

Urban Nostalgia and Romantic Modernity: London in the Early
Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of nostalgia as depicted in visual and literary representations of London published in the early nineteenth century. It aims to expand our current understanding of the varying definitions and uses of nostalgia present in literature of the period. Rather than confining itself to the well-served notion of ‘Romantic London’, this thesis focuses upon the period falling between ‘Romanticism’ and ‘Victorianism’, and in doing so broadens current critical understanding of London’s literary history. Chapter one outlines three modes of viewing the urban landscape (the prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque) and analyses their uses to Cyrus Redding and Pierce Egan in containing the social tensions between history and modernity visible in the city’s landscape. Chapter two considers the affective metaphor of national ruin in Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Mary Shelley’s futuristic visions of London, and compares these descriptions of imperial decay with George Cruikshank’s illustrations of domestic ruin wrought by the construction of new suburban housing. Chapter three offers an alternative definition of ruin by focussing upon localised pockets of the city overlooked by urban improvement, and examines nostalgic illustrations of lost London neighbourhoods by John Thomas Smith and William Hone. Chapter four examines how antiquarian representations of the London poor (namely prints, engravings, paintings, and slang dictionaries) use nostalgia as a strategy of containment, reducing the poor to stock figures or anecdotes of London life in a polite literary format. Chapter five compares the narrative techniques and publishing strategies of Charles Lamb, William Hone, and Leigh Hunt in their appeal to an ideal readership characterised by convivial sociability and common London nostalgia. The conclusion brings together the many temporalities of nostalgia at play in these texts and suggests possible routes for tracing the afterlives of urban nostalgia into the twenty-first century.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Introduction

The Deserted Village

Sweet AUBURN! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks, and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at thy breast, and turns the past to pain.¹

Published in 1770, Oliver Goldsmith's nostalgic paean to pre-enclosure England presents personal feeling and political reaction as inextricably intertwined modes of viewing rural landscape. *The Deserted Village* reflects wistfully upon 'Sweet Auburn!', a fictional place - or at least an imagined composite of the Irish village of Goldsmith's childhood and the many English villages depopulated as a result of Parliamentary enclosure – and in doing so, embeds firmly the personal 'pain' that 'remembrance wakes' within the social and economic contexts of enclosure and the ascendancy of agrarian capitalism.² Wandering between the 'glades forlorn' and the 'tangling walks' enshrouding the crumbling ruins of Auburn, the poet traces the outline of the now vanished 'cottage' and 'hawthorn', the remains of which are barely perceptible in the village's 'ruined grounds'. The glades and bowers that once protected Auburn are now abject physical relics memorialising the tyrannical grasp of enclosure and improvement. But they are also evocative prompts and aids to memory, a means of summoning an image of the past:

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smil'd,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;

¹ Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village, a Poem* (London W. Griffin, 1770), 5.

² For a discussion of the critical tendency to read Auburn as Goldsmith's home-village of Lissoy, see: Michael Griffin, 'Delicate Allegories, Deceitful Mazes: Goldsmith's Landscapes', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 16 (2001): 108.

There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.³

Nostalgic reflection upon Auburn's ruins enables the poet to excavate the hidden layers of social, economic, and personal history that have accrued around this picturesque vision of rustic ruin.

Goldsmith's countryside is marked with impressions of ruin and decay - physical symptoms of the landscape's deterioration brought about by the improving forces of enclosure - that in their picturesque forlornness elicit nostalgic contemplation of what once stood on this ground, and fondly individualised memories of the people who lived there. These ruins prompt an interleaving of personal reminiscence with political history: a narrative of enclosure, ruin, and protest is interiorised by the narrator, who mourns not only for the past but for the present state of things too. The focal point of this nostalgia is located in the narrator; a singular voice that performs a resurrection of collective memories buried in the landscape, thus revealing Auburn as a pastoral idyll subsumed by modernity. *The Deserted Village* is not merely a nostalgic poem, but a poem about nostalgia: the recovery of lost memories that are personal and painful, but also collective and cultural.

The scope of recent critical study of nostalgia's reach suggests that the emotive stimuli of landscape and the sensuous experience of place and displacement had a crucial influence over the formation of national and personal identity in this period.⁴ Indeed, as Fiona Stafford notes, the long eighteenth century was marked by a 'shifting balance between man and environment', in which 'changing social structures and economic, demographic, and employment patterns, together with advances in science, philosophy, technology, and agriculture' served to position people as observers of

³ Goldsmith, 13.

⁴ Kevis Goodman has authored a number of recent innovative discussions on the intersections of medicine and aesthetic theory in the period, particularly in terms of nostalgia and landscape, see: 'Uncertain Disease': Nostalgia, Pathologies of Motion, Practices of Reading', *Studies in Romanticism* 49, no. 2 (2010): 197–227; 'Conjectures on Beachy Head: Charlotte Smith's Geological Poetics and the Ground of the Present', *ELH* 81, no. 3 (2014): 983–1006; and 'Reading Motion: Coleridge's "Free Spirit" and Its Medical Background', *European Romantic Review* 26, no. 3 (2015): 349–356.

landscape rather than active within it.⁵ *The Deserted Village*, I suggest, marks the beginning of this vexed relationship. Goldsmith's poem offers a particular focalised moment in which a nexus of concerns combining both political comment on rural displacement, and the psychological focus of the poetic voice, come to bear upon the concept of nostalgia. As Raymond Williams notes, the poem is distinctive in 'its combination of protest and nostalgia', highlighting the capacity for nostalgia as a means of commenting upon the political, economic, and cultural concerns of modernity.⁶

The tensions inherent in Goldsmith's poem – between nostalgia and modernity, between improvement and ruin, and between personal and collective memory – are at the heart of this thesis. The chapters here examine various forms of urban nostalgia that emerge in the early nineteenth century as strategies to address an experience of modernity perceived and characterised by a sense of ceaseless change. Across a range of texts, as I will show, this formulation of nostalgia – whether for a golden age of national glory, for a time when London's streets opened onto vast fields, or for an urban populace that was known, readable, and unthreatening – was a hallmark of early nineteenth-century accounts of the city. The model of nostalgia underlying and unifying these texts is one which exists coevally with modernity, supporting various literary and artistic projects of memorial and recovery that seek to make buried urban memories live.

Although itself not an exploration of the city, Goldsmith's poem is nevertheless a key example in explaining the ways in which nostalgia resists categorisation as a myopic sentiment of personal loss, and opens out to encompass political and cultural reactions to historical change witnessed in the present moment. The relationship between protest and nostalgia, as outlined by Williams, runs throughout this thesis, in discourses of both critique and resistance, and manifested in the aesthetic and intellectual categories of ruin, anecdote, and sociability operating in the early nineteenth

⁵ Fiona J. Stafford, *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 88.

⁶ Raymond Williams, *The Country And The City* (London: Vintage Digital, 2013), 108.

century. In Goldsmith's poem – as in a number of texts this thesis will explore - recollection of the past facilitates comment upon the present. Mouldering ruins of landscape and dwellings are portals into a previous era of 'simple blessings' and 'native charm': 'when all the village train from labour free / Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree.'⁷ Goldsmith describes an undetermined past time when the 'honest rustic' and 'long remembered beggar' were morally and physically nourished by the benevolent village preacher, a vignette that throws into sharp relief the deleterious effects of mercantilism and luxury in the present. Now, enclosure usurps the land and acts to 'dispossess the swain'.⁸

Although the object of Goldsmith's nostalgia is an unspecified era, its motivations are anchored firmly in the present, and to a specific political context of Parliamentary enclosure.⁹ Through acts of enclosure, landholders were permitted to acquire communal land and divide it into fields for cultivation, thus curtailing the rural population's collective rights to the land and their economic independence. Although the process dates from the fifteenth century, enclosure's progress was accelerated between 1750 and 1815 when Parliament endorsed private bills in order to augment agricultural production to serve expanding cities and colonies.¹⁰ In the interests of feeding the expanding market of an economy geared towards national prosperity, enclosure caused not only the radical alteration of the English countryside by engrossing common land, but also entailed the intensification of abject poverty, making urban migration and parish support an economic necessity for the rural population.

⁷ Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village, a Poem*, 2.

⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

⁹ For a resolutely unpolitical reading of the poem, see: Laurence Goldstein, 'The Auburn Syndrome: Change and Loss in "The Deserted Village" and Wordsworth's Grasmere', *ELH* 40, no. 3 (1973): 352–71.

¹⁰ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 9, 10.

Goldsmith's political resistance to enclosure is also a moral stance.¹¹ The 'shapeless ruin' of the landscape reflects the nefarious spirit of avarice and monopoly engendered by the socially reckless pursuit of mercantile growth and luxury. The trappings of wealth generated through enclosure intensifies its segregating project, as 'the man of wealth and pride / Takes up a space that many poor supplied; / Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds, / Space for his horses, equipage and hounds.'¹² As ephemeral and expendable as the 'cumbrous pomp' of luxurious commodities may be – 'a breath can make them as a breath has made' – the peasantry of Auburn 'when once destroyed, can never be supplied'.¹³ The ultimate effect is one of dispossession, inching out the rural population 'to the city sped'.¹⁴ What awaits them there is the ever-present cyclical production and consumption of wealth and luxury: 'to see profusion that he must not share' and 'to pamper luxury [...] extorted from his fellow creature's woe'.¹⁵

However, Williams argues that the narrator's identification of his own suffering – the nostalgic pang of 'pain' the poet feels in the passage quoted at the start of this introduction – with the social conflicts of his present moment, is a 'negative identification': that is, 'the identification between [the poet's] own suffering and that of a social group beyond him is inevitably negative in the end'.¹⁶

As Williams elaborates:

The present is accurately and powerfully seen, but its real relations, to past and future, are inaccessible, because the governing development is that of the writer himself: a feeling

¹¹ For an illuminating historical overview of the political and biographical readings of *The Deserted Village*, see: Alfred Lutz, 'The Politics of Reception: The Case of Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village"', *Studies in Philology* 94, no. 2 (1998): 174; Matthew Clarke, 'The "Luxury of Woe": The Deserted Village and the Politics of Publication', *European Romantic Review*. 26, no. 2 (n.d.): 165. See also: John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 98.

¹² Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village, a Poem*, 15.

¹³ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 111.

about the past, an idea about the future, into which, by what is truly an intersection, an observed present is arranged.¹⁷

With the privileged position of the writer's 'governing' influence in mind, the nostalgia of *The Deserted Village* can be read as artifice: Goldsmith's description of the 'sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn' simply utilises poetic language to render the past in more vivid terms, and demonstrates a self-awareness of the narrator's place outside of the labour and leisure of the scene: 'I paused on every charm'.¹⁸ He is a poetic spectator of the landscape, not a rural labourer. But there is critical value in this strategy. The remove of the spectating narrator from the reality of the social pressures of depopulation and migration provides a vantage point which is indicative of nostalgia's reach, encompassing grand historical narratives of improvement and decline, as well as uncovering the quotidian traces of change in the landscape.

Despite the desolation left in the wake of this ruinous cycle of production and consumption – 'where wealth accumulates and men decay' – basic human needs for shelter, food, and environmental stability endure intact.¹⁹ In its appeal to these necessary constants of human existence, Goldsmith's nostalgia for an earlier idyll of economic independence and security arrests briefly the interminable rhythm of ruin and decay. The basic needs of people persist even as the landscape is churned up and parcelled off in mercantile self-interest. Nostalgic reflections impose a moment of discontinuity into the cyclical narrative of economic production. Invoking the ghostly remains of Auburn acts to pause the progress of 'trade's unfeeling train'.²⁰ Goldsmith singles out a specific moment in time for poetic examination; a moment which requires the narrator to step outside of the present time to reflect upon the past, not only with the benefit of hindsight, but to occupy the moment in its own right.

¹⁷ Ibid, 111.

¹⁸ Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village, a Poem*, 3, 1.

¹⁹ Ibid, 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

In this sense, nostalgia is a time apart from past or present, a different temporal realm in which the march of progress or modernity is stopped briefly in order to examine and preserve a fleeting moment in this paused narrative. Often, these are the moments which are typically overlooked, incidental, and unassuming, exemplified in the homely sociability of rustic life so fondly traced by Goldsmith. But it is the contraction of political reality and personal recollection, within these reminiscences, that are the chief concern of Goldsmith's poem. The poem is a means of inscribing loss, but also an attempt at recovery – and thus future economic prosperity - in its comment upon specific political pressures. These inscriptions of loss are necessarily temporally ambiguous in their project. In one sense, the poem is a strategy of preservation, of reviving the past; but it also calls attention to the temporal vulnerability of a subject on the brink of disappearing from the landscape. I will return to the many themes that Goldsmith's poem outlines – including ruin, improvement, and memory – in the chapters that follow. First, I would like to provide an overview of the critical debates surrounding the various formulations of nostalgia operative in the early nineteenth-century city, in order to fully contextualise my exploration of distinctive forms of urban nostalgia in London in this period.

Formulations of Nostalgia

The Country and the City

It has been argued by Raymond Williams that English history has 'a problem of perspective; by which the 'good old days' are used as a 'stick to beat the present'.²¹ Patterned through history is a long line of 'golden age' thinkers and writers who cumulatively move the 'escalator' of nostalgia progressively through time, pursuing the rural paradigm of a pastoral paradise located in the recent past. As Williams' escalator travels back through history, its progress yields a persistent longing for a recently lost rural way of life: 'nostalgia, it can be said, is universal and persistent'.²² In Williams'

²¹ Raymond Williams, *The Country And The City*, 12, 16.

²² *Ibid*, 16.

account of nostalgia, we never actually arrive at the golden age, since one era's ideal is always another's flawed present. Nostalgia is restless and interminable: 'consistently directed to an earlier and happier rural England, we could find no place, no period, in which we could seriously rest'.²³ This is a view supported by later critical commentary upon nostalgia, with Susan Stewart characterising the mode as 'a longing that is inauthentic...because the past it seeks has never existed'.²⁴ The escalator never arrives at its object, but keeps moving perpetually on through 'successive Old Englands' in search of an ideal that does not exist:

Or shall we find the timeless rhythm in Domesday [...]? Or in a free Saxon world before what was later seen as the Norman rape and yoke? In a Celtic world, before the Saxons came up the rivers? In an Iberian world, before the Celts came, with their gilded barbarism? Where indeed shall we go, before the escalator stops?²⁵

What Williams' model of nostalgia reveals is that there is no specific golden age whose sudden end marked the advent of a violent modern world. The object of nostalgia will always 'move and recede' in concert with the progress of time: 'Old England, settlement, the rural virtues – all these, in fact, mean different things at different times, and quite different values are being brought into question'.²⁶ In Williams' formulation of nostalgia, the object is always rural: 'the key to [nostalgia] is the contrast of the country with the city and the court: here nature, there worldliness'.²⁷

Medical Beginnings

While twentieth- and twenty-first century notions of nostalgia define the term as an often politically inflected sentimental longing, or a phenomenon of collective idealisation of a former remembered era, nostalgia was first used as a medical term to denote the physical and psychological symptoms

²³ Ibid, 49.

²⁴ Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 23.

²⁵ Williams, *The Country And The City*, 16.

²⁶ Ibid, 17.

²⁷ Ibid, 64.

of homesickness, particularly prevalent in those who travelled or who were physically displaced.²⁸ First classified by Johannes Hofer in 1688, nostalgia became an internationally reported ‘wasting disease’ of soldiers, sailors, and exiles – a physiological pathology akin to homesickness and premised on bodily mobility and displacement.²⁹ Hofer, a Swiss medical student, coined the neologism, derived from the Greek root *nostos* (a homecoming) and *algos* (a painful longing).³⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century, throughout Europe, doctors recognised nostalgia as a frequently fatal disease.³¹

In this earliest incarnation, nostalgia was a longing for a specific place, rather than a yearning for a general sense of an idealised past. This definition was particularly convenient in a period which saw persistent global warfare: the wars of Spanish succession (1701-14), the Polish wars (1730s), the Franco Austrian war (1740s), the Seven Years War (1750s), ongoing battle for American Independence, and British conflict with France from 1793 to 1815. The disease seems to have flourished at sea and is often described as the ‘harbinger of scurvy’ in maritime nosologies.³² In scientific and medical texts, it was defined variously as a ‘calenture’, the ‘inflammation of the brain’, and the ‘maladie du pais’.³³ Erasmus Darwin describes nostalgia as: ‘an unconquerable desire of returning to one’s native country, frequent in long voyages, in which the patients become

²⁸ For a recent study of the political succour offered by nostalgia in the age of austerity, see: Owen Hatherley, *The Ministry of Nostalgia: Consuming Austerity* (London: Verso Books, 2015).

²⁹ Carolyn Kiser Anspach, trans, ‘Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia by Johannes Hofer, 1688’, *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 2 (1 January 1934): 380.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 381.

³¹ *Ibid*, 383.

³² Thomas Trotter, *Observations on the Scurvy: With a Review of the Theories Lately Advanced on That Disease; and the Opinions of Dr Milman Refuted from Practice*. (Edinburgh, 1786), 25.

³³ John Allen, *A Summary View of the Whole Practice of Physick. Being the Sentiments of the Most Celebrated Authors in All Ages, Relating to Diseases, Their Causes and Cures. With Most Cases in Surgery and Midwifery. To Which Are Added, Some Observations Very Rare and Uncommon; and a Curious Treatise on All Sorts of Poisons*, vol.1, (London, 1733), 27; Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia; Or, the Laws of Organic Life*, vol. 2, (London, 1794), 372; William Black, *An Arithmetical and Medical Analysis of the Diseases and Mortality of the Human Species*, vol, 2 (London, 1789), 71.

so insane as to throw themselves into the sea, mistaking it for green fields or meadows'.³⁴

Increasingly, nostalgia was recognised as an 'emotional upheaval [...] related to the workings of memory' and the multiple bio-physical terminologies for the condition gave way to a more stable definition via the application of associationist theory of memory in which 'associated recollections [...] attain a degree of intensity comparable to that of actual feeling'.³⁵

In analysis of an era marked by various degrees and kinds of mobility, the instability of rural and urban landscapes, and the precarious relationship between people and their worlds, the psychological application of nostalgia has been seized upon as a crucial critical lens in discourses around travel, science, childhood, and colonialism. Nostalgia has been explored as a malady of emigration in accounts of slavery, as a pathology of Romantic literary genius, as a manifestation of idealised childhood, and as a crucial facet in the discourses of sensibility, melancholy, and hysteria.³⁶ The transition of nostalgia from a treatable medical condition firmly located in the body, towards a psychological symptom of modernity in the early nineteenth century, has been absorbed by more recent and capacious formulations of nostalgia that reflect this complex history of taxonomy.

³⁴ Darwin, *Zoonomia*, 367. For analysis of the calenture in Wordsworth's poetry, see Alan Bewell, *Romanticism and Colonial Disease*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 59-62.

³⁵ Jean Starobinski and William S. Kemp, 'The Idea of Nostalgia', *Diogenes* 14, no. 54 (1 June 1966): 89-91. For an overview of associationist psychology, see: Barbara Bowen Oberg, 'David Hartley and the Association of Ideas', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37, no. 3 (1976): 441-454.

³⁶ See: Ramesh Mallipeddi, "'A Fixed Melancholy": Migration, Memory, and the Middle Passage', *The Eighteenth Century* 55, no. 2/3 (2014): 235-253,332; Ashley Miller, "'Striking Passages": Memory and the Romantic Imprint', *Studies in Romanticism* 50, no. 1 (2011): 29-53,217; Ruth Abbott, 'Nostalgia, Coming Home, and the End of the Poem: On Reading William Wordsworth's Ode. Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', *Memory Studies* 3, no. 3 (1 July 2010): 204-14; Elizabeth Dolan, 'British Romantic Melancholia: Charlotte Smith's Elegiac Sonnets, Medical Discourse and the Problem of Sensibility', *Journal of European Studies* 33, no. 3 (2003): 237-253; Deborah Weiss, 'Suffering, Sentiment, and Civilization: Pain and Politics in Mary Wollstonecraft's Short Residence', *Studies in Romanticism* 45, no. 2 (2006): 199-221,319; Heather Meek, 'Medical Men, Women of Letters, and Treatments for Eighteenth-Century Hysteria', *Journal of Medical Humanities* 34, no. 1 (2013): 1-14.

A Symptom of Modernity

In her concept of nostalgia, the most prominent recent theorist of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym, offers a wide-ranging structure of emotion that highlights the transition between personal and collective feeling tied to a sense of place: ‘nostalgia is not merely an expression of local longing, but a result of a new understanding of time and space that made the division into “local” and “universal” possible’.³⁷ Boym’s theorisation of nostalgia is based upon two understandings of the term: a ‘restorative’ nostalgia and a ‘reflective’ nostalgia. Restorative nostalgia stresses ‘a trans-historical reconstruction of the lost home’, whereas reflective nostalgia revels in ‘the longing itself, and delays homecoming’.³⁸ Boym’s typology, she argues, ‘allows us to distinguish between national memory that is based on a single plot of national identity, and social memory, which consists of collective frameworks that mark but do not define the individual memory’.³⁹ Restorative nostalgia ‘manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time’.⁴⁰ The differentiation between these two formulations of nostalgia is where I wish to position the argument of this thesis. The decoupling of an essentially collective ‘national’ memory and a singular ‘social’ memory’ is too stark a contrast, as evinced in my discussion of *The Deserted Village* here. Although Boym acknowledges that these are ‘not absolute types’ of nostalgia, but ‘tendencies’, in practise, there is too much common ground between these definitions to justify their separateness. Indeed, Boym’s own work appears to acknowledge the porous nature of her definitions: ‘As a public epidemic, nostalgia was based on a sense of loss not limited to personal history’.⁴¹

³⁷ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xvi.

³⁸ Ibid, xviii.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 41.

⁴¹ Ibid, 6.

As Boym notes, the diagnosis of nostalgia in the late seventeenth century ‘took place roughly at the historical moment when the conception of time and history were undergoing radical change. The religious wars in Europe came to an end but the much prophesied end of the world and doomsday did not occur’.⁴² Richard Terdiman’s concept of a ‘memory crisis’ works in concert with Boym’s definition of nostalgia. He notes that after any revolutionary period in history, ‘a society’s connection with its history [is placed] under pressure’, and that, specifically in Europe after the French Revolution ‘people experienced the insecurity of their culture’s involvement with its past’.⁴³ ‘The long nineteenth century’, Terdiman notes, ‘became a present whose self-conception was framed by a disciplined obsession with the past’ reducing memory to a form of mimesis.⁴⁴ Terdiman’s model of memory allows for a depathologised notion of nostalgia, a process, Nicholas Dames argues, in which literature played a crucial role. For Dames, writing about British fiction from 1810 to 1870, the novels of Jane Austen propagated the basis of what would become a new nostalgia by transforming the nostalgia of spatial dislocation into an unsettled longing for an inaccessible time, eased by voluntary recollection of the past.⁴⁵

Terdiman and Dames’ studies allow for a model of nostalgia that, in its reaction to the dislocating effects of modernity, is directed towards very recent points in national history. As further scholarship has demonstrated, literature’s role in constructing a national past extends well beyond recent events to incorporate a renewed interest in national and cultural histories, and the revival of antiquarian and folkloric modes of literature. In the nineteenth century, this interest took the form of medievalism.

⁴² Ibid, 8.

⁴³ Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 5.

⁴⁵ Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 20-75.

Early Nineteenth-Century Nostalgia

The manifestation of nostalgia in popular Victorian medievalism in the nineteenth century is a well-mapped critical field, with many studies tracing a vogue for medievalism across politics, art, and literature.⁴⁶ Inga Bryden argues for a nationalist manifestation of medievalism, although the enthusiasm for medievalism in art and politics bolstered regional identities as much as nationalistic ones.⁴⁷ The impulse to fashion regional self-identity is well documented in critical material discussing the proliferation of local antiquarian societies in the nineteenth century, attesting to the reshaping of collective nostalgia as both national and regional in scope.⁴⁸

Studies addressing Romantic medievalism are comparably less common but two prominent works take an overtly political approach in their analyses. Elizabeth Fay's book delineates the conservative and radical impulses of different forms of medievalism, claiming that: 'Whiggish and radical uses of the past, like Enlightenment antiquarian ones, located the discontinuities of the past through a scientific and theoretic lens' whereas 'Tory and nationalist ones insisted emotionally on the historical and cultural continuities that must not be erased or forgotten'.⁴⁹ Fay draws a stark distinction between the chivalric conservatism of Scott and Wordsworth, and the radical 'troubadourism' of Coleridge, Keats, and Percy Shelley, and sustains this decoupling to canonical works by Keats, Coleridge, and Mary Shelley. Clare A. Simmon's recent study takes a similar

⁴⁶ See: Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970); Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); Kevin L. Morris, *The Image of the Middle Ages in Romantic and Victorian Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1984); Roger Simpson, *Camelot Regained: The Arthurian Revival and Tennyson, 1800-1849* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1990); Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Inga Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur: The Arthurian Legends in Victorian Culture, Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2005).

⁴⁷ Bryden, *Reinventing King Arthur*, 33.

⁴⁸ Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); K. D. M. Snell, *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland, 1800-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Fay, *Romantic Medievalism: History and the Romantic Literary Ideal* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 1.

political stance, arguing that ‘the language of rights and personal freedom is a central part of Romantic-era popular medievalism’, a movement she defines as ‘the imaginative use of the past in creating a vision of what Britain should be in the future by looking back to the origins – as always, real or imagined – of British rights as conceived by those who did not have full political rights’.⁵⁰ There is a clear lacuna between the Victorian and Romantic models of collective, cultural nostalgia that exist in current literary criticism. Marilyn Butler’s posthumous work, *Mapping Mythologies*, identifies a distinctively regionalist project in the work of popular antiquarians of the late eighteenth century, an observation that helps challenge the Victorian monopoly on forms of localised nostalgia.⁵¹ Eighteenth-century ‘nativist discourses’ resisted the ‘holistic narratives’ of their ‘authoritative precursors: the Bible; genealogies of Roman emperors or of the kings and queens of England; officially sanctioned compilations such as Blackstone’s *Commentaries of the Laws of England*; histories of the state’.⁵² Instead, they retained a local and ‘collective ethos, an interest in their local roots’ and a commitment to popular culture.⁵³ Prominent antiquarians, dealing in ‘popular antiquities of ‘oral as well as written poetry and prose, and extending well beyond what we should call the literary, to beliefs, customs and festivities’, distinguished themselves firmly against religious, classical, royalist, or orientalist record-keeping, and retained a keen sense of localism, particularly in Northumbria and Wales.⁵⁴ Two prominent antiquarians from these regions, John Brand and Joseph Ritson ‘remained largely localist in their subject matter’.⁵⁵ In line with this localised project of cultural recovery, there is surely fertile space for a critical discussion of a distinctly urban nostalgia, specifically one native to London. As this thesis hopes to show, London

⁵⁰ Clare A. Simmons, *Popular Medievalism in Romantic-Era Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 58, 6.

⁵¹ Marilyn Butler, *Mapping Mythologies: Countercurrents in Eighteenth-Century British Poetry and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 122-161.

⁵² *Ibid*, 127-8.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 129.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 128.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 130.

in the early nineteenth century was subject to intense self-scrutiny, as the fundamental nature of its landscape and inhabitants demanded new forms and categories of representation.

Early Nineteenth-Century London

In the early nineteenth century, London was first and foremost a commercial city, characterised by its ever-swelling populace and expanding physical boundaries. The population of 650,000 in 1750 had reached over a million by 1800: ‘in each of the five succeeding decade, after 1800, the population would rise by 20 per cent’.⁵⁶ London was the creation of ‘an agrarian and mercantile capitalism’, the result of ‘the centralisation of political power; the replacement of feudalism by an agrarian aristocracy [...] and the immense development of a mercantile trade’.⁵⁷ In recent years, the multiple possibilities of interpreting and representing the behemoth of London in the Romantic period have garnered increasing critical attention. The nexus of concerns around competing class cultures in the city have been well-served by two recent studies. Looking beyond London, Kevin Gilmartin and James Chandler’s edited volume, *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*, explores how a ‘new metropolitan synthesis in Romantic-period culture’ of artistic, commercial and imperial developments shaped the cultural fields and aesthetic modes that enabled the Romantic city to be ‘decisively and capaciously reconceived’, notably in terms of ‘material culture, theatre and spectacle, women writers and readers, radical underworlds, popular expression, and the rich visual field of an era that witnessed the increasing availability of printed images for ordinary consumption’.⁵⁸

Gregory Dart’s *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810-1840: Cockney Adventures* uses the Cockney debate as ‘a starting-point for a series of explorations into the metropolitan art and life in the 1820s and 1830s, outlining the diverse ramifications of Cockneyism in ‘social, spatial, formal and

⁵⁶ Peter Ackroyd, *London: A Biography* (London: Vintage, 2001), 519.

⁵⁷ Williams, *The Country And The City*, 212.

⁵⁸ ‘Introduction’, in James K. Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, *Romantic Metropolis : The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21-22.

professional' fora of London life, including 'suburban tea-gardens, lodging houses, offices, house museums, and debtors' prisons'.⁵⁹ Running concurrently in Dart's book is analysis of how writers and artists including Hunt, Hazlitt, and Haydon responded to Tory criticism of the Cockney phenomenon, positioning the Cockney as the 'crucial missing link between Keats and Dickens'.⁶⁰ Similarly, Robert Douglas-Fairhurst's critical account of Dickens' early years up to 1838 sheds brief light on the urban entertainments and literary culture the young Dickens would have experienced.⁶¹

Dart's book is one of the most recent in a long line of critical inquiry into metropolitan literary culture of the 1820s and 1830s that has grown since Jon Kliner's 1987 study of magazine readership.⁶² This line of inquiry has focussed primarily upon the groundswell of magazine publications in the period. Mark Parker's *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism* is crucial in addressing the need for a critical framework for the study of metropolitan literary magazines. Parker outlines the editorial and political agendas of four key magazines of the 1820s and 1830s: *London*, *Blackwood's*, the *New Monthly*, and *Fraser's*. His study 'seeks to do three things: to demonstrate that literary magazines should be an object of study in their own right, to argue that they are the preeminent literary form of the 1820s and 1830s in Britain, and to explore the ways in which literary magazines began to frame a discussion of Romanticism'.⁶³ The historicist methodology

⁵⁹ Gregory Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810-1840: Cockney Adventures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 27.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶¹ Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Becoming Dickens: The Invention of a Novelist* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 148-58.

⁶² For subsequent studies of the voice and personae of literary magazines, see: Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing, 1800-1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Kim Wheatley, *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture* (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Mark Schoenfield, *British Periodicals and Romantic Identity: The 'Literary Lower Empire'* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Simon P. Hull, *Charles Lamb, Elia and the London Magazine: Metropolitan Muse*, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2010).

⁶³ Mark Louis Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1.

prioritises runs of magazines rather than single author studies, and in doing so acknowledges the continuity and fluidity between Romanticism and Victorian literature, two periods of study that have been falsely marked as discrete entities. Many of the texts Parker analyses remained in publication, or were at least remembered, well into the nineteenth century. This thesis takes a cue from Parker and attempts to add to the body of work that characterises this period as one of literary interest in its own right.

In turn, Parker's efforts to recognise literary magazines as a genre worthy of analysis have opened up a wealth of critical analysis in more recent years. Richard Cronin's 2009 study, *Paper Pellets*, takes steps to characterise the 1820s and 1830s as a period of intense literary collaboration, marked by a volatile relationship between literature, politics, and the cult of personality. The expansion of print culture, Cronin posits, prompted anxiety around the blurring of public and private in political disputes between writers and publications. Writers 'who knew themselves to be addressing an anonymous mass readership responded [to this anxiety] by developing in prose or in verse a manner that suggested intimate address'.⁶⁴ The intimate framing of texts was conducive to pedestrian metropolitan nostalgia, as I explain at greater length in the last chapter of this thesis.

While these notable studies acknowledge the metropolitan influence, character, and topicality of literary magazines of the 1820s and 1830s, David Stewart's *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* builds effectively upon this groundwork. Stewart differentiates his study from previous books by describing the sensibility of magazine readership as one influenced heavily by urban life. 'Magazines reflect a culture that, while it is not confined to London, is metropolitan in its size, scope and indeterminacy'.⁶⁵ Stewart constructs the model of a Cockney reader, one who perceives the magazine through an urban eye, appreciative of spectacle, discordance, and

⁶⁴ Richard Cronin, *Paper Pellets: British Literary Culture after Waterloo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 15.

⁶⁵ David Stewart, *Romantic Magazines and Metropolitan Literary Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 7.

miscellany. This kind of reader relishes the ‘blurring of boundaries, social, visual, and aesthetic’ that characterises the ‘Cockney style’.⁶⁶ Building upon Parker’s work, Stewart explores the anxiety of intimacy between magazine writers and their urban readership, with Lamb’s essays in particular lamenting the ‘lose closeness between reader and writer’ that suggests a professionally or publically inflected model of nostalgia, as opposed to an exclusively personal one.⁶⁷ Previous study by David Higgins has emphasized the tensions between magazine reader and author in the dynamics of celebrity and genius, marking the period as one which popularized and sustained the discourse of genius in professional publications.⁶⁸ The literary magazine and its structures of intimacy and familiarity, are distinguishing features of the literary period addressed by this thesis. This study aims to build upon this work by exploring more pointedly these features on a very localised level, considering the intimate nostalgic reminiscences afforded by the metropolitan genre, and focussing very specifically upon writing shaped by and responsive to metropolitan change and development. While periodical and magazine writing has dominated critical work thus far, additional research on the silver fork novel in the early decades of the nineteenth century has helped shape understanding of the genres of popular urban writing in this period.⁶⁹ Similarly, studies of the Newgate novel have

⁶⁶ Ibid, 102.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 121.

⁶⁸ David Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Biography, Celebrity and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2005).

⁶⁹ While the majority of silver fork novels remain out of print, Harriet Devine’s selection of texts for Pickering and Chatto presents a representative cross-section of titles: Harriet Devine, *Silver Fork Novels, 1826-1841* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005). See also: Benjamin Disraeli, *The Early Novels of Benjamin Disraeli.*, Pickering Masters (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004). For general overviews of the silver fork genre, see: Ella Dzelzainis, ‘Silver-Fork, Industrial, and Gothic Fiction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Women’s Writing*, ed. Linda H. Peterson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 105–18; Dianne F. Sadoff, ‘The Silver Fork Novel’, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 3: The Nineteenth-Century Novel 1820-1880*, eds. John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 106-22. For a more focussed and in-depth study on political reform, see: Edward Copeland, *The Silver Fork Novel: Fashionable Fiction in the Age of Reform*, Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture; 81 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); for women’s writing, see: Tamara Wagner, ‘Silver-Fork Legacies: Sensationalising Fashionable Fiction’, *Women’s Writing* 16, no. 2 (2009): 301–322; for class politics, see: Muireann O’ Cinneide, ‘The

proved equally fruitful in beginning to map the literary terrain of the period.⁷⁰ Critical works on industrial fiction have also attempted to delineate and characterise fiction in the 1830s and 1840s.⁷¹ The salvaging of popular genres and literary inheritance assists undoubtedly in fleshing out what has hitherto remained a vague sketch of literary culture in the period falling between the heights of Romantic and Victorian fiction. Nevertheless, there are still critical gaps in our approach to understanding this distinctive period and in particular its engagement with the city.

Richard Cronin's study, *Romantic Victorians, English Literature 1824-1840*, offers a wide-ranging (if diffuse) examination of Victorian strategies of literary self-fashioning from a Romantic legacy, part of a well-established critical seam examining the Victorian inheritance of Romanticism.⁷²

Silver-Fork Novel across Romantic and Victorian Views: Class, Gender and Commodity Culture, 1820-1841', *Literature Compass* 4, no. 4 (2007): 12-27; for material culture, see: Lauren Gillingham, 'The Novel of Fashion Redressed: Bulwer-Lytton's Pelham in a Nineteenth-Century Context', *Victorian Review* 32, no. 1 (2006): 63-85; and Lauren Gillingham, 'History Suits the Dandy: Catherine Gore's *Cecil* novels', *Women's Writing* 16, no. 2 (2009): 218-236; for canon formation, see: Cheryl A. Wilson, *Fashioning the Silver Fork Novel* (London: Routledge, 2015).

⁷⁰ For overviews of the Newgate genre, see: Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel, 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens & Thackeray* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1963); Gary Kelly et al., *Newgate Narratives* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008) offers a scrupulously contextualised introduction to a series of republished titles, with particular reference to penal reform. For the genre's links to crime fiction, see: Jonathan H. Grossman, *The Art of Alibi: English Law Courts and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Lauren Gillingham, 'Ainsworth's Jack Sheppard and the Crimes of History', *Studies in English Literature, 1500 - 1900* 49, no. 4 (2009): 879-906; for explorations of the genre's influence on Victorian fiction, see: Juliet John, 'Twisting the Newgate Tale: Dickens, Popular Culture and the Politics of Genre', in Juliet John and Alice Jenkins, eds. *Rethinking Victorian Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2000), 127-45.

⁷¹ See: Joseph A. Kestner, *Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867* (London: Methuen, 1985); Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), all of which discuss industrial fiction published by women in the 1830s and 1840s. For an altogether more canonical view of this genre – focussing on Dickens, Thackeray, Gaskell, and Charlotte Bronte - see: Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

⁷² Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002). See also: Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Bernard M. G. Reardon, *Religious Thought in the Victorian Age: A Survey from Coleridge to Gore* (New York: Longman, 1995); Stephen Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001); J. Najarian, *Victorian Keats: Manliness, Sexuality and Desire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); and Stephen Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion: The*

Frank O’Gorman and Kathleen Turner’s edited volume of essays similarly attempts to map the uneasy and complex influence of the Augustan canon on Victorian literary culture, outlining a strict linear inheritance of form that is then recycled and re-drawn, often in the mode of imitation and caricature.⁷³ Cumulatively, these works have served to strengthen a sense of the canon rather than to open up fully neglected areas of literary production in this period. By exploring the connections between the literary products of two periods, these studies characterise this period as a link-point in a narrative of nascent Victorianism.

As evidenced here, nostalgia has been explored in terms of personal and national identity, but seldom in terms of a local, and specifically urban, formulation. Discussing a distinctly urban form of nostalgia, in a period that witnessed a collision of modernising and preserving impetuses, opens up our understanding of the early nineteenth century considerably, and allows us to uncover a series of aesthetic categories and practices used to describe, explore, and contain the growing metropolis.

*

This thesis discusses nostalgia in relation to a variety of writings about London authored and published in the early nineteenth century. In doing so, it seeks to accomplish several things. Firstly, it aims to expand our current understanding of the character and deployment of nostalgia across literature. The forms of nostalgia explored in this thesis are all innately tied to an awareness of – and often resistance to – modernity, a relationship that is expressed primarily through genre and aesthetic focus. Secondly, this thesis aims to broaden current critical understanding of London’s literary history. Rather than confining itself to the well-served notion of ‘Romantic London’, this thesis focuses upon the period that falls between ‘Romanticism’ and ‘Victorianism’, but does so on the period’s own terms, rather than anchoring it as a precursor or inheritor of these two literary

Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷³ Frank O’Gorman and Katherine Turner, *The Victorians and the Eighteenth Century: Reassessing the Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

movements. Finally, in taking as its subject representations of London in the early nineteenth century, this thesis also hopes to contribute to the field of inquiry into early nineteenth-century literature. It does this by invoking a range of non-canonical genres, and by marshalling a broad body of literary and artistic works that have never been considered in tandem before.

The thesis is organised into five chapters. The first two chapters delineate two key organising aesthetic categories in urban writing of this period. Chapter one outlines three modes of landscape representation and their utilisation in specifically urban views. The prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque are visual forms that are invoked throughout this thesis. In this chapter, I show how these modes of viewing were used to express, explain, and contain the tensions between history and modernity in the city. I draw this discussion together with two examples of urban views: Pierce Egan's novel, *Life in London* (1821), and Cyrus Redding's sketch, 'The Tea Garden' (1822). Both works fit into a panoramic mode of viewing London that displays its modernity while sustaining a sense of nostalgia. Egan's text, as we shall see throughout this thesis, is a touchstone for a number of concerns in representing the metropolis, and is revisited in chapter four.

Alongside the modernising views of the panorama, threaded throughout this thesis is a preoccupation with ruin. Chapter two considers representations of national ruin manifested in future views of ruined London. Images of future ruin in Anna Laetitia Barbauld's 'Eighteen Hundred and Eleven' (1810) and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), invoke the cyclical rise and ruin of empires as a proleptic mirror of western nations' moral and economic decline. In particular, this chapter focuses upon some of the more domestic details of ruin, particularly in Shelley's novel, that act to puncture the inflated grandeur of empire and nationhood exhibited in the wealth and splendour of the metropolis. The chapter ends by projecting the future images of ruin back onto the contemporary domestic infrastructure of London, in a discussion of George Cruikshank's 1829 engraving 'London Going out of Town'.

Chapter three aims to extend definitions of ruin by taking the term down to the level of the street. Here, I argue that the definition of ruin applies not only to the grand edifices of the metropolis, but also finds expression in the pockets of London overlooked by the modernising process of improvement. In analysis of an urban and London-centred form of antiquarianism, I examine illustrations of London scenes by John Thomas Smith, and accounts from William Hone's *Every-Day Book* (1825-26), analysing how those monuments, neighbourhoods, and dwellings overlooked by improvement are absorbed into the everyday experience of life in London. These pockets of history become objects of antiquarian nostalgia for Smith and Hone, who both seek to memorialise and examine ruins in the moment prior to collapse, decay, or demolition. Like Egan's *Life in London*, Hone's *Every-Day Book* works in a number of ways to express and engender a sense of nostalgia, and is discussed again in chapter five. The chapter ends by gesturing out towards Victorian representations of London slums – areas that are also characterised as anachronisms as a result of being overlooked by metropolitan improvement. Here, I hope to show how the nostalgic tenor of Smith and Hone's projects gives way to a heavily moralised discourse later in the century.

Chapter four builds upon chapter three's discussion of the desire to explain, make known, and thus contain unknown areas of London. It offers a discussion of antiquarian representations of the London poor in a number of formats. I outline how antiquarian catalogues and collections of prints, engravings, and paintings of the London poor use nostalgia as a strategy of containment, reducing the poor to stock figures or anecdotes of London life as a means of containing urban reality in a more polite literary format. I extend discussion of these forms of explaining and containing London life by revisiting Egan's *Life in London*. In a discussion of the use of slang, cant, and flash dictionaries in Egan's text, I identify urban lexicography as a means of positioning the urban poor as a subject of antiquarian examination, and nostalgic oddity.

Chapter five discusses how the 1820s were a watershed in urban literature, explaining how a localised nostalgia for London characterised metropolitan writing in this period. While previous chapters have explored the various tensions and applications of nostalgia in urban writing and

illustration, this chapter examines a sense of collective nostalgia for the city born out in the essays of Charles Lamb, William Hone, and Leigh Hunt. Here I show how these writers appealed to a convivial ideal of ‘Merry England’ (and perhaps, of ‘Merry London’) to generate a sense of collective nostalgia for London in their sociable community of readers.

Finally, my conclusion attempts to bring together these many forms of representation, categorisation, and explanation of London in the 1820s in order to suggest ways in which we can characterise London writing of this period. It also takes time to trace some of the afterlives of the forms and preoccupations discussed in this thesis, and notes how discourses around improvement and nostalgia, in London and beyond, endure well into the twenty-first century.

Chapter One – Views of London

Introduction

In her examination of the relationship between landscapes exhibited at the Royal Academy and the growth of popular landscape entertainment, Ann Bermingham delineates acutely the cross-overs between two parallel developments in visual culture. ‘The fertile cross-pollination between the exhibition landscape and the popular landscape entertainments of the period needs to be understood in the context of metropolitan modernity’, she writes. ‘The success of the exhibition landscape cannot be viewed as a simple compensation for the loss of rural nature, but must be seen as a positive response to urbanism’.¹ Bermingham’s comments provide an inspiring starting point for this chapter. Taking as its focus the distinctions and continuities between three prominent modes of viewing urban landscape - the prospect view, the picturesque, and the panorama - this chapter shows how innovative generic cross-over in urban writing allows for expression of a dual-faced image of London that is both nostalgic and modernising in nature. These three organising aesthetic categories were key in shaping the distinctive character of urban writing in the 1820s and I hope to show how these visual modes of viewing the city had a profound impact upon literary means of representing London. I aim to show that the urban spectacle of the panorama was not an unqualified celebration of modernity, and that the prospect view and the picturesque mode were not merely easy exercises in nostalgia. All three forms bear a more complex and ambiguous relation to urban writing, and to each other, than has been recognised by criticism until now.

The first section of this chapter will outline the characteristics of the prospect view, the picturesque, and the panorama and will pinpoint how the utility of each mode helps shape literary discourse around the city in the 1820s. The second section takes as its focus Pierce Egan’s fiction, *Life in London* (1821) and will analyse the impact of the panoramic view upon Egan’s formulation of the

¹ Ann Bermingham, ‘Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments,’ in David H. Solkin, ed. *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 127.

city. The third section traces the competing narratives of progress and decline exemplified by elements of the prospect view and the picturesque as deployed in Cyrus Redding's essay, 'The Tea Garden' (1822). These texts offer accounts of how popular literature absorbed the narratives of progress and decline, and of nostalgia and modernity, made accessible by the prospect view, the picturesque, and the panorama.

The Prospect View

Characteristics of the Prospect View

As we shall see throughout this thesis, the prospect view, though traditionally used as a mode of surveying the rural landscape, has been utilised across a number of written and visual genres depicting the city of London. As John Barrell has shown, in his classic definition of the mode, the prospect view was a culturally and politically-powerful vantage point from which an eighteenth-century gentleman or landowner could demonstrate his public virtue.² From this single, stable position, the disinterested gentleman of leisure encountered a view that claimed to encompass the entire landscape. In its mimicking of this stable viewpoint, the prospect view unfolds, makes visible, and makes knowable the landscape from a privileged and distanced position. The aesthetic observer occupies the stable position of the privileged landowner who disdains interaction with the poor, who also inhabit the landscape.³

Barrell's study offers a crucial distinction between different types of landscape view: between 'a viewpoint from which a vast and panoramic prospect is visible, and low, sunken situations from which only the nearest objects are visible'.⁴ The former seek to 'exhibit substantial, representative

² John Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 59.

³ *Ibid*, 96-98; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape : The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 70-76; Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 68-69.

⁴ Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge*, 45.

forms of nature arranged in a wide extent of land', and the latter 'exhibit the accidental forms of nature, and even if ideal, exhibit their ideal forms within a restricted terrain', Barrell notes.⁵ Whereas the sunken, 'occluded view', engenders 'seclusion' and 'privacy, as something opposed to the social in its more extended sense', among the meanings attached to the panoramic view, Barrell states, 'may be the notion of a wider society, and the notion of the ability to grasp objects in the form of their relations to each other'.⁶ The intimate scale of the 'low, sunken' viewpoint and its focus on physical objects as opposed to expansive scope, counters the abstracting impulse of the panorama, a form which 'offers a wide range and variety of objects to abstract from' and is 'capable of offering the most gratifying test of our ability to reduce it to classes and structures'.⁷

Key, then, to the application of the prospect view to the urban landscape, is its politically and socially divisive effect. The prospect view, in Barrell's formulation, enables the privileged viewer to abstract, reduce, and contain the social relationships within the landscape they survey. As we shall see in this chapter's discussion of Redding's sketch, 'The Tea Garden', collisions between the prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque challenge this social distinction, and in allowing the social reality of urban poverty to traverse and transcend the social distinctions imposed upon the urban landscape, Redding's sketch suggests that the city and its populace cannot be contained by one single organising aesthetic category. As I will discuss later in this chapter, the interactions between the prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque modes of viewing the landscape reflect the increasing need to contain, control, and make knowable the new modern reality of the ever-expanding metropolis. This need is one articulated in terms of nostalgia. This particular nostalgic impulse of containment is something I explore more fully in chapter four of this thesis, in which I suggest that antiquarian catalogues and prints of various 'types' of the urban poor are used

⁵ Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge*, 41.

⁶ *Ibid*, 45.

⁷ *Ibid*, 48.

to reclaim a sense of distance between the aesthetic observer and their subject, thus reducing and abstracting the urban poor to a series of nostalgic and picturesque oddities.

In tracing some of the generic cross-overs between the prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque throughout this thesis, I hope to build upon Ingrid Horrocks' work on the prospect view, by demonstrating how the modernity of the city resisted singular focalisation and visual categorisation. In her discussion of poetic incarnations of the prospect view, Horrocks states that by the time Goldsmith wrote *The Deserted Village* (1770), the 'unbounded prospect of the earlier century' had become untenable and difficult to assume for poets.⁸ The previous century's formulation of the prospect view, Horrocks notes, was aligned with 'the expansionist empire and with an idealised notion of centralised British liberty'.⁹ But by the second half of the century, the view was associated with 'oppression and excesses of luxury'.¹⁰ This was precipitated by critiques of enclosure: the dividing up and occluding of landscape from its inhabitants prompted a fundamental shift in 'notions of social relations within the landscape', the most famous articulation of which was *The Deserted Village*.¹¹ Having outlined the particular form of nostalgia that arises from Goldsmith's poem in the introduction to the thesis – nostalgia with a clear capacity for social comment - throughout this thesis, I will trace how nostalgia cuts both ways in this knot of concerns. Just as Goldsmith's nostalgia for a pre-enclosure England arises from the same disdain for wealth and luxury that eventually dislodges the prospect view from its stable position, and endures throughout the nineteenth century, so also a nostalgia for the forms of social stratification and distinction enabled by the prospect view is sustained with equal longevity in this period. The safe distance and knowledge engendered by clear social division is one which a number of literary forms

⁸ Ingrid Horrocks, 'Circling Eye and Houseless Stranger: the New Eighteenth-Century Wanderer (Thomson to Goldsmith)', *ELH* 77, no. 3 (2010): 675.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

strive to return to in their depictions of the modern metropolis. Now, though, I would like to turn to the picturesque mode, and its nostalgic applications in depictions of London.

The Picturesque

Characteristics of the Picturesque

Put plainly, the picturesque is an eighteenth-century theory of landscape describing a kind of visual beauty that is worthy of being illustrated in a painting. Among its distinctive characteristics is the idea of variety in landscape, revealed through an interest in ‘irregularity, ruggedness, rusticity, intricacy, singularity, and chiaroscuro [contrasts between light and dark]’.¹² These are the qualities identified by the chief theorist and pioneer of picturesque touring, William Gilpin, whose travels down the River Wye into Wales in 1770, and his journeys into North Wales to Caernarvon Castles and to Snowdon in 1773, established a touring itinerary and viewing model for the traveller in search of a first-hand experience of picturesque beauty in nature.¹³ While these qualities of fragmentation and variation were thought to stimulate the imagination to reverie or admiration, Gilpin recognised that they did not appear naturally in nature, but needed to be coaxed in order to create a pleasing composition of a scene. Picturesque landscapes did not exist in any pure and immediate form, but views were thought to contain inherent picturesque potential. Only an artist with a receptive eye to picturesque composition could elicit such a scene from the raw materials offered by nature: although it valued qualities of ‘ruggedness’ and ‘rusticity’, the subject matter of the picturesque belied a highly mediated and artificial form of landscape viewing.¹⁴

¹² Iain McCalman et al, *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 646.

¹³ William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: With a Poem, on Landscape Painting. By William Gilpin*, (London: R.Blamire, 1792).

¹⁴ Iain McCalman, *Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, 646.

The history of the picturesque is well rehearsed and familiar, formulated in key texts by John Barrell, Malcolm Andrews, Stephen Copley, and Tim Fulford.¹⁵ However, an account of the struggle to retain the aesthetic ideal of the picturesque for an elite viewership reveals the mode's aptness for a more popular viewership. As the critical history of the picturesque recounts, Gilpin's most prominent successors, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, attempted to retain the picturesque mode for an exclusive socio-economic group.¹⁶ Price and Payne's envisioned viewership implied a community of 'fellow-improvers, a small elite with sufficient taste and leisure to bring an aesthetic sense to its relationship with land'.¹⁷ In comparison, Gilpin wrote for 'powerless tourists' who were not actively involved in agricultural or estate improvement in the way landowners were, but who could learn the precepts of an aesthetic mode that enabled them to recognise picturesque beauty:

Beautiful nature, like the beautiful soul, marks a space untouched by a social order for which the lesser gentry was unfit, and to which it responded with a resentful sense of moral and aesthetic superiority.¹⁸

In attempting to restore a sense of connoisseurship in this aesthetic category, Price identified the quality of 'curiosity' as a chief motivation of the mode's ideal enthusiast.¹⁹ According to Judith Adler, by the seventeenth century the term had shed its connotations of vice and had begun instead

¹⁵ Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape*; Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Malcolm Andrews, *The Picturesque*, (Sussex: Helm Information, 1994); Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Kim Ian Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque', *Representations*, no. 38 (1992): 95.

¹⁷ Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 54-55.

¹⁸ Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque', 55.

¹⁹ Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful; And, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape*. By Uvedale Price, *Esq.*, volume 1, (London, 1796), 88.

to signify ‘virtuous passion for secular knowledge as well as scrupulous observation and concern for accuracy of detail’, suggesting a resolutely intellectual mode of encountering landscape.²⁰ Similarly, Knight’s formulation of the picturesque was the reserve of a cultural elite well versed in art, who ‘have correspondent ideas to associate; that is, by persons in a certain degree conversant with art’.²¹ Through a sustained exposure to landscape painting, Knight’s ideal, elite consumer of the picturesque was possessed of a cultural faculty that associated appreciation of elements of natural scenery with the ideas presented in fine art, ‘a mechanical operation of the mind, which we cannot directly control’.²² Price describes a similar process of apprehending the picturesque, one dependent upon instinctive mental connections rather than intellectual interest, and derived from ‘a certain irritation or stimulus’ of experience.²³ Both accounts, I suggest, in their reliance upon intuitive, imaginative connections as opposed to rationalised, intellectual process, validate the theatrical potential of the picturesque as spectacle, as something to be displayed for metropolitan consumption, and arguably lacking in the exclusive intellectual substance Price and Payne Knight cherished in their theory of the picturesque. This sense of potential spectacle, and an appeal to curiosity, I’d like to suggest was crucial in depicting urban change in metropolitan formulations of the picturesque. First, I would like to outline briefly the nostalgic nature of the picturesque as a mode of visual representation.

The Nostalgic Picturesque

Theorists of the picturesque acknowledge clearly its nostalgic character derived from its pastoral origins. Poetry of country life invoked a pastoralism recalling idyllic images from the classical prototypes of Virgil and Horace, thus providing idealised models for the assessment of rural scenery

²⁰ Judith Adler, ‘Origins of Sightseeing’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 16, no. 1 (1989): 15.

²¹ Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (London: T. Payne, 1805), 152.

²² *Ibid*, 136.

²³ Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque*, 125.

that naturalised and absorbed (though sometimes repudiated) anti-modern sentiment.²⁴ As Malcolm Andrews notes, the ‘pastoral was a means of escaping imaginatively from the pressures of urban or courtly life into a simpler world, or [...] into a world which had been deliberately simplified as a contrast to the social complexities of the city’.²⁵ The pastoral origins of the picturesque advocated a retreat from urban modernity into a rural Golden Age, ‘the mythical time set in an eternal spring when man lived in harmony within his society and with the natural environment’, the implications of which are profoundly nostalgic and anti-modern in their rejection of metropolitanism.²⁶ The picturesque retained the pastoral idyll of a rural Golden Age only recoverable in the aesthetic imaginative realm of painting.²⁷ Ann Bermingham notes that although the picturesque ‘harkened back nostalgically to an old order of rural paternalism’ the focus of picturesque painting upon the ‘dilapidation and ruin’ invoked by contemporary agriculture could be read as an implicit justification of landscape modernisation.²⁸ The picturesque possesses a particular aesthetic language of nostalgia: its motifs of ruin, fragmentation, and rugged imperfection capture brief moments and details in a narrative of change, age, and decline, preserving these markers of time passing in an attempt to not only arrest briefly the arcs of rural decline (or rural decline identified as urban progress) but to preserve these moments for future reflection, recollection, and prosperity. As we shall see in this chapter, in the picturesque mode’s natural propensity towards spectacle, and in its innately nostalgic impulse to preserve scenes against change (and also to recognise ruin as a sign of change) the aesthetic category of the picturesque provides a dual character suited to accommodating an impulse to celebrate London’s modernity, but to keep the machinations of this modernity at arm’s length from the viewer. Throughout the thesis I will demonstrate how these key

²⁴ Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 5.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid, 6.

²⁸ Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 70.

characteristic of the rural picturesque (of ruin, fragmentation, and aging) are equally effective in articulating a distinctly metropolitan strain of nostalgia.

The Metropolitan Picturesque

By the early nineteenth century, the picturesque was a highly conventional means of comprehending rural landscape but had acquired a new tenor when deployed in representations of the city. While the rural trajectory of the picturesque mode's application has been well accounted, the representational tradition of what we might call the metropolitan picturesque is explored less prolifically in critical material.²⁹ Critical writing on the picturesque recognises the 'cross-currents and ambiguities' inherent within the mode and argues for an indeterminacy that accommodates a metropolitan application.³⁰ The metropolitan picturesque can be understood as the adaptation of the tropes, motifs, and graphic codes of the rural picturesque –including, for example, ruggedness, ruin, and fragmentation - to accommodate a new curiosity about urban life and the inhabitants of the metropolis, especially, though not exclusively, in terms of the identities and habits of the urban poor, and the preservation of old monuments and dwellings. Bringing the aesthetic idioms of the picturesque to bear on the city, this mode was rendered in watercolours, prints, etchings, metal engravings, or lithographs presented in costume books, collections of street cries, and volumes of regional views. Some collections were self-consciously positioned as picturesque, such as Thomas Malton's *A Picturesque Tour through the Cities of London and Westminster* (1798), a

²⁹ For broad but representative discussions of the rural picturesque, see Andrews, *Search for the Picturesque*, pp.3-24; Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: the English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 57-87; Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, *The Politics of the Picturesque : Literature, Landscape, and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Donna Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside : Hunting, Walking, and Ecology in English Literature, 1671-1831* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp.15-27; and Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*; Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside*; Mary Fairclough, 'Fairclough, "John Thelwall and the Politics of the Picturesque"', 1 September 2011, <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/thelwall/HTML/praxis.2011.fairclough.html>.

³⁰ Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*. (Houndmills Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 54. See also: Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque'; Peter De Bolla, *The Education of the Eye: Painting, Landscape, and Architecture in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 119-20.

comprehensive collection of urban views that guided readers through a sequential tour of public buildings in the capital, demonstrating that ‘cities were just as amenable as rural landscape to picturesque viewing and depiction’.³¹ Malton’s images are neatly illustrated views of street vistas and courts, such as the Lothbury courtyard, and the facade of the Bank of England at centre of the ‘city’ near Mansion House and the Bank, rendering the hub of the city in geometrically contained formats. The unity and containment of these vistas evokes Barrell’s idea of a tension between intimate scale and expansive scope, reducing the unending variety of London’s streets to a single, picturesque snapshot view.

Malton’s views were appended with prose praising the inherent picturesque quality in the ‘variety’ of London’s streets, but also displayed an impulse to preserve and document certain views and prospects against improvement. ‘It is greatly to be regretted,’ Malton notes, ‘that all public improvements are not subject to some legal control, that, without materially affecting the rights of individuals, might prevent them from disgracing their country with meanness and absurdity’.³² He describes the approach to London from the Kentish Road that was ‘within these few years, highly picturesque and striking’ and presented ‘such a lovely picture, as can never be seen but in the neighbourhood of a great City’.³³ But ‘since the rage for building spread itself in this quarter’, Malton laments, ‘the liveliness and splendour of the late extensive plain, and all that was grand and impressive in this prospect, are blotted from the picture by an heterogeneous mass of contemptible dwellings, erected without taste, and disposed without design or arrangement’.³⁴ In its appreciation of the variety and ‘opulence’ of London’s landscape, Malton’s metropolitan picturesque retained the sympathies of the rural picturesque for a variety that was pleasing but controlled: the impetus to

³¹ Wendy Bellion, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2012), 145.

³² Thomas Malton, *A Picturesque Tour through the Cities of London and Westminster, Illustrated with the Most Interesting Views, Accurately Delineated and Executed in Aquatint by Thomas Malton* (London: T.Bensley, 1789), 1.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

reform and improve London's landscape challenges the privilege of Malton's 'prospect', thus prompting a nostalgic idealisation of the picturesque view in the face of improvement and modernity. Notably, Malton's tour pauses on Blackfriar's Bridge, with a 'prospect so extensive and various', only the panorama, in which 'the spectator turns, and views the whole circle of the horizon' could 'do justice to such a scene'.³⁵ As I will show in subsequent sections of this chapter, the panorama figures as a form that contains and exceeds the scope of the picturesque tour.

Collections of engravings of London views, usually published with accompanying prose commentary clearly subordinate to the illustrations, offer a similarly picturesque presentation of the city and are even more explicit in their project of preservation. These texts are typically comprised of drawings of buildings and streets, or vistas onto the city's parks and the Thames, in which human figures appear as incidental markers of scale. Samuel Ireland's *Picturesque Views, with an Historical Account of the Inns of Court, in London and Westminster* (1800), is 'designed to celebrate the magnificence and antiquity of the public structures, which embellish a flourishing and wealthy city'.³⁶ William Henry Pyne's *The Microcosm of London* (1808-10), originally published in parts and followed by three volumes, presents the public spaces of the city to similar ends. The collection imitates the structure of a dictionary, from the 'Academy Royal' to 'View of London, from the Thames', suggesting the compendium of views that can be easily consulted for future reference. In each of its seventy-five coloured plates the architectural details are rendered by Augustus Charles Pugin and the human figures are drawn by Thomas Rowlandson. Robert Wilkinson's two-volume *London Illustrata: Graphic and Historic Memorials of Monasteries, Churches, Chapels, Schools, Charitable Foundations, Palaces, Halls, Courts, Processions, Places of Early Amusement, and Modern and Present Theatres, in the Cities and Suburbs of London and Westminster* (1819-25) positions itself similarly as a repository of illustrations of the contemporary

³⁵ Ibid, 59.

³⁶ Samuel Ireland, *Picturesque Views, with an Historical Account of the Inns of Court, in London and Westminster* (London: Faulder and Egerton, 1800), vii.

city, including some of its survivals from the past. This particular mode of representing the city is one which entails process and change, and modernity and nostalgia – a series of tensions that, as I will now outline, have previously only been considered in relation to later Victorian formulations of the metropolitan picturesque.

Critical explorations of the metropolitan picturesque are focused exclusively on representations of London in the late nineteenth century. In his essay on the metropolitan picturesque, Malcolm Andrews outlines how the form was invoked as a means of expressing disdain at the rapid development of Victorian London. If the rural picturesque was, as Andrews explains, ‘a reaction against both the transformation of the countryside during the agrarian and industrial revolutions, and the preference in architecture for symmetry, smoothness and regularity’, then the form’s inclination for accident, fragmentation, and heterogeneity was a clear ‘vernacular antidote’ to the ‘imported Palladianism in the Georgian villas and to the crescents, squares and terraces of Georgian towns’ of the city’s recent past.³⁷ Andrews goes on to claim the ‘architectural assertion of individualism’ asserted by the picturesque ‘translates comfortably into a political philosophy of laissez-faire’ in Victorian London.³⁸ In shifting focus from artistic representations of urban architecture, to an appraisal of the buildings themselves, the metropolitan picturesque ‘emancipated’ the city ‘from what [architects] regarded as the drab uniformity and traditional hierarchical constraints of the previous age’, namely the ‘featureless, colourless, formless’ Georgian street building, replacing them with ‘vivacious architectural idiosyncrasy’ funded by private wealth initiatives and ‘aggressive individualism’.³⁹ In this sense, and with Malton’s view in mind, the metropolitan picturesque could be read as a resistance to the aesthetic uniformity of civic architecture.

³⁷ Malcolm Andrews, “The Metropolitan Picturesque”, in eds., Copley and Garside, *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 283.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 284.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 285, 283, 285.

As Lynda Nead points out in her study of Victorian London, the metropolitan picturesque ‘came also to represent process and change, the last traces of the past in the present’.⁴⁰ If the picturesque was drawn to scenes of variety and fragmentation, then the metropolitan picturesque was drawn specifically to images of dilapidation in architecture, and the attendant condition of impoverishment and marginalisation of its inhabitants. While the picturesque of the eighteenth century was a reaction to the transformation of the countryside during the industrial revolution, the metropolitan picturesque was invoked as a means of countering ‘the rapid development of central London’.⁴¹ The aesthetics of urban development in the mid-nineteenth century has been well delineated by Nead, who notes how ‘much of the city appeared to be a gigantic building-site’ in the 1860s, as investors constructed new streets, railways, and bridges.⁴² The visual impact of these processes of improvement was profound and unavoidable: ‘modernity in the 1860s forced itself upon the eye’.⁴³ Construction generated an array of new visual spectacles: the cross-section became a popular technique for displaying the full glory of the new Underground system. These views exposed the subterranean inner workings of locomotives, below the gas pipes and sewers of the city, invoking the sublime scale of tunnelling and vaults beneath the city’s surface.⁴⁴ Nead also documents the series of illustrated reports on ‘falling buildings’ made popular in the *Illustrated London News* in the 1850s.⁴⁵ These articles recorded cases of London houses collapsing due to age and decay, giving the sense that ‘the old city, irrespective of improvement, had simply decided to come down’.⁴⁶ As the self-appointed ‘archivist of the city’, the *Illustrated London News* published a regular ‘Archaeology of the Month’, providing picturesque illustrations of Elizabethan houses and

⁴⁰ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets, and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 32.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 283.

⁴² *Ibid*, 13.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

buildings that had been lost to decline.⁴⁷ The visualisation of modernity, then, was framed as much by a reinvention and reinvigoration of the past, as much as the invention of new visual forms of representation, engendering a constant and uneasy shifting between demolition and construction, which I will explore in more depth in chapter three.⁴⁸ In the continuous process of cycle and reconstruction, ‘the new London never seemed finally to emerge’.⁴⁹

If, as outlined in Andrews’ articulation of the form, the metropolitan picturesque was attracted to architectural scenes of decay, dilapidation, and disintegration resulting from development in London much later in the nineteenth century than Nead documents, then there is clear space for the metropolitan picturesque to be considered in a much earlier context. While the metropolitan picturesque retained its capacity to synthesise and aestheticise complex historical change in a manner similar to that in which the traditional rural picturesque presented the landscape, the frenetic pace of change in London in the 1820s presented a challenge to the original rural mode that struggled to contain the full implications of urban development. ‘The signs of the metropolitan picturesque’, remarks Nead, ‘are thus signs of modernity; they are signs of a changing urban geography’.⁵⁰ The metropolitan picturesque was ‘an obsessive discourse of the past’, transforming the city into a ‘collection of relics’ through images and texts, as opposed to the prioritisation of architectural individualism Andrews attributes to the form.⁵¹ The application of the metropolitan picturesque as a visual and literary means of recording - and thus pausing textually - the processes of urban development is felt throughout the many genres of urban writing discussed in this thesis, particularly antiquarian images of the poor, and prose writings about various forms of urban ruin. While subsequent chapters explore how representations of demolished neighbourhoods, old housing,

⁴⁷ Ibid, 31.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 14.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid, 33.

and displaced populations are transformed into pleasing images presented to the public as ‘signs of the emergence of the new,’ this chapter will now consider the spectacle of the visual panorama and its multiple manifestations in textual formats as a derivative of the metropolitan picturesque, one which did not reject history as wholeheartedly as Nead suggests, but which relied upon spectacle to absorb and contain the momentum of change in new and innovative visual formats.⁵²

The Panorama

Characteristics of the Panorama

To draw upon Markman Ellis’s pithy definition, the panorama is a ‘large-scale landscape painting depicting a circular 360 degree view exhibited under special conditions on the inside surface of a dedicated cylindrical exhibition space’.⁵³ The panorama was one of a number of cultural spectacles that gained popularity from the 1770s onwards, a period which saw a profound shift in the scale and nature of popular consumption of metropolitan culture and entertainments. The growth and expansion of theatre and exhibition spaces in London saw the creation of large venues for dramatic and musical performances, as well as new technological forms of visual representation such as the Eidophusikon, dioramas, and panoramas.⁵⁴ As John Brewer outlines, these new technologies of visual spectacle shared a number of common features, namely: their grand size and scale; their appeal to the popular audience rather than to the art connoisseur; and the mingling of sound and vision which provided an air of performance.⁵⁵ ‘The aim,’ concludes Brewer, ‘seems to have been

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Markman Ellis, “‘Spectacles within Doors’: Panoramas of London in the 1790s’, *Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 133.

⁵⁴ John Brewer, ‘Sensibility and the Urban Panorama’, *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2007): 233.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

to offer the public a moving, sensational experience directed less at [the audience's] intellect than at their feelings, in order to provide them with a more authentic experience'.⁵⁶

Modern historiography of the panorama characterises the form as the uniquely modern source for popular visual media in the nineteenth century: Gillen D'Arcy Wood describes the panorama as a 'uniquely modern intersection of landscape art, commercialism, and visual technology', which is typical of a critical tradition that champions the modernising influence of the form.⁵⁷ Beginning in the late 1960s, initial studies by Hubert Pragnell, Richard Altick, Stephen Oettermann, and Ralph Hyde prompted scholarly scrutiny of the panorama among the New Art History movement and its interest in the emergent discipline of 'visual culture'.⁵⁸ Such studies positioned the panorama as the origin point of a teleological narrative of the development of exhibition spectacles for mass consumption: the panorama spawned the diorama, moving panorama, cosmorama, myriorama, and phenakisticope, which in turn informed the proliferation of more portable visual media in the nineteenth century including the daguerreotype, the photograph, the stereotype, and, finally, cinema.⁵⁹ As Stephen Oetermann has suggested, in its anticipation of twentieth-century visual mass media, the panorama 'represented the first true visual "mass medium"'.⁶⁰ While this arc has been rehearsed by the numerous studies cited here, my chapter seeks to move away from this discussion

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real: Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 111.

⁵⁸ Hubert John Pragnell, *The London Panoramas of Robert Barker and Thomas Girtin, circa 1800* (London: Topographical Society, 1968); Richard Daniel Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1978); Stephan Oetermann, *The Panorama: History of a Mass Medium* (New York: Zone Books, 1997); Ralph Hyde, *Panoromania!: The Art and Entertainment of The 'all-Embracing' view* (London: Trefoil in association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1988); Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 93-4.

⁵⁹ This narrative has been rehearsed by numerous theorists of visual culture, notably: Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (London: BFI Publishing, 1994); Oliver Grau, *Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion* (MIT Press, 2003); Virgilio Tosi, *Cinema before Cinema: The Origins of Scientific Cinematography* (London: British Universities Film & Video Council, 2005).

⁶⁰ Oetermann, *The Panorama*, 7.

of the panorama as innately modern, and instead, looks back to Barrell's discussion of the 'abstracting impulse' of the panorama and its capacity to reduce urban scenes to 'classes and structures' as a means of nostalgic containment and prosperity.⁶¹

The Modern Panorama

Like a diorama, a cosmorama, or the Eidophusikon, the panorama was amenable to being characterised as modern because it offered the viewer a new virtual perspective of their environment. As Ann Bermingham notes, the affective responses evoked by the thrill of the panorama's all-embracing view created something akin to the sublime, recalling 'the sensations one was expected to feel in the presence of the sublime in nature'.⁶² The panorama, in this sense, 'domesticated' an experience previously reserved for encounters with real landscape scenery, and 'mechanically reproduced it as a popular entertainment' in the city.⁶³ From Brewer's perspective, the sense of sublime generated by the panorama was 'less concerned with the viewer's powerlessness than a countervailing tendency', namely 'the way in which that the viewer sees, as a human artefact, is a sign of his own power, his ability to stand outside and above the image and in fact to transcend the sublime'.⁶⁴ In essence, the panorama offered a contraction of space and time, enclosing the viewer into a landscape that may be free from worldly restrictions, but which confined them in a non-negotiable moment in time, a preconfigured mode of seeing the city, one which, I argue, is profoundly nostalgic in focus.

Panoramas capture and render spectacular highly specific views of the city, freezing the urban subject not only in one image, but in one moment in time. Examples including Thomas Hornor's panorama of London at the Colosseum preserves an image of the capital between 1821 and 1822, at

⁶¹ Barrell, *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge*, 48.

⁶² Ann Bermingham, "Landscape-O-Rama: The Exhibition Landscape at Somerset House and the Rise of Popular Landscape Entertainments," in *Art on the Line: The Royal Academy Exhibitions at Somerset House, 1780-1836*, ed. David Solkin (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2001), 130.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Brewer, 'Sensibility and the Urban Panorama', 236.

a time when London was changing rapidly. Doing so not only had the effect of seeming to arrest eternally the transformation of the urban landscape, but also to preserve a carefully composed perspective of the city for prosperity. Comparable spectacles such as the diorama (a spectacle using ‘lighting and transparency effects to suggest diurnal, seasonal and atmospheric changes to images’) and Philippe Jacques de Loutherbourg’s Eidophusikon (‘a miniature scenic illusion combining lighting effects and mechanically operated models, accompanied by music’) through their visual effects were able to present a continuous narrative of change over time.⁶⁵ By comparison, the panorama not only enables viewers to step outside of their everyday reality to observe their environment from a new virtual perspective, but also allowed them to make the temporal leap of viewing their own time from a position of projected and proleptic prosperity. Although Susan Stewart has described the panorama as ‘an art of mediation and arrangement’ entailing ‘the manipulation of flux into form, infinity into frame,’ I argue that the effect of the panorama is not to detach totally an image of the city from its historical moment, thus capturing and making ‘infinite’ a view of the city free from historical constraints, but quite the opposite.⁶⁶ In capturing a specific moment in time and allowing the viewer to occupy and experience that moment endlessly, the panorama does not decontextualise and make universal that chosen moment, but revels nostalgically in the historical particularity of it.

The panoramic form offered historical value in representing London: it allowed the city to be viewed as part of a modernising project of urban entertainment, but it also provided a means of manipulating and composing this view that was particularly effective in countering contemporary anxieties towards the ever-changing and ever-modernising city. According to Brewer, the ‘attention to observable details and remorseless lucidity’ the panorama’s scope accommodated ‘was not so much a faithful copy of the city “out there” as an idealised imitation of what could be seen only by

⁶⁵ McCalman, *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age*, 587.

⁶⁶ Stewart, *On Longing*, 75.

an omniscient viewer'.⁶⁷ The conflation of modernity and historicism was crucial in the panorama's mimesis, and this manipulative power made the panorama central to formulations of London's modernity.

Walter Benjamin's theory of metropolitanism, an account that in critical terms has become indivisible from writing on 'Romantic London', centralises new forms of viewing technology such as the panorama in the transformation of 'old Romantic sentiment for landscape' into 'a new Romantic conception of landscape [...] that seems, rather, to be a cityscape'.⁶⁸ Benjamin regarded the panorama as the 'expression of a new attitude to life' in which 'the city opens out to landscape – as it will do later for the flâneur'.⁶⁹ The figure of the flâneur is typified by a gaze of desire and nostalgia, walking the streets of Paris that 'conduct [him] into a vanished time'.⁷⁰ He absorbs the all-encompassing '*tout entière*' of the modern city, 'every shop sign, every step, and every gateway [passed] into the passerby's dream'.⁷¹ As Chandler and Gilmartin argue, the visual technology of panoramas offered as entertainment in London and Paris enabled the flâneur to process the past into reverie, eliding memory and modernity, something I argue the panorama achieves in its simultaneously modernising and historicising project. As Chandler and Gilmartin have posited, 'Benjamin's conceptual link between the panorama and the Romantic "cityscape", through flânerie, has crucially come to define metropolitan sensibility', which I suggest makes the panorama central in characterisations of London's double-faced modernity in the Romantic period.⁷²

The all-encompassing scope of the panorama was well-suited to the composition of an ideal view of London free from the movement and flux of everyday life. While the aesthetic language of the

⁶⁷ Brewer, 'Sensibility and the Urban Panorama', 237.

⁶⁸ 'Introduction', James K. Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, eds. *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 5-8; Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1999), 420.

⁶⁹ Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 416.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 417.

⁷² Chandler and Gilmartin, *Romantic Metropolis*, 421.

picturesque assimilates the variety and dissolution of landscape into a more pleasing and readable visual form, the panorama draws upon this capacity to erase the markers of industry and commerce disfiguring the urban landscape. These tensions are particularly visible in Robert Barker's 1791 panorama of London.

Following on from the success of his Edinburgh panorama exhibited in London from 1789 to 1790, the Anglo-Irish painter, Robert Barker, exhibited a highly anticipated panorama of London at 28 Castle Street near Leicester Square. Barker claimed it was the first panorama to extend to 'three quarters of a circle', or 270 degree.⁷³ The panorama offered viewers a vista of London from the vantage point of the roof of Albion Mills, overlooking Blackfriar's Bridge. The foreground of the panorama is dominated heavily by the roof and chimneys of Albion Mills, and the open sweep of the river Thames, although this enables a wide view of St Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the Monument, the Tower, Parliament, and Whitehall, and many city churches, in the distance. The foreground details a scene of everyday life, freezing a moment of morning in the city to enable viewers to hone in on the many details of work exhibited in the panorama.

The depiction of labour on London's streets demonstrates neatly the 'abstracting' and reducing effect of the panorama outlined by Barrell, thus cushioning the prospect viewer from the reality of the landscape. At first glimpse, the panorama fulfils its promise to contain 'at one glance' real life in London and Westminster.⁷⁴ All the types of urban society are present, going about their everyday duties and pleasures in the same '1479 square feet'.⁷⁵ Chimney sweeps and the well-heeled upper classes pass each other by on the pavement. Yet none of these 'types' are seen to be interacting with each other; each figure is occupied solely with their own activity. The passengers in the horse drawn carriage are oblivious to the passing chimney sweep, and the idle ramblers seem unaware of the workers at the docks. Each figure is absorbed in their own leisure or trade, caught up in their

⁷³ H.T. Ellacombe, 'First Panorama', *Notes and Queries* 4, no. 94 (1851): 118.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, 112.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

own immediate world to the exclusion of their neighbours; they each have their own blinkered view of the city, one defined by their form of work.

As noted, the roof of Albion Mills dominates almost every angle of the view, often obscuring the scenes on the street below. The viewer is promised a panoramic view from this vantage point, and the chance to occupy a position which allows them to see behind the edifice of the building, and the city itself, to experience the metropolis from an unusual perspective. The choice of location conditions and filters the view, inviting the viewer to see London as an industrial and functional city. From the rooftop of the mill, the viewer can witness the economic chain of labour, trade, and wealth – the effects of industry across all sectors of society. There is no space for domestic observation, in detail or privacy, (we cannot see into the windows of the many houses in the panorama): the view is a public one, of the city's streets and trade. Barker's panorama offers only one perspective of the city's narrative. By depopulating views of London so selectively, the panorama doctors the gritty reality of modernity in order to preserve an image of the city for prosperity, one which anticipates the idealising impulse of nostalgia. The wonder of the panorama is that it offers a view of the city that is not real but is still recognisably London. It creates order and clarity from the chaos of modern city life.

But as much as panoramas seek to order, quantify, and contain the modernity of the city through an abstracting view, this is not resolutely typical of writings about London. The final section of this chapter explored two alternative panoramas – Piece Egan's *Life in London* (1821), and Cyrus Redding's 'The Tea Garden' (1822) – texts which combine elements of the prospect view, the picturesque, and the panorama in order to express and control the tensions between modernity and nostalgia evident in the London landscape. As we shall also see, the panorama and picturesque are utilised to counter the failure of the prospect view to contain strict social distinctions.

Alternative Panoramas

Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821): Revealing London's Inner Workings

Published in 1821, and endlessly proliferated and plagiarised in a number of forms well into the nineteenth century, Pierce Egan's *Life in London* was a popular, picaresque novel detailing the plurality of all forms of urban life. It followed the 'sprees' of Corinthian Tom, Jerry Hawthorn, and Bob Logic amongst rich and poor subsectors of London society – they visit various scenes of high and low life and participate in every form of pleasure they encounter. Corinthian Tom is a young society gentleman, and Bob Logic his old friend, who, by the end of the narrative, runs himself into debt. They are joined by Tom's cousin, Jerry Hawthorn, who is transformed from a rustic gentleman into a *Bon Ton*. Together they negotiate their way around the many entertainments of London in the tradition of the urban ramble and Egan focalises the novel so as to imitate a guide to London life that allows the reader to experience, fleetingly, the illustrious heights and murky depths of London society, but from a position of safe, isolated, detachment. Egan, I would like to suggest, invokes the detail of the urban picturesque, and the generality and distance of the panorama, as the modern substitute for the prospect view. As we shall see in chapter three's discussion of Egan's London slang, Egan utilises a number of strategies to suggest a sense of revealing the diversity of urban life - and the social relationships within it - while keeping the reader or viewer at a safe distance.

By using literary project and purpose as a metaphor for architectural innovation, Egan offers a drastically different utilisation of the panorama and the picturesque, one which uses these modes to reveal rather than conceal the inner workings of London. For Egan, the incomprehensibility of the city, and the struggle to come to terms with the epistemological limitations of metropolitan literature, is an opportunity to play upon popular habits of urban perception, and thus define the unique pitch of his own literary venture. In the opening chapter of *Life in London* Egan considers the various literary methodologies which might be best suited to representing the plurality of urban

life, but takes care to distinguish his experiment with literary form from the shallow and fashionable posturing of hack writers:

That *intense* study formerly required to make up the *character* of an AUTHOR is at the present period greatly relied, as it should seem that LITERATURE has kept pace with the new buildings in the Metropolis; and new street and new books have been produced, as it were, by magic. This rapid improvement made in the literary world, is owing to those extensive manufacturers of new works, Messrs. SCISSORS and PASTE.⁷⁶

Underscoring the connection between the newly refashioned London as part of George IV's grand scheme of metropolitan improvement, and the concurrent proliferation of urban writing, Egan typifies his contemporaries as literary hacks who pander to the fleeting and transitory tastes of fashion with a cut and paste industry of literary production.⁷⁷ The planned transformation of London orchestrated by architects John Nash, John Soane, and Robert Smirke indulged a very specific taste for a 'highly picturesque conception of a garden city for an aristocracy, supported by charming panoramas showing a composition of alluring groves and elegant architecture of a somewhat Parisian character'.⁷⁸ The classical grandeur of porticos and facades homogenised the cityscape to indulge the fashionable aristocratic tendency towards a sentimental neoclassicism. This new standardised style redefined the purpose of the city to charm and allure its richer inhabitants. Similarly, Egan feared that the new role of the author was not to be part of an edifying and longstanding literary tradition, but to keep pace with vacant fashionable taste. We can consider *Life in London* to be an attempt, on some level, to penetrate the fascia and frontage of the new aristocratic playground in order to reveal a murkier and less palatable city of pleasure, as well as a

⁷⁶ Pierce Egan, *Life in London Or, The Day and Night Scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq. and His Elegant Friend Corinthian Tom, Accompanied by Bob Logic, the Oxonian, in Their Rambles and Sprees through the Metropolis* (London: 1822), 2.

⁷⁷ Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 25–30.; for an account of architectural changes in Regency London, see John Summerson, *Georgian London* (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1978).

⁷⁸ John Newenham Summerson, *Georgian London* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1988), 178.

response to hack writers' commercialised aping of fashionable taste. *Life in London* is a textual panorama of urban life that seeks to peer beneath the veneer of idealised and patriotic images of urban splendour, thus revealing the inner working of the city rather than editing them – though the scenes Egan reveals, and the way in which he unveils them to the reader, are equally selective.

In order to dismantle the panoramic artifice of splendour, Egan outlines an experiential vision of the city in book two of *Life in London*, relying upon a new means of detailed observation which fused both fictional and real events and material. Egan discusses the advantages of 'seeing life' in favour of 'knowing the world' – the particular view versus the overview:

So numerous are the instances which might be displayed... 'to hold the mirror, as it were, up to Nature', that volumes would not suffice to portray the various characters which *cross our path DAILY in LONDON*. A *theoretical* inquiry will not go far enough in ascertaining the real features of society in the *Metropolis*.⁷⁹

For Egan, 'an accurate knowledge of manners, habits, and feelings of a brave and free people is not to be acquired in the CLOSET, nor is it to be derived from the formal routine precepts of tutors'.⁸⁰

Instead:

It is only by means of a free and unrestrained intercourse with society... that an intimate acquaintance is to be obtained with Englishmen: for this purpose, it is necessary to view their pastimes, to hear their remarks, and, from such sources, to be enabled to study their *character*.⁸¹

Egan operates a range of different metaphors to expose the reality of urban life: panoramic and episodic modes of vision; the organisation of knowledge; and the idea of performance. For Egan, the notion of vision is bound up explicitly in the mechanics of the camera obscura, a mode which allows readers to see and not be seen (much like the panoramic viewpoint) and to enjoy a transgressive voyeurism. For Roger Sales, the camera obscura is a means of guiding the reader

⁷⁹ Egan, *Life in London*, 143.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Egan, *Life in London*, vi.

beyond the border of the ‘classical’ city so that they can ‘gaze at new, and usually forbidden sights’.⁸² As Egan explains:

The *Camera Obscura* is now at work; the table is covered with objects for the amusement of my readers; and whenever it is necessary to change the scene it is only requisite to pull the string, *i.e.* to turn over leaf after leaf, and LIFE IN LONDON will be seen without any fear of apprehension of danger.⁸³

This method is ‘complex and contradictory’ because it promises an unmediated surveillance of the city through a highly controlled mechanism.⁸⁴ ‘Leaf after leaf’, the text is reduced to a series of controlled, picturesque episodes which selectively reveal and conceal metropolitan life, and promise both safety and transgression. Readers will avoid: ‘breaking a limb, receiving a *black* eye, losing a pocket-book, and getting into a watch-house, or picking up a *Cyprian* [prostitute] and being exposed the next morning before a magistrate for being found *disorderly*.’⁸⁵ While the camera obscura may reveal the city ‘leaf after leaf’ episodically, the breadth of these images reaches to both high and low quarters of the metropolis. The result is a patchwork of metropolitan images which make up a varied topography of the city which is panoramic in its breadth and that the reader is invited to enjoy - a format reminiscent of the neatly articulated compendiums of urban views published by Thomas Malton, discussed earlier in this chapter. The effect is to unfold and make known the city to the reader, who can then survey and enjoy vicariously from the safety of their homes:

But ‘experience makes fools wise;’ and, as good-natured HAWTHORN and laughing TOM are now about to relate their *adventures* for the benefit of the *fire-side* heroes and sprightly maids, who may feel a wish to ‘see Life’

⁸² Roger Sales, ‘Pierce Egan and the Representation of London’, in *Reviewing Romanticism* (London: Macmillan, 1992), 160.

⁸³ Egan, *Life in London*, 19.

⁸⁴ Sales, ‘Pierce Egan and the Representation of London’, 160.

⁸⁵ Egan, *Life in London*, 19.

without receiving a *scratch*, it must be considered that the Metropolis is now before them.⁸⁶

Dart highlights the crucial image of the cosy suburban fireside that polarises the domestic reader from the grimier reality of London life: ‘positing an overwhelmingly respectable frame of zero-risk engagement’.⁸⁷ This image highlights the artificiality of Egan’s mode of viewing but also entrenches conservative distinctions between the popular readership and the lower orders of London society, part of the ‘combination of spectacle and verisimilitude’ that D’Arcy Wood describes as typical of the panoramic form.⁸⁸ Egan offers the reader an opportunity to traverse social boundaries, while maintaining the status quo of their own social standing. In Dart’s words, the ‘structural hypocrisy’ of a text which entitles the reader to a ‘real’ view of London from the safety of their home, allows us to conclude that Egan’s address was consciously written with a non-metropolitan readership in mind, ‘to supply provincial readers with a vicarious experience of the city’.⁸⁹

The metaphor of a camera obscura projecting brief and flickering images of the city ‘leaf by leaf’ is akin to rapidly thumbing through a book. It is a mode through which to view the city, but can also be considered as a visual means of organising knowledge, reflecting the inherent variety of more picturesque modes of viewing the city. Critics have considered this mode to be a defining feature of Egan’s modern view of the metropolis. In his prefatory essay to the collection *Unknown London*, John Marriott emphasizes the publication of *Life in London* as a ‘formative moment in the cultural history of the metropolis’.⁹⁰ Egan’s encyclopaedic vision of London ‘created a break with classical modes of representation, and the modernization of vision was set in motion’. The city was:

⁸⁶ Egan, *Life in London*, 19.

⁸⁷ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*, 117.

⁸⁸ Wood, *Shock of the Real*, 100.

⁸⁹ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810-1840*, 117.

⁹⁰ John Marriott, *Unknown London: Early Modernist Visions of the Metropolis, 1815-45* vol.1 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), xxiii.

a complete CYCLOPAEDIA, where every man of the most religious or moral habits, attached to any sect, may find something to please his palate [...] Every SQUARE in in the metropolis is a sort of *map* worth exploring [...] there is not a *street* in London but what may compared to a large or small volume of intelligence, abounding with anecdote, incident and peculiarities. A *court* or *alley* must be obscure indeed, if it does not afford some remarks; and even in the *poorest* cellar contains some *trait* or other, in unison with the manners and feelings of this great city.⁹¹

The notion of the city as a book can be traced back to earlier eighteenth century spy narratives, such as *The Complete Modern London Spy* (1781) which defined London as ‘a world in miniature’ to be read as the ‘Book of Life’, a revelatory text in which ‘the secret springs of the actions of mankind are traced to their fountain-head; and the rays of human knowledge are drawn into one focus’.⁹² For Egan, the city is both a ‘cyclopaedia’ and a map: repositories of urban knowledge to be explored at leisure. The city is both navigable (as a map) and readable (the cyclopaedia), and can be schematised as such. If the city is seen as an impenetrable conglomerate of sights and sounds, Egan offers a rationale of cataloguing and reading the metropolis, breaking it down into a familiar and digestible format for his readership. However, just as a reader might flick through a book, the episodic ‘leaf by leaf’ revelation of the camera obscura only skims the surface the city. If despite these efforts, as Marriott notes, the city remained ineffable, Egan used the social contrasts of London to construct a new urban aesthetic: ‘the EXTREMES, in every point of view, are daily to be met with in the Metropolis’, and on the contrasts of rich and poor, luxury and squalor, Egan created *Life in London*.⁹³ The patchwork of prospect, picturesque, and panoramic forms invoked in Egan’s text, then, suggest how the modern view of an expanding and labyrinthine city resisted easy

⁹¹ Egan, *Life in London*, 24.

⁹² *The Complete Modern London Spy, for the Present Year, 1781; or, a Real New, and Universal Disclosure, of the Secret, Nocturnal, and Diurnal Transactions, in and About the Cities of London and Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark. ... Written by a Gentleman of Fortune. Revised, Corrected, and Improved, by Richard King*, (London, 1781), iii–iv.

⁹³ Egan, *Life in London*, 50.

aesthetic categorisation. Prominent in this anxiety was a desire to utilise new forms of viewing to explore and understand the modern incarnation of London, but also to preserve and entrench the social distinctions afforded by the older prospect view. Similarly, as I shall now show, Cyrus Redding's sketch, 'The Tea Garden', also revealed the socially disrupting effects of stepping outside of the prospect view, and the fragility of picturesque idealisations of a socially-contained London landscape. Whereas Egan's panoramic view of London is one that presents itself in terms of a complete, self-contained, and easily consumed view of the city, Redding's text is characterised by an interest in ruin, fragmentation, and disunity – impulses that speak to an anti-modern portending of national ruin and decline observable in the urban landscape.

Cyrus Redding's 'The Tea Garden' (1822)

Cyrus Redding's brief sketch 'The Tea Garden' appeared in the newly-resurrected *London Magazine* in August 1822, the magazine which first published Hazlitt's 'Table Talk', De Quincey's 'Opium Eater', and Lamb's 'Elia' essays. Redding's piece is a compact commentary on a ramble up Primrose Hill, north of Regent's Park in London, to seek a 'bird's-eye view' of the metropolis.⁹⁴ The following section highlights how Redding's account of a London view dismantles the dominant modes of the prospect view, the panorama, and the picturesque, invoking various forms of decline and ruin that challenge the pristine image of London hitherto associated with these modes of viewing.

'The Tea Garden' begins from the fixed, and seemingly all-knowing, viewpoint of the panorama. 'The Regent's Park, with its handsome buildings, lay at my feet like a mass', explains Redding's viewer.⁹⁵ The 'silvery lake' of the canal 'lacing the green turf with a winding stripe of water of a luminous blue colour' transforms the national institutions of 'royalty, legislation, nobility' into a

⁹⁴ Cyrus Redding, 'The Tea Garden', *London Magazine*, August 1822, 137.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

graceful and striking aesthetic spectacle.⁹⁶ The terrifying ‘modern Babylon’ stretches out of view, straining against the confines of human vision ‘until it was lost in the obscurity of the atmosphere’ forming a ‘*coup-d’oeil* of magnificent though mingled character, partly natural partly artificial’, hinting at the flaws and weaknesses of the panoramic mode in capturing the reality of sprawling urban progress, and tempering the expansive interconnectedness of the metropolis into an impressive but comprehensible single entity.⁹⁷

Images of a networked and connected city deteriorate into a rhetoric of immensity and blockage. Gazing upon the city of ‘a million human beings’, the ‘bird’s eye view of it which was before me diminished in its aggregate effect’, the intense volume of human activity merging into one indistinguishable and ‘entire mass’.⁹⁸ The division between the viewer and the metropolis is further divided and intensified, invoking the safe and pleasing social distance of the prospect viewer: the inhabitants ‘were to me as ants in their cells’, whereas the viewer is a ‘giant’ contemplating them. But the safety of this distance gives way to fear at the monolith of urban life that the prospect view simply cannot make knowable. The ‘mighty accumulation’ of commercial activity and progress ‘seemed but one entire mass’, with the viewer unable to differentiate between its constituent elements: ‘no streets, nor passages of communication being visible’.⁹⁹ The heaving mass of urban activity belies the magnitude of its achievement: ‘royalty, legislation, nobility, learning, science, trade, and commerce, were concentrated before me in a mightier whole than they had ever before been in the history of the world’.¹⁰⁰ The realisation gives way to rumination upon the autonomy and unknowability of the relentless activity and the narrator pauses to consider the ruling ‘passion of the congregated mass’ and ‘what the ultimate object of individual aims’ might motivate the faceless

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

engine of human progress, or ‘the designs of the awful Being who had placed them all there’.¹⁰¹ The effect of contemplating the relentless layer upon layer of human work exhibited in the bird’s-eye view is mirrored in the narrator’s failure to disaggregate and order his own thoughts: ‘Idea crowded upon idea, until my mind was overflowing with them’, and is only relieved by the sudden distraction of his friend, M.¹⁰²

The icons of improvement (‘royalty, legislation, nobility, learning, science, trade, and commerce’) so integral to the bird’s eye view of London are blanketed in a palpable fear of the uncontrollable autonomy of these improving activities and a trepidation of the future forms of decline such intensely propelled progress may engender. Redding’s account is peppered with references to categories of discourse which are read by M as a means of controlling and explaining atmospheric forces, and can in turn be read as the noble but futile attempts of knowledge to illuminate the unknowable, and for intellectual progress to stem decline. M holds no truck in ‘old women’s gossip or Moore’s almanac,’ disregarding folk lore and astrological hokum as retrogressive (‘he therefore does not imagine that a comet has had a “finger in the pie” lately’).¹⁰³ M is ‘too well informed’ to draw upon anything other than his reading of ‘The Gentleman’s Magazine’, from which he extrapolates a theory of future decline framed anxiously as an attempt to make coherent the forces of so-called urban progress.¹⁰⁴

M’s account is centred around a metaphor of choking and blockage within the commercial veins of the city. Progress will be stemmed by the flourishing of exotic fauna and flora. Regent’s Canal will be ‘choked up with mangroves’, ‘palms and plantains will flourish on the banks of the Thames’, date trees will ‘overshadow the sands of Hounslow’, ‘cocoas and ananas [sic]’ will ‘spring up wild’ in Hyde Park, and a ‘*boa constrictor*’ will ‘writhe’ around Windsor Forest devouring ‘royal venison

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

and Merino ram'. London's indigenous crops and wildlife will be supplanted and subsumed by encroaching foreign bodies: 'the mango, kissmiss, and tamarind, will be as plentiful at our desserts as apples'.¹⁰⁵ The anticipated moral decline of the city is marked by the encroachment of exotic goods and luxuries introduced via the so-called progressive project of international trade and commerce – an anxiety that I discuss in relation to the decline of mercantile empires in chapter two of this thesis.¹⁰⁶ Though the imaged of a 'choked' Thames suggests an encroaching and consuming fear at future decline, the viewer is still distanced from the reality of the urban sprawl, via the vantage point of the prospect viewer. But the unity and containment of the panorama is ruptured by M's dismantling of the idealised view of prosperity and commerce.

Although 'The Tea Garden' begins with a panoramic view of London, the distance afforded by the prospect view is compromised as soon as the narrator and M descend Primrose Hill: 'we walked to the bottom of the hill, on the side of Chalk Farm, that most pugnacious of tea gardens, celebrated in the annals of duelling'.¹⁰⁷ The tea garden is idealised as a site of almost antiquarian interest, featuring in historical 'annals' as a notable locale. But this pastoral, historicised idyll of nostalgia is constantly subject to disruption – the distraction is characteristic of the narrating figure. The narrator is characterised as one who has 'lost the power of fixing [his] attention on any thing; [he] could neither read nor compose'.¹⁰⁸ His attempt to comprehend the 'million of human beings' at work is disrupted by his friend M who 'broke in upon [his] abstractions',¹⁰⁹ a 'Scotsman playing a clarionet', who is revealed to be an impoverished ex-soldier, interrupts the eavesdropping of a nearby Cockney family; and in turn M's 'scheme for removing the evils of poverty, and achieving a

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 137-38.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of the economic links between luxury and decline in stadial theories of civilisation, see: Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). 138.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 139.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 136.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 137.

more equitable distribution of the good things of this life' is cut short by procession of charity girls.¹¹⁰ These interruptions are made possibly only by stepping outside of the prospect view and into the landscape itself. Suddenly, the social interactions abstracted by the prospect view and the panorama become real and actively impose themselves upon Redding's narrator. The effects of these interruptions are two-fold. Taken as an improving discourse, the interruption of conversation can be seen as emblematic of the inevitable obstacles to human progress, and the artifice of linear improvement. More broadly, and in reference to the totalising and idealising forms of viewing the metropolis Redding draws upon in his essay, these interruptions gesture towards more fundamental disruptions in the sweeping and comprehensive view of the ideal metropolis. They reveal not only the myth of uninhibited progress, but the relentless challenge of decline to this narrative. They reveal the artificiality of the panorama to be its fundamental flaw; in prioritising one narrative of progress it fails to contain the counter-narratives of decline born out of the very forces of commercialism, luxury, and industry that these images seek to control and revere. It is not just the inner workings of commerce and industry that are alluded to, but the failure of modern aesthetic categories to contain, explain, and prevent the age-old cyclical narratives of progress, decline, and ruin that are written irrevocably into the London landscape.

'The Tea Garden', I suggest, illustrates a number of breakdowns in the organising categories of prospect view, panorama, and picturesque. The prospect view, as it merges with the breadth of the panorama, makes the scope of London knowable, but fails to unveil the hidden forces at work within the landscape. The panorama allows the narrator to anticipate, on an enlarged scale, the inevitable moral ruin and decline of the city as a result of a national indulgence in luxury. Upon exiting the prospect view, the picturesque encounters with London's citizens disrupts the idealised view of the tea garden, revealing the artifice of the panorama's effect of visual and social unity. As

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 140.

a result, the picturesque nostalgia of tea garden fails to contain the social mobility of modernity, a theme I return to in chapter four of this thesis.

As evidenced here, the theme of ruin is one which runs alongside ideas of progress in Redding's sketch. The next chapter of this thesis takes its cues from Redding's anticipation of national decline and ruin, as marked in the London landscape. Chapter two will explore a series of views of ruined London, imagined in the future as symptoms of moral and economic decline anticipated by Redding.

Chapter Two – London in Ruins

Introduction

Chapter two of this thesis considers categories of ruin that expose tension between modernity and nostalgia, as depicted in fictional and graphic images of London produced between 1810 and 1829. Taking both contemporary and futuristic depictions of London as its focus, this chapter attempts to expand the aesthetic vocabulary of ruins to encompass anxieties around urbanisation and urban improvement as manifested in the quotidian details and locales of imagined ruins of London. As the sizable body of critical work exploring the aesthetic of ruins in the eighteenth century and Romantic period demonstrates, ‘it is the shadow of classical antiquity which is the deepest source of the fascination with ruins in the western world’.¹ The canonical geography of ruins maps Greece and Rome – though criticism is directed increasingly towards domestic ruins – as its primary sources of literary influence, prioritising a definition of ruin as a preserved tourist destination, and thus complete in its ruin.² But in returning to the now rare definition of ruin as ‘the collapse of a fabric or structure, especially a building; the action of giving way and crashing down, or of being toppled, either accidentally or by force’.³ I argue that texts offering an encounter with the process of ruin – as opposed to the idealised, static state of ruin – reveal a more nuanced and dynamic dialogue between

¹ Christopher Woodward, *In Ruins* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2001), 5.

² For a discussion of ruin-viewing in ancient and modern Greece, see: Francis Haskell, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); David S. Ferris, *Silent Urns: Romanticism, Hellenism, Modernity*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000); William Keach, ‘The Ruins of Empire and the Contradictions of Restoration: Barbault, Byron, Hemans’, 1 January 2012, <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/disaster/HTML/praxis.2012.keach.html>; Francesco Crocco, ‘The Ruins of Empire: Nationalism, Art, and Empire in Hemans’s Modern Greece’, accessed 15 July 2016, <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/patriotism/crocco/crocco.html>. For specific accounts of tourist interest in British ruins, see: Dale Townshend, ‘Ruins, Romance and the Rise of Gothic Tourism: The Case of Netley Abbey, 1750-1830’, *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*. 37, no. 3 (n.d.): 377-394; and in relation to gothic architecture, see: Jenny McAuley, ‘Representations of Gothic Abbey Architecture in the Works of Four Romantic-Period Authors : Radcliffe, Wordsworth, Scott, Byron’ (Ph.D., Durham University, 2007), <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2564/>.

³ ‘Ruin, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 9 July 2016, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/168689>.

the present moment and an idealised past time. While the ruins of the classical world entail a definite distancing of both time and space between the English ruin-gazer and their subject, and can thus be considered as a kind of absolute ruin in their clear remove from present time and space, the imagined ruins outlined in this chapter exploit the ambiguity of their ruined status, either in terms of their aesthetics, or in their historical status. In doing so, they expand the purpose of ruin discourse, allowing for immediate comment upon the present moment via their imagined near-future status. The imagined future ruins of London explored in this chapter puncture the sense of an idealised past, or a period of lost perfection, projected upon classical ruins, and replaces the classical ideal with a current image of London, the developed and improved status of which is offered up for scrutiny and comment.

Part one looks at Anna Laetitia Barbauld's futuristic ruin of London in the long poem *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812), outlining how images of future ruin not only display the inevitable ruin of empire, but also throws the London of 1810 into nostalgic relief. Part two analyses forms of preserved and intact ruins in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826), alongside contemporary accounts of Pompeii and Herculaneum. I argue that the nostalgic solace of domesticity evinced in the pristine remnants of the two ancient cities also serves to deflate the grandeur of the metropolis, but also the nostalgic fetishism for the classical world by making it appear uncanny and mundane. Part three traces the concept of ruins in reverse. In writing and images by William Hone and George Cruikshank that are concerned with the urbanisation of London in the 1820s, I analyse how images of construction portend ruin of the domestic English landscape in the near future, as opposed to the imminent ruins of empire described by Barbauld. The close aesthetic ties between ruin and construction bring the cycle of decay and decline full circle: if a ruin is a mirroring of the initial hope in construction, then construction can also be read as a projection of future ruin.

Ruins and Nostalgia

The aesthetic reach of the eighteenth-century and Romantic fascination with ruins has been well documented: by the mid-1700s, ruins had become a favourite subject for poets and painters, and

rich estate owners built mock ruins of mouldering castles and crumbling abbeys in their grounds, thus demonstrating the potential for different forms of materiality inherent in this aesthetic mode.⁴ Gillen D'Arcy Wood's study of the relationship between Romantic literary culture and emerging commercial visual culture offers a pertinent assessment of the transformative effect of ruins upon literature. Wood notes how the installation of the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum in 1816 overthrew the idea of eighteenth-century Hellenism as a 'strictly idealised, predominantly text-based phenomenon', and that the materiality of the Marbles represented the 'visual material 'real' of antiquity come to shake the idealist foundations of literary Hellenism'.⁵ While this chapter is not concerned with the ruins of ancient Greece and Rome per se, the emphasis upon material and physical experience and its transformative effect upon notions of an idealised past is pertinent to this chapter. As I will show, the materiality of ancient ruins punctures the idealised nostalgia for the classical world, by making them seem both physically vulnerable and immediate. Encountering the domestic details of classical sites that appeared familiar and uncanny, I argue, prompted a reflection upon western metropolises that allowed writers to imagine London in the present in ruins.

Indeed, as Rosemary Sweet notes, the awakening interest in archaeology gave voice to an emergent awareness that 'there was more to be learned from the material remains than from literary sources' and that archaeological discoveries 'heralded a different approach to seeing cities such as Rome, one which was more interested in understanding how the ancient city had operated as an entity; as opposed to viewing its antiquities simply as a prompt to literary recollection or philosophical reflection'.⁶ This in turn prompted a tendency of tourists to 'try to interpret and understand Rome as

⁴ Woodward, *In Ruins*, 126. For an example of ruins in Romantic-era British painting, see Louis Hawes, 'Constable's Hadleigh Castle and British Romantic Ruin Painting', *The Art Bulletin* 65, no. 3 (1983): 455–470; for a representative discussion of imagined ruin in continental painting, see Richard Wendort, 'Piranesi's Double Ruin', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34, no. 2 (2001): 161–80. Inger Sigrun Brodey, *Ruined by Design: Shaping Novels and Gardens in the Culture of Sensibility* (London: Routledge, 2008), 28.

⁵ Wood, *Shock of the Real*, 10.

⁶ Rosemary Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c.1690-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 122.

a functioning urban centre inhabited by people [...] not just by the Roman Senate or emperors and their armies; a city whose growth, glory and decline could be traced through its physical remains' thus conveying a sense of 'the appearance and lived experience of the ancient city, reducing it to a human, rather than a monumental scale'.⁷ The archaeological investigations into Herculaneum and Pompeii revealed a sense of uncanny wonder at the paradoxical materiality of ancient ruins, both in their longevity in surviving apocalyptic events, and in the vulnerability of the material fabric of cities at the centre of empires. The visceral and immediate nature of tourist encounters with classical ruins and excavations manages to puncture the idealised intellectual monument of the classical past, bringing the Romanticism of ruins into an uneasy proximity with the modern world and highlighting the vulnerability of even the greatest of empires and civilisations. Imaginings of the present London in ruins echoes this uneasy and uncanny immediacy.

The sense of loss engendered so profoundly through the apprehension of ruins can be read as a form of nostalgia, both for historical and contemporary sites of ruin. Wood explains how Schiller's conception of the modern poet as seeking nature 'but as an ideal and in a perfection in which she has never existed and now lost' supports a nostalgic reading of the study of ruins in the classical world.⁸ 'We experience our difference from antiquity as we do our estrangement from nature in the form of personal loss', Wood notes: 'the ancients are what we were'.⁹ The psychological consequence of modernity as the difference between past and present, or what Wood identifies as 'the alienation of modern European sensibility from its natural origins in antiquity', is defined by Schiller as 'sentimentality', the affective symptom of which is 'melancholy'.¹⁰ This form of antiquarian melancholia – or more precisely, nostalgia – is made palpable by the ruin-gaze: 'the ancient ruin is an incomplete and ultimately inscrutable representation of antiquity. Through it we

⁷ Ibid, 123.

⁸ Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, 121.

⁹ Ibid, 121.

¹⁰ Ibid; Friedrich Schiller, *Naive and Sentimental Poetry, and On the Sublime: Two Essays*, (New York: Fungar Publishing Co, 1966), 127.

sense the limitation of our condition, namely modernity, in the form of a debilitating melancholia'.¹¹ This form of ruin presents the classical world in a pleasingly fragmented and picturesque manner: a kind of retrospective guessing puzzle to be solved by filling in the gaps to imagine a whole vision of a civilisation which can never be verified as true. By comparison, the presentation of familiar locales in ruin offers a different take on this puzzle. Images of London in ruin offer a vision of a known whole in a fragmented state, generating a sense of trepidation at the decline of the familiar and thus engender a nostalgia for lost details of the everyday, as opposed to the loss of a golden age that never truly existed.

Some critics of the ruin trend question the discretion which viewers bring to particularly domestic subjects. In his writings about ruin-gazing, John Aikin urges a rational and analytical approach to the appreciation of domestic ruins. Bordering upon a kind of anti-nostalgia, Aikin proposes a set of criteria marking ruins worthy of appreciation. Those ruins that possess 'intrinsic beauty or grandeur', demonstrate the 'ingenuity' of a former age, 'illustrate manners and modes of living' obscured by history, or are 'associated with any remarkable event', are those worthy of preservation and appreciation.¹² Ruins most perform some kind of historical utility, Aikin notes, and those that refer 'only to inconsiderable personages and ordinary modes of life' are 'much less valuable in themselves than what have succeeded them'.¹³ In *Letters from a Father to his Son* (1793), Aikin writes at length on the criteria for ruin appreciation and preservation: 'for a ruin to be worth preserving', he notes, 'it must have belonged to a work of some grandeur or elegance, and still exhibit the faded features of those qualities'.¹⁴ Aikin acknowledges the nexus of temporal concerns a ruin may represent and its effects upon human sentiment: 'they are all referable to that principle of

¹¹ Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, 122.

¹² Lucy Aikin, *Memoir of John Aikin, with selections of his miscellaneous pieces*, vol. 2, (London: Baldwin, Chaddock, and Joy, 1823), 346.

¹³ *Ibid*, 347.

¹⁴ John Aikin, *Letters from a Father to His Son, on Various Topics, Relative to Literature and the Conduct of Life. Written in the Years 1792 and 1793, by J. Aikin, M.D.* (London: J. Johnson, 1793), 266.

association which connects animate and inanimate things, and past with present, by the relation of place'.¹⁵ The general sentiment inspired by scenes of ruin is one of the 'mutability of human affairs'.¹⁶ This retrospection and sensitivity to temporal change must offer something 'dignified or pleasing to the mind', notes Aikin, citing the 'brutal ignorance of feudal anarchy' invoked by the 'castellated mansion of the ancient Baron' as an example of a ruin whose history is unworthy of an aesthetic or intellectual appreciation.¹⁷ Whole swathes of national history are judged unworthy of preservation in ruin and Aikin encourages a highly rational and selective approach to the retrospective gaze of the ruin-viewer. Monastic remains are a particular target of Aikin's discretion. In gazing upon these ecclesiastical ruins, 'what shall we see, but a set of beings engaged in a dull round of indolent pleasures, and superstitious practices', he notes. 'We are rejoiced that their date is passed; and we can have little inducement to recall them from that oblivion into which they deservedly sunk, and which best accords with their primitive insignificance'.¹⁸ The sentimental emotion stirred in the mind of the ruin-viewer must be historically worthy, notes Aikin. This is demonstrated in the imperial importance of Barbauld's (and to some degree, Shelley's) images of an imagined ruined capital, but can also be shrunk down to the domestic, hyper-localised level of a projected personal nostalgia in the views and ruins discussed by Hone and Cruikshank later in this chapter.

The form of nostalgia or 'melancholy' engendered by gazing upon ruins, and heightened by the stretch of time between the object's creation and the viewer's encounter with it, is one which underpins the forms of alternative ruin this chapter outlines. Future ruins, preserved ruins, and reversed ruins each cast a nostalgic lens upon the viewer's apprehension of their own moment in time, as much as it does upon their understanding of time passed. In the examples of ruin depicted

¹⁵ Ibid, 267.

¹⁶ Ibid, 268.

¹⁷ Ibid, 270.

¹⁸ Ibid, 271.

by Hone and Cruikshank explored later in this chapter, the close temporal proximity between the nostalgic viewer and the object of their nostalgia creates a sense of possibility in arresting the inevitable cycle of building, ruin, and rebuilding. Unlike classical ruins, whose status of disintegration is known, total, and irreversible, the anticipated ruins of nineteenth-century London can serve as a warning against the over-zealous impetus for urban improvement.

Anna Laetitia Barbauld's *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* (1812)

The Framing of History

Published in 1812, Barbauld's poem takes as its subject an imagined future ruin of London. While other futuristic depictions of urban ruin are set well into the future - such as Shelley's *The Last Man* and Eugénie Roche's poem *London in a thousand years* (1830) - Barbauld projects her image of ruin only into the very near future. The poetic image of ruin is not only historically specific but creates a far more immediate link between the present moment of its composition and the future it anticipates. In doing so, Barbauld casts a historicising lens upon her own present moment; this close framing of the present day as history, James Chandler suggests, helps clarify 'the complex terms of the new Romantic-historicist configuration and crucially reveals the Romantic period to conceive of itself as 'the age of the spirit of the age'.¹⁹ The extent of what Chandler terms the period's 'comparative contemporaneities' in Barbauld's poem is distinctive in that the indexes of progress and decline are marked not temporally between eras, but spatially across continents, forging a transnational narrative of the cyclical rise and fall of empire.²⁰ Within a framework of ruin that is temporally narrow but geographically expansive, the image of London in ruin is abrupt, immediate, and visceral for the contemporary reader.

Ruin and decline are tied inextricably with commerce and luxury in Barbauld's poem. Barbauld begins, as William Keach has argued, by evoking 'the bad harvest of 1810 that was brutally

¹⁹ James Chandler, *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 96, 105.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

intensified by government policies on food distribution'.²¹ Nature summons its bounty 'in vain' against the 'Despot's sway; its scent of 'orange blossoms' and crops of 'olives' and 'corn' are no match for the inevitable decline of England, the 'sinking state'.²² The rural ideal of agrarian economy is decimated by the 'Colossal Power' of the decay wrought by 'Fate':

Man calls to Famine, nor invokes in vain,
Disease and Rapine follow in her train;
The tramp of marching hosts disturbs the plough,
The sword, the sickle, reaps the harvest now,
And where the Soldier gleans the scant supply,
The helpless Peasant but retires to die.²³

In this pastoral image of an idealised cycle of rural production and consumption, blighted by the brutal imposition of 'the Soldier' gleaning the 'scant supply' from the fields, Barbauld is clearly paying homage to Goldsmith's narrative of rural decline caused by Parliamentary enclosure. In doing so, Barbauld's poem attends to the stadial theory of economic progress and decline debated in the eighteenth century. Outlined in Adam Smith's stadial theory of economic and moral progress, luxury entails a severe economic inequality. In Smith's account of the 'natural progress of opulence', understood simply as 'society's development from barbarism to civilisation', is the 'distinctive humanist linkage between politics, property and dependency', notes Berry: 'the (political) equality presumed by the civic humanists was based on property held by citizens, but this, in practice, presupposed widespread (social) inequality between citizens and non-citizens'.²⁴ In the fourth stage of Smith's theory, the 'commercial' age – visible in Barbauld's depiction of a trading and conquering nation - stems from the 'natural human propensity to truck, barter and exchange being allowed to establish a network of interdependency', a 'conjunction of opulence and freedom,

²¹ William Keach, 'A Regency Prophecy and the End of Anna Barbauld's Career', *Studies in Romanticism* 33, no. 4 (1994): 574.

²² Barbauld, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 152.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*, Ideas in Context (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 156.

luxury and civilisation' is still possible.²⁵ Luxury, then, plays a crucial role in the 'revolution' of social change.²⁶ *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* can be read as a homage to Goldsmith's own narrative of decline and fall of national ideals at the hands of commercial corruption. McCarthy and Kraft note that the Warrington Circulating Library acquired a copy of the poem a month after its publication, suggesting that Barbauld probably wrote her poem in praise of the verse soon after.²⁷ There are clear parallels between the two poem's treatments of national decline:

Nor let Britannia mourn her drooping bay,
Unhonoured genius, and her swift decay;
Oh patron of the Poor! – it cannot be,
While one, one Poet yet remains like thee;
Nor can the Muse desert our favoured isle
Till thou desert the Muse and scorn her smile.²⁸

These lines can be read as a reference to Goldsmith's lament at the desertion of 'Poetry, thou loveliest maid' from a corrupt England, 'unfit in these degenerate times of shame', the 'source of all my bliss, and all my woe', poetry 'founds't me poor at first, and keep'st me so'.²⁹ The desertion of poetry is seen as the culmination of 'devastation' in Goldsmith's poem, as the narrator sees 'the rural virtues leave the land'.³⁰ In the 'business of destruction', the 'voice' of poetry passes over 'Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side, / Whether here equinotical fervours glow, / Or winter wraps the polar world in snow'.³¹ Poetry travels from the cliffs of Lake Torno in Italy, towards the mountain of Pambamarca in Ecuador, crossing the heat of the equator, marking a progress from East to West that is echoed clearly in Barbauld's mapping of the rise and fall of England's empire in *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*.

²⁵ Ibid, 157.

²⁶ Ibid, 158.

²⁷ Ibid, 240.

²⁸ Ibid, 152.

²⁹ Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, 22.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid, 23.

In tracing the passage of civilisation from east to west, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* not only describes the narrative of the spatial shift of empire, but also holds the future of civilisation in prospect. Liberty and prosperity journey from Asia, via Africa and northern Europe, towards Spanish America, which is venerated at the close of Barbauld's poem as a civilisation on the brink of its own Golden Age:

For see, - to other climes the Genius soars,
He turns from Europe's desolate shores
And lo, even now, midst mountains wrapt in storm,
On Andes' heights he shrouds his awful form;
On Chimborazo's summits treads sublime,
Measuring in lofty thoughts the march of Time;
Sudden he calls: - "Tis now the hour!" he cries,
Spreads his broad hand, and bids the nations rise...
Shouts to the mingled tribes from sea to sea,
And swears – Thy world, Columbus, shall be free.³²

The historian David Brading has suggested that Spanish America inspired British Romantic writers in that it offered a fertile ground for importing the post-Revolutionary communitarian ideals that England's 'desolate shores' could no longer accommodate.³³ The Americas were imagined as an opportunity to exercise free trade, an ideal tabula rasa onto which colonising nations could forge a new image in terms of the 'benevolence and improvement' that characterised the promoting rhetoric of industrialised nations.³⁴ Rebecca Cole Heinowitz has mapped out the appeal of the Americas to Europe at length, citing the 1808 English translation of Viscardo's *Lettre aux Espagnols Americains* (*The Letter to the Spanish Americans*) as a key catalyst: 'As a nation that had been economically interested in Spanish America since the age of Walter Raleigh', she notes, 'England could not now

³² Barbauld, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 161.

³³ D. A. Brading, *The First America: The Spanish Monarchy, Creole Patriots and the Liberal State 1492-1866* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 4-6.

³⁴ Rebecca Cole Heinowitz, "'Thy World, Columbus, Shall Be Free": British Romantic Deviance and Spanish American Revolution', *European Romantic Review* 17, no. 2 (1 April 2006): 154.

fail to be enticed by Viscardo's portrait of imminent profit'.³⁵ With this in mind, Barbauld's closing proclamation of the freedom and liberty in the land of Columbus can be read as warning against the spread of mercantile self-interest, and testament to the enduring pursuit of commercial gain. The notion of an ideal and 'free' final destination for 'Genius' is both ironic and a falsehood when considered within a narrative of cyclical migration and the inevitable decline of nations and empires that is destined to repeat itself infinitely.

Furthermore, Heinowitz notes how the final address to England's plight ('to other climes the Genius soars, / He turns from Europe's desolate shores') elides England and Europe with no distinction between the two, prompting disquiet among the poem's many unfavourable reviewers.³⁶ The argument can be developed further to question the status of London in Barbauld's vision of future ruin. While London's ruin juxtaposed with the 'sublime' and 'lofty' economic potential of new nations suggests a failure of commercialism and luxury specific to the city, the overarching narrative of cyclical decline is generic and not unique to the failures of any one locale or nation. The notion of 'freedom' is elusive regardless of the locale, because commercialism, industry, and luxury bring with them their own unassailable narratives of cyclical prosperity and devastation. As a result, Barbauld's vision of a new Golden Age contains within it a glimpse of future ruin; all images of the future are mirrors of the recent past, just as all images of the ideal past contain within them a suggestion of future ruin. The imagined ruin and desolation of London, then, can be read as nothing particularly extraordinary in the 'march of Time', but a necessary state of decline that all nations and empire must pass through. With the inevitability of cyclical decline also comes the repeated possibility of the rebuilding and re-emergence of each nation.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid, 156.

London in Ruins

When ruin occurs, it is with ‘an earthquake shock’ and ‘baseless wealth dissolves in air away, / Like mists that melt before the morning ray’.³⁷ The process of ruin is almost incidental in its brevity, and fleeting in its dissolution into thin air. The abruptness and shock of the process of ruin is sustained in the reader’s disturbance at seeing their present capital so rapidly and readily fossilised in ruin. Jonathan Sachs suggests that the aligning of modern London with the model of classical ruins of Greece and Rome is a kind of ‘national validation’, although it is also the apparent ease, receptiveness, and vulnerability of London to ruin that suggests the capital is ruin-worthy.³⁸ Rather than crumbling and mouldering, the ruins of present London will serve as sites of pilgrimage, as shrines to British literature, science, politics, and art, and as blueprints for the fledgling societies of the Americas. ‘New states shall know’ the magnitude of the British ‘store of knowledge’. The present canon of literature and thought – ‘Thy Locks, thy Paleys’, ‘Milton’s tones’, ‘the Bards that swept the British lyre’, ‘Shakespeare’s noble rage’, ‘Joanna’ Baillie, ‘Thomson’ – will become the new model of classical learning that has sustained and formed Britain into a nation worthy of ruin.³⁹ Similarly, the edifices of the Tower of London and St. Paul’s Cathedral, will also be monuments on the pilgrim trail:

Pensive and thoughtful shall the wanderers greet
Each splendid square, and still, untrodden street;
Or of some crumbling turret, mined by time,
The broken stairs with perilous step shall climb.⁴⁰

From the Tower of London, pilgrims will be able to occupy a site of ruin and gaze upon the once prospect view of London, now crumbling in ruin:

³⁷ Anna Letitia Barbauld, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld* (Athens ; London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 154.

³⁸ Jonathan Sachs, ‘Decline and British Romantic Literary Culture’, *Literature Compass* 9, no. 1 (January 2012): 59.

³⁹ Barbauld, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 155.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 157.

Thence stretch their view the wide horizon round,
By scattered hamlets trace its antient bound,
And, choked no more with fleets, fair Thames survey
Through reeds and sedge pursue his idle way.⁴¹

The pilgrim can take in the entire sweep of London's history at a glance, imagining not only what was lost in recent ruin, but viewing an almost pre-industrial residual outline of London marked by 'antient bound' and no longer populated by commercial 'fleets'. Barbauld's image reveals the pre-civilised and prelapsarian natural history of the Thames still visible in the landscape, a time in which 'reeds and sedge' held dominance over the river rather than commercial shipping fleets. The view of London renders the city as a palimpsest upon which multiple stages of economic progress and decline are discernible to the viewer simultaneously. What is equally striking about this view is the extent to which it anticipates Cyrus Redding's own prospect view of the Thames, in which the 'choked' Thames, and the 'silvery lakes' and 'winding blue stripes' of London's waterways are visible.⁴²

The image of a reed-choked Thames recalls the trope of the weed-enveloped palace, a symbolically powerful trope of visual depictions of ruin, particularly in the images of prospective ruin of the Louvre and Soane's Bank of England by Hubert Robert and Joseph Gandy. Robert's *Design for the Grand Gallery in the Louvre* and his *An Imaginary View of the Grand Gallery in Ruins* (1796) present a dual vision of the gallery in prospect and in ruin. For Daniel Brewer, Robert depicts 'the inevitable transience of precisely the institution whose current function is to preserve the artwork from physical deterioration'.⁴³ Viewing these images together, as they were presented at the 1796 *Salon*, highlights the irony of the very structure built to shelter artworks being in a state of total ruin.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Redding, 'The Tea Garden', 137.

⁴³ Daniel Brewer, *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 192.

The elision of ruins and museum is crucial in Barbauld's project of 'national validation' and in the progress of the imagined pilgrimage through ruined London.⁴⁴

Oft shall the strangers turn their eager feet
The rich remains of antient art to greet,
The pictured walls with critic eye explore,
And Reynolds be what Raphael was before.
On spoils from every clime their eyes shall gaze,
Egyptian granites and the Etruscan vase;
And when midst fallen London, they survey
The Stone where Alexander's ashes lay,
Shall own with humbled pride the lesson just
By Time's slow finger written in the dust.⁴⁵

Implicit in the museum's aim to preserve is also a nostalgic impulse, one directed at the 'spoils' of empire and conquest. Barbauld's final couplet offers a moral censure of the nostalgic imagining of past empires: the monuments to global conquest and colony are as ephemeral and as lasting as words 'written in the dust'. The object of this critique is Barbauld's contemporary world, one which falls in line easily with the cycle of ruin and decay: indeed Joshua Reynolds will soon become what 'Raphael was before'.

Barbauld's pilgrims go on to wander through 'the hallowed mansions of the silent dead' housed in the 'long isle and vaulted dome' of St. Paul's cathedral:

Awe-struck, midst chill sepulchral marbles breathe,
Where all above is still, as all beneath;
Bend at each antique shrine, and frequent turn
To clasp with fond delight some sculptured urn,
The ponderous mass of Johnson's form to greet,
Or breathe the prayer at Howard's sainted feet.⁴⁶

Alluding to the statues of Samuel Johnson and John Howard in the nave of St Paul's, Barbauld presents the contemporary reader with an image of the very recent literary and political past framed

⁴⁴ Sachs, 'Decline and British Romantic Literary Culture', 87.

⁴⁵ Barbauld, *The Poems of Anna Letitia Barbauld*, 158.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

in the language of classical ruin: ‘antique shrine’, ‘sepulchral marbles’, ‘some sculptured urn’.

Similarly, as the pilgrims are guided around the cathedral by a nostalgic ‘Briton’, in whose ‘musing mind’ the ‘ages live which Time has cast behind’, moments of recent patriotic and political note are recalled in similarly monumentalising terms:

Here Chatham’s eloquence in thunder broke,
Here Fox persuaded, or here Garrick spoke;
Shall boast how Nelson, fame and death in view,
To wonted victory led his ardent crew,
In England’s name enforced, with loftiest tone,
Their duty, - and too well fulfilled his own.

The supposedly momentary nature and ephemeral stylings of political speech (‘eloquence’ and ‘loftiest tone’) transpire to be a monument more lasting than the crumbling edifices of London’s architecture: ‘the fractured arch, the ruined tower’, the Ozymandian ‘limbs disjointed of gigantic power’.

Barbauld’s poem of a ruined London in the near future allows the reader to imagine a sense of nostalgia for their present moment. Rather than invoking a sense of nostalgia for a lost time never truly experienced, or even nostalgia for very recent past, Barbauld makes the reader privy to a kind of panorama of nostalgia, one which encompasses knowledge of the past, present, and future images of London. An imagined future nostalgia evoked by future ruin, draws upon the readers’ knowledge of their own present moment. The image of ruin presented here, is not one which requires the viewer of reader to embellish, imagine, and idealise a crumbled structure intact, but instead creates a more arresting image of the known whole of London in fragmentation. The reader must imagine their own reality in ruin. The closeness – both materially and historically – between the reader and their contemporary knowledge of London forces a more stringent political and social critique of the processes of moral and national decay that will inevitably bring about the deterioration of England’s capital.

Having discussed the prediction of national ruin and the strategy of nostalgia deployed in Barbauld's poem, I would now like to turn to Mary Shelley's depiction of intact ruin in her novel, *The Last Man*. In her study of ruin poetry, Anne Janowitz outlines the 'movement from public terror' at old structures in ruin, 'to private melancholy' that 'matches the reduction of poetic scope from recording of objects of monumentality to expressing subjective reactions'.⁴⁷ This transition, from a collective, national scale, to a personal, private perspective is one I would also like to trace in this chapter. Shelley's novel, I suggest, in its depiction of an alternative, intact ruin, demonstrates the capacious perspective of the ruin gaze, transitioning from the awe-inspiring futuristic prospect view of a ruined London in Barbauld, towards a more picturesque, quotidian encounter with ruin in *The Last Man*.

Preserved Ruins – Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826)

Archaeology

The space in time between Shelley's novel and the ancient world preserved at archaeological sites, is prime for a projection of nostalgia born out of classical study. Gillen D'Arcy Wood notes how the ancient world 'constituted a radically underdetermined cultural object' for study. Hellenists 'experienced a melancholy sense of historical and geographical remove, of being privy to no more than the shadowy outline of antiquity'.⁴⁸ Hellenistic study of prints, copies, and drawings of ancient sites, academic study of classical literature, and the taste for neo-classical architecture became a form of cultural substitution, 'perpetual signifiers of an absent original'⁴⁹ and promising a knowledge of history 'in a resolutely aesthetic form'.⁵⁰ 'That very indistinctness', writes Johann Joachim Winckelmann in 1764, 'awakens only a more earnest longing for what we have lost, and

⁴⁷ Anne F. Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990), 62.

⁴⁸ Wood, *Shock of the Real*, 123.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ David S. Ferris, *Silent Urns: Romanticism, Hellenism, Modernity.*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), xi.

we study the copies of originals more attentively than we should have done the originals themselves, if we had been in full possession of them'.⁵¹ In this way, the idealisation of the keenly imagined past becomes a cipher of modernity itself, and all its pathologies of longing. The antithesis between the two periods, of the modern and ancient worlds, shapes the space within which nostalgia occurs. The 1820s saw a wave of writings inspired by the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum as sites of archaeological interest, appearing alongside a proliferation of literary explorations of the Last Man theme. Both sets of text respond to the idea of apocalypse, but they also contain descriptions of buried and uninhabited cities perfectly preserved and replete with domestic detail. Like *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, the deserted city of *The Last Man* is tainted by markers of indulgence and luxury. Whereas ruins during this period commonly symbolised the cyclical rise and fall of empires – as we have seen in this chapter - the intact status of Pompeii and Herculaneum prompted an uneasy sense of the uncanny, which was adapted by Shelley in her examination of a solitary figure wandering around deserted cities at the end of time. The suddenness of destruction in Pompeii and Herculaneum spoke to the recent memory of a devastating earthquake in Lisbon in November 1755, an image which remained central in the European mind-set, making the notion of London's sudden desolation all the more palpable.⁵²

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the concept of archaeology had been based around the collection and recording of antiquities but by the early nineteenth century the term had expanded to encompass the practice of excavation: the uncovering and examination of remains located underground and the consideration of these finds in their historical context.⁵³ The development of modern archaeology came about with the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, the ancient cities

⁵¹ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *History of Ancient Art*, vol 4, translated G. Henry Lodge, (Boston: Osgood and Company, 1872), 292.

⁵² See: Richard Hamblyn, 'Notes from Underground: Lisbon after the Earthquake', *Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (1 July 2008): 108–18.

⁵³ Jennifer Wallace, *Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 12-13.

buried under ash and pumice when Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD.⁵⁴ As Shelley Hales and Joanna Paul have noted, this event destroyed the cities by, paradoxically, preserving them under a layer of ash, thus burying the settlements and preserving their remains for hundreds of years.⁵⁵ The excavations introduced archaeology as a new historical science of the age, but political infighting paralysed work at the sites for many years. These cities remained intact under volcanic debris until they were discovered near modern Naples in 1689, and although exploratory excavations were carried out, the suggestion that these remains were of Pompeii were treated with scepticism.⁵⁶ Similarly, workmen discovered part of the theatre of Herculaneum in 1709, and after initial investigation the project was closed in 1716.⁵⁷ Various attempts to resurrect the projects were made throughout the eighteenth century, with a number of major finds transforming the sites into tourist spots.⁵⁸ While the advance of Napoleon's army through Europe had resulted in a sharp decrease in the number of tourists able to visit the sites, after 1815 travellers began to return, firing public interest in the buried cities.⁵⁹ The resurgence in investigative activity around the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum fuelled the evolution of archaeology as a discipline of scientific inquiry. Jenny Uglow notes there was an 'increasing interest in the forces active below the earth's crust, which had been shown horrifically in the great Lisbon earthquake of 1755'.⁶⁰ It was accepted increasingly, especially after the Comte de Buffon's first volume of *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du Cabinet du Roi* (1749), that the earth was a 'theatre of active processes', perpetually destroying and

⁵⁴ Alison Cooley, *Pompeii* (Bristol: Duckworth Archaeological Histories, 2003), 68.

⁵⁵ Shelley Hales and Joanna Paul, *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from Its Rediscovery to Today* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2011), 1.

⁵⁶ Colin Amery and Brian Curran, *The Lost World of Pompeii* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2002), 31-32.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 32.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 32-38.

⁵⁹ Alison Cooley, *Pompeii*, 80.

⁶⁰ Jennifer S. Uglow, *The Lunar Men : The Friends Who Made the Future, 1730-1810* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), 150.

rebuilding itself.⁶¹ By the 1780s, figures such as the Scottish geologist James Hutton were able to argue that the same natural forces had altered the face of the globe in an endlessly repeated cycle over millennia, reshaping continents, carving rivers, and building mountains without any divine intervention.⁶² The resulting fascination in the formation of rocks and minerals also led to an attendant interest in the human occupation of these environments: the precariousness and brevity of built structures; the idea of ruins as another mutable layer of the earth to be excavated, investigated, and projected onto. Science provided an empirical groundwork supporting an aesthetic theorisation of the historically precarious relationship between people, their built structures, and their natural environments.

Intact ruins

Unlike the scenes of ruin that had long held the fascination of eighteenth-century Britons, Pompeii and Herculaneum were not ruins in an immediately recognisable sense, having been found preserved complete. They functioned as intact ruins, preserving historical specimens of ancient metropolises. Although originating in the classical past, these sites also retained an uncanny sense that they had been occupied and lived in very recently, and offered to viewers a distorting mirror of their own urban habitations.

Reflecting upon ruins was often seen as prompting a meditative state of mind by writers such as Edward Gibbon, author of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), and Constantin-François Chasseboeuf Volney, in his text *Les Ruines, ou Méditations sur les Révolutions des Empires* (1791). For Volney, ruins represented philosophical hope by offering a vision of the destruction of the present regime, while Gibbon posited that the study of ruins lead to the ‘pleasing conclusion that every age of the world has increased and still increases the real wealth, the

⁶¹ Roy Porter, *The Making of Geology: Earth Science in Britain, 1660-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 109.

⁶² Uglow, *The Lunar Men*, 150.

happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue, of the human race'.⁶³ Although a contemplation of ruins will always inevitably lead to a consideration of the fall of empires, both Volney and Gibbon predict that these falls will be followed by rises, just as in her poem, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven*, Barbauld balances her vision of the ruin of the British empire with the rise of the Americas. For Pompeii and Herculaneum, however, there was no decline and fall, and no ruin in the traditional sense: their buildings remained frozen in time. The cities were not part of a regenerative cycle of rise and fall, or of ruin and rebuilding, but were victims of an apocalyptic catastrophe that stunted this conventional narrative. This situated Pompeii and Herculaneum outside the binary tension of past and present times, and placed the viewer outside of this opposition, too, by providing a vantage point conducive to reflection upon the present state of the city, and nostalgic ideals of the past.

The relationship between past and present, and nostalgia and modernity, elevates ruins from picturesque detail to a sublime status, even in their evocation of the domesticity of time passed. This elevation is articulated most clearly in Denis Diderot's critique of the ruin paintings presented by Hubert Robert in 1767, mentioned briefly early on in this chapter. The debuted paintings reconciled human domesticity with the grandeur of ruins, and included an image of the Pantheon at Rome reimaged at the port of Ripetta, a depiction of a hermit praying in a ruined Roman temple, and a picture of people carrying out domestic chores in the ruined Villa Madama outside Rome. In his account of the exhibition, Diderot remarked upon the transient nature of present time evoked by Robert's ruins:

The ideas ruins evoke in me are grand. Everything comes to nothing, everything perishes, everything passes, only the world remains, only time endures. How old is this world! I walk between two eternities. Wherever I cast my glance, the objects surrounding me announce death and compel my resignation to what awaits me.⁶⁴

⁶³ Quoted in Laurence Goldstein, 'The Impact of Pompeii on the Literary Imagination', *The Centennial Review*, 23:3 (1979), 227-41 (229).

⁶⁴ Denis Diderot, *Diderot on Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), vol 2, 198-199.

But Diderot also criticised Robert's painting for being too densely populated, preferring a reflection of a viewer with his own sensibilities:

Don't you sense there are too many figures here, that three-quarters of them should be removed? Only those enhancing the effect of solitude and silence should be retained. A solitary man who's wandered into these shadowing precincts, his arms across his chest and his head inclined, would have made a greater impression on me; the darkness alone, the majesty of the building, the grandeur of the construction, the extent, serenity, and muted reverberation of the space, would have set me shuddering. ⁶⁵

Stripped of their human contents, Diderot's ideal of ruins relies upon the anchorless state of solitude to invoke the grander maxims of temporality and death: 'everything comes to nothing, everything perishes, everything passes', with the inevitability of death and decay the only reassurance of constancy. The excessive and crowded habitation of cities comes at a great cost to solitude and to the moments of historical comprehension solitude enables. In this sense, nostalgia, in any form, is a singular antidote to crowded communal living in the modern and developed city.

While the solitude afforded by crumbling ruins is a source of solace for Diderot, the intact status of Pompeii and Herculaneum surprised and often disappointed tourists to these sites. As Rosemary Sweet notes, the later eighteenth century emphasis upon the subjective focus of travel writing gave rise to the tendency to 'record the impressions formed, rather than simply to document the existence of a monument'.⁶⁶ In his travel account, *Pompeiana* (1821), Sir William Gell perceives the paradoxical character of Pompeii when he notes that 'remote antiquity is here combined with an air of newness which appears but the work of yesterday'.⁶⁷ The depopulation of the ruined scene lifts immediate and contemporaneous distractions, anchoring the viewer to their own historical moment. Sarah Atkin's *Relics of Herculaneum* (1825), a children's guide to popular archaeological site,

⁶⁵ Ibid, 208.

⁶⁶ Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 129.

⁶⁷ Sir William Gell and John P. Gandy, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices, and Ornaments of Pompeii*, (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1821), 114.

remarks upon the sense of human isolation engendered by silence: ‘All around is silence, not the silence of solitude and repose, but of death and devastation: the silence of a great city without a single inhabitant’.⁶⁸ The evocation of a grand and ‘great city’ in an uncanny state of silence, and the association of sublime destruction with ruins, engages the response of the viewing subject, projecting the subject of ruin back upon the present time. Atkins describes wandering through the houses of Herculaneum and the uncanny sensation of encountering a ruin so intact it could still be occupied by humans:

While you are wandering through the abandoned rooms, you may, without any great effort of imagination, expect to meet some of the former inhabitants, or, perhaps, the master of the house himself: and almost feel like intruders, who dread the appearance of any of the family. In the streets you are afraid of turning a corner, lest you should jostle a passenger; and on entering a house, the least sound startles, as if the proprietor was coming out of the back apartments.⁶⁹

Similarly, Gell describes how in one room at Pompeii, ‘was found a skeleton; near it was a plate, on which were fish bones; while the utensils used in cooking that fish were discovered in the kitchen.’⁷⁰ As tourists walked around these ancient cities, they felt an affinity with the people of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and could relate to the most domestic of details in their everyday lives.⁷¹ The ruined city is both a prompt to imaginative, nostalgic departure, but also a preserved artefact to be studied.

⁶⁸ Sarah Atkins, *Relics of Antiquity: Exhibited in the Ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, with an Account of the Destruction and Recovery of Those Celebrated Cities* (London: W. B. Gilley, 1826), 97.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁷⁰ Gell, *Pompeiana*, 252.

⁷¹ These tourists accounts in turn inspired fictional descriptions of walks around Pompeii and Herculaneum, including, notably, Edward Bulwer Lytton *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), John Hughes *Pompeii: a Descriptive Ode* (1820), Edwin Atherstone *The Last Days of Herculaneum* (1821), W.P.T. Shortt’s *A Visit to Milan, Florence, and Rome, the Subterranean Cities Herculaneum and Pompeii, and the Crater of Vesuvius* (1823), and William Light’s *Views of Pompeii* (1828).

The idea of intact ruins is perceivable in Mary Shelley's depiction of London in *The Last Man*, though to date, *The Last Man* has garnered diverse criticism focussing upon the text's treatment of what is now termed bio-politics, geology and extinction, as comment upon human population growth, as critique and exploration of the sublime, global exploration, in terms of gender and biography, and millenarian prophecy.⁷² In the novel, a global pestilence results in the widespread depopulation of England and the eventual death of everyone on earth apart from one man, Lionel Verney. When the population of England diminishes to fewer than two thousand people, Lionel and his friend Adrian decide to lead the survivors onto the continent, but before they depart, they decide to visit London one last time to ensure that no inhabitants remain. Lionel describes how 'the open doors of the empty mansions creaked upon their hinges; [...] the voiceless steeples of the churches pierced the smokeless air: [...] every thing was desert; but nothing was in ruin'.⁷³ Here, Shelley's description of an empty London distinctly echoes the various accounts of Pompeii, including Percy Shelley's own account of their 1818 visit, elaborated in a lengthy letter to Thomas Love Peacock: 'Since you last heard from me we have been to see Pompeii [...] I was astonished at the remains of

⁷² For bio-politics, see: Fuson Wang, 'We Must Live Elsewhere: The Social Construction of Natural Immunity in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review* 22, no. 2 (2011): 235–255; Siobhan Carroll, 'Mary Shelley's Global Atmosphere', *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 1 (2014): 3–17; Ranita Chatterjee, 'Our Bodies, Our Catastrophes: Biopolitics in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *European Romantic Review* 25, no. 1 (2014): 35–49. For geology see: 'The Psychologization of Geological Catastrophe in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *ELH* 82, no. 2 (2015): 671–699. For population, see: Charlotte Sussman, "'Islanded in the World": Cultural Memory and Human Mobility in *The Last Man*', *PMLA* 118, no. 2 (2003): 286–301; Lauren Cameron, 'Mary Shelley's Malthusian Objections in *The Last Man*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 67, no. 2 (2012): 177–203. For the sublime, see: Patricia Cove, "'The Earth's Deep Entrails': Gothic Landscapes and Grotesque Bodies in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Gothic Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013): 19; J. Jennifer Jones, 'The Art of Redundancy: Sublime Fiction and Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *The Keats-Shelley Review* 29, no. 1 (2015): 25–41. For global exploration, see: Ruth Scobie, 'Mary Shelleys Monstrous Explorers: James Cook, James King, and a Sledge in Kamchatka', *The Keats-Shelley Review* 27, no. 1 (2013): 8–14. For gender studies, see: Betty Bennett, 'Radical Imaginings: Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *The Wordsworth Circle* 26, no. 3 (1995): 147. For millenarianism, see: Morton Paley, 'Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*: "Apocalypse without Millennium"', *Keats-Shelley Review* 4 (1989): 1; Kevin Hutchings, "'A Dark Image in a Phantasmagoria": Pastoral Idealism, Prophecy, and Materiality in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*', *Romanticism* 10, no. 2 (2004): 228–244.

⁷³ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *The Last Man*, World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 262.

this city; I had no conception of any thing so perfect yet remaining'.⁷⁴ Pompeii's ambiguous ruined status, old but new, dead but preserved, is the same source of tension that Lionel observes when the last of his companions die and he is left to wander alone through the city of Forli. 'As far as I could divine, I must have been in Forli', he recalls. 'I entered with pleasure its wide and grassy streets. All, it is true, pictured the excess of desolation; yet I loved to find myself in those spots which had been the abode of my fellow creatures'.⁷⁵ Although Lionel takes great comfort in knowing these streets were once functional, and yearns to find a fellow survivor, he is nonetheless startled when he enters a deserted palace and, opening a door, encounters another person staring back at him:

I entered one of the palaces, and opened the door of a magnificent salon. I started – I looked again, with renewed wonder. What wild-looking, unkempt, half-naked savage was that before me? The surprise was momentary.⁷⁶

The stranger turns out to be his own reflection in a mirror, but this episode demonstrates how the eeriness of an empty town can encourage one to expect to meet others, even if, logically, we know this is not possible. Despite his acknowledgement that he can live in any number of magnificent empty houses, Lionel chooses to camp outside each night, in order to avoid the loneliness of perfectly preserved yet deserted dwellings: 'I have sat, hour after hour, at the door of the cottage I had selected, unable to lift the latch, and meet face to face blank desertion within'.⁷⁷ Wishing to escape this form of uncanny ruin, Lionel travels to Rome, a city filled with actual ruins rather than deserted houses - crumbling walls and broken facades: 'every part of Rome is replete with relics of ancient times. The meanest streets are strewn with truncated columns, broken capitals [...] and sparkling fragments'.⁷⁸ The 'cold durability' of 'hallowed ruins, and stupendous remains of human

⁷⁴ *The Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. Frederick L. Jones, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II: 71.

⁷⁵ Shelley, *The Last Man*, 455.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Shelley, *The Last Man*, 457.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 359.

exertion' are divested of their human association.⁷⁹ In deciding to make his home among the ruins of Rome, Lionel thinks in the tradition of Edward Gibbon and views ruins as representative of mankind's greatness. As Lionel explains, Rome is 'the crown of man's achievements. Among its storied streets, hallowed ruins, and stupendous remains of human exertion, I shall not [...] find every thing forgetful of man'.⁸⁰ Thus for Lionel, while the pristinely preserved streets of London and Forli are torturous in their solitude, the ruins of Rome represent all that mankind has accomplished, and all that it might accomplish in the future if, as he hopes, the 'children of a saved pair of lovers' regenerate the population of the planet.⁸¹ The account of Rome ends with a description of the cycle of the seasons, bringing comfort in the 'cold durability' and inevitability of ruin:

Winter has come again; and the gardens of Rome have lost their leaves – the sharp air comes over the Campagna, and has driven its brute inhabitants to take up their abode in the many dwellings of the deserted city – frost has suspended the gushing fountains – and Trevi has stilled her eternal music.⁸²

For Lionel, classical ruins are comforting in their reminder of the inevitability of history and decline, but the quotidian and domestic ruins he encounters cut to the quick, offering to stark a reminder of the human price of the rise and fall of empire. The abstraction of classical ruin prompts a comforting nostalgia to buffer the desolation of reality, whereas a deserted home is the literal manifestation of a thwarted nostalgia: to return home only to find it physically the same but fundamentally different in nature is perhaps the only closure to nostalgia that can ever be achieved. A similar uncanny effect is evoked upon Lionel's return to London to visit the sickened Adrian. While previously London was the city of 'projectors and projects', subject to 'a thousand beneficial schemes' of improvement ('canals, aqueducts, bridges, stately buildings, and various edifices for

⁷⁹ Ibid, 461, 460.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 358.

⁸¹ Ibid, 364.

⁸² Ibid, 467.

public utility'), by the point of Lionel's return, the city of dynamic and energetic improvement is now desolate.⁸³ 'London appeared sufficiently changed' in the wake of the plague:

There were no carriage, and grass had sprung high in the streets; the houses had a desolate look; most of the shutters were closed; and there was a ghaſt [sic] and frightened ſtare in the perſons I met, very different from the uſual buſineſs-like demeanour of Londoners.⁸⁴

Parliament is also empty: 'the benches were very empty, thoſe by cuſtom occupied by the hereditary members were vacant [...] a ſilence prevailed'.⁸⁵ The plague has ſapped London of its vitality, a ſtate of ruin matched in the decline of industry, progreſs, and trade. Adrian's ante-chamber is crowded with 'people of the middling and lower claſſes of ſociety, whoſe means of ſubſiſtence failed with the ceſſation of trade, and of the buſy ſpirit of money-making in all its branches, peculiar to our country'.⁸⁶ Lionel later notes 'knots of country-people' fearing the contagion of decline emanating from London.⁸⁷ The ſenſe of inevitable deſtruction is palpable: 'the great heart of mighty Britain was pulſeleſs. Commerce had ceaſed'.⁸⁸ The decline of the city, overrun with weeds and emptied of life, is foſtered in the decline of trade, tracing back to Barbauld's own uſe of ruin for the metaphor of ſtadial economic decline, a cycle brought to its brutal and ſtartling concluſion in Shelley's deſcription of the ruined farm. In Shelley's homage to Goldſmith, the fears of the country-people Lionel encounters are ſoon confirmed. At the peak of the plague's progreſs, Lionel deſcribes the ſcene of deſolation in a nearby farm at Windſor:

The fields had been left uncultivated, weeds and gaudy flowers ſprung up, - or where a few wheat-fields ſhewed ſigns of the living hopes of the huſbandman, and the work had

⁸³ Ibid, 106.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 250.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 252-53.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 258.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 261.

been left half-way, the ploughman had died beside the plough; the horses had deserted the furrow, and no seedsman had approached the dead.⁸⁹

This description, awash with death, decay, and lethargy, is Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* taken to its extreme. The spread of the plague from London to the countryside has prompted the cessation of trade, the deleterious effects of which have spread into the farms of fields of the countryside, throwing the progress of improvement and trade into reverse.

The encroachment of urban ruin upon the countryside is one I would like to turn to in the final section of this chapter. As Shelley offered readers an uncanny vision of ruin that seemed palpably real, in its use of domestic details and settings, Cruikshank's critique of urban development expands further this idea of a domestic ruin, taking as its subject the construction of urban homes. The final section of this chapter considers the documentation of urban construction as a quotidian and small-scale correlative to the rhetoric of cyclical empire-building and dismantling deployed by Barbauld and Shelley.

George Cruikshank, 'London Going Out of Town' (1829)

Depictions of urban improvement go hand-in-hand with fears of urban ruin: the processes of construction, dissolution, and re-building cannot be easily told apart and share the same visual characteristics of incompleteness and material fragmentation, calling attention to the transience and temporality of their materials. In analysing George Cruikshank's etching 'London Going Out Of Town, or the March of Bricks and Mortar' (1829), (Figure 1) and the entry 'Groves and High Places' from William Hone's *The Table Book* (1827), I hope to show how the close aesthetic links of construction and dissolution suggest an ambiguous status of ruin, and formulate a notion of ruins that mirrors the prospect of (re)construction with the projected future ruin.

The increased activity in construction during the 1820s saw the fringes of urban London subsumed by urbanisation and transformed into an agglomeration of half-built houses and rusting relics of

⁸⁹ Ibid, 319.

older construction. Development of the city's outer suburbs was exploited by private speculators for cheap housing.⁹⁰ The close juxtaposition of construction and dissolution suggests an eternal cycle of building and re-building, of ruin and the reversal of ruin. The apocalyptic imaginary of *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* and *The Last Man* is not alleviated by the progress of urban expansion and construction (or even reconstruction), but the grand narrative of imperial anxiety is matched by a localised cycle of ruin, and improvement as ruin, which sees London rise into wreckage as the landscape of the city is churned up by the industrial boom of construction.

Reimagining London

Utopian visions of London's development have come in various 'shades of realism', as Simon Foxell notes and form part of a long literary tradition of depicting ideal, imagined utopias of metropolitan locales.⁹¹ One of the most frequently referenced is Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which incorporates a description of an idealised city in its second book, 'Concerning the Best State of a Commonwealth'. In More's lengthy description, of 'the city of Amaurote', the utopian metropolis occupies an ideal prospect 'upon the side of a low hill, in fashion almost four-square', and it 'continueth by the space of two miles until it come to the river Anyder'. 'There goeth a bridge over the river', notes More, a feat of engineering 'made not of piles or of timber, but of stonework with gorgeous and substantial arches' constructed with the purpose that 'ships may pass along forby all the side of the city without let'. The streets are also a marvel of civic architecture 'set forth very commodious and handsome, both for carriage and also against the winds'. The houses are 'of fair and gorgeous building' in terraces 'joined together in along row through the whole street without any partition or separation'. Each house is supplied with garden 'enclosed round about with the back part of the streets'. Indeed, each house is a functional yet picturesque ideal of domesticity:

⁹⁰ Hermione Hobhouse, *Lost London: A Century of Demolition and Decay* (London, Macmillan, 1971), 7.

⁹¹ Simon Foxell, *Mapping London: Making Sense of the City* (London: Black Dog, 2007), 230.

‘Every house hath two doors, one into the street, and a postern door on the back side into the garden’.⁹²

As evinced by this description, futuristic visions of the metropolis were not unique to the early nineteenth century but part of a more rigid and philosophical literary tradition of utopian writing. More’s description of the utopian city Amaurote twins efficiency with aesthetics, prizing the riverside prospect of the settlement alongside the ‘commodious and handsome’ civic infrastructure, the ‘fair and gorgeous’ domestic architecture, and an adjoining garden plot to every dwelling. Such visions of utopian metropolises share dual functions as both pragmatic and visionary blueprints of urban design and city life. As projected ideals of urban design they function both as suggestions of how a city’s current street pattern and infrastructure could be improved upon, and also as futuristic visions that prompt and rely upon critical reflection of the present for their visionary impact. Yet paradoxically, such visionary blueprints for improvement, by the nature of their utopian and idealised status detached from the present moment, share a careless disregard for practicality, for history, and for the individual lives of a settlement’s inhabitants. Such plans take no account of the quotidian experience of a locale, or of the sediment of history and personal associations accrued within each neighbourhood. In their freedom of vision and responsibility, utopian plans for improvement are inevitably, and paradoxically, deeply tied to the historical moment of their conception, to the intellectual current of their time, and to the impact of contemporary events upon the aesthetic turn of the nature and breadth of their imagination. In the period this chapter is concerned with, the unrelenting construction and turnover of metropolitan real estate developments was a tangible and rapidly developing reality across the city, felt both psychologically and politically.

The purpose of invoking More’s *Utopia* is to demonstrate how, just as an idealised urban development of the utopia is constrained by material and historical reality, so actual urban

⁹² Thomas More, *Utopia*, Oxford World’s Classics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp 52-53.

development is bracketed by the material parameters of inevitable decline, specifically ruin. Each projection of an idealised locale may consider itself a timeless pinnacle of modernity, but are still limited by being anchored in the conditions of the time in which they were conceived. Ruins reveal in retrospect what the moment of utopian conception held in prospect. They are the opposite of prospective building plans pregnant with potential, not merely signalling decay, but also the inevitable tragic dimension of imaginative perspective. Although More's *Utopia* could be used to demonstrate the timelessness of idealised landscapes and their inevitable cycle of decline, there is a historic distinctiveness to the ruin-gaze that allows for a more capacious definition of 'ruin' than has hitherto been explored in critical literature. Architectural fragments and half-destroyed dwellings have existed since the dawn of human culture, but the ruin-gaze can be understood as the particular optic that frames our relationship to ruins at a specific moment in time. In considering the process of piecemeal, for-profit developments upon the fringes of London in the 1820s, this final section aims to present a more expansive definition of ruins in terms of aesthetics, subject, and purpose. The concept of ruin as a process of accidental or purposeful deconstruction encompasses the ambiguous aesthetic tie between building and collapse; manifests the subject of contemporary pressures upon the fluctuating urban landscape; and expresses the purpose of arguing against this unrelenting change, and explores this more

The final section of this chapter explores two texts that play off the close visual ties between construction and ruin, not only reimagining London, but reimagining ruins too. The similarities between construction and ruin demonstrate that the image of future ruin is held in the moment of construction, opening up the nature of ruin to interpretation. This is exemplified by notable images depicting recent monumental construction in future ruin. In 1796, Hubert Robert exhibited *Design for the Grand Gallery in the Louvre* and his *Imaginary View of the Ruins of the Grand Gallery*, the first painting presenting an ideal view of the new Republican edifice, and the second image imagining the unexplained ruin of the same structure. The paired paintings suggest an accelerated transition from prospect to ruin and rely upon this disjunction, of the newly-created imagined as old,

for its visual impact. The English correlative to this dual vision of future ruin is Joseph Gandy's *A Vision of Sir John Soane's Design for the Rotunda of the Bank of England as a Ruin* (1798) and *Soane's Bank of England as a Ruin* (1830), marking the conception and final construction of Soane's bank. Both images were commissioned by Soane and offer a similarly chronological yet elliptical history of a national institution, conceiving ruin as a parallel to the creative process of architectural design. In his commentary upon the paired images, William Viney suggests that these depictions of imagined ruins are used to 'narrate the trajectory of built environments', though the patchy chronology of this trajectory invites the viewer to consider the 'events of waste and the particular sequence of events whereby the useful is transformed into the non-useful'.⁹³ Similarly, Cruikshank's image, *London Going Out Of Town*, invokes the prospect and ruin of the project of urbanisation, and prompts the viewer to consider the process of construction and ruin at work in the pristine rural landscape, asking them to disentangle the ambiguous threat of human and non-human agency propelling this particular trajectory of London's built environment.

Cruikshank's Image

Moving into a region north of London that was developing rapidly at the time, George Cruikshank would have been well aware of the speed and scale of urbanisation at work in his neighbourhood. Between 1823 and 1824, the English illustrator moved to 25 Myddleton Terrace in Pentonville, a newly developed area north of London. Robert Patten describes the new neighbourhood as having 'been developed for middle-class families on fields adjacent to the New River Head reservoir east of the northern extremity of Gray's Inn Road. The short rows of four-storey terrace houses overlooked open spaces, neither city nor country'.⁹⁴ An anonymous and contemporary quote captures the 'rage for building', lamenting how builders filled 'every pleasant outlet with bricks, mortar, rubbish and eternal scaffold-poles, which, whether you walk east, west, north, or south,

⁹³ William Viney, *Waste: A Philosophy of Things* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 158.

⁹⁴ Robert L. Patten, *George Cruikshank's Life, Times and Art* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1992), vol 1, 217.

seem to be running after you'.⁹⁵ The quote doubtless served as an inspiration to Cruikshank's etching, which conveyed the same anxiety over the all-encompassing invasion of the countryside by building tools and construction materials.

Cruikshank's etching depicts the ruthless redevelopment of the rural fringes of north London, and the rows upon rows of new streets which propelled the boundaries of the city further into the countryside. The image is frenetic with the energy of progress. From the direction of London to the left, a robotic army advances into the fields. Its soldiers are anthropomorphised amalgams of chimney pot bodies, mortar-hod heads, and picks and shovels for limbs. The leader wields a trowel like a sword and carries a placard that reads, 'This ground to be let on a building lease. Enquire of Mr. Goth, Brickmaker, Bricklayers Arms, Brick Lane, Brixton'. Invading troops, also synthesised from builders tools, hack away at the limbs of trees, digging cellar holes, and shovelling earth. Regimented rows of tenements 'To Let', still in scaffolding but somehow already cracked in ruin, roll forward on giant wheels. A kiln leads the advance by firing hot bricks into the fields. In the distance, half-completed houses obscure the horizon. The rural response to the onslaught of urbanisation appears in the right side of the picture. Cows, sheep, geese, and birds flee in panic and haystacks run for their lives as trees bend away from the march of bricks. 'We are losing ground here,' cries one retreating haystack, while a desperate tree shouts 'I must leave the field!' A grove of trees upon a distant hill predicts that nearby fences will be 'no defense against these Barbarians who threaten to enclose and destroy us in all 'manor' of ways.' The topography of the picture is a geographical amalgam signifying a region north of London, showing St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey to the left of the picture, and a 'Hampstead' sign on the upper right above the retreating haystacks. It suggests that Cruikshank was reflecting upon the pace and abundance of construction within his own neighbourhood of London.

⁹⁵ Quoted in James Elmes, *A General Bibliographical Dictionary of Fine Arts* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1826), under the entry for 'Park', and in Charles Molloy Westmacott, *The English Spy*, vol 2 (London: Thomas Davidson, 1826), 71, which was illustrated by Cruikshank's brother Robert.

There are various forms of ruin contained in Cruikshank's apocalyptic etching. While the image clearly depicts the perils of urbanisation and the relentless construction of houses, the rows of half-completed tenements look more akin to old, collapsing ruins, and would be indistinguishable from any crumbling structure if it were not for the large 'To Let' signs pinned to them. The cracked, shoddy, roof-less structures look cheaply made, suggesting not only the cynicism of investment in such an exploitative project, but also a prescient comment upon the human cost of cheap, broken-down dwellings. The close visual similarities between old ruins and poor construction project a sense of future ruin upon the landscape. Just as the ruin of old buildings recalls the weakness of their construction, the shabby appearance of new buildings portends their future collapse. Almost indistinguishable between construction and dissolution, the houses in Cruikshank's image are stuck in a cycle of ruin and ruin in reverse, dwellings which predict their own ruin but which also hark back to their poor construction. In doing so, Cruikshank's image can be read as a cynical debunking of the utopian project of urban construction, revealing the ideal to be propelled by a desire for quick profit, rather than by a belief in good planning and enduring construction. Stuck in an ambiguous space between ruin and construction, the houses enable the viewer to read the landscape around north London as an area doomed to perpetual development, constantly reconstructed to replace the ruin upon ruin of cheaply-made houses. This is a remarkably prescient observation by Cruikshank, as past histories of London's urbanisation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have remarked how the history of the city has 'included wave after wave of necessary and interesting rebuilding'.⁹⁶ The uncontrollable impetus for redevelopment in Cruikshank's image can be read as a satirical manifestation of the anxiety towards the vulnerability of modern structures to tectonic shifts churning up the natural landscape. As seen earlier in this chapter, forms of scientific progress enabled investigation into the causes of decline in the earth's geology, leading writers to reflect upon the causes of decline in their own built environment. This provides an effective visual parallel for comment upon contemporary forms of human-led improvement and disintegration of the

⁹⁶ Hobhouse, *Lost London*, 2.

landscape, comparing the unquenchable greed of the urban developer with the relentless destruction of the earth's own tectonic shifts.

Perhaps the more obvious form of ruin engendered by construction is that done to the landscape, in particular the all-encompassing view of London which is obscured by soot and cheap houses.

Construction threatens to enact ruin upon the landscape as seen through the lens of the prospect view. The views of the city from the north of London were considered unparalleled, and thus vulnerable to the ruinous onslaught of development. Writing to his friend John Fisher on 26 August 1827, the English landscape painter John Constable described the panoramic view towards London afforded by his new property at 6 Well Walk, Hampstead:

Our little drawing room commands a view unequalled in Europe – from Westminster Abbey, to Gravesend – the doom [sic] of St Paul's in the Air – realizes Michael Angelo's Idea on seeing that of the Pantheon – 'I will build such a thing in the sky.'⁹⁷

Returning to Cruikshank's engraving, to the top left hand corner of the image the viewer can scarcely pick out the shadowy outline of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral and the flag-decked towers of Westminster Abbey, but unlike Constable's celestial monument Cruikshank's cathedral is almost completely obscured by unrelenting row upon row of uniform roofs and chimney stacks, the 'bright and glittering' dome of Wordsworth's poem now blackened and begrimed by billowing clouds of soot.⁹⁸ Constable's pristine panoramic view encompassing St Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey is blighted by the murky emissions of urbanisation. Michael Rawson's analysis of Cruikshank's etching suggests that the landmarks signal the 'complicity of church and state' but ultimately concludes that 'they seem to be watching the assault rather than driving it'.⁹⁹ It is unclear whether Rawson considers church and state to be impassive or vulnerable to the march of bricks

⁹⁷ As quoted in Leslie Parris and Ian Fleming-Williams, *Constable* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1993), 473.

⁹⁸ William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, ed. Stephen Gill, New Ed edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 285.

⁹⁹ Rawson, Michael, 'The March of Bricks and Mortar', *Environmental History* 17, no. 4 (October 2012): 845.

and mortar, but their retreat into obscurity leaves little doubt that they are no longer relevant in the narrative of urban progress. Rawson goes on to suggest that ‘the reason we do not see the apprentice in the picture is that he lies outside of it: Cruikshank might be suggesting that we, the viewers, are the ones who have set the urban armies in motion or at least helped to fuel their continued advance’.¹⁰⁰ There are no builders, speculators, or officials in the etching; all the action is propelled by anthropomorphised figures, technology slipped loose from the grasp of human control.

In his selective use of anthropomorphism, Cruikshank suggests that it is not only the landscape which is vulnerable to technological progress, but humanity too. Cruikshank gives human voices and feelings to the trees and haystacks (‘I’m mortally wounded!’, ‘I must leave the field!’), while the robotic army of chimney pots and shovels remains neutral and emotionless. Rawson notes that ‘when the trees and haystacks are driven from the field, so will be the last trace of humanity in Cruikshank’s vision’ arguing for the necessity of nature in the human world.¹⁰¹ The urban world encroaching upon the landscape is not just inhuman, but entirely technological in its unyielding power. The threat of ruin is not confined to the picturesque view of suburban north London, but to the very existence of nature. In Cruikshank’s image of future ruin, the technological modernity of the city will almost entirely consume the countryside. The sky is blotted out by chimneys and clouds of soot, and the only animal visible in the encroaching army of urbanisation is a downtrodden horse hauling a cart of rubbish. The predicted image of nature being degraded and erased from the urban landscape is extreme, but it serves to bolster the powerful threat of autonomous technological innovation progressing into modernity at the expense of the rural past. Cruikshank’s critique of urbanisation poses a crucial question: who has set this process in motion, and who fuels its continuing advance across the countryside? The robotic army is a faceless force of urbanisation, propelled by an equally anonymous builder or speculator outside of the picture. The forces of urbanisation remain detached from the human reality of their projects. Published in 1829,

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 848.

Cruikshank's image demonstrates a keen awareness of the anxious debates circulating around leaseholders rights to develop the rural outskirts of London. Like the utopian ideal of More's Amaurote, speculators remained detached from the quotidian reality of urban development upon the local inhabitants of areas such as Hampstead. In More's text, this detachment is a result of Amaurote's very status as a utopian ideal, and thus a fiction rather than reality. If Cruikshank's image is a critique of the utopian ideal made manifest, then the robotic army symbolises the reckless human pursuit of urbanisation at all costs; if the only humanity is to be found in the last remnants of nature, then in the march of modernity humanity wreaks havoc upon itself. The retention of nature can do a great deal to keep London human in scale. In Cruikshank's image of ruin, the cannibalised progress of urbanisation leaves no hope for even a residual nostalgia in the landscape: it is an apocalyptic vision in which no shred of humanity survives in the face of modernity. The projected image of ruin is therefore ultimate and offers no hope of cyclical reconstruction of the landscape.

William Hone and Hampstead

While Cruikshank's bleak examination of urban modernity is extreme in its narrative, its concern for the loss of rural landscape and its humanising effects is not unique. The potential development of Hampstead was a source of much anxiety, and the subject of nostalgic and pastoralised eulogies projecting the future ruin of the countryside at the hands of faceless urbanising forces. The final section of this chapter considers such an account published in William Hone's *Table Book*.

The Table Book came in weekly numbers every Saturday, monthly parts, and half-yearly volumes from 1827 to 1828, encompassing 'multifarious contents and the illustrative engravings'¹⁰². Rather than 'commemorating every day', a project which 'frequently prevented [Hone] from topics that would have been more agreeable to [...] readers than the 'two grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff,'

¹⁰² William Hone, *The Table Book, of Daily Recreation and Information: Concerning Remarkable Men and Manners, Times, Seasons, Solemnities, Merry-Makings, Antiquities and Novelties, Forming a Complete History of the Year*. (London: William Tegg, 1825), Preface.

which I often consumed my time and spirits in endeavouring to discover – and did not always find’,¹⁰³ the *Table Book* is more whimsical and unstructured in its purpose: ‘In my *Table Book*, which I hope will never be out of ‘season,’ I take the liberty to ‘annihilate both time and space,’ to the extent of a few lines or days, and lease, and talk, when and where I can, according to my humour.’¹⁰⁴ Furnished with ‘contributions of my friends; the teemings of time, and the press, give it novelty’, the object of the book is ‘to blend information with amusement, and utility with diversion’. The *Table Book* still managed to retain a nostalgic, quotidian, and communal quality similar to its predecessor: ‘Perhaps, if the good old window-seats had not gone out of fashion, it might be called a parlour-window book – a good name for a volume of agreeable reading selected from the book-case, and left lying about, for the constant recreation of the family, and the casual amusement of visitors.’¹⁰⁵ Due to its diffuse and quixotic nature, Hone regarded the *Table Book* as a ‘series of continually shifting scenes – a kind of literary kaleidoscope, combing popular forms with singular appearances – by which youth and age of all ranks may be amused; and to which, I respectfully trust, many will gladly add something, to improve its views’.¹⁰⁶ One such scene in the nostalgic kaleidoscope is a lengthy description of the threat to Hampstead contemporary with Cruikshank’s etching.

According to a lengthy paean ‘Groves and High Places’ Hampstead is the ‘place of groves’.¹⁰⁷ Hone maps out a network of shaded and secluded groves around Hampstead, outlining a picturesque topography of the area:

Its first grove, townward, is the noble private avenue from the Hampstead-road to Belsize-house, in the valley between Primrose hill and the hill whereon the church stands[...] and the lodge at the corner of the pleasant highway to the little village of West-end. In the

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 2,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

neighbourhood of Hampstead church, and between that edifice and the heath, there are several old groves. Winding southwardly from the heath, there is a charming little grove in Well Walk, with a bench at the end; whereon I last saw poor Keats, the poet of the 'Pot of Basil,' sitting and sobbing his dying breath into a handkerchief, - gleaning parting looks towards the quiet landscape he had delighted in - musing, as in his Ode to a Nightingale.¹⁰⁸

'Groves and High Places' re-orientates the scope and focus of the London panorama, presenting an alternative view of the city vulnerable to forms of ruin. Laying out the views from the heaths and hills, Hone's description of Hampstead is a rather low-key alternative reading of the landscape to Redding's vista of 'royalty, legislation, nobility, learning, science, trade, and commerce' concentrated into a 'mightier whole than had ever before been in the history of the world', as seen from nearby Primrose Hill.¹⁰⁹ The glory in Hone's Hampstead is not from the view of the networked and chartered Thames, but from the 'charming' and 'pleasant' interweaving of nature with village life. Furthermore, it offers a limited and self-sufficient view of the locale, on a much smaller scale than the panoramas outlined in chapter one - partly necessitated by the enclosed nature of a grove, but also in the views' veneration of village-like ideals of suburban London life. The most impressive man-made feature of this landscape is not the economic power evinced upon the commercial lifeblood of the river, but the 'edifice' of the local church. As in Redding's panorama, Hone's description of Hampstead unites man-made structures ('Hampstead-road' and 'Belsize-house', 'the little village of West-end') with the organic splendour of nature ('a charming little grove', 'the noble private avenue'), to present a view of nature shaped in the image of the national prosperity. The national ideal exhibited in Hone's account of Hampstead is of the village, shrinking down the grand vista of Redding's panorama to quaint local sketch. In 'The Tea Garden', London is oriented as the centre of the Western world; in 'Groves and High Places', the city is barely visible.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Redding, 'The Tea Garden,' 137.

Yet there is something ‘noble’ at risk in this picturesque description of suburban quiet. Hone’s summoning of the weeping spectre of Keats exposes the vulnerability of the view. Keats takes his ‘dying breath’ and steals ‘parting looks towards the landscape’ as if, as declared in *Ode on a Nightingale*, he were taking a ‘draught of vintage [...] tasting of Flora and the country green’ to alleviate his suffering and to hasten his decline ‘into the forest dim’¹¹⁰. Hone’s suggestion that such a view of Hampstead’s many groves, as Keats describes in their ‘beechen green, and shadows numberless’ was simultaneously the heavenly retreat for Keats’ ‘light-winged Dryad of the trees’ but also held a curative power in its evocation for the poet of ‘the grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild’, invokes a double-edged image of nostalgia¹¹¹. As the archetypal Londoner, dying abroad, Keats’ deathly presence on his sickbed in Rome is invoked by Hone’s account, pining for the ‘white hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine; / fast fading violets cover’d up in leaves’ of Hampstead described in his own verse.¹¹² This ghostly image transplanted to Hampstead appeals to a definition of nostalgia as a pathology of homesickness, and heralds the restorative power of local landscape. But as Keats’ poem describes ‘musing’ upon the nightingale, as ‘heard / In ancient days by emperor and clown’¹¹³, Hone’s evocation of Keats’ ghost emphasises the ancient and elemental status of the groves around Hampstead, home to prehistoric tribes and the Saxon homestead that gave the area its name.¹¹⁴ Hone’s nostalgia is not only for a timeless image of village life, but for the primordial power of the natural landscape, and the layers of ancient history written into the organic formations of the earth seen in this view of Hampstead.

¹¹⁰ John Keats, *John Keats: Major Works*, ed. Elizabeth Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), 286.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 285, 287.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 287.

¹¹³ *Ibid*, 287.

¹¹⁴ Ben Weinreb and Matthew Weinreb, *The London Encyclopaedia* (London: Macmillan, 2010), 374.

Hone's account of Hampstead in *Table-Book* is appended by a letter from the anonymous contributor 'JRP', noting how 'the groves around London within a few years have been nearly destroyed by the speculating builders'. Hone's response to the letter decries the fact that the view from Camberwell grove is 'partially obstructed by new buildings' as a result of 'breaking up [...] the adjacent grounds and meadows into brick-fields', flanking its sides with 'town-like houses'.¹¹⁵ By comparison, Hampstead was relatively unscathed: 'how long it may remain so is a secret in the bosom of speculators and builders', ponders Hone.¹¹⁶ In his physical deterioration, the ghost of Keats is a harbinger of ruin. The infectious spectre of decline haunts the hill-side, physically enacting the definition of ruin as 'collapse', and projecting the future ruin of Hampstead onto a landscape at the brink of its own death. The cycle of ruination is as predictable in the natural world as it is in the metropolis: the fine walks and pleasant vistas of the ancient countryside will inevitably fall prey to speculators and builders, and the salutary panorama of rural London is already vulnerable to being churned up into 'brick-fields'.

Hone's prophecy was not wholly inaccurate, and was probably propelled by the very public debates concerning the development of Hampstead. In 1829, Sir Thomas Maryon Wilson, the lord of the manor of Hampstead, petitioned Parliament to let him build on Hampstead Heath. Wilson had inherited a sixty-acre estate adjacent to the Heath, and as a condition of the settlement was a life tenant without powers to grant building leased. He upheld a long-standing opposition to a bill promoted by Walpole Eyre, a St John's Wood estate owner, who sought to build what would eventually become Finchley Road. Wilson argued that the proposed road was really an estate developer's route disguised as a public turnpike, and that the inevitable spread of suburban housing would compromise the peace and solitude of his own Hampstead estate. The settlement of his father's will succeeded in postponing the new road throughout the 1820s until the Finchley Road Act was passed in 1826, seeing the road opened in 1830. Yet by 1829, Wilson was petitioning for a

¹¹⁵ Hone, *The Table Book, of Daily Recreation and Information*, 405.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

private estate act to grant him power to sign off ninety-nine year building leases for the Hampstead land. Local freeholders and copyholders of the manor protested the petition, swaying the Commons to throw out Wilson's bill even though it had been approved by the Lords.¹¹⁷

The debate in the Commons was notable for its public use of the 'lungs of the metropolis' argument for preserving open spaces, a phrase first attributed to William Pitt the Elder by Lord Windham in an 1808 speech in the House of Commons, during a debate on encroachment of buildings upon Hyde Park. While the phrase obviously draws upon the health-giving benefits of green spaces within the metropolis, it also serves to underpin the human interest tied to landscape made vulnerable by urbanisation, and an element of London made vulnerable to ruin. The notion elevates green spaces as a crucial element in the network of the metropolis, retaining a primordial human element in a city increasingly colonised by technological innovation. As Hone's invocation of Keats demonstrates, the natural landscape is inextricably tied with human history and personal history, the loss of which creates a sense of rootlessness, as demonstrated by the identikit houses obscuring the historical landmarks in Cruikshank's etching, transforming north London into an anonymous and uniform suburb. Both Hone and Cruikshank offer a comment upon the human cost of instability and unhappiness created by such wholesale redevelopment at the mercy of an impersonal local authority. Past histories of London have noted how 'traffic, public money and homes for Londoners are still powerful enemies for any historic building'¹¹⁸ and the same can be said of the green spaces around Hampstead. The image of urbanisation critiqued by Hone and Cruikshank is one which offers no vision of public, or human, benefit, thus forecasting a sense of nostalgia for the more 'humane' history of a locale in the face of technological modernity. Writing in 1971, Hermione Hobhouse observed how 'schemes which ignore the original street plan of the area [...] substitute the inhuman

¹¹⁷ F. M. L. Thompson, 'Wilson, Sir Thomas Maryon, eighth baronet (1800–1869)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/50157>, accessed 7 June 2016]; see also F.M.L. Thompson, *Hampstead; building a borough, 1650-1964* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), chapter 3 and 4.

¹¹⁸ Hobhouse, *Lost London*, 4.

scale of high-rise flats or a new office block for four- and five-storey traditional terrace houses'¹¹⁹. Ironically, the 'five-storey traditional terrace houses' were the inhuman march of bricks and mortar portended by Cruikshank, recast in the twentieth century as the elegant object of aspirational nostalgia. While the process of ruin may be characterised as a perpetual cycle of predicted construction and dissolution, the object of nostalgia circles around in much the same way.

One point that can be gleaned from the survey of ruins offered in this chapter is that ruins force us to view the quotidian details of the present day differently.

The temporal closeness of ruin predicted by Cruikshank and Hone function as a warning against the destructive results of urban improvement contemporary to the text, whereas Barbauld's depiction of a future ruined London operates as a lens through which the reader can anticipate the material and political deterioration of the London they know. Rather than this overt political closeness, Shelley's depiction of ruined domestic interiors uses the quotidian detail of everyday life to jolt the reader's imagination. The forms of ruin described here rely on different kinds of intimacy and closeness between the reader and their world: temporal closeness, political recognition, and domestic familiarity. These forms of personal knowledge are crucial in the structure of nostalgia, and each cast a distinctive light upon the relationship between the nostalgic reader and the London landscape.

I would now like to turn to another form of ruin, not the grand crumbling edifices of Rome, but the marginal spaces of London overlooked by improvement and hidden in the everyday landscape of the city.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 5.

Chapter Three - Everyday Ruins

Introduction

As outlined in chapter two, the cyclical decline and rebuilding of metropolitan ruins frequently offers a national, grand narrative of national progress and decline that can evoke nostalgia and contemplation of more small-scale, domestic details. The current chapter, however, focusses upon the most 'everyday' forms of ruin most overlooked: dwellings and monuments on the brink of disappearance from London's ever-regenerating landscape. In doing so, it aims to use the recovery and record of these obscured and forgotten ruins to suggest a definition of nostalgia motivated by an antiquarian desire to uncover and preserve the history of everyday sites and locales in London, rather than the nationalistic images of prosperity and decline explored in the prospect and picturesque view of chapter one, and the imperial ruins described in chapter two.

As previous chapters of this thesis have shown, in the early nineteenth century, London was perpetually shaped and reshaped by the processes of economic speculation, property improvement, and the dispossession of the poor. The occluded spaces of the city were those areas that were both isolated from the middle- and upper-class city's image of modernity, but also crucial to its project of self-aggrandisement: in order for an area to be improved, something about its former state must be lost.

This chapter seeks to document the various generic forms employed in attempting to capture, and thus preserve textually, the often over-looked moments and locales of urban improvement, or those areas relinquished to the tide of metropolitan improvement. In the texts and images discussed here, nostalgia operates as a means of preservation and revelation of an untold history, as opposed to the known grand narratives of national history inscribed upon imperial ruin. As the London landscape gave way to increasingly frenetic and extensive architectural and civic improvement, anthologists, illustrators, and novelists increasingly sought to document the buildings, streets, and neighbourhoods poised between decay and demolition. This chapter considers a number of genres

under the umbrella of ‘urban antiquarianism’, a mode possessing the inherent capacity for preservation that makes it particularly suited to retaining the last traces of vanishing neighbourhoods, urban customs, and ways of life. Urban antiquarianism offers an alternative narrative of London to that of improvement, and instead seeks to preserve the quotidian details obscured and destroyed by discourses of improvement, thus retaining an alternative history of London for future nostalgia. The genre also allows for a definition of nostalgia motivated by the need to record and observe as much as it is to feel and sentimentalise. The texts and images discussed here share Cruikshank’s wariness of commercial property development, but rather than anticipating ruin as a pessimistic portent of loss, these texts seek to pause briefly a process of loss already in progress.

The antiquarian illustrator and engraver, John Thomas Smith, produced lengthy repositories of images documenting buildings (often the only remnants of London’s Elizabethan past) either intact or in the process of ruin, but always earmarked for imminent demolition. In this first section, I consider the aesthetic choice of picturesque engravings of these ruins, and how the visual language of this text attempts to preserve not only an image of imminently disappearing architecture for future reflection upon the physically intangible past of the city, but, in rendering images of these buildings at the very point prior to their disappearance, documents a specific moment in London’s narrative of improvement. Smith’s collections of images are not only exercises in creating a future object of nostalgia, but are also a documentation of the modernising process of urbanisation.

The architectural focus of Smith’s text fluctuates between the domestic and the ecclesiastical, but always remains local. Similarly, William Hone’s essays in his *Every-Day Book* take an even more granular focus on the disappearing urban fabric. In the second section of this chapter, I outline the even less visible and even more marginal fringes of the city preserved for prosperity in Hone’s popular antiquarian text. Taking three examples from *The Every-Day Book*, including a cottage made of sticks, the auction of the Hyde Park toll-gate, and the last surviving working fountain in London, this section considers the utility of the antiquarian anthology in preserving nostalgic

images of the obscured and forgotten details of the ‘every-day’ London landscape, offering an alternative definition of the ‘every day’ as that which encompasses the aesthetic and cultural history of locales and structures, as much as their quotidian functionality. In doing so, Hone retains and preserves a highly localised history of London, but one which is commemorated in a written form for national consumption, thus transforming these vanished – or vanishing - traces of London as the common property of the popular readership.

The first and second sections of this chapter clearly define a specific antiquarian interest in the unimproved landscape of London, in direct opposition to the grand views of improvement and modernity outlined in chapter one. The final section of this chapter identifies the moral shift in this narrative, in which the slums and rookeries of early Victorian fiction are read as the literary inheritors of this antiquarian work. Texts by Thomas Beames and other early Victorian accounts draw visibly upon the focus of Smith and Hone’s works. These texts document neighbourhoods hitherto forgotten and overlooked by discourses of improvement and emerge in early Victorian literature as sites of moral, as well as physical, ruin and decay. Here, I loosely chart a shift in the characterisation of everyday ruins in London from something about to be lost, to places that have nothing left to lose. This final section also offers an alternative register of improvement and ruin, one still confined to the overlooked and unexplored locales of the modern city, but which, in emerging moral discourse, somehow wilfully resisted urban improvement. These texts bring the rise and fall of the discourse of ruin full circle, invoking a morality that Smith and Hone’s works shy away from.

Alternative Ruins

Throughout this chapter, I trace an alternative definition and narrative of ruin, one adjusted to the overlooked and neglected minutiae of London’s landscape. In Smith’s engravings, the cycle of construction, ruin, and rebuilding, as delineated upon a national scale in chapter two, is briefly arrested in visual form for the reader to inspect and gaze upon in the moment before total ruin.

Similarly, Hone's antiquarian project works to offer an alternative history to improvement, giving credence to the city's frayed edges, the ruins that are always present, but seemingly never visible.

While the modernisation of London in the 1850s and 1860s is characterised by Lynda Nead in terms of the collapse of old London, as much as by the construction of a new London, the third chapter of this thesis seeks to examine the pauses in a similarly relentless cycle in the early nineteenth century.

With specific reference to publications of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, this chapter challenges Nead's argument that the cycle of organic decay and sublime new construction in the mid-nineteenth century gave a new life to the conventional mode of the picturesque.¹ Instead, I argue, there is a clear tendency in writers and illustrators to capture the images of London that are to be lost, without revelling in the sublime power of the processes of urbanisation and demolition - though Smith's illustrated ruins and Hone's anecdotal sketches could indeed be considered as operating within the mode of the metropolitan picturesque, they revel in the spaces lost by improvement, rather than venerating those that are gained.

Drawing upon my discussion in chapter two of the visual similarities between construction and destruction in Cruikshank's image, 'London Going out of Town', this chapter also attends to some of the conceptual ties between improvement and ruin. As Matthew Beaumont notes, London in the 1820s was characterised as a 'constant scene of creative destruction', carved out by improvements that required the demolition of entire streets and neighbourhoods.² Improvement and ruin are intimately linked: in order for the city to gain from improvement, it must also relinquish something from its landscape. Taking as its focus areas of London unimproved or, more specifically, those areas earmarked for improvement but yet to be demolished, this chapter traces a shift in the discursive literary forms of engagement with these ambiguous locales, from an antiquarian impulse

¹ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 29.

² Matthew Beaumont, *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London : Chaucer to Dickens* (London: Verso, 2015), 326.

to preserve and record, towards a more moralised understanding of improvement that emerges in early Victorian literature.

Urban Antiquarianism

The antiquarian modes frequently deployed to record these everyday ruins created a new kind of ruin-fascination, in elevating those fringes and nooks of the city to objects worthy of nostalgia. As the domestic detail of future ruins and intact ruins explored in chapter two undercut the nostalgia directed at classicism, and reveal the inevitable degeneracy of trading nations, so the antiquarian fixation upon humble, marginal dwellings briefly punctures and arrests the relentless narrative of urban progress. In analysing the impulse in the antiquarian works of John Thomas Smith and William Hone, this chapter delineates a popular urban antiquarianism – something I will also explore in chapter four of this thesis. Initially, the notion of an urban antiquarianism appears somewhat paradoxical. As Marilyn Butler outlines in her classic definition, popular antiquarianism is ‘the study of British national culture: of English, Welsh, Gaelic, and Irish as vernacular languages [...] their oral as well as their written traditions – not merely literary forms and art, but beliefs, customs, and festivities’.³ Though the work of notable antiquarians such as Joseph Ritson and John Brand was localised to areas including Wales and Northumberland, their archaeologies and records did not detail urban cultures, histories, or locations. Though Butler discusses Hone’s *Every-Day Book*, albeit briefly, in her essay, referring to Hone as a publisher who ‘gave the urban crowd the concept of a popular cultural history’, she neglects to outline how Hone’s project was not only directed at an urban readership, but was urban in scope and content.⁴

Rosemary Sweet, however, has identified a series of urban histories that allow us to shape out a more stable definition of this nascent genre. As Sweet notes in her study of eighteenth-century urban histories, in day-to-day urban existence ‘the perception of the past informed the

³ Marilyn Butler, ‘Antiquarianism (Popular)’, in Iain McCalman, ed. *An Oxford Companion to the Romantic Age: British Culture, 1776-1832* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 328

⁴ *Ibid*, 335.

understanding of the present and was an important constituent of urban consciousness'. This mindset, was particularly heightened in the early nineteenth century in a response to the forces of improvement I have outlined previously in this thesis.⁵ Sweet goes on to characterise urban histories as manifold in their genres. In urban culture, the past was explored through a variety of printed media: 'the perception of the past which is offered in these histories was never static and was never limited to a single mode of expression. The written narrative was one of several ways in which urban historical consciousness could be manifested.'⁶ Indeed, Sweet identifies several clusters of genres that share common features. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a spike in the production of urban histories in multiple forms. A number of older chronicles were republished, and a vast number of texts were published as histories intended for travellers visiting towns and cities. Increasingly, though they remained popular, traditional antiquarian chronicles were supplemented by 'coverage of other forms of literature such as newspapers and almanacs' and a wealth of antiquarian material was reframed in relation to local affairs.⁷

Sweet notes that it is difficult to pigeonhole the readership of these texts. Frequently authors explained their histories had been written for fellow town-dwellers, or for visitors to cities. 'The production of antiquarian histories for a rather more elitist market remained fairly steady', Sweet explains, 'but the number of non-specialist histories which included some antiquarian material greatly increased'.⁸ As we shall see in discussion of Hone's *Every-Day Book*, many projects of urban antiquarianism were resolutely populist in their aims.

Urban antiquarianism, then, can be assigned a rather capacious definition, though for the purposes of this chapter, I will discuss two examples that reflect the variety of form and genre that Sweet

⁵ Rosemary Sweet, *The Writing of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 2.

⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

⁷ *Ibid*, 9.

⁸ *Ibid*, 13.

notes as typical of the related urban history, but that also combine a preoccupation with the competing perspectives of the local and the stranger. While Smith and Hone write for national circulation, their publications display a view of London's streets from the local perspective, one which has the nous to identify and uncover the impoverished or ruined pockets overlooked by improvement. By the middle of the nineteenth century, I then argue, the view of the local becomes subsumed by the moral anxiety of the stranger to London – though as we shall see, Londoners could also occupy this position of moral disquiet.

John Thomas Smith's *Ancient Topography of London* (1810-15)

Smith's Antiquarianism

The antiquarian works of John Thomas Smith demonstrate that London's architectural and social flux could be visualised in temporal terms, poised between a historicised past and an imagined future. Smith, a printmaker and draughtsman, published a number of antiquarian works about London. He worked on extra-illustrated copies of Thomas Pennant's *Some Account of London* (1790), and also published a series of ninety-six etchings and aquatints of London relics, *Antiquities of London* (1791-1800). These prints depicted traces of London's history still visible in the landscape: a modest statue at Pye Corner commemorating the end of the Fire of London; Old House in King Street, Westminster, believed to be the one-time residence of Oliver Cromwell; and London Stone – the marker by which the Romans measured distances. Smith's *Ancient Topography of London* [sic] (1810-15) drew heavily upon the successful format of *Antiquities*, using the same deeply-bitten style of etching to record picturesque images of urban ruin and architectural decay. Smith's *Ancient Topography* depicted streets and neighbourhoods in London that had been recently removed, or were consigned to demolition, more often than not to make space for urban housing.⁹

⁹ John Thomas Smith, *Ancient Topography of London: Containing Not Only Views of Buildings ... but Some Account of Places and Customs Either Unknown, or Overlooked by the London Historians* (London: John Thomas Smith, 1815), 44.

The views of London are organised into loose categories of public, domestic, and sacred architecture, adhering to a notion of antiquarian categorisation and positioning the text within a tradition of urban antiquarian histories. Smith's preface to his *Ancient Topography* provides a sense of the abundance of antiquarian accounts of London: 'the country has...been inundated with histories of London, which have been stolen from each other, without adding a single record of new matter'.¹⁰ In an attempt to position his own text as a refined alternative to the more popular genre, Smith explains that 'topographical books are frequently put aside by the inspector, as soon as the prints have been turned over'.¹¹ Smith's text combined visual accuracy of representation and picturesque modes of viewing to render antiquarian topography an edifying pursuit.

Ancient Topography

These views not only depicted the architectural fabric of London, but also its social life and impoverished inhabitants as a synecdoche for the urgency for urban regeneration. The etching of Bethlehem Hospital with London Wall in the foreground, drawn June 1812, features an itinerant figure bent-double. (Figure 2). The composition of this image is one of arresting unity. Smith structures the etching around a series of horizontal layers. At the bottom, the figure scrutinises the ground, picking up whatever he can find. Above him, the crumbling wall covered in shrubbery gives way to a layer of weeds; above that, another more intact wall; beyond that, a pristine, crisply etched building of higher rank, very much intact. The stratification of the image is not so much disrupted, but made more engrossing by the inclusion of the wandering figure in the bottom right hand corner, drawing the viewer's eye to his humble work. He is the anchor of the picture that brings together the many layers of ruin and construction evident in the image, suggesting that, as much as environments shape their inhabitants, people also shape environments. In doing so, Smith urges the viewer to extend their awareness of the disappearing London landscape to observe the human figures who will be left behind by ruin and demolition.

¹⁰ Smith, *Ancient Topography of London*, xi.

¹¹ Ibid.

The inclusion of street figures in his images served to disrupt the comfort of cosseted domestic reading. Rather than offering a dramatic punctuation of urban views, the London underclass depicted in Smith's images was pivotal in capturing 'a complete picture of former times' in the city.¹² If Smith had intended his images to be read solely as representations of early modern London, the details of overhanging medieval buildings, rickety beams, and disintegrating walls would have added to the concept of an archaic city in need of restoration and improvement. But Smith's dated inscriptions and insistence on including figures 'drawn from life' places his scenes firmly in the present, resisting comfortable distance of nostalgia and bringing the squalor of living London squarely into the genre of antiquarian topography. Smith justified their presence as an analogy for 'London in former days, [which] has afforded characters for the pencil equally singular with those of the present time'.¹³

Depicting human figures in these images of ruins immediately invokes the human cost of demolition and improvement. The parallel between improvement and morality has been drawn extensively in eighteenth-century texts on metropolitan improvements that proposed a link between architectural improvement and moral refinement, often in a project of eradicating poverty. The social and aesthetic advantages of these projects of improvement are illustrated in James Elmes's *Metropolitan Improvements* (1827) where modern London's grandeur and 'healthy streets and elegant buildings' were defined against the 'pestilential alleys and squalid hovels' of London's ancient neighbourhoods.¹⁴ The relationship between past and present underpinned the rhetoric of 'metropolitan improvements'; it was only through direct comparison between the old and the new that achievements of urban improvement could be measured. It is between these two polarities that Smith positions the *Ancient Topography*.

¹² Smith, *Ancient Topography of London*, 50.

¹³ *Ibid*, 69.

¹⁴ James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements; Or, London in the Nineteenth Century: Displayed in a Series of Engravings of the New Buildings, Improvement, Etc* (London: Jones & Co., 1827), 1.

Rather than depicting individual examples of civic monuments, Smith's *Ancient Topography* focuses upon local architecture hitherto unpublished in print formats. These examples are often marginal structures, not even complete buildings. For example, Smith depicts 'London Wall in churchyard of St Giles Cripplegate'. (Figure 3). The image was etched in 1793, before the wall was demolished in 1803. This particular image delineates a liminal space in the city. The Wall demarcates an ecclesiastical area from a clutch of domestic dwellings. Raggedy laundry hangs from numerous washing lines and available beams; shrubs and plants are perched on a window sill; doors and windows are flung open. Two faces peer from the shadows of a doorway, and in the distance, four women can be seen hanging out washing. Yet for all the signs of life, this structure is also in decline. Window panes are shattered, the wooden beams are rickety, and the clothes hung out to dry are shabby and dog-eared. Below this domestic scene, a more conventional image of ruin is visible. A crumbling wall is festooned with moss and overgrown shrubs, and the detailed texture of Smith's etching creates an impression of crumbling decay in the brickwork. The wall divides two forms of ruin that will both inevitably fall prey to improvement and both are mundane: one, a humble wall, the other, a humble dwelling.

The etchings appear picturesque in their close attention to the material details of ruin: crumbling masonry, bare roof beams, the encroachment of nature into ruins, the disorder of architectural debris, and decaying and discarded planks and bricks. In his *Remarks on Rural Scenery* (1797), Smith had already outlined a specific visual vocabulary of the picturesque, extending and more finely delineating previous working definitions of the mode to encompass the transience of architectural materials: 'patched plaster...fissures and crevices of the inclining wall...[and] the mischievous pranks of ragged children'.¹⁵ Smith was also eager to distance this mode from the practice of embellishment or artifice, deriding 'topographical draughtsmen [who] introduce more than they see,

¹⁵ John Thomas Smith and Joseph Downes, *Remarks on Rural Scenery: With Twenty Etchings of Cottages, from Nature: And Some Observations and Precepts Relative to the Picturesque* (London: Nathaniel Smith: 1797), 9.

in order to make their productions picturesque'.¹⁶ Smith's prioritising of realistic and precise draughtsmanship over romanticised embellishment suggests an expectation that antiquarian illustrations should be an informative mode of viewing the metropolitan landscape.

Smith, I would like to suggest, broadens the notion of a metropolitan picturesque to include more marginal forms of ruin that resist easy categorisation. Smith includes views of the north and east walls of the Convent of St. Clare, drawn 1797 (Figure 4). At first glance, the image bares all the hallmarks of ruin: crumbling walls, windows without glass, the lack of a roof. Workmen stand about, and ladders rest against the fragments of walls still standing. But Smith notes that a fire caused the initial ruin, revealing 'unsettled construction' in the inner workings of the building, leading to a dismantling of the convent. The image of the watchtower at Ludgate Hill, drawn 1792, tells a similar story (Figure 5). A recent fire uncovered the heavily cemented foundations of a watchtower that had survived the 1666 fire. The original foundations survived the Great Fire and were utilised in the rebuilding, such was their durability. The image depicts layers of masonry and brickwork, and an enormous slice of the structure has fallen away, giving an impression of a tower cut in half. Though illustrating the layers of history excavated by the accident of two fires, Smith is still careful to allude to the markers of progress: figures in the background are engaged in heavy work. Human figures are the crucial connective tissue in Smith's images of ruins. They constantly remind the viewer that these are not images for pure picturesque amusement, of incidental and accidental ruin. They remind us not only that that these spaces are populated, but that it is the presence of humans that imbues the landscape with meaning and function. In recoding these crumbling walls and towers, Smith is not only recording urban ruins as objects of antiquarian interest, but also incorporates the many forms of work tied to the landscape in his project of urban antiquarianism.

¹⁶ Smith, *Ancient Topography of London*, p.1.

The tower itself is a relic of improvement, though a form of improvement that looked to the past for its power and durability. This image, I suggest, prompts a rejection of artifice in favour of the longevity of solid foundations. Smith's rejection of picturesque artifice he felt was too often associated with the picturesque was manifested in a sustained self-consciousness of the draughtsman's own role in discovering forgotten streets and neighbourhoods and preserving these locales in an unfiltered antiquarian format. In captions to the images, Smith often includes the date of his original on-site sketch: 'these Houses were taken down by the city in May 1799 to widen Chancery Lane', not only to adhere to the antiquarian need to record specific details of relics or finds in their historical context, but to also readjust the readers' expectations of the picturesque as a cosy entertainment. Smith's etchings of London's historic sights uncovered by fire or demolition were an antidote to the edifying prospect views and sweeping vistas of London's civic improvements, as illustrated in panoramas and 'views' of London's improved landscape, that as we saw in chapter one were features of popular panoramic entertainments and picturesque catalogues of London views.

The definition of nostalgia at work in Smith's images is filtered through urban antiquarianism and acts to preserve moments of urban decline and improvement for study rather than sentimentalism. Urban antiquarianism, then, can be described as nostalgic its fixation upon specific eras and times but also seeks to preserve the historical specificity of its subjects as much as any sense of emotional loss tied to the landscape. I now wish to turn to the specific every day human figures who populate similar antiquarian accounts of London authored by William Hone.

William Hone, *The Every-Day Book* (1825-26)

In Smith's images of the fringes of urban decay, urban workers or itinerants are crucial to the composition and the purpose of each view. The relationship between people and their environments, especially those neighbourhoods on the brink of disappearance, when expressed in an antiquarian format, incorporates human figures into the project of nostalgia. The people who inhabit these

neighbourhoods and buildings are fundamental to the sense of place that will be lost to improvement. Tim Hitchcock notes how the wandering poor often inhabited ruins as temporary shelters, and were tragically overlooked and left to die underneath forgotten crumbling structures.¹⁷

The first example I draw from Hone's *Every-Day Book* in this chapter documents the chequered history of an impoverished figure living in his own ruin – a structure not forgotten, but certainly overlooked, and vulnerable to the forces of urban improvement and modernisation.

The 'Cottage Formerly on Hag-Bush Lane', is a vignette or sketch hidden among the many laments Hone made for the changing landscape of London. William Hone meditated on the changing landscape as he rambled through the city: 'London is familiar to me; I know every street and turning in this city, have walked over half the metropolis when the land was covered with houses and churches and green fields.' Hone's eulogy for the diminishing suburbs revealed a close attachment to the London of his childhood, and the rights of the city's inhabitants, both of which were under threat from property developers. Hone's familiarity with London extends beyond an intimate knowledge of 'every street and turning', but also extends towards the city's past, and the green fields that came before the streets and turnings. Furthermore, Hone betrays no anxiety about being able to keep pace with urban development. In contrast, Smith's antiquarian images are careful to allude to the human figures who will be left behind by improvement and demolition.

Hone dedicated a large portion of *The Every-Day Book* to chronicling the changes in London's landscape. While some of these accounts were gleaned from readers' contributions, David. A. Kent and D. R. Ewen have recently attributed other pieces to Hone.¹⁸ These short essays demonstrate what Kent and Ewen describe as Hone's personal 'attachments to the past and to a London that was

¹⁷ Tim Hitchcock, *Down and out in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Hambledon and London, 2004), 30, 70.

¹⁸ William Hone, *Regency Radical: Selected Writings of William Hone* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003), 24.

being threatened by property developers'.¹⁹ Hone lived in London from the age of three until his death in 1842 and fondness for his home-city was evident in accounts which lamented the encroachment of urban development upon the suburbs.

'Cottage Formerly on Hag-Bush Lane'

Hone's *Every-Day Book* entry for 26 June 1826 describes the trials of a 'decayed labouring man' from Hertfordshire, in the year 1820. The man constructed a cottage on a disused ancient pack-road running between two private estates in Islington. The shelter of boughs and branches was rebuilt as a mud hut in the winter months and housed the labourer, his wife, and their child. Hone explains how:

deeming him by no means a respectable neighbour for their cattle, the two landowners warned him off; he, not choosing to be houseless, nor conceiving that their domains could be injured by his little enclosure between the banks of the road, refused to accept this notice, and he remained.²⁰

One of the landowners 'caused his labourers to level the miserable dwelling to the earth'. As a result, 'the houseless child of want was compelled by this wanton act to apply for his family and himself to be taken into the workhouse.'²¹ He was refused and ordered to build again, 'with information that his disturber was not justified in disturbing him. In vain he pleaded incompetent power to resist; the workhouse was shut against him, and he began to build another hut'.²² Having managed to shut out the weather in one direction, 'wealthy again made war upon poverty'. While he was away from the hut it was pulled down by heavy rain. 'His wife and child were left in the lane shelterless'.²³ His second application to the workhouse was rejected 'with still stronger assurances

¹⁹ Ibid, 25.

²⁰ William Hone, *The Every-Day Book, Or, The Guide to the Year* (William Tegg, 1825), 874.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 875.

²³ Ibid.

that he had been illegally disturbed, and with renewed advice to build again'.²⁴ According to Hone: 'the old man has built for a third time; and on the site of the cottage represented in the engraving, erected another, wherein he dwells, and sells his small beer to people who choose to sit and drink it on the turf seat against the wall of his cottage', though chiefly these are brickmakers in the neighbourhood. The account describes the rapidity of development in the area:

it is chiefly in request, however, among brickmakers in the neighbourhood, and the labourers on the new road, cutting across Hagbush-Lane from Holloway to the Kentish-town road, which will ultimately reconnect Regent's park and the western suburb, with the eastern extremity of this immensely growing metropolis.²⁵

Hone describes the Hagbush-dweller's present state: 'for the present he remains unmolested in his almost sequestered nook, and the place and himself are worth seeing, for they are perhaps the nearest specimens to London, of the old country labourer and his dwelling'.²⁶

In September 1827, a contributor to Hone's next project, *The Table Book*, wrote explaining that since reading Hone's essay, he had visited the site of the cottage only to discover that the shelter had been demolished a third time. The labourer was now living in a nearby shed – 'a most wretched sty'. Hone implores the reader not to forget the aggression on the old cottager: 'the private wrong he has sustained is in the nature of a public wrong' of those who ignore and do not question the march of improvement.²⁷

It was clear to Hone that the rights of the dweller, and with him, the rights of the old country labouring classes, had been violated. But Hone took the personal example of this incredibly unfortunate dweller to be indicative of the plight of the entire area:

Through Hagbush Lane, every man has a right to ride and walk; *in* Hagbush Lane, no one man has even a shadow of right to an inch as private property. It is a public road, and

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Hone, *The Table Book*, 610.

public property. The trees, as well as the road are public property. Under no conveyance or admission to land by any proprietor, whether freeholder or lord of a manor, can any person legally dispossess the public of a single foot of Hagbush lane.²⁸

Hagbush Lane was subject to much development. Trees were cut down to develop private fields and pastures. According to Hone ‘the preservation of Hagbush-lane therefore is an object of public importance’.²⁹ The notion of nostalgia gives way to a more pragmatic and social concern: not for the loss of ‘one of the loveliest of our green lanes’ but for the way of life in this area.³⁰ Hone’s sense of a personal loss for the green spaces he enjoyed as a child become more pressing social concerns – a concern which was born out of a longing for both a specific locale and an admired way of life.

‘Sale of Hyde Park Corner Toll-Gate’

Whereas the account of the poor man’s dwelling on Hagbush Lane unfolds a personal history to explore more general concerns about the relentless rate of improvement in the city, further accounts of forgotten, overlooked, or marginalised corners of London pushed to the city’s fringes are absorbed into the way of London life, and even into the social fabric of the city. In this section, I would like to draw attention to how Hone imbues mundane, functional features of London landscape with a personal nostalgia reflective of Raymond Williams concept of ‘negative identification’ outlined in the introduction of this thesis: that is, the focalisation of loss or suffering of another party through the feeling of the narrator.³¹

Hone dedicates the entry for 4 October to the ‘Sale of Hyde Park Corner Toll-Gate’, commemorating the removal of the toll-gate, along with sale of the adjoined toll-house, at the behest of an act of Parliament, ‘with a view to the free passage of horsemen and carriages between London and Pimlico’ in order to relieve the flow of travel between the city and its suburbs and ‘to

²⁸ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 877.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Williams, *The Country And The City*, 111.

relieve other growing neighbourhoods of the metropolis from these vexatious imposts'.³² Hone remarks that a gentleman 'evidently an artist' has submitted an illustration of the toll-gate on the day of its sale, along with a letter which he replicates in full for the reader.

The letter describes the accompanying illustration as 'a view of the old toll-house and the last scene of its eventful history'.³³ The author recounts the sale of the toll-house, and remarks upon the 'several carriage folk and equestrians, unconscious of the removal of the toll' who stopped to pay, while 'the drivers of other passed through knowingly, with a look of satisfaction at their liberation from the accustomed restriction at that place'.³⁴ The author remarks upon the empty scene, 'not a vestige left on the spot' and muses upon the anecdote's possible appeal to Hone: 'I have thought this event would interest a mind like yours, which permits not any change in the history of improvement, or of places full of old associations, to take place without record', identifying Hone's project as one that seeks to record every change to the quotidian fabric of the city, and to document 'any change', no matter how inconsequential, as a result of 'improvement'.³⁵

Hone appends the letter with his own short account of the sale, noting the weighing and appraisal of the house's remnants that were eventually sold on as building materials. 'At the same time', he notes, 'the weighing machine and toll-houses at Jenny's Whim bridge were sold in seven lots; and the toll-house near the bun-house at Chelsea, with lamp posts on the road, were likewise sold in seven lots.'³⁶

While the lots are 'entirely cleared away, to the relief of thousands of persons resident in those neighbourhoods', Hone ends his account on an unexpected and ironic note, noting that the toll-houses are 'vexations' and that 'this is a very good beginning, and if there be truth in the old saying,

³² Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 1357.

³³ *Ibid*, 1355.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1357.

we may expect “a good ending””.³⁷ This concluding sentiment can perhaps be interpreted as an ironic aside on the optimism of ‘improvement’, as to read the remark at face value sits uneasily with the more elegiac description of Hone’s project as one marking the small changes made in the landscape at the expense of improvement. Indeed, it is not clear what a ‘good ending’ may mean within this context, and who may be the recipient of this fortune: perhaps the public, or the resident of the toll-house. Reading this statement as a more critical aside on the unrestrained optimism of improvement brings into focus the magnitude of what is lost: that while seemingly small inconveniences may be wiped from the landscape and immediately forgotten (as Hone’s account of similar demolitions suggests) they disappear without notice, and an entire way of life is lost without comment and never remarked upon again, except for in the pages of Hone’s *Every-Day Book*. In this sense, the scene is the very definition of ‘the every day’, something which is taken for granted each minute by those who use it, and that may only again be noticed when it is entirely absent from the landscape.

‘Water in Warm Weather’

These markers of the functional every day fabric of the city are admired by Hone throughout the *Every-Day Book* and become a consistent focus of the project of documenting the seemingly quotidian features of the London landscape. In the number for 29 July, Hone rhapsodises on the workings of the city’s fountains and pumps in an essay titled ‘Water in Warm Weather’. He begins the essay remarking upon the efficiency of ‘boring’ for springs, as opposed to ‘the old method of well digging’ and notes that ‘in 1821, the water for the fountain at Tottenham High Cross was obtained by boring to a depth of one hundred and five feet, at the expense of the parish, for public accommodation’.³⁸

³⁷ Ibid, 1358.

³⁸ Ibid, 1041-42.

Hone seems to delight in delineating the details of how high the water rises and the relative depths that boring can achieve. He also takes care to praise the design of the pump's column and praises its designers 'Messrs. Matthew and Chaplin, executed by Mr. Turner of Dorset-street' who is 'the well known manufacturer of iron pumps' who maintains reputation as 'a good pump-maker'.³⁹ Hone elevates the status of pump-maker to reverential heights: 'Public spirit should rise to the height of giving him, and others of the worshipful company of pump-makers, more orders' and in doing so, reveals the crucial status of these seemingly quotidian features of the city:

Many places are sadly deficient of pumps for raising spring-water where it is most wanted. Every body cries out for it in hot weather, but in cool weather they all forget their former want; and hot weather comes out again and they call out for it again in vain, and again forget to put up a public pump.⁴⁰

Hone goes on to describe the almost pastoral appeal of the city's one fountain in Temple: 'you pass it on the way from Essex-street, or "the Grecian" to Garden-court', he outlines.⁴¹ 'It is in the space at the bottom of the first flight of stone steps, within the railings enclosing a small, and sometimes "smooth shaven green" the middle whereof it adorns, surrounded, not too thickly, by goodly trees and pleasant shrubs'.⁴² The fountain pump itself is described in an almost scientific yet appreciative terms:

The jet proceeds from a copper pipe in the middle of a stone-edged basin, and rises to its full height of at least nine feet, if water from the cock by the hall with which it communicates is not drawing; when that process is going on the jet droops, and seems dying away till the drawing ceases, and then the "Temple Fountain" goes up again "famously".⁴³

Hone manages to imbue the fountain with a sense of wonder, in that it is simultaneously shrouded in greenery, yet also a marvel of engineering. It also prompts a nostalgic reflection upon fountains

³⁹ Ibid, 1042.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, 1043.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

past: ‘There *was* a fountain in the great square of Lincoln’s Inn, but it has ceased to play “in my time”. I only remember the column itself standing there, “For Ornament, *not* use,” with its four boys blowing through shells’.⁴⁴ The memory Hone notes is itself of a kind of every day ruin, the remnants of a now defunct fountain, the remains of a once wondrous and functional fountain reduced to mere ornament. The recollection of the everyday ruin prompts a lengthy detour upon the ‘fountain as an essential decoration’ of the “ancient” style’ of landscape gardening, enumerating the various showers of water achieved through different fountain designs (‘some are contrived to throw the water in the form of sheaves, fans, and showers, or to support balls; others to throw it horizontally or in curved lines, but the most usual form is a simple opening to throw the jet or spout upright’)⁴⁵. Hone remarks upon how the author of the ‘Encyclopaedia of Gardening’ rejects the notion of ‘a jet from a naked tube falling from the middle of a basin [...] as unnatural, without being artificially grand’, as ‘Grandeur was the aim of the “ancient” gardener, and hence he made a garden “after nature,” look as a garden of nature never did look’.⁴⁶ The invocation of a kind of artificial or cultivated classical picturesque serves to elevate the aesthetics of the urban pump and fountain, elevating the sole surviving fountain in London as a relic of a particular aesthetic turn of the past, but also highlighting the picturesque quality of the humble metropolitan pump and fountain.

Hone further entrenches this aesthetic link by invoking antiquarian references to famous pumps and fountains. He notes a reference to an ‘artificial fountain’ in the ‘Century of Inventions of the Marquis of Worcester’, describing one ‘to be turned like an hour glass by a child, in the twinkling of an eye, it yet holding great quantities of water, and of force sufficient to make snow, ice, and thunder, with the chirping and singing of birds, and showing of several shapes and effects usual to fountains of pleasure’.⁴⁷ The distinction between a fountain of ‘pleasure’ and presumably one of

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 1044.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 1044.

mere function is a vague one here, because it is clear that Hone is attempting to elevate the remnants of an everyday functional feature of the city into something more akin to the spectacle and picturesque novelty of fountains and pumps found in pleasure gardens of the past. Hone also quotes at length from ‘Sir Henry Wotton’ on his architectural notes on fountains, which in its length, tone, and detail suggests the model for Hone’s own paean to the urban fountain:

There went a long, straight, mossie walk of competent breadth, green and soft under foot, listed on both sides with an aqueduct of white stone, breast-high, which had a hollow channel on the top, where ran a pretty trickling stream; on the edge whereof were couched very thick, all along, certain small pipes of lead, in little holes; so neatly, that they could not be well perceived, till by the turning of a cock, they did sprout over interchangeably, from side to side, above man's height, in forms of arches, without any intersection or meeting aloft, because the pipes were not exactly opposite; so as the beholder, besides that which was fluent in the aqueduct on both hands in his view, did walk as it were under a continual bower and hemisphere of water, without any drop falling on him; an invention for refreshment, surely far excelling all the Alexandrian delicacies, and pneumaticks of Hero.⁴⁸

Hone briefly concludes the entry with a joke: ‘An invention of greater solace could not have been desired in the canicular days, by those who sought shelter from the heat; nor more coveted by any than by him, who is constrained to supply the “every-day” demand of “warm” friends for this little work – no “cool” task!’, bringing the invocation of pleasure gardens and classical gods back to the essence of the fountain as an ‘ “every-day”’ feature of the city. In doing so, Hone returns the fountain to its rightful place within the everyday fabric of the city, but, in having accounted for its aesthetic antecedents, has unveiled the almost classical history of the most mundane and overlooked hidden secrets of the city. In his reference to the fountain on ‘the Kent-road’ which would ‘be a good ornament were it kept clean and relieved by trees’, he invoke another form of everyday ruin: the neglected relic of lost aesthetic potential, with a hidden history that has been written into (yet also out of) the forgotten spaces within London’s geography. In revealing the grand hidden histories of the neglected and almost-lost pumps and fountains, Hone does not merely elevate these subjects

⁴⁸ Ibid.

in themselves, but recognises and venerates their functional everyday purpose also. The notion of the everyday and the notion of grand aesthetic history sit comfortably alongside each other, generating not so much a paradox, but revealing the grandeur and history intrinsic within the everyday. The account does not transform the pump or fountain into a landmark but acknowledges this standing as an inherent aspect of its character. The purpose of the account is not merely to frame the remaining pumps and fountains as the nostalgic relics of any golden age, but to acknowledge the heterogeneous layering of aesthetic histories built into and built out of the changing London landscape.

The nostalgic 'everyday' landscape of Hone's London is one made up of accrued layers and foundations of former buildings and landmarks, each layer revealing a lost culture of locale of London life. Hone's antiquarian record peels back layers of the city's history by inspecting the frayed remnants and footprints of former monuments and landmarks. London is read as a document in which layers of history are scrubbed out and written over with improvement. In the *Every-Day Book*, nostalgia acts as mechanism for an imagined excavation of London's hidden corners. In the final section of this chapter, I would like to explore the longevity of this idea and identify further examples for study in the later decades of the nineteenth century, with a specific focus upon slum areas as a correlative to urban improvement.

Early Victorian Ruins

The third part of this chapter aims to plot a loose trajectory in the spatial representation of slum neighbourhoods in the 1850s. I suggest that once these areas are opened up and exposed via metaphors such as the labyrinth, they become the subjects of a moral invective – one often critical of metropolitan improvement - that seeks to reform and reclaim the rookeries of London from moral degeneration. In this sense, nostalgia gives way to a moralised preoccupation with the cost of improvement. Whereas Hone's depictions of improvement outlined in chapter two articulate the future loss of rural landscape in nostalgic terms, the accounts in this chapter present a more

complex temporality of loss and improvement. Neighbourhoods overlooked and left behind by metropolitan improvement occupy an ambiguous temporal position: they contrast sharply against the modernity of improvement, but also become new in themselves as their existence is revealed to a polite readership. Threaded through this tension is a conflict between the ‘local’ and the ‘stranger’: those who lived in the rookeries were often represented as traversing the maze of the city at ease, an image that generated increasing moral disquiet among those Londoners who were broadly unaware of what went on in these hidden locales of the city.

Labyrinths and Mazes

London, as a physical entity, was not known in the same way by all of its inhabitants, and as a result was conceived of in a number of spatial metaphors. In the 1820s and 1830s, the labyrinth was an organising trope in discussions of London and Paris: both English and French observers focused on the maze-like qualities of poor neighbourhoods as territories hidden from the rest of the city, mysterious, and impossible to map. As Victoria Thompson notes, ‘more than just associating different neighbourhoods with different social groups, [...] authors began to imply that individuals of different classes used and understood urban space in different and conflicting ways’.⁴⁹ Two cities emerged from these descriptions: ‘a popular city that demanded surveillance and control, and a middle-class city that require freedom and mobility’.⁵⁰ In a similar critical discussion on the mapping of gothic accounts of London, Richard Maxwell notes the debated material reality of London and Paris’s architecture and layout:

One Paris and London begin to be modernised – once streets are widened and straightened to facilitate the circulation of traffic – the older, usually poorer neighbourhoods exert a

⁴⁹ Victoria Thompson, ‘Telling “Spatial Stories”: Urban Space and Bourgeois Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Paris’, *Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 3 (2003): 538.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 547.

new fascination. Here there are many narrow, winding alleys; here traffic easily gets itself into knots; here, the visitor who is not a native may well feel mystified.⁵¹

Deborah Nead has since noted how the most significant force in the later stages of urban improvement and modernisation was the advent of the railway, the construction of which left major displacement of labouring populations in its wake.⁵² The impact wrought by the railways was to suddenly reveal and make known neighbourhoods previously hidden, thus throwing into sharp relief those areas left behind by the progress of modernity. Rather than creating a sudden rupture in the known landscape, the labyrinth, in contrast, casts the walker or viewer in a privileged role of explorer, the first figure to progress through the maze of the city and to uncover what lies hidden at its centre, a role not unlike the tourist wandering through the imperial future ruins of London, or of the dust-shrouded homes of Pompeii, discussed in chapter two of this thesis.

In particular, De Quincey's classic description of London as labyrinth positions the opium eater as the first figure to encounter the neighbourhood. '[I] came suddenly upon such knotty problems of alleys, such enigmatical entries, and such sphynx's riddles of streets without thoroughfares', he notes. 'I could have believed, at times, that I must be the first discoverer of some of these *terrae incognitae*, and doubted, whether they had yet been laid down in the modern charts of London'.⁵³

There is a position of privilege implicit in De Quincey's description, reflected in the language of exploration and conquest: the first to solve a 'riddle', 'the first discoverer', and the first to unravel the 'knotty problems' of London's secret and thus unmapped terrain. Indeed, Franco Moretti notes that early nineteenth-century maps were 'in total disagreement' as to which roads 'lead into Smithfield, or on the alleys around Saffron Hill', lending De Quincey's description a very real sense

⁵¹ Richard Maxwell, *The Mysteries of Paris and London* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 15.

⁵² Nead, 34-52.; with reference to *Dombey and Son* see: Jeremy Tambling, *Going Astray: Dickens and London*, (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009), 103-21; for detailed sociological studies of housing demolition see H. Dyos, 'Railways and Housing in Victorian London-I', *The Journal of Transport History* 2, no. 1 (1955): 11-21 and 90-100; and H. Dyos, 'Some Social Costs of Railway Building in London', *The Journal of Transport History* 3, no. 1 (1957): 23-9.

⁵³ Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (London: Penguin, 1971), 89.

of unknown terrain.⁵⁴ Penetrating the knotted system of streets, alleys, and rookeries is a threshold point at which the stranger who stumbles ‘suddenly’ upon a knot of unmapped streets becomes one who is in the know, and privy to the grim reality hidden in London’s unknown corners.

The amazement De Quincey’s opium-eater feels at discovering unknown urban terrain differs somewhat to Dickens’ focalisation in slightly later sketch of another London maze, ‘Seven Dials’:

The stranger who finds himself in ‘The Dials’ for the first time, and stands Belzoni like, at the entrance of seven obscure passages, uncertain which to take, will see enough around him to keep his curiosity and attention awake for no inconsiderable time. From the irregular square into which he has plunged, the streets and courts dart in all directions, until they are lost in the unwholesome vapour which hangs over the house-tops, and renders the dirty perspective uncertain and confined; and lounging at every corner [...] are groups of people, whose appearance and dwellings would fill any mind but a regular Londoner’s with astonishment.⁵⁵

The implication here is that a ‘regular’ Londoner, likened to the intrepid Italian explorer Giovanni Battista Belzoni, would not be startled by the Seven Dials, unlike the perplexed and hesitant stranger who is encouraged to indulge his ‘curiosity’ and linger ‘for no inconsiderable time’ contemplating the ‘unwholesome’ honeycomb of streets and courts. The distinction between the knowledgeable Londoner and the perplexed stranger is also notable in Dickens’ description of Oliver Twist’s first journey to London. Having encountered John Dawkins, the Artful Dodger, at Barnett, Oliver is led into the heart of the city:

They crossed from the Angel into St John’s-road, struck down the small street which terminates at Sadler’s Wells’ theatre, through Exmouth-Street and Coppice-row, down the little court by the side of the workhouse, across the classic ground which once bore the name of Hockley-in-the-hole, thence into Little Saffron-hill, and so into Saffron-hill the Great, along which, the Dodger scudded at a rapid pace, directing Oliver to follow close at his heels.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1999), 83.

⁵⁵ Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 92.

⁵⁶ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59.

The repetition of ‘down’ and the episodic pace of Dickens’ prose creates an impression of Oliver and Dawkins spiralling downwards, descending to the depths of the city. The speed with which Hawkins leads Oliver suggests an instinctive knowledge of these streets, inherent to those that live there, rendering the urban map obsolete, while also suggesting the Londoner’s innate understanding of his environment. The pair are later followed by Noah Claypole and Charlotte, who take a similar route through the Highgate archway, eventually reaching the Angel via St John’s road. As strangers, they are ‘deep in the obscurity of the intricate and dirty ways which, lying between Gray’s inn Road and Smithfield, render that part of the town one of the lowest and worst that improvement has left in the midst of London’.⁵⁷ Here, Dickens makes explicit the anachronistic status of those neighbourhoods hidden in the midst of the city’s labyrinthine and unchartered structure, those areas ‘left behind’ by improvement. In further sections of *Oliver Twist*, the distance suggested by being ‘left behind’ is both temporal and moral, revealing the failure of the linear narrative of improvement. These descriptions also create space for outsiders to mythologise unimproved areas as relics of a less civilised age, in an attempt to assert a sense of historical narrative and progression resulting from urban improvement. This tension is particular prevalent in the account of Jacob’s Island:

Near to that part of the Thames on which the church at Rotherhithe abuts, where the buildings on the banks are dirtiest and the vessels on the river blackest with the dust of colliers and the smoke of close-built low-roofed houses, there exists the filthiest, the strangest, the most extraordinary of the many localities that are hidden in London, wholly unknown, even by name, to the great mass of its inhabitants.

To reach this place, the visitor has to penetrate through a maze of close, narrow, and muddy streets, thronged by the roughest and the poorest of waterside people...he makes his way with difficulty along, assailed by offensive sights and smells from the narrow alleys which branch off on the right and left...Arriving, at length, in streets remoter and less-frequented than those through which he has passed, he walks beneath tottering house-fronts projecting over the pavement...[he is confronted by] every imaginable sign of desolation and neglect.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid, 349, 351.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 442.

The account begins by anchoring the reader firmly in a known locale (close to the ‘church at Rotherhithe’) before immediately casting them into an unknown world ‘hidden in London’, one that is measurable and containable only by virtue of the fact that it is the ‘dirtiest’, ‘the filthiest’, ‘the strangest’, of all these neighbourhoods. Traversing and navigating the ‘maze of close, narrow, and muddy streets’ is no longer a rite of passage to attain the status of ‘regular Londoner’, as even the ‘great mass of inhabitants’ of the city are ignorant of the Island’s existence. As Martin Daunton explains, most labouring-class housing before the mid-nineteenth century ‘had been located in self-contained little worlds of enclosed courts and alleys’.⁵⁹ Descriptions of these hidden nooks opened out cells of poverty for public inspection and navigation. The visitor must navigate a ‘maze of close, narrow and muddy streets’ to establish the remoteness of the area from all known experience of London life. They must encounter and navigate:

wooden galleries common to the backs of half a dozen houses, with holes from which to look upon the slime beneath...rooms so small, so filthy, so confined, that the air would seem too tainted even for the dirt and squalor which they shelter; wooden chambers thrusting themselves out above the mud, and threatening to fall into it – as some have done...every repulsive lineament of poverty, every loathsome indication of filth, rot, and garbage – all these ornament the banks of Folly Ditch.⁶⁰

The description of antediluvian effluvia - ‘slime’, ‘filth’, ‘rot’, and ‘garbage’ - evokes an image of primordial living untouched by the drive of urban progress of improvement, an effect compounded by the suggestion of imminent collapse of shelters ‘threatening to fall in’. This is the harshest indictment of urban improvement, to the extent that these locales are beyond the pleasing and picturesque grasp of antiquarian nostalgia evident in Hone and Smith’s accounts of London ruin. This description is bereft of any nostalgic impulse because the desire to expose and improve the primordial monstrosity is felt so acutely in this account of a London slum. This impulse, I would argue, is more prevalent in Victorian accounts of slums. Such arguments for improvement are

⁵⁹ M. J. Daunton, *House and Home in the Victorian City: Working Class Housing, 1850-1914*, *Studies in Urban History*; 7 (Baltimore: E.Arnold, 1983), 12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 443

historicised in that they draw upon the language pre-civilised and primordial states of existence, rather than appealing to a nostalgic impulse to preserve.

It is important to note that Dickens' descriptions do not invoke the age of these dwellings: they are, in their degeneracy, beyond any civilised structure of history. Indeed, as H.J. Dyos and D.A. Reeder observe: 'The actual age of houses seldom had much to do with [the formation of slums], and it was sometimes possible to run through the whole gamut from meadow to slum in a single generation, or even less'.⁶¹ Similarly, David R. Green and Alan G. Parton notes that 'outer-city shanties, sometimes jerry built and at other times constructed from little more than rubbish, vied with inner-city rookeries in terms of squalor'.⁶² Forms of moral ruin and physical decay, as evinced in Cruikshank's image discussed in chapter two, preyed upon any cheap and flimsy dwelling built quickly for profit or necessity. Their transiency positions them outside the focus of nostalgia, both in their physical resistance to preservation, and in their perceived moral decay.

Thomas Beames, *Rookeries of London, Past, Present and Prospective* (1850)

Similarly, in a later account of London slums, Thomas Beames's *Rookeries of London, Past, Present and Prospective* (1850) observes how 'In [various] districts, rows of small houses are constantly erected; the ground around them is not drained'. Beames deduces that 'these houses are badly built, [...] we should think, by contract, solely as a profitable investment.'⁶³ Beames had a particular fascination with the crumbling buildings of London's topography of slums, and exaggerates the anachronistic status of rookeries as pockets resisting improvement, in order to comment upon the failure of modern forms of improvement. As outlined in the text's introduction, Beames invites the reader to 'look back, then, and see how men were lodged of old, and at the same

⁶¹ H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, *The Victorian City: Images and Realities* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 364.

⁶² 'Slums and Slum Life in Victorian England: London and Birmingham at Mid-Century', in S. Martin Gaskell (ed.), *Slums* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 17–91.

⁶³ Thomas Beames, *The Rookeries of London: Past, Present, and Prospective* (London: T. Bosworth, 1850), 15.

time... glean what information we can respecting those plague-spots which still remain, which under the name of Rookeries are so unenviably notorious'.⁶⁴

Beames's introduction provides a condensed history of the development and improvement of London from the sixteenth century, in which rookeries were constantly present: 'we do not say that there were no Rookeries then, but rather that they were common'.⁶⁵ Rookeries are repositories of urban history, and 'survive by their very isolation, by their retention of past anomalies, - possessing still the errors, and handing down the discomforts of our ancestors, - sad memorials of the past'.⁶⁶

Rookeries inherited the flaws and stigmas of ancient dwellings, thus entrenching their anachronistic status. As Beames notes, 'a large class of the genus Rookery are very ancient houses, deserted by those to whose ancestors they once belonged', and 'in the dingiest streets of the Metropolis we find houses, the rooms of which are lofty, the walls panelled, the ceilings beautifully ornamented ... In many rooms there still remains the grotesque carving for which a former age was so celebrated'.⁶⁷

Eliding the age of aristocracy with the squalor of rookeries suggests that the eventual decline of these buildings was a result of 'tide of fashion - the rage for novelty' leaving behind these dingy pockets of London.⁶⁸ With the moral project of Beames' text in mind, the progress of fashion could be seen as analogous with that of improvement: selective, superficial, and trivial in its outlook.

The ultimate aim of Beames' text is to denounce the moral poverty of the rookeries and thus precipitate Parliamentary intervention. As John Marriott has pointed out for the eighteenth century, rookeries were *terrae incognita* for the affluent and became the focus of middle-class anxiety

⁶⁴ Ibid, 10.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 14.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 41.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 21-22.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

concerning the creation of ‘urban spaces fit for bourgeois intercourse and conviviality’.⁶⁹ Appealing to ‘that splendid monument of wisdom and rage, the English constitution’, Beames advocates reform of impoverished neighbourhoods, mandated by ‘the people’s voice’.⁷⁰

Let the law, then, denounce Rookeries, - the law which the people may evoke, and which the Legislature, the echo of the people’s voice, will enact; which the righteous energy of a Russell would gladly sanction, the far-sighted prudence of a Peel assent to, and the indignant eloquence of a D’Israeli demand.⁷¹

Parliamentary intervention is presented as the only means of halting the inevitable cyclical repetition of history, and preventing the ‘prospective’ ruin of future rookeries: ‘we may yet bear to listen to the teaching of history; its lessons are for us’.⁷² Failure to ‘remedy where time has ravaged, to remedy abuses which none can palliate, the day of retribution must come’ will bring about future ruin of the nation, Beames portends: ‘our children may possess an heritage blasted by our neglect [...]. We cannot defy history, we cannot be so secure, as that the same causes shall not again produce the same effect’.⁷³ Beames’ model of the inevitable decline and moral ruin brought about by urban poverty and decay transplants the cyclical building and desolation of national ruin and decline, outlined in chapter two of this thesis, to the rookery: a failure to rid London of this toxic ‘back-ground of wretchedness’ would be a failing of the national moral character: ‘we cannot believe that our countrymen, kind, liberal, generous, wishing that others should participate in the blessings they enjoy, will sit down quietly with the consciousness that such evils are unchecked’.⁷⁴ This anxiety, I suggest, is visible as a moral fear surrounding the perceived criminality of rookeries and slums, and finds political expression in Beames’ account of London. The culmination of

⁶⁹ John Marriott, ‘The Spatiality of the Poor in Eighteenth-Century London’ in Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore, eds. *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003), 122.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 210.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 105.

⁷² *Ibid*, 210.

⁷³ *Ibid*.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 212.

political stasis and a moral failure to intervene is outlined in almost biblical terms of disaster and decay: ‘grant that the evil day be staved off, the sore will yet fester, and English life be poisoned by a wound so deep, so rankling’.⁷⁵ If the ‘sons and [their] sons’ sons’ of the nation are to ‘escape the desolation which has lain waste foreign cities’, they can only do so ‘in the same course of temperate reform as their forefathers’, Beames warns.⁷⁶

The nature of reform Beames venerates, though, is hardly ‘temperate’. Indeed, in the closing pages of *Rookeries of London*, Beames alludes to recent attempts to stem impoverishment: ‘Whilst our pen traces these concluding pages, an appeal for the needle-women of England has been answered, as Englishmen should answer the cry of distresses’.⁷⁷ This is most likely a reference to Sidney Herbert’s proposed scheme to ‘dispatch distressed needlewomen with exemplary references to the colonies’ in his belief that there were 500,000 excess females in England and Wales, and a shortfall of exactly 500,000 in the colonies.⁷⁸ The scheme was not a success, Sheila Rowbotham notes: ‘there were reports of immorality. Women carefully vetted for respectability mysteriously got pregnant’ en route to the colonies.⁷⁹

There is an explicit moral impetus in Beames’ desire to reveal and make known the contents and inhabitants of London’s rookeries. ‘Do not [criminal] outcasts hide their heads in Rookeries, because the very wretchedness of these districts acts as a charm – is their shield’, Beames asks, describing rookeries as ‘the nurseries of disease’.⁸⁰ The threat of criminality affixed to the London

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 215.

⁷⁸ Sheila Blackburn, *A Fair Day’s Wage for a Fair Day’s Work?: Sweated Labour and the Origins of Minimum Wage Legislation in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2013), 29.

⁷⁹ Shelia Rowbotham, ‘Strategies against sweated work in Britain, 1820-1920’, in Swasti Mitter and Sheila Rowbotham, eds. *Dignity and Daily Bread: New Forms of Economic Organization Among Poor Women in the Third World and the First* (London: Routledge, 2003), 175.

⁸⁰ Beames, *The Rookeries of London*, 261.

poor, and the need to reveal, explain, and thus contain their characteristics, is explored more fully in the next chapter of this thesis.

The descriptions of London detailed in this chapter share a similar approach to depicting the city, reading it as a palimpsest of building, demolition, and re-building. Each text, or group of texts, positions the city in tension with nostalgia. Smith's engravings seek to arrest and contain the demolition of streets, preserving a moment of the city's history just as it is overwritten by improvement. Hone reveals the stratified layers of the city's history, peeling back and revealing the hidden corners and monuments obscured or lost by improvement. Both these accounts seek to reveal an image of London that is still detectable in the everyday encounters inhabitants have with their city, in which residents are briefly made strangers and presented with a hidden history of their local streets. Later accounts of slum dwellings by Beames and Dickens explore the tension of locality and revelation differently, exposing the areas of contemporary London that most inhabitants remained ignorant of in their own lifetimes. Following this particular tension of estrangement, exploration, and revelation, chapter four will look at the inhabitants of these hidden rookeries and will outline the nostalgic strategies used in representations of the London poor.

Chapter Four – The Antiquarian Poor

Introduction

An awareness of changing demography within cities ‘emerged within modern culture as populations exploded’.¹ London’s escalating population presented a problem of representation to those depicting and writing about the capital. The city’s population grew from around 900,000 in 1801 (already twice that of Paris, which stood at 540,000 in 1801) to over 1,500,000 in 1830.² This population surge was accompanied by an overwhelming sense of social dissolution and dislocation as pedestrians, vehicles, and horse riders fought for space on the streets. Unyielding pedestrian traffic and the relentless circulation of people in the city’s streets created a constant source of social confusion and fluidity.³ Distinctions of class, rank, and status became permeable in the crush of bodies, dissolving the reassuring structures and strictures of social stratification, and presenting an affront to codes of urban politeness: ‘in the ordinary conditions of the eighteenth-century, all that had seemed socially solid was in a state of ceaseless dissolution’.⁴ A ‘personal etiquette of acceptable street behaviour’ was in the ascendancy, Penelope Corfield notes: ‘The informal code decreed that staring too directly at other people was rude; peering closely through the windows of private houses was unacceptable; belligerent jostling or pushing was disliked; spitting was discouraged; and excessive swearing or drunkenness in public were socially as well as legally proscribed.’⁵ The guidebooks, manuals, glossaries, dictionaries, and directories that proliferated in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century London demonstrated a desire to codify and systematise the city

¹ Nicholas Daly, *The Demographic Imagination and the Nineteenth-Century City: Paris, London, New York*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

² *Ibid*, 630-32.

³ Alison O’Byrne, ‘The Art of Walking in London: Representing Urban Pedestrianism in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 94.

⁴ Matthew Beaumont, *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London: Chaucer to Dickens* (London: Verso, 2015), 130.

⁵ Penelope Corfield, ‘Walking the City Streets: The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Urban History* 16, no. 2 (1990): 154.

and its ever-multiplying inhabitants.⁶ These guides and accounts of urban politeness and impoliteness, Alison O’Byrne notes, sought to ‘respond to the ways in which London, and one’s experience of moving through the streets, altered drastically’, in tandem with demographic expansion, emphasising particularly ‘encounter, confrontation, and encroachment on personal space’.⁷ The cataloguing of social ills and transgressions in texts such as George Cruikshank’s *The Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1801), Richard Dighton’s *A London Nuisance* (1821) and the anonymous *Casualties of London Street Walking* (1826), O’Byrne explains, marks a move away from traditional divides between country and city, or between the ‘cit’ and the gentleman, and instead reveal ‘the emergence of a particular urban mindset’ and ‘a more developed sense of the functioning of human life, exploring questions of how to situate oneself in this milieu’.⁸

The social make-up of the urban milieu was increasingly impoverished.⁹ In 1817, as much as twenty percent of the country’s outdoor poor lived in London.¹⁰ Along with a need to navigate the streets was a need to navigate the other people that walked them, although this response to modernity was not a new impulse. Early modern rogue literature – ballads, chapbooks, cant, plays, and pamphlets – proliferated in the period 1580 to 1620 as a means of navigating the mercantile population. Such texts offered ‘an endorsement of mobility, a cultivation of bohemianism and

⁶ A substantial body of literature was concerned with classifying and explaining London’s streets to visitors. Representative titles include: anon, *The Ambulator; or, the stranger’s companion in a tour round London* (1774), and anon, *The London and Westminster Guide* (1768). For a full survey, see: Herbert George Fordham, *The Road-Books and Itineraries of Great Britain 1570 to 1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Visitors could also consult street directories. See: P. Corfield and Serena Kelly, “‘Giving Directions to the Town’: the Early Town Directories”, *Urban History Yearbook* 11 (1984): 22-35.

⁷ Alison O’Byrne, ‘The Art of Walking in London: Representing Urban Pedestrianism in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (2008): 95.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sam Smiles, “Dressed to Till: Representational Strategies in the Depiction of Rural Labor, c. 1690-1830,” in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, eds. Christiana Payne, Michael Rosenthal, and Scott Wilcox (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 118.

¹⁰ David R. Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790-1870* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 18.

aggressive individuality' with the aim to 'naturalise the frightening sense of change associated with London'.¹¹ These genres were reworked endlessly as taxonomies of London criminality, often taking the form of urban guides and travelogues. Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698-1700) prompted a plethora of notable and anonymous imitators such as *The Country Gentleman's Vade-Mecum; or, His Companion for the Town* (1699), *A Trip through London* (1728), *A Trip through the Town* (1735), *A Ramble through London* (1728), and *A Trip from St James's to the Exchange* (1744), titles which generated their own literary subculture of plagiarism, and also fed the emergence of criminal biography.¹² As John Marriott notes, these lurid accounts of criminal activity rendered the threats of the metropolis 'fictional, strange, unfamiliar and hence distant', a mode of viewing which was replaced by a new character of urban observer, 'operating in a range of social and artistic practices' in the early nineteenth century, one who 'attempted to appropriate the dislocating experiences of urban environments' by 'abandoning the dominant, fixed and seemingly stable perceptions of the previous century'.¹³ But despite Marriott's emphasis upon the panoramic aspirations of writers such as Egan and his imitators who 'attempted to capture high and low life through participation in and observation of their forms', it is clear that the core generic features of the 'cries of London' collections retained their interest and popularity almost continuously into the twentieth century, as we shall see in this chapter.¹⁴ These texts, in their increasing emphasis upon their antiquarian capacity and form, provided a safe means of viewing and a sense of containing the impoverished population walking London's streets.

While early modern and eighteenth-century accounts of the urban poor are well documented – as are Victorian accounts, as outlined in chapter three of this thesis - this chapter outlines some of the

¹¹ Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20.

¹² 'Introduction' in John Marriott, Masaie Matsumura, and Judith R. Walkowitz, *Unknown London : Early Modernist Visions of the Metropolis, 1815-45*, vol. 1, (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2000), xix.

¹³ *Ibid*, xxiii-xxiv.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

strategies of representation and containment used to depict London vagrants in alternative forms of antiquarianism at the start of the nineteenth century. Part one outlines the nostalgic strategies of containment evident in the antiquarian print collections of 'London cries', specifically Francis Douce and John Thomas Smith's *Vagabondiana; or Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London* (1817). Part two considers the antiquarian apparatus of slang, cant, and flash dictionaries utilised in Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821) as a means of decoding but also distancing the language of the urban poor.

As this chapter outlines, nostalgia is a key means of containing and displaying the unknown and troubling manifestations of London poverty. Artists and writers have sought to capture the wandering vagrant in print using different strategies of containment, control, and documentation, often by exploiting and conflating different aesthetic and textual forms of representation. Inherent in the textual stasis of the wandering poor is their temporal fixedness: in pinning down the poor as a subject of antiquarian study – either visually, anecdotally, or linguistically - it fixes them in time also. Idealised as pastoral, comic, or economic markers of the city, the London poor become not only print commodities, but also objects for nostalgic consumption. The mode of nostalgia the texts explored here rely upon is one which distances and, to some extent, falsifies the impoverished reality of urban modernity, even as they claim explicit intentions to reveal and make known their urban subjects. Although this form of nostalgia seemingly has much in common with the nostalgia in common parlance today, one 'enamoured of distance, not of the referent itself' and that 'exiles us from the present as it brings the imagined past near', I argue that this is not a nostalgia for a vanished social group, but a means of framing an ever-present reality in a more palatable light.¹⁵ Nostalgia is an imagined temporal distance imposed to invoke a physical and social distancing. In

¹⁵ Stewart, *On Longing*, 145; Linda Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," in *Methods for the Study of Literature as Cultural Memory*, ed. Raymond Vervliet and Annemarie Estor (Atlanta: Rodopi, 2000), 195.

packaging the urban poor as a nostalgic commodity, these texts reduce their subject to a series of ‘types’, divesting the poor of their distinctiveness.

John Thomas Smith, *Vagabondiana; or Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers* (1817)

Representing the itinerant poor

The body of scholarship discussing literary representations of vagrancy in the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century literature tends to focus often on Wordsworth’s representation of, and engagement with, the itinerant rural poor.¹⁶ This body of work takes its cue from an attendant interest in increased pedestrian mobility. Anne Wallace posits that the increased cultural awareness of pedestrianism, not only in the form of those exiled by enclosure, but also in the form of ‘deliberate excursive walking, especially by the relatively well-to-do and educated’, meant increased encounters between those wandering for artistic inspiration and those made to wander out of necessity.¹⁷ In her history of walking, Rebecca Solnit’s argument differs somewhat from Wallace’s model of inquisitive pedestrianism, suggesting that walking afforded opportunity for observation as much as conversation, particularly in the city: ‘the average rural walker looks at the general – the view, the beauty’ whereas the urban walker ‘is on the look out for particulars, for opportunities, individuals, and supplies’.¹⁸ The tension between generality and particularisation of the pedestrian’s view is matched by the tension between mobility and stasis outlined by Lucy

¹⁶ See: David Simpson, *Wordsworth’s Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement* (London: Methuen, 1987); Celeste Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy: Wordsworth and the Simulation of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); James O’Rourke, “Goody Blake and Harry Gill,” “the Thorn,” and the Failure of Philanthropy”, *European Romantic Review* 9, no. 1 (1998): 103–123; Toby R. Benis, *Romanticism on the Road: The Marginal Gains of Wordsworth’s Homeless*, *Romanticism in Perspective* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Alex Dick, ‘Poverty, Charity, Poetry: The Unproductive Labors of “The Old Cumberland Beggar”’, *Studies in Romanticism* 39, no. 3 (2000): 365–396; Quentin Bailey, *Wordsworth’s Vagrants: Police, Prisons and Poetry in the 1790s*, *British Literature in Context in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

¹⁷ Anne Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): 166.

¹⁸ Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (New York ; London: Penguin, 2001), 174.

Traverse's recent work. In antiquarian prints of the poor, Traverse notes, persons defined by their unauthorised movement are recorded as distinct personalities, each situated upon 'a spectrum of criminality'.¹⁹ These figures 'sit, stand, crouch, pose, gesture, and occasionally step, but they do not seem to wander'.²⁰ Traverse identifies an apparent 'discontinuity' in the discursive antiquarian forms that seek to 'contain and mimic' the movement of their vagrant subjects: 'these are persons defined by their unauthorised movement, and yet, to record them as distinct personalities or types requires a degree of arrest'.²¹

Pinned down as objects of study, the urban poor are reduced to an abstract ideal. 'The vagrant's mobility and expressivity', Celeste Langan posits, 'are abstracted from their determining social conditions – the fiscal-military state that effectively produces the vagrant's mobility and the specific purpose of the vagrant's speech: entreaty or begging'.²² In reducing and abstracting the condition of vagrancy to the acts of walking and talking, Langan claims, vagrancy can be read as an archetype of Romantic movement.²³ This chapter suggests, however, that the urge to record, classify, and catalogue these abstractions of Romantic movement is as crucial to literary discourse as the urge to wander, and is part of a project of nostalgia that seeks to contain the reality of urban poverty in a more pleasing form.

Rowlandson and Dagaty's 'Six Views of different Entrances to London' (1798-98)

Images of the London poor have often resisted singular categorisation and hybridity is a common feature of representations from the early nineteenth century, such as narrative and lexicography in Pierce Egan's *Life in London*, engravings and reportage in Douce and Smith's *Vagabondiana*, and

¹⁹ Lucy Kimiko Hawkinson Traverse, 'Unsanctioned Wanderings: Capturing the Vagrant in Romantic Prints', 1 December 2014, <https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/visualities/praxis.visualities.2014.traverse.html>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Traverse, 'Unsanctioned Wanderings'.

²² Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy*, 17.

²³ Ibid, 27.

the plethora of appropriations of the ‘London cries’ format. What these forms often have in common is that they frequently invoke the anecdote or vignette as a means of representation, particularly in depictions of the London poor as a highly mobile sector of society.²⁴ ‘Six Views of different Entrances to London’, aquatints by Dagaty and Thomas Rowlandson, exemplifies the struggle to contain the London poor with a single aesthetic category.²⁵ Engraved by Heinrich Schutz and published by Rudolph Ackermann from 1797 to 1798 in his gallery at 101 The Strand, the views depict the six main highways into London controlled by turnpikes, including the Whitechapel turnpike, the Tyburn turnpike, and the Hyde Park Corner turnpike. The strong topographical frames of these engravings are populated with humorously drawn caricatures of London life which preempt Rowlandson’s *Microcosm of London* (1808-10). The energetic and shambolic figures of soldiers, beggars, cits, chimney sweeps, the young, the elderly, milkmaids and musicians take centre stage in sweeping topographical vistas and sit uneasily in spacious and elegant drawings of wide London streets. The viewer’s attention is pulled from the expansive view of urban architecture down to the commotion and movement of the figures at ground level, where the details of poverty sit in tension with the grand image of the metropolis, almost as if the comic poor are performing sketches upon a stage.

In the third view, ‘Entrance of Tottenham Court Road Turnpike, with a view of St. James’s Chapel’, (Figure 6) a clear, sweeping architectural illustration of the Chapel, the turnpike, and its adjoining shops, forms the backdrop for an array of activity. Figures pass through the turnpike, travelling in all directions. Milkmaids, beggars, dogs, a young boy on a donkey, a bolting horse pulling a trap, an overcrowded carriage with a kissing couple perched on the back, and a number of pedestrians, enter the scene with frenetic energy. Each group appears as a brief snapshot of activity. The itinerant and

²⁴ For a similar discussion of fears of circulation and discussion among London’s population, see: Jon Mee, ‘Mutual Intercourse and Licentious Discussion in The Microcosm of London’, *The London Journal* 37, no. 3 (2012): 196–214.

²⁵ The first two plates were illustrated by Dagaty and the final four are by Rowlandson. It is not clear who ‘Dagaty’ was, though it may be an Anglicisation of Edouard Gautier d’Agoty.

working poor are depicted as comic anecdotes that disrupt the symmetry and proportion of the picture's urban topographical backdrop. The effect is to almost isolate each little scene as an anecdote in itself, representative of a certain kind of urban movement or work.

Similarly, in the sixth view, 'Entrance from Hackney or Cambridge Heath Turnpike with a distant view of St Pauls', (Figure 7) the London skyline appears as a faint painted backdrop, and the turnpike itself is set back in the wide city road to allow the urban crowd to fill the foreground. To the left of the image, a beggar accosts a wealthy family; two unkempt boys chase a dog herding pigs; and in the centre, a horse bolts and upsets a trap. In the right-hand corner of the image, a crowd watches a puppet show and spectators laugh at the commotion from their windows. The turnpike is a gateway of frenetic energy. People circulate through the city in myriad forms: on foot, on horseback, herding animals, and in overcrowded carts and carriages. Again, the scene is presented as a series of snapshots of London life. Discrete groups are brought into contact with each other through revelry and accident: comic anecdotes set against a grander narrative of the city.

Each 'View' is densely populated with streams of movement in and out of the city's gateways, to the extent that the larger backdrop of London starts to become obscured. The dominant emphasis upon detail, anecdote, and example, is extrapolated by other works seeking to illustrate the characteristics of the London poor, which this chapter will explore at length. As Rowlandson and Dagaty's images hone in on the picturesque detail and variety that threatens to fragment the cohesion of the architectural sweep of London's views, antiquarian works go one step further and erase the backdrop entirely, reducing anecdotes of the urban poor to stock figures exemplary of a particular 'type'. While in Rowlandson and Dagaty's images, the threat of different forms of human circulation are contained as comic spectacle, antiquarian works seek to transform these figures into subjects of nostalgic study, confined to the backdrop of the blank page, thus creating an impression of control and containment of the wandering London poor.

Francis Douce and John Thomas Smith's *Vagabondiana*(1817)

In the various antiquarian collections of the cries of London that proliferated throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, the impulse of abstraction identified by Langan takes the form of anecdote.²⁶ Francis Douce and John Thomas Smith's *Vagabondiana; or Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London; with Portraits of the most Remarkable, Drawn from the Life* (1817) refrains from using the term 'beggar', and in promising to present only selected 'anecdotes' and 'portraits' of the 'most remarkable' examples, not only censors a particularly grim aspect of life in London, but also allows Smith, an engraver, and his antiquarian collaborator Douce, to transform this reality into a charming antiquarian project. The antiquarian lineage of *Vagabondiana* is worth recounting briefly. Douce was a notable antiquarian and Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Museum and Smith had also made his name engraving *The Antiquities of Westminster* (1807) and *The Ancient Topography of London* (1815), as discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.²⁷ As we have already seen in chapter three, many of Smith's works attempted to preserve images of neighbourhoods on the verge of literal destruction through ruin or demolition. While *Vagabondiana* adapts this approach to form the conceit of the disappearing mendicant, it maintains the emphasis on antiquarian preservation thus generating a new view of its subject, primarily as a means of containing and controlling a new reality of urban modernity through antiquarian categorisation and observation.

Vagabondiana is part of a longer tradition and enduring vogue of antiquarian sketches and catalogues that had the effect of not only defining the urban poor by their trades and wares, thus reducing entire swathes of the urban population to stock markers of trade, but also of fixing wandering figures in a particular moment in time through their textual format. Collected 'cries' can also be linked to expansive costume books that seek to document and display rural and urban trades,

²⁶ Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy*, 17.

²⁷ See: John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and His Times: A Life of That Celebrated Sculptor and Memoirs of Several Contemporary Artists, from the Time of Roubiliac, Hogarth and Reynolds to that of Fuseli, Flaxman and Blake* (London: Colburn, 1829).

dress, and customs. One of the texts exemplifying this genre that has received critical scrutiny is W.H. Pyne's *Costume of Great Britain* (1805), an 'encyclopaedic collection of domestic trades and scenes' that documents a growing interest in national and regional dress of the British public.²⁸ Costume books such as Pyne's sought to illustrate a comprehensive portrait of British identity, though they also conveyed the inherent difficulties in cataloguing such a variety of customs and costumes. Chloe Wigston-Smith notes how 'the diverse national portrait reflects the aesthetic fluidity of the text, as well as its emphasis on social variety', something antiquarian catalogues of the London poor also share.²⁹

Figures who wandered were often included as notable subjects in portrait book. These compendiums of portraits and biography depicted interesting figures of note from ancient and recent history. G.H. Wilson's *The Eccentric Mirror: Reflecting a Faithful and Interesting Delineation of Male and Female Characters, Ancient and Modern* (1807) embraced 'memoirs and descriptions of persons remarkable for any extraordinary deviation from the general laws of nature with respect to exterior conformation', such as the unusually large Daniel Lambert, and Joseph Boruwlaski, the Polish-born dwarf who travelled extensively through Europe.³⁰ Wandering types abound in James Caulfield's *Portraits, Memories, and Characters of Remarkable Persons* (1819)

²⁸ Chloe Wigston Smith, 'Dressing the British: Clothes, Customs, and Nation in W. H. Pyne's "The Costume of Great Britain"', *Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture* 38, no. 1 (2009): 143. See also: John Barrell, 'Visualising the Division of Labour, W.H. Pyne's *Microcosm*', in *The Birth of Pandora and the Division of Knowledge*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), and Christiana Payne, "'Calculated to Gratify the Patriot': Rustic Figure Studies in Early-Nineteenth-Century Britain" in Michael Rosenthal, ed., *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Yale Center for British Art by Yale University Press, 1997).

²⁹ *Ibid*, 144.

³⁰ G. H. Wilson, *The Eccentric Mirror:: Reflecting a Faithful and Interesting Delineation of Male and Female Characters, Ancient and Modern, Who Have Been Particularly Distinguished by Extraordinary Qualifications, Talents, and Propensities, Natural Or Acquired ... With a Faithful Narration of Every Instance of Singularity, Manifested in the Lives and Conduct of Characters Who Have Rendered Themselves Eminently Conspicuous by Their Eccentricities, the Whole Exhibiting an Interesting and Wonderful Display of Human Action in the Grand Theatre of the World* (J. and J. Cundee: Ivy-Lane, Paternoster-Row, 1807), 1; 1-34; 35-60.

too, including the notorious highwayman James Whitney, and William Ellis, ‘a poor half-witted fellow, who wandered about Moorfields, and its neighbourhoods, and was supported by the casual bounty of passengers’.³¹ Although Wilson presents his subjects as specimens of physical abnormality, and Caulfield’s text similarly records characters that could be described as outlandish, they demonstrate that catalogues of characters relied upon diversity for their interest, and that figures who wandered were of interest in contexts other than the urban.

The antiquarian format of a series of characters or types is particularly conducive to a kind of unstructured and anecdotal reading or browsing.³² The format of *Vagabondiana* is peripatetic, wandering from figure to figure, without strict taxonomy or structure, and offering a brief snapshot or anecdote of people who, by their social identity, are also forced to wander. Antiquarian works are selective – and thus incomplete – records of known facts or artefacts gathered by the author and this sense of fragmentation is reflected in the unstructured selection of London ‘types’ Smith and Douce illustrate. The tension between particular ‘portraits’ and their representation of an entire phenomenon (‘mendicant wanderers’), is crucial to the nostalgia of these prints, as the episodic nature of an ‘anecdote’ imitates the fragmented nature of recollection. The reader encounters each character of *Vagabondiana* briefly, as an anecdote, seemingly mimicking the chance encounter with the itinerant poor that walking and rambling can facilitate: the organic nature of random encounter is expressed through a literary form contrived to create an effect of randomness. Capturing these metaphorical encounters in antiquarian selections of prints also has the effect of not only arresting the progress of each wandering figure – and thus containing those who are inclined to wander - but also fossilises each character as an example to represent all traders, street-walkers, or beggars of a

³¹ James Caulfield, *Portraits, Memoirs, and Characters, of Remarkable Persons, from the Revolution in 1688 to the End of the Reign of George II: Collected from the Most Authentic Accounts Extant*. (London: T. H. Whitely, 1819), 94.

³² For comments on the encyclopaedic aspirations of other forms of urban fiction, see: Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790-1832* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 80-83.

similar ilk. The moment of hypothetical encounter is not only preserved for prosperity and future reflection, but each figure is conserved as representative of a type, rather than for their own identity.

The tendency to generalise through example, and to assemble different urban types into a whole, can be seen in previous and subsequent modes of representing the itinerant poor. In his *Essay on the Picturesque* (1794), Uvedale Price describes how the itinerant poor are assimilated into the visual vocabulary of the picturesque landscape: ‘among our own species, beggars, gypsies, and all such rough tattered figures as are merely picturesque, bear a close analogy, in all the qualities that make them so, to old hovels and mills, to the white forest horse, and other objects of the same kind’.³³

Exemplified by Price, the tendency to cast the poor as an incidental, functional, and disposable element of the urban and rural landscape, divested of individual distinctiveness but diverse in their categorisation, also projects forward to Marx’s classic description of the lumpenproletariat:

Alongside decayed roués of doubtful origin and uncertain means of subsistence, alongside ruined and adventurous scions of the bourgeoisie, there [are] vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged criminals, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, confidence tricksters, *lazzaroni* [Neapolitan street people], pickpockets, sleight-of-hand experts, gamblers, *maquereaux* [pimps], brothel-keepers, porters, pen-pushers, organ-grinders, rag-and-bone merchants, knife-grinders, tinkers, and beggars: in short, the whole indeterminate, fragmented mass, tossed backwards and forwards, which the French call *la bohème*.³⁴

The capacious description of those ‘living off the garbage of society’, as Marx explained in another account from 1848, consists of ‘people without a definitive trace, vagabonds, *gens sans feu at sans aveu*’, people without fire and home.³⁵ The notion of humans living ‘without a definitive trace’, leaving no mark or impression upon society, casts a nostalgic light upon these incidental figures of the poor, as if they are perpetually on the brink of imminent disappearance.

³³ Uvedale Price, *Essay on the Picturesque*, 242.

³⁴ Karl Marx, ‘The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte’, in *Surveys from Exile: Political Writings Volume 2*, ed. David Fernbach, (London: Penguin 1992), 197.

³⁵ ‘The Class Struggles in France: 1848 to 1850’, *ibid*, 52.

The disappearance of the itinerant poor from the streets of London is a central conceit of Smiths' *Vagabondiana*, highlighting the nostalgic tone of the antiquarian project laid out in Douce's introduction:

Concluding, therefore, from the reaction of the metropolitan beggars, that several curious characters would disappear by being either compelled to industry, or to partake in the liberal parochial rates, provided for them in their respective work-houses, it occurred to the author of the present publication, that likenesses of the most remarkable of them, with a few particulars of their habits, would not be unamusing to those to whom they have been pests for several years.³⁶

Gesturing towards the 'liberal parochial rates' found in the workhouses, Douce acknowledges the economic burden of the itinerant poor in the post-war economic downturn but recasts the problem of poor provision in a nostalgic and comforting light.³⁷ Hoping that the project 'would not be unamusing', Douce acknowledges the distaste and displeasure that the 'pests' of the urban poor are regarded with in polite society, but takes the opportunity of their supposedly imminent disappearance to assign the poor with a more benign and unthreatening character. In selecting only 'the most Remarkable' examples, as *Vagabondiana*'s full title explains, the poor become a palatable subject of antiquarian interest. In presenting the poor as race on the brink of extinction, Douce and Smith transform their subject into one worthy of antiquarian documentation, recasting the inconvenient and ever-present poor as a nostalgic and pleasing oddity, creating an impression of control.

Douce and Smith's approach to documenting these figures relies upon observations supposedly taken from real life. Indeed, Smith walked the streets of London and noted the cries of the traders he met there in his autobiography: 'I remember hearing a Baddeley whine the cry of "Periwinkles, a

³⁶ John Thomas Smith, *Vagabondiana; Or, Anecdotes of Mendicant Wanderers through the Streets of London; with Portraits of the Most Remarkable, Drawn from the Life, by John Thomas Smith* (London: J. and A. Arch 1817), v.

³⁷ After the Napoleonic war, government expenditure on poor relief was close to eight million pounds per year. See: Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 134.

wine quart a penny, periwinkles. Come buy my shrimps, come buy my shrimps: a crab, will you buy a crab?’³⁸

In his introduction to the *Vagabondiana*, Douce describes following a ‘bone-picker’ for several hours in order to ‘discover a few of the habits of this character’: he was ‘accused of stealing door mats, and with some difficult extricated his tatters from the tugs of a couple of dogs’ and ‘was seen to take up a brick, and throw it at two curs fighting for a bone, which he picked up and put into his bag. These bones are brought by the burners at Haggerstone, Shoreditch, and Battlebridge, at two shillings per bushel, in which half a bushel is given over, that being bone measure.’³⁹ In a similar anecdote, Douce also describes observing a ‘grubber’, one of a group who ‘procure a livelihood by whatever they find in grubbing out the dirt from between the stones with a crooked bit of iron, in search of nails that fall from horse-shoes, which are allowed to be the best of iron that can be made use of for gun-barrels’.⁴⁰ Douce notes that:

though the streets are constantly looked over at the dawn of day by a set of men in search of sticks, handkerchiefs, shawls, &c , that may have been dropt during the night, yet these grubbers now and then find rings that have been drawn off with the gloves, or small money that has been washed by the showers between the stones.⁴¹

The presentation of highly specific detail of the work of grubbers and bone-pickers is reminiscent of the forensic detail of Henry Mayhew’s portraits of ‘street-finders’ and collectors’, especially ‘the bone-grubbers and rag-gatherers, who are, indeed, the same individuals, the pure-finders, and the cigar-end and old wood collectors’.⁴² This group ‘go abroad daily to *find* in the streets, and carry away with them such things as bones, rags, “pure” (or dogs’-dung), which no one appropriates.

³⁸ John Thomas Smith, *Nollekens and His Times: A Life of That Celebrated Sculptor and Memoirs of Several Contemporary Artists, from the Time of Roubiliac, Hogarth and Reynolds to that of Fuseli, Flaxman and Blake* (London: Colburn, 1829), 199-201.

³⁹ Smith, *Vagabondiana*, 30.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, ed. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 175.

These they sell, and on that sale support a wretched life'.⁴³ There is also a notable and broader similarity between Douce and Mayhew, in that Douce has a tendency to classify and sub-categorise the various street-folk of the *Vagabondiana*, though adheres to a less stringent criteria than Mayhew's finely delineated categories. 'Of Scottish, Welsh, and Irish mendicants', notes Douce, 'there are now very few in London, perhaps their full number does not exceed fifty'.⁴⁴ Douce proceeds to enumerate each sub-category of the Scottish, Welsh, and Irish poor: 'the lowest class of Scotch are baker's men; the women are laundresses', for example, whereas 'the Welshmen, of whom London never had many, are principally employed by the potters of Lambeth'.⁴⁵ By comparison, 'the poor Irish are the most anxious to gain employment, and are truly valuable examples of industry. They sleep less than other labourers; for at the dawn of day they assemble in flocks at their usual stands for hire'.⁴⁶ The most industrious of the Irish population are categorised as 'chairmen, paviors, bricklayer's-labourers, potato-gatherers, and basket-men'.⁴⁷ The impulse to categorise is extended to those who are disabled: the blind, who are divided between the 'sober' and those 'commonly termed industrious beggars'; and those 'unfortunate mendicants' who have been maimed, or who display impaired mobility.⁴⁸ 'Go-cart, Billies in bowls, or sledge-beggars' for example, 'are denominations for those cripples whose misfortunes will not permit them to travel in any other way'.⁴⁹

These descriptions of the London poor demonstrate an almost anthropological impulse to observe, record, and taxonomise the groups and sub-groups of urbanmendicants. But this tone is not sustained throughout the *Vagabondiana*, and subsequent descriptions note the almost quaint 'appeal

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Smith, *Vagabondiana*, 31.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 32.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 21, 22, 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 16.

of rustic simplicity' found among London's impoverished population.⁵⁰ Whereas the categorisation of the Scottish, Welsh and Irish poor appeals to a taxonomising interpretation of the London poor as 'anecdotes', other London types are presented in picturesque vignettes. For example, Douce describes a man who 'mimics the notes of the common English birds, by means of a folded bit of tin, similar to that used by Mr. Punch's orator, and which is held between the teeth [...] Musicians of this description were at one time very numerous'.⁵¹ The 'musician' is playing what sounds like a rudimentary 'call', also described by the Punch performer in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*: 'speaking all day through the "call" is werry trying, 'specially when we are chirruping up so as to bring the children to the vinders'.⁵² The whimsical oddity of this peripatetic musician invokes a kind of pastoral or elegiac quality with his urban birdsong, especially in Douce's presentation of the figure as one of the last of his urban tribe.⁵³ This kind of elegiac urban pastoralism is prevalent in the commentary of *Vagabondiana*, in which Douce laments the decline of a pastoral image of the poor and their customs: 'London has of late been gradually losing many of its old street customs', laments Smith, 'particularly that pleasing one of the Milk-maid's garland, so richly decorated with articles of silver, and bunches of cowslips'.⁵⁴ 'The milk-woman and her pretty maids in their Nancy Dawson petticoats would dance to the fiddlers jigs' but now, 'instead of this innocent scene of May-day gaiety, the streets are infested by such fellows [...] who have been dismissed, perhaps for their indecent conduct, from the public places of entertainment'.⁵⁵ These men 'hire old dresses, and join the Chimney Sweepers [...] and exhibit all sorts of grimace and

⁵⁰ Ibid, 23.

⁵¹ Ibid, 31.

⁵² Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*; see also: 'Call, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 25 July 2016, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/Entry/26410#eid1174521080>.

⁵³ For a discussion of racialised categorisations of the urban poor, see: John Marriott, *The Other Empire: Metropolis, India, and Progress in the Colonial Imagination*, Studies in Imperialism (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 101-30.

⁵⁴ Smith, *Vagabondiana*, 18.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

ribaldry to extort money from their numerous admirers'.⁵⁶ The loss of a pastoral ideal entails a moral corruption, as the 'pleasing' milk-maid is replaced by grotesque canting fraudsters, thus perpetuating a fear of the 'new' London poor and generating a perceived need to contain and explain their tricks and swindles. The only counter to this grim 'ribaldry' is the last vestige of rural innocence, provided by the crude mimicking of birdsong by the itinerant musician.

While Douce's lament for the loss of a pleasing pastoral ideal is conventionally and straightforwardly nostalgic in its evocation of a lost tradition and a longing for an indeterminate rustic past, the positioning of a criminal underclass of frauds as the particularly modern replacement for the milkmaid seems disingenuous. As evidenced previously in this chapter, classifications of the urban poor were born out of a need to decode and navigate London crime in the early modern period. The type of deception Douce identifies is surely nothing new. Indeed, the picturesque anecdote made possible by the antiquarian collection of urban types is particularly conducive to moral censure. As John Barrell explains, the picturesque represents and reforms the rural poor: 'It is not a description only, but a prescription; the poor must be shown at work, not only because that is what they do, but because it is what they *ought* to do' - an impetus which is easily extended to encompass the urban poor also.⁵⁷ The notion of the London poor as moral subjects is also notable in pocket-sized collections of 'cries' aimed at children, such as the 1820 *The Cries of London: for the instruction and amusement of good children, decorated with woodcuts from life*.⁵⁸ Each 11 x 7 cm woodblock print is appended with a short moral lesson, such as: that of the herb seller: 'thro' the fields he bends his way, / Pure nature's works discerning; / So you should practice every day, / To trace the field of learning'. As discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis, antiquarian and historicising accounts of London's impoverished neighbourhoods gave way to a heavily moralised

⁵⁶ Ibid, 19.

⁵⁷ John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape : The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 77.

⁵⁸ *The Cries of London: for the instruction and amusement of good children, decorated with woodcuts from life* (York: J. Kendrew).

discourse later in the century, whereas the poor themselves have always been a vehicle for moral instruction and example.

Cries of London

It is difficult to position Smith's nostalgia as being either typical or typical of a genre that has been appropriated in multiple forms and tones. An earlier depiction, Paul Sandby's *Cries of London from the Life* (1760) - the title of which suggests a pointed attempt to depict the reality of London - positions figures in confrontational poses and includes earthy and ribald details of street life. The visual style is heavily etched and almost grotesque, a style echoed by Luke Clennell's *London Melodies* (1812). Clennell was apprenticed to the engraver Thomas Bewick and his figures are rendered in woodcuts: unpolished and full of visual texture, they are sturdy but spirited in appearance.⁵⁹ Sandby's cries are individual and distinct like Smith's: a man pushes a wheelbarrow on which sits a basket of trotters and shouts 'any tripe or neats feet or calves feet' (Figure 8); a young woman wearing a tight bodice looks out from the picture, and addressing the viewer asks 'will your honour buy a sweet nosegay or memorandum book?' Other figures exclaim: 'a hot pudding, a hot pudding, a hot pudding' and 'rare mackerel, three a groat or four for sixpence'. In comparison, Smith's engravings are not grotesque per se but they do not shy away from depicting misery, pain, and relentless hard labour where it is found, such as the Jewish mendicant, unable to walk, sat in a box with wheels; the street cleaner blinded in one eye; or the maimed boot lace seller. Smith manages to make these subjects worthy of antiquarian documentation and nostalgic viewing by engraving them with fine detail rather than rough woodcuts, thus enabling the depiction of human sentiment and expression in the faces of his figures, rather than grotesque spectacle. They capture specific individuals for examination and scrutiny, unlike subsequent collections such as the facially indistinguishable figures of T.L. Busby's *Costume of the Lower Orders of the Metropolis*

⁵⁹ Jenny Uglow, *Nature's Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 207.

(1820), or Richard Dighton's *City Characters* (1824), depicting well-tailored bankers in static profile (Figures 9 and 10).

Vagabondiana's recent antecedent, Francis Wheatley's *London Cries* (1792-95), provides a stark contrast in its uniform pastoral nostalgia. Unlike the grotesque or lascivious spectacle of Sandby's images, Wheatley's collection is a picturesque series of contrived vignettes befitting a middle class drawing room and reflective of artistic aspiration. Fourteen of the images were exhibited as paintings at the Royal Academy between 1792 and 1795 and they were published between 1793 and 1797.⁶⁰ Graceful, pleasing, and sanitised, Wheatley's images are bland and insipid when viewed alongside Sandby or Smith's engravings. These are images designed for straightforward consumption. They lack the intrusive urban grit of Sandby and Smith's images, and seek to charm rather than confront. Each image lacks any distinctive feature, either in the individuals or in the setting, with few markers to suggest the scene is set in London. Interactions between traders – the cherry seller, the knife-grinder, the chair mender – are measured, contained, and static (Figure 11). There are no grotesque or arresting details to distinguish any of the individual figures; indeed, the recurring female figures are interchangeable. The strawberry seller, the match seller, and the milkmaid could easily be the same woman depicted in different guises, and are all depicted with the same pastoral heroism that feeds a nostalgia for a pre-industrial London. There is nothing vulnerable or undignified about any of these figures, and they go about their labours noble and emotionless, elevated as moral, pastoral ideals of how the London poor should behave.

In a similar vein, William Craig Marshall's *Itinerant Traders of London in their Ordinary Costume with Notices of Remarkable Places given in the Background* (1804) places each figure within a picturesque view of an unpopulated London street. The accompanying text describes in detail the goods sold by each figure, such as band boxes, apples, brooms, baskets, playbills, cherries, doormats, peas, spiced gingerbread (Figure 12). These figures are not as elegant as Wheatley's, but

⁶⁰ Celina Fox, *Londoners* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 162.

they are still isolated, posed, and generic, lacking any distinguishing physical features. Marshall deploys a clear strategy of nostalgic containment, by depicting the flow of commerce and people in a controlled, ordered, and relatively bland manner. Marshall's London poor occupy the streets of London in a pleasing manner. As records of London street life, Wheatley and Marshall's images of the London poor manage a dual feat of reflecting the heterogeneity of trades, goods, labours witnessed in the capital, but manage to record this diversity with a visual language that divests the poor of any distinctive individual qualities. Their particular aesthetic mode enables the same sense of nostalgic containment as Douce and Smith's *Vagabondiana*, by making known aspects of urban life that the polite viewer would not contemplate so singularly in reality.

Returning to the *Vagabondiana*, Douce's construction of an ideal past and corrupted modern London is indicative of a clear falsification of both the past and the present state of the city, a perception that feeds Douce's depiction of the urban poor as a subsector of society on the brink of disappearance. The antiquarian format is crucial in imposing a falsified temporal distance between the reader and the reality of the urban poor, but also supports Douce and Smith's project in singling out 'anecdotes' worthy of being rendered as nostalgic relics of a fabricated sense of the past. Two distinct modes of nostalgic framing emerge in the *Vagabondiana*'s commentary: the pseudo-anthropological record of various urban types and sub-types (evinced by the grubbers and bone-pickers), and the pleasingly picturesque and rustic portrait of urban customs and people usurped by a harsh modernity. These two modes enable the viewing of the urban poor through a nostalgic lens. The quantification and classification of the poor explains and makes known details of the population a more polite readership would not be privy to, whereas the replacement of the rustic poor with a criminal underclass creates a sense of fear that is quickly and conveniently quashed by the impression of containment created by the cataloguing effect of Smith's anecdotal mode.

Collections of London 'cries' sustained interest into the twentieth century, and were easily adapted to suit new forms of distribution – such as collectible cigarette cards and playing cards – and expanded their subjects to encompass new trades and figures. The visual modes of illustrating the

London poor only continued to proliferate. Texts such as Luke Limner's *London Cries and Public Edifices* (1851) utilised a more portrait-like mode of depicting the poor. Andrew Tuer's *Old London Cries* (1876) retreated back to the arcane woodblock print style and chapbook format, while a contemporaneous collection by John Thomson, *Street Life in London* (1876), juxtaposed photography and prose to anticipate photojournalism. The nostalgic forms of woodblock prints retained popularity in texts such as *History of the Cries of London* by Charles Hindley (1884) and William Nicholson's *London Types* (1898). W. & F. Faulkner Ltd issued a series of cigarette cards in 1902 depicting the traditional figures of sweeps, coal sellers, and muffin men, but by 1919 the format was adapted, notably by Julius Mendes Price in *Types of London*, to include British and Italian officers, 'Tommys', 'Wrens', tea-shop waitresses and 'female window cleaners'. The ceaseless imitation and proliferation of this genre, adapted into new and old formats, demonstrates a version of Raymond Williams' nostalgic 'escalator' concept as outlined in the introduction to this thesis. Each age seeks to explain and make sense of its own modernity by casting back to an idealised 'Old England' – or in this case, 'Old London' - of the recent past, using the aesthetic language of nostalgia and a kind of popular antiquarianism to make this past material, or to invoke its traditional aesthetic modes. As the London landscape and its occupants changed, means of representing the poor adapted and exploited the formats available in order to contain and make known the changing public body of the capital. Within William's static narrative of an interminable striving towards a tantalising ideal of London life, Douce and Smith's *Vagabondiana* differs not in the crux of its project, but in its bold and explicit central conceit of presenting the London poor on the brink of extinction from the city's streets, as opposed to a population already lost to history.

Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821) and Francis Grose's *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1785)

Egan's Alternative Antiquarianism

While Smith's *Vagabondiana* adheres broadly to the generic conventions of collected 'London cries' Egan's *Life in London* offers a more manifold interpretation of the antiquarian genre. It is one

which suggests an interest in popular history and the present moment by using a variety of generic forms to both historicise and decipher the current population of London's streets. Drawing upon a plethora of literary forms – the panorama, the picaresque novel, the sketch, graphic satire, extra-illustrated books, cant and slang dictionaries – to form a text that attempts to express the increasing expanse and possibilities of the city in the capaciousness of its literary form, while also marking its inhabitants as subjects of antiquarian scrutiny. The hybrid of genres forming *Life in London* echo the perceived incomprehensibility of the city, or rather an attempt to capture and make sense of the language, sounds, and scenes of the ever-expanding metropolis of London. In doing so, it provides the reader with a guide to the language of London as it exists in the present moment, while also historicising the present in an antiquarian format. In the opening section to *Life in London*, Egan attempts to outline his antiquarian methodology, one which relies upon an accurate mimesis of real, physical encounters with the London poor: 'An accurate knowledge of the manners, habits, and feelings of a brave and free people', he claims, 'is not to be acquired in the CLOSET, nor is it to be derived from the formal routine precepts of tutors':

It is only by means of a free and unrestrained intercourse with society [...] that an intimate acquaintance is to be obtained with Englishmen: for this purpose it is necessary to view their pastimes, to hear their remarks, and, from such sources, to be enabled to study their character.⁶¹

Unrestrained access to the subject of 'study' is crucial in Egan's antiquarian epistemology. The reader must be presented with as full and realistic account of the lives of the urban poor as is possible to record within a book, one which not only depicts the sights of London, but also the sounds. Egan's London is a 'complete cyclopaedia [sic]' a legible and 'accurate' repository of the 'pastimes' and 'remarks' of the 'character' of the urban poor.⁶² The generic diversity and experiential emphasis of Egan's text can be regarded as a form of alternative antiquarianism: one which relies upon a lived experience of the city in the present moment in order to furnish the

⁶¹ Egan, *Life in London*, vi.

⁶² *Ibid*, 23.

enduring and authoritative form of the encyclopaedia with a diligent record of the pastimes and language of a particular subject (the urban poor) in exhaustive detail. In this sense, *Life in London* occupies a tension between, on the one hand, an urge to preserve a particular image of the city, albeit one innately modern in its reflection of anxieties around navigating urban change and population expansion, and on the other hand, a desire to keep this image alive and intriguing to the reader in the present moment. The element of *Life in London* most clearly identifiable as conventionally antiquarian is the role of flash language, a feature of the text that also embodies the tension between preservation and lived experience so characteristic of Egan's brand of antiquarianism. *Life in London* does not merely offer a fossilised record of where and by whom urban slang was spoken, but it also shows readers how to use it, demonstrating slang in action and thus keeping a subject of antiquarian interest alive and current.

Egan's Debt to Gross

Egan's flash language is a mixture of real London cant and slang of the early nineteenth century, subtly interspersed with turns of phrase and definitions of Egan's own invention. Heavily capitalised and italicised definitions and interjections are peppered throughout the text of *Life in London* in mid-sentence footnotes and authorial asides. Representing slang, cant, and flash in a printed glossary of footnotes may be interpreted as *Life in London's* supplementary key to decoding the city for the reader who wished to keep up with the imagined habits and activities of the London poor. Conversely, if the purpose of a dictionary or glossary is to translate and clarify unknown language, Egan's decision to cloak the text in footnotes has the effect of adding further layers of meaning for the reader to decode, often disrupting the rambling flow of Egan's lengthy sentences. This format presents the reader with a conundrum as to whether to attend to each footnote as they appear - thus disrupting the vicarious enjoyment of Tom and Jerry's spree - or to read over sentences without knowing the full meaning of the content, attending to definitions after the fact. Both forms of reading force the reader to admit their own lack of knowledge, persistently keeping the reader a few steps behind *Life in London's* protagonists and never truly in on the joke.

The effect of isolation is exemplified in Egan's portrait of Tom's gambling habits:

However animatedly TOM might have sported his money on the race-course, upon a *Smolensko*, or backed the *Phenomena* trotting mare for a large stake; interested himself upon the *fleetness* of his greyhounds; admired and been delighted with the courageous properties of the English bulldog; felt all alive when viewing the combats of the prize-ring; extolled the *staunchness* of his pointers, and praise the *well breaking-in* of his spaniels; or even *smiled* with indifference at the rolls of *soft* which his most captivating FANCY-PIECE⁷ drew from him repeatedly [...]

⁷A sporting phrase for a "bit of nice GAME," kept in a *preserve* in the suburbs. A sort of BIRD OF PARADISE!⁶³

In defining 'fancy piece', Egan presents the reader with further layers of sporting references to decode. 'Smolensko' is not slang or cant, but a reference to a famous racehorse, presented as an unqualified reference.⁶⁴ Similarly, 'fleetness', 'staunchness' and 'well breaking-in' are not specialist terms for training race dogs, but presume a degree of knowledge from the reader as to how these qualities can be measured in a sporting context. Egan does not offer a definition of 'soft' in *Life in London* but his 1823 reissue of Francis Grose's *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* defines 'soft' as 'Bank-notes. *Cant.*'⁶⁵ All of these references assume a certain level of knowledge – or an intuitive understanding gleaned from a trace of knowledge - from the reader and are presented without explanation. These terms operate as a filters to distinguish readers who are *au fait* with the practices of the sporting world, and further distancing those who could not tell a 'pointer' from a 'greyhound'. Egan's footnote for 'fancy piece' presents the biggest test for the reader. The definition of is explained essentially by further slang terms: 'nice Game' and 'bird of paradise',

⁶³ Ibid, 47.

⁶⁴ John Lawrence, *British Field Sports: Embracing Practical Instructions in Shooting, Hunting, Coursing, Racing, Cocking, Fishing, &c. ; with Observations on the Breaking and Training of Dogs and Horses ; Also the Management of Fowling Pieces, and All Other Sporting Implements* (Sherwood: Neely, and Jones, 1818), 551.

⁶⁵ Francis Grose, *Grose's Classical Dictionary of The Vulgar Tongue: Revised and Corrected, with the Addition of Numerous Slang Phrases, Collected from Tried Authorities* (Sherwood: Neely, and Jones, 1823) unnumbered pages.

offered without any further explanation and leading most readers to intuit or deduce a meaning for ‘fancy piece’.

The structure is later repeated in Egan’s own edition of Francis Grose’s 1785 work, *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (1823), seen here in the definition of ‘Uncle’:

*Cant-term for a Pawnbroker: Who lives where hang those golden balls, / Where Dick’s poor mother often calls, / And leaves her dickey, gown, and shawls? / MY UNCLE. / Who, when you’re short of the short stuff, / Nose starving for an ounce of snuff, / Will ‘raise the wind’ without a puff? / MY UNCLE.*⁶⁶

This can be read as an attempt to cement Egan’s own authority as a purveyor of slang terms.

Quoting from his own work on the title page, Egan publicised the dictionary as a partner publication to *Life in London*, necessary for decoding the colloquial colour of urban life:

A kind of *cant* phraseology is current from one end of the Metropolis to the other, and you will scarcely be able to move a single step, my dear JERRY, without consulting a *Slang Dictionary*, or having some friend at your elbow to explain the strange expressions which, at every turn, will assail your ear.
*Corinthian Tom – LIFE IN LONDON.*⁶⁷

Egan reprints the prefaces to Grose’s first and second editions, using his arguments as justifications for a third edition, and also lays out his own validations which echo the edifying aims of *Life in London*, while making explicit the aim of recording new turns of phrase:

E’very exertion has been made to collect and arrange, under their proper heads, all the new phrases which have occurred since the last edition. To improve, not to degrade; to remove *ignorance*, and put the UNWARY on their guard; to arouse the *sleepy*, and to keep them AWAKE; to render those persons who are a *little UP*, more FLY: and to cause every one to be *down* to those tricks, manoeuvres, and impositions practised in life, which daily cross the paths of both young and old, has been the sole aim of the Editor; and if he has

⁶⁶ Pierce Egan, *Grose’s Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, (London: 1823).

⁶⁷ Egan, *Grose’s Classical Dictionary*, title page.

succeeded in only one instance in doing good, he feels perfectly satisfied that his time has not been misapplied.⁶⁸

Emphasising the protean nature of slang and cant, Egan also notes the consistencies between the language of the Elizabethan and Regency underclass, which has ‘remained unchanged for centuries’, implying that the current moment of the 1820s witnessed a blooming of new terms worthy of lexicographical recording:

Many of the words use by the Canting Beggars in Beaumont and Fletcher, and the Gipsies in Ben Jonson’s *Masque*, are still to be heard among the *Gnostics* of Dyot-street and Tothill-fields. To *prig* is still to steal; to *fib*, to beat; *lour*, money; *duds*, clothes; *prancers*, horses; *bouzing-ken*, an alehouse; *cove*, a fellow; a *sow’s baby*, a pig, &c. &c.⁶⁹

Grose also revelled in the mutability of slang and cant, acknowledging the transience of meaning and phraseology as something worthy of record and celebration. The more novel, and thus unstable, a term was, the more reason there was for capturing it in print:

The many vulgar allusions and cant expressions that so frequently occur in our common conversation and periodical publications, make a work of this kind extremely useful, if not absolutely necessary, not only to foreigners, but even to natives resident at a distance from the metropolis, or who do not mix in the busy world; without some such help, they might hunt through all the ordinary Dictionaries, from Alpha to Omega, in search of the words, ‘black legs, lame duck, a plumb, malingeror, nip cheese, darbies, and the new drop,’ although these are all terms of well-known import, at New-market, Exchange-alley, the City, the Parade, Wapping, and Newgate.⁷⁰

In offering an alternative dictionary, Grose’s lexicon combats the transience and novelty of ‘vulgar allusions and cant expressions’ by rendering them in text for the curious to consult as they would any other dictionary. In his acknowledgement of the fluidity and cross-pollination of language between different social and cultural spheres, Grose justifies his text as a means of preserving fascinating terms that are always new to those who have never encountered them before:

⁶⁸ Egan, *Grose’s Classical Dictionary*, xxviii,

⁶⁹ Egan, *Grose’s Classical Dictionary*, xxi.

⁷⁰ Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (S. Hooper: London, 1785), ii.

The fashionable words, or favourite expressions of the day, also find their way into our political and theatrical compositions; these, as they generally originate from some trifling event, or temporary circumstance, on falling into disuse, or being superseded by new ones, vanish without leaving a trace behind, such were the late fashionable words, a Bore and a Twaddle, among the great vulgar, Maccaroni and the Barber, among the small; these too are here carefully registered.⁷¹

The notion of capturing for posterity the language that will imminently ‘vanish without leaving a trace behind’, echoes the impulse of Douce and Smith’s *Vagabondiana* and their central conceit of depicting the labours and cries of mendicants who face a similar fate. Egan profits upon this impulse by presenting slang, cant, and flash as a means of decoding the untoward highs and lows of London life, exploiting the nostalgic mechanisms of antiquarianism used by Grose, Douce, and Smith, to make slang appear new and interesting. What all of these texts share in common is the effect of making known the murkier corners of London life and in doing so erase the distinctiveness of the London poor and their language, work, and customs. Making these explanations and portraits available for a wider readership may capitalise upon intrigue, but ultimately makes the subject intelligible, and in presenting this explanation in an antiquarian format, use a historicising or nostalgic lens to package this knowledge in a pleasing and controlling format.

Coleman’s study shows that Egan’s edition of Grose’s dictionary contains 5714 definitions, eighty seven per cent of which are from taken from a reprinted edition of Grose’s *Lexicon Balatronicum: A Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit and Pickpocket Eloquence* (1811).⁷² The title page of the *Lexicon Balatronicum* notes that it was ‘compiled originally by Captain Grose’, similarly acknowledging its status as a new reworking of Grose’s original, enabling us to read Egan’s edition of Grose as an imitation of an imitation, or as part of an antiquarian lineage or tradition.⁷³ Egan also draws from contemporary sources, such as *The Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux* (1819), *The Life of*

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Coleman, *History of Cant and Slang*, 161.

⁷³ Francis Grose, *Lexicon Balatronicum: A Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence* (London: C. Chappel, 1811), title page.

David Haggart (1821), the *Flash Dictionary* (1821), and J. Burrowes's *Life in St George's Fields* (1821). In light of Coleman's work, these two extracts are particularly striking because they make claims to the 'new phrases' of London slang from various genres of criminal writing, while emphasizing the linguistic lineage of phrases traced back to the dramatic works of Beaumont and Fletcher in the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Coleman points out that several of the terms used by Egan, including 'boozing-ken', 'lour', 'prancer' and 'sow's baby' were already obsolete by this point, and known only in canting dictionaries.⁷⁴ Coleman takes this to be indicative of Egan's limited knowledge of the lexicon, but I argue their inclusion is suggestive of the archaic lineage of cant in which Egan is rooting *Life in London*, and the antiquarian impulse of the project. Egan's editing of Grose's lexicon is somewhat superficial, but the changes he does make to entries suggest a project of modernisation. The nature of his editorial interventions are mostly orthographical, particularly the modernisation of spelling. Lengthy entries demonstrate Egan's editorial habits:

APPLE-PYE BED. A bed made apple-pye fashion, like what is called a turnover apple-pye, where the sheets are so doubled as to prevent any one from getting at his length between them: a common trick played by frolicsome country lasses on their sweethearts, male relations, or visitors.⁷⁵

DUNGHILL. A Coward: a cockpit phrase, all but game cocks being stiled dunghills. To die dunghill; to repent, or shew any signs of contrition at the gallows. Moving dunghill; a dirty filthy man or woman. Dung, an abbreviation of dunghill, also means a journeyman taylor who submits to the law for regulating journeymen taylors' wages, therefore deemed by the flints a coward.⁷⁶

For the first definition, Egan modernised the spelling of 'pye' to 'pie', and 'visiters' to 'visitors', but otherwise the extract remains the same as Grose's original. In the Dunghill definition, 'stiled' is modernised to 'styled', 'shew' to 'show', 'taylor' to 'tailor', and 'deemed by the flints' to 'deemed,

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Ibid.

by the flints'. Egan also inserts accents, italicises words, and anglicises French spelling on a number of occasions:

SALMON-GUNDY. Apples, onions, veal or chicken, and pickled herrings, minced fine, and eaten with oil and vinegar; some derive the name of this mess from French words *selon mon goust*, because the proportions of the different ingredients are regulated by the palate of the maker...⁷⁷

Egan italicises 'vinegar', and alters 'goust' to 'goût'. Such examples show a tendency towards modernization, to make some attempt at a stamp of newness and to bring an older source up to date, if only superficially. But Egan's editorial hand is so light of touch, that these alterations are only gestures towards modernisation. The dictionary is not a project in improving Grose's dictionary, or of making his material more contemporaneous to Egan's *Life in London*. Grose's dictionary is an opportunity for Egan to highlight the defining features of *Life in London* and to root them in a framework which both emphasises the book's striking newness and its roots in antiquarian records of London street language.

The circular definitions, combined with the conversational emphasis of capitalisation and italicisation, imitates the effect of being let in on a secret or an exclusive sporting tip, emphasising the need for the reader to be 'in the know'. It also demonstrates the dual urge to preserve and keep exclusive a certain category of knowledge: explaining one slang term with another may, on the one hand, create a multi-layered record of flash talk, but it is also far from a democratised means of explanation, and seems a counter-intuitive approach to even casual lexicography. The antiquarian format of the dictionary sits in tension with the content of Egan's slang, the format and frequency of Egan's footnotes suggesting an almost scholarly urge to preserve, to explain, and to make known this urban language – an impulse that is unavoidably historicising in its impulse to record. Yet the content of the material recorded is kept constantly new and interesting with additional layers of meaning and definition accruing around each term. By ensuring the slang is never fully laid bare to

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the full knowledge of the unaccustomed reader, the lexicon never becomes antiquated, suggesting a body of language that is always shifting and impossible to pin down within any accepted system of knowledge.

Confusing Terms and Flash Style

Positioning London slang as an antiquarian subject is not only a means of sustaining readers' interest in the ever-evolving lexicon, but also frames the language of the London underclass as a key to decoding the city, an alternative guide to the city that renders unthinkable and unknowable urban experiences suddenly accessible to those in possession of the linguistic nous. Egan characterises his use of slang, cant, and flash as the expression of those truly free in the metropolis:

I am aware that some of my readers of a higher class of society may feel or seem to think, that I have introduced a little too much of the *slang*; but I am anxious to render myself perfectly intelligible to all parties. Half the world are up to it; and it is my intention to make the other half down to it. LIFE IN LONDON demands this kind of demonstration. A kind of *cant* phraseology is current from one end of the metropolis to the other. Indeed, even in the time of Lord Chesterfield, he complained of it.⁷⁸

Supposedly, Egan's 'flash' style operates as a kind of London lingua franca, rendering Tom, Jerry, and Logic as socially fluid and ambiguous figures moving between the ranks of the aristocracy and lower orders at their leisure. Indeed, Dart regards the 'highly fashionable' flash language as 'socially ambiguous – the kind of playful vocabulary that might be resorted to, quite readily, by a number of different ranks of metropolitan society'.⁷⁹ But in Egan's text, I argue, movement is not universal but exclusive to the protagonists. Egan's use of cant and slang can be read as a fashionable badge for those in the know, a kind of social levelling that only cuts one way.

Crucially, Egan's comment elides the definitions of cant and slang, a loose application of terms suggesting a casual and easy sense of social mingling that sits uneasily with the scrupulous footnoting and typography of definitions peppered throughout *Life in London*. As Julie Coleman

⁷⁸ Egan, *Life in London*, 84.

⁷⁹ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*, 122.

notes, ‘slang terms are characteristically short-lived, and tend to be used by a closed group of people, often united by common interests’ whereas the primary purpose of cant ‘is to deceive, to defraud, and to conceal.’⁸⁰ It is the language used by beggars and criminals to hide their dishonest and illegal activities from potential victims’.⁸¹ Flash, however, ‘can be used to refer to either slang or cant. It tends to be associated with the slang of fashionable high-flyers of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century London’: ‘it gestured towards that which was truly dazzling and spectacular, but also to that which was specious and fraudulent’.⁸² This mixing of lexicons is perhaps indicative of the Regency interest in sport (Egan wrote extensively on prize-fighting in *Boxiana; or Sketches of Ancient and Modern Pugilism*, between 1813 and 1824) which, as Dart notes, had ‘long provided a meeting ground of the classes, a series of arenas where men of widely different backgrounds could come together as ‘equals’, enjoying a kind of temporary fellowship in the technical vocabularies of the turf and the ring’.⁸³ But the other effect of this ‘thick verbal texture’ was to create a ‘kind of classless language, a polyglot vocabulary that was not tied to any particular social milieu’.⁸⁴

Coleman’s explanation of ‘cant’ suggests that it is a language particularly suited or conducive to an antiquarian project: ‘many [lexicographers] refer to the cant (or canting) language, or tongue, implying that it is not a register of English, but a separate language,’ an attitude manifested in lexicographers’ choices to adopt ‘the formats of the bilingual dictionary tradition’ such as ‘including unattributed citations to illustrate idiomatic usage’ and arrange entries by semantic rather than alphabetical classification.⁸⁵ Coleman also notes that this framing of cant as a separate language was used for commercial means: ‘the more threatening’ a canting group seemed, ‘the

⁸⁰ Julie Coleman, *A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries*, vol. 1, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 4, 124.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁸⁴ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*, 124.

⁸⁵ Coleman, *A History of Cant and Slang Dictionaries*, 4.

better sales of the dictionary are likely to be'.⁸⁶ Documenting or deploying slang, cant, and flash language to neutralise a perceived social threat could be read straightforwardly as a means of social control, but it also suggests a kind of subversive pleasure of being seen to traverse social boundaries and being seen to be 'in the know', one which may seek to superficially flatten class distinctions, but actually relies heavily upon discrete social groupings in order to make the thrill of subversion achievable.

Challenging Politeness

Critical work on the history of London cant and slang typically identifies glossaries and dictionaries as making accessible a body of knowledge with the power to 'challenge [...] the axiom of polite culture'.⁸⁷ There is an undeniable frisson of excitement in occupying briefly a less decorous social position and John J. Richetti has observed that eighteenth-century popular fiction possibly produced 'gratifying fantasies of freedom – moral, economic and erotic' for the reader otherwise constrained by social mores.⁸⁸ Writing on the slang language of Moll King's coffee house, Helen Berry suggests that 'the obscure meaning and burlesque manipulation of language was intended to provoke curiosity [...] and amusement'. The pleasure of speaking flash was that it 'was both secretive and exclusive, the delicious irony being that it denoted entry into a counter-culture of libertines and wits rather than one of ancient universities'.⁸⁹ Flash, then, relies heavily upon the existence of boundaries to generate the pleasure of subversion.

However, where I depart from this reading is in the use of flash as resistance to 'the axiom of polite culture'. Another pleasurable aspect of flash, Berry notes, 'was its potential to disrupt status

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Helen Berry, 'Rethinking Politeness in Eighteenth-Century England: Moll King's Coffee House and the Significance of "Flash Talk": The Alexander Prize Lecture', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 11 (2001): 69.

⁸⁸ John J. Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns, 1700-1739* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 29-30.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 76.

hierarchies' and it was used 'as a means of cutting across social boundaries'.⁹⁰ In doing so, flash, cant, and slang offer what Berry terms as a 'discourse of politeness', prompting us to rethink politeness 'not as a uniformly observed set of rules, nor as an attribute which all are striving to attain, but as a potentially repressive social force'.⁹¹ Egan, I suggest, offers something different. Egan's documenting of London slang is not part of an egalitarian project, but creates an illusion of mobility that entrenches a series of distinctions – between the louche aristocracy, the sporting enthusiasts, the London poor, and the clueless reader – by throwing light upon these strata and substrata of the London population, but offering only an elliptical and obfuscatory key to decoding the city in the form of circumlocutory and digressive footnotes. The slang, cant, and flash language of *Life in London* does not challenge parameters of politeness, or dissolve social distinctions, in and of itself, but challenges the reader to decode and unpack layers of meaning, a kind of rite of passage to be truly in the know.

It is between the contrasts of rich and poor, luxury and squalor, that Egan positions *Life in London*: 'The EXTREMES, in every point of view, are daily to be met with in the Metropolis' (50). The numerous episodic modes of viewing the metropolis deployed by Egan (the camera obscura, the panorama, the theatrical masquerade) function as fictional corollaries to the anecdotal mode of illustrating the London poor used by Smith, allowing the reader to ramble through the social extremes of the city, yet also pinning down the city and its impoverished inhabitants as a subject for study, scrutiny, and consumption. Alternating between the high and low life scenes of London, Egan provides a panoramic view comprised of a series of 'peeps' that emphasize the cosseted privilege of the reader's vantage point and social position within the stratified hierarchy of the city. This vantage point entails a distancing manifested in the paratexts of *Life in London* that frame the city as an antiquarian curiosity recording the many visual and aural facets of urban life, transforming the city into a legible and knowable collection of texts. Constantly conjuring new

⁹⁰ Ibid, 79, 81.

⁹¹ Ibid, 81.

ways to keep his readers ‘in the know’, the extra-textual materials of Egan’s book promise new and exclusive insights into the lives of the urban poor. In doing so, Egan’s alternative form of antiquarianism relishes novelty and newness to keep the subject of his text current and contemporary, while simultaneously recording a historically specific moment in the social history of London’s impoverished population.

Conclusion: Lamb and Smith

Whereas the temporal models of nostalgia explored in chapter three framed scenes of London life that were about to be or had just been lost or demolished, the antiquarian images and texts in this chapter attempt to navigate and contain threats of disorder in current London life by reframing them as historical curiosities, while also offering a means of navigating and deciphering the unknown languages of London streets. In the hands of Francis Grose such a project may have a democratising impulse in elevating the language of the street to something worthy of antiquarian study, whereas Egan’s use of slang definitions seeks to maintain a social distance between reader and subject. Egan’s conservative appropriation of Grose’s project prompts a kind of detached curiosity of a present phenomenon, repackaged as an antiquarian oddity, as opposed to any retrospective sense of nostalgic loss demonstrated in chapters two and three of this thesis. Egan’s portrayal of the urban poor provides a stark contrast to the more personal reminiscences of Charles’ Lamb’s *Elia* essay: ‘A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis’ (1822). A discussion of the nostalgic, antiquarian urban poor in the 1820s would not be complete without an acknowledgement of Lamb’s essay, which I have decided not to discuss this text at length, not only due to limitations of space, but because the essay has been discussed in relation to Smith’s *Vagabondiana* at length in two excellent works: Gregory Dart’s *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810-1840*, and James Harriman-Smith’s recent article.⁹² In Dart’s account of the essay, the essay is part of a wider discussion of Lamb’s metropolitan affect: ‘Lamb’s metropolitan aesthetic sees the relationship between the

⁹² Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*; James Harriman-Smith, ‘Representing the Poor: Charles Lamb and the Vagabondiana’, *Studies in Romanticism* 54, no. 4 (2015): 551–568.

Londoner and his surroundings as a form of transaction in which the urban stroller ‘lends out’ his heart to the streets around him in the hope of a rich return’.⁹³ Lamb invest his sentiment ‘in the grubby spectacle of the city, but precisely in order to receive it back again, like a usurer, with interest’.⁹⁴ For Lamb, life in London was based around a sympathetic engagement with the markers of change and progress written in the landscape. In what Dart identifies as an anti-reformist argument, Lamb explores the ‘complex relationship between urban spectacle and social sympathy’: the urban poor are necessary touchstones of humanity assimilated into the theatrical spectacle of urban life.⁹⁵ Dart concludes his discussion of Lamb by identifying a similar project in Smith’s *Vagabondiana*, a text that took Lamb’s interest in the picturesque poor one step further by seeking to detail the individual lives of a range of mendicants. While Lamb starts to contemplate the urban beggar as another type of urban show, in both intention and effect, Smith acknowledges this wholeheartedly, depicting beggars in turn as both heroic and theatrical.⁹⁶ James Harriman-Smith’s recent article takes a different tack to Dart, arguing that:

While *Vagabondiana* mobilises parliamentary rhetoric, the techniques of both antiquarian and catalogue literature, and the picturesque mode in an effort to reassure its readers, Lamb takes the same approaches and pushes them to their extreme, revealing both their limits, and, most disturbingly of all, those of his readership as well.⁹⁷

In the final chapter of this thesis, I begin by discussing Lamb’s nostalgia, though not in relation to the urban poor. The nostalgia evident in Lamb’s mendicants is indicative of a broader project of London-based nostalgia that characterised the 1820s, one which centred around a personalised politics of loss as opposed to a forward looking project anticipating the need to preserve, record, and explain figures, languages, and locales about to be erased from London’s streets.

⁹³ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*, 145.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 153.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 157.

⁹⁷ Harriman-Smith, ‘Representing the Poor’, 551.

Chapter Five – Merry London

Introduction

Marilyn Butler characterises the 1820s as a point of ‘reinvention’ in London’s literary history. Despite the well-worn trajectory of ‘Romantic men of letters’ towards literary professionalism, culminating in a Londoner celebrity status ‘as a virtual condition of advancement’, London itself received little attention in fiction, Butler claims.¹ Between 1790 and 1820, Butler argues, London was absent from fiction.² Several studies have since disputed this claim. James Raven lists a number of novels by Eliza Parsons, Samuel Jackson Pratt, and Frances Burney that demonstrate London’s centrality to the ‘fashionable’ novel.³ Subsequently, Leya Landau has argued that both Butler and Raven ‘suggest thematic and generic continuities with earlier literary periods’: Raven draws upon Eliza Haywood’s moralised narratives of urban pleasure, while Butler invokes sentimental literature’s residual image of London as a corrupt city.⁴ Landau herself argues for a corrective narrative that acknowledges London’s presence in fiction of the 1800s, but decentralises previous models to position the city ‘increasingly in relation to contemporary historical events and national identity’.⁵ While this is a salient means of addressing a perceived gap in Romantic literary criticism, Landau’s article necessarily constricts its focus to discussion of Jane Porter’s *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (1803) and Burney’s *The Wanderer* (1814), thus offering a narrow counterargument to Butler and Raven. Returning to Butler, though the rationale of her argument remains contested, her point that ‘the metropolis emerges, reinvented, in 1820’ is germane to the chronological focus of this thesis.⁶

¹ Marilyn Butler, ‘Hidden Metropolis: London in Sentimental and Romantic Writing’, in Celina Fox, ed., *London - World City, 1800-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press in association with the Museum of London, 1992), 188.

² *Ibid*, 188-90.

³ James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 162.

⁴ Leya Landau, ‘The Metropolis and Women Novelists in the Romantic Period’, *Romanticism* 14, no. 2 (1 July 2008): 120.

⁵ *Ibid*, 121.

⁶ Butler, ‘Hidden Metropolis’, 188.

Butler identifies the emergence of ‘lively, readable, cosmopolitan’ publications including the *London Magazine*, Hazlitt’s *Table Talk*, and Lamb’s *Essays of Elia*, works she characterises as ‘short informal prose pieces set in the present or remembered past, and mostly located in London’.⁷ These texts reflected London’s rapid ascendancy as a topic of interest: in 1820 ‘topographical London, fashionable London, literary London, slum London’ all found expression in the London print industry’s deliberate challenge to the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*.⁸ As outlined in the Introduction of this thesis, professional literary magazines and essays dominated the literary marketplace and character of the 1820s and 1830s. As Cronin notes, ‘the newly mechanized industry of periodical publication was sustained by a newly created mass readership’ prompting an anxiety around the ‘mechanized and impersonal’ business of printing and publishing. ‘It was in reaction against the conditions that made possible their production’, Cronin notes, that the new magazines encouraged a prose that fostered an illusion of personal, intimate address’. Lamb, Hunt, and others, ‘worked busily to realize the presence of the essayist, so that the consumption of a mass-produced pamphlet might seem to the reader an experience as intimate as being engaged in conversation by an unusually clever and entertaining friend’.⁹

The notion that the 1820s was a turning point of metropolitan literature characterised by conversational essay writing is one I wish to pursue at greater length in this chapter. This chapter considers a series of essays by Charles Lamb, William Hone, and Leigh Hunt that use differing models of a convivial author-reader relationship to generate a sense of collective nostalgia about London. In overlaying personal geographies with literary geographies of the city, Lamb, Hone, and Hunt appeal to a community of readers to share in a literary project that creates a nostalgic history of London in essay form.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, 86.

These essay forms draws upon a number of conventions categorised in the preceding chapters of this thesis. The most prominent modern theorist of nostalgia, Svetlana Boym, posits that ‘the nineteenth century nostalgic was an urban dweller who dreamed of escape from the city into the unspoiled rural landscape’.¹⁰ The notion of a strict urban/rural divide in the literary production of nostalgia in the early nineteenth century is arguably far more nuanced than this. Hunt, along with Charles Lamb, William Hone, sought to construct nostalgia *about* the city, as opposed to a notion of nostalgia which defined itself in opposition to the metropolis. The nostalgic familiar essay, I argue, did much to expand the aesthetic qualities of the rural picturesque to the urban landscape.

Metropolitan literary culture, specifically magazines, lent itself to this type of writing, Parker explains. In his discussion of the *New Monthly* magazine, Parker identifies a type of publication propelled by economic enterprise rather than politics, one which appeals to an ‘intensification of [middle-class] domestic and personal bliss’, enabling any occasion or moment to be used as a point of departure for pleasurable reminiscence and contemplation.¹¹ This chapter builds upon Parker’s idea by identifying the specifically nostalgic moments in metropolitan essays about the capital, one which appeals to the readership to help shape a collective sense of local nostalgia for London’s landscape. As we shall see in the first section of this chapter, mechanisms that invite the reader into an intimate and shared recollection are crucial in constructing a nostalgia for an idealised moment in time.

My aim here is to map the genres of anecdotal portraits (discussed in relation to the urban poor in chapter four), popular antiquarianism (explored in chapter three), and picturesque views of domestic ruins (outlined in chapters two and three) onto the essay form, thus demonstrating how writing about London in the 1820s undertook a particular kind of nostalgia that drew upon generic crossovers between the essay and other aesthetic categories.

¹⁰ Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 27.

¹¹ Mark Louis Parker, *Literary Magazines and British Romanticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 141.

These essays mark a departure from the images of ruined or demolished London landmarks presented in chapters two and three. Smith and Hone forecast future ruin and rebuilding, as do Barbauld and Shelley in their depictions of future ruin as a means of reflecting upon the present political moment. Lamb, Hone, and Hunt, in this chapter, position nostalgia in a more straightforward temporality, exploring the politics of loss marked and felt in the London landscape. However, the means by which they appeal to their readership is positioned more firmly in the present. The essays discussed here are forward-looking in that they appeal to a current readership to help shape and contribute to a collective nostalgia and to create a history of London and its locales. Lamb, Hone, and Hunt extend this invitation to their readers in a number of ways. The first section of this chapter considers how Lamb uses personal histories and portraits evoked by the South-Sea House to generate a sociable intimacy with his readership, interweaving personal and collective memories. The second part of this chapter explores Hone's *Every-Day Book* in detail, analysing the project's anthologising of Elizabethan poets to construct an ideal of demotic conviviality, and a repository of urban customs - a project to which Hone encouraged his readership to contribute. Finally, the third section considers Hunt's use of the imagined metropolitan ramble around London that develops a sociable substitute in the absence of the physical public venue of the coffee house.

Charles Lamb, 'The South-Sea House' (1820)

Parker's study of 1820s magazine culture briefly outlines the fluctuating history of critical interest in Lamb's 'penchant for reminiscence', and the various critical efforts made to read Lamb as an apolitical writer in light of this style.¹² Parker suggests that Lamb's *Elia* essays are an embodiment of circulating arguments against innovation. Citing Lamb's essay 'Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago', Parker outlines how Lamb's style is marked by a mixture of 'pleasure and pain, of sympathy and sadism'. 'The fact', Parker notes, 'that the ideal past is evoked in the form of a correction of a too favourable account suggests much about the dynamic of displacement: "ideal" is

¹² Ibid, 56.

what satisfies the desire for the ideal at a particular moment'.¹³ Lamb's nostalgia, then, is particularized to a specific moment and locale, but in the intimacy formulated by Lamb's style, is collectively accessible to the magazine readership. Cronin, however, argues that Lamb's essay style 'encouraged skimming, dipping, skipping through the pages, [and] obstructed deep responses', something innate to the magazine format.¹⁴ Lamb was one of a number of writers, Cronin argues, who 'knew themselves to be addressing an anonymous mass readership [and] responded by developing in prose [...] a manner that suggested intimate address'.¹⁵ The first section of this chapter explores the various narrative techniques and styles deployed by Lamb to promote a shared but very localised sense of nostalgia for the recent past rooted in the contemporary London landscape.

In his study *Romantic Englishness*, David Higgins argues for a rethinking of the term 'local' in the early nineteenth century, advocating for a shift from an individual and personal definition towards a more outward-looking localism shaped by global interconnectedness.¹⁶ Localism, he explains, is expressed in terms of a globally recognised generalisation of locality. Through the medium and mechanisms of print culture, 'local and national selves can be understood as complex processes rather than fixed entities'.¹⁷ This formulation supports the aim of this chapter, namely that Lamb's narrative techniques prompt a very localised and specific nostalgia for a recent past that also invites a mass readership into a series of intimate recollections. Higgin's work addresses 'The South-Sea House' as a study of imperial nostalgia: the building is a '*memento mori*, suggesting the obsolescence and destruction that awaits the grandest imperial projects', in a London 'shaped by imperial power and trade, but [...] also haunted by the prospect of its own decay', a temporality of

¹³ Ibid, 48.

¹⁴ Cronin, *Paper Pellets*, 194.

¹⁵ Ibid, 15.

¹⁶ David Higgins, *Romantic Englishness: Local, National and Global Selves, 1780-1850*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 4.

¹⁷ Ibid, 5.

nostalgia more akin to Barbault and Shelley's work discussed in chapter two of this thesis.¹⁸ Rather than pursuing the idea of nostalgia for London as a projected image of imperial decay and dissolution, this chapter focusses more closely on the mechanisms of localised nostalgia communicated to a mass readership.

Lamb's *Elia* essay, 'The South-Sea House' was originally published in the *London Magazine*, in August 1820, as 'Recollections of the South-Sea House'. Once the place of business of the Governor and Company of Merchants of Great Britain trading to the South Seas, in 1792 the young Charles Lamb held a brief post in the Examiner's Office, and it is his status as an office-worker that 'gives his city writings bite and value', notes Dart.¹⁹ Reflecting upon his brief spell there, some thirty years ago, Lamb recalls the South-Sea House as a haven of sociability. In reimagining this personal idyll, I suggest, Lamb simultaneously reinterprets it, presenting it to the reader as a highly constructed nostalgic appeal to intimacy, thus acknowledging the idyll's idealised status as a conscious construction of myth, and a theatrical performance of affected sociability.

Elia opens the essay with a direct address to the reader, immediately brokering a sense of intimacy and collusion:

Reader, in thy passage from Bank – where thou hast been receiving thy half-yearly dividends (supposing thou are a lean annuitant like myself) – to the Flower Pot, to secure a place for Dalston, or Shacklewell, or some other thy suburban retreat northerly, - didst thou never observe a melancholy looking, handsome, brick and stone edifice, to the left – where Threadneedle-street abuts upon Bishopsgate?²⁰

The meandering and digressive syntax evokes the ebb and flow of natural and enthusiastic conversation, inviting the reader to answer and contribute to Elia's recollection of the building. The reader is cast into a supporting role, a substitute listener who is asked to share in Elia's memory as if it were a shared personal history.

¹⁸ Ibid, 134.

¹⁹ Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature*, 144-145.

²⁰ Charles Lamb, *Works*, ed. E.V. Lucas, vol. 2 (London: Methuen, 1903), 1.

The South-Sea House itself is presented as an empty and ghostly shell of its former glorious edifice: ‘This was once a house of trade, - a centre of busy interests. The throng of merchants was here – the quick pulse of gain – and here some forms of business are still kept up, though the soul be long since fled’, Elia laments.²¹ The building is eerie and desolate: ‘offices roomy as the state apartments in palaces – deserted, or thinly peopled with a few straggling clerks’, anticipating the deserted domestic spaces of uncanny ruin depicted in *The Last Man*. It is the granular, quotidian details which serve as a searing prompt to personal recollection: the time-worn symptoms of decline and decay. The fabric of the building is disintegrating, with ‘long worm-eaten tables’, the portraits of ‘deceased governors’ now obsolete, the walls hung with ‘huge charts, which subsequent discoveries have antiquated’.²² It is mausoleum of memories, a ‘magnificent relic’ of a former age of economic progress and prowess, and now a dusty anachronism. ‘Silence and destitution are upon they walls, proud house, for a memorial!’ Elia cries.²³

But there is sociable charm and opportunity to be found in the silence of ruin: ‘there is a charm in thy quiet: - a cessation – a coolness from business – an indolence almost cloistral – which is delightful!’²⁴ The emptiness of the depopulated building is almost a blank canvas onto which vividly constructed memories of former colleagues can be projected, which I will detail shortly.

The silence also works to invoke a sense of the uncanny that matches the accounts of visits to Pompeii and Herculaneum discussed in chapter two of this thesis, in which the everyday, quotidian scenes, cloaked in dust, are invoked as a means of puncturing the grandeur of the present moment. Instead, Lamb’s invocation of ‘the shade of some dead accountant’, ‘stiff as in life’, prompts a meditation on the ineffectual and ‘degenerate clerks’ of the present, who could not ‘lift from their

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid, 2.

²⁴ Ibid.

enshrining shelves’ the ‘great dead tomes’ of accounts consulted so readily in a previous age.²⁵ The tome itself is an antiquarian relic, akin almost to an illuminated manuscript: ‘with their old fantastic flourishes, and decorative rubric interlacings – their sums in triple columniations [sic], set down with formal superfluity of cyphers – with pious sentences at the beginning [...] – the costly vellum covers of some of them almost persuading us that we are got into some *better library*’.²⁶ This is an image that hints at the construction of false grandeur, of a pleasing external façade. But it is the people that gave body to ‘the genius of the place’.²⁷ Without them, the South-Sea House is an obsolete edifice. The clerks were models of sociability. Possessed of a ‘curious and speculative turn of mind’, ‘humourists’, ‘pleasant fellows, full of chat’, and individuals with their ‘separate habits and oddities’.²⁸ As Felicity James notes, Elia is fascinated by the power of personal associations in shaping locations and environments, ‘transforming a workplace into a landscape of remembered affection’, one in which the reader is invited to share in.²⁹

Elia’s colleagues are idealised in their diversity of character, ‘a sort of Noah’s ark. Odd fishes. A lay-monastery’.³⁰ Elia carves out detailed and intimate portraits of a convivial brotherhood of individual but like-minded types, thumbing through an imagined catalogue of pleasing anecdotes and alighting on those most sociable and worth dwelling upon a little longer than the others. Much like the antiquarian and picturesque sketches of characters outlined at length in chapter four of this thesis, Elia’s memories are a heavily mediated rendering of reality: each recollection is idealised and contained within a brief anecdotal form that is highly selective in its depiction of sociable qualities. As James notes, a sympathetic emphasis upon ‘the particular’ can lead ‘through Hartleian

²⁵ Ibid, 2-3.

²⁶ Ibid, 2.

²⁷ Ibid, 3.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Felicity James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth: Reading Friendship in the 1790s* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 204.

³⁰ Lamb, *Works*, 3.

train of association, to wider understanding – to a suggestion, if not actually a realisation, of the ideal'.³¹ The abstracting impulse of Elia's nostalgia places a heavily rose-tinted lens upon the scenes he evokes, revealing the inner working of nostalgia to be akin to a chain-reaction of memories. The South-Sea House, even in its blank, dusty, state, offers a series of stimuli to prompt a fluid recollection of characters and habits in the depths of Elia's memory, summoning up details of each character that are almost antiquarian in their obscurity and specificity.

Elia enumerates the many friends and colleagues worthy of recollection. The cashier, Evans, 'wore his hair, to the last, powdered and frizzed out' in the fashion of the '*Maccaronies*' dating him to only the recent past. He was 'the last of that race of beaux', Elia notes, in a conceit reminiscent of *Vagabondiana*, a relic occupying the liminal space between modernity and obscurity.³² His '*forte*' was talk, Elia recalls: 'How would he chirp, and expand, over a muffin! How would he dilate into secret history! His countryman, Pennant himself, in particular, could not be more eloquent than he in relation to old and new London'. The spectre of Evans prompts an associative train of memory, a chain of convivial ideals. Old London is 'the site of old theatres, churches, streets gone to decay vanished markers such as the Mulberry-gardens – and the Conduit in Cheap – with many a pleasant anecdote [...] of those grotesque figures which Hogarth has immortalised'.³³ In this lengthy digression, an expression of the peripatetic mind of the nostalgic, the object of Elia's nostalgia becomes conflated. What began as a nostalgia for Evan's ability to talk about London, in itself triggers a chain of memories of London itself, and the many venues of sociability and 'pleasant anecdote' Elia once found there. London and sociability are closely-knitted nostalgic prompts, ushering not only a nostalgia for forms of sociability unique to London, but an underlying nostalgia for London itself.

Elia continues to delineate expansive and finely-detailed portraits of the foibles and mannerisms of

³¹ Ibid, 204.

³² Lamb, *Works*, 3.

³³ Ibid, 4.

now-vanished colleagues: the deputy under Evans, Thomas Tame, and the accountant, John Tipp are particularly notable in their embodiment of sociable ideals.³⁴ Tame in particular could traverse all manner of social boundaries with his amiable chat, Elia recalls. He hosted concerts of performers ‘culled from club-rooms and orchestras’ who ‘ate his cold mutton, and drank his punch, and praised his ear’ and cut ‘a very sociable figure mingling with the artistic world’: ‘He sat like Lord Midas among them’.³⁵ But at work, ‘all ideas, that were purely ornamental, were banished’. ‘You could not speak of anything romantic without rebuke’. For Elia, Tipp is a model of appropriate sociability, one which adapts and contracts to reflect the austerity or loucheness of the environment. ‘Not that Tipp was blind to the deadness of *things* (as they call them in the city) in his beloved house’, Elia reassures the reader, ‘or did not sigh for a return of the old stirring days when South Sea hopes were young’ but his life was formal and exact: ‘His actions seemed ruled with a ruler’.³⁶ The appeal to the reader is timely, almost as if to ensure they have been thrust fully into the centre of Elia’s ever-multiplying throng of remembered faces, ‘space of community and shared memory’.³⁷

Elia quickens the pace with a series of smaller sketches resurrecting ‘the dusty dead’: the wit ‘Henry Man’, and ‘Plumer’, ‘Woollett’, ‘Hepworth’ and ‘Newton’.³⁸ The memories now jump between merely invoking the name of some past clerk, or recalling a particular idiosyncrasy which, though minor and humble, takes of an elevated and defining status. There are memories of the quotidian nuances of every-day actions: ‘How profoundly would he nib a pen – with what deliberation would he wet a wafer!’³⁹

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid, 5.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ James, *Charles Lamb, Coleridge and Wordsworth*, 203.

³⁸ Lamb, *Works*, 6-7.

³⁹ Ibid, 7.

Felicity James' notion of the South-Sea House containing a 'symbiosis of the experiential and the ideal' is a crucial one here.⁴⁰ The final declaration undercuts these memories, suggesting they may be phantasms concocted for amusement:

Reader, what if I have been playing with thee all the while – peradventure the very *names*, which I have summoned up before thee, are fantastic – insubstantial – like Henry Pimpernel, and old John Naps of Greece: - Be satisfied that something answering to them has had a being. Their importance is from the past.⁴¹

But what resonates, and what endures from Elia's carefully woven fabrication, is the sense of sociability between narrator, reader, and phantasm. Undoubtedly, the form of nostalgia Lamb invokes in this essay is an active one, a structure of emotion that relies upon active invitation and participation between author and reader. There is a fine balance between the very intimate workings of associative memory, and a collective sharing in this process: the reader is positioned on an intimate and close footing with Elia, and quickly forgets that they are one of many who have occupied this same sport, and shared in these same memories. The notion of an invitation to a collective readership to share in a very personal nostalgia is one I now wish to explore in Hone's antiquarian essays – this is a project of nostalgia that has a more explicit and forceful social motivation.

William Hone's *Every-Day Book* (1825-26)

Hone's community of readers

William Hone's *Every-Day Book; or, Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements, Sports, Pastimes, Ceremonies, Manners, Customs and Events* (1825-6) was a popular anthology and antiquarian miscellany, incorporating 'the manners and customs of ancient and modern times' alongside writers as diverse as Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Clare, and Keats.⁴² It was 'a hybrid of

⁴⁰ Ibid, 205.

⁴¹ Ibid, 7.

⁴² Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 3.

almanac and encyclopaedia, popular antiquarian miscellany and literary treasury'.⁴³ Each entry contained a floral calendar that marked the flowers dedicated to particular days, meteorological predictions, accounts of historical events, the lives of saints, biographical sketches of famous and obscure figures of interest, lengthy descriptions of popular customs – both national and regional – poetry from a variety of attributed and anonymous sources, and anecdotes authored by Hone reflecting his own antiquarian predilections. Put together, these entries formed a diverse almanac of English life and customs, and a record of the ritual calendar of work, festivals, and 'popular merriments'.⁴⁴ It was structured according to the calendar and documented historical events, feast days, literary extracts, street cries, buildings, hagiography, natural history, pagan customs, fairs, local traditions, urban sports, peculiar news items, and 'several seasons of popular pastime'.⁴⁵ It was an 'Everlasting Calendar', a 'History of the Year', a 'History of the Months', a 'History of the Seasons', and a 'Perpetual Key to the Almanac'.⁴⁶

It appeared in weekly instalments from January 1825 to December 1826. Each number was made up of thirty two pages divided up into seven sections of text, priced at threepence. The weekly numbers were bound and indexed, and then republished at the end of each year, creating two densely-packed 800-page volumes in double-column octavo format. Hone's project was one of popular antiquarianism, with the aim to create 'a storehouse of past and present manners and customs', undertaken 'for the purpose of forming a collection of the manners and customs of ancient and modern times, with descriptive accounts of the several seasons of popular pastime'.⁴⁷

Hone formulated a collective readership that held every strata of society in its conception. 'It is an Every-Day Book of pleasure and business', Hone explained, 'of Parents and Children – of Teachers

⁴³ Joss Marsh, *Word Crimes: Blasphemy, Culture, and Literature in Nineteenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 101.

⁴⁴ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, vii.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, vii.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

and Pupils – of Masters and Servants.’⁴⁸ Transcending the classic model of the public sphere as the exclusively male domain of education and private wealth, Hone envisioned a project of collective authorship and readership that promoted common human interest. This vision was circulated in a nationwide advert announcing the project in December of 1824, three days before the publication of the first number on 1 January 1825:

The Every-Day Book is for the mansion and the cottage – the parlour – the counting-house – the ladies’ work-table – the library-shelf – the school room – the coffee room – the steam-boat – the workman’s bench – the traveller’s trunk and the voyager’s sea-chest. It is a work of general use, and daily reference: in all places it is in place, and at all seasons seasonable.⁴⁹

Hone also conceived of his readership as ‘contributor-correspondents’, encouraging readers from around the country to submit articles and descriptions describing local customs, though he did include his own pieces.⁵⁰ Outlined in the *Every-Day Book*’s preface, Hone appealed to his readers ‘friends’ to contribute to the project:

I may now be permitted to refer to the copious indexes for the multifarious contents of the volume, and to urge the friends to the undertaking for assistance towards its completion. There is scarcely any one who has not said – “Ah! this is *something* that will do for the *Every-Day Book*.” It is not possible, however that I should know *every* thing; but if each will communicated “something,” the work will gratify every one, and my own most sanguine wishes.⁵¹

Hone invites his readers to be part of a community of shared experience befitting of record in the *Every-Day Book*, and invites them to take up a role similar to his own: ‘It is not possible [...] that I should know *every* thing’. It is a sociable and thus gratifying interaction and exchange of knowledge and customs of a shared way of life. Hone goes on to thank those who have already contributed to the book:

⁴⁸ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, ‘Explanatory Address to Readers of the Every-Day Book’.

⁴⁹ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 1.

⁵⁰ Hone, *Regency Radical*, 24-5.

⁵¹ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, vii.

And here I beg leave to offer my respectful thanks in several correspondents who have already furnished me with accounts of customs, &c. which appear under different signatures. Were I permitted to disclose their real names, it would be seen that several of these communications are from distinguished characters. As a precaution against imposition, articles of that nature have not been, nor can they be, inserted, without the name and address of the writer being confided to myself. Accounts, so subscribed, will be printed with any initials or mark the writers may please to suggest.⁵²

Hone promises anonymity to level any distinctions between notable writers and regular readership. As many have noted, figures including John Clare and Lamb were regular, anonymous contributors to the *Every-Day Book*.⁵³ Readers were invited to become contributors and thus participate in the dialogue and exchange between anthologist, contributor, and poet. This model of egalitarian participation in authoring a repository of popular customs also found its inspiration in the poetry Hone anthologised – works which appealed to a demotic

Hone and the ‘Old Poets’

Hone’s poetic enthusiasms were conspicuous throughout the *Every-Day Book* and were integral to its structure and content. For example, in the 1826 numbers, Hone quoted passages from the Mutabilitie Cantos of *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96) in the epigraph of each new month. Hone sought to publish a diverse selection of poetry, much culled from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including verse by Jonson, Spenser, Drayton, and Browne, all of whom ‘represented a sociable, convivial ideal of poetic and political fellowship’.⁵⁴ The work of Herrick is quoted frequently throughout *The Every-Day Book*, and appears as an epigraph in the anthology’s frontispiece, later published in the national and provincial press as a stock advertisement:

I tell of festivals, and fairs, and plays,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Mina Gorji, ‘Clare’s Merry England’, in John Goodridge, ed, *John Clare: New Approaches* (Peterborough, John Clare Society, 2000) 15; Simon Kovesi, ‘John Clare, Charles Lamb and the *London Magazine*: Sylvanus et Urban’, *Charles Lamb Bulletin* (135), 91.

⁵⁴ Mina Gorji, ‘Every-day poetry: William Hone, popular antiquarianism, and the literary anthology’, in Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, eds. *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 252.

Of merriment, and mirth, and bonfire blaze;
 I tell of Christmas mummings, new-year's day,
 Of twelfth-night king and queen, and children's play;
 I tell of Valentines, and true-love's-knots,
 Of omens, cunning men and drawing lots –
 I tell of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
 Of April, May, of June and July-flowers;
 I tell of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
 Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes;
 I tell of groves, of twilights, and I sing
 The court of Mab, and of the fairy-king.⁵⁵

Hone proclaimed Herrick to be 'the poet of our festivals', recording the 'history of ancient times'.⁵⁶ Herrick's verse is an uncomplicated and demotic catalogue of popular customs – 'May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes' – echoing Hone's own agenda outlined in *The Every-Day Book's* prefatory material. The aim of the text was to 'open a storehouse, from whence manhood may derive daily instruction and amusement, and youth and innocence be informed, and retain their innocency [sic]', an antiquarian repository of customs framed in nostalgia. The *London Magazine* – a liberal publication edited, for a short time, by John Scott and the first publisher of Lamb's early *Elia* essays – featured a similar motto lifted from Ben Jonson's 'Discoveries': 'Why should not divers studies, at divers hours, delight, when then / variety is able alone to refresh and repair us?' Hone's quoting of Herrick demonstrates an attendance to the popular currency of Spenserian and Elizabethan modes of writing, as well as the cultural politics that prompted a recovery of this verse in the 1820s. Keats – whose poem *The Eve of St. Agnes* Hone discussed at length in an 1826 number of *The*

⁵⁵ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, i.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 402-3.

Every-Day Book – had a particular interest in the political potential of Elizabethan poetry and conceptions of Merry England. In his gloss upon *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Hone notes venerates the poem for its illustration of popular custom:

Little is remembered of these homely methods for knowing “all about sweet hearts”, and the custom would scarcely have reached the greater number of readers, if one of the sweetest of our modern poets had not preserved its recollection in a delightful poem.⁵⁷

Keats’ wider interest in the relationship between Elizabethan writers and popular culture as a model of demotic culture has been explored at length by Nicholas Roe and Mina Gorji. The latter argues that conviviality was key in linking the old poets with ‘an ideal of poetic and political fellowship’ held by Hunt and his London circle, one associated with Robin Hood’s England.⁵⁸ Roe highlights the stylistic features of the ‘old poets’ who afforded a sociable model of creativity that actively and purposefully resisted the egotistical bent of Wordsworthian poetics.⁵⁹ Keats’s ‘Lines on the Mermaid Tavern’ (1820), a poem describing a meeting between Ben Jonson’s coterie and Robin Hood’s merry men, articulates this cultural project vividly, invoking: ‘Souls of Poets dead and gone, / What Elysium have ye known, / Happy field or mossy cavern, / Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern’?⁶⁰ Keats and his circle had a particular interest in reviving a poetic canon mediated through discussion of folk culture and customs, an agenda that the *Every-Day Book* shared. In his anthologising of poetry, Hone printed extracts from Spenser, Milton, Dryden and Wordsworth alongside lines from milkmaid songs, street cries, and works by labouring poets including Robert Bloomfield and John Clare, tracing a common link of collective and socially levelling conviviality – part of a shared heritage as opposed to a cloistered elitism. As Hone noted in his preface, the *Every-*

⁵⁷ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 6

⁵⁸ Gorji, ‘Every-day poetry’, 252; Nicholas Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998), 134-59.

⁵⁹ Roe, *John Keats and the Culture of Dissent*, 158.

⁶⁰ John Keats, *John Keats: Major Works*, ed. Elizabeth Cook (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 171.

Day Book was ‘calculated to engage the attention of almost every class of reader’.⁶¹ In his ‘Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth’, Hazlitt argued that the Elizabethan poets represented the ultimate ‘genius’ of British literature, purely for their unadorned style of verse:

They did not look out of themselves to see what they should be; they sought for truth and nature, and found it in themselves. There was no tinsel, and but little art; they were not the spoiled children of affectation and refinement, but a bold, vigorous, independent race of thinkers... They were not at all sophisticated. The mind of their country was great in them, and it prevailed.⁶²

The sense of poetic fellowship is extended to Hone’s descriptions of London locales of his youth. In structures threatened by development, he aligns personal reminiscence with a collective patriotic nostalgia for the inclusive and convivial fellowship of the English poets.

Canonbury Tower

In his project of urban antiquarianism, even the act of walking is a nostalgic process for Hone. In *The Every-Day Book* entry for 8 March 1826, Hone announces his intention to take a ramble:

A walk out of London is, to me, an event; I have an *every-day* desire to bring it about, but weeks elapse before the time arrives whereon I can sally forth. In my boyhood, I had only to obtain parental permission and stroll in fields now no more – to scenes now deformed, or that I have been wholly robbed of, by “the spirit of improvement”.⁶³

Hone goes on to describe a walk through Islington to Canonbury Tower and recounts the changes to the landscape of his childhood witnessed on the way:

Having crossed the back Islington Road, we found ourselves in the rear of the Pied Bull. Ah, I know this spot well; this stagnant pool was a ‘famous’ carp pond among boys. How dreary the place seems; the yard and pens were formerly filled with sheep and cattle for

⁶¹ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, xi.

⁶² William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, vol. 6 (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd, 1930), 175.

⁶³ Hone, *Every-Day Book*, 633.

Smithfield market; graziers and drovers were busied about them; a high barred gate was constantly closed; now all is open and neglected, and not a living thing to be seen.⁶⁴

Hone's account of the physical deterioration of the idyllic childhood spot surrounding Canonbury Tower into a 'dreary' and 'neglected' wasteland demonstrates a longing to be returned to a specific place, one which is rose-tinted and remembered as 'famous' from the perspective of youth. In the focalisation of Hone's essay, nostalgia morphs from an instinctual memory into a cultural mode of thinking, and as we shall see, this process levels the distinction between childhood and national memories.

Hone goes on to describe the deserted tower earmarked for demolition. It was supposedly a onetime dwelling of Francis Bacon, Oliver Goldsmith ('Goldy', who supposedly wrote 'The Deserted Village' during his residence), Christopher Smart, and Sir Walter Raleigh.⁶⁵ To Hone, the building is imbued with Raleigh's particularly gallant and patriotic triumphs:

[He] who threw down his court mantle for Queen Elizabeth to walk on, that she might not damp her feet; he, whose achievements in Virginia secured immense revenue to his country; whose individual enterprise in South America carried terror to the recreant heart of Spain; whose lost years of his life within the walls of the Tower, where he wrote the 'History of the World', and better than all, its inimitable preface; and who finally lost his life on the scaffold for his courage and services.⁶⁶

Hone and his companions 'condoled on the decaying memorials of past greatness' and having explored the various apartments and parlours, gave a last farewell to Raleigh's former residence:

...yet we made not adieu to it till my accompanying friend expressed a wish, that as Sir Walter, according to tradition, had there smoked the first pipe of tobacco drawn in Islington, so *he* might have been able to smoke the last whiff within the walls that would in a few weeks be levelled to the ground.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ibid, 634.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 636.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 635.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

The smoking of tobacco acts to not only pay homage to Raleigh, but also allows Hone and his companions to share in a nostalgic model of sociability. On an immediate level, tobacco is taken as a shared ritual to unite the friends in the moment. By lighting a pipe within the very walls that Raleigh may have first smoked tobacco, the group hope to share in, or occupy, the same moment as Raleigh at the remove of several centuries. The group seek to resurrect, in physical form, the sociable ideal that is the object of their collective nostalgia. Hone's biographer, Frederick William Hackwood, writing in 1912, refers to Hone's letters to illustrate the true circumstances of the event. On 21st May 1825, Hone, George Cruikshank (his illustrator), a friend Joseph Goodyear, and David Sage, the son of the proprietor about to demolish the tower, smoked pipes and drank port and toasted the 'immortal memory of Sir Walter Raleigh'. Hone goes on to record in his letters:

Intervening sentiments and toasts being expressed, and drunk, the next of importance was the country of Sir Walter and ourselves – 'Old England' - We, the first three undersigned, came here for the high veneration we feel for the memory and character of Sir Walter, and that we might have the gratification of saying hereafter that we had smoked a pipe in the same room that the man who first introduced tobacco smoked in himself. The room in which we do this, is that described in the *Every-Day Book* of this day by W.H. In short, we have done what we said, and there is nothing more we can say, than this, that as Englishmen we glory in the memory and renown of our revered countryman.⁶⁸

This letter aligns the 'Old England' associated with Raleigh alongside Hone's memory of the countryside around Islington. In doing so, Hone rejects the forces of urban change and improvement, in order to preserve a double-sided nostalgia fed by personal loss and collective sentiment. Beginning as a walk imbued with personal memories, the essay digresses towards an experience and history shared with Raleigh, aligning Hone's childhood frolics at the carp pond with the accomplishments of a revered historical figure. As a result, the personal losses of childhood and the public demolition of a monument to national history are equalled and levelled. This reinforces an egalitarian notion of history which does not adhere to a hierarchy of personal and public culture.

⁶⁸ Frederick William Hackwood, *William Hone: His Life and Times* (New York: A.M. Kelley, 1970) 350-51.

Humble personal memories sit alongside the lofty heights of Raleigh's international renown: a pub, a stagnant pool, the honourable achievements of Raleigh, and the shared experience of smoking are part of the same history and culture. To Hone, Canonbury Tower is an emblem of what is at stake: both personal and national memory and ways of life.

Leigh Hunt's 'Wishing Cap Essay'

Introduction

The interleaving of personal and literary geographies underlies Hone's essays, a pattern that reflects the 'alternative histories' of William Cobbett's attempts to 'recover a popular history [...] that constituted accurate representations of the past and of the historical consciousness of English villagers'.⁶⁹ Cobbett's works were 'intended to preserve and fortify the independence of the people's historical consciousness' securing control of popular memory.⁷⁰ One of the most notable of these is *Rural Rides* (1822-26), a celebration of 'parochial, agrarian values of an earlier time'.⁷¹ Written in the form of a 'deceptively personal' travelogue, Cobbett published *Rural Rides* in serial form in his *Political Register* between 1822 and 1826, publishing them as a collected work in 1830. The issues were 'scrupulously dated and situated', combining a sense of personal reminiscence with 'something more than random comments on specific circumstances', James Mulvihill notes, 'converging [...] on a landscape that is not merely a passive register of local conditions, but [as a] portion of a greater national consciousness'.⁷² Cobbett's expansive but nostalgic prospect view 'bring[s] us beyond the ken of a "single glance"' to a vast and voluminous image of the rural landscape'.⁷³ The essays by Hunt analysed here, I suggest, import the impulse to record and

⁶⁹ Ian Dyck, *William Cobbett and Rural Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 125.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 127.

⁷¹ James Mulvihill, 'The Medium of Landscape in Cobbett's Rural Rides', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 33, no. 4 (1993): 825.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 826.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

preserve customs and landscapes of rural ‘Old England’, but transplant these concerns into an urban context. As argued in chapter four, just as the anecdotal nature of the antiquarian catalogue was conducive to creating an impression of random encounter with the itinerant poor, so the serial travelogue of *Rural Rides* demonstrates a parallel function between riding and writing, both of which make known, in an episodic manner, the lay of the land: ‘the synthesis of perception and conception by which Cobbett seeks to establish a medium of public discourse in his national survey’.⁷⁴

Hunt’s Metropolitan Rambles

Hunt published numerous essays on the many nooks and corners of London and the genial intercourse these sociable forums afforded. Often framed as journeys around London imagined in solitary mediation from the comfort of the fireside, in these essays, Hunt excavated the endless layers of London’s literary history. This created a legible literary geography of the city for readers to navigate from the safety of their armchairs, generating a sense of shared experience between reader and author, in contrast to the contribution to a collective project engendered by Hone’s *Every-Day Book*.

Using the familiar essay, particularly in the form of the nostalgic reverie, Hunt explored the intersections between real and imaginary urban travel, meditating on both temporal and geographical departures to idealised times and places. Like many of the peripatetic texts discussed in this thesis, in particular Smith’s *Vagabondiana*, Hunt’s imagined metropolitan ramble recalled the anecdotal effect of pedestrian encounter. This model is born out in William Hazlitt’s essay, ‘On Going on a Journey’. ‘The world in our conceit is not much bigger than a nutshell’, observes Hazlitt: ‘it is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast; - the mind can form no larger idea of space than the

⁷⁴ Ibid, 828.

eye can take in at a single glance'.⁷⁵ Here, Hazlitt dismantles the artifice of the prospect view and the panorama, insisting upon the fragmented, anecdotal, worm's-eye view of landscape. Hunt's use of the metropolitan ramble echoes this structure, resisting the all-encompassing panoramic view of London, and instead, relishing the randomness of anecdotal encounters.

In the familiar essay, Hunt explored the intersections between real and imaginary travel, meditating on both temporal and geographical departures to idealised times and places. For Hunt, these forms of transportation are intrinsically linked to the powers of reading. The final section of this chapter will focus upon a series of Hunt's essays published in the *Examiner*, from 1824 to 1825, referred to broadly as 'The Wishing-Cap Essays'. These articles later provided a basis for Hunt's book *The Town* (1848), as well as a series of articles in the 1830s in *Leigh Hunt's London Journal*, under the title 'The Streets of London'. I aim to provide a sense of how Hunt's writing on the London of his literary idols offers a distinctively nostalgic means of consuming and reading the city, recovering nostalgia as a mode of reading London in line with Lamb's emphasis upon the nostalgic urban anecdote.

If in its earliest sense, nostalgia was a longing for a specific place – as outlined in the introduction to this thesis - rather than a yearning for a general sense of an idealized past, it was not only a pathology of travel, but an associative mental process; a sentiment of loss and a symptom of modernity rather than something firmly located in the body. Hunt's accounts of London are part of nostalgia's transition from an instinctual personal memory, into a mode which shaped a sense of a national past. Hunt's essays, I suggest, offer a palliative alternative to nostalgia's longing for a physical return in space and time.

Hunt's essays are characterised by a nostalgia aimed uniquely at the city, an impulse echoed in Charles Lamb's open letter to Leigh Hunt's *The Reflector* in 1802: 'I have no hesitation in

⁷⁵ William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, vol 8 (London: J M Dent and Sons, Ltd, 1930), 187.

declaring', Lamb says, 'that a mob of happy faces crowding up a the pit-door of Drury Lane Theatre, just at the hour of six, gives me ten thousand sincerer pleasures, than I could ever receive from all the flocks of silly sheep that ever whitened the plains of Arcadia or Epsom Downs'.⁷⁶

Here, Lamb exhibits an almost petulant lack of interest in the pastoral mode: the 'silly sheep' of the countryside are less engaging and worthy of comment than the sociable crowds in the hub of Drury Lane. Both country and city are what Hunt refers to as 'the world of books', as he states in one of the essays: 'Nature inspires great authors, and they repay her by rescuing her very self from oblivion, and keeping her transitory pictures fresh in our hearts. *They*, thank God, as well as the fields, *are* Nature; and so is every great and kindly aspiration we possess'.⁷⁷ A belief in the salutary power of the pastoral runs throughout Hunt's formulation of metropolitan nostalgia.

In 1828 Hunt recalls the town in Tuscany where he wrote many of the first *Wishing Cap* essays, 'Love and the Country':

I not only missed 'the town' in Italy; I missed my old trees, - oaks, and elms. Tuscany, in point of wood, is nothing but an olive-ground and vine-yard...A tree of reasonable height is a Godsend. The olives are low and hazy-looking, like dry shallows. You have plenty of those; but to an Englishman, looking from a height, they appear little better than brush-wood.⁷⁸

Although there is 'nothing upon earth so fine as a good, rich, English meadow', Hunt pines for his beloved London, idealized as a kind of *rus in urbe* fantasy:

I think of an English field in a sylvan country, a cottage and oaks in the corner, a path and a stile, and a turf full of daises....I intend to sprinkle this article with some flowers out of the Italian poets; but positively I will not do it. They are not good. They are not true. The grapes are sour. Commend me to the cockney satisfactions of Chaucer, Spenser, and

⁷⁶ Charles Lamb and J. E. Morpurgo, *Selected Writings* (London: Routledge, 2003), 162.

⁷⁷ Leigh Hunt, *The Wishing-Cap Papers* (Lee and Shepard, 1873), 81.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 106.

Milton, who talk of ‘merry London’, of lying whole hours looking at daises, and of walking out on Sunday mornings to enjoy the daises and green fields.⁷⁹

It is not necessarily the location or physical space of the city, but the literary ghosts, a London-centric canon, for which Hunt pines. Here, Hunt’s model of a sociable nostalgia aligns more closely with Hone’s formulation of sociability in *The Every-Day Book*: although Hone’s antiquarian work documents many urban customs, practices, and histories, the poetic model he draws upon is resolutely rural in its folk sociability. Hunt’s nostalgia occupies a more liminal space, in the suburb fantasy between the city and the countryside – though this, I suggest, is also intrinsically metropolitan in its desire to both occupy and escape from rural spaces. Moreover, the ability to traverse between urban and rural spheres is indicative of the wandering, nostalgic freedom afforded by the metropolitan ramble.

The imitation of rural and urban wandering is one of the key rhetorical flourishes of Hunt’s essay. The first four *Wishing-Cap* essays take the form of walks through Covent Garden, Piccadilly, the West End, the City, Whitehall, and St. James’s Park, with Hunt writing from exile in Italy. These are the meandering nostalgic tours of a Londoner abroad indulging in a kind of poetic calenture. The essays are structured to imitate the meandering qualities of walks through London, and the episodic reminiscences of the nostalgic - encouraging a digressive and associative literary form. The winding structure of the *Wishing-Cap* essays is one conducive to memories prompted by a visual cue, successive episodes of the memory re-told, and nostalgic reminiscing. Composite in focus, Hunt’s *Wishing-Cap* essays draw upon picturesque, topographical, poetical, and historical modes of writing. Books, memories, and urban vistas intersect at random and accidental points. Endlessly tangential, Hunt jokes in an later 1833 essay: ‘we are so accustomed to whisk hither and thither by means of our Wishing-cap, that we shall not undertake to stick to any one subject together for a couple of paragraphs’.⁸⁰ Here, nostalgia engenders a kind of humble but constructed intimacy.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 436.

Hunt's style imitates the associative flow of authors and locations encountered on an urban ramble and the reader is privy to the twists and turns of the mind of the brooding nostalgic:

In the City, shops and a certain bustle are fitting. Everything ought to be alive, - the pavement, the windows, the prospect. A genuine piece of quiet is good, but this must be in some old street or corner. Bread Street has a right to be tranquil, both because it is ancient and because Milton was born there. To go through Christ-Hospital, when my old school-fellows are at their books, is a pleasant transition from the bustle of grown life to the dreams of boyhood. Any spot, where you meet with a piece of antique building, a Gothic archway, or an old tottering house with a coat of arms upon it, is a happy variety.⁸¹

The essay then turns to impoverished urban office workers who yearn for the country, the value of second-rate theatres, the sickliness of London shop-men in this 'lettered generation', and various other London topics. This invokes a different mode of nostalgia, one linked more closely to Boym's theoretical division of urban and rural reminiscences. Contrasting with any practical guide to the city, Hunt's essays model the tourist's walk upon the ruminations of a meandering mind. Yet there are structural parallels in the guide book and familiar essay and their means of consuming the city: they are both episodic, with all episodes being equal in their picturesque and nostalgic effect. They are peripatetic texts held together by the most tenuous of narrative structures. They are plotted by coincidence in space and memory.

This kind of conversational ruminative style is particularly fitting with Hunt's nostalgia for the sociability of the coffee house. In his 1826 essay, 'Coffee-Houses and Smoking', Hunt says 'I never pass Covent Garden (and I pass it very often) without thinking of all the old coffee-houses and the wits'.⁸² Years earlier he had written in the *Examiner* that it was his fondest wish to be considered an inheritor of this form, 'to persuade the public to hear me...after celebrated men, like Addison, Steele, and Defoe'.⁸³

⁸¹ Ibid, 46.

⁸² Ibid, 249.

⁸³ 'On Periodical Essays', *Examiner* (10 January 1808), 26.

In his 'Walk in Covent Garden' (1824), Hunt guides the armchair tourist through a London neighbourhood, introducing the non-urban outsider into his urban nostalgic reverie, 'moving and alive with the best times in English comedy, and one of the pleasantest of English society and verse' – the spirits of the Restoration and the Eighteenth century.⁸⁴ Covent Garden is 'classic ground' for Hunt - the ghosts of Voltaire, Congreve, and Dryden haunt the lanes and the sites of old coffee-houses nearby – he frequently shifts into a first person to describe them: 'My head is filled with them all... Addison is keeping it up over the way at Buttons'.⁸⁵ The need to return to the sociable exchanges of the coffee house is urgent and palpable. The absence of the real-life coffee-house was an endless source of despair for Hunt – he berated the contemporary periodical culture for its petty prejudice and lack of the 'wit' of the coffee-house era. 'You are invited to a literary conversation', he complained in *The Examiner*, 'and you find nothing but scandal and common-place. There is a flourish of trumpets, and enter Tom Thumb. There is an earthquake, and a worm is thrown up'.⁸⁶ Already missing conversational substance, the periodical press also lacked any affiliative connection with its readers, the 'more humane openness of intercourse' Hunt saw as characteristic of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century periodicals. In the *Wishing-Cap* essays, Hunt finds himself rambling through the nostalgic smoking rooms of the late seventeenth century, looking for a group of like-minded wits and a similar public space for debate:

Where shall I place my imaginary coterie, and fancy myself listening to the Drydens and Addisons of the day? Where is the room in which we can fancy Drydens and Addisons? Where is the coffee-house to match? Where is the union of a certain domestic comfort with publicity, - journals of literature as well as news, - a fire visible to all, cups without inebriety, - smoking without vulgarity?⁸⁷

Hunt is nostalgic for the intimacy of the 'domestic comfort' of the coffee house culture, an intangible past and nostalgic model of sociability. This is a preference of Hunt's Kevin Gilmartin

⁸⁴ Hunt, *The Wishing-Cap Papers*, 23.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ 'Prospecuts', *Examiner* (3 January, 1808), 6-8.

⁸⁷ Hunt, *The Wishing-Cap Papers*, 251.

has described as a ‘frank discursive fantasy rather than a practical programme for social change’ in forms of conversation.⁸⁸ Yet there are social implications in Hunt’s nostalgia for a haven of sociability. If periodical literature was doomed to remain closed and ineffectual to Hunt, due to its failure to elicit the kind of conversation he desired, the forum needed to be reinvigorated by bringing readers and writers back from private sphere and into the public, bringing individuals into contact with each other again. Rather than returning to a rigidly eighteenth century model of periodical culture, Hunt sought to replicate the ‘domestic comfort and publicity’ he admired in Addison and Steele. The metropolitan ramble was the best palliative to an inability to go back in time and to recover the *Tatler* and *Spectator*.

Yet, despite the weaknesses of the periodical press, ‘the commonplace and most unpoetical’ literature which London remained associated with, still gave value and potential to the humble places and memorial nooks Hunt encountered:

I can no more pass through Westminster without thinking of Milton, or the Borough without thinking of Chaucer and Shakespeare, or Gray’s Inn, without calling Bacon to mind; or Bloomsbury square, without Steele and Akenside – that I can prefer brick and mortar to wit and poetry, or not see a beauty upon it beyond architecture, in the splendour of the recollection.⁸⁹

Hunt’s reverence for the celebrated figures of the past is well documented. Hunt’s agenda for the *London Journal* was to create a ‘private-public journal’ and an ideal, new discourse and model of exchange. Untroubled by the separation of public and private spheres, the ideal recalls the fictional Gliddon’s coffee-house in Hunt’s ‘Coffee-Houses and Smoking’ essay. The coffee-house is presented as an insular, secluded place above the distinctions of private and public, but also beyond the distinctions of past, present, and future. Hunt’s experience in Gliddon’s culminates in a historical vision of the coffee-house superimposed onto current patrons:

⁸⁸ Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 206.

⁸⁹ Hunt, *The Wishing-Cap Papers*, 236.

There he sits, over the way, - Steele, I mean, - the man with the short face; for I perceive there is wit at that table. Opposite him is Addison, in black, looking something like a master in chancery. The handsome man, always on the giggle, must be Rowe; and the other one, an officer, is Colonel Brett. But who is this tall formal personage coming up? Look at him, - the very man, Ambrose Phillips.⁹⁰

Hunt's enjoyment of the coffee-house is not only nostalgia but also a means of creating an ideal mode of sociability for the present moment, ensuring the survival of eighteenth-century discourse in an evolved form through intimate association with its modes of discussion. For Hunt, coffee-house culture is the embodiment of communal and interpersonal discourse, encompassing the domestic comforts of privacy and easy intimacy. This unchanging experience is what Hunt attempts to replicate in periodical writing, an experience of 'wine, wit and natural humanity' available to all.⁹¹ Security and community can be realized through the collective imagination of the readership, overcoming the perceived disengagement between reader and writer promoted by contemporary publishing and writing practices. The absence of the coffee-house underscores a central concern for Hunt: that 'the age of periodical philosophy is perhaps gone by'.⁹² The decline of periodical literature and its impact upon public discourse was a chief source of concern for Hunt, condemning in the *Examiner* the 'petty and prejudiced' motivations of contemporary publications which degraded the function of periodical discourse.

As we can see from these three essay forms – the intimate sociable essay, the collective essay, and the metropolitan ramble – nostalgia *for* London was visible in a number of guises in literature of the 1820s. These forms all draw on variations of a collective nostalgia for an idealised and imagined past located in the works of literary figures from previous centuries. What is notable about this fact is that the figures mentioned, such as Herrick and Raleigh, were not all strictly metropolitan in character or origin, suggesting that periodical writers were amenable to adapting and transplanting

⁹⁰ Ibid, 255.

⁹¹ Ibid, 284.

⁹² Ibid, 26.

various formulations and strategies of nostalgia to suit their varying purposes. These essays also offer a more straightforward temporality of nostalgia in comparison to the texts discussed in previous chapters of this thesis. Although Lamb's essay on the South-Sea House could be read as akin to Barbauld's predictions of imperial decline, the conversational invitation to intimacy draws the reader into Elia's more personalised nostalgia for a recent lived past that is still discernible in the ghostly building. Whereas the nostalgia of Shelley's ruined domestic scenes is visceral in its appeal to the uncanny recognition of familiar interiors and landscapes, the descriptions of deserted homes act as generic canvases onto which the readers' personalised recollection of domesticity can be projected. In contrast, Lamb, Hone, and Hunt's nostalgia is personal to each writer, but is framed in a way that invites the reader into a communal contemplation of the past. These moments are structured so as to seduce the reader into an imagined sense of intimacy with the author, but are disseminated on a mass scale that makes this nostalgia both local and collective at the same time. In this sense, the nostalgia in these essays has more in common with the images of demolition written and illustrated by Hone and Smith in chapter three: heavily localised and often personalised images of the disappearing London landscape that are printed and re-printed for consumption and prosperity. As I will explain in the conclusion to this thesis, the recurring differential between the models of nostalgia explored in this thesis is one of temporality as much as locality.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to uncover a body of nostalgic literature that characterised metropolitan writing in the period between Romanticism and Victorianism, delineating new visual and literary categories that allow us to conceive of early nineteenth-century London in a new light. What has emerged from this thesis is a persistent impulse to make the city known, containable, and readable in a variety of visual and written forms. The desire to record various aspects of urban reality in a number of innately nostalgic, historicising, antiquarian forms, encapsulates the paradox of London in the early nineteenth century: that there is a desire to preserve, capture, and fossilise brief, anecdotal images of a past London, and an equal impetus to draw upon new and popular genres to achieve this aim.

Of all the capacious, organising aesthetic categories explored in this thesis – the prospect view, the panorama, the picturesque, the ruin, the urban ramble – urban antiquarianism is the most dominant and dynamic genre in early nineteenth-century urban writing. Urban antiquarianism is a touchstone throughout this thesis: in discussions of ruins as artefacts from a previous civilisation, in preserving fringes of London on the point of decline, in presenting a catalogue of London ‘types’ as a form of nostalgic containment, and in authoring a series of guides and observations that seek to make the city ‘known’ to the reader while constantly maintaining a sense of newness and intrigue. It is a crucial epistemology in writing about London in the 1820s.

The key organising aesthetic categories that run throughout the texts in this thesis – the prospect view, the panorama, the picturesque – create generic touchstones that recur time and again in considerations of literary and visual form. The desires to collect, classify, focalise, and to expand and contract views of the city between panoramic and sketch-level scales, are evident in the myriad of printed forms representing London in the 1820s and 1830s. Each mode of encountering the city implicates the reader or viewer to different degrees: whether this is as a detached voyeur of the panoramic city, as a street-level wanderer, as a local ‘in the know’, or as an accomplice in convivial

reminiscences. These methods of framing the dynamic between writer, reader, and viewer in nostalgic appreciation of London impact upon the temporality of each model of nostalgia outlined in this thesis. In one sense, this thesis is a study of these genres and modes of representing and enacting nostalgia, but I suggest that the temporality of these models is the key to distinguishing between forms of nostalgia, more so than the aesthetics of genre.

Chapter one's discussion of Egan and Redding's urban panoramas suggests that the weaknesses of these modes of viewing were exploited in order to highlight the tensions between nostalgia and modernity in the present moment, hinting at an inevitable future decay and ruin of imperial power and infrastructure. Redding in particular self-consciously draws attention to the weak spots of his chosen method of representing the city, one which is unable to contain the social threat of poverty in the sweeping vision of economic and imperial unity offered by the panorama. The breadth of the panorama is not matched by the depth of detail needed to understand the more granular workings of social and political tension written upon London's landscape. The nostalgic view of imperial glory is fodder for future reminiscence, but also warns against the foolhardiness and falsehood of idealism that fails to dig deeper into the inner workings of the city's economic, social, and moral impoverishment. The temporality of this nostalgia acts as a warning against the over-inflated rhetoric of the self-historicising present moment.

The nostalgia at work in Shelley, Barbauld, and Cruikshank's depictions of London also offer a warning against decline, and seize upon the narratives of inevitable ruin to deflate a sense of imperial grandeur emblemized by London. The temporality at work here is multi-layered, anticipating future decline to comment upon the present state of the metropolis. Both Barbauld and Shelley appeal to the reader by depicting futuristic ruined domestic and localised scenes of urban sites. These texts prompt an uncanny and visceral moment of recognition in the reader: Barbauld depicts iconic London landmarks in decay, whereas Shelley prompts the reader to imagine their own domestic sphere in ruin. Whereas Barbauld uses this recognition to make a point about grander political deterioration, Shelley's argument is less politically overt, and shares more in common with

Cruikshank, Hone, and Smith in their more personally inflected predictions of ruin. This mode of nostalgia relies upon a more immediate tie to the present moment, exploiting the reader's personal familiarity with the London landscape, rather than their recognition of iconic landmarks. Hone and Cruikshank's warnings against urban redevelopment also rely upon a more immediate temporal closeness, referring to actual buildings upon the landscape contemporary to the moment of their texts' publications. This is in contrast to Barbould's forecasting of the ruin of London monuments and buildings that have acquired more longevity and permanence in their political and stately magnitude. Similarly, in chapter three, Hone and Smith seize upon the Londoner's quotidian encounter with streets and buildings as an opportunity to excavate the multi-layered histories hidden in the everyday city, utilising moments of recognition in the present to uncover London's past histories. While this approach recalls a more straightforward formulation of nostalgia as a longing for a lost, recent past, it exposes the temporal potential for what a lost past might encompass: landscapes, buildings and localities hitherto unknown to the reader or viewer, but nonetheless distinguishable in the present moment. In particular, Smith focusses upon buildings about to be demolished, recording them at the very moment they slip into obscurity. These texts in particular challenge the understanding for nostalgia as a feeling that is either strictly emotional or nationalistic – the emotional mechanisms of recognition and longing inherent in nostalgia can be applied to multiple temporalities and for both personal and political agendas and comment. Similarly challenging to the traditional ideas of nostalgia as a longing for place, Egan and Smith's classifications of the urban poor challenge critical understanding of what a suitable object of nostalgia might be. The antiquarianism of prints and dictionaries that seek to explain the London poor links back to Redding's warning against the reductive panorama. These texts seek to make knowable the hidden threats of impoverishment and disorder, casting the present moment as an object of historical study and spectacle. Egan's text in particular offers a complex temporality of nostalgia. The use of slang dictionaries in *Life in London* capitalises upon the readers delight in novel and new knowledge, simultaneously keeping the subject of the urban poor current and

interesting, but also containing them and reducing them to a historicised subject of London's social history. Rather than forecasting future decline, as per Barbauld and Redding, Egan recognises the present moment's indicators of social decay, and rather than exposing them for nostalgic study like Smith and Hone, constructs historicising layers around the subject of the urban poor. They are living relics of history: both in their pre- or un-civilised state, and as walking objects of future historical study. They are living embodiments of nostalgia as a strategy for political and social containment and neutrality.

Egan's strategy of containment involves closely his readership in sustaining his complex model of nostalgia. The reader is complicit and crucial in mediating the London poor as a threat to conservative social order, but Egan relies upon their voyeuristic interest to mark these subjects worthy of antiquarian study. The reader is invited to be 'in the know', treated to a brief and vicarious glimpse into the urban underworld. A similar construction of intimacy is utilised by Lamb, Hone, and Hunt in the final chapter of this thesis, as a means of creating a nostalgia that is temporally simplistic in its appeal to a lost past, but complex in its collective authorship and mass readership. The images and locales of nostalgic focus in these essays are specific neighbourhoods and buildings in London that have either disappeared or are in disrepair, appealing to a similar temporality as Smith's engravings. What these multiple temporalities of nostalgia share in common is a generic ingenuity in appealing to and sustaining a mass-consumed sense of nostalgia for London and its historical landscape: nostalgia has the potential to be individual, collective, local, and national, appealing to the historical past, the present moment, and the imagined future.

London's status as a tumultuous, dangerous, and multi-layered city that resists singular definition and containment marks each of the models of nostalgia examined in this thesis as distinctively responsive to the unique concerns of metropolitan life.

The progress of nostalgia, I would like to suggest, has no clear end point. There is no specific moment in the nineteenth century at which all of the anxieties of the 1820s – of wealth and luxury, poverty, improvement, decline, ruin – are absorbed and neutralised in a particular historical moment.

Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851) is the culmination of many of the threads gathered by this thesis, a text in which the concerns of this thesis meet in a new and distinct way.

Mayhew's text shifts between a number of observational approaches in a way that positions him as the inheritor of urban antiquarianism. In his account of 'The Watercress Girl', Mayhew's reader is presented with a picturesque, anecdotal, and sentimental narrative, observed from real life but heavily mediated by Mayhew's authorial hand. In comparison, the account 'Of the General Characteristics of the Working Chimney-Sweepers', draws upon a number of statistical modes to present a panoramic breakdown of facts about this urban occupation.

Similarly, in his use of the daguerreotype and in his appeal to age-worn catalogues of urban 'types', Mayhew exploited the collision of nostalgic and modernising impulses in depictions of the city. His text also sharpens a number of central issues invoked in this thesis: his categories of urban types are far more heavily racialised and stringently organised than in Smith's *Vagabondiana*, and the scope of his project is infinitely more ambitious, taking as it does verbatim interviews as the basis of its text. By trawling the streets and alleys of London seeking scenes of extreme, grinding poverty, Mayhew was enacting the social mobility and exploration of *Life in London* in a harsher, grimmer, more politicised setting than had previously been encountered before.

The meeting of these concerns position Mayhew as the archetypal Victorian chronicler of London poverty, operating within a proliferating genre of urban investigation that found its popularity amongst those with a moral and voyeuristic interest in the impoverished neighbourhoods of the capital. Mayhew's journeys into the rookeries and alleyways of London precipitated the dawn of the 'Amateur Casual': figures who 'masqueraded as one of the poor to experience first-hand what it means to be an inmate in a ward for indigent wayfarers, tramps, and other homeless people'.¹

¹ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 26.

Even Mayhew, in his expansive attempts to record and make known the city, does not present an end point to the progress of nostalgia.

Limitations of space do not permit me to outline fully the persistence of nostalgia for a pre-modern society into the first half of the nineteenth century, especially in the form of nostalgia for chivalry.² A longer study would integrate the Tory splinter group of Young England into this narrative, ‘the political wing of a widespread nostalgia for the Middle Ages which had sprung up in the 1830s’.³

George Smythe, Lord John Manners, Henry Thomas Hope, Alexander Baillie-Cochrane, and Benjamin Disraeli promoted a romanticised Social Toryism motivated by ideals of ‘decentralisation, welfare for the poor, feudalism, “back to the land”, back to guilds and apprenticeships, hatred of industrialisation and other forms of modernity’.⁴ The movement’s sympathy for the poor and their belief in medievalism’s ‘alleged sense of community’ and its ability to ‘offset the perceived social alienation of the new industrial age’, provided Disraeli with the ammunition for his *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), and *Tancred* (1847).⁵

Recent studies delineate nostalgia for Merry England as a through line for political fiction and poetry of the nineteenth century. Mike Sanders notes how the invocation of Merry England in Chartist poetry demonstrates a desire to ‘return to the idyll of the household as the fundamental economic as well as social unit’, a belief in the lost golden age, and a ‘distaste for modernity’ that, according to Susan Zlotnick, rendered male Chartist writers incapable of embracing capitalist

² See: Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

³ Douglas Hurd and Edward Young, *Disraeli: Or, The Two Lives* (London: Hachette UK, 2013), 1820.

⁴ Boyd Hilton, ‘Disraeli, English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit’, in L. W. B. Brockliss and David Eastwood, eds, *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, C. 1750-C. 1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press ; New York, 1997), 48.

⁵ W. A. Speck, ‘Robert Southey, Benjamin Disraeli and Young England’, *History* 95, no. 318 (1 April 2010): 194.

industrialism.⁶ Zlotnick's work offers the most radical interpretation of the political vogue for Merry England, analysing Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) as a 'woman's history of England' that 'overturns the history of the nineteenth century popularised by the Victorian medievalists', and 'openly repudiates the implicit nostalgia in the medievalists' condition-of-England discourse because, for her, history offers no golden age'.⁷ The 'unromantic and unappealing' medieval past was 'brutal and barbaric, a time of mind-numbing labour and painful social inequality', especially for women.⁸ The appropriation of medievalist iconography by women writers to create a 'female medievalism' is explored at length by Clare Broome Saunders, though her study does not attend to the issue of poverty to any great length.⁹

To return to our present moment, the cyclical repetition of history has been borne out by a glut of twentieth and twenty-first century popular but polemic literature on the 'new ruins' of post-war and post-Blair British landscape.¹⁰ Most notably, Owen Hatherley's *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (2010) traces the legacy of the momentous New Labour urban regeneration initiative.¹¹ Hatherley observes the remnants of municipal architecture across the British landscape, showing how in many cases the optimism of New Labour edifices have led to, or have been left to, various states of physical, economic, and ideological decline. The nostalgia of Hatherley's project is for the

⁶ Mike Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism: Aesthetics, Politics, History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 163; Susan Zlotnick, *Women, Writing, and the Industrial Revolution* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 168-69.

⁷ Susan Zlotnick, 'Luddism, Medievalism and Women's History in "Shirley": Charlotte Brontë's Revisionist Tactics', *Novel* 24, no. 3 (1991): 282.

⁸ *Ibid*, 283.

⁹ Clare Broome Saunders, *Women Writers and Nineteenth-Century Medievalism*, *Nineteenth-Century Major Lives and Letters* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 1.

¹⁰ Patrick Wright, *A Journey Through Ruins: The Last Days of London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2009); Lynsey Hanley, *Estates: An Intimate History* (London: Granta Books, 2012); Owen Hatherley, *A New Kind of Bleak: Journeys Through Urban Britain*, 2nd Revised edition edition (London: Verso Books, 2013); John Grindrod, *Concretopia: A Journey Around the Rebuilding of Postwar Britain* (London: Old Street Publishing, 2014).

¹¹ Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2010).

ambitious plans for working-class housing that have never reached fruition. Within fiction, Jeremy Gavron's novel, *An Acre of Barren Ground* (2005) takes Brick Lane as the subject of a dramatization of the histories, neighbourhoods, and memories accrued then forgotten around one London locale.¹² Further to this, Owen Hatherley's recent work, *The Ministry of Nostalgia* (2015), takes as its focus the broader political import of nostalgia's tedious commodification within the often misguided anti-austerity propaganda played out in various forms of popular culture.¹³

As Simon Foxell notes, the blueprint of an ideal London is a long-held fascination for urban designers.¹⁴ In reality, while London has accommodated numerous token gestures towards such projects, the success of modern utopian projects in domestic architecture has been piecemeal. Completed in 1958, Roehampton's Alton Estate, based on Le Corbusier's 'archetypal example of the dreaded Modernist city', *Ville Radieuse*, is a blueprint of urban social reform and structured around a linear design of the human body, and is one of the largest public housing estates in the United Kingdom.¹⁵ Similarly, Robin Hood Gardens, a social housing estate built in 1972, was built in the Brutalist style of 'streets in the sky', a style of architecture characterised by aerial concrete walkways, the success of which has been broadly mooted: 'daringly sculptural...[it] looks like a stronghold, but one can't imagine anyone defending it'.¹⁶ In contrast to these concrete visions of modern urban living, the ideal of a leafy village suburb has retained equal fascination for urban designers, exemplified by the endlessly emulated garden suburb of Bedford Park in West London. Similarly, Edwardian town planning saw the emergence of areas including Hampstead Garden Suburb, a Parliament-sanctioned scheme to create a quiet, low-density residential hedge-lined neighbourhood north of Hampstead. These buildings and locales are notable in their singularity,

¹² Jeremy Gavron, *An Acre of Barren Ground*, (London: Simon & Schuster UK, 2006).

¹³ Owen Hatherley, *The Ministry of Nostalgia: Consuming Austerity* (London: Verso Books, 2015).

¹⁴ Foxell, *Mapping England*, 233.

¹⁵ Colin Fournier, 'Cities on the Edge of Chaos', *Architectural Design* 85, no. 6 (1 November 2015): 132.

¹⁶ Owen Hatherley, *Militant Modernism* (Winchester: O Books, 2008), 26.

proving an exception in ideologies of urban design, rather than the rule. They venerate stark polar opposites of an ideal London aesthetic: the functional, Brutalist concrete of British modernism, and the leafy, heritage-style Metroland of the suburbs. The aesthetic chasm lying between these two forms of urban design accounts for a multitude of styles and ideologies of city-planning: no single ideal of London emerges from the tension between an arch-modernist vision and a conservative, nostalgic ideal. Just as there has been no single, serious challenge to the multi-centeredness of London's aesthetic identity, no single historical image of London has been the sole target of this kind of cultural nostalgia. Indeed, for better or worse, the examples of urban planning cited here are ones that have not avoided fossilization, and have in their own way become static images anchored to a highly specific aesthetic movement and historical era.

While these images could be considered to be decisive failures of progress, or cossetted from social degradation in their exclusivity, they demonstrate a key characteristic in the formulation of urban nostalgia, namely that this sensibility is one born out of the endless, heterogeneous layering of history in the city's landscape. In the mixture of architectural styles, in the shells of buildings and neighbourhoods, in the appropriation of ruins, and in the multiple potentials of urban spaces in various states of ruin, construction, and grandeur, nostalgia, like the orthodoxy of London, is multi-faceted. Just as any attempt to impose a decisive utopic vision of either a modernising or nostalgic plan of London has been a falsehood, so has the target and attention of nostalgia shifted with each age.

The most recent incarnation of this argument is the ongoing saga of the London Garden Bridge, a proposed public garden-cum-pedestrian bridge situated between Blackfriars and Waterloo bridges and linking Temple with the South Bank. The project will 'further cement London's position as the greatest city in the world to live, work and visit,' featuring 2,500m² of 'plants, trees, woodland and meandering walkways' that will 'integrate a new kind of public space into the fabric of the city,

adding to London's rich and diverse horticultural heritage'.¹⁷ The notion of 'horticultural heritage' sits uneasily with reports of planned technological surveillance to enforce prescribed codes of public behaviour on the bridge, creating no so much a sense of futuristic pastoralism, but rather a totalitarian dystopia in which human behaviour is monitored and scrutinised closely to ensure conformity to a standard thought suitably reverential of a faux-rural landmark.¹⁸ The Garden Bridge project may suggest a civic ideal manufactured from the progressive gains of modern engineering and horticulture, while offering a brief bucolic retreat from the very effects of modern industrialism that have made the bridge possible. But the reality may well be an empty icon of nostalgia; a synthetic manifestation of the modern anxiety to acknowledge the failing of urbanisation in gesturing towards the pre-industrial landscape, while trying to ensure modern, civilised behaviour within the precepts strictly defined by metropolitan governance and social mores.

The project has been hindered by mixed political reactions, public controversy, and convoluted bureaucracy, and debate has surged around the projected drain upon public funds the project will cause, as well as the fact that the bridge will be constructed in an area with well-met transport needs, while communities further east lack such easy cross-river access. The Conservative lead of the Greater London Authority described the bridge as 'a white elephant, and it's going to be a white elephant that gets to the point of where it gets built and you can't justify knocking it down', neatly anticipating the future ruin and economic decline of this contested icon of London's modernity.¹⁹ It seems that nostalgia for a vision of London, whether urban, rural, or suburban, will never lose its lustre.

¹⁷ 'General', *Garden Bridge - Introducing London's Iconic New Landmark*, accessed 3 July 2016, <https://www.gardenbridge.london/articles/general>.

¹⁸ Peter Walker, 'London Garden Bridge Users to Have Mobile Phone Signals Tracked', *The Guardian*, 6 November 2015, sec. UK news, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/nov/06/garden-bridge-mobile-phone-signals-tracking-london>.

¹⁹ Peter Walker, 'London's Garden Bridge: Will "Tiara on the Head of Fabulous City" Ever Be Built?', *The Guardian*, 3 January 2016, sec. UK news, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jan/03/london-garden-bridge-will-tiara-on-head-fabulous-city-ever-be-built>.

Figures



Figure 1. George Cruikshank, 'London Going Out of Town, or the March of Bricks and Mortar'. Hand-coloured etching, 1829. British Museum.

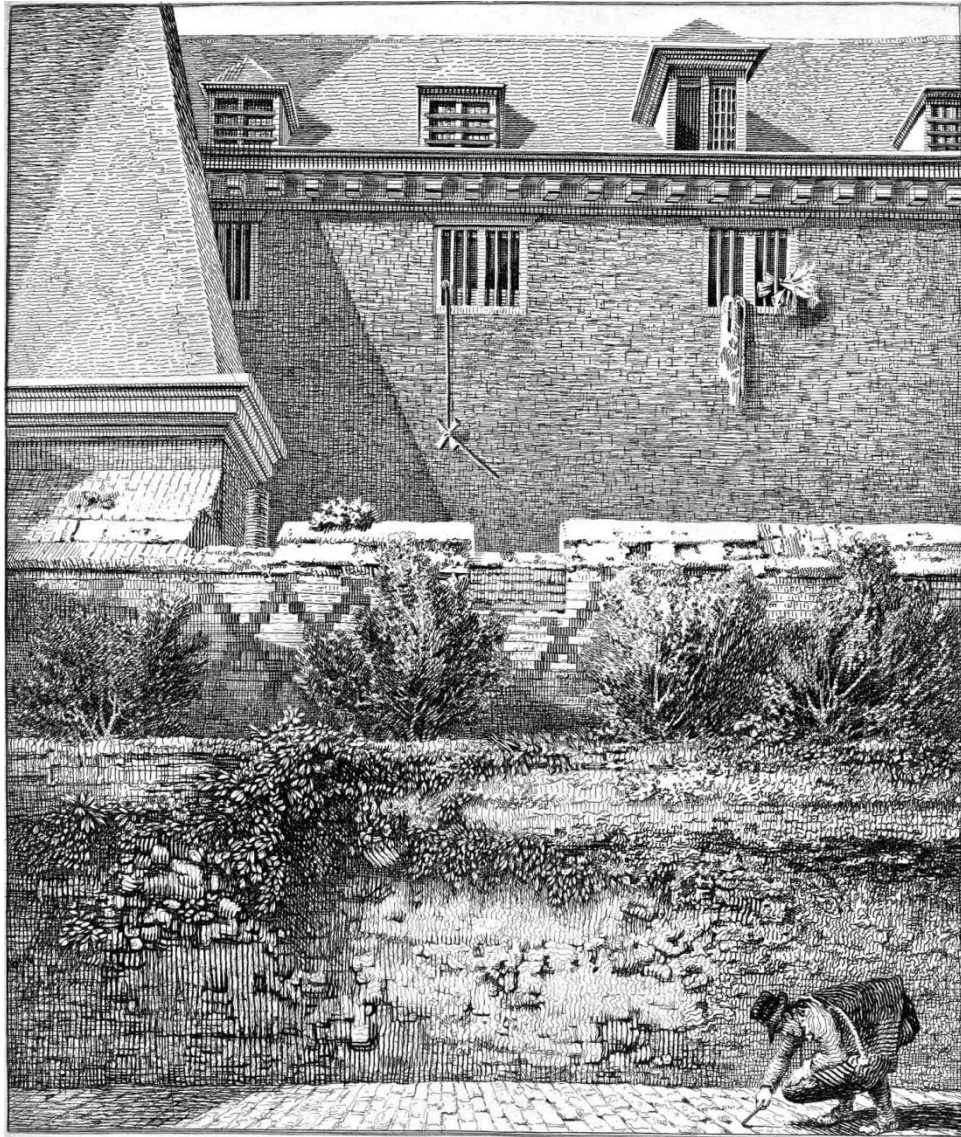


Figure 2. John Thomas Smith, 'Bethlehem Hospital with London Wall in Foreground – Drawn June 1812'. Etching. Bishopsgate Institute.

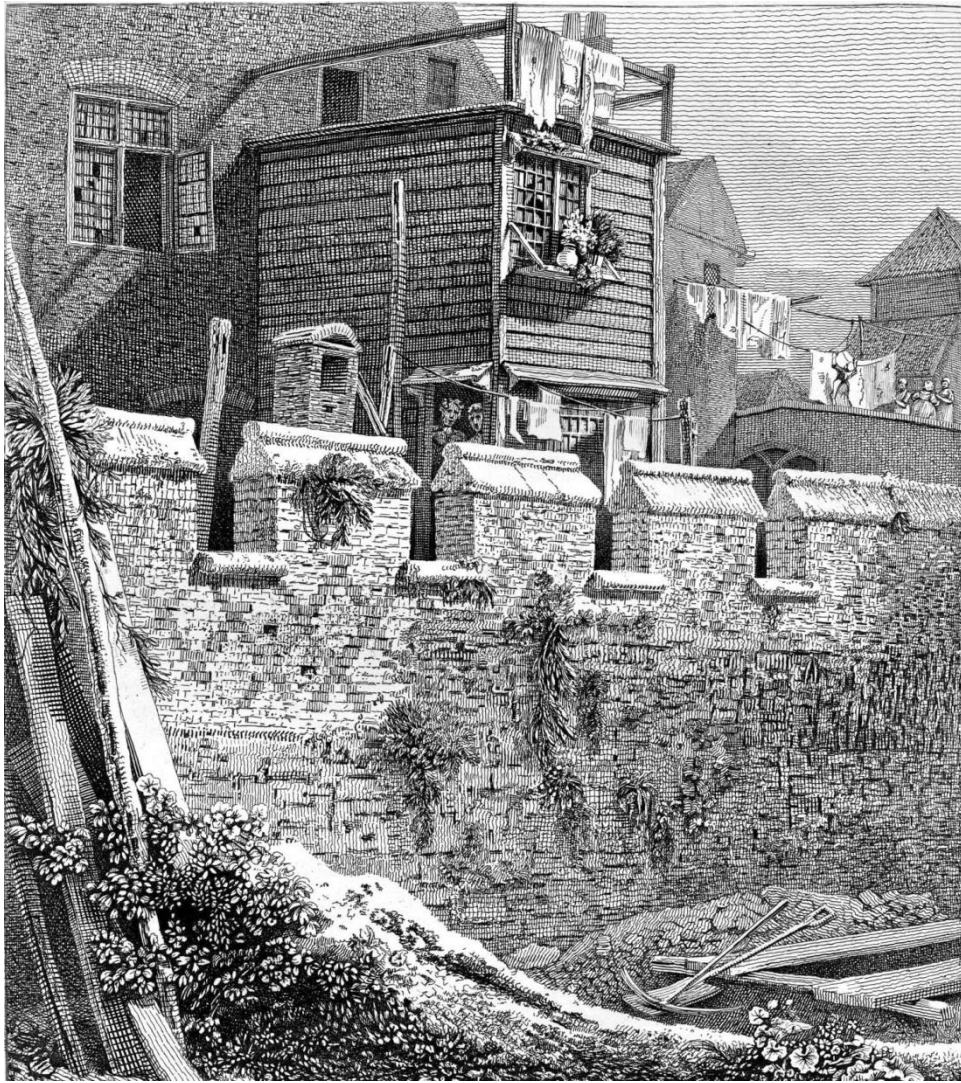


Figure 3. John Thomas Smith, ‘London Wall in Churchyard of St Giles’ Cripplegate – Drawn 1793, Taken Down 1803. Etching. Bishopsgate Institute.

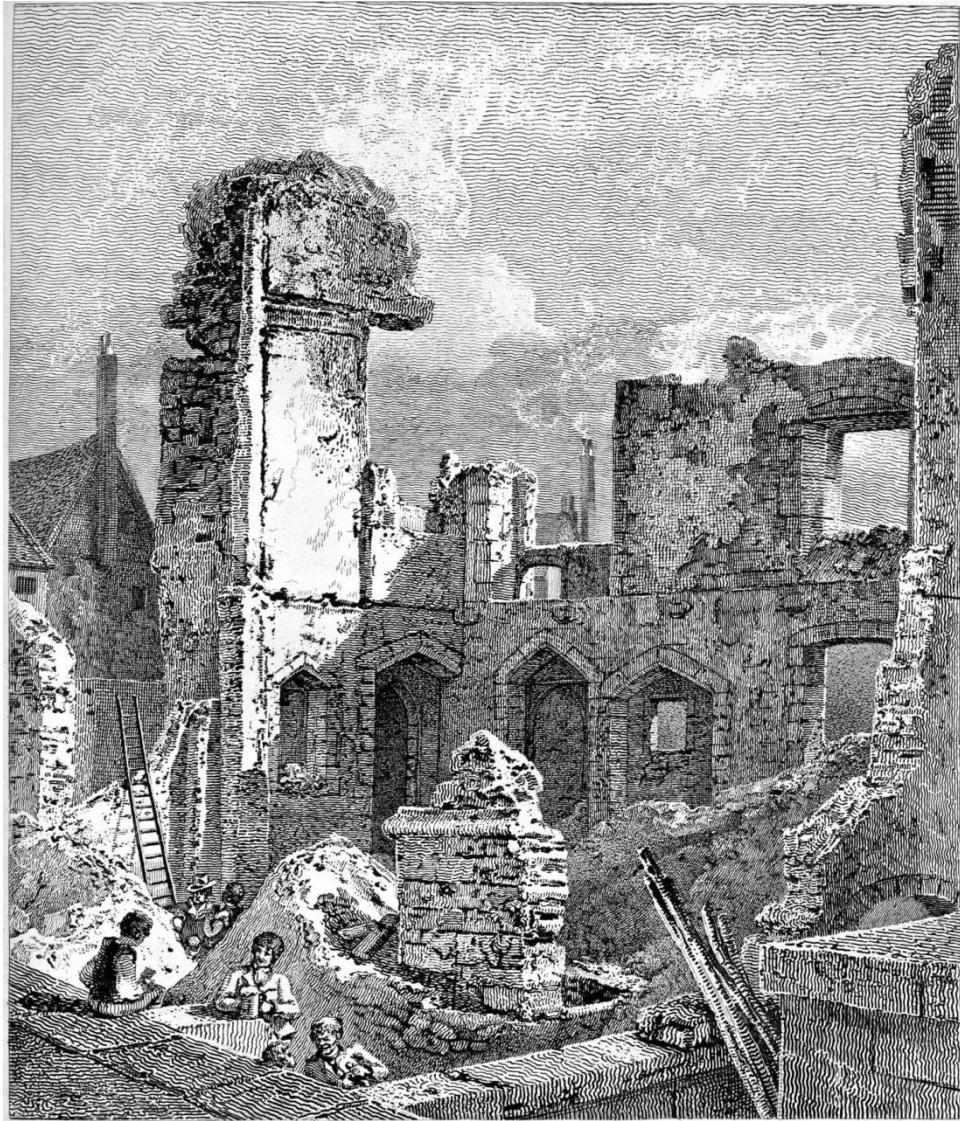


Figure 4. John Thomas Smith, 'Walls of the Convent of St Clare – Drawn April 1797'. Etching. Bishopsgate Institute.

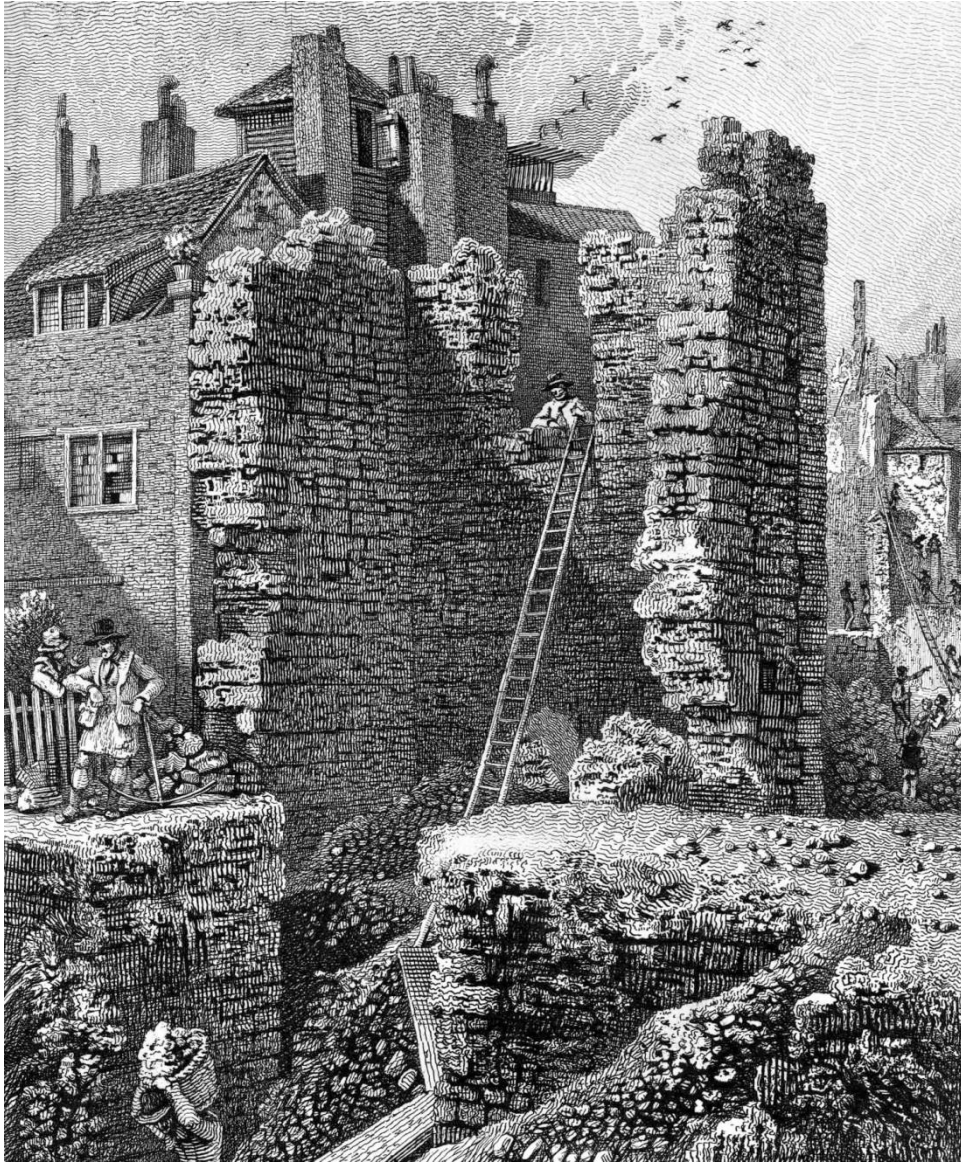


Figure 5. John Thomas Smith, 'Watch Tower Discovered Near Ludgate Hill – Drawn June 1792'.

Etching. Bishopsgate Institute.



Figure 6. Thomas Rowlandson and Dagaty, 'Entrance of Tottenham Court Road Turnpike, with a view of St James's Chapel' 1797, coloured engraving. British Library.



Figure 7. Thomas Rowlandson and Dagaty, 'Entrance from Hackney or Cambridge Heath Turnpike with a distant view of St Pauls' 1797, hand-coloured engraving. British Library.



Figure 8. Paul Sandby, 'Any tripe or neats' feet or calves' feet' 1760, engraving. Bishopsgate Institute.



Figure 9. T.L. Busby, 'Door-Mats' 1820, hand-coloured engraving. Bishopsgate Institute.



Figure 10. Richard Dighton, 'A Contract' 1824, watercolour. Bishopsgate Institute.



Figure 11. Thomas Wheatley, 'Round & Sound, Five Pence a Pound, Duke Cherries' c. 1792-95, coloured engraving. Bishopsgate Institute.



Figure 12. William Craig Marshall, 'Band Boxes', coloured engraving, 1804. Bishopsgate Institute.

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