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**“THE MAZE FACTOR” VS. “THE SOLAR EYE”:
IDENTITIES OF WALKERS AND WATCHERS**

Keywords: James Joyce; Aldous Huxley; Alasdair Gray; cognitive mapping; modern urban planning; self-identity; labyrinth

Abstract: This paper will aim to investigate Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the paradigmatic urban novel, in juxtaposition with Huxley’s dystopian *Brave New World* and Alasdair Gray’s ambiguous *Lanark* on the theoretical basis of modern urban planning, environmental psychology, and De Certeau’s analyses of modern urban living. It will compare the contrasting perspectives of the city as a fragmenting labyrinth and integrative panorama. The analysis telescopes on the denizens’ roles of walkers and spectators, with particular attention on cognitive mapping as vital for spatiotemporal orientation. Therefore, as the wanderings of Stephen, Bloom, and Duncan Thaw demonstrate, the practice of everyday walking in the city and the trajectory walked are inextricably linked to the character’s inner quest for self-identity. The city maze is as confounding as the puzzles of one’s subjective existence. Conversely, Huxley’s characters’ panoptic vision of post-Fordian London fits an urban planner’s dream of objectivity, linearity, and totalitarian order where walking, I would argue, amounts to a productive anarchy against the imprisonment of individuality. Ultimately, the optimism of Joyce and Gray testifies that the peripatetic city view, although disordered, allows a dynamic inscription of subjective meanings on the material reality, thus prevailing over any attempt to curtail its heterodoxy into a static one-dimensionality.

He sees something he has never seen, or has not seen . . . in such plenitude. He sees the day and cypresses and marble. He sees a whole that is complex and yet without disorder; he sees a city, an organism composed of statues, temples, gardens, dwellings, stairways, urns, capitals, of regular and open spaces. None of these artifacts (I know) impresses him as beautiful; they move him as we might be moved today by a complex machine of whose purpose we are ignorant but in whose design we can intuit an immortal intelligence. (Borges 122)

This quotation from Borges’s short story in Alasdair Gray’s epic *Lanark* is incorporated in the speech of a political leader vindicating capitalist rapacity and urban growth. More specifically, Lord Monboddo’s linear trajectory of human history from tribal man to global man appropriates solely the ‘obverse’ side of Borges’s coin, or “the passage from barbarity to civilization” (Starobinski 35). Simultaneously, it elides and repudiates manipulatively the ‘reverse’ side, that of the civilised “turncoat that embraces” barbarism, as unfit for Monboddo’s authoritarian apologia (Starobinski 35). More importantly, by reiterating Borges’s notion of the city as the ur-image and essence of civilisation, Monboddo champions a powerful, primarily positivist vision of the urban environment as the paragon of human achievement,

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economic efficiency, and industrial productivity. Monroe K. Spears emphasises the city's centrality as a social and political form that relies on singularity: "the city is a society of individuals who subscribe to an ideal of rational order" (70). However, such an idealistic conception ineluctably opens up ample opportunities for problematisation. All its constituent parts – the society, or the community it predicates, the individuals it aggregates, and the rationality it is presumed to reflect – represent vast fronts for challenging this urban ideal, both separately and in their multifaceted interplays.

Accordingly, a proliferation of urban fiction and scholarship, especially of the 19th and 20th centuries of Western culture, reflects the ambiguities that the City inheres through equally ambivalent responses, ranging in sentiment from fascination to abhorrence. Namely, a host of critics of urban literature – Burton Pike, Raymond Williams, Marshall Berman, Richard Lehan, and Peter I. Barta, to name a few – document the anguish, frustration, and squalor that permeate writers' fictional accounts of life in the emerging megalopolises of the 19th century. The city image thus becomes that of a leviathan, spreading tentacles of industrial-technological advances and functionality. As a result, "[m]aterialistic, purpose-oriented societies of the age make many a vulnerable or artistically sensitive person feel unwanted and unnecessary; sensibility comes to be regarded as an extravagant and unproductive luxury" (Barta 9). Hence arises the *fin de siècle* figure of the isolated, dispirited urbanite, disconnected from yet confronting the desensitised mass, confined within an Inferno of spiritual paralysis.

The dystopian literary representation of the city transitioned into high modernism and culminated in T. S. Eliot's "unreal city." In *The Waste Land* he transforms the vacuum and immobility of the Inferno into the passage of anonymous London millions while conveying the same sense of transparency, loss, and desolation. The sharpness and inclemency of this life-negating urban image gained such momentum among modernist minds that, as Michael Long elaborates, "[Eliot] became one of the cornerstones of a vastly influential moral-educational enterprise, and his cityscape was one of that enterprise's leading images" (146). Eliot's urban antagonism, Long argues, resonates strongly in the torpor and "paralysis" of Joyce's Dublin in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (147). The result is for the horrified artist to "recoi[l] from the desolate city" (Long 147), and be "nerved" to aspire to a transcendent topos where spiritual reintegration and unification is made possible (148-9). Regarding Joyce's masterpiece, *Ulysses*, Long records that early receptions of the epic condemned its lack of an "urgency and [a] quest for unity," perceiving instead an expression of spiritual aridity that defies redemption (150). Long, however, is quick to expose the fallacy of such readings, expounding that the failure of *Ulysses* to urge its Dubliners towards an elevated existence is the locus of its unique achievement – "a full and generous acceptance" of the city (150).

Long's argument, thus, unveils a significant counter-current to Eliot's authoritative rendition of the "anguished [metropolitan] consciousness" (Williams 239) that will prove vital for the chief aim of this essay. In the urban sociology classic, *Country and the City*, Raymond Williams locates this counter-current in a new understanding of city life, found in "its transitoriness, its unexpectedness, its essential and exciting isolation and procession of men and events" (234). Williams, too,

recognises the literary paradigm of this absolute subjective primacy in *Ulysses*. He declares: “[t]he historically variable problem of ‘the individual and society’ acquires a sharp and particular definition, in that ‘society’ becomes an abstraction, and the collective flows only through the most inward channels” (246). Thus, this inward orientation amounts to a universality that celebrates idiosyncrasy as much as Long’s praise of Joyce’s “eye for the heterodox” and his “celebrat[ion of] ‘irregularity’”(156).

In spite of the above, urban visionaries and city planners have invariably conceptualised (re)constructions of cities as if constructing Borges’s “complex machine.” Such cities would facilitate movement, eliminate collision, and purge all social metropolitan life of disorder. Indeed, as Liam Lanigan exhibits, the emergence of urban planning in the 19th century was governed by rationalist, linearising principles: “Formalism and authoritarian determinism were bolstered by the tendency for planning to work panoramically: planners were fascinated by the possibility of organizing the city from above, imposing geometrical coherence on the chaos of the modern city from a superhuman perspective not bound by the limitations of the everyday, street-level view” (8). Similarly, Richard Sennett identifies the perils of transplanting the methodology of machine production into the construction of urban areas, since it expresses “an adolescent refusal” against facing “complexity and pain” (96-7). In accordance with them, Michel de Certeau terms such plans “panoptic,” “imaginary totalizations,” that seek to order and simplify: “Perspective vision and prospective vision constitute the twofold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with” (93-4).

Thus, the urban vision that both Borges’s converted warrior and modern urbanism uphold as a utopian ideal, and the one that Long and Williams celebrate in Joyce’s masterpiece, emerge as entirely incongruous. Rigidity, homogeneity, functionality, and hierarchy dominate the former image. It towers above the individual and astounds one into subordination. It predetermines spaces and formulas of social and subjective existence, “recapitulat[ing] the power of an urban elite to define the city as a site of meaning” (Lanigan 4). Detrimentally, it defeats the vital role of the cityscape in the processes of developing a self-identity, normally “defined and expressed . . . by one’s relationships to the various physical settings that define and structure day-to-day life” (Proshansky, Fabian, and Kaminoff 58). Conversely, the latter vision implies fluidity, heterogeneity, complexity, and irrationality. In interacting with the environment, individual subjectivities subvert its externally imposed features, dissolve the connotative boundaries of lived space, and negotiate its meaning while simultaneously questioning their own. As De Certeau describes their spatial practice, “[i]n the technocratically constructed, written, and functionalized space in which the consumers move about, their trajectories form unforeseeable sentences” (xviii). Compared to the rationalist ideal, the latter implies uncertainty and disorder. Yet, it is precisely this sort of disorder in the urban conglomeration that Sennett advocates as enabling and beneficial for personal growth. He favours a “multiplicity of contact points” in the bustling streetscape to the urbanist “desire for controlled, purified experience” (56, 108). Fostering “a certain anarchy” and conflict in people’s daily lives, he believes, would open conduits towards acceptance of diversity, and hence, towards a rich and mature human existence (108).

Taking Long's, De Certeau's, and Sennett's arguments on board, this essay sets out to examine the intertwining between City and Self, the objective and subjective reality, within the framework of the above dichotomy. To that end, I investigate *Ulysses*, the paradigmatic urban novel, in juxtaposition with two stylistically and generically divergent texts, with which it is not routinely conjoined in critical considerations. Still, I believe, they examine problems of urban identity in mutually resonating and interpenetrating ways. The first is 1932 dystopian classic *Brave New World*, and the other is 1981 Scottish blend of realism and fantasy, *Lanark*. Huxley's "totally planned society" (Atwood viii) with its futuristic London topography represents an urbanist's utopian dream come true, an incarnation of De Certeau's "scopic and gnostic drive" to know city life by becoming "a viewpoint and nothing more" (92). Yet, the position of this novel in the gamut of city literature has been largely neglected in favour of its overarching bioethical and political preoccupations, and its prophetic value. Despite the stark differences in the city images, individual urbanites Stephen Daedalus and Leopold Bloom, and Bernard Marx and John Savage experience urban struggles that resound, rather than countervail each other. *Lanark*, on the other hand, has been hailed as the "epiphany" of Scottish urban fiction (Burgess 260). Straddling the latter end of the 20th century, it scrutinises how individuals "act in common and uncommon domestic, political, legendary and fabulous circumstances" (Gray, "Tailpiece" 566). Its "Portrait of the Artist as a Frustrated Young Glaswegian" (Gray, "Tailpiece" 570) evokes *Ulysses*'s Stephen, while the nightmarish transformations of Duncan Thaw's sensitive artistic psyche echo the *Brave New World* despair.

In what follows, therefore, I will aim to demonstrate the universal nature of the existential morass presented by the assertion of a sense of self within a variously perilous urban environment, be it 1904 bustling commercial Dublin, technology-infested London of the future, or 1950s industrial Glasgow. Thus, the exploration builds on the theoretical discussion of modern urban planning and compares the perspectives of the city as a confounding labyrinth and integrative panorama. The analytical focus is on the denizens' roles of walkers and spectators respectively, with particular attention on cognitive mapping as vital for spatiotemporal orientation, but also for the negotiation of identity in relation to the physical environment.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud opens his discussion on the psyche's capacity to retain and layer the content of all evolutionary stages of the self by drawing an analogy between mental life and urban life (8-9). While the analogy successfully serves its immediate purpose of psychoanalytic exposition, Freud here might well have contoured the relationship between the mind and its spatial environment in a manner that anticipates what urban theorists and psychologists have since termed 'cognitive mapping.' It constitutes the underlying mental process of city experience, ensuring orientation and navigation as prerequisites for urban survival and movement. According to Kevin Lynch, creating a mental frame of one's surroundings forestalls the dread, frustration, and feeling of near-catastrophe that the experience of losing one's way incites (4). Although Lynch does not explicitly employ the term 'cognitive map,' he defines it as "the environmental image, the generalised mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by the individual" (4). It is "a coherent pattern"

that depends, importantly, on the “legibility” of the urban landscape, or the solvability of the puzzle that meandering through the city space represents (Lynch 2-3).

However, the cognitive map inevitably presupposes a certain vantage point, or perspective, on the part of its constructor. For it to be created, or, in Lynch’s terms, for a city to be mentally ‘read,’ it must be experienced intimately, from the inside out. Correspondingly, such a perspective is a street level one, and in his interaction with its structure the urbanite experiences the city through the elementary practice of walking (De Certeau 93). Hence, steering through the urban tangle armed with a constructed image conjures up a vision of the city as a labyrinth. Both Burton Pike and Wendy B. Faris recognise the implications of this perspective in literary “spatial mimesis” (Pike 33). Pike exposes the essentially fragmented nature of the wanderer’s perception of the cityscape, and the consequent apprehension: “Sight-lines are limited by corners, crowds and traffic; constant watchfulness is called for” (34). More importantly, he also credits the labyrinthine journey with a “high susceptib[ility] to chance,” which renders this personal city-perspective “the modern vehicle for the journey of adventure” (35). Faris, on the other hand, describes the correspondence between the “cognitive maps of the walker in the city” and the “decoding strategies of the reader in the text” (37). In addition, she records a critical paradoxical attribute of the labyrinthine visual representation found in the tension it embodies of “diachronic wandering” in time and “synchronic mapping” of space (38).

This dichotomy of ‘wanderer’ and ‘mapmaker’ points to the urban planners’ linearising, panoramic outlook on the city, which Pike also traces as an image in metropolitan fiction. As opposed to the fragmentation of the cityscape imposed by the street-level view, this top-down perspective “diminishes the city in size and its activity in importance” (Pike 34). Countervailing the absorption of the individual mind inside the bustle of the street maze, the view from above implies detachment instead of involvement, observation instead of action, and finally, the contemplation of a single authoritative consciousness instead of multiple threads of continuous subjective discourse. In other words, it implies the diminishing of subjectivity and nervous stimulation typical of totalising social structures. Thus, the outlooks of the fictional observer and the urban planner share an interstice of isolation, superiority, and centrality that opposes and seeks to obliterate the nonsensical, “decentered configuration of the modern city” maze that is “conscious of its own subjectivity” (Faris 38; Lanigan 18).

Each of the characters’ inner mental movements and their movements as pedestrians in the city is essentially labyrinthine in nature, and they are inextricably interlinked. As subjectivity expresses itself through perceptions and cognitions, the city alternately assumes the role of an ally or an enemy to one’s sense of self and place. James Joyce and Alasdair Gray engage with, but also counter the anti-urban angst of high modernism. The bird’s eye view on the city prevalent in *Brand New World*, has implications for individuality and, by employing the panoptic perspective, Huxley demonstrates the anti-totalitarian significance of the act of walking.

Joyce’s quotidian odyssey seems to evoke the labyrinth most prominently, and with multifaceted resonances. Primarily, the Daedalian undertones inherited from the mythological framework of Stephen’s *Portrait*, evoking King Minos’s formidable structure, position him in the uncomfortable centre of the Dublin maze. Instead of

emulating mythical Daedalus in seeking unhindered artistic expression, his post-collegiate trajectory seems to have been rather more Icarian in kind. Coupled with the haunting death of his mother and the strained relationship with his father, Stephen's anticlimax seems to confirm Faris's observation that, rather than a promise of flight, labyrinths "represent . . . affirmations of entrapment in the city" (38). The "Telemachia" episodes portray a disillusioned genius who inhabits an Eliotesque, suffocating, and fractured city, and whose psycho-geographical coordinates are typically Modernist: "I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final frame" (Joyce 24).¹ Indeed, a leaden weight of nightmarish history and his triple servitude – to the English crown, the Roman Catholic Church, and his own fatherland – oppresses his mind as he leaves the Martello Tower: "I cannot sleep here tonight. Home also I cannot go" (23). Down Sandymount Strand in "Proteus", the ruination that obsesses him grows nearly tangible as his horizon is obstructed by remnants of everyday urbanity: "Broken hoops on the shore; at the land a maze of dark cunning nets; farther away chalkscrawled backdoors and on the higher beach a drying line with two crucified shirts" (41). This image of crucifixion is verbally and visually polyvalent. While it alludes to Stephen's conflict with religion, as a material sign of juncture the cross aptly summarises his sense of isolated exposure within an inscrutable enclosure. Moreover, the open space surrounding his beach promenade lends itself as a perfect canvas for his lack of direction. Stephen's interior amblings spill over into his physical path-searching as he considers seeking refuge in his aunt's house, which then he absent-mindedly moves past and renounces: "Houses of decay, mine, his, and all. . . . Beauty is not there" (40). Later he stops, stands in place, sits among reeds, turns back and retraces his steps.

Stephen's erudition and philosophically nourished intellect continually transmute the physical world into abstractions and almost impressionist responses. As the simultaneously created and creating imaginative consciousness, Stephen possesses a unique capacity to recognise the "metaliterary function" of the labyrinth as a spatiotemporal analogue to the process of reading as both decoding and inscription of meaning (Faris 34). Within it, all signs and symbols inhere, in Lynch's terms, an unquestionable legibility, and readily submit themselves to his synaesthetic (re)interpretation: "Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust : coloured signs" (37). This chromatic primacy in the perception of the material world evinces his philosophical perspective. Stephen's belief in the "[i]neluctable modality of the visible" (37) derives from Aristotle's postulate of visual perception: "Sight (in concert with the mind) perceives through colour which lies at the boundary of determined bodies" (Johnson 783). From the concord of vision and thought arises Stephen's dual role of "speculator" and "spectator" (Johnson 782), which turns the perceptible spatial environment into a playground for endless Protean shape-shifting, of which Stephen is the agent. Furthermore, his exercise in temporary obstruction of sight yields audibility as the other, similarly inescapable, modality of the perceptible world. Isolating the sound of his steps, he arrives at the concept of *nacheinander* - succession

¹ A full citation of *Ulysses* is provided in the Works Cited list. In-text citations hereafter will only contain page numbers.

(of sounds) in time. Although he can thus conceive of time as a separate dimension, his own corporeality arouses his awareness of the *nebeneinander*, or the juxtaposition (of objects) in space: “My two feet in his boots are at the end of his legs” (37). Thus, only through an interaction and complementation of the two can he begin to devise a mental map of his complicated existence, of which the process of walking proves definitive: “I am, a stride at a time” (37). Embodying a cross of diachrony and synchrony, Stephen weaves his erratic movements through the spatiotemporal and mental fabric in a largely labyrinthine way.

However, despite the overwhelming stagnance, emptiness, and disorientation of the solitary artist of the early episodes of *Ulysses*, Joyce does not confer centrality on his wanderings through Dublin, and hence, on his impressions of the city. In a “move from an idealist to a materialist aesthetic” (Khanna 125), Joyce chooses to marginalise the “nerve and recoil” of the artist, assigning primacy instead to the daily saunter of the more pragmatic, though not unimaginative, “itinerant ad-man,” Leopold Bloom (Khanna 149). His Dublin promenade on 16 June 1904, replete with departures, returns, entrances, exits, crossings, shortcuts, detours, and halts incorporates an eclectic patchwork of walking styles that distil his personal idiosyncrasies, as well as momentary spirits. Or, as Declan Kiberd puts it, “[a] person’s way of walking, whether strut or slouch, reveals a personality” (77). Early in the morning, Bloom is already wide awake and domestically active, which readily contrasts with the “displeased and sleepy” Stephen (3). Bloom’s tiptoeing “about the kitchen softly” and climbing the staircase “on quietly creaky boots” (53, 54), to serve his drowsy wife’s breakfast in bed, reveal a sympathetic and sensitive individuality. He “reflects (refracts is it?)” Stephen’s observation that there are “[n]o black clouds anywhere” as he “crosse[s] to the bright side” and “walk[s] in happy warmth,” relishing the sunlight (55, 50, 55). Unlike Stephen’s disengagement from his inert, oppressive Dublin, which only incites empty theorisation, Bloom’s encounter with the street is on very intimate terms that rejuvenate and invigorate his senses, triggering a gush of fantasy and private associations:

Boylan’s breadvan delivering with trays our daily but she prefers yesterday’s loaves turnovers crisp crowns hot. Makes you feel young. Somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at dawn, travel round in front of the sun steal a day’s march on him. . . . Walk along a strand, strange land, come to a city gate, sentry there, old ranker too, old Tweedy’s big moustaches leaning on a long kind of a spear. Wander through awned streets. Turbaned faces going by. Dark caves of carpet shops, big man, Turko the terrible, seated crosslegged smoking a coiled pipe. Cries of sellers in the streets. Drink water scented with fennel, sherbet. Wander along all day. Might meet a robber or two. Well, meet him. Getting on to sundown. The shadows of the mosques along the pillars : priest with a scroll rolled up. A shiver of the trees, signal, the evening wind. I pass on. (55)

This daydream of a full-blooded, dynamic Oriental city, where military, commercial, and religious urban realities intermingle depicts Sennett’s “multiple contact points” (53) and echoes an inherent attribute of the city maze that Peter F. Smith has termed “the maze factor” (172). He defines it as the powerful magnetism that pulls the walker to unlock the labyrinth’s enigmas; once the key has been found,

the walker is admitted to a level of psychological intimacy with constructed space where “[m]an and buildings become symbolically bound together” (Smith 172). One might argue here that Bloom’s urban reverie suggests a yearning for flight from entanglement and thralldom. Such an assumption would be crucially flawed, though, since it is a feature of Dublin street life that prompts the Oriental vision in Bloom’s mind, and it is this potential for wonder in the city’s everyday spectacles that he responds to. Through his fancy, Joyce opens the channels for fascination and marvel flowing through the city streets, and reveals in its minutiae “spontaneity and openness to chance” (Kiberd 11).

Of course, chance also implies precariousness, and during the odyssey through Dublin Bloom’s sunny disposition ebbs and flows. Returning from the butcher’s, a slight cloudiness dispirits him and aligns his thoughts with Stephen’s broodings almost too perfectly: “Desolation. Grey horror seared his flesh. . . . Cold oils slid along his veins, chilling his blood: age crusting him with a salt cloak” (59). Bloom is a Dubliner, but an unorthodox one, what with his Jewish descent in a climate of gossiping, Irish nationalism, and vitriolic anti-Semitism. He hastens his exits when he senses threat and rancour – at Barney Kiernan’s, immediately after his apologia of the persecuted Jewish race, “off he pops like greased lightning” (319). His trajectories lead him through familiar places, but the puzzles of the labyrinth remain unsolved as the meanings of his mental topography are continually negotiated. Interestingly, the quandary of Bloom’s existence in the city maze is materialised in the shapes of his walking routes – namely, a question mark and an inverted question mark (Barta 63-4). Nonetheless, what emerges triumphant against dejection is Bloom’s capability to quickly wriggle out of its grip: “Got up wrong side of the bed” (59), and to profess his beliefs regarding the essence of life in a most hostile environment: “Force, hatred, history, all that. . . . [E]verybody knows that it’s the very opposite of that that is really life. . . . Love. I mean the opposite of hatred” (319). Ultimately, it is sheer chance and the possibility of intersecting paths that imbues the path-searching experience with a redemptive value. The artist and the ‘Wandering Jew’ are united in nightly perambulation, generating, out of the myriad clashes, the only meaningful bond that offers them comfort and safety. Bloom’s bipedal journey ends where it began, in his Eccles Street home kitchen, foregrounding him, symbolically, as the “centripetal remainder” (656). Stephen, the “centrifugal departer” (656), resumes his wayfaring in an ending that, despite its lack of a planned itinerary, conveys continuation, “affection and acceptance which gr[o]w, slowly, from Joyce’s lack of recoil from the city” (Long 155).

If unpredictability, heterodoxy, and a sense of firm grounding characterise Joyce’s street view, Huxley’s nightmarish metropolitan construct fundamentally challenges this outlook. Whereas Joyce’s strollers vent their subjective confusions and ruminations freely and elaborately, the brave new citizens of London in 632 AF are denied indulgence in idle promenades, both physical and mental. Walking has been substituted with the highest feat of rational and scientific thought: mechanical flight. An early image of piloting a helicopter illustrates the celebration of the mimetic powers of technology as it conquers and replaces nature:

He started the engines and threw the helicopter screws into gear. The machine shot vertically into the air. Henry accelerated . . . London diminished beneath them. The huge table-topped buildings were no more, in a few seconds, than a bed of geometrical mushrooms sprouting from the green of park and garden. In the midst of them, thin-stalked, a taller, slenderer fungus, the Charing-T Tower lifted towards the sky a disc of shining concrete. (Huxley 52).²

The passage simultaneously instantiates the panorama that Pike qualified as “diminish[ing] the city in size and its activity in importance” (34), and apotheosises the logic of modern city planning that imposes rectilinear grids on organic, irregular shapes intending to combat visual and moral disorder. In De Certeau’s terms, Lenina and Henry Foster instantiate the desire for facile knowledge of the city obtained by a “solar Eye, looking down like a god” (92). The panorama below epitomises pure functionality, while their downcast gaze paralyses movement by superimposing advancement in time over space (De Certeau 91, 95). Its ultimate result is alienation and impoverishment of individual experience. Moreover, considering that the agency of flight, not unlike governmental leadership of the World State, is predominantly in the hands of the elite Alpha caste, the superiority thus granted implies not only lack of social engagement, but also condescension:

Lenina looked down through the window in the floor between her feet. They were flying over the six kilometre zone of parkland that separated Central London from its first ring of satellite suburbs. The green was maggoty with foreshortened life. . . . In the Ealing stadium Delta gymnastics display and Community Sing was in progress. ‘What a hideous colour khaki is,’ remarked Lenina, voicing the hypnopædic prejudices of her caste. (53)

Lenina’s aerial purview of London renders the generation of a personal cognitive map obsolete. Primarily, deeply ingrained post-Fordian thought-propaganda predetermines meanings and occludes the necessity for their negotiation. By denying walking and diachronicity, the denizens obviate the possibility of forming a meaningful relationship with their surroundings. Thus, all possibilities of polyvalence are eliminated from the physical environment, turning its artefacts into elements of a finite monolithic reality. Within it, tenements and edifices are inscribed in the psyche merely as incarnations of social institutions, whose functionality takes absolute precedence as the wheels of the social machine “must keep on turning” (6). Thus, the “majestic buildings of the Slough Crematorium” are only perceived as a “landmark” insofar as they epitomise the definitive utilitarian value of each human being (63). The psychological destitution of this disengagement remains unperceived, as it is the sole social standard, and results from indoctrination by a totalitarian ideology. This leads to the second aspect of the elevated vantage. It encompasses the whole in a single, controlling gesture. More importantly, in concert with flight as the chief mode of transport, its appeal extends from urban planners to ordinary citizens, making the panorama instrumental in perpetuating the totalitarian regime.

² A full citation of *Brave New World* is provided in the Works Cited list. In-text citations hereafter will only contain page numbers.

Not surprisingly, such a social landscape constitutes an arid ground for personal idiosyncrasy or private intimations. Amidst Huxley's technocratic paradise of rigid social stratification, collective chanting of "Community, Identity, Stability" (1), and "incessant buzzing of helicopters" (62), walking would likely be deemed a socially inefficient activity and a transgression against conventional mores, deviant enough to arouse suspicion in the collective. Or, as Lenina judges it, "a very odd way of spending an afternoon" (77). Indeed, a systemic deviation or "an error in World State calibrations" (Baker 99), produces the novel's budding walker and budding subjectivity - Bernard Marx. His unorthodox proclivity to separate himself from the beehive and take "walks in the Lake District" (77) brands him as a threat to the total socio-political equilibrium. In this context, his act of walking amounts to an expression of political rebellion, albeit situated in the natural wilderness rather than the over-regulated cityscape. Thus, unlike his fellow-Londoners, he treads a personal labyrinth where his inchoate sense of self is a site of conflicting frustration and satisfaction. His inability to surrender to the mass orgiastic trance in worship of Ford leaves him "more hopelessly himself than he ha[s] ever been in his life before" (74). Yet, he prefers his embittered self to the sugar-coated vision of the hallucinogenic panacea: "I'd rather be myself, . . . Not somebody else, however jolly" (77). Like Stephen, he voices a painful awareness of his servitude to the state: "[W]hat would it be like if I could, if I were free – not enslaved by my conditioning" (78). However, his opposition to the dehumanising social practices lacks maturity, and, immediately after he encounters the fellow-outsider, John Savage, his autonomy retreats into the "coercive culture" that originally manufactured him, albeit imperfectly (Baker 103). At the first prospect of reintegration into the collective body on superior terms, he abandons the quest for individual freedom. Although he rejects the alternate reality induced by the *soma*, he succumbs readily to the intoxication of his new-found sense of personal grandeur. Accordingly, one of Bernard's last scenes imagines him "[l]ighter than air, . . . being shown a bird's-eye view of [civilized life] from the platform of the Charing-T Tower" (137).

As Bernard's anarchic flair for wandering and self-knowledge fades and is reabsorbed into the mechanic order, another, more profoundly troubled individuality emerges – that of John Savage. Born of a biological mother rather than a production line, he embodies the perversion of all that Ford's disciples regard as sacred. Simultaneously, through persistent exclusion, the xenophobic, tight-knit fabric of the Indian community in the reservation poses an inscrutable puzzle to him. Not unlike Joyce's Stephen and Bloom, John's mastery of the surrounding space does not yet initiate him into the 'secrets' of its society. Thus, although the pueblo represents a rare relic of the organic, pre-Fordian world, it offers no respite from the overwhelming regularity and monotony of the London machine. Through yet another panoramic view, Huxley implies the intrusion of the long arm of linearity and spiritual aridity into the spatial arrangement of Malpais: it stands on a "shaped and geometrical outcrop of the naked rock," while its tenements resemble "stepped and amputated pyramids" that release smoke "perpendicularly into the windless air" (92). After John's transplantation from this 'bad place' into the grid of bright, sanitary corridors of the Other Place, his confusion only redoubles. His hybrid, semi-conditioned, semi-educated existence cannot be suitably integrated either in the *mescalised* villagers or

in the *soma*-addicted citizens. Ultimately, the prying eyes of urban sensationalism brutally thwart his attempt at seclusion in an uninhabited gray zone, leading him irrevocably into a mental breakdown. His tragic end closes the novel with a powerful image of his personal, and by metaphorical extension, the global, detrimental lack of direction: “Slowly, very slowly, like two unhurried compass needles, the feet turned towards the right; north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-south-west; then paused, and after a few seconds, turned as unhurriedly back towards the left. South-south-west, south-south-east, east . . .” (229).

Furthering the theme of the mental and urban entanglement, as well as the Modernist anti-urban angst, Alasdair Gray sets out to challenge the notorious judgement of Glasgow as “the sort of industrial city where most people live nowadays but nobody imagines living” (105). Stretching over four books and two narrative lines, oscillating between realism and “science fiction-cum-fantasy” (Witschi 68), *Lanark*’s urban perspectives morph along with the “elaborate transform[ation]” (Witschi 68) of Glasgow into its imaginary avatar Unthank. The *Bildungsroman* cocooned in the centre of the epic follows the explorations of Stephen’s Scottish counterpart, Duncan Thaw, through the streets, nooks and crannies of Glasgow as he seeks outlets for his artistic ingenuity in an urban community “essentially hostile to art” (Witschi 60). In the initial chapter of the Thaw narrative, Glasgow is a receptacle of rather dispirited, working-class life, housed in “corporation tenement[s]” of “red sandstone in front and brick behind” (Gray, *Lanark* 122).³ Displaying an early fascination with colour, reminiscent of Stephen’s synaesthetic perception, he compensates for the dejection and hostility of his urban childhood with a gaze aspiringly directed upwards:

There was empty ground in front of him with the shadows of tenements stretching a long way across it. Colours had become distinctions of grey and close-mouths’ black rectangles in tenement walls. The sky was covered with blue-grey cloud, but currents of wind had opened channels through this and he could see through the channels into a green sunset air above. (128)

The long “shadows of tenements” anticipate the ghost city to which Thaw returns after World War II, and which strikes him as an alien, mystified and unknowable tangle: “Once Glasgow had been a tenement block, a school and a stretch of canal; now it was a gloomy huge labyrinth he would take years to find a way through” (146). The altered aspect of the hometown significantly mirrors a change in his self-perspective, a thrust in the complexities of adolescence that the childhood cognitive map can no longer accommodate. Path-finding through the “huge labyrinth” proves fraught with a host of hardships. His youthful, unconfessed longing for Kate Caldwell translates into an unconscious choice of disconcerting, meandering trajectories: “[H]e walked to school each morning through Alexandra Park, mistakenly thinking a twisting path through flowerbeds was shorter than the straight traffic-laden road” (156). Traumatic “emotional [and sexual] complications” send him into fits of rage and misery, further exacerbated by frequent bouts of asthma that turn his surroundings into a verbal maze he cannot decode, or “words he [cannot] read”

³ A full citation of *Lanark* is provided in the Works Cited list. In-text citations hereafter will only contain page numbers.

(157, 160). When personal and familial turbulence, a clash with standardised education inimical to his artistic talent, and psychosomatic malaise overwhelm him, ambulation through vacant streets offers a comforting detachment:

He walked quickly into streets with fewer shops where people moved in enigmatic units. His confidence grew with the darkness. . . . [H]e strode past couples embracing in close mouths feeling isolated by a stern purpose which put him outside merely human satisfactions. This purpose was hardly one he could have explained (after all he was just walking, not walking to anywhere) but sometimes he thought he was searching for the key (169).

Thaw here exemplifies the magnetic pull of the ‘maze factor’ in a most substantial way – discovering the key would direct his art and remedy his physical and psychological ails. Aspiring to produce an epic, polymorphous work of art in order to inscribe Glasgow in the imaginative map of the collective unconscious, he attempts to reconcile the two perspectives into a novel artistic viewpoint: “He invented a perspective showing the locks from below when looked at from left to right and from above when seen from right to left” (279). Yet, however visionary, his Icarian ambition conflicts too violently with his “egotistic, self-pitying, sulking, and gloomy person” (Witschi 64) to allow him to achieve personal and artistic equilibrium. Like Huxley’s *Savage*, Gray’s wandering hero makes a fatal exit, preceded by an utter dissolution of his overwrought psyche. A lack of reconciliation links *Savage*’s and Thaw’s self-destructions, though unlike the tantalising suicide of the *Savage*, Thaw’s drowning betokens relief through “annihilating sweetness” (354). His last image of Glasgow is no longer the street to tread alone or the city with unperceived beauty, but a maelstrom in which he sinks: “The city was forcing itself into the sky on every side. Factory, university, gasometer, slagging, ridges of tenements, parks loaded with trees ascended until he looked up at a horizon like the rim of a bowl with himself at the bottom” (348).

Yet, unlike Huxley, Gray does elude a plunge into nihilism by granting Thaw a fantastic reincarnation in *Lanark*. As opposed to Thaw, whose maps of the city and of his identity expand and grow more convoluted as his trials deepen, *Lanark*’s existence begins with a topographical and existential blank slate – his own name is randomly assigned, his memory is composed of haphazard temporal landmarks, and the city’s name is neither known nor important. Unthank is lidded with a cold, sunless, black sky, a colour only slightly gloomier than Glasgow’s “pallid neutral” (156). To the same extent that Glasgow imposes itself as a “huge labyrinth,” dystopian Unthank is a place of absolute disorientation, where reverberations of Dublin’s torpor and of futuristic London’s dehumanisation are strongly felt, turning the city into a veritable “Kafkaesque nightmare” (Witschi 69). Nevertheless, the impending apocalyptic doom that threatens Unthank through raging fire and a galloping flood eventually recedes. The announcement of *Lanark*’s imminent death coincides with a sense of restoration and renewal, as the life-affirming sunlight floods the city and transforms the landscape instead: “The darkness overhead [sic] shifted and broke in the wind becoming clouds with blue air between. He looked sideways and saw the sun coming up golden behind a laurel bush, light blinking, space dancing among the shifting leaves” (558). Like Joyce’s *Bloom*, *Lanark* has centripetally returned home, and despite the latter’s end,

they share the same “generous acceptance” of their cities and their lives, acknowledging their immense variety: “Well, I have had an interesting life” (Gray 557). The liberated space Lanark perceives unites with the liberation of time, as continuity and a possibility of redemption arise from the notion that Lanark’s family lives on. The closing confessional farewell articulates the same diachronic-synchronic marriage embodied in the mental representation of a city’s (and a life’s) landscape:

I STARTED MAKING MAPS WHEN I WAS SMALL SHOWING PLACE, RESOURCES, WHERE THE ENEMY AND WHERE LOVE LAY. I DID NOT KNOW TIME ADDS TO LAND. EVENTS DRIFT CONTINUALLY DOWN, EFFACING LANDMARKS, RAISING THE LEVEL, LIKE SNOW” (560).

For all the extraordinariness of the Lanark narrative, these parting lines speak the mind of a comfortingly “ordinary old man” (560).

Thus, by portraying disillusioned artist-wanderers, both Joyce and Gray seem to perpetuate the modernist urban antagonism. However, they shift their focus from the failure of the artistic aspiration towards transcendence to the more earth-bound spirit of quotidian city life, albeit in often uncommon or unnerving circumstances. Thereby they foreground the complex maze as the most suitable incarnation of the intricacies of mental and physical space. Within it, the sheer everyday act of walking amounts to a quest for an identity as it allows the inscription of subjective meanings on the streetscape as a material reality. Its inherent spatio-temporality gives rise to mutability and contingency that the static, totalitarian panorama inhibits, thus imprisoning identity in a constant state of immaturity. Through Bernard and Savage, Huxley manifests an understanding of walking as the sort of productive anarchy implied in Lanark/Thaw’s mature comprehension of space and time, and Bloom’s contentment in the peripatetic union with Stephen.

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