Imagining the Modern City

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chapter 1

Fog Everywhere

We start in the midst of things, in the city of benighted day, at the opening of Charles Dickens's novel *Bleak House*, published in 1853.

London, Michaudmas term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn hall. Impeachable November weather. As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill. Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making soft black drizzle with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snowflakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, indistinguishable in mire, Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper, and losing their foot-hold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping and sliding since the day broke (if this day ever broke), adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green aits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls defiled among the tiers of shipping, and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex Marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the caboose of collier-brigs; fog lying out on the yards, and hovering in the rigging of great ships; fog dropping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of ancient Greenwich pensioners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and bow of the afternoon pipe of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of his shivering little 'prentice boy on deck. Chance people on the bridges peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog, with fog all around them, as if they were balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds.

Gas looming through the fog in divers places in the streets, much as the sun may, from the spongy fields, be seen to loom by husbandman and ploughboy. Most of the shops lighted two hours before their time—as the gas seems to know, for it has a haggard and unwilling look.
Although this passage represents a there (London) and a then (the middle of the nineteenth century) rather than a here and now, the city conjured up by Dickens is not a place we have left behind. His London remains familiar territory. As the architect Kevin Lynch once observed, “Dickens helped to create the London we experience as surely as its actual builders did.” The city presented by Bleak House remains part of the present in which we live, part of our common sense. It does so less through its vivid representation of that city then, however, than through its pedagogy. The novel teaches us how to see the city, and how to make sense of it. It defines the co-ordinates for our imaginative mapping of urban space.

What is this London mapped by Dickens? The opening of Bleak House teaches a relationship between city and nature. The city is, by nature, unnatural. Its landscape and weather are shaped by human dirt: the mud, the November fog, the soot. As the gas-lamps struggle to penetrate the murk, so the city’s fragile veneer of civilisation barely holds nature in check. Or, rather, its suppression produces a nature that always threatens to return as monstrous: the spectre of the Megalosaurus.

The passage defines a here, the space of the city, as it maps but also names London. It locates the reader. We are on Holborn Hill, by Lincoln’s Inn. London as a whole is defined in relation to the (unnamed) Thames, from its source to its mouth in the east. It is the eastern boundaries that are named: Essex, Kent, Greenwich. This space is already too vast and sprawling to be captured in a panorama; hence the montage of apparently random figures and events – pensioners by the fire, the skipper with his pipe, the shivering apprentice, the pedestrians gawping from the bridges – which constitute London as a place.

Dickens locates the reader in time as well as in space. This is the city now. That is only in part the sense of London on this late afternoon in this November. More broadly, Dickens begins to render a way of experiencing the urban space of London which we shall learn to call modern. The contemporaneity, the now-ness, of his city suggests a style of living in the present. This style entails an historically specific psychological response. Dickens captures the modern citizen’s reaction to this unnatural new landscape and to the oppressive presence of crowds of strangers, always on the move, jostling the observer, their anonymity emphasised by their umbrellas. Equally, he describes an anxiety externalised and figured in the cityscape and the crowd. Here Dickens’s pedagogy teaches his readers not only how to articulate that anxiety, but also how to manage it. However opaque its ever-changing surface and however labyrinthine its social structures, for Dickens the metropolis was still legible. He always looks beyond the apparent randomness of the bustle and the business. The modernity of this overture to Bleak House lies in its brief prefiguring of institutions and social interactions that bind the city together. These, it will emerge later, are the law, money (here linked to the capital accumulation of mud), and trade (embodied not only in London’s shops but also in international shipping).

Dickens’s London is a city of networks. In part, these are social, economic or administrative networks: the railways of Dombey and Son, the dust heaps of Our Mutual Friend, the prisons in Little Dorrit. But they are also narrative networks. London becomes a space constituted by the possibility of the narration of its social relations. In Bleak House, the narrative moves beyond or behind the empirical reality of fog and bustle to unravel a hidden reality, the link between an aristocratic landowner and an impoverished crossing sweeper. Through the interminable and pettyfogging delays of the Court of Chancery, the law colludes in obscuring this connection. The narrative device for discovering it is to turn the lawsuit into a
mystery through the murder of the lawyer who knows the city’s secrets. This prepares the stage for the entrance of that other figure of the law, the police detective who can then solve the mystery and so resolve the case.

The policeman is thus a figure of the modern city, the personification of the power to decipher its networks. This power the policeman shares with the modern poet. The anthropologist Marc Augé cites the presentation of the city in the first poem in Baudelaire’s Tableaux Parisiens as a spectacle of modernity.

Les deux mains au mentou, du haut de sa mansarde,
Je verrai l’atelier qui chante et qui bavarde,
Les tuyaux, les clochers, ces mâts de la cité,
Et les grands ciels qui font rêver d’éternité.

Chin on my two hands, from my mansarded lyric,
I shall see the workshop with its song and chatter,
Chimneys, spires, those masts of the city,
And the great skies making us dream of eternity.

What makes this modern, for Augé, is first of all a sense of decipherable and cohering networks of meaning that Baudelaire shares with Dickens. Here, the ancient church spires are still integrated into the industrialised landscape of Paris, and so mark both the passage and the continuity of time in the space of the city. Second, though, and this is different from Dickens, the poet looking at the city has himself become part of the spectacle, a constitutive part of the landscape. His gaze is observed by a second self sensitive to the eternal that transcends the contingency — the this, here, now — of the temporal city.

By the time of high literary modernism after the Great War, this second way of seeing had intensified to the extent that it had absorbed the city into its own mental landscape. By 1922, in T.S. Eliot’s The Waste Land, London’s fog and river and anonymous crowds are still there as they had been in the opening of Bleak House seventy years earlier. But now the city has become unreal.

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many,
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.

In modernist aesthetics, despite their national and political variability, the city for the most part was used to define this type of experience, this way of seeing, rather than to portray a place. Or rather, place comes to be understood as this way of experiencing urban space in human consciousness. 'The forces of the action have become internal,' Raymond Williams observes of James Joyce’s Ulysses, also published in 1922; 'in a way there is no longer a city, there is only a man walking through
Williams quotes this passage from the novel to illustrate both Joyce’s new way of seeing Dublin – ‘fragmentary, miscellaneous, isolated’ – and also the way that it is ‘actualised on the senses in a new structure of language.’

He walked along the curbstone. Stream of life . . .

. . . Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too; other coming on, passing on. Houses, lines of housing, streets, miles of streets. Miles of pavements, piled up bricks, stones. Changing hands. This owner, that. Landlord never dies, they say. Other steps into his shoes when he gets his notice to quit. They buy the place up with gold and still they have all the gold. Swindle in it somewhere. Piled up in 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, jerrybuilt, Kerwan’s mushroom houses, built of breeze. Shelter for the night.

No one is anything.

In a slightly earlier novel, the first volume in Dorothy Richardson’s massive thirteen-volume Pilgrimage, the city has been rendered not to a man walking through it, but to a woman cycling back into London.

This was the true harvest of the summer’s day; the transfiguration of these northern streets. They were not London proper, but to-night the spirit of London came to meet her on the verge. Nothing in life could be sweeter than this welcoming – a cup held brimming to her lips, and inexhaustible. What lover did she want? No one in the world would quench this mighty lover, always receiving her back without words, engulfing and leaving her untouched, liberated and expanding to the whole range of her being. In the mile or so ahead, there was endless time. She would travel further than the longest journey, swifter than the most rapid flight, down and down into an oblivion deeper than sleep; and drop off at the centre, on to the deserted grey pavements, with the high quiet houses standing all about her in air sweetened by the evening breath of the trees, stealing down the street from either end; the sound of her footsteps awakening her again to the single fact of her incredible presence within the vast surrounding presence. Then, for another unforgettable night of return, she would break into the shuttered house and gain her room and lie, till she suddenly slept, tingling to the spread of London all about her, herself one with it, feeling her life flow outwards, north, south, east, and west, to all its margins.

Although Richardson’s London is as thoroughly internalised as Joyce’s Dublin, the flux and force of the city are not here centred into the consciousness of the observer walking through it. Rather, the woman’s very being is dissolved into the enveloping, liquefying spread of the city. This might be read as a contrast between centripetal, taxonomising maleness and centrifugal, feeling femaleness. But remember then the same nocturnal sense of the self dissolving across space and time to be found at the end of ‘The Dead’ in Joyce’s Dubliners.

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey
westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and all the dead.

This may be more conventional than Ulysses. Nevertheless, it conveys something of the modern city-dweller’s imagination, the ability to live both here and elsewhere – a way of being encouraged in more mundane ways by new and largely urban technologies of communication: here the newspaper, but also advertising, cinema and, later, broadcasting.

The snow in ‘The Dead’ performs similar functions to the fog in Bleak House. That continuity may be of passing interest to literary historians. It makes me wonder whether such tropes tell us anything about a broader repertoire of cultural responses to the city. Consider another imagined city at another time, in a different place, and inscribed in a less rarefied genre: the middle of the twentieth century, an unnamed city in America’s mid-West which is clearly Chicago, and a narrative located squarely in the traditions of popular fiction.

A dark, blustery night had settled down like a cowl over the huge, sprawling Midwestern city by the river. A mistlike rain blew between the tall buildings at intervals, wetting the streets and pavements and turning them into black, fun-house mirrors that reflected in grotesque distortions the street lights and neon signs.

The big downtown bridges arched off across the wide, black river into the void, the far shore blotted out by the misty rain; and gusts of wind, carrying stray newspapers, blew up the almost deserted boulevards, whistling faintly along the building fronts and moaning at the intersections. Empty surface cars, and buses with misted windows, trundled slowly through the downtown section. Except for taxis and prowling cars, there was no traffic.

River Boulevard, wide as a plaza and with its parkways and arched, orange street lights stretching off into the misty horizon in diminishing perspective, was as deserted as if a plague had swept the streets clean. The traffic lights changed with automatic precision, but there were no cars to heed or disobey them. Far down the boulevard, in the supper-club section of the city, elaborately glittering neon signs flashed off and on to emptiness. The night city, like a wound-up toy, went about its business with mechanical efficiency, regardless of man.

Finally the wind died down and the rain began to fall steadily all over the huge city: on the stacks of the steel plants in Polishtown; on the millionaires’ mansions in Riverdale; on the hilly regions of Tecumsch Slope, with its little Italian groceries and restaurants; on the massed tenement apartments along the upper river, where all the windows had been dark for hours and men would start awake cursing as the alarm clocks blasted at five a.m.; on the fanned-out suburban areas to the north and east, where all the little houses
and the little lawns looked alike; and finally on the dark and unsavoury reaches of Camden Square and its environs, the immense downtown slum beyond the river, where there was at least one bar at every intersection, prowled by the dozens, and harness bulls working in pairs.

A taxi pulled up at a dark store front near Camden Square, and the driver turned to speak to his fare.

‘You sure you know where you’re going, buddy?’

This is from W.R. Burnett’s gangster thriller *The Asphalt Jungle*, published in 1949 and turned into a successful film the following year. Strangely, this imagined Chicago is still in many ways Dickens’s London, and in some sense also Joyce’s Dublin. The implacable weather still indiscriminately buffets different districts. The city still seems somehow alien, and civilisation, however mechanically sophisticated it has become, remains fragile. The narrative is again woven around the technologies and forces that constitute the life of a city – transport, lighting, police, and so forth. Obviously, there is going to be a crime. So what is new in this urban here and now of Burnett’s?

First, Burnett offers a double take on the city which intensifies and makes explicit images that were emergent in Dickens. On the one hand, the urban networks traced by Dickens are here transformed into the city as *machine*. ‘The night city, like a wound-up toy, went about its business with mechanical efficiency, regardless of man.’ On the other hand, the uncanny edge to this machine-like city is made manifest. Gone are the haggard gas lamps. The wet pavements have become ‘fun-house mirrors that reflected in grotesque distortions the street lights and neon signs.’

Second, then, this unnamed city may refer to Chicago, but it is also recognisably the modernist city. It is as de-centred and de-centring as Richardson’s city, suspended between life and death like Joyce’s, and as unreal as Eliot’s.

Third, however, this city is modernist in another sense. Burnett takes it for granted that readers of a popular novel in the middle of the twentieth century will be at ease with the idea of mapping class and ethnic differences onto the geography of the city. That assumption invokes another tradition for talking about the city: not the nineteenth century novel, nor literary modernism, but modern sociology. There is at least an affinity between Burnett’s urban ecology and the microscopic mapping of their home city by the Chicago School of sociologists in the inter-war decades.

Compare Burnett’s description of rain-soaked enclaves with Louis Wirth’s observation in his 1938 essay on ‘Urbanism as a Way of Life’:

> Cities generally, and American cities in particular, comprise a motley of peoples and cultures, of highly differentiated modes of life between which there often is only the faintest communication, the greatest indifference and the broadest tolerance, occasionally bitter strife, but always the sharpest contrast.⁶

Compare too the tone and perspective of *The Asphalt Jungle*, or American hard-boiled crime fiction generally, with the advice given to his students by Robert Park, the leader of the Chicago School.

> Go and sit in the lounges of the luxury hotels and on the doorsteps of the flophouses; sit on the Gold Coast settees and on the slum shakedowns; sit in
the Orchestra Hall and the Star and Garter Burlesque. In short, gentlemen, go get the seat of your pants dirty in real research."

I have no idea whether Burnett knew the work of the Chicago sociologists (any more than I know whether he had read Dickens or Joyce). He probably did, but influence is not the important issue.

I take two broader lessons from this Chicago contribution to my montage of quotations. First, The Asphalt Jungle reveals a perspective on the city -- a certain way of seeing and narrating the city -- which transcends literary modernism, gangster novels and the sociological imagination. Historically, what linked popular fiction and sociology seems to have been a journalistic eye for the drama of the city and a nose for social investigation. Like Dickens before him, Park worked as a journalist and editor in New York and Chicago in the eighteen nineties before going to Berlin to study with Georg Simmel. Burnett's day job was also as a Chicago journalist. The attitude which unites novelist and journalist in their fascination with the city -- an attitude raised to heroic status in the mythical figures of gangster and detective -- is captured by Park in his 1915 essay on 'The City':

... a great city tends to spread out and lay bare to the public view in a massive manner all the characters and traits which are ordinarily obscured and suppressed in smaller communities. The city, in short, shows the good and evil in human nature in excess. It is this fact, more than any other which justifies the view that would make of the city a laboratory or clinic in which human nature and social processes may be most conveniently and profitably studied."

The second lesson from Burnett's Chicago follows from this. If sociologists, journalists and novelists carry out their research in the laboratory of the city, then their moral tales about social differences and about human nature in turn help to construct the city as archive.

This archive, this city of modernist texts, is to some extent my object of study. But, more than that, it is where I live. I am less interested in literary archaeology than in understanding the imaginary city which, snail-like, I carry around with me. Part carapace and part burden, this shell has been moulded, of course, by experience. But both that experience, and the imagined city it has produced, are shot through by the contents of the archive city. It has been learned as much from novels, pictures and half-remembered films as from diligent walks round the capital cities of Europe. It embodies perspectives, images, and narratives that migrate across popular fiction, modernist aesthetics, the sociology of urban culture, and techniques for acting on the city.

This starting point produces a distinctive paradox in the way I see the city. The city suggests an immediacy of experience: the this, here, now, so beloved of empiricist philosophers, that is conjured up in Dickens's rendering of London on a foggy November afternoon and (as we shall see in a later chapter) made explicit in Virginia Woolf's London on a June morning in Mrs Dalloway. Yet, as those references already show, this experience of immediacy is mediated through and through by the pedagogies and aesthetics of the city. It involves not immediacy but contingency. The city teaches us the arts, the techniques, and the tactics of living in the present.
A State of Mind

'The city is a state of mind,' wrote Robert Park in 1945. If that is true, does it mean that there is no such thing as the city? It is tempting to say yes, but that answer might set up a false opposition. Of course, cities are not only mental constructs. Of course, there are real cities. Each city has its own location and climate, its own history and architecture, its own spatial and social dispositions, its own cacophony of languages, its own soundtrack of traffic, trade and music, its own smells and characteristic tastes, its own problems and pleasures. But why reduce the reality of cities to their thinginess, or their thinginess to a question of bricks and mortar? States of mind have material consequences. They make things happen.

Starting from there, what particularly interests me is the power of the city as a category of thought. The city is an abstraction, which claims to identify what, if anything, is common to all cities. The category designates a space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication, and so forth. By calling this diversity the city, we ascribe to it a coherence or integrity. One way of thinking that coherence would be to treat the category of the city as a representation. But the concept of representation, although in the end it is indispensable, may raise more problems than it solves when we try to think about both the thinginess of the city and the city as state of mind. It is true that what we experience is never the real city, ‘the thing itself’. It is also true that the everyday reality of the city is always a space already constituted and structured by symbolic mechanisms. But representation does not quite get the measure of the relationship between those two realities, for it implies that one reality must be a model for the other, or a copy of it. More to the point, maybe, is Ihab Hassan’s invocation of the immaterial city which, he suggests, has ‘in-formed history from the start, moulding human space and time ever since time and space moulded themselves to the wagging tongue.’ The City of God, the republican polis, the Ville Radieuse, the city as public sphere: none of these is just or quite a representation, nor has any of them ever existed as a real (in the sense of physical) place. Rather, these immaterial cities are ideas or ideals that have played a powerfully important role in shaping the spatial organisation and architectural design of cities. What such images point to is a social and even spiritual element invested in space, a material and so inevitably unsuccessful embodiment of the will to create relations between people that transcend the animal or the tribal, the will to community.

If it is not quite a representation, maybe (taking the imagined community of the nation as an analogy) it would be more accurate to think of the city as an imagined environment. This environment embraces not just the cities created by the ‘wagging tongues’ of architects, planners and builders, sociologists and novelists, poets and politicians, but also the translation of the places they have made into the imaginary reality of our mental life. In that sense, I live in the same city as Victor Burgin; or, at least, I live the city in the same way.

The city in our actual experience is at the same time an actually existing physical environment, and a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on.

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Work and love meld in the romance of consumption staged on the Kings Road in London in the 1980s. 'The Romantic loves most what is least accessible. Hence, most banal and most true of clichés, the British love the sun. These images of the Kings Road catch some reflected sunlight of a single Saturday afternoon.' — Victor Burgin, Some Cities
theoretical writings about visual culture, in his photographs and in his art works, is not only this simultaneity, but above all the productive transactions between the two. This traffic between urban fabric, representation and imagination fuzzies up the epistemological and ontological distinctions and, in doing so, produces the city between, the imagined city where we actually live.

It is this city between that I attempt to map in this book. I do not pretend that it is an undiscovered city. On the contrary, it is the city that has, in the twentieth century, fascinated modern sociologists and cultural theorists as well as novelists and poets.

The figure who stands for the sociological articulation of this fascination is Georg Simmel. He taught Robert Park that the city is a state of mind, and that the city is both the location and embodiment of modernity. In his famous 1903 lecture on "The Metropolis and Mental Life", Simmel offers a prescient attempt to grasp the uneasy urban space between physical and imaginary produced by the destabilizing dynamic between subjective space, the outside world, and social life. How, he asks in effect, does the outside of the metropolis become the inside of mental life?

An enquiry into the inner meaning of specifically modern life and its products, into the soul of the cultural body, so to speak, must seek to solve the equation which structures like the metropolis set up between the individual and the supra-individual contents of life. Such an enquiry must answer the question of how the personality accommodates itself in the adjustments to external forces.14

One of the surprising things about "The Metropolis and Mental Life" is that it offers no description of its city, nor any detailed observation of places or people. It is already a largely unreal city. We only know that Simmel has Berlin primarily in mind when he muses about what would happen if all its clocks stopped at once, although he is also happy to refer to London when it serves his turn. The contrast between the abstraction of Simmel's sociological impressionism and the particularity of Dickens's novelistic realism is not just aesthetic or generic. It entails a different objective. Simmel does not want to conjure up the this metropolis now. Rather, he wants to understand the metropolis as the conceptual location of a split between subjective culture and objective culture produced by the money economy and the division of labour.

The individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organisation of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value in order to transform them from their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life. It needs merely to be pointed out that the metropolis is the genuine arena of this culture which outgrows all personal life. Here in buildings and educational institutions, in the wonders and comforts of space-conquering technology, in the formations of community life, and in the visible institutions of the state, is offered such an overwhelming fullness of crystallised and impersonalised spirit that the personality, so to speak, cannot maintain itself under its impact.15

In some ways, I wish that there were a bit more Dickens in Simmel, that he had been more explicit in cataloguing exactly which institutions and formations produced the newness experienced in the metropolis. As two of Simmel's other pupils,
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Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin (whom we shall meet again) were to document, the changed nature of time and space was no abstraction. They described the new technologies of gas lamps, arcades, trains, telephones and telegraphy, they catalogued the rebuilding of Europe's great metropolitan centres, and they observed new forms of mass spectacle and mass entertainment, including sport and cinema. More recently, post-Foucault, historians have shown how institutions of the state both responded to and helped to shape the reality of the great cities.

Simmel's great virtue was not detailed reportage. Rather, it was his ability to perceive the metropolis as a structure or field of social forces, and to convey the experience of that city with unprecedented clarity. His city is an overwhelming series of events and impressions, a representational space within which a mass of transitory, fleeting and fortuitous interactions take place. How are these events, impressions and interactions translated into an inner, emotional life - into a state of mind? In two ways. As their senses are bombarded, urban life becomes increasingly mediated and as fellow citizens become, of necessity, more self-interested, suggests Simmel, individuals resort to stratagems of inward retreat and social distance. A blasé, intellectualising attitude is one such strategy for self-protection. This reflects less indifference than a reserve cultivated to contain the aggression inherent in urban relations: "a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion, which will break into hatred and conflict at the moment of a closer contact." Even though distance and deflection may appear to be forms of disassociation, they actually help to neutralise this propensity to violence.

That elementary form of defensive sociation is just one difference from the culture of small towns. There, you know who you are because everyone else knows who you are: "frequent and prolonged association assures the personality of an unambiguous image of himself in the eyes of the other." In the metropolis, fleeting contacts and transient relationships make it difficult to assert your own personality. This problem then produces a more expressive, and again specifically modern, reaction. It manifests itself in an aesthetic of self-creation, which can verge on being a parody of individuality. In the city, "man is tempted to adopt the most tendentious peculiarities, that is, the specifically metropolitan extravagances of mannerism, caprice, and preciousness."

Metropolitan man has become genuinely "free" (the scare quotes are Simmel's) in the sense of being liberated from "the pettiness and prejudices which hem in the small-town man". This freedom from the constraints of community has to be exercised, however, in the crowded and claustrophobic space of the city. It is not a freedom without costs. Its consequence is physical closeness offset by mental distance.

It is obviously only the obverse of this freedom if, under certain circum- stances, one nowhere feels as lonely and lost as in the metropolitan crowd. For here as elsewhere it is by no means necessary that the freedom of man be reflected in his emotional life as comfort."

The uncomfortable freedom of the metropolis is the key lesson to be learned from Simmel. He does not see in the city only the manifestation of a power that oppresses the individual. Rather, he suggests how individual agency is enacted within the field of possibilities realised by this real-imagined environment: its space, its population, its technologies, its symbolisation. The city may remain inescapably strange and
opaque. It is often oppressive. Yet it provides the texture of our experience and the fabric of our liberty. The city is the way we moderns live and act, in as much as where.

That is an axiom that runs through the cultural history of twentieth-century Europe, from the Surrealists to the Situationists and beyond. Linking those two movements, and giving a different twist to many of Simmel’s perceptions, is the work of that engaging and idiosyncratic observer of modernity and everyday life, Henri Lefebvre. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre, like Simmel, is concerned with the interplay between the space of the city and the mental life of its citizens. But Lefebvre is less concerned than Simmel with the impact of the metropolis on mental life. Simmel asks how the outside of the metropolis becomes the inside of mental life. Lefebvre is more interested in the way that mental life is projected outwards. Looking back from the period after 1968, when he wrote the book, Lefebvre links his vision to that of the surrealists.

The leading surrealists sought to decode inner space and illuminate the nature of the transition from this subjective space to the material realm of the body and the outside world, and thence to social life.\(^{22}\)

For both Lefebvre and Simmel, however, the key to understanding the dynamic (as a marxist Lefebvre would say dialectic) between social space and mental space is the transition. What Lefebvre takes from the surrealists is the model of a circuit running through imagination, representation, the body, the social, and the spatial.

What makes this circuit work, according to Lefebvre, is not the nature of space, but the spatial consequences of what people do. The space we experience is the material embodiment of a history of social relations. But we conceive space as well as perceive space. We map space, we calculate it, we control it – or at least the ‘scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers’ among us do, along with ‘a certain type of artist with a scientific bent’. (He presumably means architects.) Through a process of abstraction and conceptualisation, they produce ‘representations of space’. This is in turn different from the ‘representational space’ in which we actually live. Representational space is ‘the dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlaps physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.\(^{23}\)

This is Lefebvre’s version of my imagined city, the city between mental space, social space, and physical space. The strength of his approach lies in his determination to show how the texture of this imagined space is produced. His view is that it happens in the ‘lethal zone’ of language, signs and abstraction. Because language is inherently metaphorical, it becomes possible – or inevitable – for meaning ‘to escape the embrace of lived experience, to detach itself from the fleshly body’. In a move that is ‘inextricably magical and rational’, the representational space of our imagined reality comes into being.\(^{24}\)

Although Lefebvre’s account of the *production* of representational space has the operations of language at its very heart, it represents a polemical alternative to what he saw as the inflated claims about the *language-like* nature of space in structuralism and post-structuralism.\(^{25}\) That is why he insists on the *texture* of space, and why he is so reluctant to allow that it has any *text-like* qualities. If we read the city, as Lefebvre accepts we do, our reading is pragmatic rather than semiotic.

Georg Grosz, Berlin, 1925 (© Viscopy)
Now, it may or may not be necessary to draw that distinction as firmly and exclusively as Lefebvre does. I suspect that it is not. Nevertheless, his insistence on the production and consequences of both representations of space and of representational space remain essential in any attempt to understand how we imagine the city.

Another influential perspective on these questions, and one much more sympathetic to the linguistic analogy, is that of Michel de Certeau. Despite this basic difference of emphasis, there are resonances between Lefebvre’s account of the way we appropriate urban space and de Certeau’s chapter ‘Walking in the City’ in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. There, de Certeau offers another dual perspective for mapping urban space.26 Echoing Lefebvre’s ‘representations of space’, he first describes the New York cityscape visible from the World Trade Centre. This leads him to meditate on the temptation inherent in such a panorama. It offers the perspective of a *dieu coupant*: the promise of a Concept City to be found in ‘utopian and urbanistic discourse’. This representation is the fantasy that has motivated planners and reformers in their desire to make the city an object of knowledge and so a governable space. They dream of encompassing the diversity, randomness and dynamism of urban life in a rational blueprint, a neat collection of statistics, and a clear set of social norms. Theirs is an idealised perspective, which aspires to render the city transparent. The city would become, as de Certeau puts it, ‘*un espace propre*: its own space and a purified, hygienic space, purged of ‘all the physical, mental and political pollutions that would compromise it’. It would be the city of benign surveillance and spatial penetration. Institutions like hospitals, schools and prisons, carceral and pastoral at the same time, would provide constant oversight of its population. Its dwellings and settlements would be designed on therapeutic principles. Its lungs and arteries would be surgically opened up to allow the controlled flow of air, light, waste, traffic, and people.27

Against this panoptic representation de Certeau poses a representational urban space — what he calls the *fact* of the city. The city that people inhabit is a labyrinthine reality which produces ‘an *anthropological*, poetic and mythic experience of space.’ In the recesses and margins of the city, people invest places with meaning, memory and desire. We adapt the constraining and enabling structures of the city to an ingenious or despairing rhetoric. ‘Beneath the discourses that ideologise the city,’ writes de Certeau, ‘the uses and combinations of powers that have no readable identity proliferate; without points where one can take hold of them, without rational transparency, they are impossible to administer.’28 For de Certeau, then, the city figures the labyrinth as well as transparency. Rather as Simmel drew a distinction between the ‘enormous organisation of things and powers’ and the ‘forms of motion’ in mental life, de Certeau (like Lefebvre) attempts to gauge the material consequences of the projection of that motile inner life: a *migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.29

The imagery of de Certeau’s battle between the tower and the street has often been criticised for its melodramatic opposition between power and resistance, between social and individual, between theory and practice. Meaghan Morris, for one, has objected that the model recuperates the heterogeneity that de Certeau celebrates in his invocation of the streets by pulling it back into an all too familiar grid of binary oppositions. The tower, Morris concludes, ‘serves as an allegory of the structural necessity for a politics of resistance based on a bipolar model of power to
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David Vestal, West 22nd Street, New York, 1949 (© David Vestal 1998)
maintain the imaginary position of mastery it must then endlessly disclaim.' De Certeau himself acknowledges the historical contingency of his imaginary map. The tower has had its day. The heroic age of planning and building our way out of the problems of modernity has passed.30 ‘The Concept-city is decaying,’ writes de Certeau, with no apparent sign of regret.

Nevertheless, despite his own caveats, the way that de Certeau’s image of a mythical struggle between creative tactics and an abstracting vision of power has been taken up has tended to sustain a generalised and sentimental conception of ‘resistance’. This is certainly ‘Tony Bennett’s objection. Because he fails to discriminate between different types of resistance, de Certeau provides no basis for political (or policy) action. De Certeau’s description of the profane arts of the city is simply too poetic to be useful.52 I see the strength of Bennett’s argument. It is undeniable that de Certeau is not going to help much if you are trying to improve the street lighting, to encourage rational recreations in parks, libraries and museums, or to create well-ordered public spaces conducive to active and pleasurable citizenship. But then, why should he? De Certeau was not a policy-maker manqué.

What he does offer, however elliptically, is an attempt (again like Simmel and Lefebvre) to understand and explain how the imaginative appropriation of space is linked to mental life. What Bennett fails to spot, I think, is the psychoanalytic rationale for the steps by which de Certeau traces the creativity of metaphorical space to the intensity of dreaming and ultimately back to the re-enactment of ‘the joyful and silent experience of childhood’. That experience is, like being both here and elsewhere, ‘to be other and to move toward the other’ in a place.53 Even if he does not altogether deliver it, de Certeau suggests the need for a sociological elaboration of styles of urban spatial appropriation that are expressed at their most intense and, yes, poetic in images like Joyce’s Bloom walking the streets of Dublin or Dorothy Richardson’s heroine ‘tingling to the spread of London all about her, herself one with it, feeling her life flow outwards, north, south, east, and west, to all its margins.’

So de Certeau’s alleged poeticism does not worry me as much as it does Tony Bennett. I interpret it less as an irresponsible disavowal of the reality principle, than as a sober acknowledgement that the city we actually live in is poetic in Vattimo’s sense. In the subjective life of the city dweller, there is no possibility of defining clear-cut boundaries between reality and imagination: ‘Haunted places are the only ones people can live in.’54

De Certeau’s comment may sound like more throwaway poeticism. It foreshadows, though, Jacques Derrida’s invocation of the figure of the spectre in his attempt to capture the ‘elusive pseudo-materiality’ of our everyday reality. The spectre is another refusal of the opposition between reality and the immaterial. ‘There is no reality without the spectre,’ argues Slavoj Zizek in his gloss on Derrida; ‘the circle of reality can be closed only by means of an uncanny spectral supplement.’ What does Zizek mean by this, and how might it help us to understand the real/imagined space of the city? To go back a few steps, I have argued that we never experience the space of the city unmediated. The city we do experience – the city as state of mind – is always already symbolised and metaphorised. The problem, though, is that the symbolisation never quite gets the measure of the real (understood as a formal, pre-ideological matrix onto which various ideological formations are grafted). What remains, says Zizek, is an unsettled, unredeemed symbolic debt.
And the non-symbolised part of reality then ‘returns in the guise of spectral apparitions’.

What appeals to me about this account of the haunted city is that it manages to give weight to the force of both the real and the imaginary. In doing so, it suggests how the real makes its presence felt in the imaginary, and so offers a model for the production of the actual or experiential. It avoids saying that the city is purely a social or a textual or a symbolic construction, without denying that it is all those things as well.

To put it simply, reality is never directly ‘itself’, it presents itself only via its incomplete-failed symbolisation, and spectral apparitions emerge in this very gap that forever separates reality from the real, and on account of which reality has the character of a (symbolic) fiction: the spectre gives body to that which escapes (the symbolically structured) reality.

How do we inhabit this spectral space of the city? One answer might be suggested by the angels in Wim Wenders’s film Wings of Desire. Themselves invisible, to these benign and omniscient spectres Berlin is wholly transparent. They hear the inner speech of its inhabitants with infinite empathy. They see with tragic resignation all history sedimented into the most apparently banal spaces, and especially those spaces in pre-1989 Berlin rendered superficially meaningless yet historically meaningful by the presence of the Wall. Their ability to see all and hear all – to experience the city raw, as the thing itself – would, of course, drive us humans instantly mad. We are able to operate in urban society only because the surface of the city and the people in it (including ourselves) are opaque, historically contingent, complexly determined, but also in some ways and to some degree legible. And, agreeing here with Lefebvre, that legibility requires less the angelic skill of perfect reading than the human powers of imagination.

In deference to my sceptical and pragmatic readers, and to the sceptical pragmatist in myself, let me attempt a brief audit of what these powers are, and how they work. Their first and most important feature is that they involve a creative act of appropriation or meaning-making, rather than the mental reproduction or representation of a thing external to the mind. Imagining is neither simple reflection nor pure projection. The lesson of Simmel, Park, Lefebvre and de Certeau – as well as the poets – is that imagination is always a creative but also constrained interchange between the subjective and the social.

Phenomenologists give a particular gloss to this premise. They see the act of imagining less as a translation from the sense-data of empirical experience into the movies in our minds, than as a way of intuiting the essence of things and then projecting alternative possibilities of how things might be. We do not just read the city, we negotiate the reality of cities by imagining ‘the city’. This suggests a broader lesson: that imagination preceedes any distinction between fiction and truth, between illusion and reality. It is imagination that produces reality as it exists. The question then is the degree of freedom of action that is opened up for the citizen of this constituted reality.

Imagination is neither a delusory nor a solipsistic act, even though it registers in its full force the reality of unconscious drives and fantasies. However idiosyncratic our imaginations and their flights of fancy may be, the terms of imagining are transindividual. This is the axiom that Cornelius Castoriadis builds on when he talks about a social imaginary. By this he means the power to create out of nothing the
figures and forms of everyday social and historical life, the symbolic reality instituted as language, narrative, ritual, tradition, and myth.

Whether you look at it from a phenomenological or a psychoanalytic angle, the conventional hostility towards imagination as a luxury of idle fancy, especially as it shades into fantasy, makes little sense. On the contrary, imagination emerges as an instrument of truth.40 The value, and not the limitation, of imaginative truths is that they are poetic, that they transgress the boundaries between social and psychic. They thereby sustain a fourth dimension of 'space-time', which is where the dynamic between unconscious and corporeality, between desire and the social, between pleasure and Law, is played out.41

Imagination is concerned with the exploration of possibilities, not merely the record of what is. Imagination is not limited to the mimesis of images sanctioned by the Law. Imagination is inherently ethical insofar as it always operates in the register of as if; as if I were another, as if things could be otherwise. As a political gesture, imagination has the power to offer what Sue Golding calls 'a kind of practical romanticism rooted in an 'as if' and fractured by the unequivocal perversity of the body itself.42

The Modern City

Once, when I was writing a paper based on a chapter from this book, I was asked politely but subversively, whether my argument would stand up if I were to remove all reference to modernity and the modern from it. Certainly the concept needs to be justified. As the topic of modernity has been discussed almost to death in social theory, cultural criticism, and postmodern geography, its inflated status has understandably produced a backlash.

Shouldn't we pause, critics are quite properly asking, to reflect whether the attempt to identify the forces that have shaped the present necessarily entails or even needs a conception of modernity? Aren't the costs of using the concept - its implication of a progression from pre-modern to modern and possibly beyond, its tendency to assume a modernised, rational as in the west and an inadequately modernised, irrational there everywhere else - greater than the value of any insights it allows?43

One tactical response to such questions is to agree that there is no such thing as modernity, and never was - and then write a book about it. I shall resist the temptation.

I accept fully that 'periodising' modernity (or even modernism) is not in the end a very productive activity. (Did modernity really start at a certain hour on a certain day in 1910, as Virginia Woolf mischievously claimed? Did it end, as David Harvey reports, when a certain building in a certain American city was demolished in 1972?) I am not interested in modernity as an epoch - although I realise that that disavowal does not get me out of all the difficulties of the temporal baggage the concept brings with it. What intrigues me, especially when you bring modernity and the city together, is the consistency with which commentators, from Baudelaire through Le Corbusier to the postmodernists, end up saying that modernity too is a state of mind. I think that is right, although I do not see that 'state of mind' in terms of a mentality with a positive substance or content. It is something more elusive than that, something more akin to Raymond Williams's tantalising notion of a structure of feeling. Le Corbusier comes close to what I am trying to get at in one of the better jokes in The City of Tomorrow: an empty page with this box on it.
For Le Corbusier, ‘modern feeling’ is the undeliverable promise of a substantive answer to the question of what it means to live in modernity. That brings into focus what for me is the real issue: whether the category of modernity (or for that matter the category of the city) is a useful way of framing an answer to the question of how we live in the present.

This, of course, is Foucault’s question, paraphrasing Kant in his late essays and lectures on the Enlightenment.

What is happening today? What is happening now? And what is this ‘now’ which we all inhabit, and which defines the moment in which I am writing?  

What was novel in Kant’s response, suggests Foucault, is ‘the reflection on “today” as difference in history and as motive for a particular philosophical task.’ This new approach to philosophy is what produces modernity as a state of mind. Foucault calls it ‘a point of departure: the outline of what one might call the attitude of modernity.’

And by ‘attitude’, I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. A bit, no doubt, like what the Greeks called an ethos.

Modernity can then be seen as the term that denotes this critical reflection on the present. As I have suggested, however, some people who operate in this Foucauldian register argue that the term modernity has become so ideologically barnacled that it now actually inhibits that critical thought.

This sceptical case has been vigorously argued by Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose. They share the view that the fundamental problem with thinking the present as modernity and modernity as a comprehensive periodisation – ‘an epoch, an attitude, a form of life, a mentality, an experience’ – is ‘an inherent impetus to totalisation.’
Where are the limits – geographical, social, temporal – of modernity? Is modernity a type of society, or an attitude or a mode of experience? Is modernity a functionalist, a realist, or an idealist concept? Where is modernity heading? What comes after modernity? Or perhaps – the greatest iconoclasm – we have yet to reach modernity at all?¹⁰

Part of the problem, for them, is a ‘predictable’ shift away from describing the empirical features of the present to speculating about the supposed transition to some new present epoch: postmodernity, late modernity, high modernity, super-modernity. Against this tendency to science fiction, Barry, Osborne and Rose defend the Foucauldian ethos of modernity as a way of orientating oneself to history.

Foucault was concerned to introduce an ‘untimely’ attitude in our relation to the present. Untimely in the Nietzschean sense: acting counter to our time, introducing a new sense of the fragility of our time, and thus acting on our time for the benefit, one hopes, of a time to come.¹¹

The ‘present’ should be understood less as an epoch, or as the culmination of some grand historical process, than as an array of questions. Foucault’s ethos thus leads to a methodological attitude based on a commitment to uncertainty in the permanent scrutiny of the present. It produces a version of Kant’s ‘pragmatic anthropology’ – an attempt to produce perspectival analyses of the strategies and techniques which structure both our experience and our ethical certainties.

The strand in Foucault’s thinking about the present which Barry, Osborne and Rose most value, and which their own work develops, is his concern with governmentality. They don’t go quite as far as saying that all the rest is so much froth on the coffee, the overheated and apocalyptic rhetoric of boys who spend too much time strolling the shopping malls, reading detective stories, or watching Blade Runner.¹² But I think it is not unfair to say that applying their approach to the study of the city would mean spending more time understanding the logic and consequences of urban reform and welfare programmes and less time rhapsodising heroically about the voluptuous spectacle of the streets. Theirs is a rigorously de-poeticized reflection on the present.

Barry, Osborne and Rose have helped to illuminate ‘some of the contingencies of the systems of power that we inhabit – and which inhabit us – today’. But in order to do that, is it necessary to drop the concept of modernity altogether? They look as if they are about to say that it does, but then they go silent, and leave its tattered remnants flapping in the breeze. The real issue, it seems to me, is less ‘modernity or not’ than the appropriate topoi and methods for a pragmatic anthropology of the present. If there is a disagreement, it is less about whether or not to call the critical attitude to the present ‘modernity’ than about the necessity or legitimacy of a poetic aspect to that attitude.

Rereading Foucault’s essay ‘What is Enlightenment?’, which is where he discusses explicitly the present and modernity, reveals a curious blind spot in Barry, Osborne and Rose’s argument. It is the missing figure of Baudelaire. They relate the ethos Foucault calls modernity to Kant and Nietzsche. They ignore his references to Baudelaire as the ‘almost indispensable’ exemplar of modernity, whose consciousness of modernity is widely recognised as one of the most acute in the nineteenth century.’ In Baudelaire’s comments on male dress, the painting of Constantin Guys
and the subjectivity of modern man, Foucault sees key elements of the modern attitude: the 'ironic heroiisation of the present', a 'transfiguring play of freedom with reality', and an 'asetic elaboration of the self'. He also adds that, for Baudelaire, these have no place in society itself, nor in the body politic. 'They can only be produced in another, a different place, which Baudelaire calls art.' This is not a way of cutting them down to size, so far as I can see. Rather, Foucault is acknowledging one of the most important modalities through which the relationship of the self to the present and of the self to the self have been kept under interrogation. To be sure, he dismisses any idea of modernity as 'a phenomenon of sensitivity to the fleeting present.' Modern art is a stern and inherently political discipline.

For the attitude of modernity, the high value of the present is indissociable from a desperate eagerness to imagine it, to imagine it otherwise than it is, and to transform it not by destroying it but by grasping it in what it is. Baudelairean modernity is an exercise in which extreme attention to what is real is confronted with the practice of a liberty that simultaneously respects this reality and violates it.\[97\]

If Foucault's 'What is Enlightenment?' is read without censoring out Baudelaire, then a commitment to imagining the city otherwise than it is no longer appears incompatible with the extreme attention to what is real that Barry, Osborne and Rose demonstrate in their studies.

To illustrate what is at stake between a pragmatic reading of Foucault and one which accommodates the 'poetic' concern with the instability of boundaries reality and imagination, consider an example from their book which returns us to our Victorian starting point. In his essay on 'Drains, Liberalism and Power in the Nineteenth Century', Thomas Osborne attempts to pinpoint the place of drains and sewers in the emerging governmental rationality of the time. He plays down any symbolic or ideological connotations. Drains functioned, he insists, 'as the material embodiments of an essentially political division between public and private spheres.'

What was at stake was not just a Victorian fetish for cleanliness, but a strategy of indirect government; that is, of inducing cleanliness and hence good moral habits not through discipline but simply through the material presence of fast-flowing water in and through each private household.\[98\]

Although his positive emphasis is no doubt right, neither the division between public and private nor what Osborne himself calls a fetish for cleanliness can be divorced from the sort of symbolic polarities identified by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White in their more poetic account of modernity. The nineteenth-century division between private and public was not just political. It expressed an anxiety about the strength of boundaries between the two, about making the imagined space of 'the home' impervious to the stink of the unwashed and so to the contamination of their diseases. This meant also, suggest Stallybrass and White, the repression of certain types of knowledge and desire. They quote the image in Victor Hugo's Les Misérables of the sewer as a space of hidden truths unimaginable on the surface – 'the labyrinth below Babel.' For Hugo, the sewer was
ments of the modern play of freedom with that, for Baudelaire, c. "They can only be dirt." This is not a way fault is acknowledging ownership of the self to derogation. To be sure, sensitivity to the fleeting line.

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... the conscience of the town where all things converge and clash. There is
darkness here, but no secrets. ... Every foulness of civilisation, fallen into
disease, sinks into the ditch of truth wherein ends the huge social down-slide,
to be swallowed, but to spread. No false appearances, no white-washing, is
possible; filth strips off its shirt in utter darkness, all illusions and mirages
scattered, nothing left except what is, showing the ugly face of what ends. 27

Or rather, this had been the nature of the sewer before their reform after the great
European cholera epidemics of the eighteen thirties. ‘Today,’ according to Hugo,
prosaging Osborne’s perspective, ‘the sewer is clean, cold, straight, and correct,
almost achieving that ideal which the English convey by the word “respectable”.’ But
was this respectability achieved purely by the application of ameliorative social
and political rationalities? Victor Hugo was no doubt right to say that: “The sewer today
has a certain official aspect.”33 That is the often ignored or undervalued cue that
Osborne picks up. In reality, though, at least in Zizek’s sense of the real, the sewer
was also haunted. Or rather, the respectability of the hygiene movement was
haunted by a spectre: rats. It is not just that rats symbolise the reformers’ disgust at
its stink, their horror of the dark and subterranean. Moving between sewer and
street, and even invading the home, the rat was the all too real surplus that revealed
the impossibility of a society of non-corporeal communion (the ideal, purified,
administered city). In the same gesture, though, the figure of the rat was also an
attempt to close the circle of society’s reality.

We have ended up again in Dickens’s London, but now in the respectable but rat-
infested sewers below ground rather than in the legible but implacably foggy streets
above. To repeat, the point of introducing the drains has been to show that what is at
issue between the perspective offered by Barry, Osborne and Rose and my approach
is not really the ontological or historical status of modernity. If one accepts that the
concept simply offers one way of telling the story of how we live in the present, and a
limited, partial and loaded way of telling the story at that, then one can stop worrying
about it too much and ask instead what gets left out from the official versions of that
story. I happen to agree with Barry, Osborne and Rose that governmental rationalities
have not been given their due weight in most accounts. But it does not follow
that theirs are the only questions to ask about the city. They add considerably to an
understanding of the pedagogy of the city. They have little to say, deliberately,
about the power to imagine the city. I am interested in both. For all that they have
been explored by poets and novelists and by sociologists and political theorists. I still
think that there is more to be said about the haunted spaces of the city, and about
their power to affect how we live in cities, and how we live together in cities.
Holding onto both rationalities and spectres represents my attempt to confront
‘extreme attention to what is real’ with ‘the practice of a liberty that simultaneously
respects this reality and violates it.’
Charles Marville, Boulevard Saint-Martin, Paris, ca. 1874 (Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris)