

EnterText Volume 8

ABSTRACTS

Susan Ash

Dr Barnardo and ‘The Queen’s Shades’: Liminal London, Hospitality and Victorian Child Rescue

To support his ubiquitous philanthropic enterprises, Dr. Barnardo published autobiographical tales of child rescue set in the typical London spaces where the homeless ‘city arabs’ often took shelter: lodging houses, stairwells, archways and bridges. This essay examines two texts that depict a site known as ‘The Queen’s Shades,’ a ‘doss’ created by discarded boxes and detritus near Billingsgate Fish Market. In *Our Father’s Sparrow*, Barnardo gently fictionalises this location to create a story about hospitality among street children. In contrast, his version of ‘The Shades’ in ‘God’s Own Hand’ (an account of his early career) exemplifies monstrous corporeal and architectural collapse. I argue that Barnardo’s conflation of human sensations with architectural detritus denigrates maternity while justifying the ‘right’ reformer’s permeation into the poorest classes. I incorporate Derrida’s work on thresholds and hospitality to explore how ‘The Shades,’ neither inside nor outside any fixed architectural structure, opens up discussion about ‘liminal London’.

Peter Coles and Gesche Würfel

London-Luton: A Photographic Exploration of the Lea Valley

Using photography, interviews and documentary research, this study examines various boundaries within the Lea River Valley, from its source to the estuary on the Thames. The work partly builds on a previous study by one of the authors on the 2012 Olympic

site, before construction work began and the area was closed to the public. The study also incorporates a reflection on the Meridian, which bisects a vertical stretch of the Lea from the Thames to Ware. The other author focuses on vestiges of a rural past along the entire Lea Valley, which are sometimes out of place in the present urbanized landscape.

David Fulton

Heaven or Hell: Representations of Ilford in the Writings of Denise Levertov and Kathleen Raine

The essay examines competing conceptions of the suburbs – one traditional, the other revisionist – as reflected in Kathleen Raine and Denise Levertov’s representations of Ilford. While Raine held to the traditional characterisation of the suburbs as a place of stifling uniformity and conformity, Levertov adopted a revisionist response in which the suburbs becomes a locus for diversity and liberating potentiality. While this division between the two poets can be momentarily bridged by the way both mythologise their childhoods, their actual representations sharply diverge for whereas Raine sees Ilford as a region of Hell, Levertov regards it as a kind of Paradise.

Nick Hubble

The Liminal Persistence of Interwar Suburbs in the Twenty-First Century

Four million houses were built in Britain between the wars; many of them part of a new suburban culture suffused with the utopian promise of a golden classless future. However, because of the onset of the Second World War and its aftermath of austerity, this promise was never fulfilled. In the 1990s, New Labour claimed that the suburbs had been ‘forgotten’ and built a campaign around them which led to their 1997 landslide election victory. This paper examines the Channel 4 television series *The 1940s House* (2001) as part of a broader revisionist attempt to embody Britishness in the suburban new

middle classes by replacing the hitherto dominant working-class imagery of wartime Britain. After establishing the ultimate futility of this project, the paper concludes by analyzing the liminal persistence in the twenty-first century of an interwar suburban housing form that has been stripped of its sunray gates to the future.

Kevin McCarron

‘Memories of Old Sins’: Opium Addiction in Narratives of Nineteenth-Century London

In this chapter I suggest that throughout a number of English texts written in the second half of the nineteenth century London is represented as a labyrinth at the centre of which lie dark secrets. It is also, connectedly, portrayed as both initiator of and metaphor for addiction. The article will focus on Thomas De Quincey’s, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1856), Charles Dickens’, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), Oscar Wilde’s, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s ‘The Man with the Twisted Lip’ (1892).

Ivona Misterova

A Comparative Analysis of the First Depictions of London in Czech Literature

This study analyses the first depictions of London in Czech literature as recorded by the medieval Czech writer and traveller Vaclav Schaseck of Birkov and the German burgher Gabriel Tetzl of Gräfenberg who both accompanied the Czech nobleman Leo of Rozmítal and Blatna on his diplomatic mission through Western European countries between 1465-1467. Points of similarity and difference between Schaseck’s and Tetzl’s accounts of London are identified and contrasted within a framework of relevant historical and social contexts, including the court arrangements of the Hussite King George of Podebrady and the English Monarch, Edward IV.

Roshni Mooneeram

The Chinese Flâneuse Negotiating the Metropolis: Xialu Guo's *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*

This article considers the Chinese flâneuse's contribution to contemporary literary representations of London in the light of China's changing relation with the world. I argue that Xiaolu Guo's *A Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*, far from offering a minority, exotic or marginal discourse, traces, through her protagonist's traverses of London, a means of cultural intervention and redefinition of the urban exotic. In focusing on the Chinese flâneuse as historicised, gendered and racialised in twenty-first century London, this article also extends the literary history of the flâneur, as originally depicted by Baudelaire and Benjamin.

Michael O'Brien

'Tunnel Visions': Space, Transience and Escapism in Geoff Ryman's *253*

This essay conducts an exploration into the quotidian experience of commuting on the London Underground, through a critical reading of Geoff Ryman's novel *253*. In the process of analysis, a number of key questions are raised: what is the psychological effect of travelling within a confined, light-deprived space? To what extent does travelling on the tube afford time for reflection or escapism, for example reading a novel on the way to work? Does tube travel subvert the spatial and social order of the world above the ground, through its potential for the disorientation of the subject? And, most importantly, is the literary representation of London life sharpened, by constructing a narrative within the London underground, and by extension beneath the city itself?

Magda Wosinska

Liminal Spaces and States in Jerzy Peterkiewicz's *Inner Circle*

Jerzy Peterkiewicz arrived in England as a wartime refugee before going on to study at St Andrews and then King's College, London. His wartime experiences influenced his metaphorical novel *Inner Circle* (1966). This paper examines two aspects of liminality in the novel. First, it draws the reader's attention to the main character, Patrick, who stuck between childhood and adulthood is portrayed as existing "neither here nor there" and, therefore, as the embodiment of liminality. Second, it focuses on the way that the London tube itself is presented as a liminal zone. Finally, it goes on to suggest that it is through the tube that Patrick transgresses the boundaries of his childhood and is able to become an adult.