an obscure place of isolation and ostracism, where several old buildings were converted into penitentiaries. Parts of a colonial fortress, El Castillo del Morro, for instance, became a prison, and Villa Marista, a Catholic Boys' school, was expropriated to become the main headquarters of the State's Security. Arenas recalls: "From the roof we could see not only the sun but the sea as well, and we could also look at the city of Havana, the city of our suffering, but which from up there seemed like paradise" (Arenas 2001: 181). A similar love-hate relationship for Havana surfaces in *Viaje a La Habana* (*Novela en tres viajes*) (1990), which includes three novellas. The novella carrying the book's title portrays Ismael, an exiled Cuban living in New York. His return to Havana to meet his son is pictured as an alienation from all that had been was familiar to him before.

From the 1990s to the 2000s, the city emerged as a hotbed of violence dominated by a sense of emptiness and deception after the failure of the revolutionary promises. Havana was transformed into a fragmented and decomposed environment during the "Special Period," a severe economic crisis that commenced in 1989 following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The crisis aggravated the already overcrowded housing situation and the maintenance of the dilapidated buildings was hindered due to the scarcity of tools and materials.

Leonardo Padura (b. 1955) employs crime fiction to recreate Havana during the "Special Period." The series *Las cuatro estaciones* (Four Seasons) includes several novels, published between 1991 and 2005, in which Lieutenant Mario Conde investigates the crimes, as he wanders through the city, observing its current state of deterioration. Rising out of his interest for writing, Conde performs the part of an intellectual, not only elaborating upon the architecture and the physical state of the buildings but also explaining their historical meaning and present social function. At the same time, as a police officer, he rationalizes his observations of the city.

The neighborhood of La Víbora, through which Conde moves around, is located on a hill with a panoramic view of Havana; consequently, it gives the observer visual control of the city. In the same vein, the balcony where the lieutenant spends most of his time also acts as an observatory to decipher the labyrinthine twists of the city. Conde also visits the formerly aristocratic areas—Vedado, Miramar, Santos Suárez—and highlights the desertion and despair of their grandeur during the republican era (1902–1959).

Through his wanderings' descriptions, Conde rebuilds the history of the city, its evolution, and its current state. Padura's texts are also full of nostalgia for the old times of Havana's allure. La Víbora is the place of Conde's childhood and adolescence, which is one reason he chooses to take refuge in La Víbora, a nontourist site that has retained to some degree its historic magnificence. The neighborhood becomes an oneiric residential area

with mansions, large houses, and gardens, almost as if it had been left untouched by the revolution. Padura's Havana is a city of contrasts swinging between the old and new, repudiation and love, acceptance and rejection.

Juan Pedro Gutiérrez (1950–) implements his skills as a master of “dirty realism” in *Trilogía sucia de La Habana (Dirty Havana Trilogy)* (1998), presented from the semi-autobiographical perspective of a disenchanting journalist. The book is abundant in its descriptions of cruel and savage reality in the *solares* and quarters that lack both moral and civil values. The narrator's apartment is located on a street parallel to El Malecón, a broad esplanade hugging the coast, brimming with tourists, while rotting and habitual filth reign in the neighboring areas. The narrator opens up a realistic visual of human despair, which in turn augments a claustrophobic feeling.

Yet, in contrast to Padura, Gutiérrez does not reject Havana's decadence as its inhabitants reinvent the space to confront the housing scenario. The once magnificent buildings that now harbor the *solares* are places growing in- and upward. On the one hand, the book refers to *barbacons*, a kind of mezzanine constructed as a house partition with high ceilings. On the other hand, the roofs offer spaces for gardening and raising small farm animals. Although the roof symbolizes the absence of a vital horizon, it frees the narrator to exercise watchfulness and observation. This contemplative activity presents the ravaged landscape as a symbol of the regimen's politics.

The Havana of Antonio Jose Ponte (b. 1964) cannot be understood without blackouts, building collapses, waiting queues to obtain food, bicycles, ruins, and utter hopelessness. In his short story *Corazón de skitalietz (Heart of Skitalietz)* (1998), the main characters abandon their homes choosing to wander through the streets of Havana. The city absorbed in solitude is presented as an oppressive environment that triggers the wanderings with no final destination in view. Moreover, the fragmentation of the characters' personal lives is reflected in the fragmentation of the urban landscape. Havana thus loses its welcoming look and becomes a hostile place, while the personal and family relationships become as unstable as the city's structure and buildings. In another short story *Un arte de hacer ruinas (An Art of Making Ruins)* (2005), Ponte redefines Havana's ruins. Although they remind one of a war site, their dilapidated structure conceals the city's archives.

Cien botellas en una pared (One Hundred Bottles on a Wall) (2002) by Ena Lucía Portela (b. 1972) presents a feminine perspective of inhabiting a place. Zeta, the main character, lives in a *solar* in Vedado, a once rich neighborhood that is currently submerged in constant commotion. As Havana did not continue to develop since 1958, it still retains a certain architectural uniformity. Thus, the space is redistributed differently due to the alterations in the social strata that are the metonym of a city ruled by abuse and violence. A disintegrated urban space enables anxiety to permeate into the lives of the characters that culminate in isolation. The city is thus transformed into a menacing jungle, while its inhabitants are depicted as

irrational and bestialized: “Many of them . . . contributed to a new unusual fauna of the urban landscape: hens, turkeys, pigeons, turtles, a pig, and a goat . . . All these creatures pee and poop where they please as if they were living in the forest” (Portela 2002: 42; author’s translation). However, this difficult environment has the potential for creating acts of resistance that often end up in abandoning the city.

Una ciudad, un pájaro, una guagua . . . (A City, a Bird and a Bus . . .) (1999) by Ronaldo Menéndez (1970) narrates the return of an exiled Cuban, Humberto Travieso. He returns to Havana as a tourist because he could not overcome the loss of the city and what it represented in his life. The story combines descriptions of a harsh reality during the “Special Period” and a nostalgic image of the city prior to Humberto’s migration. When one of his friends, a recent graduate of Art History, becomes his guide through the city, Travieso realizes that the inhabitants are driven by monetary gain resulting from an overall decadence. In contrast, as the responsibility of the intellectual is to return to the original image, he wants “to recognize his Havana, to discover it as an archeologist behind the collapse” (Menéndez 1999: 48; author’s translation). It then becomes clear that the aspect of the ruined city is exploited by Travieso’s nostalgic impulses. Although Travieso frequents both the touristy and other more isolated areas, he plans to take back his photographs of marginal places to the USA. Moreover, the ruins estheticized by art are commercialized while the nostalgia for Havana is for sale.

SANTO DOMINGO: RISE AND FALL OF A PROPER CITY

Dominican urban literature solidifies after the publication of three novels: *La sangre* (*Blood*) (1914), authored by Tulio M. Cestero (1877–1955), *Ensebio Sapote* (1938), written by Enrique Aguiar (1890–1947), and *Navarijo* (1956) by Francisco Moscoso Puello (1885–1959). All three texts are in terms of chronology set during the Presidency of Ulises Heureaux (1845–1899) at the end of the nineteenth century. The Santo Domingo depicted in these texts preserves the division between the colonial city walls and the poorer neighborhoods. Yet, the Dominican capital becomes an indicator of development, progress, and modernity. In other words, the improved quality of the urban life—outdoor gas illumination, public transportation, and paved roads—symbolizes civilization.

Moscoso Puello’s *Navarijo* (published in 1956, although the manuscript was completed in 1940) is a *costumbrista* chronicle, (i.e. one detailing local customs in romantic style) based on its author’s memories in the neighborhood of Navarijo: “That Guzman’s Santo Domingo was a small city supporting hardly fifteen thousand souls, without reaching the surrounding walls. A strip of land covered with grass and brushwood had extended these walls and the real city, where the neighbors’ domestic animals grazed freely” (Moscoso Puello 2001: 25; author’s translation). Although the text describes the peasant reality of a city enclosed within its walls, it also recognizes the initiation of its transformation from a small village into a modern city.

Enrique Aguiar's *Eusebio Sapote* (1938) is the first novel that fully explores the trading between the old city and the extramural neighboring areas. In these foundational works, Santo Domingo functions only as a backdrop for these ordinary events. Simultaneously, the city experiences growth in dramatic and epic dimensions, exemplifying progress and civilization.

The city of Santo Domingo becomes the epitome of the progress seen under the 31-year dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo (1930–1961). In 1930, after Hurricane San Zenón, he rebuilt the entire Dominican capital renaming it Ciudad Trujillo. It remained intact until 1961. The complete reconstruction of the city first created a national prototype of a new urban spatial order detached from the countryside. This foundational moment then activated the Trujillista propaganda appearing in both prose and poetry, in which Santo Domingo embodies the dictator. Only in the 1950s did Virgilio Díaz Grullón's short stories touch upon the urban mentality. A later example includes Carlos Federico Pérez's novels *Juan, mientras la ciudad crecía* (*Juan, While the City Was Growing*) (1960) and *La ciudad herida* (*The Wounded City*) (1977). Both texts trace the growth of the middle class in the urban environment, while the modifications in its landscape symbolize the changes in their characters' lives.

Upon Trujillo's assassination in 1961, probably orchestrated by the CIA, Santo Domingo was submerged due to the vertiginous events, political turmoil, and social struggle that produced personal and collective accounts. For example, in *En canto de amor a la ciudad herida* (*Love Song for the Wounded City*), Abelardo Vicioso (1930–2004), the poet of the Generation of 48, describes the second US intervention (the first was between 1916 and 1924) and the Dominican Civil War in 1965 (la Guerra de Abril, Revolución del 65): "The city is no longer seen in the shopping windows/Neither does it speak about baseball in the coffee shops / the city is wounded on all four sides . . . , Ah, the heart of the city beating / To a universal rhythm, the heart / Wounded, trapped by the predatory hounds" (Vicioso 1984: 224; author's translation). In the poem, the city is personified as a humanized living organism, wounded and with a beating heart. During this period, although the city is an independent universe that fabricates its own dimensions and laws, it is also a receptacle of the past and its deception linked to the recent political events.

The following two decades (1970s–1980s) reflect the complexity of urban life and social dynamics resulting from disproportionate city growth, overpopulation, increase of the middle class, rural migration to the urban areas, consumerism and migration to the USA. In *Sólo Cenizas hallarás* (*You Will Only Find Ashes*) (1980) by Pedro Vergés (b. 1945), the common stronghold for all the characters is the city of Santo Domingo post-Trujillo assassination, inspiring a different hope for each character: Yolanda, who returns to the Dominican Republic leaving her fiancée behind in New York City; or Lucila, a young peasant girl hired as a maid in Doña Evangelina's house. Each chapter's idiosyncrasy reflects a certain neighborhood, which in turn adds a building block to a fuller and clearer picture of Santo Domingo. It is no longer Ciudad Trujillo but a city that leaves its constraints behind to incorporate its adjacent areas. The ancient and aristocratic El Conde street

coexists with poor districts: “Now his eyes could see a dirty city full of signs, the sidewalks covered with papers, garbage cans, sweaty people going up and down . . .” (Vergés 1980: 20; author’s translation). These are different pieces of the mosaic that together produce a complete picture. Vergés’ novel restores the imprint of post-Trujillo Santo Domingo.

Besides Vergés’ text, the El Conde street appears in Tony Raful’s poetry and in Efraím Castillo’s novels as the vital artery of the capital. Another work *El fantasma de la calle El Conde* (*The Ghost from the El Conde Street*) (1987) by Pedro Peix (b. 1952) describes the most emblematic street in Santo Domingo. In the story, the ghostlike apparitions of the nameless odd protagonist disturb the city’s inhabitants. He wanders through Santo Domingo at night wearing armor, acting like Don Quixote, attacking electric power poles and looking for his bride. The visit to his apartment on the El Conde street after his definitive disappearance reveals: “but everyone understood that she, his fiancée, was the city” (Peix 2006: 329; author’s translation). The story displaces the longing for the lost glorious city with an acknowledgment of its ephemera that was nonexistent in the first place, similar to the deceptive illusions induced by the chivalrous novels. The main character, a wandering subject, personifies a lost city ghost looking for its future path. Peix’s story initiates the motif of urban uprooting that can be identified in later works by other Dominican writers; for example, women’s estrangement in the city in *He olvidado tu nombre* (*I’ve Forgotten Your Name*) (1997) by Martha Rivera (1960–) and the diasporic experience in Santo Domingo and Bloomington, Indiana, in *Memorias del último cielo* (*The Memories of the Last Sky*) (2002) by Fernando Valerio-Holguín.

The subsequent representations of Santo Domingo redefine the marginal regions, which from that point on emblemize the city and gain equal importance as other iconic places. *Materia prima* (*Prime Material*) (1988) by Marcio Veloz Maggiolo (b. 1936) is a fictionalized chronicle of the rise and fall of the Villa Francisca neighborhood. The novel covers its foundation, its development under Trujillo’s dictatorship in the 1940s and 1950s, the decadence after 1961 and the massive exodus after the demolition of hundreds of dwellings, done with the intention of transforming a shanty town into a new locality with new streets and multifamily apartments. The center stage of *Materia Prima* is taken by the Veloz Maggiolo family, with its own expectations and dreams of socioeconomic ascent, which in turn permits the mix of intimate confessions with descriptions of the epoch. The novel invites the readers to look at a detailed picture of Villa Francisca’s buildings, patios, and bunkhouses. Besides these descriptions, all the imagery is rooted in memories that bring the neighborhood back to life. While each place has its own role and symbolism in Villa Francisca (e.g., the workers’ center hosts the proletariat social activities, Julia Molina school for girls, and a movie theater), the characters moving around in each place witness the ravages of the Trujillo’s tyranny, police and military repressions, while revealing the intimacies of private lives and forestalling future demographic explosion. Therefore, they are the *materia prima*, prime material, which constitutes the Villa Francisca along with all of the memories that invigorate the neighborhood. When

considered in the right order, these building blocks actually delineate the history of Villa Francisca. They rebuild the whole neighborhood, which in turn becomes an assembled piece of another larger city of Santo Domingo. Villa Francisca is described in a similar vein by other authors such as José Alcántara Almánzar, who also set his short stories' stage for action in that area. In contrast, Manuel Rueda's short stories present a description of Villa Francisca, shedding light on its hidden side: a lower world of prostitutes, pimps, and the symbiotic life of these marginal characters.

The 1990s and 2000s produced a constellation of young authors who revealed Santo Domingo's multilayered, multicultural, and local features. Aurora Arias, Rita Indiana Hernández, and Rey Emmanuel Andújar openly denounced the earlier urban imaginaries, opening up the path to the previously invisible flipside of urbanism: violence, mafia, corruption, and poverty. The moment these authors focused their arguments on marginal and precarious spaces such as cemeteries, brothels, and gay bars, they automatically destroyed the vision of progress formerly associated with the city. For instance, the streets once considered a sign of modernity are in a decadent state with damaged roads and pavements: "the streets poorly paved and filled with rubble" (Andújar 2008: 124; author's translation). The Santo Domingo of these authors is falling down into pieces, creating chaotic mosaics out of the urban landscape. This subversive cartography oversteps the official norm of hiding the "repulsive" facets of the city. Thus, the narration of the city's story becomes a contestatory gesture, because they criticize the new urban chaos implying it to be the result of governmental policies. Santo Domingo appears as a place that connects the street culture, youth and urban music in the novels by Avelino Stanley and Pedro Antonio Valdez.

Invi's Paradise y otros relatos (Invi's Paradise and Other Stories) by Arias destroys the Dominican capital in the 1980s, here the younger generations feel disoriented and lost. The streets present a hostile core of deprivation in a city ruined by corruption, delinquency, and decadence. The acronym INVI in the title of the book and story stands for Instituto Nacional de Vivienda (National Institute of Housing), the agency responsible for initiating a series of housing projects in the peripheries in the 1970s. The projects are contrasted against Columbus Lighthouse, the grandiose monument of President Joaquín Balaguer who was Trujillo's follower and who served three nonconsecutive terms (1960–1962, 1966–1978, and 1986–1996). However, there are several places located along the margins of Santo Domingo that provide an avenue of escape from an immobile city symbolizing a stagnant society. These places include an apartment also known as The Museum of Disorder, and a cave, called Invi's Paradise, by the reefs of the esplanade on Highway 30. For example, the museum archives the disorder that the young generations can neither catalog nor organize. Furthermore, it resembles a dump, difficult to be categorized as luxurious. The apartment ends up being a dystopia, an inapprehensible site displaced from the city.

If Arias describes Santo Domingo as a museum of disorder, the novels *Candela* (*Candle*) (2007/8) by Andújar and *La estrategia de Chochueca* (*Chochueca's Strategy*) (2000) by Rita Indiana Hernández display Santo Domingo as a huge out of control dumping site: “look at the dirty brown river that carries garbage, shit, bodies, handing them over to the sea as a crazy gift” (Andújar 2008: 108; author’s translation). This image of Santo Domingo expelling the impurities and wastes emphasizes the impossibility of keeping order. While in Andújar’s *Candela* the city is divided mainly into two sectors—west and east, rich and poor—in *La estrategia de Chochueca* by Hernández the events develop in Santo Domingo’s urban landscapes, which are broken into multiple fragments.

Hernández’s novel depicts the search of this main character Silvia for lost speakers. Her disorganized strolls reveal Santo Domingo as a previously unknown territory of marginal characters, music icons, and sex tourists who perceive the city as an international playground. Hernández’s novel offers the only option to describe a city, that is, through constant movement. Transitions and nomadism from rich to less privileged and disorganized neighborhoods cover many areas conflicting with each other. For this reason, names charged with historicity do not identify historical events; instead, the urban uproar and chaos distract the reader from them. In its place, the novel revives an ignored part of the unofficial history of the city when it was constructed by the Haitians in the 1980s. Silvia’s constant wanderings around the city without stopping at her own apartment reiterate that family is no longer a safe harbor, a distinction from Arias’ stories. In contrast, the *flânerie* in solitude along with the criticism creates a possibility of constructing the city independently: “The only act of walking offers inevitable possibilities, walking without thinking one is walking, rather jingling our hips, timing our legs with automatic rhythm” (Hernández 2003: 13; author’s translation). Therefore, the constant movements within Santo Domingo make a labyrinth out of the Dominican capital.

SAN JUAN: MANY FACES OF THE IMAGINED CITY

Puerto Rican literary work has always acknowledged the significance of the city and its urban landscape. In 1948, José Luis González (1926–1996) clearly reiterates the necessity for urban literature in his book *El hombre en la calle* (*The Man on the Street*): “In Puerto Rico it still remains to be initiated an urban literature that is doubly necessary because too many times the rural environment has been a defeatist’s refuge for those who still do not know that the assaults of imperialism on the cultural front must be resisted on the street, the same way as on the furrow” (González 1948: 7; author’s translation). In 1953, *La carreta* (*The Oxcart*) by René Marqués labels ruralism as an anachronism by depicting the moving of the *jíbaro* (peasant) family from the countryside to the capital of Puerto Rico first, and then on to The Bronx, in New York City, seeking for a better life. However, the boom of urban literature began in 1950 as a reaction to the *muñocismo*, the political line of Luis Muñoz Marín, the first governor of the island. The Muñoz Marín

administration institutionalized the Estado Libre Asociado in 1952 and declared loyalty to the US government and its Constitution. This administration also starts Operation Bootstrap, which involved a series of projects on modernization and the economic development of Puerto Rico, based on shifting the economy from agriculture to manufacturing and tourism. The city becomes a battlefield a place for questioning the political status of the island and the politics of the *muñocismo*.

The work *En una ciudad llamada San Juan (In a City Named San Juan)* (1960) by René Marqués (1919–1979) is a collection of stories set in the 1950s during the modernization of the island. In the story that gives title to the book, an exiled Puerto Rican is driven by an inexplicable desire to return to San Juan. One night, after he runs into a US marine, the protagonist finally grasps the meaning of his city and his place in it. San Juan is divided into areas: “The lawn was federal property. So was the beach at his back. The sidewalk, however, was island property” (Marqués 1970: 205; author’s translation). Thus, as the city appears besieged, the geographical division of San Juan shows a colonial subjugation. When the narrator observes the marine urinating on the sidewalk from the lawn, he hits him. Albeit the narrator realizes his colonial status, the Puerto Rican capital also hides a potential for a colonial subject to find its self-conscious identity and to strike back.

The 1960s and 1970s reveal the crisis of *muñocismo*. In the process of being urbanized, San Juan experienced the growth of marginal neighborhoods and shanty towns as secondary effects of American colonialism; it was there that the delinquency, drugs, and prostitution thrived. This change is evident in the work of Luis Rafael Sánchez (b. 1936), *En cuerpo de camisa (In Shirt Sleeves)* (1966). This collection of 11 short stories depicts marginal subjects, members of the Puerto Rican proletariat and “lumpen,” as termed by Efraín Barradas, all of whom offer a new version of the Puerto Rican reality. The urban environment along with its commerce and slum areas is reconstructed through the marginal characters—prostitutes, drug addicts, and vagabonds, among others. All of them do not belong to the modernization era and, therefore, are enabled to emphasize their frustrations. Sánchez’s collection, thus, breaks away from a previously decent representation of the city.

Sánchez’s *La guaracha del macho Camacho (Macho Camacho’s Beat)* (1976) is a polyphonic text that links literature with popular culture, music, orality, and intertextuality. The novel also highlights the impact in San Juan’s urban landscape caused by the USA’s culture of consumption, urban music, and segregation of the lower class, besides corruption, and colonialism. The characters still belong to different social strata: the senator Vicente Reynoso and his frigid spouse Graciela, the son Benny obsessed with his Ferrari, and the senator’s concubine La China Hereje, among others. Their point of encounter is the *guaracha* beat heard from the cars stuck in a traffic jam during a peak hour. Albeit this new way of moving through the city in a car is a reference to the consumerism produced by the colonial state, the city stuck in traffic represents stagnation on the island. Yet, besides reproducing the urban jargon related to each character, the novel

recreates the urban landscape of San Juan as fragmented and chaotic because Sanchez juxtaposes images and sounds in a way that it no longer assembles a single picture. Alternatively, multiple actions and events change and interrupt each other in a similar way to the dynamic sequences of images on a TV screening or the sequence of scenes appearing while navigating a city in a car. Furthermore, the city grows permanently and unceasingly, constructing and expanding itself through those images. One recent text that prompts a dialogue with *La guaracha* is *Guaya Guaya* (2012) by Rafael Acevedo (b. 1960), one of the most important poets of the 1980s generation. The novel is presented in the size and shape of a CD. The cover is similar to the cover of *La guaracha*'s first edition: a woman in a bikini on a motorbike viewed from behind. Acevedo makes use of the musical genre *reggaeton* to depict the marginal social sectors and the streets of San Juan.

The urban literature of the 1980s captures the urban imaginaries and the images of everyday life in different genres, varying from chronicle to dystopia. Edgardo Rodríguez Juliá (b. 1946) is one such, his work spread over several decades. His work *El entierro de Cortijo* (*Cortijo's Wake*) (1983) is an urban chronicle without allegorization in which the narrator-chronicler attends the wake and funeral of a famous *plena* musician Rafael Cortijo (1928–1982: *plena* is music from Ponce in Puerto Rico). While following the funeral procession down the streets of working-class San Juan, Rodríguez Juliá documents the mourners—Cortijo's childhood friends and fellow musicians. At the same time, his feelings as a light-skinned, middle-class writer are at odds with the world of the poor black Puerto Ricans. From this conflict arises a portrait of the impoverished society from which Cortijo's music emerged. In the chronicle, Rodríguez Juliá describes the grim reality of the segregated subjects who reside in the quarter "Luis Lloréns Torres," a project blessed by the welfare state of Muñoz Marín.

Another work, *La noche oscura del Niño Avilés* (*The Dark Night of Niño Avilés*) (1984), is written as a colonial chronicle that presents a duplication of the city San Juan Batista with its colonial government's religious and military power, and New Venice, a nearby city, full of runaway slaves founded by El Niño Avilés in 1797. The city-fortress of San Juan is threatened from both the inside and outside. On the one hand, it fulfills the colonial norms and regulations imposed by the metropolis. On the other hand, New Venice symbolizes a population which initiates the liberation of society. New Venice reflects a social utopia or even a heterotopia as different orders are established and coexist in one space. The chronicle includes a Borgesian description of a colonial city-fortress supported by a rebellious ghost city of dubious existence despite a wealth of historical documentation. This narration begins as a historical essay but finishes as fiction, although it is constantly legitimized by references to historical figures and sources. This apocryphal documentation serves the purpose of liberating the city and its questionable historical discourse from the control of official historiography.

San Juan ciudad soñada (*San Juan: Memoir of a City*) (2005) is a lyrical guide to San Juan. The narrator not only records the physical and social changes in the city but also interiorizes and consequently constructs an urban

image. The chronicle unveils multiple cities in one, thanks to a deconstruction of symbols and signs, expropriation of memory and insertion of the private into the public sphere. At the beginning, the narrator resorts to nostalgia due to the loss of the city of his childhood in the chapter titled “Ubi Sunt, ¿dónde están?” (“Where are they?”). The text thus becomes a trip into San Juan’s past as well as a physical walk in the present. The extant city coexists alongside with an imagined one. But modern San Juan comes alive when the chronicle describes the impact of modernization and economic development, the transformation of neighborhoods resulting from internal and external migrations. As the narrator is concerned with loss, oblivion, and destructive modernity, he insists that places of affection leave marks on the city’s surface transforming it into a site of dreams, images, and writing. At some point the narrator says, “My life, just like the city itself, was searching for its own metaphor” (Rodríguez Juliá 2007: 27). Furthermore, the imagined space is not panned by urbanists, but by its own inhabitants. Thus, the history of the city becomes the biography of its intellectual generations.

In the 1990s, women’s literary production on urban topics adds a feminine subject walking through a contemporary city. *La ciudad que me habita* (*The City That Inhabits Me*) (1993) by Magali García Ramis (b. 1946) is a collection of essays of earlier publication in different newspapers. The fictionalized book accounts the everyday life in a city supported by an autobiographical background: the selection of a name for a firstborn child, the decision-making process around a national bird, the experience of emigration and of living in New York City. While revealing the social, national, and personal experiences, García Ramis perceives San Juan as one large family filled with the voices of students, workers, housewives, etc. Their descriptions serve as the defense of San Juan in rescuing its uniqueness. The city remains active and alive because of its inhabitants, who constantly reinvent it. The title story “La ciudad que me habita” creates a totalizing picture of urban mosaics from different times and diverse spatial dimensions. The city provides an opportunity to transform its inhabitants and to be transformed by it, with the aid of the subject who speaks or walks, and has access to these dimensions: “The stories in San Juan and the story tellers give substantial shape to what we are” (García Ramis 1993: 139; author’s translation). The writer plays a special role in this process; therefore, the narrator insists that “being San Juan and living it is my destiny” (García Ramis 1993: 139; author’s translation).

In her short story “Placeres urbanos” (“Urban Pleasures”) (1994), Ana Lydia Vega (b. 1946) showcases the different faces of the same city. First, she presents a poetic description of San Juan’s night landscape and the urban life rituals, connecting them with pleasurable sensations: coffee smell and busy traffic in the afternoon, and the beauty of dawn. The second half of the story reveals the negative aspects that, however, enliven the city. She refers to San Juan using a feminine Spanish word *la ciudad*, personifying Puerto Rico’s capital as a feminine entity: “but in [the city] there is a raw energy” (Vega 2006: 53; author’s

translation) and “through the tender heart of my tender city” (Vega 2006: 56; author’s translation). Despite the beauty of the city, she criticizes the difficulty of navigating it without a car whereas riding a bus turns out to be a sacred ritual.

In the 2000s, literary production was transformed into a complex picture showing the formerly invisible San Juan freed from a tourist’s gaze. A photographic essay by Eduardo Lalo (b. 1960), *Los pies de San Juan* (*The Feet of San Juan*) (2002) is comparable to *La ciudad de las columnas* by Alejo Carpentier. In the Swiss-Cuban author’s text, the esthetic pleasure arises from a distance that permits appreciation of a building’s architecture. The combination of literary and visual elements in Lalo’s essay, however, subverts the image of many urban areas—Condado, Río Piedras, El Viejo San Juan—as he focuses on unphotographable areas: sidewalks, cement walls, and drains, among others.

Lalo writes, “There, on the pavement where we put our feet and on the walls we have in front of our eyes, our city is also there” (Lalo 2002: 19; author’s translation). The word *pie* (foot) in the title suggests a new way of walking through the city: looking down to less hygienic areas. The city’s surface is like a skin marked in less visible or noticeable places: shoeprints, buildings in ruins, cobblestones, graffiti, and pavements. In addition, the essay includes several human body photographs against the background of an urban landscape. This combination revives the solidified life. According to Lalo, the photographer assumes the role of an archeologist “the photographer is an archeologist. Life turns into stone. The city is our fossil” (Lalo 2002: 13; author’s translation). The work *Los pies de San Juan* explains another preservation system. However, the emphasis continues to be on the written word, either in graffiti or phrases on the walls, unveiling the city through a tangible city archive.

Hispanic Caribbean literary production continues to reflect the process of urban evolution as the cities continue to capture, subvert, and uncover new and inherent tensions. While presented as a territory defined by historical periods, the Hispanic Caribbean cities are also creative possibilities and a means to considering space in new ways. These imagined literary scenarios include the new spatial possibilities created by television and media technology. Hispanic Caribbean literature also embeds new urbanized areas, recently emergent citizens, newfound identities and evolving communities into the unceasing transformation of the Caribbean repeating city.

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Mexico City

David William Foster

[Mexico City] often looks like the morning after the apocalypse. (Alma Guillermoprieto)

Fuera de México todo es Cuautitlán [Everything outside Mexico City is hicksville]. (Popular saying)

COMPLEX ORIGINS AND A FOUNDING IMAGINARY

It is inevitable when speaking of Mexico City to speak of it as one of the premier megalopolises of the world, probably second only to Tokyo in the population of its greater area.¹ That is, one speaks of the federal capital of the country of Mexico—the Distrito Federal (known as the D.F.)—the political entity of Mexico City, and the continually expanding, amorphous fringes of that city that likely encompasses 25 million inhabitants or more. Demographic statistics in much of the world are, so to speak, a form of bad poetry because one does not always know what one is counting. This is particularly true when the phenomenon of *colonias de periferia* (periphery colonies) prevails: settlements of people, often immigrants from impoverished and outlying areas of the country, who establish themselves in an illegal and unprotected fashion on unused patches of land, with no modern urban infrastructure of utilities and services and often involving obtaining those services through outright theft, such as patching into the electrical and communications grid. Makeshift security is likely to be organized by residents, and the settlements occupy an imaginary zone between the sense of the fortification against outsiders (especially official metropolitan agents) and the sense of a no man's land, to be entered only with great personal risk, by outsiders. Mexico City is not the only Latin American (or, for that matter, so-called Third-World) city to have such emergency villages

(compare the famed Rio de Janeiro hillside *favelas*), and they are an integral part of the identity of modern Mexico City. This is especially true when such villages, or sectors of such villages, are archives of other parts of the country, with the inhabitants clinging together on the basis of geographical place of origin, distinctive dialect of Spanish and/or regional indigenous language, customs and rituals, values, and food practices.

Certainly, one of the most distinctive aspects of Mexico City is that, unlike Buenos Aires or São Paulo, the other two great megalopolises of Latin America that, along with the former, constitute the three hegemonic cultural centers of the “continent” (as Latin America is customarily called in Spanish, despite the fact that it involves two continents), its history antedates the European conquest. Founded in the early fourteenth century as an Aztec city state, it was a splendid urban area before the arrival of Hernán Cortés in late 1519. With a population estimated to be over 200,000, it was likely one of the largest cities of the known world at the time, and one of the important facets of its contemporary imaginary is how such splendor must have impacted Cortés, arriving from, at the time, a relatively impoverished Europe with little in the way of major urban centers. Of course, this would all change with the wealth the Spanish, Portuguese, and others extracted from the so-called New World: one usually thinks first of the precious gems and metals that built the great churches of Europe beginning in the sixteenth century, but foodstuffs from what is now Mexico were much more important in effecting meteoric changes in European life after the Conquest. Nevertheless, it is important to grasp the staggering impression Tenochtitlan must have made on Cortés, himself a university-educated man. So much of the Mexican imaginary is underlain by that shock of contemplation, which, as Mexico City has become one of the five largest cities in the world, continues to this day for both Mexicans themselves and foreigners who must navigate its enormous complexity and dense urban texture.

The Conquest of Mexico meant building an outpost of the emergent Spanish empire on the preexisting urban area of the Aztec city state, known as Tenochtitlan, thereby providing another major facet of the contemporary Mexican imaginary, that of the fusion of cultures, as monumentalized in Tlatelolco in central Mexico City, also known as the Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Plaza of the Three Cultures): Aztec, Spanish-European, and mestizo Mexican.² Mexico emerges as one of the major administrative centers of the Spanish American empire, rivaled only by Lima, which is now the capital of Peru. It is important to note that Lima was not historically the center of the Incan empire, which was rather the inland Cuzco; the colonial Lima settlement had the advantage of developing as a major port city. Thus, Mexico City goes from being Tenochtitlan to the administrative center of the Spanish Colony of Nueva España (New Spain: the very name indicates its preeminence), to become, with the affirmation of Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, the capital of the Estados Unidos de México (the United States of Mexico) or just simply México. Mexico City grows rather

slowly through the 300 years that it is a viceregal capital and the first century of its existence as a national capital, with the sort of geometrically explosive growth we now associate with it coming only after the middle of the twentieth century. Mexico's role as an ally of the USA during World War II and the material benefits that accrue as a result, the promotion of tourism, and, most significantly, the patterns of internal demographic shifts that channel so much of the country's population toward an evermore dynamic capital have all played a role in the size—and continuing growth—that characterize the enormous metropolitan area today.

Mexico City can count as one of its earliest characterizations references in the long poem *Grandeza mexicana* (1604; *Mexican Grandeur*) penned by Bernardo de Balbuena (or Valbuena) (1562–1627). Baroque characterizations of the New World, more than anticipations of a subsequent social anthropology, were basically boosterish encomiums meant to satisfy both rulers' satisfaction over the properties they had acquired and readers' fascination with the often outlandish exoticism of the inhabitants and the landscape of those properties. The New World was, to be sure, exotic in the root sense of the word (“foreign,” “out-ness”), but the newly discovered marvelous was wont to make writers prone to let their imaginations run wild as the actual facts. Balbuena can probably be said to be more circumspect than others, comparing the splendors of the Valle de Anáhuac, the general name for the valley in which Tenochtitlan was located, with the mythic splendors of the ancient Greek city of Tempe. In the end, it is immaterial whether Balbuena is describing verifiable sociocultural details. What is important is the way in which this founding text of Mexican colonial literature—Mexican *avant la lettre*, in the sense that Mexico as such does not yet exist—establishes an ideal range of parameters for what is to become one of the great Latin American cities. While it is true that Balbuena's encomium might easily be ridiculed given the social and environmental problems that the city today presents. But it remains an important referent for greatness and grandeur the city will come to assume.

EMERGING MODERNITY

Between Balbuena and the writers that will come to focus on Mexico City's version of the project of modernity, with all of its contradictory imperfections, there is little significant writing about the city as such. It is when the project of nationhood incorporates the imperative to be modern—that is, to have the complex trappings of modernity—that the city as an organic entity begins to come alive. José Fernández de Lizardi (1776–1827) authored the late enlightenment novel, *El Periquillo Sarniento* (1816–1831; *The Mangy Parrot*), as a platform for discussing in bitingly ironic and condemnatory terms the conflicts and injustices of the last days of the Spanish empire (because of censorship, the final segments of the novel were only published posthumously), the growing sense of urgency for independence, and, most importantly, the sense of personal selfhood and the ethical commitments that will characterize the new Mexican citizen. Cast in terms of an

eponymous narrator who speaks from his deathbed to future generations, the *Periquillo* elaborates a sort of existential beginning for a Mexican citizenry that will necessarily find its identity anchored in the modern metropolis and what it synthesizes as regards national life.

The descendants of Fernández de Lizardi's narrator will be characterized, with all of the problematical texture of their lives in the modern city, by the newspaper chronicles of Manuel Gutiérrez-Nájera (1859–1895), under the general title of *Plato del día* (Today's Special), which appeared over the period of several decades in the late nineteenth century, along with several collections of short stories. As a commentary on the privileged spheres of modernity in a city and a nation that were still very rough-hewn, Gutiérrez Nájera's prose, as well as his poetry, analyze in witty and ironic terms the sometimes preposterous nature of effecting—and affecting—modernity in a society in which the structures of premodernity still hold sway.

POST-REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO

Mexico experienced the first major social upheaval of the twentieth century, the so-called Mexican Revolution, 1910–ca. 1918, which replaced the old ruling oligarchy (personified by Porfirio Díaz, “president for life”; he served 1877–1880 and 1884–1911) with a professional political middle class. In the process, it co-opted the lower classes, both the peasantry and the proletariat (which began to progressively absorb the latter as Mexico City and other major urban areas, including, as some wags would have it, the Mexican city of Los Angeles, through internal migration), in carefully controlled programs of public assistance that substituted clientelism for any meaningful form of government by the people. The term “revolutionary Mexico” is usually meant to refer, not so much to the decade of conflict, as to the social and cultural hegemony that emerged around seven decades of one-party rule (the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, Institutional Revolutionary Party, as it came to be called). While Mexico City survived the Revolution proper relatively unscathed (in contrast to the estimated one million or more Mexicans killed by the hostilities throughout the country, mostly in the north and west), Mexico City, as the seat of the new and efficiently centralized rule, became the major seat of subsequent twentieth-century culture, as it remains so today.

One can point to a significant bibliography of cultural production that achieved exceptional artistic merit even as it touted the tightly structured ideology of Revolutionary Mexico. The Golden Age of Mexican filmmaking would be the best example here, including much of the muralist tradition. The muralist David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974) would experience persecution, however, for his unacceptable pro-proletarian sympathies, sympathies that Diego Rivera (1886–1957) shared but which he tamed as part of his government contracts. Also of note is the extensive production of what are called novels of the Mexican Revolution, narratives written in the main after the conflict and touting proleptically the emergence of the new Mexico, including a virile masculinity that will

eventually become a point of significant contestation. For, as one might suspect, such an ideological hegemony, which the Mexican government had ways of enforcing without ever resorting to a brutal Stalinism, did not go unchallenged, such that, in retrospect, the most interesting writing about Mexico City will be that which questions the modernist ideology of Revolutionary Mexico.

Although not all of the members of the *Contemporáneos* (Contemporaries) group of the late 1920s and the early 1930s, which prioritized poetic works, were queer, a significant majority of them were. Although the disjunction was rarely commented on in academic and journalistic circles, it was widely known and provided the curious disjunction between the putatively virile, masculinist voices of the official discourse and the queer ones of contestational writing, which eventually included significant women artists, of whom, today, Frida Kahlo is the reigning icon (1907–1954) and in whom urban motifs are significantly present in complex ways despite the folkloric patina one might at first associate with her work. Where writers more identified with official revolutionary ideology might deal with the eternal Mexican verities of the land, including the conflicts that for them threatened its value-laden universality, the contestational writers we can begin exploring with reference to the *Contemporáneos* were insistent regarding the texture of urban life, both the bohemian pleasures of an increasing internationalism of Mexico City and the depredations brought by the promotion of unfettered capitalism. Although the left was insistent in denouncing the Americanization of Mexico (e.g., mostly Mexico City), just as did what remained of the traditional oligarchy, there were two unquestionably strong American influences: the way in which World War II brought American tourists to Mexico who had nowhere else to go, a trend that continued after the war, and the way in which Mexico allied with the USA during the war. The promotion of tourism in Mexico and the attraction of international artists, both in the capital and in the countryside, brought bohemian motifs, particularly feminism, queerness, and sexual liberation in general (cf. the importance of the British-born painter Leonora Carrington [1917–2011] or the Spanish-born poet Luis Cernuda [1902–1963], to mention only some of the most famous).

Of note in this regard is the chronicle of urban life by Salvador Novo (1904–1974), *Nueva grandeza mexicana* (1946; *New Mexican Grandeur*), which is an obvious reference to Balbuena's colonial text. Novo speaks as a tourist guide for a visiting friend, whom he takes on a narrative tour of the city, pointing out with wit and sarcasm the questionable marvels of its modern lifestyle. Novo was very open about his homosexuality, in a way in which virtually no other Mexican writer was able to get away with (foreigners like Cernuda, could, however, do so to a certain extent), and it is difficult not to read his chronicle, along with his other writings on the city, as campy changes on official and tourist priorities. Susan Sontag's famous essay, *Notes on Camp* (1964), could well have mentioned Mexico as a center of this queer-based aesthetic, so useful in its irreverence and over-the-top figurations, in debunking the hypocrisies of heteronormativity.

The Spanish film director Luis Buñuel (1900–1983), although he never associated with queer or feminist circles, contributed his own virulently

deconstructive voice to the refutation of the mythologies of the Mexican revolution as regards urban life. If *Los olvidados* (1950; *The Young and the Damned*) had not gone on to win recognition at Cannes and to be considered one of the most important films of all time, Buñuel, although he had been invited by the government to work in Mexico after the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), might almost have not made it out of Mexico alive. While the film shows, in the background, the building of modern Mexico City, the foregrounded story is that of grinding poverty and social misery, a Mexico City that is little more than a decaying village. Life is brutal and primitive and government agents, while likely well-intentioned, are incompetent, and the implication is that the project of modernity, which we can see in the background, has done little for the people, particularly for the youngsters showcased by this harsh film. Buñuel's surrealism is in evidence, but the film is essentially unstinting Neorealism, with auteurial moralizing much in evidence. The final scene, in which the little boy who is the main character of the film, is thrown down a garbage dump ravine in a burlap bag, is particularly gut-wrenching because we sense how it speaks to unfulfilled promises of a “revolution” now in its fourth decade. There is some irony to the fact that the great cultural text about Mexico City was the product of a Spanish director who seemed to be wearing out his welcome (Buñuel, who had arrived in 1946, become a Mexican citizen in 1949, would depart Mexico in 1953).

Probably the second greatest text about Mexico City is the signature narrative by Carlos Fuentes (1928–2012), *La región más transparente* (1948; *Where the Air Is Clear*), his first novel. Anticipating the complex narrative structures of the impending Boom of the Latin American novel (a rather problematical configuration that is centered on the international recognition of an internationalist style anchored in Latin American sociohistorical realities), *Región* is a vast mosaic of various instantiations of Mexico City urban life, from the indigenous lumpen that had become almost invisible (it will be much more visible again with the internal migration beginning in the following decades) to the decaying oligarchy, which clings to the idea that it represents an authentic and seigneurial Mexico. At crosscurrents to these narrative primes is the central story of Federico Robles, an ex-revolutionary who has become a financial powerbroker, a synthesis for Fuentes and other writers of his generation of the arc of the Mexican Revolution and the quintessence of its “revolutionary” ideology: virtually unlimited power to those who can effectively work within its system. There is, necessarily, a bohemian backdrop that is both a counterpoint and a complement to the world of power, along with a failed novelist who evokes in a metanarrative fashion the questionable validity of an artistic text to encompass such a complex metropolitan dynamic.

La región más transparente is, then, one of the most important novels in the Mexican canon, and it is the point of reference for an extensive production in the period of novels that question in very strident ways the myths of the Mexican revolution. This production includes the beginnings of a filmic production outside the government-controlled traditional industry. There are simply too many texts to even mention here, but perhaps one of the most important would be

Gazapo (1965) by Gustavo Sainz (1940–2015), a short novel indicative of the so-called Onda (Wave), a loose group of writers from the generation following Fuentes who specialized in experimental, iconoclastic, and dissident writing, all in the context of defying the powerful revolutionary bourgeoisie. The word “gazapo” means whelp, and it is an accurate characterization of the universe of young and aimless teenagers, mostly spoiled brats of the bourgeoisie or the lumpen tied to the bourgeoisie, much in the fashion of Françoise Sagan’s *Bonjour Tristesse* (1954) or J. D. Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye* (1951). Whereas the French and American novels are best characterized as existentialist, Sainz is only vaguely so, being much more sociopolitically oriented than they are. The Mexican novel is less interested in the moral and psychological crises of the postwar years than it is in something like a crisis of national meaning for Mexico. With much of the promise of revolutionary modernism exhausted and with American-style commercialism its major reflex—the importance of the automobile in *Gazapo* is, for example, striking—Sainz’s characters have little to identify them/little to identify themselves with the much-vaunted importance of Mexico as a Latin American model. The automobile, accompanied by their other consumerist trappings, allows them to wander the geographic space of Mexico City but without any transcendence to their journey.

It would be difficult to underestimate the importance of Octavio Paz’s essay *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950; *The Labyrinth of Solitude*). Although Paz went on to become Mexico’s first and only Nobel prize winner (1990) and won many other prestigious international recognitions, it was principally as a poet. *Laberinto* is one of the most read Mexican texts by foreigners attempting to understand so-called enigmatic Mexico, especially in its insistence of a Mexican version of the lonely crowd. For Paz, the “solitude” of his title refers to the alienation urban modernity has generated in the Mexican man (here Paz is being unquestionably sexist) of both indigenous and mestizo origins, essentially unable to fathom the codes the vast overlays brought beginning with the Conquest and that never quite relate to the millenary structures of life in which his social consciousness have originated. It is customary to hear the term “deep Mexico” to refer to this consciousness, which lives on in Mexico in never fully assimilated indigenous societies and their urban extensions that are often not even considered “Mexican,” and the ensuing solitude for Paz is one of the abiding points of fissure for Mexican identity, such that lived human experience never fully matches the official ideology, still prevalent in his day, of a seamless revolutionary essentialism. One could certainly make the argument that the poetry and essays of Octavio Paz, as well as the work of others from what we might call the high Revolutionary period, contributed to establishing a mystique of Mexico that they subsequently set about interpreting, often it would seem more for foreign readers than for Mexicans themselves, the essential fact remains that there is as much of exceptional intellectual as artistic value in these writings. Mexico City as such is not always the immediate focus of Paz’s texts, in *Laberinto* and elsewhere, but yet it is an inevitable anchor, in as much as the geometric growth of the capital in the latter half of the twentieth century is not unrelated to the themes and interpretations writers like Paz set out to explicate.

Indeed, one of the most original aspects of Paz's influential essay is the analysis of the *Pachuco* (something like a Mexican American hotshot or even gangbanger), a paradigm of the young Mexican male rebelling not only against traditional Mexican values but also against American anti-Mexican racism. Part of the cluster of ideologemes of Revolutionary Mexico involves not only the 40% of national territory ceded to the USA in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but also the mass migration of Mexicans to the USA that began with the Revolution of 1910, was augmented by the US *bracero* (= men with arms) agricultural worker program beginning with World War II to supplement the lack of American farmworkers because of wartime recruitment, and continued throughout the rest of the century as a consequence of economic problems in Mexico (Mexico also served as a channel for migration north for Central Americans fleeing civil war and economic disaster in their own countries). Paz's analysis of the alienation of the Mexican in the hostile American setting complemented his analysis of the estranged Mexican peasant in the context of the alienating modernity of Mexico/Mexico City of the twentieth century. If Mexico City is the primary arena of the putative labyrinth of solitude from which broad vulnerable sectors of Mexican society cannot escape into the fundamentally false embrace of modernity, the *Pachuco*, escaping from the latter, falls into the suffocating solitude of an even more alienating American version of that project. Paz thus ends up positing a Los Angeles/Mexico City axis that brings to the fore one of the most significant aspects of contemporary Mexican urban culture: the passage from countryside to the city that may include the passage to the north and its own countryside/city passage. This is only one detail of Paz's long essay, but it is important for reaching beyond the simple formula of village-to-metropolis migration to open one line of the debate over the relationship between metropolitan Mexico and metropolitan USA.

There is much that is problematical today about *Laberinto*, beginning with its sexism (we are asked to think much about Mexican males but little about women) and its compulsory heterosexuality, in addition to the unquestioned proposition that Mexicans are degraded by their contact with the North. Yet it retains a solid place in the canon of Mexico City writing and foreshadows the overwhelming importance of the essay in recent writing about the city.

AFFIRMING A POST-REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

There is a feminist point to be made about the fact that the most sold, and most revered, book of American literature is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960). And although it may not be as revered, the testimonial document *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971; *Massacre in Mexico*) by Elena Poniatowska (b. 1932), who always ranks high in accounts of Latin American feminism, is unquestionably the most sold book of Mexican letters. Inevitably, the 1968 Paris spring had its repercussions in Latin America, so tied among both bohemians and the intelligentsia to French culture. In Argentina, it was in the context of resistance to

US-inspired authoritarian military dictatorships (the 1964 coup in Brazil, the 1966 overthrow in Argentina). But in Mexico, it had to do with a student massacre, on the night of October 2, 1968, that derived from long summer months of unrest related to unacceptable national school bureaucratic policies, although undoubtedly many other issues came into play at a time when various forms of unrest and protest in Mexico were being met by sundry acts of police brutality and repression. Mexico had, unlike the bulk of other Latin American countries, not experienced any organized military repression after the end of the Revolution, although one-party rule had inherent dictatorial qualities about it. There still existed, therefore, the national imaginary that modern Mexico was very much of a model society. This was all shattered by the Tlatelolco massacre and its repercussions, particularly official cover-ups and denials of responsibility. To this day, official documentation remains deficient and many important issues remain unanswered.

Poniatowska's book is accompanied by an extensive photographic dossier taken essentially from journalistic sources: Poniatowska has had a long career as a journalist and had excellent resources at her disposal. The text, built predominantly around recorded interviews with participants and witnesses, including some foreign journalists in Mexico to cover the impending Olympics, provoked much controversy. The controversy came both from the establishment, for its implied unflinching denunciation of the police, the military, and authorities at the highest level of government, and from the left, for what were claimed to be some documentary irregularities, including alleged plagiarism from other sources. Such an accusation is in a sense an objective correlative of the epistemological instability provoked by the massacre. Perhaps assembled too rapidly (it has subsequently been "corrected" in some aspects), *Noche* came at a time when the country and specifically the residents of Mexico City who lived the events in expanding circles of participation, were very acutely aware of how a significantly affective shift in their relationship to the city had taken place. Tlatelolco, of course, is also known as the Plaza de las Tres Culturas referred to at the beginning of this essay as a symbolic epicenter for the city, and that fact has not been lost on any level of the Mexico City imaginary.

Given the depth of Mexico City's queer culture, it is important to include mention of a founding gay novel, *Aventuras, desventuras y sueños de Adonis García, el vampiro de la Colonial Roma* (1979; *Adonis García, A Picaresque Novel*) by Luis Zapata (b. 1951). Set in the once tony gay quarter of the Zona Rosa (i.e., Pink Zone), an epicenter of yore of sophisticated tourists, *Vampiro* (as it is commonly known) turns on the nighttime escapades of a middle-class sexual outlaw, whose cruising practices were important of an early cartography of what at the time was still a sexuality confined in Mexico to the shadows, which is certainly no longer the case. *Vampiro* has not aged well, although it does have its important campy moments, but it is important for having given male homo-affectivity in Mexico a bestseller. Urban lesbianism is best approached through the enormously influential performance pieces of Astrid Haddad (b. 1957), who has broken so many Mexican taboos that it is difficult to know where to begin.

Certainly unforgettable are her parodies of the national icon, the Virgin of Guadalupe, whose significance reaches far beyond that of a patron saint.

Alma Guillermoprieto (b. 1949) is one of Mexico's most internationally known investigative reporters. She has not limited the scope of her work only to Mexico and Mexico City, but writes across the range of Latin American social issues. Fluent in English, she has published extensively in the USA, most notably in *The New Yorker* and *The New York Review of Books*. Her dispatches from "hot spots" in Latin America and the depth of her interpretive acumen make her widely read. One example of a particularly important cluster of her writings has dealt with contemporary Cuba, the transition between the two Castro brothers, and, as of this writing, one eagerly anticipates what she will have to say about the reopening of full diplomatic relationships between the USA and Cuba. In the process, she has much to say about life in the city. Perhaps her best-known book in English is *The Heart That Bleeds: Latin America Now* (1994). Written directly in English for *The New Yorker*, this collection includes several important pieces on Mexico City, one on the problem of garbage and one on the Americanization of Mexican life in general, but specifically in the social and economic center that is Mexico City. Guillermo Prieto's tone is decidedly apocalyptic in nature, as synthesized by the epigraph from her writing I have placed at the beginning of this essay. The enormous growth of the city and the issues that growth generates that outstrip the best efforts at urban planning (even before corruption and ineptitude are factored in) make it difficult not to take the image of overflowing garbage as a metaphoric icon of the city, a master icon complemented by the icons of the process of Americanization that not only generates its own unique forms of garbage (e.g. nonbiodegradable plastics), but a detritus actually signed by American culture in the form of the brand names born in vivid colorful design by that waste: the Golden Arches that rise up on the landscape and the Golden Arches that overtake the landfill. While it is true that Guillermoprieto basically writes to explain Mexico and Latin America to an English-reading audience, her essays are nevertheless central to the globalization of Mexico City, which includes the internationalizing presence of English along a complex continuum of influence and comprehension. Long gone are the days when the culture of the Revolution was aggressively Spanish-only. One hardly believes that Mexico City is actually becoming significantly Americanized or that English is taking over. But American English is a powerful trace of the post-Revolutionary capital and its ramifications throughout the country. A major dimension of this that bears underscoring: as twenty-first-century Mexicans reverse their migratory flow between Mexico and the USA, they take back with them advanced knowledge of American English; indeed, in most cases their children are actually native speakers of the language.

As internationally known as is Guillermoprieto, she enjoys none of the sheer reverence in Mexico bestowed upon Carlos Monsiváis (1938–2010), the greatest chronicler of Mexico City and Mexican popular culture in general since Salvador Novo and perhaps the greatest writer the city has ever produced. Because his oeuvre is so vast, it is difficult to reduce it to a

central core. For example, after his death, his disciples published a collective volume on Monsiváis's writings on queer sexuality, *Que se abra esa puerta: crónicas y ensayos sobre la diversidad sexual* (2010; *Open That Door: Chronicles and Essays on Sexual Diversity*). Gay-identified himself, like Novo he assumed his sexuality in the public arena, which allowed him to write not only well-documented essays regarding the history of sexuality in Mexico, but also chronicles and tracts that contributed to the public discourse over sexuality in general and homosexuality specifically. While Monsiváis's work was rarely grounded in what we have come to call queer theory and is, therefore, susceptible to certain revisions and corrections as regards the subtleties of gender identity and erotic desire, the sheer power of his intellect, the charisma of his presence (with his perennial black leather jacket), his incisive humor in the face of homophobic cant, and his impressive ability to bring to the fore hundreds of incidents, events, participants, and textual manifestations of homoaffective and homoerotic life in Mexico City render him one of the most crucial figures in any study of that city's social and artistic culture.

Sexuality intersects with popular culture for Monsiváis since sexual dissidence or "diversity" vis-à-vis official discourse could best be articulated in the genres on the fringes of respectable bourgeois institutions of culture. Thus, for example, Monsiváis wrote widely about popular artists and their textual production, as, for example, in his important scrutiny of the singer Juan Gabriel (b. 1950), who, despite his queer posturing and provocative song lyrics, has had an almost universal following among Mexicans across social boundaries, leading one to wonder, along with the implication of Monsiváis's interpretation, whether Mexico is not fundamentally queer and whether the compulsory heterosexuality of the European project of modernity imposed on the country since the time of Porfirio Díaz (and, before him, by the homophobia of the Spanish Inquisition) is not, in the end, a minority adscription.

One of Monsiváis's key collections of essays is *Los rituales el caos* (2006; *The Rituals of Chaos*), probably his most eloquent collection of essays on Mexico City. The overarching principle of the pieces is twofold: Mexico no longer exists—that is, the myth of a uniform greater Mexico forged by the culture of the Mexican Revolution—and that it is impossible to police morality in a society in which every known vice is shared by millions. Certainly these are interrelated propositions. The fragmentation of the myth of a greater Mexico is organized around the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a founding myth of the country, the mestizo as the quintessential Mexico, Mexican Spanish—heavily influenced by indigenous languages, but designed to supplant those languages—as the linguistic glue for Mexican identity, and triumph of the Revolution as the confirmation of the modern nation. This fragmentation means the dissolution of a grid of eternal values that putatively held the country together. Rather, today Mexico is held together by the inertia of its asserted and recognized sovereignty, but that grid no longer validates or authenticates it. Millions of Mexicans subscribe to opposing values (e.g. the rise of Protestantism and the deep inroads of the Church of Latter Day Saints), and there is no going back to

an alleged and impossible romantic version of a unified Mexican national consciousness. It is this perception that allows Monsiváis to defend women's issues, to promote queer culture, to acknowledge that Mexicans living in the USA are not traitors but merely "other" Mexicans and are still Mexicans when they come back to Mexico, not the damaged goods as described in novels by Carlos Fuentes and essays by Octavio Paz.

Sara Sefchovich (1949–), in addition to excellent novels, is a professional sociologist who teaches at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the sort of intellectual supported by an academic system that allows her ample time and resources to develop important studies regarding her society. *La suerte de la consorte* (1999; *The Luck of the First Lady*), now in its third edition (2010), is the first social history of Mexican first ladies, women who have, until very recently, played important but carefully scripted roles in Mexican society. Extensively researched, each portrait of some 50 presidents' wives is also a vignette of the era represented by that woman and the husband whose power she complements, if often only minimally and in a shady fashion. Mexican presidents currently serve 6 years, are not eligible ever for reelection, reign with considerable autocratic power, only to essentially disappear from public view when their term is up, and each of their wives has been a crucial component of their power, even when they have had no personal autonomy nor anything approaching a measure of feminist independence. Mexico will eventually have a woman president, and the structural configuration Sefchovich describes will be forever altered. But as a historical phenomenon, it is an integral part of Mexican history, and it is an integral part of Mexico City culture because of the extent to which the forum for the wives of Mexico has been their articulation of select prominent cultural and social dimensions of its public life. This changed dramatically in 1990, when the PRI lost its 70-year grip on power and President Vicente Fox (2000–2009) of the Partido de Acción Democrática (Democratic Action Party) saw his wife Marta Sahagún work to assert her own political power base, including articulating her desire to run for the presidency.

If Sefchovich's book on Mexican first ladies is important for understanding Mexico City because that is the principal forum for political power in the country, her collection of newspaper and radio articles, *País de mentiras* (2008; *Country of Lies*), is easily her most influential work. Again, she ranges across Mexican society, but inevitably, since power is centered in Mexico City, the point of radiation of her commentary is the Mexican capital. Sefchovich's general analytic principle is that political ideology in Mexico is a vast network of lies. That is, successive governments in power articulate programs, pursue initiatives, convene panels and forums, but never in the end really accomplish anything in the way of concrete goals. Or what they accomplish is a pale figure of their original proposal. Mexican governmental society is a vast scriptural machine that produces proposals and reports that stretch out in rhizomatic fashion from the three bloated branches of government. But these texts rarely translate into concrete process, into material social change. Thus, there is a certain aesthetic impulse in all this, one that Sefchovich charts with careful detail, a bureaucratic impulse that is what one might describe as poetic because it is neither functional

nor practical. Of course, this does not mean that social change does not take place, only that, from Sefchovich's point of view, it takes place almost despite the poetic processes she foregrounds. It is important to note that Sefchovich writes as both a woman and a Jew, although she has recognized she is more ignored or silenced as a woman than as a Jew. Jews constitute a small but powerful part of Mexico City intelligentsia (they are the third largest Jewish society in Latin America, although barely 50,000 in number), and the anti-Semitism that does exist in Mexico has been more subtle than broad-brushed, as it often has been in Buenos Aires, the largest Jewish community (300,000) in Latin America. Rather, Sefchovich has complained that as a woman speaking out in a Mexican society that remains intransigently masculinist is where her Otherness has most mattered. Her journalistic work, and the collection of essays that results from it, has been her opportunity to speak out in a transgressive fashion, in Spanish, as opposed to the English-language privilege of Guillermoprieto.

I have emphasized essays in this section because this is one of the most important aspects of cultural production in Mexico at the moment. Clearly, Mexico City, as one of the great and monstrous megalopolises of the world and as the seat of a complex Mexican political system, offers much to comment on as a prime twenty-first-century urban environment.

NOTES

1. One understands by Mexico City (Ciudad de México) or simply México the extended megalopolitan area that has continued to expand beyond the formal boundaries of México, D.F. (Distrito Federal), the national capital of the Republic of the United States of Mexico. Mexico City, then, not only includes the federal district, but many towns and municipalities that are actual part of the administration of the states contingent with the federal district. As is customary with megalopolitan areas, there are multiple disputes as to the boundaries of the urban entity lie, which are, in any case, constantly shift—that is, constantly expanding—while the official federal district remains geographically static.
2. The word “mestizo” is contested semantic terrain. In Mexico, it basically refers to those individuals of mixed indigenous and European (essentially Spanish) descent. Mexicans are customarily viewed as quintessentially mestizo, the fruit of the rape of indigenous women by Spanish conquerors, iconized in the sexual relationship between Cortés and his concubine-translator Malintzin, known in Spanish as La Malinche, the prototype of the violated mother from whom all Mexicans descend.

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Cities, Territories and Conflict: Narrative and the Colombian City in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century

Andrés Mesa

In 1959, amid one of the most violent and sad times in Colombia's history, Gabriel García Márquez published an essay entitled: *Dos o tres cosas sobre la novela de la Violencia* (García 1983). He emphatically states that the novels dealing with the history of *la Violencia* (the civil war between 1948 and 1958) were aesthetically poor and unworthy of examination: 'Quienes han leído todas las novelas de violencia que se escribieron en Colombia parecen de acuerdo que todas son malas' (García 1983: 286). Although it may be true that the vast majority of texts of this genre are highly concerned with the political conflict of the time and, as such, are deliberately partisan, García Márquez's essay demonstrates a compromising disregard for Colombia's literary development. Firstly, this is because he is too involved with the problems of his contemporary Colombian society, as can be seen in *Lamala hora* (García 1996) and *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (García 2003). Secondly, *la Violencia* and the literature about it were the first phenomena to draw attention to the Colombian city and its inhabitants. Thus, it can be seen as the precursor of the country's urban literature.

This chapter shows how the emergence of the modern city in Colombian literature is based on a history of violence and inequality, which is articulated in the politics, economy and its subsequent representation. In order to achieve this aim, two novels and two films are selected to exemplify how the city and urban life is experienced and represented: Manuel Mejía Vallejo's *Al pie de la ciudad* (1958), Fernando Vallejo's *Virgen de los sicarios* (1994 = 'hired assassins') and two films by Víctor Gaviria, *La vendedora de rosas* (1998) and *Rodrigo D: no futuro* (1990).

After a century of *costumbrist* literary production which highlighted the difference between the rural and urban worlds, in Medellín 1958, a new

treatment of the city as a literary subject appeared with Manuel Mejía Vallejo's (1923–1998) *Al pie de la ciudad*, one of the first urban novels in Colombia. *Al pie de la ciudad* does not just portray one story or one protagonist, but centres around two marginal spaces: *los barrancos* (the city's outskirts slopes) and the house of Dr Arenas. In the former setting, Mejía Vallejo depicts a group of socio-economical outsiders. In particular, the narration focuses on a young boy and his sidekick goat, who, after being driven away from the countryside and rejected by the city, have settled in the undefined space of *los barrancos*. Here, while living on whatever can be found in the sewage water that pours into the nearby river, the protagonists are confronted by challenges from both nature and the city (Mejía 1969: 72–80). In the latter setting, the author portrays the noble and traditional Arenas family. Like the *barrancos* inhabitants, their lives are marginal to that of the city. The doctor, who is the general manager of the city's hospital, is only ever described at his house, never at his workplace. Similarly, rather than being described directly, his family members' movements outside the home are only ever indirectly portrayed through the doctor's perspective (Mejía 1969: 101). The family are depicted only in the wealthy area of the city, either at the club or at their house. The reason why the city functions more as a character than as a place is because the definition of a city dweller, according to the municipality, the government and culture, is still not clear: the characters, like the real-life author and his fellow Colombians, are still coming to terms with their new identities as urban inhabitants.

Mejía Vallejo, along with other writers, moved beyond the depiction of differences between rural and urban life by approaching the city through the representation of subjects. In this manner, these writers consider a multitude of themes within the city landscape, like public spaces, cinema, plastic arts and architecture. Alongside Mejía Vallejo's text, narratives such as Mario Arrubla's (b. 1939) *La legendaria infancia de Ramiro Cruz* (1967) and Humberto Navarro's *Amor en grupo: la onírica y veraz anécdota del Nadaísmo* (1974) started to construct the new genre (Mesa 2001: 104–106). Arrubla's novel depicts the drama of moving from a rural to an urban setting and uses the periphery of the city, which is the poorest area, to exemplify urban life (Mesa 2001: 104; Arrubla 1967). In his text, Navarro employs a novel-like narrative to recount the history of the 'Nadaísta' movement (Mesa 2001: 104; Navarro 1974). *Nadaísmo* (a counter-culture combining the words 'nada' (= nothing) and 'dada'), was one of the most influential artistic movements in Colombia during the second half of the twentieth century. While drawing on the urban motif, it began as a counterculture movement, like the 'beat' generation, against traditional Colombian society and its violence. In 1979, *Las muertes ajenas* by Manuel Mejía Vallejo was published. In this novel, while moving away from *la Violencia*, the author further develops the urban leitmotif through a broad depiction of Medellín and its society (Mejía 1979). In particular, the narrative portrays a wealthy family with political links as the focus of the occult forces that govern the fibres of society: a young student, who is a member of this family, assassinates another young man, and to hide his crime, he hires a poor man to take the blame instead of him. For the first

time, grotesque realism is employed in order to illustrate the rotten heart of traditional Colombian culture and the country's upper classes. The novel maintains the depiction of an idyllic-less city. Thanks to Manuel Mejía Vallejo's work, the trend of polarising the city and the countryside is overcome. In this manner, the author cleared the way for a new treatment of the city by future authors, which is determined by their own experiences.

Colombian urban literature took on the task of representing twentieth-century social problems. The violence and war that afflicted rural areas of the country provoked great diasporas from the countryside to the city. The *planes pilotos* of the 1930s and 1940s for Bogotá, Cali and Medellín, which had been developed by the world's greatest city planners, were helpless in the face of the migratory upheaval during *la Violencia*. Edward Calderon explains that the *plan piloto* for Medellín projected a growth in the urban population from little less than 250,000 to 500,000 in 1975 (Calderon 2016: 144). Historians show that Medellín's population in 1930 was 275,000; by the time *Al pie de la ciudad* was published, the population had increased to almost a million and a half, roughly five times Karl Brunner's estimation for 1975 (Calderon 2016: 137–144; Melo 1994: 13–20). The treatment of these settlement patterns in urban literature becomes one of the most important themes considered by the authors. They describe the new physiognomy of the habitat, which has been created by the intensified urban expansion, and where the modern consumerist and capitalist way of living clashes with the traditional rural mentality.

The new periphery created by the expansion of the city absorbed previously rural areas. Mejía Vallejo depicts the conflict this created in society because the areas occupied by the poor and the refugees from the violence in the rest of the country were wanted by expansion and urbanisation for different purposes. As a result, the poor and the refugees are evicted from the land: 'Maldita la Ciudad . . . — "Yo tenía mis tres cuerdas de tierra, más lejos que aquellas montañas. Y un mulo, y una vaca, y un crío. Maldita la Hora en que abandoné mis siembras. Maldita la hora en que todos nacimos"' (Mejía 1969: 67–71).

The new areas were never integrated with the rest of the city, but their inhabitants, being so close to the city, started to create new human relationships with the space. These relationships quickly infringed on the narrow limits of traditional 'honourable' society. In the case of Medellín, the inhabitants confronted the idea of '*antioqueñidad*' (Medellin is in the department of Antioquia) through new cultural manifestations and new behaviours, which grew out of traditional myths. In the novel, this is represented by the loving relationship between Amalia and the son of Dr Arenas; the couple's unplanned child makes the bourgeoisie family see and feel the life of the outsiders (Mejía 1969: 37, 76, 130).

The birth of the city in Colombia was a process tainted by wars and massacres. The usual panorama represented in the urban novels of the 1960s and 1970s is characterised by a city rejected and destroyed by violence and war. The authors are faced with giving life to a city without hiding the drama, the pain or the misery (Mesa 2001: 105). The different areas, both

old and new, form part of a new mosaic city; a Medellín constituted by a multiplicity of sectors and neighbourhoods, which compels each writer to take on the task of drawing the history and map of each particular part of the city.

The main characteristic of this new literary production comes from the need to name the depressed and marginal areas of the city, while also depicting the inhabitants' conflicts, passions and deaths. It is a phenomenon of collective enunciation, of self-recognition and of self-identification, only made possible through literary proclamation. The need to name and construct Medellín as a twentieth-century metropolis is also determined by both the rural nature of the settlements that the Valle de Aburrá had until the 1940s and the *costumbrist* imaginary depicted in the works of Tomás Carrasquilla (1858–1940).

For the purposes of this study, the poor, defined by Bart Keunen and Luc de Droogh as the 'socio-economic outsider', is a crucial characteristic of Medellín's configuration, architecture and material fantasy (Keunen 2014: 99–113). The identity of these men and women is closely linked to that of the working class and the peasant. As Colombian cities started to enter the age of industrialisation and proletarianisation, the spaces started to change. The urban and sanitary need to delineate between commercial, leisure, agricultural and industrial areas in an ever-growing society led to new definitions of the functions of public spaces; as places of visual consumption, of walking, of observing merchandise, of people watching and of nightlife. Medellín was soon confronted with the migrating refugees from the war in the countryside and the resulting pauperisation of the city's outskirts and centre (Melo 1994: 13–20; Calderon 2016: 135–151).

Manuel Mejía Vallejo's *Al pie de la ciudad* describes the urban environment divided between the extremely wealthy residents and the poor, homeless population that wander between the city and its peripheries, thereby inhabiting both spaces: '... caravanas de seres sin nombre, sin tierra, sin ranchos, sin futuro' (Mejía 1969: 221). Like Mejía, Gaviria and Vallejo demonstrate a melancholic empathy for these socio-economic outsiders, who they consider victims of exclusion and discrimination. Accordingly, through responding to the industrial movements and identifying themselves with the little guy, these writers construct antibourgeois narratives.

The literary concern for the poor outcasts comes more from the fact that there was increasing social awareness about urban poverty. The history of the writers' discourse needs to be considered alongside the development of the typical modern discourse about poverty (Keunen 2014: 101). Colombian authors of urban narratives were influenced by social conscience ideas that conceived stereotypical views of the poor, the young and the labourer, who are branded with no freedom and no opportunities. This is immortalised by Rodrigo's memorable declaration at the beginning of *Rodrigo D*: 'votado estas vos, estoy yo, estamos todos' (Gaviria 1991: 3:34). According to this view, characters like Rodrigo and Mónica are not simply outcast figures who try to survive, they are also archetypes of a population claiming their place. In *Rodrigo D*, Gaviria is guided by the young

population's clash with traditional culture through their pursuit of counterculture punk music; forging themselves a place in which to express and claim their rights. In an important passage that recognises the influence that Rodrigo has in the counterculture movement, the film shows a musical performance on a house rooftop. This is set against the backdrop of the city landscape, which is representative of traditional culture (Gaviria 1991: 1:02:06).

The social classes represented symbolise the forces that emerge from dialectical opposites. For Mejía and Gaviria, the socially marginal actors that give life to their stories are defined as non-specific identities, which represent the evolution of society and the development of humankind as a whole. This can be seen in the absence of a name for the boy and the goat: “Vamos, cabra . . .” [. . .] “Cabra, venga y vea el tren . . .” [. . .] “Mire, cabra, ésta es usted” (Mejía 1969: 13–53). Likewise, in *La vendedora de rosas*, the actresses, who are either runaways from violent homes or orphans, have no surnames (Gaviria 1998: 4:41). Their clear and evident critiques of the political and social status quo, most pronounced in the case of Fernando Vallejo, show attitudes towards the left of the political spectrum.

The generic identity used to represent the public perception of the marginal inhabitants of the city becomes problematic as the stories advance and these identities develop. The authors aim to construct a phenomenological description of the human life cannot overcome with the individualisation of their stories. The outsider can never escape from the stereotype of the poor as *sicarios* and *sacoleros*.¹

In addition to the migrations from the country to the city and the accelerated urban development represented in the urban literature, it is also necessary to consider the influence of the break with the old economic paradigm. From its independence to contemporary times, as an exporter of primary goods such as gold and agricultural produce, the Colombian economy has constantly struggled in the international market. From the 1960s and 1970s, the prosperity of the mafia business, buoyed by the trafficking of drugs, appliances, tobacco and alcohol, represented a possibility of escape from the misery and poverty in the new cities (Palacios 1998: 308–324). From drug trafficking, literature developed the theme of ‘extravagant individuality’: extreme characters that belong to the darkest and most sordid areas of human existence. These characters exacerbate the reader's understanding of both society and the writer's own history. In the same way, due to the appearance of narco trafficking, writers are able to deal with forbidden themes. As a result, the way is cleared for the development of the petite bourgeois drama and the inane romantic melodrama of family intrigues; genres that allow the writer deal with the tragedy of human life. By assessing the city's image through its violence, which results in the loss of life's value, fear and horror, urban literature imposes two great challenges to the readers and authors: first, the sensationalist character that violence exposes the writer and reader to; and second, the silence that suppresses any description of the causes of the problem of drug-trafficking and *sicariato* (murder for hire) in a philistine society.

La virgen de los sicarios awoke all kinds of emotions in critics and readers (Vallejo 1994). It is undeniable that the novel sensationalises the violence in order to attract readers, damaging the reputation of this genre and thereby marking out future writers. In this manner, the novel seems to follow a fashion, instead of a need to communicate an experience or a sentiment. Nevertheless, the narrator/author's agonising voice allows the presence of a critical and extremely real depiction of Colombian society and culture (Mesa 2001: 108). Fernando Vallejo lives through his narrator's homosexual impersonal affairs; this being a topic which had never been manifested so openly before. Thus, the author gives a voice to a group of citizens who had never been represented in *costumbrist* literature (Vallejo 1994: 1–10).

In the four novels and films, the representation of the city is always fragmented by violence and horror. Medellín appears amorphous, cleaved and decentred as its citizens walk the streets unaware their history, architecture, neighbours and faith. While in *Al pie de la ciudad* the setting of the personal drama of the boy and the father is the street where the goat is run over by a car, in *Rodrigo D*, the settings of the personal drama are the staircase where Rodrigo's friend is murdered and the building from which he jumps (Mejía 1969: 195–196; Gaviria 1991: 113, 43–116:00). For Mónica in *La vendedora de rosas*, the city exists only at night and is relevant to her as long as she can sell roses in order to make money (Gaviria 1998: 44:48, 1:03:56). In *La virgen de los sicarios*, although 'Colombia changes but continues the same', owing to respect and superstition, it is the churches that stand as refuges from the violence (Vallejo 1994: 12). In contrast, the city outside in full of characters absorbed by the confusion of violence, which is depicted through the fights, death, hunger and indifference.

The films and narratives depict society and urban development in a visible and eternal way. The experiences of the inhabitants take place in the unfamiliar outside world of the streets. In *La virgen de los sicarios*, the deconstruction of public spaces and their occupation by the poor and by pedlars are one of the main factors that allow Vallejo to speak about the ruin of the city: 'el parque de Bolívar, en el corazón del matadero, y seguimos hacia la Avenida La Playa por entre la chusma y los puestos callejeros caminando, para calibrar el desastre' (Vallejo 1994: 64). In *Rodrigo D*, music, business, crimes and even the shower are located outside the privacy of the house (Gaviria 1991: 12:58). Mónica and her friends are homeless, so they spend the night at a residence in the centre of the city. However, because the residence is a secondary place where there is no privacy, they still live and sleep on the streets (Gaviria 1998: 1:12:38). Since downtown is represented as an always overcrowded and chaotic space, there is a loss of the public space that causes a subsequent loss of the private space. Thus, the narrator of *La virgen de los sicarios* finds a completely different world to that of his childhood (Vallejo 1994: 7).

In Vallejo's Medellín, the only areas that are clearly represented, thus characters assert their identity with it, are the *comunas* and the wealthy south.² In Manuel Mejía Vallejo's text, cities are not named; the *barrancos*

and the club are the closest terms to place names in the novel. The same technique is employed in *Rodrigo D* by Gaviria: in order to make more evident the alienation the characters feel in their surroundings, areas and neighbourhoods of the city are never identified. Different is the case of *La vendedora de rosas* in which the experience of the city is depicted through language and the use of slang to identify places and landmarks: “la 70...” [...] “el lleras...” [...] “el río...” (Gaviria 1998: 4:41, 21:37, 52:30). Vallejo, on the contrary, names everything in order to report and blame the state, the narcos, and the accommodating citizens; for him, there cannot be a story without names: ‘no se puede contar historias sin nombres’ (Vallejo 1994: 10).

Colombian urban narrative aims at the transfiguration of an individual experience into a common one. The aim of this is to re-establish and mend not only those lost spaces but also the sensitivity of their citizens. The narratives only acquire meaning because they are contrasted with the appropriation of a reality—not a hallucinated imagination—which confronts the reader’s participation in the depicted reality and fiction. This urban literature and the reality it represents challenges Hannah Arendt’s understanding of the ‘public event’ (Arendt 1959: 59). Arendt’s public event achieves the category of reality by merit of its setting in the streets and because it is in front of the widest audience. However, as it has been explained, the Medellín represented in these works lacks both spaces such as these and the attention and sensibility of its audience. This does not mean that the public event ceases to exist. Instead, the event acquires its reality, or truth, by means of the literature that represents it, thereby forcing the audience to look and experience the sadness of their reality.

The Medellín represented in all of the narratives and films discussed in this study is dubious because it is fragmentary and one-sided. The violence in Colombian and Medellín’s society is undeniable, but represents only one part of its life. The value of an urban literature that narrates a story of violence through the eyes of the *sicarios* and narco traffickers comes from the clash it produces with a society that, owing to the citizens’ and readers’ fears of reiterated violence, has become unresponsive. Conversely, for the foreign reader, the sensationalist element in the literature seems to dissimulate a common and total experience, which leaves no space for the rest of occurrences that constitute day-to-day life. In this aspect, *Al pie de la ciudad* is distinguished from the rest of the works considered in this study. Mejía’s text, while depicting the poor reality of those who live in the outskirts of the city, still manages to represent the happiness that these people are able to find in their friends, family and the little things in life, like games of the children and family time (Mejía 1969: 162–182).

The protagonists in the city, in a lost public space, are simple bystanders who feel little or no connection with their surroundings. Víctor Gaviria’s films show this through short flashes of the city, where random encounters and banal conversations happen as a commentary on this relationship with the space (Gaviria 1991: 11:20, 11:39, 20:39, 37:47, 55:00; Gaviria 1998:

21:37, 44:48, 1:02:44). Thus, a poetics of the low becomes the centre of the narratives. In *Rodrigo D: no futuro* and *La vendedora de rosas*, a dissection of Medellín is made by the characters, who, in the mist of uncertainty, ride bikes or walk in the underground world of the city at night (Gaviria 1991:19:00, 47:32; Gaviria 1998: 30:31, 1:02:44). The city is mapped by the experiences and fears of these tragic characters. The *comunas*, the poor, the young, the punk, the *sicario* and the underage prostitute are characters and social roles that reveal the city's obscure face, along with its silence and the neglect by the ones who are defined as citizens.

Gaviria's work uses non-professional actors in order to create a vital, almost palpable realism, which plays with the limits between fantasy and reality. The use of a documentary style to create the films takes advantage of the semblance of a low budget production to convey his poetics. The war unleashed by drug trafficking, between cartels, the government and the citizens, created bloodshed that enlarged social and geographical differences. The films use the image of the territory divided into south, centre and north, and go further by also showing a strongly divided and atomised city. The mountain areas are depicted as ghettos, like bunkers where the perpetrators of violence find protection from the law. The lower areas are manifestations of misery and social inequality.

The stories from *la Violencia* and the times of the Narco are endless and there are enough deaths and victims to prove their reality. In Medellín, and indeed the rest of Colombia, most people chose not to speak, about politics, violence, injustice or death. One only has to remember the line from *El Coronel no tiene quien le escriba*, which records the social spirit of the epoch: 'prohibido hablar de política' (García 2003: 54). Particularly, in Medellín's *comunas*, there is an intimacy with the trafficking stories and crime news. In these narratives, they find the voice of a culture that does not fit with the 'traditional' and 'noble' *Antioqueña* culture. Colombian urban literature is thus composed by narratives of pain and memory, which mourn the death of their families and of their political leaders, as well as the abandonment of the state.

I have tried to show how the representation of the city in the two novels and two films share some of the same creative/imaginary and critical characteristics, while at the same time, analysing their critical reflection about the construction and reception of the city. Urban realism and fidelity to the city and its citizens is only maintained as long as it allows the writers and directors to create the fantasy. Mejía, Vallejo and Gaviria narrate politically charged fantasies. There is longing for revolution or change, and a voice is found through Vallejo's sexually exuberant attack on a sectarian and privileged high class. By trying to show all the conflicts inside the texts, this chapter has tried to display the different forms of experience of the city. The problem of juxtaposition between the different versions of the same city allows the appreciation of the enormous potential that exists from recognising the imaginary flexibility as a reading process. Nevertheless, the subject still has a lot to offer, especially if one considers the possibility of studying the phenomena that have been experienced across various different countries, including Mexico, Venezuela and Brazil.

NOTES

1. Sicario: hit-man or hit-woman. Sacolero: drug addict, whose poison is a cheap glue, consumed through inhalation.
2. The *comuna*, or commune, is a concept used by the administration of the city to define the delineation of neighbourhoods. Recently, it has acquired the role of denominating the poor parts of the city, something similar to that of the favela in Brazil.

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Peru: Words Under the Fog

Fernando Rivera

At dawn, a huge and pale blanket of fog covers the valleys of the Rímac, Chillón, and Lurín Rivers, hiding a vast territory of 1,088 square miles from the rising sun. Under the haze, the sprawling city of Lima begins its daily life, taking a deep breath of Pacific Ocean mist and moving its rusty machinery of metal, cement, and 10 million people. No matter the season—winter or summer, autumn or spring, no matter the era—pre-Hispanic, colonial, or modern—the mist homogenizes buildings, peoples, and highways at this time of the day. According to the celebrated poet Antonio Cisneros, this affects the desires and behavior of its people:

This air—they'll tell you—
turns everything red and ruins most things after the briefest
contact.
Thus your desires and efforts
will become a rusty needle
before their hair or head have emerged. (Cisneros 1985: 77)

For 3,000 years, many different people have inhabited the territory of today's Metropolitan Lima, including the seaport of El Callao. Before the Hispanic foundation of the city, a series of fiefdoms and kingdoms—culminating with the Incan Empire, Tahuantinsuyo—ruled the region. The earliest settlement that still remains is Huaca El Paraíso, dating back as far as 2000 B.C. There are other *huacas* (archeological sites) in the city that emerge, almost miraculously, amongst the crowded buildings of the modern cityscape like unexpected emissaries from ancient times.

THE CITY OF THE KINGS

As a Hispanic city, Lima was founded on January 18, 1534, by conquistador Francisco Pizarro and his men. It was the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru and honored with the title *Ciudad de los Reyes* (City of the Kings) by King Charles I

(better known as Emperor Charles V) as a reference to the magi of the Epiphany, but as time passed its old name in Quechua, *Rímac* (taken from the river), was corrupted as Lima and became the general name. The huge mining production of gold and silver enabled Lima to become one of the richest cities of the world, where galleons full of gold and silver bars were continually sent to Spain.

In a few decades, Lima flourished and was praised for its rising splendor. The Jesuit priest Bernabé Cobo (1582–1657) portrayed its *Plaza Mayor* (Main Square) in *Historia de la Fundación de Lima* (1639, *History of the Lima's Foundation*):

On the fourth and last side of the plaza, which slopes down toward the river along the north bank, are the royal offices, palace, and home of the viceroys. It is the largest and most luxurious structure in this kingdom because of its grand site and the great efforts expended by all the viceroys to make it resplendent. (Cobo 1996: 62–63)

During the seventeenth century, public, religious, and official festivities were marked by opulence and pageantry as occurred with the celebrations for the arrival of a new viceroy. Even the common people enjoyed a time of bonanza: “The great ornamentation and ostentation of houses in Lima is so extraordinary that I believe one would find that even the poorest and humblest Limeños have some jewel or silver or gold vase in their homes” (Cobo 1996: 68–69).

This wealthy city caught the attention of pirates, corsairs, and filibusters from Europe, such as the legendary English corsair Francis Drake, and the Dutch corsairs, Joris van Speilbergen and Jacques l’Hermite. The fight against pirates and corsairs was glowingly rendered in epic poems, which represented a new poetic circle different from the epic poetry dedicated to the conquest (Firbas 86). For instance, Juan de Miramontes y Zuázola’s long poem *Armas antárticas* (1609?) recounts Drake’s foray in the South Seas:

Drake meanwhile releases the sails
of his ship and continues his voyage,
because saw he the weapons gleam
and of the horns and drums he heard the crash.
(Miramontes y Zuázola 2006: 353)

There were two other fears that creoles and Spaniards had at that time. One was an Indian rebellion, when a plot to seize Lima and massacre the Spanish population was discovered; the other was the prospect of a black uprising (Higgins 2005: 42–43; Flores Galindo, 91: 79). In response to these fears, Viceroy Duque de la Palata constructed an immense defensive wall around the

city in the 1680s. This wall brought changes in social life as the urbanization of the empty places inside it was carried out and the population became more ethnically diverse (Panfichi 1995: 29).

Lima became a major intellectual center. The presence of the University of San Marcos (1551), printing houses, and *colegios mayores* (colleges from the religious orders) attracted theologians, writers, poets, playwrights, historians, and artists, eager for intellectual renown and social promotion. Despite the Inquisition Tribunal's prohibition of the circulation of novels and other texts in colonial territories, the colonial intellectual elite largely defied this rule. A good example is the diffusion of the first edition of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605); the majority of the copies were sent to the colonies, and it was read avidly in Lima (Guibovich Perez 2003: 18).

Furthermore, bookstores and private libraries had the most prominent poems published in Spanish, even poems translated from the Latin and Italian such as Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Tasso's *Jerusalem Liberated*, and Petrarca's poems. This rich intellectual environment encouraged the formation of literary societies and academies, like Academia Antártica, a particular intellectual group that included religious and secular humanists from the University of San Marcos and the viceroyalty court. These poets tried to incorporate American and indigenous issues in their works, using the most prestigious genres of the Renaissance (Firbas 2006: 21–22).

Among the most important works written in this time are Diego Mexía y Fernangil's *Parnaso antártico*; Diego Dávalos y Figueroa's *Miscelánea austral* (1602); and *Discurso en loor de la poesía* (1608) and *Epístola a Belardo* (1621), written by anonymous women poets who used the pen names of Clarinda and Amarilis, respectively. In baroque poetry, the satirical and ferocious poems of Juan del Valle y Caviedes (1652–1657) stand out, criticizing the colonial life of the city. He used to take on physicians:

If in hands of mediocre doctor
falls the sinner, the just
in which will he fall?
because good one there is none. (del Valle y Caviedes 1984: 6)

One of the greatest intellectual figures of colonial Lima was Pedro Peralta y Barnuevo (1663–1743), a mathematician, astronomer, poet, and playwright. He wrote the long epic poem *Lima fundada o la conquista del Perú* (1732), which recounts the history of Lima and Hispanic Peru. The last chant tells of the Spaniards' victory over Manco Inca's rebellion, the last episode of the conquest, in which the Inca is portrayed as evil and the indigenous population as a threat:

Never such those in Lima suspected,
Never such was imaginable to the Marquis;
Not judging, that they still were in feint
When it was one terror, and much havoc. (Peralta y Barnuevo, 1732: 359)

This poem expressed also the fear, the cultural distance, and the view as an inferior race that creole society from Lima was developing of the indigenous population. This feeling would persist until the end of the twentieth century, when a massive migration from the highlands changed forever the social cityscape.

Lima had its zenith as a metropolitan city in the seventeenth century. Later, after the creation of the new viceroyalties of Nueva Granada (1739) and Río de la Plata (1776), Santa Fe de Bogotá and Buenos Aires started to compete with her as an economical and cultural center. Lima's importance in colonial era has been recently recognized as a *metropolitan modern* city, "a space of mixing and subversion of social and cultural structures not found in this dimension anywhere in Europe or the Orient" (Osorio 2008: 156–157).

THE COLONIAL ARCADE

Peru obtained its independence from Spain in 1821. The following three decades were a period of internal turmoil with civil wars and military *caudillos* trying to seize power. In Lima, intellectuals and writers portrayed the new society from the point of view of the creole elite. Through plays, journalistic chronicles, poetry, and painting of what has been called *Costumbrismo* (discourse about local customs), the capital of the new republic was populated by politicians, military officers, aristocrats, priests, artisans, musicians, state bureaucrats, housemaids, housewives, slaves, servants, workers, common people, and others. *Costumbrismo* was an artistic endeavor focused on social types, which criticized both remaining customs of colonial society and the excessive affection for European models, while at the same time it reinforced social hierarchies, distributed social roles, and celebrated city life.

A particular case among the *Costumbrismo* works was the *Tradiciones* by Ricardo Palma (1833–1919). They were mostly custom articles on everyday life of colonial times published in magazines and newspapers. Through anecdotes and historical accounts, they portrayed smart, gentle, sarcastic, pious, and sly characters. *Tradiciones* developed a "structure of feeling"—in Raymond Williams's sense—about colonial society that Limean elite could connect with. It has been said that *Tradiciones* and other *Costumbrismo* works avoided addressing the tensions between masters and servants, foreigners and natives, and wealthy and miserable people. This fabricated the pleasant idea of a "colonial arcade" (Salazar Bondy 1973: 13–14).

In one of Palma's *Tradiciones*, most likely following Goethe's *Faust*, the old scribe Don Dimas de la Tijereta makes a pact with Lilith to win the love of Visitación. In exchange, he cunningly compromises to give his *almilla* (little *alma*, little soul) to Lilith. When the time comes to make effective the pact, Don Dimas gives his *almilla* to Lilith, which also happens to be the doublet that seventeenth-century scribes used to wear (Palma 1952: 502–506). This duplicity in relationship with power and law came to be an important trait of the Limeans' identity as developed by themselves: it abides but it does not lead to fulfillment.

THE TANGLED DESIRE FOR MODERNITY

At the mid-nineteenth century, the cityscape and the life of Limeans started to change, after the boom of guano and saltpeter exports brought economic prosperity to Peru. A series of democratic reforms and urban projects began. Slavery was abolished definitively; a railroad, from Lima to Callao, was built in 1843; gas lighting appeared in the city streets in 1855; and a telegraph line connected also Lima and Callao in 1857. As with other major Latin American cities, Paris was designated as a model in all city affairs; foreign immigration was stimulated and workers and their families were brought from Italy, China, England, France, and Germany. In 1870, the city wall was demolished, almost as an announcement of another kind of reforms. Primary education was declared free and mandatory for men and women until 12 years old. Apart from the tercentennial University of San Marcos, the government opened Schools of Agriculture, Engineering, Industry, and Arts. A School of Education for women was opened, and women were incorporated as teachers in basic education. Moreover, the influence of modern European culture through novels, operas, ballets, and arts forged a new Limean society (Denegri 1996: 63).

In *Lima: esquisas históricas, estadísticas, administrativas, comerciales et morales* (1866), a book dedicated to contest fantastic impressions of the city as being an “exotic” and “savage” place, and to inform French people about “modern” and “civilized” Lima, the Limean writer Manuel A. Fuentes (1820–1889) expounded on the progress and prosperity of the city in the everyday life. He said, “[Lima] receives goods from almost all commercial nations of the world, imported generally by European businessmen,” the city’s sidewalks were made of “slate stones brought from Europe,” there were “several carriages for public service” in the main square, “photography is one of the modern industries that has reached greater perfection (. . .) it can be said they are as good as in any other advanced country” (pp. 62–67). This anxiety for being modern was shared by the new elite of the city and included also high moral standards: “[Limean’s] sincerity and frankness are their most dominant qualities,” “sensibility, tenderness with friends and deep love for family are joined with a brilliant and alert imagination, and a keen intelligence early developed” (99).

However, this desire for modernity also mixed with racial and sexist prejudices that expressed social roles and hierarchy. It can be perceived even in the apparent objective description of the physical “strength” of bodies: “men have the strengths: the whites in their shoulders, the blacks in the head, the Indians in their backs; women: the Indians in their feet, the blacks in their tongue, and the whites in their eyes” (90).

The activity of literary evenings and saloons such as the Club Literario de Lima, the editorial activity of cultural magazines and literary journals such as *El Ateneo de Lima*, *La revista de Lima*, and *El correo del Perú*, and the call for literary contests and the art exhibits enlightened the cultural life of the city. Writers, many of whom were influenced by European romanticism and

naturalism, produced fine poems, novels, and plays. This was the case of Carlos Augusto Salaverry (1830–1891), a poet and playwright author of the poetry books *Amores y destellos* (1871, *Loves and Sparkles*), and *Cartas a un ángel* (1871, *Letters to an Angel*), and of several plays. He is renowned for his passionate love poems:

and when you see that a solitary bird
crosses the sky in dying flight,
searching for a nest between the sea and the sky:
Remember me! (Salaverry 1993: 28)

Among others, Luis Benjamín Cisneros (1837–1904) wrote notable poems and narrative pieces such as *Aurora amor* (1889, *Aurora Love*) and *Edgardo o un joven de mi generación* (1864, *Edgardo or a Young Man from My Generation*), respectively. His *Amor de niño: juguete romántico* (1864, *Child Love: Romantic Play*) is a tragic short story about a 7-year-old child, who falls in love with a beautiful young woman.

There were a stellar group of women writers, who composed mostly novels and strongly advocated women rights. They gathered in literary saloons like the one led by the Argentine writer Juana Manuela Gorriti (1818–1892: she had associations with Bolivia and Peru as well) and published in the most important journals and newspapers of the time. Among them, Mercedes Cabello (1842–1909) and Clorinda Matto (1852–1909) stand out. Cabello's novels *Sacrificio y recompensa* (1886, *Sacrifice and Reward*) and *Blanca Sol* (1888) produced a sharp criticism of Lima's social customs and habits, while Matto's novel *Herencia* (1893, *Legacy*) confronted the Catholic Church and criticized the creole hegemony in the country (Denegri 1996: 49). An excerpt of Cabello's *Blanca Sol* presents the materialist way of life of middle and upper classes. The young Blanca learns to esteem money above all good things in life in school. She observed that the Mothers: "treated with great consideration the rich girls, and with disdain and even harshly the poor ones helped ingrain this estimation (. . .) From this she deduced that money not only served to pay the debts of the household, but also to buy good will and sympathy at school" (Cabello de Carbonera 1889: 4).

THE POSTWAR YEARS

The Pacific War (1879–1883) between Peru and Bolivia, and Chile, represented a moral, economic, and territorial defeat for Peru, interrupting the modernization of the city. After the war, the Peruvian state was left bankrupt and a political crisis emerged. The anarchist, poet, and potent essayist Manuel González Prada (1844–1918) blamed fiercely the past regimens for this defeat in his speeches and essays. He proposed also an idea that would later lead the political and intellectual discussion of Lima and Peru. Before this time in republican Peru, the inclusion of the indigenous population in the nation had

merely been discussed in terms of labor force, but González Prada stated in his famous “Discurso en el Politeama” (1888, “*Speech in the Politeama Theater*”):

The real Peru isn't made up of the groups of American-born Spaniards and foreigners living on the strip of land situated between the Pacific and the Andes; the nation is made up of the masses of Indians living on the eastern slopes of the mountains. (González Prada 2003: 49)

This signified a strong advocacy for the inclusion of the indigenous population as actual citizens of the nation. It was particularly a rejection of the old creole elite that ruled the country from Lima and an invitation to the new generation to build an inclusive and democratic country: “Old men to the grave, and young men to the task at hand!” (50) González Prada's words on inclusion would go on to impact upon the entire artistic and literary production of the twentieth century.

At the turn of the century, the Peruvian economy experienced rapid growth based on the exports of cotton, rubber, and minerals, and through the development of industrial activity carried out by mostly foreign investors. The city expanded beyond nineteenth-century limits and new long avenues were open to the west, south, and east (Panfichi 1995: 35). This was also a vibrant period for literature. The young writers of the *Colonida* Movement (1915–1916), led by Abraham Valdelomar (1888–1919), had as their goal to renew Peruvian literature, following the Hispanic *Modernismo* and movements of French and Italian literature. As José Carlos Mariátegui stated: “*Colonida* represented not so much a revolution, which would exaggerate its importance, as an insurrection against academicism and its oligarchies (...) The colonidos called for sincerity and naturalness” (Mariátegui 1971: 262).

Valdelomar and the colonidos founded the journal *Colónida* and edited also an anthology of their poetry, *Las voces múltiples* (1916, *The Multiple Voices*). Valdelomar is mostly renowned for his storytelling craft, apparent in *El caballero Carmelo* (1918, *The Gentleman Carmelo*) and the posthumous *Los hijos del sol* (1921, *The Sons of the Sun*).

But before the *Colónida* Movement, the poet José María Euguren (1874–1942) had published a singular book of poetry *Simbólicas* (1911, *Symbolics*) and later *La canción de las figuras* (1916, *The Song of the Figures*). Euguren's art of poetry was unparalleled in Peruvian literature. His poems depict diaphanous ambiances, haunted and enchanted places, oneiric images, contrasting with the noise of modernization and its propensity to rationalize space and time.

Avant-garde activity emerged in the 1920s with the decisive and impressive work of the Trujillo-based César Vallejo (1892–1938), one of the greatest poets of the Spanish, or any, language. There has been no other book so radical in the art of poetry than *Trilce* (1922)—excepting perhaps the baroque *Soledades* (1613) by the Spanish author Luis de Góngora (1561–1627). It breaks words and phrases into pieces, then rejoins the pieces and reinvents the words, creating new meanings. *Trilce* takes phrases and sounds from different times, from oral and literary traditions, and mixes them, producing outcomes

both familiar and remote in sense. It has been said that Vallejo's poetry "discolors the myth of the *literary* discourse inherited from the XIX century and, at the same time, emancipates the man of our century (...) gripped by the triple hook of what he wanted the words to say, of what the words actually say, and of what the others expect them to say" (Ballón Aguirre 2015: xxviii).

XLIV

This piano travels within,
travels by bright leaps
Then it muses in an ironclad repose,
nailed with ten horizons.
(...)
Dark piano, whom do you glimpse
with your deafness that hears me,
with your muteness that deafens me?
Oh mysterious pulse. (Vallejo 1992: 99)

Trilce generated perplexity among the literary critics of the time. They either misunderstood it or did not understand it at all; however, contemporary and younger poets took it as a benchmark. Other celebrated poetry by Vallejo includes *Los heraldos negros* (1918, *The Black Heralds*) and the posthumous *España aparta de mí este cáliz* (1939, *Spain, Take This Cup from Me*) and *Poemas humanos* (1939, *Human Poems*).

Despite their differing poetic styles, Limean writers tried to capture the experience of transformation and change. Some of them impregnated their works with a secular, sardonic, and anti-bourgeois sensibility in order to contest the superficial cosmopolitanism of the time (Elmore 204). This is the case of the great poet Martín Adán (1908–1985), who wrote in his younger years a beautiful avant-gardist account *La casa de carton* (1928, *The Cardboard House*), describing the everyday life of the then-placid beach resort of Barranco—now, the bohemian district of Lima, well known for its art galleries, restaurants, bars, and nightclubs:

On the streetcar. Seven-thirty in the morning. Below the lowered shades, a glimpse of the sun. Tobacco smoke. An upright old lady. Two unshaven priests. Two shop clerks. Four typists, their laps full of notebooks. One schoolboy: I. Another schoolboy: Ramón. The smell of beds and creosote. The color of the sun settles on the windowpanes from outside, like a cloud of pale translucent butterflies. A sudden excess of passengers. (Adán 2012: 21)

Martín Adán was above all a poet, and a poet of the transcendental, in direct contradiction with the fleetingness of Modernity and an influence on Allen Ginsberg. Among his most important works are *Travesía de extramares: Sonetos a Chopin* (1951, *Voyage of Extra Seas: Sonnets to Chopin*) and *La mano desasida: Canto a Machu Picchu* (1964, *The Disengaged Hand: Song to Machu Picchu*).

Other notable avant-gardist poets are Carlos Oquendo de Amat (1905–1936), who wrote the artist’s book *5 metros de poemas* (1927, *5 Meters of Poems*); Emilio A. Westphalen (1911–2001), with two extraordinary books *Las insulas extrañas* (1933, *The Strange Isles*) and *Abolición de la muerte* (1935, *Abolition of Death*); and César Moro (1903–1956), who wrote intense surrealist poetry: *La tortuga ecuestre* (1957, *The Equestrian Turtle*). Moro wrote also in French and was active in the surrealist movement along with André Breton. In narrative, José Diez Canseco (1904–1949) depicted all social sectors of the city, developing gradually a realistic style. His novel *Duque* (1934, *Duke*) and short story book *Estampas mulatas* (1938, *Mulatto Portraits*) achieved renown.

As an intellectual figure, José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930) shone in this decade. An essayist and Marxist, he directed *Amauta* (‘sage’ in Quechua), a cultural magazine dedicated to socialism, art, and culture. It published works of the literary avant-garde, *Indigenismo*—a literary and artistic movement dealing with the inclusion of Andean culture—as well as essays on culture, politics, and theoretical reflections such as “Resistencia al psicoanálisis,” the first Spanish translation of Sigmund Freud’s essay on resistance to psychoanalysis. *Amauta*’s readership and influence went beyond Peruvian borders and reached all regions of Latin America. It gathered notable writers from all provinces of Peru such as Luis E. Valcárcel, Enrique López Albújar, César Atahualpa Rodríguez, Alejandro Peralta, Alcides Spelucín, as well as international figures such as Jorge Luis Borges, Miguel de Unamuno, André Breton, and Filippo Marinetti.

THE INVISIBLE WALLS

The narrative of the second half of the twentieth century portrayed eloquently the life of various neighborhoods and districts of Lima. Miraflores was one of them, now the traditional site of bourgeois Lima with a fervent cultural life fed by its theaters, bookstores, art galleries, cultural centers, language schools, academies, restaurants, and pubs. It is located atop a cliff, where from the *malecones* (seafronts) one can watch the surfers in the beach raiding audaciously the waves along the bay of Lima or contemplate the calm waters of the Pacific Ocean.

The magnificent storyteller Julio Ramón Ribeyro (1929–1994) set several of his stories in Miraflores. With a precise, clean, flowing, and, sometimes, sarcastic prose, his narrative addresses the vicissitudes of marginalized people and the ironies of life. In fact, Ribeyro titled his entire collection of stories *La palabra del mudo* (*The Mute’s Voice*). One example of his work is “Los gallinazos sin plumas” (1954, “*The Featherless Buzzards*”), where he describes the waking up of the city and its people at 6 in the morning:

the city gets up on tiptoe and slowly begins to stir. A fine mist dissolves the contour of objects and creates an atmosphere of enchantment. People walking about the city at this hour seem to be of another substance, to belong to a ghostly order of life (. . .) There workers heading for the streetcars, policeman yawning

next to trees, newspaper boys turning purple from the cold, and maids putting out trash cans. Finally, at this hour (. . .) the featherless buzzards appear [to get scraps of food from the trash cans]. (Ribeyro 1993: 17)

Among his most notable story collections are *Los gallinazos sin plumas* (1956, *The Featherless Buzzards*), *Las botellas y los hombres* (1964, *The Bottles and the Men*), and *Silvio en el rosedal* (1977, *Silvio in the Rose Garden*).

Mario Vargas Llosa (1936), a Nobel laureate, is perhaps the writer who has most extensively described the city of Lima. His novels are massive frescos depicting the common life of all sectors of Limean society in an acute and realistic style. Not only do they explore the individual struggle of men and women in modern society, but also denounce the mechanisms of power and the authoritarian structures of Peruvian society. As a prominent representative of the narrative “Boom” of Latin American literature, Vargas Llosa writes in a remarkable avant-gardist style, employing a plethora of narrative techniques. His novels are complex narrative structures in which the characters’ life stories intertwine in different places and times. *La ciudad y los perros* (1962, *The Time of the Hero*) and *Conversación en la Catedral* (1969, *Conversation in the Cathedral*) depict extensively the city of Lima. In a passage of the latter, the main character raises a question about both the crisis in his life and the crisis of the country:

From the doorway of *La Crónica* Santiago looks at the Avenida Tacna without love: cars, uneven and faded buildings, the gaudy skeletons of posters floating in the mist, the gray midday. At what precise moment had Peru fucked itself up? (. . .) he starts to walk slowly toward Colmena. His hands in his pockets, head down, he goes along escorted by people who are also going in the direction of the Plaza San Martín. He was like Perú, Zavalita was, he’d fucked himself up somewhere along the line. He thinks: when? (Vargas Llosa 1975: 3)

Other important novels include *La casa verde* (1966, *The Green House*), *La guerra del fin del mundo* (1981, *The War of the End of the World*), and *La fiesta del Chivo* (2000, *The Feast of the Goat*).

Alfredo Bryce Echenique (1939) portrayed in his novels the life of the creole oligarchy. With a conversational style and humorous prose, Bryce Echenique’s novels express also the sensibility of misfits in the world. They depict carefully social habits, individual attitudes, and personal desires as characters seek their place in life. Among his novels, *Un mundo para Julius* (1971, *A World for Julius*) and *La vida exagerada de Martín Romaña* (1981, *The Exaggerated Life of Martín Romaña*) stand out. It has been said that the narrations by Ribeyro, Vargas Llosa, and Bryce Echenique share a common feeling of skepticism and disbelief about the individual confronting the modern world, but also depict internal barriers, the *invisible walls*, that separate social groups in the city (Elmore 1993: 214).

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, a new kind of popular identity had emerged within the poorer neighborhoods of the city. It was perceived as the “true” way of being a Limean and even a Peruvian, and was known as the “popular creole.” This identity was associated with the leading role played by mestizos in multicultural environments (Panfichi 1995: 37). Three decades after Diez Canseco’s *Duque*, a decisive novel described these sectors of the city and the everyday struggle for life of their people. *En octubre no hay Milagros* (1965, *No Miracles in October*) by Oswaldo Reynoso (1931) explored the private life of various social groups through the stream of their consciousness. It broke new ground by being a novel narrated mainly from the point of view of marginalized characters.

Along with Miguel Gutiérrez (1940) and a group of young writers, Reynoso founded the journal *Narración* in 1966. They presented themselves as middle classers who had chosen to work the people’s causes in their fiction and lives. This was a statement advocating for a commitment in literature to social causes. However, *Narración*’s writers went beyond this commitment and produced excellent fiction works in their own right. Some of these are Miguel Gutiérrez’s novels *La violencia del tiempo* (1991, *The Violence of Time*) set in the Northern region of Piura; Gregorio Martínez’ *Canto de sirena* (1977, *Siren Song*) and Antonio Gálvez Ronceros’ *Monólogo desde las tinieblas* (1977, *Monologue from the Darkness*) on the Afro-Peruvian communities in the coastal region of Peru; and Augusto Higa’s *La iluminación de Katzuo Nakamatsu* (2008, *The Enlightenment of Katzuo Nakamatsu*) about the Japanese community in Lima.

An event of paramount importance in Lima’s history was the mass immigration from less urban provinces and Andean communities. Although immigration had been a constant event since the city Hispanic foundation, in the 1950s it occurred in a new scale that changed forever the ethnic and cultural composition of the city. In 1940, Lima and Callao had a combined population of 602,000 people, but by 2015 it has reached 10 million people. This massive immigration has been considered a “popular people overflow” for the city (Matos Mar 1986: 16).

Also, the representation of poor immigrants in literature had been present in the works of writers such as José María Arguedas, Ciro Alegría, and Enrique Congrains Martín; however, only in the last decades of the twentieth century did this become a central topic as Lima’s society turned more inclusive and the invisible walls continue to fall apart, and as writers from this social sector depicted the “other” Lima. The poet Antonio Cisneros, who poetized the city’s changes, had noticed this “invasion”:

On the sandy hills
barbarians from the south and east have built
a camp that’s bigger than the whole city, and they have other gods.
(Arrange some convenient alliance). (Cisneros 1985: 77)

Cronwell Jara (born 1950) is one of the writers who illustrated the troubles, hardship, and violence suffered by the immigrants in his monumental novel *Patíbulo*

para un caballo (1989, *Gallows for a Horse*). With a realistic style cut by moments of poetic imagery, it narrates also the encounter of immigrants from various regions of the country that have to share a common life in order to survive.

After Ribeyro, Vargas Llosa, and Reynoso, Pilar Dughi (1956–2006) stands out as a writer who depicts the conflicts of men and women troubled by the aggressiveness of the metropolis at the end of the century. Her prose flows with a precise and transparent style, and penetrates subtly characters' thoughts. She has written the remarkable short story book *Ave de la noche* (1996, *Bird of the Night*) and the novel *Puñales escondidos* (1998, *Hidden Knives*).

Two important Lima-based writers, who wrote mainly on the life of the cities and communities located in the Andes, were José María Arguedas (1911–1969) and Manuel Scorza (1928–1983). Arguedas undertook an extraordinary literary endeavor by incorporating the sensibilities and knowledge of the Quechua culture into his writing. He is the most prominent representative of what has been called *narrativa andina*—Andean narrative, differing from *Indigenismo*, which implied an external and superficial literary approach on indigenous communities—and is celebrated as one of the two greatest Peruvian novelists along with Mario Vargas Llosa. Among his more important novels are *Los ríos profundos* (1958, *Deep Rivers*) and the posthumous *El zorro de arriba y el zorro de abajo* (1971, *The Fox from Up Above and the Fox from Below Down*). Manuel Scorza, a poet and novelist, is known above all for his narrative pentalogy *La guerra silenciosa* (*The Silent War*). It recounts the life and political fights of Andean communities in a beautiful magical realism style. Among Scorza's notable works are the novels *Redoble por Rancas* (1970, *Drums for Rancas*) and *Historia de Garabombo el invisible* (1972, *Garabombo, the Invisible*).

MULTIPLE VOICES

Since the 1950s, poets, having assimilated the art of the avant-garde and César Vallejo, produced an extraordinary poetry that explored a variety of topics, techniques, and styles. From transcendental to colloquial, from “pure” to socially oriented, from mocking classical to conversational styles, this poetry centers on the dissatisfaction with the social order, or the human condition, or the disbelief in Modernity, or the absence of affection, or the everyday struggle for life, or the limits of language and the impossibility of meaning.

There were three decades of outstanding poetry and numerous groups; it was an extraordinary contribution to literature in the Spanish language. From the 1950s' generation, as they are known, these poets stand out: Jorge Eduardo Eielson (1924–2006), who initially displayed a brilliant formal expression and in his later poems looked for the simple and precise verse, *Reinos* (1945, *Kingdoms*), *Habitación en Roma* (1951, *Room in Rome*); Carlos Germán Belli (1927), whose poetry dialogues splendidly with the Spanish Golden Age poetry and surrealism, *Poemas* (1958), *¡Oh Hada Cibernética!* (1961, *Oh Cybernetic Fairy!*); Blanca Varela (1926–2009), whose poetry states a strong feminine point of view and

explores the human condition, *Ese puerto existe* (1959, *That Port Exists*), *Canto Villano* (1978, *Song of Dirtiness*). A fragment from “Canto Villano” examines desire and loneliness through a “villain” hunger:

this own hunger
exists
it is the soul’s desire
that is the body
(...)
there is no one else here
in this empty plate
but me
devouring my eyes
and yours. (Varela 1996: 155)

The poets of the 1960s mark an inflection point in Peruvian poetry, assimilating elements from Saint-John Perse’s poetry and the English poetry of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Two of them stand out notably, the aforementioned Antonio Cisneros (1942–2012), whose ironic and conversational poetry style dialogues with history, urban culture, as well as with the individual confronting the solitude of the metropolis, *Comentarios Reales* (1964, *Royal Commentaries*), *Canto ceremonial contra un oso hormiguero* (1968, *Ceremonial Song Against an Anteater*); and Rodolfo Hinostroza (1941), who depicts social and private events with a brilliant formal expertise and powerful surrealistic imagery, *Consejero del lobo* (1965, *The Wolf’s Adviser*), *Contranatura* (1971, *Unnatural*).

During this time, global and local events like the Cold War, the protests of 1968, the sexual revolution and rock culture, and the socialist dictatorship of General Juan Velasco in Peru (1968–1975) impacted intellectual activity and poetry writing. Literary magazines like *Estación Reunida*, *Pielago*, *Hora Zero*, *La sagrada familia*, *Hueso húmero*, and poet movements like the iconoclasts *Hora Zero* and *Kloaka*, shook the cultural establishment of Lima with polemics, manifestos, and happenings. Many poets shone in this time such as José Watanabe (1945–2007), whose fluid and hyperrealist verses charged with a subtle irony follow the wisdom of haikus: *Álbum de familia* (1971, *Family Album*), *El huso de la palabra* (1989, *The Spindle for Words*); Enrique Verástegui (1950), who initially wrote an intense, urgent, and stunning poetry dealing with the harshness of a deprived life, and later displayed a more meditated verse, *En los extramuros del mundo* (1971, *Outside the Walls of the World*), *Angelus novus* (1989); Mario Montalbetti (1953), whose tense and precise verses explore with a fine irony the limits of meaning and otherness installed in language, *Perro negro, 31 poemas* (1978, *Black Dog, 31 Poems*), *Angel Cupisnique* (2012); and Roger Santibáñez (1956), whose first poems, forged in a superb conversational style, explore the life of the streets and later changed to a more reflexive style following in the footsteps of Vallejo and Adán, *Homenaje para iniciados* (1984, *Homage for the Initiates*), *Symbol* (2000).

Also, a generation of excellent women writers revamped the poetic discourse. In their poems, they delved into their minds and desires, and depicted their bodies, their affections, and their right to be both someone and/or no one. Carmen Ollé's poetry stands out in particular. It displays a strong personal voice that takes control of her being and confronts the oppressive forces of society in a conversational style intertwined with a material reflection. In one of her poems, the poetic voice presents herself: "To be 30 years old changes nothing save to be nearer to the heart attack or the uterine emptying (...) our intestines flow and change from being to nothingness." Then she evaluates her own insubstantiality as a woman and a human being:

I have once again woken up in Lima being a woman who walks
measuring her figure in the shop windows, like many, worried
about the swing of her transparent ass.
Lima is a city as I am a utopic woman. (Ollé 1992: 7)

Carmen Ollé (1947), besides her outstanding *Noches de adrenalina* (1981, *Adrenaline Nights*), has also written notable novels such as *Las dos caras del deseo* (1994, *The Two Faces of Desire*) and *Pista falsa* (1994, *False Clue*). Along with Ollé, others who stand out at the end of the twentieth century are Mariela Dreyfus (1960), one of the founders of the Kloaka movement (anti-capitalist and surrealist), who wrote poems charged with eroticism and criticizing patriarchal discourse, *Memorias de Electra* (1984, *Electra's Memoirs*), *Placer Fantasma* (1993, *Ghost Pleasure*); and Rocío Silva Santisteban (1963), whose poems dealt with the lack of love, the uncertainty of life, and later with political violence, *Ese oficio no me gusta* (1988, *I Don't Like That Job*), *Las hijas del Terror* (2005, *The Daughters of Terror*).

In Lima, as the fog recedes at midday, the words of the writers remain like figures tattooed on its humid body.

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Brasília's Literature

Sophia Beal

INTRODUCTION

In 1956, Brazilian president Juscelino Kubitschek announced that he would transfer the capital of Brazil from the southeastern coastal city of Rio de Janeiro to a predominantly unpopulated area in the center of the country. He proposed designing and building a city to be the new national capital, in the model of other planned capitals, such as Washington D.C., New Delhi, and Canberra. The move would help integrate the disparate regions of the vast country, trigger the development of the interior, and solve the overcrowding issues in Rio de Janeiro. But most importantly it would be bold. In 1960, Brazil inaugurated this new capital city, Brasília. Its construction took place in the late 1950s, an era of economic growth and good cheer in Brazil. The country had won the World Cup in 1958; bossa nova (Brazilian music between samba and jazz) was playing on radios around the world; and Brazilian concrete poets were major players in an international literary movement. Brasília itself was a sort of concrete poem. It was visual culture meant to inspire, dismiss certain traditions, and embrace new technologies. Brasília was shaped like an airplane, and that form was intended to evoke meaning and emotion: hope, patriotism, innovation, possibility, limitlessness. Since Brasília's inception, authors have both echoed and contested the capital's officially sanctified connotations, contributing in their own ways to the ongoing interpretation of the city.

Arguably the most important work of Brazilian fiction is a text of a mere five pages written by Clarice Lispector in 1964. Clarice's *crônica* (a short creative piece) "Brasília: Cinco Dias" (Brasília: Five Days) makes no effort to *represent* Brasília, but instead *reproduces* the feeling of visual shock the city

elicits. Clarice writes: “Brasília is assexual”; “the beauty of Brasília is its invisible statues”; “There should be white horses roaming in Brasília”; “This is the place where space seems the most like time”; and “Here, organic things don’t decompose. They become petrified” (165–167). Clarice invents myths for the city. In one, people, acting like archeologists, excavate a buried Brasília from the sand and then move into its ruins. More than any other literary work about Brasília, this *crônica* has captured the imagination of artists and critics.

Brasília’s literature is best understood in dialogue with other artistic manifestations that have shaped the capital’s cultural identity. The city itself is among the most ambitious modernist architecture projects ever undertaken. When it was inaugurated, Brasília became internationally famous practically overnight. It was a phenomenon. The capital’s founding fathers all contributed to its iconic imagery. Examples include Lucio Costa’s *Plano Piloto* (*Pilot Plan*), the airplane-shaped design of the city; Athos Bulcão’s bright decorative tiles; monuments featuring the face and full body of President Juscelino Kubitschek; and the fluidity and seeming buoyancy of Oscar Niemeyer’s Foreign Ministry, Supreme Court, and Alvorada Palace, monumental federal buildings that stretch the limits of his favorite medium: reinforced concrete.

Much of Brasília was inspired by Le Corbusier’s Five Points of Architecture (primarily the first four): horizontal windows, load-bearing columns known as pilotis that lift a building above the ground, façades free from structural constraints, the absence of supporting walls, and roof gardens. However, Brasília’s modernism deviated from the hard lines and mechanical severity of Le Corbusier’s architecture, opting instead for sensuous curves and fields of color. These choices soften the hard edges of the European machine-driven aesthetic, while still evoking the speed and dynamics of modern technology. At the same time, these organic elements draw on the Brazilian Baroque architecture that flourished in the eighteenth century. Brasília’s many churches, for instance, show a proclivity for curves and for stained glass and tile decorations. The most notable example—which elicits an awe akin to that evoked by the gilded church interiors of the Brazilian Baroque—is the Dom Bosco Sanctuary (designed by Carlos Alberto Naves) in which floor-to-ceiling windows (comprising tiny glass squares in 12 shades of blue) flood the interior with azure light.

Culturally, the capital has become known for more than its architecture. Brasília also served as the heartland of Brazil’s vibrant rock music movement of the 1980s, which—although it was little known internationally—was hugely influential throughout Brazil, producing bands such as Aborto Elétrico, Plebe Rude, Capital Inicial, Legião Urbana, and Os Paralamas do Sucesso. The enormous success of Legião Urbana’s 1987 ballad *Faroeste caboclo* (*Mixed-Race-Brazilian Western*), set in Brasília, fixed the capital in the imaginations of listeners across the country as a place of violence, broken dreams, and inequality. The rock movement made creative, rebellious youth the voice of Brasília nationally. Although this voice did not sing in unison, it vocalized shared concerns about

consumer culture, globalization, systematic violence in Brazil, individuals' anxiety about purposelessness, and clashes between children and their parents.

In the twenty-first century, Brasília's low-income areas have become creative hotbeds for hip-hop, producing names such as GOG and Viela 17. Other Brasília musicians and bands—such as Ellen Oléria, Sexy Fi, and Móveis Coloniais de Acaju—have also put Brasília on the musical map. In addition, Brasília holds a place in Brazilian cinema in the films of distinguished directors, such as Carlos Diegues and Glaubert Rocha.

Frequent allusions and homages to specific cultural texts reiterate the capital's artistic identity. Directors Vladimir Carvalho e Adirley Queirós have made documentaries about Brasília's music. "Brasília: cinco dias" and "Faroeste caboclo" both were made into films. Nicolas Behr's poem *Nossa senhora do cerrado* (*Our Lady of the Tropical Savannah*) inspired a song by the band Liga Tripa, later covered by Legião Urbana. Zuleika de Sousa's photography registers transformations of Niemeyer's architecture. Lyrics by Japão, the lead rapper of Viela 17, can be found in a literature anthology. As these examples demonstrate, collaboration across artistic genres in Brasília is frequent.

Since the publication of the capital's first literary work—the 1962 anthology *Poetas de Brasília* edited by Joanyr de Oliveira—creative writing in Brasília has been deeply explored (Guimarães da Costa 2005: 25). This body of literature can be understood as engaging with:

1. Brasília's unique origin story,
2. Brasília's visual surprises, and
3. Brasília's violence and inequality.

Inevitably, these general categories overlap and are incomplete, but they are valuable for identifying thematic and formal patterns. That said, a few major authors whose works do not fit neatly into this typology are Samuel Rawet, Anderson Braga Horta, Francisco Alvim, Ana Maria Lopes, Antônio Miranda, Cassiano Nunes, Ronaldo Costa Fernandes, Liziane Guazina, Ronaldo Cagiano, Conceição Freitas, and writers of children's and young adult fiction Roger Mello, Stella Maris Rezende, Marcos Bagno, and Lourenço Cazarré.

BRASÍLIA'S UNIQUE ORIGIN STORY

As the story goes, the idea of Brasília dates back to the eighteenth century, when Salvador da Bahia was still the capital city of colonial Brazil. In 1789, the unsuccessful Brazilian independence movement known as the Inconfidentes Mineiros called for Brazil's capital to be moved to the country's geographic center. In 1822, when Brazil declared its independence, Rio de Janeiro was serving as the capital. That year, in a pamphlet, the statesman José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva proposed that a new capital of the kingdom should be founded in the center of Brazil, and he suggested the name Brasília. The Italian priest Don

Bosco dreamed, in 1883, of a place of great riches near a lake between the 15th and 20th parallels of the southern hemisphere. In the 1940s and 1950s, logistical problems (water and gas shortages and traffic and telephone line difficulties) in Rio de Janeiro, as well as continued pressure to create national cohesion, reignited discussions of a new capital city (Evenson 1973: 9). President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–1961), handpicking Niemeyer as the architect, took on the challenge. In 1956, the first year of his term as president, Juscelino Kubitschek opened a contest for the best urban plan for the new capital. Of the 26 entries, Lucio Costa's simple design of a bird-shaped city—hand sketched in 16 small drawings accompanied by an extremely brief description—triumphed over more detailed and elaborately researched designs that were less successful in expressing national grandeur (Holston 60–74). As these legendary stories help explain, even before construction began, Brasília was taking form in the imaginations of many as a mystical outpost, a modernist whimsy, and a utopian city.

João Guimarães Rosa's 1962 story *As margens da alegria* (*The Edges of Happiness*) defamiliarizes the founding of Brasília by presenting its lack of importance to a young boy visiting family near the construction site. Too young to be captivated by Brasília's symbolic weight as an icon of the nation's modernity, he is captivated by other aspects of the *cerrado* (the tropical savanna eco-region), primarily birds and flora. He praises a turkey with the euphoric language one might expect in an accolade to the new capital. Moreover, what he sees of the construction—huge diggers, dust, and commotion—spooks him because it threatens the natural world with which he is enraptured. The new capital is never even referred to by name, echoing how the boy, who has no notion of nation building, perceives it.

Two novels have explored the creation of Brasília. The first is José Geraldo Vieira's 1966 novel *Paralelo 16: Brasília* (*16th Parallel: Brasília*), which tells the story of several young workers involved in the construction of Brasília who are enjoying the freedom of coming of age on a frontier far from their elders' watchful eyes. Although the lion's share of its characters are middle- and upper-class bureaucrats and military men, *candangos*—the manual laborers who built Brasília—play a crucial role in the novel, which exposes double standards regarding the capital's egalitarian intensions and its elitist reality. A poignant shift takes place when four *candangos*—who had been well-developed characters in the first stretch of the novel—simply cease to be mentioned in the latter part of the novel. Their unexplained disappearance from the plot illustrates how, once construction jobs subsided and the promise of mixed-income housing in the *Plano Piloto* failed to become a reality, working-class people were priced out of the city they built.

João Almino's 2010 *Cidade Livre* (*Free City*), like Vieira's book, integrates key components of Brasília's founding into its storyline, weaving together a cast of imaginary and historical characters. The novel involves a love triangle among fictional characters and a mystery about the whereabouts of an invented character named Valdivino. He was a man who built churches in the *Cidade Livre*, the first residential neighborhood for the *candangos* and a place that was intended to be temporary. *Cidade Livre* is

now known as Núcleo Bandeirante, which has a population of 26,000 and is one of the Federal District's 31 administrative regions. Valdivino later moves to Vila Amaury. In September 1959, Vila Amaury, a locale housing an estimated 16,000 workers, was flooded to form the Paranoá Lake. Beneath its shimmering surface lie the vestiges of a workers' settlement, a haunting metaphor—taken up in Almino's novel—of the erasure of the least powerful from the city center and from collective memory (Lins Ribeiro 250). The novel engages the peculiar dynamics that resulted from Brasília being disproportionately male with a significant percentage of its female residents employed as sex workers. In addition, the text is bound up in the mysticism associated with Brasília—a tradition that begins with Don Bosco and includes Mestre Yokaanam and Tia Neiva—all referenced in the novel in relation to a fictional religious settlement that shares some characteristics with the real Vale do Amanhecer religious community.

An additional example of literature on Brasília's founding comes from *cordel* poems, popular narrative poetry often composed of six-line stanzas, seven syllables each, in which the second, fourth, and sixth lines rhyme. Traditionally each poem was recited orally or printed in the form of an inexpensive paper booklet with a woodblock image stamped on the cover. Some of the *candangos* who built Brasília in the late 1950s had been *cordel* poets in their home states in the Northeast, and they brought their poetry with them. One prolific contemporary *cordel* poet is Gustavo Dourado, who has written patriotic poems recounting the construction of Brasília and the careers of its founding fathers.

Although different in form, Nicolas Behr's *Brasiliada* (2010) and Augusto Rodrigues's *Niemar* (2008) are poetry collections inspired by Brasília's origins. The poets return to Clarice's image of Brasília as the ruins of a bygone city and thus unsettle expectations about order and origin. Behr's title combines the words *Brasília* and *Iliad*, emphasizing the epic and literary identity of the city. Echoing a common mispronunciation of *Niemeyer*, Rodrigues's title transcribes a verbal accident. With this neologism, he construes Brasília as a land far from the sea (by combining the start of the German word for *no* and the Portuguese word for *sea*).

Superlatively ambitious and cloaked in lore, it is no wonder Brasília's origin story has piqued literary interest. These writings fall across the scale of understatement and overstatement, some more tethered to history than others.

BRASÍLIA'S VISUAL SURPRISES

Many of Brasília's aesthetic features—such as flat roofs, curtain walls, *pilotis*, stark contrasts between horizontal and vertical volumes, prominence of white walls, unfinished concrete, and *brise soleil* (or more specifically the Brazilian *cobogós*)—reflect Le Corbusier's Five Points of Architecture and mark a dramatic departure from the appearance of other Brazilian cities. James Holston argues that “by asserting the primacy of open space, volumetric clarity, pure form, and geometric abstraction, modernism not only initiates a new vocabulary of form, more radically it inverts the entire mode of perceiving architecture” (Holston 1989: 133).

Unlike Brasília, most Brazilian cities (and more generally most Western cities) were designed with more solids than voids. They were built for a relatively high population density and have street walls that lead to articulated public spaces, such as public squares, which display large structures of Church and State.

Starting in the 1920s, Le Corbusier and the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne challenged this model, seeking ways to open up cities and build vertically to allow for more light, movement, and vegetation. Following this practice—which was influential in the 1950s and the early 1960s—Brasília's *Plano Piloto* has more voids than solids, creating an expansiveness that is unlike other Brazilian cities. The monumental buildings appear as stand-alone objects, disconnected from a larger urban fabric. The intimacy of *superquadras*—large residential blocks—is detached from streets and the familiar activities that take place on them. Thus, Brasília surprises onlookers visually. It also surprises them verbally. The city has a specific set of codes and acronyms used to name highways, zones, and buildings. For instance, SQN-203-A-105 is a typical Brasília address. For someone familiar with Brasília's codes, the address clearly refers to apartment 105, in building A, of *superquadra* north 203, east of the Eixão Highway, three blocks from the bus station. For someone unfamiliar with this lexicon and naming system, however, these wordless addresses are confounding.

The literature on the surprising visual and verbal experience of Brasília employs wordplay, unconventional textual layout, scale change, exaggeration, and apocalyptic speculation. For instance, poet Nicolas Behr takes Brasília's seemingly unpoetic lexicon and imbibes it with humorous and emotional new meanings. In his poem *Naquela noite* (*On That Night*), from his 1980 chapbook *L2 novas fora W3* (*L2 Rule of Nines W3*), Brasília-specific words—such as the street names W3, L2, and Eixão and the term *superquadra*—are repurposed as adjectives describing a Brasília lover's lust. The poem is featured in a mosaic by artist Gougou on the wall of the library Biblioteca Demonstrativa de Brasília. In the poem, Brasília inspires new forms of lovemaking:

naquela noite
 suzana estava mais W3
 do que nunca
 toda eixosa
 cheia de L2
 suzana,
 vai ser superquadra
 assim lá na minha cama (1980: n. pag.)

on that night
 suzana was more W3
 than ever
 all *eixosa*
 full of L2
 suzana,
 will be *superquadra*
 like that in my bed

In his poem *Tô namorando (I'm Dating)*, from his 1979 chapbook *Saída de emergência (Emergency Exit)*, a Brasília acronym morphs into a lover. The city's efficient and rational sector names cross into the unpredictable arena of physical desire and emotion:

tô namorando
 uma sigla
 MSPW
 conhecem?
 uma gracinha
 de sigla
 ela é a minha
 emeessepêdabluzinha (1979: n. pag.)

i'm dating
 an acronym
 MSPW
 do you know her?
 an adorable
 acronym
 she's my
 littlemisspeedouble-u

Behr's poem *Eu S (I S)*, from his 1978 chapbook *Grande circular (Circle-Route Bus)*, imagines each letter in the acronyms for *superquadras* north and south as the conjugations of a verb. Thus, unspecified actions and emotions (the work of verbs) replace the descriptive adjectives and nouns (super, block, south, north) that the letters of the acronyms represent. The poem suggests that Brasília has acquired new meanings from the actions and emotions of its residents. Moreover, the poem exposes the arbitrariness of the types of systems, such as grammar and street numeration, people create to organize information:

eu S
 tu Q
 ele S
 nós S
 vós Q
 eles N (1978: n. pag.)

I S
 you Q
 he S
 we S
 you all Q
 they N

In the poem, as in the city, we see that what once belonged to the realm of the rational and efficient has become absurd and playful. The reader who has grown accustomed to Brasília's peculiar lexicon cannot help but see its strangeness afresh.

Poet Augusto Rodrigues approaches the strange effect of Brasília's Pilot Plan in a different way in his 2011 poetry collection *Do livro de carne (brasílias invisíveis)* [*Of the Book of Flesh (Invisible Brasília)*]. A mainstay of Brasília's highways are its cloverleaf and double cloverleaf entrance and exit ramps, on which a driver might have to make five or six loops to enter a specific highway. Rodrigues's book replicates the circuitous experience of looping around these cloverleaves and losing one's bearings. The book has text written in different directions, so it must be flipped to be read, which is disorienting. Each poem title serves two different poems, which, along with the lack of page numbers, causes confusion. The way the poems are numbered and their square shape alludes to a specific set of *superquadras* with the same numeration. The front and back cover are identical, but inverted. No matter which cover the reader begins from, the first poem is *Paisagem 416 (Landscape 416)* and the numbers of each poem diminish until reaching *Paisagem 402*. Unlike the actual *superquadras*, which have names that indicate north or south, Rodrigues's book provides no indication of which side is which. He opts instead for bewilderment, which destabilizes the logic of the planned city. With philosophical and literary references, each poem appears to be a reflection triggered by a bus ride down the L2 highway from one end of the *Plano Piloto* to the other. Alluding to Wim Wenders and Tennessee Williams, the wings of the *Plano Piloto* transform into "wings of desire" and Brasília possesses "a bus called desire." These poems, like Behr's, are invested in bringing out the emotional, unpredictable, and fleshy aspects of the planned city.

Similarly, José Rezende Jr. uses exaggeration and scale change in his very short stories from 2010 to expose the strangeness of Brasília. In *Os amantes do Eixo Rodoviário (The Bus-Station-Highway Lovers)*, a couple in love thrives despite being stuck for five days on opposite sides of a treacherous Brasília highway. The story ends: "And if no one mentioned that there's an underground walkway for pedestrians it wasn't out of malice: it's that it's nice to see those two, she drawing hearts in the air, he sending letters in paper airplanes. I think they've never been so in love" (55). In Rezende's micro love story *Maquete (Model)*, nonsense and illusion conflate the architectural model of Brasília with the actual city. Two people standing on opposite ends of the model of Brasília at the Espaço Lucio Costa museum fall in love at first sight, but since it is Sunday there are no buses, so they cannot reach one another. As the story playfully reveals, the original plan of the city continues to dominate perceptions of the city.

One final example is Alexandre Ribondi's apocalyptic story *O desejo da água (Water Desire)*, from 1999, in which Brasília runs out of water, its palaces burn down, and only 5,000 residents remain. The fictional destruction of Brasília paradoxically pays homage to the city and activates the reader's communion with it. In this fantasy, Brasília is worthy of literary tribute and fantastical reinvention. As Pascale Casanova posits, to destroy a city in literature is to elevate its status, remove it from strictly historical understanding, and treat it as a universal myth, akin to Nineveh, Babylon, and Thebes (Casanova 2004: 27).

Using a range of methods, these different cultural texts reengage the modernist ideal of unsettling one's habituated perception, thus allowing us to see Brasília anew.

BRASÍLIA'S VIOLENCE AND INEQUALITY

As we learn from various scholars (James Holston, Aldo Paviani, Luiz Alberto Gouvêa, and Edson Beú), the greatest catastrophe of Brasília has been the systematic exclusion of low-income residents from dignified living conditions. Disproportionately long distances between the *Plano Piloto* and the homes of low-income residents exacerbate this problem. Moreover, the city must contend with the paradox that its founders pledged that it would be more egalitarian than other Brazilian cities, yet it ended up being more economically segregated.

Many of the cultural texts that have emerged from Brasília—particularly hip-hop and documentary film—confront this inequality. Among the earliest works of literature in this category is José Marques da Silva's 1963 memoir *Diário de um candango* (*Diary of a candango*). In it, he recounts his observations and tribulations as a bar owner in 1961 in Vila Planalto, where manual laborers lived during the construction of Brasília. For several months, Marques da Silva kept a diary about the daily events in and around his bar, painting a portrait of a lawless frontier riddled with shootings, knifings, thievery, prostitution, rats, mud, and a general lack of public services. What stands out most clearly, and links Marques da Silva's memoir to more recent texts, is the contrast between the residential areas of the rich and poor. He, like Vieira, decries how the centrally located housing promised to low-income workers continuously went to wealthier residents. Rainstorms in Brasília are a spectacle for the rich, he notes, yet a tragedy for the poor, whose shacks and tents might not be left standing after heavy showers. Experiencing Brasília's socioeconomic contrasts and the marvel of the capital's construction, Marques da Silva wrestles with contradictory feelings of national pride and outrage.

One particularly poignant cultural text concerned with systematic violence and economic inequality is the 2008 *Coletânea candanga* (*Candanga Collection*), which uses the word *candanga* both in the contemporary sense, to refer to a person from Brasília, and in the earlier sense, to refer to those who built the capital. It is an anthology organized by the Ceilândia Academy of Literature and Popular Arts and edited by Manoel Jevan. Most of Brasília's literature comes from the *Plano Piloto*, the political and economic center of power. However, this literary collection hails from Brasília's most populous administrative region, Ceilândia, which has a population of 398,000, strong ties to Brazil's Northeast, and significantly inferior public services in comparison to the Plano Piloto. It is the most recent of a handful of literary anthologies focused on Ceilândia. Its contributions include *cordel* poems, song lyrics, acrostics, sonnets, woodblock prints, a

handwritten letter, and a children's story, all of which collectively manifest the value and importance of writing, publishing, and self-expression in Ceilândia.

A recurring theme in many of the contributions is the administrative district's name, Ceilândia, particularly the irony, memory, and trauma associated with its etymology. The *Cei* in the name stands for *Campanha de Erradicação de Invasões* (*Campaign for Squatter Eradication*), and is joined with the suffix *lândia*—from the English *land*. Ceilândia, inaugurated in 1971, was strategically designed by the Federal District government to relocate people living in informal residential settlements. The poems reflect both the hardship caused by being forced to move to an undesirable location and the perseverance of the residents who turned it into a home. In Rosana Maria Carvalho da Costa's poem *Eu sou a Cei* (*I am Cei*), a personified Ceilândia plays with the homonyms *sei* (I know) and *Cei*, highlighting the benefits of knowing one's origins. A *cordel* poem from 1976 by Joaquim Bezerra da Nóbrega recounts struggles related to obtaining the title for one's home. Many of the poems resignify Ceilândia as a literary space. They reference Ceilândia's government-run cultural center Casa do Cantador (The House of the Singer), erected in 1986. The only Niemeyer building in the Federal District that is outside of the Pilot Plan, the Casa do Cantador is an artistic hub, particularly for *cordel* and for *repente*, a form of improvised music from the Brazilian Northeast. Therefore, the building is a notable exception to the concentration of Brasília's renowned architecture in the wealthy areas of the city. As stated in *Coletânea candanga's* preface and introduction, the anthology articulates the emancipatory potential of publicizing the words of those who typically have been on the sidelines of hegemonic literary production.

CONCLUSION

The literature of the capital richly grapples with Brasília's origin story, its startling design, and its social inequality. These themes emerge from the challenge of writing about a city as dynamic and heterogeneous as Brasília. As Hermenegildo Bastos writes in his 1970 poem *Prefácio* (*Preface*):

ó cidade lógica, horizontal.
lógico é o seu contorno,
aquela linha sobre o contorno, cartão-postal,
a linha da qual as formigas fogem. (15)

oh horizontal, logical city.
your outline is logical,
that line above your outline, postcard,
the line ants flee from.

In this stanza, the double meaning of *linha* (drawn line, poetic line) and of *sobre* (above, about) simultaneously suggests the dimensions of the postcard of Brasília

and the poetic verse about the city. The ants evoke both words on a page that will not align and the movement of Brasília's many living bodies that disrupt the stagnant utopian plans of Brasília and the postcard image frozen in time. Doreen Massey argues that "space unfolds as interaction" (2005: 61). In Bastos's stanza, words, architecture, utopian plans, and lived reality interact. Like all the aforementioned texts, the poem allows us to see interactions among people whose motion, negotiation, lived experience, and imaginative writing continuously transform Brasília. These transformations will surely continue, giving rise to new artistic voices and requiring regular scholarly examination of the expanding literature of Brasília.

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Rio's Favelas: Mapping the Periphery

Leila Lehmen

The concept of “itinerant mapping” seems, at first glance, an oxymoron. Traditionally the idea of the “map: suggests static spatial representation. In this representation, not only space, but also the individuals that occupy this territory are immobilized on the recorded surface” (Massey 2005). However, geographer Doreen Massey proposes a reconceptualization of space and, therefore, of the “map.” Massey suggests that we understand space not as a static surface, but as a symbolic field where several paths intersect and/or collide. This spatial understanding not only suggests a terrain of contact between different subjects, but also a less hierarchical perception of “otherness”: (social, cultural). An “itinerant mapping” destabilizes the division between mapping subject and the object mapped.

Several contemporary Brazilian novels broach and problematize this idea of “itinerant mapping.” These narratives examine issues of cultural, gender, ethnic, and social difference by placing the narrative action in places that are both strange and that cause estrangement. Ruben’s Figueiredo award-winning 2010 novel *Passageiro do fim do dia* (*Passenger at Day’s End*) establishes a cartography of social differentiation in an anonymous Brazilian metropolis that can, nonetheless, be read as being Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, the anonymous urban terrain transforms the narrative into an allegory of Brazil’s urban spaces.

This essay examines how *Passageiro do fim do dia* employs itinerant mapping as a narrative strategy to foreground the peripheral urban spaces and their residents. The essay suggests that by employing this narrative technique Figueiredo’s novel substantiates the social and cultural difference that characterize these terrains and the subjects that inhabit them to its readership. By representing the peripheral geo-social space through an itinerant mapping, *Passageiro do fim do dia* addresses issues of socioeconomic and cultural

inclusion and exclusion, and whether it is possible to represent these matters adequately through literature. In this sense, the novel addresses the conjunction between space, citizenship, and culture.

Through the moving gaze of the novel's protagonist, Pedro, the novel maps the human, social, and cultural complexities of Brazil's impoverished urban periphery—variously known as “favelas,” “periferia,” “comunidade” (community), “morro” (hill—for the favelas that surround Rio de Janeiro), without generally resorting to a discourse of violence, transgression, or otherness that normally typifies the representation of such spaces and of their denizens.

Favelas are a fixture of most Brazilian cities. In Rio de Janeiro, they were established by freed slaves, the urban poor, and, since the 1950s, by migrants from Brazil's Northeast that came to metropolitan centers such as Rio and São Paulo in search of employment and better living conditions. In Rio, favelas sprung up on the hillsides that surround the city. Traditionally, these steep and rocky terrains proved difficult for urban development. Nonetheless, favelas have also sprung up in Rio de Janeiro's outskirts. And, more recently, more central favelas, such as the Vila Autódromo in the swanky neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca, have been threatened with removal due to mega sporting events such as the 2016 summer Olympic Games.

According to Theresa Williamson, founder and executive director of the NGO Catalytic Communities, favelas are defined by four elements. Williamson maintains that they are “neighborhoods that emerge from an unmet need for housing.” They were “established and developed with no outside or governmental regulation.” Favelas were “established and developed by individual residents (no centralized or outside ‘developers’).” Lastly, favelas are “continuously evolving based on culture and access to resources, jobs, knowledge, and the city.”

Rio de Janeiro's first favela was founded in 1897 by soldiers returning from the Canudos (1893–1897) campaign [see for this the novelist João Guimarães Rosa's *Grande Sertão: Veredas* (*Great Backlands: Paths*) (1956), the Rio anthropologist Euclides da Cunha's *Backlands: The Canudos Campaign* (1902), and Mario Vargas Llosa's *The War of the End of the World* (1981)]. The soldiers who partook in the operation were supposed to be granted land as a reward for their services. When this did not materialize, they protested and were moved to the Morro da Providência. It was here, on the hills surrounding the city center, that the veterans of the Canudos war established a settlement that they named “Morro da Favela” (Favela Hill), after a shrub that grew in the arid northeastern hinterland where the Republic's forces fought the followers of the messianic leader Antônio Conselheiro. Nowadays 1.4 million of Rio de Janeiro's 6 million residents live in favelas (Williamson 2012).

The posture of Rio's municipal authorities toward favelas as a social space has been mostly hostile. Since the nineteenth century, favelas have been targeted for removal and/or relocation—usually away from middle- and upper-income

neighborhoods. Since Major Pereira Passos (1836–1913), whose tenure went from 1902 to 1906, and his campaign to modernize Rio de Janeiro, city authorities have repeatedly displaced low-income *cariocas* under the guise of urban renewal. Between 1964 and 1974 during Brazil's last military dictatorship (from 1964 to 1985), 80 favelas were razed by the government with the intent of freeing up land for residential development. The inhabitants of affected communities—approximately 140,000 people—were relocated to the city's outskirts or established new favelas around town. Paulo Lins' 1997 novel *City of God* details this process. The book focuses on the development of organized crime in the neighborhood of Cidade de Deus. Located in the western part of the city Rio de Janeiro, Cidade de Deus was founded in 1960 as part of an effort on behalf of state governor Carlos Lacerda to eradicate *favelas* from Rio's center.

Favelas and their social configuration have been part of the city's imaginary since almost their inception into the urban landscape. Nineteenth-century city chroniclers referenced this space (Beal 2013). In the twentieth century, the favela inspired films such as Marcel Camus' 1959 feature *Orfeu negro* (*Black Orpheus*) and Carlos Diegues' and Leon Hirsman's *Cinco vezes favela* (*Five Times Favela*, 1962). As pointed out by Ivana Bentes, the representation of the favelas in films such as *Orfeu Negro* tends to be that of an idealized space, where tight community relations make up for material lack (Bentes 2003: 121–137).

More recently, the favela went global with the success of Kátia Lund's and Fernando Meirelles' blockbuster production *City of God* (2003), based on Paulo Lins' novel of that name. Like Lins' text, there has been a spate of texts written about the favela that focus on the more problematic aspects of these urban terrains. Examples include Júlio Ludemir's *Sorria, você está na Rocinha* (*Smile, You Are in Rocinha*, 2004) and Raquel de Oliveira's account of the drug traffic in Rocinha favela *A número um* (*The Number One*, 2015). Violence, drug trafficking, and poverty are staples of such narratives and of the biopic *Abusado: O dono do morro Dona Marta* (*Abused: The Boss of Dona Marta*, 2003) by journalist Caco Barcellos that details the story of Márcio Amaro de Oliveira (named Juliano VP in Barcellos' text), who controlled the drug traffic in the Favela Santa Marta, in Botafogo. Similarly, recent cinematic production also tends to emphasize these unsavory facets of the favelas. Well-known examples include José Padilha's two blockbuster productions *Tropa de elite 1* and *2* (*Elite Troop 1 and 2*, 2008 and 2011, respectively).

In contrast to some of the aforementioned texts, *Passageiro do fim do dia* walks a fine line between portraying some of the aforementioned social problems that haunt many Brazilian favelas, and attempting to draw a more nuanced image of this space. Interestingly Figueiredo, who himself hails from the middle class, chooses a nonperipheral protagonist to relay this vision of the favela.

Passageiro do fim do dia relates the protagonist Pedro's journey from the center of a Brazilian metropolis to its impoverished outskirts at the end of the workweek. The entire novel takes places during this trip, and the

narrative action is limited to the space of the two buses that transport Pedro. The journey happens in the midst of the threat of possible riots along the route, especially as the buses near the periphery. Though the disturbances never quite materialize, the tension that they cause among the passengers infuses the narrative and points toward the conflicts around class and space that pervade Brazil's urban centers. The allusion to an uncertain commotion along the route, coupled with rumors among travelers who speak of barricades and turmoil along the route, and who remember similar episodes in the recent past, conveys the idea of a conflictive urban framework. It is a diffuse conflict, what Marcelo Lopes de Souza identifies as the "fragmentation of socio-political spatial fabric" (Souza 2000). While Lopes de Souza associates this division with territorial control by criminal groups (especially drug dealers) as well as the abandonment of public spaces by state forces, the fragmentation in Figueiredo's novel also has other factors, such as the socioeconomic segregation of the metropolis. The tensions that the novel references signal to this fragmentation that, according to Lopes de Souza, undermine urban sociability due to a reduction of shared urban spaces (Lopes de Souza 2000: 217). In effect, *Passageiro do fim do dia* does not depict any spaces that are shared by the upper and lower social echelons. If they coincide in one place, tensions ensue. Figueiredo's novel does highlight how the fragmentation and the violence that ensue from it impact the lower classes more strongly as it affects their daily life in both small and large ways (McIlwaine and Moser 2007: 117–137).

The protagonist of *Passageiro do fim do dia* journeys from city center to its margins not because he inhabits the latter, but because he will spend the weekend with his girlfriend, Rosane. She resides in Tirol, a neighborhood that, according to the novel, was originally built for military families and now caters to the city's poor working class as well as individuals who are, in the words of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, the "waste products of modernity" (Bauman 2004): unemployed, informal workers, and subjects who live on society's legal fringes. The name of Rosane's neighborhood can be read as allusion to the favela of that name located in Rio's outskirts.

As indicated by Mike Davis (2006), the neoliberal wave that swept Latin American countries in the 1980s and 1990s led to greater labor informality that transformed significant sectors of the working class into a *Lumpenproletariat*. Thus, in Figueiredo's novel, Rosane's father, who worked in construction for most of his life, feels he has been lucky he was able to retire on disability (he develops an allergy to cement). His coworkers, who, unlike him, continued to work, found themselves thrown into informality when the economy begins to shift. As Davis points out, the change from formal to informal labor practices in turn negatively impacted the metropolitan setting. Working-class neighborhoods, for example, became impoverished not only socioeconomically, but also in terms of deteriorating infrastructure due to reduced social spending on behalf of the state (one of the tenets of neoliberalism being cuts in social spending; Harvey 2005). As a result, spaces such as sidewalks and public squares become derelict due to neglect.

They no longer fulfill their function to promote sociability among neighborhood residents. Instead, these locations can become spaces of conflict and contravention.

During his trip from the city center to its impoverished outskirts, Pedro observes his surroundings, effectively establishing an itinerant cartography. His observations are interrupted by his intermittent reading a biography of the British scientist Charles Darwin and, more specifically, the trip that Darwin made to Brazil in 1832 on his way to the Galapagos Archipelago. Darwin spent some time both in the city of Rio and in the interior of the state. During his inland trip, the English naturalist recorded not only the tropical fauna, but also the abuses suffered by the local Afro-Brazilian population. Pedro compares the landscape that he sees through the bus windows to the one Darwin describes during his trip to Rio de Janeiro. Implicitly, his observations of the poor men and women that travel with him toward the city limits also evoke Darwin's recollections of the dire conditions endured by Brazil's Afro-descendant populace. The narrative traces an implied genealogy of disenfranchisement between the two groups. Interspersed with these observations are Pedro's memories of an incident in which he was seriously wounded in the leg by the military police during a riot. Again we have a reference to the tensions that crisscross Brazil's urban terrains. Nevertheless, despite the social tensions and socio-spatial fragmentation that the novel portrays, Pedro's gaze also traces an itinerant cartography of the metropolis that counteracts these frictions to a certain degree.

Doreen Massey proposes that we understand space as the simultaneity of stories so far. This is to say that space is constantly changing according to the subjects that exist in it, pass through it. This perception of space also changes our understanding of place. Massey suggests that we understand place/s as the "collections of those stories (so-far), articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be product of these interactions within that wider setting, and of what is made of them. And too, of the non-meeting-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place" (Massey 2012: 130).

It is precisely this understanding of space and of place that emanates from Figueiredo's text. Through Pedro's eyes, the anonymous territory of the city becomes imbued with a meaning that derives from the stories that cross and intersect in different spaces. By turning the anonymous spaces of the city and its periphery into a map of meanings and, to some extent, of sociability, Figueiredo's novel resignifies the peripheral areas of the city. *Passageiro do fim do dia* does not propose an idealized reading of these places. Rather, the text recognizes the tensions that characterize these territories. In addition to the disturbances on the route, the novel also mentions episodes of crime, violence, poverty, lack of jobs, of resources, and of prospects in general that mar the social life in Brazil's peripheries. Nevertheless, while the novel acknowledges these problems, the text also demonstrates—through the itinerant cartography that the protagonist traces—the complexity of social life and of the individual stories that exist in these locations.

The itinerant cartography that the protagonist creates begins at the bus stop, where Pedro initiates his odyssey toward Tirol. Here we encounter the small miseries that punctuate the daily life of Brazil's lower middle class and its impoverished social sectors, which sociologist Jessé Souza calls respectively "the fighters" ("Os batalhadores" Souza, 2010) and the "rabble" ("A ralé" Souza, 2009).

The third-person narrator paints in almost naturalistic details the bus stop—the heat of the late afternoon, the smell of urine and of dirt. The description of this anonymous space—we do not have street names, avenues, businesses—offers us a vision of a dilapidated public space. The waiting passengers echo their surroundings. Pedro makes a mental inventory of his companions, subjects at the socioeconomic margins, such as "a mulher com aparência de setenta, mas que devia ter só uns quarenta e três" ("the woman who looked as if she were seventy, but who probably was no older than forty-three") and "o rapaz de uns vinte anos, de cabelo raspado, com dois dedos na mão por causa de algum acidente" ("the young man in his twenties, with shaved head, with two fingers of his hand paralyzed because of some accident") (Figueiredo 2010: 10).

Despite their anonymity—none of the individuals waiting for the bus has a name—these characters have a history. Pedro observes that the prematurely aged woman carries a Bible, and the young man always dozes off during the trip, and so on. These small details allow the reader to develop the story of each character, a story that Figueiredo's text suggests, but does not fully outline. In this way, the reader participates in the mapping process that Pedro unwittingly performs.

The picture of the daily life of low-income subjects shifts the center of gravity of the urban cartography and makes these sectors and the spaces they inhabit the focal point of the city. As such, despite their socioeconomic marginalization, they become symbolically central. This centralization metaphorically inserts the peripheral characters and their terrains into the larger *urbe*. The novel therefore performs an inclusionary gesture of sorts, even while it emphasizes the geo-social exclusion of the territories and subjects it depicts. *Passageiro do fim do dia* thus blurs the urban boundaries. This occurs through the aforementioned centralization of the geographic and human periphery, but also through the representation of movement—Pedro's journey to Tirol.

The portrayal that the novel paints of Tirol is doubly mediated. On the one hand, we see the neighborhood through Pedro's foreign eyes. He is a member of the middle class and lives in the city's center, a locale that, though not affluent, is not entirely impoverished. On the other hand, we have the impressions of the place conveyed to Pedro by his girlfriend, Rosane. Juxtaposed, these two perspectives draw a diachronic picture of the district. If Pedro's account highlights Tirol's decadence, with its dusty streets, open sewers, and a high density of informal homes, then Rosane recalls a place with ordered, straight, and tree-lined streets and open fields. The contrast between the two visions of the area emphasizes the decline of Brazil's working classes and their socio-geographic spaces. At the same time, the amalgamation of the two narrative perspectives also underscores the workings of the itinerant cartography that the narrative undertakes in which space is a construct in which various perspectives converge.

Though Pedro is familiar (and a familiar figure) with Tirol's social and spatial geography, he also is aware that he is ultimately a stranger in this place. On his journey, he feels as if he “estava sendo levado à força, em linha reta, para um poço cada vez mais fundo, para um corredor escuro que desembocava num tumulto, num caos de brutalidades” (“was being taken by force in a straight line to a well that kept getting deeper, to a dark corridor that ended in mayhem, in a brutal chaos” [Figueiredo, 36]). Pedro feels both attracted and repulsed by this chaos. He wants to separate himself from it, and yet be part of it. His aversion conveys the impressions of Brazil's upper-income sectors that often perceive those who live in poor neighborhoods as a possible threat, as agents of social chaos (Caldeira 2000). For Jessé Souza, this social segment is a by-product of the “Brazilian modernization process” (Souza 2010: 25). Souza points out that this class is not seen by the elites as entitled rights—that is, as a truly integral part of the social, civil, political, and economic fabric of the nation. Their geo-social marginality equates with a marginalization as citizens.

Although Pedro mentally reproduces some of the negative stereotypes of his social class, he is conscious of this operation and attempts to struggle against it: “Um calor de vergonha correu na sua testa e ele tratou de rechazar bem depressa aquelas ideias. De todo jeito, o fato concreto era que não podia mais sair do ônibus” (“A hot wave of shame passed through his forehead and he tried to repel those ideas as quickly as possible. And in any case, the truth of the matter was that he could no longer step off the bus” [Figueiredo: 36]). Pedro's inability to leave the bus signifies that he, despite being an outsider, is also part of the reality that he observes, albeit in an uncertain and transient form.

The misery that Pedro observes during his trip and in Tirol is implicitly contrasted to the city's more affluent neighborhoods. Pedro's fellow travelers work in the upper- and middle-class homes and businesses. As indicated by the geographer Marcelo Lopes de Souza, there is a symbiotic relationship between what he classifies as the Brazilian urban *Lumpenproletariat* and the wealthier classes in the sense that the first part of the “lower circuit of the urban economy” (Lopes de Souza 2000: 190) caters to the wealthier classes, who, in their turn, benefit from the same economic system that increases social inequality.

Passageiro do fim do dia focuses mainly on two urban spaces. On the one hand, we have the bus in which Pedro travels and that can be seen as a microcosm of the Brazilian working class. This territory also includes the area of the route. Through the vehicle's windows, Pedro (and, by extension, the reader) catches glimpses of the *Lebenswelt* of the people traveling on the bus: modest houses, popular supermarkets, informal vendors, crowded bus stops, potholed streets, and posters announcing various types of products targeted at the lower-income metropolitan population. The images that Pedro sees through the windows of the bus speak of a social horizon circumscribed by material circumstances and by the geographic space itself. The low-income neighborhoods that he transverses on his way to Tirol have deficient infrastructure and indicate the state's neglect of the country's lower-income population. Again, it should be emphasized that *Passageiro do fim*

do dia does not fully criminalize these spaces as, for example, other narratives such as Lins' *City of God*. Rather, Figueiredo's novel points toward the quotidian aspects of the periphery, its daily rhythms, and the people who partake in them. This narrative approach counteracts the violent imaginary associated with peripheral urban spaces that is common in Brazilian cultural and mediatic discourse. In *Passageiro do fim do dia*, the periphery becomes integrated into the larger metropolitan cartography while also remaining at its fringes by virtue of the social neglect of the space and its residents' experience.

On the other hand, as stated earlier, the geo-social space of Tirol is central in the narrative. This space is a metaphor of Brazil's poor urban neighborhoods. It is a desolate territory, which, as mentioned earlier, reflects the decline of the Brazilian working class. This neighborhood encapsulates the interplay between peripheral spaces and the symbolic significance of these areas. Tirol is at the same time peripheral—distant from the city's center in a geographical sense—and central since it is the focus of the narrative we are reading. And despite—or perhaps because of—its population density, the neighborhood is not a place of sociability among the residents.

Thus, for example, Rosane's family does not get along with their neighbors, notwithstanding the proximity in which they live: "Vizinhos tão próximos, parede com parede, as duas famílias não se davam" ("Though they lived so close, sharing a wall, the two families did not get along" [Figueiredo: 37]). Due to the changing socioeconomic composition of the neighborhood and the attendant spike in criminality, Tirol's residents look at each other with suspicion. In her book *City of Walls* (2000), anthropologist Teresa P.R. Caldeira observes that often population changes in urban neighborhoods destabilize the configuration of urban space and sociability models established in the community. The disorientation felt by older residents is externalized in the form of negative prejudices, creating a dichotomy between "us" and "them" where new residents are seen as "invaders" (Caldeira 2000: 86).

This distrust that poisons relations between the residents in Tirol is also present in heightened form between the inhabitants of Tirol and its adjacent neighborhood, Várzea. In this case, the suspicion turns into open animosity. The residents of Várzea, which, according to Rosane, is an older and more established neighborhood than Tirol, saw the arrival of the new residents (who came to live in Tirol) with fear and suspicion. They fear that these people, of even fewer means than they, would damage Várzea and its denizens. They believe that the newcomers "vinha[m] para prejudicar, vinha[m] para desvalorizar a vizinhança de algum jeito, para degradar o bairro todo. Ou, quem sabe, até coisa pior" ("came to harm, to devalue the neighborhood somehow, to degrade the whole vicinity. Or, perhaps, something even worse" [Figueiredo: 38]). For the inhabitants of Várzea, their "rights" (to housing, to public security) are threatened by the presence—and by the claims to rights—of the new arrivals. The latter impinge upon the rights of the former because their presence leads to property

devaluation, the (perceived) deterioration of both material security, and, therefore, of the social status of long-time residents.

In addition to this notion of rights as a competitive field, the quotation also conveys the idea of social contamination that emulates the dominant discourse. Caldeira suggests that this type of speech, used as a distinguishing factor between and within the same socioeconomic group, implies a shift where negative stereotypes are imposed on the (social, racial, gendered) “other.” Within this discriminatory discourse, poverty is seen as synonymous with a social evil that can be “transmitted” much in the same way that disease is spread. In his context, the final sentence of the quote that alludes to an implicit (and even larger) threat encompasses a multitude of negative meanings, transgressive possibilities and dangers that are even more menacing by virtue of their vagueness.

As if to confirm these stereotypes, the novel zooms in onto Tirol’s conflictive public space. Young people here seem to be mostly unemployed, devoting themselves to idleness or criminal activities like selling drugs or stealing cars and motorcycles. But this dystopian picture is complicated by the individual stories of some of these young people such as a young boy that Rosane knows and who lost three fingers in an accident with an improvised weapon. What these stories convey is the lack of perspective that the young people face. *Passageiro do fim do dia* details the tensions lived out in the vicinity’s streets without resorting to the glamor of violence that has tainted narratives such as *A número um*. Rather, Figueido’s novel emphasizes the human story behind the transgressive behavior of some of the text’s characters.

Thus, for example, the narrative voice communicates the idea of the boy’s fragility and parallel boldness:

“uns vinte e sete, trinta quilos, no máximo, as costelas visíveis embaixo da pele esticada do tórax, músculos redondos nos ombros estreitos, pulsos finos, de aspecto quase quebradiço, e uns movimentos que queriam ser largos, uns gestos sedentos de chegar longe, uma voz que se esticava aos saltos, voz e gestos que não sabiam a que se prender”

(“Twenty-seven, maybe thirty quilos at most, his ribs showing through the taut skin of his thorax, rounded muscles on his narrow shoulders, delicate, frail-looking wrists and movements that wanted to be big, gestures that seemed eager to reach far, a voice that stretched, almost jumping, voice and gestures did not know where to anchor themselves” [Figueiredo: 94]).

The description emphasizes the boy’s youth and insinuates his precarious existence, his social invisibility. In recounting the boy’s story, which he remembers almost obsessively, Peter inscribes its existence in the symbolic map that he traces of the city. Though not fully visible (he remains anonymous), the boy’s presence becomes a ghostly presence of sorts that haunts the novel’s readers.

Contrasting and complementing these dystopian scenes, which somehow reproduce and yet also offset negative stereotypes about the poor urban classes, *Passageiro do fim do dia* also focuses on the daily rituals of Tirol's residents. The novel paints familial scenes such as the morning coffee that is served in cracked glasses, the weekly shopping trips that Rosane and Pedro make, and the evening television viewing session. These domestic scenes serve as a counterpoint to the unwelcoming public spaces of Tirol.

In particular, the novel signals the symbolic significance of the weekly grocery shopping expeditions that Pedro and Rosane make. Pedro, who spends most weekends at Rosane's house, helps with the household expenses. For Rosane, the weekly supermarket run has both material (i.e., acquisition of—mostly—necessary household goods) and symbolic connotations. She evaluates each potential purchase carefully, comparing price and weight mentally according to a system that only she knows. Much like the other daily activities that the novel describes, the narration of the shopping trip serves to demystify the urban periphery as a space of contravention. By portraying these everyday aspects, *Passageiro do fim do dia* approximates the periphery to the hegemonic metropolis. Figueiredo's text seems to suggest that both territories share the same daily routines and rituals even if the two areas are separated by social and geographic distance. *Passageiro do fim do dia* thus creates a cartography of immaterial contact zones.

Massey argues that places have the ability to transform us. This transformation takes place through what she calls the "practising of place." For Massey, this "practising" implies "the negotiation of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us" (Massey 2005: 154). *Passageiro do fim do dia* emphasizes this transformative sense of space through a narrative that maps the peripheral areas of the Brazilian metropolis. The protagonist's mobility conveys the idea that displacement is necessary for an understanding of different social realities. Through movement he negotiates the sights, sounds, people, and differences that he encounters. Pedro, a member of the middle class, embodies displacement not only through the physical movement. In addition, Pedro's displacement is also suggested by his positioning vis-à-vis his traveling companions, as well as his relationships and observations about the residents of Tirol, a locale that functions as a metaphor of Brazil's poor neighborhoods (favelas, comunidades, periferias). Though removed from these surroundings, Pedro, and, by extension, the reader, can develop a relation to them that has the potential to be transformative in the sense that it foments a critical sense about the relationship between space and citizenship, or lack thereof.

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The Case of Rio de Janeiro: Exploring Geographies of Resistance and Domination

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With a population of 6 million residents, the city of Rio de Janeiro lost part of its political and economic prestige with the transference of the capital to Brasília in 1960. Rio is the second city, responsible for around 5 % of the nation's GDP (Census 2010). The economy relies mostly on service activities, culture, and tourism. The city houses multinational offices, banking and finance headquarters, and heavy industries such as shipbuilding and chemicals. The city is, however, marked by drastic contrasts between wealth and poverty. According to the 2010 census, 10 % of the population accounted for 60 % of all personal income, while 10 % accounted for less than 2 %. The 2010 Census identified around 6,329 “subnormal agglomerates” (i.e., special interest zones) that make up around 6 % of the Brazilian population (11,425.644 inhabitants). The state of Rio de Janeiro has 1,332 “subnormal agglomerates” with a total population of 2,023.744, only behind São Paulo (2,715.067 residents). The metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro has 1,393,314 residents living in “subnormal agglomerates”—around 22.16 % of the total population. Some of these agglomerates are located close to the wealthier areas of the city, promoting a tense proximity between actors who are economically very distant from each other.

In spite of being known world over for its natural beauties, today the city also stands for the violence caused by drug trafficking and poverty. The active presence of drug dealers and militia organizations (organized crime groups typically composed of current or ex-police members) in the large majority of the favelas and marginalized areas scattered around the city can explain the high rates of violence and crime especially among young, low-income, less-educated men between 14 and 29 years old (Zaluar 2010: more than half the population of the favelas are African-Brazilian). But we cannot forget that the brutality and violence of the police in poor neighborhoods also leads to high homicide rates. One such case was the Candelária

massacre on the night of July 1993 that received extensive news coverage all over the world. At the so-called Candelária massacre, eight young people sleeping close to the Candelária church in downtown Rio de Janeiro were killed by a group of men, several of which were members of the police. In 2008, in order to control the increasing violence in the city and in preparation for its bid to host the FIFA World Cup (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016), the state created the Pacifying Police Units Program (UPPs). Since then, the armed police have invaded various favelas and installed UPPs as a strategy to reclaim the so-called criminal territories as part of the city. In 2011, the government created the UPP Social Program, which comprises measures in social services and infrastructure that aim to help the locals with professional training and educational programs. At the same time, efforts have been made to revitalize downtown Rio. In 2009, a Municipal Statute created the Wonder Port Project that seeks to reintegrate the Port Region into the city of Rio de Janeiro by revitalizing 5 million square meters. The project aims to create a waterfront area, to restructure vehicular circulation, to preserve historic buildings, and to recycle old buildings for cultural and commercial uses. The goal is to draw new visitors and investments that can increase economic gains and facilitate new economic clusters.

Funded by the state and the federal government and international banks, the idea behind the more recent projects is to integrate favelas with the wider city by promoting a better quality of life for the favela residents. Yet, in most cases, these urban policies promote the eviction of long-time residents who are an obstacle to modernity or who can no longer afford the rapid increase of home prices and taxes. This process of beautification and commodification of the urban space is not new. The image of a fragmented city dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century when chroniclers, politicians, and medico-hygienist scientists attempted to organize and control meanings and social practices, immobilizing certain territories (favelas) and marginalized groups within stigmatized frameworks. In most cases, those who did not fit into the image of the modern, civilized city were forced to move to its outskirts.

As can be seen, urban space interventions allow for the examination of the varied meanings of citizenship in diverse historical moments. Similarly, cultural artifacts play a significant role in our understanding of the ways places are produced and imagined. This chapter explores the ways space is configured in *Clara dos Anjos* (1922), by Lima Barreto, and *Guia Afetivo da Periferia* (2009), by Marcus Vinícius Faustini. By privileging marginalized voices that move through the different zones of the city, both novels register not only the difference between downtown and the suburb but especially how these two spaces are distant and integrated. I argue that the emphasis on the relationship between everyday life and different modes of belonging to the city helps us capture the diverse ways individuals experience space. Understanding this point enables us to see the way space enters into the production of difference.

The novels thus come to function as a critical prism through which the city is remapped relationally and contextually. But before examining the novels, I briefly discuss the Belle Époque and how different chroniclers document their views about the radical undergoing transformations in the city of Rio de Janeiro.

RIO'S URBAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

The first permanent settlement in the city of Rio de Janeiro was established in 1536, but only with the arrival of the Portuguese court in Rio in 1808 was there an effective stimulus to improve the quality of the resident's life. Dom João, the Prince Regent, inaugurated a period of drastic urban transformations, providing the city with pavement, lightning, public transportation, and running water. In spite of several plans to urbanize the city, it was only in the beginning of the twentieth century that a massive urban intervention took place. In the administrations of the President of the Republic Rodrigues Alves (1902–1906), and the city mayor Francisco Pereira Passos (1902–1906), a series of urban interventions were elaborated that became popularly known as the *bota-abaixo* (tear down). The intervention plans aimed to create a European urban façade for the city, to improve its infrastructure and to eradicate epidemics that were affecting the international image of the city. Among other things, the urban renewal plans consisted of the demolition of portions of the Castelo and São Bento hills, entire blocks of old buildings, and tenement houses in downtown Rio to make way to public parks, wide avenues, and boulevards. At the very end, almost 20,000 people were forced to abandon their homes and about 1,600 buildings were demolished (Needell 1987a: 257). Another concern was the construction of a modern port in Rio that could contribute to the nation's economic growth through its participation in the North Atlantic agro-export market (Needell 1987a: 243, 244).

The reform also included the construction of modern neoclassical buildings as the Municipal Theater (1909), the School of Fine Arts (1908), and the National Library (1910). Inspired by Georges-Eugène Haussmann's vast urban reform in Paris from 1858 to 1870, the new buildings' architectural style followed the French school (*École des Beaux-Arts*) as is evidenced in the Municipal Theater, which is a replica of the Paris Opera House. Pereira Passos also imported sparrows and statues from Paris to decorate boulevards and squares. The final touch was the construction of large avenues that could facilitate mobility. As Jeffrey Needell argues, Avenida Central (today Avenida Rio Branco), traversing the city from east to west, became a monument of Brazil's inscription as a modern (European) nation (1987b: 35). The goal was to transform the city in the most cosmopolitan center of the country, although, as Needell claims, "[the] Avenida [Central], like the *belle époque* for which it stood, pulsed between two poles, colonial realities and metropolitan dynamism, in a constant counterpoint, a tension which is basic to the explanation and experience of the world" (1987b: 45).

However, Rio's urban reform under the slogan of "Rio civilizes itself" had other implications. The developments in the medico-hygienist field in the

nineteenth century, which focused on environmental conditions that could enable the propagation of diseases, ensured efforts to improve the public health conditions of the city. Different measures were taken to provide the city with some of the basic services and infrastructure such as sanitation, sewer systems, public transportation, and an energy supply. One of the most controversial measures was the obligatory small pox vaccination plan that led to the *Revolta contra Vacina* in November 1904. In fact, according to Needell, the *Revolta contra Vacina* was a culminating moment against modernizing policies that were establishing a new social order based on the needs and values of an elite (1987a: 266). The hygienic reforms and the new vaccination rules were part of a series of debates interconnecting notions of degeneration, nation, and race. As Dain Borges argues, many Brazilian social scientists adopted Augustin Moreau's notion of "degeneration as a specific syndrome of cumulative hereditary psychiatric decline that ran in families" as a necessary condition to "assert that race mixture could have an elevating, or 'whitening' effect on the national race" (1993: 236, 237).

The adoption of a scientific rationality marked by biosocial categories was also essential to understanding the ways in which the urban reforms attempted to organize the city and to establish its uses, delimiting those who belonged to the city and those who did not. To be more specific, the process of urban intervention also involved the cleansing of undesirable residents. Nicolau Sevcenko (1983) shows in his work on the intellectual environment during the *Belle Époque* that the reforms targeted low-income, poorly dressed, barefooted, and mostly dark-skinned individuals who were driven out of downtown and sent either to the outskirts of the city or to the hillsides. Sevcenko also points to the role played by the *Belle Époque* chroniclers in historicizing and ascribing meanings to new socio-spatial practices. To be sure, the chronicle literature functioned as a kind of reading principle through which a changing urban space acquired meaning. As a result, it helps unveil some of the conflicting relationships within a city marked by drastic spatial and social differences.

One striking feature in many of the chroniclers is the presence of a tone of nostalgia. Mario Pederneiras (1867–1915), for instance, criticizes the copy of the European architectural style at the expense of the local culture (Moody 2014: 276). João do Rio (Paulo Emílio Cristóvão Barreto 1881–1921), on the other side, refers to street peddlers as part of the "enchanted soul of the streets." For the elite, however, street peddlers were related to practices tied to urban slavery that should be eliminated from the modern capital (Acerbi 2013: 3). Unmistakably, the nostalgic tone conveys the attempt to "conciliate tradition to modernity, allowing the popular-traditional and the bourgeois-modern to be compatible" (Acerbi 2013: 4). I would say, however, that this nostalgic tone not only points to the conflict between different models of conceptualizing the city, but also the impacts of the disappearance of social practices and points of reference that helped for so long to sediment a sense of belonging.

Other chroniclers such as Olavo Bilac (1865–1918) chose "to dramatically present the good/bad dichotomy between the present and the past" to praise

the capital's drastic reform, which is described as a transition from an ignoble and filthy city to an elegant and ordered one (Beal 2013: 28; Moody 2014: 263). Interestingly, the transition to an elegant city has as one of its key factors the exclusion of marginalized groups (at least from the prime areas of the city) to a space of invisibility—a perspective that reproduces much of the ideas of the elite. Not all chroniclers, however, had an idealized vision of progress as defined by the elite. João do Rio, for instance, in his attempt to capture the mundane practices of the streets and back alleys, questioned the easy connection between progress and civilization (Beal 2013: 30). In “Três aspectos da miséria,” he challenged the myth of progress by bringing to the fore the lack of infrastructure and service of those living in the lower-class suburbs and the peripheries. João do Rio's chronicles are populated by anonymous types and obscure territories that could cause, at a first glance, distrust and fear but that turned into enchantment. This is the case with “Livres acampamentos da miséria” that describes Providência favela with a mixture of fear, a sense of insecurity, but also curiosity:

I followed them [to Santo Antonio Hill], and I in another world. The lighting was gone. We were in the fields, in the interior, away from the city camp cheerful squalor, the unconscious horror of real misery, with the vision of casinhotos [a small poor house, but with negative connotations] and faces of a vigorous people, lolling in poverty instead of working, right in the middle of a big city the unprecedented construction of a sloth camp, free of all laws. (9–10, 152, my translation)

Nonetheless, the narrative reproduces most of the racist stereotypes and degeneration/laziness metaphors that permeated much of the scientific, literary, and journalistic production of his time. From this perspective, the favela (and poor neighborhoods) and their (unsuitable and dark-skinned in its majority) residents become closely linked to the representation of vice, disease, violence, and backwardness. Images of otherness that tied to certain territories/segments of the population and wrapped in the legitimacy of science helped justify the sanitation and renewal reform of downtown Rio and discredit any possible opposition (Meade 1997: 115).

The attempt to construct a more multifaceted image of the city gains new contours with Lima Barreto's work. In his narratives, the city becomes polycentric as its point of reference expands to include the suburbs and not only downtown. The suburban sprawl caused by urban developments and the constant circulation of people and goods in and out of downtown point to a changing and more nuanced cartography of the city, as is discussed in the next section.

LIMA BARRETO AND DIFFERENT DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Afonso Henriques de Lima Barreto (1881–1922) was born in Rio de Janeiro from a family of mixed racial background. His mother died when he was very young. In 1904, he had to abandon his studies to provide for his siblings due to

his father's deteriorating mental health. He initiated his literary career as a journalist and was a civil servant in the War Ministry—a low-paying public job. Struggling with poverty, Lima Barreto had a bohemian life and was twice institutionalized in a mental hospital after being diagnosed as an alcoholic. He died in 1922 of a heart attack.

Lima Barreto was a novelist, journalist, short story writer, and chronicler. His works document his opposition to Brazilian racial hierarchy and the positivist race science. In 1909, Lima Barreto published his first novel *Recordações do Escrivão Isaías Caminha* (*Recollections of the Clerk Isaías Caminha*). In 1911, he published his most popular novel *Triste Fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (*The Patriot*), and in 1919, *Vida e Morte de M. J. Gonzaga de Sá* (*Life and Death of M. J. Gonzaga de Sá*). The first version of *Clara dos Anjos* appeared in 1904, but the final version was only published posthumously in 16 issues of *Revista Sousa Cruz* between 1923 and 1924 (Nunes 1979: 6). The novel tells the story of Clara dos Anjos, an innocent, young and poor mullato girl who is seduced by Cassi, a more upper class, white, unscrupulous man. At the end of the novel, Cassi flees to escape the obligation to marry her and Clara finds herself pregnant and dishonored.

In *Clara dos Anjos*, the city emerges in its contradiction and inequalities. The novel makes us reflect on how the railroads shape the land use and the development of the city suburbs since many of the houses are built along the train tracks. The novel offers a vivid contrast between the open and spacious downtown area and the precarious suburban expansion, depicting the rhythm of life in the suburbs and their different topography:

This is more or less the way life is in the suburbs, with the poverty and virtual abandonment in which the public authority leaves the people who reside there. From the earliest hours of the morning, people came out from all the huts, pockets, and caves to cross the trails, hills, streets and by-ways and walk toward the nearest railroad station. Some, living farther away in Inhaúma, in Caxambi, in Jacarepaguá became less attached to their nickels and took the streetcars, always fully loaded, that ran to the railroad stations. (Nunes 1979:167)

The reference to loaded trains or streetcars linking downtown with the suburbs helps illustrate how the suburban residents are an integral part of the local economy. Foremost, the description of low-income neighborhoods and their everyday challenges point to the way marginalized groups are asymmetrically integrated into society. After all, the necessity of maintaining a steady supply of cheap labor to ensure low costs is an integral part to the development of capitalism.

Moreover, instead of restricting himself to the image of a dichotomous (suburbs vs. downtown) city, Lima Barreto introduces his reader to a more complex map of the city. The suburb is described as a primary agglomeration of “houses, tiny buildings, cottages, shacks and hovels built anywhere four wooden stakes could be set down and connected with something that serves as a

wall” (Nunes 1979:165). The narrator also mentions the presence of “[s]ome relatively new [houses] with a few frills and a certain sense of courtliness that hid their lack of room more effectively and justified their exaggerated rents” (Nunes 1979:110). Finally, the novel makes reference to “the axis of the suburban zone,” where “the state of the streets changes immediately. There are no more railroads or business establishments; there are only the shacks, hovels, and other similar buildings” (Nunes 1979:165). The narrative depicts the city as primarily marked by different types and levels of assets, distinct patterns of life histories, as well as various instances of solidarity, violence, and exploitation. The novel grasps different but interdependent circles of power inscribed in the space of the city, revealing a dynamic in which the further away from the central area (downtown), the greater the socioeconomic inequalities.

Rio de Janeiro thus emerges as a city in transition and full of contrasts, where the old and the new coexist in tension. *Clara dos Anjos* explores the ways in which the articulation of new urban designs, urban policies, and lifestyles at the macro-social level has an impact on the practices and needs of social actors in daily life frameworks. Similar to the chronicle literature, the novel points to the fragmentation of the urban space, highlighting some of the crisis factors linked to the city use. The difference is that Lima Barreto introduces a different way of conceptualizing the urban scene. Lima Barreto points to the presence of a city composed by a kaleidoscope of individuals and socially stratified territories and groups with diverse interests, needs, and values. The novel refers to neighborhoods mostly devoid of economic activity except for consumption but that provide essential forms of cheap labor and service to the “modern” downtown.

In this perspective, the work of David Harvey is essential since he insists on the structural role of “accumulation by dispossession,” which promotes the fragmentation of the city into subdivisions marked by presence of a dialectic between inclusive and exclusive mechanisms (Pineiro, and Rio 1993: 175). Pereira Passos’s urban reform, in its physical and symbolic dimension, is a decisive factor in the attempt to order and domesticate the urban space, delimiting its uses and imposing changes in the city’s demography. Driven by economic imperatives and the needs of an elite, the urban reform involved the cleansing of “undesirable” elements who were pushed to the outskirts of the city. In other words, there was a clear attempt to whiten the areas frequented by an elite and tourists since the reforms included municipal regulations prohibiting people walking without shoes or jackets in certain parts of the city (Fischer 2003: 49). However, as Beatriz Resende states, Lima Barreto’s criticism does not mean a position totally contrary to the new urbanization model, but to the fact that the celebrated reform was restricted to the ruling class neighborhoods, thus denying the condition of citizenship to all city residents (1993: 50). Therefore, by denouncing the violent practices of exclusion and discrimination that were part of the urbanization project, Lima Barreto clearly initiates a debate on what the right to the city should entail since, as his works make clear, marginalized groups do

not have a say in decisions that affect the urban space and have an impact on their lives (Harvey 2008: 23).

FAUSTINI AND HIS AFFECTIVE CITY MAP

The modern, civilized city that starts to materialize in the beginning of the twentieth century gains new contours over the years. One example is the Agache Plan (1927–1929) that tried to extend Pereira Passos’s urban intervention by conceiving monumental schemes to integrate, among other things, the waterfront into the city’s urban form (Brandão 2006: 40). Although it was never implemented, it offered suggestions to control the urban growth and beautify the city that were revisited later. In the late 1970s, the Cultural Corridor Project proposed an urban design that attempted to “reconcile historical preservation with the needs of economic development and various class interests” (Pinheiro, and Rio 1993: 54). In spite of some drawbacks, the project achieved many of its objectives. Many historical areas and buildings were restored, such as *Paço Imperial* (residence for the governors of colonial Brazil). The partial success of the Cultural Corridor Project has encouraged other urban interventions, as is the case of the Wonder Port Project—a waterfront project that includes a combination of cultural and recreational activities, institutional and commercial facilities, offices, and housing.

The state’s politics of intervention illustrates the way urban planning has been reframed to operationalize marketable features to devalued areas. It points to the adoption of a neoliberal market logic that has transformed “the city itself in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of urban political economy” (Harvey 2008: 30). In most cases, the state attempts to create a consensus by advocating urban interventions as a necessary step to improve the citizen’s quality of life. According to Sharon Zukin, this consensus is built through the controlled circulation of images that defines the shape/meanings of the public space and who belongs in the space—a symbolic economy created by the interaction between cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital (1995: 1–2). However, the question remains: who will really benefit from these urban interventions?

Recent literature has touched on some of these issues, as is the case with Marcus Vinícius Faustini’s *Guia afetivo da periferia*. Born in Duque de Caxias in 1971, Faustini is a theater director, documentary filmmaker, and writer. A social activist, Faustini was the Secretary of Culture and Tourism of the municipality of Nova Iguaçu (in Rio de Janeiro) from 2008 to 2010. In 2010, he founded the Networks for Youth Agency (Agência de Redes da Juventude) that combines social, cultural, and political activism. It aims to develop the ideas and talents of young cariocas from Rio de Janeiro’s favelas in order to implement sociocultural initiatives that can create and strengthen sociocultural networks within Rio’s “pacified” communities.

Published in 2009, *Guia afetivo da periferia* creates a mental map of the city through the narrator's remembrances and photographs. The book is divided into three parts: *meu território* (my territory), *primeiros mapas* (first maps), and *bússola* (the compass). The 62 photographs and images that compose the book say much about the way the narrator attempts to construct accounts of his life and his relationship to the city. The images capture parts of the city (TV antennas, street signs) and aspects of the community and family life (family snapshots on the beach), providing views that allow us to explore the effect of space on the construction of a sense of belonging and identity. The final goal seems to be the production of a new cartography to the city, bringing new meanings to places usually stigmatized by the official discourse or simply made invisible. For this reason, the narrative privileges an inside-out way of seeing in order to place stigmatized neighborhoods differently on the city map.

Its point of departure is Santa Cruz, located in the west side of Rio de Janeiro. With a population of more than 368,000 residents, Santa Cruz is a lower and middle-class neighborhood. Data from the Census 2010 show that the average per capita income of Santa Cruz ranges from R\$68.01 (around US \$17.15) to R\$1,861,43 (around US\$469.50) and its Human Development Index is 0.742 ("Indicadores de"). Santa Cruz is famous for its extreme hot weather, the air force military base, and the increasing violence due to confrontations between military forces, drug dealers, and the militias. To address the problems of housing and to push inter- and intraregional migrations to the suburbs, between the 1950s and 1970s the government divided the "peripheral area into plots of land with low investments in infrastructure and marketed with long-term payments that became the key means of access for poor people to acquire their own houses" (Lago, and Ribeiro 2014: 43). Built between 1979 and 1980, the Doutor Otacílio de Carvalho Camará housing complex in Santa Cruz follows this same logic. Popularly known as Cezarão, it initially had 5,667 houses; nowadays, it has almost 7,000 houses and around 80,000 residents.

As for *Guia afetivo da periferia*, the narrative begins with an allusion to the thermal shock experienced by the family when it moved from Duque de Caxias to Cezarão in Santa Cruz. The city that appears before our eyes is reconstructed through everyday activities and emotional attachments. The rides from Santa Cruz to downtown Rio de Janeiro are populated by a diversity of sounds, individuals, and geographies. First, the narrator refers to the presence of vendors shouting out loudly what they are selling inside the trains or the different architectural style of the houses on his journey to downtown (2009: 35). Next, he refers to vans that transport a multiplicity of individuals such as "underage street vendors, evangelicals going to preach, workers and guys like me acclimatized by this neon and the funk of car speakers" (2009: 48). As for downtown, it is mapped through cheap eats, street vendors, and special places with their own cultural ghosts, as is the case with "the Public Garden where I always imagine a meeting with the myopic Simplício of The Magic Telescope" (2009: 120). In his attempt to propose other ways of seeing the city, the narrator refers to Aarão Reis street in Santa

Teresa. In this case, the narrator denounces a process of gentrification/commodification of space when he refers to one of its many illustrious residents (the Brazilian filmmaker Vianinha) and to a hotel that attracts tourists looking for “an idyllic blend of Rio de Janeiro and Venice in the 21st century” (2009: 79). Tourists, dazzled by the trolley ride or the numerous art galleries, are usually blind to black residents who climb the hill on foot to save money, such as an old black woman whose feet, from walking, grew sideways (2009: 80). However, he also mentions the way he used to scream at some of the Favela do Jacarezinho residents (“surfing in the river, favela resident?”) when, looking from his grandparents’ window, he would see them being swept away by the rising rainwater (2009: 177).

As we can see, there is no attempt to reproduce the traditional postcards nor the images of violence usually associated to these neighborhoods by films such as *City of God* (2002), but rather to engage the gaze of the reader and direct his/her perception to ordinary experience and daily images—spatial dynamics that help create a sense of emotional attachment (Lehnen 2013: 183). More than that, the dialogue established between the photographs and the narrative allows us to critically challenge the images/meanings that have traditionally framed the city. For this reason, there is no concern in selecting photographs of high artistic quality; much to the contrary, they are ordinary, low-tech photos that resemble those of many family photo albums. The emphasis is on places that the narrator identifies as personally significant, pointing to the ways the narrator socially and physically positions himself. At the same time, the narrative explores the various peripheries coexisting within the city, blurring consequently the all-too-easy perception of a dichotomous city.

Of course, if past events are reframed in the light of more contemporary needs and interest, *Guia afetivo da periferia* materializes overlapping ways of producing and grounding experience in place. It articulates a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which the urban space is embedded and reproduces axes of difference and power. One example is his initial fear and discomfort while walking in Ipanema during the day—a sensation that unveils the narrator’s unconscious perception of the territorial segregation of the city. Also, the constant presence of photos capturing uncomfortable trains or different snapshots of Avenida Brasil helps denounce the daily and hard experience of those living in the suburbs and commuting to work downtown. We can say that the allusion to the discomfort and the difficulties that are part of his everyday routine help humanize the narrator, who becomes someone we can better understand and identify with. By doing this, he denounces a process of othering that is an intrinsic part of the construction of distinct forms of difference. In other words, *Guia afetivo da periferia* allows us to explore the spatiality of social constructions of differences operating in diverse places, reproducing pervasive and widespread structured patterns of inequality and discrimination.

Authors like Michel de Certeau highlight the intricacies of resistance in everyday manifestations and forms. De Certeau affirms that the simple act of walking on the street can be viewed as “a process of appropriation of the

topographical system on the part of the pedestrian” (1984: 97). Here, he implies that pedestrians can reclaim the streets that have been made sterile by engineers, planners, and architects. The act of walking becomes a way to refute the notions of order and morality inscribed in the landscape. Following de Certeau’s arguments, it appears that the intention of the author in selecting stories and photographs that revolve around everyday life points to his refusal to recognize dominant socio-spatial codes and hierarchies. It is the possibility of articulating other uses and meanings that enables him to cope with a social stigma that he experiences in different occasions. The city is thus presented in ways that challenge taken-for-granted expectations of how individuals, neighborhoods, and the city are supposed to be.

Like *Clara dos Anjos*, *Guia afetivo da periferia* comes to function as a critical prism through which the city is remapped. Both authors force their reader to reflect on issues of subjectivity, difference, and community in reliance upon place and geography, both as a metaphor and a material context. Understanding this point allows us to see the way place enters into the construction of difference since difference is not only a social but also a spatial process. In both cases, the city is perceived as a space in constant transformation and capitalism as a system that perpetuates class differences. Consequently, the sense of belonging is not only permeated by everyday social interactions and emotional attachments, but the emotional and personal feeling of belonging also has a geographical dimension since space and time are an intrinsic part of our experience (Mee and Wright 2009: 772). However, although both narratives attempt to create other ways of seeing and address the coexistence of different forms of citizenship, in *Guia afetivo da periferia* the production of a localized gaze functions as a mark of territorial affirmation and self-recognition. Faustini thus lays the foundation for a cultural production involved in the active appropriation and rewriting of the city as part of a process of political resistance and affirmation of difference.

Needless to say, by providing new representational forms that attempt to capture the diverse ways in which communities and individuals experience their territories, Lima Barreto and Faustini enhance the conditions for critical and political engagement. I would say that the act of giving visibility to some of the contradictions and inequalities that mark our society now and then helps us question celebratory discourses that attempt to define the terms through which the city and its residents are recognized. After all, the attempt to reframe the meanings attached to space is a crucial step in the ongoing negotiation over questions of identity and citizenship.

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São Paulo in Transit

Leila Lehmen

In January 2014, the Shopping Metrô Itaquera, located in the subprefecture of Itaquera, in São Paulo's northeastern city limits, was the stage of a flash mob of youths from the emerging middle class. The phenomenon, dubbed *rolezinho* (little stroll), quickly spread from the Shopping Metrô Itaquera to other shopping centers in São Paulo and to other Brazilian cities. The occurrences, which were organized via social media, consisted of groups of young people meeting at a shopping center and taking over the public spaces in these venues. While some saw the *rolezinho* as a political gesture that allowed lower-income youth to claim public space, a terrain that has been surreptitiously denied to this social segment, others believed that the presence of these young people was only a depoliticized disturbance of the public order. Fearing not only the disruption that the events caused, but also property damages and even theft, many shopping centers around Brazil closed their doors when they got wind of a planned *rolezinho*.

The controversy surrounding the *rolezinhos* went on for several weeks drawing national and international media attention and becoming the subject of scholarly presentations and papers. Perhaps the fascination with the *rolezinho* stemmed from the fact that its participants represented Brazil's newly empowered (though recently weakened) social sectors, the so-called *Classe C*.

Brazil's emerging middle class (also known as the Classe C or "new middle class" [nova classe média]) came about due to several socioeconomic factors, among them public policies aimed at reducing intergenerational poverty. Between 2003 and 2008, these policies—of which *Bolsa Família* (family grant) is perhaps the best known—were able to lift more than three million people out of poverty. Until recently, the Classe C comprised more than 50 %

of Brazil's population and was responsible for pouring approximately R\$1.1 trillion into the nation's economy.

The *Classe C* became the poster boy of Brazil's social changes over the last two decades. According to Brazilian scholar Jessé de Souza, the emerging middle class was touted as Brazil's ticket into the "first world." On the surface at least, the rise of this segment denoted that Brazil had finally made strides in addressing one of its most pressing social issues: the nation's large income gap. Recent studies demonstrate however that despite improvements Brazil continues to be a profoundly unequal society. According to Marc Morgan Milá, the country's top 1% income bracket retains 27% of the gross domestic income.

The above-mentioned social transformations have—as argued elsewhere in this essay—also percolated into the country's cultural production. In recent years, the Brazilian literary scene has experienced an influx of authors that belong to lower-income sectors. These authors, whose production is broadly classified as *literatura marginal* or *literatura periférica* (marginal or peripheral literature), alluding to the authors' marginalized socio-geographic condition, thematize the terrains, the cultural habitus, and the practices of the *Classe C*, as well as of those segments of the populace that have not yet ascended to this social category. As pointed out by critics such as Érica Peçanha Nascimento and authors such as Reginaldo Ferreira da Silva (Ferréz), marginal or peripheral works attempt to showcase and valorize the socio-geographic and cultural contexts that they depict—Brazil's low-income urban communities and their inhabitants.

Many consider Carolina Maria de Jesus' *Quarto de despejo: Diário de uma favelada* (*Child of the Dark: The Diaries of Carolina Maria de Jesus*, 1960) the genre's founding document. In this text, de Jesus relates her life and that of her neighbors in the favela do Canindé, paying special attention to the problems caused by poverty and state neglect. More recently, authors such as Paulo Lins (*City of God*, 1997) and Ferréz (*Capão Sin*, 2000; *Practical Handbook of Hate*, 2003) continue to depict the struggles of poor metropolitan communities and its residents, such as violence, lack of adequate infrastructure, precarious housing conditions, among other issues.

These social sectors and the spaces that they occupy are also the focus of the novel *Estação Terminal* (2010) by the *paulista* author and cultural activist Ademiro Alves (Sacolinha). In this text, which can also be read as a loosely fictionalized collection of chronicles, Alves details the daily life of the Estação Corinthians-Itaquera metro station.

Located in the neighborhood of Itaquera and inaugurated in 1988, the Estação Corinthians-Itaquera is part of São Paulo's train and metro system and is situated in the vicinity of the Shopping Metrô Itaquera, to which it is connected. The station derives its name both from the district in which it is located and from the neighboring training facility of one of São Paulo's most beloved (or hated—depending on the perspective) soccer teams, the Sport Club Corinthians.

Like the shopping center, the Estação caters to the primarily lower-middle-class population of Itaquera and its adjacent neighborhoods. According to a study realized by the newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* in 2008, 58 % of Itaquera's

population belonged to the Classe C. The next largest demographic group (according to income) was the middle class (Classe B with an annual middle income between R\$3.175 and R\$6.410) that represented 33 % of the local population.

The bus terminal serves as a nodal point from which *Estação Terminal* radiates toward São Paulo's popular districts. Though most of the narrative action takes place within the walls and on the sidewalks of the station, the stories that Sacolinha tells also encompass other places of the lived experience of low-income *paulista* residents. By choosing to focus on a point of transit, rather than a residential neighborhood, as, for example, Lins, Ferréz and Sacolinha himself does in another novel (*Graduated in Marginality*, 2009), *Estação Terminal* hints at the geo-social range of low-income subjects and spaces in Brazil's cities. Rather than circumscribing these subjects to a particular terrain, the narrative suggests that they have the right to access the entire city. In the novel, the station functions as a synecdoche for the city of São Paulo and for how marginalized subjects access this city both materially and symbolically.

This essay examines how *Estação Terminal* represents the right to the city (Lefebvre 1968) as a fundamental human right (Harvey 2008). The essay demonstrates how this entitlement is achieved through what Engin F. Isin and Greg Nielsen have called "acts of citizenship" (2008).

According to Isin and Nielsen, acts of citizenship are "acts when, regardless of status or substance, subjects constitute themselves as citizens or, better still, as those to whom the right to have rights is due" (Isin and Nielsen 2008: 27). Acts of citizenship are different from citizenship practices in that they are not necessarily tied to institutional parameters, but transcend traditional definitions of citizen participation such as voting, performing military duty, paying taxes, etc. (Isin and Nielsen, 2). The essay proposes that certain actions, despite or perhaps because they are deemed transgressive, such as illegally occupying urban terrains can function as acts of citizenship. These acts establish the characters' human rights, including their right to the city and, more generally, their "right to have rights" (Arendt 1966).

Building on the concept coined by French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey defines the right to the city as not only the right to access urban resources, but also to shape the *urbe* and, through this agency, also to "change ourselves by changing the city" (Harvey 2008: 23). For Harvey, the right to the city constitutes a fundamental human right. In Brazil, the right to the city has inspired Law 10.257, also known as the City Statute. Passed in 2001, this legislation is anchored in two main ideas. The first is the notion that the social function of urban planning should trump commercial interests. The second is the idea of democratic city management. However, as Brazilian scholar Alves dos Santos Júnior observes, urban interventions in the wake of mega events such as the FIFA Men's Soccer World Cup in 2014 and the summer Olympics in 2016 have impinged upon the tenets of the City Statute (Santos Júnior 2016).

Considering such developments, the issue of maintaining, recuperating, and making new claims for human rights in urban contexts gains urgency. I believe that cultural production, including literature, can play a role in the struggle for rights in Brazil. Literary production opens a space accessible to various audiences in which individual and collective demands, conditions, and subjectivities can be enunciated. As such, it can function as a public sphere of sorts through which democratic social, civil, and even political engagement can be strengthened.

It can be said that beyond the novel's representation of acts of citizenship, *Estação Terminal* is in itself such an act in that the narrative intervenes in the representation of traditionally marginalized subjects and the geo-social territories they inhabit. Not only does the text forefront these two elements thereby rupturing the dominance of white, middle-class (and male) characters in contemporary Brazilian fiction (Dalcastagnè 2005: 13–71). But, moreover, by representing how people create their right to the city, the book also disrupts the habitus of symbolic disenfranchisement that has typified subjects such as those that transit through the book's pages. This is to say, instead of primarily focusing on the violence and lack of agency endured by Brazil's lower-income segments, *Estação Terminal* points to insurgent strategies that empower the members of these sectors.

As indicated in the novel's prologue, *Estação Terminal* was inspired by Sacolinha's own experiences as a *lotação* conductor for the Cidade Tiradentes—Terminal Itaquera line (9–10). According to the author's curriculum, posted on the Web site of Associação Cultural Literatura, no Brasil (Cultural Association Literature in Brazil), Sacolinha worked as a conductor between 1997 and 1998 and again between 1999 and 2003. In the prologue, the author explains that

“O tema central deste livro foi vivido por mim durante doze anos. Trata-se da história do Terminal Corinthians-Itaquera e dos problemas que o cercam, como o transporte clandestino e alternativo, os ambulantes, os moradores de rua que vivem ali, os pedintes, a máfia dos policiais e a máfia dos transportes”

(“I lived the theme of this book during twelve years. The book deals with the story of the bus terminal Itaquera-Corinthians and of the problems that surround it, such as the clandestine and alternative public transportation system, the informal vendors, the homeless that reside in the terminal's vicinity, the beggars, the police and transportation mafias” [Sacolinha: 9]).¹

The focalization on the author's lived experience lends the book a documentary quality that supports its ideological impetus of showcasing *Lebenswelt* of lower-income Brazilians to a wider audience, which includes but is not limited to middle-class sectors.

In his comparative study between Afro-Brazilian and peripheral literature, sociologist Mário Augusto Medeiros da Silva purports that the lived experience of peripheral authors informs their political stance, which oscillates between denunciation and claims for rights. As such, many texts that deal with Brazil's urban peripheries directly or indirectly allude to the authors' lives. Thus, for example, Ferréz's *Capão Sin* relates the daily life in São Paulo's southwestern neighborhood of Capão Redondo. Similar to *Estação Terminal*, Ferréz's text, on the one hand,

stakes a territorial claim by articulating communitarian pride through narrative devices such as the incorporation of photographs by local residents of the neighborhood (the images are part of the 2000 *Labortexto* version, but were eliminated in the text's second edition, issued by Objetiva in 2005). On the other hand, both Ferréz's novel and *Estação Terminal* highlight the exclusion that marks these peripheral areas and their residents thus alluding to Brazil's ongoing social disjunctures that are reflected in the urban geography.

Estação Terminal is divided into five segments. With the exception of the first part, which is dedicated to the backstories of several of the characters, the rest of the text is organized loosely by chronology. Written in the third person, with dialogues interspersed throughout, the narrative spans the time frame between 1995 and 2006 and details the transformations of the station as a physical space. A second, but equally important narrative line is the alteration of the legal position of the informal van drivers and conductors and of the ambulant vendors that work in and around the station and who, as the narrative progresses, become incorporated into the station's (and thereby the city's) formal economy.

The novel's time frame roughly coincides with the stabilization of Brazil's economy that began under Fernando Henrique Cardoso's presidency (1995–2003) and the ascension of Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva to the country's executive office (2003–2011). It is during Lula's presidency that social programs such as the *Bolsa Família* were strengthened. It is also during the Lula administration that social indicators for lower-income citizens begin to improve. Though *Estação Terminal* does not directly reference Brazil's political context during the period of the narrative (one exception is a brief mention to the economic crises that marked the presidency of Fernando Collor de Melo [1990–1992]), the arc of socio-economic advancement that the *lotação* drivers and informal vendors experience can be read as an allusion to the nation's changing economic panorama.

Unlike the shopping Itaquera, the bus and metro terminal is not a space of consumption and leisure per se. Rather, it is a terrain of transit through which people pass on their way to or from work, errands, and other daily activities that require spatial dislocation. Whereas the commercial center favors leisurely strolling, a type of *flânerie* centered on the exchange of commodities, the movement in the *Estação* revolves around more utilitarian circulation of peoples and to a degree of goods that are typical of these sites of mass transportation, such as beverages, fast food, newspapers, and magazines.

Nonetheless, though both the shopping center and the terminal can be seen as “nonplaces,” areas in which contractual relations prevail (Augé 1995: 94), *Estação Terminal* transforms the terminal from a location of contractual interactions into a territory of civil agency and of social relations. French anthropologist Marc Augé defines nonplaces in regards to both the function that they have, such as “transport, transit, commerce, leisure” (Augé: 94), and to the types of social relations that occur in these locales. According to Augé, “as anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality” (Augé: 94). In *Estação Terminal*, the narrative voice highlights the stations' “organically social

aspects” by humanizing the setting and by focusing on the social interactions that occur within the terminal. The station is a place “Em que milhares de usuários circulam, milhares de rostros diferentes todos os dias, pessoas com diferentes trajetórias, mas de igual humildade” (“Where millions of customers passed, millions of different faces every day, people with different trajectories, but all equally humble” [Sacolina: 46]).

Estação Terminal suggests that the social relations that occur in the terminal imbue it with a meaning beyond that of consumption (Lefebvre 1991). The novel depicts the station as a place in which various actors negotiate social hierarchies, labor relations, and, in more general terms, citizenship practices that translate into social and civil rights. Emblematic is the character of Severino, also known as Cocada. He sells coconut candy (*cocada*) at the station and, as a bonus, offers his buyers verses of his own making. His business activity allows him to prosper (“Construiu sua casa, criou seus três filhos e se mantém até hoje com o dinheiro que fatura vendendo cocadas” [“He built his house, raised his three kids and is able to live with the money that he makes selling the sweets” [Sacolina: 61]), and to articulate his cultural subjectivity. The poems Severino recites are inspired by the cultural traditions of the northeast (more specifically by the literatura de *cordel*). For Severino, the terminal has therefore both an economic and a cultural significance.

Beyond relating the social interactions and cultural performances that happen in the Terminal, the narrative voice uses rhetorical strategies such as personification and diachronic narration to transmute the station into a locale of “identity, of relations and of history” (Augé 52). This narrative tactic reoccurs in numerous contemporary Brazilian literary texts that thematize the cityscape. Thus, for example, Luiz Ruffato’s famous *They Were Many Horses* (2001) converts the city of São Paulo into the protagonist at the center of the novel’s multiple narrative threads.

In *Estação Terminal*, the narrative voice personifies the space of the bus station firstly by changing the noun “terminal” into a proper name “Terminal.” The novel’s title further centralizes the role of the station within the text. The title highlights the role that space (i.e. the station) plays in the narrative. Secondly, the narrative endows the station with a coming of age story that evokes the novel of formation (*Bildungsroman*). The traditional *Bildungsroman* relates how a story’s protagonist becomes inserted within a given social framework. Similarly, the plot of *Estação Terminal* focuses on how the terminal goes from being an anonymous, lifeless space to being an integral part of the geographic and social fabric of the city of São Paulo.

The first chapter of the novel’s second part “A história do Terminal Itaquera” (“Terminal Itaquera’s Story”) narrates the station’s “coming of age.” In its initial days, the terminal is likened to an abandoned newborn (“Os seus primeiros meses de vida foram solitários” [“Its first months of life were solitary,” 52]). However, the terminal gradually acquires personality and vitality (“Discretamente o Terminal ia perdendo a solidão e o

sossego” [“Subtly the Terminal started to lose its solitude and tranquility”] [Sacolinha: 52]). This process occurs through the intervention of human actors who appropriate the station’s space, claiming their right to partake in its functioning and, by extension, in the functioning of the city.

The alteration of the station from an empty space to a locality of rights indirectly evokes the development of São Paulo’s peripheries, which, according to James Holston, were transformed from sites of differentiated citizenship into terrains of civil, political, and social empowerment through insurgent practices such as illegal occupation and autoconstruction.

The idea of the right to the city underlies the storyline of *Estação Terminal* at many levels. For the informal vendors and transportation workers, it means being able to access the terminal as a locality of labor rights. The informal vendors’ takeover of the terminal is therefore a twist on the notion of democratic urban planning. The merchants appropriate the empty space of the terminal despite police repression, transforming it into an area of trade, but also of social aspiration: “A maioria desses trabalhadores era de outros estados . . . Vendo que o comércio ambulante estava dando dinheiro por ali, muitos marreteiros adiantaram suas promessas e chamaram os parentes para vir trabalhar no estado da oportunidade” (“Most of these workers were from out of state . . . Seeing that itinerant commerce was profitable, many informal vendors made good on their promises and told their relatives to come and work in the state of opportunity” [Sacolinha: 52]). Here the commercial function of the space amalgamates with its social meaning of creating jobs (i.e., social rights). The station also represents a place of futurity, of possible social ascension (“estado da oportunidade”). Concomitantly with social rights, the informal vendors also gain civil agency. It is significant that at the end of the novel the informal vendors are able to unionize (Sacolinha: 142).

Estação Terminal spotlights the role of the drivers and conductors of the *lotações* in the struggle for rights. The *lotações* are usually smaller buses (vans) with limited seating (10–16 passengers) used as public transportation. Though in various cities the *lotação* is officially part of the metropolitan transportation system, in *Estação Terminal* the term refers to the informal bus service that ran parallel to São Paulo’s public network until 2003. That year, the service was incorporated into the São Paulo Transporte SA, the city’s metropolitan transportation system. The *lotações*, which operated either through *peruas* or *sprinters*, an updated version of the *peruas*, began using minibuses (*microônibus*). The novel suggests that in São Paulo the *lotações* emerged as a response to the inadequacy of the metropolitan bus system. From the beginning, *Estação Terminal* establishes the group of *lotação* drivers and conductors as a collectivity that operates according to its own code of conduct. The motorists and ticket collectors are what Iris Marion Young has termed a “social group.” Young defines a social group as a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by “cultural forms, practices or way of life” (Young 1990: 43). In this case, the *lotação* drivers

and conductors stand in opposition to the metropolitan bus drivers. The former differentiate themselves from the latter foremost by their work ethics. They take pride in the customer service they provide, which contrasts with the unfriendly, careless demeanor of the metropolitan bus motorists. While the city drivers “sequer olhavam no rosto do usuário” (“did not even look the customer in the eye,” 90), some *lotação* drivers go so far as to distribute candy to their passengers (Sacolinha: 90). The distinction between the service that the *lotação* motorists offer and the lack thereof on behalf of the city bus drivers signifies a deficient urban infrastructure that affects mainly residents at the socioeconomic margins (Beal 2013: 6): “os ônibus deixavam muito a desejar fazendo os passageiros esperarem mais de trinta minutos no ponto para embarcar em veículos sucateados e barulhentos, com bancos sujos e soltos” (“the buses left much to be desired. The passengers had to wait more than thirty minutes at the stop and then ride in derelict and noisy buses with dirty and rickety seats” [Sacolinha: 85]). The “periphery” here becomes not only a spatial signifier, but also represents the workings of differentiated citizenship in which economic position determines access to privileges, specifically, the right to transportation. As Sophia Beal has pointed out, the representation of a deficient infrastructure as an indicator of lacking entitlements reoccurs in literary texts dealing with São Paulo, such as Ruffato’s *They Were Many Horses* in which characters have to endure overcrowded buses, or lack access to public transport, or in Ferréz’s *Capão Sin.*

In contrast, the service the *lotação* drivers provide in *Estação Terminal* transforms the passengers into subjects of entitlements (i.e., access to a functional transit system). As such, the handing out of sweets can be read as an unintentional act of citizenship that defies the traditionally denigrating treatment of said individuals. The gesture humanizes the passengers and creates a bond between the drivers, conductors, and commuters.

As indicated earlier, *Estação Terminal* describes how *lotação* drivers either improve existing transportation routes or establish new ones that service far flung corners of the city and their inhabitants: “Legalmente, não havia dono de linha. Ou o perueiro colocava carros para rodar num itinerário já existente, ou abria um novo itinerário e alugava ou vendia vagas. Algo muito lucrativo” (“Legally, the itineraries did not have an owner. Either the *perueiro* would have vehicles servicing existing routes, or he would create a new one, renting or selling slots. This was very profitable” [Sacolinha: 86]). The ability to change the cityscape by creating new transit routes translates into a gamut of other rights, such as social rights. Whereas the motorists are able to improve their financial situation, the commuters have better access to the urban space, and therefore to work, to leisure and other urban areas and activities since the *lotação* “não ficava parado em todos os pontos de ônibus, cortava caminhos e, quando possível, deixava o passageiro na porta da casa ou do serviço” (“did not wait at all stops, took shortcuts and, whenever possible, left the passenger at his doorstep or at his work” [Sacolinha: 22]).

Anthropologist James Holston maintains that Brazilian society is characterized by what he calls differentiated citizenship, a political system based on

the idea of equality but that nonetheless legalizes differences. Differentiated citizenship engenders insurgent practices that aim to counteract the legal discrimination that this system promotes. Speaking of the insurgent practices of the urban poor, such as land occupation and subsequent autoconstruction, Holston maintains that the same circumstances that promote inequality are also “the conditions of its subversion, as the urban poor gained political rights, became landowners, made law an asset, created new public spheres of participation, achieved rights to the city, and became modern consumers” (Holston 2008: 9). *Estação Terminal* centralizes these insurgent practices and illustrates how they constitute acts of citizenship.

Gago, one of the text’s main characters and the owner of a *lotação*, as well as other informal van drivers strive to assert their right to the city not only by etching their presence onto the urban cartography and therefore transforming it, but also by affirming their right to labor. For the *lotação drivers*, the right to the city is intimately connected to the right to labor. Both the right to the city and the right to work are safeguarded in the 1988 Brazilian constitution. The 1988 constitution includes the right to work as a fundamental social right (Article 6). Nonetheless, according to a 2012 census conducted by Brazil’s official census agency, the IBGE, approximately 22 % of the Brazilian population worked in the informal sector (these numbers have recently risen due to the country’s economic instability). As stated earlier, *Estação Terminal* focuses on the lives of these workers.

The *lotação* drivers and conductors that populate Sacolinha’s novel avail themselves of several microinsurgencies to counteract the curtailing of their right to operate their transit business. For example, faced with the expropriation of his van (due to late payments), Ximbinha, one of the drivers, throws himself underneath his vehicle and threatens not to leave until he has the promise that it will not be taken from him (Sacolinha: 97). Ximbinha’s actions constitute a transgressive act of citizenship that makes the struggle of the *lotação* drivers visible at a national level: “Esse ato corajoso de Ximbinha durou das nove da manhã até as três da tarde e repercutiu em todo o Brasil, através duma emissora de TV que chegou no local no começo da tarde” (“Ximbinha’s courageous act lasted from nine in the morning until three in the afternoon and reverberated in all of Brazil thanks to a TV station that arrived at the event in the beginning of the afternoon” [Sacolinha: 97]).

Though many of the *lotação* drivers in *Estação Terminal* emblemize what Jessé de Souza has called the *batalhadores* (the fighters), it is perhaps Gago’s character that best embodies not only the work ethic that, according to Souza, is one of the defining features of this social segment, but also the challenges that this group faces.

As if evoking Souza’s depiction of the *batalhadores*’ resilience and work ethos, the section dedicated to Gago’s story is titled “Gago’s Persistency” (“A persistência de Gago”). The chapter details how the character—who, as his nickname indicates, stutters when nervous (we never learn Gago’s real name)—works his way from an informal street vendor to the owner of a line

of *lotações*. In between, he works as cobbler, store decorator, window repairman, locksmith, bakery attendant, janitor, and painter (Sacolinha: 25). Gago's multiple occupations reveal the universe of low-paying jobs to which many of the *batalhadores* are circumscribed due to insufficient formal education and lack of cultural capital (Souza 2010: 52). At the same time, the list of jobs also suggests Gago's belief that he can change his social standing through personal effort and resourcefulness.

Gago's resourcefulness manifests itself in his transformation from paid laborer to small business owner, and, attendant with this status, his position as homeowner. He illegally occupies a plot of land and uses it to establish his first business venture, a junkyard ("utilizou o terreno que invadiu na Vila Nhocuné, onde morava" ["He used a plot of land that he occupied in Vila Nhocuné, where he lived" [Sacolinha: 25]). Holston claims that illegal land occupation is one of the hallmarks of insurgent citizenship. According to Holston, autoconstruction—the building of a home on seized land—implies an investment and belief in the future, both individual and communal. Land ownership, and by extension, autoconstruction, can thus be seen as an act of citizenship in that it disrupts the habitus by "transforming a subject into a claimant" (Isin 18). Beyond actualizing his presence within the urban terrain, Gago is also transforming this terrain and, by doing this, he also changes himself. He no longer is an impoverished migrant. Rather, he has become a property owner, a businessman, a subject of the city and of its economic cycles. Gago's land seizure implies not only the material appropriation of metropolitan space, but also the symbolic procurement of capital. In other words, for Gago, the occupied terrain connotes economic rights since it signifies his insertion into a capitalist economy.

As suggested by David Harvey, the development of cities is tied to the expansion of capital. Harvey maintains that urbanization is linked to the deployment of "a surplus product" (Harvey: 24). Since capitalism also operates on the premise of surplus produce and value, it generates what Harvey denominates "logistic curves"—"money, output, and population," which are, in turn "paralleled by the growth path of urbanization under capitalism" (Harvey: 24).

In this context, it is significant that Gago's first venture—established on surplus urban land—also deals with the excess of capitalist society. Through hard labor, Gago recycles waste materials back into the economic cycle. At the same time, his economic activity contributes to the city's physical expansion.

Estação Terminal hints at the association between urbanization and capitalist economy by relating how Gago's entrepreneurial success translates into home improvements: "As crianças estavam crescendo, a casa precisava ser ampliada, Gago trabalhava das oito da manhã às cinco da tarde no ferro-velho e das seis às onze da noite trabalhava em sua casa na construção de mais um cômodo" ("The children were growing, the house needed to be expanded, Gago worked from eight in the morning to five in the afternoon at the junk yard and from six to eleven at night building an addition to the house" [Sacolinha: 28]).

Autoconstruction in this context signifies Gago's gradual economic empowerment, the symbolic appropriation of the urban space as a locale not only of disempowerment, but also of possibility (Holston: 8).

Gago's second business endeavor also operates via the appropriation of the urban terrain as a locale of opportunity. As he enters the *lotação* business, Gago metaphorically seizes the residual spaces that fall beyond the purview of the municipal transportation routes. Gago, similarly to other *lotação* drivers, transforms these spaces into a new cartography of the city, one that includes their right to use the urban landscape as an instrument of futurity. Futurity in this context means both the right to use the city geographically and to use the city as an economic means.

By depicting urban space as an arena for the achievement of entitlements such as the right to housing, to labor, to circulation, *Estação Terminal* illustrates the importance of territory in shaping both material and symbolic power and in the demand for human rights. David Storey argues that territorial practices such as the tracing of boundaries are intimately tied to the exercise of social and political power. Other territorial practices such as illegal land or propriety occupation or the unofficial redrawing of urban transit routes can also question and even undermine established power structures (Storey 2012: 9).

Human rights, and in particular the right to the city, has gained significance in Brazil recently. Human rights, which are, at least in theory, firmly ensconced in the 1988 Brazilian constitution, have suffered setbacks lately. Thus, for example, entitlements such as the right to participate in protests or property rights have come under attack. Consider two recent examples of how the right to the city has been violated.

On January 13, 2016, police forces violently repressed demonstrations organized by the *Movimento Passe Livre* (Free Fare Movement) in São Paulo. This social movement advocates for free mass public transit. The demand for affordable—or even free—mass transportation is significant considering the cost of public transit in São Paulo. According to Vladimir Safatle, “Gasta-se atualmente 13,5 minutos de um salário médio em **São Paulo** e no **Rio** para pagar uma tarifa. Em **Paris** e **Pequim**, gasta-se 4,5 minutos e em **Buenos Aires** gasta-se 2,5 minutos” (Safatle, ‘Breve Tratado de Imobilidade Urbana’) (“Nowadays one spends approximately 13.5 minutes of the average salary in São Paulo and in Rio on fare. In Paris and in Peking, one spends 4.5 minutes and in Buenos Aires one spends 2.5 minutes”). The cost of public transit is particularly prohibitive if one bears in mind that large numbers of commuters are from low-income sectors and live far from their workplace. In other words, the costly fare curtails their right to access the city and impacts their overall quality of life.

Media reports and video footage of the January 13 protests shows police shooting into a group of apparently peaceful protestors on the Avenida Consolação, in the center of São Paulo. The demonstrators disperse, but security forces continue to shoot at fleeing individuals. Finally, the *Tropa de Choque* (Shock Squad) go after the fleeing marchers, throwing tear gas at

them, and, in some cases, roughing them up. The January 2016 occurrences echo those of August 2013, during which police also violently repressed demonstrators who were opposing the increase of mass transit fares. The violence inflicted on the protestors infringes upon three of the rights delineated in Article 5 of the 1988 constitution: the right to free expression (Provision 4), the right to assemble (Provision 16), and the right to associate (Provision 17).

The other example is the violation of the tenets of the 2011 City Statute by the forced removal of residents from low-income communities in preparation for mega sporting events such as the 2016 summer Olympics to be held in Rio de Janeiro. To date, about 22,059 people have been dislocated in Rio in preparation for the 2016 Olympics. (The figures after the Rio games suggest a number more like 70,000 displaced people.) Though sometimes compensation is offered, the disruption of community is one of the reasons why many residents such as those of Vila Autódromo, located in the swanky neighborhood of Barra da Tijuca, in Rio de Janeiro, do not want to leave their homes.

Arjun Appadurai and James Holston maintain that cities have become the primary sites for the demand of rights. Conversely, cities are also the principal sites for the erosion of rights. *Estação Terminal* conjures Appadurai's and Holston contention of the *urbe* as the space of citizenship (and lack thereof) *par excellence*.

NOTE

1. This and all translations by the author.

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Santiago, Chile, from the Mapocho River: Landscape, Border, and Waste

Claudia Darrigrandi Navarro

‘Now my body floats over the swells of the Mapocho, my coffin navigates among the murky waters, dodging tires, branches [. . .]. I’m traveling along a brown river. A dirty thread that carries me with ease [. . .]’, declares the narrative voice in the first lines of *Mapocho*, a novel by Nona Fernández (1971), published in 2002 (Fernández 2006: 13). Specified in the novel’s title, the river here is the Mapocho, a major water landmark in Santiago, Chile. As for the mentioned thread, it denotes both something of excess, leftover or expendable, and also a woven fabric falling apart, becoming frayed and losing its threads. However, if skilfully sewn, the thread can be reincorporated into the fabric. In *Mapocho*, the river is also the open wound of a city that lived under dictatorship for 17 years since the river is a continuous flow of dead bodies.

Forty years before the publication of *Mapocho*, the child protagonist of *El Río (The River)*, a novel published in 1962 but set in the 1930s, is greeted by the Mapocho upon his arrival to the city. The child, Toño, comes from the rural provinces and, after several days in the city, instinct helps him recover that first image of the capital: ‘I came to the edge of the Mapocho. I don’t know how. I recognized the place from my first sight of the city’ (Gómez Morel 1962: 52). This novel by Alfredo Gómez Morel (1917–1984) depicts the river as another wound of twentieth-century Chile; it is a haven for runaway children, preferring a life of delinquency over surrendering to the psychological, physical, and sexual abuse of parents, teachers, or priests. Between the city and the river, Toño chooses the river.

This chapter, translated by Thomas Rothe, is part of Fondecyt project no. 1140881, of which I am the head researcher.

Backtracking further in time, ‘El Mendigo’ (‘The Begger’) (1842), a short story by José Victorino Lastarria (1817–1888), one of Chile’s most important nineteenth-century intellectuals, begins with a stroll along the Mapocho in which the narrator enjoys ‘observing the endless beautiful landscapes of that place [the river]’ (66). In this context, the river of ‘El Mendigo’ contrasts with the Mapocho of the two previously mentioned novels. Despite this abyss spanning between the ‘pleasures of the Mapocho’ in Lastarria’s story and the ‘brown river’ in Fernández’s novel, all three narrations depict the Mapocho River as a border space.

I began this chapter with these quotes to introduce an interpretation of Santiago based on literary representations of the Mapocho and its surroundings. Since Colonial times, urbanization processes have continually appropriated the river’s surroundings; bridges were constructed, the river was channelled and connected to the city’s drainage network. As a result, the riverbanks were left almost completely deforested and its basin turned into a dumpsite. With this in mind, in the following pages I will apply literary analysis to discuss the relationships between urbanization projects, city residents, and the river. In this sense, I aim to reflect on the river’s role in the construction of an urban imaginary, as depicted in a small corpus of Chilean literature.

In the introduction to her book *Políticas de la destrucción/Poéticas de la preservación. Apuntes para una lectura (eco)crítica del medio ambiente en Latinoamérica (Politics of Destruction/Poetics of Preservation. Notes for an (Eco)critical Reading of Nature in Latin America)* (2013), Gisela Heffes describes how ecocriticism was consolidated in the 1990s as a new field of knowledge to address environmental problems. She comments, ‘it is an emerging discipline that examines the relationship between literature and culture and the environment’. Among Heffes’s many contributions, she includes ‘representations of the environment in urban space’ as an object of study. The ideas discussed in this chapter are guided by this concern to expand on the representation of nature and the environment in studies that connect literature and the city. Every city has its own natural landmarks, symbols often exploited by tourism as unique characteristics. Bogotá has the eastern hills and, among them, Monserrate; Buenos Aires, the La Plata River; Río de Janeiro, the Corcovado mountain; Lima, the Rímac River, to mention several examples. Santiago has the hills of Santa Lucía and San Cristóbal, as well as the Mapocho River. In Santiago, intervention in these ‘natural’ spaces began in the Colonial Period but intensified in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly after Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna was appointed mayor in 1872. Something had to be done with the river, nature had to be dominated. On the one hand, it was needed; on the other, though its current is quite moderate throughout the year, possible floods were always feared—and there were floods up to the 1980s.

Historically, the Mapocho River has divided Santiago in two. To the north stood the La Chimba neighbourhood; to the south, the city. As historian Simón Castillo Fernández has studied, hygienic, aesthetic, and economic reasons determined many of the interventions in the river. In his own words,

since the beginning of the Republic, the Mapocho provoked ambivalent feelings:

On the one hand it was a promenade, thanks to the levees, introducing trees and boulevards. The torrent was thus perceived as a part of the urban aesthetic. On the other hand, the Mapocho was already considered an obstacle for urban development. (Castillo Fernández 2015: 72)

The Mapocho was thus esplanade, landscape, and obstacle. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, Mayor Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna speculated the riverbank's economic value and prompted its channelling, allowing him to 'win grounds' that would benefit the city (Castillo Fernández 2015: 72).

Since the Colonial Era, the river's northern neighbourhood of La Chimba (present-day boroughs of Independencia, Recoleta, Huechuraba, and Pudahuel) has been associated with a chaotic, poor, and folkloric lifestyle; it was home to taverns, brothels, and people from the lowest end of social hierarchy. However, some of the city's most illustrious figures owned lands and farms in this area. Though it formed part of the city's urbanization and expansion projects, especially from the twentieth century on, 'for centuries, *Santiaguinos* [inhabitants of Santiago] from the historic downtown viewed life in La Chimba as living in "another" city' (Castillo Fernández 2015: 65). La Chimba also received—and continues to receive—much of Santiago's immigrant population: Arabs, Koreans, Haitians, Colombians, Peruvians, and Dominicans have contributed to the cultural diversity of this area of the city. Likewise, during Colonial times, several religious orders established monasteries and convents on this side of the river; both secular and catholic cemeteries were constructed in La Chimba so as to keep them 'away from the city' and avoid public health problems (Lavín 1947; Franz 2001: 33–57). Various institutions related to hygiene and mental health also established facilities in this neighbourhood, as well as the city's largest market, the Vega Central, which is operational to this day, continuing to lend a working-class character to the area. In this sense, the other side of the Mapocho harboured death, religion, and also celebrations and chaos. In the words of Carlos Franz, 'La Chimba hides our starving belly, our dreams, and also our madness' (Franz 2001: 33). On the opposite side of the Mapocho is downtown Santiago, which in the Colonial Era, contrasted with La Chimba by representing civility, order, institutionality.

Based on these grounds, and echoing the importance of qualitative and cultural heritage studies of cities (Tironi y Pérez 2009; García Canclini 1999), this chapter focuses on the Mapocho's presence in Chilean literature, not only to demonstrate its different aesthetic conceptions but also to analyse the river as environment, landscape, territory, and border.

LANDSCAPE, TERRITORY, AND EMOTIONS

‘A landscape is never there. To perceive and represent a territory is to convert it into a landscape. Converting a territory into a landscape means fragmenting its natural unity, selecting, omitting elements, framing and cropping various attributes to make the space a landscape’, writes critic Paola Cortés-Rocca in her book *El tiempo de la máquina* (*The Time of the Machine*) (Cortés Rocca 2011: 110). As mentioned earlier, ‘El Mendigo’ opens with the narrator’s account of walking along the Mapocho. The narrator describes Santiago’s environment in terms of a Romantic painting: ‘The sun began to set over the western hills, sketching several flakes of radiant nacre into the sky’s azure background, tinting the clouds that hung over the Andean slopes with a soft hue of rose [...]’ (Lastarria 2014: 67). Nevertheless, according to W.J.T. Mitchell, landscape is not only a pictorial genre: ‘landscape is best understood as a medium of cultural expression [...] is not simply raw material to be represented in paint but is always already a symbolic form in its own right’ (W.J.T. Mitchell 2002: 14). In this context, the narrator evokes a landscape with symbols that correspond to the repertoire of national identity (in this case, the Andes Mountains), a common practice among nineteenth-century artists. From a slightly different point of view, landscape construction is also related to emotions and affections. Regarding the pleasure of walking, David Le Breton suggests that ‘the relationship with landscape is emotional before turning into a sight. Each place arouses a series of feelings [...]’ (Le Breton 2011: 73). In ‘El Mendigo’, the feelings are associated with nationalism:

Oh, pleasures of the Mapocho! How many times have you filled my chest with the purest of delights! [...] I would shed tender tears if, when separated from my homeland, my memory were to bombard me with these scenes of simple rusticity, which are at the centre of national culture! (Lastarria 2014: 67)

In this passage, I would like to emphasize the tension caused by nature as a ‘simple rusticity’ next to the principal modernization project of the nineteenth century—the city. In other words, although the natural world, landscape, and territory erect a pillar to construct an idea of the nation, they also arouse certain discomforts since this landscape does not belong to the city (the ‘national culture’), according to the narrator. Regardless, the story’s landscape stirs emotions that can establish connections with the nation and reinforce identity:

Considering the relationships between landscape and country, we can assume that landscape, as a culturally constructed image, is subject to an ideological process of naturalization, whereby the nation will be identified with a natural space that, given its permanence in time, transcends the historic transience of citizens and appears as the essence, nature, and origin of the nation. (Schoennenbeck 2013: 74)

By the 1930s, when Gómez Morel's novel is set, the area described in 'El Mendigo' had already been urbanized. Entering the twentieth century, the river no longer ran along the city border but through the middle since the construction of several bridges had incorporated La Chimba into Santiago's urban map. Regardless, the *civitas* still considered the Mapocho and its northern side as part of the working-class world. For those living in the city, the river's basin would be viewed with suspicion, as a place where many child delinquents took refuge. Instead, for Toño, the protagonist of *El Río*, the basin represents freedom:

There was something important: I wasn't going back to school. I hated living like that: having to pray all the time [...], spiritual exercises that required days of praying and special lectures, the lack of freedom that in the river... '... **that in the river...** ' 'In the river?'. . . Why didn't I make up my mind before?

Let's keep walking: To the river! (Gómez Morel 1962: 102, emphasis in the original)

From then on, Toño relentlessly invests his energy into becoming part of the river community, a cultural space that emerges in opposition to the city. For the boy, inhabiting the city only becomes possible *outside* of the city and from this new territoriality he proclaims the city as his 'other'. Emotions play an important role here: whereas in 'El Mendigo' territory turned into landscape arouses the narrator's feelings of national kinship, in *El Río* feelings of hatred serve to unite the river dwellers: '[...] our solidarity with Zanahoria [top authority figure of the River] was not based on him alone, rather our shared feelings against the city. Our chief exploited common hate' (Gómez Morel 1962: 166). In her book, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed (2014) writes, 'As an investment, hate involves the negotiation of an intimate relationship between a subject and an imagined other, as another that cannot be relegated to the outside'. Although it appears the children are marginalized from the city as they do not participate in any urban institutions, their appropriation of the river, their hate for the city, and their declaration of war on its values allow them to demarcate their own territory and tell their own story. As in war, the real or imagined enemy allows them to form a community. Aside from hate, the river also inspires feelings the narrator never felt while living in the city: '[...] the River had the personality of a beloved and grouchy old man. It provided a strange kind of love: crude, tough, harsh, soft, and resentful' (Gómez Morel 1962: 121).

Certainly, a community of children living along the river, surviving on waste and robberies, is a politically and socially sensitive issue. However, from a fictional perspective, this situation highlights the characters as children trying to find their place in the history of civilization. When reflecting on his first encounter with Zanahoria, Toño considers himself 'a small and humble Indian, who by chance ran into his Inca on the street' (Gómez Morel 1962: 141); after a different meeting with the chief, the narrator remembers feeling 'as though he

had christened me the Knight of the River' (Gómez Morel 1962: 143); and, finally, when the children are surrounded by police, Toño recalls, 'we resembled a caravan of Egyptian slaves. The city watched us, forming a long line along the riverbank' (Gómez Morel 1962: 172). These references to the Inca Empire, medieval knights, and ancient Egypt reflect classic political hierarchies from universal history, incorporated into the narration of river life as forms of social organization preferable to those existing in the city. As a result, in this other territory, which is the river, several glorified pasts are condensed into a single space.

Toño's descriptions of river life resemble certain popular comic strips from the first half of the twentieth century. Magazines such as *Simbad* (1949–1956) often published translations of comics from Europe and the USA, many of which were inspired on universal history, particularly processes of conquest and colonization, both in America and other cultural areas. Characters like Hernán Cortés, the Knights of the Round Table, Tarzan, Buffalo Bill, among other figures, conveyed models of masculinity based on war, conflict, and violence. Likewise, the adventure novels by Italian writer Emilio Salgari (1862–1911) are especially noteworthy, many being published as comic strips in *Okey* (1949–1965), a 'highly-popular magazine in the 1950s' (Rojas Flores 2014: 116). In other words, I suggest the child narrator's imaginary of the river is mediated by this reading material, whose 'protagonists [in the case of Salgari's adventures] stand out for their bravery, their love of freedom [. . .]' (Rojas Flores 2014: 127). Hence, the material culture available in the city allows Toño to construct a landscape onto which he projects ideas of heroism and exoticism, altering a space which the city considers dangerous and unhealthy: 'just as poor bodies alter the geography of the city, the body of the city also modifies the biogeography of poor bodies' (Noemi Voionmaa 2011).

BRIDGES, BORDERS, AND HISTORY

La Chimba is the neighbourhood where La Rucia, the protagonist of *Mapocho*, spent her childhood. Among the many issues dealt with in the novel, history is a major theme, both on a national and local level. For example, once La Rucia returns to Santiago, we learn specifically of La Chimba's history:

They say the neighbourhood was called La Chimba. They say it used to be a rural place, no stores or buildings, a place where purple radishes grew [. . .]. Butterflies flew about, crickets hummed watching fireflies in the evening. [. . .] A shoddy bridge connected Santiago with the land north of the river. (Fernández 2006: 69)

The repetition of 'they say', appealing to collective memory, recalls the northern zone of the Mapocho in its natural state. Although this passage resembles images from 'El Mendigo', at the end of the quote, the narrator's voice returns to the present to judge the material poverty of colonial Santiago: 'A *shoddy* bridge connected Santiago with the land north of the river' (Fernández 2006: 69, my

emphasis). This bridge predicts the demise of La Chimba's natural beauty upon turning into a poor neighbourhood rejected by the city: 'remember that they have to look at the Virgin's butt everyday', La Rucia's mother tells her, referencing the Virgin atop the San Cristóbal hill, which overlooks the city to the south and turns its back on La Chimba (Fernández 2006: 27).

The first most significant work of engineering erected over the river was the Cal y Canto Bridge, which replaced the 'shoddy bridge' mentioned in Fernández's novel. Completed in 1779, it 'constituted one of the most notable buildings of the time', but was later demolished under the presidency of José Manuel Balmaceda in 1888 (Castillo Fernández 2015: 68). Given its grandiosity, the bridge formed part of the nineteenth-century landscape, as pictured in various paintings, engravings, and other historical records. As for the narrator in 'El Mendigo', it is also a point of reference: 'in the distance, a confusing mass of lucid buildings, slender and elegant towers, and the large bridge that flaunts a majestic and supreme air while resting over its formidable columns' (Lastarria 2014: 66). According to Castillo Fernández, near 'the end of the nineteenth century [...] the notion of [urban] landscape was still based on conceptions from the Enlightenment; it was understood as scenic views of the city', which, in order to achieve, required intervention in the environment (Castillo Fernández 2015: 106). The Cal y Canto Bridge was *the* urban development work of the Colonial Period, lasting nearly the entire nineteenth century, and from the landscape depicted in 'El Mendigo', it is clear that Santiago had already become a city at the beginning of the Republican Era, establishing 'a connection between nature and human contemplation, whether it be observing, smelling, walking, reading' (Castillo Fernández 2015: 106).

In his book, *Santiago de memoria (Santiago by Memory)*, contemporary chronicler Roberto Merino devotes a column to describing this bridge. The subtitle of his text 'La sangre llegó al río' ('Blood Came to the River') emphasizes the idea that colonial mayor Luis Manuel de Zañartu (1723–1782) introduced the relationship between river, progress, and death (Merino 1998: 15–16). In this sense, creating the urban landscape, the national landscape—let us recall the city drove the nation's material and cultural progress—and incorporating the river into the city did not only mean monetary expenses. In Nona Fernández's novel, the city's construction is recounted in the following passage, again appealing to collective memory:

They say [Mayor Zañartu] recruited every drunk and thug who crossed his path. He emptied the jails, enrolled slaves, Indians, and Blacks; he mixed them all around and locked them in a prison built near the works. They say he shackled them, fed them rotten jerky, made them work from before dawn until the sun set [...] They say the workers' cries kept people from sleeping. [...] They say many couldn't handle such a noble atonement and were swept away, beaten by the river. Bluish bodies still in shackles set out along the Mapocho and were lost among its waters. Dead Indians. Blacks. Mestizos. (Fernández 2006: 73)

Therefore, in Fernández's novel, as opposed to Lastarria's story, the bridge is no longer a landscape, rather it turns into narration, into history. A narration remembering that the dead have floated along the river since colonial times: river and death unite in the name of civilization and modernization projects. In other drives toward modernization, the river has also been more than just a river: 'The river water flows / Dirty water flows through the sewers / The sewers flow into the river' (Millán 1979: 10), writes poet Gonzalo Millán (1947–2006) from exile in 1979. In this sense, dominating the river, overcoming it as a barrier and having it serve the city's needs, has not only translated into a material cost, but also a human and environmental cost. Hence, dead bodies, waste, and excrements share the same hierarchy in the river's current.

In 1888, the Cal y Canto Bridge was demolished, supposedly in the name of progress. Decades later, Joaquín Edwards Bello, Chile's principal chronicler of the twentieth century, wrote columns criticizing the bridge's demolition as a means to warn his contemporaries against destroying other urban milestones of material progress. In this sense, writing about the city is a form of recording and remembering it. Demolition is a recurring theme in this author's chronicles and in one of his reflections from the 1930s, he comments: 'I left thinking: How we love to destroy!' (Edwards Bello 2014: 474). In another one of his chronicles from the same period, regarding the Congress Building's possible demolition, he writes: 'There is a necrophorus involved, a man who takes pleasure in bringing ruin to death, in spreading it and living amidst it' (Edwards Bello 2014: 508). It is noteworthy how Edwards Bello depicts man as a builder of ruins, wanting to demolish structures that could naturally turn into ruins over time. In this sense, he identifies a fear of the past, a fear of everything old, which coincide with desires to accelerate the process of demolition and create new opportunities of production.

While I have already interpreted the river as a border between two areas of the city, the bridges also mark a border between the river and the city. As La Rucia's body floats along the Mapocho, she recalls, 'From here I can see myself up there, on one of those bridges that crosses the river. It's me. I see myself standing there the day I came to that city' (Fernández 2006: 14). Therefore, the bridge does not only divide two territories but also two spatialities: it separates the dead from the living; it separates a world that lives in a lineal temporality and another in a circular temporality. As for Toño, the bridge indicates another division: 'From the bridge up, our struggle began, and it had no mercy. From the bridge down, our freedom began, and it had no limits' (Gómez Morel 1962: 125). In *El Río*, the bridge is also where the policeman, who the children nickname Mostachín, monitors the kids; the bridge therefore resembles the panoptic tower of a prison.

THE MAPOCHO AS A FLOW OF WASTE

As opposed to 'El Mendigo', in which romantic aesthetics elaborate a landscape that reinforces the presence of nature for nation building, *El Río* underscores the notion of the river as a sewer and dumpsite. In Gómez Morel's novel, waste

becomes a central idea throughout the narrative, albeit the river is still partly lined with its original vegetation (the trees protect Zanahoria's dwelling and provide hiding spaces for the children to escape the policeman's watchful eye). The river as a waste collector, along with its delinquent population, reinforces the idea of deterioration and danger. Drawing on the theoretical work of Giorgio Agamben and Zygmunt Bauman, Heffes studies contemporary visual and literary representations of garbage dumps as spaces of exception, and their inhabitants as waste. Heffes compares Agamben's idea of concentration camps to Latin America's urban garbage dumps, hidden spaces on the margins of the city and its laws. In this context, its inhabitants are also residues and, in turn, live in urban waste. Although the river in Gómez Morel's novel slightly escapes these characteristics, as a territory monitored by the city, it is indeed inhabited by 'trash-men and human-ruins [who] coexist with the filth, putrefaction, and everything detestable [. . .]' (Heffes 2013). Heffes elaborates that these trashmen and human-ruins 'have been stripped of all rights or sovereign representation, just as they have been categorized as residues and, as a result, "discarded" politically, socially, and economically'. One day, after returning from an adventure in the city, Toño and his friend Panchín discover their shack has disappeared and 'in its place there was a mound of trash' (Gómez Morel 1962: 124). Thanks to their dog, they discover that a *carretonero* (*carretoneros* are people who use carts, or *carretas*, as their main source of work, typically involving independent trash collecting) had dumped his trash on their shack, emphasizing the non-existent distinction between the children's home (made of cardboard scraps and tin cans—a depository for ruinous treasures) and the trash collected in the city. Though Heffes' corpus is primarily from the turn of the twenty-first century, the river basin in Gómez Morel's novel resembles the spaces she studies and can be considered a literary precedent. In the context of the 1960s, it would be problematic to imply that river children were complete social outcasts or that policies were already in place to hide their existence, since it was during this decade that the Popular Movement gained strength, consolidating its efforts with Salvador Allende's presidential triumph in 1970. In the mid-twentieth century, riveting images of children living in the river basin were captured by Chilean photographer Sergio Larraín and similar images do not go unnoticed in films such as *Largo viaje* (*A Long Journey*) (1967) by Patricio Kaulen. However, some sectors of the society still considered these children social plagues.

The river community described in *El Río* is organized along the same set of principles as the *civitas*: 'the river also has its own hierarchies and the delinquents are extremely protective of them' (Gómez Morel 1962: 163). Each child fulfils the role designated by the authorities of the Mapocho. They even copy models of exclusion: children who do not pass certain tests are forced into lower hierarchies, prohibited from sharing spaces with the rest and subject to the sexual needs of the more powerful. As Diamela Eltit has said, the river children are 'naked bodies of bourgeois ideology; they follow their own codes, which are no less rigid than those circulating in official systems' (Eltit 2000: 90).

The children live in a world of residues but these residues are recycled, reused, and also converted into merchandise for survival: ‘Bones, empty cans, hope, and disenchantment proliferate in our territory. The River would often awake in a good mood and bring useful or sellable things’ (Gómez Morel 1962: 120). This waste is also an important element when the narrator describes how people live in the river basin, as mentioned in the previous section. Related to this ideas, Heffes (2013) comments on recycling practices:

Both the ability and transformative power of recycling [...] and reusing thrown away objects does not only revitalize the presumed extinction of discarded objects, but operates on different levels [...] generating a change not only in the environmental but also in the cultural sphere.

This waste feeds the narrator’s imagination, decorating fluvial monotony with stories of adventure. If the Mapocho basin in this novel is a precedent for spaces that are definitively invisible to society, such as the garbage dumps Heffes studies, the image of this space as a depository for waste is intensified in the novel *Mapocho*. Returning to the first scene, quoted in the introduction to this chapter, La Rucia’s body floats along the river with other discarded objects. As she blends into the waste, her perspective and position of enunciation are reversed. The river is no longer part of the landscape, rather a place from where the rest of the city can be observed. Therefore, this apparently unproductive space, a stronghold for filth and corruption, turns into a position of observation and critical enunciation. While La Rucia’s body floats along the river, her spirit simultaneously wanders the city in search of her neighbourhood, her childhood home, and her brother, who had convinced her to return to Chile. On this journey she realizes how the city has changed: ‘Santiago changed its face. Like a snake shedding its used skin’ (Fernández 2006: 19). Though her neighbourhood is ‘different, decorated with lights and colours’ (Fernández 2006: 26), referring to superficial material progress, a product of neoliberal policies implemented during the last 30 years of the twentieth century, the river has deteriorated: ‘the current reeks and hugs the neighbourhood, swaying it back and forth in an odour of shit’ (Fernández 2006: 54); and ‘it’s full of poop and dead people’ (Fernández 2006: 159). These passages not only display the environmental damage brought on by urban modernization processes; they are also an invitation to observe the city by smelling it, another elemental practice in the urban experience. The river overflows its banks and bathes the neighbourhood in odours, contaminating the surroundings. Contrary to the children’s resourceful use of waste in *El Río* (a way to resist the city’s garbage), in *Mapocho* there is no recycling or reuse of materials. As a result, this idea, together with the image of a floating coffin, turns the river into an urban landscape in ruins. In a study on post-dictatorship literature in Latin America, critic Idelber Avelar points out that, ‘[t]hese images of ruins are crucial for postdictatorial memory work, for they offer anchors through which a connection with past can be reestablished’ (Avelar 1999). Nona Fernández’s novel reviews and rewrites the history of Chile, the foundation of Santiago, the

history of La Chimba, the history of the Cal y Canto Bridge, the kidnapping and disappearance of homosexuals during the Ibáñez (1877–1960) dictatorships, the Coup in 1973, and the history of her own family, among other episodes. Therefore, the river waste reveals the environmental destruction of Santiago as well as national traumas. The children no longer live there since the river no longer has inhabitable strongholds, but dead bodies continue to float, accenting the circularity of time—bodies from the Colonia Era, bodies from the Ibáñez dictatorship, bodies from the Pinochet dictatorship. As in Gómez Morel's novel, the river is a heterotopy: different temporalities and spatialities converge in one space. In *El Río*, comic strips and adventure novels intervene in the construction of an imaginary that transcends the river's borders and the present time of the narration; and Fernández, in her novel, elaborates an archive of the wounds of national history.

CLOSING WORDS

In his conference, 'What is a city?', Néstor García Canclini criticizes several discipline-oriented attempts to define the city. Among them, he points to the failure of defining the city in opposition to the countryside. In this context, such tension continues to revitalize efforts to subject the river, understood originally as a non-urban space, to the city's needs. In both Gómez Morel's and Fernández's novels, the Mapocho is landscape, border, territory, nature, and city. It is also a third space where time dictates its own laws and contradicts that of the city.

From the perspective of the texts analysed here, the river constitutes a resilient space that reminds us there is no civilization without barbarity. A barbarity imagined in a potentially raging river that obstructs urban development, in the nineteenth-century case; a barbarity strengthened in the river children as resistance to a policed and institutional city; and a final barbarity which the State imposes on its citizens and is reflected in the river's constant flow of dead bodies.

In 2010, the Mapocho stopped receiving wastewater thanks to the 'Clean Urban Mapocho' programme. Since then, numerous projects have been developed to recover the river and bring it closer to citizens, among them, opening a bike lane on the southern riverbank and organizing marathons when the current is low. In this sense, there is a new use of the river basin that reaches beyond nineteenth-century aesthetic contemplation and aims at improving the quality of life for city residents. This way, the river as a 'dirty thread' from the novel *Mapocho*, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is reincorporated into the urban fabric.

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Buenos Aires

David William Foster

*Hard to believe Buenos Aires had any beginning.
I feel it to be as eternal as air and water. (Jorge Luis Borges, Mythical
Founding of Buenos Aires)*

INTRODUCTION

In approaching the cultural production of any urban area, it is important for the student of cultural studies to reference the essential ideologemes held by the inhabitants of that area, the grounding imaginaries through which they organize, customarily in an unconscious fashion, an understanding of their lived human experience, although it is not uncommon for those imaginaries to be overtly articulated as signposts of collective identity. Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), who wrote quite a bit about Buenos Aires (despite rather silly allegations from doctrinaire leftists in the 1950s and 1960s that he had no sympathy for his native land), wrote his “Mythical Founding” early in his career, anchoring it on the square block where the family home of the time stood in the old Palermo quarter near the river. The proposition that Buenos Aires was an eternal city (although obviously in a much different way than Rome) is actually not one of the city’s hegemonic imaginaries, although it served Borges well for his vanguard concerns in the 1920s and 1930s over the vertiginous modernist transformation of a city that had, until the so-called fat years of the burgeoning beef industry in the late nineteenth century, been little more than a provincial backwater and never a major, and, therefore, splendid colonial center like Lima or Mexico City.

IDEOLOGEME I: BUENOS AIRES IS THE PARIS OF THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Indeed, it was this vertiginous modernist transformation that gave the city one of its bedrock ideologemes that Borges, always able to see so clearly through Argentine hucksterism (even when it was gold plated and draped in the silk of the prosperity of the day), was wont to gleefully deconstruct. I am referring to adscription to the belief that Buenos Aires had emerged as the Paris of the Southern Hemisphere. This had as much to do with lording it over the rest of Argentina as it did in confirming that, as important as other Latin American cities were as colonial centers, after the early-nineteenth-century independence rush (1810–1830 for most of the former colonial domains), the future—economic and cultural—belonged to Buenos Aires. This was evident in the way in which, although Buenos Aires did not itself produce any significant first-generation modernist writers, it was the major publishing center for the all-important cosmopolitan modernist movement (part of the affirmation of the separation from Spanish colonial domination) and the locus for the most important mature publications of its signature poet, the Nicaraguan Rubén Darío (1867–1916), who also had a major newspaper career in Buenos Aires.

The proposition that the Buenos Aires cultural apparatus, as much the institutional one, the semi-institutional one (i.e. that backed by official interests), and the independent one (the heady mix of often immigrant-inspired anarchist and socialist tendencies), had risen to the level of the French model was rather pretentious, as though a couple of lovely boulevards, a welter of Belle Époque buildings, and a scattering of Beaux Arts cafés could do the trick. Borges always thought such pretensions were amusing, and he built his literary career around undermining the Argentine intellectual commitment to European ideas and by charting what he considered the prelapsarian city of his youth. While it contained all of the violence of its “mythic” origins, that city was much more materially fascinating than the city that was ostensibly organizing itself to, if not compete with Paris, at least tide one over between trips to the real thing. It did work to a certain extent: Argentina, before World War I, was the only Latin American society to have a Baedeker guide, in three editions, with special emphasis on Buenos Aires, of course.

Borges, however, did not much like Buenos Aires as a city of hardscrabble immigrants any more than he did its cosmopolitan airs, preferring instead the simple life of Creole provincialism, the vast Pampas and unmediated sunsets. One must turn to the short but stunningly intense writing of Roberto Arlt (1900–1942) to find the first complex contours of the immigrant city (mostly Italians, Jews, Syrian-Lebanese, and Spaniards) in prose (short stories, chronicles, but principally a handful of major novels, such as *Los siete locos* (1984; *The Seven Madmen*). Arlt was an eclectic iconoclast, and it is difficult to pinpoint a fixed political credo in his writings, which fluctuate between the populist, the socialist, and, mostly, the

anarchist, always with the goal of getting the grimy daily lives of men and women on the margins of the Argentine bourgeoisie. These are grotesque individuals whose interaction with the city is unrelentingly humiliating, an interaction that never makes good on its promise, leaving the individual pathetically bewildered as to why it has not. The modern—and legendary—Argentine tango emerges in this period, and as a conjunction of music, dance, and lyrics firmly anchored in the streets and tenements of the city, including the trappings of legalized prostitution, the tango dancehall is a microcosm of the city that can never be really allayed by elegant internationalized settings to which it ultimately migrates as well.

One of the most salient features of both the tango and Arlt's fiction is the incorporation of modalities of colloquial speech, particularly those based on nonstandard immigrant languages. This mostly meant the vast array of socio-regional variants of Italian, but Yiddish and French made their contributions. It is debatable how sociolinguistically accurate the argot of the tango is, and a good case can be made for the poetic impulse of lyricists to make up colloquial words and expressions rather than simply to take them from the underworld denizens referenced by the tango. The word *lunfardo* is used in Argentine to both refer to the argot of this underworld (prostitutes, pimps, hucksters, and criminal elements in general) and to the particularly linguistic configurations it assumes in tango lyrics and derived cultural productions. Dictionaries of *lunfardo* constitute in themselves a prominent urban cultural production.

In the case of Arlt's fiction, sociolinguistic verification is less questionable, and Arlt became the first Argentine writer to legitimate colloquial varieties of Buenos Aires Spanish in literature via their verisimilar incorporation into the linguistic universe of narrator and characters. *Los siete locos* became the first Argentine urban narrative to systematically incorporate the second-person *vos* pronoun and its accompanying verbal inflections. While the *vos* is not uniquely Argentine (it exists in one form or another through Latin America, both in rural and urban contexts), the particulars of its universal use in Argentine render it a national linguistic icon. Where earlier narrative writers had resisted its use (on the basis of the implied allegation that literary prose should be more academic than actual speech), Arlt fully embraces it, as do all Argentine writers subsequent to him. With this embrace comes also a host of other colloquial modalities that give Buenos Aires fiction its contemporary unmistakable linguistic stamp.

Arlt, at the end of his life, also wrote some exceptionally fine dramatic works, joining the ranks of a thriving Buenos Aires theater scene that was, in its historically memorable projections, intimately tied to the materiality of the city. This was particularly true with the grotesque pieces penned by Armando Discipolo (1887–1971). (His brother Enrique Santos Discipolo [1901–1951] wrote equally hard-hitting tango lyrics.) Buenos Aires urban theater was particularly apt at staging marginal lives, both when focusing on miserable immigrant roots or when examining unflinchingly the failures of social climbing in a city where everyone was on the make. After Peronismo (1946–1955), the immigrant matrix no longer prevailed in the theater: the middle class now

prevailed, although precariously, either because it was the rot at the center of the body politic or because it was the icon of the many sources of corruption elsewhere. But the theater continues to be one of the great cultural vehicles of Buenos Aires to counter the pretensions of the city's presumed urban privilege and sophistication. There are many names to be mentioned here, but suffice it to mention Griselda Gambaro (born 1928), the most important feminist playwright in Latin America, who revolutionized Argentine theater by systematically questioning the masculinist presumptions (including phallic women) underpinning Argentine exceptionalism.

One of the great demythifications of Buenos Aires as the Paris of South America occurs, however, in *Rayuela* (1967; *Hopscotch*) by Julio Cortázar (1914–1984). Cortázar (who had been born in Brussels, but raised in Argentina) spent most of his professional career in Paris, and his novel, considered one of the masterpieces of Argentine fiction and a key text of the so-called Latin American boom of the 1960s, juxtaposes experimental narrative trajectories that involve the two cities, “From Over Here” (Buenos Aires) to “From Over There” (Paris). Or is it the other way around in the end? Or is it always over here in Buenos Aires, with the over there always an imaginary never-never land to which one can only with imperfect fantasizing accede? Does it matter, really? Because, what matters really is the force field of cultural constructs the protagonist and his coterie fabricate to live a transcendence of Buenos Aires that they can never really have—beginning, ironically, with the fact that the novel can never really escape the material conditions of being written in Argentine Spanish. One always has the sensation that the Parisian settings of *Rayuela* can never effectively evade the sewer smells of Buenos Aires.

Prior to the success of *Rayuela*, Leopoldo Marechal published *Adán Buenosayres* (1948; *Adam Buenosayres*), which Cortázar reviewed with enthusiasm. Although few would share today in this enthusiasm, Marechal's rather insufferably long-winded novel is the attempt to create a Porteño Ulysses, a novel that sets out to characterize an Everyman that will symbolize the essence of the city and synthesize its complex and diverse cultural and social elements. At best, *Adán Buenosayres* is a novel of some memorable pages on the texture of urban life, especially the opening section of the novel.

IDEOLOGEME 2: BUENOS AIRES KILLS ME

A concomitant cultural ideologeme of Buenos Aires as a Parisian incarnation is that of the city as a slaughterhouse: “Buenos Aires kills me.” This ideologeme can be traced back to the short story *El matadero* (written ca. 1840, but only published in 1871) by Esteban Echeverría (1805–51). Echeverría wrote in exile from Montevideo, one of the iconic victims of the dictator Juan Manuel Rosas (1793–1877; governed principally 1835–52), a wealthy landowner who attempted to undo the inspiration of Argentine independence from Spain in the French Enlightenment and Freemasons. Although Rosas was eventually overthrown and the Europeanizing oligarchy of Buenos Aires prevailed, the

shadow he casts across *El matadero* (the founding short story of Argentine and Latin American fiction) remains an integral part of the urban imaginary. If the modernizing effete dies in the slaughterhouse of the title (he is about to be raped and appears to will his own apoplectic end), it is a symbolic suicide that complicates the idea that one is merely the victim of the mortal machinations of the urban monster.

Another foundational text of the mid-nineteenth century is Domingo Faustino Sarmiento's 1845 *Civilización y barbarie* (*Civilization and Barbarism*; title varies in English), also known simply as *Facundo*, after the main character, the backlands caudillo (something like a warlord), Juan Facundo Quiroga. For Sarmiento (President, 1868–74), himself from the provinces and founder of the free and lay public education system in Argentina, *Facundo* represented Argentina's atavistic Hispanic and indigenous/mixed race so-called Gaucho heritage. In detailing *Facundo* as a negative icon, Sarmiento promotes the sort of Europeanizing enterprise that will allow his version of civilization to supplant the sort of barbarism that still holds sway even in Buenos Aires: Sarmiento writes *Facundo* from his exile refuge in Chile during the Rosas dictatorship. However, an added twist here is that subsequent Argentine thinkers will question how the sort of Sarmiento-inspired Europeanization of Buenos Aires becomes, in turn, a new barbarianism, that of the project of modernity, with its own dynamic of oppression and persecution.

Argentine fiction represents a very noirish symbiotic relationship between the city and its inhabitants, one in which passive annihilation is of little narrative interest. This is particularly evident in the extensive fictional and chronicle writings of Enrique Medina (born 1937), who has assembled a core of texts that capture the successive symbolic regimes that have held sway in Buenos Aires, from the time of his first novel, *Las tumbas* ([1972] 1993; *The Tombs*), in which the degrading "reformatory" to which the title alludes (the Peronista government touted it as a vocational school, but it was little more than a brutal institution for juveniles) is a microcosm of the city, to a host of novels that cover periods of disingenuous democratic rule as much as thuggish neofascist military tyranny. *Desde un mundo civilizado* (1987; *From a Civilized World*) is a collection of chronicles, but its title could well serve as the overarching characterization of the mordancy with which Medina views Buenos Aires, where, as he says elsewhere, "corruption is a tourist attraction."

One of the most salient features of Medina's writing, one that connects him back to Arlt and the unique texture of urban writing in Buenos Aires, is the gritty nature of his language. The term "dirty realism" is often used to refer to the unalleviated representation of hard lives played out in harsh circumstances and recounted by a narrator unyielding in the refusal to idealize or sentimentalize such hard lives. With a seamless continuity between unrelenting existential circumstances and the language used both by a narrator to expose them and by characters who react to them, novelists like Medina are customarily decried as pornographers, interested only in

shocking their readers while seeming only to concern themselves with violent sexuality. Undoubtedly, rape is a potent metaphor for quality of substance in the city for expanding circles of its citizenry, always at a far remove from touristy evocations of the Paris of the Southern Hemisphere, and authorial honesty demands competent and convincing representations. This is not a documentary or sociological impulse. In fact, Medina's narrative language (aside from however "realistically" his characters speak) is highly wrought, as though the unspeakable dismalness of bitter-fought shared communitarian existence could only be reliably conveyed via impeccably academic Spanish.

It has often been said that Buenos Aires is the only place in the world where there are still practicing theory-driven psychiatrists, with only a smattering of the more recent model of pharmaceutically driven practitioners. For the last 50 years, this has essentially meant theories derived from the intensely scriptural-like reading of Jacques Lacan, whose concepts of the Father have been very important in understanding the authoritarian patriarchy of Argentina in general (once again, the shadow of the dictator Juan Manuel Rosas and then the democratically elected but demagogic Juan Domingo Perón) and the recurring figure of military tyrants of diverse but essentially (neo)fascist persuasions. While certainly male authors can take up the matter of the iracund and brutish father, it has only been natural that women writers have found an ideological space particularly propitious for their Argentine version of the deconstruction of a murderous sexism with which they, alas, often find themselves an accomplice. Nowhere can this be better seen than in the novel by Marta Lynch (1925–1985), *Informe bajo llave* (1983; *Report Under Lock and Key*).

Writing autobiographically in many respects, Lynch committed suicide soon after publishing *Informe*. Written as a psychiatric report, the novel relates the dreadful emotionally twisted relationship between the protagonist, a woman novelist, and her lover, a central-casting macho who is a member of the ruling military junta. Unable to free herself from the relationship, the protagonist is repeatedly raped, physically and psychologically, as the allegorical body of the nation. Consequently, the image of the city can be little more than the confines of the sort of torture chambers where the agents of the so-called Dirty War (1976–1983) kept women prisoners alive, if only briefly, for their erotic fulfillment (through the Möbius strip of sex and torture). Women prisoners who arrived pregnant were also kept alive until they could bear their child, who would be used as kewpie doll-type rewards for supporters of the regime. One might mention in this regard Luis Puenzo's 1985 Oscar award-winning film, *La historia oficial* (*The Official Story*), which provides exceptionally fine images of Buenos Aires on the cusp of the return to constitutional democracy in the ironic context of a history teacher who is unaware of the origins of her adopted daughter. Lynch did not receive the international recognition garnered by Luisa Valenzuela with her exceptionally competent narratives of a similar tenor (the same is also true of Liliana Heker [1943], Alicia Kozameh [1953], and Reina Roffé [1951]: in each

case, women's lives are fully rounded psychologically as well as speaking to the ghoulish Law of the Father). Yet Lynch's personal story as it relates to *Informe* gives it a special resonance that is quite chilling.

Another important type of feminist voice is represented by that of the investigative journalist Viviana Gorbato (1950–2005), also an iconic representative of an exceptionally important coterie of investigative journalists in general in Buenos Aires, but also as an iconic representative of women's work in the field. It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of investigative journalism in Argentina, and there is a distinguished bibliography of monographic analyses of the most pressing issues in a diverse, prosperous, and complex society that has experienced some of the worst versions of Latin American military dictatorships and, concomitantly, the most appalling corruption alongside the most encouraging manifestations of democracy. Gorbato was fearless in her work, and when she died suddenly of massive health complications in her mid-50s, it was immediately assumed by many that she had been the victim of assassination at the hands of those whom her work certainly inconvenienced: at the time of her death, she had recently published a long study on the role of national terrorists in the Carlos Saúl Menem government (1989–1999) and was working on an equally devastating examination of the dirty dealings of the sitting president, Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007). (Both were democratically elected.) While Gorbato did die of natural causes, few would have been surprised if she had not or if the real causes of her death had never been discerned.

While anything having to do with national politics imbricates Buenos Aires profoundly, I am more interested here in calling attention to two very different forms of journalistic coverage undertaken by Gorbato on the cusp of Argentina's return to constitutional democracy. This return was, without a doubt, the most complex on the continent because of the way in which both state-sponsored analyses of the conditions of dictatorship were undertaken and, as a direct result, a particularly satisfying array of cultural production relating to tyranny, consciousness-raising, and redemocratization occurred. Such a production stands in very stark contrast to the rather anemic production generated in neighboring countries like Chile, Brazil, and Uruguay, where much in the way of discreet silence during the initial years of redemocratization greeted the recent past.

Buenos Aires has perennially been seen as the paragon of the bohemian city (legalized prostitution of all stripes is one of its signature features), and Gorbato devoted two major examinations to the city of the night and its diversions. (Indeed, she often claimed that her health had been ruined by the depth of her research.) *Noche tras noche* (1997; *Night After Night*) is an extremely detailed analysis of the venues of the night and its denizens. In part, it demonstrates a continuity of bohemian Buenos Aires across the map of the city that is sustained, with varying inflections brought about by the shifting ideologies of moral libertinism and paternalistic social hygienics (all tinged by the ironies of hypocrisy), from, literally, night after night, year after year, and century after century: this is not the eternal Buenos Aires Borges was thinking about, but it is certainly

the one Gobato brings so vividly alive with page designs and layouts inspired by early computer graphics. Her second work, *Fruta prohibida; un recorrido revelador por lugares, costumbres, estilos, historias, testimonios y anécdotas de una sexualidad diferente: la cara oculta de la Argentina gay* (1999; *Forbidden Fruit; A Revealing Excursion into the Place, Customs, Styles, Stories, Testimonies and Anecdotes of a Different Sexuality: The Hidden Face of Gay Argentina*). By mid-2010, Argentina had become the first Latin American republic to legalize gay marriage and gay adoption on a national level, and Gorbato's book is a signpost along the run up to that point, which begins with the brutal homophobia of the 1976–1983 military dictatorship and the reaction to it that included the full reinvestiture of the long history of queer life in Buenos Aires. Again, this is not just a tourist-like guide to major hotspots, but rather a seriously sociologically grounded analysis of what has become the hardly hidden face of contemporary gay Argentina. All this, to be sure, is quite different from the figurations of the city as mortiferous that is the controlling cultural ideogeme we are still dealing with here. Rather the continuity is to be discovered in the unflinching gaze directed at a vital urban milieu that demands the reader's interactive engagement in what is hardly a benevolent measure.

Ana María Shua's fiction is so versatile that it is difficult to tie it just to figurations of the city of Buenos Aires. Yet her work is characterized by a dark humor that reveals a lived urban environment that is not as unrelentingly fatal in the ways we find in Arlt's or Medina's fiction. Yet it is, nevertheless, hardly a benign garden-like presence. Or at best, it is a garden of quirky monsters that keep her protagonists on the run, hardly ever to enjoy a moment's peace as the circumstances of their daily life in such a hostile environment are always closing in on them relentlessly, implacably. Shua has disagreed with my critical assessment that her novel *Soy paciente* (1997; *Patient*), set in the labyrinthine jungle of a public hospital, is an allegory of the dreadfully arbitrary nature of the military dictatorship, in which "patient" refers as much to the victim caught up in its machinations as it does to the human quality of despairing forbearance in the face of what individuals on their own cannot alter.

But Shua is nothing if she is not scathingly ironic, claiming to have not known she was a woman writer and a Jewish writer until she read American criticism of her work. It is a criticism that sees in Shua's fiction a decentering of the masculinist city where, thanks in part to the overbearing ideology of military regimes, the Western Christian tradition has held hegemonic sway. Certainly, many women writers (and now queer writers) have worked to decenter the (hetero)sexist assumptions of the city (and one would not want to count two female presidents as having had any significant impact in this regard). But it has not been enough simply to write women's stories or those of any other of the many urban groups submerged by hegemonic suppositions. This is a significant undertaking, especially in one of Latin America's most important immigrant centers. Yet in and of itself, it is still the rather neutral forging of a more complete mosaic of human life than an analysis of the turmoil of that life. The sort of quirky, decentering narratives Shua is capable of generating so

effortlessly and entertainingly, however, go far toward disrupting the assumptions of any sort of routine daily life in which one does not really bother to reflect on apparently arbitrary happenstances. For example, in one of her masterpieces, *El libro de los recuerdos* (1998; *The Book of Memories*), the history of a middle-class Jewish immigrant family is told through a myriad of documents, not just the novel itself and whatever diaries and albums it might be based on, but ostensibly false documents like passports, birth certificates, travel permits, letters of explanation and self-serving accounts that not only reference the precariousness of record keeping in premodern Europe but also the network of dissemblance often necessary for escape and survival. It is significant that we never know who the narrator is or narrators are, a clever detail that correlates with our perception that there is no “logical narrative” to be told and the best that the text can do is to relay the messy *mélange* of uncontainable human lives, especially in the complex convolutions they assume in such a raw and threatening city as Buenos Aires. Concomitantly, what is of greater importance for the lived human experience, especially Shua’s Latin American Jews, is not any independently verifiable documentary archive. Rather, it is the shared domain of memory anchored in the material reality of daily urban lives. Memory in this sense may be a very erratic affair, but it is what, after all else, most defines a community’s shared even if conflicted existence.

It is fitting to close this section with a reference to one of the most venerable urban cultural texts to define Buenos Aires, and that is the comic strip *Mafalda*. Drawn by Joaquín Salvador Lavado (1932; aka Quino) between 1964 and 1973, *Mafalda* centers on an eponymous little girl who lives with her typical middle-class Buenos Aires family in a typical middle-class neighborhood and enjoys the company of a typical middle-class circle of school and playmates. Her world focuses on her home and the public spaces (typically the neighborhood plaza) where her life takes place, and the substance of the strips (4–5 panels) are hilarious and yet acerbic commentaries on the vagaries of the world she sees around her. *Mafalda* has no problem in extrapolating her probing assertions internationally and even cosmically, and the result has been a body of material (10–12 albums depending on publication format, a coffee table assemblage of these strips and an additional one of previously ungathered material, along with a number of spin-off publications) easily available, over 40 years after Quino ceased drawing the strip, at newsstands and bookstores throughout the Spanish-speaking world (there are also many foreign language translations, but not into English). *Mafalda* material has routinely been included in American textbooks for the teaching of Spanish.

The singularity of *Mafalda*’s success as perhaps after Borges and the tango the most notable cultural product of Buenos Aires rests with Quino’s genius in the sense of the absolute urban authenticity of his themes, language, and images. There is no attempt to make *Mafalda* or her cohorts “cute,” nor is there any disillusion about the implacable harshness of urban life. In one of Quino’s many metatextual strips, *Mafalda* is riding an urban/suburban commuter train.

She observes that looking out of the window is like “watching the country go by on television.” At that moment she speechlessly observes scenes outside the window of the peripheral slums, only to conclude that “unfortunately the programming isn’t as good as it is on television,” with the inescapable conclusion that the latter is a lie about how social life really is.

Mention in passing should be made of Eduardo Mallea (1903–1982), whose career spanned almost 60 years beginning in the late 1927s. Virtually unread today, Mallea penned many novels about what he says as a silent and tragic spiritual aristocracy who suffered for the loss of a bygone noble Argentina to a bourgeois, populist, immigrant-infested society incapable of the reflective and value-oriented life he espoused.

IDEOLOGEME 3: GOD ATTENDS PETITIONS ONLY IN BUENOS AIRES

The third imaginary I wish to analyze asserts that “God is everywhere, but he only holds office hours in Buenos Aires.” One might take this to be a riff on the self-aggrandizing assertion that “God is Argentine,” a self-estimation that is usually held as indicative of the Argentine sense of privileged exceptionalism, even when self-critical Argentines may wonder why, in spite of that blessing, Argentina seems to keep blowing its chances. But the proposition really refers to the unyielding centralism of Argentina, which, like virtually every other Latin American republic (Brazil was to be something of an exception), see national life concentrated in one dominant urban area on which everywhere else in the country is dependent for identity and survival. Both material and symbolic life is concentrated in the urban megalopolis, and life must eventually flow through, for example, Buenos Aires, to have some semblance of meaning and legitimacy. The result is the migration toward the Buenos Aires of national cultural producers, and Buenos Aires can only be discounted if one is fortunate enough to achieve recognition from a cultural center on which the Argentine capital itself is dependent, such as, historically, Paris (e.g. the case of Julio Cortázar) or, today, New York or Los Angeles.

Manuel Puig (1932–1990) would exemplify well this circumstance, both in his own writing career and in the internal universe of his fiction. Puig never resided for very long in Buenos Aires. He was from a small town in the province of Buenos Aires, which is where he set his first novel, *La traición de Rita Hayworth* (1971; *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth*), and because of the military dictatorship and his queer sexuality, he mostly lived abroad, in New York, Brazil, and Mexico. Nevertheless, his writing was very much tied to Buenos Aires. In the first place, provincial life, when it was not mythified by return-to-the-land antiurbanists like William Henry Hudson (1841–1922, whom fellow Argentines usually identify as Guillermo Enrique Hudson) and Ricardo Güiraldes (1886–1927), customarily referenced, as best it could, the big city in all levels of style and custom. Puig was noted for his interest in popular culture and for incorporating such modalities into his texts. Not only were these the icons of urban life, but their narratives

routinely modeled an alluring city existence that provincials found highly seductive. The real-life voyage of Eva María Duarte (1919–1952), subsequently known as Evita Perón, from a provincial setting similar to that of Puig’s novel, to Buenos Aires in 1934, in pursuit of the bright lights of the city and an acting career, is a paradigm of Argentine culture, as it is for so many other nationalities. The important point, in the case of Duarte, is that she made it, becoming the First Lady of the Nation (1946–1962) and very much a whirlwind force of the Argentine metropolis. But Puig’s characters do not make it. This is the case of the sickly and effeminate boy of *Traición*, who mostly lives urban life through the commercial film production that comes to the provinces through Buenos Aires (foreign as well as Argentine titles). Part of the irony of Puig’s use of popular culture is that the motifs and narrative schemata they deploy often do not have much to do with the real contours of urban life—or if they do they distort them through mawkish sentimentality and absurd melodrama, although for *Traición*’s Toto they may have more of the substance of emotional reality than either provincial life or what the reader knows about the urban humdrum.

In the case of *Boquitas pintadas* ([1969] 2010; *Heartbreak Tango*), the novel deals with individuals, principally women (Puig is really the first Argentine novelist to write extensively and convincingly about urban women’s lives), who make it to the big city, where their lives are defined by the radio soap opera and the lyrics of the commercial tango, both immensely rich veins of melodramatic narrative. By contrast with this sort of affective representation of the city, Puig’s *The Buenos Aires Affair* (1973; published originally in Spanish with the title in English) deals with the stark materialism of urban life, particularly issues like structural violence, rape as a corollary of such violence, and psychological alienation. Here, where Puig’s characters are urban dwellers, all too conversant with the languages of the city, there is none of the hallowed seductiveness the author’s provincials associate with the Argentine metropolis.

A particularly important segment of Buenos Aires narratives has to do with urban slums, virtual no-man’s-lands peripheral to the city not because they are part of a suburban sprawl but because they are nonplaces within the traditional city, often in close proximity to well-established neighborhoods. (The hyphen here is meant to signal how we are not talking about US suburbs as idealized spaces in opposition to the central core of the city, but literally about urban spaces that are marginal to the ideological, but not necessarily geographical, center.) If earlier governments, both democratic and military, might have sought to contain these slums and even to eradicate them, recent populist administrations have accorded them a measure of autonomy such that they are part of the urban landscape while at the same time alien to it, with little in the way of direct central intervention in their internal dynamics. In this sense, it as though these slums, with their legendary names and a mythology surrounding them, were not really part of the Buenos Aires where God holds forth. Of course, they are an integral

part of the city, and all sorts of historical, sociological, and anthropological evidence can be adduced to account for them—even financial evidence, on the basis of the way in which major clandestine crime centers are located in such slums, virtually untouchable by the police, who refuse to penetrate them, and driving property values up higher than one finds in some of the most high-rent districts of the globalized city on public view.

Two major writers whose works reference these slums have achieved a measure of prominence, Washington Cucurto (1973; pseud. of Santiago Vega) and Cristián Alarcón (1970). Like Medina's narrative, the texture of their writing is that of dirty realism, but without Medina's interest in the comprehensive social panorama of the city nor with his characteristic linguistically elaborated authorial voice. Alarcón (who is actually Chilean by birth, but whose novelistic production centers exclusively on Buenos Aires) writes in a tone rather like that of a popular journalist, aiming for transparency without imitating the expressive register of his characters, whose speech itself is a correlative of their marginal lives within a city they enter and exit as through the rabbit hole that marks the frontier between the official city and their impenetrable domain in the slums. This sense of a crucial point between the inside of the slum and the outside of the visible city of Buenos Aires that only partially contains it renders the spaces of their communitarian existence very much beyond the pale of bourgeois respectability that it would seem God is wont to occupy Himself with.

Curcuto's characters, by contrast, are not quite as bounded by the no-man's-land of the slum, moving as they do more broadly in the suburban city of the radically marginalized, which paradigmatically means undesirable immigrants, whether internally from the far reaches of Argentina abandoned by God or from the many impoverished nations that surround Argentina and its mythic city on the edge of the Pampas plains, Buenos Aires. Although his prose deals in urban experiences as appallingly dirty as one might envision, there is a demonic quality to Curcuto's writing and to the unchecked mania of the vital force of his characters that it embodies. His narrative voice is, so to speak, all over the place, capturing multiple perspectives and plumbing colliding motivations and outrageous undertakings, all in the name of survival and making it in the monstrous city, because that is what they have left their godforsaken origins for. Much of Curcuto's prose borders on the delirious when it is not appalling in the ground zero of the base human impulses it portrays, where the sexually unsavory is a naturalized force, as in *Sexybondi: peripecias de una vida en cuatro ruedas* (2011; something like *Sextreet Car: Wanderings of a Life on Four Wheels*), where the vehicular microcosm of the sex-maddened protagonist careens around the suburban fringes of the city.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Writing on the city of Buenos Aires is a vast enterprise, paradigmatically associated with fictional narrative. While other Latin American cities also enjoy some sort of mythic status—Rio de Janeiro for sophisticated beach life, the Lima of the Spanish Empire, the Mexico City of the Aztec Empire, and contemporary Mexican

mestizo culture, the Havana of a bygone tropical paradise—there is no other Latin American city more associated with the project of modernization, international globalization, and the most intense aspects of contemporary urban life than Buenos Aires. The three ideologemes of the urban imaginary examined in this essay can be taken as one viable conceptual framework for understanding the significant body of cultural production that city has generated.

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African Cities

INTRODUCTION

To write about ‘Africa’—colonised by so many European countries: making parts of it Belgian (a point remembered in *Heart of Darkness*), others, French, British, Italian, or German; while Angola and Mozambique are Portuguese (as detailed in the chapter on Lisbon)—is difficult. Nonetheless Alastair Niven’s chapter with enviable ease maps the territory and its writers from the Mediterranean to Cape Town, in a way which makes it accessible.

The question is what difference postcolonialism has made to African writers, who often assume, rightly, that the ‘novel’, for instance, is a western import. And can we even speak of ‘Africa’? The postcolonial philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, argues in *The Invention of Africa* (1988) that the continent as a concept has been invented by Western intellectuals and anthropologists, within a ‘universalising’ discourse which wants one object of knowledge which it can domesticate to itself and also complain that it has not reached a fit state of modernisation after decolonisation. That is the subject of Achille Mbembe’s *On the Postcolony*, which is written principally about West African states, concentrating on Cameroon. One point which Mbembe concentrates on is the obscenity of absolute power that so many African rulers have assumed since independence. And what of African cities? So completely colonised were the people, and therefore forced into the construction of cities which fitted the interests of colonists rather than of Africans, so raising the question is raised, what is a city? And can we think of an African city without invoking European parallels—Paris, for instance?

In East Africa, Nairobi (Kenya) is an instance: it was created as a depot on the railway line between Mombasa, a medieval trading port for India, and Uganda, by the British a year after they had claimed it as a Protectorate in 1895; it was planned to be a European garden city. It had, therefore, nothing to do with African interests, and it has been argued that it enforces a division between urban and rural which does not do other than relate to colonial

practices, bringing African males into the city for administrative and military duties while keeping women out, and on the land, only in the city as prostitutes. Kenya became independent in 1963, but the damage was done; Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi (until 2002) continued colonial policies in order to keep the city and country in a global relationship to international finance, which imposed neoliberal policies, and necessitated the extraction of everything from the countryside: turning peasants into an urban proletariat.

These things are the subject of such novelists as Leonard Kibera, in *Voices in the Dark* (1970); Meja Mwangi, in three novels about Nairobi of the 1970s, *Kill Me Quick*, *Going Down River Road*, and *The Cockroach Dance*, and outstandingly Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, in several novels, such as *A Grain of Wheat* (1966) written in Leeds, where he was studying with Arnold Kettle, its subject is the Mau-Mau uprisings. Nairobi too appears in the more Marxist *Petals of Blood* (1977), written in exile, after which he ceased writing in English but rather in his native Gikuyu, as part of his 'decolonising the mind'. That was the name of a series of chapters he published (1986), part of whose subject is how African rulers, beginning with Jomo Kenyatta (1891–1978) followed by Daniel arap Moi (b. 1924), were actually recolonising their countries after independence, becoming as like the colonial masters as they could in the way that they treated their people. (How to write about such dictators, often associated with cities, is one interest Africa shares with Latin American literature.) *Petals of Blood* Chap. 4 discusses colonialism and compares the small town Ilmorog with Nairobi, treated with lively satire, as a town which has thrown in its lot with modernisation which is identified with not just forgetting history, but with corruption, as seen in the local M.P., Nderi wa Riera. This MP is seen in Part Two, where he has been 'flooded with offers of directorships in foreign-owned companies' (*Petals of Blood* 208)—which means that Nairobi is itself bought up by international capitalism. The section is called 'Towards Bethlehem', and the Yeats quotation—from the same poem from which Achebe derived his title *Things fall Apart*—is significant because of the sense of something more ominous awaiting. This novel is aware of the split between the traditional, expressed in a narrative which uses the 'we' form, because there is no single identity, and another, more personal voice, because the city individuates and forces identity upon people. This is writing as sophisticated as Achebe's, who writes less about the city, save in *A Man of the People*; he is more interested in recording the community which colonisation destroys. There is no future for Ilmorog, except for it also to become a boom town, supplying goods to Nairobi. Neither in Achebe nor in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is there any love for the city; what is valued is the land which colonialism removed, and the city looks like an alienated structure: indeed, Nairobi possesses Africa's largest slum, in Kibera, and that began under colonialism.

Another novelist of Nairobi is M.G. Vassanji (now a Canadian citizen, but born in Kenya, and raised in Tanzania), in *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall* (2003). Its subject is the Indian workers in East Africa, many brought by the British, after the abolition of slavery, to work on the Kenya-Uganda

railway; these people—banished from Uganda by Idi Amin—are also the subject of *The Book of Secrets* (2006), this time set in Tanzania. *The Book of Secrets*, narrated by Pius Fernades, a Goan schoolteacher who had immigrated to East Africa, tells the history of Tanzania under colonialism, and shows the Great War as it affected the colonies, focusing on the disenchantment awaiting the coloniser. The title *The Book of Secrets* refers to the diary of the British Administrator, Alfred Corbin, and has his career and retirement as subject, and a possible sexual scandal, which is never resolved, though the diary might explain it. In other words, the diary refers to something amiss in the archive of colonialism, which has the power to continue its damage, but it is significant that the record cannot be fully known.

The history of Tanzania is also the subject of Abdulrazak Gurnah (b. 1948), in *Paradise* (1994). Its hero is the young Yusuf, sold into virtual slavery, like the Biblical Joseph; this time to Aziz, a wealthy Arab merchant to whom his father owes money. They reach the Congo basin, in a mirror image of the journey in *Heart of Darkness*. At the end, Yusuf, returned, becomes an askari, i.e. a native soldier recruited for the Germans for the Great War; it ends then with the irony it has had throughout, which is of people not knowing a history which is shaping them. The towns discussed are small, outposts, but the novel is full of the sense of travellers: coast people, or Somalis, or Arabs.

Present-day Burundi, Rwanda, and mainland Tanganyika comprised German East Africa and were ceded to Britain in 1918. The capital was Dar-es-Salaam; the other significant town is the Arabic Zanzibar, part of a group of islands off the coast, taken by the Portuguese in 1498, but in the late nineteenth century, a British colony. Similarly, Mogadishu, capital of Somalia to the north of Kenya, was an ancient port and centre of Islam in the middle ages; for these port cities had a pre-colonial existence trading across the Arabian sea, and the Indian ocean. Somalia had a rich literature, of poetry and folktales, and poets who composed impromptu, including Mohammed Abdullah Hassan (1856–1920); despite its reputation as a ‘failed state’, it has produced novelists: Nuriddin Farah, who writes about the Ogaden conflict (Somalia versus Ethiopia 1977–1978) in *Maps* (1986). The first in a trilogy called *Blood in the Sun*, with as theme African dictatorship. His most recent is *Hiding in Plain Sight* (2014), about an al-Shabaab attack in Wanlaweyn in June 2013. There are also poets such as Ladan Osman, herself influenced by the Palestinian Mahmoud Darwish (1941–2008) and by the Sudanese Tayeb Salih, author of *Season of Migration to the North*; this turns on contrasts between London and returning to the village in the predominantly Arabic Sudan (there are also scenes in Khartoum).

For more examples of writing engaging with Arab themes, we can mention, as Alastair Niven does, Camus; just as significant is another Algerian, Kateb Yacine (1929–1989), whose novel *Nedjma* deals with the cities of Constantine and Bône in the context of riots in Algeria which were bloodily put down by the French on 8 May 1945 (depicted in the film *Outside the Law* [dir. Rachid Bouchareb 2010]). And there is the Saudi Arabian novelist

(1933–2004) with a Jordanian nationality, Abdelrahman Munif in *Cities of Salt* (1984)—first of five novels in a sequence (the idea of a series suggests a comparison with Mahfouz, who is discussed by Ahmed Elbeshlawy). The title goes back to Genesis 19, but suggests a city with no basis, no substance, and here refers to what happens to a Bedouin village in a wadi on a caravan route which is overrun when it is exploited for oil and becomes Arab Harran and American Harran (Chap. 30). Dubai may be the model, and the mourning for Arab cities despoiled by the oil industry crosses the border into the following section of this book, on Asian cities. The city, ‘American Harran grew taller, more spacious and more alien with every passing day, until one afternoon the workers were sent away and not allowed to return’ (Chap. 31). That narrative, of gleaming plate glass buildings side by side with squalor, and with a kind of apartheid exercised, is of course, familiar too in South Africa, very comprehensively dealt with by Marita Wenzel, and scarring its townships, which were set up on segregated lines after 1948, and until 1994.

Coming over to West Africa, Louis James writes on Lagos, while Patrick Williams’ chapter deals with the cultural production that comes out of Dakar, capital of Senegal since 1902. Senegal, with Mauritania to its north, Gambia within its borders, Guinea-Bissau to the south, and Mali to the east, was taken by the Portuguese and finally became independent from France, having been also a Dutch and English colony, in 1960. Its first president was Léopold Senghor (1906–2001), poet and, with Aimé Césaire, author of the concept of ‘negritude’, the assertion of blackness as part of an identity politics. Senghor wrote in French, but has been translated into the Serer language, from which he originated. Senegal’s most famous figure is Ousmane Sembène (1923–2007), who commented on his change from novel writing to film making: ‘I became aware of the fact that using the written word, I could reach only a limited number of people, especially in Africa where illiteracy is so deplorably widespread. I recognised that the film on the other hand was capable of reaching large masses of people. That is when I decided to submit applications to several embassies for a scholarship to pay for training in filmmaking. The first country to respond favourably was the Soviet Union. I spent a year at the Gorki Studio in Moscow, where I received a basically practical instruction under the direction of Marc Donskol’ (quoted by Robert Mortimer in an article in *African Arts*). His most famous novel-become-film was *Xala* (1975), satirical about masculinity, whose cult status Mbembe hints at. *Xala* means impotence, and it afflicts the Senegalese businessman—part of a western elite—who is marrying his third wife. He is an allegory for his social class: and can men be leaders at all? And since the man has been put under a curse, it seems, the film is speculating on popular resistance to neo-colonialism. Another Dakar-based director was Djibril Diop Mambéty (1945–1998), who made a documentary about Dakar, *Contras’ City* (1968) and *Touki Bouki* (1973), also set in Dakar, about a Senegalese couple hoping to get to Paris. Like others, Mambéty saw himself as a *griot*, a West African term for a storyteller with improvisatory and prophetic force. A later film, *Hyenas* (1992), shows Colobane, a town before

and after decolonisation, and sees it as victim to Americanisation, and globalisation which it wants; its community spirit replaced by a money spirit. The film was shot in Gorée, a slave station, which tells its own story of exploitation.

We may compare these with the novelist, film-maker and dramatist Sony Lab'ou Tansi (1947–1995), associated with Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of the Congo: his play *Parentheses of Blood* (1981) makes reference to the murder of Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961) in what became Mobutu's Zaire, and which is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, its capital Kinshasa, on the other side of the river from Brazzaville. Lumumba's 'execution' was with the complicity of the Belgians, the British, and the USA/CIA, as part of a resistance against USSR influence in the area, and it is an example of the violence that has prevented African states from being other than indentured clients of the West. A third name to be mentioned here is Henri Lopès, (b.1937) of the Republic of the Congo, politician and diplomat, and writer, as with *Le pleurer-rire* ('The Laughing Cry' 1982), a satire against African dictatorship (Bokassa, who ran the Central African Republic from 1966 to 1979, is a target).

Kinshasa, as a city with hardly any 'status' in the western world, is discussed by Kaspar Loftin, who takes issue with Mike Davis' *Planet of Slums* in the way that this book regards the shanty town as an aberration, as opposed to being a 'normal' state for so many, and a growing condition, not just in Africa. Here again, Patrick Williams' question, what is an African city, is absolutely essential; African cities have produced some wonderful writing, but they have had to work against the grain where civilisation, and sophistication are defined in western terms. Most African countries and cities speak the colonial language; this relates to a point that colonialism established boundaries and territories which, since independence, have had to be welded into different nation-states, often with no basis of unity save French, or English, or Portuguese. This, which threatens to increase the alienation of the postcolonised people, becomes more complex in cities, which, as seen so often in this Handbook, do not reflect nation-states, but something more complex, challenging the homogeneity of the nation. It helps account for the ambivalence felt towards the city, even in the best and most significant of African writers, to say nothing for how cities are felt to belong to an elite, European, not African. Many African cities are very old. But their expression in European forms, impacted upon by that modernity, remains a problem. It is interesting to think of other colonies having an influence—Brazil's modernism, for instance, on Angola, and Luanda, its capital, just as Africa had an immense influence on the lives of North American, Caribbean, and Latin American cities.

An Overview of African Cities and Writing

Alastair Niven

‘I shall begin by commemorating the gods for their self-sacrifice upon the altar of literature, and in so doing press them into further service on behalf of human society, and its quest for the explication of being’. The Nobel Prize for Literature was won in 1986 by Wole Soyinka, Nigerian playwright, poet, essayist and novelist. These words open his essay collection, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (Soyinka 1976: 1). They are a reminder that modern African writing never entirely loses contact with the mythic origins of storytelling, with the religious currency of daily life in Africa, and with the need to understand why societies bond together even while individuals strive for personal development. It was in the early 1950s that modern genres, such as fiction, plays and poems, properly took off in Africa, though from the start these coexisted with, rather than displaced, traditional fireside tales and recited praise poetry, which continue to be passed on by officials in the villages or *griots* inheriting traditional responsibilities as oral recorders of customs and history. This chapter is mainly concerned with books that have moved away from rural communities and into the fluorescent glare of metropolitan life, but it is important to understand that every African in a city will have a place in his or her mind and heart which is referred to as ‘my village’ or ‘my home’. The busiest city is umbilically connected, through the sentiments of almost every inhabitant, with countless small rural places.

We think of Africa in stereotyped ways: vast deserts across which nomadic peoples range with camel caravans; jungles full of wild animals, many of them threatened by illegal poachers. There is also political corruption on a huge scale, endless wars, poverty and famine, and today trails of refugees departing from conflict zones, driven out by hideous genocides. African cities rarely feature in these caricatures, though they are beginning to acquire their own pejorative labels. Johannesburg: city of crime. Cairo: city of riots and police

oppression. Lagos: queen of traffic congestion and king of the Internet scam. Timbuktu: no longer a snappy way of referring to the ends of the earth, but a danger zone of religious extremism. Gross simplifications though they are, they are not easily dispelled. Successful democratic handovers of power, such as have happened in Ghana, Nigeria and Tanzania, are rarely given much attention by the media outside Africa. We hear about the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, but little about ambitious government and charitable schemes to reduce the levels of infection, of natural catastrophes but not of scientific research to contain them. It is for this reason that the South African intellectual Lewis Nkosi called his book on themes and styles in African literature, *Tasks and Masks*.

If African literature can be said to divide itself according to its two main preoccupations to which I have assigned the classificatory terms 'tasks' and 'masks', the balance has for too long, it seems to me, remained firmly fixed in favour of the 'mask' school; but if we are not to see African society as merely static, or rather as a 'mask' which is perennially being turned and examined in detail by our novelists; if we are also to see African society as a living organism, a society constantly in motion, always plunged in conflict and contradiction, we surely need the novelist as much as the professional historian to recover for us the essential meaning from the 'supple confusions' of history and to guide us with a firmer hand than we have been accustomed to through history's 'cunning passages'. (Nkosi 1981: 30)

Nkosi notes the tendency outside Africa, and sometimes in the continent itself, to portray African in a unidimensional way, ignoring the steps it has taken in the last 60 years to be part of a global society, sharing all the ambivalences and preoccupations of human interaction elsewhere. It is by reading literature set in cities or moulded by them that patronising simplifications can be averted. It would be more understandable if every African novel was set in an idealised precolonial rural community, but even this would deny the complexity of such societies. Chinua Achebe established conclusively that the culture from which he derived was no less subtle, coherent and riven by contradictions as the one that Westerners imposed.

Africa, according to the United Nations, is the most rapidly urbanising continent in the world, with ten of the largest cities on earth. In all demographic surveys, the move from the countryside to cities is the biggest mass movement of our times, usually caused by poverty and the need to seek work where it is likely to be more easily available, and also by an increasing desire for self-improvement through education. Self-protection is another motive for the large-scale movement of peoples, as exemplified by the flight of refugees from war-torn centres such as Mogadishu in Somalia and many cities in Sudan, Libya and northern Nigeria, though not all refugee flows are out of Africa: Yemenis are fleeing to Djibouti, for example. Escape from one city because of fear can often become a huge burden on another city to which the exiles flee. Slums

proliferate, health hazards increase and makeshift townships creep across formerly productive land, creating gigantic urban sprawl.

This process of migration and urbanisation has changed the way we talk about regions. It is projected that by 2050 no fewer than 86% of the populations of the developing world (and 64% of the so-called developed world) will be living in cities. Measuring populations and even land masses are notoriously difficult tasks, but by most reckonings Lagos in Nigeria is the largest African city, with a population of over 20 million people. Cairo, the capital of Egypt, is not much smaller. Other major cities on the African continent include Kinshasha (Congo Democratic Republic), Johannesburg (South Africa), Khartoum (Sudan), Alexandria (Egypt), Abidjan (Ivory Coast), Nairobi (Kenya) and Casablanca (Morocco). Several of these cities are known internationally through authors particularly associated with them: Constantine Cavafy with Alexandria and Naguib Mahfouz with Cairo, for example, Tayeb Salih with Khartoum and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o with Nairobi, Nadine Gordimer with Johannesburg and Josué Guébo with Abidjan. They are all cities with vibrant intellectual traditions, with progressive views born out of ancient discourse, and with writing groups and universities to nurture young talent. Indeed, it is worth recalling that the city of Timbuktu in Mali had a university thriving there from the late tenth century until towards the end of the sixteenth century and that it remains to this day, despite damage done by dissident occupiers in recent times, a centre of Islamic learning.

It is evident, therefore, that literary expression in Africa, both oral and written, is long established. This introduction is necessarily concerned with what has been written in Africa in the last 70 years, for its focus has to be metropolitan and urban. Since Lagos is agreed to be the largest city in the continent, it is appropriate to begin with a writer especially associated with that city on an island, Cyprian Ekwensi, though he was actually born and died in the east of Nigeria. He is *par excellence* the novelist of migration to the city from a rural province. In his tales and short stories, Ekwensi often shows how the individual spirit of his characters, nurtured in an area where traditional values still prevail, is insidiously defeated by modern urbanised indifference. The city and modern life between them take over and warp the better qualities of the protagonists. The exception is in Ekwensi's best regarded novel, *Jagua Nana* (London: Hutchinson 1961), where the eponymous main character is alone capable of sustaining some kind of human dignity. Jagua rejects Lagos and returns to her original home in the east of Nigeria. Ekwensi was the first African novelist to show how the city takes on a moral quality of its own, undermining its inhabitants' resilience and exploiting any tendency to corruption. In *Iska*, five years after *Jagua Nana*, he refers to 'the city where anonymity reigned supreme' (Ekwensi 1968: 52). The city becomes a large, predatory and corrupting character in its own right.

Ekwensi was popular in every sense of the word. Never taken very seriously by academic commentators, he sold more copies than Chinua Achebe and provided a stronger link between traditional storytelling and contemporary printed fiction. His roots were in Onitsha market. Onitsha is a largely Igbo-

speaking city of over half a million people, the largest river port in Nigeria lying on the eastern bank of the Niger in Anambra state. Still one of the largest trading centres in West Africa, with a huge market, it flourished there in the 1950s, and until its destruction in the civil war in 1968, a body of popular fiction to which Ekwensi himself contributed his earliest work. Cheap (usually priced, in the currency of the day, between one and sixpence and three shillings), short (between 30 and 40 pages), more often than not undated and often using the services of one writer under several names (a custom which survives in Ghanaian popular fiction today), the Onitsha books were sensational in their narratives and moralistic in tone. The titles of these stories are often sufficient explanation of their content: *Money and Girls Turn Man Up and Down*; *Why Boys Don't Trust Their Girl Friends*; *No. 1 Bomb to Women*; *A Journey Into Love*. Any one of these could serve as a subtitle of an Ekwensi novel and in doing so would underline not just the theme but the frequent tawdriness of the writing. Other Onitsha titles—*The Trials of Patrice Lumumba* or *Jomo Kenyatta and St. Paul*, for example—demonstrate the same political piety that we find in Ekwensi's later novels. Onitsha market literature is imbued with city thinking. As Harold Collins put it, at the time they were most read:

These little books give aid and comfort to Nigerians moving from the traditional villages to the westernised townships and being hit by the disquieting impact of urbanisation and westernisation, especially as manifested in the money economy and the new relations between men and women. (Collins 1968: 3)

This consolatory, therapeutic purpose is preserved in Ekwensi's longer writings. Indeed, he was the only one of the Onitsha writers to develop and—with the exception of Bediako Asare in Ghana, author of the allegorical tale *Rebel* (London: Heinemann 1969), a slight work defending 'progress' against traditionalism—is the only notable African writer to have started in local popular fiction. Though Ekwensi did write about rural landscapes and customs, his strongest works are city based. Indeed, he can be credited with writing West Africa's first urban novel, *People of the City*. A disorganised tale, packed with too much incident to work satisfactorily even as a melodrama, *People of the City* nevertheless has some historical importance both as the book which showed a blossoming of the Onitsha format into mainstream fiction and as the first novel depicting the metropolitan side of Nigerian life. The Onitsha habit of reducing human behaviour to smug moral slogans operates from the outset: 'How the city attracts all types and how the unwary must suffer from ignorance of its ways' (Ekwensi 1954: 1). This caption can be taken as the principal point of Ekwensi's city novels. The author sees the city as essentially impersonal, a motivated force in its own right, as one might speak of the law or the government. *People of the City* is studded with random incidents in which the city is represented as a monstrous life force bent on destroying its own inhabitants. There is, for example, the clerk who commits suicide: 'To him the city had

been an enemy that raised the prices of its commodities without increasing his pay' (Ekwensi 1954: 70).

This sense of the city's malevolence informs most of Ekwensi's writing and was influential over a whole generation of West African urban fiction. When Filia, the heroine in *Iska*, first arrives in Lagos, she finds the city 'large, confusing, pretentious, impersonal' (Ekwensi 1968: 75), and Wilson Iyari, the protagonist in *Beautiful Feathers* (London: Hutchinson 1963), has similar reflections: 'he thought what a poor impression the city made on visitors who were seeing it for the first time' (p. 104). In *Jagua Nana*, 'Rosa had become – like many women who come to Lagos, like Jagua herself – imprisoned, tangled in the city, unable to extricate herself from its clutches' (p. 124). These early Nigerian novels of city life are peopled with prostitutes, thieves, political frauds and thugs, for these are the people truly versed in the art of metropolitan survival. The city is a seducer, luring the likes of Sango, the young nightclub trumpeter in *People of the City*, because it is a place of opportunities. Yet 'Sango's one desire in this city was peace' (Ekwensi 1954: 3). The chances of finding it are thin. As Kofi, the bleakest character in the novel, puts it:

I have often asked, why do girls leave their happy homes and come here on their own? No brothers, no knowledge of anything, no hope . . . They just come to the city, hoping that some man will pick them up and make them into something. Not just one man. You can't find him at the right time. But *many men*. And some disease, something incurable picks them up. You see them dressed, and they are just shells. Hollow and sick . . . (Ekwensi 1954: 145)

In *Jagua Nana*, Ekwensi provides some corrective to this urban malaise. Though his title character derives from one of the oldest clichés in fiction, the 'tart with a heart', he avoids making an African Suzie Wong out of her. He makes of this 'ageing and experienced woman of the city, Jagua' (Ekwensi 1987: 13–14) a creature of many contrasts, and although not all of them are reconciled she emerges by the end of the novel as a richly original creation. The dialogue she speaks is largely responsible for this, Ekwensi finding a plausible way of rendering Lagos *argot*. Throughout the story Jagua feels a stranger in the city. In the tradition of Moll Flanders, Tom Jones and Evelina, she has arrived from a rural background, and it is to there that she returns at the end, with no choice but 'to cast aside her city ways and settle down to living in Ogbu' (134). Indeed, Ekwensi sets a significant part of the novel many miles from the city, where after years in the city Jagua feels as out of place back home as she has so often done in Lagos—her walk is criticised, her cosmetics scorned, her feet grown unaccustomed to the hot sand. She is 'a Tropicana princess in the mangrove creeks of Krinameh' (67), but her fear of 'becoming more provincial and less Jagua-ful' (80) lures her back to the city. Ekwensi takes some care to avoid making the contrast between an idyllic rural existence and cynical Lagos life too naive. Krinameh and its neighbouring community Bagana have been at war for 30 years; Jagua's return home is no pastoral interlude. The

moral balance eventually weighs against the city, however, for it is only in the country that Jagua savours genuine humanity:

She was singing gently now and enjoying the very rare luxury of being free. This was what the city women meant when she told her friends. 'I am going home'. No men ran after her in Ogabu, none of them imbued her with unnecessary importance. Here she was known, but known as someone who lived with them and grew up with them. She was not known as a glamourite, someone to be hungered after for sheer diversion. (54)

Ekwensi indicts the slick superficiality of metropolitan life in such passages. The experience of surviving in the city and learning its sophisticated ways is a salutary one, but when Jagua finally returns to Ogabu after many years of achievement and splendour, suffering and struggle, the author's verdict is explicit:

That driving, voluptuous and lustful element which existed in the very air of Lagos, that something which awakened the sleeping sexual instincts in all men and women and turned them into animals always on heat, it was not present here. Here in Ogabu, men dressed well but sanely. Women were beautiful but not brazen. They had become complementary to the palm trees and the Iroko, the rivulets and the fertile earth. They were part of their surroundings as natural as the wind. Whereas in Lagos MAN was always grappling to master an ENVIRONMENT he had created. (135–136)

Ekwensi, who died in 2007, never repeated the success of these early writings, though in *Lokotown and Other Stories* (London: Heinemann African Writers Series, 19, 1966) he encapsulated many of his urban concerns in nine sharply turned vignettes, one of which shows Jagua in her apprentice days as a pick-up in Accra. The author remained haunted by the iconic character he had created and went on to write a sequel, *Jagua Nana's Daughter* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books 1986). His place in West African fiction is assured because he was the first writer to address his subject matter, though not the first novelist from the region. That honour falls to Richard Emmanuel (R.E.) Obeng from the then Gold Coast, now Ghana, whose *Eighteenpence* was published in 1942, and to Amos Tutuola, who 10 years later brilliantly retold Yoruba stories in *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, the first of many set in the bush. Though Obeng is interested in 'African values' and is implicitly hostile to many aspects of colonialism, at a time when it was not much questioned, and though Tutuola mined the lore and beliefs of his people, neither writer approached their material with the flagrant moralising of Ekwensi. His work has struggled to be accepted academically, but it is worth recalling that in 1968, at the height of his popularity, and no doubt affected by international sympathy for the plight of his Biafran compatriots during the Nigerian civil war, Cyprian Ekwensi was awarded the prestigious Dag Hammarskjöld International Prize for Literature.

At the same time as Ekwensi was at the peak of his popularity in Nigeria, a wholly different 'urban' novelist emerged in neighbouring Ghana, Ayi Kwei Armah (b. 1939). When *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* was published in 1968, it aroused huge interest, introducing into Anglophone West African fiction an existentialism which was far from anything that had been attempted before—though Camus (1913–1960), author of *L'Étranger* (*The Outsider*, 1942), and *La Peste* (*The Plague*, 1947), usually thought of as one of the main proponents of existentialism, was also from Africa (his mother Spanish, his father Alsatian), setting these novels in Algiers, where he was brought up, and Oran. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* takes as its title a phrase which might have been found at the time on the side of any lorry, bus or tro-tro plying the streets of Accra. These vehicles often ran on a wing and a prayer, the wooden-framed bodies of the tro-tros or 'mammy wagons' being mounted above unreliable and feeble engines and poorly maintained wheels. The bright slogans painted on their sides were often religious ('Trust in the Lord'), but they could be witty or poetic. The combination of struggling motorisation with endless optimism that God would look after the passengers summed up much of the spirit of the West African cities.

Armah's version of Accra, identifiable to those who know that flat and sprawling conurbation, was a new kind of city in the African novel. Sleazy and impersonal like Ekwensi's Lagos, it is not so much sexual as monetary degradation that keeps it going. Armah is an altogether superior writer to Ekwensi, his often poetic prose imbued with sorrow and despair. His first novel has as its protagonist an unnamed man who is a railway worker. He is approached at the start of the book with an offer of a bribe. He declines it, to the fury of his wife, and has thereafter to live with the knowledge that his innocence is perceived as a kind of guilt in a society where corruption is rife and moral compromise the norm. Here is the man wending his way home through the city roads after his encounter with the briber:

Outside, the sight of the street itself raised thoughts of the reproach of loved ones, coming in silent sounds that ate into the mind in wiry spirals and stayed there circling in tightening rings, never letting go. There was no hurry. At the other end there was only home, the land of the loved ones, and there it was only the heroes of the gleam who did not feel they were strangers. And he had not the kind of hardness that the gleam required. Walking with the slowness of those whose desire has nowhere to go, the man moved up the road, past the lines of evening people under the waning lamps selling green and yellow oranges and bloated bread polished with leftover oil, and little tins and packets of things no one was in any hurry to buy. Under a dying lamp a child is disturbed by a long cough coming from somewhere deep in the center of the infant body. At the end of it his mother calmly puts her mouth to the wet congested nostrils and sucks them free. The mess she lets fall gently by the roadside and with her bare foot she rubs it softly into the earth. Up at the top a bus arrives and makes the turn for the journey back. The man does not hurry. Let it go. From the other side of the road there is the indiscreet hiss of a nightwalker also suffering through her Passion Week. At other times the hiss

is meant only for the heroes, but now it comes clearly over. In the space between weak lamps opposite can be seen the fragile shine of some ornament on her. There are many of the walking dead, many so much worse off. (Armah 1968: 41–42)

This could have come from Camus or perhaps one of the English provincial realists of the 1960s such as Alan Sillitoe or Stan Barstow, where individuals reach out to each other in a sad attempt to avoid the solitariness that dreary routine and poverty breed. It was a new way of depicting urban life in Africa, perhaps owing a lot to European fiction, but authentic in its detail. Armah's next novel, *Fragments* (London: Heinemann 1970), also had an Accra setting, but this time a more specific one so that hotels, streets, roundabouts and banks are locatable as on a map.

Gradually West African fiction moved in to the city with greater frequency. The master novelist of the region is internationally recognised to be Chinua Achebe. His best known works have village settings, but it is worth noting that the political decadence which became his subject matter in his last two novels, *A Man of the People* (London: Heinemann 1966) and *Anthills of the Savannah* (London: Heinemann 1987), necessitated quite a lot of the action taking place in government offices and civic buildings in fictionalised countries and imagined capital cities, though Nigeria and Lagos are only thinly veiled.

It is sometimes thought that the great generation of African writers coincided with the coming of independence to their nations. Once that was achieved, the argument goes, the energy went out of their writing. It is true that any account of West African writing would be headed by the authors so far cited, but new themes continued to come to the fore and new reputations were established. What had once been seen as almost exclusively male territory began to be challenged by the emergence of women writers such as Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta in Nigeria, Mariama Bâ in Senegal and Ama Ata Aidoo in Ghana. Today Aminatta Forno from Sierra Leone, Véronique Tadjo from the Ivory Coast and, most notably, the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie are well established: the latter being among the most widely read novelists in the world. Emecheta is particularly interesting when we consider the city in fiction, for her works weave in and out of the traditional village way of life as so many of her characters drift to the city, and often beyond to other continents. It is not just a modern phenomenon. In *The Joys of Motherhood* (London: Allison and Busby 1979), Emecheta opens the novel in the colonial Lagos of 1934, where Nnu Ego has moved from the relative comfort of her village, following the breakdown of her childless marriage.

Buchi Emecheta herself came to live in London after the collapse of her own marriage. Her first two novels are barely concealed memoirs of her own struggles, as a single parent of five children, to make ends meet in the British capital. *In the Ditch* (London: Barrie and Jenkins 1972) and *Second-Class Citizen* (London: Allison and Busby 1974) had their roots in articles

Emecheta wrote for *The Guardian* and are regarded today as key works in the emergence of black British writing. Their relevance to this study is their setting in a city even larger in its entirety than Lagos. The urbanisation process reaches beyond Africa. A more recent example of this is Adichie's bestselling novel *Americanah* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2013), which moves between Lagos, London and various American settings. Its author now lives as much in the USA as in her native Nigeria. Writers living in more than one country, or staying away from their place of birth but still identifying with it, is so commonplace today that it starts to become problematical to describe them by a national designation or to locate them in one city.

West Africa has continued producing novelists and poets of great quality: Festus Iyayi, Adewale Maja-Pearce, Niyi Osundare, Biyi Bandele, Helon Habila and Helen Oyeyemi, among them. The first generation of writers in the region felt that their major task was to reveal to their fellow Africans knowledge of their own past, that, as Achebe put it in many different ways, the history of African peoples was not one long night of savagery. Colonial teachers had regularly referred to Africa as a dark continent without a history until the white man brought his civilising mission. Thus the authorial generation of the 1950s through to the late 1970s could appear sometimes to be unaware of the enlarging migratory and urbanising elements in the composition of their communities. However, from the 1980s onwards this really has not been possible. The more recent writers and their peers move in and out of rural and urban life, at home in both. A passage in Ben Okri's story *In the City of Red Dust* serves as a metaphor for this:

Emokhai moved on into the clean avenues that were named after rich men, governors, and freedom fighters. Then he went towards the tracts of forest on the edge of the city. The area was sealed off with barbed-wire fences. Through their thorny spaces he made out dense clusters of flamboyants. Emokhai sniffed the air for the hundredth time, trying to ascertain whether it was true that the military governor had acres of richly-kept marijuana farms in the vicinity. (Okri 1988: 39)

City and bush come together, the bright lights of the one close to the hectic colours of the natural world close by. A city of promise with an honourable history or a stew of corruption? The author keeps both options open and that is the position of most African writers whose subject is city life.

Apart from Nairobi, East Africa does not have cities comparable to Lagos, Abidjan, Accra or the great university and publishing centre of Ibadan. This, however, is rapidly changing. It is worth pausing on Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), said to be at the epicentre of a perfect demographic storm that by 2020 will possibly take the number of people living there beyond Nairobi's. Its road to this situation has not been the inexorable enlargement of Nairobi or Kampala in neighbouring Kenya and Uganda; it was not always on course for such expansion. In colonial days, first under German rule to 1919 and then under British ruled

until independence in 1962, Dar es Salaam ('Haven of Peace') was a relative backwater in Tanganyika. Amalgamation with the former sultanate of Zanzibar in 1964 led to devising a new name for the new country, Tanzania, but Dar, as the city is familiarly known, did not particularly flourish. The first president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, venerated though he is as an idealistic and unselfish political leader, greatly admired some of the reforms brought about by Mao Tse-Tung in Communist China and in imitation adopted a policy of *ujamaa*, loosely translated as socialism. The implication for Dar was profound. It lost its status as the nation's capital in 1974, replaced by Dodoma, a more centrally placed town, which even today has fewer than half a million people. Residents of Dar were encouraged to move away from the city and to engage in rural activities since the needs of the country were deemed to be agrarian rather than industrial. However, this was an experiment in de-urbanising which did not take hold and was rarely imitated elsewhere in Africa. It is only in recent years that the fortunes of the city have been reversed with rapid urban development and an influx of new people returning from the countryside or seeking refuge from conflict zones elsewhere such as Somalia and Burundi. The arrival of refugees, swelling local populations, is evident across the continent, depleting the cities from which they flee while adding to the stresses of the receiving city. So far this has not been the subject of much fiction, but it must only be a matter of time before that changes.

Despite his emphasis on education, which was exceptional among the pioneer leaders of newly independent Africa, and despite himself being the first translator of Shakespeare into Swahili, Julius Nyerere (or 'Mwalimu'—'Teacher'—as he was universally referred to in his own land) did not preside over a burgeoning new Tanzanian literature. The country's best novelist, Abdulrazak Gurnah, left the country when quite young and has largely written about migrations across and out of Africa, about the Islamic past, particularly of his native Zanzibar, and about the inter-action of Africa and Europe. The bustling city still plays a small part in Tanzanian writing. The wider matter of interest is why East Africa as a whole has produced so much lesser a literature than West Africa. It must be relevant that it was a region in which white settlers farmed and, in the eyes of local people, stole the land. Colonial administration was more immediate than in Nigeria. Gold Coast and Sierra Leone less operated through pre-existing dynasties and chieftainships. Only one major writer has emerged from East Africa, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and he famously moved away from using English to writing in *Gĩkũyũ* (Kikuyu) after the publication of his fourth novel. Ngũgĩ is comparable in importance to Achebe and Soyinka in Nigeria, to Armah in Ghana, to Mahfouz in Egypt and to Nadine Gordimer in South Africa. In an essay questioning the value of making English, the agreed language of world currency he talks wryly of English cities and how they resonated with him from an early age:

In my primary school we were taught English from a text under the general series 'Oxford Readers for Africa'. We used to read the stories of a boy called John and a girl called Joan. And it thus came to pass that, while still in my

village and before I knew the names of any other towns in Kenya, I already knew about a town called Oxford where the two children were born and Joan went to school. We, the new readers, followed them wherever they went. One day we went to visit another town called London; we went to a zoo and walked along the banks of the river Thames. It was a summer holiday. Oh, how many times did the river Thames and the Houses of Parliament beckon to us from the pages of our English language text books! Even today, when I hear the name of the river Thames or travel in its vicinity, I still remember Joan and John. . . . Oxford represents to me less the great seat of exclusive scholarship that it is supposed to be than the exclusive home of John and Joan of my primary school textbook. (Ngũgĩ 1993: 34)

Ngũgĩ's settings are mainly rural, his fiction highly political. Even when describing village events, Ngũgĩ never lets one forget that directives affecting ordinary people's lives are issued in the capital city Nairobi. The metropolis holds even the remotest parts of the country in its grip. His first novel, *Weep Not, Child* (London: Heinemann 1964), published under the name James Ngũgĩ, which he abandoned as the same time he renounced English as his primary creative language and Christianity as his religion, has commendatory things to say about the founding father of modern Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, but in December 1977 it was this same politician who was to approve his detention at Kamiti Maximum Security Prison in Nairobi. By this time Ngũgĩ's political sympathies had become more Marxist as Kenyatta's rule became more personalised and capricious.

As long as he wrote in English, admired by the intelligentsia at Nairobi University, where he was professor of English, he could be regarded as relatively harmless. Intellectuals usually oppose regimes, went the argument, and Ngũgĩ's hostility to the Kenyan government's corruption could be contained. His writing whilst in prison and on lavatory paper of *Caitani Mutharaba-ini*—published as *Devil on the Cross* (London: Heinemann 1980)—changed that. Here was a satirical novel showing up the decadence of the Kenyatta regime, written in a language accessible to ordinary people, whether or not they were educated or literate. Ngũgĩ used to joke that he would read excerpts from the novel in city bars and leave off at a particularly suspenseful moment until someone bought him another drink. The novel's message was conveyed verbally by popular readings of its unpublished Gikũyũ version in market places, lorry parks and bus stations. It was a unique coming together of the oral tradition and modern fiction not just in the content of the book but in its manner of delivery to an audience. Ngũgĩ had already written plays and his ability to make language perform became a danger to the government. A writer praised abroad and on campuses was one thing, one whose work could be understood by people at home and which might motivate them to insurrection was another. Hence, Ngũgĩ's arrest and detention until after Kenyatta's death a year later. His experiences in the Nairobi prison are recorded in *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* (London: Heinemann 1981).

Twenty-two years after his detention, Ngũgĩ, who had meanwhile lived mainly in the USA with university posts, returned to Kenya in the hope of staying there, but harassment of him and his wife made it unendurable.

Nairobi, where when young he had been a successful university professor and an honoured writer, could no longer guarantee his safety. He had continued in America to write extensively and to teach, but it was not until 2006 that he produced another novel. *Wizard of the Crow* (London: Harvill Secker 2006) may turn out to be his masterpiece, a voluminous satire mocking the pretensions of all despots. A supreme leader's determination to build a stairway from his palace to heaven is a brilliant metaphor for greed and misuse of power, but the hinterland of the novel is humane and even tender. Set in the imagined city of Eldares, over which the Ruler presides with insidious totality, this is a novel greatly extending the possibilities of African fiction and confidently pointing the way towards a fusion of comedy, absurdism and social commentary. It is impossible to read *Wizard of the Crow* without recalling overweening politicians in real life and in real cities—not just Kenyatta and perhaps his successor arap Moi in Nairobi, but 'Emperor' Bokassa of the Central African Empire (now Central African Republic) in Bangui, Idi Amin of Uganda in Kampala, Hastings Banda of Malawi in Lilongwe, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe in Harare and some would say Jacob Zuma of South Africa in Pretoria.

As the major cities of South Africa, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth, have grown, so have they produced writers of note. So far this chapter has largely been about novelists. With South Africa, however, it is essential to admit the importance of city poets and playwrights. During the years in which the country was under white minority rule and the *apartheid* system was maintained of racial hierarchy and division, it was almost impossible for black writers critical of the regime to be heard within their own country. They therefore resorted either to living in exile and publishing abroad or to operating in a clandestine manner within their own land. Soweto (a conflation of 'south-west township'), the sprawling shanty area of Johannesburg, supplied particularly good cover for the performance of subversive plays by the likes of Maishe Maponya. A play could, in modern parlance, 'pop up' and then disappear as quickly as it had come. The audience would have known about the performance through word of mouth. A script most probably was never published. In a system where printed material was liable to prosecution and banning, the invisibility of theatre was a major irritant to the government and a morale-boosting encouragement to oppressed peoples. Even when a play was legally presented, as in the case of Maponya's best known work *The Hungry Earth* in 1979, no text was available and the theatrical production standards had to be minimal. The themes of these plays, however, resonated with the largely township audiences. *The Hungry Earth* dramatises the predicament of migrant workers in the gold-mining industry at a time when government policy, enshrined in law in 1976, massively reduced their opportunities for employment by privileging urban dwellers in settled communities.

Gradually these plays became known outside South Africa and did a great deal to alert the world to the difficulties of life in South African townships. The most famous of them, *Sizwe Bansi Is Dead*, which received its first performance

in 1972 in Cape Town, went on to win awards all over the world both for the play itself and for the superb acting of its cast of two, John Kani and Winston Ntshona, who with Athol Fugard had co-authored it. Set in the Port Elizabeth suburb of New Brighton, it was a drama about survival in the city and the endless struggle to preserve one's self-respect and even identity.

Fugard himself wrote plays set in his native Port Elizabeth. *The Blood Knot*, *Boesman and Lena*, *'Master Harold' . . . and the Boys*, and *Hello and Goodbye* examine different aspects of urban life, following in the wake of Fugard's earliest and less well-known works such as *Nongogo*. Set sometime in the late 1950s in 'Queeny's shebeen in Johannesburg', the city to which Fugard moved from Port Elizabeth in 1958, *Nongogo* was the writer's first full-length play. It explodes with the frustration of unachieved lives in the squalor of a vast township. Rancid sexuality, including child abuse, is as prevalent as the inebriation endemic in an illegal drinking parlour. In Act 2 Scene I:

Johnny There's no women in these compounds and they don't let you out. There's big bursting men in these compounds and there's no women. So they take the boys, the young ones, like me. That's what they take.

Queeny Okay, Johnny.

Johnny Stop saying that because it's not okay. It's like dogs, see.

Queeny Johnny!

Johnny Yes, dogs, or something that crawls around the garbage cans or the gutter. Something dirty! I've tried to wash it off, Queeny. I've tried. Every day, I try. But there is always something around that brings it back. Like that bus ride in from Alex this morning. It was hell. It was crowded with men, big men. I could feel the violence in their bodies. Like the nights in the compound when they sat around and spoke about women and got all worked up until . . . (Fugard 1977: 37)

Fugard's portraits of urban derivation would have been major drama in any context, but, born out of a political and social system that the world was beginning to realise was morally repugnant, they made a huge contribution to the eventual destruction of *apartheid*.

The poets of South Africa did not make a comparable impact elsewhere, but within South Africa their voices added to the urgency of demands for change by drawing attention to the miseries of city deprivation and to the increasingly arbitrary dispossession of families from their homes as they were forced to move to allocated areas in undesirable locations. Dennis Brutus, known internationally as a prominent campaigner against racial separation in sport, managed to find tenderness amid his bitterness.

Sleep well, my love, sleep well:
the harbour lights glaze over the restless docks,
police cars cockroach through the tunnel streets
from the shanties creaking iron-sheets

violence like a bug-infested rag is tossed
 and fear is immanent as sound in the wind-swung bell;
 the long day's anger pants from sand and rocks;
 but for this breathing night at least,
 my land, my love, sleep well.

This poem, *Nightsong: City* (Ibadan: Mbari Publications 1963), captures the pent-up fury of the humiliated non-white population of South Africa from the late 1940s until the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994, but it also conveys an underlying passion for the country itself and even an affection for the urban sprawl in which most of them had to live. Brutus, a 'coloured' writer in the terminology of the country's complex racial mix, was only one of many poets articulating this rage and yearning. Though born in Harare, his was a Port Elizabeth background, similar to his *protégé* Arthur Nortje, a considerable poet who died young of an overdose whilst studying in Oxford but whose posthumous collection, *Dear Roots* (London: Heinemann 1973), remains one of the outstanding works of its period. Other poets identified with other cities: Mazisi Kunene and Gcina Mhlophe with Durban, for example. Kgosisile Keorapetse, Don Mattera, Siphso Sepamla and Mongane Wally Serote were all devoted sons of Johannesburg, with the suburb of Sophiatown at the heart of much of their work.

Outside South Africa, apart from Fugard it was the white novelists who attracted most attention. The award of the Nobel Prize in 1991 to the Johannesburg writer Nadine Gordimer consolidated a reputation that had already brought her countless literary honours, including the Booker Prize for *The Conservationist* (London: Jonathan Cape 1974). Even when, as is the case with this novel, her work is set in rural landscapes, Gordimer always seems shaped by her particular Johannesburg *milieu*, liberal, middle class, Jewish. There were strong East European influences in her, as there was in her compatriot Dan Jacobsen, reflecting another strain of the South African admixture. Alan Paton, often credited rather too loosely with being the founder figure of South African fiction on account of *Cry, The Beloved Country* (London: Jonathan Cape 1948), also, though he was not Jewish, came from this kind of urbane as well as urban background.

Cape Town, with its large white population, is justly regarded as one of the most beautiful cities in the world. However, it has not often been its majestic location at the foot of Table Mountain or its sunny climate through much of the year that has moved the many writers it has produced. Alex La Guma was typical. *In the Fog of the Season's End* is a novel about underground protests against the regime, of the ever-present possibility of detention and torture, and of quiet heroism. Yet at the start of the novel, Cape Town has an illusory calm and gentleness.

In the municipal park the trees made rough patterns on the brown gravel of the pathways. They were oak trees, and brown acorns left over from the winter lay in the conduits along the side of the paths; the leaves, sparse now in the

late summer, mottled the grass and gravel, curling like snippets of dead skin in the hot sun. . . . Beyond the pond the Portuguese explorer, who had been the first European to land on that part of the world, gazed granitely across the oak trees towards the bay, his cassock-like robe and hewn hair speckled by the pigeons, his stone eyes made cynical by a trick of the sunlight. Behind him a maze of pathways led to the museum and open-air restaurant: Whites only. Beyond all that the edge of the city clambered upward in steps of wealthy thoroughfares to the green foothills and the blue-grey face of the mountain. (La Guma 1972: 8)

This is lethal writing, for by depicting the recognisable Cape Town setting as somehow callous as well as manicured, emotionally bleak even though it is leafy and pretty, La Guma distils the heartlessness of white minority rule which controls the whole area. La Guma's best known story, *A Walk in the Night*, is set in District Six, the area of central Cape Town from which over 60,000 black South Africans were removed in the 1960s in the name of urban regeneration. Richard Rive and several other writers have memorialised this area of the city, and a museum honouring the enforced migrants now stands on the site. Cape Town is a city of contrasts, but it is writers who have best recorded its darker side. I allow myself one personal note: it concerns Alex La Guma. One day in the mid-1980s I was walking down Tottenham Court Road in London when I was hailed in the street by the writer, whom I had met on various occasions. We had a friendly chat and passed on after a few minutes. I thought no more of it until, about a year later, I again met La Guma. This time he began with a cryptic remark: 'You nearly got me into prison'. I had no idea what he meant. He explained that our casual encounter had been secretly photographed and when La Guma next applied for permission for a South African visa he was summoned to explain who this man was who he had been talking to in a London street a year before. He had been trailed whilst walking around the city by agents from Boss, the South African spy network. As much as anything he had written, this incident showed me how pernicious and extensive was the system then controlling South Africa. Even out of his own city and visiting another, a South African writer simply telling the truth was not at that time a properly free person. It is, of course, different today, though Nadine Gordimer's remark that since the liberation of South Africa she felt 'beached by history' may apply beyond just the white community. The collapse of *apartheid*, wholly welcome though it was, took away the nation's most urgent subject of ambition and debate. It is questionable whether the new writers emerging in the country today have anything like the same motivation or desperation.

In nearby Zimbabwe, there is plenty to write about and some fine writers such as Tsitsi Dangarembga, Chenjerai Hove and Yvonne Vera have certainly done so, drawing much from their familiarity with Harare and Bulawayo. The most controversial of Zimbabwean writers was Dambudzo Marechera, who died young of HIV/AIDS. This scourge has affected most of the cities of Africa and yet has rarely been written about. Marechera's anger may, however, have

been as much derived from his neurotic, almost schizophrenic perception of a world obsessed with materialism and self-gratification as it was from incipient disease or political outrage. His prose bursts out in terse violent explosions, very much the language of the city:

Austerity. Austerity. Austerity. These drab rimless streets, the tainted asphalt of means that have no end. But austerity. Screwing the shit out of the cowering air. Here and there, eyes glaze over in wideawake stupor. Up down. Crunch the feet of soldiers. Austerely. Striding. The microphone pushes deeper and deeper into the dark lips. Speechifying. The ugly fact. Suddenly oozes. Flanked by Ministers. Licking. The blunt and abrupt cheer. Fucked into astonished silence. Down there in the towering sky, a bright disc blazes. Nerves. Moods. Blacker polished night. Revealing dentures. The dazzling sharkskin words. Sounds that are all surface and have no meaningful core. (Marechera 1980: 97)

Briefly it appeared that Marechera might define the new city voice of the late twentieth-century, but it was not to be. His staccato drug-infused prose had extraordinary energy and undoubtedly reflected the language of the bars and gutters in which he lived both in Harare and for a while in London, but it was a road to nowhere and the imitators did not appear. Indeed, perhaps the best city novel to have come out of Zimbabwe is a much calmer book, *Harare North* by Brian Chikwava (London: Jonathan Cape 2009). It is not set in Harare, but in London.

Africa is a huge continent. Potentially richer than any other because of its largely unexploited mineral wealth, its cities are, with the exception of those in north Africa, not ancient by European or Asian standards. As they develop, they will become richer and almost certainly therefore more beautiful. They have, however, already inspired literary work of great range and diversity. This introduction has not done justice to many places which have inspired great writing. Naguib Mahfouz, for example, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988, is the laureate of Cairo. His novel *Children of Gebelawi* (1959) focuses on just one alley in that prolix city, yet finds within it countless individual lives and stories, linking the present with the Biblical and Koranic past, for its characters include Adam and Eve, Moses, Jesus and Mohammed. In almost every African city, there is a writer extolling its history and prospects, alive to what is wrong but drawn always to hopes of betterment. Let the final word be with the laureate of Alexandria in Egypt, the great poet C.P. Cavafy. His poem *The City* (1910) contends that 'you will always end up in this city', and that is part of his dialogue between despair and pragmatism.

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Cairo and Alexandria

Ahmed Elbeshlawy

In Egypt, one of the oldest countries on earth, lives one of the most unpredictable nations; a people who toppled and imprisoned two heads of state two years away from each other—one a secular dictator, the other an Islamist. Two large Egyptian cities played main roles in both of Egypt's revolutions in 2011 and 2013: Cairo and Alexandria. The two cities not only set the tone of Egyptian political discourse and activism; they are also the two major sites of Egyptian literary and cinematic production, as well as the two major markers of the metamorphosis of modern Egypt from a country which provided various forms of aid to some European and Arab countries from 1805 to 1952 to a country with one of the heaviest external debts in the world today. Nearly everywhere in twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century Egyptian culture one can find allusions to that metamorphosis, but perhaps nowhere with more clarity than in the Cairene novel and the Alexandrian film. Taken together, these allusions constitute a kind of fictitiousness that is truly peculiar to those cities.

Representing Cairo and Alexandria in Egyptian literature and film points to something that is quite distinguishable from the literary and cinematic production of the cities, even though it may sometimes be intrinsically problematic to distinguish between the two. Looking at the latter might mean attempting a critical examination of the Cairene novel and the Alexandrian film as idiosyncratic texts coming out of those cities as well as defining them. It would involve covering a wide range of exemplary novels and films marking a certain corpus of literary and cinematic works which in some way or another establish the imagined spatial, social, and cultural features of the cities. By contrast, representing Cairo and Alexandria in Egyptian literature and film has an altogether different sense. Primarily, 'representing' already suggests an ongoing always already failed endeavour, given the heavy weight of the term in the history of cultural studies and theoretical writing. The close examination of literary and

cinematic representations of cities diminishes not only the importance of the creators of the representative work but *the* corpus of work itself as a distinctive cultural structure. Instead, a close examination of city-oriented creative work shows how in the process of representation the city as an imagined space of cultural production inscribes itself in the work in ways that problematize the representation, making it an impossible idea.

Edward Said describes a ‘Cairo person’ as ‘Arab, Islamic, serious, international, intellectual’ while an ‘Alexandria amateur’ is ‘Levantine, cosmopolitan, devious, and capricious’. Even though he later describes this division of Cairene and Alexandrian characteristics as ‘severe’ (Said 2003, p. 337), it does seem to capture the main differences between the writers, poets, directors and musicians whose works came out of the two cities, both characterizing the cities and taking character from them. For example, the two sets of traits can in fact be used not only to describe Naguib Mahfouz (1911–2006), the writer of the famous *Cairo Trilogy* (and the only Arab writer to have won the Nobel prize, in 1988) and Youssef Chahine (1926–2008), the maker of the cinematic *Alexandria Trilogy*, but to describe their corpuses of literary and cinematic works respectively as well. The atmosphere of established local traditions, staunch cultural particularity mixed with an ever-present intellectual inquiry seeps through all of Mahfouz’s Cairo-based novels like *Karnak Café*, *Khan Al-Khalili*, *Cairo Modern*, *Midaq Alley* and *The Cairo Trilogy* and seems to correspond with the well-known calm composure, light-heartedness and witty joke-loving nature of Mahfouz himself. The stillness of the air, the unchanging rhythm of everyday life, and the reassuring presence of the features of a deep-seated Islamic culture all around the narrow streets of Mahfouz’s Islamic Cairo—from prayer beads of endless repetitive canticles to the imposing monuments of Islamic architecture—correspond with the repetitive bureaucratic formality of a life mostly spent in civil service. In Mahfouz’s novels, as in popular Egyptian cinema, the ‘physical space of Cairo’ is ‘largely portrayed as enclosed, womb-like, with narrow, interlocking winding roads that seem to protect the people living within the city’ (Khatib 2006, p. 33). The Alexandrian Chahine, on the other hand, was known for his stormy temper, especially on set where he often made instantaneous decisions and changed everything capriciously. Stylistically, his films, which thematically advocate revolution in every possible sense—political, cultural, and sexual—and which often present ‘elaborately reflexive take[s] on his filmmaking career’ (Khouri 2010, p. 154) are mostly ‘frenetic, non-linear, multi-layered, cerebral and demanding... fragmented, convoluted, with a dash of the Theatre of the Absurd’ (Fawal 2001, p. 1). The masturbatory fantasies of *Cairo Station*’s handicapped hero, the homosexual allusions of *Alexandria... Why?*, *Alexandria Again and Forever*, *An Egyptian Story*, and *The Other*, the ‘strongly political and highly fragmented’ *The Sparrow* with its ‘parallel stories and numerous subjective moments such as fantasies and nightmares’ (shafik 2007b, p. 97), *The Emigrant*’s indirect depiction of the Biblical/Qur’anic Joseph (which is against Islamic tradition and which made Chahine face a court case in Egypt), and *The Other*’s association of Islamic fundamentalism and sexual perversion, all point to

Chahine's rebellious nature which seems to emanate from his city's exposure to the Mediterranean. While Cairo is '[ruled] by river and desert', Alexandria is 'ruled by wind and sea' (Said 2003, p. 337).

Any discussion of Cairo can avoid neither its centrality in the Arab world as a capital of literary and cinematic production nor its fictional character as a city which is quite literally made out of literature and film in the minds of its own people. To take one salient feature, the cafés of Cairo form an integral part of Egyptian cultural and political history. No wonder that the Cairene café appears in the title of one of Mahfouz's 'angriest and most explicit works of fiction' (Allen 2007, p. 109)—*Karnak Café*. Yet, the Cairene café is not only a frequent literary and cinematic theme that can be found in hundreds of Egyptian literary works and films; the theme has in fact helped transform those cafés in reality from historical intellectual sanctuaries of literary production—where Mahfouz wrote some of his works, and Amal Donqol (1940–1983) some of his poems, and Osama Anwar Okasha (1941–2010) (secular, and a critic of the Arab league which had been formed in Cairo in 1945) some of his screenplays, etc.—to contemporary ruthless moneymaking businesses accommodating mostly young and frustrated customers who despise literature and culture—even education itself. The Egyptian downtown Cairo café was in fact made famous by intellectual and literary figures only to use the names of those intellectuals posthumously—and sometimes their photographs—in marketing the business. The Cairene café, just like the city itself, stands today between its literary and cinematic image, its glorious past, and its miserable present reality.

How Cairo is simply presented or described in Mahfouz's literature is not really what makes his city-oriented writing great. While his literary style is marked by social realism and widely known for vividly conjuring the alleys, the cafes, the mosques, the houses, the landmarks, as well as the run-of-the-mill structures of Cairo as he focuses on the psychosomatic effect of societal change on his literary characters, what really calls for attention is Cairo's multifaceted existence in certain moments in Mahfouz's writing that are marked by what one can call the writer's politics of liminality which problematizes the stature of the city. For example, the official history of Cairo pictures one of its most powerful historical eras as the capital of Saladin's empire (the Sultan (1137–1193) whose conquests captured key cities in Syria and the Mesopotamian hinterlands and drove Europe's Crusaders out of Jerusalem in 1191, and whose citadel still stands on Cairo's Moqattam hill today. But Mahfouz keeps an eye on the unsaid and the unrecorded of the city's history, thus he asks, 'During the period when Saladin was winning his glorious victory over the Crusaders, how do we know what the average street-dweller in Cairo was living through?', and, 'while Muhammad 'Ali was busy creating an Egyptian empire in the nineteenth century, how much did the Egyptian peasants have to suffer' (Mahfouz 2007a, p. 17).

Mahfouz's politics of liminality, however, is at its best when it is subtly employed stylistically in writing the city without raising any direct questions. In 'Dream 14' of his most psychedelic work, *The Dreams*, which is a 'mixture of the deceptively quotidian, the seductively lyrical, and the savagely nightmarish' (Stock 2004, p. xi), Mahfouz starts by one of the most romantic as well as the

most hackneyed images of *the* major feature of Cairo: ‘I was walking along the green banks of the Nile . . . as the secret dialogue continued between the moon and the river’s waters, on which the luminous rays rippled’. In Egyptian literature, this beautiful image of Cairo at night with the moonlight reflecting on the surface of the Nile’s water is one of the most recurrent. It is notable how this sublime image which beautifies—even animates—the river stands in contrast with reality in which the river banks in Cairo are far from green; they are more packed with concrete buildings, old metal fences or walls, tens of small piers for ships and yachts of the cruise tourism industry, and connected with bridges that are heavily crowded with traffic most of the day.

Given Mahfouz’s known appetite for knowledge and extensive reading, one can never doubt his awareness of the repeated use of images like ‘green banks’, ‘secret dialogue’, and ‘luminous rays’ in connection with the, *de facto* and *de jure*, most mythologized river in the history of mankind. And, given Mahfouz’s own description of *The Dreams* as a work in which each dream is an ‘actual dream, which I develop into a story’ (Stock 2004, pp. viii–ix), it becomes ultimately impossible to tell whether the said images belong to an actual dream (the unconscious of the author) or to his story (the literary creation). While the first case would be a matter of an overused literary trope insinuating itself in the writer’s unconscious recesses then appearing in his writing (an imagined and over-represented Cairo at night now writing itself), the second would be an authorial satirical use of an overused trope (an imagined and over-represented Cairo at night romanticized and ridiculed at once by the writer). In both cases, the liminality of the city—its existence at a threshold between literature and reality—does not only problematize its representation; it makes the question of *what* or *who* is representing it ultimately unanswerable. ‘Dream 14’ gets even more interesting when Mahfouz starts to cast his personal experience—particularly the experience of being in love with a woman—over a whole Cairo district in which one of the women that he fell in love with in his early youth used to live: ‘My spirit wandered through the recesses of Abbasiya, suffused with the scent of love and jasmine’ (Mahfouz 2004, p. 18). Again, Mahfouz takes a major feature of Cairo, the Abbasiya district, and makes it more than it actually is. The difference this time, however, is that this is too personal. Totally unlike the literary trope of the beautified image of the Nile, in no other text one will find the district of Abbasiya—which is one of Cairo’s most detrimentally crowded places—described as scented with love and jasmine. What is not there in literature is certainly not there in reality; one brief walk anywhere in Abbasiya’s streets will most probably smell of exhaust pipes’ gases. Housing one of Egypt’s oldest and most notorious madhouses, Abbasiya even figures in Egyptian culture and jokes as a place for the mad.

It is in this dreamlike Cairo of the moonlit Nile and scented Abbasiya that the writer relates his encounter with a long-lost beloved in the dream. The fictitiousness of Mahfouz’s Cairo, however, evaporates at the end of the dream when he tries to hold the woman in his arms only to discover that ‘her dress

felt as though it was draped over empty space'. As she collapses in front of him, her 'marvelous head fell to the ground and rolled into the river' (Mahfouz 2004, p. 19). Readers observe a fundamental shift in Mahfouz's writing which took place around 1940 when he 'dropped historical themes in favor of the contemporary novels, which deal with social realism' as he thought that 'historical fiction was an inadequate vehicle to convey his impressions about contemporary life in Egypt'. It is true that Mahfouz 'never went back to the historical novel' (Moosa 1999, p. 54) after writing *Khufu's Wisdom*, *Rhadopis of Nubia*, and *Thebes at War*, but it is equally true that he infused several of his contemporary novels with stresses on the enduring aspects of Cairo against which every other aspect changes; the river, the pyramids, the Sphinx, etc. Those unchanging aspects, however, are never summoned in any celebratory fashion; on the contrary, they are usually summoned to criticize modern Cairene society—however this may be defined.

The disappearance of the beloved in 'Dream 14', like the disappearance of Tahiya in her chauffeur-driven automobile in Chapter 17 of *Cairo Modern* to escape the unwanted advances of the story's cynical opportunist hero, Mahgub Abd al-Da'im, inside the Sphinx's Temple of the Sun, is deployed amid this imposing sense of rift between the ancient, the old, and the contemporary in Cairo—a city whose present is always alienated from its past, even though past and present are physically represented within the same space. Mahgub's abject poverty, suppressed sexuality in a Muslim society, and his inability to make a girl who belongs to the aristocratic class of Cairo love him made him so angry that he 'felt like pelting Cairo with huge stones from the pyramids' (Mahfouz 2008a, p. 83). This Quasimodo wish seems to encapsulate all of Mahfouz's critical sense of what modernity meant to Cairenes in the 1930s which witnessed the 'rise of an Egyptian intelligentsia' that became increasingly 'exposed to a variety of intellectual concepts that were mostly Western and included materialistic philosophy and socialism, both of which were alien to the indigenous Islamic culture and traditions' (Moosa 1999, p. 55).

Being himself one of this intelligentsia, Mahfouz, as Said argues, 'took the novel from Europe and fashioned it according to Egypt's Muslim and Arab identity' (Said 2003, p. 325). Modernism may have meant embracing Western thought to many Egyptians back in the 1930s and 1940s. However, even the most casual look on Mahfouz's huge corpus of literature would conclude that modernism in his particular case meant nothing but writing the Egyptian city. This is how and why his work, in spite of its international status, always remained 'so thoroughly Egyptian (and Cairene)' (Said 2003, p. 319). The question of Cairo, what it is and what it ought to be, is a recurrent question throughout Mahfouz's literature. Old Cairo features 'crumbling remnants of former glories, a place that stirs the imagination, arouses a real sense of nostalgia', but, 'if you look at it from an intellectual perspective, all you see is filth, a filth that we're required to preserve by sacrificing human beings'. Modernizing the city to give its people the 'opportunity to enjoy happy and healthy lives' requires no less than 'knock[ing] the whole thing down'. Yet, in spite of the fact that its modern

reality is alienated from its past, it is the old quarters of Cairo that give it the only identity available to it. ‘Where does today’s Cairo, all modern and indentured to others, belong?’ (Mahfouz 2008b, pp. 53–54).

Modern Cairo, in Mahfouz literature, is not only a city alienated from its past and lost in its quasi-modern present; in its liminality, fictitiousness, reality, traditions, and anxieties, Mahfouz’s Cairo is a maddening city inhabited by people who try to deal with the ‘anxiety from living in such a society’ by finding ‘consolation in sex, religion, alcohol and drugs’ (like the group of addicts in *Adrift on the Nile*), or by turning to the ‘only resort’ left to them, which is ‘intellectual consolation’, like the writer himself or like his hero in *The Window on the Thirty-Fifth Floor* who ‘lifts himself out of the normal, everyday life of the city’ (Abadir and Allen 1973, p. xii) and watches it from above where he can see ‘more than one Nile flowing in Cairo’, gardens which look like ‘tiny engineering diagrams drawn on a piece of paper’, cars which look like ‘children’s toys’ and people who ‘seem like mice’. From above, the ‘anxieties didn’t exist at all’ and ‘the city itself will vanish if you go up high enough’ (Mahfouz 1973, pp. 200–203). Yet this intellectual consolation ends tragically when the hero throws himself out of the window from which he was surveying the city. The city always claims its own. Egyptian literature and cinema continue to provide heterogeneous and poignant accounts of present day Cairo and its people. Alā’ Aswānī’s roman à clef *The Yacoubian Building* (2002) is one of the best examples. It takes one of Cairo’s downtown art deco-style colonial buildings and its former and contemporary inhabitants—both in the fictional and real sense—as a symbol of modern Cairo’s colonial past, which was in fact culturally, economically, and architecturally rich, metamorphosing into its postcolonial present which is marked by poverty, the almost complete disappearance of the middle class, the rise of half-educated or even uneducated business class of traders as well as the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and militancy among the frustrated youth. Cairo in *The Yacoubian Building*, like the building itself, is nothing but a ghost of its former self. The 1930s Yacoubian Building, which still stands in central Cairo, is a tangible support of the city’s multicultural history as well as its architectural beauty which is mainly a mixture of Islamic, Coptic, and European varieties. Yet, the decadence of the city and its people permeates through almost every page of Aswānī’s novel. The reality of contemporary Cairo clearly does not sit well with its past. Marwān Hāmid’s 2006 cinematic adaptation of Aswānī’s novel, *Imārat Ya’qūbīyān*, is a brilliant exponent of this idea. Nothing in the film alludes to Cairo’s beautiful past of architectural prowess, multiculturalism, and religious tolerance except a black and white montaged overture which traces the building’s history with close-ups of its outer decorations followed by low-angle shots of it. The rest of the film, however, deals with Cairo’s recent past and its present as a city suffering crowdedness, poverty, visual pollution of every sort, the ruthless materialism of its people, the Islamist fundamentalists, the hypocrisy of the religious, and the heavy-handedness of state security and the police.

If Cairo’s history and character are meticulously drawn by Mahfouz, if its present is portrayed and criticized by Aswānī, the city as text is further problematized by

Sun'Allah Ibrāhīm's *Zaat (Self)*. *Zaat: The Tale of One Woman's Life in Egypt During the Last Fifty Years* puts Cairo at the heart of a multilayered representation of the societal degeneracy of Egypt through Nasser's, Sadat's, and Mubarak's regimes, which is mostly deployed through documentary newspaper headlines, advertisements, articles, and captions that are interspersed with the fictional story. Those documentary fragments seem to give a coherent account of historical events affecting the characters' lives and, at the same time, enhance Ibrāhīm's fragmentary narrative tableau and his alienatory themes. *Zaat* (1992) is a Cairene account of the transformation of Egypt's socialist dream into a capitalist-consumerist nightmare that is presented by Ibrāhīm with an effect which resembles the effect of Edvard Munch's *The Scream*; with its main character becoming increasingly traumatized by powers stronger than herself, like Munch's homunculus with its mouth open in a traumatic silent scream and its slender figure swaying with the colourful spirals of a visual yet unidentified ongoing catastrophe. If *The Scream* is, in Fredric Jameson's words, 'a canonical expression of the great modernist thematics of alienation, anomie, solitude, social fragmentation, and isolation' (Jameson 1991, p. 11), it is the figure of the Cairene girl, Zaat, against the background of a terrifying/terrified city, that condenses all of these thematics in *Zaat*.

Alexandria's presence in Mahfouz's literature is categorically different from Cairo. His 'Rashomon-style novel about Alexandria' (Said 2003, p. 318), *Miramar*, which is comparatively much shorter than most of his Cairo-based novels, marks a shift from mastering 'the natural or realistic novel in which the narrator knows everything' (Sears) to a multiple narrative novel where the story is retold four times from different characters' perspectives mainly to bring out the characters and the conditions of living in Egypt under Nasser's regime. What is striking about Mahfouz's Alexandrian novel, however, is the almost complete absence of the city. Unlike the other novels in which one can see and almost smell the streets of Cairo, *Miramar* seems devoid of its city's presence. Mahfouz obviously would not—or could not—write Alexandria the way he wrote Cairo.

In the case of Alexandria, where it has substantially mattered that a city-oriented work has come out of it, or has shaped it in a phantasmic way, trying either to construct it, represent it, or make it a text, Youssef Chahine's cinematic four-film series about the city seems to stand on the highest ground. The importance of Chahine's films on Alexandria is that they do not describe the city or show its features as much as present the viewer with a conscious autobiographical yet intentionally imaginative and unrealistic account of the director's version of Alexandria as an imagined city. A graduate of the prestigious Victoria College, which once was a beacon of quality education in colonial Egypt where Edward Said and Omar Sharif also received their early education, Chahine invented a cinematic Alexandria which clearly sought to both idealize the city and document a certain historical era of the city's cultural diversity which ceased to exist after 1952. In his account of contemporary Alexandria, Said observes how 'today's disappointing and disenchanting Mediterranean port' (Said 2003, p. 342) has nothing to do with what is written on Alexandria by Durrell, Forster, Anatole France in *Thais*, Pierre Louÿs in *Aphrodite*, Cavafy, and Ungaretti.

The content and the stylistics of the Alexandria series seem to collaborate to create an atmosphere of vitality which seems to derive from the director's conscious construction of a lively cosmopolitan city that was no longer there when he made the films. In the series, as Malek Khouri argues, Chahine 'bare[s] his own history and soul in front of the camera (Khouri 2010, p. 125). In fact, it can be argued that Chahine literally puts his image of Alexandria, which constituted the stuff of his dreams about the city, on the screen. This resulted in films of which composition clearly follows the logic of dreams; a 'highly compromised chronology, interrupted and incomplete sentences . . . fumbled camera movements' and a 'mixture of events, periods, locations, and individual stories' which 'combine to produce an almost surreal sensation' (Khouri 2010, p. 129). Such composition seems to advocate the alienatory way of creating art while being hostile to the illusionary way that targets the viewer's emotions rather than his or her intellect. It 'rearticulate[s] the Brechtian practice of nurturing a self-conscious audience' (Khouri 2010, p. 119) that is always aware of the distance that separates it from the work.

Chahine's first film on Alexandria, *Alexandria . . . Why?*, opens with an amalgamation of images summarizing Chahine's autobiographical but also quite impressionistic view of the city in 1942: Yehia (Chahine's alter ego) watching an American musical in the cinema with his friends, beachgoers having fun on Alexandria's beautiful beaches, Egyptian youths having a scuffle with some British soldiers, a voice-over informing that Rommel is approaching Alexandria, a documentary footage of Adolf Hitler declaring 'Alexandria! You are MINE!' and another showing Esther Williams swimming in a Hollywood film. Chahine's Alexandria in the film features a city in a state of anxiety about its future between a present British occupation, a seemingly inexorable German invasion, and a strong American cultural influence. In the cosmopolitan city of *Alexandria . . . Why?*, 'human relations . . . develop across religious and ethnic borders' (Shafik 2007a, p. 167), attesting to the idea that 'Chahine's memory of his upbringing in Alexandria is perhaps more idealistic than realistic'. In real historical Alexandria, unlike his cinematic one, 'not all ethnic groups mingled with and tolerated each other to the extent that he suggests' (Fawal 2001, pp. 187–188).

Even though the multiethnic diversity of Chahine's *Alexandria . . . Why?*, in his own words, 'is rooted in the city of Alexandria itself' (Schmait 2001, p. 172), indeed, when Chahine was making his film in the mid-1970s, Alexandria was already a very different city in a very different Egypt after a military coup and four wars with Israel. His 'sympathetic representation of a Jewish family' in *Alexandria . . . Why?* was 'heavily attacked in 1978, the year the film was released' (Shafik 2007b, p. 39). Even though he depicted the Jewish Egyptian family as thoroughly anti-Zionist, his 'sensitive depiction, which draws from his childhood memories in cosmopolitan Alexandria, was perceived as political opportunism by those opposed to Egypt's unilateral peace agreement with Israel' (Shafik 2007b, p. 40).

Chahine's bold move, which also included a love story between a Muslim Egyptian communist and a Jewish Egyptian, in fact broke a long-standing taboo

which both banned depicting Jews as once an integral part of Egyptian—and particularly Alexandrian—society and virtually cancelled out the substantial Jewish contribution to Egyptian cinema in the first half of the twentieth century at once. Ahmed Bahjat argues that Jews ‘played a weighty role in the development of Egyptian cinema until 1948’ (Bahjat 2005, p. 3). That role was deliberately suppressed by Egyptian ideology and an Islamic tradition which, sadly, could not or would not distinguish between Judaism and Zionism. In the late 1970s, Chahine’s cinematic Alexandria bravely stood for the Egyptian identity of Alexandrian Jews against a prevalent Egyptian intolerance of the Jewish other—almost always mistaken as necessarily Zionist. It still stands today, admired and longed for, in defiance of an ugly contemporary reality that is marked by a deadly religious intolerance that many Muslim cities seem to be living by at the moment.

The urge to represent the city coupled with an always already present feeling about the impossibility of an adequate representation makes itself felt most clearly in the third film of the series, *Alexandria Again and Forever*. This is where Chahine’s idiosyncratic cinema reaches its epitome and, inevitably, its highest level of difficulty. The film seems to attempt defining Alexandria through recreating it in terms of history and literature combined with the director’s dreams about creating individual art despite the influence of capitalism and the petrodollar over Egyptian artists. Owing to the film’s expansive cinematic experiments, stream of consciousness narrative style, historical and literary allusions, references to previous films by Chahine, and what feels like free dream associations and conscious abandonment of many conventions of Egyptian cinema, *Alexandria Again and Forever* remains largely incomprehensible to many viewers.

It includes ‘one of the largest musical scenes in cinema history’ (Fawal 2001, p. 144) about Alexandria and its historical founder, Alexander the Great, staged on the city’s seashore. The city, being the main site of Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra*, this time witnesses a bisexual Antony who gives another man a kiss on the mouth calling him ‘Cleopatra’. Its hero’s (director’s) desire to create a Hamlet work—which never gets done—is juxtaposed against other fulfilled cinematic dreams that are immersed in locality yet attaining considerable international recognition. Chahine’s Alexandrian locality is not peculiar to his Alexandria series. Ibrāhīm al’Aris argues that ‘Chahine’s multicultural 1940s Alexandria never left him and was always there, implicitly or explicitly’ (al’Aris 2004, p. 45), in his other films. This presence seems to get most condensed in *Alexandria Again and Forever* where the city literally gets shaped out of fragments of history, literature, personal experience, and sexual fantasies.

The ‘subjective portrait of cosmopolitan pre-Nasserist Alexandria’ (Shafik 2007a, p. 190) which he draws out of the characters of *Alexandria... Why?* is expressed in *Alexandria Again and Forever* more directly as a personal wish in the last scene in which the director is shown shooting the 1987 Hunger Strike by Egyptian actors against changes made by the government to the law

regulating their union. In it, the heroine becomes the mouthpiece of Chahine and sings:

I want to live among you . . .
 Free and glowing
 Array my life in my own way
 But please, no idealization

The song plays in parallel with the Egyptian national anthem being sung by a large congregation that includes famous actors in cameo appearances inside the union building. It clearly carries a message which advocates a sense of individuality within an imagined national fabric that includes everybody regardless of religion, ethnicity, and personal choices and which ‘affirm[s] a more encompassing notion of national identity that did not exclude queer sexuality’ (Khouri 2010, p. 118); in other words, an ideal Egyptian society that takes its character from the ideal Alexandrian society that Chahine imagines.

Chahine’s last film about Alexandria, *Alexandria . . . New York* (which was originally entitled *Anger*), in his own words, is about his love-hate relationship with America: ‘I love the Americans’ respect for science, art, democracy and love for life. But there is also the American sickening foreign policy . . . partiality on the side of Israel . . . and an inexplicable hostility towards me and my work’ (Jabr 2002, p. 14). Even though the film is more about Chahine’s unrealized American dream than his Alexandria, the city this time assumes an exceptionally repugnant presence in the name of Alexander; Yehia’s/Chahine’s imagined American son whose existence was virtually unknown to him, and who fanatically refuses to acknowledge the father simply because he is an Arab. The phonetic closeness between ‘Alexander’ and ‘Alexandria’ seems to highlight the contrast between the American son’s racism and the Egyptian city’s bygone multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. In this sense, *Alexandria . . . New York* marks not only Chahine’s anger towards America but his bitterness about what has finally become of Alexandria itself—a city like any other Egyptian city, with a growing population that is getting more and more cybernetically connected to the world yet more and more immersed in an Islamic culture that is closed upon itself.

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Lagos

Louis James

In African literature, Claude Wauthier has noted, ‘the town has become a symbol of contact with the West, with all its blemishes and attractions’ (Wauthier 1966, p. 168). It was not always so. In the European ‘Dark Ages’, Timbuktu in West African Mali Empire, and now in Mali, just north of the Niger river, was a centre of commerce, religion and learning, with a thriving Arabic literature (Davidson 1959, pp. 91–92). What was written in these cultural oases has long disappeared, but it would have been very different to the Nigerian city literature of the postcolonial era, which is our concern here.

Britain’s modern involvement with Nigeria began in 1861, when it bombarded Lagos during its war against the slave trade. A group of islands protecting a lagoon, its port had provided access to the interior through the coastal sandbars, and it had become a major centre for the slave operations. Britain replaced its chief, then annexed the area, and in 1914 included it in the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria. Lagos, taken by the Portuguese in 1472 (‘Lagos’ is a town in Portugal), was the largest city in West Africa, with a population estimated of over 15 million in 2006. Continuing rapidly to grow, Lagos dominated commercial developments across the region and melded together the three very different ethnic groups that made up the Nigerian nation—Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa Fulani. Yet, significantly, it remained a commercial and administrative, rather than a cultural, centre. Although Lagos loomed large in a growing body of literature, most writers on the city were born and educated outside the city, and wrote looking in.

The British annexation of Lagos was rapidly followed by missionary activity. Moving up though the interior, its evangelists confronted traditional beliefs and customs, created English-language schools and facilitated the introduction of the British legal system, organised through local chieftains, backed by the military. Changes in Lagos had their impact far beyond the city. Chinua Achebe’s landmark novel on the evolution of modern

Nigeria, *Things Fall Apart* (1958), is set in the late 1880s, some 500 red miles to the east, in the nine villages of Umuofia, and centres on the personal failure of the warrior farmer Okonkwo. But his tragedy is confirmed by the arrival of the missionaries, the villagers' burning of their school and Okonkwo's despairing act of striking down a soldier, precipitating his own suicide.

In Achebe's sequel, *No Longer at Ease* (1962), Lagos moves centre stage. It is 1957, and Nigeria prepares for independence. As the influence of Lagos grows, the villagers have clubbed together to educate a candidate to secure their share of the city's prestige and wealth. They choose Obi, the grandson of Okonkwo, to receive a London university education in preparation for a public administration job in Lagos. Obi finds Lagos a world of contrasts. The slums are chaotic, noisy and dirty. Yet poverty brings a sense of shared humanity, in which conflict can explode into laughter. At weekends, decaying streets are transformed by music and dancing. 'Here was Lagos, thought Obi, the real Lagos he hadn't imagined existed until now' (Achebe 1960, p. 17). This is barred to the wealthy and educated. Obi once shared a bare but friendly tenement room with his friend Joseph. But when he returns to Lagos with his London degree, the Umuofia Union places him in a small Western-style hotel as befitting his educated status. Starting work, Obi lives in Ikoya, once a reserve for Europeans, now a fashionable residential area. Separated from the city by a vast cemetery, it feels like a funeral, without corporate life.

Obi is caught between two worlds. Living and working in Lagos, he enjoys wild nights dancing the high life in its nightclubs. But his village sponsors expect repayment of their investment, ignorant of his new financial liabilities. They demand he abandon his relationship to Clara, a girl he met in England, who in Umuofia is *osu*, an outcast. Medical expenses for his mother, and Clara's abortion, add to his debts. His spirit broken by the death of his mother and his rejection by Clara, he finally surrenders to the temptations of his position, is convicted of taking a bribe and loses all.

Achebe's last work was his account of the Biafran War (1967-1970), virtual genocide against the Igbo people, in the east of Nigeria: *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (2012). While it was Achebe in the 1960s who established the Nigerian novel internationally, from the 1940s, an indigenous literature in English had emerged in Onitsha, a bustling Igbo market town on the Niger. Where Yoruba-dominated Lagos remained the centre for religious and educational publications, in Onitsha, enterprising largely Igbo entrepreneurs set about producing cheap accessible reading matter, written by a variety of previously unknown authors, printed on small hand presses and sold from shops or private addresses. This 'market literature' was essentially an urban phenomenon, providing advice, information and entertainment to a new growing audience of common readers. These small paperbacks were cheap and crudely embellished front and back with photographic or locally drawn reproductions.

Written in idiomatic English sliding into local pidgin, the subject of these booklets was limited only by the interests of their readers. Some gave advice on letter writing, whether to apply for jobs, for social correspondence or courtship—*How to Write all Kinds of Letters and Compositions*. Others advised on *How to Become Rich and Make Money*. A common theme was making social contacts outside the traditions of family and caste. Some warned against the dangers of ‘wicked’ women: others advised on ways to form romantic attachments: *How to Write Love Letters* and *The Game of Love and How to Play It*. Many developed their moral advice into a short illustrative narrative or a brief play. Drawing on oral idioms, these marked the beginnings of a Nigerian popular fiction (Obiechina 1973).

The relative morality of women in town and country was a common theme. M. Okewena Olisah, a writer whose pseudonyms included ‘Master of Life’, advised in *Beware Harlots and Many Friends*:

The girl born and trained in the township loves to play ‘highlife’ and knows in and out about love making. She attends the cinema and knows how kissing is made and how love is played. She attends dances and dances and other things. All this things [sic] can spoil her.

The girl born and trained in the rural area have no chance to go to all those things. . . . I would like to recommend to my Readers to marry girls trained in the rural areas.

Yet attitudes to town and country remained ambivalent, In *Veronica My Daughter* by Ogali A. Ogali Sr, the eponymous heroine rejects her father’s rural choice of the rich but illiterate Chief Jombo, and, in a splendid Cathedral ceremony, instead marries Mike, a smart city journalist with an intermediate B. A. and a penchant for quoting European classics (Roscoe 1971, pp. 146–149).

In 1947, an Onitsha bookseller published a novella by Cyprian Ekwensi, *When Love Whispers*, and in 1963 Ekwensi’s *People of the City* became the first Nigerian novel to be published in England. Born in Minna, Northern Nigeria, in 1921, Ekwensi began his career in medicine before joining the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, becoming head of its Features Department. With a background in practical science and journalism, he identified with Onitsha market writers, declaring that, as for them, his audience ‘consists of the ordinary working man. I don’t pretend to aim at intellectuals’ (Nichols 1981, pp. 43, 44).

People of the City is prefaced with a West African proverb that might have come from an Onitsha pamphlet: ‘wrong doing is a hill; everyone mints his own and decries that of another’. It begins by telling ‘how the City attracts all types and how the unwary must suffer from ignorance of its ways’. Amuso Sango is a reporter for the *African Sensation*, a popular paper whose journalism creates its readers sense of urban identity—reading it has become ‘a part of life, eagerly awaited for its stories of politics, crime, sport, and entertainment’ (Ekwensi 1963, p. 69).

Besides newspapers, the urban world lives for music. Lagos had become the jazz capital of the country, and in a second occupation as band leader, Sango plays ‘the calypsos and the konkomas in the only way that delighted the hearts

of the city women' (3). His high life music throbs through 'the twisting, writing bodies, the glittering jewellery, the shuffling feet and wiggling hips' and creates its own morality. Dupeh Martin, the 16-year-old girlfriend to Sango's friend Bayo, is

a girl who belonged strictly to the city ... who knew all about Western sophistication – make-up, cinema, jazz ... the kind of girl who would be content to walk her thin shoes in the air-conditioned atmosphere of department stores, or hang about all day in the foyer of hotels with not a penny in her hand-bag, rather than live in the country and marry papa's choice. (29)

But behind the glamour of the jazz floor lies crime and casual violence. Expensive flats rise amid wretched slums. Behind civilised appearances, Africa's dark pagan past survives. To gain promotion, a shop clerk joins the Efemfe society, a pagan fraternity cult: when he discovers he is expected to sacrifice his firstborn son, appalled, he commits suicide. 'The depressed people of the city' Sango notes, 'literally sold their souls to the devil' (71). 'Once you have money', Ekwensi has declared, 'you are GOD' (Nichols 1981, p. 43). Moral values disappear. Ladije, Sango's landlord, had lived too long in the city to care about right or wrong, so long the end was achieved. And that end was so often achieved by money that it was inconceivable that money could fail in anything or with anybody. When Ladije's schemes fail, he dies drinking alcohol (100, 151).

Sango enjoys Lagos city life as a colourful and eligible young bachelor, taking his picks of willing women. But he is abandoning his village background, where a young wife awaits him chosen by his mother. In the city, a casual sexual encounter with the rootless Aina brings her demands that he protect her from the police and claims that he is the father of her unborn child. Moreover, 'beneath his gay exterior lay a nature serious and determined to carve for itself a place of renown in this city of opportunities' (3). In the midst of the dance floor, he pauses to reflect on 'himself in the big city. What had he achieved? Where was he going? Was he drifting like the others, or had he a direction?' (58).

He also comes to see the amorality of his reporter's job. 'Sometimes he had to remind himself that however exciting crime was, it brought tragedy to someone. But it was his function to report it, and to him it had become something clinical, with neither blood nor sentiment attached' (69). When his friend Bayo attempts to marry Suad, a Lebanese girl from Syria, her brother Zamil opposes the marriage on racial grounds and murders the couple. When Sango writes a newspaper report of the tragedy, relating the crime to tensions in Lagos society, he is promptly fired: there is no room for journalism that might disturb the paper's readers.

Sango saves the life of a pure girl, Beatrice, and falls in love with her. In an Onitsha romance ending, three obstacles to their happy marriage are removed: his matchmaking mother dies, Aina aborts his (presumptive) child and Beatrice's fiancé fails his exams and commits suicide. The couple marry and escape to the Gold Coast. But they will come back. 'We want a new life, new

opportunities ... We have our homeland here and must come back ... when we have done something, become something!’ (155).

Jagua Nana (1961) takes us deeper into Ekwensi’s attitudes to the city. The name of its eponymous heroine refers not to a jungle beast but an emblem of city life, the Jaguar car. Stylish, high spirited, proud and independent, she lives for the moment in the heady nocturnal world of dance and jazz music on the Tropicana dance floor. For her dancing to jazz in the Tropicana ‘was a daily drug, a potent brew’, the essence of ‘that driving, voluptuous and lustful air that existed in the very air of Lagos’ (Ekwensi 1961, p. 189). She is also vulnerable, dependent on selling her body for sex, and, now 45, aware her attraction will fade. She has taken as a lover Freddie, an impetuous young Ibo from her home village. Through a tempestuous relationship she shows him genuine affection and even hopes to bear his child. But she has financed his study in England so that he can return to a good career, marry her ‘and be strong enough to work and earn when she would be on the decline’ (Ekwensi 1961, p. 5).

While Freddie is away, she visits her home village and finds that he is already engaged to a local girl. She awakens to the attractions of rural life, but is committed to Lagos, to which she returns to become the mistress of Taiwo, a flashy, genial but corrupt politician. Freddie returns from England a changed man, pays back Jagua’s financial support and, to the horror of Jagua, stands against Taiwo in the city elections. In a violent campaign, both Freddie and Taiwo are murdered. Jagua discovers a stash of Taiwo’s falsely appropriated money in a suitcase left in her care. With this she returns to Onitsha intending to become a ‘proper merchant princess’ with her own shop and lorry. Ekwensi leaves her future undecided, but it would be out of character for her would she settle down to life as a market trader.

The novel is distinguished by Ekwensi’s non-judgemental, objective scenes of Lagos life. But *Jagua* aroused controversy. She is a dance-floor prostitute living on the proceeds of casual sex, manipulating those around her. She is also courageous, surviving in the city jungle, by turns kind and heartless, controlling and vulnerable. The novel was published in 1961, a year after Nigeria achieved independence, and *Jagua*’s resilient spirit was Ekwensi’s counter to the city-based corruption that he saw shaping Nigeria’s future. In a passionate speech, *Jagua* appealed to the market women of Onitsha to assert their rights as human beings, warning that whatever party came to power, Lagos politicians would become richer while villages continued in poverty. ‘And you will console yourselves that you are struggling. Tell me, what are you struggling for? ... You call that life?’ (Ekwensi 1961, pp. 109–110).

If *Jagua Nana* is a man’s account of a woman’s life in Lagos, Buchi Emecheta’s novels take a female point of view. Emecheta, born in 1944 of Igbo parents, was one of the few major Nigerian authors to be born in the capital. Her fiction embodies her experience as a precocious girl educated in the city, and engaged at 11, married at 16, to a repressive husband. In 1962, she followed him to London. His continued oppression led her to leave him, aged 22 and supporting five children, to set about reading for a B.Sc. in Sociology at the University of

London. Her experiences became channelled into the writing that became rewarded with a series of distinctions, culminating in 2015 with an M.B.E.

Her novel *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) opens in 1909 in Ibuza, a traditional Ibo village. Polygamy is the rule, but the system can be flexible. Ona, a beautiful and independently spirited young woman who is the idolised favourite of her prosperous father, becomes mistress to Chief Agbadi, yet is allowed to continue in her father's compound. But the village traditions also allow slavery: prisoners taken in local wars become slaves, without human rights. On the death of a chief's wife, her slave must die to serve her in the afterlife. The birth of Ona's first child, Nnu Ego, coincides with the unwilling death of one such slave. When the baby suffers a swelling in the head, a diviner declares she has been possessed by the spirit of the sacrificed slave.

Ego inherits her mother's beauty and marries a wealthy suitor from a neighbouring village. But she remains childless and is returned to her father. It is now 1934, the prosperity of Lagos increasingly attracts village attention, and having failed as a mother, Ego is sent to the city to marry Nnaife, a villager who had moved there five years earlier. Nnaife works for an expatriate scientist and his wife on the island of Yaba, a Lagos settlement built 'by the British for the British'. To Ego's horror, he is employed to wash his employers' clothes, a male role socially unthinkable in Ibuza. As the couple drift apart, Ego supplements his meagre wages trading in foodstuffs and firewood. When she has a boy child, she gains 'a sense of fulfilment, for the first time in her life' (Emecheta 1980, p. 55). But her baby suddenly dies. Devastated, she attempts suicide. Paradoxically, she finds the city that denied her traditional support has created a sense of mass identity: in Nigeria, 'you are simply not allowed to commit suicide in peace, for everyone is responsible for the other person', and 'people she had never seen before and would never see again surrounded her and gave her words of consolation' (60–62).

In 1939, the war in Europe makes its impact on Lagos. Nnaife's employer leaves for England, his servants are paid off. The burden of supporting the family falls mainly on Ego, who struggles to support the growing family by trading firewood and foodstuff. Nnaife revisits his village and returns with a younger wife, Adaku. Like the sacrificed slave girl, Ego 'finds herself a prisoner, imprisoned by her love for her children, imprisoned in in her role as the senior wife' (137). The novel continues, recording the changing conditions of Lagos through the war years, and their effect on the city dwellers. The 1940s sees an influx of immigrants from the Igbo north. Food prices soar. Nnaife gets a job as a grass-cutter, but is then impressed as a soldier, leaving Ego in charge of the family. Adaku deserts the family for a life of sexual freedom in the city: 'many people put the blame on Lagos itself, they said it was a fast town that could corrupt the most innocent of girls' (170). Ego longs to follow her, but is unable to break loose. Nnaife returns from the war and reasserts his tyrannical rule. When one of his daughters, Kihinde, runs away with a young butcher's son, who is a Yoruba and Muslim, he is so infuriated by a betrayal of his tribal caste

that he murders him. Ego defends her husband in court, and when he goes to prison, she takes on the care of children in their immediate and extended families, protesting 'I don't know how to be anything else but a mother' (222). Finally, her heart breaks when two sons who emigrate abroad lose contact. She dies alone, but ironically, on the news of her death, all her children come home and give her the noisiest and most costly burial Ibuza had ever seen, and a shrine was erected in her name (224).

Emecheta's novel reflects the situation of women in urban Nigeria during and after the war. But the turn of century saw changing attitudes reflected in Nigerian literature. While Jagua and Nnu Ego came to the city with a village background, Abikẹ, the central character of Chibundu Onuzo's *The Spider King's Daughter* (2012), is Lagos born and educated, the favourite daughter of a business magnate Olumide Johnson. Lagos, for Ekwensi a turbulent world of change and tension, has become established. Onuzo presents its varied panorama as in a film: the wealthy estates, where elegant residences with private swimming pools hide behind high walls with their armed guards; the sordid slums of Suluweru; the bustling Tejuoso market, and the crumbling district of Mile 12, where tenements, relics of better days, still preserve the appearance of past respectability, though no water now flows to their rusting taps or water closets. Its different social worlds communicate in distinct languages, from the self-conscious refined 'standard English' of the public school educated, to pidgin dialects unintelligible to the uninitiated. Connecting the city are the congested city roads, along which hawkers eke a precarious living, selling sweetmeats to commuters in their chauffeur-driven, air-conditioned limousines.

Abikẹ feels imprisoned in her safety and wealth. She picks up a young street trader, known throughout as 'the hawker', though we learn he is the son of a lawyer, Emmanuel Sodipo, whose suspicious death in a car crash has plunged his family into poverty. As the plot unravels, we discover that in the past Johnson, Abikẹ's father, had employed Sodipo, the hawker's father, and that Johnson had had him murdered when he refused to become a partner in his corrupt schemes. Johnson's facial birthmark, shaped like a spider, is symbolic of a still wider web of sinister activities, including trafficking young Nigerian girls for the European sex trade. The intensifying attraction between Abikẹ and the hawker turns to murderous violence as they come to face the history holding them apart. In the finale, Johnson's male offspring, whom he has refused to recognise as his heirs, contrive to have him murdered by his chauffeur. Abikẹ shares out his wealth and inherits her father's business empire, discovering her talent for business management. On the other side of the wealth divide, young Sodipo works to recover his family's respectability through industry and enterprise. Whatever the past, the novel says, the Nigerian future stands open to a new generation.

While one should not make conclusions from a single example, Onuzo's debut novel follows the wider development in Nigerian literature of the city. Ekwensi declared in 1974 that

The African fiction published immediately after independence dealt with traditional society. Then succeeding that you had themes on the man of two worlds. . . . [W]e are now having this literacy explosion in which the new man of today is living in the computer age He's an executive and he's like his counterpart throughout the entire world except that he just happens to be an African. (Nichols, 45)

In literature, Lagos began as the focus for changes brought by colonisation, an invasion disturbing the continuities of Nigeria's rural traditions, and the stage on which conflicting values were dramatised. Now Lagos is a city among world cities, sharing urban experiences common to London, New York or Tokyo. It is rural Nigeria that now appears exotic.

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Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo: Cowboys, Cosmonauts and Frontiers of Capitalism

Kaspar Loftin

The capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kinshasa, sits on the south bank of the Congo River, some 240 miles from the Atlantic. It is a city with a short but tumultuous history. After Lagos, Nigeria, Kinshasa is the second largest city in Sub-Saharan Africa with a population estimated at 12 million (De Boeck 2011). Its lingua franca is French, but Kinois (residents of Kinshasa) mainly speak Lingala, a pidgin language that emerged from the trading relationships between different peoples of the Congo River. Lingala became the language of composition for much of the DRC's renowned popular music, the dialect synonymous with the capital's urban melting pot (Stewart 2004).

Catholicism is the country's main religion arriving to the region with Portuguese sailors in 1491. Since the early 1990s and the end of the Cold War, there has been surge of Pentecostal churches in Kinshasa, a trend seen across West Africa (Piot 2010).

COLONIALISM AND TROPICAL COWBOYS

The surrounding area of Kinshasa has been populated since the first millennium BC. In 1871, Henry Morton Stanley, on behalf of King Leopold II of Belgium, brutally established two trading posts (Leo East, Kinshasa, and Leo West, Kintambo) on former market villages built around the Malebo Pool, a lake widening on the Congo River. An estimated ten million Congolese died during the exploitation of rubber before Leopold II handed his personal colony over to the Belgian state in 1908. The DRC is, of course, the setting for *Heart of*

Darkness (1899) and the lesser-known *Outpost of Progress* (1897), a short story that more overtly showed Joseph Conrad's contempt for the colonial project.

In 1910 Belgian authorities designated Leo East (Kinshasa) as the site for the capital of the Belgian Congo and began its construction. Like many colonial capitals Léopoldville, as it was formally named, was based on a binary physical structure, with the European neighbourhoods, *La Ville Européenne*, separated from the African quarters, the so-called *Cités Indigène*. The two zones were kept apart by a railway track, golf course and zoological garden. These neutral buffer zones implemented a *cordon sanitaire*; the rhetoric of hygiene suggested the protection of Europeans from tropical diseases such as malaria but also worked to appease European fears of the African population. Going beyond mere medicinal reasoning, this practice created a culture of purity and impurity between the European and black populations, which can be read as a use of colonial governmentality (see Demissie 2008). The division also neatly fitted into modernist approaches to urban planning that promoted an organisation of the urban territory via functional zoning principles.

Industrial expansion of the city required low-cost labour drawn from the country's rural hinterlands. This increase of a largely male population resulted in the emergence of informal townships in the African *Cité*. Just like ruling-class perceptions of slums in European capitals, colonial regimes tended to look at informal settlements as dangerous and disorderly zones of resistance and detribalisation. European powers feared that unplanned spaces were difficult to police and could become sites of anti-colonial activity. From the beginning of their emergence across Sub-Saharan Africa, policies existed towards their elimination. In Léopoldville the Belgian administration embarked on a large-scale housing scheme to try and control the activities of shanty dwellers (Beeckmans 2010).

A policy of 'petty apartheid' pervaded Léopoldville – from housing to mobility, labour conditions and leisure. As Africans were prohibited from entering the cinemas of Europeans, makeshift movie theatres for Africans were opened in the *Cités*. Some of the most popular films of the 1940s and 1950s were Westerns, particularly *Buffalo Bill* (1944). A working-class youth subculture of mainly unemployed males took their name from this cowboy hero, calling themselves the Bills. Dressed in Stetson hats and cowboy boots, as documented in the photographs of Jean Depara, the Bills tropicalised the Wild West motif, using it to mediate life under a strict and alienating colonial system. The gangs became a vehicle in which young, downcast men and sometimes women found solidarity. In an era when colonial powers controlled space, we can read the Bills as a form of rebellion, and emasculated men were able to exercise a form of masculinity and power through territorial control. Indeed Gondola has suggested that these groups can be seen as the street-level equivalent to the educated and often overtly political anti-colonial figures of the middle-class, black *évolués*. The Bills 'acted as a wedge, opening Kinshasa's townships to the possibility

of insurrection' and played a key role in the explosive city riots of 1959 that accelerated the decolonisation process (Gondola 2009: 4).

THE INVISIBLE CITY

Following Congolese independence in 1960 and the murder, by Belgian and US troops, of the country's first democratically elected leader, and anti-colonialist, Patrice Lumumba, Mobutu Sese Seko seized power in 1965. He launched a campaign of Zairianisation to break with the legacy of colonialism, Léopoldville was renamed Kinshasa and a French planning organisation was enlisted to design a new-look capital. Despite the French group submitting two master plans in 1967 and 1975 neither was enacted. In fact what followed in the subsequent years, due to economic crises and increased kleptocracy, was an urbanisation process from below.

In *The Colonial Debt* (1995: 53) Congolese author Maguy Kabamba wrote, 'like the telephone; (the state) exists but does not work'. By the early 1980s the Congolese state had become an 'absentee landlord' (Trefon 2004: 12). Indeed Mobutu famously told the Congolese people, 'débrouillez-vous' ('fend for yourself'). In response Kinois re-territorialised their capital city; in 1984 it was estimated that for every plot legally established, ten times more were created outside the legal system (Piermay 1997).

Mike Davis's *Planet of Slums* (2006) was effective in showing how neoliberal policies created the dramatic inequalities in cities of the Global South. However, his analysis of informal urbanisation was too simplistic, falling into typical apocalyptic narratives of the developing world; it ignored the agency of slum dwellers (Angotti 2006). As Thierry Nlandu, professor of English Literature at the University of Kinshasa, argued, informal urbanisation can be read as an emancipatory process. This is not to celebrate the reduction of the state (in a zealous neoliberal embrace) but to suggest that in Kinshasa, through actively taking land, the Kinois ceased 'to be an object to be urbanised', instead becoming 'the actor of his own urbanisation' (Nlandu in Enwezor et al. 2002). Despite the economic and political chaos of the time Kinshasa's slums offered remarkable patterns of stability, order and organisation (Trefon 2004). Shanties provided a form of solidarity and social cohesion that the absent state did not (Nlandu in Enwezor et al. 2002). As Robinson has argued, Western-centric views of what a city should look like are dependent on a set of presumed pre-given categories (Robinson 2006). The visual form of a shanty town often dominates analysis. As De Boeck argued, conclusions drawn from mere observation of Kin's built-form would be unfair and deceptive; this was because the city existed 'beyond its architecture' (De Boeck and Plissart 2004). Among the dilapidated buildings, there was a second 'invisible city' that functioned around and within these structures. This city was not seen but experienced something Davis had failed to grasp.

Kinshasa, like many developing countries, largely depended (and depends) on city dwellers to provide forms of urban stability and citiness. Simone has developed the concept of 'people-as-infrastructure' to show how services are delivered in metropolises of the Global South. Where infrastructure or network

systems are not functioning, or function at a low level, the flexible and mobile activities of city dwellers engaging with ‘objects, spaces, persons and practices’ enable the reproduction of life in the city (Simone 2004).

In Kinshasa, over time, colonial buildings and colonial spaces were occupied and reimagined; we can understand these transformations as a territorial palimpsest, an ongoing process of layering new uses and meanings (Lagae 2013). The significance of these changes only becomes apparent with historical context. For example, the Kinshasa Zoo and Botanical Gardens, built in 1933, originally served as a leisure space for white elites and made up part of the city’s *cordon sanitaire*. Effectively abandoned during the crisis, its grounds became a place of refuge for the capital’s street children and prostitutes. The Zoo features in recent documentary *Benda Bilili!* (2010) as the practice space of the polio-stricken musicians of Staff Benda Bilili. This transformation can be read as an appropriation of colonial space from below, whereby the Zoo’s symbol is inverted; once an exclusive site of European leisure and colonial exoticism it becomes a space of safety and inclusion for Kinshasa’s vulnerable engaging in communal and cultural activities.

SLUM ASTRONAUTS

In the early 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, Mobutu began to lose his political usefulness; accordingly the United States, and its financial allies the World Bank and IMF, stopped political and economic support. In 1997 Mobutu fled the country after being ousted by Laurent-Désiré Kabila, a long-term opponent in exile since a failed coup attempt in 1965. Following some years of political disorder, including the assassination of Kabila by his own bodyguard, his son Joseph took power in 2001. He is still the president in 2016.

In recent years the Congolese state has begun to aggressively retake control of urban spaces in Kinshasa. Kabila launched Cinq Chantiers, a programme committed to the so-called modernisation of the capital. As part of this programme, a new city in its entirety is being built on the reclaimed marshes of the Malebo Pool, land obtained by state-sponsored slum clearances. Described as the most ‘spectacular realisation of Neoliberal modernity’, *La Cité de Flueve* is a utopian (or dystopian) mega project under construction (De Boeck 2011: 276). Across other Sub-Saharan African countries similar gated cities are either planned or being built; in Accra, Ghana, there is Appolonia, in Lagos, Nigeria, there is Eko Atlantic city, and Uganda’s capital, Kampala, has Kakungulu eco-city. Murray has coined these new developments as ‘city doubles’, mirror opposites of the existing urban landscapes (cited in Miraftab et al. 2015). As Edgar Pieterse expressed, ‘the shanty city is by and large the real African city’ (2011: 21).

These new mega cities can be seen as a transfer of resources (land) from poor city dwellers to a small, globalised elite. Furthermore they can be read as a radical escalation of the already prominent practice of bunkerisation. *La Cité de Flueve* promises its own hospital, school, power supply and private causeway

bridges – a dramatic step-up from the compound; it will allow elites to totally cut themselves off from the everyday lives of the population.

As part of Cinq Chantiers, city authorities have begun to clean up informal sites by bulldozing bars and restaurants (businesses which provide an income for many of Kinshasa's women) deemed too close to the roadside (De Boeck 2011). This 'clean up' operation can be read as an attempt to 'normalise' the urban space, a process that can be traced back to the Haussmannisation of Paris in the 1850–1880s; in the name of civic improvement and renovation, the Parisian authorities destroyed the city's slums, citing disorder and lack of hygiene. In actuality, the state saw these sites as harbouring potential revolutionary activity and feared their prolonged existence. Kamete (2007) has shown how the Zimbabwean state has used similar rhetoric to 'restore order' in the informal spaces of the country's capital, Harare.

Kinshasa's future is not just a concern of the Congolese elite. Since the disappointment of independence and the failures of Mobutuism, Kinshasa artists and writers have dreamt up their own utopian visions for their city. Counter to the typical nightmarish descriptions of the DRC and its capital, Congolese playwright Vincent Lombume Kalimasi suggests Kinshasa can be 'a site of dreams'.

One vehicle of this imagining has been through Afro-futurism, an aesthetic rooted in the work of African-American jazz musician Sun Ra (1914–1993). His film *Space Is the Place* (1974) suggested that black (including those politically 'black') emancipation would be realised in outer space, not on planet earth. These ideas of alienation and metaphors of utopianism have been carried and explored in Europe and the United States by many diasporic figures such as filmmaker John Akomfrah, musician George Clinton and cultural theorist Kodwo Eshun. In the African context, Eshun suggests that Afro-futurism works to forecast and fix African dystopia, a label that hangs over the continent, particularly in the DRC (Eshun 2003). Many contemporary African artists, writers and musicians are employing an Afro-futurist aesthetic in their work as a tool for understanding current changes in the continent. The Chimurenga project's publication *Cityscapes #7: Futurity*, and the Goethe Institute's *African Future's Festival* and the *Pan African Space Station* (a platform for critical culture) all reflect a growing interest in Africa's future within the arts and the academy.

Few African cities can boast as rich a body of Afro-futurist-themed cultural production as Kinshasa. Drawing from the experiences and knowledge produced in the informal slums, the work of artists such as Pume Bylex uses utopian and spacial concepts to reimagine the capital. In the film *The World According to Bylex* (2008) the artist builds his perfect city and, like Sun Ra, invents his own cosmology, his own forms of modernity and his own radical utopianism (De Boeck and Van Synghel 2008).

In 2014 a cosmonaut emerged on the streets of Kinshasa, wearing a silver suit 'bristling with extensions of various kinds'; it moved through shanty towns including the densely populated Massina, aka. the People's Republic of China (Diallo and Malaquais 2014). This figure was a member of the Kongo

Astronauts (KA), a ‘crew-part artists’ collective, part think-tank and experimental living facility’ (Diallo and Malaquais 2014).

The spaceman’s suit, like the work of Cyrus Kabiru, a Kenyan junk artist from Nairobi, was made from recycled materials. Its helmet, quite clearly a silver-painted plastic bucket, exposed the ‘seams of processes’ (Diallo and Malaquais 2014). This conscious decision to show how things are made aligned KA with Kinshasa’s slum population who have spent decades reusing and reimagining objects and spaces. The suit, as a metaphor, shows the possibilities of imagination and claims the right for the poor to have their own utopian dreams, counter to the elite’s sterile vision of *La Cite de Flueve*. KA’s suit, I suggest, embraces the ironic appellation ‘Kin La Poubelle’ (a play on words of the colonial named Kin La Belle), often used by Kinshasians to describe their polluted city. The meaning of Kin La Poubelle is inverted and made positive, raising questions about what can be achieved with reused garbage. One of the Congo’s most successful international bands, Konono N°1, is known for their DIY aesthetic – having assembled many of their instruments from salvaged items. As the recent project by the Kisangani (DRC’s third largest city)-based Studio Kabako showed, recycling is not limited to materials but can be applied to practices. The Fanfare Funérailles (Funeral Brass) performance reinvented the social function of the funeral; the occasion became a hybrid performance for the community that entertained as well as provoked, all through the practice of dance.

The Kongo astronaut has also become an emblem for the city’s emerging music; its image appeared on the album sleeve of the renowned DRC band Mbongwana Star, whose opening track is titled ‘From Kinshasa to the Moon’. In ‘Capture’ a music video by Baloji, a politicised rapper who splits his time between Kinshasa and Brussels, two of KA’s cosmonauts explore a defunct factory, interacting with discarded items of industry. One of the key themes of Baloji’s work concerns Congo’s relationship with technology, including the dramatic ironies. As Žižek recently pointed out the DRC’s natural resources are central to the world’s new technologies and also Eastern Congo’s rural violence; there is nothing more modern than this! (Žižek 2016: 46). Yet many people in the East lack basic healthcare, let alone reliable wi-fi.

It is apt that the astronaut chose the public domain to announce itself; the street is the space where the vast majority of the population act out their daily lives. Whilst bunkerised elites hide behind barbed wire fences, blacked-out cars and soon their own gated city, the street in Kinshasa, as in Lagos, Accra or Lome, is the place of encounters. In these public spaces music is played, gossip is exchanged, transactions are made, and people drink, eat and sometimes sleep (particularly Kin’s large population of street children). KA’s appearances are in keeping with the ‘magic’ of African art which ‘derives from its power of dematerialisation, its capacity to inhabit the commonplace...with the aim of transforming it into an idea and an event’ (Mbembe 2015b).

Africa is increasingly seen as ‘the final frontier’ (of capitalism); as postcolonial theorist Achille Mbembe suggests, ‘if you want to have any idea of the

world that is coming, the world ahead of us, look at Africa' (Mbembe 2015). Kinshasa in 2016 is a city in quandary; who will decide the city's future? Kabila's modernisation programme looks to return to authoritarian organisations of space, whilst the slum astronaut stakes its claim on the future in the spirit of the people.

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What Is the City in Africa?

Patrick Williams

INTRODUCTION

The city in Africa is a problem.

The first aspect of the problem, more evident in the past, is the apparent absence of African cities. For those of a Hegelian bent, such an absence would of course be entirely to be expected. If Africa is the continent without history, then it must of necessity be a continent without cities—the onward march of urbanisation constituting from one perspective the visible sign of history on the move. Historically, an absence of African cities would be an altogether natural thing for many, since, for them, Africans, being ‘naturally’ both rural and tribal, did not belong in anything larger than a village. As Freund says, ‘Colonial administrators . . . took for granted that the African was a naturally rural inhabitant whose urban experience was a danger to the integrity of African society as well as to colonial authority’ (Freund 2007, p. 83).

A more recent dimension of the problem is the fact that urban theorists, as well as others less theoretical, persist in using oversimplifying concepts like ‘the African city’. While colonialism’s well-known reductive, homogenising categorisations clearly served the needs of colonial governance, as well as fitting in with racist or Orientalist ideologies—‘they’re all the same’—routinely asserting the indistinguishable nature of indigenous people seems to have migrated to cover the cities they inhabit. The fact that such unitary, undifferentiated, even essentialising, categories survive in the postcolonial period is a matter for some concern, if not necessarily for surprise. In addition, not only are African cities all (allegedly) alike, they are, being African, alike in their insufficiencies and failings:

In urban studies, it is often the case that theorists and scholars think and write across the whole of the continent, and often in a way that is ‘obsessed with the

less palatable particularities of African urban politics and society' (Chabal 2009:18). Although there is some evidence here and there of changes, it is still generally the case that cities in Africa are ignored, banished to a different, other, lesser category of not-quite cities, or held up as examples of all that can go wrong with urbanism in much of the mainstream and even critical urban literature. (Myers 2011, p. 3–4)

Even the best and most radical of urban theorists—David Harvey, Mike Davies, Doreen Massey, Saskia Sassen and others—have little to say about Africa, and what they do have to say may not be particularly helpful. For Murray and Myers, the problem lies principally with the analytical models and ideological norms of—predominantly Western—academics.

The difficulties that scholars often encounter in theoretically specifying cities in Africa stem from two analytic flaws. The first follows from an undue reliance upon ideal-typical models of urban development derived from identifying the salient features of key Western cities as the defining characteristics of a paradigmatic urbanism... The second flaw arises from the continued reliance upon analytic categorisations and distinctions that were developed under specific historical and spatial conditions that may have been appropriate for an earlier epoch or time frame, but no longer carry the same relevance under contemporary circumstances. (Murray and Myers 2006, p. 8)

One contentious analytic category that refuses to disappear is tradition and modernity. Within postcolonial studies, it has been so unthinkingly overused that many in the field will not go near it. Rashmi Varma, for example, in her excellent study, *The Postcolonial City and Its Subjects* (2011), talks of 'the binaristically entrenched traps of reading between tradition and modernity, city and country...' (Varma 2011, p. 20) As Simon Gikandi points out in 'Reason, modernity and the African crisis' (2002), however, while modernity has been a category from which Africans were routinely and repeatedly excluded, it remains an enormously important concept for African intellectuals, as does its relation to traditional forms, beliefs and practices. The relationship between modernity and tradition, understood in increasingly complex ways, is also one that African cultural producers, as we will see in the course of this chapter, continue to place at the heart of their work.

The representation of African cities constitutes another dimension of the problem: how do you begin to encompass the diversity in the continent-wide cultural, historical, political and architectural trajectories? Perhaps through an appropriate variety of forms and methods. Myers comments that 'cinema, literature and photography are among the representational tools for postcolonialising African cities' (Myers, op. cit., p. 46), and it is the first, rather than the second of these, that this chapter will address. Without any hope of providing an all-embracing response to the problem of representation, the chapter will examine four films by African directors. Their stylistically different work tackles a range of historical moments,

economic states and urban possibilities. Their representations of cities in Africa are important as visual self-representations, and also because they all belong to the postcolonial period. Each offers his own response to the question that frames the chapter. (All the films discussed here are—some-what unusually for work produced by African filmmakers—available for purchase. Of the directors, Sembene has been extensively written about. Others, like Flora Gomes, have been largely ignored. Murphy and Williams 2007 have a chapter on each of the filmmakers discussed here.) The choice to analyse films, rather than novels, about African cities is also prompted in part by the fact that, in a manner that parallels the sidelining of Africa in ‘global’ studies of urban development, African film-making is strangely, though repeatedly, ignored or downplayed, for example, in books dealing with World Cinema (even more recent ones like Dennison and Lim 2006 that claim to be *Remapping World Cinema*).

OUSMANE SEMBENE, BOROM SARRET

It is not without a certain ironic significance, given the lack of understanding of African urbanisation referred to earlier, that the first important African film—the short *Borom Sarret*, released in 1962, and directed by the man often referred to as ‘the father of African cinema’, Ousmane Sembene—should be a film of the city. This is the postcolonial city, unnamed but recognisable as *Dakar*, capital of Sembene’s native Senegal. It is also spatially and architecturally very much the colonial city, as memorably described by Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Indeed, with the exception of the remarkable *Battle of Algiers*, directed by Gillo Pontecorvo, it is hard to think of a film that encapsulates the spaces of the colonial city better than *Borom Sarret* does in its 19-minute duration.

Given its relevance to the urban spaces inherited by postcolonial states, Fanon’s view of their colonial construction is worth quoting at some length:

The colonial world is a world cut in two . . . The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. The settler’s town is a strongly-built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly-lit town: the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about . . . The settler’s town is a well-fed town, an easy-going town: its belly is always full of good things. The settler’s town is a town of white people, of foreigners.

The town belonging to the colonised people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the Medina, the reservation, is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how: they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness: men live there on top of each other, and their huts are built one on top of the

other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs. (Fanon 2001 [1961], p. 30)

Although the racial dimension which is fundamental to colonialism ('the settler's town is a town of white people') no longer applies in the postcolonial period in the same way, its place has been taken by class, with the emergence of a black bourgeoisie. Similarly, although elements of colonial ideology may perhaps no longer apply (e.g. the 'native' town populated by 'men of ill repute'), the two mutually exclusive spaces show little, if any, change. Above all, as we see in the film, the space of the 'native' remains a space of hunger and deprivation, as the political, economic and ideological separation and segregation embodied in the construction of the colonial city continue to dominate the lives of supposedly liberated Africans.

Borom Sarret follows a day in the life of a Dakar cart driver (Borom Sarret being the Africanised form of the French for cart driver, 'bonhomme charrrette'). This 'Long Day's Journey into Night' of one member of the urban working class takes place in various parts of the city, providing graphic representation of the different spaces and the lives lived in them. The action takes place in the open air of the African city. This is an early example of African cinema's preference for location shooting, partly for financial reasons (location shooting means that you do not have to build a set, which for a cinema industry permanently and woefully lacking funding is a major consideration), partly for reasons of lighting (natural light is preferable—and also free), and also, importantly, because of Sembene's commitment to a realist cinema. This can be attributed, among other things, to his having learned film-making in the Soviet Union, to his liking for Italian neorealist films, and, above all, to his belief in the importance of a realist aesthetic as the best and most effective means of communicating with his African audience. The question of an audience and how to address them is crucial in Sembene's move from being a novelist to being a filmmaker, though the relationship between literature and film continues to be important in his work, as comments like the following make clear: 'For me, the cinema begins with literature. But when I write, I wish the final product to be cinematic' (Downing 1987, p. 46). The switch from the written to the visual came about because of the felt need to address the widest possible audience—within Senegal, but also, if possible, beyond. The novel obviously requires certain things—an appropriate level of literacy, particularly in a foreign language; extended or repeated amounts of free time—that cinema does not; most importantly in this context, novel reading is a solitary activity, rather than a communal one. *Borom Sarret*, as Sembene's first film, is something of a transitional text, in that it has no dialogue, only a voice-over spoken in French. (The important move to using Wolof, the major language of Senegal, for maximum comprehensibility, came later.) Interestingly, the use of voice-over, which, once again was the result of a lack of funding (the

technology needed for synchronised dialogue is much more expensive), was taken by some critics to indicate the ‘literary’ character of the film.

The film opens with the sound of the *azan*, the morning call to prayer of Islam, as the cart driver prays for protection from the law and from evildoers (an interesting two-pronged request, particularly in view of what follows). The title sequence shows wide roads and motorised traffic, but the cart driver’s part of the city has neither of these. As he sets off for work in his cart, establishing shots show what urban theorists would call the ‘informal city’ of shacks and shanties. The second and third of his jobs offer a stark contrast, as well as radically different aspects of urban modernity. In the first of these, he takes a pregnant woman and her husband to the maternity hospital, and in the second, a father and his dead child to the cemetery. The maternity hospital, one of the most impressive buildings seen in the film, presents the progressive face of modernity, its fine arched facade fronted by flowerbeds. At the cemetery, on the other hand, obstructive (post-)colonial bureaucracy prevents the father from burying his son because he does not have exactly the right paperwork.

A lack of paperwork is central to the cart driver’s next, and disastrous, hiring. He is prevailed upon by a smart-suited man to take him and his belongings to the former European zone of the Heights. The rigid segregation of urban space introduced by colonialism and analysed by Fanon still continues, and although the cart driver points out that he and those like him are not allowed into the Heights, the fistful of money waved in his face convinces him to take the risk. As they enter the Heights, the camera pans across an impressive modern cityscape, while the soundtrack, which up till now has featured simple West African music played on the stringed *xalam*, switches to stately European classical. Shot from a very low angle to emphasise their impressive size, the buildings—Heights, indeed—overawe the cart driver until he is stopped by a policeman. The policeman steals the cart driver’s World War II medal and fines him for entering the Heights without the correct paperwork, a fine he is only able to pay by selling his cart. Crossing the urban divide and venturing into the wrong part of the city has left him penniless and without any means of earning money.

As he walks home with his horse, to the accompaniment of mournful classical music, the cart driver ponders the problems of ‘la vie moderne’, and indeed it is possible to view the whole film as a meditation on urban modernity and its discontents. Life in the city, particularly for those like the cart driver, is, in his view, one of regulation and surveillance, bureaucracy and corruption, a relentless treadmill leading nowhere except perhaps death. Urban existence also takes place, unavoidably, within a capitalist framework. The ruling class is now the black bourgeoisie, about whom Fanon repeatedly warned, and of whom he was so scathing:

In fact, the bourgeois phase in the history of under-developed countries is a completely useless phase. When this caste has vanished, devoured by its own contradictions, it will be seen that nothing new has happened since independence was proclaimed, and that everything must be started again from scratch. (Fanon, op. cit. p. 142)

The representative of the black bourgeoisie here is the cart driver's final passenger, who leads him to disaster, and escapes unscathed, as money and social position trump laws and regulations. Capitalism obviously means a money economy, and this is something that a number of the characters in the film have difficulty working within. The cart driver picks up regular passengers, none of whom is able or willing to pay him for their daily journey; he takes the wrong sort of customers, like the man with the dead child, and ends up not being paid; he gives everything he has earned to the *griot*, or traditional praise-singer, and has nothing left with which to feed his family. In turn, the *griot* is a different example of the negative effects of a capitalist economy. In precolonial West African society, he was a much-respected figure, a combination of bard, storyteller and community memory bank. Relocated into an urban capitalist context, he is reduced to little more than a street performer, though his praise for the noble warrior ancestors of the cart driver does get him all the money the latter has earned. Tradition lives on in the city, but, in this case, in a degraded, commodified form.

Returning to his own part of the city, and accompanied once again by traditional African music, the cart driver offers a very different sense of inhabiting the urban environment. Here, in 'mon quartier', he feels good; 'It's not like up there' (i.e. in the Heights); there are no police here; here, everyone knows everyone else; there is community and solidarity. The sense of community is such that the cart driver refers to it as 'my village'. Despite this positive interpretation, capitalist exigencies appear inescapable, and this risks being for the cart driver, in Fanon's terms, 'the native town [as] a hungry town, a town starved of bread' since he brings home nothing from his day in the city, indeed, having lost his cart, he has much less than when he set out in the morning. The one ray of hope is his wife, who, in the final sequence, leaves home promising that she will find them something to eat. Despite his morning prayer to be protected from evildoers and the laws, the cart driver has precisely fallen foul of both during his day in the city. It is hard not to feel that Fanon's bitter assessment: 'They are born there, it matters little where or how: they die there, it matters not where, nor how' (Fanon, *ibid.*) is still the case in the postcolonial city. As Freund comments, 'The dream of the successful city which certainly accompanied independence for African nationalists can be characterised as a modernist dream. . . . It is a dream which has faded painfully' (Freund, *op. cit.*, p. 142).

DJIBRIL DIOP MAMBETY, *HYENAS*

The Senegalese critic Mamadou Diouf may be correct when he claims that, 'However turbulent he may be, Diop Mambety (1945–1998) is undeniably the eldest son in Sembene's lineage' (Diouf 1996, p. 241), though the majority of commentators stress differences rather than continuity or filiation, with Mambety typically being portrayed as variously modernist, or postmodernist, in contrast to the perceived unrelenting realism of Sembene. Unquestionably, despite the presence of films such as *Borom Sarret* in Sembene's oeuvre,

Mambety is far more of an urban filmmaker. His first two, shorter, films, *Contras' City* (1969) and *Badou Boy* (1970), are bounded by the city space of Dakar, while his first feature-length film, *Touki Bouki* (1973), is a narrative of the dream of escaping from one urban environment (African, therefore inferior and unsatisfactory to the film's protagonists) to another (bigger, better, richer—in this case, Paris).

After this wholesale immersion in the city, Mambety's next feature film, *Hyenas* (1992), comes as something of a shock, registering as it does a shift from the African city as overwhelmingly present, indeed seemingly inescapable—as in *Touki Bouki*—to the city as disappearing, almost entirely absent. While the idea of the disappearing city may seem hard to imagine in the modern world, it is not without precedent in the African context: 'Some cities that pre-dated the rise of Europe were able to capitalise on colonialism to grow larger (e.g. Mombasa, Kenya, or many North African cities) but others were bypassed and replaced, ultimately superseded and occasionally falling into ruin' (Myers 2011, p. 51). 'Falling into ruin' is certainly what has happened to the city of Colobane (a district within Dakar), and its ruinous state—physically, economically and ultimately morally—is crucial to the unfolding of the action. (The extent of Colobane's disappearance is apparently so great that even a seasoned film critic like Frank Ukadike, in an interview with Mambety, repeatedly calls it a village. Unperturbed, Mambety continues to refer to it as a city.) If the city in *Borom Sarret* is, in Freund's terms, 'unsuccessful' in its divided, oppressive state, then that in *Hyenas* looks little short of catastrophic.

Hyenas is a reworking by Mambety of *Der Besuch der Alten Dame* (*The Visit*) by Swiss dramatist Friedrich Durrenmatt, and both concern the return, after an absence of many years, of a woman, previously rejected by, and ejected from, her community on the grounds of immorality. In each case, the woman is now rich and powerful, and bent on revenge. In *Hyenas*, Linguere Ramatou is said to be 'richer than the World Bank', and certainly many times richer than the city to which she is returning. Colobane, emblematic of the continent, is drowning in debt: as the film opens, the town hall—building, contents and all—is being seized by bailiffs as a result of non-payment of debt, thereby threatening to bring an end to urban governance. Not only administration is threatened: communication and infrastructure are disappearing, or have already done so—we are in 'Colobane where trains, planes and even cars no longer stop'. The absence of cars in the film is indeed both striking and significant. The mayor rides around town in a cart identical to that in *Borom Sarret* except for the addition of a sunshade. When the townspeople go to meet the train carrying the returning Ramatou (in the dusty wasteland outside Colobane, since trains no longer stop there), it is reminiscent of a scene out of a Western: some are in carts, some on horseback and the majority on foot—not an internal combustion engine in sight. That absence, and Colobane's decline, is highlighted by the fact that no sooner has Ramatou got off the train than a huge limousine and a four-wheel-drive appear as if from nowhere to carry her and her entourage into town.

The announcement of the return of a fabulously wealthy Ramatou therefore offers a possible way to save Colobane; as the mayor says, 'We have fallen into an abyss so deep that only the lady coming today can pull us out of it.' To that end, he calls a council meeting, but in the absence of a town hall, they are obliged to gather, symbolically enough, in the ruins known as the Hyena's Hole to plan their rescue strategy. Although they hoped gradually to wheedle funds for urban regeneration from Ramatou, they are taken aback, both by her immediate offer of unimaginable sums of money—100 billion Francs—and by her demand that getting the money is conditional on their killing her former lover, the amiable and endlessly generous Draman Drameh, grocer, future mayor and 'the most popular man in Colobane'.

This, then, is the economic and moral dilemma at the heart of narrative: the rebuilding of the city, the regeneration of its economic life, and personal enrichment, at the cost of destroying or denying basic human values of friendship, loyalty and justice. At first, Ramatou's demand is vociferously rejected: Draman's normally taciturn wife shouts 'You'll have to kill me first!', while the mayor adds, 'We are in Africa, but the drought will never turn us into savages. In the name of Colobane and humanity, I refuse your offer.' All too soon, however, Draman's customers are stripping his shop of its most expensive items—everything now taken on credit, in anticipation of his death and their own future enrichment. Ramatou's assistant, the former chief justice of Colobane, tells her, 'The time has come. They are raiding the grocery.' To which she replies, 'Already? The reign of the hyenas has begun.' In the same way, the mayor, formerly Draman's friend and sponsor, now has an architectural model for the vast new town hall that he wants built. As Draman comments bitterly, 'You're speculating on my death.'

The overcoming of values by commodities, indeed, the turning of values into commodities, to be purchased at an appropriate price, continues with Ramatou's importing of lorry loads of fridges, washing machines, TVs and the like, to be given away to the people of Colobane. As the master of ceremonies for this unusual undertaking says, 'Ladies of Colobane, the city is revived. All thanks to Linguere Ramatou. All these things she has given us have come from abroad.' The display of individualised greed is short-lived and impressive. The mayor's wife had already asked her husband for seven of everything; now she asks for more. This shocking behaviour is outdone by Draman's wife, who, with the impeccable logic of capitalist acquisitiveness, and in a manner that it is tempting, but not altogether accurate, to call primitive accumulation, simply says, 'I'll take everything.'

In an attempt to prevent everyone, and all their values, being bought, the Doctor and the Teacher go to plead with Ramatou. They reveal to her Colobane's secret, and its hope for salvation—its reserves of untapped minerals including oil, gold and phosphate, in which they hope she might invest. In turn, Ramatou reveals to them that she knows all about these; in fact, she has already bought them: 'The factories, the fields, the town, the roads, the houses—they are all mine. I had my agents buy the whole lot.' All that is left for Colobane is to 'pay your debts. Either you get blood on your hands, or you stay poor forever'.

Colobane opts for bloodied hands, and the longed-for regeneration of the city. Indeed, no sooner have they paid their debts and killed Draman in a traditional-looking, self-deluding act of collective assassination than a menacing rumble on the soundtrack announces the arrival of giant earthmoving equipment which proceeds to flatten everything in sight. In the final sequence of the film, long-distance shots of hazy skyscrapers and the sound of aircraft coming into land announce that Colobane is returning to the realm of urban modernity, though the cost is considerable. The final shot is of a landscape flattened and deeply scarred by caterpillar tracks, and a baobab tree, so important in African life, culture and belief, reduced from its usual mighty dimensions to something small, insignificant and altogether vulnerable.

Mambety's bitter satire might look like a somewhat belated version of the postcolonial literary genre, epitomised by novels like the Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah's (b. 1939) *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968), which expressed deep dissatisfaction and disillusionment with different kinds of social and economic failure and corruption in the post-independence period. Moving beyond the problems of the individual nation state analysed in novels like Armah's, it could be tempting, from a certain perspective, to set up a quasi-allegorical equation in which 'failing /failed city = failing/ failed state = failing/ failed continent', where seemingly the only available route out of ever-more generalised failure is offered in the brutal prescriptions of the World Bank and Western corporate capitalism. Mambety, however, is not setting out to criticise Africa, and his aim is global rather than continental: 'All of these [eclectic imported elements] are intended to open the horizons, to make the film universal. The film depicts a human drama. My task was to identify the enemy of humankind: money, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank. I think my target is clear' (Ukadike 1998, p. 144). Mambety adds, 'We have sold our souls too cheaply... We are done for if we have traded our souls for money. That is why childhood is my last refuge' (Ukadike, op. cit., p. 140). The final comment is interesting: although Colobane offers no sign of this refuge, the importance of children is even more visible in the films of Flora Gomes, as we will see a little later.

JEAN-PIERRE BEKOLO, *QUARTIER MOZART*

Although he acknowledges a great debt to Mambety (and claims—a little controversially—that with *Hyenas* Mambety became the father of African cinema), the city in Jean-Pierre Bekolo's (b. 1966 in Cameroon) enormously popular first feature film, *Quartier Mozart* (1992), could hardly be less like Mambety's Colobane, while the quartier is a long way from that so warmly praised by Sembene's cart driver. Based on the real district of Quartier Mozart in the port city of Douala, Cameroon, which Bekolo describes as 'a very tough neighbourhood', the film follows a group of young people over the course of a few days. Quartier Mozart may be 'very tough' but, if Basile Ndjio is correct, that would apply to the entire city. For Ndjio, Douala is a 'necropolis' that its

more resourceful inhabitants, or *sauveteurs*, endeavour to turn into a ‘hedonopolis’. ‘Whether he/she is a hawker, sorcerer, hooker, robber, profane or trickster, the *sauveteur* is above all someone who, in his/her everyday practice, endeavors, by means of resourcefulness, ruse, trickery, mischievousness, or violence, not only to transform his/her living conditions, but also to invent a new form of life’ (Ndjio 2006, p. 116).

Quartier Mozart is very much a film of the people, for the people, focusing on the ‘real’ lives of ordinary Africans, though, as we will see, its grounding in contemporary African urban reality is not an absolute determinant. As Bekolo comments, ‘For me, the key is to play with, but not get stuck in, reality’ (Akudinobi 1999, p. 79). As such, the film occupies an interesting liminal space, much like that described by Benita Parry, in what

Michael Löwy designates as the border space between reality and ‘irreality’. This ‘irrealism’ is substantiated by the juxtaposition of the mundane and the fantastic, the recognizable and the improbable, the seasonal and the eccentric, the earth-born and the fabulous, the legible and the oneiric, historically inflected and mystical states of consciousness. (Parry 2009, p. 39)

The film’s use of transgressive irrealism is an important element in its appeal.

Quartier Mozart is a film for the people, insofar as Bekolo’s aim is to speak to an African audience. While that aim might seem altogether obvious, it is anything but in a context where, given the commercial stranglehold of Asian films and US blockbusters, African films are much more likely to be screened outside the continent. (Mambety, for example, asked by a critic to comment on African films in general, replied, ‘You tell me—you will have seen many more African films than me’). It is also ‘for the people’ in terms of addressing popular subjects (male–female relations, gender and sexuality) in a popular—earthy, humorous, accessible—manner. In his rejection of a style of African film-making perceived as unremittingly politicised and didactic, Bekolo is here very much in agreement with Mweze Ngangura (b. 1950), director of *La vie est belle* (1987), who, in ‘African Cinema—Militancy or Entertainment?’ (Bakari and Cham 1996), argues that an African cinema that focuses on entertainment rather than politics is more likely to contribute to the development of Africa.

In addition, *Quartier Mozart* is a film of the youth, for the youth. Its multi-generic style includes elements of music video, while the sound track is energetic Afro-pop supplied by Philip Kikwe. It is interested in youth culture, style, behaviour, slang, all of which are part of Bekolo’s search for relevance. As Bekolo pointed out, ‘In Cameroon, the public liked *Quartier Mozart* because, among other things, the characters talked like them’ (in Akudinobi 1999, 74). At the same time, it is a film of the city, for the city, offering a recognisable urban culture to a contemporary urban audience. In this combination of urban life and youth culture, *Quartier Mozart* resembles a number of recent successful African novels, such as Chris Abani’s *Graceland* (2004), and NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* (2013), though it lacks the ‘escape to the United States’ theme

that unites the novels (and, controversially in some quarters, their authors). Frequent fast cutting in the film gives it a sense of speed, which makes it simultaneously appear modern, and also unlike many other African films, which have typically been marked by an aesthetic of slowness and long takes. In that vein, the film opens with the main characters displaying their street-smart personas in quick-fire, straight-to-camera cameos of self-definition. With the exception of *Atango* and *Saturday*, all of them use nicknames or street names.

Unsurprisingly, style is important for a number of the young people in the film, most obviously *Atango*, the (alleged) Sorbonne graduate working as a tailor, who uses his clothes-making as a means to attract women. *Saturday* also likes to dress smartly, though this involves her having to run the gauntlet of the men of the neighbourhood, who line the street, whistling and calling out to her. For many, however, lack of money means a lack of opportunity to show off in style. Having said that, it is noticeable that when *Queen of the Hood* is transformed into *My Guy*, and steals clothes from a washing line to hide his nakedness, the next morning, displaying the resourcefulness of the urban *sauveteur*, he is sewing decorations onto them, and making cut-offs from the stolen jeans.

One of the ways in which tradition insinuates itself into the film is through the figure of the witch *Mama Thekla*. Not usually associated with the urban, nor with modernity, the witch is a problem for a number of critics, but not for *Bekolo*: 'It is [a problem] for those people who think of it as past, or agree with the idea that it is what makes Africa backward. For me those elements are African, even universal' (Akudinobi 1999, p. 74). The presence of the magical and the unreal within the contemporary urban may be something that critics outside Africa can find hard to accept, but, once again, for *Bekolo*, the use of the fantastic makes the film more relevant and more likely to engage an African audience. In this case, no witch, no narrative, since it is *Mama Thekla*'s transformation of the teenage girl *Queen of the Hood* into the young man *My Guy* that structures the entire action of the film, centring on the relatively simple narrative problem of whether *My Guy* and *Saturday* will sleep together.

As the film's voiceover comments in the early stages, 'Neighbourhoods like *Mozart* often talk witchcraft,' and witchcraft runs through the film and the city, often in tandem with aspects of modernity, so, for instance, we hear a woman telling how her husband died in a 'bewitched' air crash, while another's died in a 'bewitched' car waiting at a stop sign. *Saturday*, discussing men with a friend, says she would like to have *Denzel Washington*, even if it meant using witchcraft to get him. *Panka*, a figure from traditional popular culture (and who turns out to be *Mama Thekla* transformed), can make men's genitals shrink or disappear through his handshake. Life in the city clearly has some formidable challenges.

FLORA GOMES, *THE CHILDREN'S REPUBLIC*

For *Flora Gomes* (b. 1949 in *Cadique*, in *Guinea-Bissau*), the city is at best an ambiguous space. In his first feature film, *Mortu Nega (Those Whom Death Refused)* (1988), it is the place where the wounded *Sako*, one of *Amílcar*

Cabral's (1924–1973) anticolonial freedom fighters, experiences disappointment, and betrayal by former comrades, as he searches for some treatment that will heal his wounds. In *Udju azul di Yonta* (*The Blue Eyes of Yonta*) (1992), although the growth of the city is part of the 'progress' brought by independence, the price, as for the inhabitants of Colobane, is high. Vicente, another former freedom fighter, comments, 'See the town, how it is dying? It weeps over its divorce from the River Geba. Now it is married to the container ships. The huge mango trees along the street are gone. They reminded us of the jungle. . . . Listen, can you hear? The army of cars, reaping your past and sowing modernity. And your culture, Nha Padidor, will it survive?' In *Po di Sanguí* (*Tree of Blood*) (1996), the city is the source of the mindlessly destructive, profit-driven capitalism that threatens the complete annihilation of the community of Amanha Lundgu, and in the face of which they are forced to flee. While his films may be set largely (*Mortu Nega*) or entirely (*Po di Sanguí*) outside the city, Gomes' most recent film, *The Children's Republic* (2012), places the city at the centre of its concerns.

Even more important than the condition of the city is the condition of children. Children are one of the touchstones of Gomes' oeuvre, and his films typically end with some kind of upbeat scene involving children. Here, however, what we first see of children is anything but upbeat. The film opens with boy soldiers, led by the brutal, drug-fuelled Mon de Ferro, attacking a village, slaughtering the adults and taking away the young women and children. It then shifts to the capital city, and an altogether different kind of 'child': Nuta, a bright, enthusiastic student, the film's central character.

The city is in a bad way: there is evidently a civil war in process (part of the effect which is the creation of boy soldiers like those we have already seen) and the capital is under attack. Despite this, the President's Council wrangle over whether to allow more generous profit sharing in order to encourage inward capitalist investment in the country. This pointless debate is brought to an end by a rebel rocket attack, and the entire government flees in panic. Only Dube, the president's elderly councillor, remains, looking for his lost spectacles, without which he is virtually blind. As he stumbles through the palace, he encounters Nuta, who, providentially, finds him a pair of spectacles in the debris, and together they emerge into the deserted post-apocalyptic-looking devastation of the city.

So far, so 'real', but the unreal is never far off in Flora Gomes' films, and particularly not here. The spectacles Nuta finds give the wearer the ability to see differently, including into the future, so Dube is able to tell Nuta that she will grow up to be the doctor she has always wanted to be. As he says, 'There are so many wounds to heal in this city. . . . You will have to learn to treat the city, and, at the same time, to treat the people. That is the most important thing', and healing of all sorts is central to the narrative. In *African Cities*, Garth Myers includes the Wounded City as one of his key categories, and has this to say, 'Most Western students and most urban studies scholars will have a notion somewhere in their heads of African cities as wounded places, whether

wounded by war, famine, disease, poverty or political turmoil' (Myers 2011, p. 19). He does, however, go on to say:

There is, however, a 'continuum' to urban violence in Africa that is worth articulating at the outset – in other words, one must not lump all forms of violence together into a notion of all African cities as violent or equally violent in the same ways, as writers prone to the rampant stereotypes and generalisations about the continent are wont to do. (Myers, *op. cit.*, p. 143)

How to heal a wounded city? This is what the film explores. As Mon de Ferro's group, now reduced to just five, wander aimlessly through scrubland, the youngest says that he can see a city, but is told that he is always imagining things. In fact, he did glimpse the city, now transformed. Its streets are thronged with children—but only with children; there are no adults in this, the Children's Republic, apart from Dube, now Nuta's mentor. Abandoned by adults who fled the fighting seen at the beginning of the film, the children have come to realise that they can survive without grown-ups. In addition, as adults notice and 'see' the children less and less, so they become literally invisible, and the city with them. Inhabiting this unreal space, from which it is possible to go to and from the real/visible world, the children have constructed a community at peace, in an attempt to heal themselves and the city. There is a democratic city council, and a new president every day. Decisions about their lives are collectively arrived at; indeed, collectivity at all levels is how their society functions. A lot of time is spent, appropriately enough, having fun, but the necessary, mundane things are also organised and carried out. The physical healing of the city's inhabitants is in the capable hands of Nuta. When she operates to remove shrapnel from one of Mon de Ferro's group, he asks her, 'How can you be a surgeon at your age?', to which she replies, 'Anything is possible here. It's the Children's Republic.'

It is clear that Gomes has created a utopian city here, but this is no empty dreaming of how to live better in a failed state. *The Children's Republic* marks the high point—thus far—in Gomes' repeated use of utopian themes in his films, many of them related to anti-colonial and postcolonial issues in Guinea-Bissau. (For a more extended discussion of this, see Williams 2016.) In addition, and arguably more importantly, *The Children's Republic* bears comparison with other progressive, practical attempts to organise urban society in a completely different manner. Although the Paris Commune of 1871 is best known for being born out of the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War, and for ending in the mass slaughter of the rebels, its brief span also included audacious social, cultural and political experimentation. The Commune formed an open, inclusive society (so much so that it was claimed that half the rebels were foreigners), with a focus on (free, secular, universal) education, culture for all, disalienated labour, personal and social development, and non-coercive social organisation. Marx commented, 'They have no ready-made utopias to introduce *par decret du people*... they

have no ideals to realise, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant' (Marx 1981, p. 213). This, in spite of any element of utopian aspiration, marks the fundamental modesty of the Commune: no ideals, no pre-prepared grand plan or blueprint, no desire to be state capital, still less take over the world. For Marx, the originality of the Commune lay in the fact of 'its own working existence' (Marx, *op. cit.*, p. 217), and this, like the other points indicated earlier, links the reality of Paris in 1870 with the (ir)reality of 'the Children's Republic' in shared projects of remaking the city. While the relevance of the seemingly dead and buried Commune for a possible city-to-come might not be immediately apparent, irrelevance, Kristin Ross argues in her stimulating reassessment of the Commune, is absolutely not the case. For her, 'Being attentive to the energies of the outmoded [is] one way to think oneself into the future' (Ross 2015, p. 116).

The Paris Commune was not allowed to survive and pursue its utopian project. Will 'the Children's Republic' survive? That is the question Mon de Ferro puts to Nuta, and she can give no definitive answer: their community is a good one, but it is obviously fragile, vulnerable, at the very least, to the sort of violence Mon de Ferro threatened to introduce, and the further wounds that he and others like him might inflict on the city. In the end, however, in keeping with Gomes' enduring belief in the necessity of hope—embodied, above all, in children—there would appear to be grounds for optimism in the Republic: healing is achieved, particularly in the case of Mon de Ferro; Dube's far-seeing spectacles apparently detect no looming disasters for the city. Mon de Ferro's healing is important at an individual level (he is restored to both psychological and [irreally] physical health), and at a collective level (unless he can overcome his destructive violence, he and his group will have to leave the city); in addition, it represents a significant intersection of the real and the unreal, the traditional and the modern. Dube asks Mon de Ferro and his group to collect stones, one for each hurt done to them, or by them. The stones are then thrown into the sea, taking, it is hoped, the hurt with them. At the end of this process, Mon de Ferro dives into the sea and emerges without the enormous scar that has disfigured his face since childhood. Although this process of casting away hurt might look like nothing more than traditional African magical irrealism, the use of material objects, onto which negative feelings, painful memories and the like are transferred, and the objects then disposed of, forms part of the procedures adopted by (modern, Western, theoretically underpinned) practices of psychotherapy and trauma counselling. Such combinations of the ancient and the modern may yet save the city.

WOMEN AND THE CITY

For Rashmi Varma, one of the most urgent tasks in thinking about the post-colonial city is to understand 'postcolonial feminist citizenship as a universal political project challenging current neo-liberal and post-neo-liberal contractions

and eviscerations of public spaces and rights'. In part, this involves 'the simultaneous reconfiguration and subversion of women's "proper" place in the city, and of their proper work, as central to thinking and theorising postcolonial feminist citizenship' (Varma 2011, pp. 1–2). A key figure in the constitution of this new form of citizenship is that of 'unhomely women', here construed in material rather than psychoanalytic terms, whose literal emergence from the home into the city:

performs an ironic gendered re-citation of the quintessential 'unhomely' figure of modernist urbanism that was the *flâneur*. By examining the gender and colonial question suppressed or elided within the dominant narratives of modernity, we can begin to point to figures that disturb the notion of the 'proper' urban subject. (Varma, op. cit., p. 20)

In that context, we will briefly examine the women in the films we have discussed.

In *Borom Sarret*, Fatima, the cart driver's wife, is seen briefly at the beginning and end of the film. At the beginning, it is very much a homely presence as she tends to the baby and helps her husband get ready for his day. When he returns at the end of the film with no food, no money, and, more importantly, no cart, she calmly prepares herself, says to the baby, 'Don't cry little one. I promise you we will eat tonight', and, without further explanation, goes out into the city. Numbers of critics have assumed that she is going to prostitute herself, though there is no actual evidence for that. Others, such as Femi Shaka in *Modernity and the African Cinema*, claim that she is abandoning her husband: 'As if to add insult to injury, his wife equally deserts him as the film ends' (Shaka 2004, p. 58). However exaggerated such a claim may be, Fatima does not stay in her 'proper' place and joins the ranks of the 'unhomely'. She also marks the first appearance of an enduring element in Sembene's films, the strong female character, present all the way through his work to the remarkable Colle Ardo in his last film, *Moolaadé* (Burkina Faso 2004). Sembene said on a number of occasions that he wanted his films to show 'the heroism of everyday life', and although in this case critics have usually taken that to refer to the travails of her husband, one could argue that in fact Fatima's calm determination to rescue her family by whatever means might be seen as better fitting the description. Changing the roles and representation of women is central to Sembene's politics. The following is typical of his views on the subject: 'The development of Africa will not happen without the effective participation of women. Our forefathers' image of women must be buried once and for all' (Gadjigo 1993, p. 100).

In contrast to Fatima, a more disturbing individual for the cart driver is the pregnant woman he takes to the maternity hospital with her husband. On the way, clearly exhausted, she rests her head on the cart driver's shoulder, and in so doing becomes in his mind part of the urban modernity that he finds so difficult to cope with. As he says, 'Women today – who can understand them?,' and her (mildly) 'out of place' behaviour is later entered

in the list of things that have combined to ruin his day in the city. Whether his reaction is part of 'our forefathers' [unhelpful, outdated] image of women' is not clear.

Compared to the pregnant woman, Linguere Ramatou in *Hyenas* is unhomeliness personified: unmarried, globetrotting, domineering, demanding, cynical, unrepentantly vengeful, while the fact that she has managed to become fabulously wealthy from a life of prostitution removes her as far as possible from the place of a 'proper' woman. Society's physical and economic exploitation of women is Ramatou's model for the shape of her revenge; as she says, 'Life made me a whore. Now I'll make the whole world a brothel.' As an unhomely woman, she is the appropriately 'bad' mother for the rebirth of Colobane, which, given its founding (lack of) values, looks likely to be a 'bad' city. Ramatou also takes part in the unsettling or overturning of gender relations and roles which accompanies her unhomely status: she employs the former chief justice of Colobane as her assistant; she has the two men who were the original false witnesses against her imprisoned and castrated.

Although quite a lot of what we see in *Quartier Mozart* is young men talking about women and sex, the film is very female-driven; indeed, it receives its narrative drive from the most unhomely of the female characters: the arrogant, transgressive Queen of the 'Hood's endless curiosity, not least about what it might be like to be a man, and the witch Mama Thekla's transformation of her into My Guy, which allows her to satisfy her curiosity. Mama Thekla, as we have seen, also turns herself into a man on occasion and uses her magic to make various men's penises shrink or disappear. Castration for fun rather than revenge, it would appear. Meanwhile, the fact that the well-endowed and very much not-castrated My Guy is reluctant to behave in the same sexually exploitative way as the other men in the film, in other words acting like a 'real' man, may have something to do with his not in fact being a real man. The idea of irrealism discussed earlier is, according to Lowy, particularly useful because of its critical dimension. Here, magical irrealism undercuts the overweening self-satisfied masculinity displayed by all the 'real' men to the detriment of most of the women. As Mama Thekla comments on the subject of shrinking men's penises, 'It is the only way to erase their pride.'

In *The Children's Republic*, Nuta offers a very different image of unhomeliness. Out of her original place, away from her original home, she nevertheless now occupies a place of fundamental importance, and has a home, in the Children's Republic. Her out-of-placeness includes the fact that, as an untrained teenage girl, she is in charge of the city's medical services, and carrying out surgery. She is also destined to take over the not-normally-for-women role of counsellor to the community. Not just Nuta, though, the whole city is, as we have seen, out of its 'proper' place. Indeed, the unhomely city may be the most suitable image of contemporary African urban reality with which to close our discussion. The cities we have examined here, their inhabitants, their

various modes of representation, will, we hope, give some sense of the diversity of life in African cities, as well as the richness of the cultural responses to that diversity.

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South African Cities

Marita Wenzel

CONTEXTUALISATION

Commercial gain and territorial expansion were at the root of colonisation and its aftermath in Africa. In South Africa, hegemony and racism created a chasm between coloniser and colonised that perpetuated difference and resulted in poverty, illiteracy, violence and crime. Meredith (2007, p. xv) correctly claims that ‘Actions taken in the late nineteenth century continued to reverberate for more than a hundred years’ in South Africa. At present, globalisation and change have become keywords in the literary debate on South Africa, as change poses a major threat for many inhabitants, white and non-white (a term used to acknowledge that different races and ethnic groups were all subsumed under apartheid as ‘black’). Many tribal cultures cling to old, often obsolete customs in order to remain standing in an unstable global world in which the foundations of their beliefs are shaken, as Zakes Mda effectively illustrates in his novel, *Heart of Redness* (2000). In addition, many whites resent the advent of change, because it forces them out of their comfort zones, a topic that Vladislavić ironically addresses in *The Folly* (1993).

The most densely populated, culturally representative and prominent microcosms of South Africa’s historic and political profile are the cities of Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg, which all clearly reflect their past as well as their present. This chapter will trace how the ideologies of slavery, colonisation, racism (apartheid) and xenophobia that have determined and shaped the political climate of the country in general, and the topography of the respective city spaces in particular have been addressed in the process for a transition to a democratic dispensation that began in the early 1990s.

As literature inevitably echoes and comments on a country’s sociopolitical climate, various English, Afrikaans and non-white writers have attempted, since

the 1960s, to express their concern about the lack of ethics in the country as a whole, and the abysmal conditions in the townships in particular. Among the critics, were Nobel Prize laureates Nadine Gordimer (awarded 1991) and John Maxwell Coetzee (awarded 2003); Afrikaans writers such as André P Brink and Antjie Krog as well as non-white writers such as Ezekiel Mphahlele, Mbulelo Mzamane and Miriam Tlali. These courageous people published their ideas despite the threat of censorship (Brink, Gordimer and Tlali actually had some of their first publications banned by the Censorship Board, but this ban was later revoked) by criticising apartheid's stringent and restrictive laws imposed on the non-white population. These laws came into effect with regard to: place of work (they needed to carry a pass at all times); the imposition of curfews that prevented them from visiting white areas after nightfall (often announced by a siren); the prohibition on intermarriage and the negation of landownership (Land Act of 1913). With the implementation of the Group Areas Act (1950) life under apartheid meant the demarcation of suburban city boundaries that separated whites from non-whites (who were on occasion evicted from certain townships claimed by whites, such as District Six and Triomf). In compensation, the evacuated people were relocated to other townships or 'locations' at some distance from the nearest cities and towns that required much travelling and long hours getting to work and back. Non-whites had to attend separate schools in the townships that were inferior in terms of equipment, teachers and had overcrowded classrooms, as recounted by Mzamane in *The Children of Soweto* (1982).

In addition to these restrictions, non-whites were not allowed to enter through doors or sit on benches in parks that were designated 'for whites only'. The absurdity of this law was later ironically exposed by Vladislavić in his short story: 'The WHITES ONLY Bench' (51–66) from his collection 'Propaganda by Monuments' (1996). The Beeld Newspaper (Thursday 19 November 2015, p. 10) recently featured an authentic photograph of two park benches placed back to back, with a young white girl facing the camera while seated on a park bench designated for 'Europeans Only' and her non-white carer, seated on the unmarked bench behind her, was turned sideways to also face the camera. From a contemporary perspective, such a situation appears incredible.

While non-white writers were at first only able to publish their grievances in their own 'black' newspapers, they tended to focus on short stories like Njabulo Ndebele's *Fool's and Other Stories* (1983) and Miriam Tlali's *Soweto Stories* (1989); but autobiography also became a popular genre to share personal experiences like Peter Abrams' *Tell Freedom* (1954), Todd Matshikiza's *Chocolates for my Wife* (1982 [1961]) and Wiliam 'Bloke' Modisane's *Blame Me on History* (1986, [1963]). Yet, many black African writers went into exile when the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC) parties were banned during the apartheid regime. Contemporary writers such as Mda and Beukes have also joined the fray to express their dissatisfaction with conditions in the country by using genres like magic realism, fantasy or science fiction that feature lashings of irony and satire.

Our multicultural heritage includes 11 official languages (www.southafrica.info): Afrikaans, English, Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Venda, SiSwati, Tsonga and Ndebele. As English is the *lingua franca*, this discussion will mainly refer to English texts, but references to some pertinent texts (novels, selected short stories and poems) translated from Afrikaans and other indigenous texts into English will also be included. The main criterion has been to select literary texts that contribute towards the historical and sociopolitical significance of the cities selected for discussion, but it does not include historical, picture-based texts or guides to cities. Over a broad spectrum of society, the selected texts reflect different opinions on the South African heritage, but do not necessarily all display an overt political agenda.

Ironically, the two colonial themes of land ownership and greed for power are still evident in South African fiction today. In the literary explorations of South African cities, the contrast between city and rural life is often underlined, as it was first expressed in Alan Paton's novel, *Cry the Beloved Country* (1948). Although this opposition between innocence and experience has remained to some degree in South African writing, as J. M. Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) illustrates, the title of a more recent novel like *Lost Ground* (2011) by Michiel Heyns resonates with irony, intimating that the white settlers' appropriation of land and enforcement of white hegemony have lost momentum, that the result of these actions was a loss of moral ground at the cost of betrayal (for self and others).

Unfortunately, the desire to acquire wealth and power has evolved into crime: including drug and alcohol abuse, human trafficking, senseless murders, the daily rape and abuse of women and children, violent youth gangs that roam the streets and xenophobia against the asylum seekers and fugitives from war-torn countries. In Mitchells Plain (a township 20 miles from Cape Town), where youthful gangs with no occupation have taken to drugs, concerned parents were compelled to take action by convening a movement called Parents Against Gangs and Drugs (PAGAD) to combat the violence infiltrating the townships. Sello Duiker (2001) and Songeziwe Mahlangu (2013) depict victims of drug addiction in their novels. Within this context, crime fiction has increased in volume and writers like Nicol and Meyer have become favourites as their novels not only tend to identify and expose the perpetrators of crime, but also provide their readers with the comfort that good will prevail over evil in the end.

As a point of departure, the discussion of the respective cities will give a brief historical introduction with mention of relevant topographical features such as the main population components in the relevant suburbs, as well as streets and monuments that will feature in the main discussion of cityscapes.

CAPE TOWN

Cape Town, the first city to be founded in South Africa in 1666 (Rosenthal 1966), celebrated its 150th anniversary this year in 2016. Situated in a strategic location to sea routes, the city was originally founded to provide fresh produce

for ships of the Dutch East Indian Company en route to India and the East. As a harbour city, Cape Town was also the hub of the slave trade in South Africa that originally provided labour for the first farming enterprises which later developed into the extensive vineyards and fruit farms surrounding Cape Town.

Cape Town has been called ‘The Mother City’ or ‘The Gateway’ to (South) Africa on account of its history and unique location at the foot of Africa with Table Mountain rising above the city like a sentinel. Like any other city, its special setting and unique topography have shaped Cape Town to acquire a character all its own. Despite several changes in street names and the names of towns since 1994 in South Africa, most of the streets, suburbs and townships of the city have retained their original names and functions; while most of the historic landmarks like the Houses of Parliament, the Castle as the first official site of government, the original Slave Lodge that was restored in 1998 (Pinchuck 2000, pp. 72–76), as well as the Pollsmoore prison (situated in Tokai) with Mandela as its most famous prisoner and certain public spaces like the Company Gardens and Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens have been retained as well. However, the Cape Town City Bowl’s profile has changed over time. Of special interest is Robben Island that has since Nelson Mandela’s imprisonment become a tourist attraction. The famous suburb of District Six, formerly inhabited mainly by Cape Malay people as well as other ethnic groups was allocated to white people while the original inhabitants were relocated to the Cape Flats known as Mitchell’s Plain. It should be mentioned here that the coloured population (i.e. the Cape Malay community) bring a particular culture to the city, in particular with their customary Cape Town Minstrel Carnival. On the second day of January every year, thousands of musicians, singers and people related to them, flock to the City Bowl playing music and singing while dressed in their finery specially designed for this occasion. It is reported that they are celebrating in a similar way that the slaves once did when they obtained the first of January each year as a free day.

CITYSCAPES

As a novel, *Islands* by Dan Sleigh (2004), captures the establishment of settlements at the Cape by creating characters who relate their experiences from various perspectives: the introduction and the implications/practices of colonisation and slavery; the question of class and racial differences that still seems to fester in contemporary South Africa; miscegenation, and gender discrimination.

South African slave literature only became of public concern towards the end of the previous century, when several consciousness-raising writers started publishing novels on slaves and slavery. Andre P. Brink (1935–2015), wrote several novels that display his awareness and empathy with the slave conditions in Cape Town during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in particular his final novel on slavery, *Philida* (2012). Female writers have also expressed their empathy with the female slaves’ double bind as women and mothers as well as work and sex

objects to white masters: Rayda Jacobs in *The Slave Book* (1998) and Yvette Christiansë who captures the desolation and hopelessness of imprisonment on Robben Island in her novel *Unconfessed* (2006). All these novels contribute towards an understanding of the early society at the Cape.

When novelists use cities as a backdrop or a 'stage', the urban environment plays a major role in developing and defining the plot. In all the novels below, the inhabitants or characters both shape and are shaped by their environment. For example, in his description of District Six below, Richard Rive (1986, p. 3) captures the milieu or lifestyle of District Six when he mentions how the Jewish shopkeeper and the inhabitants have come to an unspoken agreement about their pilfering from his shop and his counteraction of simply raising his prices to compensate for the loss.

The suburb of District Six is situated at the foot of Table Mountain in Cape Town. In his novel *'Buckingham Palace', District Six*, Rive (1931–1989) creates an endearing and compassionate picture of the primarily coloured community who used to live there; he also describes their relationships with all parts of the community, including various Jewish and Italian shopkeepers. Buckingham Palace was a row of tenements rented from Katzen, a Jewish landlord. As the name is the same as the English Royal family's palace in London, it creates an ironic contrast with the actual inhabitants of the tenements who vary from notorious characters such as prostitutes and drug dealers to ordinary law-abiding citizens. Reminiscing on his youth, the narrator recalls: 'I remember those who used to live in District Six, those who lived in Caledon Street and Clifton Hill and busy Hanover Street' and he mentions in particular, the weekends 'which began with the bustle of Friday evenings when the women came home early from the factories and the men came home late although they had been paid off early' (1986, p. 1). This ironic observation implies that the money would have been spent on beer before returning home, which would diminish the amount to be spent on food for the family. The result was that households had to buy groceries 'on the book and clothes on hire purchase' (1986, p. 2). Despite the fact that this was regarded as a slum area, Rive captures the inherent irony of their situation and illustrates how the different factions managed to live side by side and had to depend on their wits to survive. For example, the shopkeeper Katzen had a notice outside his shop: 'Although Katzen has been burgled again, Katzen will never burgle you!' (1986, p. 3). On Saturdays, Tennant Street and other neighbourhood streets were bustling 'with housewives, peddlers, skollies (implying unsavoury characters and street habitués), urchins, pimps and everybody else' (1986, p. 3).

The novel, *'Buckingham Palace', District Six*, is divided into three periods: Morning 1955, Afternoon 1960 and Night 1970. When seen in retrospect with regard to the 'displacement' of the District Six population (1966), these time periods become significant as they intimate the eventual demise of the District as the former inhabitants recall it. On account of the notorious Group Areas Act (1950), this suburb was declared a white area in 1966 and the former inhabitants were forced to leave for the barren Cape Flats on the periphery of

Cape Town. The diverse and fascinating characters of District Six are also the topic of Alex La Guma's *A Walk in the Night and Other Stories* (1968) as well as *Rosa's District 6* (2004) by Rozena Maart.

In her novels, Rayda Jacobs focuses mostly on the trials and tribulations of Muslim women and their relationships. Her third novel, *Sachs Street: A Bo-Kaap Story* (2001), relates the experiences of a young girl growing up during the 1950s in this Bo-Kaap section of Cape Town, regarded as a traditional Muslim area on the slopes of Signal Hill. Although her novel provides us with an interesting glimpse of Muslim traditions during the 1950s, it is her personal account of incidents and relationships that reveals how the influence of the community and their beliefs about women shaped, or rather, challenged her to shape her own personality. Pamela Jooste's novel, *Dance With a Poor Man's Daughter* provides the reader with an intimate perspective on the coloured community through the eyes of a young girl who hears expressions like 'try for white', but ironically, does not comprehend the implications of such concepts. In a similar vein, Zoë Wicomb's rendition of coloureds' lives and the problems that they face entitled *You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town* (1987), depicts the anguish of a young coloured girl who attempts to discover her identity by trying to fit into a world prescribed by white rule. Yet, young Frieda only becomes confused and isolated in her struggle to belong somewhere.

From the City Bowl and environs, we move to the township of Khayelitsha where ethnic culture takes precedence over European tradition. In a comparison of the film *U-Carmen eKhayelitsha* (director Dornford-May), Santisa Viljoen (2013, p. vi) traces the original story of *Carmen*, written by Prosper Mérimée (1845), and its transformation into an opera by Bizet, in order to consider its subsequent rendition within the social environment of the township Khayelitsha on the edges of Cape Town, near to the airport. With her focus on female identity, Viljoen (2013) claims that 'the appropriation of operatic texts to reflect various contexts induces the potential to shape alternative perceptions about identity'. By referring to literary (semiotic and narrative) strategies, Viljoen indicates how Dornford-May articulates the African female Other within the context of a post-apartheid paradigm. In order to appreciate this differentiation, the film version of this opera (2005) mentioned above, should be viewed.

The two novels by J.M. Coetzee (b. 1940) that take place in Cape Town, show two divergent white perspectives on the new South African situation. In *Age of Iron* (1990), Mrs Curren's letters to her daughter express her thoughts on Cape Town as she experienced it under apartheid. She has never countered or shown opposition to the ideas of apartheid until she experiences it first-hand when her black house worker's son is killed and she provides shelter to a homeless man. It is intimated that the cancer from which she suffers is comparable to a similar sickness in the society at large. In another scenario David Lurie, Coetzee's protagonist in *Disgrace* (1999), is a white professor of literature at the University of Cape Town who is gradually confronted by new realities in his life and forced to leave his comfort zone. His comfortable and chauvinist lifestyle is disrupted by new approaches to university

education: his niche subject, poetry, is exchanged for English grammar lectures; and his respectability is questioned when he is accused of seducing a coloured student, Melanie, against her will. When called to justice, Lurie refuses to acknowledge guilt; he resigns instead and moves to a smallholding in the country, where he lives with his lesbian daughter. Ironically, she is raped by three black men and becomes pregnant. This proves to be one more lesson in humility for Lurie.

In *The Revenge Trilogy* by Mike Nicol, contemporary Cape Town and its environs play a major role in the actions and reactions of the characters or inhabitants. Particularly, his first novel in the trilogy, *Payback* (2009), lays out the historical markers, modes and lifestyles of the Cape Town inhabitants: the well-known streets, the definitive suburb of Constantia, the City Bowl and the undeniable presence and attraction of Table Mountain. Nicol skilfully manages to recreate the atmosphere of the city with its sidewalk cafes, beautiful beaches and fashionable shopping centres, but he also refers to the walled estates of the super-rich, their security systems, guards and safety measures and ironically mentions the aspiration of the middle classes to move up into ‘better’ suburbs—and build walls around their houses as well. This picture contrasts with the actual underworld of the city, as the reader soon realises.

The main characters of his trilogy are the intrepid ‘security guards’, Mace Bishop (white) and Pylon Bosu (coloured) who used to be gunrunners but have both settled down to marry and start families. Ironically, the two former movers and shakers have started a security firm called Complete Security that focuses on guarding rich tourists on their visits to South Africa. However, their past involvement with fighting the struggle for freedom from apartheid catches up with them in the form of Sheemina February, who was tortured at their hands in one of the freedom-fighter camps, because they believed her to be a spy for the opposition. Sheemina becomes their nemesis and with indomitable determination she stalks them, listens to their telephone conversations and hires hit men to accomplish their downfall. Above all, she wants to become rich so she uses her attractive appearance and legal profession as stepping stones to ingratiate herself with the ‘fat cats’ or ‘black diamonds’, as the new black upper class is termed (Wenzel 2015, p. 121); she is obsessed with revenge. In the subsequent two novels, *Killer Country* (2010) and *Black Heart* (2011), the city setting is exchanged for the countryside where the development of golf estates on the west coast, inland mining concerns and the acquisition of farmland feature more prominently.

The Afrikaans writer, Deon Meyer who is also well known for his crime fiction, follows a similar pattern of crime, fear and suspense as Nicol, and also uses Cape Town as base. Most of Meyer’s books have been translated into English. The exposition of his novel *Thirteen Hours* (2010) describes a girl apparently jogging on the slopes of Lion’s Head in Cape Town. However, the urgency of her footsteps and her constantly anxious glance over her shoulder alerts the reader that she is running from someone. The girl’s body is later found outside the Lutheran Church in Long Street. Meyer’s detective, Bennie Griessel, is summoned by Inspector Vusumuzi Ndabeni to the scene. At first they assume

that it is probably a homeless person, a 'bergie' as the people of Cape Town call the 'inhabitants' who live on the mountain and often rob people/climbers of their possessions. The novel unfolds with unexpected revelations that contribute towards the suspense and the conclusion. Meyer has written many crime novels, but in *Devil's Peak* (2007) he also uses Cape Town as background.

Apart from crime or detective fiction, Patricia Schonstein, addresses the influx of refugees when she describes the experiences of a young girl living in a block of flats in Central Cape Town in *Skyline* (2000). The flats are flooded by refugees from all over Africa and she has to keep afloat in this unknown underworld of Cape Town. This novel provides us with an interesting perspective on a significant problem that South Africa faces, with regard to overcrowded cities. In turn, Omotoso (2011) describes the tragic and isolated life of Leke in *Bom Boy*, who wanders through the Cape Town suburbs in search of connections with people. On account of his loneliness and attempt at survival, he takes to stalking people and stealing from them. In her novel, *Moxyland* (2008), Lauren Beukes gives a different slant to contemporary Cape Town. She creates a world of unusual characters who show the reader a different, unfamiliar social environment that challenges him/her in the same sense that her novel, *Zoo City* (2010) situated in Hillbrow, also surprises and challenges the reader.

With reference to the ubiquitous use of drugs and practices of prostitution mentioned above, Sello Duiker provides the reader with a nightmare sketch of this underworld in his novel *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001). The direct contrast between 'violence' and 'dreams' seems to emulate Tshepo's drug-induced world that is shattered when he is raped by his friend Chris and two other men. Titlestad (2012, p. 683) claims that this experience makes him aware of his own sexuality, which in turn leaves him with self-knowledge and a sense of optimism.

PRETORIA

The city of Pretoria was founded in 1855 (Allen 2007, p. 13) by the Voortrekker leader Marthinus Pretorius who named it after his father Andries Pretorius. The elder Pretorius was a hero of the Battle of Blood River against the Zulus and also negotiated the Sand River Convention 1852 (Meredith 2007, p. 75) that granted the Transvaal its independence. When Pretoria was designated as South Africa's capital that would accommodate the seat of government in the Union Buildings (designed by Sir Herbert Baker), some of the other large cities were also allocated certain political functions after the proclamation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 (Meredith 2007, p. 520). At this point, it was decided to situate the South African Parliament in Cape Town and the Supreme Court of South Africa in Bloemfontein which was then replaced by the Supreme Court of Appeal in the same city in 1997.

Church Square, with the sculpture of Paul Kruger made by Anton van Wouw, is regarded by many inhabitants as the central point of reference in Pretoria; it is flanked by the Palace of Justice, and the Ou Raadsaal (old Government building) the old Capitol Theatre on different sides. Other

landmarks include the Voortrekker Monument built on the outskirts of the city to commemorate the Great Trek (1834) from the Cape to the Northern hinterland, and the forts of Klapperkop and Schanskop erected to serve in the defence of the city. Pretoria is also the site of the country's Heroes' Acre (that is mentioned by Vladislavić in his short story, 'The Prime Minister is dead' (1989, pp. 1–9) in the collection 'Missing Persons'). Although the cities of Pretoria and Johannesburg are about 50 km apart, due to industrial and urban expansion, the contemporary cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria have almost merged to form a great metropolitan area. While Pretoria forms the bastion of the government and is regarded as the capital city of Gauteng, Johannesburg represents a more cosmopolitan society involved in commerce and industry. It is also interesting that most people in Pretoria speak or can understand Afrikaans, while Johannesburg's main language of communication is English.

Two significant writers have written about Pretoria, namely Mphahlele (1959), a former resident of Marabastad a township of the capital city and Vladislavić (1996) of Croatian origin (but he was born in Pretoria and later moved to Johannesburg) who focuses on another township of Pretoria, Atteridgeville.

CITYSCAPES

From his autobiography, *Down Second Avenue* (1959), the reader can gain a clear picture of a black child growing up under the apartheid government during the twentieth century in South Africa. As his parents were both working, Ezekiel Mphahlele (1919–2008)'s childhood was spent in the country with his paternal grandmother in the village of Maupaneng, 75 km from the town of Pietersburg (now Polokwane in the province of Limpopo). It was a poor environment and his school attendance was often interrupted by other duties such as water fetching (from a trickling tap with a queue of people waiting to get water) and goat herding. He and his two siblings were subjected to poor hygiene and nutrition. When he was about 12, his paternal grandmother fetched him to live with his parents in Marabastad, where he was exposed to the city-township life of youth gangs, illicit beer-brewing for additional income and his father's addiction to locally produced liquor, called skokiaan. His father's addiction to skokiaan affected his behaviour and after a violent physical attack on his wife, he left his family. Ezekiel's mother subsequently also lost her job and they were forced to share an overcrowded home with his maternal grandmother and about seven family members for whom he also cleaned and cooked (1959, p. 37). His mother fortunately obtained a sleep-in job as a domestic servant with her own room in the city of Pretoria, (where she worked for white people), while his grandmother eked out a living from beer-brewing and doing the laundry (that Ezekiel had to fetch and return by bicycle) for white people in the distant rich white suburb of Waterkloof for a pittance.

After attending St Peter's school in Johannesburg, Ezekiel remained there and married Rebecca in 1945. The couple experienced countless occasions of police

harassment (1959, pp. 177, 198, 199) and taunting from whites in their daily lives (similar to Mirian Tlali's accounts). Constantly aspiring to achieve a better education, he eventually obtained an MA degree in English at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 1955 and subsequently became a teacher. It should be noted that he was only able to study after 10:00 p.m. because he had to use the communal dining room as a study. Although he had always been a law-abiding citizen, he eventually became impatient with the hypocrisy of the church and the arrogance of the white race; he found himself more interested in dramatics and literature where he possibly found inspiration for his own writing.

Taking note of the lives of black people like Mphahlele and armed by his own convictions as a white citizen, Vladislavić has attempted to make readers conscious about the conditions that non-whites had to endure. From various angles and within different contexts, he launches a subtle yet humorous critique at the South African society and stalwarts of apartheid and other ideologies. His short stories *Missing Persons* illustrate how the passing of time can change perceptions and perspective: in particular, he questions the reverence attributed to certain monuments and political icons in the capital city of Pretoria by showing that context determines interpretation. 'The Prime Minister is dead' invokes irony on different levels: the narrator is a young boy of 10 years whose father takes him in a wheelbarrow (he was helping to weed the garden) to view the funeral procession of the former Prime Minister (probably based on HF Verwoerd). As the procession was to pass close by their house, the boy's mother wants him to see the cortège while his father is rather nonchalant about the occasion and refuses to dress for watching the procession: 'We'll go as we are, stained with combat and proud of it' (1989, p. 6). The latter observation intimates an oblique comment on his army service and his present lifestyle. As an innocent, the boy totally misses the significance of the cortège, but notes the consequences that the death had on his family: in a matter of fact tone, he recounts that his grandfather died and left them a suitcase while the prime minister had died and left them a compost heap (1989, p. 2). In order to view the solemn procession on the way to the Heroes' Acre where all the important statesmen lie buried, his father lifts the boy onto his shoulders and then carefully climbs onto the wheelbarrow. When the truck carrying the coffin suddenly has engine failure, the boy and his father offer to push the coffin in their wheelbarrow to the grave. We are struck by the irony when his father finally pushes the coffin to the lip of the grave, 'dug the metal prow of the barrow into the earth and heaved' (1989, p. 9). A ceremonious and solemn occasion for burial in the heroes' acre is suddenly brought 'down to earth' when the coffin is shoved into the open grave.

In a similar vein to the above short stories, Vladislavić's astute observation of anomalies in the apartheid system is once again revealed in 'Propaganda by Monuments' when Boniface Khumalo, a tavern keeper from Atteridgeville (township in Pretoria), decides to adorn the entrance of his pub with a bust from Lenin which he would procure at great effort and expense from Russia.

As Lenin is a foreign concept to the ordinary people, his struggle to obtain the bust makes no impression on his clients. Yet, it shows how any kind of monument can become insignificant if it is not placed within a familiar or appropriate context. In *The Folly* (1993), Vladislavić addresses the idea that people who cling to ideologies or the past are unable to adapt to new conditions and therefore fail to embrace a new mindset and broadened perspective on the past as well as the present. In this novel, Mr and Mrs Malgas represent the enlightened mindset and the narrow-minded view of remaining on the sidelines, respectively. Although Mr Malgas is not very clever, he tackles the new venture that his new neighbour, Nieuwenhuisen (in Afrikaans it would mean ‘new house’), attempts with enthusiasm while Mrs Malgas refuses to deviate from her ideas. This strategy is also applied to the citizens of Hillbrow, in particular Tearle in the *Exploded View* (2004) that will be discussed under the Johannesburg cityscape.

JOHANNESBURG

When diamonds were discovered in the former Griqualand (Northern Cape Province) in 1867 which later became Kimberly (Meredith 2007, p. 22) and gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand (meaning ridge of the white waters) in 1886 (Clare 2010, p. 345), the two mining enterprises of diamonds and gold precipitated a constant stream of diggers to the Transvaal who hoped to make their fortunes and lived in tents or shanties near to the excavation sites. Johannesburg expanded by leaps and bounds and this rapid population explosion prevented the proper urban planning of the city. Although Kimberly has become known as a tourist attraction on account of the significant site of the Big Hole where diamonds were excavated at first, it has not really featured much in South African literature. The only novel that might present an interesting glimpse on the excavations and the social milieu around the diggings would be George Manville Fenn’s *A Dash From Diamond City*. In a similar sense, Rosenthal’s novel on gold might also be interesting: *Gold! Gold! Gold! The Johannesburg Gold Rush* (1970).

Johannesburg has since its early development, evolved into an industrial giant. The literature on Johannesburg has focused primarily on the inner city of Hillbrow and the peripheral townships of Sophiatown, Alexandra and Soweto. Hillbrow is a residential area situated in the inner city of Johannesburg, which used to be regarded as an upmarket address for whites in the 1970s, but the many apartment blocks have become overcrowded with employment seekers, drug dealers and prostitutes. Consequently, when many middle-class residents moved away in the 1990s the buildings deteriorated. In contrast to the past, the present population harbours many different ethnicities and migrants from the rest of Africa. Ponte City (Johannesburg’s tallest building) is close to Hillbrow and has suffered the same fate of neglect; it is now rundown and overpopulated. Other significant sites are Constitution Hill which is located in Braamfontein, to the west of Hillbrow, where the Constitution Court of South Africa is situated and the former

Hillbrow Tower (completed in 1971) locally called telecommunications tower, has now been renamed the Telkom Joburg Tower but still remains a landmark in the city of skyscrapers. It should be mentioned that Sandton is now considered to be the business hub of Johannesburg, but that it also represents an enviable urban lifestyle of large mansions and exclusive, large shopping centres. The Johannesburg section will mainly focus on Sophiatown, Hillbrow, Alexandra and Soweto.

CITYSCAPES

As an autobiographical work, Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* provides a framework for the different novels that position Johannesburg as a central point of orientation in the political struggle during the second half of the twentieth century. From black activists and white supporters, with Gordimer as a constant watchdog, up to the satirical portraits that Beukes, Vladislavić and Mda present, the city remains the nerve centre of the country, maintaining the pulse of life in all its facets.

As an inhabitant of Johannesburg from an affluent white suburb, the Nobel Prize winner, Nadine Gordimer (1923–2014), was very aware of the political turmoil of the late twentieth century and she also played a constructive part in exposing the inequality practiced by the Nationalist Government. In her novel, *Burger's Daughter* (1987), Gordimer addresses the core of the freedom struggle in terms of public and personal sacrifices when she creates the fictitious character of Burger to act as substitute for the historical Bram Fischer trial in Johannesburg that resulted in Nelson Mandela's incarceration. Although many of her novels are situated in Johannesburg, she focuses on the contrast between the exclusive white residential areas and the black townships. In *The House Gun* (1998), Gordimer describes the anguish of a white middle-class couple, Harald and Claudia (a medical doctor) who, while they are watching the news about war and mayhem on television one Friday evening, receive a visit from Julian, their son Duncan's friend. Julian informs them that Duncan has been arrested for murder. The safe world that they created by moving into a walled, gated complex with guards and electric fencing is suddenly breached and compromised by personal violence that they could not have anticipated or avoided. The implications of their dilemma are that money or a white skin cannot avoid the South African reality.

In *Triomf* (1999), Marlene Van Niekerk is concerned with the fate of the residents of 127 Martha Street who are poor-white inhabitants of the former Sophiatown, renamed Triomf by the apartheid dispensation. When the novel was published, the exposure of a white family in dire poverty, with a lack of skills and incestuous relationships in the family, was frowned upon by white South African readers and members of society who dissociated themselves from such white people. However, van Niekerk's criticism is directed at her reader public by intimating such Afrikaners should be aided and not scorned; that the white society or even society as such, should concern themselves with such people, as the finger points right back at them. In fact, the family serves as a direct indictment of apartheid as a mere

determination of skin colour and also creates a type of picaresque tale in defiance of the assumed superiority of white society. The new name of Triomf ('triumph' in English) proves to be ironical because the old name, Sophiatown, was restored after 1994, which makes the apartheid government's victory short-lived.

Ezekiel Mphahlele (1919–2008) and Can Themba (1924–1968) (2006) and Mahala (2011) give in their writings nostalgic memories of the old Sophiatown. Themba pays tribute to the township in his collection of short stories entitled 'Requiem for Sophiatown' while Mahala recounts incidents over a period of 50 years (1950s–1990s) in a collection of short stories. The nostalgia for township culture is reflected in the Maraba music emanating from the townships and performed on a type of keyboard instrument called a Marabi. Similar to the introduction of jazz music in the USA, the Maraba music, as a kind of hybrid music, became popular in the 1930s and 1940s (Ballantine 1993). Modikwe Dikobe's novel, *The Marabi Dance*, celebrates this type of music as a theme in the novel, but he also captures the other side of daily life in Soweto in his novel, that focuses on the people's means of entertainment and love of dancing.

As indicated above, Hillbrow has regressed to derelict buildings that are occupied by refugees, drug dealers, etc. Similar to Mphahlele, Phaswane Mpe also came from rural Limpopo, but he migrated to Johannesburg where he settled in Hillbrow in order to be close to the University of the Witwatersrand for his studies. In his novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* (2001), a place where similar conditions rule as in the Cape Town underworld, Mpe confronts the reader with the reality of a mixed population and the struggle for everyday survival. In particular, Mpe exposes issues of xenophobia and AIDS. The title of his novel has ironic undertones, as outsiders would be welcome to join this anthill of activity, but the word 'our' seems to imply that becoming part of the community also carries a measure of responsibility. To the outsider, Hillbrow personifies hope of obtaining work and making a living; yet it also poses the dangers of such city areas.

In his novel *Room 207*, Kgebeti Moele describes the room as an overcrowded space inhabited by six men who seem to hustle by day (occupied with illicit or aggressive dealings, etc.) and party by night. Moele presents a rather hopeless picture of Hillbrow life which seems to delude the characters themselves about their own, desperate lives. In *Ponte City*, Norma Ohler describes the building close by to Hillbrow, to be in a similar state of disrepair as the rest of the suburb. However, in *Zoo City*, Lauren Beukes transforms Hillbrow into a seemingly innocuous zoo world. The reader becomes aware that many inhabitants of Hillbrow have become 'animalled', indicated by the animals that they carry with them and he/she soon realises that the animal burden is punishment for a crime committed. Criminals are therefore easily identified by the animal that they carry with them. The protagonist, Zinzi, is accompanied by a sloth on her back and she earns money to pay her drug dealer and to survive by looking for lost objects, which she locates by following a thread from the original owner to the lost

object. However, she ironically claims that she cannot search for drugs, weapons or missing persons.

With the township of Alexandra as backdrop, Mark Mathabane recounts his life story by dividing it into three significant phases (similar to Mzamane): Part I, The Road to Alexandra, Part II, Passport to Knowledge and, Part III, Passport to Freedom. These crucial periods in his life can be regarded as stepping stones towards the attainment of his freedom. Due to sheer hard work and perseverance, as well as aid from white people, Mark finished school and subsequently obtained a tennis bursary from a US university where he continued his tennis coaching to finally become a player of renown.

Soweto features widely in the 'black' authors' concerns discussed in this chapter: Mzamane, Tlali, Brutus and Ndebele. Mzamane divides his novel into three main sections: (1) My Schooldays in Soweto; (2) The Day of the Riots and (3) The Children of Soweto. In this candid picture of Soweto, Mzamane first sets the scene by relating his school days in Soweto. It would seem that he was not inspired by his teachers and the only popular ones were Pakade and Phakoe, who had a rather lackadaisical attitude as they 'drank like twin sponges' and even borrowed money from their pupils (1982, p. 3). The pupils bitterly objected to learning Afrikaans in their schools (1982, p. 6) because they regarded the language as another means of subjugation. In addition, the schools were not provided with enough teachers, so that classes often had about 70 pupils to one teacher (1982, p. 28)—this observation is ironically countered by mentioning the high rate of absenteeism at the same time. These circumstances above, together with an ineffective police force in which the black policemen treat the black population worse than their white counterparts; and the streets that are terrorised by street gangs called *tsotsis*, come to a head and Soweto erupted in riots in 1976 (1982, p. 69). In the second section, the reader learns that the police station has been burnt down during the riot and entry to or exit from the township has been barred. The pupils unite to gain more influence. The third section recounts an escalation in violence with police raids and apprehension of people who are then allegedly tortured (1982, pp. 181, 186–187). Violent death has become a common occurrence and the people fear to attend funerals for possible harassment by the police (1982, pp. 216–218). The resentment escalating in the township results in strikes and stay away from work, which disrupt the railway services (1982, p. 223). There is bad blood between the hostel dwellers (miners from the homelands) and the students (1982, p. 226). Peter Abrams explores the mining conditions in his novel, *Mine Boy* (1946).

As a township dweller, Miriam Tlali was the first black woman to have her work published in South Africa. Her first novel, *Between Two Worlds* (1975) was published outside South Africa. This novel was later renamed *Muriel at Metropolitan* (1980) when it was first published in South Africa. Tlali's writing is inspired by her own experiences as a young woman in Johannesburg who describes the living conditions in Sophiatown and Soweto. In an interview with Rosemary Jolly (1998), Tlali claims that her interest in books and learning developed from 'trying to understand things

around' her (1998, p. 141). She recounts her experience of inequality when trying to buy shoes, but she is neither allowed to try them on without socks nor in the shop; she mentions the strikes and the signs 'for Europeans only' (1998, p. 142). As an intelligent woman, she found it most frustrating that any resistance to the *status quo* was banned, a matter that compelled her to create her own platform (1998, p. 144) to write and make people aware of the system. Apart from the political situation, Tlali was also aware of the problems that women like her were exposed to, for example, the treatment women were accorded in trams and trains as well as the attitude of African men towards their wives (1998, p. 146). These issues were raised in her short stories like 'Footprints in the Quag: Stories and Dialogues from Soweto' (1989).

As an activist, Dennis Brutus wrote several poems and articles, but in this context his memories related in *Remembering Soweto* (2004) make an important contribution to this overview of role players. In a similar manner, Njabulo Ndebele contributes a useful glimpse of ordinary township people and their problems, instead of a politically coloured image in 'Fools and Other Stories' (1983).

Zakes Mda, from African origins and Ivan Vladislavić of Croatian extraction, both 'focus on the spatial expression of the white and black social cultures and their different configurations of identity formation' in Johannesburg (Wenzel 2015, p. 114). Mda tends to act as a social conscience to both black and white by reverting to historical evidence in order to reveal how the passage of time and the necessary distance tend to change historical impressions. In his novel *Ways of Dying* (1995) Mda chooses an anonymous coastal city in order to describe the living conditions in shacks. The protagonist Toloki has no work, but he invents himself as an official funeral mourner because ironically, there are so many funerals that relatives do not find the time to mourn a loved one properly. This hopeful attitude also emerges when he wants to set up house with his childhood friend Noria. Whereas he previously lived with a shopping trolley as his 'household' container, when Toloki decides to set up home with Noria, he applies all his creativity to make it appealing for both of them; he tears pages from catalogues and magazines (1995, p. 92) to beautify their home.

In a more recent novel, *Black Diamond* (2009), Mda applies gentle satire to describe the faults and foibles of both black and white citizens as he believes that 'rewriting the past must take cognisance of the present' (Wenzel 2015, p. 120) and the novel exemplifies this. Especially here, the narrator describes the lifestyle of the up and coming young affluent blacks who enjoy their new advantages but still experience nostalgia for what they regard as home: 'More than anything else, former Sowetans return to Soweto for the homeliness as well as the nostalgia: being in Soweto is like being enveloped in the ample bosom of a much-loved matriarch' (*Black Diamond*, 22). One gains the impression that the respective characters receive affirmation of their new identities when they revisit home. However, the most important aspect of this crossing-over of boundaries that were formerly strictly segregated, lies in a type of hybrid culture

which could only benefit all the citizens involved, as culture needs to be dynamic and constantly challenged to avoid stultification. The concept of hybridity is also underlined by the different characters who intermingle: Kristin (white magistrate) and Don (black security guard); the white gangsters and black prostitutes which suggest that *Black Diamond* is Mda's attempt 'to expose ideological boundaries that prevent mutual understanding between black and white communities' (Wenzel 2015, p. 120).

An article by Terésa Coetzee on Johannesburg in *The Beeld* newspaper (June 29 2013, p. 3) draws specific attention to the renewal of central Johannesburg (the former industrial heart of the city) as an arts centre named Maboneng. In this location, the former business premises have been converted into art galleries, shops, food markets and restaurants that are mainly situated on Main and Fox Streets. At the Pata Pata restaurant on Fox street, the customers can eat, play chess or listen to jazz music. It is this type of culture that creates positive feelings among the different communities, because it reflects something for everyone. Vladislavić also addresses prejudice in his work, but he attempts to provide an ironical perspective, intended as a mental corrective—either at a distance in time, or from different vantage points or from varying historical impressions. In a story entitled 'Curioser' from *The Exploded View* (2004), Vladislavić questions the boundary between 'authenticity and duplicity' (Wenzel 2015, p. 118), when he describes the artist Majara's reconstruction and subsequent sale of original, cheaply bought African masks as his own artistic expression. This act could be seen as sheer reproduction or could serve as an example of 'the postmodernist problematic of the authentic author or creator' (Wenzel 2015, p. 118).

Reminiscent of *The Folly*, mentioned above, Vladislavić once again exemplifies in *The Restless Supermarket* (2001), how the obstinacy of habit and the unacknowledged presence of bias can solidify certain comfort zones. The writer focuses on the changes taking place in Hillbrow through the jaundiced eye of Tearle, a former proofreader. With a typical ordered and accurate factual mindset, Tearle resists change in all its forms; he wants to impose order and feels helpless to evade the signs of change that occur around him

In another, earlier article in *Die Beeld*, Eben Venter (23 July 2006, p. 4) pays tribute to Vladislavić's *Portrait With Keys: Joburg and What-What*, as 'more than just a biography of Johannesburg, because it is also an autobiography, a comedy, an artistic sketch, a travel description and a philosophical meditation' (my translation). Venter seems to share and appreciate the element of nostalgia that clings to the following quotation: 'We have grown up in this air, this light... we will never be ourselves anywhere else. Happier, perhaps, healthier, less burdened, more secure. But we will never be closer to who we are than this' (*Portrait With Keys* 2006, p. 103). This quotation summarises how most South Africans (black and white) feel about their country.

Within a separate frame of reference, some individual cases need to be revisited to note how both black and white individuals suffered from segregation in a city

context. In *Bitter Fruit* (2001), Achmat Dangor explores the ramifications of a senseless and brutal rape of a non-white nurse, Lydia Ali, and the effect this act has on her marriage. In a contrasting situation, Arthur Maimane wrote a novel *Hate no More*, in which he describes the anguish of a white girl raped by a black boy. She becomes pregnant and decides to keep the child, but she is derided and scorned by the white community for her courage. Lewis Nkosi describes the experience of a black man imprisoned for allegedly raping a white girl in his novel, *Mating Birds* (1986), which once again highlights the indelible traces of apartheid on ordinary people. Furthermore, Shaun Johnson depicts a sympathetic and conscientious Native Commissioner in his novel, *The Native Commissioner*, in contrast to the hated Native Commissioners in the townships. Yet, despite his good intentions the commissioner is finally railroaded into submission by the nationalist government. Most of the scourges of contemporary society have been discussed, but the ravages caused by AIDS should not go unmentioned. Sandile Memela wrote a novel called *Flower of the Nation* (2005) in which she explores the anguish of two young girls who live with a father suffering from AIDS. They are finally forced to seek help from a family member. Yet there are many orphans who have no family or refuge. Another area of neglect that occurs frequently in squatter settlements is the fate of single mothers. Futhi Ntshingila bemoans the fate of such mothers in the novel, *Do Not Go Gentle: A Novel* (2014).

It is also necessary to touch on the topics of refugees and human trafficking mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. In her novel *Shadows* (2012), Novuyo Rosa Tshuma describes the fate of Zimbabwean exiles/refugees in Johannesburg, while Jassy Mackenzie explores the tragic world of human trafficking between Johannesburg and London in the novel, *Stolen Lives* (2011). In contrast to foreigners, Matlwa (2007), in his novel *Coconut*, describes the difficulties that young black South Africans growing up in white suburbs experience with identity, and Mngxitama (2013) looks at middle-class Johannesburg citizens like Mda in *Black Diamond*.

A FOOTNOTE ON DURBAN

As a harbour city, with a tropical climate, Durban became the centre for sugar cane cultivation that also attracted Indian indentured labourers (1860–1911). The result of this industrial enterprise was a large Indian population which has also become a qualifying characteristic of the city. With regard to Indian culture and life, Praba Moodley (2003) presents us with an Indian family's struggle with the harsh realities of labourers in a sugar cane plantation near Durban. The title of the novel, *The Heart Knows No Colour*, is self-evident. The young daughter of the family transgresses the strict prohibition of love across the colour bar when she falls in love with a white man and is then forced into an Indian marriage by her parents according to their traditions, while her brother sadly becomes enslaved by the Durban underground and its gambling dens.

Malla Nunn, provides us with insight on Zulu customs in her novel *Blessed are the Dead* (2012). Although the context is in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands

and the novel is written in the detective genre, the topic of black and white relationships is once again investigated and the unfortunate victim is a lovely Zulu teenager girl.

CONCLUSION

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Hearings that commenced on 15 April 1996 have been rendered in Antjie Krog's poignant commentary in *Country of My Skull* (1998). Her contribution should be regarded as an important means of closure and as a gesture of reconciliation for herself and by intimation, for the South African white population who had adhered to a selfish and short-sighted ideology. Krog's interpretation of the tragic events enacted at the hearings precipitated a spirit of reconciliation that has become embodied in the diffusion of former city boundaries, the creation of new meeting sites like Maboneng in Johannesburg and the building of Steyn City, which all contribute towards a new profile for Johannesburg. An insurance entrepreneur, Steyn, is in the process of constructing this city in a 'neutral' area situated between an exclusive mixed suburb, Dainfern, and a poverty-ridden black settlement called Diepsloot (Deep Furrow) in the north of Johannesburg. To affirm this bold decision, Steyn has moved both his home and his head office to this site (Wenzel 2015, pp. 125–126).

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the cityscapes of South Africa have been shaped by colonisation and the spectre of apartheid; the dominant industries of gold and diamonds and the land-ownership question. In retrospect, the questions of identity and traditions seem to feature prominently at the heart of all these social dilemmas. The legacies of apartheid still remain in many contexts, but the concept of globalisation has to be taken in account as well: cultures have become hybrid, home has become associated with people rather than the old idea of place and tradition can only feature if it lends value to our lives, like history. Meditating about the character of our cities, we become aware of the many positive ideas that different cultures can contribute and should acknowledge the role of literature 'in creating a historical consciousness while retaining an integral sense of culture' (Wenzel 2015, p. 126). Fiction remains an essential form of expression that allows leeway for adjustments of perspective.

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Asian Cities

INTRODUCTION

Obviously, there is no easy summary to be given for literature and cities which span from Turkey and Palestine and Arabia through to Korea and Japan. Contributors have written well and comprehensively: for example, Valerie Kennedy on Istanbul, which is half in Europe, half in Asia; Ghenwa Hayek on Beirut, and hence on the Arab city. Further attention to Asian cities could take in Azerbaijan, whose capital Baku is the setting for Kurban Said (1905–1942)’s novel *Ali and Nino*, first published in Vienna in 1937. Its opening scene, with thirty Mohammedans in the school, four Armenians, two Poles, three Sectarians, and one Russian, is a reminder of Russian possession of the territory, including of Iran in the nineteenth century.

Russian interference in Afghanistan marks Kipling’s *Kim* (1901), whose hero is a poor white living in the Mughal town Lahore, capital of the Punjab, just over the present border into Pakistan, and regarded then as a frontier town which the British garrisoned. It is also the setting of Kipling’s short story ‘On the City Wall’; Lahore is a romantic site (the brothel is on the city wall), and Kipling enjoys thinking of Lahore as ageless, primitive like an Old Testament town. A summary of Asia must also note Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka, all subject to colonisation, before reaching China and Japan. Here, Alastair Niven has written comprehensively on Indian cities and gives a route map for any reader; and India is also represented by two wonderful chapters on Delhi and Mumbai by Stuti Khanna and Nilufer Bharucha. No one could handle the China chapter better than Leo Lee, author of *Shanghai Modern*; and there is a sensitive chapter too by Louis Lo on Taipei and Seoul, and on the films of Jia Xiangke, whose *24 City* (2008) illustrates a death drive in the very heart of capitalist modernity (even when that capitalism is Chinese). And Ikuho Amano draws out an elegiac note in Japanese modernism. To increase the diversity beyond Asia, this section also includes a masterly chapter on Australia and New Zealand by Michael Hollington.

To an even more obvious extent than in the Americas, or Africa, colonisation in nearly all these countries impinged on cities which have ancient and sustainable cultures already. African port cities were before and after colonisation closely linked to port cities in the Arabian Sea and to India, developing, as Kenneth McPherson argues, an independent cultural and cosmopolitan existence different from hinterland cities, and being the places, in the nineteenth century, where, even if Western ideas were rejected, the technology of communication—the printing press, the telegraph, the railroad, and steamship-allowed nationalism based on religion, language, and shared historical experience. He points out that in British India, before Delhi became the capital in 1911, the only English-speaking tertiary institutions open to Indians were in Karachi, Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta (Kolkata); hence the newspapers there, and the intense literary activity in these cities too, such as the ‘Bengal Renaissance’. The migration theme, whereby so many Indians were brought by the British into Africa, accounts for G.V. Desani (1909–2000), author of the novel *All About H. Hatterr* (1948), being born in Nairobi, and raised in Sindh (capital: Karachi) before taking off for England via Durban and arriving at Liverpool, returning to India in 1952. The exilic theme is Joycean, and so is much of the novel. Hatterr describes himself as son of a European merchant-seaman and a Malaysian woman from Penang. His novel, an influence on Rushdie, involves him listening to various gurus, including from Calcutta, Rangoon, Madras, Bombay, Delhi, and Varanasi (Benares). The text and its ‘rigamole English’ reflect this pluralisation of cultures and stand for an India which cannot be seen in single terms, certainly not by the standards of English ‘humanist’ culture, of which it is as critical as is Forster’s *A Passage to India*. It had a huge influence on Salman Rushdie, in both *Midnight’s Children* and *The Satanic Verses*. Both texts are multiple in style and subject matter, and define one aspect of Indian postmodernism.

Kolkata, population five million, India’s eighth city, became a possession of the English East India Company in 1690; it included amongst its administrators Thackeray’s father (Thackeray was born there in 1811). It changed its character as it became subject to British colonial rule after 1857. It produced a huge literature, as with Kaliprasanna Sinha (1840–1870), who translated the *Mahabharata* into Bengali, and also wrote *Hutom Rynchar Nashka* (1861), which, according to Ranajit Guha in ‘A Colonial City and its Times’ derives from Dickens’ *Sketches by Boz*, thus presenting us with the strange idea of Dickens’ representations of early nineteenth-century London providing a way of thinking about a colonial city. The comparison was made then by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838–1894), from whom Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) learned much, and who was the author of the first novel in Bengali, *Durgeshmandini* (1865), and who also edited the periodical, *Bangardashan*, starting in 1872: a sign of urban culture.

After independence, India came under the control of the Indian National Congress Party, with Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister (1966–1977, 1980–1984); she kept herself in power by declaring a State of Emergency (1976–

1977), with which Rohinton Mistry's novel *A Fine Balance* (1995) opens; it is set in Mumbai, though the city is not mentioned, and begins with the student Maneck saying to the two tailors he has met on the train, 'I am new in the city . . .' (6): that familiar trope with which to start a city novel. By the end, Maneck has been in Dubai, which he hates, and he commits suicide on returning home. This Zolaesque negativism, which made Mistry—an opposite to Rushdie in his writing—emigrate to Canada in 1975, and which shows itself in a conservatism in describing the city and its impoverishment, associates with the point that Indian literature has often seen itself in contrast to urban life. It is not so with Vikram Seth, whose *A Suitable Boy*, which Alastair Niven discusses, is often compared to Jane Austen for its irony. It is set in Brahmipur, an imaginary city; to put Desnai, Rushdie, Seth, and Mistry together is to get some sense of the variety of modern Indian prose styles.

Feuds between Hindus and Muslims markedly and horribly increased after the destruction of a Muslim temple at Ayudhya in 1992: the aftermath was felt for example, in the feminist 'factual novel'—combining fiction with historical summaries—of the Bangladeshi Taslima Nasrin's *Lajja* (Shame) (1993), which describes revenge on Hindus in Dhaka, after Ayudhya; its Dhaka—a place of modernity and rickshaws, and of deep poverty—is a place of riot and siege, and no place for women, according to Nasrin. The city is to embody the nation, and the nation sees the woman as destabilising. In contrast, the modernity of the BJP, the Hindu nationalist party, has been part of the construction of a new urbanisation, as with, and outstandingly, Bangalore, with a population as the same as London's; with its IT industry and its business process outsourcing (BPO), it is India's third city, after Mumbai and Delhi: the fourth city being Chennai, formerly Madras. Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Surat, the port city in Gujarat, come next: these cities—especially Bangalore as a new city—are now markers of a postmodern consumerism, including a film industry which far exceeds Hollywood.

This is a far world from Kipling's Lahore, and the world of the British in India, remembered in Kipling's poetry, 'Ford o' Kabul river' ('Kabul town's by Kabul river') or, more extensively, with 'The Song of the Cities' (a brief tour of cities commanded into being, or influenced by, the British: Bombay (with its 'mills' that make it like Manchester), Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, Singapore, Hong Kong, Halifax, Quebec and Montreal, Victoria, Cape Town, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart, and Auckland). In 'Barrack-Room Ballads' (1892), such a Kipling poem as 'The Road to Mandalay', evoking the soldier's life in Burma, and Moulmein, a seaport taken by the British in 1826, (and the setting of Orwell's chapter 'Shooting an Elephant'), evokes both those cities. And the poem includes London by contrast. Conrad knew that world too, as in his Malay novels (*Almayer's Folly*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *The Rescue*, and *Lord Jim*). Kipling was a source of fascination to Brecht, whose sense of the city is deeply informed by the sexual implications of 'Mandalay'; the 'song of Mandalay' is sung outside the brothel in Mahagonny, which is simultaneously Upton Sinclair's Chicago, Berlin, and

London, home of the Salvation Army whose existence as a working-class city movement informs not only Brecht but Damon Runyon. The city is Brecht's 'jungle of cities', title of his play of 1923, combining Chicago and a Malay timber dealer; only criminality (much of it well heeled) is at home in it, and for most it is the experience of the unidentifiable, and of mere survival in alienated conditions. So much of Brecht's *Man Equals Man* (1926), *The Threepenny Opera* (1928), *Happy End* (1929), and *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* (1930) recalls Kipling's soldiers in Indian cities and barracks, like the song 'Surabaya Johnny' which, deriving from Kipling's ballad 'Mary, Pity Women' evokes cities as names, and as sites of strange encounters, where identity is liminal.

Surabaya, in Javan Indonesia, and a town as old as Jakarta (formerly Batavia) of course, represents another area of colonisation, and everything that may be said about African cities applies here, again. In Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925–2006), the setting for his historical quartet, called the Buru Quartet, after the name of the prison island where he was confined as a communist (1969–1979), the opening is in Surabaya, a cosmopolitan centre but under Dutch rule in the 1880s. There is a rage felt in Toer's sense that it has been in the coloniser's interest to leave the city village-like, purposefully underdeveloped, in order to continue a sense of patronage, and to prevent the colonised ever feeling equal: at the same time, the colonised city knows how much modernity is at work in, say, New York. (It was at Bandung, in Indonesia, in 1955 that the 'Third World', made up of non-aligned countries, was conceptualised, and its events written up by Richard Wright as *The Color Curtain* (1956)). Pramoedya Ananta Toer had been imprisoned by the Dutch in the last days of colonial rule (1947–1949); the Buru Quartet comprises *This Earth of Mankind*, *Child of All Nations*, *Footsteps*, and *House of Glass*; the first two were banned by the Indonesian government. Their subject is the nation, but seen in no reductive terms, and with its linguistic and religious complexity recognised, described through the narrator, Minke, son of an old Javanese family, and at the beginning of *This Earth of Mankind*, the only 'native' in the Dutch High School in Surabaya, for which the novel speaks.

India's older civilisation compares with China's, which marks its modern history as beginning in 1841, when Hong Kong was taken by the British, and treaty ports such as Shanghai were opened up to western occupation. J.G. Ballard gives a sense of Shanghai as a terrible city, marked by death, as symbolised by the flowers on the river, and occupied by the British and then by the Japanese, in *Empire of the Sun* (1984), whose oppression of the Chinese is noted as evoking a fearful vengeance to come. Shanghai was, then, a profound contrast to Beijing, the older capital, yet the place where Chinese modernism started, in the May Fourth (1919) movement, and marked in the often urban-based short stories of Lu Xun. Shanghai and Beijing, along with Nanjing, Guangzhou, and Xi'an, now represent different forms of modernity, aware of comparisons with the United States and Europe, and yet fiercely assertive of their Chinese character, which is, however, different from that of Taipei, capital of Taiwan, which has also gone its own way while keeping a

'traditional' Chineseness represented by its possession of the treasures brought over by the Kuomintang in 1949, now housed in the Palace Museum. Taipei, too, has memories of Japanese colonialism between 1895 and 1945. Beijing and Taipei have formidable film industries, as do Hong Kong and Japan.

Four films made in Tokyo are Kurosawa's *Stray Dog* (1948), which has a *noir*, criminal content, Ozu's *Tokyo Story* (1953), Mikio Naruse's *Floating Clouds* (1955), based on a novel by the feminist writer Fumiko Hayashi (1903–1951), and *Autumn Has Already Started* (1960), which is about children finding their way round Tokyo. In each of these, the city is unglamourised, as if there was no embracing of it as there is in any New York or Paris film. The 'story' *Tokyo Story* tells, in an era of post-war defeat and stoicism—its plot is of an old couple coming up from a traditional Japanese town to Tokyo to see their grown-up children—relates to disillusionment. That is what the city means; or else emptiness, with a sense, especially in Naruse, that women fare worse in it. To come to these films is to feel a resistance to western modernity insofar as that has created the modern city, and which means that the city does not offer great surprises, or changes. The elegiac note is pursued and makes the city something to be represented, and yet resisted, perhaps because if modernity has its triumphalism, it does not accord with the lives within it, sometimes lost.

Istanbul

Valerie Kennedy

INTRODUCTION

Asked what he liked most about Ankara, the poet Yahya Kemal replied, 'Returning to Istanbul.' However unfair to Ankara, the reply conjures up Istanbul's special place in the minds of Turks and non-Turks alike. Located in both Europe and Asia, with a current population estimated at 17 million ('Istanbul, the Queen of Cities' 2016), divided by the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, Istanbul's geographical situation suggests the *brassage de peuples* which has characterized the city for much of its existence. For Western travellers from at least the sixteenth century onwards, the city has symbolized, variously, aesthetics, exoticism and/or sensuality, Oriental despotism, and the seclusion of women, functioning as Europe's 'Other' (Said 1995) in terms of culture, government, and religion. The European Capital of Culture in 2010, today, with Turkey's candidature for membership of the European Union seemingly eternally deferred, and Istanbul struggling to cope with the influx of refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, the city once again symbolizes the complex relationship between East and West. Moreover, the heavy-handed government reaction to the summer 2014 Gezi Park protest against the destruction of an Istanbul city park spiralled into countrywide demonstrations against the ruling Justice and Development Party of Turkey (conservative) [AKP] government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, revealing Istanbul's position on Turkey's political fault line, just as the 1999 Izmit earthquake reminded us of Istanbul's geological vulnerability. (Such heavy-handedness was more than repeated in the summer of 2016.) Nowhere is the complex relationship between Istanbul and literature or Istanbul as the meeting place of East and West more clearly dramatized than in the works of Orhan Pamuk, a writer who is controversial at home while being

seen as *the* Turkish author abroad, although there are many other significant Turkish writers.

BYZANTIUM—CONSTANTINOPLE—ISTANBUL

Turkey is a land of cities (and today, therefore, also of ruins), whether one considers the ancient cities of the Hittites, such as Hattuşaş, *Yazılıkaya*, and *Karatepe-Aslantaş*, the underground cities of Cappadocia like Derinkuyu and Kaymaklı, or the ruins of such Greek and Roman cities of Ephesus, Bergama, and many others. Istanbul takes its place in this list first as Byzantium, then Constantinople (with the old part of the city being known as Stamboul), and today Istanbul.

Known as Byzantium until 330, when Constantine founded the new capital of the Roman Empire on the same site, the city was renamed Constantinople and became the capital of the Byzantine Empire until 395 A.D., when it became the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. In 1204 in the Fourth Crusade, it fell to the Crusaders who ransacked and desecrated the Aya Sofia, and then became part of the Latin Empire of Constantinople. Although the Byzantine Empire was restored in 1261, in 1453 Mehmet the Conqueror (1432–1481) took the city, which became the capital of the Ottoman Empire (Chronology of (the) Byzantine Empire). Istanbul remained the capital until 1923, when Mustafa Kemal or Atatürk made Ankara, strategically placed near the centre of the country, the capital of the new Turkish Republic.

The emergence of Atatürk, the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and the population exchange in 1923, during which 900,000 Greeks were repatriated to Greece from Turkey and 400,000 Turks returned to Turkey from Greece, as well as the massacres of Armenians and the destruction of Armenian property in the 1890s, 1915–1916, and 1920 (Anderson 2008), had a huge effect on Turkish cities like Istanbul and Izmir. If Ankara is the capital, Istanbul with its varied historical and cultural heritage—palaces, mosques, churches, museums, Byzantine remains, Ottoman fortifications—as well as the Kapalı Çarşı/covered market, and the city's central place in commerce and tourism, is still by far the more famous of the two.

Istanbul has always been a divided city: at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Mary Wortley Montagu opposed Pera to Constantinople, and today there is Beyoğlu (Pera as was—from the Greek meaning 'on the other side' (Türel 2011, p. 90)), as opposed to Sultanahmet (with the Topkapı palace and the Aya Sofya), versus the 'Asian side' of areas like Kadıköy and Üsküdar (previously Scutari, made famous by Florence Nightingale), and Haydarpaşa, the terminus of the railway from Baghdad built by the Germans in 1909. Moreover, today, in the wake of the Syrian stalemate and the coming of Daesh, Istanbul and other Turkish cities are faced with a huge influx of refugees. There are about 2.2 million in Turkey (Kingsley 2015, p. 1), many remaining in the southeast while others—330,000 in 2014 according to one estimate—are in Istanbul (Cetingulec 2015). The Kurdish problem remains. The Kurdistan Workers'

Party (socialist) [PKK] leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was arrested in 1999 and is currently serving a life sentence on İmralı island in the Sea of Marmara; but while in the early years of the AKP, government relations between the Turkish state and its Kurdish population improved, as of January 2016 the situation has worsened again, partly as a result of the complex political situation in neighbouring countries like Iraq and Syria.

ISTANBUL THROUGH WESTERN EYES

Often viewed through the Orientalist stereotypes of sexuality, despotism, and an alien religion, Istanbul has been a key location for European writers and travellers, notably Montagu, Lord Byron, Charlotte Brontë, Pierre Loti, W. B. Yeats, and Virginia Woolf, among others. Montagu presents the position of women ambivalently, declaring them to be ‘the only free people in the empire’ (Montagu 1992, p. 116), but also admitting that women’s liberty and their ‘methods of evasion and disguise that are very favourable to gallantry’ do not prevent them from fear of discovery, which would mean their exposure ‘to the most merciless rage of jealousy which is here a monster that cannot be satiated but with blood’ (149). Later, she recounts the story of the finding of the body of a young and beautiful woman ‘naked, only wrapped in a coarse sheet, with two wounds with a knife’, ‘supposed to be brought (to Pera) in the (the) dead of night from the Constantinople side’ (169); Montagu thus identifies this example of male revenge with the Ottoman part of Istanbul rather than European Pera. Elsewhere she states that ‘(T)he luscious passion of the seraglio is...blended so with the surly spirit of despotism in one of the parties, and with the dejection and anxiety which this spirit produces in the other’, that ‘it cannot appear otherwise than as a very mixed kind of enjoyment’ (149), earlier commenting that, fearing a revolt, ‘the Sultan...has begun his precautions, after the goodly fashion of this blessed government, by ordering several persons to be strangled who were the objects of his royal suspicion’ (148).

Tropes of the harem, the black eunuch, and the beauties of the harem inmates and their precarious lives reappear in Cantos V and VI of *Don Juan*. Baba, the black eunuch, warns Don Juan, disguised as one of the odalisques:

You know how near us the deep Bosphorus floats;
And you and I may chance ere morning rise,
To find our way to Marmora without boats,
Stitch’d up in sacks—a mode of navigation
A good deal practised here upon occasion.

(Byron 2008, pp. 571, V, ll. 732–736)

Towards the end of the harem episodes, Don Juan and the odalisque Dudù are threatened with this punishment when Gulbeyaz, the Sultan’s current favourite, finds that Don Juan has been confided to Dudù’s care and

declares: 'Let the boat/Be ready by the secret portal's side: /You know the rest' (Byron 2008, pp. 619, VI, ll. 898–900). Although Don Juan escapes, the threat remains. The trope is a long-lived one, and it occurs once again in Pamuk's *The Black Book* (Pamuk 2006a, p. 19) and *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (Pamuk 2006b, p. 41) as well as in Barbara Nadel's *Harem* (2003).

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* evokes both 'the bazaars of Stamboul' (Jane) and 'the grand Turk's...seraglio; gazelle-eyes, houri forms and all!' (Rochester), and Rochester imagines himself bargaining for 'so many tons of flesh and such an assortment of black eyes' (Brontë 1993, p. 282). Other nineteenth-century women travellers like Julia Pardoe and Fanny Blunt generally followed Montagu in describing the harem, the hamam, despotism, and the position of women, but it falls to Pierre Loti to represent the lives of Turkish women (both inside and outside the harem) in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries through a haze of sensuality and exoticism in works like *Les Désenchantées* (1879) and *Alizadé* (1906). Other early twentieth-century writers like Yeats and Woolf take a more aestheticizing approach. In 'Sailing to Byzantium' Yeats sees the city as the embodiment of 'sensual music' and imagines himself as a bird:

Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lord and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

(2012, pp. 2102, 2103)

This makes the city the symbol of both eternal art and imperial power. 'Byzantium', similarly, represents the city through the 'starlit or...moonlit dome' of the Aya Sofya, and again evokes the golden bird, whose 'changeless metal' 'scorn(s) aloud... / Common bird or petal / And all complexities of mire or blood' (Yeats 2012, pp. 2107–2108). Responding to early twentieth-century Constantinople, as she calls it, Woolf sees it as merely a 'very large town', noting that 'it was not ten years ago that the Turks & Armenians massacred each other in the streets', and adding that while the name of 'The Golden Horn' has whispered sweetly in ears that have never left London', 'the actual waters are a little disappointing as the real thing must always be' (Woolf 1990, pp. 348, 357, 351). Similarly, her impression of the Aya Sofya before the restoration of the mosaics is of something 'fragmentary and inconsequent', and not 'beautiful', since 'the zeal of the Turks has stripped the temple bare of ornament', and the place is 'so large, & so secular' that it scarcely seems 'the precinct of an awful religion' (349, 350). However, in Chapter 3 of *Orlando*, she uses the familiar associations of Istanbul with sexuality, despotism and rebellion against it when Orlando's change of sex takes place against the backdrop of an uprising against the Sultan (Woolf 1987, pp. 83–86).

More recently, following the earlier trend represented by Graham Greene's *Stamboul Train* (1932), Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), and Ian Fleming's *From Russia With Love* (1957), Istanbul has become the site of several successful series of detective stories by Barbara Nadel, Jason Goodwin, and Jenny White, as well as by Turkish writers like Mehmet Murat Somer and Ahmet Ümit, where the time settings range from the 1990s to the 2010s (Nadel), the mid- and late nineteenth century (Goodwin and White respectively), and contemporary Turkey (Somer and Ümit). The detectives are, variously, Inspector Çetin İkmen (Nadel), Yashim, a eunuch (Goodwin), Kamil Pasha (White), an unnamed male transvestite (Somer), and Chief Inspector Nevzat Akman. Nadel, Goodwin, White, and Ümit all draw on Istanbul's Byzantine and Ottoman past and its mix of races and religions.

ISTANBUL IN TURKISH LITERATURE

Pamuk is preceded by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, whose novels, *A Mind at Peace* (1949)—declared by Pamuk to be 'the greatest novel ever written about Istanbul' (qtd. in Riker 2014)—and *The Time Regulation Institute* (1962) respond to the early days of the Turkish Republic. *A Mind at Peace*, like later works by Pamuk, evokes Istanbul's *hüzün* (melancholy), its cosmopolitanism, and its position between East and West, tradition and modernity, while *The Time Regulation Institute* satirizes the bureaucracy and the infatuation with systems of all sorts which accompanied Turkey's modernization/Westernization.

ORHAN PAMUK: 'FOR ME THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD IS ISTANBUL'
(2007, p. 414)

Istanbul dominates Orhan Pamuk's work from *Cevdet Bey and His Sons* (1982) to *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2015): the city is both context and protagonist, and the city and many types of literature are often closely intertwined. Pamuk's Istanbul is dominated by *hüzün*, and he presents his works as 'made from a mixture of Eastern and Western methods, styles, habits, and histories' (Pamuk 2007, p. 264). While *The White Castle* (1985) and *My Name is Red* (1998) create fictionalized versions of Istanbul in the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively, the works which focus most intensely on the city are *The Black Book* (1990), and *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2003).

One of the most striking characteristics of *The Black Book* is the dense pattern of allusions to works of what Pamuk calls elsewhere 'the... Eastern canon' (Pamuk 2007, p. 371), most significantly Rumi's *Mesnevî* (Long Poem) and Sheyh Gâlib's *Hüsni ü 'Ashk* (Beauty and Love). Both these allusions serve to indicate the moral degeneracy of Istanbul, possibly as a result of Western influences. From the *Mesnevî*, Pamuk takes the episode of the competition between the Chinese and Anatolian (Rûmî) artists for the favour of the Shah (Andrews et al. 1997, pp. 119–120), a story also referred to in *My Name Is Red* (Pamuk

2002, p. 331) and in ‘Şirin’s Surprise’ (Pamuk 2007, p. 283–289). In Rumi’s poem, the Chinese painters use all the colours available and produce a stunning painting which ‘stole (the Shah’s) wits away’, but the Anatolian artists produce a highly polished mirror in which ‘All that he saw there, here was bettered’ so that ‘(H)is eye was robbed from its socket’ (qtd. in Andrews et al 1997, p. 120). In Rumi, the Chinese painters create a masterpiece, and the mirror’s reflection of the beauty of their painting represents the ‘mirror-like purity’ of the heart of ‘those of Rûm . . . the sufis’ (120), since an ideal Sufi is ‘the perfect mirror that completely reflects the attributes, the word, and the power of God’ (121). In Pamuk, by contrast, the two paintings are commissioned by ‘a Beyoğlu gangster’, who decides to decorate the lobby of his new brothel ‘with scenes of the city’ (Pamuk 2006a, p. 397). He appeals to the painters of the academy, but they refuse, so instead he turns to ‘the artisans who painted the ceilings of provincial mansions, the walls of summer theaters, and the vans, horse-carts, and snake-swallower tents you saw at fairs’, promising the winner ‘a large cash prize’ (398). Rumi’s Shah is replaced by the gangster, the palace by the brothel, the best painters of two cultures by two low-class, unskilled artisans, access to God by money. 1950s Istanbul is decadent and degenerate. Moreover, Sheyh Gâlib’s *Hüsn ü Askh* (Beauty and Love) provides the name of one of the main protagonists, a name meaning ‘winner’ or ‘victorious’, both equally inappropriate and ironic, and Gâlib’s young male and female protagonists, Hüsn and Askh, become the young Galip and Rüya; instead of living and falling in love at the edge of a desert in Diyar-i Kalp—the Realm of Hearts, they live in a city apartment block, the ‘City-of-Hearts’ Apartments (225). There are also references to *The 1001 Nights* which relate to male sexual fantasies (42), Celâl’s literary ambitions (113), and Haroun al-Rashid’s wanderings around the city (307, 315; see also Pamuk 2007, p. 366).

Istanbul: Memories and The City encompasses all the main themes and leitmotifs related to the city in Pamuk’s work to date. The first is the dystopian vision of Istanbul: the disappearance of the Bosphorus ferries, the burning of the Ottoman mansions and *yahıs* (summer houses), the dilapidation of the city in the 1950s and 1960s, recalling both Pamuk’s essays (Pamuk 2007, pp. 66–67, 77) and the nightmarish evocation of the drying up of the Bosphorus in *The Black Book* (Pamuk 2006a, pp. 16–20). *Istanbul* also evokes the loss of multi-cultural Istanbul, its *hüzün*, Western travellers’ accounts of Istanbul and their influence on twentieth-century Turkish writers including Pamuk himself, and Istanbul as the West’s exotic Other. Interspersed with these are accounts of Pamuk’s family and their apartment block, his schooldays, his love of painting, his first love affair, and his decision to become a writer.

Istanbul as dystopia is associated with ruins, the end of empire, loss, and *hüzün*: ‘after the Ottoman empire collapsed’, says Pamuk, ‘the world almost forgot that Istanbul existed’; ‘For me’, he adds, ‘it has always been a city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy. I’ve spent my life either battling this melancholy, or (like all Istanbulus) making it my own’ (Pamuk 2006b, pp. 6). Later he says, ‘the city speaks of defeat, destruction, deprivation, melancholy,

and poverty' (43), and the catalogue of loss includes the disappearance of the Byzantine/Ottoman past (27), the Turkish film industry (32), the landscape around the city (61, 63), the 'glorious street fountains' (88), the cemeteries (264), and so on. The dystopian note is also sounded when, reading *The Istanbul Encyclopedia* of Reşat Ekrem Koçu, Pamuk finds pleasure 'in thinking of the history of Istanbul as a gallery of death, torture and horror' (140). Similarly in *Other Colors* he says, 'Today's Istanbul—today's Turkey—is a world leader in state-sponsored murder by unknown assailants, not to mention systematic torture, trammels on freedom of expression, and the merciless abuse of human rights', although he then adds that 'Turkey also has a democracy strong enough to allow voters to force the state to refrain from such practices' (Pamuk 2007, p. 297). However, this democracy did not prevent Pamuk from finding himself in 2005 accused of 'insulting Turkishness', because of his references to the killing of a million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds in an interview with a Swiss newspaper ('Avoiding EU Condemnation' 2006), although the case was later dropped.

Although one chapter of *Istanbul* does deal with Tanpınar, Yahya Kemal, Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, and Koçu and another discusses Koçu's *Istanbul Encyclopedia*, Pamuk confesses that he is much closer to Western observers of the city than to Turkish Westernizers since he frequently 'identified with a number' of the former—'Nerval, Flaubert, de Amici' and thus 'forged (his) own identity', and 'because so few of Istanbul's own writers have paid their city any attention whatever' (260). This claim is challenged by Laurent Mignon (2011, pp. 62–63) and disproved by some of the poems in İskender Pala's article (2010) and in *The Age of Beloveds* (Andrews and Kalpaklı 2005, pp. 64–68). In any case, in *Istanbul* Western—especially nineteenth-century French—writers dominate. Gérard de Nerval, Théophile Gautier, and Gustave Flaubert get separate chapters, and Pamuk also refers to Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Émile Zola, and Jules Verne, among others. He argues that since Turkey was never a Western colony (Pamuk 2006b, pp. 218, 260, 263 and see Pamuk 2007, p. 370), he is able to share Westerners' Orientalizing views of Istanbul and Turkey as 'exotic' (261) without any humiliation, and to 'become one with the Western traveller... at once the object and the subject of the Western gaze' (261). This feeling, he asserts, has been common to all Istanbulis 'for the last hundred and fifty years' (261). The claim is extraordinary if taken literally, and it has been disputed by Mignon (2011, pp. 60–61), although films like *Hamam*, *The Harem*, and *Istanbul: Crossing the Bridge*, as well as the repeated staging of Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail* at the International Istanbul Opera Festival in 2011, 2012, and 2015 ('6th International İstanbul Opera Festival' 2015), and the popularity of the long-running TV series *The Magnificent Century*, based on the life of Süleyman the Magnificent (Batuman 2014), to some extent bear out Pamuk's claim, at least for a certain class. Along with the return of *Fal* (fortune-telling) and *Nargile* (hookah) cafes and the recent middle-class taste for imitations of Ottoman artefacts, these cultural phenomena can be seen as nostalgia for a lost world.

CONTEMPORARY TURKISH NOVELISTS

Pamuk's writings on Istanbul must be related to those of contemporary novelists like Elif Shafak, Buket Uzuner, Latife Tekin, İzzet Celasin, Ahmet Ümit, and Mehmet Murat Somer, along with poets like Nâzım Hikmet, Yahya Kemal, Orhan Veli, İlhan Berk, and Bedri Rahmi Eyuboğlu, among others. Their works also take the city as a central character. Shafak's *The Flea Palace* (2004) creates an image of Istanbul's diversity and the split between tradition and modernity through its depiction of the varied inhabitants of the Bonbon Apartments and touches on the motifs of disappearing graves and cemeteries, while *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2006) highlights the issue of the Armenian genocide, causing Shafak, like Pamuk, to be charged with 'insulting Turkishness', although she was later acquitted. Tekin, offers a highly original non-realist vision of the shanty town dwellers who against all the odds create a community out of waste on the edge of an unnamed city in *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* (1984), although one reviewer identifies the city as Istanbul (Berji Kristin). Tekin's focus on migration to Istanbul is shared by several other writers, notably Pamuk in his 2015 *A Strangeness in My Mind* and many filmmakers from the 1950s onwards (see below pp. 14–17). Buket Uzuner's *İstanbulu* (2010) raises the question of what it means to live in Istanbul: the city's inhabitants represent a cross-section of ethnicities and religions, and many are migrants, but it is clearly suggested that they do indeed belong. Uzuner's earlier *Mediterranean Waltz* (2000) is set partly in the Kuzguncuk area of Istanbul and mourns the loss of its multi-ethnic and multi-religious community, creating a dystopian vision of a near-future civil war. Another novel in which Istanbul is a site of conflict is İzzet Celasin's *Black Sky, Black Sea* (2013), translated into English from Norwegian, since its author left Turkey in 1988 after having been imprisoned for left-wing activism after the 1980 military coup. The novel covers roughly the same time period as that of Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* (2009), but whereas in Pamuk's novel the political events seem to impinge on the protagonist narrator mainly when the curfew interferes with his visits to Istanbul's expensive restaurants, in Celasin's novel political events are central to the novel since they are intertwined with the lives of the two main protagonists, Oak and Zuhul.

ISTANBUL IN TURKISH POETRY

In Ottoman poetry, Istanbul is often described or implied as a background for the beloved, as the poems by Sa'yi and others quoted in *The Age of Beloveds* (Andrews and Kalpaklı 2005, pp. 72, 145–146) and Nedim's 'We Understand the Purpose of that Glance' (Silay 1996, p. 210) make it clear. Or it takes the form of the setting of the garden, seen as a microcosm of order (Andrews 1996, pp. 160–166), as in Nedim's 'The Time for Festivity Has Come' (211). Occasionally, however, as İskender Pala shows, sometimes the city or one of its neighbourhoods did take centre stage, as in Nabi's 'A Declaration to Honourable Istanbul', Bâki's 'Ghazal' (2010,

pp. 192–193, 196), or Latifi or Revani’s poems about Galata (Andrews and Kalpaklı 2005, pp. 64–66).

In the twentieth century, George Messo singles out Hikmet, Veli, and Berk as poets of Istanbul par excellence, also noting the work of contemporary poets like Gonca Özmen, Küçük İskender, and Birhan Keskin (2016: personal communication). Hikmet’s *Human Landscapes from My Country* starts from Haydarpaşa station (2002, pp. 3–16), and in his *Poems from Prison*, ‘October 5 1945’ evokes ‘the misery of Istanbul’, ‘the city of honest, hardworking, poor people—my real Istanbul’ (Halman 1982, p. 315). Many of Veli’s poems evoke places in Istanbul, like ‘The Covered Bazaar’, ‘Galata Bridge’, ‘Sandıkburnu’, Bebek (‘The Bebek Suite’), or the waters encompassing the city (My Boats), while others imagine Istanbul as the site of love (‘For Istanbul’ and ‘To Live’), or depression (It Makes Me Blue) (Messo, *Veli* forthcoming). All of these are to be found in Veli’s most famous Istanbul poem, ‘Listening to Istanbul’ (Halman 1982, p. 346). Images of the city also dominate Berk’s work, notably but not only in the two book-length poems, *Pera* and *Galata*. In *Pera*, Berk provides a detailed dramatization of the area, evoking its past and present and its multicultural inhabitants. Murat Nemet-Nejat points out the ‘ironic and revealing parallels’ between Benjamin’s *Arcades Project* and Berk’s ‘The Arcade Hristaki’: Benjamin’s quotations are from ‘philosophers, poets, anarchists, journalists, politicians, etc.’ while in Berk they come from ‘prostitutes...in the whore house’ (2007: n 12). Berk’s long poem, ‘Istanbul’, recreates the city’s geography, its past rulers, its monuments, and the engravings of Hogenberger and Melling, and alludes to Yahya Kemal, Orhan Veli, and Sait Faik (many of whose short stories deal with Istanbul’s Greek community) (Messo, *Berk*, forthcoming). But many of Berk’s shorter poems also evoke specific places, like the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua and the Aya Sofya (Saint-Antoine’s Pigeons), ‘Gulhane Park’ (also the subject of Hikmet’s ‘The Walnut Tree’, and quoted in *Black Sky, Black Sea* (Celasin 2013, p. 98)), Pera (‘An Old Street in Pera’), Galata, the Bosphorus, the Golden Horn (‘The Thames’), or Ümraniye (‘Novembers’) (Messo, *Berk*, forthcoming). Other famous poems evoking Istanbul’s beauty, its multiculturalism, its glorious past but also the problems of migration and poverty are Yahya Kemal’s ‘Aziz İstanbul’ (qtd. in Boyar and Fleet 2010, p. 1), Bedri Rahmi Eyuboğlu’s *The Saga of Istanbul* (Silay 1996, pp. 473–477), and Fazlı Hüsnü Dağlarca’s *The Epic of the Conquest of Istanbul* (Halman 2006, pp. 45–47).

ISTANBUL AND FILM

Istanbul, and especially the neighbourhood of Beyoğlu/Pera, is at the heart of Turkish cinema. It was the site of the first film screenings in Turkey (1896) and the first cinemas (1908); from the 1940s to the 1980s, one of its streets—Yeşilçam Caddesi—gave its name to the dominant popular mode of film-making in Turkey (Türel 2011, p. 90). Most films—whether Turkish or non-Turkish—

are set in the European side of Istanbul, although there are exceptions, such as *The Losers' Club* (2011) which is set in Kadıköy on the Asian side.

Yeşilçam dominated Turkish popular cinema from the 1950s to the 1970s, producing mainly melodramas and comedies, but also historical, adventure, and gangster films (Arslan 2011, pp. 63–199). Asuman Suner (2010) identifies the mid-1990s as the beginning of both new wave Turkish cinema, exemplified by the films of Nuri Bilge Ceylan, and of a new form of popular Turkish cinema, which combines Hollywood technique with Yeşilçam themes, as exemplified in Yavuz Turgul's *The Bandit* (1997). In Turkish art cinema from the 1950s to the present, perhaps the most important theme to emerge is immigration from the country to the city (Türel 2010, p. 161), and the migrants' isolation and alienation. The theme characterizes many 1950s and 1960s Turkish films, which often use the arrival at Haydarpaşa railway station as a key scene, as in *The Nights of Istanbul* (1950) or *Birds of Exile* (1964) (Çiçekoğlu 2011, pp. 42–43), but it is also present in the 1971 Yeşilçam film *Give Some Consolation*. In a later film, *Istanbul Tales* (2005), the station is the setting for an (abortive) attempt at escape from the dystopian city. The 1960s and 1970s also saw the continuation of the association between Istanbul and thrillers or detective stories—harking back to the spy film *Five Fingers* (1952)—with the heist film *Topkapı* (1964), *From Russia With Love* (1963), or *Murder on the Orient Express* (1974).

Another central concern is nostalgia for Istanbul's multicultural past, as seen in *Oh Beautiful Istanbul* (1966), which both expresses and ironizes the sense of loss, and *Hidden Face* (1991), which features Pamuk's only screenplay (Çiçekoğlu 2011; 40). The dystopian vision of Istanbul in recent films may be said to begin in the 1970s, with the focus on isolation and claustrophobia (or agoraphobia), in settings which include prisons as in *Midnight Express* (1978) and *Don't let Them Shoot the Kite* (1989), high-rise apartment blocks on the edge of Istanbul, as in *C Blok* (1994)'s dramatization of the life of an isolated housewife, or the ruins of the Rumeli Castle and the city streets as seen by a drifter, as in *Somersault in a Coffin* (1996). In the 1980s and 1990s, films like *Steam: The Turkish Bath* (1997) and *The Harem* (1999) offered both nostalgia and modernity. Both directed by Ferzan Özpetek, a Turk who lives and works in Italy, they were criticized by many Turks for being Orientalist, but Savaş Arslan argues that they indicate the 'shifting parameter(s)' of Turkish identity (2011, p. 271). In the twenty-first-century Turkish cinema, the dystopian mood often dominates, as in the linked revisionist negative fairy tales of *Istanbul Tales*, the alienation in *Distant* (2002), the self-destructiveness, despair, and violence of the characters and the city in *Head On* (2004) and *Three Monkeys* (2008), and the exposure of the negative effects of the marketing of Istanbul as a global city in *City Without Limits* (2011), which charts the dispossession of poor communities to make way for the innumerable high-rises on the outskirts of Istanbul. A lighter mood characterizes Jackie Chan's adventures in *The Accidental Spy* (2001), and the musical documentary, *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul* (2005). The latter presents the varied Istanbul music scene as being neither Eastern nor Western and underlines the ethnic, cultural, and musical diversity of the city through its Kurdish,

Roma, and Turkish musicians, and its mediators, the German musician Alexander Hacke and the Canadian singer Brenna MacCrimmon (Göktürk 2010, pp. 187–190). Deniz Göktürk (193), moreover, points to the recent discovery by Bollywood of Istanbul as a setting as witnessed by Mani Ratnam's *Guru* (2007) and Apoorva Lakhia's *Mission Istanbul* (sic) (2008).

CONCLUSION: A DYSTOPIAN FUTURE?

The dystopian vision of Istanbul is not confined to Turkish films. In a 2009, essay on Sait Faik, Nedim Gürsel concludes that 'Istanbul... did not fall in 1453... but it is "falling" today' (127). He laments the transformation of the Golden Horn into 'a putrid swamp', the destruction of the 'Jewish, Greek, and Levantine neighborhoods in Galata and Pera' and their replacement by 'skyscrapers and luxury hotels', the damage done to 'the waterside mansions on the Bosphorus' by huge oil tankers, the 'mass of concrete buildings' along the shores, and the 'crowd of tense, nervous violence prone men': 'No trace of cosmopolitan Istanbul... remains', he concludes (127). Gürsel who, like Pamuk and Shafak, has been charged with 'insulting Turkishness', lives and works in Paris ('Nedim Gürsel'), but his view of the city is echoed by Ümit's *When Pera Trees Whisper* (2014), which is dedicated to 'the precious memory of the people who were forced to leave these lands' and includes laments for the deportation or exodus of Istanbul's Greek and Armenian communities and comments on the lack of justice, the violence, and the corruption of the city. Such views might seem over-pessimistic, but current developments are not promising. The AKP/President Erdoğan plans to turn Istanbul into a global hub. What this means in practice is the ever-increasing destruction of the natural environment to the north of Istanbul through the planned construction of the Third Bosphorus Bridge, a six-lane highway, a third airport, the Istanbul Canal, and the transformation of areas like Ayazma and Tarlabası (the latter the neighbourhood in Ümit's novel discussed above), involving the destruction of entire neighbourhoods, like that of Sulukule, where the 3400 Roma inhabitants were removed with inadequate compensation ('Movie night: *Ekümenopolis—city without limits* (Turkey 2011)' 2014). As one of the commentators in *City without Limits* says: if the current trend continues, the result will be 'Chaos': or, as the epigraph to Part 7 of Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind*, from Baudelaire's 'The Swan', has it: 'The form of a city / Changes faster, alas! than the human heart' (2015a, p. 561).

NOTE

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Talât S. Halman, lover of Istanbul and literature, both Turkish and English.

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Beirut

Ghenwa Hayek

BEIRUT AWAKENS: 1860–1900

Modern Beirut's literature has been intertwined with the city since the nineteenth century. While Beirut is an ancient city, it lacked the stature of the great Arab cities like Damascus, Baghdad, or Cairo. But as the city grew to become a thriving provincial capital in the late 1800s, Beirut also became the home of the Arab world's first press culture, and many of its intellectuals were foundational figures of the Arab *nahḍa*, renaissance. In Arabic-language journals like *al-Jinān*, *al-Muqtataf*, and *al-Mashriq* Beirut intellectuals like Butrus al-Bustani, Sheikh Nassif al-Yaziji, and Father Yusuf Shaykhu debated ideas in passionate editorials and articles. Like many other print publications during the nineteenth century, these journals dedicated a special section to literature, in which writers experimented with new forms of prose and poetic writing, including the realist novel set in the contemporary city. In his first novel, *al-Hiyām fi-Jinān al-Shām* (Passion in Damascene Gardens 1868–1870), Salim Bustani described Beirut as a center of learning exerting a sort of magnetic pull on young individuals from all over the Arab world, such as Sulayman, the novel's hero, who, "came to Beirut because he had heard that it was advancing in the sciences and in civilization" (Bustani 1868, p. 699). In Arabic, the words for city (*madīna*) and civilization (*tamaddun*) share a common root, one which Bustani makes good use of. What is uncanny about Bustani's work is how much it preempts and foreshadows several of the tropes that have since been used to describe Beirut.

The first of these tropes portrays Beirut as an exceptional space, a cosmopolitan world city. Bustani's Beirut is described as having rushed up the ladder of development, as the narrator mentions that what Beirut has

achieved in progress in 20 years, Europe took 100 to develop (Bustani 1868, p. 701).

Further, Bustani qualifies this effusive description of Beirut as a site of exception and a paragon of progress by pointing backward into the past just as he gestures toward the future:

Undoubtedly, due to the many schools and reading, (the people) will cast off the robes that they inherited from the centuries of ignorance and each one of them will stride forth with eyes open on the road ahead, walking without fumbling and not believing what he does not see; thus, Beirut will become what it used to be: the motherland of knowledge and science. (Bustani 1868, p. 700)

This particular trope reverberates across nineteenth-century Arab *nahḍa* accounts of the immediate past as one that has been a dark time for the Arab Middle East. Thus, by alluding to Beirut's glorious Roman past, Bustani circumvents its Ottoman history and present.

Yet, just as *al-Hiyām* sets up Beirut as a center of progress and learning past and future, the novel suggests that the city can also be dangerous. After all, as the next passage makes clear, it is not only progress that can spread:

Certainly, Beirut danced for a long time in the square of ignorance, when it should have been sitting on the chair of awareness and sobriety. It took more bad habits than good from western civilization, holding on to the shell and not the essence; this poison traveled from it to most of the cities and towns of the East. (Bustani 1868, p. 700)

The dual positioning of Beirut as threat and Beirut as site for the progress of the entire East are both related to Beirut's perceived position as a space of interchange and a site of influence—and perhaps to continuing fears that the violence that had broken out in Mount Lebanon less than a decade before in 1860 could reignite or spread in the city. But it also highlights Beirut as a colonial space, one at the intersection of East and West.

In this 1868 novel lie the kernels of some of the most enduring tropes about the city of Beirut and some of its most powerful dialectical associations. The city emerges as a multitude of contradictory qualities: progressive, yet nostalgic, a site of knowledge but also of a dangerous hedonism, a producer and transmitter of ideas about modernity and progress but also an exporter of vice and excess to the other cities of the Middle East.

WASTED BEIRUT, 1920–1943

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1299–1922), Lebanon came under French mandate rule, which effectively lasted from 1920 until 1943, although French troops did not leave Lebanon until 1946. The 20 years until

1943, when the country gained its formal independence from the French, were busy ones. Beirut had ceded its centrality as the capital of the Arabic press to Cairo, but the city's writers and authors continued to produce work that expanded notions of genre, in Lebanon and in the diaspora.

In general, this period of Lebanese history is culturally more associated with the movement that Jens Hanssen has dubbed "mountain Romanticism," in which writers turned away from the city, striving instead to locate a kind of untouched authenticity in Lebanon's mountain villages (Hanssen 2005; Salem 2003).

Although the cultural national and diasporic elite may have turned their attention away from Beirut, the city and its problems continued to feature in popular culture, such as in the songs and poems of vernacular poet 'Umar al-Z'inni, whose popularity earned him the title *shā'ir al-sha'b*, the poet of the people. Z'inni's poems and songs—which he performed himself—were scathing social and political critiques that often connected politics and the everyday life of urban Lebanese. In his 1938 poem, *Ya Di'ānik ya Bayrūt* (What a waste, O Beirut), Z'inni launches into an acerbic depiction of the city's present. Like Bustani a few decades earlier, Z'inni's poem also introduces concerns about the city as a location of potentially corrupt practices—here, of course, in the Mandate context, Z'inni links Beirut's decline to the nefarious influence of the French presence in Lebanon:

O, you images on the screen/you cheating fraud
 You bride with a rattle / You corpse mounted in a coffin
 What a waste, O Beirut
 (Nu'mān 1979, p. 118; my translation)

In imagery that emphasizes the grotesque yet feminine nature of the city, Z'inni directs his accusatory anger at Beirut, revealing the city to be a simulacrum, an unreal site that is also an uncanny bride and a dead corpse, images both horrifying and lamentable.

The horror of Beirut's present in Z'inni's poem is matched by a mournful lament apparent in the title phrase that is repeated three times in the poem "*ya di'ānik ya Bayrūt* / what a waste, O Beirut." Just as Bustani's text did, the poem also reaches into the past to gesture nostalgically to the city's thwarted possibilities. In particular, Z'inni's poem laments the city's new reality under the French mandate, suggesting that not only has the latter broken people's spirits but also has led to the city's corruption "ideas are broken / spirits are oppressed / freedom has been buried / and only the stick speaks;" before, in the penultimate stanza, declaring "there's no respectability any more / the law is a plaything / wherever you go, there is gambling / in clubs and in houses / what a waste, O Beirut" (Nu'mān 1979, p. 118). His final stanza conjures up images of a prison, where "he who enters does not leave, and he who leaves cannot enter" (Nu'mān 1979, p. 118). If mobility and teleological progress were at the forefront of Bustani's mind in the late nineteenth century, a few decades later, Z'inni is despondent at the thought of any such thing. Further, in his choice of rhyme

scheme (aaabb / cccb / dddb / eebb / fffb / gggb), Zi'inni forces together the words Beirut, with *tābūt* (coffin), *nabbūt* (stick), *tamūt* (to die), *al-qūt* (food; in the sentence “people are starving”), *buyūt* (homes; invaded by gambling, as seen above), and *ma bi-fūt* (does not enter). The poet rhymes all these words, associated with death, starvation, corruption, and violence to Beirut, shackling the city with all sorts of negative associations.

In another of Zi'inni's poems from the same period titled simply “*Bayrūt*,” the poet targets his critique at the city's inhabitants' frivolity and links it to impending destruction: “Drinking ʿaraq, playing cards / racing horses and hunting pigeons / are your capital, Beirut,” continuing on to say “Eating drinking laughing playing / happiness and riding in taxis / are your life, Beirut” (Nu'mān 1979, p. 119). All this “showing off and excess / have exhausted Beirut,” the poet concludes sorrowfully (Nu'mān 1979, p. 119). In Zi'inni's poem, it is precisely Beirut's easygoing lifestyle that becomes problematic; Beirut's frivolity can only lead to “*zift bi zift* (literally tar, but figuratively rubbish, awfulness) and the destruction of Beirut's souks” (Nu'mān 1979, p. 119). In 2012, when alternative musician Yasmine Hamdan re-recorded this song, the poignancy and prescience of Zi'inni's depiction of a city that danced itself into destruction was obvious to all even as they highlighted the fact that anxieties over the city and its lifestyle did not begin with the civil war.

GLOBAL BEIRUT, 1950–1975

The period between the 1950s and the early 1970s in Beirut was one of the most culturally rich and active in the life of any modern Arab capital, although Beirut and Lebanon were not completely unscathed by political turmoil, including the outbreak of civil conflict in 1958, the Arab–Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973, and the expulsion of the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) from Jordan and their relocation to Beirut after 1970. The PLO had been founded in 1964. Nevertheless, those decades marked a moment of prosperity for many, and an especially culturally fertile one for Beirut. Beirut became a destination. It is during this period that, to paraphrase Elise Salem, Beirut's “aura” began to develop regionally and globally (Salem 2003, p. 138); Mahmoud Darwish describes the city as a place where “Arabs came searching for something missing in their own countries . . . a lung which a mixture of people . . . could use to breathe” (Darwish 1995, p. 93).

Beirut became a laboratory for literary and cultural experiments, “busy sticking out a mocking tongue at the sand and the repression on all sides of it. It was a workshop for freedom” (Darwish 1995, pp. 52–53). Founded in the 1950s, journals like *al-Ādāb* and *Sh'ir* became known for promoting literary modernisms and for publishing work by poets from across the Arabic-speaking world. In the pages of these journals, and in the many cafes that were now established in the areas around the American University of Beirut, literary and aesthetic debates raged over such issues as modernity, global postcolonial struggles, and the role of art and literature in society.

During this period of rapid urban change in all aspects of life, Beirut itself became the symbol of the modern (Kassir 2011, p. 400). For example, Suhail Idriss's 1958 novel *al-Kbandaq al-Ghamīq*, named after a conservative Beirut neighborhood, stages a critical coming-of-age moment for Sami, its protagonist, as one in which he leaves his conservative neighborhood having, much to his neighbors' horror, removed his religious garb. In the novel, Sami takes the tram into the heart of the city and, as he settles in, "looks around him, and feels content. How light life is, and how delightful!" (Idriss 1958, p. 111). The further he gets into the city and away from his neighborhood on board the tram, the more "modern" Sami becomes. In the novel, Sami's journey toward secular modernity culminates in his deeper entrenchment in the urban space. City and modernity are irrevocably entwined.

Even authors whose earlier work had celebrated the Lebanese mountain village, like Emily Nasrallah or Tawfiq Yusuf Awwad, turned their attention to Beirut. In novels like *Tuḡūr Aylūl* (*September Birds*) and *Tawāhīn Bayrūt* (*Death in Beirut*), Nasrallah and Awwad explored Beirut's liberatory promise for young women from the countryside, but they did not spare the city with a critical gaze either. Beirut was, as it had been for Z'inni and Bustani, a place of dualistic tensions, at once modern and exciting yet potentially dangerous, a place where young women encountered violent ends and young men and women could get lost in material or political excess.

In retrospect, it is remarkable how many artistic works that gesture to the turmoil of the times seem also to be foreshadowing the violence to come. Awwad's 1972 novel ends as protesting students stream into Martyrs' Square in the heart of Beirut. In 1974's *Nazl el-Surūr*, *The Inn of Happiness*, Ziad al-Rahbani situates his musical play's action in a rundown urban hotel in a Beirut seething with student protests and violence. Rahbani's status as heir to the Rahbani musical tradition which celebrated an idealized, pastoral, Lebanese village setting made his work's urban relocation all the more significant, and has been seen as a sign of a continuing generational shift away from the mountain and toward the city and its everyday life (Stone 2007). Sympathetic to political action, the play is mostly concerned with the everyday struggles of ordinary urban dwellers, and emphasizes the marginal and overlooked Beirutis who had been seduced by the city's rapid modernization and urbanization, but for whom its promise remained elusive.

The crackle and energy of that moment of fervent intellectual and political activity is perhaps best captured in Mahmoud Darwish's description of Beirut as "a global transformer station that converted every deviation from the norm into a program of action" (Darwish 1995, p. 54). The sentence does not end there, however, and continues "for a public busy securing water and bread, and burying the dead" (Darwish 1995, p. 54). With its language of electrical transformation, the sentence manages to evoke energy and modernity, while its second half reminds its readers of those for whom all of this meant little if the basic necessities of life were unsecured. It sums

up the city during this time as follows: not only a place of electric political and intellectual fervor but also of growing inequalities; not only a site of modernity and experimentation but also of insouciance. In April 1975, it all came to head in an outbreak of violence that was to endure off and on for 15 years, and transform the city into “a mythological prototype of the city torn by civil war, disheveled by death, dismembered by destruction” (Khoury 1995, p. 137).

THE NECESSITY AND DIFFICULTY OF WRITING BEIRUT, 1975–1990

In 1975, Beirut and Lebanon were irrevocably altered by the outbreak of civil war. Initially, a relatively clear-cut conflict between left-leaning Lebanese and Palestinian, often, but not exclusively Muslim political groups and right-leaning Lebanese mainly Christian militias, by the time the fighting was brought to an end in 1990, the conflict had devolved into a messy intersectarian morass. Very early on in the conflict, Beirut was split into two, west and east, with a demarcation line known as the Green Zone separating the city. Downtown Beirut was shut off from both sides of the city, and gradually emptied of its shops, cinemas, theaters, and public life, becoming by the late 1970s, a wasteland.

As the country disintegrated and the urban fabric was altered beyond recognition, Lebanese authors began to experiment with narrative form in an unprecedented manner, producing some of the most formally and thematically innovative work in modern Arabic literature. As Elias Khoury eloquently put it:

The unbridled spaces of war . . . made daily life in Beirut a myth in itself. Survival was our leitmotif, our sole concern to safeguard body and soul, to recreate life in the midst of overwhelming horror and death. At the center of this, writing became a necessary means of survival. Naming the horror was a way to protect oneself from it. (Khoury 1995, p. 138)

In novels like *Little Mountain* (1977), *White Masks* (1981), *The Journey of Little Gandhi* (1989), *Beirut Nightmares* (1977), *Sitt Marie Rose* (1978), *The Story of Zahra* (1980), authors like Khoury, Ghada Samman, Etel Adnan and Hanan al-Sheikh found creative ways to name the horror, and exploded the form of the novel into prose fragments as they wrote searing accounts of everyday life in the war-torn city and condemned the violent social forces that had brought about its destruction.

If novels from that period are angry, explosive, and fragmentary, using the form of the novel itself as a way to push the boundaries of what could be expressed in language, its characters often restlessly wandering a restless city, the poetry of Beirut during this period is likewise haunted by the possibility of expressing what has happened to the city in verse. The early days of conflict still allowed for the possibility of poetry that in form and content attempted a

reconciliation with the city. So, for example, in “Beirut, Lady of the World,” from 1976’s poetry collection *To Beirut, The Feminine, With My Love*, Nizar Qabbani, known across the Arab world for his love poetry, describes Beirut as a beautiful woman who has been robbed of her beauty. In the poem’s final stanza, he declares:

I still love you, crazy Beirut
 You river of blood and jewels
 I still love you, good-hearted Beirut,
 Chaotic Beirut,
 Beirut of godless hunger and godless plenty
 I still love you Beirut of justice
 And Beirut of injustice
 Hostage Beirut,
 And Beirut of the murderer and the poet
 I still love you Beirut of passion
 And Beirut of murder from artery to artery
 I still love you despite human folly
 I still love you, Beirut
 Why don’t we start now?

(Qabbani 1976, pp. 46–47)

In Qabbani’s poem, despite the chaos and extremes of the war, the city is nevertheless redeemed and redeemable; the poet and the city may have a chance to start over together. This modicum of hopefulness was not to last long, however, as the 1970s segued into the 1980s and the conflict seemed to simultaneously become more entrenched and more confusing as new players entered into the field and alliances shifted.

The tragic crescendo of the conflict was the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the siege of Beirut in the summer of 1982. For Qabbani, whose wife Balqis had died in a suicide attack on the Iraqi embassy in Beirut a year earlier, his relationship to the city changed irrevocably. “In the poet’s grief, the city becomes narrower and narrower,” he writes in his long eulogy titled “*Qasidat Balqis / Balqis’ Poem*” (Qabbani 1981: lines 168–169). Not only does the city feel narrow but also feels dangerous to both people and language itself:

Beirut . . . every day murders one of us
 And looks every day for a victim
 Death . . . is in our coffee cups . . .
 In our apartment keys . . .
 In the flowers on our balcony . . .
 In the pages of the newspapers . . .
 And in the letters of the alphabet . . .

(Qabbani 1981: lines 66–72)

Moreover, in Qabbani's murderous city, people are forced to evaluate their relationships with each other, but also, their relationship to writing, now firmly caught up in the violence, as the city and all those in it:

Enter into the age of ignorance . . .
 We enter into savagery
 And backwardness . . . and ugliness . . . and
 We are entering into the barbaric ages . . .
 Where writing is a journey
 Between pieces of shrapnel

(Qabbani 1981: lines 73–78)

As he mourns, Qabbani wonders, “what can poetry say, Balqis / in this time? / What can poetry say?” (Qabbani 1981: lines 414–415). In its final three lines, the poem starts itself shrinking through the removal first of one word, then another, until finally the letters of the remaining two words are detached completely, unmooring language itself from the text and the city.

As they recall the 1982 siege of Beirut, poets call into question the use of writing during a time of conflict. In his poem of that time, titled “The Desert / The Diary of Beirut Under Siege, 1982,” Adonis declares that in Beirut, “The papers that love ink, / The alphabet, the poets say goodbye, / And the poem says goodbye” (Adonis 1984, p. 151), gesturing to the impossibility of writing poetry in a city where “the houses leave their walls/and I am/ Not I” (Adonis 1984, p. 153). In *Memory for Forgetfulness*, Mahmoud Darwish's poetic prose memoir from the 1980s, the formal experimentation in both genres underlines the poet's quest to find the language to commemorate the conflict and the city. In the work, the poetical becomes ethical, until finally the poet resolves to remain silent. But then, Darwish runs into a journalist who questions this decision. Again drawing into question the adequacy of poetic language to capture the world of the city under siege, Darwish ultimately collapses the distinction between the urban body and poetic expression:

Beirut itself is the writing, rousing and creative. Its true poets and singers are its people and fighters . . . They are the genuine founders of a writing that for a long, long time will have to search for a linguistic equivalent to their heroes and their amazing lives. How then can the new writing—which needs time enough for leisure—crystallize and take form in a battle that has such a rhythm of rockets? And how can traditional verse—and all verse is traditional at this moment—define the poetry now fermenting in the belly of the volcano? (Darwish 1995, p. 64)

During much of Lebanon's violent and protracted civil war, authors and poets grappled with the inadequacy of language to capture the everyday that they were now enduring. Once the war was brought to an end, they had a new struggle: to try and recuperate the memory of a city that they felt to be endangered by the controversial reconstruction project. Beirut's center became the site of struggle in these new politics of memory.

REMEMBERING BEIRUT, 1990–

Much has been written about the astonishing literary and creative output of the 1990s in Lebanon and its relationship to the politics of commemoration, as if to confirm Elias Khoury's statement that "in this city systematically ravaged by civil war, the only space left for memory is literature" (Khoury 1995, p. 139; Salem 2003; Hayek 2014). In my book, *Beirut: Imagining the City*, I show how novels of the 1990s are effectively commemorative counter-memories that deliberately call into question the policies and narratives of reconstruction initiated by the entwinement of Lebanese politics and private capital (Hayek 2014). By inserting their protagonists—and more importantly, their protagonists' everyday memories of life in the area under reconstruction—back into the landscape of central Beirut, these novels by authors like Hoda Barakat, Rashid Da'if, and Hanan al-Shaykh contrast personal memories and personal claims to the city with the "culture of amnesia" promulgated by the Lebanese political and business elite (Haugbolle 2010, p. 72). For example, in Barakat's *The Tiller of Waters*, the narrator wanders the downtown area and names all the stores that used to be there in a sequence of pedestrian speech acts that not only archives these no longer extant sites but also reminds those who knew them of their location:

I convinced myself to take a serious walk to the further end of the Place des Martyrs, as far as the Café Parisiana and opposite the shop of Qaysar Amir, king of fireworks (. . .) Then I made a turn at Zayn, the fresh juice seller. . . I passed in front of the Café Laronda, then the theater of Shushu the comedian, and went on to Gaumont Palace (Barakat 2004, p. 43)

By reclaiming these memories of the prewar city, authors of the 1990s like Barakat drew on their personal knowledge of the cityscape to reinsert themselves and their readers into the urban landscape and national memoryscape.

Such vivid spatial memories are not accessible to a newer generation of Beirut-based writers and artists, whose relationship to the city center is always mediated by the memories of an older generation. Since 2006, a younger generation of authors like Rabee Jaber, Sahar Mandour, and Hilal Chouman, as well as graphic novelists like Lena Merhej and Mazen Kerbaj, have used art not only to respond in creative ways to the ongoing crises in the country (such as the assassination of ex-Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and various political and cultural figures, including Samir Kassir in 2005, also the 2006 Israeli war on Lebanon, civil conflict in 2008, religiously motivated terror attacks, multiple rounds of fighting in Lebanon's second largest city, Tripoli, the ongoing refugee crisis from the war in Syria, and growing political dysfunction that at the time of writing (2016) has blocked the election of a president for almost two years, and has led to the country's worst ecological crisis in decades), but also to bring into question older modes of writing the city, without glossing over its legacy of conflict (Hayek 2014).

Contemporaneity and the representation of the present preoccupies many of these recent novels. For example, a few months after Hariri's assassination in February 2005, Rabee Jaber published *The Mehlis Report*, named after Detlev Mehlis, the German special investigator brought in to investigate the murder, (it implicated both Lebanese officials and Syria, for its involvement). The title's evocation of Mehlis places the novel firmly in its moment. The main character of Jaber's novel is an architect named Saman Yarid, who, like all the rest of his friends and "Beirut, (is) suspended, waits for the unknown" (Jaber 2013, p. 62). In terse, disjointed prose, the novel produces some of the anxieties and tensions of the city during those days, as well as its contradictions: "the city was hopping, as if it hadn't been rocked by explosions just a few weeks earlier. As if there weren't a threat of it being completely upended at any hour. At any moment" (Jaber 2013, p. 35).

As the novel gestures to an unknown future and an anxious present, it also connects Saman's world with the city's distant and more recent past. As he wanders the city obsessively, Saman passes by buildings whose history is intimately entwined with his own family's history, since many were built by his grandfather, also named Saman Yarid, or by the older Saman's competitors. Saman moves around the contemporary city recalling stories of his grandfather's time, and of the destruction caused by the war. But Saman also maps Beirut in the present through his wandering past specific shops, buildings, restaurants, etc. Significantly, Saman registers the change wrought not only by conflict but also by ongoing urban development, some of which he is responsible for.

The novel's connection to the past is consolidated in its second half, narrated by Saman's sister Josephine, who was murdered during the civil war. Josephine inhabits an underworld where those who have died violent deaths attempt to condense their entire lives into writing, an act that is both necessary because the dead "don't want to forget"—in fact, their environment will not let them, since every scrap of paper they use is kept in the archive, where nothing can be torn up—but also impossible, since "words wouldn't say what I wanted to say" (Jaber 2013, pp. 185, 183). The novel seems to gesture to the futility of trauma narratives. The dead who inhabit this underworld read and write obsessively, trying to narrate their lives and deaths, to no avail. Yet, *The Mehlis Report* also suggests that Josephine and the others like her, who include Rafiq Hariri and Samir Kassir, who remains unnamed in this section of the novel, are there by choice because they are unable to let go of their memories of their physical selves. Josephine's purgatory of remembering, and incomplete dissatisfactory commemoration is, the novel suggests, one of her own making. With Josephine's story, Jaber seems to draw a large question about the usefulness of testimonial narratives as a form in which to engage with Beirut's bloody past, its anxious present, and its unknown future.

Yet, despite the anxieties and tensions of living in a city on the verge of eruption and yet another potential destruction, the novel makes it clear that there is nowhere else that Saman can see himself. "What's keeping him in this city?" Saman wonders at some point, before tying his sense of belonging firmly

to his sense of place: “he knows these paths so well. He’s lived his whole life here. He never once traveled far from Beirut without feeling as if he’d left half of himself behind” (Jaber 2013, p. 116). In a novel where those who leave are forgotten by a city endlessly changing and relentlessly transforming, the desire to stay attached to this place becomes valuable in and of itself.

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India and Its Cities through the Eyes of Its Writers

Alastair Niven

Baumgartner's Bombay, Madras on Rainy Days, The Calcutta Chromosome, Twilight in Delhi: it is not hard to find the names of Indian cities registered in the titles of prominent novels. India has the second largest population in the world after China and may by 2022 have the largest. As a nation of 1.252 billion people—17.5% of global humanity—it inevitably has huge cities. Mumbai (formerly Bombay) is the biggest, but Kolkata (Calcutta), Delhi, Chennai (Madras), Bangalore and Hyderabad are not far behind. This vast country, stretching from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean, has perhaps the most demographically diverse composition in the world. Though only Hindi and English are recognised as official languages for government business, the constitution of the Indian republic names 22 mother tongues, whilst hundreds more are spoken in disparate places. India has by some reckonings the largest book publishing industry in the world, certainly one to rival the annual output of the USA and the UK, and its street selling of books and printed matter is unparalleled. India's has one of the world's fastest growing economies. In many technological ways it is self-sufficient. It is politically a successful democracy, which has seen many peaceful changes of power at the highest level as the result of the people's choosing in elections. It has perhaps the most rapidly expanding middle class anywhere on the planet, with impressive figures of widening literacy.

Yet, of course, India's enormous, constantly growing urban life is in the context of a much larger rural population across the whole country, many of whom live in desperate poverty. Appalling acts of sexual degradation against women and children may partly be the consequence of this deprivation. Demonstrations, often linked to ancient religious feuds, frequently turn violent. Millions of people have moved from country areas to the cities in search of

work and survival, placing almost intolerable strains on the places to which they move. One only has to read the opening pages of Neel Mukerjee's *The Lives of Others*, with its horrific description of a man driven to murder his wife and children before killing himself, to confront the grim wretchedness of urban despair.

The theme runs through Indian fiction in English. The first novel from India to make an international impact was *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand. My personal copy of the book was inscribed in his own hand: 'This novel is called the creative manifesto of the emergence of the rejected.' To a world that mainly knew literary India through Rudyard Kipling or through romances about princes and palaces, often infused with pretentious mysticism, Anand's harsh depiction of urban misery was a revelation. It required the efforts of E. M. Forster to persuade a publisher to bring out *Untouchable* in 1935, Forster's own reputation having been confirmed by the massive success of *A Passage to India* 11 years earlier—but that was a novel excoriating the Raj rather than portraying the quotidian brutality endured by outcastes and untouchables, people literally outside the caste system which determined so much in Indian social life. Anand's first novel has never been out of print and has been translated into many languages. Forster's Preface always accompanies it:

This remarkable novel describes a day in the life of a sweeper in an Indian city with every realistic detail. Is it a clean book or a dirty one? Some readers, especially those who consider themselves all-white, will go purple in the face with rage before they have finished a dozen pages and will exclaim that they cannot trust themselves to speak. I cannot trust myself either, though for a different reason: the book seems to me indescribably clean and I hesitate for words in which this can be conveyed. Avoiding rhetoric and circumlocution, it has gone straight to the heart of its subject and purified it. None of us are pure—we shouldn't be alive if we were. But to the straightforward all things can become pure, and it is to the directness of his attack that Mr. Anand's success is probably due.

Untouchable is a short novel, but this 'directness of his attack' has never lost its impact. Almost every novelist who has subsequently written about India's street life has acknowledged that their own work derives, whether consciously or not, from Anand's courageous depiction. The episode in which the sweeper boy Bakha accidentally knocks against a businessman on his way to a meeting still shocks 80 years later, partly because one knows that versions of it continue to happen every day in Indian cities.

'This dirty dog bumped right into me. So unmindfully do these sons of bitches walk in the streets! He was walking along without the slightest effort at announcing his approach, the swine!' Bakha stood still, with his hands joined, though he dared to lift his forehead, perspiring and knotted with its hopeless and futile expression of meekness. A few other men gathered round to see what the row was about, and as there are seldom any policemen about in

Indian streets, the constabulary being mostly concerned to have their palms greased, the pedestrians formed a circle round Bakha, keeping at a distance of several yards from him, but joining in to aid and encourage the aggrieved man in his denunciations. Confused still more by the conspicuous place he occupied in the middle of the crowd, the boy felt as though he would collapse. His first impulse was to run, just to shoot across the throng, away, away, far away from the torment. But then he realised that he was surrounded by a barrier, not a physical barrier, because one push from his hefty shoulders would have been enough to unbalance the skeleton-like bodies of the onlookers, but a moral one. He knew that contact with him, if he pushed through, would defile a great many more of these men.

Kipling had caught the atmosphere of Indian bazaars and streets in *Kim*, but in a more picturesque manner, not with Anand's sense of outrage. *Untouchable* concludes on a note of cautious optimism. A new machine which can remove dung without a person having to handle it—we call it a flushing lavatory—has been brought to the city, and somewhere not far away a man called Gandhi is spelling out his vision of a changed India in which the poor are as valued as the rich. Anand went on to become one of the most prolific authors of modern times, a voluminous correspondent, essayist, magazine editor and campaigner, but many would say that he never surpassed the brilliance of his first book, which 'poured out like hot lava from the volcano of my crazed imagination, during a long weekend' and went on to influence not only the writers who followed him but also politicians and organisations around the world.

Mulk Raj Anand was part of a generation of authors who established the credentials of English-language writing in India, though not without controversy. It has been justly claimed that the wealth of fiction and poetry that has been written in native Indian languages, especially in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu, has been overlooked outside India. Partly this is because so little of it has been translated into western languages. When major writing created in an Indian vernacular language is translated, its excellence can be a startling admonishment to Anglocentric parochialism. One example must speak for many. Here is U.R. Ananthamurthy, who writes in the south Indian language Kannada, evoking city life in his imagined urban landscape Bharathipura.

These streets have grown, without sewers, one leading to the other. If the Holeyaru struck work for even a week, and refused to fill the shit into baskets and carry them on their heads, then these streets would be filled with such stench as would pervade even the innermost chamber of the temple where Manjunatha dwells. Jagannatha shuddered with disgust at the very thought. Not a single beautiful thing could be created in these towns where Brahmins and traders lived. Wonder why? Some ten miles from Bharathipura, there were masons who made pots and pans of stone, and woodcarvers who sculpted beautiful figurines from sandalwood. In a village just about two miles from here, lived puppeteers.

But there was never anything beautiful in the town of Bharathipura except the main street paved with red mud when the President came to visit. And, anyway, even that turned slushy after a few days.

Bharathipura—for the novel, published in its original language in 1973 and in translation in 2010, is named after its conurbation—is well rendered into English by Susheela Punitha. Ananthamurthy's theme echoes Anand's in *Untouchable*, so not much has changed after all in the nearly 40 years that separate the two novels. Reading work of the quality of Ananthamurthy's makes one understand the resentment, expressed in countless literary discussions over the decades, that English can appear to have assumed an entitlement in India over other tongues which is simply not justified. This is not the place to do more than record the fervency of the debate, but against such a background of sometimes rancorous disputation it is useful to point out that the Anand generation used English partly to alert the rest of the world to the realities of their contemporary India, and also to speak across language barriers to many of their fellow Indians. In all Anand's work, one can hear in the rhythms and colloquialisms of his English usage echoes of the Urdu and Punjabi street language which he always had in mind whenever he wrote novels or short stories.

The same principle applies to those of his contemporaries who are credited with being co-founders of so-called Indo-Anglian literature (Indian writing in English), for example, Raja Rao. Rao's first novel, *Kanthapura*, published in 1938, made almost as big an impact as *Untouchable*. Though about remote village life rather than cities, it is shaped by the idioms of the author's mother tongue in south India, Kannada. Rao's masterpiece, *The Serpent and the Rope*, has the same indebtedness and is in parts very much a city novel, though the cities are London and Montpellier.

It was an astonishing generation. Perhaps the most celebrated writer of them all internationally was R. K. Narayan, who imagined a town that did not exist in reality but which became loved across the world. Malgudi is the setting for most of Narayan's fiction, from *Swami and Friends* in 1935 via perhaps his best novel, *The Guide* in 1958, to *The World of Nagaraj* in 1990. He based the town partly on his native Mysore, though it is not as big. Malgudi is not a city, but one instinctively wants to add 'not yet'. In each novel, the pressures of the external world seem to bear down on this small town relentlessly and even threateningly—pressures of materialism from avaricious developers and land grabbers, of tourism, urban gentrification and religious charlatanry. Malgudi is a fully conceived world at the crossroads between traditional rural India and its rampant future. If Narayan were to revisit it now, one feels that it might have been swallowed by a proliferation of highways and industrial plants, hotels and theme parks. Whatever the case, Narayan would be describing it with the same fastidious irony that made critics reach for comparisons with Jane Austen and which led Graham Greene to say that he was the novelist he most admired in the English language.

One other father figure must be remembered, Ahmed Ali, a Muslim who, after the partition of India in 1947, went to live in Pakistan and became at one point an ambassador for this fledgling Islamic nation. His novels, *Twilight in Delhi* and *Ocean of Night* are set in Delhi and Lucknow, both of course Indian cities. Ali was deeply perturbed by what he considered the necessity to renounce his Indian citizenship, since his view of the world had been shaped by an India in which Muslim and Hindu had lived side by side for centuries. There is an elegiac tone to his fiction, as though always recognising that even the greatest of human creations, including magnificent cities, will not last forever.

But great are the ravages of Time, and no one can do anything against its indomitable might. Kings die and dynasties fall. Centuries and aeons pass. But never a smile lights up the inscrutable face of Time. Life goes on with a heartless continuity, trampling ideals and worlds under its ruthless feet, always in search of the new, destroying, building and demolishing once again with the meaningless petulance of a child who builds a house of sand only to raze it to the ground.

Anand, Rao, Narayan and Ali changed the direction of Indian literature by describing the realities of town and city lives in the subcontinent. They have had many successors, among them Kamala Markandaya, Manohar Malgonkar and Anita Desai in the next generation, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Chandra, Vikram Seth, Kiran Desai, Aravind Adiga, Jeet Thayil, Neel Mukherjee and Chetan Bhagat in the years following. The proximity of village and city is to some extent present in all these writers, for many Indians, even when they have been born and brought up in an urban environment, will have a village place they regard as 'home', as real to them as the shrine in the corner of the living room before which they strew marigolds and petals. It is often hard to define these writers by nationality. Markandaya lived much of her adult life in England. Anita Desai and her daughter Kiran are partly of German stock. Salman Rushdie has accepted a British knighthood. Rohinton Mistry lives in Canada and has Canadian citizenship. Vikram Seth has a home in Britain. Yet each is indubitably Indian in much of their subject matter and linked, most obviously in Rushdie's case, with indigenous traditions of Indian storytelling. City life is part of a vaster tapestry that aims to explore the complexities of a country too often caricatured in the popular mind as mystical, exotic or simply poor.

Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy* has been cited at 1349 pages as possibly the longest novel in English ever published. In itself this indicates little beyond the author's stamina. There is, however, no doubt that it is one of the major novels not only to have come out of India, and particularly from the environment of Indian cities, but also to have been published in the late twentieth century. A deserved winner of the Commonwealth Writers Prize, *A Suitable Boy* was set in a mix of real cities such as Calcutta (not renamed Kolkata until 2001), Delhi and Kanpur and the fictional city of Brahmipur on the banks of the Ganges

somewhere between Banaras/Varanasi and Patna. It is a novel about dynasties, friendships and social interchange, informed by the rhythms of urgent city life.

Rohinton Mistry's novels have examined the underside of Indian urban life with great compassion. *Such a Long Journey* and *A Fine Balance* show how a constant struggle to survive economically imposes horrendous strains on Indian family life. Neel Mukherjee does the same. It is impossible to read their fiction without being emotionally affected by the desperation of their characters and without admiration for the ability of many of them to cope. There has, however, been a reaction to all this suffering and urban poverty, with criticisms that it feeds a western obsession with third world deprivation. Aravind Adiga in *The White Tiger*, which won the Man Booker Prize in 2008, portrays a Delhi of wealth living cheek by jowl with squalor and chaos.

I ran ahead to take their bags from them, and put them in the back of the car, and then closed the back and jumped into the driver's seat of the Honda City and drove them to their new home, which was up on the thirteenth floor of the gigantic apartment building. The name of the apartment building was Buckingham Towers B Block. It was next to another huge apartment building, built by the same housing company, which was Buckingham Towers A Block. Next to that was Windsor Manor A Block. And there were apartment blocks like this, all shiny and new, and with nice big English names, as far as the eye could see.

The White Tiger is a novel about escape from grinding poverty and its protagonist, Balram, is prepared to compromise himself morally whenever the prospect of material betterment presents itself. Inevitably, therefore, the world it describes is not all about slums and disappointment. This is the flashy new India, living alongside the old, but almost impervious to it.

Another version of this can be found in Jeet Thayil's powerful novel *Narcopolis*. Based partly on his own circumstances, Thayil writes here about addiction, in particular of the draw towards heroin in the city of Bombay in the 1970s. He had already a well-established reputation as a poet when he wrote this novel, which is evident in the sensuous nature of much of the prose. This is a novel about inner city life seen in its bars and secret dens, among people divided from each other by money, education, religion and aspirations. Bombay, or Mumbai as it had become by the time the novel was written, is seen as a fragmenting city, possibly destroying itself in its greed and self-absorption.

Some would say that Jeet Thayil's vision is nothing new. Amitav Ghosh has been writing historical novels for 30 years which trace the dependency on money and narcotics of those who ran India before its independence. His most recent work chronicles the impact of the Opium wars in the nineteenth century on characters from many social and racial backgrounds. He has also written at length about science and medicine, his novel *The Calcutta Chromosome*, for example, being a sophisticated mystery tale set in what is now Kolkata. This is as much a work of science fiction, looking to a future

where genetic transposition is possible, as a tribute to the city's past, where major research on malaria was conducted in the late nineteenth century.

Kolkata is sometimes referred to as the 'City of Joy', the ironic soubriquet given to it by the French novelist Dominique Lapierre and later adopted by the film of that name. It is the most literary of India's cities, the Bengali (Bangla) language having produced not only a magnificent tradition of writers, one of whom, Rabindranath Tagore, is regarded rather like William Shakespeare, but also great films, notably those of Satyajit Ray. It was also the home for the best part of 60 years of Nirad Chaudhuri, the magisterial essayist whose *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* is often and rightly cited as one of the finest memoirs ever written. Since it is largely about the author's early years in rural Bengal, one actually has to read its successor *Thy Hand, Great Anarch!* to have a full description of Calcutta itself.

It seems appropriate, however, not to end this brief introduction to the literature of Indian cities with Chaudhuri, but with a popular writer whose works have in a few years outsold any other Indian writer in English, Chetan Bhagat. He writes of the new India we know in the west through call centres and computers. For many people, the city of India that springs first to mind is not the present capital Delhi and its predecessor Kolkata, nor Mumbai, centre of India's film industry, nor smaller cities of huge tourist interest such as Agra and Cochin, but Bangalore, now Bengalūru. It is here, in the so-called Silicon Valley of modern India, that India has achieved its technological miracle. Chetan Bhagat is its current laureate, though one can predict that there will be others. His novels such as *One Night @ the Call Center* engage with the new India and have a vast following. In an age when computer technology is predicted by so many people to spell the end of book reading, it is ironic that the burgeoning literate population of modern India is drawn to fiction of this kind. Much of it may be downloaded rather than read in printed form, but it is still the product of the creative imagination. As the huge cities of India have become even bigger, their inhabitants are already proving that they want to read about themselves in new stories.

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Out of Place in Delhi: Some Vignettes of Loss

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Although Indian writing in English has not seized upon the city of Delhi with the same alacrity and joyousness with which it has laid claim to Bombay (more recently Mumbai)—the quintessential city of inexhaustible plenitude, of the ‘too-muchness’ that Salman Rushdie has described so compellingly in his early fiction—it has, over the years, engendered a substantial body of writing about Delhi that might be less colourful, perhaps, than Bombay fiction, but is more weighed down and intense. Much of this brooding quality to the writing comes from a sense of loss, one that takes on multiple forms but originates, always, in the chequered and tumultuous spatial history of the city. While Bombay, or the seven fishing villages that were joined together to create the port-city in the mid-nineteenth century, has followed unwaveringly the imperative of growth, expansion and extension almost since it came into being, Delhi’s successive ‘cities’ that go back all the way to the sixth century B.C.E. have a repeated history of defeat, decline, erasure, replacement (by the next ‘city’), and, in the cataclysmic Partition of the country in 1947, a violent two-way movement of ‘refugees’ leaving for and arriving from what was now called Pakistan followed by a ferocious and ongoing expansion of the city’s boundaries. The popular narrative of the seven cities of Delhi—one city falling and being built anew, often in a new site entirely, only to fall in its turn—plays upon a constant and repeated experience of loss; and the ruined monuments littered through the city in various stages of decay offer a visual testament of this. While one could trace a similar sense of nostalgia in the narrative of Bombay, it is a recent, post-1992 phenomenon, when the violence triggered by the fall of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya and the rise to power of the blatantly right-wing Shiv Sena destroyed, for many people, a Bombay that was inclusive and cosmopolitan in spirit and replaced it with a narrow-minded, provincial Mumbai. Delhi, on the other hand, is predicated historically upon a continual loss of itself, of repeated cycles of complete devastation and destruction.

Nadir Shah's infamous sacking of Shahjahanabad in 1739 and the savage butchery by the British in 1847 hastened the decline of the 'old city' and its Mughal provenance, as a belated outpost that needed to be replaced with a new, planned, modern city that could serve as a fit seat of colonial government. Needless to say, loss has been a consistent paradigm in the city's imaginary, and much of the writing—fictional and non-fictional—about the city has had to negotiate it in some form or another.

This chapter will look closely at some of the modes in which the experience of living in Delhi and writing about it is shaped and underwritten by a deep sense of loss. It does not purport to offer by any means a comprehensive overview of the writing associated with the city, of which there is plenty. Two names worth mentioning in this context, in the realm of fiction and non-fiction respectively, are those of Manju Kapur (*Difficult Daughters* 1998; *Home* 2006; *Custody* 2011) and Rana Dasgupta (*Capital: A Portrait of Twenty-First century Delhi* 2014). While Dasgupta, in this recent monumental work, seeks to understand the phenomenon of contemporary Delhi through the dual lens of the trauma of the Partition and the uniquely new mutations of capitalism in postcolonial urban South Asia, Kapur's novels constitute a low-key but incisive understanding of the interactions of gender and domestic space in the cityscape of Delhi, sharply differentiated and class-marked as it is west and the recent settlements that have mushroomed in the east across the river Yamuna. Nayantara Sahgal's writings focus on a Delhi that is the seat of government and its attendant powermongering and corruption (*Rich Like Us* 1985; *A Situation in New Delhi* 1989). This is the 'new' Delhi, famously designed by Edward Lutyens that had replaced Shahjahanabad, Shah Jahan's 'old' Delhi, as the centre first of British imperial authority, after Calcutta, and, post-1947, the new Indian government.

While acknowledging the contribution of these and other excellent writings that have importantly reflected and shaped the city's 'meaning' for us, this chapter focuses on three texts that refer to three distinct 'moments' in the city's history over a period of about a 100 years. These are Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1940), Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* (1980) and the collectively written *Trickster City* (2010, translated by Shveta Sarda). All of these moments, as I have chosen to call them, are refracted in these texts through experiences of dispossession and loss—physical, cultural, linguistic and psychical. Ali's *Twilight in Delhi*, like Krishna Sobti's Hindi novel, *Dil-o-Danish* (translated as *The Heart has its Reasons* in 2005), is a requiem to a city of poetry and beauty, one in which identity, language and culture could range freely and draw upon multiple sources seamlessly, without being tied solely to one's religious affiliation. Both these novels, set in the 1910s and 1920s, have an elegiac, nostalgic note to them; their protagonists are marked by an 'out of place-ness', inhabiting perforce a world that is fading out of existence. The catastrophic Partition that was to follow in 1947 literally changed the face of the city: vast numbers of displaced people from both

within and across the border were housed in refugee camps set up in the precincts of monuments like the Old Fort and Humayun's Tomb, and the trend of mass migration to Delhi that carries on unabated to this day was inaugurated. Desai's magnificent *Clear Light of Day* speaks of the emotional and psychical displacement caused by the trauma of the Partition, even in cases where no physical uprooting was involved. As the capital city, burgeoning with phenomenal speed on a phenomenal scale, Delhi continues to be the natural choice of migrants of all economic classes from all over the country in search of better job opportunities among other things. While most of these journeys are undertaken with the hope of a better future, many end with stark, repeated experiences of material and emotional loss and dispossession in a city that is growing, no doubt, but unevenly and unthinkingly so. This chapter finally examines *Trickster City*, a recent work that straddles fiction, memoir, documentary and biography in order to produce a seething, churning metropolis that is rarely encountered in literary writing. Privation and loss remain the overriding concerns of this text, but there is neither nostalgia nor lament in the narrative energy that pulls it along.

HAD WE BUT WORLD ENOUGH AND TIME

Ahmed Ali's novel, *Twilight in Delhi*, was written in 1940 and set in the decade between 1910 and 1920. The city in this novel is always already the signifier of loss and carries its burden, as much at the time it is about as at the time of writing. In an introduction to a much later edition written in 1993, Ali, living in Karachi, Pakistan, revisits the leitmotif of loss as he recalls how he was prohibited by the 'overnight-turned-Hindu Indian authorities in 1948 to come back to India, and for no other reason than because (he) was a Muslim', a denial that was a 'living repetition of history ninety years after the banishment of my grandparents and the Muslim citizens from the vanquished city by the British' (Ali 2007, pp. xix–xx). The shadow of the banishment and exile, albeit temporary, of the 'Mussalmans' from the city by a British government retaliating against the 'mutiny' (or the first war of independence) in 1857 seems to lurk over and darken the world of the book, a nightmare that is doomed to recur at the time of the Partition. Much before its irrevocable loss, however, the city is languishing, its unique cultural identity slowly dissipating under the pressures of a colonial rule uneasily joined with twentieth-century modernity.

But gone are the poets too, and gone is its culture. Only the coils of the rope, when the rope itself has been burnt, remain, to remind us of past splendour. Yet ruin has descended upon its monuments and buildings, upon its boulevards and by-lanes. Under the tired and dim stars the city looks deathly and dark. (...) Like a beaten dog it has curled its tail between its legs, and lies lifeless in the night as an acknowledgement of defeat (Ali 2007, pp. 5–6).

The ageing patriarch Mir Nihal, with his passion for Urdu poetry, pigeon-flying, and Babban Jan is the novel's embodiment of a way of life that is on its way out. In her untimely death, his young lover Babban Jan takes away

all Mir Nihal's pleasure in the world of 'beauty' and 'love' that had been a respite from the constraints of domesticity (Ali 2007, p. 108). Unable to take any delight in the pigeons he has bred with such zeal all his life, he gives them up. Poetic styles and traditions are changing too, as Mir Nihal witnesses his favourite poet, Mir, 'who belonged to an older generation and tradition, with a school of his own' (Ali 2007, p. 116) give way to newer, more flamboyant poets like Zauq and Daagh. The grand coronation of King George V in 1911 at the lavish *darbar* in Delhi, and the frequent sightings of descendants of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal king deposed by the British after the 1857 uprising, wandering penniless and destitute through the city's streets, only serve to heighten Mir Nihal's growing sense of alienation: 'The past, which was his, had gone, and the future was not for him' (Ali 2007, p. 147).

To the increasing distance between him and his son Asghar, whose adoption of English dress and manners is an attempt to stay in step with the changing times, is added a sense of estrangement from the physical fabric of a city that was abruptly being transformed beyond recognition.

In Delhi itself, many changes were being proposed. The gutters which were deep and underground from the times of the Mughals to this day were being dug and made shallow. . . . The city walls were also going to be demolished. . . . Worse than all the changes which were felt so deeply by the people, was the disfiguring of the Chandni Chowk [the Mughal-built 17th century highway] whose central causeway was demolished and the expansive peepal trees which had given shelter to the residents and the poor from the scorching rays of the sun, were cut down. The road did look wide and broad, a real boulevard, but its uniqueness and oriental atmosphere were destroyed. This affected the people more deeply than anything else. (Ali 2007, pp. 195–196).

Private, discrete episodes of pain and loss blend into and merge with a larger, overwhelming note of wistfulness and lament. While to a great extent this sense is the outcome of a disruptive colonial presence that is out of touch with the life and language of a civilisation that it nonetheless rules over, it also seems to originate in a melancholia about the transience and mutability of life and the things that make it worth living. Love—whether that of Mir Nihal for Babban Jan or Asghar's for a range of women—is experienced only, and repeatedly, as un-attainment or loss. Friends, relations, lovers, acquaintances, servants—all seem to either fade out from Mir Nihal's life or become irrelevant to him—and he to them. A pervasive sense of disconnection seems to exist between Mir Nihal and his world, in which he increasingly comes to resemble a belated presence, a remnant of an older place and time. As an inhabitant of a once-grand city that has lost its life spring, it's very *raison d'être* as it were with the British government's decision to build a brand new capital city not far from it, Mir Nihal's melancholia—as well as that of the book he appears in—becomes understandable. There is a further, linguistic, disconnection, as the novelist, an

Urdu writer, writes this book in English in order to gain for it a larger readership to which he wishes to convey, paradoxically, the tragic decline of the Urdu language and the Delhi culture it is intertwined with. As Ali puts it in his Introduction, ‘This cause deserved a world-wide audience. If presented in Urdu, it would die down within a narrow belt rimmed by Northwest India’ (Ali 2007, p. xvi). Rashmi Sadana, in an article that examines the implications of this move from a postcolonial standpoint, writes:

Ali admits that he must disavow Urdu in order to highlight Urdu, a move that may appear to us today as a classic postcolonial manoeuvre. His novel-writing begins with self-consciousness about the very language in which he chooses to write. And yet, while there is a certain utility in his decision to write in English, his use of the language also leaves a deep literary impression: it marks the very death of Urdu in Delhi that it laments. (Sadana 2009, p. 6)

In its elegiac form, then, the novel commemorates, magnificently so, what it also mourns the systematic marginalisation of—a world, a time, a language and a sensibility. Mir Nihal’s pleading injunction to his grandson to drive out the ‘farangis’ (foreigners) from the country when he grows up (Ali 2007, p. 148), even as it comes to pass, cannot bring a dying city to life again, cannot restore the cultural centrality it once had. It is this retrospective insight on the part of the author that pervades and shapes the world of the book.

THE TRAUMA OF DIS/LOCATION

This part of the chapter seeks to examine how the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 shaped the ways in which the city of Delhi was inhabited and experienced—as much by those who called it home as by those who came to it in search of a new home. It does this by examining some of the modes in which Delhi was written into existence, in fiction as well as non-fiction. In particular, I refer to two texts: Desai’s novel, *Clear Light of Day*, and Anis Kidwai’s recently published memoir, *In Freedom’s Shade*, based on the extensive work she undertook in the refugee camps of post-Partition Delhi from 1947–1949. How do the experiences of dislocation, homelessness and out-of-placeness get inscribed upon the cityscape? How does *narrative* account for the ubiquity of these experiences of destabilisation, and what are the ways in which it is forced to bend, configure and organise itself in order to convey them with some degree of adequacy? What does it mean to inhabit a place—a city, a nation—whose own meaning and identity is increasingly open to question? What happens when a home becomes strange, unhomey, *Unheimlich*? Through the lens of the two texts referred to above, I hope to outline some of the ways in which narrative becomes both symptom of as well as compensation for the cognitive dissonance that, in its broadest sense, the Partition has caused for all those affected by it, whether directly or indirectly.

Clear Light of Day would be an unlikely contender for a Partition novel. None of its main characters, firmly located and sheltered as they are in their leafy, sprawling home in Bela Road, Darya Ganj (an old neighbourhood in “old” Delhi), experience at first hand the horrors of the dislocation and violence that it has caused all around them. The members of the Das family live in a cocoon of sorts, their selves and consciousnesses as firmly tied to the lush natural and vegetative world that contains their house and garden, as they are cut off from human society. This seems as true of the mid-1970s, the ‘present’ of the novel, as of the 1930s and 1940s, in which most of the novel is set—both, one should add, periods of deep political unrest and ferment. Bim and Baba, the two siblings who have, willy-nilly, stayed on in the family home, share a quality of insularity; despite their very different lives and personalities, they seem equally free of any moorings or ties that might connect them in any meaningful way to the world outside their house. While we see Bim on one occasion with her students, sharing an easy, bantering relationship with them, and assume that she finds value and purpose in her job as a history teacher in a Delhi University college, her association with the external world (including their longstanding neighbours, the Misras), seems minimal, perfunctory and almost irrelevant—to her as much as to the novel. Baba, on account of his autism, embodies, in his hermetically sealed-in self, pierced only by the old gramophone records he plays over and over again at full volume in his room, the logical culmination of this inertness. It is almost as if the narrative determinedly turns inwards and locks itself in so as to shut out everything that the ‘outside’ represents.

One of the things that stand for the outside in the world of the Das siblings is New Delhi. Tara’s husband Bakul’s repeated wish to stay with his uncle in Lutyens’ Delhi immediately marks *him* as an outsider in the spatial scheme of the novel. His constant itchy, uncomfortable need to break out of the chronotope of lassitude and inaction that his wife’s family home stands for, is, to his despair, not echoed any more by his usually pliant wife whom he has trained so well over the years to lead a busy, purposeful life filled with appointments carefully noted down in an engagement book. This world of ‘old Delhi decadence’ is one of ‘silences and shadows’, of ‘things left unsaid and undone’ (Desai 2007, p. 26). It is, as Bim tells Tara in her strident tone, a world that ‘does not change. It only decays. My students tell me it is a great cemetery, every house a tomb. Nothing but sleeping graves. Now *New Delhi*, they say is different. That is where things happen. The way they describe it, it sounds like a nest of fleas. . . . And here, here nothing happens at all. Whatever happened, happened long ago—in the time of the Tughlaqs, the Khiljis, the Sultunate, the Moghuls—that lot’ (Desai 2007, pp. 13–14). Much, indeed, does not happen by way of *event* in the novelistic universe of Bela Road. Even the carnage in the streets and homes of Delhi that accompanied the Partition, a recent ‘happening’ that Bim curiously fails to include in her little historical list, spares their locality: the wealthy Muslim landowner who owns most of the houses there moves out to Hyderabad well in time, and most of the genteel Hindu tenants continue to stay on undisturbed in the same houses, like the Misra family next door.

Having said that, I want to suggest that the entire poetic imaginary of the novel, indeed the very shape of the novel, is refracted through the large-scale trauma and displacement caused by the Partition. This is different from saying that the Partition impacts the characters in indirect if not overt ways—which it does. What I am suggesting is that the sense of unease and heaviness that hang over and suffuse the narrative is an evocation of the violence of the Partition, and symptomatic of it. This is a cultural and even linguistic violence as much as it is physical. Raja's long illness and the fever he suffers from for over a year in 1947–1948 is a symptom of his sense of loss at the sadly truncated world he must now inhabit; a world from which so much that is dear to him—Hyder Ali's library, the literary soirees of Urdu poetry held regularly at his house, the prospect of pursuing Islamic studies at the Jamia Millia Islamia that he so looks forward to—will be summarily taken away from him. As his father says to him in a rare conversation between them, 'If you, a Hindu boy, are caught in Jamia Millia, the centre of Islamic studies . . . you will be torn to bits, you will be burnt alive', and when Raja asks who would do that to him, he is told that both Muslims and Hindus alike would be out for his blood—'the Muslims, for trying to join them when they don't want you and don't trust you, and Hindus, for deserting them and going over to the enemy' (Desai 2007, p. 85). Caught at a historical moment in which it became impossible for a Delhi Hindu to be openly supportive of Islam and anything associated with it—poetry, language, literature and of course people—Raja is branded a traitor by his colleagues at college, all of whom believe in a militant espousal of India's staunchly Hindu, anti-Muslim identity, and a plainclothes policeman installed outside his gate to monitor any underground pro-Islamic activity he might participate in. As he lies, month after month, burning with fever in his bed, 'the city of Delhi (is) burning down about them. He hoped, like Byron, to go to the rescue of those in peril. Instead, like Byron, he lay ill, dying' (or so Bim thinks) (Desai 2007, p. 97). Even as there is more than a hint of the theatrical in Raja's self-consciously Byronic predicament, his angst and sense of frustration are no less real for that. Physically on the margins of the action, he is very much at its emotional centre.

The city was in flames that summer. Every night fires lit up the horizon beyond the city walls so that the sky was luridly tinted with festive flames of orange and pink, and now and then a column of white smoke would rise and stand solid as an obelisk in the dark. Bim, pacing up and down on the rooftop, would imagine she could hear the sound of shots and of cries and screams, but they lived so far outside the city, out in Civil Lines . . . (Desai 2007, p. 73)

Despite their sheltered location, 'out in Civil Lines', the flames that devour the city in the summer of 1947 also swallow up their Aunt Mira as she—fearful, insecure—loses herself in an alcoholic haze that completely destroys her. Her worries about Raja's growing friendship with the Hyder Ali family, and the general atmosphere of unease prior to the Partition become instrumental in

turning her to seek the comfort of the bottle of brandy lying around the house, and rapidly spirals into full-blown alcoholism and madness.

They cast huge shadows on the walls around her. White walls, livid shadows, lurching from side to side. ‘Bim and Raja,’ she called desperately, ‘stop it, stop it!’ But the shadows did not listen. The shadows lurched towards her, and the flames leapt higher to meet them. Flames and shadows of flames, they advanced on each other, they merged with each other and she was caught between them, helpless as a splinter, a scrap of paper. (Desai 2007, p. 125)

Fires, flames, high temperatures—images of heat pervade the world of the novel. The heat of the dreaded Delhi summer, referred to time and again in the narrative, is so much more than just realistic detail: it crucially *defines* the novelistic universe, in all its stifling, oppressive, simmering, pent-up, potentially explosive quality. Let us look at one of many such descriptions:

(Tara) actually got up and went to the door and lifted the bamboo screen that hung there, but the blank white glare of afternoon slanted in and slashed at her with its flashing knives so that she quickly dropped the screen. It creaked into place, releasing a noseful of dust. On the wall a gecko clucked loudly and disapprovingly at this untoward disturbance. She went back to her chair. If she could sleep, she might forget where she was, but it was not possible to sleep with the sweat trickling down one’s face in rivulets and the heat enclosing one in its ring of fire. (Desai 2007, p. 38)

Delhi heat is soporific but does not allow one to sleep, induces passivity but gives no rest. Here is a description of Tara being lulled, by the heat and the familiar surroundings of her childhood home, into a state of relaxation:

A part of her was sinking languidly down into the passive pleasure of having returned to the familiar—like a pebble, she had been picked up and hurled back into the pond, and sunk down through the layer of green scum, through the secret cool depths to the soft rich mud at the bottom, sending up a line of bubbles in relief and joy. (Desai 2007, p. 24).

Straightforward as this description seems, its disturbing quality becomes evident in light of the account, which appears later in the book, of the cow that had fallen into the well in their back garden and died, her body left there to rot. Bought at Aunt Mira’s request so the children could have fresh milk, the cow’s rotting carcass hidden under the scummy water of the well creates, for the children, a ‘dense and intolerable’ horror constantly present in their house. ‘The well then contained death as it had once contained merely water, frogs and harmless floating things. . . . It was a blot, a black and stinking blot’ (Desai 2007, pp. 186, 171). In her meekness, as well as her lonely, blundering end, the cow is associated in the novel, and in Bim’s mind, with Aunt Mira. The image, and the unnecessary, meaningless violence it is associated with, also

recalls the young women in the aftermath of the Partition who were made to, or chose to, end their lives by jumping into wells, rather than be taken captive by men of the other religious community (Urvashi Butalia has written at length about such episodes in *The Other Side of Silence* 1998).

The oppressive atmosphere of the house is further heightened by Baba, through the old records he acquired in the 1940s that he insists on playing on his old gramophone, well into the 1970s. Not only are they played at full blast, it is the same few records that are played over and over again—all from the same musical era, all of the same type. The records and gramophone both belong to Benazir, Hyder Ali's daughter who is now married to Raja and has four children with him. Picked up on a visit by Bim and Baba to Hyder Ali's empty, abandoned house sometime in 1947, the gramophone stands as a perennial testimony to the opportunistic acts of looting and despoiling of private property that accompanied the so-called communal violence of the Partition. Although Bim and Baba's visit to the empty house is motivated by genuine neighbourly concern, we cannot but acknowledge, given the historical context in which it takes place, the exploitative potential of the act—Hindu neighbours going into a house abandoned by a Muslim family and carrying things away from there:

The house was so strangely unlit and deserted as it had never been for as long as they had known it—like a body whose life and warmth they were accustomed to and took for granted, now grown cold and stiff and faded. It looked accusing, too, as if it held them responsible. (Desai 2007, pp. 116–117)

If being able to emerge on the other side of the Partition without any serious disruption in where or how one lives is at the opposite pole from being displaced from home and country, it is yet possible that the experiential burden of both may not be very different from one another. When Bim and Tara remember their childhood, it is in terms of an extended period of 'dullness, boredom, waiting' (Desai 2007, p. 12), a description that is particularly apposite for the post-Partition experience of staying in refugee camps. We do not see any of them at close quarters in the novel, though the city was littered with them—we catch only a glimpse of what it might be like to live in one of them when a bus Bim has taken to go back home drives past the Red Fort.

The bus lumbered on past the city walls and the massed jungle of rag-and-tin huts that had grown beneath them, housing the millions of refugees who were struggling in across the new border. Here there was no light except for the dull glow of small cooking fires, blotted out by smoke and dust and twilight. They swarmed and crawled with a kind of crippled, subterranean life that made Bim feel that the city would never recover from this horror, that it would be changed irremediably, that it was already changed, no longer the city she had been born in. She set her jaw and stared into its shadowy thickness, wretched with its wretchedness. (Desai 2007, p. 137)

The city does indeed change. As Anis Kidwai's moving memoir, *In Freedom's Shade* (2011), tells us, its very geography was being reconfigured at this very moment along the lines of Hindu and Muslim, insider and outsider, those who belong and those who do not, those who should be let in and those who must be let out. Kidwai lost her husband to communal violence and, at Mahatma Gandhi's urging to drown her private sorrow in public service, volunteered to help manage and run refugee camps and other rehabilitation activities. In a wonderfully detailed account, only recently available to us in translation, Kidwai draws out the attitudinal differences in the ways in which the Hindu refugees and the Muslim sanctuary seekers were treated, and the bad conscience of a state that touted its secular credentials and was yet complicit in forcing out Muslims from their homes and sending them across the border. In fact, she tells us that a substantial number of people who took refuge in the camps at Purana Qila and Humayun's Tomb between September 1947 and March 1948 did not ultimately move to Pakistan at all. For most of them, their homes did not await their return. Where do these masses of internally displaced people fit into the received understanding of the Partition, seen primarily in terms of cross-border dislocation? Is it possible to be a casualty of the Partition, a Partition refugee, even, without having moved out of one's country or home? In their very different ways, both the texts discussed above show us that it is—that it is possible for a city to stop being a home for its people in more ways than one. That Bim is able to reclaim, at the end of the novel, herself in relation to the house she has spent her life in and the siblings she has shared it with, is owing to the redemptive power of poetry, music, nature and a shared childhood. The musical performance at the Misras with which the novel ends recalls the poetry gatherings at Hyder Ali's at which the young Raja was such an avid participant. Mulk's aging guru brings together in his song, worlds that the Partition has torn asunder—Iqbal's Urdu poetry set to a Hindustani classical raga—that carries, for Bim, echoes of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* as well as memories of her estranged brother who loved both Iqbal and Eliot in equal measure. There are spaces that the Partition has not been able to divide.

HOME AND NOT-HOME

Trickster City (2010) is a composite of literary pieces—both imaginative and documentary—that reflect upon the experience of inhabiting a city and a home that are also, at the same time, unhomey. Precarious and contingent as life in the metropolis is, it is in the so-called informal settlements, liable to be demolished and relocated anywhere at any time by the so-called authorities, that the experience of the incongruous and the unhomey is always waiting just around the corner. The authors of *Trickster City* seek to make sense of this disarticulated assemblage of realities, experienced at first hand by many of them. This collection of writings from, and about, the 'belly' of Delhi, is jointly authored by a young team of people—Azra Tabassum, Jaanu Nagar, Lakhmi

Chand Kohli, Rakesh Khairalia, and several others—who live in neighbourhoods across the city, including LNJP colony in Central Delhi, Dakshinpuri in South Delhi, and Sawda-Ghevra, a new resettlement colony on the north-west extreme of the city, where families from Nangla Maanchi on the banks of the Yamuna (a tributary of the Ganges) were recently relocated. (LNPN stands for the Lok Nayak Prakash Narayan hospital). Written over a few years from 2005 onwards, when drives to make Delhi into a world-class city and a fit host for the Commonwealth Games (2010) had been launched in full earnest and a number of settlements by the Yamuna had been hastily demolished, the writers grapple with the fraught questions of what it means to live in the city and belong to it. As one blog entry, written during the demolition of the Nangla Maanchi settlement in 2006 (a victim of capitalist modernisation), asks:

One has to think the question anew: What is ‘living’ or ‘dwelling’?
Getting ration cards, voter I-cards, identity cards, passports made?
Or is it those relationships because of which not only your own home,
but your entire lane calls you ‘Amma’?

(Sarda 2010, p. 185)

Most of the short pieces that make up the volume, varied as they are in tone and intent, emerge from a hesitation, a confusion between the boundaries that separate the insider from the outsider, so that there is no knowing what one is, despite having been born and lived in a settlement for the duration of one’s life. Names and places have still not congealed into meanings—bus conductors do not stop their buses at Nangla because they do not know where it is, official documents do not name it as Nangla Maanchi but ‘as a place where people are living on poisonous fly ash deposits, people who need to be saved’, a ‘beauty parlour’ operates out of a thatched shack with no walls, bulb or fan (Sarda 2010, pp. 144, 159, 286). Other experiences fail to be articulated because of the lack of a vocabulary with which to do so. Suraj Rai struggles for words to convey the experience of writing from inside Nangla as the bulldozers move in, realising that the only language he has access to is ‘the language of reports about demolition in newspapers’ (Sarda 2010, p. 309). Documents, chits of paper, numbers and identity cards, whether or not one is able to read them, acquire a fetishistic importance in a setting in which one’s proof of inhabiting a certain piece of land, of indeed one’s very existence, is crucial in order to get any sort of recognition or benefits from the government. Asked for ‘evidence’ of his residence in a colony an old man has lived most of his life in and helped build from scratch, he undoes the knots of different polythene bags one by one—he managed to remember ‘which document was in which polythene from the way he had knotted it, or from rags of cloth of different colours tied over them’ (Sarda 2010, p. 243).

Language has to strain against itself in order to be able to articulate the experiential imperative ‘from the belly’. It continually comes up against its own limits, straining to convey a set of experiences it cannot fully fathom, so that images of the unexplained and the inexplicable recur: neighbours hear a woman

being beaten up mercilessly by her husband because she had made four extra rotis for dinner (the article ‘Daily Hurts’ by Kulwinder Kaur); a desperate man’s ‘unnamed need’ trumps the exigencies of his associates as he willingly agrees to pay a ridiculously high rate of interest for a sum of money (‘His unnamed need’ by Lakhmi Chand Kohli). Familiar associations and expectations are invoked in order to be undercut. Inside a burning hut, a mother tensely looks on as her son, armed with a pair of scissors, hurriedly digs in a corner. There is a sigh of relief as he pulls out a polythene wrapped box containing—not money, not gold, but something infinitely more valuable—documents bearing government stamps, proofs of identity (‘Vanished in the Smoke’ by Shamsher Ali). This image is a recurrent one in the book: official documents, whether ration cards, voter cards, V.P. Singh ‘lal’ (red) cards, and even school report cards are carefully, almost ritualistically, wrapped in individual polythene bags and tucked away in safe corners of the house, in a bid to prove one’s claim to a piece of land and an officially recognised identity.

While differing vastly in tone, structure and style, each of the writings that constitute this book has a shared perspective—one that emerges from the informal settlements where two-thirds of Delhi resides but which is rarely, if ever, encountered in the printed word. Many of these writings have a compelling sense of freshness and immediacy to them, which comes as much from the experiences they choose to write about as from the way in which they choose to write about them. For instance, the longish section on ‘Eviction’ invokes many of the commonplace markers of ordinary city life, such as noticeboards and loudspeakers, but manages to defamiliarise them, so that instead of the advertisements and ‘jaagrans’ that we would expect, we hear, with a shock, announcements such as ‘This settlement is going to be demolished today. Everyone should stay at home’ or come across notices that calmly proclaim ‘This land is the property of the government. It should be vacated’. The *form* of this section, composed as it is of short pieces that were originally blog entries, written *during* the demolition of Nangla Maanchi over a few months in 2006, only heightens the effect of raw, pulsating immediacy. In a superb, and beautifully understated, example of the incongruity that life lived on the frontiers and margins of the universe creates, Lakhmi Chand Kohli’s blog entry reads:

The door of a house, removed from its wall, lay on one side. There was a lock on the door. The house was still filled with things. (...) a man asked, ‘Whose house is this?’ A little distance away, sitting under a black umbrella with her child, a woman said, ‘It’s our house, sir.’ She was feeding her young child rice and vegetables from a plate. The demolishers finished their work in the lane. Their heavy hammers on their shoulders, their brows sweating, they walked away, talking among themselves and saying, ‘This is just such an awful job.’ (Sarda 2010, p. 157)

Boundaries between the inner and the outer, the private and the public, the home and the world dissolve to create the ‘unhomely’—‘Posters pasted on walls used to hide the shortcomings of walls. But today they are unable to hide

themselves from outsiders' gaze. Every passer-by can read what is written on them' (Sarda 2007, p. 173). Homi Bhabha suggests that 'to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the "unhomely" be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and the public spheres':

The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world. (...) the intimate recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement the border between home and the world becomes confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. (Bhabha 1994, p. 141)

The deliberate eschewing of sentimentality and pathos is a crucial aspect of the theoretical mandate of the writers. Even as the ever-present tension between the fictive and the personal in these writings is acknowledged, a concerted attempt is made to distance themselves from the word 'bechara' (poor thing), and steer the fine line between writing uninhibitedly yet not patronising oneself or the other. As the translator Shveta Sarda puts it, it is a 'simple, yet profoundly difficult quality', one which, we might add, is apparent on almost every page of the book. In their various ways, all the writers seek to address an image of a stranger within themselves, to write as if 'to nurture this unknown but intimate stranger, who dwells inside us and confuses the boundaries of whether we are insiders or outsiders to this city and who questions the language we are writing in' (Sarda 2010, p. 300).

The 'trickster city', then, like the 'trickster' in the city, operates in a 'tactical' way, as against the 'strategic' modes by which established structures and institutions operate (I refer to Michel de Certeau's famous distinction between *strategy* and *tactic* in *The Practice of Everyday Life*). The very slipperiness and lack of fixity of a locus/mode of existence that sustains itself on the margins of entitlement and legality can enable it to evade, deflect and unravel to a greater or lesser degree, temporarily, subconsciously and on the fly, the fabric of authority. *Trickster City* seeks to be a map—rough and ready, incomplete and constantly mutating—of this half-formed space that is marked by its own precariousness, faced perennially by the prospect of its own erasure, and always open to reconstituting and remaking itself anew. It attempts to articulate an experience of place that is always-already on the verge of sliding into non-place; to give form, however tenuous and transitory, to a mode of existence that is predicated upon the lack of stable form. Shamsher Ali, one of the writers, coins a new word for this experience of place: he calls it *nishastgah*.

A place in 'nishastgah' is a place where the gaze has not yet been fixed and time has not yet been disciplined,...When a place loses its 'nishastgah', it condenses into a 'jagah' (place). By then it has moved through its processes of

working out what it wants to remember and what it wants to forget, who it wants to keep in and who to keep out, which ways of being it finds acceptable and which are the ways it shuns or tries to keep away from. (Sarda 2010, p. 311, italics in original)

The trickster of *Trickster City*, then, is both person and place. Both trick by deceiving, cheating and defrauding, but they are also tricksters in the sense of being shape-shifters—spirited, energetic and playful. It is the man seducing gullible people on the Delhi liner, advertising the ‘item bombs’ that turn out to be worthless and ordinary objects (Sarda 2010, p. 5). It is also the city that repeatedly holds out promises of becoming a stable, solid home for its people, but keeps them on their toes and often dupes them, acting according to the whims of political parties and state officials. But most of all, it is the resilience and the initiative that can magically turn a jungle into a garden and mud into gold. As the elderly lady responds to the complaint that Sawda-Ghevra, where people from Nangla had been forcibly relocated, was little more than a jungle—‘What jungle? (she says) This will become a garden, watch closely. All this place needs is four to five years. When we settled in Lakshmi Nagar, what do you think it consisted of? Acacia trees, grass, mud! We cleaned it with our own hands. And it turned into gold, over time’ (Sarda 2010, p. 287).

CONCLUSION

The question of locus, or location, has always been a problematic one in reference to Delhi, a name that has successively, down the centuries, referred to distinct geographical locations. As a city, then, it has no established ‘core’, and the popular idea of the seven cities of Delhi is more accurate than one might think: not a single city that was destroyed and rebuilt several times, Delhi meant a new city altogether at every stage, built on a geographically new space, the only thing linking it to its predecessor being its name. Mehrauli, Siri, Tughlakabad, Shahjahanabad, etc., are not successive versions of the same city; they all *refer to an idea* of Delhi, they are all cities *of Delhi*. Historically speaking, any reference to ‘the city of Delhi’ is a paradox, an incommensurability, a contradiction in terms. That repeated dislocation and loss are built into the very meaning of the city then should come as no surprise; nor should the fact that any worthwhile literary engagement with Delhi is predicated, to a lesser or greater extent, upon these paradigmatic emotions and experiences. These take on historically specific forms that are aspects of the city’s long colonial and postcolonial trajectory. This chapter has examined three such facets of a city that is perennially in flux and out of place.

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Fictional and Cinematic Representations of the Journey of Bombay to Mumbai

Nilufer E. Bharucha

The city of Bombay, renamed Mumbai in 1995, evolved into the megapolis that it is today from a group of islands nestled in a bay off the western coast of India. Coveted by the Marathas, the Portuguese and the East India Company, the islands finally fell into the hands of England as a part of the Portuguese Princess Catherine de Braganza's dowry upon her marriage to Charles II of England in 1661. Strange as this might seem today, the British crown was then as uninterested in claiming possession of these islands, as the Portuguese Viceroy of Goa under whose jurisdiction they fell was in parting with them. Finally, in 1668 England leased the islands to the East India Company for £10 per annum. However, not all the islands had been gifted to the bridegroom: the Portuguese had retained control over seven of them. Control over these islands was gradually wrested from them and the East India Company shifted its headquarters from Surat to Bombay in 1687. The islands were now on their way to becoming the city which became the capital of the Bombay Province of British India (Tindall 1992).

The Portuguese had called the islands Bom Bahia or the Good Bay. The British name for the islands, Bombay, evolved from this earlier naming. There was yet another name though by which the indigenous peoples of the islands identified one of the islands and this was Mumbai, after their goddess Mumbadevi. So the European Bombay and the native Mumbai existed side by side as the White Town and the Black Town, the latter being invisible and unimportant to the former in the tradition of colonial hegemony and domination. By 1845, the islands were almost all joined together by the construction of causeways and bridges, as well as by the filling in of the swamps between them. In 1853, the construction of the railway line between Bombay and Thana confirmed its importance as the most important trading centre of British India after their then capital city of

Calcutta. Bombay's growth was fuelled as much by colonial impetus as it was by the commercial and industrial energies of the Parsis, the Gujaratis, the Konkani Muslims, the Hindu Pathare Prabhu community and the Baghdadi Jews who made it their home. A huge influx of Hindi-speaking labourers and businessmen from the north of India had also added to the cosmopolitan ambience of Bombay. These North Indian inhabitants of the city called it Bumbai, a Hindi corruption of the English name Bombay. To the indigenous Koli (fisher folk) peoples of the island it was always Mumbai, as it became to the countless other Marathi- and Gujarati-speaking peoples of the seven islands which had become a city.

So long before Bombay was renamed Mumbai in 1995 by the far-right Shiv Sena-led Government of the state of Maharashtra, the city's name had at least three variants—Bombay, Bumbai and Mumbai. The city had been happy to answer to any one of these names which had coexisted then for at least 300 years. This is what makes the changing of the name Bombay to Mumbai a more complex and troubling affair than a mere postcolonial repossession. The appropriation of the name Mumbai by the Marathi speakers in the mid-1990s was a denial of the contribution of the Gujarati-speaking Hindus and Parsis, as well as the Hindi-speaking Northerners, to the growth and development of the city during colonial and then postcolonial times. Moreover, the name change had followed the most horrendous communal riots witnessed by the city in 1992 and 1993. These riots in the wake of the destruction of the Babri mosque in the North Indian city of Ayodhya by militant Hindus had challenged the much vaunted tolerance and cosmopolitanism of the city.

This journey of the seven islands from being a great city which had welcomed one and all to one which is intolerant, which wants to know your religion, your language, your dietary preferences and your opinions, before you can buy/rent a flat or get a job has not gone unrecorded by literature and cinema. While the focus in this chapter is on texts written in English, other language books have also been taken into account as Mumbai is a multilingual city and home to speakers of various Indian languages which includes English. Mumbai is also a dream factory, home to the Hindi film industry now known globally as Bollywood. The city and its cinema are in a symbiotic relationship and any attempt to study the writerly representations of the city would be incomplete without its connection with images on celluloid, even more so as many Hindi and Urdu writers also work for the film industry.

Thomas Blom Hansen (2001) has noted how this city which was the symbol of modernity and cosmopolitanism in India became the site for ethno-religious violence. He makes a crucial point regarding how with the rise of the right-wing party Shiv Sena in Bombay, the globalisation of India became coloured by vernacularisation as the Sena put forth the agenda of the 'Marathi Manos', the local Marathi speaking man, and set about changing the identity of the city. In the 1960s, the targets who did not fit into the Sena's 'localisation' agenda were the non-Marathi-speaking people of the city, but by the last decade of the

twentieth century their agenda had enlarged to include militant Hinduism which had percolated into the city from Northern India. Now the 'other' was the non-Hindu rather than the non-Marathi speaker.

The changed character of the city and the manner in which 'Naming' challenged the older more tolerant identity of the city has been noted by Rohinton Mistry (b. 1952, emigrated to Canada, to Toronto, 1977) in all his novels beginning with *Tales from Firozsha Baag* (1987). Mistry dates the threat to 'Bombayness', the quintessential character of the city, to the early 1970s and the war with Pakistan that led to the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 and then culminated in the Emergency of 1975–1977. These were the years of the then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi's power politics. The Camelot-like Nehruvian India had died with the Chinese invasion of India in 1962 and the wrangling for power within the ranks of the ruling Congress party. The idealism and high-minded public discourse of these years was now at an end and the rise of regional identities as opposed to nationalist ones had to be contended with by the majority-Parsi residents of Firozsha Baag. They had to come to terms with a Bombay in which they as a minority no longer felt safe and had to live on the sufferance of the majority. This theme is further extended upon in *Such a Long Journey* (1991) which is set against the backdrop of the 1971 war with Pakistan. Here the city's famed reputation for religious tolerance is shown to be unravelling as the compound 'Wall of all Religions' that encompasses the Khodadad building is broken down and the residents are exposed to a violent, stone-throwing mob. Naming and Identity is also a strand in this book as names of the old landmarks and streets of Bombay are changed to reflect the vernacularisation of the city. As Dinshawji, a character in this book, says: 'Names are so important . . . All my life I have come to work at Flora Fountain. And one fine day the name changes. So what happens to the life I have lived?' (Mistry 1991, p. 74). As David Williams (1995) has put it, 'What Dinshawji laments in the loss of old names is the loss of the old logocentric security, that metaphysical reassurance via language' (1995, p. 217). *A Fine Balance* (1995) is yet another Bombay book in which the city is imagined as like a factory peopled by Parsi widows, Dalit [= untouchable] tailors, the Bombay mafia, the Beggar syndicate, etc. This is unrelentingly dark discourse as the city struggles to survive in the face of the Internal Emergency (1975–1977) imposed by Mrs Indira Gandhi, when though the main plank was 'Eradicate Poverty' it was in reality the poor who were being eradicated. The tragedy here is that the subalterns of the city had to suffer the ruthless diktats of the state. This brings up the question of who owns the city space? Is it the elite who want to beautify and sanitise it or is it the people, especially the poor people who make up at least 50% of Mumbai's population who have the right to it? In *Family Matters* Mistry has once again set his tale in the city of his birth—Bombay, now called Mumbai. Here, he has detailed the travails faced by its citizens during and in the aftermath of the Babri riots in 1992–1993.

Yet, another chronicler of the city is Salman Rushdie who in *Midnight's Children* (1981) and then in *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) has written at length on his city of birth, which he had left as a school boy but to which he continued

to feel attached by a long umbilical cord. The changing face of the city and especially its loss of tolerance is more properly noted in *The Moor's Last Sigh*: 'O Bombay! *Prima in Indis! Gateway to India! Star of the East with her face to the West!* Like Granada—al- Gharnatah of the Arabs—you were the glory of your time' (Rushdie 1995, p. 372).

The Moor's Last Sigh is a savage indictment of the forces that have taken over the city. The character of Raman Fielding here is a thinly veiled portrait of Shiv Sena's founder, Bal Keshav Thackeray (1926–2012). It is not surprising therefore that this book was 'unofficially' banned in the city and copies had disappeared from bookshops. Written in the usual Rushdiesque style of 'magic realism' the book nevertheless clearly details the destruction of Bombay. He explains the attacks on Mumbai by saying that 'Those who hated India, those who sought to ruin it, would need to ruin Bombay' (351). This book was written at a time when Rushdie was in his own incarcerating exile because of the Fatwa issued against him by fundamentalist forces within Islam. Hence the more poignant is this discourse where he describes his natal city battling with forces of Hindu fundamentalism. A city belongs not just to the majority communities that inhabit it but to all who live within its boundaries and contribute to its growth and development. This had been the case in Bombay but now the minorities, especially the smaller minorities, such as the Parsis of Mistry's world and the Jews of this book, found themselves completely marginalised in the power play of demographics. Adam Zogoiby the 'cathjewnnt'(the Catholic-Jewish scion of the cashew nut-growing family), hero of this text asserts the right of the smallest of minorities to being Indian. Mistry in *Family Matters* has glossed over the retaliatory bomb blasts which had rocked Bombay on 12 March 1993 and which were engineered by the Muslim sections of the Bombay underworld after the Sena-led riots against Muslims in December 1992, January and February 1993. However, Rushdie has in this book blamed not just the right-wing extremists but also those within the city who had through their silence, their lack of protest against Raman Fielding, strengthened the fascist forces. Rushdie called these people the 'Malabar Hill types', the so-called liberal elite who allowed their city to be torn apart and destroyed. This then was the tale of two cities—'the great city of Hell, Pandemonium, that dark-side, through the looking glass evil twin of my own golden city: not proper but improper Bombay' (126).

Another writer who belongs to one of the minority communities of Bombay is Meher Pestonji (b. 1946), a Parsi Zoroastrian like Mistry, who in her novel *Pervez* (2002) has specifically critiqued the Parsi elite of Mumbai and their inaction during the dark days of the post-Babri riots and then the blasts. Pestonji is a journalist and an activist whose book portrayed fence-sitting Parsis who mouthed platitudes during the riots but did little to help the victims. Yet another Parsi writer is Boman Desai (b. 1950). At the beginning of his *Memory of Elephants* (1988), Bombay is bound within the circle of affluence marked by the Cricket Club of India (CCI) and the Oval Maidan ringed by Art-Deco buildings, but as the novel progresses the apolitical, live and let live ethos of the city gives way to the shrill cries of rioting mobs, like in Mistry's *Such a Long Journey*. The time-travelling hero of this book,

Homi, stands on the balcony of his affluent south Mumbai flat and watches as the safe, quiet city of his childhood becomes a frightening space which might not be willing to house him anymore.

Murzban Shroff the author of *Breathless in Bombay* (2009) writes in the introduction to his novel: ‘Perhaps there is no other city in the world where the struggle spills so vividly and unabashedly out onto the streets. . . . How many trades? How many dreams? How many journeys can a single city take and deliver?’ (quoted in Shivani 2010). Shroff’s Bombay is actually the post-Babri, i.e. post the riots following from the destruction of the Babri mosque in Uttar Pradesh in 1992, Mumbai. Here postmodernity exists alongside older trades and vocations, where you might have the famed globally acclaimed management techniques of the *Dabbawallas*, who deliver lunch boxes around the city, coexisting with multinational companies, global IT startups and outsource offices. Shroff’s stories are therefore as multivalent as the city itself, a city that is resilient and lives in the present.

In such a city, the Moor’s tower might have been blown up by one of the 12 bombs that had gone off at iconic targets in the city, but where the Moor lies low and survives to fight another day. He takes refuge in the Al Hambra where all boundaries are erased, a fortress which is a symbol of endurance beyond defeat. The morning after the 12 blasts, the city had reported 90% attendance at offices, schools and colleges. Gustaad Noble in *Such a Long Journey* loses his multi-religion wall but not his optimism. Ashok Banker’s eponymous hero of *The Byculla Boy* (1994), on the verge of committing suicide decides he wants to ‘live. I want to LIVE’ (244) he shouts. In Firdaus Kanga’s autobiographical novel, *Trying to Grow* (1990), Bombay is a shabby city bursting at the seams but it is alive. It may be infested with gangsters, comen and beset with severe shortages ranging from water to public transport but its heart beats as strongly as that of Kanga’s severely handicapped hero, who in spite of everything is a survivor.

From the tumultuous days of 1992 and 1993, the city has learnt to struggle back onto its feet and carry on with the task of living. Actually, neither the city nor its citizens as Nissim Ezekiel has written in his poem ‘The Island’ have much of an option. The city might be ‘Unsuitable for song as well as sense’ but ‘I cannot leave the island/I was born here and belong’ (1989, p. 182). It is this inescapable sense of belonging that also drew back the thousands of Muslims who had fled the city after the 1992–1993 riots and blasts.

Another Bombay poet who is now based in the UK but lived in the city during that time is Imtiaz Dharker. In her collection of poems entitled *Postcards from God* (1994), she writes of how the post-Babri riots in the city were not spontaneous but were organised—‘Here in this quiet, civil room / permission has been given / for the carnage to begin’ (1994, p. 78). The ultimate pity of the killings was the fact that all those killed, Hindu or Muslim, were equally vulnerable: ‘Some are circumcised, some not / but circumcised or not / they are all glass’ (1994, p. 79). In this poem she also links, as others have right-wing fundamentalism in India, with the anti-Jewish programmes of the Nazis. ‘And through the crystal night/the bodies begin to burn’ (1994, p. 79). In the poem entitled ‘The List’ from the same collection she writes, ‘You expect more—/ perhaps

jack-booted men/ not this small crowd / of children, fists / clamped around match-boxes, / sticks and ball-point pens, / and the final weapon: / The list, / to be read aloud. / Your name is there' (1994, p. 92). Writing in the voice of those who were butchered Dharker says in '1993', 'Monsters stand patiently at our doors, / ringing our bells, / waiting to visit us in our homes / The beast is upon us / long arms dangling / squatting on our shell-bright domes' (1994, p. 82). Dharker was born in a Muslim family in the UK and came to India upon marrying a Hindu who she had met there. They had settled in Bombay/Mumbai and she had made that city her home. Now she felt a sense of betrayal as the city turned on her kind and 'othered' her. As she writes in 'Untitled', 'The city and I had both survived / Or so we thought. / This morning I took a breath / of city air / and smelt out death' (1994, p. 98).

Books on Bombay/Mumbai's crime and underworld scene written by observers and participants constitute yet another important section of literature on the city. One such book is *Shantaram* (2003) by the Australian Gregory David Robert. Like most big cities in the world, Bombay too has a well-organised crime scene ruled over by legendary dons in the godfather tradition of the Mafia in the USA. The underworld in the city really came into its own during the years of the Second World War when in the scenario of all kinds of shortages due to the war, a parallel economy began to thrive. After the independence of India and the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru's, tryst with a Socialist economy, the imposition of prohibition and ascetic norms on most of the Indian states by moralistic politicians, the smuggling of liquor, luxury goods and gold flourished all along the western coast of India. This was controlled from Bombay. Gradually, the Underworld began to also deal in prostitution and drugs. This was not always welcomed by the older, strait-laced dons who had their own version of morality in spite of their otherwise criminal activities. By the last decade of the twentieth century, the Bombay underworld had also begun to dabble in illicit arms and explosives. This demand was fuelled by the diverse terrorist outfits which had become active in India. *Shantaram* is a thinly disguised autobiographical novel in which Robert writes about his experience first in the slums of the city where he was rechristened Lin Baba by his Indian friend Prabhakar, and then moves on to narrate how he became an inmate of the notorious Arthur Road jail in Bombay. Along the way he met and became friends with several of the city's dons. This is a problematic book as it is difficult for most outsiders to separate fact from fiction and most Indian reviewers have also found it guilty of Orientalist stereotypes about India and Indians. Be that as it may, *Shantaram* became a bestseller and for over a decade now has been in the making as a film produced by Johnny Depp. Robert has in 2015 announced that he was writing a sequel to his novel and it would be called *The Mountain Shadow* (Isabella Bierdenharn, 'Entertainment Weekly', Times Inc. Network, www.ew.com/article/2015/03/11). It would be set in Bombay 2 years after the action in *Shantaram*. Yet another interesting book from this genre is *From Dongri to Dubai: Six Decades of Mumbai Mafia* (2012) by S. Hussain Zaidi. This non-fiction book is focused upon Dawood Ibrahim who started out in life as a small

time hood and went on to become one of the most powerful and dreaded of Bombay dons. After his leading role in the Bombay blasts of March 1993 he has become one of the most wanted of Bombay's dons and is alleged to live partly in Dubai and partly in Karachi, Pakistan. This book also details the life and times of Bombay's other dons—Haji Mastan, Karim Lala, Vardarajan Mudaliar and Chota Rajan. Zaidi's portrayal of not just Dawood but also those of Haji Mastan and Karim Lala provide more realistic and credible details on these men than those in *Shantaram*. As a crime reporter, Zaidi had first-hand knowledge of these men and their criminal activities.

The city of Bombay/Mumbai has also been the subject and setting of novels, poems and plays written in Marathi, Gujarati and Hindi-Urdu. Marathi writers, such as Gangadhar Gadgil, Arun Kolatkar, Sadanand Rege, Vilas Sarang and Kiran Nagarkar have written on Mumbai and set their works within the bounds of the seven islands that became a city. Some of these writers such as Kolatkar, Sarang and Nagarkar are bilingual and write both in Marathi and English. Like their Indian English counterparts they too focus on the 'Bombayness' of the city. In their works which are written in Marathi, the city is always Mumbai. They too write of the institutions of the city, the Irani restaurants, the Bombay Electric Supply and Transport Company (BEST) buses, the commuter trains and the *dabbawallas* (the tiffin/lunch box suppliers to Mumbai's office goers). Gadgil's work is the most affectionately accepting of the city's faults and foibles. This is most evident in his collection of short stories and essays, *Mumbai and Mumbaikars* (1970). Sarang's work presents a surrealist portrait of the city in stories such as *Chima Kai Kamachi?* 'Of what use is Chima?' and *Ithas Amcha Bajula Abet* 'Our History is of No Use' (1974). Nagarkar is another important chronicler of the city in his Marathi novel *Saat Sakkam Trechaalis* 'Seven Sixes are Forty Three' (1974) and his English novel *Ravan and Eddie* (1994). These are Mumbai books that are set in the lower middle class ghettos of the city. These ghettos however, house peoples of diverse religions and regions, so are symbolic of the city's famed ethos of tolerance and live and let live spirit. Ravan, the Hindu boy and Eddie the Catholic lad, grow up together in one of Mumbai's famed *chaals*, working class/lower middle class residential buildings where the little flats branch off long balconies (*chaals*), which resulted in as many quarrels over balcony space, as it did bonhomie and tolerance of the other. The two other books which came as sequels to *Ravan and Eddie* were *The Extras* (2012) and *Rest in Peace* (2015). *The Extras* is named after the extras in Mumbai's films. The city's film industry prided itself on its secular credentials and tolerance, where Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, Christians and Jews had worked together ever since the first films had been made in the city in the early years of the twentieth century. *The Extras* celebrates the multihued city especially the denizens of its *chaals*. As noted on Nagarkar's website, '*The Extras* is much more than a book about Bollywood or Bombay. It is the engrossing tale of a near-epic struggle against obscurity and towards self-realisation; and is outrageously exuberant in the telling, and touching in its depiction of the large and small tragedies that shape our lives' (<http://kirannagarkar.com/the-extras/>). Here Ravan and

Eddie who had become a taxi driver and bouncer in a club, respectively, debut in Bollywood but do not make it as actors, instead become music directors. In *Rest in Peace*, Ravan and Eddie hit the lowest possible depths of their existence but then like the city reinvent themselves even as in the best Mumbai/Bollywood tradition they fall from the top of the Air India building chased by gun toting goons. Many Marathi writers such as Vasant Patankar have written on the Bombay riots of 1992–1993. Patankar, in his poem ‘Arajak’ anarchy (1994, pp. 24–25), writes ‘... Achanak kuthlaya Kopradyun manacha, shaharachy / ek barakiskshi thingi udte aasmaanaat kunaachyaahi nakalat / aani arajak pasarat manamanaat, vastyavastyaat afwaaanchya sphotak havetun / pratyek peshipeshitun, raktaraktatun arajakanchi laagni hot jaate surwatra / kontyatari eka naavane—/ vhayaras dharma, varna, prant, bhasha kinva asach kaahi’—‘Suddenly from a corner of the brain, the body / A tiny spark flies towards the sky / and anarchy spreads from mind to mind, object to object catches the explosive infection of rumours / each and every sinew and drop of blood is infused with the feeling of rampant anarchy / due to either a name—/ religion, colour, region, language or something like it’ (my translation).

Other interesting Marathi writing on Mumbai is that by the Dalits. Dalit is a term of self-definition of the lowest among the Hindu castes in India. Dalit literature is often radical and militant in its approach. In the villages the Dalits or the untouchables as they used to be called, lived on the margins and were not allowed to mingle either socially or professionally with the upper caste Hindus. In a city like Mumbai, they enjoyed certain anonymity and escaped the discrimination practiced against them in their villages. However, the city worshipped wealth and power and the Dalits found themselves at the bottom of the economic ladder in the city and hence were of no importance to it. Their manual labour in the cotton mills, docks and markets helped generate the city’s wealth but they themselves remained faceless and invisible. Inspired by the Black Panther movement in the USA, Dalit writers in Mumbai banded together as the Dalit Panthers. Daya Pawar was one such Dalit Panther who wrote ‘... this kind of mad attraction for Bombay was deeply entrenched in my blood. After all these years, I now wonder what has this city given me?’ (*Balute* 1982, p. 132. Trans. Bhagwat 1995, p. 114). Narayan Surve in ‘Mumbai’ (1975), boldly lays claim to the city in which the Dalits have laboured unknown and unsung. During communal riots too it is ironically the poor Dalits, discarded by Hinduism, who suffered the most because of their technical belonging to the Hindu religion, this in spite of the mass conversion to Buddhism led by the Dalit leader Dr Ambedkar in the 1950s. And it was the poor Muslims who were killed in these riots, thereby creating a brotherhood of poverty and oppression among the Dalits and Muslims. Another Dalit writer who had made Mumbai his home is Namdeo Dhasal. He had adopted the city but the city had never acknowledged his lowly self, so in anger and despair he calls the city a whore in the poem, ‘Mumbai, Mumba, Mazhya Priya Rande’ Mumbai-Mumba My Beloved Harlots (1983). It is interesting to note that as a Dalit, a neo-Buddhist, he not only calls Mumbai but also the goddess Mumba a whore, after whom the city has been named.

He calls them his beloved harlots. He writes in this poem against other Hindu goddesses as well: 'Laxmi, Saraswati / the discriminating harlots / We invited them but they never came / We asked them to spread under us but they refused'. Laxmi is the Hindu goddess of wealth and Saraswati is the goddess of learning, so rejected by the city and its goddesses of wealth and learning the poet curses all of them but like other Mumbaikars/Bombayites he does not give up completely on the city: 'I will make you mine . . . Bombay, Bombay / O my dear slut . . .' (Trans. Bhagwat 1995, p. 123). The sexual symbolism of violent possession indicates the poet's deep rooted hope of one day possessing the wealth and knowledge of the city. Tragically, this dream was shattered during those days and nights of December 1992 and February 1993 when the city turned on itself and the poorest of its poor, whether Hindu or Muslim, lay dead. The riots were first instigated by the charged communal atmosphere due to the destruction of the Babri Mosque in the distant North Indian town of Ayodhya, but soon became a structured killing spree facilitated by the nexus between politicians, land owners and builders who took this opportunity to get forcibly vacated the city's slums and ghettos occupying the island city's prime and scarce land resources (Punwani 2003, pp. 325–364).

Gujarati language poets are not far behind the Marathi writers, when it comes to describing their city's descent into intolerance, a city which even now is bilingual, Marathi and Gujarati. Poets such as Suresh Dalal, Dilip Jhaveri and Nitin Mehta have dealt with this aspect of the city. Mehta's poem, *Be Kaavya* 'Two Poems' (1995, pp. 13–19), begins on a quiet note but then gathers momentum and in the modernist style describes the city as a wasteland. Mehta then arrives at the central point of the poem when the city exploded into riots and was then torn apart by bombs:

Ane ek divas
 Bhansan vinanu dhandhani uthyu . . .
 Eij raate maabenbhaabidikrione dhadhagta laavaaman dubadi didha
 Wah Bombay
 Salaam Bombay
 Gha ziltu Bombay
 Nidar Bombay
 Sadaa hanstu Bombay
 Jai bomb Bombay
 Salaam Bombay
 Garvse kaho Bombay
 Moongo rahyo . . .

(And one day / the city went up in flames . . . / That very night mother-sistersisterinlawdaughter (telescoping of words the poet's own) were drowned in the blazing fires / Bravo Bombay / Salaam Bombay / Wounded Bombay / Fearless Bombay / Ever smiling Bombay / Victory to bomb Bombay / Salaam Bombay/ Say Bombay with pride / I kept silent. (My translation.))

This ironic and pained eulogy to the city ends with the damning evidence of how the majority of the citizens had not raised their voices against the riots. They like the poet had kept silent. However, the trademark optimism of the city surfaces by the end of the poem as the poet looks into the mirror and in his own face sees the bloody and ravaged face of the city. He trembles but then realises that the mirror is still intact. The killings and fires gradually die down and the poet like the city re-emerges from the mirror with a smile on his face.

Diverse Muslim communities too have contributed immensely to the development and growth of Mumbai; they too were some of the earliest settlers on the seven islands that became a city. Urdu (practically speaking, Muslim) literature has located many of its texts in the city. In the first half of the twentieth century many Urdu writers belonged to the Progressive Writers' Movement. The League of Progressive Authors in 1933 became the Progressive Writers' Movement which soon spread out all over India and even to London in 1935, where it was called the Indian Progressive Writers' Association. The Progressive Writers' Movement included Urdu writers who were both Hindu as well as Muslim like Krishan Chander, Ismat Chughtai, Saadat Hasan Manto, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, Ali Sardar Jafri, Sibte Hassan, Ehtesham Hussain, Mumtaz Hussain, Sahir Ludhianvi, Kaifi Azmi, Ali Abbas Hussaini, Makhdoom Mohiuddin, Farigh Bukhari, Khatir Ghaznavi, Raza Hamdani, M. Ibrahim Joyo, Sobho Gianchandani, Shaikh Ayaz, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Amrita Pritam, Ali Sikandar, Wajid, Zoe Ansari, Majaz Lakhnavi and many more. A large number of these writers wrote also for the Hindi film industry in Bombay. The language of these films was usually Hindustani (a mix of Hindi and Urdu) but sometimes it was also Urdu. A number of Urdu writers were thus based in Bombay before and after the partitioning of India. Some of them like Manto later migrated to Pakistan but others like Kaifi Azmi and Sahir Ludhianvi continued to live in Bombay and write for postcolonial Hindi films, where they wrote legendary radical lyrics and screenplays for film makers such as Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt and Bimal Roy among others. Some of these songs have become anthems for the city such as the one written by Majrooh Sultanpuri for the 1956 Guru Dutt film *C.I.D.*: 'Ai Dil hain mushkil jeena yahan, zara hatke, zara bachke, yeh hain bambai meri jaan' ('O my heart, it's difficult to live in this city / take care my love, this is Bombay', my translation).

During the Hindu-Muslim riots in 1992–1993 given the demographic reality of an overwhelming Hindu majority, the Muslims were often the targets rather than the perpetrators and there is much literature written on these riots by Urdu Muslim writers in the 1990s such as Anwar Khan, Salaam Bin Razak, Mushtaq Momin, Sajid Rashid, Anwar Qanwar and Moinuddin Jinabade. These works are focused on the change in the ethos of Bombay from cosmopolitanism to essentialism. In *Tabeer*, Jinabade locates the action not in Bombay but in an apocryphal space, Dharampur, the City of Law and Justice. In a postcolonial allegorical mode employed by writers in societies where they fear to take a

more direct approach to their subjects, the embattled citizens here are two groups of Hindus, rather than Hindus and Muslims. However, the ultimate message is unambiguous: ‘Dharampur ab patele wala Dharampur nahin raha—bus uska naam rahe gaya’ (‘Dharampur is not its old self anymore—only its name is as before’, Trans. Bharucha 1993). Another Urdu writer Javed Akhtar, also a Bollywood script writer and lyricist, has published a collection of poems, *Tarkash* ‘The Quiver’ (1995a, 1995b) in which he has three *nazams* (descriptive poems) called ‘Fasaad se Patele’ (Before the riots), ‘Who Dhal Rahaa’ (It is Falling) and ‘Fasaad ke Baad’ (After the riots). In the first poem, Akhtar has written of how the city had been caught in an atmosphere of terror even before the actual rioting had begun. In the second poem he writes: ‘Main qatal to ho gaya / Tumhari galimen / Lekin mere lahoonse / Tumhaari diwaar gal rahi hain...’ (‘I was killed in your street but your walls are melting with the stains of my blood’, Trans. Matthews 2001, pp. 98–99). Here we have the message that such violence harms the predator as much as it does the prey. In the third poem he writes: ‘Jo lootne aaye the / Woh khud loot gaye / Kya lootta who unko khabar hi nahin / Kum nazar hainki / Sadiyon ki tehzeeb per / Un bichaaron kin azar hi nahin’ (‘Those who had come to loot were themselves looted. They are so short-sighted they could not see the centuries old culture—they did not even know they had been looted’, Trans. Matthews 2001, pp. 100–101).

The city is also the hero of several films made in it. Earlier, these films were known as Hindi films and were only pejoratively called Bollywood by Westerners. This tag implied a certain derivativeness and dependence upon Hollywood. However, India has been making films for as long as has Hollywood. The first feature film was made in 1913, *Raja Harishchandra* and the first talkie *Alam Ara* was released in 1931. With the dawning of the global economic order in India in the 1990s, the Hindi film industry has also become more global in its approach to film-making and embraced Bollywood as a self-definition, as its films reached out to world audiences even as its stars became global icons—Shahrukh Khan, Aishwarya Rai, Irfan Khan and now Priyanka Chopra.

Hindi cinema/Bollywood has long been a faithful chronicler of the city. As Amrit Ganger (1996, pp. 210–224) has said right from its inception the Hindi cinema has carried on a love affair with the city. While it has projected it as a glamorous and desirable entity, it has also portrayed the darker side of the city of dreams. Raj Kapoor’s scriptwriter for his early films was Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, better known as K. A. Abbas, who was a member of the Progressive Writer’s Movement. In the 1950s, Abbas had scripted hard-hitting narratives for Kapoor’s productions *Boot Polish* (1954), *Shree 420* ‘The Petty Thief’ (1955) and *Jaagte Raho* ‘Stay Alert’ (1956) in which the uncaring callous side of the rich city was revealed in a leftist ideological mode, where there was dialectical tension between the rich and the poor, the capitalist and the proletariat. The Kapoor–Abbas team was further bolstered by the lyricist Shailendra and music directors Shankar and Jaikishan, who wrote and set to music songs such as *Ramaiya Vastavaiya* for *Shree 420* where Raju (played by Kapoor) who has just arrived in the city is befriended by equally poor and

homeless workers and they sing this song on the pavement where they live. The song and dance routine upsets the rich capitalist who is woken up by the noise and calls the police who take away all the homeless people, including the hero. The film maker Guru Dutt was yet another film-maker of the 1950s and 1960s whose works commented on the city and its unequal culture. It was in his film *C.I.D.* that the city although criticised has also been immortalised. You have to lose something to gain something; if you want to live in Bombay you have to be smart, you have to be on your guard because after all ‘Yeh hain Bumbai meri jaan’ (this is Bombay my love!). Hindi cinema’s depiction of the city as a difficult but ultimately secular place where if you worked hard and if you were clever you succeeded, continued into the 1970s and 1980s. The actor Amitabh Bachchan, as the ‘Angry Young Man’, became an iconic and enduring superstar of this era. He represented the millions of poor, jobless young men in the city which had by then become an even more violent and dangerous space. The city had no space for the weak and the morally upright anymore, so crime flourished. Bachchan’s character of Vijay in films like *Deewar* ‘The Wall’ (1975) became a member of the criminal underworld but as a balance the film provides his upright younger brother who is a policeman. Linking the two brothers, who lived in two different worlds but in the same city, was the figure of their mother. The iconisation of the mother figure in Hindi cinema goes back most famously to the 1957 *Mother India*, where the single mother character of Radha was played by the much-lauded actor Nargis. Radha’s life and times were set in rural India but the mother in *Deewar* lives in the city, works as a labourer on building sites to raise her young sons and ultimately represents, albeit in a rather melodramatic and sentimental manner, the women who toil for the city’s rich and powerful but retain their humanity and values.

By the 1990s, Bollywood was in the fray to depict and even defend the city which was now not just criminalised but also communalised as its famed secular fabric began to fray under the pressures of religious fundamentalisms. The nemesis of those who sought to divide the city along communal lines was now the actor Nana Patekar who stood tall in films such as *Krantiveer* ‘The Revolutionary’ (1994), *Tiranga* ‘The Tricolour’ (1993) and *Prahaar* ‘The Final Attack’ (1991) as the abrasive but upright man—a defender of all faiths. Woven into the tales of these films was also the theme of patriotism and nationalism. This is interesting as the Indian nation in the last decade of the twentieth century and at the end of the second Christian millennium was beginning to redefine itself not just along religious lines but also economically and culturally.

Then as the city became the battleground of religious intolerance in the dark days of the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, Bollywood responded with a slew of films focused on the riots and the bomb blasts. The first film though to hit the screens on the riots, the bilingual (Tamil and Hindi) *Bombay* (1995), was not made by Bollywood, but came from Madras (now called Chennai) from the acclaimed director Mani Ratnam. The Bombay film industry had been stunned by the violence and mayhem let loose in the city and although it had responded with processions and demonstrations, it had yet to formulate a cinematic

response to what had torn the city apart so brutally. This response began to come a few years later with *Naseem* (The Morning Breeze) in 1995 and continued well into the new century and millennium with *Fiza* (Atmosphere) in 2000 and *Black Friday* (2007) which was focused on the 1993 bomb blasts.

A much swifter response from Bollywood has happened in the case of the terrorist attacks that have subsequently shaken the city again and again beginning with the commuter train blasts of 2006 and culminating with the siege of the city in 2008. These have been depicted by films such as *Mumbai Meri Jaan* (Mumbai my Love) and *A Wednesday*, both released in 2008. The 2008 siege of the city which for most of the world was focused on the hostages held by the terrorists in the luxury Taj Mahal hotel as it had involved many foreign nationals, was actually much wider as the terrorists who had entered the city by the sea route had fanned out to kill hundreds of the city's residents at railway stations, on city roads and in hospitals too. There is a documentary made by the HBO on the siege of the Taj Mahal hotel called *Terror in Mumbai* (2009) which has a voice over by CNN's India born political commentator and TV host Fareed Zakaria. This film by Dan Reed makes for chilling viewing as it is not a cinematic recreation but has actual footage shot by TV channels, CCTV footage and audio and videos by the survivors from within the hotel. What is also gripping is the fact that one of the objectives of the attack was to catch the attention of the world, to 'grab the eyeballs' of the viewers and this it certainly did and in that sense although all but one of the attackers were killed in the gun battles inside the hotel and outside at the railway station and on the streets, the attack was termed a success by its perpetrators.

Another documentary on Mumbai worth considering for its comprehensive treatment of the city and its ethos is Madhushree Dutta's *Seven Islands and a Metro* (2006), which has an interesting narrative line in the form of a dialogue between the two Urdu writers Ismat Chughtai and Saadat Hasan Manto talking about the layered aspects of the city of wealth and the city of poverty. The cinematography enthral as the city in all its beauty and squalor unfolds upon the screen. The multivalences of Bom Bahia, Bombay, Bumbai and Mumbai are the focus of this film that thus challenge the hegemonic construct it has now become.

There have been many films set in Mumbai by non-Indians too, one of which is Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008) which won as many as eight out of the nominated 10 Oscars in 2009. One of these was for its Indian music director A. R. Rahman. This film was an adaptation of Vikas Swarup's novel *Q & A* (2005) which was inspired by the rags to riches story of one of the winners of *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?* TV programme franchised in India as *Kaun Banega Crorepati*. The film was termed a 'sleeper hit' by critics some of who also called it 'poverty porn' (Alice Miles, 14 January 2009, *The Times*, London). A more realistic and less sensational depiction of Bombay/Mumbai's slum and pavement dwellers is to be found in films such as K.A. Abbas film *Shehar aur Sapna* 'The city and the Dream' (1963) and *Dharavi* (1991) a film by Sudhir Mishra on Asia's largest slum. *Lunchbox* (2013) is yet another film that captures the spirit of

the city as its protagonists battle with the daily grind of commuting and mind-deadening office work which is leavened by the romance launched by a lunchbox, delivered by the otherwise extremely efficient *dabbawalas* to the wrong office worker.

Bombay, a colonial construct, became the rich and powerful metropolis of India that was not India. Then towards the end of the twentieth century it becomes Mumbai a city which witnessed what Homi Bhabha has called the ‘repression of a ‘cultural’ unconscious; a liminal, uncertain state of cultural belief when the archaic emerges in the midst of margins of modernity’ (Bhabha 1994, p. 143). Yet as the books and films surveyed here reveal the city was and still is a hero and like a phoenix rises from its ashes—if not still as strong, still capable of drawing ever new migrants from the Indian hinterland and attract corporate businesses from around the world—*Yeh Hain Bumbai Meri Jaan*.

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City and Country in Chinese Fiction: An Historical Survey

Leo Ou-fan Lee

In his classic study of English literature since the sixteenth century, Raymond Williams delineates a historical trajectory that contrasts the “knowable communities” of rural country to the “city of light and darkness” as embodied by industrial London (Williams 1973). However, this dichotomy is more apparent than real, according to Williams, because both country and city were affected in varying degrees by the same force of production—i.e., capitalism. Up until modern times, English writers and artists tended to idealize the pastoralism of the countryside, within which the city defined itself and its spatial boundaries. Following Williams’ lead, other theorists have extended the dichotomy by arguing that in the modern era the roles have been reversed: the cities have become the centers of culture and identity, while the countryside all but disappears. The rise of modern metropolis provided the breeding ground for artistic and literary modernism. (Bradbury and McFarland 1978). And since the 1980s, the modern metropolis has transformed itself into the postmodern “megapolis” or “city of spectacle”—an urban landscape of skyscrapers crisscrossed by highways and invisible electronic circuitry whose “simulated environments” of advertising signboards dazzle the senses (Boyer 1996, pp. 46–48).

In China, there seems to have been a comparable development of the city in relation to culture and literature with different modalities. The interpretive model that has held sway for at least half a century is Frederick Mote’s thesis of the “rural–urban continuum,” which argues that in traditional China the city, albeit with more dense population and more thriving commercial activity at least since the Song dynasty (960–1279 AD), forms a cultural “continuum” with the rural world (Mote 1973, pp. 42–49). This does not mean that city and country constituted a homogenous whole with no differences in physical environment or socioeconomic scale. Rather,

Mote's thesis refers to a cultural ideal or symbolic system dominated by rural values. This is particularly relevant to classical Chinese literature, in which the dominant genres—poetry and the prose essay—exhibited primarily a rural aesthetic. Together with landscape painting it embraces the same pastoral ethos of man living in harmony with nature, which consists of the two essential elements of mountains (*shan*) and rivers (*shui*). However, for the purposes of this chapter, a more relevant question is: whether the rise of cities begot new literary forms or genres such as the novel. Can we speak of the “image of the city” in traditional Chinese literature as Burton Pike did for Europe? (Pike 1981) In the following, I can present only a brief sketch and summary based on my past work and those by other scholars (Lee 1999; Zhang 1996; Shih 2001; Liu 2006).

THE CITY IN TRADITIONAL CHINESE LITERATURE

In general, most of the traditional works about the city belong to the *biji* (miscellaneous notes) category: they are generally prose accounts drawn from sundry sources, including stories. But they are not “novels” in either the Western or the traditional Chinese sense (i.e., *zhanghui xiaoshuo* or “multi-chapter fiction”). The cities can be the key topic or setting for *biji* works, such as *Dongjing menghua lu* (The dream splendor of the Eastern Capital) or *Yangzhou huafanglu* (The flowery boats of Yangzhou). But as a whole, cities do not constitute a central or dominant trope in traditional Chinese literature. The only exception may be what is called “urban popular literature,” a much used and abused epithet that requires further contextualization. The term arises from a query: if the rise of the cities signified an early modern form of urban development—thriving commercial activity and, since the Ming period (1368–1644), increasing consumerism—can we find an appropriate genre of literature that catered to the taste of the urban population? Latter-day scholars have used the term “vernacular literature” (*suwenxue* or *tongsu wenxue*) to describe essentially a form of oral storytelling whose birthplace was supposed to be the city. The linguistic hallmark of this new genre is the omniscient voice of an oral narrator whose persona was attributed to the anonymous oral storytellers in the urban market place. The language used was the vernacular idiom (*baihua*), instead of the classical literary language (*wenyan*). However, this theory of the rise of urban popular literature—itsself a hypothesis advanced by a number of pioneering scholars such as Jaroslav Prušek (Prušek 1974, pp. 259–298)—has been subject to debate and revision. To what extent is the *huaben* (or “prompt books”) an authentic written record of the oral mode? Recent scholars like Patrick Hanan and Wilt Idema have shown that the oral storytelling mode was itself a written form to begin with, which merely “simulates” the oral mode in its narration. It is a formulaic device used to great effect by the known or unknown writers/compiler of such stories who drew materials from diverse written as well as oral sources (Hanan 1981; Idema 1974). Gradually, as the form matured, such imitative oral devices became less

pronounced. In short, traditional urban popular fiction was basically a variant genre of written literature.

Can we then still speak of an urban literature that in content truly reflected the culture of the city? The vernacular stories did become increasingly popular in the Yuan and Ming dynasties (thirteenth to seventeenth centuries) together with drama and other performing arts. They were sometimes lumped together under the broad category of *xiaoshuo* (literarily “small talk”). Hence, “fiction” is really not an appropriate term to describe this cluster of mixed vernacular works whose official status remained low when compared with classical poetry and formal prose. Nor can we say that their contents reflected a world of urban life totally different or cut off from the rural countryside. The city is represented by a number of scenic spots like the West Lake of Hangzhou, famous historical landmarks like pagodas and temples, Buddhist or Daoist monasteries, and taverns and teahouses. These signposts can serve as narrative “chronotopes” in plot development but do not constitute a cultured universe of its own. For while a city can be known by a famous site—such as Hangzhou for its West Lake and Suzhou for its Hanshan Temple—other famous sites may also be found in towns and villages. The Chinese word for “city” (*cheng*) can also mean “town,” and the two often appear as a pair (*cheng-xiang*). Indeed, Mote’s “continuum” thesis finds its expression in such terminologies.

As mentioned earlier, the description of urban culture can be found in *biji* works, especially those with a nostalgic hue like the *Dongjing menghua lu*, written in the Southern Song dynasty after the loss of the Eastern capital (present-day Kaifeng) to the barbarians. A visual parallel can be found in the famous rolled painting “Qingming shanghe tu” (The river scene at the Qingming Festival) that shows a panoramic scene crowded with shops and people. However, even in this pictorial depiction the street scene does not necessarily pinpoint the uniqueness of urban life except for the hustle and bustle of its crowd. The human figures are not dressed any more differently than the rural figures in landscape paintings. In other pictorial representations of the urban scene, what stand out are the shop signs but not building structures, monuments, or thoroughfares. This is perhaps because “monumentality” is not considered an essential feature of the city in Chinese culture. The only hallmark of its separation from the countryside is the city gates, which open and close at designated hours.

We can only illustrate the above remarks with a few examples from Ming—Qing fiction (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries). Take, for example, the tale “Pearl-Sewn Shirt,” probably the most well-known story in the Ming “*Sanyan*” collections. (Birch 1994) The hero is an itinerant jewel merchant who leaves his newly wed wife in order to travel to other cities in the south for trade. His well-provided urban residence in Xiangyang (a *xian* or township) becomes the setting of an elaborate scheme of seduction of the young wife by another merchant with the help of a conniving old woman as a go-between. In the second half of the story, the two men meet by chance at another city (Suzhou) and become fast friends. The lover shows an intimate

gift from his mistress, a pearl-sewn shirt, which originally belongs to the husband. The plot develops into a complex web of entanglements involving the two couples (the other merchant also has a wife) before reaching the final denouement in which the first couple is reunited. All of these is made possible by a series of shifting settings: an urban marketplace where the lover engages the go-between, the festivities outside the house which attract the wife as she opens the window and looks outside, only to be seen by the prospective lover, and a tavern on the road where the two men meet, etc. Yet these sites do not conjure up the splendor of the city as the center attraction in the characters' quotidian lives. Rather, the hero travels across a landscape of cities and towns, all thriving with commercial life. Historians like Timothy Brook have shown that indeed travel and tourism had become very popular during the last century of the Ming period (1550–1644) as commerce and consumerism prospered (Brook 1999, pp. 153–237).

As the above story illustrates, the merchant can indeed be a central character in traditional Chinese literature. But more often than not the protagonists in such stories are literary scholars (*caizi*) who become entangled with courtesan beauties (*jiaren*). In other words, the traditional elite of the scholar officials continued to set the cultural standard in both city and countryside. As members of the rural gentry, they nevertheless liked to enjoy the comfort of city life by building artificial gardens for their residences in some of the most prosperous cities in the Yangtze area. The leisurely lifestyle they sought to emulate was still modeled after the pastoral ideal of rural life. These gardens were filled with carefully arranged rocks (miniature mountains), plants, flowers, streams, ponds, and bridges that concealed the opulence of the interior residences. This ideal of the “garden in the city”, with its attendant site of the “backyard garden” (*hou huayuan*), provided a convenient setting for numerous stories of amorous encounters in late Ming literature. In a way, it can be said that the world inside the garden residence is separated from the outside city and constitutes an idealized pastoral world of its own.

The most celebrated of Chinese novels, *The Dream of the Red Chamber* (“*Honglou meng*”; also called *The Story of the Stone*), produced in the early eighteenth century, continued this urban–pastoral tradition and provides an exceptional example. The city in which the bulk of the story takes place is Nanjing, but the world in which the young hero and heroine (Baoyu and Daiyu) live together with a host of maids and servants is a specially constructed Garden of Grand Vision. It is an aesthetic world in which time seems to stand still and life goes on according to a mythic and cyclical pattern of the seasons. The Garden is certainly *not* a microcosm of the city; on the contrary, its ethereal beauty and splendor sets it apart from the ugliness and squalor of the outside world. There is a marvelous episode (Chapter 6) describing the visit of a distant relative from the countryside called Gannie Liu, who is ushered into this paradisaical world of splendor and elegance (Cao 1973). At the novel's end, however, it is the country abode of this rural bumpkin that offers a haven of escape for some of the maids as the House of Jia eventually falls. The Garden, therefore, proves to be a land of illusion, not reality. On the other hand, an antecedent work to which *The*

Dream of the Red Chamber is indebted, *Jin-Ping-Mei* (The Plum in the Golden Vase) offers a graphically realistic portrait of domestic life in the urban household of a merchant, the novel's antihero, whose sexual trysts with three women provide the nexus of action. (Roy 2015). Since the hero is a merchant whose commercial and sexual activities are intertwined, the reader is offered a full exposé not only of his moral depravity but also of the materialistic aspects of city life down to the smallest detail such as the price of daily goods. But nowhere can we find any clues, thematic or otherwise, about the geography of the city itself (presumably a market town in Shandong attributed to the Song dynasty), which can be blamed as the source of decadence and evil. On the contrary, the author makes the hero Ximen Qing die in sexual excess as a matter of moral retribution, according to the prevailing belief, a blend of popular Buddhism and Confucianism.

In fact, none of the so-called six masterworks of the classic Chinese novel (the other four being *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Water Margin*, *Journey to the West*, and *The Scholars*) written from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, can be called “urban novels”—in spite of the historical fact that this was the period of the rise of urban culture and at least half a dozen cities were large enough to be called metropolises. In my view, as far as the Chinese literary tradition is concerned, the Mote thesis still holds. However, the situation began to change in the late Qing period with the rise of Shanghai.

SHANGHAI IN LATE QING FICTION

The transition from tradition to modernity in China can definitely be traced to the late Qing period (roughly 1890–1910). By this time, the Western imperial powers, particularly Great Britain, had already made their presence felt. The Opium Wars (1839–1860) had already opened up a number of treaty ports on the China coast and along the Yangtze River. Shanghai obviously occupied central place due to its geographical location and its commercial potential. The British lost no time in developing the city, especially its “concession”—called an International Settlement—into a cosmopolitan metropolis unlike any other Chinese city, even among the treaty ports. By the end of the Qing dynasty, Shanghai had become the largest center of publishing that produced a large corpus of novels and translations. The form of such works remained traditional: most of them are written in vernacular prose in a loosely organized multi-chapter structure containing a host of diverse characters whose different experiences constitute the plot. While Shanghai does not fully occupy center stage, it does provide the main setting. The typical plot of such works (for instance, *Shanghai youcan ji* or “An Excursion of Shanghai”) begins with a couple of rural figures who travel to Shanghai and are confronted by the full array of Western material culture—from newly constructed Western-style buildings, streets and thoroughfares with street lamps, Western banks on the Bund, restaurants, and hotels, horse-racing courses, to Victorian-style clothing and furniture, clocks and watches. While they are dazzled by such a spectacle, they cannot participate fully in its enjoyment. Rather, these rural *flâneurs* typically stay in a Chinese

tavern (instead of a Western hotel) and visit the popular playground *Dashijie* (The Great World) for the Chinese with its vaudeville shows and distorting mirrors at the entrance. Occasionally, they would venture into a Western restaurant and try out knives and forks and have a Western drink—only to make fools of themselves.

On the surface, the plot satirizes the protagonists as country bumpkins, but no longer from any high moral ground. For such new and unprecedented experiences mark a distinct break with their rural world, and some of the characters choose to stay in Shanghai. A set of new urban values and habits (often seen as vices) set in, which contrast sharply with the rural ones. The central figure that lures such rural males into urban decadence is the Shanghai courtesan.

As Catherine Yeh has studied in great detail, this urban figure embodies both the old and the new (Yeh 2006). The Shanghai courtesan is among the first to add elements of Western material culture to the interior décor of her boudoir and to flaunt a lifestyle that mixes Chinese tradition with Western modernity. The photos of courtesans dressed in traditional clothing often appeared on the front covers of popular magazines. Their daily rides in horse-drawn Western-style carriages along the streets adjacent to the Bund were featured in guidebooks as well as novels. Their clients and admirers saw themselves as male reflections of the “courtesan trope”—as frustrated men of letters living in the twilight of transition from the old to the new.

A literary example can be found in the novel *Haishang hualie zhuan* (Flowers of Shanghai 1892) by Han Bangqing, which was written entirely in the local Shanghai dialect. The work, made famous by Eileen Chang in her vernacular rewriting, begins with a brother and sister couple from the countryside who come to Shanghai to find jobs. As the plot progresses, the city of Shanghai as an alien and alienating environment is depicted in a series of encounters and new experiences. Again modern material novelties occupy center stage: electricity, telegraph, running water, modern vehicles (rickshaws, horse-drawn carriages, ships at the harbor), gas lights along the streets and in front of shops, mirror-stands in the boudoir, Western-style rattan chairs, and in one scene, a glass tray of fruits, candies, and milk cookies from the foreign companies. The main content of the novel deals with courtesan life in this city of *shili yangchang*, (literally “ten *li* of foreign field”) and their amorous affairs with minor officials, merchants, as well as other members of the lower social strata. The two protagonists, a brother and sister pair, find themselves embroiled in the courtesan world with tragic consequences: at the end of the novel, the impoverished brother becomes a rickshaw puller and the sister becomes a prostitute. What makes the novel unique, however, lies in its realistic description of courtesan life down to the smallest detail. They are described as rootless and cut off from their rural origins. Behind their glamorous world looms the shadow of a modern metropolis in the making, a world beyond the comprehension of these petty men and women. It is through such a portraiture of Shanghai that we find a major shift in the paradigm of the “rural–urban continuum”: the modern Shanghai is a metropolis that stands out *against* the world of rural China. Gradually, the rural immigrants in Shanghai, especially the successful ones, became urban dwellers who flaunted a

sophisticated Shanghai lifestyle (*haipai*) and looked down on the country folks from the provinces and from other cities, including Beijing.

In late Qing fiction, *Flowers of Shanghai* also occupies a unique place. It was written relatively early (1892); its literary merits were discovered some 30 years later. While the novel's courtesan world was imitated in other works, it did not form the central trope of all late Qing fiction. The more famous works all include scenes and episodes involving the courtesan, but the background landscape encompasses both city and countryside—however, with some notable differences from the late Ming mode. Shanghai has assumed the centripetal position that pulls the characters and their experiences to the city.

Take, for instance, a novel published a decade later by Li Boyuan, a writer and magazine editor with prodigious talent and output. *Wenming xiaoshi* “A brief history of civilization” (was first serialized in Li's own magazine *Xiuxiang xiaoshuo* (Illustrated Fiction) in 1906). There is a hilarious episode of two country bumpkins who come to Shanghai for visit and adventure but are made to look and act like fools. The author adopts a gently satirical “low mimetic mode” and pokes fun at a gallery of characters who emerged in this era of “New Reform” of the 1900s as the Qing court was forced to adopt new policies to appease both the foreign powers and its own population. Yet it is precisely these new “fools” who eagerly adapt themselves to foreign customs and who form the backbone of the new reform movement. The author, a conservative who reluctantly supports the reform, finds himself in a paradoxical bind. Still, despite the unevenness of its narration and implied contradictions of its value system, the novel gives an indelible portrait of China in social commotion. The entire Yangtze River area from Wuhan to Shanghai fills the novel's canvas, and a host of new characters appear on the scene: they are all what may be called “in-between” figures—agents for foreign firms, merchants in Shanghai who seem at ease in dealing with foreigners, bungling provincial officials who are forced to acquire “new learning,” and above all the new professional species of interpreters in the service of these officials. As a genuine “in-between” figure, the interpreter is foisted onto center stage and becomes the novel's real “hero.” Naturally, his background is connected with Hong Kong and Shanghai, the two East Asian commercial outposts of the British Empire. Despite the author's mistrust of the interpreter's linguistic expertise, it is the escapades of this new hero (or antihero) that drive the narrative toward its abrupt ending. We are given the impression that despite the gathering storm of political upheaval and uncertainty, Chinese society was transforming itself in unprecedented ways. It would take a Chinese Balzac or Dickens to give us a sense of *totality* of such a changing world centered around the new metropolis of Shanghai.

THE REPUBLICAN ERA

The legacy of the late Qing novel described above was carried over into the Republican era (1912–1949) owing to the fact that the popular literary journals in which they were serialized continued to prosper. To this were

added the “literary supplements” in some of the leading newspapers such as *Shenbao*, in which a miscellany of subjects—satirical commentary on current events, essays, and poetry written in the classical style as well as stories—appeared to cater to the urban readership. The spiritual figure was Liang Qichao, the late Qing intellectual who spearheaded the trend of using newspapers to propagate new ideas. Liang in fact wrote an incomplete novel called *Xin Zhongguo weilai ji* (Record of the future of the New China), which includes a chapter (presumably written by another person) devoted to Shanghai. Again the same satirical trope of country bumpkins visiting this foreign-looking metropolis is featured. Liang had wished to lift the status of the novel and invest its content with a political high purpose. As an intellectual leader and elitist in his literary taste, he had underestimated its popular appeal and entertainment value.

Indeed, it was this popular genre of fiction—known as the “Saturday School” of “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies” fiction that gives us the first glimpse of Western-style modernity as it enters into the everyday lives of urban dwellers in the treaty ports. Zhou Shiujuan, one of the leading practitioners of this genre, was also among the first to embrace Hollywood movies and even incorporate some elements of its plot and visual perspective into his own stories (Chen 2003). While Zhou’s attitude toward such foreign subjects was basically favorable, another popular writer, Zhang Henshui, who set his novels in both Shanghai and Beijing, was far less so. His most well-known work, *Tixiao yinyuan* (Romance of tears and laughter), which is set in Beijing, puts his protagonist, a young urban man, between two contrasting females: a country girl lost in the city who embodies the virtues of purity and moral rectitude and an urban sophisticate who loves to go to embassy balls and indulge in Western-style comfort. We know from the beginning where the author’s sympathy lies, yet at the end it is the urban woman who gets the man. In another work, *Pinghu tongche* (The Peking-Shanghai express), Zhang goes a step further by describing all the dangers in a train trip, which includes a female thief. There cannot be a more blatant form of animosity toward modernity.

The New Culture movement known as the May Fourth Movement (1917–23) was supposed to usher in a new literature written in the modern vernacular that reflected modern sensibilities. However, in spite of its leaders’ championship of “total Westernization,” May Fourth literature did not take a “modernist turn” as in Western Europe around the same time. The principal theme of May Fourth fiction was an obsession with rural China, not the urban counterpart, despite the fact that Beijing was the intellectual birthplace of the Movement and Shanghai its publishing center. Instead of the city, it was the rural village and town that became the prototypical setting in May Fourth fiction. Lu Xun’s early stories such as “Kung Yiji,” “My Home-town,” “The New-Year Sacrifice,” and “The True Story of Ah Q” were all modeled after the author’s own hometown, which was portrayed as a rather bleak world of social inequality and rural superstition. In works by other writers, the hometown image is invoked either as a site of poverty and ignorance to which the urban intellectual returns temporarily in order to

enlighten the villagers without success (for instance, *School Teacher Ni Huanzhi* by Ye Shaojin) or as a site of oppression seething with unrest (stories by Wu Zuxiang). The representation of the countryside became increasingly a projection of their uneasiness in the cities as they were caught between nostalgia for the rural past and a forward-looking ideology in which the countryside was seen as backward and in need of reform or revolution. Thus “regionalism” entered the literary landscape. The term refers to a deep attachment to the rural region or locality—the writer’s own place of origin—which is depicted with all the scenic and human particularities by its writers who have left the region. Even in the stories of Shen Congwen, set mostly in the rural region of West Hunan, one finds a mythic quality that David Wang has called “imagined nostalgia” in his portraiture (Wang 1992). In Shen’s artfully created regional universe of the *Border Town*, the story’s ending gives us a clear reminder that it cannot last; the arrival of the forces of modernity spells its doom.

What happens to the city in May Fourth literature? Lao She’s novel, *Luotuo Xiangzi* (translated as *Rickshaw Boy*), provides an intriguing example (Lao She/Goldblatt 2010). As a writer grown up in Beijing, Lao She portrays his hometown as a “knowable community” full of rural characters, including the protagonist Xiangzi, a rickshaw puller. The only “urban” figure is a professor who sympathies with Xiangzi’s plight. As the story unfolds, Xiangzi’s world is slowly deteriorating as he encounters all kinds of misfortune. In one episode, he finds himself acquiring a camel outside the city gates and then losing it, for the world outside proves even more chaotic. What makes it so and why is such an honest hardworking man reduced into a social outcast? Herein lies Lao She’s own deep-seated ambivalence “between his declared love for the cultured city of old Beijing and his manifest nostalgia for the idyllic countryside, between his suspicion of Western values and his critique of Chinese weaknesses” (Zhang 1996, p. 99). In fact, Lao She’s evocation of old Beijing and its residents has all the qualities of the idyllic countryside. It should be pointed out that Lao She was by no means a traditional intellectual. With his earlier residence in London and his manifest interest in the fiction of Joseph Conrad, he was fully aware that his espousal of old Beijing values in the life of Xiangzi could only be a symbolic gesture. That idyllic world was already penetrated by the forces of modernity, so the story can only end in tragedy.

As is well known, Beijing writers like Lao She and Shen Congwen took an adverse attitude toward Shanghai. In their eyes, this cosmopolitan metropolis could only offer the glossy image of a fake foreign “vanity fair.” Shen Congwen in fact wrote a devastating critique in the form of a fictional fantasy by transporting Lewis Carroll’s heroine in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* to China—the “wonderland” being of course Shanghai, the target of Shen’s scathing satire. Though not typical of Shen’s style and not entirely successful, the novel did signal the rivalry between the so-called Beijing School (*jingpai*) and Shanghai “schools” (*haipai*). If the Beijing school writers preferred to write about rural values and issues, Shanghai writers were by no means united in their devotion to

their own city. The very “foreignness” of its urban culture, which had appeared to an earlier generation of late Qing popular writers as an exotic harbinger of a new brand of “*wenming*” or modern “civilization,” was now affecting the post-May Fourth writers in a different way. Western modernity was no longer a matter of exotic curiosity but a physical presence. To what extent did this “semicolonial” environment affect their Chinese identity and their writing? (Shih 2001: Chapter 1) Beginning in the 1930s, a few Shanghai writers began to tackle the city in ways that are radically new and different from the May Fourth mode.

MAO DUN’S MIDNIGHT

Ziye (*Midnight*, written in 1930–1931 and first published in 1932) by the renowned leftist writer Mao Dun can be considered the first long novel in modern Chinese literature. The 500-odd page work is also the first full-fledged portrait of Shanghai from a modern Marxist perspective. Despite its ideological pretensions and stylistic flaws (Hsia 1961, pp. 140–164), the work merits our special attention.

Subtitled “A Romance of China, 1930,” the novel was intended to use Shanghai as a microcosm of China at the time. Mao Dun’s original design was to write a three-part novel—of which *Midnight* was merely the first—that encompassed the entire Chinese society, both urban and rural. That he decided to begin with the urban part and never managed to write the rest bespeaks the significance of the city over the countryside as the central marker of Chinese modernity, at least in his mind. It was also supposed to show, in light of his newly acquired knowledge of Marxism, the inevitable decline of the forces of rural feudalism in the face of capitalism and Western imperialism. The scope of vision was grand indeed. However, as the implied meaning of his pen name Mao Dun (literally “contradiction”; his real name: Shen Yanbin) indicates, the author is caught in a “contradiction” of his own in literary execution. To fulfill his ideological purpose, Mao Dun puts into the foreground his protagonist Wu Sunfu, a native capitalist whose grandiose ambition of building a financial empire is eventually thwarted through the stock market by his archenemy, an artful “comprador” capitalist working for Western interests. Wu’s tragedy signifies the eventual triumph of Western capitalism and the victimization of the native bourgeoisie. How to paint this grand canvas of economic conflict? As a declared realist who was also interested in French Naturalism, Mao Dun chose to fill his fictional canvas with a gallery of characters whose final “dance of death” on the Shanghai stage provides the central drama of the plot. Mao Dun was convinced that urban China at that time was just entering into a capitalist phase of economic development; the full revolutionary power of the proletariat was yet to come. So at this stage of historical development the bourgeoisie was destined to occupy center stage. So he gave primary roles to them and described in great detail their lifestyle of aimless decadence. This presumably negative portrait of the Shanghai bourgeoisie, however, brings out the full force of Mao Dun’s technique of description, in

comparison with which the novel's central thesis—the clash between native industrial capitalism and Western financial capitalism—pales in significance. In other words, the novel's ideological intent and design is sabotaged by the author's fidelity to fictional realism.

In focusing fully on the urban setting of Shanghai, Mao Dun also pays meticulous attention to the modern sight and sound of this metropolis. Especially in the novel's first chapter, a magnificent spectacle of the Shanghai Bund emerges:

The sun had just sunk below the horizon and a gentle breeze caressed one's face... Under a sunset-mottled sky, the towering framework of the Garden Bridge was mantled in a gathering mist... Looking east, one could see the warehouses of foreign firms on the waterfront of Pootung like huge monsters crouching in the gloom, their lights twinkling like countless eyes. To the west, one saw with a shock of wonder on the roof of a building a gigantic Neon sign in flaming red and phosphorescent green: LIGHT, HEAT, POWER. (The last three words appeared originally in English). (Mao Dun / Shapiro 1979, p. 1)

We can read this passage as a paradoxical evocation of the materialistic force of modernity (as epitomized by the three English words), which is set against a twilight sky, in order to bring the metaphor home: it would soon be engulfed by the forces of darkness, that is, foreign capitalism and imperialism. Still, the spectacle of material splendor that awaits the visit of Wu Sunfu's father proves too overwhelming for the old country "gentleman" (*shishen*). As the old man was driven in a 1930 Chevrolet sedan through the streets of the Bund, the shock was enough to cause his instant death. This magnificent first chapter of the novel, which serves as a prologue, thus ushers in the ensuing drama (or melodrama). The first few chapters are suffused with emblems of Shanghai's modern material culture—cars, electric lights and fans, radios, Western-style dresses, mansions and furniture, guns, cigars, perfume, high-heeled shoes, beauty parlors, etc. They evoke a world of cosmopolitan sight and sound, the like of which had seldom been depicted in previous works of Chinese literature. The narrative is also charged with a constant flow of eroticism. The women characters, such as the sexually promiscuous socialite Xu Manli, is given special attention. Mao Dun describes her in a florid style bordering on purple prose. Her body is fully displayed not only to arouse male desire (as Manli dances and cavorts with her male admirers in Chapter 17) but also as commodity in collusion with Wu Sunfu's stock market adventures. Mao Dun borrows from a Naturalist ploy to make Wu release his animal instinct and rape his maid at the final moment of his financial collapse (Lee 2006, p. 689).

The bulk of the novel's second part is devoted to the urban workers' failed strike and the financial maneuvers in the stock market. Here Mao Dun proved to be a layman. Obviously, despite serious effort of research, he was not familiar with the proletarian world, nor was he able to portray their deep sense of *ressentiment*. Herein lies perhaps another "contradiction" between

the author's intention and his fictional realization. One need not recall Lukács's famous theory of the novel to see the point (Lukács 1974). Much depends on the writer's power of description and narration. In fact, the novel invites comparison with a similar work published roughly at the same time by the Japanese novelist Yokomitsu Reiichi, called simply *Shanghai*, in which the description of the worker's riot in a textile factory like a tidal wave of seething humanity is far more successful. One can also compare Mao Dun's novel to Malraux's *Man's Fate* (*La condition humaine*) to find another evocation of the city in revolution in 1927 (although Malraux had never set foot in Shanghai). Both works by foreign authors (especially Malraux) excel by style and language at a certain expense of realistic authenticity. Still, Mao Dun's bold vision and grand portrait of the city and its Chinese characters has left its imprint as a landmark of urban fiction in the history of modern Chinese literature.

THE NEO-SENSATIONALISTS

The flag carriers of modern urban fiction are the so-called Neo-Sensationalists—a Japanese term (*shin kangaku kai*) introduced by Liu Na'ou from Japan in the late 1920s. Liu was born in Taiwan but spent most of his adult years in Japan, where he acquired a taste for the urban chic and artistic avant-garde prevalent in Japan and subsequently translated some stories by writers of the Japanese "Neo-Sensationalist" school, especially the aforementioned Yokomitsu Reiichi. Liu was especially interested in the cinema and later became a filmmaker himself. The imprint of his Japanese literary experience and his accumulated knowledge of cinematic technique is everywhere in evidence in his short stories—collected under the title of *Dushi fengjingxian* (Metropolitan landscapes)—which evoke the urban landscape of Shanghai as exotic fantasy dominated by foreign-looking *femme-fatales*. The display of the female body (the prototype derived from Hollywood stars like Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford) and its too obvious equation with Western commodities (e.g., automobiles, Camel cigarettes, etc.) gives these stories a blatant charge of eroticism as well as a modernistic penchant for time and speed. However, Liu's evocation of the urban world is too fantastic to be believable. True, as in the case of Western literary modernism, the metropolis can be "unreal" and serve as "the source of fleeting impressions registered by fluid states of consciousness" (Timms and Kelley 1985, p. 4), which was the original claim of the theory of Neo-Sensationalism. But it requires a visual technique in which Liu was deficient. His stories betray a formulaic shallowness that at repeated reading grows tiresome. The typical plot always involves a romantic encounter of the male narrator with a fantastically seductive "modern girl." He follows her in futile pursuit that sometimes turns into a love triangle. (The formula is itself borrowed from Paul Morand, Liu's favorite French author.) The sites of Shanghai—bars, dance halls, hotels, racecourse, etc.—serve merely as background props for such encounters.

The one unifying feature lies in Liu's total fascination with and devotion to the metropolis in all its decadent glory.

Despite Liu's minor canonical status as one of the pioneers of Chinese modernism, he must be considered an inferior writer when compared with his junior colleague, Mu Shiying. On the surface, Mu's stories seem like carbon copies of Liu's, with the same cast of urban characters and staged scenes. Like Liu, he plays up the typical trope of the male–female encounter by endowing the femme-fatale figure with even more predatory power, who treats the male protagonists as “playthings.” Yet Mu's style is far more inventive. In his own way, he experiments with a variety of modernistic techniques: interior monologues, a form of stream of consciousness marked by long sentences without punctuation marks, and “loop” paragraphs with repeated sentences. He totally disregards the realistic convention of linear narration by focusing on the reconfigured space of the dance hall as the main trope of his stories, in which episodes of human pathos are played out. Two of his most famous stories stand out as representative works: “Five Characters in a Nightclub” and “Shanghai Foxtrot.” In the first story, the action takes place in one afternoon and evening on 6 April 1932. To capture the mood of the city at night, he uses intentionally words marked by color followed by materialistic signifiers (advertisements and shop names):

Red streets, green streets, blue streets, purple streets . . . City clad in strong colors! Dancing neon light—multicolored waves, scintillating waves, colorless waves—a sky filled with color. The sky now had everything; wine, cigarettes, high-heels, clock-towers . . .

Try White Horse whisky! Chesterfield cigarettes are kind to the smoker's throat.

Alexander's Shoestore, Johnson's Bar, Laslo's Tobacco Shop, Dizzy's Music World, chocolate and candy shops, the Empire Cinema, Hamilton Travel Agency . . .

Swirling, endlessly swirling neon lights. (Mu 2014, p. 43)

This passage betrays obviously Mu's indebtedness to Liu Na'ou, especially in the listing of brand names. Yet, Mu's style is also freer and more densely imagistic by purposefully showing an overabundance of Western goods and signs. Under the burden of such a spectacle, the fate of the five human characters is predetermined (beaten by life). His conscious use of film technique is also evident. One could compare this passage with the beginning montage sequence of the film *Malu tianshi* (Street Angel) produced around the same time (1937), an acknowledged masterpiece that treats the lives of a group of lower-class characters from a leftist perspective. Unlike Mu's fiction, the film throws a totally negative light on Shanghai by night.

“Shanghai Foxtrot” is probably Mu's best known and most accomplished story. Here Mu's stylistic experiment is even bolder. Instead of repeating words, he repeats sentences by arranging them in a circular loop structure, in

which the entire sequence is reversed at the end. The story opens with a panoramic “long shot”:

Shanghai. A heaven built upon a hell!

West Shanghai: a large moon climbs the sky, shines over a vast field. Ashen field, blanketed with silver-grey moonlight, inlaid with deep-grey shadows of trees and row upon row of farmhouses. On the field, steel rails draw a bowline, following the sky out to the horizon. (Mu 2014, p. 105)

The two quotes from the two stories invite comparison with the opening paragraph of Mao Dun’s *Midnight*, which likewise invokes neon signs of “light, heat, power.” But Mu is not a realist with a grandiose historical design but an expressionist who plays with imagistic style. It is perhaps not by accident that the two writers from totally different ideological persuasions would attempt to capture Shanghai as an urban universe by itself, without any rural connections. They both put on stage a cast of characters from the Chinese bourgeoisie. Though Mu’s stories remain fragments, he clearly intended them (especially “Shanghai Foxtrot”) as part of an intended long novel to be called “China 1931” (Mu 1933: Preface, 3), which he never managed to write. His design, as evidenced in these two stories, would not be temporal, by marking the historical development of Shanghai at a specific historical stage as in *Midnight*, but spatial, by capturing simultaneously a cross-section of people and their fate caught in a specific year. Perhaps, he also intended the novel to be a challenge to Mao Dun’s. Whatever it might be, we can surmise from Mu’s stories as a whole that his attitude to the city was far more ambiguous than Liu Na’ou’s, and did not want merely to paint a picture of urban glory. Under the phantasmagoric lights and shadows of a self-alienating world, the human characters can only become masked “Pierrots,” for whom the city stands as “a heaven built upon a hell.”

Shih Zhecun, who first spotted Mu’s talent and published his story “Shanghai Foxtrot” in his journal, *Xiandai* (Les contemporaines), has been associated with Mu and Liu under the same “Neo-Sensationalist” umbrella, but vehemently denied the title. He has a prodigious knowledge of West and literature and draws his creative inspiration from them. The stories set in Shanghai have none of the neon-lit glamor of nightlife. Rather the urban sites are used to probe the psychological depths of repressed sexuality of his characters, both male and female. The story “At the Paris Cinema” is told entirely by the male narrator in a stream of conscious monologue—a technique derived not from Virginia Woolf but Arthur Schnitzler (specifically *Lieutenant Gustl*, which Shi had translated)—who details his psychological reactions to every move of his female companion in the darkened theater. Shi never likes to write about women as *femme-fatales* but rather focuses on portraits of gentle feminine lure. As shown in the collection *Shan nüren xingping* (Exemplary conduct of virtuous women), his women characters are cast in a mold of gentle femininity reminiscent of

literary figures from classical Chinese literature. They, nevertheless, are placed in the urban milieu of Shanghai and have to cope with its modern demands. Thus, tradition and modernity interact with each other in ways that cannot be easily categorized.

Still, Shi considered himself an urban writer with an avid interest in European avant-garde (as revealed to me during our interviews), who characterized his work as revolving around three major themes: the erotic, fantastic, and grotesque. In the chapter devoted to him in my book, *Shanghai Modern*, I left out the “grotesque” (a term that came originally from the Japanese literary scene in the 1920s) and adopted a framework of the “urban uncanny” in order to fit his work into the spectrum of urban writing in Shanghai in the 1930s (Lee 1999, pp. 181–185). One can easily find aspects of the “grotesque” in Shi’s historical tales: “The General’s Head” and “Shi Xiu,” which have nothing to do with the city. In the former story, Shi treats the “grotesque” as an aspect of surrealism; in the latter, it becomes a form of sadomasochism. Both contain fantastic and erotic elements. In his urban stories, however, Shi adopts a different strategy by placing the protagonist, a male urbanite, on a journey from the city to the country. The “uncanny” incidents encountered in the countryside represent an interesting twist to Freud’s theory: while the urban environment that has its uncanny elements, it is the countryside that “demonizes” the urban dweller and makes him “unhomed” (*unheimlich*). In the story “Demonic Way,” for instance, the *femme-fatale* takes the grotesque face of an old woman who suddenly emerges on the train and continues to haunt the narrator as he visits his friends in the countryside. In “Yakusha,” the demented protagonist finds himself lost in a shady countryside in pursuit of a ghostly woman. In both stories the urban narrator, once outside the city, becomes a victim of the “uncanny” forces beyond his control and becomes mentally deranged. Thus, the countryside becomes the abode of the force of darkness that triggers the mental illness of the urbanite. In so doing, the classical ideal of the “rural–urban continuum” is broken. Shi as a modernist has succeeded in reversing the old value priorities of the Chinese literature in which rural values continue to dominate narratives of urban life.

If literary modernism can only stem from the culture of the city, as has been theorized in numerous books, the three writers discussed above can indeed be singled out as China’s early pioneers of modernism (together with a few poets such as Dai Wangshu, Xu Chi, and Luyishi, who were all contributors to the journal *Les contemporaines* under Shi Zhecun’s editorship). Yet their careers were all cut short by the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War. They either consciously turned away from creative writing in the modernist mode (Shi) or moved to other careers (both Liu and Mu worked for the Japanese as editors and filmmakers, hence treated as “traitors”). As the city of Shanghai itself fell to the Japanese, a decade of urban literature also seemed to come to an end—until the young Eileen Chang emerged on the literary scene in occupied Shanghai in the early 1940s and carried the image of her beloved city to new artistic heights.

SHANGHAI IN EILEEN CHANG'S FICTION

My book *Shanghai Modern* devoted a whole chapter to Eileen Chang under the subtitle: "Romances in a Fallen City" (Lee 1999, Chap 8). When I wrote it, I did not really expect that Chang's posthumous fame would continue to rise across the pan-Chinese regions of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Mainland China; one can indeed call this phenomenon an "Eileen Chang Fever." With the success of Ang Lee's film, *Lust/Caution* (2007) based on Chang's story and the appearance of English translations of her works (Chang 2007), her literary reputation has reached international proportions. Does it signify that Chang's unique urban sensibility somehow has captured the imagination of a changed nation and world?

As is well known, Chang was a Shanghailander who was devoted to her city throughout her entire life, even after she left China in the early 1950s and lived in exile in the USA. What has caused her obsession with Shanghai? One thing is clear: Chang definitely chose *not* to follow the footsteps of the Neo-Sensationalists. Rather, she admitted to a certain literary debt to the vernacular fiction of the Butterfly School, and in fact "translated" the dialect-tinged novel *Flowers of Shanghai* into modern Mandarin. The masters of the Butterfly School such as Zhou Shoujuan were among the first to spot her talent and publish her stories, but Chang developed her own technique to depict her beloved city. I have argued that Chang had a particular penchant for the small world of everyday life: "It is a world of small public and private spaces—alleys and side streets off the main thoroughfares, dark attics or balconies, rooms in old houses stuffed with old furniture . . ." (Lee 1999, p. 270). In short, it is a world of Shanghai's *xiaoshimin* or "petty urban residents," who may be quite "petty" in their tastes but who show a remarkable gusto and resilience for the kind of urban life in the alley compounds (*nongtang*) with all its pleasures and sorrows—particularly in the perennial rituals of courtship and marriage. It would be impossible in such a world to accommodate dandies and fantastic *femme-fatales* with their extravagant appetites for the automobile and the dance hall. With few exceptions, Shanghai in Eileen Chang's fiction is an exclusively Chinese "lifeworld" in which the residents carry on their daily rituals as if sealed off from the outside world.

One of the distinct hallmarks of Chang's narrative art, as I analyzed in my book, is the adopted posture of a bemused and sophisticated outsider who peeks sympathetically from the outside, often with gentle sarcasm. The insider-as-outsider's privileged position is made possible by Chang's own educational experience in Hong Kong, where she attended the University of Hong Kong as a major in English literature. Her first two stories used Hong Kong as a setting but were dedicated to the readers of her beloved Shanghai. Only occasionally, as in her famous story "Love in a Fallen City," do the two cities meet as the Shanghai heroine travels to Hong Kong to seek her own fortune in marriage. She is immediately transformed into a "gay divorcée" as if in a Hollywood musical. Still, this element of urban sophistication derived from Hong Kong's English colonial culture

provides Chang with a needed perspective with which to observe her Chinese world with a sophisticated cosmopolitan eye.

How can we summarize Chang's image of Shanghai? Her sophisticated writing skill certainly makes it look more local and authentic than the Neo-Sensationalists. But the city is also reduced to a "community" or neighborhood that has none of the elements characteristic of a modern metropolis—anomie, anxiety, solitude, sense of alienation and aimlessness, being lost in a labyrinth, etc. Perhaps, Chang herself wished to give her readers such an image, which also largely avoids or bypasses history. In her last works published posthumously, especially the novel *The Fall of the Pagoda* written in English (Chang 2010), the communal world of Shanghai in her reminiscence is reduced to an enclosed domestic space—her family compound filled with maids and servants. The outside world of the city seems to have disappeared altogether.

Burton Pike has remarked that "the city is, by any definition, a social image. Throughout history, and literary history, it has chiefly represented the idea of community, whatever values might be attached to it in any particular context" (Pike 1981, p. 14). Chang's image of Shanghai can, therefore, be seen as a particular community to which she has attached enormous value. One striking example is a story-like sketch describing her quotidian routine of going to the food-market. As she walks along a familiar street and takes in all the sight and sound of its human ambience, she waxes lyrical and composes a poem. The piece is titled: "Day and Night in China." Here we have another symbolic evocation, a "romance" of China at street level, as it were, in sharp contrast to the grandiose and fantastic images of Shanghai in Mao Dun and the Neo-Sensationalists. Chang's image of Shanghai, either as enclosed domestic space or street scene, certainly does not fit Williams' model of the modern city as a universe of light and darkness. It rather recalls the ancient echoes of classical literature: the paradisaical garden in *The Dream of the Chamber* or the marketplace of the storytellers in a vernacular tale. That a modern Chinese writer with a background of British colonial education would prefer to create a fictional "community" with traditional or semi-modern values whose sights and sounds are deeply familiar bespeaks not so much the persistence of Chinese literary tradition as a paradoxical "inward turn" in the portrait of a modern city that becomes her special appeal.

CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS

Eileen Chang's fiction may be a special case, but it, nevertheless, raises the question of whether modern literature, fiction in particular, must be equated with the cultural values (good or bad) of the modern city. As we look back from now at the long twentieth century of Chinese literature, however, we can only conclude that only in its first half do we find writers in search of various forms of "modernity." The attempts at creating an urban form of literature centered in Shanghai were short-lived and limited to the avant-garde experiments of a few writers. Despite Shanghai's central status as a metropolis *par excellence*, it could and should not be compared to Paris, London, or Berlin. For although

Shanghai as reflected in the fiction of the Neo-Sensationalists appears to be a shining modern universe onto itself beyond the darkening pale of the surrounding countryside, this “semicolonial” metropolis is in a class by itself—so unlike other Chinese cities, even other treaty ports like Tianjin, Amoy, and Wuhan that it cannot be considered representative. The only other city that fully qualifies as its “twin” or “other” is of course colonial Hong Kong. The full flowering of Shanghai’s new urban culture was reached in the 1930s, and thereafter slowly declined, due to the changed circumstances of war and revolution. The ideology of the Chinese Communist Revolution was rooted in rural values. Mao’s famous guerrilla tactic dictated that the forces of the countryside should surround the city, which was regarded as the bastion of moral degradation. It came as no surprise, therefore, that after the People’s Republic was proclaimed in 1949, all modernistic experiments in art and literature were banned in favor of Socialist Realism, whose main trope was the countryside. For some 30 years (1949–1979) the memory of Shanghai’s past glory was totally erased, until its residents rediscovered it in the early 1980s. It led to a wave of collective nostalgia about Old Shanghai, which in turn resulted in a spate of reminiscences, reissues of old journals and photos, as well as scholarly research. But it did not usher in a new trend of urban literature.

Only in the 1990s did a few works begin to appear, of which the most noteworthy was Wang Anyi’s novel, *Changben ge* (A song of everlasting sorrow) (Wang Anyi 2008). The novel was a remarkable achievement by a talented woman writer who was regarded as Eileen Chang’s successor. Wang may have read Chang’s stories, but her image of Shanghai is from an entirely different vantage point. The novel is a chronicle of a woman who has lived through three historical periods: from the late Republican era of the 1940s, through the Communist era of political campaigns, to the post-Mao era of the 1980s. The novel’s temporal scope betrays the author’s reflective stance as someone looking back on the past history of the city as epitomized by the heroine as a beauty queen. But Wang’s urban parable is not nostalgic but ironic, as the heroine meets her pathetic fate under both Socialism and post-Socialism. Tragedy nearly turns into farce: in the new era, lovers of “Old Shanghai” can only become faddish clones.

The novel begins with a chapter on a typical Shanghai alley compound. It seems to be both a tribute to and a critique of Eileen Chang’s fiction. Instead of the street-level coziness and warmth of Chang’s *Gemeinschaft*, Wang adopts a bird’s-eye view as the sparrows fly from the sky into a noisy neighborhood compound. Readers familiar with classical Chinese literature can easily locate the reference in a poem by Liu Yuxi as well as in the novel’s title, which is taken from a famous Bai Juyi ballad. If the ballad title implies the heroine’s sorrowful fate, the poetic reference epitomized in the image of the sparrows brings to mind a changed historical environment. The novel could become an elegiac narrative of the days gone past but for its contemporary parody in the second part of the narrative, which reaches the conclusion that the world of Old Shanghai is gone forever and any effort to “clone” it would be futile.

Meanwhile, since the 1990s Shanghai and a number of other cities—Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Suzhou, Nanjing, as well as Beijing—are also rapidly developing into supermodern cities. The image of “rural China” seems long forgotten since it is abandoned by government policy, which turns villages into cities. Still, contrary to the official urban drive, the best contemporary writers, like the Nobel Prize winner Mao Yan, Yu Hua, Su Tong, Yan Lianke, and others refused to follow in the trail of urban development. Although most of them are city dwellers, they choose to situate their fiction—certainly more critically reflective in content and more inventive in form—in the countryside. As of this writing, there has been no significant trend of “city literature” to emerge on the current literary scene, save for a few isolated works.

One recent and most notable example is *Fanhua* (Blooming flowers), published in 2013, which is set entirely in Shanghai during the 1960s and the 1990s. Jin Yucheng, the author of this bulky work (more than 500 pages), is a Shanghai native who uses the Shanghai dialect for all its characters and expects the reader to read it in a Shanghai cadence. The novel immediately recalls *The Flowers of Shanghai*, first published in 1892, which was also written in the Shanghai dialect. But the quotidian world of the late twentieth century the new novel unfolds is radically different. No more courtesans, to be sure, but its central characters are likewise Shanghai’s “petty urbanites” who live in the city’s old districts. Their intertwining lives and desires are woven into a human fabric that would have appealed to Eileen Chang. The book has won several literary prizes and received much critical attention. Will it lead to a new trend of city writing? Given China’s rapidly changing urban landscapes today, no one can foretell the shape of its literary future.

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A Cinematic Guide to Asian Cities: Taipei, Seoul, and the Cinema of Destruction

Louis Lo

TAIPEI

February 28 Peace Memorial Park (renamed in 1996) is a politicized space as its name refers to a massacre in 1947 (Braester 2010, p. 202), a history recorded in *City of Sadness* (dir. Huo Hsiao-Hsien 1989) but suppressed by the Kuomintang (KMT), which ruled Taiwan after 1949. The site is also associated with a modernist literary text, which serves as the setting for Pai Hsien-yung's novel *Crystal Boys* (1983), a story about a group of young gay men in search of sexual and cultural identities in an era when homosexuality was illegal under the then government regime. Pai also wrote a collection of short stories, *Taipei People* (1971), named after James Joyce's *Dubliners*, depicting people who left China for Taiwan when the government of the Republic of China, that is, the KMT, moved to the island.

The narrator of *Crystal Boys*, Li Qing, who was expelled from high school in 1970 for committing “an immoral act” on campus, ends up joining the gay community in the Taipei New Park:

There are no days in our kingdom, only nights. As soon as the sun comes up, our kingdom goes into hiding, for it is an unlawful nation; we have no government and no constitution, we are neither recognized nor respected by anyone, our citizenry is little more than rabble. (Pai 1995, p. 17)

Their “kingdom,” restricted to the lotus pond in the middle of the park at night is a “hidden, unlawful, tiny state” (18) where the socially and sexually marginalized community gathers. The Park in *Crystal Boys*, located in the city center, is a locus of intensified nostalgic memory and desire for a masculine, if not queer,

identity. Appearing as a subversive space, the Park is in fact a controlled site frequently raided by the police.

Tsai Ming-liang's cinema takes an interest in the representation of the marginalized in Taipei. It is both symbolic and "realistic" at the same time. The motif of water appears frequently as a symbol of desire and memory. It is represented as either in excess as in *The River* (1997) and *The Hole* (1998), or as lacking, as in *The Skywalk is Gone* (2002) and *The Wayward Cloud* (2005) (Sing 2013, p. 84; Ivy Chang 2013, pp. 100–101). In *The River*, Hsiao-kang suffers from neck pain after a cameo appearance in a film production as a corpse floating in a filthy stream. Hsiao-kang (Lee Kang-sheng) and his father share a motorbike when the son suffers from this neck pain and the latter positions it correctly by holding it upright so that the son can drive. There is an illusion of liberation when they are on a moving motorbike. The intimate, if not erotic, spatiality, created in the act of the father and son riding on the same motorbike recurs when they visit a gay bathhouse separately where they end up having sex without recognizing each other. The representation of this homosexual/incestuous encounter echoes the sexual "reunion" of Hsiao-kang with a female school friend (Chen Shiang-chyi) whom he runs into on an escalator in front of the Shin Kong Mitsukoshi department store. The pain in Hsiao-kang's neck can be seen as the incarnation of a *mal*, in both senses of the word, as fever and psychic malady, experienced in the city. The homosexuality in *Crystal Boys* is another name for a nostalgic search for masculine, national, and sexual identity, whereas that in *The River* does not question identity, but is rather a given, an intrinsic element "queering" an ordinary family. But I want to develop an aspect of the social criticism of Taipei as public and private space with the film *Stray Dogs* (2013).

Subtle social criticism of the changes in Taipei's public and private spaces as a result of neoliberalism and consumerism is thematized in *Stray Dogs* (2013). Set in contemporary Taipei, Tsai's film features a sandwich man, Hsiao-kang who, standing in the rain, holds a signboard advertising a new residential development; the new buildings, their sample houses, and the signboard become part of the cityscape in a 2010s Taipei. Ironically the grandiose, high-tech new apartment buildings that Hsiao-kang is supposed to be selling are never shown in the film. We only see their representations and stand-ins, that is, the construction site and the temporary sample house. Hsiao-kang spends an afternoon falling asleep on a luxurious white bed in one of the sample houses. These structures are allegories of the city as they are just built for temporary use: the very idea of destruction is already built into them (Benjamin 1999, p. 13). The city, like the sample house, is there only for the projection of a dream-like consumption "fever" (*mal*).

Wrapped in a minimal but colorful raincoat, Hsiao-kang tries to balance himself in the strong wind and rain. Though his tears are noticeable in an extreme close-up, his recitation and singing of "Man Jiang Hong" is almost inaudible in the city's busy traffic. Through Tsai's static long take, he is shown working, eating, cleaning himself, sleeping, and looking after his kids (a brother

and his toddler sister), who, when their father is working, wander through the city and countryside (as the Chinese title *Jiaoyou*, “Excursion,” suggests) looking for free everyday necessities. These people’s lives are no different from the stray dogs which are fed by two of the female protagonists in a dilapidated urban building. The film title evokes Baudelaire’s “Les bons chiens” (Good Dogs) in *Paris Blues*, where the poet says:

I sing in praise of destitute dogs, under-dogs, whether those who wander all alone through the tortuous ravines and gullies of the vast metropolis, or those who have said to some old outcast, with a wink of their witty, spiritual eyes, “Take me along with you, then perhaps we can make some sort of happiness out of our two poverties.” (245)

In the ruined city, Hsiao-kang survives but does not live, he devours but does not eat. Like “good dogs,” Hsiao-kang and his children are eventually fostered by one woman (it seems she is played by three actresses) who stays in a family sized well-equipped apartment. The peeled walls are symptoms, in Chiang-chyi’s word, of the apartment’s “sickness.” A repeated motif echoing *The River* and *The Hole*, the wall’s texture is visually comparable with that of the abandoned buildings and the frescoes on their surface (on the fresco and the historical significance of the affective reaction of Shiang-chyi, see Sing 2014, pp. 159–183).

The ruin becomes a site where art is exhibited and is viewed by Chiang-chyi and Hsiao-kang alone. The former sheds tears after extended contemplation before the fresco, whereas the latter is only absorbed, metaphorically and literally, into the picture when he is left alone. In the last sequence, “nature” represented in the fresco, looks almost the same as the surface of the ruined floor where Hsiao-kang stands. The monotone and deep focus, created by the static long-take, transform the visual images into a two-dimensional viewing experience. Taking an “excursion” (recalling the film’s title) is to be trapped within a *mise-en-abîme* of looking and self-reflexive absorption.

Tsai’s visual and video arts cut across cinematic ideas: materials in his film productions become video installation art exhibited in museums (*Stray Dogs at the Museum* in 2014 and 2015, see Song 2015) and 2016 (*No No Sleep at MoNTUE*). The latter features Tsai’s various shots from his Walker series, wherein a monk walks in the city so slowly that his motion is barely recognizable. Viewers must rethink the relationship between the body and the city. The locations in the cities (Marseilles, Tokyo, Hong Kong) cease to be a setting or a landscape to be consumed.

The English title *Stray Dogs* recalls Kurosawa’s *Nora Inu* (*Stray Dog*) (1949). The “dog” in Kurosawa’s postwar Tokyo is Detective Murakami who strays undercover in Tokyo looking for clues for his lost pistol. But it could also refer to the criminal who is on the run. The “dog” can be Detective Murakami who walks in postwar Tokyo desperately looking for clues for his stolen pistol. But it can also be the criminal Yasu whose life is similar to the detective’s (both are penniless war veterans returning to Tokyo), or, as the allegory suggests, the multitude which Murakami encounters in the “straying

sequence.” Images diffuse one after another in the montage of his inquisitive eyes, and walking legs are interwoven with the city scenes. Murakami is immersed into the city by the montage, but he does not belong to the world in which he strays. His “outsider quality” is betrayed in the beginning of his journal when he approaches a large shop window (after changing from his usual white suit with a tie to dark-colored worn-out soldier-like outfit) examining his own reflected image. In the reflection, his dark figure is isolated from the crowd which he is about to penetrate. There are similarities between Kurosawa’s *Stray Dog* and his *High and Low* (*Tengoku to Jigoku*, 1963), literally ‘heaven and hell’. The crime-thriller genre, the black and white photography, the infernal quality of the dark side of the city, the heat and the investment in representing the city are in both. The criminal walks in the city looking for a victim, among corpse-like bodies, to test the drug he intends to use on the conspirator. The contrasts between the living dead in the walkways and the dancing bodies mixed with American soldiers and Japanese hipsters literalises the split nature of a port city, Yokohama, a garrison city during the American occupation and the Korean war, where the film is set.

SEOUL

Let us take another city. Korea, historically divided between Japanese rule and Chinese cultural influences, has been dominated by the Korean War (1950–53), which left the 38th parallel north the demarcation of two opposing world forces after WWII. South Korean directors are primarily obsessed with the representation of the war which caused the division of the country. Apart from mainstream productions such as *Shiri* (1999) and *Taegukgi* (2004), art-house directors including Park Chan-woo and Kim Ki-duk have at least one work which is set in the demilitarized zone (DMZ), a region established at the border of the two Koreas at the end of WWII. The first is Park’s *Joint Security Area [JSA]* (2000); others are Kim’s *Address Unknown* (2001) and *The Coast Guard* (2002), which have virtually no representations of the city, because the first is set in the Korean DMZ and the latter two films by Kim are both in a garrison town. Chung Hye-Seung argues that the *kijich'on* (camptown) where *Address Unknown* is set can be considered as what Michel Foucault calls a “heterotopia” (Chung 2012, p. 30; see 26–29 for a Lacanian interpretation of the film). This “other space . . . has the ability to juxtapose in a single real place several emplacements that are incompatible in themselves” (Foucault 1998, p. 181). These garrison towns may be read as allegories of Seoul, as a site of contradiction and impossibility.

I will discuss representations of Seoul in Park Chan-wook’s and in Kim Ki-duk’s works, and compare the differences in how they discuss the subject of revenge. These versions of Seoul will be contrasted with Hong Sang-soo’s cinema which is more complex in narrative structure, but more minimalistic in cinematic aesthetics. In his films, the city is not just a background where the action is set, but becomes a subject under interrogation.

In *JSA*, the DMZ becomes a site where the north and the south meet, creating a desire which is partly homosocial, if not homoerotic. In this paranoid military zone, brotherhood among men within one side is essential to maintain the status quo, but the rhetoric also implicitly includes “brothers” on the other side of the border. The attraction between men from different sides is manifested in four men from the two sides. “What’s wrong with people of the same blood playing some games together?” asks Sergeant Lee Soo-hyeok when Private Nam Sung-shik expresses doubt about their transgression, which the North Korean soldier Jeong Woo-jin embraces as an act of opening a dam so as “to reunify the country . . . after half a century of division.” Kim Kyung-Hyun maintains that their “games” (which include childish one-leg wrestling, to threatening by pointing weapons at each other, and to the killings) are “allegories of same-sex eroticism” (Kim 2004, p. 259). He notes that the homoerotic relations between the four men constitute the contradictory national discourses of the two sides, seeing each other as the absolute other (259). The soldiers on one side of the border are desirable within this context: homoeroticism is kept intact only with this contradictory discourse. The notion of brotherhood is further complicated by “gender trouble” from the female investigator, the “hybrid” (Korean–Swiss) Major Sophie Jean, who is always in uniform, and who claims to be neutral. She transgresses the boundaries of national identity and gender stereotypes. Jeong is killed in “execution style” which implies revenge according to Sophie’s observation. The intense masculinity in the armies and the paranoid reaction in Panmunjom suggest that the idea of a “joint security zone” works as a contradiction. The contradiction in the DMZ can be seen as an allegory of modern cities: Seoul is depicted here as a deeply repressed “joint security area.” The DMZ is shown not to be a geographical specificity, but to be deterritorialized, present everywhere, a situation constitutive of sexual anxiety.

After their box-office success and film-festival achievements, Park Chan-wook’s and Kim Ki-duk’s cinemas both moved to less political modes of representation. Park’s subsequent works are devoted to a series of revenge-motif films, including a revenge trilogy—*Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* (2002), *Oldboy* (2003), *Sympathy for Lady Vengeance* (2005) plus *I’m a Cyborg, But That’s OK* (2006). In these films, the city is a site of private revenge. The protagonist in the first is the victim of a factory layoff, whereas the woman Cha Young-goon in *I’m a Cyborg* works in a radio factory which is as inhuman as that in Chaplin’s *Modern Times* (1936). Like the Little Tramp in that film, Young-goon goes mad while working in the production line; unlike him, she is admitted to a madhouse where the film is set. She believes that she is a cyborg whose function is to take revenge against the medical personnel. Imagining herself as a cyborg, she turns her body into inorganic matter so she can avoid eating, an expression of deep alienation.

While *I’m a Cyborg* implies that the city becomes no more than a madhouse, Seoul is represented in *Oldboy* as a prison. The protagonist Oh Dae-su is kidnapped and kept in a private prison. Seoul is the site for mystery solving, adventure, chance encounter, and revenge. But these actions are under constant surveillance. Dae-su’s revenge is actually induced by his captor Woo-jin,

who has taken revenge against Dae-su, by putting him in the private prison. Though set in a postindustrial Asian-Americanized city, the self-inflicted violence, incest (brother–sister and father–daughter), suicide, and Oedipal motifs give the film an almost Greek character. The revengers never consider taking legal action against their enemies: the city is productive of vengeful thinking and is the site where “wild justice” is restored.

Whereas the city in *Oldboy* serves as a Greek labyrinth for the hero’s self-discovery, the industrial ruins in Kim Ki-duk’s *Pietà* (2013) are full of biblical connotations. A redemptive future is all that remains for the protagonist Lee Kang-do after the suicide of the female revenger. In fact, Christianity (as a result of Korea’s Americanization) becomes a subject of contention in various ways in films such as *Secret Sunshine* (dir. Lee Chang-dong 2007) and Park’s *Lady Vengeance* and *Thirst* (2009). The city (Cheonggyecheon) in *Pietà* is a hell-like postindustrial slum in Seoul, where family-run light-machinery businesses are about to be eradicated so that they can be demolished and redeveloped. Outgrown by the hypermodern globalized economy that South Korea is experiencing, the inhabitants are forced to borrow from loan sharks to sustain their operations. Kang-do works as a debt collector for one of these loan companies. In cases of unsuccessful collection, which are very frequent, he is forced to stage industrial accidents by injuring the debtors in order for the loan sharks to recuperate money by making insurance claims, which the factory owners are then required to pay out, an example of Seoul as capital of a country that is a living contradiction.

Hong Sang-soo is Korea’s most internationally renowned art-house director. According to Kim Kyung-Hyun, he belongs to the “post-political” (Kim 2010, p. 138) era in which the question: “After politics, what next?” became fashionable (Kim 2004, p. 208). For Kim, the complete absence of political references in Hong’s cinema is a political gesture. Seoul in *Virgin Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (2000) and *The Day He Arrives* (2011) is depicted in black-and-white. The city becomes a site for walking, chance encounters, and sexual advancement and disappointment. Hong’s protagonists are without exception film directors, university professors teaching films, or artists. They are in a constant crisis of masculinity: directors are not making films, or are in a troubled relationship with other people, having affairs with students or with married women. Apart from these recurring thematic features, his films are intellectually challenging and visually entertaining. The narrative is “complex, episodic, and ultimately *Rashomon*-like” (Chung and Diffrient 2007, p. 129; see Deutelbaum 2005 for an alternative reading of *Virgin Stripped Bare*). There is no distinction made in the representation of dreams and “reality.” Chung and Diffrient argue that the repetition and broken narratives suggest “social and psychic fragmentation” (2007, p. 133). Seoul and the people in the city are “shattered remnants of their former selves” (133). In *Virgin Stripped Bare*, Su-jong is trapped in a suspended cable car on her way to the hotel where Chae-hun is waiting to have sex with her.

A DMZ defines lines and boundaries, but also marks out their dissolution; it arises as an attempt to secure a boundary on the basis that there may be none. The cable car belongs to one of those lines which Akira Mizuta Lippit notes in Hong

Sang-soo's cinema, including "the railroad, cable, and telephone, lines of seduction, lines of defense, lines of communication and inquiry, and lines of escape," which "carve up the spaces and times of [Hong's] cinema into discrete, schizoid geographies and temporalities, forcing individuals to perpetually cross lines, cross the line, and double-cross one another" (Lippit 2004, pp. 25–26). These lines do not demarcate spaces which give history and memories, but remind the audience that Seoul can only offer what Marc Augé calls "non-places" (Augé 1995, pp. 77–78).

During his visit to Seoul in *The Day He Arrives* (or *In the Direction of Bukchon*), Seong-jun, a film studies professor, wanders in Bukchon in the Jongno District. He runs into the same stage actress three times, has a drink with a group of film students, visits his former girlfriend and spends a night there, falls in love with a bar-owner who looks virtually the same as his former girlfriend and eventually sleeps with her before leaving Seoul. The two women are actually played by the same actress (compare with Buñuel, *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977), where the theme of the virgin 'stripped bare' is basic to male fantasies). During the last day Seong-jun spends in Seoul, a female photographer asks for his photograph to be taken. He says he does not like being photographed, but nevertheless allows her to take a picture of him. This closing incident evokes an episode in the same director's *Oki's Movie* (2010) where the director and film-professor protagonist refuses (after waking up from a nap, or still in a dream) to be the subject of a picture taken by a female photographer who looks exactly like his wife. Individual subjectivity does not mean being one continuous human being with a linear, traceable memory.

Though all of Hong's films are set in Korean cities including primarily Seoul, there is one exception. In *Night and Day* (2008), the painter protagonist Kim Young-ho is self-exiled to Paris where he develops an affair with a young Korean woman majoring in painting. Devoid of any clichéd representation of Paris, French elements are suppressed: almost no French is spoken; the sole identifier of the city is a shot of Courbet's *The Origin of the World*. Instead, Paris is a setting that stages a caricature of the DMZ. Young-ho gets into a heated debate with a North Korean man which leads to an arm wrestling. Paris is like anywhere in Korea, and the black-and-white Seoul is like Paris. Seoul and Paris can be any city in Hong's films where conflicts and confused narratives take place.

JIA ZHANG-KE'S 24 CITY AND WONG KAR-WAI'S CHUNGKING EXPRESS

The subject of Jia Zhang-Ke, the Sixth Generation Chinese director, is people in post-socialist China when the force of capitalism is irresistible. Jia's cinema is considered by critics as "authentic" representations of a Chinese city and the lives of the ordinary people in its "realistic" style. The realist impulse and its problematic nature in relationship with reality are best examined in *24 City* (2008). By reconstructing and staging the personal histories of "Factory 420," a former military state-owned city-size factory in China turned apartment complex named "24 City," Jia's "mockumentary" shows workers' situations

from different generations. They had devoted their lives to the factory between 1958 and 2005. It initially produced combat aircraft engines for and after the Korean war (1950–53) and Vietnam wars and subsequently domestic machinery post-demilitarization. Production ceased in the 1990s to make way for a city-sized complex. Strategically located in Chengdu (in Sichuan province in southwest China) because it was far away from the North-Eastern war front, Factory 420 is a city within a city.

The name “24 City” of the real-estate project evokes a postindustrial, modernized or even globalized, 24/7, nonstop city which China has been marching toward with full speed, a topic which Jia’s previous feature film *Still Life* (2006) has explored (on the “spatial unconscious” and reading the anamorphic space in *Still Life*, see Abbas 2008). The obsession with demolition and how it leads to deconstruction is shown in the sequence which ends one of the interviewees, Song Weidong’s story. Acted by Chen Jianbin, Song is the Assistant to General Manager of the Chengfa Group. His interview ends with him playing basketball in Factory 420, followed by W. B. Yeats’ poem “The Coming of Wisdom with Time” (1916) in Chinese translation:

Though leaves are many, the root is only one.
 Though all the lying days of my youth
 I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun
 Now I may wither into the truth.

Yamaguchi’s song “Red Sensation” in Japanese accompanies the poem, creating the impression that Yeats’ four-line poem is the song’s lyric. Yeats’ poem is followed by a transition shot showing trees in a forest, which, with the upward movement of the camera on clamp, immediately unveils the fact that the forest is a representation, printed as a backdrop on the hoarding sheet of the construction site which is the very site where Song played basketball, now cleared, leaving no trace of the communal life he mentions. It is followed by an inter-text denoting this fact: “Construction site for stage 1 of 24 City (Former factory basketball court).” Unveiled and glorified, construction is literally wrapped up in a representation of nature, and this very representation is transgressed by the camera, but nothing truly “inside” is exposed to the viewers. The next shot seems to be a text message from a worker’s mobile phone, or from the workers’ (unheard) conversation: “藍球場已起高樓，三天後這裏拆機器”(Buildings have been erected in the basketball court. These machines will be demolished in three days) (my translation).

The city seems to contain its own death as seen in a sequence showing the demolition of buildings, montaged with the collapse of window glasses and the reflection of bulldozers on a pond of stagnant water. A static long take shows the demolition of a factory building in such a way that it falls without any visible cause: redevelopment comes “naturally” after demolition, which is shown as if it demolishes itself. The soundtrack is a Chinese version of the first stanza of “The Internationale” sung in Putonghua. The song, while strongly associated with revolutionary ideal and as important as

the Chinese National Anthem, is critical of any system which is exploitative. The irony is twofold: the system which naturalizes what is operating behind the logic of demolition is intertwined with capitalism which is operating in modern China without limits. *Demolition is seen as the necessary procedure of modernisation.* In *24 City*, the visual pleasure in watching the destruction of buildings is derived not from the implied progressive promise after the demolition, but from the destruction itself. Post-socialist cities are best represented when they are undergoing demolition, because the city is born with a self-destructive mechanism, as Benjamin argues in his Paris essay.

The irony is further enhanced by the ending of this sequence with W.B. Yeats's "Spilt Milk" (1933) as an inter-text appearing in the middle of the slowly approaching dust caused by the collapsed building:

We that have done and thought,
[That have thought and done,]
Must ramble and thin out
Like milk spilt upon a stone.

Yeats' poem can be a comment on the situations of these interviewees, who have no choice but to explain, sympathize, or understand what the state did to them; deeds and thoughts are "thinned out," represented as the demolition sequence. The poet's obsession is with becoming an old man and not gaining wisdom. People interviewed are all trapped in either the national discourse or capitalist logic. The history of *24 City* may be seen as an allegory of modern China.

The criticism of China's modernity is more evident in the last interview. Su Na (a.k.a. Nana, played by Zhao Tao) represents the youngest generation of the Factory 420 history, which is said to be transformed into a real estate development governed by the market economy. She tells a story about her "growing up into an adult" when she witnessed how alienating her mother's work was as a laborer in the factory. This is hinted as in Yeats's theme, because she has learned nothing except being proud and belonging to the spirit of capitalism. Because of this pseudo-epiphany, her goal is to buy an apartment in "24 City" for her parents, despite its high price, because, she says "I am the daughter of a worker." This pride as a worker uncannily embraces the old communist values no longer operant in modern China, while realizing through her everyday practice as a luxury-goods merchandiser, living a life that is the least communist. The phantasmagorical effect produced by national or Marxist ideologies is achieved when modern China is herself most capitalist.

While Su Na's character is the nearest to those in Wong Kar-wai's *Chungking Express*, Jia's *24 City* retains a critical distance from her, whereas there is no sense of criticism in Wong's 1994 film, which has nothing critical of the political situation that Hong Kong had been facing. If Factory 420 is seen as an allegory of modern China, then *24 City* can be read as a criticism of the negative effect of modernity. In Wong's film, Chung King Mansions may be seen as an allegory of Hong Kong (for its non-Chinese, multinational population), but the film offers

no criticism of Hong Kong's political situation. The actual site, Chung King Mansions, is a racially diverse, Indian part in Hong Kong, and remains the most heterogeneous center in Hong Kong because it is located in the center of the most expensive area: Tsimshatsui. Ackbar Abbas contends that the location of Chung King Mansions can be understood as a "heterotopic space" (Abbas 1997, p. 54), a living contradiction, as opposed to a utopia, which ironically China's communist official historical discourse alludes to. However, spaces represented in *Chungking Express* do not seem to be heterotopic, offering no criticism of Hong Kong's political situations. *24 City*, on the other hand, poses questions concerning China's modernization and neoliberalism, showing the contradiction within her modernity, wherein a strange nostalgia is evoked in a site in which the past is not needed.

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A Megalopolis in Transit: Waterways as the Witness of Early Twentieth-Century Tokyo

Ikuho Amano

INTRODUCTION

In the modern and contemporary literary landscape of Japan, Tokyo has always wielded centripetal power as the nation's capital. Densely populated with well above 10 million, most social and cultural infrastructures are concentrated within the 23 wards, the area jurisdictions that enjoy foremost privileges of the capital. Such popular and commercially successful authors like Murakami Haruki (b. 1949), Hayashi Mariko (b. 1954), and Tanaka Yasuo (b. 1956), just to name a few, have situated their stories in the city center of Tokyo, oftentimes with concrete, proper nouns of particular districts, streets, and landmarks. Their intersubjectively constructed writing of the city is, in large part, intertwined with the needs of the contemporary cultural market and common readership. With the plethora of urban references, these writers have built the image of Tokyo as an affluent as well as vibrant postmodern city, where the paradox of labyrinth-like everydayness not only fascinates but also deludes dwellers and visitors alike. There, a writer's identity recedes to a secondary importance, as many contemporary writers – including Murakami, who was born in Kyoto and grew up in the cities close to Kobe – migrate to the megalopolis at a later stage of life primarily for various social and economic opportunities. Such a dominant tendency in the depiction of the city, however, constitutes a facet of imagined Tokyo. As the city that underwent a number of rejuvenations, mainly after the sociopolitical reform in the late nineteenth century and the recovery from the heavy air raid during World War II, Tokyo is relatively a young, early modern city, compared with Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka, which can boast far longer history since Japan's antiquity. Nevertheless, the rapid cycle of development, destruction, and redevelopment has bestowed its own uniqueness upon Tokyo *par excellence*. Then, precisely because of the unprecedented changes the city has

witnessed, urban time and space accommodate multifarious layers of social and cultural consciousness, which refuse to be subsumed under a single nomenclature, “Tokyo.” With such heterogeneity the city inherits in mind, the following essay addresses a phase of literary modernism, when Tokyoites avowed their identity as the indigenous successors of the premodern locality. It is also a phase when the city began to be recognized as a portal to what Western modernity has to offer to the Far East.

THE CITY OF TOKYO IN MODERNIST TEXTS

The official end of the *ancien régime* of Japan in the 1868 meant for the country not only a bureaucratic reformation of the national polity and social structure, but also the beginning of the physically perceivable rebirth of its urban landscape. In the following decades, such large cities as Tokyo, Yokohama, and Osaka witnessed the advent of modernity in manifest forms of material reality, be it an iron bridge replacing wood or Gothic-style brick building. The heyday of such corporeal transformations arguably arrived in Tokyo during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Between 1895 and 1923, the city’s population doubled and reached almost 4 million, and as a city of “Golden Twenties” metropolises, which include Berlin, New York, and Shanghai, Tokyo also saw flourishing mass cultures (Schulz 2003: 118). Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, under the governance by the Tokugawa Shōgunate regime, Japan embraced an isolationist policy for more than 200 years (1639–1854), and during the period the country developed relatively homogenous social as well as cultural conditions in its domestic urban space. The abolishment of the national policy – in reality a political decision yielded to the USA – and the subsequent peace treaty with the country became, thus, a driving force for Japan’s new historical phase that plunged into gradual Westernization. In the realm of literature, the motifs of sociocultural transitions were both cherished and lamented by writers, and no doubt galvanized their poetic imagination of both the present epoch and the past. Precisely for such a ceaseless influx of different social milieux, the city of Tokyo played a role of being the cradle in which writers’ modern sensibilities were nurtured — above all among writers of Japanese aestheticism.

As the former headquarters of the Tokugawa regime during the Edo Period (1603–1868), the castle city of Edo became a renewed national capital, Tokyo, when the governing power was officially returned to the Meiji Emperor. As though aligning its physical outlook to the national motto of the Meiji Restoration, *bunmei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment), which was derived from the dictum of enlightenment thinker Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), the city of Tokyo paved the way to realizing the national ideal by incorporating Western architectural grandeur and technology into the city space. No such radical transformations had changed the city previously, not only visually but also semantically as a liminal space

that accommodates both the remnants of the Edo heritage and the novelty of Western civilization. In the realm of literature, as Evelyn Schulz points out, criticism of “urban literature” has laid emphasis on canonical texts such as Mori Ōgai’s *Maibime* (The Dancing Girl; 1890) and Natsume Sōseki’s *Higan sugi made* (Until after the Spring Equinox; 1912) among others (Schulz 2003: 123). In the mainstream of Japanese literary history, Un’no Hiroshi’s *Modern City Tokyo: the 1920s of Japan* (1983) retrospectively recognized the genre of “urban literature” in relation to the rise of mass culture in the 1920s and the 1930s (Schulz 2003: 124).

In the process of building literary canons, there is another massive body of literary works which fall out of the critical parameter. One of the most notable recurrent motifs that emerges in novels, novellas, and poetry is a waterfront scenery, especially the east bank of the Sumida River. Through the physical constellations of nature (water) and artifice (bridge), writers such as Nagai Kafū (1879–1959), Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927), and Kinoshita Mokutarō (1885–1945) displayed their phenomenological visions of modern urbanity. Their writing conflates a complex array of personal emotions into physical realities readily observed in the changing city. In the process of building their literary landscape, then, those writers designed the city in the text so that the reader’s imagination and limitation is also constantly being supplemented (Maeda 1992: 12). Shedding light on the early twentieth century, this chapter overviews the ways in which the representative array of aestheticist works depicted, imagined, and established the image of Tokyo through a certain continuity. Outlining a unified image of the city, or scrutinizing multitudes of texts that build the city’s image is a daunting task, and such an investigation cannot be attempted here; nonetheless, this chapter hopes to disentangle the development of a modern topos in modernist texts, and therein attempts to present a local face within the global megalopolis. Circumscribed by the river, the waterfront of Tokyo exists as a physical entity divided from the city center; simultaneously, the interplay between the space and cognitive images transmitted by texts were certainly destined to construct, in Benedict Anderson’s terms, an “imagined community” that exists beyond the notion of authorial jurisdiction as well as in the visible presence of people who share a certain commonality. To address this objective, our analysis focuses on literary images of the waterfront. Through this journey, this homage to early modern Tokyo hopes to disentangle the physical and metaphysical concatenation that constitutes the counter-modern discourse of the city.

By and large, the city of Tokyo in modernist texts insinuates an interest in salient features of locality, centering on each author’s intimate association with a particular district or landmark. In the early twentieth century, therefore, a totalized image of the urban is scarcely present. In Japan’s literary circle, as early as around 1905–1907, *shizenshugi* (naturalism), which was inspired by the French predecessors such as Zola, Flaubert, and Maupassant, flourished as the vanguard of modern stylistics for its pursuit of an objective

worldview via realism and psychological contemplation. Nevertheless, in Japan, the rigorous notion of realism or objectivism was neither pursued nor practiced in writing, but instead faithfulness to reality was emphasized. Further, the Japanese branch of naturalism expanded its territory to lyricism, a style akin to a naturalistic current within European Romanticism. At this juncture, we can hark back to literary critic Karatani Kōjin who posits that “scenery reflects the viewer’s cognitive perspective” (Karatani 1988: 24). He states that the discovery of *fūkei* (psychological scenery, phenomenological landscape) was a landmark event in modern Japanese literature, as first seen in naturalist writer Kunikida Doppo’s *Wasureenu hitobito* (Unforgettable People) (1898) and *Musashino* (The Field of Musashino) (1898). This writing’s value does not exclusively rely on objective reality derived from the ocular perception of the author. What foregrounds the scenery in those works is not the external world (*gekai*) but discovering an external world, “a semiotic process of overturning the perspective” (Karatani 1988:31). Keeping this observation in mind, we can revisit the city of Tokyo in Japanese modernist texts, fundamentally as each writer’s narrative process of discovering the scenery, which is a projection of certain perspectives on the modern city in transit.

In the construction of the urban landscape, as a quintessential modernist motif, rivers play a role in anchoring the physical reality of the city, together with the author’s perspective and creative imagination. Above all the Sumida River (alias: Ōkawa – “Big River”), as well as branched-out canals and surrounding quarters, often appears to be at the center of a psychic landscape resilient against modern urbanity which was gradually sweeping away the remnant of the premodern ambience of the Edo period. Running through the eastern rim of the city, the Sumida River was not situated at the periphery of Tokyo even back then; nevertheless, the river and areas on the bank are oftentimes employed as topoi of nostalgia that are intertwined with antimodern sentiments. The reason may be primarily found in the origins of Tokyo. During the Edo period, the city was built around waterways, and this trait of *mizu no miyako* (Capital of Water) was replaced by the Meiji regime, the government that promoted the westward development of the hilly uptown districts (Kawamoto 1997: 12). Therefore, local writers such as Nagai and Akutagawa envisioned the image of Tokyo as the land whose existence is inextricably tied with waterways, superimposing the fluid nature of water on the city in relentless transition.

In contrast with their fascinations with waterways, which used to be connected by small man-operated boats, the emergence of large bridges drastically changed the connectivity between banks. Both efficiency and stability of iron-made bridges were destined to shuffle the social perception of time and space in an urban setting, and thereby became a staple symbol of modernity. In the early Edo period, for security reasons, the Tokugawa government did not allow the city to build bridges, except Senju Bridge, the only portal on which the Ōshū Highway runs to connect Edo and the northern regions (Strack 2010: 38–39).

Later wooden bridges such as Fukagawa Bridge and Eitai Bridge were built in the lower streams of the Sumida River, but they were often lost to fire and earthquakes. In the early Meiji period, Azuma Bridge was built with wooden materials, and later in the early twentieth century, iron-made Komagata Bridge connected Asakusa and its east bank (Strack 2010: 41–42). These bridges not only altered the waterfront landscape but also distanced people from the surface of water. Around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the ceaseless wave of Westernization further diminished the remnant of the Edo culture. In tandem with the headquarters of the Bank of Japan built in 1896, Nihonbashi Bridge built in 1911 physically confirmed the fate of the irretrievable past, by the architectural grandeur borrowed from the styles of the Renaissance and the Baroque. Those new landmarks became a significant source of imagination for writers and poets of the time, above all for the members of *Pan no kai* (The Group of Pan), who sumptuously employed proper nouns derived from actual landmarks. On the other hand, the Sumida River and its waterfront, for other aestheticist writers including Nagai, Akutagawa, as well as Satō Haruo (1892–1964), became an implicit locus of escape, a private utopia that allowed them to take refuge from the buzzing noises of the modern city center. With subtle excitement in the advent of new material life, nevertheless, these writers consciously displayed their psychological alliance with the waterfront.

SUMIDA RIVER AS THE SYMBOL OF NATIVIST TOKYO IDENTITY

In the essay titled “Shisō to shite no Tōkyō” (Tokyo as Ideology), critic Isoda Kōichi keenly points out that the location we choose to reside in is inseparable from our own identity. Our association with a particular location goes beyond social ideology, and rather relates to our sensibility (Isoda 1991: 13). In the opening phase of the early twentieth century, literati and aesthetes chose to situate their residencies around the Sumida River, precisely for the synergy and empathy they felt for the waterfront districts. The ambience of the old locality was bound to disappear, but the indigenous downtown (*shitamachi*) of such areas as Fukagawa and Ryōgoku kept stimulating writers’ artistic imaginations, while consoling their laments for the fading locality. In the process of zoning, numerous districts lost their original names, and in turn were subsumed under new jurisdictions with arid naming such as Chūō-ku (Central District) (Ikeda et al. 1980: 36–37). Complicatedly intertwined with excitements for the change, nostalgic sentiments for the pre-Restoration epoch are prevalent among writers of aestheticism. To overcome their forlorn sentiments felt for the fading uniqueness of the city, these writers whose literary erudition was largely nurtured by Western European literature exerted their modernist vision, superimposing European counterparts upon the image of Tokyo. On the other hand, despite his 5-year residency in the USA and France, Nagai Kafū consciously took refuge in the waterfront of Fukagawa, in order to indulge in the decadent ambience of the Edo period, which remained nearly intact in the quarter.

AKUTAGAWA RYŪNOSUKE'S SUMIDA RIVER AS CRADLE

Akutagawa, who is known in the West as the author of the novella, *Yabu no naka* (In a Grove) (1922), which was adapted to Kurosawa Akira's film *Rashōmon* (1950), represents a delicate and rather unstructured feeling of sorrow for the city in transit. His writing, however, is subtle and suppresses personal sentiments which use upfront claims. His essay, "Ōkawa no mizu" (Water of Ōkawa) (1914), exemplifies such ambiguity in the form of his personal dialogue with the Sumida River, and thereby implicitly averts his eyes from the reality of modernization which his local area has faced. Portraying the river as a sort of maternal symbol of the city, this brief but often cited autobiographical sketch of childhood reveals the author's intimate rapport with the river that had a significant psychological impact on his formative years. He grew up in Ryōgoku, a riverbank district directly facing Ōkawa (Big River, Sumida River), embracing the presence of water as an integral part of his identity. Akutagawa's childhood remained in his memory even long after he relocated to Shinjuku, the newly developed suburb of the time in western Tokyo.

As the essay's title suggests, what the writer is concerned with is the amorphous materiality of the water rather than a cartographic implication of the river as a landmark. Born in proximity to the river, the water was constantly present in his quotidian life as part of bodily experience, through the immediacy of visionary and olfactory contacts (Akutagawa 1971: 273). His affection for the river is intertwined with "ineffable consolation and solitudes," and even provokes such feelings as "entering a world of nostalgic admiration and memory" (Akutagawa 1971: 273). This primordial sense of comfort and attachment to the river constitutes the core of his identity as an indigenous Tokyoite, without claiming his familial roots in the area. Unlike Kafū, whose vigorous identity as a local successor to the Edo cultural heritage, Akutagawa's grasp of the river is ideologically unstructured, delving instead into his primordial sense of yearning for a sort of maternal comfort its water provides him. Likewise, at times the river's water oozes out "the breath of death" that transmits "ungrounded loneliness" (Akutagawa 1971: 274). This particular note on the river reminds us of his well-known reflection on the epoch, which was left before his suicide – he could not help feeling *bokuno shōrai ni taisuru tada bonyarishita fuan* (only ambiguous worries for my future) (Akutagawa 1978: 275). Arguably, it is possible to surmise that his uneasiness was rooted in the sociocultural conditions of Taishō Japan, where indigenous authenticity ceaselessly yielded to the Western Other's logic and therefore intellectuals were forced to internalize the absence of a solid ontological ground on which they could stand. Though written 13 years before his suicide, a sprout of his psychological aphasia can be located in Akutagawa's unconscious desire to step out of the suffocating domestic situation of his homeland. The river is thus rendered in the form of confluence of nostalgia with the poetic image of a Venetian waterscape:

Whenever I see the stream of Ōkawa, I cannot help recalling the water capital of Italy that sees the dusk together with the bell sound of the monastery and the voice of swans – the sensibility of D’Annunzio who outpoured his passion to the quintessence of Venice, such as roses and lilies in bloom on balconies, the casket-like black gondola moving through from a bridge to the other like a dream, while being pale under the moon light from the bottom of the water. (translation mine, Akutagawa 1971: 274)

Further, the author insinuates his attachment to the Sumida River, with reference to European writers, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Dmitry Sergeyevich Merezhkovsky (1866–1941). For Akutagawa, as well as for Japanese writers of aestheticism, these writers are meant to be important forerunners primarily for their technique of expressing *Stimmung* (ambience, evocation of certain emotions), a German neologism and concept shared among Japanese writers. As if following those Western writers’ anti-naturalist poetics, Akutagawa also gestures to transmit nothing but the ambience of the gentle river that is filtered through his nostalgic sentiments and imagination.

By virtue of affectivity, Akutagawa’s sensibility defies a grand narrative of Tokyo as a civilized modern city. Setting aside the socioeconomic functionality of the river, the essay sheds light on the materiality of water, noting its texture, color, and sound. In order to focus on these physical traits of water, the author privileges *watashi bune* (boats for crossing the river) over modern bridges in the downstream of the rivers. He writes that “I used to ride crossing boats with no purpose” but just for feeling delight of “being gently shaken like a cradle as water moves” (Akutagawa 1971: 274). While riding the boat, “the smooth green water” is felt reachable, and “the wide surface of the river shining with blue bronze-like light” occupies his vision (Akutagawa 1971: 275). Then, this valency of impression is contrasted with other waters of the upper streams of the river and canals – the former is “too light and shines superficially,” while the latter is “dark and dormant” (Akutagawa 1971: 275). The water of Ōkawa, on the other hand, exudes a human-like persona in its ambience. The author finds a poetic inspiration that affords him to employ the simile of an aged Jewish man “[who tends to] grumble [...] but] is down-to-earth [and [...] displays] comfortable texture [of skin]” (Akutagawa 1971: 275). Similar modes of personification continue as the author’s vision shifts to the further downstream, while passing underneath Ryōgoku Bridge, New Big Bridge, and Eitai Bridge. Running through the urban center, the river inevitably absorbs the air “filled with noise and soot,” “reflecting the festering sun and shaking old-fashioned boats” (Akutagawa 1971: 275). Even if those impurities touch it, the water still sustains “warmness” that “infuses the breadth of nature and that of human beings” (Akutagawa 1971: 276). Precisely for this human-like corporeality, the river water appears to be warm blood that is gently pumped out of the heart of the city. For the author, the city is not an entity that can be rationalized by certain epistemic models but exists at the limit of a physical reality that can be

translatable only by his own sensation and sensibility. His writing of Tokyo thus takes a gentle form of defamiliarization with no ambition to hammer out a wholesome image of it. In conclusion to the essay, then, Akutagawa cites Merezhkovsky: “[e]very city holds its own unique odor. Florence possesses the odor of white iris, dust, mist, and old paintings” (Akutagawa 1971: 276). In the essay’s epilogue, he states that not only the odor but also the color and the sound of the Sumida River comprises what Tokyo is all for him. Such a metonymic use of the river is the limit of how he sees Tokyo in the early twentieth century, the city riding the ceaseless current called modernity.

THE WATERFRONT OF FUKAGAWA AS THE LOCUS OF THE BELLE ÉPOQUE

Along with the river, local quarters on the banks also play no less significant roles in aestheticist texts of the city. Above all, the district of Fukagawa located in the downstream of the Sumida River is worthy of our attention for its topographical implication prevalent in the oeuvre of Nagai Kafū (1879–1959). Being a returnee from France and the USA, Kafū was one of the most progressive and erudite literati of the time, well exposed to modern Western literature and culture. Upon returning to Tokyo, his loathing for Meiji Japan increased because it appeared to him that the country was only mimicking the surface of Western civilization without a mature citizenry who understood its value. Gradually, his despising of the homeland dragged Kafū out of a mainstream circle of literature and academia. His novel *Reishō* (Sneers) published in *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* (1909–1910), for example, mirrors the complex inner psyche he was embracing at the time. The novel, which consists of the voices of four characters who are allegedly alter egos of the author, illustrates Kafū’s deep affection for the hedonistic ambience of the Edo period. In the city in transit, only the riverbank district of Fukagawa preserves his dream as the microcosm of Edo culture, where aged residences are still intact and indigenous songs accompanied by *shamisen* are heard in the evening.

The novel takes the form of a quasi-plotless story, where four male characters in their mid-30s share their bitter reflections of contemporary Japan, interweaving their memories of the past as well as modernist aspirations through excerpts from French and Italian literary works. Through the voice of novelist Yoshino Kōu, a leading figure of the narrative, the novel constantly endorses the Western genealogy of literary Romanticism, since European cities were constructed by subjective visions in search of the self, rather than developed by objective knowledge. Kōu goes on to mention that Italian poet/novelist Gabriele D’Annunzio depicted his visionary city of Venice in autumn twilight, by his virtuoso use of emotive fatigue indulged in by an actress (who is modeled after Eleonora Duce). Likewise, the right-wing monarchist and French novelist Maurice Barrès projected his ideal of melancholic beauty to an (unnamed) ancient city of Provence, borrowing the image of a forlorn local girl (Nagai

1992: 7. 40). Drawing on those European “aesthetes,” Kōu also imagines his beloved Fukagawa through a metaphorical image of a local woman who used to be a geisha. In the chapter titled “Fukagawa no yume” (Dreams of Fukagawa), Kōu extols the waterfront district, juxtaposing its melancholic beauty with that of the girl in visionary recollection:

In order to go to a flower arrangement lesson, she joined a commuter boat with us, who have just returned from an overnight outing. When the aroma of tallow on floating lumber passed by the canal in the cold morning gust, how intoxicated I was by an elegant imagination. I was diagonally observing her profile when (she) (.) was resting her chin on her hand. (.) I still remember (her) young figure facing back to the white wall of warehouses in the morning sun, she, with flowers in her hand. (Translation mine; Nagai 1992: 7.41)

In this course of narrative progression, however, the physical reality of the Fukagawa district surrounded by waterways makes no clear appearance. The proper noun, Fukagawa, which denotes in Japanese “deep river” is suggestive of the old district developed out of the canals. The act of naming plays a sufficient role here, as the location in narrative exists fundamentally as a topos, an inter-subjectively recognized area known for its hedonistic ambience. In fact, Kafū’s writing of the city of Tokyo is limited almost exclusively to the old downtown (*shitamachi*) for a number of reasons. As we have seen in the case of Akutagawa, for those who possess vigorous self-assurance as an indigenous resident of Tokyo (Edo), the waterfront districts located in the city’s east side remain at the core of their identity. Further, as represented in Kōu’s voice, the author likens Meiji Japan to “a ship without a helm” (*kaji no nai fune*), a socioculturally groundless enterprise in the condition of a stalemate (Nagai 1992: 7.123). Then, the only possibility that can redirect the drifting country is left to “aesthetic enthusiasm for the beauty of one’s homeland” (*kyōdo no bi ni taisuru geijutsuteki netsujō*) because such passion “would awaken the profound self-knowledge” (of homeland) (Nagai 1992: 7.124). In this regard, along with Barrès, Belgian writer Georges Rodenbach who “outpoured ardent sentiments to the melancholic city of Bruges” is an invaluable forerunner whom the Japanese author wishes to follow (Nagai 1992: 7.124).

Nevertheless, in the name of Fukagawa, the image of the Edo period as a counter-modern utopia is certainly not a critical construct but at most reveals the narrator’s (and thus the author’s) wishy-washy escape from the evolving city. According to Carol Gluck, the Edo is nothing but “the invented other in relation to which modernity posited itself,” being identified as “Japanese tradition” (Gluck 1998: 262). This need of distinctions from contemporaneity is the symptom of modernity constantly prevalent in the discourse of Kafū who was exposed to the modern West. Concretely, his novella titled “Fukagawa no uta” (Songs of Fukagawa) (1908) displays the author’s argument against Tokyo, juxtaposing Fukagawa as the utopia of the Edo still preserving the *belle époque* intact. What centers on in the

novella is the unnamed narrator's consciousness that navigates the reader from a western district of Tokyo, Yotsuya, to Fukagawa in the southeast through the tram bound for the waterfront areas of Tsukiji and Ryōgoku. In contrast to *Sneers*, a sarcastic as well as hedonistic story that negotiates between past and present, *Songs of Fukagawa* unfolds far more agonistic cravings for the bygone days of Tokyo prior to the Meiji Restoration.

The story starts with the moment when the narrator launches a capricious day trip, jumping into a tram with no particular destination in mind. The whim in the midst of daytime is a clear gesture that he willfully goes against the mainstream value of laboriousness and productivity, which Meiji Japan embraces. Likewise, the destination of Fukagawa, surrounded by canals that branch out of the Sumida River, is also imagined to be the space diametrically opposed to western Tokyo, a productive and thriving urban center. However, paradoxically, the daytrip is set forth by the tram, a modern means of transportation that does not only celebrate the epochal progress of technology but also, in fact, enables the narrative "to reach for the past through" its symbolic embodiment of modernity (Strack 2010: 51). This ironic detour is prevalent from the onset, as the narrative navigates the reader through the vibrant city center in December, anticipating the upcoming New Year's Day with seasonal decorations and a marching band that advertises local shops and businesses. Inside the train is filled with lively noises such as students talking about final exams, crying babies, men's yawns, an old geisha who sucks her decayed teeth, etc. (Nagai 1992: 6. 103–104). As gradually the train moves toward the direction of the southeast, the itinerary takes a centrifugal trajectory from the city's center, the area circumventing the Imperial Palace, to the periphery: Kōjimachi, Hanzōmon, Sukiya-bashi, Tsukiji, Shintomichō, and Kayabachō. What the narrator faces at the last stop is however still, to him, "the wretched center of the city," and the streets laden with telegraph poles with gaudy advertisements and cheap imitations of Western-style buildings. Outraged by the contemptible scenery, he instinctively decides to "escape to Fukagawa" (Nagai 1992: 6. 112–113).

What awaits the narrator who visits Fukagawa after 10 years is the scenery he used to be familiar with. Nonetheless, more beautiful than the actuality of the space is the narrator's recollection of the past. The visionary past is fragmented and yet associated with the water of the area's canals:

I will never forget the scenery I saw from the boat late at night. It was around the summer time when there was a lantern festival in the pleasure district of Suzaki. A dim light leaked out of a rush shade brightens the naked boatman who is drunk and fighting. From the rear window along the river, a girl of bawdy appearance, who drinks saké with a naked, tattooed man, can be seen. The garden with a pine tree extending its branch to the water, and the water gate with spikes foregrounds the restaurant. From its second floor, a geisha's singing voice can be heard. The moon rises. (.) A car lightening a lantern passes on the wood bridge brightly reflected by the water light. (Translation mine; Nagai 1992: 6. 114)

While the memory returns to him in a stream of consciousness, simultaneously, the narrator is highly cognizant of his being a modern man who discerns the present from the past. Further, his sensibility of cherishing the local ambience is not innate to him, but is afforded by the foreign erudition derived from his experience in the West. Toward the end of the story, he runs into the scene where a blind man sings a song with a *shamisen*. As he sings on, the narrator is struck by “the tragic feeling” of not belonging to this old-fashioned space he admires. Despite his deep attachment to Fukagawa, the story ends with his internal monologue that laments his fate of leaving the area for his study where “a volume of Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra* has remained opened, waiting for [him]” (Nagai 1992: 6.118). The bifurcation of the past and the present, as well as that of the sensuous locality and the intellectual foreign, realizes the beguiling effect of the waterfront. The city in transit is therefore a stage where not only its physical surface creates an epochal rupture but also its space as a repository of memories enquires into one’s ontological location.

BRIDGES AS METONYMY OF MODERNITY

As we have seen, the waterfront of Tokyo stirred imaginations intertwined with antimodern sentiments and nativist attachment to the (imagined) cultural heritage of the past. On the other hand, other writers of aestheticism, notably the leading members of *Pan no kai* (The Group of Pan) such as Kinoshita Mokutarō (1885–1945) and Yoshii Isamu (1886–1960) celebrated the waterfront, a periphery of the city, as a locus of modern optimism and hedonism (Noda, 1984: 216). These writers and poets were influenced by their forerunner Kafū Nagai (1879–1959), whose writing elevated Fukagawa to be a sanctuary for aesthetes. Nonetheless, the contributors of *Pan no kai*, known for its short-lived magazine *Subaru* (1909–1913), were more concerned with Westernization of obsolete Japanese poetics by amalgamating images of decadence with exoticism. Accordingly, the waterfront for them was not the locus of nostalgia but the urban symbol that could nurture new aesthetic sensibilities. One of such modernist spirits is prevalent in Kinoshita’s *Shokugo no uta* (After-Meal Songs) (1919), a collection of poetry that illustrates the city of Tokyo, within which the remnants of pre-Meiji life and Western ambience harmoniously intersect (Noda 1984: 204). Therefore, Kinoshita’s sketch of the city, for instance, in the preface, renders the impression that was hitherto nonexistent in the waterfront image of traditional districts (*shitamachi*): “the magical ambience” (*fushigi no jōcho*) permeates in the space where “reddish brick office buildings and banks shining with brass” announce the advent of the new epoch. Nearby, “university professors in black frock coats celebrate the birthday of Confucius” (Kinoshita 1980: 255). In reality the Group of Pan embraced their eclectic lifestyle, savoring Western cuisine at restaurants where geishas played *shamisen* to entertain guests (Kinoshita 1980: 255–256). One of those venues

that stimulated the Group of Pan's creativity was *Eitaitai* overlooking Sumida River and Eitai Bridge, Japan's first iron bridge built in 1897.

The presence of bridges in modernist texts is not an arbitrary choice for embellishing urban landscape. In his essay "Bridge and Door," *Georg Simmel maps out a metaphysical significance of bridges as a physical object that articulates "the active resistance of special configuration," an obstacle of "separateness" innately existing in nature (river and banks). Employed to overcome the obstacle, the bridge "symbolizes the extension of our volitional sphere over space"* (Simmel 1997: 66). If we will, this function of linking two separated points may be expanded to a diachronic connectedness of divided temporalities as well. In this sense, the Sumida River, Ryōgoku, which literally denotes "both countries," occupies a notable significance in Kinoshita's urban modernism that incorporates bridges as both physical reality and the metaphor of what Simmel calls our volition, a will to reconfigure the space. As of the first decade of the twentieth century, the area was a sort of liminal space, displaying the remnant of the Edo ambience that was yet unable to escape the modern civilization. Kinoshita's *Ryōgoku* included in *After-Meal Songs* witnesses the area in transit through the poet's vision as a city walker, watching a boat, folding down its mast, as it goes underneath the bridge of Ryōgoku, and the boatman shouting:

Cold moisturized river wind blows,
 on the fifth day of May,
 a gentle sculling rhythm coming from
 the man with eyeglasses on the speedy boat,
 and the butterflies, together with peonies, dyed on his short coat
 are buffeted by waves
 Delicious, refined saké of Nada, Kikumasamune
 pours the nostalgic aroma in the thin crystal glass
 From the restaurant's second floor,
 the obscure sky with setting sun,
 over the round roof of dream Kokugikan,
 birds are flying away, and their shadows of the evening,
 I don't know why but my heart beats for excitement, as I see them.

(Translation mine; Kinoshita 1980: 259)

As the Group of Pan sought to achieve, the poetry sets aside realism and instead seeks to accumulate scenes evocative of a *Stimmung*, an ambience that provokes the poet's delight in the present time situated at the intersection between the past and the future. By passing through Ryōgoku Bridge, which was originally constructed in the mid-seventeenth century and replaced with iron, the poet metaphorically crosses the threshold between the old and the new. His twofold sensibility is projected on the material reality of the present, as concretized by the boatman's clothes with indigenous flower designs, passing under the iron bridge. The "buffeted by waves" mirrors nothing but his modern psyche split

between the two epochs the city is witnessing. Nonetheless, unlike Kafū who stubbornly clings to the past, Kinoshita is far more extrovert, so as to cherish the moment with the sense of admiration. Shifting the perspective from the surface of the river to the bank, the subsequent stanza reveals the poet's subtle exoticism, condensing it in "thin crystal glass" and the second floor of the restaurant, both announcing the presence of what the city can provide him from overseas. But he drinks neither wine nor whisky, but still Kikumasamune, the first-rated *saké* from Nada in Kobe. While savoring the alluring aroma, ultimately, he superimposes the image of birds flying over Kokugikan, the renowned athletic arena for *sumō* competitions built in 1909, on himself dreaming of the foreign world that is yet to be seen.

CONCLUSION

The psychological trajectories displayed in the chapter are broadly those of modernity but oftentimes discursive and reflexive of individual experiences, disavowing an ideologically constructed "grand narrative" of the city. Ultimately, there is no clearly totalized epistemic model of early twentieth-century Tokyo for the literary imagination, and in lieu of such, various modes of attachment to the locality constitute the core of what the city meant to the writers of the time. Therefore, it is not without reason that these literary voices tend to relatively short textual forms of essay, poetry, and novella. The city in those vignettes is, at its best, a microcosm of a visualized sanctuary that does not transgress a phenomenological limit of individual visions.

Tokyo has relentlessly altered its outlook, undergoing a number of phases since the early seventeenth century: the Pax Tokugawa of the Edo period, the age of the Meiji Restoration, the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, the massive air raids in 1945, the postwar recovery, and the subsequent high economic growth. Nonetheless, a grand purview of the city was out of the scope of these modernist texts of locality. Iron bridges over the Sumida River were built "under influences of functionalism [*kinoushugi*], structurism [*kouseishugi*]" represented by Le Corbusier, Bauhaus, Russian Constructivism and so forth, as the foremost symbols of modernity (Un'no 2007: 24). Along with the development of bridges, a number of riverbanks, notably the district of Asakusa, began to establish modern urban life with housing, restaurants, and entertainments (Un'no 2007: 39). These material realities gradually eroded the traditional *shitamachi*; Fukagawa was one of very few final destinations for Kafū, where decadent ennui permeated to console him. The commonality among these writers discussed is, however, that the Tokyo waterfront was the sanctuary where weary minds and excitement could be equally sublimated into an aesthetics of counter-realism.

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Australasian City Writing

Michael Hollington

Very shortly after the golden age of the Modernist City Novel – *Petersburg* (1913), *Ulysses* (1922), *Manhattan Transfer* and *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) – a work of comparable stylistic brilliance and originality was published by an Australian writing about an Australian city. Christina Stead's (1902–1983) *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* was in fact finished as early as 1930, but the London publisher who accepted it early in 1931 insisted that she write a more conventional book before he would finally risk publication in 1934 (Rowley 137ff).

This book, together with Patrick White's later Sydney novels and Katherine Mansfield's earlier writing about Wellington, triggers the fundamental approach to modern Australasian city writing adopted here. It is neither derivative nor subversive of Northern hemisphere work: the best of it is simply written alongside that more familiar corpus, and virtually simultaneously with it, by brilliant writers every bit as sophisticated as their counterparts in Europe and America in the range of literary and cultural reference they deploy, and every bit as deserving of detailed attention. To be sure, Joyce casts his spell on Southern hemisphere writers, as he did on Woolf and Dos Passos, and Dickens's *Seven Poor Travellers* suggested the title of Christina Stead's novel. But what these writers made of their 'sources' is their own, both because of their own individual talents and because of the complex web of similarities to and differences from archetypal modern cities like London and Paris that they uncover in writing about their counterparts in the antipodes, as we shall see.

'The hideous low scarred yellow horny and barren headland lies curled like a scorpion in a blinding sea and sky' (7 *PM* I 1). The six negative adjectives qualifying the subject in the first sentence of *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* establish

both a Rabelaisian principle of verbal excess in the novel and at the same time, paradoxically, that fundamental melancholy that Delia Falconer, in her insightful 2010 book about the city, characterises as the underlying essence of Sydney. The novel will end in suicide out on that headland: instead of the Thames or the Seine (supplying the Morgue in nineteenth-century European city writing), we have here in Sydney from the start The Gap, where suicides leap off the cliff to their death. The first chapter, indeed, ends with a cyclical reinforcing of the hopelessness of its opening in Catherine's premonitory drawing of 'an emaciated naked woman lying dead on the quays' (I 36). 'Fear death by drowning' is a *leitmotif* of the book, (as of modern Sydney writing in general), and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* an important strand in the essentially Modernist network of its cultural reference ('They carried high the rushlight of their metropolitan culture . . . , talked Cézanne, Gauguin, Laforgue, T.S. Eliot, Freud and Havelock Ellis' – II 57). Psychic impotence and sterility is the prevailing state of mind in the novel's city dwellers, and redundant statement a recurrent symptom of the condition, as in 'What Kol designed was no more than a perverse love of death and negations, a prolonged womb-life, a Brahmin self-extinction, a desire to be lapped once more in one's own excreta, an onanism, if you will' (II 60).

For this is a novel about a 'lost generation' traumatised by war and economic depression. Though in revolt against the conditions of urban life – that is to say, against capitalism itself – their capacity for effective action is essentially neutered. Describing herself more than once as fundamentally a psychological writer, Stead uses Freud and the Oedipus complex in many of her central images, which are again subject to listing, as in Michael's catalogue of his dreams: 'my father lying in a pool of blood, long black spectres coming in through the crack of the door, forests of serpents, dismal rivers flowing without end, as in the Sons of Clovis, at the Art Gallery' (VII 207). The last named, the French Evariste Luminais (1822-1896), in his 1880 salon painting 'The Sons of Clovis II', is of particular relevance to this theme, both because of the story it narrates – 'alarmed by her sons' rebellion against their absent father, King Clovis, their mother – the regent Sainte Bathilde – has their tendons cut before sending them, immobilised, downstream on a barge to their fate' (see <http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/712/>) and because of the way in which it highlights Stead's Sydney/water nexus, where the river landscape in the painting even perhaps brings Sydney harbour to mind.

As in many previous city novels, the key to passing beyond the condition of paralysis is the capacity to understand and interpret its complex, multiple, even seemingly infinite layers of meaning. One of the seven who comes close to it is the Jewish printer Baruch Mendelssohn, who manages to pack a paradigmatic inventory of all five senses as these are bombarded by city life into one remarkable sentence: 'he knew by heart the foetid rooms, eyes opening on littered streets, heavy wombs, market-gardeners' carts trailing a cabbage smell, moustaches washed in beer, working-men's tramcars rattling out to brown dusty suburbs, Alexandria, Redfern, Waterloo, pawnshop windows advertising their unredeemed pledges, grimy hands, sweat, unfolded papers relating the latest

murder, wrinkles, hands with swollen veins, and eyes thick with the circular lucubrations of the dulled mind trying to escape' (V 140-141).

Yet, in what can be seen as a curiously Platonist novel about the one and the many, the collective and the individual, the world of number (the 'seven' of the title, for instance, a pointed enumeration of fragmentary, alienated individuals) is ultimately an illusion, played in the novel's symbolic language against an ideal imaginary communal Jerusalem of the Southern hemisphere (the 'watery hemisphere' of the opening of Stead's later novel *For Love Alone*). It is located in one of its manifestations in this book off Stewart Island off the south coast of New Zealand, 'a city walled with a sort of Saracen wall', where, as in the land of Cockaigne, food drops from the skies, as birds are roasted in the heat of the midday sun: 'the roofs were crowded with chimney-sweeps, roof-menders and lay-climbers like bartenders and hungry midday clerks eating roast pigeon and swan' (XI 299-300).

This too is the meaning of the incest theme in the novel – Michael's desire to achieve physical union with his sister Catherine is a yearning for oneness and wholeness in transcendence of fragmentary maleness and femaleness. But of course all these utopian levels of meaning are presented with a great deal of humour, in a novel that is remarkable not only for its symbolic complexity but also for its realist ear for the larrikin banter of Australian city dwellers ('My mother is not a whore.' 'She is! Why isn't she?' 'No. Willy's mother isn't; she always has the same blokes, and she has only three' – V 139). Stead follows her ultimate master Dickens (she grew up in a house that was 'full of Dickens', and had a grandfather who named his house 'Gad's Hill' – Rowley 2, 31) in writing ironic fairy tales about the city.

But if *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* can be seen as the *fons et origo* of modern Australasian city writing, there are many who think *For Love Alone* yet superior ('what greater novel of Sydney has there been?' asks Drusilla Modjeska rhetorically in her introduction to the 2011 Miegunyah edition – *FLA* ix-x). From its rich store of thematic material I shall concentrate here on how it, too, is a great novel about city poverty – in what is supposedly 'the lucky country'.

Its heroine Teresa Hawkins has an Orwellian capacity, as a thinking person of fastidious intellectual discrimination, to subject herself to intensifying degrees of physical hardship and degradation in order to save up sufficient money to leave Australia and come to Europe. She takes a job as a typist in a factory, and leaves home each day on long walks to and from her place of work in order to save the fare on public transport. She thus becomes a particular kind of impoverished Sydney flâneur: 'her only amusement was to go out of her way to St Michael's Street, to walk up that street slowly on the far side, smell the smell of the seasons there and see Jonathan's house as she went by' (XX 295).

But we learn shortly thereafter that this amusement characterises a relatively self-indulgent stage of her 'progress': 'in the first two years, she made her trips to and from the office, observing, as a discipline, everything that went on around her, types, languages – Yiddish and Italian – the weather,

the architecture and what interested people in the street, dutifully attending Eight-Hour Day processions and the like.’ But after that, ‘with semi-starvation and weakness, she lost interest in these outside things’ (296) – that is to say, in the hierarchy of the five senses regularly deployed in Stead’s representation of city experience, sight becomes a luxury. She seems to move down a notch in the Darwinian evolutionary scale: ‘she recognized noises and smells, however, things which guided her when her eyes became milky or dark as they did occasionally, and which did not distract her. She developed the acuity of a savage, in sound and in smell’ (298). She will eventually move to the factory doorstep in order to save shoe-leather, contemplating even sleeping in the building itself (like *Bartleby* in the lawyer’s office where he works, in Melville’s great story) or in wasteland nearby. Even the free pleasures of city *flânerie*, we learn, depend on having something in your belly.

Yet, Teresa retains piercing lucidity of mind and precision of language throughout the succession of self-flagellations. She belongs in the company of Poe or Baudelaire or Benjamin, for instance, in her reflections on the attraction of the experience of the crowd for modern city dwellers: ‘Perhaps the so-called crowd instinct is nothing more than a desire for the general confused and relaxed feeling which is obtained by the multiple vague sensations of contact, sight, sound, smell, fear, expectation, hate, blood-lust, all at once, in the crowd’ (293). And with her constant critical eye trained on early twentieth-century urban Australian sexual wowsers, she both interrogates the meaning of words like ‘love’ – ‘the words, joy, love, excitement, are bald and general. That is why love stories I suppose sound so dull, for the heroine or hero cannot feel just love, it must be one of a hundred kinds of love he feels’ – and urges others to do likewise: ‘Everything in the world is produced by the act of love, it would be queer not to think about it’ (XXII 290, IX 126).

For as in *Seven Poor Men of Sydney* there lurks, in Teresa’s mind and elsewhere, an alternative, utopian vision of what an Australian city might be, handled by Stead in semi-humorous vein. ‘She imagined a city-state with clear water running down the gutters and the people, in laced leather and metal sandals, taking these off to bathe their feet when it got too hot’, a place that associates fertility and physical and sexual freedom in an amusing way with fashionable chic: ‘through a dress of lemon velvet the pouting breasts of a young mother stood out, bursting with their thick white wine; she suckled her child as she walked’ (VIII 109). Fourier’s utopian socialism figures more than once in her mind, as for instance when she goes to look for a room and encounters a woman in whose house the rooms have no locks or bolts: ‘perhaps she runs a kind of phalanstery’, Teresa remarks (XVIII 236). The factory itself begins to seem such a place, where work and community are fused: ‘it failed her in nothing. Money, washrooms, even affection, she was liked there and everyone knew there what no one knew at home, that she was sailing soon. Such was the good-nature and solidarity of the factory’ (XXIV 320).

Thus the crucial image of *For Love Alone* is the idea of transit or passage, once more captured by reference to a French painting, Watteau's *L'Embarquement pour Cythère* (1717, Louvre). It is like Ulysses' journey to Ithaca essentially a *nostos* or homecoming – an 'Embarkation for Life', as Chapter 17 of the novel is entitled. Most obviously it refers to Teresa's intended journey to Europe, to reclaim the intellectual and cultural 'home' of her mind as well as to take up residence with Venus. But it also links back to the Australia that underlies the 200 odd years of white settlement – the city beneath the city, as it were – to the 40,000 years and more of indigenous society, much, much closer, in this book, to the Fourierist phalanstery: 'Long ago, if she had been born a black Australian girl, she would have gone off now, paddling by herself up the coasts and daring the passage to the islands.' Teresa is a Ulysses who dares that return: 'I'm as young, strong and brave even if my skin is white. It's the same sun, the same air' (XXI 279–280).

If Christina Stead is still shockingly under-read and undervalued (at a December 2015 conference in Sydney, Fiona Morrison spoke of the 'topos of the neglected writer' in connection with her), Patrick White (1912–1990), its solitary Nobel Prize winner (if we except the recent addition of J.M. Coetzee, whose earlier work is South-Africa based), is one of the few Australian writers to have gained adequate international recognition. Himself obviously indebted to her whenever he writes about the place (I shall take here *The Eye of the Storm*, the subject of a worthwhile film adaptation by Fred Schepisi, as representative of his Sydney writing) he is with Stead the other 'classic' Australian city writer to whom all successors necessarily refer.

For White, Sydney means inauthenticity. The central characters of *The Eye of the Storm*, the three living members of the Hunter family, are engaged at all times in reciprocal theatres of cruelty and insincerity. Mrs Hunter, who lies in Centennial park on her deathbed (so her children, who have flown from Europe for the last rites, eagerly suppose), is characterised as someone who 'could be heard at a distance charming her hosts with an impersonation of the character generally accepted as Elizabeth Hunter' (*ES* VIII 378), and who likes to play Field rather than Chopin 'because he is easy...and leisurely enough to show off one's wrists' (397). In a novel that follows nineteenth-century tradition in pitting the pastoral bush setting of the rural family home Kudjeri against Sydney's Centennial Park, she has bullied her husband into building a house in the city: 'The point is, Alfred, you must allow me to give our children what we owe them; here there is no life; and what about their education?' (I 25). At the heart of a crassly materialist society, she has become the ultimate consumer – of other people: 'I went through dolls and jewels and last of all, I longed to possess people who would obey me – and love me of course' (III 161-2).

Here, in the 'self-important metropolis' (VI 252), where, after work, 'men in bars...(begin)...inflating their self-importance with beer' (II 104), where, along the Parramatta Road 'the predominant colour of

the highway was that of cement dust', and only 'the used-car racketeers added something of daring by mooring their fleets under canopies of garish pennants permanently fidgeted by a wind' (X 464), her children Basil and Dorothy spend their childhood, exposed to the prevailing philosophy of 'every good Australian . . . to believe only in the now which you can see and touch' (IX 443). Ostensibly at least, they both violently reject the place and its values and fly the coop to Europe, but there they merely develop their own rackets. Basil becomes an actor and achieves fame, but is acutely aware of its hollowness ('he was the dishonest one. And a bloody superficial Lear' – VII 349), Dorothy contracts a loveless marriage with a French aristocrat which ends with her being cut adrift from him and his family. Both are symbolically barren – Dorothy has no children, Basil only a daughter who is not his own child, who bears a fake Shakespearian name, Imogen, and in whom he takes no interest.

In the bitter ironies of the novel this pair of Sydney products acts out multiple layers of black comedy. The deathbed scenes descend from Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, or several Dickensian reworkings of it (e.g. in *Martin Chuzzlewit* or *Great Expectations*), or Puccini's opera *Gianni Schicchi* based on Dante, where mercenary families flock to pay their last respects to dying Maccenesses from whom they hope to inherit. But the virtuosity of White's range of cultural reference is such that the Lear paradigm is omnipresent, metamorphosing in a bewildering number of variants. Basil has not only played Lear on numerous occasions but also appeared in drag as Goneril – as here with Dorothy as Regan and Mrs Hunter as Lear. They want, not only to whittle down her expenditures to preserve their inheritance (just as Shakespeare's duo want to curb Lear's retinue) but also to hasten her demise by having her put into a home. 'I'm more than ever convinced old people should not be encouraged to live for ever' is Dorothy's hair-raising pronouncement on the subject (VIII 436).

Coming together in this unsavoury cause, Basil and Dorothy share a bed at Kudjeri in another variant of the Platonist incest theme to be found in *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, for just as White makes copious reference to European classic writers (Stendhal and Montherlant as well as Shakespeare and Dickens) he also signals a debt to Stead. In this book the only escape from the melancholy of Sydney that can be imagined comes from the sea – at Watson's Bay, that essential Stead location, 'at least the sea was unspoilt, but only as an expanse, or in its pretty lapping round the stilts of a bleached jetty' (VII 346). 'The eye of the storm' that comes from the sea and gives the book its title provides an out of body experience for Elizabeth Hunter that takes her out of nature, of sex and gender, of the world of the materialist city and society: 'she was no longer a body, least of all a woman; the myth of her womanhood had been exploded by the storm' (VIII 424). 'I was given by chance this human body so difficult to wear', runs the Noh play motto at the novel's outset. It is a surprisingly recurrent theme in Australasian city writing, especially in 'ghostly' Sydney.

Turning now to a group of gifted contemporary city writers – Delia Falconer, Kate Grenville and Gail Jones, all indebted to Stead and White – I want first to look at what is ostensibly a work of non-fiction, Delia Falconer's *Sydney* of 2010, but which can be approached as a kind of prose poem. One of its themes is of particular interest, having grown in prominence in recent Australasian city writing, not only of Sydney – the awareness of the city as a palimpsest in which the present 'unreal city' (recalling T. S. Eliot once more) is merely an overlay built on essential Aboriginal land. Two hundred years of the present civilisation, at least 40,000 of the past: it is hardly surprising that (in the context of, e.g. the Mabo judgement acknowledging native title, the Rudd government's apology to aboriginal people, the now routine public acknowledgement of the traditional owners of city land) imaginative writing about the city and much besides in Australia should in the past few decades have begun regularly to pit the crass materialism of present against the ubiquitous ghostly presence of the spiritual meanings of the past.

Falconer in fact quotes a 1958 essay by Patrick White to characterise the former: in Sydney, he writes, 'the mind is the least of possessions', as 'the buttocks of cars grow hourly glassier, food means stake and cake, muscles prevail, and the march of material ugliness does not raise a quiver from the average nerves' (S 153). But she also insists 'we are the most dialectical of cities', for 'to live here is always to feel the place has a secret life that resists you' (10-11). 'This sense of hauntedness' by the Aboriginal past – the world of the Eora or Weerong or Dharawal – is the focus of an entire chapter, 'Ghosting,' but in practice omnipresent in her book. She relates for instance how the writer Ruth Park, moving into a 'ramshackle old rectory' in Neutral Bay in the 1950s, discovered there a work of Aboriginal art: 'the tail of a sacred snake disappeared beneath the house and outside toilet' (31). She tells of numerous 'middens', in the shape of left-behind seashells discarded by aboriginal groups, constantly being uncovered during excavation in present-day Sydney. The Opera House stands on a vast one, and 'in the early 1990s, the tiniest of middens was uncovered by an archaeologist hired by developers in the foundation of a nineteenth-century terrace in Cumberland Street in The Rocks . . . dating it to 300 years before European settlement' (32). And in an extraordinary story of involuntary modern return to aboriginal life in 1951, in the heart of the city Falconer remembers how 'Stefan and Genowefa Petroszys, displaced persons from Lithuania', imagining the KGB (The Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union) to be on their trail, 'made their way to a rock cave, probably one of the old Aboriginal rock shelters or "gibber gunyahs," just downstream from the Roseville Bridge on the other side of Middle Harbour,' where, 'for the next twenty-eight years they would live (. . .) on roots, berries, fish and rats' (121).

Falconer explores this dialectic of present and past in much fine writing – in contrasts between the harmonies of aboriginal seasonal rhythms of life ('the Dharawal recognise six seasons in the Sydney region: Ngoonungi . . . Parra'dowee . . . Buran . . . Marrai'gang . . . Burrugin . . . Wirritjiribin' – 143) and the incongruities of Northern hemisphere seasonal customs

like Christmas reproduced in the antipodes, for instance. She offers some fascinating folk etymologies – e.g. how ‘Yarramundi’ became ‘Yellow Mondays’, the name given to a type of cicada she would catch as a child. Above all, she renders the ‘psychic consequences’ for contemporary city dwellers of living with such ghostly echoes of the past in precise meditative sentences, recording how ‘the result is a dreaminess, a sense of pleasant unreality, a spectral feeling of sunny suspension as one drives the endless streets and roads – which can, if disturbed, turn hostile’ (43).

But perhaps no Sydney writer has done more to bring to consciousness the city’s ‘secret life’ than Kate Grenville. This applies in particular to what is perhaps her most ambitious and significant work, *The Secret River*, the subject of an ABC TV serial in 2015, but in general her writing since the turn of the century has been concerned with the relationship of white and Aboriginal Australia. I shall illustrate this by looking at two works that apparently have little in common – *The Secret River* itself, dedicated ‘to the Aboriginal people of Australia: past, present and future’, and her most recent book *One Life: My Mother’s Story* (2015) – like Falconer’s book a work of non-fiction (a biography in this case) – an account of Nance’s struggle to become a pharmacist in Sydney in a male-dominated profession and society, and later, to bring up her family there. Through this comparison, I hope to show how Grenville, in all her recent work, attempts to write out her own sorrowful feeling of responsibility, and that of her family and predecessors and all white Australians, in suppressing the memory of the brutal racial crimes – amounting to a kind of genocide – upon which Sydney and Australia have been built.

The essential Aboriginal reference in *One Life* comes right at the end of the book, in a postscript that recounts a kind of conversion experience in her mother’s life, after a trip in 1959 to Uluru. Yet it has antecedents, particularly when her brother Frank teaches her how to spell and pronounce ‘Bringalilli’. ‘Seems only right to say it their way, Frank said. Least we can do, all things considered,’ and ‘once he had told her she made a point of saying it the Aboriginal way’ (OL78). But the later trip, we are told, ‘changed her thinking about the place she called home’. Nance wanted to write about it, but was unable to: ‘among her papers there are several drafts in which you can sense her trying to process an experience too deep to be immediately understood’, an awareness that people who were not fifth-generation Australian like herself but ‘five-hundredth or five-thousandth’ had an infinitely profounder relation to the terrain on which Sydney stands, ‘where every rock and every seep of water had its story, like a title-deed’. Nance’s essential recognition is that ‘there was no escaping the reality that Australian had belonged to the Indigenous people, and in some sense it always would’ (239–241).

This book, and even more perhaps *The Secret River* of 2005, writes the experience Grenville’s mother was unable to express. *One Life* begins with a family tree, that traces the line five generations back to Solomon Wiseman (1770–1838), transported to Australia for stealing timber on the Thames. That river is balanced

against the 'secret' Hawkesbury river in the earlier book, as London as a whole is against Sydney, the one seemingly solid and substantial, the other, in its early stages, as yet a thin and fragile overlay over a profoundly established way of life.

The Secret River centres around a figure based on Kate and Nance's convict ancestor Solomon Wiseman, here dubbed William Thornhill. Its structure is inherently binary, and the first opposition to note is that between Sal and William, the former for ever fondly attached to the idea of metropolitan *nostos*, the latter a kind of counterpart of Faulkner's Thomas Sutpen in *Absalom! Absalom!*, driven to establish himself, to stake out property for his inheritors and descendants in a hostile and alien environment. Another is the contrast between London and Sydney, but (although this is essentially a Sydney novel) the latter city has yet to emerge as a fully realised community. It is as though, to balance Richard Jeffries's *After London*, Grenville is imagining here a 'Before Sydney'. For this is an aetiological book meditating on the recent origins of the present-day city, and thereby upon the fragility and insubstantiality of all such apparently solid human urban habitats.

It opens brilliantly with a prelude, 'Strangers', describing Thornhill's first encounter with an Aborigine on his first night in Australia in 1806 – irresistibly reminding the reader, of Wilfred Owen's 'Strange Meeting' ('I am the enemy you killed, my friend'). Thornhill sleeps in a shelter that has 'hardly a door, barely a wall . . . no need of lock', that is, with little or no demarcation between home and outdoors and nothing to determine the boundaries of property. Here he comes face-to-face with an absolutely alien human 'other': 'it took a moment to understand that the stirring was a human, as black as the air itself. His skin swallowed the light and made him seem not quite real, something only imagined' (SR 5).

The novel's most fundamental binary is thus introduced – so fundamental that to the white man the human 'other' of Aboriginal Australia seems, not only inhuman, almost as of another species, but even as unreal, a mere imaginary ghost or nightmare. Yet in exploring this absolute contrast, the writing develops multiple paradoxes and ironies. What for instance if, as in Stead's *For Love Alone*, it is the 40,000+-year old culture supplanted by the whites that contains stronger and deeper elements of what might be regarded as 'civilised values'?

Thus, in this book the lifestyle of the indigenous people of Australia appears strangely aristocratic – 'they were like gentry. They spent a little time each day on their business, but the rest was their own to enjoy'. But whereas the values of civilised leisure in Europe were created only for a privileged few benefitting from the subjection of others, Aboriginal 'aristocracy' is such that it does not require an underclass of servants and labourers: 'there was no call for another class of folk who stood waiting up to their thighs in river-water for them to finish their chat so they could be taken to their play or their ladyfriend' (238).

Against this representation of a civilisation is played a white European obsession with power, ownership and material possession. Having offended in the cities of the old world against laws designed to protect private property, the convicts in the new display an insatiable appetite for it. The

language used to describe this fixation belongs to basic instincts, and marks them out, in the ‘strange meeting’ that occurs throughout the book, as the real ‘primitives’. When Thornhill sees the place he wants to make ‘Thornhill’s Point’, ‘it was a piercing hunger in his guts: to own it’ (110). Later, the hunger instinct is replaced as drive and motivation by a displaced version of sexual desire: ‘he could not forget the quiet ground beyond the screen of reeds and mangroves and the gentle swelling of the point, as sweet as a woman’s body’ (125). And Sal, never having been convicted of any crime hitherto, is now ‘a prisoner here’ in Thornhill’s property, ‘marking off the days in her little round of beaten earth, and it was unspoken because she did not want him to feel a jailor’ (155).

Thus, the book asks us to weigh in the balance the advantages and disadvantages of a city and civilisation where *the blacks have no word for property* (270) against the advantages and disadvantages of one where ‘only when the sun slipped down behind the ridge did they take their ease, and by then . . . no one seemed to have energy to spare for making a baby laugh’ (237). In the world outside the fiction – the world it inhabits and addresses – it is perhaps only in the present, with heightened awareness of what has been lost and gained through the overwhelming urbanisation of Australia in the past 200 years, that this question can begin to be addressed.

I close this rapid survey of a few Sydney writers with Gail Jones’s *Five Bells* (2012). Its title refers to a famous poem by Kenneth Slessor written a decade or so after the presumed suicide in 1927 of an Irish-Australian friend and colleague, Joe Lynch, a black-and-white artist fond of amber fluids who jumped overboard from a ferry in Sydney Harbour. Slessor’s title itself, as well as the gap between the event and the writing of the poem obliquely referred to in its opening lines (‘Time that is moved by little fidget wheels/Is not my time, the flood that does not flow’), also provides Jones’s essential subject: time.

Her book thus goes back to the beginnings of modernist city fiction. It centres around Circular Quay, the focal point of the transport system of Sydney’s inner harbour – like *Manhattan Transfer* or *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the link with the former strengthened by the fact that here too the train is an ‘El’; it interweaves the stories of related and unrelated individuals in the urban crowd; and its action takes place in one day, like *Ulysses* or *Mrs Dalloway*, a day that is shown as an intersection of all previous time in the lives of its main protagonists who form four of the novel’s ‘five bells’ (the fifth is a child, a shadowy figure who seems to go missing on the day in question, under the very noses of two other ‘bells’).

All the characters are in some sense in mourning – this is ‘melancholic’ Sydney again – and thus connect with Slessor’s elegiac poem. Only two are Australian, James and Ellie: the former re-enacts Joe Lynch’s suicide, or, more distantly, that of Septimus Smith in *Mrs Dalloway*, and his death mixes Slessor’s language (the black wet pushed its thumb-balls in) with Woolf’s: ‘he was washed and washed into the mothering darkness, a release, a release, as sound releases; into the wake, Gennaro’s wake, and into waves, in waves’ (*FB* 208). The other two are, respectively, from Ireland (Catherine, who has lost her brother in a car accident)

and China. Pei Xing grieves for the loss of parents who were murdered during the Cultural Revolution, but here in Sydney again recapitulates Owen's 'Strange Meeting' in regular encounters with the woman who had been her former prison guard in China, acting out a process of healing that goes in another direction from James's trajectory. The global dimension of contemporary Sydney is embraced here, and we have for the first time in this series of books extended consciousness of Australia's significant Asian dimension, past and present.

Jones's book can easily be shown to carry forward the critique of modern urban 'fidgeting' pioneered in the work of Stead and White – in particular into the 'digit fidget' era, as she observes what people around nowadays seem to feel compelled to do as they travel on mass urban transport: 'people settled, talked on mobile phones, sent text messages that reduced the world and its vast feelings to a few shiny codes. All those swift fidget fingers tapping into enigmatic circuits' (12). Her tone is as ferocious as anything in White – or Sebald for that matter – when she moves to writing about the Museum of Contemporary Art where, before an installation entitled 'Cosmos 4' Catherine 'found herself now confronted by a sequence of objects that might have been constructed by robots. They were of space-age substances and undetectable handiwork. They had a technological sheen and a kind of high unheard frequency; a dog led to this place might begin howling' (160). She herself does not howl, but 'a sculpture of multiple breasts in pink neon drove Catherine from the room' (161). Yet as with Stead and Grenville and (implicitly) White there is in Australasian city writing the regular imagining of possible alternatives. 'She took the lift to the third floor and there she was humbled', by the art of Aboriginal women with 'mellifluous names' that Jones, like Falconer before her, is disposed to rehearse – 'Kathleen Petyarre, Gloria Petyarre, Emily Kame Ngwarraye'. 'These women seemed to believe that pattern was everywhere. Pattern was thought, and spirit, and land, and time' (161). Here city and cosmos, matter and spirit, truly interact.

Thus, Jones's book serves as a perfect summation of the Sydney writing surveyed here – all concerned, not with the 'little fidget wheels of time' but with an immense past and, in some cases, a possible utopian future. She takes us back in scope and imaginative energy to the beginning, to Stead's *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, for James's suicide clearly also repeats Michael's. And one may ask rhetorically whether any other body of recent city writing retains so coherent a set of concerns over the decades since the era of high modernism as that of Sydney, and not readily find an answer.

Perhaps because of distance (even from Sydney to Melbourne), Australia seems to invite stereotype and cliché. Turning from Sydney to Melbourne, I want to avoid one of them: the idea that the two largest and culturally richest Antipodean cities are deadly rivals. Delia Falconer, is aware of the temptation, avowing that 'when I first agreed to write this book I made myself a promise that I would not play the cities off against each other, because their rivalry is a cliché, and because I wanted to reflect the truth:

while Melbourne regards the northern city as Gomorrah, Sydney rarely thinks of Melbourne' (S 167). But perhaps she too falls in to the trap. When I asked Helen Garner, whom many would regard as the doyenne of contemporary Melbourne writers, whether she regarded herself as such, she was dismissive of the whole idea of there being such a thing as a Melbourne or Sydney writer (in which case she, from Geelong, would be neither) and certainly not disposed to regard Sydney as Gomorrah. For Gomorrah is everywhere if you want to find it, and Melbourne, in some of Garner's work, and that of some of her predecessors in writing about the city, may serve just as well.

Which is not to say that there are not significant differences between writing about the two cities. Both construct myths, but out of different materials. Though John Shaw Neilson (1872–1942) ('black with every sin', as he puts it) in his fine Melbourne ballad poem 'Stony Town' works the same age-old contrast between country and city to be found in White, for example, and apparently shares with some of the Sydney writers a reverence for a premodern Australian dreamtime, he emphasises specific features of Melbourne's geography – its flat, gridiron layout for instance, which is unlike Sydney's:

Stony Town

If ever I go to Stony Town
I'll go as to a fair,
With bells and men and a dance girl
With a heat wave in her hair.

I'll ask the birds that be on the road –
I dream (though it may not be)
That the eldest Song was a forest thought
And the Singer was a tree.

Oh, Stony Town is a hard town,
It buys and sells and buys,
It will not pity the plight of youth
Nor any Love in the eyes.

No curve they follow in Stony Town,
But the straight line and the square,
But the girl will dance them a royal dance
Like a blue wren at his prayer. . . .

(Grimwade 126-7)

Where Neilson takes the main arteries of Melbourne as the focus of his symbolic geography of a kind of hell, Fergus Hume (1859–1932), in his fascinating 1886 self-published detective novel *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab* takes us on to a journey into darker recesses of the city, the characteristic network of narrow 'lanes' that provide links between them that is again unique to Melbourne. He makes reference to a wide range of literary antecedents – Dickens, Bunyan, Dante – in attempting a poetic mythologising of the city:

The brilliantly lit street, with the never-ceasing stream of people pouring along, the shrill cries of the street Arabs, the rattle of vehicles, and the fitful strains of music, all made up a scene which fascinated him, and he could have gone on wandering all night, watching the myriad phases of human character constantly passing before his eyes. But his guide, with whom familiarity with the proletarians had, in a great measure, bred indifference, hurried him away to Little Bourke-street, where the narrowness of the street, with the high buildings on each side, the dim light of the sparsely scattered gas lamps, and the few ragged looking figures slouching along, formed a strong contrast to the brilliant and crowded scene they had just left. Turning off Little Bourke-street, the detective led the way down a dark lane, which felt like a furnace, owing to the heat of the night; but, on looking up, Calton caught a glimpse of the blue sky far above, glittering with stars, which gave him quite a sensation of coolness.

‘Keep close to me’, whispered Kilsip, touching the barrister on the arm, ‘We may meet some nasty customers about here.’

Mr Calton, however, did not need such a warning, for the neighbourhood through which they were passing was so like that of the Seven Dials in London, that he kept as closely to the side of his guardian, as did Dante to that of Virgil in the Infernal Regions. It was not quite dark, for the atmosphere had that luminous kind of haze so observable in Australian twilights, and this weird light was just sufficient to make the darkness visible, Kilsip and the barrister kept for safety in the middle of the alley so that no one could spring upon them unaware, and they could see sometimes on the one side, a man cowering back into the black shadow, or on the other, a woman with disordered hair and bare bosom, leaning out of a window trying to get a breath of fresh air. There were also some children playing in the dried-up gutter, and their shrill young voices came echoing strangely through the gloom, mingling with a bacchanalian sort of song a man was singing, as he slouched along unsteadily over the rough stones. Now and then a mild looking string of Chinamen stole along, clad in their dull hued blue blouses, either chattering shrilly, like a lot of parrots, or moving silently down the alley with a stolid Oriental apathy on their yellow faces. Here and there came a stream of warm light through an open door, and within, the Mongolians were gathered round the gambling tables, playing fan-tan, or leaving the seductions of their favourite pastime, and gliding soft-footed to the many cook-shops, where enticing-looking fowls and turkeys, already cooked, were awaiting purchasers. Kilsip turning to the left, led the barrister down another and still narrower lane, the darkness and gloom of which made the lawyer shudder, as he wondered how human beings could live in them.

‘It is like walking in the valley of the shadow of death,’ he muttered to himself, as they brushed past a woman who was crouching down in a dark corner, and who looked up at them with an evil scowl on her white face. And, indeed, it was not unlike the description in Bunyan’s famous allegory, what with the semi-darkness, the wild lights and shadows, and the vague undefinable forms of men and women flitting to and fro in the dusky twilight.

At last to Calton’s relief, for he felt somewhat bewildered by the darkness and narrowness of the lanes through which he had been taken, the detective stopped before a door, which he opened, and stepping inside, beckoned to the barrister to

follow. Calton did so, and found himself in a low, dark, ill-smelling passage, at the end of which they saw a faint light. Kilsip caught his companion by the arm and guided him carefully along the passage. There was much need of this caution, for Calton could feel that the rotten boards were full of holes, into which one or the other of his feet kept slipping from time to time, while he could hear the rats squeaking and scampering away on all sides. Just as they got to the end of this tunnel, for it could be called nothing else, the light suddenly went out, and they were left in complete darkness. (Grimwade 187–90)

And even Bruce Dawe (b. 1930), writing in his poem ‘Life-Style’ in a more light-hearted vein about another distinctive Melbourne myth or stereotype – the notion that virtually every one of its inhabitants is obsessed with Australian Rules ‘footie’ – uses echoes of Binyon and Jung and Frazer’s *Golden Bough* in his panegyric to the heroes of urban folk sporting legend:

They will not grow old as those from more northern States grow old,
for them it will always be three-quarter-time
with the scores level and the wind advantage in the final term,
That passion persisting, like a race-memory, through the welter of seasons,
enabling old-timers by boundary-fences to dream of resurgent lions
and centaur-figures from the past to replenish continually the present.
So that mythology may be perpetually renewed
and Chicken Smallhorn return like the maize-god
in a thousand shapes, the dancers changing
But the dance forever the same – the elderly still
loyally crying Carn . . . Carn . . . (if feebly) unto the very end,
having seen in the six-foot recruit from Eaglehawk their hope of salvation.

(Grimwade 137-8)

At first sight, Helen Garner’s now classic *Monkey Grip* of 1977, which inaugurates an impressive series of recent work set in Melbourne by herself and others (Alan Wearne, Steven Carroll, etc.), might appear somewhat set apart from most of the work considered here, for the vivid realism of its depiction of a Melbourne bohemia addicted in equal measure to drugs and sex seems to preclude any mythic dimension (‘there was nothing mythic at Sydney,’ writes Shirley Hazzard in *The Transit of Venus* about the 1930s (TV37), and the same might seem to apply here to Melbourne in the 1970s). And indeed, Garner’s subsequent evolution into Australia’s most distinctive and distinguished practitioner of ‘factual fiction’ or ‘faction’, in the tradition of Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood* of 1965, might seem to support this impression. But it is a mistaken one. On the very first pages, in fact, metaphoric connotation starts to add further meaning to descriptive denotation. Martin, soon to be displaced by Javo the junkie as Nora the narrator/heroine’s lover, returns from ‘Disaster Bay’; the trio go off to swim at the Fitzroy baths, where Nora stares at the capitalised Dantesque sign ‘ACQUA PROFONDA’ (MG 2). Which does not stop her going off to ‘Disaster Bay’, where one of the

company, Lou, softly recites a line from John Clare's poem 'I am!': 'and the huge shipwreck of my own esteem'.

So, too, this novel continues the magisterial habit of literary allusion (not at all a sign of inferiority or derivativeness!) that characterises Australasian city writing. Nora and Javo are, to borrow another line from the poem, 'the self-consumers of their woes', as the novel pursues with austere single-mindedness the implications of the central metaphor of its title. Vicious circles, endless repetition, hypnotic possession – these are already implicit at Disaster Bay, where Nora and the children roll sandballs on the beach: 'we rolled and rolled, hypnotised... we sang and rolled and sang, naked and sweaty' (3). 'Smack habit, love habit – what's the difference?' (106) is one frequently quoted laconic formula in the novel for the intertwining 'monkey grip' of endless drug dependency and insatiable sexual desire, (with Nietzsche's 'Alle Lust will Ewigkeit... will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit' hovering in the background), relentlessly explored in this novel through Nora's eyes wide shut gaze.

Another Melbourne book by Garner deserving more attention than I can give here is *The Children's Bach* (a third, her first 'factual fiction', *The First Stone* of 1995, is an altogether too complex and controversial study of many-sided Melbourne hypocrisies for me to do anything other than enthusiastically recommend it, even to those who may end up being appalled by its abrasive take on feminist as well as masculinist and colonialist versions thereof). Whether or not, one entirely agrees with Don Anderson's hyperbolic claim that 'there are four perfect short novels in the English language. They are, in chronological order, Ford's *The Good Soldier*, Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and Garner's *The Children's Bach*' (see McPhee 243), Garner's second novel offers a dazzling virtuoso meditation on a cluster of meanings centring on the opposition of city cacophonies and ordered musical sound, as these are registered on the sensorium of a severely disabled boy. There is perhaps a strain of Platonism again in the exploration, on the one hand, of 'the sirens (that) drive him crazy. Sometimes they're so far away that we can't even hear them. He's like a dog' (CB 53) and, on the other, of Athena in the city playing Bach on the piano and tossing notes 'high into the sparkling air!' (164)

Finally to New Zealand and its capital Wellington, a much smaller place than Sydney or Melbourne, but one which was the subject of great writing before them. After the 1915 war death of her brother Leslie, Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923) resolved to focus her work on her childhood relationship with him. One of the finest stories written by anyone at any time anywhere is 'The Garden Party', a searching probe into class relations in the city that anticipates in small scale (as a kind of 'Poor People of Wellington' story) the later epic breadth of Stead's first novel.

The story's title itself gives an initial clue to its focus – only rich houses with tennis courts hold garden parties for which no expense is spared to provide a profusion of lilies and other flowers. Mansfield was eminently a writer who, like Dickens, captures the rich varieties of city speech: as late as 30 April 1922 (7 months before her death), she planned to give public readings of her work: 'I intend, next spring, to go to London, take the Bechstein Hall and give readings

of my stories. I've always wanted to do this, and of course it would be a great advertisement. Dickens used to do it... he knew his people just as I know old Ma Parker's voice and the Ladies Maid' (Letters V, 160). And here the voice with which the story opens is manifestly that of a person who is involved in the holding of garden parties and the petty anxieties about their outcome that go with the task: 'And after all the weather was ideal' (401).

That is to say: it is a middle-class voice, a Mrs Hunter voice, the voice of someone for whom all commodities can be ordered. As in Ben Jonson's humorous utopian 'To Penshurst,' where 'fat, aged carps... run into thy nets', nature itself is given volition that seems only too willing to do human bidding, for not only the bought flowers but also the roses in the garden itself put on a suitable show: 'you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden parties.' Archangels, it seems to this voiced epitome of self-importance, have visited overnight.

But in this story – which, once more, like the city novels of high modernism, takes place in one day – Wellington is divided into those in the light and those in the shadow. The divide is mapped in terms of height and depth – the poor live in 'little cottages... in a lane to themselves at the very bottom of a steep rise that led up to the house' – as well as in terms of a measure of distance that is more symbolic than real – 'a broad road ran between'. (408) What happens on the day of the party is that this nether world, with the accidental death of one of the inmates of the cottages, encroaches in unwelcome fashion on the world of the rich. Nature and meteorology may be obedient to the desires of the rich, but urban society is not.

There is savage Wildean comedy of the Lady Bracknell variety as Mrs Sheridan shrieks with anguish at the thought that the death may have occurred in the garden itself, and then sighs with relief: 'oh, what a fright you gave me!' Only Laura, the central figure in the story, feels at first that the party should be cancelled, but she is won over by another commodity – her mother's gift of a hat that will enable her to appear as a grown-up belle at the festivities.

But this is a story in which the middle-class city child (unlike the children in *The Eye of the Storm* growing up in Sydney) experiences a real and not illusory initiation into adulthood. Sent down to the cottages with an appallingly insensitive basket of party leftovers (but not any of the flowers, usually appropriate on such occasions, because they might ruin her dress!), Laura embarks on a harrowing of what, from a middle-class perspective, is the hell of the world of the slums. Everything here is in shade: 'it was just growing dusky... a big dog ran by like a shadow' (411). The dog might be Cerberus, and the myth invoked that of Orpheus and Eurydice, in which a taboo is placed on gazing on the face of the dead creature, as it is about to be here by Mrs Sheridan – 'don't on any account' before being withdrawn with staggering condescension: 'no, better not put such ideas into the child's head!'

But Laura *does* see the corpse, invited to do so in a casual and easy way by his sister-in-law, for whom death is not the other side of some 'broad road'. In the most brilliant touch of all, perhaps, she also sees, immediately thereafter, her

brother Laurie, who has taken the role of Virgil in her descent. He is clearly the Leslie who died in 1915, for 'he stepped out of the shadow' (413), and the brother/sister reunion of Laura and Laurie at the end of the story appears as another Australasian version of Plato's myth of origin.

Thus, T.S. Eliot's famous remarks on *Ulysses* have their application here too: 'in using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity, Mr Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him.' The miracle of Mansfield's own pursuit of it lies not only in its unobtrusive lightness of touch but also in the density of meaning she is able to pack into a mere 12 pages of narrative.

Wellington is mythologised quite differently in *The Great Fire* of 2004 by the Australian writer Shirley Hazzard, the last text I consider here. It is a book written in the spirit of Brecht's 1951 pronouncement on the years immediately following 1945 – the period with which the novel is concerned – and fears at that time of a coming third world war: 'Great Carthage waged three wars. It was still powerful after the first, still inhabitable after the second. It was no longer to be found after the third.' The cosmopolitan element prominent in much of the Australasian city writing discussed here is very much to the fore, as its protagonist Aldred Leith, a war-time hero in several theatres of combat, interrupts a book he is writing about China to travel to Japan to report on Hiroshima. There he meets and falls in love with an Australian girl much younger than he is, Helen Driscoll, the daughter of a thoroughly blinkered brigadier, who follows the pattern of other characters studied here in her intense relationship to a dying brother. She reciprocates, and is whisked away to New Zealand by her parents in order to escape Aldred's attentions.

Wellington thus stands at the end of the line – historically and spatially. Historically, it comes after the 'great fire' of Hiroshima, the last in a series of cataclysmic disasters that begins with the Fire of London in 1666, marked by 'The Monument', the tallest structure in London, which had a profound impact on Leith as a child (103). Then comes the First War – 'to have been on earth, merely, during the First World War is to have experienced Hades' (269), and then the Second, from which, 'having expected, repeatedly, to die from the great fires into which his time had pitched him', Leith has 'recovered a great desire to live completely' (188) – with Helen. From a spatial point of view, the only stop after Wellington is the Antarctic – the place of ice and death, 'to whose white magnet the nation was irresistibly drawn' (263), the polar opposite and counterpart of the great fire itself.

Is Helen to be entombed here in symbolic death? An Englishman whom she meets in Wellington, Sidney Fairfax, waiting for his father to return from an expedition in the Antarctic, proposes this possibility to her: 'I was never consistently aware of my position on the face of the earth, were you? Sea-girt, southerly, sundered. And my father so much more so, near the Pole', and she accepts his suggestion: 'yes, the islands seem adrift on the atlas. There is our helplessness, even to register. I suppose it could be seen as floating free' (299-300). And to be

sure, Hazzard's representation of Wellington, as of Sydney in an earlier book *The Transit of Venus*, is anything but positive. There she had followed White and Stead in articulating withering scorn for the crass vulgarity of the place – 'refinement was a frail construction continually dashed by waves of raw, reminding humanity: the six o'clock shambles outside the pubs, men struggling in vomit and broken glass; the group of wharfies on their Smoke-O (smoking break), squatting round a flipped coin near the Quay and calling out in angry lust to women passing' (39) – here she depicts a waste land of conformity and mediocrity, where, on her way to meet Eleanor Fry and her mother in suburban Wellington Helen experiences the place as 'small, rickety, irrelevant: unresponsive to destiny. And Helen saw herself creeping, Lilliputian, over that disregarded topography, walking to Kelburn without expectation of change' (263).

Yet change does come at Kelburn. Mrs Fry, Eleanor's mother, at first strikes the baleful note of Dante's *Inferno* ('lasciate ognor speranza, voi ch'entrate qui'): 'whoever comes to these islands, even now, feels that it is forever. The distance is fateful' (266). The lives of mother and daughter have been blasted by war; Eleanor's French lover killed at the Ypres salient. Yet they are undefeated – 'Mrs Fry had laughed with the laugh of a merry girl, and Elinor had used the word "sublime"' (272). Above all, while they are speaking, there is quintessential New Zealand experience of disaster in the shape of an earthquake tremor, 'infinitesimal but absolute', and they do not turn a hair: Carthage does not come to an end. They are courage teachers vicariously urging Helen to write her love letter to Aldred. And thus they, as ordinary Wellingtonians, have their place in setting up the beautiful, fragile, tentative lovers' reunion of the ending, with its Burns echo, reclaiming this ultima Thule: 'Ten thousand miles had been retraced, down to the final fleshly touch where he could wake and touch her, and say her name' (314).

Thus, Shirley Hazzard is another modern Antipodean writer of high seriousness contributing significantly to a staggeringly coherent and impressive body of work. Anyone who thinks that Australasian city writing is inferior, or parochial or peripheral to contemporary urban experience, is in the grip of stereotypes and clichés for which there is only one remedy: to begin reading some of these authors.

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Urban Themes

INTRODUCTION

The Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun (1859–1952) begins *Hunger* (1890) by saying that ‘all of this happened while I was walking about starving in Christiania [i.e. Oslo]—that strange city no one escapes from until it is has left his mark on him . . .’. The fantasies, the creation of words, the desire to hurt the self, the sense of the city as a place of internal migration, keeping the self on the move (and there is only the self in this book) are all products of the city from which the ‘I’—not a unitary ‘I’ however, escapes by taking ship to drop ballast at Leeds followed by coal at Cádiz. Hamsun has the sense that living in the city, or rather wandering in it, is not without the city writing the self, just as much as cities have changed writing. Sara Thornton discusses the fit between realism and the city by looking at the classic realist texts of the nineteenth century, and their more specialised form, the naturalist novel. How did this respond to the desire to describe and account for the diversity of lives, to bring different classes and class interests into a ‘totality’, a word which echoes from Hegel and Marx? She reads Flaubert positively, in a way which contrasts with other senses of Flaubert as the writer who shows that all looking is platitudinous, already co-opted into bourgeois looking.

Modernism, Iain Bailey’s subject, could be seen as a rejection of this possibility: the city could not be charted, there could be no overreaching narrative which would explain the motor forces within cities and society. Modernism resorts to new styles, following Joyce. After *Manhattan Transfer*, Dos Passos’ *USA* as a novel aspiring to be an American epic, is Whitmanesque in writing the lives of prominent Americans—capitalists or inventors—in what looks like a free verse format. An epic modernism is also in William Carlos Williams, in his long poem in five books about a city in New Jersey: *Paterson* (1946–1958). This is Whitmanesque and draws on the idea of newspapers as a ‘democratic’ feature within the modern United States, accepting their mode of utterance in a qualified way, like Joyce and Dos Passos, whose *USA* works with newspaper headlines, seeing the city as comprising news in tabloid form, presented in montage-like sequences.

Yet the sense that the city as a knowable or unknowable entity also has sections within it which resist knowing, and that newspapers prevent knowledge, presenting only potted information whose content is ideological, makes it knowable in one way to the tourist, the subject of Paul Smethurst's chapter, but resisting knowledge, because cities create a new consciousness, which Sara Thornton hints at, and which Jason Finch discussed in Part I in relation to Simmel. The city overcomes traditional ways of knowing which presupposes a fixed object of knowledge. There have been endless travellers' accounts of the city; these are touched on here by Smethurst, but the detective novel, usually a realist form, aims to track down the 'heart of darkness' within the city, as Stephen Knight brings out (To use the imagery of Conrad: to suggest that the city has an unknowable 'darkness', even horror within it, risks what is always problematic within 'representation': fixing the other, thinking that he or she can be known *and judged objectively*; thinking that everything is a fit object for investigation, which implies an intolerable superiority.) The fantasy of complete knowledge produces on the one side the utopian city, all laid open and bare, expressed most fully in the Great Exhibition, which became the Crystal Palace. This is a theme which Benjamin writes about and it appears in the novel by Chernyshevsky, *What is to be Done?* (1863) which thinks of the ideal city and ideal society on the lines of the Crystal Palace. The failure of such planning gives the sense that the city is finally dystopic, a nightmare, which is what Dostoevsky's *Underground Man* thinks. This equivocality is Lieven Ameel's subject in the last essay. And with the thought of dystopias, which evoke endless conurbations, and the unpausing multiplying of shanty towns and slums, making these cities of the future, goes the other question: is the city a unit which can be talked about at all?

Jacques Derrida's essay 'Des Tours de Babel' (1980) analyses the Biblical story of the building of the city and tower which is called Babel (Genesis Chap. 11), subject of Breugel's picture, which gives the fantasy of a gigantic molar structure, dominated by one man who has architectural fantasies, as Hitler had, hence the prominence he gave to Albert Speer (1905–1981). But Babel means 'confusion' and implies that the god who must be scaled and the punishment he executes on the builders of Babel, by confusing their languages, are the same confusion: that the city is the impossible plurality of different tongues, which must, but cannot be translated, and the loss of a single 'proper' language means that the city has no single language, nor anything proper to it. Control of language, and in particular, a hegemonic language is essential to rule: Antonio de Nebrija, who compiled the first Spanish grammar in 1492, said in his Introduction 'language has always been the companion of empire', a statement Todorow quotes (p. 123). In cities, plural languages are the rule; we cannot find a city as a 'pure' concept: it does not express a nation and its spaces, however much they may be bought up or privatised: they are always for contestation. Derrida proposes that the city, as encouraging 'cosmopolitanism' should not be thought of as having the swagger that being a citizen of the world, in the age of globalisation, usually implies: cosmopolitanism for Derrida is not a matter of

being at home anywhere, in shopping chains which have branches everywhere, starting at the city's airports, which in some ways are becoming the new cities, or in tourist malls which are identical the world over, and which feed golf courses just outside—an utopia or dystopia according to taste—it is rather concerned with the refugee, recognising that the city is the place where single national values cannot and should not obtain and where people are émigré; cities are cities of refuge and respond to people who have been denied of rights.

The ultimate dystopia is when cities are divided between their centres, and their peripheries, poor districts like Molembeek in Brussels, or where minorities have been pushed out of the centre into banlieues which may extend far out of town, with little public transport access to the city, as has happened with Paris, the exact reverse of American towns such as Detroit where the centre is empty and the middle-class in suburbs. Either way is a denial of what a city means, and also a marker that the city may no longer work as a unified concept; that its difference from the country it is within has gone.

Realism and its Revelations: City Perspectives in London and Paris

Sara Thornton

INTRODUCTION

A young ‘matte painter’ and concept artist working in Barcelona recently commented on his created image ‘London during the Victorian era’, a digital image of London at night. Pau Minguell said, ‘My idea was to create a view of the old London during the night. I didn’t want to recreate the city to perfection (lots of buildings aren’t at the original location), I focused on capturing a good atmosphere and image composition’. He then says his painting was ‘inspired by the environments of the literature of Arthur Conan Doyle, Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde. And also by the fantastic matte paintings of Peter Ellenshaw for *Mary Poppins*’ (Minguell 2016). Here, Victorian literature is seen as producing or offering up ‘environments’ which can be reproduced in new ways and capable of persisting in newer popular medial forms. Matte painting, originally a cinema technique back in the celluloid days when a scene was painted onto glass and used as a false backdrop for film sequences, is now an artistic practice in the digital era and, however fantastic the aesthetics, still deeply connected to realist representation and a reality effect. What is interesting in Minguell’s explanation is the idea of ‘capturing’ an ‘atmosphere’ and a ‘composition’ rather than seeking perfect mimesis; the artist is seizing on a sense of something, a recorded effect and a recorded affect in the environments created by canonical Victorian novels. Realism is being used as a practice, not for its potential veracity or as a window on the historical world, but as an understanding of how things once seemed, perhaps even a ‘structure of feeling’. This is not to say that they do not offer the political clarity that Lukács lamented had been lost in modernism but that they offer it obliquely and in a fractured way. The realist novel cannot offer a perfect blueprint or working model for the functioning of society and

its power structures, but it records with its own hesitant new tools an environment in the process of change.

This chapter explores panoramic descriptions of the city in the nineteenth century in Balzac, Dickens, Sue, Hugo, Flaubert, Zola and Gissing – views from above seen by particular subjects who record and decipher what is laid out beneath their eyes. We will consider how these urban views help us understand ‘realism’ as a literary genre, a movement and a practice anchored in the past but leading to the present and the future. It will also ask what realist descriptions of the city in the French and British nineteenth century creatively reveal about the social and economic reality of the *polis*, and what link this may have to what Lukács called ‘objective reality’ (Lukács 2001: 1041).

Let us consider some of the arguments concerning realism and its bad press as well as the good press it is increasingly receiving in the twenty-first century. In France, realism was not simply a genre but part of a desire to understand the functioning of human society: in 1856, Louis Edmond Duranty and Jules Assézat launched the review *Réalisme* where they rejected Romanticism’s insistence on the individual soul and its passions. Duranty felt that literature should cover all life’s aspects and in particular the way men earned their livings and reflected society’s divisions and professions: ‘(. . .) the principle passions of man stem from his profession in society which exerts a pressure on his ideas, his desires, his goal in life and actions’ / ‘(. . .) les principales passions de l’homme s’attachent à sa profession sociale, elle exerce une pression sur ses idées, ses désirs, son but, ses actions’ (Duranty 1856: 4. My translation). Jules Husson, known as Champfleury, wrote in his manifesto, *Le Réalisme*, that he wished to ‘understand the causes of and the means by which works of art take on the appearance of reality’ / ‘chercher les causes et les moyens qui donnent les apparences de la réalité aux oeuvres d’art’ (Champfleury 1857: 1). Realism was therefore both an aesthetic concern (how visual art or writing created the illusion of the real) and a political tool (revealing the everyday pressures of urban organisation on the individual). These concerns would take the bourgeois realist novel of Balzac towards the naturalist more radical novel of Zola and eventually towards the ultimate reality effect and knowing illusion of early cinema (Nacache 2012: 12–13). In the twentieth century, the realist novel began to lose its power and would be replaced by *le nouveau roman*. After the Second World War, structuralist and post-structuralist movements pushed realism into the background; Robbe-Grillet felt that Balzac’s realist techniques could no longer capture the disjointed twentieth century, while Barthes placed the novel within the realm of bourgeois mythology. Jean-François Lyotard made an autopsy of the referential illusion and the belief in the metanarratives of modernity which attempt to give totalising explanations of human history (Lyotard 1979). In the late twentieth-century, it was more fashionable in French academic departments to write a Ph.D. thesis on Antonin Artaud’s theatre of cruelty or Yves Bonnefoy’s poetry than on Hugo or Balzac. A revival of interest came with critics such as Henri Mitterrand (*Le Discours du roman*,

1980, *L'Illusion réaliste. De Balzac à Aragon*, 1994, *La littérature française du XXe siècle*, 1996, reprinted 2005, 2007, *Le Roman à l'œuvre. Genèse et valeurs*, Paris, 1998) or Philippe Hamon in the 1980s and 1990s (*Texte et idéologie*, 1984 and 1996, *La Description littéraire*, 1991). Now, the digital age has helped to put realism and its effects back at centre stage, and in 2015 Hamon published a work dissecting the techniques of realism called *Puisque Réalisme il y a* (*Realism is here to stay*, 2015) exploring how the real was made in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was a variety of a discourse of manipulation, a make-believe or '*faire croire*' in which the real cannot be taken for granted but must be made and the real-effect literally manufactured: 'Describe the human body at work, list the real, have the real flicker past us, paint the inside and the outside, collect relics of the real, track it down in its most intimate reactions, lie to tell the truth' / 'Décrire les corps au travail, mettre en listes le réel, faire défiler le réel, peindre le dessus et le dessous, collectionner les reliques du réel, traquer le réel dans ses vibrations les plus intimes, dire le faux pour dire le vrai (...)' (Hamon 2015: cover). There is now a rekindled fascination with this 'effect of the real' as part of our virtual lives today.

In Britain, the detail is different but the highs and lows of realism's popularity followed a similar path: after Scott and Dickens and the extraordinary energy of the serial novel to claim a diverse social readership and create a powerful imagined community of readers, realism was at first decried by defenders of modernism in the early twentieth century and fell – despite or perhaps because of F.R. Leavis's defence in *The Great Tradition* (1948) of the proper relation between form and moral interest or between art and life – into the academic doldrums. Rachel Bowlby's Foreword to *Adventures in Realism* (Beaumont 2007) laments that realism was, in the late twentieth and very early twenty-first century 'out of date and second-rate. Squashed between the newness of romanticism and the newness of modernism' (Beaumont 2007: xiv). It was considered a 'dingy Victorian relation' guilty of crude linear narratives and 'naively "omniscient" narrators and assumptions of linguistic transparency' and that the only virtues were thought to be 'to do with its anticipation of modernist experimentation or else its continuing romanticist exploration of subjectivity' (Beaumont 2007: xv). Matthew Beaumont speaks of the vision of a 'passive, positivistic reflection of banal social reality' (Beaumont 2007: 5) and traces the slandering of realism from Northrop Frye, to George Becker. He cites the many companions to postmodernism which demote realism as if it were not relevant, or simply 'simple-minded' or duplicitous: 'a species of *trompe l'oeil*' with dreams of 'attaining a complete correspondence to it' (Beaumont 2007: 4). This, says Beaumont, 'overstates its mimetic ambitions and dramatically undervalues its ability to exhibit and examine the formal limitations that shape it' (Beaumont 2007: 4). Beaumont chooses *Adam Bede* (1859) to demonstrate the self-reflexivity of realism but one could equally quote Dickens and Thackeray who referred constantly to the medium of serial fiction and paper monthly numbers as well as to their relationship with their readers. This is also Philippe Hamon's argument in 2015, where techniques of auto-derision and self-designation are seen to be the

foundation of French nineteenth-century literature. Finally, the global academic community has fêted the work of Jacques Rancière whose apology for the popular serial novel has given realism a political revival in its powerful democratising role as part of the ‘distribution of the sensible’, in which printed writing allows the common man to speak directly to the common man and to share culture and indeed create it (Rancière 1998, 2000).

What use then an understanding of realism for our engagement with the urban space today? How did realist novels of the nineteenth century create our capacity to ‘read’ the city? How do they offer us a phenomenology of seeing performed in writing which provides the roots of our own relationship to the city and our place within it?

We will consider some realist techniques of city writing in Eugène Sue, Balzac, Dickens, Victor Hugo, Flaubert, Zola Gissing. I will discuss a form of writing in which the city is laid out for us by the writer who shows how the space functions ideologically and provides a pre-interpreted scape: we will see that the seeing character (with and through whom we see) is responding to a vision of a city already divided between wealth and poverty, production and consumption and so politically mapped out. We will then deal with a more fluid and changing scape and an urban seeing which reinvents the future and offers dynamic readings of the city albeit often bourgeois and conservative. The third part will show a more hesitant and explorative technique in an extract from Flaubert: readers are placed alongside the seeing subject and work through the complexity of the dynamic scene before us to discover neither clear quarters (either in terms of contiguous physical areas or in terms of the structures of political economy) nor fixed future destinies, but an unfolding space of rhizomic interconnections which translates a different city reality. We will discover an almost virgin seeing subject who works with and within its own ignorance. Many of these writers potentially practice all these modes of representation showing that within one realist work very conflicting practices coexist.

ASSIGNED AND ‘CHARTERED’: THE CITY AS PREDETERMINED SPACE

One of realism’s practices is to present the city as already ‘chartered’ space, to use the word which recurs throughout Blake’s 1794 poem ‘London’. The narrator shows the city as fixed in its separations and barriers, a space divided by laws which are both constitutional and primal. It is as if ancient deeds of property and laws of birth right had always been in place and might never change – from the chimney sweeper’s cry and soldier’s sigh to the harlot’s blight and the Church and State’s indifference to both. The position of Blake’s poetic ‘I’ is to ‘wander’ and ‘tell’ – to reveal a truth, a reality –as realist narrators will later do.

We will first consider the city spread out as a map of society where it seems an image of the city as a pre-given model of class struggle, a didactic rather than a heuristic practice. The following extracts have much in common with the writing of political economy in its more literary modes such as Friedrich Engels’ famous view of London as he enters the city on a ship on the Thames

and remarks upon the magnificent facades of the buildings visible from the river – signs of the might and magnificence of capital and production – and the mean streets and poverty hidden behind, physically and metaphorically. Engels maps British society through a moving photograph of London space and teaches his readers that there is an objective truth behind the facades of England's ostensible 'greatness' (Engels 1892: 68). Production is hidden from view by a reified and glossy consumption.

Similarly, Lukács in 'Realism in the Balance' champions realist art that explains the economic system which reduces human beings to things and accuses modernist art of alienating an often already alienated public:

the realist must seek out the lasting features in people, in their relations with each other and in the situations in which they have to act; he must focus on those elements which endure over long periods and which constitute the objective human tendencies of society and indeed of mankind as a whole. Such writers form the authentic ideological avant-garde since they depict the vital, but not immediately obvious forces at work in objective reality. (Lukács 2001: 1049)

This 'objective reality' might be visualised in the cartoon 'Capital and Labour', *Punch*, 29 July 1843, showing a downtrodden proletariat at work in the mines in the bottom part of the cross-section and a decadent consuming upper class in the upper band – indifferent to the exploitation going on below. This image of how consuming elites rely on the production of the poor – is an example of this awareness of political economy in popular culture in the mid-century. The ghost of this 'objective reality' haunts urban description in the novel and is immediately discernable in the simple 'truth' that the city, like society, is divided into areas of wealth and areas of poverty. It is, of course both a fantasy and a fact and one which sold novels by providing an exotic space of deprivation (as attractive in fictional terms as the areas of opulent luxury) as well as spaces of privileged consumption.

Eugène Sue in his popular *Mystères de Paris* (1842) provides just such a model for Paris. The poor area with which he opens his novel is watched over by the law embodied in the very real building of the *Palais de Justice* or Law courts:

It was on a cold and rainy night, towards the end of October, 1838, that a tall man of athletic build, with an old broad-brimmed straw hat upon his head, and wearing a blue cotton carter's frock, which hung loosely over trousers of the same material, crossed the Pont au Change, and darted suddenly into the Cité, that labyrinth of obscure, narrow, and twisting streets which goes from the Palais de Justice to Notre Dame.

Although the area is limited, and carefully watched over, it serves as hide-out, or rendezvous, of a vast number of the very scum of society in Paris, who flock to the tapis-franc. A tapis-franc is, in the language of theft and murder, a cabaret of the worst kind. A returned convict, who, in this foul parlance, is called an 'ogre', or a woman in the same degraded state, who is called an 'ogress', generally keep such

taverns, frequented by the refuse of the Parisian population; freed convicts, thieves, and assassins are regulars there. No sooner is a crime committed, than it is here, in this cloaca, that the police casts its net, and nearly always catches the criminals it seeks to take. (Sue 1844: I My translation)

We see here the *Cité* (an underworld like Dickens's 'Seven Dials' district in *Sketches By Boz*), which is demarcated geographically and given an identity as a 'labyrinth' with its headquarters within the *tapis-franc* or drinking-shops scattered through it. It has its own internal logic and functioning and a steady supply of felons to people it. The area is policed and fished like a pool where a good 'catch' is guaranteed for the police and fairy-tale vocabulary (e.g. 'ogress') designates the area as having a folklore and being part of a folklore.

As Franco Morretti shows in his *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900* novelistic plots often reflect a plotted-out course of action and a mapped space of class boundary: both the Paris of Balzac and the London of Dickens are divided into quarters in which different actions take place – 'Silver Fork' districts or 'Newgate' labyrinths. A Paris or London dandy straying into the wrong area will be forced to run like the common people and so forced into behaviours foreign to him (Moretti 1999: 84). The straying dandy, however, is not alone in feeling alienated. The regular inhabitants of the city, be they from poor or bourgeois areas, all feel a sense of dislocation. The notion of divided quarters is therefore reinforced by a map of alienation which lies over the city space. Engels expresses this reality in his vision of the London crowds:

The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive, something against which human nature rebels (...) And still they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance (...) The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme. (Engels 1892: 68)

The reader is invited to see the physical layout of the city as conforming to an allegorical 'vale of sorrows' with biblical but also ideological connotations because man is seen both as condemned to perdition and alienated from his environment and the fruits of his labour. The following passage from *Père Goriot* (1834) shows this vale between two mountains (prosaically Montrouge and Montmartre – from the south to north of the city). The description of the city shows and also 'teaches' us this alienation and helps us see Paris anew as a place of perdition:

Will any one without the walls of Paris understand it? It is open to doubt. The only audience who could appreciate the results of close observation, the careful reproduction of minute detail and local colour, are dwellers between the heights of Montrouge

and Montmartre, in a vale of crumbling stucco watered by streams of black mud, a vale of sorrows which are real and joys too often hollow; but this audience is so accustomed to terrible sensations, that only some unimaginable and well-nigh impossible woe could produce any lasting impression there. Now and again there are tragedies so awful and so grand by reason of the complication of virtues and vices that bring them about, that egotism and selfishness are forced to pause and are moved to pity; but the impression that they receive is like a luscious fruit, soon consumed. Civilization, like the car of Juggernaut, is scarcely stayed perceptibly in its progress by a heart less easy to break than the others that lie in its course; this also is broken, and Civilization continues on her course triumphant. (Balzac 2009: 3)

The juggernaut of ‘civilisation’ runs through this land of gain and greed and crushes any hint of humanity. Balzac delineates a geographical area and assigns to it the quality of decadence in his reference to ‘crumbling stucco’ which suggests the ruins and collapsing decoration of the *ancien régime*. It resembles the land after the great flood (the moral decadence stretches from Montrouge to Montmartre) with its streams of black mud as well offering connotations of a primal slime of prehistory. It is a world in which emotions are no longer communicable and souls are crushed creating a blanket of indifference to the destiny of fellow creatures. Dickens too, using similar images in *Bleak House* (1853), shows us an opening scene in a city of the utter alienation and atomisation of human beings:

London. Michaelmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln’s Inn Hall. Implacable November weather. As much mud in the streets as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes – gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another’s umbrellas in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest. (Dickens 2003: 17)

He shows and instructs us in both walking through and reading the city space. Here, at the heart of London at Holborn, the crowds are victims of the same ‘streams of black mud’ as the Parisians in *Père Goriot*. The city of London has become the habitat of citizens become automatons yet strangely linked with the age of dinosaurs. The clearly delineated confines of Lincoln’s Inn Hall and Holborn Hill contain a machinery of urban existence in which the inexorable accumulation of capital and debt lay heavy on daily human lives. The environment underlines the circularity of this existence – where the ‘slipping and sliding’

goes on, mud and soot reproducing itself endlessly like ‘compound interest’ linked to misery and debt. The vision is constantly reimagined in the realist novel.

In Gissing’s *The Netherworld* (1889) the sense of constantly renewed toil as well as populations reproducing themselves to endlessly repeat the same alienated tasks is put before the reader in descriptions like the following one from Chapter 2 ‘A Friend in Request’:

It is not as in those parts of London where the main thoroughfares consist of shops and warehouses and workrooms, whilst the streets that are hidden away on either hand are devoted in the main to dwellings. Here every alley is thronged with small industries; all but every door and window exhibits the advertisement of a craft that is carried on within. Here you may see how men have multiplied toil for toil’s sake, have wrought to devise work superfluous, have worn their lives away in imagining new forms of weariness. The energy, the ingenuity daily put forth in these grimy burrows task the brain’s power of wondering. But that those who sit here through the livelong day, through every season, through all the years of the life that is granted them, who strain their eyesight, who overtax their muscles, who nurse disease in their frames, who put resolutely from them the thought of what existence *might* be – that these do it all without prospect or hope of reward save the permission to eat and sleep and bring into the world other creatures to strive with them for bread, surely that thought is yet more marvellous. (Gissing 2008: 11)

We see the same delineation of a particular area of suffering and toil, different from other areas of London (the scene begins with a negation ‘not as in those parts of London’). Gissing sets out the map of the space we are to enter, a scene of constantly renewed ‘forms of weariness’ as in the Dickens extract, and conjuring up the same jaded dullness as in *Père Goriot*. Relentlessness is expressed by Gissing in ‘all’ and ‘every’ and in the anaphoric ‘who strain’, ‘who overtax’, ‘who put’. Dickens uses a similar technique with the metaphor of ‘fog’ which comes directly after the passage quoted above – a word and a matter which persists in the text and is repeated many times, which gets everywhere like the black mud and whose ubiquity speaks of the all-consuming power of the system. Gissing’s narrator points out each iniquity as the seeing eye passes over the workshops and addresses the reader directly: ‘Here every alley...’ or ‘Here you may see...’. There is persuasion in ‘Surely...’ which is part of a complicity with the reader built up in small manifestations of shared emotion. The city is a ‘capture’ as in the French ‘*capture d’écran*’ in that it captures a place and a moment – stops time to show the events the city has undergone. The past and the present is ‘chartered’ to return to Blake’s expression and the destiny of the inhabitants clearly determined by this environment.

Zola’s characters look at the city from above like a working map, or as a three-dimensional moving graphic of economic strife. We look down on Paris from in front of Montmartre’s *Sacré Cœur*, a favourite recurrent location of Zola’s, whose *Les Trois Villes/The Three Cities Trilogy* (1893 to 1898) deals with Lourdes, Rome and Paris through the life of Abbot Pierre Froment, who has lost his faith and comes to see the need for an organised renewal of society’s

base rather than the use of charity which he feels can only scratch the surface of social injustice. Zola considers the role of religion in society but also the position of a triumphant bourgeoisie in its relationship to the poverty of working-class districts in these three cities. *Paris* begins with the Abbot watching over Paris on a peaceful morning; it is a scene which displays the strife at work in the city:

That morning, one towards the end of January, Abbe Pierre Froment, who had a mass to say at the Sacred Heart at Montmartre, was on the height, in front of the basilica, already at eight o'clock. And before going in he gazed for a moment upon the immensity of Paris spread out below him. After two months of bitter cold, ice and snow, the city was steeped in a mournful, quivering thaw. From the far-spreading, leaden-hued heavens a thick mist fell like a mourning shroud. All the eastern portion of the city, the abodes of misery and toil, seemed submerged beneath ruddy steam, amid which the panting of workshops and factories could be divined; while westwards, towards the districts of wealth and enjoyment, the fog broke and lightened, becoming but a fine and motionless veil of vapour. (. . .) It was a Paris of mystery, shrouded by clouds, buried as it were beneath the ashes of some disaster, already half-sunken in the suffering and the shame of that which its immensity concealed. (Zola 2007: 3)

This is a city drowned in water – comparable to the sticking mud of *Bleak House* or the streams of black mud of Balzac's Paris. It is also drowned in ashes, like those falling from the sky again in *Bleak House*. We participate in the gaze of the onlooker as he surveys the contrasting areas of the city, each bearing the mark of its social and economic position: one 'submerged' in the haze of pollution, the other clear and protected since the cleaner air allows the mist to disperse while the pollution remains over the workers district turning fog into smog. The novel begins in this way with the material fact of the separation of two worlds.

Similarly in *The Nether World*, Gissing plots the life of the London poor which echoes the crowding and alienation of Engels' London:

Over the pest-stricken regions of East London, sweltering in sunshine which served only to reveal the intimacies of abomination; across miles of a city of the damned, such as thought never conceived before this age of ours; above streets swarming with a nameless populace, cruelly exposed by the unwonted light of heaven; stopping at stations which it crushes the heart to think should be the destination of any mortal. (Gissing 2008: 159)

Gissing's sun is just as cruel in its effect. Gissing solicits the complicity of the reader with the words 'this age of ours' and practices a form of connivance and even conspiracy in the positioning of the narrative eye as it surveys the scene. We see and watch and have our hearts 'crushed' with the narrator and we are invited to recoil at the cruelty of the sunlight with him. The city is literally signed (or *sign-posted*), sealed and delivered to us as a map of a certain political

reading: social space is shown to be deconstructed or demystified to reveal an 'objective reality' or as Gissing sees it a stable and attainable social truth.

However, these novels are capable of translating a more moving and complex urban reality. The scenes' static nature is not a general rule; city descriptions are complicated by striving, and strife in which the finished map is rejected for a more chafing and restless quest for solutions. The latter might take the form of a desire to break into new social arenas, to make connections outside all class expectation and wealth division, or to produce and consume *with* others rather than against them. Desiring entities can be seen to connect with each other to create alternative distributions across borders. Be it Balzac's César Birotteau or his Eugène de Rastignac, Dickens's Pip or Lady Dedlock, a fundamental drive in the characters of the realist novel is to rebel against order: bourgeois, aristocratic or working class. They can promulgate or reject revolutionary doctrines to complicate the grid of political economy's reading of the social space. Many characters rail against a form of predestination or predetermination – one which was later to be explored by Jean-Paul Sartre in his reading of the tales of Maupassant in his *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948). Fredric Jameson says that for Sartre in these stories 'the time of the *récit* is the preterite' and that 'events that have entered history once and for all'. Novelistic telling often turns the future into a form of dead future and Sartre seeks to re-establish 'the open present of freedom, the present of an open undecided future, where the die has not yet been cast' (Jameson 2013: 18). We will consider this seeing-as process at work within realist texts – cherished by existentialism, present in British modernism.

DYNAMIC SEEING: PROCESS AND POTENTIAL

Political economy had to produce a depth model to render recognisable and assimilable society's inequalities: an image of a proletariat that received its orders from above or rose up together against authority in revolution was put in place. This model – eloquent and useful as a working conceptual tool – limits visions of the lines of power of the time and tends to neglect the micro-formations and networks which human organisation makes within particular classes or across classes. What poses a problem is the neatness of the scission between consumption and production and the separation that such a scission implies. Rather than a cross-section or vertical vision of labour dominated by capital (a superposition of strata) realism often provides flat or horizontal maps of bleedings, crossings, mixing and exchanges. Moretti has plotted some of these in his graphs and maps for *Atlas of the European Novel* (1999) and in his more recent and digitally inclusive *Graphs, Maps and Trees: Abstract Models for Literary History* (2007). Such alternative pictures are indeed visions of social relations but ones that do not necessarily fit the Marxist division between production and consumption, an underworld of producing proletariat and consuming upper classes. Instead, we have a complex series of relations of interactions seen over the space of the city and the mixing and blending of

characters. The following extract from the end of Dickens's *Little Dorrit* (1857) demonstrates the complexity of relations in the city space:

They all gave place when the signing was done, and Little Dorrit and her husband walked out of the church alone. They paused for a moment on the steps of the portico, looking at the fresh perspective of the street in the autumn morning sun's bright rays, and then went down.

Went down into a modest life of usefulness and happiness. Went down to give a mother's care, in the fullness of time, to Fanny's neglected children no less than to their own, and to leave that lady going into Society for ever and a day (. . .) They went quietly down into the roaring streets, inseparable and blessed; and as they passed along in sunshine and shade, the noisy and the eager, and the arrogant and the forward and the vain, fretted and chafed, and made their usual uproar. (Dickens 2004: 860)

This extract appears a classic ending to a bourgeois realist novel placing the reader firmly within the comfort of the dream of staying the same and enfolding the city back into a regime of domestic economy. It is possible, therefore, to read it as a scene of the subsumption of all resistance to the system of property and marriage and a vision of future harmony with others – a 'modest life' in which the protagonists are 'inseparable and blessed'. However, it could be seen as a new departure into a heterogeneous city rather than a sign of bourgeois continuity. We are perhaps walking with the character of Little Dorrit into what Moretti calls 'the third London' which holds the two halves of London together, a *Bauplan* where the cities of Dickens and Balzac are triangular with a third central, combining space. The 'West End of the élite' is separated from 'the manual wage labourers to the East and South' while Dickens's middle class occupy a triangle between 'Islington, The City and Soho' in the middle of the London map and in middle of society (Moretti 1999: 116–118). In this third space, neither the prison of Marshalsea, nor the workhouse or the opulent world of the upper classes, we find a literally 'middle-of-the-road' scene in which the couple walk down the street to a new future, defiant of the paths they could have taken or the milieu in which they were born. It is a docile form of defiance but one where the 'uproar' of those who are close to them – 'fretting' and 'chafing' suggest a friction of change and the newness of discovery. This dynamic might catalyse social relations outside of convention. The couple are not subsumed but 'free to go', to leave the plot assigned to them and the quarter of London once set out for them. They can blend in with the crowd and move in new directions. Instead of either accepting the happy ending as a conservative dream or being prompted to demystify the dream to reveal the misery beneath appearances, the reader can take a third direction in this 'third' London, aware of a new horizontal connectivity between classes and areas.

The ending of Balzac's *Père Goriot* explores this potential crossing over in a more forthright and aggressive way than Dickens. There is no couple here to

dream of future life together but a young man's dream of conquering a woman from a social strata not his own:

And with that tear that fell on Father Goriot's grave, Eugene Rastignac's youth ended. He folded his arms and gazed at the clouded sky; and Christophe, after a glance at him, turned and went – Rastignac was left alone. He went a few paces further, to the highest point of the cemetery, and looked out over Paris and the windings of the Seine; the lamps were beginning to shine on either side of the river. His eyes turned almost eagerly to the space between the column of the Place Vendome and the cupola of the Invalides; there lay the shining world that he had wished to reach. He glanced over that humming hive, seeming to draw a foretaste of its honey, and said magniloquently: "Henceforth there is war between us." And by way of throwing down the glove to Society, Rastignac went to dine with Mme. de Nucingen. (Balzac 2009: 302)

Rastignac's gaze has replaced the narrator's gaze of the opening pages (down onto Paris and its mire of despond between Montrouge in the south and Montmartre in the north so enveloping the whole of Paris) with a gaze from *Père-Lachaise* cemetery in the east to focus on the *beaux quartiers* to the west around the Tuileries which he wishes to conquer. The vale of sorrows is replaced with a line of flight and a strategy (the gaze becomes an action: Rastignac immediately sets off to dine there). Like the protagonists arriving in Paris in Zola's *Au Bonheur des dames* – a scene of desire and discovery in the new world of the great stores such as Bon Marché – the passage offers not only a scene read from above but also a movement down into the streets. Rastignac traces with his eye a trajectory to a new point in the city space. A line he will physically follow to perform an action.

An even more powerful instance of this performative gaze (a term used in video animation and in literary and art criticism, but here used as a counterpoint to performative speech or speech which produces real action) is in Zola's *La Curée* (The Kill). This novel deals with the investments and cut-throat deals of Haussmannisation and its title expresses the tearing apart of Paris by the promoters who like hounds at a hunt fight for part of the hunted animal. It shows Saccard, an ambitious young promoter, perched above Paris in a restaurant in Montmartre at the time of Haussmann. He takes his knife and performs imaginary surgery on the city below by showing how the new city will be redesigned cutting across the social and wealth map to change commercial and economic relations forever for good or for bad. Paris is described as an ocean of houses with bluish roofs like moving waters hurrying to fill the huge horizon. We see a reinventing and redefining of the city:

Yes, as I have always, said, many a district will be melted down and the alchemists who stir the rubble will find gold dust on their hands. Poor innocent old Paris! See how huge she is and how she slumbers away! These great cities have no idea what awaits

them! (...) Paris can't see the army of pickaxes which will attack her one of these fine days, and those great mansions on the rue d'Anjou wouldn't be shining so brightly in the setting sun if they knew that in three or four years there time will be up (...).

It has already begun' he went on 'But it is just the beginning. Look over there towards the Halles, Paris has been cut into four...'. And with this he pretended with his open outstretched hand, sharp as a cutlass, to cut the city into four pieces (...). 'Look, just follow my hand. From the boulevard du Temple to the Trône barrier there will be one cut; then this way another cut from the Madeleine to the Monceau plane; and a third cut in this direction, another like that, a cut here and a further one there, cuts through the whole city. Paris lacerated with a sabre, its veins open, feeding a hundred thousand navvies and stone workers, creating admirable strategic thoroughfares (...). (Zola 1879: 89 My translation)

Cutting, slashing, opening the veins of Paris to allow new flows and new exchanges, we discover that of Zola's writing has is Deleuzian: Saccard is deterritorialising Paris or rather re-territorialising, creating new distributions and sharing of space – not just for the benefit of the entrepreneurs but, he claims, the artisans and workers too (masons, workers in stone and navvies alike) who will make a living from the changes. Saccard is no revolutionary but is a Haussmann, visually cutting through older social hierarchies to reinvent a bourgeois commercial city against the grain of the *ancien regime* and also of the republican values of the revolution. *Le grand démolisseur* or great demolition artist as Haussmann was known whose ultraconservative remit was to clear space for a more controlling eye over the populace had some things in common, paradoxically, with the anarchism of the 1880s. Haussmann's project meant dismantling older forms of communication – some organic and communal such as those of the old popular quarters rooted in the middle ages – making a *tabula rasa* of previous social and economic borders. The quotation speaks of the death of a gentle giant sleeping in the sun and a sense of Paris as a passive victim awaiting its surgery. This is not a contemplation of a city in repose, but an urban system menaced with change: vicious butchery is imagined in this metamorphosis into a new city space.

Our final duty in this section is to leave the heights of Paris and plunge beneath the city to consider Hugo's description of the sewer in *Les Misérables* (1862), where Jean Valjean takes us further down to mix with the leavings of the city. I quote a view of the underground in the tunnels of Paris, to discover the effect of contiguity and promiscuity and the growing importance of affective traces in scenic descriptions. Hugo says, he is showing the space in Paris under the surface of the streets where everything bears its true form. He begins: 'The sewer in ancient Paris is the rendezvous of all exhaustions and of all attempts. Political economy therein spies a detritus, social philosophy there beholds a residuum' (Hugo 1887: 3237). One form of seeing (that of political economy) sees a reality, philosophy sees a residue of emotion, a trace or affect. We see the material truth behind the glamorous façades, hidden connections

laid out for all to consider. Hidden narratives are displayed showing the connections between people and from very different walks of life:

The sewer is the conscience of the city. Everything there converges and confronts everything else. In that livid spot there are shades, but there are no longer any secrets. Each thing bears its true form, or at least, its definitive form. The mass of filth has this in its favour, that it is not a liar. Ingenuousness has taken refuge there. (...)

There, no more false appearances, no plastering over is possible, filth removes its shirt, absolute denudation puts to the rout all illusions and mirages, there is nothing more except what really exists, presenting the sinister form of that which is coming to an end. There, the bottom of a bottle indicates drunkenness, a basket-handle tells a tale of domesticity; there the core of an apple which has entertained literary opinions becomes an apple-core once more; the effigy on the *big sou* becomes frankly covered with verdigris, Caiphas' spittle meets Falstaff's puking, the *louis-d'or* which comes from the gaming-house jostles the nail whence hangs the rope's end of the suicide. A livid foetus rolls along, enveloped in the spangles which danced at the Opera last Shrove-Tuesday, a cap which has pronounced judgment on men wallows beside a mass of rottenness which was formerly Margoton's petticoat; it is more than fraternization, it is equivalent to addressing each other as thou. All which was formerly rouged, is washed free. The last veil is torn away. A sewer is a cynic. It tells everything. (Hugo 1887: Book the second, Chap 2, 3237–3238)

The goal of every major realist, says Lukács, is 'to penetrate the laws governing objective reality and to uncover the deeper, hidden, mediated, not immediately perceptible network of relationships that go to make up society' (Lukács 2001: 1041). He adds, 'When the surface of life is only experienced immediately, it remains opaque, fragmentary, chaotic and uncomprehended' (Lukács 2001: 1042). Hugo shows not merely that production (the toil and suffering beneath the glittering façades of the city) literally lie under the surface of the seeming world of Paris but how horizontal connections (person to person) work. The horror of the foetus turning in sequins or spangles – a symbol of the shining beauty of a performance which led to an unwanted pregnancy, abortion or miscarriage – is part of a complexity of cross-class relations which is vivid and speaks of life and change, not death. There is a connection between a foetus and a dancer, a judge and a dancer or a judge and a revolutionary, between an establishment figure and a *demi-mondaine*, between a conservative and an anarchist. Hugo's view of the city's rubbish is surprisingly vigorous and describes normally unidentifiable things or static objects in terms of the potential they once had (the opinions of a brilliant student in an apple core, the passion of love in a foetus) and the power they wielded and will wield again. The passage relies on a practice of estrangement with material objects usually associated with modernism and even postmodernism. Frederic Jameson, as seen, combats the 'inertia of [realism's] appearance as a copy or representation of things' (Jameson 1992: 62). Here we see realism starting to play with description, introducing an almost

experimental and experiential approach to urban matter – the strange stuff of daily life left behind and usually seen as inassimilable to systems and orthodoxy. It is not just a question of waste matter but of ‘mess’ – that which follows no rules but both estranges and seduces us as David Trotter shows in *Cooking with Mud: The Idea of Mess in Nineteenth-Century Art and Fiction* (Trotter 2000). The seduction is a dynamic which acts on the viewer who will engage in creative recyclings and even *bricolage*.

This brings us to our last section, devoted to a quotation from Flaubert’s *Sentimental Education* (1869), which will allow us to cut ourselves off from all certainty and organisation concerning our view of the city; its writing shows the possibility of an unsure subject with an equally shifting object. As the most experimental realist, Flaubert teaches us to learn to see from scratch, undoes writerly and readerly habits. We are encouraged neither to be political economists nor bourgeois subjects; we learn to be a feeling body, a shifting centre which captures sense and emotion without a single directive subject to control impressions.

THE UNSURE GAZE OF REALISM: ‘WHAT’ AM I LOOKING AT AND WHO AM ‘I’?

As quotation from Hugo showed, there is no political grid by which we can read all representations of space but a need to deal with a complex network of chance encounters and micro-changes. The realist novel not only offers the security of certain readings and ideologies but also an experimental space of reading the unreadable, encountering strangeness and trying to follow it. There is often a heuristic element in realist writing that teaches a new gaze and even a new subjectivity based on a phenomenology in which the narrator unfolds with the reader the process of apprehending an object. In Flaubert:

[Frédéric] spent whole hours gazing from the top of his balcony at the river as it flowed between the quays, with their bulwarks of grey stone, blackened here and there by the seams of the sewers, with a pontoon of washerwomen moored close to the bank, where some brats were amusing themselves by making a water-spaniel swim in the slime. His eyes, turning aside from the stone bridge of Notre Dame and the three suspension bridges, continually directed their glance towards the Quai-aux-Ormes, resting on a group of old trees, resembling the linden-trees of the Montereau wharf. The Saint-Jacques tower, the Hôtel de Ville, Saint-Gervais, Saint-Louis, and Saint-Paul, rose up in front of him amid a confused mass of roofs; and the genius of the July Column glittered at the eastern side like a large gold star, whilst at the other end the dome of the Tuileries showed its outlines against the sky in one great round mass of blue. Madame Arnoux’s house must be on this side in the rear!

He went back to his bedchamber; then, throwing himself on the sofa, he abandoned himself to a confused succession of thoughts – plans of work, schemes for the guidance of his conduct, attempts to divine the future. At last, in order to shake off broodings all about himself, he went out into the open air.

He plunged at random into the Latin Quarter, usually so noisy, but deserted at this particular time, for the students had gone back to join their families. The huge walls of the colleges, which the silence seemed to lengthen, wore a still more melancholy aspect. All sorts of peaceful sounds could be heard – the flapping of wings in cages, the noise made by the turning of a lathe, or the strokes of a cobbler's hammer; and the old-clothes men, standing in the middle of the street, looked up at each house fruitlessly. In the interior of a solitary café the barmaid was yawning between her two full decanters. The newspapers were left undisturbed on the tables of reading-rooms. In the ironing establishments linen quivered under the puffs of tepid wind. From time to time he stopped to look at the window of a second-hand book-shop; an omnibus which grazed the footpath as it came rumbling along made him turn round; and, when he found himself before the Luxembourg, he went no further. (Flaubert 1904: 175–177)

Flaubert's writing is not a sure-footed seeing and writing of the urbanscape, but one where making mistakes and trial and error is important and enriching. It is as if the seeing subject is reading braille and must interpret each micro-event or contour or sound as it comes into range as he goes along. Frédéric changes his mind, is surprised, changes direction and observes without trying to impose order. The hero registers the people of his time; we sense that he is exploring society through the quotidian – washerwomen, waitresses, cobblers, carpenters or in other parts of the novel the upstarts and parvenus, bourgeois men of business or courtesans. Pierre Bourdieu in the prologue to *Les Règles de l'art* saw *Sentimental Education* as a field of sociological experimentation. We might add that it is also a space of *writerly* experimentation with a constant subtle irony which produces intimacy and even connivance and complicity with the reader. The free indirect style imposes no particular point of view to save the floating presence of Frédéric who seems to flee his own ego to allow himself to be invaded by the sights and sounds of the city: he wishes to 'shake off broodings about himself' and his thoughts are 'confused' and without logic or sequence. Frédéric's position on his balcony as he looks down on the Seine and the Quais and gives himself up to the rhythms of the city is something we are familiar with in Henri Lefebvre's 'rhythmanalysis', when he claims that one has to be outside the rhythms of the city to analyse them and also give yourself up to them – 'through illness or technique'. Lefebvre's observation from his own Paris apartment of the choreography of crossing the street at lights in Paris and the revving of cars seems to be in tune with Flaubert's own rendering of a restless city symphony. It is restive, innervated and enervating as Frédéric plunges 'at random' into the day like Mrs Dalloway into the air of the morning at Bourton and London. The extract provides the reader with random yawns, sounds, panoramas; it zooms in on a spaniel below, zooms out on the 'confused mass of rooves' and the dome of the Tuileries. Nowhere is there the partitioning of the city that we saw in our first extracts, the reading of space through the prism of a social organisation.

Frédéric is reading a surface, not a depth, and picking up on the effects of the peaceful day: work, playfulness, the textures of walls, distances through the air, the lengthening ‘silence’ of the colleges which speaks curiously of lengthening shadows so that a sort of synaesthesia is also at work to capture the bodily sensation of being in the city. The yawn or the sudden vibrant proximity from the omnibus act as points of contact with the environment, but their randomness eschews all narrative linkage. There is much of the stream of consciousness in the flowing succession of Frédéric’s thoughts as he ventures outside to absorb the world.

Here no opinions are given and when proffered elsewhere, are often in the same gesture discredited or questioned. It seems to be a question not of interpreting the environment but feeling it. Flaubert whom Maupassant and Zola both considered to be their guide and mentor was said to have pushed realism towards naturalism, where the environment constructs behaviour. Naturalism adds a physiological interaction – the body and mind of the characters interact with the environment and affectively unite with it for good or for bad. Flaubert is perhaps offering a ‘structure of feeling’ in that he explores the ‘powerful feelings’ which have gathered on the city at the time of his writing and have been ‘generalised’ to use the words of Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City*: ‘On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light. Powerful, hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness, ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation’ (Williams 1973: 3). We are reminded of Frédéric’s sentimental education when we read Williams’ description of Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* the pace and rhythm of the city seen by Jude ‘who stood and looked at the distant, attainable and unattainable, Christminster’. Williams evokes in the same argument Wordsworth’s poem *Westminster Bridge* when the poet gazes at ‘the great buildings of civilisation; the meeting-places; the libraries and theatres, the towers and domes’ he had also felt ‘the aching press of strange crowds (..) the dynamic movement (...) magnificent achievement’ (Williams 1973: 5). If a ‘structure of feeling’ is symptomatic of an ‘emergent social formation’ often related, says Williams, to contradiction and epistemological change within a social class (William designates in England the dates 1780–1830 or 1890–1930) – it is when a formation appears to break away from class ties, the tension being expressed and ‘articulated in radically new semantic figures’ (Williams 1973: 6). Flaubert’s writing might be an example of one of those moments of tension which creates new semantic figures: Frédéric represents a new vision of the city – he is a freer version of Rastignac – no need to throw down a gauntlet at Parisian society but just taste it and flow within it.

The quotation shows a being-in-the-world which faces huge changes in society, in education and in economics: how to adapt to these new realities by finding a voice or style of writing which captures that most fleeting and difficult of experiences: everyday life? The text offers a trial and error

perception which is a form of teaching. Flaubert's and Frédéric's Paris is a fast-changing environment and in the texture of Flaubert's writing we see the truth of Levine's statement that: 'Realism exists as a process, responsive to the changing nature of reality (...) evoking with each question another question' (Levine 1981: 22). Realism on these terms and in this extract from Flaubert offers up patterns, experiments, possibilities, new lines of contact and flight in a constantly reconfiguring and changing landscape: with strange connections and constant exceptions, not rules. Realism can be tested and defended through its visions of the city space which is like a changing map of possibilities read intermittently by a shifting subjectivity. Jameson in *Antinomies of Realism*, discussing 'The Narrative Impulse' shows that, on one level, the realist novel is concerned with 'adapting its readers to bourgeois society' with a stress on individualism and 'on the acceptance of money as an ultimate reality' (Jameson 2013: 5). He contrasts this impulse with a 'scenic impulse' (Jameson 2013: 11) and argues that they are two opposing and irreconcilable forces. Realism comes into being says Jameson 'in the symbiosis of this pure form of storytelling with impulses of scenic elaboration, description and above all affective investment, which allow it to develop towards a scenic present' (Jameson 2013: 11). He maps out this apocalyptic battle within realism:

The new scenic impulse will also detect its enemies in the hierarchy of characters who people the tale, which can scarcely be conceived without a protagonist (...) Its final battle will be waged in the microstructures of language and in particular against the dominance of point of view which seems to hold the affective impulses in check and lend them the organizing attribution of a central consciousness. Engaging this final battle will however exhaust and destroy it, and realism thereby leaves an odd assortment of random tools and techniques to its shrivelled posterity, who still carry its name on into an era of mass culture and rival media'. (Jameson 2013: 11)

In Jameson's second chapter 'Affect or the Body's Present' the perpetual present is in fact the body and its affect: affects are bodily feelings says Jameson, basing himself on Terada's *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the Death of the Subject*' (2001: 82), while emotions are conscious states. The emergence of new forms of daily life produces 'a competition between the system of named emotions and the emergence of nameless bodily states which can be documented in literature around the middle of the nineteenth century' (Jameson 2013: 32). Hence the difference between Balzac and Flaubert in this 'transformation of the sensorium'. Jameson takes the description of the *maison Vauquer* which is full of stereotypes, that is, pre-interpreted material: sticky surfaces and neglect of the interior which poor circumstances dictate. He contrasts these essences with affects: 'Affects are singularities and intensities, existences rather than essences' and they include 'non-meaningful, non-symbolic objects' (Jameson 2013: 36–37). In Flaubert, we start to see practices

akin to phenomenological attempts to formulate embodiment; even a Heideggerian *Stimmung* or being-in-the-world which leads Jameson to this formulation of a new experience of the body in the nineteenth century:

Impressionism and post-impressionism in painting, the Wagnerian revolution in music – these are only the most obvious analogies to the new affective styles invented by Flaubert and Baudelaire: all are indeed contemporaneous with that historic emergence of the bourgeois body . . . (Jameson 2013: 42–43).

If we go back to Frédéric’s engagement with Paris we can focus on this ‘radical transformation of the experience of the body’, and equate it with the act of looking out over the city and reading it as if it were a lunar scape, a new territory, an unknown and uncharted region. With Flaubert we advance without a map; we *naviguer à vue* (navigate by sight alone) – without a plan or guide. Flaubert offers a pure potential both within the gazer and within the gazed upon city. The new representation in the Flaubert quotation seems to be linked to a question of deep connectivities in the urban space –even to what Bruno Latour has called the *plasma* of the city:

What I call plasma is the space – but it is not a space – in which rest – but there is no rest – the diverse movements of totalisation and participation which have not yet been explained or composed. The definition may sound abstract, but that is because all the usual metaphors are defined by the image of zooming in, which forces us to think that we know what we are talking about when we say that there is an unbroken/continuous path between the parts and the whole (. . .) the sites where we speak about Paris “as a whole” (the Mayor’s Office, the Paris Police Headquarters) (. . .) Well, the background of this painting is the plasma. It is that through which one can measure the depth of our ignorance concerning Paris (Latour 2007: 262 My translation).

What Flaubert sees of Paris as he watches the Seine and those near to it or the gestures of those he sees in bars and shops are the small uncharted happenings of the city which cannot be integrated into a totalising vision of Paris. His writing shows that realism, rather than offering a truth or a reflection or even a verisimilitude, offers a reading of connections and disconnections as they happen outside of our interpretative grids.

CONCLUSION

Within one realist work conflicting practices can coexist, thereby throwing into doubt the homogeneity of realism and the concept of sequential literary movements. Rachel Bowlby quotes novelist Henry Green lamenting in 1950 that letter writing had been replaced by the telephone; she says that today we are writing again – in texts, e-mails and social media – and that we make words and receive them all the time to give ‘myriad impressions’ of what our

life is 'like'. We are *in* realism all the time today since our lives are full of 'ongoing attempts to represent it "like" it is to others (this is my life or how I felt etc.)'. Realism is back at centre stage, says Bowlby, since it makes 'speakeable' realities that might have seemed 'incommunicable' once upon a time. (Beaumont 2007: xxi).

Resurrecting realism in terms of city space is part of an attempt to understand how micro-connections and communities have resisted authority and redrawn boundaries and replaced the model of the cross-section with the rhizome's random development. Depth models of the city's reality give way to scenes with their internal connecting nodes which occur on a horizontal plane. The only depth, as Latour has shown, is the depth of our ignorance. It is affect rather than knowledge which not only takes us forward into the future and into the long twenty-first century but also helps us connect back to much earlier discourses on sentiment and connecting through feeling as expressed by David Hume or Samuel Richardson (Mullan 1988).

Perhaps in video games we find the new realism of today. If we look at Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed* and especially those versions of the game set in London and Paris (*Unity* set in the Paris of the French revolution and the Terror and *Syndicate* in Victorian London) the protagonist (the player's avatar) accomplishes a series of actions: he runs through the streets and makes connections with others, he observes them or exchanges goods or services, he kills enemies and engages other characters in conversation (sometimes historical personalities). This is a basic narrative form – a metonymy of one thing following another. At other times, however, the Assassin is perched on a pinnacle of a cathedral or palace above the city, reconnoitring spaces which must be dealt with. This is a recurring scenic present, lasting only a few moments in magical quiet as we scan the vista below: a décor of roofs, river, streets, crowds which lies before us inspired by the London of Dickens, Sherlock Holmes and Jack the Ripper or by the visual clichés of the French revolution inspired anachronistically by the 1830 revolution depicted in *Les Misérables* or by Dickens's revolutionary Paris from *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). This use of novelistic environments returns us to digital artists like the Matte artist mentioned in the first paragraph. Like the designers who create the environments and plots of video games, he continues a tradition of representation that bears witness to the novel's cataloguing of the sensation of seeing and sensing the city. The realist novel survives thanks to this urban descriptive turn and creates a scenic space for future cities and our affective relationship with them.

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Conceptualising the Modernist City

Iain Bailey

PARTICULARITY AND GENERALITY IN THE MODERNIST CITY

Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities* opens in a Vienna that would, the novel says, be immediately recognisable to a returning traveller just by its particular texture of sounds. He would know the city with his eyes closed. Or if he were to open them, Musil writes, the traveller would recognise the city as Vienna before he picked out any individual detail, just by the distinctive style of movement on its streets:

So let us not place any particular value on the city's name. Like all big cities it was made up of irregularity, change, forward spurts, failures to keep step, collisions of objects and interests, punctuated by unfathomable silences; made up of pathways and untrodden ways, of one great rhythmic beat as well as the chronic discord and mutual displacement of all its contending rhythms. (Musil 1997: 4)

Vienna on this first impression has something special about it, distinctive, both at the political level – ‘the Imperial Capital and Royal City’, as the novel makes a point of specifying – and at the level of experience: an unmistakable identity scored into its movements, rhythms and tones. Or so it appears, to the returning traveller. Musil goes on, and the clarity of the city's identity lasts only for a moment: ‘It would not matter’, he writes, ‘even if [the traveller] only imagined that he could do this’. Suddenly the perspective shifts: at first it had seemed that Vienna's individuality was objective, but now the traveller's act of recognition comes into focus; the city's distinctiveness might be real or imagined. The traveller himself was always hypothetical, the mood conditional. Perhaps the city itself is indiscernible from any other: all it has are the generic characteristics of ‘all big cities’.

There is an integral relationship between the aesthetic developments associated with modernism and the changing face of cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Raymond Williams puts it in his 1985 essay, 'The Metropolis and the Emergence of Modernism': 'It is now clear that there are decisive links between the practices and ideas of the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century and the specific conditions and relationships of the twentieth-century metropolis' (1985: 13). The key theoretical tension of Williams's essay, which remains only partially resolved by the end, is encapsulated in this innocuous-looking sentence. Williams is concerned with the concepts and categories he regards as sustaining an 'undifferentiated' view of twentieth-century literature and culture – of which 'modernism' is one (as is clear from the start), and of which 'the metropolis' is another (which is much less explicit, but equally important). The title refers in the singular to 'the emergence of modernism', but from the beginning Williams emphasises plurality: not 'modernism', but a whole range of avant-garde movements, together with their practices, ideas, conditions and relationships.

While Williams's decisive argument for 'internal diversity of methods and emphases' largely means that he avoids using the term 'modernism', tending instead to refer to forms, movements and institutions, the abstract and singular concepts of 'the city' and 'the metropolis' retain an important explanatory function in his essay. It is clear from his argument that an uncritical application of the term 'modernism' not only fails to account for the specificity of particular aesthetic practices but also tends to flatten or deny that specificity. It is not immediately obvious that an uncritical application of 'the city' or 'the metropolis' might do the same. The essay does, however, move in this direction: the conditions and relationships of metropolitan life are specific, variable and complex. Yet the concept remains singular: in order to explore these complexities it will be essential to see 'the imperial and capitalist metropolis as a specific historical form, at different stages: Paris, London, Berlin, New York'. Although the cities all have their peculiarities, Williams suggests nonetheless that there is a consistency to the concept of the metropolis, in that particular cities are taken to represent different stages in the development of a (singular) historical form.

Paris, London, Berlin, New York. These are all cities at the heart of conventional accounts of literary modernism. One could even put Berlin aside and come up with what Andrew Thacker and Peter Brooker describe critically as 'the familiar London-Paris-New York axis' of a certain, strongly Anglophone, version of modernism. This essay will follow Thacker and Brooker and the more recent tendency in modernist studies to separate from that axis and look elsewhere. But even within a restricted canon of metropolitan centres we could see a great diversity of modernist texts and practices: London with Dorothy Richardson's Miriam riding on a Northern Line train, barrelling out from a purgatorial underground, or with Wyndham Lewis's *Blast* belting out that 'LONDON IS NOT A PROVINCIAL TOWN'; Paris with

André Breton at the flea market, Gertrude Stein in a drawing room, or Léopold Sédar Senghor ‘melted like snow on the rooftops’; New York with John Dos Passos gathering scraps of news from the *New York Herald* or the *Wall Street Journal*, with Lola Ridge observing the lights and poverty in the backstreets of Manhattan, or with Richard Bruce Nugent’s ‘Beauty’, musing, smoking and loving queerly in Greenwich Village.

These examples from New York begin to give a cross-section of the eclectic print cultures and networks at play in the city. Nugent’s story was published in *Fire!!* (1926), a short-lived journal conceived by Wallace Thurman, Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, Nugent himself and other Afro-American writers who had moved to Harlem from cities throughout the USA: for higher education, for work, to write. *Fire!!* was discontinued after one issue for lack of means, and a number of the remnant copies were lost in a basement fire before they could be sold (Nadell 2012: 816). Meanwhile, Lola Ridge’s first collection, *The Ghetto and Other Poems* (1918), had been taken on by B. W. Huebsch, a publisher with a relatively small house under his own name who focused specifically on marketing modern or ‘avant-garde’ texts through an emphasis on the idea of quality, pitched at highbrow markets (Turner 2003: 25). Ridge herself was a Dublin-born poet who spent her teenage years and twenties in New Zealand and Australia before moving to America at the age of 34 and becoming part of the poetic avant-garde in New York, contributing significantly to little magazines such as *Broom* and *Others*. Dos Passos also published in *Broom* and spent time in the journal’s New York offices. By contrast, *Manhattan Transfer* was published in 1925 by Harper & Brothers, one of the most established American publishing houses, with much less of a reputation than Huebsch or the little magazines for innovative fiction.

Both at the level of form and in the eclecticism of the print outlets and cultural networks in which such work was published and circulated, ‘modernism’ in a city like New York was characterised by any number of styles and connections. A novel like *Manhattan Transfer* tries to register this in its array of styles, languages, media and stories; we can see something similar over the course of *Fire!!* – a set of variations in the way that race, sexuality and economic means signify. Nugent’s ‘Smoke, Lilies and Jade’ charts the ‘idle . . . and contented’ thoughts of a young, decadent, unemployed artist living in New York in fragmented, free-indirect sentences punctuated only by ellipses. The story that precedes it, Gwendolyn Bennett’s ‘Wedding Day’, tells the story of Paul Watson, a black American living in Paris who labours his way through life in the city, working as a prize fighter and a boxing trainer, moonlighting as a banjo player when the jazz bands arrive. In the bars and cafes of Montmartre, he comes into confrontation with white American men who call him ‘nigger’. He fights for France in the First World War and acquires a scar on his face. He is jilted on his wedding day by a white American woman (a ‘street woman’, in fact – and the relation between sex and labour is another important element of the story): at this point the narration shifts for the first and last time into a free-indirect perspective, as he reads her letter. Paul Watson’s Paris is heavy with social relations made uncertain and violent by race,

and in Bennett's story these relations are always immigrant: American social relations translated to Paris. The contrast with Nugent's piece is very pronounced. As Daniela Caselli points out, 'Smoke, Lilies and Jade' has the curious and appealing quality of being 'only apparently self-indulgently abstracted' (2015: 111). But there is a relative ease to the tone and to the relations that the story presents. Race and labour weigh differently between the pieces that make up *Fire!!*, and between the two metropolitan settings that we see in these stories.

Fire!! and *Manhattan Transfer* are both New York texts, both of the mid-1920s, and both 'modernist' in their different ways. Both involve an understanding of the city as a centre for immigrant populations, both intra- and international. Because of its importance as a centre for publishing and distribution, and because of the buying power of collectors operating out of the city, as well as of emergent institutions like the Museum of Modern Art, New York also has a hand in the eclectic history of modernism at the level of circulation and consumption (see Braddock 2012). The eclecticism of those texts and forms that come under the aegis of the term 'modernism' is very visible even in the restricted space of a single city like New York: the difference between Wallace Stevens's gallery-going poetic modernism (Costello 2012) and that of Mina Loy, returning from Paris and writing of the Bowery sanctuary, 'irrhymic stagger/along the alcoholic's / exit to Ecstasy' (Loy 1997: 133); the observations of Lorca in Harlem compared to those of Senghor or Mayakovsky; the shape of the American-Yiddish *In Zikh* ('Introspectivist') poetry of the late 1910s and those of the Objectivist poets, from Louis Zukofsky to George Oppen to Lorine Niedecker.

The tension we are beginning to see in the relationship between modernism and the city is between particular urban centres, avant-gardes, styles, texts or writers, and general concepts, terms, forms or equivalences. As Jeff Wallace puts it, modernism is 'less a single consistent "movement" than a retrospective category for relating together a variety of movements, artefacts, artists, thinkers, and cultural practices, some of whom might have been surprised to find themselves thrown together under the banner of "modernism"' (Wallace 2011: 1). Sean Latham and Gayle Rogers show how the term was not exclusively retrospective, but share with Wallace the sense in which calling something modernist is always a *claim* that brings together 'disparate cultural trends and forces' under a single name (Latham and Rogers 2015: 17). Modernism is a banner or a category: it is not so much a *thing* that one could describe with more or less accuracy than it is a *term* which organises different perspectives on a historical relationship between culture, society, technology and time. Some writers consider this relationship to have quite clear unifying principles: Pericles Lewis, for example, insists on 'the underlying unity of the literary and artistic problem facing writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: how to respond to the crisis of representation' (Lewis 2007: xviii). Others, like Latham and Rogers, focus instead on the inconsistency of the term: on the ways in which 'modernism' has been put to work by different writers for different ends. To draw a very rough distinction between the two positions, Lewis defines

modernism in terms of a shared predicament faced by writers responding to a particular historical situation (the disruption of 'life in an urban, industrial, mass-oriented age' [xvii]) while Wallace, Latham and Rogers define modernism in terms of a predicament faced by writers seeking a perspective on those responses.

THE CITY AS A CONDITION FOR LITERARY MODERNISM

What is common to both these positions is the tension between particularity and generality, or multiplicity and singularity: Lewis, Wallace, Latham and Rogers all acknowledge the profound variety of works, artists, styles and practices that can be called modernist, and all of them consider what it is that justifies gathering them together under the single concept of modernism. From a critical perspective, this is a tension that underpins the whole field of modernist studies, and the questions it generates have a significant bearing on any account of the relationship between modernism and the city, because they determine both the scope of the cities and the texts that are taken into account, and the premises on which these decisions about what counts as modernist are taken.

But it is also a similar dynamic to the one Musil's novel presents from the beginning: an aesthetic and a narrative issue rather than exclusively a theoretical one. *The Man Without Qualities* begins by narrating a tension between individuality and generality as part of the immediate experience of Vienna. The new blend of sound and motion (Musil writes of cars, crowds, lines of velocity) means that the city is perceived in terms of textures and aggregates, rather than discrete characteristics (a particular building, a street name). Modernity, in the form of technology and density of population, seems to have affected the way that the individual experiences the city space. Musil describes this complex synthesis in a long, careering metaphor of cords and weaving, cusps and edges, flattening, splintering and fading, as though striving to capture the distinctive 'texture' [*Geräusch*] of a moment in modern Vienna. Yet in the very next sentence, he ingenuously remarks that the quality 'cannot be captured in words', and then calls into question whether the city's supposedly distinctive qualities are anything but imagination. The shift in perspective does not lead to a simple inversion of the original idea: it does not say that the individuality of the city is all in the mind. Instead, it turns the confident impression of a Vienna possessing certain unmistakable features into a more doubtful relationship between subjective apperception (the recognition of the traveller) and objective phenomena (the sights and sounds of the city).

A similar tension between individuality and generality is central to the work of Simmel, one of the first theorists of the modern city. In a 1908 essay on 'The Problem of Style', he observes that 'the practical existence of humanity is absorbed in the struggle between individuality and generality'. In the essay on style, this 'struggle' concerns aesthetic judgment in the quite specific circumstances of appreciating a work of art, but it has a much wider importance in Simmel's concept of aesthetic experience, which in turn has a bearing on his understanding of the city. In his influential 1903 essay, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (*Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben*), Simmel writes: 'The deepest problems of modern

life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve autonomy and individuality in the face of overwhelming social forces' (1997:174–175). This reads as though individuality is the ideal and submersion into generality must be resisted, but in the essay on style Simmel observes that the two terms are 'poles of the human creative ability [...] each of which determines every point of life, inward and outward, active and enjoying, only in cooperation with the other, although in an infinite variety of ways' (1997: 213). The cooperation between the two terms is always a struggle: style is a principle of generality, which 'negates [the] quite individual nature and value' of particular works and in this sense causes them to be 'relieved of [their] absolute autonomy'. But at the same time, 'neither of [them] could be dispensed with'. In this sense, Simmel appears to regard the tension between individuality and generality as a characteristic human experience that is aggravated by the conditions of urban life. It is both a theoretical tension (as it is for Williams) and a practical or experiential one (as it is in Musil's novel).

We can see in the opening of *The Man Without Qualities* an example of the 'crisis of representation' that Pericles Lewis regards as a fundamental predicament of modernist writers. First, the sense of language's insufficiency to a distinctively modern urban situation corresponds to the idea that new technologies and growing populations in urban centres such as Vienna, during the first part of the twentieth century produced new kinds of experience for which the representational tools of literature (its forms, conventions and even language itself) struggled to be adequate. Second, the very idea of experience is complicated in Musil's novel by a combination of curiosity and uncertainty about perception itself: the techniques and habits by which individuals process their surroundings.

One could think of numerous European and American writers working in different idioms during the first part of the twentieth century whose writing exhibits similar concerns, from Gertrude Stein to A. Leyeles (a core member of the *In Zikh* group), Kurt Schwitters to Vladimir Mayakovsky – to name only a few. Such perspectives on perception were sometimes informed by emergent discourses in psychology and the natural sciences: Musil aligns his uncertain recognition of the city with the science of optics; Stein was involved as a student at the Harvard Psychological Laboratory with William James's research into perception; Schwitters worked extensively on psychology of colour perception (Meyer 2003; Luke 2014). These kinds of discourse might seem at first glance to have nothing to do with the specific conditions of the modern city: they are new perspectives on the mental and physical apparatus rather than on the objective material circumstances. But to look at it in another way, the institutions in which such research took place invariably grew up in the cities. Moreover, the circulation of ideas was quickened by the development of commercial and communicational networks in which cities were the key nodes.

The accelerated urbanisation that took place across Europe in the first part of the twentieth century meant that city populations grew precipitously, coinciding with developments in infrastructure, transport, communication, housing, work and leisure. A common theme in existing accounts of modernism's relation to the

city is that urban life in such a time of rapid change produced new kinds of experience. These experiences became the stimulus for new formal developments, not only in writing but also in other kinds of cultural production: music, sculpture, painting, architecture, cinema, etc. All of these became in turn part of the set of artistic forms to which modernist writers would also respond. Understood in this way, the city produces certain kinds of experience, which elicit or provoke new kinds of form among the artists and the producers of culture. This idea implies a causal relationship between the material development of cities and literary innovations: a history of new forms being devised in response to the unprecedented experiences produced by new material conditions.

But alongside this notion that modernist writing involved a direct response to the experience of the city, there is also an important sense in which the experience of the city, and writers' perspectives on that experience, was shaped by the production and circulation of new knowledge and theories, which were themselves facilitated by the institutions and technologies of distribution that developed alongside the concentrations of wealth and population involved in the process of urbanisation. Furthermore, urban migration meant the coming together of different languages in close proximity. Williams argues that this may be one reason for a shift in perspective on language that helps to account for literary experimentation: '[language was] no longer, in the old sense, customary and naturalised, but in many ways arbitrary and conventional [. . .] more evident as a medium – a medium that could be shaped and reshaped – than as a social custom' (1985: 22). In other words, the development of cities and the increasing speed of commerce between them can be seen as both a direct (or subjective and experiential) and an indirect (or social and institutional) condition for the production of modernist literary forms.

CITIES, NETWORKS AND EMPIRE

Scott McCracken has remarked that '[in order to] understand a city's modernisms, we have to understand its networks' (2010: 638). Part of the modernity of modern cities is that they function in relation to other cities, not as self-sustaining organisms. Certain cities gained especial significance in relation to aesthetic production in the early part of the twentieth century not only because of their own immanent characteristics (Vienna's distinctive *Geräusch*) but because of their 'key place in a widening series of cultural networks'. McCracken sees this as an important factor in the kinds of preoccupation with speed, motion and perspective that so often appear in modernist writing: '[a] fascination with the movement of things, goods, and people, through, in and out of, and between cities' (638). Furthermore, modernist writers were connected to other writers, publishers and critics, and avant-gardes emerged, travelled and disseminated their work, by way of the transport and communication networks that became increasingly fast and reliable both within and between particular cities.

From this perspective, we can look in a different light at the internal workings of particular modernist texts that take a city as their subject or setting. James Joyce's *Dublin*, Alfred Döblin's *Berlin*, John Dos Passos's *Manhattan* or

Andrei Bely's St. Petersburg can be read as self-contained or at least centripetal modernist cities, but they are also full of signs that their city occupies a position in a wider economic and political network. The beginning of Book II of Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, for example, produces an intense inward-looking orientation towards the city through its interminable series of tram routes, street names, business premises and municipal dispensations. But even here are persistent reminders that the life of the city is partly determined by its role in a network: trains to and from the Baltic, commerce with Frankfurt and Meiningen, civic pride against the regions.

In *Petersburg*, similarly, Bely begins to unfold a story of the revolutionary events of October 1905 in a city 'surrounded by a ring of many-chimneyed factories', which then parallels the 'agitation that embraced Petersburg in a ring [and] seemed to penetrate even into the very centres of Petersburg' (94). But in this contained space and among the crowds we repeatedly come across 'the loquacious character', an agitator who carries a borrowed Browning, hands out a 'badly typeset leaflet', and wears a 'black shaggy hat pulled down over his eyes and forehead, a hat that had evidently been acquired on the fields of bloodstained Manchuria'. What happens in Petersburg is always in relation to other parts of the Russian Empire, and to the imperial war with Japan. Even more strikingly, the behaviour of crowds is both specific to particular cities and apparently generic: 'in Arkhangelsk that was how the Lapps, the Karelians and the Finns acted; in Nizhne-Kolmynsk – the Tungus; on the Dnieper – both Yids and *khokhols*. In Petersburg, in Moscow everyone acted like that: in the intermediate, higher and lower institutes of learning: waited, were afraid, hoped; at the slightest rustle poured quickly on to the street' (93). Bely's novel continues to both assert and submerge the individuality of people, national groups, classes and educational institutions. The 'loquacious character' reappears when 'the worker-representatives of the crowds had all to a man turned into loquacious characters; among them the Browning circulated; and one or two other things as well'. Different cities become interchangeable, and individuals are subsumed into types or functions: 'in those days was the district superintendent dragging out his life in Kemi: similarly did he drag it out in Petersburg, Moscow, Orenburg, Tashkent, Solvychevodsk, in a word, in those towns [that] make up the Russian Empire' (94).

Berlin Alexanderplatz, *Petersburg*, *The Man Without Qualities* and *Ulysses* are modernist city texts: the city itself is in one way or another the subject of the novel. The very length of these texts can be seen as one way in which the concentration, multiplicity or miscellaneity of relationships in the modern city are mediated in the novel's form. But modernist city texts are neither always novels, nor always long. Lola Ridge anthropomorphises Chicago in a short poem of 1924, published in Harriet Monroe's magazine *Poetry*: 'Your faith is in what you hold, / Monster, with your back against the lakes. / You gather the cities close, with iron reins / Knotted in your frozen grip. [...] Convulsive movements pass along your length. . . . / I think there

is a giant child that kicks in you' (1924: 311). Networks, power, containment and spasmodic movement are all condensed into this poem, which owes something to imagism. The perspective means that there is no sense here of the 'I' being immersed in or disorientated by the city, though there is a kind of alienation in the subject's standing apart: urban experience is implicitly in the sickness, the convulsions and the running blood of the 'Monster'.

A different note is struck by Paolo Buzzi's futurist city poems, which include a series of pieces on German industrial centres published in his 1913 collection, *Versi liberi* [Free verses]: there are poems on Kiel, Hamburg and Mannheim. 'Al porto d'Amburgo' begins with an invocation to 'the breath of the Modern City' and happily casts itself as a 'cry of enthusiasm' [*lancio mio grido d'entusiasmo che rombi dal ponte*] from a 'son of the dead' who hopes to inject into himself the electric lifeblood [*linfa elettrica*] of the city. Once again, the poem concerns itself with networks: Hamburg as a port city, the free ports that bring the poem's orotund speaker into contact with voices from England and Holland, as well as the signal of Greenwich Mean Time 'which marks the time delay of Europe' [*che segna l'ora in ritardo dell'Europa*]. If Ridge's poem takes the city as its object and keeps it at arm's length, Buzzi takes the city as Muse in a characteristic example of futurist technological enthusiasm. But both have a sense that their city makes sense only in relation to others, and both account for the movement and disjunctions of city life in lines that vary and flex in length and form. Moreover, Buzzi in particular goes outside of the imperial metropolis: Chicago in 1924 is not New York or Vienna, but Mannheim and Kiel in 1913 are much more like the subsidiary cities of Ridge's poem.

In different ways, these texts register the importance of networks to the character of the city in large-scale capitalist economies during the early part of the twentieth century. The result of these developing networks is what Williams calls the city's miscellany: 'its crowded variety, its randomness of movement [...] especially when seen from inside' (1973: 154). In the city novels of Bely and Döblin, as well as Joyce, Musil and Dos Passos, not to mention Dorothy Richardson or David Fogel (whose novel *Chaye nis'u'im* [Married Life] is also set in Vienna – 'the European modernist Hebrew urban novel par excellence', according to Shachar Pinsker [2011: 98]), miscellaneity is seen from the inside and plays out at the level of form (shifts in perspective, incorporation of different discourses and genres, self-reflexivity over narrative and cognition, uncertain subject positions) as well as in the types of social relation that are presented, the way that material goods are handled, and the way that the text positions itself geographically. Each of these novels takes place in one of the conventional centres of modern European culture, but we can see similar kinds of immersed perception in Buzzi's futurist, free-verse poems on provincial German cities. Yet, in all these cases the compression and intensity of experience in the cities runs alongside a recognition of the city's place as a node in an extensive network.

This tension can help to structure a reading of the texts at hand, but also has implications for the decisions about which texts and which cities to look at:

Vienna, Berlin, New York, St. Petersburg, London are all interesting in these novels for the ways that they turn outwards, but they are hegemonic cities (Lee and Pelizzon 1991), each at the political and economic centre of large empires in the early twentieth century, and all of them widely discussed in existing accounts of aesthetic modernism. Although their poems still concern industrial cities in the powerful Western economies of Germany and the USA, Buzzi and Ridge in contrasting ways begin to pull in a different direction: Buzzi in the relative marginality of the cities, and Ridge in the sense of an exterior perception of Chicago and its subsidiaries. But our perspective on modernism as a concept is limited if it focuses only on these Anglo-European-American contexts.

THE GLOBALISATION OF MODERNIST STUDIES

An emphasis on multiplicity grounds the emergent concepts of ‘global’, ‘world’ or ‘planetary’ modernisms. There has been a sustained effort, as Stephen Ross and Allana Lindgren write, ‘to treat as modernist materials [that which] had conventionally been excluded by occurring too early or too late (i.e. in the Western context, before 1890 or after 1940), too far-flung geographically [...] and too aesthetically broad’ (2014: 1-2). An emphasis on differentiation and plurality of the kind that Williams needed to argue for in 1985 has now become a common premise of modernist literary studies: the idea of internal diversity is now incorporated into the concept of modernism. This means a larger, more populated map of modernist movements: no longer restricted to the European and North American metropolitan centres. Scholars now aim to take into account the distinctive modernisms of Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Lisbon, Calcutta, Shanghai, Dakar or Melbourne.

But alongside this move to expand the canon of texts and cultures that come under critical consideration remains the question of why they should be treated as *modernist* materials. One important consideration in this regard is that modernism is not simply a neutral descriptive term but a value-laden category which organises an entire academic sub-discipline: expanding the geographical and temporal scope of modernism means bringing new territories under the aegis of the concept. In this sense there is a risk of cultural appropriation involved in extending the reach of the field, especially if the grounds for applying the terms (modern, modernist, modernity) are not properly theorised.

This is where the crucial debate concerning modernism and the city (or cities and their modernisms) lies. Numerous commentators on literary modernism maintain or presuppose the idea of a singular modernity: a set of social formations that emerge as an effect of the development and globalisation of capitalism (Jameson 2002). That is to say, an economic principle or world system that expanded through both trade and colonisation (including the appropriation of resources from ‘marginal’ regions to produce wealth that flowed to ‘central’ hubs such as London, Brussels, Berlin, New York, Paris, St. Petersburg, Vienna) to become hegemonic (Wallerstein 2004). The unity of the concept of *the modern*

city, the dynamic which means that Musil's Vienna can be at once individual and generic, lies in the fact that *modernisation* is an economic and social process tied by definition to the development of capitalist relations of production, and *urbanisation* is one element of this process.

But on the other hand, for some critics this singular modernity or capitalist world-system falls back into an 'unthinking Eurocentrism' (Shohat and Stam 1994: in their book to 'unthink' is a critical injunction in response to an 'unthinking' habitual tendency). Susan Stanford Friedman's *Planetary Modernisms* (2015) articulates this position in the context of modernist studies, and bears careful consideration because of how it takes on materialist accounts of the relationship between urbanisation, modernisation and capitalism. For Friedman, coupling modernity with capitalism and treating the global reach of both as an effect of colonial expansion tends to imply 'a diffusionist, linear human history': an '*idea* of modernity as an invention of the West, as a product of the West's exceptionalism' (2015: 3). According to this, the model of modernity proposed by writers like Wallerstein and Jameson 'is the story of the West's growing capitalist exploitation of the Rest, a demonisation of the West that is itself a form of Eurocentrism' (130). Instead, Friedman argues for an idea of multiple modernities from different times and places which can be compared on the basis of a tension in which they 'share elements while being historically and spatially specific'. This will produce 'not a single *metanarrative* of modernity but rather a general *concept* that takes particular forms within spatially and historically distinct *stories* of modernity' (145).

The first imperative is therefore to produce an 'archive' of modernisms and modernities whose 'spatio/temporal scale [is] sufficiently large to include a substantial variety of instances of modernity across time and throughout space' (145). The concept can then be derived from the archive. But that still needs a principle of selection, or a determining concept. Friedman asks for an archive organised around a concept of modernity 'as a loosely configured set of conditions that share a core meaning of accelerated change' (93). This means looking for situations in which 'a combination of new technologies, knowledge revolutions, state formations, and expanding intercultural contacts contribute to radical questioning and dismantling of traditional ontologies, epistemologies, and institutional structures' (39). Friedman still considers urbanisation to be an important feature of her expanded concept of modernity, though she takes issue with any assumption that modernisation and urbanisation are synonymous: cities can play important roles in 'periods of heightened change', but so does the Mongolian steppe and the Indonesian archipelago (165). Since modernism can be defined as 'the aesthetic dimension of specific modernities', there is a modernism of Tang dynasty cities like Chang'an and Luoyang in the seventh and eighth centuries, as well as of colonised cities like Calcutta, Alexandria, Kingston and Shanghai in the early twentieth century.

By expanding the concept of modernity to cover all kinds of historical situation that featured this type of circumstance, there is clearly a problem of circularity (since the terms of the concept are already preset in order to decide

on the contents of the archive which is supposed to produce the concept), as well as a risk of appropriation or expansionism (since it gathers all sorts of heterogeneous cultures under a single term). *Planetary Modernisms* anticipates such objections, but although in principle the expansive archive of modernities, cities and cultures is intended to displace the special value accorded to (capitalist, Western) modernity, Friedman is ultimately sanguine about the fact that the term itself serves as a kind of symbolic commodity in a (capitalist, Western) market:

Modernity sells books and provides jobs, as does *modernism*. Modernist studies as a field has grown exponentially, moving through the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, generating discourses that the sciences and technology adapt as well. [...] The very fluidity and flexibility of *modernity* and *modernism* function linguistically to crystallize whole fields of debate. What's to be gained by dropping the terms? (325-326)

The problem with a singular concept of modernity according to Friedman is that it implies that the capitalist world-system was produced in Europe, and always defines modernity against this origin. But we should keep and expand the singular terms, she maintains, because of their value to an intellectual field that trades in them. Planetary modernist studies may wrest the concepts of modernism and modernity away from the idea of being produced in the West, but in doing so it grounds their value in the process of circulation – and in certain institutions that take an especially active role in that process.

All of this is to say that the relationship between modernism and the city is properly a question of postcolonial theory. The critique of a singular concept of modernity and of the capitalist world system on the grounds that they reproduce a Eurocentric perspective, and the counter-critique of pluralistic modernities on the grounds that they only displace the ‘singularity’ onto some other institution, have a substantial history in postcolonial literary studies. Trying to understand the relationship between literary modernism and the city means focusing on particular cities, particular texts and forms, particular avant-garde movements. The ‘new modernist studies’, global or planetary approaches like Friedman’s, and studies that find their interest in the idea of uneven or incomplete modernities, have opened up the canon of cities, texts, forms and movements that come under consideration. For economic and cultural reasons, Paris may indeed remain the modernist city par excellence, as McCracken observes (2010: 638), but Belgrade, Ljubljana and Zagreb, or Budapest and Bucharest, in different ways, have as much interest for their avant-gardes in a European perspective (Benson 2002; Djurić and Šuvaković 2003; Bahun 2012). Indeed, as Tyrus Miller has suggested:

All modernity, one might say, is incomplete modernity; and if we want to uncover the *characteristically incomplete* instances and pathways to European urban modernity, we might better look to Belgrade, Brno, Barcelona, Trieste, Katowice, Bratislava,

Riga, L'viv, Bucharest, Helsinki, and Stockholm than to the world metropolises [. . .] which may constitute something like exceptional realized 'major' cases of the 'minor' norm, rather than the standard of modernity as such. (2005: 720)

Similarly, one might consider the developments in narrative associated with modernist or avant-garde movements in Tokyo, Osaka, Yokohama or Kyoto during the early decades of the twentieth century, recognising that the relationships between these cities and the rest of the world has quite a different form to those European cases (Lippit 2002; Tyler 2008).

RABINDRANATH TAGORE IN TURIN

On 20 June 1926 in Turin, at an event organised by the *Associazione Pro Cultura Femminile* [Association for Women's Culture], the Indian poet and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore gave a lecture entitled 'The City and the Village'. It was based on an essay Tagore had previously published in the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, a journal published out of the school that Tagore had founded in 1921 in Santiniketan, a quiet town in rural West Bengal. In addition to the lecture, the event in Turin also featured a performance in Italian translation of some of Tagore's Bengali lyric poems, set to the original melody. Everything took place at the Liceo Musicale – the music school – which was then located in the Convento del Carmine on Via Bligny, adjacent to Filippo Juvarra's neo-baroque Church of Madonna del Carmine, and sitting among the narrow grid of streets at the centre of the old city. The Association for Women's Culture was a more recent development: it had been established in 1911 to provide a resource for women who were otherwise excluded from cultural institutions in the city. The association maintained a library as well as organising the programme of lectures, meetings and recitals of which Tagore's visit formed a part.

Just to the east, past the university, lay the Vanchiglia district. This was one of the first and most established areas of industrial development in Turin. In August 1917, Vanchiglia had been a centre for the workers' uprising and general strike, a major conflagration that began with demonstrations by women workers over bread shortages, widened into a protest over labour rights and the national government's wartime economic policies, and developed into a full-scale civil insurrection: 5 days of barricades and street fighting which was put down by the police and army, with around 500 killed. In the same year, the young socialist representative Antonio Gramsci edited a one-issue journal entitled *La città futura* [*The Future City*], which was published by the Socialist Youth Federation of Piedmont. This was followed in 1919 by the well known *L'Ordine nuovo* [*The New Order*], initially a weekly 'review of socialist culture' that later became a daily publication and a crucible for ideas and debates that would lead to the foundation of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in 1921.

From the early 1920s, Turin also had its own emergent branch of the Italian futurist movement. Among them were the typographer Terenzio Grandi, the Bulgarian-born artist and architect Nikolay Diulgheroff, and

the book designer Ugo Pozzo (Rainey et al 2009: 559–560). The principal Turin futurist was Fillia, a poet and painter born in 1904 who would collaborate extensively with Filippo Marinetti in the early 1930s. Fillia contributed some of his early free-verse poems to a 1922 collection entitled *1+1+1=1, Dinamite. Poesie Proletarie, Rosso + Nero*, which was published by the Turin *Proletkult* (a Communist institute for proletarian culture with which Gramsci and others were involved), but his political affiliations changed significantly over the course of the decade. The Turin futurists had been closely involved with the *Proletkult* in the early 1920s, but by 1926 were aligning themselves with the fascist movement. The journals published by the Turin futurists mirrored the titles of the earlier socialist publications: first *La città futurista* [*The futurist city*] (1929) and then *La città nuova* [*The new city*] (1932–1934).

A little to the south of Vanchiglia along the River Po was San Salvario, another workers' district that was also the site of the original Fiat car works on the Corso Dante. There an Art Nouveau extension designed by Alfredo Premoli had been built in 1907, though in 1923 Fiat had moved its centre of operations some 2 miles south to the newly built Lingotto factory. The building was oriented towards Taylorist production methods, and was included by Le Corbusier in his seminal 1923 book *Vers une architecture* [*Towards an Architecture*], which positioned the factory as a paradigm of industrial modernism and rational organisation.

In short, Turin in 1926 was both a modern and a modernist city: heavy with industry, technology and private enterprise, organised labour movements, income inequalities, journals and periodicals, small and large publishing houses, institutions of higher education and bourgeois culture, public lectures and recitals, art exhibitions and emergent avant-garde movements, with cultural products that reflected on the condition of the city itself. Unlike New York, Paris, London or Berlin, in 1926 it was also a city under fascist government.

Tagore was in Italy in 1926 on Mussolini's invitation. The visit was controversial: Tagore was moved to write an extended open letter to the missionary Charles Freer Andrews contradicting reports that he had expressed admiration for the philosophy of fascism. The letter was published in the *Manchester Guardian* on 5 August: in it, Tagore takes up a political position against dictatorship and expresses reservations about the monumentalism of the movement. His appreciation for Mussolini had been personal and aesthetic, but he admits that he may have been mistaken. One curious element of the letter is that Tagore speculates as to 'the possibility of the idea of Fascism being actually an infection from across the Atlantic'. The letter has a very strong sense of centre and periphery: Italy is portrayed as one of '[o]ur Western rulers', but America is cast as the centre of its value system – especially of violence, rationalisation and urbanisation (1926: 9–10).

On 20 June in Turin Tagore spoke along similar lines. In the published lecture, Tagore argues that urbanisation manifests itself in uneven distribution, which he articulates in moral terms as a kind of intemperance. He focuses on the

concentration of energy and materials to particular centres in order to supply an exaggerated appetite, while labour is bought cheap in the peripheries. In Africa and Asia, ‘a bartering goes on, whereby the future hope and happiness of entire peoples are sold for the sake of providing fastidious fashion with an endless train of respectable rubbish’ (1996: 512). Tagore’s critique is global, not just in the sense of a general distaste for the conditions to be found in one city and the next, but because the concentration of ‘energy and materials’ into the cities at the cost of the ‘anaemic’ villages is the same process in which the concentrated appetites of ‘civilisation’ are supplied at the cost of Asia and Africa.

In this sense, Tagore’s anti-urbanism is an element of his anti-colonialism. His sense that goods, demand and appetite tend to be concentrated in urban centres makes the city a synecdoche of the colonising West. Urbanisation is construed as a process intrinsically connected to colonialism, and especially to an exploitation of labour and resources. His critique has a similar shape to that of world-systems analyses, though it is grounded in a moral understanding that rests on an idea of spirit, rather than being materialist or Marxist, and in this way also lends itself to being read as a nostalgic ruralism. Tagore’s position in ‘The City and the Village’ would likely have found favour with fascist ideologues, since the lecture coincided with a growing ruralist rhetoric that would culminate in the national policy of ‘rurality’ in 1927 (Lyttelton 2004: 290–294).

Tagore’s remark on ‘fastidious fashion’, or the taste for perpetual novelty, begins to suggest how his critique of urbanisation might also have a bearing on his understanding of modernism. In a lecture of the 1927, delivered to a group of students in Tokyo, Tagore returns to a similar theme: addressing those men who claim to have ‘modernised Japan’, he says:

I must warn them that modernising is a mere affectation of modernism, just as affectation of poesy is poetising. It is nothing but mimicry [...] Modernism is not in the dress of the Europeans; or in the hideous structures, where their children are interned when they take their lessons [...] These are not modern, but merely European. True modernism is freedom of mind, not slavery of taste. (1996: 368)

Tagore’s relationship to modernism is not at all straightforward. Amit Chaudhuri observes that commentators on Tagore have distinguished ‘between the modern, the political, the “critical”, on the one hand, and the romantic, the ahistorical, the organic, on the other’ (2013: 95–96). Chaudhuri reads Tagore’s work as running against such a clear opposition, despite some of the poet’s own critical propositions that seem to confirm it. In *Planetary Modernisms*, Friedman also offers a reading of Tagore and his sister Swarnakumari Devi that persuasively refuses to assume that ‘modernist’ must entail a pre-established Western, metropolitan concept of the modern, and suggests that Tagore’s late novella *The Broken Nest* works through a distinctive claim on the meaning of modernism (2015: 261–280). Reading Tagore’s relation to modernism in these ways means moving from the important but centralising narrative of his encounters with Yeats and Pound in 1912 (for these, see Carr 2009: 509–514).

'The Spirit of Japan' lays a claim on the concept of modernism, and he considers it to have a real significance in the direction taken by national administrations. He does not say that modernism is a European invention, but that what passes for modernism is in fact Europeanism. There is a 'true' modernism which departs from European models and has the same spiritual weight as 'poesy'. Tagore refuses to presuppose that the idea of modernism is a European invention, even though in some respects his argument is similar to others who have taken this position (an example is the debate between Chinweizu, Wole Soyinka and others over modernism in African literature, for which see Lazarus 2012).

A parallel question is whether we can call on a concept of modernism determined by particular types of formal or stylistic development, independent of Tagore's claim to the term and against which his work can be read. Here I follow Jean-Michel Rabaté, observing that on a global scale 'the variations from medium to medium, from country to country, are such that no single standard of "advancement" could be defined' (2007: 5). Since 'advancement' also presupposes a set of criteria against which the particular form is meant to be advancing, it also presupposes restricted types of context in which such criteria can operate. To give a well known example, Pound's 'To break the pentameter, that was the first heave' (Pound 1996: 538) speaks to the restricted context of a particular, relatively narrow tradition in English versification. A cultural approach to modernism tends to avoid taking these restricted contexts in isolation, while recognising how important they can be in particular texts or at particular moments of a text's development.

Considering modernism in terms of networks and transactions, rather than sharply defined movements, styles or types, can help to account for the complex of relations seen in Turin. This is the approach that Paul Peppis calls cultural studies modernism (2014: 6). The emphasis in these cases is on preserving the specificity and particularity of a situation in which certain kinds of culture were produced. But the tension we must negotiate is exemplified in how Tagore pits his understanding of modernism against a perceived dominant, Western concept. However far we particularise, to talk about modernism or modernisms is to make a claim on a concept. In considering the city as a global form that nonetheless takes very different shape in particular cases, we can ask once again what is at stake in the application of modernism as a critical concept to the literatures of the metropolis.

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Travel Writing and the City

Paul Smethurst

In 'Walking the City', Michel de Certeau describes New York as a city that 'has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour [as] the tallest letters in the world compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess' (de Certeau 1988: 91). This insistent reinvention means that New York, in common with other modern cities, is not so well suited to travel writers seeking connections between place, history and the present. As de Certeau observes, New York arises out of a grand concept of *the City*, which takes as its representational form the panorama that used to be seen from the top of the World Trade Centre. So far above the real city, the panorama has little connection with the practice of everyday daily life. De Certeau even suggests that it provides a panoptic illusion as a strategic distraction from everyday life, from the alienation and disconnection experienced on the crowded city streets. Here the continuous present can induce schizophrenia, and while this might furnish fiction writers and abject travel writers with themes of banality and alienation, it offers little scope to those who like to travel with one foot in the past. So although this chapter will ultimately turn to questions of the contemporary, globalisation and the postmodern city, its main focus is travel writing on cities that have become especially prominent in the Western imagination through historical associations. As well as cities like Rome and London, this also includes Alexandria, now languishing geographically and imaginatively on the Western periphery, yet for centuries exerting profound influence on Western thought. A major exit route to the West for refugees, today the city retains few concrete reminders of that formative past. E. M. Forster's book on the city (discussed below), shows how travel writing can reconstruct and resuscitate the past in the eye of the modern traveller. As with other examples in this chapter, it does so by

engaging in the interplay of travel and history, especially in bringing hidden histories into the light of day.

As well as delving into the history of a city, the further aim of travel writers is to uncover social and cultural habits in the present, and of these mobility and tourism are obvious choices given the travellers' *modus operandi*. Tourism is by nature belated, a consuming practice, but increasingly it shapes the space of cities, as well as contributing to a literary genre with historical precedents that the travel writer is obliged to acknowledge. Literary tourism has emerged alongside the practical guidebook, although often distancing itself from it. For example, Tobias Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy* (1766) 'follows' the guidebooks of Thomas Nugent (*The Grand Tour*) and Joseph Addison (*Remarks on Several Parts of Italy*), often to criticise them and supplant unreliable facts and opinions with *in situ* reporting. In general, looking beyond the immediate and practical demands of the guidebook, literary travel writing of the kind explored in this chapter aims to filter and meld subjective impressions of place with received histories, to let them occupy the same imaginative time-space, and to understand and contextualise the undertow of multiple pasts where they tug on the present. Balance is everything here, as Western travel writing sometimes reflects so much of the traveller/tourist's subjective posturing that history, if it is included at all, is there to bolster the narrative authority of the writer. In Grand Tour narratives, for example, affected responses to Renaissance art and architecture by self-styled *connoisseurs* and amateur antiquarians merely reveal self-aggrandisement.

At its best, literary travel writing on cities provides an imaginative conduit to history to create a sense of the past living on in the present. As well as 'writing to the moment' and recording impressions of places at particular junctures, there is more texture and nuance where accounts are interwoven with history, and redolent with that elusive and nebulous element, the 'spirit of place'. In his essay, 'On History and Travel', Hilaire Belloc refers to three ways of treating travel in connection with history: the first, is to travel with no knowledge of history at all; this might create a deeper impression of particular sights, because we are not distracted by historical context; the second, is to visit a place having read a good deal about it, which allows us to concentrate on the details, of the architecture, for example, but at the cost of that deep impression of seeing something for the first time; the third, and the 'best', is 'to take travel in connection with general history', with a synoptic view of history in mind rather than guided by 'official or conventional history'; for Belloc this would be the worst way of regarding history in travel (Belloc 1942: 30-34). History takes on greater significance in travel writing on cities associated with milestones in the development of Western civilisation. In cities like Alexandria and Rome, writers ponder grand narratives of progress (or regress) and the abstract concepts behind the city's foundation. Where these reach back into an antique 'Golden Age' and chart the fall from a glorious past, ruins provide especially poignant touchstones, both as reminders of wonders, and as portents of calamities to come.

The literary travel writer might follow prescribed tourist itineraries, but is expected to transcend and deviate from them to find unique ways of bridging history with present experience; to describe new visions of the contemporary, which will inform future tourist itineraries. E. M. Forster's guide to Alexandria brought this city to the attention of modern readers between the wars. He restores the city as the foundation of something from which it has been disconnected for centuries. It is common in times of crisis to try to suture ancient and modern history, to create fictional continuities and harness the mythical power of the past, but this is not Forster's aim. Hidden histories of Alexandria might resonate with twentieth-century realities, but in Foster's account the past remains detached and anomalous. He writes of the Mouseion at Alexandria, that it was the 'great intellectual achievement of the dynasty', founded by Ptolemy Soter, it was partly modelled on Aristotle's library, but 'far richer and larger'. Of the Mouseion and the famous library, nothing remains (even its location is the subject of conjecture), and yet it seems to be of immense significance to Western civilisation: 'Not only did it . . . mould the literature and science of the day, but it has left a permanent impress upon [western] thought (Forster 1982: 19). But in 1922, Forster would find virtually nothing of ancient Alexandria in sight; as Laurence Durrell put it, 'for the majority of people Alexandria was a dull hole with only good bathing and many French restaurants to commend it . . . Pompey's pillar was an aesthetic calamity . . . and Alexander's tomb had disappeared under a thousand conjectures' (Durrell 1982: xvii).

Forster's role is to evoke a phantom city, excavating and reconstructing it on the page, and he achieved this through the double arrangement of a 'History' and a 'Guide'; the latter to be used on the spot, while the former gives substance to the unremarkable sights facing the modern traveller. The city that Forster constructed by this method helped Durrell to imagine the stage for his forthcoming Alexandria novels:

For two years I was able to walk about in the pages of this guide-book, using it as piously as it deserves to be used, and borrowing many of its gleams of wisdom to swell the notes for the book I myself hoped one day to write (Durrell 1982: xvi).

Although Forster's book on Alexandria is too schematic for some, the general idea of interweaving multiple pasts with the present to produce a diachronic sense of place is a common aim among modern travel writers who travel with one foot in the present and one in the past. Francis Bacon, in his essay 'Of Travel' (1626), directs travellers in the empirical spirit of the Enlightenment to record exactly what they saw in Europe: the present state of cities, institutions, architecture and social practices. Travelling to see the past was not considered.

Durrell and Forster were both looking for some kind of diversion when they wrote as exiles in Alexandria; neither were wholly at ease in Western society nor were looking to the East. But in regarding Alexandria through a prism of Western literature and culture, Forster was still travelling in the West. He gives scant attention to Alexandria's extensive 'Arab Period'; his favourite

'local' poet, Constantine Cavafy, was a Greek who spoke little Arabic. He considered the loss of Alexandria to Islam to be a calamity. This was 'the intellectual birthplace of Christianity', the city of Alexander and Cleopatra, so when the Arab general Amr took the city in 641, Forster writes it off, claiming that 'it would not function again for over 1,000 years' (Forster 62). By the time he visited Alexandria in 1922, the city had a reputation as a cosmopolitan place, not always in a positive sense. In a review of Forster's other book on Alexandria, *Pharos and Pharillon*, Middleton Murry called it a 'dubious city', a place with a 'bend in the spiritual dimension', qualities he associates with Forster: 'It is nothing less than a crack in the human universe', and the 'dubious character' Mr Forster 'wanders off to put his ear to it' (Murry 1923: 240). This may allude to Forster's 'dubious' sexuality as well as to the errant cosmopolitanism of modern Alexandria, which was at the time, for Murray, cast off from the intellectual and cultural ambit of European cities.

This idea that travel writers are drawn to cities with which they might have some abstract connection, raises the question of whether they shape the city, or vice versa. St. Paul's miraculous encounter on the road to Damascus certainly set him on a different path, and turned that city into a metaphor for transformation, with special significance for travellers from Christendom. Whereas Alexandria can claim a role in the foundation of Western thought, and was once central to Western civilisation, the desert city of Damascus, with fountains, running water and palaces, at least prior to the civil war, was, in the words of Gertrude Bell, 'always further away than any known place' (Bell 1985: 133). For Victorians, Damascus functioned as metaphor for 'elsewhere' as well as one of transformation, and at the heart of the Orient, it was both dangerous and hugely exotic. The daring exploits of Lady Hester Stanhope (1776 – 1839) in what was then Turkey created stirrings among repressed Victorians at home.

Unlike shady Damascus and 'dubious' Alexandria, Rome has long been a symbol for continuity between antiquity and the present, even though travel writers have always struggled to convey this as a reality. After Byron called Rome the 'Eternal' city in *Childe Harold* (Canto IV), legions of English tourists would head for the ruins to experience the romantic sublime among its ruins, and immerse themselves in the atmosphere of ancient history and Renaissance culture. Earlier, young gentlemen on the Grand Tour were sent here to impress on them the lessons of ancient, medieval and Renaissance history. In all this time, little attention was paid to the modern city of Rome, which if considered at all was regarded negatively, especially by non-Catholics. Travelling to Rome was expected to bring a change in character and sensibility as well as increasing knowledge in the Arts. So when Goethe set out for Italy in 1786, he was anticipating an existential transformation in what he called the 'First City of the world' (Goethe 1970: 128). After 1 month in Rome, he claimed, 'Though I am still always myself, I believe I have been changed to the very marrow of my bones' (147). But what particular effects did the city of Rome have on him?

He certainly received an education in aesthetics by studying art at first hand in the galleries and among his coterie of artist friends. He is voluble on the topic of

his own personal growth, and of opening out into a larger world. And yet, based on his studied indifference to the material remains of the ancient city, he has turned inwards, immuring himself from the past, from the monumental history which imposes itself at every turn. He acknowledges that 2000 years of history are laid out before him, occupying the same soil and sometimes the same walls and columns that he can visit today, and in a wider context, ‘the entire history of the world is linked up with this city’ (148). Through seeking parallels between cultural history and natural history, he attempts to analyse those links. But surely the analogy is wrong. Goethe spends most of his time learning about art in the galleries of Rome, where he feels he can apply something of the systematic discipline of natural history to the history of art. He finds associations and resemblances (as one might in natural history at that time) and works towards categories and theories about how works of art were produced, about the cross-fertilisation of ideas that produced new methods and subjects.

It is doubtful whether Goethe is able to systematise cultural history through this approach, and he is most uncertain about how to deal with the weight of history that surrounds him. It is not that history mystifies him, but he cannot account for its massive presence, or assimilate it within the contemporary city, most importantly he cannot observe its continuity since it is all before him at once, ‘All history is encamped about us and all history sets forth again from us.’ What he wants to see through all of this, is the Eternal City, ‘the Everlasting Rome, not the Rome which is replaced by another every decade’ (154). In other words, he seeks that panoptic vision of the city mentioned by de Certeau in ‘Walking the City’, the illusion that maps the concept of the Eternal City. But there is no vantage point from which to see that continuity, and the material evidence of the city only emphasises temporal and spatial disruption and discontinuity. To make the city whole, Goethe conceives of Rome as a work of art, and, preparing to leave, declares: ‘Everything is beginning to make a pattern’ (171). But this pattern concerns art and it is self-referring. Rome has been for Goethe an aesthetic and emotional site, and the material city is the stage for a personal transformation – it is his Damascus.

When Smollett visited Rome 20 years earlier, he satirised the reckless enthusiasm among English gentlemen to become ‘connoisseurs in painting, musick, statuary, and architecture’, suggesting it resulted not so much in education, as to a brisk trade in fakes:

I have seen in different parts of Italy, a number of raw boys, whom Britain seemed to have poured forth on purpose to bring her national character into contempt: ignorant, petulant, rash, and profligate, without any knowledge or experience of their own . . . all of them talk familiarly of the arts and return finished connoisseurs and coxcombs, to their own country (Smollett 1981: 241).

The larger point here is that if these gentlemen are so easily duped, then the Baconian integrity and judgment of England’s future leaders are in question. Compared with Goethe’s description of Rome, Smollett in *Travels Through*

France and Italy has a striking honesty and lack of pretence. As he spends more time writing to the moment than in reflection, we can walk with Smollett around the city and follow his critical eye. Opinionated and irascible he may be, but from a contemporary post-touristic perspective, his insouciance towards some of the major tourist sights might strike a chord. For example, he is unimpressed by any of the bridges in Rome, which he finds inferior to those of London, and the Pantheon is described as ‘a huge cockpit, open at the top’ (Smollett 1981: 258). On the other hand, he finds the Colosseum, ‘the most stupendous work of the kind which antiquity can produce’, the piazza of St. Peter’s church is ‘altogether sublime’, and he applauds the ‘admirable symmetry and proportion’ of the great altar, if one can ignore the overcrowded ornamentation, a fault he finds in most Roman churches and houses (255, 257).

If travel writers as a rule use history to gloss the present or to give it an extra dimension, Smollett does the reverse: examines the past through the present, demystifying it from a modern perspective. So although the Colosseum is a stupendous site, reports of 10,000 of beasts and humans slaughtered for public amusement make Smollett conclude that the Romans were ‘undoubtedly a barbarous people . . . who took delight in seeing their fellow-creatures torn in pieces by wild beasts’ (260). While applauding the aqueducts and the fountains adorning the piazzas, he cannot help remarking, ‘That this great plenty of water, nevertheless, has not induced the Romans to be cleanly. Their streets, and even their palaces, are disgraced with filth’ (243). Modern Rome is constantly cut down to size as Smollett compares the present city unfavourably with London, which he finds far more progressive in its architecture, bridges, roads and gardens. It is undoubtedly through the eyes of a committed ‘improver’ that he wonders why the Campagna has remained an uncultivated desert and the marshes around the city not drained. Other travellers from Britain shared Smollett’s disappointment with the ‘Eternal City’. Hazlitt was even less appreciative of contemporary Rome during his visit of 1826:

In Rome you are for the most part lost in a mass of tawdry, fulsome *common-places*. It is not the contrast of pig-styes and palaces that I complain of, the distinction between old and new; what I object to is the want of any such striking contrast, but an almost uninterrupted succession of narrow, vulgar-looking streets, where the smell of garlick prevails over the odour of antiquity, with the dingy, melancholy flat fronts of modern-built houses . . . A dunghill, an outhouse, the weeds growing under an imperial arch offend me not; but what has a green-grocer’s stall, a stupid English china warehouse, a putrid *trattoria*, a barber’s sign, an old cloths or old picture shop or a Gothic palace . . . to do with ancient Rome? No! this is not the wall that Romulus leaped over: this is not the Capital where Julius Caesar fell . . . Rome is great only in ruins: the Colisium, the Pantheon, the Arch Constantine fully answered my expectations. (Hazlitt 1983: 232–233)

Smollett, Goethe and Hazlitt all had difficulties bridging contemporary Rome to the idea of historical continuity implied in ‘Eternal City’. They

could not travel in the past: Smollett because he denigrated the present state of Rome as he found it, not gilded by its glorious past, and he did so strategically to promote London as the first city in Europe; Goethe because motivated by the desire to cultivate himself through the study of the city's art collections and resident artists. Rome was an elaborate stage on which a formative episode of his life played out, about which he probably only tells the half. He was shaped by Rome, but only by a particular aspect of it. Both Smollett and Goethe shaped the city according to their personalities. These are personal reflections which impose their character on Rome rather than exploring the city as a historical phenomenon. Hazlitt on the other hand finds contemporary Rome an aberration, a cuckoo in the nest of antiquity.

The reverse was true for Dickens, whose *Pictures from Italy* (1846) focuses on what lies before him, largely excluding historical analysis. Antiquity is in ruins, which signify little beyond the material facts of times long passed. He arrives in Rome at the time of the Carnival and is drawn to describe the liveliness of the scene in the Corso, which included:

[A] party of gipsy-women engaged in terrific conflict with a shipful of sailors; a man-monkey on a pole, surrounded by strange animals with pigs' faces, and lions' tails, carried under their arms, or worn gracefully over their shoulders; carriages on carriages, dresses on dresses, colours on colours, crowds upon crowds, without end . . . the main pleasure of the scene consisting in its perfect good temper; in its bright, and infinite, and flashing variety; and in its entire abandonment to the mad humour of the time – an abandonment so perfect, so contagious, so irresistible, that the steadiest foreigner fights up to his middle in flowers and sugar-plums, like the wildest Roman of them all. (Dickens 1970: 369–370)

Continuing with feet and eyes in the present, Dickens describes High Mass at St. Peter's as a spectacle, almost as if it were an extension of the Carnival, which in a sense it was as both were in celebration of Easter. High Mass was a show of splendour designed to invoke in the audience a response 'half miserable, and half ridiculous'; while other aspects of the 'show' were 'droll and tawdry' (365). In the ornate interiors of 'innumerable' churches, where he always finds the scene the 'strangest possible', with the same 'monotonous, heartless, drowsy chanting, always going on, the same dark building . . . the same priest's back, with the same large cross embroidered on it . . . the same miserable cripples exhibiting their deformity . . . the same preposterous crowns of silver struck upon the painted heads of single saints and Virgins in crowded pictures' and so on, but he does single out one church where a 'miraculous Bambino, or wooden doll, representing the Infant Saviour' is pressed into service to heal the sick, for a 'small charge' (378; 376–377)

Given the title, *Pictures of Italy*, it is not surprising to find Dickens attending mainly to the visual, and therefore to the present more than the past. Time and again, it is Rome's *theatricality* that draws him; this includes performances

connected with Catholicism, like that performed with the Bambino, and the living dramas played out across the modern city. It does not include the staged masquerade at the theatre itself, which he finds ‘dull and senseless’. He enjoys riding out into the Campagna, called ‘a Desert, where a mighty race have left their footprints in the earth from which they have vanished, where... the broken hour-glass of Time is but a heap of idle dust!’ In other words, there is no historical continuity, and antiquity does not speak to him. Yet he is struck by the way ancient fragments of obelisks, columns and temples have been ‘blended into some modern structure, and made to serve some modern purpose’ (393–394). For another writer with a more diachronic imagination this might serve as a metaphor for continuity, the past living on in the present, but Dickens sees only the anomalous and indifferent recycling of the past to serve present needs.

There is, however, a singular ruin where the past does impress itself on Dickens, and he returns to it daily: in the Coliseum he finds the most spectacular ruin among ruins, the most ‘majestic, mournful sight conceivable’, where can be seen ‘the ghost of old Rome, wicked, wonderful old city, haunting the very ground on which its people trod’. But then, glad to see it all gone, he adds, ‘God be thanked: a ruin!’ It is of course the preeminent site of spectacle and performance, and so it connects with Rome’s continuing dramas, but more than this, for Dickens it is a place exerting psychic and emotive force on the traveller:

Its solitude, its awful beauty, and its utter desolation, strike upon the stranger the next moment like a softened sorrow; and never in this life, perhaps, will he be so moved and overcome by any sight, not immediately connected with his own affectations and afflictions. (362)

Emphasising the visual again, Dickens suggests that the traveller senses something emanating from this site in the form of a displaced memory from outside his own experience. Alternatively, he might sense a reflection of his own historical projection onto the ruin, and generalise his response. In modern travel writing, these half-realised psychological and phenomenological approaches to place are much more evident, and more worked.

In the 1930s, Elizabeth Bowen takes a phenomenological approach in visiting Rome with the intention of discovering how the historical continuity that makes Rome ‘eternal’ might act on her. With modernist eye, and post-Bloomsbury mode, she brings theories of consciousness and memory to her narrative. Realising that in the absence of a time machine the past can never be entered in any meaningful way, she considers the possibility that the past might be allowed to enter the present, if one were to admit it. In the nicely titled, *A Time in Rome*, she wonders ‘how to break down the barrier between myself and happenings outside *my* memory. I was looking for splinters of actuality in a shifting mass of experience other than my own.’ The past cannot be entered, but it might be possible to use the present as a ‘reflector’, and then ‘one can be entered by it [the past], to a degree’ (Bowen 2003: 11). The idea of acting as a

passive presence and then feeling the forward flow of Rome's continuity is certainly a less intrusive approach than that of the male travel writers discussed so far.

At times, Bowen's narrative of a time in Rome recalls Mrs Dalloway's journey across London. For both women, the present is a reflector to the past, but unlike Virginia Woolf's character, Bowen attempts to evoke a past outside her own memory, to penetrate the screen of the present and 'break through this canvas simulacrum of a city into the reality at the other side of it: antiquity [...] Rome as it was under-propping Rome as it is' (Bowen 2003: 44). Her mode is 'visual rather than historic', one of 'directed imagination', as she tries to re-evolve Roman history at the Forum (63-64). But as she casts her imaginative eye back to end of the eighteenth century when the Palatine was excavated, she senses something blocking her journey:

There is a naivety about the Forum as it is now. It is as though what is disinterred took on the character of the greater part of the time of disinterring: the Palatine, later exposed, looks twentieth-century [she later refers to it as 'Antiquity's rock garden'], the Forum, Victorian – still like a faint brown photograph in a rectory study. (50)

The problem with encountering the architecture of the Forum is that it 'reproduces itself sadly elsewhere, today':

From the Roman idea have spawned endless civic buildings: town halls, terminal railway stations, banks, exchanges, middle-aged universities, museums, art galleries, public libraries... Grime-caked and smoke darkened in northern cities, these reproductions bear down crushingly on the spirit, alienating one from the benefits they stand for. (67)

The representational Forum that stands between now and antiquity disrupts the historical continuity and alters that sense of the past, the atmosphere or climate Bowen was expecting to experience. She is on more solid ground re-evoking the noises of antiquity, such as the human roar of the Forum, and the relative quiet of the decorous Curia and Vestals' precincts, in contrast to the constant 'clip-clop of plebeian ill-fitting sandals, up and down steps and across pavements, [which] would have also added considerably to the din' (68-69).

In all this travel writing on Rome, attempts to evoke the atmosphere of the ancient city stand out from more descriptive accounts of the art and architecture of the Renaissance city, which in turn are somewhat at odds with the often ignored (except by Dickens) contemporary city. Ancient Rome holds a particular fascination for travellers because it has long been associated with the origins of Western culture. Rome as a city of the Renaissance, on the other hand, is a vast museum of art and architecture, a cultural treasure trove. These two faces of the city – three if the

contemporary is not entirely blindsided – give Rome a disjointed character, a multiple personality. Most cities are more cohesive, more together, as successions of writers and artists paint its essential character. This may not always appear in quite the same guise, but there are recognisable traits. With modern cities, however, a lack of character can result from uniformity, sameness and the lack of anything that demands attention. Visiting Berlin in 1854, George Eliot thought the city lacked a distinctive physiognomy, as with people, some cities lack the kind of character that solicits different emotive responses: ‘Every one tells you it is an uninteresting modern city with broad, monotonous streets; and when you see it, you cannot for the life of you get up an emotion of surprise, or make a remark about the place which you have not heard before’ (Eliot 1885: 178).

According to V.S. Naipaul, ‘No city or landscape is truly rich unless it has been given the quality of myth by writers, painters, or by association with great events’ (Naipaul 1988, cited in Tindall 1991: 10). With respect to ‘painterly’ cities, then surely Naipaul has Venice in mind. With its unique floating presence and its carnivals, this city has worked on the imagination of writers and painters like no other. Jan Morris begins her account of Venice in 1960 by describing the lagoon ‘encircled with illusory reflections, like mirages in the desert [...] and among these hallucinations the water reclines in a kind of trance’ (Morris 1960: 23). Following this otherworldly prelude, the city skyline presents itself:

Its towers survey the lagoon in crotchety splendour, some leaning one way, some another. Its skyline is elaborate with campaniles, domes, pinnacles, cranes, riggings, television aerials, crenellations, eccentric chimneys and a big red grain elevator. There are glimpses of flags and fretted rooftops, marble pillars, cavernous canals [...] and as the boat approaches through the last church-crowned islands, and a jet fighter screams splendidly out of the sun, so the whole scene seems to shimmer. (24)

The first impression is revealing because all the modern elements and infrastructure are painted with the same brush and subsumed into that part-real, part-illusory vision of the historic city. It is as though history has reclaimed the present. The city is commonly described as dream-like or as a painting, a replica of itself. As if confirming the idea of Venice as a representational space, Henry James begins his account of it in 1882 with the anxiety that he may have nothing to add (James 1958: 384); his sense of belatedness is induced from having Ruskin’s *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853). So he begins by approaching the city as a self-styled ‘visionary tourist’, a persona related to the ‘sentimental tourist’ and the ‘cosmopolite’ (31). Yet he joins the tourists intent on painting Venice in images and words, somewhat superfluously, given that the city already exists as a picture composing in his mind:

I simply see a narrow canal in the heart of the city – a patch of green water and a surface of pink wall. The gondola moves slowly; it gives a great smooth swerve, passes under a bridge, and the gondoliers cry, carried over the quiet

water, makes a kind of splash in the stillness. A girl crosses the little bridge, which has an arch like a camel's back, with an old shawl on her head, which makes her characteristic and charming; you see her against the sky as you float beneath. The pink of the old wall seems to fill the whole place; it sinks even into the opaque water. (396)

In *Pictures from Italy*, Dickens arrives in Venice at night, and his whole visit is described as a dream:

I found that we were gliding up a street - a phantom street; the houses rising on both sides, from the water, and the black boat gliding on beneath their windows. Lights were shining from some of these casements, plumbing the depth of the black stream with their reflected rays, but all was profoundly silent. (Dickens 1970: 325)

The next day, the dream continues and with it the literary conceit:

The glory of the day that broke upon me in this Dream; its freshness, motion, buoyancy; its sparkles of the sun in water; its clear blue sky and rustling air; no waking words can tell... Going down upon the margin of the green sea, rolling on before the door, and filling all the streets, I came upon a place of such surpassing beauty, and such grandeur... It was a great Piazza, as I thought; anchored like all the rest, in the deep ocean. (326)

He continues in this mode, until he finally awakes in the marketplace of Verona, having floated away from this 'strange Dream upon the water: half wondering if it lie there yet, and if its name be VENICE' (331).

Of all major cities, Venice is least likely to step outside of its own image, although cities such as London, Rome, Florence and New York are also deeply infused with images, ideas and events that have shaped how they are perceived. Following Naipaul, this is how cities become great, or acquire character, even if that character is shaped by the idiosyncratic perspectives of writers and painters, often outsiders, rather than on the everyday experience of their citizens. Unlike other travel writers discussed here, Iain Sinclair writes from home (London) and brings considerable local, geographical and historical knowledge to his writing. He also engages with the city by walking through it, taking significant paths designed to reveal particular aspects of the city's everyday expression. In Sinclair, the 'rhetoric of walking' is given free rein (de Certeau 1988: 100). In *Lights Out for the Territory* (1997), he takes a walk from Hackney to Greenwich to Chingford, a path designed to have runic significance: 'The notion was to cut a crude V into the sprawl of the city, to vandalise dominant energies by an act of ambulant signmaking' (Sinclair 1997: 1). As well as dabbling in a half-serious occult involving 'the letters of a secret alphabet', he is also committed to presenting the gritty realism of contemporary Britain, recording the counter-culture in the urban graffiti, 'the pictographs of venom' decorating his route. Through such semiotic ramblings, one aim is to map the alternative

cartography of an underclass excluded from the proximate epicentre of high capitalism. Walking is key to his mode, and as a ‘born-again *flâneur*’ he sees himself as less intent on ‘texture and fabric’ than on noticing and recording potentially significant patterns:

Alignments of telephone kiosks, maps made from moss on the slopes of Victorian sepulchres, collections of prostitutes’ cards, torn and defaced promotional bills for cancelled events at York Hall, visits to the homes of dead writers, bronze casts on war memorials, plaster dogs, beer mats, concentrations of used condoms [. . .] (4).

Walking stitches these random observations together, and the graffiti en route provides a subtext to a fiction whose meaning is revealed in sudden epiphanies, as when he arrives at a vandalised chapel in Abney Park Cemetery, where he finds D-O-G sprayed in pink on the corrugated iron sheets covering the chapel. The apex of these iron sheets forms a triangle, to Sinclair a sign, a mystic triangle with the eye of a window at its centre. The letter ‘V’ that defined the original journey, now has three sides, putting Sinclair in mind of a gilded triangle enclosing a circle of gold at the altar of Christ Church, Spitalfields. It is often noted that the London churches designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, including Christ Church, appear to contain symbols evoking London’s pre-Christian origins and, to those suitably primed, evidence of a clandestine occult beneath the official history of London. For Sinclair, an ‘occult mapping of the city’ (125) is certainly insinuated in his rhetoric of walking, the coordinates of which are formed by the location of the seventeenth-century churches built after the Great Fire, and ‘all the other triangulations of the city: Blake, Bunyan, Defoe [. . .]. Everything I believe in, everything London can do to you’ (34).

For Sinclair, London’s churches have deep associations with the past and form a mesh of mystical, but palpable, symbolisms; yet he is dismissive of the ‘entirely mythical past’ he finds in the city’s postmodern piazza’s – the ‘interzones’, of ‘drudge surrealism for insomniacs. Random statuary, pissing fountains, imported cobblestones’ (100). It offends the postmodern psychogeographer to have allusions made explicit, preferring instead to dig up hidden histories and eschew the more obvious markers of the past. He regards London’s memorials to famous people and events as no more than ‘a way of forgetting, reducing generational guilt to a grid of albino chess pieces, bloodless stalagmites. Shapes that are easy to ignore stand in for the trauma of remembrance’ (9). He also rails against London’s network of security as he sloganises: ‘Surveillance is another form of erasure’ (39). Again, the past is erased as ‘the peeping vulture lenses’ produce ‘a discreet tyranny of “now” – thousands of present moments sprayed onto screens most of which are never seen’ (90, 105).

While Sinclair’s psychogeography and anti-capitalist rants might identify him with a counter culture, what Tory politicians used to call the ‘Loony Left’, his near-obsessive practice of walking the city gives authenticity to the vision. Immersed in street-level detail his mode is diametrically opposed to the panorama. And yet in his occult mapping and alternative cartographies Sinclair does

attempt a commanding counter-vision of the city. This meaning is not transparent, however, and the monuments which stake out public space, are false friends to those who seek the city's meaning in the subtle patterns of the everyday saturated with an occult past.

Sinclair is not alone in attempting to bring hidden histories of the city to the surface by tracing etymologies of place names and interpreting signs and symbols. In *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens teases his readers by weaving cryptic connections across the city, as many other mystery and detective writers have done since. Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy* has a postmodern detective (Auster's alter ego) who follows a man whose walk through the streets of New York appears to be spelling 'THE TOWER OF BABEL'. But Auster's mystery evaporates in postmodern bathos, in a parody of the author-cum-detective's focalisation, and of semiotic interpretation, traced back to the zealots for whom the foundation of America was a Biblical story foretold (Auster 1986). But as Sinclair walks his 'V' (later emended to a triangle, and then to VOX), there is no sense of self-parody, his interpretations are delivered with hair-shirted seriousness.

Sinclair has followed similar paths to those of Peter Ackroyd in his *London: A Biography*. For both, the English visionaries, Blake and Dr John Dee are prominent in their nebulous cartographies of the city. Ackroyd notes that before the Blitz, a number of historians explored London's supposed Celtic origins and associations with Druidism. But with much of the city in ruins, speculative geographies were put aside as the focus shifted to urban planning and renewal (Ackroyd 2000: 12-18). In the aftermath of the Blitz, H. V. Morton produced *In Search of London* (1951), an amalgam of travel writing, history and geography, which extends through Morton's own memory back to Victorian and Edwardian times, to London between the wars, the Blitz itself, and the continuing state of devastation after the war. And all the while, Morton is conscious of the Roman city, some 20 ft below, and the succeeding layers of history that underlie the present ruins. Like other writers at the time, Morton was prompted to re-invoke Roman history by the extraordinary number of Roman remains, many pre-Christian, which were uncovered by the bombing and recent rebuilding work. While many of the main sights of London surprisingly survived the Blitz, Morton surveys the scene between Milk Street and Moorfields to find:

Thousands of buildings have been burned and blasted to the cellars. Here and there the side of a building rises gauntly from the rubble, a detached gateway stands by itself in the undergrowth, the towers of a few churches, or a spire, lift themselves mournfully, like tombstones in a forgotten cemetery. (Morton 2001: 39)

He finds it tempting to compare blitzed London with the ruins of Pompeii or Herculaneum as 'all ruins have a certain similarity'. But in Greece and Rome, they may be inspected 'without the expense of human feeling'. It is possible to wander around these ruins with 'sketch-book, camera, or luncheon basket'. But the fire this time round is different: 'There is a savagery, a fury and a hideous wickedness about the ruins of London – and of Berlin also – that chills the heart' (39-40).

Ackroyd and Sinclair return to the city 50 years after Morton for different reasons and with different emphases, writing at the Millenium when there was an appetite for conspiracy theories, doomsday scenarios and apocrypha. It is perhaps with this audience in mind that Sinclair hints at dark forces operating beneath the surface of the capitalist system. One example is the absence of images of the Thames on public display. The city's visual history has been secreted in private galleries and boardrooms across the city, preventing most of us from travelling in time, along this particular 'ribbon of memory' (Sinclair, 173). With access to this official history blocked, Sinclair turns to unseen transhistorical forces along the Thames, such the geomantic power of the Temple of Mithras and the 'grid of energies' produced by the alignment of symbols such as the Minotaur (109, 112).

In uncovering the city's Roman past, Sinclair offers another way of seeing the city, although after 2000 years, much of the physical evidence has been moved, replaced and copied. Sinclair regards this as a deliberate form of vandalism:

The ancient gates, energy sluices, have been replaced by tawdry plastic barriers. A policy of deliberate misalignment (the Temple of Mithras, London Stone, the surviving effigies from Ludgate) has violated the integrity of the City's sacred geometry; leaving, in the place of well-ordered chaos, regimented anonymity – a climate in which corruption thrives. Poisoned weather, sick skies, confused humans. (116)

From contemporary texts, written on subway walls, graveyards, crypts and other 'underground' places, Sinclair connects contemporary class politics with the energy lines of the city's prehistory. It is tempting to see in this Sinclair's subterfuge from the ravages of globalisation, from the reduction of today's city to commodified simulacra. Only in the mysterious depths of London's prehistory can Sinclair escape the banality, corruption and greed of the postmodern city.

Hong Kong, as both a postmodern and a postcolonial city, has no such depths. Returning to de Certeau's comments about New York, it too has 'never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts', and its present also 'invents itself, from hour to hour'. When travel writers mention Hong Kong, the themes are predictable: the city is a 'hybrid nest of Global Souls' producing 'Pure mishmash' or 'fusion culture' (Iyer 2000: 97). For Pico Iyer, this is not a recent phenomenon as Hong Kong has always been a 'perpetual colony... which... managed to change identities to fit the shifting of history's tides' (96). The city is often compared with the set of *Blade Runner*, a mix of past, present and past futures, of East and West, of unspecified and untranslated Asians in noodle shops and markets, against a backdrop of futuristic, glass-clad tower blocks with helicopters flying overhead. In the movie, the semiotic disorder has aesthetic integrity, at least, but in Hong Kong it is open to multiple readings. To Jan Morris, for example, Hong Kong Park's colonial gardens are an example of 'those inescapable amenities of the British Empire that have defied progress even here' (Morris 1997: 41). They stand for a legacy, that

most importantly includes the rule of law, and which resists the march of globalisation figured in the tower blocks. For Iyer, they belong with the 'last sad remnants of British rule' (82). In *Locations*, Jan Morris realises that due to globalisation:

peoples everywhere have become more familiar with each other, and the idea of travel is beginning to acquire altogether new meanings... I seldom go to a city now, after so many years, that I have not written about before: I know the shape of a place, I have inner comparisons to make. (Morris 1992: 1)

This inward turn is not just a personal choice, it is a cultural response forced upon the travel writer by globalisation. For Morris, the journey might be an internal one, but with half a century of remembered travel, the comparisons to be made must also reflect how the world has changed, and not just her revised way of seeing it.

As modern cities become more like each other, or indistinguishable from filmic representations, the literary traveller increasingly finds landscapes and cityscapes of the past the most rewarding places to visit. Even the once futuristic architecture of Le Corbusier, Frank Lloyd Wright can now be seen through the rear window of nostalgia. In catering to an increasing appetite for history and 'heritage', real sites/sights are often extended by digital simulations and other forms of simulacra, which flatten history by projecting it onto the screen of the present, rather than resuscitating it, and giving presence to the past. It has never been easier to produce digitally enhanced images of how the past might have looked, but this does not make it easier to re-evolve the past in the mind of the tourist. In the future we may be condemned to travel zombie-like over historical sites, feet in the present, minds in a timeless cyberspace. But access to digital and concrete simulacra of the past should not replace the travel writer's 'city of words', interwoven with time, history and memory. Older habits of armchair travel can still bring the past to life through literary echoes and resonances, and might go some way to dispelling the modern myth that 'the past is a foreign country' (Hartley 1953: 1).

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The Urban Connections of Crime Fiction

Stephen Knight

DETECTION APPROACHES THE CITY

Early crime fiction has no separate sense of urban life as a specific source of threat or value. Story collections like Richard Head's *The English Rogue* (1665) or the eighteenth-century versions of *The Newgate Calendar* can include London criminals as well as highwaymen and murderers right across the country, but there is no sign that the city is felt to be different from other areas. However, later, *Calendar* editions like those produced by Andrew Knapp and William Baldwin in 1809–1810 and George Wilkinson in 1814 include new stories where people move around London anonymously from suburb to suburb, and at the same time evidence about crimes becomes obscure or contradictory. The changing *Calendar* appears to be responding to the growth of urban alienation and the enhanced possibilities of crime in that context.

The novels of William Godwin and Charles Brockden Brown have often been cited as early transmutations of the Gothic towards crime fiction (Hindle 2015; Knight 2015a: 23–32), but both manage without foregrounding the city. In *Caleb Williams* (1794), Godwin makes the hero on the run move briefly to London, but though his lack of urban belonging is clear, it brings no special personal danger or thematic impact, and he soon moves away. Brockden Brown was a Philadelphian, at times a New Yorker, and he involved himself in the cultural and political life of both those newly independent cities, but though *Arthur Mervyn* (1799) does show the turmoil of plague-ridden Philadelphia, the real evils of the story are moral and interpersonal threats, like the swindler who targets Arthur himself.

Two of the first writers who developed something like a quasi-detective case-study are city-based and develop some elements of a link between urban

professionals and the comprehension of crime, in ways that validate the Foucauldian concept of the disciplinary basis of detection (see Worthington 2005: 46–49) - which itself has firm links to the cities where most disciplinary professionals lived and worked. Starting in the American *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1838, 'The Diary of a Philadelphia Lawyer' stories are based in the city, and the lawyer himself travels to various sites, but little is yet made of locations or their implications. Before that, Samuel Warren, both doctor and lawyer, without leaving *Blackwood's Magazine* moved from his early generalised sensationalism to medically-focussed London-set inquiries, in his *Passages from the Diary of a Late Physician* (Vols 1, 2, 1832; Vol 3, 1838). Starting in 1830, Warren's 'Physician' is given no address, but he can have an awareness of the city, if primarily sentimental and negative: 'how often have I slunk stealthily along the streets of London, on cold and dreary winter evenings' (1832: 15). Most of Warren's stories only concern the equally individualised miseries and errors of others, but the forces of urbanisation can be identified. In 'The Merchant's Clerk' (1836), an Oxford graduate, ruined by his landed father's gambling, works for a wealthy Mincing Lane merchant who lives in arriviste Highbury. When he marries the daughter and she is cast out, they settle in the impoverished semi-criminal Borough; finally the husband, believing his wife and child are dead, throws himself in the New River—itsself a creation of the city, a canal bringing fresh water from the River Lea to the developing suburbs of north London.

This urban sequence is unique in its period. The anonymous *Richmond: Scenes from the Life of a Bow Street Officer* (1827) charts country cruelties and misunderstandings in the north-west of England, until Tom Richmond joins the Bow Street Runners. That bases him in London, but even then his cases are mostly elsewhere, such as a comic marriage dispute in the city's village-filled hinterland. *Pelham* (1828) by Edward Bulwer (known after 1844 as Bulwer-Lytton) eventually focuses on a murder near an East Anglian race course, but the story starts in Paris and moves to London a third of the way through when Pelham becomes an MP. He inhabits the city without specific reaction to it, apart from a dangerous visit to a criminal rookery in 'narrow and filthy streets' (Lytton 1888, 433) by the river in the East End. This replicates a pattern previously found in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) and Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749)—threats to the visiting person in the city can be briefly realised in some detail, but no broader social issues are developed.

The first substantial engagement with the locations and systems of the modern megalopolis in crime writing was in the Paris-focused *Mémoires* of Eugène François Vidocq (1827–1828), which became very popular in English in 1829 London. Though the latter of the four volumes clearly had some authorial (or more likely ghost-writerly) elaborations, the whole passed for autobiography. When he is in the city, the narrative is strongly urban: when he became a full-time police agent Vidocq 'walked Paris for twenty days... I was studying the terrain'

(Vidocq 2003: 192), and this knowledge is central to his successes against ‘the herd of crooks who infested the capital’ (Vidocq 2003: 196).

Though there are critics who speak of ‘urban Gothic’ as if Eugène Sue and G. W. M. Reynolds, the 1840s authors of *Mysteries* of both Paris and London, combined earlier excitements with their metropolitan viewpoints, this view is simplistic (see Knight 2015b): novelists had already dealt with the modern city through temporal displacement in historical fiction. When Scott in *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818) represented the conflicts of classes and communities that led to the Porteous Riots of 1736, he names the Edinburgh streets dominated by the rioters, and their motives delineate major forces in modern Scotland. Victor Hugo made a crucial further move, condensing urban history and geography in *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831), drawing attention to the streets of medieval Paris that were still to be found: the city can be known in the present through its traces from the past.

W. Harrison Ainsworth followed Hugo in *Jack Sheppard* (1839), describing the city of London a 100 years before his own time; he continued in that mode and would, if indirectly, stimulate Eugène Sue’s massive urbanisation of crime narrative. An editor who apparently thought Sue might run up a London parallel to Hugo showed him an illustrated English version of ‘les mystères de Londres’: it seems to have been *The Mysteries of Old St Paul’s* (1841), an exploitative response to Ainsworth’s *Old St Paul’s* (see Knight 2012: 27, 28). Sue’s response was a crucial move of modernisation, apparently influenced by his own recent radicalisation and the political tensions of 1840s’ France: he produced the enormously successful and influential *Les Mystères de Paris* (1842–1843). Central is the story of Rodolphe’s lost daughter Fleur-de-Marie, met first as a prostitute, then rediscovered by her father, and at the end dying in peace as a nun, but there are also accounts of many criminals, from the fearful, unregenerate ‘Schoolmaster’ to the brutal ‘Chourineur’ or ‘Stabber’, who is redeemed through Rodolphe’s influence into a life of honest service. Sue’s long narrative is essentially an epic of the city before Haussmann widened the boulevards and destroyed the worst slums. A very mixed set of characters live right in the centre at 17 Rue du Temple, the gentry are in the Faubourg St Germain, but a good deal of the action and some free-floating characters are found out beyond the *barrières* of expanding Paris (see ‘Charting the City’, Knight 2012, 40–45).

Sue’s pattern of the ‘Mysteries’ of the city was to be many times reworked, with settings in London, Philadelphia, Berlin, even Melbourne and the Vatican (Knight 2012; Ascari 2013). His operating context was itself potently modern: the stories were at first *feuilletons*, appearing on the bottom half of a newspaper’s front page: technology and commercialism combined to offer updated validation to urban fiction. G. W. M. Reynolds in *The Mysteries of London* (1844–1848) replayed Sue’s structure without the aristocratic overview and with more crimes and added a recurrent radical understanding of how social forces have shaped criminals—even the terrifying Resurrection Man, who is finally killed by Crankey Jem, a London villain who returns illegally from transportation determined on revenge against the master-criminal. But

London's crimes are more varied, and some of the criminals more elusive than those of Paris. In Reynolds, bourgeois and gentry criminals, bankers, bill brokers and even members of Parliament continue their rampages largely unhindered across the huge and consciously swelling city—the massive story even offers an opening paean to the new social impact of the omnibus. Ultra-modern technique also contributes here in the form of eight-page weekly instalments, with one illustration, and just for a penny.

THE CITY IN DETECTION

Though the city had found a home in the 'Mysteries' narratives, they are not usually identified as crime fiction, simply because they have little role for detectives or even street police. Crime fiction had, however, by the mid-century made some clear moves in establishing itself with some self-consciousness through some detective figures: they did not yet, unlike the characters of the *Mysteries*, make the city their inevitable home, but these two forces of modernity would eventually merge.

Edgar Allan Poe deals with the city in the *flâneur* story 'The Man of the Crowd' (1840), but there it is the essence of busy London that the narrator detects, not any formally posed crime. It may have been the model of the 'Philadelphia Lawyer' stories—he edited the magazine soon after they appeared—which led him to condense the city and detection in his three very influential stories about the Chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, gentleman of leisure, as well as analyst of crimes and crime scenes. He is located in Paris—perhaps a gesture to Vidocq, or just the outcome of Poe's cultural sophistication and that of his audience: the French crime writers did very well in America in following decades. Urban and essentially disciplinary as he is in location and approach, Dupin does not have a strong realistic relation with his imagined Paris—though he was English educated, Poe never visited the city, and the occasional geography can be vague, though Dupin and the narrator enjoy the nightlife and intellectual locations of the great city. The human relations in a Paris lodging house are part of the first story, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' (1841), but like that address, the focus is sensationalist rather than realistically urban—the fact that the criminal is an escaped orang-utan takes the narrative further from urban human interaction. The second story, 'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt' (1842–1843), had more topographical and locational detail, but that was because it is primarily a reworking of a real New York crime, when Mary Rogers, who worked in a cigar shop at 119 Broadway, disappeared near Greenwich St, well known as a base for abortionists (Walsh 1968). But this engagement with urban stress, if in displaced form, is not a commitment for Poe, just part of his widespread *flâneuresque* imaginative response to modernity, as is clear when the third Dupin story, 'The Purloined Letter' (1844), disappears into royal-aristocratic fantasy, again in an imagined Paris, but now one quite without any interaction with the populace.

While Poe's special powers made in detailed narration the link between disciplinary detection and the crime-rich urban context, which had been implicit in Warren and the 'Philadelphia Lawyer' stories, the steady growth of more realistic detective stories in London did not see the inevitability of the connection. Warren's evidently successful basically disciplinary commentary on crime was continued in a series of stories entitled *Experiences of a Barrister* (1849), probably by Warren, with enhanced detective activity by a law-clerk, Mr Ferret, but these cases are much less urban than the Physician stories: the lawyers move all around the country, especially to assizes.

Policing became more formalised in fiction with the appearance of 'Waters', the central figure created by the still unidentified 'William Russell' in *The Recollections of a Police Officer* (1849) ('Detective' was added before 'Police' in the 1856 book version). The stories do deal with characteristically urban problems of deception, identity change and—apparently extremely common at the time—insurance fraud, but the locations are often, as with Richmond years before, across the country, though Waters is, like him, based in London. The pattern becomes increasingly urban as the form becomes more popular in the 1860s. The literary hack Thomas Delf, writing under the heroic cognomen 'Charles Martel', produced both *The Detective's Notebook* (1860) and later in the same year *The Diary of an Ex-Detective* (1860). In these, the cases were often city focused, and London oriented by title is *Secret Service, or Recollections of a City Detective* by 'Andrew Forrester Jun' (1864). Whoever he was—suggested to be the hack writer J. Redding Ware (Flanders 2011: 374)—he went on to create *The Female Detective* (1864) with Miss Gladden (which seems one of her many aliases), who is London based but can also move about the country. Later in the same year appeared *Revelations of a Lady Detective* by 'Anonyma' (thought to be the journeyman author W. Stephens Hayward), where Mrs Paschal deals with ten crimes, all but two set in London, crossing social and area boundaries, with some emphasis on problems in the West End, but placing stress on human rather than locational relations. Like all these new police detectives, the woman enquirers deploy simple observation rather than disciplinary skill and, apparently in a related way, not being explicitly nor thematically involved with the city.

Detective activity finds its way into mainstream fiction, as with Mr Nadgett in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–1844) and Wilkie Collins's Matthew Marksman, amateur investigator returned from America, in *Hide and Seek* (1854). Nadgett is based in London and leads against the villainous Jonas Chuzzlewit, but much of the action is rural. Marksman's case, though, starts off in the new outer suburbs of London, somewhere like Willesden in the north-west, and the text deplores the development, lamenting the loss of 'the last remnants of healthy rustic flavour' (Collins 1854, reprinted 1981: 15). Both the new suburbs and the attempt to rob a young woman of her rightful inheritance are seen as improper disturbances of prior order, not as domains of modern conflict in themselves. Dickens famously makes detective activity in London an element in *Bleak House* (1852–1853) with detailed and plot-central urban enquiries by Inspector Bucket and also, if unofficially, his wife. Presumably, the

latter feature related to the female audience for which Reynolds was now producing long novels—and the heroines of his *Rosa Lambert* (1853–1854) and *Ellen Percy* (1855–1857) are notable for conducting enquiries to resolve puzzles in their own lives and those of their friends. But Dickens was not committed to urban mystery: detection will again be an element in his unfinished *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), but it is not set in a city, nor, until the very end, is Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone* (1868), which appears to have been the stimulus for Dickens' turn to title-privileged mystery writing in his unfinished last novel.

In resonance with the initially urban emphasis of French crime fiction in Vidocq's *Mémoires*, it is in Paris that the first detailed and lengthy mixture of urban stress and detection at a disciplinary level of intensity operates in crime fiction. Émile Gaboriau was the first to make the city central to the form in a really popular novel, *Monsieur Lecoq* (1869). But he and that novel were not the first French movers in the field of urban crime fiction. A largely forgotten early exponent of the genre is Paul Féval, for whom Gaboriau worked as editor of the magazine *Jean-Diable*, probably edited his novels and possibly operated as ghostwriter. One of Féval's first works is urban, though not really crime fiction—*Les Mystères de Londres* (1843) displaces Sue's fine idea before Reynolds did. Centring on an Irishman's fantastic scheme to destroy the British government on behalf of neo-Napoleonic forces, it offers a selective, touristic view of the city—indeed Féval did not visit until halfway through and was pleased with his imagined version. Back in a French setting, he turned to less political crime and wrote *Jean Diable* (1862–1863), the success of which gave rise to a magazine, with plenty of detection but set back in time and travelling, with much local detail, between London and Paris. He then started his long series *Les Habits Noirs* (1863). The first novel was translated as *The Black Coats: The Parisian Jungle*, but not until 2008 by the Féval scholar Brian Stableford: this offered considerable urban material about France and a Paris gripped by a criminal conspiracy, in which the master-villain is named Lecoq.

Gaboriau followed Féval, but with more direct plotting, even more sensational disguises, and just as melodramatically fraudulent criminal schemes. Most notably, he reshaped Lecoq as a police detective in two novels published before *Monsieur Lecoq*, *Le Crime d'Orcival* (1866–1867) and *Le Dossier 113* (1867), and then Lecoq appears late in the more rambling and less detective-focused corruption story *Les Éclaves de Paris* (1868). The first of these three is an aristocratic crime narrative, largely outside the city, but the second is a fully urban story of a bank robbery, a villainous aristocrat and some fine disguising by Lecoq, including as the new lover for the mistress of the accused innocent—France brings its own localisations to urban crime fiction. Gaboriau's most famous novel *Monsieur Lecoq* makes the city and disciplinary detection appear to be natural partners. A vivid opening sequence first shows the outcome of a murderous attack in a late-night Paris bar, then the incompetent efforts of the police to comprehend, and next the incisive detailed enquiries of Lecoq himself. He will pursue the fugitives across Paris,

have a suspect locked up, lie in the roof to await his error and finally reveal all. But the city and the present are not the whole story. Volume 2, entitled ‘The Honour of the Name’, goes back in time to the end of the Napoleonic period and traces the errors and suspicions that led the errant duke into his largely understandable night of violence, with a brief explanatory conclusion managed by Lecoq in the present Paris.

Gaboriau seems to have lost interest in detection, but not in the city, in the novels he produced before his death at the age of 40 in 1873; though his posthumous Lecoq-free *Le Petit Vieux de Batignolles* (1876) does look forward to Sherlock Holmes with its medical student narrator and an austere detective who is good on bloodstains. Yet Gaboriau’s impact on world crime fiction is clear in *The Leavenworth Case* (1878) by Anna Katharine Green, the first best-selling crime fiction novel, which is set in New York and deploys a good deal of city travel and interaction to focus on a single murder and its complex and also partly historical causes. Less than Lecoq himself, the central detective is the mild-mannered, quietly incisive police detective Ebenezer Gryce. The crime, the criminal’s deceptions and the detective methods are not specifically urban, in spite of New York being the dominant, but not total, location—the story and some characters go upstate for a while to establish the background to the crime. In fact, Green to some extent reduces the urbanity of the already existing and notably popular American short stories by John B. Williams entitled *Leaves from the Notebook of a New York Detective* (1865). Here James or Jem Brampton is a lone enquirer loosely attached to the police; more than half the stories are based in New York, but like his English predecessors, he often works across the country, even once in France. Between them, Williams and Green link crime fiction firmly, if not yet intimately or in fully disciplinary mode, to the American city, and that pattern was followed carefully, and colourfully, in what Pamela Bedore describes as ‘thousands of dime novels published between the late 1870s and the dime novel’s demise in 1915’ (2013: 4).

DETECTION OF THE CITY

Through the mid-nineteenth century, the city appears in crime fiction, but without any clear insistence that the issues of urban life are themselves being explored and fictionally resolved through the genre. A title like London’s *The Notting Hill Mystery* (1862–1863 as a serial, 1865 as a book) might suggest the story is fully urbanised, but this is in fact a short epistolary novel and the author Charles Warren Adams (a publisher, who wrote as ‘Charles Felix’) is hyper-sensational—a woman is deliberately murdered via mesmeric transferral when her twin sister is poisoned. In the later Wilkie Collins fiction, detection can be a way to raise and resolve issues and excitements as in Collins’s semi-urban *The Law and the Lady* (1875), and Mary Braddon had in the 1860s written some stories with major detective activities, whether by a legal amateur as in *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) or a less than totally successful police detective in *Henry Dunbar* (1865), but neither author made strong links to the city and both tend to move away from the full

structure of detective fiction. Though Braddon does return to the form at times as in *A Strange World* (1875) and *The Cloven Foot* (1879), it is still without urban emphasis, even though she was very familiar with London life.

This changes, in a strangely simultaneous way, in two books published within a few weeks of each other in London in later 1887. Fergus Hume's *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, with its highly urban title, first appeared in the city of its setting, Melbourne, a year before and sold very well there. A key feature appears to be the way it combined the new genre of the murder-focused mystery—Green and Gaboriau are both referenced in the text—with the contemporary force of the city setting. Where Australian fiction had for some time celebrated both the grandeur and the threat of the country's enormous and very un-European expanses, this novel realised vividly the new but already large and rich city of Melbourne, with well over quarter of a million people, and still enjoying the results of the 1850s' gold rush. Detection is secondary to the urban experience here: from the cab where the murder takes place, through fine mansions on Port Phillip Bay at St Kilda, to the dangerous criminal haunts of the inner city, the story is very much about up-to-date Melbourne, including its multiple social tensions. This sense of the brand-new nature of the Australian city, as well as Hume's brisk style, was key element in the novel's great success in London in 1888, when close to 400,000 copies were sold. Once again the techniques of publishing modernity are evident: this time the energetic publicity devices of the media-focused urban world, from advertising to stunts with a whole fleet of hansom cabs (Sussex 2015: 150–161).

There is no sign that Conan Doyle was influenced by Hume's novel, but from the start of *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), we are also in a well-charted city, whose realisation is now condensed with, and known through, full disciplinary detection. Holmes moves about London with full confidence; he knows how to identify and deal with its conflicts. Nevertheless, the origins of the mystery lie elsewhere and in the past. Hume had also deployed explanations from history, and Doyle, like Gaboriau, has a whole section set back in time and overseas to explain the troubled present—as indeed does Stevenson's *The Dynamiter*. This was the major source for Doyle's story and, like other work by his Edinburgh fellow alumnus (notably *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Suicide Club*) is a story with strong urban features, very close to crime fiction. Though the first Holmes novella did not swamp the market, a Lippincott's editor commissioned *The Sign of the Four* (its American and more rational title than the English *The Sign of Four*), and here again, Doyle mixes a disruption of overseas origin with a vividly realised city, from the south London home of the Indian treasure stealer to the bravura final steamboat chase on the Thames.

The full Holmes formation emerges with contemporary force when Doyle starts publishing in a new-style magazine with the highly urban-conscious name *The Strand*—breakthrough urban crime fiction again benefits from the up-to-date urban communicative mode of the day: it was a very

new-looking magazine with an illustration on every opening. Doyle's stories will develop an intimate and protective relationship with the people and places of modern London. The first, 'A Scandal in Bohemia' retains some sensationalist distance, but the foreign king's embarrassing former mistress is firmly located in the city, and it is on Holmes's own Baker Street that Irene Adler, dressed as a young man, utters her mocking farewell words 'Good night, Mr Sherlock Holmes'.

Many of Doyle's devoted readers were the white-collar workers who commuted in to the city, often changing trains at Baker Street station itself, and they found in the stories the confusions and temptations they felt highly possible in their own lives—and also sometimes in those of the wealthy urban class to which they aspired. Very few of the early stories involve murder, and quite a number are even without a crime as such. They show how people can be tempted to mistreat members of their family, or their employers and those they work with, or even how, especially like those wealthy professionals who live further out in the semi-rural areas where Doyle himself soon moved, they could be treated treacherously by their own children or unreliable relatives.

Holmes and Watson enjoy the city: after a case, a visit to the concert or theatre is very desirable, and the illustrations show them properly dressed, silk top hat at night, neat trilby for the day. The deerstalker hat is only actually worn on visits to the distant country, like Dartmoor in 'Silver Blaze'—it is the process of mythic completion that has made it seem the authentic headgear for this hunter of the beast in man. But not all of the city is part of the stories. Holmes may well go enquiring in the lower class and more dangerous suburbs, but the narrative does not go with him—he will head off alone, in some elaborate and amazingly convincing disguise, and will tell Watson what happened on his mission into the dark places. The stories operate in a respectable person's London—and also a realistic one: the heavy fogs that occur in melodramatic film versions are not found in this world of petit bourgeois error. While as time goes on there are a few espionage cases, and the final stories are set in rural retirement, these are only occasion-based variations from the mainstream exploration and resolution of the social and personal pressures in the city.

It was Doyle who generated the confident and repeated arias of urban disciplinary criminography from the 1890s onwards. His success was not only in readership and income but also in providing the model modern detective, even generating joke detectives, from Bret Harte's 1902 'Hemlock Jones' to Robert L. Fish writing in 1959 about 'Schlock Holmes of 221 Bagel Street'. The city link was parodically canonised by Doyle's Canadian friend Robert Barr in a 1904 story where Holmes's body is buried in the Strand—the street, not the magazine (Knight 2015a: 94; Barr 1993). Evidence of Doyle's authority also lies in the way that other writers fully accepted the established mix of disciplinary detection and the city. A notable example was Arthur Morrison, a serious recorder of the city's problems, as in his Zolaesque *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894): his firmly liberal feelings led him to create a decidedly anti-heroic detective in Martin Hewitt,

popular in stories in *The Strand* from 1894. The pattern continued through simplified and generalised versions like the Sexton Blake stories (first appearing in the periodical *Union Jack* in 1894) and J. S. Fletcher's *The Adventures of Arthur Dawe (Sleuth-Hound)* (1909): the exotic American-originated cognomen conflicts oddly with the banal London-based cases.

There also suddenly came to be women detectives located in the city. Several were created by male writers, the all-purpose author George Sims with *Dorcas Dene, Detective* (1897) and M. McDonnell Bodkin, Irish lawyer and M.P., turned from his male detective Paul Beck to *Dora Myrl, The Lady Detective* (1900). More authentic female voices were the clever, determined woman detective in *The Experiences of Loveday Brooke* by Catherine Louise Pirkis (1894) and the stories by the prolific producer of girls' and crime stories L. T. Meade, with her regular collaborator Robert Eustace, about the handsome, independent Florence Cusack, published in *The Harmsworth Magazine* from 1899 to 1901, but not in book form until *The Detections of Miss Cusack* (1998). Baroness Orczy added to her London-based thinking-man detective stories *The Old Man in the Corner* (1901; in book form 1909) the stylish, confident and highly urban *Lady Molly of Scotland Yard* (1901, in book form 1910).

VARIATIONS ON CITY DETECTION

The city detective, empowered by Holmes, had become female as well as male and kept varying in detailed identity but was now firmly urban. Even when G. K. Chesterton varied the evaluative and personal authority of the detective into the priesthood, he kept central his knowledge of the city. The first Father Brown story 'The Blue Cross' (1910, in *The Innocence of Father Brown*, 1911) features a long bus journey from Victoria to Hampstead, and while the international master-criminal Flambeau is hardly a Londoner, the story, coming to its climax on Hampstead Heath, exemplifies Chesterton's assertion in an earlier essay that the form is 'this realization of the poetry of London' (Chesterton 1901, reprinted 1974: 4).

That forceful Doylean structure, fully urban and detective, is not likely to have been without challenge, and a new positioning of mystery writing developed in the innovative hands of American women novelists. Some of Green's imitators did not follow her use of the city, however unmelodramatic, as a base. Mary Roberts Rinehart's very successful second novel *The Circular Staircase* (1908) is located in a country-based American mansion, and narrated by a woman, with some male professional detection along the way. Essentially, rurality is positive—the murderous threat is from a corrupt city businessman. In her widely read *The Clue* (1909), Carolyn Wells followed the same non-urban, even anti-urban, pattern. This school of mystery writing has long endured, especially through its adoption by a young reader of Rinehart and Wells, an English writer with an American father—Agatha Christie. Her model is famously based in a country house or a village: the less than macho Poirot tends to follow the first and spinster Miss Marple the second,

though they can overlap in locations. The issues at stake are the conflicts, temptation, and dangers of bourgeois life in a non-urban world, one which seems to hark back wistfully to that of the now invisible landed aristocracy.

One recurrent misreading of the Christie model is that it is an unreal fantasy world—in fact the dramas of interpersonal feelings are intense. Another error is that Christie is only rural. The first 6 of her 14 Parker Pyne stories, though quasi-romantic enigmas rather than murder mysteries, are based in London—12 of them appeared in *Parker Pyne Investigates* (1934); in any case Christie featured London as the setting of some scenes in her work, and occasional whole stories, such as *Cards on the Table* (1936) and the novella *Murder in the Mews* (1937, published under that title with three other stories). After the Second World War, during which Christie lived in London's inner-city Belsize Park, she produced several well-received novels dealing with young women and the challenges they face in the modern city, the Poirot enquiries *Hickory Dickory Dock* (1955). *The Clocks* (1964) and *Third Girl* (1967), are all principally or wholly set in London, as was the Miss Marple-focussed *At Bertram's Hotel* (1965).

The novels of other between-war women mystery writers, notably Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham, were often extensively based in London and contradicted the idea that the 'golden age' was only rural as well as unrealistic, so describable as 'the artificial snobbish world of the vicarage garden' (Bander 1999: 403). That is an American voice, and this view is in fact an American construction, or self-construction, largely generated by Raymond Chandler in his famous essay 'The Simple Art of Murder', where, after mocking what he felt were English rural unrealities he praised American urban realism of the 'mean streets' and created the unforgettable line 'down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean' (1944, reprinted 1995: 991–992) for the tough-guy hero he honoured so highly in the work of Dashiell Hammett and, by extension, in his own fiction. Male gender and American nationality were central ideological markers in this rejection of the English *haut bourgeois* context Chandler himself had left for America. The giant post-war Californian city was the locus of this self-identification, but Chandler does not link it to the earlier flood of urban, naïve, even racist versions of the 'dime novel': Bedore comments, 'Chandler's idealized description of the hardboiled detective fits comfortably with hundreds of dime novel detectives' (2013: 21).

Hammett tried to account more fully for the threatening nature of the modern American city, with an emphasis on the potential weakness of government and also the incursive force of both capitalism and corruption. In *Red Harvest* (1929), problems are the direct result of business and crime, while *The Glass Key* (1931) presents a more complex narrative interweaving personal loyalties with political and criminal corruption. Chandler charts potently the spaces and alarms of the modern mega-city as Marlowe drives long distances, admires the sky and the mountains and then turns back into the dubious alleys and the alarming casinos. Like Doyle (and later, Paretsky and Rankin) he apotheosised a city in which he had not grown up, but, lacking both Hammett's political radicalism and his

ease with women, Chandler also largely simplified the threats into personal ones, often borne by those who were female, beautiful, and untrustworthy. Americans have largely remained committed to this literary sub-genre as an emblem of national veracity, and Sean McCann (2000) has even likened it to New Deal liberalism, an improbable combination of Hammett's decided leftism and Chandler's personalisation of bourgeois male values.

The later American private-eye form tended to take two paths. One was a recuperation of dime-novel politics, in the form of Mickey Spillane's New York-based hero, the well-named Mike Hammer—his banal brutality suited the McCarthy era; the other was Chandleresque multi-locational introspection, as in Ross McDonald's family-oriented psychological dramas. There were mixes of the two like John D. Macdonald's primarily active, even hyper-active, Florida-set forms of modern moralism, and Robert B. Parker's thrillers of interpersonal angst and some action, based in Boston. Along the way, there were versions located in many cities across America, and the form was transported to wartime London by Peter Cheyney with great success and re-emerged through Peter Corris in 1980 Sydney as part of the new Australian un-English consciousness.

Another twentieth-century form of urban detective activity was the police procedural. Its initiating figure was Freeman Wills Crofts's Inspector French, first appearing in *The Cask* (1920): he was based in London, but as Crofts stories are essentially complex travel puzzles, the action usually takes place around Europe and Britain. Also non-urban was Simenon's very widely read police detective Maigret, starting in *Pietr-le-Letton* (1931). The novels emphasised instinct and psychology rather than procedural teamwork and were originally focused on northern French small towns, and only after 1945, when Simenon lived in America, were they increasingly focused in Paris. It was only after the war that urban conflict came into major procedural focus, first in America with Lawrence Sanders's New York-based series starting with *Vas in Victim* (1945) and then—the communication techniques of modernity are prominent again—in Jack Webb's successful series *Dragnet*, on radio in 1949 and television in 1952. This was imitated on British television by *Fabian of the Yard* (1954–1956), and the approach was brought to the London novel by John Creasey, writing as 'J. J. Marric'. *Gideon's Day* (1955) began his long series, lasting until 1976, about the leader of the city's force of detectives: the story will open at some unostentatious address, and Gideon will manage police from several locations to connect up the links across London, and sometimes beyond it, that have led to this crime.

America developed the procedural novel: Hillary Waugh offered a capable low-temperature version, starting with *Last Seen Wearing...* (1952), but the major impact was made by the 87th Precinct series by 'Ed McBain' (Evan Hunter), starting in 1956 with *Cop Hater*. The series would last until 2005, appeared on film and on television, and essentially explored the patterns of threat and the possibilities of protection by police teamwork in a modern capital. Though it is clearly New York, the city is symbolically named Isola—both an urban island and the gathering place of modern forms of isolation.

The police force has an ethnic range, with Steve Carella, of Italian origin, and often works with the Jewish, thoughtful, Meyer Meyer. This model was relocated in many cities around the world both in fiction and especially in television series where, with its modern extension into forensic detection, it still dominates the channels in the early twenty-first century.

DETECTING IN THE POLITICAL CITY

There were from the mid-twentieth century on variations to the dominance of the city in crime fiction, from Arthur Upfield's touristic Australian bush adventures (though his indigenous detective has been to university in the city of Brisbane, long before an Aborigine actually did) to the cat detectives and other small-town residents of the recent 'cozy' formation. More thematically productive have been the ways in which the acceptance of the city as the normal site for crime fiction has been developed into a range of socially and politically critical analyses, bringing a weight and range to crime fiction that it never previously attained.

In 1965, Sweden saw a re-formation of the fairly new police procedural in a ten-novel series by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö, where detectives led by the serious, and anxious, Martin Beck, deal with a series of cases that all in some way reveal the social and political strains of the modern city and state. The authors set out to show how people were pressured into crime by the forces of modern financial greed, and how the authorities responded with both incompetence and lack of interest, but also, in the case of a few featured policemen, with commitment and endurance. Beginning with *Roseanna* (1965, in English, 1967) and continuing through a range of different stories that at times used locations other than Stockholm, the series finally, and with a futuristic vision, explored extended threats to the modern city, stemming from its title called *Terroristerna* (1975; in English *The Terrorists* 1977)—though they too were home grown.

Writers from other countries made use of the city detection format to mount searching political investigations of their own situation. In Italy, Leonardo Sciascia produced a series of penetrating small-city accounts of both Mafia corruption and the inadequacy of the modern Italian state to deal with it, starting with *Il Giorno della Civetta* (1961; as *The Day of the Owl*, 2003). That tradition has continued: Barbara Pezzotti shows how the serious modern Italian crime story stems from Giorgio Scerbanenco's explorations of Milan, beginning with *Traditori di Tutti* (1970, as *Duca and the Milan Murders*, 1970) (Pezzotti 2014: 58–74). In France, Didier Daeninckx outlined in *Meurtres pour Memoire* (1984, as *Murder in Memory*, 1991) what he saw as the criminal assault of the Paris authorities on protestors against governmental Algerian policy in 1962, while Jean-Claude Izzo started the intense account of urban tension of his 'Marseille trilogy' with *Total Kheops* (1995, as *Total Chaos*, 2005).

The Mexican Paco Ignacio Taibo II probed his country's years of public corruption in the capital and across the country through the eyes of Hector Belascoarán Shayne—the surname refers to a character from American pulp crime fiction—beginning with *Dias de Combate* (1976: no English edition has yet

appeared). A major urban and protesting Hispanic voice has been that of the Catalan Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, starring Pepe Carvalho, wit, chef and ex-Communist. A series of novels starting in 1974 and best represented by *Los Mares del Sur* (1979, as *Southern Seas*, 1986) creates a critique of the post-Franco Spanish transition to democracy, seen in terms of Barcelona's modern conflicts. Montalbán's element of Catalan separatism meshes with another worldwide political re-formation of urban mysteries, post-colonial crime fiction, where the crimes of the imperial oppressors are identified and as far as possible rectified by the former subjects. Strong examples of this form range from Mario Vargas Llosa's analysis of the oppressions suffered in modern Peru, from Marxist guerrillas to urban corruption, in *Lituma en los Andes* (1992, as *Death in the Andes*, 1996), through Raphaël Confiant's Martinique-based critique of the French empire and its aftermath in *Les Meurtres du Samedi-Gloria* (1997, as *The Murder on Holy Saturday*, 1997), to the substantial number of urban thrillers produced in Northern Ireland in the late twentieth century dealing with 'The Troubles' in both Belfast and the border areas, such as Colin Bateman's *Cycle of Violence* (1995).

America itself has been a major contributor to the political redirection of urban crime fiction. Major efforts were made to locate the issues of the African-American movement in the form, effectively beginning with Chester Himes's novels about two Harlem detectives, as in the powerful and often deeply ironic *Cotton Comes to Harlem* (1965). This challenging relocation was popularised in Ernest Tidyman's series beginning with *Shaft* (1970), which became very well known in film, and the form was developed by other authors, arriving at the subtle series by Walter Mosley starting with *Devil in a Blue Dress* (1990), where Easy Rawlins is something like a black Philip Marlowe, but with many meaningful differences: the fact that he is from Watts, site of the notorious race-based disturbances of 1965, powerfully intertwines location and theme.

There were successful women writers in the African-American version of the genre, from Nikki Baker, with a Chicago lesbian stockbroker first appearing with *In the Game* (1991), and the searching Barbara Neely (she resents the space between names nearly as much as colour prejudice) who began her East Coast-set series with *Blanche on the Lam* (1992). These and other African-American women crime writers were following a doubly resistant path, because by the 1980s, the city mystery had become appropriated as a voice for modern feminism. Marcia Muller is the first of these, with *Edwin of the Iron Shoes* (1977), set on the west coast, but the major political and literary power was that of Sara Paretsky, starting with *Indemnity Only* (1982), both an insurance-based Chicago murder and a platform for V. I. Warshawski, well dressed and sociable but also armed and firmly independent. In her wake, there have been many feminist urban mysteries around the world, from Val McDermid's Manchester-focused series with serious-minded private eye Kate Brannigan, starting with *Dead Beat* (1992) to the Sydney-based lesbian police detective Carol Ashton, as glamorous as the harbour itself, created by Claire McNab in *Lessons in Murder* (1988). Overall, however, this form has been dominated by post-Paretsky American women writers, from Katharine V. Forrest's Los Angeles lesbian

detective who emerged in *Amateur City* (1984) to the New York prosecutor created by Linda Fairstein, first appearing in *Final Jeopardy* (1996).

CRIME BEYOND THE CITY

Throughout all these varieties of urban crime fiction the city itself has remained a given, a formation whose people and systems are however, subject to multiple forms of conflict. But critique can go further: some American writers contributed to a sub-form which has been given the name of ‘urban collapse’. James Ellroy’s *The Black Dahlia* (1987) is at once a moralised police procedural, a darkening of Chandler’s masculinist sentimentality, and also a narrative that suggests the modern city is simply not governable in any functional way: Ellroy developed the concept in *L. A. Confidential* (1990) and his ‘L.A. Quartet’ in general. This is also the recurrent theme of George Pelacanos’s increasingly dark accounts of Washington in his own ‘D. C. Quartet’, beginning with *The Big Blow Down* (1996). Urban crisis recurs from *The Neon Rain* (1987) through James Lee Burke’s brooding accounts of New Orleans and its region, often approaching tragedy. He was ideally placed and equipped to deal with actual collapse, and wrote *The Tin Roof Blow-Down* (2007), dealing with Hurricane Katrina’s external tempest in 2005, and also the internal self-destruction of the city—both processes revealing that the systems of federal and state government were leaving the public exposed to manifold deadly dangers. That novel effectively takes American crime fiction out into the modern international political domain occupied by major writers in whose work detecting the mystery, itself empowered by its command and critique of urban forces, has grown to comprehend world issues of drastically demanding importance.

Ian Rankin’s *The Naming of the Dead* (2006) is a striking example of the internationally politicised crime novel, policing the world rather than just a city—though it is also faithful to detailed domestic concerns. The question whether murdered sex-offenders deserve the care and concern of the law meshes with the international disruptions emphasised through the presence in Edinburgh of the world-wide G8 meeting in 2005. The issues exposed, both local and global, both alternate and inter-relate through a novel which traces its path through both the out-of-the-way and criminal-haunted secret places of Edinburgh and also the city’s major sites, which are on these occasions scenes of major conflict, in the demonstrations against the G8 summit itself. The novel’s sense of multiple urban crisis comes to a memorable climax as the story finally deals with the ultimate drama of the London bombings, which did actually occur during the last stages of the much-challenged G8.

Stieg Larsson’s *Dragon Tattoo* trilogy (2005–2007, in English 2008–2009) also belongs to this wider-ranging category. His work has been to some degree simplified by a merely cultural reading, focusing on the tattooed punk girl who has come to seem just an intriguing central figure: but in fact she is herself a hi-tech international force of modern mystery, like Julian Assange and Edward Snowden. The novel in national terms combines the self-doubt of up-to-date Scandinavian fiction about recent changes in social politics, but it goes much

further as an international mystery, dealing both with a reconsideration of wartime neutrality and also the increasing modern inter-relations of worldwide business and high-level crime.

Equally massive and searching, even more disturbing in its linking of terrorism and urban crime, is Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2006). Inspector Singh in Mumbai, much like Edinburgh's Rebus, charts the city he knows so well with a range of mostly minor cases and his own quotidian concerns, but he and colleagues are steadily linked into a massive international narrative where the obsessions of modern religion and racism are exploited by serious criminals using the threat of extremist violence as their instrument to achieve the extortions of major organised crime. Inspector Singh's final, and successful, mission is to defuse a threat not just to the peace but also to the survival of a powerfully realised great city of India.

Rankin, Larsson, and Chandra, through exploring crime in the city in its most modern formations, take criminal threats into the domains of terrorism, that overarching new anxiety for the civilised city, where the prophetic vision of Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907) has become an everyday reality. But in this potently modern extension of criminal dramas and their detection, those novelists are not working alone. There are many other domains where today the urban crime novel is doing serious work in policing the melodramas of modern politics. Modern South Africa has a striking number of crime writers, some rural or using small towns as their base, and also exciting new voices who are reading the cities of this complex new nation. Margie Orford has a series about a Capetown woman detective, starting with *Like Clockwork* (2006), and Sifisio Mzobe has made a striking debut with *Young Blood* (2010), tracing conflicts between a township and a wealthy touristic part of greater Durban. In the same spirit, Australian indigenous writers have recently exposed their continually difficult situation, from Philip MacClaren's searching account of Aboriginal police in 1990s' Sydney in *Scream Black Murder* (1995) to Nicole Watson's telling exploration of twenty-first century-Queensland racial politics in *The Boundary* (2011).

As this account has indicated, narratives of crime and detection especially in the context of discipline-oriented enquirers, came to find a natural base in the great Western nineteenth-century cities, but the developed genre has now travelled across the world to investigate many urban sites and their extended criminalities; it has also moved on beyond merely urban concerns to tackle issues on a national and international basis. The simple journeys of Hume's hansom cab and Father Brown's bus have developed into a constantly interrogative process of representing, detecting, and evaluating crimes of many kinds that cast multiform shadows across the cities of the world.

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Cities Utopian, Dystopian, and Apocalyptic

Lieven Aemeel

INTRODUCTION

The city has always held the promise of utopia, the intimation that it be the spatial form within which a harmonious and wholesome society could take shape, as the emanation of a civic, rational, or holy order. And as often, the city has been associated with the opposite: with the failure of such an order to take hold, and with the sense that an imminent end-time could upend the social and cultural fabric of humankind in the form of its perhaps most celebrated cultural artefact. This chapter examines utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic renderings of the city in literature. Various approaches could be adopted to undertake such an examination. One could start out with religious visions of the city, or focus on more secular city ideals and the worldly apocalypse. Or it would be possible to focus primarily on utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic narratives as literary genres proper, or on the interaction between these literary genres and their broader religious, sociological, or political counterparts. My approach in this chapter will be guided by an interest in the implications of utopia, dystopia, and apocalypse for urban planning and development. I will start out by examining city utopias as emblems of a godly scheme for society, of a civic order, and as dream of a harmonious community. One utopian narrative, Edward E. Hale's *Sybaris and Other Homes* (1869), will be used as a point of entry to approach these thematics.

'Utopia' is used here to denote the depiction of a non-existing, imagined state or place, in which one finds crystallized a vision of the 'good society' (Pinder 2002: 15; Kumar 2010: 27). This conceptualization of an ideal societal form can be expressed either in the form of a literary narrative or in the more rationalistic account of the sociologist or philosopher (cf. Manuel 1965/1973). More often than not, utopia contains something of

both genres, mixing the scientific jargon of an ideal society's explorer with the stylized tone of the fictional narrator. I will be most concerned here with the literary form of utopia, and its dystopian and apocalyptic counter-currents and undercurrents.

While utopias can be set in a range of possible contexts, one characteristic in terms of location tends to unite them: utopian environments are typically located in a more or less inaccessible place, distanced from the reader in terms of place and time. Utopian environments have thus been situated in outer space, or within a hollow earth, or in a distant past or future. Within this variety of settings, the form of the city has had a continuous appeal as the preferred spatial mould. This has made Northrop Frye claim that, since '[t]he symbol of conscious design in society is the city . . . utopia is primarily a vision of the orderly city and of a city-dominated society' (Frye 1965: 27).

CITY AS RE-CREATION OF COSMIC ORDER

Emphasis on the fundamentally imaginary nature of utopia is present in the very title of the text that gave its name to the narrative genre. In the way Thomas More constructed a name as 'a contamination between ou-topia (non-place) and eu-topia (good-place)' (Baeten 2002: 144), he emphasized that utopia exists by definition outside of the normal, worldly fabric. Literary utopia, by consequence, tends to take the form of a vision or a dream, and it is hardly a coincidence that so many utopian narratives, from Louis Sebastian Mercier *L'an deux mille quatre cent quarante* (*The Year 2440* [1775]; see also Sutton 1994: 19) to Orson Welles's *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) or Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1889), describe the visits of sleep-walkers of sorts. Yet it is important not to exaggerate the gulf that divides the dreamed-of, idealized city, and its counterpart, the actual city. An idealized, godly, or rational grid underlies to a degree all existing cities. From urban civilization's beginnings in early antiquity, there has been a continuous interaction between how cities have been built and experienced, and how they have been imagined as emblems of a preordained order. Lewis Mumford argues that the first cities of the Bronze Age were in effect utopias on earth, in the way they represented a cosmic order in built form. The ancient city was a utopia transcribed into reality, 'a glimpse of eternal order, a visible heaven on earth, a seat of the life abundant—in other words, utopia' (Mumford 1965/1975: 13). Insofar current cities resemble the ancient city at all, they, too, contain elements of utopian form.

The interaction between the city as form and the city as idea recurs in Greek and Roman antiquity. In political and philosophical thought (e.g. Plato's *Republic*), the city was used as a metaphorization for the political and cultural community, and in Greek and Roman colonies, new cities were laid out according to a preordained grid reflecting a universalist order (McEwen 1993). In the Christian thinking of the church fathers, most notably that of

St. Augustine, the city came to symbolize a morally inspired community. In St. Augustine's sermons and writings, the community of believers to which the Christian belongs, as a pilgrim in the earthly world, appears as a heavenly 'city of God'. In both cases—Platon's *Republic* and Augustine's *City of God*—these utopian, ideal states (either as city state, or community of believers), are not to be understood as being entirely detached from the actual world, or as an unambiguous appeal to contemplate something that is out of reach. Plato's interlocutor in the ninth book of the *Republic* suggests that the ideal of the city fundamentally informs the actual city society:

But perhaps it[the ideal city]'s laid up as a model in heaven for anyone to look at who wishes to found himself. It makes no difference whether it exists or ever will exist here. He'll practice the politics only of it and of no other. (Plato 1979: 251)

Augustine argues in a somewhat similar vein, though in a radically different context, that the two idealized cities he distinguishes, that of the city of God and the city of the world, Jerusalem and Babylon, are present together inseparably:

How can these two cities be distinguished? We cannot separate them from one another, can we? No, they are intermingled, and they continue like that from the very beginning of the human race until the end of the world. (Augustine 2001: 265)

In the Western tradition of city writing, founded on Judeo-Christian and Classical examples (of which Saint Augustine and Plato offer the most well-known exponents), the image of the city oscillates between utopia and its opposite—between the city as a model for various ideals, and the city as the spatial embodiment of various forms of evil. The city is the embodiment of an enforced comprehensive order and that order's victory over natural chaos. Simultaneously, it is the symbol of hubris, of mankind's Promethean urges, and of the vengeance this pride and presumption could incite. The continuing oscillation between these two visions lies at the heart of the profound ambiguity that constitutes more than anything else the key characteristic of the urban experience and its complex rendering in the literary imagination (Pike 1981: ix–xv). In this unstable ambiguity, there is ample room for pondering the potential fall for grace and divine or (other) retribution. It is perhaps no coincidence that some of the very first city renderings in Western culture, both in literature and in images, show cities being annihilated (Mumford 1961: 51). From the sack of Troy, the destruction of Nineveh, and the fall of the Temple of Jerusalem, not a grand leap of the imagination is needed to account for the continuing fascination in popular culture with the apocalyptic destruction of cities in early modern, modern, and postmodern times, from sensational news reports of the 1755 Lisbon earthquake to novels such as H.G. Wells' *The War in the Air* (1908) and the annual wholesale destruction of American cities witnessed in Hollywood productions.

Plato's *Republic* initiates a 'rationalist utopia', with its own distinctive generic features (Balasopoulos 2014). The appearance of utopian narratives as a fictional literary genre had to wait until the early modern period. Two golden ages of literary utopia can be discerned. The first founding period of utopian literature produced Thomas More's *Utopia* (1515), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), and Tommaso Campanella *La città del Sole* (1623). It coincided with a pivotal time of transition (cf. Jameson 2005: 15) characterized—amongst many other things—by an interest in urban matters, and when the connection between urban form and the concept of the ideal city was eagerly explored (Sennett 1990: 121–204). The same interest in matters of urban form during a profoundly transitional era is evident also in the second period, in roughly the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, and includes such influential works as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1889) and William Morris *News from Nowhere* (1890). There is an intriguing correlation between the appearance of urban planning as separate discipline in this period and the proliferation of literary utopias, often with distinctly satirical undertones. Modern city planning has been argued to arise 'out of a vision of an alternative society, a utopia' (Hall 1989/2014: 463), and in the answers it provided to urban problems, it often relied on the utopian literature that engaged with the same questions.

A considerable literature on both of these utopian literatures has come into being (Forbes 1927; Frye 1965; Claeys 2010; Balasopoulos 2014; Latham and Hicks 2014). In what follows, a relatively little-known utopian work, *Sybaris and Other Homes* (1869) by the American author Edward E. Hale, will be examined as an illustrative example of the generic features of literary utopia. The themes of the text, its idealization of the suburb, and its apocalyptic undercurrents will provide a point of entry to utopia's relationship with contemporary urban planning discourse, and traced further into the thinking and writing of the city during the twentieth century.

A VISIT TO SYBARIS

Hale's *Sybaris and Other Homes* is part of an upsurge in utopian writing in the latter half of the nineteenth century, informed by the industrialization and urbanization in this period, and commenting upon the increasingly critical relations between capital and labour (see Forbes 1927; Seed 2012: 338). It is a motley collection of texts, in which one of the short stories, entitled 'My Visit to Sybaris', describes the experiences of an American adventurer, the Bostonian reverend Frederic Ingham. When on a secret mission on behalf of Garibaldi in the gulf of Tarentum, adversary winds beach Ingham's ship on a strange coast, and he finds himself unexpectedly in a city whose inhabitants possess a mix of modern, ancient and future mores, laws, beliefs, and technology.

Utopian narratives tend to set the visionary world apart either in time and space from the visitor's one, and with Sybaris, both these distancing strategies

are at work. The utopian society is set apart from Ingham's known world in spatial as well as in temporal terms. The Sybarites are presented as a relic society from ancient times, who have preserved much of their ancient mores, although they are also in communication with the nineteenth century's western world, and they possess advanced, futuristic technologies. It is a secretive location: the Sybarites 'have published no sailing directions since St. Paul touched here' (Hale 1869: 87). Arrival in Sybaris also carries undertones of a dreamy journey to the netherworld: Ingham reads the *Aeneid* when crossing the Bay of Tarentum, after which he falls asleep (Hale 1869: 21–23). Upon arrival in the strange bay, his unwilling Charon—the Italian steering the boat—believes he will encounter 'the father of lies himself' (Hale 1869: 30)—the devil. Regardless of these premonitions of a descent in hell, Ingham meets a society of friendly and hospitable humans and is escorted through the city by the 'Proxenus' (ibid. 35), who is the 'officer whose duty it was to see to strangers' (ibid. 34), and who acts as a guide to the visitor. George, the Proxenus, his brother Philip, and several other Sybarites provide the narrator with information about this strange environment. Through the Proxenus, the narrative takes on the form of dialogue typical of many utopian narratives, in which an outsider is gradually introduced to the trappings of a strange world and society.

Utopian narratives can be divided into those focusing on technological innovations and those interested more in drawing up a moral and social blueprint of society (see Frye 1965). *Sybaris* makes several references to widespread and everyday use of innovative technology, most notably the telegraph (in use in Sybaris for a few millennia, as the narrator claims; Hale 1869: 36, 37), and the horse-car rail track, pulled by chain, 'driven by stationary engines five or six stadia apart' (Hale 1869: 32, 33). They also possess something that resembles the personal car: 'little steam-wagons', running on petroleum, which they use for transport and which people keep 'in a shed at the back of the house' (ibid. 60, 61). More important, however, are the set of laws and rules that constitute the moral and legal framework for this society, most of them going back to ancient 'Charondan' laws. The most conspicuous element of the law book is the crime of 'harpagmos', 'this terrible verdict which they all so dread', as Ingham recounts:

It is given on an indictment brought by the state's attorney in a criminal court. It means, 'He has taken from a citizen what he cannot restore'. (52)

The crime includes the stealing of time, echoing discussions during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century about labour and currency reform (associated with the American Josiah Warren and the British Robert Owen), that in turn fed into utopian narratives in the later nineteenth century, which presented time as alternative currency, such as the 'labor checks' in Henry Olerich's *A Cityless and Countryless World* (1894; Forbes 1927). There are ecological dimensions, too, since the verdict of 'harpagmos' can be passed for disturbing the natural and ecological harmony. In this respect, 'Sybaris' prefigures later

utopian/dystopian accounts concerned with ecological catastrophes. Two striking examples are given. The first involves a capitalist enterpriser who builds a river dam to power his factory, due to which ‘five hundred thousand people lost their fish because that fellow chose to spin cotton a ten-millionth part of a drachma cheaper than the rest of mankind’ (Hale 1869: 54). The second example involves the draining of salt marshes at Paestum, which ended in disaster: ‘They got more than they bargained for. They disturbed the natural flow of the currents, and they lost their harbor’ (Hale 1869: 54). In both cases, ‘harpagmos’ is pronounced.

As the narrator, a priest who knows his Greek Bible well most probably realizes, ‘harpagmos’ is a Biblical term, ‘robbery’ in the King James Bible. The Biblical passage where the term appears is of interest for the overall moral framework laid out in Sybaris, and for its implications for the urban planning paradigm in this utopia. The full theological and linguistic arguments of the Biblical passage in question would lead us too far, but in the traditional translation, the ‘robbery’ is related to the desire of usurping Godly status, wanting to be equal to God (Phil. 2, 5–12). ‘Harpagmos’ could entail stealing, as it were, of God by presuming to be on the same level (Wright 1986). Indeed, all the laws and rules of Sybaris seem aimed at suppressing the Promethean and Icarian urges commonly associated with urban development. Upwards, vertical desires are frowned upon in Sybaris, which is structured as a horizontal utopia. When first seeing the city, Ingham exclaims in surprise: ‘Did anybody see the towers of Sybaris? Not a tower!’ (Hale 1869: 29).

The advanced technology the Sybarites possess (the cable track, in particular) is emphatically not used to construct elevators but to enable the inhabitants to live in well-connected suburbia. Moral laws are thus made to justify a specific urban planning aesthetics. All buildings have only one storey, and ‘stair-builders and slaveholders are forbidden to live in Sybaris by . . . fundamental law’ (Hale 1869: 33). The result is an urban landscape in which the distinctions between suburb and the centre have been erased:

I supposed that his was a mere suburban habit, and, though the houses came nearer and nearer, yet as no two houses touched in a block, I did not know we had come into the city till all the passengers left the car . . . (Hale 1869: 33)

The visit to Sybaris is in effect an introduction to a suburban dream city, in which ‘. . . a house without its own garden was an abomination, and easy communication with the suburbs was a necessity’ (Hale 1869: 41).

UTOPIA, PLANNING, AND ANTI-URBANISM

Although *Sybaris and Other Homes* describes idealized societies, the text is not without its pessimistic undercurrents. Even the most optimistic and idealistic utopian narratives function to some degree as satirical allegories, inherently containing a critical view of society by their projection of an idealized better world. In nineteenth-century utopian narratives, this tends to become ever more

explicit, as is by explanatory forewords and dedications. The collection *Sybaris and other Homes* is structured in such a way that it constantly invites the reader to compare Sybaris with conditions in nineteenth-century American cities, presenting contemporary urban society in unmistakable dark colours. Paratexts, including the title, motto, and introduction, emphasize these critical characteristics of the text. The book is dedicated to the Suffolk Union for Christian work, which had as its first mission ‘the provision for better homes in cities’ (Hale 1869). Hale’s introduction compares Sybaris and Boston, presenting Boston as a society that ‘ought not be’, compared to the ‘if’ of the utopian society. The structure of the book leads the reader from utopian perspectives on the question of housing to a chapter describing the actual condition in the contemporary United States. This chapter, which contains gloomy descriptions of working class conditions, bears the tendentious title ‘How they live in Boston, and how they die there’. The final chapter of the volume states the ultimate purpose of the narrative as a whole: ‘Homes for Boston Laborers’.

While I defined utopia above as the depiction of the ‘good society’, the extent to which utopian narratives unequivocally describe an unambiguous ‘good society’ remains a matter of debate. In the way utopias present a rigid and immobile social form, they come dangerously close to description of a totalitarian state. The question whether a narrative describes a ‘good’ society or a nightmarish travesty of the good society will often be answered differently depending on the reader and his or her context. Plato’s Republic has been read by twentieth-century critics not as utopia, but as ‘the prototype of the fascist state’ (Mumford 1965: 4), and the society depicted in *Looking Backward* has similarly been read with considerably more foreboding by readers in the second half of the twentieth century than at the time of publishing. Northrop Frye claims that ‘most of us today would tend to read it as a sinister blueprint of tyranny’ (Frye 1965: 29). If it is hard to draw clear distinctions between utopian and satirical or dystopian impulses in modern utopian narratives, urban planning perspectives that were inspired by utopia have been equally ambiguous.

Sybaris and Other Homes aimed to provide answers to practical questions arising from urbanization, modernization, and industrialization. Hale’s texts essentially deal with housing conditions for the working classes, which ‘at the time of writing was the crusade uppermost in his mind’ (Holloway 1956). The city is no longer the abstract form in which the idea of society or the state is approached, but a concrete and pressing question. Like other utopian texts published in the course of the nineteenth century, *Sybaris* feeds on a larger set of thoughts about the ideal structure of society, the problem of increasing modernization and urbanization, offering tentative solutions. These in turn fed back into the actual town plans. Hale’s *Sybaris* indirectly influenced Frederick Law Olmsted’s plans for Riverside, Illinois, planned in the late 1860s and one of the early examples of American suburban city planning. Riverside was the ‘best-known curvilinear suburb of the nineteenth century’, and its plan contains an abundance of pastorally curving streets (Langdon 1994: 39). Olmsted and Hale corresponded with each other

after Olmsted had read *Sybaris and Other Homes*, and when Hale visited Riverside, he ‘there found his Sybaris fully realised’ (Condello 2014: 117, 118).

Other novels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century communicated similarly with urban planning paradigms. David Seed points out that novels such as Charles W. Caryl’s *New Era* (1897) and Chauncey Thomas’s *The Crystal Button* (1891) provided urban planning solutions in considerable detail (Seed 2012: 341). People from a variety of denominations turned to utopian narratives to bring across their concerns with urban questions. In *Hygeia*, the British physician Benjamin Ward Richardson describes the ideal city of health, considering, like Hale in *Sybaris*, the multi-story morphology of cities undesirable (Richardson 1876). *Hygeia* contained no cellars. Richardson’s utopia similarly influenced concrete urban design: in part inspired by *Hygeia*, London’s Bedford Park, designed by Jonathan Carr and with Norman Shaw as architect, contained buildings without cellars (cf. Wilson 1991: 44, 45, 101).

As the suburban city in ‘Sybaris’, with its banishment of stair builders and praise for low-rise illustrates, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century utopian narratives tended to exhibit a distinct uneasiness about the form the modern city had taken. The utopias by Bellamy, *Looking Backward* and Morris’s *News from Nowhere*—a reaction to Bellamy—were meant to participate in discussions concerning the city, and reformers associated both with the City Beautiful movement and the Settlement movement found inspiration in Bellamy’s novel (Wilson 1991: 70). Both, Morris in particular, essentially presented pastoral models for future society. From these pastoral themes, it was only a small step to works such as Henry Olerich’s *A Cityless and Countryless world* (1894), in which, as the title suggests, the distinction between city and countryside are altogether abolished in favour of the latter (Forbes 1927).

As industrialization and modernization gathered pace, a pastoral vision of the city was increasingly competing with the metaphorization of the city as a monstrous, runaway machine, representing a threat to the perceived harmony between man and nature that reigned in a pastoral past. This metaphor was further modulated as the ‘machine in the garden’—a concept with a long legacy in American thinking, in particular (see Marx 1964; Trimble and Winters 1984)—and the cognate concept of a Frankensteinian machine out of control of its creators (Frye 1965). In both cases, the city appears as the opposite of utopian views of future society—a dystopia of sorts.

The term ‘dystopian’, apparently first coined by John Stuart Mill in the middle of the nineteenth century, means ‘an alarmingly unpleasant imaginary world’ (Baldick 1990/2008: 100), but in the industrializing cities of the nineteenth century, what was perhaps most alarming was the fact that grim environments that resembled the opposite of imagined better worlds were not imaginary at all, but lying within walking distance of well-off city dwellers. Progress and the enlightened march of civilization was supposed to move towards a better future, but such a view became hard to sustain. Stretching the definitions of the term ‘dystopia’, several of the realist and naturalist nineteenth- and twenty-century city

texts have been read as dystopia, even if they describe actual conditions realistically. A case in point is Coketown in Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854), which in the form of a conjectured city, characterized real urban conditions in England.

In their dubious stance towards the industrializing city, utopian narratives and their counterparts in urban planning discourse envisioned two broad solutions that had little to offer to the contemporary urban morphology of the inner city, and that would result in realities that contained, in turn, distinctly dystopian elements. One was the modernist high-rise city, envisioned as a comprehensive alternative to the congested city. It was most famously evoked in the modernist ideals of Le Corbusier's *The City of To-morrow* (1929), and implemented in a variety of modulated forms from Chandigarh, India to Brasília, Brazil. In literature, this vision was anticipated by such utopian authors as Paul Scheerbaert, who both in his literary and architectural writing proposed futuristic cities of glass. A second and related utopian-inspired urban planning paradigm envisioned was to emphasize the garden to the detriment of the machine, in the form of a sprawling suburbia. Texts such as *Sybaris* forestall this pastoral turn in urban development, which has led, in the course of the twentieth century, to sprawling development as well as a vast literature of the suburb that has only fairly recently been more thoroughly examined in literary urban studies.

Both the modernist city of skyscrapers and the sprawling suburban city carried the seeds of failure. As *Sybaris*'s prohibition on high-rise buildings illustrates, the idea of secular buildings rising to the skies as spatial embodiments of linear progress had long been suspect. Since accounts of the tower of Babel, the building of iconic high-rise buildings had led to accusations of pride and presumptions that would not go unpunished. The downfall of the WTC towers on 11 September 2001, is only the most spectacular of examples so moralistically read. Suburbia carried its own distinct challenges to utopia. Riverside was adorned with curvilinear streets that gave it a tranquil feel, but in which inhabitants found it extremely difficult to orient themselves (Langdon 1994: 39). The problem was emblematic for suburbs: by neutralizing the centre, suburbia defied the need for clear orientation points.

The moral and existential repercussions for this lack of centre were quickly taken up in literature. Los Angeles, in particular, became the emblem of the suburban, sprawling city, a postmodern city that, by virtue of Hollywood and Malibu, was also emblematic of American consumerist and popular culture. As Elizabeth Wilson points out, in literature, 'LA is the 'nowhere city' [title of a novel by Alison Lurie] in which lives are inconsequential, fugitive and timeless in the sense of lacking both past and future' (Wilson 1991: 136). It is tempting to draw a connection between the unintelligibility of human behaviour in novels such as Brett Easton's *Less than Zero* (1985) and Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), and to some extent even in earlier LA texts such as John Fante's *Ask the Dust* (1939), and the diffuse suburban urban form within which they are set. Literature suggests that as the city does no longer resemble the city, moral bearings get lost.

UTOPIA IN THE INNER CITY

While the literature of suburbia developed a distinctive strand of desperation and alienation, a sense of utopia was retained in a genre with particular relevance for Northern American cities—what Blanche Gelfant calls the ecological novel, which ‘focuses upon one small spatial unit such as a neighborhood or city block and explores in detail the manner of life identified with this place’ (Gelfant 1954: 11). Utopia has always been concerned with the ideal of a harmonious community. In a succession of New York novels describing life in often ethnically delineated inner city boroughs, the protagonist’s development is outlined against the background of a close-knit social community at the neighbourhood level. The American ecological or (inner city) novel problematized community by posing complex heroes drawn between the gravitational pull of the ethnic neighbourhood and a larger world outside it. The ideal presented in such novels remains that of potential integration into urban society (or conversely, the escape from a cohesive community into a broader and more meaningful fold), a personal utopia of harmonious relationships within a meaningful community.

Several twentieth-century ecological city novels have developed their own schemes to integrate the city as machine and the ideal of the garden. In the New York ‘ecological novel’, the possibility for upward social mobility and the sense of a community that comes to bloom repeatedly take shape in the *topos* of the small garden or the tree within the inner city. Metaphorized most famously in Betty Smith’s *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1943), the image reappears in a number of more recent reflections on life in the inner city. The tree in the city appears as a form of garden in the machine, an urban pastoral that hints at the possibility of a genuine community life and personal development against all odds. In recent texts, however, even this symbol of hope is used in a questioning light. In Teju Cole’s *Open City* (2011), a friend of the narrator notes about Brooklyn’s iconic ailanthus tree that ‘[b]otanists call it an invasive species. But aren’t we all?’ (2011/2012: 179) In the context of a novel dealing extensively with the violent nature of dispossessions and migrations, the remark reminds us that the ‘tree of heaven’ has become embroiled in a wider symbolism of displacement, memory, and violence.

In the course of the post-war decades, utopian images of a sense of community in the inner-city neighbourhood—if only as something to rebel against—was crumbling. Utopian and modernist planning, both in the form of the brutalist high-rise and the pastoral suburb, had turned their back on inner cities. Combined with the specific dynamics of Northern American cities, these reactions became part of a process turning post-war inner cities into areas that resembled the gloomiest of nineteenth-century industrial cities, without the jobs. ‘Dystopian’ became a term not used to describe an imaginary or future city, but inner city reality. In literature and in film from the 1970s and 1980s onwards, the image of a ‘dystopian’ New York became increasingly ‘codified and clichéd’ (Webb 2014: 315). The image of a disintegrating,

burning New York City becomes a stark symbol of the failing city in novels as diverse as Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997) or Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009). In Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, an English academic who moves to New York is shocked by the city's dystopian appearance:

It was July and the city shimmered and stank... I was astonished to see so many beggars in the rank, disordered streets, where crones and drunkards disputed with the rats for possession of the choicest morsels of garbage... The skies were of strange, bright, artificial colours—acid yellow, a certain bitter orange that looked as if it would taste of metal, a dreadful, sharp, pale, mineral green... (1977/2001: 11–12)

The fact that it will take some time for the reader to realize that the novel does *not* depict actual New York in the 1970s, but an alternative dystopian future, tells us much about the established image of New York during these decades as a city beyond redemption. In Carter's novel, New York, like the New York in Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's column* almost a century earlier, and a host of other novels in between, is a city on the way to be obliterated. It is, as in the 1985 New York novel by the same name, by Madison Smart Bell 'waiting for the end of the world'. To William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock, the group of novelists to which Bell (as well as Auster and DeLillo) belonged were writers not of dystopia, but of an 'urban apocalypse', that drew its imagery 'as much from biblical accounts [...] as from the actual topography of their settings' (Sharpe and Wallock 1987: 26, 27).

URBAN END-TIMES

Even in optimistic utopian narratives millenarian sentiments tend to be present at least in the form of an implied, possible past or future. *Sybaris* is again relevant: similar to other novels that explicitly referred to Biblical or ancient cities, the name alerts the reader to an implied story of hubris and destruction. In Antiquity, Sybaris was perceived as the epitome of pride, arrogance, and luxury, and its consequent destruction as a just retribution. In the introductory chapter, frequent comparisons are made between Boston and Sybaris, pointing out that the original Sybaris existed only a little longer than Boston then: 'For two hundred years and more,—almost as long, dear Atlantic, as your beloved Boston has subsisted,—Sybaris flourished...'(Hale 1869: 9). Addressing his reader as an 'Atlantic' further rubs in the message of possible destruction. One of the novel's implied messages is not only that Hale's contemporaries are living in a dystopian reality, but that the present course of society is on the path to a violent ending. *Looking Backward* contains similar implications: in a nightmare within the dream, the protagonist awakes in Boston, only to realize the full proportions of the dismal conditions of his contemporaries. A visit to the poorest districts of South Boston provides him with a vision from hell. Having compared Boston earlier to Babel, Bedlam and

the Land of Ishmael, the protagonist notes: ‘as I observed the wretched beings about me more closely, I perceived that they were all quite dead. Their bodies were so many living sepulchres’ (Bellamy 1941: 266). If that is not enough, the narration explicitly refers to two competing potential futures, one utopian, one apocalyptic. Awakening in the future, the protagonist shows surprise that the city he sees has not descended into total ruin: ‘All I can say is, that the prospect was such when I went into that long sleep that I should not have been surprised had I looked down from your house-top to-day on a heap of charred and moss-grown ruins instead of this glorious city’ (Bellamy 1941: 36, 37). The harmoniously laid out future Boston is situated at the end of one specific path into the future, but if society continued on its present, late-nineteenth-century path, the prospect of urban apocalypse seemed the more probable future.

APOCALYPSE IN THE UNREAL CITY

Since literature has had cities, it has described their destruction. What we call antiquity was already a world littered with deserted cities, as such diverse first-hand accounts as Xenophon’s *Anabasis* (fourth century BC) or Pausanias’s *A Guide to Greece* (second century AD) testify. In *Civilisation and its Discontent*, Freud reads the urban ruins of Rome as a metaphor for the layers of human memory and conscience (1930/1961: 16–19). But the process could be reversed. In literature, urban destruction is often posited as informed by or caused by mental processes. Emphasis on how (a potentially contorted) individual consciousness filtered the urban reality, in modernist and symbolist literature, gave rise to specific aesthetics—unreal cities that reverberate with the associative processes of the mind (see e.g. Sharpe 1990). An increasing interest in literature’s capacities to describe processes of consciousness, combined with an acute fascination for end-times conspired, around the turn-of-the-twentieth century in the form of a distinctive aesthetics of disaster (Ellmann and Feidelson 1965; Spears 1970: 42). Apocalyptic instances are not only bound up with the falling apart of a commonly experienced world, but in literature, they are more often than not evocative of a tumbling down of the mental scaffolds of the personal, inner world. In the expressionist poems of Paul van Ostaïjen’s *Bezette Stad* (*Occupied City*; 1921) or of Georg Heym, as well as in modernist works such as T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922), the contemporary city becomes the scenery of collapsing inner and outer end-times, as Antwerp, Berlin, and London are read in millenarian light. In such works, the literary city has become unreal and unstable, distorted by an over-sensitive narrative consciousness.

While Eliot’s lyrical persona is akin to the seer, in prose, urban apocalypse resides as often in the perspective of the madman, or that of characters that are mentally incapacitated by distress, disease, or hunger. Confusion, despair, or illusion become projected upon the cityscape, and in such texts, the reader is

guided to interpret the dystopian or apocalyptic cityscapes as a result of the protagonist's cognitive restrictions. In Jules Verne's *Paris au XX^e siècle* (*Paris in the Twentieth Century*), utopia becomes dystopia and eventually into intimations of apocalypse for the protagonist, who, towards the end of the novel, is described as going mad, convinced that he is chased by the evil spirit of electricity (Verne 1995: 172 ff.). Eve/Evelyn, the protagonist in *The Passion of New Eve*, is almost continuously sedated, drugged, or otherwise cognitively impaired in the course of her journeys through an increasingly apocalyptic world. In Lethem's *Chronic City* (2010), the progressively apocalyptic atmosphere is not unrelated to the protagonists' extensive use of 'chronic', a potent brand of marijuana, which, as the title suggests, defines the city in the novel. Often, the characters' cognitive restrictions make it impossible to say whether the apocalyptic feel resides in the storyworld or in the protagonist's mind. A case in point is Timothy Findley's novel *Headhunter*, where the protagonist, the schizophrenic Lilah Kemp chases Conrad's Kurtz through a disconcerting Toronto, after having 'inadvertently set...[him] free from page 92 of *Heart of Darkness*' (1993: 3).

CITIES AFTER UTOPIA?

Around the turn of the twentieth century, utopia thinking and writing seemed to have lost its drive. Literary utopias had run out of steam, and in critical urban theory, too, utopian thinking appeared something from a bygone age. As Guy Baeten argues, '[u]topian thinking, both as a literary and political genre has been rendered marginal in contemporary political practices. Urban dystopia, or 'Stadtsschmerz', is now prevalent in critical Western thinking about city and society' (Baeten 2002: 143). Concomitant with this end of utopia has been the rise of dystopian, apocalyptic, post-apocalyptic, and climate-catastrophe narratives, especially in popular fiction and on the big screen.

Some caveats are in place. As several of the texts discussed above showed, utopian literary narratives tend to include dystopian references—and the other way round. If literary utopia is not defined primarily by an optimistic ethos—always dependent on author or reader perspective—but by the respect in which it provides an implicit better alternative to the present world, dystopian and apocalyptic narratives cannot be excluded from the utopian literary tradition. If we follow Northrop Frye in considering dystopias as a satirical, or critical form of utopian writing, the previous decades can be considered as an age that has presented an unprecedented range of alternative worlds (future, past, or alternative) that puts the actual world in perspective, and that more often than not are in explicit dialogue with the long history of utopian and critical utopian narratives. Cities continue to take a prominent place in these representatives of the genre.

In urban planning narratives, the first decades of the new millennium have seen the reappearance of what could be considered as utopian thinking. Concomitant with this is the proclamation of a 'renaissance of the city'.

Examples can be found in Far-Eastern, Middle-Eastern, and Central Asian cities, and also in Western Europe and the Americas. One example is the appearance of a distinctively utopian Toronto around the turn of the twenty-first century, a ‘Torontopia’ in which utopian visions of the city from artistic and cultural actors, as well as from the municipal level, come together (Levin and Solga 2009). Whether this is the kind of critical utopian paradigm Baeten had in mind remains to be seen. In many respects, the newspeak surrounding cultural regeneration of cities seems more like the sober appropriation of grassroots citizen movements by neo-liberal forces. Torontopia, as well as the endless plans for ever-higher skyscrapers in the desert, and the many current schemes for sweeping urban transformation worldwide, show that policy makers and planners continue to be in thrall to utopian narratives of the city. At the same time, the wide range of imaginative fiction that continues to draw on utopian traditions bears witness to the undiminished potential of city literature to project imaginative alternatives—utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic—for the cities we inhabit.

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FURTHER READING

A complete reading list on literature and the city is obviously impossible, but I list books here according to parts: these supplement the bibliographies given at the end of each chapter. Some material on cities and literature is also included—primary and secondary texts—which this *Handbook* has not been able to cover.

For further lists and guidance, readers may consult the *Cambridge Companions to: Paris* (ed. Anna-Louis Milne 2013), *The Harlem Renaissance* (George Hutchinson 2007), *New York* (Cyrus R.P. Patell 2010), *Los Angeles* (Kevin R. McNamara 2010), *London* (Lawrence Manley 2011), *Australian Literature* (Elizabeth Webby 2006), *Modern Indian Culture* (Vasudha Dalmia and Rashmi Sadana 2012), and *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature* ed. Kevin R. McNamara (2014) and sundry others. These volumes are useful, though less critical than those here, more like brochures than guides, but certainly a place to start. Volumes of special interest are noted below.

Another place to start is:

Bridge, Gary, and Sophie Watson. 2011. *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

(At 768 pp, this is an impressive collection of 65 new essays, with some distinguished contributors, but there seems little principle of selection and a lack of empirical detail or even of coverage (e.g. no entry on Moscow, or St Petersburg, nor an entry on Japan, or Tokyo).)

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