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

   This chapter considers what literary scholars in the twenty-first century could do with the models and theories which emerged under the general headings of planning and urban studies between the mid-nineteenth and the later twentieth centuries. Accounts of the city which were produced to describe and shape actual practice and policy in the new, sprawling urban zones could become fresh approaches to the reading of literature. Conversely, as works produced from the 1970s onwards in sociology, architecture and design, and human geography taking a cultural

turn recognise (Lefebvre [1974]; Sennett 1977; Sennett 1994; Pinder 2005; Campkin 2013), literature and other forms of cultural production contribute to the discussion. The texts which are at the centre of this chapter were shaped with different purposes in mind from those of literary scholars. The outcome of such purposes in the actual building and planning decisions of nineteenth and twentieth-century cities in Europe, North America and elsewhere is neither utopia nor dystopia but the messiness of life. Such messiness is rendered best not by plans but by certain literary forms, notably the realist novel and creative non-fiction.

Up until the 'spatial turn' of the 2000s and 2010s, literary scholarship paid little attention to theories of the urban. Even now, the reception of contemporary spatial theory by Andrew Thacker (2003), Anna Snaith and Michael Whitworth (2007) and others, like the mapping-based approach of Franco Moretti (1998; 2005), the 'geocriticism' proposed by Bertrand Westphal ([2007]) and his disciple Robert T. Tally Jr. (2013) and even the postmodern geographies of Edward Soja (1989) have emphasized the narratives of the modern, within which the urban dominates, proposed in France between the 1960s and the 1990s by the likes of Pierre Bourdieu (1993; 1999), Michel Foucault ([1967]), Guy Debord ([1967]), Gilles Deleuze, Henri Lefebvre ([1974]), George Perec ([1974]), Michel de Certeau ([1974]) and Marc Augé ([1992]). Such narratives see the modern and postmodern urban as essentially the site of contests of power between varied ideological forces with individual 'users' occasionally developing the ability to subvert the system via creative and irrational practices of walking and art production. But a much broader range of theorizations of and responses to the urban, produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have still largely been overlooked by literary scholars. Work from specifically German and Anglo-American traditions which coalesced as urban studies will be at the centre of this chapter.

Specifically, this chapter moves from fairly fresh, even raw, responses to the rapidly urbanizing city in the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth by the likes of

Friedrich Engels ([1845]), John Ruskin ([1884]), Charles Booth ([1886-1903]), Ferdinand Tönnies ([1887]), Frederick Law Olmsted ([1870]) and William Morris ([1890]) to the wholescale rejection of the urban embodied most clearly in the work of Ebenezer Howard ([1898]) and Patrick Geddes (1915) and developed into a massive orthodoxy in the US by Lewis Mumford ([1938]; 1961) and in the UK by Patrick Abercrombie (1945) in the mid-twentieth century. This is followed by efforts to reshape the urban via revolutionary transformations, again focused on the era between the two world wars and emerging most clearly in the work of Le Corbusier ([1929]) and Albert Speer (1970; see Hall 1988: 198-200).

Running alongside such efforts was a slow and penetrating effort to get to grips with the details and landscape of the modern urban beginning, I would argue, with the refocusing on the individual of Georg Simmel ([1903]), progressing through the Chicago School sociological studies produced between the 1920s and the 1960s and taking a vital turn with the neo-urbanism of Jane Jacobs (1961) and the work on gentrification and urban revival of Ruth Glass (1964), Marshall Berman (1982) and Neil Smith (1996) between the 1960s and the 1990s. Gradually this work tested the hypotheses about the unique nature of the modern urban social experience proposed by Tönnies and others, becoming itself the foundation for twenty-first century work in cultural geography (Pinder 2005) and sociological ethnography (Hall 2015) which combines rigorous spatial and statistical analysis with an interest in the narrative projection and indeed creation of urban experience. Literary scholars of the urban have a great deal to learn from these new research avenues.

The Nineteenth-Century Fear of the City

The historian of urban planning Peter Hall (1988: 14) entitles his chapter on late nineteenth-century '[r]eactions to […] the Slum City', 'City of Dreadful Night'. In doing so, he borrows the title of a literary text, the Victorian poem of the same name by James 'B.V.' Thomson

which describes a city as a dark, bleak place whose inhabitants are profoundly alone. To a certain extent, the characteristic nineteenth-century account of the new, sprawling metropolis was an act of demonization, but the truth involves more in the way of dialogue.

For Engels (1820-95), the meaning of the city was found in many individuals living in close physical proximity to one another, which he held to be necessarily a dehumanizing experience.

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

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

Engels's concern with the actual nature of a new sort of human society in the newly gigantic cities is taken up by the German founder of sociology Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) some decades later. Tönnies works with a distinction that in part echoes Engels, between a formerly community- and specifically kinship-based sort of human organization, built on known hierarchies among people and personal access to others of all social levels, with a much more transactional and individualised environment. He perhaps implies *gemeinschaft* (classically pre-modern 'community') to be superior to *gesellschaft* (classically modern 'society'), but he does so in a much less histrionic way than the British-based Ruskin, Engels or Thomson, who were living in the first country on earth to undergo what became understood as specifically modern industrialization and urbanization. Indeed, Tönnies begins the effort to understand the 'modern' as something distinctive, not necessarily to be rejected. Tönnies is more concerned with the historical moment of nineteenth-century modernity, in which *gemeinschaft* is the same thing as the 'old' and *gesellschaft* the 'new' (Tönnies [1887]: 19), than he is with the emerging contrasts between the biggest cities and smaller settlements which to Engels and Ruskin seemed less changed by the era of industrialization than did cities like Manchester, London or Berlin.

Tönnies's perception of contrasts between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* derives from an awareness of change in the formerly conservative, prosperous and apparently slow-moving area on the German-Danish frontier where he himself was raised (Harris 2001: x-xii). For the reader of English literature, there are shades of Thomas Hardy. But from the point of view of the twenty-first century, Tönnies's approach could anticipate an era in which huge swathes of the more densely populated regions of countries in the developed world form urbanised, networked regions. And yet when Tönnies ([1887]: 18) insists that *gemeinschaft* is the sphere from which we go out, and *gesellschaft* the sphere we enter 'as if into a foreign land' when we leave the home he also models the relationship between private and public which characterises bourgeois social relations in the age of mass urbanization. The relationship he maps out closely parallels

that found in the bildungsroman novel of the nineteenth century, for example, such as Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, when a protagonist arrives in the massive and seemingly incomprehensible city. And yet, if modernity means the era in which *gemeinschaft* disappears, then Tönnies has identified it as the era in which human bonds of a proper and ancient sort are lacking. He thus retains a sort of living, tense dualism of a kind that is not present in Williams's country versus city dichotomy, essentially an account of false consciousness.

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

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

More Anti-Urban Urges, 1898-1961

While Tönnies became known as a founder of the academic discipline of sociology, until the middle of the twentieth century most efforts to theorize the novelties of the urban world came from outside conventional academia. Engels, Morris and Booth were all independently wealthy

citizens who used their own resources to investigate the massive changes which were going on around them; Olmsted was a professional practitioner like Robert Moses after him, also in New York. Academic departments devoted to the urban did not exist until after 1950. In the first half of the century the most important contributions to the understanding of the urban to appear in the Anglophone sphere were the work of autodidacts: Ebenezer Howard and Lewis Mumford.

Writing the history of urban planning, Peter Hall (1988: 87) calls Howard (1850-1928) 'the most important single character in this entire tale'. Howard is known above all for the conception of the garden city, which was in effect a more radical expansion of what Olmsted and the public parks movement had tried to introduce to the city as a remedy for what Engels, Ruskin and others complained about. It also drew on the anti-urban social rhetoric of Morris. Howard's thinking is founded on the notion that with will and money it would be relatively easy to remake the city somewhere else. As such, from a twenty-first-century perspective it seems to downplay the forces of inertia, randomization and above all the usually unpredictable facts of near-future economic change. Hall makes a strong case for Howard as an urbanist, and so more recently does Pinder (2005). Hall's view is that Howard planned huge garden city conurbations not simply to remove troublesome poor people in their great numbers from the inner cities but as part of 'a progressive reconstruction of capitalist society into an infinity of co-operative commonwealths'. But Howard's work is founded on a belief he shared with Morris: in the essentially shallow and temporary nature of the sort of urbanity which had come into being in Britain and elsewhere during the nineteenth century. In *Garden Cities of To-morrow* (1898) Howard cartographically represented utopian spatial relations between different social classes, functions of the city, and between the urban and the rural (Hall 1988: 92-93; Howard [1898]). Yet the actual garden cities and garden suburbs which came into being in early twentieth-century England at Letchworth and Hampstead proved, instead of being the forerunners of a revolutionary transformation of nineteenth-century urbanity, merely to provide

a template for a twentieth-century version of the same city model, albeit a version of it in which families would live nucleated in houses of vernacular appearance with small gardens and the automobile would play a role (Hall 1988: 97-108).

Howard's work is utopian, as Pinder's approach to it recognises, and as such has close links with not just the objectives but also the literary techniques of Morris, who in News from Nowhere critiqued the contemporary city by presenting a radical alternative to it: the site of London returned to a pristine, pre-industrial state. Howard's maps of an ideal garden city with its environs including space for 'cow pastures' but also 'children's cottage homes' and a 'farm for epilectics', within its circuit numbered concentric avenues but named radial roads: 'Boulevard Columbus' and 'Boulevard Newton' (Howard [1898]: 314-15) is among other things an elaborate utopian fiction.

The connecting thread between Howard and Mumford ran through Patrick Geddes (1854-1932). Geddes was an academic but in no way an orthodox one (Hall 1988: 137). *The Evolution of Cities* (1915) is (Hall 1988: 146-47), richly compendious and filled with visuals, comparative between different cities at different stages, is a book that was unprecedented when it first appeared. But the problem Geddes perceives, and the solution he proposes, is precisely that of Howard and after him Mumford. All of them draw on the Engels-Morris negative view of modernity in the nineteenth century: the problem, all think, is that cities are too crowded and gardens have been built on; the solution, surely, is urban cottages with their own gardens and pleasant spaces around them. Many cottage estates of the sort proposed by Geddes (1915: 72-73) as key components alongside public parks of his hoped-for 'neotechnic' city appeared particularly in northern European cities including London but also and perhaps more fully many in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark during the first decades of the twentieth century and indeed they made a difference, but it was a leavening of the nineteenth century not its abolition.

If Howard's garden city concept (in almost equal contrast with the actuality of Letchworth once built) represented a grand science-fictional fantasy (Howard [1898]: 314-15), such fantasies and projections would shape twentieth-century realities, for example in the huge-quantities of high-density housing areas of post-war European state communism, often mundane in appearance and of standardized designs aimed at cheap and rapid construction, and in the much more self-consciously designed *grands-ensembles* built around Paris after 1970, now documented by photographer Laurent Kronental (2011-16). Works of fiction built around life in twentieth-century mass housing developments have often verged on the dystopian (Kelman 2008; Welsh 1995; Price 1992): such works from Scotland and the Atlantic coast of the USA have portrayed the experience of what was planned as utopia negatively, in terms of crime, drug addiction, privation, squalor and desperation. But in other contexts the picture has been different. Arvo Valton's *Mustamäe Armastus* ('Mustamäe Love', 1978), written in Soviet Estonia and set in the town-sized city district of Mustamäe, built rapidly during the 1950s, is an intensely romantic humanization of life in the tower blocks built around the love of one person for another glimpsed in a neighbouring block. Perhaps the city of tower blocks which in the hands of Le Corbusier seemed to consider human beings as part of the mess needing to be tidied up, invited humanization of the sort Walton provides, a sort equally visible in the tonally different *Kieron Smith, Boy*, of Kelman (2008).

Twentieth-century urban planning certainly led various sorts of escape from the kinds of drabness and squalor condemned by Lewis Mumford (1895-1990). Mumford's approach to the city, seen at its fullest in *The City in History* (1961) was, paradoxically, both completist and narrowly Eurocentric. He traces human urban history at great length from the Stone Age until the post-war decades but unapologetically takes 'Western civilization' as his subject material and, implicitly, his norm (Mumford 1961: xi). In so doing, he highlights a shortcoming shared by most efforts to study the urban (including the present one): students of the urban make their

own city, and the others they have investigated, equal to all cities. The gigantic history which follows is largely an account of how most of the typically valorised models of the urban were in fact squalid and vicious. Here Mumford's two targets are the Greek polis, in essence a totalitarian village in his eyes, and the supposedly elegant European city of the eighteenth century. Ancient Athens, Mumford (1961: 125) says, acted chiefly in the interests of 'its own vainglory'.

In attacking both the polis and its neo-classical imitation, Mumford seems to be speaking from an American Puritan 'city on the hill' standpoint, condemning the luxury, decadence and tyranny which have been left behind across the water to the east and specifically in Britain. Against these negative models he claims to be beginning the work of rehabilitating the medieval town, emphasizing its liberty, self-sufficiency and down-home reasonableness (Mumford 1961: 415). Compare his earlier claim in *The Culture of Cities* (1938: 164) that in nineteenth-century cities 'a pitch of foulness and filth was achieved that the lowest serf's cottage scarcely achieved in medieval Europe'. Certainly he goes too far when he claims that in Victorian cities rubbish simply lay in the streets, 'no matter how vile and filthy' until a passing manure contractor found it worthwhile to remove it: more recent researches by James Winter (1993: 118-34) and Lee Jackson (2014) do not support this claim, indicating the complex, if somewhat incompetent, efforts London civil parishes made to manage the removal of detritus. Mumford's reading results from his ideological opposition to the nineteenth-century city, and can be placed alongside Morris's small, white medieval London surrounded by greenery and clean water, or Ruskin's lectures in which he drew smoke and chimneys onto an image of a medieval town thus implied as clearly superior to its debased and damaged industrial-age descendent. But Mumford's medievalism leads towards a pro-urban view which emerges during the 1960s and 1970s in the work of Jacobs and Lefebvre, whose approaches praised instead of a rational ordering wisdom precisely the blend of the local and the cosmopolitan to be found in actual

individual urban neighbourhoods. Lefebvre at least ([1974]: 78) traced the positive qualities of the modern city back to the medieval mercantile territory's ability to sidestep or ignore the laws of Church and King by creating its own network and legal status.

Mumford, then, demonised the Victorian sort of city in a way that seems too extreme today. He even peddled myths of it, for example that what he calls 'the commercial town', the city founded on the getting of rents, had a complete 'indifference to the elementary necessities of hygiene or amenity' (1961: 433). Large-scale improvement projects such as the sewer network for central London built by Joseph Bazalgette for the Metropolitan Board of Works (1859-65) and Central Park in New York City (after 1857) in fact began a mere couple of decades after the recognition that there was a new sort of urban problem. Yet he offers a powerful *avant la lettre* critique of the assumption that seems to dominate the neo-liberal twenty-first century, that the nature of a city is almost totally determined by its property market.

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

massive concentration of wealth in the region driven by Silicon Valley businesses (Solnit 2016), the shift from a metropolitan to a poly-nodal and profoundly displaced world that was often pronounced in the 1990s and 2000s may seem exaggerated.

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

Cities of Monuments and Towers

Planning reached its apogee not in the moderation of the nineteenth-century critique of the urban found in Mumford and the still-more watered-down application of that by Abercrombie in south-east England, but in the development of the nineteenth-century City-Beautiful Movement. This happened in a tradition connecting the Haussmanization of Paris with the imperial visions of the Victorian British and Wilhelmine German Empires and after them the varied twentieth-century applications of this by totalitarian dictators, by planners such as Moses, employed to transform the world's biggest city (New York) in the mid-twentieth century and by the construction of planned capital cities built wholly from scratch including Brasilia and Canberra. All of these are about hierarchy and dramatic views, avenues, domes and towers of central, governmental buildings. They are inherently imperial or totalitarian, and may contain built-in racism of the sort on which colonial empires are founded, whose characteristic urban

geography appears in the first chapter of E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924). These are acts of top-down physical intervention in cities, or the leader or (as in the case of Moses and even, thinking of the Green Belt and New Towns of southern England, Abercrombie), carried out by a planning professional given by governments the temporary power to make such an intervention.

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

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

A revolutionary sort of city of towers was proposed by Charles-Éduouard Janneret-Gris, known as Le Corbusier (1887-1965) in the late 1920s. Le Corbusier's ideas, essentially his view ([1929]: 323) that 'WE MUST BUILD IN THE OPEN', stand most directly behind the social housing of the period after World War Two. What is literary about a city of monuments and towers? Hall (1988: 211) describes Corbusier as a planner, even a creator, on paper only, stating 'how phenomenally unsuccessful he was in practice' who generated only the sort of 'grandiose urban visions' which architects like to keep on their private bookshelves. Yet he also conceived the city which would be experienced and transmitted in the dystopian and less dystopian literary vision of the later twentieth century, in which the physical squalor, disease and closeness of death and faeces of the nineteenth-century city gave way to a profound physical isolation and alienation finding outlets in graffiti, drug abuse, gang activity and vandalism resulting from the creation of marginalized groups and their physical removal from old inner cities of the nineteenth-century sort but in which love, sometimes, was still possible.

The Urban Experience

Literary writing by the likes of Joyce, Woolf and Kafka treats city life in a different way from previously: not in terms of the narrative arc of a life in which one can succeed or fail on moving to the city in a time of uncertainty, as so often is in focus in nineteenth-century urban fiction (Balzac, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Zola), but in terms of moments and chance happenings, inconsequential in themselves but in their immensely multiple totality composing city life as experience rather than biography. Early twentieth-century urban theory has, at first sight, a less clear relationship to the imaginative literature of its period than does the critical nineteenth-century urbanism of Engels and Morris. The progressive, detail-focused writing of Engels, after all clearly emerges from the world that produced the campaigning fiction of Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Kingsley, and the social surveys of Edwin Chadwick, Henry Mayhew and,

later, Booth. And Morris was himself a writer of utopian imaginative literature in the later decades of the century, with clear parallels existing between his work and even more clearly that of Howards and a science-fictional or fabling way of comprehending modernity present in 'literary' writings by Richard Jeffries, Oscar Wilde, Roubert Louis Stevenson, H.G. Wells and the Edwardian short stories of E.M. Forster.

But attention to temporally-apprehended flashes of urban experience connects the imaginative writing of the 1910s and 1920s today labelled 'modernist', with the urban theories not only of George Simmel (1858-1918) in turn-of-the-century Germany but the sociological ethnographies developed in the United States by the Chicago School associated with Robert E. Park (1864-1944) and Louis Wirth (1897-1952) in the 1920s and 1930s. The latter, in turn, is the forerunner not only of directly sociological work such as that on slum living of Gerald D. Suttles in the 1960s, but the sociolinguistics of William Labov and, most importantly of all in terms of the sea change in understandings of the urban that happened in the second half of the twentieth century, Jacobs.

Simmel's innovation was to consider the 'mental life' (*Geistesleben*) of residents of the newly enormous cities as a central fact of those cities' existence, not just evidence that the physical organization of those cities was or was not working. Implicitly he recognizes that this sort of cities, *Der Großstadt*, is here to stay, and the sort of mentality it brings about would not therefore be seen correctly as something which planners of cities should attempt to eliminate by returning the mental life of cities to what existed in them before 1800, but something they must take into account. Simmel ([1903]: 103) grasps this by returning individual people to the centre of the picture, attending to 'the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign power of society'. This move particularly distinguishes his view of the modern city not just from statistically- and cartographically- based accounts of it such as those of Chadwick and Booth, but also literary

accounts such as those of Zola and Anglophone followers of his such as Gissing and George Moore, who tended to see the lives of individuals as relentlessly and even mechanically determined by their social positioning given to them by their genetic and environmental heritage. Simmel, this is to say, restores the possibility of grasping the individuality of the individual within a massive and influential and also unprecedented sort of society in which relations had very largely changed: in the terms of Tönnies, from those of *gemeinschaft* to those of *gesellschaft*.

Simmel's concern is with individuality, the human personality, as it is affected by 'the specifically modern aspects of contemporary life', a new positioning which he calls 'metropolitan individuality' ([1903]: 103). Life in the new metropolis contains more 'stimuli' than previous forms of life, he argues. Potentially, this is exhausting and stressful: every time you cross the street something might happen which you have never experienced before. The argument is, like that of Tönnies, built on a distinction between this sort of life and another, 'the slower, more habitual, more smoothly flowing rhythm of the sensory-mental phase of small town and rural existence' ([1903]: 103-04). The city makes people 'intellectualistic', Simmel claims: they think more, and with their thinking they challenge what they experience through the senses. Being 'intellectualistic' protects them from their potentially dangerous surroundings since they calculate risk. Money matters. Major cities such as London have always been not 'the heart of' a national polity but the 'money bag' of their surroundings ([1903]: 104). Differently from almost any other earlier writer on the modern city, Simmel does not sympathize with the 'passionate hatred' felt for the new large city by the likes of Ruskin and Nietzsche ([1903]: 105). Famously, he said that the urban dweller is characterised by becoming blasé in the face of the ceaseless unpredictability of events and the great contrasts of rich and poor which are around. But this observation is built into the nexus of intellectuality and money. More important still is his twofold focus on the mental life of the individual inhabitant,

struggling to retain individuality, and his acceptance that the modern is something specific and new, and not necessarily to be condemned.

Simmel's interests are developed in a 1938 essay by Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life'. Making reference not to Simmel but to Max Weber and to Wirth's Chicago School sociologist colleague Park, Wirth ([1938]: 99-101) presents three areas in which urban life is different from other sorts of life: 'size of the population aggregate', 'density' and 'heterogeneity'. His writing is less essayistic than that of Simmel, who keeps reaching into psychology in a speculative manner whereas Wirth is laying out the foundations of a professionalized university study of the urban. Moreover, his interest is ultimately not in the individual as an individual, the concern of Simmel's which makes him so unusual among scholars of the urban and brings him so close to the literary rendering of urban experience, but in 'collective behaviour' (Wirth [1938]: 104). Here a comparison can be detected with the literary urban renderings of John DosPassos which aim to break with the traditional literary focus on the individual and create a polyphonic literary city.

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

Post-War: Can Planners Plan?

As Peter Hall (1988: 326) observes, planners of Abercrombie's generation were unprepared for the post-Second-World-War baby boom. Since 2000, the idea that a trained specialist could shape the future of human social organization in the way that he (and in the history of urban planning this person was typically assumed to be a he, despite Jacobs and Glass) thinks best has come to seem even more ludicrous than it seemed in the later twentieth century. Then, the supposed utopias of Corbusian planned, vertical housing developments were brought into being in many parts of the capitalist and communist worlds and then widely derided as thoroughly dystopian. Faced with such developments, literary works can 'write back' in a manner expressible in the terms of post-colonial theory as that of the subaltern, against top-down planning. This is not to say that top-down planning is worthless. Indeed, the confidence of utopian vision brings reshapings of the world that have the potential to be ultimately valuable and indeed enormously humane, if they are allowed to live in a manner that could be categorized as literary, which to say if they permit human beings to dwell in them (in a Heideggerian sense), to change them slowly and in accordance with localized needs.

Judy Iovine (2015: 24) writes of Jacobs (1916-2006) that she countered the 'Goliath-like visions' of Moses, which had outcomes like the ten-mile long manmade Jones Beach on the Atlantic coast of Long Island east of New York, with 'neighbourhood-scale community'. And yet, instead of actually preserving communities, Jacobs preserved worked to preserve architecture and street layouts for existing middle-class residents, gentrifiers (typically wealthy or at least college-educated incomers) and tourists (Hall 1988: 234-35). It's hard to think that Hudson Street in 2016 has anything to do with the street Jacobs observed except in its buildings, and in a sense this argues that she was wrong: the preservation of the physical layout does not preserve the sort of life that was lived there in her time, because the social and ethnic mix that she observed is no longer there. And yet her writing enables us to notice and encourages us to

value those districts of cities which might have similar qualities to those she observed and, arguably, idealised: in New York no longer Greenwich Village but perhaps some portions of Brooklyn and Queens; no longer Notting Hill in London but perhaps Willesden or Shepherds Bush. And so on, until Brooklyn (hymned in literature by Jonathan Lethem after the 1990s) and Willesden (similarly treated by Zadie Smith as the surviving cosmopolitan yet scruffy other of the gentrified zones of wealth closer in) become magnets for the 'life' and then find that the magnetism has exterminated the life, as seems to have happened at Greenwich Village and Notting Hill.

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

gentrification since the 1960s, from Williamsburg in Brooklyn to Uus Maailm in Tallinn and beyond.

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

Jacobs and Berman, like their contemporary in the UK Ruth Glass, have an interest in particular districts and neighbourhoods which amounts to giving those zones a personality. Berman, coming after Jacobs, does not oppose himself to her as clearly as she did herself to Mumford, regarded by Jacobs as, like Howard and most other urbanists before her, as 'interested only in failure' in cities (Jacobs 1961: 20). But Berman differentiates himself from Jacobs as, within a New York context, an outer boroughs man. Jacobs's city is made cosy by not being ethnically diverse, Berman (1983: 324) argues. He goes further, pointing out that during the 1960s and 1970s 'rage, despair and violence spread like plagues' through American cities and 'hundreds of formerly stable urban neighbourhoods all over America disintegrated completely'. Jacobs's belief in the urban was no more than 'a dream', he concludes, but still,

'if she misses some of the shadows of neighbourhood life, she is marvellous at capturing its radiance'. There is another shadow here, and it has to do with gender: unlike almost every other student of the urban considered here, Jacobs was a woman, and responses to her work, not excepting Burman's, frequently verge on the patronising. The concern of Jacobs, Berman and Glass, finally, closely parallels much of the working-class fiction and immigrant writing, both of it with a documentary sort of approach, produced between the 1930s and the 1970s in both North America and the UK.

Postscript: Art versus Science?

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

Lefebvre (1901-90) advocates the city as itself an oppositional sort of space, above all active through by giving rise to art in situationist fashion. This is surely doubtful when the fact that the city is the capital of empires, the site of Wall Street, the place of slums and sexual exploitation. Yet he means that it is, in a heritage he traces back to late-medieval trading networks such as the Hanseatic League, somehow independent from the thinking of dominion; a person can live there. Foucault seeks oppositional spaces typically but not necessarily within the city: his well-known heterotopias or spaces of difference, spatial carnival sites where one

can be apart from the usual order whilst there: brothels, graveyards. Cities about in these. Certeau seeks to give make a space for the urban user to contest the dominating order

It would be possible not just to see the sociology of the Chicago School of Park, Wirth and Suttles in conjunction with, or illuminated by the art of a photographer and documentary film-maker such as Helen Levitt (the same could be said of Charles Booth in relation to the photography of Paul Martin), but instead to ask the question: could be the artist be a theorist too? And what sort of theorist is the documentary artist? Perhaps, one who avoids making bogus claims of representativeness. But perhaps this is to misunderstand art. Still, the frontier between documentary artistic forms, notably film, and ethnographic sorts of academic writing, is where I would like to end this chapter, suggesting that a way forward lies there. Before ending, however, it is necessary to glance briefly at some trends and moments in urban theory of the period between the 1970s and the 2010s.

Some of the most high-profile examples of urban theory produced since the 1970s continue Mumford and even the tradition reaching all the way back to Morris and Engels by being structurally critical of existing cities and the planning principles which underpin them: David Harvey, Manuel Castells, Neil Smith and Edward W. Soja belong here. But a way forward which includes to a sufficient degree the multiple and varied perspectives of individual users of the city is not provided by this work, or even the post-1960s French tradition including writers such as Bourdieu, Certeau, Perec and Augé, but by work which includes the actual narratives of urban experience of users (for example the urban ethnography of Suzanne Hall) and work which integrates artistic accounts of existence in actual cities with planning questions. Where Mumford (1961: 377) used Thackeray or Proust in an illustrative fashion, as if to say, look, the city of the nineteenth century was as follows and reading these people proves it, work such as Ben Campkin's *Remaking London* (2013) proceeds in the manner of a literary critic or an analyst of film or the visual arts, tracing the city through the nuances and vagaries of the artistic

work and its conditions of production. Work such as that of Hall and Campkin holds out the promise of an integrative rather than an oppositional view of the twenty-first century city.

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

Meanwhile, the pendulum appears to be swinging, in the hands of theorists and writers at least, away from the glorification of the small-scale urban neighbourhood advocated by Jacobs. This seems to have become excessively dominant in an age of the kind of gentrification associated with the word 'hipster'. Perhaps there is once again an appetite for large-scale projects of the sort that Moses was able to carry out in New York in the period between the 1930s and the 1960s, 'almost entirely without accountability to city, state or federal government' (Iovine 2015: 24). But these have never been an endeavour with which literary authors have been very comfortable. The recovery of utopian thinking from Howard to Corbusier of Pinder (2005) offers the Moses sort of plan as a projection, a means of achieving something new that might not, would not, perhaps, be achievable otherwise and this too seems a likely way of rehabilitating Le Corbusier, by making the positive shifts that became possible through his projection of the impossible clear. Yet the movement of literary writing in the newish twenty-first century, at a time when the prestige of the metropolitan is arguably greater than ever before and the advantage it can confer likewise, seems to be in a contrary direction, into the atomised obscurity conferred by the era of social media. Literature, all this is to say,

can itself study; the novel, to borrow the formulation of Marc Brosseau (1996) can itself be a geographer.

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