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## 'TOWN OF SHADOWS': REPRESENTATIONS OF BELFAST IN RECENT FICTION

Eamonn Hughes

Belfast, despite some two centuries as a substantial city and several centuries of settlement before that,<sup>1</sup> has only comparatively recently begun to emerge from invisibility into fictional representation. Between about 1800 and 1950, as John Hewitt has pointed out,<sup>2</sup> writers, whether of fiction or poetry, associated with Belfast had little to say about it. The absence of Belfast from the writing of this period continues in certain ways into the last 50 years, although in this period we can also see the attempt to represent Belfast. This essay will deal with these more recent writings about Belfast and outline some of the major features of their representations of Belfast.

As a fictional location Belfast has to contend with two disadvantages. Firstly, its history sets it up not an actual place to be mimetically represented but as an unspecific battlefield, a place dominated by its 'Troubles' and formed, or more accurately deformed, by them into the kind of location where, as ancient maps used to be labelled, 'Here be dragons.' All that matters in this representation is Belfast's imputed attributes of danger, violence and mayhem. The currently predominant literary (and televisual and cinematic) representation of Belfast is within the thriller genre<sup>3</sup> whether the specific instances of that genre are mere 'Troubles trash' — in J. Bowyer Bell's phrase<sup>4</sup> — or something as morally serious as F. L. Green's *Odd Man Out*<sup>5</sup> or as ambitious but deeply flawed as Brian Moore's *Lies of Silence*.<sup>6</sup>

Represented in this way Belfast is not Belfast at all; it is simply a void, a blank space filled by novelists and film-makers with stock properties. This is a Belfast which is, in the words of Gerald Seymour, an 'adventure

playground par excellence for the urban terrorist<sup>7</sup> and, one might add, for the army, the secret services, and, of course, thriller writers. This is the representation of Belfast so brilliantly satirised in the writings of John Morrow, especially in *The Confessions of Proinsias O'Toole*.<sup>8</sup> In this novel the incomprehensible depravity usually attributed to the inhabitants of Belfast by thriller writers rather than being subjected to their cynical moralising, is seen instead as the basis for a not unattractive lifestyle. I have remarked elsewhere<sup>9</sup> that the perfect unsatirical instance of this representation occurs in Tom Clancy's *Patriot Games*<sup>10</sup> in which Belfast (indeed the whole of Northern Ireland), despite the fact that events there fuel the plot, is left completely out of account. Once its alleged qualities — tribalism, violence, danger, murderous hatred — have been used to light the blue touch paper Clancy withdraws, feeling no need to set any scenes there at all. At the heart of *Patriot Games* therefore we have the void that is Belfast for most such writers even when, their research hanging heavy on their prose style, they set their novels there and marshal details about physical locations with an accuracy that paradoxically shows up the extent of their ignorance about everything else in the city.

Belfast has to struggle not only against this recently dominant representation but also, secondly, against the fact that in Irish culture in general the city has not until recently played any major role. Irish culture, with its predominantly rural bent, has long been at best indifferent, at worst hostile, to the city, though the reasons for this are still contested.<sup>11</sup> This second disadvantage is exacerbated by the industrialised nature of Belfast. If Belfast as 'Troubles' city is treated by thriller writers as simply a blank space to be filled in at their whim, then as a heavily industrialised Northern urban centre, it is equally invisible to the prevailing cultural ideology within Ireland. John Hewitt has pointed out, with reference to Belfast poets of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, that 'from these voluble city dwellers there was not a word about where they lived and the people they lived among'. Fiction was even more deficient in that, in the period up to 1910, Hewitt can identify only two novels with a Belfast setting: Archibald McElroy's unpromisingly-titled *A Banker's Love Story* (1908) and James Douglas's *The Unpardonable Sin* (1907).<sup>12</sup> Over the past 200 years the history of the representation of Belfast is largely a history of absence. Belfast carries the double burden of being both an abyss of murderous insanity and the *ne plus ultra* of the Irish city, and is therefore a place seemingly beyond representation.

There has been, however, over roughly the last 50, and particularly over the last 30, years a countervailing tendency in representations of Belfast. In

the work of Ciaran Carson there is as intense an exploration of city life, as it is experienced in Belfast, as one could hope for.<sup>13</sup> This countervailing tendency is inextricable from what has been called the revival of Northern writing and shares with that revival many of the same determinants. Despite the almost overwhelming presence of Seamus Heaney, whose work is largely in line with the ruralist tendency of Irish writing, the social, economic, cultural and political changes of the last 50 years which provide the preconditions for the Northern revival also work against the dominance of the rural in Northern Irish and Irish culture.

In brief the principal changes are: the growth of Belfast; the consequences of more widespread educational opportunities; the emergence of a securely city-based and educated audience for writings about the city; and the development of broadcasting and electronic technologies which have given Belfast dwellers an expanded sense of themselves as not simply living in a small marginal city but as partaking of the global experience of being urban.<sup>14</sup> Discussion of such changes cannot discount changing attitudes to migration, both North and South over recent years.<sup>15</sup> In the first half of this century migration patterns played a large part in attitudes to the city. It was where people went when they lost their land, and was for many a transit point since the pattern of migration was such that a move to the city was often merely the first stage of an onward migration out of Ireland. Such were the feelings of shame and guilt associated with migration that accounts of city life from this perspective tend to be clouded by regret, nostalgia and feelings of loss,<sup>16</sup> as can be seen in Michael McLaverty's Belfast novels.<sup>17</sup> However, as attitudes to and patterns of migration have changed it has become increasingly clear that the Irish are an urban people and have been for at least 150 years. Think of the Irish outside Ireland and the places one associates with them — Kilburn or Bermondsey in London, the Irish towns of Manchester or Birmingham, parts of New York, including that byword for municipal corruption, Tammany Hall, the whole of Boston — are overwhelmingly urban, even metropolitan.<sup>18</sup> For this reason, and the others outlined above, the culture of Ireland has had to catch up with the urban experience of the peoples of Ireland. It is this complex of changing experiences which lies behind recent novels.

Finally, of course, and more specific to Belfast, we have the Troubles, which, set into the context of other social and technological changes, is not the dominant, but simply one more, reason why in the face of increasingly apparent changes in, and pressures on, older rurally-based identities, writers have found the task of coming to terms with urban identity and Belfast more and more urgent.

Given all this, it is appropriate that one of the first appearances of Belfast in recent fiction is as a place which in its dazzle, complexity and din defeats to the point of death Petie Ogle an old countryman in Sam Hanna Bell's *December Bride*:

To Petie it was a confused blur of hurrying people, the lighted windows of huckster shops, hoardings, dirty brick walls, street lamps and people; people scurrying blindly along the pavements or moving forward in patient droves as the tram stopped.<sup>19</sup>

The city as a 'confused blur' with its blind citizens, recalls the Dublin — 'a new and complex sensation'<sup>20</sup> — that confronts Stephen Dedalus and defeats his sight, and Bell's reasons for so describing it echo those of Joyce as he describes Stephen Dedalus's first encounter with Dublin. It is as if both writers have to acknowledge the difficulties of representation of the city in Irish fiction before they can move on to take fictional stock of it.

Such representational difficulties, Donatella Mazzoleni has argued, arise because sight alone cannot comprehend the city,<sup>21</sup> and yet our approaches to it are largely derived from a geographical study of landscape which privileges visual criteria and data.<sup>22</sup> Recent Belfast fiction has a tendency to include at key moments panoramas of the city which seems to continue this privileging of the visual. Mal Martin, for example, in *Burning Your Own* is able to see all the interconnections that make up the city from the hills surrounding it but is aware only of divisions within the city itself.<sup>23</sup> However, these panoramas result from a 'taking to the hills', as if to suggest that the only way to comprehend the city is leave it, to become an observer rather than a participant. This view from the hills allows characters to look down (in more ways than one) on the city, which 'lies like a puddle of cold tea in a saucer. Much of the town was built on marsh and bog.'<sup>24</sup> and is an almost universal feature of Belfast fiction.<sup>25</sup> The ultimate implication is, in line with Mazzoleni's argument, that the city cannot be comprehended with ease because there is always more happening than can be apprehended by sight alone, and therefore to understand the city one has to stand outside it. This in turn has interesting implications for those who remain within it. As Jim McCabe has pointed out the unsavoury Proinsias O'Toole's homesickness when away from Belfast satirically implies that only a licentious drunken wastrel and con-man could love Belfast.<sup>26</sup>

This returns us to the connection, already touched on in relation to thrillers, between the complexity of the city and morality. The city's complexity is apprehended as antithetical to the lost rural world and its pastoral simplicities, so that complexity becomes a sign of urban corrup-

tion in contrast to rural innocence. It would be wrong to conclude that this representation of Belfast as a place of corruption relies solely on the fact of the 'Troubles'. This representation takes its lead, rather, from Joyce's work (in which Hell is a type of the city) and from the attitudes expressed in the quotation from St Augustine used by Maurice Leitch as the epigraph to *Silver's City*: 'The devil hath built his cities in the North.'<sup>27</sup> A similar attitude can be found in Louis MacNeice's poetry and in poems by Derek Mahon such as 'Ecclesiastes'.<sup>28</sup> Here we have a religiously-grounded distrust of the city.

The novels in which this distrust is found either often are, or share an affinity with, the thriller. While this can be true even of "Troubles trash" I am referring rather to novels which, while using the thriller genre, attempt to encounter Belfast in its particularity. In the recent period this form of writing may be said to begin with F. L. Green's *Odd Man Out* and includes Leitch's *Silver's City*, and Ronan Bennett's *The Second Prison*.<sup>29</sup> In each the city is figured as a place of labyrinthine darkness, betrayal and deceit: the Belfast of *Odd Man Out* in which the members of the Organisation find themselves hunted and trapped; the Belfast (and London) which is *The Second Prison* (whose central figure's name, Augustine Kane, combines two great citizen sinners); and the Belfast of *Silver's City* in which Silver Steele, despite the novel's title, is forced to the realisation that the nameless city has ceased to be his possession and has become his prison.

In *December Bride* these same features — darkness, fear, deceit and betrayal — arise from unfamiliarity with the urban, and it is almost incidental that in *Odd Man Out* and other novels they arise from political violence and its consequences. The point is that despite the apparently dissimilar motivations of a novel such as *December Bride* and novels more akin to thrillers, the image of the city that emerges is remarkably similar. Belfast in the former case is just being itself; in the latter case, as a 'Troubles' city, it is just being itself only more so.

Belfast represented as a 'Troubles' city is in other words simply an exaggeration of certain pre-existing views of the city. Therefore, although strongly associated with thriller-like novels, this sense of corruption is not confined to them. The city in this representation becomes an almost Gothic landscape<sup>30</sup> as in this phrase from *A Man Flourishing*: 'let us be no more than shadows in this town of shadows'. This novel also continues the labyrinthine motif by representing Belfast as growing out of a network of alleyways at its centre which houses a criminal fraternity and through its image of cities within cities:

Wandering the streets and alleys, Hugh had become aware of another township, inhabited by men and women who didn't know where next they might get food for their bellies and possessing only a clawful of dirty rags to cover that part of their bodies.<sup>31</sup>

This gothic element is present even in such an apparently unremittingly realist novel as *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*.<sup>32</sup> The novel's allegorical skeleton — this is the *passion* of Judith Hearne — provides a symbolic geography of the city which undercuts the novel's apparently mimetic representation of Belfast. In this and Moore's other early Belfast novels this symbolic geography has a distinctly religious cast: the Antrim Road is a bourgeois Catholic heaven from which Judith Hearne has been cast out to live in the purgatory that is the University district around Camden Street. Her visit to Ballymacarrett — working-class *and* Protestant — combines a socially-grounded distaste for the city with a religiously-grounded disgust. In this scheme of things Ballymacarrett can only be a type of the Inferno<sup>33</sup> into which Judith falls in the course of her passion. In this aspect Ballymacarrett is a place of 'gritty gloom' interrupted by the 'harsh orange glare' of street lamps, a place of dark back entries in which the sparks from cigarette butts 'fall in the dusk' and Judith is deceived; having asked and paid for best Irish whiskey she is palmed off with cheap Scotch.<sup>34</sup>

Moore is not alone in writing about Belfast in an apparently realistic fashion undercut by a form of symbolic geography which affords the reader, at a subtle level, a sense of the resonances of the city going beyond the empirical cataloguing of place and street names. Characters are enabled to interpret the city in intimate and personal ways by such geography, and events derive significance from location. It is the absence of these resonances from *Lies of Silence* which seems to me to make that a deeply-flawed novel in which the city, while accurately rendered in terms of street names, buildings and one-way systems, lies dead on the page because the characters, for the most part, lack any kind of special relationship with any part of it and it is in consequence merely a homogeneous mass, rather than a set of 'significant locales and distinct psychological territories.'<sup>35</sup>

A principal feature of this symbolic geography is a sense that the city is doomed, that some self-destructive fault runs through it as the very title of Mary Costello's *Titanic Town*, with its reference to both the seemingly inevitably doomed product of Belfast and to the hubristic myth of revolt against the universe, indicates. There is consequently a wish for this 'terminal place'<sup>36</sup> to be destroyed before it does any more damage. In *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* Gavin Burke and his companion Freddy exult in the Blitz and join in an antiphonal prayer for the destruction of Belfast's constricting institutions:

“[B]low up St Michan’s,” Gavin shouted...  
 “Blow up City Hall.”  
 “And Queen’s University.”  
 “And Harland and Wolff’s.”  
 “Blow up the Orange Hall.”  
 “And the cathedral and the dean.”...  
 “Blow up a few capitalists...”  
 “And the Bishop of Down and Connor...”  
 “And Stormont Castle and Lord Carson’s statue and the houses of bloody Parlia-  
 ment...”  
 “Not with a whimper, but a bang.”  
 “Right you are, Gavin boy. A big bang.”<sup>37</sup>

This urge for an inevitable destruction is also evident in Robert MacLiam Wilson’s *Ripley Bogle*, the central figure of which similarly hopes that ‘Belfastard’ the ‘shitty city, leprous and not too pretty’, which is both illegitimate and diseased, ‘shouldn’t be allowed to get away with this kind of thing. Belfast has to be stopped. Its time will come.’<sup>38</sup>

In this representation of the city as a corrupt and Gothic landscape, Belfast becomes a kind of Byronic figure among cities: mad, bad and dangerous to know. Belfast is a self- and other-destructive lunatic, ‘brain-damaged and dangerous’ in Stewart Parker’s phrase<sup>39</sup> which is also how Deirdre Madden describes it in *Hidden Symptoms*, the very title suggesting that Belfast is a pathopolis,<sup>40</sup> a diseased city:

Belfast was now like a madman who tears his flesh, puts straws in his hair and screams gibberish. Before it had resembled the infinitely more sinister figure of the articulate man in a dark, neat suit whose conversation charms and entertains; and whose insanity is apparent only when he says calmly, incidentally, that he will club his children to death and eat their entrails with a golden fork because God has told him to do so; and then offers you more tea.<sup>41</sup>

Belfast as ‘Troubles’ city is simply an exaggerated version of itself, and is actually preferable in that it now wears its madness and destructiveness openly, rather than trying to disguise them under a respectable normality.

So apocalyptic longings follow on from the sense of Belfast as mad, bad and dangerous, which in its turn is derived from a religiously-based distrust of the urban as Gothic, stricken, and sinful. In this context much has been made of the topography and origins of Belfast which is built on and from alluvial mud, ‘sleech’ as it is called in Belfast.<sup>42</sup> Glenn Patterson’s *Burning Your Own* opens with a reference to the city’s origins: “In the beginning” — said Francy — “was the dump.”, continues with an origin myth in which the dump is the first city, and represents Belfast as both self-generating and self-consuming.<sup>43</sup> This is taken up again, in *Fat Lad* in which the



battle between *destruction* and *construction*' is seen as 'the oldest battle in Belfast. The congenital predisposition of various of its inhabitants for periodically dismantling the city had been matched at every turn by the efforts of those who... had struggled throughout its history to build it up.'<sup>44</sup>

Kay, the character who says this, sees it as a sectarian battle between Catholic destroyers and Protestant builders. Eoin MacNamee's *Resurrection Man* reverses this sectarianism in a 'rank, allusive narrative' based on the Shankill Butchers, which represents their activities as part of the city's self-destruction and ultimate desire to be a necropolis: 'Bodies laid out as if for journey. They would carry news of the city and its environs.'<sup>45</sup> Belfast as a corrupt city is a place of nightmare, somewhere that will destroy if it isn't destroyed. Belfast is, in Maurice Leitch's words, 'the city [that] always made you pay for your dreams.'<sup>46</sup>

This overwhelming representation of Belfast as gothic locale, a site of corruption, sin and nameless terrors seems to be in line with the valorisation of the rural and suspicion of the city which runs through Irish culture:

The city... in the work of a whole range of Irish writers, became the focus of corruption and impurity, set against the innocence and simplicity of the peasant.<sup>47</sup>

John Wilson Foster, indeed, has argued that there is no real urban consciousness in Ireland and that even in the city it is possible to inhabit a knowable community:

If Irish towns became less rural after 1918, they remained fairly intimate with the surrounding countryside that can still even today be seen from the streets of the two largest, Dublin and Belfast. They continued to exhibit the features of overgrown villages, being personal, neighbourly and communal, features that characterize the towns and cities of predominantly urban novels, even the Dublin of *Ulysses* (1922) and Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939)... Only with reservation, then, could we claim that in reality or in fiction Ireland has a peculiarly urban consciousness.<sup>48</sup>

In this light, the view of the city outlined here would seem to conform to a rural perspective. However, it is truer to say that in these novels we can see Irish culture developing an urban consciousness. There is still in much writing a resistance to such a consciousness through the image of the fake village which is an implicit attempt to deny the multiplicity of distinct communities available in the city: the family, the streets, work, education, religion, friendships and social groupings which the city offers in contradistinction to the singular knowable community of the countryside. This is why:

The classic location for Irish urban writing has been the tenement building. If the characteristics of rural forms in Irish writing are the pull to the past, the attraction of a knowable and self-contained community and in the theatre a tendency to super-naturalism, then the use of the tenement as the typical urban setting clearly allows for all three of these characteristics to come into play... the tenement setting excludes the world of the streets and the world of work, the two crucial experiences of urban experience.<sup>49</sup>

The representations of the city we have considered are not necessarily consonant with this mutually defining and mutually excluding opposition in Irish culture between the rural and the urban. Alongside the images of Belfast as so complex as to defeat sight, and therefore to an extent representation, and as a gothic locale, there is also a strong sense of imprisonment and alienation.<sup>50</sup> This conversation in Bennett's *The Second Prison* neatly expresses the sense of the city as an imprisoning place:

"Roisin, I belong here."

"You don't belong, you're a prisoner here. Let's leave, let's get free."

"You can't be free in a place you don't belong, with people you don't know."<sup>51</sup>

There is an urban dialectic in this passage — belonging becomes imprisonment, freedom becomes alienation — which begins to move beyond the opposition between rural and urban. This urban dialectic — does the city represent belonging or imprisonment, freedom or alienation? — cannot be resolved because there is as yet no language in which to resolve it. We are aware, after modernism, that the urban requires new forms and languages<sup>52</sup> which the over-riding realism of Belfast novels seems to deny. This is why it is necessary to stress the gothic aspect of these writings, their sense that Belfast can be made visible in the sphere of representation only by stressing its hellishness, its almost unspeakable materiality. This gothic aspect, undermining that surface realism, is the transformative element in these texts, their effort to find a new language, to speak, as the gothic so often does, the unspeakable.<sup>53</sup> It is the nature of urban space and organisation which makes it so difficult to make visible.

Belfast is a town of divisions and borders which as Neil Jarman says: 'emerges from the dry equality of the map as a patchwork of distinct communities' between which 'ideological divisions have increasingly become a concrete part of the physical landscape'<sup>54</sup>. Damian Smyth arguing much the same point is concerned that in consequence of this there is a lack of communal urban life.<sup>55</sup> But this is a denial of urban consciousness, a sign of a consciousness which has still not adapted to the strangeness and

comparatively recent appearance of modern cities. In its divisions Belfast is, once again, little different from (though an exaggerated version of) other cities. Cities are artificial and strange, different from wholly knowable and centred communities. The city can only have what *Judith Hearne* identifies as a 'designated centre'. Brian Moore's description of this is worth some attention:

And so they walked slowly down Wellington Place and reached the designated centre of the city, the staring white ugliness of City Hall. There, under the great dome of the building, ringed around by forgotten memorials, bordered by the garrison neatness of a Garden of Remembrance, everything that was Belfast came into focus. The newsvendors calling out the great events of the world in flat, uninterested Ulster voices; the drab facades of the buildings grouped around the Square, proclaiming the virtues of trade, hard dealing and Presbyterian righteousness. The order, the neatness, the floodlit cenotaph, a white respectable phallus planted in sinking Irish bog. The Protestant dearth of gaiety, the Protestant surfeit of order, the dour burghers walking proudly among these monuments to their mediocrity ... [s]tanding there in the designated centre of the city.<sup>56</sup>

In this passage there is a glimmering of something beyond the rural/urban opposition. The distaste expressed here is not for the city qua city but for the way in which this 'designated centre' stills and orders its potential. It is not the city but precisely the imposed version of communal urban life that is unattractive. The absence of a centre seems to be a disadvantage but it may well be that a 'designated centre', into which one can inscribe one's own qualities, rather than some actual centre or mythic omphalos allows for a leap of imaginative faith both in living in a city and in representing it.

Most of the discussion to this point might be taken to be solely about Irish nationalist attitudes to the city. It should therefore be noted that, without trying for some spurious balance, the novelists I have discussed come from both nationalist and unionist, Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. In the passage just quoted from *Judith Hearne* Moore's distaste is for the 'surfeit of order' he sees as having been imposed on Belfast and while there may be a sectarian impulse behind this comment (Patricia Craig has pointed out that it is too readily directed towards Protestantism<sup>57</sup>) it makes a salutary point: Unionism too evinces a suspicion of the urban. The Stormont government was no more welcoming of the urban than was the dominant rural ideology of the South. Hence we find comments such as this from a quasi-official Northern publication as late as 1968:

Perhaps the fairest general comments about the Ulsterman is [sic] that he is, for the most part a countryman at heart. Even those who live in the city of Belfast

normally have many relations in the countryside, and that rigid division between rural and urban habits and traditions, which is so marked in some of the larger conurbations in Great Britain, has not yet developed in Northern Ireland. The country qualities of strong loyalty to family and social groups, of firm attachment to principle, and of marked unwillingness to be “pushed around” are evident in many spheres.<sup>58</sup>

This list gives us by implication the attributes associated with the city dweller: disloyalty, a lack of principles and, presumably, a willingness to be pushed around, perhaps even a tendency to be easily-led. The setting of Stormont itself can be read as confirmation of this suspicion of and disdain for the urban; opened in 1932 it sits on hills to the South East of the city, looking to the rolling countryside that provided the wealth of many of its original denizens, and turning a neo-classical cold shoulder to Belfast. Furthermore, as Neil Jarman has pointed out the annual Orange march from Belfast to the Field can be seen as an act of pastoral renewal:

[I]t represents an abandonment of the city and its profanities for the purity of the countryside, where spirits are refreshed away from women and heathens. Renewed in their fortitude, the men can recolonise and reassert control over the city for another year.<sup>59</sup>

The question that has to be asked is; what is it that both nationalist and unionist ideologies fear in the city and is the representation of Belfast as corrupt simply a reflection of this? To answer this question we must broaden the discussion beyond the dimensions of Irish exceptionalism. Throughout his work Ciaran Carson has adapted Joyce’s question about the endurance of identity over time to the city itself. In his writing the city is a Lacanian self in process but remains itself through its expansive memory. Lewis Mumford has commented on the city as mnemotechnic:

[I]t maintained and transmitted a larger portion of [people’s] lives than individual human memories could transmit by word of mouth. This condensation and storage, for the purpose of enlarging the boundaries of the community in time and space, is one of the singular functions performed by the city... The city, as Emerson, well observed, “lives by remembering.”<sup>60</sup>

The city then offers a different version of individual identity: where the rural produces an essentialist and organic identity, cities produce relational and constructed identities. The rural is the site of homogenous Ireland; the urban is resisted precisely because it is potentially the site of heterogeneous Ireland. Here is another reason for suspicions of it: Ireland is a society in which ‘individual action, ambition, and the assumption of personal responsibility’ are devalued and in which ‘customary patterns of behaviour

and thought' along with 'passive or communal values such as duty, continuity, and conformity'<sup>61</sup> are valued. This conformity (often disguised as solidarity) can only see the city as a place of transgression against traditional values and accepted boundaries, and the novelists reflect this. Such transgressions are often related to gender and sexuality, for example, Poll in *A Man Flourishing* dressing as a woman<sup>62</sup> or Theresa, the heroine of *Hidden Symptoms*, crossing gender boundaries,<sup>63</sup> and the presence of homosexual characters in Maurice Leitch's novels and in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*. In this light, even that Belfast cliché, 'love across the barricades', represents a transgression of sectarian boundaries; see, for example, Ripley Bogle and Deirdre Curran, or the friendships between Mal and Francy in *Burning Your Own* and Gavin Burke and Freddie Hargreaves in *The Emperor of Ice-cream*. These individual transgressions against accepted traditional boundaries find a homology in the idea of the city as crossing place, with Belfast acting as a ford between two forms of identity. Given this it seems that the earlier invisibility of Belfast and the refusal to represent it is in accord with a ruralist ideology, while the representation of Belfast, even as site of corruption, amounts to a breaking beyond that ideology.

It is then not so much Irish nationalism or unionism which is hostile to the city as the underlying conservatism of those ideologies, and the forms of identity which they promote, which would deny the presence and importance of the city. In this they are no different from nationalisms elsewhere. European nationalisms in general tend towards the rural as part of their self-promotion as organic and even autochthonous:

[O]ne cultural aspiration of a returning intelligentsia and middle class is the yearning for the spiritual wholeness represented by the countryside and the 'natural' life, as an antidote to the materialism and competitive individualism of city existence. There are several facets of this urban 'populism' of the intelligentsia: the rediscovery of the 'common man' and peasant life; the rediscovery of fields and rivers and forests, man's natural habitat; and a return to rural folkways as the embodiment of purity and truth.<sup>64</sup>

From this perspective the countryside has a sacral stability in contrast to which the city is obviously secular and as such becomes an affront to nationalism's reliance on the atemporal and enduring.<sup>65</sup> Urban space, defined by architecture and calendrical time rather than by agriculture and seasonal or cyclical time, is always and literally secular; in Patrick Geddes's phrase the 'city is more than a place in space, it is a drama in time'.<sup>66</sup> This existence in time makes the city potentially subject to change rather than just renewal: 'Urban life... is... full of new situations, for which the proverbial wisdom and the time-honoured responses are no longer adequate.'<sup>67</sup>

Nationalism's suspicion of the city depends on its secularity and is in line with the even longer-standing suspicion of the city within Western and Christian culture. The city may well figure as a potential Utopian space — a new Jerusalem — but this heavenly city is always shadowed by an infernal counterpart. The city as mnemotechnic may repress but can never erase its post-Edenic origins: 'Cain was the founder of a city' (Genesis 4:17). For the New Jerusalem to be built (Revelation 21: 2), Babylon must be overthrown (Revelation 18: 21). This religious ambivalence to the city is carried through European literary culture. It is '*la città dolente*' ('the city of woe') which carries the admonishment to 'abandon all hope.'<sup>68</sup> Although it can be for Milton the 'city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty',<sup>69</sup> in *Paradise Lost* 'Pandaemonium' is 'the high capital/ Of Satan', the 'city and proud seat/Of Lucifer'.<sup>70</sup> The city is a place of night and death,<sup>71</sup> is, in short, is all too often the Eliotic waste land, though always potentially the new Jerusalem as well. Civilisation and city may be cognate terms, but so too are citizen and sinner. Mumford's alternation between materialisation and etherialisation acknowledges that 'Heaven and Utopia both had a place in the structure of ancient cities; yet... Hell became part of the formative structure too.'<sup>72</sup>

At some level sin and criminality are inscribed alongside secularity in the very fabric of the city. Representations of the city are therefore, as Walter Benjamin suggests, tied to the thriller and detective story:

The original social content of the detective story was the obliteration of the individual's traces in the big-city crowd.<sup>73</sup>

At the heart of the city is then the mystery of the self, since an integrated and authentic self is impossible in the city. Ken Worpole argues that the novel and the criminal city developed together in a way that is both suggestive of the difficult birth and development of the Irish novel in general and reminiscent of novels such as *A Man Flourishing* and *Ripley Bogle*:

The rise of the city, in Britain, coincides with the rise of the novel itself, and the two have been inextricably linked ever since.... The English novel itself can be said to have grown out of the streets, stews and rookeries of outcast proletarian and criminal London, a symbiotic relationship and fascination which continues to this day.<sup>74</sup>

Taken together these various comments on the city within Western tradition bear a remarkable similarity to the city as it is represented in Belfast novels. Given that the predominant ideologies of Irish life are rigidly ruralist, it is no surprise that the city in its urban unknowability is an affront to them. The city is, indeed, a form of hell for ideologies which

promote a tribalistic knowing your place as the only way of knowing yourself. The city is itself so obviously beyond phenomenological perception as to raise questions about one's place in a totality now recognisable, if not graspable, as being beyond individual and tribal identity. As Fredric Jameson has argued the city can function as a simulacrum of the social totality in such a way as to enable the individual to see through the ideological:

the mental map of city space... can be extrapolated to that mental map of the social and global totality we all carry around in our heads... urban alienation is directly proportional to the mental unmapability of local cityscapes... the dialectic between the here and now of immediate perception and the imaginative or imaginary sense of the city as an absent totality... presents something like a spatial analogue of Althusser's great formulation of ideology itself... this positive conception of ideology as a necessary function in any form of social life has the great merit of stressing the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated.<sup>75</sup>

In recent years Belfast has emerged from silence and invisibility into what Robert Johnstone has called the 'self-absorption' involved in the citizens of Belfast's 'hunger to hear the story of themselves retold and re-interpreted'.<sup>76</sup> Belfast now stands before multiple representations of itself with the result described in Glenn Patterson's *Fat Lad*, at a moment when a group of schoolchildren are being filmed by a Swedish camera crew:

They were just being themselves as Drew described it, only more so.<sup>77</sup>

This sense of 'being themselves... only more so' is now part of the representation Belfast in fiction as it has moved from the invisibility of unrepresentability to what Barbara Bender refers to as polysemic process.<sup>78</sup>

What is beginning to emerge then is a sense of Belfast as an 'absent totality' which unlike ruralist ideologies 'stress[es] the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated'. Belfast is no longer just an anomaly in Ireland but is becoming a paradigmatic city. Robert MacLiam Wilson's *Ripley Bogle* and Glenn Patterson's *Black Night at Big Thunder Mountain*<sup>79</sup> are novels embedded in urban existence. The former is driven by the urge to experience to the full the *unheimlich* (in all meanings of the term) quality of the city at both the level of the body and of consciousness.<sup>80</sup> In the latter, EuroDisney is a type of the post-modern city — artificial, inauthentic and polysemic — and the character Raymond Black is seen as having been

fitted by his Belfast experience for being part of the global — or at least North American and European — workforce constructing it.

At this stage, given the burdens under which Belfast has laboured in both cultural and socio-political terms, it seems to be an achievement for it to have begun to make its appearance in fiction at all, and given the comparatively recent date at which it made its entry into fiction we can expect further developments. In the hands of writers such as Carson, Patterson, MacLiam Wilson and others we can expect future fictional Belfasts to, at the very least, more accurately represent the actual lives and experiences of its citizens, to take into account not just 'the tortured and disorderly' aspect of it, but also its 'beautiful patchwork of human creation'.<sup>81</sup>

At present only half of what Manuel Castells, summarising general attitudes to the urban, has to say about the city applies to Belfast in fiction:

[The various social determinants shaping a city] are played out, and twisted, by social actors that impose their interests and their values, to project the city of their dreams and to fight the space of their nightmares.'<sup>82</sup>

In the general Irish context we have witnessed the emergence of the city from invisibility into representation in the works of writers such as Joyce and O'Casey. In both cases Dublin begins as a form of hellish nightmare (the 'Nighttown' section of *Ulysses*, the tenements of the Dublin trilogy) but eventually takes on a paradisaical aspect in Joyce's New Bloomusalem<sup>83</sup> or the transformation scene in O'Casey's *Red Roses for Me*.<sup>84</sup> The gothic is the of category unspeakable horrors but running through this essay has been the sense of it as a category in which the unspeakable to be spoken in the kinds of new (and possibly unrecognised) languages referred to in *Resurrection Man* as 'The speech of the city. A dreamtime of voices'.<sup>85</sup> The Gothic in other words is also a utopian category in that it bespeaks transformation. The major transformation that we have witnessed is the emergence of Belfast from silence and invisibility to a gothic representation. It is a shorter step from hell to heaven, in representational terms, than from limbo to either. There are few representations of the other pole of city life — the city as utopia — in Irish fiction. 'The city of their dreams' has been largely absent.

Those forces for change which drive the city into representation and which the city embodies are, however, beginning to produce utopian views of the city. In *Eureka Street* (just published as I finish this essay) Robert MacLiam Wilson represents Belfast as something akin to heaven:



The city rises and falls like music, like breathing. The sleeping streets feel free.... Belfast is Rome with more hills; it is Atlantis raised from the sea. And from anywhere you stand, from anywhere you look, the streets glitter like jewels, like small strings of stars.... it is magical.<sup>86</sup>

Immediately after this utopian chapter, however, MacLiam Wilson reverts to an almost literal description of the hellishness of Belfast, but perhaps Belfast has now been represented often enough that an urban consciousness has begun to form and with it comes the recognition that the city is dialectical; if it is infernal that is because it also offers the heavenly. The real challenge, however, will be to represent Belfast, if it will allow, not as utopia, but, in Patrick Geddes's term, 'Eutopia',<sup>87</sup> neither heaven nor hell but simply the good place.

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#### NOTES

1. For general history see Jonathan Bardon, *Belfast, an illustrated history*, picture research by Henry V. Bell, (Repr. with corrections. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1982); J. C. Beckett & R. E. Glasscock, eds., *Belfast: the Origin and Growth of an Industrial City* (Belfast: BBC, 1967); A. C. Hepburn, *A Past Apart: Studies in the History of Catholic Belfast, 1850-1950* (Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation, 1996); Robert Johnstone, *Belfast: Portraits of a City* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1990); W. A. Maguire, *Belfast* (Keele: Ryburn Publishing/ Keele University Press, 1993). A good fictional account of the modern origins of Belfast can be found in Sam Hanna Bell, *A Man Flourishing* (1971, Belfast: Blackstaff, 1986).

2. John Hewitt, "'The Northern Athens" and After,' in J.C. Beckett et al., *Belfast: The Making of the City* (Belfast: Appletree Press, 1988), 71-82.

3. See S. Donovan, 'Song And Suffering — A Survey Of The Literature Of The Northern Irish Conflict, 1969-89,' *Antigonish Review* No.80 (1990): 145-161; J. McMinn, 'Contemporary Novels On The Troubles (General Patterns Of Presenting The Northern-Ireland Conflict In Novel Form),' *Etudes Irlandaises* No.5 (1980): 113-121; Bill Rolston, 'Mothers, Whores and Villains: Images of Women in Novels of the Northern Ireland Conflict,' *Race and Class* 31, 1 (1989): 41-57.

4. J. Bowyer Bell, 'The Troubles as Trash,' *Hibernia* Jan. 22, 1978, 22.

5. F. L. Green, *Odd Man Out* (1945; London: Cardinal, 1991)

6. Brian Moore, *Lies of Silence* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

7. Gerald Seymour, *Harry's Game* (1975; London: HarperCollins, 1993) 50.

8. John Morrow, *The Confessions of Proinsias O'Toole* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1977).

9. Eamonn Hughes, 'Introduction: Northern Ireland — border country,' *Culture and Politics in Northern Ireland, 1960-1990*, ed. Eamonn Hughes (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991) 1-12.

10. Tom Clancy, *Patriot Games* (London: William Collins, 1987).

11. Fintan O'Toole, 'Going West: the Country versus the City in Irish Writing,' *The Crane Bag* 9, 2 (1985): 111-116; Luke Gibbons, 'Coming out of Hibernation? The Myth of

Modernity in Irish Culture,' *Across the Frontiers: Ireland in the 1990s*, ed. Richard Kearney (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1988) 205-218; Luke Gibbons, 'Montage, Modernism and the City,' *The Irish Review* 10 (Spring 1991): 1-6; Augustine Martin, 'Novelist and City: The Technical Challenge,' *The Writer and the City*, ed. Maurice Harmon (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1984) 37-51; Liam O'Dowd, 'Town and Country in Irish Ideology,' *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 12, 2 (1987): 43-53.

12. Hewitt gives an account of the limited and now largely ignored writing of and about Belfast up to and including the early twentieth century in "'The Northern Athens' and After,' and remarks on the absence of fiction (pp. 79-82).

13. Ciaran Carson, *The Irish for 'No'* (Dublin: The Gallery Press, 1988); *Belfast Confetti* (Dublin: The Gallery Press, 1989); *First Language* (Dublin: The Gallery Press 1993). Carson's work is the culmination of a curious phenomenon in which Belfast, an 'unpoetic' city, has been more often dealt with by poets than by fiction writers; the work of Louis MacNeice, John Hewitt, Derek Mahon, Tom Paulin, Frank Ormsby, Robert Johnstone as well as Carson contains numerous representations of Belfast which I hope to deal with in a companion essay to this one.

14. Jonathan Bardon, *Belfast, an illustrated history*; W. A. Maguire, *Belfast*, Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1992); D. W. Harkness, *Northern Ireland since 1920* (Walkinstown, Dublin: Helicon, 1983); Sabine Wichert, *Northern Ireland since 1945* (London: Longman, 1991); Fionnuala O'Connor, *In Search of a State* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1993); Rex Carthcart, *The most contrary region, the BBC in Northern Ireland 1924-1984* (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1984); Martin McLoone, ed. & intro., *Culture, identity and broadcasting in Ireland, local issues, global perspectives, proceedings of the Cultural Traditions Group/Media Studies UUC Symposium, 21 February, 1991* (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, 1991).

15. Patrick O'Sullivan ed., *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, 6 vols. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991-); Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1985); Richard Kearney ed., *Migrations: The Irish At Home and Abroad* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1990); J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: Politics and Society*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 374-87; R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Allen Lane, 1988) 345-72.

16. See John Wilson Foster, *Forces and Themes in Ulster Fiction* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan: 1974).

17. See, for example, Michael McLaverty, *Call My Brother Back* (1939; Dublin: Poolbeg, 1979); and *Lost Fields* (1942; Dublin: Poolbeg, 1980).

18. Eamonn Hughes, "'Lancelot's Position: The Fiction of Irish Britain,' *Other Britain, Other British*, ed. Robert Lee, (London: Pluto, 1995) 142-60. The urban (and Catholic) character of Irish America is not uncontentious; see Donald Akenson, 'The Irish in North America: Catholic or Protestant?' *The Irish Review* no. 11 (Winter 1991/2): 17-22, and Lawrence J. McCaffrey, 'The Catholic and Urban Profile of Irish America,' *The Irish Review* no. 14 (Autumn 1993): 1-9.

19. Sam Hanna Bell, *December Bride* (1951; Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1974) 262-3.

20. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, The Definitive Text, corrected by Chester G Anderson, ed. Richard Ellmann, (1916; London: Jonathan Cape, 1968) 68.

21. Donatella Mazzoleni, 'The City and the Imaginary,' trans. John Koumantarakis, *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, eds Erica Carter, James Donald & Judith Squires, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993) 285-301, 297; and see Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans Harry Zohn, (London: Verso, 1983) 37-8.

22. Kristin Ross, 'Rimbaud and Spatial History,' *Space and Place: Theories of Identity and Location*, eds Erica Carter, James Donald & Judith Squires, (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993) 357-377.
23. Glenn Patterson, *Burning Your Own* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1988) 102, 115, 201, 203.
24. Mary Costello, *Titanic Town* (London: Mandarin, 1992) 26
25. See, for example Sam Hanna Bell, *A Man Flourishing*, 119; Michael McLaverty, *Call My Brother Back*, 86 — this overview is from an excursion boat though there is a later one from the hills; Brian Moore, *Lies of Silence*, 84 — from an aeroplane; Danny Morrison, *West Belfast* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1989) 12.
26. James McCabe, 'Some Belfast Writers and their City, 1955-1992' Unpub. M.A. Diss, Queen's University, Belfast, 1993. See John Morrow, *The Confessions of Proinsias O'Toole*, 58.
27. Maurice Leitch, *Silver's City* (1981; London: Abacus, 1983)
28. See 'Belfast', 'Valediction', 'Autumn Journal', and note MacNeice's emphasis on religious practices in the city. Louis MacNeice, *Collected Poems*, ed. E. R. Dodds, (London: Faber & Faber, 1966) 17, 52, 101; and Derek Mahon, *Selected Poems* (London & Loughcrew: Viking/Gallery, 1991) 28.
29. Ronan Bennett, *The Second Prison* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991).
30. See Tony Pinkney, 'Towards a Gothic Criticism,' *The State of Theory*, ed. Richard Bradford, (London: Routledge, 1993) 75-89.
31. Sam Hanna Bell, *A Man Flourishing*, 25, 218.
32. See Terence Brown, 'Show Me a Sign: Brian Moore and Religious Faith,' *Ireland's Literature: Selected Essays* (Mullingar: The Lilliput Press, 1988) 174-188 for an account of the limits of Moore's empiricism and realism.
33. The opening pages of Leitch's *Silver's City*, in which working class Protestant terrorists invade the Antrim Road area, seem to me to be a mischievous response to this Moore schema.
34. Brian Moore, *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* (1955; London: Panther, 1965) 126, 127.
35. Ken Worpole, 'Mother to Legend (or Going Underground): The London Novel,' *Peripheral Visions: Images of Nationhood in Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. Ian A. Bell, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995) 181-193, 187.
36. Maurice Leitch, *Silver's City*, 177.
37. Brian Moore, *The Emperor of Ice-cream* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1965) 200-1.
38. Robert MacLiam Wilson, *Ripley Bogle*, (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1989) 160, 161, 31. So strong is Bogle's animus to Belfast that he would prefer to live as a tramp in London than stay there.
39. Stewart Parker, *Northern Star* in his *Three Plays for Ireland* (Birmingham: Oberon Books, 1989) 75.
40. Patrick Geddes's term, quoted in Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), 556
41. Deirdre Madden, *Hidden Symptoms* (London: Faber, 1988) 14.
42. Ciaran Carson, 'Brick,' *Belfast Confetti*, 72. See also Robert Johnstone, *Belfast: Portraits of a City*, 9.
43. Glenn Patterson, *Burning Your Own*, 3 and see 15-18 for the fable of origins.
44. Glenn Patterson, *Fat Lad* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1992) 204.

45. Eoin McNamee, *Resurrection Man* (1994; London: Picador, 1995) 233. See Martin Dillon, *The Shankill Butchers, a Case Study of Mass Murder* (London: Hutchinson, 1989) for an account of the events on which the novel is based.

46. Maurice Leitch, *Silver's City* 181.

47. Fintan O'Toole, 'Island of Saints and Silicon: Literature and Social Change in Contemporary Ireland,' *Cultural Contexts and Literary Idioms in Contemporary Irish Literature*, ed. Michael Kenneally, (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988) 11-35, 23

48. John Wilson Foster, 'The Geography of Irish Fiction,' *Colonial Consequences: Essays in Irish Literature and Culture* (Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1991) 30-43, 37

49. Fintan O'Toole, 'Going West: the Country versus the City in Irish Writing,' 114, 115.

50. See Edna Longley, "'A Barbarous Nook" The Writer and Belfast,' *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1994) 86-108, 91; and Derek Mahon, 'Webs of Artifice: Derek Mahon on the Novels of Brian Moore,' *The New Review* 3, 32 (Nov. 1976): 43-44 on imprisonment as a recurrent metaphor in the work of Michael McLaverty and Brian Moore respectively.

51. Ronan Bennett, *The Second Prison*, 41.

52. See, for example, Raymond Williams on Joyce's *Ulysses, The Country and the City* (1973, London: The Hogarth Press, 1985) 242-5.

53. See Tony Pinkney, 'Towards a Gothic Criticism.'

54. Neil Jarman, 'Intersecting Belfast,' *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Bender, (Providence & Oxford: Berg, 1993) 107-138, 110, 107.

55. Damian Smyth, 'Being Unkind to Belfast,' *Fortnight* 325 (Feb. 1994): 43

56. Brian Moore, *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, 76.

57. Patricia Craig, 'Moore's Maladies: Belfast in the Mid-Twentieth Century,' *Irish University Review* 18, 1 (Spring 1988): 12-23, 15.

58. Hugh Shearman, *Northern Ireland* (Belfast: HMSO, 1968) 70.

59. Neil Jarman, 'Intersecting Belfast,' 134.

60. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, 98.

61. Kerby A. Miller, 'Emigration, Capitalism, and Ideology in Post-Famine Ireland,' *Migrations: The Irish At Home and Abroad*, ed. Richard Kearney, (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1990) 91-108, 93. Miller is writing specifically about Catholicism here but Irish Protestantism tends also to be conformist rather than individualistic.

62. Sam Hanna Bell, *A Man Flourishing*, 31.

63. Deirdre Madden, *Hidden Symptoms*, 37.

64. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 190.

65. Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 191.

66. Patrick Geddes, 'Civics: as Applied Sociology,' *The Ideal City*, ed. Helen E. Meller, (1905-6; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979) 79. Geddes has a closer relationship to Belfast than merely that of city theorist; along with Lewis Mumford, he was an influence on John Hewitt's thinking about cities and regions; see Murdo Macdonald, 'The Outlook Tower: Glossing Lewis Mumford in the Light of John Hewitt,' *The Irish Review* no. 16 (Autumn/Winter 1994): 53-73. It was Murdo Macdonald who introduced me to the writings of Geddes.

67. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, 115.

68. *Inferno*, III, 1-3, *The Vision of Dante Alighieri or Hell, Purgatory and Paradise*, trans. H. F. Cary, (London: J. M. Dent, 1908) 9.

69. John Milton, *Areopagitica and Other Prose Works*, intro. C.E. Vaughan, (London: J. M. Dent, 1927) 32.
70. *Paradise Lost*, I, 756-7; X, 424-5, *The Poems of John Milton*, ed. John Carey and Alistair Fowler, Longmans' Annotated English Poets, (London: Longman, 1968) 505, 948.
71. James Thomson, 'The City of Dreadful Night,' *Poems and Some Letters of James Thomson*, ed & intro. Anne Ridler, (London: Centaur Press, 1963) 177-205, 178.
72. Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, 113; and see Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics*, intro. Percy Johnson-Marshall, (1915; London: Ernest Benn, 1968) 86-8.
73. Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*, 43; and see Dana Brand, 'From the *flâneur* to the detective: interpreting the city of Poe,' *Popular Fiction: Technology, Ideology, Production, Reading*, ed. Tony Bennett, (London: Routledge, 1990) 220-237.
74. Ken Worpole, 'Mother to Legend (or Going Underground): The London Novel,' 181, 182.
75. Fredric Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping,' *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Greenberg, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 347-360, 353, citing Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960).
76. Robert Johnstone, *Belfast: Portraits of a City*, 1. Johnstone's own books on Belfast, both historical and poetical, are, of course, part of this self-absorption, as is this paper.
77. Glenn Patterson, *Fat Lad*, 216-7.
78. Barbara Bender 'Introduction: Landscape - Meaning and Action,' *Landscape: Politics and Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Bender, (Oxford & Providence: Berg, 1993) 1-17.
79. Glenn Patterson, *Black Night at Big Thunder Mountain* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1995).
80. See Sigmund Freud, 'The "Uncanny",' *Art and Literature*, The Pelican Freud Library, Vol. 14, ed. Albert Dickson, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 335-76.
81. Manuel Castells, 'European Cities, the Information Society, and the Global Economy,' *New Left Review* 204 (March/April 1994): 18-32, 18.
82. Manuel Castells, 'European Cities, the Information Society, and the Global Economy,' 18-19.
83. James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Jeri Johnson, (1922; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 457.
84. Sean O' Casey, *Red Roses for Me*, (1942) *Seven Plays by Sean O'Casey: A Students' Edition*, ed. Ronald Ayling, (London: Macmillan, 1985) 309-11.
85. Eoin McNamee, *Resurrection Man*, 61.
86. Robert MacLiam Wilson, *Eureka Street* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1996), 212, 213-14.
87. Patrick Geddes, 'Civics: as Applied Sociology,' 89.