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Masses, Forces, and the Urban Sublime

The Realization of Multitudinous Humanity

Observers of the urban scene in nineteenth and early twentieth-century fiction are recurrently confronted with what American novelist Robert Herrick calls "the realization of multitudinous humanity":[1] the city defeats their powers of perception. In William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), this experience is triggered by masses of immigrants. Gazing from the New York elevated train, upper-middle-class editorialist Basil March discovers slum dwellers with disquieting features—"small eyes, … high cheeks, … broad noses, … cue-filleted skulls." As Basil's ethnic clichés cannot keep up with this diversity, he seeks comfort in Social Darwinist generalities: the streets, he ventures, are ruled by the "play of energies" of the "struggle for survival."[2] If Howells's flâneur dared to immerse himself into the crowd, he would likely share the plight of Avis Everhard, the heroine of Jack London's dystopia *The Iron Heel* (1908), whose perceptual distress is compounded with disgust and terror. Trapped in a riot of the Chicago underclass, Avis must thread her way through the "awful river" of a subhuman mob made up of "carnivorous … apes and tigers, anaemic consumptives and hairy beasts of burden."[3] In other texts, the object of urban dread is industry. French science-fiction pioneer Jules Verne's *The Begum's Fortune* (1879) features gothic depictions of a city designed by German gun manufacturers: Stahlstadt is "a dark mass, huge and strange" whose "forest of cylindrical chimneys … vomit clouds of dense smoke."[4] Likewise, North England towns in Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil, Or the Two Nations* (1845) are "wilderness[es] of cottages … interspersed with blazing furnaces."[5] For Emile Zola, steam engines in coal mines are "vile

beast[s] … gorged on human flesh."[6] American investigative journalist Rebecca Harding Davis calls manufacturing towns the "Devil's place."[7] This nightmarish apparatus of production sustains economic processes beyond human measure. American novelist Frank Norris's *The Octopus* (1901) and *The Pit* (1903) map the gigantic economic traffic whereby wheat is produced and exchanged. Harvested from the "Titan" earth, wheat unleashes speculation frenzies displaying the "appalling fury of the Maëlstrom."[8] At the far end of these economic chains, Zola's *The Ladies' Paradise* (1881) and Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900) examine how customers fare in the urban market. In newly-built department stores, Zola's and Dreiser's shoppers experience the "drag of desire" exerted by commodities with untraceable origins.[9]

The passages above are instances of the urban sublime: they picture cities as objects of fascination and terror. The urban sublime, they suggest, interweaves two strands of discourse: oceanic metaphors that evoke magnitude and urban-industrial gothic that stirs accents of abject dehumanization. Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant have provided the classic analyses of the psychological and philosophical stakes of the sublime. Burke's definition revolves around power and terror: we should regard as sublime "whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever … operates in a manner analogous to terror."[10] For Burke, sublime terror paradoxically induces delight: subjects of the sublime enjoy fear by proxy. Kant's view of sublimity, relying partly on Burke, is concerned with the dynamics of cognitive processes. For Kant, the sublime arises whenever reason produces an idea of infinity that cannot be objectified by understanding and imagination: the mind struggles with a concept of "absolute totality" with which it cannot catch up. This experience gratifyingly intimates that human subjects may perceive absolutes, albeit in "supersensible" form. [11] In light of Burke and Kant, the city's human aggregates are sublime because they inspire ambivalent feelings, mingling

exhilaration with a threat to selfhood. Also, just as sublime landscapes hint at a divine presence in nature, cityscapes spark off epiphanies about multitudinous humanity. Urban novels suggest that the spectacle of the mass allows observers to perceive what late-nineteenth-century American essayist Henry Adams calls "the economies … of force"—the latent play of energies in the social field.[12]

The urban sublime occupies a median position between the sublimes of Romanticism and postmodernism. For William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the chief object of wonder was nature.[13] Under postmodernism, sublime distress is caused by what Fredric Jameson calls the "impossible totality" of technologically mediated social bonds.[14] In broader epistemological terms, the postmodern sublime arises from the mismatch between strategies of representation and their "[u]npresentable" objects.[15] Among the sources of dread and wonder evoked above, Romantic nature and the postmodernist breakdown of representation have enjoyed more attention than the city. The critical corpus investigating urban sublimity is limited and mostly recent. It can be broadened by taking into consideration discourses cognate to urban experience—the industrial, the technological, even the nuclear sublime.[16] This apparent neglect may originate from the suspicion that the discourse registering the city's sublimity developed as an afterthought to Romanticism: it merely involves, Carol Bernstein argues, a "transfer" of sublime affects "from a natural to an urban … scene."[17] Still, looking backwards from postmodernism, the value of the urban sublime resides in its capacity to signal that the epistemological crisis of (post)modernity is perceptible in the materiality of built-up space: the metropolis is the visible token of the resistances to representation caused by complex social interconnections. Unlike romantic nature, yet in agreement with postmodernist skepticism, the

city manifests this epistemological breakdown in a cultural context that renders the mystical resolution of the sublime unavailable.

The primary corpus of the urban sublime ranges from architecture, the social sciences, literature, and film, to such popular attractions as panoramas. Some of the earliest discussions of urban sublimity focused on architecture and urban planning. In his history of English architecture, Nikolaus Pevsner discerns a potential for fascination and dread in Victorian buildings—a phenomenon Nicholas Taylor calls the "Awful Sublimity of the Victorian City."[18] Similar reflections have been elaborated about skyscrapers and twentieth-century urban development, yet only a limited grasp of the urban sublime can be derived from architecture alone. Buildings and metropolitan sprawls are awe-inspiring not by virtue of their sole spatial embodiment but because they are material tokens for principles defying objectification. Spatial structures are indeed fragments in a profusion of urban stimuli whose full extent is never present to the observer's gaze. Thus, much as gothic cathedrals are expressions of the medieval community of believers, or as Versailles showcases absolute monarchy, the sublime metropolis gestures towards a social fabric perceived as a tangle of indeterminate masses and forces. The full deployment of the urban sublime requires therefore that architecture and the graphic arts be complemented by media able to name this imperfectly glimpsed background. From the nineteenth century to World War I, for instance, the urban sublime appears as the combined offshoot of the city's architectural configuration and its literary, journalistic, and sociological representation.

Thus defined, the corpus of urban sublimity yields its own principle of periodization. For the urban sublime to emerge, observers of the metropolis must possess some awareness of demographic and industrial development: the urban sublime is unlikely to appear before Adam

Smith's treatises on economics or Thomas Malthus's reflections on populations. This places its onset no earlier than the first half of the nineteenth century, when the impact of the Industrial Revolution on city life was exposed in the "Blue Books" of Victorian social investigators, in treatises of political economy such as Friedrich Engels's study of the Manchester working classes, and in reform novels by Charles Dickens, Disraeli, and Elizabeth Gaskell.[19] Conversely, we must consider, if not the disappearance of the discourse of urban sublimity, at least its qualitative change under modernism and postmodernism. The social structures of the metropolis is no less opaque today than at earlier stages of urbanization. Yet it less often inspires the discourse of masses and forces that dominated previous stages of urban culture.

From the Picturesque to the Sublime

In Burke and Kant, the sublime exists by virtue of its contrast with the beautiful: excess and dissonance instead of balance and harmony. Similarly, the "City Sublime," Elisabeth Wilson argues, coexists dialogically with "an essentially moderate and 'civilised' approach to urban living."[20] Urban planners often seek to restore what Lewis Mumford calls the city's "illumination of consciousness … and stamp of purpose."[21] Alan Trachtenberg points out for instance that Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park, aimed to "teach the metropolis about itself, to clarify its parts."[22] Verne's *The Begum's Fortune* contrasts grimy Stahlstadt with tree-lined France-Ville—an urban Eden evocative of turn-of-the-twentieth-century garden-cities. Likewise, in documentaries and social sciences reports, the portrayal of cities beyond control serves as a preparatory shock tactic for sociological analysis and reform. Jacob Riis's late-nineteenth-century photographs of New York slums expose poverty of gothic proportions in order to

advertise a program of housing regulations. Jack London's *The People of the Abyss* (1903), a muckraking investigation of the London East End, legitimizes a socialistic agenda.

The development of nineteenth-century urban fiction may be narrated on the basis of the pattern of dialogization outlined above: city novels developed according to writers' efforts to manage the spectacle of sublimity. Urban dread and wonder were either contained by the strategies of classic realism and the picturesque, or set to work for mapping urban space in the idiom of the romance. Honoré de Balzac's realist classic *Père Goriot* (1835) features surprising traces of the urban sublime, both oceanic and gothic. "Paris," Balzac writes, "is a veritable ocean" whose depths contain "flowers, pearls, monsters … unheard of, forgotten by the literary divers."[23] Likewise, *Père Goriot* swerves into blood melodrama in its portrayal of a spine-chilling convict hiding at the boarding house that serves as the novel's main locale. These are, however, scattered flashes in a text mainly concerned with scanning what Amy Kaplan calls the "knowable community" of realist fiction—its determinate lifeworld.[24] Balzac fulfills the realist agenda by resorting to the mechanics of the novel of manners, which cannot accommodate unfathomable motives and social forces. Any oddity affecting the boarding house—the latter is initially labeled a "curious monstrosit[y]"—is no sooner evoked than neutralized by the reassuring accents of the picturesque.[25]

As city novels shift from realism to naturalism, they increasingly rely on sublime rhetoric. I have argued elsewhere that the appropriation of this Romantic idiom is a definitional feature for naturalism as it separates off from realism.[26] In naturalism, the sublime is no longer the accursed portion of the image of the city: naturalist authors assume, as American novelist Abraham Cahan puts it, that the metropolis must be both "great" *and* "strange."[27] The sublime therefore becomes a paradoxical asset in the mapping of what James Naremore, in a study of

film noir, felicitously calls "the social fantastic"—areas at the periphery of the knowable lifeworld.[28] Thomas Weiskel's reflections on the Romantic sublime, if transposed to urban fiction, indicate how a literary idiom concerned with obstacles to representation may paradoxically contribute to the exploration of social space. Weiskel describes the sublime as a moment of perceptual excess triggering either a metonymical or a metaphorical resolution. The metonymical variant, I argue below, fits the (post)modernist variant of urban sublimity. Its metaphorical counterpart, already predominant in Romanticism, informs most city fiction until World War I. The metaphorical sublime turns perceptual distress into what Weiskel calls an "intuition of depth."[29] The representational breakdown, in this case, originates from an excess of stimuli—of signifiers—for which no determinate signifieds are available. Yet the excess comes to stand as a token for a signified of a deeper order: sublime distress gestures towards an indeterminate metaphorical tenor. For city fiction, this distress implies that aspects of the metropolis resisting the analytical strategies of documentary realism are evoked connotatively, as ungraspable energies and forces emanating from the totality of urban experience.

Dreiser's and Zola's representations of the subject's relation to the metropolis illustrate the dynamic of the intuition of depth. Realist certainties have a limited scope in *Sister Carrie*. The heroine's initial grasp of economics is shallow: she understands "the meaning of a little stone cutter's yard" in her native small town, yet knows "nothing" about the "strange energies and huge interests" informing businesses in the Windy City. The men she meets embody forces beyond representation, be it the energizing appeal of "the city's hypnotic influence" or, conversely, the destructive drag of urban life: Drouet radiates with "the mesmeric operations of super-intelligible forces"; Hurstwood is led to suicide after an eerie voice—the city's diffuse call—urges him to steal from his employer. Zola, in *Money* (1891), seems more intent than

Dreiser on portraying the urban economy analytically. Yet he swerves into gothic as he characterizes the ruthless speculator Saccard and hisillegitimate son, raised among the Paris underclass. Young Victor is a sadistic, incestuous pervert—the living metaphor of his father's implicitly criminal will to power. In Dreiser's *The Financier* (1912), similar gothic allegories depict speculator Frank Cowperwood as the evolutionary kinsman of a lobster meticulously devouring a squid, or "Mycteroperca Bonaci," a predatory fish with chameleon-like powers of simulation.[30] To some extent, as the two writers sound these sublime accents, they foreground their difficulties in turning perceptual breakdown into determinate revelation: they hesitate before settling on a metaphor fitting the city's sublime power. Still, they eventually give a solid outline to what might have remained a blurry intuition. Carrie's Chicago, we learn, is the playground of "the forces of life."[31] Likewise, Cowperwood, as he discovers the Windy City in the opening of *The Titan* (1914) describes it as a place where "life [i]s doing something new."[32] Zola's Saccard, after dragging his shareholders into bankruptcy, exclaims: "Does life concern itself about that?"[33] The object of sublime intuition is therefore life embodied in the urban field.

As urban novels equate the mysteries of the metropolis with life itself, they avail themselves of a mapping tool endowed with flexible fuzziness and the capability to picture its object either as fascinating or repellent. Thus, any enigmatic aspect of the city may stand for various manifestations of life energies. Economics and demographics, because they defy understanding, are equivalent to equally puzzling processes of biological reproduction. Capitalism and crowds are thereby caught up in a gendered economics. In Norris's *The Octopus* and *The Pit*, the wheat acts as a reproductive principle informing labor activity, trade, and the protagonists' mental processes: one single material acquires the status of a vital principle acting as token for the totality of the urban economy. Gold plays a similar part in Norris's *McTeague*

(1899), as does meat in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906), where the Chicago stockyards are the emblem of capitalist exploitation. Yet these energizing life cycles may veer into degenerative forces. Norris's wheat is both creative and destructive. More spectacularly, the biological traffic of sublime cities becomes a cesspool of abjection as it reaches the slums. Disraeli describes a city of metal workers whose streets are "reservoirs of leprosy and plague";[34] Sinclair's Chicago reeks with the metamorphoses of meat; in Jack London's East End documentary, the English capital accommodates a monstrous biological and economic traffic whereby rural England's "flood of vigorous strong life … perishes by the third generation."[35]

The Politics of the Urban Sublime

In Romanticism, Weiskel contends, ideology seeps into the sublime at the moment when a specific label is assigned to the awe-inspiring intuition of depth.[36] By a mechanism akin to Derridean logocentrism, subjects of the sublime transcode the indeterminate stimuli of distress into determinate concepts drawn from pre-existing ideologies. In late-nineteenth-century urban novels, the ideological resolution of the sublime is secured not only by naming life as the city's latent force, but also by conceptualizing that force in light of Social Darwinism. When Darwinism still carried the thrill of the new, the rhetoric of the struggle for survival made it possible to map populations in a fashion that seemingly met the requirements of both science and art. Phrased in this idiom, the urban scene appears as a segment of the social world where, to borrow Darwinian philosopher Herbert Spencer's mystical terminology, evolutionary processes unfold with the allure of the "Unknowable."[37]

Since Social Darwinism has served as ideological validation both of capitalism and scientific racism, one may suspect the nineteenth and early-twentieth urban sublime to be the

handmaiden of political conservatism. Alan Trachtenberg endorses this view: late-nineteenth-century social science and popular culture, he writes, propagated "the image of the city as mystery, as unfathomable darkness and shadow"; this discourse was a "mystification" encouraging urban dwellers to view monopoly capitalism as natural and unchallengeable. Trachtenberg's critique of the city's "new inexplicableness" is grounded in the Marxist concepts of commodity fetishism and reification.[38] Marx argues that capitalism, by the complexity of its mode of production, misleads subjects into believing that their social environment is "under the sway of an inhuman power."[39] Instead of appearing as a human aggregate amendable by human effort, the social world seems invested with the alien impenetrability of things. Thus, discourses romanticizing the city's mysteriousness enhance "human self-estrangement" and abet strategies of domination.[40] In this logic, the rhetoric of urban wonder is guilty of the philosophical mistake Marxist critic Georg Lukács imputes to vitalism: it views history not as the deployment of reason but as the whimsical course of "the 'eternal essence of life.'"[41] Nor does sublime vitalism fare better at the hands of critics relying on Michel Foucault's reflections on biopolitics. Mark Seltzer and Walter Benn Michaels suggest that Dreiser's and Norris's gendered economics neutralize all strategies of resistance as they make instincts and desire indistinguishable from consumerist seduction.[42]

The contention that urban sublimity amounts to mystification and subjection faces several objections, however. First, the idiom of dread and wonder was appropriated by literary left-wingers—Zola, Sinclair, London, Ernest Poole, or H. G. Wells. Poole's *The Harbor* (1915)—a best seller among American Progressive-era novels of social reform—both testifies to the existence of this aesthetic/political choice and illustrates its contradictions. Poole's chronicle of New York narrates the shift from entrepreneurial liberalism to monopoly capitalism, and

celebrates the promise of a socialist future. While the novel presents small entrepreneurs as obsolete, it makes monopoly capitalism and socialism equally fascinating. Advocates of scientific management, in their efforts to restructure the chaotic urban-industrial city, are "giant[s]" radiating "some queer magnetic force." To these icons of corporate glamor, labor opposes "the strike feeling"—the capacity of industrial crowds to achieve self-organization.[43] Political commitment in this novel is therefore less a matter of demystification than of emotional surges: socialism will conquer if its energies surpass the romance of capitalism.

Secondly, as Poole's novel inchoately suggests, political thinkers with no inclination toward irrationalism may refuse to condemn sublimity as parasitical. In the early-twentieth-century United States, Fredric Clemson Howe and Simon Nelson Patten developed visions of urban life praising the "crowding together of mankind" as a "social treasure":[44] the social interfacing made possible by urban masses creates a self-multiplying social surplus affording a "gain upon nature."[45] These thinkers anticipate the postmodern view according to which the city's indeterminacy, fluidity, and excess foster empowerment. Yet in the context of their time, their arguments were marginalized by the negative connotations clinging to urban masses. In *The Crowd, A Study of the Popular Mind* (1895), French sociologist Gustave Le Bon argues that the members of political crowds descend "several rungs in the ladder of civilization."[46] They respond exclusively to leaders able to channel hypnotic intensities arising from the mass itself. Sigmund Freud reformulated Le Bon's argument by arguing that crowd leaders achieve their dominion over groups by acting as the agglomerated subjects' "ego-ideal" (i.e., their superego).[47] Even pro-Socialist novelist H. G. Wells suggests in *The War of the Worlds* (1898) that streams of refugees are as much of a threat to Londoners as are the Martians. The novel's obsession with unruly masses is also noticeable in its visions of parasitical red weeds overrunning the ruins of

London, or of colonies of bacteria lethal even to extraterrestrials.

Toward Postmodernism: Beyond Masses and Forces

The urban sublime survived the transition from realism/naturalism to modernism at the cost of several reconfigurations. On the one hand, the reshaping of cityscapes by architectural modernism and the International style perpetuated the sublimity of masses and forces. This nineteenth-century discourse also found new outlets in emergent media such as film (Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* [1927]; King Vidor's *The Crowd* [1928]), science fiction (Isaac Asimov's *The Caves of Steel* [1954]; William Gibson's *Neuromancer* [1984]; Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* [1982]), and comics (the Batman and Spiderman franchises). On the other hand, the romance of the mass was marginalized in literature and painting. As these artistic media turned toward formal abstraction and the inner world, urban sublimity in the realist/naturalist mode was deprived of its main channel of expression. The shift was no mere matter of aesthetic choice. It also testifies to the high-modernist belief that the urban world had become associated with culturally sterile or politically objectionable mass phenomena. Pam Morris indicates that modernism's critique of realism is rooted in writers' distaste for commercially oriented mass culture, hence for the visible face of the twentieth-century urban world.[48] More ominously, the spectacle of the mass acquired military or totalitarian overtones: the portrayal of sublime crowds experienced its demonic swan song in the visions of armies stranded in World War I trenches (the debacle in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* [1929]), in the choreography of fascist hordes (Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* [1934]), and in the urban apocalypse of World War II bombings.

To the previous mode of the urban sublime, modernism opposed in the first place what

we might call necropolitan terror and wonder. (Post)romantic sources—Edgar Allan Poe's "The City in the Sea" (1845), James Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night* (1874)—had long established an anxiety-ridden link between the city, loss of self, and death. Similarly, modernist poetry and fiction—Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922), F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Franz Kafka's *The Trial* (1925)—identified the metropolis with cemeteries or the circles of hell. This mode of the sublime reverses the vitalistic depiction of urban masses. The alienated necropolis—Conrad's "whited sepulcher," Fitzgerald's "valley of ashes," or Eliot's "[u]nreal [c]ity"[49]—is metaphorically equivalent to death, not life. Beyond literature, the necropolitan sublime flourished in the (post)modernist iconography of the urban scene, from Edward Hopper's paintings to photorealist cityscapes by Richard Estes and Victor Burtinsky's photographs of industrial waste lands.

Simultaneously, (post)modernism developed a variety of the urban sublime that is neither death-obsessed nor concerned with underlying forces. In this discourse, the city is the playground of what Jean-François Lyotard calls the "*infinity of heterogeneous finalities*."[50] Its endless multiplicity is experienced as exhilarating, inducing only temporary anxiety soon overcome by new wonder. Nineteenth-century antecedents for this empowering mode of urban fascination appear in Charles Dickens's *Sketches by Boz* (1836), Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" (1840), or Charles Baudelaire's evocation of the Paris *flâneur*, famously glossed by Walter Benjamin. Each of these texts suggests, with occasional spikes of guilt, that the city's endless stimuli are pleasurable. Within modernism, this structure of feeling informs John Dos Passos's urban novels, which weave potentially infinite narrative networks among dozens of fictional lives. In Weiskel's terminology, this variety of the sublime affords a metonymical, not a metaphorical, resolution. Weiskel identifies its mechanism in the experience of writers faced

with a crippling "excess of signified."[51] The blockage is overcome by producing new signifiers ready to accommodate new meanings. Thus, the metonymic movement of writing—from one signifier to the next—defeats paralyzing excess. Weiskel's reasoning can be transposed from the subject to the object of perception. In this perspective, the confusion caused by perceptual excess is resolved by the reassurance that the stream of stimuli will not cease: there will always be more of the world to mobilize observers' attention. Cities fitting the metonymical sublime therefore resemble the rhizomatic lattices freed from a unifying principle evoked by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.[52] Novels and films of the postmetropolis such as David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* (1999) or Alejandro González Iñárritu's *Babel* (2006) celebrate this rhizomatic freedom. The fragmented, multifarious locales they evoke create ever more surprising connections among a planet-wide cast. The engine of the urban sublime is in this case no longer a transcendent force, but the very unfolding of time and space actualized in the form of human interconnections.

NOTES

[1] Robert Herrick, *Together* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1962), p. 185.

[2]William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 163.

[3] Jack London, *The Iron Heel*, in *Novels and Social Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1982), p. 535.

[4] Jules Verne, *The Begum's Fortune*, trans. W. H. G. Kingston (Philadelphia: Lippincott, s.d.), p. 65.

[5] Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 138.

[6] Emile Zola, *Germinal*, trans. Roger Pearson (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 482.

[7] Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron-Mills," in Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th ed., vol. B (New York: Norton, 2007), p. 2603.

[8] Frank Norris, *The Octopus* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Viking Penguin, 1986), p. 131; Norris, *The Pit* (New York: Doubleday Page and Co.: 1903), p. 80.

[9] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin-University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), p. 23.

[10] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 4.

[11] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 119.

[12] Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams*, in *Novels, Mont Saint Michel, The Education* (New York: Library of America, 1983), p. 1066.

[13] Thomas Weiskel, *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 6.

[14] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 35; see also Joseph Tabbi, *The Postmodern Sublime: Technology and American Writing from Mailer to Cyberpunk* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 11-13.

[15] See Jean-François Lyotard, "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime," trans. Lisa Liebmann, in Simon Morley, ed., *The Sublime* (London: Whitechapel Gallery-MIT Press, 2010), p. 130.

[16] See Victor Burtinsky, *The Industrial Sublime* (Ogden, UT: Mary Elizabeth Dee Shaw Gallery, 2011); David E. Nye, *American Technological Sublime* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994); Frances Ferguson, "The Nuclear Sublime," *Diacritics* 14.2 (1984), 4-10.

[17] Carol Bernstein, *The Celebration of Scandal*: *Toward the Sublime in Victorian Urban Fiction* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), p. 174..

[18] Nicholas Taylor, "The Awful Sublimity of the Victorian City; Its Aesthetic and Architectural Origins," in H. J. Dyos and M. Wolff, eds., *The Victorian City: Images and Realities* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), p. 431; see also Lynne Walker, "The Greatest Century: Pevsner, Victorian Architecture and the Lay Public," in Peter Draper, ed. *Reassessing Nikolaus Pevsner* (London: Ashgate, 2004), p. 138.

[19] Sheila Smith, "Introduction," in Benjamin Disraeli, *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. x.

[20] Elisabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 20.

[21] Lewis Mumford, *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 656.

[22] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 108.

[23] Honoré de Balzac, *Père Goriot*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 10-11.

[24] Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 47.

[25] Balzac, *Père Goriot*, p. 11.

[26] Christophe Den Tandt, *The Urban Sublime in American Literary Naturalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p. 33.

[27] Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 90.

[28] James Naremore, *More Than Night: Film Noir in Its Contexts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 16.

[29] Weiskel, *Romantic Sublime*, p. 24.

[30] Theodore Dreiser, *The Financier* (New York: New American Library, 1981), p. 446.

[31] Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, pp. 17, 78, 78, 73.

[32] Theodore Dreiser, *The Titan* (New York: New American Library, 1984), p. 12.

[33] Zola, Emile, *Money*, trans. Ernest Alfred Vizetelly (New York: Mondial, 2007), p. 319.

[34] Disraeli, *Sybil*, p. 165.

[35] Jack London, *The People of the Abyss*, in *Novels and Social Writings* (New York: Library of America, 1982), p. 28.

[36] Weiskel, *Romantic Sublime*, p. 44.

[37] Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1867), p. 3.

[38] *Trachtenberg, Incorporation*, pp. 112, 103.

[39] Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 156.

[40] Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, p. 135.

[41] Georg Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin, 1989), p. 181.

[42] Walter Benn Michaels, *The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism: American Literature at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 65; Mark Seltzer, "The Naturalist Machine," in *Bodies and Machines* (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 44.

[43] Ernest Poole, *The Harbor* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 152, 315.

[44] Fredric Clemson Howe, *The City, Hope of Democracy* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 294.

[45] Simon Nelson Patten, *The New Basis of Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), p. 16.

[46] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind,* trans. anon. (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 32.

[47] Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Liveright Publishing, 1967), p. 42.

[48] Pam Morris, *Realism* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 21.

[49] Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin Books: 2007), p. 11; F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1981), p. 29; T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land,* in *Collected Poems, 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 65.

[50] Jean-François Lyotard, "The Sign of History," trans. Geoff Bennington, in Andrew Benjamin, ed., *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 409, emphasis in original.

[51] Weiskel, *Romantic Sublime*, p. 29.

[52] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 7.