

PICTURING THE CITY

Photography and the Presence of the Gaze

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is an examination of the ways in which city-life photography can provide insights into the structuring conditions of urban spectatorship during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To this end, the thesis will involve a survey of some of the uses of photography in the representation various cities during this period. However, the aim of this survey is not simply to collate a range of 'images of the city'. Instead, the central theme of this work is a discussion of the ways in which photography structures our perception.

Fundamental to this discussion is a reformulation of what constitutes a photographic archive. It is as a means to redefining this archive that the notion of the gaze which will be employed to refer both to structures of subjectivity and vision and to particular regimes of representation. As a consequence of this reading, the archive will not be defined in terms of individual photographers, styles or genres. Instead, it will be read as a structure of repetition and displacement, of identity and difference: in short, as a system of signification which both offers and denies positions of security, knowledge and pleasure to the viewer.

As a means of pursuing this reappraisal of the archive the thesis will be organised around a series of readings of texts from post-structuralist and psychoanalytical theory as well as from critical commentaries on urbanism, modernity and social space. Following from these readings will be an analysis of photographs with reference to the intersection of the psychical and the social which will not be cited as two distinct registers of experience but will instead be seen as being mutually inflected. It is within this theoretical framework that photographs will be viewed as images which both summon and disrupt the presence (as stable identity) of the viewer and the presence (as unmediated literal transcription) of the objects and scenes which they represent.

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*The camera introduces us to an unconscious optics,
as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses.*

Walter Benjamin

Introduction

CITY, SPACE, PHOTOGRAPHY

*Our relationship to the past is now a spatial one*¹

Put in its most summary form, the subject of this thesis is the relation between photography and the representation of various cities and of particular aspects of metropolitan life and experience within them during the second half of the nineteenth century. Focusing largely on British cities but also, to a lesser extent, on Paris and New York, the broad topic of this study is the relationship between the applications of photography and the growth and transformations of cities during this period. This terrain can, however, be pinned down further in that the central concern of this work is an examination of photography with reference to what might be called the perceptual structures of urban subjectivity: in other words, how might photographs be read as images which potentially give us access to the conditions of urban spectatorship during the latter nineteenth century.

Cognitive maps

A useful starting point for an introductory discussion of some of the concerns of this thesis is Frederic Jameson's essay, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", in which he cites space as a fundamental site of ideological and cultural production. As part of this essay Jameson argues that the:

latest mutation in space - postmodern hyperspace - has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and to cognitively map its position in a mappable external world...this alarming disjunction point between the body and its built environment...can stand as a symbol and analogue of that even sharper dilemma which is the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects.²

As a means of overcoming this dislocation between the subject and its environment, Jameson calls for "an aesthetic of cognitive mapping". Of this he writes:

the conception of space that has been developed here suggests [that] a model of political culture appropriate to our own situation will have to raise spatial issues as its fundamental organising

¹ Anders Stephanson, "Regarding Postmodernism - A Conversation with Frederic Jameson", *Social Text*, 7, 3, Winter 1988, p. 6.

² "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", *New Left Review*, 146, 1984, pp. 83-4.

concern. I will therefore provisionally define the aesthetic of such a new (and hypothetically) cultural form as an aesthetic of cognitive mapping.³

Jameson then explains what this "cognitive mapping" would involve

In a classic work, *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch taught us that the alienated city is above all a space in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own position or the urban totality in which they find themselves: grids such as those of New Jersey, in which none of the traditional markers (monuments, nodes, natural boundaries, built perspectives) obtain, are the most obvious examples. Disalienation in the traditional city, then, involves the practical reconquest of a sense of place, and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in the memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories.⁴

Remarking that Lynch's work was addressed only to the "problems of the city", Jameson argues that it also "becomes extraordinarily suggestive when projected outwards at some of the larger national and global spaces."⁵

Despite the criticisms that might be levelled against Jameson's somewhat Lukácsian framework in, for instance, his demand for new and disalienating urban spaces, his essay does signal some important issues which shall also be my concern here. Firstly, he points to the fundamental significance of space within socio-cultural production and experience, coupled with an emphasis upon the historicity of spatial formations. Furthermore, Jameson addresses the question of the relation between space and perception in the positioning and, if only implicitly perhaps, the construction of the individual subject. Allied to this are questions concerning possible ways of describing space by reference to theories of representation. Finally, Jameson's essay raises the question of whether the city and, indeed, society itself can be perceived as a totality and what might be the structuring role of representation within such perceptions.

These are of course complex issues and cannot be satisfactorily dealt with solely in abstract terms. But, before turning to the specific question of photography, it would be useful to refer briefly to the text which Jameson himself cites as a precedent for his own analysis - Lynch's *The Image of the City*. For, despite its limitations, this text does nonetheless provide a useful framework and vocabulary for examining the question of representation and the city. More specifically, however, while my aim here is in fact to retain much of Lynch's terminology, I wish also to utilise it within a theoretical framework altogether different from his own.

³ *ibid.*, p. 89

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*

Arguing that the city is "a construction in space", Lynch defines it in terms of the associations, memories and meanings which it evokes for the citizens within it. Moreover, describing the city in terms of both its "moving elements" and its "stationary physical parts", Lynch also observes that "We are not simply observers of this spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it, on the stage with the other participants." ⁶ Essentially Lynch's focus is on the "mental image" of the city" which he defines in terms of its "the apparent clarity" or "legibility". This latter quality is specified in terms of:

the ease with which its parts can be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern.....a legible city would be one whose districts or landmarks or pathways are easily identifiable and are easily grouped in to an over-all pattern...To understand this, we must consider not just the city as a thing in itself, but the city being perceived by its inhabitants. ⁷

The apprehension of this legibility by the city's inhabitants is achieved by means of their abilities at "structuring and identifying the environment" by means of their "techniques of orientation" and in terms of their "consistent use and organization of definite sensory cues from the external environment." For Lynch, however, this ability to orientate oneself within the city has more than a merely functional application in that:

The need to recognize and pattern our surroundings is so crucial, and has such long roots in the past, that this image has wide practical and emotional importance to the individual.....a clear image enables one to move about both easily and quickly...But an ordered environment can do more than this; it may serve as a broad frame of reference, an organizer of activity or belief or knowledge...A clear image of the surroundings is thus a useful basis for individual growth.⁸

Not only does a "vivid and integrated physical settingfurnish the raw material for the symbols and collective memories of the group" but a "good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security."⁹

But, while not condemning the "visual chaos" of the modern city and while also acknowledging that "there is some value in mystification, labyrinth, or surprise in the environment", Lynch argues that this should occur "only under two conditions":

First, there must be no danger of losing basic form or orientation, of never coming out. The surprise must occur in an over-all framework; the confusions must be small regions in a visible whole. Furthermore, the labyrinth or mystery must in itself have some form that can be explored and in time be apprehended. Complete chaos without hint of connection is never pleasurable.¹⁰

These observations lead Lynch to "point to an important qualification" in that the

⁶*The Image of the City*, Cambridge Mass. and London, The M.I.T. Press, 1960, p. 2.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

"observer himself should play an active role in perceiving the world and should have an active part in developing his image". As such: "Environmental images are the result of a two-way process between the observer and his environment. The environment suggests distinctions and relations, and the observer - with great adaptability and in the light of his own purposes - selects, organizes and endows with meaning what he sees." ¹¹

Claiming, then, that "the coherence of the image may arise in several ways", Lynch refers to the use of "systems of orientation" and the organization of the world "around a set of focal points". But more specifically, he claims that "For the most part these examples seem to echo...the formal types of the image elements into which we can conveniently divide the city image: path, landmark, edge, node, and district."¹² It is around these features that Lynch argues that an "environmental image may be analyzed into three components; identity, structure, and meaning."¹³ Lynch then further defines the "value for orientation" of the city image in terms of a map which "must be readable". Moreover, extending the metaphor, Lynch continues that: "The image should preferably be open-ended, adaptable to change, allowing the individual to continue to investigate and organize reality: there should be blank spaces where he can extend the drawing for himself." ¹⁴ It is this aspect of the urban image which Lynch calls its "imageability", in other words "that quality in a physical object which gives it a higher probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer.....which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment" ¹⁵ and which is itself symptomatic of "the need for identity and structure in our perceptual world." ¹⁶

Various criticisms can be made of Lynch's model of "cognitive mapping". The most significant of these for the present context can be briefly summarised as follows. Firstly, Lynch defines the city solely in terms of its physical form which

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹³ Thus, for example, "a workable image requires first the identification of an object...its recognition as a separable entity...Second, the image must include the spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects. Finally, this object must have some meaning for the observer, whether practical or emotional. Meaning is also a relation, but quite a different one from a spatial or pattern relation." (p. 8)

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 10

itself can be further reduced to just five basic features: path, landmark, edge, node, and district. Moreover, defined in somewhat limited terms of usage and function, these features are ultimately divorced from any social or symbolic meaning. Secondly, perception is defined as the perceptual knowledge of physical form which is itself known only through patterns of recognition and identification. Urban physical form thus functions as the support, prop or cue for the appropriate behavioural response from the individual. Allied to this, not only does Lynch posit an essentially *re*-active urban spectator, but urban space becomes solely an object of cognition or picturing by a monadic, asocial subject. This rational and calculating subject (i.e. a subject of perceptual judgments) is itself the construct of a behaviourist narrative of the individual's adaptation to its external surroundings - a model both produced, and then subsequently reinforced by, Lynch's own "methodological individualism"¹⁷ which is itself largely premised upon the measurement of intra-subjective judgments. In effect, the 'meanings' of the city are reduced to being the epiphenomena of the individual's mental cognition. Not only is this model unable to move from the individual to the larger social group - from the micro to the macro - but this account ignores the question of representation, in other words, not only of how the meanings of urban space are constantly reproduced and circulated but also what the terms of this production might be.

For Jameson, however, Lynch's work does explicitly foreground important questions concerning representation:

Nor should it be too hastily assumed that his [Lynch's] model - while it clearly raises very central issues of representation as such - is in any way easily vitiated by the conventional post-structuralist critiques of the 'ideology of representation' or mimesis. The cognitive map is not exactly mimetic, in that older sense; indeed, the theoretical issues it poses allow us to renew the analysis of representation on a higher and more complex level.¹⁸

But while, undoubtedly, a notion of representation is necessarily implicit within, for example, the concept of mental mapping and within the individual's cognitive schema, what is missing or, rather, what was more likely simply unavailable to Lynch, was the notion of signification - at least in a non-Piercian sense. For, by using such a model of signification, one can argue that Lynch's essentially topological account of urban space does not go beyond the level of denotation (i.e. of recognition and identification). Moreover, employing a binary subject/object division, Lynch reads urban space as a physical space which exists independently

¹⁷ This term is used by M. Gottdiener and Alexandros Ph. Lagopoulos in their Introduction to *The City and the Sign, An Introduction to Urban Semiotics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1986, p.7.

¹⁸ "Postmodernism , or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism", op. cit., p. 89.

of the conditions of its perception by a discrete, stable observer who is in turn independent of any determining environment. In this sense, physical space or form exists as an inert 'container' for the urban spectator's progress through the city.

Space, presence and photography

For Lynch, urban space is both unitary and static. And, rather than being in part an effect of representation, it exists in an a priori dimension outside of social practices. As such, any disruption of that space or, more precisely, of its legibility is defined solely in terms of the physical absence of those traditional markers for recognition. My point, however, is not to jettison Lynch's terminology but instead to relocate the notion of mental mapping both within processes of signification and within the shifting structures of perception. As a means of doing this, the business of this thesis will be to employ various aspects of those "conventional post-structuralist critiques of the 'ideology of representation' and mimesis" that Jameson would appear to disparage.

However, before moving on to this, the relationship between space and social practices or what might be described as "social space" - a term also used by Jameson - requires some brief explanation with reference to the notion of representation. One of the most useful descriptions of social space is that which is provided in the work of the social geographer David Harvey and most notably perhaps in his *Social Justice and the City*. Here, arguing against the methodological separation of physical space and social practices, Harvey claims that "spatial form and social process are different ways of describing the same thing."¹⁹ For this purpose, he argues that:

Each form of social activity defines its space; there is no evidence that such spaces are Euclidean or even that they are remotely similar to each other. From this we have the geographer's concept of socio-economic space, the psychologist's and anthropologist's concept of "personal space" and so on. A primary need, if we are to understand the spatial form of the city, therefore, is the articulation of an adequate philosophy of social space. Insofar as we can only understand social space by reference to some social activity, we are forced to attempt an integration of sociological and geographical imagination.²⁰

Fundamental, however, to Harvey's account is his assertion that "social space is not isomorphic with physical space".²¹ Thus, while arguing that "Euclidean geometry is the relevant geometry for discussing the organization of objects in

¹⁹ *Social Justice and the City*, London, Edward Arnold, 1973, p. 26.

²⁰ *ibid.* p. 30

²¹ *ibid.* p. 29.

physical space", Harvey claims that this form of geometry cannot of itself provide a wholly sufficient description of social space. Given this, Harvey implicitly argues for an asymmetrical relation between physical space and its perception: a relation which he describes as "some structural isomorphism between the geometry used and the particular perceptual experience or set of experiences under analysis."²²

The notion of an asymmetry within perception will be a central theme throughout this thesis. For Harvey specifically, this isomorphism is one between a measurable and calculable physical space as distinct from social space which he describes as being:

made up of a complex of individual feelings and images about and reactions towards the spatial symbolism that surrounds that individual. Each person it seems lives in his own personally constructed web of spatial relationships, contained, as it were in his own geometric system.²³

This is not to argue, however, for an account of space which turns solely upon the subjective relativism of a myriad of individual perceptions for:

it seems reasonable to adopt as a working hypothesis the view that individuals possess some proportion (as yet undetermined) of "common image" derived from some group norms.....and a proportion of "unique image" which is highly idiosyncratic and unpredictable. It is the common part of the spatial image with which we must first concern ourselves, if we are to squeeze out some details of the real nature of social space.²⁴

In effect, while arguing that "if we are to build an analytically tractable theory of spatial form, we must eventually resort for formal geometry", a description of social space requires the use of "a more continuous geometry" for, above all:

we have to conclude that social space is complex, non-homogeneous, perhaps discontinuous, and almost certainly different from the physical space in which the engineer and the planner typically work.²⁵

This description of space will be axiomatic for much of my discussion of photography. Indeed, from the start I shall argue for an instability of effect even within the apparently absolute realm of Euclidean geometry. This instability, however, needs to be located as an effect of representation. The notion of representation is one which Harvey himself uses to illustrate the disjunction between physical and social space in that he differentiates between a description of space premised upon "physical principles" as opposed to one structured according to "aesthetic ones". Summarising the arguments of Susanne Langer, Harvey observes that, "the space in which we have our physical being is a system of

²² *ibid.*

²³ *ibid.*, p. 34

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 35.

relationships whereas the space of art is a created space built out of forms, colours and so on. Thus the visual space defined by a painting is essentially an illusion." ²⁶

Two aspects of this distinction are pertinent here. Firstly, Harvey posits a lack of congruity between physical space and the representation of that space in that the latter is ordered and intentional - or, at least, is supposedly so. Clearly this division has implications for the belief that photographs themselves transcriptively reproduce the external world. As distinct from this belief, however, photographs need to be situated within the realm of social space. Secondly, and allied to this, Harvey also appears to be drawing a distinction from aesthetics between the direct perception of physical space and the intentional and illusory (or "virtual") spaces of images or representations. A distinction is thus made between a direct and unmediated perception which takes as its object physical space - a mode of perception which, like that space itself, can be both measured and quantified within behavioural schema - as distinct from representational space which is in some sense always mediated: most obviously, for example, by its various conventions.

In many ways of course this distinction between disparate cognitive forms (to remain for the moment within the language of these accounts) has some validity, but any rigid separation between the two has its limitations. Not only is perception itself always encoded and structured by existing schema - as demonstrated in Lynch's own work - but arguably even geometry itself is no more than a sophisticated representation in that it, too, is a set of culturally specific conventions. But this aside, my point here is that while a separation between seeing and representing objects has much pertinence with reference, for instance, to painting, the situation with photography is altogether less clear-cut. For if a photograph cannot be read in the same way as a painting or drawing it is in part because of the different investments that are made around each of them. For while each process involves codes and conventions, certain beliefs or assumptions are brought to photography that do not apply so readily to painting.

To put it crudely, photographs are posited as being literal records of perception which possess an innate connection with what they depict as opposed to their being read as unmotivated or arbitrary representations. It is in this sense that I shall be citing photography as a paradigmatic example of a logocentric regime of representation in that photography was, and still is, posited as a form of representation which comes closest to being a physical trace of the act of perception

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 31.

itself.²⁷ Nor is it my immediate concern to argue for the falsity of this belief. For while important work has been produced which exposes the naturalist or realist pretensions of both photography and film (in part through a dismantling of the "classic realist text"), it is also the case that an analysis of photographs premised solely upon treating them as texts, while useful, is not altogether adequate and in many ways misses out on what is specific to photography or, rather, what in part marks its difference from other forms of image production. In short, this belief in this innate connection between photography and its objects cannot be readily dismissed. Instead, what needs to be examined is how this belief organises and

²⁷ The belief in the status of the photograph as an unmediated copy or substitute for actual objects is evident from the earliest accounts of photography. Thus, for example, a notion of photography as a literal re-presentation of a palpable presence whereby objects or people effectively 'drew' or imprinted themselves on the paper or plate (thereby effacing the distinction between original and copy) is operative in Fox Talbot's account of his own photography, i.e.: "the object which would take the most skillful artist days or weeks of labour to trace or to copy, is effected by the boundless powers of natural chemistry in the space of a few seconds...To give an idea of the degree of accuracy with which some objects can be illustrated by this process, I need only mention one instance. Upon one occasion, having made an image of a piece of lace of an elaborate pattern, I showed it to some persons at the distance of a few feet, with the inquiry, whether it was a good representation? when the reply was, That they were not to be so easily deceived, for it was evidently no picture, but the piece of lace itself," ("Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing" (1839) in *Photography in Print: Writings from 1816 to the Present*, ed. Vicki Goldberg, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1981, p. 39). Talbot also recounts how his experimentation in photography was partly initiated by his speculation as to "whether it might be possible to cause the image to impress itself upon the paper, and thus let Nature substitute her own inestimable pencil, for the imperfect, tedious, and almost hopeless attempt at copying a subject so intricate" (ibid., p. 43), while he also remarks upon his making of "a great number of representation of my house in the country...[that] this building [is] I believe the first that was ever known to have drawn its own picture" (ibid., p. 46). Similarly, in 1840, Edgar Allen Poe wrote: "if we imagine the distinctiveness with which an object is reflected in a perfectly polished mirror, we come as near the reality as by any other means. For, in truth, the Daguerreotypied plate is *infinitely* (we use the term advisedly) more accurate in its representation than any painting by human hand...the closest scrutiny of the photogenic drawing discloses only a more absolute truth, a more perfect identity of aspect with the thing represented. The variation of shading and the gradations of both linear and aerial perspective are those of truth itself in the supremeness of its perfection" ("The Daguerreotype", reprinted in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, New Haven, Leete's Island Books, 1980, p. 38). For Samuel Morse, daguerreotypes were "painted by Nature's self with a minuteness of detail, which the pencil of light in her hands alone can trace...they cannot be called copies of nature, but portions of nature herself" (letter of 1840 quoted in Richard Rudishill, *Mirror Image: The Influence of the Daguerreotype on American Society*, Albuquerque, 1971, p. 57). This line of thinking reached its apogee in Oliver Wendell Holmes's description in 1859 of how the Daguerreotype "has fixed the most fleeting of our illusions, that which the apostles and the philosopher and the poet have alike used as the type of instability and unreality. The photograph has completed the triumph, by making a sheet of paper reflect images like a mirror and hold them as a picture...[this] invention of the mirror with a memory" ("The Stereoscope and the Stereograph", in *Photography in Print*, op.cit., p. 101). Photography, Holmes argued, would eventually be able to supply a copy of everything, a universal "currency" of equivalence between the photographic sign and "objects of nature", i.e. "There is only one Coliseum or Pantheon; but how many millions of potential negatives have they shed - representatives of billions of pictures - since they were erected!...Every conceivable object of Nature and Art will soon scale off its surface for us. Men will hunt all curious, beautiful and grand objects...for their *skins*...The consequence of this will soon be such a huge collection of forms that they will have to be classified and arranged in vast libraries, as books are now. The time will come when a man who wishes to see any object, natural or artificial, will go the Imperial, National or City Stereographic Library and call for its skin or form, as he would for a book at any common library, where all men can find the special forms they particularly desire to see...And as a means of facilitating the formation of public and private stereographic libraries, there must be arranged a comprehensive system of exchanges, so that there may grow up something like a universal currency of these bank notes, or promises to pay in solid substance, which the sun has engraved for the great Bank of Nature" (ibid., pp. 112-113).

conditions the ways in which we might look at and use photographs particularly within the context of historical enquiry.

An initial exposition of the logocentrism within photography can be gleaned from Jacques Derrida's description of what he has called "the phonocentric necessity: the privilege of the voice over writing" in his statement that:

The priority of spoken language over written or silent language stems from the fact that when words are spoken the speaker and the listener are supposed to be simultaneously present to each other; they are supposed to be the same, pure unmediated presence. This ideal of perfect self-presence, of the immediate possession of meaning, is what is expressed by the phonocentric necessity. Writing, on the other hand, is considered subversive in so far as it creates a spatial and temporal distance between the author and the audience; writing presupposes the absence of the author and so we can never be exactly sure what is meant by a written text; it can have many different meanings as opposed to a single unifying one.²⁸

By substituting vision for voice, perception for phonocentrism and representation for writing, much of Derrida's account has a bearing on photography in that it too, like speech, is posited as being the site of an authentic and unmediated self-presence (as image) which is identical with the real. Photography in this sense stands, like logocentrism, as a 'metaphysical' project committed to a desire for presence secured through a direct and unmediated knowledge of the real. Within this project, the guarantee of immediate access with the real is the "transcendental signified"²⁹ which, as a fixed point of contact, exists above the play of textuality (or representation). However, with photography there is something of a reversal of Derrida's account with reference to the role of spatial distance (although his remarks remain pertinent in terms of the authorship of photographs) in that much of my concern in what follows is to argue that, with photography, it is precisely this distancing which operates as the guarantee of both coherent meaning and spectatorial security while it is proximity which can provoke a crisis of meaning and threaten the stability and coherence of the perceiving subject.

But while photography can be framed as being premised upon logocentric notions of presence (as both perception and transcription), I would also want to argue for a mobility or undecidability of the photographic image within this regime of presence in that, at the level of our common assumptions at least, photographs oscillate between the two registers of direct perception and coded representation.

²⁸ "Deconstruction and its other" in Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with contemporary continental thinkers, the phenomenological heritage*, Manchester University Press, 1984, pp. 115-116.

²⁹ For perhaps the best introduction to Derrida's critique of logocentrism and the "transcendental signified", see "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, espec. pp. 278-282.

Indeed, it is this undecidability or oscillation which is in part the source of their specificity - and fascination.

However, the positing of the undecidability of photography is not in any sense synonymous with a return to a belief in the self-evidence of the photographic image. But what I would argue for here is a notion of a psychical reality in terms, for example, of the structures of perception and the nature of the spectator's investment in the image. However, this psychical reality is not reducible to a positivist framework of truth and falsity - a framework which arguably is still operative in those analyses of the "classic realist text".

But before discussing further the implications of a critique of logocentrism for an analysis of photography, it is worth recapping on what the various accounts of spatiality that I shall be using in this thesis might offer a history of photography - as well as indicating what their limitations might be. For, as opposed to the ascription of a status of self-evidence to photography, the aim of this thesis is to construct a series of frameworks around photography. Indeed, it is precisely because there is no stable or inherent meaning in photographs that it becomes necessary to construct such a series of frameworks or models within which photographs can then be situated. It is in this sense that one might cite Brecht's observation that:

less than ever does the mere reflection of reality tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or AEG tells us next to nothing about these institutions. Actual reality has slipped into the functional. The reification of human relations - the factory, say - means that they are no longer explicit. So something must in fact be *built up*, something artificial, posed.³⁰

Not only do accounts of social space in part provide such a framework (of "something...[to] be built up") with reference to city-life photography but as Harvey himself observes with reference to his own methodological procedures:

the only adequate conceptual framework for understanding the city is one which encompasses and builds upon both the sociological and geographical imaginations...We need, above all, to formulate concepts which allow us to harmonize and integrate strategies to deal with the intricacies of social processes and the elements of spatial form.³¹

It is this formulation of concepts and the construction of frameworks which will be much of my concern. More specifically, the necessity of looking at photographs in terms of spatiality can be located at both a polemical and at a practical level. Above all, it provides a means of overcoming or, rather, of making redundant the traditional art historical models and narratives that are increasingly being imposed

³⁰ Quoted by Walter Benjamin, "A Small History of Photography" in *One-Way Street*, trans., Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, NLB, 1979, p. 255..

³¹ *Social Justice and the City*, op. cit., p. 27.

upon photography and in particular upon the photography of the nineteenth century.

For as the history of photography gains some recognition, albeit still limited, it is at the price of its being contained within the paradigm of authorship which is most readily apparent in the notion of the distinctive style - the personal or 'unique eye' approach. And, even more so perhaps than with the history of art itself, photography remains framed within narratives of origins and descent (i.e. the endless debates on who constituted the founding fathers of photography), while analyses of individual photographs remain couched in terms of formalist descriptions. Furthermore, just as the history of photography moves back and forth between a narrative of a technical evolution (most usually in the form of the 'first use') and those narratives derived from the history of art, so too, it repetitively addresses itself to resolving the pseudo-debate as to whether photography's essential identity is either scientific or artistic, i.e. between its being an objective or expressive medium.

Yet, if photography has any form of identity, it is a parasitic one in that it is defined by discourses and institutions outside of itself. This important line of argument has already been productively broached within recent photographic history, perhaps most notably in the work of John Tagg and Allan Sekula.³² But while this work has transformed what might constitute both photography and its social history, this re-evaluation remains largely marginalised and the history of photography continues for the most part to follow well-worn and increasingly unyielding paths. For the moment I wish merely to point out two major consequences which result from the continued use of these traditional historical models. The most obvious consequence is the almost total exclusion of the vast bulk of photographic production since it does not lend itself to being readily framed within the paradigms of authorship, style or genre. As much photography is anonymous or at best institutional (especially in the nineteenth century) it falls beneath what Michel Foucault has called "the threshold of description" ³³ or, in this case, even of recognition. Moreover, as much photography is repetitive,

³² See John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation, essays on photographs and histories*, Macmillan, 1988, espec. the Introduction and Allan Sekula, *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works*, Halifax, The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984. I have discussed the value and limitations of Tagg's approach in relation to the traditional history of photography in "The Subject of Photography", *Oxford Art Journal*, 12, 2, 1989.

³³*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979, p. 191.

unarresting and mundane, it is deemed unworthy of historical enquiry. Yet this judgment should not be taken as a statement of fact but is instead a consequence of the limited terms operative within photographic history itself. It is in this sense that the ways of reading photographs that shall be developed here are a means to recouping and making visible photographs that have been neglected because they may not have an author or because they do not fit into the modernist paradigm of stylistic innovation.

However, there is another aspect to this which goes beyond the practical necessity of retrieving hitherto neglected images. For the major criticism that can be levelled against much photographic history, or what passes for it, is that in fact it usually says very little about photographs themselves. When the specific question of pictorial meaning is addressed it is often in somewhat haphazard terms which reflect the confusions within those paradigms which motivate and frame such commentaries.

But, beyond this, a fundamental contradiction arises between the assumptions of photographic history and the inadequacy of what it is actually able to say about individual photographs. For, on the one hand, the sheer impoverishment of photographic history when it comes to discussing photographic meaning is an effect of a belief in the self-evidence of photographs. By this I mean that historical commentaries have a merely tautological function in that the text often simply describes what is in the photograph. In this sense the text is no more than an inventory of pictorial referents. However, this paucity of analysis can be read another way in that it is symptomatic of the lack of any self-evident meaning in photographs just as pictorial meaning and effect cannot be accounted for by a catalogue of subject-matter. Thus, although working from the premise that photographs are essentially transparent and hence readily legible images, historical discourse is unable to say anything about photographs beyond the banally obvious. Not only, then, does photographic history have very little to say about photographs themselves (beyond the anecdotal) but what is usually presented is a series of tangential details and narratives.

It is as a means to viewing photographs in terms of the production and circulation of representations that theoretical accounts of social space can here be employed. To this end it is necessary to outline various spatial models of the city and to examine their inter-relation. Such models of the city might include, for

example, descriptions of the city as a formal spatial pattern or as a physical environment or might also take the form of a description of the specific spatial orderings of individual cities in terms of zones, districts, urban centres, traffic systems etc. The city can also be seen as an organism or body as, for instance, within hygienist, medical and environmental discourses. An economic model would perhaps see the city as the space of the circulation, consumption and exchange of commodities, surplus value and labour. Another account, and one which will be central here, is to view the city as the space of social encounter.

Clearly, such models are not exhaustive. Moreover, they need to be seen as being layered upon each other. However, despite the importance of citing them, it is not my concern to describe these spatial accounts of the city in any great theoretical detail. Rather, they will be implicit throughout my discussion. But the important point to stress here is that these various models are themselves representations. Furthermore, they draw attention to the spatial dimension within other representation of the city such as those produced through demographic surveys, statistical profiles, social investigations and, of course, photography.

It is this spatial dimension which allows for connections to be made between these diverse models of the city and analytical descriptions of space. Such descriptions could include the defining of spatiality in terms, for example, of social, created and absolute space. Other obvious spatial categories which suggest themselves are the division between public and private or an account of space as a register of social distance. It is in order to describe and account for these spaces that a particular vocabulary is needed, a vocabulary which would, for instance, describe space as homogeneous, fragmented or hierarchical and which could describe the structuring of space in terms grids, maps, zones, territories, centres and margins. Finally, from such descriptions one can begin to read photographs in terms of strategies and effects of representation (as distinct from intrinsic meanings) such as emplacement, or exclusion and inclusion, and in terms of the construction of lines of vision and visibility across the city's spaces.

It is these descriptions of the city as a spatial entity which very much structure the first half of this thesis - but most notably in Chapter 2. In particular they would seem to provide a means of thinking about urban space and representation which avoids reducing space to being either inert or else as being the prop for modes of perceptual experience and consciousness (as in *The Image of the City*). But having

said this, however, and despite the sophistication of these analyses of urban space, there is a danger perhaps of returning to a recurrent position within historical narratives of photography whereby the photographs cited ultimately function as no more than illustrations of social processes or events. What crucially needs to be addressed is not only the question of representation - the production of meanings for the city - and the ways in which these representations are themselves referable to other representations and social practices, but the positioning of the viewer or spectator in relation to these images. In short, there can be no space without subjects. But while this claim need not entail the re-installation of the notion of an autonomous subject, I wish also to avoid the danger of evacuating altogether the category of the subject or of simply presenting it as no more than a prop for extrinsic processes. What is needed, then, is a bridge between the discrete, monadic consciousness of phenomenology and the over-abstracted and generalised subject of, for example, structural Marxism (or, one might add, of Lacanian psychoanalysis).

The beginnings of a delineation of some of the features of what might be called an urban subjectivity - and, in particular, the psychical life of such a subject - can in part be formed from accounts offered by urban sociology. While the aim of many of these accounts has been to produce a static and normative urban "type", some of the phenomena which these accounts outline are nonetheless pertinent here. Within this sociology of the city perhaps the first systematic attempt to provide a description of the psychical structures of an urban subject is that which is provided by Georg Simmel in his essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life" written at the turn of the century. The special significance of Simmel for the present context is his attempt to link the psychical with the particular spatial organisation of the city. As one commentator has remarked:

Simmel's account of *modernité* [is] located in specific spatial configurations. Simmel was the first sociologist to reveal explicitly the social significance of spatial contexts for human interaction...no other theorist was so preoccupied with social distance, with detachment from reality, with 'the intersection of social circles' as was Simmel.³⁴

A number of connected features within Simmel's description of the urban subject of modernity will be relevant throughout this thesis. Among these are his emphasis upon the primacy of perceptual experience within the city and, as part of this, the determining effects of distance and proximity in structuring the forms of social encounter and experience available within it. This can be described more precisely

³⁴ David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1985, p.71.

in terms of what Simmel cites as "the intensification of nervous stimulation" as an aspect of urban existence and, with it, the threat of the obliteration of autonomous selfhood.

Arguing from the premise that "the deepest problems of modern life derive from the claim of the individual to preserve the autonomy and individuality of his existence",³⁵ Simmel describes an essentially defensive urban type who adopts a number of strategies which aim to protect the individual from the perceptual onslaught of metropolitan life and to preserve identity from "those relations to others...[which] dissolve the boundaries of the individual":³⁶

The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the *intensification of nervous stimulation* which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. Man is a differentiating creature. His mind is stimulated by the difference between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it. Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts - all these use up, so to speak, less consciousness than does the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions. These are the psychological conditions which the metropolis creates. With each crossing of the street, with the tempo and multiplicity of economic, occupational and social life, the city sets up a deep contrast with small town and rural life with reference to the sensory foundations of psychical life...In order to accommodate to change and to the contrast of phenomena, the intellect does not require any shocks and inner upheavals...Thus the metropolitan type of man - which of course exists in a thousand individual variants - develops an organ protecting him against the threatening currents and discrepancies of his external environment which would uproot him...to preserve subjective life against the overwhelming power of metropolitan life.³⁷

Simmel lists a number of traits as part of the profile of this urban individual. Among these are the blasé attitude, the cultivation of reserve, indifference and even open hostility: "Indeed...the inner aspect of this outer reserve is not only indifference but, more often than we are aware, it is a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion, which will break into hatred and fight at the moment of a closer contact, however caused."³⁸

Maintenance of personality against perceptual over-stimulation, discontinuity and threat ("shocks and inner upheavals") in conjunction with the preservation of individuality against absorption into the anonymous group ("the atrophy of individual culture") thus rests, for Simmel, not only upon the cultivation of particular "mental and psychic traits", but also upon the development of special skills for reading the city. Partly arising from the pace of city life and the

³⁵ "The Metropolis and Mental Life", *The Sociology of George Simmel*, trans. and edited by Kurt H. Wolff, New York, The Free Press, 1950, p. 409.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 417.

³⁷ *ibid.*, pp.409-411.

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 415-416.

preponderance of "brief metropolitan contacts", the urban individual necessarily develops a "sensitivity for differences" and a self-consciousness about "the awareness of others."³⁹ For, without the adoption of these defence mechanisms and cognitive skills, "one would be completely atomized internally and come to an unimaginable psychic state."⁴⁰

However, as with Lynch's account of the city, my concern here is not simply to replicate the terms of Simmel's analysis but, rather, to recast them within a different framework. And while Simmel's sociology foregrounds the spatial dimension which structures the intersubjective experience of urban modernity, the question also arises of the spatial organisation of our perception and access to the past especially when that access is through images. This question is raised in Jameson's claim that "our relation to the past is now a spatial one." For Jameson this is an effect of the loss of visual and interpretive depth and of the flattening of historical time which he cites as intrinsic features of postmodernism. This process he describes as the "spatialisation of time" in that "time has become a perpetual present and thus spatial."⁴¹ Arguably, however, this spatialisation of time is not a feature unique to postmodernism (should one choose to accept the validity of the term) but instead it is one which has been a defining feature of modernity and one which, for instance, one can trace back to Baudelaire.⁴² But, the question of postmodernism aside, I would suggest that these remarks have a relevance not only to the employment of photography (and the status of photographs as historical documents) but, more broadly, that the issue of spatiality is fundamental to any account of modernity. More specifically, I wish to situate photography within what Jameson, employing a language derived from both Lynch and Foucault, calls "the cognitive mapping of power, the construction of picture-models, and the transfer of conceptions of social power and its forms onto powerful spatial figures."⁴³

Jameson's call for a spatial or geo-political reading of postmodernity thus evokes the notion of the "cognitive mapping" of those mystificatory spaces which mask the instrumentalist operations of power and social control. This mapping then provides the means of overcoming spatial alienation or dislocation. To this end,

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 421.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 415.

⁴¹ "Regarding Postmodernism", *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.

⁴² See, for example, Paul de Man's discussion of Baudelaire's notion of 'la représentation du présent' in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 156-161.

⁴³ "Regarding Postmodernism", *op.cit.*, pp. 6-7.

Jameson describes how, within his own critical project, "the loss of ability to position ourselves within this space and cognitively map it...is then projected back on the emergence of a global, multinational culture that is decentered and cannot be visualised, a culture in which one cannot position oneself."⁴⁴

For Jameson, then, "we must...begin to think of cultural politics in terms of space and the struggle for space".⁴⁵ But, once again, as with the notion of the spatialization of time, the cognitive mapping of urban space, the loss of spatial positioning and the "struggle for space" all occurred during the nineteenth century (although not necessarily described as such by contemporaries) - Engels's description of the industrial city and the events of the Paris Commune being two obvious examples. However, aside from the question of the chronological placement of these phenomena, my concern is less with Jameson's 'macro' level of analysis but more with the 'micro' level in that I wish to pin down these processes with reference to specific photographs.

As a means of doing this one might usefully cite Walter Benjamin as a precedent for examining photography as a means of uncovering the pathology of modernity. For Benjamin it was Atget who, more than any other photographer, "wiped off the mask and then set about removing the make-up from reality."⁴⁶ But while Benjamin's description of Atget's photographs as "the forerunners of surrealist photography" has often been repeated (usually in order to support the view that all photographs are inherently surrealist)⁴⁷ what is often overlooked is the diagnostic status ascribed to Atget's photography in terms of what Benjamin describes as the uncovering of the "physiognomical aspects" of modernity and the demystification of the aura. Ignoring the "great sights and so-called landmarks", Atget:

initiates the emancipation of object from aura...He looked for what was unremarked, forgotten, cast adrift, and thus such pictures operate against the exotic, romantically sonorous names of the cities; they pump the aura out of reality like water from a sinking ship...[the photographs] are not lonely, merely without mood; the city in these pictures looks cleared out, like a lodging that has not yet found a new tenant. It is in these achievements that surrealist photography sets the scene for a salutary estrangement between man and his surroundings. It gives free play to the politically educated eye, under whose gaze all intimacies are sacrificed to the illumination of detail.⁴⁸

However, my citing of Benjamin's reading of Atget's photographs is not intended to grant some kind of unique or privileged vision to Atget himself for the drift of

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ "A Small History of Photography", *op.cit.* p. 249.

⁴⁷ For example, Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1982, espec. pp. 51-82.

⁴⁸ "A Small History of Photography". *op. cit.* pp. 250-251.

what Benjamin says is applicable to much nineteenth century photography although, in the case of the photographs that I shall be discussing, this is not to argue for a conscious or motivating authorial intention. Nor is this to posit a notion of the photographs' self-revelatory details or effects. Instead our own gaze needs to be mobilised through the use frameworks along the lines that I have indicated.

But this is not to argue that photographs, once situated within such frameworks, then allow us direct and unmediated access to the 'historical past'. For, instead of granting us this, photography both organises and disrupts what might be called our perceptual access. As Benjamin argues, photography was a "new way of seeing" which transformed not only the objects but also the structures of perception and of looking. Photography thus functions as a kind of grid or template, while individual photographs themselves need to be read as "powerful spatial figures." Indeed one might use the analogy of textual translation here in that a translation (like a photograph) both refers to but simultaneously transforms a prior text (or referent, the 'real' etc.). However, reference to something else is not synonymous with unmediated replication. Instead, what is involved in both translation and photography is a kind of doubling or repetition, but a doubling which is a transformative process involving distortion and distancing.⁴⁹

An unconscious optics

It is as a means of uncovering this work of (re)organisation and disruption I shall be taking a further cue from Benjamin when he remarks upon what he describes as photography's "optical unconscious":

No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an irresistible urge to search such a picture for the tiny spark of contingency, of the Here and Now, with which reality has so to speak seared the subject...For it is another nature that speaks to the camera than to the eye: other in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious...It is through photography that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis.⁵⁰

While the optical unconscious that Benjamin describes here refers more to photography's revealing of objects and processes (through slow motion and

⁴⁹ "In effect, the theme of the transcendental signified took shape within the horizon of an absolutely pure, transparent, and unequivocal translatability. In the limits to which it is possible, or at least *appears* possible, translation practices the difference between the signifier and the signified. But if this difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of transformation: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another. We will never have, and never have had, to do with some 'transport' of pure signifieds from one language to another, or within one and the same language, that the signifying instrument would leave virgin and intact" *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass, London, Athlone Press, 1982, p. 20.

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 243.

enlargement) not available to normal vision, his reference to psychoanalysis implies more than mere analogy in that he alludes to the workings of both conscious and unconscious processes.

It is these psychological processes that are very much the focus of this thesis. However this was not its original starting point. For my initial concern was with thinking about photography in terms of the spatial taxonomies outlined above. But while the situating of photographs within an historical account of particular spatial orders remains fundamental, what was missing was a specific address to the summoning or production of a gaze for the photographs. For the issue of photography's ordering and disruption of our perceptual field is inseparable from the the gaze and the determinant contexts for looking. It is at this juncture that psychoanalysis made a (somewhat belated) entry but an entry which transformed not only how one might approach individual photographs and what constitutes the archive but also what makes its maintenance as a discrete structure unsustainable (i.e. as one which can be contained solely by reference to subject-matter, 'authors' or styles).

Benjamin's "seared" subject might thus be reappropriated as referring to the viewer-subject of photography and not only to photography's objects. But while Benjamin's remarks provide a useful starting point for this inquiry, the citing of photography as an optical metaphor for perception was not unique to him and, within psychoanalysis, references to photography, the camera and the negative were regularly employed by Freud.⁵¹ More recently, Jean-Louis Baudry, in part following upon Freud's account of the dream-work and Jacques Lacan's description of the subject as "an apparatus", has developed this theme and several aspects of Baudry's analysis of the cinematic apparatus are not only pertinent to photography but draw comparisons with Derrida's characterisation of logocentrism as the desire for an immediacy of perception and signification. Thus, for example, Baudry refers to the "hallucinatory factor, the lack of distinction between representation and perception...that something of a desire in dream unifying perception and representation - whether with representation passing itself off for perception...or whether perception passes itself off for perceived representation."⁵²

⁵¹ Sarah Kofman cites several examples in her *Camera obscura, de l'idéologie*, Paris, éditions galilée, 1973, pp. 37-46. See also Freud's references to photography and the negative in "The Dynamics of Transference" (*Standard Edition*, vol. XII) and in "Notes on the Concept of the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis" (*Standard Edition*, vol. XII).

⁵² "The Apparatus", trans. Bernard Augst and Jean Andrews, *Camera Obscura*, 1, 1976, p. 117.

While I do not wish to identify photography solely with the dream-work, what is important to note for the moment in Baudry's analysis is the notion of the subject-effect produced through projective identification with the image. More particularly, Baudry describes this subject as "the subject of the unconscious". What I wish to draw out from this is not only the reference to the unconscious subject but also the situating of representations at the interface between perceptual and unconscious processes so as to then argue that representations or, more precisely, their effects need to be located between the systems described by Freud as perception-consciousness and the unconscious. As Baudry himself remarks: "the dream wish is formed from daytime residues in the Pcs system which are reinforced by drives emanating from the Ucs."⁵³ However, these two systems should not be seen as operating in tandem so as to mutually reinforce each other (although at times, of course, this is possible) but should be seen as existing in a state of tension. For, following the founding insight of psychoanalysis into the workings of repression (which, in the form primal repression, initiates the emergence of a dynamic and structured unconscious), the relation between these two systems needs to be described as one of mutual conflict. As such, one element within my approach to photography will be to examine images which initiate a rupture between perception-consciousness and the unconscious and to locate these images within what Lacan has described as "the absolute separation between perception and consciousness", within "the interval that separates them, in which the place of the other is situated, in which the subject is constituted."⁵⁴

The presence of the gaze: vision and/as text

This method of looking at photographs is adopted as a strategy in order to pursue the central concern of this thesis which is to focus on the ways in which photography destabilises its own logocentric aspirations. This can be clarified perhaps by some brief explanation of method by reference to the thesis sub-title, "the presence of the gaze." My aim here is to employ a 'deconstructive' critique of a logocentrism understood as referring to the desire for access to and mastery of knowledge, meaning, presence, identity, origins etc. It is within this logocentric regime that I shall situate photography which, like speech and instrumentalist

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 115.

⁵⁴ *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London, Tavistock, 1977, pp. 45-46.

language, is posited as a transparent and unmediated medium. However, this critique will run in conjunction with various psychoanalytic accounts of subjectivity and in particular with those accounts which focus on perception and representation. It is these accounts of the production of the subject that will be employed as a means to arguing that the subject-effect of photography can be situated (via a psychoanalytic reading) within (an unstable) logocentrism.

In part, this project involves the conjoining of deconstructive notions of, for instance, presence, absence, the supplement, undecidability etc. with a psychoanalytic vocabulary of narcissism and ego functions, lack/castration, repression, ambivalence/ instability and so on. However, this is not a matter of producing a system of equivalence through matching respective concept with concept and thereby attempting to conflate two very distinct orders of discourse. Instead, this conjoining involves not only employing deconstruction as a technique for reading psychoanalysis, but also involves emphasising what might be called the proto-deconstructive elements within psychoanalysis itself. Within the present context this will largely turn upon 'the logic of the supplement'. For if Derrida's project can be understood as a subversion of "the principle of identity, the founding expression of a philosophy of presence"⁵⁵ (on which is predicated an autonomous, self-relexive and sovereign subject, which is both the constitutive origin of both language and meaning and which is also concentric with its self-knowledge), a similar destabilisation of hierarchical binary oppositions is operative (if only implicitly perhaps) within psychoanalysis. As Jonathan Culler explains:

Freud begins with a series of hierarchical oppositions: normal/pathological, sanity/insanity, real/imaginary, experience/ dream, conscious/unconscious, life/death. In each case the first term has been conceived as prior, a plenitude of which the second is a negation or complication. Situated on the margin of the first term, the second term designates an undesirable, dispensable deviation. Freud's investigations deconstruct these oppositions by identifying what is at stake in our desire to repress the second and showing that in fact each first term can be seen as a special case of the fundamentals designated by the second term, which in this process is transformed. Understanding of the marginal or deviant term becomes a condition of understanding the supposedly prior term...These deconstructive reversals, which give pride of place to what had been thought marginal, are responsible for much of the revolutionary impact of Freudian theory.⁵⁶

At the risk of extreme reductiveness, the basic operative terms within a deconstructive reading are presence and absence in that, for Derrida, identity and meaning etc. are defined through their constitutive (but suppressed) opposites or differences. Within phono-logocentrism, the supposed full plenitude of speech -

⁵⁵ "Freud and the Scene of Writing" in *Writing and Difference*, op. cit. , p. 207.

⁵⁶ *On Deconstruction* , London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, pp. 160-161.

"the unique experience of the signified producing itself spontaneously from within the self" ⁵⁷ - is always inhabited by the differential trace of writing. Speech, as the privileged site of unmediated meaning/ consciousness, is thus always mediated by writing (its non-present but pre-existent substitutes) in that speech itself not only involves signification (and thus also the spatio-temporal difference between signifiers), but its status of immediate and natural self-presence (the coincidence of intention and meaning) is contingent upon the viewing of writing as an unnatural, supplementary or contaminating activity marked by the loss or denial of self-presence. In other words, the possibility or conceptualising of speech and presence is contingent upon writing, the non-present, the non-originary, i.e. "that what opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence."⁵⁸

This notion that presence, despite its privileging over absence, is always marked or constituted by what is (apparently) absent has an obvious counterpart in psychoanalysis in that consciousness (as presence-to-perception, for example) is always inhabited by what is absent (the unconscious). So also, for example, conscious (intentional) speech is always overdetermined by the otherness of the unconscious.

A more specific example of this relation is provided by Freud's use of the writing-toy, the 'Mystic Writing Pad', as a metaphor for the operations of the psychological apparatus. Freud employs this model not only to describe both how perceptions are received from the outside world but also to show how traces and memories are inscribed within the unconscious. Explaining the inadequacy of either a sheet of paper or of chalk and slate as models of the the functioning of the psychological apparatus, Freud remarks that: "an unlimited receptive capacity and the retention of permanent traces seem to be mutually exclusive properties in the apparatus which we use as substitutes for our memory: either the receptive surface must be renewed or the note must be destroyed."⁵⁹ However, while these "devices to aid our memory seem particularly imperfect", the Mystic Writing Pad in "its construction shows a remarkable agreement with my hypothetical structure of our perceptual apparatus and that it can in fact provide an ever-ready receptive surface and the permanent traces of the notes that have been made upon it."⁶⁰

⁵⁷ *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, London and Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 20.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 159.

⁵⁹ "A Note Upon the Mystic Writing Pad" (1924), *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, pp. 227-228.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 228.

Within this model the top layer of the perceptual apparatus (the *Pcpt.-Cs.*) functions as both a receptive surface and as the psyche's protective shield against an excess of external stimuli - a process which has with distinct parallels with Simmel's account of the urban individual's psychological defence mechanisms:

The layer of the celluloid thus acts as a protective sheath for the waxed paper, to keep off injurious effects from without. The celluloid is a 'protective shield against stimuli'; the layer which actually receives the stimuli is the paper...the perceptual apparatus of our mind consists of two layers, of an external protective shield against stimuli whose task is to diminish the strength of excitations coming in, and of a surface behind it which receives the stimuli, namely the system *Pcpt.-Cs.*...the permanent traces of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights. Thus the pad provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again, like a slate, but also permanent traces of what has been written, like an ordinary paper pad: it solves the problem of combining the two systems by dividing them between two separate but interrelated component parts or systems...precisely the way...our mental apparatus performs its perceptual function. The layer which receives the stimuli - the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* - form no permanent traces; the foundations of memory come about in the other adjoining systems.⁶¹

While acknowledging that, "There must come a point at which the analogy between an auxiliary apparatus of this kind and the organ which is its prototype will cease to apply...It is true, too, that once the writing has been erased, the Mystic Pad cannot 'reproduce' it from within", Freud continues:

None the less, I do not think it too far-fetched to compare the celluloid and the waxed paper cover with the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* and its protective shield, the wax slab with the unconscious behind them, and the appearance and disappearance of the writing with the flickering and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception....If we imagine one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Writing Pad while another periodically raises the covering sheet from the wax slab, we shall have a concrete representation of the way in which I tried to picture the functioning of the perceptual apparatus of the mind.⁶²

While the top layer (the *Pcpt.-Cs.*) retains no lasting record since it is continually erased (a process which itself might be taken as an analogy for the reconstitution of presence through its continual erasure),⁶³ the secondary or underlying layer (the *Ucs.*) is never erased and retains permanent traces which never appear on the top layer. It is this aspect of the model of the psyche as "a writing machine"⁶⁴ that Derrida takes up in his assertion that permanent traces exist "always already" before perception is even aware or conscious of itself. The trace (which is absent from consciousness) thus forms the constitutive basis of consciousness itself in that presence/perception are derived from supplementary but non-present traces:

Writing supplements perception before perception even appears to itself. "Memory" or writing is the opening of that process of appearance itself. The "perceived" may be read only in the past,

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 230.

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 230-232.

⁶³ "The becoming-visible which alternates with the disappearance of what is written would be the flickering (*Aufleuchten*) and passing-away (*Vergehen*) of consciousness in the process of perception.", "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *op. cit.*, p. 225.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 221.

beneath perception and after it.⁶⁵

Fundamental to Derrida's reading and critique of Freud here are the terms 'presence' and 'absence'. Presence and absence are not marked, however, by some kind of manichean divide but are instead mutually interactive and, indeed, ultimately dissolve as discrete categories. But this is not to argue that the unconscious is 'knowable' in the same manner as perception-consciousness for it can only be 'known' via its effects. Yet to claim this does not then involve citing the unconscious as being no more than a 'container' for repressed contents which sometimes erupt from it, nor is it to posit the unconscious as a presence which is merely 'elsewhere'. As one commentator notes, "Freud recognised that the term 'unconscious' was better used as a descriptive adjective rather than as a topographical noun. Although everything which was repressed was unconscious, not everything unconscious was repressed."⁶⁶ The unconscious, then, is not another or secondary consciousness or mind. Instead, for Freud, it is other to but constitutive of conscious mental processes. But as Freud also came to recognise, a simple opposition between the ego (consciousness) and the unconscious was untenable for part of the ego is itself unconscious while it was also the latter which is also the agent of repression. Given this, psychological tension might very crudely be understood as being between the ego and what is repressed.

Derrida, describing the unconscious in relation to *différance*, writes:

différance maintains our relationship with that which we necessarily misconstrue, and which exceeds the alternative of presence and absence. A certain alterity - to which Freud gives the metaphysical name of the unconscious - is definitively exempt from every process of presentation by means of which we would call upon it to show itself in person. In this context, and beneath this guise, the unconscious is not, as we know, a hidden, virtual, or potential self-presence. It differs from, and defers, itself; which doubtless means that it is woven of differences, and also that it sends out delegates, representatives, proxies; but without any chance that the giver of proxies might "exist", might be present, be "itself" somewhere, and with even less chance that it might become conscious. In this sense, contrary to the terms of an old debate full of the metaphysical investments that it has always assumed, the "unconscious" is no more a "thing" than it is any other thing, is no more a thing than it is a virtual or masked consciousness. This radical alterity as concerns every mode of presence is marked by the irreducibility of the after effect, the delay. In order to describe traces, in order to read the traces of "unconscious" traces (there are no conscious traces), the language of presence and absence, the metaphysical discourse of phenomenology, is inadequate.⁶⁷

Just as a return to the discrete registers of presence/absence would initiate a return

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 228.

⁶⁶ Anthony Storr, *Freud*, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 46. See also Freud's discussion in "The Unconscious", *Standard Edition*, vol. XIV, e.g. "the unconscious does not cover everything that is repressed" (p. 166).

⁶⁷ "Différance" in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass, Brighton, Harvester Press, 1982, pp. 20-21.

to a binary logic of identity structured upon mutually exclusive and hierarchised polarities (a logic of either/or), what is at work instead within the constitution of the subject is an undecidability or supplementary logic (one of both/and). Moreover, while the self-disruptive movements or essential ambiguity of undecidability are, for Derrida, the effects of *différance*, *différance* itself "is no longer conceivable on the basis of the opposition presence/absence."⁶⁸

Derrida's neologism of *différance* does not then imply merely the reversal of terms or the prioritisation of the hitherto secondary term over its dominant counterpart although of course he does argue that, for instance, writing or difference are the constitutive conditions for speech and identity respectively and are thus logically anterior to either of them. But *différance* is not equivalent to being another identity (albeit a 'negative' one) for this would ultimately mean that deconstruction amounts to no more than a fetishisation of difference. Instead, *différance* is the movement which both precedes and exceeds oppositional pairings, while it is also a movement which is not resolved either through dialectical resolution or the production of a synthetic third term.

Put (over)simply the logic of the supplement is the process by which identity is both achieved (through oppositional difference) yet the very processes or structures which would seem to secure identity simultaneously, because of their excess, threaten any stable identity or meaning. It is this generative absence and surplus (itself neither a concept nor even definable) which deconstruction focuses upon through its "double gesture" of overturning and dislodging,⁶⁹ a strategy which is altogether distinct from the reification of differences. For while reversal simply leaves the structure of oppositional polarities intact, displacement seeks to reveal the constitutive dependence of the dominant term upon its subordinated 'other'. It is in part this relation of dependence which is designated by the term 'undecidable' as referring to that which not only subverts binary oppositions and classificatory systems, but which also simultaneously initiates and occupies both terms. As Derrida observes of philosophical texts:

it has been necessary to analyze, to set to work, *within* the text of the history of philosophy...certain marks...that *by analogy*...I have called undecidable, that...can no longer be included within the philosophical (binary) opposition, but which, however, inhabit philosophical opposition, resisting and disorganizing it, *without ever* constituting a third term, without ever leaving room for a solution in the form of speculative dialectics...the *supplement* is neither a plus nor a minus, neither and outside nor the complement of an inside, neither accident nor essence

⁶⁸ See also Derrida's 'summary' (if one can use the word) of *différance* in *Positions*, op.cit., pp. 8-9, also p. 45.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 41 ff.

etc...Neither/nor, that is, *simultaneously* either/or⁷⁰

It is in this sense that Derrida discusses the unconscious and *différance* not with the aim of ascribing an identity to it (although I would wish to retain a notion of the unconscious as a distinct register of consciousness) but with the aim instead of describing it as the play of forces which produces identities. The 'traces' which are the marks of this play of forces are not then literal representations but are instead, for Derrida, the material inscriptions and effects of *différance*. More particularly, the specific spatio-temporal implications of *différance* (as difference and deferral) deny any resolution to this play of forces just as, more broadly, the failure of any ultimate coincidence of signifier and signified precludes any finally securable and coherent 'presentness' of meaning or identity. But more immediately, what I shall be pursuing here are the effects of *différance*, (as the logic of the supplement or "undecidable oscillation"),⁷¹ which psychoanalysis reveals within the psychic life of the subject whether, for instance, as the unconscious traces which constitute consciousness or else as the splitting of the subject, or its ability to simultaneously occupy or identify with multiple (and seemingly contradictory) subject-positions.⁷²

However, while, as Derrida claims, the "putting into question the primacy of presence as consciousness...[is] the major motif of Freud's thought",⁷³ the sustainability of a conjunction between deconstruction and psychoanalysis is by no means unproblematic and a number of reservations need to be addressed. Not least of these is the question of the compatibility of the two in that it is debatable as to

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp.42-43.

⁷¹ Sarah Kofman, "Ca cloche", *lectures de derrida*, Paris, éditions galilée, 1984, p. 132. This lecture is also available, (trans. Caren Kaplan), in *Derrida and Deconstruction*, ed Hugh J. Silverman, New York and London, Routledge, 1989, pp. 108-138. As Derrida remarks in the discussion included with the translation, "It is because there is indecidability that everything is put into gear" (p. 135). See also Kofman's discussion of undecidability and psychoanalysis in the book's major section, "un philosophe 'unheimlich' ", espec.pp. 76-90.

⁷² However, as Derrida himself emphasises, "Despite appearances, the deconstruction of logocentrism is not a psychoanalysis of philosophy" ("Freud and the Scene of Writing", *op. cit.*, p. 196). So too, "logocentric repression is not comprehensible on the basis of the Freudian concept of repression" (*ibid.*, p. 197). More particularly, in *Of Grammatology*, Derrida states that "in spite of appearances, the location of the word *supplement* is here not at all psychoanalytical" (*op. cit.*, p.159), although he adds, "if by that we understand an interpretation that takes us outside writing toward a psychobiographical signified." Clearly, what I am advancing here is not a psycho-biography of authors (photographers) and with it a notion of the supplement to be understood a search for pathological symptoms. Nor do I wish to present deconstruction (which is essentially a technique or strategy for reading texts) as a theory of the subject. However, while there are strong affinities between the supplement and, for instance, Lacan's objet *a*, my concern here is to draw out the correspondences between the logic of the supplementarity and, for example, Freud's account of the dream-work, e.g. the claim that "The alternative 'either-or' cannot be expressed in dreams in any way" (*The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Standard Edition*, vols. IV-V), or his discussion of the subject's ability in phantasy to simultaneously occupy or identify with several and apparently mutually exclusive subject-positions, for example as outlined in the paper "A Child is Being Beaten".

⁷³ "Différance", *op. cit.*, p. 18.

whether such (apparently) anthropocentric notions as perception and desire, let alone the category of the subject, can be accommodated within deconstruction's project.

Thus, to take one example, despite the usefulness of Freud's analogy of the Mystic Writing Pad, as a description of the perceptual apparatus, it is at first glance perhaps questionable as to how pertinent Derrida's own reading of it might be with reference to the question of vision in that he would appear to reduce perception to being no more than a textual effect, i.e:

If there were only perception, pure permeability to breaching, there would be no breaches. We would be written, but nothing would be recorded, no writing would be produced, retained, repeated as legibility. But pure perception does not exist: we are written only as we write, by the agency within us which already keeps watch over perception, be it internal or external.⁷⁴

Indeed, elsewhere, Derrida has denied that "anything like perception exists" or "that there is any perception."⁷⁵ But while this assertion might appear to support the charge that Derrida cannot conceive (or, perhaps, cannot allow) anything to exist outside of language, his target here is the use or function of the term 'perception' in the context of the epistemological models of meaning or conceptions of the subject which cite perception as both support and validation. For Derrida, 'perception' is implicated in a metaphysics premised upon "a concept of an intuition or a given originating from the thing itself, present itself in its meaning, independently from language, from the system of reference...[a] concept of origin and of center."⁷⁶ So also, in his critical reading in *Speech and Phenomena* of Husserl's attempt to ground inner self-presence, Derrida observes, "We have discovered the systematic solidarity of the concepts of meaning, identity, objectivity, truth, intuition, perception, expression. Their common matrix is being as *presence*."⁷⁷ However, with reference to the example of texts, it is precisely their generative excess and instability which precludes the immediacy of presence:

A text remains, moreover, forever imperceptible. Its laws and rules are not, however, harbored in the inaccessibility of a secret. It is simply that they can never be hooked into the present, into anything that could rigorously be called a perception.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit., p. 226.

⁷⁵ Discussion after "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" in *The Structuralist Controversy*, eds. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, London and Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972, p. 272. The discussion in which these remarks are made is not included in *Writing and Difference*.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. David Allison, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973, p. 99.

⁷⁸ "The Double Session", in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, London, Athlone Press, 1981.

A sharper hold on the relation between perception, the trace and the supplement can be formed from Derrida's discussion of memory in the context of Plato's attack on the Sophists. Distinguishing between "memory itself" and "monuments, inventories, archives, citations, copies, accounts, tales, lists, notes, duplicates, chronicles, genealogies, references. Not memory but memorials", Derrida writes:

What Plato is attacking in sophistics, therefore, is not simply recourse to memory but, within such recourse, the substitution of the mnemonic device for live memory...the active reanimation of knowledge, for its reproduction in the present. The boundary (between inside and outside, living and nonliving) separates not only speech from writing but also memory as an unveiling (re)producing a presence from re-memoration as the mere repetition of a monument; truth as distinct from its sign, being as distinct from types. The "outside" does not begin at the point where what we now call the psychic and the physical meet, but at the point where the *mneme*, instead of being present to itself in its life as a movement of truth, is supplanted by the archive, evicted by a sign of re-memoration. The space of writing, space *as* writing, is opened up in the violent movement of this surrogation, in the difference between *mneme* and *hypomnesis*...A limitless memory would in any event be not memory but infinite self-presence. Memory would always need signs in order to recall the non-present, with which it is necessarily in relation...Memory is thus contaminated by its first substitute: *hypomnesis*. But what Plato *dreams* of is a memory with no sign. That is, with no supplement.⁷⁹

This description of writing and memory complements the account of perception outlined in reference to the Mystic Writing Pad in that perception is itself structured upon mnemonic traces which in turn form an archive. It is this textuality or writing (as substitutions) which constitute both memory and perception and undermine any notion of self-presence. But although the psyche can be described by means of a metaphoric of 'writing', Derrida also remarks that, "It is not enough to speak of writing in order to be faithful to Freud, for it is then that we betray him more than ever."⁸⁰ For Derrida's description of the unconscious is not as the transposing of (another) presence, a return to "an ancient phonologism",⁸¹ but instead it as a kind of "nontranscriptive writing":

The conscious text is thus not a transcription because there is no text *present elsewhere* as an unconscious one to be transposed or transported. For the value of presence can also dangerously affect the concept of the unconscious. There is then no unconscious truth to be discovered by

⁷⁹ "Plato's Pharmacy" in *Dissemination*, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

⁸⁰ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit., p. 211.

⁸¹ "It is with a graphematics still to come, rather than a linguistics dominated by an ancient phonologism, that psychoanalysis sees itself as destined to collaborate." (ibid. p. 220). But while, as Derrida observes, Freud's work is permeated by references to writing, i.e. "From a system of traces functioning according to a model which Freud would have preferred to a natural one, and from which writing is entirely absent [in the *Project*], we proceed toward a configuration of traces which can no longer be represented except by the structure and functioning of a writing" (ibid.), he argues that Freud remains bound to a logocentric valuation of presence, i.e. "Freud, like Plato, thus continues to oppose hypomnemonic writing to writing *en tei psychei*, itself woven of traces, empirical memories of a present truth outside of time. Henceforth, the Mystic Writing Pad, separated from psychical responsibility, a representation abandoned to itself, still participates in Cartesian space and mechanics: *natural wax*, exteriority of the *memory aid*. (ibid. p. 227). It is precisely this juxtaposition of 'natural' memory (as "the pure transparency of a perception without memory", ibid. p.211) and auxiliary or external supplementation which is connoted in Wendell Holmes's description of the photograph as "a mirror with a memory".

virtue of being written elsewhere. There is no text written in the present elsewhere which would then be subjected, without being changed, to an operation and a temporalization.....which would be external to it, floating on its surface. There is no present text in general, and there is not even a past present text, a text which is past as having been present. The text is not conceivable in an originary or modified form of presence. The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united - a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are always already transcriptions. Originary prints. Everything begins with a reproduction. Always already: repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral, *nachträglich*, belatedly, *supplementarily*: for the *nachträglich* also means *supplementary*. The call of the supplement is primary, here, and it hollows out that which will be reconstituted by deferral as the present. The supplement which seems to be added as a plenitude to a plenitude, is equally that which compensates for a lack.⁸²

It is this which also accounts for the threat of the supplement or substitute. Thus, asking "Why is the surrogate or supplement dangerous?", Derrida replies:

Its slidings slips it out of the simple alternative presence/absence. *That* is the danger. And that is what enables the type to pass for the original. As soon as the supplementary outside is opened, its structure implies that the supplement itself can be "typed", replaced by its double, and that a supplement to the supplement, a surrogate for the surrogate, is possible and necessary.....writing appears to Plato.....as that process of redoubling in which we are fatally (en)trained: the supplement of a supplement, the signifier, the representative of a representative.⁸³

What is partly at issue here in Derrida's description of the unconscious is its own active productivity. Thus he claims that "consciousness for Freud is a surface exposed to the external world".⁸⁴ Within this description the unconscious is seen as being composed of accreted and layered sedimentations produced as a consequence of its being written *upon* (even though the unconscious then retains these perceptions as permanent traces). Derrida's own emphasis, however, is on the active production of meanings by the unconscious, it being "already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united." The unconscious is thus not only a receptive surface (the wax slab) which retains impressions from an external source but it is always reworking, deferring and creating the archives which constitute it. Against the model of the receptive surface, Derrida argues for the "possibility of a writing advanced as consciousness and acting in the world",⁸⁵ an irreducible and "originary spacing, deferring, and erasure of a simple origin, and polemics on the very threshold of what we persist in calling perception."⁸⁶ It is this originary repetition which also accounts for the inadequacy of the analogy of a

⁸² *ibid.* pp. 211-212. In "Différance", Derrida writes, "the trace is not a presence but the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates itself, displaces itself, refers itself properly to no site - erasure belongs to its structure" (*op. cit.* p. 24).

⁸³ "Plato's Pharmacy", *op. cit.* p. 109.

⁸⁴ "Freud and Scene of Writing" *op. cit.* p. 212.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁶ *ibid.* p. 226.

machine for describing the psyche, i.e. "The machine does not run by itself."⁸⁷

For Derrida, then, it is *différance*, the supplement and undecidability which mark the activity of the unconscious and which render as unsustainable the presence of perceptual self-consciousness - an understanding of the psyche which is not, however, incompatible with Freud.⁸⁸ But if 'perception' is framed within an idealist metaphysics through its being summoned as confirmation of the presentness of meaning - a summoning which is operative, as Derrida has also argued, within psychoanalysis itself⁸⁹ - this does not mean, however, that the term must then be done away with altogether. Instead, precisely by developing Freud's model of the writing pad, perception can be likened to an overlaid palimpsest in that it is structured by constitutive representations and traces but ones which are not finally reducible to textual or linguistic structures. Moreover, for Freud, perception is always structured by representations or memories whether 'real' or phantasies.⁹⁰ It is with reference to these precedents that I shall argue that the phantasy of scopic presence is both predicated upon and threatened by representations of lack or

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Derrida is perhaps only giving a greater emphasis to something that is already implicit in Freud's notion of "deferred action" (*Nachträglichkeit*). Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis describe this process as referring to "experiences, impressions and memory traces [which] may be revised at a later date to fit in with fresh experiences or with the attainment of a new stage of development. They may in that event be endowed not only with a new meaning but also with psychical effectiveness" in that "the subject revises past events at a later date (*nachträglich*) and that it is this revision which invests them with significance and even with efficacy or pathogenic force" (*The Language of Psychoanalysis*, London, Hogarth Press, 1973, pp. 111-112). Thus, while Freud describes a receptive psychical apparatus which receives external perceptions (a description in which the unconscious involves a sedimentation of perceptions etc.) the unconscious also actively transforms these perceptions - an aspect of psychical life which could not be represented by the Mystic Writing Pad. However Freud, in his account of the Writing Pad, also refers to the unconscious (the wax pad) as "the foundations of memory", a description not incompatible with Derrida's reference to the unconscious consisting of "archives which are always already transcriptions." The notion of deferred action (which of course has obvious correspondences with the operations of *différance*) does not then imply a simple linear causal relation between past events and the present or a delayed release of affect. Nor, as Laplanche and Pontalis state can, "the Freudian conception of *nachträglich*...be understood in terms of a variable time-lapse, due to some kind of storing procedure, between stimuli and response" (*ibid.* p. 113). Instead, Freud himself (in a letter to Fliess of December 6th 1896) refers to it as both "a process of stratification" and as "a re-arrangement...a re-transcription" (quoted. p. 112). And, as Laplanche and Pontalis further suggest, "for Freud a real working-over is involved - a 'work of recollection' which is not the mere discharge of accumulated tension but a complex set of psychological operations" (*ibid.* p.114). More particularly, Freud sees deferred action as the psychical investment of previously unassimilable perceptions and memories (notable traumatic ones). Yet while these memories are for the most part linked to 'real' perceptions, this operation is also pertinent to primal phantasies. Either way, deferred action grants to the unconscious a role of actively producing meanings which, like Derrida's transcriptions, are "always already" worked over.

⁸⁹ *The Post Card, From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 382-383.

⁹⁰ Primal phantasies would be an obvious instance here. These are described by Laplanche and Pontalis as "structures [which] exist in the phantasy dimension (*la fantasmatique*) which are irreducible to the contingencies of the individual's lived experience." (*The Language of Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., p. 337). See for example Freud and Breuer's references to disturbances of vision and visual hallucinations in their *Studies in Hysteria*, *Standard Edition*, vol. II, most notably the case of Anna O.

absence. The self-presence of perception or of the gaze is thus always produced through unconscious traces which both constitute and undermine it.

To retain a notion of perception does not then imply a reversion to a model of a perception that is somehow pure or unmediatedly self-present. However, the question of the relation between perception and textuality is an aspect of the broader issue of the relation between language and the subject in deconstruction or whether it can even accommodate any reference to a subject. For while deconstruction initiates a dissolution of the logic of identity, I am not arguing here for a dissolution (as denial) of identity itself or, more specifically, of psychic identity. However, to say this is not to claim that such a dissolution is in fact operative within deconstruction or that it evacuates the category of the subject. But as this is a charge frequently brought against Derrida (despite his recent protestations to the contrary),⁹¹ it perhaps requires some brief response here if only to help clarify some of the terms at issue.

Thus one criticism that might be made against deconstruction is that it cannot account for the breaks or ruptures of the logocentrism within which the subject is implicated. For if signs cannot refer beyond themselves (if "there is nothing outside of the text"),⁹² heterogeneity (as an effect of *différance*) is ultimately a purely internal function within signification, while grammatology itself remains no more than an immanent critique of the sign. This, in effect, is the gist of Julia Kristeva's critical claim that:

grammatology denounces the economy of the symbolic function and opens up a space the latter cannot subsume. But in its desire to bar the thetic and put (logically or chronologically) previous energy transfers in its place, the grammatological deluge of meaning gives up on the subject and must remain ignorant not only of his functioning as social practice, but also of his chances of experiencing jouissance or being put to death. Neutral in the face of all positions, theses, and structures, grammatology is, as a consequence, equally restrained when they break, burst, or rupture: demonstrating disinterestedness toward (symbolic and/or social) structure, grammatology remains silent when faced with its destruction or renewal...Indeed, since *différance* neutralizes productive negativity, it is conceived of as a delay that comes before, a (pre)condition, a possibility, becoming and become, a movement preceding the sign, logos, the subject, being, and located within every differentiated entity.⁹³

Not only do the totalising effects of *différance* efface heterogeneity, but Kristeva implies that *différance* (as trace) is posited as an initiating and causal origin in that "concealed in Being and all its variations, concealing the other within itself, the

⁹¹ See for example "Deconstruction and its other", op. cit., p. 125. One might add (perhaps unfairly) that Derrida's defences of the subject have a rather ad hoc and gestural quality about them in that they are made during interviews and not in his major texts.

⁹² *Of Grammatology*, op. cit. p. 158, ["there is no outside text; il n'y a pas de hors texte"].

⁹³ *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1980, p. 142.

trace marks *anteriority* to every entity and thus to every position."⁹⁴

For Kristeva, however, it is the subject which accounts for these movements of disruption and heterogeneity. More precisely, it is the subject of the drives (the bridgehead between the psychical and the somatic)⁹⁵ or, rather, the "drive residues" (themselves encompassed within her notion of the semiotic), which are the origins of the heterogeneity which, Kristeva argues, is effaced by grammar's 'trace':

Indeed grammar seems to brush aside the drive "residues" that are not included in the *différance* toward the sign, and which return, heterogeneous, to interrupt its contemplative retention and make language a practice of the subject in process/on trial. This instinctual heterogeneity - neither deferred nor delayed, not yet understood as a becoming sign - is precisely that which *enters into contradiction with différence* and brings about leaps, intervals, abrupt changes, and breaks in its spacing. Contradiction can only be the irruption of the heterogeneous which cuts short any *différance*.⁹⁶

However, this critique, despite some validity, does not in itself deny the possibility of an enriching relation between grammar and psychoanalysis. Indeed, as Kristeva herself acknowledges, "the psychoanalytic discovery paves the way, in a

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 143. Kristeva's remarks anticipate Peter Dews's recent critique of what he describes as the "vicious circularity" of Derrida's concept of *différance* in terms of its necessary assumption of "an essential *logical prioritising* of non-identity over identity" in *Logics of Disintegration: Post-Structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*, London, Verso, 1987, *espec. pp.* 25-31.

⁹⁵ Peter Gay has neatly defined the drive as "as an urge translated into a wish". However, as he also observes, "Freud was never completely happy with his theory of the drives, whether in its early or late form...this absence of theoretical clarity was in large part due to the inability of biologists and psychologists to generate a consensus on the nature of the drives or instincts. Lacking their guidance, Freud constructed his own theory by observing psychological phenomena in the light of whatever biological information was available. To understand the drive one needs both disciplines" (*Freud, A Life for Our Time*, London, J. M. Dent, 1988, pp. 341-2).

This lack of clarity is itself symptomatic of the somewhat ambiguous description and status of the unconscious within psychoanalysis arising out of Freud's attempt to conflate, or at least to work across, two quite distinct models of the mind. On the one hand, a (neuro-)biologist and mechanistic model of causes and effects; a hydraulics of energy, libido, discharge etc. As distinct from this physicalist model, there is also a mentalist one involving a hermeneutics of affects, meanings and disguised symbolism irreducible to biology - a division which becomes a variant on the opposition Nature/Culture. Arguably, however, the use of these two broad models is not so much debilitating but is instead the generative dynamic within psychoanalysis. It might also be added that the question of the articulation between the somatic and the psychical remains a perennial one within psychology.

For a discussion which, while acknowledging the "overall coherence and plausibility" of Freud's account of the unconscious, focuses primarily upon its difficulties and inconsistencies (in particular the difference between the descriptive and substantive status of the unconscious), see David Archard, *Consciousness and the Unconscious* (London, Hutchinson, 1984), especially Chapter 1. As Archard says of the drives, "As a theory of the *psychic*, psychoanalysis is concerned not to deal with the drives in biological terms but with their representatives in the psyche. For the most part then, Freud is careful to distinguish between the physiological notion of an instinct and the properly psychical concept of an instinct's psychical representative" (p.25). Within this model, the "wish itself is...presented as an amalgam of unthinking energy and self-symbolizing intent" (p.27). However, as Archard continues (although only making passing reference to the notion of cathexis), "Unfortunately such an approach leaves unanswered a number of embarrassing questions, such as how somatic instincts are 'represented' in the psyche, or, how *psychic* energy can 'flow' from idea to idea. In sum, many of the difficulties of Freud's theory of 'the unconscious' derive not from his use of two epistemologically inconsistent forms of explanation, but from two ontologically incompatible philosophies of mind. Freud's explanations are ambiguous because their object is ambiguously described" (p.31).

⁹⁶ *Revolution in Poetic Language*, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144.

certain sense, for grammatology itself."⁹⁷ As she argues:

But materialism and Freudian practice...show that it is impossible to gather up the heterogeneous element into *différance* without leaving any remainders. The return of the heterogeneous element in the movement of *différance* (symbolic retention, delayed becoming- sign-subject-being), through perception and the unconscious (to use Freudian categories), brings about the revolution of *différance*: expenditure, semantico-syntactic anomaly, erotic excess, social protest, jouissance. This heterogeneity breaks through the barrier of repression and censorship that writing entails...[it] is a threat to repression and tosses it aside.⁹⁸

But while Kristeva ultimately overstates her case here through her imposition of an essentialist identity upon a libidinal economy of uncatheted drives which she presents as being radically 'other' to language, the Symbolic and the law (for what we also need to follow through is the complicity of the psychical with the Symbolic), her basic assertion that language does not exhaust the formation of the subject remains valid.

But what is perhaps at issue in both Kristeva's remarks and in other critical responses to deconstruction is the meaning of the term 'the text'. For if the text is to be understood literally as referring only to verbal language (to which everything is subordinated), then there is indeed much to be said in support of such criticisms. Yet while deconstruction is most widely thought of with reference only to Derrida's by now notorious statement that "there is nothing outside of the text", it is clear that for Derrida there is no single definition of what constitutes a text. As he has frequently indicated, the text is not to be understood solely as 'the book', i.e. as a discrete authorial text or, indeed, as a literal object.⁹⁹ But while the text refers to a particular signifying relationship (which may perhaps involve an author) the very possibility of such a text is predicated upon a much broader notion of 'writing'. Thus, just as Derrida cites an *archi-écriture* which precedes the opposition between speech and writing, so the existence of a text rests upon the operations of writing. As he remarks of Rousseau's text:

in what one calls the real life of these existences of flesh and bone, beyond and behind what one believes can be circumscribed as Rousseau's text there has never been anything but a writing; there have never been anything but supplements, substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the 'real' supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement etc.¹⁰⁰

Derrida's strategy, as he has himself said, is to "recast the concept of the text by generalizing it almost without limit, in any case without present or perceptible limit,

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 143.

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, p.144.

⁹⁹ See for example, *Of Grammatology*, *op. cit.*, Chapter 1 and p. 158 ff.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p. 159.

without any limit that *is*. That's why there is nothing 'beyond the text'.¹⁰¹ It is in this sense that the text falls within the broader category of writing which can refer to any form of signification which is (necessarily) structured upon difference and, as such, is divorced from any ultimate guarantee of origins or presentness. Any attempt therefore to go "beyond the text" amounts not only to an attempt to avoid the operations of difference, the supplement etc. but can only involve a 'return' to writing and the supplement. If textuality or writing can thus be understood as referring as to any relation or articulation of difference (thereby allowing the possibility of a non-linguistic text) or as any system of "spacing" (of signs detached from an authenticating origin),¹⁰² then it is feasible to conceive of processes such as perception (and of other forms of experience which are irreducible to language) as being textual in that they are structured by a writing. Moreover, "the text is always a field of forces: heterogeneous, differential, open and so on."¹⁰³ Thus, for instance, within the framework of psychoanalysis, Derrida's claim that "writing is unthinkable without repression" is fully reversible.¹⁰⁴

Arguably for some, no doubt, this notion of a general text "without limit" involves such a broadening of 'the text' that it becomes virtually meaningless. But, for the moment, my concern here is simply to argue that, as the example of perception demonstrated, reference to textuality and writing does not in itself involve the reduction of the subject to being purely an effect of either language or of 'the text' as understood literally. Given this, the question to be posed with reference to what Derrida calls a "psychical writing" is:

¹⁰¹ "But Beyond...(Open letter to Anne McClintock and Rob Dixon", trans. Peggy Kamuf, *Critical Inquiry*, 13, Autumn 1986, p. 167.

¹⁰² "We have already defined elsewhere the fundamental property of writing, in a difficult sense of the word, as *spacing* : diastem and time becoming space; an unfolding as well, on an original site, of meaning which irreversible, linear consecution, moving from present point to present point, could only tend to repress, and (to a certain extent) could only fail to repress.", "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit., p. 217. Elsewhere Derrida has described writing as the "textual spacing of differences...the chain of substitutions...(archi-trace, archi-writing, reserve, brisure, articulation, supplement, différance: there will be others.)", *Positions*, op. cit., p. 14, or as "the impossibility of a chain arresting itself on a signified that would not relaunch that signified, in that this signified is already a substitution.", *ibid.*, p. 82.

¹⁰³ "But Beyond..." , op. cit., p. 168.

¹⁰⁴ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit. p. 226. Moreover, it is repression (both psychical and social) which Derrida would also seem to be citing as "the agency within us which always already keeps watch over perception, be it internal or external"(*ibid.*). Moreover, 'writing' always entails a form of self-repression or protection, i.e., "There is no writing which does not devise some means of protection, *to protect against itself*, against the writing by which the 'subject' is himself threatened as he lets himself be written: *as he exposes himself*", *ibid.* p. 224.

not if the psyche is indeed a kind of text, but: what is a text, and what must the psyche be if it can be represented by a text? For if there is neither machine nor text without psychical origin, there is no domain of the psychic without text.¹⁰⁵

The archive: repetition and difference

Not only, then, do the potential tensions between grammatology and psychoanalysis arise in part from differing definitions of the meaning of the terms 'text', 'textuality' etc. but they can, I believe, be further resolved by the use of deconstruction as a technique for reading and using psychoanalysis - a strategy which is open to the charge of itself ascribing a supplementary status to deconstruction in relation to psychoanalysis. In many respects such a charge is justified in that I would also argue that while deconstruction provides an invaluable critical vocabulary, it is psychoanalysis which supplies the mechanisms which account both for the desire for presence and the disruptive effects of alterity. It is in this sense that the language of deconstruction needs to be situated within what Kristeva calls the "materialist practice" of psychoanalysis.¹⁰⁶ More specifically, what I wish to focus on is the affective or experiential life of the subject which, while it is undoubtedly structured upon a writing (in the Derridean sense) and shaped by language, is not however reducible to purely linguistic structures. Indeed

¹⁰⁵ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit., p. 199.

¹⁰⁶ Thus while, for example, Derrida claims that "Without the possibility of *différance*, the desire of presence as such would not find its breathing space" (*Of Grammatology*, op. cit., p. 143) or else refers to "the desire for the centre in the constitution of structure and the process of signification" ("Structure, Sign and Play", *Writing and Difference*, op. cit., p. 280), he is ultimately unable to account for the existence of these logocentric imperatives (as the desire of/for presence, the repression of *différance* etc.). Instead, deconstruction can only describe their structures, workings and effectivities. In this sense Kristeva's criticism of grammatology would appear to be legitimate. Derrida would thus seem to assume some kind of generative psychical economy within logocentrism (but one which remains largely untheorised) although an acknowledgement of psychical primacy is perhaps implied in his reference to a "psychic writing, which prefigures the meaning of writing in general" ("Freud and the Scene of Writing" op. cit., p. 209). But perhaps the reticence of such a theorisation is because, for Derrida, this would imply a return to presence. Yet while, in "Freud and the Scene of Writing", Derrida argues that "The concept of a (conscious or unconscious) subject necessarily refers to the concept of substance - and thus of presence - out of which it is born...Thus the Freudian concept of the trace must be radicalised and extracted from the metaphysics of presence which still retain it (particularly in the concepts of consciousness, the unconscious, perception, reality and several others" (op. cit., p. 229), he himself, in order to account for what both runs and disrupts the psychical "machine", and for the inadequacy of the machine metaphor itself as a representation of the psyche, makes reference to an energy, e.g. "the labour of writing which circulated like psychical energy between the unconscious and the conscious" (p. 212), and to an "energetics", "surplus" and "force" which would seem to be an aspect of the trace itself (i.e. "a weave of pure traces, in which meaning and force are united"). Yet this would then seem to contradict his assertion that "The distinction between force and meaning...belongs to a metaphysics of consciousness and presence, or rather presence in the world." Derrida thus not only makes recourse (against himself) to a form of substantive grounding of the psychical (as an economy of forces and energies) and thus some kind of presence, "a certain Being-in-the-world of the psyche" (p. 228), but he remains caught within the same difficulty of describing the articulation between the psychical and the somatic ("between force and meaning") which had been a feature of Freud's own theory of the drives.

one might take the functioning of the drives as an example of this relation in that, while they become attached to and structured by words and representations (an aspect neglected by Kristeva) and as such are themselves a text, this is not to say that they then disappear by being absorbed within the internal relation between verbal signifiers.¹⁰⁷

But more broadly I would argue that, as opposed to Kristeva's charge of grammatology's ignorance "of [the subject's] functioning as social practice" and of its "disinterestedness toward (social and/or symbolic) structure", the mobilisation of psychoanalysis within a deconstructive reading provides a necessary dimension for a psycho-social analysis - a kind of psycho-pathology of modernity - which allows us to focus on those moments of rupture and instability within photography's hegemonic production of knowledge and subject positions. Essential to this reading is a rethinking of the archive which is now no longer to be viewed in terms of genre (the level of the referent) or of authorship, but can instead be framed in terms of both the presence of the gaze and its absence (as a consequence of the negativity which Kristeva describes as "the sudden interruption of conscious presence and its finitude").¹⁰⁸ The archive can thus be read as a structure of repetition or return (as the continual production of a gaze for the subject) and of difference or rupture (as the simultaneous destabilisation and denial of that presence).

However, this is not to argue that the repetition at work across the archive is an essentially static process, i.e. a repetition of the same. Or rather, while this may be the impulse behind repetition - the (re)affirmation of identity - its effects militate against cohesion and stability. For (to modify Derrida slightly), "[Re]iteration alters:

¹⁰⁷ In fact, the charge of over-valuing the constitutive role of language is one more justifiably brought against Lacan and his "linguisterie" than against Derrida. Lacan's axiomatic statement that the unconscious "is structured like a language" comes not only to mean in effect that the unconscious is language (i.e. that it is a linguistic structure) but also that its origin is solely a function of the acquisition of language (i.e. entry into the Symbolic). Derrida's position (and the understanding of the unconscious that I am also arguing for here) would seem to be closer to that of Lacan's followers Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire for whom "The unconscious...rather than a language, is the very condition of language" (Laplanche's "Postscript" to "The unconscious: A psychoanalytic study", trans. Patrick Coleman, *Yale French Studies*, 1972, p. 178). For a Lacanian rebuttal of Laplanche and Leclaire, see Anika Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan*, trans. David Macey, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, pp. 113-131. For an effective countering of Lacan's excessive linguisticism within the context of the dream-work, see Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Discours, figure*, op. cit., pp. 250-260. Part of this chapter entitled "Le travail du reve ne pense pas" which contains this critique is available as "The Dream-Work does not Think", trans. Mary Lydon, *Oxford Literary Review*, 6, 1, 1983. See also Lyotard's extensive discussion of Freud's paper which, in its account of the scene of phantasy as a "writing", bears some (limited) comparison with Derrida's description of the psyche (*Discours, Figure*, Paris, Éditions Klincksieck, 1971, pp. 327-360, espec. p. 349) and also his "The Unconscious as *mis-en-scène*" in *Performance*, eds. M. Benamou and C. Caramello, Madison, Coda Press, 1978.

¹⁰⁸ *Revolution in Poetic Language*, op. cit. p. 197.

something new takes place."¹⁰⁹ Thus instead of affirming a pre-existent presence, identity or origin, repetition or reiteration betrays a (neurotic) anxiety over the non-coincidence of meaning with itself - the non-self-identity of both sign and subject. Not, therefore, always a confirmation of presence, repetition (as both symptom and supplement) can operate as a transformative addition to an origin or identity which in fact never was a presence. In effect, then, repetition:

is not the origin, but that which takes its place; which is not, moreover, the opposite of an origin. It is not absence instead of presence, but a trace which replaces a presence which never has been present...[the] repeated...is no longer exactly the same...[for] as soon as a sign emerges, it begins by repeating itself. Without this, it would not be a sign, would not be what it is, that is to say, the non-self-identity which regularly refers to the same.¹¹⁰

Moreover, while identity is necessarily produced through difference, difference (as a negative and secondary contrary) remains subordinated to identity in so far as it serves to re-instate the position of a prior identity or origin. However, an effect of repetition, as supplement and displacement, is to initiate a dissolution of regulative boundaries and structures. It is this repetition, or "repetition as difference", which Foucault sets against a "philosophy of representation" predicated upon identity, a philosophy within which repetition "becomes, within a system of representation, the organizing principle for similarities." Ultimately Foucault's target is a dialectics of contradiction, a dialectics which acknowledges but then suppresses difference:

In actuality, dialectics does not liberate differences; it guarantees, on the contrary, that they can always be recaptured. The dialectical sovereignty of similarity consists in permitting differences to exist, but always under the rule of the negative, as an instance of non-being. They may appear as the successful subversion of the Other, but contradiction secretly assists in the salvation of identities.¹¹¹

Against this repetition-of-the-same, Foucault highlights the destabilising effects of repetition within dialectics - a repetition which dialectical thought must repress:

As for repetition, it would cease to function as the dreary succession of the identical, and would become displaced difference...difference that displaces and repeats itself, that contracts and expands; a singular point that consists and slackens the indefinite repetition in an acute event. One must give rise to thought as intensive irregularity - disintegration of the subject...[for] repetition betrays the weakness of similarity at the moment when it can no longer negate itself in the other, when it can no longer recapture itself in the other. Repetition, at one time pure exteriority and a pure figure of the origin, has been transformed into an internal weakness, a deficiency of finitude, a sort of stuttering of the negative: the neurosis of dialectics.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ "Limited Inc abc", *Glyph*, II, 1977.

¹¹⁰ "Ellipsis" in *Writing and Difference*, op.cit., pp. 295-297.

¹¹¹ "Theatrum Philosophicum" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews*, ed. and trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1977, pp. 184-185.

¹¹² *ibid.*, pp. 182-184. Foucault's essay is a review of Gilles Deleuze's *Différence et Répétition* which argues for a non-dialectical difference, i.e. "Difference and repetition have replaced the identical and the negative, identity and contradiction", *Différence et Répétition*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1972, p. 1. Against a repetition as mechanical replication (the antithesis of difference), Deleuze argues for a difference as repetition which, in the form for example of 'nomadic' difference (*différence libre*) is a difference of dispersal and dissolution.

Transferring this account of repetition-as-difference to the archive, it too can be read as a structure of repetitions whether, for example, in terms of the photograph's status as the 'copy' of an 'original' presence or in relation to photography's continual summoning of spectatorial presence. But more broadly, what is a work across the archive, as a consequence of the self-disrupting effects of repetition, is a fixing and unfixing of spectatorial subject positions. However, this is not to subsume the subject as entirely an 'effect' of the text (as either photograph or archive). Rather, it is a question of the interaction or engagement between the subject-as-text (itself a mnemonic archive) and the specificity of the archive-as-text. It is this redefinition of the archive which constitutes the central concern of the thesis which will involve the juxtaposition of the cognitive mapping of the city and the (attempted) securing of urban identities and legibility (a form of photo-cartography, which can be framed within the debates around social space) with a discussion of those moments of incoherence and threat - moments that involve what Jürgen Habermas has called the "exposing" of the individual "to the dangers of sudden, shocking encounters"¹¹³ - which can be situated in relation to forms of social encounter and to the question of proximity and distance. In particular I shall be focusing on the asymmetry within perception (between, for example, the look and the Gaze, and the disjunction between spectatorial investment in representation as distinct from what images may return) as a means to arguing that photography itself undermines the oppositional boundaries (of presence/absence, subject/object, exteriority/interiority etc.) across which it operates.}

This self-undermining is symptomatic of the structuring tension within the archive between the discursive representations of photography as distinct from its practices and effects. This argument will in part determine the structure of this thesis which will move between a broad discussion of photography and space (both its production and destabilisation) and a detailed reading of a few selected photographs. However, it is also necessary to register at least one caveat or, rather, to clarify the usage of some terminology. For the notion of 'presence' employed here has something of a heuristic status (as arguably much of Derrida's own terminology does) in that, while it initiates a redefinition of the archive, I do not wish to imply a monumentalising of presence as a meta-concept co-extensive with

¹¹³ "Modernity - An Incomplete Project" in *The Anti-Aesthetic, Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster, Port Townsend, Washington, Bay Press, 1983, p. 5.

Western thought or with a socially abstracted subject. Moreover, another (alleged) danger that has been posited as arising from such a reading is that the denial of presence simultaneously becomes not only a nostalgic elegy for its disappearance.

As one commentator has claimed:

deconstruction...keeps alive the demand for transcendence simply by never-endingly denying its possibility - a criticism of essentialism which can rapidly become a lament for its loss, a consolation of the limitations of the human condition which is simultaneously a recipe for political quietism.¹¹⁴

However, while there may indeed be some truth to the observation that the repeated affirmation of loss turns into an attempt to recoup that loss by making it knowable, such criticisms perhaps arise in part as a consequence of a misreading of deconstruction or, rather, of what sometimes passes for it. However, while the use of a language of 'presence' need not of itself produce totalising analytical models,¹¹⁵ any potential dangers of lapsing into such nostalgia are, I would suggest, avoidable ✓ by locating presence as a retroactive phantasy. But more particularly, this thesis can be read as being in part a response to Roland Barthes's call for "a History of Looking".¹¹⁶ This history needs to be further broken down and at most my concern here is to track particular moments of looking and spectatorship which always need to be brought back to the specificity of the photographs themselves.

However, this thesis is not a history of photography. Instead, it is aimed at countering traditional models of photographic history and entails thinking about photography in terms of a reformulation of the archive as both an unstable construction and as one which ultimately ceases to be a discrete and containable entity. As such, it is not my concern to construct yet another taxonomy of the archive for implicit in much of my approach is a notion of discontinuity. Just as there is, for example, no direct line between the unconscious and the social, so also I do not intend to employ psychoanalysis as a 'master-code' within an historical account of perception so as to produce a seamless theoretical model or some kind of psycho-social account of modernity.¹¹⁷ Nor do I want to ascribe a systemic

¹¹⁴ Tony Bennett, "Texts in History; the determination of readings and their texts" in *Post-Structuralism and the Question of History*, eds. Derek Attridge, Geoff Bennington, and Robert Young, Cambridge University Press, 1987, pp. 65-66.

¹¹⁵ Moreover, as Derrida has often observed, it is impossible to operate outside of the terms of logocentrism. As he says of Heidegger, for example, "[He] recognizes that economically and strategically he had to borrow the syntax and lexical resources of the language of metaphysics, as one must always do at the very moment that one deconstructs this language", *Positions*, op. cit. p. 10.

¹¹⁶ *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard, Fontana, 1984, p. 12.

¹¹⁷ See, for example, Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*, London, Abacus, 1980 or prior to this the critical writings of Marcuse and Reich.

coherence to the social itself. Instead, what is involved here is an altogether more modest project which seeks merely to draw attention to some of the psychical investments and displacements operative across photography. For the 'historical' (having been 'described') does not then exist as something to which we can directly 'refer' photography. As distinct from a matching of images and their historical referents, what is at work in the archive is an interplay of vision and writing, of perception and inscription - a textuality of the gaze. It is particular moments within this inscription of the gaze (or, rather, of gazes) across the archive that I shall be pursuing here. This of course does not imply an evacuation of the historical for questions of identity and spectatorship need to be located within the specific context of the nineteenth century city. But the initial concern of this thesis is to generate frameworks within which further historical analysis might then take place.

1

GEOMETRIES OF PRESENCE

*The subject is always searching for his certainty*¹

In this chapter I wish primarily to discuss just one photograph - Charles Marville's picture of the Rue de Rivoli taken in the 1850s (fig. 1.1). There are two aspects of this image that I shall pursue here. Firstly, I shall argue that Marville's photograph is, in many respects, a photograph 'of' photography in the sense of its being a photograph which affirms the discursive representation of photography. Secondly, a reading of this particular image can serve as a point of departure for examining the relation between the photographic image and the city. As such, my concern here is to begin to outline an analytical framework which will be further amplified in subsequent chapters. Starting with a discussion of Marville's photograph within a brief survey of the historical identity of space and the Haussmannisation of Paris, I shall then situate the photograph in the context of psychoanalytical debates around subjectivity and vision.

Photographic space

Aside from its topographical interest, the most striking feature of Marville's photograph is its spatial organisation. This organisation of space involves the juxtaposition of two apparently disparate spatial registers. On the one hand, there is an empty, expansive and indeterminate foreground space which, aside from the relatively weak pattern of the cobblestones, is structured solely by the arbitrary limits of the photograph's own edges rather than by any of the objects within the picture itself. On the other hand, there is the space of a relentless and plunging perspective which disappears to infinity just left of centre. In fact, these two spatial orders are not altogether mutually discrete for the function of the 'deep' space of the mid and background is, in effect, to organise and structure the formless space in the foreground. This spatial formation is not, however, simply a consequence arising

¹ Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, op.cit., p. 129.

from the requirements of topographic record. For Marville's photograph operates as more than just "record". Instead, this is a photograph of spatial excess. More specifically, it is an image of the excess of a particular order of space - that of geometrical perspective.

My concern here is with the way in which that space produces a particular viewing subject for the image. For the effect of the perspective in this photograph is to evoke or, rather, to demand a spectatorial *presence*. Indeed, everything within this photograph (the external features of the buildings and the convergence of the colonnades, lamp posts and railings towards a fixed vanishing point) serves to produce an irresistible perspective which not only summons up a viewing subject but which also tyrannically organises its gaze.

However, while this presence is predicated upon spatial forms, space here is not an abstract phenomenon nor is it simply the effect of an independent mental picturing. Space has a history and it is a history of representation. And it is within an archaeology of the spatial that photography needs to be situated. As part of this archaeology it is possible to trace broad historical mutations of space. Thus a metrical classical spatial order was replaced during the Middle Ages by a hierarchical space of emplacement (i.e. of designated and fixed places for the subject). This in turn was superseded by Renaissance perspective which was first codified by Alberti. Taking Euclid's "Optics" as its model, this was an anthropocentric space organised around the projection from a central observer. Post-Renaissance and Enlightenment theories of space built upon this model and worked from the basic premise that spatiality was to be understood as the totality of 'objective' appearances perceived through sensory-based perception. Within this description there were, of course, particular variations, e.g. a Cartesian mathematical model, Newtonian mechanics etc. But in all of these accounts, and those of Locke and Hume, space is an autonomous natural order reducible to physical objects. Knowledge of space was founded upon an accumulation of information about phenomenal forms and appearances with a particular emphasis upon measurement and quantification. Essentially a sensory objectivism directed towards the description of objects, these accounts (regardless of whether they described space as a natural, mechanical or organic phenomenon) involved a universalisation of space and its imputed properties.

Concomitant with this sensory objectivism, however, although often in the form of a denial of it, was the notion of space as cognition, i.e. of space as a mental

construct. This was most ambitiously proposed and argued for by Kant. There is some ambiguity, however, within Kant's account as to whether space is an innate property of things or whether it is an a priori category of the mind whereby the mind has an inherent knowledge of space with, for example, the axioms of geometry as the necessary conditions of knowledge. Either way, for Kant space is a continuous and measurable Euclidean absolute through which the individual moves. Physical and social space are collapsed into a mental space or, rather, the individual's mental representation of space. It is this ideational subject (often in association with an objectivist model) which still structures the dominant paradigm of spatiality according to which space is the mental ordering of phenomena.

My purpose is not to argue for a strict sequential chronology of spatial mutations for clearly there are overlaps and co-existences of different spatial formations. Instead, the point to emphasise is that photography and the construction of photographic space need to be placed within this history of space and its dominant paradigms. However, while photography was never the mimetic mirroring and replication of spatial forms that already existed in the 'real' world, this is not to argue that photographic space was something wholly new or original even though the particular industrial processes of image production certainly were. Instead, the image produced by the camera was itself premised upon the reproduction of pre-existent spatial types. While the specific technology of the camera was indeed novel in the nineteenth century, the principle behind it had a long history. In this sense the camera's representation of space served, on both a technical and discursive level, to reaffirm and 'prove' a broad range of beliefs and assumptions about space and, more especially, perspective.

Paradoxically, however, while photography was the culmination of a long tradition of describing space, the codification and hegemony of the camera's optic in the latter nineteenth century occurred at the historical moment in which the 'classical' spatial order upon which it was predicated was itself under attack or, at least, being exposed as a construction. With, for example, the beginnings of the new physics and the rise of non-Euclidian geometry² together with the emergence of philosophical perspectivism (most notably Nietzsche) and Freud's account of the radically 'other' space of the unconscious (with *The Interpretation of Dreams* being published in 1899), the idea of a single homogeneous spatial order was being

² See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918*, London, Wiedenfeld and Nicholson 1983, p. 131ff.

comprehensively undermined.

Fundamental, however, to the still dominant discourse upon spatiality is the belief both in the centrality of the perceiving eye and in the existence of perspectival space. Portrayed as a detached and mechanical (and therefore objective) eye, the historical role of the camera was to legitimise the fixed centrality of the perceiving subject. Prerequisite to this process was the notion of central projection:

The conception of the Quattrocento system is that of scenographic space, set out as a spectacle for the eye of the spectator. Eye and knowledge come together; subject, object and the distance of the steady observation that allows the one to master the other; the scene with its strength of geometry and optics. Of that projected utopia, the camera is the culminating realisation...the image it furnishes becomes, precisely, the currency of that vision, that space.³

This identification between the spectatorial subject and the camera as the point and source of vision was itself the central tenet of the the system of monocular perspective. But while the codification of perspective has its own evolution, as an optical system it rested upon a belief in and a construction of an independent and external space that was above all measurable. A spatial order was thus described which was homogeneous and continuous with its spatial co-ordinates focusing ultimately upon a single point of vision.

That photographic space is not, in fact, synonymous with actual human perception and that the camera is not the exact replicator of the real is both scientifically and anatomically demonstrable.⁴ Not only does monocular, fixed perspective bear little correspondence with binocular vision (the stereoscope being the nearest approximation to it), but the analogy between the eye and the camera also ignores intrinsic aspects of photography such as camera angles, frozen vision, field and depth of focus and the need (at first) for long exposures. Instead, the belief in a centralised vision grounded in perspective functioned, as it still does, as a "powerful ideal". As Stephen Heath explains:

What must be more carefully emphasised is that the ideal of a steady position, of a unique embracing centre...is precisely that: a powerful ideal...there is a real utopianism at work, the construction of a code - in every sense a vision - projected onto a reality to be gained in all its hoped-for clarity much more than onto some naturally given reality.⁵

This ideal of a rational, homogeneous and universal space, given to cubic measurement, was not invented in conjunction with photography. From its origins photography was bound up with commonplace notions about space and objectivity. Indeed, as Hubert Damisch has claimed:

³ "Narrative Space", *Screen*, 17, 3, 1976, p. 76.

⁴ See Maurice Pirenne, *Optics, Painting and Photography*, Cambridge University Press, 1970.

⁵ "Narrative Space", *op.cit.*, p. 76.

The lens itself, which had been carefully corrected for 'distortions' and adjusted for 'errors', is scarcely as objective as it seems. In its structure and in the ordered image of the world it achieves, it complies with an especially familiar though very old and dilapidated system of spatial construction. to which photography belatedly brought an unexpected revival of current interest.⁶

Moreover, as Joel Snyder has argued, the power of photographs in part rests upon a belief in a "natural connection" between the photograph itself and the real. In a similar fashion, the perspectival grid was posited as a natural model of space. As Snyder explains:

Photographs make a special claim upon our attention because they are supposed not only to look realistic (although they do not all look realistic) but also to derive from or be caused by the objects they represent. This 'natural connection' has been taken as a reinforcement and even as a guarantee of realistic depiction.⁷

However, as Snyder further argues, this "program" of realistic depiction and the belief that photographs are natural phenomena is itself tied to "a model of vision itself as pictorial":

Cameras do not provide scientific corroboration of the schemata or rules invented by painters to make realistic pictures. On the contrary, cameras represent the incorporation of those schemata into a tool designed and built, with great difficulty and over a long period of time, to aid painters and draughtsmen in the production of certain kinds of pictures...The construction of the camera did not flow out of the abrupt discovery of the 'image of nature' but rather that it developed as an aid for the production of realistic paintings and that such paintings provided the standard for the kind of image that the camera was designed to produce...We have completely reversed the history of the camera in our popular accounts of photography. The problem for post-Renaissance painters was not how to make a picture that looked like an image produced by the camera, it was how to make a machine that produced an image like the one they painted.⁸

As such, Snyder concludes:"The mechanism of the camera was thoroughly standardised to meet specific pictorial requirements...Photography did not sidestep the standards of pictorial production, it incorporated them."⁹

However, while Snyder argues that photography is bound to a model of space and vision that is inherently pictorial (a model first fully elaborated by Alberti), there is an implicit danger of eliding photography with painting in terms of their formal equivalences even though their specific operative procedures are very different. It is this tendency to view photographs in purely aesthetic formal terms that motivates John Berger's comment that:

We must rid ourselves of a confusion brought about by continually comparing photography with the fine arts...Painting is an art of arrangement: therefore it is reasonable to demand that there be some kind of order in what is arranged. Every relation between forms on a painting is to some degree adaptable to the painter's purpose. This not the case with photography...Composition in the profound, formative sense of the word cannot enter into photography...The formal arrangement of a

⁶ "Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image" in *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg, New Haven, Leete's Island Books, 1980, p. 289.

⁷ "Picturing Vision" in *The Language of Images*, ed. W.J.T.Mitchell, University of Chicago Press, 1980, p.224.

⁸ *ibid.* pp. 231-232.

⁹ *ibid.* pp. 233-234.

photograph explains nothing.¹⁰

While Berger's anti-formalist attack is in itself legitimate (Berger in fact argues that it is time which gives a photograph its meaning and significance), "composition" in terms of the spatial arrangement within a photograph cannot be so easily dismissed. For far from being neutral or transparent, photographic space is an organised and signifying space.

The point to be made here is that a photograph does involve a structuring of space in that objects and people etc. are positioned within the frame. Here photography directly shares in the concept of the picture as a window but even more powerfully so as a consequence of the photograph's status as a natural object. But while the frame and 'composition' are fundamental to photography, this also involves a tension. As Steve Neale observes with reference to painting:

Just as the frame borders and packages an imaginary space, a depicted scene, so it also borders and packages a real space, the surface of the picture. An awareness of this surface is fundamental to painting. It is part of the pleasure it involves. But it is an awareness that oscillates and shifts. For the final component of monocular perspective as a system, a regime of vision, is that the surface should ideally function as a window, with the frame as the window's edge...An apparent contradiction exists then between the notion of the surface as a window, as 'transparent' glass, and the necessity for an awareness of the surface as a surface. But it is only, indeed, apparent. It is a contradiction that is managed. For the window is the other side of an impossible ideal. The surface is necessary therefore to ensure that it [the scene] is stable, that it constitutes a palpable identity. Only if this stability exists can monocular perspective construct its scenes so perfectly and centrally for the look of the individual eye.¹¹

Within photography's elimination of the painterly trace upon the surface of the image (the mark of a transformative labour), photographs themselves take on the status of the real in all its clarity, density and texture. Moreover, as a consequence of the growing hegemony of photography a direct equivalence was posited between the space represented by the photograph and 'real' space. As William Ivins observes:

Strong as the mathematical convention of perspective had become in picture making before the pervasion of photography, that event definitely clamped it on our vision and our beliefs about 'real' shapes etc. The public has come to believe that geometrical perspective, so long as it does not involve unfamiliar points of view, is 'true', just as a long time ago it believed that the old geometry of Euclid was 'the Truth'.¹²

It is within the context of this belief in the natural identity between real space, the space of the photograph and the discrete individual's own line of vision that one can cite the recurrence of those photographs in which, through the avoidance of oblique angles and the combination of long narrow perspectives with often dramatic depths

¹⁰ "Understanding a Photograph" in Trachtenberg, op. cit., pp.292-3.

¹¹ *Cinema: Technology and Production*, London, British Film Institute, 1985, p. 19.

¹² *Art and Geometry: A Study in Space Intuitions*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1946, p. 127.

of field, the vanishing point of the scene directly counterpoints the external presence of the spectator as the point of origin of a projective gaze (figs.1.2 - 1.3).

Photo-polis

With perspective cited as being synonymous with the spatial ordering of reality itself, an unbroken identity was posited between the look and space, and between the perceiving eye and its object of vision. As Neale further argues:

Photography thus constituted an enormous investment in perspective and in its image of the world on the part of the industrialised countries. It therefore constituted also an enormous social investment in the centrality of the eye, in the category and identity of the individual, in a spatial form of visual pleasure, and in an ideology of the visible world."

Framed within a discourse upon perspective, photography was bound up with what Edward Said has called a "rationality of time, space and personal identity".¹⁴ One of the major sites for the ideological investment in this regime of spatiality was the city itself. Indeed, in his account of the Renaissance *citta ideale*, Siegfried Giedion has suggested that urbanism was premised upon a system of perspectival space, i.e. "The central building in the midst of the star-shaped city fulfils the same role...[as] a symbolic observer at the focal point."¹⁵

This spatial rationalisation was a motivating dynamic for urban planning with the Haussmannisation of Paris being the most comprehensive and spectacular example during the nineteenth Century. Haussmann's reconstruction of Paris during the 1850s and 1860s can be seen as an attempt to impose a rational order upon the fabric and structure (both physical and social) of a city and marked both the fruition of a history of urban planning and the beginnings of a new spatial order. As Anthony Vidler observes:

Carrying the techniques of rationalist analysis and the formal instruments of the Ancien Regime, as refurbished by the First Empire and its institutions, to their logical extreme, Haussmann joined them to the power released by the burgeoning consumer economies of speculative credit in a magnificent attempt to seal up disorder, and enshrine measured progress, in an aesthetic package derived from Beaux-Arts academic formulas realized with all the expertise of engineering science.¹⁶

Haussmann's imposition of a rational order upon Paris, in terms of greater beauty, efficiency and social control, was both an aesthetic and political project. This project marked the culmination, through the revival of classical city planning, of Enlightenment ideals and the Reason of the philosophes but now in conjunction

¹³ *Cinema: Technology and Production*, op.cit., p. 22.

¹⁴ *Orientalism*, Peregrine, 1987, p. 167.

¹⁵ *Space, Time and Architecture*, Harvard University Press, 1967, p. 44.

¹⁶ "The Scenes on the Street: Transformations in Ideal and Reality, 1750-1871" in *On Streets*, ed. Stanford Anderson, MIT Press, 1986, p. 87.

with the instrumentalist rationality of the modern bourgeoisie. Not only was Paris to be rebuilt as befitted its status as the capital of the French Empire but the reconstruction of the city can be seen as a variant within a long tradition, going back to the Greek city-state, of creating an urban space which was both adequate to and exemplified the individual's possession of a political sovereignty and civic identity.

A necessary stage prior to the actual work of rebuilding was the imposition of a perspectival grid across the city. For the preparation of a highly detailed and accurate plan of Paris involved the intensive surveying and measurement by triangulation of the proposed areas for demolition and rebuilding. As Vidler describes:

From such a triangulation was prepared the first detailed survey of the city, a basis for the instrumentalization of Louis Napoleon's plan of transformation...To determine a new network of communication for Paris...an abstract network of precise geometry was traced at a level far above the streets.¹⁷

As a consequence of this triangulation the city itself was now viewed as a holistic entity and not an assemblage of parts. It is within this cartography of the city, involving the detailed measurement and quantification of urban spaces, that Marville's photographs need to be situated.¹⁸

While Marville's photographs need to be seen as subject to the demands of architectural and topographic documentation and not as a nostalgic or anecdotal picturesque record, their motivating origin was congruent with Haussmann's reforming ambition. As such, there was a conscious polemical context to the photographs. As Maria Morris Hambourg explains:

Thus the pictures suggest, contrary to the traditional view, that Marville was very much Haussmann's man, quite in sympathy with the rigorous, relentless logic of the Prefect's plan. His photographs of small streets presents them very much as Haussmann's philosophy painted them: narrow, uneven passages choked with curbstones and carts, their central gutters awash with noxious waste water. The axial and relatively low camera position Marville selected makes them seem so, for it emphasized the damp cobblestones and rivulets that glimmer in the foreground of the pictures...As a group, the pictures of old Paris record the insalubrious, dank, darkness which would be opened to light and air; the accidents which would be corrected by plan; the picturesque heterogeneity that would disappear beneath crisp homogeneity; the historic heritage that would exist in the future only as archival documents.¹⁹

It is within this framework of rational order and civic progress that Marville's photograph of the Rue de Rivoli acquires its significance. The extension of the Rue

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ Probably originally commissioned by Haussmann himself and later under the direction of the Travaux Historiques, Marville methodically documented those areas of the city destined for demolition. The photographs themselves (some 425 altogether) were intended to form part of a multi-volumed *Histoire generale de Paris* of which one (of the two) parts was entitled *Topographie historique du vieux Paris*.

¹⁹ *Charles Marville: Photographs of Old Paris 1852-1878*, New York, French Institute:Alliance Francais, 1981, p. 10.

de Rivoli, together with the rebuilding of the central markets, was among the earliest projects in the reconstruction of Paris and had been inherited by the Emperor Louis Napoleon from his predecessor Napoleon I. The completion of these two popular but frequently delayed projects was adopted by Louis Napoleon as a propaganda device to contrast the dynamism of the Empire with the inactivity and inefficiency of both the monarchy and the preceding Republican government. Despite concerns about the financing of the work, in 1851 Louis Napoleon successfully argued for the extension of the Rue de Rivoli by another 1,000 metres and work began in 1852. As David Pinkey relates:

The first expropriations of land and buildings in the line of the Rue de Rivoli were made in mid-October, and within a year wreckers had cut a broad path straight through the crowded central quarters. For the first time Parisians could stand in the Place de L'Oratoire on the north side of the Louvre and see across the old city to the City Hall.²⁰

With the further planning of the extension of the Rue de Rivoli in 1851 and its instigation the following year, the first stage in the rebuilding of Paris was well underway before Haussmann's appointment as Prefect of the Seine in 1853. However, one of Haussmann's first tasks was to supervise the completion of the Rue de Rivoli which had been ordered by the Emperor in 1854:

At the end of September, 1854, the Emperor authorized the construction of the last section of the Rue de Rivoli - at its eastern extremity from the City Hall to the church of Saint-Paul on the Rue Saint-Antoine. When it was completed the following year Napoleon I's dream of a broad, straight thoroughfare across the city was realized and the central barrier of ancient buildings and narrow streets was at last broken.²¹

As one of the Ancien thoroughfares and as the first major construction to be completed, the Rue de Rivoli was a prototype of the most dramatic sign and consequence of the Haussmannisation of Paris - the boulevard. Commenting upon the extension of the Rue de Rivoli, Haussmann himself described it as a "spacious, direct, monumental and above all strategic route", observing also that its straight and broad alignment "did not lend itself to the habitual tactic of local insurrections."²²

Within Haussmann's opening up of Paris as a network of "beautiful perspectives"²³ each of which was to culminate in a dramatic "point of view"²⁴ (usually a civic monument), the Rue de Rivoli stood as an example of the regular (and regulated), uniform and homogeneous construction of space that the new Paris

²⁰ *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 51.

²¹ *ibid.* pp. 56-57.

²² Quoted in Vidler *op.cit.*, pp. 91-93.

²³ Baron Haussmann, *Memoires*, vol. II, quoted in Vidler, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²⁴ *Memoires*, vol. III, quoted in Vidler, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

was to be - as well as being an obvious contrast with the images of the old city (figs.1.4 - 1.6).²⁵ Marville's photograph, as a variant upon the classical urban veduta, marks the convergence of this rational and ordered city space with the projected, ideal space of photography. This ordered space, a space both open to the viewer's gaze and one with which the spectator, as civic subject, identified was not only a recurrent motif in photography from its beginnings (fig.1.7) - and one which was often reinforced by the application of new technological developments aimed at replicating depth of vision (fig.1.8) - but it remained a standard motif in twentieth century urban photography (fig.1.9). Yet this rational space cannot simply be taken on its own terms. For what this spectatorial identification is grounded upon, yet what is also repressed at a discursive level, is the imaginary identification between the viewing subject, the photograph and the urban scene which it frames.

An optics for desire

An account of the psychical mechanisms through which this spectatorial identification is evoked might begin with Lacan's narrative of the mirror stage. But more broadly, through mobilising a psychoanalytical reading of Marville's photograph, I wish to emphasise the constitutive role of narcissism within perception and representation as a prelude to examining the relation between photography and what might be called the space of the Imaginary. For despite the ambiguities within its accounts of narcissism and identification, psychoanalysis provides an important vocabulary for describing the relation between representation, space and subjectivity with reference both to the psychical mechanisms at work (introjection, projection etc.) and to the subjective identities produced.

Three inter-related aspects of Lacan's account of the mirror stage are pertinent here. Firstly, the emphasis upon an identification that is both visual and spatial as the precondition for the operations of narcissism and desire - and, indeed, for the subsequent development of the ego (itself traceable, for Lacan, to the mirror stage). Secondly, the determinant role of an image (a reflection) that is perceived as being external to the infant/subject within that moment of primary identification. Finally, I

²⁵ For a discussion of the charges brought against Haussmann by his contemporaries including the charge of reducing the city to a series of blank spaces which obliterated topographical juxtapositions and chance views (fig.1.6), see T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1985), espec. chp. 1. As Edmond Goncourt, quoted by Clark, wrote of the new Paris in his *Journal*, "I am a stranger to what is coming, to what is, as I am to these new boulevards without turnings, without chance perspectives, implacable in their straight lines, which no longer smack of the world of Balzac, which make one think of some American Babylon of the future" (ibid., p.35).

wish to draw upon Lacan's framing of identification, narcissism and desire in terms of a spatial projection.

Describing the mirror stage as involving "an identification...namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image", Lacan continues that it "would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the I is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other."²⁶ Within Lacan's account, the mirror stage marks the moment when the pre-Oedipal infant (still in a condition of dependency, motor incoordination and disorganised drives) engages with its own specular reflection and anticipates its future self-mastery and corporeal totality. Caught within the disjunction between its own motor incapacity and its stable reflection, the child identifies with the image as total form (Gestalt). In effect, the reflection functions as the teleological sign of the infant's anticipated subjecthood in that the reflection is perceived as an image of what the child is yet to be. Within this reversed transitivity or transference from sign to subject, the infant aspires to imitate or conform to its own ideal image. It is this identification between the infant and its reflection which, argues Lacan, becomes the basis of the projective equivalences that will structure the subject's relation to the world as the individual's own body becomes the mediating referent governing its perceptual access to external space. It is from this imaginary position, too, that the subject is also able to retroactively fantasise about the "body-in-pieces".

This relation between body and space involves an identification with an idealised image yet the child is also, according to Lacan, alienated from that image:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation - and which manufactures the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality which I shall call orthopaedic - and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.²⁷

Not only does the subject in the mirror stage become an object of its own perception, but the identification with an idealised image initiates the "fictional direction" of the child's misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) of itself as an imaginary unity (the specular *moi*), i.e. an identification of itself as an independent (and increasingly rigidified) ego with its concomitant "illusion of autonomy". For Lacan, the ego as an Imaginary instance, functions as a defence mechanism protecting the

²⁶ "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytical experience" in *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, London, Tavistock, 1977, p. 2.

²⁷ *ibid.* p.4.

subject from the recognition of its own fundamental lack. For this reason, Lacan argues, we must:

not regard the ego as centred on the *perception-consciousness system*, or as organised by the 'reality principle'...Our experience shows that we should start instead from the *function of méconnaissance* that characterises the ego in all its structures.²⁸

While the structure for this emergence of identity is derived from Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness (especially the dialectic of master and slave) in which the subject's self-awareness is achieved through its reciprocal recognition by the Other,²⁹ Lacan as it were misreads Hegel in that the self-transparent, intentional consciousness of the Hegelian dialectic is displaced by a model of inter-subjective opacity and asymmetry in that the subject's alienation in the mirror stage is a consequence of its projective identification with the mirror image as an ego-ideal or alter-ego which stands over the subject (of lack). Within this disjunction between self and image, the perception of the self from the place of or as the other initiates a "splitting" in the subject while also provoking an auto-rivalisation and an aggressivity directed towards the other. For this reason too it forms the basis of the paranoid nature of self-identification. Moreover, Lacan, arguing for "the evident connection between the narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I*, [and] the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in a relation involving the most samaritan of aid"³⁰ points to aggression as the necessary correlative of narcissism.

Not only, then, does the mirror stage initiate the founding of the Imaginary - the illusory belief in an unmediated immediacy between subject and object (which recalls Derrida's descriptions of "transcendental signified") - but it also contains the basis for the ambivalent binary oppositions (e.g. between narcissism and an alienating identity or between paranoia and aggressivity) which structure it. Engagement with its own reflection thus places the child within a process of identification and separation, i.e. in a process of resemblance and rivalry with the

²⁸ *ibid.* p. 6.

²⁹ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford, 1977. See also Wilferd Ver Eecke, "Hegel as Lacan's Source of Necessity in Psychoanalytical Theory" in *Interpreting Lacan*, eds. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan, Newhaven and London, Yale University Press, 1983. For the immediate precedent for Lacan's reading of Hegel, see Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, London, 1980.

³⁰ "The Mirror stage", *op.cit.*, p.6. As Lacan describes elsewhere, "what the subject finds in this altered image of his body is the paradigm of all the forms of resemblance that will bring over onto the world of objects a tinge of hostility by projecting on them the manifestation of the narcissistic image, which, from the pleasure derived from meeting himself in the mirror, becomes when confrontating (sic.) his fellow man an outlet for his most intimate aggressivity...It is in this image that becomes fixed, the ideal ego, from the point at which the subject stops as ego ideal. From this point on, the ego is a function of mastery, a play of presence, a bearing (prestance), and of constituted rivalry", "The subversion of the subject in the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious", *Écrits*, *op.cit.*, p. 307.

other (which is also, of course, its own image). Essentially, however, the structure of the mirror stage remains dyadic, i.e. between the specular subject and its own reflection. What is crucially missing from Lacan's account is the *look* of the other (primarily the mother) which is present from the very moment of primary identification and is not subsequent to it.

Lacan argues that the mirror stage occurs "*before* [the subject] is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other" yet it is the confirmatory look-of-the-(m)other which is as important, if not more so, than the child's engagement with its own image. Indeed it is the image of the parental figure and not the child's own reflection which would most likely provide the ideal image or ego with which it identifies. As Donald Winnicott remarks: "Lacan does not think of the mirror in terms of the mother's face".³¹ Moreover, Winnicott continues:

the mother's role of giving back to the baby the baby's own self continues to have importance in terms of the child and the family. Naturally, as the child develops and the maturational processes become sophisticated, and identifications multiply, the child becomes less and less dependent on getting back the self from the mother's and father's face and from the faces of other's who are in parental or sibling relationships.³²

However, a recognition of this initial omission of the look-of-the-mother would seem to be implicit in Lacan's subsequent references to the mirror stage in, for example, his description of :

the gesture with which the child in front of the mirror, turning to the one who is holding it, appeals with its look to the witness who decants, verifying it, the recognition of the image, of the jubilant assumption, where indeed *it already was*.³³

In other words, at the 'moment' of the mirror stage (itself a continual process of engagement), the child is already caught within an exchange of looks and is positioned through the look of the other. As Jacqueline Rose comments: "The permeation of the other over the specular relation therefore reveals the necessity of appeal, and hence the structural incompleteness of the relation, and then, through that, the irreducible place of desire within the original model."³⁴ By now tracing desire (for the other) to the mirror stage itself, Lacan here shifts its significance away from that of identification only. Now identification and desire would appear to be co-existent.

Through following through Lacan's citing of desire within the mirror stage it is

³¹ "Mirror-role of Mother and Family in Child Development" in *Playing and Reality*, London, Tavistock, 1971, p. 111.

³² *ibid.* p. 118.

³³ Quoted in Jacqueline Rose "The Imaginary" in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, London, Verso, 1986, p. 186.

³⁴ *ibid.*

now possible to query his original account. For, rather than citing a primordial moment of (self-)recognition and alienation - the moment which initiates the emergence of the ego - it is possible to argue instead that the subject only comes to 'know' itself through introjecting the gaze, or the use Winnicott's term, the "attitude"³⁵ of the other. Here self-identity arises from its being mirrored back to the subject from the place of the other's desire.

It is this desire both of and for the other which also resolves the problem within Lacan's original account of the subject's seemingly spontaneous but pre-reflexive recognition of itself. For a basic difficulty with Lacan's original account is that, for the infant to be able to (mis)recognise itself, it must already have some conception of self-identity - in effect, it must already be a subject. Recognition cannot simply be a spontaneous event for the subject can only recognise itself as a 'me' if it already has a prior conception of being an 'I'. For this reason the self-conscious unitary subject, even as the bearer of an illusory identity, cannot be the point of departure for subsequent development. Instead, like the "body-in-pieces", the specular image of a unitary subject is a retroactive phantasy. In his initial account of the mirror stage, however, Lacan in effect reifies and temporally projects back a phantasy of self-plenitude as an empirical moment (but one now lost) within the subject's history.

In effect, Lacan posits a self-causing subject which from the start 'knows' or recognises its own lack. My point here is not to reject Lacan's account of the mirror stage but merely to question one aspect of it and to argue that, instead of seeing the subject's early history as a development arising from (the recognition of) primordial lack, it can be read as a movement from undifferentiated fusion and identity (with the mother) to separation and loss (of course themselves forms of lack). Moreover, I would argue that in some sense the subject is always positioned by the gaze of the other in that an awareness of that Gaze is not temporally subsequent to the narcissistic exchange with the mirror image. For, following Freud's account in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, it is the experience of loss which precipitates the ego's formation as a protective "shell". This notion was developed further in *The Ego and the Id*. Here Freud's description of the ego as "first and foremost a bodily ego...[and] not merely a surface entity, but...the projection of a surface"³⁶ (i.e. as a body ego) would in part support Lacan's account of the mirror stage. But Freud,

³⁵ "Mirror-role of Mother and Family in Child Development", op. cit.

³⁶ *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 26.

following his remarks in "Mourning and Melancholia" regarding introjection and "the identification of the ego with the abandoned object",³⁷ further argues that the incorporation of lost loved ones is a means of understanding all ego formation in that the ego is "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes...[which] contains the history of those object choices".³⁸ In this sense, the ego is originally (an)other in that the subject "becomes like" another ego through an introjective identification.

Introjection/incorporation is the key process here in that the abandoned objects that constitute the ego or subjective identity are objects which were originally external to the subject but which have been internalised. Describing the process by which the subject mediates between itself and the external world through using an "internal representation", Richard Wollheim has described one aspect of the process by which internal objects have "derived their existence from incorporative phantasies of the subject they inhabit."³⁹ More specifically he adds, "any internal object...owes its existence to a phantasy of oral incorporation."⁴⁰ Incorporation, argues Wollheim, is the mechanism of internalisation which, he suggests, can be seen as a defensive strategy adopted by the individual subject:

The account begins with a perception, in which the figure in the environment is perceived by a subject as either very benign or very malign, and this figure the subject then phantasizes by taking in to himself. If the perception is what motivates the phantasy, it is reasonable that what the subject wishes to achieve, in the case of the malign perception, is to protect himself from the harm that the figure might do him.⁴¹

It is not so much the defensive aspect that I wish to focus on here but, rather, the libidinal investment active within the process of incorporation itself. What is significant here is Wollheim's description of phantasies as being "self-representing", in other words as referring to the body itself:

in phantasizing the incorporation of the figure the subject thereby incorporates him, and this in turn could be accounted for if not merely did the subject's phantasies include a representation of themselves but these representations represented them as the very bodily activities that they are of. It is essential to the incorporative phantasy that it represents itself as an actual incorporative process, and this bridges the gap which otherwise would open up, between resort to phantasy and the lowering of anxiety.⁴²

While Wollheim then goes on to claim that "Corporeal self-representation cannot stop short at the incorporative phantasy, it must extend to internalisation",⁴³ it is

³⁷ *Standard Edition*, vol. XIV, p. 249.

³⁸ *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 29.

³⁹ "The bodily ego" in *Philosophical Essays on Freud*, eds. Richard Wollheim and James Hopkins, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 137.

⁴⁰ *ibid.* pp. 137-138.

⁴¹ *ibid.* p. 132.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.* p. 133.

with reference to the phantasy of incorporation itself - which is self-represented corporeally (i.e. orally) - that we can in part describe perception. The subject's gaze can here be likened to Freud's description of "the original pleasure-ego [which] wants to introject into itself everything that is good and to eject from itself everything that is bad"⁴⁴ - whereas for Wollheim the subject internalises both good and bad objects. The self-representation of a (devouring) gaze is here determined by what Wollheim calls "something corporeal" - in this case oral incorporation. It is this representation which can then be put with Freud's description of the ego as a "body ego...a surface entity...the projection of a surface" whereby perception and the look can be situated within an auto-affective libidinal economy. Thus, as Jean Laplanche argues:

But if it is true that hunger and the function of eating can be completely supported and underwritten by love and narcissism, why not consider the same situation as applicable to other vital functions, and perhaps to 'perception' itself? The relation of the ego to perception, as conceived of by a certain 'ego-psychology', would be reversed while at the same time retaining all its specificity. The ego does not blossom forth from the 'perception system', but, on the one hand, it is formed from perceptions and primarily from perceptions of a fellow creature, and, on the other hand, it takes over libidinally, as its own, the activity of perception. I perceive, just as I eat, 'for the love of the ego'.⁴⁵

For Lacan, however, the structure of the ego does not gradually emerge from the incorporation of external objects (an incorporation which, in the example of perception, is libidinally charged) but, as an Imaginary instance, it arises spontaneously as a compensatory response to the subject's alienation during the mirror stage. But, by following Freud's description of the ego as a defence mechanism (as distinct from his later theory of the ego as a self-conscious adaptive agency), the subject's belief in its autonomy can be seen not as a point of origin for subjectivity but as a defensive phantasy provoked by the realisation of loss and contingency. Whereas Lacan posits as an origin a subject which already knows or recognises itself as incomplete, the 'self' can instead be seen as emerging both from the gradual experience of loss, separation and difference⁴⁶ and from the gaze of the other - an account which could still, however, retain the notion of the ego as an Imaginary instance.

As distinct, then, from Lacan's positing of the subject's inaugural and apparently spontaneous recognition of its own primordial lack, the phantasy at

⁴⁴ "Negation", *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 237.

⁴⁵ *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976, p. 83.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Freud's discussion of "the significance of the loss of object" in *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, *Standard Edition*, vol. XX, sec. 8, espec. pp. 138-140.

work in the mirror stage can only operate retrospectively from the Symbolic and cannot exist prior to it. In fact the presence of the Symbolic within the mirror stage is evident in the concept of an "ideal" image with its implication of a cultural norm which renders untenable any rigid separation between Symbolic and Imaginary. Moreover, entry into the Symbolic (the process of socialisation) is via a sequential narrative of separation and loss (a narrative which ultimately comes to be figured by the castration complex) and it is this socialising process which in turn produces the retroactive phantasy or compensatory belief in an original (but now lost) plenitude. For Lacan, however, the misperception of the mirror stage implies a denial of castration yet a denial which is prior to the experience of difference and lack. What is at work here instead would seem to be a direct effect of *Nachträglichkeit* (deferral) in that it is socialisation which induces a phantasy or 'memory' of what preceded it.⁴⁷ This memory or belief is not only a phantasy which is then projected back into the past but it is a phantasy which then supplies the possibility of meaning or affect to an earlier economy which was necessarily unavailable to signification. In short, a self-aware monadic subject cannot be the starting point for a process of socialisation. Instead it is the experience of loss and separation which generates a phantasy of presence (as a unified self) and it is within this phantasy structure that signification functions as substitute-formations (representations) of a desired plenitude.

But more immediately, however, the narratives of *Nachträglichkeit* and the formation of the ego are, of course, closely bound to the question of narcissism. In his account of the mirror stage Lacan would seem to be describing a secondary narcissism in that the image, although a reflection, stands as an ego-ideal. What is

⁴⁷ The temporal complexity of the mirror stage has been noted by Jane Gallop. As he observes, "There is something quite difficult about the temporal order of the mirror stage. It produces contradiction in those trying to to describe it...The specific difficulty in thinking the temporality of the mirror stage is its intrication of anticipation and retroaction. The retroaction is based upon anticipation. In other words, the self is constituted through anticipating what it will become, and thus this anticipatory model is used for gauging what was before", (*Reading Lacan*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 1985, pp. 80-81). Thus the infant before the mirror "finds in the mirror image, 'already there', a mastery that she will actually learn only later. The jubilation, the enthusiasm, is tied to the temporal dialectic by which she appears *already* to be what she will only *later* become" (ibid., p. 78). And, although Gallop does not make reference to the effects of *Nachträglichkeit* within "the temporal dialectic of a moment that is at once anticipatory and retroactive", the mirror stage is similarly structured upon deferred or retroactive knowledge - a knowledge, which in this instance, is based upon anticipation: "The infant is thus thrown from 'insufficiency' to 'anticipation'. However, that 'insufficiency' can be understood only from the perspective of the 'anticipation'. The image of the body in pieces is fabricated retroactively from the mirror stage. It is only the anticipated 'orthopedic' form of its totality that can define - retroactively - the body as insufficient. Thus the impetus of the drama turns out to be so radically accelerated that the second term precedes the first...anticipation is always entangled with retroaction" (ibid., p. 86). For a discussion of *Nachträglichkeit* with reference to historical temporality, see Rainer Nägele's "Belatedness: History After Freud and Lacan" in his *Reading After Freud*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1987, pp. 169-201.

thus omitted, or perhaps elided, within this narrative is the role of primary narcissism. For it is primary narcissism which, I would argue, also plays a part in overdetermining the retroactive phantasy of plenitude. Within this scenario, primary narcissism does not denote a self-conscious plenitude (a moment of monadic autonomy) but instead describes both an auto-eroticism and a condition of undifferentiation or fusion between subject and object/other. Not only, as Winnicott describes, does the child "see him or herself" in the face of the mother but "no object external to the self is known."⁴⁸ Effectively seeing its own self everywhere, it is the boundaryless subject of primary narcissism which is akin to Lacan's description of an "asubjectivity of total presence"⁴⁹ or the "absolute subject"⁵⁰ of the newborn infant.

However, as Laplanche has argued, following Freud's own description of primary narcissism as a "fiction", primary narcissism has something of a mythical status in that it refers to:

a kind of hypothetical initial state in which the organism would form a closed unit in relation to its surroundings. This state would not be defined by a cathexis of the ego, since it would be prior even to the differentiation of an ego, but by a kind of stagnation in place of libidinal energy in a biological unit conceived of as not having any objects...[It is] the image of a primal state, closed in upon itself, the prototype of the state of sleep and of dreaming.⁵¹

What makes this condition unsustainable is what Laplanche calls "the imperfection of the system, the hiatus - however slight - introduced between need and maternal aid, that would provoke the hallucination [i.e. of the object providing satisfaction]." But while it is need which provokes what Freud called "hallucinatory satisfaction",⁵² it also renders as problematic the very concept of "primal satisfaction" since it is need or demand which propel the biological organism into object relations, difference and signification:

For, in any event, hallucination presupposes a minimal ideational content and consequently a *first* cleavage, however imperfect: a cleavage not so much between the ego and the object, or between internal and external excitations, but between immediate satisfaction and the signs which accompany every deferred, imperfect, contingent and mediated satisfaction: that brought by a fellow creature.⁵³

However, to raise the question of a "first cleavage" is not "to deny the possible existence of biologically closed systems, but only underscores the contradiction

⁴⁸ Donald Winnicott, "The Relationship of a Mother to her Baby at the Beginning" in *The Family and Individual Development*, London, Tavistock, 1963, p.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*, London and New York Methuen, 1981, p. 89. Original source not cited.

⁵⁰ "The mirror stage", op.cit., p. 5.

⁵¹ *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, op. cit., p. 70.

⁵² *ibid.*

⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 71.

inherent in any attempt to conceptualise that [subjectivity] 'for itself' and even more, to retrace the genesis of that 'for itself'. Primary narcissism as a psychological reality can only be a primal myth of a return to the maternal breast, a scenario that Freud on occasion classifies as one of the principle primal phantasies."⁵⁴

Primary narcissism is thus quite distinct from the secondary narcissism of the mirror stage. Here Lacan's own account accords with Freud's description of the role of narcissism in the formation of the ego:

There comes a time in the development of the individual at which he unifies his sexual drives (which have hitherto been engaged in auto-erotic activities) in order to obtain a love-object; and he begins by taking his own body as his love-object, and only subsequently proceeds from this to the choice of some person other than himself.⁵⁵

Here Freud cites narcissism as the transitional stage between auto-eroticism (the infant's relation to its own body as sexual object) and object-choice proper. Two forms of narcissism are cited here. Firstly, the subject loves itself as itself. Secondly, narcissism involves an identification as the child seeks a love object conceived in its own image. Within this account the body is elided with the person - an elision which does, however, parallel Freud's description of the ego as both a mental and corporeal entity. What is important here is that this narcissism is predicated upon the existence of an ego as it denotes a condition in which the ego directs libido upon itself. The ego-libido of narcissism is thus, for Freud, subsequent to an ego-less auto-eroticism but prior to the object libido of sexual choice. Moreover, the ego-ideal has its beginnings within this original narcissism which it serves to retain. As Freud observes: "What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal."⁵⁶

Just as the ego-ideal is here the object of an original narcissistic love, so also the super-ego arises from ego-ideal identifications. This is most evident in the super-ego's role of setting up ideal goals such as critical self-observation and punishment. It is this persecutory super-ego which also forms the basis for the paranoid dimension of self-identification. By the time of *The Ego and the Id* the ego-ideal and the super-ego are inseparable as the narcissistic aim of being loved and approved of by oneself merges with the ambition of being loved and approved of by an internalised ideal parent (the super-ego). It is this need to be loved or recognised together with the fear of punishment that leads to the ego's submission

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁵⁵ "On Narcissism", *Standard Edition*, vol. XIV, pp. 60-1.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 95.

to the super-ego.

Freud's views on narcissism, however, are by no means clear-cut or consistent. Thus, in "Mourning and Melancholia", he seems to view narcissism as the identification with a lost love-object thereby conflating narcissism with identification - as does Lacan with the mirror stage. However, as Anthony Wilden notes:

There are at least three types of identification involved: (1) primary identification which Freud describes as the original pre-Oedipal affective link to an object, related to incorporation, the oral stage and the mother; (2) identification as the regressive substitute for an abandoned object-choice; and (3) non-sexual identification with another insofar as one person has something in common with another person.⁵⁷

In a subsequent work, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud describes two further forms. Firstly, an objectless, primary narcissism which is characterised by an indifferentiation between the ego and the id and by the absence of object relations - although elsewhere Freud describes the mother as the first love-object from the start. Secondly, Freud introduces the notion of a pre-sexual father as an ideal thus breaking with his account in "On Narcissism" where all forms of identification are ultimately related to object-choice and the primary role of the mother.

But for the present context, however, I shall broadly cite narcissism as the resistance to or the denial of difference. More particularly, the plenitude of primary narcissism is essentially a solipsist identity through which the subject (though being ego-less it cannot strictly yet be a self-reflexive subject) 'knows' only itself. While the experience of separation, loss and difference from those objects originally believed to be co-extensive with the subject (the process which Freud simply described as the experience of reality) makes primary narcissism untenable, arguably it is never lost but instead it is maintained as a primal phantasy. Indeed, as Freud comments, "The development of the ego consists in a departure from the primary narcissism and results in a vigorous attempt to recover it."⁵⁸ Moreover, it is the emergence of the object-libido as described by Freud (the identification and introjection of ego-ideals) which fractures the absolute and undifferentiated unity of the 'subject'-libido within primary narcissism. It is this primary narcissism, rather than the emergence of an autonomous ego, which would make sense of the alienation arising from the child's identification with an image different from its

⁵⁷ *The Language of the Self*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968, pp. 169-70.

⁵⁸ "On Narcissism", *op.cit.*, p. 96.

own experience.

My immediate point here is to differentiate secondary narcissism from primary in that with the former identity is achieved via identification with the other (an ego-ideal). A primary narcissistic investment in objects, whereby those objects are returned as being the same as the subject, is thus distinct from the object-libido identification of secondary narcissism. Indeed, narcissism (as the projection or recuperation of the self through or as the other) is opposed to identification (which is premised upon the recognition of difference). As Anthony Wilden remarks: "Identification and narcissism, or the relationship between ego and alter-ego, are not relationships of identity; it is always a question of each trying to take the place of the other."⁵⁹ What would seem to be involved here is the subject's attempted recuperation of the other as the means of securing a narcissistic autonomy. The identification with an ego-ideal is thus still grounded upon an original narcissism. As Freud himself observes: "In many individuals the separation between the ego and the ego-ideal is not very far advanced; the two still coincide regularly; the ego has often preserved its earlier narcissistic self-complacency."⁶⁰

This observation can perhaps be read not just as a commentary upon individual pathologies but, in the context of Lacan's account of the mirror stage, as signalling the conflictual intersection of narcissism and the positioning of the subject from the place of the other. However, Freud's remark would to an extent appear to counter Lacan's division or separation of the Imaginary from the Symbolic and his positing of the Imaginary (and the ego) as a regressive stage. Instead, the subject's access to the Symbolic is always mediated through the Imaginary. As André Green comments:

in the zone of the imaginary, the subject goes in one of the two directions: either toward the object or toward the ideal. We know that in Freudian thought this orientation is heavily dependent upon narcissism...the other can be reached only through the two paths just described, via the object or via narcissism. There is no other direct route to the Other.⁶¹

It is precisely this movement towards the other that provokes a crisis of subjectivity. Within this narrative the mirror stage can be seen as initiating a tension between the subject's necessary engagement with the other (which is both external and contingent) so as to take on and verify its own identity and the subject's preservation of its imaginary (narcissistic) autonomy from the other's Gaze. In this

⁵⁹ *The Language of the Self*, op.cit., p. 168.

⁶⁰ *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Standard Edition, vol. XVIII, p. 129.

⁶¹ "Logic of Lacan's *objet (a)* and Freudian Theory: Convergences and Questions" in *Interpreting Lacan*, op. cit., p. 166.

scenario the specular *moi* attempts to identify itself with and to function as an intentional and autonomous subject. The subject is thus constituted both through a narcissistic exclusivity and through extrinsic identities given to it by the other. Narcissism and difference both function here as intrinsic facets of identity. And it is within this conflictual scenario of the subject's need to recognise (and to be recognised by) the other (the object), but in conjunction with its attempted recuperation of alterity (narcissism), that the ego exists as an 'instance' within a self-reflexive narcissistic closure.

It is across this tension between a narcissistic self-regard and an identity which is a function of otherness that I wish to situate the question of the spectatorial look and photography. For if access to and knowledge of the other is via a self-identification which is also alienating (i.e. involving a splitting), the work of visual representation in part involves an effacing of lack and the restoration of a fictive plenitude to the subject.

More specifically, this can be located in the disjunction between the point of view (the subject's own look) and the Gaze. Commenting upon the "classic realist" film text, Colin MacCabe writes:

The point of view is always related to an object. But in so far as the object is given there is always the possibility of seeing it together with all the possible points of view. The point of view preserves the primacy of vision, for what is left out of the point of view can always be supplied by another. The look, however, is radically defective. Where the point of view is related to an object, the look is related to other looks. The look's field is not defined by a science of optics in which the eye features as a geometrical point, but by the fact that the object we are looking at offers a position from which we can be looked at.⁶²

Within this division of the scopic field, the point of view offers a position of spectatorial plenitude, origin and presence with the intentional subject's mastery over the image recalling the child's "anticipation" in front of the mirror. What MacCabe calls the look (but what is in fact the Gaze), on the other hand, denotes the subject's emplacement by the other. As Lacan remarks: "what determines me at the most profound level, in the visual field, is the gaze that is outside."⁶³ Not necessarily 'seen' by the subject, the Gaze is one that is imagined or introjected by the subject from the field of the other. As the sign of a loss and of the subject's lack, the Gaze here marks the subject's fading and is thus a threat to "that form of vision that is satisfied with itself in imagining itself a consciousness."⁶⁴ Within MacCabe's account of film, it is the role of the point of view to efface the disruptive

⁶² "Theory and film: principles of realism and pleasure" in *Theoretical Essays: film, linguistics, literature*, Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 67.

⁶³ *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, op. cit., p. 106.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 74.

threat of the Gaze and to restore to the viewer an imaginary plenitude of vision.

MacCabe's discussion of the look and the Gaze draws heavily upon Lacan's extended description of the the gaze as an *objet petit a*.⁶⁵ This description not only provides an account of vision and subjectivity which is no longer predicated upon a 'reflection' theory of the subject's constitution but it is one that can be more readily matched with Freud's notion of the ego as "a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes." More specifically, the concept of the *objet a* provides the basis for an account of how a form of identification can take place between, for instance, a subject and an image (in a broad sense) which does not need to posit a pre-reflexive consciousness or self-identity as its point of departure. In other words, the *objet a* provides the framework for an account of how the subject is captured by representation while avoiding recourse to reflection or identification as the mechanism for this process. Thus while still retaining the specular relation of the mirror stage as a trap or lure, the subject, instead of being reflected in signification, is now an effect of signification in the sense of being inscribed within it.

In "The Gaze as *petit objet a* " Lacan moves away from a narrative of identification and (mis)recognition and instead describes a signifying economy structured upon desire and lack. Within this economy or, more precisely, metonymy, the *objet a* is a 'sign' of a separation or of what the subject lacks. However, its status is ambiguous in that, like a fetish, it marks both the sign and the annealing of a lack or absence. As such, rather like the castrating effects of language, the *objet a* simultaneously constitutes and splits the subject while, also like language, functioning as a bridge between the subject and the Other.

Kaja Silverman has described the *objet a* in terms of those objects:

which the child attempts to introject into itself...[and] which give it pleasure, and which it does not yet distinguish from itself. The first such object is generally the breast...[which] the child...perceives as its missing complement, that thing the loss of which resulted in sense of deficiency...There will be many such objects in the life of the subject. Lacan refers to them as "*objets petit a*," which is an abbreviation for the more complex formula "*objets petit autre*". This rubric designates objects which are not yet clearly distinguished from the self and which are not fully grasped as other (*autre*). The object (a)...derives its value from its identification with some missing complement of the subject's self, whether that loss is seen as primordial, as the result of a bodily organization, or as the consequence of some other division."⁶⁶

However, what perhaps needs to be emphasised is that the *objet a* is not an actual object but a 'phantasy-object' which can perhaps be characterised in terms of Freud's notion of primal phantasy (which includes primary narcissism). Thus although it may refer to primordial objects or relations (which provide the 'original'

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 67-119.

⁶⁶ *The Subject of Semiotics*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 156.

material or reference of the phantasy), the *objet a*, unlike 'the other' in the mirror, does not appear but instead it is what the subject searches for in representation. But essentially, as a lost or absent object of desire, the *objet a* is non-specularisable. And, as a lost object, it is a function of what Lacan describes as the subject's "want-to-be" (*manque-a-être*).⁶⁷ For if the subject or ego designates a space of disparate functions (e.g. of narcissism, introjection, identification etc.) which cannot be assimilated into a unified totality (except within the Imaginary), the subject perpetually seeks the "missing complement" which will provide it with its desired wholeness:

The question of desire is that the fading subject yearns to find itself again by means of some sort of encounter with the miraculous thing defined by the phantasm. In its endeavour it is sustained by...the lost object...which is a terrible thing for the imagination. That which is produced and transformed here, and which in my vocabulary I call the object, lower case, *a*, is well known by all psychoanalysts as all psychoanalysis is founded upon the existence of this peculiar object. But the relation between this barred subject with this object (*a*), is the structure which is always found in the phantasm which supports desire, in as much as desire is only that which I have called the metonymy of all signification.⁶⁸

While signification proffers the possibility of this wholeness, it is the engagement with signification (essentially language for Lacan) which in fact denies this plenitude. Not so much directly estranged from its own self (as in the mirror stage), the subject is instead now barred from the signifier. As Lacan writes:

This is our starting point: through his relationship to the signifier, the subject is deprived of something...of himself, of his life, which has assumed the value of that which binds him to the signifier. The phallus is our term for the signifier of his alienation in signification. When the object is deprived of this signifier, a particular object becomes for him as object of desire.⁶⁹

Within the metonymy of signification the subject is inscribed within a movement of perpetual displacement or exchange of phantasised objects or substitutes for the lost object - process described by Kristeva as the subject's "interminable quest for an adequate fit between 'meaning' and 'object'".⁷⁰ Moreover, for Lacan, the subject, "always a fading thing under the chain of signifiers",⁷¹ is itself inscribed, through its "signifying dependence",⁷² in or as a sequence of substitutions for "above all he

⁶⁷ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op. cit., p. 29. As Stuart Schneiderman explains, "For the psychoanalyst the important object is the lost object, the object always desired and never attained, the object that causes the subject to desire in cases where he can never gain the satisfaction of possessing the object. Any object the subject desires will never be anything other than a substitute for the object *a*". "Lacan's Early Contributions to Psychoanalysis" in *Returning to Freud: Clinical Approaches in the School of Lacan*, Yale University Press, 1980, p. 4.

⁶⁸ "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever", in *The Structuralist Controversy*, op. cit., p. 194.

⁶⁹ *Seminar on Hamlet*, quoted by Silverman, op. cit., p. 183.

⁷⁰ *In the Beginning was Love; Psychoanalysis and Faith*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, New York, Columbia University Press, 1987, p. 62.

⁷¹ "Of Structure as an Inmixing", op. cit., p. 194.

⁷² *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op. cit., p. 77.

is these objects, according to the place where they function within his fundamental phantasy."⁷³

It is within this structure of both the desire and the denial of unity and plenitude within signification that the gaze functions as an *objet a*. However, within Lacan's account of vision the gaze in fact refers to several gazes as both the viewer's own gaze (the look) and the Gaze of other's or the Other, as well as to the structure of the picture (the screen) and its iconic signifiers. As with the mirror stage, Lacan describes a split or unequal scopic exchange in that the subject misrecognises itself as a point of vision (eye) which can fully see the other when, in fact, the eye is a point within or for the other's Gaze. The optic field thus allows the subject to be a viewing subject but only on the condition that it becomes the point of vision for another subject. Moreover, writes Lacan (echoing the paranoia inherent in the mirror stage), "I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides."⁷⁴

Describing two imagined cones intersecting at the picture surface with the subject as "a sort of geometrical point, a point of perspective",⁷⁵ Lacan argues that the viewer is positioned or situated by perspective (the cone converging on the eye) while simultaneously appearing to master the vanishing point (the convergence of the inner cone). Addressed as a punctual, full subject and as the bearer of a projective gaze (the centric ray), the picture offers the viewer a position whereby "I see myself seeing myself"⁷⁶ - a position reinforced through an identification with the gaze of the painter "which claims to impose itself as the only gaze".⁷⁷ The viewer is thus spatially positioned by the picture while being interpellated as mastering its projective space. But for Lacan the viewing subject essentially misrecognises the image or other as an effect of its vision whereas the subject is instead an effect of the representation itself (as both screen and gaze). The picture or Gaze and, above all, the returned look (which is perhaps the only instance in which the Gaze, rather than the screen, can in fact be seen), become signs of the subject's own lack.

In the present context, and in the light of the previous discussion, Lacan's complex account of this division might be described as one between the look (i.e. the subject, eye, point of view etc.) and the Gaze (of the other). For if, following

⁷³ "The direction of treatment and the principles of its power", in *Écrits*, op. cit., pp. 251-252.

⁷⁴ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op. cit., p. 72.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, p. 86.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 80.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 113.

Lacan's account, the structures of looking are themselves constitutive of the self-reflexive subject - i.e. the subject which observes itself as a consciousness - it is also the radical instability or asymmetries within perception which deny to that subject any final autonomy of consciousness as presence. What is operative here is an unequal division between vision and the Gaze, between what might be described as a narcissistic self-regard and specular identity as a function of an external other. Within this scopic regime, the look (libidinally invested and directed outwards), misrecognises itself as an origin of vision as scopic mastery. The Gaze, on the other hand, not only exists outside but is the sign of the subject's emplacement by the other. Furthermore, the Gaze, as the potentially repressive sign of separation, lack and castration, threatens the imaginary coherence of the viewing subject in that it exists (as both "missing complement" and lack) as the constitutive horizon of the subject and as the terminal point or fading where the subject "is led...to lay down its gaze."⁷⁸ It is this relation which precludes any schematic separation between the look and the Gaze. Moreover, by taking up Lacan's account of the gaze, one can argue that the look is always framed by the Gaze (almost literally in terms of pictures) but this is not a relation of one-sided domination but of tension and it is this tension which can be explored further.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 109.

⁷⁹ An example of this interaction, as potential tension, between the look and the Gaze is implicit in Freud's discussion of blindness in hysterical patients. Freud describes this disturbance of vision as arising from "the undeniable opposition between instincts which subserve sexuality, the attainment of sexual pleasure, and those other instincts, which have as their aim the self preservation of the individual - the ego-instincts" ("The Psycho-Analytical View of Psychogenic Disturbance of Vision", *Standard Edition*, vol. XI, p. 214). Moreover, Freud observes, "The sexual and ego-instincts alike have in general the same organs and systems of organs at their disposal...the eyes perceive not only the alterations in the external world which are important for the preservation of life, but also characteristics of objects which lead to their being chosen as objects of love - their charms. The closer the relation into which an organ with a dual function of this kind enters with *one* of the major instincts, the more it withholds from the other" (*ibid.*, pp. 215-216). If the ego, and more specifically the super-ego, is understood as a function of the introjection of the Gaze of the Other, Freud's description of the "relation of an organ with a double claim on it - its relation to the conscious ego and the repressed sexuality" can be related to the tension between the look (as a libidinal conduit of desire) and the Gaze (as prohibition). This, however, is not a relation of one-sided dominance for, as Freud's own discussion indicates, the look - as (repressed) sexuality, libidinal excess - escapes the control of the Gaze (ego), i.e.: "Let us suppose that the sexual component instinct which makes use of looking - sexual pleasure in looking (scopophilia) - has drawn upon itself defensive action by the ego-instincts in consequence of excessive demands, so that the ideas in which its desires are expressed succumb to repression and are prevented from being conscious; in that case there will be a general disturbance of the relation of the eye and the act of seeing to the ego and consciousness. The ego will have lost its dominance over the organ and will now be wholly at the disposal of the repressed sexual instinct. It looks as though the repression had been carried out too far by the ego, as though it had emptied the baby out with the bath-water: the ego refuses to see anything at any more, now that the sexual interest in seeing has made itself so prominent. But the alternative picture seems more to the point. This attributes the active role instead to the repressed pleasure in looking. The repressed instinct takes revenge for being held back from further psychical expansion, by becoming also able to extend its dominance over the organ that is in its service. The loss of conscious dominance over the organ is the detrimental substitute for the repression which has miscarried and was only made possible at that price" (*ibid.*, p. 216). Nor, moreover, are the Gaze and the look radically antithetical. Indeed, the sadistic gaze would appear to be an example of the internalisation of the Gaze which is, as it were, taken over by the look.

By following through these various scenarios we can return to Marville's photograph in the light of Lacan's remark that, "the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world."⁸⁰ One possible implication of Lacan's observation would be that any engagement between the viewer and an image involves an re-enactment of the subject's recognition of and (via the mirror stage) entry into the outside world. More specifically, however, the exchanges within the mirror stage and the phantasy structures of the *objet a* can help provide an answer to the question: what is the spectator's investment in this image? In other words, what is returned to our look?

Within the structures of narcissism, Marville's photograph offers the viewer a phantasy of complete return. Functioning as an image through which the subject, in its search for a unified total self, can see itself seeing, the photograph offers a position of fixity and plenitude for the spectator. A direct and symmetrical reciprocity would seem to exist between the viewer as the point of convergence outside the photograph 'mirroring' the vanishing point within it. For by setting up a relation of identity between the subject, eye and the camera, the photograph produces a space which is not only contiguous with our own but one which is meaningful only in relation to the position of the viewer.

This relation between eye and camera has been described by Jean-Louis Baudry as one in which the camera "lays out the space of ideal vision and in this way assures the necessity of a...transcendental subject."⁸¹ However, the subject does not identify simply with what it sees (the image, the screen) but, rather, "with what makes it visible in the same movement as the spectator himself sees."⁸² In other words, the camera operates as a relay or analogue of the perceiving subject. As Christian Metz describes it:

the spectator *identifies with himself*, with himself as a pure act of perception...the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject, which comes before every *there is...*[and] as he identifies with himself as look, the spectator can do no other than identify with the camera, too, which has looked before him at what he is now looking at and whose stationing (=framing) determines the vanishing point...an apparatus the spectator has behind him, *at the back of his head*, that, is, precisely where phantasy locates the 'focus' of all vision.⁸³

Although the "apparatus" which both Metz and Baudry are describing here is principally cinema, these remarks (as Baudry says of his own comments) are

⁸⁰ "The mirror stage" op. cit., p. 3.

⁸¹ "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus", quoted in Bertrand Augst's Introduction to "The Apparatus", *Camera obscura*, op. cit., p. 98.

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 99.

⁸³ *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. Celia Britton, Anwyl Williams, Ben Brewster and Alfred Guzetti, London, Macmillan, 1983.

referable to painting and theatre - and clearly also to photography. This apparatus Baudry describes as "the answer to a desire inherent in our psychological structure...A desire...[for] a form of lost satisfaction which its apparatus would be assured at re-discovering in one way or another...and to which the impression of reality would seem to be the key."⁸⁴ This account of cinema echoes Lacan's metonymy of the *objet a* in that the subject is inscribed within a series of regressive movements as "the compulsion to repeat...[a] return to a former condition"⁸⁵ of "primitive narcissism." This (primary) narcissism Baudry relates to a "fusion of interior with the exterior" as experienced prior to the mirror stage, "a state in effect of indistinction between a hallucinatory wish, a sign of satisfaction and desire for perception, of contact with the real."⁸⁶ Akin to Laplanche's description of a primal phantasy of monadic autonomy before the "first cleavage" (of hallucination, representation and difference etc.), a time "when the system of consciousness-perception had not yet differentiated itself",⁸⁷ cinema is marked by "something of a desire in dreams unifying perception and representation - whether with representation passing itself for perception...or whether perception passes itself off for perceived representation."⁸⁸

By drawing upon Baudry's account of one specific system of representation (cinema), the (logocentric) desire of unmediated presence (as an unfractured immediacy of perception) can be located within those metonymic structures within which the subject searches for the lost object (*objet a*). For Baudry the lost object would be the hallucination of "a form of archaic satisfaction", i.e.

the desire of cinema...would recall...a form of archaic satisfaction expressed by the subject, by reproducing the scene of it...the desire to recover archaic forms of desire which in fact structure any form of desire, and the desire to stage for the subject, to put in representation of form, what might recall its own operation...[and which] brings about a state of artificial regression...to an interior phase of [the subject's] development...It is the desire, unrecognized by the subject, to return to this phase, an early state of development with its own form of satisfaction...Return to a relative narcissism...as enveloping and in which the separation between one's own body and the exterior world is not well defined...A return to a primitive narcissism by a regression of the libido...[as] the absence of the delimitation of the body; the transfusion of the interior out onto the exterior...a more archaic mode of identifications...desire as such, i.e. a desire of desire, the nostalgia for a state in which desire has been satisfied through a transfer of perception to a formation resembling hallucination...a condition in which what is perceived would no longer be distinguished from representations...a simulation machine."⁸⁹

Of course, as Baudry points out, cinema (or photography) are not equivalent to

⁸⁴ "The Apparatus", *Camera obscura*, op. cit., p. 113.

⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 108.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 115.

⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 117-118.

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 118-121.

dreams not least because the former are mediations of perception, "an impression of reality". Instead, "the simulation apparatus...consists in transforming a perception into a quasi-hallucination endowed with real-effect which cannot be compared to that which results from ordinary perception."⁹⁰

This rigid division between (cinematic) perception and "ordinary perception" is perhaps a somewhat surprising one for Baudry to make, for, with reference to the notion of perception as itself being a text, structures of phantasy can be seen as pervading perception in all its forms. But more generally, what emerges from Baudry's analysis is an account of a dynamic unconscious which binds the subject into representations which then function as the self-representations or stagings of that subject. The metonymy of representation is thus symptomatic of:

the existence of an unconscious where the subject's early mode of functioning persists...never ceases requiring of the subject and proposing to him, by multiple detours (even if only through artistic practice), representations of his own scene...the subject is induced to produce machines which would not only complement or supplement the workings of the secondary processes, but which represent his overall functioning to him: he is led to produce mechanisms mimicking, simulating the apparatus which is no other than himself. The presence of the unconscious also makes itself felt through the pressure it exerts in seeking to get itself represented by a subject who is still unaware of the fact that he is representing to himself the very scene of the unconscious where he is.⁹¹

However, despite the desire to return to state of undifferentiated fusion between subject and object, what is perhaps also involved here is something akin to the "bodily perception" (which, Jameson argues, is effaced by postmodern space) or the apperception (Winnicott's term for the structuring of perception by reference to the subject's own body) within the dyadic exchange of the mirror stage. For not only can the look be represented by reference to a corporeal (oral) phantasy of incorporation, but the entire body itself becomes the referent of perception and representation. In this Marville's photograph is an example of what Wollheim has described as the pictorial "metaphorization of the body" whereby an image "becomes a metaphor for the body, or (at any rate) for some part of the body or for something assimilated to the body."⁹² When, within this "seeing-in" or "representational seeing", the "picture as a whole...metaphorizes the body...the experience that grounds this relation attributes to the picture the global property of corporeality."⁹³ As Wollheim emphasises, it is not necessary for images to actually represent the body in order to metaphorize it, and he takes as his example "pictures

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 122.

⁹¹ *ibid.*, p. 123.

⁹² *Painting as an Art, London, Thames and Hudson, 1987, p. 305.*

⁹³ *ibid.*, p. 308.

that represent architecture or are buildingscapes."⁹⁴ Of the pictorial metaphorization of the body he writes:

All paintings that metaphorize the body receive some part of their authority to do so from the way they engage with primitive phantasies about the body. Indeed it is the submerged presence of this early material - that is, material from the early life-history of the individual - in metaphorical paintings that lends support to my claim that, in the profound cases of pictorial metaphor, what is metaphorized is the body. However, in the case of pictures that metaphorize the body, not through representing the body, but through representing something else, something metaphorically linked to the body, the evocation of these phantasies is called for twice over. They are recruited to enhance the corporeality of the picture itself, to which we globally respond, but they do this the better for already having been recruited to ensure corporeality for what the picture represents. If primitive phantasy helps to forge the new metaphorical link, or the link between picture and body, this is largely because of the way it reinforces, it has already reinforced, the old metaphorical link - that is...the link between building and body. For it is from the old link that the new derives much of its strength, much of its vitality...The investiture of the represented buildings with phantasy about the body,...then comes to settle around the picture as a whole, giving the picture a presence quite out of proportion to its size and its manifest ambition."⁹⁵

For Wollheim the "submerged presence of early material" relates to the infant's experience of its own corporeality. It is this which provides the material for the metaphorical connection between buildings and a sense of mass and movement, between inner and outer in the depiction of windows and apertures, of skin and textures in the rendering of walls and of phantasies of destruction and restoration. However, the "understructure of phantasy" involved in the viewing of Marville's photograph is not so much referable to the infant's mapping of its body surface (although this may indeed be an element here) but is instead the subject's phantasy of itself as a punctual monad. More pertinent here is Wollheim's description of the spatial construction in the paintings of Thomas Jones:

The central device upon which Jones relies to give his pictures the effect of something near and prone, or to revive the early vision of the body, is the way he standardly dresses the principal building in the painting by the picture plane, and then prolongs the elevation of the building by a startlingly wide angle of vision. In this he is licensed, indeed encouraged, by two features of his work. First, there is the horizontal format that he adopts. Second, there is the way he slips from linear perspective to orthographic projection, in which all orthogonals are drawn as parallel lines."⁹⁶

A similar organisation of pictorial space is established in Marville's *Rue de Rivoli* (its dramatic convergences, repetitions and fading to infinity) which serves to incite a spectatorial presence. Above all, it is the photograph's perspectival space - its depth of field - which operates as the signifier of the gaze. For while the mechanism of emplacement in Marville's photograph is the spectator's look, this look is itself incited by the particular spatial organization of the image itself - this action being evident also in another photograph by Marville (fig.1.10) in which the

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 338.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 344-345.

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 345.

axes of the converging streets effectively pinion the spectator in space. Presence is produced not just by the picture's emphatic locating or positioning of the viewer but is reinforced through the image's effect of eliding the viewer's body with a specific activity of the body - the look - which is both libidinally and socially invested.⁹⁷

It is this depth of field (reinforced by the image's clarity of detail and its repetitions and recessions) which both solicits or summons a gaze for the image and which produces its reality-effect (its supposed convergence with natural vision). But this depth of field is also symptomatic of photography's adjustment from its inception to the normative codes of linear perspective. It is in this sense that Jean-Louis Comolli's description of the early cinema is as valid for photography:

Not only is the deep focus in the early cinematic image the mark of its submission to these codes of representation and to the histories and ideologies which necessarily determine and operate them, but more generally it signals that the ideological apparatus cinema is produced by these codes and by these systems of representation, as at once their complement and surpassing them. There is nothing accidental, therefore, or specifically technical in the cinematic image immediately claiming depth, since it is just this depth which governs and informs it; the various optical instruments are regulated according to the possibility of restoring depth.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ This elision of the body and vision is not, however, synonymous with what Norman Bryson describes as "a disappearance of the body". Bryson says of the Gaze that "spatially and temporally, the act of viewing is constructed as the removal of space and time, as the disappearance of the body: the construction of an *acies mentis*, the punctual viewing subject" (*Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, London, Macmillan, 1983, p. 96). As opposed to the "vision disembodied, vision decarnalised" of the Gaze, corporeality is entirely a feature of the Glance: "Against the Gaze, the Glance proposes desire, proposes the body, in the *durée* of its practical activity: in the freezing of syntagmatic motion, desire, and the body, the desire of the body, are exactly the terms which the tradition [of Western painting] seeks to suppress" (*ibid.*, p. 122). However, while Bryson appropriates the structure of Lacan's account of the gaze as *objet a*, he then evacuates it of psychoanalytic content. For Lacan, the gaze is the place of a radical instability of the subject, an instability which he refers to the drives and the unconscious: "The eye and the gaze - this for us is the split in which the drive is manifested at the level of the scopic field (*The Four Fundamental Concepts*, *op.cit.* p. 73). Moreover, as he emphasises, "If one does not stress the dialectic of desire one does not understand why the gaze of others should disorganise the field of perception. It is because the the subject in question is not that of reflexive consciousness, but that of desire" (*ibid.*, p. 89). But it is precisely a subject of "reflexive consciousness" which Bryson substitutes for Lacan's subject constituted by the drives and through inter-subjective exchange. Not only does Bryson return to a phenomenology of a discrete consciousness (which as a stable structure cannot acknowledge the dispersal of the gaze across the archive) but the instability both *within* vision and *of* the subject is reductively codified and displaced as a function of two manichean orders of signification which are then conflated within a hegemonic repression of the body by Western traditions of representation. Bryson thus reifies what he describes as "the implied dualism of the Gaze and the Glance" (*Vision and Painting*, *op.cit.*, p. 94) into two orders of signification, two regimes of the sign. On the one hand, there is the Gaze signifying fixity, repression, disappearance of the body and of desire and, ultimately, representing the ideological. On the other hand, there is the Glance signifying fluidity and the activity of the repressed body and desire - a subversive "flickering, ungovernable" mobility (*ibid.*, p. 121). But while Bryson does refer to "the splitting of vision under the impact of the sign" (*Tradition and Desire*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 69), this splitting is entirely a function of the sign (the "third term" which intervenes in dyadic vision) which remains external to the subject. Instead of an encounter between subject and sign, Bryson posits an 'empty' viewing subject. Moreover, not only is there some ambiguity as to the status of the body in Bryson's account of vision (i.e., as "an actual bodily presence" of the viewer, the somewhat enigmatic "body of labour" or as the somatic etc.), but the gaze (as, for example, the introjection of the Gaze of the Other) as well as the look (Bryson's Glance) are both structures of phantasy and desire, of identification and incorporation. Thus while the gaze involves the organising or channelling of the libidinal or somatic, this is not a disappearance of the body from vision, or its positioning as it were to just one side of vision, but is instead indicative of the fundamental relation between all vision and the body.

⁹⁸ "Machines of the Visible" in *The Cinematic Apparatus*, eds. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath, London, Macmillan, 1980, p. 130.

And, as Comolli adds, "What is at stake in deep focus, what is at stake in the historicity of the technique, are the codes and the modes of production of 'realism', the transmission, renewal or transformation of the ideological systems of recognition, specularity, truth-to-lifeness".⁹⁹

The presence of the singular viewing subject, of being as vision, produced by this depth of field is here the effect of an identification with the image which becomes the projective site for the recovery of a lost narcissistic plenitude in that:

The drama of the subject..is the experience of its lack-in being...It is because it carries this moment of lack that an image comes to the position of bearing all the cost of desire: projection, function of the imaginary.¹⁰⁰

More precisely, it is the mastery of the look, rather than the image itself, which is invested with desire and phantasy - a fetishisation of vision itself rather than its objects. What takes place here is a "pseudo-identification" which Lacan describes as "a suture, a conjunction of the imaginary and the symbolic."¹⁰¹ Yet this exchange in which "the subject [is] the effect of the signifier and the signifier the representative of the subject"¹⁰² also initiates a splitting in the subject in that a division or tension is produced between the spectator's self-perception as the origin of an omnipotent gaze and the fracturing of this self-sufficient presence by the Other.

This tension can be located as an effect of the excess of the image itself, its reduction to a system of insistent repetitions, in which space reveals itself as a construction (screen) and as a codifying supplement to vision. Something of this process in cinema is also described by Comolli:

That is why cinematic deep focus does not slip into the 'naturalness' of linear perspective, but inevitably stresses that perspective, accentuates it, indicates its curvature, denounces the visual field it produces as a construction, a composition in which there is not simply 'more real' but in which this more visible is spatially organised in the frame, dramatised. Deep focus does not wipe out perspective, does not pass itself off as the 'normality' of vision but makes it readable as coding (exteriorisation of the interiorised code); it de-naturalises dramatises it.¹⁰³

A similar de-naturalisation is operative in Marville's *Rue de Rivoli* as the image oscillates between being a space with which the spectator identifies (a space which, as it were, recognises and confirms a spectatorial presence) and its being a space which exists as other to the viewer. As Lacan describes, it is a picture's depth of

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁰ *Écrits* (Paris, Seuil), quoted in Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema*, London, Macmillan, 1981, p. 84.

¹⁰¹ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

¹⁰² Jacques-Alain Miller, "On Suture", *Screen*, 18, 4, 1977-8, p. 33.

¹⁰³ "Machines of the Visible", *op. cit.*, p.137.

field which also effaces the geometrical illusion of scopic mastery and which:

was elided in the geometrical relation - the depth of field, with all its ambiguity and variability, which is in no way mastered by me. It is rather that it grasps me, solicits me at every moment, and makes of the landscape something other than a landscape, something other than what I have called a picture.¹⁰⁴

In effect, the space of the photograph simultaneously endorses and denies a specular identity to the viewer who moves between desire (for presence, plenitude) and knowledge or submission to cultural codes - codes which are both necessary for phantasy to operate but which also need to be disavowed. In Marville's photograph, however, it is because of the excess of these codes that scopic mastery is revealed as emplacement as the subject of self-reflexive presence is shown instead to be an effect (or positioning) of the signifier. What is at work in the photograph is both the self-undermining of the naturalness of the photograph (through its self-revelation as a construction), as well as processes symptomatic of the oscillations within perception itself (the imbalance between vision and the Gaze). It is within this asymmetrical scopic regime that Marville's photograph stands as a generic image for the structuring tension, in the relation of photography to the city, between the subject's preservation of a narcissistic autonomy and the perception of urban space as both other to it and as the potential site of difference, loss and disorder .

¹⁰⁴ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op. cit., p. 96.

2

THE PRODUCTION OF PLACE

*analysis will reveal the contradictions of space*¹

The insistent spatial construction of Marville's *Rue de Rivoli* effectively locks the spectator into a fixed point of vision which induces a narcissistic phantasy of scopic plenitude. However, this spatial construction, precisely as a result of its insistent excess, simultaneously belies the status of perspective as a natural description of the physical world. Instead, perspective reveals itself in this photograph as an ambiguous construction - albeit as one also which emphatically summons and controls the viewer's gaze. In this chapter I shall develop this issue through an examination of some uses of photography in the representation of urban space. My focus here will be on photography's production and circulation of a typology of urban spaces and on the potential contradictions between the various spatial regimes produced within this archive. In this, my immediate concern is not directly with the status of the spectator but, rather, it is with the discursive inflections and instabilities which structure the representation of urban space. This said, however, the broad over-view of the photography of the city in this chapter also stands as a framing prelude to the question of the precariousness of urban spectatorship (in terms of the city's threat to the security of perception) in that the moments of perceptual rupture that I shall be discussing in subsequent chapters need to be set against the use of photography as a means of producing a coherent and legible codification of urban space.

This chapter, then, will involve an outlining of a morphology of space and a discussion of the connection and interaction of various spatial types or models and their mutual articulation. Necessarily this will be rather schematic for this spatial morphology in many ways exists only at a descriptive or discursive level and is by no means intended to reflect 'real' spatial phenomena. Moreover, having set up these models the point is not then to cite them as discrete phenomena but it is

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism*, London, Allison and Busby, 1976, p. 17.

instead to describe them as processes and relations. To begin with, then, I wish to briefly outline various spatial forms and models which are pertinent to an examination of this question. Among such models one could, for example, cite photographic space, created space and symbolic, social and semantic space. But beyond this, what needs to be examined here is the manner in which such definitions of space not only overlap, interact, and mutually reinforce each other but also the ways in which they may simultaneously militate against and undermine themselves.

The city as spatial formation

At a very general level of course all social systems are also spatial formations. Whether on a broad level (e.g. the transition from an agrarian to an urban industrialised society) or on the level of the particular (e.g. the spatial organisation of the neighbourhood and the street or of the individual house etc.), spatial form and social organisation are deeply inter-related just as, for example, the descriptive terms of urban, suburban and rural also imply their concomitant spatial orders. As such, a major problem is one of how to begin to describe and analyse space and social processes without imposing an unreal independence upon each. Summarising his own approach in *Social Justice and the City*, David Harvey writes:

The distinction between social processes and spatial form are always regarded as artificial rather than real, but in the later chapters the definition is regarded as unreal in a rather different sense. Spatial forms are there not seen as inanimate objects within which the social process unfolds, but as things which 'contain' social processes in the same manner that social processes are spatial.²

It is from this perspective that Harvey rejects any abstracted or ontological inquiry into the nature of space as being a mystification. More particularly, referring to the question of urbanism he continues:

An understanding of urbanism and the social-process-spatial-form theme requires that we understand how human activity creates the need for specific spatial concepts and how daily social practice solves with consummate ease seemingly deep philosophical mysteries concerning the nature of space and the relationships between social processes and spatial forms.³

↓ A similar is advocated by Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson in *The social logic of space* in which they describe the relationship between spatial and social structures as one of "problem definition". Outlining their own theoretical approach by indicating the lack of an adequate spatial theory of society, they state:

² *Social Justice and the City*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

³ *ibid.*, p. 14.

The common 'natural'-seeming definition sees it as a matter of finding relations between 'social structure' and 'spatial structure'. However, few descriptions of either type of structure have succeeded in pointing to lawful relations between the two. The absence of any general models relating spatial structure to social formation, it is argued, has its roots in the fundamental way in which the problem is conceptualised (which in turn has its roots in the ways in which social theorists have conceptualised society), namely as a relation between a material realm of physical space, without social content, and an abstract realm of social relations and institutions, without a spatial dimension. Not only is it impossible in principle to search for necessary relations between a material and an abstract entity, but also the programme itself is contradictory. Society can only have lawful relations to space if society already possesses its own intrinsic spatial dimension; and likewise space can only be lawfully related to society if it can carry those social dimensions in its very form. The problem definition as it stands has the effect of desocialising space and despatialising society. To remedy this, two problems of description must be solved. Society must be described in terms of its intrinsic spatiality; space must be described in terms of its intrinsic sociality.⁴

This argument provides a useful counter to the belief in a 'natural' dichotomy between space and social structure, while the call for "a broad theory of the social logic of space and the spatial logic of society" has obvious relevance to urbanism. However, in the light of Harvey's remarks, this demand for a "broad theory" can itself be seen as rather questionable in that the problem needs to be addressed historically. More specifically, cities, as particular types of social formation, produce their own spatial orders in that they necessarily involve the organisation of different groups and individuals within patterns of congregation and separation, mobility and encounter, proximity and visibility. And, just as every city is structured by its own buildings, thoroughfares, traffic systems, zoning and patterns of residence, so also each develops its own individual and recognisable spatial order and characteristics. What is required is an outlining of the operations of photography within the spaces of the city both in terms of photography's production and reinforcement of the spatial identities of individual cities and of localities within them, but also an account of the manner in which photography was bound up within the flux and contestation of the city's social space. Through this process, the 'visual' identity of each city can be seen as being produced through the composite image generated through the cumulative effect of the interplay of a multiplicity of apparently discrete images and points of view.

It is within this framework that I wish to posit the city as a "semantic field" (to use Castells's phrase)⁵ or semiotic system. In this discussion of photography and urban space there will, therefore, be a distinction made between different types of space, e.g. contested space, semantic space, space as a register of social distance,

⁴ *The social logic of space*, Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 26.

⁵ "Theory and ideology in urban sociology", in *Urban Sociology: Critical Essays*, ed. C.G. Pickvance, London, Tavistock, 1976.

space within environmental discourses, public and private etc. although to a great extent these distinction can only be made at a descriptive level. More broadly, however, my point is to focus on the the importance of space within the meaning of the city and for experiences within it. Given this, the space of the city cannot be reduced simply to its architectural form alone. As Harvey remarks:

The city as a built form and urbanism as a way of life have to be considered separately from each other for they have become separated in reality. What were once synonymous concepts are no longer so.⁶

While of course the "built form" of the city is important, it does not exhaust the spatial processes at work within urban society nor can it be seen as the originating foundation of spatial formations. Nor, too, can the city itself be reduced to its spatial structures. As Harvey further argues:

Urbanism, insofar as it possesses its own transformation laws, is at least partially moulded out of basic principles of spatial organisation. The distinctive role which space plays both in the organisation of production and the patterning of social relationships is consequently expressed in the urban structure. But urbanism is not merely a structure fashioned out of spatial logic. It has attached to it distinctive ideologies (urban versus rural images for example) and therefore has a certain autonomous function in fashioning the way of life of a people.⁷

Following this, a fundamental premise of this study is an assertion of the fundamental connection between space and social relations. And it is here that Harvey's notion of "created space" (as opposed to "effective space"), as a product of industrial capitalism, provides a useful point of departure, i.e:

But in whose image is space created? We have already acknowledged that the organisation of space can affect and reflect social relationships. But created space has a deeper meaning than just that. In the ancient city the organisation of space was a symbolic recreation of a supposed cosmic order. It had an ideological purpose. In part it is fashioned by the dynamics of market forces which can easily produce results which nobody in particular wants...Yet created space is an integral part of an intricate sign process that gives direction and meaning to daily life within the urban culture..The signs, symbols and signals that surround us in the urban environment are powerful influences.⁸

Harvey's discussion of created space is, of course, premised on the argument that space is essentially social even when being produced by seemingly abstract forces of fixed capital investments, industrial capital and the circulation of surplus value etc.- forces which necessarily preclude viewing urbanism as an autonomous process.

The "transitional city" debate

The question of the relation between urban photography, spatial formations and the

⁶ *Social Justice and the City*, op. cit., p. 307.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ *ibid.*

changing socio-political structure of the nineteenth century city can be further clarified by reference to the debate concerning the transitional nature of the Victorian city. In basic terms this debate turns on the issue of whether the nineteenth century city displayed essentially 'modern' characteristics (e.g. well-differentiated residential areas) or whether, instead, its spatial structure was transitional between the pre-industrial and the modern city or town and, as such, marked by social in-mixing with clear segregation only being found at the extreme edges of society. Thus, within this debate, pre-industrial cities are seen as exhibiting minimal obvious residential segregation (except, perhaps at the social extremes with the wealthy tending to live in or near the town centre), while it is argued that modern cities have clear patterns of residential separation with the wealthy moving out to the suburbs at the periphery of the city.

One argument within this debate has been that presented by David Ward who argues that the Victorian city was in a transitional state in that it had a more weakly defined spatial and social structure than either its pre-industrial precursor or the modern city as typified in twentieth century forms of urban structure. Although, Ward argues, the extremes of society were separated, the Victorian city was nonetheless marked by an eclectic interspersing and in-mixing among the mass of the skilled and unskilled population. Only towards the end of the century was there the marked emergence of the 'independent' dimensions of social, familial and ethnic status. So too, the separation of home and workplace was, to a great extent, consequent upon the centralisation and expansion of employment within industrialisation and the growth and improvement of urban transport systems - both of which did not fully occur until the end of the nineteenth century.

Citing those features seen as being intrinsic to the identity of the modern city, Ward writes:

The modern western city displays a mosaic of residential districts, usually well separated from the major sources of employment and distinguished from one another by differences in the status, income, family size, life style and the racial, religious or ethnic identities of their residents. The social areas are not always well defined either on the ground or in the minds of the urban residents who may perceive and judge the same or similar districts in a variety of fashions. In spite of these problems of definition, regularities have been recognised in the spatial arrangements of the different attributes of urban residents. The precise geometric arrangements of these attributes are perhaps of less importance than the recognition or assumption of a relationship between the diverse bases of stratification within urban society and the differentiated social geography of the city.⁹

Ward lists various patterns of urban social traits that have been posited as symptomatic features of modern or industrial cities, i.e. "overlapping, zonal,

⁹ "Victorian Cities: How Modern?", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 1, 1976, pp. 135-136.

sectoral, clustered and random arrangements."¹⁰ However, although the zonal separation of social groups was described in the mid-nineteenth century, for example, by Engels in Manchester or, to a lesser extent, by Booth in London at the turn of the century, these perceptions were, Ward argues, an over-simplification. Instead, he claims that:

considerations of social geographic changes in Victorian cities suggest that until quite late in the nineteenth century, 'modern' levels and kinds of residential differentiation were quite weakly developed. Engels and other mid-century observers described the dichotomous class division of industrial cities and clearly diagnosed the antagonistic implications of this separation but they underestimated the internal complexity of the 'working-class' majority. Both the upward social mobility and internal stratification of the lower socio-economic groups resulted in a more differentiated residential pattern approximating to that described by Booth and Burgess and the minor similarities of the spatial arrangements serve to obscure rather than reveal the fundamental differences in the degree to which different levels of social stratification were recorded on the ground.¹¹

In short, Ward concludes:

The kind and level of residential differentiation within Victorian cities displayed the 'transitional' attributes that marked so many aspects of the age and only late in the nineteenth century would the appellation 'modern' be appropriate to describe the social geography of nineteenth century cities.¹²

Ward's thesis has, however, been rejected by others. David Cannadine has argued that Victorian cities were residentially differentiated and had patterns of segregation similar to twentieth century urban centres in both Britain and America.¹³ Similarly, Colin Pooley, citing Liverpool in particular, has also argued that the Victorian city should not be treated as a unique phenomenon:

These studies, and the results from the analysis of mid-Victorian Liverpool...suggest that rather than trying to define the internal structure of nineteenth century towns as a special case, transitional between the pre-industrial and modern city, the similarities to twentieth century towns should be stressed instead.¹⁴

He continues:

The transition to an essentially modern urban form was a gradual evolutionary process with the precise timing of change in particular towns being difficult to pinpoint and varying from place to place depending on rates of population growth, the level of industrialisation and previous urban development. Evidence from Liverpool, however, suggests that for the larger industrial town this change occurred in the first few decades of the nineteenth century rather than in the last quarter as proposed by Ward, and it is likely that most nineteenth century towns were being fashioned by recognisably modern processes for most of the Victorian period...essentially modern levels of residential differentiation occurred in many nineteenth century towns. The processes causing segregation were complex and no single theory of residential differentiation is likely to provide an appropriate explanation...many of the processes which characterised the mid-Victorian city are still

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 151.

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ "Victorian Cities: how different?", *Social History*, 2, 1977.

¹⁴ "Residential Differentiation in the Nineteenth Century City", *Space, Hierarchy and Society: Interdisciplinary Studies in Area Analysis*, eds. Barry C. Burham and John Kingsbury, British Archaeological Reports, 1979, p. 168.

operational today...there seems little evidence that we should treat the Victorian city as a special case.¹⁵

Nevertheless, despite the validity of these counter-arguments, there is much that is still pertinent in Ward's general observation that:

the social geographic changes in cities on both sides of the Atlantic during the second half of the nineteenth century record a transition from weakly defined patterns in which some elements of either a traditional or idealised community persisted to one in which a more emphatic level of residential differentiation reinforced new and more complex bases of social stratification.¹⁶

However, while it is of course legitimate to argue about the precise timing of these processes within particular urban areas, the notion of the 'transitional' city still provides a useful framework for discussing urban photography. This is especially true for London which was also in many respects a unique city displaying distinctive patterns of growth and development.

Created space

Regardless of the debate around its precise chronology, the transitional city was a product of the process which Lefebvre has described as capitalism's self-perpetuation "by occupying space, by producing a space."¹⁷ Within this process photography was directly involved in the transformation of the nineteenth century city through its mobilisation as document or antiquarian record of the rebuilding of the material fabric of the urban environment. Here photography was employed to record the old structure before its demolition in the wake of what Marshall Berman has called capitalism's "innovative self-destruction"¹⁸ or what Harvey has similarly cited as capitalism's "creative self-destruction".¹⁹ This physical rebuilding occurred to some degree in all the major European cities and an ambivalent response to urban redevelopment underlies the initiative behind much of this photography.

It was the Haussmannisation of Paris that no doubt represented the most systematic and radical rebuilding of a city and the consequent reshaping of its social landscape. Motivated by "the twin ideals of Enlightenment rationality and imperial authority",²⁰ Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris involved viewing the city as a "technical problem" to be solved by means of the conflation of created space with

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

¹⁶ "Victorian Cities: How Modern?", *op. cit.*, p. 149.

¹⁷ *The Survival of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 21.

¹⁸ *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, London, Verso, 1983, pp. 98-105.

¹⁹ *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1985, p. 28.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 178.

forms of effective space (e.g. the efficient movement of traffic and troops). During this rebuilding of Paris under Napoleon III photography (most notably by Marville) was used to record the actual destruction of old buildings and sites during the 1850s and 1860s (fig. 2.1). However, Marville's photographs did not at the time have the overtly antiquarian status as did the photographs both commissioned and also taken by The Society for Photographing Relics of Old London (figs. 2.2 - 2.4). Nevertheless, the use of photography as a 'record' of the old and the historic and of the sites of antiquarian and topographical interest was a major cause of the mobilisation of the camera within the city. In France the practice of documenting the historic sites and architecture of the country, and especially of Paris, started early. In 1851 the Commission des Monuments Historiques had commissioned photographers such as Gustave le Gray, Henri Seq and Hippolyte Bayard to undertake this work. And by the 1850s the government had begun to purchase complete photographic surveys and collections.

In its turn this employment of the camera provoked a sustained debate during the century and beyond concerning the function and status of the photographic image when used as a historical record. Some of the fundamental issues within this debate were raised in the directives issued by the Manchester Amateur Photographic Society which was formed in 1885 in association with the Manchester Public Libraries with the aim of supplying "historical record pictures".

In his brief history of the Society, Harry Milligan describes as "progressive" those members who formed the Society as a break-away group from the original Manchester Photographic Society which had already been in existence some twenty years. An indication of some of the issues within this debate can be gleaned from the statements made in December 1888 by the Rev H. J. Palmer, President of the Amateur Society, in his outline, with reference to a group of buildings known as the "Gibraltar" then marked for demolition (figs. 2.5 - 2.6), of a programme of action in the club Journal:

He asked for a systematic endeavour to be made during the coming year to preserve a photographic record of the condition of old buildings, and ended with a plea that it is as up-to-date today as it was then; that: 'now that these ancient tenements are no longer in a state to 'make a picture', I desire to suggest to Manchester amateurs that they may well bestir themselves to obtain photographic memorials of similar ancient antiquities of the city to be preserved in collected form among our treasured archives.'

This demand, and subsequent ones, was made in the face of the city's "constant

²¹ "The Manchester Photographic Record Survey", *Manchester Review*, 8, 1958, p.154.

state of transition" as a result of redevelopment. As Milligan relates:

In the course of a lecture in October 1889 the Rev. H. J. Palmer made another prophetic remark that seems to be so up-to-date today as to be shocking. It was this:—"In another and very useful direction some of us are making our photography distinctly philanthropic by our efforts to preserve for all future citizens a pictured record of those parts of ancient Manchester which still survive the ruthless destructiveness of our modern civic and commercial requirements."²²

Having thus been initiated in Manchester in 1890, similar photographic surveys were proposed in Birmingham, Sheffield, Liverpool and York. In Manchester itself a growing list was submitted by members of subjects to be photographed using the highly durable Palintype process. Subjects listed included not only public sites such as the Exchange, the Old Town Hall (fig. 2.7), the Infirmary, Victoria Station, the Palace Theatre, the Assize Courts, City Road) but also scenes of "the business life of the city and the habits of the people" not just from within Old Manchester and Salford but from the entire city and Borough (figs. 2.8 - 2.12).

Throughout this survey, permanence and change were the determining criteria of photographic value. Milligan quotes a statement made in April 1890 by the President of the Survey, Mr. John Wilcock:

His first point is in answer to the question 'What are we to take?.' His reply is really a summary of the requirements in one word when he says:-We might as well give an answer and say: anything.' He continues:-'The simplest row of jerry-built cottages, rearing each other up like the paper scenes of a toy theatre, has the strongest claim to be photographed if only to show the morality of the building trade as it exists today'...He deals with places and institutions which are permanent by saying that:'This is seemingly paradoxical. If a place is permanent why photograph it?.' But he answers himself by asking what is permanent.²³

Aside from providing a useful narrative account of the Manchester Survey, Milligan, in his discussion of the "right kind of photograph", makes a distinction between "utilitarian" and "pictorial" photography and posits "photographic quality" and "Pictorial value" as two implicitly distinct criteria. As part of this distinction he lists "four requirements":

It must be understood that what is wanted in a print for reference purposes is information, and nothing but information; therefore transient pictorial effects are a waste of time. A perfect print for local history work should show quite clearly what the subject is, and where it is. If the topographical detail cannot be shown adequately on the main print then a secondary picture should be taken that embodies some recognisable part of the main object, and some topographical detail that will place the subjects. Next, if possible, and this is rather more difficult, some approximate indication of the date on which the picture was taken should appear on the picture...And finally, and in all probability the most difficult requirement to fulfil, is to indicate just why it was thought necessary to take the picture.²⁴

Although directed as much towards contemporary (i.e.post-war) photography,

²² *ibid.*, p. 195.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 203.

Milligan's distinction between "information" and "pictorial" value was simply a continuation of the debate initiated during the nineteenth century, a debate, too, which broadened in scope with the rise of Pictorial photography at the turn of the century.

Glasgow and Edinburgh

This notion of a kind of photographic conservation work with its concomitant emphasis upon an unmediated documentary verisimilitude is also emphasised in William Young's Introduction to the 1900 edition of Thomas Annan's photographs of *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow* taken for the City of Glasgow Improvements Trust in 1868. In the Introduction Young writes:

The City Improvement Trustees acquired, by act of Parliament, in 1868, the right to alter and reconstruct several of the densely built areas of the city, and these operations, it was foreseen, would remove many old and interesting landmarks. Before entering upon their work, therefore, the Trustees arranged with the late Mr. Thomas Annan to take a series of views of the closes and streets more immediately affected...Within recent years the Town Council has added a number of views, and the whole pictorial record is now submitted in this volume.²⁵

As C. M. Allen has noted: "the story of nineteenth century urban development and of working-class housing shows a steady progression from *laissez-faire* to municipal initiative."²⁶ More particularly:

The importance of the City of Glasgow Improvements Scheme started in 1866 is that it represents the first massive municipal intervention to sweep away the most insanitary and dilapidated and archaic central urban areas and to replan them on a modern basis. It was the first recognition that a free market, and private philanthropy and public health regulations could not provide an adequate solution to these problems: that the City Fathers must at least plan and supervise redevelopment.²⁷

In his Introduction to Annan's photographs, Young outlines a brief history of Glasgow, "the commercial metropolis of Scotland, the second city of the Empire",²⁸ with a stress upon both the historic and strategic sites within the city but primarily upon the improvements to the environment as a consequence of the growth of urban management. Describing first the loss of many of "many of its oldest, and doubtless most picturesque houses"²⁹ as a direct consequence of plague and fire (particularly in the seventeenth century), the Introduction then lists subsequent municipal innovations such as street lighting, street hygiene, the early beginnings of a police force, plans for river purification, and the need to remedy the smoke

²⁵ *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow*, Glasgow, James MacLehose and Sons, 1900.

²⁶ "The Genesis of British Urban Redevelopment with special reference to Glasgow", *Economic History Review*, vol. XVIII, 3, p. 602.

²⁷ *ibid.* p. 613.

²⁸ *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow*, *op. cit.*

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 14.

problem: "Were these two great reforms successfully carried out, and the excessive noise of the street traffic by some means reduced, Glasgow would greatly add to its honourable repute, as a healthy and pleasant place of abode."³⁰ Annan's photographs are firmly situated within this environmental discourse and narrative of municipal initiative as depicting all that was undesirable in the city - a polemic reinforced by the visual effect of dark and cramped claustrophobia and the heightened effects of texture, dampness and airlessness in the photographs of the alleys just off the High Street (figs. 2.13 - 2.16) in contrast to the open vistas of the High Street itself (fig. 2.17):

The value of many of the plates embraced in this volume consists in their true representation or suggestion of the seamy side of the city's life: in their depicting with absolute faithfulness the gloom and squalor of the slums. They afford a peep into dark and dismal dens unvisited by the great purifying agencies of the sun and wind, and in surveying them, we instinctively feel that human life born, bred or led within their shades is sorely handicapped, and that the day of their extinction is the more due.³¹

While Young's Introduction overtly condones the municipal initiative behind the demolition and rebuilding works in Glasgow - even if the slum-dwellers themselves did not - another text which was exactly contemporary, but this time concerned with Edinburgh, displayed a far more ambivalent attitude to urban redevelopment. Published in 1868, the book *Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh* was comprised of "A series of photographs by Archibald Burns; with descriptive and historical notes by Thomas Henderson". This text (accompanied by fifteen photographs by Burns and seven anonymous woodcuts) registered a distinctly oppositional response to urban 'created space'. Given this, although several of Burns's photographs (figs. 2.18 - 2.22) would appear to be very similar to Annan's, the semantic inflection given to them is of an altogether different order.

Essentially an elegiac discourse upon "the picturesque", Henderson's text is, however, more than simply an antiquarian or topographical survey of architectural sites in "auld" Edinburgh (even though the last chapter is a commentary specifically concerning the neo-Gothic revival) but is, to a greater degree, a polemic against urban redevelopment and municipal improvement:

One cannot help deploring some of the effects of improvements which necessitate the removal of buildings of artistic or historical value; but when there is needless and wanton demolition of the old landmarks, it would surely not be too useful an office for even a town-council, to become guardians of what is probably quite as much the property of the town as are the sweepings of the streets...Now and then the rage for improvement spreads like an epidemic - just now it has attacked

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 23.

³¹ *ibid.*

the old trees in our public gardens - and woe betide any vestiges of antiquity that turn up during its prevalence.³²

In a similar vein he continues:

Of course, in endeavouring to recall the High Street of former times, one must conceive of it as unbroken by the many wide gaps which now disfigure the stately range of its lofty buildings, and interrupt the picturesque array of its gabled roofs: and all the atrocities which have been committed on this unfortunate city under the name of improvement, certainly the neighbourhood we have now reached, has been favoured with the greatest share.³³

Yet elsewhere, however, Henderson does acknowledge something of the realities of slum-life:

Taking Bull's Close as a sample, one gets somewhat reconciled to the loss of the picturesque, if thereby a better sanitary condition could be induced; and it takes the utmost stretch of the imagination, when looking at such hovels, and their present inhabitants, to conceive of them as abodes of the gay, the beautiful, and the noble of other days.³⁴

This recognition is expressed further when, for example, Henderson describes Frier Wynd as being now "most dreary and uninviting" or the route to the present Old Corn Market, i.e:

if there is much interest in the past, there is also much pain in the present, - where human beings, if not of the highest type, cluster like carrion birds in these deserted carcasses, once alive with rude, yet simple and noble, life. Here civilisation seems not to have decreased, but only lowered the ills of life, and vice and crime act as executioners, in room of the stake and the gibbet. Here also the genial heat of the summer is apt to fructify the seeds of disease, and, life, being always at so low an ebb, the salutary cold of winter only opens another door to death.³⁵

Nonetheless, such transformations are ultimately cited as indications of a general narrative of social decline and are symptomatic of "the changes of time and the depravity of human nature - of course as seen in the character of your servants and the working classes."³⁶ In short, *Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh* operates as an elegy for a lost and, of course, fictive city of social integration, hierarchy and civility.

This tension between the preservation of the picturesque and the "catalogue of horrors" resulting from improvement and modernisation provides the dominant textual thread in *Picturesque "Bits"*, a tension which is evoked across various types of spatiality. Thus Henderson explicitly contrasts the old and the new:

For it is not this Edinburgh of the Nineteenth century we would speak of, with Princes Street for its centre - stately, straight, and spacious - but that city over there, beyond the valley...These two towns, divided in situation only by a narrow valley, are in character separated by centuries. The one on the north - classical in its features, formal, open and fair; the other on the south - Gothic in its

³² *Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh*, Edinburgh, Edmonston and Douglas, 1868, p. 18.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 23.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 48.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 55.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.56.

outlines, rich in light and shade, rugged and old.³⁷

Burns's photographs thus stand in contrast to the images of Princes Street produced by George Washington Wilson and William Donaldson Clark (figs. 2.23 - 2.25) and instead look back to the topographical photography of Thomas Keith (figs. 2.26 - 2.27). Not surprisingly Henderson text stresses the innate visuality of the city and of particular places within it, while the Old Town itself is described as being a ready-made picture:

On a summer evening, when the setting sun shines through the city smoke, and the old town lies piled up in gigantic masses, fringed with spires, and culminating in the castle rock, you have a picture worth painting by anybody who can do it well enough.³⁸

Aside from references to Millais and Doré, Henderson lays great stress upon the viewer's own imagination to historically recreate a given scene. So also, "by merely allowing the influence of the place, assisted by the charm of the hour, to creep over you...you almost lose your own identity...in the spirit of the place".³⁹ As part of this process the text itself becomes, in effect, a series of evocative word-pictures which would seem to partly prefigure Pictorialist photography (fig. 2.28) and the more self-conscious literary enterprise of, for example, Hillaire Belloc's text and Coburn's photographs in *London* published in 1909 (figs. 2.29 - 2.31).

The space of the city, too, is not described solely in visual or aesthetic terms alone (as picturesque) but is also overtly semantic in that particular places and buildings are the bearers of historical and emotional associations and meanings, associations which also have the effect of implicitly displacing the more recent class identities acquired by a given area (e.g. Cowgate). In this manner the city becomes a psychological environment formed through the affective resonances of specific places. Not only is the Old Town itself a kind of palimpsest of overlaid meanings but individual buildings whether, for instance, "quaint" or "lofty, dark, and somewhat mysterious" can provoke sentimental responses. In order to facilitate this process, and depending also upon the required effect, Henderson suggests optimum viewing times, e.g. "summer twilight as the season for a sentimental excursion in Old Edinburgh,...A bright forenoon as most suitable for a more critical inspection"⁴⁰ - and also, of course, for the taking of photographs.

With the text's assertion that "any one with a sufficiently lively imagination may

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 46-47.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 14.

be able to reconstruct for himself the city of former centuries",⁴¹ Burns's photographs come to have a double-status. On the one hand they are presented as images of unmediated mimetic "record" and of "minute description" and accuracy in that:

While the draughtsman can generally chose his own point of view, and may 'humour' his sketch, it must be remembered that the photographer has not the same license, and must 'take' things as they are, and nothing exclude.⁴²

However, on the other hand, as an aid to imaginative reconstruction, the photographs also have the status of evocative fragments as distinct from being close-up images of architectural detail, as suggestions rather than statements. Proximity of vision, and not just perspectival clarity and depth, and hence suggestive detail and texture is valued as much for its evocative effect. This is especially the case in the photograph of Bull's Close (fig. 2.22) which becomes a kind of abstract pattern and not just an image of an architectural feature. As such, shadows and concealment are as valued as clarity and, indeed, visibility - a quality which is acknowledged, too, in Young's praise for Annan's photographs for both their "true representation" and for their "suggestion" of their subjects.

London: from Thomson to Sims

In the debate over the 'transitional' city, the modern city was defined as having well-differentiated residential (i.e. class) areas while the urban structure itself came increasingly to be perceived as a distinctive spatial order. By briefly contrasting two texts about London, I would suggest that, as the century progressed, the photography of London increasingly operated to register and produce an image of the capital as an essentially spatial organisation patterned into distinct districts, areas and suburbs. As part of this development John Thomson's *Street-Life in London*, published in 1877 (figs. 4.1 - 4.37)⁴³ can be contrasted with the magazine series *Living London* (edited by George Sims) which ran for two years between 1901 and 1903 and totalled over 1,000 pages when complete.

What is distinctive about these two texts is their different ways of experiencing and representing the city particularly in terms of moving within it - an experience that was itself overtly bound up with the transformations in the social demography of the city during the later nineteenth century. This transformation can be illustrated

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ See Chapters 4 and 5 for a discussion of this text.

by reference to literature, especially that of Dickens and Mayhew. For both authors London signified a complex heterogeneity which proffered the possibility of direct personal contacts and relationships that were not bounded by specific areas or localities. For both writers the city was marked by what Adrian Poole has termed its "epistemological excitement."⁴⁴ In part this was a mode of perceiving the city to which *Street-Life in London* was closely bound especially in its use of the narrational device of directly, and apparently randomly encountered, 'knowable' individuals who obligingly recount their life-stories. In *Street-Life*, however, the urban crowd is broken down into isolated and atomistic units (the individual or type) with no articulation of complex inter-relationships. This representational strategy can be likened to Nicos Poulantzas's description of the spatio-temporal "matrices" of capitalism in which the:

primal material framework is the mould of social atomization and splintering...embodied in the practices of the labour process itself. At one and the same time, presupposition of the relations of production and embodiment of the labour process, the framework consists in the organization of a continuous, homogeneous, cracked and fragmented space-time as lies at the basis of Taylorism: a cross-ruled, segmented, cellular space in which each fragment (individual) has its place, and in which each emplacement, while corresponding to a fragment (individual), must present itself as homogeneous and uniform; and a linear, serial, repetitive and cumulative time, in which the various moments are integrated with one another, and which is itself orientated toward a finished product - namely, the space-time materialized par excellence in the production line.⁴⁵

It is this linear, serial space which is also produced in *Street-Life in London*. Moreover, the underclass portrayed in *Street-Life* is not circumscribed by the physical or social geography of the city in that the division between East End and West End, for example, is not invoked. In *Living London*, however, the capital is presented as being primarily not only a spatial order but it also, unlike *Street-Life*, emerges as a complete entity - an image achieved through a 'zonal', rather than segmented or cellular, representation of the city's spaces. This representation can be compared to the strategies operative in Charles Booth's social investigations. As John Goode has noted, Booth addressed himself to "the social space of the demographic process, the structure of the urban universe...Booth establishes the city as a spatial order: urbanisation as a process is analysed in terms of the structure it determines, the map it draws."⁴⁶ So too, argues Goode, Booth's contemporary, the novelist George Gissing, "makes fictions out of the spatial order of the city as a totality."⁴⁷ Thus, as opposed to the "organization of space in Dickens...based on a

⁴⁴ Quoted in John Goode, *George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction*, London, p. 92.

⁴⁵ *State, Power, Socialism*, NLB, 1978, pp. 64-65.

⁴⁶ *George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction*, op. cit., p. 97.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 98.

tension between obscurity and proximity",⁴⁸ space in the London described by both Booth and Gissing "is structured to guarantee the divisions on which it rests."⁴⁹

A similar representational strategy is operative in *Living London* in terms of its codification of the social space of the city. Within this totalising vision, London is described as "a stage", a "panorama", and as "a cinematograph". As Sims also claims in the Prologue to the series: "All forms and phases of London life, from the highest to the lowest, will be brought before us. For us the gates of the palace and the prison will fly open, and the West End and the East shall deliver up their mysteries."⁵⁰

However, divorced from the method of direct personal encounter as employed in *Street-Life in London*, the photographed figures in *Living London* simply become motifs or adornments upon the page (figs. 2.32 - 2.34). As the mapping out of London displaces both individual and collective histories, people cease to be subjects but are here merely actors within the space of the city. Class is implicitly predicated as a category of space, and space as a function of class, as the text sets up a series of associations between specific places and their social identities. Thus, in the chapter entitled "Representative London Streets", one of the contributors, Edwin Pugh, writes:

The 'East-End' and 'the West-End' are phrases indicative of more than mere locality. When we talk of 'the City' we do not always mean, strictly the entire area of London over which the Lord Mayor rules. We have come to apply these terms to communities. 'The West-End' could by no stretch of the imagination be said to include Ealing, though logically that is the truer West End of London. The City contains within its borders streets utterly commonplace and even squalid; but they have no place in the mental picture that those words 'the city' conjure up. London is, in short, not to be rightly understood by a study of particular neighbourhoods, but by a study of her streets as can be said to be truly representative of one distinct phase in her daily life.⁵¹

Given this perception, the theatrical analogy cited in the Prologue is not altogether inappropriate, i.e. "All the tragedies and all the comedies of the great city will be acted before us by men and women who are merely players"⁵² in that it is the urban backdrop (in the form of the reification of social identities and relations within the city's spaces) rather than particular individuals that is now the focus of attention and survey. Furthermore, as John Goode observes with reference to Gissing:

The social space of the city, insofar as it is created space...is partly organized to keep class relations to an abstraction - suburbs, ghettos, thoroughfares are all ways of keeping the

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 99.

⁵⁰ *Living London*, ed. George R. Sims, London, Cassell and Company, 1901-1903, p. 3.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 363.

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 5.

possibilities of direct confrontation at bay.³³

The most obvious and effective way of mapping the increasingly complex environment of the city and its composite spatial identity - this being especially the case in terms of London's unplanned and accumulative growth - was, and is, by comparison and contrast through the use of visual 'evidence'. In *Living London* textual descriptions and assertions (e.g. "the diamonds of the West will dazzle our eyes; the rags of the East will bring tears to them")³⁴ are reinforced by the use of juxtaposed photographs such as Piccadilly contrasted with the New Cut in Lambeth (fig. 2.35). The same strategy was employed in a magazine series published a few years earlier called *Round London*. Each album consisted of "twenty-four remarkably fine views of London, reproduced from photographs taken by some of the most eminent photographic firms in the world." Once again London - the "Modern Babylon" - is presented as a total experience. As the inside cover extols:

In speaking of London one is prone to platitudes: one iterates to weariness the overwhelming statistics, and one strives - too often in vain - to convey even the faintest impression of the wondrous Capital of the proudest and grandest Empire the world has ever seen. Here is a city whose opulence and magnitude have passed into proverb among the nations of the earth; a world within a world; a city wherein a man owning a single acre of land may be rich beyond the dreams of avarice. Our cicerone will not merely show us the world-renowned streets and the buildings of the City and the West-End, but will also conduct us into the labyrinths of Seven Dials, Whitechapel, and little-known, criminal London, as well as across the breezy heights of Hampstead Heath, the sylvan shades of Epping Forest, the many beautiful and rural spots that have not yet been reached by the tentacles of that mighty, ever-growing octopus - the capital of the British Empire.³⁵

Like *Living London*, *Round London* also makes use of the juxtaposition of disparate sites within the city. Thus, for example, a photograph of the High Street, Borough is adjacent to one of Pall Mall; the New Cut, Lambeth (clearly a stock favourite) is contrasted with Marlborough House. What emerges from such series in both London and in other cities is the registering and circulation of the different spaces of the particular city. Photographs by the London Stereoscopic Society (fig. 2.36) or of the Houses of Parliament or London Bridge produce an image of London the capital defined by its grand public sites and vistas and its places of government and commerce which become the ubiquitous images of a city of both tourist attraction and the heart of the Empire (figs. 2.37 - 2.39).

³³ George Gissing: *Ideology and Fiction*, op.cit., p. 100.

³⁴ *Living London*, op.cit., p. 5.

³⁵ *Round London, An Album of Pictures from Photographs of the Chief Places of Interest in and around London*, London, George Newnes Ltd., c.1898.

Mapping the city

Altogether different from this image of the capital, the photographs taken by John Galt, for instance, in and around Bethnal Green at the turn of the century (figs. 2.40 - 2.43) fulfil a quite separate function and circulate an identity of the 'other' London. Here urban space is inscribed within the concerns of philanthropy and environmental discourses around sanitation and over-crowding, while the photographs themselves reinforce the socio-spatial codification of the city. Numerous examples of this codification can, of course, be cited elsewhere such as the Old Town of Edinburgh in *Picturesque "Bits"* contrasted against the city's thoroughfare of Princes Street, both of which in turn are implicitly defined against the particular identity of Glasgow. Cities such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford were frequently represented in terms of their commercial life and their municipal power with the framing of the massive architecture within the photograph so as to achieve an effect of monumentality which dominates the spectator (figs. 2.44 - 2.47).⁵⁶

By means of the circulation of such images an intricate morphology of urban space was both reinforced and produced as the city was broken down into an infinite series and overlaps of seemingly discrete spatial zones and functions. As Michel de Certeau has argued in his account of the emergence of the city as "a universal and impersonal subject", "the city enables us to conceive and construct a space on the basis of a finite number of stable and isolatable elements, each articulated to the other."⁵⁷ This process in turn produced a complex semiotics of space and place, e.g. the set-piece public scenes and monuments of the city, the sites of power, capital and exchange, historic landmarks, the Industrial grand-view and an emergent class landscape (figs. 2.48 - 2.52). And, as the terrain shifted, the camera was mobilised to register and record. As a consequence of this mobilisation, urban photography was to an extent constituted through its being caught within what might be described as one of the fundamental dynamics of modernity - the tension between fluidity and fixity, stasis and transformation. It was this dynamic which motivated much urban photography in the form of the documentation of land marked for rebuilding or demolition (figs 2.53 - 2.54) or as the contrast between the old and the new particularly in terms of the juxtaposition between the massive

⁵⁶ See Nicholas Taylor, "The Awful Sublimity of the Victorian City" in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, eds. H.J.Dyos and Michael Wolff, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973, vol. 2.

⁵⁷ "Practices of Space" in *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, p. 127.

scale of municipal architecture (e.g. Town Halls) and the more intimate scale of the older buildings they towered over (figs. 2.55 - 2.60).

As the created space of the city was continually being reshaped, so also the camera was employed to fix and freeze what Baudelaire had described as "the gesture of living beings...and their luminous explosion in space", to frame "the moving chaos"⁵⁸ of the modern city. To a degree this utilisation of photography was determined within the bourgeoisie's attempts to control urban space, to mould and make legible its ideological meanings and to make the entire city visible by constructing lines of vision through it - quite literally in the case of Haussmann's "grand prospects". As Harvey argues, "Spaces and crowds had to be controlled if the bourgeoisie was to maintain its class position and power."⁵⁹ It is this question of who controlled urban space that is fundamental, for example, to the interaction between photography and the Commune of 1871. For, with political power both producing and being predicated upon specific spatial relations,⁶⁰ what is articulated across the numerous photographs of scenes from the Commune is a range of conflicting attempts to appropriate the centre of Paris. On one level, this use of photography was perhaps the first openly instrumentalist use of the camera by the state. Very simply, the use of photography during the Commune was determined by who had access to the camera. Thus, not only were commemorative portraits (fig. 2.61) of the communards later used by the police for identification purposes but the camera was used both to record the suppression of the commune (fig. 2.62) or as overt propaganda as in Eugene Appert's use of montage to produce fictive 'reconstructions' of alleged communard atrocities (fig. 2.63). Ranging from souvenir portraits of the communard dead or images of buildings and monuments destroyed during the siege of Paris (figs. 2.64 - 2.66) or by the communards themselves (fig. 2.67) to the use of photographs for police surveillance, photography was employed as a means to both securing and then consolidating victory and the traditional values of patriotism (fig. 2.68) over oppositional forces.⁶¹

Intrinsic to the Commune had been an attempt by workers etc. to reappropriate

⁵⁸ Quoted in Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*, op. cit., pp. 145-159.

⁵⁹ *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, op.cit., p. 205.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Henri Lefebvre, "Reflections on the Politics of Space", *Antipode*, 8, 1976, espec. pp. 30-33.

⁶¹ See Gen Doy, "The Camera Against the Commune", *Photography/Politics: One*, eds. Victor Burgin, Douglas Lowndes, Stuart Hood and Maggie Murray, Photography Workshop, (no date), and Donald E. English, *Political Uses of Photography in the Third French Republic 1871-1914*, Ann Arbor, UMI Research Press Studies in Photography, pp. 21-79.

the city centre from which they had to a large part been expelled as a consequence of Haussmann's rebuilding. As Harvey describes:

The dilemma in 1868-71, as in 1848, was that the republican bourgeoisie had to open its space in order to achieve its own bourgeois revolution. Weakened it could not resist the rising pressure of the working class and revolutionary movements. It was for this reason that the reoccupation of central Paris by the popular classes took on such symbolic importance. For it occurred in a context where the poor were being chased, in imagination as well as in fact, from the strategic spaces and even off the boulevards now viewed as bourgeois interiors. The more space was opened up physically, the more it had to be partitioned and closed off through social practice...Thus did the geographical imagination of the bourgeoisie impose sociospatial structuration on a Paris that Haussman's works had opened up to closer scrutiny.⁶²

With the boulevard being both a means and a sign of the bourgeoisie's attempt to take over Paris, the structuring spatial dimensions of the Commune can in effect be seen as a struggle between the boulevard and the artisans' *quartier*. It is this spatial division which in part explains the recurrent images of the barricades put up by the communards (figs. 2.69 - 2.70). Indeed the frequency and repetition of these images - the barricade across the Rue de Rivoli at the Tuileries or the destruction of the Ministry of Finances having an almost magnetic pull for photographers - are symptomatic not only of the importance of these sites as spaces of bourgeois hegemony but are indicative too of what Steve Neale described as "an enormous investment in perspective..[and] an enormous social investment in the centrality of the eye." Just as Marville's "Rue de Rivoli" functioned as a space for scopic presence, the images of the barricades (with their connotations of blockage and the returned look) can be read as an attempt to reassert control and efface these barriers to the gaze by mobilising the ideal, homogeneous space of photography against the figures of class and social difference.

For it is within the context of the ambition to transform Paris into a wholly bourgeois space that the Commune can be understood as a resistance to the class hierarchisation of the city's spaces in that what the Commune represented was a radical reconstruction of urban space. As Kristen Ross observes:

The failure of the communards in the 'mature' realm of military and politico-economic efficacy is balanced by their accomplishments in the Imaginary or preconscious space that lies outside specific and directly representable class functions - the space that could be said to constitute the realm of political desire rather than need...If workers are those who are not allowed to transform the space/time allotted them, then the lesson of the Commune can be found in its recognition that revolution consists not in changing the juridical form that that allots space/time (for example, allowing a party to appropriate bureaucratic organization) but rather in completely transforming the nature of space/time...The working existence of the Commune constituted a critique pronounced against geographical zoning whereby diverse forms of socio-economic power are installed: a breakdown of privileged place or places in favor of a permanent exchange between distinct places -

⁶² *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, op.cit.

thus the importance of the *quartier*...The breakdown of spatial hierarchy in the Commune, one aspect of which was the establishment of places of political deliberation and decision making that were no longer secret but open and accessible, brought about a temporal division as well.⁶³

It is within these attempts by conflictual class and social groupings to transform the uses and meanings of urban space that photographs of the Commune need to be situated. For while the overt partisanship of propagandist photography is unavoidably acknowledged, none of these photographs is in fact just a passive record of events or an image which exists somehow outside of the scenes it represents. Instead all of these images are symptomatic of and implicated within particular spatial regimes and are determined by the conditions of access for the gaze in terms of who controlled or had access to the city. But while the Commune represented an attempt to break down the spatial hierarchies of the city, by the turn of the century both the boulevard and the security of a classed and proprietorial gaze had been restored (figs. 2.71 - 2.73).

Whether, then, used within strategies of bourgeois socialisation, as in *Street-Life in London*, or against the Paris Commune, or, more obliquely, through establishing a coherent, ordered and stable identity for the urban environment, the camera was an invaluable tool in the bourgeoisie's "endless conquest of space"⁶⁴ arriving, too, just at the historical moment when that class "finally consolidated the triumph of space as a concrete abstraction with real power in relation to social practices."⁶⁵

However, as in the photographs of the Commune, it is through this use of the camera that a tension also emerged: indeed, a contradiction that needed somehow to be managed, between the ideal of a universal, homogeneous and measurable spatial order (an abstract, Euclidean realm exemplified in the model of photographic space) and the actual, lived social fragmentation of space. It is this process of spatial fragmentation and universalisation that has been described by Poulantzas in his discussion of spatiality as the support and embodiment of the relations of production:

Separation and division in order to unify; parcelling out in order to structure; atomization in order to encompass; segmentation in order to homogenize; and individualization in order to obliterate differences and otherness.⁶⁶

⁶³ *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1988, pp. 39-42.

⁶⁴ David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, op.cit., p. 12.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ *State, Power, Socialism*, op. cit., p. 107.

Similarly, as Harvey describes:

The homogeneity of space is achieved through its total 'pulverisation' into freely alienable parcels of private property, to be bought and traded at will upon the market. The result is the permanent tension between the appropriation and use of space for individual and social purposes and the domination of space through private property and other forms of class and social power.⁶⁷

Moreover, as he continues:

The response is for each and every stratum in society to use whatever powers of domination it can command (money, political influence, even violence) to try to seal itself off (or seal off others judged undesirable) in fragments of space within which processes of reproduction of social distinction can be jealously protected.⁶⁸

Within this context photography not only registered social fragmentation but it was also part of the continual efforts to rationalise and unify the city's created space, to curb its atomization by containing alternative (and potentially subversive) class spaces - in short, the mobilisation of the camera within the process that Foucault has described as "the analytic arrangement of space."

Furthermore, as Michel de Certeau has observed, "The desire to see the city preceded the means of attempting to fulfil that desire."⁶⁹ It was the camera that came to be the means of fulfilling that desire or phantasy of scopic omnipotence or of a totalising vision - an obvious product being panoramic or aerial photography. And it is in the context of this desire to see the city that photography operated, at least implicitly, with reference to a notion of the democratisation of vision not simply in terms of access to the camera, but in relation to the promotion of the belief that the different spaces of the city were indeed accessible and available to be freely appropriated by the camera. In this manner disparate spaces and their various identities could be levelled to the apparently unproblematic status of simply being an image among an infinite series - a process perhaps somewhat similar to the 'democracy' of money or capital as described by Harvey in his analysis of money as both the great leveller (with everything reducible to commodity status) and the source of fragmentation and social division. It was this tension, or continual displacement, between one conception of space (as an ideal abstraction) and the other (as social and conflictual), that to a great extent in the nineteenth century (as today) structured the interaction between the camera and the urban milieu within which it was employed.

⁶⁷ *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, op.cit., p. 13.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁹ "Practices of Space" op.cit., p. 124.

3

THE VIEW ON THE GROUND

*The right to look, or the invention of the other*¹

In the previous chapter I argued for the increasing importance of photography in the production and circulation of a morphology of urban spaces: spaces which were simultaneously defined both as generic types and as specific localities. Essentially, the identities of these spaces were determined by their function - for example, monumental and civic sites, major public thoroughfares, and areas of particular economic activity or class residency. By means of this photographic production the legibility of cities was secured through their being mapped out as assemblages of a range of identities and usages. By the turn of the century, as evident in a photo-text such as *Living London*, the dominant taxonomies of the major cities (but especially of the capital itself) were well established to the point of being banally reproduced. A set of representational conventions had been installed which still remain powerful in structuring the imaginary cartography not only of contemporary London but also of the Industrial (or typically northern) city.

This classification of urban spaces can be likened to Foucault's description of "opinion" as:

a mode of operation through which power will be exercised by virtue of the mere fact of things being known and people seen in a sort of immediate, collective and anonymous gaze. A form of power whose main instance is that of opinion will refuse to tolerate areas of darkness.²

But while photography can be situated within this regime of the gaze, its aims and modes of operation - in particular, its construction of lines of vision so as to "bring to light" the previously hidden - were by no means unproblematic. Not only was the archive structured across the tension between an ideal, homogeneous photographic space which was counterposed against the heterogeneity of the city, but this tension can be located more specifically in terms of the accessibility or resistance of particular spaces to the external gaze. Foucault's account of the

¹ Jacques Derrida, Afterword (untitled) in *Droits de Regard*, photographs by Marie-Francoise Plissart, Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1985, p. xxxvi.

² *Power/Knowledge: Essays and Interviews*, ed. Colin Gordon, New York, Pantheon Books, p. 154.

"imperative to look" needs here to be referred to what Dennis Porter has described as "the licence to look"³ which was itself partly contingent upon who had a "right to the city."⁴ Looking was neither an automatic or universal right while it was often an activity which could entail specific risks. In the context of the photographic production of specular identities for viewers, this tension between disparate spatial orders (ideal projective spaces set against those of urban alterity) can be located in terms of the potential threats to the spectator's self-reflexive presence (the viewer's identification with the plenitude of the gaze) through the disruption of the conditions of that gaze with the consequent fracturing of specular security.

The dangers associated with looking can be more clearly examined with reference to the perception and experience by the observer on the street of those 'shocks' which were particular to city-life and which were perhaps first described by Simmel. For it was the city's streets which were most notably the arena for a defining feature of modernity - the association between an "unknown realm [and] the risk of sudden, shocking confrontations". As one commentator has observed, in the "in the more orthodox sociological analyses of modernity...the experience of the modern occurred mainly in the public sphere."⁵ Yet, while perhaps receiving an excess of attention over other realms, such as the domestic, this public sphere remained a paramount site of modernity. But arguably as the sites and processes of industrial production became more organised, the signs of the modern and the potential for shocking confrontations became most apparent on the street itself. For, despite increasing and often successful attempts to minimise the opportunities for inter-class contact (often in conjunction with emergent patterns of urban growth), streets always offered the possibility of an unregulated randomness and promiscuity of social encounter and exchange (fig. 2.9).

It is some specific forms of social encounter that could take place on the street or, as significant, the management or overt avoidance of such encounters which is the issue that I wish to address in this chapter through a reading of a selection of mid-century texts by Engels, Mayhew and Baudelaire - a reading which will also make reference to Walter Benjamin's account of modernity. My aim, however, is not simply to appropriate either these texts or Benjamin's own terms at face value but to suggest instead that they to a degree can be situated and read within a

³ *The Pursuit of Crime, Art and Ideology in Crime Fiction*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1981, p. 241.

⁴ Quoted by Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space*, op. cit., p. 4.

⁵ Janet Wolff, "The Invisible *Flâneuse* : Women and the Literature of Modernity", *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2, 3, 1985, pp. 37-38.

psychoanalytic framework. But this is not to construct individual pathologies of these authors as discrete monadic consciousnesses. Rather, the 'author' operates here as both the name of a collection of texts and, as subject, as the effect of these texts.⁶

Principally I shall concentrate upon Engels's *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845) which was not only one of the first major accounts of the modern city but it was also a text explicitly marked by the conjunction between an "unknown realm" and "shocking confrontations". One chapter from Engels's book is especially pertinent here. In this chapter, "On the Great Towns", Engels addresses the problem not only of how to set about representing the city but also the difficulties of both physical movement and visual registration within it. For, aside from the general polemic throughout the chapter, what is at stake in this narrative is Engels's maintenance of a position of authorial observation and control. In other words, what emerges from the text is an account of how Engels, in what might be described as his engagement with difference, adopts various strategies in order to secure a position of exteriority as an objective observer who is politically alert and sympathetic to the scenes of otherness which he describes but who remains, nonetheless, positioned outside of them.

Dominant among these strategies is the central emphasis given by Engels to the issue of spectatorial positionality in terms of proximity and distance. Associated with this is Engels's reading of the city in terms of the organisation of space both in the context of the (ir)rationality of the modern industrial city and within what could be called a critique of (in)visibility - concerns which are symptomatic of Engels's overall attempt to find a method and vocabulary adequate to representing the city as unified totality beneath its surface chaos.

It is with reference to some of the discursive tropes employed to describe the city within these texts that I wish to draw out particular aspects of urban photography by viewing a range of images which for the most part share a common identity in so far as they were all produced in association with investigative surveys into what might be called the areas of overt social and class difference within the city. For while, on the one hand, photography was mobilised for the securing of a

⁶ See Foucault's "What is an Author?" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, op.cit., pp. in conjunction with Derrida's remarks on 'authorship', i.e. "The 'subject' of writing does not exist if we mean by that some sovereign solitude of the author. The subject of writing is a *system* of relations between strata...the psyche, society, the world. Within that scene, on that stage, the punctual simplicity of the sovereignty of the classical subject is not to be found", "Freud and the Scene of Writing", *Writing and Difference*, op.cit., pp. 226-227.

coherent legibility for the city through the operations of a panoptic or panoramic gaze, the coherence of this overview always threatened to collapse at the point of direct encounter on the streets. It is within this tension between the panoramic or totalising gaze and the perceptual experience at street-level that I shall situate these photographs.

Distant prospects: Engels and Mayhew on London

This tension can be illustrated here by comparing Engels's account of his arrival in London with Henry Mayhew's description of the capital in his Introduction to *The Criminal Prisons of London* (1868). What is striking in these two texts is their use of similar narrative devices but so as to achieve quite different representations of the same city. Thus, for example, both texts employ the juxtaposition between the grand panoramic view and the experience of walking through the city. Similarly, both authors dwell upon a graphic description of the crowd although they register the experience of being within it in altogether dissimilar ways.

In the opening paragraph of "The Great Towns" chapter Engels draws attention to the role of physical distance as a determinate condition for both representing and knowing the city:

I know nothing more imposing than the view which the Thames offers during the ascent from the sea to London Bridge. The masses of buildings, the wharves on both sides, especially from Woolwich upwards, the countless ships along both shores, crowding ever closer together, until, at last, only a narrow passage remains in the middle of the river, a passage through which hundreds of steamers shoot by one another; all this is so vast, so impressive, that a man cannot collect himself, but is lost in the marvel of England's greatness before he sets foot upon English soil.⁷

For Engels the view from the Thames produces a distinct form of visual pleasure for the spectator, a pleasure of disruption, in which "a man cannot collect himself but is lost in the marvels of English greatness."⁸ This particular pleasure or excitation had, of course, antecedents within accounts of the Sublime and had been cited as a consequence of a dramatic contrast between the viewing subject and an expansive scene which overwhelmed the gaze.

The pleasure of the gaze is also explicitly addressed by Mayhew in his chapter "A Balloon View over London" which he opens with the observation that:

There is an innate desire in all men to view the earth and its cities and its plains from 'exceeding high places', since even the least imaginative can feel the pleasure of beholding some broad landscape spread out like a bright coloured carpet at their feet, and of looking down upon the world as though they scanned it with eagle's eyes. For it is an exquisite treat to all minds to find that they have the power, by their mere vision, of extending their consciousnesses to scenes and objects that are miles away; and as the intellect experiences a special delight in being able to comprehend

⁷ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, Granada, 1981, p. 57.

⁸ *ibid.*

all the minute particulars of a subject under one associate whole, and to perceive the previous confusion of the diverse details assume the form and order of a perspicuous unity; so does the eye love to see the country or the town, which it usually knows only as a series of disjointed parts...become all outlined...into one harmonious and varied scene...With the great cities, however, the desire to perceive the diverse multitude of houses at one single glance instead of by some thousand different views...is a feeling strong upon everyone - the wisest as well as the most frivolous - upon all, indeed, from the philosopher to the idler about town."⁹

Like Engels, Mayhew also emphasises the awe-inspiring effect of the grand view. Yet here the "pleasure of beholding" is achieved through a totalising and omniscient vision for the spectator which effaces both fragmentation and illegibility - "the previous confusion of diverse details" - as well as the pedestrian's dependence upon the partial view. Here Mayhew sets up a dense associative chain between desire, pleasure, power, vision, consciousness and love which are all cited as facets of a "desire to perceive." In turn, this empowering and libidinal economy of the scopic is both predicated upon and supports an effacement of the conflictual and destabilising visual field of difference - an effacement encoded here as a desire for wholeness, unity and harmony.

This chain of affects, then, becomes the determinant condition of an omnipotent and thus pleasurable position for the viewer. Whereas, for Engels, the image of London had been too "vast" to encompass, Mayhew, albeit from the more distant and aerial vantage point of a balloon, is able to "grasp it in the eye, in all its incongruous integrity, at one single glance."¹⁰ In association with this all-comprehending and God-like gaze is an almost nostalgic feeling of unassailable security which comes close to the solipsist structures of primary narcissism:

to swing in the air high above the petty jealousies and heart-burnings, small ambitions and vain parades of 'polite' society, and feel, for once, tranquil as a babe in a cot, and that you are hardly of the earth earthly, as, Jacob-like, you mount the aerial ladder, and half lose sight of the 'great commercial world' beneath, where men are regarded as mere counters to play with, and to *do* your neighbour as your neighbour would *do* you constitutes the first principle in the religion of trade - to feel yourself floating through the endless realms of space...and enjoying, for a brief half hour, at least, a foretaste of that Elysian destiny which is the ultimate hope of all.¹¹

The two forms of pleasure described by Engels and Mayhew need not, however, be regarded as being mutually exclusive and in the context of looking at photographs can readily coexist. Indeed, it is this coexistence which may in part explain the particular appeal of the panoramic or aerial view (figs. 3.1 - 3.3, 3.5). For, as the eye scans these photographs, the viewer moves between an empowered gaze over the city which is laid out before it and an awareness, evoked through

⁹ Henry Mayhew and John Binny, *The Criminal Prisons of London and Scenes of Prison Life*, London, Griffin, Bohn and Co., 1862, pp. 7-8.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

memory and projection, of the inescapable knowledge of the body's physical scale. While the pleasure of this (temporary) release from corporeal scale is the more powerful sensation here - although for Engels, of course, the sheer scale of the city merely drew attention to the spectator's own tiny size - this pleasure is also circumscribed by the realisation that this situation is also unreal. Pleasure here involves a suspension of knowledge which then allows for a phantasy of scopic plenitude. Within this cognitive ambivalence the viewer moves between recognition and disassociation: recognition of typical urban structures and perhaps also of familiar landmarks but seen now from a vantage point that was previously inaccessible - a situation within which, according to Mayhew, the spectator has the pleasure of "recognising the different places and objects...under a wholly different aspect."¹²

As part of this production of spaces which displace or suspend the conventional anthropocentric dimensions of scale (structured by reference to the body), such images often create striking spatial paradoxes. In an anonymous Daguerreotype of Paris of 1844 (fig. 3.4) such paradoxes become especially striking as the broad sweep of the city is contained within an object which the viewer can physically hold - a dislocation of scale all the more effective as a result of the fascination evoked by the minute detail captured upon the metal surface.

Such spatial paradoxes become yet more apparent in Nadar's aerial photographs of Paris. For while his 1858 view over Montmartre (fig. 3.6) remains within a fairly conventional format, his images of the quartier l'Étoile (fig. 3.7) taken a decade later produce a dynamic and relative space - an effect all the more intensified by the breaking up of the city's structure into a sequence of composite serial views as the single grand view is here replaced by an almost cinematic sequence. Moreover, through a dramatic tilting of the image which now fills the picture plane - with which the image is also parallel - Nadar sets up an uncertain relation between flatness, surface and depth. Simultaneously, the eye is denied a single fixed point upon which to focus but is instead compelled to track the intricate patterns of the streets but only, at times, to find itself back where it started. This disruptive effect here of repetition across the series militates against the clear legibility of the image - a legibility, too, which is dependent upon a carefully gauged (i.e. not excessive) distance. The reading of this image thus demands sophisticated interpretive skills from the viewer for whom seeing now largely makes sense only by explicit

¹² *ibid.*, p. 27.

reference to what is already known. Moreover, instead of a smooth elision between vision and cognition, the need for a deliberative decoding of the image opens a gap between them.

As a consequence of this tilting of the image, Nadar produces a novel representation of the city which becomes a grid-like structure of geometric patterns. The image thus reads as a virtual blueprint for a Haussmannised Paris - a visual and aerial complement to the triangulation of the old city. Indeed, not only did the Haussmannisation of Paris produce a more regular pattern for the city, but it was only from a high vantage point that the dramatic transformations produced through the urban rebuilding could effectively be seen.

Yet, as Nadar's picture reveals, the aim of depicting the city as a totality or as near as was possible, also entailed a risk to the legibility of that image. But for Nadar himself photography could potentially be employed as a form of aerial cartography. Indeed, he had ambitions to photographically map the whole of France. Yet it is within the terms of such a project that two potentially exclusive and self-defeating tendencies emerge. On the one hand, an ambition to produce the ultimate panorama in the form of a national survey recording the entire surface of the nation. However, on the other hand, the means of achieving such a project entailed a radical disruption of conventional representations of space and demanded new skills of visual decoding as a result of the effacement of both the gestalt immediacy of the image and of the smooth suturing of the viewer.

Crowds and streets: strategies of observation

As a consequence of these two tendencies Nadar's photograph of the quartier L'Étoile stands as a limit-point of the panoramic in that it is an image in which the (over) ambitious demands of the survey provoke a crisis of the picture's legibility. Such a crisis was also implicit in Engels's description of London from the Thames although constructed here as a disruptive threat to the hitherto secure observer. In the "Great Towns" chapter Engels writes in a similarly hyperbolic vein about the distant views of other cities but here he operates within a tradition of topographical accounts of the beautiful rather than of the Sublime. However, Engel's reference to the picturesque is heavily ironic. Dublin he describes initially as "a city the approach to which from the sea is as charming as that of London is imposing." However, he continues that: "By way of compensation, however, the poorer districts of Dublin

are among the most hideous and repulsive to be seen in the world."¹³ Similarly, he writes of Bradford that, "On week days the town is enveloped in a grey cloud of coal smoke, but on a fine Sunday it offers a superb picture, when viewed from the surrounding heights. Yet within there reigns the same filth and discomfort as in Leeds."

This juxtaposition between a city's distant image and the reality "within" is also to be found in Engels's description of London. For, after enthusiastically citing the great achievements of the capital, Engels then abruptly changes tone:

But the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later. After roaming the streets of the capital a day or two, making headway with difficulty through the human turmoil and the endless lines of vehicles, after visiting the slums of the metropolis, one realises for the first time that these Londoners have been forced to sacrifice the best qualities of their human nature, to bring to pass all the great marvels of civilisation which crowd their city...The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive against which human nature rebels...The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one might be aware of the isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads of which each one has a separate principle and a separate purpose, the world of atoms, is here carried to its utmost extreme.¹⁴

What is significant about this passage is not only Engels's attempt to descriptively register the nature of the urban crowd but also his moral and social self-distancing.

As Walter Benjamin observed:

Engels is dismayed by the crowd; he responds with a moral reaction, and an aesthetic one as well; the speed with which all the people rush past one another unsettles him. The charm of his description lies in the intersecting of unshakable critical integrity with an old-fashioned attitude. The writer came from a Germany that was still provincial; he may never have faced the temptation to lose himself in a stream of people.¹⁵

In effect, Engels here registers a response and a description which, striking as it is, is not really developed further, except for a rather general reference to the "social warfare" engendered by capital. The more important aspect of this passage, however, is Engels's maintenance of a distance, not only critical and psychical but also physical, as evident in his dislike of crowding "within a limited space." Engels's response here is hardly that of the flâneur's suspension of the self in relation to the crowd - Baudelaire, for example, had written of the flâneur's desire "to become one flesh with the crowd."¹⁶ Instead, Engels stresses his feeling of complete and detached isolation and his preservation of a monadic selfhood - the

¹³ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 66.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁵ *Charles Baudelaire, A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn, London, Verso, pp. 121-122.

¹⁶ Quoted by David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, op.cit., p. 17.

very feature of the urban crowd that he is so critical of.

Engels's description of London and his psychological response to its crowds can be compared to Mayhew's text which, while sharing common themes, strikes a very different tone. Mayhew writes:

The thoroughfares of London constitute, assuredly, the finest and most remarkable of all the sights that London contains. Not that this is due to their architectural display even though...as we walk along, a kind of architectural panorama glides before our eyes...[the] London thorough-fares are, simply, the finest of all sights - in the world we may say - on account of the never-ending and infinite variety of life to be seen in them.

Beyond doubt, the enormous multitude ever pouring through the principal metropolitan thoroughfares strike the first deep impression upon the stranger's mind; we ourselves never contemplate the tumultuous scene without feeling that here lies the true grandeur of the Capital - the distinctive mark that gives a special sublimity to the spot.

Travellers speak of the awful magnificence of the great torrent of Niagara...But what is this in grandeur to the vast human tide - the stupendous living torrent of thousands upon thousands of restless souls, each quickened with some different purpose, and for ever rushing along the great leading thoroughfares of the Metropolis...of the several emotions and wills stirring each of the homuncular atoms comprising that dense human stream.

There is no scene in the wide world, indeed, equal in grandeur to the contemplation of the immensity of this same London traffic...If the desert is the very intensity of the sublime for the feeling of tragic loneliness - of terrible isolation that it induces - from the awful solemnity of the great oceans of desolation encompassing the traveller, surely this monster Metropolis is equally sublime, though from the opposite cause - from the sense of the infinite multitude of people with which we are surrounded, and yet of our comparative, if not absolute, friendlessness and isolation in the very midst of *such* an infinite multitude."

As opposed to Engels's defensive reaction to the crowd which he perceives as alien, for Mayhew it is this crowd which is the awesome and sublime 'sign' of London. Within this account the city provides a constant visual spectacle and both the crowd, and the isolation of the observer within it, are seen as neither threatening nor unpleasant but as phenomena to be wondered at.

Engel's, however, was not to be unique in voicing his particular response to the city and the theme of the individual's isolation within the city's crowds was to be taken up by others, and perhaps most markedly by Dickens. Engels's account also prefigures many features of Simmel's description of the predominance of the blasé attitude and of private reserve as both a means of maintaining social distance and as a defence against the constant bombardment of the individual by the rush of images, shocks and collisions experienced within the city. However, within the chapter as a whole, Engels's more specific purpose is to highlight the contrast between the grand vista or prospect, with all its artistic associations, and the reality on the streets and, more particularly, in those areas just off from the main public thoroughfares. As Engels remarks, "the sacrifices which all this has cost become apparent later." However, that reality can only "become apparent" by Engels reversing those social and physical barriers of distance which he had maintained in his initial response to

¹¹ *The Criminal Prisons of London*, op.cit., pp. 53-54.

the crowds on London's streets. Instead of maintaining distance, Engels now adopts as a deliberate strategy a mode of exploring and experiencing the city based upon close physical proximity and an active, critical searching for evidence.

Mayhew, too, despite his celebration of the crowd, is still faced with the problem of how to represent it. For its sublime quality is essentially a function of distance. Mayhew thus extols the view from St. Paul's from whence:

the monster sublimity of the city stretched out before us. It was utterly unlike London as seen below in its every-day bricken and hard-featured reality, seeming to be the spectral illusion of the great Metropolis...as the vast Capital lay beneath us, half hidden in mist, and with only a glimpse of its greatness visible, it had a much more sublime effect from the very inability of the mind to grasp the whole in all its literal details.¹⁸

Just as Mayhew invokes the "illusion" of distance - but, unlike Engels, without the subsequent exposure of what this distance disguises - so too, his attempt to "grasp the whole in all its literal details" parallels Engels's strategy. But while Engels moves from the general impression while simultaneously reversing his self-distancing, Mayhew's method is to "descend to particulars"¹⁹ and to produce an encyclopaedic inventory of streets and their characteristics: in effect, an attempt to define what he calls the typically "Londonesque" by means of an exhaustive catalogue produced through a cumulative compilation of details and statistics.²⁰

Engels's strategy of moving from the grand, public vista and the general impression to descriptions of the local and particular is most evident in his description of Manchester which begins with a detailed account of the city's geographical location. But it is in response to Manchester's streets that his critical methodology fully emerges. For within Engel's social pathology of the city, streets and houses are indices of the whole social order. As he comments, "the manner in which the needs of a shelter is satisfied furnishes a standard for the manner in which all other necessities are supplied."²¹

As Engels's develops his typology of Manchester's streets in terms of their use and function i.e. the commercial district, middle class suburbs etc., a number of key themes emerge. Engels's himself appears to be particularly struck by the patterns of class visibility within the city. As he remarks:

The town itself is particularly built, so that a person may live in it for years, and go in and out daily without coming into contact with a working-people's quarter or even with workers, that is, so long as he confines himself to his business or to pleasure walks...And the finest part of this arrangement is this, that the members of the money aristocracy can take the shortest road throught the middle of all the labouring districts to their places of business, without ever seeing that they are in

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁰ *ibid.*, espec., pp. 53-63.

²¹ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 99.

the midst of the grimy misery that lurks to the right and the left. For the thoroughfares leading to the Exchange in all directions are lined, on both sides, with an almost unbroken series of shops...[which] suffice to conceal from the eyes of the wealthy men and women of strong stomachs and weak nerves the misery and grime which form the complement to their wealth...I have never seen so systematic a shutting out of the working-class from the thoroughfares, so tender a concealment of everything which might affront the eye and the nerves of the bourgeoisie, as in Manchester.²²

However, as Engel's notes, the invisibility of the poor and the working classes is not wholly the consequence of deliberate planning. For, as opposed to many 'liberal' moralising and philanthropic discourses upon poverty, Engels argues that it is the structure and functions of the city itself which both create and maintain the poverty, inequality and class divisions which he describes. In particular, it was the invisibility of the poor which had long been as source of the fear of them. Edwin Chadwick, for example, had argued in 1842 that it was necessary to remove the spatial and architectural barriers which allowed the "immoral" to be "secluded from superior inspection and from common observation."²³ In the same year W. Cooke Taylor had observed of Manchester that "its narrow streets, its courts and cellars, have been abandoned to the poorest grade of artisans. There they live, hidden from the view of the higher ranks by piles of stores, mills warehouses, and manufacturing establishments, less known to their wealthy neighbours."²⁴ Similarly, the Select Committee of 1838 had claimed that:

There were districts in London through which no great thoroughfares passed, and which were wholly occupied by a dense population composed of the lowest class of persons who being entirely secluded from the observation and influence of better educated neighbours exhibited a state of moral degradation deeply to be deplored...the moral condition of these poor occupants would necessarily be improved by communication with more respectable inhabitants.²⁵

Such sentiments were commonly voiced. And it was this perception of the invisibility of the poor or the residuum (yet often within a situation of close inter-class residential adjacency) which was also a motivating source for bourgeois fears and anxieties. However, as Engels argued regarding the poor, their social isolation and invisibility were structural consequences of capitalism itself and, as such, could not simply be removed or legislated away - an event which, for Engels at least, would only come about through class revolution. Not surprisingly, this analysis contrasts with Mayhew for whom urbanism, as epitomised by London, was read as a self-congratulatory narrative of civic progress, municipal pride and "abundant

²² *ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

²³ Quoted by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Methuen, 1986, p. 126.

²⁴ Quoted by Steven Marcus, *Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974, p. 51.

²⁵ Quoted by Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London, A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1984, p. 166.

charity.²⁶ Similarly, Mayhew had identified the urban population in terms of its endless diversity. This was represented, for example, in his enumeration of the different social "types" to be found in London and in his description of the "strange and incongruous" contrasts which produced the capital's identity as "a city of antithesis."²⁷ For Engels, however, there are only two classes or two antagonistic polarities, who exist in a state of near manichean opposition.

In his description of Manchester's streets, Engels produces a detailed survey of the city's spatial topography which operates both horizontally or laterally (e.g. in terms of patterns of class residence) as well as vertically - as evident, for example, in his particular fascination with cellars (fig. 3.8). This spatial typology or counterpointing is itself part of Engels's attempt to impose some form of coherent order upon the apparent chaos of the city. Indeed, the tension between the seeming irrationality of the city when seen close up and the search for a method to register this, while also formulating an historical account which can make sense of the city's disparate identities, is fundamental to Engels's project in "The Great Towns" chapter.

For Mayhew, the legibility of the city is never in doubt. For despite his emphasis upon the sheer scale of the city and upon the endless variety of its population which the "mere pedantry of statistics"²⁸ cannot adequately capture, it is these differences which in fact produce an image of the city as a composite totality. And it is in order to read this totality that Mayhew employs a variety of strategies and discourses ranging from the language of tourist guide-books (for example, the emphasis upon national landmarks and the reiteration of the West End/East End division) to a spatial and functional taxonomy of the city's streets and from a description of "the principal social and moral contrasts to be noted in London town"²⁹ to an ethnographic and "scientific classification"³⁰ of its residents. Through such devices and framed within Mayhew's spatialising gaze - as he goes both "beneath the moral surface" of the city while also seeking to "contemplate it from above"³¹ - London and its crowds are seen as being accessible to systematic investigation and are as a result ultimately both ordered and knowable.

Engels, however, throughout his own text, frequently remarks upon the

²⁶ *The Criminal Prisons of London*, op.cit., p. 41.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 45.

³¹ *ibid.*, p. 8.

irrationality of the city both in terms of its socio-economic functioning and in terms of its legibility. He comments, for example, when describing London, that, "one can only wonder that the whole crazy fabric still hangs together."³² In Manchester, when describing the Old Town, he remarks upon "the irregular cramming together of dwellings in ways which defy all rational plan" and upon "the irrational manner in which the entire district is built."³³ He compares the "chaos of buildings" as opposed to a "plan" and laments the "totally planless confusion and layout of the courts and backyards."³⁴ In the New Town the situation deteriorates further as "all the features of a city are lost"³⁵ and more than once he refers to the city as a "labyrinth"³⁶ and as "Pandemonium" (sic.) while also implicitly comparing himself to "an explorer."³⁷

Within this narrative Engels often refers to the risks of complete disorientation:

He who turns to the left here from the main street, Long Millgate is lost; he wanders from one court to another, turns countless corners, passes nothing but filth, nooks and alleys until after a few minutes he has lost all clue and knows not wither to turn.³⁸

Later on he comments:

The lanes run now in this direction, now in that, while every two minutes the wanderer gets into a blind alley, or, on turning a corner, finds himself back where he started from; certainly no-one who has not lived a considerable time in this labyrinth can find his way through it.³⁹

This commentary upon the disorder, chaos and irrationality of the city (a confusion, however, which is often the effect of a monotonous and repetitive uniformity) extends to his description of the construction of the houses themselves:

We have seen in the Old Town pure accident determine the grouping of the houses in general. Every house is built without reference to any other, and the scraps of space between them are called courts for want of another name. In the somewhat newer portions of same quarter, and in other working-men's quarters, dating from the early days of industrial activity, a somewhat more orderly arrangement may be found. The space between two streets is divided into more regular, usually square courts.⁴⁰

Yet he adds in the next paragraph that:

These courts are built in this way from the beginning, and communicate with streets by means of

³² *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 58.

³³ *ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 94.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 84.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 85. See also Lynch's remarks here on urban disorientation, i.e. "To become completely lost is perhaps a rather rare experience for most people in the modern city. We are supported by the presence of others and by special way-finding devices...But let the mishap of disorientation once occur, and the sense of anxiety and even terror that accompanies it reveals to us how closely it is linked to our sense of balance and well-being. The very word "lost" in our language means much more than geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of complete disaster", *The Image of the City*, op.cit., p. 4.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 88.

covered passages. If the totally planless confusion is injurious to the health of the workers by preventing ventilation, this method of shutting them up in courts surrounded on all sides by buildings is far more so. The air simply cannot escape as the chimneys of the houses are the sole drains for the imprisoned atmosphere of the courts, and they serve the purpose only so long as fire is kept burning.⁴¹

While reformist commentators claimed, according to Engels, "that these courts are the masterpieces of municipal architecture, because, like a multitude of little parks, they improve ventilation"⁴², in effect, however, the most recent types of back-to-back housing (often short-life and speculatively built) were worse in terms of ventilation than the older houses which preceded them. As Anthony Vidler has observed:

The critical archaeology of dwelling that Engels provided, together with the social conditions which he described, thus constitute the first systematic attack on the Enlightenment vision of progress, couched precisely in the Enlightenment's own terms. The planless chaos, the dirty, twisting streets, have been encountered before, from Rousseau onward: but it was always understood that the imposition of a rational plan, the development of a uniform mode of housing, would naturally shape the mores of the new inhabitants. Engels disposed of the myth and turned it right about, placing the blame for conditions squarely on the economics of the industrial system that created them.⁴³

For Engels it was, to a great extent, the street itself (as a physical environment) which was both the cause and the consequence of the deplorable social conditions which he described. In effect, Engels's whole polemic here could be called anti-street. Yet, paradoxically, this critique would seem, by implication at least, to support the arguments for the 'Haussmannisation' of Paris and other cities which Engels was to attack almost thirty years later in his articles on "The Housing Question."⁴⁴ More significant, however, in the present context, is the fact that, while Engels in his account of Manchester breaks with the distancing at work in his response to London's streets, he nonetheless still retains a hostility to the street although this is now no longer based so clearly upon moral or aesthetic criteria (as Benjamin described them) but upon a forcefully argued and graphically illustrated social and economic analysis.

It is reference to these issues of proximity and distance, and of the spatial formation, social visibility and the 'irrationality' of the city that one can begin to situate Engels's use of 'shock' images. The lengthy description of the area known as Little Ireland is a typical example. Here Engels relates how:

The cottages are old, dirty, and of the smallest sort, the streets uneven, fallen into ruts and in part without drains or pavement; masses of refuse lie around standing in pools in all directions; the atmosphere is poisoned by the effluvia from these, and laden and darkened by the smoke of a dozen

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ "The Scenes on the Street: Transformations in Ideal and Reality, 1750-1871", *op.cit.*, p. 76.

⁴⁴ *The Housing Question*, (1872), Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979, *espec.*, p. 20.

tall factory chimneys. A horde of ragged women and children swarm about here, as filthy as the swine that thrive upon the garbage heaps and in the puddles. In short, the whole rookery furnishes such a hateful and repulsive spectacle as can hardly be equalled in the worst court of the Irk...This race must have really reached the lowest stage of humanity. This is the impression and the line of thought which the exterior of this district forces upon the beholder.⁴⁵

But the most striking of these 'images' is all the more effective due to the minimal simplicity of Engels's language as he recounts how in Salford:

I found a man, apparently sixty years old, living in a cow-stable. He had constructed a sort of chimney for his square pen, which had neither windows, floor, nor ceiling, and had obtained a bedstead and lived there, though the rain dripped through his rotten roof. This man was too old and weak for regular work, and supported himself by removing manure with a hand-cart; the dung-heaps lay next door to his palace!⁴⁶

Such graphic visual tableaux are fundamental to Engels's method of exposition and critique. Moreover, this emphasis upon visual experience signals a departure from his previous statement, when describing London's crowded streets, that "it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance." Engels in effect replaces the casual, indirect glance with an overt and critical gaze. It is this gaze which is also at work in the mobilisation of photography to investigate the living conditions of the urban poor. The photographic surveys made in Birmingham (figs. 3.9 - 3.12) - including an extensive survey made by James Burgoyne in 1875 of the area due for clearance under Joseph Chamberlain's *Improvement Scheme*, the employment of photography by John Foster in Leeds (figs. 3.14, 3.36) and by John Galt⁴⁷ in London and within Public Health surveys such as the one conducted by Peter Fyfe, Glasgow's Chief Sanitation Officer, at the turn of the century (figs. 3.19 - 3.23) all share Engels's strategies for investigating the hitherto hidden regions of the city and of subjecting the "mysteries" of the city to an increasingly interventionist and professionalised gaze.

This use of photography as evidence is also prefigured by the way in which Engels's looks at and describes urban life in that the role of the visual is to support his essentially negative critique of the city while his method very simply involves the juxtaposition of selective journalistic and historical documentation - "the testimony of my opponents" - with a series of eye-witness accounts: in short, a combination, as stated on the title page, of "Personal Observation and Authentic Sources." This, then, is no purposeless wandering or "a lounging excursion."⁴⁸

⁴⁵ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 93.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 96.

⁴⁷ Galt was a lay preacher who arrived in London from Scotland. Between 1893-4 he took photographs in and around the Bethnal Green area. These photographs were used in lantern-slide talks one of which was entitled *Thrilling Tales of London Life*.

⁴⁸ Charles Dickens, "The Prisoners' Van", *Sketches by Boz*, London, Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 272.

Instead, Engels is deliberately searching and seeking out. He recounts, for example, how:

Immediately under the railway bridge there stands a court, the filth and horrors of which surpass all the others by far, just because it was hitherto shut off, so secluded that the way to it could not be found without a great deal of trouble. I should never have discovered it myself without the breaks made by the railway, though I thought I knew this whole region thoroughly.⁴⁹

Aside from the whole question of the city exposing itself through its own development and expansion (in this case through the railways), what is notable about this passage (and others) is its emphasis, with reference to the question of invisibility, upon Engels's mode of perception which is adopted through necessity in order to overcome the spatial barriers within those cities which he visits.

Moments of (uncanny) encounter

Engels's narrative tableaux can be likened to Walter Benjamin's "dialectical images" of which it has been observed that they:

functioned like switches, arresting the fleeting phenomena and starting thought in motion, or, alternatively, shocking thought to a standstill and setting the reified objects in motion by causing them to lose their second nature familiarity.⁵⁰

Although not altogether sharing the same cognitive function and status of Benjamin's dialectical images, Engels's own spartan and highly graphic accounts operate in a similar fashion. His images are intended to be quite literally shocking as he relentlessly piles on the cumulative catalogue of horrors with its attendant effect of endless repetition - a process marked, too, by a combination of both excess and monotony. For, unlike Mayhew, Engels does not portray the city by means of the standardised conventions of topographical accounts nor by reference to either the picturesque or historical associations of place. Instead, he implicitly evokes these conventions but only to then subvert or expose them as ideological tropes. But more pointedly Engels mobilises a series of shocking images which are themselves symptomatic of his attempt to register the abrupt spatial disjunctions and discontinuities which at times during his urban itineraries work against his finding any coherent legibility within the industrial city.

It is at this point that Engels's strategy of seeking out direct encounters within the "labyrinth" of the city and of bringing to light and to the realm of visibility that which was formerly concealed begins to parallel the practices and discursive contexts of urban 'documentary' photography. This is further reinforced by

⁴⁹ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 84.

⁵⁰ Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, Harvester Press, 1977, p. 106.

Engels's emphasis upon the empirically particular (as distinct from purely abstract notions of social relations) and, above all, in his belief in the unproblematic status of visual 'evidence'. Moreover, just as Benjamin was to claim of photography that "a touch of a finger now sufficed to fix an event for an unlimited period of time. The camera gave the moment a posthumous shock as it were",⁵¹ a similar process occurs with Engels as he focuses in on and freezes particular scenes and images within a series of descriptive snap-shots.

An unsigned account, published in *The Sun* newspaper during 1881, of Jacob Riis's night flash-photography in New York (figs. 3.23 - 3.27) reveals some of the similarities between the practices of urban documentary photography and Engels's expositional strategy:

With their way illuminated by spasmodic flashes, as bright and sharp and as brief as those of lightning itself, a mysterious party has lately been startling the town o' nights. Somnolent policemen on the street, denizens of the dives in their dens, tramps and bummers in their so-called lodgings, and all the people of the wild and wonderful variety of New York night-life have in their turn been frightened by the phenomenon. What they saw is three or four figures in the gloom, a ghostly tripod, some weird and uncanny movements, the blinding flash, and then they heard the patter of retreating footsteps, and the mysterious visitors were gone before they could collect their scattered thoughts and try to find out what it had all been about...The party consisted of members of the Society of Amateur Photographers of New York experimenting with the process of taking instantaneous pictures by an artificial flashlight and their guide and conductor, an energetic gentleman, who combined in his person, though not in his practice, the two dignities of deacon in a Long Island church and a police reporter in New York. His object in the matter, besides the interest in the taking of the pictures, was the collection of a series of views for magic lantern slides, showing, as no mere description could, the misery and vice that he had noticed in his ten years of experience.⁵²

This account in part echoes several of the discursive tropes at work within Engels's own narrative: the expedition by socially aware amateurs into the unknown quarters of the city, a particular emphasis upon light, darkness and knowledge (in Riis's case the revelatory nature of flashlight photography) and with it the intention of making visible the previously unseen.⁵³ Also shared is the assertion of the inadequacy of "mere description" in conveying the full truth of an image - a point also made by Engels: "On re-reading my description I am forced to admit that instead of being exaggerated, it is far from being black enough to convey a true impression."⁵⁴ This is not merely a figure of speech or rhetorical cliché on the part of Engels for, as Steven Marcus remarks of Engels's description of Long Millgate:

⁵¹ *Charles Baudelaire*, op.cit., p. 132.

⁵² "Flashes from the Slums: Pictures Taken in Dark Places by the Lightning Process. Some of the Results of a Journey through the City with an Instantaneous Camera - the Poor, the Idle, and the Vicious" (*The Sun*, New York, February 12th 1888), in *Photography: Essays and Images*, ed. Beaumont Newhall, London, Secker and Warburg, 1981, p. 155.

⁵³ See also the examples of social investigation cited in Peter Keating's *Into Unknown England 1866-1913, Selections from the Social Explorers*, Glasgow, Fontana, 1976.

⁵⁴ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, op.cit., p. 86.

he has run out of superlatives before he has barely begun; the language itself is giving out on him. In none of which inadequacies was he alone; indeed, one of the saving functions of language honestly used is that it should collapse before such realities, that it should refuse to domesticate these actualities with syntax and imagery...There is only one course open, and Engels promptly takes it. He begins to specify.⁵⁵

The repetition of the common tropes around investigative photography and the assertion of the inadequacy of verbal pictures alone occur also in an account similar to the description of Riis's activities. In this article, "Hand-Camera Experiences in East London" (1899), the author, cited only as J.M.W, prefixes his narrative with the observation that:

I had intended to illustrate this article with photographs taken by myself when on this expedition, but on second thoughts have decided that however interesting they might be, from our point of view, it would not be wise to do so, as to my mind it is always as well to exercise extreme caution in these matters.⁵⁶

Within the text itself the author employs by now commonplace narrational devices. Investigative photography is described as "the most enjoyable and risky business" while later he again couples "leisure" with "investigation."⁵⁷ The whole operation is likened to an "expedition" with the need of a guide to "pilot me through the district" of Commercial Road and Whitechapel. As with Engels, personal authentication is cited to fill in for the inadequacy of the image or, rather in this case, the verbal image. However, while the aim of the "expedition" is to "obtain some real "life" pictures for the truth of which I can personally vouch for" the author remarks further on that "I cannot adequately describe what I saw and felt."⁵⁸

What becomes apparent also in this text is that "the objects of our expedition" are defined as being ready-made pictures or as being inherently picturable - this representation of the poor as a ready-made spectacle for the camera being illustrated in George Cruikshank's frontespiece (fig. 3.28) for a text by 'Shadow' entitled *Midnight Scenes and Social Photographs* published in 1858.⁵⁹ Thus referring to one subject the author describes how he "succeeded in obtaining two very passable pictures of him."⁶⁰ In another example this notion of the ready-image is overlaid with a notion of shock:

We moved forward, and descrying another specimen further on, we watched him for a short time, when, to our mingled surprise and disgust, we actually saw him pause, walk into the middle of the roadway, stoop down and pick up a pear, which I suppose had either fallen or had been thrown from

⁵⁵ Engels, *Manchester and the Working Class*, op.cit., p. 182.

⁵⁶ *The Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger*, 10, 116, January 1899, p. 8.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁵⁹ *Shadow's Midnight Scenes and Social Photographs, Glasgow 1858*, University of Glasgow Press, 1976. The epithet "social photographs" would in fact seem more applicable to Engels's method than it is to Shadow's text.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p. 8.

a streetmonger's barrow, and begin to eat ravenously, cautiously looking round to see if he was unobserved (which of course he was not?). I was so taken aback by this action of his that I forgot what an excellent picture he would have made, but recovering myself a few moments later, I 'snapshotted' him whilst taking a bite at his toothsome morsel. I do not believe that I shall ever forget this scene until my latest day.⁶¹

As significant within this account is the activity of observation itself. In this example it is both the photographer (as in Cruikshank's drawing) and the (secretly) photographed subject who avoid being observed. What is at work here is a resistance to the photographic gaze. This is more explicitly referred to elsewhere in the piece. Thus, at one point, the author remarks that, "it was almost impossible to get a really good view of any of the subjects that I wished to obtain owing to the sharp look out that these men keep against observation."⁶² Later on the narrator and his guide, "Spotting two 'out o' works'...stopped in a doorway, under the pretence of photographing some building works going on opposite...[and] succeeded by this means of obtaining a fair view of these two men." Outside a Mission Hall, "We surreptitiously obtained a snapshot of the men waiting." In a further situation the resistance to the gaze comes close, according to the author, to physical violence:

On stopping to arrange in my finder the picture which I desired to take, I was startled by an exclamation from my companion, and on looking up found that some half-dozen men had started across the road with the loudly expressed intimation that they weren't "going to be took anyhow" and that if I didn't want "a punch in the 'ed" I had better "clear out", this of course being mixed with a great deal of slang which was quite unintelligible to me. My guide, however, succeeded in quieting them by promising not to allow the picture to be published in any of the papers. The reason, as one poor fellow stepped aside to tell me, being, that he and most of the others had seen better days, and did not want their friends to see what had befallen them.⁶³

In concluding his account the author of this piece remarks:

for what nobler use can science be put than to help, in however small a way, those poor fellows who have "gone down in the social scale". To those who have the necessary time, money and inclination, I strongly recommend this work of investigating the state in which our poor destitute live, or rather exist, and die, in this great London of ours.⁶⁴

While operating within a terrain of extreme social difference which is at times perceived as being overtly shocking or threatening, photography is depicted here as means of minimising the threat of difference. In part this is achieved through the activity of picturing the poor (despite the possible risks entailed) as a strategy of making them both visible and supposedly knowable. This strategy of recuperating difference is further reinforced by the author's own observations regarding the social aspirations of the poor who not only have a natural hierarchy - "the Aristocrats" in the Mission Hall - but whose "dirty exteriors, in many instances,

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

cover a truly noble nature, and a forgiving and kind spirit⁶⁵ and who are for this reason seen, for the most part, as deserving "cases".

However, such a conclusion ultimately sets up a contradiction which remains unresolved in that, while the photographic activity promoted here is provoked by extreme social difference, the author simultaneously wants the poor to be seen as being fundamentally no different - just unfortunate. Given this, the text posits two representations of the poor. On the one hand, as shocking, resistant to the outside gaze and wholly other yet also both accessible and articulate. And it is across these two representations of the poor that much street photography was to operate. But more immediately, the photographic activities of Riis and others can be framed within both Engels's method of exposition and the narrational devices employed to describe investigative photography. Thus, in a Barnardo's publicity photograph, "The Raw Material As We Find It" (fig. 3.29), there is a similar device to Engels's of the direct encounter recorded as it happened (although of course clearly reconstructed), the image of a staged 'chance' encounter presented as corroborative evidence⁶⁶ while several other photographs use the same painted back-drop of a street (figs. 3.31, 3.33).

While these pictures attempt to recreate encounters on the streets, other photographs of the city are marked by a fascination with entering into and focusing

⁶⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁶ This photograph was in fact one of those which was cited as an "artistic fiction" by The Rev. George Reynolds who charged the Barnardo Homes on various counts of misconduct in 1876. Barnardo took the case to the Arbitration Court. As part of this action he published a defence of his photographs in *Night and Day*. Barnardo pointed out that "Out of thirteen hundred photographs of destitute children which had been taken, and out of eighty-five which had been published and sold for the purposes of the Mission, only nine were brought forward by our opponents as presenting any ground for their charge of "deception", and on but ONE have the Arbitrators pronounced a decided opinion unfavourable to us" *Night and Day, A monthly record of Christian Missions*, November 1, 1877, p. 132. Of "The Raw Material As We Find It" he wrote that it was criticised "not so much...on account of the picture itself as on that of the letterpress beneath it, which it is thought might possibly lead the reader to suppose that the boys depicted were literally found *together* in a group, and not separately, as was actually the case, although their individual condition on the night when they were all rescued in lodging-houses in Mint Street, Borough, was proved to have been precisely the same as is shown and described in the photograph (*ibid.*). Photographs of William Fletcher (fig. 3.32) and Kate Smith (fig. 3.34) were also claimed to be deceptive in that it was alleged that their clothes had been deliberately torn or they were given props etc. But Barnardo's general defence was that the photographs were always intended to be "representative or typical" portraits, i.e. "We have nothing further to remark on this subject of photography, except that no intention to mislead in the slightest degree ever crossed our minds for a moment. We held, and still do, that not one single case of portraiture in our published list is without its real representative in hundreds of street children to be found on every hand, either among those still homeless and friendless, or amongst those already rescued by us...Of such representative or typical photographs, only four have ever been issued, and not one of them was published so as to imply that it showed a particular child whose name was so-and-so, and whose case and condition was such-and-such. If it had not been for certain unavoidable hindrances, due to foggy weather and other similar causes, which prevented the pictures of individuals being made at the time, even these four typical would never have been published, as we should, of course, have preferred in these, as in all other instances, to have photographed the identical children, in the actual dress they wore at the time of reception. But, for the reasons, given, this was rendered impossible, and so not to lose the picture altogether, a *typical* case was prepared a few days later" (*ibid.*, p. 126).

close upon areas and spaces which were previously invisible (at least to the camera before the use of flash photography). Just as Atget's photographs of the "Zoniers" districts of Paris present a negative mirror-image of the city - in the form, for example, of what might be described as the anti-boulevard (fig. 3.35) - so too, these images of slum interiors (figs. 3.36, 3.37, 3.39, 3.41 - 3.43) stand almost as parodying inversions of the security, stability and property not only of the bourgeois interior (figs. 3.38, 3.40) but of domestic space itself (figs. 3.44, 3.45).

An analysis of the interstitial nature of these photographs (in the sense of their simultaneous reference to but dissolution of the stability and identity of the domestic interior) might well begin with Freud's paper "The Uncanny". Freud's essay begins with an extensive etymological survey of the meaning of the word "uncanny" (*das Unheimliche*) and a number of his observations are directly pertinent to these photographs. Freud thus begins by pointing out that, "The German word '*unheimlich*' is obviously the opposite of '*heimlich*' ['homely], '*heimisch*' ['native'] - the opposite of what is familiar."⁶⁷ Not only does *das heimlich* relate to domestic space or to those qualities "belonging to or pertaining to the home, [the] familiar," i.e. "Intimate, friendly, comfortable; the enjoyment of quiet content, etc., arousing a sense of agreeable restfulness and security as in one within the four walls of his house,"⁶⁸ but its opposite, the uncanny, signifies its obverse, the "strange [and] unfamiliar." More specifically, with reference to Engels's sense of disorientation, Freud notes that the uncanny was frequently related "to intellectual uncertainty; so that the uncanny would always, as it were, be something one does not know one's way about in. The better orientated in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it." And, as Freud also points out, intrinsic to many uses of the word "uncanny" is the notion of concealment and of being "kept from sight", i.e. "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret and hidden but has come to light."⁶⁹ However, having outlined these distinctions (i.e. between the familiar and the unfamiliar or strange, and between the homely and the unhomely), the direction of Freud's discussion is to argue that these opposites are in fact represented by the same terms or phenomena. Thus:

What interests us most...is to find that among its different shades of meaning the word '*heimlich*' exhibits one that is identical with its opposite, '*unheimlich*'. What is *heimlich* thus comes to be *unheimlich*...Thus *unheimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way

⁶⁷ "The Uncanny", *Standard Edition*, vol. XVII, p. 220.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 222.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 225.

or other a sub-species of *heimlich* ⁷⁰ .

Freud's claim is that the uncanny "is related to what is frightening - to what arouses dread and horror...[or] what excites fear in general...[and] feelings of repulsion and distress."⁷¹ Such feelings are themselves a function of the identity of the uncanny as a site for the projection or objectification of unconscious fears, anxieties and desires; in effect, the return of the repressed. Freud himself summarises "the gist of this short study" by arguing that:

if psychoanalytical theory is correct in maintaining that every affect belonging to an emotional impulse, whatever its kind, is transformed, if it is repressed, into anxiety, then among instances of frightening things there must be one class in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*. This class of frightening things would then constitute the uncanny; and it must be a matter of indifference whether what is uncanny was itself originally frightening or whether it carried some other affect. In the second place, if this is indeed the secret nature of the uncanny, we can understand why linguistic usage has extended *das Heimliche* ['homely] into its opposite, *das Unheimliche*; for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. This reference to the factor of repression enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling's definition of the uncanny as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light⁷² .

As Freud further observes, "the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch*, familiar; the prefix 'un' is the token of repression."⁷³ Not only does this connection between the uncanny and repression have some bearing on Engels himself whose position of analytical mastery and psychical exteriority is constantly threatened, but never irredeemably so, by disorder, chaos and the absence of meaning or legibility (Engels in effect maintains his analytical mastery by conceptually framing and explaining this chaos thereby disavowing any real threat it might pose to own identity and interpretive abilities),⁷⁴ but the 'meaning' of these slum interiors is produced through what H  l  ne Cixous, referring to textual narrative, has described as "the effect of uncanniness...[as] a relational signifier. *Unheimliche* is in fact a composite that infiltrates the interstices of the narrative and points to gaps we need to explain."⁷⁵

Moreover, as Cixous also notes, "the *Unheimliche* presents itself, first of all, only on the fringe of something else...it is a unit in the 'family' but it is not really a member of the family."⁷⁶ In a similar fashion, while these photographs contain the

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, p. 224 - 226.

⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 219.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 241.

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 245.

⁷⁴ Of relevance here is Kristeva's discussion of analytical mastery and interpretation in "Psychoanalysis and the Polis" in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, Blackwell, 1986.

⁷⁵ "Fiction and Its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (the 'uncanny')" *New Literary History*, 7, 1976, p. 536

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p. 529

signifiers and objects of the domestic they fail to produce the signifieds of homeliness but, in effect, invert them. What is at work in these photographs is not only an "infinite game of substitutions,"⁷⁷ but also a "displacement, the insidious movement, through which opposites communicate. It is the between that is tainted with strangeness."⁷⁸ While, for Cixous the "between" that the uncanny represents is ultimately the place of absence and of death,⁷⁹ the "between" or absence that is made present in these photographs (through a defamiliarising of objects and environments) is the gap (the arbitrary relation) between signifier and signified. This infiltrative disruption of the sign is akin to what Derrida describes (in relation to the uncanny and undecidability) as "the paradoxes of the double and of repetition, the blurring of the boundary lines between 'imagination' and 'reality', between the 'symbol' and the 'thing it symbolizes'."⁸⁰ For not only do these photographs represent the repressed other or 'double' of a bourgeois social order (its antithesis existing on its fringe or boundary), but they also reveal the contingency of that order by making explicit its hidden repressed and by revealing the "relational" and constructed status of the signs which establish it..

As with Engels's investigations in Manchester, these Glasgow photographs also involve a necessary degree of proximity with their subjects. As such, their uncanniness is also a function of distance or, rather, the lack of it. This question of distance and proximity becomes more delineated when contrasted against the methods and images of Pictorialist photography at the turn of the century. For it was the Pictorialists, not the 'documentary' photographers, who inherited the flâneur's mode of perception. As Benjamin described it, the flâneur did not perceive the reality and the full horror of the city since:

For the flâneur there is a veil over the picture. This veil is the mass; it billows in 'the twisting folds of the old metropolises'. Because of it horrors have an enchanting effect. Only when this veil tears and reveals to the flâneur 'one of the populous squares...which are empty during street-fighting' does he, too, get an unobstructed view of the big city.⁸¹

In the photographs of Stieglitz, Coburn and others distance is essential. So too, dark and dusk are favoured over sharp lighting. Stieglitz, for example, refused to use 'artificial' flash or mechanical lighting so as not to undermine the 'natural'

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 536.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, p. 543

⁷⁹ "The relationship to death reveals the highest degree of the *Unheimliche*...Our unconscious makes no place for the representation of our mortality. As an impossible representation, death is that which mimes, by this very impossibility, the reality of death. It goes even further. That which signifies without that which is signified...The strange power of death moves in the realm of life as the *Unheimliche* in the *Heimliche*, as the void fills up the lack", *ibid.*, p. 542-543.

⁸⁰ "The Double Session", *Dissemination*, *op.cit.*, p. 220, n. 32.

⁸¹ Quoted by David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, *op.cit.*, pp. 250-251.

authenticity of the image. Silhouetting, blurring and soft-focus (the practice of greasing the lens) were all favoured over sharpness of image. These, however, were not mere stylistic or technical features but need to be seen as having the effect of keeping social relations to an abstraction. In these photographs, the picturesque city on a grand scale (a favourite Pictorialist motif) becomes a formalist or subjective interior and ceases to be a social environment just as the urban crowd within the city loses its particularity and specific class identity.

This Pictorialist privatisation of perceptual experience echoes both Simmel's contemporaneous description of modernity as the experience of the inner world and as the cultivation of extreme subjectivism as well as Benjamin's account of the development of inner, lived-out existence (*Erlebnis*) over historically specific, concrete experience (*Erfahrung*) in part as a defence against the shocks experienced within the city. Yet while the Pictorialists' abstraction of social relations and their perception/representation of the 'real' were achieved by means of particular forms of distancing (which recall Engels's response in London), the question of distance is more complex than this. Stieglitz's theoretical concept of the "Equivalent" involved the proposition that an image could embody an emotional equivalent between the artist or photographer and the scene depicted. As such, the equivalent can be seen as inheriting the Romantic quest for the fusion of subject/self and object. For the Pictorialists, this subjective identity is necessarily predicated upon a specific gauging of distance and space. 'Documentary' photography, on the other hand, more usually operated in terms of close physical proximity which, as with Engels in Manchester, was the register of a relation of non-identity between subject and object. For it is proximity which here underwrites and reinforces a relation of (acknowledged) social distance and difference.

The crowd, the aura and the dissolution of distance

These issues can be further discussed with reference to Walter Benjamin's notion of the "aura" and of "shock" which usefully signal important aspects of visual perception and representation within the city. Benjamin's concept of the aura is used both in his writings on Baudelaire and in his essay "The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction." In both these texts the term "aura" remains rather nebulous but its various meanings broadly involve a conflation of notions of authenticity, origin, authorial presence, symbol, historical trace or residue, uniqueness and tradition. Referring to works of art, for example, Benjamin writes:

The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardised by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardised when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object...One might subsume the eliminated element in the term "aura" and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art...One might generalise by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition.⁸²

Further on, having argued that " the mode of human sense perception changes with humanity's entire mode of existence", Benjamin writes: "And if changes in the medium of perception can be comprehended as the decay of the aura, it is possible to show its social causes."⁸³ Here Benjamin gives an example of the aura:

The concept of the aura which was proposed above with reference to historical objects may usefully be illustrated with reference to the aura of natural ones. We define the aura of the latter as the unique manifestation of a distance, however close it may be. If, while resting on a summer afternoon, you follow with your eyes a mountain range or a branch which casts its shadow over you, you experience the aura of those mountains, of that branch. This image makes it easy to comprehend the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura. It rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in contemporary life. Namely, the desire to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction. Every day the urge grows stronger to get hold of an object by way of its likeness, its reproduction...To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal quality of things' has increased to such a degree that it exacts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.⁸⁴

It is not my concern here to either pursue or assess Benjamin's line of argument regarding the consequences of the reproducibility of the work of art but, instead, I wish to follow up his connection between the aura and distance. For, not solely an aspect of the work of art, the aura (or, rather its disintegration) is associated with the experience of social life. Commenting upon Baudelaire, Benjamin notes that:

Of all the experiences which made his life what it was, Baudelaire singled out his having been jostled by the crowd as the decisive, unique experience...Baudelaire battled the crowd with the impotent rage of someone fighting the rain or wind. This is the nature of something lived through (*Erlebnis*) to which Baudelaire has given the weight of experience (*Erfahrung*). He indicated the price for which the sensation of the modern age may be had: the disintegration of the aura in the experience of shock.⁸⁵

Not only was the experience of being jostled by the crowd the "decisive, unique experience" for Baudelaire but this experience was for him the sign of modernity itself. However, Baudelaire's relation with the crowd is essentially ambiguous. For, despite his exhortation for the flâneur to "become one flesh with the crowd", it remained necessary to maintain a certain psychical distance from it. As Benjamin

⁸² "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations*, op. cit., p. 223.

⁸³ *ibid.*, p. 224.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p. 226.

⁸⁵ *Charles Baudelaire*, op.cit., p. 154. See also Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption*, New York, Columbia University Press, chp. 7. espec. pp. 226-236 and David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, op. cit., espec. pp. 230- 236.

comments on the relationship between the flâneur/Baudelaire and the "image of the big city crowds":

If he succumbed to the force by which he was drawn to them and, as a flâneur, was made one of them, he was nevertheless unable to rid himself of their essentially inhuman make-up. He becomes their accomplice even as he disassociates himself from them. He becomes deeply involved with them, only to relegate them to oblivion with a single glance of contempt. There is something compelling about this ambivalence when he cautiously admits to it.⁶⁶

Baudelaire's relation with the crowd is, in effect, marked by a process of identification and disavowal, a desire both to project and disperse himself within the crowd while also maintaining a sovereign autonomy against it with the poet remaining an "exile". Something of the complexity of this relationship with the crowd is evident in Baudelaire's essay on the artist Constantin Guys, "The Painter of Modern Life", in which Baudelaire writes:

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of the birds and water of the fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect flâneur, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world - such are the few pleasures of those independent, passionate, important natures which the tongue can but clumsily define. The spectator is a prince who everywhere rejoices in his incognito... Thus the lover of universal logic enters into the crowd as though it were an immense reservoir of electrical energy. Or might we liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself, or to a kaleidoscope gifted with consciousness, responding to each one of its movements and reproducing the multiplicity of life and the flickering grace of all the elements of life. He is an "I" with an insatiable appetite for the "non-I", at every instant rendering and explaining it in pictures more living than life itself, which is always unstable and fugitive.⁶⁷

Baudelaire's here describes an essentially narcissistic relation between the crowd and the subject/self as the subject (as a "mirror") is simultaneously displaced onto and reconstituted through images of the external world. In a similar fashion, the flâneur's losing of himself in the crowd becomes the very means which enables the re-affirmation of his identity. This contrasts with Engels who, despite reversing his self-distancing from the crowd, maintains a constant position of exteriority in relation to it. However, the possibility of the flâneur's identification with the crowd is dependent upon that crowd being "fixed" at a distance and upon its mass identity remaining undefined. As Benjamin remarks, "Baudelaire insists on the magic of distance."⁶⁸ Baudelaire's strategy for registering and representing the crowd is thus to focus on isolated individual or types who then become the site of his projected identification.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *ibid.* p.128.

⁶⁷ *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathon Mayne, Phaidon, 1964, pp.9-10.

⁶⁸ *Charles Baudelaire*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

⁶⁹ See Marc Eli Blanchard, *In Search of the City*, Anma Libri, 1985, espec. pp. 77-79, 85-87 and 103-106.

The imaginary nature of this narcissistic relation to the world (in the sense of the subject's identification with external symbols) is indirectly referred to in Baudelaire's description of vision and subjectivity in the context of childhood. Recounting an anecdote told to him by a friend, "now a famous painter", Baudelaire writes:

But genius is nothing more than childhood recovered at will - a childhood now equipped for self-expression with manhood's capacities and a power of analysis which enables it to order the mass of raw material which it has involuntarily accumulated. It is by this deep and joyful curiosity that we explain the fixed and animally ecstatic gaze of a child confronted with something new whatever it be...A friend of mine once told me that when he was a small child, he used to be present when his father dressed in the mornings, and that it was with a mixture of amazement and delight that he used to study the muscles on his arms, the gradual transitions of pink and yellow in his skin, and the bluish network of his veins. The picture of external life was already filling him with awe and taking hold of his brain. He was already being obsessed and possessed by form.⁹⁰

Here Baudelaire associates the child's viewing of the world (framed in terms of a relation with the Father - the sign of the Symbolic and of the realm difference) with a description of the child being overwhelmed by external forms. In effect, Baudelaire provides an 'account' of the child's entry into the Symbolic - moving from "childhood" to "manhood's capacities" - which can be read as the transition from an ego-libido (narcissism) to an object-libido (attachment to loved objects).

This displacement of a stable and discrete subjectivity is also fundamental to the phenomenon of inspiration: "I am prepared to go even further and assert that inspiration has something in common with a convulsion, and that every sublime thought is accompanied by a more or less violent shock which has its repercussion in the very core of the brain."⁹¹ Significantly, too, Baudelaire (once again using the term "violently" to suggest a dramatic disruption of a stable identity) refuses to call Guy a dandy because of his "insatiable passion" to lose himself in the crowd. For it is through his refusal to remain "insensitive" (i.e. detached and self-contained) that Guy "parts company decisively with dandyism."⁹²

Returning the gaze

For Baudelaire the experience of shock, in terms of the individual's negotiation of the crowd, undermines the aura which itself can be likened to a form of a "Proustian" recollected experience (*Erfahrung*). But Benjamin also argues that, while the aura is dependent upon distance, it is equally dependent upon the returned look. Yet it is exactly the returned look which would seem to be a threat to the

⁹⁰ *The Painter of Modern Life*, op. cit., p. 8.

⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁹² *ibid.*

Imaginary plenitude of auratic experience. Writing of the daguerreotype, Benjamin claims:

If the distinctive feature of the image that rises from the *memoire involuntaire* is seen in the aura, then photography is decisively implicated in the phenomenon of the 'decline of the aura'. What is inevitably felt to be inhuman, one might even say deadly, in the daguerreotype was the prolonged looking into the camera since the camera records our likeness without returning our gaze...To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with ability to look at us in return. This experience corresponds to the data of the *memoire involuntaire*...they lend support to a concept that comprises the unique manifestation of a distance.⁹³

Benjamin is here writing of the returned look from the camera. However, if this argument is cited in terms of the look from the photograph, then the returned look is no longer the source of the aura but instead can at times be a threat to it. For in such contexts the returned look can operate as a sign of a (potentially threatening) difference which fractures the plenitude and self-identity of the Imaginary. Moreover, the returned look highlights the subject's own lack in that the subject can never look from or occupy the place of the Other or the object of the look⁹⁴ (figs. 3.46 - 3.48). It is this, in conjunction with the returned look, which accounts for the "deadly" character of the daguerreotype or photograph rather than the image's inability to return our look. While Benjamin is correct to claim that the camera cannot return our gaze (although it is difficult to see quite how it could), the action of posing in front of it (like the photograph) itself evokes the subject's own lack in that the sitter can never see him or herself from the viewpoint of the camera (except through the photograph) - a realisation which forcefully highlights the 'gap' across which vision is constituted.⁹⁵

While not being a site of difference, therefore, the camera can be a sign of lack. And it is with reference to difference (in its multiple representations) and to lack that it is possible to re-interpret Benjamin's concept of "shock" (the antithesis of the

⁹³ Charles Baudelaire, *op.cit.*, pp.147-148.

⁹⁴ This is the gist of Lacan's anecdote in *The Four Fundamental Concepts Of Psycho-Analysis*, *op.cit.*, pp. 95-96. Of relevance here also is Jean-Paul Sartre's discussion of the look of the Other in *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes, New York, Philosophical Library, 1956, espec.pp. 252-302.

⁹⁵ Benjamin himself implies this (with reference to Lack and the insatiability of desire) in his comments upon Valery's description of the work of art: "According to this view, the painting we look at reflects back at us that which our eyes will never have their fill. What it contains that fulfils the original desire would be the very same stuff on which desire continuously feeds" (*Baudelaire*, *op.cit.*, pp.146-147). This, however, is only an attribute of painting for Benjamin continues: "What distinguishes photography from painting is therefore clear, and why there can be no encompassing principle of 'creation' applicable to both; to the eyes that will never have their fill of a painting, photography is rather like food for the hungry or drink for the thirsty" (p. 147). Similarly, in *Illuminations*, Benjamin contrasts the 'shock-effect' of film to painting: "The painting invites the spectator to contemplation; before it the spectator can abandon himself to his associations" (p. 240). Although Benjamin is here writing of the temporal qualities of the two mediums (i.e. film's continuous narrative versus the still image), his comments echo his view that the effect of photography is one of shock while painting maintains the aura in terms of the subject's suspension of self.

aura) as that which disrupts the plenitude of the punctual subject. Moreover it is this lack (in vision) which itself becomes the origin of the desire to see, to look, and to examine - the epistemophilic imperative. This process itself recalls Baudelaire's account of how the image/sign of the father aroused the child's initial visual "curiosity" while simultaneously displacing its undifferentiated self-perception. It is within this model of vision, too, that the fascination with the poor in the nineteenth century, for example, can be understood not simply as a matter of an instrumentalist social control but instead was symptomatic of the fundamental psychological structures of perception itself - in short, the greater the difference, the greater the desire or need to look.⁹⁶

More particularly, it is within the context of the returned look and of proximity and distance that one can situate Baudelaire's critical hostility to photography. Not only does Baudelaire accuse photography of disrupting hierarchies (both social and artistic) but he also counterposes the "exactitude" of photography against "imagination".⁹⁷ This notion of "exactitude" can perhaps be read in terms of photography's dissolving of auratic distance and in terms of its fracturing of what Benjamin calls "the smoothness of the stare."⁹⁸ Benjamin himself also suggests the disruptive possibilities of photography in the sense of the individual photograph's random traces of the real which propel the image from a distant past into our own immediate present:

No matter how artful the photographer, no matter how carefully posed his subject, the beholder feels an essential urge to search such a picture for the tiny sparks of contingency, of the Here and Now, with which reality has so to speak seared the subject, to find the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future subsists so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ A striking literary example of this is provided in Edgar Allen Poe's short story, "The Man of the Crowd" in which the narrator, sitting all day until nightfall in a London Coffee-House and "absorbed in contemplation of the scene without", initially observes the crowd with "an abstract and generalizing turn" (*Selected Tales*, ed. Julian Symons, Oxford University Press, 1985, pp. 98-99) but then spots "a decrepid old man...a countenance which at once arrested and absorbed my whole attention, on account of the absolute idiosyncrasy of its expression" (*ibid.*, p.101). The narrator, feeling "singularly aroused, startled and fascinated" then pursues this figure across the city throughout the night until dawn. Aside from the central motif in the story of different modes of looking and narrator's travels across a variety of urban spaces, the compulsion to follow the old man is provoked by his difference. Thus, while the narrator describes him as "the type and genius of deep crime" (*ibid.*, 104), the old man has in fact committed no actual crime. Instead, his "crime" is his unknowability and the fact that the narrator cannot classify him within the familiar categories of urban types. For a discussion of Poe's story as "a critique of the interpretive strategies of the flâneur", see Dana Brand, "Reconstructing the 'Flâneur: Poe's Invention of the Detective Story", *Genre*, XVIII, Spring, 1985 and his *The Spectator and the City: Fantasies of Urban Legibility in Nineteenth Century England and America*, Yale University, Ph.D.thesis, 1981, (Ann Arbor, Michigan, University Microfilms International), espec. chp. IV.

⁹⁷ "The Salon of 1859" in *Art in Paris 1845-62, Salons and other Exhibitions*, trans. and ed. Jonathon Mayne, Phaidon, 1965, pp.149-155.

⁹⁸ *Charles Baudelaire*, op.cit., p. 150.

⁹⁹ "A Small History of Photography", op.cit., p. 243. Benjamin's comments here strikingly prefigure Barthes's notion of the "punctum" in *Camera Lucida*, op.cit., espec. pp. 43- 45.

In a similar fashion, Benjamin claims that photography reveals "what happens during the fraction of a second when a person steps out"¹⁰⁰ while also revealing "the physiognomic aspects of visual worlds which dwell in the smallest things, meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams."¹⁰¹

It is with reference to these comments that one can better understand Benjamin's comment that "a touch of the finger now sufficed to fix an event for an unlimited period of time. The camera gave the moment a posthumous shock, as it were." In effect, Benjamin here draws out and celebrates those very features of photography that Baudelaire had found so "startling and cruel" - in other words, photography's fracturing of temporal and psychical distance and its making visible, if only implicitly at least, moments within the construction of subjective identity.

Both Baudelaire's response to the urban crowd and his critical reception of photography can be read as a refusal of difference. As Colin Mercer has commented: "holding back from the crowd and the dissemination of his subjectivity in the persona of the flâneur, Baudelaire resists what Lacan has called 'the entry into difference'. He attempts to avoid the abandonment to difference, to other menacing significations."¹⁰² While Baudelaire's position may perhaps be rather more ambiguous than this, he does nevertheless seek to preserve auratic distance from both the threat of the crowd and from photography. Indeed, a similar ambition to preserve the aura is evident both in Baudelaire's Symbolist aesthetics and in his eternalisation of the present.¹⁰³

A psychoanalytic reading of both Baudelaire and of Benjamin's concepts of the aura and of shock helps reveal Baudelaire's strategy of preserving an Imaginary narcissism against the threat of difference. However, the relation between photography and the Imaginary is not antithetical but is instead more complex. For, through a reading of Baudelaire,¹⁰⁴ it is possible to cite two registers of the Imaginary - narcissism and paranoia - both of which are fundamental to the construction of subjectivity through difference. In effect, this involves both the narcissistic appropriation of the world (i.e. through projection, identification) or, alternatively, a representation of difference as threat or "other" with both strategies

¹⁰⁰ "A Small History of Photography", op.cit., p. 243.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* pp. 243-244.

¹⁰² "Baudelaire and the city: 1848 and the inscription of hegemony" in *The Sociology Of Literature:1848*, eds. Francis Barker et al., University of Essex, 1978.

¹⁰³ See David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, op.cit., pp. 16-20.

¹⁰⁴ Of particular relevance here is Leo Bersani's *Baudelaire and Freud*, University of California Press, 1977, espec. pp. 106-124.

being pertinent to the photography of the urban crowd and the poor.

Citing this framework it is possible to trace the fracturing (through the dialogic exchange and circulation of the look across the crowd) of the monologic gaze of the subject and a dispersal of its presence and identity through its encounter with difference. Yet, simultaneously, there is both a recuperation of difference yet also an attempted restoration to the viewing subject of a coherent identity through strategies of disavowal and non-identification - the "not-I". Within these psychical manoeuvres photography needs to be seen as both producing and operating within a psychical space involving the complex interplay between proximity and distance, identity and difference. As such, it is not a question of counterposing the 'realist' status and project of photography against its imaginary spaces. Instead, what needs to be explored is their mutual enfolding.

4

REPRESENTATION AND REGULATION

*The gaze is alert everywhere*¹

In Burgoyne's photograph "The Gullet" (fig. 3.46) the image is structured by the overt intrusion of the other within the field of vision. The possibility of the returned look is here dramatically enacted, an event which highlights not only the identity of the gaze (as the look of the spectator) as a function of alterity but also the framing of that look by the Gaze. Moreover, not only is the particular locus of alterity here, an urban crowd, a barrier to the uninhibited movement of the viewer's gaze, but the precise social identity of the assembled figures is itself ambiguous and, indeed, potentially threatening. For, although quite possibly just interested onlookers, the terms of the exchange of looks across the image radically shift when the photographer is read as both the bearer of an external gaze and as the agent of an interventionist municipal authority.

It is the representation of social difference - in conjunction with the simultaneous management of any potential threat to specular security - that I wish to discuss here with reference to *Street-Life in London* (figs.4.1-4.37). Not only was *Street-Life* among the first (or at least among the earliest surviving) photographic surveys in Britain of the urban poor themselves, rather than just their habitat, but it was also a survey which combined photography with an extensive textual commentary.² *Street-Life* thus offers itself as the most systematic and self-articulate photographic engagement with the urban poor in Victorian Britain and for this reason stands as a paradigmatic point of reference for any discussion of the relationship between photography, the city and the poor during the nineteenth century.

¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., p. 195.

² *Street-Life in London* was published in serial form by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington in twelve monthly instalments beginning in February 1877. Each issue consisted of three photographs and their accompanying texts (which included eye and ear-witness statements and commentaries, contextual information etc.) which were co-authored by John Thomson with the journalist Adolphe Smith. For convenience, however, I shall refer simply to Thomson, while also calling the text *Street-Life*. An abridged book version called *Street Incidents* was later published in 1881.

In this chapter I shall read *Street-life in London* as a hegemonic project of representation or, more precisely, as an attempt to control the disruptive effects of alterity which, as in "The Gullet", potentially threaten the cohesion of the gaze. For this purpose I shall situate *Street-Life* within its contemporary discursive environment by reference to arguments concerning surveillance and the social as a prelude to then examining its particular strategies of representation. These strategies may themselves be seen as working across a double-manoeuvere of difference and incorporation through the imposition of a normative subjectivity upon that section of the population designated as being 'the poor'. This, however, is only part of the story. For, in the next chapter, I shall argue, with reference to just one photograph from the series, for the internal instability, and consequent partial failure, of this project of incorporation.

Text, image, fixity

Fundamental to this reading are issues relating to the procedures of historical investigation arising in the construction of a non-reductive and non-instrumentalist reading of *Street-Life in London*. This reading of *Street-Life* (both as a text and as a set of photographs) involves an examination of its determinate conditions of emergence and existence as a means to then begin unravelling both the structuring constraints upon its legibility and signification and its inscription within relations of power. As such, this chapter necessarily addresses itself to the question of reading both in terms of the analysis of one specific text but also in terms of the relationship between the writing of history (itself a representational and discursive practice) and the real.

My aim, then, within this chapter is to outline and apply certain methods of historical analysis with reference to *Street-Life* before locating it within the context of London in the 1870s. For this purpose certain prescriptive procedures and objectives of analysis can be briefly stated here. Primarily, the concern of this reading of *Street-Life* is to uncover the strategies operating within the text and across the photographs rather than reductively imposing a set of coherent or unified meanings upon them. Allied to this question of interpretive closure is the need to avoid seeing *Street-Life* as merely reflecting discourses, ideologies and representations already constituted elsewhere or as epiphenomena which can be schematically retraced through a causal sequence to an originary source. Nor should a status of representative typicality be ascribed to *Street-Life*. Instead, through

employing Foucault's notion of "eventalisation", Thomson's text needs to be read as a specific and non-reducible discursive "event" and not simply as the expression of a broad historical formation. Such a strategy of genealogical analysis thus aims to preserve the text's singularity through recovering the multiplicity of factors and processes which constituted it thereby negating the ascription to it of an immanent identity and intelligibility. As Foucault states:

eventalisation means rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies and so on which at any given moment establish what counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary. In this sense one is indeed effecting a sort of multiplication of causes...Causal multiplication consists in analysing an event according to the multiple processes which constitute it.³

According to this form of genealogical analysis or "effective"⁴ history, historical events and developments are not to be viewed as the necessary results of historical processes, agencies or intentions. Instead, they constitute episodic manifestations of a play of subjugations and dominations. Events are thus conceptualised as being marked by a play of forces for which no individual subject may be held responsible. Furthermore, as Jacques Donzelot has argued:

A reading of a text is no longer a question of assessing its coherence and detecting its hidden intents or the interests which it betrays. It is to identify the relation which it establishes between a knowledge which it produces and a power which it programmes, it is to evaluate its strategic functioning within a field of forces.⁵

Such a reading involves both an "archaeology" of the text's "rules of formation" (i.e. the conditions for its production of knowledge)⁶ together with an analysis of its inscription and circulation within productive relations of power: in effect, its production of "reality...domains of objects and rituals of truth."⁷ This is not, however, to posit a programmatic model of power. Equally, it is important to avoid any schematically functionalist account of *Street-Life* for it is necessary to be alert to the possible non-correspondence between discourses, representations and their effects. Thus, this analysis of *Street-Life* is not concerned about the intention or motivation 'behind' power but, rather, it is focused upon the issue of the application of power and processes by which subjects are constituted (interpellated) as effects of both power and of regimes of representation. In short, while *Street-*

³ "Questions on Method", *Ideology and Consciousness*, 8, 1981, p. 61.

⁴ See "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, op cit.

⁵ "The Poverty of Political Culture", *Ideology and Consciousness*, 5, 1979, p. 74.

⁶ "Archaeological territories may extend to 'literary' or philosophical texts, as well as scientific ones. Knowledge is to be found not only in demonstrations, but it can also be found in fiction, reflection, narrative accounts, institutional regulations and political decisions", Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan Sheridan, London, Tavistock, 1977, pp. 183-184.

⁷ *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., p.194.

Life needs to be situated within a "field of forces" and while, as a singular event, it provides access to a wider social order, this is not to claim that Thomson's text is ultimately reducible to this macro-realm.

Central to this discussion of the production of a "reality" or set of referents in *Street-Life* is, of course, the status and signification of the photographs themselves. For, just as the text of *Street-Life* cannot be read simply as the passive vehicle for discourses already existing fully formed prior to its emergence, so too Thomson's photographs cannot be viewed as readily legible documents or records. For not only does *Street-Life* incite, mobilise and rework existing discourses, but it is also the irreducible constitutive site for the formation of its own specific knowledges and representations. However, fundamental to this production is an anxiety about the limits of representation. This anxiety, which of course is never openly voiced as such, can be located around a recurrent concern with representation and fixity. In other words, the constraints upon defining, containing and immobilising through particular strategies of representation.

This negotiation around the possibilities and limitations of the work of representation is, to put it rather schematically, evident at several levels within *Street-Life in London*. Firstly, it is apparent in relation to the potential instability or, rather, the vacuity of the photographs themselves in terms of their lack of semantic autonomy. In part, this is an historical issue for, by the 1870s, the status of photography and the terms of photographic 'realism' were still emergent and uncodified despite the confidence voiced in the series's Preface about photography's ability to mimetically reproduce the real. Secondly, this question of representation and fixity was constituted around the urban poor themselves who, throughout the nineteenth century, were recurrently described as a vast, seething, mobile and independent mass which was both potentially threatening and constantly evading regulation, containment and control (themselves forms of 'representation'). Finally, but closely allied to this, was the problem of how to represent the city and especially the "World City" of London whose population was to be over five million by the turn of the century. For as Raymond Williams has observed of Victorian London: "its miscellaneity, its crowded variety, its randomness of movement, were the most apparent things about it, especially when seen from inside."⁴

This heterogeneity was, in many respects, a structuring sign of London or, to be more specific, of the "Londonesque" as, for example, it had been for Mayhew.

⁴ *The Country and the City*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 154.

Indeed, because this heterogeneity or urban activity (fig. 2.39) was perhaps *the* dominant signifier of London's specific visual identity (as the boulevard was in Paris), it was all the more important that this highly condensed complex of signifiers not only signify but that its meanings should also be both legible and manageable. Part of the problematic of *Street-Life*, in its particular construction of an urban ethnography, was how to register, let alone organise, this "miscellaneity and randomness" particularly in relation to what Williams cites as "the experience of the streets."⁹ And it is here that *Street-Life* both partakes in and forms part of the conjuncture in the latter nineteenth century involving the application of the novel technology of photography and the development, contestation and representation of the city's spaces.

Throughout the nineteenth century the city had been the locus not only of civic pride but also for the playing out of many class anxieties and ambivalences concerning the processes of industrialisation, especially in relation to the possible social disruption brought about in its wake. In the mid-century it had been the great industrial cities of the North - especially the "shock" city of Manchester in the 1840's - that had largely been the sites of such concerns. But, as the century wore on, Manchester and the other Northern cities gave the appearance (particularly within the context of the decline of Chartism) of both stability and improvement. Indeed, it was the industrial North that was increasingly seen as representing the respectability and independence of the working-class in terms of institutions, such as the Friendly Society, embodying self-help, temperance, sobriety and traditions of religious dissent. Conditions in London, however, often remained not only appalling but seemed to many commentators to be both rapidly degenerating and beyond solution. As Asa Briggs has commented: "The rapid growth of London, both in area and population, was fascinating in itself because it seemed to obey no known laws...Certainly "industrialisation" by itself provided no adequate explanation."¹⁰

Within such a perception, Engels's description of London had not been untypical: "the very turmoil of the streets has something against which human nature rebels...The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space."¹¹ Similarly, although writing from a

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 157.

¹⁰ *Victorian Cities*, Odhams Press, 1963, p. 323.

¹¹ *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, *op.cit.*, pp. 57-58.

very different political perspective, C.F.G. Masterman at the turn of the century also described the deadening effect of urban life and referred to the Imperial city of London as "the Abyss". Furthermore, in common both with with many anxious liberals and conservatives alike, Masterman feared the emergence of "a new race...the city type...stunted, narrow-chested, easily wearied, yet voluble, excitable, with little ballast, stamina or endurance - seeking stimulus in drink, in betting, in any unaccustomed conflicts at home or abroad"¹² - a new breed of city dweller who, it was feared, would fall as easy prey to incitement by political radicals.

Justifying their own reasons for yet another survey of the urban poor, the two authors of *Street-Life in London* argue in their Preface that: "the subject is so vast and undergoes such rapid variations that it can never be exhausted."¹³ This photographic investigation of the city was complemented during the nineteenth century by the use of photography in the exploration and expansion of the Empire ranging from the photography of the Grand Tour to anthropological surveys.¹⁴ Photography was thus employed throughout the breadth of the Empire and within its very centre, the capital. Both the sites of particular class residency in London and of indigenous ethnic populations from the farthest regions of the Empire were constructed within discourses and regimes of representation that bore a striking similarity. Often framed within an evolutionist and hierarchical discourse, each was seen as different, foreign and unknown. Thus Mayhew, for example, could say of London that:

In passing from the skilled operative of the West-end, to the unskilled workman of the Eastern quarter in London, the moral and intellectual change is so great, that it seems as if we were in a new land, among another race.¹⁵

Not only did these potentially threatening populations within the city and the Empire have to be Christianised and 'civilised', but each had to be ethnographically described and categorised. Just as Mayhew made a crude anthropological

¹² "Realities at Home" in *Heart of the Empire*, ed. idem, London, Fisher Unwin, 1901, pp. 13-14.

¹³ *Street-Life in London*, Harenberg, Die bibliophilen Taschenbücher, 1981, p. 81.

¹⁴ Thomson himself was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and from 1862 had travelled widely in the Far East. Among his books of photography were *The Antiquities of Cambodia* (1867) illustrated with albumen prints; a four-volume work including 200 photographs (including many of street traders) called *Illustrations of China and its People* (1873-4) and *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China and China: or Ten Years Travel, Adventures and Residence Abroad* (1875) illustrated with engravings from his photographs. In 1879 Thomson also published *Through Cyprus with a Camera* while his last travel project was *Through China with a Camera* (1898) illustrated by many of his wet collodion photographs from the 1870s.

¹⁵ *London Labour and the London Poor*, (4 vols), 1861, vol. 3, p. 233.

distinction between "wandering" and "civilised" tribes,¹⁶ so too the authors of *Street-Life* employed a similar taxonomy in their description of "London Nomades" (fig.4.1):

In his savage state, whether inhabiting the marshes of Equatorial Africa, or the mountain ranges of Formosa, man is fain to wander, seeking his sustenance in the fruits of the earth or the products of the chase. On the other hand, in the most civilised communities the wanderers become distributors of food and of industrial products to those who spend their days in the ceaseless toil of city life. Hence it is that in London there are a number of what might be termed, owing to their wandering, unsettled habits, nomadic tribes. These people, who neither follow a regular pursuit, nor have a permanent place of abode, form a section of urban and suburban street folks so divided and subdivided, and yet so mingled into one confused whole, as to render abortive any attempt at systematic classification. The wares, also, in which they deal are almost as diverse as the families to which the dealers belong. They are the people who would rather not be trammelled by the usages that regulate settled labour, or by the laws that bind together communities.¹⁷

With its implicit reference to representation and fixity, it is this opening paragraph of *Street-Life* (with its talk of "systematic classification" and regulation) which very much sets out the terrain within and against which particular strategies of representation were to be mobilised.

Governmentality: the state and the social

One strategy for reading *Street-Life in London* is to situate it in relation both to the historical formation described by Foucault, Donzelot and Deleuze (among others) as the "social" and in relation to Foucault's notion of "governmentality". The social is not to be understood as an ahistorical concept of society but, rather, it was a specific historical formation involving the constitution of the social body as both an object of knowledge and as a site for intervention through the exercise of multiple technologies and tactics of power. In the nineteenth century this power was particularly exercised around a number of central concerns such as the crisis of political economy, the demography of population, the limits and failures of philanthropy and the issue of public health. As Deleuze has argued, the social should not be reduced to or confused with either the juridical or the economic sectors. Instead:

it invents an entire social economy and lays new foundations for marking the distinction between rich and poor. Nor does it merge with the public sector or the private, since on the contrary it leads to a new hybrid form of the public and the private, and itself produces a repartition, a novel interlacing of interventions and withdrawals of the state, of its charges and discharges. The question is not whether there is a mystification of the social, nor what ideology it expresses.¹⁸

¹⁶ *ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷ *Street-Life in London*, *op.cit.*, p. 83.

¹⁸ "The Rise of the Social" in Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, London, Hutchinson, 1979, p.x.

Reacting with other sectors, the social emerged as "a new hybrid form" through the intersection of multiple practices, or "little lines of mutation", as it in turn produced new relationships between the public and private and between institutional practices and social relations such as the juridical and administrative systems, wealth and poverty, medicine, education, and the family. More particularly, Donzelot, arguing that the social was originally understood as "the problem of poverty, the problem of others"¹⁹ has claimed that:

For the social is not society understood as a set of material and moral conditions that characterize a form of consolidation. It would appear to be rather a set of means which allow social life to escape material pressures and political-moral uncertainties; the entire range of methods which make the members of society relatively safe from the effects of economic fluctuations by providing a certain security.²⁰

An important consequence of positing "the emergence of the 'social' as a concrete space of intelligibility"²¹ is a decentering, indeed suspension, of the State as the ultimate reference point within critical social analysis. This contrasts with recent Marxist theorisations, notably those of Louis Althusser²² and Nicos Poulantzas,²³ for whom the State remains the privileged site for the initiation and exercise of power - for example, through its securing (by means of repression and ideology) the reproduction of the relations of production and class domination.

A number of criticisms can be levelled against this theorisation. Firstly, both Althusser and Poulantzas retain a model of the exercise of power which Foucault has called "juridico-discursive", i.e. a model of both "descent" and "sovereignty" with the ruling class in effect occupying the position of the Absolute Sovereign. Power is thus conceptualised as being reducible to a subject (the State) and as being the possession of a sovereign agent thereby eliding the multiple forms by which power may be exercised. Secondly, both Althusser and Poulantzas present the State as a unified and homogeneous entity or concept. Functioning as a monolithic bloc, the State is posited as an external unity existing in a position of externality and autonomy from capitalist relations of production and social exchange but, nonetheless, able to impose itself upon them. Thus, even though traversed by contradictions, the State remains a coherent entity.

This relation of externality remains undissolved by Althusser's Ideological State

¹⁹ *The Policing of Families*, op. cit., p. xxvii.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. xxvi.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² See espec. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" in *Lenin and Philosophy*, London, New Left Books, 1971.

²³ See *Political Power and Social Classes*, London, NLB, 1973 and *State, Power, Socialism*, NLB, 1978, op.cit.

Apparatuses since the repressive/coercive State is still retained within this account. Moreover, this account is itself posited within a model of the State's modes of operation which, despite its sophistication, still ultimately amounts to no more than 'repression plus ideology'. Furthermore, there remains a latent functionalism and economism within these accounts in that, for example, ruling class ideology is still constituted and given unity at the level of the economic. As such, aside from the employment and hypostatisation of general, ahistorical models of 'production', 'ideology', and indeed of 'the State' itself (in conjunction with a final recourse to "determination in the last instance" and the oxymoron of "relative autonomy"), there is an elision of economic and social forces and relations and of the State and the social.

Poulantzas, despite his attempts to go beyond Althusser in decentering the State, also retains an ultimately reductive economic and functionalist analysis. This is in spite of his rejection of the possibility of either a general theory of the economy or of the State²⁴ and despite, too, his rejection of a position whereby the relationship between the State and the economy is necessarily one of mutual externality. Poulantzas thus attempts to construct a model of the institutional materiality of the State in which the relations of power extend beyond the couplet 'repression plus ideology'. Thus he argues, for example, that ideological relations are already present in the actual constitution of the relations of production.²⁵ Yet, in the final analysis, power can, for Poulantzas, still only be a class possession. Within his globalising notion of a social totality, social forms and relations have an overall cohesion and determinate identity but these only acquire "legitimation" or significance within an essentialist account of the class struggle.

One effect of this reading is that it leaves no space for those political, ideological and economic forces which are not specifically class forces or which operate across classes. For, within this account, it still remains the class struggle which generates the conditions of existence and forms of representation for these extra or trans-class forces.²⁶ Furthermore, there is a tension or contradiction between Poulantzas's acceptance, following Foucault, that power relations are dispersed throughout the social body and his replication of a model whereby the State has an essential class identity which then penetrates other power relations. For, in the last instance, the very foundations of power would seem to rest with the repressive State apparatus

²⁴ *State, Power, Socialism*, op.cit., p. 20.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 44.

(the police, army, judiciary etc.) which has the means to employ violence. As such, despite his notion of the State's "isolation effect" and his utilisation of Foucauldian notions of individualisation and normalisation, Poulantzas ultimately misreads Foucault's analysis of the operations of power.

While the accounts of both Althusser and Poulantzas still retain their usefulness, it is possible, however, to operate a reversed reading of the operations of the State. For, rather than assuming the domination of 'society' by the State (with both terms being assumed to be self-evident) and from there proceeding to analyse various State apparatuses, their modes of functioning and the forms and means for the representation of ruling-class interests, it is instead possible to argue that the State can only be understood through an analysis of the tactics and techniques of government by which its effects are produced. In other words, the State is not to be seen as the sole and unitary point of origin for strategies of intervention and social management. Instead, it is to a degree itself the cumulative effect of these multiple and non-reducible strategies and techniques of government and of local exercises of power. As Donzelot has argued: "Thus the State would never be a subject of history as such but a support for technologies and a resultant effect of governmental strategies."²⁷

Similarly Foucault, writing on the question of governmentality, makes a distinction between sovereignty and government. It was the sixteenth century which, Foucault argues, first witnessed the emergence of the problematic of government as a debate around two alternative positions. On the one hand, government was conceptualised as being equivalent to the form of rule exercised by an individual sovereign over a principality. However, alternative debates around the "art of government" sought to provide a rationality for government (and the State) which was independent of any conception of the interests of the sovereign ruler.

Foucault here makes a categorical distinction between one mode of the exercise of power, i.e. sovereignty, which has as its objective the preservation of a principality or a territory and the submission of the people to the (sovereign's) law as opposed to another form of government for which the target is "the complex unit constituted by men and things."²⁸ Thus with sovereignty the aim of government and the State is the preservation of sovereignty itself (with the principal mechanism

²⁷ "The Poverty of Political Culture", op.cit., p. 78.

²⁸ "Governmentality", *Ideology and Consciousness*, 6, 1979, p. 11.

for this being the authority and operation of the sovereign's law), while in the case of government the focus of attention and intervention is the relationship between people and things e.g. the production and disposition of wealth and resources, the organisation of ways of living, and the management of the contingencies of life - in short, "a plurality of specific aims...A whole series of specific finalities, then, which are to become the objective of government as such."²⁹ And, above all, it is "the population" which is the catalyst for the development of the problematic of government beyond models based upon either the individual sovereign or upon the family:

whereas the end of sovereignty is internal to itself and possesses its own intrinsic instruments in the shape of its own laws, the finality of government resides in the things it manages and in the pursuit of the perfection and intensification of the processes which it directs, and the instruments of government, instead of being laws, now come to be a range of multiform tactics.³⁰

Organised around the problem of population, the aim or end of government is the welfare and management of that population "in its depths and its details."³¹ Yet it is also a relation of interest:

The population now appears more as the aim of government than the power of the ruler; the population is the subject of needs, aspirations but it is also the object in the hands of government, aware vis-à-vis the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it. Interests, both at the level of each individual who goes to make up the population, and also the interest of the population as such, regardless of individual interests and aspirations, this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population. The birth of a new art, or at any rate of a range of absolutely new tactics and techniques.³²

This is not, however, to posit a linear or evolutionist account of the exercise of power (i.e. as the successive displacement of one form by another). For population is the site for the operation of the triangular configuration of sovereignty- discipline- government in the formation of the social order although this is not to say that the three elements are equally weighted. None of them, however, is entirely absent. For example, sovereignty remains allied to the legal foundation of the State and the legitimation of techniques of government.

Foucault further describes the constitution of this triangular configuration "which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism apparatuses of security"³³ as being focused upon the three elements of government, population and political economy, i.e. a relation between:

the deep historical link between the movement that overturns the constants of sovereignty in

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 19

³¹ *ibid.*

³² *ibid.*, p. 18.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 19.

consequence of the problem of the choice of government; the movement that brings about the emergence of population as a datum, as a field of intervention, and as an objective of governmental techniques; and that which focuses on the economy as a specific sector of reality, and on political economy as the science and the technique of intervention of the government on that field of reality. Three movements: government, population, political economy, which constitute from the Eighteenth Century onwards on a solid series, which even today is assuredly not dissolved.³⁴

In short the State is the composite effect of the multiform tactics and techniques mobilised within the triangular relation of sovereignty-discipline-government. As Foucault concludes:

maybe, after all, the State is no more than a composite reality and a mythical abstraction whose importance is a lot more limited than many of us think...A governmentalisation of the State which is a singularly paradoxical phenomenon, since if in fact the problems of governmentality and the techniques of government have become the only political issue, the only real space for political struggle and contestation, this is because the governmentalisation of the State is at the same time what has permitted the State to survive, and it is possible to suppose that if the State is what it is today, this is so precisely because of this governmentality, which is at once internal and external to the State, since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the State and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on; thus the State can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality.³⁵

Complementary to Foucault's discussion of the "governmentalisation of the State" is Donzelot's notion of "the socialisation of politics" (e.g. as in his discussion of "insurational technologies").³⁶ Furthermore, in *The Policing of Families* Donzelot has outlined how the family became not only the site of governmental intervention but how it also became an instrument of government and was no longer cited as a model for it.

Through utilising an analytical framework based upon governmentality and the social, the nineteenth century can now be seen as witnessing the dissolution of many major political struggles into a series of administrative strategies and solutions. The 'political' realm (including the State) thus became a series of technical and administrative questions and issues organised around social management. And it is through this management that government shares the characteristics of a "savoir" as described by Giovanna Procacci:

A savoir is a discourse which occupies a crucial position in the discursive universe: as an exchangeur (exchanger) it operates the mediation between the analytico-programmatic levels of discourse elaborated by the 'sciences' and the exigencies connected with direct social intervention - whether the intervention is imaginary or real matters little in this context....the object of savoir is no longer pre-eminently scientific, but an object upon which par excellence intervention is possible.³⁷

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁶ "The Poverty of Political Culture", *op.cit.*, p. 80ff.

³⁷ "Social Economy and the Government of Poverty", *Ideology and Consciousness*, 4, 1978, p. 60.

The science of police and political economy

Not only does the notion of governmentality provide a framework for a reading of the general historical conditions of emergence and existence of *Street-Life in London*, but the text can be situated as one particular instance (albeit a highly local one) of governmentality at work. For it, too, is structured around the constitution of the population (or rather one section of it) as both an object of examination and knowledge and as the target for the intervening exercise of power. More specifically, *Street-Life* falls within the realm of the "science of police" as defined by Pasquale Pasquino.

Pasquino argues that the term "police" has not always denoted just the legal-judicial order and the surveillance and control of the "dangerous classes". Instead, it was more broadly referable to the maintenance of the "public good" and thus, representing itself in terms of public concern or "interest", it incorporated a widely dispersed range of 'objects' or sites of operation. Given its multiple functions the "Science of Police" constituted: "a great labour of formation of the social body, or rather a labour whose principle result is what today we call society or the social body and what the Eighteenth Century called the good order of population."³⁸

Marking the beginnings of the exercise of administrative powers over the social body, this science of police was founded upon two basic aims; firstly, the attainment of information and, secondly, the cultivation of happiness. As Foucault, quoted by Pasquino, states: "The business of police is everything which concerns maintaining and augmenting the happiness of the citizens omnium et singulorum, of all and of each."³⁹

This construction of police around the double imperative of surveillance/information and the cultivation of happiness is clearly applicable to *Street-Life* which operates as an exercise in information gathering and journalistic reporting organised around the issues of both security and happiness - a discursive mediation which produces its own specific knowledges together with representations of the social. This concern with "happiness" (for example, in the form of financial security) and with self-protection against the vagaries of economic life is recurrent throughout the text in the form of constant references to the need for prudence within domestic economy and the desirability, indeed necessity, of

³⁸ "Theatrum Politicum: the genealogy of capital - police and the state of prosperity", *Ideology and Consciousness*, 4, 1978, p. 47.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 49.

savings. An excerpt from "Covent Garden Labourers" is typical:

The labourers employed by their tradesmen who have shops or stalls at Covent Garden are divided into job-workers and the regular hands. The former are by far the most numerous, and, but for their improvidence, might be as well off financially as those who receive regular salaries...If, however, they were able to strike an average in their earnings, never spend more, and save from the prosperous season to meet the exigencies of the less busy months, they would lead a life of comparative comfort. But such prudence would be altogether foreign to their natures. Resisting the temptation to spend the money actually in hand would be considered a far greater hardship than the privation to be subsequently endured.⁴⁰

Recalling Donzelot's definition of the social as "the set of means which allow social life to escape material pressures and politico-moral uncertainties", the broad theme of security is constantly returned to in *Street-Life*. This is particularly apparent in the accounts of flooding, i.e. "Sufferers from the Floods" (fig.4.5); disease, i.e. "Public Disinfectors" (fig.4.6) and "Flying Dustmen" (fig.4.35); personal injury, i.e. "Hookey-Alf of Whitechapel" (fig.4.30) or theft, i.e. "The Crawlers" (fig.4.31) as well as the more general accounts of poverty and unemployment which are interspersed with repeated exhortations for individual self-discipline and self-reliance as a means of protection against life's vicissitudes.

More particularly, as Giovanna Procacci has described, the theme of happiness (as "prosperity") is inscribed within the context of political economy and social reconciliation:

at its heart 'happiness' becomes the technical means for resolving the new problem; the reconciliation of social groups which the economic project unites through the expansion of wealth but which are incapable of refraining from antagonism.⁴¹

These discourses of political economy occupy a structuring role in *Street-Life* although the text never overtly registers any crisis of confidence in laissez-faire political economy e.g. its creation of poverty, the inadequacy of philanthropy and the recognition of the need for systematic intervention - a situation which had at least been acknowledged by Mayhew. And, while in *Street-Life* there is a limited recognition of the 'exploitation' of certain members of the poor and working classes (e.g. the situation of the Covent Garden flower sellers or the cabmen's hiring of their cabs) together with the recognition of the existence of genuine victims of the free market, any examination of the deeper structural causes of poverty is both displaced and resolved through the constant demands for individual self-reliance, initiative and thrift. Poverty, unemployment or destitution are thus represented as problems of the individual and not as economic symptoms.

Furthermore, poverty itself was rarely questioned in the nineteenth century but

⁴⁰ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 132.

⁴¹ "Social Economy and the Government of Poverty", op.cit., p. 59.

was viewed as part of the natural order. Rather it was pauperism and destitution that were the areas of both anxiety and inquiry. As Procacci states: "Having made his entrance with full rights onto the stage of the economy, the 'pauper' starts to become a new scientific object."⁴² And, while poverty and inequality (as 'natural' conditions) were not themselves an inherent threat to the social order, pauperism was, i.e: "Pauperism is...poverty raised to the level of social danger; the spectre of the mob. a collective phenomenon, essentially urban."⁴³ If poverty was "a fundamental yet unanalysable, 'unmanageable' given" which "figured as a counterpoint, destined to be denied", pauperism: "appears as 'anti-natural' as well as anti-social, a manifestation of deformity which insinuates itself in the folds of the natural order which political economy, the discourse on wealth, aims to found."⁴⁴

So too, in *Street-Life* it is pauperism and destitution - or rather the possibility of falling into that condition - which is the focus for concern rather than the condition of simply being poor. As Procacci states: "the elimination of social inequality is not the purpose of the discourse on pauperism."⁴⁵ Indeed, Sismondi's statement, quoted by Procacci from his *Nouveaux principes d'economie politique* of 1819, is pertinent not only to *Street-Life* but also to the wider discourse on philanthropy. As Sismondi states: "It is not in fact equality of all conditions but happiness in all conditions which should be the legislator's aim."⁴⁶

The potential 'otherness' of pauperism within the natural order is itself represented within a moral rather than a purely economic discourse. Procacci, for example, cites Donzelot's description of the "systematic grafting of morality onto economics"⁴⁷ which allows entry to the social which is itself defined as forms or patterns of behaviour:

Morality does not stand here for ideology, nor for strategy; one should not be misled into thinking that the social economists are pedantic moralists, caught in the grip of nostalgia for the past. 'Morality' here signifies a discursive mediation which allows a whole range of technologies to gain access to the social as behaviour.⁴⁸

It is thus the behaviour of both the group and the individual which is constitutes as the site and signifier of difference - or integration: 157²

if it is not poverty which the discourse on pauperism takes as its object of attack, if it not towards the disappearance of the poor - the indispensable support for the existence of the rich - that this 158

⁴² *ibid.*

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

discourse is tending, what is its purpose? Its object is the elimination not of inequality but of difference. And here 'moral' language finds its exact meaning. With the term 'difference' I want in fact to underline that the essential significance of the category of 'pauperism' consists in indicating a series of different forms of conduct, namely those which are not amenable to the project of socialisation that is being elaborated.⁴⁹

This representation, or imaginary projection, of the poor as the bearers of a threatening and unnatural difference and of their resistance to socialisation has been succinctly summarised by Stedman Jones in his description of Victorian slum literature, according to which:

London workers were 'heathen'. 'Civilisation' had not reached them. The poor lived in inaccessible places, in 'dens', in 'swamps', in the 'deeps', in the 'wilds', or in the 'abyss'. The 'Light' of civilisation did not shine upon them because they dwelt in the 'shadows', 'the shade'. 'the nether world', the 'darkest' regions. When missionaries from 'civilisation' ventured into that 'Babylon', they were confronted by 'terrible' sights, and if struck by guilt of fear, they recalled the stories of Dives and Lazarus or Jacob and Esau. The terms, 'working classes' or 'toiling masses' carried no positive cultural connotations for they signified *irreligion*, *intemperance*, *improvidence* or *immorality*. Indeed, it was often difficult for these strangers from the 'civilised' world to discover where the 'working classes' ended and where the 'dangerous classes' began. For crime, prostitution, disorder and sedition were also thought to lurk in these poor regions, hidden from the gaze of the well-to-do and when left to fester in this 'nether' world could suddenly break out and threaten the town...The working class lacked 'civilisation' because it was hidden away from it.⁵⁰

Surveillance and representation

Pasquino states that: "To be exercised power needs to know; knowledge then, but also - and this is the other side - a force for public happiness."⁵¹ It is within this double register that *Street-Life* is inscribed. And just as Foucault has cited a politics of power implicit within the discursiveness of all forms of knowledge, so too he has argued that the epistemophilic desire and imperative to examine human reality is itself pervaded by a gaze of surveillance. It is with reference to surveillance and discipline that one can begin to locate a general strategy of visual and textual representation which is employed within *Street-Life* - a strategy, however, that is not reducible to any one single photograph or chapter but which is instead produced across them as a series. Writing specifically of police, Pasquino argues that:

To put it simply, and at the risk of over-generalising, I would say that what police regulations regulate or try to regulate, is everything which in the life of this society...goes unregulated, everything...that lacks order or form.⁵²

Pasquino here implicitly contrasts a realm of regulation/representation (as order and form) against one which escapes control or surveillance (themselves forms of representation), an issue which Procacci also raises with specific reference to

⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵⁰ "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class", in his *Languages of Class*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 183-184.

⁵¹ "Theatrum Politicum", *op.cit.*, p. 51.

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 47.

pauperism:

The definition of pauperism...does not work essentially through economic categories; rather than a certain level of poverty, the representation of pauperism, lays emphasis chiefly on images of fluidity, of indefiniteness, on the impression, at once massive and vague, which is left by a crowd, and which makes for its menacing character.⁵³

The production of such a representation of the poor can be seen in James Greenwood's *The Seven Curses of London* published in 1869 - Greenwood's "sketches of low-life" themselves being cited in the Preface to *Street-Life*. Discussing the statistics for vagrant criminals, Greenwood claims that:

When, however, we come to regard the long column that at a glance reveals the figures that pertain to vagrant committals for fifty successive years, a decided damper is thrown on one's hopes that the trade of the shifting roving vagabond is becoming slowly though surely extinguished. As might be expected of a class so erratic in its movements, it would be difficult to measure them by any fixed standard; but one is scarcely prepared to discover the awful amount of uncertainty that prevails as regards the going and coming of these impostor tramps, when there is a dearth of them, and when their swarming may be expected. They are like the cholera, or like plague, and have their seasons of sloth, and again of general prevalence and virulence. The laws that govern the movements of the professional beggar are inscrutable. You may make war on him and thin his ranks, and prosecute him and persecute him, and by the end of the year be able to show in plain unmistakable figures that he is not half the formidable figure that he was last year; that you have blunted his sting and decreased his dimensions. You still prosecute the war of extermination and next year you are in position to reveal in black and white further glorious results. The thousand have become seven hundred, and again the seven hundred four. At this rate, ere two more years are elapsed, you may strip the rags from your last beggar's back and hang them on the city's gate as a scarecrow and a caution against a revival of the detestable trade.

But alas for our delusive hopes! Come another year - that which showed our seven hundred beggars reduced to four - and without any apparent cause the enemy, crippled more than half killed it seemed, reappears on the stage hale and sound, and with years of life in him yet. The four hundred has grown to six. There are no means of accounting for it. Depression of trade and poverty widely prevailing will not do, for such are the times of prosperity and fattening with the professional beggar. When 'giving' is the order of the day, and benevolence, sickening at the sight of privation and distress that seems endless, shuts her eyes and bestows her gifts on all comers, then is the cadger's harvest, then may he pursue his shameful avocation with comparative impunity.⁵⁴

Framed within a moralising discourse, Greenwood here constructs a series of images of the 'otherness' of the vagrant poor ("the enemy") in terms of their erratic mobility, unpredictability and resistance to regulation. For, at one moment numerically visible ("swarming"), they are next seemingly on the decline and absent - if only temporarily. At one moment apparently controllable, they are subsequently rampant. The "inscrutable" laws of their movements bear no correspondence with either fixed standards or with orthodox forms of measurement and are beyond systems of rational explanation and causality. Not simply an internal disturbance within the social order, these vagrant poor exist both outside it and outside of conventional systems of representation and patterns of behaviour. Indeed, so perverse or inverted is the world of the beggar, according to Greenwood's logic,

⁵³ "Social Economy and the Government of Poverty", op.cit., p. 62.

⁵⁴ *The Seven Curses of London*, London, Blackwell, 1981, pp. 144-145.

that they actually thrive during economic depressions and periods of widespread poverty. Thus, rather than being in part the consequences of economic fluctuations, these poor are depicted as free agents who parasitically exploit economic decline. Likened to a contagious disease (significantly those of epidemic character and proportions), these roving vagabonds must be persecuted and wiped out.⁵⁵

Producing an image of urban vagrancy, Greenwood's text simultaneously posits the professional beggar as existing outside conventional categories of representation and beyond forms of regulation. This question of how to represent what is either resistant to representation or what is posited (at an imaginary level) as being beyond representation is implicit in another contemporary text, *London: A Pilgrimage* by Gustave Doré and Blanchard Jerrold published in 1872, in which standard representations of public and private break down or are inadequate when applied to the East End poor. This representation and registering of the poor as a vast, amorphous flux is recurrent throughout Victorian literature but is not one which is visibly produced in *Street-Life* although it is necessarily part of its problematic. Rather, its particular strategy of representation involves a breaking down of any collective and anonymous identity of the urban crowd into an atomistic sequence of isolated and 'knowable' individuals.

In this *Street-Life* partly adopts the conventional procedures of a tradition of Victorian empirical social investigation, e.g. classification, taxonomy, and the minute morphology of both individuals and types of which Mayhew's own investigations (acknowledged in the Preface) were the major precedent. This mode of investigation recalls the techniques of surveillance as described by Foucault, i.e. exclusion, differentiation, individuation - in other words, "a form of surveillance at once global and individualising...carefully separating the individuals under surveillance."⁵⁶ Citing the model of the Panopticon, Foucault has described this process of differentiation:

Rather than the massive binary division between one set of people and another, it called for multiple separations, individualising distributions, in organisation and depth of surveillance and control, an intensification and a ramification of power...The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities...it is replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised...Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See also Foucault's discussion in *Discipline and Punish* of the plague, the leper and the city, espec., pp. 195-200, i.e. "the plague as a form, at once real and imaginary, of disorder had as its medical and political correlative discipline. Behind the disciplinary mechanisms can be read the haunting memory of 'contagions' of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder" (p. 198).

⁵⁶ "The Eye of Power", *Semiotexte*, 3, 2, p. 6.

⁵⁷ *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., p. 198.

This separation of individuals in *Street-Life* has important consequences in that "the poor in London" are not seen and represented as constituting a cohesive group, let alone either a class or a threat - a threat that is acknowledged in *London: A Pilgrimage* (even if only in the context of the narrator's personal safety).⁵⁸ But while the poor are still, on one level at least, represented within a grid of difference, there is no engagement in *Street-Life* with the almost eschatological imagery as described by Stedman Jones. Significantly, too, *Street-Life* is not focused upon the East End (with its traditional identity of total 'otherness') but mainly upon central London and the West End (e.g. Holborn, Covent Garden, St. Giles') with only one foray into the East End (i.e. "Hookey-Alf of Whitechapel").

London in the 1870s

However, while Foucault provides a necessary counter to reductive analyses of power/knowledge, his own accounts and operative terms such as surveillance and discipline need, at times, to be used with care and, indeed, if cited as generalisable concepts they can themselves become a potential obstacle to historical investigation. Thus, for example, while Foucault argues that power is dispersed throughout the social body and while he has sought to abandon a model of power based upon sovereignty and possession, it is nonetheless the case that power is unequally distributed. Foucault may claim that "where there is power, there is resistance"⁵⁹ but the various individuals in *Street-Life* are entirely lacking in powers of self-determination. Despite their spoken statements quoted in the text, they never represent themselves but are always represented by others. Equally, the uses and availability of photography are premised here upon a wholly uneven distribution of power. For such reasons, specific historical investigation is needed as a means of avoiding the potentially totalising notions of power and surveillance provided by Foucault. The purpose of such investigation is to reveal the particular configuration of *Street-Life's* conditions of emergence and circulation rather than reading it as just one more example of the operations of disciplinary society. *Street-Life* thus needs to be situated within a historically specific "field of forces" comprised both of a heterogeneous set of discourses and of a particular range of institutional practices and their rationalities. For it is only within this field of forces that *Street-Life* takes

⁵⁸ Gustave Doré and Blanchard Jerrold, *London: A Pilgrimage*, New York, Dover, 1970, pp. 141-150.

⁵⁹ *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, Pelican, 1981, p. 95.

on significance and meaning. As Derrida has remarked:

A text is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential networks.⁶⁰

It is this "differential network" which is the constitutive site for the production of meaning through intertextual movements of both difference and deferral. But while *Street-Life* can be located in relation to a widely dispersed and variable set of responses to the problem of urban poverty, this is not to impose a homogenising reading upon them.

This field of discourses and practices was in particular focused around the issues of 'casual' employment, endemic poverty, pauperism, mendicancy, crime and the 'demoralisation' of the working classes and residuum. These issues were, of course, themselves bound up with specificity of London's economy and its particular industrial pathology and social demography. As Stedman Jones has observed, London's economy was essentially "pre-industrial" and was dominated by "non-industrial forms of capital."⁶¹ Unlike many of the towns and cities of the North which had arisen around large factories and one or two dominant industries, London remained a centre of specialist skills and small workshops organised particularly around 'finishing' and consumer trades. In short:

The extensive survival of small scale production in Victorian London determined its economic structure and political character, and its patterns of poverty remained largely distinct from those of the other nineteenth-century industrial regions.⁶²

The few large-scale industries that had existed in London prior to the 1850s had, by the turn of the century, largely moved elsewhere due to lack of space, steep rents, the scarcity of raw materials as well as London's infamously high industrial wage rates. Thus while engineering, printing and tanning (to cite a few) all moved out to the provinces, London became a centre of specialist trades concentrating on the manufacture of goods for the London market and, in particular, for a West End clientele.

Above all, it was the cycles of demand and depression allied to seasonality and, as important, the weather which determined the particular patterns of employment and metropolitan distress for London's working class and poor. Dependent to a large extent upon the West End season and fashion, the cycle of employment for many people (including a significant proportion of those represented in *Street-Life*)

⁶⁰ Quoted in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 29.

⁶¹ *Outcast London*, Peregrine, 1984, p. 239.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 32.

reached its peak in mid-June, fell during August and rose again in October with a slump throughout the winter months. Seasonality also effected London's few major industries such as shipbuilding and coal. Coal, grain and timber imports to the port of London were all seasonal while the city's other major industry, building, also slackened off to a virtual standstill during the winter. The effect of these factors was a permanent blight of 'casualisation' and unemployment producing a concomitant social and economic insecurity. Nearly a quarter of those employed in coal-portering, for example, were a 'casual' (or, at least, underemployed) surplus with the ratio being even higher among the dockers. But even in the more traditionally skilled industries such as shipbuilding there were similar patterns of seasonality as artisans with a specialist trade found themselves dependent upon meagre casual earnings.⁶³

An over-supply of unskilled labour (far in excess of demand), often dramatic changes in seasonal demand and low fixed capital were all determining aspects of London's economy. Yet aside from these structural features there was an imbalance between the demand for juvenile over adult labour, a constant supply of workers displaced from skilled or permanent jobs (due to general economic factors and structures of employment within particular trades), the temporary influx of outsiders into the casual labour market during periods of cyclical and seasonal unemployment coupled with rural migration and foreign immigration of unskilled labour into London.

Allied to this and the decline of some trades (for example, Thames shipbuilding which collapsed in 1867) and of employment conditions within them, there were also specific features of employment patterns in London such as the system of irregular short engagements which effected some 10% of the city's working population, low wages in many trades, the practice of "sweating" and the intensification of work methods. Above all, it was the East End and the centre of the city - the "inner industrial perimeter"⁶⁴ - that was most effected by these

⁶³ I am of course using the terms working classes, the poor, the casual poor etc. very loosely here. Clearly there were significant differences between, for example, artisans and labourers or between the wholly destitute and those in employment (even if only on an irregular basis). However, the broad distinction I wish to make is to differentiate these groups from an industrial, and specifically factory, proletariat. For a detailed examination of the labour market, see *Outcast London*, op.cit., espec. Part 1 and James Treble, *Urban Poverty in Britain 1830-1914*, London, Batsford, 1979, espec., chapters 1 and 2, and *The poor and the city: the English poor law in its urban context, 1834-1914*, ed. Michael Rose, Leicester University Press, 1985, espec. Rose's Introduction, pp. 2-17.

⁶⁴ The term "inner industrial perimeter" is used by Stedman Jones in *Outcast London* to describe an area north, east and south of the city that runs north of the Thames from Holborn to St. Saviours through Bethnal Green and Mile End to Rotherhithe and Bermondsey south of the river. Areas such as Hackney, Islington, Greenwich, Lambeth and Camberwell are beyond this perimeter.

conditions as chronic urban poverty arose, especially subsequent to the middle-class exodus from these areas to outer London and the suburbs.

Entry into the casual labour market almost inevitably meant a descent from a more skilled trade to a less skilled one with unskilled workers, for example dockers, often resorting to reliance upon forms of casual employment, the income of their wives or else charity and the Poor Law - a descent which also often provoked a 'crisis' of masculinity.⁶⁵ The obvious consequence of this pattern of descent was to maximise the pressure upon the least skilled sections of the labour market. Aside from the particular factors resulting from an individual's descent into the casual labour market from more lucrative and appealing forms of employment e.g. injury, sickness, collapse of the employer's firm, lack of adequate references, offensive behaviour etc., descent was essentially due either to the general movement of the economy (for example, cyclical depression) or else due to the specific employment structures and patterns within particular trades. Cabmen, retired or ex-soldiers and boardmen, all figuring in *Street-Life* (figs.4.2, 4.4, 4.26), as well as groups such as ex-servants, were all caught up in the particular contingencies of their professions and often found it impossible to re-enter the mainstream labour market.

Mayhew had been particularly alert to this movement of descent and had made a sharp distinction between those who "were driven" to the streets as distinct from those who either "took" or were "bred" to them:

In most cases, I am convinced, it is adopted from a horror of the workhouse, and a disposition to do, at least something for the food they eat. Often it is the last struggle of independence...Some have been reduced from their position as tradesmen or shopmen; others have been gentlemen's servants or clerks; all dragged down by a series of misfortunes, sometimes beyond their control, and sometimes brought about by their own imprudence or sluggishness...but a still larger class than all, are beaten out mechanics and artisans, who from want of employment in their own trade, take to make up small things (clothes horses, tinware, cutlery, brushes, pails, caps and bonnets) on their own accounts.⁶⁶

The story of "Scotty" in "The Crawlers" is typical of many narratives of descent, through misfortune, to the streets that are given in *Street-Life* coupled with an assertion of independence and self-reliance, i.e: "Imbued with a pride that

⁶⁵ This anxiety about the loss of manhood through unemployment due to an inability to fulfil the traditional 'masculine' role of provider for the family and because of exclusion from a (male) working environment is evident in the narrative of "Hookey Alf" whose amputated left arm becomes a sign of his 'castrated' impotence. Throughout the commentary there is an overtly empathetic gender identification between Adolphe Smith and Hookey Alf, i.e. "this good-natured, honest man, feels that he ought to be supporting his mother and sister, while in reality he is often living on their meagre earnings. The position is certainly trying, and it is difficult to make poor "Hookey" understand that an epileptic cripple cannot be expected to fulfil the same duties as a man in sound health" (p. 161).

⁶⁶ *London Labour and the London Poor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 322-323.

does honour to her nationality, Scotty has stubbornly rejected all suggestions as to her entering the workhouse and does not, I believe, condescend to beg."⁶⁷

However, while none of the individuals in *Street-Life* represent a direct threat to the existing social order nor do any of them voice dissent or opposition to the free market, the possibility that they might become a threat, due primarily to extremes of pauperism, is implicit throughout the text. Thus, for example, street advertising is described as giving "employment to many destitute individuals who would otherwise become burdens to the parish or swell the list of our criminal classes."⁶⁸ As such, it was the possibility that the 'honest' poor and 'respectable' working classes might fall into the class of unregenerate poor (alternatively known as the dangerous classes, the casual poor or the residuum) which was an issue of, at times, urgent concern and attention.

The residuum itself was seen as a permanent potential threat and as representing the worst aspects of urban life which, if left unchecked, could disrupt the stability of the social order itself. Recalling Masterman's description of the 'city type', Alfred Marshall voiced much orthodox opinion in his characterisation of the residuum as "those who have a poor physique and a weak character - those who are limp in body and mind."⁶⁹ Similarly, writing in 1885, Arnold White argued that while 20% of the unemployed were "genuinely unemployed", the other 40% were totally degenerate: "physically, mentally and morally unfit, there is nothing that the nation can do for these men except to, let them die out by leaving them alone."⁷⁰ Once again, it was not poverty itself that was at issue within the subjective psychologising of both Marshall's and White's descriptions in that both were moralising responses rather than being descriptions based upon structural or economic analysis. Such characterisations of the residuum were themselves symptomatic of a more general representation of pauperism which was perceived as difference and threat in terms of improvidence, drunkenness, intemperance, bad language and disrespect for authority.

Moreover, it was London which was identified with the problem of the residuum. And, although never reaching the alarm of the 1840s, this identification was fuelled by periodic crises. The period of 1866 to 1872, for example, not only witnessed the Second Reform Bill (and the Paris Commune) and fears of potential

⁶⁷ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 165.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁶⁹ Quoted in *Outcast London*, op.cit., p. 11.

⁷⁰ "The Nomad Poor of London", *Contemporary Review*, vol. XLVII, May 1885, p. 715.

working class republicanism but, in London high food prices coinciding with high unemployment provoked public marches and demonstrations. Furthermore, there were major outbreaks of cholera, scarlet fever and smallpox. As distinct from the national scene, there was also a dramatic rise both in pauperism and vagrancy (with both being consequences of unemployment) with "plagues of beggars" roaming the streets. During such conditions, begging, crime and political disorder were seen as being closely linked - links which were themselves in no small part fuelled by alarmist and sensationalist journalism such as Greenwood's investigations into the "wilds" of London.⁷¹

Class anxieties did, however, lessen in 1873 with the return of an economic boom and the realisation that the social order was not on the verge of collapse. Compared with *London: A Pilgrimage* - a text overtly marked by an anxiety about the radical otherness of the East End - *Street-Life* (published some five years later) displays a more relaxed attitude towards the poor. However, the return of economic prosperity and social stability did not remove the problem of the residuum even if it now seemed rather less urgent and the 1870s saw a wave of religious, philanthropic and political activity directed at 'civilising' the city and moralising the urban poor. In particular, this activity was provoked by what was diagnosed as the demoralisation of the poor of which social disorder was the logical symptom. This demoralisation (framed in terms of idleness, dissipation, lack of independence etc.) was read as the consequence both of the geographical separation of classes (itself again especially a feature of London) with a resultant collapse of local administration and a lack a direct inter-class acquaintance. This situation was further coupled with what was seen as the unequal operation and abuse of "indiscriminate" private charity and the Poor Laws with the latter, it was argued, no longer functioning as a deterrent.

Within this context, the 1870s witnesses the emergence of a wide set of forms of guidance aimed at inculcating the virtues of labour, thrift and self-help among the urban poor. These techniques of guidance took the form of both legislation to create a physical environment which would discourage undesirable working class habits

⁷¹ Greenwood's accounts of London were accused of sensationalism by contemporaries and there is often a sense of titillating voyeurism in his descriptions of the extreme 'otherness' of certain areas of the city. And although the two authors of *Street-Life* stress the accuracy and factuality of their own investigations, their text is not entirely immune to a milder form of melodramatic sensationalism. Thus the series begins with "the story of the mysterious death of Mary Pradd [which] will hardly bear repeating in detail" (p. 84). This was probably a ploy to attract prospective readers and subscribers but the fact that the Mary Pradd is in the accompanying photograph for "London Nomades" (fig. 4.1) adds a certain voyeuristic interest to the image while also 'confirming' certain representations of the lives of gypsies and the poor.

and attitudes, while private charity aimed to induce a moral reformation of the poor.

The legislative use of the immediate needs of the urban poor as a means of securing their moral reform, active social control and discipline is evident in the spate of reforms initiated from the 1870s onwards. The Sanitary Commission of 1869-71 led to the formation of the Local Government Board in 1871. 1872 saw the Public Health Act to be followed by the Public Health Act of 1875 which divided the country into rural and urban sanitary districts each with clearly defined duties. The Artisans and Labourers Dwelling Improvement Act, also led to the demolition of slums and "rookeries", and the subsequent dispersal of their inhabitants - a process which occurred within the St. Giles' district which was one of the major sites of investigation in *Street-Life*.⁷² As slums were demolished, model dwelling companies and philanthropic trusts provided what they considered to be more appropriate housing - Octavia Hill's housing experiments which began in the 1870s being a notable example.

This creation of a new physical environment for the urban population involved both the 'discrete' regulation of the working classes in part through seeking to inculcate what Booth was to call the "habits of cleanliness and order."⁷³ In London especially there was also a series of attempts to break the physical and social class polarisations that had emerged across the city. These attempts to cultivate direct personal relations ranged, to cite just a few examples, from Edward Denison's residence in the East End, the settlement movement and plans to create a new urban squirearchy through the appointment of Guardians, to the practice of "visiting" the poor and the formation of the Mission Hall.

Such efforts at the moral reformation of working class behaviour and manners were often marked by a convergence of utilitarian and evangelical traditions frequently based upon the most vulgarised tenets of political economy and the majority of critics and reformers of the 1870s remained oblivious to the structural aspects of the economy and unaware of the specific nature of London's labour

⁷² Writing in 1860, Renton Nicholson had described this transformation of the once infamous St. Giles's district: "The city of cadgers is not what it was. Formerly its boundaries were lawless, like Alsatia...It was a refuge for the desperado, the thief, the cadger and the prostitute; it now scarcely affords a home for the latter two classes. The introduction of a police station in the immediate vicinity has perhaps caused this revolution in the precinct of the classic ground. The operations of the Mendicity Society have naturally decreased the number of beggars in the Metropolis. These and other multiplied causes have had the effect of reducing the population of St. Giles's as well as altering for the better the character of the inhabitants. Working people employed in selling fruit and other things in the streets, and labourers in the markets, are the principle occupiers of the tenements in the 'rookery' at present", quoted in "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics", op.cit., p. 194.

⁷³ *Life and Labour of the People of London*, Religious Influences Series 3, vol. 2, 1902, p. 54.

market. Mayhew's enlightened understanding, almost two decades before, of the behaviour of the London poor in the context of the capital's economy remained a precedent which was almost universally ignored. For, as Mayhew observed, the reason for the absence of thrift among casual workers and the poor was readily obvious in that, "Regularity of habits are incompatible with irregularity of income."⁷⁴

Throughout the 1870s, however, poverty and pauperism were widely seen as signs or effects, rather than as causes, of demoralisation. Those middle class writers who promulgated normative ideals of behaviour for the working class assumed that these classes had an income which was sufficient not only for providing them with adequate standards of feeding and housing etc. but which also enabled them to provide themselves with cover, through savings banks and friendly societies, against the contingencies of life. Once again Mayhew, in his differentiation between "good and bad wages", was a virtually isolated exception in his promotion of a national minimum social wage:

the test for the bare sufficiency of wages is, such a rate of remuneration as will maintain not only the labourer himself while working and when unable to work, but support his family, and admit of the care and education of his children; and as those wages may be termed good which admit of more than this being done, even so are they bad which admit of less.⁷⁵

The goals of self-sufficiency, thrift and self-help as the surest paths to working class independence were usually severely out of joint with economic reality while poverty and destitution were often seen more as the results of individual "moral" failings rather than as the consequence of exogenous forces such as economic pressures and social environment. However, against the assumption that "good wages" were the norm for the working classes or, at least, were readily available, Thomas Wright had argued in 1873 that:

it is making liberal allowance on the favourable side of the matter, to say that not more than one in twenty of the working class get within the standard of comfort we have sketched - who have always sufficiency of food and clothing, and a decent and healthy home; and who, when too old to find employment in a market in which employers have a choice of younger men, can maintain themselves without having to seek public charity or becoming dependent upon relatives who, being themselves in straitened circumstances, generally regard such dependence as a burden, and make it very bitter.⁷⁶

But it was the view voiced by the Charity Organisation Society in its Annual Report of 1876 which best represented much middle class opinion on the subject when it proclaimed that:

⁷⁴ *London Labour and the London Poor*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 309.

⁷⁵ Quoted in E.P. Thomson and E. Yeo, *The Unknown Mayhew*, Penguin, 1973, p. 565.

⁷⁶ *Our New Masters*, 1873, p. 43.

the principle is, that it is good for the poor that they should meet all the ordinary exigencies of life, relying not upon public or private charity, but upon their own industry and thrift, and upon the powers of self-help that are to be developed by individual and collective effort.⁷⁷

And it is the Charity Organisation Society (C.O.S.) which provides a crucial point of reference not only for understanding the moralisation of the poor in London during the 1870s and beyond, but also for a reading of *Street-Life in London*.

The Charity Organisation Society

Founded in 1869 for "Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity", the C.O.S. sought to advance the cause of "scientific charity" and to remoralise the poor who, it was claimed, had been the recipients of indiscriminate donations of cash, gifts and charity. Functioning as a clearing-house for applications for charity, the character of the C.O.S. was, as one commentator has put it, "professionally pioneering but ideologically reactionary."⁷⁸ In part this was a result of the the Society's particular class disposition. For, established by a group of individuals drawn from the ranks of professional London, the C.O.S. has also been described as "a product of the fears expressed by a particular sector of wealthy London in the 1860s about the separation of classes and the deformation of the gift."⁷⁹

Promoting a philosophy that was aggressively individualistic, the C.O.S. expounded and circulated many of the assumptions of nineteenth century social reform often in the guise of a nostalgic myth of a visibly organic class community which shared a common value system. As one of the most influential C.O.S. writers commented:

The separation between rich and poor in our large towns, and more especially in London, has often been pointed out as one of the most characteristic and threatening signs of the times. On the one hand, it is said, we have a large number of wealthy people, living an idle, luxurious life in their own quarter, and knowing or caring little about anything outside; on the other hand, we have a much larger number of poverty stricken people herded together at the opposite extreme of town, with all their energies exhausted in the futile endeavour to secure a tolerable existence.⁸⁰

As a response, the C.O.S. greatly stressed the role of direct personal influence as a means to regenerating the poor and remedying the effects of urbanism. To this end C.O.S. workers were encouraged to view their working locality "not as a chaotic agglomeration of atoms, but as an organic whole."⁸¹ Through such

⁷⁷ Quoted in W.H.B. Court, *British Economic History 1870-1914, Commentary and Documents*, 1965, p. 373.

⁷⁸ D. Frazer, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State*, London, 1974, p. 121.

⁷⁹ *Outcast London*, op.cit., p. 257.

⁸⁰ Mrs. Bernard Bosanquet, *Rich and Poor*, London, 1898, p. 3.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

strategies "the specialisation which is an indispensable feature of modern life shall not isolate us from the citizen spirit, the pulse-beat of the social heart."⁸²

Rejecting both unregulated philanthropy and collective social welfare, the C.O.S. stressed a concept of personalised welfare which was seen as a specialist and quasi-professional activity.⁸³ Central to its practice was the individual case-history and a normative model of human behaviour based upon a specific notion of "character". As one C.O.S. report stated: "Charity takes account of character, and selects those cases in which assistance will lead to self-support; the possession of some resources makes a case more suitable for charity."⁸⁴

Evidence of individual "character", assessed through detailed case-work, home visits, interviews with neighbours etc., was the major determinant of whether an applicant would receive assistance and in what form. "Character" was thus revealed through an investigation of an individual's past history while aid was conditional upon points of merit such as the evidence of previous attempts to save money. Above all, the ideal character possessed those attributes which facilitated the smooth functioning of a capitalist economy. Habits of temperance, forward planning, economic independence and restraint were stressed. It was this model of character that was contrasted against what was seen as the typical personality of a member of the residuum:

The true type of his class lives in the present moment only: not only is he without foresight, he is almost without memory, in the sense that his past is so completely past that he has no more organised experience to refer to than a child. Hence his life is one incoherent jumble from beginning to end; it would be impossible to make even a connected story out of it, for every day merely repeats the mistakes, the follies and mishaps of yesterday; there is no development in it; all is aimless and drifting.⁸⁵

Against this was counterposed the ideal of thrift:

thrift is the characteristic of the steadfast mind, reflecting the unity and necessity of life and the universe, and exercising self-control in the present for the sake of ensuring that the future shall at any rate approximate to it in value. The mind which yields easily to the temptation of pawning, on the contrary, is one to which the future is merely an uncertain chance, good only to be robbed for the sake of the present.⁸⁶

Just as the C.O.S. imposed rigorous behavioural norms upon deserving applicants, so too a similar construction of ideal character is operative within

⁸² Bernard Bosanquet, "The Duties of Citizenship", in *Aspects of the Social Problem*, ed. idem, London, 1985, p. 26.

⁸³ See Judith Fido, "The Charity Organisation Society and Social Casework in London 1869-1900" in *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. A.P. Donajrodski, London, Croom Helm, pp. 207-230.

⁸⁴ Quoted in Fido, "The Charity Organisation Society", op.cit., p. 214.

⁸⁵ Helen Bosanquet (Mrs. B. Bosanquet publishing under her own name), *The Standard of Life*, London, 1906, p. 169.

⁸⁶ Mrs. B. Bosanquet, *Rich and Poor*, op.cit., p. 99.

Street-Life. For, rather than being a representation of a wide variety of street types and personalities, *Street-Life* ultimately comes to function as a discourse about just one individual or type. Emerging as a cumulative and composite textual effect, this ideal type is a projected image of what the poor should be and of how they ought to behave. Like the ideal type of the C.O.S., what emerges is an industrious individual who is both thrifty and forward-looking; who saves, is temperate and ideally teetotal; who is socially responsible and independent; who would refuse any form of assistance no matter how destitute; who seeks upward social advancement but is not overly-ambitious or critical of the class structure. In short, *Street-Life* operates to produce a model of the "honest" or "respectable" poor and working classes - a socially responsible subject who identifies with the existing social order.

It is this normative type which is particularly apparent in the description of the Italian ice-sellers, in "Half-Penny Ices", in terms of their display of the habits of subsistence and a "spirit of economy":

the Italian ice-man sets an example of steady perseverance, economy and foresight which is at once the envy and marvel of the English poor who live around...the example of their lives is useful in a country where the poor classes have no notion of economy, are guilty of continuous daily waste, and are ever betraying their interests and selling their substance for the sake of a drink.⁸⁷

Ultimately, this normative subject is constructed in terms of owning property - for example, as the desire and financial ability of the ice-sellers to buy property back in Italy.

The study of character was thus a strategy employed both within attempts to remoralise the poor and as a structuring narrational device and discursive figure within *Street-Life* in the form of individual case-histories and as the fabrication of a normative type. Photography is here mobilised in the examination and construction of the individual case-history. Employed in the production of what Foucault has described as "the total visibility of bodies, of individuals and of things before a centralised eyesight",⁸⁸ photography was used to bring everyday individuality above "the threshold of description":

For a long time ordinary individuality - the everyday individuality of everybody - remained below the threshold of description. To be looked at, observed, described in detail, followed from day to day by an uninterrupted writing was a privilege. The chronicle of a man, the account of his life, his historiography, written as he lived out his life formed part of the rituals of his power. The disciplinary methods reversed this relation, lowered the threshold of describable individuality and made of this description a means of control and a method of domination. It is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use...This turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroisation, it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection...The examination as the fixing, at once ritual and scientific of individual differences, as the pinning down of each individual in his own particularity...clearly indicates the appearance of a

⁸⁷ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., pp. 135-136.

⁸⁸ "The Eye of Power" op.cit., p. 6.

new modality of power in which each individual receives as his status his own individuality, and in which he is linked by his status to the features, the measurements, the gaps, the 'marks' that characterise him and make him a 'case'.⁸⁸

In its emphasis upon "character" *Street-Life* parallels many of the methods of investigation and classification employed by the C.O.S. Through journalistic investigation (to which the status of scientific accuracy was ascribed) and photographic "document", *Street-Life* shares the C.O.S. goal, as described by Bernard Bosanquet, of "entering into the minds, habits and feelings of the classes under consideration, and of comprehending their lives from the beginning to the end"⁸⁹ - a goal, however, not only of comprehension but also of the transformation of character. Like much C.O.S. case-work, *Street-Life* is marked both by individual sympathy and by manipulative social control. Yet it was in order to combat the abuse of spontaneous sympathy or compassion, that the C.O.S. put such stress upon organisation rather than relief and upon systematic charity and casework rather than upon any imaginative thinking on the issue of poverty. Similarly, it is necessary to examine the power relations at work within the representational strategies of *Street-Life*, rather than reading the text at the level of Thomson's and Smith's empathy for their individual interviewees.

Furthermore, it was practical fieldwork which revealed the ideology of the C.O.S. in operation. For, as Stedman Jones has argued, the C.O.S. "represented the aspirations of a distinct social group - the middle and upper ranks of the more conservative employers" with a virtual absence of the large industrial employers:

As far, then, as the Society expressed the outlook of one social group, it was that of the elite of professional London. This makes intelligible the aspirations of those active in the formation of the C.O.S. to form a new urban gentry.⁹¹

This new urban gentry which had been alarmed by the disorders of the 1860s had, however, no natural economic or social contact with the poor and were almost completely lacking in the experience necessary to understanding their behaviour. Instead, perceiving their own social position as having been achieved by means of the cultivation of the virtues of austerity:

they were prone to view the poor, not with the undemanding paternalism of the established rich, but with a hard-headed severity born of strong aversion to those who stood condemned of fecklessness, indolence and lack of resilience. With this background, the equation between virtue and vice, success and failure was fairly easy to make.⁹²

C.O.S. committees consisted almost entirely of businessmen, clergy, civil

⁸⁸ *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., pp. 191-192.

⁸⁹ "The Duties of Citizenship", op.cit., p. vi.

⁹¹ *Outcast London*, op.cit., p. 269.

⁹² *ibid.*, p. 270.

servants, ex-army officers and wealthy women - people with no direct ties with the poor and working classes.⁹³ In this, the C.O.S. was one instance of an emergent urban gentry in London and it is to this diffuse and by no means homogeneous grouping that *Street-Life* can be referred.

However, both the C.O.S. and *Street-Life* were particular responses to the issue of urban poverty with each having its own effectivity and both need to be situated within a diverse discursive field which formed their conditions of operation and intelligibility. This discursive and institutional field ranged, to give a few examples, from the traveller's tale genre of James Greenwood to the extensive tradition of Victorian social investigation (notably Mayhew) and from particular forms of government legislation to an institutional infrastructure comprised of the Poor Laws, private charities, "make-work" projects and a range of unemployment funds.

Just as *Street-Life* was itself one instance of the simplification and dissemination through a range of minor publications of the message of thrift and self-help for a mass audience, it can also be referred to an emergent liberal ideology which was being voiced from the 1860s onwards. This liberal ideology was particularly evident in the writings of Alfred Marshall, T.H. Green and Arnold Toynbee in their rejection of the general pessimism of classical economics about the possibility of working class progress. Although these figures represented a vanguard of liberal thought in the 1870s and were not representative of the opinions of the majority of the middle classes or employers, there are nonetheless significant coincidences between *Street-Life* and this new liberal characterisation of the working class.⁹⁴

⁹³ However, it would be misleading to impose a single homogeneous identity upon the C.O.S. As Stedman Jones argues, "It would be incorrect however to situate the C.O.S. either in the old or the new liberalism. For the society itself was a heterogeneous collection of individuals whose reasons for participation varied greatly", *ibid.*, p. 15, n. 43.

⁹⁴ Just as *Street-Life* asserts the possibility of upward social mobility and integration, so too Alfred Marshall described the possible levelling of social rank, i.e. "whether progress may not go on steadily if slowly, till the official distinction between working men and gentlemen has passed away; till by occupation at least, every man is a gentleman" (*The Future of the Working Classes*, Cambridge reform club, 1873, p.3). Noting that "All ranks of society are rising" he said of artisans, "how all are rising, how some are in the true sense of the word becoming gentlemen" (*ibid.*, pp. 18-19). In a similar fashion T.H.Green noted that "in the well paid industries of England, the better sort of labourers do become capitalists to the extent often of owning their own houses and a great deal of furniture, of having interest in stores and of belonging to benefit societies through which they make provision for the future" (quoted in *outcast London*, *op.cit.*, p. 9). Even members of the C.O.S., whose ideology was often no more than a form of vulgar political economy, shared this new hope about working class respectability and the obliteration of class distinctions. C.S.Loach, the Society's long-standing Secretary, hoped that charity, in its dissolution of class distinctions, would "create what in a sense might be called a great friendly society" (quoted in Judith Fido, "The Charity organisation Society", *op.cit.*, p. 224).

Within the context of the economic boom of the early 1870s, *Street-Life* shared the new optimism throughout the decade that the working classes could be integrated. This more relaxed attitude to the working classes contrasts with the often millenarian representations of them produced in the 1840s. More specifically, however, *Street-Life* can be situated between the crisis of the 1860s in London, and its aftermath, and the return of economic crisis during the 1880s. This latter decade was marked by a shift of attention away from the pauperism of demoralised individuals to an investigation of chronic poverty which was seen as the consequence of the 'degeneration' of the conditions of urban life - a new appraisal of poverty being evident particularly in Booth's investigations.⁹⁵

However, like Marshall, the authors of *Street-Life* believe not only in benevolent progress and in universal rationality and morality, but also in the value of labour as a means of creatively developing character. It was within this redemptive and evolutionist framework of moral and material progress that attention was focused on the residuum which was seen as a minority enclave that had to be controlled or removed. While not producing the alarmist representations of the class of casual workers, the concern of *Street-Life* is that they be kept within or be recruited into the 'respectable' working classes rather than their falling into the threatening realm of the residuum - in the next decade Booth was also to make a sharp distinction between the "true working class" and the casual residuum. Indeed, *Street-Life* depicts many of the street characters of London as in fact actively seeking integration and respectability.

But this is not to claim that *Street-Life* merely passively reflects or expresses the respective ideologies of either the C.O.S. or the new liberal thinking or indeed any other representations thereby collapsing its own specific identity. Rather, it is to cite these ideologies and discourses as constitutive elements within the discursive terrain in which *Street-Life* operated and was read. Furthermore, the particular class formation of the urban gentry and liberal intelligentsia should not be viewed as a static and fixed social grouping exercising an increasingly manipulative social control but was instead formed through a mobile, shifting and often contradictory interplay of social and class relations.

This mutable class identity was constituted and overdetermined across multiple levels and sites of representation (both discursive and institutional) and was not simply an automatic reflection or holistic expression of the economic level - an

⁹⁵ See *Outcast London*, op.cit., pp. 281-314.

assumption which would involve the reduction of classes to 'interests' already externally determined elsewhere (ultimately at the level of the economic) and therefore existing always-already constituted prior to and outside of widely disparate forms of representation and practice. And while, to put the case very crudely, *Street-Life* can be read as one specific instance within a particular class hegemony (in the form of the mobilisation of consent to the reproduction of capitalist relations and bourgeois values) and as one specific instance within the ceaseless production and redefinition of class boundaries, membership and positionality across relations and representations of identity and difference, this is not, however, to cite hegemony as the logical outcome of the subjective intentions of the ruling class or of particular class fractions. Nor is it to return to an instrumentalist or functionalist account of social control. Instead, it is possible to see major forms of social domination as the 'hegemonic effects' emerging from a multiplicity of non-reducible micro-powers. Equally, instead of producing a schematic conspiratorial account of power whereby its mechanisms, techniques and procedures are invented by the bourgeoisie (i.e. were simply the creation of a class seeking dominance), it is possible to argue that specific techniques and tactics of power were employed only once they revealed a potential political or economic utility for the bourgeoisie.⁹⁶

More specifically, however, strategies of moralisation were never simply one-way for "moralistic initiatives or movements came from all classes...Equally, resistance crossed class lines."⁹⁷ Moreover, it is unwarranted to assume a necessary correspondence between class interests and representations or between practices and their effects. The C.O.S. itself was a particular instance of the latter in that while its ideology had a wide currency, it singularly failed to reform the poor as it had wished. Furthermore:

How far had this middle-class onslaught changed or influenced working-class attitudes or behaviour? Certainly not in the way it had been intended. By the Edwardian period it had become inescapably clear that middle-class evangelism had failed to create a working-class in its own image. The great majority of London workers were neither Christian, provident, chaste or temperate.⁹⁸

It is in the light of this qualified understanding of hegemony that *Street-Life* can

⁹⁶ "It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantage or political utility that derives from them in a given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole", Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, ed. Colin Gordon, Brighton, Harvester Press, 1980, p. 101.

⁹⁷ A.P. Donajgrodzki, *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, op.cit., p. 20.

⁹⁸ "Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London", op.cit., p. 196.

be read as an example of what Robert Gray has described as the creation of an "ideological environment"⁹⁹ to which the working class and the residuum had to adapt in order to survive. Above all, it was the wage relation itself which was the essential element of this environment. This promotion and naturalisation of the wage relation is fundamental to *Street-Life* and should not be ignored through an exclusive emphasis upon external agents of social control and surveillance. As Stedman Jones has stated: "The greatest 'social control', if one wants to use the word, available to capitalism is the wage relationship itself - the fact that, in order to live and reproduce, the worker must perpetually resell his or her labour power."¹⁰⁰

It is a repetitive insistence upon this "necessity to obtain work, to remain fit for work and to make ends meet"¹⁰¹ which structures *Street-Life* as the 'good' citizen is ultimately defined in terms of his or her relation to work as productive labour. And, as Gray further argues:

The urban gentry sought...to resolve the problems of capitalist society by a network of direct or indirect controls designed to reform the individual behaviour of the working classes...The most effective ideological influence came, not from the evangelical social reform that sought to eradicate working class identity altogether, but from more complex and more indirect agencies, through which fragments of dominant ideology were 'spontaneously' reproduced by the working class.¹⁰²

This spontaneous reproduction of dominant ideology is operative within *Street-Life* not only in the form of particular individuals identifying with the social order (for example, the Italian ice-sellers) but also in its overall construction of a community of the streets which, in its own localised fashion, is represented as a mirror-image of *laissez-faire* capitalism with its own aspects of free enterprise, commercial initiative, self-help and the pursuit of profit coupled with a 'natural' hierarchy and labour aristocracy. In this hierarchisation of individuals in relation to each other around a normative ideal, *Street-Life* partakes in what Foucault has called the political dream of "a pure community...a disciplined society...the utopia of a perfectly governed city."¹⁰³ It is in this way, too, that *Street-Life*, in its formation of lines of vision through and across the city, operates as one example of the opening up and domestication of urban space.

But in its circulation of these norms of rational and responsible conduct, *Street-Life* is also marked by the contradictions inherent in the work of the C.O.S.

⁹⁹ "Bourgeois Hegemony in Victorian Britain" in *Class, Hegemony and Party*, ed. J. Bloomfield, London, Lawrence and Wishart, p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ "Class Expression versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of Leisure" in his *Languages of Class*, op.cit., p. 87.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*

¹⁰² "Bourgeois Hegemony in Victorian Britain", op.cit., p. 87.

¹⁰³ *discipline and Punish*, op.cit., p. 198.

and other reform agencies in that the working classes and the poor are urged to be independent through self-help but are still to be contained within relations of social deference, kinship alliances and, above all, within the demands of the labour market and economy. Furthermore, within the parameters of capitalism, the didactic imperative of *Street-Life* can never be, about the elimination of poverty as such. Rather, its concern is with the inculcation of particular forms of behaviour among the poor so as to eliminate both their difference and their potentially subversive non-conformity. The aim, then, of *Street-Life*, within the context of London, is the imposition of order and regularity upon "that whole lower region, that region of irregular bodies, with their details, their multiple movements, their heterogeneous forces",¹⁰⁴ and the making of "useful individuals".¹⁰⁵ As Foucault states: "Generally speaking, it might be said that the disciplines are techniques for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities...to increase the docility and utility of all the elements of the system."¹⁰⁶

Mobilised within the accumulation of both men and capital, "discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a 'political' force at the least cost and maximised as useful force...The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of a disciplinary power."¹⁰⁷ And, it was in order to produce its own fabrication of an image and 'subject'¹⁰⁸ of and for the urban poor that *Street-Life* employed specific forms of representation and visibility, e.g. strategies of individualisation, separation and isolation, and forms of characterisation and classification which themselves produced particular effects of identification and docility.

These general strategies were not, of course, unique to *Street-Life* and are evident for example in the history sheets produced by the Barnardo Homes (figs. 4.38, 4.39). A more overt example of the operation of these disciplinary strategies in the "reduction" of a body as a means to producing a subject can be seen in a Ragged Schools Union case-book from around 1860 of boys from London admitted to a collecting centre at Walton-on-Thames prior to their emigration to Canada. Consisting of forty-nine individual case-histories accompanied by fifty-

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 221.

¹⁰⁸ Foucault's term for subjectification (*assujetissement*) bears a double connotation here as subjectification through disciplinary normalisation and as the constitution, through the operations of power, of the subjectivities of both the agents and subjects of power relations.

nine photographs (both of groups and of individuals), the most extensive entry refers to one George Gander (or "Gandy") who is described as being "Admitted on probation April 10 1857 - aged 17 or 18. Mother dead. Father living. A street vagrant from infancy. Imprisoned sixteen times almost always for vagrancy. May 3rd - discharged at his own request." Accompanying the only full-length portrait of the series (fig. 4.40), the entry from the Minutes book reads:

George "Gander", or probably Gandy, about 18 years of age. Known to the writer for four or five years as one of the most notorious vagrants in London. He was admitted into the refuge at Bloomsbury in 1853 at the request of Mr. Hall the Police Magistrate at Bow Street. Absconded several times, and brought back as often either by the police or some of the inmates. Was at length taken before a Magistrate for the offence where he was sent to prison for two months. The first he had to serve in solitary confinement. On his discharge he was re-admitted at his own earnest application. After a stay of ten months at the Refuge he was outfitted for admission on board the H.M.S. "Waterloo" but failed to pass the doctor who reported him "weakly deformed" - Having again absconded he was refused admission, he having given much trouble with but little hope of reclamation - He used to get his living by crossing sweeping and begging, tumbling to the neighbourhood of Charing Cross. He would roll himself up into a ball and tumble thro' the mud across the street much to the amusement and surprise of all beholders. He had been imprisoned sixteen times, always for vagrancy. Having met him at his post last Jan. (1857) and being accosted by him, he being in a deplorably wretched state, he was asked if he thought he could and would work for his living if he had an opportunity offered him once more. He begged very earnestly for "another chance" which was promised him when a vacancy [would] occur. He walked down April 10th barefooted and in rags covered in x x x x. He appeared overjoyed with his prospects, was cleansed, and began to work...with great anxiety to please and to get on. He was engaged in setting potatoes, which work suited him very well, but when he had to handle the spade and the hoe he began to repine his lot and to be full of complaints. "He did not have enough to eat!". "The work was too hard". "He did not want to go abroad". "He did not like the place" and would be glad if his discharge was given him. Seeing that it would be useless to battle with all his complaints he was discharged after a trial of three weeks. It was hoped that his admission from such misery into a new scene to him might be the means of rescuing him, of saving him from a life of wretchedness, of relieving society of such a nuisance. But it was now evident that he prefers a life of vagrancy to honest industry, and so long as he and others are encouraged by the public to continue the avocation by the legislature, there will ever-exist a class of such that will cost the public twice as much as ought to support them, in idleness and wretchedness, and if not rescued by some legal enactment and compelled to work for their living will remain in the same state to their lives' end.

This lad's intellect is rather below the average, yet he is very crafty and ready witted. Like all his class there is no dependence on the account he gives of himself. He will never speak the truth when he can substitute a lie. In many respects he seemed to promise of great amendment, till his restless habits would not admit of the experiment being fairly tried.¹⁰⁹

What is at work here is the production of a subject through a conflictual field of forces in that what emerges from this short biography is a narrative of discipline and resistance organised around a series of structuring oppositions - vagrancy and honest industry, idleness and restless habits versus the compulsion to work, independence and accountability, dirt and cleanliness, earnestness and deceit, wretchedness and reclamation, the granting and withholding of admission, liberty of movement and restraint, the individual and society - in short, the social management of a subject-body through the interventions of police, medical

¹⁰⁹ *London Boys from the Ragged Schools Union*, Guildhall Library, unpublished manuscript (MS.5754), p. 124.

surveillance, the legislature and charity. As Deleuze, citing Nietzsche, argues regarding the constitution of a body through a play of forces of domination and subordination or "relations of tension":

What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body - whether it is chemical, biological, social or political. Any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they enter into a relationship. This is why the body is the fruit of chance in the Nietzschean sense, and appears as the most 'astonishing' thing, much more astonishing than consciousness or spirit. But chance, the relation of force with force, is also the essence of force. The birth of a living body is not therefore surprising since every body is living, being the 'arbitrary' product of the forces of which it is composed. Being composed of a plurality of forces the body is a multiple phenomenon, its unity is that of a multiple phenomenon, a 'unity of domination'. In a body the superior or dominant forces are known as *active* and the inferior of dominated forces are *reactive*. Active and reactive are precisely the original qualities which express the relation of force with force...This difference between forces qualified according to their quantity as active or reactive will be called *hierarchy*.¹¹⁰

But while the story of George Gander is a story of the inscription of a subject within a hierarchy of forces (but of forces which also admit to their own failure), the question remains, as framed by Donzelot, as to "How was it possible to ensure the development of practices of preservation of the population while at the same time detaching it from any directly political role and yet applying to it a mission of domination, pacification and social initiative?"¹¹¹ In *Street-Life in London* this is achieved not through strategies of direct or coercive control but instead it is attained by presenting a series of normative role models of the honest poor who are to be admired, and possibly identified with, for their spirit of independence and self-help. In effect, the aim of the text is to endow this normative subject with what Jeffrey Minson has called a "promotional aura":

As a general form of assistance, philanthropy attempted to establish a relation of 'enticement' with its beneficiaries that was much more than a simple 'carrot-and-stick' approach. Philanthropy endowed the norms with which one was meant to comply (at the cost of evading tutelary supervision) with a *promotional* aura. The idea was to make these norms of hygiene, saving etc. along with the domestically based autonomy that that they would make possible, positively desired as conducive to a better, fuller life...Closely bound up with this component of 'social promotion', philanthropy fostered and played on *individual* family members desire for autonomy.¹¹²

It is this "promotional aura" and the cultivation of autonomy as a desired goal which is produced not only across *Street-Life* but which also underwrites the use of photography in, for example, the Barnardo homes. In a telling exchange from one of his promotional tracts, Barnardo himself relates how he used photographs of a socially-endorsed and desired-for identity (e.g. fig. 4.41) as an enticement to bring children from the streets into care:

¹¹⁰ *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlison, London, Athlone Press, 1984, p. 39.

¹¹¹ *The Policing of Families*, op.cit., p. 55.

¹¹² *Genealogies of Morals, Nietzsche, Foucault, Donzelot and the Eccentricity of Ethics*, MacMillan, 1985, p. 191.

By what means could I induce Bridget to come with me to the Home? I had formerly tried every argument likely to succeed; what new plea could I urge now.

Just then putting my hand in my coat pocket, I felt something stiff against my finger and suddenly recollected that I had there what might prove a more powerful argument than any I had previously adduced.

But I advanced cautiously, for your true street arab is often a very shy fish, and will not always take even the most alluring bait..

There was no reply. I hoped Bridget was thinking over what I had said. Pulling out suddenly from my pocket the object referred to, I held before Bridget's eye a photograph of a young girl neatly dressed as a domestic servant, with white wristbands and collar, with neat little white cap and apron, in print dress, and holding in one hand a house-broom, in the other a dustpan, in which she was about to gather the dust from the floor she had been sweeping, her bright smiling face raised from the work and turned full at the spectator, presenting on the whole a very attractive picture.

"Oh my!", was the admiring exclamation that burst from Bridget's lips. "Ain't she smart."

Having allowed a few minutes for examination of the picture I asked -

"Wouldn't you like to be like her? Better, I should think, to be dressed in that way than to wear the things you have on", pointing to her ragged dress.

"I should think it wor", she replied, "but I ain't got such luck, you see."

"Nonsense", I replied, "you may be just as well dressed and as comfortable as she is if you chose."

Bridget looked at me with a surprised air. Now it was my turn to explain.¹¹³

The status of photography

Aside from examining this incorporation of photography within a "system of permanent registration",¹¹⁴ i.e. as "the assignation to each individual of his 'true' name, his 'true' place, his 'true' body",¹¹⁵ it is also necessary to focus upon the relation between text and image within *Street-Life* as it is the text which provides the immediate conditions of existence for Thomson's photographs. For while in *Street-Life* two signifying systems operate together, this is not to say that each system has equal authority or status. However, in their Preface, the two authors claim that the photographs are the sites of readily legible meanings. For both, photography functions as evidence, document and witness:

And now we have sought to portray these harder phases of life, bringing to bear the precision of photography in illustration of our subject. The unquestionable accuracy of this testimony will enable us to present true types of the London Poor and shield us from the accusation of either underrating or exaggerating individual peculiarities of appearance.¹¹⁶

This essentially positivist view of photography - for example, its mobilisation within the accumulation of 'facts' and regimes of classification - is predicated upon

¹¹³ "A City Waif; how I Fished for and Caught her", London, J.F.Shaw and Co., 1883, pp. 19-21.

¹¹⁴ *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., p. 196.

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 198.

¹¹⁶ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 81. Defending photography against engraving, Thomson made similar claims in his *Illustrations of China and Its People*, i.e., "I feel somewhat sanguine about the success of the undertaking, and I hope to see the process which I have applied adopted by other travellers; for the faithfulness of the pictures affords the nearest approach that can be made toward placing the viewer actually before the scene which is represented", quoted in Carrington L. Goodrich and Nigel Cameron, *The Face of China: As seen by Photographers and Travellers, 1860-1912*, London, Gordon Fraser, 1978, p. 153.

a belief both in the self-sufficient iconic plenitude of the photographic image and in its inherent truth status. In this 'window on the world' account, photography is presented as being a literal transcription of reflection of the real.

Yet the confident assertion made in the Preface is constantly undermined by the activity of the written text or commentary, the necessary excess of which compensates for a fundamental lack or inadequacy in the photographs themselves. For the relation between text and image within *Street-Life* is not merely an example of the textual policing or repression of an innate polysemy of the image but, rather, it is marked by a production, at the level of the text, of meanings for the photographs. Lacking semantic autonomy, the photographs never, as it were, speak for themselves, but are always spoken for. Indeed, this often appears in the form of the textual description and explanation of indexical or denotational referents with the typical phrase "the accompanying photograph represents" being recurrent throughout the text.

This verbal activity is evident, for example, in the explanation of facial expression and physiognomy in the commentary on "Hookey Alf" (fig.4.30):

There is a metropolitan mixture of good and evil in the countenances that may here be studied...Thus in the photograph before us we have the calm undisturbed face of the skilled artisan, who has spent a life of tranquil, useful labour, and can enjoy his pipe in peace, while under him sits a woman whose painful expression seems to indicate a troubled existence and a past which even drink cannot obliterate. By her side, a brawny, healthy "woman of the people."¹¹⁷

Yet while Thomson's photographs often do provide an abundance of minor, if apparently insignificant, detail of the kind that Roland Barthes has called "the very raw material of ethnographical knowledge"¹¹⁸ - itself an element of the "studium" of the photographs¹¹⁹ - they are necessarily inscribed within a textual field or support which is itself the generative site of meaning. Marked by semantic vacuity, it is precisely self-evident meaning which is absent from the photographs.

In *Street-Life*, therefore, the textual does not simply function as anchorage, i.e. as the restricting of a multiplicity of possible meanings with the provision instead of preferred readings, but, rather, due to its dominance and its production of narrative information, the text's status is more akin to relay as "the setting out, in the sequence of messages, meanings that are not to be found in the image itself."¹²⁰ Given the dominance of the text, it is the photographs which have the secondary

¹¹⁷ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 160.

¹¹⁸ *Camera Lucida*, op.cit., p. 28.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25ff.

¹²⁰ Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image", in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, Fontana, 1977, p. 41.

function of anchorage. This relationship, however, is not wholly one-way for a relation of mutual support - a "reciprocal mirror-effect"¹²¹ - is produced between text and image. Thus, for example, the commentary on "Tickets, the Card-Dealer" emphasises his Frenchness, his "comparatively good education" and the "frugality and sobriety which generally distinguishes a Frenchman",¹²² while the photograph (fig.4.15) - the only interior shot in the series - presents him as a thoughtful and introspective artist in his studio - this characterisation itself being part of the construction within *Street-Life* of a natural hierarchy among the poor.

Contrary, then, to the claims of Smith and Thomson, the extensive textual support of the photographs is indicative of their non-production of knowledge and, more particularly, it reveals the inability of single photographs to construct or provide narratives. Instead, this activity (e.g. biography) is a function of the text. For, while the photographs may spark off or condense a series of narrative questions - questions which the text both responds to and produces - they themselves can provide no resolution. Instead it is the text, ranging from its provision of signifieds projected onto the images (e.g. facial expression) to its existence as a broad discursive field, which determines how the photographs are to be read and what they may mean. This relation is in part symptomatic of the relation between vision and textuality, i.e. of the way in which "writing supplements perception, before perception even appears to itself."¹²³

Constructing itself as a discourse founded upon empiricism and objectivity, the text of *Street-Life* supplies narrative context and meaning for the photographs which themselves serve to underwrite the authority and objectivity of the text. The 'having been there' phenomenological status of photography¹²⁴ or its capturing "of the Here and Now"¹²⁵ thus grounds and supports the truth-status and 'factuality' of the textual representations. This reciprocal, indeed tautological, relationship of mutual support also operates within the text itself as the spoken discourse of the various individuals interviewed - recorded, Smith and Thomson repeatedly (indeed almost neurotically) claim, "word for word in the original language in which it was delivered"¹²⁶ - functions to legitimise and authenticate the representations and

¹²¹ Stuart Hall, "The Determination of News Photographs", Working Papers in Cultural Studies, no. 3, Birmingham, 1972, p. 85.

¹²² *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 122.

¹²³ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op.cit., p. 224.

¹²⁴ "The Rhetoric of the Image", op.cit., p. 44.

¹²⁵ Walter Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography", op.cit., p. 243.

¹²⁶ *Street-Life in London*, op.cit., p. 85.

opinions produced within the commentary. Reported speech is here posited as the site of truth and presence, with a privileging of the phonic over the graphic sign, speech over writing. Within this logocentric framework, both speech and photography become signs and guarantors of objectivity, meaningfulness and self-presence¹²⁷ while the photographs themselves, existing in a reciprocal relation to the text, are presented as the sites of a literal and self-present meaning and as the bearers of both reality and plenitude, content and reference.

Functioning within an idealist metaphysics of presence, *Street-Life* constructs an unequivocal logic of identity or "proper-name effect"¹²⁸ between text/voice, photography and the real. The real itself is cited as an external and anterior origin or reserve of pre-existent meaning operating independently outside of the continuous productivity of representation while photography is seen as making present something that is or was in fact present but elsewhere (from the actual photograph). As Rosalind Coward and John Ellis argue with reference to realism:

realism has as its basic philosophy of language, not a production (signification being the production of a signified through the action of the signifying chain) but an identity: the signifier is treated as identical to a (pre-existent) signified. The signifier and signified are not seen as being caught up together in a process of production, they are treated as equivalents: the signifier is merely the equivalent of its pre-established concept. It seems as though it is not the business of language to establish this concept, but merely to express or communicate it.¹²⁹

For the authors of *Street-Life*, too, photography represents the real through a process of metonymy as the photograph stands in a relation of equivalence and identity for the person or scene represented. The photographic sign here marks an absent presence with the self-sufficient signifier being viewed as the being-present of the referent and signified.

This process of metonymy also extends to the construction of typicality. For many of the individuals photographed in *Street-Life* are represented both as specific personalities and case-histories but also, through a relation of 'standing in for', as representatives or types of a specific class of labour. This operation is itself signalled in the Preface which speaks of the conflation of "true types" and

¹²⁷ "The notion of the sign...remains within the heritage of that logocentrism which is also phonocentrism...absolute proximity of voice and being, of voice and the meaning of being, of voice and the ideality of meaning, We already have a foreboding that phonocentrism merges with the historical determination of being in general as presence, with all the subdeterminations, that depend on this general form...(presence of the thing to the sight, presence as substance/essence/existence)...Logocentrism would thus support the determination of the being of the entity as presence", *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., pp. 11-12.

¹²⁸ Derrida describes the proper-name as "every signified whose signifier can neither vary nor be translated into another signifier without loss of significance, suggests a proper-name effect", "Coming into One's Own", in *Psychoanalysis and the Question of the Text*, ed. Geoffrey Hartman, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1978, p. 127.

¹²⁹ *Language and Materialism*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 47.

"individual peculiarities" within the photographs. And elsewhere Thomson had also written of the need to preserve the individuality of the sitter:

Every portrait so far as the work of the photographer is concerned should be a work of art. No matter how rough or uninteresting the face he has to deal with, he ought to start with the conviction that there is something good in it - some redeeming characteristic - which may be bought out by his manner towards, and his treatment of, the sitter.¹³⁰

Yet it is the individuality of many of the subjects within *Street-Life* that is effaced through their being represented as types. This latent tension between the individual and the type is itself related to the notion of 'character' operative within *Street-Life*, for 'character' is constituted both as the ideal subject produced for the poor but also as character connoting eccentricity or individualism. Figures such as the Italian ice-men, for example, function as types of normative 'character', while individuals such as "Caney, the clown" (fig.4.11) or "The Dramatic Shoe Black" (fig.4.14) are presented almost as Dickensian oddities or curios of the streets.¹³¹

Metonymic signification is perhaps most apparent in the photograph of "The Crawlers" which, aside from its immediate denotational features, potentially signifies wider notions such as poverty and destitution - these connotations of 'the condition of being poor' in part recalling Barthes's neologisms such as "Italianicity."¹³² In relation to the other photographs in *Street-Life*, the image of "The Crawlers" comes to function as a kind of limit-point in its representation of a nadir of poverty which would appear to be little removed from being an image of death - an issue decorously skirted around in *Street-Life*.

However, there is another aspect to this image. For, on one level, the photograph is directly 'about' the gaze of the spectator. Here the pose, framing and angle of vision produce (or at least appears to produce) a direct relation or effect of spectatorial dominance over the passivity and subordination of the depicted woman which, in turn, operates to displace the threat of poverty. Poverty and powerlessness are here overtly framed around the gender of both the subject and the viewer. This would seem, however, to be in conflict with another possible reading of the photograph formed, for example, at the performative level of intended

¹³⁰ *The British Journal of Photography*, vol. 13, October 12th, 1886, p. 487.

¹³¹ These vignettes of bizarre or eccentric characters also recall Mayhew's *London Characters* published in 1870. Many of the illustrations in Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* were woodcuts based on forty daguerreotypes (now lost) by Richard Beard which could not of course be reproduced. *Street-Life* was one of the first examples of the use of photography within this form of social survey and indicative of photography's gradual rise over the graphic arts in the representation of urban life. But with reference to 'character', photography lacked the potential of the graphic arts for characterisation and caricature to illustrate these personalities and again it was the text which had to generate the particular connotations of individuality.

¹³² Roland Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image", in *Image-Music-Text*, op.cit.

meaning or of pictorial reference and association (e.g. Mother/Madonna and child) whereby the image may evoke pity and sympathy. Yet it is in part this mother and child reference which in fact allows for the disavowal of poverty along the axis of sexual difference.¹³³

A similar docility or passivity of the represented subject is also produced, for example, in the photograph of "The Temperance Sweep" (fig.4.13) who is textually represented as a particularly ennobling example of an individual's self-reformation - again, an example of character. The Sweep is depicted full-length and confidently upright (with suggestions even of a halo around his head). His body frontally positioned and squarely centred within the frame,¹³⁴ he is openly available to the gaze for close inspection and approval while his social identity is defined by the emblematic tools of his trade and by the activity of his labour. Through this framing he functions as a visual counterpart to the textual definition of the normative subject as a productive worker.

This framing of the body and the inscription of identity through emblematic references (e.g. to particular tools) also operates in the photographs, for example, of the "Covent Garden Flower Women" (fig.4.3), "Public Disinfectors" (fig.4.6), "The Water Cart" (fig.4.27), "Flying Dustmen" (fig.4.35). Of these, the photograph of "Public Disinfectors" is particularly interesting due to the inclusion of a supervising Inspector overseeing the disinfectors who, like the Temperance Sweep, are somewhat awkwardly and formally posed as representative types before the camera.

In these photographs the individuals are defined as tokens or emblems of a particular activity or, rather, it is their particular labour which defines them. Given these strategies of representation, it is not surprising that the *Court Circular* referred to the "Capital Specimens" in Thomson's photographs while *The Lancet* thought that they would be of interest to "the sanitarian, the citizen and the philanthropist."¹³⁵

However, aside from the relation between representation and surveillance, a

¹³³ The issue of power and looking in relation to this photograph is, in fact, more complex than simply being a relation of dominance and is discussed in the next chapter.

¹³⁴ Frontality also carried class connotations. As John Tagg has argued, "Rigid frontality signified the bluntness and 'naturalness' of a culturally unsophisticated class and had a history which predated photography...in the course of the nineteenth century the burden of frontality was passed on down the social hierarchy, as the middle classes secured their cultural hegemony", "A Democracy of the Image: Photographic Portraiture and Commodity Production", *The Burden of Representation*, op.cit., p. 36.

¹³⁵ Both quoted in Ian Jeffrey, *Photography: A Concise History*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1981, p. 65.

general and pervasive effect of passivity or docility is produced across all the photographs marking in part a conjunction of their technical and discursive constraints. Thomson was limited by the bulky and cumbersome wet-plate process which necessitated long exposures and the need for a portable darkroom. As a result, all his photographs are posed simulations of 'real-life' situations. Thomson's somewhat static scenes of street life resulting from the slowness of the wet collodion process contrast with the "candid" or "snap shot" photography of, for example, Paul Martin in the 1880s and 1890s¹³⁶ (figs. 4.42 - 4.45) with their features of movement and spontaneity - Martin's photographs being closer to Raymond Williams's description of nineteenth century London, i.e. "its miscellaneity, its crowded variety, its randomness of movement". For Martin's photographs were produced in the context of the technical revolution of the 1880s which saw the introduction of the dry-plate process and the hand-held camera - developments which also allowed for the easier use of a disguised camera. However, the technical limitations which Thomson faced are not merely extrinsic factors in the production of the photographs but are themselves constitutive elements in the production of photographic meaning.

But while Thomson's photographs may lack the apparent spontaneity of those of Paul Martin they nonetheless helped to establish the operational procedures of much subsequent street life photography. Thomas Burke's street photography in Liverpool in the 1890s (figs. 4.46, 5.4, 5.7), for example, or Edgar Lee's documentation of the Sandgate area of Newcastle (figs. 4.47 - 4.51) or the photographs taken by John Galt all had *Street-Life in London* as a precedent for the photographing of urban communities. And, like *Street-Life*, these surveys all produced what David Harvey has described as "images of knowable or affective communities [which] can also be marketed as commodities."¹³⁷ Similarly, the photographs taken under the instigation of the Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon in Greenwich (figs. 4.53 - 4.56) for use in lantern-slide lectures share *Street-Life's* representational strategies of isolating, individualising and typifying as a means to registering the social mix and activity of the streets (fig. 4.52).

But the point to be made when discussing both these and Thomson's photographs is not to posit them as the hermetic bearers of a latent or immanent

¹³⁶ See Roy Flukingher, Larry Schaaf and Meecham Standish, *Paul Martin: Victorian Photographer*, London, Gordon Fraser and University of Texas Press, Austin, 1978.

¹³⁷ *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, op.cit., p. 255.

'visual' meaning but, rather, it is to argue that their 'meaning', instead of being inherent within the image is produced upon, around and across them. Thus the issue of historical investigation is not one of how 'true' or 'adequate' a representation Thomson's photographs are but, rather, it is to examine how they were utilised and circulated within the production of a wider network of representations. The 'truth' of Thomson's photographs - their 'realism' - is not a pre-given constant which they embody nor is it reducible to any single strategy of representation. Rather, as a constituted effect, it is the product of a totality of discourses.¹³⁸ For this reason the photographs cannot be viewed as 'signs' of the real but only as the effects (even at the level of denotation) of the play of multiple connotations produced within this field of forces. Indeed, the classical 'binary' notion of the sign (signifier/signified) must be suspended, founded as it is within a logocentric science of presence. Instead, the photograph can perhaps be likened to Derrida's "trace". In other words, the identity of the sign is constituted through syntagmatic relations of difference with the trace being the sum of all possible relations (of alterity) which inhabit and constitute the sign. Rather than seeing the sign as being produced within relations of identity and equivalence, it can instead be cited as a structure of difference, repetition and substitution, i.e. as constantly relating to other signs and texts. It is in this way that meaning and the real are produced through a constant textual movement of difference and deferral.¹³⁹

The issue of 'truth' is pertinent not only to the status of Thomson's photographs but is clearly apposite to the discursive field which gives them meaning. Moreover, the question for historical investigation cannot simply be one of how 'true' a representation *Street-Life* provides of the urban poor. For this would be to assume the existence of an extra-discursive historical reality which can be objectively reconstructed as a reference point by which to judge the text's

¹³⁸ See Colin MacCabe's description of the "classic realist text" as "one in which there is a hierarchy amongst the discourses which compose the text and this hierarchy is defined in terms of an empirical notion of truth", "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on some Brechtian Theses", *Screen*, 15, 2, 1974, p. 8.

¹³⁹ "The play of differences supposes, in effect, syntheses and referrals which forbid at any moment, or in any sense, that a simple element be in and of itself, referring only to itself. Whether in the order of spoken or written discourse, no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present...Différance is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other...there is no presence before and outside of semiological difference...In the extent to which what is called "meaning" (to be "expressed") is already, and thoroughly, constituted by a tissue of differences, in the extent to which there is already a text, a network of textual referrals to other texts, a textual transformation in which each allegedly "simple term" is marked by the trace of another term, the presumed interiority of meaning is already worked upon by its own exteriority...there is no signification unless there is synthesis, syntagm, différance and text", "Semiology and Grammatology" in *Positions*, op.cit., pp. 26-33.

adequacy or distortions. In other words, it would be to assume that a knowable reality exists independently outside of discursive mediation and that there can be an unequivocal identity between representations and the real. Not only would such a view negate the fact that the writing of history is itself premised upon the reading of 'sources' which are themselves discursive mediations but, more specifically, it would be to accept that it is possible to separate the ideological or discursive from the real. A reading of *Street-Life* thus raises the question of whether the real can be counterposed against the discursive. In short, whether it is possible to clearly cite an economic or social reality which exists not only behind or prior to the ideological both as a real situation or problem which is 'deformed' by ideology but which is also the condition of existence of that ideological (mis)representation. Within this juxtaposition of the real and the ideological or discursive, historical investigation becomes a process of demystification based upon the belief that ideologies are false deformations or abstractions of a real object or problem (e.g. poverty, casual labour).

To raise these questions is not, however, to dismiss the possibility of historical reconstruction or 'proof' altogether. The endless references in Victorian literature to the mobility of the labouring classes and the poor, for example, were clearly distortions and exaggerations. Indeed, these groups were usually highly immobile.¹⁴⁰ But, beyond, such refutation, the questions which also need to be posed relate to why and how such representations were produced, circulated and privileged and, indeed, why they were believed to be true. For these reasons, my concern here has not so much been an inquiry into how adequate or truthful *Street-Life* was (i.e. how it may have ideologically deformed the real) but rather it has been to examine how a certain 'reality' or set of referents were produced through the mobilisation of specific strategies of representation and, furthermore, how these representations already had or were given a discursive currency.

My concern, then, has been to look at certain strategies at work within *Street-Life* rather than gleaning the text and photographs for a set of fixed or self-evident meanings. Rather than, for example, debating and contesting the truth of *Street-Life* or of Greenwood's texts or the C.O.S.'s representations, the issue that needs to be investigated is under what conditions or "rules of formation" were these various representations seen to be true and how effectively they fulfilled certain

¹⁴⁰ See Eric Hobsbawm, "The Nineteenth Century Labour Market" in *London: Aspects of Change*, ed. Ruth Glass et al., Centre of Urban Studies, 1964.

functions.¹⁴¹ For instance, although Greenwood's images of the poor in *The Seven Curses of London* were in some sense 'distortions', what is perhaps of more importance is that they provided an imaginary representation which played upon and fulfilled certain class anxieties and fantasies while also serving to legitimate strategies of social intervention. In this fashion, the text (as a form of "savoir")¹⁴² literally operated as a pre-text for policies of regulation and control in that an image of the residuum was produced which, as it were, then required the appropriate regulative response. What was involved here was thus something of a circularity in that intervention produced and circulated images of the poor which then functioned to legitimise that intervention which could then present itself as a 'response' to a particular social problem.

But to claim that such representations are not simply referable to an independent historical reality or already-constituted referents is not to ascribe an autonomous or relativist randomness to them. For, within the context of London in particular, these representations and discourses had historically determinate constraints and conditions of existence which were not merely extrinsic background. For, aside from its indirect relation to various institutions and practices, *Street-Life* was inscribed within existing regimes of sense and truth and within a non-reducible "differential network" of other discourses and representations which in part served to confirm its own 'truth'. To seek, then, to read *Street-Life* simply in terms of the adequacy of its own representations is to miss the point. For meaning and truth are not attributes inherent in either the text or the photographs but are instead produced across them through the articulation of a series of determinate levels of

¹⁴¹ Jeffrey Minson argues along similar lines in his critique "from Donzelot's point of view" of the juxtaposition of the economic and the ideological in *Outcast London*, i.e. "*Outcast London* locates the major causes of metropolitan pauperism in the casual, seasonal employment structure peculiar to London trades, and in the consequent paucity of appropriately sited housing...What may be questioned here are the the implications of according this economic component the status of a structural cause, and then employing it as a benchmark against which the *ideology* of philanthropy can be evaluated as such. Philanthropy is ideological insofar as it mislocates the origins of East End pauperism, housing conditions and insurgency in a set of moral causes, ranging from degenerate character to urban anomie (demoralisation). Small wonder that this 'private' initiative was supplanted by *State* social security and assistance systems. Philanthropy both misrecognised the material, structural source of the problem and as private initiative lacked the financial and organisational means to so much as grasp the scale of the problem, let alone resolve it. Philanthropy failed because of what it failed to see...To this argument, Donzelot could respond that, concentrating as Stedman Jones does on what the philanthropists failed to see, he fails to attend sufficiently to what they actually attempted to do, particularly with respect to the reformation of working class domestic life. The consequence of this failure to grasp the complexities of philanthropic *strategy* is an underestimation of its effectivities, which cannot be gauged merely by the degree of success or unsuccess of the nineteenth century philanthropic movement...the philanthropic solutions to the problem of indigency and insurgency have the merit of a complexity and subtlety which must be weighted against the philanthropists' theoretical and organisational limitations. It cannot be reduced to a ideology vainly seeking to service the needs of capitalism", *Genealogies of Morals*, op.cit., pp. 190-193.

¹⁴² "Social Economy and the Government of Poverty" op.cit., p. 60.

representation and through the text's inscription within a historically specific field of forces. Rather than positing *Street-Life in London* as a self-sufficient text, it is to these other sites of the production of meaning that historical investigation must be directed.

5

THE ATTRACTION OF REPULSION

*To each ego its object, to each superego its abject*¹

While *Street-life in London* can legitimately be read as a hegemonic project of representation, such a reading also entails the risk of citing this particular text as just one more instance of a totalising surveillance. It is in this sense that Peter Dews's criticism of Foucault, that "throughout his work the omnipresent look reduces alterity to identity"² stands as a pertinent warning against a reading of photography as both the unproblematic evidence of a pervasive disciplinary surveillance and as the function of a (successfully) repressive and irreversible panoptic Gaze. For what also needs to be examined are not only the potential contradictions within any political project or initiative but also the potential instabilities between such projects and the representations mobilised in order to secure their aims. Despite the usefulness of accounts, such as Foucault's, of a rationalising imperative, it is important to recognise not only a degree of psychological autonomy but also to acknowledge what Jacqueline Rose has referred to as "the attempt of the social order to secure its own rationality, and its constant failure to do so."³ To a great extent this failure turns upon the effects (rather than intentions) of representation. As Rose also points out, "One of the key characteristics of both identification and the image is their tendency to operate in a contradictory fashion - which means psychoanalytically that there is no stopping the potential range of their aberrant causes or effects."⁴

It is one instance of such aberrant effects within *Street-Life* that I shall be discussing here, an instance (among others potentially) which undermines the hegemonic knowledge of the poor which the text aims to produce. More

¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, New York, Columbia University Press, 1982, p. 2.

² "Adorno, Poststructuralism and the Critique of Identity", in *The Problem of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, London, Routledge, 1989, p. 5.

³ "Margaret Thatcher and Ruth Ellis", *New Formations*, 6, Winter 1988, p. 8.

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

specifically, the wayward effects of representation crucially inflect upon the status of the viewing subject itself. For if *Street-Life's* project of producing a normative representation of the poor in part rests upon the employment of photography as a literal transcription of presence, this presence - which might here be called realism (although, of course, never a term used as such by the authors of *Street-Life*) - can be described as a system of exchange of signifiers between subjects. The terms of this exchange has been outlined by John Tagg who, describing dominant realist discourse as "the creation of an identity between signifier and signified", argues that:

this whole process could only operate by placing the consumers - the readers - of the texts in an imaginary position of transcendence in relation to the system in order that the texts should be intelligible. Just as Marx has shown that recognised, socially fixed positions are necessary for the exchange of commodities which functions through a system of equivalences, so realism fixes the position of its readers in order that the transaction between signifier and signified may take place. Realism sets its subjects in place at the point of intelligibility of its activity, in a position of observation and synthesis which cannot be questioned by the flux of the text and which cannot be thrown into process by the sliding of signifiers that disestablishes social positionality.⁵

And, as Derrida also argues, both the classic model of communicative exchange and "the 'semiological' project itself and the organic totality of its concepts", presupposes identifiable subjects between whom objects (signifiers) are circulated:

communication...implies a transmission charged with making pass, from one subject to another, the identity of a signified object, of a meaning or of a concept, rightfully separable from the process of passage and from the signifying operation. Communication presupposes subjects (whose identity and presence are constituted before the signifying operation) and objects (signified concepts, a thought meaning that the passage of communication will have neither to constitute, nor, by all rights, transform). A communicates B to C. Through the sign the emitter communicates something to a receptor, etc.⁶

Yet while realism operates through the process of fixing subject positionality, this fixing is nonetheless precisely a process and there is no reason to assume that it is always successful. 'Realism' is not only a contingent mode of representation, it is also a potentially unstable one.⁷ As such, while itself of course operating through the exchange of signs between subjects, *Street-Life* also initiates an unfixing of the subject by opening an undecidable rupture or breach within its attempt to secure knowledge and positionality for the reader. Fundamentally this rupturing turns upon phantasy. For while *Street-Life*, like 'realist' discourse, mobilises psychical investments (such as identification) so as to achieve its representations, it is the

⁵ *The Burden of Representation*, op.cit., pp. 100-101.

⁶ *Positions*, op.cit., pp. 23-24.

⁷ I have discussed the concerns of these opening remarks at greater length in "The Subject of Photography", op.cit.

psychical which also militates against the text - an instance, perhaps, of the text's own failure of self-regulation.

It is this self-undermining which I shall be discussing in this chapter by focusing on Thomson's photograph "The Crawlers" (figs. 4.31, 5.1). This discussion will take as its starting point my remarks on Engels's account of Manchester. There are two aspects of this account that I wish to follow up here. Firstly, Engels's implicit foregrounding of the question of spectatorial positionality (in terms of proximity and distance) and, secondly, what might be called his use of the 'shock' image. For, with reference to Engels's text, "The Crawlers" can be cited as an example of the dangers of proximity. But what I also wish to discuss here some of the psychical dimensions which structure the ambivalent responses to the poor during the nineteenth century. This ambivalent response to the poor can be described more precisely by the phrase "the attraction of repulsion" - a phrase used by Charles Dickens to describe his own fascination with the 'other' of the bourgeoisie, i.e. extreme poverty, dirt, decay etc. This fascination was recounted by Dickens's biographer John Forster who himself employed the term in his description of the writer's childhood:

To be taken out for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere about Covent Garden or the Strand, perfectly entranced him with pleasure. But, most of all, he had a profound attraction of repulsion to St. Giles's. If only he could induce whomsoever took him out to take him through Seven Dials, he was supremely happy. 'Good Heavens!' he would exclaim, 'what wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary, arose in my mind out of that place.'⁸

But while it has been observed that bourgeois responses to both the city and the poor or working-classes within it were simultaneously marked by fear and fascination there has been little commentary upon the mechanisms at work within such responses and little specific analysis of the intersection of the psychical and the social.⁹

As regards the dangers of proximity, in my discussion of the "Great Towns" chapter I argued that fundamental to Engels's account of the industrial or 'modern' city was his demonstration of the ways in which the physical structure of the city (itself in part a product of economic and ideological forces) imposed particular modes of movement, encounter and perception upon the observer walking through it. Engels, however, does not begin his account with this realisation. Instead, this

⁸ *Life of Dickens*, quoted by Philip Collins in "Dickens and London", *The Victorian City*, op.cit., p. 538.

⁹ See, however, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, op.cit., espec. chp.3, pp. 125-148.

discovery was, as it were, forced upon him as he describes how that, in order to give a "truthful" account of the scenes that he witnesses in Manchester, he must go up close thereby reversing the strategy of self-distancing that he initially maintained in his response to, and description of, London's crowded streets. However, while Engels adopts a method of observation based upon physical proximity, this operated to reinforce a psychical distancing, i.e. a relation of non-identity between Engels and the subjects of his investigation. This particular relation between spectatorial and social positionality was counterposed with Pictorialist photography in which an identification between the photographer and the depicted scene was predicated upon a necessary, and deliberately gauged, physical separation. It is within this context that "The Crawlers" can be cited as an example of the potential risks involved when the observer goes up too close to particular urban subjects.

By taking up Engels's narrative, it is possible to refer urban, and particularly street life photography, to the structure of the city itself which produces specific modes of encounter and vision. The consequences of what might be called this 'spacing' between subjects, in conjunction with the experience of shock (as the fracturing of narcissistic autonomy), in the formation of inter-subjective relations and identities (with reference here to particular images) can be usefully opened up through a reading of "The Crawlers" with reference to Julia Kristeva's account of abjection. I do not intend here to summarise Kristeva's often highly opaque account of abjection. Nor do I wish to respond to the criticisms made of the political implications and consequences of her work.¹⁰ However, a brief outline of the salient features of her argument will be necessary here. Instead, I wish to focus upon several features of Kristeva's account of abjection which seem especially pertinent to the present context. Firstly, there is the relation between the abject and processes of spatialisation whether physical, psychical or social. Secondly, there is the fundamental relation, for Kristeva, between the abject and the female body and, more particularly, the maternal body. Finally, I wish to discuss the question of subjectivity in terms of the representation of abjection - an issue that raises questions regarding the psychical mechanisms upon which the very possibility of any system of representation is predicated and, perhaps especially, the possibility of photography itself.

¹⁰ See especially Jennifer Stone, "The Horrors Of Power, A Critique of Kristeva" in *The Politics of Theory*, ed. Francis Barker et al., University of Essex, 1983.

Kristeva on abjection

In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva, focusing upon the phenomenon of abjection, sets out to describe the primary processes of separation, division and exclusion which underpin the formation of (patriarchal) society: the realm of the Symbolic. More particularly, using examples from literature (especially Celine), Kristeva's concern is with the individual subject's experience of these processes. Kristeva's formulation of abjection remains nebulous throughout her book but from the start she defines it as that which does not "respect borders, positions, rules" and as that which "disturbs identity, system, order".

Basic to Kristeva's project is an account of how the abject, as a source of horror and revulsion yet also fascination, operates as a means of separating the human from the non-human and the fully constituted subject from the partially constituted. Central to Kristeva's account throughout the book is the role of ritual and religion as strategies which evoke the abject so as to disavow it- "the demarcating imperative"- i.e. pagan rites of defilement, biblical abomination, social taboos , Christian interiorisation etc. Through these practices the subject is spoken through the abject as the subject's identity is constituted through a relation of difference against the abject. However, the abject is not specific solely to these cultural manifestations for, necessarily prior to these, it is bound to the maternal function itself: it is "rooted historically (in the history of religion) and subjectively (in the structuration of the subject's identity) in the cathexis of the maternal function - mother, woman, reproduction."¹¹

Before discussing this further, however, it is useful to look briefly at Kristeva's initial description of the abject. She writes:

When I am beset by abjection, the twisted braid of affects and thoughts I call by such a name does not have, properly speaking a definable *object*. The abject is not a an object facing me, which I name or imagine...The abject has only one quality of the object - that of being opposed to *I*. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is abject, on the contrary, the jettisoned object is radically excluded and draws me to the place where meaning collapses...It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.¹²

As the place where "I" (as a subject) do not occupy and as a threat against life itself, the abject must be expelled - "radically excluded" - from the realm of the living subject and positioned on the other side of an imaginary border which separates the

¹¹ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 91.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

subject's "own and clean self" - Kristeva also frequently refers to the "clean and proper body" - from that which threatens it. However, while the abject must be excluded it can never be so totally for it must be allowed to exist so that the subject may be defined and constituted, i.e. the subject cannot exist without the co-existence of the non-subject, the not-I.

Early on Kristeva cites various situations in which the abject is experienced. One of these is food loathing, "perhaps the most elementary and archaic form of abjection."¹³ Kristeva gives the example of the skin on the top of some milk which she was offered by her parents as a "sign of their desire" yet also a sign signifying the separation between her world and theirs and a sign which she refuses: "But since the food is not an "other" for me, who am only in their desire, I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject myself within the same motion through which 'I' claim to establish *myself*".¹⁴

Other examples of the abject exist from biological bodily functions to the extreme example of the corpse. From all of these the body/subject removes and separates itself so that it may continue to live:

Such wastes drop so that I might live, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit - cader, cadaver. If dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be, the corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon everything. It is no longer I who expel, 'I' is expelled.¹⁵

Kristeva further argues, but does not really substantiate, that the abject takes on a more social manifestation when any individual breaks the law or when an individual is a liar, traitor or hypocrite: "Any crime because it draws attention to the fragility of the law, is abject."¹⁶ And it is corruption, above all, which provides the most "socialised appearance of the abject."¹⁷

Such examples are perhaps the clearest cases demonstrating a basic feature of the abject - its highlighting of the "fragility of the law" and the Symbolic. As such, while the abject must always be expelled, it always remains as the place where meaning and the Symbolic collapse. The subject, constituted through language and the Symbolic and the desire for meaning, is thus also spoken by the abject as the place of non-meaning: the site "of the excluded, the outside-of-meaning, the abject.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 16.

Atopia."¹⁸ This, Kristeva argues, is the reason for the constant evoking by the subject of the abject, which both fascinates and repels it, as a defence against its own annihilation. Moreover the abject is always ambiguous and it is this which accounts for the tension of desire and repulsion felt by the subject for the abject:

We may call it a border, abjection is above all ambiguity. Because while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it - on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger. But also because abjection is itself a composite of judgment and affect, of condemnation and yearning, of signs and drives. Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship (sic.), in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be.¹⁹

It is through this "archaism of pre-objectal relationship" that the abject is identified with the maternal function. All individuals, according to Kristeva, experience abjection during their first attempts to break away from the mother. Not only is this period one of conflict- as the child struggles to leave the mother who is unwilling to release it - but it is also marked by a prohibition upon the mother's body. The maternal body now becomes the site of conflicting desires - a relationship complicated by the mother's desire to retain the child as a validation of her own existence which itself remains ambiguous in relation to the Symbolic:"The difficulty the mother has in acknowledging (or being acknowledged by) the symbolic realm- in other words, the problem she has with the phallus that her father or husband stands for - is not such as to help the future subject leave the natural mansion."²⁰

As the child rejects the mother for the symbolic authority of the father, it is the mother who now becomes an abject. Abjection of the mother thus opens the way for the father's role of initiating the young subject into the Symbolic. At this stage, too, the child experiences two contrasting feelings: a desire for a dyadic unity with the mother (reinforced by its fears of separation) but also a fear of losing its own identity through continued bonding. The role of religion, Kristeva argues, has been to resolve this situation.²¹ Kristeva here claims that rituals of defilement are referred back to the mother as a prohibition against contact with the maternal body.

Within these rituals, polluting objects fall into two categories: excremental (objects which threaten the subject's identity from outside) and menstrual (those which threaten from within). The child's first learning about polluting objects is itself associated with its first experience of authority, i.e. a maternal authority as the

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 13..

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 64ff.

child learns from its mother about its own body. This Kristeva calls this the "primal mapping of the body", also the "semiotic. Fundamental here is Kristeva's distinction between maternal "authority" and paternal "laws" in that "Maternal authority is the trustee of that mapping of the self's clean and proper body; it is distinguished from paternal laws within which, with the phallic phase and the acquisition of language, the destiny of man will take shape."²²

The initial phase of this "primal mapping" under maternal authority is marked by the experience of "authority without guilt" whereas submission to the law of the phallus initiates not only guilt and shame but also desire. The sight, for example, of bodily wastes provokes a split between these two orders, i.e. on the one hand, as threat to the subject (now constituted through the Symbolic as "whole and proper") and thereby evoking a response of disgust and revulsion yet, on the other hand, as pleasurable by evoking a time of the "fusion of mother and nature", a time without embarrassment and shame. In a similar fashion, food is abject only if it signifies the border "between two distinct entities or territories."²³ Such experiences not only involve the breaking of (symbolic) taboos but also, by highlighting the realm of the body, incite memories of the world of the mother - the world repressed with the subject's entry into the Symbolic. As such, for example, it is the function of defilement rites to indicate and reinforce the "boundary" between semiotic maternal authority and paternal law.

"The Crawlers": maternal collapse

While it is not my immediate concern here to assess the validity of Kristeva's account, it is useful to look at the underlying frameworks of her argument. Two aspects are particularly significant. Firstly, Kristeva starts from the premise that both society and language are constituted around the axis of sexual difference. More specifically, sociality and the Symbolic are defined through the exclusion of the woman to society's edge, its outer limit, where she is situated as a cultural absence. As Elizabeth Cowie has also remarked: "Motherhood is...a positioning not a role. 'Being a mother' is a coming into a place...across a series of psychical investments themselves by no means outside the social"²⁴ - a positioning which is,

²² *ibid.*, p. 72.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁴ "Introduction to Post-Partum Document", *m/f*, 5/6, 1981, p. 118.

however, reversed in "The Crawlers". Secondly, I wish to focus upon the fundamental role of spatialising processes within Kristeva's account. For this account of abjection is loaded with a "spatial" or topographical terminology, i.e. notions of inside/outside, exclusion, expulsion, separation, margin, boundary, border and outcast.

Both these frameworks are directly pertinent to "The Crawlers" for it is not altogether accidental that the most extreme image of "abject misery" (to quote the text) in *Street Life* is framed within the context of motherhood just as the photograph itself overtly foregrounds the question of spectatorial positionality and power. Indeed, part of the shock effect of Thomson's photograph lies in its activation of a spectatorial power (through a subjecting and disempowering gaze) under which the woman's passive body seems almost to visibly acquiesce. Inanimate, powerless, unengaged with the bearer of the gaze and virtually a phantom corpse, the anonymous child-minder is framed as a personified metonymic emblem of the demoralised condition of the poor. Although not, perhaps, provoking the sometimes extreme horror and repulsion in Kristeva's examples of abjection, a controlling and fascinated gaze, free from the threat of the returned look, is nevertheless mobilised through its ability to both examine up close this particular pauper while also lingering over the details of surfaces, textures and random objects within the picture.

An image of such extreme demoralisation would seem at first to undermine the confident liberal rhetoric in *Street-Life* about the poor particularly given the iconographic and cultural associations of Mother and Child at work in the photograph. Yet it is precisely this mother/child couplet, in conjunction with the woman's extreme passivity and subjection, which allows for a disarming of the (potential) threat of poverty. For, despite its disturbing effect, "The Crawlers" is not a unique image within the representation of poverty. For, more often than not, not only is it is images of women and children which constitute the image of the urban poor²⁵ (figs. 5.2 - 5.6) but recurrent within these images are photographs of old and destitute women (figs. 5.7 - 5.10). Indeed, it would be hard, if not impossible, to find an image of an adult male similar in effect to that of "The Crawlers". One needs, for example, only to compare this photograph with that of "Hookey Alf" who, despite his unemployment (through injury) remains articulate

²⁵ See Andrea Dworkin's remarks here regarding poverty as "a humiliating, and therefore a feminizing, experience" in *On Pornography*, London, The Women's Press, 1981, p. 59.

and heroically defiant about his economic situation while remaining framed as the central figure within a familial group.

This framing of poverty in "The Crawlers", and the possibility of its disavowal through sexual difference, has, I would suggest, correspondences with Kristeva's account of abjection. For instead of being an image of a mutually absorbed mother and child, "The Crawlers" is marked by the collapse of maternal authority (in part through the upsetting of traditional connotations of mother and child through the implication of the mother's inadequacy and self-withdrawal) and the simultaneous intercession of the Law-of-the-Father through the spectator. For here the spectator is positioned in the place of the third term (the phallus) thereby fracturing the mother/child dyad and disempowering the mother.

In effect, the image of motherhood and (or as) poverty in "The Crawlers" operates to produce a position of exterior subjectivity for the viewer through a relation of alterity. As such, "The Crawlers" functions as a site, however localised, within the constitution of a bourgeois social identity for the spectator as a negative identity (the not-I) through a grid of difference. Within *Street-Life's* project of incorporation and its homogenising imperative or recuperation of difference (both through its production of a single normative subjectivity for the poor and through its reinforcement of bourgeois self-identity), the woman in "The Crawlers" is positioned on the other side of an "imaginary border" - effectively expelled as waste outside the circuits of social production and exchange. Here, too, Kristeva's notion of the abject as that which must be excluded (but never fully can be) has parallels with responses throughout the Nineteenth Century to the residuum, poverty and criminality, i.e. the notion of an "other" *within* the social body which can never be expelled and which always threatens to erupt and infect - a spatial positioning of poverty which made redundant previous forms of spatialisation such as the expulsion (e.g. of beggars) beyond the city walls.²⁶

This double imperative at work within *Street-Life* of both exclusion and recuperation is not, however, simply the intentional or reflex action of an instrumentalist social control. For this discourse of control was itself predicated upon the psychical structures underlying perception and subjectivity in that it is difference (as image) which evokes both a spectatorial fascination and the desire to look (attraction) but also a disavowal (repulsion). For while difference is evoked,

²⁶ See Foucault's discussion of the "rituals of exclusion" and "the space of exclusion of which the leper was the symbolic inhabitant" in *Discipline and Punish*, op.cit., espec. pp. 195-200.

as both a potential threat and as the sign of the spectator's own lack, it must also be banished. This banishment takes the form of a reverse introjection as described by Freud in his paper "Negation": "the original pleasure-ego wants to introject into itself everything that is good and to eject from itself everything that is bad. What is bad, what is alien to the ego and what is external are, to begin with, identical."²⁷ Within this scenario identity is produced through either an affirmation or negation (introjection or expulsion) that is essentially spatial.

It is in this sense, too, of expulsion or exclusion that the regulating gaze of surveillance is itself grounded upon the structures of aggressivity (and paranoia) as outlined by Lacan - structures which are themselves referable to the mirror-stage. Within this scenario subjective identity, as the Imaginary ego, was essentially a function of otherness as the subject appropriated or takes as its own an identity that is both external and other to it (the idealised mirror-image). Initially, at least, the ego was literally an other. The subject must, as it were, make this image its own in that the image provides the subject with an ideal identity (as a unified and coherent totality) which it does not in fact have. Moreover, this unity of the self can only be achieved by the imposition on the other of an idealised self-image - as Lacan states: "aggressivity... [is] a correlative tension of the narcissistic structure in the coming-into-being of the subject"²⁸ (a remark with relevance, perhaps, to the relation between charity and forms of social control). Similarly, Lacan also remarks upon "the evident connection between the narcissistic libido...and the aggressivity it releases in any relation to the other, even in the most samaritan of aid."²⁹ It is this inter-relation between narcissism and aggression which explains both "the effusion of the subject towards an object without alterity"³⁰ and the aggressivity which is provoked either with the loss of an ideal object or when the idealised identity of unity between self and other is threatened by irreparable difference. As Kristeva also remarks: "The phobic has no other object than the abject."³¹

Lacan does, however, suggest that primordial aggressivity can be overcome but only through the Oedipus complex, i.e: "the Oedipal identification is that by which the subject transcends the aggressivity that is constitutive of the primary subjective

²⁷ "Negation", op. cit., p.237.

²⁸ "On Aggressivity in Psychoanalysis" in *Écrits*, op. cit., p.22.

²⁹ "The mirror stage", op. cit., p. 6.

³⁰ "On Aggressivity", op.cit., p. 24.

³¹ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 6.

individuation."³² More specifically this takes the form of an identification with the image of the father which is adopted as an ego-ideal. In the context here of the simultaneous evocation and displacement of the threat of difference in "The Crawlers" this Oedipal identification is achieved by returning the viewer as witness to the primal scene of maternal castration - the scene of sexual difference within which the viewer is then positioned from the place of the father.

This reading of Thomson's photograph raises further questions concerning spatialisation and representation since for both Lacan and Kristeva, as also for Freud, identity and inter-subjectivity are predicated upon separation, gaps and divisions (i.e. processes of spacing). So too, following both Lacan's account of the scopic and spatial constitution of the subject and the implications of Kristeva's wider theoretical work, the question to be addressed here is perhaps not so much one of who or what is the subject (a question of identity) but, rather, where is the subject (a question of positionality).

Representation, repetition, (un)pleasure

This formation of identity across a "gap" (or division or lack) can itself be referred back to the formative period of the infant's separation from its mother. It is this moment - between the infant-subject not yet being an ego yet also not being an object - that Kristeva calls the abject. This is the moment also named by Freud as "primary narcissism", i.e. the period after the infant's initial auto-eroticism but prior to any fixed object-cathexis. Kristeva herself writes that "Abjection, with a meaning broadened to take in subjective diachrony *is a precondition of narcissism* " and refers to it as "a kind of narcissistic crisis."³³ Fundamentally, too, this is the moment marked by the introduction of the third term - the phallus or law of the father. Narcissism (primary or otherwise) here involves the child's identification (via an ego ideal) with the father (the sign also of the mother's desire). Kristeva describes this conflict of choice for the child, between the mother or father, as, "this abjection, which threatens the ego and results from the dual confrontation in which the uncertainties of primary narcissism reside."³⁴ The precise status of the father-image within this scenario (i.e. as an Imaginary father or as paternal metaphor) is not the feature that I wish to draw attention to here but, rather, the crucial role of a

³² "On Aggressivity", *op.cit.*, p.23.

³³ *Powers of Horror*, *op. cit.* pp. 13-14.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 63.

transference involving both a spatialisation (between the separate figures of mother and father) as well as the child's emergent conception of itself as a separate individual.

This process can be further illustrated by reference to Freud's discussion, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, of the *fort/da* game. Here Freud recounts how his young grandson re-enacts his mother's departure and subsequent return by the throwing out of his cot of a cotton-reel with a string attached to it. The disappearance of the reel is accompanied by the child's utterance of the sound "fort", which both Freud and the child's mother interpret as the word "gone", while, on the recovery of the reel, the child "hailed its reappearance with a joyful "da"[there]." Freud comments on this process that:

This, then, was the complete game - disappearance and return. As a rule one only witnessed the first act, which was repeated untiringly as a game in itself, though there is no doubt that the pleasure was attached to the second act.³⁵

Freud cites the *fort/da* game as one of three examples of what he calls the "compulsion to repeat" what would seem to be unpleasurable experiences - in this case, the mother's departure from the child. His first example is the dreams of patients suffering traumatic neuroses as a result of life-threatening war experiences or injuries, dreams which "repeatedly take the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright."³⁶ The third example Freud cites is the compulsion to repeat, by analysands within psychoanalytic transference, those experiences which not only cannot bring any pleasure but "which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed."³⁷ Freud's purpose here is to ask what lies behind this impulse to repeat unpleasurable experiences - an activity involving the repetition of unpleasant encounters which returns us to our point of departure: "the attraction of repulsion".

Freud's first response is to interpret the game as an example of an instinct for mastery as the child transforms his passive role into an active one:

At the outset he was in a *passive* situation - he was overpowered by the experience; but by repeating it, unpleasurable as it was, as a game he took on an *active* part. These efforts might be put down to an instinct for mastery that was acting independently of whether the memory in itself was pleasurable or not.³⁸

³⁵ "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", *op.cit.*, p. 15.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 16.

Freud then offers "still another interpretation" - which would seem, however, to be an expansion of the first. The game is now interpreted as a form of revenge in that the child, as it were, preempts his mother's departure by sending her away himself. Within this account, the initial displeasure or pain of separation is transformed into the pleasure of a game. Moreover, the dimension of revenge now introduces an affective or libidinal charge into the desire for mastery. For, in the gesture of symbolically expelling the mother, the child indulges in a pleasure which is both sadistic (through the expulsion and punishment of his mother) yet which is also masochistic (in that he denies himself her presence by repeating the moment of their separation - a moment which, as Freud observes, is repeated more often than that of her return). This gesture of expulsion would, then, seem to combine the gratification of a fantasy of narcissistic omnipotence in conjunction with a masochistic reactivation of the child's initial feelings of loss and, as such, enacts in a condensed form the process of maternal abjection. And it is at this moment, too, itself one of many, that this symbiotic interrelation between pleasure and *unpleasure* threatens to dissolve the specificity of the very phenomenon - the existence of an independent pleasure principle - which Freud is attempting to describe.

Within the present context, the *fort/da* game itself perhaps signals a moment within which the subject/child, by fracturing its dyadic relation with the mother, enacts a gesture of self-constitution across the gap opened up by the experience of separation and loss.³⁹ For, as Freud comments in "Negation": "a precondition for the setting-up of reality testing is that objects shall have been lost which once brought real satisfaction"⁴⁰ - a comment which is also clearly pertinent to a reading of "The Crawlers" as an image of the (post-Oedipal) 'lost' mother. This deliberate reactivation, in the *fort/da* game, of unpleasurable experiences operates here perhaps as a form of testing-out by the subject of its own identity and mastery (its own reality) through a narcissistic self-differentiation and self-representation - an activity which is itself also predicated upon a masochistic excitation. Moreover, within Freud's two other examples, this masochistic stimulation threatens the ego ,

³⁹ Derrida has made an extensive reading of the *fort/da* game as an activity of supplementation in which the child not only makes himself an object of (self) representation but which also displaces Freud's assumed position of exteriority as objective observer, i.e. "Just as Ernst, in recalling the object (mother, thing, whatever) to himself, immediately comes *himself* to recall *himself* in an immediately supplementary operation, so the speculating grandfather, in describing or recalling this or that, recalls himself", "To Speculate - on Freud" in *The Post Card, From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, op.cit., espec. pp. 320-321.

⁴⁰ "Negation", op.cit., p. 238.

at least potentially, with its own destabilisation and even annihilation.

Lacan, in his gloss on the *fort/da* game interprets it as the child's attempt to overcome the gap created by separation from the mother by uttering signifiers (*fort* and *da*) which evoke the mother's presence although she is in fact absent. Referring to Freud's description of his grandson's game of throwing a cotton-reel, Lacan remarks that they are, "repetitive games in which subjectivity brings together mastery of its dereliction and the birth of the symbol."⁴¹

Following both Lacan's interpretation and Freud's remark (again in "Negation") that "all presentations originate from perceptions and are repetitions of them",⁴² it is perhaps possible to cite the *fort/da* game as an operation which not only initiates the compulsion to repeat in the unconscious but which also signals the origins of the mechanisms of representation. For the gesture of expulsion can be seen as the moment in which the drive itself (of aggression or expulsion) is for the first time able to be represented or, rather, is able to represent itself. As Lacan remarks:

When Freud grasps the repetition involved in the game played by his grandson, in the reiterated *fort-da*, he may indeed point out that the child makes up for the effect of his mother's disappearance by making himself the agent of it...The activity as a whole symbolises repetition, but not all of that of some need that might demand the return of the mother and which could be expressed quite simply in a cry. It is the repetition of the mother's departure as cause of a *Spaltung* [split] in the subject - overcome by the alternating game, *fort-da*, which is *here or there*, and whose aim, in its alternation, is that of simply being the *fort* of a *da*, and the *da* of a *fort*. It is aimed at what, essentially, is not there, *qua* represented - for it is the game itself that is the *Representanz* of the *Vorstellung* [idea, thing-presentation].⁴³

For Lacan, the *fort/da* game marks a moment of "primal symbolisation" which is both linguistic and scopic. While not rejecting Freud's interpretation of the game as an act of representation and mastery, Lacan claims that the game goes beyond the mere satisfaction of a need (i.e. for the return of the mother), in that it reveals, and

⁴¹ *Écrits*, op.cit., p.103. For a complementary discussion of the relation between sadism, phantasy and symbolisation see Melanie Klein, "The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego", in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and other works 1921-1940*, London, Virago, 1985, pp. 219-232, the wholly undeveloped ego is faced with a task which at this stage is quite beyond it - the task of mastering the severest anxiety...Since the child wishes to destroy the organs (penis, vagina, breasts) which stand for the objects, he conceives a dread of the latter. This anxiety contributes to make him equate the organs in question with other things; owing to this equation these in turn become objects of anxiety, and so he is impelled constantly to make other and new equations, which form the basis of his interest in the new objects and of symbolism...Thus, not only does symbolism come to be the foundation of all phantasy and sublimation but, more than that, it is the basis of the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality in general. I pointed out that the object of sadism at its height, and of the desire for knowledge arising simultaneously with sadism, is the mother's body with its phantasised contents. The sadistic phantasies directed against the inside of her body constitute the first and basic relation to the outside and to reality." (pp. 220-221).

⁴² "Negation", op.cit., p.237.

⁴³ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

indeed produces, a splitting of the subject (as the throwing of the reel represents the child's expulsion of part of himself) with the subject not just an initiator but also an effect of signification. As Lacan remarks, the repetition of the two phonemes (*fort* and *da*) is "aimed at what, essentially, is not there *qua* represented." In short, the reel in the game symbolises a lack (of the mother).

However, within this account of the game as a play a metonymic signifiers, the relation of signifier/signified to the subject is not one of identity or correspondence but is one of discontinuity which provokes a splitting (alienation) in the subject. Within this playing of the *fort/da* game, the subject does not function as a point of origin or identity but is instead the spatial and tautological effect of a repetitive play of the signifiers of absence and presence.⁴⁴ As Lacan explains:

In the two phonemes are embodied the very mechanism of alienation...The function of the exercise with this object [the game itself] refers to an alienation, and not to some supposed mastery, which is difficult to imagine being increased in an endless repetition, whereas the endless repetition that is in question reveals the radical vacillation of the subject.⁴⁵

Within this scheme it is, argues Lacan, the intervention of the Name-of-the-Father which replaces the absence of the mother and which initiates the primal repression (of the world of the maternal) through the threat of castration (itself the ultimate symbolisation of lack). It is this lack and splitting which installs desire in the form of the desire for the other and as the desire for speech and communication.

My point here is that the *fort/da* game, narcissism and abjection all involve processes of spatialisation and the necessary recognition of the existence of an "other" external to the subject. So also, it is within this nexus of key psychical moments that perhaps the very possibility of representation emerges - Freud himself at the close of his discussion of the *fort/da* game makes a connection, with reference to the representation of the unpleasurable, between "the artistic play and artistic imitation carried out by adults" and the activity of playing.⁴⁶ Moreover, as Kristeva remarks: "If, on account of that Other, a space becomes demarcated, separating the abject from what will be a subject and its objects, it is because a repression that one might call "primal" has been effected prior to the springing forth

⁴⁴ As Freud remarks in a footnote which prefigures Lacan's account of the mirror-phase, the game also involved the child's own body: "It soon turned out that during this long period of solitude the child had found a method of making himself disappear. He had discovered his reflection in a full length mirror which did not quite reach the ground, so that by crouching down he could make his mirror-image 'gone' " (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, op.cit., p15).

⁴⁵ *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, op.cit., p. 239.

⁴⁶ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, op.cit.,p. 17.

of the ego, of its objects and representations."⁴⁷ It is within this scenario of the origins of a "mimetic logic" (Kristeva) that it may be possible to adapt Derrida's citing of "an originary spacing...on the very threshold of what we persist in calling perception"⁴⁸ (seen now in terms of the subject's relation to the other) by reference to Kristeva's description of the abject as "a space out of which signs and objects emerge."⁴⁹

It is this relation between play, the "space of symbolisation" and the emergence of the subject which is also the central focus of Winnicott's description of the "transitional object" and "potential space". In his account of the early relation between the child and its mother, Winnicott describes an "indeterminate area of experience" for the young infant which involves its first differentiation between its own body as distinct from non-body objects - an exploration through toys, dolls, blankets etc. (transitional objects) of the boundary between the "me" and the "not-me". As, initially, a form of defence against separation from the mother, the transitional object, within the context of inter-subjective play, functions as a bridge between the inner world of the child's psychical reality and an outer world of an external reality. It is this indeterminate area of play involving transitional objects which forms the basis for the subsequent emergence of potential space. Among his various definitions of potential space Winnicott writes:

Potential space...is the hypothetical area that exists (but cannot exist) between the baby and the object (mother or part of mother) during the phase of the repudiation of the object as not-me, that is, at the end of being merged with the object.⁵⁰

Elsewhere, Winnicott's description of potential space as that which both joins and separates the child and the mother (object) would seem, partially at least, to complement Kristeva's account of abjection.⁵¹

Potential space thus emerges during the child's departure from the "holding environment" of the mother/child dyad during which the mother had fulfilled all the child's needs. It is this space of containment which is identified, according to Winnicott, as being a moment of an indivisible and harmonious unity between mother and child while it is the infant's playing within the inter-subjective space

⁴⁷ *Powers of Horror*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

⁴⁸ "Freud and the Scene of Writing", op. cit. Derrida also argues here that "Temporalization presupposes the possibility of symbolism, and every symbolic synthesis, even before it falls into a space 'exterior' to it, includes within itself *spacing as difference*" (my emphasis).

⁴⁹ *Powers of Horror*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁵⁰ "The place where we live" in *Playing and Reality*, London, Tavistock, 1971, p. 107.

⁵¹ "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" in *Playing and Reality*, op.cit., pp. 1-25.

between itself and its mother which leads to its dawning perception of itself as a distinct individual. Within this narrative of loss from the merged state of mother-infant unity to a relation of mother *and* infant, the transitional object functions as a symbol within a dialectical process of unity and separation while it also, as Winnicott observes: "gives room for the process of being able to accept difference and similarity."⁵²

Brought into use before the subject's awareness of externality (or exteriority), the transitional object exists prior to object usage proper (which is itself predicated upon the recognition of difference) and, as such, is still tied to the infant's sense of a limitless and totalising wholeness. It is object usage and the recognition of the "wholly other" which forms the foundation for what Winnicott calls "the unit self" (a concept perhaps similar to, but not in origin, to Lacan's imaginary self). Winnicott describes the individual's journey to this moment as a process of "destruction" (but not in the sense of hostile aggression - unlike Lacan) in that, while the object (or other) is destroyed as an object in fantasy (as a site or object solely of the subject's own projections), it is nevertheless reciprocally recognised as having its own irreducible and independent reality. Destruction, through its displacing of the psychical structures of introjection and projection, thus creates or brings into being not only externality (reality) but also the ability for empathetic recognition. As Winnicott describes:

the subject does not destroy the subjective object (projective material), destruction turns up and becomes a central feature so far as the object is objectively perceived, has autonomy, and belongs to a shared reality.⁵³

Originating, then, as a space of mutual play, potential space (in its many variable forms) becomes part of the discrete individual's own everyday space of engagement and interaction with others. Potential space is thus premised upon and produced by the individual's recognition of an external area, space or reality (which includes the existence of others) and which is beyond its own intentional control. Fundamentally, too, for Winnicott, potential space, as the boundary between reality and fantasy, involves the individual's creative and cultural use of symbols. What is paramount here is the activity of symbolisation rather than the ascription of an identity to either the self or the object. Above all, it is within the interpretive activity of the subject - the ability to differentiate between the symbol and the symbolised

⁵² *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵³ "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identification" in *Playing and Reality*, *op.cit.*, p. 91.

(signifier and signified) - that the true significance of potential space lies.

However, to claim, with reference to both potential space and the example of the *fort/da* game, that any system of representation is necessarily grounded upon a psychical and inter-subjective 'spacing' would seem to cast doubt as to whether the object is itself representable or, indeed, knowable. For if the possibility of representation arises from a transitional stage between an archaic, pre-Oedipal state and the subject's accession to the Symbolic, it is also a space to which the subject can never return. In this context it is questionable as to whether the object can ever be fully knowable (in the sense that it was first experienced) even on a subjective level for by then the (post-Oedipal and post-objectal) subject perceives of itself as a fully differentiated subject. Nor can the object be representable, even within language, for representation and discourse are grounded upon a spacing itself predicated upon the existence of subjects. Indeed, much of my purpose in citing the narrative of narcissism and the *fort/da* game etc. is that they involve the *contiguous* emergence of both space and subjects: in effect, no space without a subject and no subject without spatial structures.

To argue, however, that the object cannot be represented is merely to question Kristeva's ascription of social, and seemingly personified, identities to the object when, for example she writes of criminality. For here Kristeva would seem to be contradicting her opening statement that the object is not "a definable object...(nor) an object facing me which I can name or imagine."²⁴ Instead, the object can only involve subjective psychical processes (e.g. a memory trace, an emotional response etc.) which both disrupt and confirm the individual's self-identity.

The supplement: castration

My argument here, then, is that "The Crawlers" would seem both to re-enact a scenario of maternal abjection while also inscribing the spectator within a network of psychical and social difference the constitutive foundations of which are traceable back to the subject's experience of abjection during the transitional stage of narcissism. For it is during this moment of its history that the subject is first inscribed within the relations of difference and spacing which are operative in "The Crawlers".

What is significant here is that this inscription of the subject is from the start

²⁴ *Powers of Horror*, op. cit., p. 1.

initiated in relation to sexual difference. In the *fort/da* game, too, the emergence of the discrete subject within the subject/object division is played out across the mother (as absence). Similarly for Winnicott, despite the limitations of his account,⁵⁵ the formation of both inter-subjective and representational space (i.e. of symbolisation) is achieved through the terms (signifiers) of gendered difference. Within these accounts space, subject/object separation and signification - the founding elements of representation - are produced simultaneously with the subject's knowledge of difference. Sexual difference, then, is not simply the object of representation (as referent only) nor is it solely inscribed within the forms of representation (e.g. fetishism) but, rather, it underwrites the very possibility of representation itself. And, conversely of course, a radical disruption within the terms of difference can itself threaten the stability of that representational order.

Through the aggressive gaze of surveillance or disciplinary society, this order of spacing is essentially one of exclusion with the circulation of both the look and spectatorial presence across the binary oppositions or the "violent hierarchy"⁵⁶ of phallus, presence, power and of castration, absence, submission. Not only would "The Crawlers" appear to be a paradigm example of the unequal distribution of the look between the male (as its bearer) and the woman (as its object), but Thomson's photograph can be referred more specifically to Luce Irigaray's account of specularisation. Within this account female castration operates as the narcissistic sign (for the male) of presence (as phallus). Through this specular logic of the same, the image of the woman is admitted - but only as a negative mirror-image of the male - so as to both confirm and secure phallic identity (as possession of the phallus). As Irigaray remarks: "To castrate the woman is to inscribe her in the law of the *same* desire, the desire for the same."⁵⁷ What is significant, too, within Irigaray's polemic (itself directed at Freud's account of femininity) is the determinate role of looking (for the male child) and of the visual 'affirmation' of lack. Indeed, as Freud himself also notes with reference to "the substitutive relation between the eye and the male organ" in his paper on "The Uncanny", the power to

⁵⁵ For a useful critique of both Winnicott and object-relations theory see Elizabeth Wright *Psychoanalytic Criticism: Theory in Practice*, London, Methuen, 1984, chp. 6. Two further reservations which I would also indicate here relate, firstly, to Winnicott's assumption of maternal adequacy (the "good enough mother") and, secondly, while the object/other may be expelled, I would argue that it is not, however, destroyed in phantasy.

⁵⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, op. cit., p. 41.

⁵⁷ Quoted in Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, London, Methuen, 1985, p.133. See also Luce Irigaray, *This sex which is not one*, New York, Cornell University Press, espec. chp. 3.

look is itself an affirmation of phallic power.⁵⁸

Similarly in "The Crawlers" the production of spectatorial presence can be seen as being achieved through the securing of an Oedipal identification for the viewer in part by means of an image of the other not as the site of irrecuperable difference but as the confirmatory sign of a self-same specular identity. However, this securing of an Oedipal/phallic mastery exacts a heavy and, perhaps, ultimately excessive toll of repression from the spectator. For the image of "The Crawlers" can be read as both securing and disrupting the binary oppositions of difference across which the Oedipal gaze is mobilised. Here again Freud's essay "Negation" provides a clue. For while in this essay Freud himself remains tied to a dualist model of opposites and exteriority (of inside/outside, internal/external) he also suggests that, in fact, nothing ever is excluded - it is simply repressed. As he states "we never discover a 'no' in the unconscious."⁵⁹

By expanding upon Freud's remark with reference both to the *fort/da* game and to Winnicott's account of potential space, as well as with reference to the Kristeva's account of abjection, I wish to suggest here the possibility of framing Thomson's photograph (and the gaze which it summons) within an "interspace" of fantasy and ambivalence, a space of "ambiguous opposition" (Kristeva) and undecidability⁶⁰ - in other words, not just as the space of a binding and fixed positionality for both subject and object but one instead of an interdependent enfolding between them. For while (post) Oedipal identity is, perhaps, the dominant psychic mode of subjectivity, it is arguably also the most precarious. Secured through the tortuous

⁵⁸ "The Uncanny", op.cit. p. 231. Freud also remarks that, "A study of dreams, phantasies and myths has taught us that anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the fear of being castrated. The self-blinding of the mythical criminal, Oedipus, was simply a mitigated form of the punishment of castration"(ibid). See also here Samuel Weber's discussion of "the relation of castration and ocular anxiety" in "The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment", *Modern Language Notes*, 88, 6, 1973, i.e "Not merely do the eyes present the subject with with the shocking 'evidence' of a negative perception - the absence of the maternal phallus - but they also have to bear the brunt of the new state of affairs, which confronts the subject with fact that it will never again be able to believe its eyes, since what they have seen is neither simply visible or invisible. The particular relation of castration to the eyes is thus not primarily based on a genetic fact or experience, the actual moment of non-perception, however important this may be; instead what is involved here is a restructuring of experience, including the relation of perception, desire and consciousness, in which the narcissistic categories of identity and presence are riven by a difference they can no longer subdue or command. The peculiar evidence of castration is peculiar because it is both too evident and never evident enough. It robs the eyes of the desired phenomena and thus alters the structure of perception; yet even more important, it carries a threat of enormous violence directed at the body and its self-image, narcissistic basis of the subject, since the perception of the 'incompleteness' of the maternal body includes and implies a threat to the child's notion of the totality of its own body" (ibid., p. 1113).

⁵⁹ "Negation", op.cit., p. 239.

⁶⁰ Undecidability can perhaps be counterposed here against Derrida's notion of the "proper" name. Unlike undecidability, the proper name rests upon a closed identity or equivalence between signifier and signified.

vicissitudes of negation, exclusion and repression, Oedipal identity always threatens to collapse under the internal strain of maintaining the repressions necessary for its continued maintenance. At best, Oedipal identity is both a compromise and contingent identity and for this reason is always open to the possibility of its own radical destabilisation from within the terms of its own emergence.

Thus while the return of the castrated mother in "The Crawlers" affirms a post-Oedipal identity for the viewer, it is also this return which threatens that identity. For not only does the image of castration evoke its opposite - for example either the phallic mother or the idealised image of the maternal as the body of unity, provision and plenitude (figs. 5.11 - 5.12) - but there also exists the possibility of an identification between the spectator and the image. This need not, of course, be a literal identification but instead involves the re-activation of the memories of primary emotional objects or original cathexes (i.e. those prior to object-choice). More particularly, since the ego was initially an-other, the primal identification with the maternal is itself never lost but is only repressed (as a precondition for accession to the Symbolic). More generally, as Melanie Klein observed:

the external mother too is cathected with libido. In various connections Freud has described this process and some of its implications: for instance, referring to the idealisation in a love relation, he states that "the object is being treated in the same way as our own ego, so that when we are in love, a considerable amount of narcissistic libido overflows to the object...We love it on account of the perfection which we have striven to reach for our own ego"...In my view, the processes which Freud describes implies that this loved object is felt to contain the split-off, loved, and valued part of the self, which in this way continues its existence inside the object. It therefore becomes an extension of the self.⁶¹

In the light of Klein's remarks, such an identification need not involve a 'regression' from a (post) Oedipal to a pre-Oedipal moment but exists instead as an ego-identification which takes its form perhaps as the re-activation of the memory-traces of lost (repressed) ego-objects.

However, while identification (in the unconscious) remains a possibility here, this Oedipal hegemony is perhaps nowhere else more threatened than in the space of fantasy (itself at work of course in identification) - a fantasy which is operative in "The Crawlers" both as a consequence of the photograph's recalling of the 'lost' and castrated mother but also due to the immediate gestalt excess of the image itself.

Initially, however, specular identity is secured against the other through a

⁶¹ "On Identification"(1955) in *Envy and Gratitude and other works 1946-1963*, London, Virago, 1985 p. 145.

relation in which alterity signifies as an inverted mirror image: feminine 'lack' confirms masculine 'presence'. As Toril Moi remarks, "In patriarchal culture the feminine *as such*...is repressed; it returns only in its 'acceptable' form of man's specularized Other."⁶² However, this statement would seem to imply not only that patriarchy operates exclusively at the level of the super-ego but that it is also successful in its censoring of which forms of the feminine are permitted (i.e. the 'acceptable'). Yet admittance of any image of the other always involves a risk for the choice can never simply be one of either/or (acceptable/unacceptable) for the one cannot be evoked without at least implicit reference to the other in that the acceptable is only definable in relation to or against the unacceptable.

The unacceptable, then, always exists as supplement to the permitted other. In the "The Crawlers" what is permitted (represented) is an image of social and sexual alterity (as abjection) which affirms a specular mastery through an identification with the phallus. Yet the image of "The Crawlers" is also marked by the evocation of the repressed supplement (castration) - an evocation which strikingly produces both the photograph's disturbing effect and its anomalously disruptive status both within the textual sequence and within *Street-Life in London's* overall ideological project. For far from being an image of empowerment or reassurance for the spectator, the photograph ultimately re-evokes the very phenomenon that it needs to efface - the possibility of lack for the phallic (phallus identified) subject.

In part, the image's extremity of effect is produced through its implicit but displaced reference to the culturally acceptable iconographic norms of motherhood (as plenitude, security etc.) - norms which, however, the image also so totally denies. But far more significantly, this image of maternal abjection, while standing as a graphic visual reminder of the possibility of castration, at the same time allows no means of disavowal for the spectator, for example through fetishism,⁶³ except, perhaps, via the reified fetishistic economy of representation itself. As a consequence of this denial to the spectator of the means of fetishistic disavowal (for example through an over-idealisation of maternity or through the exchange of looks)⁶⁴ and its offering instead of just the direct acknowledgement of castration (the sight of which the spectator can at best only physically turn away from), the picture

⁶² *Sexual/Textual Politics*, op. cit., p. 134.

⁶³ See "Fetishism", *Standard Edition*, vol. XXI. In many respects the *fort/da* game involves the same psychical investments as fetishism with the cotton-reel itself being a kind of proto-fetish.

⁶⁴ See John Ellis, "Photography/Pornography/Art/Photography", *Screen*, 21, 1, p.101 who argues that the fetish can also be located in the confirmatory gaze of the mother/woman.

tips over from being an image of security to being one of threat. Through "the *différance* of the absolute excess"⁶⁵ (primarily of castration here but also of death), any security of phallic identity is denied to the spectator at the very moment of apparent empowerment. Moreover, with the image's failure to recuperate the threat of castration through its denial of disavowal, the response to this threat involves a rupturing of identity in terms of a splitting of the viewing subject or, rather, the re-opening of an original splitting, as a means of renegotiating the threat of castration.

It is this relation between the 'splitting' of the subject and the knowledge of sexual difference which is the concern of Freud's unfinished paper entitled "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence." Remarking upon whether "what I have to say should be regarded as something long familiar and obvious or as something entirely new and puzzling. But I am inclined to think the latter",⁶⁶ Freud discusses an incident from the childhood of a male patient to illustrate an example of the prohibition upon an instinctual demand. The case Freud cites is explicitly focused upon the acknowledgement/disavowal of castration by the child as a consequence of a paternal prohibition upon masturbation. As Freud remarks, the initial sight of female genitals (those of an older girl) in itself causes no anxiety for the boy. So too, "a threat of castration by itself need not produce a great impression" for the child simply chooses not to believe it. Indeed, "whatever uneasiness he may have felt was calmed by the reflection that what was missing would yet make its appearance: she would grow one (a penis) later."⁶⁷ However, the situation radically changes subsequent to the edict of paternal prohibition.

In that case the threat [of castration by the father] revives the memory of the perception [of the female genitals] which had hitherto been regarded as harmless and finds in that memory a dreaded confirmation. The little boy now thinks he understands why the girl's genitals showed no sign of a penis and no longer ventures to doubt that his own genitals may meet with the same fate. Thenceforward he cannot help believing in the reality of the danger of castration.⁶⁸

Freud then claims that the "normal" resolution of this crisis is one in which "the boy gives way to the threat and obeys the prohibition...In other words, he gives up, in whole or in part, the satisfaction of the instinct." However:

our present patient found another way out. He created a substitute for the penis which he missed in females - that is to say, a fetish. In so doing, it is true that he had disavowed reality, but he had saved his own penis. So long as he was not obliged to acknowledge that females have lost their penis, there was no need for him to believe the threat that had been made against him : he need have no fears for his own penis, so he could proceed with his masturbation undisturbed. This

⁶⁵ Jacques Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness" in *Writing and Difference*, op.cit., p. 62.

⁶⁶ "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence", *Standard Edition*, vol. XXIII, p. 275.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 276.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

behaviour on the part of our patient strikes us forcibly as being a turning away from reality.⁶⁹

The splitting of the ego which Freud describes here thus involves the conscious acknowledgement of the castration complex but in conjunction with the simultaneous disavowal of it as a possibility for the male subject by means of the creation of a fetish object.⁷⁰ With "The Crawlers", however, it is precisely the option of unconscious disavowal that is denied to the spectator who is instead forced to acknowledge the possibility of castration. It is in this sense that a form of symmetrical mirroring is in effect established between viewer and image as the possibility of lack for the former echoes the scene of maternal castration. But, unlike Freud's patient who is split between knowledge and belief, the viewing subject here is split between acknowledgement and the *frustrated* desire for disavowal. Moreover, while it is disavowal, or the repression of undesirable knowledge, which allows for the sight of the unpleasurable to become, in fact, pleasurable, it is the denial of disavowal which produces a situation in which the potential unpleasure of looking cannot be displaced. As Moustafa Safouan has observed of repression:

The unpleasure that motivates repression is not in the repressed representation. This unpleasure is in the ego as it comes to know of the repressed or each time it threatens to approach it. Not only is the repressed not an element productive of unpleasure, it is actually a representation productive of pleasure...so long as it is unknown.⁷¹

In "The Crawlers" it is castration which cannot be made "unknown" but, as both Safouan and Freud imply, the unpleasure is not necessarily intrinsic to the image/sight itself but is instead a function of the ego. Here castration is the abject of the super-ego which, for Freud, was not only the product of the castration complex but which was also more pronounced in the male. But what is also significant in Freud's account is that the splitting of the subject/ego turns upon sexual difference, rather than the two processes simply being parallel, in that the development of the subject is predicated upon the learning (via the castration complex) of the meaning of sexual difference. Indeed, the splitting of the subject is the consequence of the splitting of the sexes. Castration in this sense operates as the sign of sexual difference (through the closing down of pre-Oedipal polymorphos

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 277.

⁷⁰ Freud does concede, however, that, despite his creation of a fetish, the patient "developed a symptom which showed the he did nevertheless recognise the danger [of castration]...in all the to and fro between disavowal and acknowledgement, it was nevertheless castration that found the clearer expression" (pp.277-8).

⁷¹ *Pleasure and Being: Hedonism from a Psychoanalytic Point of View*, trans. Martin Thom, London, Macmillan, 1983, pp. 31-32.

difference) yet it is also more than this in that comes to figure any threat to the plenitude of the self-present subject:

In splitting the subjectivity of the subject disappears. The horror is about the loss of oneself into one's own unconsciousness - into the gap. But because human subjectivity cannot ultimately exist outside a division into one of two sexes, then it is castration that finally comes to symbolize the split. The feminine comes to stand over the point of disappearance, the loss...the trauma captured in splitting is that one is isn't there; the same trauma that castration comes to symbolize is that one is incomplete...the loss can only be filled up.⁷²

In its disruption of a secure and coherent positionality for the viewer, "The Crawlers" is marked by the deeply ambiguous status of the castration complex itself which is both the adaptive mechanism for the designation of gendered difference but which is also the process or 'event' which, in its returning of the subject to that moment of difference as a learned and conditional construction, potentially disturbs any stable position in relation to the phallus. For while, on the one hand, producing a position of mastery for the viewing subject (over the abjected woman/mother), the image's simultaneous evocation of undisavowed castration reveals phallic identity as essentially a defensive identity (as evident in the necessary recourse to fetishism). The absolute status of the phallus is thus compromised through being revealed as the compensatory sign of plenitude covering over the subject's lack. For, if the power of the phallus rests upon its veiling,⁷³ when confronted with castration a gap is opened up between the penis and the phallus, a gap across which the omnipotent pretensions of the latter are exposed as both fraudulent and inadequate. As Kaja Silverman argues:

the attributes of the Symbolic are infinitely relocatable, and exist purely at the level of signification. The distance between the phallus and the penis cannot be bridged; the latter is cut off from the former, relegated to the domain of inadequacy. But because the inadequacy of the male subject must never be acknowledged, our culture attempts at every point to blur the distinction between that subject and the Symbolic; to foster the belief that the penis is the phallus, and that the gaze of the male subject coincides with the Gaze of the other. This meconnaissance can only be sustained through the female subject, whose castration and guilt, endlessly perpetuated through displacement, thus become the topics of a compulsive restatement.⁷⁴

In terms of the social ideology of *Street-Life*, one representation or assertion of the phallus is the imperative to self-reliance and autonomy that is repeatedly voiced in the text. Yet it is this imperative that is undermined by the "The Crawlers" which, in returning the viewer to a scene recalling his own maternal *dependence*, belies the promotion of an asocial self-sufficiency which can exist independently of a network

⁷² Juliet Mitchell, "The Question of Femininity and the Theory of Psychoanalysis", in *Women: The Longest Revolution*, London, Virago, 1984, p. 307.

⁷³ See Jacqueline Rose, "Feminine Sexuality - Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne", in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, op.cit., espec. pp. 61-64.

⁷⁴ "Masochism and Subjectivity", *Framework*, 12, 1984, p. 8.

of supportive social relations.

This fracturing of ideology and social positionality is in part effected through the dimensions of a fantasy in which the subject/object division is dissolved. As Laplanche and Pontalis have argued:

Fantasy is not the object of desire [and, one might add, of abjection], but its setting. In fantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms no representation of the desired [or abjected] object, but is himself represented as participating in the scene although in the earliest form of fantasy, he cannot be assigned any fixed place in it...As a result, the subject, although present in the fantasy, may be so in a desubjectivized form, that is to say, in the very syntax of the sequence in question.⁷⁵

Within this account (which recalls the *fort/da* game) the scenario of fantasy overrides any fixed identification. Indeed, as Freud argued in "A Child is Being Beaten",⁷⁶ identification in fantasy is always mobile. It is this mobility (as the reversibility of male/female positionality) which allows the phallic subject, when confronted with the spectacle of abjection, not only to imagine castration as a real threat to itself through an identification (involving a splitting within the ego rather than a splitting-off) but also to actively seek identification with the 'feminine'.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality", reprinted in *Formations of Fantasy*, eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Cora Kaplan, London and New York, Methuen, 1986, p. 26.

⁷⁶ *Standard Edition*, vol. XVIII.

⁷⁷ As Silverman argues regarding (repressed) identification, Freud's "sexual dialectic" involves "a classification which rests upon binary opposition (masculinity = aggressivity, sadism, voyeurism; femininity = passivity, masochism, exhibitionism)...[and which] leaves unchallenged the notion that for the male subject pleasure involves mastery" ("Masochism and Subjectivity", op.cit., p. 2). However, just as in the *fort/da* game, in which unpleasure is made pleasurable, there is also the possibility that the masculine subject may identify with the feminine. Not only would this be a case of what Silverman describes as "that familiar Freudian territory where pleasure for one system means unpleasure for another" (ibid., p. 3), but "the repetition of situations in which the element of pain is conspicuous (the castration crisis and the Oedipal complex represent only the most obvious examples) generates pleasure. This pleasure is not, as Freud would have us believe, the pleasure of mastery. Rather it is the pleasure of passivity, of subject - ion" (ibid.). Similarly, the psychical investments of attraction and repulsion operative in "The Crawlers" would be an example of Silverman's claim that "it is always the victim - the figure who occupies the passive position - who is really the focus of attention, and whose subjugation the subject (whether male or female) experiences as a pleasurable repetition of his/her own history. Indeed, I would go so far as to say that the fascination of the sadistic point of view is merely that it provides the best vantage point from which to watch the masochistic story unfold" (ibid., p. 5). Not only does "The Crawlers" offer an image of lack/castration but it is also a possible site for masculine identification. Thus, as Silverman explains, "the mother's 'lack' constitutes so powerful a castration threat that the child may resort to *verneinung* - to a denial of the mother's lack through fetishism. Mulvey suggests that this moment of threat is continually neutralized through establishing the woman's guilt or sickness. However, I would like to argue that what provokes the crisis is not so much the horror at the mother's 'lack' as an *identification* with her - an identification which culture attempts to deny at the manifest level by widening the moral distance between male and female subject...it is not that I am like my mother, but that she is like me" (ibid., pp. 5-6). Within this scenario, "The Crawlers" can also be cited as an instance of what Silverman calls "voluntary exhibitionism" (of lack, castration), a "voluntary exhibitionism [which] does not call into question the passivity of the female subject. Rather, it jeopardises the illusion of masculine activity. It poses a much more profound castration threat than Freud was willing to acknowledge, for by making overt the distance between the gaze and the Gaze, and by revealing the fatal attractiveness of the feminine/masochistic position, it quite literally cuts off the masculine sadistic position (ibid., p. 6) while also "dramatising the lure for both male and female subjects of negation, passivity and loss" (ibid., p. 8).

While not claiming, however, that *Street-Life in London* effects a desubjectivization of the spectator - indeed, far from it - nor does it, of course, do away with representation, it is the case that, in its restaging (in the tradition of Mayhew) of supposedly direct encounters with the "other" of the urban poor, *Street-Life*, but more notably "The Crawlers", both generates and operates across a space of speculative fantasy and the Imaginary - a space of uncertain boundaries or borders in relation to which the spectator is unable to occupy a position of complete exteriority.⁷⁸

This process can be further referred to repression. For if the fixing of positionality and the possibility of the production of stable meanings (signifieds) accessible to the subject is premised upon the workings of repression, the inability to effect a repression (for example as disavowal) entails both a crisis within the economy of representation itself while also thwarting the subject's desire or drive for mastery (through a controlling knowledge). Within this crisis a non-metonymy is generated in which the image no longer stands as the lost object for the viewing subject in that now it is withdrawn from the network of substitute identifications through which it (the image) returns an identity of presence and totality to the viewer.

With the return of castration in "The Crawlers" the spectator is instead inscribed within a movement of difference or, rather, *différance* in the sense here of an unresolved deferral and displacement of any ultimately secure position or knowledge in relation to the image. Furthermore, with the breakdown of the subject/object division - the division which, for example, Engels had sought to maintain - difference here is not simply a matter of subjective presence counterposed against an external "other" but is internal to the subject itself as the

⁷⁸ Of related interest here regarding the non-metonymic, unappropriated excess and the untenability of mastery (as exteriority) is Derrida's essay "Economimesis", *Diacritics*, 11, (1981). Here Derrida examines Kant's discussion of the hierarchy of the ugly, repellent and disgusting (the un-aesthetic). Derrida argues that Kant is indicating the "absolutely heterogeneous" which subverts any system of negative oppositions in that, being outside any concepts or naming, it exists beyond logical and grammatical description and is outside the frame (i.e. it is parergonal). As Derrida argues: "The absolute excluded does not allow itself even to be granted the status of an object of negative pleasure or of ugliness redeemed by representation. It is unrepresentable. At the same time it is unnameable in its singularity. If one could name it or represent it, it would begin to enter the auto-effective circle of mastery or reappropriation. An economy would be possible....By limitlessly violating our enjoyment, without granting any determining limit, it abolishes representative distance" (my emphasis), p. 22.

This notion of the unnameable is also adopted by Kristeva, i.e. "What we designate as 'feminine', far from being a primeval essence, will be seen as an 'other' without a name, which subjective experience confronts when it does not stop at the appearance of identity. Assuming that any other is appended in the triangulating function of the paternal prohibition, what will be dealt with here, beyond and through the paternal function, is a coming face to face with an unnameable otherness" (*Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 58-9).

ego (saved only via a splitting) threatens to collapse into its own otherness. As Barbara Johnson observes:

the self's difference from others inevitably becomes the story of its own unbridgeable difference from itself. Difference is not engendered in the space between identities : it is what makes any totalisation of the identity of the self or the meaning of a text impossible.⁷⁹

In "The Crawlers" difference/*différance* is directly consequent upon the image's generation of an excess (castration), a surplus supplement, which remains unrecuperated - a failure of restoration which undermines the logocentric aspirations of the text. Throughout *Street-Life in London* the logocentric identity of photography (as promoted in the Introduction's claim for the the images's unmediated presence) is belied by the continual textual propping-up of the photographs through an intrusive authorial direction of the viewer/reader. In "The Crawlers", however, this collapse of (phal)logocentrism is dramatically enacted through the explicit entry of the "other" into the realm of spectatorial presence. As distinct from any 'natural' revelation of photographic meaning and the securing of specular cohesion, this entry of alterity underwrites the image's resistance to anchorage through the initiation of an instability or oscillation of identity for both image and viewer thereby upsetting the traditional function of the portrait as one of social emplacement.

While, within the terms of its own project, *Street-Life in London* reveals the necessity of the summoning of the other in the production of identity, it is this summoning that puts at risk the possibility of that project. As such, a reading of *Street-Life* as a text producing an unproblematic regime of social exclusion and incorporation is inadequate. For although often positioned on the margins, or even outside the frame, the other or alterity, once summoned, can never then be made absent again. As Kristeva remarks: "from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master."⁸⁰

⁷⁹ "The Critical Difference" in *Unruly the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 166.

⁸⁰ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 2.

6

THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION

*The gaze is at stake from the outset*¹

"The desire of presence" writes Derrida, "is...born from the abyss (the indefinite multiplication) of representation."² It is this abyss which comes into play in "The Crawlers" as a consequence of the image's refusal to affirm or mirror a narcissistic phallic presence to the viewer. Instead, the impossibility of fetishistic disavowal transforms lack (castration) from being both a negative and complementary (and thus confirmatory) sign of phallic plenitude into its being a threat to the continued maintenance of security of a mastering gaze. It is this transformation of the status of lack which opens an abyss - a destabilising *mise en abyme*³ - as the splitting and disappearance of a subjectivity predicated upon the perpetuation of the binary polarities of presence/absence. Refusing to (re)enact 'passive' castration, "The Crawlers" undoes this specular logic of identity⁴ by displacing it through "the indefinite process of supplementarity [which has] always infiltrated presence, always already inscribed there the space of repetition and the splitting of the self."⁵

It is the infiltrative effects of supplementarity within the logocentrism of photography which has been the theme of this thesis. The asymmetries of vision in Marville's "Rue de Rivoli", the uncanny doubling in the Strathclyde archive, the figural visibility of the other in "The Gullet" and the abject's disruption of the fixity of hierarchised difference in "The Crawlers" have all been cited as examples of

¹ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, New York, Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 47.

² *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., p. 163.

³ See Alan Bass's translator's notes on Derrida's use of the term *en abyme*, i.e. "En abyme is the heraldic term for infinite reflection, e.g. the shield in the shield in the shield...Derrida has used the term frequently"; "En abyme is Derrida's usual expression for the infinite regress of a reflection within a reflection, etc. The term originally comes from the heraldic notion of an escutcheon within an escutcheon; Derrida plays on *abyme* and *abime*, abyss", *The Post Card, From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, op.cit., pp. 304 and 511. For an application of this term within a discussion of mirroring and doubling in photographs, see Craig Owens, "Photography *en abyme*", *October*, 5, Summer 1978.

⁴ See *Speculum of the Other Woman*, op.cit., pp. 32-34 and 133-146 and Toril Moi's commentary in *Sexual/Textual Politics*, op.cit., pp. 129-143.

⁵ *Of Grammatology*, op.cit.

instability and displacement within photography's attempted securing of presence. In each instance, difference does not operate to affirm the stabilising boundaries of identity but instead incites an epistemological anxiety by signifying the dissolution of identity and the potential loss of integrated selfhood.]

Saving the subject

Clearly, other examples of dissolution could be found within this archive but in this chapter, and by way of a conclusion, I wish to briefly develop my remarks on Pictorialism by arguing that its particular project can be read as an attempt to 'restore' to photography a plenitude or purity of vision untainted by difference, the other, supplementarity etc. This project was exemplified most consistently perhaps in the work of Stieglitz who, while later repudiating Pictorialism's visual techniques, nonetheless continued to expound its aesthetic ideology. This is not of course to argue that Pictorialist photography was a conscious or direct response to those moments of rupture within the archive such as I have been describing. But what does emerge across this body of work is, firstly, the employment of a range of strategies for representing the city and, ultimately, an almost complete withdrawal from the urban environment (especially from street photography), a withdrawal which can perhaps be read as registering the incompatibility between the city and the securing of presence through what Stieglitz called "straight photography."

Frequently taking the city (usually New York) as his subject, Stieglitz's early photographs share the aestheticising devices of contemporary Pictorialist photography (e.g. Coburn's) such as the use of mid-distance or distant points of view, soft focus, the avoidance of detail, low or indirect lighting and the lack of any direct engagement with people. The blurring effects of steam in "The Terminal" (fig.6.1), the dissolution of the crowd into a play of reflective surfaces in "Wet Day on the Boulevard, Paris" (fig. 6.2), or a similar attention to artificial light and reflections in "Reflections, Night, New York" (fig.6.3), or the depiction of the city as an arrangement of geometrical shapes and planes as in "From My Window" (fig.6.4) or within the tropes of the modern industrial or urban sublime, e.g. "The City of Ambition" (fig.6.5), can all be viewed as means to aestheticise the city and of denying (through abstraction) its constituent social relations. Transformed into a set of visual effects, this depiction of the city becomes the precondition for

ascribing overtly subjective or symbolic meanings to it. Thus, for example, Stieglitz himself described "The Terminal" as an image of his own sense of alienation on his arrival in America from Germany:

There was snow on the ground. A driver in a rubber coat was watering his steaming horses. There seemed to be something related to my deepest feelings in what I saw, and I decided to photograph what was in me. The steaming horses, and their driver watering them on a cold winter day; my feeling of aloneness in my own country, amongst my own people, seemed, somehow, related to the experience I had when seeing Duse in *Camille*. I felt how fortunate the horses were to have at least a human being to give them the water they needed. What made me see the watering of the horses as I did was my own loneliness.⁶

The culmination of this self-referential aestheticising of the world, in conjunction with a retreat from the city, was the sequence of small photographs of clouds, *The Song of the Skies*, which Stieglitz titled "Equivalents" (figs.6.6 - 6.8). Referring to them as "Straight photographs, all gaslight paper, except one pallidotype", Stieglitz described his "cloud photographs...[as] *equivalents* of my profound life experience, my basic philosophy of life...[they] are tiny photographs, direct reflections of a man's world in the sky - documents of eternal relationship - perhaps even a philosophy."⁷

A similar relation between image and subjective affect is posited in Stieglitz's account of how he took the photograph "The Steerage" of 1907 (fig.6.9), an account which has acquired something of the status of a manifesto:

In June 1907, my small family and I sailed for Europe. My wife insisted on going the "Kaiser Wilhelm II", the fashionable ship of the North German Lloyd at the time...How I distasteful I found the atmosphere of the first class on the ship. One couldn't escape the nouveaux riches...

On the third day I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to get away from that company. I went as far forward on the deck as I could...

As I came to the end of the deck, I stood alone looking down. There were men and women and children on the lower deck of the steerage. There was a narrow stairway leading up to the upper deck of the steerage, a small deck right at the bow of the steamer...

The whole scene fascinated me. I longed to escape from my surroundings and join these people...

I saw shapes related to each other. I saw a picture of shapes and underlying that the feeling I had about life. And as I was deciding, should I try to put down this seemingly new vision that held me - people, the common people, the feeling of ship and ocean and sky and the feeling of release that I was away from the mob called the rich - Rembrandt came into my mind and I wondered would he have felt what I was feeling

I had but one plate holder with one unexposed plate. Would I get what I saw, what I felt?...I knew if I had, another milestone in photography would have been reached, related to the milestone of my "Car Horses" [The Terminal] made in 1892, and my "Hand of Man" made in 1902, which had opened up a new era of photography, of seeing. In a sense it would go beyond them, for here would be a picture based on related shapes and on the deepest human feeling, a step in my own evolution, a spontaneous discovery.⁸

⁶ Quoted in Dorothy Norman's Introduction to *Alfred Stieglitz*, Aperture, New York, 1976, p. 6.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸ Quoted in Allan Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning", in *Photography Against the Grain*, *op.cit.*, pp. 13-14. A slightly different version of this account is also quoted by Dorothy Norman in *Alfred Stieglitz*, *op.cit.*, pp. 9-10.

Aside from the overbearing egotism of this anecdote and Stieglitz's identification of himself with, indeed as, the evolution of photography, this text reiterates the well established tenets of a mystificatory expression theory constructed here as the circular causal relation between the alienated, 'creative' artist (as privileged sensibility) and visual form as the expressive vehicle of that sensibility. More specifically, as Allan Sekula has cogently argued:

this text is pure symbolist autobiography. Even a superficial reading reveals the extent to which Stieglitz invented himself in symbolist clichés. An ideological division is made; Stieglitz proposes two worlds: a world that entraps and a world that liberates. The first world is populated by his wife and the nouveaux riches, the second by the 'common people'...The possibility of escape resides in a mystical identification with the Other...But the final Symbolist hideout is in the Imagination, and in the fetishized products of the Imagination. Stieglitz comes back to his wife with a glass negative from the other world.

For Stieglitz, *The Steerage* is a highly valued illustration of this autobiography. More than an illustration, it is an embodiment; that is, the photograph is imagined to contain the autobiography. The photograph is invested with a complex metonymic power, a power that transcends the perceptual and passes into the realm of affect. The photograph is believed to encode the totality of experience, to stand as a phenomenological equivalent of Stieglitz-being-in-that-place. And yet this metonymy is so attenuated that that it passes into metaphor. That is to say, Stieglitz's reductivist compulsion is so extreme, his faith in the power of the image so intense, that he denies the iconic level of the image and makes his claim for meaning at the level of abstraction. Instead of the possible metonymic equation: common people = my alienation, we have the reduced, metaphorical equation: shapes = my alienation. Finally by a process of semantic diffusion we are left with the trivial and absurd assertion: shapes = feeling.⁹

In the "Equivalents" all (social) reference, narrative or anecdote have been effaced. Stieglitz no longer identifies with the "common people" of "The Steerage" but with "the sky and the feeling of release." What was implicit in the account of "The Steerage" is made explicit in the "Equivalents" as pure, abstract or significant form becomes the sole referent of the images (which are themselves compared to music). But form is only significant in so far as it can be subjectively invested: "Shapes, as such, do not interest me unless they happen to be an outer equivalent of something already taking place from within me."¹⁰ Moreover, effacement of reference not only becomes the precondition for this identification but it is also the precondition, for Stieglitz, for the elevation of photography into being an art form (as formalist vehicle of feeling and sensibility) rather than a mechanistic medium.

But while the aesthetic discourse around the "Equivalents" has its roots in the Pictorialist phase of Stieglitz's career, they are also symptomatic of his devaluation what he described as Pictorialism's manipulation of the image.¹¹ Furthermore, as

⁹ "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning", op.cit., pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ *Alfred Stieglitz*, op.cit., p. 14.

¹¹ Rejecting "manipulated, hybrid" images, Stieglitz claimed that "Personally, I like my photography straight, unmanipulated, devoid of all tricks; a print not looking like anything but a photograph, living through its own inherent qualities and revealing its own spirit", quoted in *Alfred Stieglitz*, op.cit., p. 18.

Rosalind Krauss has observed, one aspect of this move away from overtly Pictorialist techniques was Stieglitz's recognition "that framing - or perhaps *enframing* - was a concomitant issue."¹² For intrinsic to Stieglitz's promotion of photographs as "vehicles of aesthetic transformation", was "a recognition of the cut, the crop, the fact that if photography duplicates the world, it does so only in pieces."¹³ In the "Equivalents" it is the relation between the photograph (as fragment) and the frame that is paramount:

For these are works that are most radically and nakedly dependent upon cutting, the effect of punching the image, we might say, out of the continuous fabric of the sky at large. That they are so dependent is due in part to something about the sky itself - or rather to something that Stieglitz makes evident in these images. This is not simply that the sky is so vast and the photograph is only a limited part of it, but that the sky is essentially composed. In these photographs there is a sense not merely of found or fortuitous composition, the luck of some accidental arrangement. There is, rather, a sense of the object's resistance to internal arrangement, a positing of the irrelevance of composition...*Relationship* cannot mean anything here that is much to do with its conventional meaning within the traditional arts...these images, which come to us as unanalyzable wholes, stake everything on the single act of cutting something out - the gesture that makes them by cutting...Stieglitz is not interested in leaving it at that. What these photographs do again and again is to insure that the impact of that cut, that dislocation and detachment, will resonate through every internal point of the work. The incredible verticality of these clouds as they rise upward along the image creates an extraordinary sense of disorientation - almost to the point of vertigo...we feel it as something ripped away from us, as no longer the possible extension of our experience of our own physical occupation of the world that photographs had always seemed, dependably, to be...These are images without grounds...In their verticality the clouds echo or double the initial meaning of the cut, or rather, each displays the world only by an image that is radically cut loose from its moorings, an image that is about being unmoored.¹⁴

As Krauss argues, the effect of the "Equivalents" is to transform the clouds "into unnatural signs (into the "cultural language of the photograph") by setting up a "symbolic relationship" between the sky and the photograph which is dependent upon "the medium of the cut." However, as she continues:

In calling this series *Equivalents*, Stieglitz is obviously invoking the language of symbolism, with its notion of correspondence and hieroglyph. But what is intended here is symbolism in its deepest sense, symbolism as an understanding of language as a form of radical absence - the absence, that is, of the world and its objects, supplanted by the presence of the sign.¹⁵

But while this analysis importantly focuses on the formal properties of the cut or frame, what it does not address is the identification which (as in the early photographs) Stieglitz posited as existing between himself (and presumably the viewer) and the photographs. For it is within these identifications and investments that the effects of framing and absence in the "Equivalents" can also be situated.

¹² "Stieglitz/*Equivalents*", *October*, 11, Winter 1979, p. 134.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 140.

Framing narcissism: the screen, the sublime

A notion of "radical absence", not only of language but of the sign itself (as the effacement or suppression of both reference and the figurality of signification), is implied in Stieglitz's own claim that:

The true meaning of the *Equivalents* comes through without any extraneous pictorial factors intervening between those who look at the pictures and the pictures themselves...[they] are a picture of the chaos of the world, and of my relationship to that chaos. My prints show the world's constant upsetting of man's equilibrium, and his eternal battle to reestablish it.¹⁶

Here the belief in the unmediated exteriorization of the interior self ultimately rests upon the notion of a photography without signification and of a vision without text. It is this absence in Stieglitz's "Equivalents" - an absence which raises the question of "what he had to expel in order to make them work"¹⁷ - in association with what Sekula describes as the desire for "a mystical identification with the Other" (or rather, perhaps, recuperation of the Other), which can be referred to the structures of narcissism. For if "Stieglitz's career represents the triumph of metaphor in the realm of photography",¹⁸ the "Equivalents" can be viewed as metaphors of a narcissistic relation to the external world.

This narcissistic structure (which is clearly not to be confused with particular personality traits) can be better illustrated by reference to Bertram Lewin's notion of the "dream screen". Indeed it is the idea of a screen which perhaps best describes the "Equivalents". Referring to the dream screen as the blank background of dreams rather than their visual content, Lewin writes:

The dream screen, as I define it, is the surface onto which a dream appears to be projected. It is the blank background, present in the dream though not necessarily seen, and the visually perceived action in the ordinary manifest dream contents takes place on it or before it. Theoretically it may be part of the latent or manifest content, but this distinction is academic. The dream screen is not often noted or mentioned by the analytic patient, and in the practical business of dream interpretation, the analyst is not concerned with it.¹⁹

This screen is related to the wish to sleep while it also a representation of the breast or the infant's relation to the breast:

When one falls asleep, the breast is taken into one's perceptual world: it flattens out or approaches flatness, and when one wakes up it disappears, reversing the events of its entrance. A dream appears to be projected on this flattened breast - the dream screen - provided, that is, that the dream is visual; for if there is no visual content the dream screen would be blank, and the manifest content would consist solely of impressions from other fields of perception.²⁰

¹⁶ Alfred Stieglitz, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁷ "Stieglitz/*Equivalents*", *op.cit.*, p. 140.

¹⁸ "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning", *op.cit.*, p. 15.

¹⁹ "Sleep, the Mouth, and the Dream Screen", *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 15, 1946, p. 420.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 421.

Whether the dream screen is in fact a literal representation of the breast or not is of little consequence here. What is more noteworthy is the narcissism which supports it. Likening the dream screen to "a hypothetical intrauterine stage of elementary narcissism", Lewin describes it as a "copy of primary infantile sleep", a state of "pure fulfilment", "without content", which "represents the breast situation in a nearly pure state."²¹ This description of a monadic state has obvious similarities with Laplanche's reference to primary narcissism as "a kind of hypothetical initial state in which the organism would form a closed unit in relation to its surroundings."²² Moreover, involving the repetition of an "orally defined infantile situation,"²³ the "hallucinated breast", and the infant's relation to it, can be compared to Lacan's *objet a* and to Freud's and Baudry's respective accounts of the subject's desire to return to a state of primary narcissism and "archaic satisfaction."

A number of other related features of the dream screen are also pertinent here. Firstly, a suspension of the ego and, secondly, the predominance of oral libido (as libidinal aim or gratification) over object relations. As Lewin argues, "In the primal dream, the ego takes no part and does not exert its distorting influence"²⁴ while "ego boundaries are lost" as "the body ego disappears in sleep."²⁵ What replaces these boundaries is the desire for fusion between subject and object, a phantasy of return to the mother or "union with [her] in visually blank sleep", i.e:

the sleeper has lost his ego boundaries because when he went to sleep he was reunited with the breast...To rejoin the mother, whether inside or out, appears to rest on the oral pattern and to get its basic mold from the earliest oral experiences...The fantasy of returning to the mother's body is a secondary fantasy, combining the idea of union with the mother at the breast and later impressions.²⁶

Here the subject's self-identification as "a retro-projected neonate" rests not only upon "an oral act, an ingestion of the world" but also upon feelings of envelopment or absorption (of being eaten), i.e. "the two polar ideas of eating and being eaten and their interchangeability. This interchangeability is intrinsic in oral psychology. The effect of eating is an identification with the thing eaten...there is primarily no appreciation in the baby of the distinction between itself - that is, its

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 422.

²² *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, *op.cit.*, p. 71.

²³ "Sleep, the Mouth and the Dream Screen", *op.cit.*, p. 420.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 424.

²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 427.

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 427-428.

skin and mouth - and the surface of the mother's breast."²⁷ It is in this phantasised state of boundaryless fusion (prior to what Laplanche described as the "first cleavage" of difference and signification) which can be likened to the "neutral surface" of the dream screen which, as a blank screen or empty frame, is devoid of dream content. While "intruding preconscious or unconscious wishes that threaten to wake the sleeper from the visual contents...lose their place in the sleeper's ego by being projected on to or before the dream screen,"²⁸ the screen itself or "blank dream" is like a "blank page...[and] contains no representatives of the unconscious or preconscious disturbers and wakers [of sleep]. It represents solely the wish to sleep predicated by Freud as entering into all dream formation."²⁹

It is to this "blank sleep of oral satiety", a "pure infantile dream without visual content", that the "Equivalents" can be compared. For Stieglitz's description of photography as the restoration of an equilibrium "without any extraneous pictorial factors intervening" recalls the dream screen's lack of "intrusive representatives of the unconscious." But, beyond this, Stieglitz's normative idea of what constituted a photograph can be likened to primary narcissism's screening of the constitutive gap of signification. As Kristeva has outlined, the separation between infant and mother is one which is subsequently mapped onto the experience of the 'arbitrary' nature of language, i.e. the gap or bar between signifier and signified and the non-coincidence of sign and meaning. It is this primal separation, blankness or emptiness (*vide*) between mother and child - "this *vide* constitutive of beginnings of the symbolic function [which] appears as the first separation between what is not yet an ego and what is not yet an object"³⁰ - which the subject also experiences in language. The function of primary narcissism is, in effect, to both screen or cover over, but also to protect³¹, and thus make bearable, both this separation and the primal gap of difference experienced as the subject's lack-in-being and its alienation in its encounter with the sign.

Initiating a similar psychological screening, Stieglitz's "straight" photography and the "Equivalents" can be read as an attempt to suppress the gap of signification by

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 428.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 433.

²⁹ "Inferences from the Dream Screen", *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 29, 1948, pp. 225.

³⁰ "L'Abject d'amour", *Tel Quel*, 91, Summer 1982, p. 19.

³¹ As Kristeva notes, "Narcissism protects the *vide*, maintains its existence and thus, as the reversal of this *vide*, assures a primal separation. Without this union between the *vide* and narcissism, chaos would obliterate all possibility of distinction, of trace and of symbolisation, entailing the confusion of the limits of bodies, of words, of the real and the Symbolic" (*ibid.*, pp. 19-20).

effacing the *fort/da* (as absence, loss and substitution) which constitutes all representation³² by returning the viewer to a narcissism in the form of "a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven"³³ - a narcissism which, acting like a shield, protects the "subject threatened with sinking into the void."³⁴

This recourse to the solipsist structures of primary narcissism can be viewed as a defensive strategy adopted in relation to the Other and the sign. More specifically, it can be seen as a consequence of the failure of secondary narcissism. Arising in part as compensation for the loss of primary narcissism, secondary narcissism can, for example, operate as the attempted appropriation of or identification with the other. However, an excessive heterogeneity of the other or irrecoverable dissonance between subject and object (sign), provokes a reaction as an attempt to completely efface or evacuate alterity. This reaction, or reaction-formation, is not only symptomatic of continual thwarting of the goal of desire in its objects (the object always being an inadequate substitute or surrogate for the 'original' phantasised object) but it also functions as a preemptive defence against the knowledge that present signification, especially as excess, entails the possibility of future deprivation or denial. As Thomas Weiskel has argued regarding the Sublime:

In the face of anxiety the stranded ego withdraws its attachment to objects in their irreducible otherness and thereby hopes to reproduce the primal state before otherness became the experience of frustration. This leads to regression as one major defence against the anxiety of deprivation. The regression intends the state of primary narcissism but necessarily results in the secondary narcissism we so often find in the egotistical sublime.³⁵

In their attempted effacement of irreducible otherness the "Equivalents" share many of the characteristics of the Sublime. For as Kristeva also observes:

The abject is edged with the sublime...For the sublime has no object either...The 'sublime' object dissolves in the raptures of a bottomless memory...the sublime triggers - as it has always triggered - a spree of perceptions and words that expands memory boundlessly. I then forget the point of departure and find myself removed to a secondary universe, set off from the one where 'I' am...the sublime is always *something added* that expands us, overstrains us, and causes us to be both *here*, as dejects, and *there*, as others and sparkling...A divergence, an impossible bounding.³⁶

It is in their relation to the object or the other, and in particular to the closure of the

³² As Derrida notes, "What we know is that every step (discursive or pictorial in particular) implies a *fort/da*. Every relation to a pictorial text implies this double movement doubly interlaced to itself", *The Truth in Painting*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 357.

³³ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 14.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁵ *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the Structure and Psychology of Transcendence*, Baltimore and London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, p. 139. See also Neil Hertz's *The End of the Line: Essays on Psychoanalysis and the Sublime*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1985, espec. Chp. 3.

³⁶ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., pp. 11-12.

gap in vision (thereby enabling the subject to be both "here" and "there"), that the "Equivalents" share many of the features of the "positive" or "egotistical" sublime as described by Weiskel, a form of the Sublime which "would subsume all otherness, all possibility of negation" through a non-dialectical and transcendent "totalising consciousness...[which] subverts the negativity which is the ground of the 'other' by ignoring its consequences."³⁷

Sharing the undifferentiated perception or unmediated vision of the egotistical sublime and couched within a regressive circularity in which the meaning of objects is the meaning conferred upon them by the subject, the "Equivalents" similarly obliterate difference by effacing the distinction "between what the mind confers and what it receives."³⁸ In the "Equivalents" this virtual obliteration of objects is achieved by means of the photographs' status as blank screens or apertures which frame an infinite, boundaryless space within (fig.6.10). Evacuated of reference, these spaces are then projectively filled by the viewer. Not so much images of a vertiginous dislocation, these are images of a neutral void. And, while the defining feature of these images is the cut or crop, this cut does not secure a fetishising or fragmenting gaze³⁹ but instead produces a sequence of imaginary spaces for an unmediated vision of scopic libidinality or drive with neither objects nor unity.⁴⁰

³⁷ *The Romantic Sublime*, op.cit., pp. 49-50.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 51.

³⁹ In fact this gaze is at work in Stieglitz's portraits of Georgia O'Keefe produced currently with the "Equivalents". While Rosalind Krauss refers to the cloud photographs "as providing a context for the extraordinary portraits of Georgia O'Keefe's hands, which are also about the image's severance from a body that might, in life, support it, substituting for this body the plane of the photographic print"(Stieglitz/*Equivalents*", op.cit., p. 140), Stieglitz also produced a series of nude portraits of O'Keefe (but of her breasts and/or torso only). It is this compulsive investigation of the signs of sexual difference which arguably provides the context for the "Equivalents" in that both sequences of images occupy opposite but related positions in terms of the representation of difference: on the one hand (in the portraits), a fragmenting and fetishising gaze, and on the other (in the "Equivalents") an effacement, or displacement onto the portraits, of the signs of difference (overtly sexual otherwise) thereby allowing a return to a pre-Oedipal and pre-Symbolic space of indifferentiation.

⁴⁰ Of relevance here are Lyotard's remarks on the film screen and "the imperative of unification", i.e. "the real problem, missed by Lacan due to his Hegelianism, is to know why the drives spread about the polymorphous body *must* have an object where they can unite...We will have to ask ourselves how and why the *specular wall* in general, and thus the cinema screen in particular, can become a privileged space for the libidinal cathexis...A libidinal economy of the cinema should theoretically construct the operators which...channel the drives into the apparatus. It is not clear that narcissism or masochism are the proper operators: they carry a tone of subjectivity (of the theory of the Self) that is probably still much too strong", "Acinema", trans. Paisley N. Livingston, *Wide Angle*, 3, 2, 1978, p. 57. As opposed to the Symbolic's "libidinal normalization...[as] the subordination of all partial drives...to the unity of an organic body" (*ibid*) and to "fixed references and identification" (p. 55) - an action analogous perhaps to the binding in of the gaze in Marville's "Rue de Rivoli" - Lyotard describes a "lyric abstraction" in which "the represented ceases to be the libidinal object while the screen itself, in all its most formal aspects, takes its place" (p.59), a libidinal economy "which would escape identification, recognition and the mnesic fixation" (p.57) and which, evading both immobility and "the same rule absorbing diversity into unity, the same law of the return of the same" (p. 55), would instead produce an "intense pleasure...[through] the decomposition of...[the] organism" (p. 59).

Presence, absence and the death drive

Not only are the "Equivalents" a culmination of the belief in the transparency of the photograph (as an image without signs) but they also represent a limit point in the quest for presence. For, given both the impossibility of a signifier of pure presence and the fact that the securing of any discrete identity necessarily entails the adoption of a position in relation to the Other or sign, this quest must ultimately entail a dissolution of the subject itself. In the "Equivalents" it is the conjunction of the empty screen and the absent signifier which leads finally to the absent subject. As with the (apparent) paradox of the excess of lack in "The Crawlers", the unmediated presence of an absolute self-reflexivity is predicated upon a "radical absence" not only of the object/sign but also of the subject which instead seeks its own self-annihilation as "non-ego, drive and death."⁴¹ For, to be in the "haven" of primary narcissism, or of an unalienated desire (as libidinal aim only), is to be in a state of "Pleasure itself, without symbol or supplement...which would accord us to pure presence itself, if such a thing were possible, [which] would only be another name for death."⁴² And if the empty screens of the "Equivalents" can be likened to the dream screen, it is to the "undisturbed, blank sleep...the probable state of mind of the satiated infant" which also existed, in one of Lewin's case-histories, as "the prototype of..[the] wish for death."⁴³

This particular connection is symptomatic of a broader association in that, as Lewin acknowledges, "death and sleep are equated psychologically."⁴⁴ Lewin's clinical observation that "the wish to die represented the infantile wish to sleep in union with the mother" is indicative of a deeper relation between the dream screen and the death drive, between narcissism and "the primary, inwardly directed death impulse."⁴⁵ In the "Equivalents" it is the oceanic fusion between subject and image produced through the dissolution of the structures of difference - a dissolution which culminates in the reduction of the subject itself to a zero point - which reveals the operations of the death drive which here takes the form of the Nirvana Principle as described by Freud:

The dominating tendency of mental life, and perhaps of nervous life in general, is the effort to reduce, to keep constant, or remove internal tension due to stimuli (the *Nirvana Principle*...) - a tendency which finds expression in the pleasure principle; and our recognition of that fact is one of

⁴¹ *Powers of Horror*, op.cit., p. 15.

⁴² *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., p. 155.

⁴³ "Sleep, the Mouth, the Dream Screen", op.cit., p. 431.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p. 430.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 432.

our strongest reasons for believing in the existence of the death instincts.⁴⁶

For Freud, the Nirvana Principle is an aspect of the principle of constancy - the subject's "tendency toward stability":

It will be remembered that we have taken the view that the principle which governs all mental processes is a special case of Fechner's 'tendency towards stability', and have accordingly attributed to the mental apparatus the purpose of reducing to nothing, or at least of keeping as low as possible, the sums of excitation which flow in upon it. Barbara Low has suggested the name of *Nirvana Principle* for this supposed tendency, and we have accepted the term. But we cannot claim that the Nirvana principle (and the pleasure principle which it is supposedly identical with) would be entirely in the service of the death instincts, whose aim is to conduct the restlessness of life into the stability of the inorganic state...But we must perceive that the Nirvana principle, belonging as it does to the death instinct, has undergone a modification in the living organism through which it has become the pleasure principle, and we shall henceforward avoid regarding the two principles as one...The *Nirvana Principle* expresses the trend of the death instinct; the *pleasure principle* represents the demand of the libido; and the modification of the latter principle, the *reality principle*, represents the influence of the external world.⁴⁷

While, as Freud recognised, excitation could produce pleasure, the pleasure principle itself, as Jean Laplanche notes, is "situated on the side of constancy. It is 'its most radical form' or its '*beyond*' which, as the Nirvana principle, reasserts the priority of the tendency toward an absolute zero or the 'death drive'."⁴⁸

It is this entropic drive of the subject to reduce itself to a zero or vacancy (a state of homeostasis) which operates across the "Equivalents", a drive symptomatic of the "urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things"⁴⁹ and which represents an end-point in the subject's endlessly deferred quest for presence in the image. For if, as Lacan comments, "the mirror would do well to reflect a little more before returning our image to us",⁵⁰ what the images discussed in this thesis return to the viewer is often something quite different from that which was sought in them. It is within this interplay of presence and absence, of loss and restoration - an interplay described by Stieglitz in terms of photography's place within "the eternal battle" to restore equilibrium over chaos - that these photographs can be situated. For while the image proffers the possibility of presence, it status as sign simultaneously denies that presence. As Derrida remarks, "One cannot help wishing to master absence and yet we must always let go."⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, op.cit., pp. 55-56.

⁴⁷ "The Economic Problem of Masochism" (1924), *Standard Edition*, vol. 19, pp. 159-160.

⁴⁸ *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, op.cit., p. 117.

⁴⁹ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, op.cit., p. 36.

⁵⁰ "The Freudian thing, or the meaning of the return to Freud in psychoanalysis", *Écrits*, op.cit., p. 138.

⁵¹ *Of Grammatology*, op.cit., p. 142.

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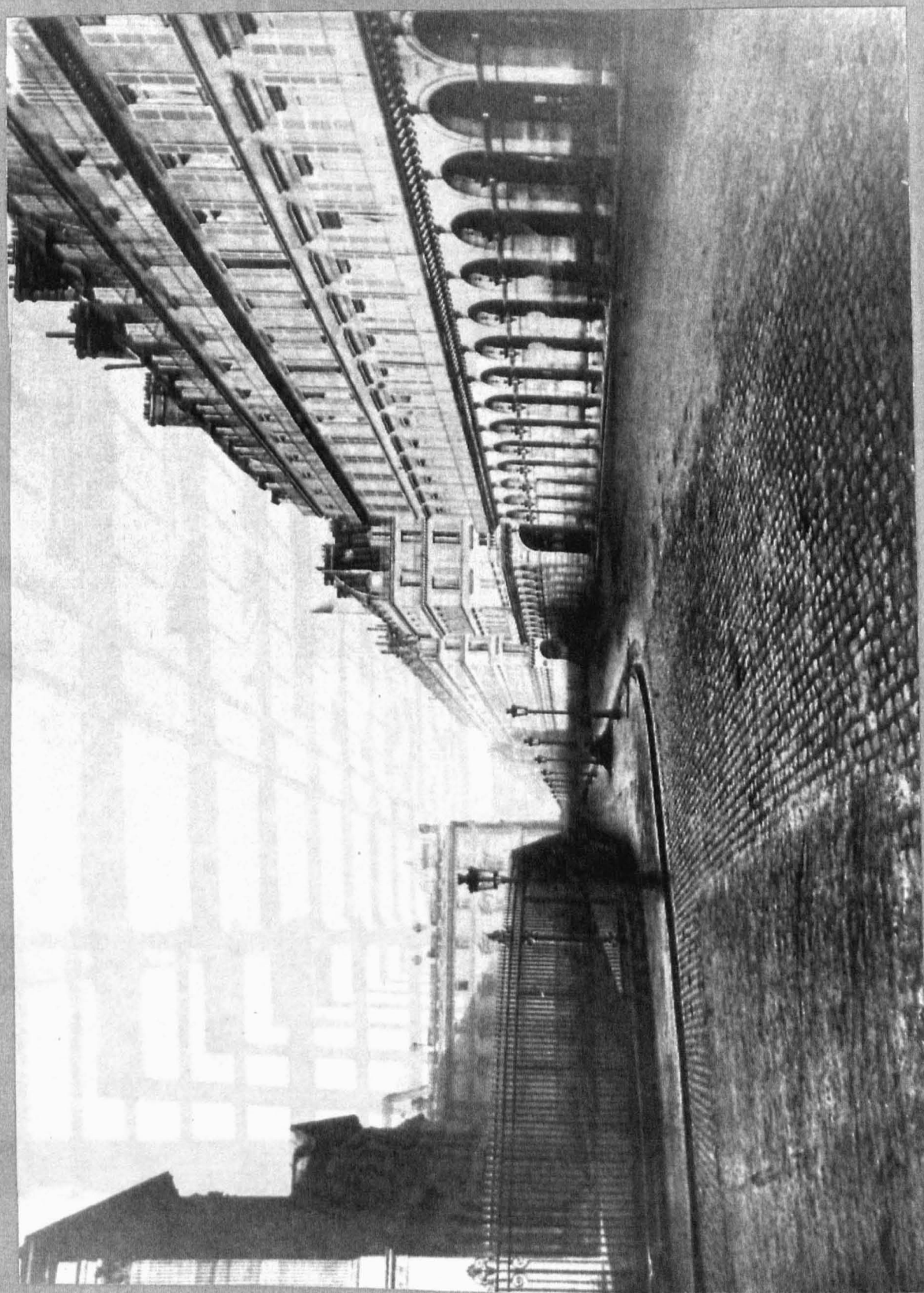
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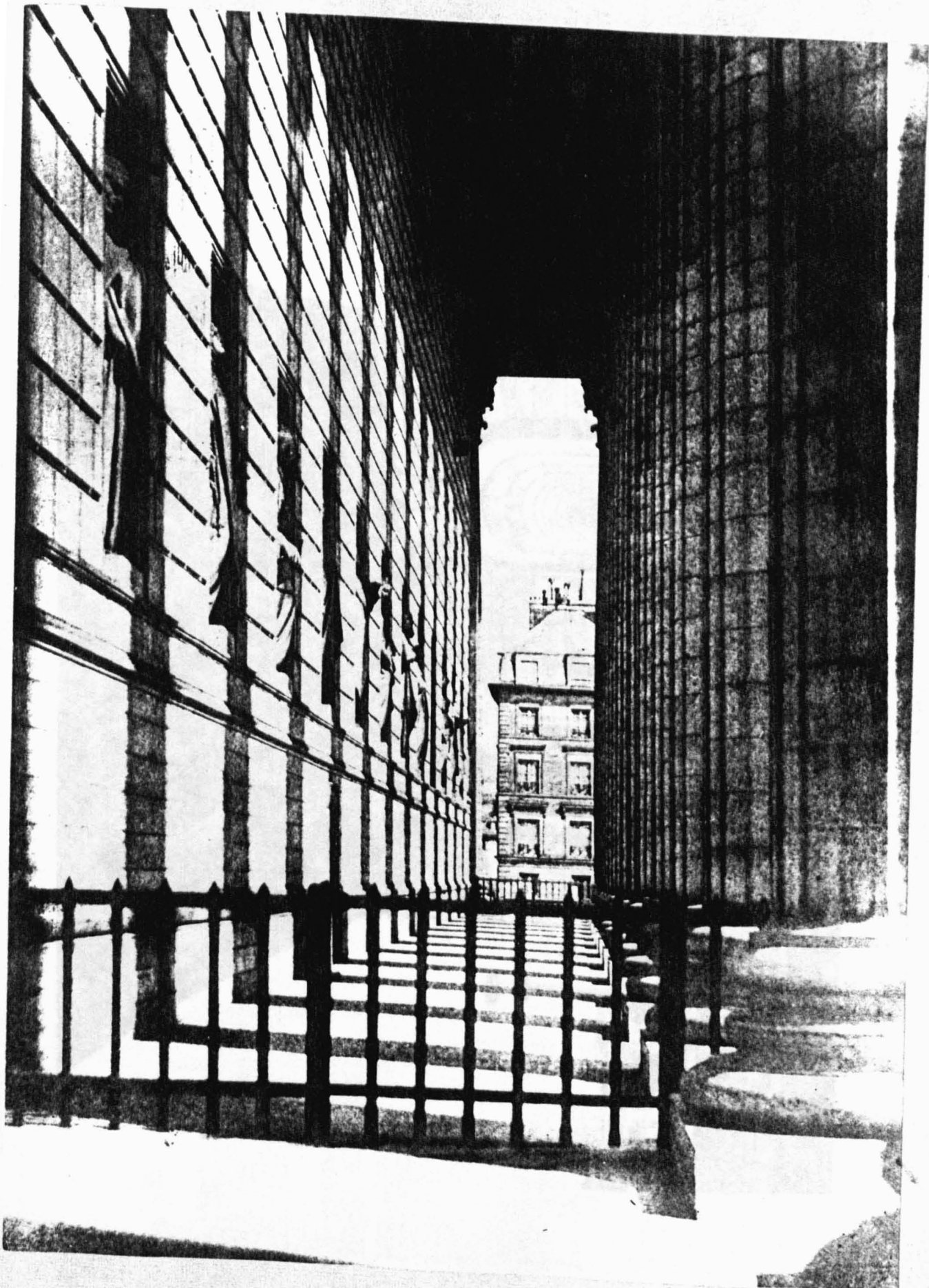
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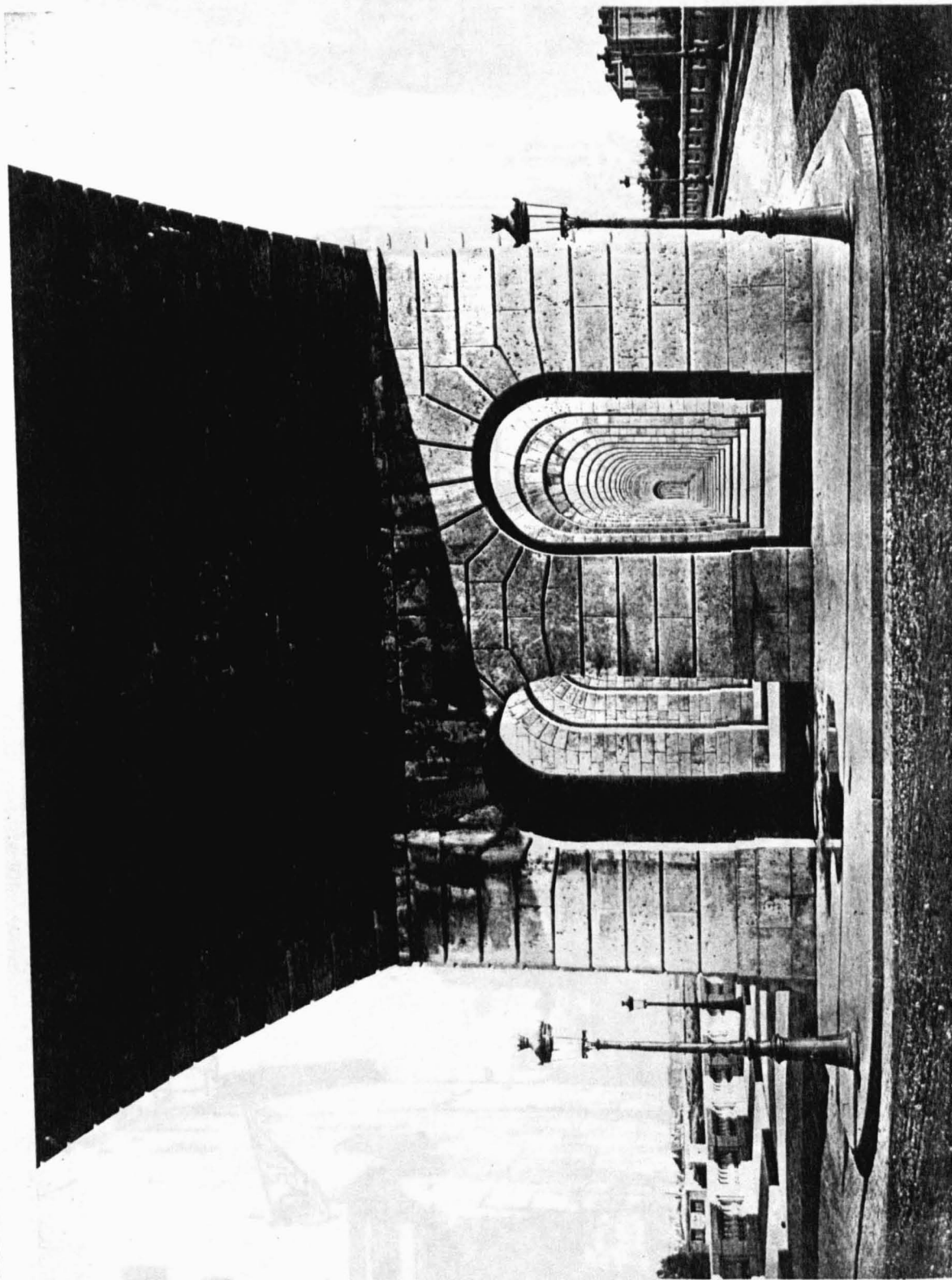
ILLUSTRATIONS



1. 1 Charles Marville, Rue de Rivoli, Paris, c.1850.



1. 2 Hippolyte Bayard, The Madeleine, Paris, c.1845.



1. 3 Auguste Collard, Viaduc d'Auteuil, Pont-du-Jour, Paris, c.1866.



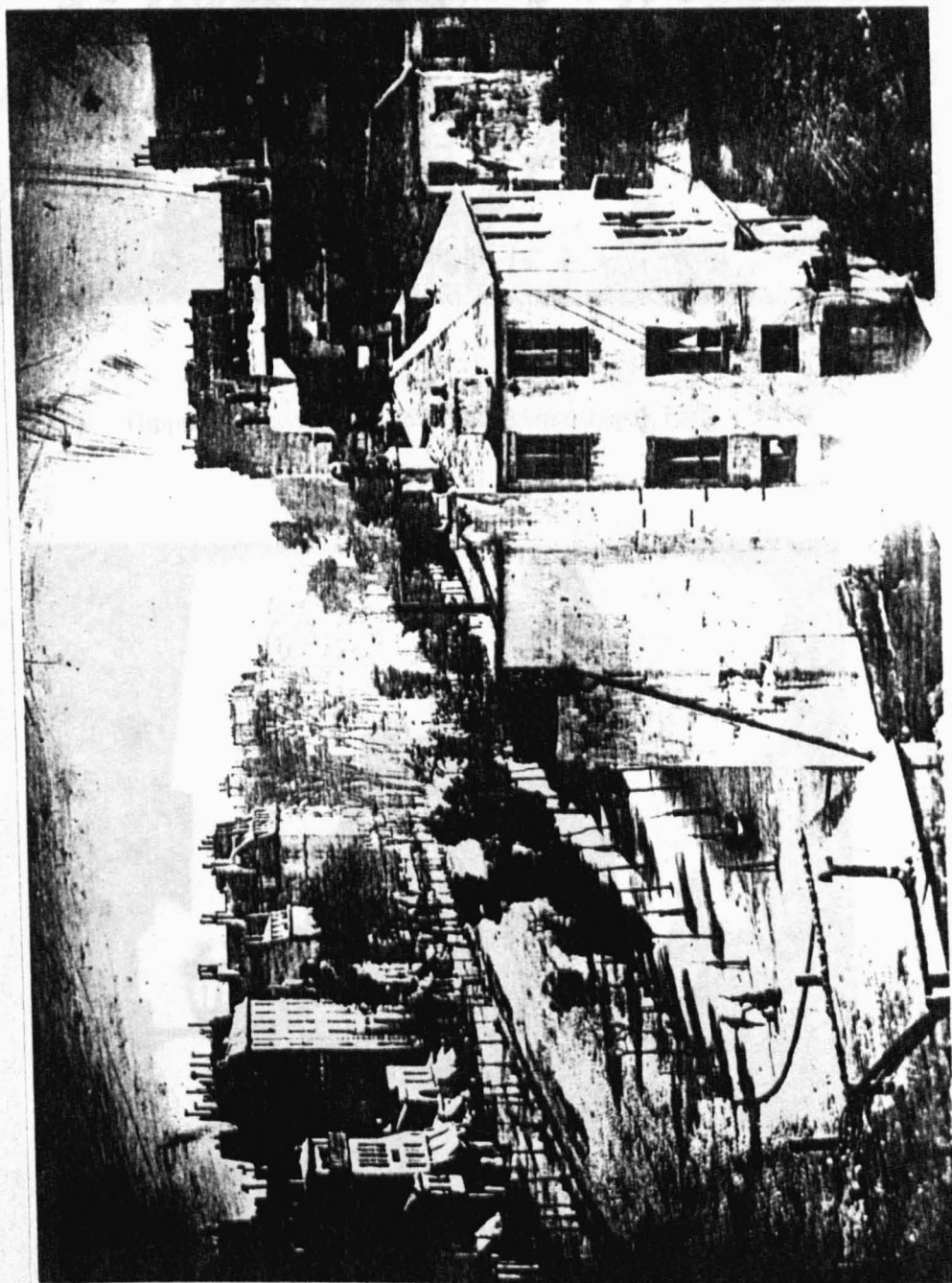
1. 4 Charles Marville, Rue Chanoinesse, Paris, c.1860.



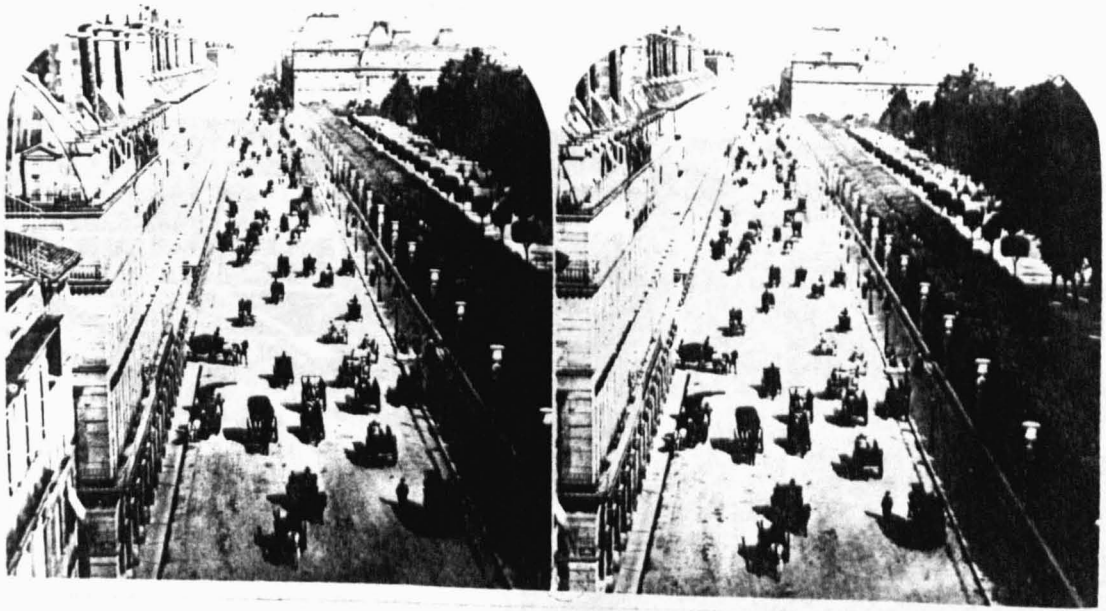
1. 5 Charles Marville, Rue Tirechape, Paris, c.1860.



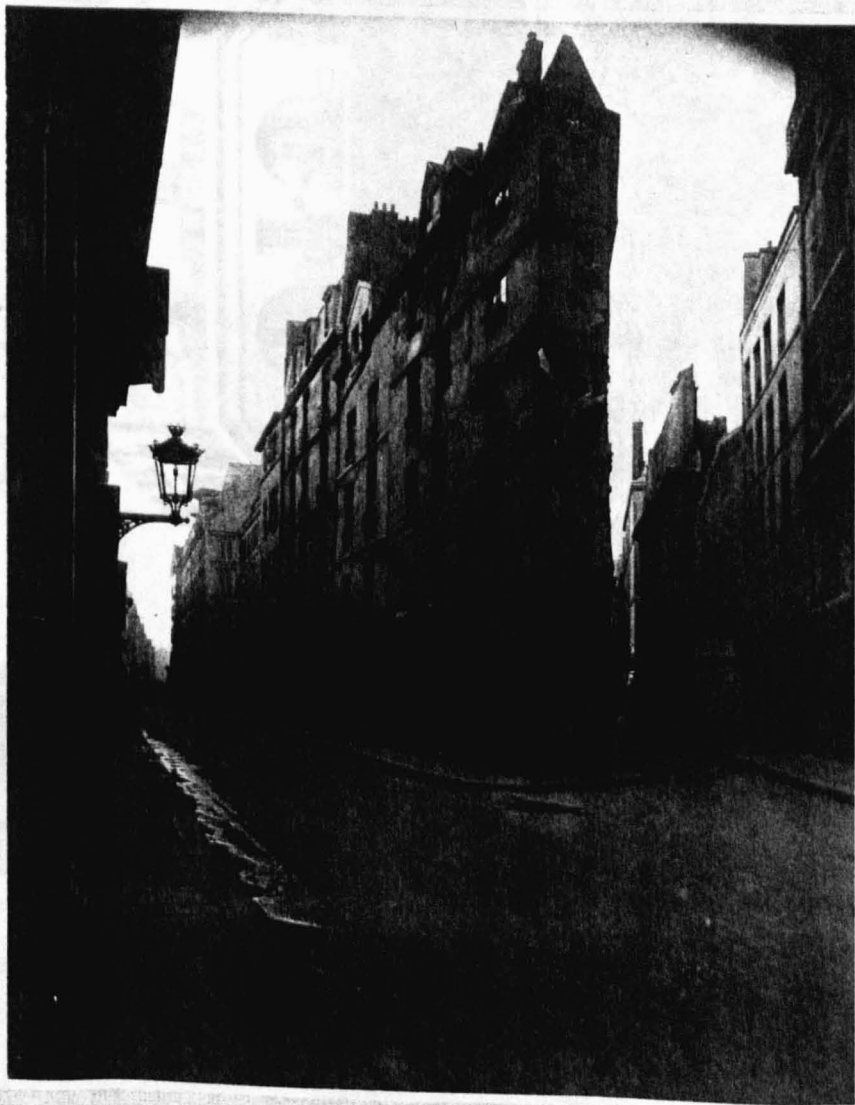
1. 6 Charles Marville, Rue de Sept-voies, Paris, c.1860.



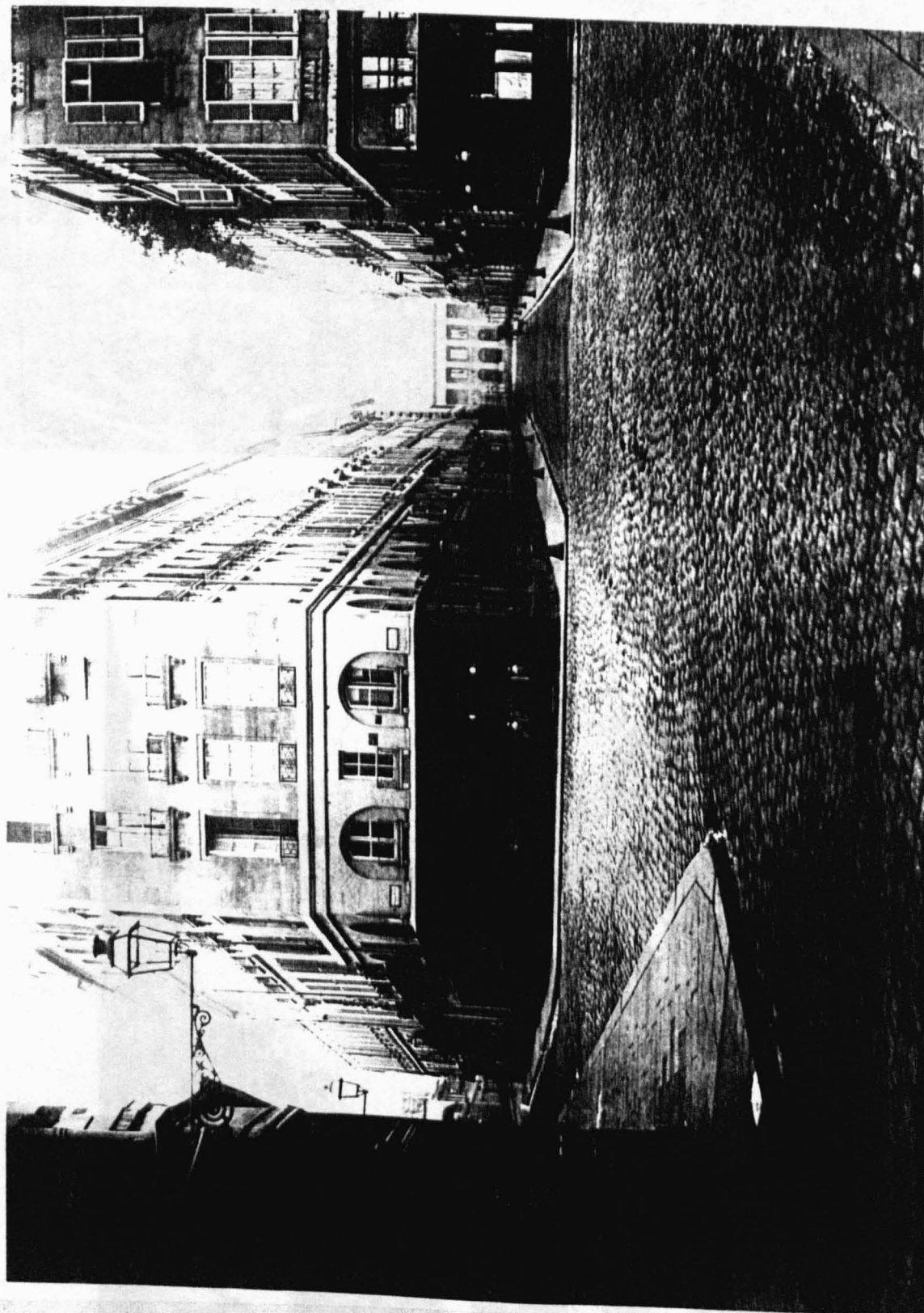
1. 7 Louis Daguerre, Boulevard du Temple, Paris, 1838.



1. 8 Hippolyte Jouvin, Rue de Rivoli (stereoscope), Paris, c.1860.



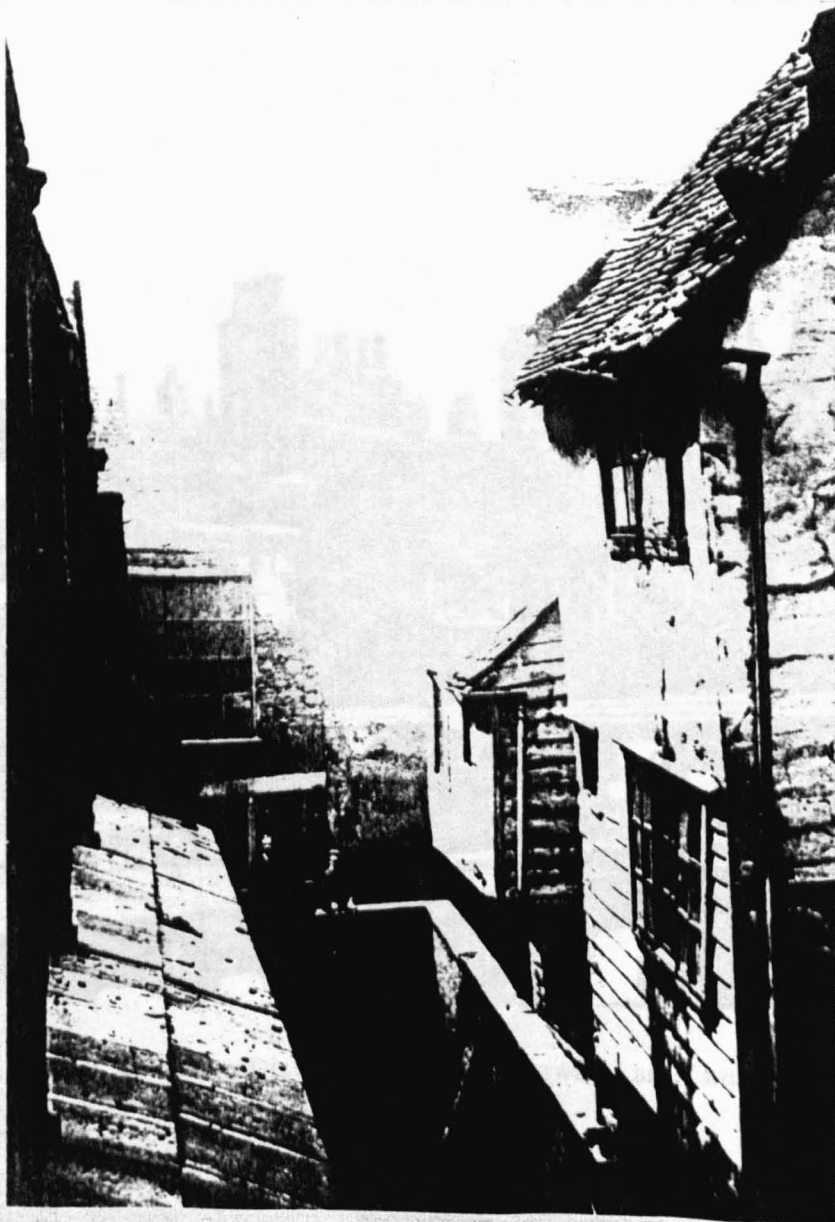
1. 9 Eugène Atget, Rue de Seine, Paris, 1924.



1.10 Charles Marville, Carrefour de l'Odéon, Paris, c.1860.



2. 1 Charles Marville, Avenue de l'Opera, Paris, c.1876.



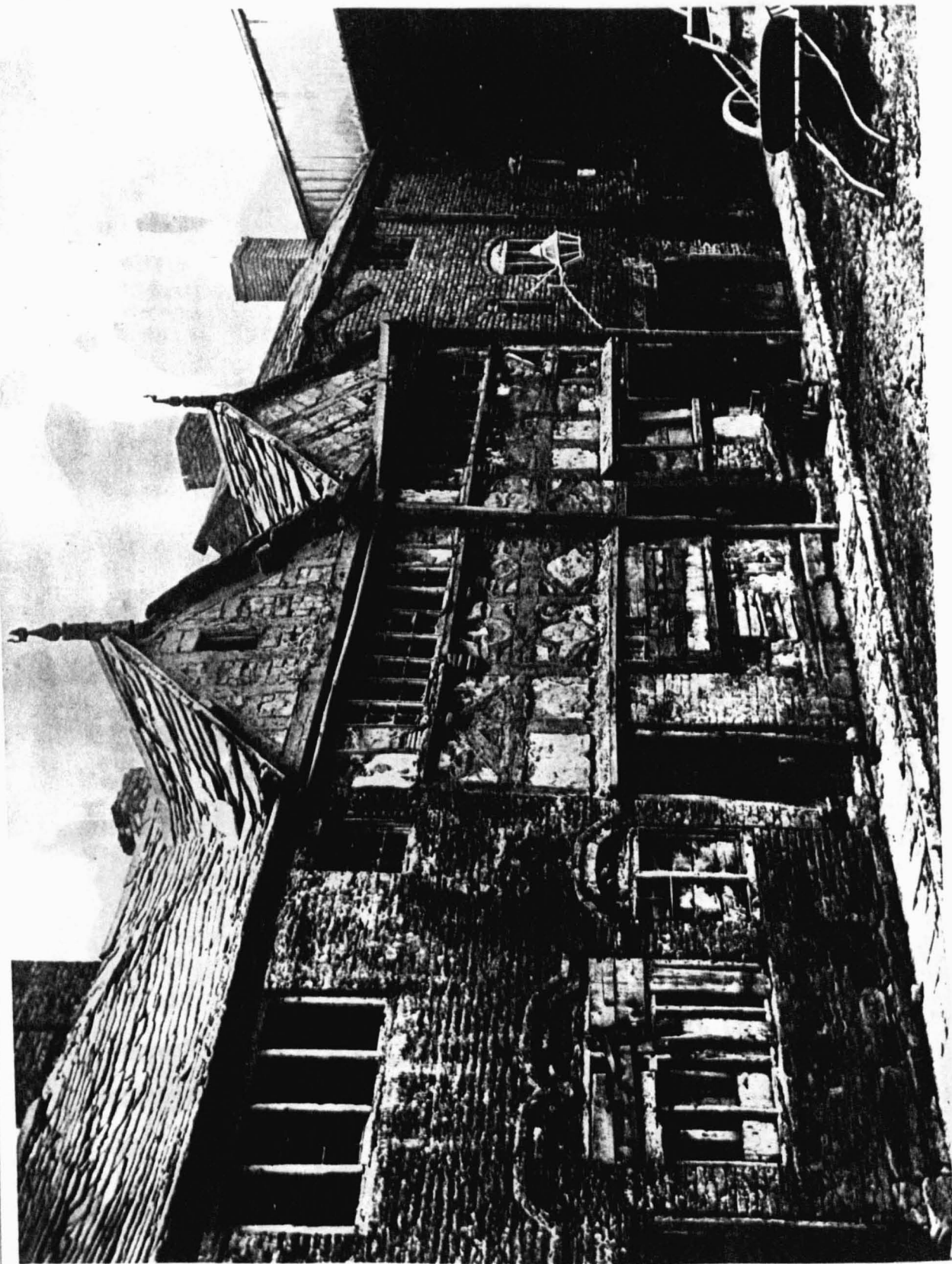
2. 2 A. and J. Bool, the Cloth Fair, London, 1877.



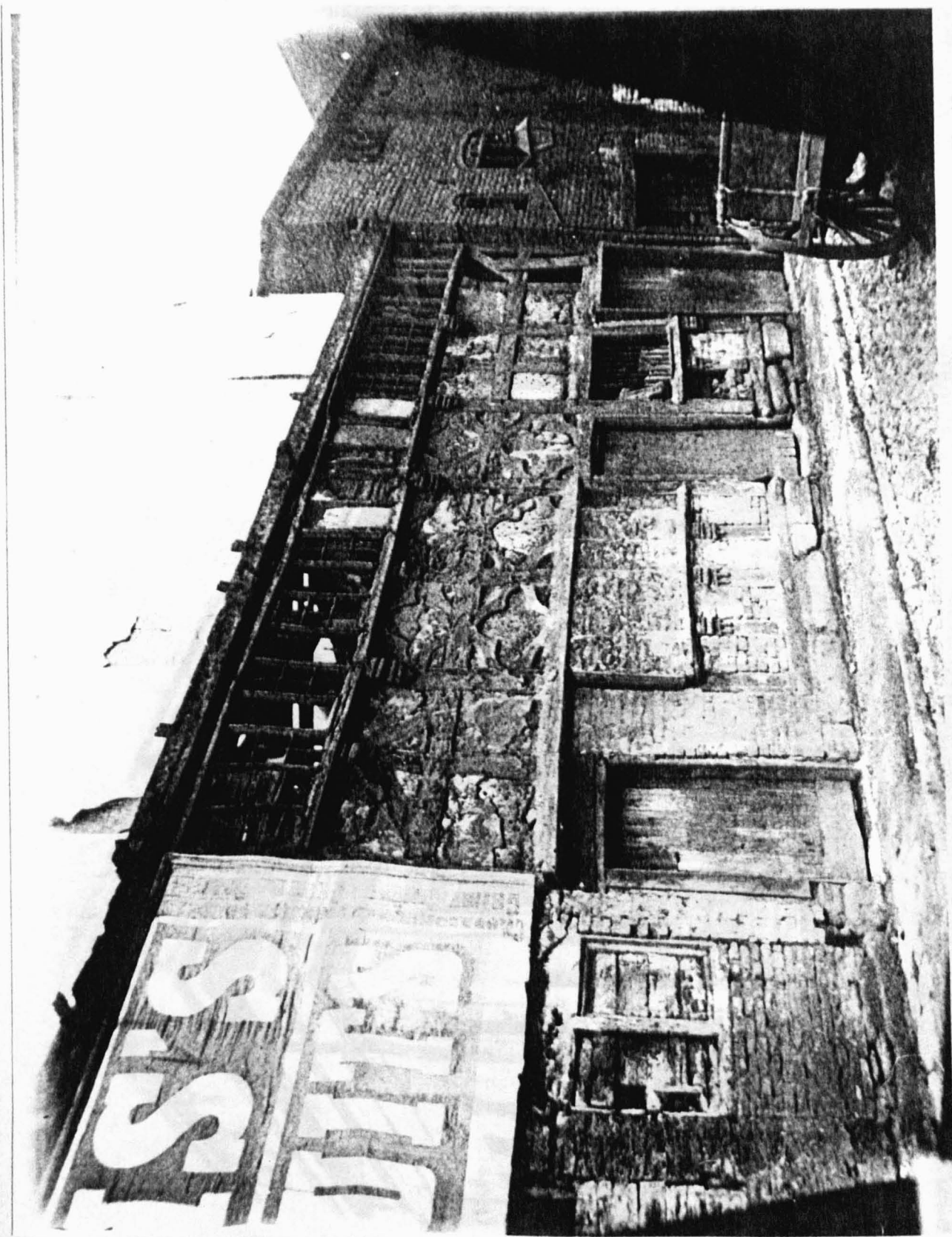
2. 3 Henry Dixon and A. and J. Bool, Old Houses, Bermondsey Street, Southwark, London, 1875.



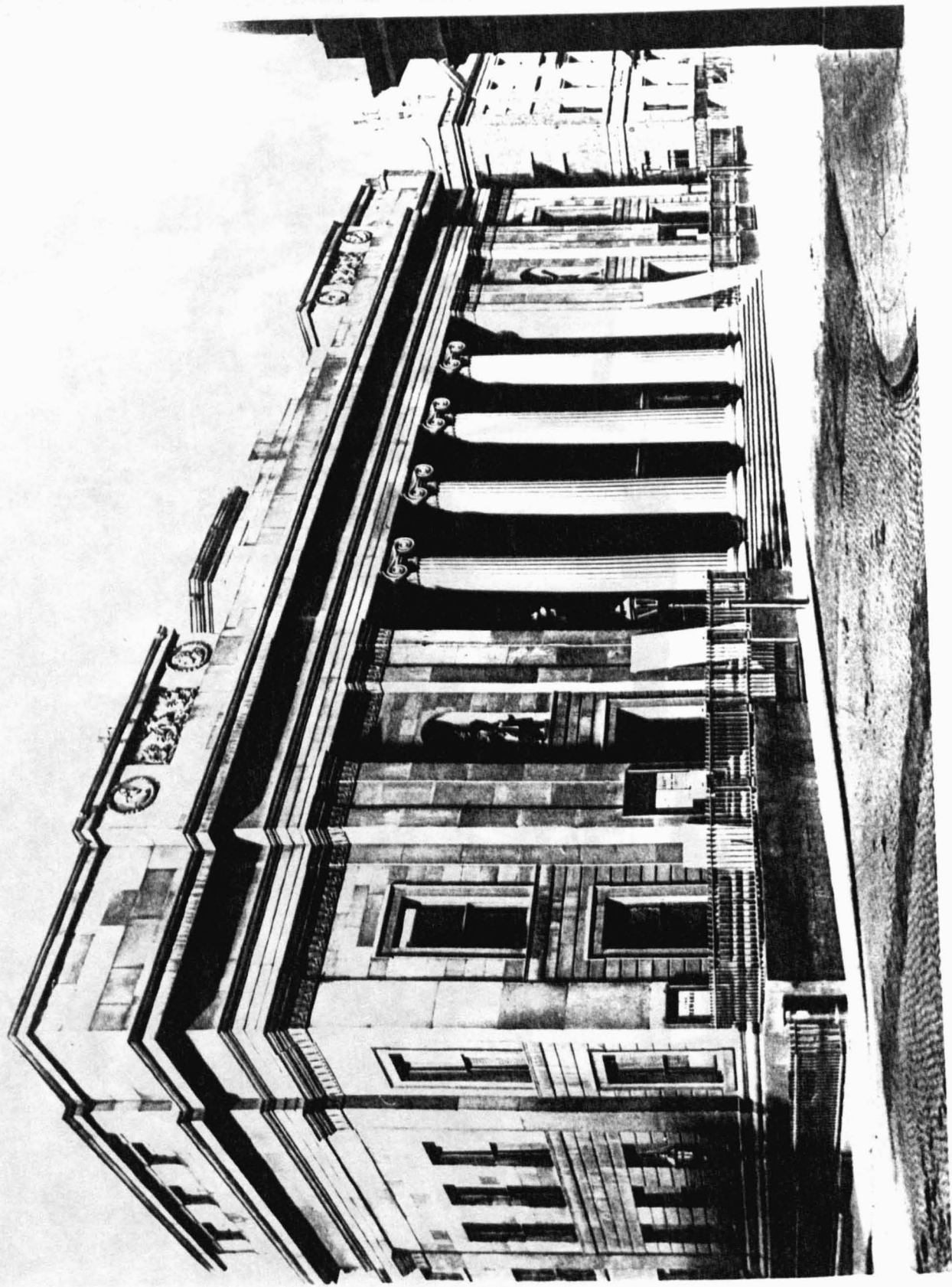
2. 4 Henry Dixon, Oxford Arms, Warwick Lane, London, 1877.



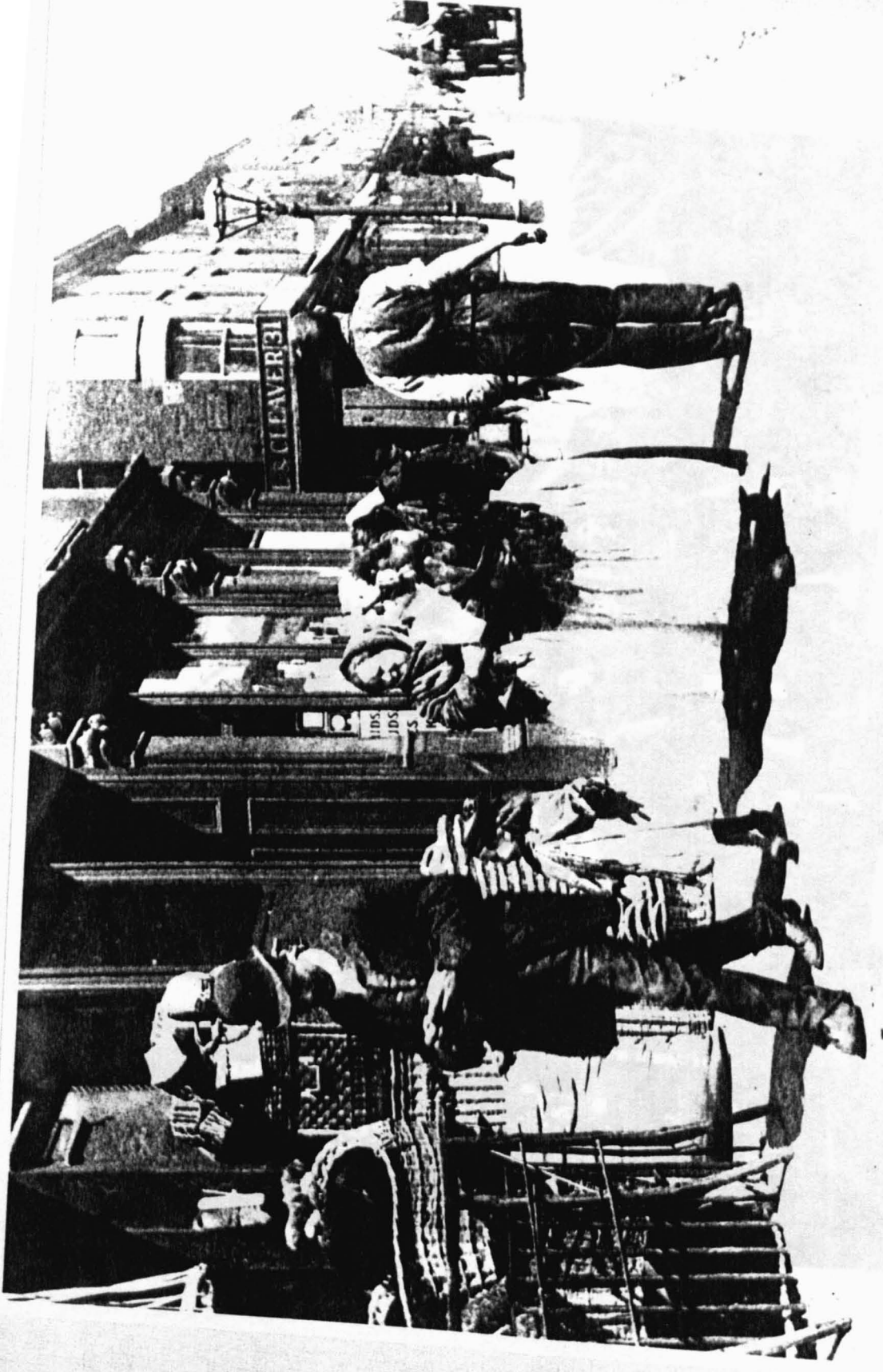
2. 5 James Mudd (?), "Gibraltar", Long Millgate, Manchester, 1877.



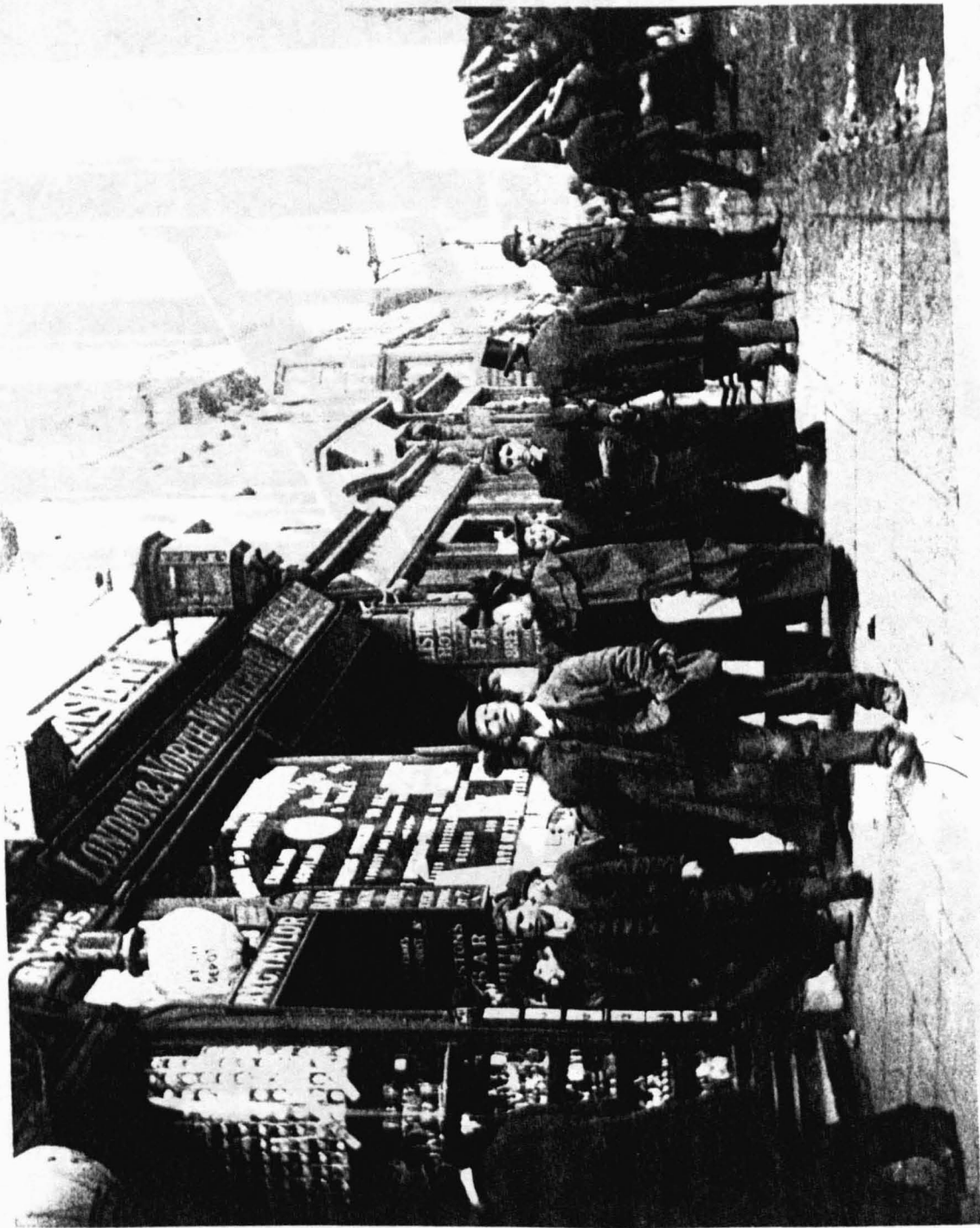
2. 6 S. L. Coulthurst, "Gibraltar", Long Millgate, Manchester Survey, 1880s.



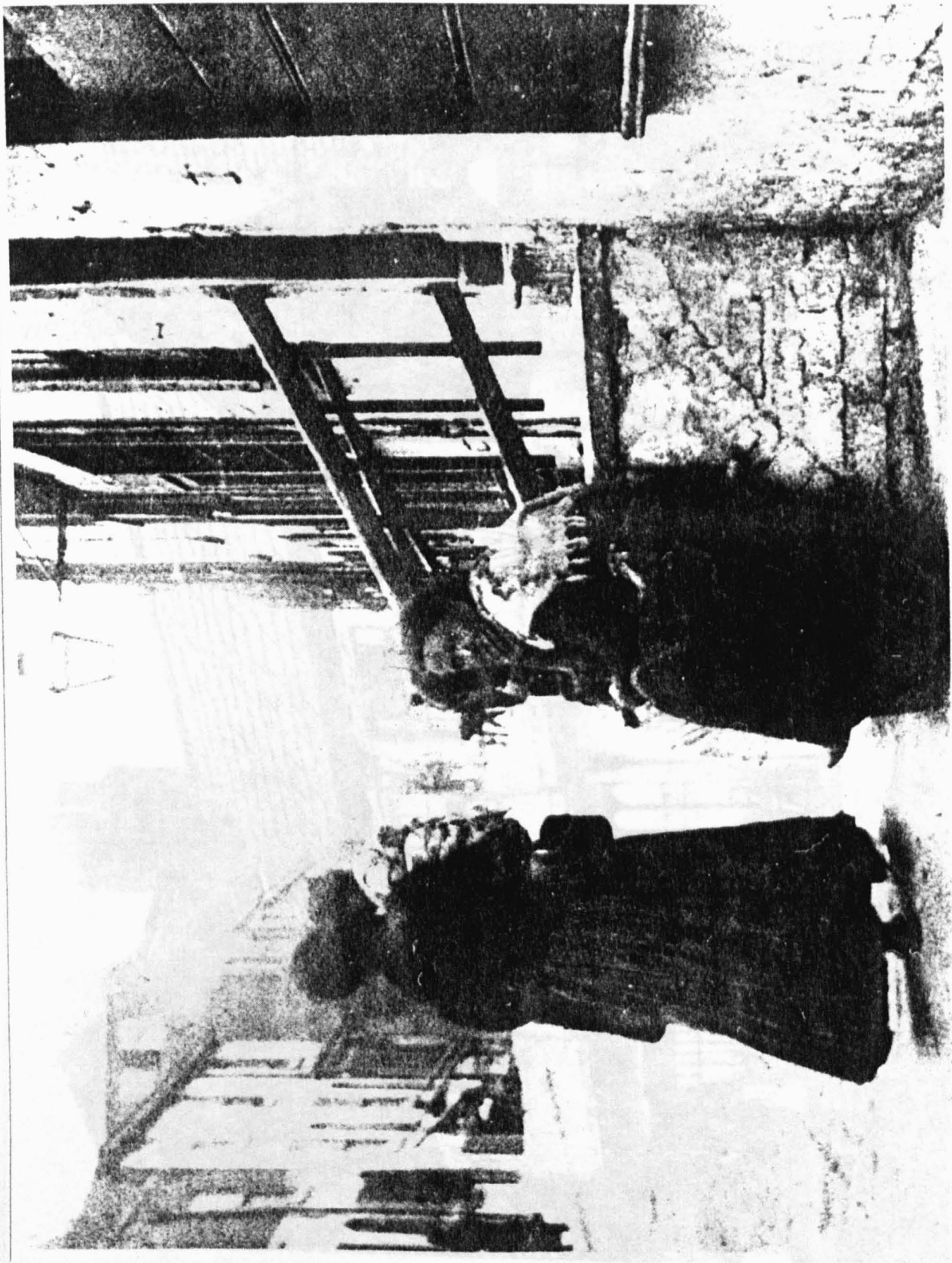
2. 7 George Wardley (?), Old Town Hall, Manchester, 1875.



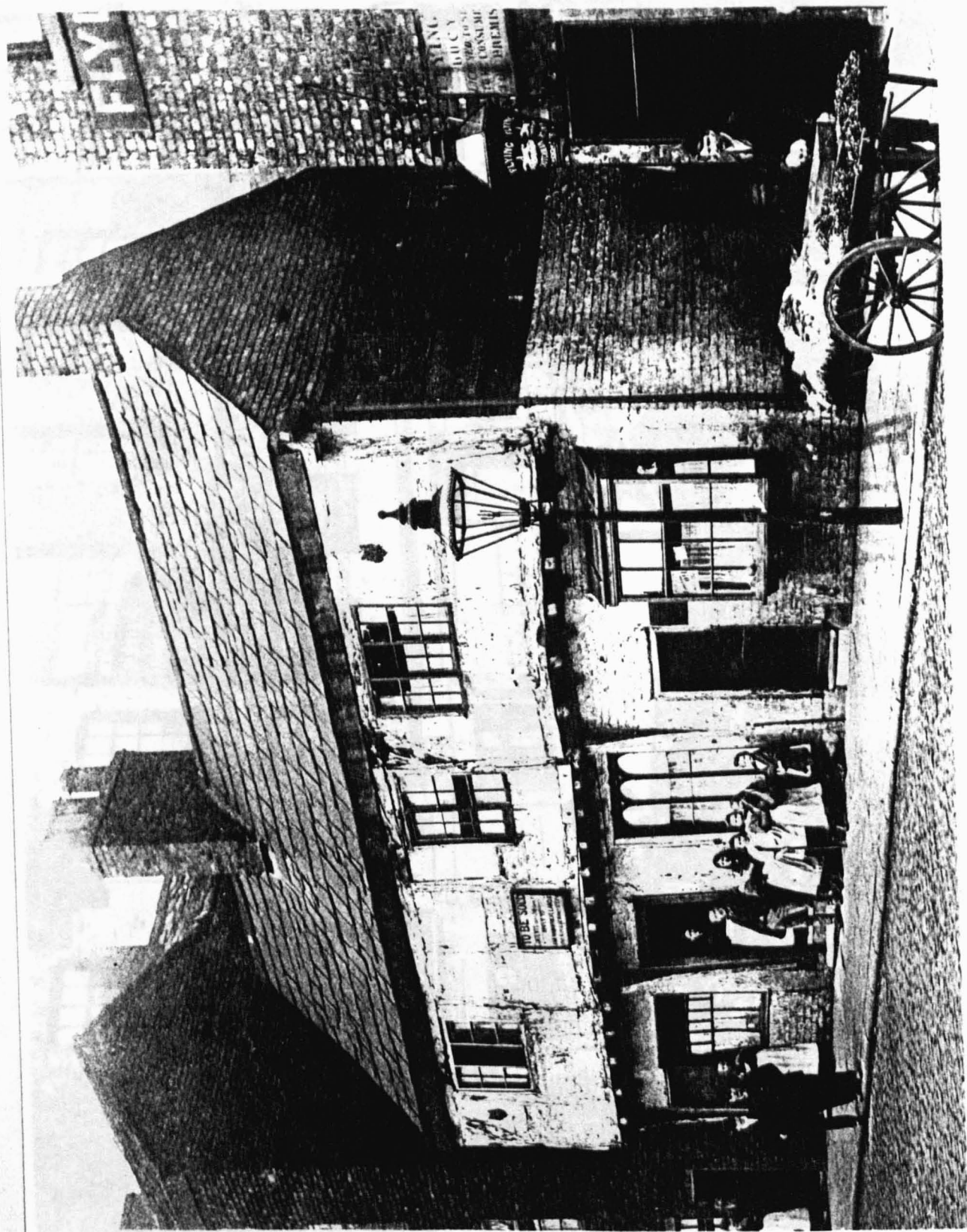
2. 8 S. L. Coulthurst, Rochdale Road, Manchester Survey, c.1890.



2. 9 J. W. Wade, Market Street, Manchester Survey, 1880s.



2.10 S. L. Coulthurst, Angel Street, Rochdale Road, Manchester Survey, c.1890.



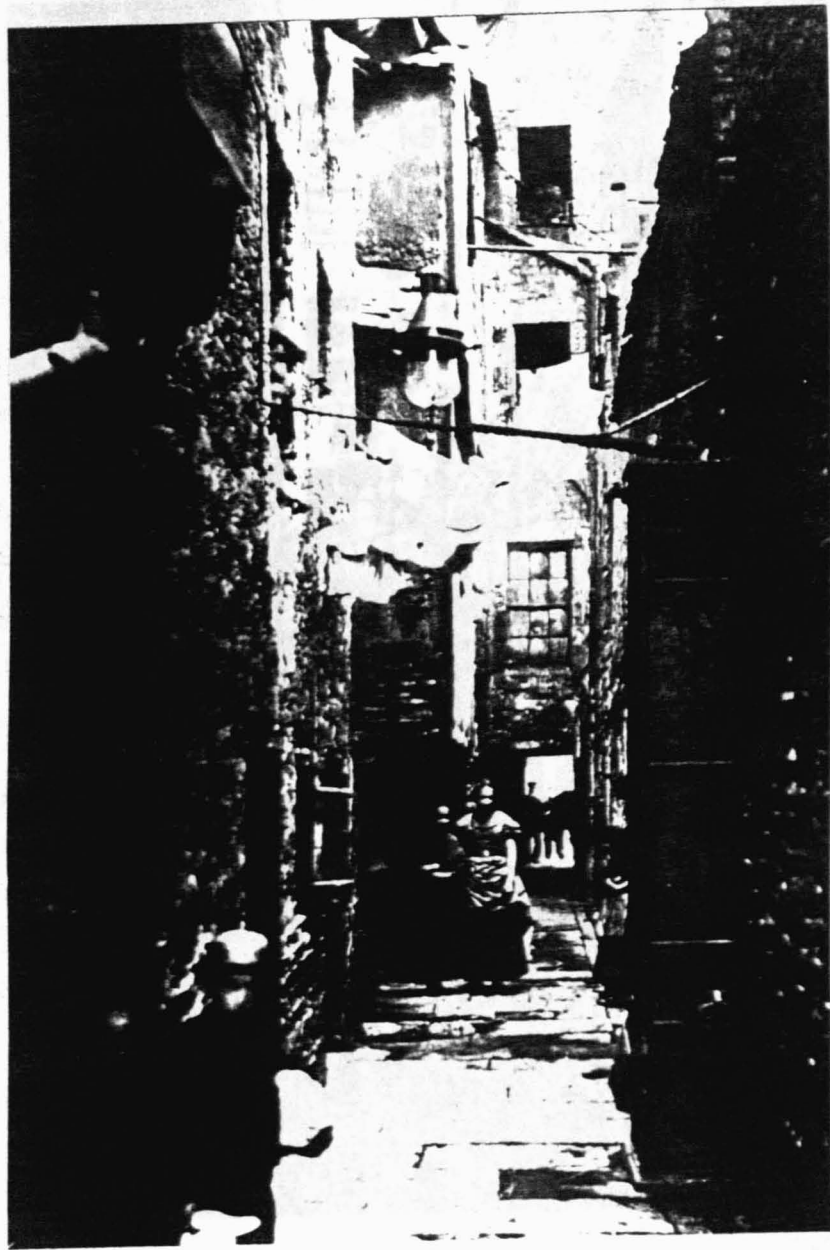
2.11 S. L. Coulthurst, Old Houses, Greengate, Manchester Survey, c.1890.



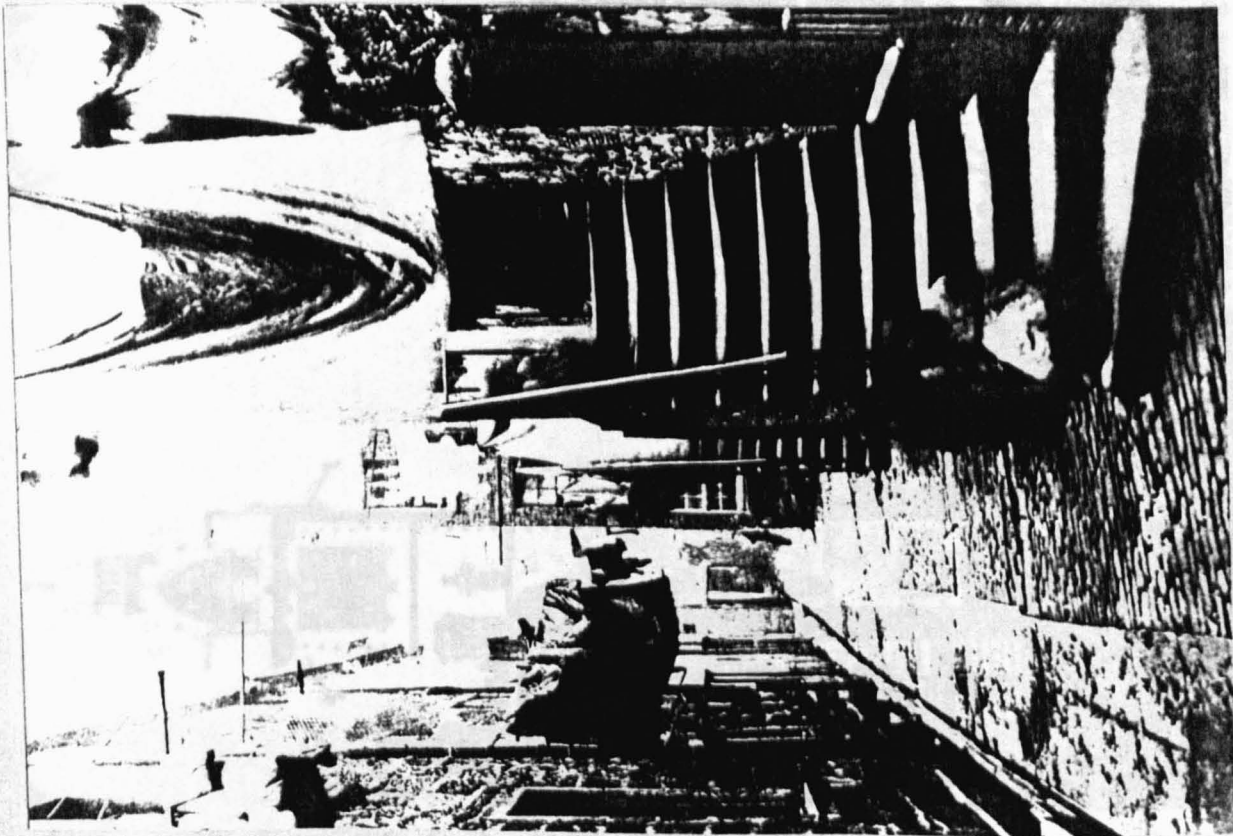
2.12 R. A. Patrieoux, Shudchill Poultry Market, Manchester Survey, 1880s.



2.13 Thomas Annan, Close, No. 118, High Street, 1868.



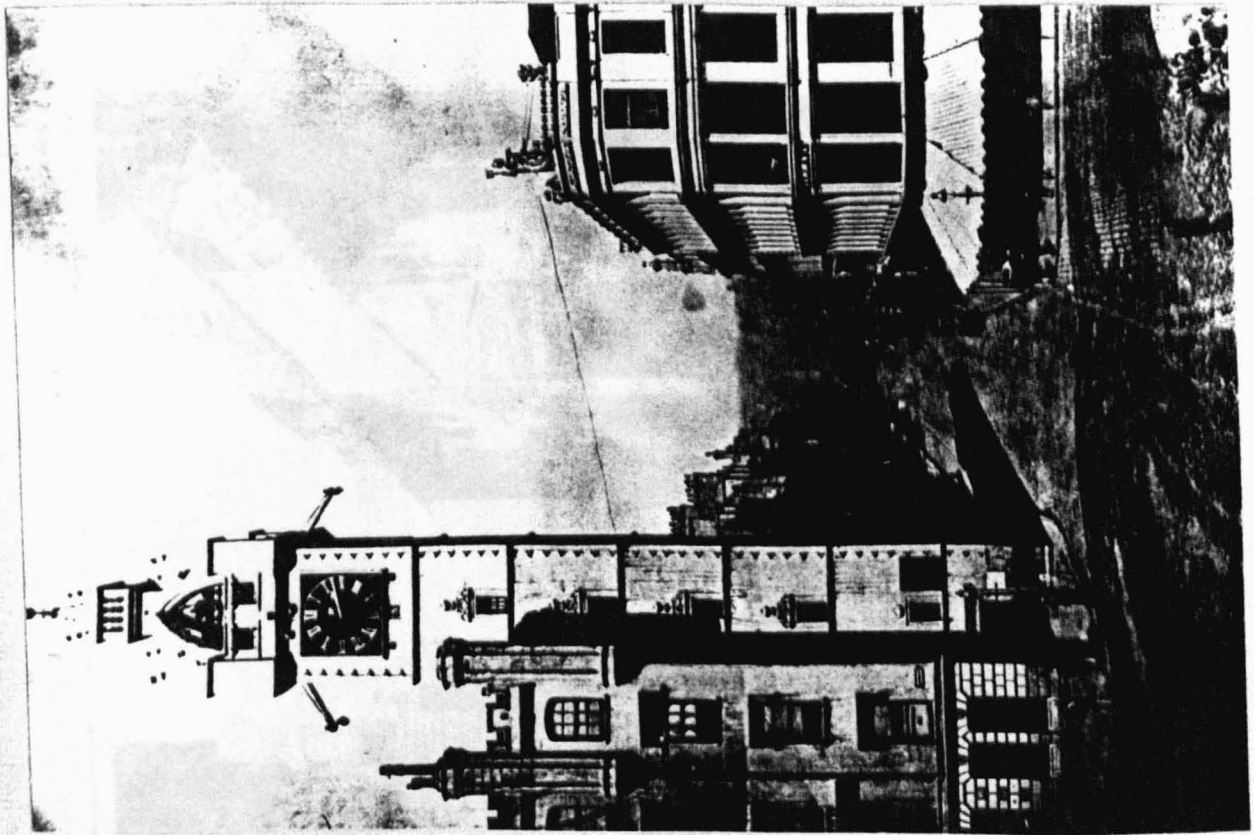
2.14 Thomas Annan, Close, No. 37, High Street, 1868.



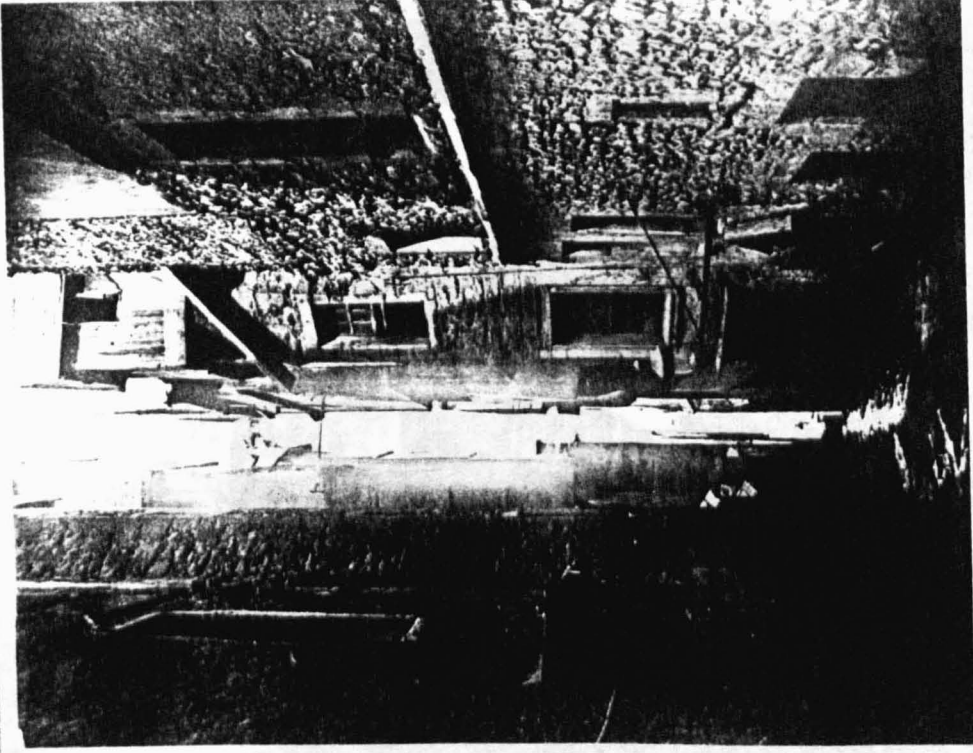
2.15 Thomas Annan, Close, No. 193, High Street, 1868.



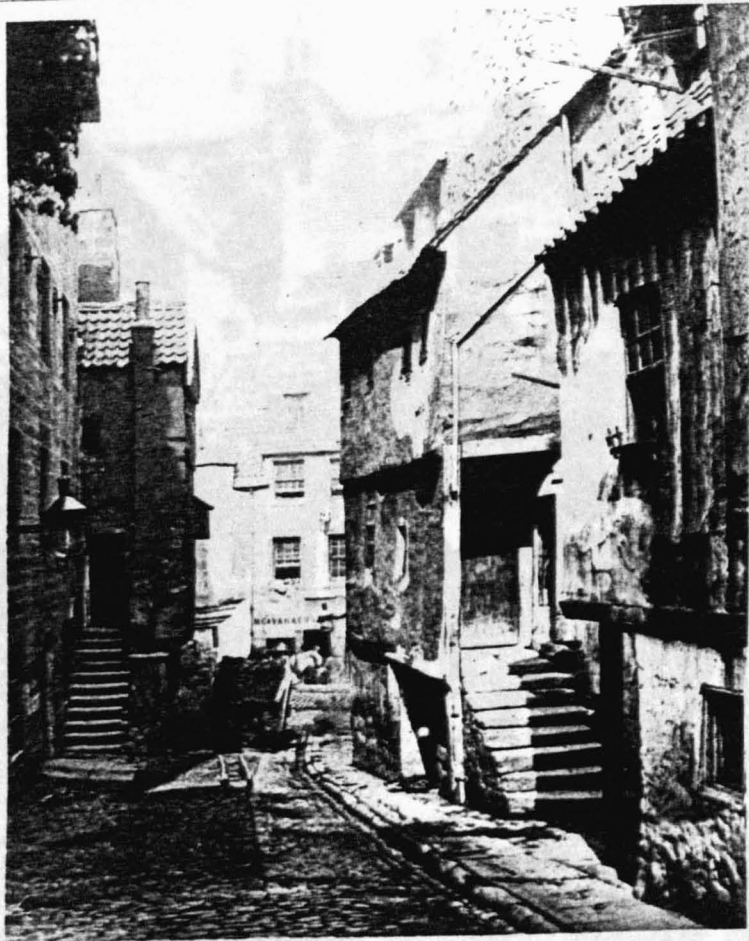
2.16 Thomas Annan, Close, No. 148, High Street, 1868.



2.17 Thomas Annan, High Street, from the Cross, 1868.



2.18 Archibald Burns, Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh, 1868.



HIGH SCHOOL WYND, COWGATE.

2.19 Archibald Burns, *Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh*, 1868.

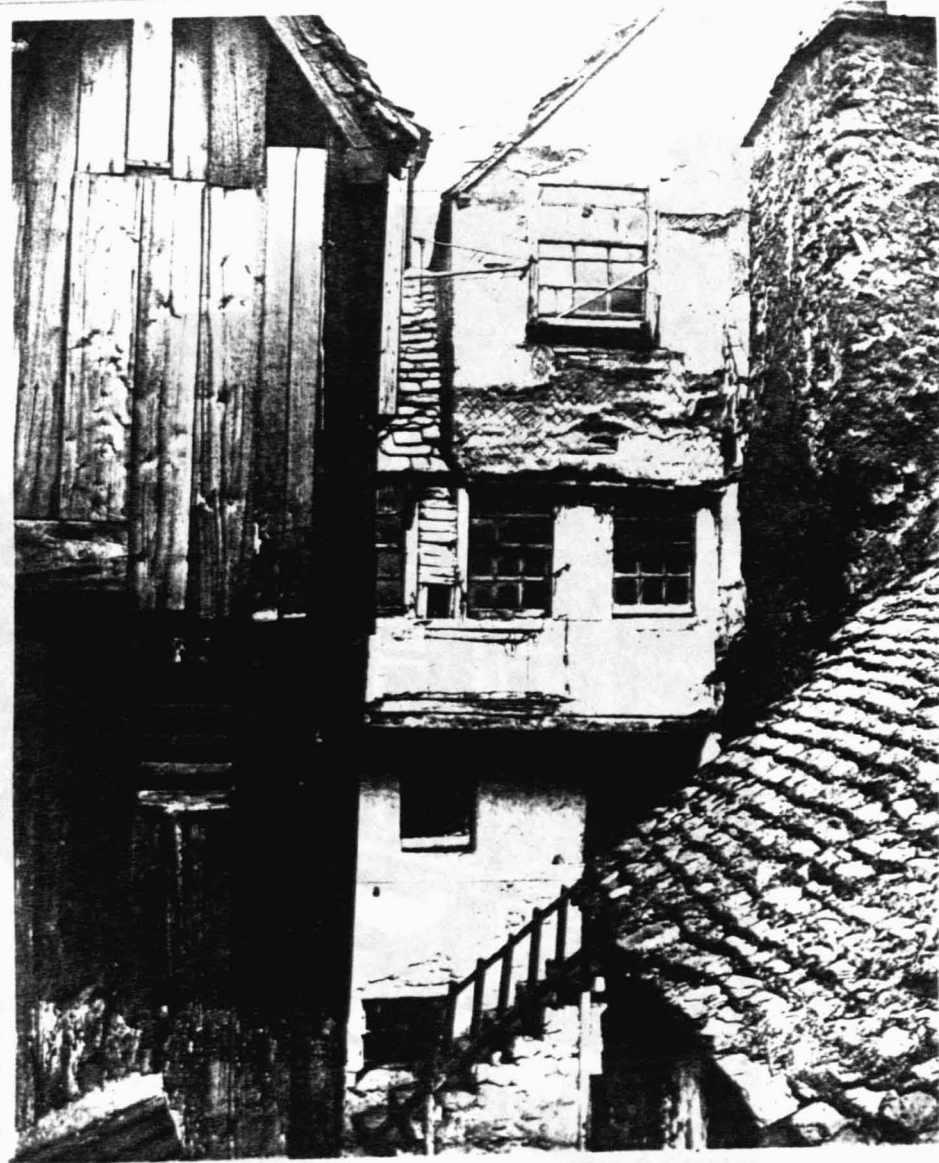


CARDINAL BEATON'S HOUSE, COWGATE.

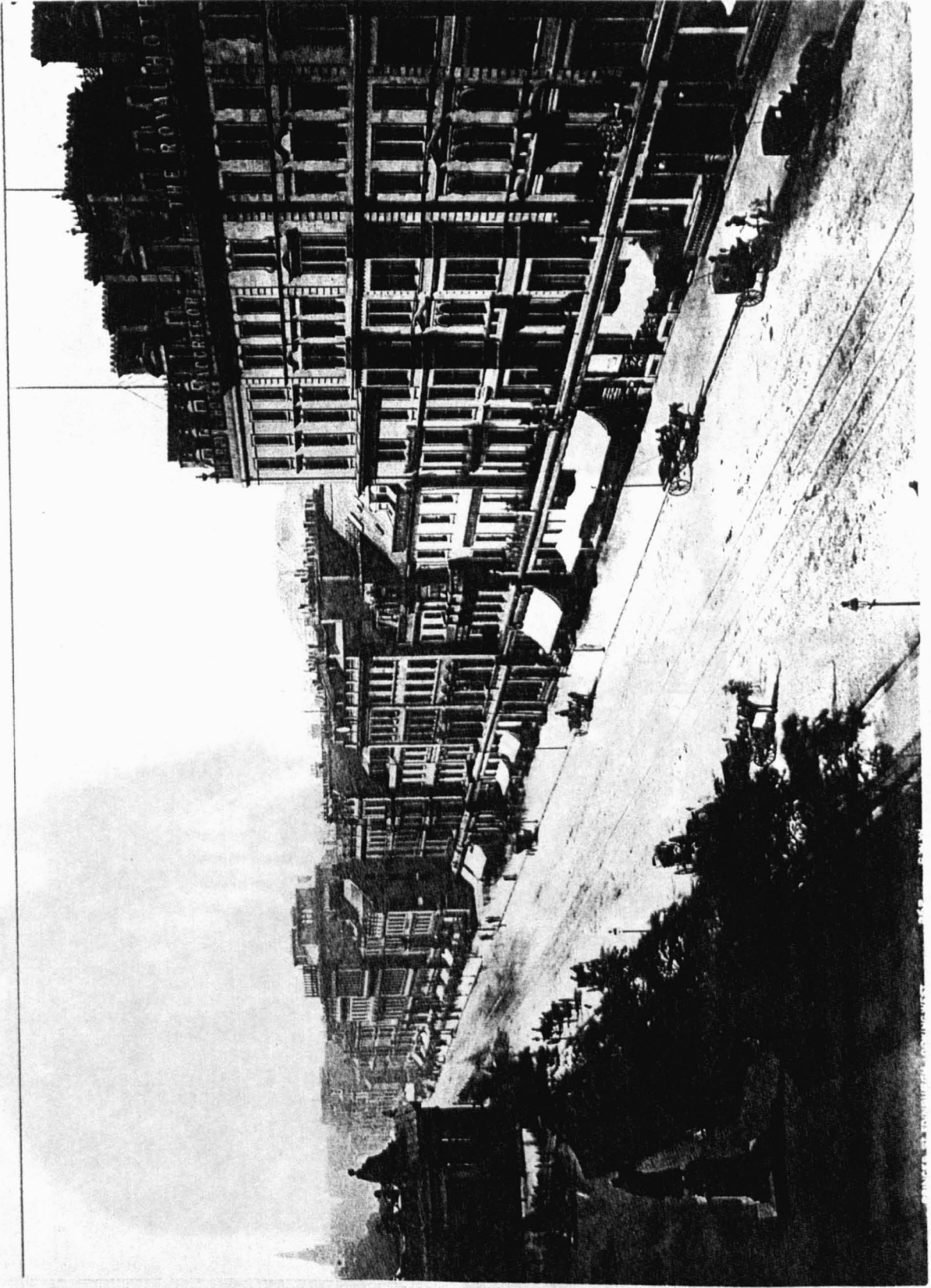
2.20 Archibald Burns, *Picturesque "Bits" from Old Edinburgh*, 1868.



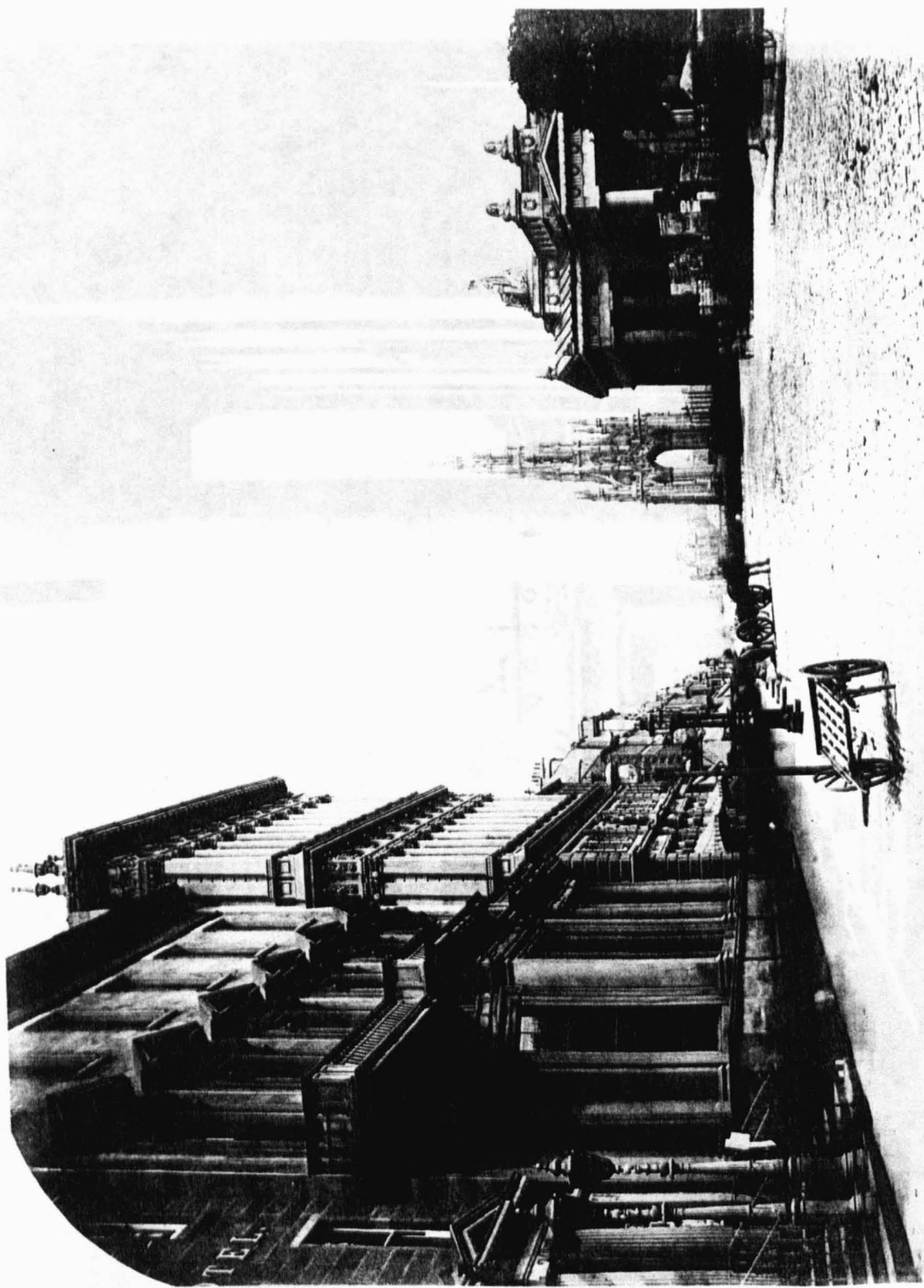
TIMBER-FRONTED HOUSES, COWGATE.



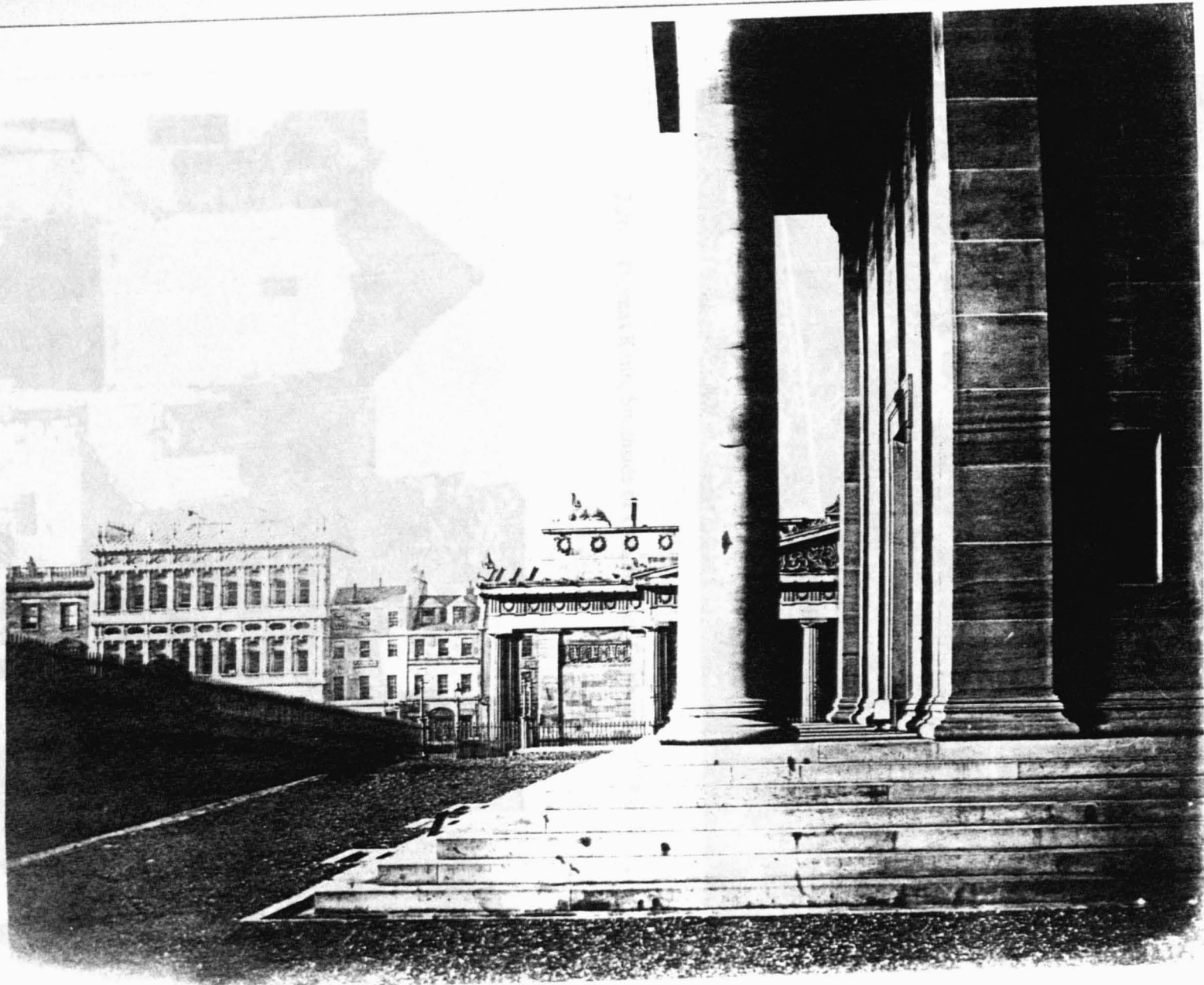
"BIT" IN BULL'S CLOSE, COWGATE.



2.23 George Washington Wilson, Princes Street, Edinburgh, c.1880.



2.24 William Donaldson Clark, Princes Street (Scott Monument), Edinburgh, c.1858.



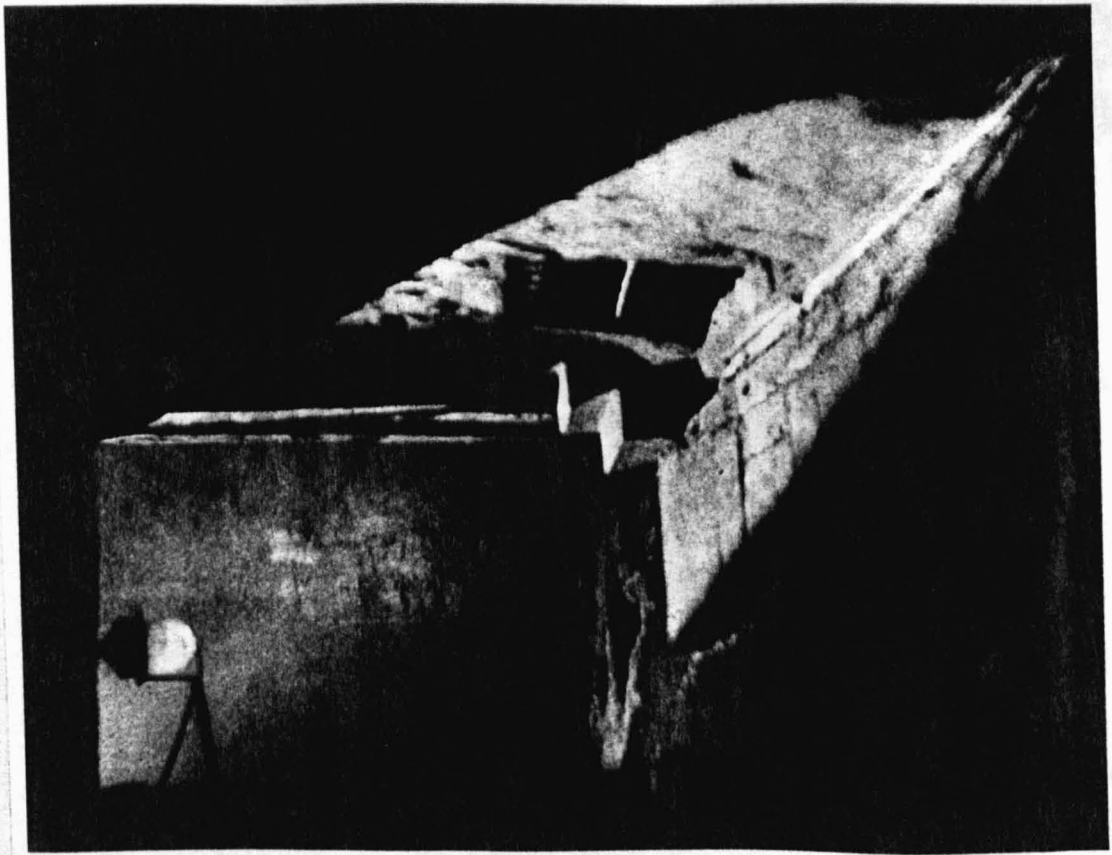
2.25 William Donaldson Clark, The National Gallery and Royal Institution, Edinburgh, c.1858.



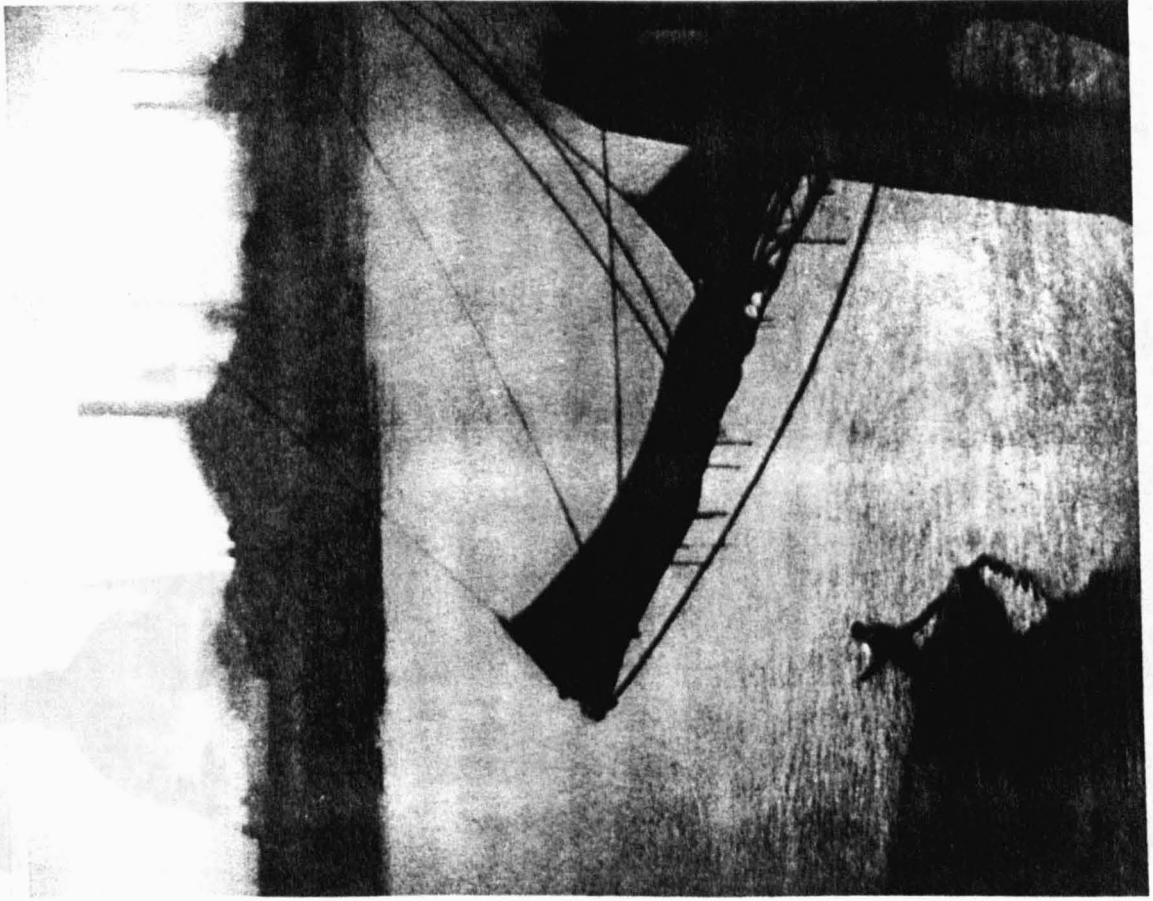
2.26 Thomas Keith, Southside of Grassmarket, Edinburgh, 1854-6.



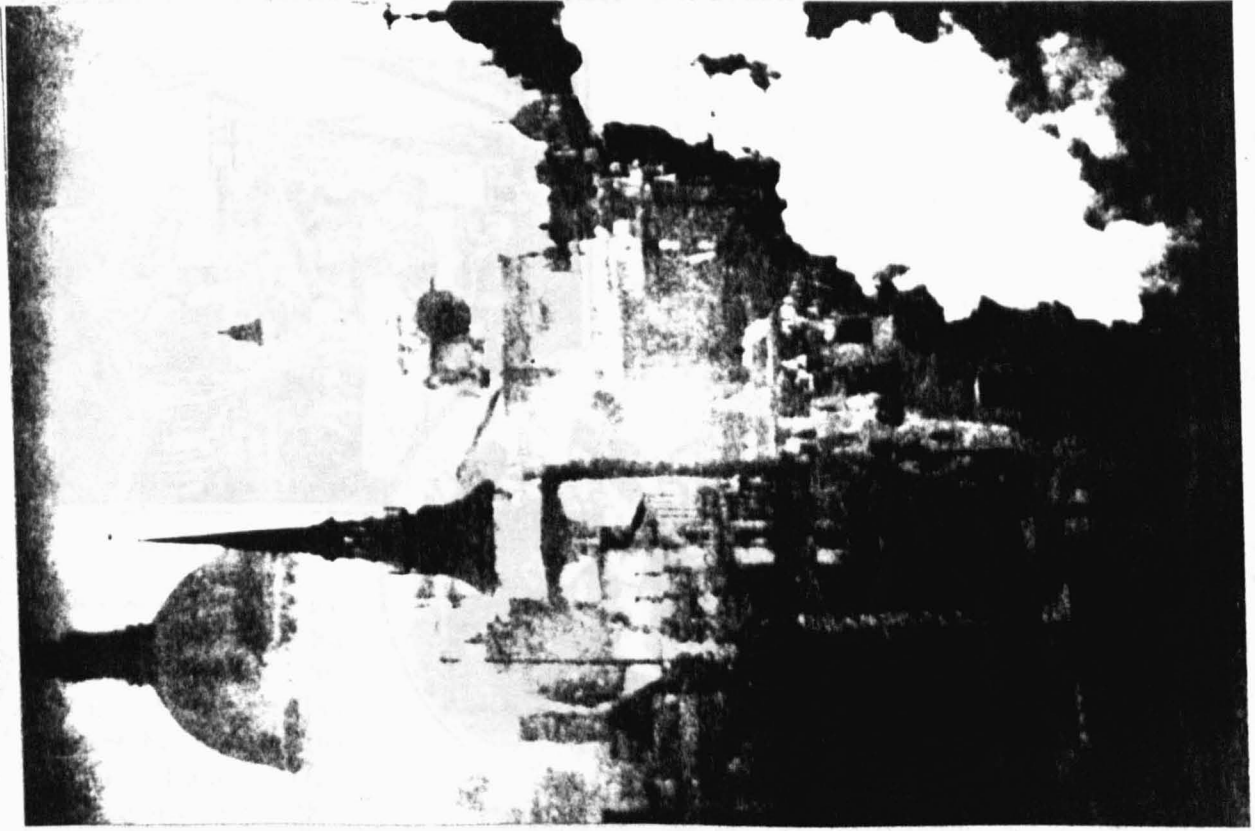
2.27 Thomas Keith, Whitehorse Close, Edinburgh, 1854-6.



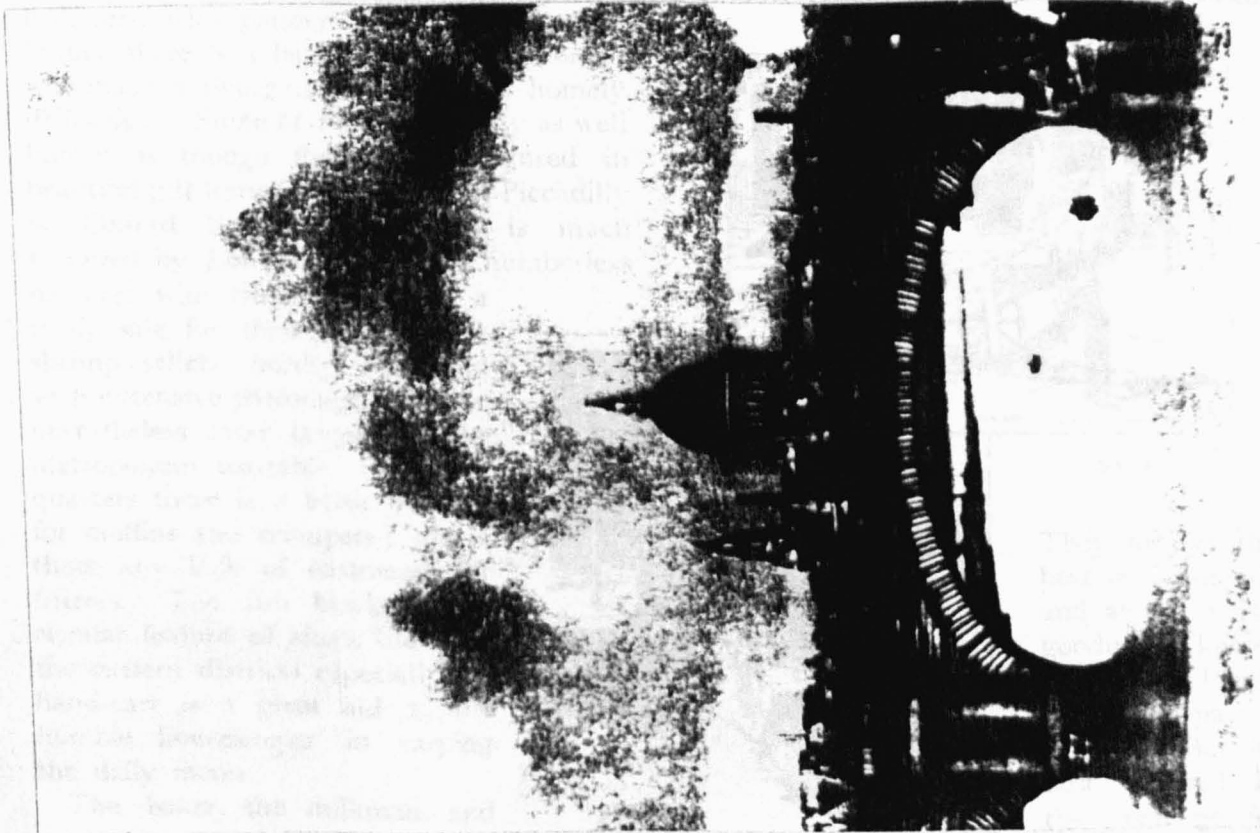
2.28 Alvin Coburn, Weir's Close, Edinburgh, 1905.



2.29 Alvin Coburn, Wapping, London, 1909.



2.31 Alvin Coburn, St. Paul's from Ludgate Circus, London, 1909.



2.30 Alvin Coburn, St. Paul's from the River, London, 1909.



SWEETSTUFF MAKING.

the eyes of his patrons. In this respect he differs from all his rivals. In Farringdon Street, Fleet Street, the Strand, Ludgate Hill, and many other thoroughfares pedestrians

are tempted with nougat and American caramels, Turkish delight, and other mysterious compounds set out on handcarts with some pretence at artistic effect.

Besides the street confectioners and fruiterers, who pander, of course, to mere luxury, there is a legion of men and women who make a living out of the sale of homely delicacies. Some of these are nearly as well known as though their names figured in beautiful gilt letters over a shop in Piccadilly or Oxford Street. Watercress is much favoured by Londoners, and the numberless hawkers who trade in it find a ready sale for their stock. The shrimp-sellers hardly command such extensive patronage, but they nevertheless cater largely for the metropolitan tea-table. In many quarters there is a brisk demand for muffins and crumpets; nor is there any lack of customers for fritters. The fish hawker is a regular feature of street life. In the eastern districts especially his hand-cart is a great aid to the humble housekeeper in varying the daily menu.

The baker, the milkman, and



FLAGS AND WINDMILLS.

the saltman may not be popular idols, but from a commercial point of view their position is impregnable. The milkman labours under the imputation of slavishly imitating the early rising habits of the lark. A sleepy age might forgive him the plagiarism; what excites its wrath is the spirited reveille he performs with his tin cans on the area railings.

Most of those who cultivate a street industry adhere absolutely to one line of business. Take the men who hawk hats — and there are many of them — they never think of bartering any other article of dress. Almost any day one can buy a brand new silk hat for five or six shillings in certain streets. The seller is usually also the maker, which accounts for its cheapness. Its pattern might not be the theme of universal

laudation at a church parade; but hats are worn at other places. Then there is the vendor of hats that have seen their zenith, and in the autumn of their days are glad to find a resting place on anybody's head.



SALT.



BREAD.

They are at the best second-hand; and at the worst, goodness knows how many hands they have passed through. But the best as well as the worst go for

a song. Needles and thread and similar trifles for women's



SHRIMPS.



WINDOW-CLEANING.

of the limited liability companies which exist for purposes of



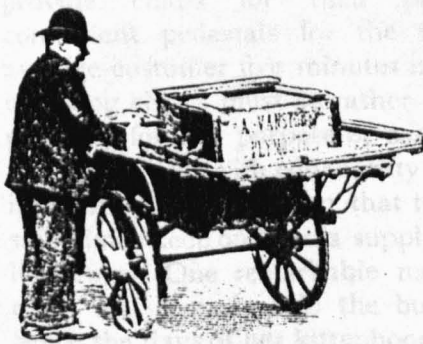
WATERCRESS.

use are hawked from house to house in the poorer neighbourhoods, while many an honest penny is turned by the sale of plants suitable for suburban gardens.

To one man, at all events, London never metes out hard times. It is always the harvest of the chimney-sweep, whose familiar cry brings his calling within the category of Street Industries. One sees him everywhere, and the richness of his workaday complexion serves as well as an auditor's report to demonstrate his prosperity. On Sundays he often drives out with his family, happy in the consciousness that neither war nor pestilence can eliminate soot from this beautiful world. The window-cleaner is almost equally happy so far as business is concerned, for the climate is his faithful ally. Sometimes he is a permanent servant of one

army of window-cleaners who work for themselves. These are often Jacks-of-all-trades, ready to put in a pane of glass as well as to polish it.

The coal man is known by his cry. As he leads his horse through the streets he occasionally curves his hand round his mouth and indulges in a demoniacal yell, which is doubtless his professional rendering of "Coal! Coal!" Nobody understands him; everybody hears him! Another familiar street trader is the greengrocer, who carts his stock from door to door, and whose brisk business many a shopkeeper might envy. The china-mender is a less striking figure in the streets than the chair-mender. When the latter is at work a contingent of children belonging to the neighbourhood generally act as his overseers.



FISH.



OLD HATS.



MILK.

aristocrat amongst those who make a living in the streets. The engraver on glass finds his patrons mainly amongst publicans, though glass ware has now become so cheap that his services are little needed.

One's sympathies go out to the shoeblack



more than to any other class of street industrialist, except perhaps the flower-girl. Little wonder; for his life is a hard one, his earnings are sometimes precarious, and yet he is always civil, and apparently content with a small payment. The shoeblacks, following the example of more important crafts, have trade societies. Of these the oldest and most important belongs to the City. Its members, like those of the Borough organisation, wear red jackets. Blue is the colour of the fraternity in East London. In Marylebone they affect white, and at King's Cross brown. Some of the more well-to-do members of the trade provide chairs for their patients, with convenient pedestals for the feet. To the average customer five minutes in one of these imposing chairs must be rather trying. It is probably for the purpose of assisting modest patrons to bear with equanimity the "splendid isolation" of the position that the proprietors sometimes keep on hand a supply of periodical literature. One remarkable member of the corps has a partner in the business—a cat. Since the days of her kittenhood she has been

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in the trade. A most worthy cat she is in all respects, her one fault being a pronounced spice of vanity. At a word of praise, such as one might let drop as a matter of course without any thought of flattering a reprehensible weakness, she arches her back and rubs against your ankles, purring in an ecstasy of delight.

Step-cleaners in the Metropolis—"step-girls" they are usually called—are legion. It is a curious calling, but those who follow it no doubt prefer it, with all its drawbacks, to employment which would impose restrictions on their liberty. As a class they are in a sense alien to the hard-driven sisterhood of more mature years who offer their services as charwomen. The vendor of fly-paper is more than a business man, he is a humanitarian. He displays samples of his goods on his hat, a mode of advertisement that is frequently productive of painful surprises to the unthinking fly. Many humble workers eke out an existence by preparing firewood. The pulling down

of an old building comes as a godsend to these people. The rotten timber is



bought for next to nothing, and cut into small pieces. It is then hawked through the poorer quarters in a barrow, and sold by measure.

I. COALS. II. FLY-PAPERS. III. WOOLWORK PICTURE MAKING. IV. SHOEBLACK.



PICCADILLY.



NEW CUT, LAMBETH.



2.36 London Stereoscopic Company, Cockspur Street and Trafalgar Square, c.1886.



2.37 Anon., Whitehall and Trafalgar Square, c.1900.



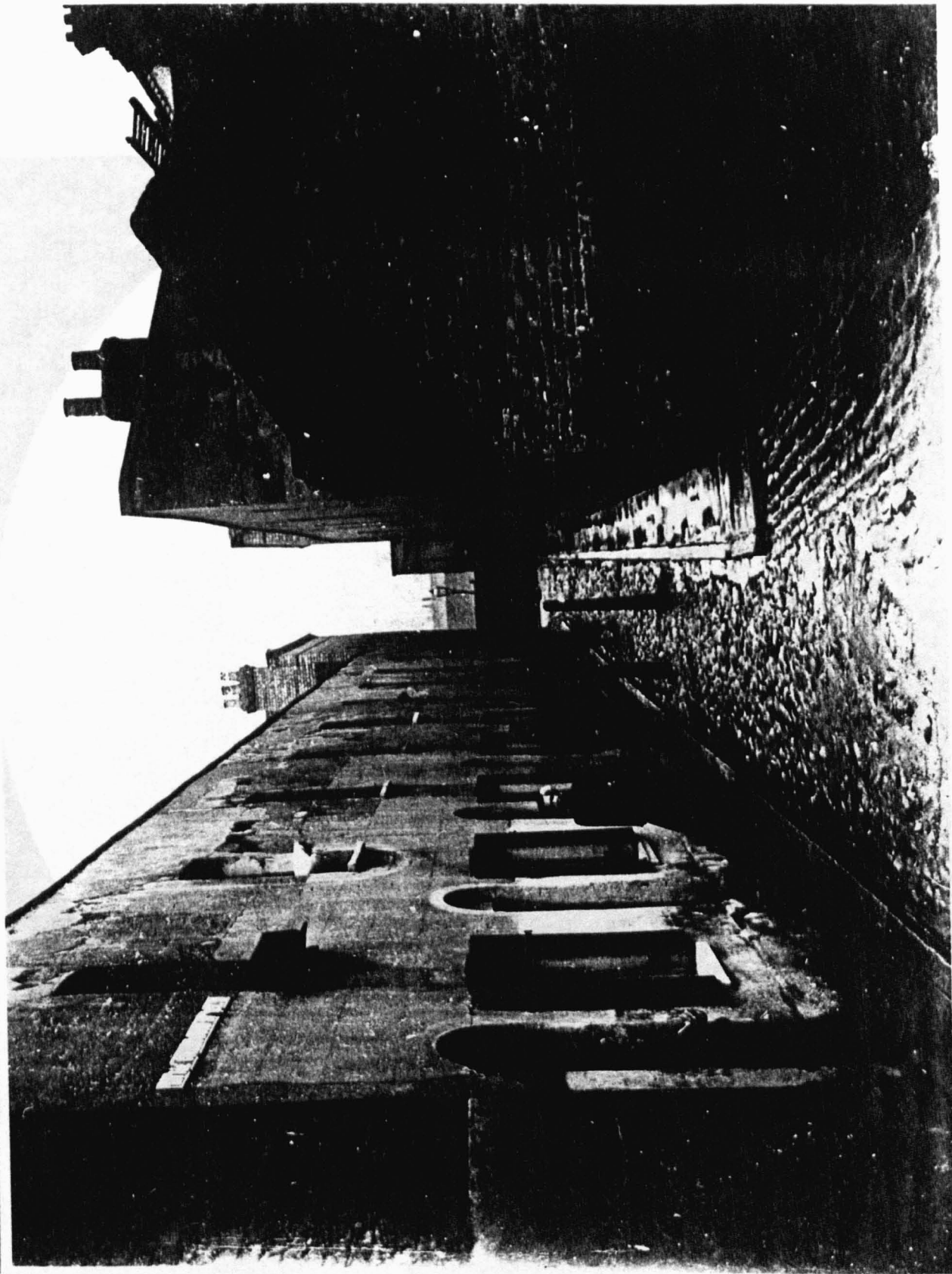
2.38 Anon., Westminster and the Houses of Parliament, c.1890.



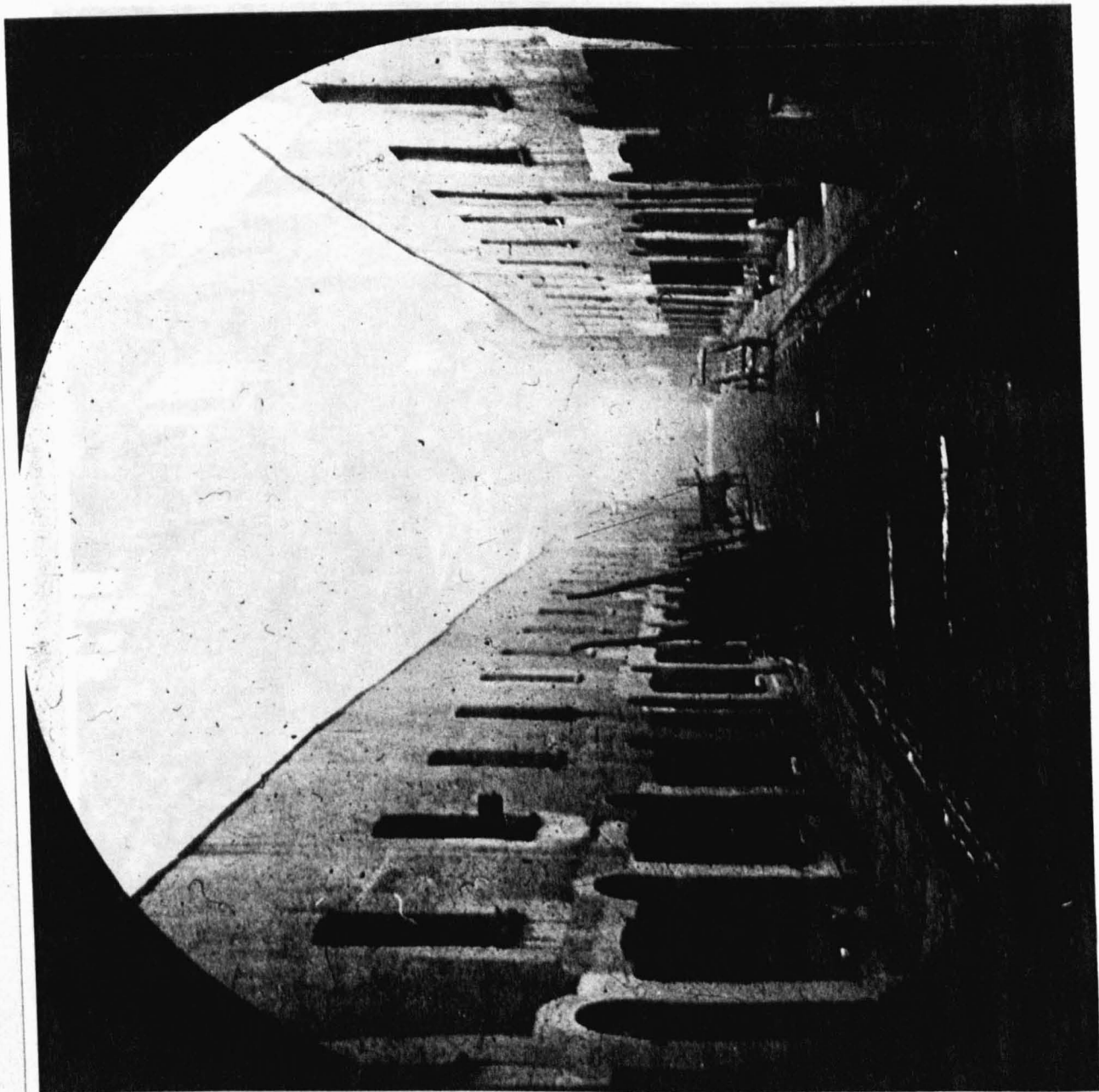
2.39 Anon., Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's from Fleet Street, c.1890.



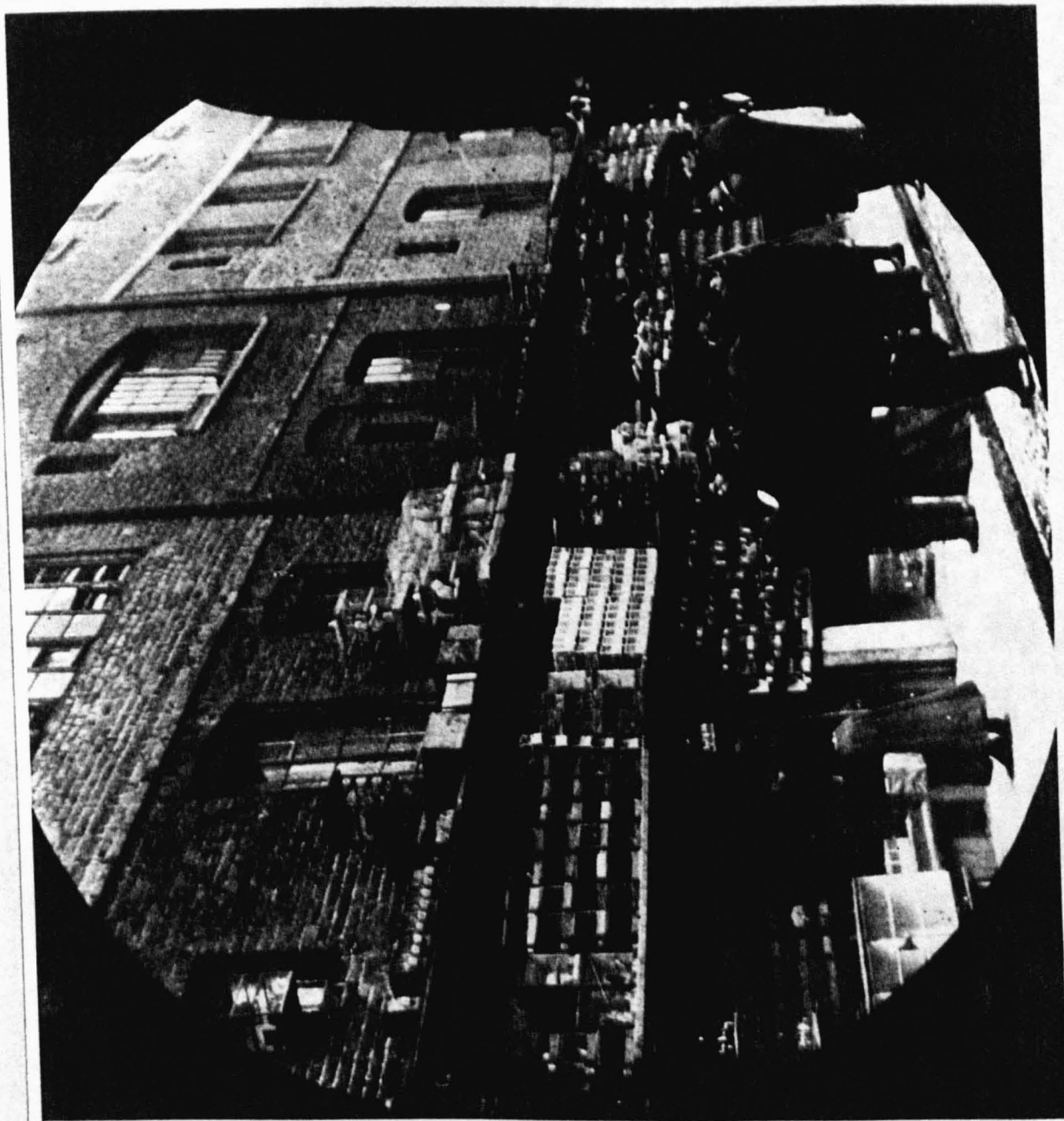
2.40 John Galt, Little Collingwood Street, Bethnal Green c.1893-4



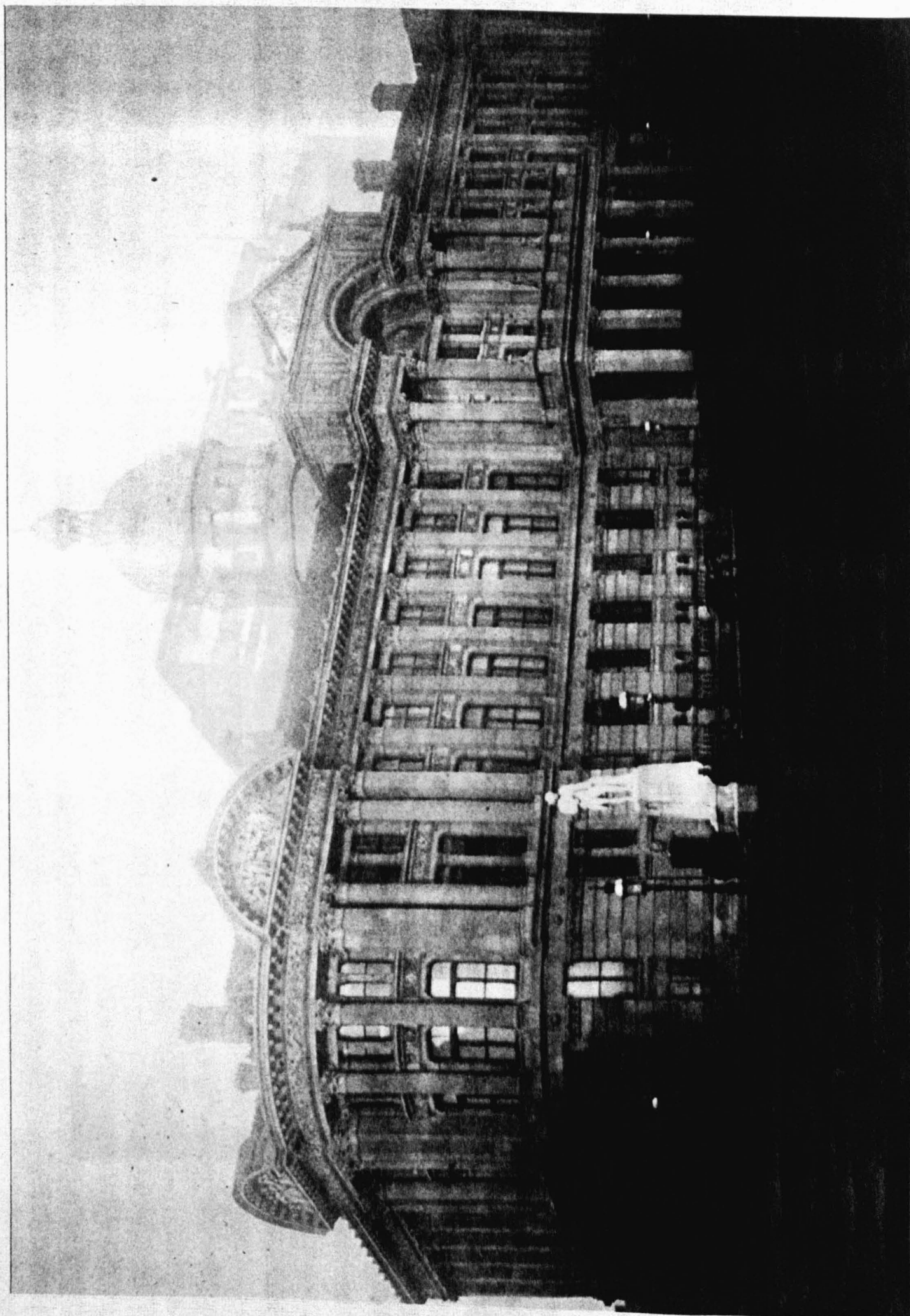
2.41 John Galt, Little Collingwood Street, Bethnal Green, c.1893-4.



2.42 John Galt, Slum Street, Bethnal Green, c.1893-4.



2.43 John Galt, Sunday Bird Fair, Spitalfields, c.1893-4.





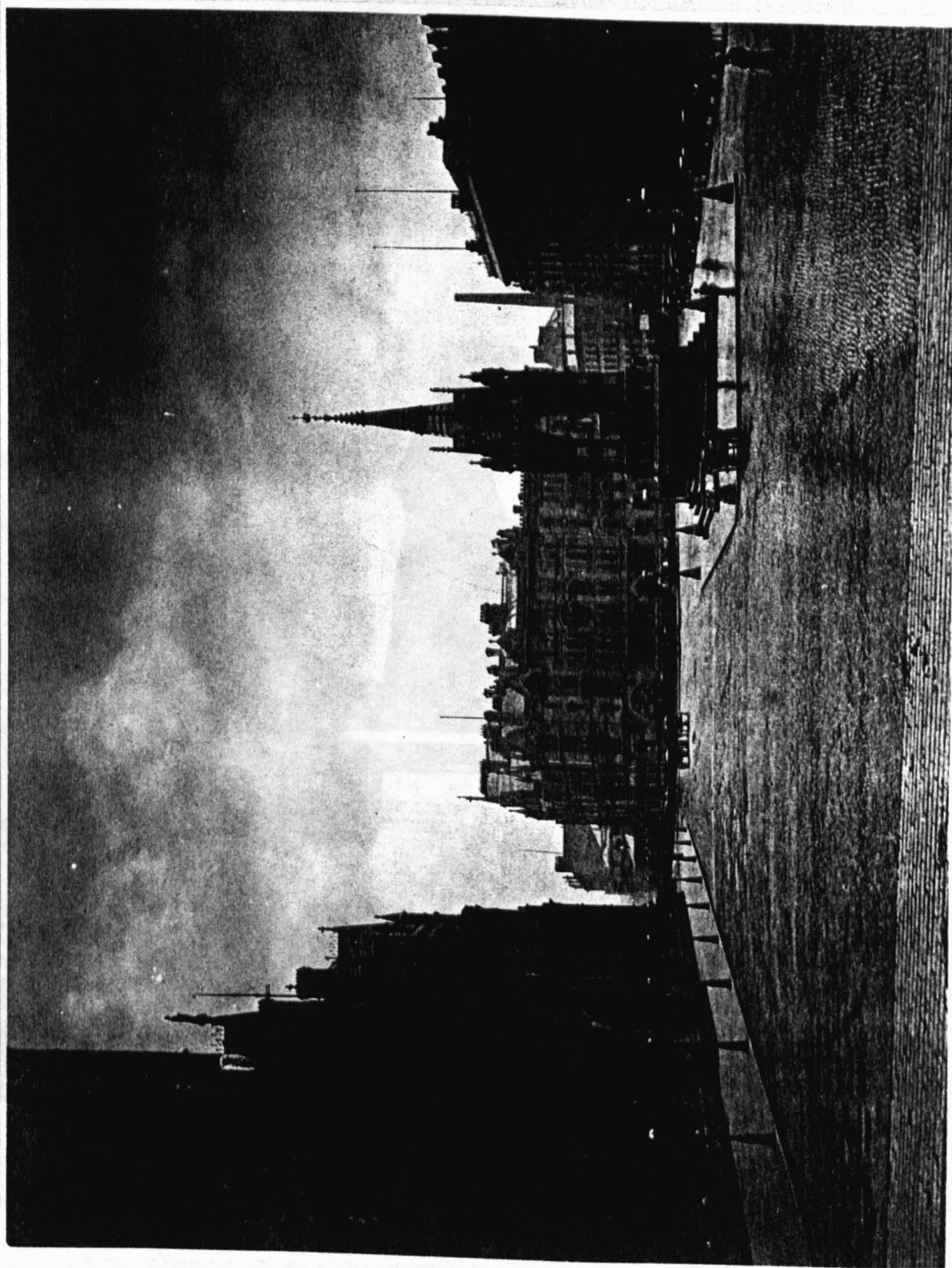
2.45 Alfred Brothers, The Free Public Library (Old Town Hall), *Manchester As It Is*, 1878.



2.46 Anon., St. George's Hall, Liverpool, c.1890.

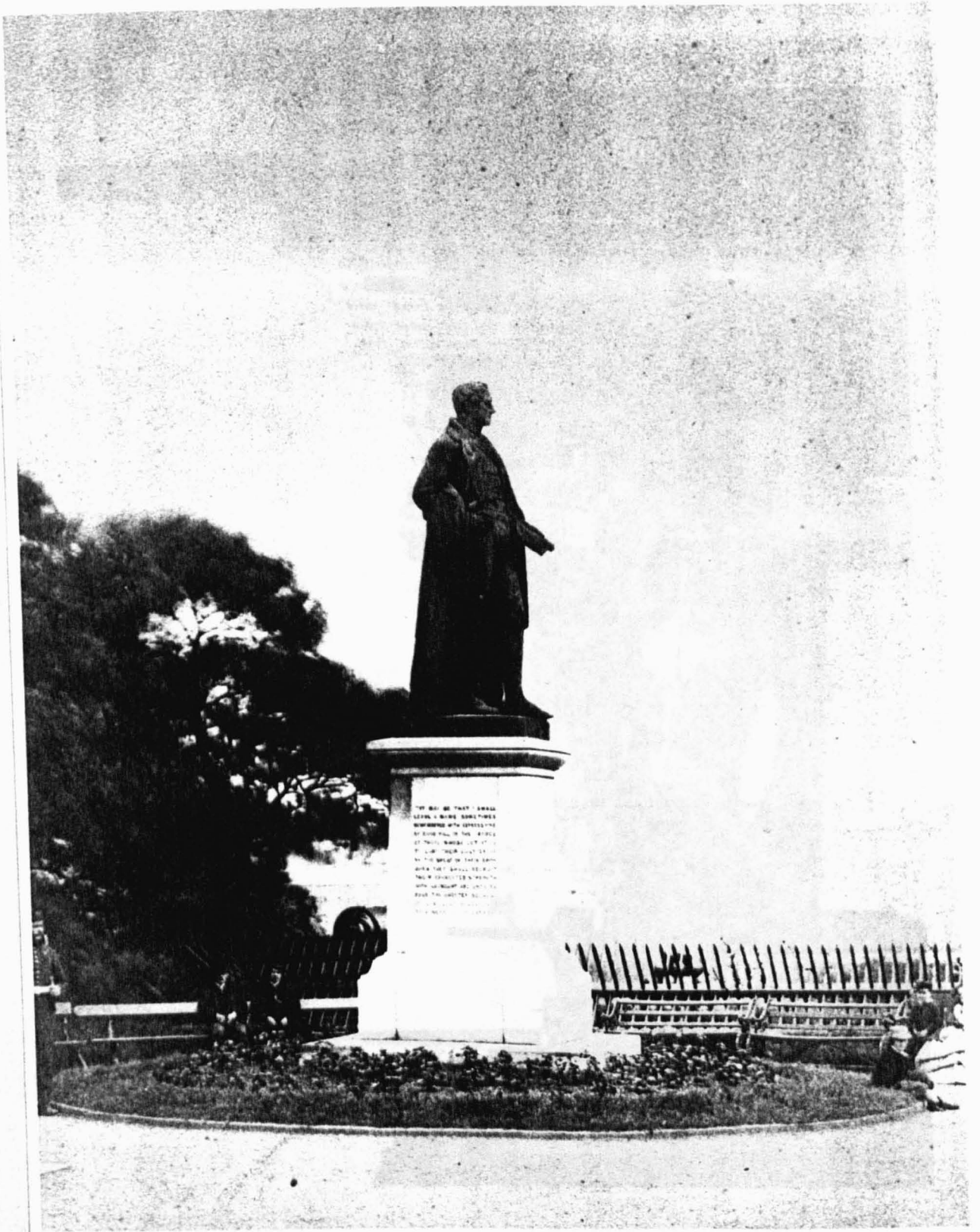


2.47 Francis Frith and Co., The Wool Exchange, Bradford, 1897.



2.48 Alfred Brothers, Albert Memorial (Albert Square), Manchester As It Is, 1878.

2.49 Alfred Brothers, Square of St. Robert, 1878.



2.49 Alfred Brothers, Statue of Sir Robert Peel, 1879.



2.50 James Mudd or George Wardley (?), The River Irwell from Blackfriars Bridge, Manchester, 1859.



2.51 George Wardley, School Mills and Old Footbridge from Blackfriar's Bridge, Manchester, 1877.



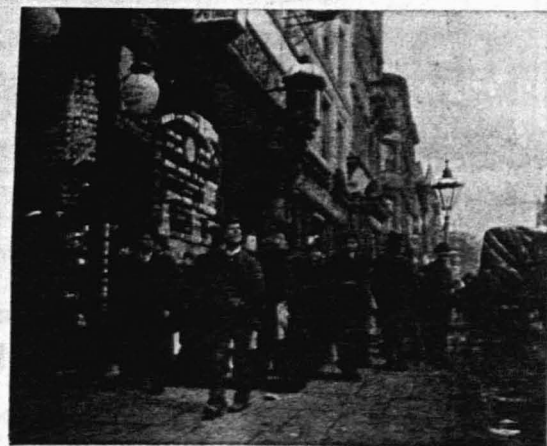
Piccadilly - 7
97 By M. Jordoff.



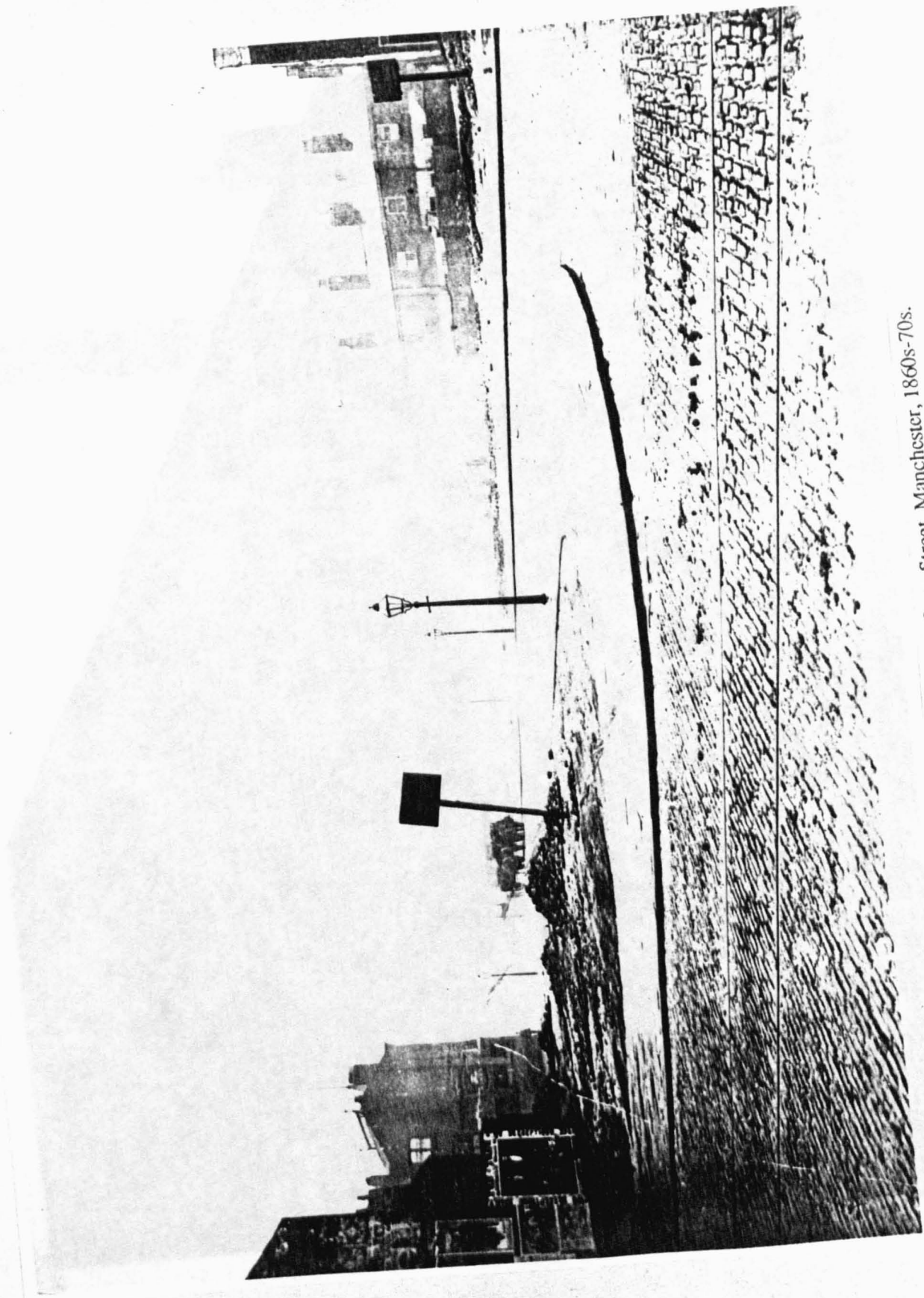
Spenceria & Piccadilly, By M. Jordoff.
98



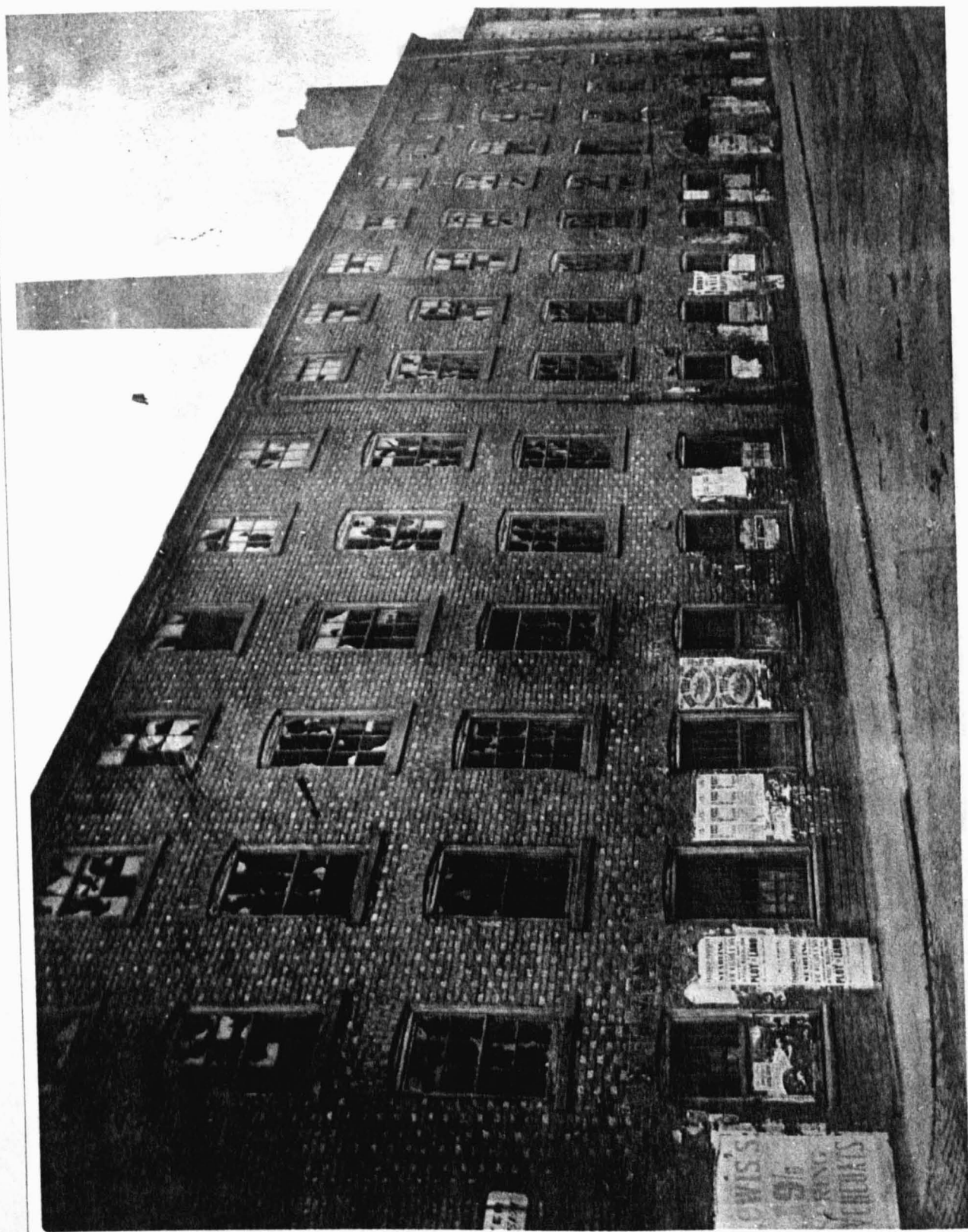
Brownie High St.
98A By S. L. Coulthurst



In Market St. From Brown St. By J. W. Wade
98B



2.53 James Mudd, Vacant Land, Quay Street, Manchester, 1860s-70s.



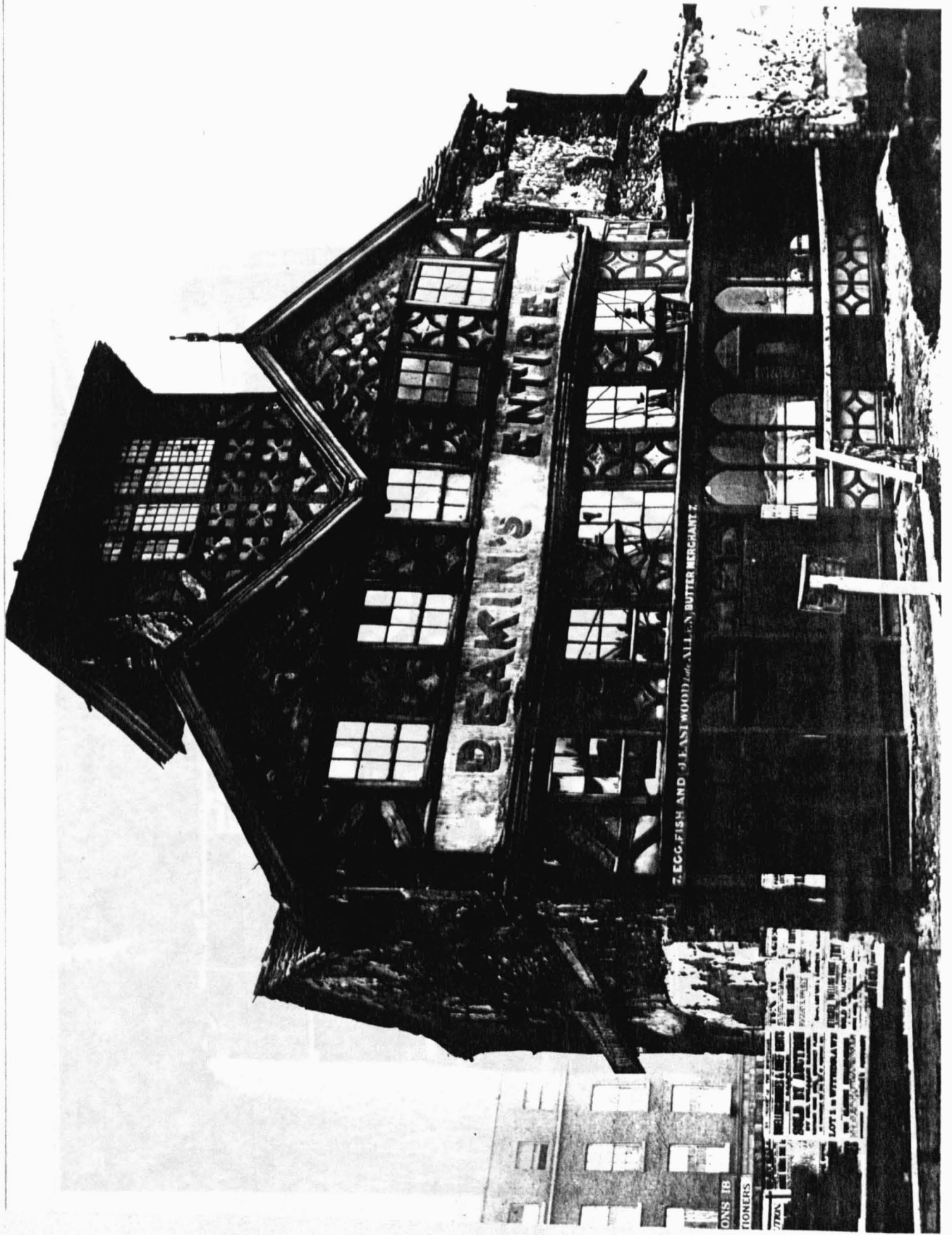
2.54 James Mudd, Water Street, Empty Mill, Manchester, 1860s-70s.



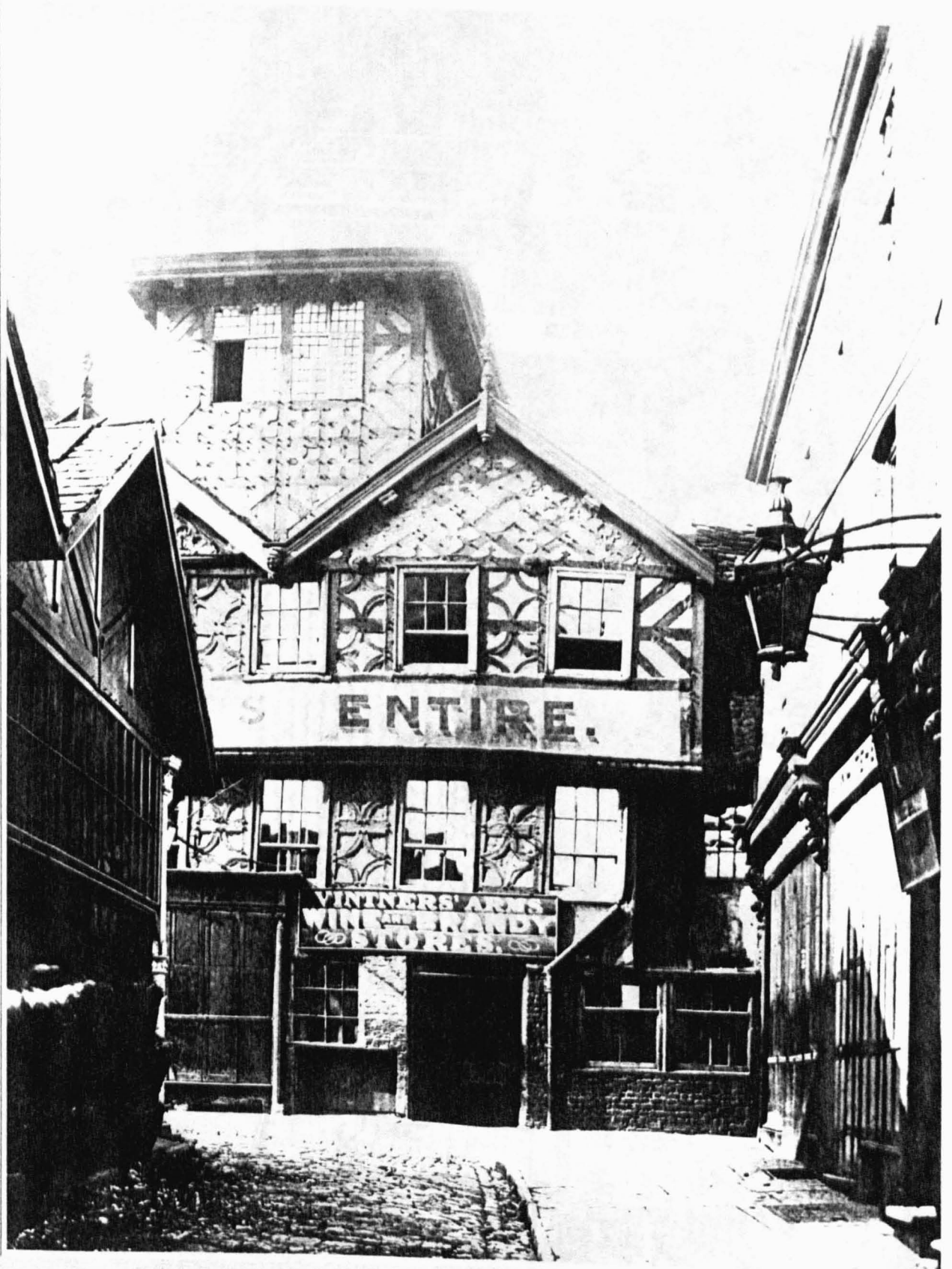
2.55 James Mudd (?), Royal Exchange Building and Old Shambles, Manchester, 1875.



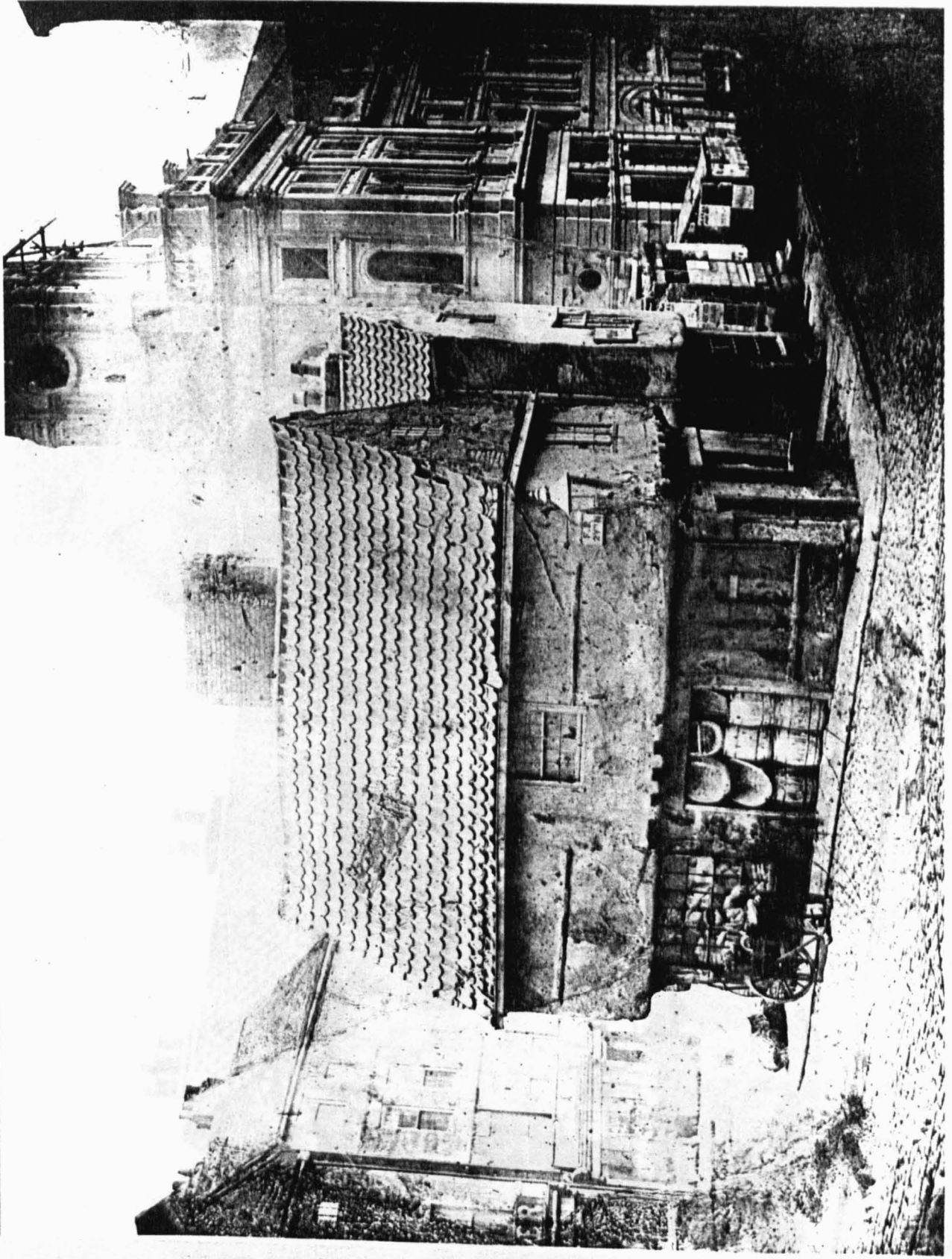
2.56 Warwick Brooks, Deakin's Entire, Market Place, Manchester, 1870s.



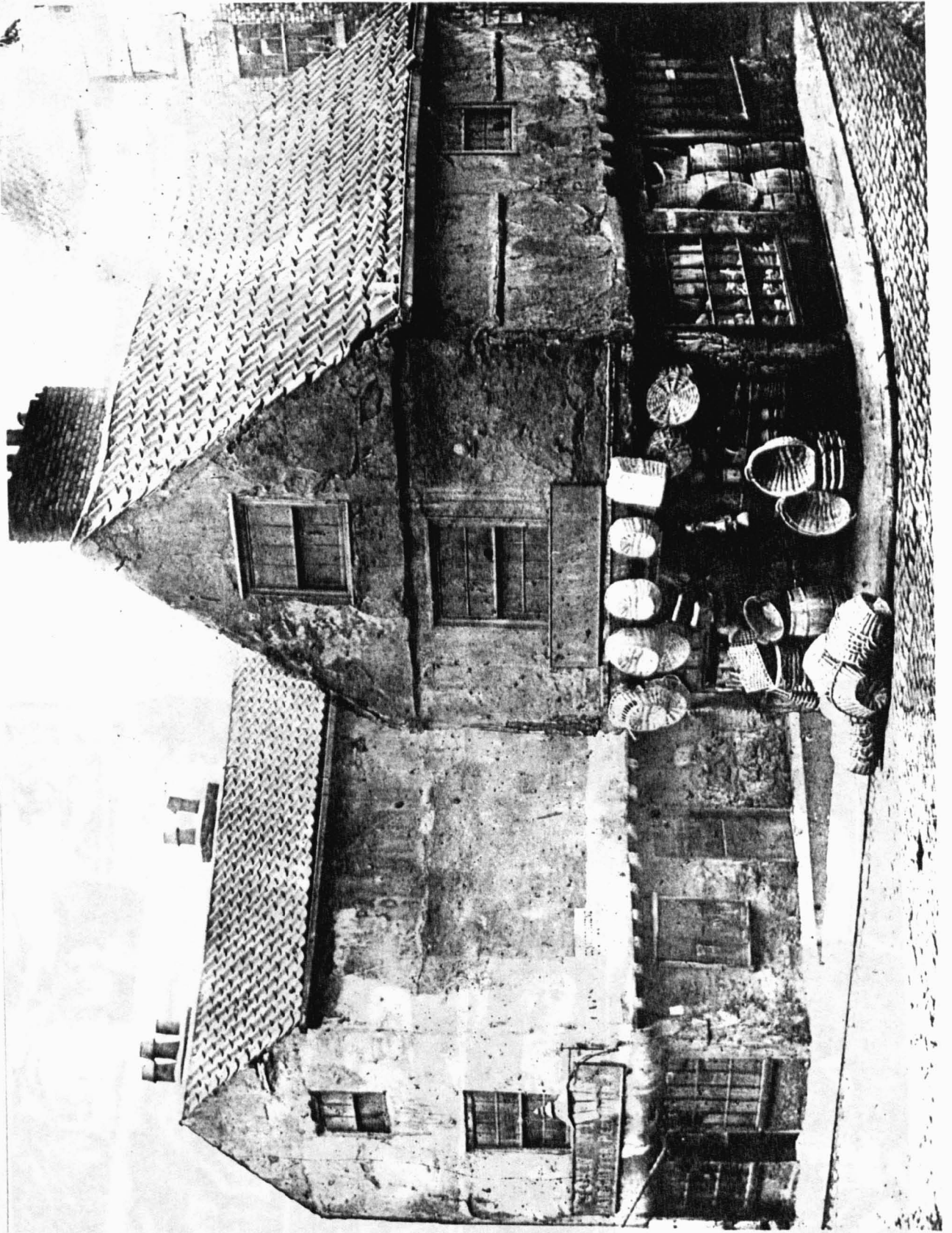
2.57 George Wardley (?), Deakin's Entire, Manchester, 1870s.



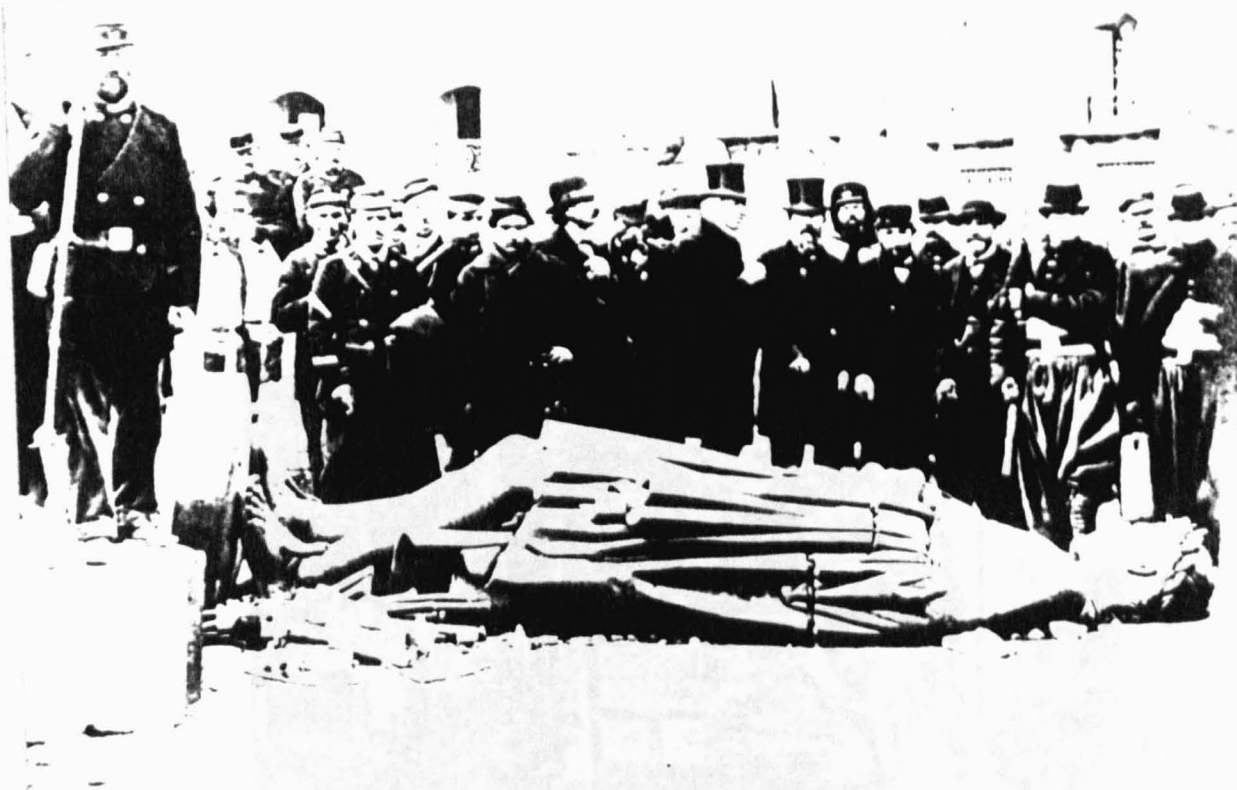
2.58 George Wardley (?), Deakin's Entire, "The Vitners Arms", Manchester, 1865.



2.59 T. Worden, Cloth Market and New Town Hall (opened 1860), Newcastle, 1858.



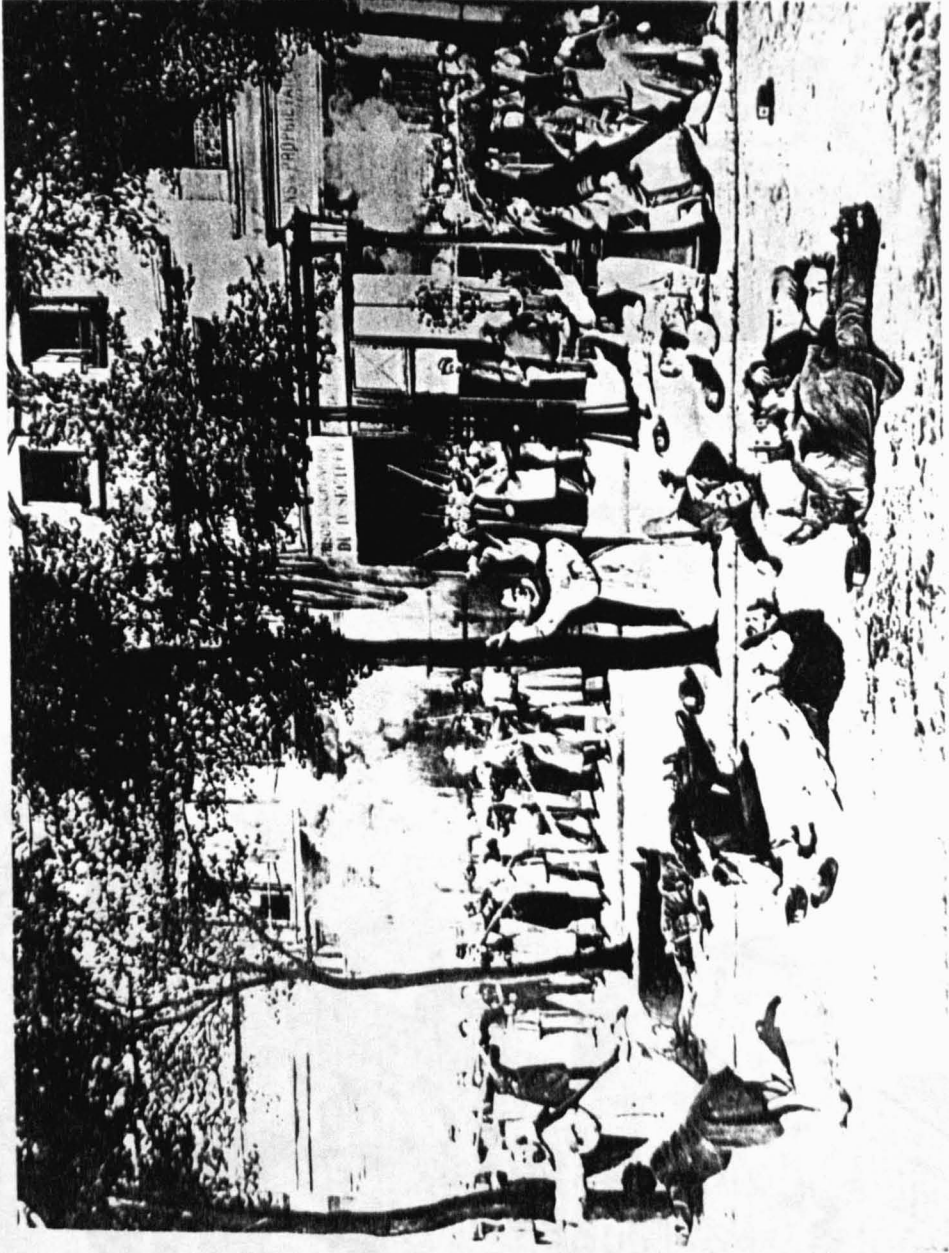
2.60 T. Worden, Humbles' Basket Shop, Cloth Market, Newcastle, 1858.



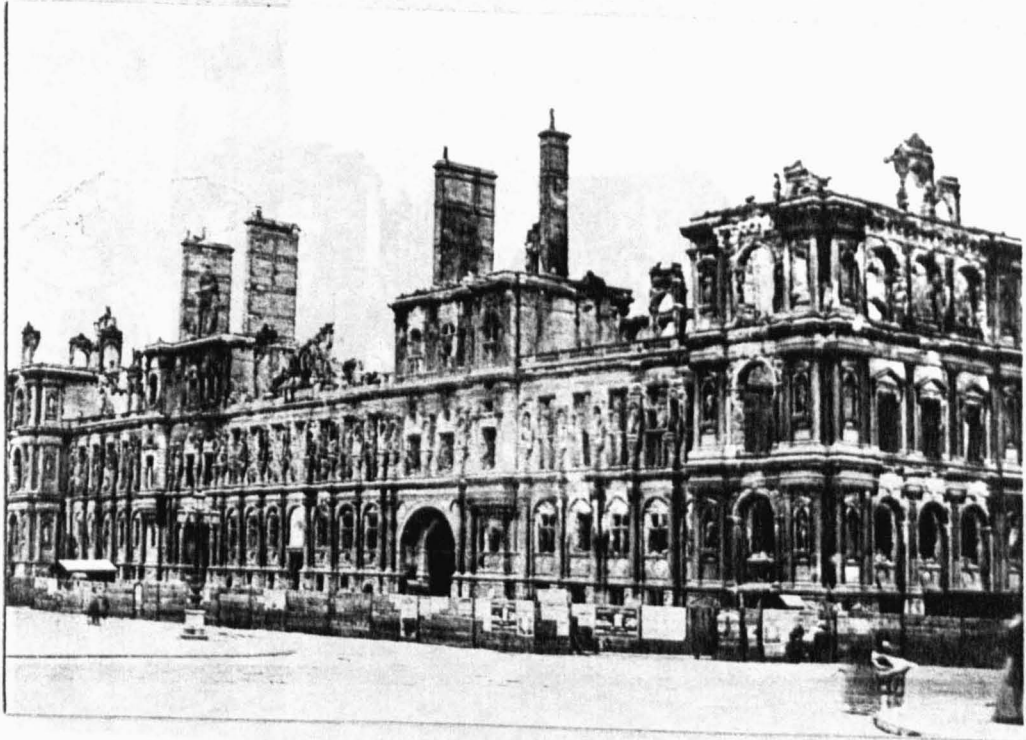
2.61 Anon., Statue of Napoleon I on the Vendôme Column after its demolition, 16 May 1871.



2.62 Anon., Bodies of unidentified Communards shot by Versailles firing squads, May 1871.



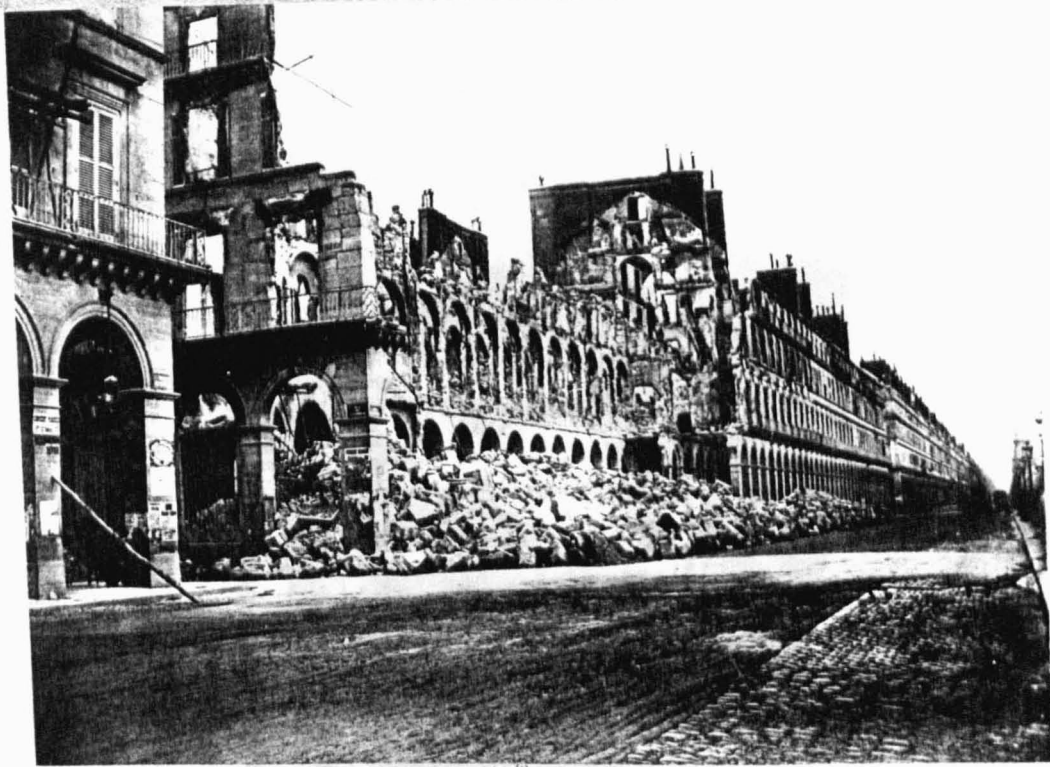
2.63 Eugène Appert, Massacre of the Arcueil Dominicans, 1871.



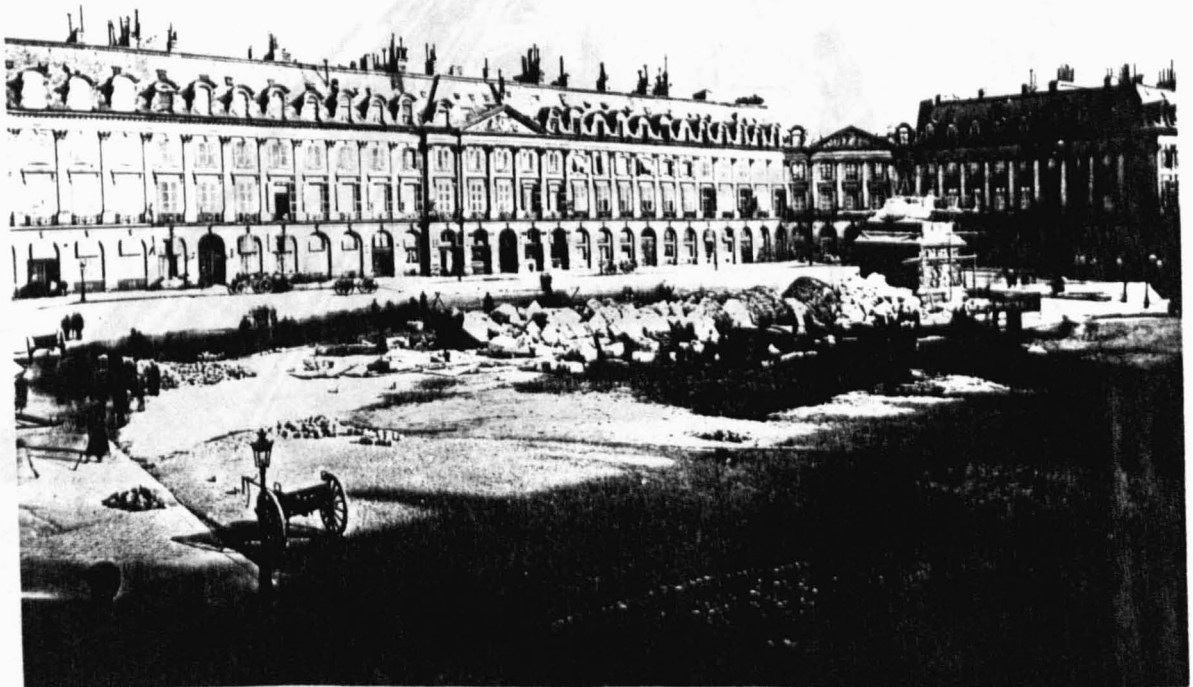
2.64 Jne. Wulff, Hotel de Ville, *Ruines de Paris*, 1871.



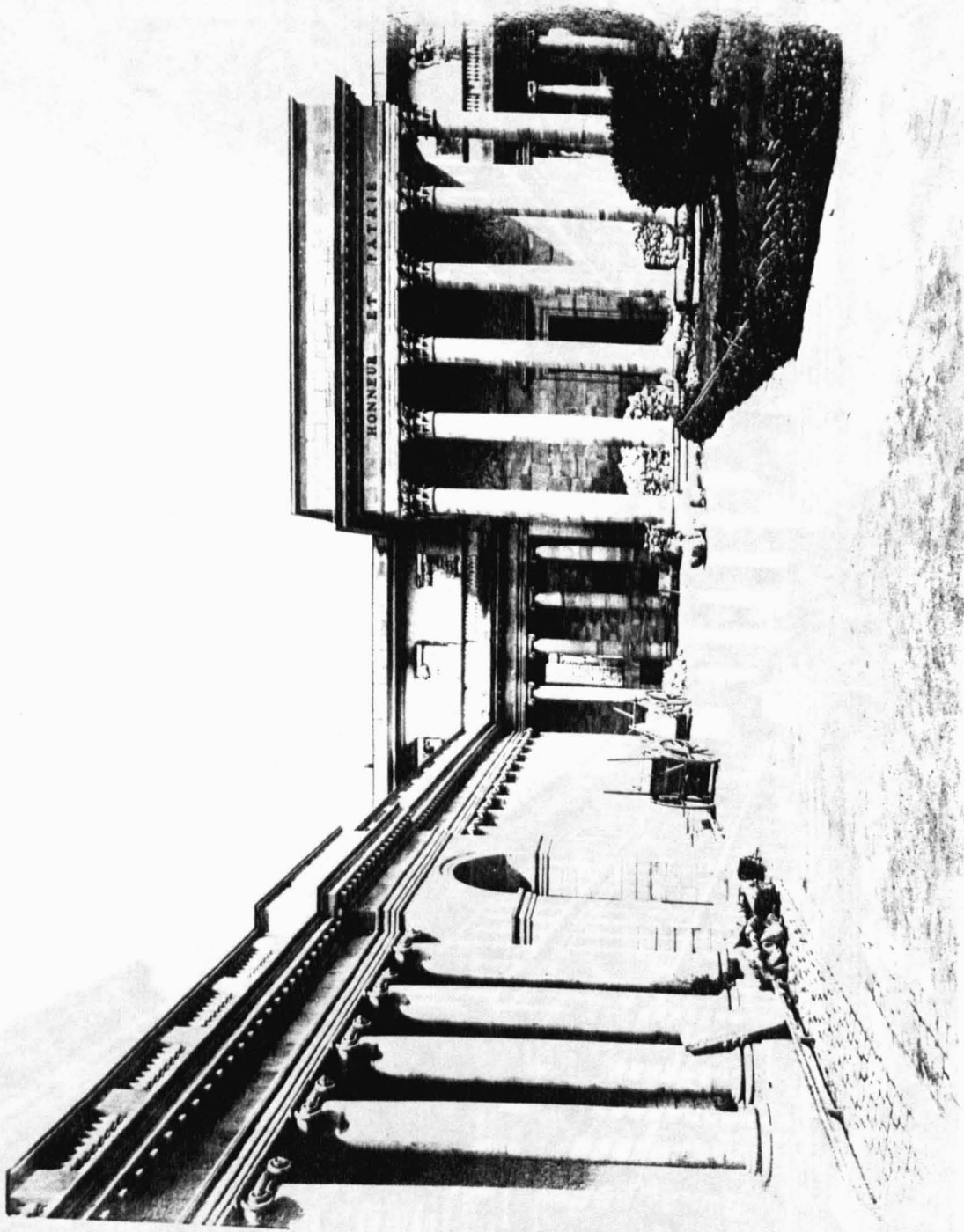
2.65 Jne. Wulff, Rue de Rivoli, *Ruines de Paris*, 1871.



2.66 Thiersault, Ministry of Finances, Rue de Rivoli, 1871.



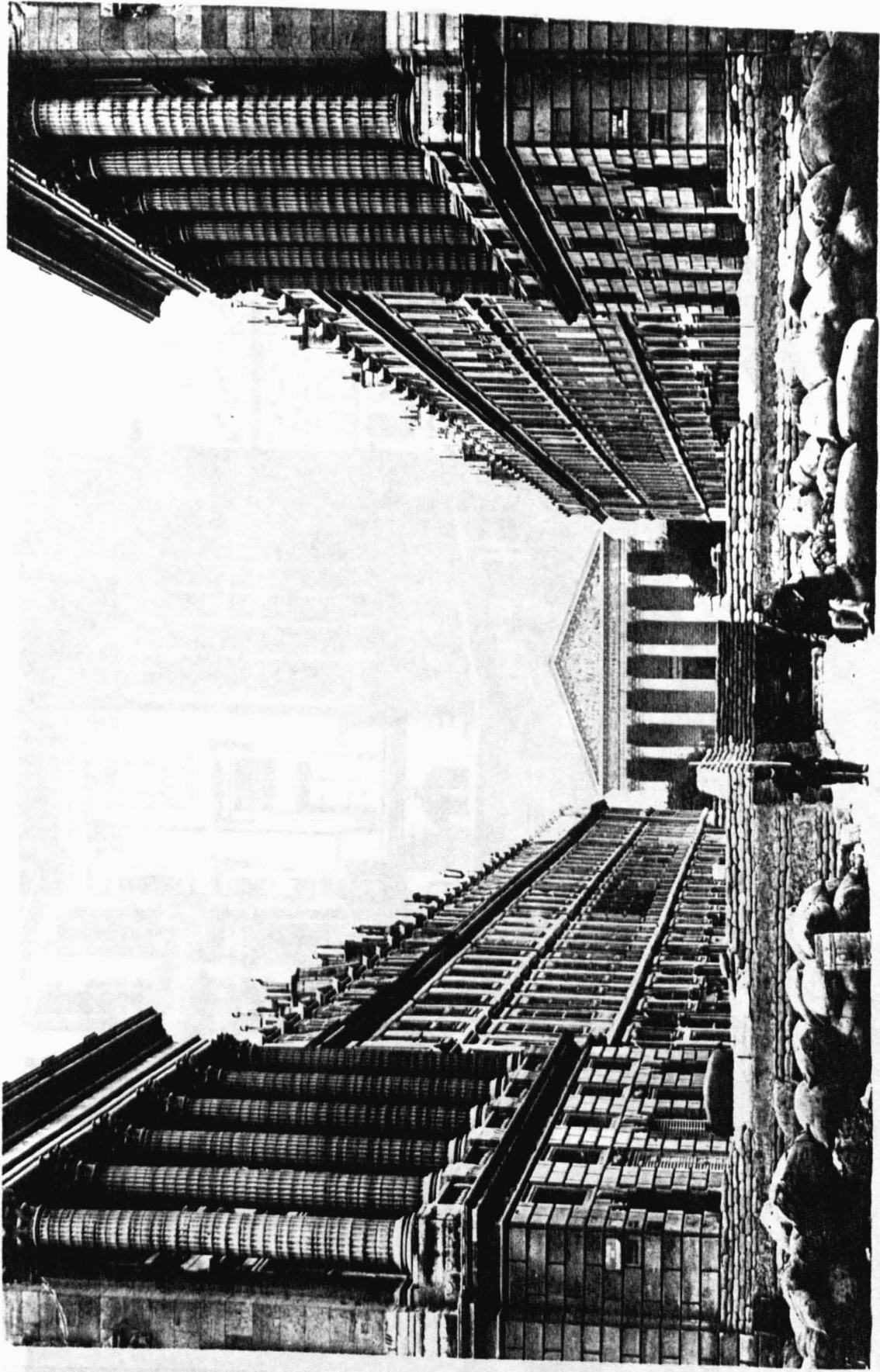
2.67 Liebert, Vendôme Column, 16 May 1871.



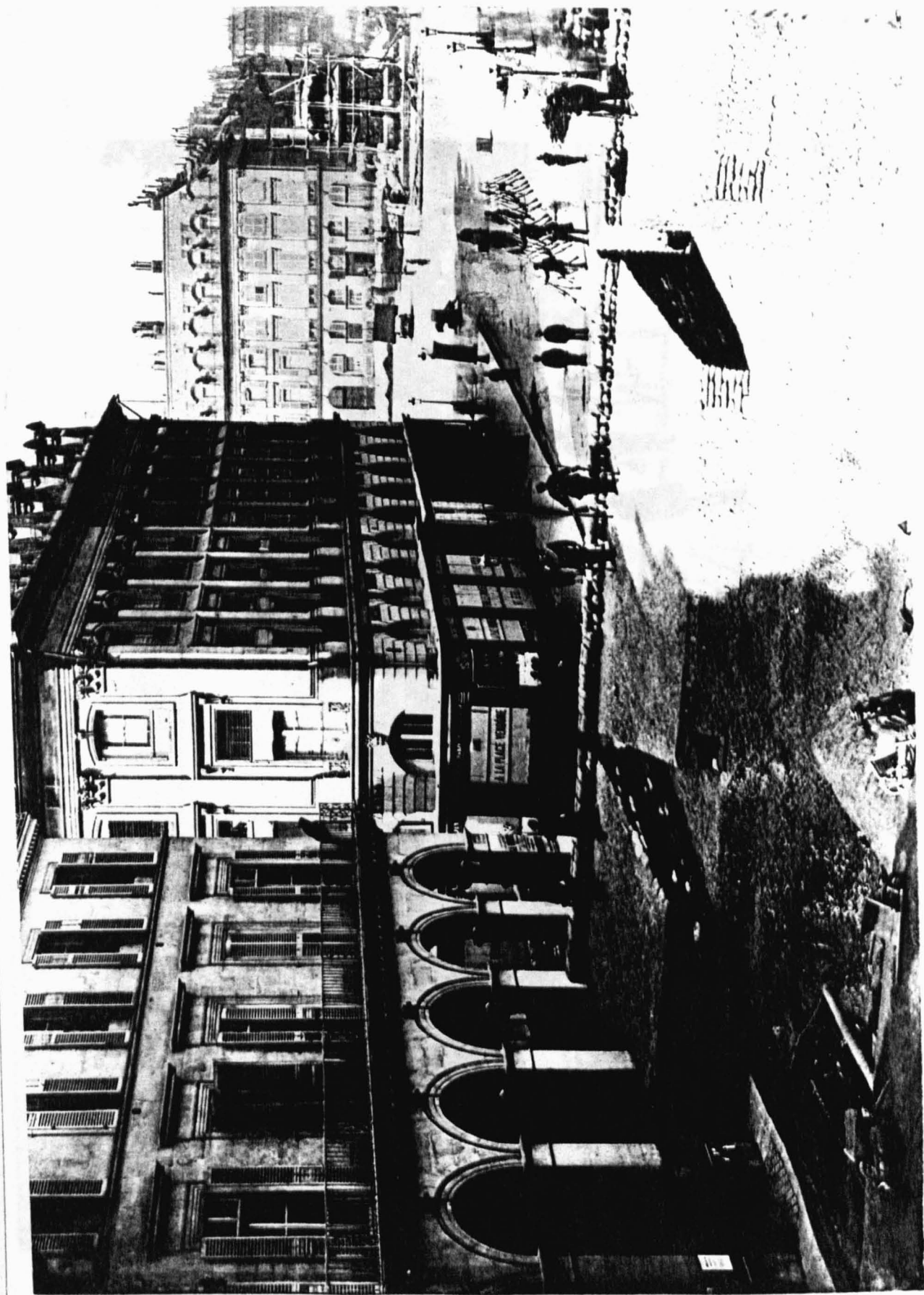
DESASTRES DE LA GUERRE

1871

2.68 J. Andrieu, *Désastres de la Guerre*, 1871.

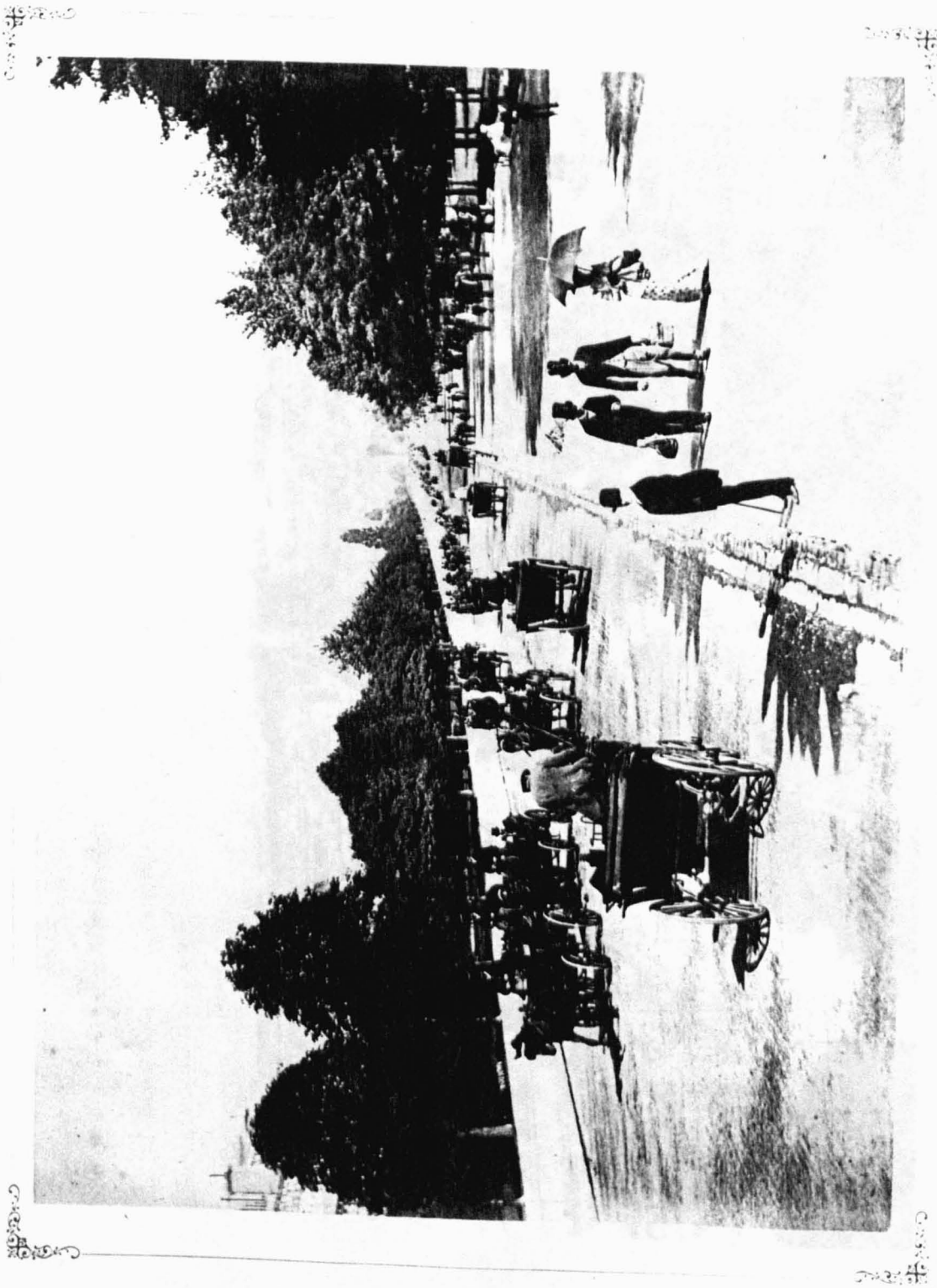


2.69 Auguste Collard, Barricade, Tuileries, 1871.



2.70 Auguste Collard, Barricade, Rue de Rivoli, 1871.

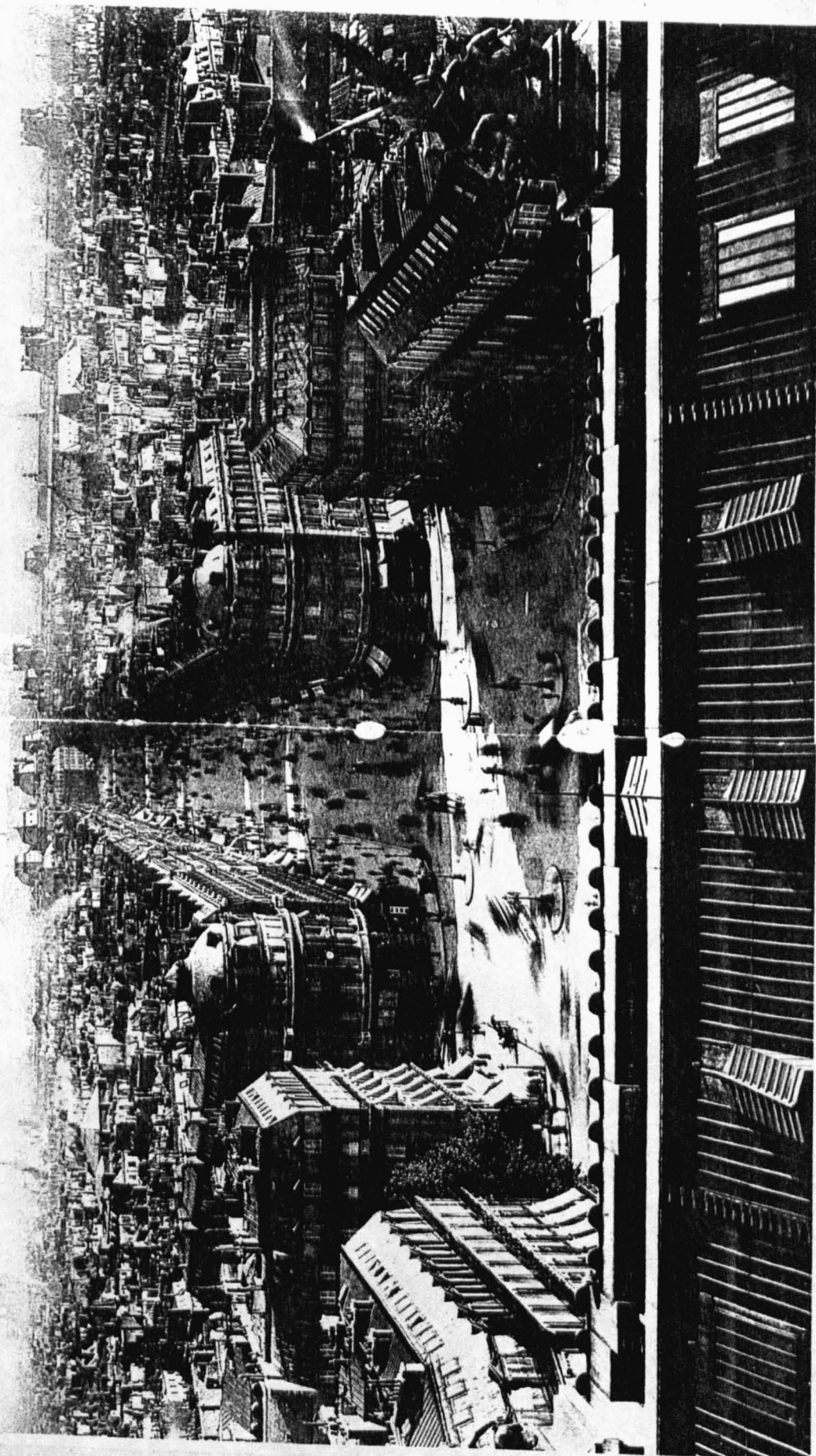
Paris



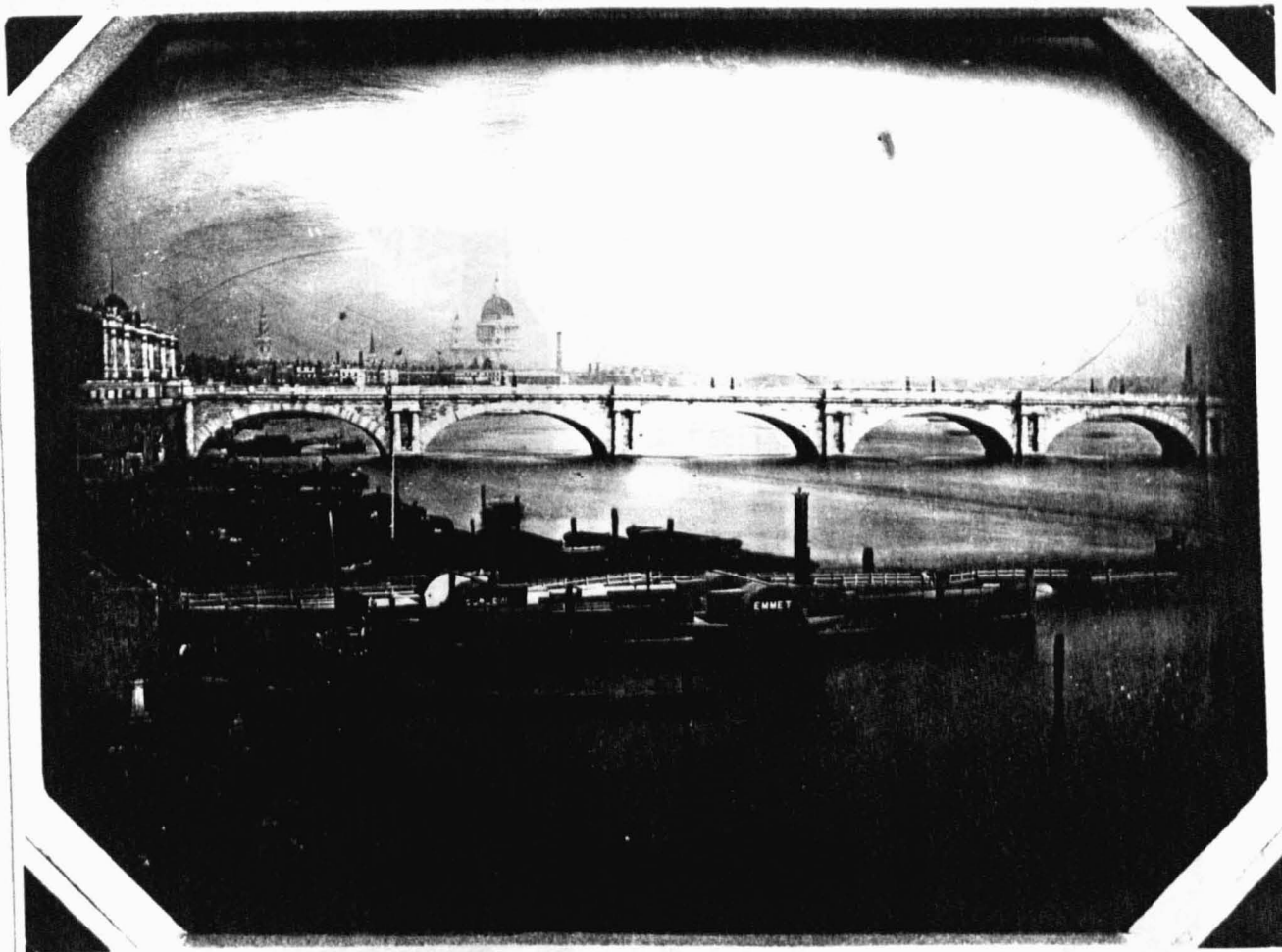
L'Avenue du Bois de Boulogne



Perspective de l'Avenue des Champs-Élysées



2.73 Chevojon, Champs Elysées, c.1900.



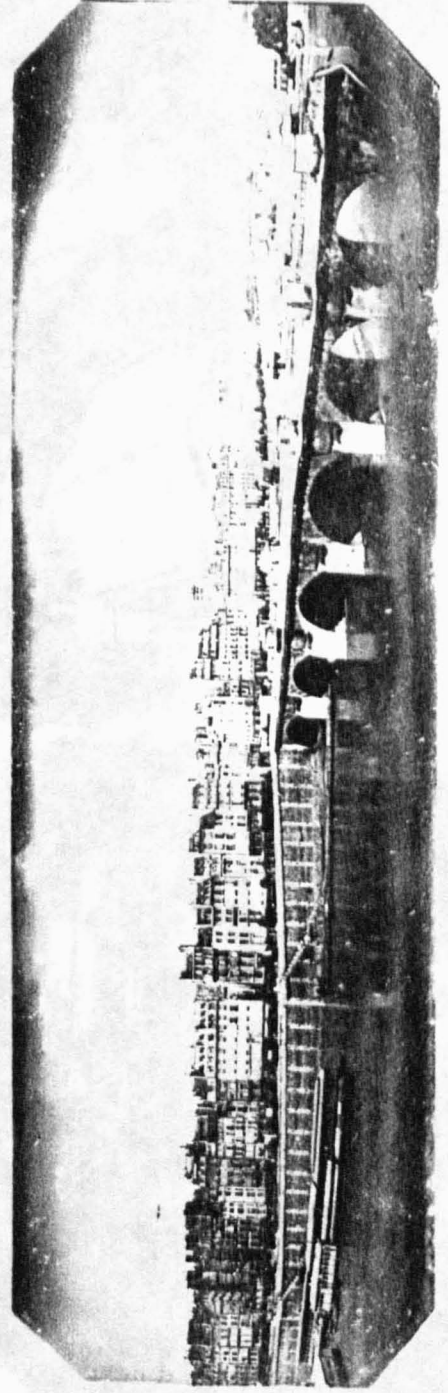
3. 1 Baron Gros, Bridge and Boats on the Thames, 1851.



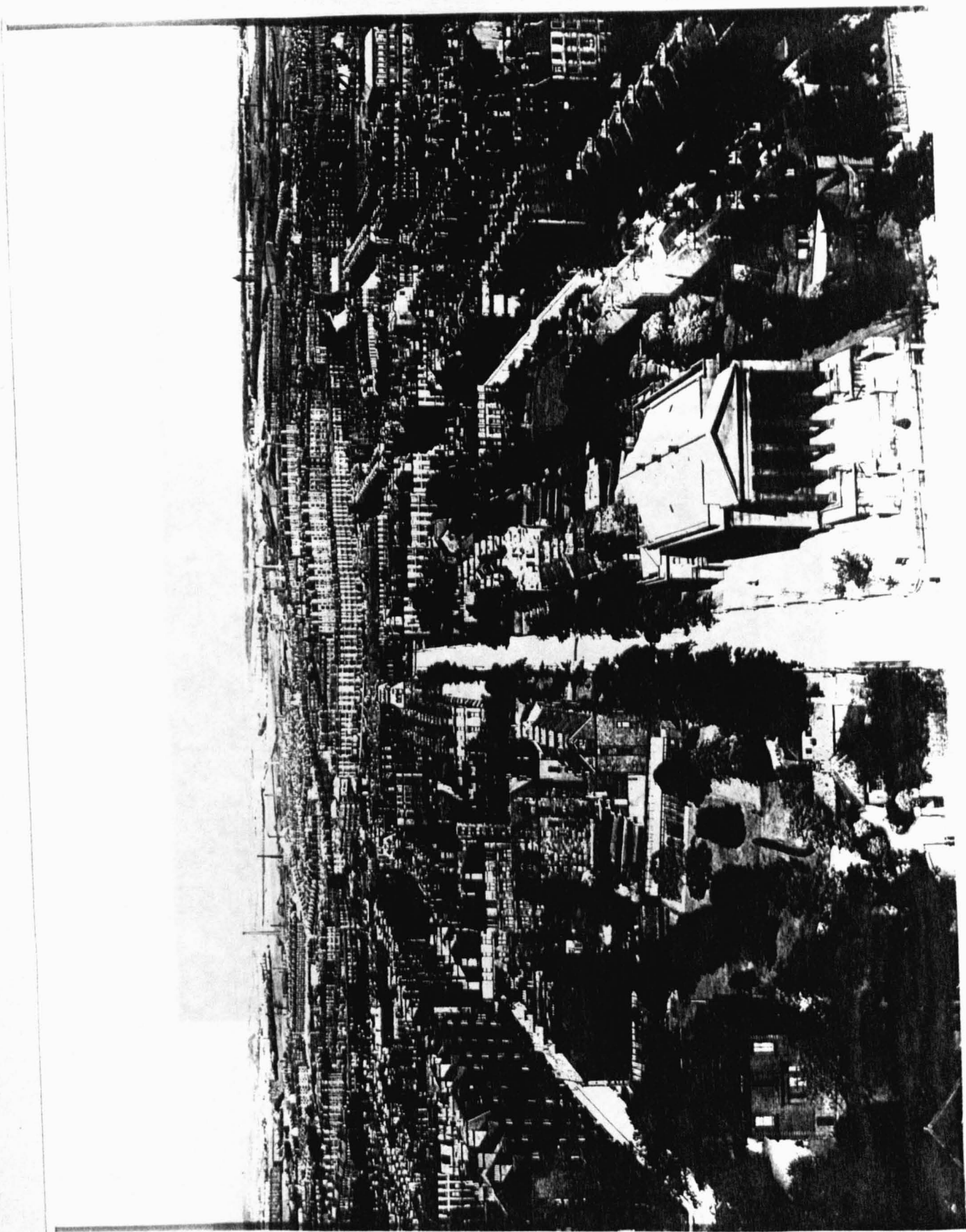
3. 2 Anon., The Thames and St. Paul's, 1880s.



3. 3 Charles Soulier, Panorama of Paris, 1880s.

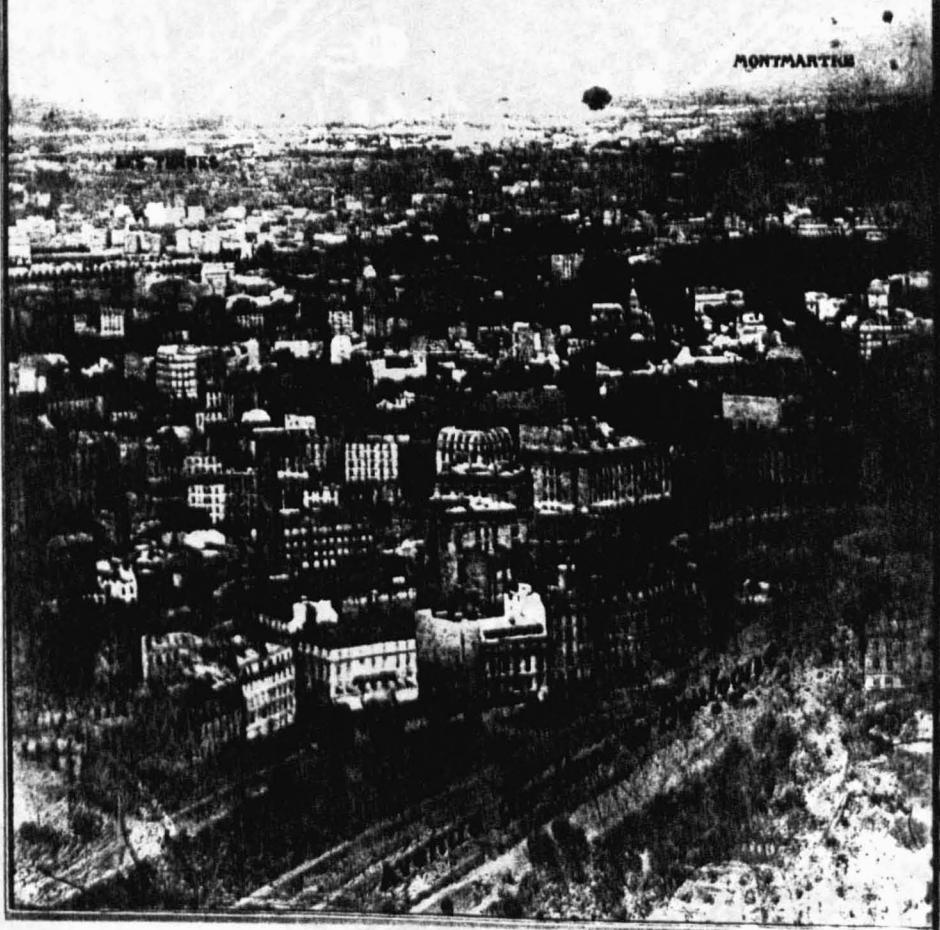


3. 4 Anon., Pont Neuf from the Louvre, Paris, c.1845.



3. 5 T. and R. Annan and Sons, Glasgow in Panorama, 1905.

Premier Résultat de
Photographie aérostatique
— Applications : Cadastre, Stratégie, etc. —
Cliché obtenu à l'altitude de 500 m
par **NADAR** 1858.



3. 6 Nadar, Aerial photograph, Paris, 1858.



3. 7 Nadar, Aerial view over the quartier L'Etoile, Paris, 1868.



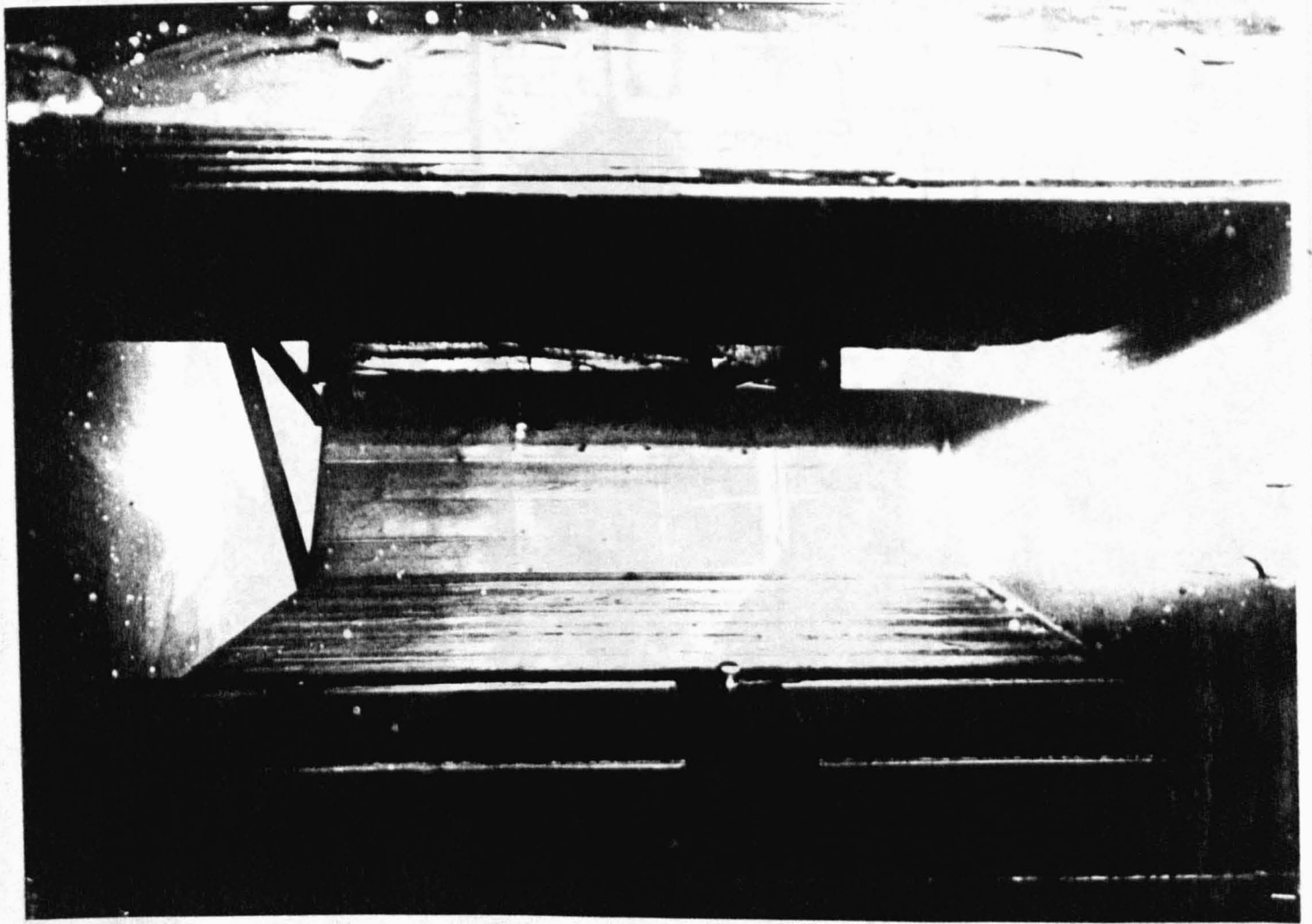
3. 8 Cellar Dwelling, Liverpool, *Housing Conditions in Glasgow, London, and Liverpool*, c.1906



3. 9 No. 6 Court, Essington Street, Birmingham Public Works Dept., c.1905.

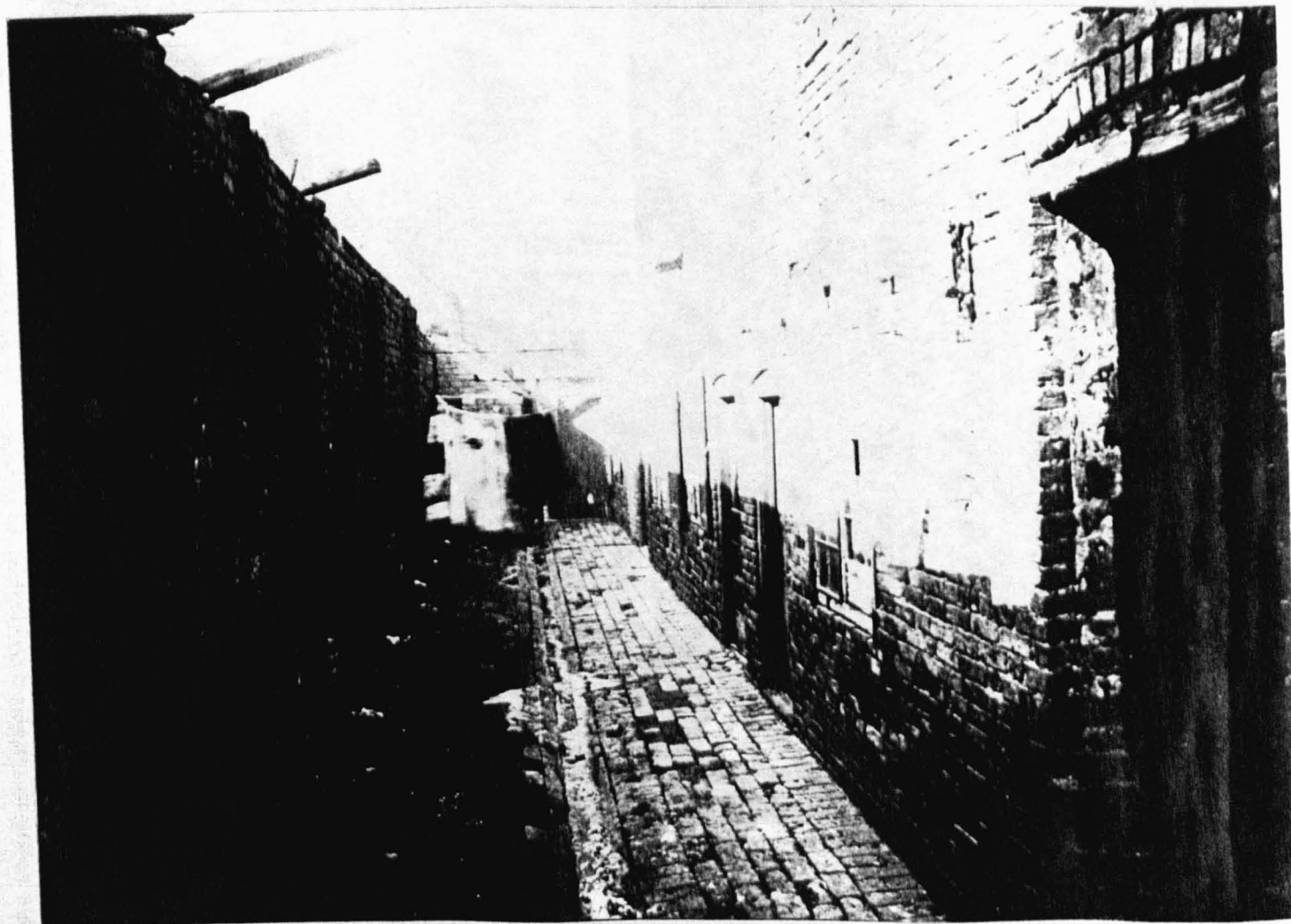
3.10 Privy in 10 Court, Lower Tower Street, Birmingham Public Works Dept., c.1905.

3.11 Passage between rooms, No. 28 Lower Tower Street, Birmingham Public Works Dept., c.1905.



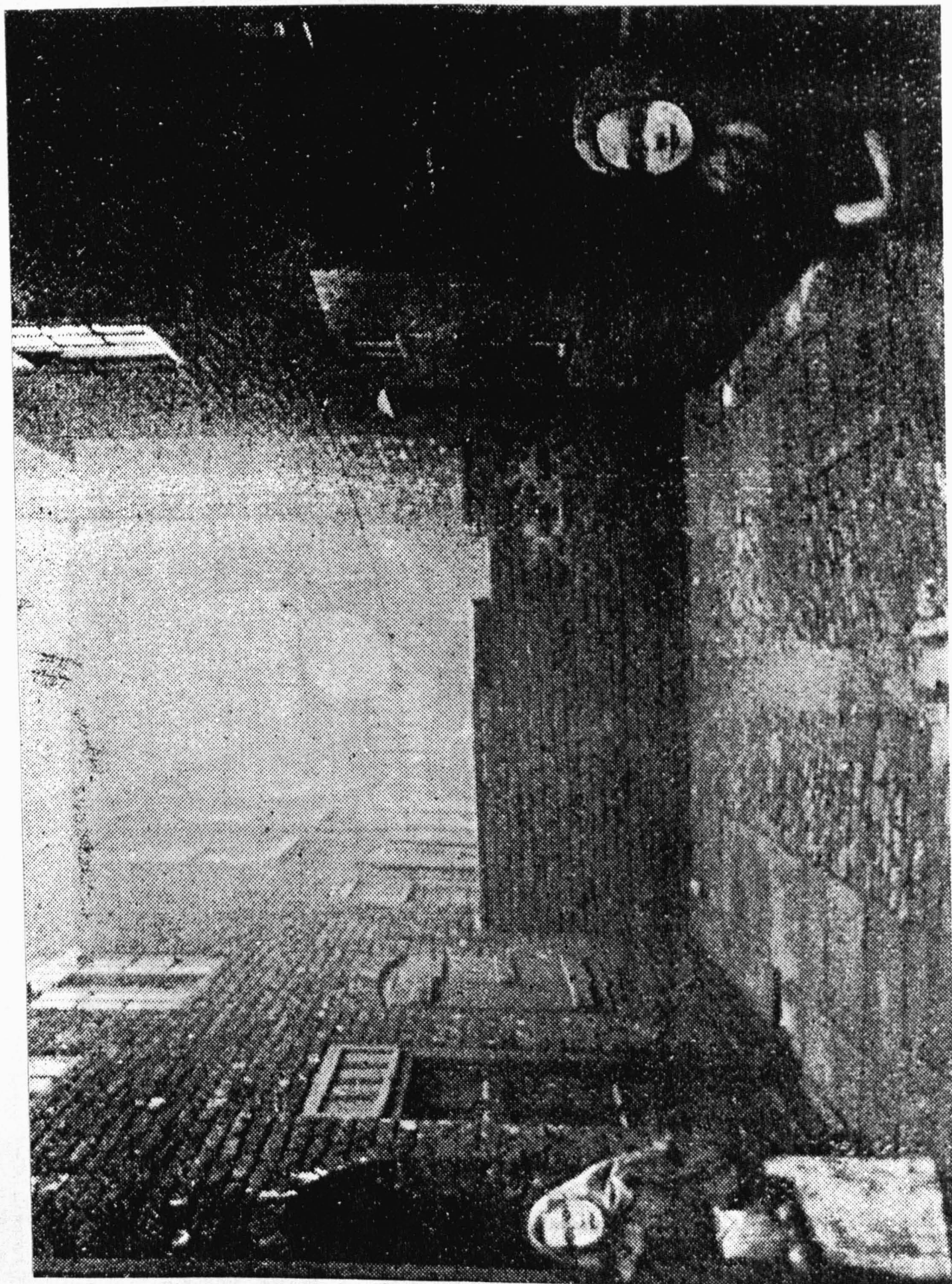


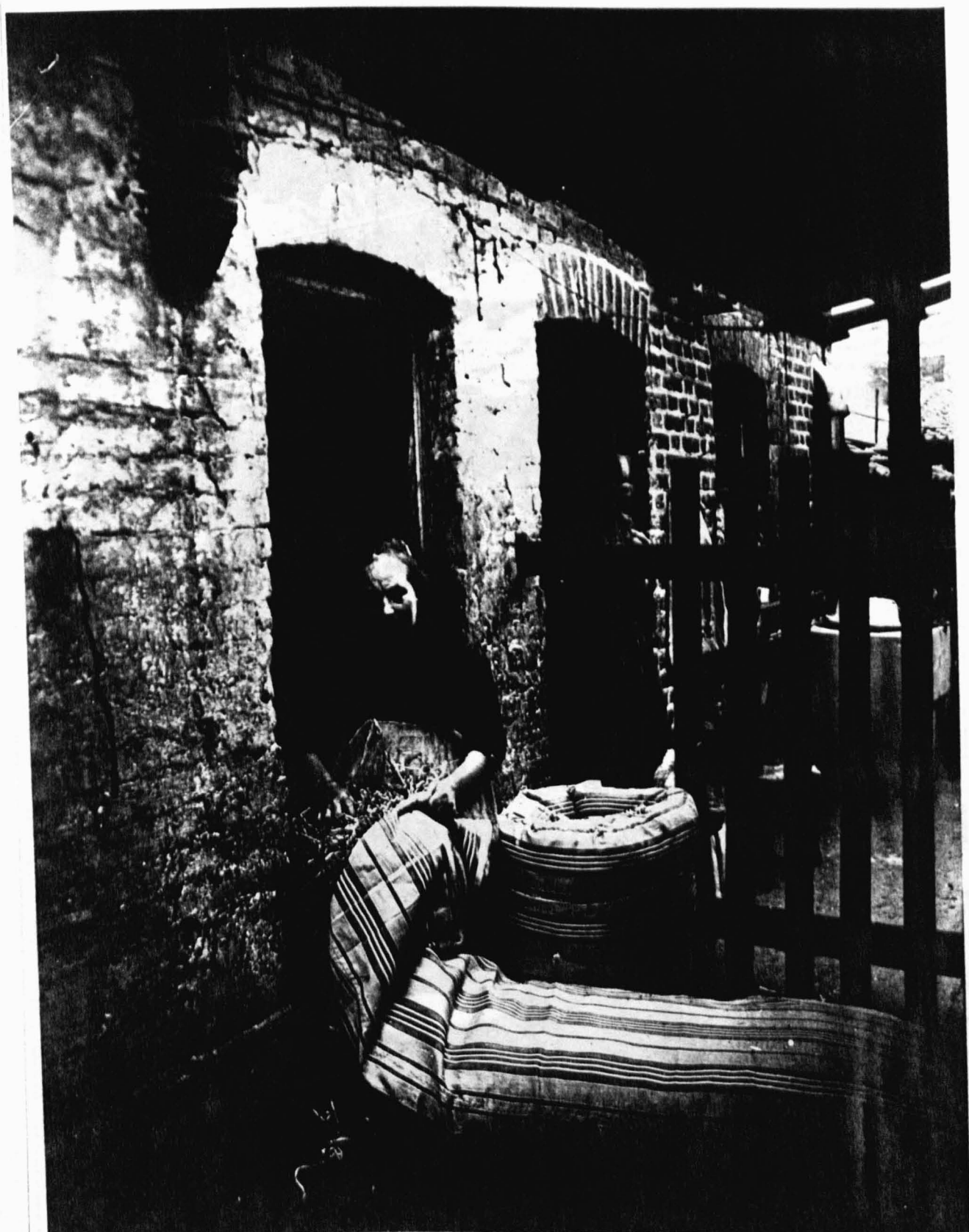
3.12 James Burgoyne, Court, Thomas Street, Birmingham Improvement Scheme, 1875.



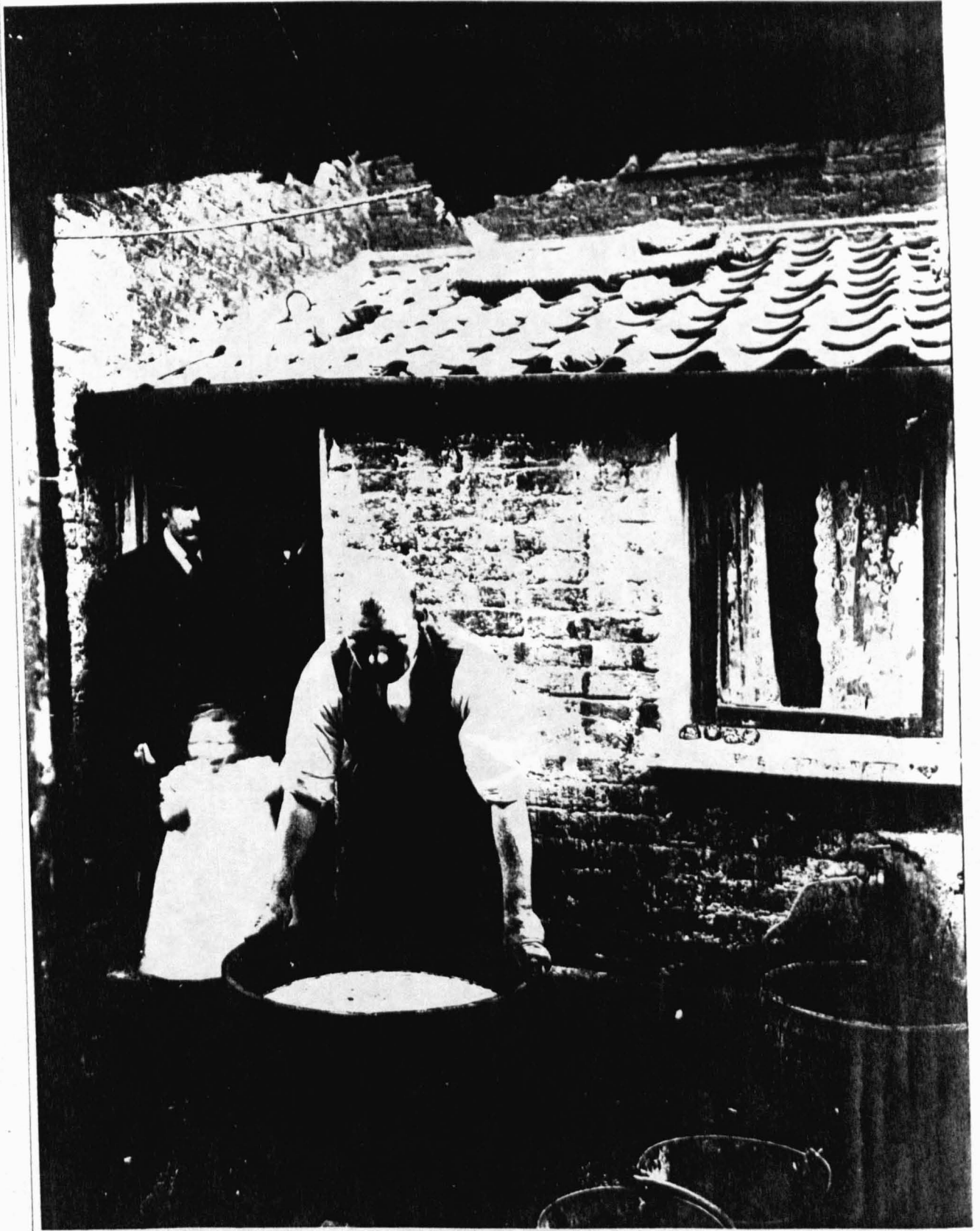
3.13 James Burgoyne, Court, Thomas Street, Birmingham Improvement Scheme, 1875.

3.14 Willie Swift, Court off Cavalier Street, *Leeds Slumdom*, 1897.

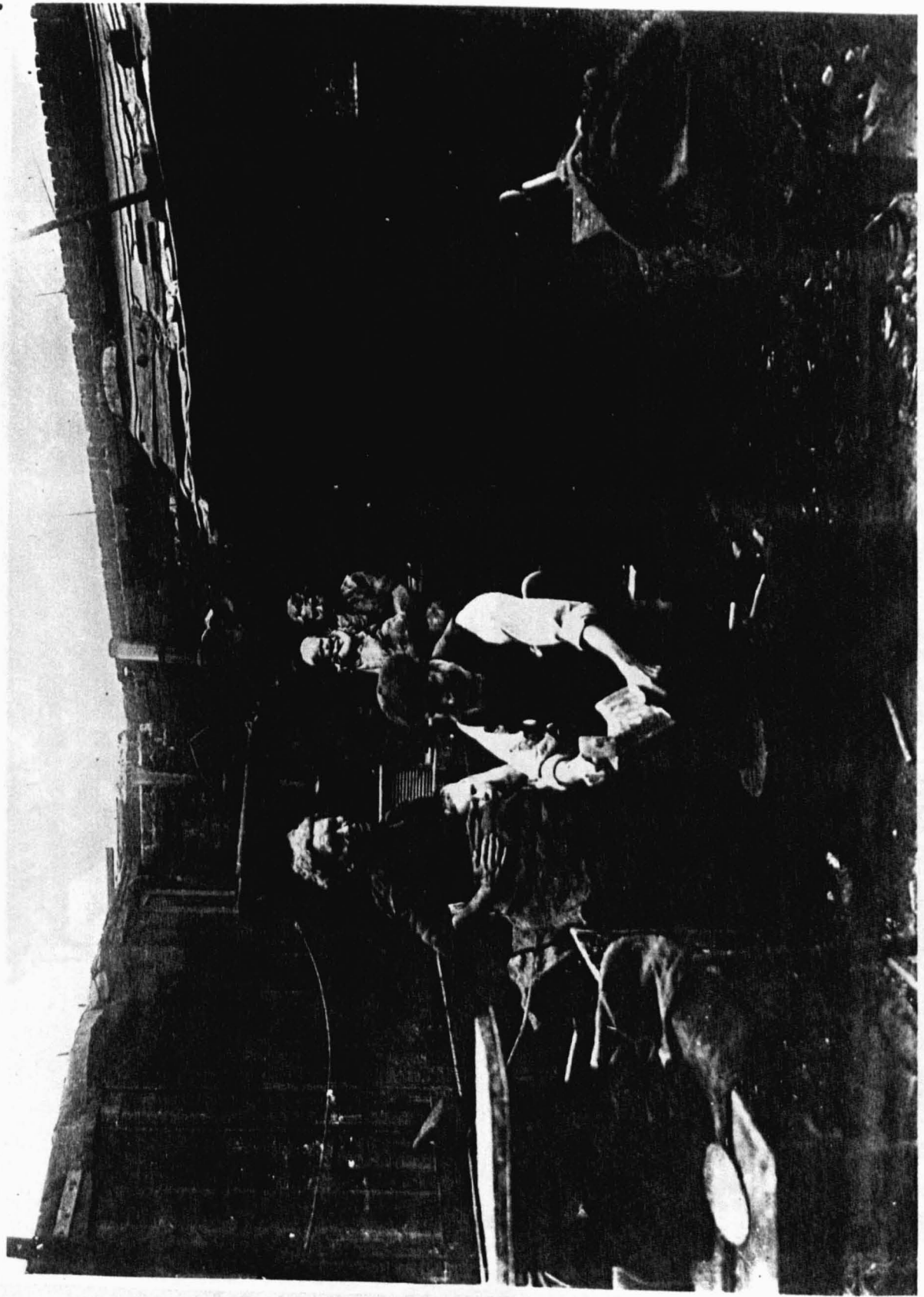




3.15 John Galt, Ma Robinson making mattresses, Bethnal Green, 1893-4.




3.16 John Galt, Cleaning Shells for manufacturing, Bethnal Green, 1893-4.



3.17 John Galt, Home Industry, Bethnal Green, 1893-4.



3.18 John Galt, Cat's Meat Man, Bethnal Green, 1893-4.

Back Lands 
and
Their Inhabitants.



By *Peter Fyfe*,
Chief Sanitary Inspector, Glasgow.

3.19 *Backlands and their Inhabitants, Glasgow, 1901.*

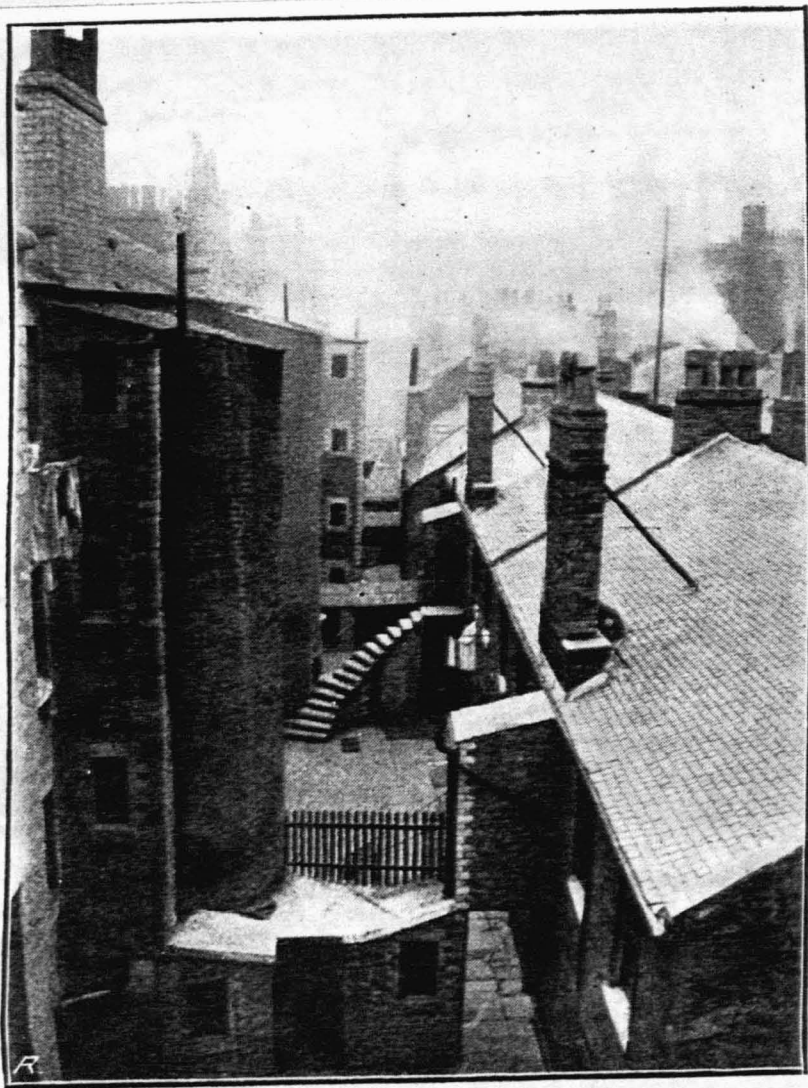


PHOTO. A.

This shows a range of two-storey back lands behind four-storey properties facing a front main street in the city.

The distance between them is about 21 feet. The ground-flat houses in these back lands are dark, and the ashpits are situated too close to the dwellings.

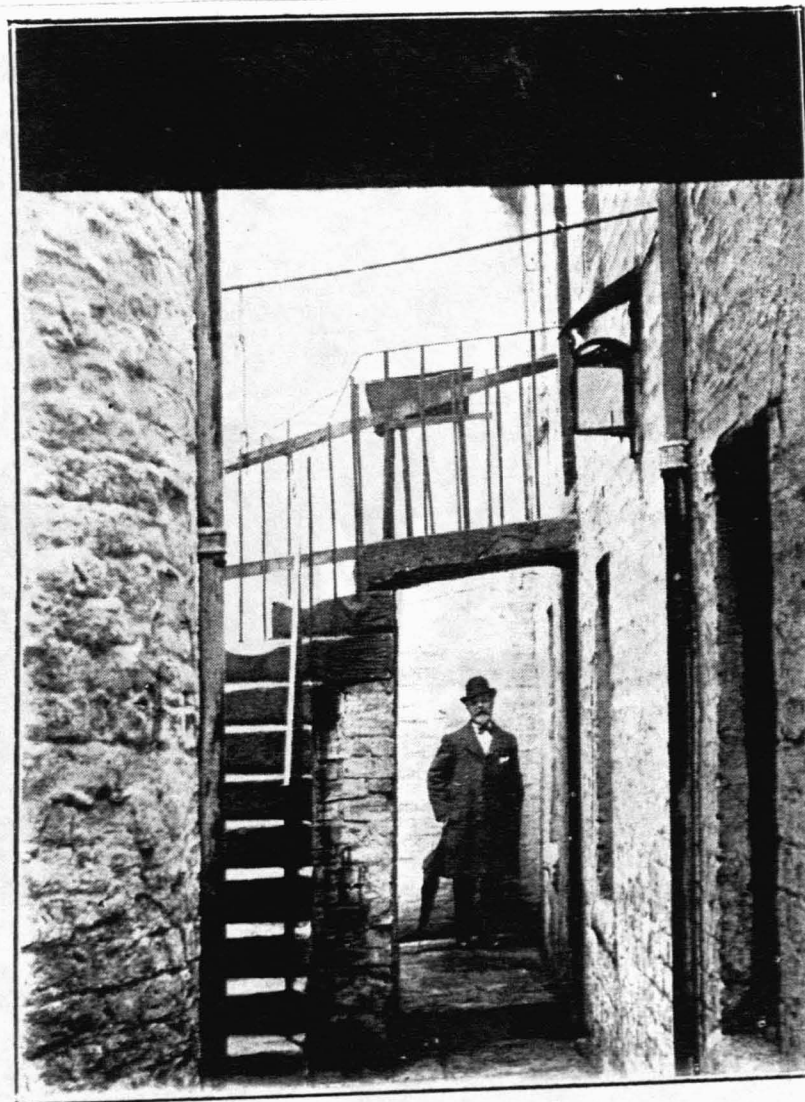


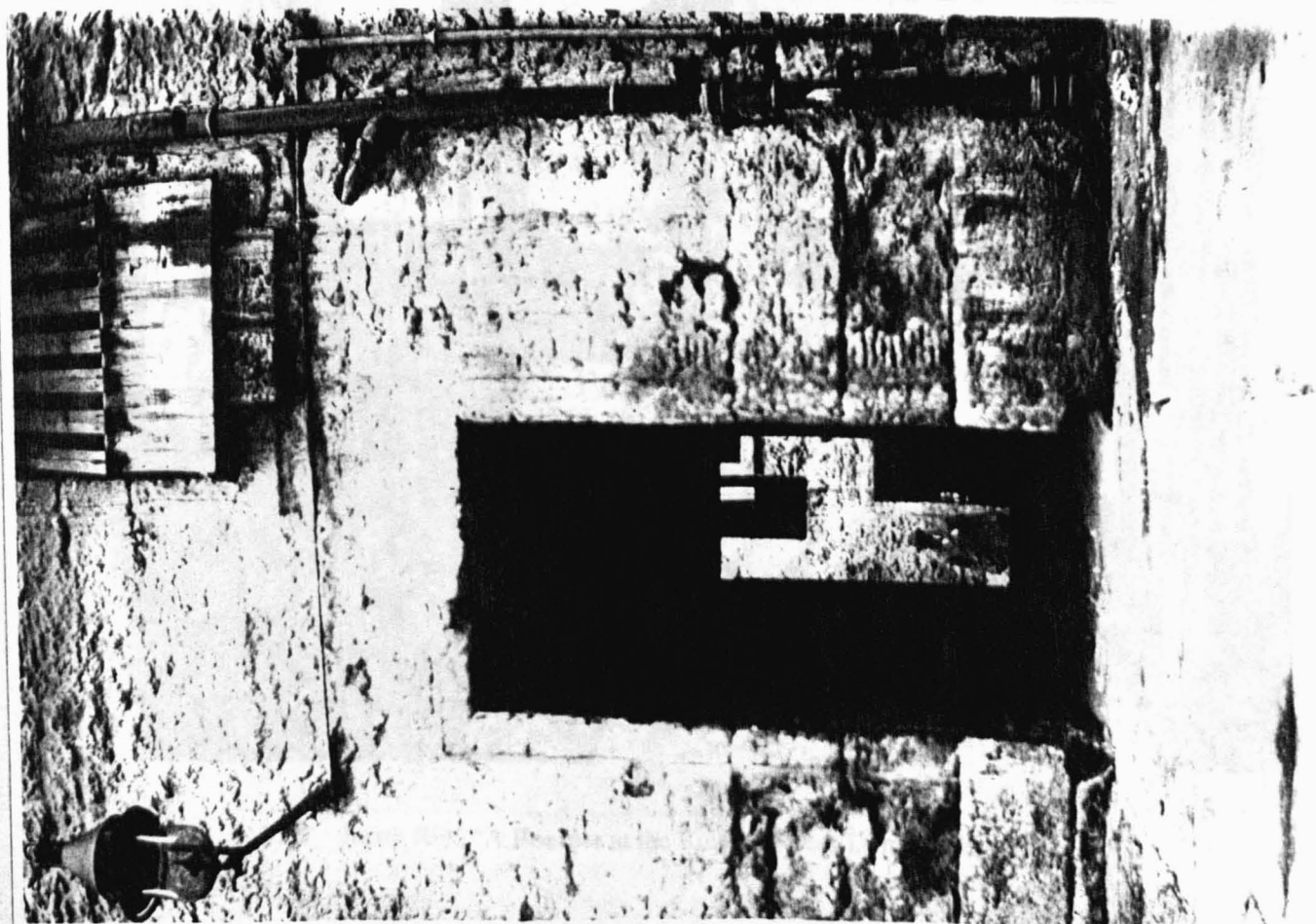
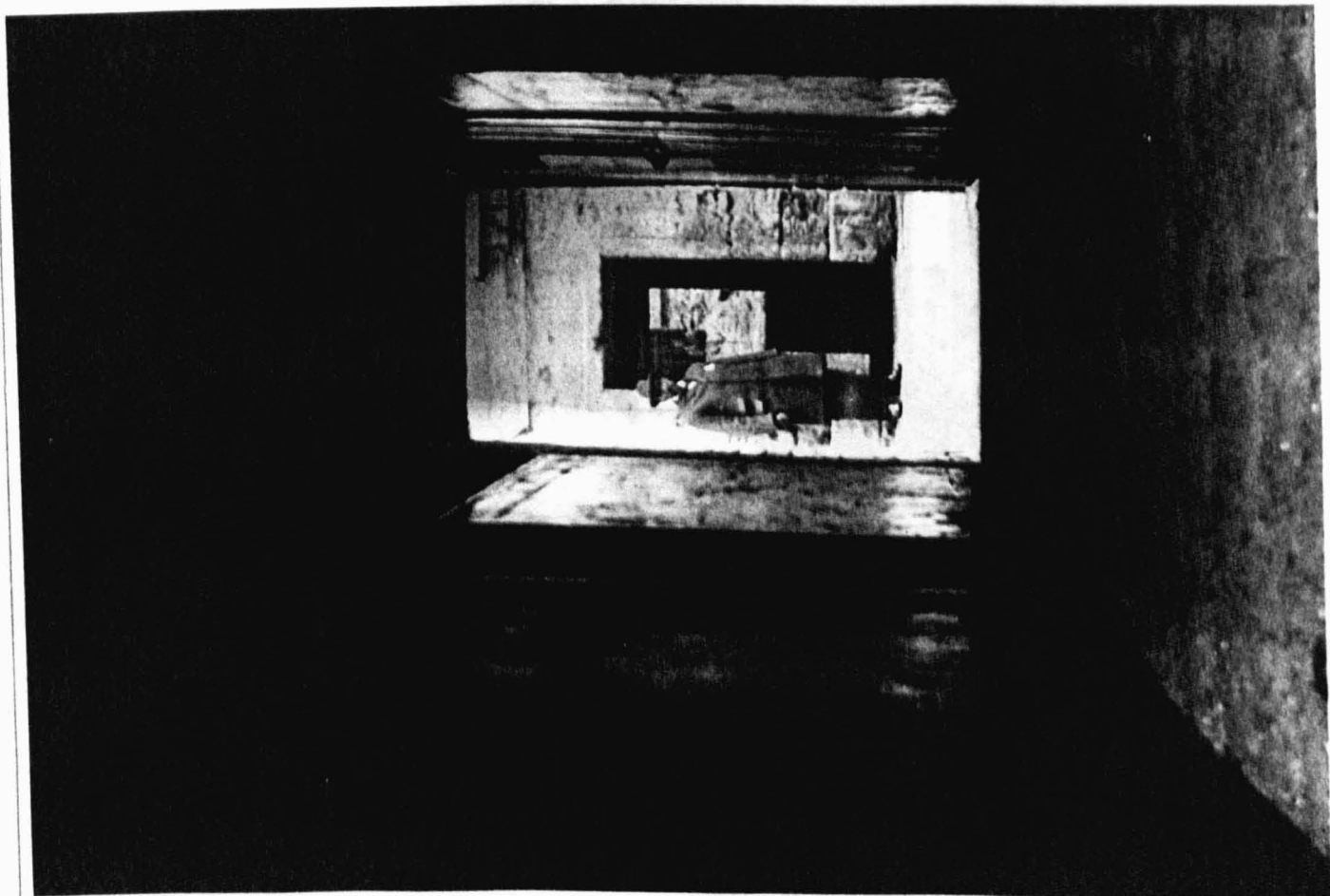
PHOTO. E.

The Inspector is shown here standing at the end of a narrow court between the back land and a second back land in the Cowcaddens district.

This is one of the worst samples of congestion in modern Glasgow.

3.22 Anon., Unidentified Close and Inspector, Cowcaddens, c.1900.

3.23 Backcourt and Inspector, 77 Stewart Street, Cowcaddens, c.1900.

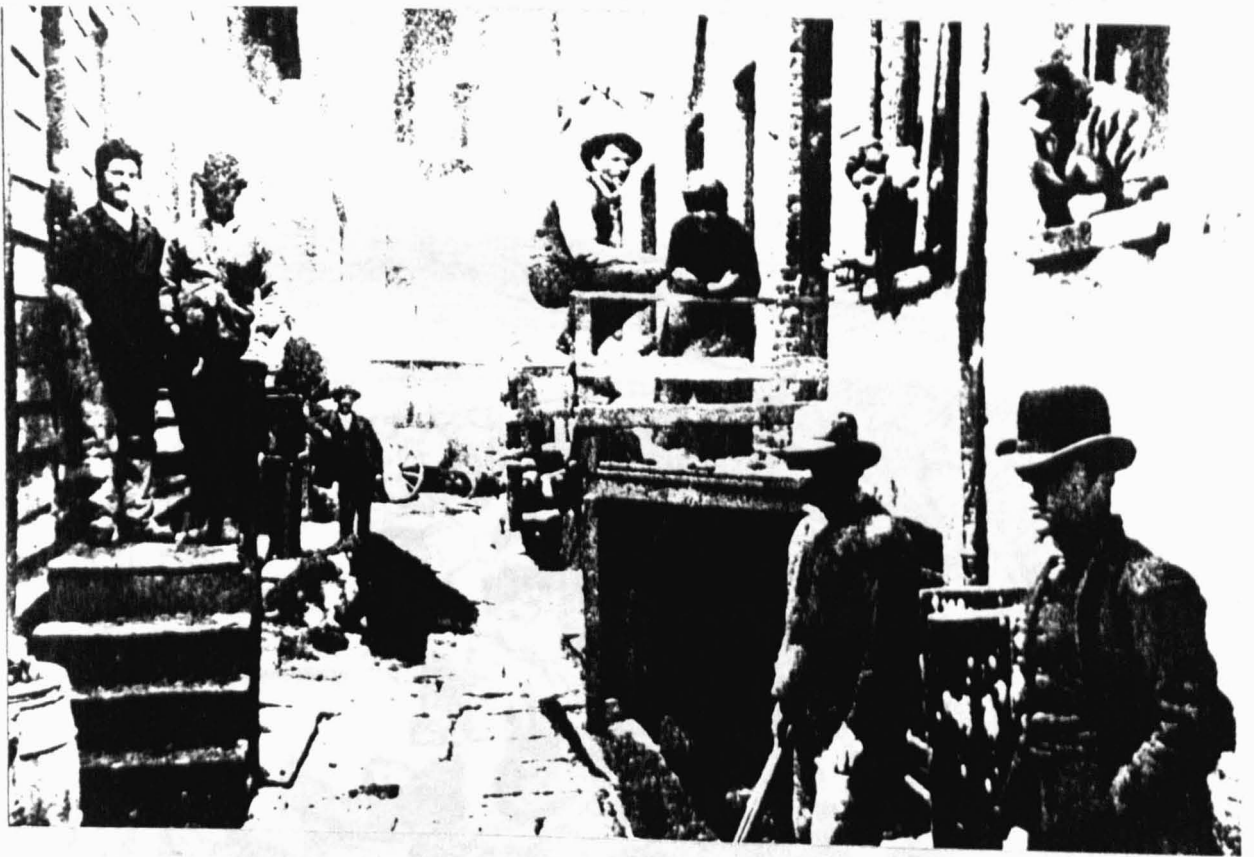




3.24 Jacob Riis, Tenement Baby, New York, c.1890.



3.25 Jacob Riis, "A Boarder at the Rutgers Street Dump", New York, 1892.



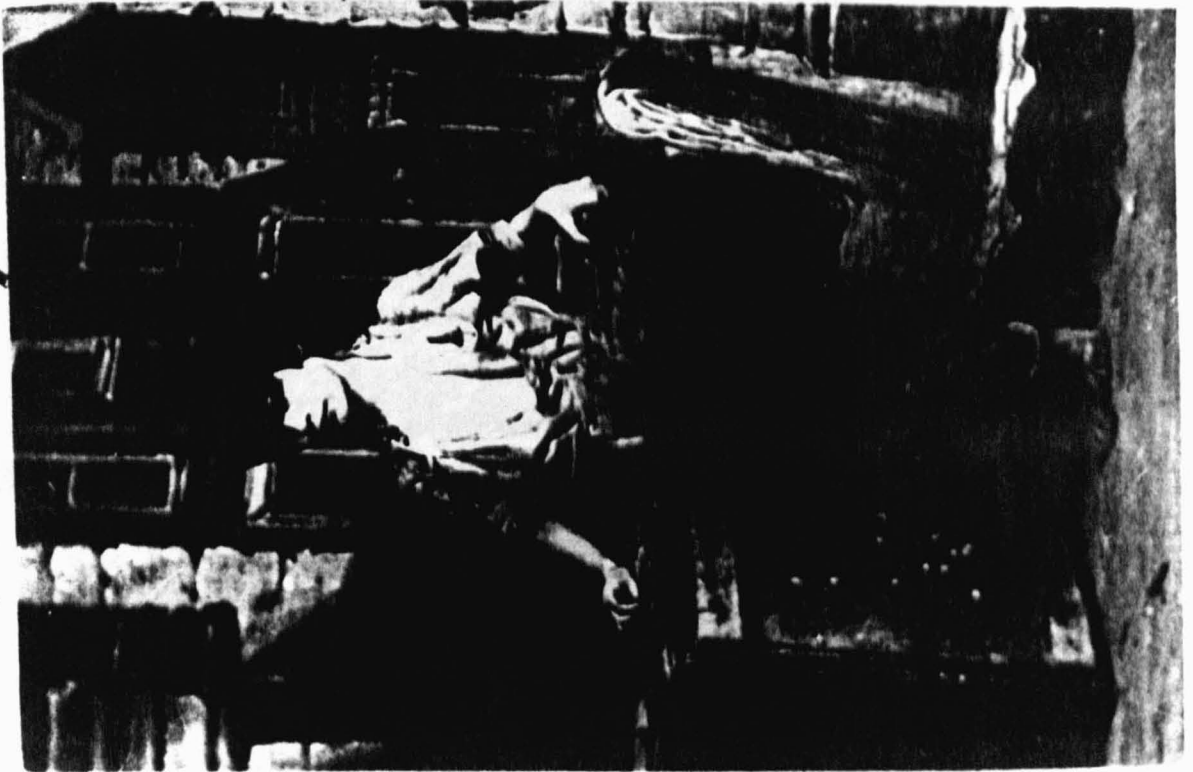
3.26 Jacob Riis, "Bandits' Roost", 59 Mulberry Street, New York, 1888.



3.27 Jacob Riis, Baxter Street Court, New York, c.1890.



*Thos Lovat
28th July 1880*



THE RAW MATERIAL AS WE
FIND IT.



3.31 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, Unidentified Youth, c. 1875.



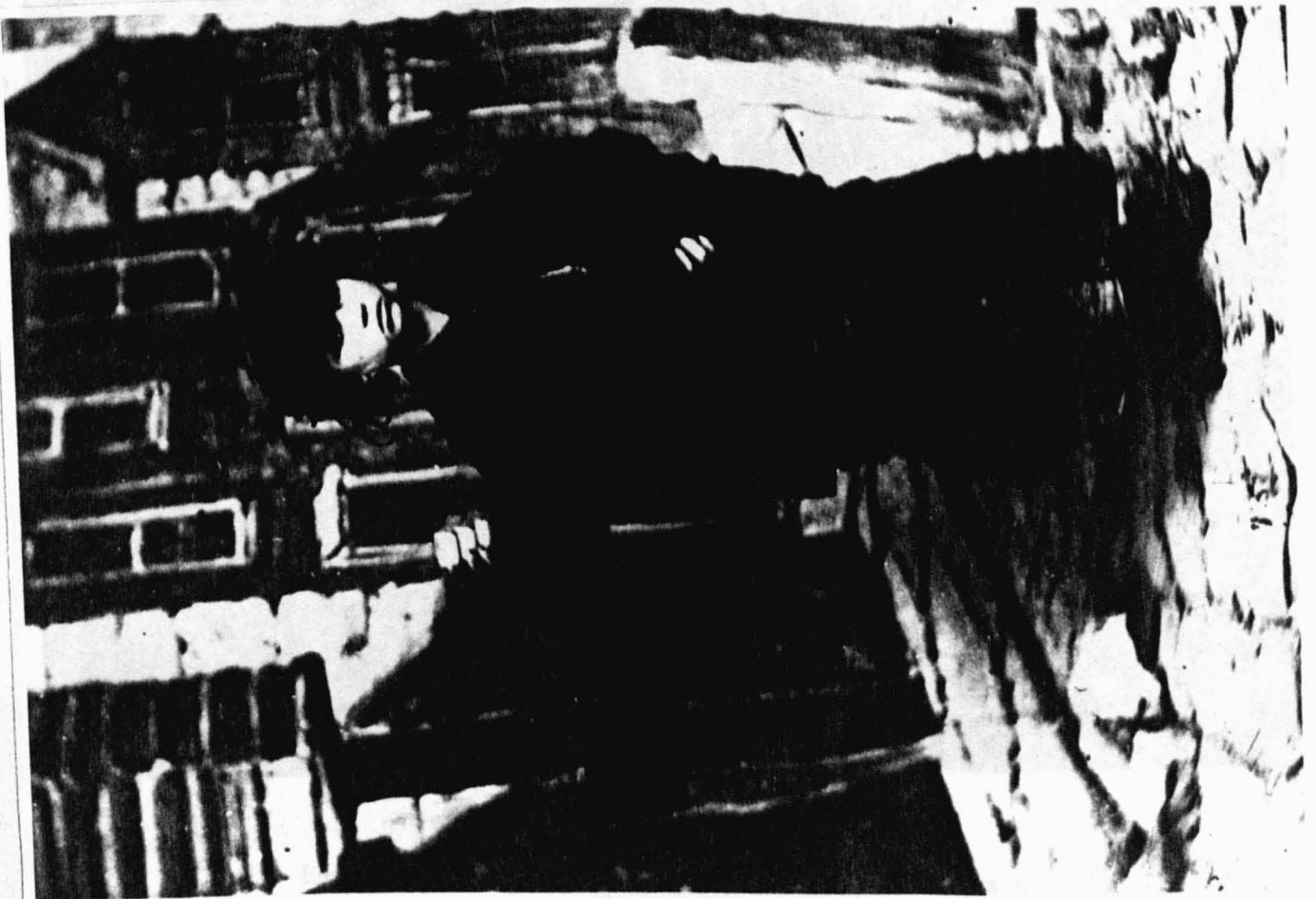
3.32 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, William Fletcher, c.1875.

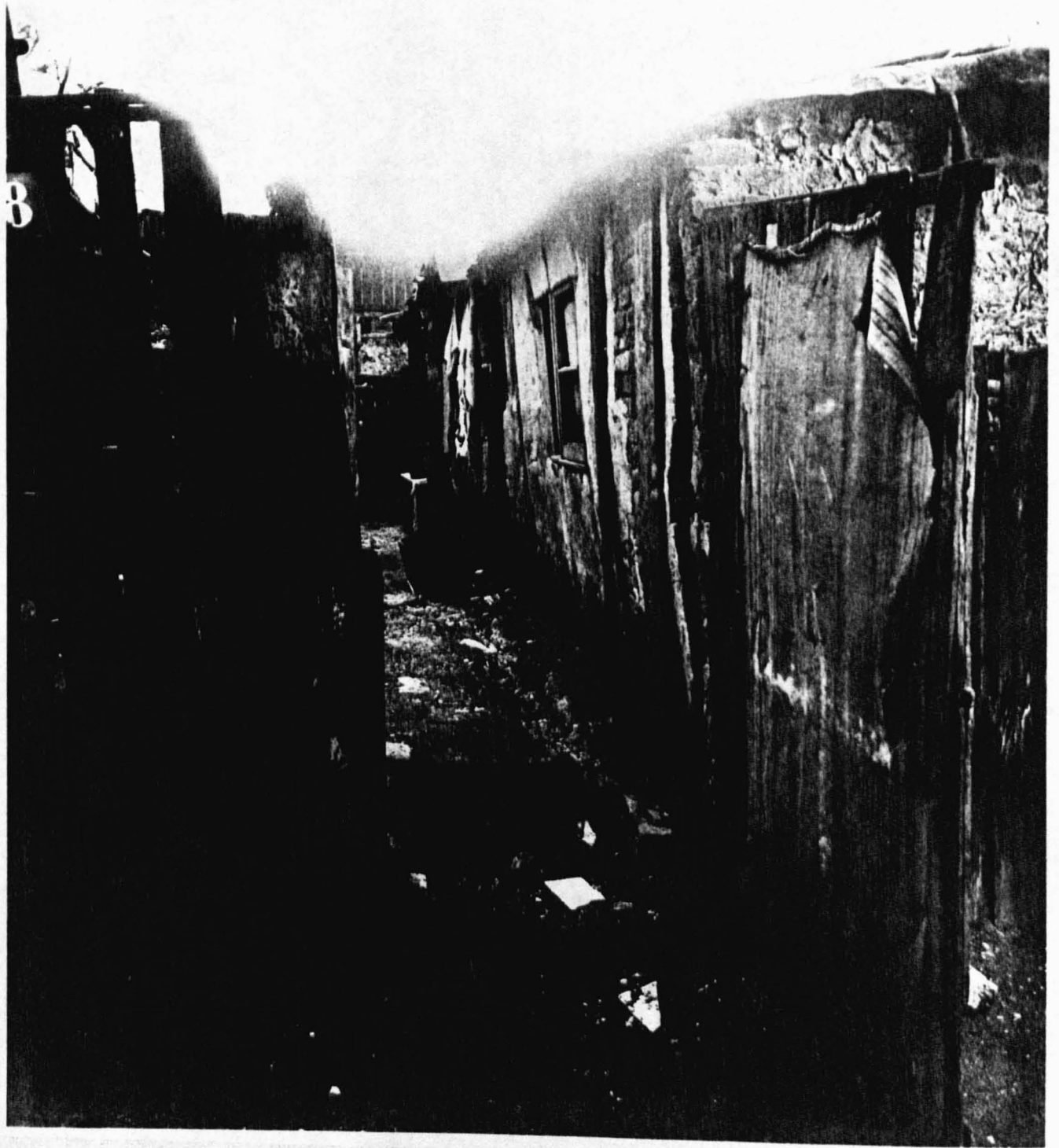


3.33 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, Unidentified Girl, c.1875.

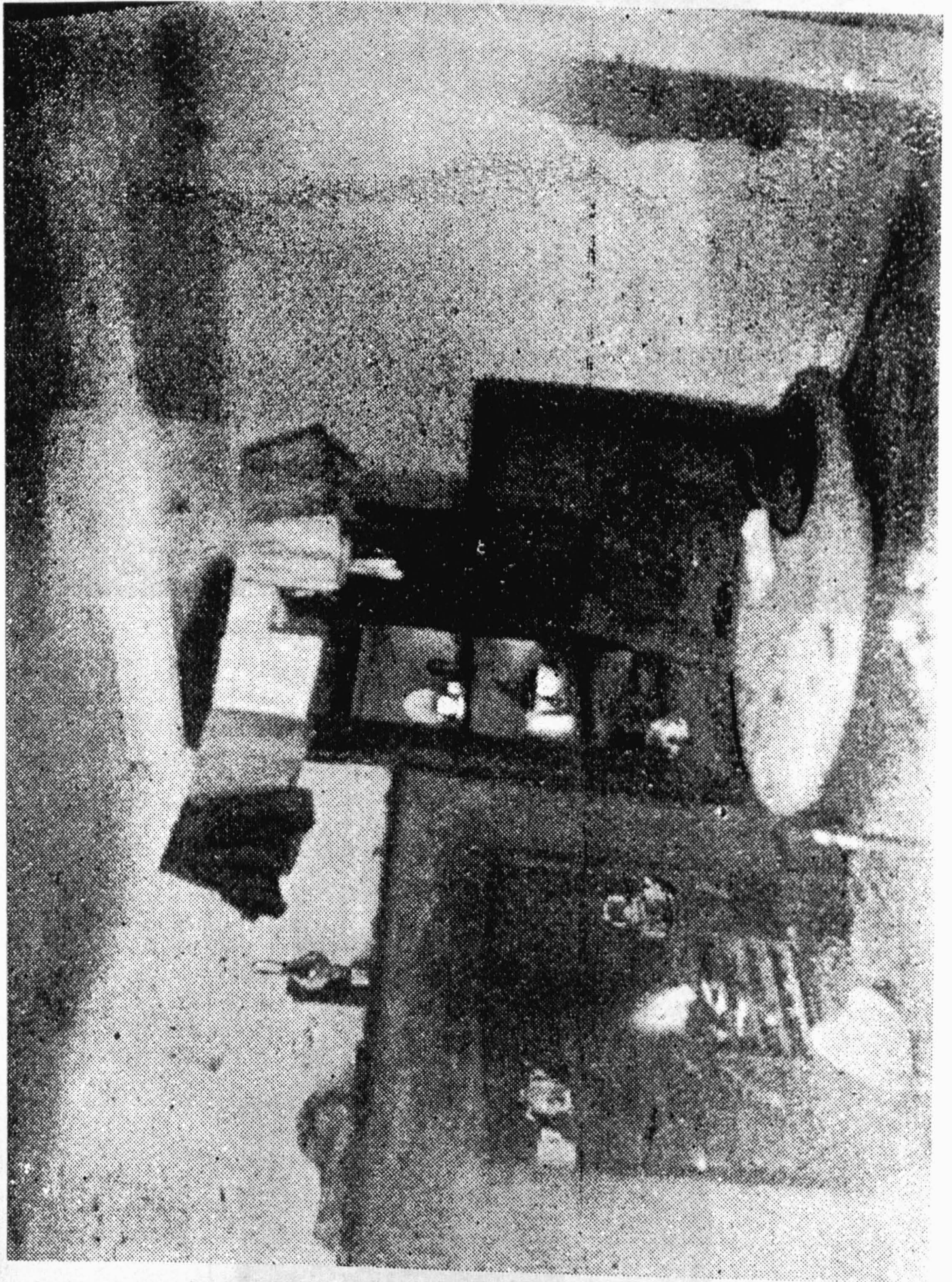
3.34 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, Kate Smith, 1875.

Kate Smith
20 Jan, 1875.





3.35 Eugène Atget, Boulevard Masséna, "Zoniers", Porte D'Ivry, Paris, c.1910.

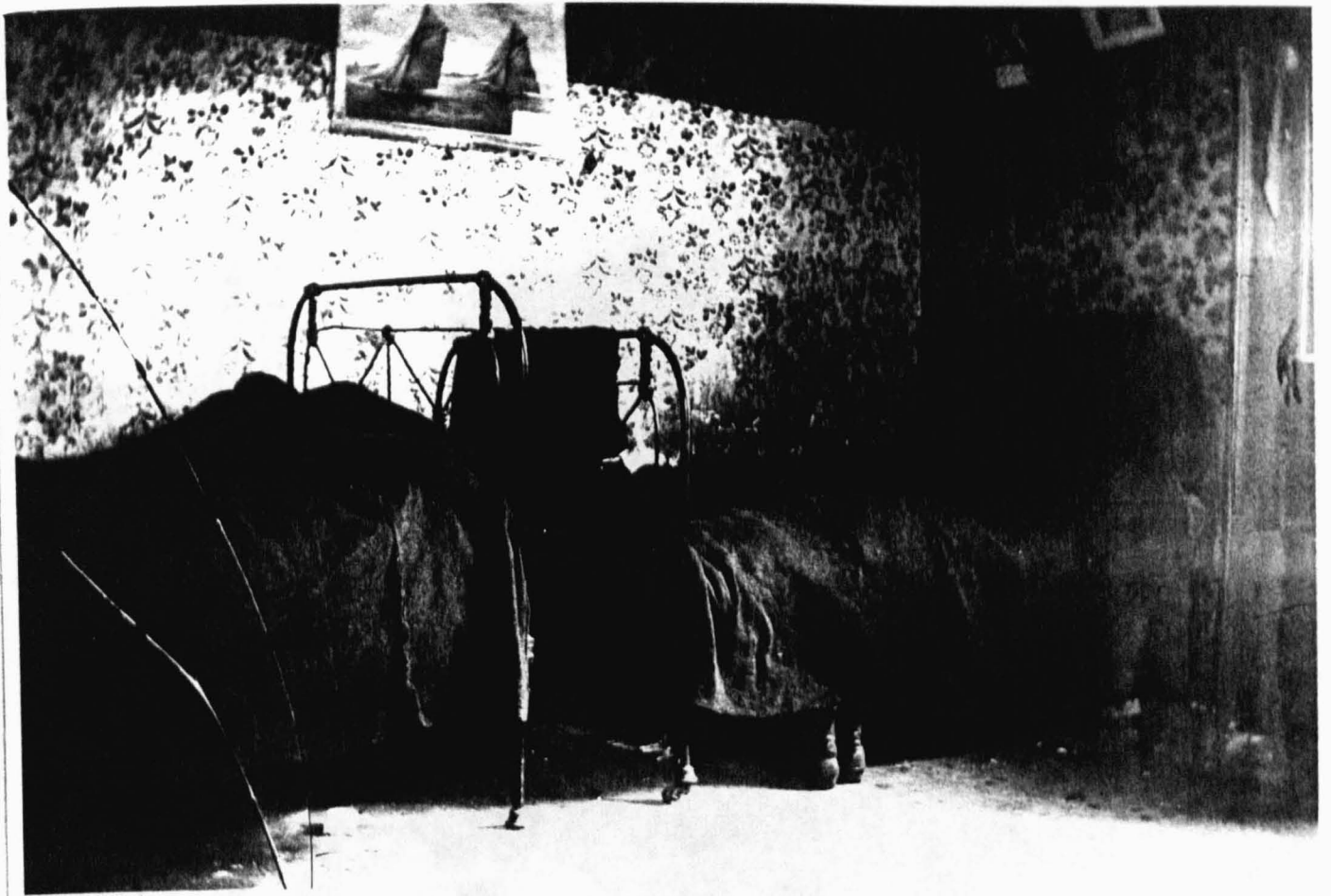




3.37 Anon., Slum Interior (fireplace), Glasgow, c.1910.



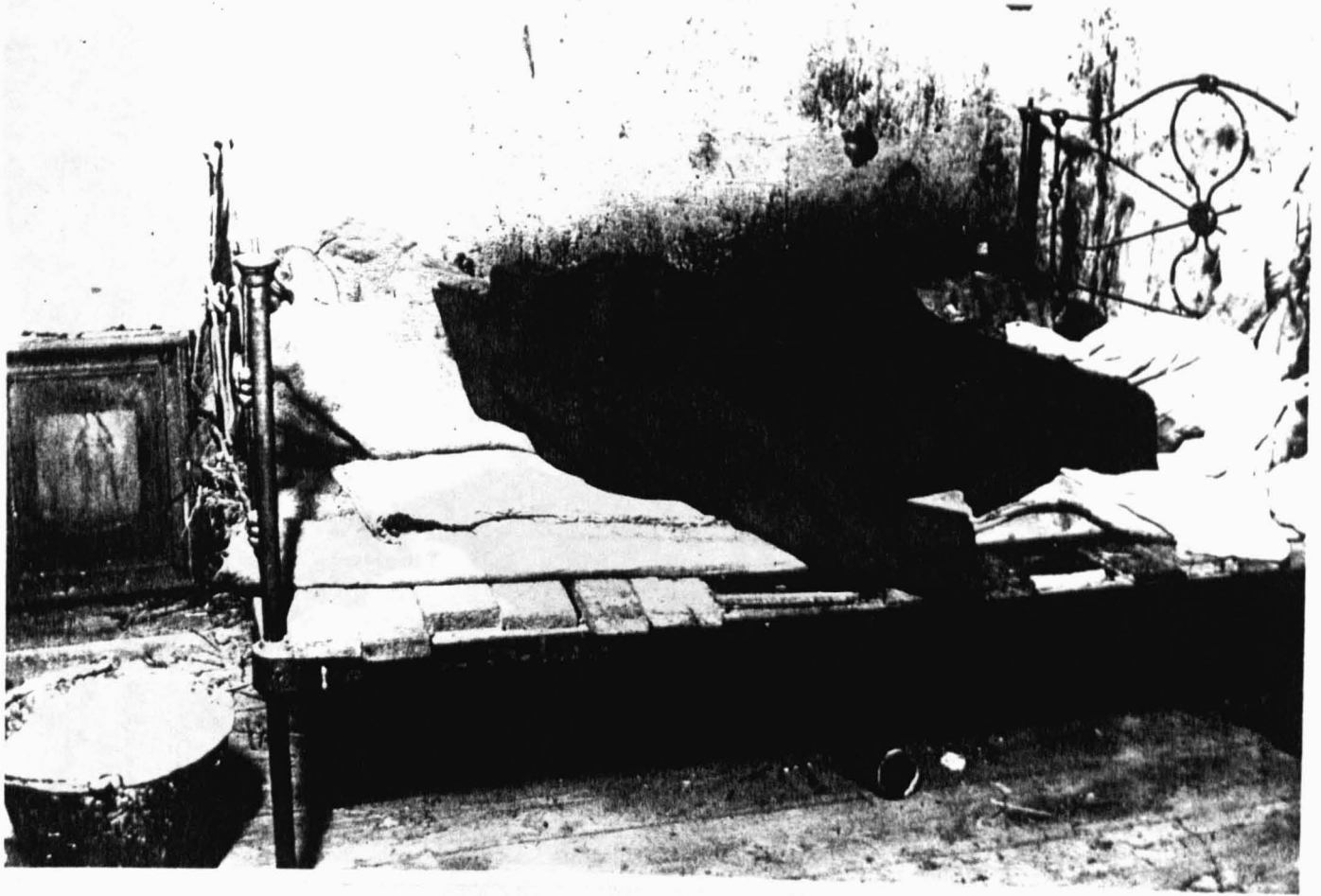
3.38 Eugène Atget, Interior, *Intérieurs Parisiens, artistiques, pittoresques, et bourgeois*, c.1910.



3.39 Anon., Slum Interior (two beds), Glasgow, c.1910.



3.40 Egène Atget, Intérieur d'un décorateur, rue de Montparnasse, Paris, 1910.



3.41 Anon., Children in bed, resting on wooden planks, Glasgow, c.1910.



3.42 Anon., Woman sleeping on floor, Glasgow, c.1910.



3.43 Anon., Woman sleeping on floor, herring box furniture, Glasgow, c.1910.



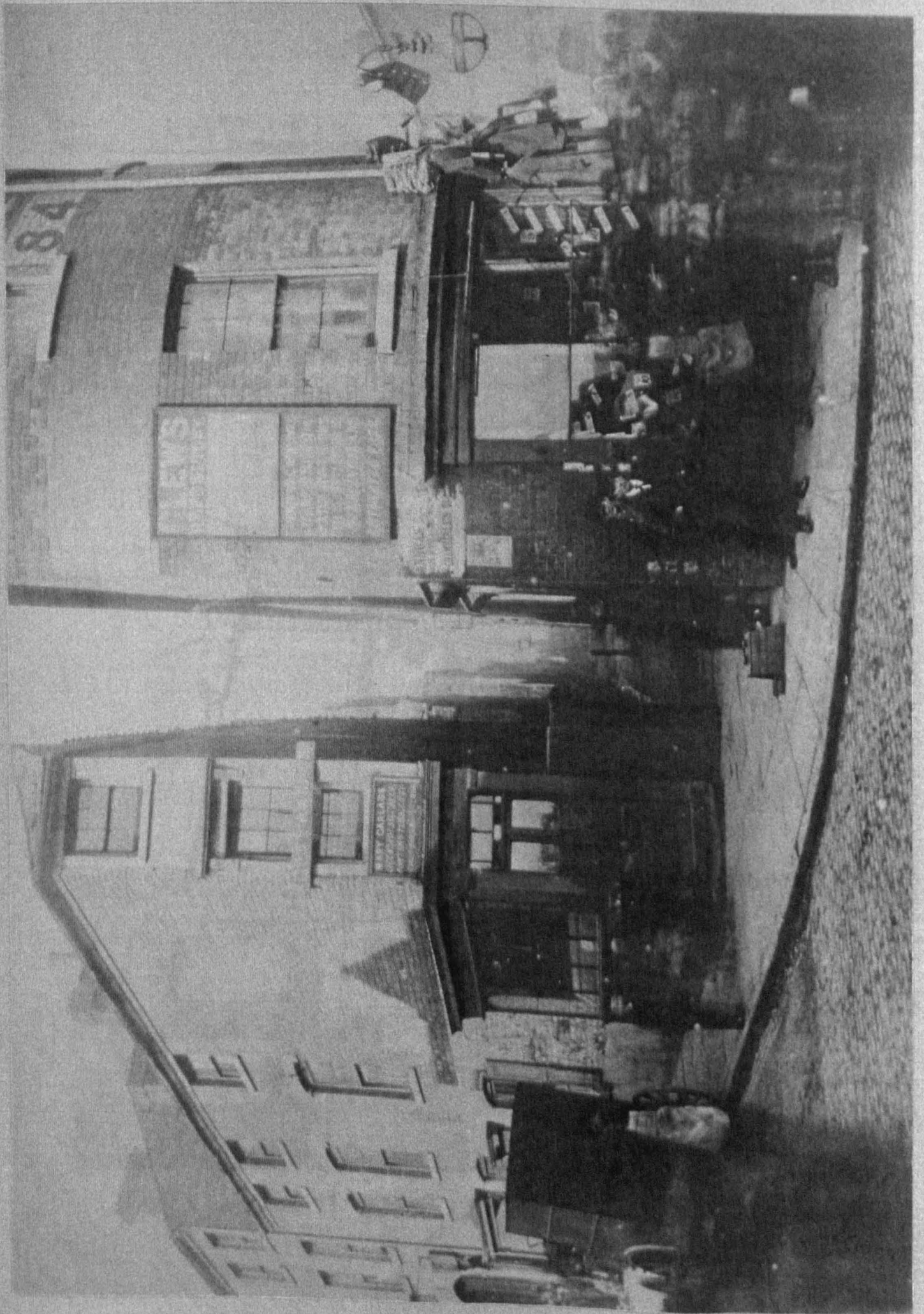
3.44 Single Apartment House (rebuilt tenement), *Housing Conditions in Glasgow, London, and Liverpool*, c.1906.



THE OLD ROOM IN SLUMLAND.

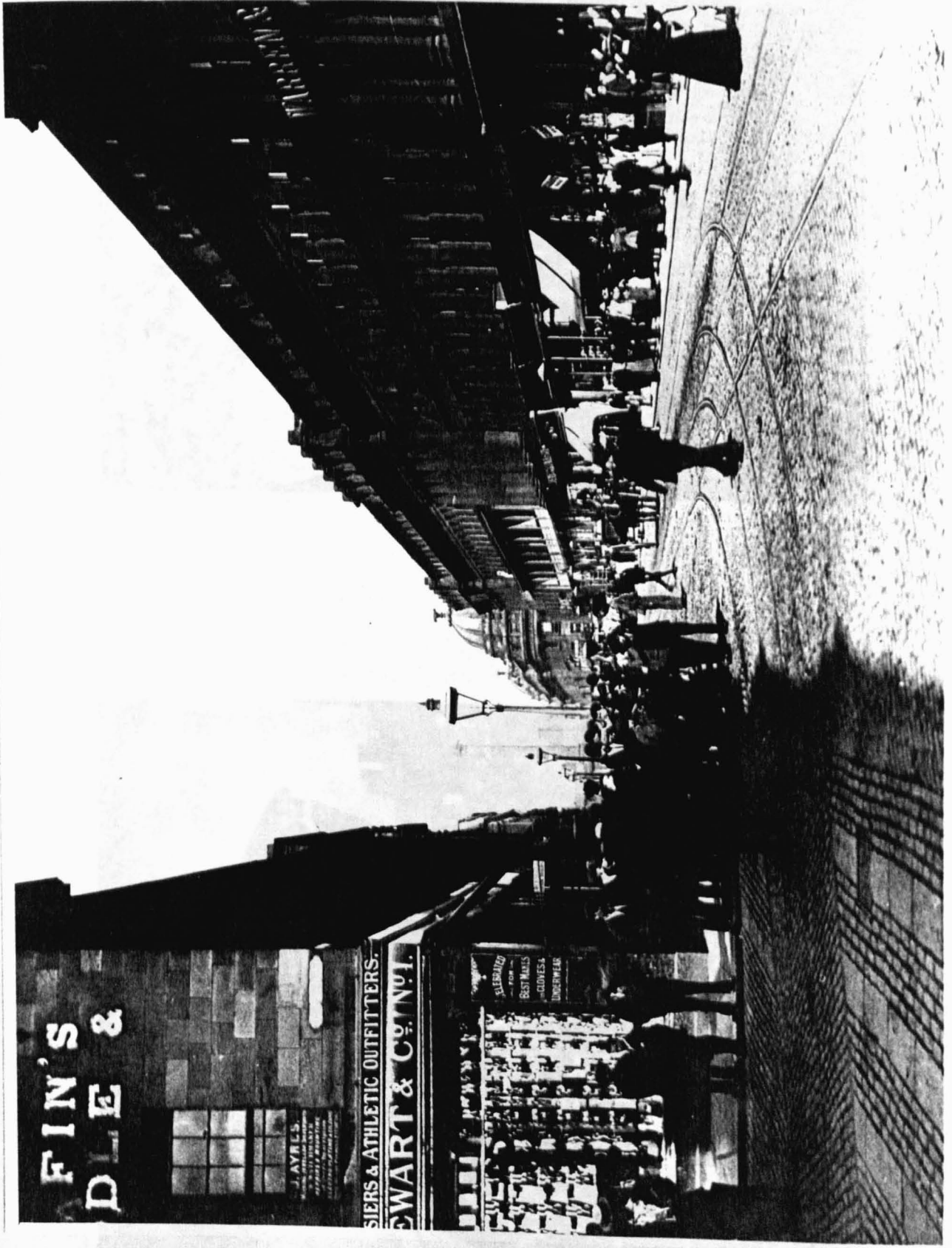


THE NEW ROOM IN A MODEL DWELLING.

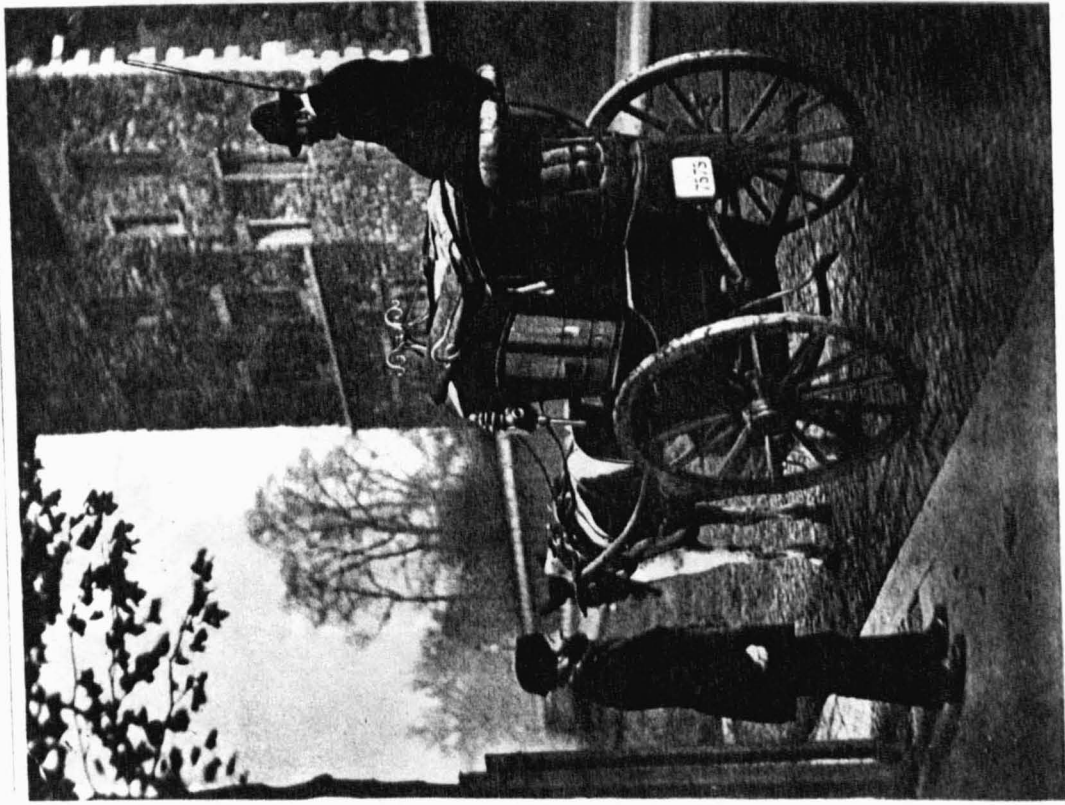




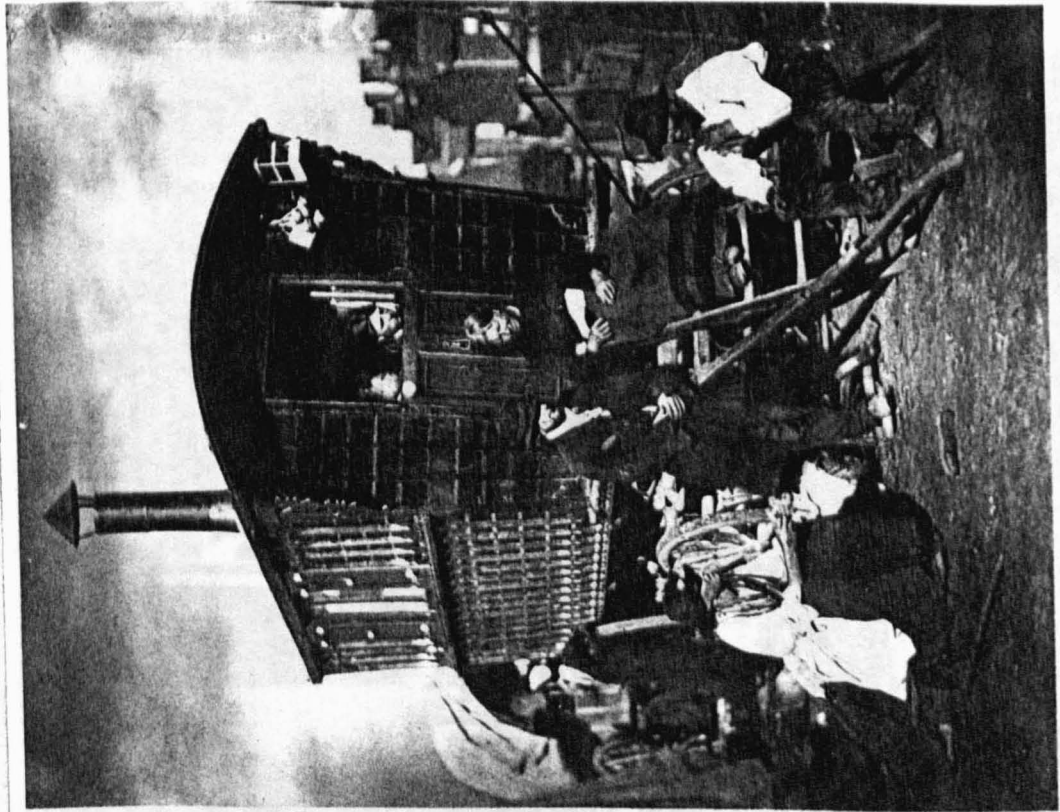
3.47 S. L. Coulthurst, Corner of Fountain Street and Market Street, *Manchester Survey*, c.1890.



3.48 M. Auty, Garinger Street, Newcastle, c.1900.



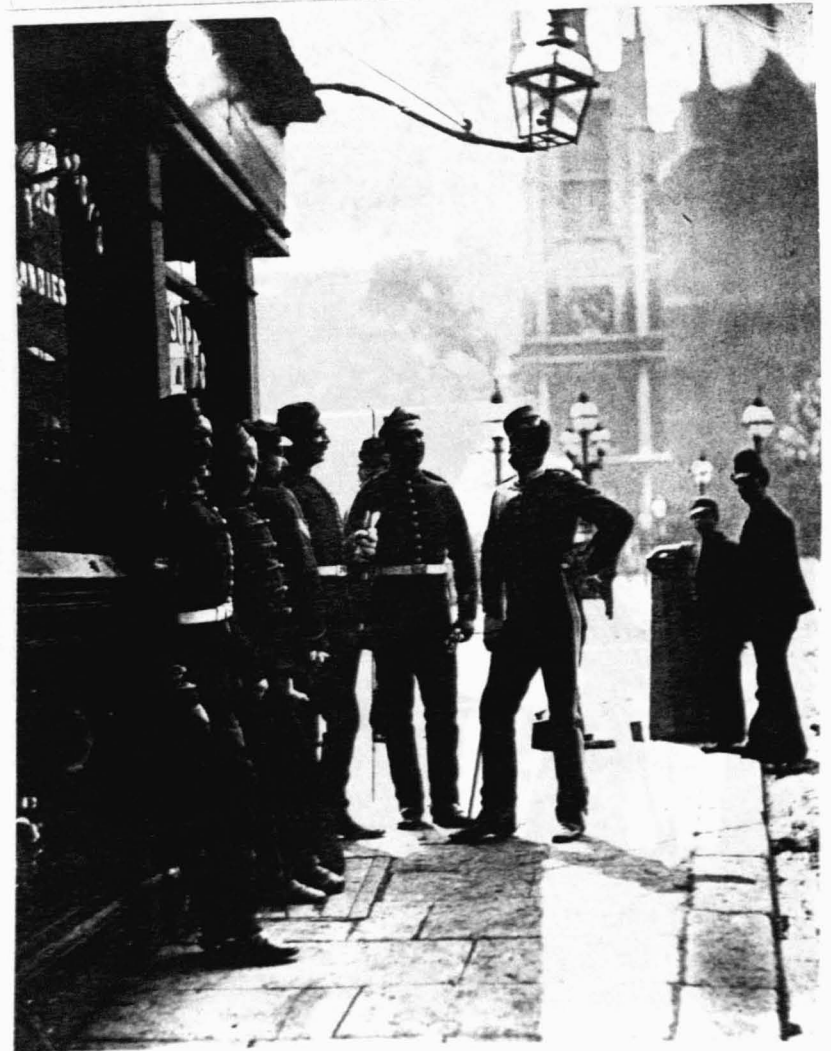
4.2 John Thomson, London Cabmen, 1877.



4.1 John Thomson, London Nomades, 1877.



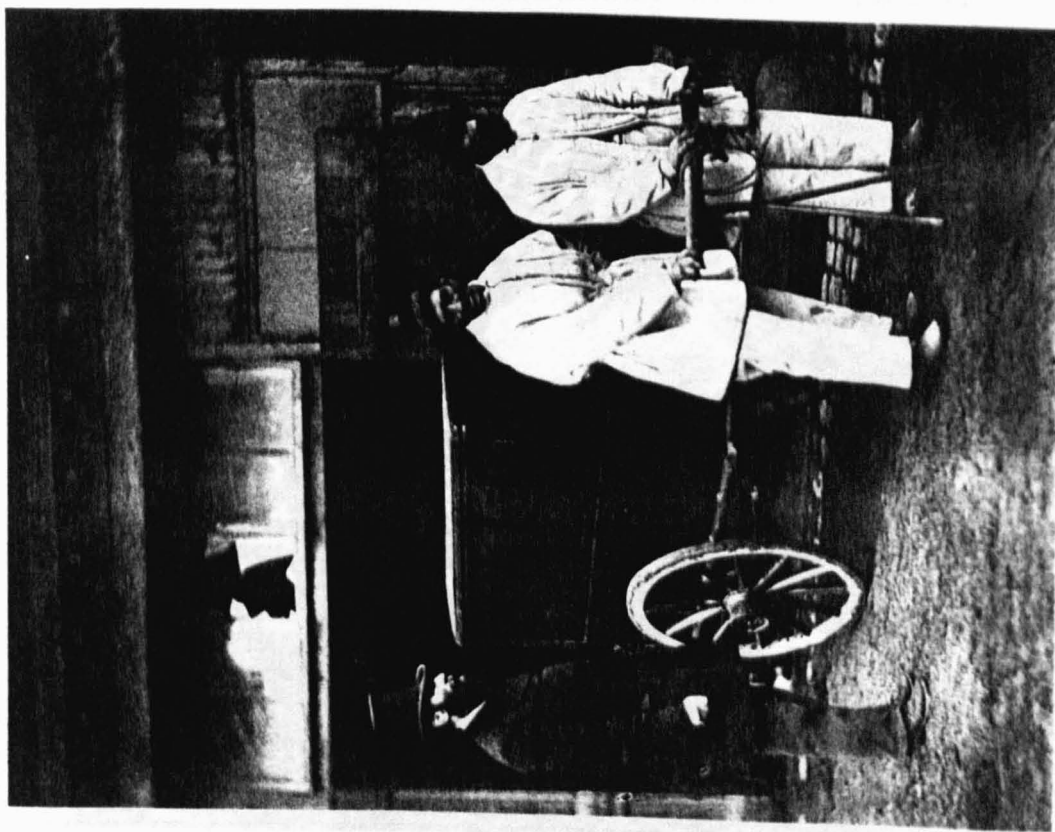
4.3 John Thomson, Covent Garden Flower Women, 1877.



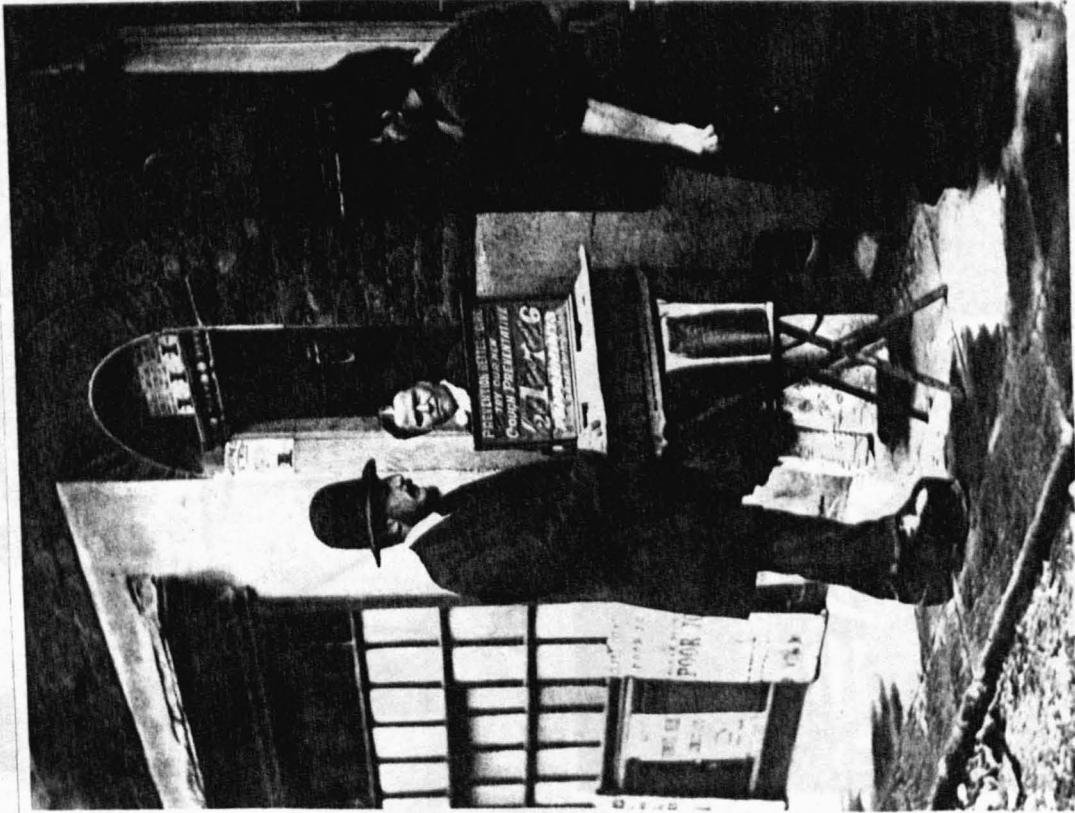
4.4 John Thomson, Recruiting Sergeants at Westminster, 1877.



4. 5 John Thomson, Sufferers from the Floods, 1877.



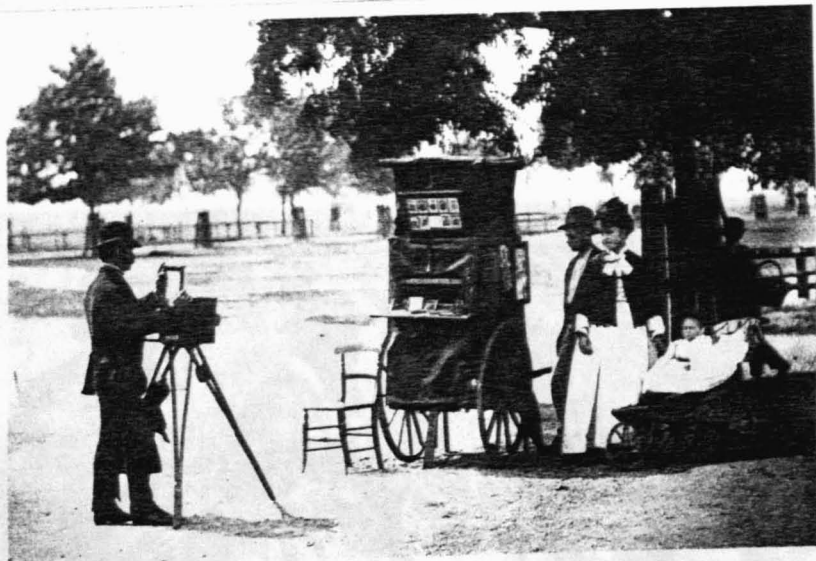
4 .6 John Thomson, Public Disinfectors, 1877.



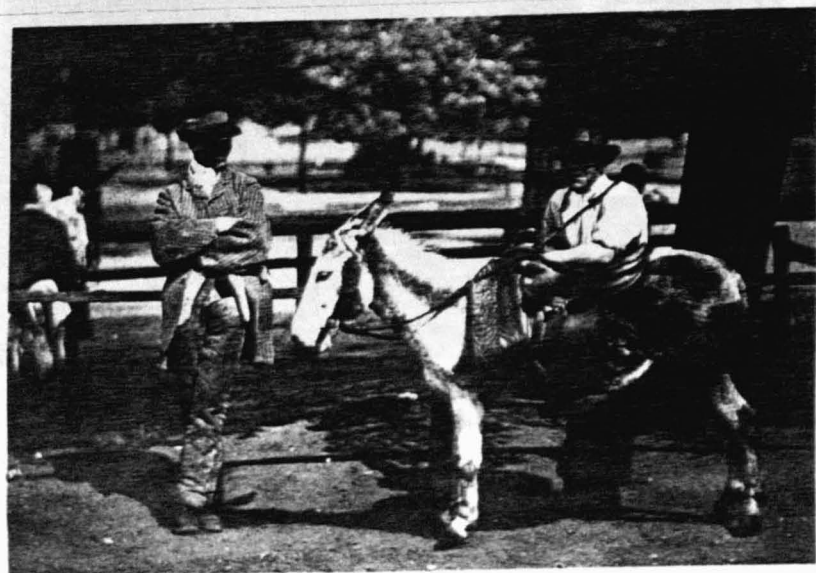
4.7 John Thomson, Street Doctor, 1877.



4.8 John Thomson, Street Advertising, 1877.



4.9 John Thomson, Photography on the Common, 1877.



4.10 John Thomson, Waiting for a Hire, 1877.



4.11 John Thomson, "Caney" the Clown, 1877.



4.12 John Thomson, Dealer in Fancy-Ware, 1877.



4.13 John Thomson, The Temperance Sweep, 1877.



4.14 John Thomson, *The Dramatic Shoe-Black*, 1877.



4.15 John Thomson, *"Tickets" the Card-Dealer*, 1877.



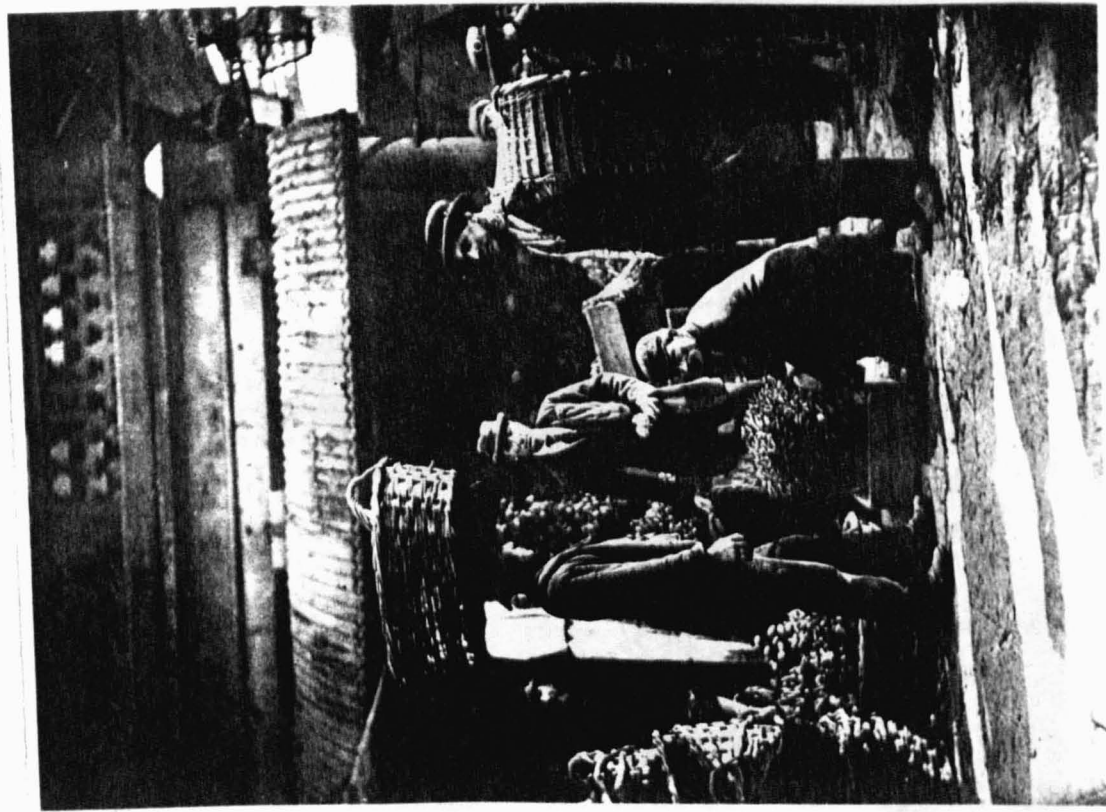
4.16 John Thomson, An Old Clothes' Shop, Seven Dials, 1877.



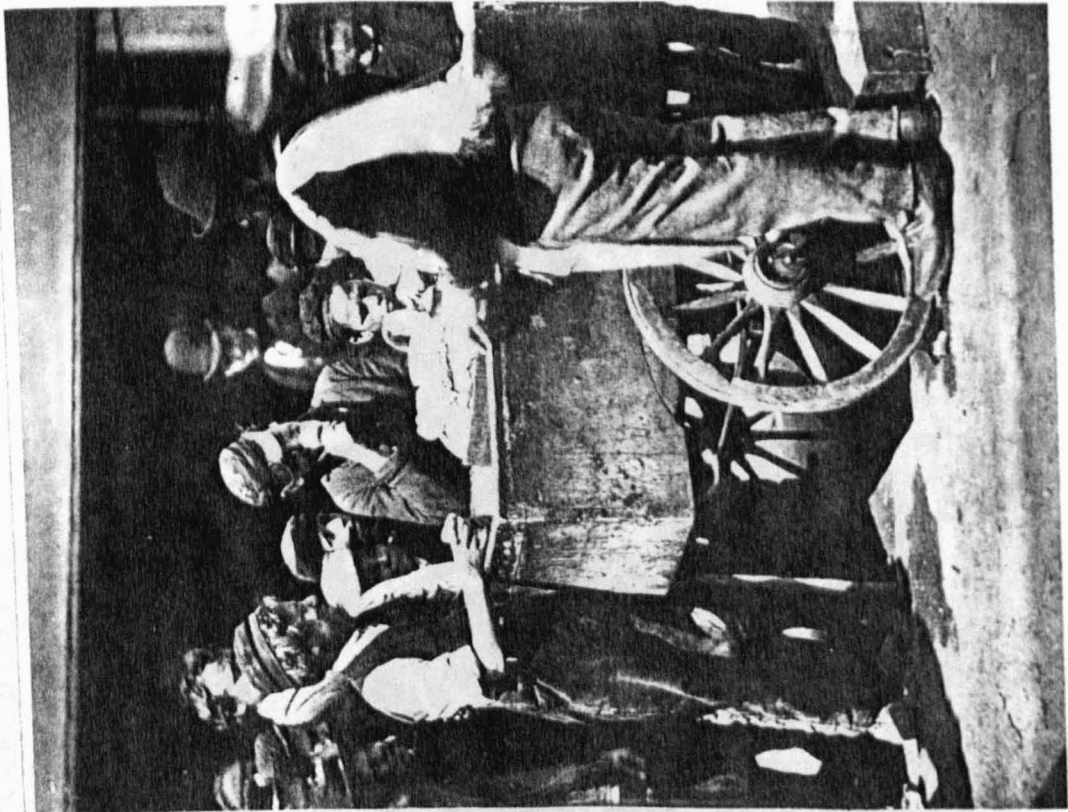
4.17 John Thomson, A Convicts' Home, 1877.



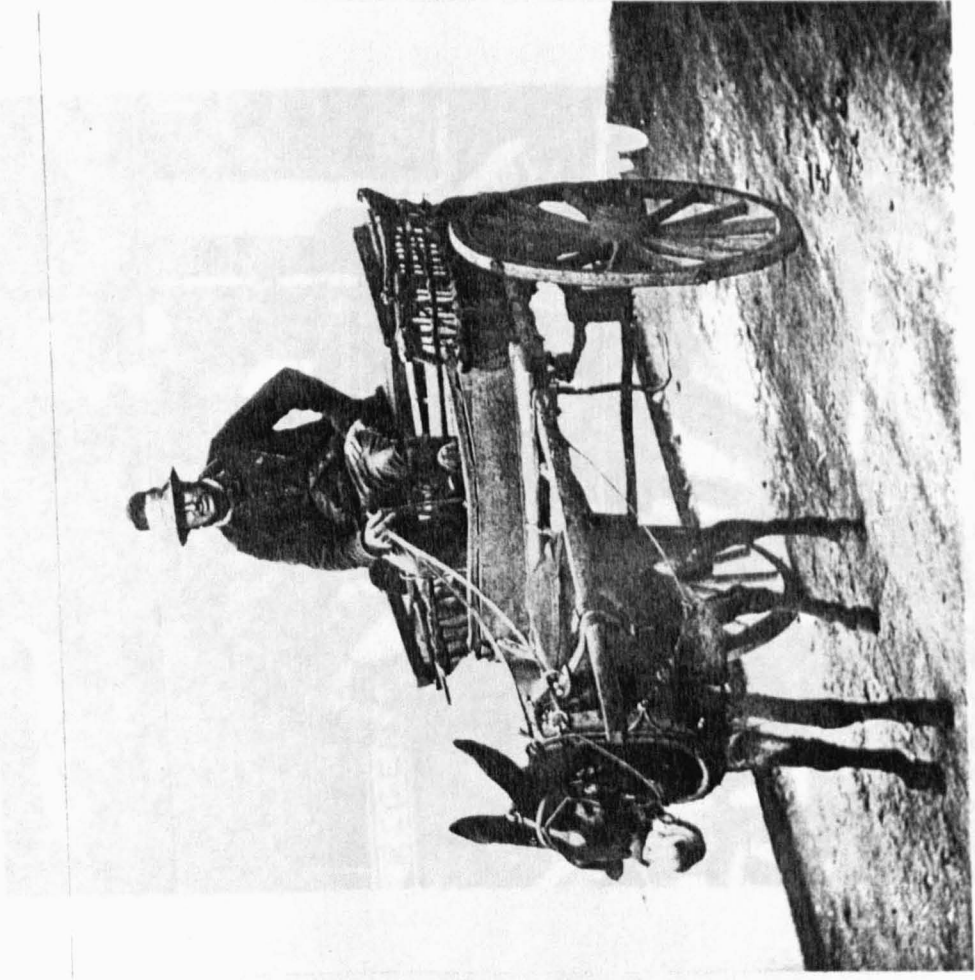
4.18 John Thomson, The "Wall Worker", 1877.



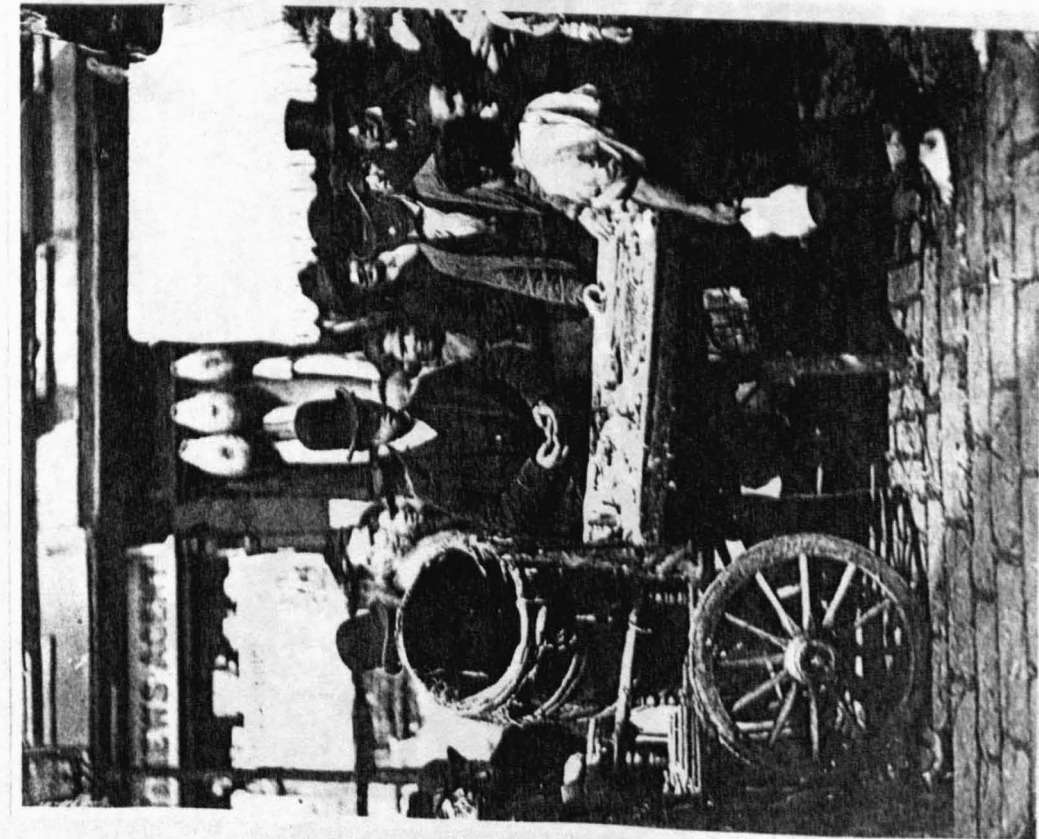
4.19 John Thomson, Covent Garden Labourers, 1877.



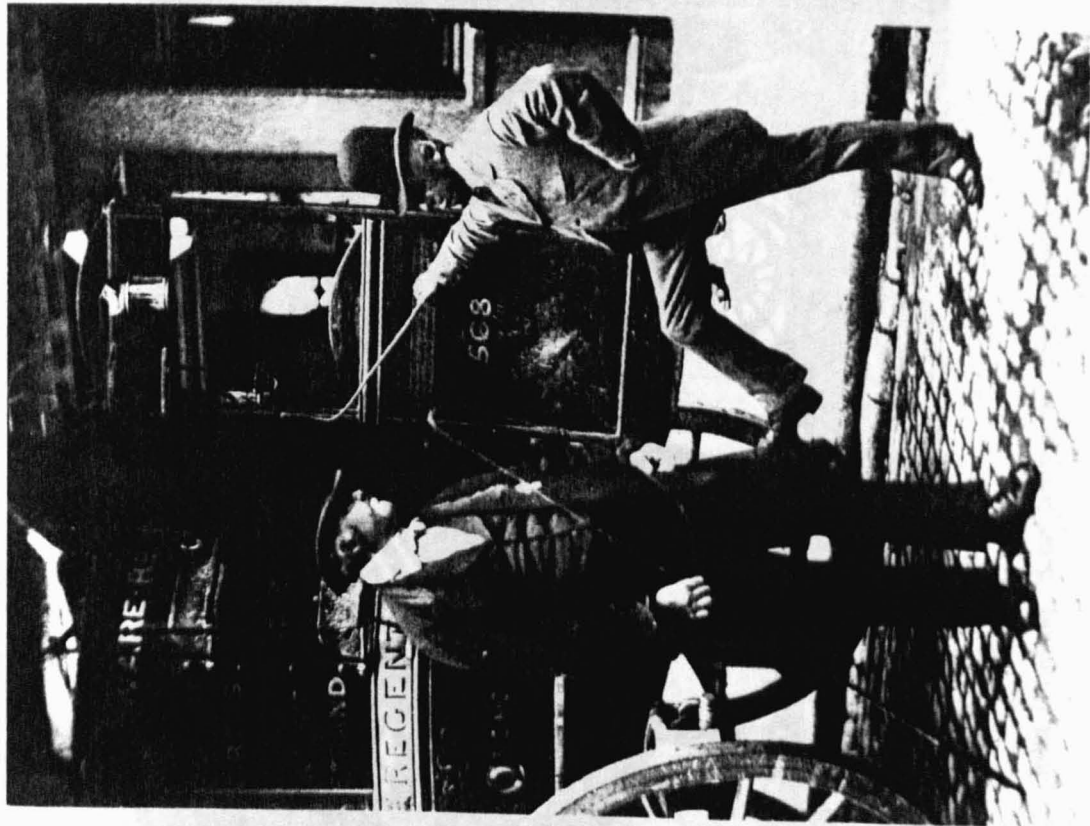
4.20 John Thomson, Halfpenny Ices, 1877.



4.21 John Thomson, Black Jack, 1877.



4.22 John Thomson, Cheap Fish of St. Giles's, 1877.



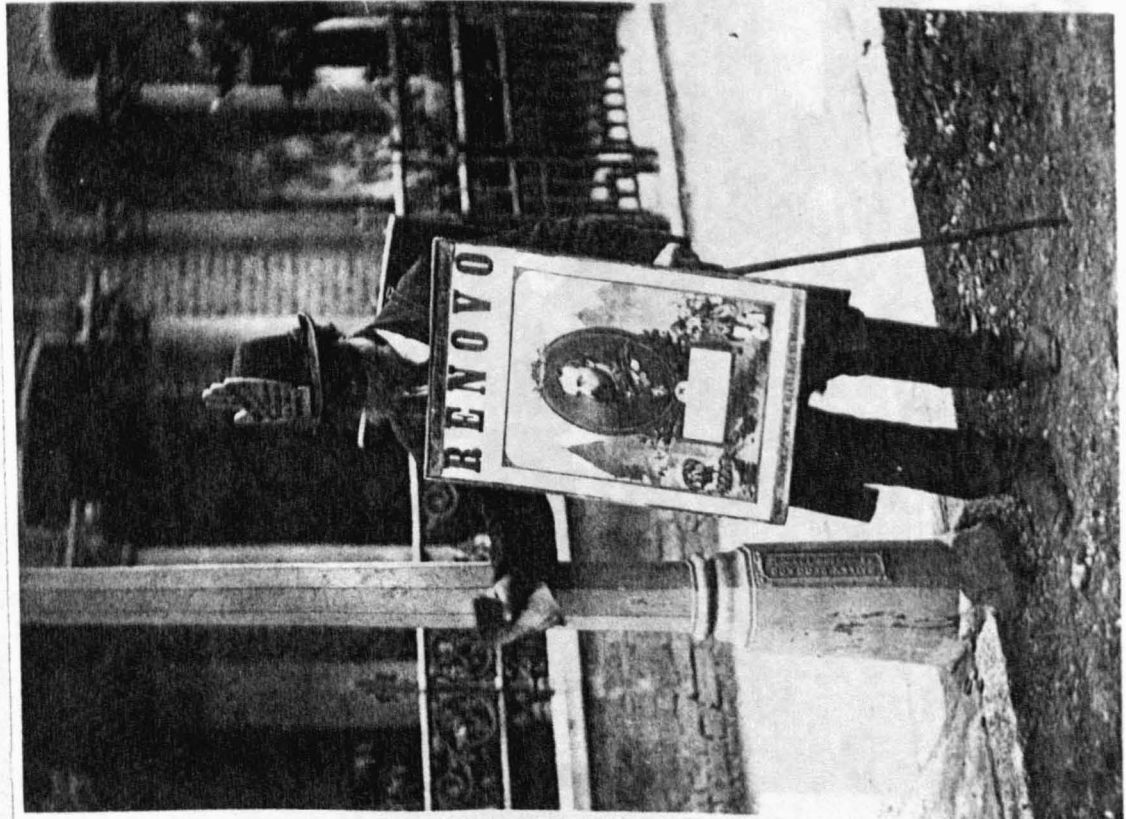
4.23 John Thomson, Cast-Iron Billy, 1877.



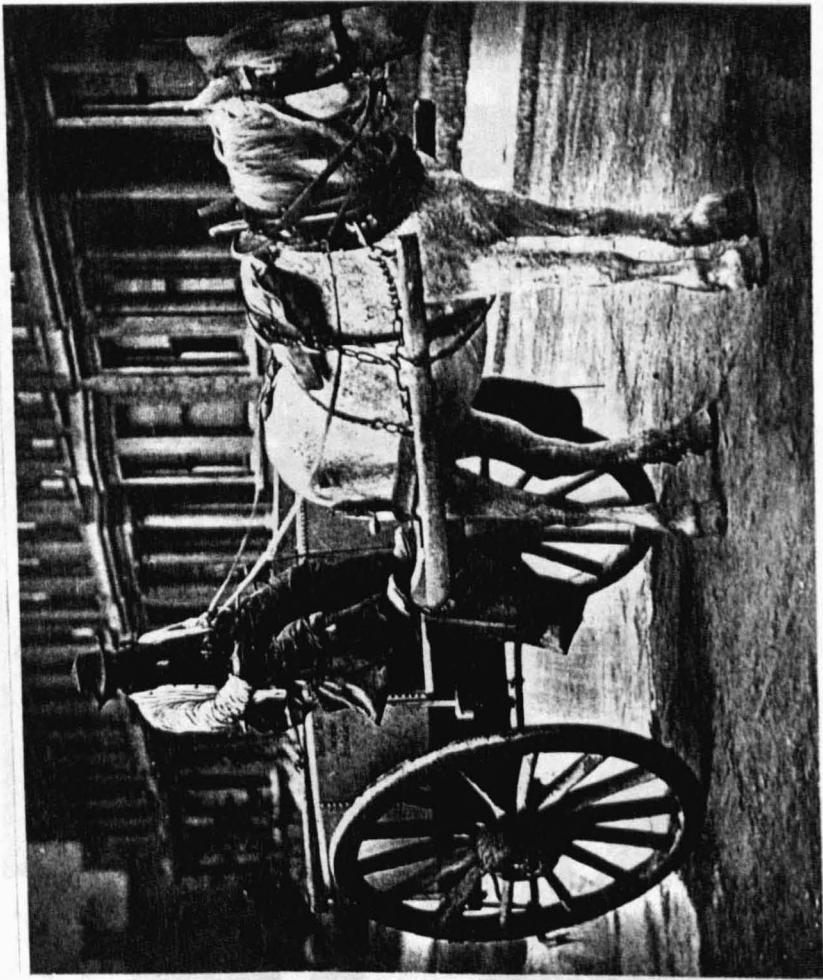
4.24 John Thomson, Workers on the "Silent Highway", 1877.



4.25 John Thomson, "Strawberries. All Ripe! All Ripe!", 1877.



4.26 John Thomson, The London Boardmen, 1877.



4.27 John Thomson, The Water-Cart, 1877.



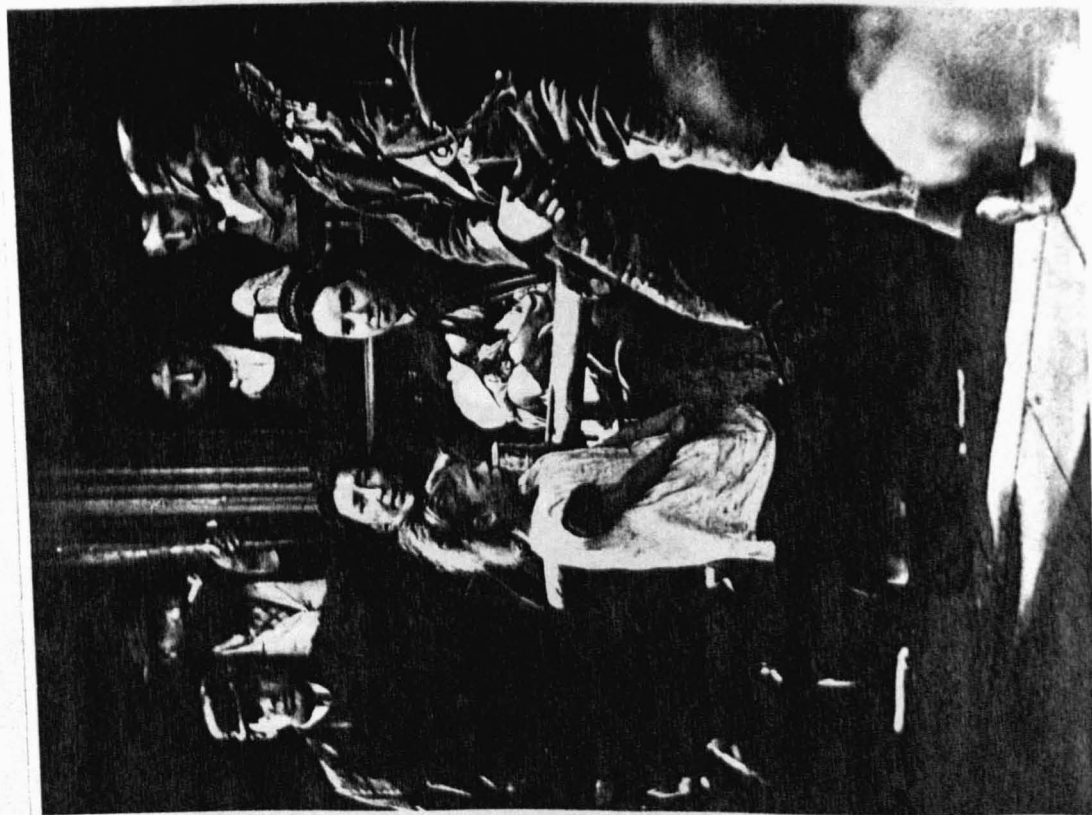
4.28 John Thomson, "Mush-Fakers" and Ginger Beer Makers, 1877.



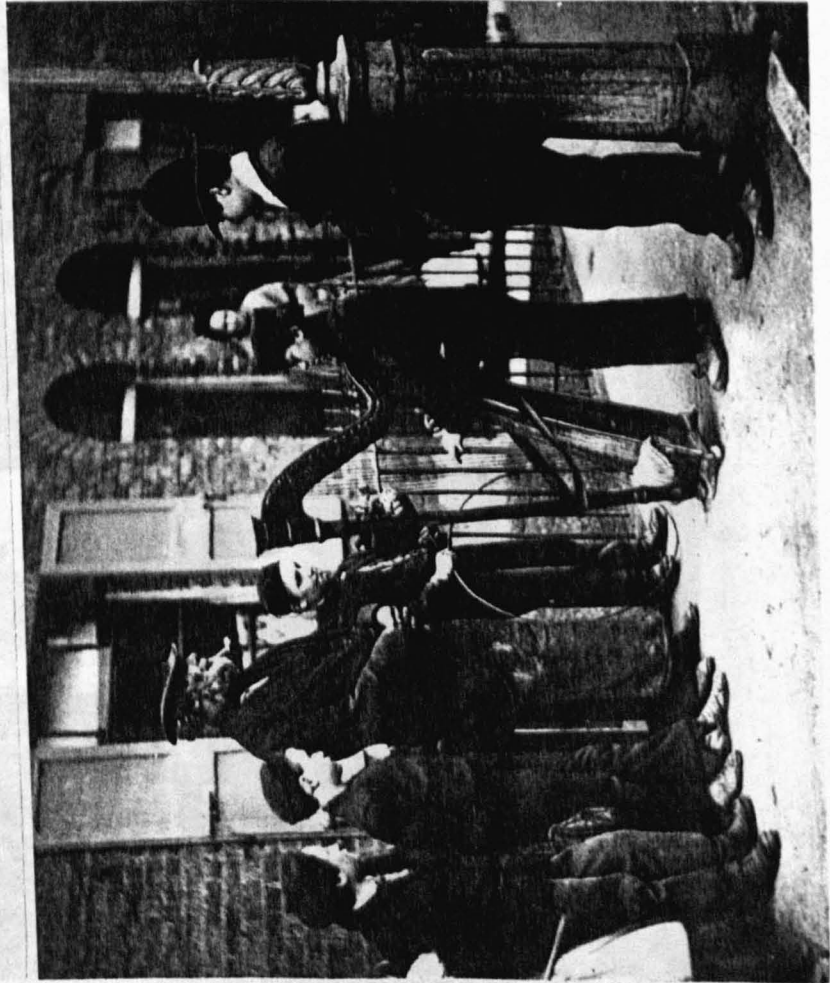
4.29 John Thomson, November Effigies, 1877.



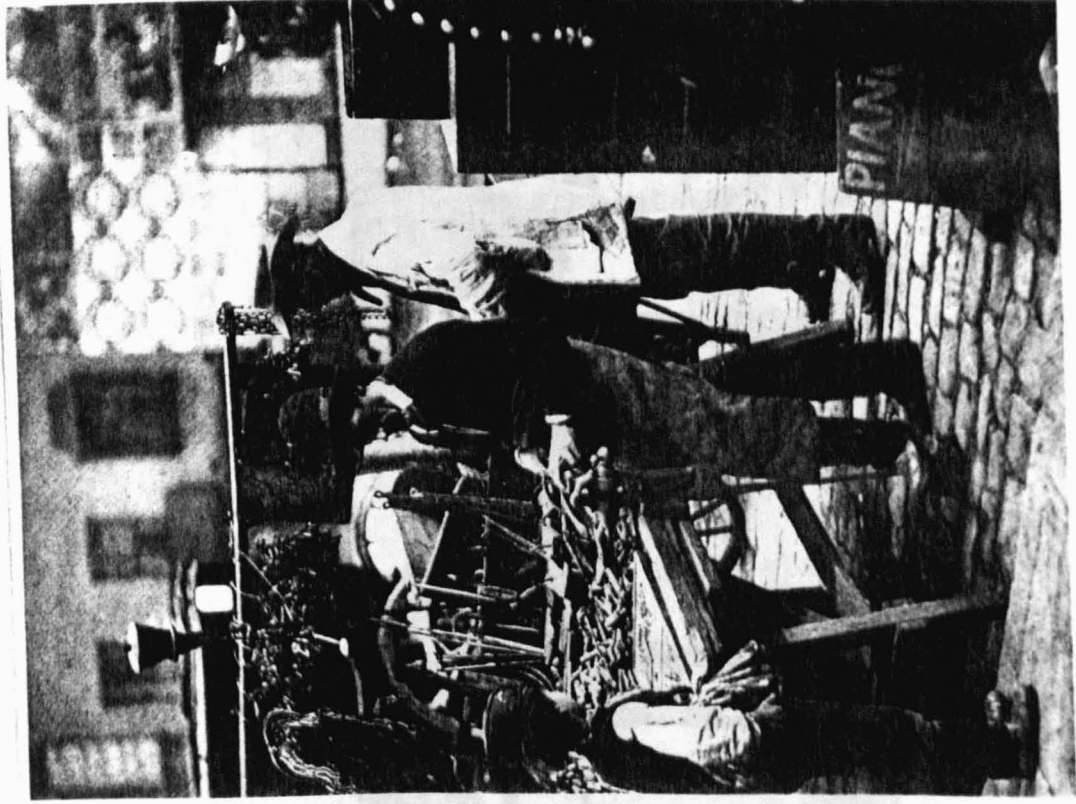
4.31 John Thomson, The "Crawlers", 1877.



4.30 John Thomson, "Hookey Alf" of Whitechapel, 1877.



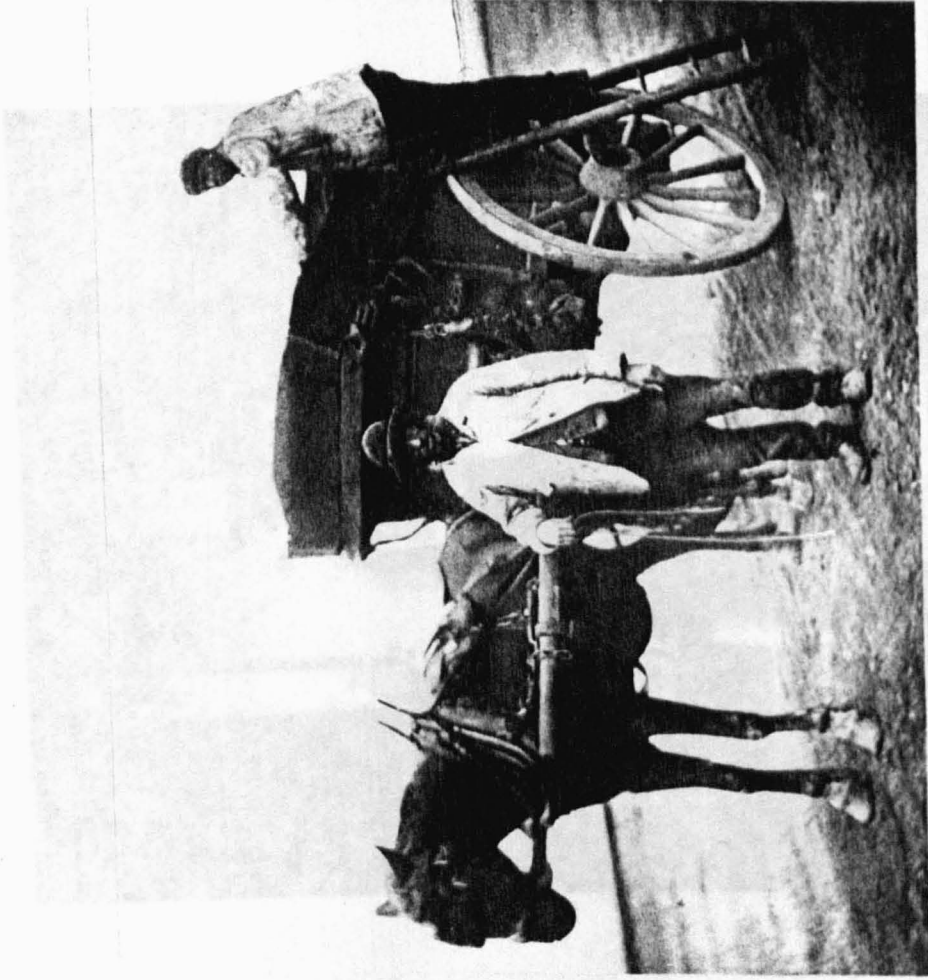
4.32 John Thomson, Italian Street Musicians, 1877.



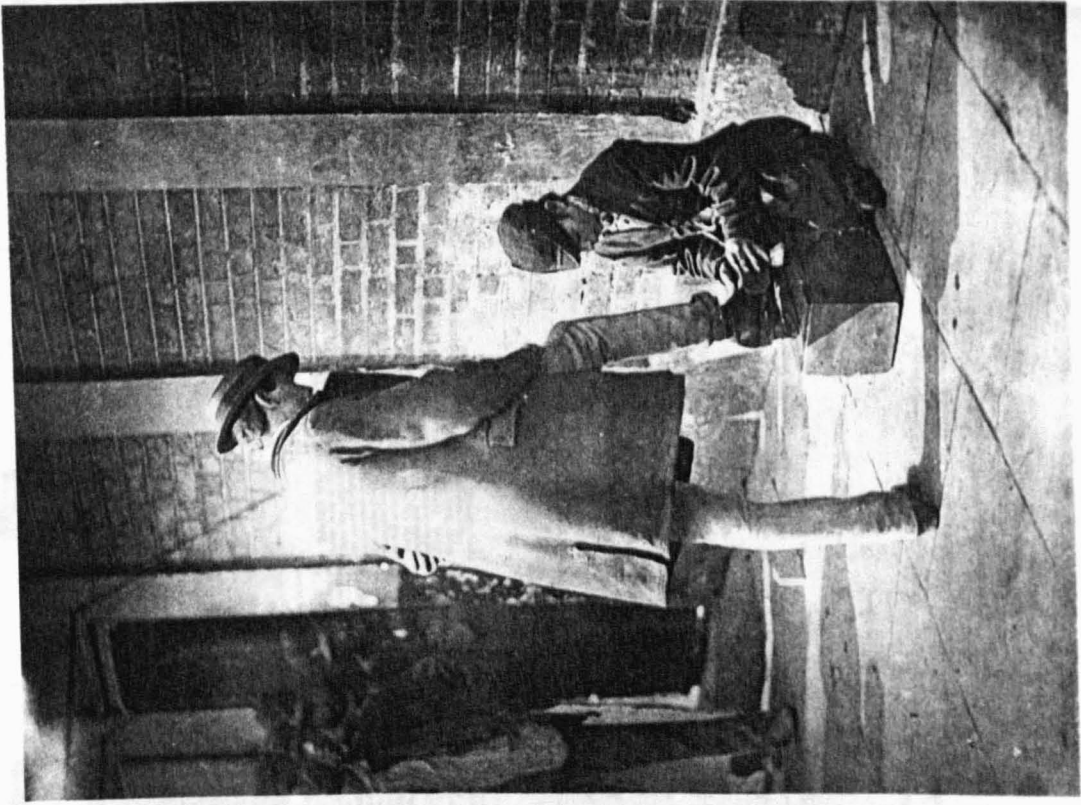
4.33 John Thomson, The Street Locksmith, 1877.



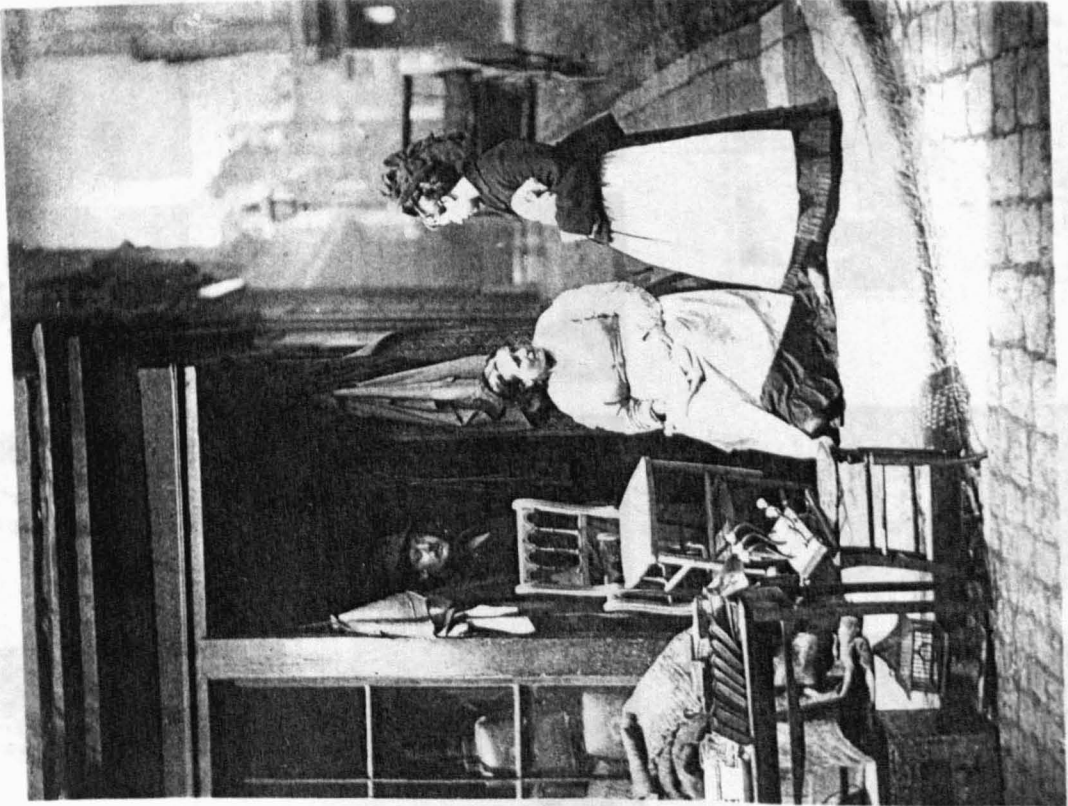
4.34 John Thomson, The Seller of Shell-Fish, 1877.



4.35 John Thomson, Flying Dustmen, 1877.



4.37 John Thomson, The Independent Shoe-Black, 1877.

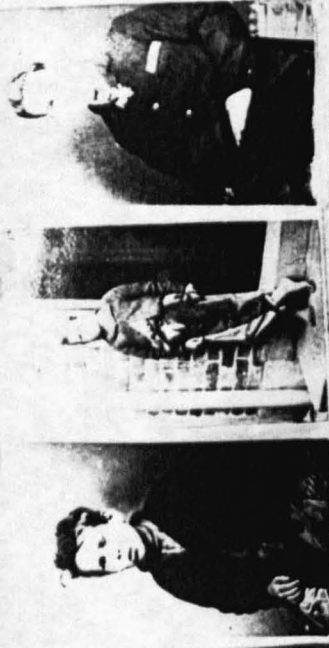


4.36 John Thomson, Old Furniture, 1877.

4.38 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, Children from Dr. Barnardo's Homes, 1875.

4.39 Thomas Barnes and Roderick Johnstone, Children from Dr. Barnardo's Homes, 1875.

CHILDREN



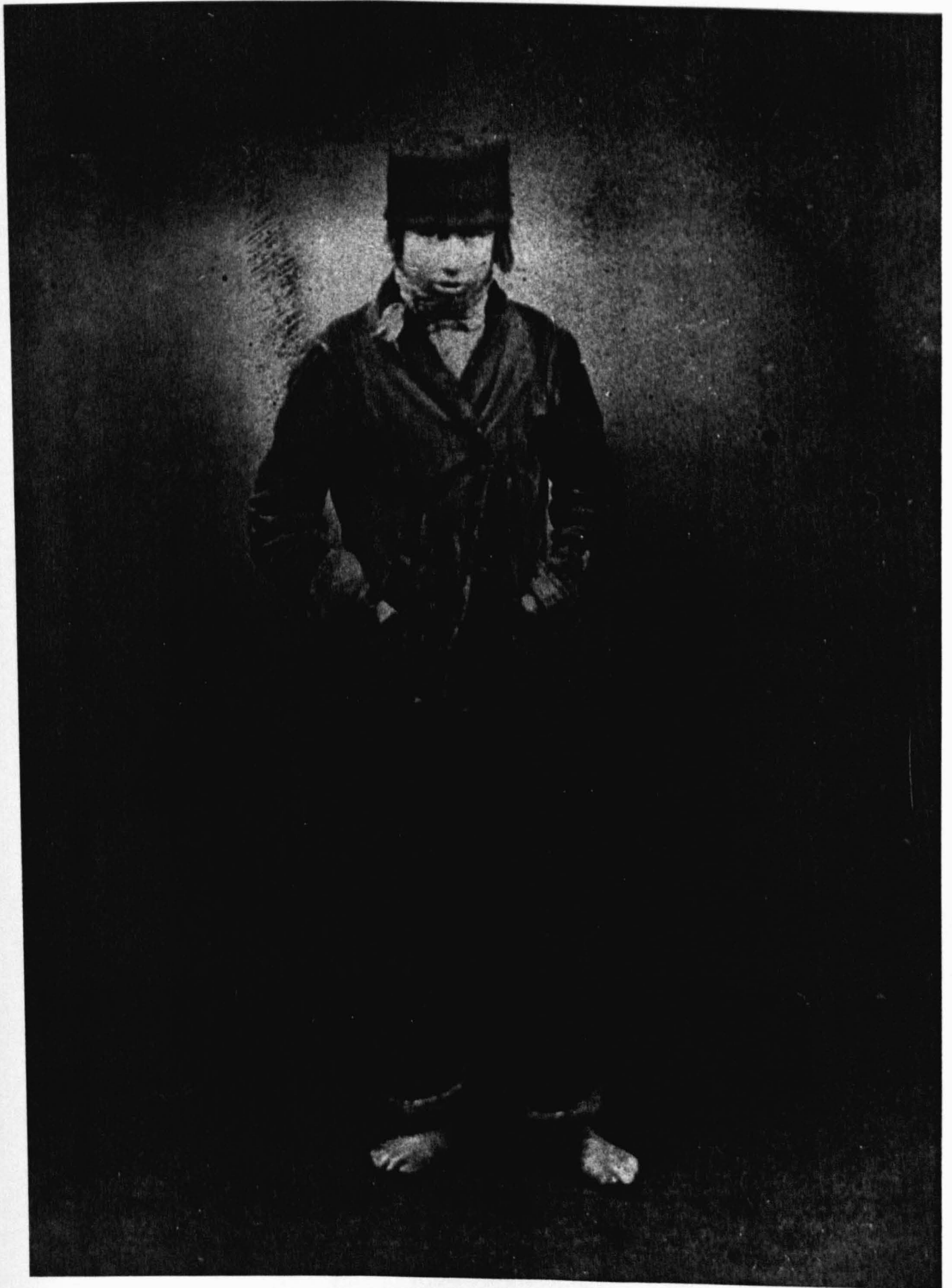
HEADLY REPORT.
 This boy's father was a ship carpenter. He died in 1847, aged 40, of cholera. He left a widow and a girl of 14, who is now married to a man named James. The boy's mother was a servant in the household of the late Mrs. [Name] of 11, Albert Street, a common-law wife of the late [Name], and is now of the ward of her son, the late [Name]. The boy's father was a ship carpenter, and he is now a common-law wife of the late [Name]. The boy's mother was a servant in the household of the late Mrs. [Name] of 11, Albert Street, a common-law wife of the late [Name]. The boy's father was a ship carpenter, and he is now a common-law wife of the late [Name]. The boy's mother was a servant in the household of the late Mrs. [Name] of 11, Albert Street, a common-law wife of the late [Name].

Subsequent Report
 1868 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1869 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1870 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1871 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1872 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1873 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1874 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.
 1875 Aug 19 The [Name] comes not yet home to [Name]. But no more [Name] & Home.

CHILDREN



4.40 April "Girls' Gender 'Daisy'" [Name] Boys from the Ragged School, London, 1875.



4.40 Anon., George Gander ("Gandy"), London Boys from the Ragged Schools Union, c.1857.

E. E. J. M.
Home for Working & Destitute Lads.

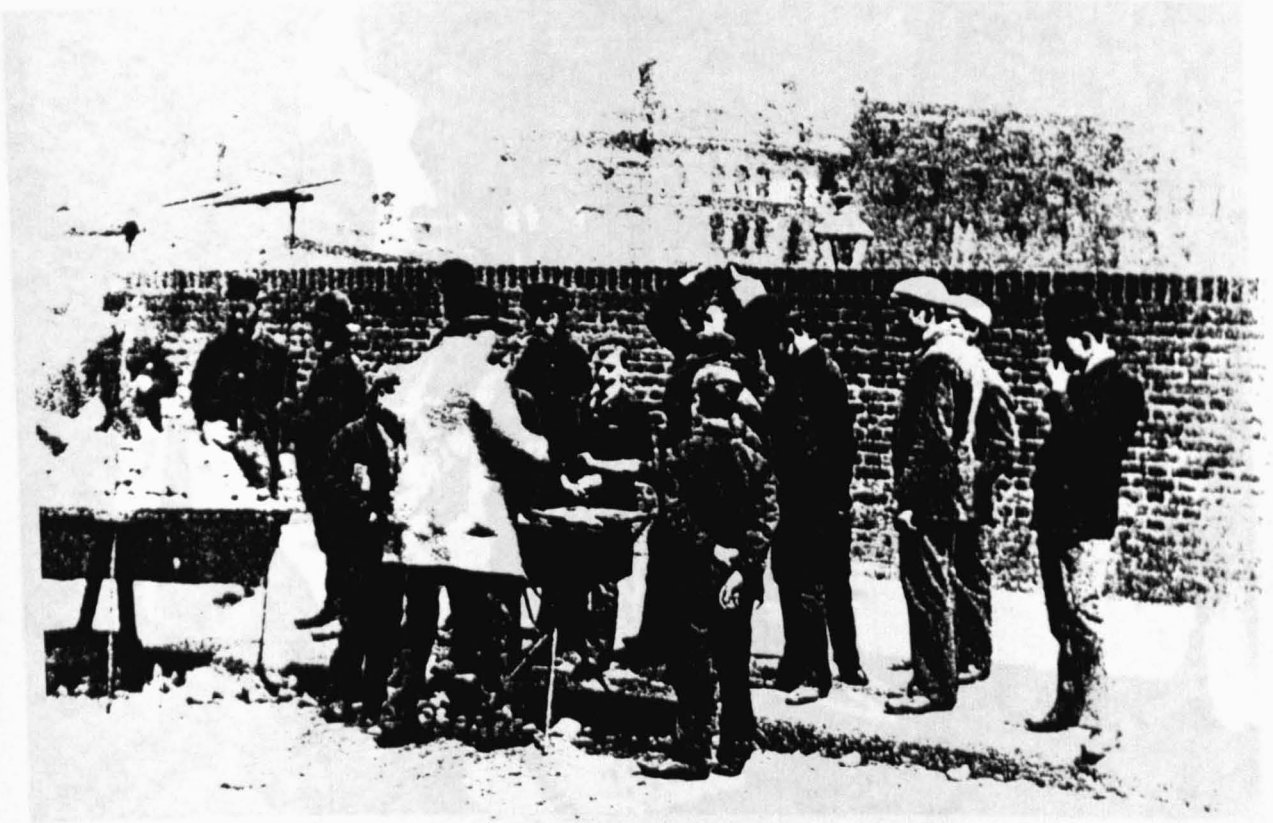


No. 27.—ONCE A LITTLE VAGRANT.
(The same lad as on card No. 28.)

E. E. J. M.
Home for Working & Destitute Lads.



No. 28.—NOW A LITTLE WORKMAN.
(The same lad as on card No. 27.)



4.42 Paul Martin, Street Market, Farringdon Road, London, 1894.



4.43 Paul Martin, Street Arabs, London, 1893.



4.44 Paul Martin, "The Cheapside Flower Seller", London, 1894.



4.45 Paul Martin, "The Cheapside Flower Seller", cut-out figure, 1894.



4.46 Thomas Burke, Clay Pipes, Photographs of Liverpool Street Life, c.1895.



4.47 Edgar Lee, A Quayside Market, Newcastle, 1890s.



4.48 Edgar Lee, A Street-Barrow, Newcastle, 1890s.



4.49 Edgar Lee, District Visitors, Newcastle, 1890s.



4.50 Edgar Lee, The Crabseller, Newcastle, 1890s.



4.51 Edgar Lee, Hand-Camera in the Slums, Newcastle, 1890s.



4.52 Charles Spurgeon, Borough High Street, 1887.



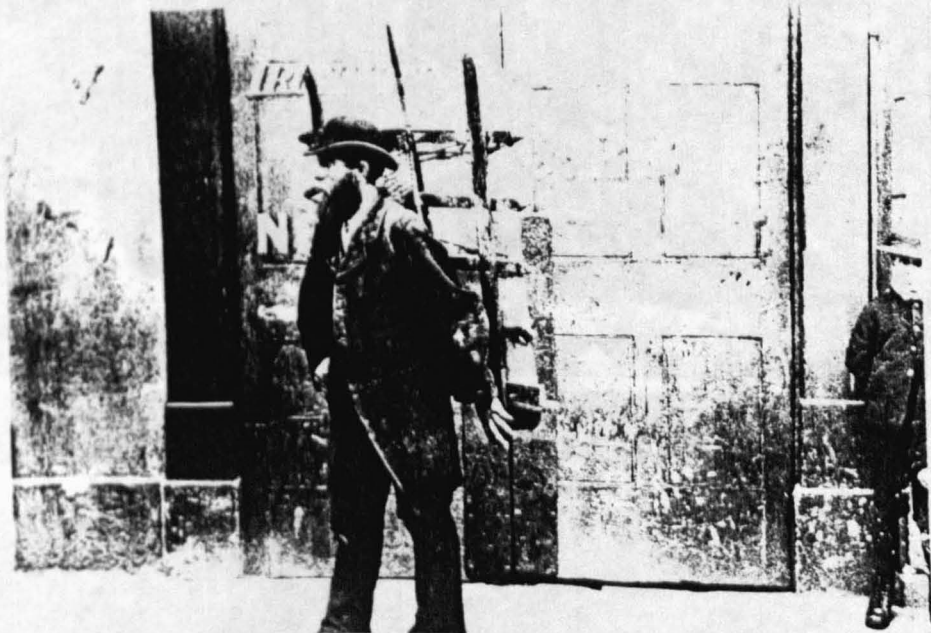
4.53 Charles Spurgeon, Sweep, Greenwich, 1884.



4.54 Charles Spurgeon, Cat's Meat, Greenwich, 1895.



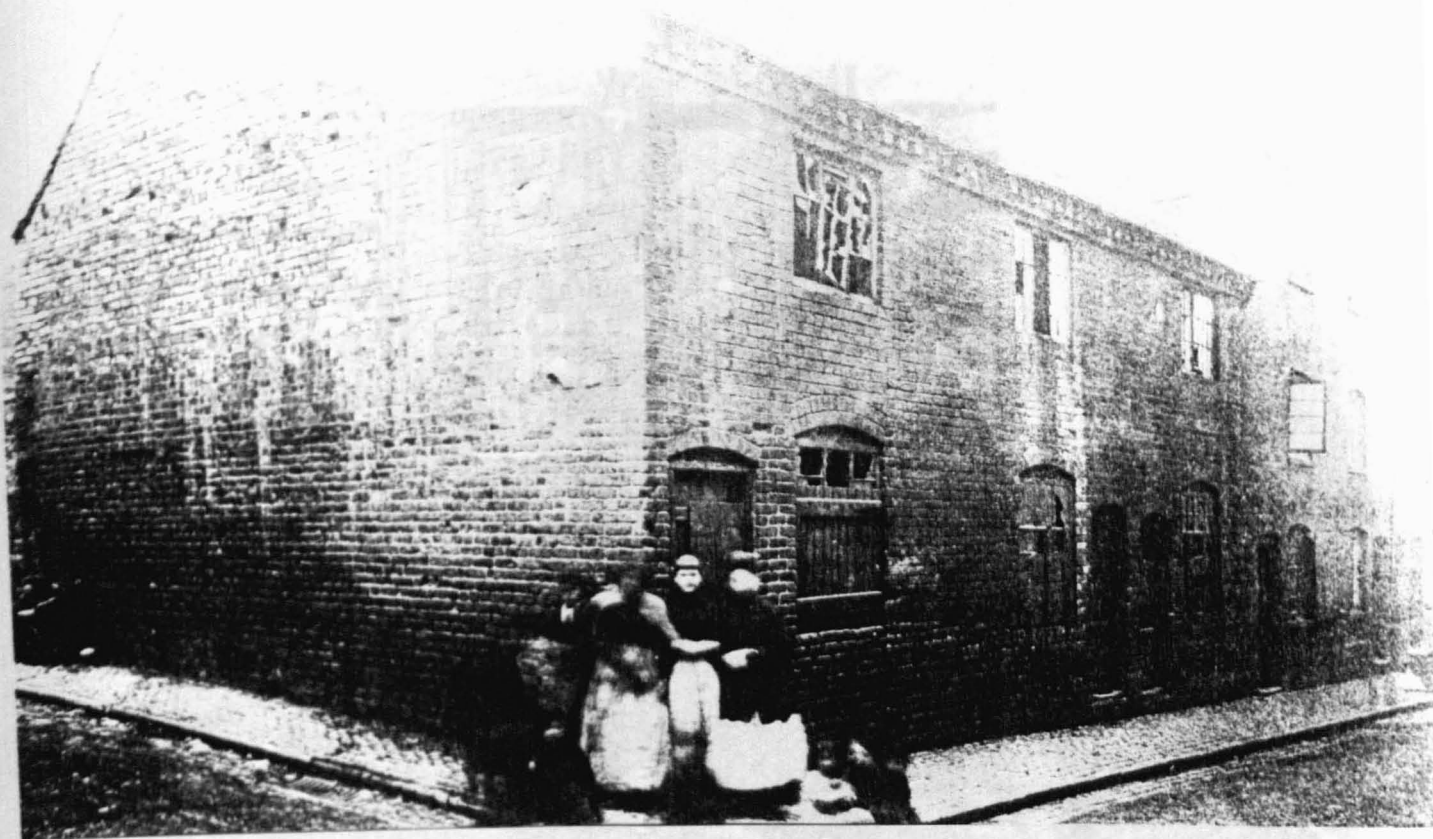
4.55 Charles Spurgeon, Rabbit Seller, Greenwich, 1884



4.56 Charles Spurgeon, Glazier, Greenwich, 1885.



5. 1 John Thomson, The "Crawlers", *Street-Life in London*, 1877.



5. 2 James Burgoyne, Balloon Street, Birmingham Improvement Scheme, 1875.



5. 3 Anon., 77 Stewart Street, Cowcaddens Special Inquiry, c.1910.



5. 4 Thomas Burke, Off Gerard Street, Photographs of Liverpool Street Life, c.1895.



5. 5 Anon., Slum Interior (woman and child, small water closet), c.1910.



5. 6 Anon., Slum Interior (woman and child by range), c. 1910.



5. 7 Thomas Burke, Rag Market, Photographs of Liverpool Street Life, c.1895.



5.8 S.L. Coulthurst, Mary, The Old Paper Woman, Victoria Street, Manchester Survey, c.1890.



5.9 Charles Inston, Character Study, Liverpool Characters and Streets, c.1890.

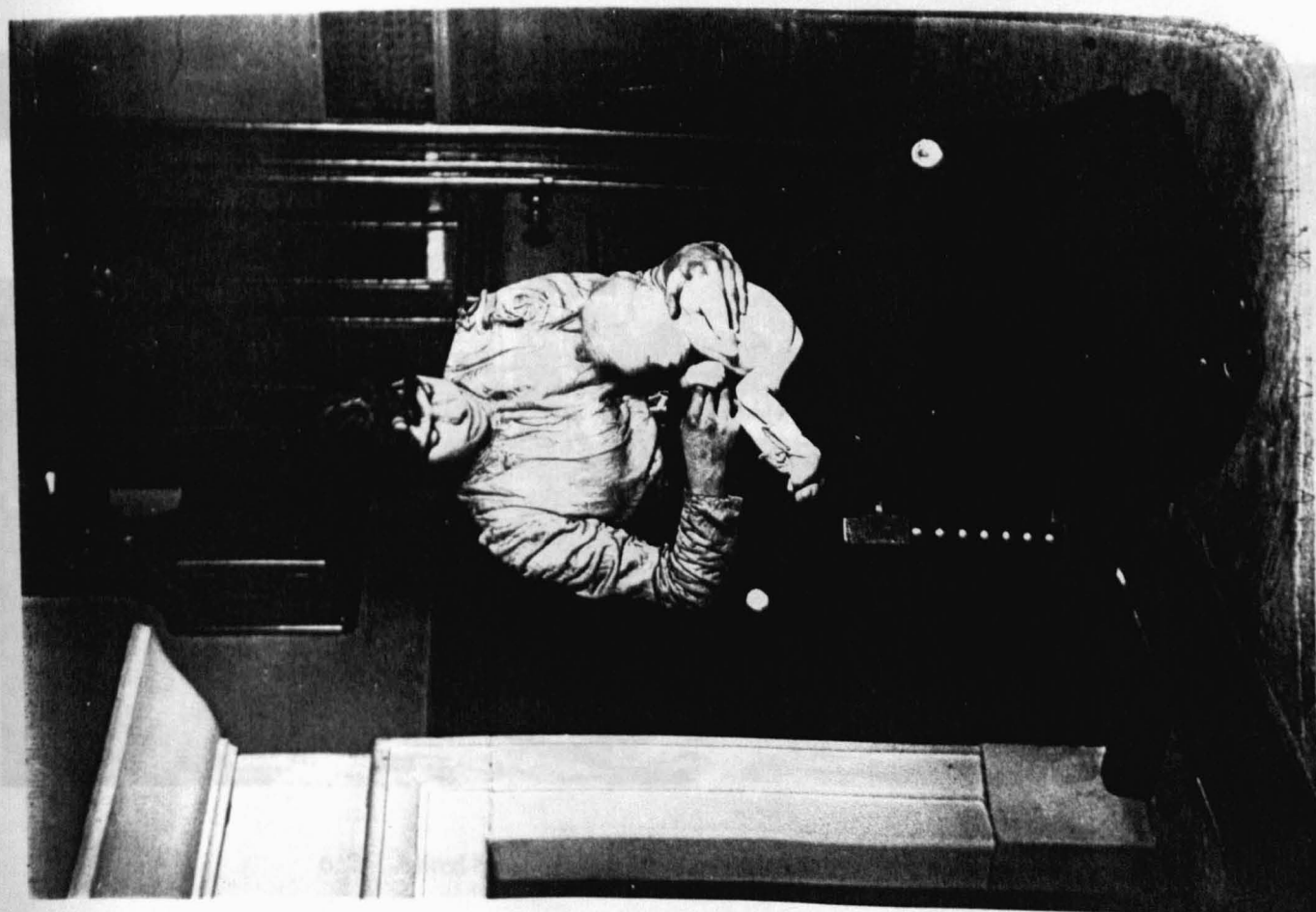


5.10 Jacob Riis, A "Scrub" with her bed, Eldridge Police Station, New York, c.1889.

© The Estate of Jacob Riis, New York, 1910. (Reprinted by permission of the Estate of Jacob Riis, New York, 1910.)

5.11 Anon., Mother and Child (at Dr. Sutherland's, Maitland Street?), Glasgow, c.1910.

5.12 Anon., Mother and Child (at Dr. Sutherland's, Maitland Street?), Glasgow, c.1910.





6. 1 Alfred Stieglitz, *The Terminal (The Car Horses)*, New York, 1893.



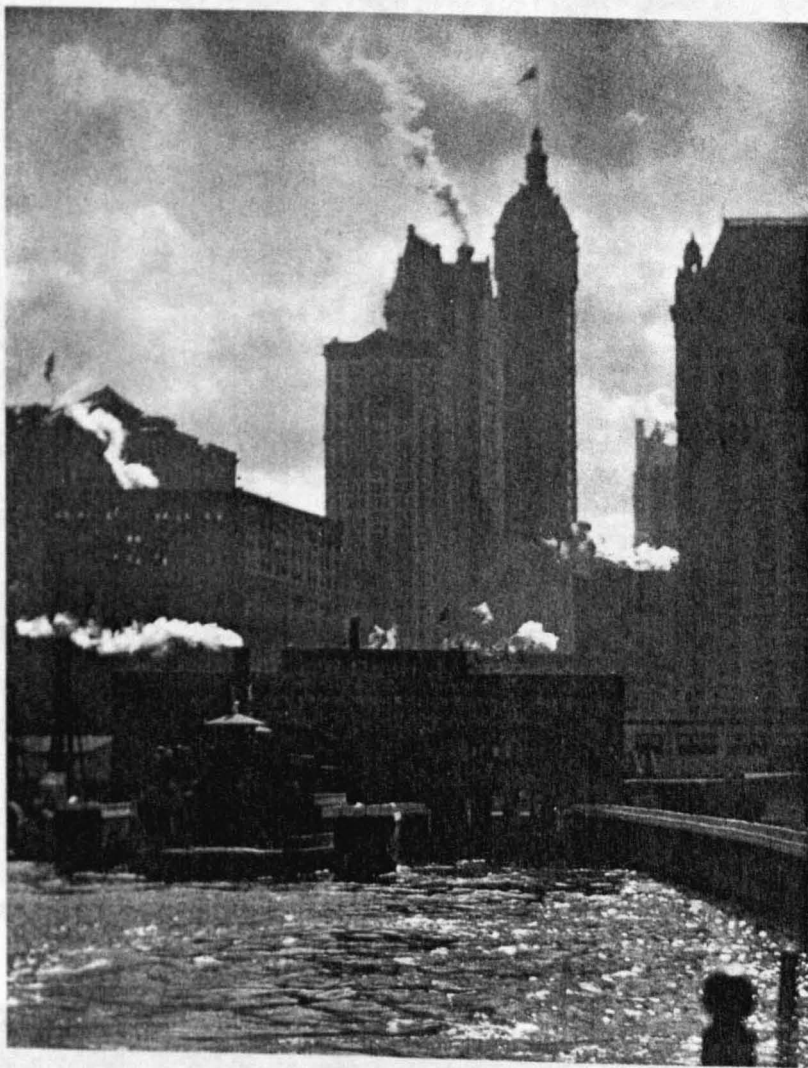
6. 2 Alfred Stieglitz, *Wet Day on the Boulevard*, Paris, 1894.



6. 3 Alfred Stieglitz, Reflections, Night, New York, 1896-97.



6. 4 Alfred Stieglitz, From My Window, New York, 1903.



6. 5 Alfred Stieglitz, The City of Ambition, New York, 1910.

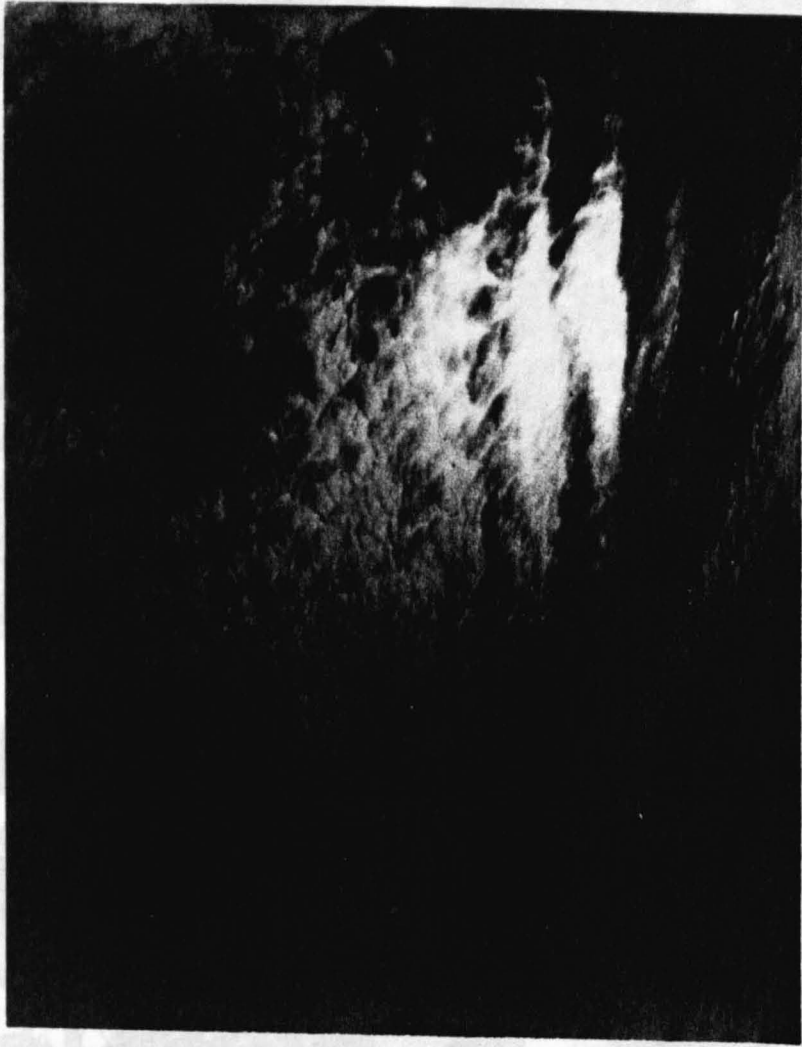
6. 5 Alfred Stieglitz, The City of Ambition, New York, 1910.



6. 6 Alfred Stieglitz, Equivalent, Mountain and Sky, Lake George, 1924.



6. 7 Alfred Stieglitz, Equivalent, 1926.

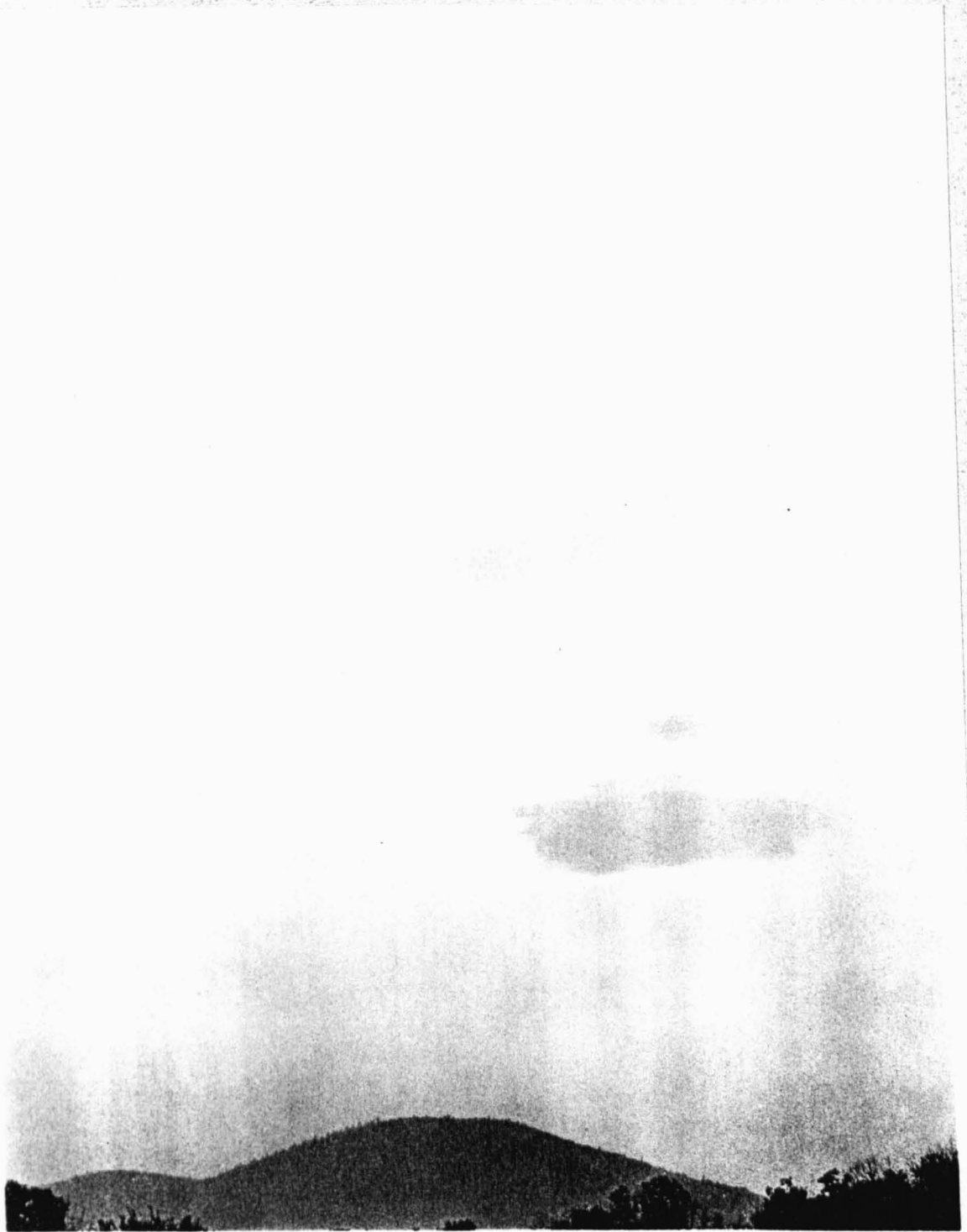


6. 8 Alfred Stieglitz, Equivalent, 1930.

6. 8 Alfred Stieglitz, The Storage, 1907.



6. 9 Alfred Stieglitz, *The Steerage*, 1907.



6.10 Alfred Stieglitz, Equivalent, Music No. 8, Lake George, 1922.