The Idea of the City

The Idea of the City: Early-Modern, Modern and Post-Modern Locations and Communities

Edited by

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

JOAN FITZPATRICK

This collection of essays emerges from a two-day international conference held at the University of Northampton, UK in June 2007. The conference benefitted from a British Academy Conference Grant that enabled the participation of scholars from overseas, for which I am very grateful. The book contains the best of the papers presented by 45 delegates from 12 countries (UK, India, USA, Canada, Italy, France, Ireland, Australia, Romania, Japan, Germany, Portugal) involving both established academics and new scholars. The collection is interdisciplinary and eclectic; its aim is to explore the nature of the modern city in literature, history, film and culture from its origins in the early-modern period to post-modern dislocations. These essays consider the city as a context within which literature is created, structured, and inspired, and as a space within which distinct voices and genres emerge.

The collection begins with an historically contextualizing essay by John Martin entitled "Counter-urbanisation: An Historian's View". Martin sets the scene for subsequent discussions of city scapes by investigating the changes that have taken place in the migration of people into rural areas. Reviewing the different explanations for the process, he shows how migration flows are continuing to change in terms of intensity and pattern. There has been a tendency to allow our understanding of this process to be unduly influenced by the romanticism implicit in most descriptions of the English countryside. However, recent research has radically challenged our attitudes toward the historical process of counter-urbanisation, thus enhancing our understanding of the forces that attracted the movement to the town as well as the continuing shift from urban centres.

Part One of the collection is entitled 'Medieval and Early-Modern Cities: Performance and Poetry'. This section historicizes the European city 1300-1700 as a space where political, secular and religious authorities impacted upon drama and verse. Alexandra Johnston's essay "The Politics of Civic Drama and Ceremony in late Medieval and Early-Modern Britain" considers historical manuscripts that provide external evidence of

the impact religious and secular authorities had on the formal procession of dignitaries through English cities. The texts that form the focus of Johnston's analysis are hitherto overlooked ones that provide an important insight into the role of the authorities upon early-modern city-dwellers. Alex Lee's focus is Petrarch's hatred for Avignon, which he characterized as the new Babylon. In his essay entitled "Sin city? The image of Babylon in Petrarch's *Canzoniere*" Lee argues that while appearing to adapt scriptural imagery to classical modes, Petrarch actually used 'Babylon' to refer to a highly interior state of confusion based upon the triumph of temporal desire over reason. Petrarch's attacks were not merely assaults on the vice of a particular city, but carefully considered invectives that made the city of Avignon a cipher for human irrationality and an emblem for the mistaken attachment to temporal things.

In "Preserving and Reserving the Past in Stow's *Survey of London*" Andrew Griffin produces a vision of past and present that is at odds with comparable Elizabethan chorographies where the past is both radically distant from the present and yet surprisingly close to it, as absolutely foreign to the present and as something to which the present relates intimately. Griffin contends that this bivalent understanding of the relationship between past and present is a function of Stow's under-theorized antiquarianism, and that it is also a function of London itself, the fraught object that he chose to survey. Shona McIntosh's essay "Space, Place and Transformation in *Eastward Ho!* and *The Alchemist*" examines the genre of city comedy via the playing space of private London theatres during the early years of the reign of James I. She argues that the satiric nature of the drama has hitherto been overstated. Jacobean City Comedy is, in fact, celebratory of social mobility. The fantasy of escaping from the city is countered by the cultural opportunities it affords as a site of transformation, an important feature of the theatre itself. In "Women and the Theatre in Thomas Heywood's London" Marissa Greenberg argues that Thomas Heywood's combination of historical crime and urban topography signals the importance of London women playgoers as consumers and patrons of drama. Ironically, women were depicted as transgressors in the drama when, without committing the slightest transgression, female playgoers actually advanced and authenticated the cause of commercial performance in early-modern London. What unites these essays is their historical approach to the emergent phenomenon of the European city, of which London was prototypical.

In the second part of the book, an approach is made via the newly re-theorized notions of cultural and social space. This section, entitled 'Defining Urban Space: the Metropolitan and the Provincial' considers

some of the complexities surrounding definitions of urban spaces (central and peripheral) in literal, metaphorical, and psychological terms. In the first essay, "Venice Imagined: The Invisible & Imaginary City Or, 'Les Lieux De La'" Julian Wolfreys is concerned with the intangibility of Venice, a city that he will argue, via reference to literature and music, is infused with mystery; although efforts have been made to capture the essence of the city via its famous landmarks, it remains, ultimately unknowable. Venice is also the focus for Arkady Plotnitsky's essay entitled "'A Palace and a Prison on Each Hand': Venice between Madness and Reason, from the Baroque to Romanticism", which looks at the poetry of Byron and Shelley and the city's architecture; for Plotnitsky, Venice is a city that at once defines and is defined by Romanticism and the Baroque.

In "Seward's Lichfield" Teresa Barnard is concerned with eighteenth-century Lichfield in the English West Midlands as described by Anna Seward, whose posthumously published letters were drastically edited by Walter Scott. This process left nothing of Seward's own battles against the gendered inequalities of female education. Barnard's essay examines a selection of anecdotes that provide a profile of the city unavailable elsewhere. Staying with Britain's regional cities is Jarrad Keyes's essay "'Archaeologies of the Future': Niall Griffiths—Pathways of the Urban". Shifting between post-millennial settings of Liverpool and Wales, Niall Griffiths' recent novel *Wreckage* explores the often-uncontested concepts of city and countryside. In its delineation of decaying industrial backdrops, idyllic villages, and vestigial council estates, *Wreckage* creates a counter-intuitive idea of the city, traversing the ontological, epistemological, and representational interstices of the shift towards a fully urbanized society. Jarrad explores the complex transactions between displaced traces of pastoral and uncanny aesthetic in *Wreckage* to discuss the significance of Lefebvre's exposition of the urban in terms of the continued uses (or otherwise) of the very 'idea of the city'.

Peter Sjølyst-Jackson's essay, "'Kristiania, that strange city': Location and Dislocation in Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*" takes us to Kristiania (now Oslo), the rather modest capital of late-nineteenth century Norway. His paper explores the uncertain borders between country and city in Knut Hamsun's text, in which material conditions, including hunger and poverty, are attended by a disturbing sense of dislocation whereby the city is a place of transit that articulates the paradoxical and unresolved experience of modern migration.

Part three, 'Modern and Post-modern Cities: Marginal Urban Identities', brings us to the social issues encountered by twentieth and twenty-first century city dwellers, specifically those usually thought to be

living on the margins of society. Robert Ward's essay, "'I'm walking here! I'm walking here!': New York Flâneurs in James Leo Herlihy's *Midnight Cowboy*", considers the representation of the urban walker in Herlihy's novel. As theorised in the writings of Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, and Michel de Certeau, prostitutes and tricksters (walkers with a distinct purpose) are transformed, temporarily, into flâneurial-type figures: the wanderer and the saunterer. As Ward points out, the quotation that prefaces his paper does not appear in the novel, but, rather, in James Schlesinger's Oscar-winning film of the same title; the reference to walking--especially appropriate for a novel fascinated by walking--is thought by some to come from a moment of improvisation by the method actor Dustin Hoffman. The figure of the flâneur is a feature also of Delphine Bénézet's essay entitled "Beyond Blank Fiction: Palimpsestic Flânerie and Converging Imaginaries in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic Of Orange*", which considers Yamashita's novel's depiction of Los Angeles. Yamashita presents an eccentric revision of Los Angeles via ironic engagement with several genres including dystopia and magic realism. Behind carnivalesque scenes Yamashita highlights the inequities and traumas experienced by marginal groups living in, or migrating to, the city.

Staying with the United States of America, Kenneth E. Roon Junior's essay, "John Rechy's Borderless *City of Night*", focuses on Rechy's novel in which the hypersensualization combined with the hypercapitalization of the individual in the city leads to a blasé erasure of the borders that mentally differentiate cities. In "The Wounded City: Ambiguous subjectivities and the riotous metropolis in Samuel Delany's *Dhalgren*" Stephanie K. Dunning contends that in Delany's novel the anarchic city functions as a metaphor of post-civil rights' African American identity and the unnamed protagonist who experiences multiple exclusions exposes the incoherence that lies at the heart of humanity.

Ipshita Ghose's essay "Bombay, Multipli-city: Demarginalizing Urban Identities and Activites in Gregory David Roberts's *Shantaram* and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City*", focuses on recent English language fiction about Bombay that gives voice to marginal urban identities and activities beneath the apparently innocuous city life. Preconceived notions of indigence and vice are cleverly subverted so that a slum becomes a collaborative effort of the disenfranchised that thrives upon trade and foreign tourism. In the essays included in this section the United States of America is a common focus for issues surrounding modern and post-modern marginal urban identities, specifically the tension between the marginal and the mainstream. This suggests that America's status as a

nation of immigrants has encouraged a more intensive introspection about identity than is usual in the Old World. Yet, as Ghose reminds us, this extends also to post-colonial nations (although America is, of course, itself post-colonial), where identities have traditionally been imposed and manipulated by colonists and where inhabitants must find new ways to relate to themselves and each other.

In the ‘Afterword’ that concludes this collection, Pamela Gilbert surveys the essays presented in the volume, drawing together common threads and alerting the reader to the range and diversity of opinions on the role and significance of the city in all its manifestations.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY

COUNTER-URBANISATION: AN HISTORIAN'S VIEW

JOHN MARTIN

The term counter-urbanisation was first used by US geographers in the 1970s, in order to account for the censuses that revealed a negative correlation between settlement size and population growth. The process is usually depicted as the voluntary movement of individual families from cities and other urban conurbations to live in the countryside. This social science-derived definition denotes a process that has been commonly accepted as an exclusively post-Second World War phenomenon. Since the 1960s, the population of the rural counties of England has changed significantly both in terms of numbers and composition.

The Process

Out-migration from urban areas has been remarkable not only in terms of the pattern of the urban-rural shift but also in terms of its intensity. The most powerful locational trend in the UK has been the shift in population, firms, output and employment from conurbations and big cities to smaller towns, New Towns and rural areas. Increases in the rural population have been caused primarily by net in-migration as opposed to indigenous population growth. In the 1970s, this exceeded 10 per cent in East Anglia, the Welsh Borders, parts of the Southwest and the South coast of England. A similar pattern is evident in the 1980s, although the rate of increase in these areas was at a lower level, mainly in the 5 to 10 per cent band. In contrast, the mainly urbanised counties experienced either a declining population or, at best, a marginal growth of less than 5 per cent in the same period.

The distinction between urban and rural areas is not, of course, as clear-cut as it may appear at first glance. It is rather simplistic to categorise counties as being exclusively rural or urban, when it would be more appropriate to classify them as predominately one or the other. All of the counties which might be deemed rural, for example, incorporate towns, the population of which is greater than the commonly accepted rurality threshold of 10,000. In spite of these methodological problems in ascertaining the degree of the demographic shift, it is evident that the migration of population has been very substantial. Since the highpoint in the 1970s, counter-urbanisation has not only declined in terms of intensity but was replaced by a more complicated pattern of migration.

Historical patterns

Counter-urbanisation has been used primarily as a means of denoting the gravitational shift of population which has taken place since the 1960s, rather than the process of rural migration which was evident in previous decades and centuries. In a numerical sense, the movement of population away from what were widely portrayed as the 'dark satanic mills' located at the centre of the new industrialised towns and cities, first became noticeable in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. With the advent of cheap and efficient railway travel, new housing developments sprang up around larger towns and conurbations, encouraging the wealthier middle class members of society to relocate to the leafy suburbs. The trend was exacerbated by Victorian snobbery, which tended to despise those who had to earn their living from trade and industry, especially if they were compelled to live adjacent to their workplaces. In an effort to increase their degree of personal privacy, a number of wealthier artisans and tradesmen sought a social and geographical separation between work and home.

The romantic imagery of country life reproduced in magazines such as *Country Life* appealed to a minority of the lower middle classes and artisans who attempted to establish craft workshops in rural locations. These pioneers were inspired by a renewed interest in the simple values of rural life espoused by influential men of the time. William Morris's version of a society where men were freed from the thrall of machinery to dwell among pastoral scenes had been reinforced by Robert Blatchford's sentiments in *Merrie England*.

The salient feature of this migrational flow was that it was dominated, both numerically and in terms of importance, by the wealthier merchants and manufacturers. They were the only group of society who could afford

to divorce their business activities from their home lives, transgressing the medieval ditch or historic wall which established the physical and psychological dividing line between urban and rural life. A small minority of families sold up and moved en bloc to become rentiers rather than active entrepreneurs in terms of their traditional core business activities. This aversion to remaining in trade and industry once the family had accumulated sufficient wealth, led to aspirations of an idyllic lifestyle reminiscent of the landed gentry. However, this did not mean that they forsook all of their entrepreneurial activities. Interests were refocused on estate management, the building of country mansions and other forms of leisure activities in which they expected to play a decisive role in the decision-making process.

Movements of this nature had been noted as early as the thirteenth century, when the growth of London began to affect adjacent counties such as Hertfordshire. Land values were significantly higher in the south of the county approaching London than in the more remote, less accessible northern parts. By this time, a significant number of wealthy Londoners had started to buy estates in the countryside, switching from commercial enterprises to the management of their newly acquired rural fiefdoms.

In the Tudor period, it is recorded that banking and brewing, chiefly in London, were responsible for the increasing wealth of quite an exceptional proportion of families who invested in land and property in accessible rural areas. The urban exodus was particularly evident during the Great Plague of 1664-5, when both Parliament and the Court were relocated to Oxford, and the great and the good of London society fled the capital. Among the army of professionals who sought refuge in the shires, were a considerable number of physicians and, to the despair of the religious populace, members of the clergy. In the early nineteenth century Arthur Young perceptively evaluated the benefits of these investments:

> They occupy a considerable space of ground, which otherwise would be held by common farmers, yet their decorated lawns, and ornamental grounds, not only adorn the county and please the travellers' eye, by their neatness and general beauty, but may also be considered as a national benefit, from the very extensive employment with which they supply the industrious poor in their neighbourhood. (Young 1804, 2)

Migration was not an isolated phenomenon. Roper Power provided a perceptive review of the process of regeneration:

> The descendants of the original *nouveau homme* now turned from Whig merchants into Tory squires, became in their turn easy victims to the new

> wave of rich men from London. And so the process went on. But the consequences of this cycle are of even greater importance. Local estates have received what amounts to a subsidy from the city. They have been run as social amenities and have attracted a considerable army of hangers-on of one sort and another. (Roper Power 1937, 393-4)

A substantial group of rural workers depended on the continued patronage of these heads of influential nouveaux riches families. There were significant differences between the attitudes of old and new wealth by the end of the nineteenth century. Convention suggests that this migration which led to businessmen divorcing themselves from their activities to become gentrified landowners and, in turn, losing their will to make money, accounted for the long-term decline of British business. This theory has been robustly challenged by F. M. L. Thompson, who considered that the real dividing line was between those who ostentatiously enjoyed themselves and the evangelical and dissenting group who objected to self-indulgence but became esteemed as good entrepreneurs (Thompson 1991, 98-119).

This process of gentrification was particularly noticeable in the London region after the First World War. Urban dwellers, many with arcadian perceptions of rose-covered cottages and palatial mansions where inhabitants could recreate their own concept of rural England, moved out to live in a string of commuter villages known as ‘metroland’ which sprang up along the Metropolitan railway line, transforming Londoners into a race of ‘straphangers’.

The lack of effective planning controls during the inter-war depression allowed urban sprawl to continue unchecked. Better transport between town and country provided by bicycles, buses, trams, private cars and motor cycles, encouraged speculative builders and railway companies to actively promote the idea of commuting to work. It was in this period that the village was rediscovered as a desirable place to live. Edith Whetham described educated townspeople as going back to the land in an attempt to become self-supporting, in an effort to escape from the capitalist society of markets and finance. She concluded, however, that they did not understand the care of livestock, the harshness of farm work or the seasonal fluctuations in incomes and food supply and, as a result, “brief lived communities came, ploughed up a few fields, quarrelled, and returned to their paved streets, piped water, indoor sanitation, and security of urban life” (Whetham 1978, 323).

Changes in counter-urbanisation

What differentiates the post-Second World War period from earlier phases of out-migration is not so much the pattern of the urban-rural shift, but its intensity. Since the 1960s, the most powerful locational trend in the UK has been the shift in population, firms, output and employment from the conurbations and big cities to smaller towns, New Towns and rural areas. These trends manifested themselves not only in terms of North-South differences in regional economic performance but also in the continuing shift in urban-rural employment.

Social scientists have traditionally perceived counter-urbanisation as contributing to the processes of gentrification and geriatrification of the countryside. The most visible signs of gentrification are the expansion of well kept houses, while geriatrification is marked by an ageing population associated with the migration of the elderly members of the population to the countryside for retirement when the family nest is empty. Although the two consequences are not mutually exclusive, autonomous changes, upon which most research has centred, have been attributed primarily to the influx of two specific groups: the retired and commuters.

The retired, or those close to retirement, have traditionally been regarded as a numerically and socially important group, which has often migrated long distances to live in the countryside. Investigating their impact on rural areas is fraught with methodological problems, primarily because the geographical origins of the retired in any community are not always easy to ascertain. Moreover 'the retired' is merely a classification category and does not constitute an homogeneous group. It comprises not only individuals with substantial wealth who have moved to rural areas but also the indigenous retired, many of whom belong to the largest low income group. These latter individuals are often wholly dependent on state pensions and disadvantaged by rural isolation and poor access to services. Their children, unable to find work or afford locally housing, will frequently have moved away. Given these analytical difficulties, quantifying population movements of this kind has been derived principally from the figures for second home ownership, which can be extracted from the rating records of local authorities.

Early settlers were concentrated in rural areas associated with the high quality of the local environment including scenery, social structure and closeness to the coast. Second homes were increasingly purchased for recreational use after the Second World War, with the subsidiary aim of using them during retirement. The most popular locations were Snowdonia and the west coast of Wales, East Anglia, the Lake District and Southwest

England. Their numbers were estimated to have risen from about 30,000 in 1950 to 200,000 in 1970.

The second group of rural inhabitants which investigators have concentrated on is long distance commuters. Early post-war statistical data on counter-urbanisation, while providing an insight into the actual numbers of migrants, makes little reference to the type of person involved or the reasons for the move. A case study of North Lancashire, found that about 40 per cent of people moving into rural areas between 1970 and 1988 came from the service class, a group characterised by high levels of academic achievement, a considerable degree of autonomy and discretion at work, with reasonably high incomes and opportunities for promotion within or between enterprises (Halfacre 1992, 63). Moreover, the more rural the settlement the higher was the service class proportion amongst those who moved in. An empirical study of the demographic take-over of the countryside by the service class using the census data by Hoggart in 1997 concluded that the demographic dominance by the service class was not only exaggerated but largely applied to the south-east of England **(**Hoggart 1997, 253-73).

This argument raises issues about not only what we mean by the service class but also about how the boundaries of the different groups are delineated. Traditional definitions of the middle classes have tended to differentiate between those employed in the manufacturing sector as administrators or owners of their own businesses, and the professionals employed in the service sector. These distinctions have become increasingly blurred with time, particularly in view of the growing numbers in the service sector who have developed more direct links with running and organising their own businesses and consultancies.

The entrepreneurial component of the middle classes is more important than their numbers suggest. They were not necessarily full-time entrepreneurs in terms of their occupational classification but consisted of an enterprising group who were instrumental in transforming their environment. Entrepreneurial families, who had sufficient resources to move and were adaptable, proved a vital asset to the countryside. Research by the Countryside Agency indicates that, on average, every self-employed migrant to rural England generated 1.7 additional full time jobs, mainly in small professional businesses. Moreover their influx into an area led to additional part-time jobs. The main reason for their move has been the value they attribute to the quality of life in the countryside and the recreational opportunities it offers.

Recent research in the late twentieth century has revealed that the typical migrant is now a family unit with a husband in mid career. Many

of these are likely to be commuters who have chosen to live in the countryside and travel either daily to their place of work, or who commute for the week, returning home at weekends. The development of fax and e-mail communications has enabled many to work flexible hours from an office at home, with infrequent trips to their formal place of work. The liberalising influences of these innovations has benefited the working day, with increased productivity and less time wasted in traffic jams.

A detailed investigation by the Countryside Agency, which divided newcomers into two types, namely local movers and incomers, has revealed the complex pattern of out-migration into rural England. Most migrations over the 1980s took place over short distances within a post code area.

Social Values and Rural Conflict

Urban perceptions of rural society have been bedevilled by ideological romanticism. There has been a preoccupation in rural literature with agricultural landscape resources and the appearance of the countryside, the perversity of this being that "the arcadian image of rural living is slowly being destroyed by the very presence of those who have money to follow their dream" (Short 1991, 15.). Traditionally the principal reason for the urban exodus has been regarded as social. Many migrants were attracted to what Pahl has referred to as the 'state of mind', or the belief that life in the countryside was characterised by harmonious relationships between all members of rural society. Such ideological close-knit rural communities appeared to be in stark contrast to the impersonal, relatively anonymous aggregations, dominated by economic relationships, which characterised urban industrial societies. Idyllic rural images were reinforced by the mass media and, more recently, by soap operas conjuring up the idea of a society in which rogues are easily identifiable and able to live alongside the respectable. Little reference is made to rural crime or the deeply ingrained hostility which can exist in such communities.

This eulogised perception of an organic society at peace with itself was prevalent amongst rural newcomers who brought with them the trappings of high status associated with well-paid, white collar, professional types of employment, and little or no conspicuous social baggage that locals could gossip about. Newcomers had the advantage over the resident population in that few people knew about their background and they had sole discretion over what they chose to tell their neighbours. Many newcomers expected deference as one of the social rewards of their upward social mobility. There was the added bonus that, with their inherently high

professional status, the indigenous village manual workers were seen as props or sceneshifters on a rustic stage, and social controls which had previously regulated rural communities went unheeded by urban migrants.

A fundamental change taking place in post-war rural society has been the growing gulf between newcomers and locals. It was this middle class influx into rural England that social scientists originally perceived as threatening the very stability and harmony on which rural communities were based. Howard Newby described the impact of commuters moving in large numbers into villages in the Home Counties:

> As the agricultural population was displaced, so it moved out, to be replaced by an urban, overwhelmingly middle-class population, which was attracted . . . by their idyllic vision of life in a real community. (Newby 1988, 36)

Newcomers often failed to integrate with the native community since their work, social activities and even shopping continued to be focused on nearby towns. In many areas a wide chasm opened up between the indigenous, largely working class population and the middle class immigrants, a division denoted by Harris as ‘social polarisation’.

Amongst the general pattern of relative prosperity, there remained a proportion of the rural population which continued to experience various forms of disadvantage, including poor access to local services and housing, low levels of income and employment. Social problems were frequently exacerbated by the success of the incomers who forced up the levels of house prices, but did not make use of locally provided services, especially public transport**.** Researchers have argued that resentment aimed at newcomers reflected the fact that they failed to appreciate the rhythms of village society. Hostility intensified as the agricultural population declined and the indigenous population began to feel outnumbered, although the influx of newcomers merely exacerbated rather than initiated this process.

Conflict of the type is neither new nor novel, but more an endemic part of rural society. Beneath the surface there have always been clear divisions between farmers and their labour force. Village communities were afflicted by internal dissension which was kept in check by a mixture of paternalism and a willingness on the part of locals to accept their place. This created a sense of psychological certainty and, with it, a not altogether unwelcome sense of security.

The challenge to established rural order had gained ground in the aftermath of the First World War but failed to reach fruition, not only as a consequence of the agricultural depression but also because of the

emergence of a set of culturally conservative village institutions which, in conjunction with order and paternalism, formed an unbeatable unified opposition. The divisions which remained within rural society revealed that, even as late as the 1960s, in the rural heartland of East Anglia at least , farmers and landowners still dominated rural local government as effectively as in the past. Consequently, while this group claimed to be concerned with providing a service to the local community, what they perceived as being in the public interest more generally reflected their own values, beliefs and ideologies. In contrast, the indigenous working class comprising farm labourers and other low paid groups, not only remained marginalised from the decision making process, but for the most part accepted their position in a rather deferential and fatalistic way.

Counter-urbanisation after the 1960s brought newcomers to English villages who formed an articulate, vociferous group, showing little concern for the remnants of paternalism and patronage. Not all of them grasped particular problems associated with living in rural areas arising from the higher cost of service provision, accessibility problems and constraints on housing. Newcomers had the power and political influence to shape the physical features of their local environment in accordance with their expectations. The locals became an 'encapulsated community', a village within a village, suspicious of and resistant to any intimate social contact with the commuter or second home owners. Many locals responded to this with a fatalistic grim good humour, rather than a grinding stoicism. As a result, the older, more established members of the village tended to withdraw and to employ non-commercial criteria to describe status, such as a sense of belonging derived from long-term residence, family continuity, dialect and a confidence in being country people.

Conflict between the two groups of village inhabitants appeared endemic in many villages. While not denying the existence of social conflict between the resident rural population and newcomers, it is very easy to exaggerate its importance and to eulogise the harmonious social relationships which existed in villages prior to the influx of newcomers. The potential for conflict between incomers and the resident population undoubtedly intensified as a result of post-war agricultural developments. The sheer pace of agricultural intensification led many newcomers to object to developments which were out of keeping with their own concept of sustainable, traditional farming methods. In fairness to the newcomers, their objections often reflected rational objections which many farmers themselves concurred with. Corporate agriculture and large-scale intensive methods of farming resulted in conspicuous management techniques such

as straw burning and monoculture, which brought farming and wildlife into ever-increasing conflict.

Social conflict intensified after the mid-1980s, with the continuing squeeze on farmers' incomes as a result of the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a trend which became increasingly acute in the late 1990s. Many farmers had to resort to tourism and other novel ways of generating income, such as the erection of unsightly telecommunications towers on their land. Lax planning controls allowed the proliferation of these eyesores in inappropriate positions close to residential areas, proving a very divisive factor in many rural communities.

In the prevailing economic rural climate of the early twenty-first century, it is probable that there will be an ever-increasing divergence in people's experiences of rural life. A majority will enjoy the countryside for its scenery, the environmental aspects of rural life and low population densities. However a minority will continue to be excluded from aspects of life perceived as essential for a satisfactory standard of living, including access to transport and services, an adequate wage and decent housing. The quest for the 'good life' of sustainable living is essentially an illusion, since the use of fossil resources is much greater by county dwellers, most of whom not only have considerably more cars per family than their urban counterparts but also travel greater distances.

Conclusion

Whilst the term counterurbanisation is relatively new, the process it denotes can be traced back over several centuries. It is only since the post-Second World War expansion in the numbers of newcomers to rural areas that social scientists have begun to investigate these trends in detail. Our understanding of counter-urbanisation has been influenced by our romanticised, idyllic perceptions of the English countryside. It is important to see it, not as an homogeneous process, but as the result of a complex pattern of migration by several different groups. To consider newcomers as a unified group, or to talk about indigenous village societies as being undifferentiated, is too simplistic. Only an appreciation of the whole picture will make it possible to identify those elements of rural society who face social deprivation, facilitating the appropriate policy responses. A study of this process reveals the complexity of population movements and reminds us that urbanisation and town growth was not simply a one way process. Counter trends and pressures were also evident, and should not be neglected.

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PART I

MEDIEVAL AND EARLY-MODERN CITIES: PERFORMANCE AND POETRY

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICS OF CIVIC DRAMA AND CEREMONY IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY-MODERN BRITAIN

ALEXANDRA JOHNSTON

In 1617 the Irish writer and traveller Fynes Moryson, reflecting on a display of civic pageantry in Dublin, remarked "there is a secret mystery in these solemne pomps" (Fletcher 1997, 31). A close study of these 'solemne pomps' whether expressed through what some would call 'true drama' or civic display or pageantry during the late medieval and early-modern periods reveals a complex and inter-related set of 'mysteries'. To a certain extent they were about power—how to get it, wield it, display it, share it and retain it. Late medieval and renaissance cities, though powerful communities jealous of their own jurisdiction, were constantly negotiating their relationships with other secular and religious authorities either in a position of power over them such as the crown or possessing parallel power as when civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions came into conflict. Civic displays were also the major tool of public propaganda in a period when the vast majority of the public were either illiterate or had received very limited education. What Greg Walker has called the 'drama of persuasion' became a central feature of public performance since drama and public ceremony were among the few 'media' available to the people trying to influence the complex web of inter-relationships that made up English society. What was said in public performance and how it was used is essential to our understanding of the period. Cities sought to fashion their own corporate self-image in order to establish the limits of their power in relationship to the countervailing powers surrounding them. Their method was active participation as producers of drama and ceremony that was both didactic and partisan.

‘Modernism’ revived the idea of a ‘drama of persuasion’. The twentieth century saw the rise in importance of such political playwrights as J. M. Synge and Sean O’Casey and their successors in Ireland, and American playwrights such as Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams who exposed the flaws in the society around them. Later playwrights have picked up the often ephemeral though, at the time, burningly important social issues of their day and had their characters argue their positions passionately. One of the most potent critics of the Nazi regime was Bertold Brecht. These playwrights have all taken a position ‘over against’ the establishment. But the twentieth century also saw drama (and particularly its celluloid counterpart, film) turned to the service of totalitarian regimes to carry the ‘party-line’ with glitz, glitter and deliberate emotional manipulation. More recently, the techniques of persuasion have been subsumed by both more personal and more public electronic media—the radio, television and the internet. We are bombarded with it in our own homes and on the road by giant flashing signs and billboards seeking to sell us something or, more insidiously, seeking to persuade us of something without our being aware of it. Spin-doctors censor or manipulate the information we receive; attack ads destroy the image of successful political leaders; newspapers around the world are controlled by fewer and fewer people. But the modern media, however it may manipulate public opinion, is a buffer between us and those who govern us. There were very few opportunities for such mediation in late medieval and renaissance Britain. Although the basic patterns were set by custom, drama and ceremony were used to establish, publicly, political or religious positions sometimes too dangerous to state directly. In *De Doctrina Christiana*, St Augustine enunciated a principal that was commonly held: “a sign is a thing which, over and above the impression it makes on the senses, causes something else to come into the mind as a consequence of itself . . .” (Schopp 1948, 535).Verbal and visual symbolism dominated the drama and ceremony of the period, providing the vehicle for indirect discourse about dangerous issues that needed to be explored and, if possible, resolved.

The most common expression of community coherence in England was in public processions either religious or secular. Before the Reformation the most potent occasion for processions was Corpus Christi Day, a relatively new festival that fitted neatly into the ‘festive season’—the progression of spring and summer events that began with Easter and ended with Midsummer or the Feast of St John the Baptist on June 24. It was a day celebrated by clergy and laity alike all over Europe most commonly with a procession in which the host was carried through the

streets of towns and cities in a reliquary so that it could be viewed and venerated by the people. It was also a day on which plays were performed, many produced by the cities of England. Although we now know through the work of Records of Early English Drama (REED) that Corpus Christi day held no more special significance for drama than Whitsun or Mayday or Midsummer (Johnston 2008) some cities such as York and Coventry did perform long episodic Biblical drama on Corpus Christi. The Chester plays were played on Witsun. Pageants carrying dumb shows or simply allegorical pictures were a common feature of Corpus Christi processions but they were not Corpus Christi plays. There were also religious plays that were not performed in procession on Corpus Christi. One such play was performed in Exeter and by examining an isolated incident concerning that play, new insights can be gained about local plays and their importance in the negotiated relationships within civic jurisdictions (Johnston 2003).

In the Mayor's Court of Exeter June 18, 1414, one John Benet, Skinner and freeman of the city, "hu*mili*t*er* . . . se submisit g*r*a*cie* eiusdem Maioris &c" (Wasson 1986, 82-3; 357-8). Benet's offence had been a vigorous opposition to an attempt by the city council to change the nature of the play that had been performed on Corpus Christi day and the date of its performance. In this year, the "Maior & C*ommun*itas" decided that a play apparently normally played by the Skinners on Corpus Christi should be played on the Tuesday of Whitsun week rather than on the feast day and that the single play should be broken up into "certas p*ar*cellas . . . voc*atas* pagentes" and distributed among all the craft guilds who were to be responsible for finding, at their own expense, the players needed to play the episode that they had been assigned. Benet and the other Skinners objected and not only refused to take their own guild part in the production but also suborned the other crafts to do likewise. The result was chaos "in obprobriu*m* tocius Ciuitatis & contemptu*m* Maioris & tocius C*ommun*itatis predicte". Reprimanded by the mayor, Benet replied, "Parde a man shall noght be an hange w*ith* outhe onsser" and marched away "contemptuose & derisorie". After some negotiations (unfortunately unrecorded), Benet was persuaded to make his humble submission to the mayor's court.

What are we to make of this episode? What evidence is there for a play performed 'ab antiqua Consuetudine'? Why were the Skinners so upset? Why should the city council take it upon themselves to alter so radically a custom of long standing? The answers to these questions do not lie in any fine sense of literary or dramatic sensibility but in the long-standing tensions that existed in the early fifteenth century between the city and the bishop. The Skinners' craft and their Corpus Christi activities seem to

have been caught in a quarrel not of their own making that divided the loyalties of the citizens of Exeter.

The procession of Corpus Christi in Exeter was an episcopal event. The first mention of the feast in the diocese is in 1320 and Bishop Stapledon's register for 1322 mentions the route of the new procession in Exeter (Hingeston-Randoph 1892, 384) making it clear that it had become one of the major processions in the liturgical year that brought the bishop and the cathedral clergy out of the Close and into the city. There is no evidence that the city, as such, supported the procession. The feast day is not mentioned in the Exeter city records until 1386 in a payment for wine for the Friars Preacher and the Friars Minor after their procession (Wasson 1986, 73). It appears from subsequent evidence that the Corpus Christi Guild was the confraternal face of the Skinners Craft in Exeter as it was in London. Entries in the civic accounts of substantial subsidies being given by the city to the Corpus Christi Guild occur frequently until 1496. There is no doubt that the play performed at Corpus Christi before 1414 was performed by the Skinners Craft and that the same guild, by the late fifteenth century (clearly now also the Corpus Christi Guild), is associated with the same play. The incident concerning John Benet and the mayor in 1414, then, seems to have been a unique event in which the mayor attempted to change a long standing custom but did not succeed.

The basic issue was over who held jurisdiction over (and so had the right to collect taxes from) two Exeter parishes—St Stephen's within the walls and St Sidwell's outside the east gate of the city. The bishop claimed 'St Stephen's fee' and the Dean and Chapter claimed 'St Sidwell's fee'. Both claims were contested by the city. The origins of the dispute went back to Doomsday and it had been pursued by the city from the mid thirteenth century. The city stepped up its pressure in the early fifteenth century. The dispute between the Skinner, John Benet, and the mayor over the play on Corpus Christi was part of this larger dispute.

In 1322, Bishop Stapledon writing to the Confessor of the cathedral, Richard de Braileghe, mentions that the Corpus Christi procession went outside the east gate of the city of Exeter, "according to the custom of our aforesaid church each year". By processing to and through the east gate, the bishop was marking the boundaries of his claimed jurisdiction. To reach the east gate the procession had to pass through the disputed parish of St. Stephen and once the procession had passed through the gates it was in St. Sidwell's parish. This route took the episcopal party directly away from the busier quarters of the town and, although we do not know how they returned to the cathedral, they may, as Nicholas Orme has suggested (Orme 1986, 78) have taken an equally provocative return route back

down the High Street once again passing St Stephen's but going farther towards the centre of the city passing the Guildhall on their right before turning into the Close at Broadgate. The Skinners' play could have been performed outside the walls before the procession returned to the city or in the Close at the end of the procession.

The most significant issue raised in the 1414 dispute, given the ongoing quarrel between the bishop and the mayor, was the date of the performance of the play. By tradition, the play was performed on Corpus Christi day by the Skinners. As such, Corpus Christi day would have been the high feast day of the guild with its particular veneration of the Host and firmly identified with the episcopal event. The action of the mayor attempted to 'steal' the Skinner's play away from Corpus Christi to the Tuesday in Whitsun week, the week of the increasingly lavish civic spring festival growing more lavish every year with traditional 'May' celebrations. A play performed on Tuesday, the day after the civic Maying events, would lengthen the festival period and add substance to the fledgling celebrations. The two celebrations—the episcopal Corpus Christi procession/Skinners' play and the civic Whitsun May games—can be seen as the expressions of rival power bases within the city. If this is so, then Benet's wrath and the opposition he succeeded in mounting against the change is a rare glimpse of opposition to the exercise of municipal power. In the long run it appears that, even if the Skinners, through Benet's submission to the court, lost the battle, they won the war since there is no mention of the Skinners play in association with Whitsun again. The dispute between the city and the bishop was finally resolved in the bishop's favour in 1449 (Curtis 1932, 41). That year the city sent gifts of wine to the bishop and hosted him at a banquet (Exeter Chamberlains' Accounts 1448-9).

The Exeter story is a fifteenth century example of the tensions between civic and religious authorities over public performance before the Reformation. The city considered the play to be of sufficient importance that they tried to command the Skinners Guild to leave an event under episcopal control and bring their most public and prized possession, the play, to a fledgling civic event. The content of the play is not here the issue but rather the issue is the very existence of a play that adorned the Corpus Christi festivities that the city coveted for their own purposes.

My other two examples of civic religious drama come from the period after 1568-9 when, at the time of the suppression of the rebellion of the Northern earls, Elizabeth and her council moved to end the religious dramas that were stubbornly being produced by the two great northern cities of York and Chester. Here the plays acted as the flash point between

the protestant ecclesiastical and civil authorities and the lingering conservative Catholicism of two cities whose civic pride was bound up in their lavish plays.

The city of York had not one but three large religious plays in the late middle ages—the Creation to Doomsday cycle played on Corpus Christi, the Creed Play substituted for the cycle every ten years from the mid fifteenth century and the Pater Noster Play, perhaps the oldest one, first mentioned by Wycliffe in 1378, that did not have a regular pattern of performance. After the dissolution of the religious guilds in 1549, the two non-cycle plays came into the possession of the city that had long controlled the Corpus Christi Play (Johnston 1975). In 1568, the then dean of Yorkminster, the convinced protestant Matthew Hutton who was also secretary of the Ecclesiastical Commission of the North, began the process of suppressing the three plays. That year, the mayor, William Coupland, a wealthy tailor and a "sturdy traditionalist" in religion (Palliser 1979, 245) gave him his opportunity. Within ten days of Coupland becoming mayor, the council agreed that the Creed Play should be performed instead of the Corpus Christi Play. Of the three plays in the hands of the city, it was probably the most doctrinally sensitive, associated as it was with both a credal statement and the guild founded to celebrate the Real Presence in the eucharist. The plans did not go unchallenged. Within six weeks, word of the impending production had not only reached Hutton but he had acquired a copy of the text from Coupland, read it, condemned it and sent Coupland and the council a firm response. The Dean begins gracefully acknowledging the antiquity of the play but lamenting how it disagrees with the "senceritie of the gospell". His advice is that the play should not be played:

> ffor thoughe it was plausible 40 yeares agoe, & wold now also of the ignorant sort be well liked: yet now in this happie time of the gospell, I know the learned will mislike it and how the state will beare with it I knowe not. (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 353)

After receiving the letter, the council agreed to abandon their plans on 30 March. On 27 April, Coupland went to the council declaring "that dyverse commoners of this Citie were muche desyerous to haue Corpuscrysty play this yere". But the council would not agree to such a performance unless "the book thereof shuld be p*er*used / and otherwaise amendyd / before it were playd" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 354). No performance was mounted that year but the clear difference of opinion between the group urging that the play be performed and the majority of the Council who

were ready to submit to the will of the Dean gives us the first hint that conflict over play production had appeared within the council itself.

Conflict within York about the suitability of the ancient Corpus Christi Play "in this happie time of the gospel" surfaced again in 1569. The production was not without trouble. Fourteen stations where the play was to be performed outside the houses of specific people were decreed on 26 May but with the unusual proviso "that if the sayd persones will not pay for the sayd places as the l*ord* mayo*u*r & Chambrelaynes shall thynk requisite than furthre ordre y*er*in to be taken at discrecion of my l*ord* mayo*u*r and Chambrelaynes &c". Three must have refused to pay since the next day three other locations were named (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 356). It is clear that there was no longer a common mind about the plays on the Council and it should come as no surprise that 1569 is the last known performance of the York Cycle.

In 1570 the see of York, which had been vacant since 1568 (Raine 1946, 139), was filled, partly at Hutton's urging, by his patron, the arch protestant Edmund Grindal. Grindal came to the northern province with a clear agenda and it was inevitable that the civic patronage of Catholic drama would not long survive his arrival. There is no mention of playmaking in 1570 or 1571 but next year saw the end of all Catholic drama in York. In 1572, William Allen, mercer, became mayor. Allen, described by David Palliser as "the most firmly Catholic alderman" (Palliser 1979, 242), persuaded the council to authorize the production of the Pater Noster Play not performed since 1558. Allen himself seems to have "pervsed" it and declared it fit for playing. The production was to take place on Corpus Christi Day (5 June) and to be financed by the pageant money of the crafts. The members of those crafts (such as the Bakers) whose pageants were actually to be part of the play were to walk with their pageants to "see good ordre kepte". The traditional stations were named and by 2 June they all seem to have been paid for except the one outside the door of the house of Christopher Harbert for which 3 s 4 d is noted as outstanding (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 365-6). Christopher Harbert had come to York from Monmouthshire in 1550 and was, with Allen, a member of the Mercer's Guild (Palliser 1979, 94). His imposing house near the Pavement still stands and its general location had been traditionally the site of the last station for all civic productions. He was a firm ally of Hutton and Grindal. Allen seems to have delighted in baiting his rival by insisting that he pay for a station outside his door. On the day of the performance, Harbert and a former mayor William Beckwith refused "to assocyate and assist his Lordship at the tyme of playeng of the Pater noster play" and were arrested and "commanded to warde / there to

abide duryng may Lord Mayour pleasure". The next day they were released from prison but declared "vtterly disfranchised, and no more to occupie as ffree men of this Citie/" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 366-7). Harbert appealed to the newly appointed Lord President of the North, Henry Hastings, earl of Huntingdon acknowledging, on 23 June, as part of his submission to the council, that he had sued Allen "before the Lord President and Counsell in theis North parties" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 367). After paying a fine, Harbert was admitted back into the freedom of the city and restored to his rank as alderman. Beckwith, however, would not submit as easily and waited for the last month of Allen's term of office (January, 1573) before he too admitted his part in the suit, paid his fine and was readmitted (Raine 1950**,** 63). The next month Christopher Harbert was elected mayor.

Harbert's election as mayor could have been foreseen. He was clearly working with the Dean, Archbishop and Lord President to bring about the end of civic religious drama but it was also clear that suppression would only be possible if he gained control of the council. A week after he had "humbly" submitted himself to Allen and the council, Archbishop Grindal requested a copy of the Pater Noster Play. The council agreed that it should be sent. It has not been seen since. The two hundred year history of religious drama produced by the city of York came to an end as the united front of the Council crumbled under questions of conscience and a mayor backed by the Protestant authorities. For Harbert and the authorities, the Catholic plays had become "plays of persuasion" and were not to be allowed to be produced in public. It was under Harbert's term as mayor that the city came to pay for a public preacher. The Word preached was substituted for the Word enacted.

The suppression of the plays in Chester took an entirely different form in large part because the Chester city council was unanimous in the support of the play (Mills 1998). Until the discovery of the letter book of Christopher Goodman by David Mills in the course of his research for his Cheshire collection of Records of Early English Drama (Mills 1998, 146), all we knew about the final days of the Chester Witsun Plays was the curious Star Chamber indictment of Sir John Savage, mayor in the last year of the performance of the play, 1575, and John Hanky, the mayor at the time of the performance in 1572. The story as it unfolds through Goodman's correspondence, to some extent explains that indictment but it also gives us another perspective on how the traditional scriptural plays performed in the north were viewed with alarm and suspicion by the Evangelical clergy.

On 10 May, 1572, two days before Allen and his supporters in York were to propose the performance of the Pater Noster Play, Christopher Goodman, along with two other Chester clerics, Robert Rogerson and John Lane, wrote to the newly appointed President of the North, the earl of Huntingdon. Goodman was a Cestrian and a fervent Protestant who had spent time as a Marian exile among the reformers on the continent returning to his native Chester in 1568 (Clopper and Mills 2007, cxxxvi). He was alarmed by the preparations for the Witsun Play in 1572 and was determined to bring its enormities to the attention of those whom he considered the authorities. His letter of 10 May to Huntingdon is full of anti-papal rhetoric. The present city council in Chester were acting, he claims, "in assured ignorance & superstition according to Papist policy". He clearly sets up an opposition between the city council and "all preachers & godly men" who oppose the plays. Despite their efforts, the council is preparing to perform the plays even though "the same have neither been perused nor allowed according as by her M*aje*sty in those cases it is provided" and appeals to Huntingdon to forbid the production "in respect of your Zeal to godliness" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 143).

At this time Huntingdon had not yet come north to take up his new post. He must have been in London and passed the letter to Archbishop Grindal who was in Westminster as President of the Ecclesiastical Commission who, five days after Goodman sent his letter (15 May), responded to Goodman's plea by writing to the mayor and council and forbidding the production. We learn from the opening lines of Goodman's next letter (11 June) that a copy of Grindal's letter had been sent to him along with the copy of a letter from Huntingdon, now lost. Grindal had required the mayor

> in the Queen's Majesty's name by vertue of her Highnesses Commission for causes Ecclesiasticall within the diocese of York . . . to surcease from further preparation for setting forth the said plays, & utterly to forbear the playing thereof for this Summer & for all times hereafter till your said plays shall be perused corrected & reformed by such learned men as by us shall be thereunto appointed & thesame so reformed by us allowed. . . . (Clopper and Mills 2007, 143)

On 11 June, Goodman, Rogerson and Lane wrote to Grindal reporting on what was to them a disturbing turn of events. Not only had letters been sent by Grindal and Huntingdon through Goodman to John Hanky, the mayor, but letters had also been sent to the bishop of Chester, William Downham. Downham had tried to reason with Hanky but had reported to Goodman that "he perceived M*aste*r Mayor so bent as he would not be

stayed from his determination in setting forth the plays by any persuasions or letters". In the meantime, Hanky and some of the council had petitioned the earl of Derby to uphold their decision to perform the play. In June 1572, this was Edward Stanley the third earl, now in the last few months of his life. His long career, in and out of favour, has long been considered equivocal in matters of religion. He had been a prominent local magnate all his life and undoubtedly considered Cheshire to be his to command. The mayor and council had appealed to their ancient overlord choosing to seek his ruling over that of the Ecclesiastical Commission. The earl stated his opinion that the Ecclesiastical Commission had no jurisdiction in Chester. The palatinate of Lancashire was never part of the Council of the North. The palatinate of Cheshire's legal status at this time is less clear. However, it is clear that since the establishment of the diocese of Chester on 1537 it was part of the archdiocese of York. This may be the reason Huntingdon turned the matter over to Grindal who clearly believes he is writing to the mayor and council with the authority of the "Commission for causes Ecclesiasticall within the diocese of York".

Goodman, clearly upset and thwarted by this response to what appeared a month earlier to be a simple matter of appealing to the royal authorities, laments to Grindal that the city is in turmoil over this "unhappy broil". Hoping that Huntingdon and Grindal will assert their authority he wrote with increasing shrillness of tone urging them to intervene and stop the performance (Clopper and Mills 2007, 146).

But the plays went ahead as planned containing all the "absurdities" that so distressed Goodman and his colleagues. The last letter in the letter book for 1572, once again written to Grindal, is undated, but Mills writes "given its relative position and the careful chronology of the letterbook—it is undoubtedly for the year 1572" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 1016). The long list of "absurdities" from which we learn that the 1572 production contained several blatantly Catholic elements that have not survived in the extant manuscripts of the plays is attached to this letter (Mills 1998, 181). Goodman's concern here in the aftermath of the play is for "divers honest men (who haue misliked of the said plays)" who have refused to contribute "according to their conscience & your G*races* commandment" and "have been to their grief and discredit imprisoned" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 146). There is no evidence from Chester for 1572 that men were actually imprisoned for their conscience (as Beckwith and Harbert had been that same year in York) but the 1575 records include the imprisonment of one Andrew Tailor, a dyer, who had refused to pay his fine to his craft and been committed by the then mayor Sir John Savage to prison. He was later

released by the next mayor, Henry Hardwick, when supporters paid his fine (Clopper and Mills 2007, 171-2).

Three years later, in 1575, the city council of Chester under the mayoralty of Sir John Savage whom Mills identifies as one of the "Savages of Clifton" who were "influential local gentry who were thought to have recusant leanings" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 1017) once again prepared to mount a production of the Witsun Plays at Midsummer. A letter that Goodman drafted but did not send to the mayor because they subsequently discussed the issues personally is quite unlike the letters sent to Huntingdon and Grindal in 1572. It does not have the strident anti-papal rhetoric of three years before but attempts to dissuade the mayor from going ahead with the production on the grounds that the city had just suffered a major economic loss when a ship sponsored by several men of substance in Chester was seized by pirates off the coast of Brittany while heading home from Spain (Clopper and Mills 2007, 1018). He urges him, rather than performing the play, to engage in "publique lamentacion or fastinge & prayinge than of solacinge our selves with feastiuite, interteninge of frendes & vaine plays" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 168). He continues to consider them "your vnlawfull, but lawfully forbidden plays" but the tone is more of a pastor trying to cajole than a preacher trying to persuade.

His persuasions were not heeded. The Chester Mayor's List for 1575 records

> this year the said S*i*r Iohn Savage caused ye popish plaies of Chester to bee playd ye Sunday Munday Tuesday and Wensday after Midsummer in contempt of and Inhibition and ye primates letters from yorke and from ye Earle of Huntington, for which cause hee was serued by a purseuant from yorke, ye same day y*a*t ye new Maior was elected, as they came out of ye common hall, notwithstanding the said S*i*r Iohn Sauage tooke his way towards London, but how his matter sped is not knowne Also Mr Hanky was serued by the same Purseuant for the like contempt when he was Maior . . . . (Clopper and Mills 2007, 161)

The summonses came from York but Savage apparently chose to have his case tried before the Privy Council itself in Star Chamber. On 10 November, 1575, he wrote to Henry Hardwick, his successor as mayor, and the council from London. The accusation against him was that he had caused "the plays laste at Chester to be sett forwarde onely of myself". He urged them since he knows that they "do knowe the contrary . . . that they were by comon assemblie apointed as remayneth in the Recorde" to "sende me a Certificate vnder your haund*es* and Seale of your Citie"

testifying to the fact that, since both he and John Hanky were being accused, both the production in 1575 and the one in 1572 had been authorized by the full council (Clopper and Mills 2007, 172). The council under Hardwick responded on November clearly testifying that both Savage and Hanky acted "with the assent of thaldermen Sheriff*es* and the comon counsell of the saide Citie to set furthe the saide plays" (Clopper and Mills 2007, 170).

Unlike the York council, the Chester council did not break ranks over the performance of the plays. There were no Beckwiths or Harberts on the Chester council to conspire to bring the plays to an end. Rather the opposition came, in 1572, from the outside—from Goodman and his fellow clerics who, unable to persuade their fellow Cestrians of the truth of their godly cause, appealed to the higher authority of the leaders of the Council of the North and the Ecclesiastical Commission. Unfortunately for them that higher authority was a long way away either in London or York. The mayor and council fell back on the local known authority of the earl of Derby who disputed the jurisdiction of the Council and Commission and encouraged Hanky to produce the play. We do not have evidence for what happened in Chester in 1575 except Goodman's draft letter to Savage. We do not know if he and his friends were behind the second appeal to the authorities in York that so alarmed Savage that, refusing to accept the jurisdiction of Grindal and Huntingdon as valid, he hurried to London and appealed to the Privy Council sitting as Star Chamber. If they were behind it, they mistook the suit they brought against Hanky and Savage. The two mayors were accused of acting alone; they could easily prove that they had not—and the case fell. Nevertheless, Goodman's party won the war since 1575 is the last known performance of the Witsun Plays in Chester

These two case studies of the suppression of the two great northern religious civic dramas demonstrate the complex way the levels of authority (civic, ecclesiastical and national) negotiated an area where jurisdiction was not entirely clear. The issues of recusancy in the north and the threat to the nation from Catholic interests on the Continent were burning ones for Elizabeth's Council. Here we see them being played out in the context of civic religious drama.

The second major way in which late medieval and early-modern cities used drama and ceremony was to define their relationship with the monarch. This is seen most clearly in royal entries, although in the case of London it was also seen in the annual ceremony of the swearing in of the mayor "before the king or his representatives, the Barons of the Exchequer, at Westminster" (Lancashire 2002, 171). Like all the uses of

drama and ceremony that we have been discussing, no occasion was static; rather they were the locus of constantly shifting balances of power.

Most frequently it was the city who was at pains to persuade the monarch of its loyalty in its welcome. In times of peace such welcomes were often formulaic and their success marked by the quality of the conceits, the pageantry and the music. But at times the negotiations were much more serious. A year after his victory at Bosworth Field in 1485, Henry VII went in progress through his new kingdom. The Entry prepared for him by the city of York resonated with political overtones. Richard III, dead on the field in Bosworth, had lived for many years in York and had been a vital part of its corporate life. He and his wife were members of the Corpus Christi Guild, his son had been made Prince of Wales in the Minster and the city had celebrated his visit as king in 1483 with a special performance of the Creed Play. In 1485, a contingent of soldiers had been on its way from York to Bosworth to fight for the king (whom they considered one of their own) when news came of his defeat and death. They had returned home and recorded in the official minutes of the city that ". . . King Richard, late lawfully reigning over us, was, thrugh grete treason . . . pitiously slane and murderd, to the grete hevyness of this Citie" (Raine 1939**,** 119). Neither their readiness to defend Richard's claim to the throne nor their public condemnation of the faction that overthrew him were likely to endear them to Henry VII. In 1486, realizing they had urgent need to impress the new king of their support, they hired Henry Hudson, a clerical poet, to write the verses for an elaborate series of pageants to be performed as Henry passed through the streets of York to a reception at the Minster. They presented the most spectacular dramatic compliment to the king they could devise so that "his highnesse may the rather be movid to think that the said maier Aldermen Sheriffes and other inhabitances heyr be gladdid and Ioifull of the same his commyng as thei haue be in tymes past seing commyng of other kinges yer souerain lord" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 138). The mediation of the archbishop and "other lordes spirituall and temporall" was sought and instead of just the mayor and council greeting the king two miles outside the city, a crowd of citizens was organized to be with them, rehearsed to shout "Ioyfully king henrie after the maner of Children" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 139). The first pageant at Michaelgate Bar depicted "A heven of grete Ioy and Anglicall Armony" with the world beneath "desolaite" until by a mechanical device, borrowed from the Creation sequence of the Corpus Christi play, a red rose and a white rose grew up and entwined to be worshipped by all the other plants. Ebrauk, the mythical founder of York, then appeared and after four stanzas of formal verse concluded that the

city welcomed the king "with oon concent knowing you yer sufferaine and king". The best cloths available in the city were hung from the houses along Michaelgate (with no gaps allowed) leading the king's party down the hill to Ousebridge end where there was a pageant of ships representing Henry's landing at Milford Haven and six figures representing the six previous Henries with a speech by Solomon acknowledging the sovereignty of the seventh Henry and handing him his "septour of sapience". As the procession passed down Coneystreet it was showered with comfits and at the Common Hall the king was met by David who, in his turn, with formal verse, submitted his "swerd of victorie" to the king (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 142). Finally, the Corpus Christi pageant of the Weavers of the Assumption of the Virgin was placed in Stonegate. The Virgin herself descended from heaven as a petitioner on behalf of the city promising Henry Christ's favour if he showed favour to the city. She then ascended back to heaven in a shower of wafers "in maner of Snaw" (Johnston and Rogerson 1979,142). The city knew it had to make amends and did so lavishly and publicly using all the resources of its playmaking traditions to impress the king they had so boldly accused of treason a year before.

York's lavish pageantry for Henry VII in 1486 was motivated by the city's need to curry favour with the king. The entry of Anne Boleyn into London at the time of her coronation in 1533, six months pregnant, can be seen as motivated by Henry VIII's need to establish his new queen as his lawful consort and the child she was bearing as legitimate. Henry had commanded the city of London "to see the citie ordered and garnished with pageauntes in place accustomed" (Kipling, 1997, 47) in two weeks for Anne's coronation procession. The city panicked being only too well aware that to produce the kind of welcome the king obviously commanded would strain not only their budget but their theatrical resources. In the end, the king came to their rescue with subsidies in cash and kind (the Kings Minstrels and carpenters and painters—"workemen out of the kinges workes") and the entry, originally conceived as a modest three pageants, grew to six pageants and twelve separate stations each providing a gracious allegorical compliment to the new queen and the hoped for male heir in her womb. Henry not only provided cash, musicians and workmen, he also provided two court poets, members of Anne's own Protestant, Humanist circle, John Leland and Nicholas Udall to write the verses in English and Latin to accompany the spectacle. A recent study of those verses makes clear that they are not simple translations. The messages conveyed by the English verses and the Latin verses are subtly different—the first addressed to the Londoners and the second addressed to the

foreign ambassadors in the audience emphasizing in different ways the illegitimacy of Henry's first marriage and the triumphant rightness of this new alliance that promised a Protestant heir. In this entry, then, ostensibly the welcome to the new queen by the city of London, we have the king presenting her to what he knew to be two different but equally hostile audiences. Here the city fathers, rather than acting on their own behalf, were persuaded (or rather, perhaps, given the nature of the royal command) coerced into presenting the case for the legitimacy of the divorce.

Henry VII's 1486 progress was that of a military conquerer. The first Tudor whose claim to the throne was tenuous at best took the crown by force. Elizabeth, on the other hand, was undoubtedly her father's daughter but the issue of legitimacy hung over her accession and was compounded by her formal excommunication by the Pope in 1572. However we may think of her reign as triumphant, that sense of triumph was hard won by her own undoubted ability and the skill of her propagandists. Her progresses, that never ventured in to the dangerous north, were more domestic affairs than those of her predecessors, including visits to her courtiers' country estates and to loyal cities such as Norwich. The tone of the welcomes had also shifted as is demonstrated by her Entertainment at Norwich in 1578 that spanned several days with plays and pageants provided by two authors—Bernard Garter and Thomas Churchyard. A decidedly commercial tone was introduced into the first pageant of the actual entry on Saturday 16 August. The mayor and council had met the queen at Hartford bridge two miles outside town and accompanied her to St Stephen's Gate. There she was greeted by Gurgunt, a mythical king of England in a shower of rain before she passed through the gate to see the first pageant "buylded somewhat like the manner of a stage, of xl foote long, and in breadth eight foote"(Galloway 1984, 254). The backdrop to this stage contained the legend: "The causes of this common wealth are God Truely preached. Iustice duely executed. The people obedient. Idelness expelled. Labour cherished. Vniuersall concorde preserued". On the stage were looms and members of the Weavers guild demonstrating their craft, each loom bearing a sign informing the queen and her court of the kind of fine woollen and linen weaving that the city of Norwich was famous for. Children were there, some spinning worsted yarn and some knitting hose sitting in front of a picture of a matron surrounded by her children with the caption 'Good nurture chaungeth qualities'. The speech that accompanied this commercial scene stressed the need for the queen to ensure peace so that the cloth trade to the continent through the East Anglian ports could prosper.

A later, similar, plea was made by the city of York to James I in 1617 in the last royal entry in to that city that had any dramatic content. James passed through York on several occasions as he travelled back and forth to Scotland. In 1617, as he approached Ousebridge he was confronted by an actor, impersonating the River Ouse itself, who begged him in bad metaphysical verse (for which the city paid one Mr Penman £5) for a dredging operation. The river had long been silting up and York was losing business to the upstart port of Hull down river. The personification of the river told the king that he was once styled

> . . . great and good
> thoughe longe empresond by some enuious growndes
> that hath encroached vpon my naturall boundes
> and pent me so that thes sad stones do knowe
> I scarce have Meanes to ebbe or power to flowe.
> (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 558)

As far as we know nothing came of this petition.

Some customs and ceremonies were repeated year after year establishing the traditional patterns of relationship. Until 1825, the mayor and council of Oxford were obliged to solemnly process down the High Street on St Scholastica's Day to do penance in the university church of St Mary the Virgin for their alleged guilt in starting the St Scholastica Day riot in 1354. There is much evidence to suggest that the riot was in fact started by members of the University but the king found for the University and established the hegemony of the University over the town in all matters of ceremony and custom. It was the chancellor or, failing him, the vice chancellor who greeted visiting monarchs before the mayor and council were allowed to make their bows (Elliott, Nelson, Johnston and Wyatt 2004). A more amicable relationship was reflected in the annual Lord Mayor's Shows in London on October 29 when the newly sworn in mayor "formally journeyed to be sworn also before the king or his representatives, the Barons of the Exchequer, at Westminster" (Lancashire 2002, 171). The show was by land and by water and culminated in a ceremony that marked the loyalty of the city to the crown. In a reciprocal mark of respect when a monarch visits the City of London to this day, the boundary of the city is marked by the ceremonial handing over of the keys.

The formal semiotics of ceremony survive today in government, the church and the university. Students graduating from a modern university are themselves part of a ritual where everyone has a place allotted by ancient custom and hierarchy. The relationship among the academic 'estates' has long since been negotiated and the ritual passes off with few

realizing (least of all the proud parents with their digital cameras) the ancient patterns that are being followed. Nor is civic drama entirely forgotten. As late as the Festival of Britain in 1951, towns and cities of Britain considered it appropriate to have 'town pageants' to celebrate their past and their identity. And when E Martin Browne persuaded the city council of York to allow him to produce the Corpus Christi play silenced for almost four hundred years as their contribution to the Festival of Britain a new set of customs grew up and continues to grow around the production of their civic play (Rogerson 2008). Late medieval and early-modern communities sought their corporate identities in processions, pageants and plays. This instinct survives in the twenty-first century although today such identity has more to do with marketing and economic power than with defining power relationships. For our ancestors, the public, often mimetic, display of symbol and spoken word affirmed their identity and their place within the complex hierarchies that made up the cities of England.

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CHAPTER TWO

SIN CITY? THE IMAGE OF BABYLON IN PETRARCH'S *CANZONIERE*

ALEXANDER LEE

At the heart of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* is a cycle of three verses commonly known as the 'Babylonian' sonnets. Perhaps written between late 1345 and November 1347 during a period of residence in Vaucluse, each of these verses is a damning attack on the elusively-named city of 'Babylon'. The language is strikingly invective (see Griggio 1997, 390-92) and makes forceful use of the vocabulary of Biblical eschatology. In sonnet 138, Petrarch spoke to the city directly:

> Fountain of sorrow, dwelling of wrath, school of errors and temple of heresy, once Rome, now false wicked Babylon for whom there is so much weeping and sighing; Oh foundry of deceits, cruel prison where good dies and evil is created and nourished, a hell for the living. . . . (Durling 1976, 282)

Deliberately inverting liturgical modes by describing Babylon as a "fountain of sorrow", and emphasising throughout the tragic nature of the consequences of its perceived association with anger, fallacy and wilful unorthodoxy, Petrarch consciously evoked an apocalyptic tone. Filled with the spirit of righteous indignation, he begged for the city to be brought to ruin. In sonnet 136 he alludes to the Whore of Babylon from the Book of Revelations (chapter 17, verses 1-5):

> May fire from heaven rain down on your tresses, wicked one, since doing ill pleases you so, who after eating acorns and drinking from the river have become great and rich by making others poor; Nest of treachery, where is hatched whatever evil is spread through the world today, slave of wine, bed and food, in whom intemperance shows its utmost power. Through your

> chambers young girls and old men go frisking and Beelzebub in the middle with bellows and fire and mirrors. (Durling 1976, 280)

In tone and subject matter, the three Babylonian sonnets stand out from the majority of the verses in the *Canzoniere*. Neither obviously dealing with Petrarch's inner torment over his unrequited love for Laura nor addressed to a friend on a specific topic, these verses present the reader with something of a puzzle. It is unclear what Petrarch intended these three invective sonnets to mean in the context of his verse collection, or what function he intended them to serve. At the heart of this puzzle, however, is Petrarch's concentration on the idea of Babylon and his use of this image provides the key to understanding both the sub-textual meaning and contextual function of these apparently highly invective sonnets.

In seeking to recover the meaning of the image of Babylon, the tenth letter of the *Sine nomine*—written some years after the verses—has been highlighted as providing a vital clue (Hallock 1977, 296-7; Iliescu 1962, 133-40). Writing to Francsco Nelli, the Prior of Santi Apostoli in Florence, Petrarch perhaps correctly anticipated that his correspondent might be confused by his frequent, enigmatic references to Babylon and attempted to provide at least some explanation. He wrote:

> You will wonder at the subscription of my letters, and not without reason. You will not have observed anything except the two Babylons; the one that was once in Assyria, where Semiramis had her fame; the other flowering in our own age in Egypt, founded by Cambyses . . . I will not direct you to the poets, nor to the works of the Muses, nor even to the historians. Consult only the Catholic writers, but especially Augustine writing about that psalm which began in the way that certain of my letters ended. You will find what he wants you to see in the name of Babylon. (*Sine nomine*, 10)

From the corresponding letter in the *Familiares* (*Fam*. 15.9) it appears that Petrarch was referring to the significantly numbered psalm 136, about which St. Augustine wrote:

> You have heard and you know that running through this portion of the ages, unto the very end of time are two cities, mixed with each other in the body and separated by the heart; one, whose object is eternal peace, is called Jerusalem; the other, whose delight is temporal peace, is called Babylon. If I am not mistaken, you hold the definitions of these names: Jerusalem is to be understood as the vision of peace, Babylon as confusion. (Augustine, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, 136.1)

If we turn to Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, this idea of the two cities is developed further. Although there are many different nations in the world, there are, he contends, only two orders of human society; the one, which he identifies with Babylon, "is made up of those who live according to the flesh" (Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 14.1; Augustine 1998, 581), who "are produced by a nature vitiated by sin" (Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 15.2; Augustine 1998, 637); and the other, which is identified with Jerusalem, "of those who live according o the spirit" (Augustine, *De civ, Dei*, 14.1; Augustine 1998, 581), who "are produced by grace, which redeems nature from sin" (Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 15.2; Augustine 1998, 637).

For some scholars, Augustine's idea of the two cities should be interpreted quite literally in its application to sonnets 136-138. The image of Babylon is used deliberately to identify Avignon as the 'terrestrial antipole' of an Augustinian metaphysical system. Filled with "perverse and wicked vices" (*Canz*. 137.1-2), Avignon—the seat of the papacy and the home of the Roman Curia since 1309—becomes Augustine's Babylon in a very real sense: it is not merely a city where sinful things occur, but *the* city of sin (Hallock 1977; Iliescu 1962, 133-40; Suitner 1985, 201-10). It is, Hallock has contended, the monumental expression of the terrestrial side of existence, that is to say *the* earthly city that stood in opposition to the Heavenly City of God (Hallock 1977, 297).

It must be granted that such a literal reading of the image of Babylon has much to recommend it. Pointing to apparent linguistic echoes in sonnets 136-138, Hallock contends that Petrarch further developed the apocalyptic associations of Augustine's commentary on psalm 136 by paraphrasing significant portions of *Revelations*, in which Babylon, as the 'fallen city' is given the appearance of a very real, physical *topos* (Hallock 1977, 294-6). Certain elements of the scriptural text seem to have been imitated quite directly and Hallock draws attention to *Rev.* 17:3-5, in which the whore of Babylon holds a "cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication", and to *Rev.* 14:8-11, in which Babylon appears as the fallen city which has made the "nations drink the wine of the wrath of her fornication", and invites men to bring upon themselves the fiery vengeance of God.

The condition of Avignon in the fourteenth century, and Petrarch's comments on the Curia's residence in the city elsewhere in his writings seem only to confirm the sense of physical reality detected by Hallock in the apparent allusions to Scripture. Although, as the seat of the papacy, Avignon was a thriving hub of commercial and administrative activity (Renouard 1970, 80-84) which played host to some of the most important manuscript collections of the period (Braxton Ross 1970; Billanovich

1953, 26-28; Ullman 1941), it was typical of cities of the day and it would be misguided to entertain any illusions of an uncorrupted cultural paradise. Subject to rapid expansion and little regulation, it was over-crowded, over-priced, badly planned and desperately unhygienic. One ambassador from Aragon complained that the smell which rose from narrow streets overflowing with filth was so foul that he was physically sick, while the Marshal of the Curia was constantly occupied with the apprehension of the countless robbers and prostitutes who prowled the alleyways. While Boccaccio praised it as the "womb of the Muses", for St. Bridget of Sweden, Avignon was so beset by the greed, luxury and pride of its ecclesiastical inhabitants that it was "like a field full of tares, that must first be rooted out with a sharp steel, then purified with fire, and finally levelled with the plough" (Mollat 1963, 279-81).

Throughout his prose writings, Petrarch used the name Babylon to refer to Avignon and, having observed life in the city at close quarters from his earliest youth, heaped criticism upon it. The epistles which make up the *Sine nomine* are well-known for the savagery of the attacks they contain, but in both their tone and their toponomy they are representative of trends in Petrarch's other works, especially those from the 1350s and 1360s. Throughout the *Familiares*, Petrarch used '*Babilonia*' to indicate when he was writing from or near Avignon and linguistic echoes suggest a certain parallelism between *Babilonia* and Avignon in *Canzoniere* 136-138.

Petrarch's toponomy seems to have brought focus to a number of attacks launched against the papal city. Picking up on its Biblical and eschatological implications, he inveighed forcefully against sinfulness in *Babilonia* as a means of giving further force to his criticisms of Avignon. In a letter to Ugolino, Bishop of Parma written in 1351, he decried the lasciviousness of the Curia which he claimed was entirely alien to his moral sensibilities (*Fam*. 9.5.8). Developing this theme with greater specificity in a letter to Bartolomeo, Bishop of Chieti written in 1352 he pointed to the "miserable, little men" who lived there in luxurious palaces, slaves to their bellies: there was, Petrarch declared, no place in the world so vile as *Babilonia* (*Fam.* 12.11.3-6, 8). Lucky indeed, he exclaimed to Jacopo da Firenze, is the man who had not seen that Babilonian town (*Fam.* 12.8.11), and frequently pointed to the fact that he fled the city to escape its errors and vice (e.g. *Canz.* 114). Writing to his brother Gherardo, a *renditus* in the Carthusian monastery at Montrieux, on 25th September 1348, he repeated the language of Augustine's exegesis in connecting the turbulence of wealth, the love of business and the iniquity of enemies with a love of worldly peace and a servitude to the Devil,

before calling out to a merciful God and affirming his desire to flee from the *Babilonia* which he contrasted strenuously with "*Ierusalem*" (*Fam.* 10.3.22, 59).

The implicit pairing of *Babilonia* and *Ierusalem* and the frequent association of *Babilonia* with Avignon was, moreover, an important part of Petrarch's persistent determination to draw attention to the need to return the papacy to Rome. This issue, which can be seen running through the *Sine nomine*, exercised Petrarch particularly strongly towards the end of his life, and letters addressed both to Pope Urban V and the papal secretary Francesco Bruni testify to his belief that Rome, and not Avignon was the proper seat of the papacy (*Sen.* 7.1; 9.1; 9.2). In his 1368 invective *Contra eum qui maledixit Italie*, he upbraided the theologian Jean d'Hesdin for suggesting that Avignon was the best place for the papal court, and argued that, far from being "*rosa mundi, balsamus orbis*", the city was the most malodorous he knew, worse even than Paris (*Contra eum qui maledixit Italie*, 10.88). In the Babilonian sonnets, almost twenty years earlier, this contrast between Rome and Avignon receives attention in a manner which subtly calls attention to the opposition in Scripture between Babylon and Jerusalem and appears to give credence to the use of *Babilonia* as a term used to denote a physical location following a literal reading of St. Augustine's idea of the two cities. In sonnet 138, for example, Petrarch addresses the city, which he berates as the home of all grief, anger, error and heresy, as "once Rome, now false, wicked Babylon" (*Canz*. 138:3). The juxtaposition is deliberately mixed. On the one hand, the contrast between Babylon and Rome seems to suggest that Babylon refers unequivocally to Avignon as the seat of the papacy. On the other hand, the use of the specific word '*Babilonia*' implicitly gives greater solidity to the Scripturally-evocative descriptions in the first two lives of the sonnet and implicitly casts Rome as Jerusalem, the promised land of God.

Given his criticisms of the Curia's residence in Avignon and symbolic juxtaposition of the city with Rome, it does not seem unreasonable, therefore, to follow the suggestion most prominently made by Hallock and Iliescu in suggesting that Petrarch used the image of Babylon to give moral force to deliberate attacks against a very real physical location. Observing the greed, ambitions and lusts which dominated life in Avignon, it seems fair to contend that he interpreted St. Augustine's notion of the two cities in a very literal fashion and exploited the obvious parallels with *Revelations* both to make Avignon the manifestation of sinful worldliness and to give force to his determination to have the papacy restored to Rome. This, indeed, is the manner in which many of

Petrarch's later commentators seem to have read the verses. Seeing in the Babilonian sonnets a source of ammunition for Calvinist and Lutheran views, Fausto da Longiano (1502-70), Antonio Brucioli (1498-1566) and Ludovico Castelvetro (1505-71) all placed great emphasis on Petrarch's apparent attacks on Avignon and, although no doubt heavily influenced by their own immediate polemical objectives, seem to have received an impression of Augustinian literalism from the text itself (Kennedy 2002, 1198-99).

Despite its appeal, however, such a reading is not without its problems and does not seem to provide a completely satisfactory explanation of Petrarch's use of the image of Babylon in these verses. Although his prose writings from the 1350s and 1360s suggest that Petrarch was all too conscious of the nefarious practices which dominated life in Avignon and saw these as being intimately connected with what he perceived to be a dereliction of the Roman Curia, it is difficult to understand why he should have included a group of invective verses into the programme of the *Canzoniere*. If Petrarch did wish to use St. Augustine's notion of the two cities in a literal fashion, and desired simply to invoke Heavenly retribution on a very real manifestation of the earthly city, it is somewhat hard to reconcile this with the ambient tone of his verse collection. Both the preceding and the following verses display a preoccupation with what Hans Baron has described as Petrarch's "inner struggles" (Baron 1971). Portraying himself as torn between his love for Laura on the one hand and his aspiration to a virtuous life on the other, he describes how he experienced no peace and found both life and death displeasing (*Canz*. 134:1, 13). While it is not implausible to suggest that the Babylonian sonnets were intended to retain a literal and invective meaning at some level, therefore, it seems that to recover the full meaning of Petrarch's use of the image of Babylon, it is necessary to explore the degree to which the idea might have related to the "inner struggles" which dominate their context, and to investigate the conceptual flexibility of the metaphor's connotations.

In seeking to uncover the wider implications of the image of Babylon, it is useful to look a little more closely at the idea of the two cities to which Petrarch had directed Francesco Nelli. While St. Augustine's use of terminology in the *De civitate Dei* suggests that his idea of the two cities can be understood as referring to two political societies or—as those like Hallock and Iliescu seem to have believed—to two distinct and real *topoi*, it is important to recognise that a different, more subtle interpretation is perhaps closer to his intentional meaning and nearer to the manner in which it might have been read in later centuries. Rather than being read

literally, it has been convincingly been argued that the two cities should be understood allegorically. (Markus 1970; c.f. Bonner 2002, 312-93; Wetzel 2002). Each 'city' corresponds to one of the two 'loves' which moves human beings, and membership of one or the other denotes simply the orientation of a man's soul rather than his location in a real place or participation in a social group. Those who are members of the 'Heavenly City', as we have already seen, are those who live according to the spirit and love of God alone. As he explains in the *De vera religione*, a text well known to Petrarch (Rico 1974), citizens of this city know that the true happiness can be enjoyed only in the company of God after death and, understanding the true nature of their souls, spurn the temporal and embrace reason instead. Those who are members of the 'earthly city', by contrast, are those who live according to the flesh and love themselves to the exclusion of God. They mistakenly believe that happiness can be had in the fleeting and changeable world perceptible to the senses and so forget their nature and their reason (Augustine, *De vera religione*, 14.27-17.34; 24.45; 32.59-34.64).

All of humanity is divided between these two 'cities', although each remains invisible to human determination. Those who are members of the 'Heavenly City' live alongside members of the 'earthly city', and the identity of the two groups remains unknown except to God Himself. Understood in this way, Augustine employs the apocalyptic language of Scripture in two ways. In one sense, the names 'Jerusalem' and 'Babylon' accurately represent the attitudes of each group. The identification of the 'Heavenly City' with Jerusalem needs no explanation, but it is also possible to see 'Babylon' as referring to the confusion which informs our own word 'babble'. Deluded by the world, citizens of the 'earthly city' are ignorant of their own true nature and the identity of the one true happiness, and are hence confused, genuine citizens of Babylon. In another sense, however, Augustine's use of the names 'Jerusalem' and 'Babylon' represents the fate of the members of each city. While citizens of Jerusalem will merit eternal life and everlasting happiness in the company of God after death, citizens of Babylon will meet with all the wrath and horrors described so vividly by St. John of Patmos.

Petrarch's comprehension and assimilation of this more subtle understanding of the idea of the two cities is observable in the *De otio religioso*, which both Iliescu and Hallock mention, but never explore in any detail. In this tract, which Petrarch addressed to his brother Gherardo, the image of Babylon is treated not as a literal term, but as a term which may be applied to an imagined community in the manner of St. Augustine.

At the very end of the first book of the *De otio religioso*, Petrarch offers a brief portrait of Mary Magdalene as an example of the figures from whom Gherardo should take inspiration in his pursuit of *otium*. Mary, he says, was once "'a sinner in the city', not in the city of God, which sinners do not inhabit, but in the city of the world". "Was she not changed", Petrarch asks with a rhetorical flourish,

> from a citizen of Babylon into a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem? Was she not so reformed through God's grace that, with the stains of her shamelessness wiped away, she seemed to us to have been the first among maidens after the mother of Christ alone? (*De otio religioso*, 1.8)

In this passage, which echoes both Augustine's exegesis of psalm 136, and the language of *De civitate Dei*, 14, Petrarch interprets Babylon and Jerusalem in an allegorical fashion, as terms which describe co-existing communities in this life, membership of which was determined by the orientation of the agent. Remembering that Mary was won from her sinful ways by her recognition of Christ, and recalling that it is her reformation through God's grace which transforms her from a member of the earthly city into a member of the Heavenly City while still in this life, Petrarch appears to suggest that citizenship of Babylon or Jerusalem was a function of her self-direction.

This is an impression which seems to be confirmed when Petrarch revisits the image of Babylon a little later in the text, at the beginning of the second book. Here, he urges his brother to forsake the "purple robes, marble palaces, fleeting power, empty honours, pleasant amusements and all the other trappings over which citizens of Babylon gloat" (Petrarch, *De otio religoso*, 2.1). Developing this theme more fully, he asks "what is Babylon except confusion itself? What is more confused than this world? What is more confused than those who love it?" (Petrarch, *De otio religoso*, 2.1) The terminology which Petrarch uses is significant. His exhortation to Gherardo is cast in terms of the desire for the worldly, while his question, which includes a direct quotation from St. Augustine's exegesis, is framed in terms of a love for the world. It seems that membership of Babylon, the earthly city, is determined not by vicious action, but, following St. Augustine's description of the two loves of humanity in *De civitate Dei*, 18, by the love of worldly things, which is itself indicative of a form of confusion.

Petrarch goes on to explain the association between Babylon and confusion further. As in the *Secretum*, he considered the desire for corporeal things to be a desire for the fleeting and the ephemeral. Wealth, glory, and renown captivate many men, but are nevertheless insubstantial

and unenduring. All worldly things change and the high prizes so earnestly sought are ultimately lost through death and the fickleness of fortune. As a result of this changeability, Petrarch thought it foolish for any man to seek happiness in the temporal. Concentrating on the ephemeral, a man neglects to recognise the one true and eternal happiness, and loses sight of the virtue which will carry his immortal soul to Heaven in looking always at the shifting world around him. In a powerful lament, Petrarch exclaims:

> The sum of all things comes to nothing, and [still], o, the madness, o, the blindness! With so much enthusiasm do [men] accumulate perishable riches and how great is the care for property which will neither endure nor follow us: the virtue that will accompany [us] to Heaven is neglected. (*De otio religoso*, 2.1)

The contention that men who follow the "instruments of mortal fame" forget virtue is related to Babylon through the multi-layered image of a river. Having drawn from a Heraclitan theme recovered from one of Seneca's letters a means of expressing the changeability of worldly things (Françon 1936; Post 1937), Petrarch expresses his amazement that there are those who "love something so fleeting as a body" before going on to associate such a "madness" or "confusion" with the oblivion of the self. (Petrarch, *De otio religioso*, 2.1; see Kallendorf 1989, 96). Here, the imagery of the *Aeneid* is overlaid with the language of St. Augustine's exegesis of psalm 136 and the ideas at the heart of the *De civitate Dei* and the *De vera religione*. Those people who are preoccupied with chasing worldly things seem to Petrarch to have drawn something from each of the five rivers of Tartarus, which he persistently refers to as the rivers of Babylon. The citizens of Babylon, he writes, seem

> freely to have drawn a forgetfulness of one's better nature from the Lethe, a ferment of anger and desires from the Phlegethon, a fruitless penitence and grief from the Acheron, sorrow and tears from the Cocytus and enmity and hatred from the Styx. (*De otio religioso*, 2.1)

The connections which this passage makes are striking. Those who are citizens of Babylon are besotted with and "confused" by transient things and suffer from anger, grief, sorrow, enmity and hatred, but are also—and most importantly—forgetful of their better nature.

In the following chapter, Petrarch explains this "better nature" in more sophisticated terms. Here, reason is identified as God's unique gift to humanity. A forgetfulness of one's better nature engendered by worldly desires is therefore equated with an abandonment of the divine gift of

reason and with a rejection of the means by which the eternal might be known. Succumbing to the "snares of the world" and the "lures of the flesh" not merely generates the deadly sins which Petrarch mentions, but also inhibits the exercise of reason which allows man to perceive God as his true end and, by extension, his capacity to embrace virtue and merit salvation (*De otio religoso*, 2.2; quoting psalm. 31:9). As Petrarch had explained using the rivers of Babylon as a point of reference, those who take pleasure in the "errors, instabilities and flight of temporal things"—those who are citizens of Babylon, in other words—are swept far from the "regal city" in which salvation lies (*De otio religoso*, 2.1; quoting *Ps.*121:2).

It is now possible to attempt a fuller reconstruction of the meaning Petrarch attached to the image of Babylon in sonnets 136-138. From the *De otio religoso*, it may be seen that Petrarch understood St. Augustine's idea of the two cities as imagined communities which described those people who held to either a love of God or a love of self. The Heavenly City—Jerusalem—was composed of those who, mindful of their true nature, used the divine gift of reason to know God and to attain to the virtue which would merit salvation after death. The earthly city—Babylon—was, by contrast, composed of those who loved only the worldly. Their attachment to temporal things was reflective of a "confusion" about the nature of happiness, inspired by a forgetfulness of their better nature and stimulated a rejection of a divinely implanted capacity for reason.

In sonnets 136-138, therefore, Babylon plays a very precise role. While it is to some degree correct to point to a certain invective quality in these verses, it does not seem accurate to argue that Petrarch wished these verses only to communicate the sense that the sinful behaviour which he observed in Avignon identified it as a physical embodiment of Augustine's earthly city. Given the iconography of Babylon in the *De otio religoso*, it appears reasonable to suggest that the turpitude which he observed was an expression of the "confused" love of those who inhabited Avignon. Those whose actions Petrarch most specifically decries—such as the cavorting young women and old men—are individuals who love the world and, seeking their happiness in transient pleasures and forget their better nature. Their orientation and their confusion merits their citizenship of Babylon, and gives rise to their vicious actions. In using the image of Babylon to describe Avignon, then, Petrarch was not suggesting a direct and literal equivalence between two physical places, but was rather communicating the sense that the papal city was populated by those who were attached to the "errors, instabilities and flight of temporal things" and uses their

addiction to "wine, food and bed" as evidence of the fact that they have forsaken the path of reason and virtue. Avignon appears not as the literal worldly city, but rather as a representation of a particular orientation or love, as a cipher for the forgetfulness of the nature of happiness and for the rejection of reason.

Such a reading allows for a more satisfactory understanding of these sonnets' role in their immediate context. Where the image of Babylon is seen as a means of transforming Avignon into a cipher for an interior condition, the sonnets appear not as mere vituperative interpolations in the generally confessional nature and reflective structure of the *Canzoniere*, but rather as imaginative components of a broader condemnation of an attraction to worldly desires. In persisting with his love for Laura, Petrarch almost seems to make himself a citizen of Augustine's Babylon. This is most tellingly manifested in later verses, such as *Canz.* 360, in which Petrarch converses with Queen Reason, "who holds the divine part of our nature" (*Canz.* 360:3-4; Durling 1976, 560) and willingly accuses himself of disdaining the paths of virtue for the unhappy pursuit of his desires. But Petrarch also acknowledges the consequences of his worldly love in the verses both preceding and following the Babylonian sonnets. Reflecting both on the tension between the heavenly and the earthly, and the fruitlessness of the transient world in sonnet 134, for example, he admits that though in some sense he flies "above to the heavens", he still lies "on the ground" (*Canz.* 134:3; Durling 1976, 272), and confesses that "I grasp nothing and embrace all the world" (*Canz*. 134:4; Durling 1976, 272). This ambient consciousness of his attachment to the temporal would, therefore, seem to make the Babylonian sonnets a vivid recognition of the dangers with which it is associated and an element in Petrarch's programme of moral self-criticism. The city, made into an emblem for worldly desire, becomes another mirror in which he could examine his own conscience.

By exploring Petrarch's manipulation of Babylon more closely, therefore, and by moving away from an uncritical reading of Augustine's idea of the two cities, it is possible to see that sonnets 136-138 are not merely assaults on the vice of a particular city made vivid with the use of apocalyptic language, but carefully considered and personal invectives which make Avignon a cipher for human irrationality and an emblem for the mistaken attachment to corporeal things. Viewing the image of Babylon in this fashion, *Canzoniere* 136-138 may be seen to have constituted a logical component in the self-analysis which underpinned the programme of the *Canzoniere*, and formed an integral part of a moral theology based on the opposition of reason and worldly desire.

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CHAPTER THREE

PRESERVING AND RESERVING THE PAST IN STOW'S *SURVEY OF LONDON*

ANDREW GRIFFIN

In this essay, I discuss John Stow's representation of history and I discuss the relationship between the past and the present that he imagines in his *Survey of London* (1598). In the *Survey*, I argue, Stow produces a vision of the relationship between past and present that is at odds with the vision of this relationship in comparable Elizabethan chorographies produced by his fellow antiquarians—chorographies such as William Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent* (1570), William Camden's *Britannia* (1588), and John Norden's *Chorographical Description of Middlesex* (1593). Even though Stow explicitly locates his *Survey* among these works, and even though these are books to which, in his dedication, he claims a considerable debt, the *Survey* occupies a strange place in the antiquarian world from which late-Elizabethan chorography emerged; specifically, its figuration of the relationship between past and present troubles the ideological work that chorographies were expected to perform. If, as many critics such as Richard Helgerson (1992) and Julian Wolfreys (2004) have argued, chorographies allowed readers to imagine the nation or one of its provincial regions as a spatially and temporally coherent whole, then Stow's chorographical description of London fails at the work of chorography because it complicates any understanding of London that would figure the city as the culmination of a simple or singular historical trajectory. Instead, Stow's *Survey* is ambivalent regarding the past's relation to the present, and it figures the past as both radically distant from the present and surprisingly close to it, as absolutely foreign to the present and as something to which the present relates intimately.

This essay also negotiates the tension between two bizarre scenes that Stow recounts in the *Survey*. The first scene—with which my essay

opens—is set in Spitalfields beyond Bishopsgate at a brick-making worksite where Roman corpses and artifacts were unearthed in 1576; the second scenewith which my essay closes—is set in the vault at Aldemarie church in Cordwainer Ward, where the body of one former mayor has been disinterred to be replaced by the bodies of two more recent mayors. I pay close attention to these scenes because it is at these moments that Stow's bivalent understanding of the past is most clear: the past for Stow is both intimately involved in the present and an infinitely remote curiosity. More broadly, I will argue that these two scenes belie a historiographical confusion that the *Survey* formally reproduces, and I want to suggest that such a confusion about the relationship between present and past results from Stow's diligent antiquarianism, a project that was as conflicted on the question of history as Stow's *Survey* is.

Stow and the Foreignness of the Past

In 1576, just to the east of St. Mary Spittle churchyard, workmen were quarrying clay from Spitalfields when "in the digging whereof many earthen pots, called *urnæ*, were found full of ashes, and burnt bones of men, to wit, the Romans that inhabited here" (Stow 1598 [1919], 152). When one considers that Stow in 1576 was already a member of the group that would become the Society of Antiquaries, and when one considers that the antiquarian project in England was greatly influenced by the classicist cartographer Abraham Ortelius, it is not surprising that Stow wandered north to examine these remains of Roman Britain, nor is it surprising that he included an account of his investigation in the *Survey*. But while Stow's interest in these artifacts is not surprising, the account of his archaeological investigation is striking to present-day eyes because—to speak anachronistically—it seems remarkably unprofessional and stunningly unscientific. In his account of this inquiry, for instance, Stow is unconcerned that work continued around him while he was exploring the site, even though "many . . . pots and glasses were broken in cutting of the clay, so that few were taken up whole" (Stow 1598 [1919], 152). He is also oddly ready to taste what has been unearthed, describing vials of an oil that is predictably "earthy in savour" and vials of water that differed "nothing . . . in clearness, taste, or savour from common spring water" (Stow 1598 [1919], 152). Certainly this willingness to taste the contents of unearthed artifacts may speak to a zeal for thoroughness, but the record Stow leaves in the *Survey* is far from complete: if Stow is interested in thoroughness, then this interest fails to translate into his record of the site, a record that is disjunctive, incomplete, and impressionistic. Of his trip to

the site in Spitalfields, he remarks, for instance, that the unearthed coins bore the likenesses of Nero, Anthoninus Pius, Trajanus and "others" whom he fails to mention (Stow 1598 [1919], 152). He similarly mentions that certain "divers antiques" were found bearing the likenesses of Pallas and other gods whom "I have forgotten" (152), and he spends a disproportionate number of words recounting a debate (which he claims to have won) about the provenance of a collection of long nails that were found at the site, one of which he "reserved" for a private collection (Stow 1598 [1919], 153). If he was as "irascible" as Ian Archer claims (Archer 2004, 18), then it is possible that Stow decided to "reserve" one of these nails more as the trophy of a debate won than as an artifact, but Stow also decided to "reserve," in a rather shocking gesture, "the nether jawbone of . . . [a] man, the teeth being great, sound, and fast fixed" (Stow 1598 [1919], 153). It is this "reserving" and this jawbone that most interest me here.

When Stow claims to have "reserved" a nail, a human jawbone and some other unnamed artifacts from the worksite in Spitalfields, he uses a term that speaks to a growing sense among early-modern antiquarians that the past is profoundly alien. According to the OED, "To reserve"—meaning "To keep, preserve (antiquities, relics, etc.)" (reserve 10b)—was a term of relatively recent coinage when Stow decided to secure artifacts for his personal collection, and it was introduced to the language in William Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent*, the first of the Elizabethan chorographies and a book to which Stow admits a significant debt (Stow 1598 [1919], xxiii). That Lambarde coined a term to describe a certain mode of relating to artifacts is remarkable because it comes at a moment when Elizabethan antiquarians were collectively producing a new understanding of the past that figured the past as radically foreign: to invent a new word for the collection of artifacts makes sense because a new mode of relating to the past requires a new language for describing one's relation to that past's bits and pieces. As D. R. Woolf points out, it was the early English antiquarians who began to think of the past in terms of its strangeness and in terms of its sheer difference from the present, and it was the early English antiquarians who consequently began to see the remains of the past in terms of their "'novelty' . . . 'rarity' or 'curiosity'" (Woolf 2003, 141). "To reserve" means not only to hold on to the past, then, but also to hold onto the past in a certain way, in a manner that both preserves the past and isolates it as radically different, foreign and exotic. The past—a past whose remains one might "reserve"—becomes a space not unlike the 'New World' in its ability to draw attention to one's cultural singularity, in this case drawing attention to the historical singularity of the present. This past is in fact so foreign—so unlike what one may find in the

present—that it is easy for Stow to pick up the jawbone of a dead human being, to casually tuck it away among coins and rusty nails without any sense of incongruity, to think of this jawbone in terms of its artifactualness rather than in terms of its humanness.

This sense of the past's remoteness translates itself into an often discussed sense of nostalgia in Stow's *Survey*; rather than reading this nostalgia as an affective relationship to the past, however, I want to read it here as an historical principle. Many critics who read the *Survey* detect Stow's wistful longing for a version of London that he figures as waning or gone. For Patrick Collinson and Ian Archer, Stow mourns for a version of London that he imagines to have existed in the 1530s, the time of his childhood, and he mourns for a sense of community that is gradually vanishing under the influence of a burgeoning merchant class and its tacit claims to the importance of individualism (Collinson 2001, 29; Archer 1995, *passim*). Along with a lament for this waning sense of community, other scholars have questioned whether Stow's nostalgia is founded on Catholic sympathies, and they wonder if Stow subtly laments the growing persecution of Catholics under Elizabeth's reign or the 1536 dissolution of monasteries and the concomitant de-institutionalization of civic charity (see Beer 1985, Kastan 1997, Collinson 2001, Wheatley 2002). Apart from this general nostalgia for an idealized past, Stow also describes at length the disappearance of the Midsummer Watch which "was . . . accustomed yearly time out of mind, until the year 1539" (Stow 1598 [1919], 94), and he describes the disappearance of moralizing scriptural drama performed by "the parish clerks of London, on the 18th of July" at Clerkenwell (Stow 1598 [1919], 16), northeast of the city's walls. What often strikes contemporary theater historians about Stow's discussion of these civic rites is that he fails to mention that these rites transformed into other rites and into other institutions: Stow feels and records their loss, but their recuperation in other rites and institutions goes unmentioned. As Theodore Leinwand points out, for instance, it "may be said with some certainty" that the Lord Mayor's annual pageant originated from the Midsummer Show (Leinwand 1982, 138; cf Manley 1995b, 47; Manley 1995a, 264-5), but Stow mostly ignores the Lord Mayor's pageant—a stunningly elaborate production—even though he spends several pages recounting the nature and the form of the Midsummer Watch which was its forebear. For Stow, the Midsummer Watch seems to vanish rather than transmuting into a different form of civic pageantry. Recognizing a similar lacuna, Angela Stock and other critics have pointed out that the moralizing public theater was replaced by the highly visible and popular private theaters to which Stow pays no sustained attention, even though these theaters were the

object of heated and ubiquitous critical discussion at the time (Stock 2004, 91). Again, certain ambiguous 'cultural energies' are re-directed into other forms—from public theater performed by clerks to private theater performed by professionals, from Midsummer Watch to Mayoral Pageant—but Stow fails to account for this transformation of rites or institutions into new rites and new institutions under subsequent cultural or economic conditions. While contemporary critics imagine the transformation of cultural energies into other forms that perform analogous social and cultural work, Stow's *Survey* is marked by a sense that such a historical translation is impossible. Nostalgia seems to indicate not only a lament for that which is gone, then, but a radical historical rupture from which nothing can be recuperated, translated, recovered. Instead of recognizing continuity in change, Stow recognizes only loss, change, and diachronic fragmentation.

Stow's refusal to account for gradual change over time—his recognition of abrupt shifts and the past's disappearance—has, since the sixteenth century, been figured by critics as a shortcoming in his historiographical ability. William Camden—a friend of Stow's and a fellow chorographer—told Ortelius that Stow "lacked judgment" in historical matters, and he figured Stow as a deft compiler of facts, documents and antiquarian knowledge rather than as a sound historical thinker. Echoing Camden, Richard Grafton figured Stow as a compiler of facts rather than as a thinker of history, and he punningly derided Stow's prose as the composite of "supersticious foundacions, fables and lyes foolishly stowed together" (in Kastan 1997, 66). More recently, F. J. Levy has concurred with Grafton to argue that "Stow could pride himself on the amount of new information he had found" (Levy 1967, 168), but that all of Stow's historical writings—the *Survey* and his chronicle epitomes—lack "even the relatively simple causative scheme of [Edward] Hall[*'s Union of Two Noble Houses of Lancaster and York*]" (Levy 1967, 195). This view was contested, though, by Eleanor Rosenberg who described Stow as an "original and indefatigable scholar" and lambasted Grafton for being a "mere compiler of facts" (Rosenberg 1955, 66). Though coming from very different sources—a friend, a historian with whom Stow had an acrimonious relationship, a contemporary scholar—these evaluations of Stow's historiographical ability all share a sense that Stow is unable to recognize a sense of causal continuity between the past and the present. For Stow, it seems, the past is composed of discrete events, isolated incidents, historically autonomous cultural lumps, and the past is stunningly alien to a present without precedent.

Stow and the Familiarity of the Past

But to say that Stow's *Survey* simply posits history as a series of discrete and discontinuous events—that it posits the past as foreign and the present as historically autonomous—is, clearly, to cherry-pick from the *Survey* and to overlook the fact that it is in many ways a typical late Elizabethan chorography. As Julian Wolfreys concisely summarizes the project of late Elizabethan chorography, its work was not only to make the nation thinkable as a spatially coherent and homogeneous whole—to produce what Karen Newman following Michel de Certeau calls a "topographic imaginary"—but also to produce an "ideological identity" for a given space by imagining a historical continuity for that space and by imagining that that space developed organically and coherently over time (Wolfreys 2004, 2). According to this figuration of chorography, Stow's *Survey* is often typically chorographical: no matter how often Stow imagines the past as radically dissociated from the present, he also imagines the past can explain the present and that it serves as the foundation on which the present rests; as Edward T. Bonahue notes, by "looking to London's history, Stow found a means of connecting his present to civic tradition in a way that made London's unprecedented phenomena less troubling and more familiar" (Bonahue 1998, 62). Though Stow often posits a radical discontinuity between past and present he also worries that those by whom he is surrounded fail to recognize the past as a vital source of self-understanding, that they fail to recognize the past as something to which the present relates intimately, and they fail to recognize the past as something that continues to inform the present in various ways. Typical of late Elizabethan antiquarians, then, Stow has a respect for the past, and this respect articulates itself as a degree of intimacy with the past and as a sense of the past's causal impact on the present and its explanatory value vis-à-vis the present.

Stow's sense of the past's contribution to the constitution of the present is most obvious when he speaks of those who fail to recognize the past's significance, and it is most obvious when the *Survey* becomes a site through which the past may be made visible even though it has been rendered materially invisible in the city's infrastructure and architecture. Approaching, for instance, the "great cross in West Cheape, which cross was there erected in the year 1290 by Edward I" (Stow 1598 [1919], 238), Stow provides readers with a descriptive history of the cross: he explains that it was erected by Edward I in memory of Queen Elinore (238), he names citizens who have "re-edified" the cross when it has fallen into disrepair (238), he describes the cross's early adornments ("images round

about the said cross . . . of Christ's resurrection, of the Virgin Mary, King Edward the Confessor, and such like [238]), he recounts the iconophobic, post-Reformation "defacement" of the cross's images (238), and he describes the curious replacement of Marian icons with "an image alabaster of Diana" that had water "prilling from her naked breast" (Stow 1598 [1919], 239). In this description of the cross in West Cheap, Stow produces and provides a history that explains a shift from a Catholic Marianism to a curious classicism—why an image of Diana?—and in doing so he draws attention to the past's literal perpetuation in the present. While, as in the case of the Midsummer Watch and the decline of public theatre, the past may simply vanish into nothing for Stow, the *Survey* also works to draw continuities with the past, to preserve the past, and to explain how the past—though effaced, defaced, partially occluded and potentially concealed—continues to persevere. The *Survey* works regularly to make this past more readily visible.

Stow's strangely bivalent understanding of the relationship between past and present is perhaps most clear when one contrasts his reading of crypts in Cordwainer Ward with his relationship to the Roman tombs in Spitalfields. In a scene repeated again and again in the *Survey*, Stow stops briefly on his peripatetic description when he reaches a church—in this case, Aldemarie church—so that he can list the names of noteworthy citizens buried in the church's crypts. He includes in this commemorative roll call Richard Chawcer (Stow 1598 [1919], 226), father of Geoffrey Chaucer (whose works Stow edited in 1561), he includes Charles Blunt who "made or glazed the [church's] east window" (Stow 1598 [1919], 226-7), and he includes the names of other citizens who had made significant contributions to the city. When he turns to the vault shared by former mayors Sir William Laxton and Sir Thomas Lodge, however, Stow begins to editorialize, moving beyond his typically simple description of accomplishments and biographical notes:

> Sir William Laxton, grocer, mayor, deceased 1556, and [Sir] Thomas Lodge,
> grocer, mayor, 1583, were buried in the vault of Henry Keble, whose bones were unkindly cast out, and his monument pulled down; in place whereof monuments are set up for the later buried. (Stow 1598 [1919], 227)

This quotation is from the second edition of the *Survey*. In the first edition, Stow was more obviously critical in his description of Keble's disinterment:

> Sir William Laxton, grocer, mayor, deceased 1556, was buried in the vault prepared by Henry Keble, principall founder of that church, for himself, but now his bones are unkindly cast out, his monuments pulled downe, and the bodies of the said Sir William Laxton, and of Sir Thomas Lodge, grocer, mayor, are laid in place, with monuments over them for the time, till an other give money for their place, and then away with them. (Stow 1598 [1919], 227 n.1)

It is unclear why Stow made this revision. Sir William Laxton died without an heir so Stow wouldn't have felt pressure from any of Laxton's descendents. It is perhaps more likely that Stow would have felt pressure to temper his criticism of Sir Thomas Lodge by Lodge's son Thomas, the author of *Rosalynde*, etc. Between the publication of the *Survey*'s first edition in 1598 and the second edition in 1603, Thomas Lodge had converted to Catholicism and become a well-established physician in London: If Stow was, as David Scott Kastan claims, a fairly devout recusant, perhaps he felt compelled to minimize any criticism of a fellow recusant's family? Perhaps Lodge's position as a well-regarded physician allowed him to pull some strings?

To suggest that Keble's remains were treated "unkindly" posits a vision of one's relationship to the dead that is clearly at odds with vision of this relationship that Stow presumed earlier when he pocketed a human jawbone. Certainly, it is unclear here what it would mean to treat the dead with 'kindness', but it seems that some bodies for Stow—perhaps bodies with names, bodies joined to civic institutions, bodies of former mayors—require the security of interment, while other bodies remain simply curious and become simple curios, their jawbones tucked away neatly among other relics. While the imperatives that lead one to treat a corpse with kindness are never made explicit in the *Survey*, it is in the strange relationship that Stow has with corpses that his strange relationship to the past becomes obvious. Again, the past is a place that might be infinitely remote or profoundly close, it may be a space that lingers in the present or it may be a long lost foreign world. The past, that is, might warrant the sort of curiosity granted by a sense of radical distance—a sense of radical distance cultivated by late Elizabethan antiquarians—or it might warrant the sort of respect granted by a sense of the past's intimacy—a sense of intimacy also cultivated by late Elizabethan antiquarians.

The tension between a sense of historical discontinuity and a sense of historical continuity explains the *Survey*'s generic strangeness. Certainly, as many critics have argued (see for example Adrian, Gordon, Hall, Wall), the bulk of Stow's *Survey* is organized according to topographical and spatial principles rather than according to typical early-modern

historiographical principles—it is a survey that moves from ward to ward rather than a history that moves from beginning to end—but the *Survey* as a whole is far from generically homogeneous. Even if the bulk of the *Survey* is organized topographically, it still begins with "The Original Antiquity, Increase, Modern Estate, and Description of that City" (Stow 1598 [1919], 3), a chronicle that struggles to pinpoint the historical origin of the city while it works to disabuse its reader of any sense that sixteenth century London was the culmination of a mythopoetic *translatio imperii* or grand Trojan inheritance through the "demi-god Aeneas" and Brute (3). While the *Survey*'s opening chronicle makes typically antiquarian moves—it pays attention to the material difference between a "Fastness" and a wall (Stow 1598 [1919], 6); it parses the various definitions of "*civitas*" so that one does not think of pre-Roman London as a city *per se* (Stow 1598 [1919], 5)—it also serves the purpose of more traditional chronicles: it locates the contemporary world as the culmination of a causal series of linked events which have made the world what it is. More specifically, it seeks, imagines, and produces London's origins, thus serving the same originological purpose of any chronicle by founding the present on a stable historical foundation. While William Keith Hall may be correct when he says that Stow's *Survey*—because of its obvious "literariness"—refuses to offer a *grand récit* of English history (Hall 1991, 13), he only tells half the text's story by ignoring this sweeping opening gambit and by ignoring the *Survey*'s sheer confusion about the relationship between present and past. Indeed, Hall fails to recognize that Stow begins his *Survey* with a chronicle—a hunting after origins—and that the *Survey* is also, in a gesture of self-contradiction, burdened with stories of discontinuity and nostalgic absence: the *Survey* provides both a *grand récit* of Britain and the disruptive details that compromise any hope of the simple historical coherence that such a grand, long-span history provides and on which it relies.

I have been drawing attention to Stow's bivalent understanding of the past in the *Survey* here in part because I think that it is characteristic of an under-theorized late-Elizabethan antiquarian project. The late Elizabethan antiquarian project was Janus-faced in its own understanding of the past: its diligent inquiry into the material stuff of the past—documents, coins, tombs, architecture—produced a sense of historical difference and anachronism that had been lacking in more mainstream Elizabethan historical thought (see Ferguson 1979, 57-9); at the same time, however, the political allegiances of the Society of Antiquaries forced antiquarians (see Levy 1967, 164-6) to find in the past a historical justification of present institutions and social organizations. Most late Elizabethan

chorographers were able to overlook the potentially destabilizing effects caused by this sense of historicity and they were able to produce chorographies that admirably performed the ideological work expected of them, but Stow's *Survey* often draws attention to the fact that a sense of historicity can produce a concomitant sense of historical disruption. While the past may work to found the present even if the past is significantly different from that present, a sense of the past's difference might also work to produce an effect of the present's historical isolation or dislocation, it may produce a sense of its radical difference from that past, and it may produce an account of historical 'progress' that detects contingency and sheer change rather than continuity. It is in Stow's strange and conflicted understanding of the relationship between past and present that this potential contradiction, usually latent but inherent in late Elizabethan antiquarianism, becomes clear.

Apart from the disciplinary and methodological protocols that seem to explain the contradictions in Stow's historiographical method, perhaps early-modern London—in the rapidity, dynamism, and breadth of its development—is the best explanation for Stow's apparently confused understanding of the relationship between past and present. The bivalent understanding of this relationship in the *Survey* speaks, perhaps, not to a failing of Stow's historiographical method, but to his historiographical acumen. Certainly Stow's antiquarian habits provide him with an acute sensitivity to the broad gulf between present and past, but this sense of stark historical distance—often figured in criticism on the *Survey* as a sense of melancholic nostalgia—also speaks more deftly to the state of early-modern London than any simple, monological story of development. While Camden, Grafton and Levy argue that Stow is incapable of recognizing continuity in change, Stow's refusal or inability to imagine a continuity between past and present may be read instead as a tacit critique of historiographical methods that are themselves too simplistic, too eager to perform the work of narration, too selective to register the various historical ruptures that characterize the urban space that he explores on foot. The historical temporality of London for Stow is ultimately characterized by this critical distance from perfectly linear historical narratives, and it is characterized by a sense of historico-temporal multiplicity. The city's historical trajectory becomes for Stow a multitude of independent but interrelated trajectories, some of which die out, some of which emerge as if from nowhere. History for Stow is no longer simply directional, and it is no longer determined by a providential hand as Edward Hall might argue, or by an equally absolute set of human laws as we find in Machiavelli's or Guicciardini's humanistic historiography;

history is instead without structure, without shape, without global meaningfulness, and the present cannot be understood as moving toward a *telos* or moving from a simple, singular origin. Instead, early-modern London may be historically adrift and isolated from its past.

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CHAPTER FOUR

SPACE, PLACE AND TRANSFORMATION IN *EASTWARD HO*! AND *THE ALCHEMIST*

SHONA MCINTOSH

Sir Petronel Flash, a prodigal knight in Chapman, Jonson and Marston's 1605 play *Eastward Ho!*, wishes to escape London and begin a new life in Virginia, away from his creditors. He says:

> I'll out of this wicked town as fast as my horse can trot. Here's no good action for a man to spend his time in. Taverns grow dead; ordinaries are blown up; plays are at a stand; houses of hospitality at a fall; not a feather waving nor a spur jingling anywhere. I'll away instantly. (Chapman, Jonson & Marston 1999, 2.2.237-41)

Although Sir Petronel begins by describing London almost in Puritan terms as a "wicked town" he then goes onto lament the fact that pubs, gambling-houses, plays, and brothels all seem hard to come by. The fact that he includes plays among these activities is perhaps a sly joke at the anti-theatrical prejudices of writers such as Phillip Stubbes, who declared that plays tempted men "to Theaters and unclean assemblies, to ydleness, unthriftynes, whordome, wontones, drunkenes, and what not" (Stubbes 1583, 10). The declaration that "plays are at a stand" also suggests that the action of *Eastward Ho!* is supposed to be taking place during one of the periods of theatre closure arising from the plague visitations. There is nothing else in the play to develop this suggestion, but the play's first audience in 1605 would surely have been expected to react to this situation with a sense of familiarity: the theatres had been closed due to plague as recently as 1604.

The Alchemist, Ben Jonson's play of 1610, is also set during a plague visitation, and indeed the plague is far more central to the plot of this play than that of the earlier collaborative venture. The 'Argument' makes clear

that the action of the play is precipitated by the consequences of the plague: "The sickness hot, a master quit for fear / His house in town" (Jonson 1999, 357). Although neither of these two plays deals directly with the issue of the plague, both are bound up with the topography and social experience of early-modern London. Jonson's Prologue suggests a similarly "wicked town" to that described by Sir Petronel:

> Our scene is London, 'cause we would make known
> No country's mirth is better than our own.
> No clime breeds better matter, for your whore,
> Bawd, squire, imposter, many persons more,
> Whose manners, now called humours, feed the stage
> (Pro.5-9)

Jonson's list of the whores, bawds, squires and imposters whom he thinks populate London obviously chimes with Sir Petronel's list of desirable entertainments (indeed, Sir Petronel himself is one of the imposters, claiming to possess a castle in the country but admitting that "all the castles I have are built with air", 2.2.256-7). It is interesting to note how both descriptions of London connect the theatre to this list of dubious pastimes. However, while in Sir Petronel's imagination the theatre is just one among many pleasurable vices, Jonson's formulation makes explicit how these vices provide matter for the playwright to work with. This might be seen as rehabilitating the stage as a moral commentary on the immorality of present-day London, but for the ambiguity of the image of the vices "feed[ing] the stage". The theatre is imagined as consuming, and therefore perhaps to some extent, depending upon, the criminal or profligate elements of Jacobean London.

This ambivalence in Jonson's play towards its own relationship with the underworld antics it represents is symptomatic of a deeper uncertainty about the social mobility of city inhabitants. *Eastward Ho!* shares many of the themes and concerns of *The Alchemist*, particularly with regard to changing social patterns, but it is less complex in its response to these issues, and more willing to derive comic pleasure from them, sweeping all anxieties aside finally in a light-hearted denouement. I would suggest that Jonson's own play, written five years after the collaborative effort, is to some extent a recantation or a qualification of his own "venture tripartite" (1.1.135) with Chapman and Marston, one with considerably more conservative implications.

City Comedy and Social Mobility

Both *Eastward Ho!* and *The Alchemist* are city comedies: that distinctively Jacobean genre of satirical comedy which took as its setting the changing society of early-modern London. In its investigation of the unprecedented social mobility of the time, the genre was "notably hostile to the earlier tradition of non-satiric, popular, often sentimental London comedies such as Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday*" (Gibbons 1980, 15). Both *Eastward Ho!* and *The Alchemist* were performed for a private theatre audience at the Blackfriars theatre, and so can be reasonably expected to cater for a more elite audience. However, this does not necessarily mean that they have conservative agendas. Both plays in large part depend upon the social ambition they satirise, and so enact complex, divided responses towards the changing society of the early-modern city.

Eastward Ho! in some respects could be seen as a satire on the social pretensions of the middle class, soliciting humour from characters who refuse to know their place. The most obvious example of this is in the treatment of Gertrude, a goldsmith's daughter who is single-minded in her pursuit of gentrification. She declares early in the play: "though my father be a low-capped tradesman, yet I must be a lady; and I praise God my mother must call me medam" (1.2.4-6). To effect this transformation in status, she marries Sir Petronel Flash, associating this upward move with an escape from the city in which she was born: "Sweet knight, as soon as ever we are married, take me to thy mercy out of this miserable chity [sic]; presently carry me out of the scent of Newcastle coal, and the hearing of Bow-bell" (1.2.138-42). Gertrude's ambitions receive their comeuppance later, as it turns out that Sir Petronel is penniless and has only married her to gain her inheritance, which he then uses to abandon her and attempt to escape to Virginia with his fellow prodigals and a woman named Winifred, the wife of the local usurer.

Gertrude's sister Mildred is constructed as her opposite in every way. She marries her father's apprentice, Golding, and the frugality of this couple contrasts with the conspicuous consumption of Gertrude and Sir Petronel. When her father asks her if she would not prefer to be married to a knight, Mildred is emphatic in her rejection of such a match: "These hasty advancements are not natural. Nature hath given us legs to go to our objects, not wings to fly to them" (2.1.74-6). The outcome of Gertrude's marriage would seem to back up this condemnation of "hasty advancements". She laments to her lady-in-waiting, Sindefy, "instead of land i'the country, all my knight's living lies i'the Counter, Sin: there's his

castle now!" (5.1.23-5). However, she does not repent her marriage, saying defiantly to her mother "I would not change husbands with my sister, I. 'The leg of the lark is better than the body of a kite.'" (5.2.164-6) She is ultimately reunited with her husband in the final scene, forgiving his abandonment of her "as heartily as I would be forgiven, knight" (5.5.172). In this cheerful reunion, it might appear that the match has turned out as happily as her sister's more modest one.

Jill Phillips Ingram has argued that although the structure of *Eastward Ho!* depends upon a contrast between two models of economic behaviour—"the prodigals offer a model of adventurous economic speculation, while the tradesmen more clearly represent bourgeois collectivism" (Ingram 2004, 28)—this binary is complicated by the social rise of the apprentice Golding. He is appointed an alderman of the city almost as soon as he completes his apprenticeship, a far cry from the modest ambition he and Mildred had earlier proclaimed. He also organises the denouement by which the band of prodigal characters are forgiven by his master, Touchstone, and reintegrated into society .But in order to effect this, Golding has to take the risky strategy of pretending that he himself has been arrested for debt in order to provide a pretext for Touchstone to visit the debtor's jail and witness the repentance of the prodigals. Ingram argues that his own social elevation depends on his taking some inspiration from the prodigal mode of behaviour exemplified by Sir Petronel (Ingram 2004, 24). In one sense, then, the individualist pursuit of social mobility is celebrated by the play, and seen as necessary to the continued health of the community—the opposition between individual and collective interests resolved by the happy ending. However, the conclusion that upward mobility is therefore sanctioned by *Eastward Ho!* should be qualified by considering that the economic rise of the bourgeois characters is not treated in a definitively positive fashion.

Mildred and Golding are undeniably prudish and sanctimonious: a fact perhaps best exemplified by their use of Gertrude's leftover wedding feast to furnish their own (3.2.67-8). In their distinctly dull characterisation, set off against the flamboyance of the less frugal characters, the audience is being set in a position of superiority to stereotypical bourgeois attitudes, and deriving humour from that superiority. This double vision offered by the play can perhaps be explained by considering that, unlike *The Alchemist*, it was played by children. The audience could then be expected to respond to it on two levels: the childish morality of the conclusion is the simpler interpretation, and the satire or irony behind that is exacerbated by the fact that adults watching the children come to this conclusion. The

sense of superiority then in part comes from the audience's more sophisticated appreciation of the play when compared to its child actors.

However, the satire does not simply cancel out the morality of the conclusion, and *Eastward Ho!* ultimately celebrates the social ambition of all its characters, as they are all reunited when the errant apprentice Quicksilver sings a song of repentance. The goldsmith Touchstone directs the audience in their moral appreciation of the spectacle:

> 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.
> (5.5.218-23)

The theatrical appreciation of the spectacle of a reformed rogue is viewed as a restorative process, creating community among the characters onstage, and in this final speech, extending that community to include the audience at Blackfriars too. While the audience would have been aware that this was not always realistic, and responded to it with some amount of irony, nonetheless, the theatrical enterprise led them to expect, or even demand, such a tidy denouement. The troublesome elements of social ambition are brought back under control by the theatrical process itself, rendering them much less threatening, particularly so because they were played by boys.

The Alchemist, though a play by an adult company, also derives a great deal of its humour from laughing at characters who wish to move up the social hierarchy. Face, Subtle, and Doll spend the play performing roles to con a profit from the various visitors to their house in Blackfriars. Their victims are all told a different story, and a large part of the farcical humour of the play derives from the quick changes in character and clothing that the three con artists must undergo throughout the day in order to keep up with all the various plots they have laid.

The customers (or victims) are all in pursuit of some kind of reinvention of self, which they hope to achieve by obtaining the elusive Philosopher's Stone. So the tobacconist Drugger seeks advice on how to lay out his shop for most assured business success, Sir Epicure Mammon only wishes to have "the power to change / All, that is metal in my house, to gold" (2. 1. 29-30), Puritan hypocrisy is satirised by the fact that the minister Tribulation is willing to trade charitable donations to an orphanage for the Philosopher's stone, and the young man about town

Kastril, wishes the alchemist to teach him how to best his opponents in show of rage. Like the joke at the expense of Gertrude, at whom the audience laughs because it can see she will never be a 'lady' despite her ambition, these characters are dramatically successful because their ambitions are misguided, and their faith in the power of alchemy to effect their transformations only highlights their lack of imagination. *The Alchemist* departs from *Eastward Ho!* in its replacement of a moral schema differentiating the characters, with a scale of intelligence which places Face at the top, not because he is less prone to vice than the other characters, but because he is clever enough to get away with it.

However, the fact that Face and his confederates are manipulating the social ambitions of others does not mean that they are free from such ambitions themselves. Indeed, Face and Subtle are seen by the audience bickering in the first act over the fact that they have both gone up in the world recently, and each wants to claim responsibility for the other's rise. Subtle says:

> You were once (time's not long past) the good,
> Honest, plain, livery-three-pound-thrum; that kept
> Your master's worship's house, here, in the Friars,
> For the vacations— . . .
> Since, by my means, translated suburb-captain.
> (1.1.15-19)

Face responds by detailing Subtle's poverty when he first met him: starving, attired in rags, and destitute: 'I ga' you countenance, credit for your coals, / . . . lent you besides, / A house to practise in' (1.1.43, 46-7). Although they clearly depend upon each other (and to a lesser extent upon Doll, the third member of the group) it is an uneasy alliance, and one in which self-interest remains the motivating factor. As soon as it is no longer expedient to band together, Face distances himself from Subtle and Doll, telling them when his master returns that they have to flee:

> The right is, my master
> Knows all, has pardoned me . . .
> . . . Wherefore, good partners,
> Both he and she, be satisfied: for here
> Determines the indenture tripartite,
> Twixt Subtle, Dol and Face. All I can do
> Is to help you over the wall, o' the back side.
> (5.4.126-33)

As many critics have noted, the trio's ability to better themselves financially by performing in an enclosed house in Blackfriars strongly suggests an analogy with the theatrical enterprise itself. Andrew Gurr details the metatheatricality of the play, arguing: "It is a play about a play about stage trickery, a counterfeit set in the Blackfriars precinct in 1610 as that neighbourhood mirrored itself inside the Blackfriars theatre" (Gurr 1999, 15). The social conditions which allow Face, Subtle and Doll to make a living out of the gullibility of their audience also rewarded the theatre companies, amongst them the King's Men, and of course, Jonson himself. The sheer foolishness of their victims is suggestive of Jonson's famous antipathy towards theatrical audiences. In Jonson's imagining of this "venture tripartite" there is an echo of his previous collaboration with Chapman and Marston. He is not celebrating the ingenuity of the schemers, but rather condemning both their vices and the stupidity of an audience which allows itself to be gulled by such a performance. In this, he is perhaps recanting something of the previous celebratory spirit of *Eastward Ho!* and suggesting a more conservative view of social ambition. His own deep ambivalence towards the profession that raised him from bricklayer to poet laureate is contained in this complex view of theatrical performance.

Space in the City: From Cheapside to Blackfriars

Both *Eastward Ho!* and *The Alchemist* make much of their London settings, with frequent reference to place-names helping to suggest a strong sense of local identity. However, the way that local urban space is set out differs greatly between the plays. *Eastward Ho!* allows its characters a freedom of movement across the city, in much the same way as it ultimately allows them to experience upward mobility in society. *The Alchemist*, on the other hand, is marked by a sense of constriction and claustrophobia exacerbated by the way it unfolds mostly in real time. In both plays the city is integral to the ways in which its citizens imagine themselves and carry out their attempts to climb the social ladder.

In *Eastward Ho!* Gertrude voices her desire for social preferment in terms of a desire to escape from the city. This is similar to Sir Petronel's wish, expressed in the speech with which this essay opened, to travel: "out of this wicked town". In Act 4, both Gertrude and Sir Petronel embark on abortive attempts to flee the city, the failures of which allow them to be rehabilitated within the society they have previously rejected. Sir Petronel, in order to be conveniently rid of Gertrude so he can sell her land to pay his fare to Virginia, sends her off eastward in a coach, a journey which in

the end brings her back to her father's house when it becomes evident that her new husband possesses no castle. The prodigals have in the meantime set off for the New World after much riotous drinking. Both Gertrude and Sir Petronel undertake parallel false journeys, which in a sense have the ultimate dramatic purpose of bringing them back to the citizen world from which they long to escape, and the prodigals' washing up on the Isle of Dogs (home of convicts) is the furthest outward point of this dilatory return. The sense of dislocation experienced by the adventurers is summed up by Sir Petronel's conviction that they have managed to cross the Channel:

> I know't by th'elevation of the pole, and by the altitude and latitude of the climate. See! Here comes a couple of French gentleman. I knew we were in France: dost thou think our Englishmen are so Frenchified that a man knows not whether he be in France or in England when he sees'em? (4.2.168-174)

He then proceeds to talk pigeon-French to the men, who laugh at him: "Why speak you this broken french, when y'are a whole Englishman?" (4.1.187-88). Petronel's geographical uncertainty springs from his endless capacity for self-invention, and it is this very capacity which allows him to be brought back within the city, both spatially and socially.

The other members of Sir Petronel's would-be colonial party also undergo similar symbolic journeys. Winifred, the usurer's wife, is washed up at St Katherine's Dock, which R. W. Van Fossen argues is "an appropriate landing-place" for her, as it is a reformatory for fallen women (4.1.66n). Her husband is shipwrecked at Cuckold's Haven, and Quicksilver (the errant apprentice of Touchstone who is in league with Sir Petronel) lands at the gallows in Wapping. The fates of the various characters during this storm are all commented upon by an onlooker, Slitgut, who places himself in a vantage point above the stage to "discover from this lofty prospect what pranks the rude Thames plays in her desperate lunacy" (4.1.22-4). The Thames here is the prime mover behind the events of the storm, and Slitgut ascribes to it a sort of mischievous madness, unaware of the symbolism behind the events he witnesses, which would be clear to audience and readers. The Thames is imagined as giving each character both a warning and a chance of redemption. Slitgut comments of Quicksilver: "What, and taken up at the gallows? Heaven grant he may not be one day taken down there. O' my life it is ominous. Well, he is delivered for the time" (4. 1. 129-31). In this scene, spread out as it is across the city landscape with the river at its centre, London itself is an active force in generating the repentance of each character. This is

recognised by Quicksilver's final song of repentance, which names Cheapside as a site of safety which will save the singer from the horrors of "Tyburn, Counters and the Spital" (5.5.129).

The Alchemist is no less specific in its geographical cues for the audience. The house is situated in the Blackfriars, which is of course where the playhouse was also situated, and the parallels have been noted by many critics. Anthony J. Ouellette notes that Face's placing of Subtle at Pie Corner would have marked the latter as a figure of the periphery, outside the city walls, and that Doll would similarly have been associated with the brothels of the suburbs. He argues "there seems to be an effort in the portrayal of the rogues' origins to distinguish the King's Men at the Blackfriars from other adult playing companies forced to perform in public playhouses 'without the walls' of London" (Ouellette 2005). In bringing these former inhabitants of the liberties within the walls then, Jonson is suggesting perhaps a more exclusive, more skilful theatre company, and also differentiating his play from the children's plays previously performed in Blackfriars. The intelligence of face and his crew precludes the kind of double vision we traced in *Eastward Ho!*—rather than the audience being privy to an interpretation unnoticed by the performers, here we suspect that the performers are in many ways one step ahead of the audience at all times. Nonetheless, the geography of London is taken as a common referent point between playwright, characters, and audience in a similar way to *Eastward Ho!* but the sense of constricted space and constant observation in *The Alchemist* renders the city more sinister.

Not only does all the action take place in Lovewit's house or the lane directly outside it, but the neighbours are constantly seen as a threatening presence, eager to pry into the business of the con artists and betray them to Lovewit. When Subtle and Face argue in the opening scene, there are various hints that they are endangering the scheme, Face admonishes Subtle when he complains "you might talk softlier, rascal", and they are then interrupted by Dol who castigates them: "D'you know who hears you?" and poses the rhetorical question:

> Shall we go make
> A sort of sober, scruffy, precise neighbours,
> (That scarce have smiled twice, sin' the king came in)
> A feast of laughter at our follies?
> (1. 1. 163-6)

This fear of being constantly spied upon is shown to be justified at the opening of Act 5, when Lovewit is accosted by a chorus of neighbours bringing reports of the "gallants", "oyster-women", "sailor's wives" and

"tobacco-men" whom they have seen going in and out of the house "daily", "And nightly too" (5.1.1-5). While in *Eastward Ho!* the onlookers are presented as essentially well-meaning, and a sense of community is extended to include the audience in Touchstone's final speech, *The Alchemist* gives more of a sense of espionage amongst the residents of London, and is more cynical about the possibility of community. This is most obvious in a comparison of ways in which each play treats the rehabilitation of its rogue characters.

Forgiveness and the Theatricality of Redemption

Both plays end in forgiveness: Lovewit forgives Face (largely because Face promises to match him with a rich widow, bringing Lovewit into the enterprise), prompting him to abandon his erstwhile comrades to return to the role of Jeremy the manservant. The resolution of *Eastward Ho!* comes when the industrious apprentice, Golding, convinced of the sincerity of the prodigals' remorse, convinces Touchstone to forgive them by tricking him into coming to the debtor's prison so he can witness this remorse first-hand: "there is no means to make my father relent so likely as to bring him to be a spectator of their miseries" (5.3.116-8). The theatricality of this endeavour is clear: great emphasis is placed on the power of a performance to convince its witnesses of the truth of a transformation. This is the basis for Golding's plan, and it is also the opinion of two random prisoners who exhort a passer-by to come and hear Quicksilver's 'Repentance' song: "You shall hear a thing admirably penned" (5.5.20-1). The way in which this 'Repentance' is discussed suggests it is a fashionable piece of literature: "this, gentleman, upon our report, is very desirous to hear some piece of your 'Repentance'" and "I am ravished with his 'Repentance'" (30-32; 115-6). The usurer Security, seeing the success with which Quicksilver's song is met, jumps on the bandwagon and declares: "if you'll be won with a song, hear my lamentable tune" (151). The assumption is that such flamboyant performance must be evidence of the integrity of the performers. Quicksilver prefaces his song by saying "the more openly I profess it, I hope it will appear the heartier, and the more unfeigned" (35-6) and indeed Touchstone's response is: "this cannot be feigned". In a reversal of the assumptions underlying the stigma of print, the performed repentance is seen as gaining more credibility the more widely it is disseminated—as though the more witnesses there are to Quicksilver's change of character, the more verifiable that change becomes. In this, of course, the audience is also key to the moral transformation of the prodigals, witnessing along with the other characters

the promise of redemption and finally being included in Touchstone's community in his final speech.

Although the change of heart seems to come rather abruptly, and the performative aspect is stressed, the sincerity of the transformation is not in doubt—rather the play seems to revel in the unlikelihood of its depiction (again a function of the theatrical situation in which adults were being entertained by children), and the theatricality is only a continuation of the way in which surface appearances have been so important throughout the play. Clothing is a major topic in *Eastward Ho!*, particularly in the contrast between Touchstone's two daughters. Gertrude expresses her disdain of Mildred through her choice of clothes: 'Do you wear your coif with a London licket, your stammel petticoat with two guards, the buffin gown with the tufttaffety cape, and the velvet lace. I must be a lady, and I will be a lady.' (1.2.17-21) Gertrude associates her sister's style of dressing with the lower class of urban citizens from which she longs to distinguish herself. Similarly, when Quicksilver abandons his apprenticeship with Touchstone he dons the doublet and hose of the man-about-town, rejecting his tradesman clothing by throwing it on the floor: 'There lie, thou husk of my envasselled state!' (2.2.39) The same character's later change of heart is presaged by his fellow prisoners testifying that: "he gave away all his rich clothes, as soon as ever he came in here" (5.3.55-6), preparing the audience and other characters for the sincerity of his song.

The Alchemist is far more sceptical on the possibility of moral rehabilitation. Although Face is forgiven, and Subtle and Doll banished over the back wall of Lovewit's house, the deception which has characterised his dealings is still to some extent intact. He manages to convince the wronged citizens, and his master, that 'Jeremy' was just as much of a victim of 'Face' as they have been. The all-seeing neighbours turn out to be as suggestible as they are gossip-prone, and on Face's assurances that the doors of the house have been locked for three weeks, begin to doubt their own testimony: "Good faith I think I saw a coach!" turns into "We cannot tell , sir: Jeremy is a very honest fellow" (5.2.34, 37-8).

Face's skill in theatrical performance has been demonstrated throughout the play. As in *Eastward Ho!* clothing is hugely important: the five acts of *the Alchemist* are a constant flurry of quick costume changes, exits and entrances, as the inhabitants don and doff the costumes of their many alter-egos in the pursuit of the perfect scam. In between the visits of the gulls, they discuss their plans in distinctly backstage terms, with Face directing the other two in their roles: "Queen of Fairy, on with your tyre,

and Doctor, with your robes" (3.3.77-8). Face's authorial power gives him the upper hand in the end, when he alone escapes punishment by completely disowning his previous identity. One of the gulled gentlemen threatens: "That Face I'll marke for mine, if ere I meet him" (5.5.86), to which Face-as-Jeremy replies: "If I can heare of him, sir, I'll bring you word unto your lodging: for, in troth, they were strangers to me, I thought 'hem honest, as my selfe, sir" (87-89). The power of self-transformation sought by each character is only attained by Face, who never stops performing even when he seems to have been found out—Face is indeed as 'honest' as Jeremy, and this very relative measure of value is only appreciated by Face himself and the audience—the other characters are taken in by it.

Jonson's attitude towards Face is ambivalent: his moral disapproval is clear, but the play's refusal to punish the con artist indicates at least some respect for his intelligence. Face might be the possessor of quasi-authorial powers, but it would be a mistake to see in this an alter-ego of Jonson himself. Rather, Face is closer to the figure of the poetaster of the 1602 play of that name, and here his counterfeit art has been joined with theatrical enterprise to further the illusion. More important than the disapproval of Face is the broader indictment of a society that allows itself to be gulled by this performance. The conclusion of *The Alchemist* suggests a much darker view of the world than *Eastward Ho!* While it would be stretching the point slightly to argue that *The Alchemist* is a play concerned in every detail with Jonson's earlier enterprise, the analogy between each "venture tripartite" is an intriguing one. The socially adventurous spirit which is celebrated, albeit in a qualified fashion, in *Eastward Ho!* is seen in *The Alchemist* as a folly which invites satirical interrogation. Furthermore, the act of creating theatre out of this folly is a deeply ambivalent one: the preface to the Reader warns "thou wert never more fair in the way to be cozened (than in this Age) in Poetry, especially in Plays" (Jonson 1999, 354). Perhaps Jonson's moral message might be best paraphrased as follows: the theatre is a dangerous place, where unintelligent spectators are likely to be conned, so those who choose to attend plays should make sure they are by Ben Jonson.

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CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN AND THE THEATRE IN THOMAS HEYWOOD'S LONDON

MARISSA GREENBERG

In the *Republic* Plato banished poets from his ideal commonwealth, in part because he believed that their representations of terror and sorrow have a noxious tendency to incite these emotions in audiences. Tragedy in particular elicits gasps, sighs and tears—affective responses that threaten the masculine virtue of a city's leaders and defenders. In the *Poetics* Aristotle countered Plato's anti-poetic stance by arguing that tragedy purges rather than fosters feelings of fear and pity. Writing specifically of dramatic poetry, Aristotle implicated theatre in the maintenance of healthy urban bodies. Tragedies, such as those performed in the amphitheatres of ancient Athens, cleansed playgoers of debilitating emotions that endangered a city's moral and physical security.

This classical debate about theatre's impact on urban spaces and communities resurfaced in late-sixteenth-century London with the construction of the first purpose-built playhouses since the Roman period. Nor need we look to drama's rampant opponents, who also tended to oppose most civic pastimes, to find an early-modern proponent of Platonic ambivalence. John Stow's *A Survey of London* celebrates England's capital city, including its traditional communal activities and entertainments, but makes only passing mention of London's playhouses. After waxing eloquently and nostalgically about lord mayor's shows, civic tournaments and guild performances, Stow concedes: "Of late time in place of those Stage playes, hath béene vsed Comedies, Tragedies, enterludes, and histories, both true and fayned: For the acting whereof certaine publike places, as the Theater, the Curtine, &c. haue béene erected" (Stow 1598, sig. F3r). Lawrence Manley (1995) suggests that Stow's disdain resulted from the disquieting social leveling that occurred

at London's playhouses, where cash rather than rank determined admission. Ian Archer (1995) suggests that it resulted from anxieties that the playhouses participated in a larger shift from communal philanthropy to individual acquisition. Either way, Stow's exclusion of London's playhouses from his chorography seems a disgruntled reaction to his impotence to banish them from the cityscape.

By the time Thomas Heywood wrote *An Apology for Actors*, there was little need to respond directly to Stow's omission. Playhouses had become highly visible if still contested features of London, as evinced by Heywood's lengthy defense of their value to the city. Recently, Jean Howard (2007, 16-19) outlined Heywood's various strategies to authorize London's playhouses. One approach involves historicizing the one-to-one relationship between a city's stature and its theatres. Heywood ranked London on a par with ancient international cities: "*Rome* was a *Metropolis*, a place whither all the nations knowne vnder the Sunne, resorted: so is *London*, and being to receiue all Estates, all Princes, all Nations, therefore to affoord them all choyce of pastimes, sports, and recreations: yet were there Theaters in all the greatest Cities of the world," including Athens, Mitelene, "euen in *Ierusalem*" (Heywood 1612, sigs. C2r, D4v). The relationship between urban and theatrical greatness is not merely a thing of the past; London's contemporary rivals—Paris, Florence and Antwerp—had playhouses. If London wished to challenge these cities culturally, as it soon would commercially and demographically, it must foster theatre. "[P]laying is an ornament to the Citty," Heywood insisted, "which strangers of all Nations, repairing hither, report of in their Countries, beholding them here with some admiration: for what variety of entertainment can there be in any Citty of Christendome, more then in *London?*" (Heywood 1612, sig. F3r).

For Heywood, theatre not only contributes to and demonstrates a city's historical and international stature. It also plays a part in maintaining urban health, specifically through the performance of tragedy. By propounding drama's social efficacy, Heywood's *Apology* evinces a uniquely English interpretation of Aristotelian *catharsis*. Since the early sixteenth century, writers in England and on the Continent had been grappling with Aristotle's brief and enigmatic description of tragic effect in Book 6 of the *Poetics*: "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude . . . through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions" (Aristotle 1992, 53). Aristotle describes how a specific type of action—mimetic, complete, weighty—has a particular, if ambiguous, emotional impact upon audiences. Whereas Continental commentators construed this definition in terms of a literal

cleansing of body and soul, prior to the late seventeenth century, English critics did not interpret tragedy as similarly medicinal (Carlson 1993; Herrick 1930; Orgel 2002; Weinberg 1961). Instead, they put a pointedly legal spin on it: the arousal of pity and fear is desirable, they argued, because it facilitates the exposure and reformation of offending playgoers.

This uniquely English understanding of *catharsis* is perhaps best known from *Hamlet*:

> I have heard that guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaimed their malefactions;
> For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
> With most miraculous organ.
> (Shakespeare 1997, 2.2.566-71)

In composing this speech, Shakespeare occludes two aspects of the criminal playgoer *topos* as it appears elsewhere. First, Hamlet's use of the plural—"guilty *creatures*," "*their* malefactions"—obscures the fact that in most versions, the offender outed by tragedy is a woman. Second, Hamlet fails to locate the theatrical-cum-confessional event in a specific town or city. Around the same time that *Hamlet* was likely written and first performed, for example, the anonymous play *A Warning for Fair Women* set its own "guilty creatures" story in the English town of Lynn:

> A woman that had made away her husband,
> And sitting to behold a tragedy
> At Linne a town in Norffolke,
> Acted by Players travelling that way,
> Wherein a woman that had murtherd hers
> Was ever haunted with her husbands ghost:
> The passions written by a feeling pen,
> And acted by a good Tragedian,
> She was so mooved with the sight thereof,
> As she cryed out, the Play was made by her,
> And openly confesst her husbands murder.
> (*Warning* 1599, sig. H2r)

Over a decade later, Heywood offered this same story from Lynn as proof of theatre's social efficacy and reinforced it with a second story, also involving a woman playgoer, set "at *Amsterdam* in *Holland*" (Heywood 1612, sig. G2r). Heywood's versions of the criminal playgoer *topos* share not only female protagonists and urban settings but also details about

tragic effect: by staging "fearfull image[s]," tragedy causes playgoers to experience an "extremely troubled" and "afflicted conscience" (Heywood 1612, sigs. G1v, G2v).

Immediately preceding these stories of tragedy's exposure of murderous women, Heywood writes of its capacity to reform women guilty of adultery: "The vnchaste are by vs shewed their errors. . . . What can sooner print modesty in the soules of the wanton, then by discouering vnto them the monstrousnesse of their sin?" (Heywood 1612, sig. G1v). The link between adultery and murder, implied by the structure of Heywood's *Apology*, becomes explicit in *Gynaikeion*, his chronicle of virtuous and vicious women: "seldome doth Adulterie but goe hand in hand with Murther" (Heywood 1624, sig. Pp1r). Moreover, just as Heywood historicizes theatre's contribution to urban development in his *Apology*, in *Gynaikeion* he presents adultery's role in a city's destruction:

> Thence looke abroad and see
> How many flourishing Cities ruin'd bee,
> Famous of old, since neither the Gods Rage,
> The hostile Weapon, nor the Enemies strage,
> Hath ruin'd Man in that abundant measure,
> As Riot hath, mixt with vnlawfull pleasure.
> (Heywood 1624, sig. Pp5r)

Fortunately, adultery, like murder, haunts the offender: "The punishment of these inchastities is . . . the vnquiet conscience, which though sometimes it may be at a seeming peace, yet the torment by beeing still renewed, dayly increaseth and gnawes the heartstrings of all such persons as to themselues are guiltie" (Heywood 1624, sig. Pp6r). Heywood recounts innumerable tales of adulterous women in the fourth book of *Gynaikeion*, which he dedicates to Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. If tragedy catches the consciences of murderous women, it may also inspire confession from adulterous women. Theatre works in two ways, then, to purge female offenders who threaten a city's security and prosperity. By exposing guilty playgoers, tragedy arguably conjoins "two opposing attitudes" towards the city that emerge in early-modern English drama: the city as "a visionary embodiment of ideal community" and as "a predatory trap, founded in fratricide and showed by conflict" (Paster 1985, 3).

Heywood's two-part *Edward IV* seems intent on prompting just such urban purgation. The plays' affective scenes of female infidelity and repentance appear designed to move guilty playgoers to confession and reformation. Through this service, *Edward IV* presents theatre as a valuable, even necessary, civic institution. Indeed, Heywood's detailed if

anachronistic depiction of London relates theatre's social efficacy to urban space. Janette Dillon has argued that drama's attention to London topography, beginning in the late 1580s, "needs to be linked to the increasingly firmly established status of players and theatres in and around London from about this time" (Dillon 2000, 6). The history of Derby's Men, for whom Heywood wrote *Edward IV*, suggests otherwise. Through the early 1590s, Derby's Men was "almost exclusively a touring company," but by 1602 it was performing at court and in London, where it acquired the Boar's Head playhouse (Rowland 2005, 2). As early as 1597, this move to England's capital met with significant resistance from the Privy Council, which "acted to protect the exclusive rights of the Admiral's Men (playing at Henslowe's Rose) and the Chamberlain's Men (playing at the Curtain)" (Rowland 2005, 3). Written and performed in the midst of Derby's Men's efforts to become a London-based company, Heywood's plays justify the establishment of another theatre in terms of civic health. The portrayal of Jane Shore's adultery and repentance promises to expose and reform guilty playgoers sitting in the Boar's Head and other London playhouses. *Edward IV* did not remain long in Derby's Men's possession: the plays were revamped around 1603 and sold to Worcester's Men, who brought it to the Rose and then the Red Bull, where it met with immense popularity in 1605 (Rowland 2005, 5-6).

Part 1 of *Edward IV* features the rebellion of Thomas Neville, Lord Falconbridge, who attempts to free Henry VI from the Tower of London and place him on the throne. Falconbridge's interest in London extends, however, beyond a prison break and change of sovereignty. Standing on a hilltop that overlooks "the lovely town" (Heywood 1599, part 1, scene 2, line 77), Falconbridge rallies his followers with promises of controlling London's prominent buildings and neighborhoods: the Royal Mint, Cheapside, Leadenhall and Westminster (1.2.49-56; see also 1.9.14-21, 88-91). Yet "the flower of London" is not a place but a woman—Jane Shore, wife of a London goldsmith named Matthew Shore (1.4.41). Falconbridge is intent on conquering all of London's treasures in one fell swoop, boasting to Matthew Shore, "Thy wife is mine, that's flat./ This night, in thine own house, she sleeps with me" (1.4.46-47). Stirred more by this affront to his household than to his city and sovereign, Matthew Shore joins London's citizenry in repulsing Falconbridge's assaults (1.8.15-18).

Once the traitor is captured and executed, the threat to London's chief "flower" would seem to be eliminated. But Falconbridge's lascivious intentions are merely replaced by Edward IV's. At a banquet honoring London's defenders, the Lord Mayor asks Jane Shore to play Lady

Mayoress and wishes his deceased wife had "lived to see/ Fair Mistress Shore thus beautify her house" (1.16.50-51). Jane's beauty, as much as her husband's honor that "[m]y Lord Mayor makes [Matthew Shore's] wife his Lady Mayoress" (1.16.132), spurs Edward's desires. In subsequent scenes, the disguised king visits the goldsmith's shop, meticulously tracing his way through Cheapside via Lion Quay and up Lombard Street to the Pelican (1.17.24-28). Edward follows an itinerary strikingly like the one Falconbridge threatens, but the king's assault proves considerably more successful. Jane describes Edward's wooing in language evocative of not only invasion but also *catharsis*. Her moral tribulations assume tragic proportions as she relates herself to be "troubled" and her "poor soul so importuned," and fears that adultery will burden "a conscience free from all debate" (1.19.5-7, 54). When Edward commands Jane to "repair unto the court" (1.19.103), she concedes reluctantly and voices a preference for death over dishonor: "If you enforce me, I have nought to say;/ But wish I have not lived to see this day" (1.19.108-09). Any hint of histrionics—that Jane performs a guilty conscience she does not have—is quashed when, alone onstage, she says, "Well, I will in; and ere the time begin,/ Learn how to be repentant of my sin" (1.19.115-16). Jane's next and final appearance in part 1 shows her performing this promised repentance. She refuses any material reward for mediating appeals to Edward: "Without gifts, God grant I may do good./ For all my good cannot redeem my ill;/ Yet to do good I will endeavour still" (1.22.35-37). Heywood shows his female protagonist suffering pangs of conscience for her adultery and attempting reparation through service to her city and nation.

Scholars have argued that part 1 of *Edward IV* dramatizes the weakness of domestic authority when challenged by sovereign authority (Helgerson 2000; Howard 1993; Orlin 1996; Wall 1996). I contend that patriarchy is not the only issue brought to the fore by Heywood's portrayal of Jane Shore's adultery. In addition to anxieties about household and nation, the play capitalizes on theatrical imperatives, specifically the social efficacy of tragic emotion. In dramatizing Jane Shore's fall, Heywood adapts conventions of the complaint genre, which experienced a revival in the 1590s. In most complaints written during this period, the speakers voice concern for chastity and sometimes link the preservation of (female) sexual power to the abuse of (male) monarchial power (Dubrow 1986). At the same time that Heywood brings these emphases to the tragic stage, he modifies the complaint form in two ways. First, Heywood offers topographical details that pinpoint the setting of his dramatized complaint. Whereas poetic complaints, including earlier versions of Jane Shore's complaint, take place in indeterminate pastoral or sylvan venues,

Heywood locates his tragedy in the audience's contemporary London. This spatial specificity unifies playgoers and character through a common urban identity. Heywood's second innovation is to include the voices of not only the fallen woman but also those who attend her fall. The suitors whom Jane assists, and from whom she refuses recompense, sympathize with her. Thomas Aire, for whose son Jane secures a pardon, says, "Pity she should miscarry in her life,/ That bears so sweet a mind in doing good" (1.22.57-58). Even Matthew Shore is affected by her repentance (1.22.58). Michael McClintock has argued that in another of Heywood's plays, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, "[a]ffectivity—a character's ability to project or respond to intense emotion—is one of the primary measures of moral worth" (McClintock 2002, 106). Heywood employs a similar strategy in *Edward IV* as Thomas Aire and Matthew Shore model appropriate emotional responses for their fellow Londoners sitting in the Boar's Head. Even as they share in their condemnation of Jane's offense, onstage and offstage audiences are brought together by their mutual pity for her.

In part 2 of *Edward IV*, Heywood returns to these strategies of spatial and emotional identification to unite playgoers and his female protagonist. Jane's entrance to the play is set at the Marshalsea, one of several prisons in the city, where she,

> once a week, in her own person, visits
> The prisoners and the poor in hospitals
> In London, or near London every way;
> Whose purse is open to the hungry soul,
> Whose piteous heart saves many a tall man's life.
> (2.9.26-30)

Continuing to typify the repentant sinner, Jane performs this London-based "charity," even though she knows it "[c]annot consume the scandal of [her] name" (2.9.34-35). Jane's behavior succeeds, however, in eliciting "pity" and "tears" from fellow Londoners (2.9.56, 182) and "forgive[ness]" from those she injured most—her husband and Edward's wife (2.12.93, 2.10.97). Sympathy and pardon emerge as appropriate responses to Jane's fall and repentance.

Heywood's cathartic strategies are most evident when Jane's royal protector becomes fatally ill. In order to secure the crown, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, has Edward's two sons murdered; but "their tragedy" is not the last example of Richard's abuse of power (2.14.121). Upon assuming the throne, Richard III sentences Jane to perform public penance and admonishes the citizens of London, indeed of all England, against

relieving the offender, on penalty of death (2.18.99-106). Heywood reconstructs the historical Jane Shore's penance as described in Thomas More's *History of King Richard the Third* and Holinshed's *Chronicles*. Once again Heywood contributes topographical details that foster audience identification with his temporally distant characters:

> This day it is commanded by the King,
> You must be stripped out of your rich attire,
> And in a white sheet go from Temple Bar
> Until you come to Aldgate, bare footed,
> Your hair about your ears, and in your hand
> A burning taper.
> (2.18.192-97)

In part 1, Heywood parallels Falconbridge's failed assault on London to Edward's successful one upon the Pelican. Here, in part 2, he juxtaposes Jane's penitential procession to civic and monarchical pageants, such as the citizenry's triumph in part 1 and Richard's royal entry, implied but not represented in part 2 (see Dillon 2000, ch. 2).

Heywood also fleshes out the affective capital of Jane's punishment. Early-modern playgoers were familiar with spectacles of public penance. Such disciplinary events surely elicited a range of responses (Ingram 1987; Mansfield 1995), but Heywood exploits the mimetic status of his procession to inspire conventionally tragic emotions. Playgoers sat in the covered galleries of the Boar's Head and watched Jane sitting in the "barren fields" outside Aldgate and welcoming "nakedness and poverty" (2.20.32-39). The scene virtually compels the audience to join her as she resolves to banquet only on that which may "refresh [her] soul": "Let heart's deep-throbbing sighs be all my bread;/ My drink, salt tears; my guests, repentant thoughts" (2.20.51-53). Heywood encourages affective participation by aligning these feelings with the sympathy and relief proffered by the admirable Thomas Aire, and by opposing them to the "scorn" and "bitter taunts" of the selfish Rufford (2.20.119-20), who resents Jane's earlier rejection of his unpatriotic suit to export corn (see 1.22.61-70). Whether this scene actually generates signs, tears and repentance from playgoers is less significant than the fact that it is blatantly designed to do so.

In these scenes, as well, Heywood again juxtaposes domestic and sovereign authority. But this time he privileges affective leadership over tyrannical power. Richard extends the conditions of Jane's penance after her procession and decrees that anyone who relieves her be condemned to death as a traitor (2.20.245-55). He exempts Matthew Shore from his

proclamation, "[u]pon condition that [he] forgive [his wife's] fault,/ Take her again, and use her as before" (2.21.131-32). Though at first unwilling to concede to these conditions, Matthew Shore forgives and reclaims Jane as his wife moments before she and then he die. In the next and final scene of the play, none other than London's citizenry model the emotions that this portrayal of redemption and death are meant to stir:

> The people, for the love they bear to her
> And her kind husband, pitying his wrongs,
> For ever after mean to call the ditch
> Shores' Ditch, as in memory of them.
> (2.23.71-74)

This story of Shoreditch's origins is, of course, wholly fictional (Rowland 2005, 57). Nonetheless, it proffers a profound vision of London, including its households and playhouses, as "an alternative historical space to chronicle" (Wall 1996, 124). Indeed, Heywood's revisionism celebrates what urban drama alone can do.

This dramatic efficacy, I have argued, is intimately bound up with the gendering of tragic effect. The theatre assigned women the responsibility of responding emotionally to tragedy. At the same time, this response implicated women playgoers as offenders, unhealthy parts of an urban body in need of purgation. Many women probably resisted the latter characterization. By continuing to attend London's playhouses, women "defied the ideologies of gender that attempted to control, enclose, or erase them. They assumed, in short, a public place in the commonwealth, and their struggles to retain and enlarge that place have a history, one we are still writing" (Howard 1993, 121). Shirley Ardener makes a more general claim for women's role in ideologies of space and gender: "The fact that women do not control physical or social space directly does not necessarily preclude them from being *determinants* of, or *mediators* in, the allocation of space, even the occupation of political space" (Ardener 1981, 17). Women need not be adulterers or murderers to contribute to the notion that tragedy fosters civic security and prosperity. Yet through these associations, women assumed a pivotal role in urban and theatrical development. Their mere presence in London's playhouses, which made it possible to claim that tragedy hones playgoers' affective aptitude, helped to determine theatre's status in England's capital city.

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PART II:

DEFINING URBAN SPACE:
THE METROPOLITAN AND THE PROVINCIAL

CHAPTER SIX

VENICE IMAGINED: THE INVISIBLE & IMAGINARY CITY, OR, 'LES LIEUX DE LA'[1]

JULIAN WOLFREYS

"Can one tell the lightning flash of presence?" asks Françoise Dastur, in a commentary on the experience of the other that memory encodes. Such a "flash" is captured, she continues, only "through the extreme condensation of [a] saying . . . [that accomplishes] the movement of the real" otherwise. And this saying, this communication from within the contours of the real "consists in doubling the event of becoming with a second world peopled with substrates and imaginary entities" (Dastur 2000, 75). There are, therefore, always two cities at least in any urban space. There is the city you see. Then there is that other city, the city's other, the one comprising many, consisting of a saying, a movement that doubles and condenses, in order to impress on the retina of the mind's eye that lightning flash. As Italo Calvino has cause to reflect

> at certain hours, in certain places along the street, you see opening before you the hint of something unmistakable . . . you would like to say what it is, but everything previously said [of the city] . . . imprisons your words. . . . And even I, who would like to keep the two cities distinct in my memory,

[1] The phrase 'les lieux de la', translatable as 'the places there'—or, if one hears the homophonic play in 'de la / 'delà', the places beyond, *there* being, of course, a space always *beyond* presence, where I am, the location of the subject and so forth—is taken from the title of a composition for ballet by German composer Heiner Goebbels, first performed in 2001. It suggests a location the singularity of which is marked by its displacement and difference from the place in which I observe that other place. Proximate and yet not reachable, it remains as a place other than the place in which I find myself and from which I observe.

> can speak only of the one, because the recollection of the other, in the lack of words to fix it, has been lost. (Calvino 1974, 61-62)

After all, Calvino concedes, every city avoids naming, it "refashions itself every day" (1974, 105).

If language cannot fix the city, if the name disappears almost as soon as it is given, and if the true city retreats into its material simulacrum, its built palimpsest, what remains to representation? In what ways therefore can a city that is invisible or imaginary, one which is nowhere to be found as such, be more 'real' than the city which is all around you, present everywhere in its brute materiality? How, if at all, does that other city, those other cities, announce themselves? And in what manner might we speak of the arrival, the return or imposition of the other city as both the site and taking place of transgression? However paradoxical this idea might appear initially or however irreducible ultimately is the undecidable to any definition, I take it as a principle that *on the one hand*, the city, the city's other or other of the city, that is to say the invisible city, remains hidden, even though the built or material urban phenomenon is in plain view; *on the other hand*, though invisible, and though unavailable except through the chance encounter with one manifest form of the city's imaginary alterity, it calls, as other, and so inaugurates a mode of communication. This being stated, and in the light of my interest in this other, transgressive city—the one existing, if at all, only as a series of iterable and different sites *over there*, with a spacing which, though tantalizingly small is forever unbridgeable—allow me a final question for now, from which to depart and which the previous questions seem to prompt: *if* the urban subject is subject to the confining, coercive powers of the city; *if* he or she is defined by the limitations imposed by spaces, architectural relations, institutional organisation, discourses of the law in relation to the *polis*, whereby one is always subject to *and* before the law; *then* what counterforce, if any, does the other city hold in its invisibility? What does it whisper and how might we hear that?

Let me begin with a brief reminder of what constitutes transgression. If we are to move forward towards a reading of the other city within any visible or material form, the transgressive is an important notion. Not only is it significant in itself, it is also suggestive for thinking the uncanny in relation to the urban and modernity. We have to return to Michel Foucault to remind ourselves of the ways in which the transgressive is constituted through its *taking place*, its performative activity. It is, Foucault demands we perceive, irreducible to some polarized or oppositional concept to be wielded in an enfeebled dialectical challenge to supposed limits (Foucault 1998, 74). Neither simply violence nor victory transgression "contains

nothing negative, but affirms limited being". It opens and so announces through its gesture that which is at the heart of the limit or any constraining mode of representation: a being otherwise, an other momentary identity flickering into one's perception as a translation of the self-same. As Foucault is eager to stress, transgression "is an *action* that involves a limit, that narrow zone of a line where *it displays the flash of its passage*, but perhaps also [he cautions] *its entire space*" (Foucault 1998, 73; emphasis added). Transgression, Foucault continues, "incessantly crosses and recrosses a line that closes up behind it in a *wave of extremely short duration*, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable" (Foucault 1998, 73; emphasis added). This much is well-known. Yet, in a caveat against any reductive or universalizing appropriation of the idea of transgression, Foucault comments not only—as is all too obvious—that limit and transgression "depend on each other for whatever density of being they possess" (Foucault 1998, 73), but also that the play between the two, and of the transgression across the line, is "considerably more complex". This is inescapably the case, for "these elements are situated in an uncertain context, in certainties that are immediately upset so that thought is immediately ineffectual as soon as it attempts to seize them" (Foucault 1998, 73).

If thought has been ineffectual in its attempts to 'seize' or pin down the motion or rhythm of the performative transgression, this has to do, in no small part, with the matter of spacing in relation to a movement. Recall from the comments I have cited Foucault's insistence on motion and spacing, as well as, implicitly, rhythm, duration and temporality, appearance and disappearance, momentary visibility in an arrival from the other, invisible side of the line, and the inevitable return to the invisible, as the ruptured line closes up, the horizon reintroduced. In addressing transgression, we must speak therefore of an 'action', or the 'flash of a passage', in which observation Foucault is haunted, however fleetingly, by the Kant of the *Third Critique*, particularly the latter's apprehension of the sublime (which itself may just be another name for the transgressive, and which may resurface as the uncanny effect of the city's other). We must give attention also to the brevity of that 'incessant', and therefore rhythmic, pulse or 'wave', however 'extremely short' a 'duration' the motion may have. And finally, we must acknowledge that this endlessly iterable movement—Foucault describes it as an incessant spiral (Foucault 1998, 74)—gives place to the entirety of a temporally evanescent alternative 'space', whilst also mapping that space through the discontinuous but constant tracing of trajectories across lines that are already marked as the topography to be transformed.

All of this is given articulation, worked through in small but significant ways, in "Ganymede", Daphne Du Maurier's revision of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*. In Du Maurier's telling invention she multiplies the cities, doubling Venice as the other and imaginary city of London. The first paragraph of "Ganymede" takes the reader, via a first-person narrator's reflective comparison to the 'reality' of London's Little Venice and, nearly simultaneously, to the invisible other Venice, underneath or alongside the London district north-west of Paddington and centred on the intersection of the Grand Union and Regent's Canals. X, we might say, marks the spot, but the X is shifting, fluid, as well as being a confluence of artificial waterways. More than this though, whatever, or wherever Little Venice might be, this is only by virtue of its being a construct in more than one sense, it boundaries being both ill-defined and unavailable to accurate plotting.

Additionally, this locus within London is also a place of the imagination, for as much as it is constructed. For, when the narrator opens the narrative with the offhand remark, "They call it Little Venice", he brings into play Browning's phrase by which the area has become named. A fiction thus precedes the place, and imprints onto the materiality of place a displaced ghost, a spectre that displaces location within itself. And so there is a "flash", to recall Foucault's word, of this other locus. The invisible city, the city of the imagination, transgresses the limits of the real, before it "loses itself in this space it marks", to cite Foucault of the passage and revenance of transgression again (Foucault 1998, 74). There is here an intimate proximity between places. And yet, we also glimpse what Foucault calls "excessive distance" between the material identity and its fictional countersignature. The rupture, once opened, cannot be sutured, even though memory loses the precarious vision. The merely real of the urban is there only to be transgressed by that invisible alterity. This is truly transgressive moreover, for the appearance of the phantom Venice has about it nothing that is either negative or positive. There is simply what Foucault describes, apropos the transgressive motion or rhythm, as "simply an affirmation of division", by which "contestation shapes an experience" (Foucault 1998, 74; 75).

Such contestation determines the subject, as much as the subject's memory causes the other to shimmer into view. The narrator of "Ganymede" both affirms the division and the contest of the urban experience in a more detailed manner, in the process of which he indicates the level of interaction between the two urban fields. In this play between what is seen and what is hidden, the other city, the ghostly double of Venice, comes into being, as imagination blindly is invited to perceive and

so follow the curve of the canal in London. As night falls in the latter, so the former manifests itself in the darkness, in a seemingly paradoxical and transgressive moment of becoming, before that inevitable retreat. Here the invisible city is able to transgress precisely because the reflective, interior vision is capable of projecting with what Foucault calls "the power of becoming always more interior to itself" (Foucault 1998, 81). Fancy sees more clearly with 'shut eyes' therefore, and this is remarked as an unequivocal truth by Du Maurier's narrator, who is all too aware of the power of those Foucauldian "fissures . . . and broken contours" (Foucault 1998, 81) within the reality of a given experience of the city. Material reality, in one instance the destination of the barges, matters less and engages the subject less, than echoes, traces, and evanescent moments, whether these are the "echo of the barge's hooter, the echo of the engine . . . the barge's wake in the canal water . . . [or] a film of oil amongst the bubbles . . . disperses" (Du Maurier 1983, 88).

Whether aural or visual, these are the flashes that trace themselves in the psyche, in the blink of an eye, and which are traced in memory as so many trajectories of becoming, mnemic or, more exactly, *hypomnemic* inscriptions of the invisible city's impossible cartography. The fluidity of imagination dissolves boundaries, transgressing the present instant or event with a line of flight signified in the poetics of invisible sound reiterating and finding itself played out in another form, whilst water itself is the most precarious of surfaces on which are mapped the traces of an other city's signs. (Apropos of Venice, it must be said, at least in passing, that water is nothing if not ambiguous. Apparently the ribbon of memory and desire, it is also that simulacrum of a line of flight that leads to nowhere so much as to the possibility of death. Utopia as Thanatos, it might be observed.) Affirming nothing, such flashes and traces map, nevertheless a 'differential field' that performs the invisible and imaginary city, producing, as the example of Du Maurier's narrator has it, "not the Venice . . . perceived, but the Venice . . . felt within. . . . That uncelestial city from which no traveller returns" (Du Maurier 1983, 91). That reworded partial citation from *Hamlet*, with its allusion to transgressive border crossings and death catches, however jokily, at the other city, and the city's other, in which moment death and utopia become reciprocal palimpsests. The invisible city of memory, archived substrate and supplement, has the power to return at any moment. Its power is to take place "at the place", as Derrida has it, of "originary and structural breakdown" at the limits of experience and representation (Derrida 1996, 10). In effect, it has a greater, if psychic and therefore virtual reality than the material city of London for its subject. And this subject has been

translated by the transgression of the self that the city dictates, in the instant and experience of structural breakdown. The narrator has received a message and become the addressee for whom the transmission was intended. He is thus written by, and into, what I have called above, the *differential field* of the imaginary and invisible city.

The phrase, *differential field*, is taken from the work of Henri Lefebvre. In his ongoing project to establish an interdisciplinary approach to the reading of space termed *rhythmanalysis*, Lefebvre admits the necessity of rethinking "the urban as a *differential field*" (Lefebvre 2003, 53). That differential field, comprised of, and mapped by, differing spatial and temporal flows and rhythms, constitutes the city not as space, which is undifferentiated, homogeneous, but as graphic and material text, albeit in a broad, rather than narrow sense. This is what we have witnessed at work in the transgressive openings, of, *within*, Du Maurier's "Ganymede". Importantly though, and beyond the immediate context of that narrative, such a constitution of the city relies on what is invisible and always in motion. Perhaps surprisingly for those who take Lefebvre as a Marxist, the invisible is always at work in his writing, in the production of the concrete and reified sociological relations of the urban and the city. The invisible flux, so many lines of flight much less obvious than Venetian waterways, and therefore difficult to apprehend, is that which is both produced by the urban and that which, reciprocally and concomitantly defines it. This matter of the endlessly open differential requires our attention. Lefebvre acknowledges its significance when, in *Writings on Cities*, he advertises his "initial concern" as having to do with "a virtual object" (Lefebvre 2003, 23). This so-called "virtual object" is the city conceptualized according to that which is the dominant historical, cultural mode of production. Any reading of the city must perforce be one which responds to the singularity of experience, caught up between determinate historical instances and the contrapuntal affirmation of the uncertainty of context. Thus, there is the political city, the mercantile city, and the industrial city in turn, each of which is disrupted, transgressed and remade from within a given identity.

Lefebvre's choice of term "virtual object" might seem strange within a Marxist discourse, unless of course one recalls Marx's own aporetic obsession with the commodity as fetish. Yet, the justification for this materialist engagement with the virtual, the invisible and the imaginary within the visible and real has to do with the fact that, at least as far as Lefebvre is concerned, the "urban (urban space, urban landscape)" cannot be seen. He asserts unequivocally that it "remains unseen". In the light of this, Lefebvre asks, "[h]ow many people perceive 'perspective,' angles

and contours, volumes, straight and curved lines, but are unable to perceive or conceive multiple paths, complex spaces?" (Lefebvre 2003, 29). That we remain on occasion unable to see the urban as so many multiplicities and complexities signals an ideological 'blindness'. It is such 'blindness' perhaps that drives Kubai Khan's interrogation of Marco Polo in Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. As urban subjects blind to our environments, the city exists, but only as a "blind field", in Lefebvre's terms. Taking this insight further, Lefebvre offers the following trenchant commentary on the "industrial city", one of the historical stages in the development of urban space: "It is a phantom, a shadow of urban reality, a spectral analysis of dispersed and external elements" (Lefebvre 2003, 35). Produced as a reality through the interplay of different logics and discourses, such as those of state and law, spatial organisation, of object, "daily life, language, information, [and] communication", the city thus maintains its reality through the tensions in its multiplicity of forces and modes of production. (In such definitions of urban organization, Lefebvre indicates a debt to the psychogeographic work of Guy Debord and the Situationists.) What we come to see in this analysis is that the city, the idea of a city, historically given and materially realised, is the production of a constantly changing war economy, into the ontology of which—an ontology always tending towards the erasure of difference in "its project of homogenization"—there appears the differential field. Urban space-time, as Lefebvre has it, in which streets "can be considered . . . *incision-suture*[*s*]" therefore appears as a "*differentia*". Lefebvre defines the differential as a moment existing within a whole, "through the contrasts and oppositions that connect it to, and distinguish it from, other places and moments" (Lefebvre 2003 37). One supposes that these other places and moments must be, of course, differentials in and for themselves.

That which is a differential within urban space-time for Lefebvre is therefore a singularity, a particular crystallization, a becoming or event that arrives, is made, takes place or comes to pass. The order of the singular is, of course, only knowable after the fact. The singular—encounter, experience, or event—can only be grasped in its singularity, paradoxically, in what amounts to a revenant transgression, an iterable return that disorders both the present moment of forgetting and the present groundedness of any image. The other city, in its invisible and imaginary alterity touches transgressively in its eruption with that *pathos* of will and desire, intertwined in the embrace of memory that marks the urban subject as modern. This is the scenario, essentially, in that scene from *Death in Venice* where Aschenbach, lounging "near the balustrade" of his hotel, is drawn to the music of a "band of street musicians", which the writer's

nerves, we are told, "drank in thirstily". (Mann 1975, 65). The "unlovely sounds, the vulgar and sentimental tunes" externalize Aschenbach's passionate paralysis, which is described as the passion which "paralyses good taste" (Mann 1975 66). This singular moment is juxtaposed by Mann with the reiteration of a question. "'Why in the world'", comes a voice, shortly before the music begins, "'are they forever disinfecting Venice?'" (Mann 1975, 65; 68). When the music stops, the query reiterates itself, partially as a statement: "'Listen!' said the solitary, in a low voice, almost mechanically; 'they are disinfecting Venice—why?'" (Mann 1975, 68). There is a seemingly effortless, yet austere economy of representation at work here, as Mann frames Aschenbach by the reduplication and return of the question 'Why?'. The single work marks out the borders of urban experience, within which framing gesture, there is woven the differential field of Lefebvrian space-time. Aschenbach is trapped between vulgarity and bathos, and urban aesthetics and their promotion through a hygienic regime. Trapped between two aural modalities—the sound of the music and the sound of the disinfecting process, Aschenbach is produced in his reality, the lie given to his own simulacral propriety, by those incision-sutures of the city.

It could be argued however, that this scene has more to do with Aschenbach's transgressive yet banal desires than with Venice itself. Perhaps—except that in Mann's story, Venice is always a singular place for Aschenbach, a complex and contradictory maze, in which "the city's evil secret mingled with the one in the depths of [Aschenbach's] heart" (Mann 1975, 61). Venice is a city that offers what Mann describes as a "dark satisfaction" (Mann 1975, 61). Strange satisfaction indeed, if, by that, desire leads to destruction, whether in Mann or, for example, over 200 years earlier, in Thomas Otway's *Venice Preserv'd.* Whether this is the case, Venice is a city composed, as we have seen, of lines of flight that repeat themselves endlessly, leaving the city a "wretched state" (I.I.207), as Otway's double pun has it, playing between a realpolitik of corruption and the image of the city's corporeal disease and dissolution. The city may not be a city of death exactly, but the city as state leads one to the ultimate abjection of the self, whereby it becomes, and promises to return one to its absolute other, a utopia, the non-place that is non-being.

In Mann's tale, Venice is this double place, yet marked by difference. It is a place composed of smells, sounds, impressions, multiple fleeting flashes of revelations—and, it must be added, revelations of the other: the other beyond the immediacy of place, the other-to-come, otherness without place, to the subject. For while Aschenbach and John Baxter, Du Maurier's architect from *Don't Look Now* obsessively pursue what eludes

them, until desire results in death, the city, its secret, remains hidden, invisible and other (Du Maurier 2006). It is the city, the invisible city within the visible structures of squares and labyrinths, themselves two figures for classical propriety and improper entrapment, which determines through its differential field the emotional quality or tone, the *stimmung* (to employ this untranslatable term), of the subject's experience. The city is always in its imagistic impulses the otherwise impossible mapping of precession and imminence, as the subject becomes deterritorialized in what Jean-Luc Nancy has called, in another context, the "desert of *jouissanc*" (Nancy 2006, 48). The city, as other, as invisible and imaginary but given to flashes of revelation, is never here; it is always displaced.

Take, for example, the following passage from *Death in Venice* as example:

> . . . his passion . . . sometimes . . . passed from his view, and then he was assailed by an anguish of unrest . . . . The air was heavy and foul, the sun burnt down through a slate-coloured haze. Water slapped gurgling against wood and stone. The gondolier's cry . . . was answered with singular accord from far within the silence of the labyrinth. They passed little gardens high up the crumbling wall, hung with clustering white and purple flowers that sent down an odour of almonds. Moorish lattices showed shadowy in the gloom. The marble steps of a church descended into the canal. . . . Yes, this was Venice, this the fair frailty that fawned and that betrayed, half fairy-tale, half snare; the city in whose stagnating air the art of painting once put forth so lusty a growth, and where musicians were moved to accords so weirdly lulling and lascivious. Our adventurer felt his senses wooed by this voluptuousness of sight and sound, tasted his secret knowledge that the city sickened . . . . (Mann 1975, 63)

In this passage the city is in some ways more active in the seduction of Aschenbach, leading one to the conclusion that the story is not one of paedophile lust, so much as it is an elegiac, yet febrile *caveat lector* concerning the lure of the city's invisible pull. The city thus appears to function outside Aschenbach's imagination and yet to hold it, rather than being merely a projected, externalised phantasm of a corrupted state. This ambiguity is telling, to say the least.

The city, it might be said, is nothing but the transposition of impressions, non-similar, differentiated phantom supplements, generated at a slight remove from where one is positioned. It is only ever and always *the places there*, *the places beyond* (*les lieux de là / delà*). Such places in their passage and exchange intervene in the representation of the city to serve in its differentiated production that preserves rather than "reducing" the "*differential spaces*", in Lefebvre's words, that generate the urban

phenomenon in its "multiple divisions and fragmentations", even as, to quote Lefebvre once more, "such fragments do not constitute knowledge" (Lefebvre 2003, 48; 49). If we recall Foucault at this juncture on the formation of the transgressive, we see how the other city is generated by "elements [that] are situated in an uncertain context, in certainties that are immediately upset so that thought is immediately ineffectual as soon as it attempts to seize them" (Foucault 1998, 73). The very idea of the city involves acknowledging the giving place to a *there* which can never be a *here.* It is in no one place for the urban subject, and affirms its alterity in its resistance to the economy of epistemological coherence. It is only ever a series of fleeting and fragmentary, discontinuous experiences and associations that either elude one or which pass beyond one's field of vision. Venice is just this—so many provisional *theres* or locations-beyond resistant to and transgressing any coherence of place or representation. Aschenbach however cannot countenance such taunting displacements, anymore than can Du Maurier's architect, or the narrator of "Ganymede".

Aschenbach's Venice, neither one thing nor another, evades any final mode of representation. A city of sounds and vapours, it remains on the edge of disappearing, a liminal and endlessly self-transgressing condition and identity. Moorish frames stand against the steps of a Catholic church, which steps, border and passage between internal and external, are also the passageway between the solid and the fluid. Auditory signals come and go, punctuating the half-real and the fabulous, the imminent and the decadent. We respond initially to the slapping of gurgling water, differentiated in its tonal registers by stone and wood. Sound is then transferred to, and taken up, in the gondolier's cry, which sound in turn is taken up and echoed back, from some other invisible place in the labyrinth. Observe how that call and response between the gondolier and his shadowy double, hidden in the labyrinth, is further redoubled in the revenant instant of the musical 'accords' of the composers. All such sounds are then the sources of musical composition, which lulling, lolloping, and lasvicious sonic disorientations saturate the subject, so that the city invisibly remains in its own saturated excess.

Such momentary excess and apprehension also take place as "the gaze and meditation" (and, we might add, the ear) trace the threads between self and other, "the past, the present, [and] the possible", as Lefebvre has it (Lefebvre 1996, 227). How might we explicate what takes place here according to the rhythmic interplay that finds itself played out in the subject's urban apprehension? Lefebvre offers particular suggestions in his meditation on the rhythms of the Mediterranean city. Rhythms, he offers,

are the "music of the City", which no visual medium can express. This last point is arguable. However, in Lefebvre's gesture towards the necessity of an urban rhythm-analysis, he continues by stressing how passage can be suspended, another vision coming to appear from within the present, the invisible city making itself felt through memory (Lefebvre 1996, 227). Memory, writes Lefebvre, allows us to "grasp this present other than in the immediate, restitute it in its moments, in the movement of various rhythms. The remembrance of other moments . . . is essential, not as simple reference, but so as to allow a discontinuous connection, a mode of communication, however abstract, between the present and its others" (Lefebvre 1996, 227). Such mnemic doubling, that communication between present experience and memory's traces, is what drives the doomed of Venice on to their fates, as they act out in reiterated manner the dance they learn from the city's own doublings and displacements. Venice is therefore the city of "multiple paths [and] complex spaces" *par excellence*, to recall Lefebvre's words. It is, at once, a city that is highly visible, known in the imagination without having been visited, and yet also invisible. It is as if, let us remind ourselves of an opening assertation, that there are two cities, one, the authentic city always beneath its perfectly formed, yet inauthentic palimpsest.

The urban space of Venice is often written therefore as a contest of motions, rhythms, interruptions and tensions, as I have already sought to illustrate. This is figured economically by Ian McEwan in the opening of *The Comfort of Strangers*. Invisibly, yet for all that, resolutely, ineluctably *there*, Venice intrudes in the afternoon through the dark green shutters of a hotel room: "It was at this time, in the clouded, late afternoon heat that . . . voices filled the darkened hotel room, *rising and falling in waves* of laughter and dissent, *flooding* the brief silences between each piercing blow of . . . hammers", so many "steel tools [pitted] against the iron barges which moored by the hotel pontoon" (McEwan 1982, 11; emphasis added). Mechanical and inhuman noise offers itself as counterpoint to the fluidity of intermingling human sounds. As McEwan's metaphors of materiality and fluidity attest, Venice is always, simultaneously its own transgressive doppelganger. Its fluidity vies with its always crumbling materiality, its persistently imminent demise captured in the precarious relationships and the attraction of dangerous opposites in plays such as *Othello* or *Venice Preserv'd*. Furthermore, as the history of the ghetto, embodied ambivalently in *The Merchant of Venice*, attests Venice is a place always on the edge, as the very edge itself, a liminal and double boundary. It is a "city of disguises" and "eely waters" (as Jeanette Winterson puts it in *The Passion*, wherein bridges, seemingly the only real locations

are also structures that figure materially and paradoxically a "void" from across which—again Winterson—the "other will not return" (Winterson 1987 56; 57). Doubtless, this has to do with the fact that, as a "city of mazes", a "mercurial city", although "wherever you are going is always in front of you, there is no such thing as straight ahead" (Winterson 1987, 49).

Moreover, as Winterson insists, in introducing the city to us, it is a site of "impossible gaps", "corners that seem to take you the opposite way" (Winterson 1987, 49). Here the reader begins to glimpse how the rhythms of architectural and topographical reiteration operate to affirm the city's otherness, its fall back into invisibility, in such a way that its secret is maintained through the rhythmic, replication, interruption and disorientation allied to a formal duplication, a doubling of form that is simultaneously a displacement of identity. In this, repetition of place and form disorientates the subject, bringing about a transgressive sense of loss of self in relation to location. Every space imagined is a radical heterotopic invention of every other place that appears to be nearly, or seemingly the same.

Images of Venice tempt in their iterable sensate recording of "exhaustion, excess, the limit, and transgression", all of which inform the writing of Venice. They constitute an experience described by Foucault as "the strange and unyielding form of those irrevocable movements that consume and consummate us" (Foucault 1998, 84). This has already been seen in diverse ways, but is given a particularly insistent expression in the iterable sameness encapsulated in the examples just given. Location leads you on, but leads you astray. No map, no diagram or text can save you from becoming lost, fallen. Every alley, square, church or bridge is like every other. Each leads you on to yet more which are Laura Baxter's remark in *Don't Look Now* affirms that which seduces, which calls one on insatiably in Venice, until one confronts one's own limit, one's destruction. The city amplifies itself, constituting the subject in abjection, whilst retreating into its material similarities and simultaneities in the promise of endless "reflections and shadows" (Lefebvre 1996, 223) without origin or end.

As Sigmund Freud was all too obsessively aware, whatever one might wish to call or signify by the terms the 'uncanny', one must proceed cautiously, never assuming absolute knowledge of that which slips away from you as soon as you attempt to define it, whether etymologically, psychoanalytically, or by narrative example. Rather like seeing someone you believe you know, or who recollection convinces is familiar to you, you pursue the glimpsed stranger through streets and turnings that become

less and less familiar, as in the pursuit your surroundings begin to let you down, losing you in a labyrinth of contiguous but chance relations. Obsession is perhaps the key there. One need only see a stranger twice to find that figure familiar, or to invest that fleeting being who is other than oneself with the specious familiarity that memory can, on occasions, invest.

Consider again Du Maurier's architect, John Baxter, in this instance in Nicholas Roeg's 1973 film. Cinematic grammar and syntax conforms in its baroque frustrations to the disturbing, unrelenting enigmatic condition of the city. Nothing is to be found, nothing known, and anxiety twinned with obsession is exponentially generated in the face of the uncanny persistence of resistance to any epistemological mode that will comfort or make familiar. Architecture as practice and metaphor for rational ordering—and therefore explanation—is only confounded, made to seem inadequate as explanation, clarification or ordering principle. Yet, one persists in searching, as does Roeg's architect. And this is all the more obsessive when that search, and the desire and obsession that drive it are tied to traumatic memory and the passing encounter with a small red-cloaked and hooded human form, human enough, and yet strangely inhuman too. So the architect is swallowed by the city, he loses his bearings, his identity, and, ultimately, his life.

The very condition of the uncanny experience, then, is that there is always the inexorable slide, inescapable as well as ineluctable, from the familiar to the unfamiliar, the homely to the unhomely, the 'canny' or 'known' to the 'uncanny'. And this equally has to do with one's 'self', one's identity or being and one's location, where location or context determines who one thinks one is, and how the subject is orientated or disorientated not only in the present but in relation to the past, to personal and to cultural memory. In this, and in all motions associated with spatial orientation and disorientation, structural, topographical and, inevitably (on occasion) architectural figures and tropes serve to illustrate what takes place. Topography becomes or is already haunted by tropography. Space, place, and displacement vie uneasily in the same location, situation, site, or locus. As soon as there is a form with repeatable if irregular shapes, the experience or occasion of the uncanny has its chance.

Turning this around, the uncanny is *there*, as soon as undifferentiated space gives way to even the most haphazard construction of place. For the uncanny experience may take place as soon as there is *a* place for the occasional, jarring encounter. And this encounter is a reminder, a *mémoire de lieu* if not a *lieu de mémoire* (to borrow and invert French cultural historian Pierre Nora's now well-known phrase), all the more disturbing

because it is a memory, a surfacing *souvenir* (something which returns, which comes [*venir*] from the other, the unconscious or just simply underneath [*sou*]; all the while there, under the surface and invisible, the trace of the other can surface at any time to capsize one's being) borne up by the undercurrent of the structure of place from some urban unconscious to remind us that we cannot bear in mind that which is at the heart of any familiar locale—its strange otherness, its persistently disorientating alterity. If Venice 'embodies' the haunting quality of the *lieu de mémoire*, and if in turn it may be acknowledged as recalling uncannily the *mémoire de lieu*, the memory of place that one has never been and yet which seems so familiar (and through which familiarity the unhomely is all the more forcefully pressed home on one), then what appears to come from the other is the sudden appearance from within the invisible city in the subject's imaginary is a sense that the place is never 'here' exactly. It is never with me, nor am I in that place. Instead, I perceive the place, as an other place, as the place of the other. The city stages its sudden appearances, rather like those moments in *Don't Look Now* where one sees a strange figure in another place. Standing on one bridge, one witnesses the uncanny other passing over water, across another bridge. Here we have the visual metaphor for the invisible city. One witnesses what one experiences, with a frustrating brevity and proximity to that which one is always in pursuit of. The place is always, to recall Heiner Goebbel's enigmatic phrase that I have used in my title, the place of there, the place there, the place of 'the there'. As we know then, and as Freud demonstrates insistently, as soon as there is an example, the 'uncanny', so-called, has fled. When definition takes place, it does so belatedly. Departed, on the run like the red-hooded dwarf of *Don't Look Now*, ahead of its definition or my determination of its identity or meaning, the 'uncanny' is only to be acknowledged belatedly by the recounting, the witnessing, of an effect as after-effect; that is to say, as the somewhat ghostly generator of untimely narrative that takes place in the very place where the 'uncanny' is not. And this, we might argue, is the invisible city of Venice.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

'A PALACE AND A PRISON ON EACH HAND': VENICE BETWEEN MADNESS AND REASON, FROM THE BAROQUE TO ROMANTICISM

ARKADY PLOTNITSKY

Lord Byron's famous opening of Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* offers one of the most extraordinary literary portraits of Venice:

> I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
> A palace and a prison on each hand:
> I saw from out of the wave her structures rise
> As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
> A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
> Around me; and a dying Glory smiles
> O'er the far times, when many a subject land
> Look'd to the winged Lion's marbles piles,
> Where Venice sate in state, thron'd on her hundred isles!
> (IV.1-9)

The passage brings together time and space, history and culture, and, as I shall argue here, reason and madness, and thus defines Venice as a city that is both Baroque and Romantic. This image is, accordingly, a fitting starting point for an exploration of the relationships between Romantic and Baroque conceptions of architecture and the city. The limits of this essay itself only allow me to sketch an argument concerning these relationships and of each conception itself, Romanticism and the Baroque. This argument is grounded in the role of materiality in defining the space or time, or 'spacetime' of the city, or any spacetime—physical, cultural, political, and historical, or that constituted by various interactions among these spacetimes, which is in fact always the case. I also argue that

materiality itself must be conceived in the same plural (physical, cultural, political, and historical) and multiply interactive sense. My main thesis is that the materiality pertaining to a given space or spacetime inflects or 'curves' this spacetime, as against the Euclidean and then Cartesian concepts of mathematical space, or our (Cartesian) models for other spaces, often based on these concepts.

This statement is literally true in physics, where, according to Albert Einstein's so-called *general relativity* theory, a non-Newtonian theory of gravity, introduced in 1915, the gravity of material bodies or of other forms of materiality, such as an electromagnetic field, curves spacetime (which physically means that gravity bends light rays). This curvature is, moreover, generally variable, depending on the amount of matter in the vicinity of a given point. The theory is grounded in one of the key concepts of modern geometry, due to Bernhard Riemann, the concept of "manifold"—defined as (in general) a non-Euclidean space, composed of a conglomerate of local spaces, whose curvature may vary. The physical part of Einstein's theory in part follows Leibniz, arguably *the* greatest philosopher of the Baroque. Leibniz questioned Newton's concept of absolute (ambient) space in which bodies are placed and argued instead that the idea of space is meaningless apart from the presence of physical bodies. The concept of spacetime was introduced earlier as part of the-called *special* (rather than *general*) relativity theory, formulated by Einstein in 1905 and restricted to the theory of electromagnetic phenomena, such as light, in the absence of gravity. In either form of relativity theory, special or general, one can no longer distinguish unconditionally, once and for all, spatiality and temporality, since space can become time, and time space. By contrast, the concept of spacetime is rigorously applicable throughout, and allows for this exchange between spatial and temporal determinations of events depending on the frame of reference in which a given event is defined. The scheme is correlative to the impossibility of a single frame of reference that would allow one to coordinate all the events in the way it is possible in Newton's physics. This impossibility gives the spacetimes of Einstein's theory an irreducible heterogeneity, even in the absence of gravity. The variability of curvature, defined by gravity, gives spacetimes of general relativity an even more radical heterogeneity. Indeed, apart from certain special cases, it deprives them of all homogeneity, in accordance Riemann's concept of manifold, defined as a heterogeneous, but connected, conglomerate of local spaces (of, in general variable curvature) 'quilted' together.

Einstein's theory has important technological underpinnings in the processes of observation and measurement, which give it a more complex

architecture and/as a form of materiality. Einstein's great initial insight was that space, or time, do not exist independently, for example and in particular, in the form of Newton's absolute space and time, but instead arise, as *effects*, from the technological nature of our measuring instruments, such as rods and clocks, and of our perceptual and conceptual interactions with these instruments (those of our bodies included). This techno-material efficacy of space and time, and of spacetime, is not unlike the efficacity of Derrida's *différance*, that produces, as effects, multiple differences, proximities, and interactions between and among entities that in an un-deconstructed regime would be seen as unconditionally separate or opposite (Plotnitsky 2002, 184-99). Derrida sees *différance* as the material efficacity of both spatiality and temporality, of the spatiality of space and the temporality of time, or sometimes, of the spatiality of time and the temporality of space (Derrida 1982, 13). Materiality is conceived here so as to include the materiality of writing, using the term 'writing' in Derrida's extended sense, reciprocal with a certain radical idea of materiality, coupled to the idea of technology, via *différance* and other Derridean "neither terms nor concepts," such as trace, supplement, dissemination, and so forth. This broader view of materiality allows one to extend Einstein's technological argument concerning space and time just sketched to space and time, or spacetime, of all our cultural production, including that of our theories, such as Einstein's relativity. All cultural artifacts, scientific theories included, become effects, products, of a material *différantial* dynamics, and thus are written in Derrida's sense by means of technologies of culture (beginning with pens and pencils, but hardly ending with them).

An analogous type of argument was developed in the constructivist social studies of science, where, more recently, an uncritical view of social constructivism as a single determining "technology" of such productions was reexamined as well, bringing the resulting constructivist argument closer to that offered in this essay (for example, Latour 1999). I am, however, primarily concerned here with extending this argumentation beyond science, to the Baroque and the Romantic urban spacetimes, as *curved* by materiality in its various forms, and their artistic and literature representations. The term 'architecture' may be given a new meaning from this perspective: it creates space, physical and cultural, including political, or time and history rather than is something that is put in space for the purposes of living or other reasons, or even merely something that shapes or reshapes the space it is put in. One might, then, define architecture *as* this materiality, materiality that makes possible any space or time, material or mental, physical or historical, and that defines any specific spacetime,

by always creating and dislocating it, by deconstructing and, importantly, (re)delimiting (rather than eliminating) any spatio-temporality that we might assume to be stable or definitive.

It must be kept in mind, however, that, as Derrida (1982) and Paul de Man (1996) argue, it is impossible to unequivocally dissociate or metaphysically isolate materiality, physical or cultural, from phenomenality. Any specific form of materiality is, in part, given to us by phenomenality, even though phenomenality, too, is the product of materiality, beginning, again, with that of our bodies. These reciprocal interrelationships are irreducible and are themselves part of the type of dynamics that Derrida pursues in terms of *différance* and writing, and de Man pursues in terms of allegory, and specifically Romantic allegory. This process is captured or *allegorized* by Byron's depiction or, again, inscription of Venice, with which I began here. Byron's perception and thinking give Venice its shape, create (along with the physical materiality of the city around him and via the technology of his body) Venice and its architecture (in the conventional sense). Byron's position, as a poet and an exile, on a bridge between a palace and prison, the position that defines poetry and the poet, is reciprocally defined by architectural materialities, physical, cultural, political, including those of Venice. Shelley thematizes the situation is his description of "[his] own, [his] human mind . . . / Holding an unremitting interchange/ With clear universe of things around" in "Mont Blanc" (36-40), which depicts the mountain in architectural and often Baroque terms of "city" and "ruin".

By endowing a given spacetime curvature, and, to begin with, by merging space and time into a heterogeneous spacetime (and, by extension, culture and history into a manifold of cultural-historical chronotopes, as Mikhail Bakhtin would call them), materiality, I argue, also gives it a "Baroque" architecture, as against a Euclidean or Cartesian one. This curving and especially varying curving of chronotopes by materiality and specifically by Derridean or de Manian techno-materiality appears to be missed by Bakhtin, and I would argue, by Henri Lefebvre's analysis of urban spacetimes (sometimes also shifted or *curved* too much toward social constructivism and away from more complex and multilayered materialities). I use the term 'Baroque' both in its historical sense and in its conceptual sense, in part following Deleuze's concept of the Baroque as elaborated in *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (Deleuze 1992). This sense allows one to extend the denomination 'Baroque' beyond its conventional historical boundaries, all the way into our own time, without in any way diminishing the significance of the historical Baroque; and Romanticism, I argue here, is part of this, still continuing,

history of the Baroque. (The historical Baroque retains its significance in shaping this history.) As noted above, in physics the idea of materiality, as defining the "architecture" of space, originates in Leibniz and, thus, in the Baroque, in Leibniz's and the Baroque's confrontation with Newton and the Cartesianism of Renaissance. As Boromini's or Christopher Wren's work especially demonstrates, the actual Baroque architecture explores both effects of materiality, spatio-temporality and curvature, at various levels—conceptual, physical, and cultural, including political. So do the Venetian Baroque painters, especially Tintoretto, who has a particular significance for Deleuze's analysis of the Baroque (Deleuze 1992, 29-31; 75).

Thus understood, the Baroque frees its spacetimes from the imposition of the 'Cartesian' or (to the degree one can still use the term) 'Renaissance' architecture (mathematical, physical, or cultural) upon them (Deleuze 1992, 3; 32). This imposition would presumably enable a *rational* coordination of points or events in space or time, or spacetime (which may also be conceived, at least culturally, in these Cartesian terms). Ultimately, one would be able to arrive at a single global coordination of all events in space and time. The Renaissance concept of perspective, grounded in Euclidean geometry and grounding the corresponding view of the world, Descartes's analytic geometry (which algebraically codifies geometrical lines and figures), and Newton's absolute space and absolute time are among the primary models of this philosophy and ideology based on it. This ideology has its proper material efficacity in the concomitant development of capitalism and, in Louis Althusser's language, its ideological state apparatuses. By contrast, while Baroque spaces, or, their best mathematical model, Riemannian spaces in mathematics, allow for local coordination and grids (it may not be possible to do without them), they do not in general allow for global coordination.

The cities were gradually made to conform to or to obey more and more this Cartesian rationality and coordination, spatial or cultural, or historical, insofar as their past history was 'revised', and their future would be shaped accordingly. Of course, coordination and grids, spatial and cultural, have existed in and shaped cities and other spaces throughout human history. In question here is a broad ideology and its material apparatuses aimed at a global (rational) cultural-historical coordination that defined the city and, along with the life of society, the city life, accordingly. This ideology was also to serve the program of the Enlightenment and was, reciprocally, amplified and, in practice, enforced by this program.

The program proved to be more difficult to advance in some cases, such as Venice, many political pressures, from within and from without, notwithstanding. Some of these pressures unavoidably had their effects, which resulted in losses in the Baroque richness of Venice's spacetimes, lamented by Byron in *Childe Harold*. Still, Venice has managed to remain more Baroque in its spacetimes under the Cartesian siege of the Enlightenment, and even absorb Cartesianism into them. Venice is a Baroque city par excellence, not only in terms of the architecture of its buildings or its paintings, but also in terms of its overall curvilinear Baroque spacetime, physical, cultural, and historical. Indeed, one can hardly doubt that this spacetime helped to bring about its architecture and especially paintings.

Also a mad city, literally a mind *twisting* city, and a (the?) city of madness! This aspect of Venice is symbolized or allegorized arguably most dramatically or tragically by its greatest imprisoned mad man and its greatest poet, Torquato Tasso. Tasso, described as "the Bard" mad and "divine" (echoing Plato's definition of poetry as divine madness in *Ion*), is the first proper name mention by Byron, and it figures significantly in the part of Canto IV devoted to Venice (*Childe Harold*, IV, 146; 19). Tasso's story, as a story of love, politics, and madness, becomes central to Shelley's *Julian and Maddalo*, in part inspired by his reading of the Canto.

With Michel Foucault's analysis of madness in the classical age, the age of Cartesian reason, I give (with due caution) the idea of the Baroque city as a "mad city" a positive meaning. For, one might say that this Baroque architecture or the Baroque more generally gives or restores a certain form of 'madness' to our spacetimes. Indeed, one could, at least metaphorically and perhaps not only metaphorically (since lines are created by us rather than exist as pre-given in some pre-given space, material or mental), define curvature as a certain madness, perhaps the divine madness, of the straight line, as a straight line gone astray, as if deflected, sometimes traumatically, by something within or without it. Unless, it is, on the contrary, the straight line that is a mad curve, and Cartesian coordination and reason are madness—not reason gone mad, but the madness of reason itself. Descartes perhaps already knew this, even if against himself, as Derrida argues in his reading of Foucault, which may be more Foucauldian that it might appear (Derrida 1978). It follows that madness and reason, even in mathematics, let alone in poetry, are not simply or unequivocally distinguishable so as to allow reason to isolate madness, just as Venice or its rulers wanted to isolate Tasso or Paris Antonin Artaud. Artaud, alongside Vincent van Gogh and Friedrich Nietzsche, is Foucault's principal example of madness judging reason,

defined, naïvely, as the grid of the rational. But then, Foucault's point is that these cases, or, by implication, that of Tasso, are not essentially different from most other cases of madness, which reason or, again, something that sees itself as reason wants to isolate. As will be seen, Shelley makes the same point in *Julian and Maddalo*. This is why Foucault argues that each of these cases or any case of madness, or reason, is both exemplary and yet unique in its mixture of reason and madness. In Baroque spacetimes, boundaries between reason and madness are possible, too, and sometimes necessary, but are never unconditional or established once and for all. These spaces combine reasons and madness (as the best reason or madness must do), just as Riemannian spaces in mathematics and Einsteinian spaces in physics combine Cartesian grids or other coordination with the play of curvatures.

Venetian paintings offer remarkable allegories of the architectural materiality of the Baroque in the present sense, that of inflecting and curving spacetimes, interactively, physical, phenomenal, and cultural—from straight lines to curves, from coordination and grids to curved spaces with at most local coordination, from reason to madness. Tintoretto's paintings are perhaps the greatest examples of this allegorization and, thus, of the Baroque in Deleuze's extended sense, and, as I said, they are important for Deleuze's analysis of the Baroque. In Tintoretto's frescoes of the Scuola di San Rocco, virtually all spaces or temporalities, physical and social, are defined by the material, corporeal ('heavy') bodies, architectural or human, and by their movement from the physical architecture and material architectural creation of spacetime in them, to the historical and social, including political, ones, and the corresponding spacetimes. As a result, they also become reflections of, and on, the fact that Venice, beginning with its architecture, is indissociable from its politics and its geopolitics. More accurately, one should speak of the interplay of both. One need not start with physical spacetimes and then move to the historical and social-political ones, although the physical ones might strike one first in experiencing these paintings. Instead, both types of spacetimes incessantly, interminably pass into and define each other, often through the interactions, confrontational or consonant, of the different perspectives on the world offered by their characters.

A significant portion of Romantic poetry, especially that of the younger Romantics, such as Byron, Shelley, and Keats, or their German counterparts, such as Heinrich von Kleist (Deleuze 1992, 125), is concerned with and offers allegories of the Baroque. It explores the emergence of *curved*, as against Cartesian or Newtonian, spacetimes due to the action of materiality upon them, with both these spacetimes and

materiality defined broadly as phenomenal, physical, and cultural, or interactively all three. Specific references to Baroque architecture and cities, in particular, Venice or Rome, in Byron's *Childe Harold* or in Shelley's *Adonais* and *Julian and Maddalo*, are both symptomatic of the significance of these allegories and help to create them. It is worth citing Shelley's letter, written from Milan after a visit to Como, which he describes in terms of a "union of culture and the untamable profusion & loveliness of nature is here so close that the line where they are divided can hardly be discovered". He then writes:

> Como is only 6 leagues from Milan, & its mountains are seen from the Cathedral. This Cathedral is a most astonishing work of art. It's built of white marble & cut into pinnacles of immense height & the utmost delicacy and workmanship, & loaded with sculpture. The effect of it, piercing the solid blue with those groups of dazzling spires relieved by the serene depth of this Italian heaven, or by moonlight when the stars seem gathered among those sculpture shapes is beyond anything I had imagined architecture is capable of producing. The interior tho[ugh] very sublime is of a more earthly character, & with its stained glass & massy granite columns overloaded with antique figures & the silver lamps that burn forever under the canopy of black cloth beside the brazen altar & and the marble fretwork of the dome, give it the aspect of some gorgeous sepulchre. There is one solitary spot among these aisles behind the altar where the light of the day is dim & yellow under the storied window which I have chosen to visit & to read Dante there.
>
> I have devoted the summer & indeed the next year to the composition of a tragedy on the subject of Tasso's madness, which I find upon inspection is, if properly treated, admirably dramatic & poetical. (Shelley 1964, 2; 461-62)

The phrase "architecture is capable of *producing*" may be read in the direct sense, at work through Shelley's depiction of architecture in his poetry. Architecture produces a curved Baroque spacetime in which Shelley finds himself, and which his own phenomenal perception and thinking help to construct as such in a reciprocal interchange with the architectural universe around him. The tragedy on the subject of Tasso's madness, a quintessentially Baroque subject, linked to the curved, mind-twisting spaces of the Baroque Venice, never materialized. The project mutated into *Julian and Maddalo*, perhaps a fortunate genetic mutation. While keeping the same spacetime of the Baroque and the same city, Venice, as its primary incarnation (also in the direct sense of material embodiment), the poem replaced or rather linked both poetry and the madness of Tasso to, as Shelley says in his Preface, the "agony" found in

"the text of every heart" (Shelley 1977, 113). It is not be possible for me to give a proper reading of this extraordinary work. Nearly every line of the poem, by the very nature of the dynamic flow of its poetic curvature (characteristic of Shelley's poetry in general), inscribes, enacts both the Baroque in the broad sense of this paper and the Baroque of Venice. I would like, however, to comment on the question of madness in the poem from this perspective.

Inspired by the story of Tasso and by Shelley's reading of Canto IV of Byron's *Childe Harold*, the poem is structured as a "conversation" (the poem's subtitle) between its two main protagonists, Julian and Maddalo. The poem ostensibly suggests Shelley as a prototype for Julian and Byron for Maddalo, and gives the corresponding character a few traits of each poet. As, however, a number of commentaries, beginning with Earl Wasserman's classic study (Wasserman 1971, 57-83), show, the poem makes it both difficult and unnecessary to identify or even to properly correlate the two protagonists with Shelley and Byron respectively. The conversation is a confrontation between Julian's (roughly Enlightenment) views, explained in detail throughout the poem, and "the darker side" (49) taken by Maddalo, whose specific views, however, are "not exactly known" (Shelley1977, 113). The case of the Maniac, the third main protagonist (whose name is not given) of the poem, the case of madness, offers an occasion to settle the dispute. The reasons for the Maniac's illness are not exactly known, and, as I shall explain, may ultimately not be important, although his disappointment in love appears to be the cause. The poem also contains two female characters—the Lady, the Maniac's companion, and Maddalo's daughter—who are not given much space but whose significance is considerable, although their role cannot be considered here.

The debate remains unresolved, which is not surprising given the generally skeptical nature of Shelley's poetry. Instead, as is characteristic of Shelley, more profound questions are posed, giving the two protagonists and the poem's reader an opportunity to think more deeply about the case and the world. Also, there emerges a new space or, again, spacetime of the relationships between people, a new spacetime of friendship (the words "friend" and "friendship" appear throughout the poem, and dominate the closing part, after an encounter with the Maniac), although I can only mention this aspect of the poem here. The character of Maddalo's daughter—"A woman, such as it has been my [Julian's] doom [fate] / To meet with few, a wonder of this earth, / Where there is little of transcendent worth, / Like of Shakespeare's women: kindly she / And with a manner beyond courtesy/ Received her father's friend (589-94)—

becomes especially significant in this context. In any event, Shelley's strategy is to refocus on the long, disconnected monologue of the Maniac, or rather partly disconnected, between reason and madness, which is often the language of what reason sees as madness: "The colours of his mind seem yet unworn;/ For the wild language of his grief was high,/Such as in measure were called poetry" (ll. 540-542). One might say, with Foucault, that this is the voice of madness, which, however, also measures our reason, especially that part of reasons (or a form of madness in its own right, a dangerous form of madness), which defines madness as that which is outside the *coordinates* (the Cartesian space) of reason. Equally subtle is Shelley's rearranging of the architecture of the space that the Maniac inhabits. In responding to Julian's question: "Alas, what drove him mad?", Maddalo replies:

> I cannot say;
> A Lady came with him from France, and when
> She left him and returned, he wandered then
> About yon lonely isles of desert sand
> Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land
> Remaining—the police had brought him here—
> Some fancy took him and he would not bear
> Removal; so I fitted up for him
> Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,
> And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,
> Which had adorned his life in happier hours,
> And instruments of music—you may guess
> A stranger could do little more or less
> For one so gentle and unfortunate;
> And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight
> From madmen's chains, and make this Hell appear
> A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.—
> (245-61)

The allusion to Milton's "The mind is its own place, and in itself/ Can make a heav'n of hell, hell of heav'n" (*Paradise Lost* I, 254-55) is extraordinary and remarkably to the point, which contributes to its extraordinary impact. Heaven and Hell are both cities, and Venice may be both, just as was Dante's Florence. The police, part of the surveillance system of the city and of the maintenance of its coordinated order and social grid, bring the Maniac into his proper place of isolation. The Maniac's "fancy" not to be removed from his isolation is an interesting question in its own right, but would require a separate consideration. The main point here is that Maddalo creates a different spacetime, Leibniz

would say, a different *monadological* space or spacetime (the Maniac's phenomenological time is yet another important subject, which I have to put aside here). This spacetime is the spacetime of the Baroque, now that of the Baroque interior, defined, as Deleuze argues, by the complex relationships between the pleats of matter and the fold of the souls, and of their respective curvatures (Deleuze 1992, 2-5). In this type of spacetime, the relationships between reason and madness become radically redefined, preventing their unequivocal separation and thus a rigorous (in either sense) isolation of madness from reason, its exclusion from reason. There are no police, governmental or mental, which can do so, without an abuse of power by the force that is supposed to protect us in reason and madness. The spacetime of the Maniac's room, or the spacetime of Venice, to which it is metonymically related and which it, in part, metaphorically represents, is the allegory of these relationships.

This is a grand Foucauldian moment of the poem, which also allows us, with Shelley and Venice, to bring together Foucault and Deleuze (whose philosophical friendship is akin to that of Byron and Shelley). From this perspective, the reason for the Maniac's madness is indeed less important than his voice, as Maddalo suggests to Julian earlier, before Julian's Enlightenment ideas suffer a shipwreck in the Maniac's room, in the spacetime of the Baroque, beside the sea, a space without grid, upon which our navigation likes to impose (albeit for good reasons) coordinates. As Foucault tells us in *The History of Madness* (Foucault 1988; I use Foucault's original title here), it is not only cases like those of van Gogh, Nietzsche, or Artaud that cannot be measured by reason, if defined apart from madness, and that by their 'madness' measures this 'reason' instead. Foucault appears to be using these cases because they make it difficult for us to separate reason and madness. The main point or at least impact of appealing to them is, I would argue, in showing that every case of madness would, given space enough and time, enough spacetime, reveal the same complexity of the relationships between reason and madness.

This is why Shelley gives no name to the Maniac and says in the Preface that "of the Maniac I [the fictional author of the preface] can give no information. He seems by his own account to have been disappointed in love." Shelley suggests that "the unconnected explanation of his agony will perhaps be a sufficient comment for the text of every heart" (Shelley 1977, 113). That his love story may be tragic, too tragic to be told and made known to "the cold world," which is also the world of cold reason, as the poem's last line tells us (l. 617), only supports and amplifies Shelley's point. One need not be "officially" declared "mad" by reason to be oppressed by it or to prove it wrong when it tries to isolate madness

from thought. In the Maniac's own words: "*Me*—who am as a nerve o'er which do creep/The else unfelt oppressions of this earth" (449-450; Shelley's emphasis). If there is reason, thinking reason, madness is its nervous system. Our neural system is surely a supply system to both, just as canals are for Venice, and for its reason and its madness.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SEWARD'S LICHFIELD

TERESA BARNARD

In October 1762 Anna Seward, the Lichfield poet, composed the first of a series of thirty-nine personal letters to an invented friend, 'Emma'. As she entered them into her letter book, she began the continuing practice of recording her life through her correspondence. These early letters have become known as her juvenile correspondence although they are, in effect, a journal of her formative years from the age of nineteen to twenty-five. Her later correspondence, which was published posthumously, was written after she had established herself as one of the most successful female poets of the late eighteenth century and is presented in a formal literary style. Although the juvenile correspondence is framed in scholarly writing and intellectual debate, it has the fresh perspective of youthful life writing, complete with ink blots and scrawls.

A significant disparity between the mature and juvenile letters is found in the themes. In her letters to Emma, Seward writes intimately of her life in Lichfield. Through a series of insightful anecdotes, she paints little word pictures of the city's inhabitants: who they were and how they lived their lives. Throughout her writing career Seward used her letters as a means of constructing a literary persona for herself. The juvenile letters reinforce her self-definition and her aspirations but importantly they also offer a social and cultural idea of the city of Lichfield and its inhabitants that is unavailable elsewhere.

Seward was well aware of her exceptional writing skills from an early age. Walter Scott, who was one of her literary editors, records in his Biographical Preface to her posthumous poetry collection that she wrote in imitation of the Psalms before she was ten years old. He added somewhat cynically that her subsequent poetry was not particularly imaginative, stating that it "intimates considerable command of numbers and language, though the ideas can hardly be called original" (Scott 1810, 1:vi). At first,

her father Thomas took an enthusiastic view of his young daughter's talent, encouraging her to read his own favourite writers: Pope, Young, Prior and Dryden, and to style her verse on theirs. As she approached maturity, however, both her parents gradually withdrew their support for her writing. Now completely opposed to the idea of her intellect creating "that dreaded phaenomenon, a learned lady", they attempted to convince her that she had no literary talent (Scott 1810, 1:vii). She wrote despairingly that where Thomas once recognised genius in her writing, he had now persuaded himself that it was illusory, that the "early and premature brightness [was] eclipsed and shut in for ever" (Seward 1763, 26-27).

Despite opposition from family and friends, Seward continued to write poetry. She was confident of her abilities and resolute in her determination to express herself through the written word. It is most probable that she evaluated her contribution to literary posterity and anticipated her opportunity to publish both poetry and prose. Like most other young women of her wealthy, middle class status, she had no formal education and, following her parents' hostile reaction to her writing, she embarked on a programme of self-education, reading whenever she could and writing her poems and her letters to Emma. It was not until 1780, the year that her mother died and her father suffered the first of a series of strokes, that she began to publish her poetry in earnest. At the same time, she started to record her life through letters to existent correspondents, copying these out into a series of letter books ready for publication in the latter years of her life.

Throughout the years, Seward kept returning to her juvenile letters, re-reading them and adding a strong literary structure to them, fleshing out her youthful anecdotes with critiques. As she edited and revised, the letters shifted and changed into a retrospective epistolary journal and she planned for its publication within her complete poetry volumes. When the letters to Emma were eventually published a year after she died in 1809, they had been censored. Walter Scott objected to what he perceived as gossip, evidently wanting to distance himself from the fashionable trend for anecdotes. His editing was severe. Not only did the features and themes alter to a great extent under his pen, but the self-representation of Anna Seward that remains within the correspondence was restructured from a strong-willed and vigorous young woman into a one-dimensional book-obsessed figure. Without her vibrant anecdotes, the published correspondence still confirms her sharp intellect but lacks any sense of humour, sensitivity or vivacity. The elaborate prose style she uses augments a negative image. Her writing was deliberately elevated and not

intended to move with the fashionable trends in style. "My letters, like my verses, are not much calculated to please the popular taste", she confirmed (Constable, 1:126).

Although edited ruthlessly, the juvenile letters still contain a credible account of six years of Seward's life in Lichfield. Kathryn Crecelius points out that in the case of conventionally published correspondence, the editorial principles usually determine the nature of the composition, stating "a new text is born, assembled by the critic rather than the author" (Crecelius 1989, 259). In terms of literary control, it was Seward, not a biographer, who originally assembled the correspondence. Scott's editing, however, affected the published composition of the juvenilia, as rather than simply taking out names or details in cases of criticism or gossip, he removed whole sections or complete letters without adding his annotations or comments to the manuscripts. Fortunately, Scott did not destroy his excised sections and they can be restored to the published letters, giving a rounded picture of Seward and her Lichfield.

What is immediately apparent on first reading Scott's censored extracts is that through the medium of the letters, Seward is constructing an anecdotally-framed self-portrait. Her struggle for independence and authorship is exposed as she voices the anxieties she encountered during her troubled negotiations with convention and the marriage market. Despite the tribulations of entering adulthood, this was clearly a fascinating time of her life. She was a great observer and as she watched the dynamics of Lichfield society she recorded what she saw, embellishing the action with details of fashion, manners and mores. Her anecdotes are not written modestly and her pride in her intellect gives her a strong sense of superiority over her Lichfield contemporaries, the "smart Misses, who can think & talk of nothing but of themselves, their Caps, their Laces and their Lovers" (Seward 1769).

Seward depicts mid-eighteenth-century Lichfield as a place of traditional architectural charm with spectacular views across the Stowe Valley. Its unusual triple-spired cathedral and its culture of intellect and sophistication added to its reputation as a city of importance. Its pastoral elegance, although it was partly surrounded by unhealthy marshland, appealed to Seward, who was constantly dismayed at the industrial destruction of the surrounding landscapes towards the west. Lichfield was by no means a retiring place. There was a thriving communal social life with balls, assemblies, card parties, theatre productions and, of course, the public walk. It was a staging post and Seward describes the flow of the busy streets with ornate coaches safeguarded by uniformed flunkeys and flanked by outriders outpacing the sedan chairs. Merchants went about

their business; powdered and perfumed young women rushed from *friseur* to dressmaker, preparing for the evening's ball; handsome young officers from the nearby garrison were dazzling in their scarlet jackets, gold epaulettes and black-ribboned hats.

Seward's family had moved to the city on Thomas's promotion to canon residentiary of Lichfield cathedral in 1749 and the tenancy of the Bishop's Palace on Cathedral Close was available to them. This soon became the centre for Thomas Seward's literary coterie and her mother Elizabeth's card parties, which she held several times weekly. Seward was well aware of the historical significance of Lichfield, specifically the Bishop's Palace. "It is true I dwell on classic ground" she wrote to Emma (Scott 1810, 1:lxix), alluding to Joseph Addison's "A Letter from Italy", in which the narrator views the "immortal glories" he has read of in Roman poetry:

> Poetic Fields encompass me around,
> And still I seem to tread on classic ground;
> For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung.
> (Addison 1709)

Addison's Roman pilgrimage took him to the seat of the Classics and as Seward had no access to university or the grand tour, she established for herself a bond with her own "classic ground" through her allusion to his letter. It was the English classics which fascinated her, and Lichfield's literary hierarchy of Joseph Addison, Gilbert Walmesley, David Garrick, Samuel Johnson, Elias Ashmole and Erasmus Darwin with whom she identified. As the Bishop's Palace had previously been occupied by Gilbert Walmesley, Seward was thrilled to relate that his protégés, Johnson and Garrick, had been regular visitors as school-boys. She remarked confidently that as she approached maturity, she did not have to "struggle up to the notice of [her] neighbours from the gloom of an inferior station". Her father was a gentleman, a scholar and a canon of the cathedral, she noted, and from an early age she met and conversed on equal terms with the "proudest inhabitants of our little city" (Scott 1810, 1:lxix; lxxii; lxxiii).

All the letters to Emma are framed with anecdotes, each of which is built around a single central concept, some relate to class and wealth while others express a forceful opposition to arranged marriages. All of them reflect Seward's attempts to identify and make sense of her role in life and her sense of place. Alternating narrative themes of love, intellect and independence sustain a dialogue with the conventional manners, morals and formalities adopted by the polite society of Lichfield. As in one of

Seward's most influential resources, Samuel Richardson's novel *Clarissa*, the main characters that inhabit Seward's juvenile letters are rounded and well defined, complete with physical descriptions and interesting histories.

Richard A. Barney suggests that Clarissa represents human nature as "adamantine and virtually unchanging", as opposed to characters in novels of education, for example, who usually undergo a reformation (Barney 1999). Clarissa is resistant to change as she struggles to preserve her virtue. Similarly, within the microcosm of Lichfield, Seward situates herself as the heroine of her own drama in a contemporary society that aligns with Richardson's scenario. Her own persona is resolute in her consistent attempts to develop and preserve her intellect and her independence. Tensions appear in her writing when she turns to forceful themes of parental control. She also reveals a robust instinct for rebellion when under pressure to conform to the domestic values imposed by her mother.

Seward's exposition of the provincial marriage market shows up the vulnerability of her friends, the young men and women who faced a life with partners picked by their parents. For most of her female friends there was very little choice. For her male acquaintances, marriage options were controlled by the authority of inheritance. Among her circle, the wealthy young men were encouraged to select wives who would improve their status or increase their wealth and their choice was often manipulated by a financial benefactor, in most cases a father but sometimes a childless relative. The threat of disinheritance and a life of poverty was a powerful coercion to follow family strategy in these matters. Time and again, Seward's anecdotes emphasise the notion that financial concerns were equal to or more important than love.

Complex courtship and marriage negotiations took place in the public spaces of the city. Seward enjoyed the winter season of dazzling balls and assemblies which offered the ultimate, glamorous meeting place. Separate rooms were set aside for card playing and refreshments, with the main assembly room turned over to the orchestra and the dance. The evening began with minuets which, although requiring concentration, allowed for some conversation and even prolonged flirting. Finally, there were the country dances. Intricate formalities accompanied the dancing, particularly the country dances where the men and women were ranged in rows opposite each other. As in life, the wealthy upper classes took precedence in these rows of dancers. The local aristocracy usually attended and, according to Seward's letters, often remained aloof, refusing to participate. She scathingly describes one occasion where a group of arrogant, flamboyant young nobles stood to one side of the room, evidently

appreciating being watched. They were "cold, careless, inattentive and not deigning to join in the Dance . . . [but] we were soon weary of admiring them" (Seward 1762, 12).

As in Frances Burney's *Evelina*, young Lichfield women had to negotiate the bewildering etiquette of the dance. Seward writes that the men chose one partner for the entire evening in a formality that appears peculiar to Lichfield and known as 'for better, for worse'. Among the strict codes of behaviour, there was intimate protocol to negotiate. Seward uses her anecdotes to express how young women and, frequently, young men were maneuvered towards unwanted courtship and marriage by their financially motivated families. She writes vividly, for example, of her friend Nannette's failed courtship by Mr N____, who was also a friend. Framing her story with clear contempt for the pursuit of wealth, for "grown children pursuing their *gewgaws*" (Seward 1763, 16) and for vanity, she writes to Emma explaining how young N____ arrived at an assembly room ball one evening, suddenly and dramatically transformed from the gauche, blushing boy of their acquaintance into a confident, fashionable youth.

Primed by his family to ignore his existing attachment to Nannette and pursue a wealthy heiress, he had been "dress'd with birth-night finery" wearing a blue silk coat trimmed with silver braiding, a solitaire and an elaborate bag-wig (Seward 1763, 16). With N—'s coming of age came a sense of duty to his parents and, disturbingly, a fear of disinheritance. A father's demands took precedence over his son's wishes and the family prosperity dominated his marital options. N____, however, gained nothing from his new clothes and new confidence as Seward describes how he was rebuffed, first by the heiress and later by a humiliated Nannette.

Aside from descriptions of glamorous occasions, a darker side of the idea of the city emerges out of an anecdote Seward tells about a duel. Regional identity shifts away from the familiar landmarks of busy streets and assembly rooms to an isolated field and a remote mansion outside the city. Although the duel anecdote provides an ideal opportunity for Seward to express her thoughts on contemporary themes of honour, she fails to explore the complexity of that issue and sets up the extraordinary account merely as an exercise of literary imagination. The anecdote reads as though written as a synopsis for a novel, uncharacteristically rushed and unembellished, yet it covers important themes of marital control and of codes of honour in Lichfield.

Briefly, she tells the story of a man she refers to as Mr B— and his love for a married woman, Mrs L_____, who is trapped in an unhappy relationship with a possessive, libertine husband. A malicious

acquaintance makes fun of the situation in public and, to preserve his honour, B_____ is obliged to challenge the troublemaker to a duel, which takes place in the field by the house of an eccentric, wealthy widow. In a disastrous yet improbable series of events, Mrs L_____ hears that B_____ has been seriously wounded in the duel and she collapses and dies. "Terror, suspense, restraint, the improbability of obtaining that hourly intelligence which such a sad state of mind demands, bring on fever—delirium—death", explains Seward. (Seward n.d. 77). She registers the notion of sensibility as B_____ is nursed back to physical and emotional health by the wealthy widow, who aids his recovery and reconciles her own loss in the manner of a Rousseau heroine, "mingling her tears with his" and sharing the "melancholy luxury of mutual woe; of speaking, during whole hours to each other, of his lacerated friendship, & her widowed love" (Seward n.d. 77). Eventually, the couple emerge from the widow's gloomy mansion and, to the local community's surprise, marry.

In telling the anecdote, Seward engages with the idea of marital possession in her depiction of the relationship between L_____ and his wife by implying that it is the husband's jealousy which instigates the duel. Her thoughts and reasoning on the morality of duelling are left undeveloped, although in later letters to influential friends she expresses strong opinions on the same subject. Although prohibited, duelling was widespread among the upper classes. A man was prepared to defend the reliability of his word or indeed any aspect of his own honour, or that of a close friend or relative, with his life if necessary. Lichfield was not immune to these codes of honour. Samuel Richardson and Richard Steele were among those who publicly condemned duelling, which could end in death or serious injury, prosecution or exile. When Samuel Johnson and James Boswell debated the subject, Johnson concluded that, under certain circumstances, duelling should be considered lawful. (Boswell 1835, 3:217).

Seward shows no interest in developing her thoughts on duelling, finishing the letter to Emma abruptly without her customary closing words. And, unusually, she offers no analysis other than that she thought B_____ deserved a better fate than marriage with an eccentric widow. Her unusually clipped narrative in this story does not sit comfortably with the style of the other anecdotes and it is not surprising, perhaps, that Scott censored this section. What is interesting, however, is the notion that the real victim here is the woman over whom the duel was fought. Jealously guarded by her husband, who allows her few friends or outings, she is unable to survive without the affection of her friend, B_____. Seward reveals her contempt for marital control, a concept which has a tendency

to surface with regularity in the juvenile correspondence. This idea parallels other anecdotes, albeit with less morbid outcomes, about the harm produced by marital possession and how it might interfere with intellectual work.

Embedded in Seward's discourse is the imagery of provincial women and their expectations and she is preoccupied with defending her own intellect, at least in print if not in public. She also expresses the idea of the ephemeral nature of beauty when contrasted with enduring intellect, telling the story of Harriet, a wealthy but uneducated young woman and her cruelty towards an admirer: a small, fat soldier. At a ball, the poor suitor provided the evening's entertainment as the object of Harriet's malicious contempt as she treated him like a servant. Her sisters and friends giggled behind their fans as the soldier was ordered to fetch drinks and biscuits and made to dance when he was clearly exhausted. Seward thought his red-faced distress was largely self-induced as he had stepped outside his own circle of friends to pursue the beautiful Harriet, yet she is far more judgmental of Harriet's conduct. She criticizes the arrogance which stems from personal vanity with a warning on the transient nature of beauty: "[Harriet] builds the superiority in which she too visibly exults upon the sandy foundations of flattery" (Seward 1764, 51).

The character of Harriet is finely drawn and Seward finds several points of comparison with herself before ultimately placing her in direct opposition, thus emphasising her thoughts on the imagery of women. Harriet was of a similar height and build with comparative rebellious qualities and, Seward notes, also without a formal education. She pays particular attention to Harriet's contrived negligence in dress, using the imagery as an indicator of her individuality but, importantly, of her lack of vitality. Unusually for a woman of her status, her dress is "put on in such a careless style" and is fashioned from "such *clinging* materials . . . and so *few* in number" (Seward 1764, 48). The mid-century fashion for the upper ranks of women incorporated an exaggerated silhouette with tight bodices, hooped skirts and high, powdered, frizzed hair. Seward equates the fragility of Harriet's clothes with Grecian draperies. Her natural shape is revealed and the imagery is that of a lifeless statue, destined to crumble away as will her youth and beauty.

By identifying that Harriet as privileged with a potential opportunity for education that she had chosen to waste, Seward is revealing values of her own. The pressures placed on young women to behave modestly extended to their intellect and their dress. Learning was encouraged but there were boundaries. On one occasion, Seward's friend Erasmus Darwin had suggested that she curb her enthusiastic impulse to join in

conversation, explaining that good listening was a "more captivating accomplishment" for young women than skilful debate (Seward 1764, 47). Needless to say, she ignored his advice.

Much of Seward's defiance grew out of resentment at her intellect being underestimated. This is revealed in her anecdote about Mary Hammond Cobb, known as Moll, a firm friend of Elizabeth Seward and a well-known figure around Lichfield. Outspoken and opinionated, Moll Cobb is represented as shrewd and satirical with an aversion to the expression of female intellect. Although not illiterate, Moll disliked poetry and her reading is documented as limited to romantic novels and plays. Her love of cards and trivial gossip and her selfish nature irritated Seward who admitted, however, to an admiration for Moll's sharp wit. Samuel Johnson did not agree. Much as he loved to visit Moll, or make use of her coach, he was harsh on the subject of her intellect: "How should Moll Cobb be a wit! Cobb has read nothing, Cobb knows nothing; and where nothing has been put into the brain, nothing can come out of it to any purpose of rational entertainment" (Seward 1763, 27).

Seward commanded respect from her immediate circle of friends and from Erasmus Darwin who encouraged her writing when her original enthusiast, her father, had lost interest. Her literary prowess was a target of hostility from her mother, who could see no purpose for it and arguments flared regularly. At this time, Seward attempted to find a balance between authorship and domesticity, managing to succeed at both by learning fine needle-point to appease her mother. Although she secretly expressed confidence in her self-worth through the letters to Emma, she tended to hide her intellect when in public. In time, she openly challenged parental authority, but first came the demeaning prospect of Moll Cobb's daily intelligence tests. Whenever they met, Moll assessed Seward's knowledge and made it clear that she found her wanting. Seward wrote to Emma in February 1763, with an outpouring of anguish at the extent of her humiliation. After noting that very few of her friends and acquaintances outside her close circle suspected that her intelligence was in any way above average, she wrote:

> Nay there is a Lady, a Mrs Cobb, considered, let me tell you, one of the Belle-Esprits of our City, who, from her intimacy with my Mother, from daily opportunities of sounding my abilities . . . pronounces my Understanding rather *below* than *above* the common standard. You know how I am allow'd to have ingenuity in my needle-works; that I invented upon catgut [a type of gauze used in embroidery], a nearer imitation of fine point lace than has yet been seen.

> Lately, in a crouded Company, of which this Personage was one, somebody observed that Doc. Darwin said Miss Seward had genius. "Genius! exclaimed the Belle-Esprit,—why *yes*, she is a *catgut* genius—that's the sum total, I fancy. (Seward 1763, 25-26)

Beneath the irony of Seward's words there is an underlying tone of frustration, particularly at being unable to convince her mother that she was capable of creativity in both writing and embroidery. From within the boundaries of modesty, obedience and cultural expectations, a confused and angry young woman who was in conflict with her parents had at least an outlet in her letters to Emma even though she lacked a public voice at this stage. With the independence of maturity, Seward was able to build on the strength that developed out of these and future conflicts and to reject the restraints that she had no choice but to endure in her youth. Through her self-identification with the "classic ground" of Lichfield, she contrived to leave a specific imprint on eighteenth-century history.

Unfortunately, Walter Scott chose to delete the last letter to Emma which leaves the published narrative without closure. Seward intended to end the discourse with a description of the summer evening view of Lichfield from her terrace. The key feature of the letter is how the place provokes thoughts of literary regeneration. "[Lichfield's] fairness makes me ashamed of this defaced and ill-scribbled Epistle", she remarks, clearly presenting a final measure of literary self-analysis balanced against her surrounding environment (Seward 1768, 84-85).

Anna Seward's self-analysis in her juvenilia forces a justification for her adopted anecdotal form and she compares the letters unfavourably to the writings of "wise, middle-aged gentry". Her conclusion is that the letters have a value to posterity, as the "quick sensibilities of youth often give to the most trivial incidents a deep and lasting importance" (Seward 1763, 43). The juvenile letters may have been the censored anecdotes and gossip that "middle-aged gentry" reject, but they illuminate the hidden lives of the inhabitants of the city of Lichfield and eventually may offer a "deep and lasting importance" through their individual voice.

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CHAPTER NINE

'ARCHAEOLOGIES OF THE FUTURE': NIALL GRIFFITHS—PATHWAYS OF THE URBAN

JARRAD KEYES

> Ontologies of the present demand archaeologies of the future, not forecasts of the past. (Fredric Jameson *A Singular Modernity*, 215)
>
> Is it the city's boundary or the city as boundary that we refer to as an environment? (Henri Lefebvre *The Urban Revolution*, 186)

A major or established literature follows a vector which goes from content to expression: a content once given, in a given form, one must find, discover, or see the form of expression suitable to it. . . . But a minor or revolutionary literature begins by speaking and only sees and conceives afterwards. (Deleuze and Guattari 1985, 591)

In disdainfully noting the preference of selected "contemporary urban sociologists" for "the adjective 'urban' to the noun 'city'", Burton Pike (1981, xii) raises a commonplace of established literature and its interpretations: that "[e]ach city receives its form from the desert it opposes" (Calvino 1979, 18). At the levels in question, that of the English novel—whose content finds symptomatic expression in the polarization of "In the City" and "In the Suburbs" (Kureshi 1990)—and its criticism—as exemplified by *The City and the Country* (Williams 1973)—the form of expression commonly deemed suitable comprises a fundamental dualism whose relational difference is the imprimatur of identity. For example, the "static" city versus the "city of flows" (Pike 1981), the un/real city (Sharpe 1990), or public and private space (Wirth-Nesher 1996). Yet such approaches are increasingly outmoded in a present bereft of the certitude found in that noun, the city, a term traditionally invested as a spatially

bounded, recognizable entity and object of analysis. For, in several important respects, the urban is a different terrain (in the manifold sense of that term) to that associated with the city, symptomatic not of a qualitative crisis of identity—as inferred by several recent academic readings (Keyes 2007)—but of a nascent condition that "is becoming the overwhelmingly predominant way in which the world is *experienced* by the majority of people whether they live in cities or not" (Skeates 1997, 6).

First traced by Henri Lefebvre (2003), the exposition of the urban provides the context within which this article analyzes several texts by contemporary novelist Niall Griffiths, with a view to engaging the insufficiencies of conventional literary hermeneutics, particularly their inability to account for the changing ontological and epistemological conditions that manifest in these works. Since they overlap in a number of areas, the works of Griffiths are justifiably compared to those of Irvine Welsh. Stylistically, each probes the shifting relationships between dialect and grammatical form, whilst thematically both are concerned with discourses of addiction, gender, and nationalist politics, aspects which compliment their mutual interest in the construction and enunciation of identity. Depicting a nation politically deracinated by Thatcherism, its legacy of social atomism reinforced by the cynicism fostered by New Labour's "abandonment . . . of the symbolic aspirations of politics itself" (Bewes 1997, 3), Griffiths' works—amongst them *Grits* (2001), *Sheepshagger* (2002), *Kelly & Victor* (2003), *Stump* (2004), and *Wreckage* (2005)—together resemble the political topography of *Trainspotting*. Thematically informed by the lingering problems of the post-1973 "crisis decades" (Hobsbawm 1994, 403-432), each explore—and finally reject—the divisive claims of identity politics. Where Welsh (1997, 234, 84) displays inherent misgivings "aboot countries" that, together with a wholesale rejection of British and Nationalist alternatives, prompt little "other than total disgust", Griffiths adopts a more subtle approach, using Nationalist "talk about nationhood, cultural unity, stuff like that" (2001, 31) as little more than a white noise "of devolution fever, of millennial psychosis" indicative of apathy, "the Welsh disease" (2002, 226, 75). This similarity extends to a figurative convergence in the image of the tower block as a decaying vestige of utopian aspirations: once having "seemed so modern", these "varicose vein flats" represent "a shantytown relic of a bygone era" (Welsh 1997, 256, 321, 256), whilst the plight of this once-vaunted "city of tomorrow" (Le Corbusier 1971) is, for Griffiths demonstrative of a repressive modernity marked by "steel doors" and "windows reinforced with wire mesh" that symbolizes the ubiquity of "these fuckin barriers" (2003, 73).

Yet an important difference emerges in their literal use of the city: where *Trainspotting* moves between Edinburgh and London, Griffiths' oeuvre undermines the experiential centrality of the capital city by moving recursively between Liverpool and Aberystwyth: a "vague South of England locale" is but a place from which "none seem to have been or go but from where many originate" (2002, 16). This diminishing experiential significance of capital cities—locations seldom mentioned—indicates, firstly, that the specificity of the city in general is waning; as will become apparent, their once-obvious identity can no longer be taken for granted. Furthermore, this changing structure of feeling is not, indeed cannot be, localized. The incumbent identity entails a new epistemological problematic that cannot be contained within the strictures of relational difference; its premise, that the "general question of the relationship between the city and the countryside is far from being resolved" (Lefebvre 2003, 8).

So the city's soul rises on vast and tattered wings from the flat rust-coloured sea. It rises and soars and hovers and casts shadow over streets and square and gargoyle and cupola and a million different bloods. It pays witness to despair and design, purpose and futility. (2005, 70)

A *leitmotiv* of these representations is the emergence of identity within constitutive matrices of violence. Any attempt at dissembling Liverpool's "genesis in sludge"—"built on and sunk in sumps of blood" (2005, 69)—is thwarted: inasmuch as the "city's soul"—an analogue of the transcendent idea of the city—"rises", it is a compromised ascent upon "vast and tattered wings", besmirched by a quotidian foundation within "a million different bloods". Contrary to the Platonic valorisation of "the highest expression of man's reason and sense of his own community" (Raban 1974, 8), this image of the city and its development does not attest to the progressive diminution of violence, merely its transference into institutionally sanctioned forms: "All the streets around here, the docks themselves are named after slavers . . . we christen parts of ar cities in ther names, honour them" (2003, 331/2), to the detriment "of those who were broken to build this city's parts, those enslaved" (2005, 187). As Griffiths repeatedly emphasizes, violence is the product both of history and education (2005, 26-55, 81-165). Nor, however, does it represent the degradation of a historical apex of identity, of the present as a decline. Rather, it undermines such teleological readings by being positioned interrogatively athwart various discursive constructions of identity, reiterating that the city is not a tabula rasa by re-inscribing the "historical quality" (the "memory") of its construction (Barthes 1973, 142). Liverpool "pays witness" to numerous appropriations; to "despair" when dystopically inscribed for reasons of political expediency (see Skeates

1997, 14), the "focus for the wrath of obsessed rulers" and "paw-thorn for a system built on and devoted to the maintenance of privilege and positional power". A "positional power" exploited for political ends: subject to utopian "design" and reactionary "purpose", Liverpool is "like a microcosm of the wider country", "deeply divided" by "unequal distribution" and "the oppositional aims of Tory rulers and militant left-wing radicalism" (2005, 69). Thus, Liverpool is an unstable signifier, subject to numerous appropriations which remind us that space—far from being a neutral category—is subject to relations of power. The violence inherent to spatial organization—as "the city's buried memories of war" (2005, 69)—is here repeated, at an epistemological level, through the process of inscription, a homology that underlines a vision of Liverpool stridently not aestheticized as a "giant holiday home" (Coillard 2002), nor "marketed as offerin thee 'Authentic Liverpool Experience'" (2003, 257).

For the idea of an authentic experience brings with it the trappings of authenticity: the idea that, beneath its dissimulation, resides a true identity. For certain strains of Romanticism this was the promise offered by nature, invested as the antithesis of received and institutionalized practices of thought. Such an approach, with its gentle rhythms of pastoral innocence typified by Wordsworth's iconography of "always rolling hills and this loveliness" (Coillard 2002), is incompatible with the "endless drama of tiny deaths played out in miniature among mountains" (2002, 6), a restlessness which rejects both timeless beauty and the dissociation of urban violence/rural virtue. "Another village" is

> little more than a hamlet, a handful of old stone whitewashed houses and a general store/post office. Characterised by leaf and bark, this small place built among trees, a forest once large. Shadow and harbour and hiding place and anchorage and sanctuary (2004, 58)

The generic connotations of "another village" undermine the eternal beauty of "Fudge box Wales" (2001, 367) together with Romanticism's cult of nature, in its eschewal of the "separation and observation" considered key to the "very idea of landscape" (Williams 1973, 120), whereby all traces of organization are removed from it. Reintroducing the metadiscursive notion of inscription, this diachronic chain of receptions posits nature—like Liverpool—as an unstable signifier, a commonality of identity that undermines forms of critical distance predicated upon their relational difference. It is "shadow" inasmuch as it functions as the city's obverse, drawing upon the etymological derivation of country from *contra*, meaning against, opposite (Williams 1973, 307). This derivation informs dualist forms of identity based upon "unresolvable division,

absolute separation, programmed segregation" (Lefebvre 2003, 144), wherein the relationship between the structure (the form) of inquiry remains unchanged, regardless of context. "Shadow" is thus also a penumbra, an eclipse or "hiding place" whose timelessness assumes the role of "sanctuary", "harbour", and "anchorage" when invested as a metaphorical retreat, a pastoral "antidote to the pressures of urbanization and mechanization" (Merchant 1980, 9), or an irrational, "female" (Easlea 1983) realm at odds with the city's rational logos. When Lefebvre (2003, 14, 169) writes of the onset of "urban reality" as being that of an "implosion-explosion"—with its connotations of centripetal and centrifugal motion—it is within the context of the "fragmentation" of particular forms of inquiry and of identity. Since "models, plans, [and] programmes" are associated with the preceding "period", "when the urban problematic becomes predominant", the new approach involves a non-programmatic "search" for an "elaboration" of identity, aware that "a threshold will have to be crossed" (Lefebvre 2003, 5). This "threshold" is precisely that of relational difference—otherwise referred to as "organic totality"—one of "the features . . . inherited from the previous period", a "residue" lost as the "*urban fabric* grows, [and] extends its borders" beyond the limits of past conceptualizations (Lefebvre 2003, 3, 14).

Akin to this refutation of "finality" (Lefebvre 2003, 67), is Griffiths' figuration of nature as no more the "sanctuary" from the city in terms of being its innocent, idyllic "shadow": brooking no 'point' external to the "susceptibility to erosion", these images do not countenance forms of critical distance ignorant to "the commonality of slow disintegration" (2001, 195), for the antinomies of established thought are henceforth inured by "a restlessness which will allow no permanence" (2001, 49). Typified by "creeping necrosis", "blight and canker . . . putrefaction [and] decay" (2002, 83, 27), the "unifying principle" of these representations is that "pain and horrer's in every blade uv grass" (2001, 387, 293). As against the timeless iconography synonymous with "*Homes and Gardens*" (2001, 350), the countryside appears compromised: the endemic "proximity uv death" (2001, 322) redoubled in images of polluted violation, the fertility of nature undermined by a "local lead mine . . . steadily sweating its sly venom" into "slow poisoned rivers and earth" (2002, 82), 'her' typical colour not that of rolling green pastures but of darker, more tainted hues: a "Bruise-coloured sky" (2005, 197), a "brown and swollen river" (2004, 164), and the sun that "rises to shine a tarnished silver" (2002, 150). Using the "distorted figuration" (Jameson, Postmodernism; or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism 1984, 79) of technology, Griffiths obliquely introduces—and explores some of the

consequences thereof—several socio-economic factors that further challenge, and ultimately undermine, traditional paradigms of spatial experience. Pierced by "screeching machines which shred the sky hourly" (2004, 74), Aberystwyth and Liverpool are punctuated by indices of a technological modernity. Where a helicopter "disappears ova tha hill inta tha mountains" (2001, 447), so its "overhead clatter" typifies "all the city noises outside" (2003, 23), its mutual presence symbolic of the thoroughgoing reaches of a plethora of technologies considered to be a criterion of urban identity.

> This expression, 'urban fabric', does not narrowly define the built world of cities but all manifestations of the dominance of the city over the country. In this sense, a vacation home, a highway, a supermarket in the countryside are all part of the urban fabric (Lefebvre 2003, 3-4)

Affording commercial and residential access to the supermarket and vacation home alike, the highway forms part of the extensive infrastructural networks of information and communications technologies (ICTs) that constitute a major aspect of the city's "dominance". Extending this aspect of analysis to incorporate the phenomenological effects of "remediation" (Bolter and Grusin 1999), Griffiths raises the relationship between the extension of digital media and the re-conceptualization of nature. In effect, nature becomes culturized: various descriptions of the sky as "gunmetal" (2004, 73), "cast-iron coloured" (2004, 156), and as a "Tarmac-coloured ceiling" (2005, 85), attest to a process whereby "the urban" subsumes "the natural" as a sort of "second nature" (Skeates 1997, 10). In this, the autonomy of natural and cultural orders expires: the urban comprises an all-inclusive rubric wherein the natural world is defined in terms analogous to the dominance of culture, as evinced by lakes of "molten lead" (2004, 81; 2001, 123), "the meandering river the colour of strong coffee" (2002, 195), "litterfruited bushes" (2005, 56), together with the "bus like a lone pike of minnows" (2002, 61) and a "thin exhaust-soot skin" (2004, 32). Henceforth, nature is interpreted as an extension of culture: the "tall white windmills of the windfarm" that "star the far hills" and comprise an "unpeopled landscape", are described as a "*forest* of . . . long-legged machines" (2002, 59, 82, italics added). The key term here is 'forest', its suitably paradoxical use encapsulating this changing mode of understanding and representing the world, for which the metonym of the satellite dish is the principal context within which this change occurs.

> [The] small whitewashed cottage there like an illustration for a fairy tale, orange firelight flickering in its quartered windows, a satellite dish bolted to the gable end like some giant fungus (2002, 211)

Given that "satellite communications effectively take television and therefore a certain view of the world" with them, the giant fungus symbolizes the process by which "television urbanises every space it reaches" (Skeates 1997, 10), bringing with it a particularly urban *weltanschaaung* that permeates consciousness in such a way that there is no outside from which to secure critical distance. Where "the TV [is] always on" (2004, 126), and sleep is punctuated by "images . . . like a film", "a film in me ed" (2001, 469, 237), so the view across a valley is measured by degrees of concordance with the television "programme *Twin Peaks"*, a beach compared with "tha Ingmar Bergman fillum", or Liverpool likened to "*Brookside*" (2001, 95, 113, 36). Whilst undoubtedly ironic, such quotes nevertheless attest to changing ontological and epistemological conditions, ways of being in and understanding the world that do not use external, autonomous referents such as 'countryside' or 'nature' in conventional ways, and instead make sense of—and co-ordinate—the world through always-already mediated images that correspond a changing environment. By drawing attention to their mediated status, these images foreground the "logic of transparent immediacy" (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 23) indicative of the "new media", which seeks to exponentially increase its media whilst erasing all trace of mediation, in a manner paralleling both the epistemological strategy of inscription (that refutes an originary identity) and the culturization of nature. The third aspect of the "pathway" (Lefebvre 2003, 66) to the urban involves accounting for the vastly expanded spaces opened up by the proliferation of ICTs, dubbed the "remediation of urban life" (Graham 2004).

The changing spatial forms associated with modern technologies are experienced by Griffiths' characters via their ability to navigate the spaces and places opened up by ICTs, chiefly in terms of roads and railways but also through the global spaces of air travel and mobile communications. Aware that the "urban phenomenon is made manifest as movement" (Lefebvre 2003, 174), blurred images of "the passing world, flat, featureless fields and houses" (2004, 10) constitute an urbanized *lebenswelt* indicating significant changes in the relationship between technology, mobility, and nature; a changing spatiality whose archetypal chronicler is not the leisured *flâneur*—whose "defining mobility" as an "indefatigable walker" (Ferguson 1994, 32) corresponds to the scale of the nineteenth-century literary city, with its labyrinthine streets—but the moving passenger, with its partial glimpses of the urban unbound. This

perspectival change, mindful that the urban is "manifest as movement", perceives Aberystwyth as an "abrupt town at land's end", "unexpected buffer of the sea" (2004, 188, 197) where "people drift through . . . like nowhere on urth", "Europe's terminus" at the "end uv-a train line" (2001, 427, 155), whilst Chester—which "begins behind the moving windows" (2005, 62)—is a place that "gets smaller behind them" whilst "Wrexham gets bigger in front" (2004, 37). Like the description of Shrewsbury as "a no-place rairly, a buffer zone" (2001, 249), these are "no-places" in that they are ostensibly without frontiers, representing neither the city's boundary nor the city as boundary. Their emergence in motion (often behind windows) and abrupt end (without discernible limit) does not amount to a proportional change in the relationship between city and country, as visions of a "city that straddles the M62 between Liverpool and Hull" (Hulme 2005, 6) attempt. Rather, they bespeak a conceptual overhaul and its hiatus, characteristic of an ongoing "period" of reorientation.

> How can we make that transition from the city, which maintains its image, which has a heart, a face, a "soul", to *urban society*, without a long period of disorientation? (Lefebvre 2003, 186)

Within this context, Griffiths' works help us to recognize the insufficiency of the city, both as a term of spatial experience and of literary criticism. Aware of the pervasiveness of binary thinking—"this world to them is a clamour of polarities" (2002, 184)—their critique is not, however, exclusively anti-foundational, since they point to a deeper understanding of this "transition".

> Wrexham spreads and scatters into low brown council estates and these soon too dissolve, absorbed by the surrounding green . . . the sprawling Perparcau estate climbing up on the hillside and the Glan-yr-Afon industrial estate spreads out below them on the valley floor, dark buildings and cooling towers and a river silver and wormlike. (2005, 287; 2002, 59)

Notions of an urban "spread"—together with the irrational connotations of "scatter"—envisage a contingent, mutable identity: Wrexham disperses into contrasting—not opposite—'brown council estates', which are in turn "*absorbed* by the surrounding green". Drawing upon an alternate etymological root of *contra*, meaning with, together (Harper n.d.), this sense of yielding, along with the dissolving contrast of colour, tentatively figures a morphology of the urban effecting the dissolution of relational difference, inasmuch as "the city has always been defined in terms of [the] contrast" (Wilson 1992, 153) with the country. Where municipal brown

dissolves, and is absorbed into surrounding green, so the rationalist paradigm dissipates; the "sprawling" estate that "spreads out" is an irrational, messy dispersal at odds with a clear distinction between elements. Together with descriptions of Dolgellau's "sprawling out" (2002, 11) and the housing estate "spilling down into that valley" (2004, 210), these images emphasize a messy conjunction of elements that compose a recursive—and not relational—form of identity. Neither attesting to the autonomy of nature nor the city as boundary, they posit the urban "as *differential*, each place and each moment existing only within a whole, through the contrasts and oppositions that connect it to, and distinguish it from, other places and moments" (Lefebvre 2003, 37). In comparative terms, this differential sense of contrast, akin to the latter definition of *contra*—together, transposes the "absolute separation" of relational difference with an all-inclusive rubric of the urban. Accordingly, "a large town is spread out an lit up below us. At its farthest end the lights mirror themselves, watery flickerin reflections; the sea, bouncing the lights back. Like a long string of pearls or diamonds" (2003, 52). Its morphology, a "spread" amplified by the "long string" of lights that are in turn redoubled by their reflection in the sea, is too vast to be rendered by the terms city or country. By enfolding upon itself, it offers a metadiscursive reflection on the epistemology of the urban: the play of surfaces, "bouncing the lights back", encapsulates its fundamental lack of hermeneutic depth; an all-encompassing, self-referential term cognizant that "any contradictions that do occur no longer take place between city and country" (Lefebvre 2003, 170).

In conclusion, although Griffiths' works map changing ontological and epistemological terrains that have, on various occasions, been identified as comprising the urban (Keyes 2007), they are conspicuous on at least two counts: firstly, for their lack of disparaging connotations and, related to this (a suggestive figuration of the urban, although seldom referred to in those terms), as an all-inclusive rubric. In regards to the first point, they grasp that the "loss of [their] contrast . . . appears to drain the city as well as the countryside of meaning" without conceding this is tantamount to "an endless sprawl of contingent matter" (Wilson 1992, 153, 154) in the negative manner of its original context. What makes the urban "contingent" is not Wilson's reading of it as the historical "crisis" of the city (for which the "endless sprawl" is a suitable adjunct, correlating spatial disorder with conceptual disintegration), for this is but the misrecognition of a new problematic—the sign of a "knowledge" languishing at an insurmountable impasse (Althusser and Balibar 1970, 53). Rather (and this relates to the second point), the contemporaneousness of the urban lies in identifying—in part through the works of Griffiths—a

host of factors (including the culturization of nature and "remediation of urban life") transcending the city, and which taken together comprise its all-inclusive rubric. The value of the urban, as it is here figured, resides not in its finality, but in its acknowledgement that the multiform and ongoing changes affecting society today cannot be represented by a simple ratification of identity. Like Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "minor" literature, which "begins by speaking and only sees and conceives afterwards", this glimpse of an "archaeology of the future" is of an afterwards that has yet to arrive.

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CHAPTER TEN

'KRISTIANIA, THAT STRANGE CITY': LOCATION AND DISLOCATION IN KNUT HAMSUN'S *HUNGER*

PETER SJØLYST-JACKSON

"It was in those days when I wandered about hungry in Kristiania, that strange city which no one leaves before it has set its mark upon him". These are the opening words of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890): *"Kristiania, denne forunderlige By som ingen forlader før han har faaet Mærker af den*". The city of *Hunger* leaves you with *Mærker*: "marks", "impressions"—even "bruises" (Hamsun 1890; as translated in Hamsun 2001). Set in Kristiania (the capital of Norway), the narrative is tied to an anonymous destitute, ravaged by starvation, who tries to write for a living. *Hunger* is often thought of as an early example of European modernism, a compelling foray into the fleeting, fragmented and dislocated experience of the modern city dweller, and a harbinger of the major themes of subjectivity and interiority that would haunt twentieth-century literature (for instance, see Auster 1998, 10). Dispensing with the nineteenth-century idea of novelistic plotting, *Hunger* follows the narrator's failing endeavours, ending with his departure on a boat, not looking ahead, but back, "to the city, to Kristiania, where the windows shone so brightly in every home" (Hamsun 2001, 197).

Walter Baumgartner poses a striking question when, in his 1997 monograph on Hamsun, he wonders how a 'modernist' city experience like this should unfold in the context of Kristiania, the rather modest capital of late nineteenth-century Norway. Kristiania (now Oslo) was no metropolis, on the contrary, it was little more than a bourgeois province of around 135,000 inhabitants, situated in one of Europe's least developed countries (Baumgartner 1998, 21). This initial paradox about Hamsun's

'idea of the city' in *Hunger*, it seems to me, is an important clue to approaching, on the one hand, a diversity of tricky themes and problems in Hamsun's works, and, on the other hand, the emergence of a distinctly modern 'idea of the city' which, for the purposes of this paper, I want to associate with the experience of migration. Baumgartner himself seems somewhat at a loss about how to proceed once the question of Kristiania's function in *Hunger* has been raised. By way of explanation, he conjures up an image of dramatic contrast and distance, of Hamsun's roots in the barren landscape north of the polar circle. Those who have visited the island of Hamarøy during winter, and who have walked back and forth on the length of its solitary road, would "better understand the *Hunger*-hero's alienation" (Baumgartner 1998, 21-2).

What we have here, of course, is another permutation of the grand dichotomy between city and nature; the grid through which much of Hamsun's works are habitually read. The failure to challenge this dichotomy appears to rest not simply upon a problematic assumption that Hamsun's works themselves are organised in this way, but also because the dichotomy still functions as a means of explaining and simultaneously silencing the disturbing heterogeneity of Hamsun's politics. To understand this, we have to acknowledge the trouble that always accompanies Hamsun, namely, the historical fact of his public support for the Nazis during the Second World War, in the run up to and throughout the Occupation of Norway (1940-45). To put it bluntly: reading Hamsun today involves troubling questions of culpability or complicity with the worst political currents of the 20th century. Reading *Hunger* today, therefore, involves being haunted by something in excess of the text itself. The city space represented (Kristiania), and the date that circumscribes the historical moment (1890), is attended by a kind of trouble to which it is very difficult to respond in any coherent or secure fashion. This is evident everywhere in Hamsun studies, and it is a problem very few commentators have managed to navigate without silence, evasive apologia or emotive condemnation. For a procedure of interpretation that is mindful about the problem of political ignorance and irresponsibility, it is still, in my view, instructive to remember the Marxist critique of Hamsun. It is also instructive for our present purposes since the question of the city is central.

Leo Löwenthal's famous ideology critique of Hamsun's works, first published in the Frankfurt School journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Löwenthal 1938), set the scene for decades of Marxist denunciations of *Hunger*. He begins by commenting on the motif of "that strange city" announced in the opening lines of the book, but asserts that this merely "evokes the fate of the average city dweller":

> The theme of the city is set at once. The fate of the hero is not comprehensible in terms of any conditions specific to him (he is, in this case, luckless and starving), but only in terms of the most general fact, the city. (Löwenthal 1957, 194)

Löwenthal makes two crucial allegations: firstly, that *Hunger* posits the city as "a general fact" rather than a social structure subject to political action and historical change and, secondly, that this involves the adoption of an anti-intellectual and finally submissive stance that seeks resolution via the "flight from the city and escape into nature". Let us now examine these allegations as they both pertain, very closely, to the idea of the city.

'. . . That Strange City . . .'

Löwenthal's allegation that the hero of *Hunger* vacates the city and escapes into nature can be dispensed with briefly. When the narrator leaves Kristiania at the end of the novel, he is in fact destined for other urban centres: he boards a barque sailing "'. . . with ballast to Leeds, to take coal for Cádiz'" (Hamsun 2001, 196). It is Löwenthal, in other words, who posits the dichotomy of city and nature—not Hamsun. Let us also note, here, that the "strange city"— "*denne forunderlige By*"—of the opening lines could be just as accurately rendered by the word 'town' (Haugen 1976). In Norwegian usage, the modern sense of the word 'city' is often rendered as *storby*—'big town'. In the English language, the word 'by' functions as a suffix in certain place names in the north of England (*e.g.* Grimsby, Kirkby and Rugby), while the noun designates a "place of habitation; a village or town" (*OED*). In this way, then, the grand binary that Löwenthal sets up between city and nature, the strict division between the urban and the rural, is already upset by the word 'by' itself—"that strange city", "*denne forunderlige By*".

There is something else disconcerting about this strange city, however, which brings us back to the first allegation, namely, that Hamsun's Kristiania is bereft of any sense of historical context. This is a recurring source of consternation in the Marxist critique of *Hunger*. There is, so the argument goes, an inability to grasp the material conditions of the city, the social production of poverty and labour. Even though the text observes the life of the city with objective accuracy, and often records scenes of poverty, the descriptions are eerily detached and uninvolved. The following passage late in the book illustrates this:

> I walked to the window and looked out; my window faced Vognmand Street. Some children were playing on the pavement below, poorly dressed

> children in the middle of a poverty-stricken street. They were tossing an empty bottle back and forth amid loud yells. A moving van rolled slowly by; it must have been an evicted family, since they were moving at such an unusual time of year. This thought came to me immediately. The van was loaded with bedding and furniture, worm-eaten beds and chests of drawers, red-painted chairs with three legs, mats, scrap, iron, tin articles. (Hamsun 2001, 165)

As the Norwegian critic Tom Christophersen points out, *Hunger* shows "a city characterised by poverty", a city with beggars, unemployed seamen, invalids, and families in dilapidated, cramped housing. These things are registered as facts, but not as social issues. The hero, who is himself poor and in the grip of starvation, is "not consciously situated in relation to the society he lives in" (Christophersen 1979, 80). There's something disconcerting about the *Hunger*-hero's mode of observing the city: "I was watching all this", he says of the scene of poverty in the street, "and hadn't the least difficulty understanding what was going on" (Hamsun 2001, 164). "In all that I observed in this way there was nothing, not even a tiny incidental circumstance, that escaped me" (Hamsun 2001, 165). As the Danish critic Peter Kirkegaard puts it, the narrator's observations are precise and objective, but also empty. The text of *Hunger*, he says, "possesses one's imagination in a long tortuous intoxication and one has, after reading, great difficulty in untangling oneself from the text's nightmarish logic, in order to see it from the outside again" (Kirkegaard 1975, 140). Hovering about these observations lies the suspicion that Hamsun, decades later, turned to Nazism because of this refusal or inability to reflect on the material conditions of the city, and that his politics were rooted in the a-historical, a-social and anti-intellectual reaction to the city space evidenced in *Hunger*.

This reading has, however, been superseded in recent decades by a reconsideration of Hamsun's *oeuvre* in the context of European modernism. Ideology critique, here, has generally been rejected as too reductive and, moreover, blinded to the aesthetics of fragmentation, interiority, irony, reflexivity and spontaneity. Atle Kittang's influential study from 1984, for instance, forcefully rejects the tendency of ideology critique to construct Hamsun's works in terms of a single, unified and 'joined-up' universe. Hamsun's books are much more contradictory and inconsistent and entail, he argues, a "restless reflection around the cleavages and fissures of existence" (Kittang 1984, 307). Here, the point of interest is no longer the Marxist's anxiety about *Hunger's* lack of historical substance or sociological comprehension, but rather a different kind of knowledge or awareness. In Nicholas Royle's words, *Hunger* is a

text that "breaks with linearity, dislocates every historicism" and "is concerned with the ironic undoing, interruption, impossibilization of every program" (Royle 2003, 214 and 217).

That which the Marxist critics denounce as *Hunger*'s historical blindness, in other words, is now the radical deconstruction of linear coherence and historical substance, intimating an experience that cannot be contained, as the work of the narrative carries us from one thing to another, without the benefit of a contextual, grounded comprehension. The text ceaselessly registers street names, buildings, interiors, hours of the day, people, dogs, clothes, buttons, shoes, insects and so forth, and yet, as the critic Einar Eggen says, "the old relationship of familiarity has gone" and the "comprehension of things is no longer given" (Eggen 1979, 84). From the first pages of the book, we are subjected to a stream of details, many of which might be inscribed under the iconography of the modern city: a "view of a clothesline"; a "forge" in the distance "where some workers were busy cleaning up"; the presence of "posters on the walls"; "a passing streetcar"; a drinking fountain at "the Arcades"; "bowing and laughing people . . . surging up and down Karl Johan Street" (Hamsun 2001, 3, 6 and 16). Bereft of their historical or social significance, the overriding effect is that of discontinuity, distraction and dislocation. Trying to write, the narrator finds himself "distracted by everything around me, all that I saw gave me new impressions. Flies and gnats stuck to the paper and disturbed me". Moments later "a couple of loud, piercing clarinet notes reached me from the Students' Promenade, giving my thoughts a fresh impetus", after which he is moved to tears by the sight of his own feet, "it was as though I had met a good friend or got back a torn off part of me". Shortly thereafter a little old man sits down next to him, emitting an absurdly extended sigh: "Ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay-ay me". And on it goes. The narrator is fascinated by the little old man, engages him in a truly bizarre conversation, which soon gives way to something else, as preceding events are "slowly getting erased from my memory" (Hamsun 1890, 32; 2001, 20).

The result, to quote John Vernon, is "a sense of time continuously billowing and literally getting nowhere" (Vernon 1984, 117). And, as Nicholas Royle writes, it becomes "impossible to appropriate, assimilate or digest the time of *Hunger*, but also impossible to throw up, make a clean breast of it, disengage from the time of *Hunger*" (Royle 2003, 214). The catalogue of 'impressions' around the inability to write—the flies and gnats, the piercing clarinet notes, the shoes, the man's absurdly extended sigh—narrates, and thus comprehends, the city not in terms of its social

substance, but in terms of its fragmentary, transitory and discontinuous character.

The City as a Figure of Migration

The modernist city of *Hunger*, as Baumgartner rightly observes, is not easily explained with reference to the marginal province of Kristiania. Signifiers of modernity do not dominate Kristiania, nor indeed the text itself, where the newspapers and adverts covering the walls of the narrator's room, the fleeting references to shopping arcades, factories, and surging crowds, remain as if preserved in some prior state, before history turned them into a recognisable iconography. As the previous discussion indicates, any assumption that there exists a deeper connection between the socio-historical reality of Kristiania and its literary representation is always already ruined by a text that, in Royle's striking phrase, "dislocates every historicism". At this point, explanations are habitually sought in the unique experience of the artist. Hamsun himself legitimised such readings in his polemic lectures and essays in the early 1890s, including the famous 'manifesto' entitled 'From the Unconscious Life of the Mind', which exhorted the modern artist to track "the incalculable chaos of impressions", "the trackless journeying by brain and heart", and "the random progress of these thoughts and feelings" (Hamsun 1994; as translated in McFarlane 1956). The two readings, the first with its emphasis on the external reality of Kristiania and the second with the contrary insistence on the internal machinations of the mind, the "trackless journeying" of Hamsun's brain, should not divert our attention from the fact that both adhere to the same basic theory of correspondence. Rather than reduce the text to one or the other then, I am raising the question of reference or correspondence in order to facilitate a new reading of *Hunger* which, as I shall now discuss, involves re-thinking the status of the city as such. In terms of reference, then, it seems to me profitable to link the city of *Hunger* to the experience of migration which, in Hamsun's case, as an autodidact from a poor background, is notably and precisely, very dislocated and fragmentary. Rather than attempt a unified narrative with coherent transformations—a project that still eludes the biographers—the discontinuous character of Hamsun's experience of migration is best represented as briefly as possible, in summary form:

> Ten years before the publication of *Hunger*, we find Hamsun, in his early twenties, as a road construction worker in Toten, a small town (*småby*) in Norway.

He emigrates to America in 1883, and travels via New York and Chicago, to Elroy Wisconsin, where he takes a series of casual jobs, working as a shop assistant, a farmhand, a delivery boy, and a clerk.

He lands a job, in 1884, as secretary and assistant to the Norwegian Unitarian minister and author Kristofer Janson in Minneapolis.

Believing he is soon to die from tuberculosis (a misdiagnosis), he returns to Norway.

He publishes some articles on literature during his convalescence in Valdres, a village in Norway.

The winter of 1886 is spent in Kristiania, where he suffers poverty and hunger.

He emigrates for a second time to America in 1887, initially working as a streetcar conductor in Chicago.

He re-establishes contact with Janson, and does some work as a journalist and public lecturer in Minneapolis, where he also takes casual work on large farms in North Dakota.

Returning to Scandinavia in 1888, he shuns Kristiania and travels instead to the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen, where over the next two years he begins to establish his reputation as a writer, publishing the first fragment of *Hunger* and a controversial pamphlet entitled *The Cultural Life of Modern America.*

After the publication of *Hunger* in 1890, he travels to Lillesand, a small town in Norway, and writes 'From the Unconscious Life of the Mind'.

The accounts of Hamsun's career in the 1880s often give an illusion of coherence, symmetry and consistency, an effect that most biographies achieve by focusing on his early lectures on literature and culture, thus positing the literary ambition as the overriding, teleological principle. The significance of the restless movement between locations and occupations is thus closed, and promptly relegated to silence. But even so, whenever the itinerary is drawn up, one cannot fail to notice the disordered, unplanned and coincidental progression through a strange diversity of locations and occupations. It is immediately clear, for instance, that the movement through geographical and social spaces cannot be contained by the dichotomy of city and nature. The Norwegian locations in this period are all, more or less, relatively coherent and integrated small towns whereas, in sharp contrast, the American locations—centres of commerce, industry or agriculture on city and state scale—are incomparably vast in magnitude. The American modernity Hamsun experienced was not simply by way of the big cities of New York and Chicago, but also the mechanised agricultural stretches of North Dakota, the smaller villages that were developing into urban centres, such as Elroy and Madelia (Minnesota), and still more established and rapidly developing cities such

as Madison, Wisconsin and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The variety of occupations is also worth noting, because this indicates a constant transit between particular working and middle-class positions: unskilled physical labour alongside clerical or supervisory work, gradually overtaken by the attainment of more bourgeois and intellectual, yet still temporary and insecure, occupations like writing and lecturing.

It is pretty difficult, in anyone's vocabulary, to place Hamsun, and the old charges of anti-intellectualism and aristocratic arrogance are, above all perhaps, testimony to the failure of a posterity (and, indeed, Hamsun himself) to consciously inscribe the effects of migration in the cultural imagination. That Hamsun himself grappled with this disjuncture whilst writing *Hunger* is vividly illustrated in his letters from the period. Here, one finds a striking difference between letters written before and after the book was published, before and after he was recognised as an author. "I absolutely cannot write for the masses", he wrote to Marie Hertzfeld in 1890 (a German translator and literary critic), "I address myself to a culturally sophisticated and select group of people" (Hamsun 1990, 132). On his return from America two years earlier, by contrast, Hamsun sounds more like an egalitarian humanist, or communist: "I wanted to write for *people* wherever they found themselves" (Hamsun 1990, 70, emphasis in original). In this letter, which was addressed to Edward Brandes (editor of the Danish newspaper, *Politiken*), Hamsun rails against nationalism, describing it as "a doctrine that really upsets all my ideas" (Hamsun 1990, 69). This early hostility to the idea of fixed national identities is particularly intriguing given the unquestioning identification with the nationalist framework Hamsun later adopted. But for our present purposes, the point of interest is how this informs our reading of the figure of the city in *Hunger*:

> I do sincerely beg you some time—in the distant future—to explain these things to me . . . There is so desperately little of Norwegian in the book I am working on [*Hunger*], and I am not indifferent to its fate. I hadn't wanted to write for Norwegians—there isn't a place name in the whole book—I wanted to write for *people* wherever they found themselves. (Hamsun 1990, 70)

Two years later, however, the text has been systematically and meticulously tied to its geographical location, plotting precise routes through the streets and buildings of Kristiania, registering its multifaceted modes of being through the different milieus, their places and times. *Hunger* is, in fact, one of the most obsessively site-specific books in Hamsun's entire authorship, which suggests, given his original plan to

write a book without place names, that the very locatedness of *Hunger* is produced by dislocation, the transitory experience of migration. The specificity of the narrator's wanderings in the opening sections of the book, from morning untill late afternoon, has the same (dis)continuous intricacy as the itinerary of migration we observed earlier:

> Continuing through the streets, I roamed about without a care in the world, stopped at a corner without having to, turned and went down a side street without an errand there. I went with the flow, borne from place to place this happy morning. (Hamsun 2001, 6)
>
> On Grænsen Street I ran into Hans Pauli, who greeted me and hurried past. (6-7)
>
> I went down Pilestrædet again and stopped outside a grocery store. (9)
>
> I got my things . . . and started up Palace Hill to the Park without delay. (10)
>
> It was very quiet everywhere; way over by the Queen's Pavilion a couple of nursemaids were wheeling their baby carriages about. (10)
>
> When I got as far as Palace Hill I overtook and passed two ladies. (11)
>
> Turning aside, they stopped at Cisler's Music Store and talked. I stopped also. Then they both started back, going the same way they had come, passed me once again, turned the corner at University Street and went straight up to St. Olaf Place. (13)
>
> The sun was in the south, it was about twelve. . . . I wandered up Palace Hill and became lost in thought. (16)
>
> Gusts of music are borne on the wind toward me from the Students' Promenade. So it must be past two. (19)
>
> The day was on the wane, the sun was sinking, a soft rustle arose in the trees round about, and the nursemaids sitting in groups over by the seesaw were getting ready to push their baby carriages home. (26)

The locations and times given are consistent and integrated in terms of joined-up time and space. However, as discussed earlier, such facts do nothing to anchor the pervasive sense of detachment and dislocation.

The early attempt to write a book without locations or place names, then, results in a striking paradox. The text carefully reproduces the cartography of Kristiania, but does not invest in this any historical

substance, because the city itself has become a figure of migration, of transit, which also means that the borders around the city, that which differentiates the inside from the outside, have become internally divided or split, so as to render the very idea of staying in the city, or leaving the city, a continual and irresolvable tension. At one extreme, anything outside Kristiania is radically foreign and impossible. The recurring motif of the harbour, for instance, which marks out the boundary of Kristiania to the sea, calls up "dark monsters" that "would suck me up when night came on" and "would carry me far across the sea and through strange lands where no humans lived" (Hamsun 2001, 58). *Hunger*, it might be said, turns around the limits of the city, as when the narrator, in his restless wandering, finds himself on "a country road the end of which I couldn't see. Here, I came to a standstill and decided to turn around" (Hamsun 2001, 36). When forced to bed down in a forest just outside the city, everything comes to this standstill once again: "A brooding darkness was all around me. Everything was still, everything" (41). At the opposite extreme, when the narrator is confined to a cell, at another standstill albeit this time in the heart of the city, there is the same traumatic stillness: "a thick, massive darkness without end that I wasn't able to fathom" (64).

The transitory, haphazard and discontinuous nature of Hamsun's experience of migration in the 1880s is extremely pertinent here. The city of *Hunger* is not simply a representation of an historical space tied to the conditions specific to Norway towards the end of the nineteenth-century but, more profoundly perhaps, of a certain 'idea of the city' born from its dis-location via the risky movement through urban and rural localities in Norway, Denmark and America. There's no escaping the city in *Hunger*, contrary to what Löwenthal's prodigious misreading would have us believe. According to his model, migration has to be thought of—as it often is—in terms of escape and exile, that is to say, in terms of a metaphor that posits a firm borderline between inside and outside. The challenge of *Hunger* is that it inscribes migration into the very texture of things, into the very fabric of the city. It may still be the a-historical, a-social and anti-intellectual reaction against the modern city identified by the Marxists, but it also betrays a singular and irreducible attraction to the fragmentary and discontinuous modes of being that are made possible, and are in some cases demanded, by the city. The city becomes a place of transit, and there's no way out of that.

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PART III:

MODERN AND POST-MODERN CITIES: MARGINAL URBAN IDENTITIES

CHAPTER ELEVEN

"I'M WALKING HERE! I'M WALKING HERE!": NEW YORK FLÂNEURS IN JAMES LEO HERLIHY'S *MIDNIGHT COWBOY*

ROBERT WARD

Walking, according to Jeff Ferrell's *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy*, "enacts a politics of attentiveness to the city's people and communities, to the sounds and smells that fill its spaces" (Ferrell 2001, 245). Since the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, walking has been associated with flânerie; a term that loosely defines an anonymous figure wandering the arcades of nineteenth century Paris and, more broadly, a metaphor for exploring the fabric of city life. Indeed, Daniel Halévy's maxim of the flâneur—"In our standardized and uniform world, it is right here, deep below the surface that we must go" (Benjamin 2002, 245)—crosses into an American realist aesthetic: an ethnography of landscapes hidden behind advertising billboards, segregated by town planners, and populated by the marginalized and the poor.

My essay reads James Leo Herlihy's *Midnight Cowboy* (1965) as contributing to that aesthetic, and defends the metaphor of flânerie as a means of understanding its concern with 1960s New York. As it was for James Huneker at the end of the nineteenth century, New York is continually "a metropolis at the awkward age"; (Brooks 1952, 1) an island uncertain of its role in supporting the spirit of its communities and the welfare of its poorest inhabitants. Herlihy's narrative intention, then, is to expose a contemporary urban readership—a readership of suburbanites, commuters, and tourists—to the complexities of their urban world.

*

Midnight Cowboy is one of the nearly-forgotten classics of American urban literature, made internationally famous by James Schlesinger's Academy Award winning (and X rated) film of the same title (1969). The novel follows loner Joe Buck as he leaves a dead-end job in Houston to make his fortune as a cowboy hustler on the streets of Manhattan. Once there, his occupation brings him into contact with other mixed-up and eccentric figures that are victims of a profoundly lonely and corrupting urban experience. However, it is that experience which slowly illuminates two conflicting worlds: one marked by human suffering and urban degeneration; the other shaped by the responsibilities of companionship and a shared dream of emigration to Florida. Walking enables Joe to navigate, survive, and understand these worlds.

The quotation that prefaces my essay—"I'm walking here! I'm walking here!"—does not actually appear in the narrative of *Midnight Cowboy*, but rather in Schlesinger's film. Although remaining largely true to the scheme of the novel, Schlesinger (together with screenwriter Waldo Salt) saw a feature in its pages that needed to be emphasized. And his judgment was right. The novel is fascinated by walking. Joe's daytime walking in search of clients who will pay to use his body, for instance, exposes an out-of-town naivety, as he does not recognize the ritual of occupying a patch on the street. Once in that patch, and at night, a passing crowd of strangers read signs of sexual availability. The fact that Joe soon learns that performance by "leaning on the window" alongside "the streetboys on the corner of Eighth Avenue and 42nd Street," (Herlihy 2002, 144) evokes a tentative connection between the ritual of the prostitute and the sedate role of the flâneur. In both, there is the projection of a fabricated and anonymous identity that conceals a true, or different, person. Both, also, are products of consumerism. Thus, as Walter Benjamin says: "The flâneur is someone abandoned in the crowd. In this he shares the situation of the commodity . . . around which surges a stream of customers." (Benjamin 1983, 55)

Yet Joe is not abandoned to (or in) commodification. To do that would endanger Herlihy's narrative perspective which rests on, to borrow Blanche Gelfant's definition of the portrait novel, "a series of educating incidents in which the city impresses upon the hero its meanings, values, and manners" (Gelfant 1954, 11). Walking plays an important part in that education, not only because it opens Joe's senses to the vibrancy of the metropolis—"42nd Street . . . throbbing, rich, and noisy . . . A stream of early evening pedestrians . . . a medley of street noises" (Herlihy 2002, 103, 120)—but also because it introduces him to the petty criminal Ricco Rizzo of the Bronx.

Ricco is a fascinating and complex character, whose life tells us much about urban poverty. Born Enrico Salvatore Rizzo to first generation Italian Americans, he grew up in the Bronx with nine brothers and three sisters, a father who worked long hours as a bricklayer and a bed-ridden mother. Ricco fared no better. He was a child struck down by several illnesses, including pneumonia and an infantile paralysis that left "his body gyrating grotesquely with each step" (Herlihy 2002, 157). The death of his parents, and the leaving home of his siblings, makes Ricco an orphan at the age of sixteen. Abandoned in the city without home or money, he began the almost-inevitable slide towards life as a petty criminal. Like the flâneur in some respects, his life is built around wandering the streets and haunting all-night saloons; a vulnerable person preying on other vulnerable people in order to survive.

It is here that Ricco introduces himself to Joe. It is the peculiarity of their encounter that represents a key moment in the novel.

> [Joe] walked for a while, looking at the street signs but giving no real thought to the direction he was taking. At midnight he found himself in another saloon. . . . He had to have some advice, that was all there was to it. The thought became an obsession: He wouldn't do another thing in this town until he'd found someone who knew the ropes and could give him some guidance . . . . Returning to the bar in a new frame of mind, Joe found he was being looked at by a person who had arrived in his absence . . . "Excuse me for starin," he said in a New York accent, "I was jus admirin' that colossal shirt". . . . Without considering the matter, he [Joe] was certain this kind of speech went hand in hand with a knowledge of the underworld. (Herlihy, 2002, 118-20)

Joe's intuition is right; here is a guide to the underworld. For as well as being a trickster, who, as Baudelaire's fugitive, uses the crowd as cover, Ricco reflects the novel's ethnographic impulse to cut deeper into particular aspects of the urban environment. I want to stay with the above quotation for a moment as it represents the first of two important markers in the novel.

My first point relates to street signs which, in essence, order a metropolis and regulate the movement of its inhabitants. The narrative's awareness of these signs reveals juxtaposition between surface direction and the more unconscious shape of Joe's sauntering. Rather than explicitly following directions, then, he "found himself" in a saloon that, in the end, will alter the course of his life. That same tension is also documented in Alfred Kazin's *A Walker in the City* (1952). Although difficult to identify, Kazin refers to the aura of Manhattan, its spirit, as stimulating the meanderings of a peripatetic culture. Riding the subway home, for

instance, he realized that "something would automatically pull me out at the Brooklyn Bridge, for one last good walk across the promenade" (Kazin 1952, 98). Similarly, *Midnight Cowboy* refers, later, to Joe's walking as a "kind of somnambulism" (Herlihy 2002, 141). Herlihy seems aware of the implications as, in etymology, we find a similar characteristic of the flâneur: "to run giddily here and there" (Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson in Solnit 2001, 198). But it also highlights the unconscious crossing of a boundary between a surface city and, what Michael Harrington calls "the invisible land" blighted by addiction, prostitution, and homelessness (Harrington 1963, 9).

My second point relates to Ricco's gaze, which profiles the cowboy as a newcomer to the city. As a stranger makes eye contact with a prostitute, so Ricco attempts to translate Joe into a commodity. That is the genius of the trickster. It is a genius shared with other iconographic urban figures including the Private Eye and the flâneur, who, as Benjamin tells us, are trained to read "the occupation, the social origin, the character of the faces in the street and the crowd" (Frisby 1994, 92); these figures trade through anonymity and disguise. According to Elizabeth Wilson, though, there is another important characteristic:

> [The flâneur] caught the fleeting, fragmentary quality of modern urban life, and, as a rootless outsider, he also identified with all the marginals that urban society produced. In particular, he emphasised not so much with the organised working class, as with the down and outs: the ragpickers, the semi-criminal, and the deviant. (Wilson 1992, 54)

Empathy is a powerful feeling (in etymology, a passionate and direct identification) and, if Wilson's view is historically accurate, it must have troubled the sedate performance of the flâneur in the Parisian arcades. It also complicates the relationship in *Midnight Cowboy*. As we find out towards the end of the novel, the swindle masks a deep identification—Joe's almost instinctual need "to put his arm around [Ricco] to hold him for a while"—which forms the basis of their future companionship and love (Herlihy 2002, 258).

That empathy is not, of course, immediately apparent. Indeed, Joe's impression of them being "archenem[ies]" (Herlihy 2002, 156) alludes to the historical and mythical landscapes occupied by the rural cowboy and the urban trickster. The swindle leads to Mr. O'Daniel who, according to Ricco, is one of New York's most respected pimps. O'Daniel is no pimp, but a half-crazy street evangelist who happens to live in the same squalid Times Square Palace Hotel as Joe. This is the first of two coincidences exposed through walking and, like the paths taken by Daniel Quinn in Paul

Auster's post-modern *City of Glass*, it paints the city as phantasmagoria. But Mr. O'Daniel is not a fleeting image, but rather a powerful messenger of the novel's realism: "You're a little different than a lot of the boys t' come to me . . . Well, I'll bet you go one thing in common with them other boys: I'll bet you're lonesome" (Herlihy 2002, 134). It is that message which epitomizes the lives of all characters that populate *Midnight Cowboy*.

Joe's humiliation at having been tricked eventually leads to the loss of his room (as he runs out of money to pay for it) and bags (which are held by the hotel as security). Nevertheless, the experience represents an important educating incident that is central to the protagonist's maturing awareness of city life. Without the baggage of his former life, and with the superficial veneer of the cowboy crumbling, his wandering around Manhattan during the following two weeks is shaped by homelessness rather than a quest for clients. It is to that period I now wish to turn.

In Joe's "endless wanderings . . . deeper and deeper into September" he learns to use the city's spaces as a private place.(Herlihy 2002, 149). In arcades below Times Square, for instance, he practices ways of "standing and walking that would conceal this flaw in his grooming," and he keeps himself clean by using the "public facilities of the cafeterias and saloons." (Herlihy 2002, 142, 150) His knowledge of the city becomes more refined, and he learns of free places to sleep in movie theatres or bus stations, and "cheap ways to eat:"

> [T]he Automat gave you baked beans or macaroni and cheese for only twenty cents, you could go to the A&P and fill your pockets with raisins and carrots for a quarter, apples could be stolen on Ninth Avenue—plums and peaches too—and there were Jewish bakers not at all jealous of their onion rolls and bagels. (Herlihy 2002, 150)

What we have here, I think, is a particular idea of the flâneur's experience of the city, one surrounded by landscape and room. The one invites perception; the latter "closes around" the observer as protection (Benjamin 2002, 417).

Within that space, Joe's observations of city life are transformed into ideological questioning:

> In his walks the one thing that would never fail to catch his interest would be the sight of other men at their labor. He would watch the pizza making in a Broadway window as if it were some intricate form of entertainment whose meaning he could not quite grasp. Why did a man work? For money? What did he spend it on? Rent, food, a family? It was as simple as could be. And therefore all the more baffling. For the fact was that Joe's

> mind had fallen into that state of *wondering* in which all the usual kinds of sense are rendered hollow. Always, beyond the answers he could give himself, there seemed to be another more important one hiding in some corner of his mind. And this, if ever it would show itself, would prove to be like a *light* that made everything else truly worthwhile. (Herlihy 2002, 151)

Light (and its derivative, 'to enlighten') is a word that signals the refinement of the character's wondering (and wandering) perspective. For Tony Tanner's *The Reign of Wonder*, such an eye on the world is influenced by the seminal texts of nineteenth century American Romanticism. And, certainly, the above quotation reminds us of Walt Whitman's poem "Song of Occupations" (1855) and its portrayal of Americans at their labour. I should point out that a fuller discussion of Transcendentalism is beyond the scope of my essay. It is intriguing, though, that Henry David Thoreau's lecture, "Walking" (1862), views peripatetic culture as "a sort of crusade . . . to go forth and reconquer the Holy Land from the hands of the Infidels" (Thoreau 1862). For Thoreau, Herman Melville, and Ralph Waldo Emerson, those "Infidels" represented a fully formed Capitalist class, and the New World needed to be rescued from their grasp

Herlihy's body of work, in its search for alternatives to the ideology of post-war society, implicitly agrees with that philosophy. Inevitably, *Midnight Cowboy* falls short of that task (Herlihy 2002, 152). Where the flâneur is intoxicated by the flow of life drifting through the streets of Paris, Joe, who once shared that fascination, is eventually sickened by the underside New York life:

> He was turning over all the possible reasons for his failure, thinking of all the ways in which he had been weakened and wearied since his arrival in New York. And thinking of it, he felt the weakness, the weariness, like something running through him in place of blood. Little by little, the city had been drawing all that good juice from him, a little here, a little there, everything going out, nearly every second of the day, the sidewalks at every step drawing something out of him through his feet, the traffic noises sucking at his ears, the neon signs pulling something vital from his eyes, and nothing much coming in, coffee here, soup there, now and then a plate of wet spaghetti, a hamburger made of spiced sawdust, a bottle of beer. And none of it nourishing to anything in him except this weariness." (Herlihy 2002, 202-03)

Walking brings Joe to that realization, and he sees it in others who wander the streets. The novel's realism here derives from the development of its

character's vision and feeling, something felt by many in contemporary American cities. And that feeling, for many critics of post-war town planning, was caused by the demolition of urban communities.

As a means of leading the reader into the wasteland of those former communities, the narrative reintroduces Joe to Ricco. This is the second structural marker of the novel. Admittedly, they do not exactly conform to Benjamin's "perfect flâneur[s]" who "everywhere rejoices in incognito" (Benjamin 2002, 330) but, nevertheless, Joe is now a "nothing person" and Ricco "a person praying for invisibility". Rather than try to survive the impending winter on their own, both characters form an "alliance" and we follow them to the boarded-up and fenced-off X flats that, along with the streets, Ricco calls home (Herlihy 2002, 148, 155, 163). Herlihy is keen to situate that destination in context:

> In New York there are always a large number of tenement buildings being emptied for eventual demolition. One by one the families are moved out, and as they leave, the owner, a great corporation, has a large white X taped across each window of the evacuated space. Ratso had been living in a series of X-flats—as he called them—since he'd left home at the age of sixteen. In need of a place, he would walk the streets in search of a building on whose windows these white X's had begun to appear. . . . His current dwelling was in a largely Puerto Rican block in the West Twenties. He took Joe there, led him up two flights of stairs to an otherwise vacant floor and down the hall to a little flat in the rear. (Herlihy 2002, 158)

If flânerie can be more than the indulgent experience of walking, which I believe it can, and forms instead (or as well) a politicised reflection of day-to-day existence, then these flats offer an interesting metaphor of a post-war urban, particularly Manhattan, milieu.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs attacks public authorities during this era for giving town planners, namely Robert Moses, the freedom to demolish whole (and ethnic and poor) neighbourhoods to *make room* (the watchword of Benjamin's "destructive character" (Benjamin 1979, 157)) for expressways, bridges, and "promenades that go from no place to nowhere." (Jacobs 1972, 14). X forms a semiotic of contemporary relevance, then, "like a message" of erasure of place and people (Herlihy 2002, 173). In *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, Moses' plans, and how they transformed his neighbourhood, are recalled by Marshall Berman:

> For ten year through the late 1950s and 1960s, the center of the Bronx was pounded and blasted and smashed. My friends and I would stand on the parapet of the Grand Concourse, where 174th Street had been, and survey

> the work's progress—the immense steam shovels and bulldozers and timber and steel beams, the hundreds of workers in their variously colored hard hats, the giant cranes reaching far above the Bronx's tallest roofs, the dynamite blasts and tremors, the wild, jagged crags of rock newly torn, the Vistas of devastation stretching for miles to the East and West as far as the eye could see—and marvel to see our ordinary nice neighborhood transformed into sublime, spectacular ruins. (Berman 1983, 292-3)

Like Berman, we have become accustomed to the cycle of demolition and rebuilding that reshapes our cities. But the sight of such projects is often obscured by the erection of barriers, or the knowledge that the areas awaiting demolition are silent, dark, and threatening. As much as X is a semiotic of erasure, though, it also, as it were, marks a spot on a map. That is: the marginal and hidden world of Ricco's existence is made central and visible by Joe's wandering perspective.

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In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau recalls looking down from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center where he is fascinated by the path left by walkers. These walkers, who "alternately follow a path and [have] followers", often deviated from sign-posted routes. Glimpsed from above, their paths appeared to "weave places together" that may otherwise have remained segregated from each other (De Certeau 1984, 99). Herlihy sends his characters and readers on those paths and, in so doing, connects them with a world inhabited by the homeless and the lost. But this vision is too late to save Rizzo. As demolition of the X flats begins, his illness becomes acute:

> "I don't think I can walk." Ratso looked at the wall. He was obviously embarrassed. "I mean, I been fallin' down a lot . . . I mean what do they, uh, you know—do with you—if you can't, uh. . . . Agh, shit!"
> "Who? What does who with you?"
> "I don't know. The cops. Or the—how should I know?"
> "You mean," Joe said, "like if you can't walk?"
> Ratso nodded.
> ". . . Well, what's the cops got to do with that? That's none of their fucking business who walks and who don't." (Herlihy 2002, 209)

If walking enabled Joe to experience the isolation and loneliness that mark the underside of New York life, Ricco's inability to walk merely reinforces that knowledge. What Joe has learned is, in order to survive as

an individual, he has to leave the city, and he plans to make real Ricco's dream of a life in Florida.

In 1990, three years before his death, Herlihy received a letter from the photographer Lyle Bonge: "What a splendid thing you had done. You had taken people who were at best statistical fragments and made them real" (Bonge 1990). But even though the realism of *Midnight Cowboy* exploits, in part, a flânerial sense of walking to transfer marginal characters to centre-stage, by the late 1960s Herlihy was convinced that large cities ought to be evacuated as he saw their way of life detrimental to human welfare and freedom.(O'Sullivan 1971, B5). Joe is able to make it to Florida, but Ricco, far too ill for the bus journey, dies on route. Herlihy has created a poignant parallel between the city and its native son.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

BEYOND BLANK FICTION, PALIMPSESTIC *FLÂNERIE* AND CONVERGING IMAGINARIES IN KAREN TEI YAMASHITA'S *TROPIC OF ORANGE*

DELPHINE BÉNÉZET

Karen Tei Yamashita's third novel, *Tropic of Orange*, is self-consciously post-modern, theoretical and parodic. It tells the story of seven characters who battle with various events while the Tropic of Cancer is magically pulled north to Los Angeles. Much of the existing literature relates Yamashita's work to novels by other Asian American writers. My objective is to focus on the novel's urban imaginary, which offers an alternative to the two extremes most often associated with the city of Los Angeles: "According to your point of view, Los Angeles is either exhilarating or nihilistic, sun-drenched or smog-enshrouded, a multicultural haven or a segregated ethnic concentration camp—Atlantis or high capitalism . . ." (Murphet 2001, 8). By ostensibly playing with genres, Yamashita challenges our expectations and presents an original and critical revision of the fictional landscape of California that goes beyond blank fiction, a term used by James Annesley in *Blank Fictions: Consumerism, Culture, and the Contemporary American Novel* to characterize the fiction of Bret Easton Ellis and some of his contemporaries. According to Annesley, these writers' novels are predominantly urban, preoccupied with "sex, death and subversion", and they favour "blank, atonal perspectives and fragile, glassy visions." (Annesley 1998, 2).

Like geographers of the L.A. School such as Mike Davis and Edward Soja, Yamashita tries to rewrite, redefine, and question the specificity of Southern California. Instead of considering space as a neutral background

against which various events are played out, she invites us to think of geographic space as contested, socially constructed, and as part of social hierarchies and relationships. The text contains several indications that Yamashita is well versed in urban theory. For example, two of the protagonists, Gabriel and Buzzworm, discuss Mike Davis' definition of urban geography (Yamashita 1997, 80-81). The incorporation of theoretical debates about literature, urban studies, and historiography into the text is typical of Yamashita, who has her characters relay her own questionings. In interviews, she expresses her desire to challenge assumptions and to give a voice to marginal groups:

> . . . how do we bring people into a work of literature who seem to be invisible and who have been invisible in that literature of Los Angeles for so many years? And the other thing is to also take a look at the literature of Los Angeles up to this point. What is the literature of Los Angeles and what do people think most depicts that literature?" (Yamashita & Imafuku 2007).

Her decision to favour a narrative driven by several characters indicates that she believes that a city can only be known and understood through different individual experiences. This plurality of characters is enhanced by the diverse positions they occupy in society. For instance, Bobby arrived from Singapore with his brother as a child, and lived in a refugee camp before settling in Los Angeles. Buzzworm is an Afro-American Vietnam veteran, and Manzanar Murakami, a former surgeon, now lives on the streets and believes that he is the great 'conductor' of traffic in Los Angeles.

With such an original cast, one would expect a rather quirky narrative, and this is precisely what Yamashita delivers. Rather than opting for a stereotyped version of Los Angeles, she creates a subversive and self-reflexive picture of the city informed by earlier representations. In *Ecology of Fear, Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*, Davis underlines the recurring literary destruction of Los Angeles, and tries to build a typology of disaster novels set in California. He categorizes disaster fiction into nine sub-genres including magical dystopia (Davis 1998, 280), but Davis is not a specialist in literature, and does not elaborate on these categories. In *Tropic of Orange*, Yamashita reworks a number of hypo-texts, and in doing so takes her reader on a palimpsestic *flânerie* that I will analyse in detail. The connections between dystopia, magical realism and the novel show that *Tropic of Orange* can be interpreted as an example of magical dystopia.

Tropic of Orange, a Magical Dystopia

Dystopia is an evasive literary genre that often refers to apocalyptic narratives imagining the downfall of a specific society. As Murphet and Davis demonstrate, Los Angeles' imaginary is known to have a dystopian predisposition. Raffaella Baccolini's definition of critical dystopia has many affinities with Yamashita's text:

> Critical or open-ended dystopias are texts that maintain a utopian core at their center, a locus of hope that contributes to deconstructing traditions and reconstructing alternatives. On the one hand, one of the most striking results of this questioning is the creation of open-ended dystopias. . . . On the other hand, blurring borders between genres has created science fiction novels that introduce conventions from other genres such as the epistolary novel, the diary, and the historical novel. It is precisely the use, re-vision, and appropriation of generic fiction that constitute an oppositional writing practice . . . . (Baccolini 2000, 13)

The notion of blurred borders is particularly relevant in the case of *Tropic of Orange*. By making the Tropic of Cancer, as well as the US-Mexico border, move north, the novelist causes the reader to reconsider geography. At the same time, when Yamashita appropriates the characteristics of some recognizable genres, she demonstrates that her text should be read as a critical dystopia. To illustrate, I will focus on two elements affiliating Yamashita's plot to dystopia: violence and environmental change.

The most obvious form of violence in *Tropic of Orange* is the one taking place on the streets. The violence in the novel echoes L.A.'s history of rioting, whether one thinks of the Watts riots in 1965, local gang wars, or the race riots following the Rodney King trial. Yamashita's characters experience urban violence in various ways. For example, by trying to get teenagers out of street gangs and away from drug trafficking and drug use, Buzzworm confronts violence on a regular basis.

Another more insidious type of violence is related to the issues of employment, ethnicity and poverty. Many of Yamashita's characters give the reader an insight into what it means to be an immigrant in desperate need of work and money. Some episodes are written in a cynical tone, like when Bobby and his illegal cousin are compared to credit cards when they drive across the border:

> Bobby's in line like one more tourist. He's got the cuz holding a new barbie doll in a box, like she bought it cheap in T.J. Official eyeballs Bobby's passport and waves them through. That's it. Two celestials

> without a plan. Drag themselves through the slit jus' like any Americanos. Just like visa cards. (Yamashita 1997, 204)

Other sections of the text, although sometimes verging on magical realism, are more sinister in their realism. When Arcangel has lunch in a local restaurant on his way up North, the name and description of the place speak for themselves:

> Arcangel sat alone at a table outside the Cantina de Miseria y Hambre. . . . All day and night long the tables and chairs of the Cantina of Misery & Hunger were filled with people. Of course some were miserable, some hungry, some miserable and hungry. (Yamashita 1997, 130)

Another dystopian element in *Tropic of Orange* is the focus on large-scale disasters and sudden environmental change. In dystopian texts, terrible events often occur on a grand scale. One of the large scale changes occurring in Yamashita's California is the sudden paralysis of the highway system. In a city so often associated with speed and mobility, the author's decision to bring the traffic to a sudden stop is daring and extreme. The first incident disrupting the city's space is impressive in scale and appears inspired by classic disaster movies. In this passage, two dissimilar tones mingle. One is related to the genre of the typically visual spectacle of dystopia, and echoes disaster films. The other is Yamashita's own construction in which she turns this accident into a jungle, with trucks represented as dying animals:

> The slain semis with their great stainless steal tanks had sprawled across five lanes, bleeding precious fuel over the asphalt. The smaller vehicles of the automobile kingdom gawked with a certain reverence or huddled near, impatiently awaiting a resolution. . . . Helicopters hovered, swooping-in occasionally for a closer shot, a giant vortex of scavengers. . . . When the tanks blew and the great wall of flames flew up the brush and ivy along the freeway canyon, Manzanar knew instinctively the consequences, knew that his humble encampment wedged against a retaining wall and hidden in oleander would be soon be a pile of ash. (Yamashita 1997, 120)

This passage illustrates the type of shift regularly presented to the reader. This also shows Yamashita's debt to magical realism. This concept borrowed from art history has gained wide currency in critical discussions of literature over the last few decades and its definition is highly debated among scholars of the field. Magical realism will here be considered as a narrative writing mode which: "challenges realistic representation in order to introduce poiesis into mimesis" (Chanady 1995, 130). In short, it is a

mode which amalgamates mimetic writing with sections of text including fantastic and dreamlike elements. Among the five primary characteristics of the mode of magical realism defined by Wendy B. Farris, at least three are found in Yamashita's novel:

> . . . first *the text contains an irreducible element of magic*; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth**,** *the narrative merges different realms*; and finally *magical realism disturbs the received ideas about* time, *space*, and identity. (Farris 2004, 7; emphasis added)

Another sign of Yamashita's appropriation of magical realism is the character of Arcangel. Sections devoted to him are emblematic. They merge different realms, different eras and different places, which makes the reader uncertain of what to consider reality, dream, performance or magic. The first description of Arcangel is representative of his multi-faceted and mysterious nature:

> . . . his voice was often a jumble of unknown dialects, guttural and whining, Latin mixed every aboriginal, colonial, slave, or immigrant tongue, a great confusion discernible to all. . . . Of course this was part of an accomplished performance, but no one was ever certain where or how he had perfected his art. He was an actor and a prankster, mimic and comic, freak, a one-man circus act. . . . He did big epics and short poetry—as short as a single haiku—romantic musicals, political scandal, and, as they say, comical tragedy and tragical comedy. (Yamashita 1997, 47)

Arcangel stands out both by his physical strength and by his knowledge. His monologues and poetry (directly inserted into the text, and usually identified with italics) re-tell various episodes of American history. Even though he sometimes appears as a jester who juggles, wrestles and performs tricks, Yamashita confirms his particular status by having some characters testifying that he truly experienced all the events he refers to. Arcangel is therefore a dual character who is able to encompass contradictions and opposites. For instance, while pulling the Tropic of Cancer north, he also declares himself a pilgrim to sceptical customs officials and offers to his audience a grandiose spectacle: "[he stood] looking out over the City of Angels with his arms raised to the heavens and his body fastened to the whole continent . . . [performing] tricks of magic, prophecy, comedy and political satire" (Yamashita 1997, 213).

While Arcangel's attributes make the text's connections with magical realism obvious, the consequences of his actions demonstrate the novelist's determination to focus on the connections that can be established between Mexico and its neighbour. When she reconsiders geography, Yamashita focuses on *la frontera* rather than on *la linea*, because it represents the "two thousand mile long zone of daily cultural and economic interchange . . . with an estimated eight million inhabitants"(Davis 2000, 26-27). This attention to contacts is also visible in the structure of the text, as I will now demonstrate.

Converging Imaginaries

In *Tropic of Orange*, Yamashita uses various literary and filmic imaginaries to engage in a process of subversion. Two of these imaginaries deserve attention because they highlight Yamashita's take on California. In the novel, references to film *noir* can be classified in two categories. The first category reveals Yamashita's critical sense. Thanks mainly to the character of Emi, Yamashita evokes the representation of Los Angeles in *noir* classics such as *The Big Sleep* and *The Maltese Falcon*. Emi often complains of her boyfriend's addiction to these films:" 'That film noir stuff is passé. Don't you get it?' Emi told Gabriel over her Bloody Mary. . . . 'Stop being such a film buff. Raymond Chandler. Alfred Hitchcock. Film nostalgia.'" (Yamashita 1997, 18-19). Suddenly after Emi criticizes film *noir* for presenting an always-rainy California, a violent downpour soaks her. Emi's intervention shows how Yamashita aims to dialogue with well-established versions of the city, and how she re-appropriates *noir* codes. This anecdote is not only a comment on earlier urban representations, it is also a proleptic hint of the catastrophes to come. In these few paragraphs, Yamashita creates a clever superimposition of the classical *noir* representation of Los Angeles with her magical realist version.

The second category of *noir* references establishes Gabriel as a decisive character who will unveil many of the city's mysteries. As a journalist interested in urban stories, he somewhat already plays the role of a detective. His taste for male heroes in film *noir* makes the reader all the more inclined to perceive him this way. Interestingly, Gabriel compares himself to several historical figures of journalism and detective work. The first figure he mentions is Ruben Salazar, a journalist born in Ciudad Juarez, who worked for *the Los Angeles Times* in the 1960s and gave voice to the problems and concerns of Chicanos at the time. Salazar was killed in 1970 by a gas projectile during an anti-Vietnam war protest and no legal

action was taken against the L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy for this action. This tragic death symbolized the abusive attitude of the police towards Mexican Americans. One easily sees the resonance between Salazar and the character of Gabriel, who wants to provide a voice for the most marginal of Angelenos: the homeless. After recognizing Salazar's influence, he calls attention to the detective side of his occupation:

> Now I'm not so pretentious as to think I am some kind of modern day Salazar, but remembering my roots can keep me on track. . . . So I might be considered idealistic in that regard. On the other hand, I must say I keep a handle on the nitty-gritty. *It's the detective side of this business that gives me a real charge*, getting into the grimy crevices of the street and pulling out real stories. (Yamashita 1997, 39; emphasis added)

Gabriel can be said to be a mix of the classical *noir* detective and the political activist. Over the course of the novel, as he uses the Internet to advance his investigation into an organ trafficking network, his persona merges with a more recent version of the detective coming from neo *noir* and cyberpunk novels and films. At one point, he acknowledges this change: "Maybe I had lost my romantic notions; I'd become truly noir, a neuromancer in dark space" (Yamashita 1997, 245). The reference to the seminal text of cyberpunk, William Gibson's *Neuromancer* is unequivocal. Hence the *noir* references play several roles in Yamashita's novel as they do not only engage her text into a dialogue with former fictional versions of the city but also reassert the proximity between these representations and the history of this region and of its inhabitants. Her choice of a mixed "cast of characters", who belong exclusively to minorities, demonstrates her highly critical take on *noir*, a genre which more often than not privileges iconic models of white masculinity.

If film *noir* corresponds to the occidental side of Yamashita's cultural inheritance, Mexican cinema appears as her alternative imaginary source. Here again two types of films will be underlined as participating in the formation of *Tropic of Orange*. In Mexican cinema, one of the common genres from the 1970s to the 1990s was that of emigrant stories. According to Garcia-Acefado and Maciel (1998, 149-202), these films shared common characteristics such as the presence of violence and sex, and of violations of the human rights of migrant workers. Yamashita's text does not follow the production formula defined by these authors (Garcia-Acefado and Maciel 1998, 174-175), but her novel is aware of the recurrence of emigrant stories in film and literature. As Smorkaloff noted "Whether it be in journalism, literature, or cinema, the frontier is a topic that engages all Mexicans, including the approximately 4 million residing

in the U.S., whatever their status and the 14 million US citizens of Mexican descent"(1994, 96). The voices of these immigrants from Mexico are present when one thinks of Rafaela, but also of the numerous phone calls Bobby, her partner, receives from Hispanics desperately looking for work. The attraction of the North is an omnipresent element, which transcends borders as the reader is presented with multiple examples of immigrants, like Bobby, Arcangel, Pepe, etc. As Smorkaloff writes: "*Frontier or transfrontier narratives* in cinema and increasingly in prose fiction *explore the theme of displacement* not only within but *across national borders*" (Smorkaloff 1994, 96; emphasis added).

For specialists in Mexican cinema, the figure of Arcangel is not a simple variation of the superhero of American cartoons. Rather, the inspiration appears to be Mexican masked wrestler movies, a classic genre which was popular until a few decades ago. The most famous wrestler, called Santo, starred in over fifty films over a twenty-five year period. Clad in a silver mask, he fought various villains including vampires, mummies or gangsters. Readers familiar with Santo will recognize elements of Arcangel's final fight with Supernafta. One of his adventures, *Santo en la Frontera de Terror*, tells the story of illegal immigrants lured North by the promise of high wages, who end up trapped by a crazy doctor intending to remove and sell their organs. The parallels here are far too numerous to go unnoticed. Gabriel's investigation into the organ trafficking seems to be drawn from Santo's stories.

One reason why Yamashita re-uses some of the characteristics of these films may be a desire to make cultural elements from various imaginaries converge in her novel, thus undermining a more traditional 'Chicano' or 'Asian-American' plot line. One could also argue that an extravagant wrestler is a more convincing advocate than a writer or a politician. After all, Arcangel's wrestling name El Gran Mojado makes indirect reference to many other Mexicans, called 'wetbacks' in the US, or 'indocumentados' south of the border, and for that reason, it is important that he embodies both pugnacity and wisdom.

Turning her text into a converging space for various filmic and literary imaginaries is consistent with Yamashita's questioning of national boundaries. By using these literary and cinematographic sources, Yamashita generates a new intermedial imaginary which contributes to the self-reflexive and parodic qualities of the novel. Her critical reworking of different national cinematographies anchors the novel into an eclectic network of cultural references. This is her way of engaging in an "oppositional writing practice"(Baccolini 2000, 13). By weaving references from popular culture into her text, she shows that texts and

films of mass culture are a crucial place of contestation and that they should be considered as important components of the city's imaginary. By mixing together such disparate references and genres, the novelist not only adds to the visuality of the novel, but also to the carnivalesque energy of her text. Shohat and Stam describe carnival as "an artistic practice [that] transforms into art the spirit of popular festivities, embracing an anticlassical aesthetics that rejects formal harmony and unity in favour of the asymmetrical, the heterogeneous, the oxymoronic, the misgeneated" (Shohat and Stam 2002, 45). Their description of the carnival resonates with Yamashita's novel. Converging imaginaries in *Tropic of Orange* affiliate Yamashita's text with this type of a decentering, non-homogenizing and alternative force.

Much of what has been written about California's literature focuses on well known authors like Raymond Chandler, Thomas Pynchon, and Bret Easton Ellis. Scholars interested in Yamashita's work have often focused on her hyphenated identity. This analysis shows that Yamashita's work can and should be analysed beyond the blank fiction framework and beyond the hyphenated perspective. Her fiction makes an important contribution to the literature on and of Los Angeles. As Min Hyoung Song remarks, *Tropic of Orange* is of historical importance, because "it reflects on many topics of immediate relevance to the underlying causes of violence in 1992" (Song 2005, 216). At the same time, Yamashita's novel occupies a crucial position within contemporary American literature because, as a magical dystopia, its poetics tries to match its politics.

When creating a fictional version of Los Angeles, Yamashita uses a classical disaster scenario, but enriches it by connecting it with the rest of the American continent. Far from avoiding references to local events whose imprints are still strong in her readers' mind, such as the race riots of 1992, and the violence related to local gang wars, she reworks these events in a creative way and gives a carnivalesque energy to her text, through the subversive dimension of characters like Arcangel, Emi and Gabriel. Yamashita's transnational perspective is slowly gaining currency, as seen in the recent volumes of *American Literary History* focusing on 'hemispheric studies', and of *MELUS* on the redefinition of ethnic American literary studies. This analysis establishes the significance of *Tropic of Orange* as a critical revision of California's urban geography, and as a literary reclamation of history. Exploring creative works produced at the crossroads of disciplines, media, and geographical areas may at times be a complex and challenging task. However, it is an indispensable project if one wants to rewrite America's literary history as "a globalised postcolonial literary history [which] will be a constellation of 'placings'

that admits of no overarching singular authenticating narrative . . ." (Sharrad 2008, 10).

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JOHN RECHY'S BORDERLESS *CITY OF NIGHT*

KENNETH E. ROON JUNIOR

Change the lines that were said before
We're all dreamers—we're all whores
Discarded stars
Like worn out cars
Litter the streets of this town
Litter the streets of this town.
(The Go-Go's, *This Town*)

In the introduction to *The Commodities of Desire: The Prostitute in Modern German Literature* Christine Schönfeld writes that authors use the figure of the 'sex worker' to either enforce or challenge the boundaries holding together the social order. However, as he crisscrosses the United States, the nameless male prostitute in John Rechy's 1963 novel *City of Night* does neither. Instead he erases the permeability of these social boundaries, as well as the subjectively distinct characteristics which differentiate one city from another resulting in what seems to be a single City. Indeed, Rechy opens the book, which is based on his own experiences as a hustler, with the line, "I would later think of America as one vast City of Night stretching gaudily from Times Square to Hollywood Boulevard . . ." (Rechy 1984, 9). Conflating an author's personal experiences with those of his narrator generally presents numerous problems, however Rechy's credibility as a writer is due in part to the fact that he was male prostitute who worked on the streets of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans. While Rechy was able to turn his own experiences into a series of groundbreaking novels, the narrator of *City of Night* does not manage the pressure as well.

To begin to understand the narrator of *City of Night's* relationship to the City, one must first comprehend his dual manifestation as flâneur and Stranger. Inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Man of the Crowd," Charles Baudelaire incorporates the idea of a crowd watcher with the French city wanderer in his 1863 essay "The Painter of Modern Life," describing how, "For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite" (Baudelaire 1995, 9). While the term flâneur had been in use prior to 1863, Baudelaire changed the concept from being simply someone who wanders aimlessly in the city to someone who watches and reports what he sees. Although *City of Night* opens with the narrator describing his bleak El Paso upbringing, it is only when he finally arrives in New York, amidst its crowds and lights, that he comes to life. He checks into the YMCA, with its constantly running showers and sexual overtones, before venturing out into Times Square. Like Baudelaire's "perfect flâneur," Rechy's narrator finds comfort in the City: "New York had become a symbol of my liberated self, and I knew that it was in a kind of turbulence that that self must attempt to find itself" (Rechy 1984, 21). In other words, without the City the narrator could not exist—he needs it to define himself.

Unlike Poe's and Baudelaire's spectators, Rechy's hustler-flâneur is literally part of the crowd. Separated by a glass window, Poe's man views the crowd from the safety of a coffeehouse, while the walls of the house that Baudelaire's flâneur constructs provide a safe place from which he is able to view the crowd objectively without motive or without becoming emotionally attached. However, Poe's and Baudelaire's watchers eventually lose their flâneurial objectivity when they stop reporting about the crowd: Poe's man becomes enamored with a man he sees and rushes out of the coffeehouse to follow him and Baudelaire's successes compromise his flâneurial gaze. (In *My Heart Laid Bare*, Baudelaire worries he would only be remembered for: "Story of my translation of Edgar Poe. Story of *Fleurs du Mal.* Humiliation by misunderstanding, and my lawsuit." Later writing in the same essay, "What is art? Prostitution" (Baudelaire, 1975, 155, 183). Contrarily, not only does Rechy's narrator manage to maintain his air of detachment, but, more importantly, whenever he leaves the crowd, whether it is to return to El Paso or to get a regular job, he almost ceases to exist. In San Francisco, the narrator stops hustling, something he does throughout the novel (and something Rechy himself did wben, one day, "(l)ooking out a window" he sees a man successfully solicit a boy, the narrator immediately walked off the job, because, "Away from those streets, I was wasting my Youth. The end of

youth is a kind of death" (Rechy 1984, 237). While Poe's man leaves the safety of the coffeehouse to chase a man, Rechy is lured not by a single individual, not by the man and boy he's soliciting, but by the crowd and the ever-changing possibilities it presents.

Because he is constantly *in* the crowd, Rechy's narrator is able to maintain his air of detachment. This is due in part to the hustler's perceived passivity; he stands on the street waiting for someone to approach him and during sex, he lies there unaffected while someone uses his body providing him with ample opportunity to observe. Furthermore, despite the fact they have sex with men, the hustlers in the novel constantly declare their heterosexuality and masculinity, regardless of whether they are either of these things. While Baudelaire's flâneur watches the crowd in order to produce a work of art, the hustler is the medium through which the work of art, in this case an erotic fantasy, comes to life; he is simply a blank slate, the canvas on which the john paints his fantasy. In order to survive he must observe the crowd, he must know all of its quirks and respond accordingly. This presupposition that the hustler must know the crowd in order to find a john inadvertently opens the door for him to become a flâneur. This does not mean that every hustler is a flâneur—for example Chuck, the cowboy hustler, is too lazy to be a flâneur—but rather that every hustler has the potential to become a one.

As an aspiring writer and someone who enjoyed hustling, Rechy took full advantage of the opportunities he was given. In *Outlaw: The Lives and Careers of John Rechy*, Charles Casillo explains Rechy's inspiration for the chapter "Skipper: A Very Beautiful Boy." When Rechy was brought to one of famed director George Cukor's infamous 'boy parties', the director was told Rechy wanted to be a writer, Cukor responded by saying "He'll never write anything that will ever get published". According to Rechy:

> I, of course was playing the role of the silent hustler, but you must understand that I was always watching and listening from an entirely different perspective from the one Cukor assumed. The artist, the intelligent man in me, was always watching even when I was playing otherwise. And what I saw was nasty. (Casillo 2002, 102)

Rechy observed Cukor, famous for directing films such as *The Women, The Philadelphia Story*, treating the handsome young man who was staying with the director at the time with distain and condescension. In *City of Night* Rechy uses this person as the basis for Skipper, an exceedingly beautiful young man 'discovered' by a famous Hollywood director who promises to make him a star. Although Skipper was given a

bit part in a film, you couldn't see his face, and when the director finishes using Skipper he passes him on to friends: "I lived with them all, one right after the mother-fucking other" (Rechy 1984, 164). All Skipper has left are his memories and a few pictures and clippings he carries in his wallet. It would seem that in Rechy's case hustling allows him to engage in flâneury and vice versa. This combination allows the narrator in *City of Night* to observe how the supposedly unique characteristics that separate people lose their importance when money is involved; Skipper becomes just another disposable beautiful boy and the director becomes just another egotistical consumer.

The economic overtones surrounding this hustler's flâneury, although money is not necessarily his driving motivation, recall Georg Simmel's 1908 essay *The Stranger*. One of the most interesting things about Rechy's narrator, and Rechy himself, is that he did not need to hustle. He was doing it because he wanted to. Although there are a number of instances in *City of Night* when the narrator stops hustling and gets a job he is always drawn back to the street. In his essay, Simmel explains how in economic history the stranger brings to a small group some kind of good or service it cannot produce on its own (Simmel 1971, 144). The commodity the sex workers bring is more than sex; it is the ability to bring to a specific fantasy, one that cannot be obtained otherwise, to life. The hustler in *City of Night* learns "there are a variety of roles to play if you're hustling: youngmanoutofajob butlooking; dontgiveadamnyoungman drifting; perrenialhustler easytomakeout; youngmanlostinthebigcity pleasehelpmesir" that are combined with a specific stance, way of speaking ("jivetalk"), a disinterested, but inviting look and a casual way of dressing (Rechy 1984, 32). This is why the twin skills of appearing ignorant while actually being able to tell exactly what a trick desires are so important. This is no more apparent than when Rechy's narrator first arrives in Los Angeles and goes to a hotel with a man. When the man passes out the narrator is tempted to steal his wallet, but does not have the strength to take the final step and feels "I had failed the world I had sought" (Rechy 1984, 91). Later he runs into the man again and this time realizes that the man's sexual fantasy is not flesh-on-flesh, but rather to be robbed. After successfully stealing the man's money he leaves the hotel room "feeling strangely triumphant for having clipped the man" (Rechy 1984, 173). It does not matter if the john is a stereotypical closeted, middle-class, married man, or a confident, openly gay man, the commodity the hustler brings to the market is something unattainable within the consumer's own group and his success relies upon his being able to know what the market wants.

However, unlike the more traditional trader, the kind Simmel probably had in mind, who brings a commodity or skill not found locally, such as spices or knife grinding, the hustler is physically the commodity upon its arrival on the market and this commodity depreciates in value almost immediately, it is quickly consumed and is disposable. After spending some time in Los Angeles, Rechy claimed "I was not making out as easily as I had when I first appeared on the scene. . . . Some of the hustlers I had known were gone—nobody on the scene even wondered where. Others replaced them, new faces, new bodies. I shifted my turf to Hollywood Boulevard" (Rechy 2008, 250). In other words, while his commodity was still in demand, it was no longer new. But what makes Rechy's narrator unique, unlike other hustlers who were limited for whatever reason, is he could have stayed in one place, got a job and settled. He has the potential to be the Stranger who comes today and stays tomorrow, but instead he decides to shift his turf. The reason for this is two-fold; first, he is drawn to the crowd, this is the place where he comes to life. Second, hustling, creates a sense of self-value: "there were times when nothing worked out, when no connection succeeded, when rejection smashed at my stomach like a brutal fist. . . . I would force myself to continue the hunt, demanding that I be wanted" (Rechy 2008, 322). Not only does the crowd give him life, but it places a dollar value upon him as an individual—he literally knows exactly how much he is worth.

In order to maintain contact with the crowd and know his value, Rechy's hustler constantly expands his borders, thereby broadening his flâneurial gaze. Initially he states, "That world of Times Square that I inhabited extends from 42nd Street to about 45th Street, from grimy Eighth Avenue to Bryant Park . . . " (Rechy 2008, 30), implying his world only included the physical streets; however he goes on to explain this also includes all-night movie theaters and the toilets in the subways. Later he expands this area to include Washington Square, Central Park and Gramercy Park. Eventually he crisscrosses the United States, stopping in Los Angeles, Hollywood, Santa Monica, San Francisco, Chicago and New Orleans, but this mobility is not unique. Throughout the novel there are references to contact between other characters that are unexpected because of the geographical distance separating them. For example, the Professor in New York has pictures he's taken of Skipper from Los Angeles and in the final chapters of the novel a number of characters from earlier chapters (Lola, Pauline and the nameless Someone from the chapter entitled "People Dont Have Wings") turns up in New Orleans. No one is contained within the borders of a single city. As a result of this ability to move from one city to another as if moving from one neighborhood, they become the

people Michel de Certeau calls, "walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and things of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read" (Certeau 1984, 93).

However, Certeau's flâneur speaks of the urban text in relation to streets and buildings, the landmarks that people move around while viewing it, again, from a distance—this time from the top of the Empire State Building. From his position on the ground, Rechy's narrator and his crowd are not confined to those spatial limitations. Rechy's crowd continues to exist in building, bars, all-night movie theaters. When he arrives in Los Angeles he gets his bearings, not by looking at street signs or landmarks, but by looking at the people. He notices "the vagrant youngmen . . . the motorcyclists with bikes, the cowboys with horses, awol servicemen or on leave . . . . And I know that moments after arriving here, I have found an extension . . . of the world I had just left behind" (Rechy 1984, 88). It would thus seem that people become the landmarks that make-up this "one vast City of Night", and Rechy's hustler's flâneurial gaze allows him to read the sprawling urban text.

The realization that America is a single City—an epic, urban text in which previously unconnected cities like New York and Los Angeles become chapters—becomes problematic for the narrator on a number of levels. In his 1903 essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" Simmel explains, because stimuli constantly bombard the city dweller, he is forced to develop an intellectual, reason-based personality, unlike the rural resident who develops a more emotional personality. Furthermore, the modern city is a beehive of economic activity where the producer and consumer may never come into contact: "the interests of each party acquire a relentless matter-of-factness, and its rationally calculated economic egoism need not fear any divergence from its set path because of the imponderability of personal relationships" (Simmel 1971, 327). In *City of Night*, the hustler never reveals his name to the reader and discloses it to only one customer, so while the johns (and in a sense the reader) may come into contact with the product—their fantasies realized on the hustlers body—they never really meet the producer. As one character tells the hustler, "I'll give you ten, and I don't give a damn for you" (Rechy 1984, 23). As Rechy explains in his 1977 work *The Sexual Outlaw*, people who pay hustlers don't want to know what the hustler really thinks or feels, while they may romanticize hustlers and the johns may convince themselves emotions are involved, for both parties the relationship is strictly economic. However, commodifying everything and everyone—assigning it a dollar value—"hollows out the core of things, their peculiarities, their specific value and their uniqueness and incomparability

in a way that is beyond repair" (Simmel 1971, 300). With money as the common denominator for literally everything, not only do the characteristics which separate one city from another become unimportant, but the qualities which define people become irrelevant; everyone has a price.

Furthermore, because the hustler operates in a single vast City he loses some of his novelty. According to Simmel, a person's individuality is directly related to the size of his social circle. Smaller social circles require more conformity and therefore there is less freedom of individuality. While a larger social group would allow for more individuality a person is less unique, because no one notices him; he is simply a face in the crowd (Simmel 1971, 257). In the City where intellect and reason replace emotion, where compassion is displaced by commodity, smaller social groups, in which one would be more recognizable, but less unique, cannot exist; people would be reduced to individual numbers. In the case of Rechy's hustler, not only does he keep his education secret from the johns, but also from the hustlers and drag queens that make up his social group. When he whispers to Miss Destiny—a drag queen who is bemoaning the fact she went to college, read Shakespeare and is now surrounded by trash—that he also knows Shakespeare, she doesn't believe him until he tells her who Desdemona is, after which she asks the narrator to marry her. While his interaction with Miss Destiny is romanticized, reality was quite different. In his memoir Rechy recalls coming out of the library with a book and almost getting caught by another hustler and queen from Pershing Square, the main hustling area in Los Angeles: "I dashed quickly across the street before they could see me with the books that would ostracize me from my other world" (Rechy 2008, 244). The fictional encounter between Miss Destiny and the nameless hustler demonstrates a person's need to be recognized as unique, however the reality Rechy experienced underscores the incompatibility between individuality and acceptance.

Miss Destiny represents the space between the rock and the hard place created by the desires for individuality and being recognized as unique where the City catches a person. What makes her unique is her desire to find a man, get married and become "real", something her peer group finds laughable. She tells the narrator she fears one day an angel will appear while she's in one of the hustler bars or on the street or in the park and say, "'All right, boys and girls, this is it, the world is ending, and Heaven or Hell will be to spend eternity just as you are now, in the same place among the same people—*Forever!*'" (Rechy 1984, 115). Miss Destiny is unhappy in her current social group (drag queens, hustlers and johns) and feels she

can only become "real" by passing as a woman and entering the larger mainstream social group through marriage. What she does not realize is in doing so she would cease to be Miss Destiny and become Mrs. Middle-Class America. Indeed, it would seem by privileging mainstream society and looking for it to confirm her "realness", she is already conforming to its expectations. Miss Destiny eventually disappears and when the narrator asks about her he learns she did in fact get her fabulous wedding, although the accounts of it vary. Some say it was a success, others say it was raided and she was arrested for "masquerading" as a woman (men who dressed too feminine could be arrested for it). He later learns she has supposedly written to someone and said she's given up her drag ways, "turned stud" and married a woman. The narrator refuses to believe this and instead imagines her "in Somwhere, Big City, America—carefully applying her makeup" because the idea that she's gotten married and conformed "*is oh Too Much to believe!*" (Rechy 1984, 119). Miss Destiny's typifies the psychic dissonance that people experience in their attempts to be recognized as unique in a world that demands conformity and the thought of her angel haunts and throughout the rest of the book. Ironically, there was a real Miss Destiny. In his biography of Rechy, Casillo says Miss Destiny recognized herself in the novel and adopted many of the mannerisms Rechy had given her literary doppelganger.

In an attempt to deal with the pressure brought on by the City, people develop what Simmel calls "the blasé attitude": they must become indifferent to the things around them. As the narrator finds himself losing what he calls his innocence, what Simmel would call his need for emotional attachment, days, nights, faces and rooms blend together into a life without meaning as the novel rushes towards it apocalyptic ending in New Orleans during Mardi Gras. It seems that New Orleans symbolizes everything Rechy imagines in his "vast City of Night": it becomes "the center of our desperate Today; a microcosmic arena of the electric nightworld Aware of the triumph of loneliness and death" (Rechy 1984, 285). This center operates like a black hole sucking in the world with its gravitational pull. Regardless of class—social or economic—everyone descends upon this single city for an orgiastic celebration, because, as someone tells the narrator upon his arrival:

> Mardi Gras aint just any old carnival. Them others got it all wrong. Im gonna tell you The Real Truth: People wear masks three hundred and sixty-four days a year. Mardi Gras, they wear their own faces! What do you think is masks is really . . . *Themselves!* (Rechy 1984, 291)

The idea that everyone wears masks to conceal their own personality fits well with Simmel's ideas about individuality and of the blasé attitude. Not only does the everyday mask conceal the uniqueness of each person, something frowned upon in the large social group, but it seems to be part of the callousness that makes up the blasé attitude. Furthermore, Mardi Gras becomes the locus where uniqueness battles this mask of conformity, as well as an emotional and intellectual battle. In "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Simmel explains how this battle, which ideally results in some kind of compromise, is the function of the City, but he never explains what the effects of this battle are, indeed he concludes by stating "it is our task not complain or to condone but only to understand" (Simmel 1971, 339). Because he is a flâneur Rechy's hustler reports from the front how this battle affects him.

Throughout the novel the narrator in *City of Night* is aware of the struggle between the individual and what is expected of him. In New York he realizes while people are moving on the street, "each person [is] enclosed by his own immediate world," these *Wandersmänner* have no destination for their journey (Rechy 1984, 82). So he returns to his mother's home in El Paso, but finds the view from the safety of this emotional haven unsatisfactory and the City draws him back. Since he did not find consolation in the emotional safety of his family and memories, he turns inward and always takes an apartment alone—"a place where I can find a lone symbolic mirror" (Rechy 1984, 285). The mirror thus becomes the narrator's only emotional support; his reflection becomes the only reminder that he is his own unique individual. When he arrives in New Orleans he attempts to find a place where he can be alone with a mirror to escape to when he is overwhelmed by the City, but is unable to do so, setting the stage his final breakdown.

After days in a drug, sex and alcohobl frenzy—all of which are part of his business—unable to find solitude and safety in the mirror, the narrator cracks. As he is leaving a bar with two johns he feels the need to reveal his true self and as he does so, it is as if someone else is talking, "someone else imprisoned inside me, protesting now—I felt as if something had exploded inside me." He continues:

> No, Im not at all the way you think I am. Im not like you want me to be, the way I tried to look and act for you: not unconcerned, nor easygoing—not tough: no not at all. . . . No, I'm not the way I pretendepd to be for you—and for others. Like you, like everyone else, I'm Scared, cold, cold terrified. (Rechy 1984, 341).

The johns immediately lose interest and abandon Rechy's hustler. However, this breakdown brings him to the attention of Jeremy Adams, the only person to whom the narrator reveals his surname. Jeremy explains to the narrator that he's "known people who have retreated into a symbolic mirror—in order to force themselves *not* to give" (Rechy 1984, 356). The narrator realizes then that while his reflection in a mirror may reflect his own inner completeness, it also represents how thoroughly unconnected he is to others. Other people become a kind of fuel, "to sustain each batter return to the Mirror" and the reminder, "*You have Yourself—only!*" (Rechy 1984, 356). Although, Jeremy offers the narrator love—an emotional connection—and an escape from the street, the narrator chooses the money. The two have sex, but when the narrator penetrates Jeremy rather than being a coming together, it symbolizes the inability of two people to fully connect. The rational, intellectual, commodity driven City erases any possibility of love and the narrator leaves Jeremy's room "mythless to face the world of the masked pageant" (Rechy 1984, 369).

In *Prometheus Bound* when the Chorus of Oceanids asks Prometheus what he has done to anger Zeus, he replies, "I caused mortals to cease foreseeing doom" and "I placed in them blind hopes" (Aeschylus 1956, 148). When the narrator leaves Jeremy's room, hope no longer exists, it is not even myth, and he recognizes the futility of life. In the mythless carnival Miss Destiny's angel appears, trapping him. Then, as he sees a drag queen acquaintance—drunk, dejected and pathetically quoting Scarlett O'Hara, all of his worlds collapse into one—he thinks he can take the subway to Times Square:

> Times Square, Pershing Square, Market Street, the concrete beach in Chicago . . . movie balconies, bars, dark hunting parks: *fusing for me into one City* . . . Yes, if I take the subway I'll be on 42nd Street. Or in Bryant Park, or on the steps of the library waiting for Mr King . . . Or in the park in Chicago, also waiting . . . Or if I hitchhike on this street, I'll be on Hollywood Boulevard, which will be lighted like a huge electric snake—and there, I'll me— . . . And ghostfaces, ghostwords, ghostrooms haunt me: *Cities joined together by that emotional emptiness, blending with dark-city into a vastly stretching plain, into the city of night of the soul*. (Rechy 1984, 371-372; emphasis added)

The narrator would continue his downward spiral for the remainder of Mardi Gras, fleeing home to El Paso in an attempt to escape the City, however a victor has been declared. The money driven, intellectual, conformist City has won, but its victory is pyrrhic. The City of Night is no longer "perchance of death," it is only of death. This death does not bring

with it the hope of heaven or any other form of salvation, but rather a continuation of the frightful, hollowed-out nothingness.

While the novel ends with a feeling of spleen-like oppression, tragedy and the narrator asking why dogs can't go to heaven (when his dog died in the beginning of the novel, his mother told him dogs don't go to heaven), *City of Night* is not a morality tale warning people to stay away from the evil City. Even though the narrator gives the impression that the City has made life into a pointless nothing to be avoided, but both he and the reader know he will return. This gives the overall text an aura of ambivalence that, like the City, it is difficult to contrain. I would argue the reason for this lies with the author himself. This novel, as well as many of his others, are based on Rechy's own experiences—he was a hustler and Miss Destiny, Jocko, Pete, Darling Dolly Dane were all real people—and he loves the City. He loves the fact the City provides him with the ability to be simultaneously a best-selling author, a hustler and a college professor. So while the City is full of contradictions the hustler in *City of Night* has difficulty reconciling, Rechy himself thrives on its effects.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE WOUNDED CITY: AMBIGUOUS SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE RIOTOUS METROPOLIS IN SAMUEL DELANY'S *DHALGREN*

STEFANIE K. DUNNING

Michel de Certeau's essay "Walking in the City" begins with a most evocative fragment: "Seeing Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center" (de Certeau 1984, 91). Indeed the experience of the city is that of fragmentation, of mass heterogeneity, so that the view from atop the now demolished World Trade Center is one of pieces, bi and tri and mutli-sected by rivers of people. So too does Samuel Delany's 1975 novel *Dhalgren* begin with a titillating fragmented flourish: "To wound the autumnal city" (Delany 2001, 1). Like de Certeau's vision of the city that constantly "invents itself" (de Certeau 1984, 91). Delany's chaotic city of perpetual apocalypse is wounded again and again, with narratives twisted and inverted and reinvented, rendering it endlessly oozing, rich with meaning.

For the unnamed protagonist of *Dhalgren*, walking in the city embodies the very act of fragmentation. Have you ever worn just one shoe? And I don't mean just momentarily, but for a prolonged amount of time—for days, perhaps, even months on end? This male, polysexual, ambiguously raced hero loses one shoe in the first few pages of the novel and never recovers it and walks around with one foot bare. It grows first dirty, then calloused, then horny and beastly and it weathers what the shyer, softer, less bold, foot cowers from within the confines of (undoubtedly) cheap leather. That Delany's hero would be a podiatric hybrid, never annoyed enough with this uneven state of affairs to seek another pair of shoes (or perhaps go completely barefooted) in order to

enforce the homogenous state of his twin feet, symbolizes an overall comfort in the novel with the incongruent, with the queer state of fraternal, rather than identical, feet.

If there is any place our nameless protagonist can expect his lopsided, half costumed paws to go unnoticed and/or be accepted, it is the city of Bellona. Though Delany is a science fiction writer and it would be easy to dismiss Bellona, a city in its decline, as a fantastic and improbable fiction, its endless chaos, race tension and general instability all reference the riots that took place immediately preceding, and perhaps during, the writing of the novel. Building on the effluvia of the actual riots of the 1960s, specifically the Watts Riot of 1965 and the Detroit Riot of 1967, Delany considers the post-nationalist, post-modernist possibilities of the metropolis of unending crisis. Rather than construct the desecrated city as the site in need of revision or redemption, Delany's novel suggests that the fractured, incongruent and violent city is merely an external portrait of the post-modern subject: nameless, identity-less, and drifting.

I am inclined to argue that this subject in *Dhalgren* is an African American subject, but such a precise locution would be at worst, incorrect, and at best, imprecise. The thing about Kid is that he occupies no operative racial space. Unlike George Harrison, whose status as black man motivates the fantasy about interracial rape, Kid's being Native American and white renders him ethnic enough only to confuse. When Faust is telling Kid how the clock tower was originally broken, he refers to the blacks in the novel as "niggers," and then scrutinizes Kid and tells him that he, too, looks like he might be a nigger. Ultimately for Kid, his race is beside the point as he has other things on his mind, like the constant fear of death and figuring out if dogs really wear red contact lenses. In *Dhalgren*, Kid sees a dog with red glowing eyeballs early in the novel. Later he finds a box full of red contact lenses. And there is, of course, the fact that he doesn't know his name or remember where he came from. He also 'loses' time, so that whole segments of his daily life are often buried in the dark silence of his unconscious. But if race does anything in *Dhalgren*, it facilitates the unfolding of certain story lines more than it elucidates anything about a particular character. The character George, for example, is more characterized by his predilection for rough sex than for his blackness. His blackness is important only in that it provides the basis for a salacious news story about the rape of a white woman. That story would exist without George, for there is nothing particular about this narrative. It is the generalized stuff of racial fear, which is never about a person and is always about power.

But the setting of *Dhalgren*, the anarchic city of Bellona, is itself racialized through its allusion to its separateness, its lack of bureaucratic structures, and its inevitable cycle of violence and decay. This is how 'the ghetto' or 'urban center' as it is now more often called, is conceptualized in American culture, as a site away from the mainstream where 'law and order' is nonexistent, and where its dangers can only be managed by maintaining it as an island, as far from so-called civil society as possible. The city for the black subject was once the site of redemption. Now the city has soured, with the promise of liberation from agrarian oppression mitigated by the realization that racism can take root even in concrete.

Consider the image of the city which provoked what in African American studies is often called ' the great migration'. Around 1910, thousands of Southern blacks migrated north to New York and Chicago (Taylor & Hill, 2000). Ultimately this influx of black people to the North fueled the Harlem Renaissance. The city, for the turn of the century African American, offered the possibility of living without fear of lynching. Migrating north meant that you did not have to be a sharecropper, which writers like Alice Walker have argued was actually worse than the system of slavery which preceded it (Walker 2008). This celebration of the liberating possibilities of the northern city is evident in Alaine Locke's edited volume *The New Negro* (Locke 1999). Locke identified Harlem as ground zero for modern black cosmopolitanism as he espoused an ideology that lionized an urban ideal of connection, intellectualism, and order, juxtaposing this ideal against the grinding, illogical, endless poverty and racial persecution of the agrarian south. It was certainly not that the North was portrayed as free of racism; rather, for the 'new negroes' the urban North offered the possibility of an enclave where the black subject could flourish rather than be constantly pruned back by the shears of racial oppression. In this sense, it is possible to read the urban north as a "monastery", to borrow Erasmus' term to describe the city (qtd. de Certeau 1984, 91).

But the city quickly acidified, or it became, well, autumnal, for the African American subject. By the time Richard Wright published *Native Son* (1940), it is clear that the city, as gilded cage, quickly became an incinerator (Wright 2005). In this novel, the protagonist, Bigger Thomas, assaults and murders a white woman and burns her in an incinerator. Filled with rats, and the possibility of interracial rape and murder, *Native Son* suggests that locale alone is not enough to undo the evils of hundreds of years of American chattel slavery. Furthermore, the city itself bends back upon the African American subject, imprisoning her. This is undoubtedly the point of Ann Petry's novel *The Street* (1946), where the city is an evil

and encroaching entity whose only goal is to devour the hardworking, innocent, and helpless Lutie Johnson (Petry 1998). Despite her desire to work hard and get ahead, the city conspires against her best efforts ruining both her life and her son's life. But perhaps the most interesting and stringent critique of the city in African American letters is Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), which, I argue, Delany substantially references in his novel *Dhalgren*.

The invisible man's problem is an optical one: given the racial landscape of his world, he cannot be seen. The novel opens with the line: "I am an invisible man" (Ellison 1952, 1). As in *Dhalgren*, the opening of Ellison's novel begins with a negation, an attack on the most fundamental value associated with its subject. To be unseen is to confront a willful erasure of one's humanity. This idea that the black subject cannot be seen for what he or she really is a longstanding trope in African American letters. The city is *supposed* to be generative rather than decaying; and the subject is supposed to be visible and readable. De Certeau asserts that the city is defined by the possibility of "a threefold operation". One of them, the one most relevant here, is "the production of its own space (un espace proper): rational organization must thus repress all the physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise it" (de Certeau 1984, 94). Note de Certeau's use of the word "production," which is akin to reproduction, hence making the utopic fantasy of the city a generative one. Yet neither are the case and both novels consciously play on the notion of vision in order to queer the politics of our racial and sexual gaze. In the first section of *Dhalgren*, titled "Prisms, Lenses, Mirrors", our sense of visual linearity is tampered with as the now nicknamed protagonist, Kid, dons an "optic chain" of bits of glass. The optic chain garners him connection to those who also wear the chain as well as bringing him a certain kind of attention—in other words, they make him visible and interpolate him into a community, albeit a community he does not quite understand. When he attempts to ask Faust, who also wears the chain, where he came from before he came to Bellona he is rebuffed and warned that nobody in Bellona wants to talk about their origins.

He begins his journey in a pastoral setting, making love to a woman who is also a tree, a clear reference the dryad Daphne of Greek mythology. (In fact, one of the many ways the novel has been read is through its allusion to Greek and Roman mythology. Kid could be read as Apollo, while George Harrison (who I will discuss in more detail below) and his victim June could be read as Jupiter and Juno). The invisible man's prelude to entering the city also coincides with his experience of a woman, albeit an incredibly dangerous and frightening scene unlike the one

experienced by Kid. In *Invisible Man*, after the battle royal, the protagonist is confronted with a naked white woman who has an American flag tattooed above her pubis. She is undoubtedly as symbolic as Delany's Daphne. The sexual potential of this scene in *Invisible Man* is never realized because in the context of Ellison's novel, one could only fulfill that desire on pain of death. Had any of the young men in this scene from Invisible Man, often referred to as 'The Battle Royale', attempted to make love with the white woman, they would have been lynched.

The "tattoo" on the woman Kid encounters is a scratch on her leg, a detail that kid notes and looks for again later. Much of the racial threat that *Invisible Man* confronts is absent in *Dhalgren*; there is racism in Bellona, but it does not menace its subject as it does in Ellison's novel.

Of course the comparison between Ellison's novel and Delany's novel is not perfect. Dhalgren has been compared to James Joyce's *Ulysses* and to Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*—but rarely have critics considered the ways in which *Dhalgren* might reference an African American literary tradition. This is probably related to the fact that *Dhalgren* does not represent race in the ways critics often narrowly expect from black texts. But in this manner it is once again akin to *Invisible Man*, which upon its publications also unsettled expectations about what it means to articulate black struggle. Criticized for its emphasis on individualism over collective identity, Ellison's novel dramatized a kind of dizzying confusion of identity not unlike what we see in *Dhalgren*. In the final pages of *Invisible Man*, the protagonist puts on a hat and sunglasses he finds on the street. In so doing, he is suddenly mistaken for someone else—a man named Rinehart—who is a pimp, a gambler, and a preacher. Not only is this character "Rinehart" an actual figure and the invisible man, which we might read as a kind of bifurcation, but Rinehart himself occupies several contradictory positions in society—the pimp and the preacher. Who Rinehart is depends on who is addressing him. This ambiguous characterization is similar to the multiplicity of identity which characterizes George Harrison.

The invisible man inevitably goes north; just as Kid inevitably enters Bellona (which is another illusion to Greco-Roman mythology, as Bellona was the goddess who wasted cities). Like Ellison's protagonist, Kid goes through multiple removes within that society and like the invisible man, he ends up exactly where he started. Indeed, the last line of the novel *Dhalgren* is also a fragment: "I have come to", which wraps around to the beginning of the novel to become a full sentence: "wound the autumnal city" (Delany 2001, 745, 1). *Invisible Man* opens with the protagonist in his subterranean cave, speaking to us of his invisibility. And in his theft of

electricity, the invisible man *is* wounding the city in his own way. The first line of *Dhalgren* suggests the stance of a warrior coming to deliver the final blow to an already vanquished enemy. This oppositional relationship to the city characterizes the invisible man's feelings about his city, as he lives quite literally "off the grid," working to undermine the system from below. It also opens in the same space, as his journey from rural south to urban north functions to explain his place underground. Prelude is prologue, in both cases.

In Ellison's novel the city is a crazy place where the protagonist is bandied about from one sect to another with little or no intention on his part. Far from being able to express some coherent vision of himself, the invisible man only gets more lost the longer he remains in the city. Like Kid, the invisible man can neither leave the city nor remain in it. The only refuge is a textual one, whereby the book itself ultimately deserts the linear and narrative logic of the internal world of the novel and ends (and hence begins) with meditations on form. *Dhalgren* makes explicit much of what is suggested in *Invisible Man*. Just as Ellison was interested in rejecting a particular construction of blackness, so too is Delany invested in rejecting the notion that the riotous city is unlivable, and by extension that the fragmented subject is untenable.

A city in riot plays out in the most predictable ways on American television. Inevitably footage is broadcasted again and again of 'looters' who take advantage of the temporary suspension of civil law to empty stores of goods. Invariably the 'looters' most visibly represented are African American and the not-so-subtle implication that African Americans are the cause of their own problems, of the very 'riot' in the first place, becomes the talking point which structures how mainstream rhetoric defines the chaos of a city in explosive decline. In order to tease out the dimensions of a forgotten city, one needs only to look at New Orleans at the height of chaos after Hurricane Katrina. American citizens suddenly became 'refugees', as everyone outside of New Orleans seemed to forget that one cannot be a refugee in one's own country. It is easy to forget a city in decline, in chaos, in need, if the people who live there have no value to those with the power to intervene. Bellona is such a city. In the context of the novel, it is supposed to be a mid-western city (probably Detroit) that somehow gets cut off from the rest of the nation and hence becomes its own universe. Bellona is precisely the kind of scenario police forces and SWAT teams are supposed to prevent. Delany luxuriates in the rich potential of an unplanned and un-foreclosed city, where the only thing that governs daily interactions is desire.

Dhalgren suggests that rather than see the anarchic city as something in need of repair, that we see the 'civil' city as the suppression of subjective freedom. Here we see the rendering of the city in earlier African American letters revised, as the city becomes the site of contestation and challenge, rather than the site of redemption. Delany's vision of the pre- and post-apocalyptic city is not one that bemoans lost order, but rather demonstrates that we always already live on the precipice between order and ataxia, and that the acceptance of this incoherence—not only of the city but also of subjectivity—exposes, rather than elides, our common, though base, humanity. Accepting the chaos of the metropolis, however, is not always pleasurable. Bellona is a dangerous, if fascinating, place. Yet the threat of that danger is undone by the realization that there is no safe opposite to turn to. Just as Delany contests the construction of a rural versus urban dichotomy that always defines the city as dangerous and the rural as 'safe', we must understand that for all its failings, Bellona testifies to the state of every kind of human community (Delany 1999). If there is anything to learn from contemporary disasters which have the power to create a place, even if only temporarily, like Bellona, it is that the structures we imagine to securely stabilize the city are mercurial. At any moment we could find ourselves cut off from food, water, police, the government, and all forms of external communication at the whim of typhoon rains or a tremorous earth. It is more than just a science fiction query to ask what we would do if we found ourselves quite suddenly 'free' of all the (sometimes desirable) accoutrements of civilization.

Dhalgren, like the city it describes, is a complicated, detail-ridden, behemoth. There are many events in the novel ripe for analysis. But there is one moment in the text that I think quite forcibly demonstrates the argument that the autumnal city is not only the true fabric of all of our contemporary cities, but that confronting the truth of that chaos produces freedom. A reflection of how the city of Bellona rejects the linear ethos of civil society can be seen in its newspaper. The newspaper of Bellona (yes, it manages to publish a paper when there is little food to be had), *The Bellona Times*, comes out regularly but it always has a different, non-linear, date. Today's paper might read "May 15th, 2007" and tomorrow's paper might proclaim the date to be "December 5th, 1977." Benedict Anderson has famously argued that nations are "imagined communities," bounded most notably by print culture (Anderson 2006). If this is so, then the imagined community's most visible print medium, its newspaper, is delimited by the printing of any date—past or present and in no particular order. The newspaper creates a temporal anomaly in Bellona, lifting and isolating the city from the linear order of time and space in the places

outside of Bellona, while also grafting it onto any time and almost any place. When you have completely lost your sense of time and place, who is to say that it is not 1977? Furthermore, what would asserting a correct date, in the context of a city like Bellona, accomplish? To tamper with the location in time of a place is also to change the subjectivities of the people that live in that city. It is to ahistoricize them, so to speak, so that the narratives operating in the text become timeless, blending Greco-Roman mythology, contemporary African American literary theories, and theories of perceptual shifts into a narrative that preserves and alters how we think about all of these highly contentious modes of representation.

Like the city that has no time and no fixed space, neither does its protagonist Kid, have a stable identity. Nothing about Kid is fixed; there is no knowledge, no name, no tangible history, no idea about life, no particular racial identification, no sexual identity, no ethos for living that he can call his own. If it is true that "The city, like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties" (de Certeau 1984, 94) then to be devoid of a proper name, a proper rendering of place and a proper sense of time, renders the city unstable, contiguous and transcendent. At one point Kid sees a list of names in his notebook and must wonder: "Is one of them mine?" If a proper name's function is to make sense of the space that is the body, then the absence of the name obfuscates rather than discloses. But to remove Kid of his proper name is to expose the vacillating nature of post-modern subjectivity.

Bellona is not unlike the red light district city-within-a city Delany celebrates in his book-length essay *Times Square Blue, Times Square Red*. But what service does this crazy city perform in relation to African American subjectivity? In Bellona, the black man—largely writ, as that stereotypical monolith—is both the traditional 'rapist' of white women and a moon. But both the appearance of a second moon and the report of rape in *The Bellona Times* are shrouded in ambiguity, offering multiple points of entry into narratives about much contested and hotly debated 'lunacies', if you will. That George is also worshipped in a church in Bellona, which produces erotic posters of him, is evidence of the many narratives about black masculinity operating in the city. There is the story of George offered up in the *Bellona Times*; there is the "moon" George; there is the George of the church and the George of the poster; and finally, there is the George that is presented in his conversation with Lanya. The multiple, and sometimes contradictory, narratives about George Harrison is further complicated when he explains to Lanya why what transpired between him and June was not rape. What is clear is that just as Kid is

defined in part by what he doesn't know, so too can we never really know who George is or what happened between him and June, the white woman he raped. We can never know if a second moon truly appeared or if it was a perfectly logical technical aberration. *Dhalgren* presents a complicated methodology of black selfhood, in much the same way Ellison's *Invisible Man* did some twenty years before Delany published his novel.

William Gibson argues that *Dhalgren* is "a riddle that was never meant to be solved." Readers have unprecedented power in the reading of this novel since Delany conceived of it necker cube, where the reader can shift their perception back and forth and change how the object is perceived. It isn't that June wasn't raped. She was. And she also wasn't. It depends, largely, on where you are standing and if you choose to squint or blink as you read. The same is true of June's brother's death. It isn't clear if she intended to push him down the elevator shaft or if he just felt and she was reaching out to grab him. To Faust, Kid look as if he could be a 'nigger'. And to others, Kid doesn't look 'ethnic' at all. Everything in this city is mutable and the reality of the situation is dependent on the reader's practices and eye. The novel is at pains to foreground this as it goes on, since it plays with type in a way that defies linear reading. In the final book of the novel, 'Anathemata: A Plague Journal', some text is set in chunks to one side, while text from a previous page continues, the reader must decide which words on the page they are going to read. It would be very difficult to read all the words, in a linear fashion, on the page at this point in the novel so the book forces the reader to decide. Does one follow the narrative thread and then return to those block sections of text later? If later, when? At the end of the book? These ambiguities of form mirror the fragmented city and the shifting subjectivity of its protagonist. *Dhalgren* disrupts identification with the characters by confronting the reader with a choice.

Dhalgren presents the post-modern subject as a hybrid flaneur, 'passing by', in the city, claimed and yet freed by the unpredictability of its community, a community that only comes into coherence from far away. The city of Bellona, which functions as a metaphor for subjectivity itself, defies time and also endlessly references all temporal realities. Bellona is at once timeless but also specific to every time. It has its foot, if you will, in a paradoxical double—a double consciousness of time, not unlike W.E.B. DuBois' concept of the double consciousness of subjectivity (DuBois 1996). The "style of tactile apprehension and kinesthetic appropriation" (de Certeau, 97) attributable to the double manifestation of the clothed and naked hoof, to the multiple invocation of

every time and also of no time, suggests that the black subject is, as always, just beyond our grasp.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BOMBAY, MULTIPLI-CITY: DE-MARGINALIZING URBAN IDENTITIES AND ACTIVITIES IN GREGORY DAVID ROBERTS'S *SHANTARAM* AND SUKETU MEHTA'S *MAXIMUM CITY*

IPSHITA GHOSE

> So it begins, this story, like everything else—with a woman, and a city, and a little bit of luck.
> (Gregory David Roberts *Shantaram*, 3)

The universality implied in Roberts's statement which is the introduction to his widely acclaimed novel *Shantaram*, is demonstrated in Suketu Mehta's literary tribute to the city of his boyhood, nostalgically titled *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* (Mehta 2004). The city is twenty first century Bombay, more familiarly referred to by its provincial name Mumbai, a vibrant, multi-ethnic, cosmopolitan city and the commercial capital of India. According to a widely regarded hypothesis, while the name Bombay is epistemologically derived from the Portugese toponym *Bombain* which means 'good bay', in 1995 the city was renamed Mumbai after the Hindu goddess *Mumbadevi* (14-15). The complexities of nomenclature are effectively ruled out as both Roberts and Mehta refer to the city by its former name, Bombay, while subtly implying that coincident with a change of name was a change in city-ethic. Salman Rushdie echoes this sentiment in his analysis of Mehta's novel when he describes Bombay as a "ruined metropolis" which has almost been destroyed by the "corruption, gangsterism, and neo-fascist politics" prevalent in present-day Mumbai (Rushdie 2004).

The novels are semi-autobiographical accounts of the authors' experiences in Bombay; their poignant memories of the vivacious yet visceral city are interwoven with stories of loves lost and re-conquered over time. Roberts's Karla (a passionate green-eyed German emigrant) and Mehta's Monalisa (the captivating Gujrati bar-dancer) are the primary representative female figures in their texts; they embody the inscrutability and allure of an urban existence in this city of relentless industry and enterprise. Bombay has a unique trade culture (*dhandha*) which is portrayed in the novels by the all pervasive and often insidious presence of money which maybe interpreted as the 'luck' Roberts is referring to. In an age where merit is devalued and honesty has crumbled into decadence, money is the supreme facilitator for urban advancement. Black money, white money, industrial money, bribe money, counter-bribe money, tip-off money, extortion money, hush money, protection money—there is no attempt to conceal the diversity of needs and greeds which are articulated in the space of the city. The multiply striated economic structure of the city is interpolated by a diversity of currencies, both official and unofficial, creating a fiscal matrix which functions upon the principle of individual gain. In recent years, this compulsive acquisitiveness has transcended the individual and become a distinguishing feature of Bombay itself, thus encouraging writers to portray the city as a conglomeration of individual dreams and material ambitions.

The ubiquitous problems of literary representation are effectively dealt with in the texts, as they illustrate a comprehensive selection of characters and incidents which exemplify the diversities inherent in this multi-ethnic, hybrid city. While Mehta acknowledges and celebrates this plurality in his writings, he is wary of a growing predisposition towards a collective representation of urban identities and embraces a theory of selfhood that strives to distinguish the Man from the Metropolis, which he believes is only "the infinite extension of the individual" (Mehta 2004, 580). Even as the author attempts to characterize Bombay in its entirety, he relates incidents and events from an individual perspective instead of generalizing the experience of rediscovering the lost city: "There are many Bombays; through the writing of a book, I wanted to find mine" (13).

Rohinton Mistry describes Mehta's text as revealing the many personalities of the metropolis: "maleficent Bombay, bountiful Bombay, beckoning temptress of hope, manufacturer of despair, city of dreams and nightmare city" (Mistry 2004). *Maximum City* uses the idea of multiplicity in all its forms to mark the disintegration of the secular order upon which the city had been founded, and there is a violent transition from a celebratory mode to a more sinister one, as Mehta describes Bombay to be

a "schizophrenic city", and one "having multiple aliases, like gangsters and whores" (Mehta 2004, 21). The city witnessed a massacre of thousands of Bombay's Muslims in the riots of 1992-93, which was justified as a cleansing act by the ruling Hindu right-wing zealots, the Shiv Sena. The need to create space was expressed by invoking a religious extremism amongst the city's Hindus who began asserting their claims of inheriting the city through violence and bloodshed. The assumption of multiple identities by those targeted in the riots is described by Mehta as a schizophrenic survival tactic: "When you were out in the city, if you got stopped your life depended on whether you answered Ram or Rahim"—Ram and Rahim are worshipped as the archetypal religious icons of the Hindu and Muslim faiths respectively. In another instance of multiplicity at the socio-political level, the riots saw the rise of a Maharastrian underclass (*ghattis*) which gained political control by virtue of being members of the ruling Shiv Sena, and the city witnessed a complete devolution of power which was facilitated by what Mehta interprets as "*powertoni*" (63). An indigenous contraction of the phrase 'power of attorney', *powertoni* implies the overwhelming ability to act on someone else's behalf; the *ghattis* now wielded immense political clout by asserting their association with the parent organization of the Shiv Sena. The city was faced by the imminent threat of a rigid provincialism and *Maximum City* marks this transition with a violent spatial disruption in the narrative.

Mehta's text illustrates a significant shift of literary locales: he narrates himself out of the initial story of his family's return and re-initiation into the upper echelons of Bombay society and actively engages himself in a nether-world of poverty, prostitution, and political intrigue. It is the opinion of many that in the current post-Marxian age, economic redistribution is not a solution to the widening disparity between the rich and the poor, and Bombay allows a shocking, yet now-familiar juxtaposition of the two—two thirds of its population is cramped into a mere five percent of its total area, while the rich monopolize the remaining expanse of the city. Halfway through Mehta's text, the iconic Bombay skyline defined by its towering skyscrapers is replaced by the smoky interiors of opium dens and brothels and the squalor of slum dwellings, marking his descent as both literal and metaphoric. Like Roberts, he believes that his quest necessitates a recreation of the self within a vast collective—that of the city and its teeming millions. For Mehta, life on the city streets is a true representation of the urban predicament and he endeavors to contextualize his existence within this greater parameter. Thematically, the novel is a departure from conformist city literature which uses the urban landscape primarily as a backdrop for its tales of

upper-middle class agony and angst. Mehta, Roberts, Chandra, and other contemporary writers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the inconsequentiality faced by ordinary individuals who are engulfed by the multitude and they foreground the city as the battling ground where a diversity of lives (which are usually written off as ordinary or marginal) struggle to find their space.

The term marginal is central in describing the city—while Bombay was incorporated into the world economy in the early 1990s it continues to occupy a peripheral or marginal status as its economic restructuring is impacted by existent local-cultural tensions (Bannerjee-Guha 1998). It may be acknowledged that in the recent spate of works of fiction on Bombay written primarily in English, the emergent trend is one that gives voice to these regional elements, to the the marginal urban identities and activities which lie beneath the surface of the seemingly innocuous hustle and bustle of city life. Even as India's most populous and cosmopolitan city maintains an increasingly global approach in its economic relations with the rest of the world, current literary trends seem to suggest a localization of themes as opposed to the more universal and conventional arranged marriage and East meets West storylines. Gregory David Roberts's *Shantaram*, Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*, Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*, and Suketu Mehta's *Maximum City* are a few which envision a world hidden beneath the chaotic flurry of city life: a nefarious underworld, which is complete, convincing and startlingly unique. Reminiscent of the great and capacious novels of the nineteenth century, their books are richly realistic and perfectly rendered novels of the streets and a tribute to the unwavering capacity of its people to accommodate the growing population and co-exist with the rapidly developing underworld—the new successors of the city. Based in the slums (*bastis*), shanties (*chawls*), gutters and back alleys (*gullees*) of Bombay, the novels reveal a strong sense of community and fellow-feeling amongst the dispossessed who are bound together by a common destitution, and the texts are inundated with colloquial references and crude invectives which although typical of the Bombay street dweller may baffle a foreign reader. A case in point is Vikram Chandra's epic street-novel *Sacred Games*, which regales the reader with exhaustive and often abstruse accounts of local criminal operations and turf-war sensitivities in the course of its 900 odd pages (Chandra 2006) It is perhaps a point of great significance that Indian authors are encouraging a readership whose identity is not key to the creation of their work.

Roberts's *Shantaram* is the tale of an escaped convict who flees from a maximum security prison in Australia and seeks anonymity and refuge on

the streets of Bombay, like the countless other poor and disenfranchised migrants who struggle to claim their space in this land of opportunities. Lindsay, the felon in Roberts's novel is doubly marginalized by his status as a foreigner and a slum dweller in Bombay, and his impromptu christening by Prabaker, the tourist guide, is a significant step towards the localizing of his identity. Recreating an urban identity is no easy task, and saddled with the name of Lin-Baba, which has certain phallic implications. Implicit in the act of renaming is the process of localization. This holds true both in the case of the man (Lindsay-Lin Baba) and the city (Bombay-Mumbai). Lindsay's new name is representative of the indigenous identity he is trying to create and is greatly revered by the local people as it is derived from the word 'ling' meaning phallus. The 'ling' or the 'Shiv-ling' is deified in almost all Hindu temples as the fertility godhead. Lindsay has to prove his ability to survive on the city streets and his loyalty towards those who have facilitated it. It is rather ironic, that Lindsay reconstructs his life in an environment not unlike the one he had risked everything to escape from, a space immersed in subterfuge and crime. Even his dwelling in the slum colony is small and cramped like a prison cell, yet it is where he finds his freedom. His encounters with Karla Saaranen, the beautiful, elusive and manipulative female protagonist, are symbolic of his bitter-sweet relationship with the city itself, and his restless masculinity is tamed by her quiet self-possession. The attractive yet inviolable aura which she projects distinguishes her from her middle class, fashionably westernized group of friends—she represents the city as it initially appears to Lindsay, familiar, yet aloof. He embarks on a quest, which is not his alone but that of every migrant, to inherit/earn the right of belonging to the city and the novel traces the trajectory of his transformation from Lindsay the tourist to Lin-Baba the healer of the slum people and henchman to the Bombay Mafioso, and finally to Shantaram, a 'man of peace'. The vastness of the city is condensed into a neat spatial framework as Roberts conceives the Leopold Café, situated on the congested Colaba Causeway as a hub of urban activity and much of his narrative transpires within the interiors of this composite space.

The spatial inequities in the texts by both Mehta and Roberts are essentially similar as the social and economic stratification of the people is physically demarcated by a difference in elevation. The high-rise buildings indicate a certain fixity, exclusivity and economic prosperity which are distinct from the condition of the pavement dwellers whose lives are conditioned by a transience that stems from a lack of adequate housing and an ongoing struggle to assert one's space and individuality in a city which threatens to subsume it. The arrant disproportion of economic distribution

in this neo-liberalized city is glaringly emphasized by the simultaneous existence of extremities such as cyber-contenders who lay claims on their private virtual spaces and the dispossessed, which guard their precious few feet of public street-space with their lives. Inextricably bound together in a complex web of concrete and intangible spaces, the inhabitants of this mega-city are distinguished by their claims of residency as 'real citizens' and 'squatter citizens', the vast majority of people occupying the second category. It has been estimated that the city's underbelly would be the most populous in the world by 2020 with a staggering 28.5 million inhabitants—thus it is hardly surprising that a majority of Indian writers are choosing to shift their textual milieus from the opulent interiors of upper class homes to the grittiness of communal living on the streets of Bombay.

Both Mehta and Roberts share a similar urban positioning as outsiders in the city, and the narratives reveal their anxieties about local identity and belonging. In her article "Provincializing the Global City: From Bombay to Mumbai", Rashmi Varma speaks of the complex text-ile of the city, using the metaphor of fabrication to describe the process of self fashioning which an individual undergoes to consolidate his/her local identity (Varma 2004). An urban stereotype which is commonly found on the city streets is the 'idle young man', who exemplifies the problems of overpopulation and unemployment in Bombay. Similar in their temperaments and beliefs to John Osborne's protagonist in the play *Look Back in Anger*, these young men are prone to lounging around the city in search of work, thereby creating a floating pool of unproductive individuals who are easily driven to acts of violence in a collective expression of resentment towards the establishment. Both *Shantaram* and *Maximum City* describe incidents where the protagonists are victim to mob fury—the Crowd is much feared and revered on the city streets as it is synonymous with a majority standpoint which often translates itself into indiscriminate violence. With continued urban expansion the crowd becomes a metonym for the city in modernist discourse, and is perceived as a group of people who have lost their individual selves in their pursuit of a universal justice (Lehan 1998, 71). In recent years, many of these men have been subsumed into the vastly operative underworld, which empowers them with money and *powertoni*, thus restoring their sense of self and individuality. The underworld is instrumental in creating an indigenous identity for Lindsay; he is swiftly accepted into the local black marketeering racket as his status of 'gora' or 'white foreigner' accompanied by a physical hardiness and quick grasp of the regional language brings a certain credibility and

legitimacy to the vastly operative network of street swindlers and schemers.

For Lindsay, Bombay is exhilaratingly liberated, an unofficial free zone where identities can be constructed and traded effortlessly. He perceives the crime of his existence to be invisible and inconceivable on the city streets which give him the autonomy to assume the guises of doctor, ambassador, gunrunner, smuggler, counterfeiter amongst others. This freedom may be translated as a certain carnivalesque lawlessness which pervades the city and is manifest in its public encroachments, its haphazard disarray of commercial activities, its teeming abundance of human resources, and a general non-conformity of tastes and opinions. Didier Levy, the worldly Frenchman in Roberts's novel mentions civilization as being defined more by what is forbidden than what is permitted, thus implying that the city's underbelly where everything is permitted, is an anti-civilization or a barbarity of some sorts. He is perhaps not entirely incorrect in his perception of this vicious city which encourages greed, speculation, and vice as being the essential elements of trade and fosters an alternative economic and (il)legal system within itself. Lindsay marvels at the corruption which adheres to every aspect of public and commercial life in Bombay while dismissing it as yet another 'city thing': "All cities are the same. It's not just here. It's the same in New York, or Rio, or Paris. They're all dirty and they're all crazy" (Roberts 2004, 10).

However, in the course of the novel Bombay is particularized by the unique practice of the 'honest bribe' that is commonly seen on the city streets, and is authorized by a candidness which is implicit in the rather sordid and mostly furtive act of bribe-taking. This brings us to the other rather radical concepts introduced by Roberts in his novel—that of "a legal slum" (under the protection of a gang-lord), "breaking the law professionally" (black marketeering), and "organized crime within a protective circle" (the mafia), implying a de-marginalization of certain aspects of urban life which are elevated from a status of disrepute to high privilege (Roberts 2004, 46-47). The common man's transition from deprivation to depravity is a tale much told in recent city-literature, as it inspires a readership which is attracted by both the sordidness and the dangers inherent in this process. Preconceived notions of indigence and vice are cleverly subverted, as a slum is not merely an excrescence but a thriving collaborative effort of the disenfranchised, while gang lords enjoy the celebrated and much-revered status of god-heads. Although possibly a moral regression, it is a progression in every other sense of the term—be it economic, social and even global, as the novels reveal that much of

foreign tourism and trade thrives upon its dealings with the underworld. However, it is unlikely that such decadence will ever be viewed as progressive by an outsider, and the texts have been severely critiqued as autopsies of a city which is morally deceased (Irani 2004).

The *really* city, as Prabaker endearingly calls the underbelly of Bombay, is characterized by an illegitimacy and unsightliness which necessitates a veiling of the activities and persons involved (Roberts 2004, 50). In a poignant scene from the novel, as Prabaker observes an entire colony of slums being razed to the ground by the municipal authorities, he comments upon the irony of demolishing a community whose existence was originally unacknowledged by the law. The tragedy of the slum people whose lives are shadowed by anonymity is summarized by him in a simple, yet distressing statement: "We are the not-people. And these are the not-houses where we are not-living" (250). Roberts portrays this multiple negation as a matter of perspective, as those who witness the demolition of the hutments are secure within the elevated precincts of the World Trade Center which adjoins the slum area. However, it is not the author's intention to draw attention to the slum dwellers' insignificance and vulnerability; instead he focuses on the alacrity with which they re-build their homes and their lives. The instinct to survive is strong and compelling amongst the city's dispossessed and even Lindsay is hardened by the adversities he encounters on the city streets. Lindsay's story is brought to a close with the death of his friend and mentor Prabaker, and betrayal by his lover, Karla. Forsaken by his near and dear ones, he turns to the city for its "nourishing constancy'. It is at the very end that he achieves an inner peace, and is truly deserving of the name Shantaram (man of peace) which was bestowed upon him by Prabaker's family.

Perhaps the only aspect of urban life which prevents the city from spiraling into a state of anarchy is the core of humanity which both Mehta and Roberts encounter in their close interactions with people. There is an attempt by the authors to acquaint their readership with the compassionate and humane aspects of life in the city to counteract the viciousness which is characteristic of Bombay. This is accompanied by an ongoing endeavor to familiarize the exceptional. The word 'exceptional' may be interpreted as contrary to conventional or commonplace; what appears unremarkable and perhaps even trivial to an inhabitant of the city might seem fascinating to an outsider. I revert to my previous theory of an active literary endeavor to de-marginalize urban identities and activities by giving them an increased visibility within the text. In *Shantaram*, Lindsay's initial horror at perceiving the widespread hardship and suffering of the street-dwellers is greatly assuaged by his intimate interaction with the slum-people and a

closer observation of their ways of surviving poverty, disease, and the constant fear of eviction. He soon begins to perceive the ghetto as a living organism and is awed by the generosity of the poor, the elastic tolerance of the slums dwellers, and their active endeavor to foster religious equality and fellow feeling within the community. Similarly, after giving his readers an initial glimpse of the sordidness and brutality of the underworld, Roberts speaks eloquently of the prostitutes, petty thieves and gang lords in his novel, counteracting their crimes with a persuasive description of their better, humane selves. I would interpret this not so much as literary misrepresentation or a glossing over but rather an attempt to acquaint the readers with the complex nature of urban identities and the unceasing struggle to find one's own space in India's most populous city.

Much of recent literature on the city of Bombay, which endeavors to foster an association between the 'local' and the 'locale', has been received extremely well by a global audience, despite concerns that the city is becoming obscure and insular. To a great extent the interest generated in indigenous issues is on account of authors resorting to a combination of fiction and investigative reportage while describing the city. The information revealed in their narratives has generated much debate about whether Bombay is the *Urbs Prima in Indis*—so named on the the plaque on the Gateway of India, built in 1911 and a symbol of the city's trading culture—or an impending urban catastrophe, or perhaps as Mehta comprehensively calls it, truly a "maximum city".

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THE IDEA OF THE CITY: AFTERWORD

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> A large city cannot be experientially known; its life is too manifold for any individual to be able to participate in it.
> (Aldous Huxley)
>
> A great city, whose image dwells in the memory of man, is the type of some great idea. Rome represents conquest; Faith hovers over the towers of Jerusalem; and Athens embodies the pre-eminent quality of the antique world, Art.
> (Benjamin Disraeli)

There are two sets of 'Ideas' in the quotations above—the idea of the city in general and the idea of a particular city. Those two ideas are also represented in the essays in this collection and reflect the larger trend in research on the city. Sometimes these two sets overlap, as in Lee's essay on Petrarch's designation of Avignon both as a particular city (two in fact, itself and Babylon) and an idea of sin city, the cities of the plains, every bad city defined against a good city on a hill or a city of god—in fact, defined against civility itself. This is also true of Ghose's treatment of Bombay as a 'maximum city'—observations that might be applied to a number of postcolonial megacities, but are also strikingly and only about Mumbai, "Gateway to India". Authors such as Rechy, however, as Roon notes, deliberately blur the specific cities—Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, New Orleans—into one continuous City of Night that is the phenomenological experience of the street hustler whose travel from city to city is facilitated by air travel. Delany's vaguely Detroit-like Bellona is characterized by its discontinuity in both time and space, its internally coherent illogic, its impossibility of definition. Kristiania, too, as Sjølyst-Jackson observes of Hamsun's portrayal of it in *Hunger*, though more a town than a city, is assimilated into the protagonist's experience of it as a chaotic series of painstakingly named and identified places that paradoxically give no sense of specificity. Here, the city stands in for the very experience of modernity itself—its anomie, dislocation and

irrationality. Bénézet's reading of Yamashita's Los Angeles likewise focuses on its carnivalesque and dystopian elements, rendering a dreamlike landscape that is nonetheless defined by its historical specificity—magical realism here being more realist than magical, perhaps.

Another opposition offered by my epigraphic quotes is that between the city as booming, buzzing confusion, inevitably exceeding attempts to define and comprehend it, and the city as a civil ideal, standing for something both particular and admirable. In this collection, the city has been strikingly defined in terms of rootlessness, boundary confusion, and migration. Even in the early-modern city, as seen in Lee and by Griffin's readings, the city is a concept detachable from geography (Petrach's Avignon) or defined by its radical disconnection from its own past, as in Stow's *Survey of London*. Relatively little is done with the rootedness of city dwellers. The modern and post-modern city is also defined in this collection phenomenologically, as a set of experiences and practices, rarely in primary terms as a geography or economy. Part of the reason for this is of course the essays' literary focus, but I think this also gestures to an important element of the way we tend to think of the city more generally.

Another important theme in the history of the urban is that of city as zone of freedom—a freedom that may itself come to oppress or madden, (as in Rechy's endless urban nights or Byron's Venice,) but that also empowers. Delany's Bellona, dystopian though it be in some ways, offers opportunities for power and human connection. Greenberg's reading of Heywood's relation to women theatergoers emphasizes the power of the figures of women characters and of women theatergoers in early-modern justifications of theater as an affirmative moral and political ritual. A major thread in these essays is the influence of Benjamin, as one might expect, and flaneurs perambulate endless streets of endless cities in several of these essays. Often, however, post-modern flaneurs have a vexed relation to consumer objects in the city, as they are consumed themselves. This occurs most notably, as one might expect, in narratives of prostitution, as in Ward's reading of Herlihy's *Midnight Cowboy* and Roon's reading of *City of Night.* Sexual freedom has long had a particularly vexed association with the urban as a site of pleasure and danger; in these texts we see both of these collide with the commodity consumption associated with the city as a market—increasingly an alienating and dehumanizing one.

If the later readings of cities are marked by cynicism and dystopianism, the pre- and early-modern readings tend to construct the city as a site of

performance that allows the inscription of identity and community through civic pageantry (and sometimes resistance to such pageantry). Johnston's essay traces the histories of religious plays and royal reception pageants in specific cities during the late medieval period. Although the performance of such plays could be the focus of considerable dissension, the decisions made around such pageantry did much to define urban communities and their character. A primary literary genre in early-modern cities was theater, and so it is not surprising to find it predominant in the essays in this section of the volume. But theater, more than, say, poetry, also tended to thematize and re-present the city to its dwellers, and so it could be again a site for community building and the affirmation of shared values. So, at least, argued playwrights like Thomas Heywood, as Greenberg makes clear. It also thematized and celebrated the social mobility that civic concentration made possible, even while it reflected anxieties about such desires, as McIntosh notes of Jacobean drama—another instance of the civic milieu offering freedoms beyond the impetus of flight noted by Martin and Sjølyst-Jackson, this time of economic and social mobility.

The desire for flight, for movement both within and away from the city, has perhaps been overemphasized. Martin shows that the urban flight Britons and US Americans tend to think of as a post-1960s phenomenon, and the concomitant demonization of the urban core, are in fact part of a long history of cyclical exurbanisations dating back at least to the late medieval period. As Martin shows, much of this movement and thus the shaping of the city has been motivated by (and understood through) a certain Idea of the Country—a romantic view of the rural as healthy, wealthy and beautiful. Venice, on the other hand, as Wolfreys and Plotnitsky both show, has spawned a literature (especially a foreign literature) with a very specific 'idea' of that city, an idea of it as desirable, if also deadly. If Venice stands in for a generic urban experience to the various other continental and British writers who have memorialized it, it also stands for a particular fantasy of undecidability and mystery, in Wolfreys's reading. A city sinking into the water (or rising out of it like Botticelli's Venus—take your pick) continually recedes and resists our reading activity of its shifting surfaces. Plotnitsky finds in its curves and complexities the very epitome of the Baroque and a successful resistance of the Cartesianism of Enlightenment architecture and urban planning (think Paris)—not least for the Romantic writers who have largely given to English speakers our understanding of Venice. Venice contains all the negative associations of the city as 'Great Wen'—dirty, diseased, crime-ridden, and sexually dangerous. (See Venice and die). Yet, in spite of and

because of these associations, it offers an irresistible fascination. (See Venice and die happy).

The post-modern city is also oppositional practices, radical mobility, and the refusal of stable identities or even geographies. In the post-modern city par excellence (thanks in part to the efforts of Frederic Jameson, Edward Soja and Mike Davis), Bénézet also finds a literature of specificity. The landscape of Yamashita's Los Angeles is populated with historical and mytho-historical personages: Ruben Salazar, El Gran Mojado, Manzanar are all parts of Los Angeles's specific history—a murdered Chicano journalist, the iconic image of the 'wetback' illegal immigrant, and a detainment camp for Japanese Americans imprisoned during WWII. In this novel places and categories become characters—as do real people 'ripped from the headlines' of L.A.s troubled past. Yamashita's 'magical' novel could not be set elsewhere, whereas Petrach's Avignon or Rechy's city of night—and even Seward's Lichfield—could be in any city in practically any nation. Delany's 'science-fictional' Bellona, too, though consciously set as 'any city' in a science-fiction landscape makes no sense—or at least could only make very different sense—outside of the specific context of the history of United States racism and urbanization, as Dunning makes quite clear. Ghose likewise treats the ethnic, historical and economic complexity of Mumbai with the sensitivity her authors demand; Mumbai does not exist *as such* outside of the complex web of historical and economic global relations that posits its necessity. In short, despite a wide diversity of historical period and topic, there is a cohesiveness of theme and topoi that is striking in this collection.

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Any collection of conference papers is bound to be incomplete as a survey of a subject. But when successful, it serves an excellent purpose as a snapshot of the kind of work occurring in a field at a given moment, and thus an opportunity to reflect on the direction of current work and the gaps left for a fuller coverage in the future. In hearing and later reading these papers, I am struck with a few tendencies they display (and sometimes contradict) that I believe to be representative of the larger body of scholarship on the literature of the city of which they are a part, and I will accordingly point to some areas that I think are the next step in building this scholarship.

Much has been said of the modern and post-modern experience of urban indeterminacy, a theme born out even in earlier treatments of the

city, as in Griffin's reading of Stow. However, the city is also experienced at some level as a bounded entirety—else how could be come to be so disappointed (or thrilled) when it fails to cohere? Some good work has been done on the theme of the larger urban identity—Plotnitsky's reading of Venice, for example, as negotiating between madness and reason through a refusal of Enlightenment spatialization. Even more work on the identity and specificity of cities in the arts would be useful placed in dialogue with the generic 'Idea of the City' which drives so much urban characterization, as would work on their boundaries and distinctions. Rechy's hero reaches the end of his journey and his rope in New Orleans, and there is a reason that the dénouement must be there rather than in LA or Chicago—or even in Baton Rouge or Lafayette. Sjølyst-Jackson calls our attention to the fact that Hamsun may not even think of Kristiania as a city, but as a mid-size town, and this matters, not merely because it challenges our sense of Hamsun's 'Idea of the City', but because it draws attention to the way his critics 'Ideas of the City' have shaped the reading of the phenomenology of the character's experience of hunger as a largely urban phenomenon rather than primarily as a bodily or psychological or even aesthetic one.

The hermeneutics of suspicion that have (not unjustly) reigned in late modernity, combine with two factors highlighted in this collection to result in an important omission in much scholarship on the modern and post-modern city. As Martin and Griffin point out, there is in cities, and perhaps in studies of cities, a romanticization of the countryside, and also an ambiguous relation to the actual history of urban places—a past which is both so comfortably close it is forgettable and yet seen as radically distant and incommensurable with our experience. These factors may cause a tendency to forget that the original Idea of the city is one of civility--a site of protection, freedom, knowledge, collaboration and community. It is important, of course, to continue to document the ways in which the city fails its promise. But it is also important to document the strivings of urban communities toward those ideals that are most recently Enlightenment, but have existed in some form as long as the city itself. To use a Jamesonian phrase, where is the 'authentically utopian' impulse that many cities embody, and that survives in post-modernity as precisely an impulse to celebrate lines of flight from Enlightenment discipline and surveillance, as it surely does in Ghose's readings of *Shantaram* and *Maximum City*? Lest we forget the 'idiocy of rural life' that Marx decried, let us attend to the many ways in which cities were and are revered and idealized. (They are often most idealized by poets and urban planners,

which leads me to think we need more on the poetry of the city, if not the poetry of urban planners).

There has justly been a great deal of attention to Lefebvre, Jameson and Soja in treatments of space in literature. They have given us much, and the next step is to complicate and revise their readings, perhaps with a broader theoretical array. Wolfreys incorporates deconstruction both as a philosophical and as an architectural tool in his readings, and Plotnitsky complicates these largely philosophical questions with reference to understandings of space emerging from the discipline of physics. This seems a promising direction, as our readings of the urban (or indeed the rural) are incomplete without a sense of how space works in our objects of study. We need to continue to push to develop understandings of space that are useful and specific, and that means an interdisciplinary set of questions that is also pointedly literary. Novels (to take an example) use settings and are used by them, recreate and shape 'real' and imaginary places even as they depict them. They are also produced, distributed and consumed in actual places that are not incidental to their context, as Franco Moretti shows us in *Atlas of the European Novel* published in 1998. I would like to briefly summarize Moretti's work here, as I think it points to another important way studies of literature and the urban might move.

Moretti analyzed various genres of novels and the conditions of their production to show how the dominant European novelistic fictions of the nineteenth century emerged from three or four literary capitals. Western literature was thus for a long period dominated by production from a very few cultures and locations. In turn, novels represented Western geography with some consistency—18th and early 19th century gothic, for example, was often in the south or east of Europe, in non-modern, non urban sites, whereas the location of English realism tended to be the agricultural village. Of sixty Gothic texts coming from England surveyed by Moretti, only one is set in England, the rest concentrate their settings in Italy and France until 1800, then Germany, then, in 1820, Scotland (16). Jane Austen's stories, however, concentrate in the lower half of England—no manufacturing North, no Celtic fringe (15). Moretti finds these patterns operating in support of national identity formation. Moretti analyzes the literature of two great nineteenth-century Western European literary capitals: London and Paris, both of which presented crises of legibility. Some genres, such as the English silver fork novel, divided the city (us, the West End, vs. them, the East and South and pretty much everything else). Others present the city as puzzle, such as Dickens, in *Our Mutual Friend*, or fields of power, as in Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*. Moretti

asks us to go beyond our close-reading tendencies as literary critics and to think more globally about the relation of literary production generally and the urban—both as an 'Idea' and as a historically and geographically situated entity. This is an avenue that requires more thought, and is part of the study of the geopolitics of literary production that in recent years we have come to understand is integral to the task of the critic.

My point here is not to suggest that there is something wrong with the kinds of close readings or historicization that have traditionally dominated our practice. But in our focus on the phenomenological experience of characters, and to a lesser extent of readers or viewers, we may be ignoring other important aspects of space in these texts. (Again, it is striking to me that there is little poetry in this volume, a form of writing in which formal structure often plays a more dominant role than in drama or the novel, where it may be subordinated to character and plot). But setting codes the *structure* of a number of novels as well. I wonder to what extent our readings of the city as anomic and confusing reflect tendencies in modernist character and plot that might be contradicted or even refused by the relation of the structure of the city and of the literary work—Joyce's *Ulysses* leaps to mind—a mythic itinerary rationalizes a city whose discontinuities, as they are experienced by the limited perspective of the characters, are harmonized within the epic form and its literary history, and the structure of Dublin is superimposed on the map of 'the world' of the ancient Aegean by the artist-cartographer-chorographer. These foci also deserve our attention, not simply to 'round out' our studies (thought that might be reason enough), but because they may also fundamentally revise some of the observations that have emerged in more common approaches.

Finally, as with any field of knowledge, there are key themes that emerge in the study of the city. Sexualities, class mobility, architecture, and community identity are all themes I find well represented widely in the scholarship and within this volume. Outside of studies of the postcolonial city, however, we have not been as diligent in seeking out the global nature of the relations by which *every* city is constituted. The metropole does not pre-exist the colonial relation. London is not a postcolonial city solely because it has population that represents former colonies, but because its existence as a modern city is itself constituted by the colonies. Atlantic studies has taught us to think in larger terms than nation or region. Detroit, in the U.S. now holds intimate economic and to some extent social relations with Juarez, Mexico. The back offices of U.S. businesses in New Jersey are in Mumbai. Finally, cities depend on the vast production of food (and increasingly water) in widely dispersed rural

areas. One cannot intelligently think through the politics of London in 1860 without thinking through the economics of Manchester in the 1830s, or the racial and ethnic relations of the Caribbean and British India. (One cannot intelligently think through the politics of London today without reference to the oil and military investments of the US in the Persian Gulf, more's the pity). But even in much earlier periods, cities were not islands—even when they were on islands. And our current (and I believe continuing) concern with sustainability demands such an understanding, both at the human and geopolitical level (who sustains this city?) and the ecological (how is this city sustained?). So, like literature itself, the city calls upon us to exercise dualities of vision—to see the specificities of a given city while weighing a relation to a more abstract urban Idea(l), or to see the boundedness and limits of a particular city without losing sight of the web of relations which constitutes it.

This collection gestures to our present strengths in understanding the relation of literature to the Idea of the City, and also provides a vantage point to see the possible futures of such studies. It has been a pleasure to see the richness of the work that is currently being done and also to have the opportunity to reflect on the trends in our scholarship. I look forward to comparing such a 'snapshot' ten years from now with this one; whatever the future of the 'Idea of the City' turns out to be, it will be indebted to the work we are doing now, of which this collection is a part.

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