

Introduction

One can distinguish two kinds of images of the city: those that are consciously formed, and others that reveal themselves unintentionally. The former emerge out of an artistic intention that is realised in squares, perspectives, groups of buildings, which Baedeker usually illuminates with a small star. The latter, in contrast, emerge without having being previously planned. They are not compositions that, like the Pariser Platz or Place de la Concorde, owed their existence to a unified building conception, but rather they are fortuitous creations that do not permit themselves to be called to account.

Siegfried Kracauer, 'Aus dem Fenster gesehen'

A person matters, his or her experiences matter, but in the city, where experiences come by the thousands, we can no longer relate them to ourselves; and this is of course the beginning of life's notorious turning into abstraction.

Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*

I am not satisfied with the expression 'street image'; I would prefer to say 'street landscape' or 'cityscape', for what it refers to is the actual landscape total image, which is produced by the arrangement and forming of masses in the same manner as the natural landscape emerges out of the grouping of mountain masses and vegetation.

Anon [Walter Rathenau], 'Die schönste Stadt der Welt'

I

There exist a series of tensions in modernity that manifest themselves as ambiguities and contradictions. The processes of modernization that generate the 'modern' dimensions of modern societies appear to be driven by unilinear and ostensibly inexorable forces, be they – *inter alia* – capital accumulation or rationalization. These processes appear to create modes of ordering society and its structures. However, this ordering of social formations is accompanied by processes of disintegration of human experience, creating fundamental discontinuities in the life worlds of modernity. In other words, the orders and structures of modernization and their putative totalizations simultaneously generate basic modes of fragmentation of everyday experience. What appear as processes of the 'rational' ordering of economic, political and social systems are accompanied not merely by commitment to irrational or non-independently groundable ends but also, and more fundamentally, by the disintegration of modes of experiencing basic features of the life world, a discontinuous experience of time as transitory, space as fleeting and causality negated as the fortuitous and arbitrary.

At the same time, the dynamic movement that we experience as the presentness of modernity creates illusions of infinite movement of that which appears similar. If it is the case that a large part of our experience of modernity on the surface of everyday life takes place within the spheres of circulation, exchange and consumption, then these spheres are capable of generating an indifference to other modes of differentiation, be they those of gender, class or ethnicity. The immediate moments of exchange, for instance, are moments of dedifferentiation, of equivalent relations between apparently similar entities.

The responses to such experiences of modernity – of modes of experiencing the newness, the presentness of modern society – are varied. Modernity has been both celebrated and critiqued in a plurality of aesthetic representations as modernisms. Modernity has been resisted in movements of anti-modernity, sometimes in ambiguous anti-modern modern movements. The dedifferentiating dimensions of modernity have also generated, as responses and spaces of resistance, differentiated counter-cultures around class, gender and ethnic formations.

Such tensions and contradictions also manifested themselves in those bodies of reflection upon modernity that sometimes even identified themselves with modernity itself. This was particularly true of the social sciences since the eighteenth century, and especially at the points of their emergence as diverse disciplines a century later. Some of these disciplines – and this is particularly true of sociology – not merely took modernity to be the

object of investigations that might provide an analysis of contemporary modern society, but also, less frequently, reflected upon their own position within this modernity.

Indeed, the social sciences abound in theories of modernization – social, economic, political, psychological and cultural explorations of how and through what processes that which has been termed modern society emerged. Such accounts have often rested upon a juxtaposition between traditional and modern societies, between static and dynamic socio-economic formations. Yet an account of modernity, understood as modes of experiencing that which is 'new' in 'modern' society, would presuppose an account of transitions to modern society, but without itself being reduced to a theory of modernization. Similarly, the aesthetic representations of transitions to modern society and modernity since the second half of the nineteenth century have given rise to a series of aesthetic modernisms, often accompanied by avant-garde manifestos announcing the arrival of absolutely new, modernist movements and exploring, aesthetically, 'the shock of the new'. The closer the concept of modernity is to that of modernization, the more it is likely to become a conceptualization of historical periodization. Where the concept is closer to aesthetic modernisms it is more likely to become a conceptualization of modes or qualities of modern social experience. A third, more recent, conceptualization of modernity is as a historical project. None of these concepts of modernity is without analytical and methodological problems.

Indeed, there has been considerable uncertainty surrounding the concepts of the modern, modernity, modernization and modernism in some historical periods, such as the turn of the nineteenth century and perhaps in recent decades, when the concept of modernity has come to encompass or be fused with all these related concepts. Indeed, the common associations of modernity with changes in historical and time consciousness, with an emphasis upon accelerating change and an identification of the present as modernity does raise the issue of historical periodization.

The historical periodization of modernity often relies on abstract chronologies and temporalities and contextualized stages of presentness. Modernity as emergent in the (late) Renaissance around 1500 and in its successive phases – 1500–1789, 1789–1900 and 1900 to the present – relies upon an abstract conception of historical epochs. Modernity as co-terminus with the development of the capitalist mode of production makes sense only if the processes by which capitalism as a socio-economic formation transforms social relations and experience into modernity can be delineated. Modernity as a project co-terminus with the Enlightenment and autonomous reason can be said to rest upon a demonstration of the continuity of this intellectual project since Kant. The most ambitious attempt to abandon the connection between modernity and periodization and turn to

modernity as process in the past and present – Walter Benjamin's 'prehistory of modernity' – itself retains elements of periodization of capitalism (Baudelaire, for instance, is viewed as a poet of 'high' capitalism by Benjamin).

Nonetheless, accounts of the transition to modernity and the contemporary analysis of the present modernity were always associated with a critique of modernity, rather than merely a celebration of the present modernity. Even then, and more commonly in the early decades of the twentieth century, this did not preclude the development of theories of an 'anti-modern' modernity and the mythological and 'post-historical' political projects associated with Fascism.

Since the introduction of the concept of modernity around the mid-nineteenth century, and especially in the proliferation of reflections upon its features in the late nineteenth century (partly stimulated by the emergence of new academic disciplines and their claim for resources in universities), *one* of the possible sites for the study of modernity was the modern metropolis. The modern city was not the *only* site for such investigations. For some, such as Marx, the capitalist mode of production was clearly of greater importance. For others, such as Emile Durkheim, the nature of social solidarity in modern society was of primary concern. For some, like Max Weber, the historical investigations of the origin of modern western rationalism and its most consequential product, modern western rational capitalism, were paramount. But in these and other instances in which the city did not appear to play a prominent role in the delineation of modernity, this did not mean that the modern metropolis was not without its significance.

Indeed, a brief overview of some of the contributions to understanding modernity suggests that the metropolis was of importance to a greater or lesser extent. For Charles Baudelaire, the metropolis was the site on which the spectacles of modernity were played out. The city as aesthetic object was to be rendered poetic by both the poet and the flâneur. Less than two decades earlier, Engels had depicted the modern metropolis as the site of modern capitalist estrangement in his naturalistic descriptions. This analyst, however, possessed a transformative interest in the object of study, in the transformation of the alienating relations of capitalism. And although many of Marx's explorations of the modern capitalist mode of production implicitly had an urban dimension, the latter was not a central concern in his drive to discover the 'laws of motion' of this system.

By the late nineteenth century the metropolis had assumed a greater significance in some social theories at least. Although not usually viewed as an urban theorist, Durkheim's studies of the abnormal forms of the division of labour (and the moral/social density of urban life) and the weakened levels of moral regulation and integration in the metropolis indicated a concern with some of the pathologies of modern urban life and a remedial

and prescriptive interest in their amelioration. For Durkheim's exact contemporary, Georg Simmel (both were born in 1858), with his postulation of an interpenetration of the mature money economy and the modern metropolis, the city was the crucial site of the intensification of the features of modernity and the attendant transformation of human experience. Simmel's interest, as he pointedly remarked at the close of his essay on the metropolis, lay in the direction of an interpretation or description of modernity that could aid our understanding of the new forms of social interaction in modernity.

The modern metropolis also received explicit treatment from a more negative standpoint in the otherwise quite diverse social analyses of modernity provided by Ferdinand Tönnies and Werner Sombart. For Tönnies, the modern metropolis was the very epitome of the negative, empty contractual and abstract social relations that pertained in modern society, generated, in part, by an arbitrary will devoid of any communalistic tendencies. Sombart, on the other hand, explored the metropolis much more extensively both in its historical development in early capitalism and in its modern form. The modern metropolis, for Sombart, was dominated by mass phenomena (commodities and individuals), quasi-independent technology and rapid transformation, producing a new urban culture, an 'asphalt culture' whose features and tendencies were viewed negatively.

A more analytical focus upon the historical development of the metropolis – which owed not a little of its original impetus from a confrontation with Sombart's historical interpretation of the emergence of modern capitalism and the city – was provided by Max Weber's historical analytical investigations of the city as economic market and political military development. On occasion, Weber reflected more freely in discourse and correspondence on the nature of modern urban existence. And although specific features of the city in which his analytical investigations were taking place seldom surfaced, the inner life of the modern metropolis in the often distorted self-understanding of the experience of its inhabitants was explored by Freud as part of a broader study of the pathologies of everyday life. In turn, this focus upon a nervous individual culture in the metropolis had some affinities with Simmel's more general explorations, with the latter's desire to drop soundings beneath the surface of everyday life.¹

II

If modernity is characterized by contradictions and ambiguities, then is the same true of the concept of a cityscape? So many of the representations of our experience of modernity are tied up with our experience of

the metropolis that the presentation and representation of the city are likely to share in modernity's contradictions. The issue as to how to represent modern experience of the metropolis is central to discussions within the aesthetic modernisms that modernity generated. The representation and reading of the modern metropolis manifested itself in crucial differences between modernist movements, each of which was ostensibly diametrically opposed to its predecessors, at least as far as the proclamations of their avant-garde manifestos were concerned.

At the same time, giving a name to that which was being represented or, better, to that *mode* of representation itself also became an issue. Beyond the call to depict the modern city and our experience of it that is shared by Baudelaire, the Impressionists, the Expressionists, the Surrealists and so on, there lay the problem of identifying the mode of representation itself. The 'panorama' of the city differs from the 'snapshot', just as the 'narrative' differs from the 'image'. In part, these differences were contingent upon the development of new techniques of representation. But, at the same time, the observer of the city and the practices associated with that observation were also changing. Different observers, as potential sources of representing the city, were located at different distances (and different tempos) from their object. For instance, the portrayal of the city embedded in the landscape is to be distinguished from the portrayal of the city as landscape and, in turn, from the portrayal of the city's *street-scape* as if it were from a perspective *within* the streets themselves.

Whilst some questioned whether the modern metropolis could constitute a landscape, others searched for new terms to describe what they took to be a new object of study. The former issue is indirectly addressed in Simmel's 'Philosophy of Landscape' ('Philosophie der Landschaft', 1910), in which he implies that the modern streetscape cannot be a landscape,² and contrasts with his earlier representation of the modern city in 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903).³ Yet the search for new terms was already evident in Walter Rathenau's anonymous essay 'The Most Beautiful City in the World' ('Die schönste Stadt der Welt', 1899)⁴ where he sought to redefine the notion of the 'image' of the city. The context is the question as to what are the conditions under which a city requires beautiful buildings. Where there is no beautiful landscape setting, no prospect of the sea or a broad river and such like, then it is necessary to create 'a significant and well set out image of streets (*Strassenbild*)'. However, Rathenau expresses his dissatisfaction with this concept and prefers that of 'street landscape' (*Strassenlandschaft*) or 'cityscape' (*Stadtbild*) on the grounds that what is at issue is

the genuine landscape total image that is produced by means of the arrangement and formation of masses in the same manner as is the natural landscape from out of the grouping of mountain masses and vegetation.

Those who have ever walked in Trafalgar Square or Place de la Concorde, Piccadilly or the Piazza della Signoria can appreciate what deep impression has been called forth to produce urban scenery purely as total image and not as the effect of individual works.⁶

Rathenau was clearly struggling here with the transition from landscape to streetscape and cityscape, to the humanly formed constellation of a total effect of streets and cities. Less than three decades later the notion of a cityscape or streetscape became central to the investigations of the modern metropolis by Franz Hessel,⁷ Walter Benjamin,⁸ Siegfried Kracauer⁹ and others.¹⁰ And in some cases the focus had shifted away from merely visual response to spatial effects of streetscapes and cityscapes. Benjamin, for example, argued that 'every architecture worthy of the name ensures that it is the spatial sense as a whole, and not just the casual gaze, that reaps the benefits of its greatest achievements'.¹¹ Or elsewhere he maintained that 'what is crucial in the observation of architecture is not seeing but rather the coming through of traces of structures. The objective effect of built structures upon the conceptual existence of the observer is more important than their "being seen"'.¹² Thus, when such reflections are applied to the cityscape, it becomes apparent that its exploration is by no means exhausted in our attention to the image of the city, to its 'image space'. Rather, a more complete exploration should open up a broader constellation of experience of its spatial and temporal (historical) existence.

One of the ways of accessing other dimensions of the cityscape is to examine the figures who populate it. More specifically, social theories of modernity have often had recourse to real and metaphorical figures in order to illuminate their methodology and substantive theories. Walter Benjamin, for instance, in his ambitious prehistory of modernity, had recourse to the figures of the archaeologist and critical allegorist, the collector (including the rag collector, the *chiffonnier*) and the flâneur in order to amplify the nature of his methodological approach to the construction of the site of the prehistory of modernity, namely Paris as capital of the nineteenth century. Other social theorists have populated their analysis of modernity and the cityscape with other figures. One somewhat neglected juxtaposition of figures must suffice as indicator of the fruitfulness of such explorations.

III

In the course of one of several replies to the critics of his 'Protestant ethic' articles¹³ – and the two essays did not constitute a monograph – Max

Weber addresses a question posed by one of his critics, Felix Rachfahl, one that he 'haunts me with in the most helpless manner'. If the question is asked,

within the total image of modern capitalism which figures could and should quite unconditionally *not* be understood from the standpoint of 'inner worldly asceticism', then I reply: the '*adventurer*' of capitalist development – taking the concept of the '*adventurer*' here in the same sense as it has recently been delineated by G. Simmel in a beautiful, short essay. As is well known, its economic historical significance especially (but not only) within the history of early capitalism is extremely important – and yet nonetheless in the increasing domination of capitalism over the whole of economic life, in a certain sense and *cum grano salis*, one can roughly treat alike the *development of economic opportunity profit into an economic system*; and the genesis of the capitalistic '*spirit*' in my sense of the word, the development *from the romanticism of economic adventurism to the traditional economic system of life* (*Lebensmethodik*).¹⁴

Clearly, Weber is here primarily concerned with justifying his thesis concerning the development of the spirit of capitalism and the distinctive nature of modern western rational capitalism, as compared to earlier (and sometimes surviving and recurring) forms of capitalism. In passing, one might ask what the connection might be between this notion of adventurer capitalism and Marx's earlier discussion of 'original' (and not, as appears in the English translation, 'primitive') accumulation. Both historical and recent examples from post-communist societies suggest that original and adventure capitalist accumulation has not disappeared. Rather, such accumulation quite rapidly seeks to 'legitimate' itself by transforming itself into 'rational' and 'legitimate' economic activity. This would suggest that the demarcation that Weber tends to draw as a sharp distinction between 'romantic' and 'rational' capitalism may not be one that holds historically with the same rigour that he assumed.

However, our present concerns go in a different direction. An implication of Weber's distinction between the adventurer capitalist and the 'rational', systematic capitalist is that the former is *premodern* whereas the latter is *modern*. It is true that Weber does acknowledge that adventure capitalism can also be significant in modern capitalism. But the main thrust of his argument lies in establishing a sharp demarcation between adventure capitalism (which could not itself generate modern western rational capitalism) and modern systematic capitalism, whose origins are related to inner-worldly asceticism. The distinction between the premodern and the modern which Weber draws in this context does not confront the implications of his acknowledged source for a model of the adventurer, namely Simmel's essay on 'The Adventure'.¹⁵ His exploration of the adventure

and the attitude of the adventurer makes no reference to capitalism (though it does contain an important reference to gambling). Simmel's essay does, crucially, define the adventure in terms of experience divorced from or torn out of everyday existence and as demanding a heightened consciousness of absolute presentness. At first sight, such features are still compatible with Weber's usage of adventure capitalism, insofar as adventure capitalism is not a systematic, routinized activity but something dependent upon fortuitous opportunities, and insofar as rational economic life – since its *capitalist* variant is devoted to ever-renewed profit or capital accumulation – must have a future orientation as well as a location in the present. (Though generations of commentators have notoriously viewed *working-class* orientation to 'rational' economic life – in its capacity as formally free wage labour – as one that is not fixed upon future horizons but upon *present* satisfaction.)

But if we examine the adventure from Simmel's perspective do we reach similar conclusions to those which Weber clearly drew from this essay? Is not the adventurer, in Simmel's context, the equivalent, for example, of the flâneur? Does the focus upon absolute presentness and total disregard for history not make the adventurer the epitome of modernity? Or could we see the experience of the adventure and the systematic 'rational' life system as *two dimensions of modernity* rather than as instances of the premodern and modernity?

Certainly *calculability* and *fortuitousness* appear, at first sight, to be contradictory orientations. They are, however, interrelated insofar as the search for, and introduction of, calculability is a process whose aim is the eradication of fortuitousness or at least the mastery of the arbitrary and the random. Calculability and fortuitousness can also be linked together in our image of the city. When Simmel describes our impression of the metropolis – and he largely has street scenes in mind – as one of bombardment of the senses with diverse impressions and criss-crossing interactions, he also reveals that this view of urban existence is contingent upon precisely calculated interactions, meetings, timetables, etc. If our personal/functional/transport and other timetables broke down momentarily (for instance, to give Simmel's own example, if all the clocks stopped at the same time) then the existing chaos (of individual impressions) would become total.¹⁶

Yet are there, nonetheless, grounds for regarding calculability and fortuitousness as separate and even contradictory processes? If we remain with images of the city for the moment, then the fortuitous images derived from strolling or walking the city (examined in their different ways by both Kracauer¹⁷ and de Certeau¹⁸) clearly differ from those that are, as it were, already preconstructed or framed for us by guidebooks. The ready-mapped (and already 'read') city of the tourist guide can be instrumental

in routinizing responses to that upon which it bestows attention. It is the routinized response that is also anticipated or expected in the calculability of rational economic processes, be they in the sphere of production, circulation or consumption. Since we are dealing with modes of experience and their representation, these reflections may be advanced by exploring the figures in the landscapes of calculability and fortuitousness. The figures clearly associated with the fortuitous are, for Weber, the adventure capitalist, for Simmel the adventurer and the gambler and for Benjamin, the *flâneur* and the gambler. In the case of figures associated with calculability, it is only Weber who could unambiguously offer an instance – the practitioner of formal rationality and, above all, the rational capitalist dedicated to a vocation of capital accumulation. This should not imply that figures such as the adventurer, the gambler or the *flâneur* are not accumulating experiences or images but merely that, in Weber's terms, they do not do so *systematically*. It is only Weber's rational capitalist (and 'rational' worker) who appear directly associated with production and the whole production process in modern western rational capitalism.

For both Simmel and Benjamin there are other figures in the urban landscape or cityscape, whose relationship to the processes of calculability and fortuitousness may be more ambiguous. In Simmel's case, the stranger and (as collectivity) the poor would be confronted, amongst others, in his cityscape. Neither is necessarily associated with modernity, although each may acquire modern forms. Yet there is one figure whom Simmel identifies unambiguously both with the mature money economy and modern metropolitan experience – the blasé person. This figure is identifiable through their response to the metropolis and the modern money economy as being blasé, that is, as adopting an attitude of (apparent) indifference to what both have to offer. When Simmel introduces the blasé person in the context of the modern money economy, this figure is preceded by one who is also to be found in the metropolis, namely the cynic. Not to be confused with the positive figure of the cynic in Greek antiquity, the modern cynic proliferates in the money economy – whose centre is the modern metropolis – and responds to 'the baseness of the highest values and the illusion of any differences in values'.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, 'the nurseries of cynicism are . . . those places with huge turnovers of commodities and money.' These same 'nurseries' – extended to things themselves – are the sites of the proliferation of the blasé person,

who has completely lost the feeling for value differences. He experiences all things as being of an equally dull and grey hue, as not worth getting excited about . . . [an] indifference to . . . [the] specific qualities . . . [of things] from which the whole liveliness of feeling and volition originates.²⁰

Unlike the cynic, however, the blasé person still seeks 'the attractions of life' in the metropolis and the money economy. Hence, the blasé attitude has a further aspect, namely:

the craving today for excitement, for extreme impressions, for the greatest speed in their change . . . the modern preference for 'stimulation' as such in impressions, relations and information. . . . The search for mere stimuli in themselves is the consequence of the increasing blasé attitude through which natural excitement increasingly disappears.²¹

If the blasé figure is the one 'unreservedly associated with the metropolis' and the mature money economy, then this figure is surely not one devoted to calculation – which requires being attuned to value differences – but rather to the fortuitous stimulations that the sites of modernity offer. As a modern response to the calculability of everything, the blasé attitude accords with a situation in which 'something definite' at the centre of our existence is missing. The conscious distance and indifference which metropolitan dwellers develop as defence mechanisms, and which give the impression of coolness and reserve, are only part of their response to the capitalist metropolis. There exists, too, a 'secret restlessness', a 'helpless urgency that lies *below* the threshold of consciousness', which propels us towards ever-new stimulations. Hence, Simmel argues:

we become entangled in the instability and helplessness that manifests itself as the tumult of the metropolis, as the mania for travelling, as the wild pursuit of competition, and as the typically modern disloyalty with regard to taste, style, opinions and personal relationships.²²

But these features, too, are related to the 'rational economic system of life' insofar as circulation in the metropolis, travel, taste and style are all commodified. The 'adventurer' in the modern metropolis, seeking new sensations and stimulations and seeking to break out of everyday mundane existence, is likely to pursue those stimulations that are themselves constitutive of the 'rational economic system of life'.

The calculating individual, who features in Simmel's cityscape and in Weber's vision of modern western rational capitalism, employs what Simmel terms 'calculative functions' when 'coping with the world and in regulating both individual and social relations' through conceiving of the world 'as a huge arithmetical problem . . . [with] events and the qualitative distinction of things as a system of numbers'.²³ Qualitative values are thereby reduced to quantitative ones. Is this not another version of the blasé individual, exemplifying the 'measuring, weighing and calculating exactness of modern times'? And is this commitment to calculability and quantification – that Weber saw as a crucial feature of modern rational

capitalism – also indicative of both formal rationality and the fortuitous appearance of quantitative connections in economic and many other transactions in the modern metropolis?

This is merely one instance of the way in which the exploration of figures in the cityscapes of social theories reveal the ambiguities and contradictions of modernity. It would go beyond the scope of the present introduction to develop other instances, but Benjamin's flâneur, prostitute, gambler and other figures in his prehistory of modernity,²⁴ along with Simmel's fashion addict in the modern metropolis, might prove equally revealing.²⁵

IV

The chapters in the present volume explore various dimensions of the structuring, representations and modes of experiencing the modern metropolis. They make no claim to be exhaustive investigations but, if they succeed, then they will have raised some significant aspects of metropolitan experience that might encourage further study. They extend from the analysis of what appears to be a most trivial activity, that of strolling the metropolis with an eye to images of it and its population – the pursuit of flânerie – to the examination of attempts to construct the rational city in the city planning activities of Martin Wagner in Weimar Berlin. But, as with all dimensions of modernity, things are seldom what they appear. As Benjamin suggested, the flâneur or flâneuse may appear to be strolling aimlessly but is, in reality, in search of a market for his or her images of the city. The apparently most systematic and rational organization of the modern metropolis – in this case, Martin Wagner's vision of a new Berlin – in fact culminates in its opposite: the dissolution of the metropolis into 'satellite' towns with a population of 50,000 inhabitants. Such ambiguities and contradictions are present to a greater or lesser extent in the other explorations in the present volume.

The first chapter on the role of the flâneur in social theory should be read in the context of a much wider and expanding literature on the significance of the figure of the flâneur for our understanding of modernity. The essay appeared originally as a contribution to a broader exploration of this deeply ambiguous figure. In particular, Priscilla Ferguson investigated the historical emergence of this figure. Challenging Benjamin's location of the flâneur in Paris from the 1830s and 1840s, she demonstrated that the figure emerged several decades earlier.²⁶ My essay seeks to challenge four other aspects of the discourse on the flâneur. The first is Benjamin's own claim that with the development of the grand boulevards and the department store, the arcades that had 'housed' the flâneur themselves

declined, and with their economic demise the figure of the flâneur also disappeared – to be replaced by the consumer. Yet Benjamin's reviews of the work of his friend Franz Hessel in Weimar Germany, and the title of one of those reviews, 'The Return of the Flâneur',²⁷ suggest that this decline of flânerie lacked finality. More compelling is Benjamin's own activity as flâneur, not merely in Paris and Berlin but, equally significantly, as an intellectual or research flâneur in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The second, related aspect of flânerie, is the positive evaluation of flânerie that is implicit in Benjamin's own writings. If his judgement of the historical role of the flâneur is often a negative one in the context of early nineteenth-century Paris, then this contradicts his frequent recourse to the figure of the flâneur in order to clarify his own historical method. In this context (and in the historical analysis of the flâneur) a neglected dimension of flânerie is revealed, namely the flâneur as *producer* (of texts, images, etc.).

The third aspect of flânerie highlighted here is the contribution of this activity both to sociological knowledge and to our understanding of its generation. The scientific claims of some sociological histories and the accompanying canonization of sociologists and their 'knowledges' erase the conditions under which a great deal of that knowledge is *produced*. These include not merely the observational and experimental settings of much interactional sociology but also the manner in which historical archival knowledge is generated. To return to Benjamin for a moment, it is instructive to note that when he declares to Kracauer that he is in the arcades, he is in fact in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The manner in which Benjamin's *own* archive is produced is illuminated by flânerie.

Finally, an implication of our broader exploration of flânerie is that it is not confined to mere observation or images. If the flâneur is a producer, then the reconstruction of experience – and primarily modes of metropolitan experience of modernity – must extend beyond the merely *visual* grasp of metropolitan interaction.

As Benjamin suggested, the figure of the private detective is prefigured in that of the flâneur, at the moment in which the flâneur's gaze becomes directed towards specific persons and objects. Far too little attention has been given to the training of individuals for the activity of detection, in comparison with studies of detection in its literary and, from the twentieth century onwards, cinematic representations. Perhaps no other figure has become so identified with their representational embodiment in a metropolitan context (outside of which, the 'cowboy' in the US could not compete with as compelling a representational trajectory). Not surprisingly, the emergence of the figure of the detective (as opposed to the government agent) appeared in literature at the same time as detective forces were being formed in both the public and private sectors in several countries.²⁸ The 1850s saw the appearance of Inspector Bucket in Dickens's *Bleak*

House (1853) as well as the founding in Chicago of the Pinkerton Detective Agency (1850).²⁹ In turn, in a European context this crucial decade witnessed the creation of several forms of protection against criminality, but more especially against civil unrest and revolution after the failure of the 1848 revolutions. In Paris, Haussmannization coincided with the creation of national police forces elsewhere. In the United States, the consolidation of federal power took several decades to complete after the Civil War. In the intervening period prior to a more comprehensive federal system of law enforcement, many capitalist institutions had to rely upon private forces such as Pinkertons for their protection.

When Allan Pinkerton drew up the rules for his detective agency he sought to identify its activities as *modern* (as against earlier informer-based systems of policing). The rule-governed nature of the activity of detection that is evident in Pinkerton's set of principles and, as the agency expanded, the increasingly bureaucratic nature of its organization by the turn of the century around 1900, already contrasted with the emergent representation of the private detective as an independent agent. It also contrasted with the absence of rules for those with a managerial overview, except with respect to the bureaucratic organization of the agency. There was, in turn, one exception here, namely that operatives should have no access to the knowledge generated by other operatives and, still less, an overview of a whole operation. As such, Pinkerton's agency is an interesting early example of the knowledge industry, but one whose subsequent representational form was the individual 'private eye' and not the waged operative within a bureaucratic enterprise.

But the activity of detection in its modern form was also predicated upon new forms of, and possibilities for, *secrecy* opened up by the growth of the metropolis and a developed money economy and corresponding attempts at *revelation* of secrets. The ability to remain hidden within these two networks of the metropolis and an increasingly sophisticated money economy, both of which in their own ways provided increasing anonymity for both the hunted and the hunter, required the creation of new modes of detection. In addition, the perceived development of urban masses also created new modes of secrecy and prompted the search for new modes of *individual* differentiation (most often based upon the typification of *individuals*) instanced in photography and fingerprinting. Thus, once more, the search for the (scientific) means for *calculating* criminal activity and behaviour (enhanced in another industry, that of insurance, by the calculation of *probability*) coincided with the representation of detection – and the crucial role of the discoveries of *clues* – as performed by individuals confronted in an urban context by the *fortuitous* nature of the discovery of hidden relations between individuals and groups. The ostensibly rule-governed nature of detection by operatives in Pinkerton's agency was presumably

intended, in part, as a means of giving a semblance of a modern system to detection and as a counter to the seemingly arbitrary or fortuitous nature of the discovery of clues.

The exploration of the 'secrets' of the modern metropolis was also undertaken by several emergent academic disciplines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most notably by social theorists. Prominent amongst their number is Georg Simmel, whose essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' is perhaps one of the most cited in literature on the modern metropolis. For that reason, amongst others, it runs the danger of being both fetishized and decontextualized. If we wish to examine more fully Simmel's contribution to the interpretation of metropolitan modernity, then we need to locate his famous lecture in its context and to integrate his other contributions and explorations of the metropolis into a broader constellation. In this way, the essay which is so often veiwed in isolation can be treated as an intersection of thematic circles of interpretation of the modern metropolis.

The more we explore Simmel's other writings aside from his metropolis essay, the more extensive the urban location of much of his analysis of modern society and modernity becomes apparent. This is, in part, because the two major sites of modernity for Simmel, the metropolis and the mature (capitalist) money economy are inextricably linked. However, in the present context, an attempt has been made to examine other dimensions of Simmel's richly diverse analyses that are relevant to a fuller understanding of his interpretation of the metropolis.

Indeed, if we confined our attention merely to Simmel's 1903 metropolis essay, then a number of *absent* dimensions of the modern metropolis would become apparent. These would include the sphere of production, political power, gender relations and gendered experience of the metropolis, spatial dimensions of the metropolis (including both representations of the city and its architecture) and the aesthetics of the metropolis. To varying degrees, these and other aspects of modern metropolitan life are explored in other Simmel texts. The latter include reflections upon urban space (including its boundaries and the inside/outside dialectic), architecture, representations of the city, female culture, domination and subordination and network analysis, interactions with the other, figures in the metropolitan landscape, pathologies of metropolitan modernity, distractions in the metropolis and beyond, and the dialectic of objective and subjective culture. This should not imply that all these reflections are located in other places devoted specifically to the metropolis, but merely that, at the very least, aspects of these other texts are evidently relevant to a fuller exploration of Simmel's interest in the modern metropolis.

If there is a *textual* context within which Simmel's essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' can be located and even reconfigured, then this is also

true for its *historical* context. Originally a lecture as part of a series in Dresden prior to the opening of the first major celebration of the modern German metropolis at the German Metropolitan Exhibition in 1903, Simmel's contribution proved not to be what its organizers had anticipated: a positive statement on the institutional, intellectual and cultural life in the city. Instead, and unlike all the other contributions to the lecture series which contained a substantial historical, comparative element, Simmel's lecture focused upon the inner life of the individual in the metropolis, and drew upon little historical and certainly no statistical evidence. His emphatic concentration upon the mental or inner life of the contemporary metropolis (with an occasional historical reference to Athens or Weimar) and the potential for individual freedom within its expanding objective culture gave it a more philosophical and social psychological import than several of the lecture series' participants and organizers desired. In a broader historical context, Simmel's lecture/essay appeared seven years after his essay on the Berlin Trade Exhibition of 1896,³⁰ which signalled that city's elevation into a world city as far as many contemporaries were concerned, and three years after his most sustained examination of crucial aspects of modernity – his *Philosophy of Money* – was published in 1900. After the metropolis essay of 1903, there were no further substantial treatments of the modern city by Simmel.

In terms of *theoretical* threads in his exploration of social, cultural and psychological processes in the modern metropolis, they can perhaps be viewed as a series of contradictory tensions that may be concentrated in the metropolis but which are present in other contexts explored by Simmel. Such tensions and antinomies would include the widening gap between objective and subjective culture, the simultaneous presence of processes of differentiation and dedifferentiation, the juxtaposition of calculability and fortuitousness in social interactions, the simultaneity of proximity and distance in the metropolis, the boundaries of inside and outside (not merely in terms of private and public spheres, but also the boundaries between publics) and the relationship between the totality and the fragment.

Although Simmel refers only once to Berlin in his essay on 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', it is evident that *his* metropolis – despite the fact that he visited many others – is Berlin.³¹ And although there is no instance of comparison of metropolitan centres in Simmel's various explorations of the modern metropolis, such comparisons were not uncommon amongst his German contemporaries. In the present context our major focus is largely upon Berlin and Vienna. Paris is represented through Benjamin's exploration of the flâneur and elsewhere, American cities are implicit in the account of detection in the Pinkerton Agency, and German cities are implicitly present in the discussion of German Expressionism.

In the German context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a number of issues emerge in discourses on the metropolis. The first is what constitutes a city and a world metropolis. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, and prompted by the dramatic expansion in urbanization after German unification in 1870, it was agreed – by social statisticians, urban researchers and others – that a city (*Grossstadt*) should have a population in excess of 100,000. This had the consequence that urban conurbations in the Rhine–Ruhr area possessed a large number of cities which, because they were not consolidated into a single unit, never constituted a single metropolitan centre, even though they comprised the largest urban area in Germany. At the same time, before their incorporation into Greater Berlin, cities such as Charlottenburg or Rixdorf constituted separate metropolitan entities even though they were effectively an extension of the Berlin urban nexus. Where the issue as to what constituted a world metropolis was resolved quantitatively at a population in excess of one million, then at the turn of the century only Berlin qualified for such status (with Hamburg with its over 900,000 inhabitants in second place).

Yet the nature of the metropolis was evidently not merely a quantitative issue (or even, as Durkheim was aware, one of social or moral density). The symbolic representation of the city was also decisive, as in the correlation between Berlin's 1896 trade exhibition and its self-recognition as world city. At the same time, other regional metropolitan centres such as Munich could lay claim to be cultural capitals whose influence extended well beyond their regional boundaries. But more importantly, the comparisons that were being made *between* cities said much more about the representations of metropolitan existence. Our focus is upon two instances.

The first is the comparison drawn between Berlin and American cities (notably Chicago, but also New York).³² If Berlin's expansion after 1870 was dramatic in a German and wider European context, then it could be compared with the even more rapid explosion of populations in such cities as Chicago – and Berlin was sometimes referred to as 'Chicago on the Spree'. Again, however, such contemporary comparisons did not merely focus upon quantitative expansion. The identification of Berlin as an American city did not rest merely upon its expansion within a relatively short timespan. Rather, this putative comparison and even identification was directed inwards towards a discourse upon the negative effects of urbanization, often in the context of an anti-urban ideology. Berlin as American city could be read as America in Berlin in Germany. American civilization could be read as Berlin metropolitan culture.

Indeed, the second significant comparison made in the same period was between Berlin and Vienna. And here almost invariably the representational context was that of Berlin as symbol of civilization and Vienna as symbol of culture. One could also reconfigure this constellation as modern

American civilization compared with historical, European (German) culture. In part, the mode of *evaluation* of such symbolic constellations rested upon whether this comparison was being made from a Berlin or Viennese perspective. But more crucial in deciding the evaluation of these representations was the stance vis-à-vis modernity itself. In turn, this could be rendered more complex by an anti-modern analysis of modernity such as Werner Sombart provided. Berlin as the symbolic representation of a (negative) modernity could be contrasted with the historically rooted cultural capital, Vienna.

Within Vienna itself, around the turn of the century, there existed an often vitriolic conflict between the forces of modernization and tradition, between 'New Vienna' and 'Old Vienna'. In part, this was not a new conflict but rather one that was embedded in the first major restructuring of the city from 1857 to the late 1880s associated with the Ringstrasse development. That project had already called forth a nostalgic literature on Old Vienna (i.e. pre-Ringstrasse), but the extension of the city boundaries in 1890 and the competition for a new city plan for the creation of a 'modern' metropolis – as 'Gross-Wien' – gave the 'Old Vienna' ideology a new impetus. Unlike Berlin, Vienna had retained a largely intact medieval, Renaissance and baroque core around which the new Ringstrasse zone formed a historicist modernity, and beyond which were the originally older urban developments increasingly subjected to modernization.

This was only part of the context within which the notion of designing a modern metropolis was likely to prove problematical. The capitalist industrialization of Vienna proceeded more slowly than was the case in Berlin. In turn, that capitalist development was located in the context of a substantial agrarian land empire of which Vienna was the capital (increasingly challenged in pace of development at least by Budapest, the capital of the Hungarian portion of that empire since its separation in 1867). The multinational and multicultural nature of the Hapsburg Empire and the waves of migration into Vienna gave the city an additional horizontal dimension of stratification (based on ethnicity, culture, language, etc.) to the dual vertical stratification systems of an estate society (based on rank) and a class society. This multidimensionality, combined with a large bureaucratic sector to administer the largest land empire in Europe outside Russia, rendered modernization a contested project that would be strongly resisted.

Hence, an architect such as Otto Wagner, with his 1896 manifesto for a modern architecture that should reflect modern life – whose epitome was the modern metropolis – and who had already been successful in winning the competition for the general plan of New Vienna in 1894 as well as for the new city railway, was likely to encounter considerable resistance in Vienna. Yet the notion of modernity with which Wagner

operated, despite his persistent call for a modern architecture and a modern metropolis, was neither internally coherent nor consistent.

Nonetheless, beyond Wagner's somewhat naive plea for a structural homology between modern life and modern architecture, many significant issues were raised in his *Moderne Architektur* of 1896.³³ His attack on the orgies of historicism in the recent past (the Ringstrasse zone development and, by implication, some of Wagner's own earlier work) focused not merely on its inappropriate stylizations in the modern world but upon a more interesting issue – which he himself neither fully articulated nor solved – as to the *intelligibility* of (modern) architecture. Although Wagner's argument was that contemporary historicisms were unintelligible to the modern urban dweller, the issue of architecture's and, implicitly, the modern city's intelligibility had much wider implications.

At one level, this issue was about the textuality of the metropolis and its architecture. For contemporary architects and observers/users/dwellers, this architecture could be conceived as *text in the process of being created or produced*. At the same time, the creation of a new modern architecture in the context of a historically existing urban and architectural constellation also implied *the destruction of text*. This was particularly relevant to the Viennese context (as it had been earlier on a larger scale in Haussmann's 'creative destruction' of mid-century Paris) in which part of 'New' Vienna would be built upon 'Old' Vienna. Indeed, this problematic of intelligibility had already been raised in Camillo Sitte's 1889 volume on city planning and the ensuing debate on the seemingly somewhat obscure issue of straight or crooked streets.³⁴ Sitte (drawing almost all of his non-Viennese examples of irregular squares and crooked streets from Italian Renaissance and baroque cities) maintained that the long straight avenue and the large modern square constituted urban spaces that created pathological responses in modern city dwellers. More importantly, the obsession with problems of traffic circulation and public hygiene (sewage systems, etc.), generated a mode of town planning that was preoccupied with technical rather than aesthetic dimensions of the metropolis. As Sitte stated in one of his many newspaper attacks upon the plans for New Vienna (often directed at Wagner), the issue before the modern city planners was whether they wished to create the metropolis as 'a work of art' or as 'a human storehouse'.³⁵ Wagner himself did not directly respond to Sitte in the press, nor did he directly participate in this debate on straight or crooked streets (whose principal protagonists were Joseph Stübben – for straight streets and a modern metropolis – and Carl Henrici – supporting Sitte's position).

Wagner's *Modern Architecture*, however, does contain many implicit attacks upon Sitte's position. But his main concern is to argue for a modern architecture appropriate to modern metropolitan life. The modern

metropolis as the epitome of modernity will be subject to unbounded expansion and extension. The correlation between modern architecture (and the modern metropolis) and modern life made it incumbent upon Wagner to specify the features of modern life that its modern architecture would 'reflect'. Although not coherently presented, these features of modern life centre around the process of *abstraction, circulation and movement* and *monumentality*: unbounded expansion of the city, permanent progress, technological advance, democratization, levelling of life-forms, purposive orientation to time and money, increasing mobility, and acceleration in circulation (and fashionability) and monumentalism (including the street as monument). As both symptom and response to several of these features, Wagner lay emphasis upon the domination of the rented apartment block (as a 'conglomerate of cells').

Aside from the somewhat uneasy location of fashion within these putative features of modern life, the desire for a new, modern monumentalism is worth noting. Only those conceptions of modernity that conceive of it as a calculated ordering and structuring of the built environment would argue for an increase in public monuments and a new monumentalism. If modernity is conceived as experience of the transitory, fleeting and fortuitous, then *its* monumental representation could be conceived only as the temporary, fleeting and fortuitous structure, or the imploding structure. The logic of Wagner's somewhat positivistic delineation of the features of modern life pointed only in the direction of a systematic and even symmetrical ordering of built forms. Modern public monumentalism required *political* support and this was not forthcoming after the shift in political power in Vienna to Dr Karl Lueger's Christian Social Party (with its anti-Semitic ideology), however much Wagner sought its support.³⁶

If we return to the notion of the imploding structure of the city, to the representation of its street life as fleeting and fortuitous impressions, then the movement that perhaps came closest to realizing this conception in some of its declarations and representations of the modern metropolis was the short-lived German Expressionist movement. Whereas Otto Wagner conceived of the constantly expanding modern metropolis in circles radiating outwards from its centre and was best articulated in his short monograph *Die Grossstadt* (1911),³⁷ some Expressionist Utopians conceived of the radical dissolution of the modern metropolis and the creation of new cities of glass – as 'city crowns' – in the mountains.³⁸ However, our concern is less with what Benjamin later referred to as 'the well-ventilated Utopia' of such conceptions that were conceived but never realized by Taut and others, as with possible affinities between Expressionist artistic and literary representations of the modern metropolis and contemporary social theory in Germany. The chapter on Expressionism thus explores not merely some of the affinities between social theorists' representations

of the city and metropolitan modernity and those of Expressionist artists, but also Expressionism *in* social theory, most notably in the work of Ernst Bloch.³⁹ A fuller treatment of this interface might wish to explore, say, the impact of Simmel's social theory and philosophy upon Erich Mendelsohn, Kurt Hiller and, beyond the Expressionist movement, Adolf Behne, Martin Wagner and others.⁴⁰

One dominant mode of representing the Expressionist city was to focus upon the inner life of the human subject in the city streetscape bombarded with all dynamic effects upon the individual. Here, the street at a distance, the street viewed from above familiar to many Impressionist representations of the metropolis, was replaced by an increasingly fragile human subject buffeted by the throng of the chaotic urban crowd, its traffic and its threatening built structures, an urban nexus imploding upon the individual. Any affinities between this mode of representation of the modern metropolis and contemporary social theory would be located in those social theories that explored expressions of emotional or other psychological responses to the tumult of the modern city. Another possibility would be the development of a mode of expressing such experiences in social theory that was consonant with Expressionism itself. Amongst social theorists the primary instance of the latter is the work of Ernst Bloch, who remained committed to this mode in subsequent decades.

In the 1920s, after what many saw as the demise of Expressionism in Germany, several of the architects who had been prominent in creating Expressionism's Utopian visions of the modern city, and who had participated in the revolutionary councils for art and architecture in the period around the failed German Revolution of 1918, were active in what some saw as the construction of new, rational Utopias of the modern metropolis. By the end of the 1920s journals announced the creation of another 'New' Vienna, the 'New' Frankfurt and, above all, the 'New' Berlin. The joint editor of the short-lived *Das neue Berlin* (the other editor being Adolf Behne), and city planner of Berlin since 1926, was Martin Wagner.⁴¹ The journal displayed the achievements and projected works in Berlin that emphasized two spheres of preoccupation – public housing and the reconstruction of the centre of the city (most notably, Alexanderplatz) – that contributed to giving Berlin the appearance (once more) of being the most modern capital city in Europe. In turn, the problems of traffic circulation in an expanding metropolis and the questioning of the site of that expansion (within the metropolitan core or at its periphery and beyond) also raised the issue of the accelerated 'turnover time', as it were, of the built environment itself.

The preoccupation with the modern metropolis in the 1920s in Weimar Germany called forth a number of Utopian and not realized models. One of the most radical and not realized was the dystopian vision of Ludwig

Hilberseimer with high-rise blocks and a radical separation of traffic forms, whose overall alienating effect (although realized in many cities from the 1960s onwards in advanced capitalist societies) caused even Hilbersheimer to lament that they were 'more a necropolis than a metropolis'.⁴² In contrast, the housing schemes conceived by Martin Wagner, and sometimes realized in association with Bruno Taut and others, displayed the hallmark of careful, realistic calculation. The same was true of his extensive writings on housing and, in a negative manner, of his commitment to rationalization of the building industry. Some of these writings pleading for rationalization serve as confirmation of Max Weber's argument that rationalization was likely to be carried forward more systematically by socialists than capitalists.

Nonetheless, few had such an overall conception of Gross-Berlin as Wagner in the late Weimar Republic's years. Although his concern for the development of public housing schemes and for the heart of the Berlin metropolis was not unique, even his opponents recognized his achievements in what were the most difficult years of the increasingly crisis-ridden Republic. City planning as encouragement of the acceleration of motorized circulation of individuals and commodities took on a logic of its own when Wagner declared that the dynamic nature of the traffic points or squares (such as Alexanderplatz) implied that the buildings surrounding them could have a life of no more than 15 or, at most, 25 years. Modernity, as the eternally transitory, had been recognized with respect to aspects of the built structures of the modern metropolis. The plans of Wagner and others were not realized for the Alexanderplatz (nor incidentally for the Platz der Republik or the Potsdamerplatz – the future form of all of which have been once more the subject of the most heated debate in Berlin in the last decade) but for quite other reasons – notably Allied bombing raids on Berlin in the Second World War. The amortization of the buildings around the Alexanderplatz hardly survived Wagner's 15 year minimum.

The increasing political deadlocks in the last years of the Weimar Republic in Berlin and increasingly bitter internecine political struggles prompted Wagner to resign from the Social Democratic Party. Within a very short space of time he was dismissed from his position in 1933 to face uncertain years in Berlin and then exile first in Turkey (Istanbul) and subsequently in the United States. But one year before his dismissal, Wagner – almost in desperation – outlined another Utopia of the modern Berlin metropolis, namely its demise and dispersal into cities of 50,000 population in the countryside, not unlike other contemporary conceptions of satellite towns. In this respect, therefore, the presumed dissolution of the city, of which many Expressionists had dreamed and then committed to paper but never realized, might perhaps have come to fruition in the writings of one of the most formally rational city planners.

V

It should be apparent that the present volume consists of a series of explorations of a number of dimensions of the city in modernity. To varying degrees, attention is given to examining aspects of *space* and the metropolis. With the exception of the study of detection, all the other explorations largely focus upon dimensions of cityscapes of modernity in Berlin and Vienna. In other words, there is an implied shift in focus upon modernity eastwards. Even the discussion of the flâneur takes as its central orientation the writings of Walter Benjamin on the figure of the flâneur, who is usually located in Paris. Benjamin originally set out from Berlin with Franz Hessel to write two articles on the Parisian flâneur, a move which, for Benjamin, generated his unfinished Arcades Project. In this respect, we are reading a Berlin perspective on what was often claimed to be a Parisian figure.

The spatial explorations of modernity commence with the *spatial practices* of the flâneur, initially as outlined by Benjamin but also demonstrating their relevance for sociological investigations. At one level, the flâneur is located within Benjamin's meticulous exploration and excavation of the origins of modernity in nineteenth-century Paris. His multilayered reading of the city is one that gives attention to the seemingly most trivial traces, to the refuse, to the scraps left behind by a history written by victors. The texts and images upon which he draws are referencing material entities – spaces, representations and practices. They are textual and visual remains that document the spaces of nineteenth-century Paris and the origins of modernity. This should clarify the significance of Benjamin's statement to Kracauer that he is in the arcades, when in fact he is in another space – the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. As Bettine Menke has argued, our reading of Benjamin's Arcades Project is a reading of that project's textual spaces as well as the spaces of the modern metropolis. This is especially true of the memory spaces that Benjamin is redeeming:

The 'memory spaces' that are to be found in modernity in the cities are, however, spaces of texts, of allusions and intersections, of inscriptions, of the extension and transcription of texts. The memory space of Paris is... [staged] in Benjamin's reading of the 'capital of the nineteenth century'... [as] the quotation space of his *Arcades Project*.⁴³

For our purposes, what this implies is that any examination of the spatial practices of flânerie must also explore the textual and image spaces of the products of flânerie.

The exploration of the not unrelated activity of the detective also involves an examination of the spatial practices of detection. 'Walking the city' takes on a definite intention and goal. The testing of potential detectives in Pinkerton's Agency for their skills in 'shadowing' and 'roping' (drawing into conversation) is a test and training in specific social and spatial practices. The training in detection took place in metropolitan centres such as Chicago, New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco. By the First World War, Pinkerton's Agency was established in most major cities in the United States. Thus, although the activity of detection also clearly took place in rural areas, training for this spatial practice was undertaken in the city. Similarly, although the *representations* of detection were not confined to urban spaces, specific genre were associated more with the modern metropolis and its mysteries.

Walking the city as detective requires training the 'eye' for acute observation *and*, in the case of shadowing, recognition of appropriate spatial distance.⁴⁴ Gathering information through conversation, often as if the detective is someone else, requires a trained recognition of the dialectics of spatial proximity and secrecy. The transgressions of the boundaries of proximity and distance that are implied in detection practices are also present in the relationship between the public and private spheres of urban existence. The private eye is distinguished from the public police 'eye'. But the privacy implicit in the former's activities suggests a much greater transgression of the private sphere and, by virtue of a cultivated anonymity, a greater command of public space than is permitted the visible, public police force. This putative superior access to the (potentially open) spaces of the city is accentuated in literary representations of detection. Although the representation of the metropolis in detective fiction in its *noir* variants, and indeed in its earlier forms, has often been a powerful one, it has not been alone in providing compelling images of the city.

As Simmel observed, the metropolis can be represented in displays of itself in exhibitions. Prior to his most famous essay/lecture on the modern metropolis (1903), which itself had its origin in an exhibition of modern German cities in 1903, he had already explored, however briefly, the spaces of representation of the metropolis – in this case, Berlin – in his 1896 essay on the city's trade exhibition and in 1890 on art exhibitions in relation to the city. Taken together with his explicit, detailed examinations of significant dimensions of social space in 1903, we can see a developing focus upon spatial configurations of social life in general and the metropolis in particular. At the same time, we should recognize that the essay on the metropolis and mental life is itself not merely an exploration of our representations of the city in our mental life, as it were, but also a compelling representation of the metropolis. Despite its omissions and often limited treatment of specific dimensions of metropolitan existence,

the essay and other relevant pieces by Simmel on urban existence in turn had a significant impact upon literary and artistic representations of the metropolis. This is not intended to detract from the substantial analytical and interpretive force of Simmel's exploration of urban existence. Rather, it is to acknowledge that its reception in some cultural and artistic circles may well have been as a powerful representation of the modern metropolis.

Despite earlier affinities with Impressionism,⁴⁵ viewed as an extension of the realist tradition, Simmel's representation of the modern city is one that, in conjunction with later writings, could be drawn upon by strands of the German Expressionist movement. Within some strands of Expressionism that focused upon the city it was not the calculating exactness of metropolitan transactions that was compelling in Simmel's portrayal of the city, but rather the chaos of the bombardment of sense impressions and the emotional impact of the city's myriad encounters that were manifested in some Expressionist images. The regulated spaces of metropolitan circulation were transposed into imploding chaotic spaces that impinged forcefully upon the 'mental life' of its inhabitants. In turn, this spatial deregulation in Expressionism's representations was to be interpreted as potentially Utopian by one of Simmel's students, Ernst Bloch.

In contrast, what was perceived as the most modern European city, Berlin, came, for some, to be the embodiment of a spatial dystopia that, by virtue of its sheer quantification of everything within it, already symbolized the crass materialism endemic to American cities and 'Americanism'. In order for such an imaginary to come into its own, it often required a counter-instance, another urban space positively filled out. That urban space was Vienna, conceived as city of culture, a definite place in contrast to the anonymity of Berlin's spaces, an embodiment of culture in contrast to civilization and even, for some, a bulwark against Americanism. Of course, this third imaginary, America, was most often an imaginary representation of an unvisited and unresearched space.⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, therefore, projects to design and *produce* a modern metropolis often met with powerful opposition. The projects of architects and city planners to produce new urban spaces in and of modernity never commenced with a tabula rasa. Indeed, response to Otto Wagner's intention to produce a modern architecture for a modern metropolis – which implied the transformation of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna into a modern metropolis – reveals not merely the systematic resistance of Old Vienna to New Vienna but an attempt at a spatial demarcation of these two modes of valorization of the city into an inside (for the old) and an outside (for the new). The defence of the inner core from substantial modernist incursions, despite some transgressions, was largely successful. At the same time, the cultural imaginaries of old and new could also mask other valorizations of these

spaces, namely the significance of these spaces as urban capital. Culture and capital form and inform these spaces.

Almost four decades after the debate on New Vienna had commenced in 1890 the project for a New Berlin was advanced by the city's chief planner Martin Wagner. During the last years of the Weimar Republic, and despite the catastrophic collapse of the world economy and of the still most modern European city, the dynamic spaces of circulation – of commodities, traffic and individuals – were to be transformed at the heart of Berlin, most notably on the Alexanderplatz. At the same time, the dynamic mobility of modern life was to be given spatial form in the transformation of one of the seemingly least dynamic spaces, the house. The expanding, 'growing' house was displayed at the historical juncture when the economy was deeply in crisis. The problems faced by the inner city in this crisis led Wagner to conceive of the Utopian city as dissolved into smaller units (his 50,000 units) dispersed in the countryside. The spaces of the metropolis were to give way to the smaller urban units of satellite towns. The crisis of metropolitan space was dissolved into the rationalized spaces of *urbs in rures*.

1

The City Observed

The Flâneur in Social Theory

Flânerie is a kind of reading of the street, in which human faces, shop fronts, shop windows, café terraces, street cars, automobiles and trees become a wealth of equally valid letters of the alphabet that together result in words, sentences and pages of an ever-new book. In order to engage in flânerie, one must not have anything too definite in mind.

Franz Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin*

The city as a mnemotechnical aid for the solitary stroller calls up more than his childhood and youth, more than its own history. What it opens up is the immense drama of flânerie that we believed to have finally disappeared.

Walter Benjamin, 'The Return of the Flâneur'

In the article I wrote about the city I leaned rather heavily on the information I had acquired as a reporter regarding the city. . . . Sociology, after all, is concerned with problems in regard to which newspaper men inevitably get a good deal of first hand knowledge. Besides that, sociology deals with just those aspects of social life which ordinarily find their most obvious expression in the news and in historical and human documents generally. One might fairly say that a sociologist is merely a more accurate, responsible, and scientific reporter.

Robert E. Park 'Notes on the Origins of the Society for Social Research'

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated, translations from the German are my own.

Introduction

Epigraphs from: Siegfried Kracauer, 'Aus dem Fenster gesehen' (1931), *Schriften V.2. 1927-1931* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990), p. 399; Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, trans. Sophie Wilkins and Burton Pike (New York: Knopf, 1995), p. 708; Anon [Walter Rathenau], 'Die schönste Stadt der Welt', *Die Zukunft*, 26 (1899), p. 41.

- 1 On the concept of modernity and some of its historical variants, see my *Fragments of Modernity: Social Theories of Modernity in the Works of Georg Simmel, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986); also my 'Modernità', *Enciclopedia della Scienza Sociale* 5 (Rome: Istituto Enciclopedia Italiano, 1996), pp. 754-61. For a brief overview of social theories of modernity in relation to the city, see Harold Chorney, *City of Dreams* (Toronto: Nelson, 1990).
- 2 Georg Simmel, 'Philosophie der Landschaft' (1910), in Michael Landmann (ed.), *Brücke und Tür* (Stuttgart: Köhler, 1957), pp. 141-52.
- 3 Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903), in D. Frisby and M. Featherstone (eds), *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings* (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 174-85.
- 4 Anon [Walter Rathenau], 'Die schönste Stadt der Welt', *Die Zukunft*, 26 (1899), pp. 36-48.
- 5 Ibid., p. 41.
- 6 Ibid., pp. 41-2.
- 7 See Franz Hessel, *Ein Flâneur in Berlin* (Berlin: Arsenal, 1984).

- 8 See Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999).
- 9 See Siegfried Kracauer, *Strassen in Berlin und anderswo* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964).
- 10 For a brief overview of the city as text, see my 'The Metropolis as Text: Otto Wagner and Vienna's "Second Renaissance"', *Renaissance and Modern Studies* (Nottingham), 40 (1998), pp. 1-16; also in Neil Leach (ed.), *Hieroglyphics of the City* (London: Spon, 2001).
- 11 W. Benjamin, 'Review of Hessel's *Heimliches Berlin*', *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927-1934* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999), p. 69.
- 12 W. Benjamin, 'The Rigorous Study of Art', *Selected Writings, Volume 2*, p. 670. Translation amended.
- 13 Max Weber, 'Antikritisches Schlusswort zum "Geist des Kapitalismus"' (1910), *Die protestantische Ethik II. Kritiken und Antikritiken*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Hamburg: Siebenstern, 1972), pp. 283-345.
- 14 Ibid., p. 322. My emphasis.
- 15 G. Simmel, 'The Adventure', in Frisby and Featherstone (eds), *Simmel on Culture*, pp. 221-32.
- 16 See Simmel, 'The Metropolis', and ch. 3 below.
- 17 On Kracauer's interest in fortuitous urban constellations, see Inka Mülder, *Siegfried Kracauer* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1985); Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity*, ch. 3.
- 18 See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 91-110.
- 19 G. Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (1900), 2nd enlarged edn (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 255.
- 20 Ibid., p. 256.
- 21 Ibid., p. 257.
- 22 Ibid., p. 484.
- 23 Ibid., p. 444.
- 24 These figures are now available in the English translation of Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*. For a discussion of some of these figures, see Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990).
- 25 For the fullest version of Simmel's essay on fashion, see 'The Philosophy of Fashion', in Frisby and Featherstone, *Simmel on Culture*, pp. 187-206.
- 26 See Priscilla Ferguson, 'The Flâneur On and Off the Streets of Paris', in Keith Tester (ed.), *The Flâneur* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 22-42.
- 27 W. Benjamin, 'The Return of the Flâneur', in his *Selected Writings, Volume 2*, pp. 262-7.
- 28 There is a huge literature on the emergence of the detective novel. Amongst the many historical and literary studies, see Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
- 29 For biographies of Allan Pinkerton, see James D. Horan, *The Pinkertons* (New York: Crown, 1967); James Mackay, *Allan Pinkerton: The Eye Who Never Slept* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1996).

- 30 See G. Simmel, 'The Berlin Trade Exhibition', in Frisby and Featherstone, *Simmel on Culture*, pp. 255–8.
- 31 For an earlier treatment of Simmel's metropolis, see my *Simmel and Since* (London: Routledge, 1992), ch. 6.
- 32 For an overview of some of the literature on European and American urban life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820–1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).
- 33 Otto Wagner, *Modern Architecture* (1896), trans. Harry F. Malgrave (Santa Monica: Getty, 1988).
- 34 See Camillo Sitte, *City Planning According to Artistic Principles*, trans. George Collins and Christina Collins (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).
- 35 Camillo Sitte, 'Die neue Stadterweiterung', *Neues Wiener Tagblatt*, 27 Sept. 1891, p. 1.
- 36 For the political context of Viennese developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Knopf, 1980), chs. 2, 3. More recently, see the detailed historical study by John W. Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis in Vienna: Christian Socialism in Power, 1897–1918* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995).
- 37 For an English translation, see O. Wagner, 'The Development of the Great City', *Architectural Record*, 31 (1912), pp. 485–500.
- 38 On Expressionist Utopias in general, see Timothy O. Benson et al., *Expressionist Utopias* (Los Angeles: County Museum of Art, 1993; new expanded edn, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). On Bruno Taut, see Iain Boyd Whyte, *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- 39 For a recent collection of essays on Bloch's work, see J. O. Daniel and T. Moylan (eds), *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch* (London: Verso, 1997).
- 40 Hiller, Behne and Wagner had studied with Simmel and, as was apparent in some of his correspondence, Mendelsohn was impressed by his philosophy.
- 41 There is no detailed study of Wagner's work in English. For two German sources, see Ludovica Scarpa, *Martin Wagner und Berlin* (Braunschweig/Wiesbaden: Vieweg, 1986); *Martin Wagner 1885–1957* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1986).
- 42 On Hilberseimer's vision of the modern city, see K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).
- 43 Bettine Menke, 'Das Nach-Leben im Zitat. Benjamins Gedächtnis der Texte', in R. Lachmann (ed.), *Gedächtniskunst* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 74–110, esp. p. 100.
- 44 On the general properties of viewing the city, see Richard Sennett, *The Conscience of the Eye* (New York: Norton, 1990).
- 45 See my *Sociological Impressionism: A Reassessment of Georg Simmel's Social Theory*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1991).
- 46 See Georg Kamphausen, *Die Generation von 1890 und die Erfindung Amerikas*, Habilitationsschrift, Bayreuth University, 2000.

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Epigraphs from: Franz Hessel, *Spazieren in Berlin* (Vienna/Leipzig: Verlag Dr Hans Epstein, 1929); reprinted as *Ein Flâneur in Berlin* (Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1984), p. 145; Walter Benjamin, 'The Return of the Flâneur' (Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1984), p. 145; Walter Benjamin, 'The Return of the Flâneur' (1930), *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927–1934*, trans. Rodney Livingstone et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999), pp. 262–3; Robert E. Park, 'Notes on the Origins of the Society for Social Research' (1939), cited in Rolf Lindner, *The Reportage of Urban Culture: Robert Park and the Chicago School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 100.

- 1 The case for Benjamin as sociologist or, at least, as someone with a major contribution to make to sociology, and certainly to the sociology of modernity has seldom been made. For a brief early attempt, see C. Neubaur, 'Walter Benjamin: Soziologie. Anmerkungen über eine Philosophie ohne Begriffe', *Freibeuter*, 15 (1983), pp. 143–9. On Benjamin in the context of a social theory of modernity, see my *Fragments of Modernity: Social Theories of Modernity in the Works of Georg Simmel, Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), ch. 4. On Benjamin's Arcades Project, the most detailed investigation is S. Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).
- 2 W. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften IV* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 172. For two reviews of Kracauer, see now: Benjamin, 'Review of Kracauer's *Die Angestellten*', *Selected Writings, Volume 2: 1927–1934* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 355–7, and 'An Outsider Makes His Mark', *ibid.*, pp. 305–11.
- 3 W. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften III* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), p. 226.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 On Benjamin and the Bibliothèque Nationale, see P. Missac, 'Walter Benjamin à la Bibliothèque Nationale', *Revue de la Bibliothèque Nationale* 10 (1983), pp. 30–43.
- 6 See the conference collection, H. Wismann (ed.), *Walter Benjamin et Paris* (Paris: Cerf, 1986).
- 7 W. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften V: Das Passagen-Werk* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982), pp. 134–5.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 1000.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 1009.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 1023.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 525.
- 12 W. Benjamin, 'Surrealism', in *One-Way Street and Other Writings* (London: New Left Books, 1979), pp. 225–39, esp. p. 237.
- 13 W. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1973).