Crossing the Street: Literature and Urban Space

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This paper reflects on the intersection of place and space with literature and language, drawing directly on my experience of designing and teaching a third-year undergraduate module, City Space: Narrating Urban Experience, from 2000 to the present. The module is a tutor-led (rather than team-taught) specialised option on a BA English degree programme, closely linked with my own research, and thus the paper will also reflect on how teaching and research in this area inform each other. The aims of the module are primarily: to examine representations of the city and urban experience in contemporary literature; to allow students to interpret city space in critically imaginative ways, utilising literary and cultural theories; to contextualise how writers represent the city in relation to current critical and cultural debates about urbanisation, and to develop students' ability to engage in intertextual analysis and discussion of literary and visual representations.

City Space looks at how the city is represented in contemporary literature and in critical and cultural debate. It is organised around a variety of themes: for example, city as text; mapping the city; writing and walking; literature and the built environment, and globalisation. Oriented around these themes, selected literary texts are discussed in relation to a variety of visual media (for example, painting, maps, film, video documentary, photography). Through looking at the interconnections between representations of urban space in literature and visual media, the module allows students to conceptualise and interpret city space in critically imaginative ways. Some of the tasks set (for undertaking outside seminars) and seminar workshops have brought the critical and the creative together, in order to test the efficacy of bringing understandings of place and space to bear on the written text, and in turn to (re)conceptualise urban space through literature. The module handbook provided for each student incorporates a variety of recent articles and critical material, focused on the interpretation of the text set for each week. This reading, which may be supplemented by additional material in the seminar, is supported by an extensive bibliography drawing on the fields of literary criticism, cultural geography, architectural theory, sociology, and the philosophy of space. Assessment has predominantly been in the form of an essay and an exam, with the latter consisting of open questions (allowing students to pursue a topic and prepare beforehand) and a section of closed questions. In answering both questions, students are asked to refer to visual material (up to six prepared visual 'references' can be taken into the exam).

In addition to utilising literary and cultural criticism, the module's critical framework draws on the fields of cultural geography, architecture, visual culture and spatial theory.[1] This paper will also consider the ways in which my own research (published and ongoing) has developed within these areas, and how a multidisciplinary approach has facilitated a sharper engagement with current cultural

debates about urbanisation. In particular, I have found Nigel Thrift's definition of cultural geography as 'an ethos of constant experimentation across many registers'[2] useful as a basis of understanding. This relates to a form of cultural geography which conceptualises space as interdisciplinary, or 'as something that is culturally produced, lived and represented in various ways'.[3] Such a framework can be usefully applied to an understanding of cities, which are both material and textualised. Joe Moran argues that 'in a sense the city can only ever be understood textually, because it is far too complicated…to be encapsulated in its material totality' (*Interdisciplinarity*, p.166). Yet we could also assert that the textual city is incomplete and that texts acknowledge the complexity of the urban space. Cultural geographers have more recently embraced the notion of space as a continuum or as process, adopting a more literary language to explore this, just as literary theory uses spatial terminology such as structure and form. If literary texts can be interpreted in multifarious ways, there are also 'different ways of making the streets tell'.[4]

During the period of teaching City Space set texts included Jon McGregor's *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*; Kamila Shamsie's *Kartography*; Iain Sinclair's *Lights Out for the Territory: Nine Excursions in the Secret History of London*; Louise Welsh's *The Cutting Room*, and short story collections *Decapolis: Tales from 10 Cities*, edited by Maria Crossan, *Hope and Other Urban Tales*, by Laura Hird and *The Penguin Book of the City*, edited by Robert Drewe. An effective starting point for discussion and a key theoretical issue was to consider the ways in which the city can be thought of as text, and the text as a city. The comparison between streets, or routes through the city, and stories is well established in literature and criticism. Poststructuralism in particular has theorised the story as a continuation of the text and the journey as something which goes beyond the apparent limits of the textual object. As Peter Ackroyd has commented, the city 'is a form of literature in which the streets are the lines of a book which can never be completed'.[5] Narrative can thus be seen as central to construction and as a means of orientation. For the reader of the text, the inhabitant of urban space and the visitor to the city, orientation is crucial. We might think of this in another way, as a question of critical positioning; it matters which way one looks at things.

In general, and perhaps surprisingly, students found the concept of city as text fairly straightforward to understand, whereas interpreting a literary text in architectural terms took longer to establish. We discussed Roland Barthes' proposition that in understanding the city we must move beyond seeing spaces in terms of specialisation of functions and 'decompose microstructures in the same way that we can isolate little fragments of phrases'. In this sense, 'the city is a writing. He who moves about the city, e.g. the user of the city (what we all are), is a kind of reader, who, following…his movements, appropriates fragments'.[6] This returns us to the notion of the city and narrative embodying potentiality. Taking a case study of an individual building and demonstrating that buildings are intertextual, allowed for an easy transition to regarding characters (inhabitants or participants), their histories and their movement as defining urban space. As Fran Tonkiss asserts, the city 'houses a multitude of little spatial histories told by bodies moving within it'(*City A-Z*, p.2). My research had led to greater historical contextualisation of the interaction between space, place and literature. Literary characters' identities became increasingly constructed by place 'and [characters] more determined to construct their own or others' identities *from* place (or series of places)'.[7] Bringing an emphasis to bear on fictional characters and their relation to place in discussion of literary texts proved an effective stepping stone on the way to the broad highway, and more difficult

conceptual approaches to the text as city. However, there is also the danger that in attempting to articulate the relation between character, text and space, the characters' identities start to eclipse other concerns. Jacques Derrida's work is permeated by a sense of how writing and texts are not just words on the page, but building. This notion complicates metaphors of inside and outside, and influences architectural theorists as much as literary theorists. Built from linguistic allusions, a literary style has to be constructed and words, like buildings, refer to more than themselves. As with buildings, what literary texts mean changes over time, as the contextualising social and cultural formation changes. As my research develops the bibliography of primary material expands, adding to the stock of texts from which to take pertinent, illustrative examples in seminars. A comment in Penelope Lively's *City of the Mind*, as Matthew and Alice negotiate Charing Cross Road in London, highlights that literary texts and buildings have both intrinsic and extrinsic meanings: '…what is visible and what is uttered are complimentary'.[8]

The module programme usually commences with a brief history of the city in literature and discussion of historical definitions of the term city. In different years I introduced various, focused creative exercises in order to underline a specific critical point and these could change, informed by ongoing research and debate at conferences. A constant emerged in that an exercise involving naming the first thing associated with a given city (for example, Paris – the Eiffel Tower) generated lively discussion about landmarks, orientation and writers' use of place, including forgotten or everyday spaces and things. Over time, too, certain texts were more intensely identified with a close-knit set of issues. John Updike's short story 'The City', concerned with a malaise connected to commerce, travel and technology, is a useful introduction to ideas of the local, globalisation and homogenised space. Ron Carlson's story 'Reading the Paper', Tobias Wolff's 'Next Door' and Banana Yoshimoto's 'Newlywed' (all in *The Penguin Book of the City*) are, in different ways, preoccupied with gendered space and the nature of suburbia. There might be some variation in the focus themes with each iteration and delivery of the module and this again might be in response to new discoveries. For example, a decision to move away from a London-centric module programme, and hearing the writer Louise Welsh discussing her novel *The Cutting Room* (set in Glasgow) at the Hay Festival of Literature, prompted the inclusion of a theme on detection, the detective and the city. James Donald interestingly comments that 'what the detective makes thinkable is not cities as places, but the narrated city as an experiential…space'.[9]

Disciplinarity as we have come to understand it is a product of the nineteenth century. Crossing disciplines or boundaries need not lead to division of knowledge though, and collaboration between individual disciplines can involve interrelated growth in an organic way. In attempting to cross the divide between disciplines, one of the module's core concerns is to familiarise students with ways of interpreting visual texts alongside literary texts. The interdisciplinary nature of my research clearly helped with this, and students were encouraged to find that theoretical perspectives could be shared between disciplines, or were borrowed or adapted. A session devoted to Visualising the City used the 'technical note' at the back of *City A-Z* as a starting point for analysing visual media (for example, Paul Citroen's photomontage *Metropolis*) as 'diagrams, montage, screens or clues'. Small group work focused on teasing out the ideological and aesthetic links between a selected literary extract and an image: a passage describing Kilburn as viewed from an overland train, in Julian Barnes's *Metroland*, was compared with Gustave Dore's drawing *Over London by Rail*.

The module's initial focus was on the short story, reflected in the title City Space: Narrating Urban Experience in the Contemporary Short Story. Critics have observed the synergies between the city and the short story as a narrative form. Architectural metaphors are perhaps more apt in describing the short story's form and effect, whilst the city itself can also be reflected in the fragmentary and incomplete nature of short stories. The street as a site for momentary urban encounters and revelations of character is particularly noticeable in the contemporary urban short story. In researching I kept up to date with new short story anthologies, so that *The Penguin Book of the City* was replaced as a set text by Laura Hird's *Hope and Other Urban Tales* and *Decapolis: Tales from 10 Cities*, edited by Maria Crossan. *Decapolis* is an anthology of stories from ten European cities and as such, it contributed to widening the module's geographical scope of cities represented. Nine of the stories are translated, which also raises the issue of orientation and highlights the extent to which language constructs the city whilst compromising access to it. Some of the writers in this anthology use particular buildings as organisational devices, making the collection particularly appropriate for examining the notion of mapping the city. Landmarks can be a means of orientation, structuring space and narrative. In Jacques Reda's story 'A Man of the Streets' for example, the daily routes taken by the businessman narrator and Georges Louis (a beggar) around Paris intersect by chance.

A street has the potential to divide, allowing people to 'walk by on the other side' or inviting confrontation, but it is also a space for creative exploration, where differences can produce new discoveries. It is symbolic of the dynamism of modernity and the airing of ideas or philosophies, yet it is also material, a place where evidence of everyday culture can be found. Perhaps more than anything, the street reminds us of narrative. As Ross King points out, 'the street…promises freedom: anonymity, drifting, the cornucopia of displayed commodities, limitless contingency, boundless choice'.[10] In other words, streets or roads offer potential, inviting us to travel along them.[11]

Cultural geographers and sociologists have drawn attention to the use of unofficial paths (desire paths) as a way of navigating the urban space which challenges more conventional cognitive mapping.[12] In this sense desire paths can be regarded as narratives of/through a city, whether or not the city has been subject to cartographic representation. This problematises an understanding of landmarks as conspicuous or easily recognisable features of the urban landscape, such as iconic buildings which allow the reader/visitor to orientate him or herself. Discussion of the cityscape and iconic structures (the imagery of power) took on a particular urgency in the wake of September 11th 2001.

In seminars on mapping the city, students were asked, in small groups, to design a map in relation to a literary extract or short story of their choice and produce a critical rationale linking the two. The notion of desire paths certainly helped in the execution of this task, as did analysing different kinds of maps; variations on the map of the London underground, or maps of city zones, for example. Consideration was given to inter and multidisciplinary approaches to mapping urban space, whether by artists, community projects or media collectives. This aspect was informed by research I had previously undertaken in India on the cultural geography of Jaipur, where I became aware of a visual tradition of representing the city in map form, and of a media neighbourhood project in Delhi. Research I had done for a conference paper presented at 'Mapping Space(s): Memory, Place, Locality', organised by the University of Silesia, also fed into the teaching of this part of the module. Bringing various critical traditions and methodologies to bear in this case contributed, I would

suggest, towards an augmented appreciation (on the part of myself and my students) of the multi-sensual nature of the city and by implication, of the distinctiveness and limitations of urban literature. Setting literary texts in the context of seeing the city as a sensorium enriched both critical debate and cultural understanding. When the opportunity arose students were informed of relevant exhibitions or events which might illuminate or inspire their research: for instance, the exhibition London in Maps at the British Library (accessed via its online gallery). Particular texts, such as Shamsie's novel *Kartography*, were analysed in relation to postcolonial criticism which itself brought a new dimension to the debate about maps and texts. The notion of maps and texts conveying an illusion of totality teased out the links between cartographic and colonial discourses. In this sense, discussion of the urban space focused on definitions of home and national identity. Maps are not just diagrams (several literary texts we studied included drawings of maps), but a mapping of space and experience. We also discussed the ways in which cities and texts could be thought of as being constituted from conscious (known or visible) and unconscious (unknown or hidden) spaces. Rebecca Solnit usefully compares these 'unknown' areas or objects to the terra incognita spaces on maps.[13]

   Specific, non-formally assessed tasks or activities were set from week to week, to be pursued outside the seminar room and reported back to the seminar group. One such activity was inspired by a group visit to a lecture by the novelist Iain Sinclair, in which he likened walking to a fugue. Sinclair provided his own map of London and its environs, overlaid with text: the words fugue, historical, rave culture and toxic pollution, among others. On the module, the students were encouraged to collect their own 'trail' of city fragments. The assembled objects were then, in a seminar exercise, framed within a material cultural discourse and with reference to literary extracts. Critical work on material culture has flourished in the last few years and my ongoing research on the material culture of the home and the city has informed the module's development. We established that there is a dynamic relation between people and things (and that the text itself is an object). In Charles Dickens's imagined urban environment stuff has a symbolic dimension; in Sinclair's urban texts it might be said to have a mythic dimension. Indeed, Sinclair's writing is peppered with lists of objects, which for some critics is problematic for the architecture of his books; that is, the sentences are in danger of collapsing. Yet for Sinclair, walking in the city is a material aesthetic act, whereby the writer is 'constructing an order on which to develop the architecture of *situated objects'*.[14] The urban space thus provides a mass of text, sometimes decipherable, sometimes not, which is ripe for collection and assemblage. There is a link here with a crucial character in McGregor's novel *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*. The 'boy from number eighteen' is an archaeologist of the everyday, collecting what he finds in the streets – graffiti, layers of posters – and photographing them, in an attempt to capture the transience of the city.

   This leads on to a consideration of three interlinked areas which City Space attempts to address: the ways in which different commentators deal with the impossibility of fully representing a city; the links between writers and architects, and walking in the city, a characteristic of psychogeography[15] and urban literature. In contemporary urban literature particularly, and in urban theorising, there is an acknowledgement of the difficulties involved in trying to capture the complexities of the urban experience. Where the western, industrial city is concerned, this experience tends to be summarised as continuous movement, the rhythms of which shape the interconnections between bodies, space and the built environment. Steve Pile and

Nigel Thrift point out the futility of trying to reassemble fragments of the city, since cities continually resist a meta-narrative (*City A-Z*, p.303).

What connections are there, if any, between the writer of the city and the architect of the city? We could at least say that both are mark-makers. The philosopher and phenomenologist Gianni Vattimo has called for architects to be more responsive to local cultural and community contexts. He argues that writers and architects are already crossing divides in the sense that they occupy a zone somewhere between being rooted in a place and being conscious of multiplicity (which could apply to cultures or disciplines). Self is recognised in shared values and in distinguishing marks, or where one is. Or expressed in another way, cities must have a human dimension. Part of my ongoing research involves contemporary architectural theory and projects. In preparing a paper for presentation at the Archi*text*ure: Exploring Textual and Architectural Spaces conference at the University of Strathclyde, it was interesting to find what Vattimo calls the 'rhetorical aspect'[16] of urban planning featuring prominently in current debate; the notion that the specific cultural traditions of communities should be taken into account.

Mark-making can be interpreted as conscious or unconscious traces which resonate beyond the built architectural form. This idea of traces has been developed by cultural geographers, informed by phenomenology,[17] to emphasise the relation between dwelling-place, identity-formation and moving through place. A text such as *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*, focused on the unnamed characters living in an urban street, reveals a tension between an acknowledgement that the houses are temporary habitations and a desire to make a mark on the history of the place. Walter Benjamin's concept of the buildings of the city as places where humans leave traces, changing interiors materially and psychologically, is relevant here.

Walking leaves traces and the city can be mapped through writing and walking. This aspect of the module usually intrigued the students. A brief history of walking was considered in relation to literary and artistic composition and urban space, with the Surrealists, the Situationists and the figure of the flaneur playing key roles. The action of walking allows the hidden or forgotten areas of a city to be explored and in this sense links directly to writers' focus on the everyday routines and (un)remarkable spaces and objects which make up the texture of a city. Much urban literature, I would argue, reinterprets the ordinary as revelatory. For Sinclair, this in itself has a subversive dimension. As Merlin Coverley asserts, it is the street-level gaze required by walking which challenges the official accounts and representations of a city.[18] In *Lights Out for the Territory*, Sinclair declares that walking is the best way 'to explore and exploit the city'.[19] The writer, and his urban accomplice Marc Atkins, the photographer, have moved on from the concept of the flaneur (or stroller) to adopt the stalker as a role model. Interestingly, the term stalker was adopted by a hybrid collective (with the name of Andrei Tarkovsky's science fiction film in mind) founded in Rome in 1995. Stalker is defined as an urban art laboratory and in suggesting walks through urban voids could be said to map the places 'left behind' in urban expansionism.

The apparent binaries of presence/absence and visibility/invisibility came to assume, with some irony, a pressing presence within my research on urban space in literature and culture. Over time I had explored various, connected theoretical positions, from which to comprehend the seemingly overbearing visual nature of the city. The cityscape – what could be termed a symbolic geography – raises questions about the relations of power. Who or what decides what is visible or invisible? Several conference papers and ensuing discussion at the 'Literary London' conference

and the International Visual Sociology Association conference 'Eyes on the City' attempted to address this issue, whether interpreting the urban space as psychologised or as a realm which needed to be *re*visioned. In seminars the concept of the (in)visible city emerged as a compelling discussion point; we considered the urban gothic in literature and film; underground train networks (Geoff Ryman's novel *253* was a useful reference point), and the legacy of the anarchitecture movement's preoccupation with concealed construction, empty buildings and undeveloped spaces. Patrick Keiller's film *London* shows the absence of public life, and a city in decline. Linked to this, *London: City of Disappearances*, edited by Sinclair, was later added to the module's primary texts. It is a fascinating anthology of writings about absence and disappearance (of landscape, people, things) through which Sinclair had 'hoped that the city would begin to write itself'[20], in both senses.

Yet the cityscape is not only visual; it is an arena of interactivity and interconnections between the visual, textual, material, aural and technological. My ongoing research focuses on the relations between visual and material cultures, extending and developing aspects of the module such as the city as text, and walking in the city. Recent work, presented at the 'Visuality / Materiality' conference held at the Royal Institute of British Architects, engages with what might be termed the limitations of urban visual practice. The visualities of the urban landscape can be comprehended in terms of an everyday materiality and, in turn, an embodied sense of dwelling in space and place. Within this theoretical context I considered a selection of contemporary cultural interventions in urban space, specifically, walks in the city, graffiti, street art and urban art, as categorised in the first Street Art Awards Ceremony held in London in December 2008. These interventions (both their articulation and textual representation) were discussed as recurring visual devices which map space and connect cities (for example, a graffiti logo) or as artography, made in situ or in the studio, which blurs boundaries between private and public spaces and between the textual, visual and material.

With regard to walking in the city, the Belgian artist Francis Alys is one of a growing number of contemporary artists for whom walking as urban intervention arguably converts the material into the visual and the textual. Alys 'enters' a city via a recurring detail, an everyday ritual or habit such as putting out milk bottles on doorsteps. The ensuing multi-media components of one project – Seven Walks: London – were placed in two distinctive London buildings: 21 Portman Square and the National Portrait Gallery. Similar to Alys regarding material traces or repeated details as a way to begin to understand a city, is the notion that a recognisable graffiti logo (such as the Toasters' toaster in cities around the world, or Xupet's black dummy in Barcelona) can jolt us into a reassessment of our surroundings. The graffiti logo, though, is a self-conscious placing or mark-making. The city environment is both artwork and a canvas, for writers and visual artists. As Sinclair reminds us in *Lights Out*, London, like any city, is subject to alternative cartographies. These can be said to represent what Chris Jenks calls the '"many potential versions…of how the manifestly shared (or at least explicitly public) streets and buildings delineate fragmented localities and senses of placement and identity"' (*Lights Out*, p.48).

Graffiti is the constant which marks Sinclair's walks through and around London, and which is articulated or translated in his writing. As symbolic text it has a resonance beyond the built forms on which it is inscribed. Indeed, the significance of space and place is pertinent to the debates surrounding graffiti, street culture and the art establishment. This has been highlighted by the recent exhibition in Bristol City Museum of work by the graffiti artist Banksy, and by the critical responses to it.

Sinclair also writes, in *Lights Out* (pp.225-231), about the sculptor Rachel
Whiteread's work. Whiteread cast the interior, an unpeopled space, of a late-Victorian
terraced house in Bow, London, in August 1993, completing it in October. After
House was demolished in January 1994 it gained power as an absent structure, its very
invisibility a reminder of vanished lives and buildings, the city's cycles of renewal,
and its own provisional status.

There is space for further reassessment and reshaping of the City Space
module, particularly in terms of mobile technologies and network architectures. The
direction of my research is likely, in the short term, to continue to focus on textual,
visual and material exploration of the urban space as a cultural phenomenon. Street
art, graffiti and physical interaction with the city (parkour as an urban art form, for
instance) have received increased media attention in the last few years, and the
production of literature about the city shows no sign of abating.

My research on urban space has partly developed from research on domestic
space, and both have been underpinned by an interdisciplinary methodology
(stemming from doctoral research which brought together literature, visual culture and
material culture). Research networks and chance encounters have also contributed to
the teaching of the module in tangible ways, for example resulting in lecturer
exchanges and visiting lecturers. A guest lecturer's discussion of Tom Tykwer's film
Run Lola Run had a considerable impact on the students' understanding of the textual
city in relation to materiality and sensuality. In the film Lola senses the city (Berlin),
rather than seeing it from the perspective of sites, as a tourist might. Relevant
exhibitions and events were incorporated in the module programme wherever
possible. A group visit to the exhibition Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern
Metropolis at Tate Modern formed the basis of a project assignment. The exhibition
was inspiring in that it showed a range of cultural attempts to represent the city and
capture the forces of urbanisation. It also emphasised the performative aspect of the
city.

It is perhaps easier to judge in retrospect which concepts or activities helped
most in 'crossing the divides' and enabling a deeper appreciation and critical
understanding of both literature and the urban environment. Perception itself took on
added significance in relation to perspective: whose city? Similarly, the connections
(through narrative or movement) between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic were
seen to be crucial, rather than the need to construct an overall master plan of the city.
Looking at aerial photographs of different cities, the abstraction of detail,
complemented working with literary texts as 'structures' of various kinds. Yet there
are always theoretical challenges in 'crossing the divides' between disciplines. How
can we 'realise' (with reference to Martin Meisel's critical study *Realizations*) the
shift between disciplines, and from narrative text to concrete perceptual form?

Over the time I have been teaching City Space the module bibliography, of
primary and secondary material, has expanded considerably. Whilst wanting to avoid
a sense of the module's continuous linear development, I would say that there has
been a shift from critical analysis of cross-disciplinary representations to an
understanding of different interventions in urban space. My sense of materiality – that
matter has a poetic dimension – is linked to this. As Thrift asserts, the material and
imaginative are not separate (*Companion to Cultural Geography*, p.123).
Interestingly, Juhani Pallasmaa makes a similar claim, suggesting that we have lost
connection with our hands and, therefore, with our embodied consciousness. If mark-
making needs to be reinstated, then that connection should also be restored.
Pallasmaa gives the example of buildings as expressions of the senses and intellect

combined. This view is an important intervention in recent debates about the built environment which are primarily concerned with the homogenisation and privatisation of cities.

Boundaries of knowledge are constantly being established, deconstructed and then reformed, much as the mythical city of Camelot, in Alfred Tennyson's Victorian Arthurian epic *Idylls of the King*, is in a state of perpetual, incomplete construction. Furthermore, boundaries between the real and the imagined city are ill-defined and constantly shifting. In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino notes that 'the eye does not see things, but images of things that mean other things'.[21] Analysing and exploring the city in literature necessarily puts the reader in the position of reconsidering 'what is meant by the "real"'.[22] In effect, urban literary texts are participating in what Gaston Bachelard terms topoanalysis, or 'the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives'.[23]

The high level of critical and imaginative engagement that students brought to the module has certainly been inspiring and informative, and has resulted in some outstanding assessments. There is no doubt that the initial prospect of crossing perceived divides caused some consternation within seminar groups. However, module evaluation (amongst other modes of communication) has revealed that students are ultimately excited by the crossing and integration of disciplinary boundaries. One student enjoyed discussing texts he/she 'would not normally get the chance to work with'. Another observed that he/she 'would never view a city in the same way again!' and another commented that he/she was now 'looking at literature and the environment in a totally new way'.

Endnotes

[1] In terms of modern urban geography, such a framework is made possible partly by the work of the Chicago School sociologists in the 1920s and 1930s, whose research into the urban environment brought theory and ethnographic fieldwork together. Since then a body of journals (for example, the *Journal of Social and Cultural Geography* and the *Society and Space* journal) in this field has been established.

[2] Nigel Thrift, 'Performance and Performativity: A Geography of Unknown Lands', in James Duncan, Nuala Johnson and Richard Schein (eds), *A Companion to Cultural Geography* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2004), p. 121.

[3] Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity* (London: Routledge, 2002), p.165.

[4] Fran Tonkiss, 'A-Z', in Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (eds), *City A-Z* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.2.

[5] Peter Ackroyd, 'The Life of the City', *The Observer: Century City* (2001), p.4.

[6] Roland Barthes, 'Semiology and the Urban', in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 170.

[7] Cynthia Wall, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), p.116.

[8] Penelope Lively, *City of the Mind* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1991), p. 66.

[9] James Donald, 'Detectives', in Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (eds), *City A-Z* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 58.

[10] Ross King, 'Habitation', in Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (eds), *City A-Z* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 97.

[11] Robert Harbison, *Eccentric Spaces* (Cambridge Mass: MIT, 2000), p. 126.

[12] Fran Tonkiss, 'A-Z', pp. 1-2.

[13] Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2006), p. 89.

[14] Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2002), p. 20.

[15] For a useful introduction to the history, ideas and practice of psychogeography see Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2006), pp. 9-29.

[16] Gianni Vattimo, 'The End of Modernity, The End of the Project?', in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.154.

[17] James Duncan and David Lambert, 'Landscapes of Home', in James Duncan, Nuala Johnson and Richard Schein (eds), *A Companion to Cultural Geography* (Blackwell: Oxford, 2004), pp. 383-84.

[18] Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2006), p. 12.

[19] Iain Sinclair, *Lights Out for the Territory: Nine Excursions in the Secret History of London* (London: Granta, 1997), p. 4.

[20] Iain Sinclair, ed., *London: City of Disappearances* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2006), p. 2.

[21] Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, trans. William Weaver (London: Vintage, 1997), p.13.

[22] Julian Wolfreys, *Writing London: The Trace of the Urban Text from Blake to Dickens* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 6.

[23] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994), p. 8.

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