

MAPPING TOPOGRAPHIES IN THE ANGLO AND
GERMAN NARRATIVES OF JOSEPH CONRAD, ANNA SEGHERS,
JAMES JOYCE, AND UWE JOHNSON

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

While the “space” of modernism is traditionally associated with the metropolis, this approach leaves unaddressed a significant body of work that stresses non-urban settings. Rather than simply assuming these spaces to be the opposite of the modern city, my project rejects the empty term space and instead examines *topographies*, literally meaning the writing of place. Less an examination of passive settings, the study of topography in modernism explores the action of creating spaces—either real or fictional which intersect with a variety of cultural, social, historical, and often political reverberations. The combination of charged elements coalesce and form a strong visual, corporeal, and sensory-filled topography that becomes integral to understanding not only the text and its importance beyond literary studies. My study pairs four modernists—two writing in German and two in English: Joseph Conrad and Anna Seghers and James Joyce and Uwe Johnson. All writers, having experienced displacement through exile, used topographies in their narratives to illustrate not only their understanding of history and humanity, but they also wrote narratives which concerned a larger global

community. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1900) and his *Lord Jim* (1904) compare to Seghers' *Transit* (1944) and *Revolt of the Fisherman from St. Barbara* (1928) in that each explores crises of modernity. Instead of using the city, Conrad and Seghers utilize the sea, the harbor, and marginalized communities to illustrate thresholds of historical crises. The topographies echo a world affected by imperialism and particularly for Seghers, fascism. In my analysis of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1921) and Johnson's *Anniversaries* (1970-83), I steer away from a traditional examination of the classic modernist city narrative. I show how the texts provide a broader and more encompassing look of the modern world through the memory of imperialism and fascism as it is reflected from outside the city limits, most notably on the coasts of the Mediterranean and Baltic seas, and on the banks of the Hudson and Liffey. Merging a socio-historical approach with a close literary analysis, my project seeks to explore an uncharted subset of modernism, and map out poetic, durable, and visual contours for literary and cultural studies, sculpting new textures for understanding history, memory, and humanity.

Dedicated to my parents,
who never said no.

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INTRODUCTION

Mapping Topographies in the Anglo and German Narratives of Joseph Conrad, Anna Seghers, James Joyce and Uwe Johnson

“Where exactly did Keats listen to the nightingale? and which of the valleys and woods around London begot the ‘Ode to Autumn’? We happen to know, but the poems do not tell us. Wordsworth has less topography than we should expect, and so terrestrial and local a poet as Cowper has scarcely any. They condescend upon particulars, as must every poet, but not upon this class.”

--John Buchan, *Homilies and Recreations*

Defining topography

In 1926, the Scottish writer John Buchan distinguished a need to understand the particulars of topography. In his essay “Literature and Topography” Buchan wrote that a “taste for topography is not the same thing as a love of the natural world; it is not even the same thing as an interest in landscape. There have been many eminent poets of nature who have scorned topography, and whose acute observation is so generalized that it is hopeless to identify it with particular tracts of the earth’s surface.”¹ For Buchan it seems, topography is a means to identify specifically regions and areas in nature. Topography, usually associated with the science of geography, combines the Greek word for place (*topos*) with the verb “to write” (*graphein*). Thus, topography literally translates into an action, or the writing of place. While *The Oxford English Dictionary* (2005) defines topography as a “detailed description or delineation of the features of a locality,” the word today also implies action as it can mean the “practice of describing a particular place,

city, town, manor, parish, or tract of land.” For Buchan, an understanding of topography in literature is less an adoration of place and nature, and more a talent for making place into a verb. To write topographically is “to produce an impression of reality, to link fancy to solid and nominate earth.”² In other words, the description of nature in the imagination becomes so telling and so clear, that its product is comparable to reality.

Narrative theorist J. Hillis Miller in his *Topographies* investigates the term within English literature and suggests that a discourse on topography searches for (and he uses Thomas Hardy’s words) “the figure in the landscape.”³ From this perspective, topography is more concrete, more vibrant, and more dynamic than a backdrop or a setting. Although it might not be locatable in geography, topography has more texture than the flat visual of landscape, and is more precise in meaning than the terms place or space. In literature, topography becomes the summation of all these terms—setting, geography, landscape, place and space—ultimately becoming a means to present, illustrate, and give concrete shape to the more abstract ideas in narrative such as epic, myth, and history.

Today, eighty years later, the term topography has lost clarity, and is often subsumed by—or interchanged with—the term space. In 1994, Charlie Bertsch and Johnathan Sterne were in a San Francisco book store and noticed a new section devoted to “Topographies.” The area was devised to offer a location for a variety of categories from virtual reality to gender studies and to cultural anthropology. Instead of appreciating the new section, the two decided that “Space is hot,” and they wrote an article on the misuse of space.⁴ Yet, space *is* everywhere. It surrounds, grounds,

evokes, comes between, disrupts, and displaces. In contemporary thought and criticism, space is a catch-all phrase that is used to map out an understanding of terrain in a variety of fields, such as linguistics, physics, cultural geography, literature, media theory, and anthropology.⁵ In literary criticism the term space evokes a variety of words trying to classify it—“place,” “landscape,” “geography,” and finally “topography” all denote ways of attempting to describe, compartmentalize, and locate the importance of space in a text. Space has lost its charm. The once clarity of Buchan’s definition that topography concerns a “concrete habitation to your fancies”⁶ in which the imagination has ground and shape in the narrative has become swallowed up by the vague description of space. Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift in *Thinking Space* explore this black hole as they index some of the ways space figures in writing. The problem with the term, as they correctly point out, is that it is too far-reaching and empty for an exact understanding of its function.⁷

The use of place, landscape, and geography also becomes limiting when used in literature. Place, like space, comes across as equally broad and elusive. Characteristically, place is grounded, mapped out, bordered, and constrained to known and defined limits, while landscape, as Dennis Cosgrove indicates, concerns specifically the visual and sight, or a type of seeing that most definitely involves a socio-historical context.⁸ In his *Landscape and Power*, W.T. Mitchell emphasizes that the visual element distinguishes landscape and advocates that landscape refers to the first cognitive encounter of a space. He differentiates between space, place, and landscape as a “dialectical triad” that can be understood from a variety of viewpoints:

If a place is a specific location, a space is a “practiced place,” a site activated by movements, actions, narratives, and signs and a landscape is that site encountered as image or “sight.” Central Park in NYC is thus located in a specific place on the earth; it is the site of innumerable activities and practices; and it is consumed (and was designed to be consumed) as a series of picturesque tableaux or ‘landscapes’ derived from European landscape painting.⁹

All three terms can be used to describe different aspects for a respective spot, since depending upon the function, each term appropriates a different perspective. In narratives where topography plays a critical role, the labels of place, landscape, and space do not function as aptly as topography since each term is still limited to one particular perspective. Certainly topography in narrative can be a specific location that is a site of activities, and to be sure some part of the topography can be as picturesque as landscape. Topography integrates many of the aspects that place/space/landscape/geography have within the narrative, and the combination results in a greater breadth of meaning. While Crang and Thrift included “metonymic spaces” as a definition of real places that stand for a “archetypal selection and epochal mapping,” topography as a device *is* often metonymic, but the meaning goes beyond an archetype.¹⁰ Topography in literature is a concrete illustration to the extent that the narrative can be visualized and mapped, but the descriptions are not simply limited to visualization. Through topography, the visualization goes hand in hand with cultural, social, political, and historical meanings.

Thus, for obvious reasons geography does not describe the illustrative and dynamic quality of topography in narrative. Nicolas Entrikin specifies that “geography has been described as a science that derives from the naïve experiences of the similarities and differences among places.”¹¹ In other words, geography best

describes the process of analyzing space, resulting in scientific forms such as maps. Although topography is sometimes so concrete that it is akin to a map—see, for example, my discussion of Anna Seghers’ *St. Barbara* in chapter two or Uwe Johnson’s *Jerichow* in chapter four—it cannot always be located within the specific designations of geography. Mapping topography can be as general as a vague idea of the layout of the place in the narrative or as specific as the street names. It should also be pointed out that ‘setting’ is an inadequate term when discussing topography in a text, since it (like space) encompasses a broad backdrop (geographical or not) in which the characters roam and interact. Setting implies a passive condition to narrative, but when the setting is very detailed and becomes integral to the story, it steers away from being a part of the exposition and becomes a topography. Daniel Schwarz terms this process as “setting-making, [which] may be thought of as a verb to show how the writer moves between the two poles of anterior reality and the fictive world.”¹² But I view this process as writing topographies since the etymology of topography includes the definition of “writing place.”

For example, when Joseph Conrad wrote to Edmund Gosse in 1918 about his *Nostromo* (1904), he explained that Sulaco—though modeled mostly after Venezuela—has “bits of Mexico in it, and the aspect presented by the mountain appertains in character more to the Chilean seaboard than to any other. The curtains of clouds always hang over Iquique. The rest of the meteorology belongs to the Gulf of Panama, and generally, to the Western Coast of Mexico as far as Mazatlan.”¹³ I would call Conrad’s description topographically synthetic. Although Conrad began with a geographical reality in his topography, he amplified and changed the

authenticity of the picturesque landscape. This adds not only a layer of fictionality, but the precise visual representation of the lofty white mountain of Higuerota and the cavernous San Tomé mine embed themselves as principle and relevant elements around which all events center. The mountain and the mine not only intertwine themselves with the entirety of Costaguana, but they also become a part of the text's message and metaphor. As a result, the topography becomes more intimate with the text than the setting of Central America.

In particular, topography permeates high modernism: Marcel Proust's Méséglise's or Guermantes' Way in *Du Côté de chez Swann* [Swann's Way, 1913], E. M. Forrester's Marabar caves in *Passage to India*, Thomas Mann's plague-infested Venice in *Der Tod in Venedig* [Death in Venice, 1911] or the mountain in his *Der Zauberberg* [The Magic Mountain, 1924]; the quiet Vienna in Robert Musil's *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [The Man Without Qualities, 1930-43], or John Steinbeck's dusty Oklahoma in *Grapes of Wrath* (1939) all have important topographies in their respective modernist narratives. The authors were certainly dealing with places and spaces and landscapes and geographies, but their topographies point to something active and dynamic outside these limiting labels. Their topographies become part and parcel of the plot, the characters, the histories, the social contexts, and the overarching narrative scope, thus charging the places not only with distinct visual elements, but with cultural meanings.

One way to understand topography is by distinguishing it as the point where metonymy and metaphor meet. Indeed, the topographies in many modernist texts become more than a metaphor for something else. Proust's Méséglise's Way

certainly is metonymic in meaning in that it becomes an archetype for paradise: Through its depiction of the seasons and foliage and in young Marcel's encounter with Gilberte, the description on the Méséglise path oozes sensuality and awakening sexuality. The image becomes not only a metaphor for puberty, but it is also metonymic for sexuality, and it is this quality that changes the setting into topography. Meanwhile the Guermantes' path—which runs next to the Vivonne River—is longer and more difficult than the Méséglise, and it is on this path that Marcel is reminded continually of his mortality. As metonymy, Guermantes signifies the way of the artist, since on this path; Marcel's constant focus on the water-lilies transports him off the defined and concrete path and into the metaphorical realms of the infinite. On the Guermantes, Marcel steps out of time and enters the mind of a writer. Thus, the place names Méséglise and Guermantes become indicative of the sensuous and the severe, the finite and the infinite, and youth and age.¹⁴

Wolfgang Iser's theory of narrative comes closer to explaining topography as a bridge past metonymic meaning when he explains narrative tension as a triad of the real, the fictive, and the imaginary. In this triad, the referential reality and fictional features “do not constitute an end or an entity in themselves. Rather, they provide the medium through which a third element emerges”—the imaginary.¹⁵ Although Iser is not specifically referring to topography, his definition of the imaginary explains how reality, metaphor, and metonymy can link together to provide a means to explore a narrative. In Proust, the naming of the two paths seemingly point to a tangible reality, but the reality (to use Iser's term) becomes “bracketed.” While the topography reproduces something akin to reality, its presence begs to be unmasked: “Whenever

bracketing occurs, a purpose makes itself felt that can never be a property of the world represented not least because the represented world is built up out of a selection of items from the world outside.”¹⁶ These two paths guide the narrative, and the descriptions give continuity to the abstract imagination. Thus, when reading texts through topography, topography provides a concrete means to explore otherwise abstract ideas. By following and mapping out Proust’s paths, the result of a memory supplemented by a solid image, ultimately creates a narrative that talks about memory through the writing of place—topography.

The city’s topography in modernism

The city in the twentieth century, combined with a frenetic rhythm of the crowd, or observed by the anonymous individual, provides a ripe place for modernist texts.¹⁷ Historical accounts that chronicle the rise and map out the physical geography of cities can be found as early as the Renaissance. Social philosophers in the early twentieth century such as Georg Simmel explored the city as a subject and attempted to explain urbanity through a conceptual system. In his essay “Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903), Simmel claimed that the most difficult challenge of modern life stemmed from the individual’s attempt to preserve his autonomy in the face of the “intensification of nervous stimulation,” resulting from the increased tempo of city life.¹⁸ Similarly, the range of economic, social, and occupational factors that is inherent in the city stands in stark contrast to rural life. Simmel concluded that the metropolis functions as an arena in which the individual struggles to define his social role. For him, the city “is a unique place, pregnant with inestimable meanings for the development of the psychic existence.”¹⁹ Or, the city becomes a topography—a

character and an active and charged force that serves to develop the individual and the society and provides a great potential to find meaning and significance in the individual's life in contrast to any another setting in modern life.

In his *The Education of Henry Adams* (1918), the journalist and historian Henry Adams also wrote about the city as a subject, when he documented the development of the United States from his birth in 1838 to 1905, something that James Joyce does in his *Ulysses* and Uwe Johnson in his *Jahrestage*, a topic I delve into in chapter four. Though Adams specifically described New York as something simultaneously wonderful and frightening, his tone is analogous to Simmel's in that the city becomes an arena for struggle: "The outline of the city became frantic in its effort to explain something that defied meaning. . . . The city had the air and movement of hysteria, . . . Prosperity never before imagined, power never yet wielded by man, speed never reached by anything but a meteor, had made the world irritable, nervous, querulous, unreasonable and afraid."²⁰ Although the two do not specifically use the term topography, when applied to literature, their studies of the city are useful in understanding how the city as a topography can come across as entopic—a metaphor that symbolizes disruption, destabilization, and an emptying out of a meaningful purpose.²¹

One reaction against the city can be found in the creation and existence of the real-world Hellerau, a planned community in the outskirts of Dresden, Germany. In its conception in 1901, Karl Schmidt, an industrialist and founder of a furniture-producing company, decided to retreat from the hectic rhythm of the city and build a *Gartenstadt*. His new community would have all the functions of a city, but it would

connect technology with art and attempt to infuse modern life with a progressive social component. According to Schmidt, and similar to the vein of Adams, the modern world had lost contact with the natural rhythm of life, and his community of workers and artists attempted to flee modernity and invent instead a kindler, gentler urban agrarianism.²² The modern industrial city, debunked by the ideal conception of Hellerau, reveals the underlying makeup of the city as a catalyst for isolating and alienating humans from nature, and symbolizes a loss of something crucial to the development of the individual.

In the literary world, writers seized upon the city as a subject for creative discourse. Since the city erupted with change and vibrancy, writers often attempted to describe and document its aura of transformation. As a result the city becomes a topography—it becomes a focus, a dynamic setting, and an integral character. T. S. Eliot’s London in “The Wasteland” (1922), Alfred Döblin’s Berlin in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929), Ernest Hemingway’s Paris in *The Sun also Rises* (1926), and Thomas Wolfe’s New York in his *You Can’t Go Home Again* (1938) all testify—in a list of many possible cities—to the decadent and draining nature of the city’s literary grasp throughout the Western world. To be sure, the city inspires modernist literature, and it could be argued that literary modernism could not exist without the city as a narrative backdrop. Malcolm Bradbury claimed that modernism is a “plot that restores art to the cities, and the cities to art. For Modernism is a metropolitan art . . . Not simply metropolitan, indeed, but cosmopolitan.”²³ From the last epigraph in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) that reads “Trieste—Zurich—Paris,” to architectural movements such as the Bauhaus, the emphasis in modernism clearly centers around

the city. Attractive as a fictional topography that represents a tangible state of mind, the city is a source for inspiration (or stagnation) and a topographic nexus to illustrate encounters between people, things, images, plots, histories, and cultures. Literature often responded to the urban explosion of industrialization, new inventions, and new experiments in science and technology by using the city to reflect the existence of the anonymous individual living in the throng of these new changes. Akin to Simmel's assessment, Adams' descriptions, and Schmidt's initiative, make the city a topography of the modernist agenda, where an individual could hide, thrive, or drown in this new and potentially estranging environment.

Charles Molesworth wrote about the tenuous and ungraspable nature of the city when he intimated that it is a "stage where staging itself occurs . . . the city is the place where everything is both available and vanishing, then we can also see it as the stage in which all prosceniums are unfolding and disappearing."²⁴ More specifically, Wolfgang Schivelbusch in his *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, points out that the railroad not only reorganizes space, but it changes how we understand (experiential) space and time and transforms the way we view space in the presence of the new stimuli as it disperses itself on the railroad journey.²⁵ New markers of urban space denote a presence that can be investigated through topography, and the city becomes something to write, a stimulus (or equivalence) that showcases intricate processes of emancipation and isolation and connection and estrangement. As a result, the city as topography becomes connected to notions of the fleeting and transitory. In the scope of historical and literary modernism, the city has become *the* modernist topography to

map and un-map, thus creating a discourse on the “reverberation of a non-physical, non-mappable, and non-temporal layers of imagination.”²⁶

Topography and water

Modernism concerns itself with crises, and one way to understand modernism is to delve into the confusion and chart out the goals and directions modernist writers took. Though some writers used the city as an inspiration, others steered away from writing the city and concentrated on writing non-urban spaces and settings—choosing to anchor their topographies instead in waterscapes. Instead of describing urban impressions, writers such as Joseph Conrad, B. Traven, Anna Seghers, Virginia Woolf, and Ernest Hemingway used the *sea* to organize their story. Arguably, adventure tales in literature which incorporate the sea date back as far as Homer and the Greek myths and the Bible. Another influence includes *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Nights* in which the sea harbors magical powers, monsters and properties, and is incorporated in many of Scheherazade’s stories. Modernists did not invent the sea as a narrative backdrop, of course. The sea and its surroundings has always been a common source for storytelling inspiration. Yet in contrast to the city, which can show the modern flux of change and present the intersections that occur between the public and the individual, the sea provides a topography that stretches beyond illustrating anxiety or an influx of stimuli—it is free of the city’s mass, rough edges and the friction of buildings yet it is still a place of traffic and of cultural intersection. The expanse of the sea, however, *slows* down the hyperactive sensory perception that inevitably arises when writing a city with defined limits, and

it helps to focus instead on something specific, such as the act of storytelling or the broad scope of history.

To illustrate this difference, Schivelbusch notes that Freud takes Simmel's effect of the city on the individual and uses it to develop a notion of an urban consciousness. Schivelbusch explains that one of "the essential new *stimuli* of the train journey is speed . . . This new stimulus at first merely irritates the traveler, who is still accustomed to the old velocity of the coach. Yet gradually everything connected with the new velocity becomes psychically assimilated."²⁷ As a result, the gaze of the train traveler differs from the one on coach, or as I would argue, for the one traveling on the sea. While the viewpoint from the train limits and diminishes the perspective, the slow, steady, and expansive view that a voyage can provide does not create a fast-paced blur, but instead forces an view of unending vastness. The closed compartment opens up when on the sea, and the congestions of traffic disperses into a vast emptiness. As a result, focusing on the sea instead of trying to make shapes from the fast-paced blur can calm the anxiousness that results from urbanity. In Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), the representation of the calm and quiet sea becomes a sleepy, but focused stage for the struggle of the man against the fish and the ocean, and does not flit with great speed from one object to the next. Another example includes Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) in which the sea organizes the narrative and becomes the illustration of a fluid unconsciousness. Though Woolf's technique can be described as being as indistinct as the urban perspective from the train window, her narrative is shaped by the first and last sentences. It begins with water ebbing and ends with the sentence: "The waves

broke on the shore,” thus giving a symbolic frame to understanding the flux of unshackled communication between the characters Bernard, Susan, and the others. Ultimately, the sea does not correlate with (modernist) entropy that is common to urbanity. Rather, it can be used to reflect back on the city and the crisis of modernity.

Topography and the journey, or experience

Since the inception of the novel, the notion of the “self” and experience is tenuous at best. By self, I am referring to Amélie Rorty’s definition that “the *self* is the individual that the society has changed, so that they acquire their rights by virtue of their powers, rather than having their powers defined by their rights.”²⁸ In one of the first German novels *Simplicissimus* (1668-69), Grimmelhausen has two narrators of the same self. An older narrator (who reveals himself at the end of the story) relates and reflects on the feelings and events of his younger self. Some of the experiences include the brutal loss of his family, the solitude of the woods, and the horrors of the Thirty Years War. As a result of the novel’s structure, the difficulty in spanning the gap between the autonomy of the self and the literary form already begins quite early in the tradition of the German novel. In other novels, canonized lines such as Herman Melville’s “Call me Ishmael,” or Tristram Shandy’s detailed knowledge about his birth in Laurence Stern’s picaresque novel of the same name also illustrate an uncertain relationship between the guiding consciousness (self or identity) of the novel and the novel itself. As a result, the self of the narrative loses authority, as the subjectivity of the narrator interferes with an objective account. To return to *Simplicissimus*, the legitimacy of the young Simplicissimus’ sagacity is questionable, since his adventures are reflected through an older and wiser narrator.

In modernism the journey takes on a new dimension in that the texts often teem with selves who struggle, resist, or confront internal and external anxieties. Critic Astradur Eysteinnsson explains that the “signs of this crisis are generally felt to reside in a modernist preoccupation with human consciousness (as opposed to a mimetic concern with the human environment and social conditions), and they are perhaps most pronounced in the use of the ‘stream of consciousness’ technique in modernist fiction.”²⁹ In other words, modernists are less concerned with the Aristotelian notion of external imitation and mimicry (such as the realistic painting of landscapes and portraits) and more concerned with representing or presenting the internal as s/he may journey in the experience of the surrounding external world. Unlike older literary texts, where the journey or experience, such as Simplicissimus’ or Ishmael’s is drawn out and detailed, modernism takes a decisive and conscious “inward turn” rupturing traditional understandings between the individual, his space, and ultimately his journey.³⁰

As a modernist topography, the city showcases the quest for wrestling with the self. For example, in Rainer Marie Rilke’s *Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge [1910]), Malte is a poor artist who roams the streets of Paris and observes the anonymous inhabitants of the city while obsessing with death. In Kafka’s *Der Prozeß* (The Trial [1925]), Josef K. tries to unravel the inexplicable reasoning behind his arrest while he navigates a web of interlocking streets and confusing pathways in buildings. In James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Stephen Dedalus hawks about Dublin while he struggles with the external world around him and ultimately decides to become an

artist. In Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* (1864), the narrator bitterly paints a self-portrait as he navigates St. Petersburg, and in Beckett's *Murphy* (1938) Murphy tragically and comically tries to find his own self in "a real alienation," while located in the city of West Brompton.³¹ The journey turns into a crisis or a sense of displacement which can find roots in its increased awareness of the growing urban space surrounding them. Hermann Bahr, a contemporary of Simmel, defines this trend as one that is caused by modernity. According to Bahr, the effect of modernity on the artistic method results in "nervousness." In his essay "Das unrettbare ich," (1904), Bahr argued that the "self is unsalvageable" in this modern society and that all of the arts should focus on illustrating nervousness.³² The inward experience or the experience of the self in the city loses itself in a dizzying and overwhelming blur. Plagued by alienation, displacement, and emotional or physical exile, the modernist experience often goes hand in hand with the city, allowing topography to be the illustrative metaphor for internal emotions.

Still, while modernism was an international affair, its main point of contention can not simply trickle down to a representation of the self as it experiences the city.³³ Octavio Paz comes a bit closer to exploring modernism outside of urbanity when he laments that modernity is "cut off from the past and continually hurtling forward at such a dizzying pace that it cannot take root, . . . that it is unable to return to its beginnings and thus recover its powers of renewal."³⁴ For some writers, the modernist journey finds its roots beyond the city and exhibits itself best in *concretizing* an epic *totality* outside the city and in older and more ancient or underdeveloped topographies—often virgin forests or isolated areas. By "totality," I

am referring to Georg Lukács's "The Theory of the Novel," when he argued that the "novel is the epic of an age in which the extensive totality of life is no longer directly given, in which the immanence of meaning in life has become a problem, yet which still thinks in terms of totality."³⁵ While Lukács believed that the novel by nature is estranged from the epic and unable to depict an epic totality, his definition is pertinent in that topographies can indeed help shape and demonstrate an epic totality within the novel. By visualizing the journey in non-urban topographies, the journey slows down and finds a more complete picture—the overarching experience is able to take root in a past and a present, remove the "nervousness," and thus find permanence.

To return to the example of Conrad's *Nostromo*, Sulaco reflects a contemporary problem of how nations struggle to define themselves within a global context that is ultimately ruled by the material and progressive interests of the West. Yet the narrative does more than become a manifesto against imperialism, since that implies the corruption of the underdeveloped, the pure, and the ideal topography, and such a statement would generalize Conrad's complex political focus. In *Nostromo*, the land was not innocent and without problem before the entrance of the Western interests. Rather, it was already fraught with native corruption and political violence, an essence that Conrad suggested is inherent in all of humanity. The imposing physical terrain that envelops Sulaco inhibits easy passage and it gives a concrete visual vitality to the difficult and intangible political terrain that the characters must inhabit. In addition, the topography in *Nostromo* helps provide a metaphorical map to the identities and inner nature of the characters: Just as Old Viola, an Italian liberal in political exile, constantly fixes his gaze upon the lofty snow-capped mountain

Higuerota, his principles comprise of uncorrupt and unshakable beliefs in pure liberty and freedom. Meanwhile, Charles Gould focuses his attention on the gaping San Tomé mine that isolates, traps, and consumes him with greed. Topography in *Nostromo* symbolizes not only the area's isolated nature, but its aspects become a way to explore the crisis of modernity and give shape to the porous nature of the journey of the selves in the narrative.

Another way to understand topography as a device that can give shape to the self is to discuss it in terms of experience. If topography in literature is defined as the “writing of place,” an enmeshment of visual dimensions and boundaries which resonates with characters, cultures, histories, and other “places,” even memories, then topography in literature provides more than narrative texture. Its function gives order and symmetry to the conscious and unconscious experiences of (modernist) narrative. Hartmut Böhme, in his introduction to an edition on types of topographies describes topographies as resonant and interconnected places that must be experienced: “Raum und Räumlichkeit muß, um überhaupt gedacht werden zu können, erfahren werden. Dies bedeutet: die Bewegungen, die wir *mit* unserem Körper und *als* Körper im Raum vollziehen, erschließen erst das, was wir historisch, kulturell, individuell als Raum verstehen.”³⁶ To translate topography in narrative involves more than a writing of place—it involves writing experience.

This dissertation explores the diverse topographies of modernism by comparing the narratives of four prominent modernist authors: Joseph Conrad, Anna Seghers, James Joyce, and Uwe Johnson, each of whom personally understood the complications of displacement. Born in Poland, Conrad was just a boy when his

family was forcibly exiled to Russia. At sixteen he left to join to the merchant navy, and thereafter spent his entire literary life writing in English. Seghers, whose works were influenced by Conrad, fled Nazi persecution in 1933, and spent fourteen years of her life exiled in France and Mexico before returning to Berlin. Although his work is intimately associated with “dear dirty Dublin,” Joyce left Dublin forever in 1904, and lived in Trieste, Paris, and Zurich before any of his major works were published. Johnson, an avid enthusiast of Joyce, left East Germany in 1959 where he was unable to publish his work. After living in West Berlin for seven years and New York for three, he finally settled in Sheerness on the Sea in England in 1974, although his narratives concerned themselves specifically with Germany, often centering on the Mecklenburg Heath. These four writers understood well the contours of topography in narrative and the dialectic vision that displacement grants. By utilizing divergent topographical lenses, the authors visualize history, culture, and politics as a dense and tangible experience in which all modern lives are active participants, and as an experience that has epic magnifications. Committed to addressing the present, past, and future, these writers call attention to the concentric circles of human relationships – to the self, the family, their cultures, and the world. Similar to Buchan’s summation of the success of the storyteller “who can build up in detail his background and dwell lovingly on its contours and its place-names, establishes an instant kinship, and is more moving and persuasive because he appeals to a most ancient instinct in the heart of man,”³⁷ Conrad, Seghers, Joyce, and Johnson appeal to an imaginative map that ultimately provides a physical durability to modernism.

Chapters one and two concentrate on Conrad and Seghers. In particular, they focus on how the two writers use waterscapes in contrast to the city to inform their narratives. Chapter one focuses solely on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), and Seghers' *Transit* (1944), while chapter two explores Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1904) and Seghers' *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* (1928) (*The Revolt of the Fishermen*, [trans. pub. 1929]). Although Conrad and Seghers come from two different countries, waterways have certainly influenced both of their lives. Born as Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski in Poland in 1857, Conrad lost his parents, Apollo Korzeniowski and Ewelina Korzeniowska, quite early. As Polish patriots, Conrad's parents were exiled in 1861 to northern Russia by the Russian authorities for subversive activities against the Russian government. As a result of the hardships of exile, both parents died in 1869 of tuberculosis, leaving Conrad an orphan. Though he went to live with his uncle in Switzerland, at the age of sixteen Conrad joined the French merchant marines in Marseille, and spent several years traveling mostly to and from the West Indies. In 1878, he entered the British Merchant Navy where he remained for sixteen years, rising eventually to the position of Master Mariner. Conrad traveled widely while at sea, visiting Singapore, Central America, Australia, and in particular, the Belgian Congo, an experience which informed much of his *Heart of Darkness*. Finally in 1886, Conrad gave up the active sea life and settled in London to begin writing professionally.³⁸ In his fiction, he did not renounce the sea by any means. Conrad wrote often about the sea and its surroundings in his fiction and non-fiction. In his "Tales of the Sea" (1898), he explained that as a writer of the sea, "the sea was not an element. It was a stage, where . . . we find the mass of the nameless, that we

see them in the flesh” (53-4).³⁹ Before Conrad even published *Heart of Darkness* in installments for *Blackwell’s* magazine, a magazine for hunters, he was already an established and successful literary writer with other tales concerning the sea that include *Almayer’s Folly* (1894), *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), *Nigger of ‘Narcissus’* (1897), *Tales of Unrest* (1897), and *Youth* (1898). For Conrad, the sea becomes an active realm, easily accessible for his yarns, often integrating itself as either *the* defining element such as in *Typhoon* (1903) or as the quiet force that connects the entire tale such as in his *Lord Jim* (1904).

Heart of Darkness exhibits an early modernist topography. By his own account, Conrad wrote in his “Geography and Some Explorers” (1928) that as a boy he was addicted to “map-gazing,” and would put his finger on the “then white heart of Africa,” exclaiming that he would one day go there.⁴⁰ After Conrad finally got his wish and received a commission to travel a thousand miles up the Congo to Stanley Falls, he wrote that he boarded the steamer “in order to learn more about the river.”⁴¹ Yet, later, after having reached his destination, he recalled that while smoking a pipe, he fell into a melancholy because he saw the disconnection between his dreams and “the distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of the human conscience and geographical exploration—the European exploitation of the Belgian Congo.”⁴² The real geography and history of the Congo embedded itself within Conrad’s topographical imagination and eventually he mapped out his disillusionment in his texts.

For Anna Seghers, born Netty Reiling in 1900, Conrad may not have been an intimate contemporary, but he was certainly a literary influence. In her essay “Volk

und Schriftsteller,” (The People and the Writer, 1942) Seghers praised Conrad for his ability to write for the people.⁴³ Before Seghers had published her first long narrative *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara*, she had already in her personal library several of Conrad’s texts, including other sea tales such as by August Strindberg and Selma Lagerlöf.⁴⁴ Seghers grew up in Mainz, situated on the left bank of the Rhine river, and many of her texts incorporate rivers and water as a principle motif, from her first stories featuring restless seamen such as “Die Toten auf der Insel Djal” (The Dead on the Island Djal, 1924) and “Grubetsch,” (1926) to later work, such as her novel *Überfahrt* (The Ship Passage, 1971). In *Überfahrt*, she actually named one of the Polish ships the *Josef Conrad* and explicitly referred to Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*.⁴⁵ Just like Conrad, Seghers admitted to the importance of waterscapes in her life. In a telegram to her hometown Mainz on October 11, 1975, Seghers admits that it was “no coincidence that [her] novel *Das Siebte Kreuz* [The Seventh Cross, 1942] took place in the area in and around Mainz.”⁴⁶ In this city she received “the first impression, that a person records in his reality, whether it be the river, the forest, the stars or the people. I have tried in many of my books to retain what I experienced and lived here.”⁴⁷

Her most crucial experience coupled with sea travel occurred in March 1941 when Seghers, her husband, and her two children departed Marseille on one of the last refugee ships—the freight ship *Captain Paul Lemerle*. The trip was not easy and after being forced to turn around and stop in Algeria from the danger of being sunk by enemy submarines, the ship traveled to Casablanca and finally landed in Martinique in April 1941, where Seghers and her family were interned for four weeks.⁴⁸ It was

here that she first witnessed colonialism as shaped by the French and Spanish.⁴⁹ After many difficulties, Seghers and her family found passage to New York, where they were also interned until they were able to leave on the *Monterrey* and finally arrived in Mexico, where they had been granted asylum, at the end of June.⁵⁰ This experience, which started in what Seghers called the “Hexenkessel” (inferno) of Marseille, became a life-changing event similar to Conrad’s Belgian trip to the Congo, and is immortalized in her *Transit* (1944), first published in English and Spanish and not published in German until 1948.⁵¹

If experience surrounding the sea was important in shaping the lives of Conrad and Seghers, they also incorporated the obvious influence that water had on them as a topographical frame that steered their stories. The device of having a frame that supplies tales within tales has its origins in early narratives such as Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales* or Bocaccio’s *Decameron* in which a group of people flee the plague-infested *city* to an idyllic and nurturing landscape. Conrad and Seghers’ works compare more to earlier adventure tales such as Homer’s *Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, where the ship and the sea guide the different episodes. The topographical paradigm of the sea does more than serve as a bookmark to the story or as an organizing principle that introduces the narrative. The figures in older epics and tales who meet at an inn by happenstance or groups of people who converse as they journey have become a common literary convention, just as a journey or voyage provides the possibilities for narrating different adventures. In the case of Conrad and Seghers, however, the sea, the ship, old harbor towns, or isolated areas near the sea frame the story, but they become more than a gateway. The water topographies

ebb in and out of the tale, splash and lap over onto all the levels of narration, thus becoming not only a narrative device and metaphor, but also an integral element to the story that helps shape the culture and history of the characters in the tale.

Ultimately, the sea provides a focus for the narrative that the city cannot. Certainly, Conrad's and Seghers' texts allude to particular urban settings, but using waterscapes gives an insight to the crisis of modernity in a way that a city narrative cannot.

Chapters three and four concentrate on Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Johnson's *Jahrestage* (Anniversaries [I: 1970, II: 1971, III: 1973, IV: 1983]). After being touted to and rejected by several publishers, which included a ban on publication in the United States, *Ulysses* was finally printed in 1922 by Sylvia Beach, a small bookseller in Paris. The reception ranged from a review in *The Sporting Times*, a newspaper that headlined "The Scandal of Ulysses," to a sanction against publication in Great Britain. Although Ezra Pound and other literary notables endorsed James Joyce as a literary genius, the book was denounced as obscene, dirty and "rotten caviare."⁵² To say that James Joyce had touched a nerve is an understatement. The narrative was unconventional. Though the text utilizes themes and structures set forth in antiquity, the story incorporates a variety of new and innovative narrative strategies, and it was set in a city, arguably making *Ulysses* the modernist epic of twentieth century Western literature in terms of place and narrative. The "obscene" and "dirtiness" to *Ulysses*, as Bruce Arnold points out, has to do with the fact that it often relates banal, everyday habits and behaviors.⁵³ Moreover, *Ulysses* follows a common man from lowly roots in a common city and places his daily habits on the same level as the mythic hero Odysseus. Still, T.S. Eliot, in his 1923 essay, "*Ulysses*,

Order, and Myth,” wrote about the book’s worldwide influence. He argued that “[i]nstead of narrative method, we may now use the mythical method. It is, I seriously believe a step towards making the modern world possible for art.”⁵⁴ “Making the modern world possible for art” is indeed an ambitious project and a grandiose claim for a group of artists, let alone one writer. But Eliot was right in that Joyce employed Hellenic myth in the structure of his narrative, a topic that was openly admitted by Joyce and discussed by his friend Stuart Gilbert, who subsequently mapped out the Homeric connections in the individual episodes.⁵⁵ As a result, myth—as written in Homer’s *Odyssey*—certainly underscores a relationship between an older world and the present one when compared to Joyce’s *Ulysses*, but *Ulysses*’ prototype of a simultaneous external and internal journey can also be found in other texts such as *Gulliver’s Travels*, *Candide*, *Rasselas* where the protagonist undergoes life-changing experiences. In addition to reading the text through its connection to myth and literary influences, it is also useful to explore Joyce’s narrative through its topography as an organizing principle for the journeys of the characters.

Though the text stays in and about Dublin, Joyce’s topography reverberates out into a larger cosmos. What begins as an individual journey for the characters Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom becomes a representation of an entire culture. The bridge between the individual and the collective, or the private and the public, takes place in the visual and sensual elements of the text—often in the parts that made the book “obscene” or “dirty.” One way to explore the visual elements of the text is by using the shore and the sea as an important gateway to understanding the text, and

it is this aspect that I explore in chapter three. Water flows in the city and breaks up the land boundaries of Dublin. Throughout the text, water, in the form of the River Liffey, the canals under Dublin, and as it washes onto the shore of Sandymount strand, often splashes over into other bodies of water—symbolic and real—such as the Mediterranean Sea or the metaphorical sea of life. Water not only bridges the modern world to an older and more permanent one in antiquity, but it also provides a concrete visualization to the unconventional and new narrative strategies Joyce employed. Namely, topography helps provide continuity and durability to the slippery consciousness and cosmos of the individuals Stephen Dedalus, Leopold Bloom, and Molly Bloom, particularly as their consciousness expands into a larger awareness of humanity.

James Joyce had long established his literary career before Uwe Johnson read him. Although Johnson studied English and German literature at the University in Rostock (1952-54), it was at the University of Leipzig (1954-56) where Johnson received the most exposure to Western texts. Hans Mayer was one of Johnson's professors who helped plant the seeds for Johnson's western influence. Leipzig had always had a strong literary tradition—Goethe himself studied there—and during Johnson's tenure, several other well-known philosophers and scholars such as Ernst Bloch taught there. Instead of a typical German university literature seminar in "Deutsche Nationalliteratur" Hans Mayer taught comparatively and lectured classes in *Weltliteratur*.⁵⁶ Leipzig became known as a school for modern art where (in the East) school departed from the typical state-sanctioned curricula. Humanities courses included modernists from Bartok, Stravinsky, and Schönberg to Adorno to Picasso,

and to other Western modernist writers such as Faulkner, Hemingway, and Joyce. Bernd Neumann has done extensive research on the influence of other writers on Uwe Johnson: “Zusammen mit der Universitätsbibliothek und dem Mayerschen ‘Giftschein’ den Zugang auch zur ‘dekadenten’ und ‘zersetzenden’ Literatur eröffnete, ermöglichte die Bibliotheksstadt Leipzig eine beinahe umfassende Reflexion moderner Kunst und Literatur. Für Johnson gilt: ohne das Studium in Leipzig keine *Mutmassungen*”⁵⁷ Indeed, Johnson himself admitted to a friend that he felt “verpflichtet” (obligated) to Hemingway, Joyce, and Faulkner and considered them as a “literarisch[es] Vorbild.”⁵⁸ In reference to Joyce in particular, Johnson wrote about *Ulysses* in 1957 in another letter when he asserted that Joyce’s interior monologue in *Ulysses* was “ein ästhetischer Fortschritt.”⁵⁹

When Uwe Johnson published his first installment of *Jahrestage*, the reception was not as “scandalous” as Joyce’s—partially because the entirety of the German text was not completed until 1983, but mostly because Johnson had already established himself as a writer of politics and history. Even before *Jahrestage* appeared in print, Johnson could not free himself from the reputation of being obsessed in his work with the division of Germany and the effects it had on the citizens. Expelled from the University of Rostock in 1953 after he refused to vilify the Junge Gemeinde (Young Congregation), a popular Christian youth organization in ideological conflict with the state-backed communist youth group Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth) to which Johnson belonged, Johnson was admitted to the University in Leipzig, but he was neither allowed to work nor was he able to receive his diploma. Because he unable to publish in the East, first his *Ingrid*

Babendererde (written 1953, pub. posthumously 1984), and because he received an offer from the publishing house Suhrkamp in Frankfurt to publish his *Mutmassungen über Jakob* (Speculations about Jakob, [1959]), Johnson decided to move to the West. The move would embroil him in the Cold War media battle between The Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. He was cast (unwillingly) in an anticommunist, anti-GDR light, and his displacement earned him the reputation of being a “Gefangener eines einzigen Themas, der deutschen Teilung, der beiden Vaterländer und ihrer Verschiedenheiten,”⁶⁰ underscored by the fact that his prose works such as *Mutmassungen über Jakob*, *Das dritte Buch über Achim* (The Third Book about Achim, [1961]), *Karsch, und andere Prosa* (Karsch, and other stories, [1964]), and *Zwei Ansichten* [Two Views, [1965]) dealt with various aspects of the divided Germany.⁶¹

The story of *Jahrestage* follows two time lines that are connected by the figures Gesine Cresspahl and her ten-year old daughter Marie, both immigrants from Düsseldorf who moved to New York in April 1961. It is important to note that Gesine had already appeared in Johnson’s *Mutmassungen über Jakob*, where she was a NATO translator. Although the story in *Mutmassungen* is about Jakob Abs, a railroad operator, Gesine plays a role in Jakob’s questioning of whether to leave or stay in the East. In *Mutmassungen*, Gesine had left the GDR after the failed workers’ uprisings on June 17, 1953, and eventually leaves NATO at the peak of the Suez Canal crisis in Egypt in 1956 when the British invaded the canal for reasons of trade. While it is unclear why Gesine of *Jahrestage* chooses 1961 to move to the States, one could certainly argue in terms of Johnson’s biography in that he went to the States in

1961, and also because of the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, cementing a more or less permanent division of Germany, and creating difficulties for Gesine (and Johnson) to return “home.” Johnson explained the renewed interest in Gesine in terms of suddenly seeing her again: “Dann traf ich jemanden wieder, das war diese Gesine Cresspahl. . . . Ich kann Ihnen die Stelle nicht sagen in New York, wo ich sie wiedertraf, aber für mich war das deutlich: Das war sie.”⁶² The narrated story of *Jahrestage*, as it is remembered by Gesine, begins with the Kapp revolt in 1920,⁶³ and continues throughout the rise of German fascism, World War II, the British and Soviet occupation of Mecklenburg, and the German Democratic Republic. During her tenure in 1967 New York, Gesine traces the activities and life of the villagers and her family mostly situated in fictional Jerichow, a town located near the Baltic Sea in the northeastern part of Germany. The life in Jerichow and New York is separated by calendar entries, beginning on August 20, 1967 and ending on the same day in 1968. Thus, the present day experience of the big city infuses itself with a particular daily routine, but at the same time there is the experience of small town life in Germany that is even more localized as it is mostly centered on Jerichow.

Similar to the narrative in *Ulysses*, Gesine’s begins with a personal journey, but becomes so enmeshed in the cosmos around her that the journey expands from the realm of the personal into a much larger realm that concerns the public sphere. As a result, the topography becomes crucial in giving shape to the type of journey Gesine and her daughter Marie (and Stephen, and Bloom, and Molly) take. In chapter three—along with the waterscapes in *Ulysses*—I explore how water connects the entire topographical labyrinth of *Jahrestage*. Whether it surfaces in Gesine’s memory of

her life in Jerichow, in the namesake of Gesine's abode in the "tower" on 243 Riverside Drive, or as it flows in the harbors and rivers of the various areas that emerge in the text, the shore and the sea become a narrative container that not only reflects, but gives a source and a shape to the intangible and tentacular memory that becomes the cosmos of *Jahrestage*.⁶⁴

Finally, chapter four explores the urban topographies in *Ulysses* and *Jahrestage*. While previous chapters deal extensively with topographies incorporating water and marginal places, it is impossible to ignore the urbanity of Dublin (*Ulysses*) and New York (*Jahrestage*). Indeed, in *Ulysses* and *Jahrestage*, the city figures prominently. Although water is a vital topographical motif, the city in these texts functions as an accomplice and helps give symmetry and shape to the internal and external experience of the characters and their community. At times, however, the city in these texts comes across as provincial rather than cosmopolitan. In *Ulysses*, there is a great deal of countryside and coast that surrounds Dublin, and in *Jahrestage*, urban New York is constantly muted by the oscillation between the big city and the small provincial German town Jerichow, ultimately providing a parabolic structure the comes from collapsing the two.

It should be noted, however, that unlike New York or Dublin, the German towns described in *Jahrestage*—Jerichow, Gneez, and the coastal town of Rande—cannot be found on a map. Similar to places in the texts of Conrad and Seghers, Johnson's Jerichow, Gneez, and Rande are topographically synthetic. Although Johnson wrote that his small towns are located near the Baltic Sea between Lübeck and Wismar, and despite the fact that critics have noted the similarities between the

real Grevesmühlen and the fictional Gneez; the existing Seeban Boltenhagen and the imaginary Rande; the actual Klütz and Jerichow, Johnson never confirmed the likeness.⁶⁵ In fact he explained that while some believe they have figured out the models of his cities, in “Wirklichkeit ist dort an der Stelle, wo Jerichow sein soll, nichts – ein Stück Wald, glaube ich.”⁶⁶ As a result of the fictionality, the place names of Johnson’s Mecklenburg towns—as real places—are not charged with other meanings or continuity. Put differently, the fictional naming of the towns, though infused with geographic similarities, creates a blank slate. The topography of Mecklenburg does not have connotations connected to the place-naming, but rather it becomes singularly associated with the particular make-up of the characters and the historical events within the narrative.

These narratives do not provide idealist topographies which offer paths towards utopia. Rather, my project attends to the visual importance and ethics of storytelling. How do topographies model humanity, and establish a non-elitist and whole vision for the future? Indeed, it is the importance of storytelling during periods of historical crisis that is of particular interest to scholars today. This study allows two widely studied European authors to emerge from occluding disciplinary categories and engages with two other German authors within the larger umbrella of modernism. The project invites a re-engagement with the visual art of storytelling and concretizes a shadowy matrix of a particular past while connecting it to a more global context of the present and future.

Notes

All translations, unless otherwise noted, are the author's.

¹ John Buchan, "Literature and Topography," *Homilies and Recreations* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1926) 181-206.

² Buchan 184.

³ J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1995) 4.

⁴ Charlie Bertsch and Johnathan Sterne, *Bad subjects* 17 (November 1994).

⁵ There are too many examples to list, but to list a few: in linguistics, see Stephen Levinson, *Space in Language and Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), and Maya Hickmann, Stéphane Robert (eds.), *Space in languages : linguistic systems and cognitive categories* (Amsterdam: J Benjamins, 2006). In a variety of fields: François Penz, Gregory Radick, and Robert Howell, eds., *Space : in science, art and society* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004). In physics: Richard S. Lewis, *Space in the 21st century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990). In art: Leo Bronstein, *Space in Persian Painting*, (New Brunswick: Transaction P, 1994). In cultural geography: Silvano Santiago, *The space in-between : Essays on Latin American Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001).

⁶ Buchan 183.

⁷ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, eds. *Thinking Space* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁸ Trevor Barnes and Derek Gregory, eds. *Reading Human Geography* (London, Arnold: 1997) 295.

⁹ W.T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002) x.

¹⁰ Crang and Thrift 13.

¹¹ Barnes and Gregory, 300.

¹² Schwarz, Daniel. "Abroad as Metaphor: Conrad's Imaginative Transformation of Place." *Rereading Conrad* (Columbia: U of Missouri P, 2001) 121.

¹³ Joseph Conrad in a letter to Edmund Gosse (1918). Rpt. in Conrad, *Nostramo*, Ian Watt, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 16.

¹⁴ Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way: Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Vintage International, 1989) 200.

¹⁵ Wolfgang Iser, *The Fictive and Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993) 1.

¹⁶ Iser 13.

¹⁷ In *The City in Literature: an Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1998), Richard Lehan offers a comprehensive exploration into the rise of the city in literature.

¹⁸ Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Rpt. in *Simmel on Culture*, eds. David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (London: Sage, 1997) 174-186. First published in Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und des Geistesleben," *Jahrbuch der Gehe-Stiftung zu Dresden* 9 (1903) 227-242.

¹⁹ Simmel 185.

²⁰ Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York: Oxford UP, 1999) 413.

²¹ Otto Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (New York: Random House, 1965) provides an anti-Western, culturally conservative contrast to Simmel, as he amends Simmel's description of the city by arguing that the city, or "Civilization," cuts off human life from the vital nourishment which finds its source in the land: "The country town *confirms* the country, it is an intensification of the picture of the country. It is the city that first defies the land, contradicts Nature in the lines of its silhouette, *denies* all Nature . . . These high-pitched gables, these Baroque cupolas, spires and pinnacles, neither are, nor desire to be, related with anything in Nature" (246).

²² The history of Hellerau and particularly its role in the artistic avant garde is fascinating. See, "Gartenstadt Hellerau: Der Alltag einer Utopie," *Dresdener Hefte: Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte* 51 (1997) 5. Though Schmidt founded a carpenter workshop in 1898, he had by 1901 decided to combine carpentry with art in an effort to create affordable and quality products. Already in 1899, he wrote: "We want to create . . . indoor furnishings . . . that are not evaluated on their hollow and phony appearance and do not imitate the rich and grand with inadequate means and in

unsound manners . . . We create furniture that is so shaped and formed, that every household appliance serves its purpose to the fullest and achieves a purposeful expression in its form.” Schmidt was very interested in filling the modern urban arena with useful and artistic meaning. His ideas for a factory were not only successful but the ideas expanded and attracted other artists and developed into a variety of areas such as textiles, architecture and the arts.

In the schools, especially, progressive ideas of education, such as combining rhythm and dance with learning contributed to a well-known (albeit brief) spotlight on the Festspielhaus theater where modern dance instructor Jaques-Dalcroze under the influence of Adolphe Appia taught rhythms of the body and sought to experiment with music theater. Such experimentation led to the development of noted modern dancers like Mary Wigman and Rudolph Bode. In its prime the garden city of Hellerau attracted many modernist notables such as Walter Gropius, Paul Klee, Franz Kafka, and George Bernard Shaw, and flourished as an alternative experiment to the metropolis until after 1933 when Hellerau was used as a place of Nazi military exercises and later as barracks for the Soviet Red Army.

²³ Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930* (London: Penguin, 1991) 101.

²⁴ Charles Molesworth, “The City: Some Classical Moments,” *City Images: Perspectives from Literature, Philosophy, and Film*, ed. Mary Ann Cows (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1991) 14.

²⁵ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19th century*, trans. Anselm Holle (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1980).

²⁶ Iser 13.

²⁷ Schivelbusch 155-56.

²⁸ Amélie Rorty, [“Characters, Persons, Selves, Individuals,” *Theory of the Novel*, ed. Michael McKeon (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2000) 537-554, distinguished between characters, figures, presences, individuals, and selves. For her, *characters* are derived from Greek. They are famed, socialized and naturalized heroes and protagonists, susceptible to fate and parentage and known by

deeds. *Characters* cannot suffer an identity crisis since they are predicable, public persons. *Figures* have their prototypes in myth and are allegorical in nature. *Presences* are the descendents of souls and are evoked, rather than presented. *Individuals* resist typing as they represent the universal mind of rational beings or the unique private voice.

²⁹ Astradur Eysteinnsson. *The Concept of Modernism* (Cornell UP: Ithaca and London, 1990).

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³⁰ Eysteinnsson 26.

³¹ Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* (New York: Grove Press, 1957) 194.

³² Hermann Bahr, "Das unrettbare ich." Rpt. in *Zur Ueberwindung des Naturalismus: Theoretische Schriften 1887-1904*, ed. Gotthart Wunberg (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1968) 183-192.

³³ Bradbury, *Modernism* 101.

³⁴ Octavio Paz, *Alternating Current*, trans. by Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1967) 162-3.

³⁵ Rpt. in McKeon 186.

³⁶ Hartmut Böhme, "Einleitung: Raum – Bewegung –Topographie," *Topographien der Literatur: Deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2005) XV.

³⁷ Buchan 206.

³⁸For biographical details connecting Conrad with the Congo, see Jocelyn Baines, *Joseph Conrad: A Critical Biography* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960); Norman Sherry, *Conrad's Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971); Frederick R. Karl, *Joseph Conrad: The Three Lives* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979); and Zdzislaw Najder, *Joseph Conrad: A Chronicle* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1983).

³⁹ Joseph Conrad, "Tales of the Sea," *Notes on Life and Letters* (London: Dent and Sons, 1949).

⁴⁰ Conrad, *Tales of Hearsay and Last Essays* (Harmondsworth Penguin: London, 1944) 110.

⁴¹ Conrad, *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad: vol. 1: 1861-1897*, eds. Frederick Karl and Laurence Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983) 62.

⁴² Conrad, *Tales* 113.

⁴³ Anna Seghers, "Volk und Schriftsteller," *Woher sie kommen, wohin sie gehen*, ed. Manfred Behn (Darmstadt: Luchterhand) 50-7. She wrote specifically that the "English epic writer Joseph Conrad, who had made conscious certain traits of the English people like no other person before him, was and remained known as a Pole" (53).

⁴⁴ Helen Fehervary, in her *Anna Seghers: The Mythic Dimension* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2001) notes that by 1927, Seghers already owned (and had probably read) Conrad's *Chance*, *Typhoon* and *Nostramo*. Later texts in her library included *Freya of the Seven Islands*, *Lord Jim*, *Tales of Unrest*, and *Almayer's Folly*:

It was evidently Seghers who penciled the date '27.IV.27' at the top left-hand side of the first recto page of the 1927 edition of *Nostramo*. Next to it, clearly not in her handwriting, is written in red ink "Weihnachten 1927." Generally, Anna Seghers made no marginal comments or other markings in her books. Yet the wear and tear on the 1927 edition of *Nostramo* (evidently read while she worked on *The Revolt of the Fishermen*) and on the 1947 edition of *Lord Jim* (evidently read while she worked on *Das Argonautenschiff* and her Caribbean novellas about Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Jamaica) suggests that she probably read these novels more than once and at different times in her life (216).

⁴⁵ Anna Seghers, *Überfahrt* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1997). There are two ships at the beginning of the story. The one that the passengers are traveling on is a Polish ship named the *Norwid*, but one of the passengers mentions that he just rode on the *Joseph Conrad* (7). Later, the same passenger approaches the main character and asks him if he knew who Conrad was:

Aber Joseph Conrad, den kennen Sie doch? . . . Viele Menschen, sagte Sadowski, glauben Conrad sei Engländer. Er war aber Pole. Er wurde Seemann, und dann ging er nach England. . . Joseph Conrad war ganz versessen auf Schiffe. Damals stieß Polen noch nicht ans Meer. Als er auf einer Reise mit seinem Hauslehrer das Meer erblickte und zum erstenmal Umgang hatte mit Seeoffizieren, da war es für ihn ausgemacht, was für einen Beruf er wählen müsse (11).

⁴⁶ Frank Wagner, Ursula Emmerich, and Ruth Radvanyi, eds. *Anna Seghers: Eine Biographie in Bildern* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1994) 15.

⁴⁷ Wagner, Emmerich, and Radvanyi 15.

⁴⁸ Seghers' experience is not the only one mapped out. Claude Levi-Strauss, who was also on the same ship, described his journey in his *Tristes tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1955).

⁴⁹ Christiane Zehl-Romero, *Anna Seghers: Eine Biographie: 1900-1947* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2000) 369.

⁵⁰ Zehl-Romero 368-376.

⁵¹ Silvia Schlenstedt, ed., commentary, *Transit* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2001) 315-18. See also, Christiane Zehl Romero, *Anna Seghers: Eine Biographie: 1947-1983* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2003).

⁵² Bruce Arnold, *The Scandal of Ulysses* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1991) 47. Arnold gives a detailed account of the complicated publication, reception, and copyright history of *Ulysses*.

⁵³ Arnold, "The Birth of the Hero," *Scandal* 1-26.

⁵⁴ T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975) 178.

⁵⁵ Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930).

⁵⁶ Bernd Neumann, "Leipzig, oder die Schule der Modernität," in: *Uwe Johnson* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1994) 191.

⁵⁷ The "Giftschein" refers to packets of books from Mayer's friends in the West that he circulated among his students. Neumann 194.

⁵⁸ Neumann 297.

⁵⁹ Neumann 306-7.

⁶⁰ Günter Blöcker, "Du hast Auftrag von uns, Gesine," (1971), *Uwe Johnson's Jahrestage*, ed. Micheal Bengel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985) 157. In a speech introducing Gesine Cresspahl, (Uwe Johnson, "Einführung in die *Jahrestage* [1978], cited in Bengel 15-27) Johnson explained that his books continually suffered from this idea that he was a writer of a divided nation, and it was one of the reasons he left to come to the States: "Ich wollte offenbar mal weg von Europa mit diesem Ruf, Fachmann für die deutsche Teilung zu sein, und ich wollte keinen goldenen Käfig, also keine Universitätsdozentur, sondern offenbar Alltag, und dieser Alltag wurde mir dankenswerterweise gegeben" (18).

⁶¹ It should also be noted that in the reception of *Jahrestage*, critics initially misread Johnson's work and compared it with the "Blut-und-Boden" Nazi literature of the 1930s. For example in 1970, literary critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki noted in a review in *Die Zeit* ("Uwe Johnsons neuer Roman," *Die Zeit* 2 Feb. 1970. Rpt, in *Johnsons Jahrestage*, ed. Michael Bengel [Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1985] 141-2) that Johnson placed a peculiar and telling emphasis on trees: "Mit manchen Naturbeschreibungen gerät Johnson in die unmittelbare Nachbarschaft der Blut- und Boden-Literatur von gestern . . . Die Folgen sind verheerend: Durch Johnsons vertrackte, teils betuliche und teils raunende Darstellung wird das Leben in der mecklenburgischen Kleinstadt archaisiert und verklärt." And after the fourth installment in 1983, poet and critic Helmut Heißenbüttel questioned "warum diese Erzählform ihre fatale Ähnlichkeit mit den Generationsromanen von Hans Grimm nicht los wird." (Helmut Heißenbüttel, "Zeitschriften-Rundschau," *Frankfurter Rundschau* 1 Jan. 1984: 2. Cited in Bengel 227). While these misperceptions can be attributed to the impact of Theodor Adorno's statement that "nach Auschwitz ein Gedicht zu schreiben, ist barbarisch" (*Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft*, 1951), Norbert Mecklenburg blames the conclusions by Reich-Ranicki, Heißenbüttel, and others on the publishing house Suhrkamp, since they had rejected Johnson's first novel *Ingrid Babendererde*. According to Walter Maria Guggenheimer, the editor at that time, *Babendererde* had "ein bißchen zu viel Sonne und See, grenzte geradezu an Blut und Boden" (Norbert Mecklenburg, "Ein Stück Herkunft," Bengel 228). Johnson's nature descriptions have nothing to do with the "Blut und Boden" literature, a topic I deal with extensively in chapters three and four.

⁶² "Einführung," Bengel 20.

⁶³ The Kapp Putsch of March 1920, was an attempted right-wing putsch against the newly formed German Republic after World War I.

⁶⁴ Cedric Watts uses this term to describe the narration of Conrad. See, chapter one, note 37.

⁶⁵ Norbert Mecklenburg, cited in Bengel 230.

⁶⁶ Cited in Norbert Mecklenburg, "Ein Stück Herkunft" Bengel 230.

CHAPTER 1
Of Cruising Yawls and Old Harbor Towns: Navigating New Waters in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Anna Seghers' *Transit*

“The sea—this truth must be confessed—has no generosity. No display of manly qualities—courage, hardihood, endurance, faithfulness—has ever been known to touch its irresponsible consciousness of power. The ocean has the conscienceless temper of a savage autocrat spoiled by much adulation.”

--Joseph Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea*

Waterscapes as a topographical paradigm in *Heart of Darkness*

In *Heart of Darkness*, the Thames, the Congo, the *Nellie*, and the steamer that Marlow navigates add to a topography of waterscapes that is more promising and durable than the urban symbols which crop up. The narrative relates the personal journey of the seaman Marlow as he voyages down the Congo to retrieve the illustrious Kurtz, an ivory collector who has gone missing. The story opens on a “cruising yawl” just below the town of Gravesend, a small harbor town that lies twenty-six miles east of London. Though the narrator refers to London on the periphery, he calls it “the biggest, and the greatest, town on earth” although it is cloaked in a “mournful gloom” (7).¹ The ship is waiting for the turn of the tide and the initial unnamed narrator whom Marlow interrupts belongs to a group of professional men. Significantly, the travelers on the *Nellie* are part of the urban machinery that fuels the ivory trade and subsequently modernity. They include a Director of Companies, its accountant, and a lawyer. Though the narrator does not

specify his relation to the others beyond “the bond of the sea,” it is clear that the passenger cargo consists of men affiliated with a shipping company which makes its profits from harvesting wealth from other lands (7). Marlow’s function—though likely as pilot—is also unspecified. His presence clearly comes across as being one of an outsider in terms of his relationship to the other men. The narrator makes it known that the director of the shipping company captains the *Nellie*, “though it was difficult to realize that his work was not out there in the luminous estuary, but behind him within the brooding gloom (7).” The director performs his duty as captain purely in a ceremonial manner and no longer works steadily on a ship. Except for Marlow, these men plainly comprise the financial appendage of the city—all of them seek fortune in a commercial, urban center. Conrad placed their role within the city in opposition and estrangement to water—their part resides in “gloom” (or urbanity) while the tale takes place on “luminous” water. In fact, within the first few pages Conrad used the term “gloom” no less than five times to refer to London: The “mournful gloom brooding motionless” over London (7); the director’s work “within the brooding gloom” (8); the “gloom to the west” (8); the setting sun “sank low, and from glowing white changed to dull red without rays and without heat, as if about to go out suddenly, stricken to death by the touch of that gloom” (8), and on the Thames fairway, the ships move farther west towards “the monstrous town [that] was still marked ominously on the sky, a brooding gloom in sunshine, a lurid glare under the stars” (9). Already in the first scenes, water resides and functions in a realm outside of the city and the ensuing description suggests that the water has a more privileged status: It is more weightless and resplendent, and it is not burdened by modern

machinery. More importantly, its luminosity can divulge something—even if it is clouded in haze and mystery—that the lackluster city covers.

Nevertheless, urban symbols are certainly embedded in the text and often situate themselves in opposition to water. Typically, criticism of *Heart of Darkness* interprets the text as an antagonism between the modern, “civil,” and urban and the primitive, native, and jungle.¹ C.B. Cox stresses the book’s binaries when he writes that Conrad “contrast[ed] the savage woman with the Intended, Western civilization with primitive Africa, the language of the rational mind, of concrete imagery and recognizable forms, with a mystery at the heart of consciousness beyond expression in words.”² Yet the dialectic between urbanity and waterscapes is (also) telling in that the quest down the Congo washes away the autonomous glory that the individual seeks. Rather, the voyage becomes a concrete metaphor—or a type of narrative flesh—that illustrates the iniquitous nature of the quest for capital gain and its effect on humanity.³

The voyage into the primitive concretizes the spirit of modernity. While recounting to his Thames’ audience his first assignment as a steamer captain, Marlow describes the difficult and physical task of guiding the steamer through the shallow waters of the Congo. In doing so, he throws a barb at his business-oriented audience for forgetting the true and “inner” reality of life due to the (untrue) abstract pursuit of capitalist gain. Though his urban audience interrupts with grunts and objections, Marlow intimates that on the river the “inner truth is hidden—luckily, luckily. But I felt it all the same; I felt often its mysterious stillness watching me at my monkey tricks, just as it watches you fellows performing on your respective tight-ropes, for—

what is it? half a crown a tumble . . .(36).” As an answer, one of the business men growls at him to be civil. Marlow uses his occupational experience of navigating to insult and question the intangible nature of the urban quest for wealth. That is, he suggests that his captaining a ship has afforded him an opportunity to be more aware of “truth.” The mysterious stillness Marlow refers to is, of course, a part of Conrad’s murky “adjectival insistence” that characterizes humanity, and it is unclear whether or not the river becomes a personification of the conscience.⁴ Nevertheless, it is clear that the voyage on the steamer allows a more substantive insight than the city can provide—the luminosity allows for transcendence, while the urban gloom obscures moments of enlightenment. This insight is noted at the very beginning: Before Marlow begins his tale, the narrator describes the setting sun on the Thames as one in which the bright white—a common symbol for Enlightenment—is muted by the urban gloom. Put differently, the critique of the urban quest filters through the waterscape, makes its presence felt, and becomes a moral comment, revealing that baser instincts always inform motivation within civilization. The “luminous” nature of the water becomes a position for a gaze with the ability to wash away the pretense and expose urbanity and modernity. Thus, the ship as an extension of the voyage becomes a part of the waterscape, functioning as a telescope in which to delve into the fundamental conundrum of capitalist colonialization.

To that end, Conrad used waterscapes and later incorporated the jungle to provide a material representation of the modern quest for wealth. When Marlow arrives at the Company’s station, on the path to the offices he passes by industrial waste: He “came upon a boiler wallowing in the grass,” then saw the “decaying

machinery” of the railway truck “turned over and one wheel off,” and later, after witnessing men senselessly blasting a way at a cliff that “was not in the way of anything,” he avoids a very narrow ravine in which “a lot of important drainage-pipes for the settlement had been tumbled . . . It was a wanton smash-up” (19-20). The images testify to modernity’s endpoint, a quest for wealth and industrial progress ends in corrosion. The station (or the beginnings of urbanity) becomes a durable graphic of social criticism that illustrates the teleological degenerative effect of the quest for wealth that is part and parcel of the city.

Georg Simmel, who argued that the city becomes an arena in which the individual confronts overwhelming stimuli, reflected this cycle when he traced the phenomena of the money economy and its role in modern life in his “Philosophie des Geldes” (Philosophy of Money [1889]).⁵ Simmel asserted that money generally functions as serving a purpose and simultaneously an end, and thus degrades many things to “means” which should be “ends” in themselves. Money resides in everything, and to everybody money is an end and a means, which finally links all of life into a teleological relationship.⁶ As a result, money is integral to modern life (or imperialism) and a major symbol within the modern urban spirit since its fundamental reality renders the world intelligible. The company station in *Heart of Darkness* concretizes Simmel’s theory in that it gives a shape to the modern urban spirit that degrades the means which should be the ends. In addition, each individual connected to the urbanscape in the jungle—Kurtz, the Manager, the International Society (since it is seen as a unit)—fulfill Simmel’s formula in that each seeks to define his role as a successful force in the pursuit of wealth.

As a result, the railway truck, the boiler, the railway, and the drainage pipes—elements that are supposed to provide financial functions for civilization—become a means for more ivory production and more wealth, and thus more exploitation. The corroded equipment lying in the Congo grass becomes a figurative illustration of urbanity that increasingly distances the possibility of a personal and private fulfilling life to an escalating propinquity of a public, impersonal and objective relationship between man and the city. The city—and man too if he is obsessed with the pursuit of wealth—will teleologically end in rot. Thus, it is no surprise that at the company station Marlow declares that he “had stepped into the gloomy circle of some Inferno. The rapids were near and an uninterrupted, uniform, headlong rushing noise filled the mournful stillness of the grove where not a breath stirred, not a leaf moved, with a mysterious sound, as though the tearing pace of the launched earth had suddenly become audible” (20). “Gloom,” again synonymous with urbanity, is juxtaposed with water. While London is simply replaced with the noun “gloom,” the “luminous” water receives additional description here. The nearby water can not only be seen, but heard. Its mysteriousness is amplified as it also functions as a siren that wails and defies silence.

Conversely, the water’s “mysterious stillness” or its “luminosity” does more than expose a quest for wealth and fortune. By navigating through the waters, the topography simplifies the perspective and changes focus to something more enduring and concrete. When repairing his boat at the Central Station, Marlow asserts: “It was a great comfort to turn from that chap to my influential friend, the battered, twisted, ruined tin-pot steamboat. . . . She rang under my feet like an empty Huntly & Palmer

biscuit-tin kicked along a gutter; . . . No influential friend would have served me better—to find out what I could do” (31). Despite its decrepit state, the ship differs from the rotting truck in that it allows for a concrete resiliency. It does not decay like the debris at the company station. The visual and aural clues of passing time testify to a long-lasting endurance and permanence. Interestingly enough, as an element tin is a malleable, soft, and silvery-white metal with a bluish tinge. Unlike heavy iron or steel, tin is lighter, more weightless and unlike the steel or lead that gets tangled in the undergrowth of the jungle. Working on the boat for the purpose of continual navigation (and not increasing personal fame and wealth through ivory amassment) keeps Marlow’s concentration afloat, ultimately allowing him to escape the “gloomy Inferno” of modernity that results in Kurtz’s dissolution.

Like the rotting machinery, Kurtz too dissolves and degenerates in the jungle. Yet Kurtz’ dissolution is problematic in that the city can masquerade its threat to a more human existence by assuming other cultural masks: Before Kurtz went to Africa, he was an accomplished artist—a painter, poet, and musician. The contrast between Marlow’s sustained focus on the steamer (and on the *Nellie*) and Kurtz’s collapse implies that cultural institutions of the city cannot redeem the threat of breakdown. The stimuli derived from modernity (in this case the machinery needed to mine ivory) only results in disintegration. The Congo itself is not so much responsible for Kurtz’s erosion, but rather, the elements of modernity, or the quest for ivory and fame. The jungle snares, entangles, and ultimately lays bare the already crumbling nature of imperialism—the crisis of modernity for Conrad. The Congo exposes Kurtz as a more honest and empty version of his being who seeks only to

succeed in the modern arena: When Marlow finally sees Kurtz, he describes him as “an animated image of death carved out of old ivory . . . I saw him open his mouth wide—it gave him a weirdly voracious aspect as though he had wanted to swallow all the air, all the earth, all the men before him” (59). Just like the gloom on the Thames that threatens to suffocate the glowing sun, Kurtz too comes across as a somber gloom that threatens his surroundings. The steamer, incidentally, was the element that kept Marlow from trying to understand Kurtz’s “impenetrable darkness. I looked at him as you peer down at a man who is lying at the bottom of a precipice where the sun never shines. But I had not much time to give him because I was helping the engine-driver to take to pieces the leaky cylinders, to straighten a bent connecting-rod, and in other such matters” (68). Instead of being consumed by the gloom or persuaded to climb down into the precipice, Marlow focuses instead on keeping the ship afloat, a metaphor that again contrasts the urban with the non-urban. Conrad went beyond contrasting the modern/civil/urban with the primitive/native/undeveloped and sought to illustrate not only its origins, but by using the Congo, he weighed down the components of imperialism. As a result, the text gives a gravity and shape to imperialism that illustrates rot and decay as its skeleton, whereas the knowledge of the roots that effuses from the steamer rings clear and solid like tin.

In *Heart of Darkness* there is no other urban stimulus such as traffic and trade to drown out Marlow’s tale or to mask civilization’s reversion to primal savagery—it is strictly kept to the ship and the Congo. Yet the topography does more than give a physical substance to Kurtz’s dissolution. Rather, through the voyage, the topography becomes a metaphor for the larger dissolution of modern life. Critic

Stephen Kern affirms Conrad's narrative practice when he writes that from "the 1880s the literary bounty of stories about empire matched the psychological, political, and financial yield of the land grab of the major imperialist powers."⁷ The navigation of the Congo centers on the empire by filtering out the economic and other stimuli that inevitably exist in the city and not only focuses on, but concretizes the ever-existing problem of exploitation specifically. As a result, Marlow, then, does more than elaborate on the personal effect Kurtz had on him, but as Edward Said noted, he eerily compares to the Ancient Mariner who feels obligated to repeat his penance and warn of future Kurtz(es) and a continuous entopic cycle.⁸

Not surprising, then, that Marlow does not relate his story to an engaged audience, but rather to a disaffected and indifferent group. His audience belongs to the realm of the intangible and immaterial. It is no coincidence that Marlow refers to Brussels earlier as a "whited sepulchre" (9) when he initially accepts and receives his orders. Certainly Conrad worked with symbolism, and white clearly signifies ivory and the white man, but the color itself is not transparent, and is certainly not empty or blank.⁹ The city occupies a dead space in this tale and indeed all of the 'city' figures are akin to apparitions and dead figures—the knitting 'fates' outside the company office, his frail aunt, and Kurtz's phantom-like Intended. As the story oscillates between the scenes in the city and those in Africa, the urban setting becomes more ethereal while the Congo becomes more vivid and solid. The Congo functions as more than a tool to describe Africa's geography, socioeconomic conditions, and inhabitants. Water reflects and exposes—much in the vein of Hellerau's urban agrarianism, the garden community established as an alternative to the industrial

city—a vision of a sterilized urban society.¹⁰ The city—including Kurtz, who is after all an appendage of the city—is not a unique place, pregnant with possibilities for engaging the psyche as Simmel had suggested. Rather, through the voyage the city becomes exposed as a system of entropy and a catalyst for human degeneration.¹¹

Still, Conrad's waterscapes do not provide clear cut contrasting examples in which water is purely redemptive and beneficial. Conrad imposed contradictions and ambiguities in which the descriptions of the African riverscape by no means offer a positive alternative to the chaotic dissolution of the city.¹² As Conrad used the color white to depict the city, he employed different terms for the Congo and Africa which compare to the urban connotations of sterilization. For the boy Marlow, Africa had always been a "blank" space that he "had a hankering after" (11). In the idea of *tabula rasa* or a blank slate readied for imagination, Africa was a ripe destination, ready for discovery and adventure. As an adult Marlow recognizes that the "blank" topography is now carved up and "marked with all the colours of a rainbow" (13). Africa is no longer a blank (or white) presence, but is filled according to Europe's predispositions. Marlow, however, chooses to describe the Congo on his voyage as "an empty stream, a great silence, [and] an impenetrable forest" (56). These descriptions, like those of the city, are far from idyllic. Stephen Kern labels these descriptions images of negation: "Marlow's journey is an allegory into the history of mankind in reverse, a devolution of the species into the past, into the darkness, into nothing."¹³ Certainly, the quiet and stillness Marlow finds on the river is far from peaceful, but when juxtaposed with the city, the "images of negation" constitute positive, productive, and vital topographies for active reflection. Unlike the frail and

sterile figures who inhabit the city and knit for the dead, the physical African landscape is rough, dense, wild, and forces life. The river necessitates a vigilant awareness of one's existence. Despite its stillness, it "was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention. It looked at you with a vengeful aspect. I got used to it afterwards. . . . I had no time. I had to keep guessing at the channel" (36). The river forced Marlow to stay focused, engaged, and ultimately allowed him to see beyond "progress" and into its effect on culture and humanity.

Moreover, when Marlow initially arrives at the station, he sees empty paths through the "empty land" which compliment his sight of chain gangs, dying black men, and rotten harnessed carrion (23). The emptiness of the stream contrasts with the opaque whiteness of London in that emptiness still has an element of transparency.¹⁴ Cities—and the quest for wealth within them—are not only centers of the dead, but they plaster over any porthole to insight. Or, they are useless in that they are fragile and breakable. When describing Kurtz's Intended, Marlow says that the woman was as fragile as a "cliff of crystal (70)." Contrastingly, the sea releases distractions attached to land messiness in the shape of rotting vehicles and breakable bodies and allows for Marlow's idealism. His insights on the steamer came "in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream remembered with wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants and water and silence" (36). Even in the beginning the "gloom" over London contrasts with the "luminousness" of the water, giving the water a purifying elemental purpose that the "gloom" only mars. Thus, Marlow asserts that Kurtz's outcry of "the horror," (68) "was an affirmation, a

moral victory paid for by innumerable defeats, by abominable terrors, by abominable satisfaction. But it was a victory.” (70). He acknowledges that the riverscape (on which Kurtz has his epiphany) can at least provide the place where whiteness subsides into transparency.

Moreover, the contrast between the sea and the city continues in that the narrator comments that the Thames (unlike the Congo) is “crowded with . . . memories of men and ships it has borne” (18). The two topographies are linked and the sea becomes a means to criticize imperialism. The critique (or dismissal) of the city’s qualities cannot exist without its opposite, and it is most poignant that the white sepulchre of a city—a space which once took over any blankness—begins to show its white creep onto the Congo topography in the form of the “heaps” and “stacks” of ivory at the Inner Station (49). Just as Conrad wrote that Africa was dotted with all the “colours of the rainbow,” the Congo will remain affected by modernity’s reach. Thus, when Marlow witnesses a dying black boy with “a bit of white worsted around his neck,” the symbolism disparaging the ivory trade stands out glaringly, but it also speaks to the city’s grasp—urban opaque white turns “a blank space of delightful mystery . . . to a place of darkness” and death (11), a sepulchre, where the quest for ivory reeks “like a whiff from some corpse” (26). The voyage up the Congo (and simultaneously down the Thames) illustrates the challenge of modern life without burdening it with the denseness and concrete messiness of land. The Congo becomes an arena that does not stage the struggle for individual autonomy—which is its main difference from urban modernism—but rather it showcases the loss of humanity

within modernity. The riverscape, while itself not necessarily idyllic, empties out any redemptive quality of the city.

Haze, in connection to the riverscape, also plays an important role in *Heart of Darkness* (and later in Seghers' *Transit*). As a natural phenomenon connected to water, haze bridges the gap between the tangible present of modernity and the mythical past or pre-modernity. The narrative is placed within the physical geography of Gravesend, the Thames, and finally Africa. Yet a fog or haze arising from the waterscapes envelope the narrative and the place, often obscuring the main subject of detail. E. M. Forster put it most memorably when he complained that Conrad's narratives are "[m]isty in the middle as well as at the edges, the secret cask of his genius contains a vapour rather than a jewel."¹⁵ In contrast to a particular tangible space, the use of haze as a device countervails the corporeality that arises from their place naming—solidarity, durability and continuity are disrupted and displaced by discord, fragility, and disruption.

The disruption of sight that the haze causes does not differ so much from the fleeting and indiscernible patterns of the modern city as it can be viewed from a train window, though haze functions differently from the modern blur.¹⁶ Haze cloaks the subject while a train window distorts it, and the effect is not dissonant fragmentation, but rather haze dampens and mutes the subject. The outline is still present, despite its ambiguity. Virginia Woolf elaborated on this method of episodic and hazy storytelling in her "Modern Fiction" when she wrote that "life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope."¹⁷ Whether as a result of the rise of the city or not, one of the general tenets of modernism is a move away from traditional concepts of

objectivity to subjectivity in order to detail the world and its surroundings more realistically. Certainly one of the paths towards subjectivity can be found within city narratives, but using haze from the waterscapes lends itself not only as a device to obscure the narrative, but the haze also becomes another way of ordering this modern and unruly cosmos, by keeping the outlines ever present without dismissing the subject entirely.

The fog or haze that envelops the narrative terrain of *Heart of Darkness* constantly mars Marlow's "vision." Not only does haze appear aboard the *Nellie*, but haze and fog cloaks the entire tale: when Marlow begins his tale he refers to early conquerors in a darkness with a "sky the color of smoke" (7); when he accepts his first commission, there was "something ominous in the atmosphere" (14); when he boards the French steamer bound for the first station, he describes "a blue sea whose glitter was blurred by a creeping mist. The sun was fierce, the land seemed to glisten and drip with steam" (16); when Marlow's steamer is finally ready to depart in search for Kurtz, a "white fog" blinds the way, and in the end, after Marlow has told his tale, the "offing was barred by a blank bank of clouds, and the tranquil waterway leading to the uttermost ends of the earth flowed somber under an overcast sky" (76).

Marlow, as an appendage of the sea, has trouble narrating linearly when the haze obscures his view. In fact, the unnamed narrator feels compelled to introduce and explain Marlow's hazy style. To him, "the meaning of an episode was not inside a kernel, but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze" (9). Despite the concrete and audio clarity of the tin steamer, haze obscures any palpable interpretation. While Ian Watt suggests that Conrad's storytelling has

an impressionistic element,¹⁸ tracing the haze as an impressionistic device is quite useful in that impressionist painting relies on the notion that the main subject remains cloaked or obscured. Yet the mistiness functions in two capacities. The obscurity cloaks the horrific and transformative power that is “too dark altogether” to deal with in its full outline (74), but it also bridges a past and present African topography with a past and present English one.¹⁹ Already in the beginning when the narrator is describing the Thames, he sets up the contrast between London and “the very mist on the Essex marshes [that] was like a gauzy and radiant fabric hung from the wooden rises inland and draping the low shores in diaphanous folds” (8). The description of the shores is followed by a description of London as being the “gloom to the west.” Haze and shadows certainly cloak the revulsion of England’s past, but they also dress the myth of England’s great past. Through its seamless cover, haze blurs the rough edges and inland disorder, softening the edges of time to show the reality that this land too “has been one of the dark places of the earth” (9). Hans Blumenberg correctly wrote that in “myth there is no chronology, there are only sequences. Something that lies very far back, but in the meantime has not been contradicted or pushed aside; it has an assumption of trustworthiness on its side.”²⁰ The mist and haze that drape England and Africa—as well as the old river—lend an element of fluid tranquility that allows an encompassing reflection on “abiding memories” (9). Marlow’s hazy narration and his topography reach back into a credible representation of world history.

As a result the incorporation of haze creates an ambiguous relationship between the public and private sphere, between the past and the present, between

fiction and/or myth, and reality. Eleazar Melentinsky writes that in “mythical space, the nature of the connection is static, form is not fragmented into homogeneous elements, and all relationships are based on a single scheme.”²¹ The haze Marlow refers to is not meant to create dissonance or illustrate a fragmented urban life, made uneasy by modernity. In contrast to urban fragmentation, haze provides a connective tissue. The haze that connects Conrad’s Thames and Africa collapses the two topographies into one and together they become one continuous past and present in which all relationships are based on a single system of exploitation. Thus, Marlow’s “experience” hearkens to Walter Benjamin’s ideals for a storyteller in that he provides “an epical side of truth.”²² Moreover, Cedric Watts, who has written extensively on *Heart of Darkness*, refers to the storytelling structure as “tentacular” in nature.²³ Just as the multiple interpretations of *Heart of Darkness* are “tentacular,” so are the topographies that reach into each other. The barges are not only present ones simply passing the *Nellie*, but rather they include past and present barges that dot a never-ending river: “In the offing the sea and the sky were welded together without a joint and in the luminous space the tanned sails of the barges drifting up with the tide seemed to stand still in the red clusters of canvas, sharply peaked with gleams of varnished spirits” (7). There is no break between the sea and the sky and the shores merge with the sea without a seam. It is as if this river is not only alive with heavily used and bustling traffic of present-day trading ships and barges, but rather the ‘hazy’ image offers no break between the past and present, and the two seemingly different topographies—the topography of the present shipping company in an urban setting and the topography of a more ancient past ripple onto each other.

In addition, haze calms the mood. While on the *Nellie*, the narrator comments that the men were supposed to play dominoes, but they “felt meditative and fit for nothing but placid staring Forthwith a change came over the waters, and the serenity became less brilliant but more profound” (7-8). Much like Benjamin’s notion that true storytelling relates life-altering experiences,²⁴ the water and the haze (unlike city lights or the noise of the train where life dwarfs the individual) lull and calm the senses, allowing for reflection on discernable patterns of humanity. The topography of the land—as observed from the deck—is calm, quiet, and tranquil, and the emphasis ebbs between stasis and expectancy much like the ripples in the water. The narrator in *Heart of Darkness* describes with mythical invocations the river Thames as “crowded with memories of men and ships it has borne . . . all the men of whom the nation is proud” (18). Out of the haze, the riverscape reaches out beyond identifying a setting and connects to an overarching human consciousness, enveloped by past explorers of reality and myth and present colonizers of England. Conrad was not simply referring to English imperialism, but centuries of past conquest by the Romans, the Celts, and the Saxons. By writing the waterscape, Conrad concretized the (mythic) archetypes of the past England—myth becomes the geography, so to speak, with the archetypes as solid markers.²⁵

The tenuous relationship between epical narration and topography finds its heart within the river and not within the city. Or, as Edward Said wrote in reference to Conrad, the fiction “dramatizes the problematic relation between the past and the present, between then and now.”²⁶ In his *Civilization and its Discontents*, Sigmund Freud compared the make-up of the psyche to a city. Freud used the topography of

Rome to set up his analogy of the self in the society as constructed by layers of a city that has been built, razed, and rebuilt. While the physical material of a certain era may not be visibly seen, Freud contended that vestiges of the older version of the city still remain.²⁷ In the beginning of *Heart of Darkness*, the narrator describes the horizon as hazy and “only the gloom to the west, brooding over the upper reaches became more sombre every minute, as if angered by the approach of the sun (18).” The imagery of the landscape is poignantly foreboding, implying the direction of the story and the subsequent manifesto against Western imperialism.

And of course, Marlow interrupts the narrator’s reverie and alludes to England’s geography (and darker social past) as that which was once also uninhabited, wild, and untamed (just like his story of Africa), but later, this same brooding surfaces again in the shadow of Kurtz’s African mistress. When she approaches Marlow’s steamer as it leaves with Kurtz, she “stood looking at us without a stir and like the wilderness itself, with an air of brooding over an inscrutable purpose. . . . Suddenly she opened her bared arms and . . . at the same time the swift shadows darted out on the earth, swept around on the river, gathering the steamer in a shadowy embrace. A formidable silence hung over the scene” (60-1). The two topographies—the real urban one situated off the banks of Gravesend, and the surreal ancient one of Africa are once again connected by the shadows and haze of the past. This modern (and corrupt) city still has remnants of the original riverscape. The towns dotted along the Thames are nothing more than razed and rebuilt topographies, replete with the same corrupt and dark vision that surfaced in Africa. Consequently, the riverscapes inscribe history with a lasting corporeality, an

epic touch that continues to resonate. When Marlow refers to Rome and the civilization development of the Thames, he is not attempting to narrate an inward and private tale or find individual autonomy—as perhaps experienced by an urban artist looking singularly inward—rather, Marlow’s odyssey becomes an internal investigation on an epic scale of man’s relationship to man.²⁸

Thus, it is not surprising that like the seamless topography, Marlow’s story winds from topic to topic and thought to thought, much like a river: There are no breaks between the tangents—Marlow flows from each episode and insight into the next. Still, presented as “a Buddha preaching in European clothes” (10), Marlow clearly has “experience” to impart.²⁹ His tales do not seek to focus on an individual history, but they relate a larger world history that “preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.”³⁰ Like the Congo river which resembles “an immense snake uncoiled, with its head in the sea, its body at rest coming afar over a vast county and its tail lost in the depths of the land” (12), Marlow’s story is an art bred by an ancient ocean in which the river (and the story) flows into an ancient and “primeval” past. Marlow admits that going “up the river was like traveling back to the earliest beginnings of the world” (35). The city, in its most basic definition, comprises crossroads and intersections where persons meet. In the history of the city, crossroads were often the extension of waterways. Richard Lehan writes: “Euphrates and Tigris in Iraq, Nile in Egypt, Indus in Pakistan, and Hwang Ho (Yellow River) in China. Even in North America, where cities came late, this holds true: Montréal, New York, and San Francisco are at estuaries of major river systems, and each is the entrepot settlement from which a great valley . . . is tied

to a larger economic world.”³¹ The river and the sea serves as a crucial and fundamental element for life, so it is not surprising that the earliest myths connect the city’s life force to that of the river, or that Marlow’s “culminating” experience epically regresses into the depths of ancient human nature.

Using the river as a crossroads or path allows Conrad to navigate in and out of myth and reality. Critic Robert Wilson discusses Conrad’s mythology in terms of religion and noted that Conrad considered religion useless as a form of knowledge,³² Conrad himself believed that fiction “is history, human history, or it is nothing . . . being based on the reality of forms and the observation of social phenomena, whereas history is based on documents, and the reading of print and handwriting—or second-hand impression. Thus fiction is near truth.”³³ Narrative has a function similar to history and the use of fiction symbolically exposes historical truths of modernity that existed prior to its time. The trip through the haze and up the river is a journey back into pre-history. And as myth is used to explain events, Conrad’s combined model of myth and reality does less to show an imitation of the world than it does to show “an example of what the world, humanely speaking, is.”³⁴ The river, then, and the corresponding haze function as a timeline that culminates in the modern world and dots various points to the rise of modern bleakness.

The sea as a topographical paradigm in *Transit*

In the foreword of the 1950 Czech edition of *Transit*, Seghers wrote that she began the novel in the first year of war in France as she was trying to secure transit for herself and her family while her husband Laszlo Radvanyi was interned in Le Vernet, a camp in the Pyreneans: “Ein paar Seiten entstanden in Hotelzimmern und

Cafés von Marseille, ein paar in den Pyrenäen, als unsere Männer dort im Lager eingesperrt waren, ein paar auf dem Schiff, das aus Marseille an der spanischen Küste entlang, um das künstlich vernebelte Fort von Gibraltar herum, in endloser, erschöpfender Fahrt auf die Insel Martinique zu fuhr.”³⁵ Similar to Conrad’s personal experience and disillusionment with European imperialism in the Congo as he traveled down the river to Stanley Falls, Seghers wrote *Transit* out of the desire to describe and explain the situation of resistance, emigration and flight during World War II.³⁶ In her commentary to *Transit*, Sylvia Schlenstedt explains the displacement in *Transit* as an attempt to understand (begreifen), and to make others understand, since Seghers herself was certain that “dieses Leben hier für Leute draußen unbegreiflich ist.”³⁷ Like Conrad’s London, Paris is besieged by a more recent example of imperialism—fascism, and Marseille becomes the last “outpost” of those attempting to flee Europe before the Holocaust. In that sense, the Old Harbor café in Marseille where the narrator settles to tell his yarn becomes more than a stage on a resting cruising yawl, as tales are told, or dominoes are played while passengers wait for the tide to turn. Though the narrator invites the anonymous listener to a “Glas Rosé und einem Stück Pizza” (5), he is already at the site of what Kurtz calls the “horror,” in that he informs his listener in the very first sentence of the novel about the alleged sinking of the *Montréal*, a ship bound for Martinique, full of refugees seeking asylum from Nazi persecution.

As a result, the narrative unfolds the collective story of refugees seeking escape from the Nazis. Specifically, Seghers’ narrator—who is never named—tells his story and how he came to Marseille, and how he came into possession of a

Weidel's papers, an author who had committed suicide when the Germans occupied Paris in June 1940. In May 1968 Seghers wrote in a letter that "[n]iemand denkt bei dem recht abstrakten Buch *Transit* an wirklich lebende Menschen, aber ich weiß und einige Freunde wissen es, daß der geheimnisvolle tote Schriftsteller, der nie auftaucht, weil er tot ist, etwas zu tun hat mit Ernst Weiss. Da stimmt die reine Tatsache: Er hat sich das Leben genommen beim Einzug der Deutschen in Paris in der Rue de Vaugirard."³⁸ In his attempt to give the papers to the Mexican Consulate, the narrator's identity becomes confused with Weidel and follows him when he goes to Marseille. In Marseille, the narrator meets and becomes enraptured with Marie, Weidel's widow, who tirelessly searches the harbor for her dead husband, based on the rumors that people have seen him alive. The narrator does not tell Marie that her husband is dead and tries instead, unbeknownst to her, to use his mistaken identity to help her receive transit across the sea.

As in *Heart of Darkness*, the waterscapes trump the city topography. The narrative begins initially in the city Paris, but then changes to Marseille, and the narrator oscillates between describing a bustling modern city and a pre-modern harbor town. *Transit* compares to *Heart of Darkness* in that Seghers drew stark differences between two types of cities, but her topographical paradigms differ from Conrad. While Conrad used his waterscapes to comment morally on the general rise of the imperialist city, Seghers focused on a *specific* waterscape and its history. Subsequently, her topography becomes actively charged as a mapped out monument to a particular present and past. J. Hillis Miller referred to this phenomenon of topographical writing when he argued that "topography is not a pre-existing thing in

itself. It is made into a landscape, that is, into a humanly meaningful space, by the living that takes place within it. This transforms it both materially, as by names, and spiritually, as by the ascription of some collective value to this or that spot.”³⁹

Instead of delving into the degenerative nature of capitalist urbanism in general, Seghers contrasted the particular urban setting of Paris with the harbor-town of Marseille, a harbor situated on the very Mediterranean sea that (Conrad’s) Africa connects to. Contrary to Conrad however, Seghers used less of topographical waterscapes in *Transit* and incorporated them as they connect to an older version of a city, thus creating a tighter seam between the two areas, rather than a stark contrast between the Conradian urban gloom and the jungle. Still, in comparison to Conrad, Seghers used urbanity in *Transit* to a greater extent than Conrad did in *Heart of Darkness*, but her privileging of the harbor town had less to do with metaphors and symbolism and more to do with a conscious attempt to preserve a moment of crisis within history.⁴⁰

The city in *Transit*—in this case Paris—takes on a greater role than it does in *Heart of Darkness*. The German army had already occupied Paris by June 1940, forcing Seghers and her family to flee to an unoccupied zone.⁴¹ While the similarities between Seghers’ personal experiences and the narrator’s fictional ones have been documented, less devotion has been given to the description of Paris as it compares to other modernist descriptions of urban centers. In this text Paris is the center of deadness, on which a Conradian gloom rests. The city is crowded and the frenetic pace of modernity coupled with the desperate anxiety caused by the Nazi presence floods the narrator’s senses, leaving him brooding and emotionless (13). The “zwei

alte Zeitungsverkäuferinnen” (15) selling newspapers match up to the two knitting women in *Heart of Darkness*. They signify urban emptiness and the quest for gain and compound the narrator’s loneliness in their “uralten gegenseitigen Haß” that reigns in the essence of business— trying to sell more, earn more, and outdo (and scam) the competition (15). The narrator does not describe a brooding gloom, based on economic gain, but instead looks to the historical cityscape markers and depicts (or documents) the excessive amount of swastika flags which cover the city. He labels the city as infected with *cafard*, which is “nichts als Langeweile, eine gottlose Leere, den Cafard Zuweilen gluckst es in einer großen Pfütze, weil es inwendig noch ein Loch gibt, eine etwas tiefere Pfütze. So gluckste in mir der Cafard. Und als ich die riesige Hakenkreuzfahne sah, auf dem Place de la Concorde, da kroch ich ins Dunkel der Metro” (25). Similar to *Heart of Darkness*’ “whited sepulchre,” Paris has turned from a space of delightful mystery (one which the narrator has admitted to enjoying in the past) to an immeasurable pit of darkness and death.

What differs, however, is the reason behind the boredom. For Conrad, the deadness of a city stemmed from rotting imperialism. For Seghers, it stemmed from Nazi persecution. Akin to Simmel’s assessment of the city, nervous stimulation and subsequent numbness certainly applies to Seghers’ Paris, but Seghers attributed this particular urban entropy to the reality of the Nazi occupation, and the narrator often follows a city image with a reference to the oppression by the Germans. The narrator comments that all “diese alten, schönen Städte wimmelten von verwilderten Menschen,” but the energy has changed to fear as a “unermüdliche Schar von Beamten war Tag und Nacht unterwegs wie Hundefänger, um verdächtige Menschen

aus den durchziehenden Haufen herauszufangen” (37). Other images include the two old women arguing which is followed by two Nazi guards joking about a young girl’s interrogation and the loss of her husband. The Nazi presence creates an anxiety which results in bitterness and deadly paranoia: Weidel’s suicide, the hotel receptionist’s fear of being found in illegal possession of Weidel’s papers, and even the Binnet’s annoyance with the narrator for not getting a bread ration card all amplify a new form of modernist anxiety, but one that connects to an exclusive historical urbanscape, since these stimuli add to and compound the already existing nervousness of the big city. Just as Conrad became disillusioned with the exploitation of Africa, Seghers was deeply concerned about the German/Italian fascist expansion: By 1940, it included Austria and Czechoslovakia (1938), Poland (1939), as well as Belgium, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands (1940). Unlike Conrad’s illustration of the city as a timeless place for the quest of wealth, *Transit*’s Paris topography—as observed by the narrator—amplifies the already existing system of entropy that becomes the city when plagued by a specific nation’s quest for wealth and dominance.⁴²

Despite Seghers incorporation of urban themes, waterscapes still frame the tale from the beginning and thus contrast with the city from the opening of the novel. Similar to Marlow’s resting on a ship when he begins his tale, the narrator of *Transit* invites his audience to focus not on the city, but on the old sea port: “Was möchten Sie am liebsten vor sich sehen? Wie man die Pizza bäckt auf dem offenen Feuer? Dann setzen Sie sich neben mich. – Den alten Hafen? – Dann besser mir gegenüber. Sie können die Sonne untergehen sehen hinter dem Fort St. Nicolas. Das wird Sie

sicher nicht langweilen.” (5). The narrator is sitting in a café in the old harbor of Marseille and is apart from the movement of the metropolis, much like the narrator in *Heart of Darkness*. In fact, just as *Heart of Darkness* opens with the waiting *Nellie*, the narrator in *Transit* begins with another type of waiting for another type of ship: He seeks news about Marie’s ship, the *Montréal*, that “soll untergegangen sein zwischen Dakar und Martinique. Auf eine Mine gelaufen” (5). Unlike *Heart of Darkness*, in which water functions metaphorically and provides an unattached topography for direct reflection and illumination—the characters are, after all, sitting on a ship—the sea in *Transit* functions as a focal point for the gaze and as an object of reference and desire to return to for reflection for the narrator and the unidentified, silent listener. The sea and the ship are not merely places to reflect on history, but they also perform a political function—they are possibly the only (and deadly) means of escape from Europe. The *Montréal* and all the ships in *Transit* take on a greater sense of urgency than rugged tin-pot steamers. These ships—“eine schwache Hoffnung” (69), as the narrator points out are burdened with refugees, hunted through all the oceans and are never received in the ports—they are burned at the high sea before the anchor is allowed to settle because the passenger’s papers have expired (5). Thus, when the narrator first enters Marseille and he sees the harbor town and the shore, the effect, he says, calms him (41). The “calm” cannot be construed as the same “serenity” the passengers experience on the *Nellie* as they leave London. While Conrad warned against the horror of humanity, Seghers’ narrator makes it clear that it seemed as if death “sei seinerseits auf der Flucht” (70). As a result, the Mediterranean harbor in *Transit* provides a broader perspective than one focused on

the individual impressions that stem from an urban reach. The perspective of the sea and Marseille certainly lulls the nervous tension exacerbated by the city, but its focused insight is always tinged with a political urgency.

The shift of focus away from a modern city beginning already from the opening line centering on the *Montréal* offers the harbor as an older and different type of ordering principle in terms of observing human relations. Guiding the narrative perspective away from the mesmerizing lure of the fire in the very beginning of the narrative, the focus on the harbor opens up the possibility to watch and attend to the numerous lives (personal and public) interacting with each other, without succumbing to the individual anonymity and threat of alienation that the city poses, or becoming lost in the city's flood of fleeting stimuli. Just as urban historian Lewis Mumford in his *The Culture of Cities* (1938) asserted that a city fails as “an integrated social relationship” in which it should be unique in vitality and plurality that is ordered and cohesive,⁴³ Seghers' harbor shows that the modern world has failed to reach its vital potential and results in containers for urban and political anxiety. Yet, the stage of this particular harbor town concretizes a moment in time, particularly one that can get lost and compounded into an overarching crisis. Helen Fehervary describes Seghers' narrative angle as an “epic-pictorial sweep,” or an attempt to observe a presence of an older pattern of traffic between persons.⁴⁴ The focus on the sea in *Transit* reconstitutes the spotlight on the integrated social relationship meant for the ideal city, but it also makes a particular moment durable—experiential time is fleshed out into a substantive stage. While the identity of the listener in *Transit* is unclear, it is certainly obvious that s/he is familiar with the refugee situation. The narrator

continually refers to his/her knowledge of the countless amounts of émigré stories that must be “boring,” but still insists on the listener hearing the full tale. Much like Marlow’s impulse, the narrator in *Transit* insists on telling everything “von Anfang bis zu Ende” (6), so that the listener can also become aware of the social situation in this timescape, and the all too real and tangible possibility that the ship was “inzwischen gekapert . . . oder nach Dakar zurückbeordert. Dann schmoren eben die Passagiere in einem Lager am Rande der Sahara” (5). Through the waterscape, an urgent human and political moment becomes vitally vivid.

It is also interesting to note that the water’s role in focalizing perception and reflection offers a different type of observation than the one usually ascribed to the visual of modernism. Critic Ute Luckhardt writes that the eye becomes the organ for modernity.⁴⁵ She argues that impressions first gain orientation through the eye, and when combined with the city (or in her example, the train) impressions are fleeting and superficial: “Modern vision is determined by the moment, by the fleeting succession of the present, where the soul-revealing past is seen in the moment.”⁴⁶ In contrast to the observations from the window of the train in a city to a café—such as the one in *Transit*—where the listener and narrator can watch the sunset from beginning to end, the eye in the café focuses for a longer period of time on the interactions between people, including those fleeing from, resisting, and living with the Nazi threat.

The location of the café where the sunset can be watched is situated behind a fort that was erected by Louis XIV to discourage further manifestations of resistance by the inhabitants of this harbor town against royal absolutism. Seghers wrote

Marseille in that she did not emphasize a modern city and the life streaming out of it, but included history as she observed the life of the past and present simultaneously. As a result, she continually called attention to the harbor as a life-force of its own. Marseille was not only a town that resisted tyranny in the past, but continues to do so in this particular present. Seghers placed her story in a location that has always had a mnemonic power: it has consistently had an active role in resistance movements, and unlike Paris, Marseille was not occupied immediately by the Nazis.⁴⁷ Thus, it is no surprise that in the end the narrator articulates he will remain close to Marseille: “Das Dorf liegt nicht weit vom Meer an einem Ausläufer der Berge. Ich bin jetzt ein paar Wochen dort. Mir kommen sie wie Jahre vor, so schwer wiegt die Stille” (278-9). And should the Nazis invade Marseille, the narrator means to participate in the resistance. Just as the river in *Heart of Darkness* washes away the land messiness and enables Marlow to point out idealized relations of humanity in the midst of the dark places in the earth, the harbor and sea in *Transit* offer an insight to a purer and more elemental purpose of life, despite the fact that it weighed down with awareness. Seghers insistence on guiding the perspective away from the fleeting impressions of city life to the steady perspective of the sea, as well as the history of the harbor town restores an epic objectivity in an emotionally-ridden timescape.

Moreover, the narrator in *Transit* walks the tightrope between desiring on the one hand to succumb to the anonymity of city and on the other hand giving to the focalizing and dazzling power of the sea, or in this case the harbor town of Marseille as a means to reflect on his existence and humanity. While the anonymous narrator in *Heart of Darkness* is affiliated with a group of business men, specifically interested in

mercantile profits, and many of the characters (marginal and main) feel the modern urban pulse, the main narrator Marlow “followed the sea”(Conrad 9), and stands outside of the city. Thus, Marlow uses the sea and observes from the outside (the urbanscape) and looks in. The narrator in *Transit*, however, neither admits to being an outsider nor a sailor, nor does his self correspond with that of the business world. Except for the end when the narrator affirms that he is “durch und durch Städter” (Seghers 278), the narrator’s past eludes the tale completely, apart from his brief narrative about his flight from two concentration camps. But the narrator does reveal his initial distaste of the sea (and distance from Marlow the seaman) when he explains how he had “doch das Meer gehaßt auf den Docks! Es war mir unbarmherzig erschienen in seiner unzugänglichen, seiner unmenschlichen Öde (43).” Though the narrator’s dislike could have arisen from his forced work in a French concentration camp near Rouen in which he had to load English munitions ships,⁴⁸ the narrator was now enchanted and comforted with “eben dieses unmenschliche Leere und Öde, in ihrer Spurlosigkeit, ihrer Unbefleckbarkeit” (43). The sea becomes an extension and reflection of his desire to escape the “zerrüttete und besudelte” Europe (43). Walking along the harbor’s Corsican quarter, the narrator becomes captivated by the idea that persons from Africa, Madagascar, and Corsica, in addition to merchants, seafarers, and even George Binnet’s (the narrator’s friend’s) African mistress all mesh together and create a vital and cohesive social relationship. Like Mumford’s ideal meant for the city, this old harbor—swathed in faint light by the sunset behind Fort Saint Nicolas, created a glow, and offers hope for a refugee in the midst of misery and exhaustion.

Still, the narrator does not remain lost in the enchantment or promise of the harbor. When the narrator comes to George's apartment, George's mistress does not share the narrator's excitement of arrival, and he was disappointed that George himself was working and "[führten] ein gewöhnliches Leben" (45). The harbor is not without its frustration. The narrator explains that he had imagined that Marseille "hätte mir schon ihr Herz geöffnet, wie ich ihr meines. Sie lasse mich auch gleich am ersten Abend in sich herein, und ihre Menschen gäben mir Obdach." (44). The narrator's illusion of an idyll is shattered and the harbor, though a stage for particular human relations, does not allow the narrator to settle and lose himself in illusory and escapist reflection. Like Marlow in his rootlessness and penchant to wander, the narrator has to continue to wander the harbor, visit various stations, and have various encounters with other refugees.⁴⁹

In terms of a more specific modern persona, the narrator has essences ascribed to the flâneur, whose topographical realm resides within the city. In his "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century," Walter Benjamin investigated Paris as a classical location for the flâneur.⁵⁰ He defined the term as an urban observer who searches for asylum within a crowd: "The flâneur still stands at the threshold—of the metropolis as of the middle class. Neither of them has him in its power yet. In neither of them is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd. . . . In it, the city becomes a landscape, a cozy room."⁵¹ The narrator in *Transit* often wanders the streets in Paris, and would stay in Paris if he did not have to hide from the Nazis: "Ich hatte auf einmal nicht die geringste Lust mehr, mich in Paris zu verkriechen. Ich stellte mir das unbesetzte Gebiet verwildert und unübersichtlich vor, ein Durcheinander, in dem sich ein

Mensch wie ich, wenn er wollte, verlieren konnte.” (33). Because of the occupation, the narrator is forced to leave his milieu and search for asylum that leads him to the harbor town.

Yet, before he leaves Paris, he visits the Mexican Consulate one more time in hopes to deliver Weidel’s belongings. As he leaves, he describes the impact the crowd has on him: “Wie ich zum letztenmal durch diese Menge ging, regte sich alles in mir, was imstande ist, mit den anderen zu hoffen und zu leiden, und jener Teil meines Ichs duckt sich, der aus der Verlassenheit eine Art von kühnem Genuß macht und aus den eigenen und fremden Leiden nur Abenteuer.” (34). The crowd of refugees in front of the consulate becomes an energy that attracts the narrator. As Benjamin put it, it becomes the veil for the narrator that “beckons to the flâneur as phantasmagoria.”⁵² And when Seghers’ narrator enters Marseille, the streets still appeal to him: “Ich zottelte wenige Minuten später mit dem Handkoffer über die Cannebière. Meistens ist man enttäuscht von Straßen, von denen man viel gehört hat. Ich aber, ich war nicht enttäuscht. Ich lief mit der Menge herunter im Wind, der Licht und Schauer über uns trieb in rascher Folge” (42). The main (and crucial) difference between the Benjaminian flâneur and Seghers’ narrator, however, is that Seghers’ narrator feels inevitably pulled to a certain group in this particular timescape—the refugees. Though the narrator’s subject does not compare to Baudelaire’s lyric urban poetry—his flâneuresque gaze is similar to Benjamin’s assessment in that the result is not a “hymn to the homeland,” but an allegory that “conceals behind a mitigating nimbus the coming desolation of the big city.”⁵³ It is no coincidence, then, that Seghers’ narrator asserts his intention in the end to join the

French resistance. His *flânerie*—his “subject,” observations, and constant walking—reveals not the “coming desolation of the big city,” but the impending desolation incurred by fascism.

Seghers also manipulated the *flâneur*’s association with a metropolis. Though the narrator has essences of the *flâneur*, when he leaves Paris, he subsequently becomes a *flâneur* without a metropolis. Marseille is certainly a city, and similar to the enchantment of the large metropolis for the *flâneur*, the harbor conducts the narrator, in Benjamin’s words, “into a vanished time. For him, every street is precipitous. It leads downward—if not to the mythical mothers, then into a past that can be all the more spellbinding because it is not his own, not private In the asphalt over which he passes, his steps awaken a surprising resonance.”⁵⁴ When the narrator enters Marseille, it is as if he enters an older and more ancient past: He saunters *down* the Cannebière and seeks out his friend George; he became spellbound as the sun set *behind* Fort Saint-Nicolas. And finally, he becomes mesmerized as he walked amidst the people crowding the stores: “Die Menschen drängten sich in den Bazaren und in den Straßenmärkten. Es war schon dämmrig in diesen Höhlen von Gassen, und um so starker glühte das Obst in Rot und Gold” (43). He searches for the source of the fruit aroma and rests while gazing at the ocean. Unlike his observations in Paris, the narrator’s gaze sees something more substantial and valuable and indeed captivating about Marseille that he does not witness in Nazi-occupied Paris—it is through his *flânerie* and observation of the harbor that this particular present moment emits another far-off time and place.⁵⁵ In the end, after the narrator explains that he will join the resistance, he likens his reasons to

something concrete and rooted: “Wenn man auf einem vertrauten Boden verblutet, wächst etwas dort von einem weiter, wie von Sträuchern und Bäumen, die man zu roden versucht” (279). The metropolis certainly offered the same dialectic of enchantment for Benjamin’s Baudelaire, but the urban crowds of the nineteenth century that fueled the flâneur’s observations cannot exist when the urgent impulse necessitates emigration. In other words, the timescape necessitates the change of flânerie. The harbor allows for a primacy of vision that ultimately orders and processes the co-existing urgent scramble to get transit, and the social topography that is inherent to the flâneur must be altered in this tale—in a tale meant to describe “the indescribable,”⁵⁶ Seghers’ narrator cannot observe the typical urban life, but has to investigate the entirely new experience of life in 1940.

Despite his attraction to a different type of topography that is natural to the flâneur, the narrator is still unsure of what to do and how to process the surreal nature of his topography: “Alles war auf der Flucht, alles war nur vorübergehend, aber wir wußten noch nicht, ob dieser Zustand bis morgen dauern würde, oder noch ein paar Wochen, oder Jahre, oder gar unser ganzes Leben” (39). Yet, he does not give up his flâneur-like qualities. In Marseille, the narrator still observes the crowd of refugees from the café, he walks through the harbor streets, and like the unattached flâneur of the city who stands at the margins, the narrator asserts that as he navigates this particular crowd, he was careful not to get enmeshed in it: “Ich sprang vorsichtig über die Netze weg” (270). In this text, the wanderer-flâneur of *Transit* desires to be strictly an observer, who, unlike those around him, prefers to stay rather than leave—he is constantly seeking to stay on the margins. Unlike Marlow who initially had a

passion to get involved in the industry, “as a snake would [fascinate] a bird—a silly little bird” (Conrad 12), the narrator- flâneur in *Transit* hesitates to get involved within the affairs of those around him. The text sets up a contrast between the narrator-flâneur of the metropolis—an urban outsider with a distant objectivity—and an observer who has to adapt and observe a different type of crowd, whose “phantasmagoria . . . [is] to read from the faces the profession, the ancestry, the character.”⁵⁷ Thus, the narrator has to witness the nursing of “einem verschrumpften Kind” (Seghers 36) and a young girl taken away from her people because she did not have proper identification papers (38).

The desire to be apart from the crowd, to the extent of having a blasé and reluctant attitude, can be attributed to the flâneur. Seghers conferred this attitude on her narrator at the beginning of tale. The narrator complains:

Die Gesichter der Menschen, die durch die Drehtür hereinkamen, waren gespannt von Wind und von Unrast. Kein Mensch bekümmerte sich um die Sonne über dem Meer, um die Zinnen der Kirche St. Victor, um die Netze, die auf der ganzen Länge des Hafendamms zum Trocknen lagen. Sie schwatzen alle unaufhörlich von ihren Transits, von ihren abgelaufenen Pässen, von Dreimeilenzonen und Dollarkursen, von Visen de Sortie und immer wieder von Transit. Ich wollte aufstehen und fortgehen. Ich ekelte mich (88).

Again, what differs from the Baudelaire flâneur mode is that the “frantic crowd” of this tale does not wear the mask of the modern metropolis, analogous to the definition provided by Simmel and company. Rather, it is the refugees who create the sense of nervousness: “Alles war auf der Flucht, alles war nur vorübergehend” (58). The topographical observations by the narrator that cue the church, the sun, and the harbor nets solidify once again the cacophony of a particular moment in time: the slower-

paced rhythm and pictorial images create a topography that reverberates not with the modern nervous tension as defined by social critic Hermann Bahr, but with a sense of epic urgency related to a specific time in history.⁵⁸

Consequently, the narrator's revulsions do not go unchecked. One of the narrator's first encounters is with an old and unknown refugee who quickly admonishes his flânerie as impotent: "Junger Mensch! Sie kommen hierher, fast ohne Gepäck, allein, ohne Ziel" (47). Like Marlow, who admits that he did not see "the real significance at once" (Conrad 24), the narrator in *Transit* dismisses or is reluctant to acknowledge the gravity of the historical situation, and he has to learn to shed his flânerie and become an active agent. Erika Haas correctly terms this quest as a search for personal identity.⁵⁹ The search for consciousness (or identity) differs from Marlow's, or even Kurtz's individual quest for autonomy and recognition, however. In fact, the search reverberates beyond an awakening of a personal consciousness or individual autonomy in a modern urban arena and instead expands out to an encompassing awareness. The narrator's namelessness and lack of identity point to the city's penchant to alienate its inhabitants from the natural vitality of life resonating around them. (Ultimately, the narrator takes an identity when he joins the resistance). Similar to the fleeting moments of the city, the narrator has a habit to be "immer unruhig . . . immer auf dem Sprung. Heute dieser Einfall, morgen ein anderer" (80). When he goes to the Mexican Consulate in Marseille and is told how to proceed to receive transit, his head "fing bei dieser Erklärung zu surren an wie ein Draht, den der Wind streicht. Mein eigenes Läutewerk, eine Art Selbstwarnung, die bei mir immer einsetzt, ehe mir selbst noch bewußt wird, daß ich vielleicht im Begriff

bin, etwas zu unternehmen, was mein augenblickliches Leben zerstören kann, ja zerstören soll" (57). The city may be the arena for the individual or unattached flâneur, but the experience of the Old Harbor shows a shift from a (selfish) inward sight—to an awareness of a larger, crowded and critical consciousness. The Old Harbor functions not as a modern arena but as a focalizer, whose essence ripples out and gives flesh and density to blank anonymity. It does not become a mere metaphor for the 1940s refugee situation, but rather becomes an extension of history in which the narrative provides shape and continuity.

As a focalizer, the sea and the harbor town function as an awakening mechanism, engaging the narrator's gradual awareness of his role and change from being a passive flâneur to a man of action.⁶⁰ In chapter two, after the elderly chapel music director from Prague admonishes the narrator for not having a plan of action, the old man outlines to the narrator the numerous physical steps needed to board a ship and emphasizes the hurdles of the émigrés. Though the conversation bores the narrator, it provides him the structure needed to move initially from the urban observer to finding agency and purpose within a larger social context. After the conversation with the old man in Marseille, the narrator feels that he was "auf einem Schiff" and dreams that he left the briefcase of the dead writer Weidel somewhere and he had to search for it "an den unsinnigsten Orten, . . . auf den Docks in der Normandie. Da stand der Handkoffer auf einem Laufsteg, die Flieger stießen en pique herunter, ich rannte noch einmal zurück in Todesangst" (51). The use of the harbor and the ship underscores his estrangement from his comfortable urban element. Still, the estrangement does not increase his motivation to be enmeshed

politically “in the nets.” In her open exchange of letters with Georg Lukács (1938/39), Seghers emphasized that the “present reality, with its crises, wars, etc. must thus first be endured, it must be looked in the face, and secondly it must be portrayed.”⁶¹ While Seghers was discussing with Lukács his definition of realism, her attempt to connect the “immediacy of basic experience” with a larger context (in this case the artistic process) aptly illustrates the struggle of the *Transit* narrator with his passive flânerie.⁶² He must first understand and endure the frustrating paralysis that the émigrés experienced in their attempt to secure transit as they try to escape, before he can dismiss their stories as boring. After his dream in chapter two, he wakes up suddenly and walks around in the harbor, ultimately ending up at the Mexican Consulate, thus beginning his experience as an active émigré, rather than a man who simply travels from place to place. The visual cues of the harbor in his dream and the harbor streets in which he walks interfere with his attempt to sink and remain in an isolated and unattached reverie, where he can stay “gern allein,” undisturbed by other tales (45). The harbor gives density to the fear of the historical situation—he is not alone on his dream ship and he walks the harbor in the company of women, who are also seeking the consulate. Even in the end, after Marie leaves, the narrator, despite his claim to be a “Städter” will remain near the ocean and throw his lot in with the people of Marseille (278). The tangible vitality of modern life, and particularly the narrator’s life, hinges not on the city, but on the harbor.⁶³

Moreover, it is interesting to compare the narrator’s dream in *Transit* with Marlow’s dream in *Heart of Darkness*. Marlow’s idealism or insights happen on the steamer and came “in the shape of an unrestful and noisy dream remembered with

wonder amongst the overwhelming realities of this strange world of plants and water and silence” (Conrad 36). Like Marlow’s dream, the narrator’s dream in *Transit* gives him a sense of urgency that prods him to move. Just as Marlow must confront the brutalities of the treatment to the savages, the narrator in *Transit* must witness the return of Spanish Republicans as they sit in the harbor, because the French police forced their return and arrested all the men, capable to fight. Though the narrator does not have a plan or purpose, the presence of the ship and being on the ship in his dream reflects the nightmarish reality of this strange world of émigrés, and encapsulates the hope, frustration, and fear that the ship embodies. Like Marlow’s trip up the river, the narrator’s experiences at the Mediterranean harbor change his ambivalence to a more active presence.

Weidel’s widow Marie, however, is the ultimate figure that shifts the narrator’s role from that of flâneur to an active agent (or a producer of visas and transits). She is ultimately responsible for his decision to become a resistance fighter and for his insistence on telling his tale (in the vein of Marlow). The narrator in *Transit* functions as a sociologist in the context that he sometimes strolls the city, but at other times he is a detective, or a decipherer of urban and visual texts that ultimately trickle back to the sea. Many of his walks include a search for Marie, who is in turn searching for her dead husband. Though the pattern is akin to the myth of Andromache and her devotion to her slain husband Hector,⁶⁴ walking and observing the city ultimately guides the narrator towards the seascape and awakens him out of his flânerie. The sea transforms the narrator from an inactive and observant flâneur who is becoming epically conscious in this tenuous topography. While sitting in the

café, the narrator sees Marie and walks after her, only to come to terms with the frustration and absurdity of the refugee's urgency (but inability) to leave:

Sie lief aber kreuz und quer durch die vielen Gassen zwischen dem Cours Belsunce und dem Boulevard d'Athènes. . . . Sie lief in das Gassengewirr hinein hinter dem Alten Hafen. . . . Sie lief die Treppe hinauf, die zum Meer führt . . . Ich sah einen Augenblick lang hinunter auf das nächtliche Meer. . . . Zwischen Molen und Hangars gab es einzelne Flächen Wasser, etwas heller als der Himmel. Von der äußersten, mit einem Leuchtturm besteckten Spitze der Corniche bis zur linken Mole der Joliette lief dünn und unscheinbar, nur wahrnehmbar durch die größere Helligkeit des Wassers, jene Linie, die unversehrbar war und unerreichbar, die keine Abgrenzung war, sondern sich allem entzieht (Seghers 107-8).

The sea and the harbor mesmerize the narrator and force him to recall the urgent and frustrating immediacy of the present. Akin to the “luminosity” that Marlow speaks of in *Heart of Darkness*, the sea reflects clarity of frustration that the land or maze of streets fragments and makes messy. Enveloped by boundaries, the city encloses and traps, while the sea reveals and emancipates the boundaries—it stands for the liberty that is within grasp, but almost impossible to attain.

On the one hand the narrator continually attempts to distance himself from the impact of the water and its symbol as a “Transitärleben” (165) by coaxing Marie to look away from the sea and into the open fire in the pizzeria (168), but on the other hand Marie repeats to the narrator and to others that they both belong to this transient existence. Each time the narrator tries to walk with Marie through the maze of the harbor streets, the streets do not remain entangled with each other as they would in the city. Instead, they always empty into the sea and the narrator has to grapple with the impenetrability of the ocean (and its eerie comparison to the helplessness of the refugees). While strolling the harbor one last time before Marie sails, the narrator

finally distinguishes between the visual cues of the immediate present and transcends to an understanding of an epic permanency: “Die Pizzabäckerin . . . hatte immer auf diesem Hügel am Meer auf ihrem uralten Gerät die Pizza gebacken, als andere Völker dahergezogen waren, von denen man heute nichts mehr weiß und sie wird auch immer noch Pizza backen, wenn andere Völker kommen” (271). Despite its inability to be mapped out, the sea still peers out and reveals in a concrete image a sense of vital permanency that is different to the dead city, or the time-specific Paris, decorated with Nazi flags and teeming with an “age-old hatred.” It is significant, then, that while the narrator tries to get Marie to look into the fire, after this experience, he gives his listener a choice, but ultimately recommends the broader gaze out towards the harbor. The sea’s constancy, along with the people that flock to it, gives the narrator the concrete transience that he is searching for.

Next to the mappable urban geography of Paris, *Transit* retreats from the city and charts the port and the sea. In doing so, Seghers fleshed out modernist anxieties that are not burdened with the tensions connected to the city. The stage of the older city at the sea emphasizes humanity in a way that the city cannot. The flâneur—at least in the vein of Baudelaire—typically renders the city poetically as an aesthetic object, but Seghers’ narrator does not use his observations to fuel poetry, or create art. Instead, she used a type of flâneur, a signifier of the city, to go beyond, in Frisby’s words, the “modern metropolis as the site of modern capitalist estrangement” in order to describe instead a vivacious space that existed before the rise of the city.⁶⁵ While most characters in *Transit* clamor towards Marseille in order to flee the Nazi occupation, the focus on the harbor illustrates a stable topography in the midst of the

modern instability—one that has been there before Marseille and one that will remain hereafter. Hans-Walter Albert writes: “Schon im 8. vorchristlichen Jahrhundert haben phönizische Seefahrer die sudfranzösische Küste angelaufen, im 6. Jahrhundert v. Chr. gründeten Griechen aus Phokäa jene Kolonie Massalia, als der die älteste Stadt Frankreichs hervorging.”⁶⁶ The port and its peoples are more permanent than the sense of doom emanating from the desperate crowd of the refugees. Thus, the aesthetic object that usually is the city for the flâneur, becomes the solid depiction of renewal and an epical cycle of life. In moments, such as the observation of the girl baking pizza, the permanency of the harbor town that existed before the city countervails and replaces the narrator’s previous “mob” description: “Auf einmal fand ich all das Geschwätz nicht mehr ekelhaft, sondern großartig. Es war uraltes Hafengeschwätz, so alt wie der Alte Haften selbst und noch älter. Wunderbarer uralter Hafentratsch, der nie verstummt ist, solange es ein Mittelländisches Meer gegeben hat, . . . auf der Flucht vor allen wirklichen und eingebildeten Schrecken der Erde” (88-9). The sea dispels the boredom, awakens and fleshes out a critical consciousness, engaging the narrator beyond his role as a passive observer.

Furthermore, the “age-old” element of Marseille contrasts with the “age-old” hatred that exists in Paris. Like *Heart of Darkness*, the sea does not by any means offer solid positive images in contrast to the city, but the images of the harbor echo with an elemental vigor that does not exist in Paris’ dark Metro or on the bench in the Latin Quarter. Incorporating the perspective of the flâneur, including the uncomfortable feeling in a modern urban landscape while maintaining an ability to observe the stimuli around him, the sea helps Seghers’ narrator to break out of the

dream-like world of the city and destroy its grasp, re-centering instead on the epic-historical trajectory of the sea.

The epical observations are not relegated solely to the narrator's observations, however. Similar to the haze in *Heart of Darkness*, the haze in *Transit* also illustrates a murky relationship between the present and a distant or epical past in that the heart of the story itself is cloaked in haze and uncertainty. Like *Heart of Darkness*, the identity of the unnamed narrator becomes cloaked in uncertainty and confusion. When the old man from Prague explains how to receive transit, he cannot determine the narrator's background: "Wenn Sie Jude sind, aber Sie sind ja keiner, nun, durch die Juden, wenn Sie Arier sind, nun, durch christliche Hilfe, wenn Sie gar nichts sind, gottlos, rot, nun dann in Gottes Namen durch Ihre Partei, durch Ihresgleichen" (48). The topographical haze in *Transit* differs from *Heart of Darkness*, however, in that it is not tied directly and exclusively to describing images of the Old Harbor in Marseille. Rather, the haze that shrouds the Old Harbor also envelops the narrator's uncertain personal existence and reluctance to become enmeshed in the lives of the émigrés. In the beginning the narrator, unsure of his commitment to the future, describes it as "nebelig" (19). At first he desires to tell his tale of fleeing a concentration camp by "Nacht und Nebel," though he quickly realizes that this is not the experience relevant to this particular tale.⁶⁷ Hazy descriptions surface again when the narrator is hesitant as to his course of actions. When he decides to take Weidel's briefcase and papers—he walks through a dimly lit tobacco field (35); when he first sees Marie, the next day "war so grau wie das Kanonenboot, das immer noch am Alten Hafen lag" (93); when he realizes that he has wasted time in pursuing fleeing

physical pleasures with his French girlfriend Nadine, he says it was as if a “Windstoß auch in den Nebel meiner eigenen Verzauberung” (111), and finally when drinking with Heinz, a former comrade in a concentration camp, the narrator becomes angry that some “Teile meines Lebens waren mir klar, andere waren verdunkelt vom zarten, schwärzlich rotten Rosénebel” (147.) While Marlow’s haze can be connected to the difficulty of narrating an improbable or credible tale, the haze in *Transit* functions as a cloaking device, concretizing the narrator’s desire for isolation and apathy, but also adding density to the ambiguity of the future.

Haze does more than cloak the ambiguity of the narrator and the tale. Haze weighs down and adds a concrete gravity to the desperation of escape towards safety—one that exists in the present and has always existed in a distant, epical past. During an attempt to follow Marie, the narrator tries to escape a “tiefe Regendämmerung” (98) and enters a church. Attracted by churchgoers coming and going, he follows them down a flight of steps that leads beneath the church and finds himself in a smoky mass: the “dünne Geriesel vor unseren Gesichtern wurde zu zittrigem Wellenschlag” (99). The visual element of the smoke and the sound of the sea condense to materialize the narrator’s and the churchgoers’ suffocating emotions of “Feigheit und unsere Verlogenheit und unsere Todesangst” (99). Out of the smoky mass waft the biblical stories of countless dangers: “Ich bin dreimal gestäubt, einmal gesteinigt worden, dreimal hab ich Schiffbruch erlitten. Tag und Nacht zugebracht in der Tiefe des Meeres, ich bin in Gefahr gewesen durch Flüsse . . . Mörder . . . Juden . . . Heiden . . . Städte . . . Wüste . . . Meere . . . falsche Brüder” (99).⁶⁸

Most telling is when the narrator meets foreign mercenaries, displaying their medals and gambling in the fog. Opportunity for money and indifference for Hitler has lured them to Germany for work: “[S]o sonderbar war sein Gesicht verschandelt, daß ich mich vorbeugte, um zu erkennen, ob nur der Nebel vor meinen Augen seine Züge verqualmte, daß weder Mund noch Nase an der richtigen Stelle waren, und platt und breit gezogen” (61). Later when the narrator is again sitting in the café, the smoke clouds it as two men tell a story of how they cheated two concentration camp escapees by selling them a boat that “hatte ein Leck” (88), causing them to be arrested and sent to prison. Haze shrouds the narrator and others when disconnected from the urgency of this particular modern life, and disperses when he begins to order his role in this timescape differently. Unlike Conrad’s haze, haze is not a device used to move away from objectivity to subjectivity, but becomes a dense blanket, weighing down and adding visual gravity, ultimately allowing the narrator to become more objective and aware.

The haziest aspect of the tale is the fate of the ship on which Marie finally sails—the *Montréal*. Similar to the murky nature of the Thames River in *Heart of Darkness*, the certainty of the *Montréal*’s demise is also murky. The novel opens with the narrator relating the unconfirmed “rumor” that the ship went down. He even goes so far as to compare the *Montréal* to a ship of legends as well as to other ships that have sunk. And similar to the interchangeable banks of the Thames and of the Congo, the story of the *Montréal* becomes the story of the many refugees whose transits were frustrated. Just as the narrator later conjectures that the *Montréal* is a “Sagenschiff, ewig unterwegs, dem Fahrt und Untergang zeitlos anhaften” (280), the

man at the Mexican Consulate who confuses the narrator for Weidel asserts that everything revolves around “Phantom-Schiffe” (103). Even the concrete names of ships that appear (sparsely) throughout the narrative—the *República*, *Esperanza*, *Passionaria*—never sail and only become tangible in the émigré imagination.⁶⁹ Though the *Montréal* is specifically mentioned and frames the story, its fate becomes the narrative for all of the past and present refugees seeking transit. Cloaking the *Montréal* in myth and a continual haze illustrates not only the tenuous nature or chaos of the historical situation, but adds a dimension of concrete movement, unable to be anchored. Ironically, the ship’s phantom-like movement creates an eternal and durable stasis of hope.

Seghers’ use of haze compares more strongly to *Heart of Darkness* in her other works. Akin to Marlow’s journey into a topography of Africa and of man’s mind, the narrator in her *Der Ausflug der Toten Mädchen* (*The Excursion of the Dead Girls* [pub. 1946]) descends into a dream that wrestles with the loss of her friends and parents. Written after *Transit* and in response to the Holocaust, the text follows a narrator as she wanders the memory of her childhood in Germany. The narrative opens on the terrain of Mexico, yet like the setting aboard Conrad’s *Nellie*, the topography extends itself beyond the initial geography and points to the terrain of an uncertain timescape.

Similar to the haze that surrounds the sea, ship and town of Gravesend in *Heart of Darkness*, the Mexican village in *Der Ausflug* is enveloped in a haze: “Das Rancho lag, wie die Berge selbst, in flimmerigem Dunst, von dem ich nicht wußte, ob er aus Sonnenstaub bestand oder aus eigener Müdigkeit, die alles vernebelte (8).”⁷⁰

The uncertainty of the haze, coming from the geography or from individual exhaustion points to a topographical metaphor continually used by Conrad and Seghers. In contrast to a particular tangible space, the use of haze suggests the opposite of place naming—solidarity, durability and continuity are disrupted and displaced by discord, fragility, and disruption. Moreover, Conrad’s narrator makes note of the haze’s “brooding” in the sunshine and even Marlow notes the blinding and insufferable sun as he enters the inner station. The reference to the sun naturally plays upon the mythic idea of bearing truth and enlightenment. And indeed, when Marlow begins his tale or when he sees African natives suffering in chain gangs, the text points to the sun setting or bearing down upon Marlow. The setting reflects Marlow’s struggle with his belief in the “redeeming idea” next to the disillusionment of the enlightened progress in European culture, just as the sun reflects the narrator’s sadness and disappointment.

Analogous to *Transit*, in *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen*, the journey through the haze also leads to a concrete image of unbearable truth. Comparable to the narrator in *Transit* trying to understand the parts of his life that is the fog from the rosé, the narrator in *Der Ausflug* recognizes that while she is physically on the outskirts of a Mexican village, she is hardly ‘at home’ in the land in which she is an exile. The narrator in *Transit* describes his future as foggy, but the narrator in *Der Ausflug* uses similar terms such as “fragwürdig” (questionable) and “ungewiß” (uncertain). The metaphorical use of light in *Der Ausflug*, continually referenced in the spatial Mexican landscape by means of the hot sun and the seemingly burning trees eventually unravels the narrator’s memory. And the haze—whether it be the

landscape or a result of the narrator's fever, jettisons her back into a journey of the past or into the landscape of her psyche and her memory of Germany when she hears the name "Netty."⁷¹ Like Conrad's notion of fiction based on reality, Seghers' topography in *Ausflug* (a point that occurs again in *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* and in *Transit*) functions as a journey through history before World War I and II: she weaves in and out of various time perspectives reaching back to the time of the German empire before World War I during a school fieldtrip on the Rhine River and expanding to the present day catastrophe of World War II in her references to bombed-out houses. Each station of memory connected to the field trip that the narrator describes reveals its present reality in a bright sun, not allowing the narrator to idle in the romantic, idyllic and obscure haze that cloaks a nostalgic memory of a class trip. The late sun reveals the German villages in which troops will march; fire engulfs the narrator's schoolmate Marianne and the vision of her as a girl, and light disperses again the uncertain fog divulging the last truth that Netty cannot climb the stairs to reach her mother after the field trip, because the present reality of the mother's deportation to Poland becomes too much to cover up. The fog of the past, then, changes into the solid reality of the Mexican exile: "Ich wollte mich umsehen, doch blendete mich zuerst das überaus starke Licht aus dem Hoffenster" (31). Similar to moments in *Transit* when the fog disperses to illustrate clarity for the narrator, the moments of fog in *Der Ausflug* reveal the all-too-concrete reality of loss.

In comparison to Conrad, Seghers also superimposed topography of epic proportions on her concrete world. Erika Haas points to the concrete world of Seghers when she explains that Seghers' works in general order themselves around

definite, geographically fixed centers such as Austria, the Rhineland, Haiti, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, and Marseille.⁷² But like Conrad, Seghers' narrator in *Transit* often incorporates other myths and references a pre-history that had existed as long as people met at the harbor of Marseille—out of the haze he recognizes an older and more permanent history. Hans-Walter Albert has extensively documented the mythic elements of *Transit*: “Die mythologische Sicht ist durchaus keine schmückende Arabeske, keine allenfalls für Philologen interessante ästhetizistische Zutat. Nein, sie ist von entscheidener Bedeutung für das Verständnis des Romans.”⁷³ The wonder the narrator feels is akin to the enchantment when he first enters Marseille and becomes enthralled. The sea reveals a microcosm of permanency—an immortality in a mortal world.

No wonder that the narrator also places himself within a timeless epic context. Before the narrator heads toward Paris, he is almost captured by the Germans. He remembers that eluding them, his “Angst war völlig verflogen, das Hakenkreuz war mir ein Spuk, ich sah die mächtigsten Heere der Welt hinter meinem Gartenzaun aufmarschieren und abziehen, ich sah die frechsten Reiche zerfallen und junge und kühne sich aufrichten, ich sah die Herren der Welt hochkommen und verwesen, nur ich hatte unermeßlich viel Zeit zu leben” (12). Unlike a storyteller telling a fantastic tale, the narrator is not telling fiction, but is reacting against the forces of chaos in this present timescape by imbibing his tale with concrete experiences, despite their epic-like echo. The narrator asserts himself as the epic bard who does not narrate a heroic poem of a voyage. Instead, the harbor and its

penchant to draw a variety of peoples allows him to find renewal and shelter in the ever-connected relationship between the past and present.⁷⁴

Though the modern crisis is one in which the city threatens to swallow the individual, Seghers' *Transit* documents the existential threat that existed outside the city in Europe of the 1940s and branches into myth. In his *Work on Myth*, Hans Blumenberg suggests that myth should be interpreted "terminus aquo," or at the myth's point of departure: "If one turns from the professionally depicted terrors of the present and all the more of the future, to the past and to its past, one encounters . . . the absolutism of reality."⁷⁵ In other words, humanity creates myth in the face of the inconceivable. In the case of Seghers,' the haze—and its bridge back into a more timeless realm—keeps alive and fleshes out a fleeting past that is threatened by death. Like Marlow, the narrator retreats to harbor gossip and the epical possibility that Marie (and the other refugees) is (are) still alive. The epical side to *Transit* gives a solid and conceivable gravity to the knowledge that Marlow suggests is "too dark altogether" (Conrad 74) to grasp. Blumenberg puts it best when he states that the use of myth creates a "breathing space" for reality. Thus, both the narrator in *Transit*—whose name remains cloaked—and Marlow wrap their incomprehensible thoughts in the haze and adopt an epical mode for their story. Furthermore, the narrator in *Transit* and Marlow are both obsessed by elusive figures, and the topographies help give tissue to their obscurity. In *Transit*, Marie becomes a hazy shadow whose shade could materialize into "Fleisch und Blut" in front of the fire, and who still endlessly walks "die Straßem der Stadt ab. . . . nicht nur in dieser Stadt, sondern in allen Städten Europas, die ich kenne, selbst in den phantastischen Städten fremder

Erdteile” (Seghers 280). Marlow speaks it correspondingly when he describes Kurtz’s ghost-like presence: “I had a vision of him on the stretcher opening his mouth voraciously as if to devour all the earth with all of its mankind. He lived then before me, he lived as much as he had ever lived—a shadow insatiable of splendid appearances, of frightful realities, a shadow darker than the shadow of the night, and draped nobly in the folds of a gorgeous eloquence” (Conrad 72). The mythic-and-shadow quality of the two novels goes beyond despair and gives a living alternative to the modern city, providing a constant presence, a wholeness or epical weight in humanity in an otherwise potentially meaningless and destructive arena.⁷⁶

In his essay “Der Erzähler” (The Storyteller), Walter Benjamin argued that seamen and wandering figures make for the best storytellers: “Der Erzähler nimmt, was er erzählt, aus der Erfahrung; aus der eigenen oder berichteten. Und er macht es wiederum zur Erfahrung.”⁷⁷ Experience for Benjamin resonated far beyond curious happenings or daily events, otherwise it was akin to information dissemination or tendentious urban journalism. More precisely, Benjamin argued for stories that relate life-changing experiences which reveal “die epische Seite der Wahrheit.”⁷⁸ Whether the narrator is a flâneur or a seaman, both narrators in *Heart of Darkness* and *Transit* display the type of experience Benjamin asserted as crucial for storytelling. Unlike urban modernism where the self or the narrator seeks to define a sense of individualism, or where the individual gathered experience and stimuli, Seghers and Conrad complicated the levels of narration to offer a tale of life-changing experience. By framing their texts outside the topography of the city and using a harbor town or a sea engulfed by haze, both writers expanded into a different side of modernism and

reached out into the realm of myth and epic narration, or a narrative that incorporates fundamental aspects of the epic—the quest for survival and permanence. Put differently, Conrad and Seghers did not treat the individual as part of (urban) modernism where, according to Desmond Harding, the art is “of despair and pain; a dissonant, fragmented art that confronts meaninglessness, an art bred by the city where the scale of life dwarfs the individual and where each isolated person lives in bewilderment, shifting patterns of relationship with others, or in no discernable patterns at all.”⁷⁹ Rather, they incorporated Benjamin’s notion of narrating experience from mouth to mouth (Conrad to his audience on the ship and *Transit*’s narrator to his audience at the café) and broadened Harding’s general assessment of modernist texts, commenting on a despair and pain relevant to an encompassing crisis of modernity.

Yet in her quest to document the timescape, Seghers went further than naturalistic realism and enveloped her harbor with mythical overtones, looking for order out of the chaos. Both Conrad and Seghers used myth not only to enrich their topographies, but as a means to describe the modern world in terms of historical patterns. Seghers shows civilization as being nourished and rejuvenated by the sea at Marseille. Similarly, the *Nellie*—and the Thames on which it floats—plays a crucial role in placing imagination and linking the narrative to cultural, historical and social messages that resonate beyond Marlow’s tale.

Ultimately, *Transit* and *Heart of Darkness* become a quest for permanence. The sea, in its very nature defies strict topographical mapping and as an entity is the least integrated in the cosmos, but in contrast to the city that grows and changes, the

sea (and the ships that continue to sail it) remains constant. Although the city is constantly being built, razed, occupied, reclaimed and re-built, Seghers' point is that the sea provides the better metaphor for uncertainty of the modern world; thus, she (like Conrad) made old patterns known again to deal with the new anxieties. The topographies of *Heart of Darkness* and *Transit* stay crowded, and go beyond modernity by encompassing an entire past and present simultaneously. The boundless sea points to a permanent history of boundless events, thus giving modernism a permanency, not seen in the rapid tempo of the city. The sea is not a subject of entropy, but provides a modernist space, receptive for imagination, for life, and also for death.⁸⁰ Replete with its never-ending gossip and never-ending traffic, the Old Harbor of Marseille and the Thames slow down modernism and give it vitality, solidity, continuity, and durability that contrast to the paranoia, fleetingness, and anxiety of the city.

Notes

Unless otherwise noted, the translations are the author's.

¹ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, ed. Robert Kimbrough, 3rd ed. (New York: Norton, 1988) 7.

¹ Nicolas Tredel, ed., in his *Joseph Conrad: Heart of Darkness* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998) gives a history of criticism of the novel from 1899 to the 1990s.

² C.B. Cox, *Joseph Conrad: The Modern Imagination* (London: Dent, 1974) 47.

³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (*The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis [Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1968]) uses the term flesh to describe the visual element which results from the seer and what is seen: "To designate [flesh], we should need the old term 'element,' in the sense it was used to speak of water, air, earth, and fire, that is in the sense of a general thing, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea" (139).

⁴ In his *The Great Tradition: George Eliot; Henry James; Joseph Conrad* (London: Penguin, 1972) 201, F.R. Leavis writes about the 'great' English novelists and focused on Conrad's craft as significant because it leaves mystery.

⁵ Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, ed. David Frisby, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004).

⁶ Nicholas Spykman, *The Social Theory of Georg Simmel* (Hampshire: Gregg Revivals, 1992) 243.

⁷ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space 1880-1918* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1983) 133.

⁸ Edward Said, *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1966) 92.

⁹ Ian Watt in his *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1979) deals with impressionism and symbolism in Conrad's works.

¹⁰ See my introduction to a background of Hellerau, an example of a garden city, meant as an alternative to the city that has become tainted by modernity.

¹¹ Peter Firchow (*Envisioning Africa* [Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 2000]), elaborates further that this “*vision* must therefore be responded to primarily imaginatively and evaluated chiefly in aesthetic rather than sociological or ideological terms” (17).

¹² David Frisby, (*Cityscapes of Modernity* [Cambridge: Polity, 2001]) reiterates this point in terms of modernism when he argued that the “representation and reading of the modern metropolis manifested itself in crucial differences between modernist movements,” (6) such as fluctuating from an orderly utopia to a chaotic dystopia.

¹³ Kern 16.

¹⁴ Interestingly enough, the typescript shows a canceled reference after the description of the “whited sepulchre” to empty streets and boulevards, and when Marlow enters the company offices the typescript cancels an addition to the description of the room being “empty;” thus it reads as only being covered in “a dead silence” (13).

¹⁵ E.M. Forster, “Review of Joseph Conrad,” *Abinger Harvest* (New York, 1936).

¹⁶ See my reference in the introduction to Wolfgang Schivelbuech’s *Geschichte der Eisenbahnreise: Zur Industrialisierung von Raum und Zeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, (Frankfurt am Main: 1989).

¹⁷ Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction,” *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Vol 2. 6th ed.* (New York: Norton, 1993) 1924.

¹⁸ Ian Watt, “Impressionism and Symbolism in *Heart of Darkness*,” Rpt. in Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* 312.

¹⁹ Edward Said suggested that Marlow’s difficulty for direct narration has to do with the “price of experience [that] is not only exacted from the individual who undergoes it in fear and mystery, but also from the person whose task it is to collect it into intelligibility” (90).

²⁰ Hans Blumenberg, *Work on Myth*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge: MIT P, 1985) 126.

²¹ Eleazar M. Meletinsky, *The Poetics of Myth*, trans. by Guy Lanoue and Alexandre Sadetsky (New York: Routledge, 1998) 34.

²² Walter Benjamin, "Der Erzähler," *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977) 385.

²³ Cedric Watts, *Conrad's Heart of Darkness* (Milan: Mursia International, 1977) 2.

²⁴ Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 83-109.

²⁵In his *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957), Northrop Frye deals in depth with myth and archetypes as he attempted to develop an anthropology of literature, by establishing archetypes as the root for literary genres.

²⁶ Said 91.

²⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1972) 19.

²⁸ Michael Bell (*Literature, Modernism, and Myth*, [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997]) writes in his attempt to situate Conrad within modernism that "a novel about the real Africa might not have had the intense concentration on its inner theme which Conrad achieved. The light first had to be directed inwards (154)."

²⁹ It is important to note that in oriental myth, nirvana comes to those who believe that all events are nothing more than *maya*, or hazy dreams. See Leonard Orr and Ted Billy, eds, *A Joseph Conrad Companion* (Westport: Greenwood P, 1999) 72. Also see, "William Bysshe Stein: "The Lotus Posture and *Heart of Darkness*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 2 (1956-57): 167-70.

³⁰ Benjamin, "Der Erzähler" 386.

³¹ Richard Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1998) 14.

³² Robert Wilson, *Conrad's Mythology*, (Troy, New York: Whitston, 1987) 19.

³³ Joseph Conrad, *Notes and Life and Letters*, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1921) 39.

³⁴ Bell 11.

³⁵ Anna Seghers, *Transit*, ed. Schlenstedt (Berlin: Aufbau, 2001) 296.

³⁶ In a private letter to Dr. Müller-Salget, Seghers explained that shortly before beginning *Transit*, she had read Balzac and had the “naive Vorstellung, ich könnte ebenso über alle wichtigen Ausschnitte des Lebens, z.B. Widerstandskampf, Emigration, Flucht usw. Romane und Novellen schreiben” (*Transit* 291).

³⁷ Seghers, “Letter to F.C. Weiskopf” (March 2, 1941), cited in *Transit* 317.

³⁸ “Letter to Tamara Motylowa,” 16 May 1968, cited in Seghers, *Transit* 323. Ernst Weiss, a Czech-German writer who poisoned himself and slit his wrists in a bathtub in Paris when the Nazis invaded in June 1940, had written a novel entitled *Ich, der Augenzeuge* [I, the witness, 1939]. The novel is about a doctor who treated Adolf Hitler after World War I.

³⁹ J. Hills Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford: Stanford UP 1995) 2.

⁴⁰ This is not to say that Conrad’s Congo or Thames are not changed and made into a “humanly meaningful space,” but Seghers’ harbor does not become a double reflection of another far-off and distant continent. In *Heart of Darkness* we are made to believe that the Congo flows straight into the Thames and the broken-down and savage villages in Africa become an embodiment of London and Brussels. In *Transit*, however, Marseille, though its history reverberates onto an older history, remains Marseille and does not connect to another specific place.

⁴¹ While her husband László Radványi was interred in a camp in LeVernet in January 1940, Seghers and her family lived in an apartment in Paris-Bellevue till late May/early June 1940. At that time the German army was marching on Paris and Seghers and her two children fled to the south. They were turned back by the German army and spent the summer of 1940 in Paris. Seghers acknowledged she did live first in a vacated apartment, but then with various friends during that summer, when the family realized that they were being searched for by the Gestapo. In September the family illegally crossed into Vichy, a city that was not occupied by the Germans until 1942. 74-5, 90. (Frank Wagner, Ursula Emmerich, and Ruth Radvanyi, *Anna Seghers: Eine Biographie in Bildern* [Berlin: Aufbau, 1994]). Also see *Anna Seghers: Materialienbuch* (Darmstadt, 1977).

⁴² It is also interesting to note that in *The Arcades Project* [trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap P of Harvard UP, 1999)] Walter Benjamin

connected boredom to waiting: “We are bored when we don’t know what we are waiting from Boredom is the threshold to great deeds” (105) In terms of the narrator in *Transit*, reading the manuscript out of boredom becomes his first step into changing from a passive observer to an active participant.

⁴³ Cited in “What Is a City?” *The Lewis Mumford Reader*, ed. Donald L. Miller (New York: Pantheon, 1986) 104.

⁴⁴ Helen Fehervary, *Anna Seghers: The Mythic Dimension* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2001) 170. Also, she suggests that Seghers is presenting two types of mythical perspectives. She intimates that a view focused on the fire suggests an introspective look. Since the perspective shifts from the introspective to the broader one looking at the sea, this line of reasoning strengthens my argument of Seghers’ interest in the collective rather than the individual.

⁴⁵ Ute Luckhardt, “Aus dem Tempel der Sehnsucht,” *Georg Simmel und Georg Lukács: Wege in und aus der Moderne* (Butzbach-Griedel: Afra, 1994) 79-85.

⁴⁶ Luckhardt 81. She credits the idea to Gert Mattenklott, “Der übersinnliche Leib: Beiträge zur Metaphysik des Körpers” (Hamburg: Reinbek, 1982) 63.

⁴⁷ Unlike Paris that was occupied in June 1940, Marseille was not occupied by the German army until November 1942, and remained so until August 1944. Still, the town continued to be an active center of the French Resistance movement, which partly explains the German decision to dynamite the Panier district and the Old Port in 1943. Further destruction was caused by German mines in August 1944.

⁴⁸ See Seghers, *Transit* 8-11.

⁴⁹ The discussion of the narrator’s identity is an interesting one. Fehervary places *Transit* as a sequel to Seghers’ earlier novel *Das Siebte Kreuz* [*The Seventh Cross*] that describes Georg Heisler’s flight from a concentration camp to a Holland Steamer. But it is also interesting to compare the narrator to Odysseus. Hans-Walter Albert does so by comparing the narrator to him as Odysseus sat by the fire and told his tale to King Alkomus, without giving his name. (“Zeitgeschichte, Psychologie des Exiles und Mythos in Anna Seghers Roman *Transit*,” *Text und Kontext, Sonderreihe* 21 [1986] 11-

56). Seghers was obviously intrigued by the Odysseus motif in that in a later story “Die Drei Bäume” (The Three Trees, 1940), Seghers wrote about the homecoming of Odysseus specifically, when he proves to Penelope his identity by remembering that their house is centered on a bed hollowed out of a tree. I will deal with the mythic elements of *Transit* below.

⁵⁰ Like Seghers, Benjamin also fled to France and settled in Paris after 1933 until summer 1940. He was interned from mid-June to mid-August 1940 in the French camp in Lourdes, and in the second half of August he tried and failed in Marseille to get transit papers to the United States via Spain. After he obtained an American visa at the end of August, he set out with acquaintances to make his way by foot over the Pyrenees. When they reached Port-Bou on the Franco-Spanish border, they lacked French exit visas and were turned back. The chief of police informed him that they would turn him over to the Gestapo, but the group was allowed to stay the night in a hotel. That night, on September 25, Benjamin committed suicide with an overdose of morphine. Seghers wrote Benjamin’s story in *Transit* as a part of a conversation between two elder women that the narrator overhears, suggesting that transit only really happens when one is dead:

Was hatte denn dieser Mann für unermeßliche Hoffnungen an sein Reiseziel geknüpft, daß ihm die Rückfahrt unerträglich dünkte? Höllisch, unbewohnbar mußte ihm das Land erschienen sein, in dem wir alle noch steckten, in das man ihn zwingen wollte, zurückzukehren. Man hört ja wohl von solchen erzählen, die den Tod der Unfreiheit vorzogen. Doch war denn der Mann jetzt frei? - Ja, wenn es so wäre! Ein einziger Schuß, ein einziger Schlag gegen diese dünne, schmale Tür über deinen Brauen, und du wärst für immer daheim und willkommen (196).

⁵¹ Benjamin, *Arcades* 10. It should be noted that as Benjamin was working on the *Arcades Project*, he himself was in exile and under the threat of fascism.

⁵² Benjamin, *Arcades* 10.

⁵³ Benjamin, *Arcades* 10.

⁵⁴ Benjamin, *Arcades* 416.

⁵⁵ This echoes Benjamin when he writes: “We know that, in the course of flânerie, far-off times and places interpenetrate the landscape and the present moment” (*Arcades* 419).

⁵⁶ See above, note 38.

⁵⁷ Benjamin, *Arcades* 429.

⁵⁸ See my introduction, note 33.

⁵⁹ Erika Haas, “Dauer als Durchhalten der Person. Zur Identitätsproblematik in *Transit*,” *Anna Seghers: Materialienbuch*, (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1977) 82.

⁶⁰The notion of changing from passive to active could be also understood as an aspect of the flâneur. David Frisby investigates Benjamin’s concept of flânerie and associates it with *production*: “The flâneur can also be a producer, a producer of literary texts (including lyrical and prose poetry as in the case of Baudelaire), a producer of illustrative texts (including drawings and painting), a producer of narratives and reports, a producer of journalistic texts, a producer of sociological texts” (*Cityscapes* 29). The fact that the narrator eventually becomes enmeshed and helps Marie and Heinz get transits, in addition to becoming an active anti-fascist, speaks to a form of production.

⁶¹ Anna Seghers, “A Correspondence with Anna Seghers [1938/9] 171.” First published in *Internationale Literatur*, no.5, 1939.

⁶² Seghers, Correspondence 177.

⁶³ Throughout time, the sea has been intricately linked with natural vitality not found within the city. Lehan indicates the close connection between historical time and the harbor. Like the origins of the city in which the king resided within the city gates, the “harbor or marketplace provided the crossroads of the city, not only because it brought people together, but because ideas from different cultures were exchanged there, so that it energized and vitalized the city at the same time as made it rich (15).”

⁶⁴On this see Schlendstedt’s commentary in *Transit* 291. Also, Seghers, “Letter to a reader, 7 March 1960,” *Über Kunstwerk und Wirklichkeit*, vol. 4, *Ergänzungsband*, ed. Sigrid Bock (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1979) 160.

⁶⁵ Frisby, *Cityscapes* 4.

⁶⁶ Albert 26.

⁶⁷ Fehervary explains this comment when she compares Seghers' *Das Siebte Kreuz* with *Transit*. She reminds us that the tale of escaping from a concentration camp had already been told (168).

⁶⁸ This is not to say that Seghers only used haze to illustrate the ambiguous and paralyzing nature of escape. To a certain extent, she also used haze to critique (political) aspects of the desperation and hope of escape. An example includes the gloom that encases the woman "with a fancy hair-do" who had been denied a visa application and was spending all her money on wine and oysters (131).

⁶⁹ Schlenstedt noted that the ship's names referenced the Spanish Civil War. Translated from the Spanish, *Republica* and *Esperanza* mean republic and hope, and *Passionaria* refers to Dolores Ibarruri (1895-1989), an active communist during civil war who was named "La Passionaria" (295).

⁷⁰ Anna Seghers, *Der Ausflug der toten Mädchen* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1998).

⁷¹ Seghers, *Der Ausflug* 9.

⁷² Erika Haas, *Ideologie und Mythos: Studien zur Erzählstruktur und Sprache im Werk von Anna Seghers* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1975) 34.

⁷³ Albert 35.

⁷⁴ Thus, like Marlow's yarn-spinning, the method of storytelling in *Transit* wanders and is not what it initially appears to be. The narrator introduces his story by describing a pizza (rather than the Conradian kernel whose main subject is obscured and the meaning emanates around the kernel): "Die Pizza ist doch ein sonderbares Gebäck. Rund und bunt wie eine Torte. Man erwartet etwas Süßes, da beißt man auf Pfeffer. Man sieht sich das Ding näher an, da merkt man, daß es gar nicht mit Kirschen und Rosinen gespickt ist, sondern mit Paprika und Oliven" (4). *Transit's* story is not simply the story of a concentration camp escapee (which is how his personal story begins), nor is it an attempt to disseminate information in the sense of a document about a particular era in history, nor is it simply a story about a young woman searching for her dead husband. It is certainly all of these, but like Marlow's personal testimony, *Transit* attempts to tell a story in the Benjaminian sense, a topic I deal with below. Fehervary logically connects this level of experience and storytelling to Seghers' debt to

lore and tradition of Jewish origins and terms this type of definitive landscape as the “the threatening prospect of the diaspora itself. Or, put differently, the familiar undulating landscapes of the Rhineland give way to the topography of the unknown and limitless possibilities of death at the edge of the Mediterranean sea” (170).

⁷⁵ Blumenberg 3.

⁷⁶ Further motifs from the *Odyssey* also help to connect the transitory present with epical past. It is no coincidence that the embassy butler compares with a “Zyklopfen” (31. When the narrator rings the doorbell of the Mexican Consulate, a large man with one eye appears on the steps.

⁷⁷ Benjamin, “Der Erzähler” 389. Benjamin is, of course, lamenting the rise of the novel and it could be argued that Seghers wrote a novel using elements from the oral tradition.

⁷⁸ Benjamin, “Der Erzähler” 38.

⁷⁹ Desmond Harding, *Writing the City* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 13.

⁸⁰In a sense, Marseille associates with the Inner Station in *Heart of Darkness*. When the narrator reaches Marseille, he comments that it “erschien mir so kahl und weiß wie eine afrikanische Stadt . . . Ich glaubte beinah, ich sei am Ziel. In dieser Stadt, glaubte ich, müßte endlich alles zu finden sein, was ich suchte, was ich immer gesucht hatte. Wie oft wird mich dieses Gefühl noch trügen bei dem Einzug in eine fremde Stadt” (41-2). Like Marlow’s false sense of certainty that this particular trip down the river will provide him with grand adventures and fame, the desire to find meaning by treading within the urban topography becomes the wrong ideal.

CHAPTER 2
**Topography and the Journey in Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* and Anna
Seghers' *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara***

Topography in *Lord Jim*

When Conrad published *Lord Jim* in book format in 1900, it, like *Heart of Darkness*, decisively turned from the tradition of nineteenth century psychological realism and settled into the uncertain realms of modernism. Though Conrad began *Lord Jim* in 1898 with the intent of writing a short story, he put the manuscript aside and wrote *Heart of Darkness*, thus suggesting a link between the two. Conrad explained to the editor of *Blackwood* magazine that *Lord Jim* “has not been planned to stand alone. *Heart of Darkness* was meant in my mind as a foil.”¹ Indeed, as Marlow’s voyage becomes a journey into the titular darkness that surrounds imperialism and man, Jim’s journey can be characterized as a journey into lightness. He travels, as the narrator explains in the beginning “in good order towards the rising sun” (38). Like *Heart of Darkness*, *Lord Jim* opens with an anonymous narrator, but in chapter four, the narrator is usurped *in medias res* by Marlow entering the tale by means of a reply to an unheard question, “Oh yes, I attended the inquiry” (63).² Just as *Heart of Darkness* begins outside of London, cities also frame *Lord Jim*: It opens with Jim working in a harbor city and ends with the judgment of Jim. The conclusion

comes from an anonymous city man whose “rooms were in the highest flat of a lofty building, and his glance could travel afar beyond the clear panes of glass” (307). The audience and topography of *Lord Jim* compare to the men of the shipping company sitting on the *Nellie* listening to a tale about Africa—though the story incorporates the setting of the city, it digs its roots elsewhere, and embeds in dense jungles, solitary ships and isolated islands. One reviewer aptly wrote that the story “takes you far away from the literary coteries, and the mean little streets of cities. . . . The wind blows in your face, and you are filled with a sense of breadth, of space, of palpitating real life which is refreshing.”³ *Lord Jim* is a quiet and slow, if not sleepy tale, and is ultimately devoid of loud streetcars, rumbling factories, and the chatter of crowds. The tale relates a journey about flight, dreams, paralysis, and isolation from urbanity. While the story is not altogether dissimilar to Marlow’s personal yarn against imperialism in *Heart of Darkness*, its topography goes beyond an ominous warning. It seeks less to concretize a disillusionment with the modern world (as Marlow does in *Heart of Darkness*), but tries instead to concretize a search for idealism.

In his 1917 “Author’s note” to *Lord Jim*, Conrad admitted that when he envisioned the story, it was not one tale, but several. Jim, a “seaman in exile from the sea” (38), loses his license to sail for abandoning the *Patna*, a ship full of pilgrims to Mecca. The crew had thought that the *Patna* was sinking when Jim jumped on an impulse, but the ship was found and towed to safety by a French steamer. Jim never recovers from his guilt and spends the rest of his life fleeing his guilt and seeking to regain his honor.⁴ At the persuasion of Marlow, he settles in Patusan, an outpost on an island in northern sea of Sumatra. Though the island is racked by civil war, Jim

becomes close to one of the ruling tribes and brings a measure of peace to the land and falls in love until he is betrayed by the European pirate Brown. Brown attacks one of the camps and Dain Waris, the chief's son, is killed. Chief Doramin shoots Jim as punishment and retribution for losing his son. Though Conrad had imagined *Lord Jim* being singularly about the scandal of a pilgrim ship and its crew, he later "perceived that the pilgrim ship episode was a good starting point for a free and wandering tale; that it was an event, too, which could colour the whole 'sentiment of existence' in a simple and sensitive character."⁵ Conrad's used the sea, the ship *Patna*, and later the isolated island of Patusan to color and concretize the "sentiment of existence." In other words, topography becomes a means to paint Jim's introspective journey with a solid visual vitality, thus concretizing the abstract "sentiment of existence," its events, and their significance.

The main topographical device in *Lord Jim* that illustrates Jim's journey is Conrad's use of haze. Like *Heart of Darkness* in which haze shrouds the tale, Conrad distorted the character of Jim and his tale with mist, fog, and clouds. As a result, the topography cloaks Jim's separation from the world around him. In *Heart of Darkness*, haze is used by the *author* to bridge one place with another, but in *Lord Jim*, haze becomes the *character's* device that is used by Jim to separate himself from reality. Topography, then, does not shroud the tale, but is a tool to navigate and shape Jim's inner desires or private topography while he inhabits the reality. His personal topography is as Octavio Paz puts, one that "never refers only to itself; it always points to something else, to something beyond itself. It is metaphysic, a religion, an idea of man and the cosmos."⁶ In *Lord Jim*, the hazy topography obfuscates Jim, but

it is not an attempt to create a cover of impressionist anonymity. Instead the haze becomes part of Conrad's attempt to 'make you see.' As Con Coroneos writes, Conrad's method is "less a question of physical and cognitive elements of vision—less a matter of specific aesthetic modes such as symbolism and literary impressionism," and more of a question of how to make material have substance so that it is understandable.⁷ Haze gives flesh to Jim's fantastical idealism, or as Marlow puts it, haze allows for "his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct" (372).

To be sure Jim's visage (and ultimately his idealism) is far from a clear and portrait-like reality. Though the beginning describes Jim as "under six feet, powerfully built . . . with a slight stoop of the shoulders, head forward, and fixed from-under stare," there is no other description in the story of his physique apart from the fact that he dressed "in immaculate white from shoes to hat" (37). Although Conrad ironically wrote in his letters that he dealt substantively in images to "make you see,"⁸ he consistently uses haze to obscure a total picture of Jim's visibility—the white Jim dresses in should be clear, but more often than not Marlow cannot clearly visualize him. Marlow complains that to him, Jim's existence is "blurred by crowds of men as by clouds of dust" (139), and later he reaffirms his difficulty in visualizing Jim by writing to his contact in the city that Jim "passes away under a cloud" (307). Even the unnamed narrator refers to Jim's nature as "incognito, which had as many holds as a sieve, [it] was not meant to hide a personality but a fact. In conceiving of Jim, Conrad combined his character's ambiguity with a tangible place—Italy, Europe, and the 'Northern Mists,' to assure his readers that the vision of Jim resides in a

tangible reality. He wrote in a foreword that he saw his “form pass by—appealing,—significant—under a cloud—perfectly silent. . . . He was ‘one of us’” (375). Though Jim’s physique seems straightforward, his nature is represented by the cloud—hard to envision, impossible to grasp and the cloud masks his individual qualities.

Yet the cloudy nature of Jim’s visage bridges his private separation from the concrete and real world and becomes a curtain for Jim’s isolation. The unnamed narrator relates that from the beginning of Jim’s initial sea career, his station was not on or below the decks, but rather in the “fore-top, and often from there he looked down . . . at the peaceful multitude of roofs cut in two by the brown tide of the stream, while scattered on the outskirts of the surrounding place in the factory chimneys rose perpendicular against a grimy sky, each slender like a pencil and belching out smoke like a volcano” (39). Like Marlow’s solitary city reader/listener who lived “solitary above the billowy roofs of the town, like a lighthouse-keeper above the sea” (319), Jim’s station on the ship consistently sets Jim physically apart from his community where his view includes the smoky haze from industrial urbanity. Complete with smokestacks and residential housing, the browns from the water, the smoke and the grimy sky blend together and merge into a passive and unattractive setting that forces Jim to look further and concentrate instead on the “hazy splendor of the sea in the distance” (39). The haze of the sea—and not the city—becomes the arena which is “enticing, disenchanting, and enslaving” and has the potential to reveal “the inner worth of a man, the edge of his temper, and the fibre of his stuff” (43).

The city and its appendages do not inform nor interest Jim's world, but rather the haze allows the sea to become a stage for Jim's fantasy and bridges his imagination to a concrete reality, thus giving his fantasy a solid edge. Mixed with the haze of the smokestacks, Jim sees the "big ships departing, the broad-beamed ferries constantly on the move, the little boats floating far below his feet" (39). But unlike Kurtz, or even the city man in the "lofty rooms" to whom Marlow writes about Jim, Jim's thoughts do not center on ivory or wealth, but rather the haze transforms the smokestacks Jim sees into hard volcanic islands and the city becomes undeveloped, washed over and supplanted with a wild, isolated and non-urban topography where Jim, "barefooted and half naked, walk[ed] on uncovered reefs in search of shellfish to stave off starvation. He confronted savages on tropical shores, quelled mutinies on the high seas" (40). The haze anchors Jim's dream and fantasy to an adventurous and solid reality where a character's desires can be fleshed out and made visible. Haze on the sea becomes a bridge whereby Jim can cross back and forth from the modern world to his ideal journey.

Of course the use of haze also adds an ambiguity in terms of reconciling Jim's achievement. In the end, Marlow writes to the shadowy city character that Jim

passes away under a cloud, . . . he had beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an Eastern bride, had come veiled to his side. . . He goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct. . . [T]here are days when the reality of his existence comes to me with an immense, with an overwhelming force; and yet upon my honour there are moments too when he passes from my eyes like a disembodied spirit astray amongst the passions of this earth, ready to surrender himself faithfully to the claim of his own world of shades (372).

Haze becomes part of Conrad's adjectival insistence, and it cloaks a clear meaning.⁹ Marlow does not wholly suggest either a condemnation or an endorsement of Jim's action and life, but uses haze and shadows to cloak a clear opinion. Jim's private idealist topography collapses onto a hazy reality and there is no answer of whether or not Jim's honor was restored only in his imagination, or whether the journey towards regaining his honor has been successfully completed.

Rain, in conjunction with haze also plays a role in Jim's internal journey. Often, rain (or a rainy haze) illustrates Jim's paralysis between the real, modern and public topography and Jim's private idealist topography.¹⁰ The narrator describes Jim as living as the "hero in the book," who navigates undeveloped and pre-urban topographies, ultimately creating a paradise informed by his own control. Yet, during one winter dusk, in the midst of a "driving mist," Jim becomes paralyzed and is unable to spot and save a man who went overboard during the storm: "The air was full of flying water. There was a fierce purpose in the gale, a furious earnestness which seemed directed at him, and made him hold his breath in awe. He stood still" (40). And later, while on the *Patna*, Jim describes the moment of his jump into the lifeboat: "'The ship began a slow plunge; the rain swept over her like a broken sea'; [Jim] raised his hand deliberately to his face, and made picking motions with his fingers as though he had been bothered with cobwebs" (125). While the haze, either as a result of the sun or from rain, does not function as a mechanism to calm Jim or slow down the "nervousness" of the modernist subject, it does penetrate idealism and offer another alternative to hazy dreams of adventure. On the one hand, haze functions as a bridge to stage the active paradise, but on the other hand, haze (as a

result of rain) cloaks the ideal to the point of paralysis, leaving Jim only to the illusions of heroism while in the sun. In addition, rain adds gravity to his ability to act on his idealism. Jim knows too well and relies on “the magic monotony of existence between sky and water” (43). He does not expect the sea to “ta[ke] him unawares” (42). The haze of Jim’s private topography clouds the reality of sea life. Thus, the dreamy swath of haze and the awakening nature of rain become tools for understanding the kind of sailor Jim wants to be as well as obscuring the reality to the kind of sailor he is.

The dream-like nature of haze surfaces again when Marlow discusses Jim’s case with Stein. Stein, a German adventurer who eventually settled as a business man, passionately studies entomology and collects butterflies, concrete specimens that signify perfection and ultimate beauty (and idealism) for Stein. Upon hearing Jim’s case, Stein, interestingly enough, characterizes Jim as living in a dream: “A man that is born falls into a dream like a man who falls into the sea. If he tries to climb out into the air as inexperienced people endeavor to do, he drowns—nicht wahr? . . . No! I tell you! The way is to the destructive element submit yourself, and with the exertions of your hands and feet in the water make the deep, deep sea keep you up” (208). The sea naturally becomes a concrete signpost for dreaming in that Jim has difficulty recognizing the dream from the reality, and as a result loses himself in his fantasies. After the incident on the training ship, Jim goes back to his fantasy and “exulted with fresh certitude in his avidity for adventure” (42), rather than dealing with his mistake as he believed he could deal with the “spurious menace of wind and seas” (42). Stein diagnoses Jim as romantic, and certainly, Jim’s

preoccupation with trivial sea literature suggests a romantic self in the traditional sense of a hero who tries to exemplify the morals of social and national responsibilities. After all, Jim readily submits himself to the haze of the sea and becomes the hero only on his personal internal imagination rather than in the public view.

Yet, as John Bachelor wrote, *Lord Jim* “deals with a person who is ‘evident,’ [or to use Stein’s term,] ‘*gewiss*,’ to the reader, and whose inwardness remains elusive.”¹¹ Stein explains the elusiveness away when he likens life to a dream, or an indistinct, ethereal, delicate and hazy topography.¹² The fact that Stein is German, and that Conrad knew and studied philosophers such as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, gives insight to Stein’s understanding that will and consciousness (or the inner thought) constitute reality. For Stein (and the philosophers) life and dreams are the same. Thus, Jim’s penchant to connect his dreams with reality might disrupt solidity, continuity and durability, but used as a trope, haze gives a gauzy tissue and restores some measure of solidity to the two seemingly discontinuous areas. Since Marlow cannot understand or comprehend Jim’s inner motivations, consciousness, or self, he relies on topography and extensions of haze to explain Jim’s nature: “night swallows [Jim’s] form” (161), he is swallowed by the surf on Patusan (306), or is covered in a cloud (372). Jim’s life is constantly being swallowed or engulfed, offering a measure of the visual to explain the impermeable. While Stein would attribute the impermeability to Jim’s inability to navigate the dream or life, the use of topography—though hazy—provides a visual bridge towards understanding Jim—his engagement with dream and reality.

In addition, in order to reconcile Jim's elusive 'sentiment of existence' with a corporeality, Conrad used the ship *Patna* and the secluded island Patusan to provide durability, concreteness, and perspective to Jim's inner self. Though Conrad modeled the *Patna* episode on an actual 1880 voyage of the steamship *Jeddah* in which a ship full of pilgrims bound for Mecca ran into "heavy weather" and began to leak, the fictional description of the *Patna* places it outside of urban modernity and hearkens back to older roots and tradition.¹³ Conrad described the ship "as old as the hills, lean like a greyhound, and eaten up with rust worse than a condemned water tank" (46). Similar to the steamer Marlow first captained in *Heart of Darkness*, the *Patna* is ancient, solitary, and not a part of a giant anonymous hub of transportation. Although the narrator suggests that the *Patna* seems unfit for travel, over and over again he points to the *Patna*'s steady progress. The ship runs smoothly, its "propeller turned without a check, as though its beat had been part of the scheme of a safe universe," and the sea it travels in is "permanent," "somber," and "calmed down at last into the circular stillness of water and sky with the black speck of the moving hull remaining everlastingly in its centre" (49). The *Patna* quiets the surroundings and draws acute attention to the "human consciousness" as it contrasts with its modern counterparts, namely the crew—it does not speed by, creating a fractured image, but rather gives a microcosmic panoramic image of the universe.¹⁴ Conrad went to great lengths to write the ship and sea as seamless so that there is no rupture or elusiveness or abstractness to contradict its stability. Even when it collides with the unknown object, Jim explains that the ship "went over whatever it was as easy as a snake crawling over a stick" (58). The *Patna* is the tranquil, isolated, and sound entity that

does not deviate from its purpose. Its monotony not only gives an empty stage for Jim's adventures, but its solitary and ancient nature reflects permanence and a steady and lasting tradition—one the Jim strives for and sacrifices his reality.

The pilgrims on the *Patna* also come from ancient, solitary, and quiet areas that add substantive layers to the topography, ultimately explaining the abstract. They (like Jim) respond to a “call of an idea,” and like the *Patna*, they slept steadily and silently:

Eight hundred men and women with faith and hopes . . . after treading the jungle paths, descending the rivers, coasting in praus along the shallows, crossing in small canoes from island to island, passing through suffering, . . . They came from solitary huts in the wilderness, from populous campongs, from villages by the sea. At the call of an idea they had left their forests, their clearings . . . They came covered with dust, with sweat, with grime, with rags” (46-7).

The description offers a concrete visual of the pilgrim's abstract nature to follow a vague and intangible belief. The passengers and the ship stem from something older and more lasting that is not obscured by rain or haze. The older civilizations, undeveloped in terms of modern civilization, base their actions and belief on permanence, a tradition that endures and branches throughout the jungles, the coast, the wilderness, and the clearings. While Conrad did not explain the ‘idea’ in concrete terms, he couples the abstract with a ritual drenched in clinging matter that is far from ethereal—dust, sweat, grime coat the abstract call of an idea with a concrete gravity. Their idea, emboldened by their hardship, gains measurable contours of the importance of an idea—through topography, faith achieves a firm and unyielding endurance.

The pilgrims' solid insistence and devotion to faith is not so different than Jim's elusive "inner" existence.¹⁵ While Jim becomes an enigma, the *Patna* and the villages whose inhabitants it carries illustrate his commitment and dedication to his ideal. He, like the villagers, flees his home or the port where he works at the 'call of an idea,' or rather at the flight from an idea and the call of an ideal. In contrast to the crew who addresses the passengers as "cattle" and want only to earn money, Jim seeks to become as steady and solid as the *Patna* where his honor is as seamless with his nature as the ship sails the bay. His ritual compares to the pilgrims in that he flees the various ports, the city (or the Western world) and avoids his home in order to find an inner contentment. In contrast to the city, the *Patna* anchors the modernist "spirit" in an older and steadier tradition that continues to seek fulfillment.¹⁶ Frederic Jameson called Conrad's use of the *Patna* and the sea a "strategy of containment; . . . For the sea is both a strategy of containment and a place of real business; it is a border and a decorative limit, but it is also a highway, out of the world and in it at once, the repression of work . . . So the sea is the place where Jim can contemplate that dreary prose of the world which is the daily life in the universal factory called capitalism."¹⁷ The *Patna* and its pilgrims give credence and shape to Jim's inner desire and penchant to return to a solid beginning of a spirit or tradition. Though Jim could have served as an overseer and earned a lot of money on an island where one of Marlow's colleagues was going to establish a colony that harvested guano, he needs another substance (or ideal) other than trade. Marlow visualizes Jim "up to his knees in guano . . . the incandescent ball of the sun above his head . . . simmering together in the heat as far as the eye could reach" (171).¹⁸ This kind of existence differs from Jim's

flight—it is a grotesque illustration of seeking honor, one that alludes to the quest undertaken by Kurtz. In comparison to Kurtz, Jim represents a different self on a journey in which the endpoint does not dissolve him but gives shape to his abstractness. The *Patna*'s successful voyage not only lays waste to the greed and selfishness that fuels the quest for wealth, as typified by the skipper and his crew, but more importantly it reflects the potential, or at least stability of responding to the inward pursuit of a purer idealism.

Conrad also used light on the *Patna* to help illustrate Jim's elusive dream state or penchant to drown himself in the 'hazy splendor of the sea.' Just as Jim is characterized as either being "dressed in white" or "swallowed by the white surf," his most transformative moment—his time on the *Patna*—is organized around light. That is, the narrative consistently describes Jim's second failure on the *Patna* in "scorching" and "unclouded" images up until the black squall when Jim jumps. Jim's first negligence on the training ship for officers occurs during a winter and rainy dusk, and later on another ship with a Scottish captain, Jim is injured during a gale with a strength "to annihilate all he had seen, known, loved, enjoyed, or hated; all that is priceless and necessary—the sunshine, the memories, the future" (43). Jim's failures on the sea are swathed in gales and storms, quite the opposite from most of the voyage on the *Patna* in which "the sea, blue and profound, remained still, without a stir, without a ripple, without a wrinkle—viscous, stagnant, dead" (48). On this voyage there is no "brutal tumult" (42) or "unbridled cruelty" (43) that overpowers Jim's desire for heroism. Instead the voyage is enveloped "in a fulgor of sunshine that killed all thought and oppressed the heart, withered all impulses of strength and

energy” (48). Even at night, the “stars, together with the serenity of their rays, seemed to shed upon the earth the assurance of everlasting security. The young moon recurved, and shining low in the west, was like a slender shaving thrown up from a bar of gold” (49). The sea is still and forcefully slows down the action, creating a steady rhythm and the resulting security culminates in illuminating Jim’s dream-state.

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Friedrich Nietzsche used the terms Apollonian and Dionysian to explain the drives governing Greek tragedy. While Nietzsche sought to find the roots of tragedy in music, his definitions are useful in understanding how the sun illustrates Jim’s nature. For Nietzsche, who used Schopenhauer’s notion of humanity living in a “dream-state,” the Apollonian encompasses everything visible, a rational knowledge that cloaks itself in lightness. In addition, the “dream-state” and the visible reality both belong to Apollo since he controls the “inner world of the imagination.”¹⁹ Thus, (like Stein’s belief), dream and reality intertwine. When Jim is on the *Patna*, the ship drowns itself in sun “as if scorched by a flame flicked at her from a heaven without pity. The nights descended on her like a benediction” (48). The overwhelming use of light emphasizes and concretizes Jim’s dream-state *and* his reality. The peacefulness of the sea lets Jim drift into “the success of his imaginary achievements . . . There was nothing he could not face. He was so pleased with the idea that he smiled, keeping perfunctorily his eyes ahead; and when he happened to glance back he saw the white streak of the wake drawn as straight by the ship’s keel upon the sea as the black line drawn by the pencil upon the chart” (52). The reality of the ship’s steady progress seamlessly flows into the his dreams of success. Achievement is not masked by a shadow, since the “only shadow on the sea was the

shadow of the black smoke pouring heavily from the funnel of its immense steamer” (51), but rather it is penetrated by light. Topography, then, lends Jim’s dream-state a visibility: the intense illustration of light—even at night—illuminates and shows a blinding visual of an abstract ideal.

Jim’s journey is not always under the sun, however. Though he stages an artistic reality on the *Patna* and becomes absorbed by the “certitude of unbounded safety and peace” (49), his dream-state is illusory—he fails to navigate the Apollonian horizon and “see the shadow of the coming event” (51). And when he jumps, Jim describes the sky as “pitch black” (125). The shadow and darkness akin to the storm and gales in his first voyages antagonize the Apollonian dream-element. In a sense, the darkness that foils Jim’s dream is similar to Nietzsche’s definition of the Dionysian impulse: the “individual, with all its limits and moderation, sank here into the self-oblivion of the Dionysian state and forgot the Apollonian principles. *Excess* revealed itself as truth, and the contradiction . . . broke through, the Apollonian was cancelled, absorbed, and annihilated.”²⁰ The “excess,” a defining trait of Dionysus, reveals itself in the gales of the sea or the overextension of a run-down ship and forces the contradiction of Jim. Jim, who wanted to face dangers at all cost in his sunny and dreamy topography, did the opposite and jumped. The light and dark topography helps to organize his journey, becoming a tool to navigate his flight.

Patusan, however, becomes the topographical balance to the *Patna* that shifts Jim’s lightness into a more concrete and dense shape. Though biographical studies have shown that the career of Sir James Brooke, the first “White Rajah” of Sarawak in Borneo (1803-68), became one of the models for Jim, Jim is not a mirror image of

Brooke.²¹ In terms of the island Patusan, Conrad moved the historically existing site, however, from the southwest coast of Borneo in the South China sea and fictionally wrote it as existing on the northern area of Sumatra off the Malacca Strait. In its initial introduction, Marlow confirms Patusan's isolation when he asks his unknown audience, "I don't suppose any of you had ever heard of Patusan?" (212). Marlow makes it clear that Patusan is "outside the sphere of [the West's] activities and of no earthly importance to anybody" (212). While Marlow notes that seventeenth-century "traders went there for pepper," throughout time trade died off in Patusan (219) and it is now a forgotten and sleepy center in terms of Western interest for progress.²² Like Jim, Patusan has been separated from the modern industry rat-race. Marlow explains that "[s]o many generations had been released since the last white man had visited the river" (233). Completely cut off from the modern world by virgin forests, since it is separated from the sea by forty miles, and standing "out in the everlasting sunlit haze like the remnants of the wall breached by the sea," (233), the only noise is not of industry, but of "white surf along the coast [which] overpowered the voice of fame" (172). Shrouded in the haze, Patusan physically represents the complete and utter isolation that Jim dreams of when lost in the "hazy splendor of the sea." Its white surf, "dark-green foliage," "swampy plains," "jagged peaks," and "vast forests" provide the concrete fodder that Jim dreamed of while sitting in the foretop and ultimately gives his journey to an inner idealism a flesh. It is no coincidence that the coast drowns out the modern march for fame and materialism. Jim's journey is about finding a solid entity for his idealism. It becomes, as Michel Foucault explains, a "heterotopia," or a place which cannot exist but is nevertheless real.²³

Like the *Patna*, Patusan functions as materialization to Jim's elusive spirit. The quiet, overpowering, and almost drowning insistence on its isolation puts a dense imagery onto Jim's elusive nature that darkens his lightness. In addition, Conrad used death-like images to describe the island. Marlow explains Patusan had been used as a "grave for some sin, transgression, or misfortune," (213), and when Marlow visits Jim he likens the main topographical marker of Patusan as a type of burial chamber. The island was cut in half by a narrow ravine in which moon glides "upwards between the sides of the chasm, till it floated away above the summits, as if escaping from a yawning grave in gentle triumph" (214). While Jacques Darras suggests that Patusan is a symbol for a tomb, the spectral and shadowy quality of Patusan does more than suggest death, it fits well into the obscure nature of explaining Jim.²⁴ The simultaneous elusive and ethereal quality of Patusan paired with the frictional weight of the images Conrad used juxtaposes the haze (or the elusive self) with a tangible density. By writing Patusan, Conrad gives weight to the spirit, or that which Jim seeks to sate. In other words, the reinforced elemental imagery solidifies Jim's private and fantastical topography he dreamt about on the *Patna* and on his first ship. While Elliot B. Gose argues that the images of opposition on Patusan "undercut the validity of Jim's life in Patusan, and of the romanticism which made Jim's heroism possible,"²⁵ Patusan echoes the private, intangible and fictional topography found on the *Patna*; Jim physically crosses over the hazy bridge of his fantasy into a visual reality.

This is not to say that Patusan is completely opposite from the *Patna*. Though there is a dualism that manifests itself between the two, Patusan creates a balance

between Jim's white/light dream-state and its darkness. Yet the Apollonian remains on Patusan in the form of the topography. Though Patusan is a "land [that] devoured sunshine" (250), Jim becomes a "white figure in the stillness of the coast . . . The twilight was ebbing fast from the sky above his head, the strip of sand had sunk already under his feet . . . he was a tiny white spark that seemed to catch all the light left in a darkened world" (306). In Patusan Jim has to make his inner reality public if he is to survive. While the Dionysian element is a formless flux and full of excess, on Patusan Jim faces greed, the constant threat of death and a desire for power which is as antagonistic as it is complementary to his estranged self in this pre-modern world already mangled by imperialism. Instead of becoming paralyzed, however, Jim's Apollonian nature becomes re-established and concretized: In Nietzsche's words, "he was obliged to sense something greater than this: his whole existence, with all its beauty and moderation, rested on the hidden substratum of suffering and knowledge, which was once again revealed to him by the Dionysian, And look! Apollo was unable to live without Dionysus!"²⁶ The hostile and primal environment remains in a tenuous balance under Jim's leadership—he is able to instate a form of peace among the warring tribes, until Brown, an appendage of imperialism, deceives Jim and causes his death. It is not Patusan that buries Jim, he is able to remain a "tiny white spark," but rather it is the knowledge that modernity (in the form of Brown, a product of urban greed) that penetrates and threatens his existence.

In addition, on Patusan there is a moment of extreme sunshine that compares to the sun on the *Patna*. When Jim is telling Marlow about his widespread fame on Patusan, he relates a small domestic dispute that he settled, showing an insight into

the culture of Patusan. Telling, however, is when Jim tells Marlow about the storming of Sherif Ali's camp, a Muslim nobleman who is angling for control of the island. In the midst of the "rout," Jim explains that he "turn[ed] his back on the stockade with its embers, black ashes, and half-consumed corpses" (255). While he terms this experience as "immense" and a "success" (255), the topography suggests another trek into blind idealism. The attack was supposed to happen at dawn, but Conrad wrote that "the gloom of the land spread out under the sunshine preserved its appearance of inscrutable, of secular repose. . . . With the first slant of sun-rays along these immovable tree-tops the summit of one hill wreathed itself, with heavy reports, in white clouds of smoke" (253). Like the sun and haze of the sea, Jim loses himself in the idea of being a hero and turns his back on humanity. Or, just as he wears the city "white" in terms of his suit, Jim forces (perhaps unconsciously) "modern" methods onto Patusan. Though the guilt of abandoning Muslim pilgrims on the *Patna* haunts him, there is no guilt for abandoning these civilians on this island. But the isolation that Patusan provides and the fame that resonates throughout the jungle "for many a day's journey" (255) become an irresistible stage. As a result, the sun becomes part and parcel of the visual that illustrates Jim's voyage into idealism, and just as it blinds on the *Patna*, the topography of Patusan shines bright when Jim dangerously borders on being swallowed by illusory heroism.

In this sense, when light illustrates idealism, Jim's paralysis in darkness becomes a corporeal balance of the tragic journey. Before Jim goes to Doramin to turn himself in, Marlow describes the sky over Patusan as "blood-red, immense, streaming like an open vein. An enormous sun nestled crimson amongst the tree-

tops, and the forest below had a black and forbidding face” (369). Like the haze that adds a narrative ambiguity to Jim’s success, there is neither a bright sun, nor an overwhelming darkness to suggest a clear journey. Rather, the topography concretely explains Jim’s emotion—he knows he is going to his death. Similar to the fall of Greek tragic heroes, Jim’s mistake to trust Brown and their common background begins a domino effect of bloodshed and death.²⁷ Jim’s penchant to trust does not disagree with his background, however. In the beginning he is described as possessing a “noble,” and having a family of means whom “Providence enables to live in mansions” (39). And later, during his tenure on Patusan, Jim earns the title of “Tuan” or “Lord.” In contrast to the “hazy” sea, Jim’s background is as old and founded in tradition as the *Patna*. His family comes from a “little church on a hill which had the mossy greyness of a rock seen through a ragged screen of leaves. It had stood there for centuries, but the trees around probably remembered the laying of the first stone” (39). Jim, described as having the “patience of Job” (37), grew up with stable, traditional values that have not only had permanence for at least five generations in Jim’s family, but are also represented by the topography—the old rock, the old vegetation, and the many trees. Thus, his belief in Brown (and Marlow for that matter) makes sense—Jim does not reside in shades of grey. Rather, Jim’s journey is painted in bold strokes. Conrad defined his main characters and their backgrounds through the topographies surrounding them, thus giving the elusive inner self a concrete edge.

Topography in *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara*

Though Seghers had by 1927 read a copy of Conrad's *Nostramo*,²⁸ the topos of remoteness that envelops Conrad's Sulaco can be traced back to the earliest of Conrad's works such as *Almayer's Folly* (1895), *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), and *Lord Jim* (1900). Seghers, similar to Conrad, began her writing career by using remote topographies which are crucial to concretizing the journey, its significance, and the events. In her first story "Die Toten auf die Insel Djal" (The Dead on the Island Djal, [1924]), which she crafted as a "Sage aus dem Holländischen, nacherzählt von Antje Seghers,"²⁹ the narrator relates the tale of a (dead) pastor who lives on the island Djal. When a ship wrecks, he paddles out to sea, retrieves the dead and dying and buries them in the cemetery next to the sea. In "Grubetsch," (1926), Seghers related another tale of a raftsman who comes to an isolated town, causing havoc each time he arrives.³⁰ Both tales use the sea or the river to illustrate a culture. In "Die Toten auf der Insel Djal," the ocean "dröhnt und zischt" (drones and hisses) as do the buried dead in the cemetery of Djal (7), but the island becomes a material mark for wanderers and seamen who are lost metaphorically and physically. In "Grubetsch," the river becomes a means to understand the changes in the community. The tale opens with a description of a town so dark that the light on the pub door shines to the extent as if it were in a mine shaft—only the river offers a path out.³¹ Each tale ends ambiguously, and some critics like Friedrich Albrecht compare early writings by Seghers to the parables of Kafka.³² Indeed, the only thing that is stable in her fictional journeys are the visual topographies, however dark. Kurt Batt notes that Seghers' figures act "on instinct, simple, unarticulated anxieties and hopes,"³³ which

parallels the less modernized topographies. Christa Wolf illustrates Seghers' method best, when she writes that in Seghers' novels and stories "herrscht oft ein Rembrandtlicht, das einzelne Figuren, Gruppen oder Gegenstände aus ihrer im Halbdunkel bleibenden Umgebung heraushebt."³⁴ In Seghers' stories topography compares to *Lord Jim* in that the visualization rivals a painting, allowing the journey to become materialized.³⁵

In her first narrative *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* (The Revolt of the Fishermen [1928]), Seghers used the water and remote areas to give shape to the journey and the perspective of the community. The story of *Aufstand* generally relates the failed attempt of a fisherman's strike for better wages as it revolves mostly around the main figure and instigator Hull. Specifically, the tale portrays relationships between the fishermen and their wives, the fishermen and each other, and highlights a few members of the community—Andreas, an orphan hungry for honor, involvement and a better life; Desak, the owner of the town pub and the center for much of the action, and Marie, the town prostitute. Like Conrad, Seghers transported her topographical arena from the city to a smaller and less industrial, though not uncivilized area. Her narrative differs, however, in that the topographies function less as an illustration of a particular character such as Jim, and becomes more a presentation of an entire culture. The result is a totality of experience.³⁶ When the novel opens, the ending is already clear—the revolt has ended and Hull has been arrested and taken to the city of Port Sebastian. Seghers described that St. Barbara "sah jetzt wirklich aus, wie es jeden Sommer aussah. Aber längst, nachdem die Soldaten zurückgezogen, die Fischer auf der See waren, saß der Aufstand noch

auf dem leeren, weißen, sommerlich kahlen Marktplatz und dachte ruhig an die Seinigen, die er geboren, aufgezogen, gepflegt und behütet hatte für das, was für sie am besten war (5).³⁷ Already in the beginning Seghers broadened the focus of the story. The setting is not an empty and passive background that is present for the sake of Hull's tale, but rather it is a topography where place is active, personified, and concerns an entire community that focuses on trade. The topography broods, waits, and quietly nurses the revolt and the discontent. Though the reference is to the recent past, the brooding suggests that this is not the tale of a return to a status quo. Rather, the waiting and brooding suggests a cycle—there were other revolts in the past and there will be others in the future. *Aufstand*, like *Lord Jim*, is a quiet tale, but its isolation as a result of the sea and the rocky cliffs, reverberates with an epic proportion a journey not of an individual, but of a culture that searches not for idealism, but for improved change.

The depiction of Seghers' Hull compares to Jim, however, in that haze, rain, and darkness masks him. After the opening scene on the marketplace, the scene shifts to Hull coming into St. Barbara from the Margareteninsel (Margaret Island) on a "kleinem, rostigen Küstendampfer" (5). And like Jim, Hull stares off into the open except that instead of sun, "Regen stand in der Luft" (5). While the haze that envelops Jim allows him to slip into a dream-state, the obscurity here penetrates and adds a gravity that does not lend itself to a daydream stupor. The entire topography surrounding Hull, the ship, and the sea is saturated with rain and smells, and similar to the voyage on the *Patna* there is an intense stillness to the air: "Der Geruch der Salzlucht, der Tiere und des Maschinenöls vermischte sich zu dem einen süßen Geruch

der Überfahrt” (5). The combination weighs on Hull and St. Barbara and forces him to pay acute attention to his surroundings—for a minute he stops brooding on the danger of his purpose. Over the balustrade, he sees “die weiße Narbe, die das Schiff in dem Meer riß, die wieder heilte und wieder riß und wieder heilte und wieder riß” (5). Helen Fehervary describes this description as a type of perspective, a “Prinzip der Navigation.”³⁸ Unlike Jim’s fantasies, Hull’s inner awareness does not educe idealism, but the gaze becomes a tool to make the intense and threatening experience vivid and palpable. The focus on the ocean, on the smells, and even on the passengers creates an awareness of an entire culture. The topography exudes a piercing exigency and an encompassing heaviness, burdened literally by the weight of the world.

The rain adds an extra dimension of gravity in that its persistence implies unyielding severity. Like Conrad’s seamless ocean and coast lines, the air and the rain meld together into one impermeable mass. Peter Beicken argues that Seghers’ descriptions embody an anxiety about the body: “Es ist ein Verlangen nach einem Daseinsreichtum, eine Sehnsucht nach unendlicher Fülle, zugleich utopisch und absolut.”³⁹ Indeed, the pungent aromas force Hull to meditate on his journey, and he becomes ravenous, “sich alles genau zu merken” (6). Though Hull’s thoughts explain his impulse as “nichts anders als die Todesangst” (6), it is clear that the sea illustrates an inward anxiousness and indecisiveness towards the future. There is here no ‘forward march’ of industry or smokestacks,⁴⁰ but the constant heavy rain obscures the vision and gives a visual flesh to the gravity of the approaching journey. Hull’s story is not an individual tale or fantasy about the adventures on an isolated island,

but his gaze suggests that he understands the weight and role of his journey. From “die Knöpfe an der Weste des Kapitäns, auch die Vögel in der Luft, auch den Geruch, alles, überhaupt alles” (6), Hull must not be like Jim and turn his back on a humanity for his own sense of greatness—his task has always been meant for a purpose larger than himself.⁴¹

Like *Heart of Darkness*, which becomes a general manifesto against imperialism, Seghers’ narratives depart from the Conradian tale of the sea in that her topographies visualize an isolation of epic proportions that takes political fiction to a different level. While Conrad illustrated the individual’s sacrifice or journey for his personal idealism, Seghers illustrated the sacrificial journey and places it within a recurring circle of hope and disillusionment surrounding exploitation. It is no coincidence that she never clearly detailed Hull’s characteristics, or those of any character for that matter. While this type of obscurity can be argued as an influence of Rembrandt’s drawing style on her writing, Seghers cloaked her characters in the dark topography to offer a visualization of an entire situation. In her critique of capitalist enterprise, Seghers did not write a narrative portrait, but an encompassing vista. When Hull looks out the window in Desak’s pub, there is no reflection since outside is “vollkommen dunkel,” and the light of the lamp, “das die Menschen weicher macht und ineinander schmilzt, ließ nicht einmal ihre Wimpern blinzeln” (8). The visualization is important, however, in that it takes away the focus from Hull and concentrates on the action—the poverty, exhaustion and mood of desperation among the fishermen.

Seghers' topography typically mars an individual perspective and ultimately suggests a collective tragic subject.⁴² Hull's characterization compares to Lukács' notion that the "epic hero is, strictly speaking, never an individual. It is traditionally thought that one of the essential characteristics of the epic is the fact that its theme is not a personal destiny but the destiny of a community."⁴³ In the tale Seghers did not describe or single out certain individuals in a particular historical uprising, but rather the experience of this revolt laps over onto other revolts of the past. Shortly after Hull's arrival and initial conversations with the fishermen, Kedennek—a fisherman and foster father to Andreas—finds Andreas sleeping in a boat. There he tells him about another rebellion in the past in which the instigator Kerdhuys hid in the cliffs. The harbor around Andreas is dark and it is sprinkling rain, but when the tale is over, Andreas notices that the "Regen hatte aufgehört, die Lichter um die Bucht herum waren ausgegangen. Quer über den Himmel gab es einen gelben, kläglichen Lichtstreifen, noch vom vergangenen Tag oder schon vom kommenden" (16). Hull's, Andreas' and to an extent Kedennek's journey, like the journey of the past instigator Kerdhuys, belongs to a cycle. Similar to an indistinctive line between the sunset and the sun risings and the weather that rains, stops and begins again, uprisings happen, fail, and occur again. Thus, the revolt that sits and broods on the marketplace at the beginning does not only refer to the recent revolt on St. Barbara, but like the outlines of the characters, it laps over onto past and future ones: "man kann sagen, daß der Aufstand eigentlich schon zu Ende war, bevor Hull nach Port Sebastian eingeliefert wurde und Andreas auf der Flucht durch die Klippen umkam" (5). The action, just like the topography is cyclical.

The cyclical action does not deter from the historical basis of the revolt, however. Similar to the singular event Conrad used as a springboard for his tale, in her journal Seghers wrote that she wanted to write a “Revolutionsmythos,” and an article with the caption “Streik der bretonischen Fischer” [Strike of the Breton fishermen] was found in Seghers’ papers.⁴⁴ The article was dated August 1927 and details the poverty-stricken situation of the fishermen whose “Elend war groß, die Familien nährten sich von Fischsuppe und trockenem Brot.”⁴⁵ In addition, like Conrad’s fictionalization of islands in the South Pacific, Seghers’ communities cannot be found geographically or orthographically, thus isolating them further from a real and actual topography. Yet, her communities compare to the coastline of Brittany situated in the North Atlantic. In a 1957 letter to a reader, Seghers confirms that she is “vom Rhein und sah jeden Tag den Rhein mit Neid an, weil er bald in Holland ins Meer fließen wird. Später kam ich in die Bretagne. Die von Ihnen gesuchte Insel schwimmt wahrscheinlich zwischen beiden Gegenden herum.”⁴⁶ Thus, like Conrad’s penchant for using his voyages as a foundation for his novels, Seghers, too admits to making her stories topographically synthetic: The name St. Barbara is akin to Pointe Saint-Barbe; Margareteninsel to Presqu’île de Sainte-Marguerite, and Wyk evokes the community Wyk on northern Friesian island of Föhr.⁴⁷ Historically, the main source of income for these island populations was fishing, though similar to the decline of trade in Patusan, these islands saw a decline in the fishing industry due to the rise of industry. While Seghers most certainly was influenced by historical events, just as Conrad was influenced by a real shipping scandal on the *Jeddah* and the career of Sir James Brooke (the first “White Rajah” of

Sarawak), the fogginess between fictionalization and topographical reality takes away the focus from historicity or a historical document and reflects instead the greater transformations taking place in a culture isolated by modernity. Or, the lack of an actual historical place takes the text by default to an older perspective and a tale that reverberates not only in history but also in imagination. It delves into the roots (and rusts) of modernity (since the fishermen have and will always trade) and exemplifies the concrete (and eternal) burden of surviving amidst exploitation.

In his essay “Realism in Our Time,” Lukács distinguishes between subjectivity (or the inner capacity to recognize a historical process) and objectivity (or the main movements of a historical process). Seghers used topography to give perspective to a Lukácian subjectivity and objectivity.⁴⁸ The continuous topography of the past and present in *Aufstand* concretizes a lasting political perspective, or as Lukács’ puts it: *terminus ad quem*.⁴⁹ Inge Dierson picks up on this general tendency to highlight a historical community when she argues that *Aufstand* mirrors the eternal struggle of class struggle; the text solidifies a “Widerspiegelung von Erfahrungen nicht nur des ökonomischen, sondern auch des politischen Kampfs des Proletariats.”⁵⁰ While much debate has focused on Seghers’ development as a socialist writer, such focus limits the ability to look at the non-political character of the text. The topography becomes a navigational tool that illustrates a cultural totality. It is no coincidence that Hull comes from the city to the St. Barbara after an earlier uprising—he is not like Jim who failed and who is searching to fulfill his sense of lost idealism, nor does he head to St. Barbara because it is a place to withdraw completely. In fact, when Hull is sitting in the pub he realizes he could go

somewhere warm where “die Sonne [würde] die Schande zusammenschmelzen” (9). Like the sun in *Lord Jim* which lends itself to a dream-like fantasy, Hull realizes that he could take “ein Dutzend Dampfer nach allen möglichen Häfen” (9), but the rain—immoveable and grey—interrupts any reverie and keeps Hull’s focus on his calling. The topography concretizes Hull’s burden and penetrates his fantasies.

Rain is not the only trope that lends the struggle substance. The remote nature of St. Barbara also highlights the economic and continuous strain. Though St. Barbara is not completely isolated—there is a “Landstraße” (land-route) in the northeast by which the other communities travel to St. Barbara (26), the usual mode of travel to the mainland is by ship. Still, St. Barbara comes across not only as secluded, but rather inaccessible. When Hull first sees St. Barbara, he intimates a difficult and impermeable geography:

Der braune Streifen war nicht mehr irgendeine Ferne, er war schon Land. Das war das Kreisrund Küste aus dem Feldstecher, die Steinhäufen von Hütten die Klippen entlang, die Maste stachen in die lebendige Luft, langsam schiebt sich der Riegel der Mole von der schmalen tiefeingefressenen Bucht (6).

Like Conrad’s Patusan, the communities in *Aufstand der Fischer* are not only physically hard to reach, but Seghers portrays the village of St. Barbara, and the fishermen who built the pier, as something that is locked away and forced back, shelved from the modern and industrial society. The area, like Patusan, is not inviting, but it is an aggressive and unwelcoming arrival. Even when Hull is at the pub, the word “unbewegt” (immovable) describes not only the rain in the sky, but the fishermen’s faces as well (14). As a result, the rain signifies the community’s “sentiment of existence”—the “Kälte, die alle Dinge durchbeizte” (7) not only

describes the pub and the weather, but it also represents the inner distress of the fishermen. The cold shows that (unlike the city), change comes slowly and does not happen quickly or in bold moves.

The overwhelming cold and darkness compare to Conrad's dense forests, swampy plains, and overpowering surf of Patusan. Seghers cloaked her topography in a dark grayness, surrounded by crumbling cliffs, ragged rocks, and suffocating dunes. When Hull arrives at Desak's pub, he sits beside a window and observes that the sky sank "in schwerem Regen erdrückend auf das Meer. Der Abend brach an, unerwartet, unbewachtet, etwas grauer als der Tag" (7-8). There is no *Patna*, a topography warmed by and enveloped in—if not brutalized—by sunshine. In fact, the only light that consistently penetrates the island emanates from the lighthouse and office building on Margareteninsel as it shines on St. Barbara as if reminding it not only of its literal, but metaphorical darkness.⁵¹ Even during the festival celebrating Whitsun, the green and red lights that decorate the marketplace are described as "ein paar Tropfen Lichter im Meer. Das Wasser zersprenkelte sie, sie trieben weit weg, vielleicht auf die offene See, wie anderer Abfall von Schiffen und Dörfern, nach Norden oder nach Süden, irgendwohin (43)." Thus, the dream reality or an overwhelming dependence on an Apollonian "dream-state" (the state where dream and reality are the same) eludes the fishermen of St. Barbara just as Jim's nature eludes Marlow—for this community, there is no journey into lightness. The heaviness of the topography does not necessarily suggest a tomb or death-like images such as on Patusan, but the driving precipitation and the description of the land gives a concrete gravity to the impending task: "Dumpf und unbeweglich, bleigrau und

regenschwer, starrten Himmel und Erde gegeneinander” (7). This is not the tale of idealism or heroism, however naïve, but an epic task that spans from the earth to sky, and is laden with sacrifice and suffering.

Moreover, the heaviness of Hull’s task in addition to the weight of existence for the fishermen contrasts to the pub on the marketplace where the shipping officers and captains drink. In comparison to Hull, Captain Six serves as a foil. Interestingly enough, Desak, the bartender notices that Hull orders an expensive “Branntwein.” It is the same schnapps that the more affluent captains and business men drink in the town square while luxuriously dipping chunks of white bread in it (21). Yet, while Hull looks out the window and sees rain and darkness, Six looks out the window and sees “was er immer sah. Über den hellen Platz trieb der Wind die wunderlichen Schatten der Wolken. Sogar das Wasser am Kai war weiß gescheckt. Die Wimpel der *Marie Farère* flatterten (21).” Six, a respected captain and a pious member of a Christian sect, does not take the same journey that Hull does, despite his acquiescence and sympathy with the fishermen during the strike. Nevertheless, Six passively and comfortably participates in the more affluent society. Ironically, despite his religious beliefs, Six does not choose to take the harder path. Thus, the contrast between the darkness and lightness surrounding the pubs becomes a navigational tool that not only illuminates, but critiques the ideas, emotions, and (lack of) action by Six.

As a result, the overwhelming darkness in St. Barbara functions less as a narrative device, and more as a mode of perception. The darkness gives density to the inner anxieties of the selves in the story. At one point, when Andreas feels guilty for eating a large portion of food from Kedennek’s house, he becomes burdened by

the air that feels “stickig” and “dick” (23, 24). He runs outside and the sea crashes “[w]ie Schüsse in der Nacht” (24). Like Hull’s experience on the steamer where the surrounding air aids in making his emotions concrete, the aggressive topography gives shape to the inner anxieties of the community. More specifically, it displays the tension between Andreas’ guilt of eating too much and resentment that he cannot do more in addition to his inability or knowledge of how to respond—his emotions, like the sea, are unbridled, unruly, but masked by the dark night. The illustrated mood of anxiousness finds its roots in Kierkegaard’s ideas of the self. Seghers was influenced by Kierkegaard and the dialectic he presents between guilt and innocence.⁵² For Kierkegaard, the definition of the self and anxiety has its origins in biblical original sin and for him innocence means ignorance or the inability to know the difference between good and evil. Ultimately, innocence produces anxiety, which produces the desire for freedom from it. In her essay “Die gemalte Zeit: Mexikanische Fresken,” Seghers prized Mexican frescos as a way to depict the time and history of a people, but ultimately, “the Mexican fresco painters have achieved the art of their own people and have given a report to world art, if it is only possible that the artist is capable of expressing the ideas which move the world and a folk in the world.”⁵³ Like Conrad, Seghers aspired to “making you see,” and conveying a dark, brooding, and lifeless topography that is bordered by a threatening sea or swallowed by rain gives a visual vitality of the permanence and endurance to the anxiousness existing when survival is marginal at best.

The anxious mood intensifies when the trek of the villagers from the surrounding communities is described. The fishermen walk along the coast on the

“Landstraße” (26), but their journey, similar to the description of the ship cutting a wound into the sea, is far from pleasant. The dawn obscures the mass, but from behind “schlug ihnen der regennasse Winterwind entgegen, von hinten zogen die Weiber, schlechte Gewichte” (26). The wind was so strong that when they spoke to each other, “der Wind verstopfte ihnen die offenen Mäuler” (26). The aggressive topography not only forces the group to be alone with their thoughts—underscoring each person’s need for change, but the rain and the wind makes the journey long and hard. Like the “call of the idea” in *Lord Jim*, which brings the pilgrims to the *Patna*, the communities congregate despite the mud and rain, coming together as a dense and slow mass, one unit illustrating a collective need for change. Though the dunes had separated the communities, the long procession together gives the crowd hope. The effect is a large crescendo, leading up to Hull’s speech and call to strike. It is no coincidence then, that after Hull’s speech the fishermen’s emotions and the weather climax: the fishermen attack Bruyk in his house—a more affluent member of the community, who has betrayed them and whose son will become a captain. During the beating, the wind “war froh, weil die Tür offen war. Er fuhr herein, zauste und rüttelte” (30). The fishermen, like the topography are not still, but become aggressive, believing that if “alle kamen, das war nicht umsonst, irgend etwas mußte schon drunten geschehn in St. Barbara” (28). The unrestrained topography illustrates a brutal gap between this particular community (not merely the individual) and the reality in their attempt to succeed. The rain and wind illustrate a tragic overpowering of life. As a result, the rough wind helps to concretize the emotions—the anxiety, the pent up anger, and the result of a powerful, but short lived release.

The suffocating nature of the topography also lends to the difficulty of the strike's success. After the initial congregation, Hull and Andreas visit each village in an effort to encourage the fishermen's will and determination. The walk to the communities was on a "grauen, eingefrorenen Weg, der unter seinen Schuhen aufweichte" (35). They pass cliffs that are "zerfressen" and because the roaring of the sea and the wind, the trek sounded like "ein Reibeisen" (36). The path between the communities exudes isolation and impedes communication and ultimately motivation. Just as the crowd needed to see themselves collected together as a large ensemble, the dunes separate them and suffocate the strike. When Hull is arrested and carted away on the land-route, apart from the sea and towards Port Sebastian, he feels weak:

Die weichen, beharrlichen Stöße, die das Fahren im Sande mit sich bringt, machen nach und nach die Körper und Gedanken mürbe. Zuletzt hatte Hull nur noch einen einzigen Wunsch: noch einmal einen schmalen Streifen Meer sehen, das ganz nahe, nur einen Sprung entfernt, zu seiner Linken liegen mußte. Aber die flachen, gewellten Buckel der Dünen schoben sich unaufhörlich so schnell und wickeln ineinander, daß sein Wunsch nicht mehr in Erfüllung ging (92-3).

The dunes, like the coast swallow not only Hull, but the communities, and with it the hope for change. Similar to Lukács' idea that "nothing is ever completely fulfilled in life, nothing ever quite ends; . . . everything merges into another thing, and the mixture is uncontrolled and impure; everything is destroyed, everything is smashed, nothing ever flowers into real life,"⁵⁴ this tale is like the sea that roars so loud it becomes monotonous.

In *Aufstand*, topography illustrates hardship through the senses. Seghers combined sight, sound, and taste to create a dense depiction of stasis. After the first

gathering, she uses the land to illustrate how difficult it is for the fishermen to continue their resolve: “Dann kamen Sturmtage, es war eine Mühe, vor die Tür zu kommen, nach Blé zu gehn, das war ganz zwecklos, dunkel und stickig dumpfte die Stube” (37). The elements merge, creating a homogenous topography of bleakness. The lack of blatant illumination suggests a tragic stasis or paralysis, in which nothing flowers into anything beyond initial hope. In contrast to Jim’s idealism, the topography compares more to Jim’s paralysis: “Der Sturm stemmte einem die Tür ins Haus, vor der Tür lag die Düne, und dahinter wieder eine Düne und dann kamen nichts als Dünen, bis nach Wyk, ganz weit hinten lag St. Barbara, wozu sich versammeln?” (37). Later, after the men try to negotiate, they return unsuccessful and one wished “Salz auf der Zunge zu schmecken” Land und Meer waren mit Staub bedeckt, der Wind war irgendwo beerdigt, die Leute hatten keine Lust, Lärm zu machen” (57). There is an uncomfortable friction to the dust and a too ample repetition of land which smothers any potential idealism and creates a stasis or paralysis where change becomes not only elusive, but buried by land mass.

The paralysis or stagnation as caused by land does not strike a balance with light motifs. Though Hull brings a measure of hope to the fishermen, the topography does not reflect hope or idealism with the Conradian lightness found in Jim’s dreams. In fact, there are only few moments of light in the text. Usually light only emanates from the shipping offices and from the lighthouses on the mainland. The most striking, albeit perplexing example is when Seghers described Andreas’ death: He is shot in the back by the soldiers as he runs away. Andreas knew that if he had allowed himself to be arrested, he would have been hung like the revolutionaries

before him. After he was shot, however, “etwas in ihm rannte noch immer weiter, rannte und rannte und zerstob schließlich nach allen Richtungen in die Luft in unbeschreiblicher Freude und Leichtigkeit” (91). The drive to run—even though that meant his destruction—resided behind “die Lichter hinter den Läden” (91). In this description, Andreas is more similar to Jim in that he literally takes flight into his idealism. While Andreas’ actions are a clear departure from Hull’s, it is interesting that Seghers framed Andreas’ death as a leap into lightness. Like the anarchist Kerdhys before him, and like Jim, Andreas sacrifices himself for an idea, and the light fuses the tragic nature of his destruction with a calm serenity. Andreas, (like Jim), does not sacrifice himself for a larger good, or for the community. To be selfless, Andreas would have had to sacrifice his pride, taken a position on the *Marie Farère*, and not have committed an act of terrorism by setting off a bomb on the boat. Unlike Hull, Andreas acts out of sense for his self, and out of his desire to fulfill an ideal.

Andreas seeks a permanence of spirit and for him it is realized in the tale of the anarchist Kerdhuys. Indeed, in the beginning Andreas admits the only moments of happiness in his life were when he stood up to authority: In the fish market, “die grauen Wände der Lagerhäuser haben geflimmert” (13) when he threw the fish away and quit his job, and when he resisted the captain on a boat who hit him by putting his bread knife to his throat. Andreas (like Jim) yearns for adventure and change, but is often stuck with monotony. In contrast to Hull, whose arrest immediately follows Andreas’ death, Hull is unable to find “etwas in ihm [,daß] noch immer weiter [rannte]” (92). While traveling towards his trial, Hull thinks “an die See, Schiffe,

Kameraden, Sonne,” but was unable to find a sense of fulfillment as dunes followed one another with such incessant swiftness and persistency (92-93). The two conclusions differ in that one disperses while the other contracts; thus creating a sense of palpable movement from lightness and release to darkness and overpowering constriction. Despite the details, both experiences—Andreas’ and Hull’s—create an overarching permanence that visualizes a breathing out and in, a suggestion that mimics the depiction of the sea in the beginning where the ship rips into the sea again and again (5). Thus, the narrative not only comes full circle, but continues its cycle of a community’s experience for release, but finding only survival again and again. It is no coincidence that the text opens with the image of a “leeren, weißen, sommerlich kahlen Marktplatz” (5) despite the darkness that hangs over St. Barbara. Though the island emanates darkness, the moments of lightness in the journey and experience, however problematic, create an eternal ripple effect in which nothing is ever concluded or forgotten.

When organized around a predominantly visual topography, the journey in Conrad’s *Lord Jim* and Seghers’ *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* becomes a concrete visual experience. Emotions, events, and the significance are charged with a tangible focus that creates permanence. Conrad’s haze bridges the reality to a private dream expanse, shaped by traditional ideas of idealism and heroism. In addition, the sun blazing on the solitary *Patna* as it sails illuminates Jim’s blinding adherence to a high standard of morality for a man’s actions. The focus on the open sea, in comparison to the closed city, gets rid of the fractured disorderliness of land and provides a more uncluttered and sweeping perspective, a parallel to Jim’s

understanding that human nature should be open, straight-forward, and honest. Jim's devotion to his idealism becomes as infinite and impermeable as the seamless nature of the sky and the sea that surround him; thus the use of the sun and the *Patna* create a rounded totality of that exemplifies Jim's ideals.

Jim is, as Marshall Berman would suggest, seeking out the quintessential modern arena, where to "be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world—and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are."⁵⁵ Jim seeks renewal from a tainted modern world and in his flight on the *Patna* and eventually to Patusan, he ultimately finds permanence in terms of tradition, heroism and fame.⁵⁶

Jim's journey is not without complications, however. In contrast to the sun, the rain and darkness on Patusan gives a balance and a measure of reality to Jim's idealism as it illustrates Jim's inability to adhere to his hazy and sunny idealism completely. Patusan becomes a nucleus of solidity in which idealism becomes outlined with traces of a darker reality, fraught by destruction. Conrad connected the idealism that predominately shapes Jim's life to the deliberately invented island, but the success of Jim's ideals means a loss of life, if not slaughter, of other civilians on the island. Like Horkheimer's and Adorno's investigation of the Odysseus figure, Jim's journey—if he is to live—has the choice of either deceit—in this case fighting against some of the natives—or failure.⁵⁷ For Jim, the goal of 'civilization,' prosperity, and fame on a small and unknown island justifies the means of battle. He is the bourgeois figure who uses cunning to find success. His journey, then, becomes

a concrete visualization of isolation. In the words of Horkheimer and Adorno, Jim “realize[s] totality only in complete isolation from all other men.”⁵⁸ Subsequently, his journey can be understood as one trying to solidify a primal passion. It is no coincidence, then, that Patusan is often covered in darkness and rain. The rain not gives weight to the haze and Jim’s dream-state, but it gives a clear outline to the darker and heavier reality that shapes Jim’s heroism.

In *Aufstand der Fischer*, the topography is consistently heavy. The isolated communities are weighed down and suffocated by a permanent darkness and oppressive conditions for survival. Seghers’ narrative is not the bourgeois individual (and heroic) journey of Odysseus, but rather Seghers presented a more communal mentality. Though similar to Patusan in its density, Seghers’ St. Barbara does not become a ideal place for Hull to flesh out his idealism, but rather it becomes an endpoint and a necessity, a constitutive principle for a self-realized community. Unlike Jim, whose journey equates with describing a ‘sentiment of existence,’ Hull’s journey becomes one in which the glory of selfhood is eradicated for the benefit of the community. Consequently, the narrative of *Aufstand der Fischer* visualizes Hull’s journey as an inordinate task, adding darkness and rain to substantiate the burden facing Hull.

Aufstand does not present a reality against an ideal utopia, but rather, through topography, the narrative offers a material and visual horizon of life remaining fundamentally indestructible despite individual suffering and death. In the end, after Hull’s arrest, the *Marie Farère* sails again. As usual, it is raining. Seghers depicted the moment of the ship’s sail through the perspective of the women, and reminiscent

of the “brooding” on the marketplace at the beginning, the women could “nochmals die Gesichter ihrer Männer so deutlich wie hinter dem Mittagstisch erkennen. Eine Minute lang erkannte sogar jede Frau in den Augen ihres Mannes das Feste, dunkel vom letzten Winter. Dann waren es nur noch ihre Gesichter, dann nur noch ihre Gestalten, dann nur noch Männer, dann nur noch ein Schiff” (93). While in *Lord Jim* Marlow continues his tale-telling, Stein still absorbs himself in his butterflies, and life still continues on and off of Patusan, Seghers’ community continues to illustrate the mood of anxiety in an epical sense. The blurring of the lines between the individual, the ship, and the horizon imparts an essence of a larger tragedy that creates a haze over the entirety of humanity. Still, the narrative does not end in a haze. The ship moves towards the horizon, “dem sichtbaren Strich entgegen, der die Nähe von der Ferne abschneidet. Sie hatte den Hafen vergessen, das Land verschmerzt. Die Frauen auf der Mole fingen an zu merken, daß sie durchnäßt waren” (93). The horizon is still very much visible, but also very much elusive, much like Marshall Berman’s title for modernity that “all that is solid melts into air.”⁵⁹ Yet the elusive nature is weighed down with the wetness of the rain as it hangs on the women, thus suggesting a material permanence and a cycle of struggle and survival.

The topographies of Conrad and Seghers are not romantic in that they mimic, imitate or are caused by collective emotions. In other words, the topographies are not direct reflections, but they do navigate and help shape the journeys that the stories take. In that sense, topography lends a visual vitality and becomes integral to understanding the tale as a whole. Just as Georg Lukács considered the novel as inadequate for representing epic and tragic themes, Conrad’s and Seghers’ narratives

illustrate the “the deepest melancholy” and “a nostalgia for the soul” that is the mark of modernity.⁶⁰ While experience in the urban arena can be an abstract and individual confrontation, the experience for Conrad and Seghers becomes material, and is connected to something more concrete and tangible. Both deal with the estrangement of modernity in their narratives as each is connected to and affected by the quest for wholeness, but by choosing undeveloped and less ‘modern’ arenas, they also reconnect to older roots and tropes and traditions of literature. Instead of focusing on a “system” or “structure,” Conrad and Seghers travel out of the city and provide a topographical totality of life as it resonates outward, and touches even the most remote areas.⁶¹ As a result, topography becomes a bridge between the outer modern world and its estrangement with the inner, thus representing a totality and corporeal reflection of the colloquial “inward turn” of modernism. Ultimately, the topography gives testament and endurance and re-energizes the quest with a modernist strain, enveloping the journey as one that potentially finds renewal and rejuvenation, despite the threat of the modern world.

Notes

All translations, unless otherwise noted are the author's.

¹ Joseph Conrad, *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, ed. Frederick R. Karl, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge P, 1986) 271.

² Conrad, *Lord Jim*, ed. Cedric Watts (Ontario: Broadview, 2001).

³ Unsigned, "Review," *Daily Chronicle* (October 1900), Rpt. in Conrad, *Lord Jim* 379.

⁴Gustav Morf, in his *The Polish Heritage of Joseph Conrad* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1930) 149-66, argued that *Lord Jim* was nothing more than a confessional novel, dealing with Conrad's guilt about leaving Poland. He pointed out that the *Patna* can be a play on *Patria*, thus making the ship Poland itself, and thus explaining Jim's reluctance to jump. Indeed, Conrad's personal childhood biography can be understood as scarred by isolation. As a result of the hardships of exile, both parents died early leaving Conrad an orphan and familiar with trope of traitorous loyalty. Later, Conrad himself went into exile when he chose to serve in the merchant navy. In his *A Personal Record* (1912), Conrad explains his choice in similar terms to Jim's jump: He felt he had taken a "standing jump out of his racial surroundings" (209). Though biography is indeed important, Conrad felt strongly about the fictional progress and would indeed complain when facts were linked to his tale. In a late letter to Richard Curle, [*Conrad to a Friend*, ed. Richard Curle (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1927) he complained about such identification and asked him to rid him of "that infernal tail [sic] of ships" (147).

⁵ Conrad, "Author's note," *Lord Jim* 374.

⁶ Octavio Paz, *Alternating Current*, trans. by Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1967) 15. Paz used the term 'landscape,' which I intentionally left out in my paragraph. Paz dealt with images of Mexico in the novel and while a landscape can be apart of a topography, a topography does not equal a landscape. The term landscape does not have the active element that topography does. On this, see my definition of topography in the introduction.

⁷ Con Coroneos, *Space, Conrad, and Modernity* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002) 112-113.

⁸ Conrad, "The Preface," *The Nigger of Narcissus* (New York: Norton, 1979) 145-48.

⁹ F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot; Henry James; Joseph Conrad* (London: Penguin, 1972) 201. See also, my discussion in chapter one, note five.

¹⁰ Though I have been using "nature" or Conrad's term, "sentiment of existence," I am basing my understanding of nature on Rorty's definition of self. On this, see note 27 in the introduction.

¹¹ John Bachelor, *Lord Jim* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988) 176.

¹² Bachelor noted that the original version read "a man that is born falls into a dream like a man" versus the published version that uses "is like." Whether or not Conrad intended the revision is debatable, but the wording as it stands makes dream and reality interchangeable, thus strengthening my argument of finding a bridge via topography linking the immaterial world with a material and solid one (176).

¹³ Conrad, *Lord Jim*, "Appendix E" 414.

¹⁴ See my note on Wolfgang Schivelbusch in the introduction, but Renzo Dubbini (*Geography of the Gaze: Urban and Rural Vision in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane [Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002]) also explained the city as a fractured view. When depicting the city from a ground level, it becomes "a city of fractures, autonomous, and localized views. Depictions of it register the appearance of new objects and new spatial configurations: traffic arteries of vast dimensions, traffic circles and multilevel intersections, large department stores, metal bridges, railroad stations, gas tanks, and enormous apartment buildings" (189). The transfer of the view from the city to the *Patna* gives a broader and more expansive perception, rather than one limited by smokestacks and urban buildings.

¹⁵ In his introduction to *Lord Jim*, Watts pointed out the discrepancy between the depictions of the pilgrims on the *Patna* with the lack of description of the slaughter of civilians on Patusan. When discussing the *Patna*, Jim goes to great lengths to explain the humanity of the pilgrims—for example Jim talks at lengths about a pilgrim asking for water, but when telling Marlow about (the enemy) Sherif Ali, he only refers briefly to the villagers as "half-consumed corpses," but becomes instead

overwhelmed at his success” (17-18.) In terms of topography, however, I deal with the similarities of the sun’s presence below in my discussion of Patusan.

¹⁶ In his *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*, (ed., Michael McKeon [Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2000]) Michael McKeon described modernism in general as a quest to redirect and “replac[e] modern ‘materialism’ by a passionate recourse to ‘the spirit’” (733). I liken this ‘spirit’ as similar to the embodiment of Jim’s elusiveness and hazy nature in his quest for idealism.

¹⁷ Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981) 210.

¹⁸ Guano trade, like the ivory trade was a lucrative business that often used exploitative means to gain wealth.

¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Douglas Smith (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) 20-21.

²⁰ Nietzsche 32.

²¹ Watts, “Appendix D” 385-392.

²² Pepper was a popular trade in northern Sumatra by traders from England, Portugal and the Netherlands, but Conrad bases his information not on the historical Patusan in southwest Borneo, but on the region of Eastern Borneo.

²³ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Visual Culture*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 1998) 239.

²⁴ Jacques Darras, *Joseph Conrad and the West: Signs of Empire* (Totowa, N.J: Barnes and Noble, 1982) 27.

²⁵ Elliot B. Gose, “The Truth in the Well,” *Modern Critical Interpretations: Lord Jim*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: Chelsea House, 1987) 20.

²⁶ Nietzsche 32.

²⁷ In effect, Jim’s trust in his idealism is his tragic flaw. The notion that *Lord Jim* is tragic does not stray too far from Aristotle’s theories in his *Poetics*. (Rpt. In *Criticism: Major Statements*, 3rd edition, eds. Charles Kaplan and William Anderson [New York: St. Martin’s P, 1991]). When Aristotle argued that tragedy, “is an imitation, not of men, but of an action and of life, and life consists

in action, and its end is a mode of action, not a quality” (28). In fact, *Lord Jim* could be understood as following basic paradigms of tragedy. Like every tragic hero Jim is constantly falling—he falls from the ship, from the grace of sailor, and he falls from favor in Patusan. Interestingly enough, Coroneos (see note 7) writes that “the greatest illumination, on the contrary, is the fact of Jim’s buoyancy. The ability of the hero (no less than the novel itself) to keep afloat is, as it were, a photographic negative of the fall” (133). Yet, Jim’s gravest mistake is ambiguous. While the sins of the Greek heroes are clear—Agamemnon fails to offer sacrifice and then kills his daughter; Oedipus marries his mother, and Antigone disobeys the law and buries her brother—Conrad clouded Jim’s (tragic) offense of abandoning ship in doubt. He loses his credentials as a seaman because “he jumped . . . it seems” (125). Jim gives no definitive answer beyond an impulse or a sudden twitch, and adds that “I knew nothing about it till I looked up,” a response that Marlow, Jim’s confessor, confirms as entirely possible (126). As usual, the topography mirrors this vagueness, or provides a concrete image to visualize the uncertainty in that Marlow describes the action as if jumping into an “everlasting deep hole” (126). Even in the moment of the *Patna*’s “demise,” Conrad used the sea to concretize the tragedy. Before Jim and the rest of the crew abandoned the ship, they heard a “faint noise of thunder, of thunder that is infinitely remote, less than a sound, hardly more than a vibration, passed slowly, and the ship quivered in response, as if the thunder had growled deep down in the water” (57). The murkiness obscures an undeniable mistake. While Conrad “imitate[d] life,” his text refuse to adhere steadfastly and clearly to Aristotle’s terms and inject the older tradition with ambiguity or modernist subjectivity. The murky images complicate the tradition, thus creating an unsettling and dissonant narrative that ruptures traditional understandings between the self and his topography.

²⁸ On this, see my introduction.

²⁹ Regarding her pseudonym Seghers wrote: “Diese Erzählung hatte ich als eine Geschichte aus meiner Familie angelegt; ich schreib darum auch in der ersten Person. Weil ich der Figur einen Namen geben mußte, der holländisch klingen sollte, kam mir der Name Seghers in den Sinn, er gefiel mir. Und da lag es nahe, daß ich mich als erzählende Nachfahre dieses Mannes ebenfalls Seghers nannte.” See, Sonja Hilzinger, “Nachwort,” *Der Letzte Mann der Höhle, Erzählungen 1924-1933*

(Berlin: Aufbau, 1994) 214. The name of Seghers refers also to Hercules Seghers, a contemporary of Rembrandt, both artists whom Seghers studied. In fact, she wrote her dissertation about Rembrandt. See, Netty Reiling (Anna Seghers), *Jude und Judentum in Werke Rembrandts* (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam, 1981).

³⁰ Nicole Suhl, in *Anna Seghers: Grubetsch und Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara: Literarische Konstrukte im Spannungsfeld von Phänomenologie und Existenzphilosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002) compared similar paradigms and structures of the short story and novel.

³¹ Both tales are collected in Anna Seghers, *Der letzte Mann der Höhle: Erzählungen 1924-1933* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1994).

³² Friedrich Albrecht, *Die Erzählerin Anna Seghers* (Berlin: Aufbau, 1965) 43.

³³ Kurt Batt, *Anna Seghers* (Frankfurt am Main: Röderberg, 1973) 32.

³⁴ Christa Wolf, "Introduction," *Jude und Judentum* 10-11.

³⁵ Fehervary, *Mythic Dimension*, 36. Though she is writing about Seghers' *Die Wellbech-Hütte* (1929, The Corrugated Iron Shack), she delved into the influence of Hercules Seghers' etching technique on Seghers' narrative. The technique is still pertinent to *Aufstand*, however, in that in the art of Hercules Seghers, there is a predominant amount of desolate landscapes.

³⁶ On "totality," see my explanation in the introduction.

³⁷ Anna Seghers, *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara*, ed. Helen Fehervary (Berlin: Aufbau, 2002).

³⁸ Seghers, *Aufstand der Fischer*, "Kommentar," ed. Helen Fehervary, 119.

³⁹ Peter Beicken, "Die Lust auf den Körper: Erzählbegehren und Sprachberührung in Anna Seghers' *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara*," *Argonautenschiff 2* (1993) 17.

⁴⁰ On this, see the introduction.

⁴¹ Suhl provides an interesting discussion comparing Hull to an apostle (242-244) and Fehervary suggests that Hull is modeled on the figure of Georg Lukács (*Mythic Dimension* 110).

⁴² Seghers, *Aufstand* 116. This is not to imply that Hull does not occupy a privileged status over the community. Like Jim, Hull is certainly more affluent. When Hull sits in Desak's pub, he

drinks “expensive” schnapps as he remembers a previous uprising in which he was shot. When he was about to be captured, people came and “hatten in langen stummen Reihen die Straße entlang gestanden, deckten ihn und brachten ihn weg” (17), and even on St. Barbara Hull is taken in, offered food, and listened to. Though he is not like Jim in that Hull is an agitator and an intellectual, he does occupy an advantaged status until he falls when the revolt is put down and he is arrested.

⁴³ Georg Lukács, *Soul and Form*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971) 193.

⁴⁴ Fehervary, *Aufstand*, “Kommentar” 102.

⁴⁵ Fehervary, *Aufstand*, “Kommentar” 106. Martin Kane in his *Beyond Ideology: The Early Works of Anna Seghers, German Woman Writers 1900-1933*. (ed. Brian Keith-Smith, [New York 1993] 255-276) suggests that Seghers had to have at least subconsciously been affected by the playwright Gerhard Hauptmann and his *Die Weber* (The Weavers, [1893]) as he too describes a failed revolt.

⁴⁶ Fehervary, *Aufstand*, “Kommentar,” 106.

⁴⁷ Fehervary, *Aufstand*, “Kommentar,” 107.

⁴⁸ Georg Lukács, “Realism in Our Time,” Rpt. in McKeon 764.

⁴⁹ McKeon 774.

⁵⁰ Inge Dierson, *Seghers Studien* (Berlin, 1965) 84.

⁵¹ Though not a topographical trope, it is interesting to note the yellow scarf that appears as a light motif throughout the text in conjunction with the prostitute Marie. Hull first recognizes Marie by her yellow scarf, which is one of the elements that cause him to want to take in every detail. At the end, when the soldiers rape and beat her, Marie clings to the scarf:

Was ihr aber nicht einerlei war, das war ihr gelbes Tuch, das hatte sie sich währenddem vom Hals gedreht und weit von sich weg gehalten. . . . Aus irgendeim Grund, vielleicht weil es ihr so besonders gefiel, vielleicht weil sie damals gedacht hatte, jetzt würde sich etwas wenden, jetzt kämen sie an, die Tuchschenker, hatte Marie auf diese Tuch eine verrückte Hoffnung gesetzt. Als einer versuchte, ihre Finger aufzusperren, kämpften ihre Fäuste weit über ihrem Kopf am Ende ihrer dünnen, ausgereinigten Arme einen verzweifelten, hartnäckigen, und zuletzt siegreichen Kampf (87).

Even when Desak, the pub owner, returns the next morning, he finds her lying among the broken glass holding the scarf. While the persistence of the yellow in the midst of the darkness likens to the yellow peeping out in a painting by Vermeer, it also becomes a focus for Marie to slip into a ‘dream-state’ and hold onto something meaningful in the midst of a brutal rape.

⁵² See, Suhl 114-135.

⁵³ Anna Seghers, “Die gemalte Zeit,” (1927), rpt. in *Woher sie kommen, wohin sie gehen*, eds. Manfred Behn (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1980) 103.

⁵⁴ *Soul and Form* 153.

⁵⁵ Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982) 15.

⁵⁶ The notion that depicting civilization becomes part of Jim’s journey is part and parcel of Conrad’s historical research. While writing *Lord Jim*, Conrad knew A.R. Wallace’s *The Malay Archipelago* (1869) which discussed the problem of modern civilization:

We should now clearly recognize the fact, that the wealth and knowledge and culture of *the few* do not constitute civilization, and do not of themselves advance us towards the “perfect social state.” Our vast manufacturing system, our gigantic commerce, our crowded towns and cities, support and continually renew a mass of human misery and crime *absolutely* greater than has ever existed before. They create and maintain in life-long labour an ever-increasing army, whose lot is the more hard to bear by contrasts with the pleasures, the comforts, and the luxury which they see everywhere around them, but which they can never hope to enjoy; and who, in this respect, are worse off than the savage in the midst of the tribe (Appendix, *Lord Jim* 438).

Jim, by adhering to the code of Patusan and allowing himself to die, becomes the antithesis of Brown, who betrayed him for his own ego. For Jim, it is not the city (or social state) that is as Simmel put it, “a unique place, pregnant with inestimable meanings for the development of the psychic existence,” but the isolated coast becomes the arena to lay permanent foundations to his notion of a civilized society.

⁵⁷ Max Horheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 62.

⁵⁸ Horheimer and Adorno 62.

⁵⁹ Marshall Berman, *All that is solid melts into air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982)

⁶⁰ *Soul and Form* 187.

⁶¹ The notion that Seghers' *Aufstand* reaches back into myth is nothing new. Alexander Stephan, in "Anna Seghers: Künstlerische Anschauung und politischer Auftrag" *Zeitkritische Romane des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Hans Wagner (Stuttgart 1975), writes that the story is "von Anfang an ins Zeitlos-Mythische enthoben," (173). Similarly, Sibylle Wirsing in her "Aura der Fiktion: Das Kaff im Zentrum der Utopie," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (April 23 1972), believes that Seghers emphasizes the mythic. In addition, Ute Brandes specifically points to the "brooding" at the beginning of the narrative as a bridge into myth: "Der berühmte Anfang der Erzählung, der die gesamte Handlung vorweg zusammenfaßt, verbildlicht das Aufbegehren der unterdrückten Menschen als mythische, personifizierte Elementargewalt." See, *Anna Seghers* (Aufbau: Berlin, 1992) 20.

CHAPTER 3
Washing in the Waves of Memory: Topography and Water in James Joyce's
Ulysses* and Uwe Johnson's *Jahrestage

“The personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea.”

--Stephen Dedalus, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

The sea and the shore in Joyce's *Ulysses*

Richard Kain—one of the earliest scholars of Joyce—lauded Joyce's *Ulysses* as an “encyclopedia” which walks the “path of Everyman through space and time to infinity . . . Man, finally, is the fabulous voyager.”¹ Envisaging *Ulysses* (and later Johnson's *Jahrestage*) as the ultimate ‘fabulous voyage’ through humanity becomes provocative when viewed through the porthole of topography, since without a topography to lend shape and form, the encyclopedic or metaphorical voyage remains in the realm of the immaterial imagination. In contrast to Joseph Conrad's hazy shores of London and Africa, or Anna Seghers's marginally recognizable coast of Brittany in *Aufstand der Fischer*, Joyce placed *Ulysses* in the “real” geography of Dublin in 1904. As a result, numerous critics, including Kain, have pointed out that *Ulysses* possesses an “epistemological authority akin to that of the map: The novel claims to present a totalizing representation of factual knowledge about a particular

‘real-world’ physical space.’² Part of the willingness to accept that Joyce’s Dublin is simply geographical fact mapped over onto a narrative comes from a conversation between Joyce and Frank Budgen. Joyce told Budgen that in *Ulysses* he wanted “to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book.”³ Rather than believing Joyce’s words so readily and assuming that Joyce used the maps of Dublin strictly for a project to create a factual prosaic map, Jon Heggelmund argues that the maps Joyce used represented Dublin and Ireland through the imperial gaze of Britain, particularly at a time when the “topography of Dublin was being violently altered by the events that led to the independence of Ireland in 1922.”⁴ Thus, the topography of Dublin becomes inundated with political and historical overtones.⁵ While Heggelmund’s study deconstructs the alleged cartographic representation of *Ulysses*, this statement is also important in that it already questions the validity of using the term geography over topography when discussing Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Or, it questions Joyce’s use of fact over a combination of metaphorical, cultural, symbolical, and political intersections that create the material essence of topography in *Ulysses*.

In addition, Joyce’s aim to “give a picture of Dublin so complete” becomes problematic in that the city per se does not dominate *Ulysses*’ topography. Richard Ellmann, in his *James Joyce*, remarks that “Joyce offers no architectural information, only places to bump elbows, or to lean them The city rises in bits, not in masses.”⁶ What does rise en masse, is water. Geographically, the city was in 1904 approximately two miles wide, but it (like the larger land of Ireland) was (and still is) encircled by water. The Royal and Grand Canals surround the city, and the River

Liffey runs east to west, cutting directly through the middle. Bloom's house, 7 Eccles Street—a focus in the “Calypso” (fourth) episode—is located in the northeast part of Dublin, as are the fifteenth and sixteenth episodes (“Circe” and “Eumaeus”), which are all situated near the harbor docks. In “Lotus Eaters” (episode five) Bloom takes a bath in the bathhouse located south of the River Liffey, and afterwards he walks along Sir John Rogerson's Quay. In “Hades” (episode six), the procession crosses over four rivers. And in episode ten—“Wandering Rocks”—the southwest part of Dublin becomes an ensemble in the streets that crosses back and forth over a number of bridges. Finally, the eleventh and twelfth episodes (“Sirens” and “Cyclops”) comprise of the northwest section of Dublin. “Sirens” occurs at the Ormond Hotel, which is located at the north bank of the River Liffey on the Ormond Quay, and the “Cyclops” episode takes place in the saloon just blocks north of the Ormond Quay.

Still, while the sites of the episodes can be pinpointed on a map of Dublin, there is very little in terms of urban pictorial representation in *Ulysses*. David Clark echoes this particularity in his understanding that while the streets, waterways, and monuments are named constantly, they are never described. Thus, the lack of pictorial descriptions “enables him [the reader] to ‘experience’ Dublin in a way that would be impossible in any simple one-dimension description.”⁷ That is, it becomes a metaphorical and symbolic journey throughout Dublin. The vivid and illustrative experience to *Ulysses* does not reside in the geographic details, but rather in the evocations of water as it surfaces as a motif throughout the text. Water becomes, as Michael Seidel suggests, a “fully migrated . . . and certainly a material hero of *Ulysses*.”⁸ Water mediates the characters' journeys into their thoughts. Richard

Ellmann has already suggested an overarching theme to explain Joyce's constant representation of the characters' thoughts: "Casual kindness overcomes unconscionable power In Joyce's work the soul—a word which he never renounced—carries off the victory."⁹ The soul, the self, or the inner gaze is the experience that informs the narrative, and the material and tangible quality of water which bookmarks the beginning, middle, and end of *Ulysses* creates a text in which the topography of water becomes a source and a shape for the individual in his culture.

The novel begins and ends with a strong but quiet presence of the sea and the shore evokes not only the individual, but also an entire culture. Joyce divided *Ulysses* into three sections and eighteen parallels, and structured each chapter after Homeric parallels. Harry Levin wrote that "the myth of the *Odyssey* is superimposed upon the map of Dublin," thus suggesting that the Homeric parallels create a type of metonymic cartography and a collective connection of figures.¹⁰ For example, the first episode "Telemachus" introduces Stephen Dedalus, implying that he is the son Telemachus to the absent father Ulysses, or in Joyce's text, Leopold Bloom. But while Homeric myth is certainly superimposed upon the map of Dublin, there is still a real texture to the topography of *Ulysses* which ultimately affects the individual. Water, particularly in "Telemachus," clearly extends beyond Homer and becomes the representation of Stephen's consciousness and the narrative's entire schema.

When the novel opens, Buck Mulligan, Stephen's friend and temporary roommate, climbs the parapet of Martello Tower that overlooks Dublin Bay. Geographically, the tower is located three miles southwest of the Dublin city center.¹¹

For Mulligan, however, the city center is irrelevant, and the seashore takes center stage. The topography is quiet and serene, and Mulligan pays homage to the tranquility as he mimics Catholic mass while shaving. Mulligan blesses “gravely thrice the tower, the surrounding country and the awakening mountains” (3).¹² The calm surroundings are so intense that Mulligan loses his sardonic nature briefly while “gaz[ing] out over the Dublin bay” as the wind ruffles his hair: “God, he said quietly. Isn’t the sea what Algy calls it: a grey sweet mother? The snotgreen sea. The scrotumtightening sea. Epi oinopa pontoon. . . . Thalatta! Thalatta! She is our great sweet mother. Come and look” (5). Like a conventional beginning to an epic, Mulligan invokes a muse. Here, however, he invokes two muses. The first invocation is to “Algy,” Algernon Swinburne, an Irish nineteenth century poet, accordingly invoking a national Irish consciousness, or at least acknowledging a poet who helped inspired an Irish national revival.¹³ However, the more serious invocation calls out to the sea. Mulligan commands to “look,” but the Greek phrases “epi oinopa pontoon” and “Thalatta” Mulligan uses translate to “upon the wine-dark sea” and allude to a shout of victory in Greek incanting “The sea! The sea!” While traditional criticism reads Mulligan’s exclamation as an introduction to a common motif that links water and womanhood, an argument that certainly supports water as a topography that connects to a larger culture,¹⁴ Mulligan’s invocation generates a series of strong visual cues that foreshadows the situations and incidents to come. By “looking,” it is the sea that transports Stephen back into memories of his “great sweet mother,” the “snotgreen” sea that concretely illustrates Stephen’s uncomfortable memory of his mother, the “scrotumtightening sea” on Sandymount strand where

Bloom encounters Gerty Macdowell, and it is “the sea crimson,” or the “wine-dark sea” that embodies Molly at the end of the night when Bloom returns to her bed, and she begins to menstruate. Thus, Mulligan’s invocation functions as a command and a surfacing-mechanism that gives a visual preview and buoy to the characters whose consciousness and journey are illustrated. While water is connected to womanhood, water—as a visual stimulant—becomes more than a “great sweet mother” or a womb that births the beginning of the tale, it becomes a bridge for the characters to reflect on their own journeys to the past, present, and future.

No surprise then that Mulligan labels the tower as the boys’ “omphalos” (17)—Greek for “navel of the sea.” Although Stewart Gilbert has already discussed the “omphalos” as a mystical seat of the astral soul,¹⁵ the shore on which the tower sits contains the center. On the one hand, the shore is the literal center for the boys’ lodging, but on the other hand, the shore becomes an orientation for Joyce’s topography. In an allusion to Homer, the tower refers to Telemachus dreaming about his father as he sits in a tower of Ithaca’s palace at the beginning of *Odyssey* before he receives guidance from Athena to seek his roots. Stephen, like Telemachus, gazes out over the sea during and after Mulligan’s antics and contemplates his past. By its cultural and literary reference, then, the shore intersects with an ancient and epic journey of investigating one’s past, thus functioning as a container for an individual and a cultural memory. Though the tower becomes the “navel” that gives Stephen a place to look inward, the sea as a container for memory functions as the expanse for an unmediated gaze and provides the stage for the shadows of Stephen’s, Homer’s, and Ireland’s past to materialize.

The sea prompts and gives a material perspective to Stephen's consciousness. Stephen first points to the central perspective of the sea when he complains about Haines (his roommate from England) and his violent nightmares. Stephen admits his fear of being "out here in the dark with a man I don't know raving and moaning to himself about shooting a black panther" (4). Without any noise or objects associated with a city to obscure his view, perspective, or consciousness, the sea provides the only focus. Its solitude isolates and pulls out Stephen's inward fears and thoughts—he has no other distraction.¹⁶ While Mulligan refers to the sea as a "mighty mother" (5), charging the sea with a spiritual and parental vibrancy, the reference to the sea's "motherhood" conjures less the metaphorical idea of earth and life-giver for Stephen. Instead, the metaphor reminds him of the opposite, of death: Stephen contemplates death and the memory of his own dead mother. The shore and the sea allow Stephen to explore his past without any (urban) interruption of his gaze. The homage to the sea pricks Stephen's memory and he remembers how he refused to kneel down at his mother's deathbed and pray for her despite her wish for him to do so. During the act of remembering, Stephen's gaze is focused on the open expanse of the "calm" sea. Subsequently, all of Stephen's internal memories connect to external images. Internal and immaterial thoughts gain shape through the external surroundings. Thus the sea becomes a prime place to write the topography of the inner self—more than a shore, it gives solidity, continuity, and durability to the internal gaze. The lather in Mulligan's shaving bowl compares to the "snotgreen sea" which compares to the bowl of "green sluggish bile" that stood by his mother's death bed. Also, Stephen's "snotgreen" handkerchief that he hands to Mulligan compares to the "ring of bay and skyline

[that] held a dull green mass of liquid” (5). Through the sea, the images of the mother’s sickness, Stephen’s mucus, and Mulligan’s shaving cream all connect to provide a strong visual representation of Stephen’s memory and pervasive personal guilt. The immensity of the dull green mass as contained by the shore gives gravity to Stephen’s journey of bereavement and his occupation with the past.¹⁷ The “omphalos,” is not only a “mystical seat for the astral soul,” but it provides a solid gateway to understanding the impact of the events on the characters. In the case of Stephen, the tower and the shore give substance to his memory.¹⁸

The centralizing role of the sea becomes more pronounced when Stephen complains that Mulligan offended him by making light of his mother’s death, calling her “beastly dead” (8). Mulligan doesn’t sincerely acknowledge or repent of his gaffe, and Stephen can only stare at the sea until it calms him. In fact, Mulligan tells Stephen to “[l]ook at the sea. What does it care about offences (9)?” The sea, though a container for Stephen’s memory is, according to Mulligan, absolved of judgment. Stephen returns his gaze to the sea and the narrative turns from prose to verse using kennings. Kennings, a device used in medieval lyric poetry, takes compound words to create language symbols that poetically denote otherwise straightforward images:

Woodshadows floated silently by through the morning peace from the stairhead seaward where he gazed. Inshore and farther out the mirror of water whirled, spurned by lightshod hungry feet. White breast of the dim sea. The twining stresses, two by two. A hand plucking the harpstrings merging their twining chords. Wavewhite wedded words shimmering on the dim tide (9).¹⁹

From a third perspective, the poetic images illustrate Stephen gazing at boats leaving the shore from the tower. Farther out one can see and hear the waves ripple in. The

lyricism is not only a throw back to older epic narrative language, thus endowing the topography with yet another texture of an older and more ancient Ireland, but the image induced from the kennings emphasizes the constancy and reflective nature of the ocean. This is not the sickly green mass of liquid, but rather an image of majesty and grace that is accompanied by sounds of the harp. The kennings forcibly slow down the narrative and in doing so it accentuates the external visual canvas, making the presence of the sea more durable and permanent. Instead of evoking a man-made image of boats, the narrator incorporates symbols from nature, such as “woodshadows,” thus creating a seam between the sea and the land. The sea filtrates everything—the gaze is “seaward,” it is “inshore and further out,” and a haze, caused by the sounds of waves, obscures the clear outline of the present, blurring the edges between the present and the past. Maria Elisabeth Kronegger, in a study of Joyce and Poe, writes that Joyce’s “mental experiences are the most frequent instances in images of circles.”²⁰ The mental observations by Stephen create interconnecting circles with the past and present. The recollection obscures the present of Ireland’s trading boats and forms a continuing circle with the boats in Ireland’s past as represented by medieval poetry, just as the sounds of waves create reverberating sounds of the shores of Stephen’s (and Ireland’s) past.

The suggestion of a tranquil past allows for the liquid “mirror of water” (9) to reflect time past. Indeed, the reflecting and whirling nature of water, or images of circles and cycles, combine with Mulligan’s voice singing below the parapet, and a “cloud began to cover the sun slowly, shadowing the bay in a deeper green”(9). The color green, of course, has already been connected to the death of Stephen’s mother.

The slow and reflective mood lulls Stephen back to the memory of his singing the same song for his mother that he hears Mulligan singing over the sound of the waves in the present. The overlapping of the past and present helps to surface concrete images connected to Stephen's mother: Memories, "spurned by lightshod hungry feet . . . beset his brooding brain" (10). Stephen's singing, his mother's smells, her nails, a roasted apple dessert she made all swirl together and climax with the appearance of the mother's ghost dressed in her grave clothes—his internal memories become external. Just as "wavewhite wedded words shimmer on the dim tide," Stephen hears the Catholic prayer for the dying over sound of the waves: "*Liliata rutilantium te confessorum turma circumdet: iubilantium te virginum chorus excipiat*" (10). The sea that allegedly "holds no offenses" allows for a crystallization of guilt as the waves give not only aural presence to Stephen's past through whispering the prayer, but out of the swirling water, the waves provide a visual presence of his memory, ultimately allowing the reader to visualize Stephen's internal reflections. The sight of the past is so tangible (and frightening) to the extent that Stephen shouts "Ghoul! Chewer of corpses!" (10). Only Mulligan, who stirs Stephen out of his reverie, ironically by shouting "ahoy!" and reminding him of land, stops the flood of images prompted by the ocean, and brings Stephen back to the shore of the present. Although the sea can be warm, inviting and calming, it also has the power to provide shape to guilt.²¹ This fact is further accentuated at the end of the episode when Stephen leaves Mulligan on the beach and he hears a "voice sweetened and sustained called to him from the sea" (23). The voice could be Mulligan swimming in the water, or a seal in

bay, but the ambiguity allows for it to be the possibility of Stephen's externalization of guilt—Stephen's journey is not over and neither is the sea's presence.

Stephen's most prominent encounter with the sea as it contains and shapes the past occurs in "Proteus" (episode three). After Stephen's encounter with the schoolmaster Mr. Deasy's, who goes on an anti-Semitic rant in "Nestor," Stephen decides to go for a walk on Sandymount strand, geographically located in the southeast part of Dublin. Stephen's focus remains his memory, but he combines his thoughts with an intellectual meditation on the divide between appearance and reality. The topography functions in this chapter on a dual plane—on the physical and the metaphysical. On the one hand the sea functions as a physical presence in Stephen's external reality, but it also functions as a device that illustrates his thoughts on the metaphysical and the non-reality or appearance. The narration begins with Stephen trying to understand the "ineluctable modality of the visible,"(37) or, as *The New Bloomsday Book* explains, Stephen is trying to grasp "the problem of the changing face of the world in relation to the reality behind it."²² As Stephen walks along the beach, the physical presence of the sea becomes his example and his subject. Through the sight of the "seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs" (37), Stephen uses kennings to reflect that the items—seaweed, debris, and the grooves in the sand that the water etches—are only signatures of an ever-shifting reality. While he can hear the "crackling wrack and shells" underneath his boots (37), Stephen understands that the spatial and temporal do not simultaneously correlate, and his cognizance of the spatial and physical realm are only presented to him after a shift of the temporal. Although the

spatial and temporal constantly shift in Stephen's present, the rhythmic pattern that Stephen falls into creates a cadence not only for his thoughts, but the regularity of the "crackling wrack and shells" reverberate over onto a larger (liquid) consciousness of Ireland's past. Just as the sea provides a shape for Stephen's past in "Telemachus," the sea and the shore in "Proteus" become a central container for the interconnecting and intangible thoughts within Stephen's consciousness, once again allowing the internal gaze to be externalized. Though the Homeric parallel of the chapter alludes to how Telemachus learned about Menelaus' management of Proteus, the slippery god of the sea, Stephen's slippery thoughts are channeled and are reined in by the sea and shore. Throughout the episode, they represent and give a canvas to the constant shifting and overlapping of historical, political, and social "signatures" that all surface in Stephen's mind and combine to create one encompassing "signature" with his present.

When Stephen questions if he is "walking into eternity along Sandymount strand?" (37), each situation or event he subsequently envisions becomes metonymical and symbolical. Similar to Martello tower in "Telemachus," the sea and the shore in "Proteus" become an "omphalos," and a center for interconnecting memories and situations. In fact during his walk, Stephen commands "Gaze in your omphalos"(38), thus strengthening the idea that a journey or look inward begins at the shore of the sea. After Stephen establishes a rhythm on the sand between the temporal and the spatial, Stephen can "[s]ee now. There all the time without you: and ever shall be, a world without end" (37). Stephen's incantation of line from the "Gloria Patria" transcends not only the limited present, but it moves into the biblical

realm of Christianity and evokes an eternal and seamless shore that contains all of mankind: The edge of the shore becomes the edge of time and space as it was initially created. It is no surprise, then, that when Stephen opens his eyes and sees two midwives walking towards the water, his thoughts connect them to the beginnings of creation. Though the midwives surface later in “Nighttown” when Mrs. Purefoy gives birth—an event that has yet to imprint this particular temporal realm—for Stephen, the midwives have come to serve “our mighty mother,” the sea, and ultimately all of humanity, since without either—the great womb (or container) or its servants, “[c]reation is nothing” (37). Symbolically, the sea represents a womb of humanity that does not have any closed boundaries. The topography, then, not only becomes inscribed with the memory of Stephen’s dead mother, as it surfaced at Martello Tower, but it shifts to include a larger encompassing “mother” of creation.

The sublime moment of creation is muted however, in that Stephen imagines that one of the midwives is carrying a miscarried baby in one of her bags, thus again negating the “life” element of the sea with the image of death. Stephen links the imaginary navel cord back to the beginning of civilization, “strandentwining cable of all flesh” (37) to “Edenville” (Eden)—arguably one of the first topographies in Western tradition. Eden, as a topography, sits on the edge of appearance and reality since as a physical place it does not exist though it certainly exists in a certain cultural memory of the past. Anthony Burgess wrote that Martello tower and the umbilical cord combine to link Stephen to his mother by a “navel-cord, and so back for ever and ever. And so the image of his mother must remain, a potent symbol, with Stephan all the day. Also he is linked through her to two other mothers—Ireland and

the Church.”²³ Burgess is right in that the umbilical cord symbolizes Stephen’s connection to a mother, but the subsequent images connect Stephen not only to a variety of ‘mothers,’ but to numerous pasts and signatures that affect the present. The sea becomes a never-ending umbilical cord, a never-ending expanse that allows overlap of symbols from the past—Stephen’s individual past, Ireland’s past, and mankind’s past as viewed through Christianity.

The physical and the metaphysical combine and can only be unpacked through the organizing principle of the sea—its fluidity and expanse allows a blurring of boundaries between the geographic (reality) plane and the larger symbolic levels (appearance). From the womb of the sea, Stephen sees his birth, but instead of being in awe of creation, he remembers the death of Avius, an early Christian heretic who dies of internal hemorrhaging in “a Greek watercloset” before being pardoned (38). These images of creation that flood Stephen’s imagination are described concretely as “whitemaned seahorses,” thus giving movement to a parade of thoughts. Yet the accompanying thoughts illustrate a continual pattern of rising and falling: The awe of Stephen’s birth is followed by the ironic fall of a Christian heretic; the rise of Stephen’s memory visiting his aunt is followed by the offence of his family’s penchant for “whiskey” and liquor, and the memory of Stephen’s desire to be a devout Catholic is followed by the awareness that he prayed more “to the devil in Serpentine avenue that the fussy widow in front might lift her clothes still more” (40). The rise and fall of memories ebb in with the personal, but they also ebb out to include the larger institution of the church, the decline of the (Irish) family, and the failures of piety. Thus, the appearance of the awesome interconnects with the reality

of the banal. Between paragraphs reminding of the rhythm of Stephen marching over “grainy sand” (40) and hearing the “proud rhythm over the sand furrows” (42), Stephen thinks about himself and the past in waves, using the sea to journey inward.

Oddly enough, it is the sea and the “wet sand slapp[ing] his boots” (44) that brings Stephen back to the temporal present. When Stephen realizes that he is headed back towards the physical tower/omphalos, he decides not to return, and sits down on the rock to watch the tide come in. As he does so, he sees a carcass of a dog and a “gunwale of a boat, sunk in sand” (44). The solid presentation of death and decay as it is washed ashore, ripples over and gives shape to a more ancient past when invaders (or Homeric pretenders) fight with the islanders for control. Through the waves of the sea, Stephen does “walk into eternity.” Guided by the sea, his imagination charges Sandymount strand with an eternal and epical permanence as it seamlessly connects to the present. Like the adult Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* who contemplates the “blank” map of Africa and later sees the disjunction between bringing the “light of civilization” to new shores, Stephen uses the visual cues of the sea to muse over Ireland’s long-standing history of being “conquered” by England. For example, his memory of the tower recalls Ireland’s past. One of fifteen built between Dublin and the town of Bray as a defense against Napoleon, the tower was named “Martello” after Cape Mortella in Corsica, a tower that the British seized in 1794 only after much difficulty.²⁴ The rejection of going to the tower, then, goes beyond Mulligan’s offense to Stephen, but it represents historically another symbol of imperialist domination of which Stephen resists.

By sitting on the rock and gazing out at the sea, Stephen chooses a more open, expanded, and continuous perspective—the sea by its very nature is void of domination. Jon Hegglund argues that in the later episode of “Wandering Rocks,” Joyce remakes the form of the map in *Ulysses* so that it suggests “neither imperialist domination nor postcolonial nationalist resistance, but rather a spatial complexity that cannot be reduced to either term.”²⁵ But by gazing at the sea, the same principle applies to “Proteus.” After Stephen imagines the endurance of Ireland over the conquerors, the conquerors are overtaken and destroyed by the islanders, and he physically connects the rhythm of the past with the present by relieving himself on the beach and into the water. He describes the seas as “full, covering greengoldenly lagoons of sand, rising, flowing” (49), thus again referring to the waves of the sea that now contain an essence of him. As he urinates simultaneously with the coming tide, Stephen hears a “fourworded wavespeech” (49)—a combination of the water and his urine. While the past “wavespeech” ushered in memories, this particular wavespeech clearly contains his present. As a result, Stephen inscribes his thoughts onto the ever-shifting topography of the past and present that is the Dublin and the world in *Ulysses*. The decaying dog, the sunken gunwhale, his urine, and the tide combine to create a lasting, permanent, and seamless container that is not etched out by one particular history or topography. Rather, all the images connect to create an encompassing and open-ended topography that is charged with various particles of time and place. Thus, when the chapter ends and Stephen sees a another cloud, it is not the cloud over the sea that ushered in his mother’s ghost, but rather this cloud moves like a ship in which “her sails brailed up on the crosstrees, homing, upstream,

silently moving” (51). The tide of memory has come in through Stephen and is now moving onto Bloom and through the present.

After Stephen’s walk on Sandymount strand, the narrative shifts to the consciousness of Bloom, and with it water functions less as a bridge to the past and more as a bridge to the present. For Stephen, whose gaze towards the sea reminds him of a larger past, Bloom’s thoughts of the sea shift towards the situation of Jews in the past and present. When Bloom wakes up, he heads to the butcher for a kidney for breakfast. The shop is situated between the River Liffey and the Royal Canal. On his way home, he reads the paper and begins to think about a fellow Jewish neighbor. They had celebrated the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, a thanksgiving of the harvest that celebrates the symbolic reunion of all the tribes of Israel.²⁶ Bloom recounts that the produce for the feast came from all over: “Spain, Gibraltar, Mediterranean, the Levant. Crates lined up on the quayside at Jaffa” (60). In contrast to Stephen’s imagination of invaders coming to Ireland (thus uniting a culture), Bloom sees the same cloud that Stephen sees on Sandymount and thinks about diaspora: a “cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly. Grey. Far” (61). Bloom uses the cloud as a metaphor for the scattering of the Jewish people. For Bloom, the color is grey and it reminds him of a “dead sea in a dead land, grey and old. Old now. It bore the oldest, the first race. A bent hag crossed from Cassidy’s clutching a noggin bottle by the neck. The oldest people. Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. It lay there now” (61). Unlike Stephen, who visualizes the sea as a container for the entire creation of humanity, Bloom uses the (dead) sea to show its proclivity to diffuse, divide, and decay. Also,

when juxtaposed with Stephen's vision of the Irish islanders vanquishing the conquering explorers, Bloom's vision illustrates a different type of expansion—one that leads more to isolation of the explorer rather than the islander. It is no coincidence either that Bloom incorporates in his vision of the dead sea an old alcoholic. She symbolizes for him the “desolation” (61) of his race. The desolation of the present as embodied in an alcoholic hag compares to the pasts of destroyed cities such as Sodom and Gomorrah. The dead sea, a site where a city once stood, literally contains remnants of a human race (Bloom's), which in the present is separated by time, land, and plagued by anti-Semitism.

But Bloom also uses images of the sea in his mind to reflect on the present. Parallel to Stephen's walk on Sandymount, Bloom goes for a walk on Sandymount strand in episode thirteen, or “Nausicca.” Yet unlike Stephen, Bloom does not gaze out at the sea and contemplate the past. While Stephen's stream of consciousness trickles from one particular past to another more ancient past, Bloom mostly (and physically) stays engaged with the present. From his view on the beach, Bloom can see Howth Hill, the northernmost rocky shore of Dublin and the site where Bloom had his first romantic union with his wife Molly. Bloom does think about their past, but his memories are always prompted by events in the present. Still, the sea in “Nausicca” is similar to “Proteus” in that it becomes the source and shape for the episode.

In *The Odyssey*, the Nausicca episode involves Odysseus waking on the mouth of a river that is home to the Phoenicians. He witnesses the princess doing her laundry, but instead of punishing him, the princess succumbs to Odysseus' pleas and

arranges for safe passage back to Ithaca. Joyce's "Nausicca" also opens with Bloom seeking refuge. Similar to Stephen's encounter with the anti-Semitic Mr. Deasey, Bloom has just had an altercation with the anti-Semitic Citizen at Barney Kiernan's saloon and he goes to Sandymount for some privacy. "Nausicca" opens with the young, pretty Gerty McDowell, "gazing far away into the distance" (348), thus echoing Stephen's earlier repose as he stares out into the "mother" sea. But Gerty is not trying to struggle with her intellect. Katherina Hagen writes that for Gerty, the beach becomes a room: "Der Strand ist für sie ungestört "matters feminine" besprechen zu können. Gerty benutzt die See als dekorativen Hintergrund für ihre träumerische Pose auf dem Felsen."²⁷ Hagen is right in that the shore becomes a private place much like a room, primed for thought, and in this particular episode, it becomes a room for intimacy. Like "Telemachus," the topography is isolated, quiet, and calm. The sun is setting "lovingly on the sea and strand" (346), and its setting underscores the isolation and private atmosphere, as the sun is "guarding as ever the waters of the bay, on the weedgrown rocks along the Sandymount shore" (346). In contrast to "Telemachus," this is not the open vista Stephen encounters. Rather the topography, though calm, is jagged, broken, and fragmented. The fragment caused by the jagged rocks emphasizes the seclusion of the beach. In addition, Gerty is not the Eve without a navel that connects all thoughts and civilizations, and this episode does not invite one to "[g]aze into your omphalos" (38). In fact, the main difference between "Nausicca" and "Proteus" is that the topography, as represented by the rocks breaking up the shore, concentrates solely on the individual gaze, rather than including a larger cultural one.

The episode begins with following Gerty's consciousness and later shifts to Bloom's—the two consciousnesses never intermingle. She is not a mother figure, but a sexual “specimen of winsome Irish girlhood” (348), and later a “little limping devil” (370). As Gerty gazes “out towards the distant sea,” she is reminded of the “paintings that man used to do on the pavement with all the colored chalks and such a pity too leaving them there to be all blotted out, the evening and the clouds coming out and the Baily light on Howth” (357). For Gerty, the sea is not an active force, illustrating tumultuous emotions in waves or movement. Instead, it is a gateway to fantasy and dreams of love, romance, and marriage. Gerty's solitary position on the rock alone is compounded by the back-story that she has been shunned by romantic partners in the past, and is now being ridiculed by her female companions who left her to go see the fireworks at the bazaar. Like Bloom, who has wandered onto the beach to find solace, Gerty uses the sea to dream of hope and romance. In terms of topography, Gerty's bridge to fantasy compares more to title figure in Conrad's *Lord Jim*, who loses himself in the “hazy splendor of the sea,” letting the romance of the sea inform her world and actions. Thus, when Gerty sees Bloom and speculates that he is a foreigner, she becomes enraptured with the idea of an exotic, romantic encounter. Bloom, in turn, takes advantage of Gerty's fantasy and complies. He masturbates at the sight of Gerty leaning back and showing her underwear. Meanwhile, surrounding them, a church is in service and the local bazaar is setting off fireworks. At the same time the church choir reaches a crescendo and the bazaar fireworks reach their finale, Bloom and Gerty climax: “And then a rocket sprang and bang shot blind and I! then the Roman candle burst and it was like a sigh of O! and everyone cried O! O! in

raptures and it gushed out of it a stream of rain in gold hair threads and they shed and ah! they were all greeny dewy stars falling with golden, O so lovely! O so soft, sweet, soft! (366-67). Similar to the “greengold” release of Stephen’s urine that connects him to the sea, Bloom and Gerty find their own colorful release on the beach. The waves of “O!” are unlike Stephen’s waves of past memories that meld appearance and reality. The waves on this shore create an atmosphere that incites the senses—the smell of the incense wafting across the shore, the brightness of the ensuing fireworks over the beach, the sound of the choir and fireworks, and the visual of Gerty’s new blue underpants combine to show isolated events and not an entirety.

After the sexual encounter “all went silent” (367), and the narrative shifts to Bloom’s consciousness of the present. The isolation of the evening on the shore allows Bloom to recap the day and ponder mostly on Molly’s present affair with Blazes Boylan. Just as Stephen has been preoccupied with his mother’s death, Bloom has been occupied throughout the day with his wife’s newest exploit: “All quiet on Howth now. The distant hills seem. Where we, The rhododendrons. I am a fool perhaps. He gets the plums and I the plumstones” (377). Similar to the romantic connection the topography elicits for Gerty, the beach prompts for Bloom thoughts of love, romance, and his marriage. But unlike Gerty, Bloom does not think only of “matters feminine” or matters masculine—the shore instead guides Bloom to think about the mutability of the present. The past, like “the distant hills,” lie far away, prompting him to associate his present sexual activity with foolishness. Unlike Gerty or Stephen, Bloom does not get caught up into the eternal romance or constancy of the sea. When sitting on the rocks looking at sea, Bloom reflects on the sea and the

sailor life. He calls it a “bloody curse” (378) and wonders “[h]ow can they like the sea? Yet they do. Something in all those superstitions because when you go out never know what dangers. . . .Then you have a beautiful calm without a cloud, smooth sea, placid, crew and cargo in smithereens, Davy Jones’ locker” (379). Bloom recognizes that the sea, like the present, ever changes. Both are anything but constant.

Bloom echoes this same sentiment when he considers writing a message for Gerty to read in the sand near the rock on which she was sitting. He decides not to since it would be “[w]ashed away. Tide comes here a pool near her foot. Bend, see my face there, dark mirror, breathe on it, stirs. All these rocks with lines and scars and letters. . . . Bloom effaced the letters with his slow boot. Hopeless thing sand. Nothing grows in it. All fades. No fear of big vessel. I. AM. A.” (382). While much has been made of Bloom’s unfinished statement, including Bernard Benstock’s summary of possibilities to include “a man, jew, cuckold, alone, ashamed, anonymous,”²⁸ the topography refuses to be etched with any permanence. Despite the fact that Bloom states earlier after the encounter with Gerty that “I am a fool” (377), the emphasis here is on the sand. Unlike the “seaspawn and seawrack” and the signatures of the past Stephen sees on the beach, Bloom does not see signatures of the past, but continually points to the inability of permanence. This idea and image is reminiscent of the beginning of the episode with Gerty’s recognition that the paintings are always washed away by the water. Similar to Bloom’s contemplation of the Dead Sea in episode four, the shore for Bloom is void of life, so empty that ships cannot even dock. His frustration with the sandy shore reinforces his separation and

isolation.²⁹ It is no coincidence that the last image of the episode is a single bat flying in the dark, and Bloom is “sitting on the rocks, looking” (382) at the sea, this time gazed at by Gerty. Bloom is not part of Stephen’s “world without end.” The sea illustrates his individual isolation in the present and detachment from a continuous and durable past.

The sea also plays a role in the last three chapters of *Ulysses*. Similar to the “Telemachiad” structure in the beginning, Joyce complied the last three chapters in a similar fashion to the last section of *The Odyssey* entitled “Nostos.” This section includes the “Eumaeus,” “Ithaca,” and “Penelope” episodes, or episodes sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen. Eumaeus and Ithaca concern Stephen and Bloom going to the cabman’s shelter near the docks for some food, and afterwards Bloom invites Stephen to his house for the night. Stephen declines and the stage is set for Bloom’s going to bed. In “Penelope,” the narrative is taken over from Bloom and is controlled by Molly’s voice. Void of punctuation and written with only eight period stops, the chapter is Molly’s recollection of the sexual voracity of the “suitors” in her life. In this last chapter echoing Odysseus reclaiming his bed with Penelope, Bloom has already entered the bed with Molly. In fact, the previous chapter ends with Bloom dozing off, symbolized by the symbol “ ● ” (737), thus allowing Molly/Penelope to speak without any meditated presence. Although the sea’s role is more marginal than a specific walk on the beach as in “Proteus” or “Nausicca,” the sea still surfaces throughout the chapter and plays an important role in that it gives shape to Molly’s stream of consciousness.

The character of Molly Bloom has been subjected to a tremendous amount of psychological criticism. Because her monologue at the end is highly suggestive, subjective, and fluid, the reading of her narrative lends itself well in critical reception to an exposé of illustrating the males' fears and desires. In a letter dated August 16, 1921, Joyce wrote that Penelope's monologue "turns like the huge earth ball slowly and everly [sic] round and round spinning its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because*, *bottom* (in all senses, bottom or button, bottom of the class, *bottom of the sea*, bottom of his heart) *woman*, *yes*."³⁰ Frank Budgen reads this comment as clearly indicative that Molly is a symbol of a "fruitful mother earth."³¹ Indeed, as an archetype Molly does become a mother—she reflects on her lost son, she has motherly thoughts about Stephen, and at the end of the text she starts her menstrual cycle. At the other end of the spectrum, Molly has also been understood as reinforcing the archetype of the erotic whore. Joyce does, after all, refer to monologue as one that is comprised of body parts. Molly recounts numerous affairs, admits that she prefers the sensual *Sweets of Sin* by Paul de Kock to the texts of Rabelais, and she accounts in great detail her recent affair with Blazes Boylan. Gabriele Schwab maintains that Molly is both mother and lover.³² For Schwab, Molly's text illustrates an ambivalence of feeling that is counterbalanced by opposite feelings, thus subverting the 'great mother' Penelope archetype: "such a system can only undermine the fact that Molly transcends every concrete manifestation of her self The archetypes underlying Molly's psyche no longer shape her consciousness. In the center of everyday life in Dublin, they melt into the cliché of the pulp novels she reads."³³ Rather than using Molly's thoughts or

digressions as a springboard into the text, the sea helps provide a concrete window into Molly's world that ultimately connects her cosmos to the rest of the narrative.

Though Molly does not go for a walk on the beach, she is clearly connected to the sea. Molly grew up on the island of Gibraltar. As an origin, Gibraltar is an interesting in that it was a place where many voyages (or odysseys) and nationalities interconnect. James Van Dyck Card examined the source material Joyce used for his knowledge of Gibraltar.³⁴ He pointed out the fact that Joyce never traveled to the island, but used Henry Field's *Gibraltar* (New York, 1888) as a source for *Ulysses*. According to Field, the variety of settlers, traders, and sailors "make a Babel of races and languages as they jostle each other in these narrow streets, and bargain with each other, and I am afraid sometimes swear at each other, in all the Languages of the east."³⁵ Molly makes note of the all the "Greeks and the jews [sic] and the Arabs and the devil knows who else from all ends of Europe and Duke Street and the fowl market all clucking outside" (782), but as an orientation for Molly's consciousness, the rock of Gibraltar illustrates Molly's multi-faceted 'omphalos.' There is not one particular 'astral seat' for Molly, but rather the sea's expanse gives an external point of reference for all of Molly's intersections.

Similar to the effect the sea has on Stephen and Bloom, the sea guides Molly's present, past, and future. She readily admits that "the smell of the sea excited me" (765), when she recounts one of her first romantic trysts with Lieutenant Mulvey. Unlike Molly's governess, who (like Stephen) takes offence that "half the ships of the world and the Union Jack flying with all her carabineros because 4 drunken sailors took the rock from them" (755-756), Molly looks their arrival and presence as

exhilarating: “[I love to] see a regiment pass in review the first time I saw the Spanish calvary at La Roque it was lovely after looking across the bay from Algeciras all the lights of the rock like fireflies or those sham battles” (749). Dissimilar to Stephen’s thoughts of the invasion of Ireland, Molly remembers a garrison near Gibraltar that was also (incidentally) against the English foreign presence on the Rock. But the memory of the garrison does not prompt Molly to reflect on Irish nationalism. For her, the presence lends vibrancy and is relegated to play and leisure through the “sham battles” and “fireflies.” In this sense, Molly compares more to Gerty who connects the sea to romance: “I wore that frock from the B Marche paris and the coral necklace from the straits shining I could see over to Morocco almost the bay of Tangier white and the Atlas mountain with snow on it and the straits like a river so clear . . . I was thinking of him on the sea all the time after at mass when my petticoat began to slip down” (762). The sea becomes a room and a springboard for sexual stimulation. Unlike Stephen’s ghosts or Bloom’s “Davy Jones’ locker,” the sea represents pure sensuality for Molly—the white snow, the caps in the bay, and the bright coral do not refer to the Dead Sea, or a “bay of green” that lends itself to sickness and decay, but rather the bright colors lend a vivacity and energy.³⁶

Most importantly, however, is how the sea figures in at the end of the narrative. Helene Cixous has already traced the water-like narrative structure of “Penelope” in her famous essay “The Laugh of the Medusa” when she suggests that Joyce writes with a “female” and fluid quality.³⁷ But the sea becomes symbolic of Molly’s relationship with Bloom:

O that awful deepdown torrent O and the sea that sea crimson
sometimes like fire and the glorious sunsets and the fig trees in the
Almeda gardens yes and all the queer little streets and pink and blue
and yellow houses . . . and Gibraltar as a girl where I was a Flower of
the mountain yes . . . an how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and
I thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my
eyes to ask again yes . . . an his heart was going like mad and yes I
said yes I will Yes (783).

Though Molly's love for Bloom becomes synonymous with a torrent of colors—
Molly's description of love is effervescent, melding together much like an
expressionist painting. Like the many nationalities that come together on Gibraltar,
Molly's relationship with Bloom is replete with unending images—the sea joins with
bright sunsets and splashes over into the streets—it a continuous string of organic
images that culminates in an affirmative yes. Though Molly (like Gerty) uses the sea
in a romantic sense when she and Bloom “were lying among the rhododendrons on
Howth head” (782), she is also, as Vikki Mahaffey suggests an “anti-Gerty:” “If
Gerty's introjected ideal image is feminine, Joyce had Molly project herself as
aggressive and even masculine . . . Molly takes pleasure in her ample flesh and
consciously registers all aspects of her physical existence.”³⁸ Unlike Gerty who limps
away and fades, Molly combines all her memories together and uses them to affirm
the future. Similar to Stephen's fluid and slippery imagination about the eternal past
and Bloom's rhythmic O's in the present, Molly has a comparable rhythm in her
seascape as it rolls in the “yes I said yes I will Yes.” The “will” makes the
memories—past and present—active that extends into the future. The three yeses
recall the three perspectives that are encapsulated in the sea and shores of Ireland, but
they also refer to the three timescapes—one yes for the past (I said), one yes for now,

and one yes, with a capital “Y” for the future. Moreover, for Molly, whose punctuation is haphazard, the capital “Y” invokes an affirmative answer that suggests a collective embrace instead of affirming individual isolation. Just as the novel opens with Stephen gazing out over the bay into the surrounding country and “awakening mountains,” Molly ends the day outside in the night air next to the sea, looking out over Howth and into the future with Bloom. Her “O” echoes Buck’s invocation of “Thalatta, Thalatta,” commits herself to the tides of the sea.

The sea and the shore in Johnson’s *Jahrestage*

In his extensive critical source book to Uwe Johnson, Bernd Neumann includes a small essay entitled “Das Großstadt-Epos. Von James Joyce über Alfred Döblin zu Uwe Johnson.” Neumann argues that Joyce and Johnson both used literary devices of the avant-garde to mediate poetically two timelines—a mythic “Vorzeit” and a cosmopolitan “Jetztzeit:” “Was bei Joyce der Odysseus-Mythos und bei Döblin die Hiob-Sage, ist bei Johnson der verdrängte Holocaust.”³⁹ That Neumann refers to Walter Benjamin’s essay “Über den Begriff der Geschichte” is telling in that Johnson does indeed structure history in *Jahrestage* as something continual rather than a “Konstruktion, deren Ort nicht die homogene und leere Zeit, sondern die von >Jetztzeit< erfüllte bildet.”⁴⁰ Moreover, Johnson substantiated Neumann’s later claim that he is writing a narrative obsessed with history when he introduced his main character Gesine Cresspahl as a 34 year old worker in New York City who began to question her past, and why her parents remained in Germany when her father had a job in Richmond, England: “Wie konnten meine [Gesines] Eltern auf die Idee kommen, daß 1933 ein gutes Jahr für Geburten ist? Und da sie damals die Wahl

hatten zwischen England und Deutschland, warum konnten sie auf die Idee kommen, daß Deutschland ein guter Ort ist, in diesem Jahr geboren zu werden?“⁴¹ Similar to Joyce, who declared that he was writing a portrait of Dublin, Johnson claimed that he was merely writing a realistic portrait of his character Gesine, who was to him “eine ziemlich wirkliche Person.”⁴² The difficulties in discerning the line between the fiction and reality of Gesine Cresspahl has been much debated, since much of Gesine’s life parallels Johnson’s: Both were born around the same time (Gesine in 1933, Johnson in 1934); Both are from Mecklenburg; both had to leave the GDR to find work (Gesine in 1953, Johnson in 1959), and both went to the United States in 1961.⁴³

In tracing Gesine’s certainly historical, but fictional life, Johnson created a topographical canvas that teems with metaphorical, cultural, symbolical, and political meanings that ultimately places the entire narrative in the realm of the (modernist) epic, one whose historical ramifications extend far beyond the Holocaust to include other historical crises such as the American war in Vietnam, the Cold War that had more or less divided Germany, and racial discrimination. While Homer’s Odysseus and Joyce’s Bloom make their way back to Ithaca, Johnson’s Gesine compares more to Joyce’s Stephen who cannot (ever) return home, but can only gaze on “home” through the ghosts of the past. As an exile from the German Democratic Republic, Gesine lives in the West. There are no suitors to destroy, nor a bed to reclaim. Gesine is, as Hans Mayer has already suggested, “entwurzelt.”⁴⁴ Similar to the seaman Marlow who is haunted by Kurtz and the circumstances that created him, or the narrator in *Transit* who seeks permanence in a timescape of extreme uncertainty,

Gesine undertakes her journey into a haunted memory that gives voice, shape, and in a sense permanence, to the past that has shaped her, and to a present that is informed by an unstable future. It is in this vein, of combining the “Jetztzeit,” the “Vorzeit,” and finally the “Zukunft” that makes *Jahrestage* similar to Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

Also similar to *Ulysses* is that Johnson’s novel is framed in the beginning and end by a strong presence of the sea. Although not explicit for the first few paragraphs, the narrative opens with Gesine sitting on a 1967 New Jersey beach, only “zwei Eisenbahnstunden südlich von New York” (1: 7).⁴⁵ The image of the sea that begins the text is one in which Gesine remembers swimming in the Baltic Sea as a child. Unlike the view from Martello tower, the opening lines describing the waves are not calm and inviting, with “[w]arm sunshine marrying over the sea” (Joyce 11). Rather, the text presents the Baltic waves as “lange” (long), with “Muskelsträngen” (muscled backs) and “zitternde Kämmen” (trembling combs, 1: 7). This seascape is completely opposite of the Thames in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* when the men lounge and wait for the turn of the tide. Instead, it compares more to the rough sea in Seghers’ *Aufstand der Fischer* as the waves represent a powerful, tangible, aggressive, and dangerous force. Although Beatrice Schultz writes that “die Bedeutung des wässrigen Elements erklärt es [Johnsons Bedürfnis nach Wassernähe] wohl kaum,”⁴⁶ the visual as representative of memory becomes as concrete as the ghost of Stephen’s mother who appears to him on the shores of the Dublin Bay. Like Stephen’s surprise of his mother’s ghost on a wave crest, the description of the waves in the beginning of Johnson’s novel is disconcerting in that it is not until the second paragraph that the location geographically orients the reader to New Jersey. The

implication (albeit still unclear) is that the waves in the first paragraph can stem from memory, imagination, or a real view in the present. Thus, many possibilities combine, and like Stephen's gaze, the focus on the sea in the beginning jettisons Gesine back into a real place within the timescape and topography of her mind.

As a description of the mind, the sea illustrates an aggressive process: "Der straffe Überschlag, schon weißlich gestriemt, umwickelt einen runden Hohlraum Luft, der von klaren Masse zerdrückt wird, als sei da ein Geheimnis gemacht und zerstört worden" (1: 7). The waves of the Baltic function as regulators—they have the power to deny the repression of secrets, (or ghosts, or history). Gary Baker suggests that the "waves created in the ocean are allegories of lived moment whose authenticity will never be regained . . . These moments are concealed as secrets of the dead past, brought back to a fragmentary and tenuous existence in narration."⁴⁷ But authenticity is not as important as the visual created. The empty void becomes powerfully filled, not allowing any diffusion or elusion. In this sense, the void becomes concrete—although clear, it has mass, weight, and a certain gravitas—the memory, albeit fluid, still carries with it gravity and lends concrete contours that shape the present. The weight is further accentuated when the water does not simply wash over the bodies of swimmers, or fill the "runden Hohlraum Luft" (space of air). Rather, the waves are accompanied by a "graupligen Grund" (gravelly bottom), which scrapes the children after the waves knock them down: "Die zerplatzende Woge stößt Kinder von den Füßen, wirbelt sie rundum, zerrt sie flach über den graupligen Grund" (1: 7). Within the first paragraph, the sea within Gesine's mind has a visual presence, but it also has a concrete texture that accompanies the visual,

ultimately giving the intangible notion of memory a tangibility and sense of touch. Subsequently, the opening description becomes symbolically representative of Gesine's odyssey—her journey into memory and history will not leave any emptiness, a ghost or shapeless presence, but rather the shapeless will find shape.

Using an epic convention, the narrative invokes a muse. In this case, the muse is the sea. Though Gesine does not directly call out to the sea as Mulligan does, the swimmer in the first paragraph (whose identity is not clear) is described as having “ausgestreckte Händen,” as if in praise or supplication, while the water flows over and pulls her “über ihren Rücken” (1: 7). Stronger than the wind, which is “flatterig” (only a flutter) (1: 7), the sea of the past (and present) has a material presence to which the swimmer succumbs. Although the orientation of these waves is later located as the Baltic Sea, the topography of Gesine's memory does not yet denote a particular event. (Not until later, on January 11, 1968, does the image of a swimmer resurface. It is when Gesine recounts her mother's attempt to drown herself in the Baltic soon after Gesine's birth.) As one of the opening images, however, the swimmer's struggle with the sea becomes a metaphor for the journey into memory. The journey is already made concrete through the gravelly bottom, but the sense of touch is accompanied by sound. Though the sound of the waves is initially described as “kappelig” (choppity), the sound of the waves becomes amplified and personified when Gesine hears in her memory a promise (or a threat) to knock her off her feet: “Ge-sine Cres-päl / ick peer di dine Hackn dä (1: 7). Although the text is written in dialect, the source is unclear. While the source can be attached (later) to the children playing on the beach in Gesine's past, it is placed directly next to the waves breaking

on the beach. The breakup of Gesine's name in her childhood dialect is uncannily reminiscent of the "fourworded wavespeech" in *Ulysses* which jettisons Stephen into an overarching past (Joyce 49). Through the wavespeech, Gesine's past is invoked, or at least given authority and charisma, and the ocean topography becomes united with Gesine's inward gaze and memory. Similar to the waves in *Ulysses*, the waves in *Jahrestage* help Gesine find her "omphalos"—it becomes the source where she hears and feels her past.

Thus it is no surprise that the shores represented in the first few paragraphs become a container for the Baltic and New Jersey coasts which ebb and lap onto each other with few discernable edges to the two shores. Water becomes the muse, the focus, and the bridge that prompts Gesine to connect the present with the past. Yet it is not simply her own personal past, but rather an overarching past and present that connects several nations—in this case, the United States and Germany. She realizes that African-Americans are not allowed to lie "in dem weißen grobkörnigen Sand" of New Jersey (1: 7), and immediately wonders if a certain fishing village near Jerichow allowed Jews to vacation there before 1933. Just as Conrad's topography connects to a number of shores, the fluid movement of the waves and beaches merge together to create a singular topography of culture that is dotted by waves of racism. Similar to Stephen's sight of the rusty boot and sunken gunwhale boat that prompts him to think of Ireland's history, the combined coasts on the Baltic and the Atlantic focus in on the cycles of the Conradian "horror" of humanity, which, like the waves, rise and fall throughout time. The sea, then, becomes a figure that emphasizes and provides the bridge between memory and the present.

It is important to note the significance of the title. While the narrative opens on a beach, without any specific reference to time, the rest of the book is divided by dates. Johnson once said in a speech that he named the book *Jahrestage* not only to recall the tradition of remembering a certain day, but by dating every day, each entry, however ordinary, becomes charged with memory and meaning: “Der überkommene Sinn dieses Titels ist: ‘Tage, an denen sich etwas jährt.’ Ich habe mir dazu etwas anderes einfallen lassen, nämlich auch die Tage eines Jahres, dreihundert-fünfundsechzig an der Zahl . . . Es wiederholt sich etwas, es kommt etwas wieder, jedenfalls in der Erinnerung.”⁴⁸ Thus memory, by Johnson’s acknowledgement, becomes paramount. Norbert Mecklenburg argues that the linear narrative structure of a “Jahrestag” becomes “nicht nur als Gedenktage schon festgelegten Tage, wie Geburts—und Todestage, die öffentlichen politischen, nationalen, soziokulturellen, religiösen Feiertage . . . sondern [macht] jeden einzelnen Tag dieses Jahres zu einem Jahrestag in einem besonderen Sinn: zu einem Tag erinnernd-erzählenden Eingedenkens.”⁴⁹ The ocean opens up Gesine’s past (as it does for Joyce’s Stephen) to release important memories, but the linear chronological dates simultaneously privilege the present (and future) events, interactions, and memories.

Similar to Stephen’s walk on Sandymount strand that jettisons him back into interconnecting memories of himself, his country, and humanity, Gesine also goes for a walk along the New Jersey strand. At first she sits on the beach in the afternoon looking out towards the sea. The afternoon sun is “dunstig” (bright and hazy, 1: 8). Analogous to the haze that bridges the past and present for Conrad and Seghers, the bright light “drückt die Lider nieder” (1: 8). The haze caused by the sunlight

reflected off the sea induces Gesine to drift off into a semi-consciousness, while the pounding surf heightens her senses. The beach becomes her bed as the sand “läßt sich zu festen weichen Kissen zusammen schieben” (1: 8). The combination of the sun, sand, and the rhythm of the waves as the surf crashes (prasselnden Geräuschen) functions as a hypnotic device just as it does in *Ulysses*. In his reverie Stephen drifts off to various stages of decay—within his family, within the church, within Ireland’s history. In the same way, when Gesine focuses on the wide expanse of the unoccupied beach (viel Strand unbelegen), the result lulls her into a sleep “wie aus einer Vergangenheit” (1: 8). Beyond the haze Gesine visualizes a mirror that reflects the interconnecting topographies of New Jersey and of Mecklenburg. The arrangement of the surf, sun, and the sound connect a rhythm of the present with the rhythm of the past: Gesine becomes aware of the paradox in which tourist planes tout restaurants and bars in the same sky that jet fighters practice navigation for the Vietnam War (1: 8). In addition, the loud surf creates the soundtrack to the war films of the beach movie houses. The entire scene ultimately creates an ironic totality—through the similar sounds that combine on the seashore; the signatures of things in the present become connected to a totality of the past.

Gesine (like Stephen) uses the sea as a container to blur the edges between appearance and reality and between the past and present. The difference, however, is that for Gesine, there is an urgency inscribed in her memories that are absent in Stephen’s thoughts, a fact that is obviously due to the post-war history that occurs before and after her birth in 1933 (World War I and II), events that had not yet existed when Joyce wrote *Ulysses*. The blurred edges are such that when Gesine rouses from

the semi-conscious state, she sees a surface that reminds her of her home in Germany: “Sie . . . sieht wieder das bläuliche Schindelfeld einer Dachneigung im verdüsterten Licht als ein pelziges Strohdach in einer mecklenburgischen Gegend, an einer anderen Küste” (1: 8). Gesine is on the New Jersey shore and lives in New York because of her shame for Germany’s genocide, while the present war signifiers that connect specifically to Vietnam (the war film, the jet fighters) remind her of Germany all over again. For Gesine and from the German perspective, the American war in Vietnam was a genocide that compares to the Holocaust. This situation, of feeling shame about the German past becomes intertwined with embarrassment and anger for the actions in Vietnam. Bernd Neumann reiterates this when he explains that Gesine’s task is to compare “ihre individuelle, historisch gewordene Schuld . . . mit dem allgemeinen Schuldigwerden angesichts des Krieges in Vietnam.”⁵⁰ Still, the specific signatures or issues surrounding the genocides are not as paramount as the recognition that the topography of war (or destruction and decay) is the same—the only change is the temporal shift. The shore becomes the stage to witness all events simultaneously. The haze blurs the lines and the events and it places them in the same visual plane, intertwining the past with a physical present.

In the evening Gesine goes for a walk on the shore, further compounding the role of the seashore in representing her memory. When Stephen walks on Sandymount strand towards Martello tower, he falls into a rhythm of crunching the sand and shells. Though Gesine, too, is walking towards a tower—a lighthouse—she cannot find a rhythm that lulls her into a reverie similar to her lying on the beach: “Abends ist der Strand hart von der Nässe, mit Poren gelöchert, und drückt den

Muschelsplitt schärfer gegen die Sohlen. Die auslaufenden Wellen schlagen ihr so hart gegen die Knöchel, daß sie sich oft vertritt. Im Stillstehen holt das Wasser ihr in zwei Anläufen den Grund unter den Füßen hervor, spült sie zu” (1: 8). The seaspawn and seawrack do not sound out a crunch and thus beat a rhythm back to the past, but rather the walk on the beach into memory is described with aggressively strong—if not violent images. The sharp shells—reminiscent of the sharp shell bursts from the day’s military exercises—combine with the hard sand as an all too concrete reminder of a violent past and present.

Moreover, the hard sand coalesces with the lighthouse’s blue light, “dessen wiederkehrender Blitz zunehmende Schnitze aus dem blauen Schatten hackt” (1: 8). The blue light is not only itself described with harsh and violent images, but it is also evocative of the same “blue rooftops” on the beach in Mecklenburg where Gesine played as a child. The rhythm of the blue light connected to the blue rooftops pricks Gesine’s visual memory of the past. As she walks, the sand hollows out beneath her feet and is filled with water. The sensation of the water and ground destabilize her balance and reminds Gesine of the incomprehensible (unbegreiflich) sensation of tumbling into the water when the children she played with brutally attempted to trip each other on the sand. Although the children are being cruel, Gesine attempts to recapture the “unbegreiflich” (incomprehensible) sensation between tripping and hitting the ground by letting “sich von den Wellen aus dem Strand schubsen zu lassen” (1: 8). Still, she cannot recapture the sensation of mystery from the past. Rather, Gesine’s attempt to recapture the incomprehensible sensation from the past is replaced by thoughts of other urgent and contemporary historical crises—the 1967

Arab-Israeli War and civil rights riots in America. In contrast to Stephen connecting himself to the entirety of Ireland's history through urinating, Gesine's walk on the sand illustrates her *disconnect* with a larger past and present simultaneously—the walk on the shore symbolically illustrates insecurity and discomfort about the entire world's present and past. The pleasure sensation of walking on the beach becomes instead full of metaphors of a violent past and present.

Finally, when Gesine's travels back to New York City, her view from the train window provides the culminating nexus of the sea as the principle organizer for Gesine's memory. When Gesine boards the shore train she sees a lot of decrepit equipment: "Am nächsten Morgen ist der früheste Küstenzug nach New York auf dem freien Feld vor der Bucht aufgefahren, invalide Geräte mit Pfandplaketten unter dem Firmennamen" (1: 9). Similar to the decaying dog and rusty boot that Stephen sees, the rundown debris reminds Gesine of her past. At first Gesine thinks of Jakob Abs, her former lover and the father of Marie. Jacob worked on the East German railroad.⁵¹ But the association of the German railroad correlates with other vacations and trips by unknown vacationers and travelers, and suddenly the present train ride back to New York becomes the past when Gesine was a child on a train. In looking at the coast, Gesine is able to pinpoint a specific time and place in her memory: "Im Sommer 1942 setzte Cresspahl sie in Gneez in einen Zug nach Ribnitz . . . Sie war so verstört von der Trennung . . . Auf der Ausfahrt in den Saaler Boden hatte sie den ribnitzer Kirchturm im Blick behalten, . . . dann die Düne von Neuhaus auswendig gelernt, . . . um den Rückweg . . . nach Jerichow später nicht zu verfehlen" (1: 9). Similar to the moment when the sea becomes the mode for Stephen to mourn the loss

of his mother which leads to contemplation of Ireland's past in the most broadest sense, the topography in *Jahrestage* becomes time and place specific.

The shore no longer becomes a general representation of memory as it did in the beginning. Neither does it illustrate a general uncertainty with events in the surrounding world. Through focusing on the sea, Gesine finally recalls a particular time and place—1942 on a train to the Baltic coast, five hours from Jerichow in southeastern Mecklenburg—when Gesine's father sent her away to live with her aunt's family. The exact chronicle of the event does not become clear until the second installment—on March 17, 1967—when Gesine recounts to Marie that Cresspahl was worried about air-raids in Jerichow. In an attempt to keep Gesine safe, he sent her to live with his sister-in-law.⁵² At this time, the only indication that the separation was necessary is Gesine's mentioning: "Ferien waren es kaum" (1: 10). Using the dunes and the coastal shore, Gesine points to the importance of the sea in organizing her memory—in order to find her way back to the past, Gesine uses the shore and the sea to guide her journey into memory. Before now, Gesine's memory was a general one, but after the final memory of a specific trip while looking at the New Jersey coast, Gesine's memories of her past in 1967 New York become just as concrete as the ghost Stephen sees. Similar to the ghosts that haunt Bloom and Stephen, Gesine engages with her past to understand both her past and her present.⁵³ Thus, as Gesine comes back from the coast, the other passengers who are going to work in 1967 New York combine with the working citizens from the coastal towns in Mecklenburg—those of the "blausandigen Bahnsteigs" (1: 9), of the German Wendisch Burg train station merges with the "blauen Gewölbe" (1: 10) of Grand

Central Train Station in New York, indicating Gesine's constant shifting from past to present. The invocation of memory is complete—through the sea, the topography of memory is ready to be mapped, and the shore becomes the bridge that gives Gesine access.

In contrast to Gesine's focus on the beach, one of the memories that surfaces includes the vision of her father "in einem schattigen Garten an der Travemündung, mit dem Rücken zur Ostsee" (1: 16).⁵⁴ The image of her father turned away from the ocean comes across as an important reflection in terms of where the gaze is focused. The image surfaces after Gesine sees photographs in *The New York Times* of a downed American plane in Hanoi and a Black Panther speaker giving an anti-war speech in New York, calling for a war on white Americans by using violence. Gesine imagines observing the faces of the police after their violent interference with the African-American rally "mit einem ungläubigen Ausdruck fast alterweiser Art" (1: 16). The "photo" of the father is surrounded in shadows—just like her imagined observation of the rally. But by remembering him with his back to the sea, Gesine's description suggests that her father's (Cresspahl's) concentration is not focused on the encompassing moment that is afforded her when she gazes at the ocean. Rather, his lack of concentration on the historical, or epic moment represented by the sea gives way to his own personal desires and romantic hopes. Gesine relates that this visit in 1931 was meant to be Cresspahl's last visit to Germany—he had visited his family, taken care of his accounts, and had visited his hometown, "wo er das Handwerk gelernt hatte, wo er zum Krieg eingezogen wurde, wo die Kapp-Putschisten [in 1920] ihn in einem Kartoffelkeller gesperrt hatten, wo jetzt die Nazis sich mit den

Kommunisten schlugen. Er hatte nicht vor, noch einmal zu kommen” (1: 18). Cresspahl was ready to leave Germany and settle permanently in England, but because of the position of his gaze he saw Lisbeth, Gesine’s mother. Soon after he decided not to go to Richmond, England, but to get a hotel room in Lisbeth’s hometown of Jerichow and court Lisbeth. Even Lisbeth interrupts Gesine’s memory to emphasize the importance of the gaze and asserts: “Dafür hatten wir einen Blick, Gesine” (1: 18). Gesine further explains the moment between the two when she describes that the “Seewind schlug Fetzen von Kurkonzert in dem Garten. Es war Friede. Das Bild ist chamois getönt, vergilbend” (1: 17). Albeit subtle, the point here is that the gaze, or “Blick,” makes all the difference in making decisions—the presence of the ocean is not enough, but rather the awareness of the moment is needed for perspective. In contrast to Gesine’s gaze on the Hudson in New York or on the sea in New Jersey, Cresspahl’s was cut off, thus suggesting a narrow and uncritical perspective of the events surrounding him.⁵⁵

Further, the romantic episode between Heinrich and Lisbeth compare to the moment Bloom and Gerty share, or even Bloom and Molly. For Heinrich and Lisbeth, the sea is a room that provides a romantic idyll—they glance at each other while at the coast; they walk on the shore, and it is on a hillside near water where their first romantic union takes place and Lisbeth agrees to marry Heinrich: “Die kommt nicht wieder. Die geht mit ihm wohin er sagt. . . . Die lagen . . . Auf den Rehbergen. Wo du einen Streifen See siehst, zum Steilufer hin” (1: 87). Unlike Stephen or Gesine, Heinrich and Lisbeth lack a critical consciousness and become engrossed in a moment.

In contrast to Gesine, who uses the ocean to organize her memories, her daughter Marie uses the ship in the Atlantic voyage to New York, and in particular the New York ferries to situate herself in connection to Gesine's past. Throughout the narrative descriptions of Marie are related to ships and/or ferries. In the introduction to Marie, the narrator describes the 1967 (assimilated) Marie as "angstlos." (1: 22). The picture is significant in that it becomes metonymical: Marie is looking out from a postcard picture at a summer camp, and she is sitting in a rowboat with "ein Bein im Wasser hängen" (1: 22). While water helps Gesine to organize her past, Marie is often the impetus for Gesine to do so—she is the primary listener to Gesine's narrative. Marie questions Gesine about the particulars of her memory, constantly asking if Gesine is being truthful. Unlike the waves in the beginning that overcome Gesine, Marie is not afraid of the incoming tide of memory. Marie handles the past and present much like her namesake Molly (Marion Bloom)—whereas Gesine is withdrawn, Marie is outspoken; while Gesine is cautious, Marie is curious. It is Marie who goes shopping in the New York crowds, Marie who befriends and invites the African-American girl Francine to stay with them, and it is Marie who forces Gesine to watch the news accounts of Robert F. Kennedy's and Martin Luther King's assassinations. Marie, like Bloom, is the foreigner who walks the New York streets cognizant of her foreignness, but adamant about her place in this American society. In fact, in an interview on January 2 and 3, 1972, Marie asserts that she was a "Kind von New York."⁵⁶

Despite the fact that she is "from New York," Marie's ease with the city is not seamless, however. When Gesine begins her narrative in 1967, she explains that

Marie was four in 1961 when the two left Düsseldorf on a ship. Similar to Gesine's trepidation in being separated from her father and home in Jerichow when she was a child, Marie, too, became agitated with the departure: "Sie hatte nach sechs Tagen auf See den Mut verloren, in dem neuen Land auf den Rhein, auf den Kindergarten in Düsseldorf, auf die Großmutter zu hoffen" (1: 19). Scared and disapproving of New York, Marie refused to assimilate or even integrate in the city and new home. Gesine complains that when she read various residential advertisements out loud, Marie would drop her head: "ihr lag nicht an den bewachten Fahrstühlen, nicht an der Klimamaschine; sie fragte nach Schiffen" (1: 19). For Marie, the ship was the one tangible form that connected her to the familiarity of home. Just as Gesine needs the shore to find a bridge back to Jerichow, Marie requires the ship to connect herself to Germany and Gesine's past. Marie even goes so far as to ask Gesine: "Wollen wir nicht lieber an einem Strand suchen?" (1: 21), when the two are looking for an apartment. Like the pounding surf that lulls Gesine and provides a source and a shape to the past, the ship—and later the Hudson and Staten Island ferry—helps Marie to organize the past, understand the present critically, and eventually gives form to the future.

Similar to Molly's excitement when she looked out on the sea, the ship becomes a beacon, a source of excitement, and a bit of homeland to which Marie can connect. While Manfred Durzak argued that the subject of *Jahrestage* is Gesine,⁵⁷ the true project also involves Marie. On the one hand Gesine delves into her and Germany's past in order to understand her own identity, but on the other hand she relates her stories to Marie so that the haze and obscurity of memory find substance

with a listener—the disruption Gesine experiences when conversing with ghosts is ultimately replaced by durability and continuity through Marie’s presence. It is no coincidence that on New Year’s Day, Marie presents Gesine with a homemade model of the house in Jerichow in which Gesine grew up. Through the rides on the ship and later the ferries, Gesine’s descriptions of memory are so precise that Marie is able to take the visual image of the mind and give it solid form. The concrete texture Marie gives provides permanence to Gesine’s memory. For example, when Gesine notices a particular door of the model that connected Cresspahl’s office to the child’s room, she asks Marie:

--Ging wirklich vom Kind eine Tür nur auf Cresspahls Büro?
--Du hast von einer anderen nicht gesprochen.
Dann war es Cresspahl, der in der Nacht zum Kind ging. Ohne Marie hätte ich es vergessen (2: 539).

The ships/ferries lend durability and continuity to Gesine’s explanations and memories about her past, but most importantly the rides allow for Marie’s active involvement in Gesine’s journey. Just as Marie “fragte nach Schiffen,” it was on a steamer that Marie first speaks. In an early entry on September 9, 1967—the third Saturday entry—Gesine explains that Marie had refused as a child to speak English at school, to the ice cream dealer, or at the grocery store, despite her knowledge of the (foreign) language. Not until the two took a steamer ride up the Hudson River did Marie converse in English with strangers:

Erst auf einem Ausflug hudsonaufwärts, als sie sich von zwei Jungen hineinziehen ließ in Fangspiele auf den Gängen und Treppen des mehrstöckigen, hausähnlichen Dampfers, verriet sie sich und rannte blicklos zwischen den Stuhlreihen hindurch vorbei an Gesine und sagte zu ihr wie zu einer Fremden: Excuse me! und ließ sich später finden auf den Stufen zur Brücke, wo sie den verblüfften Jungen

erzählte von Düsseldorf und dem Rhein in einem sprudelnden Gemisch aus deutschen Wortstummeln und akustischen Kurven . . . Aber die Jungen flogen am Abend zurück in ihre flußlose Stadt in Ohio (1: 67).

Marie is reminded of the “home” that allows her to relax and speak about home. But, the steamer also separates or releases her from the fractured view of the ocean the skyline causes. Indeed, the topography of the city underscores the fragmented nature of New York that oppresses Gesine and Marie and forces them out onto the Hudson steamer to begin with, and later on the routine of the Saturday morning Staten Island ferry. The narrator begins the entry on September 9, 1967 by describing the still, stagnant air surrounding the city, “denn die Stadt in sie pumpt aus Kraftwerken, Gasanstalten, Heizschornsteinen, Automotoren . . . die Inversion hat eine undurchlässige Küppel über die Stadt gestülpt. Der versammelte Dreck . . . dringt . . . in die Augen, in Hautfalten, legt Kehlen trocken, macht die Schleimhäute verdorren, drückt aufs Herz, schwärzt den Tee und würzt das Essen” (1: 65). The extensive description not only underscores the fractured view of the city, but its description invokes the sense of sight, smell, taste, and touch that juxtaposes with the openness of the air on the water, which allows Marie to speak freely to the Ohio boys (1:67). In the city, Marie’s focus or concentration is constricted—the pollution suffocates her senses, and it is only on the water when Marie is able to be released from the city’s grasp. Moreover, on the Saturday before the first ferry ride, Gesine takes Marie to the park for some fresh air, but instead of finding reprieve (or a voice for Marie), Marie was “angerempelt” and “gebufft” by the other children (1: 72).

The ship, steamer, or ferry rides do not provide a restrictive bubble, but rather their openness on the water allows for Marie to engage with Gesine (and her) past. It is on the Staten Island ferry rides when Gesine talks about the past, and it is on the Staten Island ferry that Marie confesses of causing trouble at school by speaking out against the Vietnam War, and it is on the Staten Island ferry that communication between the two is best achieved. As a result, every Saturday after this initial ferry ride, the day is known as “der Tag der South Ferry,” and Gesine regularly explains on this ferry (in conversation with Marie) significant memories, such as Heinrich and Lisbeth’s wedding, Gesine’s birth, and the events in Jerichow.⁵⁸

By relating memories on the ferry, Gesine hearkens back to an older form of storytelling in the vein of ‘spinning yarns’ on a ship in a vein much like Conrad’s Marlow. But the ferry becomes more than a place for Gesine to relate her memories, it also becomes a means for Marie to give shape and sound to the decisions of the ghosts in Gesine’s memories. Marie describes her attraction to the ferry much as one would explain an attachment to home. For her, the ferry is appealing “weil es ein Haus ist, das fährt; weil es eine Straße zwischen den Inseln ist, die sich selbst übersetzt; weil es ein Restaurant ist, in dem man reisen kann, ohne sich einen Abschied einzuhandeln” (1: 91). The ferry simultaneously provides movement and stasis. It allows Marie to remain in the present while Gesine travels back to the past. As a result the connection between the past and present remains fluid. While on the ferry, Marie asks Gesine about Lisbeth’s homesickness for Jerichow while she lived in Richmond, England with Cresspahl in 1931 right after they got married. Gesine tells Marie that Lisbeth did feel alienated, but she wrote and received letters from

friends and acquaintances. It is in one of these letters that Lisbeth finds out from Midshipman Herbert Wehmke about Elisabeth Trowbridge, a former mistress to Heinrich, a fact she did not share with Heinrich. Though the irony of a sailor alerting Lisbeth to the past is subtle, the point of the story is the dishonesty and lack of communication that existed between Heinrich and Lisbeth. Marie picks up on the irony and the communication gap, but she uses the ferry docking in the harbor to illustrate her understanding of the incident: “Wetten? sagt das Kind: wetten, daß es kracht? Wetten? Denn manche Fährkapitäne zielen zu spät auf das Becken, so daß das schwere Schiff gegen die hölzerne Pfahlwand der Einfahrt kracht, beim ersten Mal hart, dann mit einem mehr gedämpften Ton. Dann ist das Ächzen der Stämme im aufquirlenden Wasser zu hören” (1: 131). Missing the slip becomes metonymic—for the shipmate Herbert Wehmke and for the relationship between Cresspahl and Lisbeth. Like Stephen’s “ineluctable modality of the visible (Joyce 37),” the signature of the present (in this case the visualization of missing the slip) is not recognized until the sound of the event in the past. The bump of the ship when it misses the slip reverberates simultaneously throughout the ship *and* the relationship, or the past *and* the present—each being affected. But the signature of the bump, or Lisbeth’s withholding of information is not felt and realized until much later.

The ferry is not the only place where memory surfaces. Swimming, and the act of falling into (or drowning in) water, also becomes a means to illustrate memory. Bernd Neumann suggested that water for Johnson is a “Lebenselement, in dem Zuneigung und Erotik, Kommunikation zwischen Menschen überhaupt, auch Anfang und Ende beschlossen liegen. Das Schwimmen darin als ein Akt, der Menschen zur

Gemeinsamkeit verpflichtet.”⁵⁹ Water certainly connects the four volumes of the novel, and becomes a place for communication between the characters. The first volume opens with Gesine swimming in the Atlantic (and Baltic) waters; the second volume opens with Gesine and Marie swimming at the Hotel Marseilles in New York; the third volume begins with Marie and Gesine swimming in Lake Patton in northern New York in which Marie asks Gesine how many lakes she has swum in (3: 1017), eventually prompting Gesine to recount her life “swimming all the way from Mecklenburg!” (3: 1019), and finally, the fourth volume ends with the two in 1968 walking on a beach in Denmark, headed into the hopeful future of socialism in Czechoslovakia under Dubček and the “Prague Spring.”⁶⁰

Similar to Stephen’s umbilical cord that stretches from him all the way back to “Edenville,” Gesine uses water to connect her life with events in her life and without. While swimming in Lake Patton, Gesine places her swimming in the same waters with “Kindern, die tot sind, mit Soldaten der geschlagenen Marine” (3: 1017). Gesine, albeit not through urinating, is physically connected to the world through her recounting from the first lake to “the nineteenth lake in your life” (3: 1020) in which each lake is connected to either war, the British or Soviet occupation in Jerichow, her “exile” from 1953 to 1961 in West Berlin, “wo die Grenze am meisten entfernt war” (3: 1019), and her “exile” in America since the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The mood of Gesine’s memory is far from light; the narrative describes the lake water as “schwarz, duster” (3: 1017), “knochenkalt,” (3: 1018) and as a “[v]iel schweres schwarzes Pattonwasser” (3: 1020) in which not even fish and birds like to live. Like the black and heavy lake water, where light is swallowed and engulfed (3: 1017),

Gesine's memories stand in contrast to Marie's playful tones in English and German: "And you came swimming all the way from Mecklenburg! Marie steht längst auf der Spitze des Stegs, grüßt mit der Hand auf dem Herzen jene Fahne, die in Stadien zu Ehren des Siegers aufzieht, und sie grüßt die Verliererin, die unter ihr angeschwommen kommt. Sie spricht es mit Vergnügen . . . die Sprache ihres Landes" (3: 1020). Gesine's 'lakes' of memory weigh heavy and cumbersome and are replete with the contours of political history that has guided her life—they not only provide a map to the unfolding history of Germany since her birth, but they also indicate the immense distance between this lake and the one of her home. Lakes contain not only memory, but they become the concrete stations that signify the weight of her odyssey.

In particular, when Gesine and Marie are swimming in the "Mediterranean Swimming Club," water functions principally as the source and shape for Gesine's memory. Ironically named after the same body of water that metaphorically connects Homer's *Odyssey* with Joyce's *Ulysses*, the Hotel Marseilles hosts (much in the vein of the 1940s Marseilles in Seghers' *Transit*) a variety of immigrants, many of them being Jews who left Germany. And while the two are swimming, they share the pool with a group of elderly German women who critique Gesine's dive. In contrast to Gesine's "curious header," (2: 487), Marie glides in the water "wie ein Fisch auf der Rückreise ins ungeheuere Element" (2: 488). Similar to her familiarity with the ship, Marie's connection to water is natural and unforced—her memory is not polluted by watery containers of exile, as she has learned "den Kopfsprung anders" (2: 487). Namely, by this time Marie has learned to think of New York as home, and not as a

station on an odyssey or as a place of exile. Still, Marie's natural affinity with water helps Gesine tease out the particulars of her memory when she swims (or rides the ferry). At the pool Gesine remembers where she learned to swim in Jerichow, but as Gesine realizes, her "Erinnerung baut an" (2: 489), and later, the pool prompts Gesine's articulation of the time when her mother watched her fall into a rain barrel and she almost drowned because she could not swim. Gesine's act of falling—the complete opposite of Marie, who glides—underscores her uncomfortable relationship to water.

Gesine's near-drowning incident is a theme that surfaces throughout the narrative. The first time Gesine refers to it is when she eats lunch with her friend James Shuldiner on September 30, 1967. During their conversation, she suddenly remembers her father commanding her to leave the old housecat they had alone: "Dor kann se ruich sittn gân" (1: 64). But Gesine is cryptic and does not elaborate beyond the statement, except that her father told her not to be afraid of a cat on the same day she fell into the rain barrel in 1937.⁶¹ Months later, the comment resurfaces when Marie commands Gesine to explain "nun die Geschichte mit der Regentonne," since James Shuldiner "vorvorgestern im Mediterranean Swimming Club war und zu mir sagte: Dich läßt deine Mutter einmal nicht in die Regentonne fallen" (3: 615). Typically, Gesine is receptive to negotiating her past when she swims in lakes, pools, and oceans, but she hesitates to explain this memory, citing that it "war ohnehin im Sommer 37, und wir haben es längst verpaßt" (3: 615) and insisting that Marie will "wünschen, sie nicht zu wissen" (3: 616). Built to collect water to help with practical chores, a rain barrel was a common object in the country on farms, since "reiner

konnte er es nicht vom Himmel holen” (3: 616). In an effort to play with the old farm cat lying on the window sill, Gesine climbed up onto the lid of the rain barrel and fell in. It is not the act of falling in that affects Gesine, but in her memory she sees her mother “vor der Hintertür,” (3: 617) watching her flounder in the water. Thus, while in water, Gesine realizes the mental instability of her mother.

Gesine recounts that her father Cresspahl was the one who pulled her out while Lisbeth stood “wie erstarrt” (3: 618). Whether it was simply a fascination with drowning—an event Lisbeth could not accomplish herself—or an attempt to save Gesine “von Schuld und Schuldigwerden,” that is, the encroachment of the Nazis, the rain barrel incident gives shape to Gesine’s distrust, and provides another liquid mirror for Gesine to reflect on the disconnect of humanity in the past. In a sense, the rain barrel provides a metaphorical shape for the entire act of Gesine’s narrative. Just like Proust’s madeline biscuit that spawns the memory of his childhood, Gesine’s memory of floundering in the water and looking up at the blurry shapes correlates to the entirety of her project. She is constantly trying to “see” and make the past have presence, but like her attempts to see her mother from the rain barrel, the past becomes impregnable and blurry: “[w]enn ich die Erinnerung will, kann ich sie nicht sehen” (3: 617). Gesine must first be in the water in order to find clarity: “Da war ich längst unter Wasser. Ich hatte immer noch ihr Bild bei mir; erst dann fiel mir auf, daß in dem runden Tonnenschacht nur der Himmel zu sehen war” (3: 617). Through water, and in particular through the memory of the rain barrel incident, does Gesine “see” and organize her memory. It is no coincidence, that at the beginning of the rain barrel story, the narrator interjects a disagreement in the present between the African-

American singer Eartha Kitt and the American President's Wife Lady Bird Johnson: "Miß Kitt wußte eine Antwort auf die Frage, warum junge Leute auf der Straße rebellieren, warum sie Rauschgift nehmen und auf die Schule verzichten: 'Weil man sie von ihren Müttern wegrißt; damit sie in Viet Nam erschossen werden'" (3: 613). The future that Eartha Kitt sees, similar to the future Lisbeth saw, is bleak and holds nothing but destruction.

The rain barrel surfaces again later in February. Shortly before her suicide, Lisbeth witnesses the death of an eight year old Jewish girl during the so-called Kristallnacht in November 1938 while Gesine and her father are visiting his sister on the coast. Instead of telling the story completely, Marie asks if this is "wieder etwas, was du nicht erzählen willst? . . . So eine Wassertonnengeschichte?" To which Gesine replies: "So eine." (3: 725). The rain barrel becomes the metonymical source that represents the terror of the Third Reich and subsequently, separate 'horrors' become identified with and take the shape of a rain barrel. Much later, when Gesine retells Cresspahl's return from being arrested and interned in a Soviet labor camp in the late 40s, she centers again on the rain barrel. Cresspahl appears in a neighbor's rain barrel—shaven, sick and broken. And according to Gesine, he never overcomes his water cures: "Als sei er in dem Halbtagesbad bei Johnny nicht rein genug geworden, saß er noch oft in einer Wanne voll Wasser in der Küche, wenn wir aus dem Haus waren" (4: 1523). Like Gesine, who painfully remembers her mother's willingness to let her drown, so that she would not have to face the 'memories' of fear in the future, or Marie, who connects the more terrible 'ghost stories' of the past with

the rain barrel, Cresspahl uses the rain barrel (and water) as a place to cleanse him of his own memory of terror.⁶²

Yet despite the dread of the past that surfaces in water, water emerges again at the end of the narrative, and like Molly's affirmation, it is positive. On the last entry—August 20, 1968—the narrative follows mostly Marie. The meaning of the dialogue is cryptic, but Marie talks with Mr. Kliefoth, Gesine's former English teacher, while the three of them are in a coastal hotel on the Danish coast, before their impending trip into Czechoslovakia. Marie tells him first that she dreams to be able to live in peace again in the Germany of Gesine's past:

Auf einem polnischen Schiff, Zwischenlandung in Liverpool, dann hierher nach Kopenhagen. Die Einfahrt nach Rostock neben dem Alten Strom, Walddurchblicke im Doberaner Wald, der Bahnhof vom Wismar oder Gneez. Oder, wenn mir Jerichow untersagt ist, nach Wendisch Burg. Zur Not Neustrelitz, Waren, Malchin, wo keener uns kennt, wo ich eine Wohnung verdienen kann mit Blick auf einen See, einen Liegeplatz für ein Boot (4: 1680).

Although Marie has never lived in Jerichow, she has been schooled in memory well enough to find the return route. Until the end, Marie views Gesine's past with a disconnect, but during the trip to meet Gesine's old friend and teacher Kliefoth, Marie intimates that she, too, is now a part of the journey—on the odyssey with her so to speak. And while there is dramatic irony of the coming Prager Spring, Marie's voice takes the affirmative. She, like Molly, says "yes," and agrees to Kliefoth's request to look after Gesine, since "wir [Gesine und Marie] sind befreundet (4: 1681).

The final image underscores the affirmative (or dramatic tragedy) when the three go for one final walk on the beach: "Beim Gehen an der See gerieten wir ins Wasser. Rasselnde Kiesel um die Knöchel. Wir hielten einander an den Händen: ein

Kind; ein Mann unterwegs an den Ort wo die Toten sind, und sie, das Kind das ich war.” (4: 1681). The voice of the narrative is unclear. Throughout the chapter, Marie has dominated the narrative. By that token, then, Gesine has become the child and Marie the adult that stands on the margin, observing the three figures. Yet, if read as Gesine’s voice, Gesine becomes again the child from her past.⁶³ But the identity of the narrator is not as important as the realization that Gesine and Marie are finally connected through water. Unlike the aggressive water that Gesine swims in at the beginning of the narrative, this water is comforting, if not welcoming. The water, full of the past, present and future, (also represented by Kliefoth, Gesine, and Marie) unite to create one final “yes,” and one final connection of memory and humanity.

Notes

All translations, unless otherwise noted are the author's.

¹ Richard Kain, *Fabulous Voyager* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1947) 17.

² Jon Hegglund, "Ulysses and the Rhetoric of Cartography" *Twentieth Century Literature* 49:2 (Summer 2003) 164.

³ Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1964) 67-8.

⁴ Hegglund 165.

⁵ For example, Hegglund noted that a monument Bloom refers to was, in real history, started, but never completed. Yet in Joyce's Dublin, the political monument exists, thus creating a disparity between historical reality and topography.

⁶ Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford UP, 1959) 56.

⁷ David Clark, "Bloom in Dublin; Dublin in Bloom," *Silverpowdered olivetrees; reading Joyce in Spain* (Sevilla: Secretariado de Publicaciones de las Universidad de Sevilla, 2003) 235.

⁸ Michael Seidel, *Epic Geography: James Joyce's Ulysses* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1976) 83.

⁹ Richard Ellmann 379.

¹⁰ Harry Levin, *James Joyce: A Critical Introduction* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1960) 76.

¹¹ As with many of the places, the Martello Tower existed and Joyce lived here briefly with Oliver Gogarty in 1904. The tower was one of several fortresses built on the Irish coast to defend Ireland against Napoleon. Cyril Pearl, in his *Dublin in Bloomtime* (New York: Viking P, 1969) noted a report that described the towers: "They are in general forty feet in diameter, precisely circular, and built of hewn granite closely jointed. Some are already thirty feet high, and exhibit proofs of the most admirable masonry" (16).

¹² James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage, 1961).

¹³ Don Gifford and Robert Seidmann, "Note 1.77-78," *Ulysses Annotated* (Berkeley: U of

California P, 1988) 15.

¹⁴ See, for example, Anthony Burgess, “Telemachus,” *Here Comes Everybody: An introduction to James Joyce for the ordinary reader* (London: Faber and Faber, 1965). 94-105.

¹⁵ Gilbert 64. Gifford and Seidmann also point out that “omphalos” is one of Homer’s epithets for Ogygia, Calypso’s island where Odysseus is at the beginning of the epic. (Note 1.176, 17).

¹⁶ This type of epic expansive view is not much different than the opening view of the sea in Seghers’ *Transit* or in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*. The fluidity of the sea not only allows for a fluidity of thoughts, but it also reflects the contrast that the view of the city provides, namely the inevitable cramping of an open view that is fractured by buildings.

¹⁷ Joyce’s symbolism typically resonates on several levels. It should be noted that the “snotgreen” sea can also be understood as a mock-epithet to Homer’s “wine-dark sea.”

¹⁸ It is also important to note the similarities between Martello and Elisinore, the castle in *Hamlet* where Hamlet sees his father’s ghost on the parapets. *Hamlet* is widely recognized as another influence on *Ulysses*.

¹⁹ The reference to “harpstrings merging their twining courses” applies to the snippet of a song Stephen hears Mulligan sing below. It was the same song Stephen sung for his mother while she was sick. The image that the sea merges the sound and visual together strengthens my argument of topography lending shape to memory. The sea connects the present and the past.

²⁰ Maria Elisabeth Kronegger, *James Joyce and Associated Image Makers* (New Haven: College and U P, 1968) 33.

²¹ The use of haze should also be noted. Similar to the haze that surfaces in the texts of Conrad and Seghers, Stephen’s gaze is sometimes muted by haze. When Mulligan refuses to acknowledge his offense to Stephen, Stephen looks out at the sea, and “the sea and headland now grow dim. Pulses were beating in his eyes, veiling their sight, and he felt the fever in his cheeks” (9). Though Mulligan tells him to quit “brooding,” Stephen’s intent concentration (or fighting back tears) slips him into the poetic conjecture of the sea and his memories begin to wash over him. The haze

created, either through the sea or Stephen's tears becomes the initial bridge into his memory. Yet similar to Conrad's haze, the obscurity allows the intangible and inner self to take shape.

²² Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book* (London: Routledge, 1993) 13.

²³ Burgess 97.

²⁴ Ellmann, 1989, 171.

²⁵ Heggland 2.

²⁶ Gifford and Seidemann 74.

²⁷ Katharina Hagen, *Developing Waterways: Das Meer als sprachbildendes Element im Ulysses von James Joyce* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996) 108.

²⁸ Bernard Benstock, *James Joyce: The Undiscovered Country* (Dublin and MacMillan, 1977) 239.

²⁹ The only permanence for Bloom is in his continual presence and return to Molly's bed. In the end, when thinking about his jealousy, Bloom realizes that he is not jealous, because he is always last: "If he had smiled why would he have smiled? To reflect that each one who enters imagines himself to be the first to enter whereas he is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be the first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity" (731).

³⁰ Joyce, *Letters of James Joyce*, ed Stuart Gilbert, (London: Faber, 1957) 170.

³¹ Budgen 263.

³² Gabriele Schwab, "Mollyloquy," *James Joyce*, ed. Harold Bloom, (New York: Chelsea House P, 1986). 195-200.

³³ Schwab 199.

³⁴ James Van Dyck Card, "A Gibraltar Sourcebook for Penelope," *James Joyce Quarterly* 8 (1971) 163-174.

³⁵ Field 33-34, cited in Card 165.

³⁶ There is another parallel with Stephen and the "Telemachiad." When Molly recounts her romance with the Lieutenant, she refers to a tower. Molly recalls a tower (not unlike Martello tower)

built on the highest point of Gibraltar in order to monitor the Spanish fleet. It was named after the military governor of Gibraltar O'Hara. She liked going up there to view the surroundings. Ironically, the tower contains a shrine to the Virgin Mary. As Seidel puts it, the reference to the tower is sardonic since it is "Molly's namesake and [a reference to] an *extremely* faithful Penelope" (246).

³⁷ Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs* 1 (1976), trans. Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, 875-93. Katherina Hagen takes the same approach and calls Joyce's writing "aquatisches Fließen" (120). She argued that since Joyce ended the novel with Molly's voice, Joyce broke "aus der Tradition der männlichen Wasserfrauen-Texte aus, selbst wenn er mit Klischees nicht spart" (120). Hagen also connected the sea to Molly's menstrual cycle: "Auch ist die "flow"-Motivik nicht nur auf Molly, sondern auch auf Leopold Bloom ("the motherly man") zu beziehen. Sie ist "Flow-er" of the Mountatin" (18:1602), er Henry "Flow-er" (5.62), sie sagt, "its pouring out of me like the sea (18.1122), er spricht von "flow of the language (8.65), sie fühlt "the waters come down Lahore" (18.1148), er entwickelt "language of flow" (11.297-98) (129).

³⁸ Vikki Mahaffey, "Ulysses and the End of Gender," *A Companion to James Joyce's Ulysses*, ed. Margot Norris (Boston: Bedford Books, 1998). 164.

³⁹ Bernd Neumann, *Uwe Johnson* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt) 835. Neumann is correct in suggesting that *Jahrestage* is shadowed by the "verdrängte Holocaust;" Gesine is also haunted by the present-day American war against Vietnam. As she recounts her past, she often has conversations with her dead father, mother, and lover Jakob Abs. Neumann presents the narrator and Gesine's obsession with the past as one in which the dead demand Gesine to pay attention to the present: "Hinter dessen [des Vietnamkriegs] Blutschleier erscheinen . . . Lisbeth und Heinrich Cresspahl und viele andere. Sie alle verlangen von den Lebenden: Sie sollen ihrer "eingedenk" sein; sie sollen ihre individuelle, historisch gewordene Schuld vergleichen mit dem allgemeinen Schuldigwerden angesichts des Krieges in Vietnam."³⁹ For Gesine, the Vietnam War and the genocide in World War II are connected by similar patterns in human nature. It is this experience that connects Jerichow and New York—how war affects the two areas, a topic that I deal with in depth in chapter four.

⁴⁰ Walter Benjamin, “Über den Begriff der Geschichte,” Rpt. in *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1977) 158.

⁴¹ Johnson, “Einführung,” Bengel 25.

⁴² Johnson, “Einführung,” Bengel 20.

⁴³ In an interview with Uwe Johnson, Manfred Durzak, (*Uwe Johnson*, eds Rainer Gerlach and Matthias Richter [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984] 273-285) repeatedly asked about the fictional elements and narrative structure to *Jahrestage*. Johnson repudiated Durzak’s label of fiction, insisting on the ‘real’ elements to the text.

⁴⁴ Hans Mayer, *Der Turm von Babel* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991) 290.

⁴⁵ Johnson, *Jahrestage: Aus dem Leben Gesine Cresspahl*, 4 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1983). While Johnson envisioned his text as one volume, it was, nevertheless published in four installments. In the spirit of Johnson’s vision, the page numbering stays consistent. In referencing the text, however, I will use the volume number, followed by the page number, separated by a colon.

⁴⁶ Beatrice Schulz, *Lektüren von Jahrestagen* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995) 2.

⁴⁷ Gary Baker, *Understanding Uwe Johnson* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1999) 122.

⁴⁸ Johnson, “Einführung” 15, 25.

⁴⁹ Norbert Mecklenburg, *Die Erzählkunst Uwe Johnsons* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997) 216.

⁵⁰ Neumann 604.

⁵¹ It should be noted that Neumann suggests that the relationship between Jakob and Gesine in *Mutmassungen über Jakob* has always been connected by water: “Bereits die große Liebe zwischen Jakob und Gesine beruhte auf einer gemeinsamen Herkunft von der Ostseeküste” (837).

⁵² Ironically, this family later perished when the truck they were traveling in was shot and burned by Soviet troops. Regarding the immense amount of persons and events in *Jahrestage*, Rolf Michaelis, in his *Kleines Adreßbuch für Jerichow und New York: Ein Register zu Uwe Johnsons Roman >Jahrestage<* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), is immensely helpful.

⁵³ Though not discussed in detail in this chapter, Bloom is reminded at various times of the day of his dead son Rudy, who died eleven days after his birth. Bloom is also haunted by his father at times during the day. Both incidents are often understood as allusions to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

⁵⁴ In the vein of Joyce repeating images throughout his episodes, thus linking the narrative in other ways beyond plot and setting, this image occurs again later when Gesine notes *The New York Times*' article on Stalin's daughter. She sits in the shade "in einem Garten unter einer Schwarzeiche" (29). Gesine mocks her interview by pointing out how the *Times* reports on her dress, appearance, and answers. Yet, like Cresspahl's gaze, there is a moment when Stalin's daughter Svetlana looks "aufs Gehölz am Rande des Gartens," before she answers the question of political influence of her father. Her answer is completely guided by an opportunity to tout her new book.

⁵⁵ Ultimately, this moment answers Gesine's initial question of why two people would have a child in 1933.

⁵⁶ Johnson, "Interview mit Marie H. Cresspahl, 2-3. Januar 1972," Bengel 76. It should be noted that like her namesake Molly, Marie is committed to a future.

⁵⁷ Durzak 275.

⁵⁸ South Ferry is subway stop for the Staten Island ferry.

⁵⁹ Neumann 838.

⁶⁰ That Johnson spanned the text from August 20, 1967 to August 20, 1968 is telling in terms of Czechoslovakia's history. The Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization starting in January 1968 when Alexander Dubček tried to reform the Communist regime. On August 21, 1968, demonstrators were brutally suppressed by an invasion of the Soviet military. Afterwards, the Soviet government passed emergency laws that imprisoned anyone who protested, effectively securing control over the country. See, Jaroslav Krejč, *Czechoslovakia at the Crossroads of European History* (London: I B Tauris and Co, 1990). Also, Maria Dowling, *Czechoslovakia* (London: Arnold, 2002). And J.F.N. Bradley, *Czechoslovakia* (Edinburgh: University P, 1971).

⁶¹ Actually, before the memory surfaces, the narrator offers a Proustian tangent on the nature of memory:

Daß das Gedächtnis das Vergangene doch fassen könnte in die Formen, mit denen wir die Wirklichkeit einteilen! Aber der vielbödige Raster aus Erdzeit und Kausalität und Chronologie und Logik, zum Denken benutzt, wird nicht bedient vom Hirn, wo es des Gewesenen gedenkt. (Die Begriffe des Denkens gelten nicht einam an seinem Ort; damit sollen wir ein Leben führen.) Das Depot des Gedächtnisses ist gerade auf Reproduktion nicht angelegt. Eben dem Abruf eines Vorgangs widersetzt es sich. Auf Anstoß, auf bloß partielle Kongruenz, aus dem blauen Absurden liefert es freiwillig Fakten, Zahlen, Fremdsprache, abgetrennte Gesten; halte ihm hin einen terrigen, fauligen, dennoch windfrischen Geruch, den Nebenhauch aus Gustafssons berühmten Fischsalat, und bitte um Inhalt für die Leere, die einmal Wirklichkeit, Lebensgefühl, Handlung war; es wird die Ausfüllung verweigern. Die Blockade läßt Fetzen, Splitter, Scherben, Späne durchsickern, damit sie das ausgeraubte und raumlose Bild sinnlos überstreuen, die Spur der gesuchten Szene zertreten, so daß wir blind sind mit offenen Augen. Das Stück Vergangenheit, Eigentum durch Anwesenheit, bleibt versteckt in einem Geheimnis, verschlossen gegen Ali Babas Parole, abweisend, unnahbar, stumm und verlockend wie eine mächtige graue Katze hinter Fensterscheiben, sehr tief von unten gesehen wie mit Kinderaugen (1: 63-4).

⁶²It is no coincidence, either, that after Gesine refuses to go into detail about the Nazi pogroms throughout Germany in 1938, the next entry on South Ferry Day reprints an article from the *New York Times*. The report is about Vietnam civilians killed or wounded “in den Artillerie-, Raketen- und Minenwerfer-Kämpfen zwischen den feindlichen Streitkräften, entlang der Südseite der historischen Zitadelle in dieser Stadt, und amerikanischen Streitkräften auf dem anderen Ufer des Flusses genau gegenüber” (735). The parallel is implicit in the structure: Marie does not need to hear the details of murder in the past—she is confronted with it regularly in the news of the present.

⁶³ Throughout the novel Gesine sometimes refers to herself as she reflects on the memory as “das Kind, das ich war.”

CHAPTER 4:
Inner and Outer City Limits: Mapping Urban Topography in James Joyce's
Ulysses* and Uwe Johnson's *Jahrestage

James Joyce's *Ulysses*

In the beginning chapters of *Ulysses*, the city as a thriving urban presence is hardly perceptible. In fact, Dublin's urbanity is sometimes muted and relegated to a passive setting in which the city is merely a backdrop and the waterscapes instead become the predominant topography. Yet typical of Joyce, who often wrote in binaries and incorporated them into *Ulysses*,¹ there is a dual presence of urbanity and non-urbanity in which the two function as accomplices for illustrating the singular journeys of Stephen, Bloom, and Molly, but also the combined experiences of Ireland's and the world's past and the present. In the beginning Dublin is used as a passive backdrop, and Stephen is disconnected from the reality and his idyllic perception of a pastoral past in Ireland. As a result, the sea becomes paramount in understanding his experience.² As Stephen, Haines, and Mulligan prepare to have breakfast in Martello Tower, Mulligan opens the door to let in "welcome light and bright air" (11).³ The mood is refreshing and light, a contrast from shortly before when Stephen remembers the death of his mother and the sea gives shape to the guilt of his memory. When the men sit to eat, a dairy woman from Sandycove, a coastal

part just outside of Dublin, offers them fresh milk. Geographically, Sandycove is an agrarian community that is not part of the Dublin urban center. To the men, the woman is an “islander” (13) and not a direct appendage of the city.

As Stephen observes her pouring milk into a jug, she represents the entirety of dairy women who have ever lived and worked in Ireland: “Old and secret she had entered from a morning world, maybe a messenger. . . . Crouching by a patient cow at daybreak in the lush field . . . They loved about her whom they knew, dew-silky cattle. Silk of the kine and poor old woman, names given to her in old times. A wandering crone, lowly form of an immortal serving her conqueror” (13-14).

Underscored by a romance of milking cattle, Stephen conceives of an experience that is connected to a solid richness of heritage, or at least one that is still able to find presence in the midst of British colonial rule. The vibrancy is ironically undercut, when the Englishman Haines (or the conqueror in Stephen’s mind) speaks Gaelic—a direct linguistic remnant of an Irish memory and heritage—to the dairy woman. She responds by asking if it is “French you are talking, sir?” (14): the “islander” and “messenger” of a past are displaced by the reality of the present. The solidity of Stephen’s perceived past loses shape as the interchange with her destroys his vision of an eternal cyclic past of Irish heritage. Supposedly a representative of a long Irish heritage, the idyllic visual is marred with the recognition that throughout time, even the “islanders” have lost a concrete connection to the experience of the land. The topography of Stephen’s mind and of the dairy woman’s reality is not necessarily Dublin, but rather it includes visualization of an entire modernized Ireland. This conflict, one that—albeit extreme—is expressed again in an interchange with the

schoolmaster Mr. Deasy and again in the Cyclops episode when Bloom argues with the nationalistic Citizen, becomes fragmented by the reality of an area that functions through trade and service (mostly in the city) in exchange for money.

Soon after the dairy woman leaves, Mulligan tells Stephen to be sure to get his salary from the school because “the bards must drink and junket. Ireland expects that every man this day will do his duty” (15). The combination of age-old milk gleaned from the land, and alcohol from age-old pubs further debunks Stephen’s misconception of an idyllic and ever-permanent Irish heritage. This is especially the case when the rich heritage of Ireland’s past—at least according to this episode—is only comprised of a history of drunkenness and a lost language.⁴ While the city’s presence is not yet obvious, the urban reach of brothels and pubs is nevertheless present. As a result, Stephen’s memory and experience of Ireland gains new contours as it becomes reshaped by the reality of present day urban Dublin and Ireland.

One way to understand Stephen’s reorganization of experience is through what Michel Foucault terms “heterogeneous space:”

The space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time, and our history occurs, the space that claws and gnaws at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space. . . . We do not live inside a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light; we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on another.⁵

Stephen’s internal topography of Ireland is an idyll, but as a tangible place it does not exist. The past and the conception of a permanent idyllic culture cannot be superimposed on the reality of the present and the changing face of an increasingly urbanized Dublin and Ireland. Just as Foucault acknowledges that such idylls are

“sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of society,”⁶ Stephen’s Ireland is fundamentally unreal, a void that cannot be reconciled with his experiences throughout the day. Similar to Jim’s hazy fantasy of an adventure on an island that defines his heroism in *Lord Jim*,⁷ Stephen’s idyllic Ireland is displaced early on in the narrative and is replaced by a counter and more complex topography. Ireland becomes topographically divergent: It is no longer an agrarian paradise, but it contains a diverse culture—one that is represented by Bloom’s experience in present-day Dublin. The very nature of a narrative that prominently features a Jewish Hungarian immigrant roaming the streets of Dublin illustrates the disconnect between Stephen’s internal conception of an Irish past and the reality of the Irish present. Thus, the urban place and Stephen’s experience of it is important in terms of fracturing his sweeping perspective of a timeless and singular Irish past. From this viewpoint, then, it is not that significant that Stephen does not stay the night with Bloom at the end of the narrative in the Ithaca episodes. While much has been made of Stephen searching for a father and Bloom a son (in the allegory of Telemachus/Odysseus and Hamlet/King Hamlet),⁸ Stephen does not necessarily come away from the encounter with Bloom with a surrogate father, but instead through his experience of Dublin with Bloom, he gains a newly shaped internal and external awareness and experience of Dublin, of Ireland, and of history.

Stephen’s disconnect between an idyllic past and the reality of the present is further accentuated in “Nestor” (episode two). At the school Stephen gives a history lesson in antiquity about the conflict of Tarentum, Asculum, and the end of King Pyrrhus (24).⁹ Stephen’s naming of an ancient past in which cities struggled against

Rome is significant in that it not only becomes symbolic of Ireland's struggle against England, but it connects Ireland to a timeless battle for cultural, political, and economic control struggle since antiquity. As Martin Levitt writes: "We see the fringes of imperial trade on the Liffey, see the fringes of education and scholarship, communications, medicine, law, and religion, see the crumpled edges of Irish political life—all failed expectations."¹⁰ Through Stephen's history lesson, Dublin becomes intricately connected to a larger human penchant to decay through war and conquest.

The topography, however, goes beyond place names that invoke a history of warfare and conquest. Rather, the topography becomes most resonant in the naming of Dublin's Kingstown pier. When Stephen asks a pupil to explain the death of King Pyrrhus, the student either misunderstands Stephen or is ignorant. The pupil replies that King Pyrrhus is "A pier, sir . . . A thing out in the waves. A kind of bridge, Kingstown pier, sir" (24). Rather than correcting the faux pas and continuing on with the history lesson, Stephen replies that Kingstown pier was "a disappointed bridge" (24). For Stephen, Kingstown pier is a solid manifestation—to use Levitt's term—of Stephen's failed expectation. The pier embodies a disconnection between his conception of Ireland and the reality. Now named Dun Laoghaire, Kingstown pier was initially named by the English, and like the present-day language of the (Irish) dairy woman, the name "Kingstown" does not directly invoke an Irish heritage. Even its function is more closely connected to Britain and modernity in that it was built to service mail-boats between England and Ireland. In fact, it is this same artificial harbor that Stephen sees when Mulligan is shaving atop the tower earlier that

morning and invoking the sea.¹¹ The repetition of the pier's presence in *Ulysses*—first in connection with a Homeric allusion and again layered with Irish and English political overtones—visually connects the Homeric allusion of Odysseus' return in the “Telemachiad” to the complicated history between Ireland and England. That is, the pier becomes a bridge between the past, the present, and as a result it becomes a tangible metaphor of Stephen's disjointed and disappointed shape of Dublin (and Ireland). While Stephen tries to maintain the nationalistic point of view that Ireland was merely a land treated as a “pawnshop” (25), his experience resists such a perspective: The class ends with the call for the boys to play the English game of hockey and not the Irish national game of hurling. Stephen realizes that his experience of Ireland is more complex than his internal point of view—it is a heterogeneous space that is not limited by an easily constructed perspective of victim and perpetrator. Thus it is no coincidence that Stephen ends class with an unanswerable riddle to which the answer is a “fox burying his grandmother under a hollybush” (27). It is not only the ghost of his mother that haunts Stephen, but also the symbolic hope that the idyllic past buried under the holly will be resurrected and grow into something beyond a failed expectation.

As a result the pier provides a bridge to a larger topographical experience of history. The image and narrative placement of the pier illustrates the relation between the two extreme poles of Stephen's point of view and reality. On the one hand it gives terrestrial shape to the real geographical and historical contours of Dublin, but as a “half-bridge” and as a name from an imperial past, the pier exposes a disjointed, messy, and complex relation to Ireland's supposed idyllic past. The pier becomes

another place of divergence in which expectation and experience are not easily superimposed on one another. Like the episode with the dairy woman, the topographical turn in Dublin gives shape to a culture fragmented by place names which are ultimately motivated by urbanity—the topography of Dublin is not exclusively Irish, but it is one constructed out of other places and other cultures.

The tentacle-like reach into other places and pasts occurs again at the end of the “Nestor” chapter and right before the introduction of Bloom. Stephen talks to the anti-Semitic schoolmaster Deasy, who jokes that “Ireland, they say, has the honour of being the only country which never persecuted the jews [sic]. Do you know that? No. And do you know why? . . . Because she never let them in” (36). The joke is punctuated by the noise of his feet as he “stamped on gaitered feet over the gravel of the path. . . . On his wise shoulders through the checkerwork of leaves the sun flying spangles, dancing coins” (36). On the one hand, the description of land gives levity and adds a lightness of atmosphere to his joke, dressing Deasy’s anti-Semitic comments with meaningless forms—pebbles and specks of sunlight. Yet the fragmented image of stones and checkered spots of sunlight provide an obscurity to an otherwise clear-cut visual of the past as Deasy conceives it. Further, the ridiculousness of Deasy’s joke illustrates the non-permanence of Dublin as an isolated place with a purely Irish (in this case, non-Jewish) culture.¹² The totality of experience beginning with the milk woman creates a topographical displacement in which a particular conception of Ireland is consistently debunked.

The main visual representation of a present day urban Dublin resides not in Joyce’s narrative of Stephen, who stays mostly occupied with the past, but in

Bloom's experience. Joyce considered his Jewish Bloom as the wandering "hero" of *Ulysses*, and thus by default, Dublin becomes the stage and topography for Bloom's drama and roaming.¹³ Yet, similar to the "Telemachiad" in which the city seems marginalized, Dublin's metropolitan pictorial influence is minimal. As Frank Budgen wrote, there "is a wealth of delicate pictorial evocation in *Dubliners*, but there is little or none in *Ulysses*. House and interiors are shown us, but as if we entered them as familiars, not as strangers."¹⁴ Indeed when Bloom first appears in the narrative, he is in his house on 7 Eccles Street giving milk to his cat from "the jug Hanlon's milkman had just filled for him" (56). Milk, a recurrent motif that resonates back to Stephen's breakfast, comes not from cows in the land, but from one of three modernized dairies in Dublin. Yet Bloom does not describe the house or the dairy which would provide visualization to the city. As David Clark explains, "while all of Dublin's streets, waterways, and monuments are named constantly, they are never described."¹⁵ For Clark, the constant naming of places in Dublin illustrates Bloom's integration within and alienation from a community that was simultaneously cosmopolitan and provincial—though Dublin is a city, Bloom's alienation shows how un-cosmopolitan and provincial the city really is. As evidence of integration, he points to the number of immigrants in *Ulysses*: "Towards the end of the century, these had been joined by a not inconsiderable number of foreign immigrants, often political refugees. These are represented in *Ulysses* by Dlugacz the Polish butcher, by Stephen's music teacher, by the group of the Italians talking beside the ice-cream cart and, of course, by Bloom's family."¹⁶ A further example of Bloom's integration in the city is his address—in 1905 Eccles Street was regarded as a respectable, middle-class

neighborhood.¹⁷ While Clark is essentially right that the topography of Dublin predominately illustrates Bloom's identification with the city, the shape of Dublin does not come from narrative description, but rather from Bloom's experience and interaction with its culture.

For example, after he feeds the cat, Bloom walks to the pork butcher Dlugacz. During his walk he passes by and points out the institutions he sees. The institutions are typical for a city: a church, a bakery, two grocers, four merchants of wine and alcohol, and the National School. In looking at the variety of stores, Bloom imagines other older vestiges of the same marketplace: "Somewhere in the east: early morning: set off at dawn, travel round in front of the sun, steal a day's march on him. . . . Walk along a strand, strange land, come to a city gate . . . Wander through awned streets. . . . Cries of sellers in the streets. . . . Wander along all day. . . . A shiver of the trees, signal, the evening wind. I pass on" (57). Just as Stephen tries to connect the dairy woman to an older remnant of Ireland, Bloom's imagination seamlessly connects Dublin with older traces of cities in older and more exotic places, and he superimposes Dublin onto an older vestige of a commercial center. The vision changes from vibrant to threatening, however, when Bloom sees that a "cloud began to cover the sun wholly slowly wholly. Grey. Far" (61). The cloud distorts Bloom's vision of a vital and bright place with a dark image of a "barren land, bare waste. . . . Sodom, Gomorrah, Edom. All dead names" (61). The names reverberate with other cultural topographies that resonate with corruption inherent in urban commercialism. In other words, the commercial precedes the collapse. Bloom revisits this same theme later in "Lestrygonians" (episode 8) when he is walking in the commercial

district of Dublin: “Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away tool other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of houses, streets, miles of pavements, piled up bricks, stones. Changing hands. . . . Piled up cities, worn away age after age. Pyramids in sand. Built on bread and onions. Slaves. Chinese wall. Babylon. Big stones left. Round towers. Rest rubble, sprawling suburbs” (164). Through Bloom’s experience and observations, the shape of Dublin and its connection to a mythic past is made concrete. Max Rychner thinks similarly when he concludes that it is “auf einer Landkarte Dublin durch Linien mit Tausenden von Punkten auf der ganzen Welt verbunden. Diesem räumlichen Bezugssystem mag in zeitliches entsprechen, das vom 16. Juni 1904 aus Tausende von Zeitpunkten der Vergangenheit verbindet.”¹⁸ Just as Sodom gave way to Gomorrah and Heliopolis to Babylon, Dublin too is situated in a larger cycle of cultures, cities, and the weight of civilizations.

As a result, Bloom becomes an outside observer of the cosmopolitan community, or in other words, a flâneur.¹⁹ Bloom, like the flâneur, sees himself as a traveler to foreign gates while he takes in the sights. Edna Duffy reiterates this concept when she discusses that *Ulysses* is “the example of an early twentieth-century flâneur-novel.”²⁰ Yet while Bloom seemingly stands on the threshold and observes as an outsider (inherently because of his Jewishness) throughout his morning walk—at least in the “Calypso” and “Lotus Eaters” sections (episodes four and five)—Bloom is not the Benjaminian flâneur who searches for asylum in the masses.²¹ Rather he is more of a compulsive flâneur, a notion that Doris Bremm argues when she writes that Bloom’s “subconscious movement mirrors Bloom’s thoughts, which he does not or cannot steer either. They are rather directed by impulses Bloom perceives. Like the

wanderer in a modern labyrinth Bloom's thoughts fork into different directions, dead-ends, and like somebody lost in a labyrinth, they return to places they have been before."²² Bloom's thoughts are shaped by the sight and observations of the present-day city, but his impulse to observe also provides a bridge to Bloom's (and Dublin's) past. While Bloom essentially tries to remain in the present, his inclination to constantly comment and think about his surroundings propel his thoughts invariably back, ultimately providing a counter perspective to Stephen's idyllic point of view: Bloom's experience embodies the Stephen's disappointed expectation of Ireland.

In stark contrast to "Proteus" in episode three when Stephen walks on the beach, Bloom's initial experience of Dublin is predominately light. Before he leaves for the butcher, he puts on his hat from a milliner in Dublin in the "[g]elid light and air" of a "gentle summer morning" (55), and during his walk he is calm and in good spirits. Although he is an outsider, Bloom is not anonymous in the crowd like the man in the Macintosh who appears throughout the narrative, but Bloom's observations and thoughts give an experience of Dublin that lends the visual that Budgen complains is lacking. Except for a brief moment when Bloom sees a cloud and thinks fearfully about death and the fall of Dublin, the city in this observation is airy—the sun is shining, the other residents are polite as they pass by, the love letter Bloom receives from Martha is non-threatening, if not cute, and even a leak of alcohol from the train above becomes a "lazy pooling swirl of liquor" (84). The topography, similar to the calm and merry morning before the appearance of the ghost of Stephen's mother in the "Telemachiad" is friendly, inviting, and just as playful as the fresh and warm water of Bloom's bath in "Lotus Eaters:" "a womb of warmth,

oiled by scented melting soap, softly lathered” (86). Divergent from the ever connective and ambiguous tissue of Stephen’s conception of Ireland, Bloom’s initial description of Dublin is straightforward, familiar, and pleasant. The experience of Dublin does not stay gentle and warm, however. Similar to the symmetry of Stephen’s opening experience of a warm and calm topography that soon meshes with his tumultuous memory of guilt and death, the experience of Dublin changes for Bloom. The friendliness and his integration with the city in the morning balance out with a heavy and dark topography, ultimately illustrating a complex history and experience of the modern world.²³

In “Hades” or episode six, Bloom’s experience of Dublin turns from light and airy to dark and heavy. In this episode Bloom takes part in the funeral procession of Paddy Dignam, a friend who died of alcoholism. Ironically explained by Stephen’s father, Simon Dedalus—also a noted alcoholic—as “[m]any a good man’s fault,” (103) the funeral and wake is described from the perspective of looking out of the funeral carriage in which Bloom, Martin Cunningham, Simon Dedalus, and John Power ride from the southeast coast of Dublin to the northwest outskirts of the city. Initially on a route parallel to the shores of Dublin Bay, Bloom notes during the journey the streets and monuments in Dublin as they pass by them to the extent that the reader can follow the funeral on a map of Dublin.²⁴ The journey includes crossing the four rivers of Dublin—the Dodder, the Grand Canal, the Royal Canal, and the Liffey. Congruous to Homer’s *Odyssey*, the crossing of the rivers alludes to the four rivers of Hades: the Styx, the Acheon, the Coccyhus, and the Pyriphlegethon. Riding over the rivers becomes, as Michael Seidel writes, a mythical journey: “In

mythological parlance, these rivers are connected to Oceanus at the world's edge. The movement across and towards Dublin's northwest boundary is every citizen's ultimate journey. Dublin's surface, at once the Peloponnesus, the Mediterranean, and Ithaca, is now a version of the other world."²⁵ Superimposing Dublin onto Hades—the land of the dead—already clearly colors the light and airy Dublin with shades of darkness and the archetypal gravity of death. The movement of crossing the four rivers places Dublin in a classical urban topography—Hades being arguably one of the first cities full of masses and hazy shadows. It is an image foreshadowed and repeated when Bloom visualizes Dublin as one of the decayed cities of the past. Thus, the experience of a bustling city becomes muted and its continuity and shape become connected instead to a history of decay. Unlike Stephen's vision of pastoral Ireland, present day Dublin is indeed connected to a past—one that includes Tarentum and Asculum and those that fell to the (also fallen) Roman empire—but it is not a glorified idyll, rather it too belongs in the cycle of rising and collapsing.

Additionally the rhythm of the city beats at a snail's pace, beginning with the first sentence of the episode when “Martin Cunningham, first, poked his silkhatted head into the creaking carriage and, entering deftly, seated himself” (87). There is no movement, no walking, but only seated observation enabled through the window of a carriage. The wheels of the funeral carriage clang over tram-tracks, and the street names and monuments that should affirm the interconnectedness and continue the vibrancy of a thriving city instead places a brake on the narrative. The observation becomes one of forced pauses and deceleration: Tritonville Road, Irishtown, ripped up roadways in front tenement houses, the National School, St. Mark's cathedral, the

Queen's Theater, the gasworks, Sir Philip Crampton's memorial, and Nelson's Pillar among others (88-92) all equally hearken back to historical moments and disrupt movement in the present.

Bloom's gradual approach to Glasnevin cemetery slows down his internal flaneuresque observations of the present and his observations shift to memory—in this episode, Bloom compares to Stephen as he is continually haunted by his past. While Bloom tries to concentrate on the trifles of the everyday present, memories of the deaths of his son and father in addition to his suspicions of Molly's consistent (and present) infidelity plague him. For example, when the carriage is "passing the open drains and mounds of rippedup roadway before the tenement houses, lurched round the corner and, swerving back to the tramtrack, rolled on noisily with chattering wheels" (88), Bloom spots Stephen. Despite Bloom's preference to listen only to the "clatter of the wheels" (88), he hears instead Dedalus' rant about Stephen's choice in friends and how he goes around "with a lowdown crowd" (88). The incident prompts Bloom to think about his own paternal legacy and he remembers his own son Rudy who died eleven years ago, eleven days after his birth. The city's depiction of open sewage and construction give a concrete reflection of Bloom's emotions—the memory of Rudy is an open wound, and Bloom consistently tries to "swerve" and avoid it by moving forward in the present. In an attempt to move past thoughts of death, Bloom tries to focus instead on life, namely procreation: "Must have been that morning in Raymond terrace she was at the window, watching the two dogs at it by the wall of the cease to do evil. And the sergeant grinning up. She had that creamgown on with the rip she never stitched. Give us a touch, Poldy.

God, I'm dying for it. How life begins. . . . My son inside her" (89). Instead of remembering death and decay while traveling near the industrial grime of "the bottleworks," Bloom attempts to connect the cityscape he now sees from the carriage window with a happier memory. Near the Grand Canal where the carriage is and where Bloom and Molly lived when they conceived Rudy, Bloom lingers—almost insistently—not on the tragedy of his son's death, but instead on the placement of the military barracks, a part of the city's experience that elicited sexual excitement: "Yes. yes. . . . Life. Life" (89).

But Bloom is unable to stay focused on the more pleasant memories. Immediately after his memory of Molly conceiving Rudy, the road again becomes rough and Cunningham notices that the carriage is dirty and full of crumbs. Soon after, the carriage stops in front of the Grand Canal near the gasworks. While stopped, Bloom sees the gasworks and next to it a sign that reads "Dog's home," an institution maintained by the city to protect strays. The sight of the shelter reminds Bloom of his father Virag who had committed suicide. In a letter his father wrote before his death, Virag asked Bloom to look after his dog: "Be good to Athos, Leopold, is my last wish. Thy will be done. We obey them in the grave" (90). Once again, the visuals of the city prompt Bloom's memory and gives form not only to his past, but it simultaneously describes Dublin. Dublin is not simply a thriving marketplace, but is also full of industrial areas, construction, and homeless (if not dead) dogs.

The memory of Virag's suicide is most poignant, however, when the carriage passes through a "[d]ead side of the street" (95), and the carriage "climbed more

slowly the hill of Rutland square” (96). While ascending bit by bit, the men see another funeral (ironically “galloping” fast around the corner) for an illegitimate child, signified by the white horses and white plumes on the coach. Subsequently, the men enter into a conversation about untimely or ‘unholy’ deaths and in particular they talk about suicide. Except for Bloom, all the men in the carriage are Catholics, thus prompting each to declare that suicide is the “greatest disgrace to have in the family” (96). Like the deliberate movement of the carriage up the hill, Bloom tries to ignore the men, but the slow tread impedes his attempt and compares to the clogged stuffiness of the place where his father committed suicide: “That afternoon of the inquest. The relabeled bottle on the table. The room in the hotel with hunting pictures. Stuffy it was. Sunlight through the slats of the Venetian blinds. . . . Had slipped down to the foot of the bed. Verdict: overdose. Death by misadventure. The letter. For my son Leopold” (97). In contrast to the bright refreshing air of the morning, Bloom’s memory envelops the city in an impenetrable haze, a repetition of the grey cloud he saw in the morning. The sunlight does not “dance” as it did on Deasy’s back, but it hangs heavy in the room, unmoving and it gives gravity and density to Bloom’s memory and to the movement of Dublin. Once again, in trying to shake the gravitas of the memory, Bloom concentrates on listening to the carriage rattling “[o]ver the stones” (97), and Cunningham brings up the topic of an international automobile road race that was to take place the next day in Germany in order to speed their trip along. For Bloom, however, the weight of memory and death lingers as the next images are a hospital for the terminally ill and a hospice where “old Mrs. Riordan died” (97), both punctuated by street-organ music playing Handel’s “Dead March from *Saul*.”²⁶

Consistently, the topography of Dublin in “Hades” gives material weight, gravity, and shape to the grievances of Bloom’s past and the industrial grime of the city. As a result, the journey through the city is not simply one in which a reader can follow various place points on a Dublin map, but it resonates with Bloom’s past experience of it.

It is no coincidence that the carriage stops twice, once in front of the Grand Canal as the bridge is being lowered, and again as the funeral party has to wait for a “divided drove of branded cattle” (97) that is headed to the slaughterhouse. Ironically, the herd is also on its own particular funeral procession, “lowing, slouching by on padded hoofs, whisking their tails slowly on their clotted bony corpses. Outside them and through them ran raddled sheep bleating their fear” (97). This is not the idyll of the “dewsilky cattle” that the dairy woman milks in Stephen’s visualization of a past Ireland, but rather their walk through the city illustrates mass consumption of meat. Or, as Bloom puts it: “Roast beef for Old England” (97). In terms of mass consumption, Bloom comments that the Dublin corporation—the ruling body of the city—should build a tram for the animals and another tram for funeral processions. But this Dublin is not an efficient and fast-paced metropolis like the “municipal funeral trams like they have in Milan” (98). The desire of the funeral tram points to Bloom’s wish to separate himself from death. If on a tram, the movement is faster, and as Wolfgang Schivelbusch notes, there is a “loss of continuity.” The change affected by the speed of a tram would affect all the senses, “visual perception is diminished by velocity.”²⁷ But neither Bloom nor the city of

Dublin is able to whisk death away quickly via a train—Bloom must bear witness to death slowly and completely.

The topography of this episode aches for movement, and the sight of the cattle cements the correlation between the city and death. Although Bloom is metaphorically walking in Hades, his present reality—internal and external—is shaped by death and decay. Even when Bloom passes Dunphy’s street corner (another pub on the street before the cemetery), Bloom cannot conjure up an image of merry drinking and eating, but he instead imagines the group drowning the day’s events in alcohol and envisions Dignam’s body falling out of the hearse as they round the corner. Like the moving corpses of cattle, Bloom sees Dignam “rolling over stiff in the dust” with organs that are decomposed and blood “ooz[ing] out of an artery” (99). Death and decay become the guiding visualization of the city and of Bloom’s memory and provides symmetry to Stephen’s visualization of vibrant past to Dublin. The slow velocity of the carriage decelerates Simmel’s characterization of nervous “stimulation” and allows for the intake of lasting impressions of the city.²⁸

The final incident that shapes their journey is the procession crossing a bridge that functions as a sluice: “On the slow weedy waterway he [the bargeman] had floated on his raft coastward over Ireland drawn by a haulage rope past beds of reeds, over slime, mud-choked bottles, carrion dogs. Athlone, Mullingar, Moyvalley, I could make a walking tour to see Milly by the canal” (99). Similar to an image of Chiron on the river Styx, the visual gives a final concrete image of decay and death. Bloom’s urban experience is literally slowed down by commercial waste and older forms of transportation, and the topography is seamlessly littered with remnants of

decayed time—weeds choked by industrial and personal waste and carrion dogs—similar sights Stephen sees during his walk on the beach before he links the past of Ireland all the way back to Eden.²⁹ The slow journey becomes a complete visualization of urban death.

Finally in the cemetery, Bloom emphasizes the dark images of the city. The graveyard is bleak and dark and the earth is described as “fat with corpse manure” (108), while the air is “gentle sweet” (110), the clay “falls soft (111), . . . “brown, damp” (112). Just as the journey through the city is slow, the ghosts that haunt Bloom throughout the episode appear slowly to the extent that when Bloom enters the cemetery he is primed—if not intrigued by—death. In explaining the notion of heterogeneous spaces Foucault discusses the history of a city’s placing of cemeteries: Initially, the cemetery began as a sacred place that was at the heart of the city and exhibited a hierarchy of tombs. But in the beginning of the nineteenth century, cemeteries began to be located on the outskirts. For Foucault, the movement of the cemetery’s placing correlates with the individualization of death and the bourgeois appropriation of the cemetery with an obsession that death equals illness: “The dead, it is supposed, bring illnesses to the living, and it is the presence and proximity of the dead right beside the houses, next to the church, almost in the middle of the street . . . that propagates death itself. . . .The cemeteries then came to constitute, no longer the sacred and immortal heart of the city, but ‘the other city,’ where each family possesses its dark resting place.”³⁰ Similar to Bloom’s vision of Dublin’s collapse, his visit to the ‘other city’ ties Dublin with the cyclical nature of life and death. While the city reeks of decay, it is still the natural order of things. The visit to the

cemetery gives shape to a collective experience with alienation: Bloom might be alienated from his friends and community, but he, like the larger culture, eventually experiences death.

Ironically, “Aeolus,” the next episode after “Hades,” is far from slow and dark and the pendulum swings back to a faster pace. The episode begins loudly and is a more obscured, if not a more blurred visual. In “Hades,” the view from the carriage opens a portal to images of death that seeps out of the city. This episode, however, gives an interior view of the city from the perspective of Dublin’s commercial center—the newspaper. The episode opens with an all-caps headline: “IN THE HEART OF THE HIBERNIAN METROPOLIS” (116). In the more ancient and holy city, the center was the church and the cemetery, but in this episode, Bloom goes from the modern periphery of the cemetery to a new center—commercialism. In contrast to the airy atmosphere of the morning and the slow inert ambiance of “Hades,” Bloom’s surroundings in “Aeolus” are laden with noise and commotion. The opening text describes a ceaseless “clanging” tram route with a timekeeper that “bawl[s]” off the stops, “loudly flung sacks of letters, postcards, lettercards, parcels” and other mail items, “rolled barrels dullthudding” onto a barge, the creaking doors of the office, the noises of the printing press, the shouting of the newsboys, ringing phones, and, of course, the capitalized headlines that scream for attention (116-118). To be sure Joyce is alluding to the *Odyssey* when Odysseus uses the winds from King Aeolus for his ship and is blown back to the shore when crewmembers prematurely opened the bags containing the wind. And as Stuart Gilbert has already sketched out,³¹ this episode is symbolic of the lungs, in which gas pumps in and out, including

inflated rhetoric and lengthy conversation. The gust of words exhales out daily from the mouths of the newsboys onto the street, ultimately providing symmetry to the slow death of the previous episode.³²

Yet in contrast to the descriptions of hustling and bustling, Bloom's experience is more frustrated and constricted: Bloom is ignored by the typesetter Nanetti; he is disregarded and dismissed by the other men in the office to the extent that editor Miles Crawford swears at Bloom to "K.M.R.I.A" (Kiss My Royal Irish Arse [147]), and his friends go out for a drink without inviting Bloom. Bloom is paralyzed in the center of the metropolis—he is unsure of how to deal with Nanetti and is too polite in the midst of the other's crudeness. Even when J.J. O'Molloy comes into the office, the "doorknob hit Mr. Bloom in the small of his back" (124), thus emphasizing Bloom as something extra and unnecessary.

Yet, Bloom's experience is not singular. While Bloom is trying to secure the Keyes advertisement, Stephen comes to drop off Deasy's letter to the editor outlining the reasons behind the foot and mouth disease. In a conversation with the newsmen, Stephen relates a story (also known as the parable of the plums) in which two old ladies climb Nelson's pillar in order to see the city. Built in 1808 under British instruction, the pillar was situated in O'Connell street, the center of Dublin's main thoroughfare. The monument honors the Britian Admiral Lord Nelson, and it became a common meeting place as well as the best viewing platform to see the city. The ladies are too afraid to look down from above, and they get an ache in their neck when they try to look up at the stature of Nelson; thus, they sit on the pillar and frustratingly spit out plum seeds onto the streets of "Dear Dirty Dublin" (145). The

parabolic image is significant not only in that it is yet another example of Stephen's disappointed expectations of Dublin, but it compares to Bloom's ineptitude in the office and in his life. Paralysis and disappointment connect the experiences of Bloom and Stephen. Moreover, paralysis and disappointment inform the topography of Dublin. By connecting the image that was in the city center of Dublin to the center of Dublin's information flow, Joyce overlaps the city with an overarching illustration of the city as a center for paralysis and frustration. In this sense, the city's role becomes similar to the carriage ride in "Hades"—the city offers nothing more than example after example of individual life blunted by modernity. More distinctly, the episode emphasizes the gap between the individual and the city. The experience of Dublin cuts away from the individual experience and meshes together a common clamor of individuals trying to find their path in a modern world.

Joyce's most obvious example that illustrates the experience of the city is in "Wandering Rocks" (episode 10). Instead of tracing another episode in Bloom's or Stephen's journey during the day, the narrative follows two other figures that do not play a part in the principal cast, yet their paths still illustrate a clear communal experience of the city. The narrative maps out the paths of Reverend John Conmee S.J. and the viceregal cavalcade, both appendages of two main institutions of Ireland—the church and the state. The narratives, however, are not linear. They are interrupted by seventeen other episodes that depict other experiences of other characters as they move about and live in Dublin. By meshing a plurality of paths in one complete episode, the narrative becomes a melting pot of characters, cartographic itineraries, and (urban) vignettes which ultimately illustrates a larger composition that

makes up the realm of the city. In other words, the narrative moves beyond the experience of Bloom and Stephen and to the experience of the city. In fact, in this and the next episodes, Joyce uses less a perspective of Bloom or Stephen and relies more on the perspectives of other figures in the city, thus changing the journey from a day in the life of Dublin as seen by Bloom or Stephen, to a day in the life of Dublin as experienced by a wide cast of characters. As Jon Hegglund notes, when Joyce was writing *Ulysses*, he used the British commissioned and imperial Ordinance Survey, a map of Dublin that was produced between 1826 and 1852 to “stage” the performances of its citizens.³³ But, Hegglund argues, in needing the map of Dublin to chart the characters and routes “in order to gain a totalizing perspective, we risk reducing the multi-dimensional contours of the narrative into a two-dimensional visual image. The reader’s perspective fuses both dimensions of the chapter, mediating the individual and the collective, the lived experience of the street and the abstract space of the map.”³⁴ For Hegglund, the effect implies an inherent fictionality to the notion of a nation. There is “no overarching logic that might suggest a community of citizens sharing essential characters of a cultural identity.”³⁵ When presented via cartography, the city, according to Hegglund, breaks up this notion. However, when presented via experiences, there is indeed a totality of an encompassing culture.

From the perspective of topography, *Wandering Rocks* does present a coherent system of concentric circles which interlocks ideas of culture, community, and history. When Conmee begins his journey, he is headed towards Dublin’s orphanage in order to secure a place for Paddy Dignam’s son. Dignam, whose funeral

Bloom attended in “Hades,” died leaving his family in poverty. But Dignam’s son is not the only poverty-stricken path on which Conmess passes. Immediately after thinking about young Dignam, Conmee passes by a “one-legged sailor” who is begging in front of “the convent of the sisters of charity” (220). And soon after, Conmee sees a turf-barge anchored with “a bargeman with a hat of dirty straw seated amidships, smoking and staring at a branch of poplar above him. It was idyllic: and Father Conmee reflected on the providence of the Creator who had made turf to be in bogs where men might dig it out and bring it to town and hamlet to make fires in the houses of poor people” (221). This reflection is not unlike the one Conmee had when encountering the one-legged sailor. While walking “by the treeshade of sunnywinking leaves,” the reverend thought “of soldiers and sailors, whose legs had been shot off by cannonballs, ending their days in some pauper ward” (219). The examples of street poverty certainly belong to the cityscape, but the topography presented is not urban. Rather, it is an older and more residual experience. The sun shining on the trees and the barge on the water evoke a continuum of poverty in which the figures could belong to either the city or the land.

It is no coincidence that Conmee is moving away from the city’s heart and continues his walk in the more rural part of Dublin, along the coast, through a field where his “thinsocked ankles were tickled by the stubble of Clongowes field” (224). To get there, he boards a tram because “he disliked to traverse on foot the dingy way past Mud Island” (222). As Frank Delaney writes, “Mud Island” is “no-man’s land, not city, not suburb, suitable only for traveling through and halting.”³⁶ Conmee prefers to move quickly past the underdeveloped and poorer part of Dublin and thus

avoid the lasting impressions that a regular and slower journey through the rundown part of Dublin would expose. But the journey still provides him with a chance to observe other citizens: on the tram Conmee sees the African Mr. Eugene Stratton, and off the tram he spots a lady walking along the shore, and during his walk he encounters two lovers who appear suddenly “from a gap in the hedge . . . with wild nodding daisies in [the young woman’s] hand. The young man raised his cap abruptly: the young woman abruptly bent and with slow care detached from her light skirt a clinging twig” (224). The scenes depicted, although geographically mappable, distinctly give a fuller image of the larger culture of Dublin—Mr. Stratton becomes symbolic of the “unconverted” in Dublin, the young lady prompts the Reverend to think about history of the region’s countess in which the countess was unfaithful with her husband’s brother, and the young couple reflects natural impulses. Just like the image of the sailor and bargeman, these images evoke a continuous line of experience that resonates back to other pasts. Rather than the naming of city streets, it is the epic observations that define and give shape to the larger Dublin community. In writing a meticulous episode that attempts to place the characters on their paths in an accurate spacing of time, Joyce details cultural vignettes that not only cross paths with the “institutions” central to the city, but their presence adds to a collective entirety of people living without the institutions, or at least without adhering to their precepts. At the very least Conmee’s intersection with these characters brings the gap between the city’s institutions and the actuality to the forefront.

The gap is punctuated further in “Wandering Rocks” when one of the scenes shifts to the Dedalus’ children, who are discussing how to find money and food to eat

(226-227). The image is placed at the same time Conmee is pleasantly walking through the field “in times of yore” (223). He is reading the scripture, but his thoughts drift off to the secrets of the confessions he has heard. Unlike the worry and frustration of the Dedalus children, the reverend is having a “charming day. . . . The sky showed him a flock of small white clouds going slowly down the wind” (224). That the Dedalus children are starving at the same time Conmee is enjoying his day in the idyllic fields, illustrates the large divide between the city’s institutions and the needs of its community. As if to emphasize the image, Joyce has the children discussing their plight while the calvacade drowns out their voices with a bell clanging “Barang!” (226). In the vein of a Brueghal painting in which the entire community simultaneously revolves, but does not pay strict attention to a particular event, the text illustrates various situations that center around but are marginalized—if not deflated by—a particular event. To emphasize the timelessness and epic nature of the experience, Joyce follows the children’s meager meal of watery pea-soup with a description of a skiff that “rode lightly down the Liffey, under Loopline bridge, shooting the rapids where water chafed around the bridgepiers, sailing eastward past hulls and anchorchains, between the Customhouse old dock and George’s quay” (227). It is no coincidence that the skiff goes past the Customhouse on one bank and St. George’s church on another. (St. George is the patron Saint of England). Both are definitive symbols that restrict Ireland: government and economics on one side and England and religion on the other. Like the barges that continual to sail day in and day out, hunger and displacement are daily occurrences, and not one that is limited to Bloom—one must always manage to sail between the

two institutions of the city. Thus, the topography illustrates symmetry of experience that balances between the main wandering hero and the culture in which he lives.³⁷

This is not to imply that that *Ulysses* does not illustrate the experience of the city through its topography in other episodes. In “Sirens,” “Cyclops,” and “Circe” (episodes eleven, twelve, and fifteen), Joyce clearly used representative elements of the city to give shape to Bloom’s alienating experience. In “Sirens,” Bloom eats a meal at the bar in the Ormond Hotel, located on the quay. The episode is less a description of a visual topography, but it does add an aural dimension to Bloom’s urban experience. Starting with the sounds of the cavalcade, the “hoofmans, steelyinning, imperthnthn thn thn thn” and a “husky fifenote” (256), Joyce structures this episode in musical rhythms, phrases, patterns, and themes.³⁸ The experience, similar to “Aeolus,” is noisy and Bloom is ignored or ridiculed by the patrons and barmaids in the bar. The episode illustrates noise particular to the city, but it also serves to highlight the difference between Bloom and Boylan. In addition, the episode brutally illustrates Bloom’s alienation. One of ladies shrieks about Bloom: “O greasy eyes! Imagine being married to man like that . . . With his bit of beard” (260), while another calls him “greasy nose” (260). Yet, while Bloom broods over the ballads that the patrons sing, he also imagines Boylan’s trip to his rendezvous with Molly. While Bloom walks warily (268), heavily, and is often pushed aside, Boylan walks freely, noisily, and in the sun on the sidewalk next to the bar: “By Bachelor’s walk jogjaunty jingled Blazes Boylan, bachelor, in sun, in heat, mare’s glossy rum atrot, with flick of whip, on bounding tyres: sprawled, warmseated, Boylan impatience, artentbold” (269-70). Boylan has a carriage that “jingles” and “joggles”

(279) past all the stores all the way to house. He is aided by the speed of the carriage in the city and is not hampered by the sounds and sights that Bloom encounters in “Hades”. To emphasize that fact, at the end of the episode, when Bloom leaves the bar during a climax of another song, he breaks wind at the exact moment an electric tram passes by: “*Nations of the earth. No-one behind. She’s passes. Then and not till then. Tram. Kran, kran, kran. Good oppor. Coming. Krandlkrankran. I’m sure it’s the burgundy. Yes. One, two. Let my epitaph be. Karaaaaaaa. Written. I have. Pprrrffrrppff. Done*” (291). The noise and the experience drown Bloom out and relegate him to the margins. Also, the noise deflates any seriousness to his disappointment in Molly’s affairs—just as Bloom is “done,” the experience of his day is nothing more than gas.

The experience of alienation intensifies in “Cyclops” when the narrator and another figure—Joe Hynes—go into Barney Kiernan’s pub for a drink. Unlike “Sirens” in which the description stresses the noise in and directly outside the pub, the noise in this episode spouts from the mouth and thoughts of an arrogant, aggressive, and racist nationalist—the Citizen. In a burlesque-epic style in which the Citizen sits “on a large boulder at the foot of a round tower” (296) that is the bar, the narrator places the Citizen in a long list of Irish heroes that includes others such as Goliath, the Last of the Mohicans, Christopher Columbus, Napoleon, and Julius Caesar. Although done to lampoon and expose the Citizen’s limited (and Cyclopedic) view of a nation, the naming of the places superimposes the Irish history with other histories, legends, and cultures, and the Citizen’s exchange with Bloom illustrates a limited, if not provincial attitude of Dubliners in the midst of a

cosmopolitan city. For example, when the citizen exclaims that only Irishmen make up Ireland, Bloom corrects him by saying that a “nation is the same people living in the same place” (331). Bloom, although belonging to race “that is hated and persecuted. Also now. This very moment. This very instant” (332) ultimately believes that his experience of a nation, a city, or life should be informed by “Love . . . I mean the opposite of hatred” (333). Unlike the Citizen’s (and Stephen’s) idea that place informs the life and culture, Bloom advocates a global culture of acceptance.

In “Circe,” however, the alienating experience takes on new dimensions. Set in Dublin’s Nighttown, the episode takes place in the district formed around the former Mecklenburgh Street, on land mostly belonging to the estate of the Earl of Blessington, a place that in the 18th century was inhabited by the aristocracy and in the 19th century by wealthy professional men. By the 20th century, however, the wealth had moved, and street was a place to find bars, brothels, and much of Dublin’s poverty.³⁹ Bloom has followed Stephen to Nighttown, because he is concerned for his well-being, since in the previous episode (Oxen in the Sun) Stephen has gotten horribly drunk. As many critics have already pointed out, “Circe” is a dramatic representation of a nightmare world. It is akin to Goethe’s *Walpurgisnacht*, a depiction of internal turmoil that ends with a release allowing Stephen and Bloom to go to Ithaca and continue on in the face of urban discontinuity. The cityscape in Nighttown is dirty with “[r]ows of flimsy houses with gaping doors” (429). The night is hazy and murky, and the scene opens with a variety of figures, three prostitutes, a street urchin, a drunken man, police officers, and a squabbling couple. When Bloom enters, he comes out of “[s]nakes of river fog” (433). The haze makes the experience

surreal, draping the cityscape with dreamlike swaths; thus suggesting a bridge between the external and the internal experience.

Like “Hades,” the movement is slow and Bloom is haunted by ghosts of his past and vestiges of the present. Bloom is on trial, from the moment when his father scolds him for wasting money, to Molly, who scolds him for forgetting to buy lotion, to Mrs. Breen, a woman with whom Bloom once flirted, and to Martha, a woman with whom Bloom is having a flirtatious letter-exchange. The atmosphere chokes him and Bloom “breathes in deep agitation, wallowing gulps of air” (439) as he tries to defend himself against the accusations. Similar to “Hades,” in which Bloom consistently shifted his thoughts from death to life, the uncovering of Bloom’s guilt and his secrets (and sins) also explores his desires. One such fantasy is his wish to create a “golden city which is to be, the new Bloomusalem.” The city is based on Bloom’s ideas of social regeneration: “I stand for the reform of municipal morals and the plain ten commandments. New worlds for old. Union of all, jew, Moslem, and gentile [sic]” (489). Like his experience throughout the day in which Bloom has been predominantly occupied with the people as they go through the city, and in which he has had to experience alienation and racism time and time again, Bloom depicts in “Circe” a topography in which a city is caught in a continual rise and a fall—one that can lead to either a nightmare where he is, or to a fantasy that espouses community and life. As John Paul Riquelme writes, “Circe” provides “the underworld of the mind, with its memories of literary, cultural, and personal pasts, [that] propels us toward a future in which we experience and recognize that the underworld as our own place of habitation.”⁴⁰

Another way to understand the episode is to read the voices from “Nighttown” as a type of chorus. Although referring to the structure of *Jahrestage*, Kurt Fickert discusses the narrative in terms of a Greek play in which the chorus confronts and calls the principal character to account. Bloom (and later Gesine) hears a “multiplicity of voices which make themselves heard to advance the story, . . . These unindividualized figures in a mass inform the reader on the subject of public opinion.”⁴¹ The topography of *Ulysses* comes full circle; the figures of the city illustrate Bloom’s mundane life, but the mass and the haze gives a complexity to a mundane city scene and moves the story into a sociopolitical larger realm of history. Beginning with Stephen’s flow of history, Bloom follows the city through the experience of the people, both combining to create interlocking layers of histories, myths, cultures, and experiences.

Uwe Johnson’s *Jahrestage*

The topography in *Jahrestage*, like *Ulysses*, contrasts and compliments the characters’ experience in the narrative, ultimately creating symmetry of order between the external and internal narrative structure. Like *Ulysses*, *Jahrestage* is divided into episodes, however spanning not a single day, but rather an entire year (August 20, 1967- August 20, 1968). And, *Jahrestage* is similar to *Ulysses* in its Aristotlean conception of unity since it too consists of one entire time span and essentially follows the one contained experience of Gesine Cresspahl. Gesine, like Bloom, is the wandering hero on the streets of a large city. As Johnson stated in his *Begleitumstände*, he was convinced that “die ‘einfachen Leute’ das erheblichere Beispiel abgeben für Lebensverhältnisse in unserer Zeit, nicht allein wegen ihrer

Überzahl . . . insbesondere, weil sie jede Verschlechterung der Lage unerbittlich ausbaden müssen, ihre Schwierigkeiten mit dem schärfsten Risiko überwinden müssen.”⁴² Just as Bloom is a simple ‘everyman’ who accounts for the ‘general lot,’ Johnson used Gesine to depict the life of an ordinary citizen. Analogous to the events that take place during the one day in *Ulysses*, the narrative in *Jahrestage* combines a large sum of smaller events or vignettes that while they center around Gesine, they eventually form a plurality of experiences. In depicting her life the narrative overlaps the present and the past, ultimately creating a larger—and more global—topography that expands across time and national boundaries.

Gesine, like Stephen and Bloom, is haunted by figures and events in her past that uncannily resemble her experiences in the present. Her essential experience is, as Wolfgang Paulsen writes, haunted by her “Heimat.”⁴³ But the book does not fit in the tradition of the German “Heimatroman” in the sense that Gesine is nostalgic for an idyll that may or may not have existed, a point that greatly differs from Stephen’s experience, but rather, “Heimat” becomes a concept that explains her search for her identity. It is a means to probe her past: “Heimat is nicht mehr, was man besitzt, sondern was man verloren hat, das *Paradise lost*. Sie wird damit mehr und mehr zu einem vagen Mythos, an dem man noch festhalten kann, wenn die Realität schon versagt hat: Er ist nicht mehr an eine bestimmte, geographisch festlegbare Landschaft, . . . gebunden, sondern an eine verinnerlichte.”⁴⁴ In other words, while Stephen longs for that which never existed, an essence of Ireland that becomes myth, Gesine longs for something that was, but no longer exists. In trying to come to terms with her family’s and nation’s past, Gesine explores not only her “Heimat,” but her

“Heimatlosigkeit” in her present 1967/68 surroundings of New York. Or, as Hans Mayer has suggested, Gesine and all the figures surrounding her present and past are “insgeheim Entwurzelte.”⁴⁵ This component not only compares to Bloom’s and Stephen’s quest of finding place in an alienating modern society, but it also complicates her “everyman” status. While Gesine, like Bloom, is representative of the “einfachen Leute,” she is of a particular type—an exile. Thus, place and the experience of exile both become an important means in the narrative to give root to and ground Gesine’s sense of displacement. As a result, the contrast and interconnectedness between the two principal places in *Jahrestage*—Jerichow and New York—become integral for giving shape to Gesine’s experiences.

The first extensive image and experience of the city that illustrates Gesine’s displacement is when Gesine returns to work from her vacation. Similar to Bloom’s walk in the morning when the sunlight and airiness suddenly turn to darkness and Bloom sees Dublin fall to destruction like Sodom and Gomorrah,⁴⁶ the sunlit haze of Gesine’s vacation turns to shadow. While walking to work, Gesine observes that “Lexington Avenue ist noch verschattet” (1: 11).⁴⁷ The city street, like the sea from her vacation, becomes personified. The city controls the morning paths of the other inhabitants—the traffic lights and the crowd of taxis are a daily normality: “Sie erinnert sich an die Taxis, die einander am Morgen auf dem Damm drängen, im Einbiegen aufgehalten von einem Verkehrslicht, dessen Rot die Fußgänger zum Gang über die östliche Einbahnstraße ausnutzen können, in dessen Grün sie die wartenden Wagen behindern dürfen” (1: 11). Unlike the beach and the sea which help her to focus her memories, the obstructionist character of the city disconnects Gesine from

her internal musing, and the experience becomes (like Bloom's vision of a collapsed city) claustrophobic: There is a lot of traffic, the beggar she passes "grunzt"; the sirens' shrill stays suspended as it bounces back and forth between the high-rises; the bright light "schlägt hitziges Gegenlicht quer," causing the cement to blind Gesine's eyes, and the store shop's aroma of ammonia "dampft" out into the open, choking any fresh air (1: 11). In contrast to the sea which lulls Gesine's senses into a meditative state and places her back onto the shores of her "Heimat," the experience of the city jars her and limits her capability to focus internally and find root on the streets. Her internal thoughts become muted echoes swallowed by the noise, shape, and smell of New York: "Mit den Augen gegen den blendenden Zement geht sie neben einer Fußfassade aus schwarzem Marmor, deren Spiegel die Farben der Gesichter, Blechlacke, Baldachine, Hemden, Schaufenster, Kleider schwächer tönt" (1: 11). Thus the city becomes metonymical for depicting Gesine's displacement and isolation.

Subsequently, Gesine differs from Bloom in that she is not a flâneur of New York. While she tries to be observant, the sheer mass of stimuli (a mass that has grown substantially since Bloom's jaunt fifty years before Gesine's) impede her capacity to connect the New York experience with the memories of the past and Jerichow. While Bloom's thoughts constantly return to the eternal rise and fall of cities as he walks the city street, Gesine's internal contemplations are generally reserved for the evening when she moves away from the city streets and returns to her tower "unterhalb der Baumspitzen" (1: 13): The light is softer and in the south, she sees "neben dichten Blattwolken die Laternen auf der Brücke, dahinter die Lichter auf

der Schnellstraße. Die Dämmerung schärft die Lichter. Das Motorengeräusch läuft ineinander in der Entfernung und schlägt in eben mäßigen Wellen ins Fenster, Meeresbrandung vergleichbar. Von Jerichow zum Strand war es eine Stunde zu gehen, am Bruch entlang und dann zwischen den Feldern (1:13).” Separated from the center of the metropolis—or at least the throng of it—the air becomes lighter. Gesine is able to combine the guiding muse of her internal thoughts—the river (which for her connects to the sea)—with the distant sounds of the city and return to her project of excavating the past. The haze from the city lights obscures the present timescape and allows for Gesine to replace New York with Jerichow, a place she *can* describe concretely and observe from her present. The provincial topography of her past collapses seamlessly onto New York as it juxtaposed with each other in the daily reports of New York and the subsequent memories of Jerichow. It is a structure that continues throughout the book—an event in the present is followed by a more lengthy explanation of the past, both reflecting off each other. Thus, when Gesine describes the view outside her tower as one in which the “dunstige Luft [kann] die architektonische Wüste auf der anderen Seite verwischen in das Trugbild unverdorbenen Landschaft, in die Einbildung von Offenheit und Ferne” (1: 28), the perspective from the haze lends itself to bridging the gap between the past and the present, between the shores of America and Germany.

From this perspective then, Gesine is not a flâneur in the sense of observing the present city around her, but she is a type of flâneur in terms of observing the past. Gesine witnesses the present, but with an epic perspective of standing on the threshold of repetitive pasts: She places herself in the city beyond fixed and dated

time—she notes that she has been on the city streets “seit vordenklicher Zeit” (1: 11), but she does not have any concrete conclusions of understanding the urban present. Sara Lennox comments on this when she writes that Gesine uses the *New York Times* to gather information about the present, but she “ist vor allem unfähig, für sich eine politische Handlungsweise zu finden.”⁴⁸ For Gesine, the present *is* difficult to examine and describe, because she is still in the process of observing and scrutinizing the past. Thus, her narrative of the present always reflects back onto the wounds and places of the past, and the present-day experience of walking the streets of 1967-68 New York are filtered through past events—such as when her father Heinrich Cresspahl walked the streets of 1933 Jerichow or any of the other villagers as they experienced the events leading up to and after wartime. During the present day war in Vietnam, Gesine also witnesses the unrest caused by race riots and racial discrimination in the United States, the descriptions of an every-day present take shape and have greater ramifications when juxtaposed with a past that so violently altered the world. In that sense, Gesine never leaves her Joycean Martello Tower in Riverside and is continually stuck in the “Telemachiad” when Athena commanded Telemachus to think about his ancestry. She is unable to return home—or at least her return is complicated by historical crises—and is thus forced to sit and gaze out over her past.

In terms of presenting a fractured New York topography juxtaposed with a fleshed out non-urban one of Jerichow, Riverside Tower (243 Riverside Drive) becomes an important place in bridging the experience of displacement. When describing the location of the Tower, the narrator presents the area (Riverside) as an

“ausgedehnte Kunstlandschaft” (1: 26). That is, the Tower—located near Broadway and 96th street—is not necessarily entrenched in the cityscape, nor is it far removed from it. In comparison to Stephen’s Martello Tower, it is also removed from the city centre and functions as a gateway between Gesine’s present and past. To highlight its separation from the city center, Gesine describes Riverside and the nearby market more like a harbor and less like a metropolis: “Die Sprachen auf diesem Broadway sind vielfältig, verwirrend arbeiten Akzente aller Kontinente an Versionen des Amerikanischen, im Vorbeigehen zu hören sind das Spanisch aus Puerto Rico und Cuba, das west-indische Französisch, Japanisch, Chinesisch, Jiddisch, Russisch, die Jargons der Illegalen und immer wieder das Deutsche” (1: 27). Instead of filled with smog, ammonia, or other urban aromas, the air surrounding Gesine is laden “von Feuchtigkeit verdickte Luft” (1: 27).⁴⁹ Initially built for the new money in the nineteenth century that came out of the industrial explosion, Riverside Drive was supposed to represent wealth in residence living “mit der reservierten Aussicht auf den Fluß, die wüsten Wolkenwald auf dem jenseitigen Steilufer, auf Natur” (1: 52). It was meant to be a solid center for the newly-founded aristocratic families who wanted to escape the “dirty” and changing commerce of the streets. But the place never became one connected to stability; rather it increasingly became a revolving door for immigrants: After World War I, Riverside was a haven for Jews from Harlem when the incomes of immigrants improved, and after the 1930’s more Jewish immigrants arrived from Europe, who were then followed by expatriates from Israel, “die mit der Belagerung und dem Klima Israels nicht zurechtgekommen waren” (1: 52). The result linked persons and biographies “zusammen in der Religion,

zusammen in der Verwandtschaft, zusammen in der Erinnerung an Europa” (1: 52). Thus, Riverside Drive reverberates with cultural and political connotations of the past, and Gesine is not the only one who is “heimatslos”—Riverside’s locality is intricately connected to the deracination of the persons living there, hoping to find root despite their displacement.

Yet when Gesine describes Jerichow from the Tower, she could certainly be described as having flâneuresque qualities. Particularly when compared to the fractured and sensory-filled view of New York, the town Jerichow is described so exactly that it can be chronicled and mapped, despite the fact that in reality Jerichow does not exist.⁵⁰ Grossly unlike New York, Jerichow was only a small, declining aristocratic town “einwärts der Ostsee zwischen Lübeck und Wismar gelegen, ein Nest aus niedrigen Ziegelbauten entlang einer Straße aus Kopfsteinen, ausgespannt zwischen einem zweistöckigen Rathaus mit falschen Klassikrillen und einer Kirche aus der romanischen Zeit, deren Turm mit einer Bischofsmütze verglichen wird” (1: 31). Described from the perspective of her father walking the streets in 1931 on his way to court her mother, Jerichow is presented as having an older culture, run by an aristocracy and functioning on a feudal system. The aristocracy did not have much use for Jerichow beyond using it to store wheat and sugar beets—the town tried to function as a fishing village, but was too far from the shore to compete with the larger ports and too close for something other than industry connected to sea. Jerichow is more akin to Dublin in *Ulysses* in that the description of it is presented slowly—the buildings follow one another, connected by five streets and enclosed by fields that extend all the way to the sea. The older buildings and older system suggest a deep

contrast to New York in that the town offers durability. The discontinuity of persons around the Riverside area stand out against with the fuller and more complete images and histories of Jerichow, and the fragmentation only lies within piecing the history of the area together rather than the images given. The land and the possession of it becomes an important motif. Gesine describes the various persons who own land, and she herself comes from a family with lots of land. In fact, in order to lure Cresspahl into staying in Germany, “gab Papenrock [Gesine’s grandfather] seiner Enkelin ein Grundstück, das ihr nicht früher als am 3. März 1954 gehören würde” (1: 307).

Jerichow has attachment and permanency in a way that the large city does not, thus making descriptions easier. As Jürgen Grambow writes: “Die Region ist, gleich anderen, eine Landmarke im deutschen Panorama, topographisch konkret und von historischen Besonderheiten geprägt, mit hervorstechenden sprachlichen und eigenen ökonomischen Zügen ausgestattet, . . . das gewisse Kolorit. Mit den *Jahrestagen* in der Hand . . . kann man durch die Straßen gehen und die Chausseen entlang.”⁵¹

Narrated from the point of view of Gesine, but not always from a realistic first-person perspective, Gesine describes Jerichow and its events as if there. She does it in the same manner as she renders the experiences in present day New York. Hans Mayer explains: “Manchmal erklärt Gesine selbst, ersichtlich aus der Rolle fallend, sie habe Stimmen der Toten gehört, müsse und könne nun mitteilen, was man ihr sagte. Das sind Augenblicke, wo Gesine selbst nicht mehr aus eigener Erinnerung berichten kann, was sie als Kind erlebt oder was ihr Vater Heinrich Cresspahl erzählt haben mochte.”⁵² The narrative, although emanating from Gesine, sometimes shifts to a

quasi omniscient narrator—the “comrade” writer Uwe Johnson—who relates the memories of her family, her friends and acquaintances,⁵³ and the cooperative result illustrates Jerichow in a totality that ultimately helps to provide a means to organize the political and human ramifications of the present.

Yet because Gesine relies on other narrative to examine her past, there arises an inherent instability in its description, however exact. Gesine herself constantly references the fact that her memory is faulty. While she uses letters, photos, and old documents to piece the history and experience of Jerichow together, she often explains (to Marie) her memory in terms of the cat on the Jerichow farm:

--Die Katze Erinnerung, wie du sagst.
--Ja. Unabhängig, unbestechlich, ungehorsam. Und doch ein wohltuender Geselle, wenn sie sich zeigt, selbst wenn sich unerreichbar halt (2: 670).

Jerichow, like Gesine’s memory, is as extensive as an ocean, but as a result it is just as unstable and impermanent as the glass walls of New York.⁵⁴ As a result, topography can only become concrete in terms of Gesine’s experience—contrasting the present day fleeting experiences of New York with the fleeting experiences of memory. And the cat on the farm becomes synonymous with faulty memory. The entire process for the narrative becomes, as Gary Baker writes, a “paradigmatic structure of history.”⁵⁵ Johnson’s focus on the daily events in New York juxtaposed with more sweeping events creates resemblances between the past and present that are not spelled out, but grasped intuitively. It is a structure that compares to Stephen’s parable of the plums. The past and present become allegories for each other with each giving the other meaning.

For example after Gesine's birth on March 3, 1933—related from October 20 through October 31, 1967—Heinrich Cresspahl travels from Richmond, England to Jerichow. His trip occurs right after the 1933 Reichstag fire in Berlin, at the same time as of Ernst Thälmann's arrest,⁵⁶ and before the March 5 elections which elected Hitler Chancellor. When Cresspahl arrived in Jerichow, the Storm Troopers were celebrating the change of power in the town square: "Der Lärm unter den Fenstern kam aus einem Lautsprecher . . . und übertrug die Hitlerrede aus Hamburg. Das flackernde Licht zwischen den Hausgiebeln kam von den Fackeln, mit denen S.A. und Stahlhelm ihre Uniformen auf dem Weg zum Schützenhaus beleuchteten" (1: 205). The lack of protest on the part of the village is chilling—Papenrock sings a song, nostalgic of "mein teures Vaterland," and Cresspahl merely locks the door, but throughout the next few days in present-day New York Gesine revisits the same dilemma of non-action amidst a similarly large amount of noise. When the narrator scolds Gesine for not participating in the protest against the Vietnam War that took place the day she related her birth to Marie, Gesine defends herself by stating that the "Politik des Präsidenten in Viet Nam wird nicht durch die Proteste von Minderheiten geändert" (1: 206). Gesine prefers to watch passively in order to protect her child, but also because she believes that her only task is "zu lernen. Wenigstens mit Kenntnis zu leben" (1: 209-10). The juxtaposition of lackluster outrage and protest overlap and the two wars are placed on the same topography of experience. In other words, the present reflects the past and the parable structure suggests that passivity also abets war. The image of Cresspahl aimlessly walking the Nazi-occupied streets first in Lübeck and in Jerichow juxtaposes with Gesine walking the streets of New

York the next day. Her emotions imply a comparable connection with how Cresspahl must have felt. Gesine is frustrated, but does not know how to speak out—so she remains silent. She passes by her daughter Marie, the elevator operator, the policeman outside her apartment, Charlie at the deli where she eats, the man at the newsstand, and the beggars in the subway “ohne ein Wort” (1: 210). Similarly, Cresspahl, in the midst of the Nazi takeover walked the streets like a “Blinder, der alles sah, ohne es behalten zu können. Ein Tauber, der eine Katze laufen hörte, ohne das Geräusch zu begreifen. Jerichow kam ihm sehr laut vor. Auf dem Marktplatz war Musik” (1: 202). Gesine, like Cresspahl, cannot afford political trouble (on account of her visa). But more importantly, Cresspahl references a cat. As representative of memory, the text suggest that this—passivity, aggression, war—is a repetitive event. It is a noise that is continually heard but never understood.

And like the loud Jerichow, Gesine’s silence makes the city (and the past) more loud: the elevator ropes hit the shaft, a bird cries loudly over the Hudson, the subway rumbles, car horns honk, police sirens whine, Grand Central Station shrieks, and even late at night the “Schnellstraßenverkehr . . . hängt Windpausen auf und schmeißt Wellen wie Wasser; der Vergleich mit der Ostsee drängt ihn ohne Abfindung aus der Wahrnehmung” (1: 242). Gesine cannot help but connect the noise to the impending war that surrounds her in her past. The connection does not stop with Germany’s past: the memories of the past are punctuated by an explosion of a gas main, but for Gesine, all the noises combine to create the same noise that Gesine hears “aus der Wohnung neben uns, aus den Abendnachrichten von ABC-TV, aus Viet Nam. Es ist wie aus dem Weltall, es ist katastrophal wie Flakschrapnells

kurz vor dem unverhofften, dumpfen, erderschütternden Aufprall der Bomben, es ist menschenmöglich” (1: 242-3). Gesine, once having heard the impending sounds of war through the Nazi demonstrations, hears the noise in the present war more intensely and acutely. Analogous to the vision Bloom sees of Sodom and Gomorrah, Gesine sees the collapse of history around her. The description compares eerily to Water Benjamin’s portrayal of history as an angel that sees the catastrophes of the present, but is still propelled forward into the future.⁵⁷ The topography of the city combines with the past that bleeds together and projects an overarching canvas of confusion.

The significance of Gesine’s examination of the past certainly imparts an epic presentation of history, such as Benjamin’s angel that chronicles the world’s history, but the impetus for Gesine’s project is not simply for her own understanding, but for her daughter Marie. In November 1983, Johnson spoke about Marie as a child who “hat die Stadt New York angenommen als eine Heimat . . . So ein Kind muß man dann allerdings beschützen. Das ist die eine Hauptaufgabe dieser Gesine Cresspahl. Auf dieser Ebene des Buchs wird der Alltag vorgeführt.”⁵⁸ As a result of Gesine’s attempt to create a safe space for Marie, Marie becomes ‘at home’ in New York and subsequently, is the better figure in terms of a flâneuresque perspective of the city in *Jahrestage*. Unlike Gesine’s alienating experience in the city streets, Marie is very much comfortable in the New York cityscape. She navigates the streets without impediment; her English is better than Gesine’s; she has the Manhattan subway in her head; “[i]n vielen Wohnungen entlang der Riverside Drive und der West End Avenue ist sie über Nacht geblieben, (1: 23);” West Berlin is known to her only from the

newspaper, and “[v]iele Geschäfte auf dem Broadway sind ihr tributpflichtig, Maxies mit Pfirsichen, Schustek mit Scheibenwurst, der Schnapsladen mit Kaugummi” (1: 23). Marie is not overwhelmed by the streets and her thoughts do not roam tangentially. Unlike Gesine who gets distracted by the city’s “neu verpackten Waren” (1: 68); “das Kind geht hindurch zwischen den Lockfallen, blind gegen Plakate, taub gegen Durchsage, mit unverändert langsamen Lidschlag, und tut keine Unze, keine Packung mehr in den Korb als auf ihrer Liste steht” (1: 69). Unlike Gesine’s or Cresspahl’s blindness or deafness as they walk the streets, Marie is able to listen to Gesine’s past, while still being a part of the urban experience.

Marie’s unique position of simultaneously hearing the past, observing the present, and being “at home” in New York, allows her to take Gesine’s memories and apply them to the present topography of New York. For example, when she shops on Saturday morning, she catches the cashier overcharging her. With the change she recovers, instead of pocketing it and saving it, Marie distributes the money to other persons, namely the beggars who are homeless and jobless, (that is, those in the city who are cheated). The incident is small and insignificant, but its telling is layered in between the 1967 report in *The New York Times*’ political section (that Gesine mentions is further tucked in between the Finance and Real Estate sections) that 500 civilians were killed in Vietnam by American explosives. That is, innocent civilians were killed—as it were, cheated—so that an American arms factory can profit. Further, the incident is juxtaposed with Gesine’s relation of high taxes, lack of modernization, and general depression in Jerichow in 1931, a component that enabled the election of Nazis to power with their promise to help the economy. Marie hears

this account of Jerichow's economic slump when the two are walking along the Staten Island shore of "Tottenville," a run-down industrial part of New York. Unlike Stephen's wish to create one single image or utopian space for Ireland, Marie regularly lives in a heterogeneous place. For her, place resonates automatically with a compilation of other places, experiences, persons, and events that ultimately inform the way she lives—Marie is able to see beyond the city and thus gain an overreaching perspective. The redistribution of money becomes connected to helping the poor, to the Vietnam War in its exploitation of lives, and to the end result of industrial waste in Tottenville. The topography is not only parabolic, but recurring—a sequence that tries to stop with Marie's awareness.

Thus, it is no coincidence that early on in the narrative, Gesine describes Marie as "angstlos" (1: 24). When Gesine picks her up from summer camp, the two walk the streets and Marie turns to Gesine and looks at her reflected in the glass windows of the high rises. She says in German: "Ich habe dich gesehen," and repeats in English: "I saw you" (1: 25). The emphasis on the word "saw," implies that despite the fractured view the city naturally offers—one that Gesine has trouble with—Marie has had enough experience of the city to be able to see a wholeness beyond a spilt or cracked view. What is more, Marie herself comments on Gesine's lack of understanding when it comes to New York and America:

--Gesine, sagt Marie: Manchmal verstehst du das Land nicht, in dem wir doch leben.
--Ja.
--Dann fürchte ich mich.
--Verstehst du es denn?
--Wenn ich es von dir lernen will, nicht immer. Dann fürchte ich mich (2: 940-1).

Another example occurs in October when Marie has to write an essay for school entitled, “Ich sehe aus dem Fenster” (1: 177). While the entry is prefaced by a series of reports from the *New York Times* of brutal murders in the city, Gesine imagines that Marie would describe other various images out the window—the park, the Hudson shore, or persons whose voices can be heard outside in the park. Instead, Marie’s essay describes a past New York topography that blends with the one from Jerichow and from Vietnam alike: a particular house that was burning in May 1967, in which the smoke looked like fog and consumed a Cafeteria, a drug store, and offices. Passively, the people stood, “murmelten” (1:178), and watched while the firemen fought the fire. Marie’s essay describes an everyday catastrophe in the city, but what is significant, is that Marie ends her essay with the sentence: “Meine Mutter sagt, so ist es im Krieg” (1: 179). Unlike Gesine, in which the experience of Jerichow provides a parabolic shape to her experience of New York, for Marie, it is the experience of the city that aids in making the experience of the war concrete—she uses the heterogeneous experience of New York to place herself within her mother’s memory, and within the experience of the Vietnam War that occurs outside her known borders. As a result, like the flâneur’s prescription to take images of the city and produce something with the observation, Marie uses the city to provide a concrete topography of experience.⁵⁹

Marie’s relationship with Gesine is unlike the relationship between Stephen and Bloom. After all, the narrator reports early on that Marie repeatedly states: “Heirate doch, aber ich will keinen Vater” (1: 25). Dissimilar to Stephen’s search for a father (as seen in the allegories of Hamlet and Telemachus), Marie is not looking

for a surrogate. She is not haunted by ghosts, but is rather unconcerned if Gesine forgets elements of the past: “Was du nicht weißt, wirst du auslassen, und ich bin kein Stück klüger: sagt Marie milde.” (2: 670). Indeed, she is more concerned about the present—she participates in protest marches, argues with her teacher at school about the Vietnam War, befriends the African-American girl Francine despite the fact that it is an unpopular decision with her friends, and is genuinely disillusioned after the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy. Marie, in experiencing the past and the present simultaneously, is afforded the ability to straddle two times and places and visualizes them as one continuous experience.

Also important to navigating the past through the present is Johnson’s use of visible city institutions. Akin to the “Aeolus” episode in *Ulysses*, Johnson uses *The New York Times* and the bank where Gesine works to illustrate the city’s reach. The importance of the *Times* is introduced early on after Gesine’s return to New York from vacation. From the perspective of a man who owns a newspaper stand, the narrative describes Gesine’s daily ritual of buying a paper and running to catch the subway, as well as Marie’s secret habit of buying comics on Sunday. Placing the perspective on the street not only shows how Gesine buys and read the *Times* regularly, but it also illustrates the influence a city’s institution has on the lives of Gesine and Marie. Like Bloom, who works at a newspaper office and often thinks about marketing ads, Gesine is connected to the “central organ” of the city and constantly refers to the events reported in the newspaper before she relates something of her past. While Johnson insisted in an interview with Manfred Durzak that the *Times* “ist kein vom Erzähler erfundenes Transportmittel, sondern sie ist eine

tägliche Funktion im Leben dieser Mrs. Cresspahl,”⁶⁰ the quotes from the paper nevertheless create a tension and provide a narrative connection to the past: “Denn an diesem Tag wird nicht die gesamte *New York Times* zitiert, sondern nur Artikel, das bedeutet subjektive Auswahl. . . . Warum sagt sie denn nichts dazu? Darauf sollte die Antwort ganz leicht sein. Weil dazu von ihr aus nichts zu sagen ist. Das ist dann für den Tag ihr Lebensgefühl.”⁶¹ Gesine emphasizes the subjective nature of her relationship with the *Times* when she compares it to a relationship with an aunt (1: 15)—it is like a family member instead of an institution meant to inform the public. Although “Auntie Times” sometimes reports trivialities and is parodied by Gesine, it is for her *the* principal source for the experience of the world and functions as a pinprick to her memory. In a city full of noise, the *Times* is Gesine’s only link between the past and the present when she is cut off from the shore. Thus, it is no coincidence that when Gesine is disoriented by the number of windows in the high-rises, or disturbed by the daily monotonous routine of going to work at the same time every day, or thrown off guard by the mass of people, she consistently asks: “Und was stand in der Zeitung” (1:36)? Neither is it surprising that Gesine compulsively searches for a copy of the *Times* when she is out of town—the paper provides permanence in a way that the city does not. In other words, the newspaper functions not as a land bridge, but as a cultural and political link that provides roots in a disorienting place.

An example of the *Times* linking New York and Jerichow politically is when Gesine reads a reprint of a speech of the “frühere[n] stellvertretend[en]” President Nixon gave in the paper on December 9, 1967 (1: 423). She quotes him saying that

“der Kampf gegen Ungerechtigkeit in der Behandlung der Rassen wichtiger sei als der Krieg in Viet Nam” (1: 423). Soon after, Gesine describes Christmas in 1934 Jerichow when Lisbeth was close friends with the Pastor’s wife, Aggie Brühshaver. On account of Aggie, Lisbeth became keen to the growing tyranny of the Nazis. In particular, she learned “mehr von den Streitigkeiten der evangelischen Kirche mit dem Österreicher” (1: 425). Through Lisbeth’s memory, Gesine relates how the community (including the pastor) boycotted the local Jewish store, despite the pastor’s sermon “auf die christliche Pflicht zur Nächstenliebe” (1: 425). The two situations in the present and the past overlap—Nixon’s speech about the injustice of racism (in spite of Gesine’s view that Vietnam is an expression of racism) coincides with the rampant racism and hypocrisy against the Jews in 1930’s Germany. Yet the visualization of the racism is made more concrete in Gesine’s/Lisbeth’s memory. On December 8, 1967—the day before Nixon’s speech— Gesine catalogues a variety of urban images—her boss recovering from a hangover, the pettiness of the ladies in the office, the futility of workmen polishing the elevator doors, the insistence of a co-worker’s need to tell Gesine how many days her son has been stationed in Saigon, and the sight of an African-American boy who had fallen asleep on the subway with a shoe-cleaning box between his legs. The images of the city are ambiguous, but they do suggest apathy and dissonance. Yet the memory of Lisbeth knowingly humming an anti-Hitler tune while she peeled potatoes: “Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Führer, ein Theater” (1: 427). In spite of the Gestapo, Lisbeth recognized the conflict and chose to espouse vocally her church’s principles over politics. Although Lisbeth’s religious beliefs marginalized her from time to time (much in the vein of Bloom’s

father) and ultimately led to her suicide through the disappointment of her expectations in religion, her initial resistance and recognition give shape to the situation in the present. The linear narration of Lisbeth's and Aggie's friendship, the concrete details of the Jewish boycott, the argument between the church and state, and the way in which Lisbeth protested combine together more neatly and present the confusion and the hypocrisy in a more objective manner than the urban images placed alongside each other.

It is the same structure a few days later on December 10, 1967, when the *Times* reports that in "der nächsten Woche werden in Moskau vier Schriftsteller angeklagt, weil sei zu verstehen gaben, daß ihnen der Prozeß gegen die Schriftsteller Daniel und Sinjowsky nicht gefiel . . . Das reicht für den Artikel 70, Verbrechen gegen den Staat" (1: 427-8).⁶² The perfunctory report is followed by a long description of the false and orchestrated persecution of Methfessel, the Jerichow butcher who refused to become a Nazi party member. He was beaten and deprived of his practice because of false charges of salmonella. Because of the *Times*, Gesine is able to relate a distinct example of how the Nazis manipulated and terrorized the villagers in order to gain control. The *Times* gives a cursory item, and Gesine does not explain or delve into the incident's significance, but she does provide a longer description of Methfessel's experience. Like Stephen's penchant to talk in unanswerable riddles or parables, Gesine situates the present with explanations of the past: Methfessel's persecution becomes symbolic of political oppression per se.

One of the most poignant instances when the past provides a more concrete, if not parabolic example for the headlines occurs in February 1968, when the *New York*

Times reports about an ongoing trial in Darmstadt, Germany of SS officers for killing Jews and dissidents in the Babi Jar ravine near Kiev in 1941. The newspaper gives an account that “ehemalige Angeklaten, ehemalige Angehörige der S.S. tragen interessierte, gelangweilte, amüsierte, abwesende Mienen zur Schau. Keiner scheint beunruhigt oder bekümmert über die Aussage” (2: 718). Moreover, Gesine notes that only four people watched the trial that day. Gesine’s disgust at the lack of outrage and interest prompts her to move from the present report in the *Times* to first an ironic reminder that in November 1938, American citizens panicked on account of Orson Welles’ radio play *War of the Worlds* in which many were terrified that aliens had attacked earth. Yet, Gesine remarks that at the same time of Welles’ play, the pogroms on November 9, 1938 were occurring in Germany. She relates the atmosphere of Jerichow from the point of view of Lisbeth. While Gesine had left with her father to go to another town to visit her aunt, Lisbeth had stayed behind and was first supposed to be in the cinema, but was seen instead observing the burning Jewish synagogue. She was seen again later in Jerichow when a store belonging to the Tannenbaum’s—a Jewish family who lived in Jerichow—was set on fire. During the attack the daughter Marie Tannenbaum was shot and killed.⁶³ While the *New York Times* cursorily reports numbers and facts that take up less a page’s space, Gesine’s story provides the more concrete and specific context for the brutality of planned genocide, a far cry from the entertainment of Welles’ *War of the Worlds* or West German indifference at the report of the Babi Yar Ravine trial. Without Gesine’s relation of the past, the trial becomes just another headline in the present-day events, but when Gesine relates the events in Jerichow, the present and past

become superimposed on each other in one continuous topography of horror that has not yet ended, but still reverberates in the present.

Another ‘central organ’ to which Gesine is connected is the bank. While the *Times* links Gesine to a global world, the bank alienates her, particularly in terms of a political topography. The buildings belonging to the bank on Lexington Avenue are centuries old, decayed and rotting, and are ready to be razed and changed into steel and glass, “die auf blockbreiten zehnstöckigen Gesäßen Stufen ansetzen, vom zwanzigsten Stockwerk an in immer gleichen Schichten hochgestapelt sind, . . . Die Häuser sind leicht demontierbar, und ihre Namen sind nicht eingemeißelt und nicht eingemauert, sondern aufgekittet oder angeschraubt, bequem abzunehmen. (1: 34). The bank itself is a large twelve story tower that covers an entire block, is made up of glass, and is swathed in fluorescent light. Similar to the impermanent buildings, the description of the bank is empty and sterile: “The bank, a living room as big as a station waiting room, is still empty” (1: 34).⁶⁴ Like the empty bags of gas in “Aeolus,” Gesine’s job at the bank is meaningless and often full of meaningless rhetoric—the ladies gossip incessantly and De Rosny, the bank’s Vice-President, is only concerned about the fiscal system and the stock market. But the bank’s reach extends far—it is no coincidence that Marie calls De Rosny “Geld” (1: 465).⁶⁵ At a dinner with De Rosny where he commissions Gesine to learn Czech in order to broaden the bank’s influence to the Czech government with American loans, Marie asks him if it is true “daß die Kreditinstitute aus dem Krieg in Viet Nam Gewinne ziehen” (1: 464)? De Rosny replies with “die Mühe eines Schauspielers, der den Arzt am Bett eines Schwerkranken darstellen soll” that war is a terrible thing and that it

“bringt und züchtet Inflation” which is terrible for a bank (1: 465). Because Gesine cannot argue with her boss openly, the answer becomes sufficient for Marie. The experience of dinner, the lavish gifts De Rosny showers on Gesine and Marie, and the sterile and large glass tower give weight to the extent that commercialism looms over the entire city and Gesine’s life. The presence is empty and unfulfilling. When Gesine is promoted at the bank, she comments that “[e]s klopft niemand Die fremde Umgebung, der Abstand zu den anderen sperrt sie unnachsichtiger mit der Arbeit zusammen” (2: 821). Although she found the general office tedious, her new position—one that is higher up and gives her more influence—ironically isolates her more. Like Bloom who is paralyzed and alienated at his office, Gesine too is essentially alone.⁶⁶

Despite its seeming sterility, commercialism infests the cityscape. For example, when the neighbor Mrs. Ferwaller celebrates Passover (April 12, 1968), the entire religious experience is presented in terms of money and commercialism. The incident is already framed in terms of profit when Gesine notes that while it is Good Friday, “die Bank arbeitet” (2: 980). Mrs. Ferwaller goes shopping for items for Passover and is surprised that most items now “durch Bescheinigung des Rabbiners als ‘kosher for Passover’ gekennzeichnet sind” (2: 982). After purchasing the items, Mrs. Ferwaller realizes that it isn’t done for convenience, but because the “Leute wollen doch nur Geld damit machen! . . . Everything is business!” (2: 982). As if to punctuate the marketable manipulation of the holiday and in a typical parabolic depiction, Gesine describes an ad in a subway station showing an old Indian, “mit wettergekerbter Miene, schwarzem Zopf unter schwarzem Hut, mit funkelnden

Augen vor Vergnügen, daß er eben in ein Produkt einer jüdischen Firma beißen darf: Wer sagt denn, daß Sie jüdisch sein müssen / Um unser jüdisches Brot zu genießen” (2:983). The use of racism to make a profit is clear, but the urbanscape does not simply end with the deflation of a holiday through profit-making. Gesine states that on these ads swastikas often appear. Once again New York is connected with a German past. Not only does commercialism corrupt, but the experience of racism becomes a border that extends across time and national boundaries. Another example of the corrupted commercialism is when Marie decides that she and Gesine should participate in a protest against the Vietnam War instead of going on their usual Saturday ferry trip (April 27, 1968). The streets “waren trocken nach dem frühen Regen. Die bläßliche Sonne lieferte Wärme von vorwärts, ausreichend für einen Feiertag” (3: 1070). The topographical indicators imply that the decision to protest is not only a clear one, particularly when Gesine felt heavy with guilt before for not attending an earlier protest, but the decision is also framed in a warm and gentle context. The clarity of Marie’s decision does not last, however, when she sees the apathy of the crowds who were “noch nicht viel dichter als gewöhnliche Passanten” (3: 1071) or when she passes by countless vendors selling balloons, pins, and t-shirts. The sky “war zugezogen inzwischen, ließ die Sonne unbeständig zwinkern, drohte mit trübem Regen an” (3: 1071). The disillusionment reaches a climax, when Marie sees a campaigning politician who also went and spoke at a pro-Vietnam rally. His political exploitation for a campaign opportunity utterly disappoints Marie and she begs Gesine to go to the ferry—the one place, incidentally, that is apart from the city where Marie feels at most home. The changing weather becomes symbolic for

Marie's pulling back from clear-cut ideals to confused disappointment in witnessing political and commercial opportunism. Back at the tower at the end of the day when Gesine describes that "über den Palisaden hängt ein gelber Streifen, scharf abgesetzt gegen den bläulichen verwischten Oberhimmel. Die Sonne hat ein gelbes Loch. Minuten später schwimmt die gelbe Zelle in den dunkleren Farben" (3: 1075). The resulting haze and the image of the darkness swallowing of the yellow and clear light emphasizes Marie's (like Mrs. Ferwalter's) changed perspective and experience of New York—her idyll or naïve belief that some ideals such as anti-war sentiments (or religious holidays) cannot be corrupted by commercialism is enveloped by the dark haze of capitalism.

The description of commercialism in the city is significant in that it is put side by side with how the Russians occupied Jerichow in July 1945. At first the British occupied Jerichow from May to July 2, 1945 in which they had made Cresspahl mayor, but Gesine explains that on the "Abend des 8. Juli," the Soviet troops entered Jerichow (1033). Similar to the exploitation for profit that occurs in the city, Gesine's description of how K.A. Pontij, the Russian commandant of Jerichow, ran the town compares in that he used the town's resources for his own gain in wealth and demanded labor from the townspeople for his troops and own benefit. Later, when a new commandant took over, Cresspahl was arrested when he gained too much power and used it on behalf of the rights of the townspeople. Gesine's attempt to explain the Russian occupation to Marie is prefaced by confusion. Although the commercialism of New York is unambiguous, Gesine is not sure how to relate the complicated and also unpleasant occupation of the Russians (1029-30), particularly so since she

believes in the ideals of socialism. And the Russians did, after all, liberate them from the Nazis. Jerichow was first liberated by the British, but was soon turned over to the Russian troops, whose treatment of the villagers was also problematic. Before Gesine explains the memory to Marie, she describes the morning in New York as “verblüffend hell” with a “schwerer Dunst” (3: 1029) hanging over the Hudson. Gesine compares the sunny “ebenmäßig von Hitze abgestütztes Wetter” (3: 1029) to the first summer of Jerichow after the war. Out of the heavy haze and heat, Gesine hears the ghosts of her past urging her to tell Marie “[w]as du von uns gehört hast. Was du gesehen hast” (3: 1029). Gesine is charged to continue to be realistic, chronicling the past as she observed it. This technique of sharing the information equates with Johnson’s understanding of his role as an author. As Stefanie Golisch writes: “Realismus bedeutet für Johnson zunächst nichts anderes als die leidenschaftslose Aufmerksamkeit des Schriftstellers für die gesellschaftliche Wirklichkeit, deren Teil er ist.”⁶⁷ Despite the responsibility of chronicling the events as she witnessed them, the haze and heat become emblematic of the difficulty Gesine has in telling this part of her past. On the one hand the haze and the heat reflect the complicated nature of the Russian occupation,⁶⁸ but on the other hand they become metonymical in illustrating the displacement and claustrophobia Gesine (and the villagers) felt in the sense that the village moved from one oppressive rule to another.⁶⁹

It is no coincidence that Gesine relates her memory of the Soviet occupation as she gazes into the fire—this episode, analogous to one of Odysseus’ journeys when he relates his tale to King Alkheus or to Seghers’ *Transit*, compares in the sense that

Gesine felt that she was nobody and could not have known anything at that age: “Damals war ich ein Kind. Zwölf Jahre alt. Was kann ich wissen? (3: 1029). But also, the situation of the stare suggests that Gesine gazes more internally rather than externally. This episode is guided by a more personal reflection and experience, rather than external observation. When the Russians arrived, the village was plagued by fear—the occupation of the Russians was preempted by stories of rampant rape, pillaging, and murder. Gesine interrupts the memories as they continue throughout the week either at the Tower or at work with descriptions of how the “Sonne, die durch die ungeschützten Fenster schlägt, holt sie noch einmal zurück. In dem weiträumigen Büro aus Technik und Wohnmöbeln sitzt heiße, halbhohe, östliche Sonne, die den Dunst über den niedrigen Siedlungen von Long Island City anheizt bis zur Farbe eines Meeres vor siebzehn Jahren. Da war sie einmal, hielt einen Sextanten gegen die Sonne. Da war sie einmal” (3: 1037). The office in the bank becomes intertwined with the timescape of the Russian occupation, thus suggesting a correlation in meaning, but the morning sun is brighter and hotter than Gesine’s typical observations, further suggesting an Oedipal-esque blinding of truth. Gesine is unable to escape the sun as it settles into every crevice of the bank. Like the bank that profits on war and the exploitation of people, Gesine cannot deny that when the Soviets occupied the village, they did not just liberate them, but they exploited and profited from them as well.

The past becomes most claustrophobic when Gesine remembers on May 25, 1968, how the Soviets arrested her father because he had manipulated their laws and political ideals to aid the people of Jerichow instead of profiting the Soviet troops.

The Soviets imprisoned Cresspahl in a small, completely walled-up henhouse, parked a jeep right outside the door, and partied while he was forced to sit in the stench of chickens. Afterwards he was sent a labor camp, an experience that broke Cresspahl and lingered with him until his death. The corresponding topography in New York is not just hot, but claustrophobic. After Gesine tells about Cresspahl's arrest, she moves into a description of the subway and how "die große Hitze soll über sie kommen" to the extent that the "die stickige Luft die Sorge kräftigt, [die Türen] würden gar nicht aufgehen" (3: 1214). In this instance, it is not the past that gives shape to the present, but vice-versa. The description of the city's stuffiness and anxiety gives weight to Gesine's memory of her father's imprisonment—the heat and the anxiety in a modern-day urban experience helps visualize the uncertainty and fear of an absurd arrest and a subsequently confusing and disorienting isolation. The tempo is not unlike the slow, paralyzing speed of the "Hades" episode in *Ulysses* in which Bloom aches for faster movement but is confronted only with isolation, anxiety, and death.

The experience is further punctuated the next day (May 26, 1968) when Marie gives Gesine a tour of Staten Island. The tour is separated into eight segments, and after each segment Marie reminds Gesine how the history of Mecklenburg compares to New York. In other words, the trip—similar to Bloom's trip to Glasnevin Cemetery—becomes metonymical of the continual rise and fall of nations. The trip to Staten Island begins in a park and predictably "in der dunstigen verdeckten Luft" (3: 1223), so that the two can envision the land as Mecklenburg. Marie then points out the train tracks with trains dating back to the First World War, a bridge that connects

the island to New Jersey, and the ferry house, all of which has evidence of “Rost und Schlamm” (3: 1224). In particular, however, the two arrive in the poverty-stricken and industrial dumping ground of Tottenville: “In Tottenville kam der Tod vorbei. Im weißen, von der Sonne gedehnten Licht . . . [waren] lahme Häuser zusammengedrängt, verfallend, mit Zutaten aus Kunststoff behängt“ (3:1224). And finally, Marie points out the fact this island once belonged to the Raritan Indians, implying that “[e]uer Mecklenburg war auch gestohlen, Gesine” (3: 1225) The city, whether in New York or Jerichow or Dublin, might begin in idealism, but the progress always becomes exposed—the sun reveals the death and decay. The sun that has permeated the experiences for the past few days comes to a climax as Gesine situates the entirety next to death, but it is Marie who brings Cresspahl’s experience out of the individual and personal realm of experience and locates it in a larger global context of the collapse—or destructive nature of—human progress.

While the *Times* and the bank provide the means in the cityscape to help Gesine flesh out her memory of the past, ultimately it is the other characters with whom Gesine and Marie interact that channel a concrete connection between the haze of the past and the present. Similar to “Wandering Rocks” in *Ulysses*, in which the community takes center stage to shape Dublin, the other figures of the city in *Jahrestage* are indeed marginal, but through their individual stories they help illustrate the polarity between the city and the individual. Like Joyce, Johnson gave the mass of the city individuality while superimposing connections between histories of humanity, connecting not only Gesine’s perspective of Germany and America, but a myriad of them.

During Gesine's tenure in New York, she and Marie often meet with D.E. (Dietrich Erichson). Like Gesine, D.E. left the GDR in June 1956 after being disbarred from studying physics at the university, and in 1960 he immigrated to the United States. Here, D.E. works for the war industry monitoring radar stations designed to warn about incoming Soviet rockets, a choice Gesine cannot agree with. Although he is Gesine's lover, lives by a secluded stream in the New Jersey woods, and is a good friend and father figure to Marie, Gesine never accepts his proposal for marriage, because for her he symbolizes all the institutions Gesine resists—he is part of the war machine that has fueled the history of two nations. This is not to imply, however, that D.E. and his home do not help Gesine with her journey into memory. When Gesine visits his farmhouse (November 7, 1967), she comments that it has been "gefälscht." It is an old colonial that he has rebuilt with new technology and furnished with brand new furniture: "Vor dem Fenster war der Wind daran, kahle Äste in einer Faust zu fangen, öffnete und schloß die Faust, erholte sich in hechelnden Pausen. Unter der Dunkelheit des Himmels quoll der Innenraum des Hauses auf, dehnte sich aus mit Licht und Wärme und menschlichem Leben" (1: 270). The oldness, isolation, and the noisy rhythm of the wind transports Gesine from the stimuli of the city back to memories of her equally old and isolated childhood home—a farmhouse in Jerichow. The memory is so similar that when Marie enters a room, "eine Katze auf der Schulter, ganz haarig vom rückwärtigen Lampenschein umrissen, habe ich sie verwechselt mit dem Kind . . . das ich war" (1: 270). The haze from the lamp combines with the cat—Gesine's symbol for memory and Gesine has found a concrete bridge to her childhood.

The blurring of the past and present continues on the next day when Gesine is able to describe the farmhouse in Jerichow. It too was isolated, rundown, and needed to be repaired. Like the wind around D.E.'s house, Gesine remembers the details of the structure, the stables, and the emptiness of the yard in which "[n]ur der Wind sprach" (1: 174). The description is noteworthy not only because this is the place where many significant events occurred such as Gesine's almost near-drowning incident in the rain barrel and Lisbeth's suicide in the stables, but the description of D.E.'s empty house and the comparable emptiness of Gesine's childhood home that she feels in D.E.'s "gefälschtes" house helps to illustrate the pain of Gesine's exile. After stating four times that one could repair the Jerichow house "wenn man will," Gesine stops describing and notes that she never should have left New York: "Prompt haben wir die ersten Schneeflocken in der Stadt versäumt. Heute tut der Tag mit kalter Sonne, als könnte er kein Lüftchen trüben" (1: 275). The desire to go back to New York City, amplified by the cold and snowflakes, intimates the coldness of forgetting, being forgotten (like the rundown farmhouse), and of being displaced. Although Gesine spends the entire year trying to channel her past, the memories are painful and the wind and coldness gives weight to and reflects the pain.⁷⁰

In fact, much of the city's topography illustrates the pain of Gesine's exile. On September 15, the entry begins with the statement that the "Sommer ist vorüber" (1: 88), and many persons—including Gesine and Marie—are sitting "auf der Hudsonpromenade, inmitten von Anglern, Familienausflügen, [und] Tennisspiel," (1: 89). But the conflicts are far from over—more are dying in Vietnam, there are conflicts in Russia, South Korea, and Algeria, civil riots are raging, and crime is on

the rise in New York. While tensions around the globe and in New York are ticked off as Gesine reads them in the newspaper, the response to the culmination of catastrophes in the world is framed and made more horrific by the calm, slow, and relaxing atmosphere on the Hudson. Later on September 18, 1967, Gesine continues with the slow pace of the city when she describes again the street and the elderly persons on the traffic islands on Broadway. She explains that like the decayed buildings, the New York Jews (émigrés) have pretty much disappeared: “Ihnen ist nicht gelungen, Besitz aus Europa vor den Nazis zu retten. . . Aufgegeben von ihren Kindern, übriggeblieben aus langen Ehen, allein leben sie die letzten warmen Tage ab auf dem Broadway, doch in der Nähe von Bewegung, Verkehr, Umsatz, bis sie zurückmüssen in ihre möblierten Zimmer, in die Altersheime an der West End Avenue” (1: 98). The emphasis on being completely isolated to the extent of being “still auf den Inseln der Überwege in Broadway” (1: 97), coupled with the crumbling buildings and the summer warmth juxtaposes with the movement of the city. The effect creates a tension between forgetting and not wanting to be forgotten, only to be lost in memory. The city threatens to swallow and forget the individual, and through Gesine’s observation does she keep the memory of the “forgotten” alive. This same notion of being forgotten is a repetition of earlier when Gesine and Marie were picknicking on the Hudson, and on their way home “s[a]hen wir auf die erstarrten, blicklosen Leute in den ruckenden Fenstern des Zuges und ängstig[t]en uns davor, einmal nicht mehr zu ihnen zu gehören, vor einer Zukunft, da wir nur noch mit dem Heimweh leben könnten in New York” (1: 90).

But like Buck Mulligan's constant questioning and mocking of Stephen, D.E. constantly questions Gesine's exile, and pesters her to marry him (1: 40, 269). One significant instance, however, is in a letter to Gesine in which he uses topographical descriptions to describe their differences. The appeal of her to him is that she has a memory and feels pain. To him, this confirms that she still has ideals: "Für dich gibt es immer noch wirklich Sachen: den Tod, den Regen, die See. In der Erinnerung weiß ich es, ich komme dahin nicht zurück" (2: 817). Unlike Gesine, D.E. has given up the illusion that he is an émigré and has accepted his displacement as permanent. To underscore that fact, D.E. takes Gesine to a place, "wo die Männer Amerikas leben" (2: 905). In an Irish pub, not unlike the Ormond Bar in "Sirens," where, incidentally the place is furnished in gold colors and has prostitutes that compare to the "bronze and gold" barmaids who lampoon Bloom, D.E. plays a joke on the bartender and tries to get Gesine to live "zum Vergnügen," to have "[I]eise, genüßliche Gespräche. Kein Wort über den Krieg" (2: 908). But the noise of the place and the constant jingle of glasses and the insistence by Gesine that she is trying to live for pleasure ("Tu ich ja. Tu ich ja." [2: 908]) emphasizes Gesine's inability to suppress the past and the present. The presence of D.E. and his doggedness to block out the past—he dismisses a discussion about the past in a letter he wrote—reinforces Gesine's commitment to her project. It is no coincidence that after Gesine's experience in the bar where men come to drink and meet women, Gesine relates how her uncle Robert Papenrock sent a young Russian girl (Slata)—a prisoner of war—to the Papenrocks to be a servant, with the news that she would eventually be his wife.⁷¹

Once again, the story is parabolic: The face of the city gives a concrete link to the experience of Slata which is not unlike prostitution.

But one of the most important interactions with people in New York is the case of Francine, a schoolmate of Marie. Marie comes home with “Sorgen” (1: 218) because Francine is the only African-American in the class and the teacher Sister Magdalena has asked Marie to befriend her. Comparable to Stephen’s re-organization of Dublin as a city that is more multicultural, rather than a singular Irish one, Marie has to learn about the effects and the extent of the divide between the races. Marie finds the task hard in that her friends “denken was Francine denkt: Ich täte das aus Liebe. Ich will da raus” (1: 220). The weather that night is full of thunderstorms, “eine Horde von Gewittern und Regenschauern aus dem Westen auf unsere Fenster zu, schlägt schnell und gewalttätig in die Stadt . . . Jetzt ist es kalt” (2: 221). The thunderstorm not only compliments the Marie’s “troubles,” but it also helps to illustrate Gesine’s difficulty in communicating to Marie the political and cultural importance of wanting to befriend Francine. To be sure, Gesine feels guilty for sending Marie to a “geräumigen, sauberen Klassenzimmern hoch über dem Riverside Park und dem Hudson” (1: 99) instead of “in eine städtische Schule, in einen der schäbigen Ziegelkästen, die stinken nach fiskalischen Geiz, in überfüllte Klassen, in denen die Kinder der Armen die Streite ihrer Eltern ausschlafen” (1: 99-100). Gesine by her own choice has chosen to send Marie to a predominantly white, private Catholic school so that she receives a good education, but in doing so, she risks losing the importance of communicating to Marie by example the societal structures of racism through exposing her to a more integrated society. Thus Gesine

relates the growing anti-Semitism in Jerichow, by cataloging the various Jewish families living there. And when Marie first mentions Francine, Gesine tells about the Nazi takeover of power in Jerichow's local government, and again when Gesine and Marie see Francine on the street and Francine behaves very submissively towards Marie, Gesine tells Marie about the Nazi organization of boycotts of Jewish stores.

One of the main reasons Gesine wants Marie to be an honest friend to Francine has to do with the burden of guilt Gesine feels. While Gesine compares more to Bloom in terms of her relationship with the city, the guilt Gesine feels compares more to the guilt Stephen has when he thinks about his mother, or when Bloom feels that he is on trial in "Nighttown." When Gesine has conversations with her family or with the narrator, she is often reminded of the heavy shame she daily lives with, simply because of Germany's history. For example, friends of Gesine—Jim and Linda O'Driscoll—often let Gesine rent a house by a sea, but once during a visit (March 10, 1968), Jim mentions that what Heinrich Himmler did to the Jews, the Americans did to the Indians: "Jetzt war es nicht mehr 'Dschisain,' sondern die Deutsche, die versuchen sollte, Himmler zu erklären" (2: 851). And later when they go to the movies, the couple picks *Nuit et brouillard* (Night and Fog, 1955) a French documentary by Alain Resnais about Auschwitz. Gesine leaves the theater soon after the movie starts and explains that they "sehen mich, und sie denken an die Verbrechen der Deutschen" (2: 852). The link to the past is clear, but Gesine is not comfortable being the individual face for the nation. Rather, like Bloom's desire for a new city (Bloomusalem), Gesine hopes through her project to reform the future by not groveling in guilt as Stephen does, but instead by channeling that remorse and

teaching Marie about the choices one makes so that both can live without self-reproach.

Another such instance of re-channeling guilt is when Gesine and Marie are first looking for an apartment. They meet with a real-estate agent who takes them to an area that was “anständig” (1: 21): “Er hatte möblierte Wohnungen in den Baumgebieten vorrätig, mit Treppen zu Gärten, mit Schwimmbädern um die Ecke” (1: 21). The location is idyllic, but the agent—himself Jewish—describes the area as Jewish, and in a mixture of English and Yiddish, he assures Gesine that “wir halten die shwartzes schon draußen” (1: 21). Gesine promptly leaves. Sitting near the JFK Idlewild airport, Gesine explains to Marie her disgust that of lower middle-class racism. Gesine is disillusioned and is tempted to give up the idea of living in the States. But in looking out towards the ocean, she remembers the news of the day: “Die westdeutsche Regierung will die Verjährung für Morde und Massenausrottung in der Nazizeit ganz und gar aufheben, vielleicht” (1: 21). Despite the tranquil treed areas, gardens, swimming pools and seemingly idyllic circumstances, Gesine realizes that notwithstanding the picturesque area, the people, incidents, and hypocrisies are essentially the same. The experience of New York and West Germany are superimposed on each other—racism, and the subsequent guilt it burdens a nation with, is an experience without cultural borders or limitations. The only option one has is to make non-discriminatory choices. This is not to imply that Gesine bears the guilt and disillusionment not having her own “Bloomusalem” easily. The experience of looking for an apartment is coupled with rain that “dämpfte” (muffles) and the rumble of cars (1: 21). Rain, the topographical element that has the most gravity,

emphasizes the displacement, disillusionment, and difficulty of Gesine's choice to live in exile.

Another example occurs in a conversation with a resident at Riverside Tower—Mrs. Blumenroth. Mrs. Blumenroth insists that her family “war seit fünf Jahrhunderten in Deutschland” (1: 53), Gesine interrupts her and reminds her that her ancestors were “von den Deutschen umgebracht worden” (1: 53). The air in the park “ist ganz still” and “die Luft is klar, kühl und rasch” (1: 51). The topography, like Gesine's commitment to stay clear about Germany's past, is transparent. Similar to the moments when an idyllic conception of Ireland is debunked, Gesine must also keep a keen eye for false illusions of the past and present. Or, as Per Landin writes: “Mit Humor und Wärme, Rücksicht und einer unendlichen Ausdauer stellt Johnson Szenen und Menschen vor, die ein Leben hinter dem falschen Schein der Politik verkörpern.”⁷²

Sometimes, however, when Gesine tries to reconcile her guilt from the past in the present, the topography of the present grossly contrasts with the actual situation in the past. For example, at the end of March, Gesine reports that on the other “Ufer des Hudson war das Licht so klar, daß die Häuser scharf umrissen erschienen, näher, zu nahe. Sonst malt der Schmutz in der Luft dorthin eine neblige Gegend mit Bäumen, als hätte der Fluß verhindern können, daß es dort weitergeht wie New York” (2: 937). Typically, the haze allows Gesine to imagine New York as the past shores of Mecklenburg, but in this particular segment, Gesine spends the present dispelling false illusions of past ideals, ultimately cataloging instances of German guilt. She receives an anonymous letter from Jerichow letting her know that Cresspahl is to be

honored with his own street name and school name for his alleged anti-Fascist activities with the British. The letter writer—an anonymous admirer of Cresspahl—is shocked and horrified that he would have been anti-fascist, and she asks Gesine to confirm to her that Cresspahl was not a traitor. Gesine responds not by replying or delving into Cresspahl’s activities with the British—something she does later—but she catalogues instead the fate of other persons from Jerichow and other nearby areas, who were persecuted or killed by the Gestapo. It is a lengthy list of persons, ranging from a bargeman to an engineer to a cattle dealer to a schoolteacher. The list in itself is enough to comment on the short-sightedness or hazy and obscured perspective of the letter writer, but the list ends with a detailed description of a “geweißter” (whitewashed) cellar where victims were murdered (2: 950). The clear outlines of the New Jersey banks compare to Gesine’s vivid description of the whitewashed walls which were the Gestapo cellars in Jerichow: Just as the houses are “too close,” Gesine can plainly visualize the three hooks on which victims hung and the curtains they used to hide the dead bodies while another victim was being lead into the cellar. Although the bright light of the present provides continuous outlines of the all-to-real torture in the past, the calmness that is reflected in the good weather starkly contrasts with the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis. As a result, the clarity in the present provides a transparency to the guilt of the past she bears.

Another example occurs the next day on April 4, 1968. Similar to the “Lestrogionians” episode when Bloom walks in the morning, Gesine describes the air as and tranquil—only the sky is “bedeckt . . . über dem Hudson” (2: 951). She compares the clouds to Ribnitz, a coastal shore on the Baltic where Gesine once

visited with her aunt and uncle, the Paepkes. The memory of the morning on which she arrives at the Paepke is “fast weiß, mit fransigen Wolkenbooten im Himmel. Der Widerschein des Lichtes im Bodden war ein köstlicher Schmerz in den Augen” (2: 953). She even goes so far to comment on the relaxing area by describing that there were painters in the fields, painting the landscape on canvas. The situation is far from tranquil, however, and like the bright and clear white of the whitewashed walls of the New Jersey shore, this memory too reveals the destruction that war brings. Although the child Gesine played with the other children, and was oblivious to the situation, the adult Gesine relates that this was the last time she saw her uncle Alexander. He had disobeyed his military orders so that he could see the children, because he knew that he was being sent to the front and ultimately to his death. Moreover, Gesine remembers that Alexander gave the children “weiße Regenmäntel aus der Sowjetunion” (2: 956) before he left, presumably from the nearby concentration camp where he was responsible for putting Russian civilians to work. While to the child the mood was perfect for the “Ferien” (2: 956), it is a stark contrast to the reality and gravity of the situation, a visual that the cloudiness over the Hudson embodies. Like Bloom, the adult Gesine looks past the tranquility of the Hudson and sees the destruction war causes, a feeling that is given shape by the blinding pain of white sunlight in her memory. White—the color and its reflection in topography—becomes synonymous with death. The topography of Germany and New York combines and illustrates the horrors of war, of death, and ultimately of Gesine’s guilt.

However, the entire catalog of an all too transparent past that gives visualization to murder culminates with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4,

1968). Similar to those in Jerichow who were killed when they protested the government, and similar to Alexander Papeke, who, despite his protests, was also sent to his death, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated for his protests for civil rights. Instead of white and bright light, however, Gesine describes the aftermath of King's assassination as smoky: "schmutzigen Rauch, klumpig in den Straßen, weit ausgebreitet über die Stadt . . . Auf einer anderen Photographie steht eine niedrige Zeile Häuser eng bei einander, einige schon zu leeren Kästen ausgebrannt, mit halb eingestürzter Fassade. An einigen hat das Feuer noch zu fressen . . . So sähe ein Krieg in amerikanischen Städten aus" (2: 962). While the past is transparent, the present is only clouded in haze. Gesine responds to the death of King by imagining a conversation with the elevator operator, an African-American in which he mocks her sympathy since she is white. In her mind she is not allowed to be sincerely sorry for this death. Marie tries to respond to the murder by sending King's wife Coretta King a telegram that apologizes for her loss and suffering, "den die Weißen Ihnen zugefügt haben" (2:961). There are two versions of Marie's telegram, but both are broken off in mid-sentence. Marie's telegrams are followed by a telegram written by Gesine in which she tries to apologize for her daughter's "impulsiven und unbeherrschten Ton" (2:962), but in the midst of the telegram Gesine tries to apologize herself for King's death. But when she tries to send a sympathy telegram to Mrs. Coretta King, she hears her dead family speak up in her imagination and tell her that she cannot write a letter because "er [war] ein Neger. Ob er Gewaltlosigkeit predigte oder Gewalt. Dieser war nun zu sichtbar geworden" (2: 962). Although Gesine tries to reconcile her personal shame, there remains a gap between her and this American society—

despite her efforts to see and act beyond racial boundaries, she is still very much displaced.

Using the topography to illustrate the burden of the past through imagined conversations with other persons or the dead is not uncommon for Gesine. In *Jahrestage*, she often uses the city and its present to converse with the ghosts of her past. In fact, one of the most clear and obvious connections between *Ulysses* and *Jahrestage* is the similarity between the “Hades” episode in *Ulysses* and Gesine’s constant conversations with the dead. Like Bloom, Gesine resides very much in the realm of Hades throughout the narrative, continually using aspects of New York to contemplate incidents long past and using events in her present day life to talk about the past with the ghosts of her family and friends. And similar to Bloom’s journey in a black carriage towards Glasnevin cemetery, Gesine takes a trip in “ein schwarzes Schlachtschiff” (1: 79) to the airport for business. She describes the entire experience as an alienating one in which she is picked up by the African-American chauffeur Arthur whose formal and condescending attitude is akin to Chiron, the chauffeur of the dead: “Seine Uniform, seine gemessenen Schritte, seine blicklose Miene stören die lässigen Feierabendgespräche zwischen den Maschinenkonsolen des offenen Büroraums, er läßt ihr nicht Zeit zu Abschieden, schon hält er ihr die Tür zum Hauptkorridor auf und läßt sie hindurchgehen wie etwas, das er nicht sieht” (1: 78-79). The pace of the incident is slower than Gesine’s walk to work or when she grocery shops, or when she observes the bustling mass of persons at the subway station of the South Ferry, or even in the area near her Riverside home that is bustling with immigrants. The two descend to the cellar and Gesine sinks into the dark car

that is separated from the outside “durch dunkel getöntes Glas” (1: 79). Through the dark visuals, the heavy and slow pace, and the descent down, the tone of the experience foreshadows gloom—Gesine’s trip is not a journey to a cemetery like Bloom’s in episode six, but Gesine’s discomfort with the clear racial boundaries (and her inability to overcome it) compares to the Bloom’s uneasiness as he is confronted with the death of his son Rudy and the shame of his father’s suicide.

Indeed. The car does not ascend into a bright city, or speed past shop windows, but like Bloom’s carriage, Gesine crosses a river as the car passes under the East River Tunnel and the city emerges slowly, “denn die Straße weitet sich zunehmend aus zwischen den Industriebauten Brooklyns, weiträumig abgesetzten Wohnhäusern und endlich den Schnellstraßen Long Islands, bis in der Gegend der Friedhöfe der Himmel fast unverstellt den Horizont verhängt” (1: 79). Like Bloom who travels outside the city towards Glasnevin cemetery, Gesine also passes by a cemetery.⁷³ The view does not fly by in a blur, but rather it opens up gradually—the sky is suspended, seamlessly connecting the city’s trademarks of industry, residence, and their movement in one continuous arc. In this case, the city itself becomes a graveyard in which the “Grabäcker sind Städte, von Mauern gesichert, durchzogen von anmutigen Straßenkurven, dicht gebaut mit schmalen Totensteinen, ähnlich den alten Einfamilienhäusern Manhattans, dann wieder geöffnet mit grünen Parks, in denen einsame Leichenpaläste an die Verhältnisse irdischen Besitzes gemahnen” (1: 79). Left over scabs and scars of an industrial exploitation on the countryside clearly places the city in a land of the dead, a Hades in which the living built palaces to the dead with their industry. Analogous to *Ulysses* when Bloom sees the barge crossing

the canal covered in waste and carrion dogs, Gesine glimpses the future of a city married to industry, a sight repeated with her visits to Tottenville. Gesine tries to make conversation, but like Bloom's ineptitude, the chauffeur refuses to be casual, prompting Gesine to hear in her mind a voice that chastises her: "Gefällt dir das Land nicht? Such dir ein anderes" (1: 80). It is no coincidence that the voice Gesine hears sounds similar to a pro-war slogan of the time: "America, love it or leave it." Just like "Nighdtown," when Bloom is rebuffed for his fantasy about starting a new nation that is without prejudice in which he is leader, Gesine is fundamentally an outsider and constantly feels as if she is on trial—balancing the shame of the past with an awareness of the present. It is similar to what R.P. Blackmur writes about *Ulysses*: "Instead of the polarity of the ideal and the actual, there was for Joyce the polarity of the City and the individual."⁷⁴ Gesine is unable to fit in comfortably with the city and the American society, and she tries to reconcile her project through overcompensating with the tensions between the African-Americans and the whites. Thus, she is unable to stop Francine from going back to her dysfunctional family—even though she lives with the Cresspahls for awhile—she is unable to write sympathies to Coretta Scott King, and she is unable to connect to Arthur. In other words, Gesine is only left with her thoughts and her hope to reconcile the psychological landscape of her troubled past through teaching Marie how to avoid a past she is inherently a part of.⁷⁵

Notes

All translations, unless otherwise noted are the author's.

¹ Harry Blamires, *The Bloomsday Book* (London: Routledge, 1988) writes that “the one-eyed-two-eyed dichotomy was very important to Joyce. . . . He will never totally surrender himself or his reader to a single mood or style: the tragic and the comic moods exist side by side; poetic and ‘vulgar’ styles are intertwined” (113). While Blamires is specifically referring to the Cyclops episode (episode 12) in which Bloom encounters the nationalistic, arrogant, and crude Citizen, the dichotomous pattern can be found throughout *Ulysses*, a point that I particularly make in reference of the dichotomy between the city and water.

² See chapter three and my discussion of the sea at Martello Tower.

³ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

⁴ Joyce revisits the theme of drunkenness later in “Circe,” when Stephen gets drunk in Nighttown and visits a brothel. Moreover, the stereotype of a drunk Ireland is reinforced through the examples of Simon Dedalus (Stephen's father) and Paddy Dignam (Bloom's friend who passes away). In addition, the pastoral idyll of Ireland is also debunked through the example of Gerty McDowell. Although she is considered a fine specimen of Irish beauty—blue eyes, red hair—Bloom notices after their romantic episode that she is lame, and she becomes—as Bloom puts it—“Jilted beauty. A defect is ten times worse in a woman” (368). Similar to the dairy woman, Joyce consistently fills his narrative with cues that debunk an idyllic and pastoral Dublin.

⁵ Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Visual Culture*, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff (London: Routledge, 1998) 239.

⁶ Foucault 239.

⁷ See my discussion of *Lord Jim* in chapter two.

⁸ When Stuart Gilbert published Joyce's schema to *Ulysses* (London: Faber & Faber, 1930), he included that Stephen corresponded to Telemachus and Hamlet.

⁹ Tarentum, a city in present-day southwest Italy, stood on a peninsula between an inland tidal lagoon to the east and functioned as a harbor to the west. It was a stronghold and the wealthiest city for South Italy. In 209 BC, Tarentum was betrayed from within and was invaded by the Roman army. Asculum, a city between Rome and Tarentum, was the site of another battle in 279 BC when the Romans were again trying to gain control of the southern Italian peninsula. The Tarentines asked King Pyrrhus for military aid, and with his help they succeeded in subduing Rome. However, Pyrrhus' success subsided after his victory at Asculum, and he died in 272 B.C. when he was trapped inside Argos. He was killed by a tile thrown from a rooftop. See, Don Gifford and Robert Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988) 30.

¹⁰ Morton Levitt, *James Joyce and Modernism: Beyond Dublin* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen P, 2000) 265.

¹¹ After Mulligan invokes the sea with his "Thalatta! Thalatta!", the narrative reads that Stephen leans over the tower parapet and sees "a mailboat clearing the harbour mouth of Kingstown" (5).

¹² It should be noted that there was a history of anti-Semitism in Ireland. David Clark ("Bloom in Dublin; Dublin in Bloom, *Silverpowdered olivetrees; reading Joyce in Spain* [Sevilla: U of Sevilla P, 2003] 237) writes that "as a consequence of immigration the Jewish population of Ireland increased more than tenfold in the thirty days before the day of *Ulysses*. And from early in that year, 1904, until shortly before Joyce emigrated to the Continent in the autumn, there was a dramatic outbreak of anti-Semitism in Ireland, including an organized boycott of Jewish businesses in Limerick" (237).

¹³ It is important to note the pattern of the Wandering Jew, a figure who scorned Christ at his crucifixion, and was fated to walk the world until the Second Coming. Chester Anderson (*James Joyce and His World* [New York: Viking, 1968] 11) has connected the Wandering Jew with Enoch, Elijah, Al-Khadir (a vegetation god in Semitic mythology), and finally Leopold Bloom. Richard Lehan (*The City in Literature*, [Berkeley: U of California P, 1998] 116) also points out Joyce's awareness of Victor Berard's theory of the Phoenician or Semitic influence on the Ulysses legend. As

a result, it is appropriate Joyce collapsed the two legends together and that the modern Ulysses is Jewish.

¹⁴ Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses and Other Writings* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1972) 69.

¹⁵ Clark 236.

¹⁶ Clark 236.

¹⁷ Austin Clarke, *Twice Around the Black Church* (London, 1962).

¹⁸ Max Rychner, *In Memoriam James Joyce*, ed. Carola Gideon-Welcker (Zurich: Fretz and Wasmuth, 1941) 35-36.

¹⁹ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1977) 179. Also see my discussion of flânerie in chapter one.

²⁰ Edna Duffy, *The Subaltern Ulysses* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1994) 62.

²¹ Duffy 179.

²² Doris Bremm, "Stream of Consciousness Narration in James Joyce's *Ulysses*: The *Flâneur* and the Labyrinth in "Lestrygonians," *The image of the city in literature, media, and society: selected papers from the 2003 conference of the Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery* (2003), 194.

²³ Once again, the balancing between Stephen's and Bloom's experience adds another layer to the duality of *Ulysses*.

²⁴ Michael Seidel (*Epic Geography: James Joyce's Ulysses* [Princeton, Princeton UP, 1976]) writes that this is the first episode to break with the order of Homer. Joyce switches "Cyclops" and "Hades," but, as Seidel notes: The experiences of the Dublin day account for some obvious shifts. A morning funeral makes more sense than a morning visit to a pub, especially for Bloom. Joyce needs no excuse to juggle the chapters beyond the kind of parallel situations he wishes to set up in his city" 157.

²⁵ Seidel 159.

²⁶ Gifford writes that the march is played Handel's oratorio right before the climax of the Elegy as the Israelites carry the dead bodies of Saul, Saul's son Jonathan, and the many dead Israelites after their loss to the Philistines (113).

²⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railroad Journey: Trains and Travel in the 19th Century*. (New York: Orizen, 1978) 58-9.

²⁸ See my discussion of Simmel in the introduction, note 18.

²⁹ See my discussion on this in chapter three.

³⁰ Foucault 241.

³¹ Gilbert 172-193.

³² It should be noted that for Fredric Jameson (*Ulysses in History*," *Modern Critical Views: James Joyce*, ed. Harold Bloom [New York: Chelsea, 1982]) the constant chatter *is* representative of the city. For him, the city is not made of buildings, people, or pathways. "No, the classical city is defined essentially by the nodal point at which all those pathways and trajectories meet, or which they traverse; points of totalization we may call them, which make shared experience possible That discourse is gossip" 180-81.

³³ Jon Hegglund, "Ulysses and the Rhetoric of Cartography," *Twentieth Century Literature* 49.2 (Summer 2003): 165.

³⁴ Hegglund 191.

³⁵ Hegglund 192.

³⁶ Frank Delaney, *James Joyce's Odyssey* (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1981) 103.

³⁷ This is not to imply that there are instances that are not unique to urbanity. For example, Blazes orders champagne and fruits for Molly; he uses the telephone to call his secretary; Bloom goes to the bookstore to find a book for Molly; there are tourists in cars looking at Trinity College, and an ambulance car passes by two other character M'Coy and Lenehan (227-229). But these instances do not really make up the topography of Dublin, but rather compliment the plot—the two paramours are

taking actions to woo their lover, and two other characters explain the relationship of Bloom and Molly.

³⁸ See Sebastian Knowles, ed., *Bronze by Gold: The Music of Joyce* (New York: Garland, 1999).

³⁹ Cyril Pearl, *Dublin in Bloomtime* (New York: Viking P, 1969).

⁴⁰ John Paul Riquelme, *Teller and Tale in Joyce's Fiction: Oscillating Perspectives* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins UP, 1983) 216.

⁴¹ Kurt Fickert, *Dialoge with the Reader: The Narrative Stance in Uwe Johnson's Fiction* (Columbia, SC: Camden, 1999) 113-4.

⁴² Johnson, *Begleitumstände: Frankfurter Vorlesungen* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1980. 329.

⁴³ Wolfgang Paulsen, *Uwe Johnson: Undine geht: Die Hintergründe seines Romanwerks* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 21.

⁴⁴ Paulsen 23.

⁴⁵ Hans Mayer, *Der Turm von Babel* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1991) 224.

⁴⁶ See my discussion above, *Ulysses* 61.

⁴⁷ Uwe Johnson, *Jahrestage: Aus dem Leben Gesine Cresspahl* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970, 1971, 1973, 1983). While Johnson envisioned his text as one volume, it was, nevertheless published in four installments. In the spirit of Johnson's vision, the page numbering stays consistent. In referencing the text, I will use the volume number, followed by the page number, separated by a colon.

⁴⁸ Sara Lennox, "Die *New York Times* in Johnsons *Jahrestagen*," *Die USA und Deutschland: Wechselseitige Spiegelungen in der Literature der Gegenwart* (Bern: Francke, 1976) 108.

⁴⁹ In many ways Riverside Drive compares to the description of Molly's Gibraltar or the narrator's description of Marseilles in *Transit*.

⁵⁰ Also see my introduction for an explanation of Johnson's rural regions.

⁵¹ Jürgen Grambow, "Heimat im Vergangenen" *Sinn und Form* 143.

⁵² Mayer 211.

⁵³ In every interview or essay, Johnson insisted that he was fulfilling a contract with Gesine. This technique of being simultaneously inside and outside the narrative appears also in his *Zwei Ansichten*. Throughout *Jahrestage* the narrator appears to have authority, but there are moments when Gesine asserts her independence as a narrator from him. In the middle of an episode describing the event in which the writer Uwe Johnson from the GDR gives a speech to the Jewish American congress that Gesine attends, the narrator interrupts Gesine's explanation:

Wer erzählt hier eigentlich, Gesine.

Wir beide. Das hörst du doch, Johnson (1:256).

This added layer of narrative complexity and voices—in addition to the ghosts that Gesine hears, or the quasi omniscient third-person narrator who describes places, events, and other people, all combine in a vein similar to *Ulysses* in which the narrative strategy or narrator changes from episode to episode. For an explanation of Johnson's narrative technique, see Ulrich Fries, *Uwe Johnsons Jahrestage: Erzählstruktur und politische Subjektivität* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1990) and Norbert Mecklenburg, *Die Erzählkunst Uwe Johnsons* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1997).

⁵⁴ The name Jerichow is obviously biblical. Marie emphasizes this when she makes the statement that she wishes to send Sister M.—the teacher at her school—to Jerichow. It is a far-off place but symbolically, Gesine becomes the trumpet player breaking down the walls of Jericho as she exposes the present as a construction of the past.

⁵⁵ Gary Baker, *Understanding Uwe Johnson* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 1999) 133-34. Interestingly enough, when the city or America gets to be too much for Gesine or Marie, the ghost of Jakob does not say to take Marie back to Jerichow, but to "Dublin," (1:315) which is of course another connection—albeit minor—to *Ulysses*.

⁵⁶ Ernst Thälmann was the leader of the Communist Party of Germany. He was arrested in Berlin in 1932, held in solitary confinement for eleven years before being executed in 1944.

⁵⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Über den Begriff der Geschichte" (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977) 255.

⁵⁸ Grambow, *Uwe Johnson* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997) 97.

⁵⁹ After Marie reads her essay to Gesine, Gesine argues that she said something different: “Am Morgen: habe ich gesagt, als das Haus umstellt war mit den gelben Planken der Polizei und die Feuerwehrleute das verkohlte Holz und den wässerigen Schutt beobachteten, als die Luft wieder torcken war: habe ich gesagt: roch es nach Krieg” (1: 179). Marie explains that the emphasis on the essay was sight and not smell, but the added particular of smell to the memory also strengthens my point of concretization in that Gesine has now added the texture of smell to the topography in addition to the visualization of fire.

⁶⁰ Manfred Durzak, *Gespräche über den Roman* (Frankfurt am M: Suhrkamp, 1976) 443.

⁶¹ Durzak 448.

⁶² Sinjawsy and Daniel were dissidents who opposed the Soviet constitution that outlined the punishment laws in the USSR. On December 4, 1965, there was a demonstration on the Puschkin Platz in Moskau supporting Sinjawsy and Daniel and all the demonstrators were arrested.

⁶³ This is the incident that prompted Lisbeth’s suicide.

⁶⁴ Like Joyce’s meticulous map of narrative and experiential time, Johnson also mapped out the exact time in accordance with Gesine’s traveling to work. It takes her thirty-five minutes, but already because of the importance of time, the city is closes in on her when she travels to work (September 13). Time, however, translates into commerce. For when Gesine arrives early or leaves late, it is interpreted as an excess of zeal. The importance of time expands out to include the city when Gesine passes by Grand Central Station and hears an internal voice proclaiming that it is “die Uhr die Amerika aufweckt” (1:83). Gesine continues with the routine only so that she can afford to send Marie to a private school.

The repetition of time and Gesine’s daily repetition of working becomes parabolic in that it reflects on Cresspahl’s desire for Lisbeth. After Gesine’s description of time and her daily routine, the next day follows with a description of Cresspahl’s courting of Lisbeth. Gesine comments on his courting with the statement: “Ist nicht die Wiederholung unerträglich” (1: 86). Like Gesine’s knowledge that she loses “quality” time in her commute, she asserts that Cresspahl squandered day

after day at Jerichow in August 1931, because he was blinded by a woman. The juxtaposition of events suggests that Gesine's routine is perhaps misplaced in terms of priority, and her job is only a means—like the events that occur to Cresspahl—of entrapment.

⁶⁵ The theme of American imperialism as it is connected to banks surfaces quite regularly in *Jahrestage*. In an open letter from Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Gesine describes how he declares that the morality of America is ruled and corrupted by bank presidents, generals, and military industrialists (2: 795) and compares the men to Nazis. Although De Rosny asks Gesine to explain, she does nothing more than report the situation, as if the reporting is proof enough of the connection. Yet, the incident is shrouded in thick fog, and what should be clear to Gesine in the most direct overlap with American and German history is not. I understand the cloudy topography to illustrate Gesine's sense of guilt, a topic I delve into below.

⁶⁶ It is no coincidence either, that the description of the bank offices leads into a description of cockroaches in the city. When Gesine reports that De Rosny found a nest of cockroaches inside his dictating machine, she follows with a description of how permanent they are to the city—they have infested her apartment, her neighbors' apartments, and even won the attention of the *Times*. For Gesine, they represent the filth of a city and personal embarrassment, but in a surreal way, they unite the community and give permanence in the midst of a changing urbanscape. Moreover, the cockroaches reach across all national boundaries. Gesine points to various types—German, American, and Oriental, and they infest and withstand everything. But more importantly, the topic “wurde behandelt als ein vollständig gewöhnliches und anständiges Thema” (March 5th). Although commercialism alienates a person, there is at least, the cockroach that has the potential to even the playing field and unite a community.

⁶⁷ Stefanie Golisch, *Uwe Johnson zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 1994) 8.

⁶⁸ The struggle between the individual and the society is, of course, an essential connection between all of Johnson's works. Beginning with *Ingrid Babendererde*, and in his *Mutmassungen über Jakob*, or *Dritten Buch über Achim* Johnson portrays the dramatic conflict between an individual

struggling against (and surviving in) a society, a particularity that has dubbed him as a writer of the German division.

⁶⁹ K.A. Pontij's rule over Jerichow had an element of personal revenge. On a night when Cresspahl found out that his illegitimate son in England died in an air raid, Pontij told him that he, too lost his son to the Germans:

Dabei sagte Pontij vergeßlich, seufzend, sein Sohn sei im April 1945 in Deutschland gefallen.
--Und Cresspahl erzählte von dem Sohn in England, den er durch die Deutschen verloren hatte.
--Nein. Es waren zwei Worte, die bekam er nicht wieder aus dem Gedächtnis, es waren seine beiden besten Worte im Russischen: Nje daleko.
--Das reicht? Daß Pontijs Sohn nje daleko gefallen war?
--Das war für eine Weile genug. Nje daleko. Nicht weit von Jerichow (3: 1209).

⁷⁰ To underscore the pain of the memory, there are several times when Cresspahl begs Gesine for forgiveness. Gesine always replies—almost insistently—that she has forgiven him. For example, when Cresspahl sent Gesine against her will to live with the Paepkes in 1942 and again when Gesine relates how Cresspahl found out that Lisbeth was slowly starving her in another attempt to kill Gesine and thus alleviate her from future guilt.

⁷¹ In another allusion to *Ulysses*, D.E. takes Gesine and Marie to Dublin on a vacation.

⁷² Per Landin, "Von Mecklenburg nach Manhattan: Uwe Johnsons Landschaften,"

Internationales Uwe Johnson Forum: Beiträge zum Werkverständnis und Materialien zur Rezeptionsgeschichte, vol. 6, eds. Carsten Gansel and Nicolai Riedel, (Frankfurt am M: Peter Lang, 1997) 82.

⁷³ There are other "cemeteries" that appear in the narrative. On May 5, 1945, the British open the concentration camps near Lübeck and force the Germans to bury the dead. And on May 10th, K. A. Pontiji forces the villagers to build a mass grave in the middle of town. Cresspahl argues with the commandant, trying to hide the cemetery and place it further out of town to the extent of suggesting the place where he and Lisbeth consummated their relationship. Cresspahl loses the argument—the cemetery or the reminder of death is not allowed to be hidden on the margins of the town, but rather it takes center stage in Jerichow.

⁷⁴ R.P. Blackmur, "The Jew in Search of a Son," *Eleven Essays in the European Novel* (New York: Harcourt, 1951) 35.

⁷⁵ Gesine's frustration at being an outsider is punctuated after after Arthur and Gesine pick up De Rosny. Arthur, after seeing how DeRosny flirts with Gesine, interrupts Gesine's thoughts again and suggests that she only has the job because De Rosny is attracted to her. Gesine responds to him—ironically—to "fahr zur Hölle" (1: 82).

CONCLUSION: Concluding Thoughts on the Epic

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines the epic as that which concerns a hero of great importance who undertakes superhuman deeds in an immense if not transnational setting.¹ And, according to Aristotle, epic narratives generally begin *in medias res* with a narrator who states an argument or theme. One inherent, but sometimes overlooked aspect to epics includes topography. Topography in epics is crucial. It not only provides the scope and sets the tone of experience for the tale, but as topography itself provides shape and order—without it the result would be chaos or wilderness. By default, the establishment of topography in an epic cultivates culture. As Hartmut Böhme writes: “Kulturen sind also zuerst Topographien, Raumkerbungen, Raumschriften, Raumzeichnungen. Karten sind älter als die Schrift, Raumordnungen älter als Zeitordnungen; jedenfalls sind letztere in Sammeskulturen ungleich weniger differenziert als Raumordnungen. Kulturelle Organisation fängt also mit den Kulturtechniken des Raumes an.”² As an epic is a means to give shape to a culture’s values, ethics, and history via storytelling, topography goes hand and hand with providing the representation as well as the place for the performance or for the action. In each of the works discussed—Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, Seghers’ *Transit* and *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara*, Joyce’s *Ulysess* and Johnson’s *Jahrestage*—topography allows for the modernist narrative to reach into

the realms of the epic. These narratives ultimately attend to creating an entirety, or a non-elitist and whole vision of the future. Their topographies become locales that attest to the visual importance and ethics of storytelling. To be sure, the narratives begin *in medias res*, and undertake themes of great international importance, but as topographies the Congo, Patusan, Marseille, St. Barbara, Dublin, New York, and Jerichow are epic topographies that give shape to the values, the ethics, and the history of human culture, ultimately reaching past Aristotle's call for the noble or the extraordinary, and relocating the epic to include a larger scope of humankind within modernity.

One way to understand the epic and cultural nature of topography is to explore the scope of literary time presented—that is, to distinguish the differences between dramatic and epic time. Dramatic time is confined to a particular span of time and focuses on the *peripeteia*, or the sudden and revelatory change. Conversely, epic time lacks limits of time and place and slowly develops the action. On the one hand Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim* oscillate between place and time. In *Heart of Darkness* the story concerns an older Marlow as he relates his first voyage to an isolated and almost inaccessible area of the Congo to retrieve a missing ivory collector and discovers there the failures of imperialism. And in *Lord Jim*, the story tells the past of the title character as he flits from harbor town to harbor town to settling finally on a distant island, all in an attempt to regain his honor. To be sure, both texts refer to a specific set of dramatic circumstances. On the other hand, however, both tales are clearly developed in epic time in which the characters undertake a slow journey that culminates in a revelation, albeit an inconclusive one.

The Congo, while it allows for Marlow to witness the degenerative nature of European imperialism, still remains an ominous place that threatens to consume a man. Similarly, while Jim regains his honor, he does so at the expense of other cultures and civilizations. Patusan, like the Congo, becomes an encompassing stage that goes beyond the a dramatic unity of action. The topographies in the narratives become a variety of open and overlapping windows that gives a portrait of a modern culture that is breaking down, and the narrative of a day-in-the-life of a certain character becomes a metaphorical stage to probe the ethics of modernity. The action and topography metaphorically question a vision of a humane future, particularly when dominated by money and gain in an imperialist culture.

The texts of Anna Seghers, too, exhibit a sense of epic time. Although *Transit* specifically relates the experience of refugees in Marseille at the start of World War II, the narrator often takes flight, persecution, and displacement out of the timeframe and surrounds his story with uncertainty, so that the timescape of Marseille ripples into a borderless past in which the action is not just a dramatic action of a particular hero, but the whole course follows all who are and have been persecuted and displaced. Though not as secluded and underdeveloped as the Congo or Patusan, the topography presents intersections of cultures that exist or have existed in the old harbor town, ultimately illustrating a culture in which the dramatic circumstances of exile become metonymically represented by the interlocking streets that all lead to the harbor, or the means of escape.

In contrast to *Transit*, *Aufstand der Fischer von St. Barbara* never specifically references a particular time. Unity of time is questioned right from the beginning

when the revolt is framed in terms of having happened before and happening again as long as the struggle for survival continues. But like Marseille, St. Barbara becomes a topography of epic proportions. Because of its remoteness, it remains on the periphery, but its action of trying to survive raises questions similar to those raised on Marlow's journey to the Congo or in Marseille in *Transit*, thus placing the periphery in the center. While the course of action relates the journey of Hull, at the end of narrative—after Hull has been arrested and after Andreas' death—there is a revelatory (although ambiguous) moment when the women watch the fishermen sail away. It is a *peripeteia* by implication rather than by action: the women realize that they are wet to the skin, testifying to the community's completion of a major phase in their lives. This description is similar to the turning of the tide of the *Nellie* at the end of *Heart of Darkness*, the loss of Jim's visage due to the pounding white surf at the end of *Lord Jim*, and, at the end of *Transit*, the insistence by the narrator Weidel that Marie will forever search for the lost dead. The dramatic action is not yet over—nor can it be by virtue of the epic topography. Through its shape—neither static nor fixed—the topography gives validity and continuance to a story that questions persecution, oppression, and displacement.

On the contrary, the topographies of *Ulysses* and *Jahrestage* conflate both dramatic and epic time. While confined to either a single day or a single year, the narratives of Bloom, Stephen, Molly, Gesine, and Marie experience the epic action of a lack of limits in time and place. The characters of *Ulysses* traverse Dublin at particular times of the day, but in doing so, time becomes blurred as the characters overlap the present with thoughts of a distant pasts and distant places. As a result

Dublin oscillates between the cosmopolitan and the provincial, offering a culture that is not determined by a single group but is created by a mixture of other cultures. And in *Jahrestage*, Johnson's New York and Jerichow blur together as the events from the past implicitly parallel events in the present. Meanwhile, like the characters in the texts of Conrad and Seghers, each character in *Ulysses* and *Jahrestage* experiences a major phase in life. In light of extreme displacement, *Ulysses* follows Bloom's and Stephen's homecoming and *Jahrestage* follows Gesine's and Marie's preparation for a new home while exploring the respective pasts of Ireland and Germany. Dublin, New York, and Jerichow, like Marseille, the Congo, Patusan, and St. Barbara, function at times as a parable in which the topography has an echo-effect of experience. Just as *The Odyssey* relates Odysseus's homecoming to Ithaca but coils back to tell the story of the years since the departure from Troy, the tales of Conrad, Seghers, Joyce, and Johnson use the device of a flashback of the past before moving forward. It is in these past histories and experiences that relate an echoing *peripeteia*, intricately connected to topography. Each place obscures clear boundaries between fact and fiction and history and myth, ultimately making concrete a shadowy matrix of the past and the transnational present, or catastrophes of history in the modern age.

Finally, in terms of modernism, epic topography helps illustrate the crisis of history. Creating an epic, slowing down the senses, and using topography to delve into memory ultimately shows topography as an attempt to ground active histories instead of passive settings. And as a result topography helps to organize the ever changing flux that has come to be defined by the urbanity in the twentieth century. Although the city seems the usual stage for modernism, the experience of the

topographies in the non-urban parts of Conrad, Seghers, Joyce, and Johnson testify also to their capability to illustrate the modernist crisis in other areas. History strains, sometimes to a threshold of urgency. As a result, the impulse to survive and comprehend—and even narrate—is ever present. Stephen puts it best in “Nestor,” when he says that “[h]istory . . . is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (Joyce, *Ulysess* 34). History, like the epic, is not fixed to a particular place and has no limited time frame. Thus, Marlow and the narrator in *Transit* continue to tell their stories to those who will listen, the revolt will continue to brood in St. Barbara, Bloom will continue to attempt to return home, and Gesine and Marie will persist in their quest—all aware of the past and its continuous pattern into the present. Topography for Conrad, Seghers, Joyce, and Johnson organizes the narrative, but it also functions as a logical convention to give pause to the strain of history that continues on without intermission.

Notes

¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, ed. and trans. Gerald F. Else (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1967).

² Hartmut Böhme, ed. *Topographien der Literatur: Deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2005) XV111.

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