Joyce, Benjamin, and the Modern Metropolis

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Abstract

The central thesis that I intend to address in this paper is that the rise of the modern, industrial city produced a plethora of particular, urban phenomena that have been recorded and interpreted in various ways, and in various literary and theoretical texts, and that these treatments can be arranged, compared, and contrasted to reveal a critical interpretation of the modern, urban condition. Although the growth of metropolises gave rise to a myriad of responses during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this study focuses on particular twentieth century responses to the city, namely, the writings of Walter Benjamin and James Joyce.

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Introduction

> *Suil, suil, suil arun go siocair agus, suil go cuin* (walk, walk, walk your way, walk in safety, walk with care).
>   — Joyce, *Ulysses*

        The purpose of this Major Paper is to study a particular set of relationships between spatial and social environments, as they exist within the modern metropolis. The modern, urban environment is a site of meaningful and critical thought, and these modes of thought have arisen out of various modernist literary and theoretical treatments of the modern metropolis. This Major Paper will survey High Modernist literature for recurring themes of the urban condition, will thematise writing as critical urban practice, and will relate the concepts of 'modernity' and 'the metropolis' to literature and theory.

        The rise of the modern, industrial city produced a plethora of special, urban phenomena that have been recorded and interpreted in various ways, and in various literary and theoretical texts, and these treatments can be arranged, compared, and contrasted to reveal a critical interpretation of the modern, urban condition, and to yield insight in to a particular relationship between a segment of human society and the modern metropolis. This relationship is particular, for the research has been limited to a specific time and place in intellectual history. The texts to be covered in this study were produced by white, male, bourgeois writers who were concerned primarily with producing modernist literary and theoretical treatments of European industrial cities during the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries.

        The experience of modernity is linked to the rise of industrial cities, and to the accompanying rise of different modes of experience. Modernity begins with a shift from a primarily agricultural society to a modern industrial one, in which economic, social, and geographical conditions have been altered at an accelerating rate. According to Marshall Berman's *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (1982), modernity, as it arose in reaction to this modernisation, can be divided into three categories — the first spans from the sixteenth century to the end of the eighteenth; the second spans the nineteenth century; and the third phase encompasses the twentieth century (Berman, 16-7). For Berman, the first phase of modernity is exemplified by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his novel, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), in which the protagonist, Saint-Preux, moves from the countryside to the city, and experiences the full impact of the modern metropolis:

I'm beginning to feel the drunkenness that this agitated, tumultuous life plunges you into. With such a multitude of objects passing before my eyes, I'm getting dizzy. Of all the things that strike me, there is none that holds my heart, yet all of them together disturb my feelings, so that I forget what I am and who I belong to (as quoted in Berman, 18).

Here we have the beginnings of a modern sensibility — "of agitation and turbulence, psychic dizziness and drunkenness" (Berman, 18). This mode of experience is carried over in to the nineteenth century, but becomes increasingly more complex and dynamic. The modes of modernisation in the nineteenth century develop with increasing impact on the experiences of moderns, to the extent that the reactions of many modernists to nineteenth century modernity are dialectical in nature. Several nineteenth century modernist thinkers criticize modernity, all the while praising the positive possibilities it furnishes. This sentiment is exemplified in Karl Marx's "Speech at the Anniversary of the *People's Paper*" (1856), in which he writes:

On the one hand, there have started into life industrial and scientific forces which no epoch of human history had ever suspected. On the other hand, there exist symptoms of decay, far surpassing the horrors of the latter times of the Roman Empire. In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary (as quoted in Berman, 20).

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This contradictory and dialectical view of modernity does not, according to Berman, extend into the twentieth century, which sees the "radical flattening of perspective and shrinkage of imaginative range" (Berman, 24). The insights of nineteenth century modernist writers and theorists stem from their ambivalent stances towards modernity, whereas twentieth century modernists tend to gravitate towards polarising and totalising treatments of modernity. Berman's evaluation of the various extremes of twentieth century modernism is based on several modernist schools of thought that have lost their ambiguous relationship towards modernity: "Modernity is either embraced with a blind and uncritical enthusiasm, or else condemned with a neo-Olympian remoteness and contempt; in either case, it is conceived as a closed monolith, incapable of being shaped or changed by modern men" (Berman, 24).

Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal

　　　　　— Eliot, "The Waste Land," (Abrams, 2194).

The antagonistic and affirmative extremes typical of early twentieth century responses to modernity are exemplified in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" (1922) and in Filippo Marinetti's "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909). The optimistic, affirmative, almost utopian, account of the modern metropolis by the Futurist Manifesto is a good example of a paean to modernity and the metropolis, and of modernism's break with traditional modes of expression. Marinetti's manifesto celebrates the modern industrial city, and in particular, the motor car — his symbol for the modern machinery that would alter humans' perceptions of themselves. For the Futurists, technology would reform culture, and abolish history. This is exemplified in Marinetti's desire to destroy Italy's primary cultural edifices and institutions, including its libraries, museums, and galleries, for he saw them as anchored to a fossilized tradition.

This view is echoed by the Futurist architects, Antonio Sant'Elia and Mario Chiattone, who were enthralled by the potential of the machine, and its transformative power over life. This affirmative view of modernity, the city, and technological and mechanical development led them to state in their *Futurist Manifesto of Architecture* (1914):

We are no longer the men of the cathedrals, the palaces, the assembly halls, but of big hotels, railway stations, immense roads, colossal ports, covered markets, brilliantly lit galleries, freeways, demolition and rebuilding schemes. We must invent and build the Futurist City, dynamic in all its parts…and the Futurist house must be like an enormous machine (as quoted in Hughes, 170).

On the opposite side of the modernist spectrum is Eliot's "The Waste Land."

The idea of modernism as an art of disintegration is exemplified in Eliot's view of modernity and the city. In "The Waste Land," Eliot's London has been robbed of vitality and vigour by sexual dysfunction and unhappiness, as represented in many instances, both modern and in the past. What these examples of sexual dysfunction amount to is not simply a depiction of twentieth century London, but a representation of all cities, past and present, including "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/Vienna London" (Abrams, 2194). There is evident in Eliot's poetry, a pessimism with respect to modernity, a recoil from the city. This pessimism with respect to modernity extends further into the twentieth century, as is seen in Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man* (1964), in which modernity is viewed as prevailed over by "A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom"(Marcuse, 1). However, this paper seeks to demonstrate that there existed in the twentieth century modernist writers and theorists who retained nineteenth century modernism's dynamic and dialectical relationship towards modernity and the metropolis, most notably James Joyce and Walter Benjamin.

This idea that the theoretical orientations of Joyce and Benjamin are steeped in nineteenth century modernism is also related to my contention that both Joyce and Benjamin were heavily influenced by the school of Romanticism, as it existed in the nineteenth century, and

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that they transferred the ideals of the Romantics from the nineteenth century to the twentieth, and from the natural landscape to the urban landscape, but altered them in the process.

The Romantics consistently look to the natural environment as their primary poetic subject, as is evidenced in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. However, this 'nature poetry' is in fact inherently meditative: "…the presented scene usually serves to raise an emotional problem or personal crisis whose development and resolution constitute the organizing principle of the poem" (Abrams, 8). For the Romantics, the natural landscape is a scene which corresponds to an inner or spiritual world. This interpretation of the natural landscape is "the understructure for a tendency to write a symbolist poetry in which a rose, a sunflower…or cloud is presented as an object instinct with a significance beyond itself"(Abrams, 9). Furthermore, they view the natural landscape as imbued with divine attributes, and with the ability to enable the poet or visionary to directly access God. This interpretation of the natural landscape is linked to the Romantics' glorification of the commonplace. For example, Wordsworth, in his poetry, often represents humble people and their rustic language. In fact, Wordsworth "went even further, and turned for the subjects of his serious poems not only to humble people but to the ignominious, the outcast, the delinquent – to 'convicts, female vagrants, gypsies…idiots boys, and mad mothers,' as well as the 'peasants, peddlers and village barbers'"(Abrams, 9-10).

This view of Romanticism is also explicated by Edmund Wilson in his *Axel's Castle* (1931), in which he argues for Romanticism as a reaction to the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which put forward a conception of the universe as mechanically fixed: "The Romantics had become acutely conscious of aspects of their experience which it was impossible to analyze or explain on the theory of a world run by clockwork. The universe was not a machine, after all, but something more mysterious and less rational" (Wilson, 6). As mentioned above, the Romantics created, in their poetry, an intimate relationship between the natural landscape and personal emotion, and Wilson expresses this when he writes: "The Romantic poet, then, with his turbid or opalescent language, his sympathies and his passions which cause him to seem to merge with his surroundings, is the prophet of a new insight into nature: he is describing things as they really are" (Wilson, 8).

However, the Romantics were soon confronted with new scientific advances during the mid-nineteenth century, although not in the fields of physics and mathematics, but in biology. Wilson writes: "It was the effect of the theory of Evolution to reduce man from the heroic stature to which the Romantics had tried to exalt him, to the semblance of a helpless animal" (Wilson, 8). This development in the sciences was accompanied by a shift in literature towards Naturalism, although Naturalism had already begun initially as a reaction to Romantic literature. As Wilson contends, there was another shift in literature from the scientific-classical pole to the poetic-romantic one (Wilson, 13), known as Symbolism. Wilson writes:

It was the tendency of symbolism — that second swing of the pendulum away from mechanistic view of nature and from a social conception of man — to make poetry even more a matter of the sensations and emotions of the individual than had been the case with Romanticism: Symbolism, indeed, sometimes had the result of making poetry so much a private concern of the poet's that it turned out to be incommunicable to the reader (24).

The incommunicability that Wilson is referring to, is like the Romanticist tendency to present a natural object "as instinct with a significance beyond itself" (Abrams, 9) and has to do with the breakdown of traditions in modernity that led Friederich Nietszche to suggest that 'God is dead.' Wilson explains how this breakdown of traditions in modernity was accompanied by a breakdown of systems of symbols in literature. Wilson writes how "symbols of the Symbolist school are usually chosen arbitrarily by the poet to stand for special ideas of his won," whereas, for example, "the symbolism of the Divine Comedy is conventional, logical and definite" (Wilson, 24).

I argue that Joyce and Benjamin have strong Romantic tendencies as Modernists, and that these tendencies can be found in their treatments of the metropolis and of metropolitan figures. Like the Romantics, both Joyce and Benjamin develop complex relationships between their projects and the landscape, although their focus has shifted from the natural to the urban landscape. Through their gaze, Joyce and Benjamin, like the Romantics, focus on the minutiae of

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the landscape, for they feel that they can yield insight into things beyond their immediate significance.

There is an effort to master the new experiences of the city within the framework of the old traditional experiences of nature. Hence the schemata of the virgin forest and the sea.

— Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (447)

Although the Romantics believed natural objects can yield insight into spiritual or divine worlds, they do, as this paper will demonstrate, use religious terminology, such as 'the epiphany' and the 'Messianic time of the dialectical image' to describe secular urban encounters that furnish meaning beyond their immediate significance. Harry Levin explains Joyce's concern for the minutiae and marginalia of the metropolis when he writes:

They may be the merest *minutiae*; within limited range of history they may seem ephemeral and slight; but in the wider orbit of nature they have their appointed function. The humblest object or crudest incident is a microcosm that may contain a key to the secrets of that wider universe (Levin, 73).

Both Joyce and Benjamin also exhibit Romantic tendencies through their focus on marginal characters in human society, as do the Romantics. Benjamin, in his writings, repeatedly deals with marginal urban figures, such as the *flâneur*, the beggar, the rag picker, and the prostitute. Joyce also focuses on marginal figures: *Ulysses* (1922) tells the story of Leopold Bloom, who is native to Ireland, and yet an outsider in his own community due to his Jewish heritage, and of Stephen Dedalus, who is an artist deracinated from his religion and from his country due to his self-imposed, internal exile. This emphasis on the city's marginal characters is doubly relevant when Benjamin equates the figure of the *flâneur* with the Romanticism found in certain Modernist treatments of the city, including those of Benjamin and Joyce. In *The Arcades Project* (1982), Benjamin records a fragment from Marcel Proust's writings to demonstrate the relationship between Romanticism and *flânerie*:

The principle of flânerie in Proust: "Then quite apart from all those literary preoccupations, and without definite attachment to anything, suddenly a roof, a gleam of sunlight reflected from a stone, the smell of a road would make me stop still, to enjoy the special pleasure that each of them gave me, and also because they appeared to be concealing, beneath what my eyes could see, something which they invited me to approach and take from them, but which, despite all my efforts, I never managed to discover." *Du Côté de chez Swann* (Paris, 1939), vol. 1, p.256. — This passage shows very clearly how the old Romantic sentiment for landscape dissolves and a new Romantic conception of landscape emerges – of landscape that seems, rather, to be a cityscape, if it is true that the city is the sacred ground of flânerie [M2a,1](*The Arcades* Project, 421).

This relationship between the activity of *flânerie* and the Romantic conception of the urban landscape is found in Charles Baudelaire's essay, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1859-60) when he comments on the figure of the *flâneur*: "The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd"(9).

Landscape—this is what the city becomes for the flâneur.

— Benjamin, "The Return of the Flâneur"
(*Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, 263).

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Although the figure of the *flâneur* has been largely associated with Paris in the nineteenth century, largely through the writings of Baudelaire and Benjamin, it is my contention that *flânerie* has been a recurring motif in literary and theoretical treatments of the modern metropolis, in general, and should not be limited to nineteenth-century Paris. As Keith Tester argues, "the *flâneur* has been allowed, or made, to take a number of walks away from the streets and arcades of nineteenth century Paris" (Tester, 1). Both the figure and his activity are featured prominently in various modernist attempts at understanding the experiences of modernity and of the metropolis.

It is important to state clearly that the *flâneur* is, historically, a predominantly male figure, and it is for this reason that his activity is closely associated with the texts covered in this study. White, male bourgeois writers and thinkers whose gazes on the metropolis mirrored that of the *flâneur* produced the texts covered. Both the *flâneur* and the writers dealt with in this study were preoccupied with commodity culture, public interactions, and the façades of the city's architecture, however, these preoccupations were primarily gendered during the times said texts were produced. Janet Wolff argues for the idea that, throughout the nineteenth, and into the early twentieth century, "*flânerie* was still very much a gendered activity" (Tester, 125). There were very few opportunities for the rise of the *flâneuse* during these periods, and therefore, the texts studied in this paper can be closely associated with the *flâneur*.

The texts arranged in this paper are chosen based on their focus on the experiences of modernity and of the metropolis, and as such, are suited to being associated with the theme of *flânerie*. The *flâneur* is at home in the metropolitan scenes of the modern city, for they constitute the landscape that gives meaning to his existence. The modern experience is lacking in fundamental ways, according to Baudelaire, if it is not mediated by the urban landscape. The *flâneur's* own sense of self is dependent on his immersion in public spectacles and space. However, as Tester stresses, the *flâneur* is "the man *of* the crowd as opposed to the man *in* the crowd" (Tester, 3). This is exemplified when Baudelaire writes:

For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world (Baudelaire, 9).

Although the writings of Benjamin and Baudelaire situate the figure of the *flâneur* and the activity of *flânerie* within nineteenth century Paris, there is much in their writings to indicate that "the *flâneur* is used as a figure to illuminate the issues of city life irrespective of time and place" (Tester, 16). Baudelaire was hesitant to make any distinction between 'Paris' and 'modernity,' for he viewed Paris as an expression of modernity. According to Tester, "for Baudelaire, modernity is the *form*; Paris is the *content*. The *flâneur* is the figure and the point of observation that straddles the two and pulls them together into unity" (Tester, 17).

This tendency is also found in Benjamin, for although he focuses primarily on Paris as the site of modernity and as the site of the activity of *flânerie*, he does not hesitate to substitute other cities such as London, Moscow, or Berlin for Paris in his writings. In addition, Benjamin highlights the role of the activity of *flânerie* in his Berlin writings: "I cannot think of the underworld of the Métro and the North-South line opening their hundreds of shafts all over the city, without recalling my endless *flâneries*" (*Reflections*, 9).

For Benjamin, *flânerie* is not only a central motif in his writings, it is central to his methodology. As David Frisby argues, Benjamin recognised the activity of *flânerie*, not only as the activity of observing and reading the city, but also as the activity of "*reading written texts* (In Benjamin's case both of the city and the nineteenth century – *as* texts and of texts *on* the city, even texts as urban labyrinths)"(Tester, 83). What this suggests, is that the activity of *flânerie* can be expanded from strolling and reading the city to include "the reading of texts on metropolitan modernity and the production of texts on that modernity"(Tester, 96). The *flâneur* can also be he who wanders aimlessly through the myriad of citywritings that deal with, and represent, the experience of modernity and the metropolis. I intend to extend this methodology to my own work, and to view it as an exercise in academic *flânerie*, in that I will wander through various citywritings

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in an attempt to understand the modern, metropolitan experience, and in an attempt to produce a text on modernity and the metropolis.

Chapter 1 — The Phenomenology of the City

As *flâneur*, I intend to stroll through various modernist texts in an attempt to study, in general, the modern metropolis as a site of the myths of modernity, and in particular, the metropolis as a site for the creation of false history. As a result, this chapter will focus on various urban phenomena that comprise modern, urban phantasmagoria, and that are depicted and discussed in modernist literary and theoretical treatments of the city. These phenomena include the modern 'crowd,' the 'shock experience,' the labyrinthine qualities of the city, and the notions of 'city-as-text' and 'text-as-city.' These phenomena can be seen as various threads that can be woven to draw together various modernist writers and theorists, ranging from William Wordsworth to Walter Benjamin.

i.   The 'Crowd' and the 'Shock Experience'

> The literature concerned with the disquieting and threatening aspects of urban life was destined for a great future.
> — Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire"
> (*Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, 21).

Book VII of William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* (1798), entitled "Residence in London," is an account of the three and a half months Wordsworth spent in London in 1791, near the end of his twenty-first year, and is one of the first and most intense literary examples of a stranger's first encounter with an urban landscape. Upon entry into London, Wordsworth discovers that the city is not exactly as he had imagined it, for it "fell short, far short, /Of that which I in simplicity believed/And thought of London" (VII, 84-86)(Wordsworth, 539). Almost immediately, Wordsworth is struck by the high concentration of people in London, their close living quarters, and a missing sense of personal identity and purpose, as is exemplified when he states:

> Above all, one thought
> Baffled my understanding, how men lived
> Even next-door neighbours, as we say, yet still
> Strangers, and knowing not each other's name. (VII, 115-8)

London is a place, for Wordsworth, where he feels disconnected and disoriented — a place where "'The face of every one/That passes me by is a mystery'" (VII, 628-9). It is a place detrimental to individuality:

> Oh, blank confusion! True epitome
> Of what the mighty city is herself,
> To thousands upon thousands of her sons,
> Living amid the same perpetual whirl
> Of trivial objects, melted and reduced
> To one identity, by differences
> That have no law, no meaning, and no end-
> Oppression under which even highest minds
> Must labour, whence the strongest are not free. (VII, 722-730)

Wordsworth is surprised by the fast-paced, crowded scene of London. The city is a 'thickening hubbub,' a 'labyrinth,' a 'tide,' and a 'roar,' where when upon leaving, one feels "Escaped as from an enemy" (VII, 169). As Wordsworth winds through the streets of London, his senses are accosted by a raree-show, dancing dogs, a dromedary with an antic pair of monkeys on his back, and a minstrel bands of savoyards. In addition, he is disturbed by the "Parliament of Monsters" (VII, 717) that is St. Bartholomew's Fair. It is there that Wordsworth encounters the "danger of the

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crowd" (VII, 684), and the negative effect that the city has on creativity, for he witnesses "A work completed to our hands, that lays, /If any spectacle on earth can do/The whole creative powers of man asleep! —" (VII, 679-81). Wordsworth's reactions to what he sees in the "private courts,/gloomy as coffins, and unsightly lanes" (VII, 180-1), anticipates Walter Benjamin's theory that "Fear, revulsion, and horror were the emotions which the big-city crowd aroused in those who first observed it"(*Illuminations*,174). What Wordsworth witnesses on the teeming streets of London is less important than the attempts he makes to filter what he sees. The scenes of London frustrate Wordsworth, and it is this innocence that sheds light on the urban experience and its literary representation.

Wordsworth's perception of, and literary depiction of, London during the late eighteenth-century, helped to shape future perceptions and depictions of cities by artists. Shades of Wordsworth's London can be seen in the London of Charles Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5). The sights and sounds of modern urban life, the disorienting effects said urban manifestations have on the city-dweller, and the encounters with otherness, are similarly depicted in Dickens' dismal pictures of London in *Our Mutual Friend*, including the one of Holloway district — a region north of London and home to R.Wilfer, which he describes as "a tract of suburban Sahara, where tiles and bricks were burnt, bones were boiled, carpets were beat, rubbish was shot, dogs were fought, and dust was heaped by contractors"(Dickens, 34).

During springtime, the city is described as a sawpit, in which, "The grating wind sawed rather than blew; and as it sawed, the sawdust whirled about the sawpit. Every street was a sawpit, and there were no topsawyers; every passenger was an undersawyer, with the sawdust blinding him and choking him"(Dickens, 149). London is described as "Such a shrill black city, combining the qualities of a smoky house and scolding wife; such a gritty city; such a hopeless city, with no rent in the leaden canopy of its sky; such beleaguered city"(Dickens, 149). Dickens' depiction of London, and the otherness inherent in the modern, urban landscape, is solidified in the following passage:

It was a foggy day in London, and the fog was heavy and dark. Animate London, with smarting eyes and irritated lungs, was blinking wheezing, and choking; inanimate London was a sooty spectre, divided in purpose between being visible and invisible, and so being wholly neither. Gaslights flared in the shops with a haggard and unblest air, as knowing themselves to be night-creatures that had no business abroad under the sun; while the sun itself, when it was for a few moments dimly indicated through circling eddies of fog, shows as if it had gone out, and were collapsing flat and cold. Even in the surrounding country it was a foggy day, but there the fog was grey, whereas in London it was, at about the boundary line, dark yellow, and a little within it brown, and then browner, and then browner, until at the heart of the City…- it was rusty black"(Dickens, 437).

In being both animate and inanimate, there is a sense of otherness in Dickens' London that suggests it produces many shocks to its inhabitants, much like the ones in Wordsworth's London. The continuity seen between literary depictions of cities not only shows the similarity in perceptions of urban life, but also more importantly, emphasises the literariness of the depicted cities.[1] Dickens' depictions of London, although undoubtedly unique, were heavily influenced by Wordsworth's *A Prelude*.

While in London, Wordsworth is so taken back by the urban crowd that he has little ability for, or interest in, observing individual passers-by:

> Folly, vice,
> Extravagance in gesture, mien, and dress,
> And all the strife of singularity,
> Lies to the ear, and lies to every sense-

---

[11] This point is buttressed by the fact that T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* was originally titled, "He Do the Police in Different Voices" — a quotation from Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*. It implies that Eliot's London is an extension of the Dickensian metropolis of dirty rivers and rubbish heaps central to *Our Mutual Friend*. (Sharpe, *Unreal Cities*, 198.)

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> Of these, and of the living shapes they wear,
> There is no end. Such candidates for regard,
> Although well pleased to be where they were found,
> I did not hunt after, nor greatly prize,
> Nor made unto myself a secret boast
> Of Reading them with quick and curious eye;
> But, as a common produce, things that are
> To-day, to-morrow will be, took of them
> Such willing note, as, on some errand bound
> That asks not speed, a traveller might bestow
> On sea-shells that bestrew the sandy beach,
> Or daisies swarming through the fields of June. (VII, 578-93)

Wordsworth's reactions to the shocking sights and sounds of the city highlight his rural values, his lack of defences, and that his patterns of experience have been disrupted. He is unable to successfully assimilate his urban experiences into his previous, rural conceptual framework. In fact, the only times when he can safely absorb the city are when it is dormant:

> -the peace
> That comes with night; the deep solemnity
> Of nature's intermediate hours of rest,
> When the great tide of human life stands still. (VII, 654-7)

The shock that greets Wordsworth during his residence in London is depicted in similar fashion in the third chapter of Friederich Engels' *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (1845), "The Great Towns," which begins with Engels' account of his first impressions of London from the autumn of 1842, and constitutes a strong literary depiction of the impact the modern metropolis and the 'crowd' had on individuals. As Engels writes:

And still they crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their one agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance"(Engels. 68).

This experience of London echoes Wordsworth's, and in fact does not seem to have advanced or improved despite the difference of over fifty years.

> Besides the uneasy psychological environment which marked the break-up of the old social order and which he could only sense in passing, the smoke-laden atmosphere, the silent hurrying in the streets, bent on making for others, the endless rows of houses all the same that harboured lives he could not understand, depressed his busy-ant spirit.
> — Stanislaus Joyce on his brother James' first encounter with London,
> *My Brother's Keeper* (196).

Wordsworth's reluctance to be fascinated by the individuals in the crowd, leads him to begin to filter the shocks of the city to the point that the shapes that pass before his eyes become a "second-sight procession" (VII, 633). However, the 'second-sight procession' comes to a halt when Wordsworth stumbles across the blind beggar, whom he cannot ignore or dismiss, and his mind "turned round/As with the might of waters" (VII, 644-5). Wordsworth's initial response to the sensory overload of the city, and his subsequent response to the sight of the blind beggar, are applicable to Walter Benjamin's thoughts on the shocks produced by the urban landscape, and the modes of experience used to absorb said shocks.

For Benjamin, a primary element of this relationship is the notion of 'shock,' and his treatment of this urban phenomenon is located primarily in his writings on Charles Baudelaire. In

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his 1939 essay "Some Motifs in Baudelaire," Benjamin examines the lyric poetry of Baudelaire and his treatment of the urban experience. Benjamin feels that Baudelaire stands as the quintessential urban and modernist poet, for he wrote at a time of great transformation that saw the deterioration of traditional life by the "inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism" (*Illuminations*, 157). Benjamin places Baudelaire's lyric poetry at the watershed of this historical transformation, for he sees embodied in it, the concept of 'shock.'

Baudelaire understood the urban masses and the shocks they produced, and he incorporated the m in his poetry. Benjamin is concerned with the decline, in modern society, of traditional experiences, and highlights the emergence of 'shocks' in modern, urban life as indicators of said decline of traditional experiences. As Richard Wolin points out, Benjamin recognises that "whereas experience was traditionally governed by the principles of continuity and repetition, making it, at least in theory, something that was always familiar and predictable, the shocks of city life disrupt these familiar patterns of experience" (Wolin, 227). For Benjamin, the emergence of shocks in modern, urban life is inextricably linked to the rise of the crowd in the urban landscape. In addition, moving through the traffic of a big city "involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in a rapid succession, like the energy from a battery" (*Illuminations*, 175).

Benjamin identifies the 'crowd' as central to the experience of the modern metropolis and writes: "the crowd — no subject was more entitled to the attention of nineteenth-century writers"(*Illuminations*, 166). He refers to Victor Hugo's poem, "La Pente de la reverie," as a literary representation of the unknown character of the 'crowd,' and the stranger's reaction to it:

Foule sans nom! Des voix, des yeux, des pas.
Ceux qu'on n'a jamais vu, ceux qu'on ne connait pas.
Tous les vivants! - cités bourdonnantes aux oreilles
Plus qu'un bois d'Amerique ou une ryche d'abeilles
(as quoted in *Charles Baudelaire*, 62).

It was this type of revulsion towards the crowd that led to the emergence of *physiologues* in the early 1840s. According to Benjamin, in 1841, there were seventy-six new physiologies that "investigated types that might be encountered by a person taking a look at the marketplace" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 35). These physiologies were soon replaced by physiologies of the city: "*Paris la nuit*, *Paris a table*, *Paris dans l'eau*, *Paris a cheval*, *Paris pittoresque*, *Paris marie*" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 36). However, these experiences with the crowd were not limited to transitory encounters on the street. For Benjamin, "people had to adapt themselves to a new and rather strange situation, one that is peculiar to big cities" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 37). Benjamin cites Georg Simmel, who explains this 'strange situation':

Someone who sees without hearing is much more uneasy than someone who hears without seeing. In this there is something characteristic of the sociology of the big city. Interpersonal relationships in big cities are distinguished by a marked preponderance of the activity of the eye over the activity of the ear (as quoted in, Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire*,38).

For Simmel, the main reason for the preponderance of the activity of the eye over the ear is the public means of transportation. Before the development of public transportation in the nineteenth century, people were never in the position of having to look at one another for extended periods of time without speaking to each other. Benjamin, along with Simmel, recognizes the unpleasantness of this situation, and offers a quotation from Bulwer-Lytton's *Eugene Aram* as an example of the fear of the crowd. Bulwer-Lytton describes the metropolis by referencing Goethe's remark that "every person, the best as well as the most wretched, carries around a secret which would make him hateful to all others if it became known" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 38). For Benjamin, the physiologies were designed to put to rest these fears, but would ultimately be unsuccessful. Benjamin highlights the fact that these benign physiologies would never alleviate these fears, for "people knew one another as debtors and creditors, salesmen and customers, employers and employees, and above all as competitors" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 39).

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Soon after, the physiognomies were replaced by a literature that focused on the threatening aspects of the urban experience. It differed from the physiognomies in that it did not focus on the definition of types, but rather, "it investigated the functions which are peculiar to the masses in a big city" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 40). This literature was exemplified in the detective story. In it, the passers-by on the street are not innocuous, non-threatening strangers, but have the potential of being murderers or robbers. Benjamin cites Poe's *The Man of the Crowd* as "something like the X-ray picture of a detective story" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 48). Benjamin writes: In it, the drapery represented by crime has disappeared. The mere armature has remained: the pursuer, the crowd, and an unknown man who arranges his walk through London in such a way that he always remains in the middle of the crowd. This unknown man is the *flaneur* (*Charles Baudelaire*, 48). For Benjamin, "*He is the man of the crowd*" (*Charles Baudelaire*, 48). In essence, Benjamin is emphasizing the fact that these literatures treated the city as their main subject. This changed when Baudelaire focused on the city, not as content, but as the lens through which he wrote his lyric poetry.

Benjamin uses Baudelaire to comment on the 'shocks' present in modern, urban life, because he recognises "the close connection in Baudelaire between the figure of shock and contact with the metropolitan masses" (*Illuminations*, 165). Although the metropolitan masses are not the main subject of Baudelaire's poetry, Benjamin recognises that "this crowd, of whose existence Baudelaire is always aware,…is imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure" (*Illuminations*, 165).

Benjamin links the emergence of the shock experience, in the nineteenth century, with the aforementioned deterioration of traditional forms of experience. Benjamin buttresses this claim by citing Freud's thesis, from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: "…becoming conscious and leaving behind a memory trace are processes incompatible with each other within one and the same system" (Freud, 28). Benjamin argues, in quoting Freud, that memory fragments "are often most enduring when the incident which left them behind was one that never entered consciousness" (Freud, 27). This leads Freud, according to Benjamin, to suggest the importance of the function of consciousness in protecting against stimuli rather than receiving stimuli. Wolin argues that in the metropolitan experience consciousness is forced to erect a protective barrier against shocks and increased stimuli, and that "the majority of memory traces which previously registered as experience in a direct and natural way now fail to do so"(Wolin, 227). Benjamin cites Freud to re-enforce his point that modern, urban life produces shocks that have a detrimental effect on the nature of experience.

In essence, traditional experiences in modern life have been reduced due to their being filtered by consciousness. When the shocks produced by the city become too great, the individual consciousness is forced to act as a screen cushioning and parrying the shocks: "the more efficiently it does so, the less do these impressions enter experience (*Erfahrung*), tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one's life (*Erlebnis*)" (*Illuminations*, 163). For Benjamin, *Erfahrung* is the more meaningful mode of experience, and the one more suited to artistic creation. When *Erlebnis* is the predominant mode of experience, with its function of "assigning to an incident a precise point in time in consciousness," at the subsequent "cost of the integrity of its contents"(*Illuminations*, 163), any knowledge gained is transitory and ephemeral.

Benjamin recognises Freud's theory, with respect to consciousness' ability to filter shocks, in the poetry of Baudelaire. For Benjamin, "Baudelaire has portrayed this condition in a harsh image" (*Illuminations*, 163). In addition, remarks Benjamin, Baudelaire "made it his business to parry the shocks, no matter where they might come from with his spiritual and physical self" (*Illuminations*, 163). In other words, the phenomenon of shocks is not only apparent in Baudelaire's poetry in the form of content, but also in his creative process, thus explaining Benjamin's argument that Baudelaire "speaks of a duel in which the artist, just before being beaten, screams in fright. This duel is the creative process" (*Illuminations*, 163).

Benjamin refers to Baudelaire's dedication to his collection of prose poems *Spleen de Paris*, which he wrote to the editor-in-chief of *La Presse*, Arsène Houssaye:

Who among us has not dreamt, in his ambitious days, of the miracle of a poetic prose? It would have to be musical without rhythm and rhyme, supple and resistant enough to adapt itself to the lyrical stirrings of the soul, the wave motions of dreaming, the shocks of

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consciousness. This ideal, which can turn into an *idée fixe*, will grip especially those who are at home in the giant cities and the web of their numberless interconnecting relationships (as quoted in, *Illuminations*, 163).

Benjamin uses this quotation to show the connection in Baudelaire between the figure of shock and its encounter with the crowd of big cities, and to show that the crowd is not representative of class or collective, but simply "the people in the street" (*Illuminations*, 165). Benjamin is intrigued by Baudelaire's poetry, because, according to Wolin, he believes "it represents the first concerted attempt to destroy from within the affirmative values of bourgeois aestheticism" (Wolin, 227), and in addition, represents the effort to chart 'the everyday' in his poetry. For Benjamin, 'shock' serves as a metaphor for the transformation from traditional to modern, urban society, and the resulting deterioration of traditional patterns of experience into a regimented, homogenous, and incoherent experience of modern life.

The *Tableaux Parisiens* section of the 1861 edition of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* is a strong example of Baudelaire's perception of his urban landscape, Paris, and his determination to experience the city in a state of *Erfahrung*, and avoid the 'second-sight procession' that Wordsworth experienced in London. It is in the poems of the *Tableaux Parisiens* where Baudelaire writes of his encounters with strangers and otherness, and the shock experience that accompanies these encounters. For Benjamin, Baudelaire placed the shock experience "at the very center of his artistic work" (*Illuminations*, 163), and linked it inextricably to contact with the 'crowd,' which is an inherent part of the modern metropolis. In addition, Benjamin argues that for Baudelaire, the metropolitan masses "do not stand for classes or any sort of collective; rather, they are nothing but the amorphous crowd of passers-by, the people in the street" (*Illuminations*, 165).

Although the metropolitan crowd is never overtly mentioned in Baudelaire's poetry, it is "imprinted on his creativity as a hidden figure" (*Illuminations*, 165). According to Benjamin, because the masses had become so much a part of Baudelaire, it is rare to find a description of them in his poetry. Baudelaire does not describe the city or its inhabitants like Wordsworth or Dickens do, but "forgoing such descriptions enables him to invoke the ones in the form of the other" (*Illuminations*, 168). For example, in the sonnet "À une passante" the urban mass is not described, and yet it is an essential component of the poem.

La rue assourdissante autour de moi hurlait.
Longue, mince, en grand deuil, douleur majesteuse,
Une femme passa, d'une main fastueuse
Soulevant, balançcait le feston et l'ourlet;

Agile et noble, avec sa jambe de statue.
Moi, je buvais, crispé comme un extravagant,
Dans son oeil, ciel livide ou germe l'ouragan,
La douceur qui fascine et le plaisir qui tue.

Un éclair…puis la nuit - Fugitive beauté
Dont le regard m'a fait soudainement renaitre,
Ne te verrai-je plus que dan l'éternité?

Ailleurs, bien loin d'ici! Trop tard! *Jamais* peut-etre!
Car j'ignore ou tu fuis, tu ne sais ou je vais,
toi que j'eusse aimée, o toi qui le savais!
(Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, 168).

According to Benjamin, the poem describes an unknown woman in a widow's veil, who emerges from the crowd into Baudelaire's field of vision. The crowd is not in opposition to the poet, but rather "brings to the city dweller the figure that fascinates" (*Illuminations*, 168). The veiled woman is a figure of shock, but it is not an antagonistic element to the point that Baudelaire would describe it as a 'second-sight procession,' as Wordsworth might have.

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However, what makes Baudelaire's body twitch "is not the excitement of every fibre of a man in whom an image has taken possession of every fibre of his being; it partakes more of the shock in which an imperious desire suddenly overcomes a lonely man." (*Charles Baudelaire*, 46). Baudelaire willingly allows himself to be assaulted by the figures of shock in the crowd to the point that he cannot separate himself from the otherness he encounters. Baudelaire, like Wordsworth, is shocked by what he encounters in the city, but he differs from Wordsworth, who longs for the tranquillity that nighttime brings to the city, in that he is willing to take in all the sights and sounds, no matter how unpleasant.

These shock experiences are also present in "Les Sept Vieillards." As Baudelaire struggles to navigate through a section of apartment houses, he is taken back by the spectacle of a "cortège infernal." Seven old men pass in front of him, each the same as the preceding one. There is a sense of unreality that accompanies this experience, which is preceded by a dream-like quality in the first stanza:

Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de reves,
Ou le spectre en plien jour raccroche le passant!
Les mystères partout coulent commes des sèves
Dans les canaux étroits du colosse puissant
(Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, 231).

Baudelaire's treatment of the masses, and the shock-effect they can have on the pedestrian is also exemplified in another poem from *Les Tableaux Parisiens*, "Le Crépuscule du Soir." In it, Baudelaire describes the city at night, after the day-labourers have gone to bed, satisfied with another day's hard work: "Nous avons travaillé!"(Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, 246). He describes the rise of the underworld. Demons rise like businessmen, and rattle the shutters and roofs, and prostitution issues out into the streets like a threatened anthill:

Cependant dea démons malsains dans l'atmosphère
S'éveillent lourdement, commes des gens d'affaire,
Et cognent en volant les volets et l'auvent
À travers les lueurs que tourmente le vent
La Positution s'allume dans les rues;
Comme une fourmillière elle ouvre ses issues;
(Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, 246).

He then goes on to describe the orchestral sounds of kitchens and dance-halls, of gambling tables, and of thieves at work:

Les théatres glapir, les orchestres ronfler;
Les tables d'hote, dont le jeu fait les délices,
S'emplissent de catins et d'esrocs, leurs complices,
Et les voleurs, qui n'ont ni treve ni merci,
Vont bientot commencer leur travail, eux aussi,
Et forcer doucement les portes et les caisses
Pour vivre quelques jours et vetir leurs maitrisses
(Baudelaire, *Complete Poems*, 246).

And then, as if out of fright, and having tired of parrying the shocks of the urban masses, Baudelaire withdraws from the scene:

Recueille-toi, mon ame, en ce grave moment,
Et ferme ton oreille a ce rugissement
(Baudealire, *Complete* Poems, 246).

This exemplifies Baudelaire's ambiguous feelings, which Benjamin shares, towards the city. Both recognise the city as intoxicating and as a "refuge for the hero among the masses" (*Charles*

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Baudelaire, 66), while simultaneously remaining aware of its potential to alienate, destroy individuality, and generate fleeting, ephemeral forms of experience.

The experience of shock is also depicted in Rainer Maria Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910). In Rilke's Paris, Brigge, a Danish poet, is a newcomer to the modern metropolis and experiences the crowd in similar fashion to Engels and Wordsworth. As he steps out of his apartment, the streets rush toward him "in a viscous flood of humanity" (Rilke, 48). Brigge has unwittingly immersed himself in the Parisian crowd during carnival-time, and quickly becomes overwhelmed by the sights and sounds of the city: "Their faces were full of the light that came from the carnival booths, and laughter oozed from their mouths like pus from an open wound. The more impatiently I tried to push my way forward, the more they laughed and crowded together" (Rilke, 48).

The experience is an altogether unpleasant one for Brigge. He drags a woman along with him, after he gets caught in her shawl, which results in the people in the crowd laughing at him. At that point, he would like to laugh as well, but his eyes sting from the confetti that has been thrown in his face. Eventually, Brigge is able to put his finger on the pulse of the crowd, and feel the rhythm of the city: "On the street corners, people were wedged in, flattened together, with no way to move forward, just a gentle back-and-forth motion, as if they were copulating" (Rilke, 48).

However, Brigge's sense of oneness with the crowd is false, for he realises shortly after that he is completely out of step with the people surrounding him, and is in fact static, while everything goes on around him: "But though they stood there and I ran like a madman along the edge of the pavement where there were gaps in the crowd, it was actually they who were moving, while I stood still" (Rilke, 48-9). Brigge, at this point, is feeling the full effects of alienation and disorientation in the modern metropolis, to the extent that he begins to question his own perceptions: "Perhaps everything was stationary, and it was just a dizziness in me and in them that seemed to make everything whirl" (Rilke, 49).

ii.   'City-as-Labyrinth'

> The city is the realization of that ancient dream of humanity, the labyrinth. It is this reality to which the flâneur, without knowing it, devotes himself.
>
> — Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (429).

This sense of shock, alienation, and dislocation in the metropolis is also linked to the labyrinthine quality of the city. The literary depiction of the idea of city-as-labyrinth can be found in the writings of Engels, Rilke, and Benjamin. While wandering the slums of Manchester, Engels remarks:

Whoever turns to the left here from the main street, Long Millgate, is lost; he wanders from one court to another, turns countless corners, passes nothing but narrow, filthy nooks and alleys, until after a few minutes he has lost all clue, and knows not whither to turn (Engels, 90).

In addition, Engels writes:

This whole collection of cattle-sheds for human beings was surrounded on two sides by houses and a factory, and on the third by the river, and besides the narrow stair up the bank, a narrow doorway alone led out into another almost equally ill-built, ill-kept labyrinth of dwellings (Engels, 90).

The point is almost belaboured by Engels' frequent treatment of it, but the repetition only serves to re-enforce the labyrinthine quality of the city:

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The lanes run now in this direction, now in that, while every two minutes the wanderer gets into a blind alley, or, on turning a corner, finds himself back where he started from; certainly no one who has not lived a considerable time in this labyrinth can find his way through it (Engels, 91).

In Rilke's *Notebooks*, Brigge, in addition to having to deal with the shock of the metropolitan crowd, also experiences the labyrinthine qualities of Paris. Brigge is a stranger to the city and does not know his way around, and this is only compounded by the fact that the streets of Paris are maze-like and disorienting. As Rilke writes:

I can't remember how I got out through the many courtyards. It was evening, and I lost my way in the unknown neighbourhood, and walked up boulevards with endless walls in one direction, and when there was no end to them, walked back in the opposite direction until I reached some square or other. Then I began to walk down one street, and other streets came that I had never seen before, and still others…I didn't know what city I was in, or whether I had a room somewhere, or what I had to do so that I could stop walking (Rilke, 62).

Walter Benjamin's cityscapes, including his essays "Naples" (1925), "Moscow" (1927), and "A Berlin Chronicle" (1970), are examples of modernist attempts to recreate, in literary form, this urban experience. Benjamin, through various modes of expression, attempts to represent and mimic the labyrinthine or maze-like qualities of the modern metropolis. He highlights the ephemeral or fleeting aspects of the urban experience, by focusing on the way in which people interact with, and navigate the city's architecture and streets.

The modern metropolis is a recurring theme in Walter Benjamin's *oeuvre*, and he deals with this theme in several sketches of the cities he visited in the 1920s. These cityscapes, which Benjamin referred to as *Denkbilder*, or 'thought-images,' include his essays on Naples, Moscow, and Berlin. Through these *Denkbilder*, Benjamin attempts to create a mode of expression that embodies the metropolitan experience. For Benjamin, the *Denkbilder* serve as literary snapshots that capture the ephemeral or transitory character of the urban experience. Benjamin seeks to capture or freeze the urban experience in his 'thought-images' through short descriptions of the mundane elements of urban life: the city's architecture and streets, and the people who walk the streets and interact with the architecture.

At the centre of Benjamin's attempt to represent metropolitan life through a literary form that mimics the tempo of the urban complex, is the concept of 'porosity.' The term was coined by Asja Lacis, the Bolshevik actress and theatre director from Riga, whom Benjamin met while visiting a party of friends on the island of Capri in April of 1924, and who would come to have lasting influence on Benjamin's life and work. For Benjamin, porosity is "the inexhaustible law of the life of this city, reappearing everywhere"(*Reflections*, 168), and it describes several motifs of the urban experience, including the dislocation and disorientation one feels within the urban environment. In referring to the porosity of Naples, Benjamin is highlighting the absence of clear and distinct spatial arrangement and demarcation.

In describing the city of Naples, Benjamin states: "For anyone who is blind to forms sees little here" (*Reflections*, 165) It is "anarchical, embroiled, villagelike in the center, into which large networks of streets were hacked only forty years ago"(*Reflections*, 165) Naples is a "craggy" city whose architecture is as porous as the rock it is built on, and where "building and action interpenetrate in the courtyards, arcades, and stairways"(*Reflections*, 165-6). Benjamin's cityscape shows the lack of spatial divisions, the interpenetration and merging of buildings and spaces, and underlines the organic and labyrinthine qualities of Naples. It is easy to lose oneself in the porosity of Naples, for it is not easy to orient oneself: "No one orients himself by house numbers. Shops, wells, and churches are the references points - and not always simple ones"(*Reflections*, 166). Naples' labyrinthine quality frustrates anyone unfamiliar with the city: "The traveling citizen who gropes his way as far as Rome from one work of art to the next, as along a stockade, loses his nerve in Naples" (*Reflections*, 164).

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The notion of the labyrinthine quality of the modern metropolis is echoed in Benjamin's Moscow *Denkbild*, when he states: "The jungle of houses is so impenetrable that only brilliance strikes the eye"(*Reflections*, 99). For Benjamin, the city turns into a labyrinth for the newcomer: Streets that he had located far apart are yoked together by a corner like a pair of horses in a coachman's fist. The whole exciting sequence of topographical dummies that deceives him could only be shown by a film: the city is on its guard against him, masks itself, flees, intrigues, lures him to wander its circles to the point of exhaustion (*Reflections*, 99).

In his "A Berlin Chroncile," Benjamin describes the labyrinthine quality of Berlin: "At the end of Bendlerstrasse, however, began the labyrinth, not without its Ariadne"(*Reflections*, 3). The reference to Ariadne, who helped Theseus escape from the labyrinth on the island of Crete, points to Benjamin's idea that the modern city is a locus of myth and phantasmagoria, and that the labyrinthine quality of the metropolis is one facet of modern, metropolitan myth.

iii. 'City-as-Text' & 'Text-as-City'

> Flânerie is a kind of reading of the street, in which human faces, shop fronts, shop windows, café terraces, street cars, automobiles and trees become a wealth of equally valid letters of the alphabet that together result in words, sentences and pages of an ever-new book. In order to engage in flânerie, one must not have anything too definite in mind.
>
> — Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin.*

The way in which Benjamin deals with the notion of city-as-labyrinth in his writings is also connected to the notions of 'text-as-city' and 'city-as-text.' For many Modernist writers and theorists, the metropolis is a text that needs to be read, and the signs that comprise this text are to be deciphered and interpreted. This recognition of the city-as-text is central to Modernist discourse on the city, and has its roots in texts as early as Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. In the section, "Residence in London," Wordsworth likens the urban landscape to a book or text that can be read and deciphered. The faces of passers-by are compared to the pages of a book: "The comers and goers face to face/Face after face" (Wordsworth, 539). The architecture, as well, is compared to a text: "Shop after shop, with symbols, blazoned/names,/And all the tradesman's honours overhead:/Here fronts of houses, like a title-page, with letters huge inscribed from top to toe" (Wordsworth, 540). The notion of reading the city is evident in several Modernist treatments of the city, and is linked to the notion of writing the city, or text-as-city.

As mentioned above, Benjamin attempts to mimic the urban experience in his writings. Benjamin's representation of the city, in his *Denkbilder* and *The Arcades Project*, seeks to capture the 'at first sight' of the city, by relying on visual and imagistic literary techniques. According to Graeme Gilloch, "Benjamin's imagistic depiction of the city highlights the transitory and fleeting character of the city" (Gilloch, 18). Benjamin substitutes a discontinuous, fragmented literary style for conventional narrative structures in order to, not only depict, but mimic the city.

This endeavour to 'write the city' is central to Benjamin's project of subverting modern myth and phantasmagoria. For example, *The Arcades Project* is organised in such a way that it becomes an expression of the urban itself. It mimics the urban qualities of fragmentation and deracination. The text supplies to the reader a plethora of transitory images that result in a textual shock experience. In a sense, the reader engages in *flânerie* as s/he can encounter any number of metropolitan locations and characters. Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* highlights the deterioration of traditional forms of experience in the metropolis, and is representative of the regimented, homogenous, and incoherent experience of modern life. However, in embodying the modern forms of experience, the text serves to de-mythologize the city.

The various urban phenomena discussed up to this point are some of the key components of the phantasmagoria of the modern metropolis, but there is also the concept of history that plays a part in the phenomenology of the city. Modernity produces history that is mythic in character. The city is a locus of false history and of the myth of progress. However, the myths of

modernity can be penetrated through historical analysis. For some modernists, including Benjamin and Joyce, the city is also a site of models of historiography that seek to dispel the modern myths of history. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 2 — Walter Benjamin and the City

Now, if we recollect that not only people and animals but also spirits and above all images can inhabit a place, then we have a tangible idea of what concerns the *flâneur* and of what he looks for. Namely, images, wherever they lodge. The *flâneur* is the priest of the genius loci.

— Benjamin, "The Return of the Flâneur"
(*Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934*, 264).

Walter Benjamin's analysis of modernity is inextricably linked to his analysis of the modern metropolis, for he argues that both concepts are inherently tied together and serve to illuminate each other. Benjamin's various treatments of the city consist, in part, of his physiognomical reading of the urban landscape, for he feels that this approach can furnish meaningful insight into the metropolis. His physiognomical reading of the city is tied to the idea that the city constitutes a monad. For Graeme Gilloch, Benjamin recognises that the city "is an entity that encapsulates the characteristic features of modern social and economic structures, and is thus the site for their most precise and unambiguous interpretations"(Gilloch, 5-6). According to Gilloch, this concept of the city-as-monad is derived from Leibniz's concept of the 'monad,' which features prominently throughout Benjamin's *oeuvre*, and particularly in his city writings. The term, which Benjamin gleaned from his readings of Leibniz, stems from a pantheistic view of the world, whereby God is seen as present within every single element, both the finite and the particular, of his creation. In other words, the whole is contained in all of its fragments.

For Benjamin, this theological concept can be applied to the task of profane illumination, which consists in discerning vestiges or marks of the universal within the particular; the social totality within the mundane and trivial (Gilloch, 6). Patrick Tacussel notes: "in this perspective, every object is the fragment of the historic context surrounding it, each detail participates in a figuration of the universal which endows it with meaning"(Tacussel, 48). Benjamin's notion that traces of the universal can be found in the particular, can be linked to his idea that the city can be read in a myriad of ways, and that meaning can be derived from these readings. This linkage, in Benjamin's city writings, between the physiognomical reading of the metropolis and the notion of the universal-within-the-particular, is touched upon by Ralf Konersman when he notes: "as a physiognomist Benjamin mistrusted the classification of systematizing thinkers. He turned his attention to the detail and the particular, to those mundane occurrences which, according to Lichtenberg, contained 'the moral universe' just as well as 'the great things'"(as quoted in Gilloch, 186).

For Benjamin, modernity can be deciphered in the spaces and structures of the modern, urban landscape. This notion is central to the 'physiognomies' contained within Benjamin's city writings, which focus on, among other things, the interpenetration of the urban landscape, as it is composed of buildings, spaces, monuments and objects, and the web of modes of human social behaviour. Benjamin's urban physiognomies highlight the responsive and reflexive relationship between architecture and action in the modern metropolis. I would argue that the activity of flânerie is central to this endeavour, for Benjamin highlights the relationship between walking the city, and reading the city in his essay, "A Berlin Chronicle":

But to lose oneself in a city – as one loses oneself in a forest – that calls for quite a different schooling. Then, signboards and street names, passers-by, roofs, kiosks, or bars must speak to the wandered like a cracking twig under his feet in the forest, like the startling call of a bittern in the distance, like the sudden stillness of a clearing with a lily standing erect at its center"(*Reflections*, 9).

This last quotation not only demonstrates the Romantic nature of Benjamin's view of the urban landscape, but also shows how he feels that "*flânerie* is a kind of reading of the street, in which

faces, shop fronts, shop windows, café terraces, street cars, automobiles and trees become a wealth of equally valid letters of the alphabet that together result in words, sentences and pages of an ever-new book" (Tester, 81).

For Gilloch, "the buildings of the city, and its interior in particular, form casings for action which, or on which, human subjects leave 'traces,' signs of their passing, markers or clues to their mode of existence" (Gilloch, 6). This idea is exemplified in Benjamin's essay, "One-Way Street," when he writes: "how a convivial evening has passed can be seen by someone remaining behind from the disposition of plates and cups, glasses and food, at a glance"(*Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913-1926*, 472). In a sense, Benjamin, as social theorist, places himself in the role of detective, by gathering the traces of, or clues to, city dwellers' modes of existence, and thus endeavours to "construct a fragmentary but insightful critique of modern capitalist society and elaborate a set of imperatives for Critical Theory and revolutionary practice"(Gilloch, 6).

> Preformed in the figure of the flâneur is that of the detective. The flâneur required a social legitimation of his habitus. It suited him very well to see his indolence presented as a plausible front, behind which, in reality, hides the riveted attention of an observer who will not let the unsuspecting malefactor out of his sight.
>
> — Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (442).

He also places himself in the role of *flâneur*, "the decipherer of urban and visual However, the urban physiognomist appropriates the role, not only of detective, but of archaeologist and collector as well. The duties that make up these roles also comprise the critical enterprise that is physiognomic reading. For Benjamin, the city-as-monad is a text that needs to be read and deciphered, and this text also contains monadological fragments. Benjamin writes: "in thousands of eyes, in thousands of objects, the city is reflected" (as quoted in, Gilloch, 6). Although Benjamin's physiognomical readings of the modern metropolis are primarily concerned with the physical structures of the city, such as Paris' 'dream-houses,' said readings seek to permeate the various facades of the city's architecture in an attempt to discern and reveal meaning. Gilloch demonstrates this point when he writes: "The city is a space to be read. The city is a multi-faceted entity, a picture puzzle that eludes any unequivocal decipherment" (Gilloch, 169).

It is precisely because of the aforementioned elusive character of the city, that Benjamin forgoes any attempts at totalising readings of the city's text, and instead focuses his gaze on the transitory and ephemeral insights or illuminations that the fragments, which he has collected, can furnish or expose. Because Benjamin 'reads' the city in provisional fashion, any unpacking of Benjamin's physiognomies reveals a variety of metaphors and images of the city, including city-as-theatre; -as-labyrinth; -as-prison; and, -as-ruin.

As Gilloch notes: "The city has many faces: all beguiling, all false. The architecture of modernity is the most pronounced manifestation of its mythic, dream-like character" (Gilloch, 170). According to Benjamin, the mythic quality of the modern metropolis is central to the deceptive nature of the city's architecture and its many facades, and it is for this reason that only the physiognomical decipherment of the city can penetrate said facades and release the illuminations contained within. Engels anticipates Benjamin's treatment of the city, in his *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, in which he records his impressions of Manchester. Engels recognises that the city can be read as a text, however, reading is all one can do from the streets.

City structures, whether they be rows of shops, commercial buildings or factories, are ultimately facades. They are the faces that reveal and conceal a larger reality: "every street has its concealed back lane to which a narrow paved path leads, and which is all the dirtier" (Engels, 84). For Benjamin, there is a dual nature to the physiognomical reading of the city: it is both illuminating and destructive. Benjamin's physiognomies serve to illuminate the truth and meaning concealed behind the metropolitan architecture, and also to destroy myth as it manifests itself in the city's structures.

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For Gilloch, physiognomic reading of the metropolis' signs is destructive of myth for it "brushes architecture against the grain" (Gilloch, 171). For example, Benjamin's reading or decipherment of the monuments to progress and civilisation, as they are found in the city's physical structures, which contributes to Benjamin's notion of city-as-monument, seeks to illuminate the barbarism behind these monuments, and to disenchant their mythic qualities. Benjamin's physiognomic reading of the city, with its emphasis on the physical structures of the city, is also tied, through the task of profane illumination, to a specific mode of enquiry that is characterised by Benjamin, while simultaneously being characteristic of, modernist treatments of the city. This mode, Benjamin's phenomenology of the city, is based on an interest in the mundane and trivial aspects of the metropolitan experience; in the "minutiae and marginalia of the urban setting" (Gilloch, 7).

Benjamin approaches the aforementioned processes, as Critical Theorist, through an analysis of the quickened pace of the urban experience; of economic practices and patterns of exchange, as they are manifested in modes of commodity display, advertising and consumption; and of the dynamic relationship between public and private realms. For Benjamin, the accelerated pace and mechanical rhythms of the city lead to an increase in the commodification of time and repetition. His interest in the city as the site of the commodity stems from his re-focusing of his Marxist lens in order to concentrate, not on the forms of production, but on the modes of commodity display, advertising, and consumption. In other words, Benjamin concerns himself not so much with the alienated worker, as he does with the fetishising customer (Gilloch, 8). This is exemplified in Benjamin's analysis, in his 'Naples,' of the porous, and permeable boundaries dividing public and private Neapolitan life, and in his encyclopaedic documentation, in *The Arcades Project*, of the artefacts housed by the Parisian arcades.

> The street becomes a dwelling place for the flâneur; he is as much at home among house façades as a citizen is within his four walls.
>
> — Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire"
> (*Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938-1940*, (19).

The relationship between interior and exterior spaces is also dealt with in his writings on Moscow, in which he highlights the dissolution of private realms through collectivisation, and on Berlin and Paris, in which he underlines the bourgeois interiorization of public life and the erotic. For Gilloch, the bourgeois interior is characterised by Benjamin as a prison, and the arcade, as an interiorised street: "Interiorization is bound up with the compartmentalization of space and the removal of disruptive and disruptive and disturbing figures from everyday life" (Gilloch, 8). Again, this notion of interiorization and of the exclusion of certain undesirable figures from the bourgeois world, is anticipated by Engels in his study on the working class of Manchester. Engels writes: The town itself is peculiarly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks. This arises chiefly from the fact, that by unconscious tacit agreement, as well as with outspoken conscious determination, the working people's quarters are sharply separated from the sections of the city reserved for the middle class; or if this does not succeed, they are concealed with the cloak of charity (Engels, 85).

In highlighting the city as a site of shock and intoxication, Benjamin acknowledges the allure of the city, and of the plethora of opportunities it presents for distraction, abandonment, and excitement. However, Benjamin also stressed the dangers of succumbing to these distractions and escapes, for "to be carried drowsily along by the narcotics of chance and fate is nothing other than a capitulation to the forces of myth" (Gilloch, 171-2).

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Maxim of the flâneur: "In our standardized and uniform world, it is right here, deep below the surface, that we must go. Estrangement and surprise, the most thrilling exoticism, are all close by." Daniel Halévy, *Pays Parisiens* (Paris 1932), p.153.

— Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (444).

For Benjamin, the many reveries offered the city-dweller have a lulling-effect on the modern psyche. It is for this reason that Benjamin also characterises the city as a site of boredom. Over-stimulation of the modern psyche in the metropolis leads to, as mentioned above, the erecting of mental barriers, which in turns leads to a blasé sensibility in the modern individual. The stimuli of the city act as a narcotic on the mind of the modern individual, for the individual becomes increasingly addicted, while simultaneously growing more and more unresponsive to its effects. Gilloch notes: "Over-stimulation leads, on the one hand, paradoxically to boredom, to the misery of the always the same; on the other hand, it brings with it the frenetic, neurasthenic personality searching for the something-new"(Gilloch, 172). In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin cites a quotation discussing Paris and Baudelaire, that is indicative of the phenomenon of boredom in the modern city:

Baudelaire as the poet of *Spleen de Paris*: "One of the central motifs of this poetry is, in effect, boredom in the fog, ennui and indiscriminate haze (fog of the cities). In a word it is spleen." François Porché, *La Vie douloureuse de Charles Baudelaire* (Paris, 1926), p.184. [D1,4] (*The Arcades Project*, 102).

With respect to the phenomenon of boredom in the modern metropolis, Benjamin writes:

To grasp the significance of *nouveauté*, it is necessary to go back to novelty in everyday life. Why does everyone share the newest thing with someone else? Presumably, in order to triumph over the dead. This only where there is nothing really new. [D5a,5] (*The Arcades Project*, 112).

Benjamin relates the concepts of boredom and eternal return with the notion of myth in the city: "'Eternal return is the *fundamental* form of the *urgeschichtlichen*, mythic consciousness. (Mythic because it does not reflect.) [D10,3] (*The Arcades Projects*, 119). Furthermore, according to Benjamin: "Life within the magic circle of eternal return makes for an existence that never emerges from the auratic. [D10a,1] (*The Arcades Project*, 119). These fragments serve to indicate the connection Benjamin establishes between the notions of urban over-stimulation and intoxication, boredom, eternal return, and the mythic and the phantasmagoric.

Benjamin establishes the presence of the mythic and the phantasmagoric in the modern city through his physiognomic decipherments of the metropolis' physical structures and the objects they house, and through his phenomenological evaluation of the modes of experience intrinsic to the modern, urban experience. However, for Benjamin, myth is a dynamic concept with multiple meanings. According to Gilloch, "myth appears to have at least a fourfold significance for (Benjamin): as fallacious thought, as compulsion, as tyranny, and as metaphorical device" (Gilloch, 11). The notion that myth is false emerges out of the Enlightenment tradition, in which myth is viewed as steeped in irrationality and superstition, and can only be overcome through scientific rationalism and religious revelation.

The notion of myth-as-compulsion stems from the idea that myth holds sway over humans: "Myth involves human powerlessness in the face of unalterable natural laws" (Gilloch, 11). The notion of myth-as-tyranny is linked to the idea that modernity has ended human civilisation's subordination to myth. However, for Benjamin, modernity is not a site for the overcoming of mythic forces, but in fact, a site for the intensified domination of myth. The rise of rationalism and scientific thought and ingenuity has only aided the proliferation of dominating mythic forces in new, deceptive forms. For Gilloch, "Benjamin prefigures Horkheimer and Adorno's idea that the enslavement by natural forces has been transformed into the enslavement of nature" (Gilloch,

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11). Myth has emerged in the modern period as human tyranny over the natural world. In addition, humans are enslaved by mythology through commodity fetishism: mass-produced products are reified and worshipped. In terms of history, modernity has not moved beyond *ur*-history, "but instead constitutes a perpetual relapse of the always-the-same of myth"(Gilloch, 11). Benjamin highlights this when he writes:

In the idea of eternal recurrence, the historicism of the nineteenth century capsizes. As a result, every tradition, even the most recent, becomes the legacy of something that has already run its course in the immemorial night of the ages. Tradition henseforth assumes the character of a phantasmagoria in which primal history enters the scene in ultramodern get-up. [D8a,2] (*The Arcades Project*, 116).

Furthermore, Benjamin comments on the myth of progress, as it is found in the modern metropolis, and the way in which it puts forth an illusory vision of history:

The belief in progress – in an infinite perfectibility understood as an infinite ethical task – and the representation of eternal return are complementary. They are the indissoluble antinomies in the face of which the dialectical conception of historical time must be developed. In this conception, the idea of eternal return appears precisely as that "shallow rationalism" which the belief in progress is accused of being, while faith in progress seems no less to belong to the mythic mode of thought than does the idea of eternal return. [D10a,5] (*The Arcades Project*, 116).

Lastly, Benjamin uses myth as metaphor in his cityscapes when he incorporates mythological characters into his writings. This usage of myth stems from Benjamin's belief that there are positive elements to be harvested from myth. As Critical Theorist, Benjamin does not approach the modern metropolis out of nostalgia or pessimism. For Benjamin, the mythology that permeates the modern metropolis is the force that not only that lulls the modern to sleep, but that can also jolt and awake the dreaming masses.

> The imminent awakening is poised, like the wooden horse of the Greeks, in the Troy of dreams.
> — Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, (392)

Myth has a dual nature – it has both positive and negative potentialities. It is for this reason that Benjamin pays particular attention, in his Paris writings, to the commodity of the nineteenth century, and to the fetishised commodities it produced. For Benjamin, said commodity culture is a dream-world. It is the manifestation of the unconscious wants and desires of the dreaming collectivity, and the reified objects it produced are the wish-images of the collectivity. Benjamin is able to recognise the dual nature of myth through his physiognomic and phenomenological lens. As he gazes through this lens, Benjamin is able to identify the dialectical nature of myth, and is able to highlight the positive potential stored within: "The mythic is not to be celebrated, but rather must be ruined, reduced to rubble to free its positive potential" (Gilloch, 176). This is accomplished by identifying self-destructive potential of myth. Benjamin writes:

"Historical materialism must renounce the epic element in history. It blasts the epoch out of the reified 'continuity of history.' But it also explodes the homogeneity of the epoch, interspersing it with ruins – that it, with the present"[N9a,6] (*The Arcades Project*, 464). Because Benjamin characterises myth as a dream, the self-destructive moment arises in the form of awakening. Benjamin writes: "The realization of dream elements in the course of waking up is the canon of dialectics. It is paradigmatic for the thinker and binding for the historian."[N4,4] (*The Arcades Project*, 464). Furthermore: "Just as Proust begins the story of his life with an awakening, so must every presentation of history begin with awakening; in fact, it should treat of nothing else. This one, accordingly, deals with awakening from the nineteenth century." [N4,3] (*The Arcades Project*, 464). The preceding quotations are taken from *The Arcades Project*'s Convolute N,

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entitled 'On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress,' which served as a blueprint for Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In the latter, we can also find Benjamin's thoughts on myth-as-progress. For Benjamin, the notion of progress is mythic, for it places modernity at the height of civilisation, and turns its back on the continuation of barbarism and oppression. Benjamin writes: "The concept of progress must be grounded in the idea of catastrophe"(*The Arcades Project*, 473). In addition:

A Klee painting named "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to say, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress" (*Illuminations*, 257-8).

Benjamin's backwards version of history is based on a set of historiographic principles: archaeological, memorial and dialectical. As archaeologist, Benjamin is concerned with unearthing and preserving those traces of history that modernity and the school of history-as-progress that is historicism, threaten to stamp out. Benjamin writes:

The true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can be recognized and is never seen again. "The truth will not run away from us": in the historical outlook of historicism these words of Gottfried Keller mark the exact point where historical materialism cuts through historicism. For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably. (The good tidings which the historian of the past brings with throbbing heart may be lost in void the very moment he opens his mouth.) (*Illuminations*, 255).

As memorialist, Benjamin seeks to record and remember history's oppressed whom historicism attempts to push back into the recesses of forgetfulness. This can be related to the notion of 'bearing witness,' which is central to Judaic mysticism, and recording what might not be recorded by the historicist tradition. This is done with the intent of being able to provide testimony. Benjamin notes: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight" (*Illuminations*, 257). In addition:

To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man singled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it (*Illuminations*, 255).

As historical dialectician, Benjamin works with his notion of the dialectical image in an attempt to "telescope the past through the present" (*The Arcades Project*, 471). Benjamin's dialectical image is derived from Proust's notion of *mémoire involontaire*, which, for Benjamin, is a function of the metropolitan shock experience. The *mémoire involontaire* serves as a model for Benjamin's historiographic concept of the dialectical image. When the past is 'telescoped through the present,' the forgotten history is recovered and redeemed. For Benjamin, the dialectical image is primarily an urban image, for it is inherently ephemeral and sudden: "The dialectical image is an image that emerges suddenly, in a flash" (*The Arcades Project*, 473). It is for this reason that

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Benjamin views Baudelaire's poem, "À une passante," as, not only treatment of the shock encounter, but also as "an allegory of modern remembrance, of the *mémoire involontaire*, in which the object of memory appears suddenly and unbidden, only to vanish once more"(Gilloch,179). Benjamin likens Baudelaire to the historian who witnesses, in a flash, the emergence and disappearance of the woman; of the past.

The dialectical process is central to Benjamin's historical materialist project, and this project is primarily concerned with a critique of the concept of progress. For Benjamin, the city is the site of false history, for it presents modernity as the height of civilisation, rather than as the continuation of barbarism and ruination. The ruinous character of modernity is tied, by Benjamin, to the idea that the truth content of an object lies in its obsolescence. Once the context in which an object once existed has been destroyed, the object loses its deceptive veneer, and becomes ephemeral and endangered. This moment of ephemerality and endangerment is when the object can be reconstructed. Benjamin assigns this task of reconstruction to his historiographic texts and his cityscapes. For Gilloch, the *Denkbild*, the thought-image, is precisely the attempt to give form to the immediate and the momentary impression" (Gilloch, 179).

This attempt to give form to the fleeting images of the city affects the modes of representation present in Benjamin's city writings. These modes are primarily organised around an imagistic approach based on the use of the montage style and the dialectical image. This approach highlights the ephemeral and fleeting qualities of the metropolitan experience, and is linked to Benjamin's denial of any all-encompassing representation or depiction of the modern metropolis. These modes of representation are exemplified by Benjamin's early cityscapes, which are composed of images in a montage style, and especially later, in *The Arcades Project*, which contains the elements of incoherence, and even the shock experience: "Quotations in my work are like wayside robbers who leap out armed and relieve the stroller of his convictions" (*Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913-1926*, 475). Because Benjamin viewed the city as a locus of signs to be deciphered, and as a text to be read and interpreted, he also organised his city writings around the notion of text-as-city. This helps to explain the 'textual shock' produced by the quotations found in his writings. However, although Benjamin's city writings embody the breakdown of coherent and meaningful modes of experience in the modern metropolis, they do contain within them a subversive element: "Benjamin's texts are symptomatic of, yet resistant to, modernity. (*The Arcades Project*) incorporates the experiences of modern life in order to negate them. Writing the city breaks its spell" (Gilloch, 182).

This spell that enchants the modern metropolis is manifested in two major instances of urban phantasmagoria: the commodity, and the structures that house these commodities – dream-houses. According to Benjamin, the modern metropolis, in general, and Paris, in particular, are home to the phantasmagoric: "the so-called dreaming collectivity and the architectural forms it spawned, commodity fetishism and fashion, and the concept of progress" (Gilloch, 104). Benjamin's most thorough exploration of urban phantasmagoria, as he sees it manifested in nineteenth century Paris, is located in *The Arcades Project*. Benjamin's primary subjects of analysis are the Parisian arcades, and for three significant reasons. The first, is connected to the notion of ruin. For Benjamin, as mentioned above, objects or structures display truth-potential once they are near extinction, and the Paris arcades of the nineteenth century had fallen out of fashion when he was analysing them in the twentieth century. Benjamin writes: "The newest Paris arcade, on the Champs-Elysées, built by an American pearl king; no longer in business. [A2,3] (*The Arcades Project*, 37). Benjamin also highlights the reasons for the arcades' decline: "Reasons for the decline of the arcades: widened sidewalks, electric light, ban on prostitution, culture of the open air. [C2a,12] (*The Arcades Project*, 88). Secondly, for Benjamin, the arcades are an excellent example of the dream-house, and as dream-houses, the arcades housed the commodities which he was equally concerned with as wish-images of the dreaming collectivity: "People associated the 'genius of the Jacobins with the genius of the industrials,' but they also attributed to Louis Phillipe the saying: 'God be praised, and my shops too.' The arcades as temples of commodity capital." [A2,2] (*The Arcades Project*, 37). Finally, Benjamin's concept of city-as-monad, as it was derived from Leibniz's monadology, is based on the idea that the modern metropolis is a microcosm for modern social and economic structures. Benjamin further extends his use of the monad to the arcades, for he believes that the arcades are a microcosm of the city: "the arcade is a city, a world in miniature" (*The Arcades Project*, 31). Benjamin adds to

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this concept, and outlines a portion of his project, in the following fragment: "To construct the city topographically – tenfold and a hundredfold – from out of its arcades and its gateways, its cemeteries and bordellos, its railroad stations and its…, just as formerly it was defined by its churches and its markets" [C1,8] (*The Arcades Project*, 83).

Benjamin's articulation of the city's masses as the dreaming collectivity, and of the city's structures and commodities as dream -houses and wish-images, stems from his use of psychoanalysis and Surrealism. As we saw above, Benjamin draws from Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and from his analysis of shock in war neuroses, in order to explain the shock experience in the city. Benjamin also draws on Freud's concept of the dream-as-wish-fulfilment. In his *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, Freud invites the reader to follow him "on a brief excursion through the region of dream -problems" (*Five Lectures*, 34), and outlines the relationship between wish-fulfilment and dreams:

The true meaning of the dream, which has now taken the place of its manifest content, is always clearly intelligible; it has its starting point in experiences of the previous day, and proves to be a fulfilment of unsatisfied wishes. The manifest dream, which you know from your memory when you wake up, can therefore only be described as a *disguised* fulfilment of *repressed* wishes" (*Five Lectures*, 36).

Benjamin refers to the Surrealists when discussing his concept of the nineteenth century as a dream. In a letter to Adorno, Benjamin writes of his reading of Louis Aragon's Surrealist novel, *Le Paysan de Paris*, which featured the Paris arcades:

[…E]venings in bed I could not read more than a few words of it before my heartbeat got so strong I had to put the book down […]. And in fact the first notes of (*The Arcades Project*) come from this time (as quoted in, Buck-Morss, 33).

Benjamin was excited by his reading of the Surrealists not because they revealed to him new concepts and points of view, but because they mirrored his own interests and concerns: a concern for urban phenomena and for the urban experience as something dreamt. In his essay, *Surrealism*, Benjamin writes of André Breton, and Breton's fascination with obsolescent, urban objects:

He was the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the 'outmoded,' in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them (*Reflections*, 181).

Furthermore, the Surrealists, like Benjamin, characterised the structures and objects of the city, and the city itself, as dreamed-of: "At the center of this world of things stands the most dreamed-of of their objects, the city of Paris itself" (*Reflections*, 182). However, Benjamin does hold reservations about the Surrealists' endeavours. Although Benjamin's concept of the dialectical image is closely tied to the Surrealists' concept of 'profane illumination,' he indicates early on "the dangers of Surrealism as a model for his own work" (Buck-Morss, 260): "This profane illumination did not always find the Surrealists equal to it, or to themselves, and the very writings that proclaim it most powerfully, Aragon's incomparable *Paysan de Paris* and Breton's *Nadja*, show very disturbing symptoms of deficiency" (*Reflections*, 179). As Buck-Morss points out, the Surrealists believed the dreaming experience was an individual one, whereas Benjamin viewed the dream as a collective one. For Benjamin, the dreaming collectivity was doubly unconscious, for it was not only fooled by its dreaming state:

…it was unconscious of its itself, composed of atomized individuals, consumers who imagined their commodity dream-world to be uniquely personal(despite all objective evidence to the contrary), and who experienced their membership in the collectivity only in an isolated, alienating sense, as an anonymous component of the crowd"(Buck,Morss, 260).

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For Benjamin, this double-unconsciousness exposes a contradiction in modern social and economic structures, as they are manifested in the city. The modern modes of production favour the individual, and yet produce forms of existence – "urban spaces, architectural forms, mass-produced commodities, and infinitely reproduced 'individual' experiences" (Buck-Morss, 261) – that work against collective consciousness and any possibilities of the dreaming collectivity awakening from their slumber. According to Benjamin, the Surrealists were only capable of reflecting the dream experience, whereas his goal was to dispel it. Benjamin writes:

It's not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. In other words, image is dialectics at a standstill. For while the relation of the present to the past is a purely temporal, continuous one, the relation of what-has-been to the now is dialectical: is not progression but image, suddenly emergent.- Only dialectical images are genuine images (that is, not archaic); and the place where one encounters them is language.[N2a,3] (*The Arcades Project*, 462).

Benjamin's use of the dialectical image is rooted in his rejection of historicism. For Benjamin, historicism falsifies history, primarily through presenting it as given and universal, and through its conceptualisation as a linear, progressive trajectory in which all past events have culminated in the present. For Benjamin, the dialectical image counteracts historicism and illuminates the past: "The dialectical image is a pause, a moment of interruption and illumination, in which past and present recognise each other across the void which separates them" (Gilloch, 113). According to Benjamin, these dialectical images appear, not only in the city's commodities, but in the buildings that comprise the city — dream-houses. These buildings and monuments are the most enduring forms of phantasmagoria in the metropolitan experience, and are for Benjamin, the ideal manifestation of the dialectical image. Benjamin's thoughts on the dialectical image, wish-images, and dream architecture can be related to James Joyce's writings, most notably, *Ulysses*. The focus of the next chapter will be on the relationship between Benjamin's theory of the dialectical image and Joyce's theory of epiphanies, and on how Joyce's project, as it is manifested in *Ulysses*, articulates similar criticisms of wish-images, dream architecture, and historicism.

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Chapter 3 — James Joyce and the City

> He had wandered into a maze of narrow and dirty streets. From the foul laneways he heard bursts of hoarse riot and wrangling and the drawling of drunken singers…A trembling seized him and his eyes grew dim…He was in another world: he had awakened from a slumber of centuries.
>
> — Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, (100).

Joyce's *Ulysses* is easily linked to the figure of the *flâneur*, for it is concerned with the same phenomena as is the *flâneur*, and because the activity of *flânerie* is central to the characters' activities. The novel develops a 'pedestrian' vocabulary to deal with the activities of walking and of *flânerie* that are central to Dublin, in particular, and the modern metropolis, in general. A cursory glance at almost any chapter from *Ulysses* reveals a plethora of characters engaging in different navigations of the city. In the "Wandering Rocks" chapter, Father Conmee "smiled and nodded and smiled and walked along MountJoy Square east" (283), while further on, "a onelegged sailor crutched himself round MacConnell's corner, skirting Rabaiotti's icecream car, and jerked himself up Eccles street" (288). While in a shop, Blazes Boylan "walked here and there in new tan shoes" (291), and watched as "H.E.L.Y.'S filed before him, tallwhitehatted, past Tangier lane, plodding towards their goal"(291).

After leaving Stephen on the street, "Almidano Artifoni, holding up a baton of rolled music as a signal, trotted on stout trousers after the Dalkey tram"(293). While "Tow old women fresh from their whiff of the briny trudged through Irishtown along London bridge road" (310-1), Cashel Boyle O'Connor Fitzmaurice Tisdall Farrell, murmuring, glasseyed, strode past the Kildare street club"(314). Meanwhile, "Ben Dollard's loose blue cutaway and square hat above large slops crossed the quay in full gait from metal bridge" (314), and, "Opposite Ruggy O'Donohoe's Master Patrick Aloysius Dignma, pawing the pound and half of Mangan's, late Fehrenbach's, porksteaks he had been sent for, went along Wicklow street dawdling" (322). What these examples show is that the activities of walking and of *flânerie* were central not only to concept of the city, but to Joyce's project as well.

The link between *flânerie* and Joyce's observations of the urban phenomena is clear throughout the novel, as these observations are articulated and discussed primarily throughout the characters' wanderings around Dublin. One of the primary discussions of urban phantasmagoria that takes place in *Ulysses* is the notion of historicism, and this discussion not only sheds light on Joyce's thoughts on the city as a site of false history, but also on his own historical logic, which was derived from the writings of Giambattista Vico.

In the *Lestrygonians* chapter, Bloom walks the streets of Dublin in search of a place to eat lunch, and meanwhile, contemplates the cycles of history that occur in a city, and that are represented in the physical structures of, and institutions that comprise, the city; and in doing so, exhibits a Viconian view of history. As he strolls, nearing David Byrne's pub, Bloom's thoughts wander, as expressed in an interior monologue. He thinks of the cycles a city passes through over time: "Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too: other coming on, passing on"(208). As Joyce's intention, in using Dublin as the setting for his story, was based on his belief that Dublin could stand for all cities, and on his desire to locate the universal within the particular, I would argue that Bloom's meditations on Dublin and history, apply to all cities and to a Viconian concept of universal history.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is interwoven with elements of Giambattista Vico's philosophy and historical logic, as they are explicated in *The New Science of Giambattista Vico* and *The Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, and develops an historical logic of its own that is inflected by Vico's, but that is intimately tied to the modern city. Joyce uses Vico's philosophy to buttress his view of the city as a locus of the cycles of an eternal history.

Joyce regularly spurned invitations to be a part of the Irish Revivalist movement, and instead focused his studies on unorthodox writers, like Vico. Vico's writings were largely ignored from the time they were published up until the first decade of the twentieth century when Vico had

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a resurgence in Italian intellectual circles, which Joyce would have been aware, for he was living in Trieste at the time. Although the connection between Joyce and Vico has been firmly established with respect to *Finnegans Wake*, it is clear that Joyce had already discovered Vico while working on *Ulysses* in Trieste, and that Vico's writings undoubtedly influenced his work on *Ulysses*. Richard Ellmann points out that Joyce had frequent discussions on Vico with a student of his, Paolo Cuzzi, who studied Vico and school, and that Joyce also knew Benedetto Croce's *Estetica* with its chapter on Vico (Ellmann, 340).

Although the relationship between Vico and Joyce is one of confluence rather than influence, Joyce's *Ulysses* does bear out Vico's theories, most notably, Vico's theory of history as a pattern of repetition. Vico's first attempt to work out the concept of an ideal eternal history was presented in his book of 1725, *Principles of a New Science of the Nature of Nations, from which are derived New Principles of the Natural Law of Peoples*. Vico's discovery of this new science was based on his determination to study the beginnings of sacred history, and in particular, "the steps of its progress in the first founders of gentile nations"(*The Autobiography*, 167).

Vico's insight into the history of the first founders of gentile nations he derived through a new critical method that sifted this history from "the popular traditions of the nations they founded" (*The Autobiography*, 167). In other words, Vico went beyond the regular body of classical writers normally referred to by historical analysts, and by doing so, eventually focused on groups of principles: "one of ideas, the other of languages"(*The Autobiography*, 167). Through these groups of ideas, Vico was able to establish, through the means of philosophy and philology, an ideal eternal history "based on the idea of providence by which…the natural law of peoples was ordained" (*The Autobiography*, 169), a providence common to the histories of all nations.

In doing so, Vico utilized what he called "two fragments of antiquity" (*The Autobiography*, 169); which divided human history into three ages (the age of gods, the age of heroes, and the age of men), and which reduced all the languages spoken before his time into three types (the divine, the symbolic, and the epistolographic), "coeval respectively with the three ages" (*The Autobiography*, 169). In addition, Vico links these three ages and three language types with other categories of human history. He shows that the first age and the first language are tied to "the time of families, which certainly preceded the cities among all nations, and out of which it is agreed cities arose"(169). He shows that the second age and the second language are bound up with the period of the first civil governments, and he demonstrates that the third age and third language "coincides with the times of the ideas of a human nature completely developed and hence recognized as identical in all men"(171).

The key point in Vico's philosophy of history, is the fourth and final stage of historical repetition, *ricorso*, whereby the third stage reconnects with the first to create a cycle that continues to spiral throughout history. Vico thoroughly elaborates on these ideas in his the third edition of his *Scienza nuova, Principles of New Science of Giambattista Vico Concerning the Common Nature of the Nations*, which was published in Naples, 1744, six months after his death.

In attempting to develop his concept of an ideal eternal history that encompasses the ideas, institutions and languages of all nations, Vico adds to this list the category of mythologies. For Vico, the verity and universality of mythologies is exhibited in the fact that the fables of all gentile nations, who were closed off from any knowledge of each other, contain Joves and Herculeses, which demonstrates that "the first fables must have contained civil truths, and must therefore have been the histories of the first peoples"(*The New Science*, 73). In addition, Vico offers the axiom that humans are inherently inclined to preserve and record the ideas and institutions that bind them in society. Therefore, the historical mythology agrees with the history of languages, institutions and ideas, and contributes to Vico's concept of an ideal, eternal history. Vico's concept of an ideal and timeless history, in which all the actual histories of all nations are embodied, is based on the universal elements of language, mythology, and institutions common to all nations.

The Viconian elements in *Ulysses* are linked to Joyce's depiction of Dublin, and to Leopold Bloom's thoughts on the nature of history and life and death in the modern city. Bloom goes on to see these cycles of history in the physical structures of the city: "Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piledup bricks, stones"(208). These piled up bricks can represent the layers of history present in the city, and the interconnecting streets - the intersecting of different models of history. Bloom also thinks of these cycles as they occur in the

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city's institutions, including those of property ownership and leasing: "Changing hands. This owner, that. Landlord never dies they say. Other steps into his shoes when he gets his notice to quit. They buy the place up with gold and still they have all the gold. Swindle in it somewhere. Piled up in cities, worn away age after age"(208). This could be related to Vico's idea that cities were formed after the fathers of families united in commonwealth to resist the *famuli*, who "took refuge with the aforesaid first fathers and who, having been received for their lives, were obliged to sustain them by cultivating the fields of the fathers"(*The New Science*, 81), who had rebelled against them.

> My brother's major work came at the close of an epoch of Irish, perhaps one may say, of European history, to give a comprehensive picture of it in the daily life of a large city. He always held that he was lucky to have been born in a city that is old and historic enough to be considered a representative European capital, and small enough to be viewed as a whole.
> — Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper*, (20).

For Vico, cities, or civil states could not have arisen without the *famuli*, who were subordinated to the ruling powers, and this is similar to Bloom's thoughts on the power held by landlords in the city. Blooms concludes this series of thoughts by thinking of the role of slave labour in the building of cities, and how this history is evident in the presence of ancient structures in the city, juxtaposed against modern ones: "Pyramids in sand. Built on bread and onions. Slaves. Chinese wall. Babylon. Big stones left. Round towers"(208). The pyramids in the sand, the Chinese wall, and Babylon allude to structures built by slaves, whose classical diet would have consisted of bread and onions. The 'big stones,' and the 'round towers,' refer to the remains of the architecture of ancient Ireland. Of particular interest are the 'big stones,' which represent the "standing circles" and "stone circles" of prehistoric Ireland, whose exact function remains a mystery, but which are often associated with Bronze Age burial sites (Gifford, 171) — which suggests another allusion to Vico. Vico's concept of an ideal, eternal history is based on three institutions that Vico sees as inherent in all nations, one of which consists in the burial of the dead.

I would argue that Bloom's philosophy of history is meant to represent Joyce's historical logic, that it contains Viconian elements, and that this is shown in the *Ithaca* chapter, when the narrator speculates as to what Bloom thought of Molly's adulterous affairs:

If he had smiled why would he have smiled?
To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series of originating in and repeated to infinity (863).

Bloom recognizes that regardless of how many men Molly may have been with, none of them are the first or the last, and all are part of a cycle or series 'repeated to infinity.' This suggests a relationship to Vico's cycles of history, whereby no stage of history is the first or the last, but one part of an infinite cycle. The fact that Bloom's thoughts on Molly's supposed extra-marital relations can relate to Vichian cycles, and the fact that Molly can represent Homer's Penelope in Joyce's appropriation of *The Odyssey*, also suggest a parallel between Joyce and Vico. Vico, in the *Scienza Nuova*, repeatedly argues that fables contain truths and can represent the histories of the first nations. As Harry Levin writes, in his *James Joyce*:

It was he (Vico) who first claimed that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were not the successive products of the prime and age of a single poetic personality, but the continuous autobiography of the Greek people. In the mythologies of poets, he discovered a symbolic record of prehistory (142).

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Therefore, various characters, such as Penelope, do not stand for one person in history. In addition, Vico was impressed by Bacon's recounting, in his *Wisdom of the Ancients*, of other versions of Penelope's faithfulness to Odysseus, which claim Penelope prostituted herself to all the suitors (*The Autobiography*, 56). This, coupled with Vico's view of fables as historical texts, led him to posit that Penelope's relations with the suitors was a civil history common to all nations. Therefore, Joyce's equating Molly with Penelope is also a function of Joyce working with Vico's cycles of history in the construction of *Ulysses*.

Joyce's incorporation of Vico's historical cycles into his writing is related to Joyce's interest in the dead, and their presence in the world of the living. This is exemplified throughout *Ulysses* in the numerous references to, and appearances of, in various forms, the dead, in the city. There is a prime example of the relationship between the cycles of history and the intermingling of the dead, within the city, in the *Lestrygonians* chapter. As mentioned earlier, Bloom meditates on the cycles of history, and how they are exhibited in the physical structures of the city. Leading up to these meditations, Bloom thinks of how the workings of the city are linked to the cycles of life and death:

Trams passed one another, ingoing, outgoing, clanging. Useless words. Things go on the same; day after day: squads of police marching out, back: trams in, out. Those two loonies mooching about .Dignam carted off. Mina Purefoy swollen belly on a bed groaning to have a child tugged out of her. One born every second somewhere. Other dying every second (208).

For Bloom, the cycle of life and death, like Dignam's death and the birth of Mina Purefoy's child, is an eternal process. As one is born, another dies, and Bloom juxtaposes these thoughts with his view of the city, and the comings and goings of tram cars. The cycle of life and death takes place in the city alongside the ingoing and outgoing tram cars, and in similar fashion: "Things go on the same; day after day."

Joyce's use of Viconian science in *Ulysses* allowed him to depict Dublin as a universal city that functions along an eternal, cyclical pattern of history. For Joyce, the modern world is regenerative, in transition, and part of the infinite cycle of history. Although Joyce's philosophy of history was markedly different from Benjamin's, both Joyce and Benjamin, in their writings, treat the modern metropolis as a site of false history, and treat this false history as one of the primary phantasmagoric and mythic qualities of the city.

Joyce and Benjamin both criticise the concept of history-as-progress, and do so by applying religious terminology to secular, urban experiences. For Benjamin, history-as-progress can be subverted through 'dialectical images,' which are infused with Messianic time, and are thus not yet historicised. For Joyce, the 'epiphany' is also an instance of the not-yet-historicised, for it is bound, like the dialectical image, to the urban experience. False history is only one element of the phantasmagoria that lulls the city's masses to sleep. For Benjamin, the modern metropolis is a dream world comprised of dream-houses and wish-images – both, manifestations of the wishes and desires of the city's dreaming collectivity. The dream-state of modernity is acknowledged by Joyce in *Ulysses* through its depiction of dream architecture and advertisements as wish-images.

Joyce's criticism of the notions of 'universal history' and 'history-as-progress' is exemplified in the 'Nestor' episode of *Ulysses*. Stephen Dedalus, like Benjamin, recognises 'universal history' as catastrophe and ruination: "History, Stephen said, is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (*Ulysses*, 42). It is appropriate that Stephen begins his class, in 'Nestor,' with a discussion of Pyrrhus and his campaign against the Romans on behalf of the Tarentines, for it is an account of history that exalts the efforts of Pyrrhus, and ignores and forgets the fact that Pyrrhus won in such a costly way that the collapse of the Tarentines became inevitable. Furthermore, the site of this account of history is a city: "You Cochrane, what city sent for him?" (28).

Stephen's lesson, which is an official account of historical events, troubles him. He is at odds with the tradition that history is stabilised and conclusive. This explains why thoughts of William Blake and Aristotle preoccupy him as he gives his lesson. Stephen thinks to himself: "Fabled by the daughters of memory"(28). This is a slight alteration of what Blake wrote in *A*

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Vision of the Last Judgement (1810): 'Fable or allegory is form'd by the daughters of Memory.' What this alludes to is that Stephen is pondering the possible malleability and fictional character of history. Stephen is questioning the philosophy of history that constructs history as a linear, progressive trajectory, and forgets the oppressed of the past. It is for this reason that, in the 'Eumaeus' episode, Stephen asks Bloom, before they are about eat, to point his cutting knife away from him: "Liquids I can eat, Stephen said. But oblige me by taking away that knife. I can't look at the point of it. It reminds me of Roman history"(734). Stephen, like Benjamin, recognises history as catastrophe and barbarism. He is directly criticising the notion of history-as-progress and the forgetfulness of history's oppressed that accompanies this notion. This is echoed by Bloom in the 'Cyclops' episode when he remarks: "Persecution, says he, all history of the world is full of it"(430).

Stephen's thoughts on Blake lead him to fuse, in an apocalyptic vision, fragments from Blake with the fall of Troy: "I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livi d final flame"(28). Stephen's thoughts on Blake's prediction, in his "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," that the moment of transformation is 'the livid final flame,' lead him to question whether or not "the whole creation," when it is consumed, will "appear infinite and holy, whereas now it appears finite and corrupt?" (Blake, 101). Essentially, Stephen's thoughts suggest that history does not consist of a linear, progressive, unalterable, series of events. Stephen's thoughts on the nature of history come to a head in the 'Circe' episode when, in an epiphanic moment, Stephen smashes the chandelier with his ashplant and realises the nature of history:

Stephen: *Nothung!*
(*He lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's livid final flame leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry*).

This is an epiphany for Stephen, for it is an evanescent and luminous moment: 'Time's livid final flame leaps'; and it is a fleeting moment: '…in the following darkness.' Furthermore, the epiphany is not yet historicised and illuminates the nature of history for Stephen.

In the 'Nestor' episode, Stephen continues to ponder the concepts of history-as-progress and history-as-catastrophe. For Stephen, history is malleable and to be subverted, for it is forgetful of the past's oppressed: 'For them too history was a tale like any other too often heard, their land a pawn shop.' Stephen's questioning of the concepts of history-as-progress, and of the inevitability of history lead him to think about Aristotle:

Had Pyrrhus not fallen by a bedlam's hand in Argos or Julius not been knifed to death? They are not to be thought away. Time has branded them and fettered they are lodged in the room of the infinite possibilites they have ousted. But can those have been possible seeing that they never were? Or was that only possible which came to pass? (30).

Aristotle argues for the plurality of possibilities that might occur at any moment in history, but that only one possibility becomes 'actual,' thus ousting all other possibilities. With this in mind, Stephen wonders whether the concept of history-as-progress smoothes over historical characters and events to the extent that it is forgotten that they were once only possibilities, thus giving to history the appearance of inevitability.

The lesson he teaches his students is a history lesson that emphasises the main historical characters and events, and ignores the oppressed in this history. Furthermore, the lessons taught the students are based on a colonial education system, whereby emphasis is placed on learning by rote. The students are taught to accept their lessons as they have been taught them: "Mr Deasy said I was to copy them off the board, sir. — Can you do them yourself? Stephen asked. — No, sir"(33). Mr Deasy stands for the aforementioned concepts of history-as-progress and the inevitability of history: "The ways of the creator are not our ways, Mr Deasy said. All history moves toward one great goal, the manifestation of God"(33).

For Mr Deasy, history is progressive and inevitable, and Stephen repudiates this vision of history when he handles the hollow shells that he will later walk over and crush during his walk along Sandymount Strand: "Stephen's embarrassed hand moved over the shells heaped in the

cold stone mortar: whelks and money, cowries and leopard shells: and this, whorled as an emir's turban, and this, the scallop of Saint James. An old pilgrim's hoard, dead treasure, hollow shells" (36). The history that Stephen repudiates is a myth; it is phantasmagoric, and it finds its ultimate manifestation in the modern metropolis. This falsification of history is one element of the phantasmagoria that keeps the city's masses spell-bound, and that both Joyce and Benjamin treat in their writings.

For Benjamin, the city is the site of false history, for it presents modernity as the height of civilisation, rather than as the continuation of barbarism and ruination. As historical materialist, Benjamin equates the philosophy of history with the history of salvation, which is tied to the Messianic idea and the idea of redemption. As he writes in his "These on the Philosophy of History":

The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one. Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that preceded us, we have been endowed with a *weak* Messianic power, a power to which the past has a claim. That claim cannot be settled cheaply. Historical materialism is aware of that (*Illuminations, 254*).

According to Benjamin, "history is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]"(*Illuminations*, 261). For Benjamin, the historical materialist exercises his weak Messianic powers when he rescues and salvages these 'now-times' (*Jetztzeiten*) that are threatened with extinction. As Benjamin writes: "For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably" (*Illuminations*, 255).

Benjamin refers to his method of salvaging 'now-times,' which are "shot through with chips of Messianic time" (*Illuminations*, 263), as 'dialectics at a standstill.' This method focuses on the dialectical image that "emerges suddenly, in flash"(*The Arcades Project*, 473). For Benjamin, "the true picture of the past flits by. The past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can recognized and is never seen again" (*Illuminations*, 255). For this reason, Benjamin writes: "What has been is to be held fast – as an image flashing up in the now of its recognizability. The rescue that is carried out by these means – and only by these – can operate solely for the sake of what in the next moment is irretrievably lost" (*The Arcades Project*, 473). For Benjamin, because the city is a locus of false history, these dialectical images are urban in nature, for they are inherently ephemeral and fleeting.

For Benjamin, dialectical images are infused with Messianic time, and are thus not yet historicised. Joyce, like Benjamin, criticises, in his literature, the philosophy of history that presents history-as-progress, and does so through the use of religious terminology and through the examination of profane objects that are not yet historicised, and serve to criticise the notion of history-as-progress. Joyce's concept of the epiphany is used in conjunction with profane objects, as they are found in the city, and as they stand outside of universal history. For Joyce, the epiphany is an evanescent, luminous moment involving everyday, ephemeral objects. In *Stephen Hero*, Dedalus explains his concept of the epiphany, as he has derived it from Aquinas' term, *quidditas*:

First we recognise that the object is *one* integral thing, then we recognise that it is an organised composite structure, a *thing* in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognise that it is *that* thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which it is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany (*Stephen Hero*, 213)

Dedalus once again explains his concept of the epiphany in *A Portrait*:

I understand it so. When you have apprehended that basket as one thing and have then analysed it according to its form and apprehended it as a thing you make the only synthesis which is logically and esthetically permissible. You see that it is that thing which it

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is and no other thing. The radiance of which he (Aquinas) speaks is the scholastic *quidditas*, the *whatness* of a thing (*Portable James Joyce*, 480).

What is crucial in these passages is that the period of time whereby the object's 'whatness…leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance' and 'achieves its epiphany' is too brief to be historicised. The epiphany stands outside 'history,' in a traditional sense, and is thus like Benjamin's dialectical image that is infused with Messianic time. In addition, Joyce's epiphany is similar to Benjamin's dialectical image in that it is ephemeral and fleeting, and ultimately, urban in nature. Both Benjamin and Joyce use religious terminology to describe secular urban encounters for the very reason that they are chance encounters, cannot be reproduced, and are thus meaningful and sacred.

A young lady was standing on the steps of one of those brown brick houses which seem the very incarnation of Irish paralysis.
— Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, (211).

This spell that enchants the modern metropolis is manifested in two other key instances of urban phantasmagoria: the commodity, and the structures that house these commodities — dream-houses. According to Benjamin, the modern metropolis, in general, and Paris, in particular, are home to the phantasmagoric: "the so-called dreaming collectivity and the architectural forms it spawned, commodity fetishism and fashion, and the concept of progress"(Gilloch, 104). Benjamin's most thorough exploration of urban phantasmagoria, as he sees it manifested in nineteenth century Paris, is located in *The Arcades Project*.

Benjamin's use of the dialectical image is rooted in his rejection of historicism. For Benjamin, historicism falsifies history, primarily through presenting it as given and universal, and through its conceptualisation as a linear, progressive trajectory in which all past events have culminated in the present. For Benjamin, the dialectical image counteracts historicism and illuminates the past: "The dialectical image is a pause, a moment of interruption and illumination, in which past and present recognise each other across the void which separates them" (Gilloch, 113). According to Benjamin, these dialectical images appear, not only in the city's commodities, but also in the buildings that comprise the city — dream-houses. These buildings and monuments are the most enduring forms of phantasmagoria in the metropolitan experience, and are for Benjamin, the ideal manifestation of the dialectical image.

Benjamin's gaze looks past the monumental and landmark sights of the city and focuses on the mundane and the trivial. This is exemplified in all his cityscapes, including "One-Way Street," in which Benjamin writes about stand-up beer halls, filling stations, and gloves as sources of illumination and insight. Furthermore, in *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin devotes entire convolutes to the Parisian arcades, fashion, and mirrors. This approach is fundamental to Benjamin's cityscapes, however, it is can also be viewed as fundamentally modernist.

For example, James Joyce's literary depictions of Dublin are equally unconcerned with the major elements of the city, and instead concentrate on the mundane aspects of the city. As Ezra Pound writes in his essay, "Date Line," Joyce "seems to draw down into the art something which was not in the art of his predecessors. If he also draw from the air about him, he draws latent forces, or things present but unnoticed, or things perhaps taken for granted and never examined…" (Pound, 9).

In addition, in his essay, "'Dubliners' and Mr. James Joyce," Pound writes: "The author is quite capable of dealing with things about him, and dealing directly, yet these details do not engross him, he is capable of getting at the universal element beneath them…He is classic in that he deals with normal things and with normal people"(Pound, 29). Joyce's concern with the minutiae of metropolis and the universal-within-the-particular is intrinsic to his status as a modernist writer.

I would argue that there are dream-houses in Joyce's Dublin, and that he, like Benjamin, believed the city's objects, and the structures that housed them, are manifestations of the wish-images of the dreaming collectivity. Throughout *Ulysses*, advertisements, as they are

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encountered in the city, represent the wish-images of the urban masses, and various buildings, such as churches, museums, and bathhouses, represent dream-houses. In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin argues that the sharpest observer of the city's structures and advertisements is the *flâneur*, for "his knowledge is akin to the occult science of industrial fluctuations. He is a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers"(427). Benjamin adds:

The flâneur and the shopfronts: "First of all, there are the flâneurs of the boulevard, whose entire existence unfolds between the Church of the Madeleine and the Théâtre du Gymnase. Each day sees them returning to this narrow space, which they never pass beyond, examining the displays of goods, surveying the shoppers seated before the dorrs of cafés…They would be able to tell you if Goupil or Deforge have put out a new print or a new painting, and if Barbedienne has repositioned a vase or an arrengement; they know all the photographers' studios by heart and could recite the sequence of signs without omitting a single one." Pierre Larousse, Grand Dictionnaire universel (Paris <1872>), vol.8,p.436 (The Arcades Project, 451).

I would argue that Bloom is quasi-*flâneur* because he is an ad-canvasser who roams Dublin analysing the city's advertisements. In addition, Benjamin writes: "We know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment"(The Arcades Project, 419). I would liken this to Bloom's dream of the far east in the 'Calypso' episode:

Somewhere in the east…Wander through awned streets, Turbaned faces go 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, signla, the evening wind. I pass on. Fading gold sky. A mother watches from her doorway. She calls her children home in their dark language. High wall: beyond strings twanged. Night sky moon, violet, colour of Molly's new garters. Strings. Listen. A girl playing one of these instruments what do you call them: dulcimers. I pass (*Ulysses*, 68).

Bloom's next thoughts reveal that his dream of the far east stems from a book in his library at home, and that his copy is missing the title page: "*In the Track of the Sun* (yellow cloth, titlepage missing, recurrent intestation)" (833). There is a conflation between the text, and Bloom's vision of the eastern city, for the book is about Frederick Thompson's travels in the Orient and the Near East, and because the title page depicts an Oriental girl playing a dulcimer. What is of interest is that this dream leads Bloom to think about the headpiece of the *Freeman's Journal and National Press*: "What Arthur Griffith said about the headpiece over the *Freeman* leader: a homerule sun rising up in the northwest from the laneway behind the bank of Ireland"(68). I would argue that this image is a wish-image, and that it is a manifestation of the Irish desire for home-rule, for the sunburst is over the Bank of Ireland that occupied the building that, before the passage of the Act of Union in 1800, had housed the Irish Parliament. Unfortunately, given the position of the bank, the sun would rise in the north-west, thus rendering the dream of home-rule impossible.

There are other instances, in the 'Calypso' episode, of Bloom noticing wish-images in signs and advertisements. As he walks along Dorset street, Bloom notices an advertisement for a planter's company: "He walked back along Dorset street, reading gravely. Agendath Netaim: planter's company. To purchase vast sandy tracts from Turkish government and plant with eucalyptus trees" (72). The ad is a manifestation of the man's desire for a homeland. Furthermore, the fact that Bloom walks 'reading gravely' suggests that the city is locus of signs that are to be read and deciphered. In the 'Lotus-Eaters' episode, Bloom, while on the street, unrolls his newspaper baton and reads an advertisement:

What is home without
Plumtree's Potted Meat?
Incomplete.
With it an abode of bliss (91).

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I would argue that this ad is a wish-image, for it encapsulates the dreams and nightmares of the public. It not only evokes Paddy Dignam's imminent funeral, but also Bloom's anxieties with respect to the failed sexual relations between he and Molly. Another example would be the 'HOUSE OF KEY(E)S' ad that Bloom is contemplating throughtout the novel: "The idea, Mr. Bloom said, is the house of keys. You know, councillor, the Manx Parliament. Innuendo of home rule. Tourists, you know, from the isle of Man. Catches the eye, you see"(153). This advertisement would play into the wishes and desires of the Irish public for home rule, for the Isle of Man was governed, in part by the House of Keys, and thus enjoyed qualified home-rule.

> What is home without Plumtree's potted meat? Incomplete. What a stupid ad! Under the obituary notices they stuck it. All up a plumtree. Dignam's potted meat.
>
> — Joyce, *Ulysses*, (218).

In the 'Lestrygonians' episode, Bloom, quasi-*flâneur*, catches sight of a procession of sandwhichboardmen, whom Benjamin referred to as "the last incarnation of the flâneur: "A procession of whitesmocked men marched slowly towards him along the gutter, scarlet sashes across their boards. Bargains. Like that priest they are this morning: we have sinned: we have suffered. He read scarlet letters on their five tall hats: H.E.L.Y.S. Wisdom Hely's"(194). Bloom compares them and the signs they wear to the priest and his vestments, which he noticed in All Hallows Church earlier, perhaps alluding to the fetishisation of commodities in modern, capitalist society.

In the 'Lotus-Eaters' episode, Bloom notices the sign behind All Hallows Church: "Same notice on the door. Sermon by the very reverend John Conmee S.J. on saint Peter Claver and the African mission" (98). This notice board is a wish-image, for it is a manifestation of the concept of colonisation and the belief in the progress of Western civilisation. Furthermore, Bloom's entrance into the church is his first encounter with what I would call one of Benjamin's dream-houses of the collective:

They were about him here and there, with heads still bowed in their crimson halters, waiting for it to melt in their stomachs. Something like those mazzoth: it's that sort of bread: unleavened shewbread. Look at them. Now I bet it makes them feel happy. Lollipop. It does. Yes, bread of angels it's called. There's a big idea behind it, kind of kingdom of God is within you fell. First communicants. Hokypoky penny a lump. Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the same swim. They do. I'm sure of that. Not so lonely…Old fellow asleep near that confession box. Hence those snores. Blind faith. Safe in the arms of kingdom come. Lulls all pain. Wake this time next year (99).

A dream-house is a structure that has no exterior – "like the dream"(*The Arcades Project*, 406). A dream house is a dream world in miniature, and as such, is constructed as a site of exclusion. In All Hallows, the church-goers comprise the dreaming collectivity caught in the phantasmagoria of modernity: 'Then feel all like one family party, same in the theatre, all in the swim. They do.' This idea is underlined by the presence of the 'old fellow asleep near that confession box.' The church is a manifestation of the phantasmagoria that 'lull all pain.'

Bloom enters another dream-house of modernity when he imagines himself going to the Turkish and Warm Baths on Lenister street: "Enjoy a bath now: clean trough of water, cool enamel, the gentle tepid stream. This is my body. He foresaw his pale body reclined in it at full, naked, in a womb of warmth, oiled by scented melting soap, softly laved"(107). Again, the bathhouse or spa is a dream-house based on interiorisation and exclusion, and it is even more meaningful that Bloom's encounter with it takes place in his day-dream. For Benjamin, the 'spa' is a dream-house, and I would liken this to the bathhouse Bloom enters. Benjamin writes:

Woefully inadequate references to mineral springs in Koch, who writes of the poems dedicated by Goethe to Maria Ludovica at Karlsbad: "The essential thing for him in these

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'Karlsbad poems' is not the geology but…the thought and the sensation that healing energies emanate from the otherwise unapproachable person of the princess. The intimacy of life at the spa creates a fellow feeling…with the noble lady. Thus,…in the presence of the mystery of the springs, health comes…from the proximity of the princess." Richard Koch, *Der Zauber der Heilquellen* (Stuttgart, 1933), p.21. (*The Arcades Project, 413-4).*

For Benjamin, the reasons that make the spa a part of modernity's dream architecture, also apply to the museum. Dream-houses, such as the arcades, and the structures that housed the world exhibitions of the nineteenth century, such as the Crystal Palace, housed commodities, and were designed to exhibit the achievements of modernity and the progress of history.

Not only is Bloom's 'Bloomusalem in the Nova Hibernia of the future,' a dream-house, for it is "a colossal edifice, with crystal roof," but also the museum Bloom enters in the 'Lestrygonians' episode. For Benjamin, the museum is a dream-house, for it is related to the world exhibitions, in that it too seeks to display the concept of history-as-progress. The museum is a compartmentalised setting in which the past is catalogued and articulated according to a certain vision of the past. The objects the museum houses are in fact brought closer to commodification, for they are stored according to their market value. As Benjamin writes:

Museums unquestionably belong to the dream houses of the collective…This thirst for the past forms something like the principal object of my analysis – in light of which the inside of the museum appears as an interior maginfied on a giant scale. In the years 1850-1890, exhibitions take the place of museums. Comparison between the ideological bases of the two(*The Arcades Project*, 406-7).

As Bloom approaches Kildare Street, he spots Blazes Boylan, and ducks into the museum in order to avoid being seen by him:

Straw hat in sunlight. Tan shoes. Turnedup trousers. It is. It is
His heart quopped softly. To the right. Museum. Goddesses. He swerved to the right.
(…)
Making for the museum gate with long windy strides he lifted his eyes. Handsome building.
Sir Thomas Deane designed.
(…)
Cold statues: quiet there. Safe in a minute.
(…)
His eyes beating looked steadfastly at cream curves of stone. Sir Thomas Deane was the Greek architecture (234).

Not only is the museum a building of exclusion, for Bloom seeks and finds refuge there, but it is also a place of compartmentalisation, in which the various Grecian statues are contained. The fact that it is a dream-house is exemplified by the fact that in the 'Circe' episode, when Bloom is dreaming of the new Bloomusalem, and of the social reforms he intends to make in this new dream-world, the museum, and the objects it houses, play into his dream scenario:

(…*The keeper of the Kildare Street Museum appears, dragging a lorry on which are the shaking statues of several naked goddesses, Venus Callipyge, Venus Pandemos, Venus Metempsychosis, and plaster figures, also naked, representing the new nine muses, Commerce, Operatic Music, Amor, Publicity, Manufacture, Liberty of Speech, Plural Voting, Gastronomy, Private Hygiene, Seaside Concert Entertainments, Painless Obstetrics and Astronomy for the People.)* (611).

Another aspect of the modern metropolis' dream architecture that Benjamin touches upon in *The Arcades Project*, and that I would argue Joyce treats in *Ulysses*, is the cemetery. As Benjamin writes:

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"The city of the dead, Père Lachaise…The word 'cemetery' cannot properly be used for this particular layout, which is modeled on the necropolises of the ancient world. This veritable urban establishment – with its stone houses for the dead and its profusion of statues, which, in contrast to the custom of the Christian north, represent the dead as living – is conceived throughout as a continuation of the city of the living." (The name comes from the owner of the land, the father confessor of Louis XIV; the plan is Napoleon I.) Fritz Stahl, *Paris* (Berlin 1929), pp.161-162. (*The Arcades Project*, 415).

Benjamin argues for the cemetery-as-dream-architecture, for its structures and statues establish a dream world in which the dead are represented as living, and this is also found in the 'Hades' episode of *Ulysses*. In this episode, Bloom and his companions take a horse drawn carriage through a section of Dublin, en route to Dignam's funeral. The Dublin presented by Joyce in this episode appears as a cemetery: houses resemble tombs: "Gloomy gardens then went by, one by one: gloomy houses"(125); statues of dead men are seen: "They passed under the hugecloaked Liberator's form"(117); and monuments to the dead appear frequently: "Sir Philip Crampton's memorial fountain bust. Who was he?"(114). In addition, the cemetery is described as a "maze of graves"(141), for it resembles the labyrinthine qualities of the city.

  Like Benjamin, Joyce recognised the structures and signs of the city as phenomena to be read and deciphered, and he highlighted the dream-like qualities of the city's signs, and of the city's architecture, including its buildings, monuments, and statues. In addition, Joyce highlighted the city as the site of false history, and as a locus of myth and phantasmagoria.

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Conclusion

> The ache of conscience ceased and he walked onward swiftly through the dark streets. There were so many flagstones on the footpath of that street and so many streets in that city and so many cities in the world.
> — Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, (139).

The comparative and interdisciplinary character of this study reflects the diversity of responses produced by the writers and thinkers dealt with in this study towards the rise of the modern, industrial city and its accompanying phenomena. That modernization and urbanization were widely felt in Europe is evidenced by the fact that the perambulations of these writers and theorists took place in numerous European cities, including Paris, London, Berlin, Moscow and Dublin. However, their intellectual perambulations often crossed paths and followed similar routes, which suggests the existence of underlying patterns of coherence.

The patterns established in this study were centralised around the concepts of the *flâneur* and *flânerie*, and as such, are concerned with the same phenomena as are said figure and activity. This emphasis on the *flâneur* highlights the emphasis placed on the writings of James Joyce and Walter Benjamin, for not only do their writings deal with the social and spatial environments of the *flâneur*, but they themselves constitute *flâneur*-type figures.

The intellectual similarities between Joyce and Benjamin are buttressed by their biographical similarities. Both produced the majority of their *oeuvres* as displaced, marginal figures, with strong central homelands, who wandered their adopted cities. Joyce was born and raised in Dublin, but through a self-imposed exile, left Ireland for the Continent at the age of twenty, and save for a few trips back to Dublin, spent the rest of his life in Pola, Trieste, Zürich and Paris. The lifestyle that Joyce developed in Dublin stayed with him throughout his life and is evidenced in his writings. Joyce's descriptions, in *Stephen Hero*, of Stephen's wanderings through Dublin (Stephen is largely seen as an autobiographical figure of the young Joyce) are emblematic of Joyce's own peripatetic habits:

Nearly everyday Stephen wandered through the slums watching the sordid lives of the inhabitants. He read all the street-ballads which were stuck in the dusty windows of the Liberties. He read the racing names and prices scrawled in blue pencil outside the dingy tobacco-shops, the windows of which were adorned with scarlet police journals. He examined all the book-stalls which offered old directories and volumes of sermons and unheard-of treatises at the rate of a penny each or three for twopence (145).

As Stanislaus Joyce points out in his biography of his older brother, *My Brother's Keeper*, Joyce "was an indefatigable walker" (42). Furthermore, an anecdote that "Stannie" relates in *My Brother's Keeper* re-enforces Joyce's *flâneur*-like navigation, and interpretation of, Dublin, which he undoubtedly impressed upon his younger brother:

One evening when I was accompanying Jim across town to the National Library, we stopped to look in at the window of a bookseller's in Nassau Street. To attract attention to his wares and foster the love of art among his customers, the bookseller had arranged a modest picture-show in his window. It consisted of about a dozen prints, all representing beautiful models with nude busts. After looking at the display for a minute or two, I said to Jim: Come along, for God's sake. With all those briskets hanging around, it's like a butcher's shop (177).

The element of *flânerie* was, as it was for Joyce, a major component of Benjamin's writings and of his everyday life. As Hannah Arendt writes: "The extent to which his strolling determined the pace of his thinking was perhaps most clearly revealed in the peculiarities of his

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gait, which Max Rychner described as 'at once advancing and tarrying, a strange mixture of both'"(*Illuminations*, 22). Although this paper argues that the figure of the *flâneur* not be limited to nineteenth century Paris, it was there and then Benjamin most clearly situated the *flâneur*. It is for this reason that the concept of Benjamin-as-*flâneur* is inextricably linked to the concept of Benjamin-as-Parisian. Although Benjamin was born and raised in Berlin, he once remarked that when he first visited Paris, its streets were "'almost more homelike' (*Briefe* I, 56) to him after a few days than the familiar streets of Berlin" (*Illuminations*, 19).

Benjamin's affinities for Paris and for the nineteenth-century figure of the *flâneur* are discussed by Arendt:

It (Benjamin's walk) was the walk of a *flâneur*, and it was so striking because, like the dandy and the snob, the *flâneur* had his home in the nineteenth century, an age of security in which children of upper-middle-class families were assured of an income without having to work, so that they had no reason to hurry (22).

Although Benjamin developed his interest in *flânerie* while in Paris, for "What all other cities seem to permit only reluctantly to the dregs of society—strolling, idling, *flânerie*—Paris streets actually invite everyone to do" (*Illuminations*, 21), his "A Berlin Chronicle" reveals that his middle-class upbringing, and the city of Berlin itself, allowed for Benjamin's care-free entrance into the modern metropolis and the activity of *flânerie*:

Now let me call back those who introduced me to the city. For although the child, in his solitary games, grows up at closest quarters to the city, he needs and seeks guides to its wider expanses, and the first of these—for a son of wealthy middle-class parents like me—are sure to have been nursemaids (*Reflections*, 3).

Although Benjamin had close ties to Berlin, he felt out of place intellectually in Berlin, and left it for Paris: "Just as the city (Paris) taught Benjamin *flânerie*, the nineteenth century's secret style of walking and thinking, it naturally aroused in him a feeling for French literature as well, and this almost irrevocably estranged him from German intellectual life" (*Illuminations*, 22). His interest in French literature included his studies on off-centre writers life Proust and Baudelaire. Benjamin's geographical and intellectual estrangement from Berlin is mirrored in Joyce's life by his self-imposed exile from the city of Dublin and from Irish intellectual life, and by his own embracing of off-centre writers, most notably, Vico.

Although Joyce and Benjamin's historical logics are different, since Joyce's was derived from Vico, and Benjamin's from a Marxist dialectic, both were concerned with the metropolis as a site of false history, and approached the concept in similar fashion—as *flâneur*. As *flâneurs*, Joyce and Benjamin looked to epiphanies as instances of awakening from the nightmare of history. For Joyce, epiphanies are "the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (*Stephen Hero*, 211), and for Benjamin, "the true picture of the past flits by." It is only as *flâneurs*—aimless figures surrounded by scurrying people in the city—that Joyce and Benjamin are able to notice these fleeting and ephemeral moments and images, which are aimless themselves. The purposeless nature of the *flâneur* and the epiphanies he notices and records points to the fact that both break out of traditional modes of history. It is for this reason that Arendt links the *flâneur* to the angel in Klee's "Angelus Novus," which Benjamin discusses in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History":

For just as the *flâneur*, through the *gestus* of purposeless strolling, turns his back to the crowd even as he is propelled and swept by it, so the "angel of history," who looks at nothing but the expanse of ruins of the past is blown backwards into the future by the storm of progress (*Illuminations*, 13).

These links between *flânerie*, epiphanies, and history point to the idea that Joyce and Benjamin were engaged in redemptive quests in their writings. Both were concerned with recording and chronicling epiphanies. Joyce and Benjamin use epiphanic fragments in slightly different ways, for Joyce's use of the epiphany redeems the experience, for which the individual is

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the vehicle, whereas Benjamin is more concerned with rescuing things from the burial of the past. This difference does, however, point to a major similarity, which is that both were primarily concerned with criticizing historicism. This is exemplified in the fact that Benjamin's concern for resurrecting alternative possibilities in history is very similar to Stephen Dedalus' concern, in *Ulysses*, with Aristotelian potentialities.

> But now imagine a city like Paris…imagine this metropolis of the world…where history confronts us on every street corner.
>
>   — Goethe to Eckermann, (as quoted in Berman, 131).

This emphasis on collecting fragments of history that have been buried or left aside is shown in the fact that Joyce and Benjamin themselves, in response to what they saw as incomplete and oppressive traditional forms of history, chronicled the epiphanic fragments they encountered while engaging in *flânerie*. Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* is an excellent example of how he chronicled the fragments he encountered, and how these fragments served as the basis for many of his writings. Although the work is organized into convolutes, the text consists entirely of fragments, and thus the reader can stroll through the text as s/he would through the city. The fact that Joyce also recorded epiphanic fragments is shown in Stanislaus Joyce's *My Brother's Keeper*:

Another experimental form which his literary urge took…consisted in the noticing of what he called 'epiphanies'—manifestations or revelations…Epiphanies were always brief sketches, hardly ever more than some dozen lines in length, but always very accurately observed and noted the matter being so slight. This collection served him as a sketch-book serves an artist" (125).

The fact that redemptive quests are central to Joyce and Benjamin's projects, despite their recognition and criticism of the overarching presence of myth and phantasmagoria in the modern metropolis, separates Joyce and Benjamin from other twentieth century modernists who produced polarizing and totalizing visions of modernity and of the urban landscape.

It is precisely this idea of the city as a 'landscape' that points to Joyce and Benjamin's ambiguous and dialectical relationships towards the modern metropolis, for it reveals how they encountered and interpreted the modern metropolis as *flâneur*-like figures. For the *flâneur*, landscape gives meaning to his existence, for it is only through the urban landscape that the modern experience can be mediated. What this shows is that Joyce and Benjamin interpret the urban landscape—a human-generated environment—using tools once used to interpret the natural landscape. By adapting the older Romantic tools for the capturing of meaning in natural landscapes, and applying them to urban landscapes, Joyce and Benjamin helped forge new tools and techniques for describing the urban environment. It is for this reason that Joyce and Benjamin produced, in their writings, 'cityscapes.' For them, the city was, despite its phantasmagoric qualities, a landscape that could furnish meaning for modern modes of experience.

The fact that the modernist writers dealt with in this study look to the urban landscape for insight into modernity highlights the idea the difference between modernity and the past, for modernity looks to a human landscape for meaning, whereas past eras in intellectual history traditionally looked to the natural environment, which was presumably a divine landscape that could be read — the second book of God. This shift in modernity to the reading of urban landscapes demonstrates how moderns relied on human constructs to understand their own existence.

I would argue that this ambiguous relationship towards the city, which differentiates Joyce and Benjamin from other twentieth century modernists, and which aligns them with nineteenth century modernists, actually places them in a better position to continue to articulate modern and urban forms of experience. There is no doubt that Joyce and Benjamin continue to speak to us with respect to the European cities whose modernisation they experienced, and with respect to

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the cities and populations across the world that continue, and that are just beginning, to experience modernisation. The fact that forms of modernity continue to grow and expand points to the idea that the urban landscape is quickly supplanting the natural landscape as a producer of modes of experience, and that people are increasingly looking towards the urban landscape to give meaning to their existence.

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