Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository

8-23-2021 12:30 PM

Towards A Poetics of Representation in 'London, Ontario': or, Local and Universal Passages

Alex McIntosh, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Gardiner, Michael, *The University of Western Ontario*
: Blankenship, Janelle, *The University of Western Ontario*
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Theory and Criticism
© Alex McIntosh 2021

Follow this and additional works at: https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd

Part of the Place and Environment Commons

Recommended Citation

Abstract

This thesis engages a 'poetics of representation' of socio-culturally signifying uses of material(ized) elements within 'London', Ontario. My model of representational meaning combines Hall's (1997) representational diagramming, and Hjelmslev's glossematics, via Deleuze and Guattari (1987). I claim a theoretical primacy of *inter*subjectivity, using Lefebvre's (1991) idea of the production of space; de Certeau's idea of 'Concept-city'/'operational city' is applied to social-scientific research in 'London'. I treat local artist Jack Chambers's work (especially his film *The Hart of London*) as an 'everyday' representational poetics, linking the local and universal, while illustrating how one's representational poetics may develop, *viz*., experience. I articulate this analysis, *viz*., theories of found footage films, to interrogate the materiality of the subject-matter of Chambers's work. My analysis shifts within this local scope to ultimately problematize the colonial-capitalist model of space and locality (especially placenames) through a decolonizing analysis of the land-language nexus of Deshkan Ziibing (a.k.a., the 'Thames River').

Keywords: Poetics, representation, space/place, aesthetics, decolonization, 'London' (Ontario)

Summary for lay audience

This thesis engages a 'poetics of representation': a survey of socio-culturally signifying uses of material elements and modes of engagement. Its fundamental scope is 'London' as a locality but plumbs its depth of immanence specifically to highlight and bring into play spatial-cultural connections, along three lines.

In Chapter One, I consider representational poetics within 'London'. The productive model of representational meaning I have constructed is a combination of Stuart Hall's (1997) diagramming of representation, and Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) treatment of Hjelmslev's glossematics. I critically compare Bachelard's and Merleau-Ponty's respective theories of space, to highlight a basic theoretical primacy of *inter*subjectivity. This primacy is bolstered by Lefebvre's (1991) idea of trialectical accretion of space (physical, mental, social becomes lived-conceived-perceived). Finally, de Certeau's idea of 'Concept-city'/'operational city' is applied to social-scientific research conducted in London, to highlight the tensions and distances between the public image(s) of the city, and the city as a space of lived experience.

In Chapter Two, I treat local artist Jack Chambers's work as an 'everyday' poetics of representation, which links the local and universal and acutely illustrates how an individual's representational poetics may develop in relation to local and other experiences. Hence, I examine his 1970 avant-garde film *The Hart of London*, which I treat as an example of representational poetics bridging the temporal-local and universal-eternal. I articulate this analysis in terms of theories of found footage films, as an opening through which to interrogate the materiality of the subject-matter of Chambers's work.

Finally, in Chapter Three, the analysis shifts within this local scope to ultimately problematize the colonial-capitalist model of space and locality (especially placenames) through a decolonizing analysis of the land-language nexus of Deshkan Ziibing (a.k.a., the 'Thames River'). The river's Anishinaabemowin name is placed in the context of Algonquian languages (for example, the grammatical gender of nominal animacy), to furnish an attempt at a more robustly (if cursorily) decolonizing historical survey of the river.

Dedication

For Clara

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Michael Gardiner, and second reader, Janelle Blankenship, for their generous contribution of time, effort, and insight into my development and composing of this thesis.

Special thanks to the staff of the Art Gallery of Ontario, who so graciously provided me with indispensable research materials in the midst of a pandemic. This project would not have been possible without their assistance.

As well, my gratitude to Jake, Joel, and Clara, for so patiently allowing me to verbally work out the ideas I was mulling over at any given time during the last couple of years.

Table of Contents

Towards a poetics of representation for 'London, Ontario': or local and universal passages

Introduction The relationship of poetics and representation: a materialist survey of uses and meanings

There is, then, another subject beneath me, for whom a world exists before I am there, and who marks out my place in the world.

- Maurice Merleau-Ponty (2012: 265)

I.i   Space and subjectivity

In this chapter, I initiate a phenomenological investigation of London, Ontario as a

sociohistorical space that is a multiplicity of material productions (and hence also circulations

and consumptions) on the one hand, and a dialectic of representations and subjectivities, on

the other (with both these aspects as much in mutual presupposition as exclusion). Specifically,

in this chapter, I investigate this city as a *space* which is lived, experienced, and contributed to

by (what I shall tentatively call) the 'subject', and which also lives mentally in that subject. But

conversely, I want to break space down, so as to break *through* it, towards what is spatially-

structured as the 'subject', as towards the residual *place* that the marginal person-behind-the-

subject makes and reserves for themselves *within* space – yet, for all that, without their either

being 'authentic' or needing strictly definite spatiotemporal coordinates. Different scales of

plural times weave together *in place*, and place-quanta emerge. The structuring and play of

experience in this space, which is constitutively processual and contingently patterned, occurs

via the modes of use and reception of representable (or potentially meaningfully-signifying)

elements of manipulable, culturally(-historically) mediated forms of content and expression. But

it must be noted that *use* of these forms is an immediate function with a direct, if sometimes

diffuse, correspondence in perception, while their *meaning* is apperceived only through

intermediation, reflection, expression; uses have only contingent meanings, whereas meanings always have their use, if only at an abstract remove. The regulated relations among these representable elements dominates the relation of space to the subject (at least under the normal operating conditions of hegemony). Proper meaning (both that which is considered relatively appropriate or correct, and that which is singular and belongs to a given hegemony, or which is *proper* to it) designates and dominates use. Thus, within the two categories of use and meaning, we may consider different elements, variously discrete and continuous, as they relate to the social space by which they are contained and expressed, such as: physical commodities (and their processes of production, circulation, consumption); signs and symbols; habituses, as well as *hexis*,[1] or kinesics;[2] (in)visible forms of capital (economic, human, social, cultural, etc.); art forms and art objects ('high' and 'low'); discourses, locutions, habiliments, etc. – all as encountered and used by people, insofar as communication and meaning may be (though is not necessarily) discerned in these elements. It is obvious, then, that the *place* of a given person's use(s) of such elements, *of* and/or *in* space, may or may not be proper in its extrinsic relation to that space, while always being intrinsically proper to themselves (and yet the inherent property of the personal *place* may in turn be contingently disrupted, distorted,

---

[1] See Bourdieu (2010: 120) on the relation of symbolic structuring to the structuring of social space, of which he says that the two fundamental dimensions are the volume and composition of the capital belonging to the groups of the given space. See also Bourdieu (2000: 78) on *hexis* as a concept which 'speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic' – I follow Bourdieu in addressing this dynamic of mutual structuration, but depart from his thought where it posits an 'essential overdetermination, [which, for example] speak[s] inseparably and simultaneously of [the subject's] class […] and of his (or her) body.' While I might concede the existence of similar overdeterminations, I do not believe they are absolutely (only relatively) essential. Though he affirms in *Distinction* and elsewhere that he has not designed his model to be mechanistic and objectivistic, his argument of the social structuring of the species of capital, which places a premium on Kantian aesthetic perspectives ('disinterested pleasure' – the claimed objectivity of refined tastes), itself inevitably gives the upper hand to determinations over probabilities.

[2] This might be considered a more fluid and contingent conceptualization of the phenomena to which Bourdieu's concept of *hexis* pertains.

drawn off elsewhere, etc.). I will explore this space/place dynamic as a concretely, locally situated phenomenon, the mobile locus of which is situated in people(/subjects) and their experience.

Qua phenomenology, my investigation therefore follows Merleau-Ponty, as my attempt is that of a 'a study of the *appearance* of being to consciousness', which seeks to take up the situatedness of people in a 'transcendental *field*'[3] (comprised by a 'partial view and a limited power' among plural subjects) (2012: 62). Moreover, I try to integrate an understanding of this field, with its concretely local sociohistorical and cultural objects, especially insofar as the (inter)subjective field – both spatial and temporal, material and ideal – contains, structures, and conditions a person's capacities (representational, or otherwise) to construct, communicate, and receive uses and meanings through potentially-signifying elements. Here, the reader *must not* take meaning and representation as encompassing or being the same thing as *communication*. If I am concerned with *meaning* or *representation*, it is insofar as they constitute a common horizon of a singular intersubjectivity, which is crucially influential but not totally determinative. I likewise draw a distinction between '*a* person' and '*the* subject', as between some-body (a real affective person) and the same body as a primarily interpellated, and hence much more definite, subject (of law, economy, philosophy, etc.).[4]

This dialectic of lived space and representation may also therefore entail spontaneous leakages in its systematic, systematizing channels: there are elements that bring certain

---

[3] All emphases are in the original unless otherwise indicated.

[4] While bearing a loose resemblance to each other, *phenomenological subjectivity* is not *equivalent to* the Althusserian *interpellated subject*. While there is necessarily a degree of synonymy between the two, and indeed some conceptual overlap (as in the epigraph at the start of this chapter), I try to draw a contextual distinction, wherever possible.

excesses and absences to bear on these channels and make points or stretches of their laminar

flows become turbulent, creating unexpected points of friction (for example, public

demonstrations – the affective flows of the protest crowd spontaneously manage themselves,

while also occluding the structured commercial flow of traffic); there are other elements that

elude the flows on their margins (the walls of an alley, or even the outer walls of a bridge,

become illicit canvases for graffiti), and still others which intimate a will to turn a subordinated

afferent flow against itself, into an insubordinate efferent flow (sidewalks are often designed

and designated, at least from a civic-bureaucratic perspective, as liminal spaces meant for

passage and little else, transit stops excepted – though, as stretches of spaces, they are *de facto*

appropriated for any number of activities and for various intervals of time).[5] But I want to begin

to characterize the urban channels (or structuring) of spatial energies, as such, before I address

the dynamics of their real flows. Therefore, I will qualitatively operationalize this dialectical

dynamic in what I call a *poetics of representation*, which is demonstrated in the *use* of both

everyday and formal(ized) elements of a socio-culturally signifying modality of aesthetics and

praxis. It is a mutually constitutive intersubjectivity which synthesizes new meanings and uses,

isomorphic to hegemonic space, and thereby fostering an irreducible remainder (this

intersubjectivity is illustratable at the very least in its subjective reception, or responses to

---

[5] On sidewalks as spaces of economic survival, particularly *viz.*, push-cart vendors and other forms of street vendors (which are variously favoured by or run afoul of the shifting concerns of bureaucratic-civic regimes), see Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht (2009: 127-155). Though their discussion pertains mostly to major US cities throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, similar issues may be considered to obtain in Canadian cities (as also belonging to a 'developed' North American economy), albeit arguably at lesser levels of prominence and prevalence. Likewise, a consideration of their discussion of sidewalk as shelter may be integrated here, insofar as they observe that, in the US, by the 1980s 'Homelessness was redefined as a problem that was characterized in part by unwelcome public-space interactions' (id.: 160); as in Canada, this problem is often posed as incompatible with other sidewalk activities, but more in terms of pedestrians' discomfort than any danger to them – and 'the crux of the problem' is precisely *what* is considered harmful *to whom*, that is, *whether* the harm pertains to the person who lacks a home, *or* to the person who experiences discomfort at witnessing suffering (id.: 157-187; 175).

signals which are relatively or passingly appropriate, but most clearly evinced in active and creative participation *per se*; it must be emphasized that reception is by no means underestimated here as merely passive). For example, we may think simply of the variations among and between pedestrians and motorists at a busy intersection of any moderate-to-large city – there are those who bustle quickly and purposively (urban professionals whose dress bespeaks their stride); others who shuffle leisurely along; motorists who might patiently give way with a courteous wave, or who might instead honk impetuously; one pedestrian (a real individual) might dart across the street before the advance signal ends, etc. Here, there is both multiplicity and dialectic: there may be (will be) 'disorderly' elements on the fringes, but these will typically be (*should* be, from the hegemonic point-of-view) hemmed in again and stitched back into the proper lineaments of the urban fabric by a synthesizing movement. The history and political economy (the mode of production) of both the local and global always fundamentally condition the concrete appearances of elements in this poetic modality, though rarely in a neatly symmetrical manner. What is common in the relations among and between all its elements, is that any poetic element (whether material-practical, or factive-creative) is always constructed by a person or people ('subjects') along certain formal lines (compatible with others to a greater or lesser extent), and subsequently received by other such persons, along continuous and overlapping criteria of activity and passivity (acceptance and rejection).

I.ii.   Poetics and representation

It must firstly be asked, therefore, what exactly is poetics? In the case of either space or representation, a proper answer may be given, only if it is borne in mind that this is a primarily nominal question, necessitated specifically by the conveniences that predicative language

demands for its mode of understanding (*cf.* thus Nietzsche 2017: First Essay, §13)[6] – whereas

this poetics really is doing (not just being), and so it must be remembered that its name and

concept is always only a shadow of its object. We may deem it a praxis of everyday life: a

theory of it (an integrative, yet revisable, account) would pertain to creative forms which are

inseparable from their practiced contents and expressible practices.[7] Such a conception of the

term has two straightforward derivations. On the one hand, it may be considered a 'label for

any formal or informal survey of the structures, devices, and norms that enable a discourse,

genre, or cultural system to produce particular effects' (Reed, 2016: 262) (among which surveys

Bachelard's poetics of space is cited first, and which will be addressed in section 1.1.2.). A

poetics of representation, in its (relatively) informal capacity as a praxis of everyday life (as a

making-do of uses and meanings at-hand), is an ongoing survey of elements and effects that

serve as the field of potentialities for a person's consciousness. There is only a little here of

what is conventionally considered 'poetry', and even less of Aristotle: a notion of the particular

effects of discourses and cultural systems is what is most salient here.[8] On the other hand,

therefore, a grounding is sought in etymology (itself a kind of rear-facing poetics): retracing the

evolution of the term *poetics*, its origins are found in the ancient Greek language, not as a noun

but as a verb, 'ποεῖν, ποιεῖν[:] to make, create, produce, to compose, write' (OED Online); the

---

[6] On the cognitive and perceptual force of predicative language, *cf.* also Medin and Goldstone (1995); for an overview of the extensive epistemological impact of predicative thought, in the context of the historical debates between realism and nominalism, *cf.* Loux (2006), especially chapters one and two.

[7] Here, with the use of the concepts 'content' and 'expression', I apply Hjelmslev's glossematics, as treated by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). I clarify my application of glossematics to representation in the following paragraphs and in Fig. 1.

[8] Again, *viz.*, a notion of *effects*, a concession is made to an imposing epistemological convenience, namely, causal thought – but this is because of its sociohistorical force over perception through so much of modernity: which means that it is much more than a curiosity and must be addressed as such. Nonetheless, I do not claim to discover causal flows or mechanisms, but rather, am concerned here especially with effects, *as such*.

Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms derives *poiesis* '(fr. the Gr. verb *poieō*, infinitive *poiein*, "to

make form")' and notes that 'The verb, not the noun, was prominent in usage first' (Gourgouris,

2016: 273).[9] Broadly, then, as much as poetics will be taken to mean a theoretical elaboration,

it cannot be taken as having its own proper existence apart from its practice. Insofar as this

project seeks to understand this poetics, it therefore is likewise an assessment of social

potentials to catalyze practical revolutionary tasks such as Debord wrote on, namely, 'to

multiply poetic subjects and objects' and 'to organize games of poetic objects among these

poetic subjects' (1957; in Knabb, 1995: 25).[10] To adopt the provocative phrase of the

Situationist International (SI), this account aims to be a theoretical contribution to a

'"phenomeno-praxis"' (1964; in Knabb, 1995: 138) which is social and continuously in process.

Secondly, the general meaning of 'representation' must also be operationalized in the

context of this investigation into poetics, as a basis to discern its specific uses in its

instantiations. Hall (1997: 15) characterizes representation at its most fundamental level as

'connect[ing] meaning and language to culture.' This link may be typified as being to varying

degrees *reflective* (mimetic), *intentional* (agentic or idiomatic), or *constructionist* ('meaning [is]

constructed in and through language') (ibid.): the focus I derive from Hall is particularly

concerned with the last of these three. Obviously, representations are basically things or

objects (namely, meanings) which are *expressed*, in one form or another (in words, icons, signs,

---

[9] *Cf.* also thus, de Certeau (1984), 205 n. 2: 'From the Greek *poiein* "to create, invent, generate".'
[10] 'Clearly the principal domain we are going to replace and *fulfill* is poetry, which burned itself out by taking its position at the vanguard of our time and has now completely disappeared' (no author, 1958, in Knabb, 1995: 44). Of course, a basic degree of difference must be acknowledged between my use of the word *poetics* and the discussion by the Situationist International, *et al.*, of 'poetic subjects and objects'– but, by that same token, they may share the same breath because they both share an overarching general concern with the contingent specificities and potentialities of action and perspective.

gestures, pictures, etc.). In representation, objects may either be described or depicted, or be symbolized by other objects through substitution (id.: 16): one object may stand for another. But, as stated, representation broadly links meaning and culture to language: thus, 'As the linguists are fond of saying, "Dogs bark. But the concept of 'dog' cannot bark or bite"' (ibid.). Hall argues that there are two systems of representation which link meaning to culture: the shared conceptual maps of *mental representations*[11] and the language that facilitates the construction, expression, and exchange of representational expressions. The former is a 'chain of equivalences between things […] and […] our conceptual maps', while the latter is a 'set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs'; Hall puts it most succinctly in writing that 'The relation between "things", concepts and signs lies at the heart of the *production* of meaning in language' (id.: 17-19; emphasis mine) (see fig. 1). For our purposes here, therefore, we will take Hall's cue in addressing culture 'in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems, and the *codes which govern the relationships of translation between them*' (id.: 21); such translations will be treated as functions which syntactically produce semantic meanings.[12] It is understood that people 'unconsciously internalize the codes which allow them to express certain concepts and ideas through their systems of representation […] and to interpret ideas which are communicated to them using the same system' (id.: 22). I therefore take representational systems, for example the language system, as both inherited and manipulable, *via* the productive processes that constitute and circulate them, as both bedrock and horizon.

---

[11] '…different ways of organizing, clustering, arranging, and classifying concepts, and of establishing complex relations between them' (Hall, 1997: 17).

[12] I am thankful to Regna Darnell for pointing out the pertinence of syntax to these translational relationships or functions in representation.

Production

Concepts

Sign

Icon

Meaning
(in
language)

Symbol

Index

Production
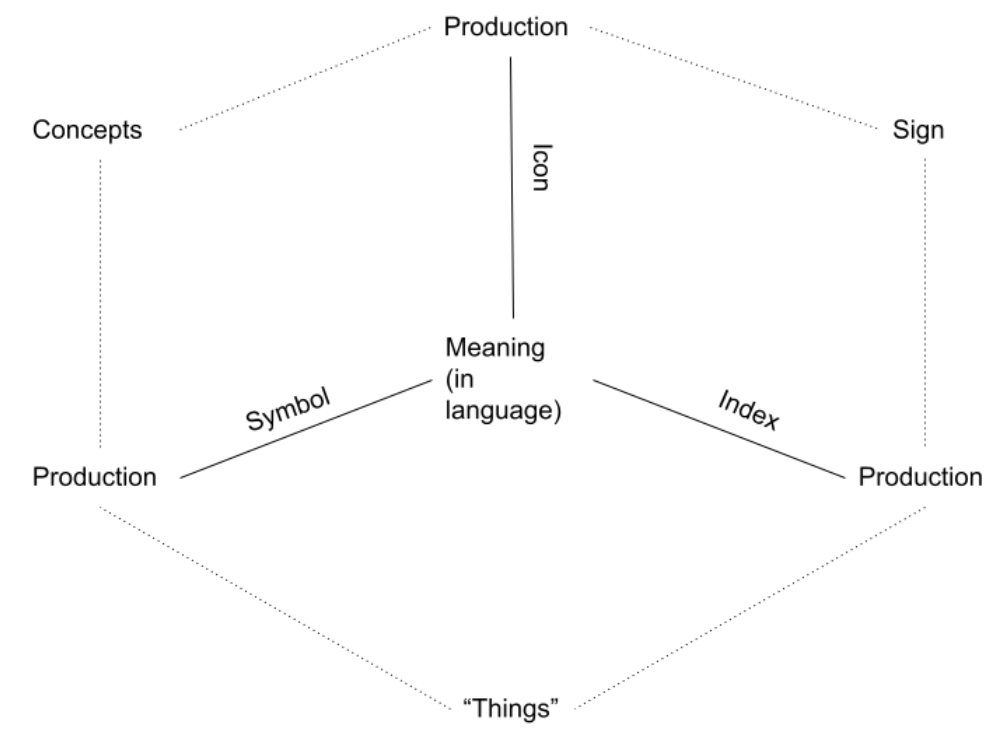
Production

"Things"

Fig. 1: a visualization of Hall's model of representational meaning – dashed lines denote contingent (or potential) productive relations among signs, concepts, and 'things', while solid lines denote the definition and/or determination of the contents and expressions of homeostatic meaning-in-language, as the outcome of the productive processes of their actualized relations; the dynamics of the whole is what entails (or is entailed by) representation *in toto*. The scope of representation may vary, and some lines may be mobilized, while others are ignored, or the entirety may be mobilized (though the whole is disposed to extend, with time); similarly, the scale of representation may be contracted or expanded, depending on the fields under consideration. The lines along which the productive processes of representation occur are all bidirectional, owing to their translational function.

Therefore, I say that meaning is formally dependent on use, but not *vice versa*: along all the lines, in all directions, the representational relations among and between concepts, signs, and 'things' must engage a productive (*expressive*) apparatus of (quasi-)settled meanings-in-language. Representation and meaning(-in-language) act together like a skein to bind the local and the world in a definite understanding which comprises a whole milieu of concepts, signs, and 'things' ('common' sense, the sense common to a milieu: *anyone can see it means this…*).[13]

---

[13] A terminological issue must be noted here. Namely, that my use of the term *language* is perfectly ambiguous *under a Saussurean framework*. This is true, and is precisely why I integrate Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of

Hence, in their discussion of regimes of signs, Deleuze and Guattari's points harmonize with the foregoigng: 'The diagram knows only traits and cutting edges that are still elements of content insofar as they are material ['things', inextricable from the concepts and/or signs which recognize them] and of expression insofar as they are functional [*production* as the functional expression of relations among the facets of contents], but which draw one another along, form relays, and meld in a shared deterritorialization: signs-particles' (1987: 141). Representational meaning-in-language is a dynamic and mobile system which primarily defines (and is secondarily defined by) 'things'. Hence also why I say language is homeostatic yet only quasi-settled: it maintains homeostasis specifically in the face of, and by incorporating and regulating, the differences and exteriorities it generates and encounters. One more term from Deleuze and Guattari will suffice here to explain the representational relation of content and expression to meaning: the *double articulation* which appears on the strata (the respective thirds of Fig. 1) to 'formalize traits of expression and traits of content' (ibid.). If we consider the relations of a 'thing' to meaning in language, we see that at one and the same time a 'thing' *qua* concept *produces* a symbol (a complex concatenation of 'things'-as-concepts – say, a physicist's or chemist's concepts of heat), while the same 'thing' *qua* sign *produces* an index (an indicator of quality and quantity, by direct contiguity to other phenomena: *I see the embers are red hot*; a thermometer's mercury; or even a photograph, insofar as it is both indexical and verbalizable);

---

glossematics, most especially because the idea of the 'double articulation' (within a four-celled matrix of form/substance and content/expression) examines given 'strata' and (as they write) 'formalizes traits of expression and traits of content, each in its own right, turning matters into physically or semiotically formed substances and functions into forms of expression and content' (1987: 142-143). Moreover, my use of Deleuze and Guattari's glossematics is most fundamentally driven by the perspective of Marx and Engels, in *The German Ideology*, that "l]anguage is as old as consciousness" and that "[l]anguage is practical consciousness" (in DeFazio, 2011); DeFazio herself contemporizes this argument by positing language as 'the dialectical product of material life' (id.: 63). My thanks to Regna Darnell for highlighting the potential indistinction in my use of the term *language*.

conversely to the double articulation, concept-sign relations inevitably produce an icon (a red octagon always means STOP, even without any letters). In Hall's terms, this double articulation situates a 'chain of equivalences' between "things" and 'conceptual maps', in relation to a linguistic 'set of correspondences' between 'conceptual maps' and sign-sets. This schematizing of representation and glossematics will be the conceptual point of departure for encountered elements.

I.iii.   The representation of poetics within the local

I will apply a study of this poetics of representation to elucidate how, within a given local space (here, 'London' – defined loosely and variously in geographic, civic, and historical terms), representational elements in the present are conversant with each other and those of episodic and epochal histories (stories) of past space, with the crucial point being that this relationship of past and present in discourse and praxis (enunciation and action) is contingent and contestable, *viz.* its future. As these elements are largely inextricable from their sociopolitical infusions, each of them emerges and culminates *dialectically* (diachronically) for subjects' further experience and manipulation, out of culturally-encoded processes, which co-occur in the representational space of the production-consumption nexus.[14] My argument is concerned with the emergence of plural and dynamic local-historical senses, insofar as they and their experiencing subjects are buffeted by and actively respond to local (but also global) flows of political economy (albeit in this local space, global capitalism serves as the fundamental – if not always the most immediate or apparent – axis for the production, circulation, and consumption of goods, services and wealth). The specific kernel of dialectical method carried

---

[14] On this nexus and its robustly dialectical character, see especially de Certeau, 1984: xii-xvii

from Marx into this project, is the notion of the 'unity of […] contradictions and […] their struggle' – which, while immanent to the structural level (Mandel, 1976, in Marx, 1990: 18), Marx held as no less immanent in the 'commodity', which he called the 'economic cell-form' (Marx, 1867 in Marx, 1990: 90). I posit the city as spatial locus for a heterogeneous amalgam of experiential activity and passivity over and through time, as a microcosm of a certain range of contradictions specific to global capitalism. The experiential sense of the historical-local as a representational space (a space with plural senses of identity, *viz.,* past, present, and future) is inextricably tied to (but not wholly determined by) the production-consumption nexus – and thus also its elements, and its times, spaces, and rhythms. Lefebvre argues that the processes and representations dynamically reflect, refract and project their 'materials (stone, wood, bone, leather, etc.) and *matériel* (tools, arms, language, instructions, and agendas)' (1991: 71) as a future onto their abiding present, thus articulating the contingency and contestability of space, and its time and meaning. Hence, 'the pre-existence of space [of a given kind] conditions the subject's presence, action and discourse, his competence and performance; yet the subject's presence, action and discourse, at the same time as they presuppose the space, also negate it'; the signs of manifold sociopolitical struggles may be more-or-less readily legible in space for generations (id.: 57), although space is technocratically and bureaucratically managed, and ideologically rendered, so as to disguise its existence as a palimpsest of history and conflict.

I.iv.   Itinerary

To clarify the dialectical nature of the processes of poetics that simultaneously support, instantiate, and deviate from these local-historical representations, I will thus open a horizon of

such local representations of London: first, by conceiving a localized framework of experiences, wherein experiences are both structured and spontaneous in the context of the rhythmic times and spaces of local city-life; and secondly, by way of a close examination of Jack Chambers's 1970 avant-garde film *The Hart of London*, in the context of his oeuvre, because this film stands as a local aesthetic exchange between the modalities of the experience of historical appearances and realities, between the strategies and tactics which de Certeau respectively attributed to State and capital on the one hand, and everyday marginality on the other (1984: 34-39). Finally, in Chapter 3, I will problematize the socio-natural status of the river ('River Thames'/Deshkan Ziibing) at the city's centre. I will investigate how such representational reflections and refractions of material and *matériel* are constructed, and further inflected and refined, on an ongoing and processual basis, as they persist into the future through reception and further subsequent reflection – a process enacting the potential of critical legacies. In the long-term, this results in changes in the perspective on the given aesthetic(ized) object (whether it be, e.g., a street, a street-name, or film footage), which can be empirically or critically treated, but which nonetheless cannot ever be exhaustively so reduced. Perspectives which are at once changing and changed are definitionally dynamic, or put differently, amenable to further change. Methodologically, this means that 'The presence and circulation of a representation' is not taken as the sole object of interest here; rather, the key problem is 'what it [the representation] is for its user [….] its manipulation by users who are not its makers', which de Certeau (1984: xiii) highlighted as so crucial in the 'tactical' existence of subjectivity.

Reception and reflection are themselves poetic, or creative, processes which may be grasped only fleetingly, that is, only so long as we maintain a certain grasp of them, which we must eventually give up, whether once and for all or only to later resume it. As de Certeau observed, the cataloguing and archetyping analyses of myths conducted by Lévi-Strauss and Propp emphasize the significant extent to which 'everyday *historicity*' can be lived unconsciously (id.: 20). More than this, though, he argues the extent to which reading is an act of 'poaching' (id.: 165-176), despite the usual theoretical correlation of the 'binomial set production-consumption' with 'the binomial set writing-reading' (id.: 168). Over against this correlation, he asserts 'one cannot maintain the division separating the readable text […] from the act of reading'; rather, it is the case that

> the text has a meaning only through its readers; it changes along with them; it is ordered in accord with codes of perception that it does not control. It becomes a text only in its relation to the exteriority of its reader, by an interplay of implications and ruses between two sorts of "expectation" in combination: the expectation that organizes a *readable* space (a literality) and one that organizes procedures necessary for the *actualization* of the work (a reading) (id.: 170-171).

So, we must elaborate the contours of the constitutive processes of everyday historicity, but without expecting to have ever done so exhaustively, because to approach an understanding of either the processes of material production and consumption, or their signified meanings and historicity, demands some sense of their confluence, which is indeed in a state of ceaseless flux. Both a theory of the poetics of representation, and its exemplification in a locally situated aesthetics (most particularly, in Chambers's *Hart of London* and his perceptual realism), as also its application in a critical reflection on the socio-natural status of Deshkan Ziibing, will therefore prove a positive contribution to a reflexively critical understanding of (and active relation to) urban spaces *qua* representational spaces within the system of global capitalism.

Chapter 1: The plenitude of poetics

Such a poetics – an ongoing (re)circulation and (re)creation of representations (historical and/or historically-conditioned) – and its material undergirding (which it may variously reinforce on the one hand and disrupt on the other) must be given a reading that can draw from it both descriptive observations and (self-)critical conclusions on the dynamic emergence of experiences within the concrete spatiotemporal totality of (here, the city's) ideality and materiality. The 'public' aspect of representational poetics seems to overwhelmingly be for individuals (subjects) to receive – that is, the self-consciousness of the culture (with its produced and consumable symbology) subsumes its subjects in constituting them, and the subject's *for-itself* is demoted to an *in-itself* under hegemonic imperatives and influences. As Lefebvre observed, 'It [hegemony] is exercised over society as a whole', and concomitantly 'The ruling class seeks to maintain its hegemony by all available means' (1991: 10). Moreover, he writes, 'The representation of the natural falsifies situations. Something passes as *natural* [commonsensical] precisely when it conforms perfectly and without apparent effort to accepted models…' (Lefebvre, 2013: 47): the logocentric skein appropriates all 'things' to itself. The result of the activity of *dressage* is the breaking-in of a subject and their reconstitution as appropriately rhythmed: 'It bases itself on repetition' and unites rhythms like 'organs in a body' (id.: 48-9). Lefebvre goes so far as to argue that 'The urban fabric can be described by using the concept of *ecosystem*', and that this fabric is support to '*urban society*' – together, among their elements, emerges 'a rationality communicated by the city' (1996: 72). What I want to examine is the modality of its operational life, with its communicated rationality, as it is situated

between the ecosystem of the material urban fabric and the urban culture which has emerged from it – life on the diachronically dynamic streets of the 'Forest City'.

The pre-eminence of the axis of global capitalism still leaves an irreducible remainder, which implies that *not all* means are available to hegemony, as hegemony definitionally (if not always systematically) neglects virtually all margins of experience, and yet without necessarily seeking to extrude them, because its margins also help to manifest and define its own outlines. It seems distinctly possible therefore that some elements of a representational poetics of local and regional spheres, whether authoritatively and canonically humanist or simply the ephemera of daily life (considered in their aesthetic aspects), may problematize such total uniformity in the systematically hegemonic reproduction of culture (or ultimately and most fundamentally, of capital). That is, both capitalism and its culture *tend* to operate in a largely systematic way, but persons whose experiential processes *actually inhabit* the plenum of material and cultural systems can, and do, exceed and critique such systems through these same processes, at once *despite* and *because of* living in their shadow. These experiential processes may be characterized by contents that emerge from, yet are not reducible to, the social forms and practices which capitalism naturalizes. Merleau-Ponty offers an inversely complementary insight, when he puts it that 'Matter is "pregnant" with its form, which is to say in the final analysis every perception takes place within a certain horizon and ultimately in the "world"' (Merleau-Ponty, 1964c: 12). If the irreducible remainder of content and expression which is also beyond their forms (praxis beyond its theoretical or conventional accounts and models) seems at all irresolvable to the "pregnancy" of matter with its form, at least one of 'Kant's discoveries' bears recalling, namely, that 'all our experience of the world is throughout a

tissue of concepts which lead to irreducible contradictions'; and yet also that such

contradictions are so irreducibly irresolvable as to be 'the very condition of consciousness' (id.:

19). It is with such a regard that the transcendental field of lived experience (Merleau-Ponty,

2012: lxx) is taken up, especially in light of its facticity (the permanent, inexhaustibly qualifiable

and differentiable thesis: *there is a world*). In the context of this intersubjective facticity,

everyday practices (such as the 'use of language') are justifiably viewed as 'based on a

problematics of enunciation' (de Certeau, 1984: 33) – the basis of these enunciative practices is

not the content of the object (its *what*) but rather the modality of it use (its *how*). The poetics

of representation comprises a procesually dynamic modality of (inter)subjective experience and

(inter)action. Thus (over against any solipsistic idealism) I posit, as point of departure, a lived

and co-experienced irreducibility, which emerges simultaneously within and beyond its space

and time of existence and intersubjectivity, and marginally posits *new horizons* for space and

subjectivity, and *new rhythms of life* within old horizons: I posit irreducibility as the possible

causal grounds of radically novel and open-ended configurations of representational space.

Layers of space

The analysis of lived experience in space therefore obviously also demands a properly

methodological integration of a concept of time, insofar as a dialectical analysis entails a

diachronic perspective. The temporal is inextricably related to perception, as demonstrated by

Lefebvre in the way that 'Sensations and perceptions […] contain repetitive figures, *rhythms* of

social space both escape and contain plural logics' (2013: 20). In the intersubjectivity of

everyday life, we try to heuristically conceal the immensely and constantly active complexity of

social space from ourselves: hence the factive horizon always necessitates pragmatic bounds.

And of course, social space has its proper 'Social time', which 'disclose[s] [...] possibilities', according to the criteria of representations (meaningful uses/useful meanings), and according to 'the historian who puts them into perspective' (id.: 24). The effects of representations and social rhythms thus 'inscribe themselves on reality' (ibid.). People experience spaces, but under a social matrix of space and time which determines their belonging in it *qua* subjects, and which is navigated by them in terms of its representational criteria. Such social criteria, for example the literality of certain signs, determine the reading of the time of social space in terms of the possibilities and conditions of its present, or its immediate future ('Back in fifteen minutes'; 'Please limit your stay to twenty minutes'; red, yellow, green lights, walk/don't walk signals; electronic bus schedule signs; 'Washroom out of order', '...for paying customers only'; 'Video surveillance is in effect'; 'Path not maintained in winter', etc.). But other, less immediately apparent, criteria may complement (or conflict) with those of the immediate present, for example, by the superimposition of a set of historical criteria with which to investigate and read the space. By virtue of its antiquity, the Rome of Freud's discussion is particularly illustrative of how historical criteria may hypothetically overlay a space. He makes a famous analogy between mental life and the history of a city (his choice of the Eternal City is apt), and writes that 'in mental life, nothing [!] that has once taken shape can be lost.' Without speaking so definitively as the foregoing, it may be argued that, correspondingly, in the city, 'much of the old is still there, but buried under modern buildings. This is how the past survives in historic places like Rome' (2002: 7-8). The application of these observations hinges on

> the fantastic assumption that Rome is not a place where people live, but a psychical entity with a similarly long, rich past in which nothing that ever took shape has passed away, and which all previous phases of development exist beside the most recent. [...] And the observer would perhaps need only to shift his gaze or his position in order to see the one or the other (id.: 8-9).

This hypothetical-analogical view of the city and psychical life – of its present being always discernibly (if not undeniably) underlined by its past – will inflect the whole of this investigation. In this study, London will be considered at least as much a psychical entity (that is, something encountered and accreted by people in a pre-psychological manner) as a city.

1.1 Bachelard and Merleau-Ponty: space(s) of (inter)subjectivity.

A poetics of representation that emerges in the local, and the complexity of whose contents and expressions becomes irreducible in relation to their form – as representations neither admitting of static nor definite conclusions, nor yet denying the ineffability of the multiplicities of lived actuality – taps the depth of a poetics of space and sets it in an inexhaustible spin so long as we examine it, not unlike 'the spiraled being who […] will never reach his centre' (Bachelard, 1958: 230). Moreover, the poetics of representation can and does dilate the scope of the poetics of space, insofar as subjective space necessarily finds a degree of integration through and within intersubjective space. Bachelard's poetics of space – ripe as it is with a philosophy of the experience of architecture, described in encounters with the rooms of houses and their articles, which find the form of their imitation in nature, among nests and shells and suchlike – restricts the scope of 'intimate immensity', and particularly, its 'product[:] consciousness of enlargement' to the reverie of a solitary, if not solipsistic, daydreamer (id.: 202). In the context of urban life (or even just intersubjective life, abstractly considered) it will not suffice to solely reflect on 'inner immensity' and that of 'the forest' (id.: 203) – though some sense of such inner immensities is doubtless necessary in order to uncover a broader theory of a poetics of representation which takes in even the margins, and so Bachelard is certainly indispensable. To be sure, the poetics of space is indissolubly tied to that of representation,

insofar as any understanding of the dialectic of inside and outside must necessarily invoke a phenomenology of the image that seeks its psychological being at a (psychical) point prior to any rational or empirical reduction (id.: 235). The poetics of representation moves towards the heights of its irreducibility only by firstly taking root in the subjective inseparability of intersubjectively-conditioned forms of perception and the poetics of space. Therefore, because the subjective relations of perceptions to space are so conditioned by the social in all but the most exceptional circumstances, we must not get caught up in pursuing any images of a 'pure and free imagination', as we are not in any position even to define a notion of a pure and free imagination, nor, *a fortiori*, the kind of subjectivity to which it would belong – which still does not discount the possibility of 'absolute poetics' to which Bachelard alludes (id.: 240), provided that contents and expressions may ever exceed their formal accounts, or that form may see contents and expression so thoroughly mixed as to lose their distinction. But we must bear in mind how an express focus on 'absolute space' necessarily throws up an obstacle for the description (much more so, for a critical understanding) of any other spaces (Lefebvre, 1991: 121), precisely because it claims to hold relativity in abeyance. Because any poetics owes its being at least as much to intersubjective practice as it does to theory (or any lights of 'pure' subjectivity), it must make, or have made, an account of the practical (practiced) and social relativity of perspective. Though the originary character of dreams-spaces may seem absolute, it is always already shot through with the 'debris of the macrocosm' (Merleau-Ponty, 2012: 306f). Turning more on the notion of space and its relationships with (here, narrative) representations, de Certeau likewise writes that 'Stories about places are makeshift things.

They are composed with the world's debris' (id.: 107). Subjectivity is a microcosm in that it imports wholesale the signifi(c)ant 'things' of the world.

As a proposition concerning experience, I agree with Merleau-Ponty that 'Transcendental subjectivity is a revealed subjectivity, meaning that it is revealed to itself and to others, and as such transcendental subjectivity is an intersubjectivity' (2012: 378). Any subjectivity that goes beyond the vacuum of its-self is (to this extent) an intersubjectivity. An intersubjectivity likewise reveals itself to itself and others in a spatiotemporal mode. Thus, intersubjective spaces are also recursively *transcendent* insofar as the intersubjective (shared) poetics of representation which motivates them formally aims at its own future actualization. That is, its aim is to abolish its present through the lived and shared actualization of self-consciousnesses of another degree and kind – thereby establishing new and more or less common senses of the past as it exists within the present.[15] No perspective on historical time ever effectively arrogates any last word for itself, and so the historical time of retrospection and prospection (always tethered to the present) is a constant site of conflict ('now hidden, now open'). Recent controversy in Canada around the continued place of racist colonial tributes in local spaces, in the form of statues – for example, the Macdonald monument in Montreal, a statue of Sir John A. Macdonald in Baden, Ontario, and a statue of Egerton Ryerson in Toronto[16] – reflects this.[17] The transcendental condition then – whether subjectively or intersubjectively

---

[15] Cf. thus Merleau-Ponty, 2014: 173: '"Transcendence" is the name we shall give to this movement by which existence takes up for itself and transforms a *de facto* situation.'

[16] On the Montreal statue, see Oduro, 30 August 2020. On the Baden statue, see KitchenerToday staff, 28 July 2020; Township of Wilmot, 2020; CBC News, 3rd Sept 2020. On the Ryerson statue, see CBC News, 6 June 2021b.

[17] While it must be noted, the monument was toppled in response to the police murder of George Floyd, in the US, London did hold its own demonstrations on 6 June 2020, with some 10,000 participants in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. See CBC News, 6 June 2021a.

spatialized – has a literal relation to the subjective condition of 'ecstasy', of being 'outside of

oneself'.[18] Transcendence can spatiotemporally posit something new against the old order

(which does not preclude it as a means to reactionary ends). On the other hand, is the

immanence of what is really before us at a given time.

1.2 The Concept-city and the operational city: spaces and places of poetics (physical, mental, social)

Indeed, although any subject is perforce interpellated to some extent or another by the

political economic flows of the space they inhabit,[19] nonetheless, in its complex and emergently

dialectical unfolding, the primacy of culturally filtered perception[20] for the working, thinking,

leisured, or marginalized subjects who inhabit the city-space is constant. This primacy

therefore becomes the basis of a 'bottom-up' (ground level) theoretical orientation to the study

of urban life and its space. The experience of this primacy takes root and flourishes in the

consciousness of lived representational space and time. *Per* Lefebvre (1991), 'space' is a site of

material productions, which capitalist relations and ideology bring into being as such, by

developing and intercalating its physical space ('nature, the Cosmos') into mental space ('logical

and formal abstractions'), social space, and ultimately into representational space. 'London' –

as a materially and socially-produced space – will be examined along Lefebvre's three

contiguous levels of spatial analysis for continuous 'logico-epistemological space': that is, the

---

[18] On the etymological rendering of 'ecstasy', *cf.* Merleau-Ponty, 2014: 512, n.3 (translator's note).

[19] Althusser would say, the Ideological State Apparatuses. While I differ in this term, I essentially concur with certain of his theses around interpellation, to wit, 1) 'Ideology is a "representation" of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence' (2018: 1300); and 2) that it is nonetheless also true that 'Ideology has a material existence', which are the theses that subtend the idea of the ideological interpellation of the subject (see 1300-1310f.)

[20] Of course, any application of a notion of the primacy of perception must acknowledge its indebtedness to Merleau-Ponty's essay of the same name (1964c).

city will be examined as a physical space (a geological and ecological one); as a mental space (of abstract, abstracting geographies); and a social space (of capitalist and settler-colonial production processes, and their modes of social reproduction) (id.: 11-12). But owing to the continuous superimposition of these spaces upon each other, London will be examined most comprehensively as a representational space: in this latter space, 'lived, perceived, and conceived realms [are] interconnected, so that the "subject" […] may move from one to another without confusion'; moreover, representational space 'has an affective kernel or centre […]. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time' (id.: 40, 42ff.). Conceptual representations of space (secular or religious) subtend representational space as a cohesive perceptual-conceptual framework (see Fig. 2).

Perceived ⎤   ⎡ Representational space
Conceived ⎬ · ⎨ Representations of space
Lived   ⎦   ⎣ Spatial practice
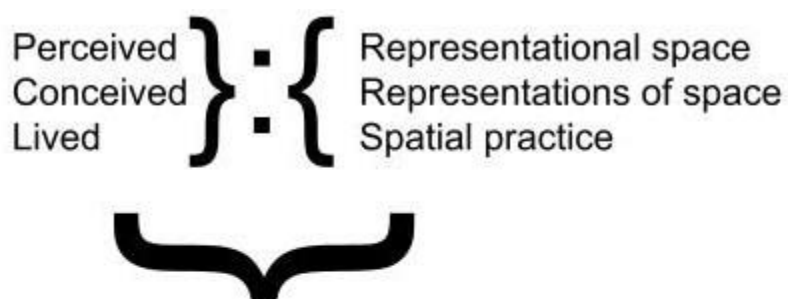
3. Representational space

2b. Social space

2a. Mental space

1. Physical space

Fig. 2: spaces emerge in an ordinal pattern. 1. entails everything described by physics. 2a. entails the foundation of consciousness and self-awareness and is engaged in an inextricable dialectic with 2b. Their synthesis produces 3), which itself fans out into a multiplicity. In it, *perception* and *representational space* become inter-imbricated. Similarly, the formal *conception* of space (its 'logico-epistemological component') corresponds to a *representation of space* (mathematical, divine, etc.). Finally, representational space which is *lived* corresponds to a *spatial practice*.

Further to the extending and problematizing of Bachelard's poetics of space, Lefebvre (1991: 3-7) – in theorizing an apparatus that systematically produces space (and which tends to alienate the inhabitants of space from generative creativity in it) – observes the rootedness of the very distinction of mental and social space in their ongoing practical elision: mental space *per se* is merely an artefact of inherited 'theoretical practice', and any non-ideological aspects are only apparent. That is, to the extent mental and social space are distinct from each other, this distinction itself derives from an indistinction which is overwhelmingly constituted by the social field. Hence the mental space of theoretical practice – emerging *ab initio* from, and thence drawn back into, varieties of social space – culminates, *via* its interpellated intersubjectivity, in the (apparent) historical inertia of space's triadic existence for-itself (independent of any one of its subjects), hypostatized and reified as perceived-conceived-lived (the facets of this for-itself correspond respectively to representational space, representations of space, and spatial practice) (id.: 38-9). In its representational capacities, mental space necessarily tends to be dominated by social space: the forms and appearances of social space, *viz.* mental space, take on logical force, if not rigour, and are perceived and conceived as *natural* (or better, *ordained by* nature) in their configuration. Marx discussed the mystification of capital in similar terms, concluding that 'The transposition of the social productivity of labour into the material attributes of capital is so firmly entrenched in people's minds that the advantages of machinery, the use of science, invention, etc., are *necessarily* conceived in this *alienated* form, so that all these things are deemed to be *attributes of capital*' (1990: 1058). Likewise, Simmel related space to the division of labour and mental life in a continuous tripartite figure: 'The requirement of specific psychological functions for individual historical

spatial formations reflects the fact that space in general is only an activity of mind' (1997: 138).

Further qualifying this configuration of space and mental life in a division of labour, he wrote

elsewhere of urban space that 'Punctuality, calculability, exactness are forced upon life by the

complexity and extension of metropolitan existence' and that 'These traits must also colour the

contents of life and favour the exclusion of […] impulses which aim at determining the mode of

life from within' (1950: 413). Among other things, time is money, and space may be a (set of)

physical dimension(s) in a nonteleological natural world, but insofar as space is inseparable

from time, space must therefore be traversed by capital's uneven divisions of social production

and wealth, which correspondingly demands a complex rhythmification of these divisions (the

general interlockings of which must be properly explored elsewhere).

But there is a contingent *place* inside of space, tacitly reserved for anyone who

presently inhabits the liminal existence situated between the poles which de Certeau (1984: 1-

2) designates 'everyman' [sic] and 'nobody' – between these poles are pedestrians. The so-

called 'ordinary' person (neither an expert nor a philosopher, at least professionally) '*becomes*

the narrator when it is he who defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous)

space of its development'; in these places, culture is the '*remainder*' of science (id.: 5-6). The

topoi of rhetorical commonplaces (common yet polyvocal fields opened by a shared yet

modifiable rhetoric) intersect with the *modal* uses and appropriations of this common ('public')

space, which remains for relatively free – indeed, critical – wandering and manipulation. This

pedestrian modality can give space a turn, as one turns a phrase (it can make space idiomatic,

in a manner proper only to its own present *place*). But engaging this modality within the urban

topoi – that is, within the fleeting plural places of the city, and onto fragments of its total space

– is a relatively solitary and quiet (if not inaudible) act, because its place is in the spatial (and/or

temporal) margins afforded by the steel and glass, the bricks and poured concrete of buildings

which 'compose a gigantic rhetoric of excess in both expenditure and production' (id.: 91).

In de Certeau's formulation, the walkers of the city are the opposite of its voyeurs, who

stand aloft and aloof in such buildings and hold the city in their gaze. Thus, we may consider on

one hand, the totalizing gaze of a businessperson at the top of One London Place (a stunted

skyscraper, but a vertical concentration and hub of capital and financial flows, all the same);

and on the other, the pedestrian's diminished field of vision, yet also their actual mobility

(whereas our businessperson has only the virtual mobility of their gaze over the cityscape, from

one actual standpoint). We have then, different relations to space between the two – which is

to say, differences in the experience of social and mental life in space. There is a chiasmus of

urban experience, wherein the totalizing gaze which holds the city in fictional (factive)

transparency has fewer restrictions on its virtual mobility, as compared with the opacity of the

popular city for the pedestrian who partakes of actual mobility (albeit a structured and

regulated mobility). I must quote De Certeau at length to clarify how the pedestrian relates to

the city as an operational space:

> The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below' […] They walk – an elementary form of this
> experience of the city; they are walkers, […] whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text'
> they write without being able to read it. […] The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized
> *poems* [emphasis mine] in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. […] The
> networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor
> spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to
> representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other (id.: 93).

In a sense, the operational city is gradually accumulated as the psychosocial residue of

multifarious lived experiences in representational space, wherein pedestrians are marked and

leave their marks, and whereby they sign and countersign each other's communications and

meanings. In a manner conversely complementary to Lefebvre's idea of the material 'urban

fabric' (which he compared to an ecosystem, and which he considered the basis or substrate of

the further development of urban society), a unique rationality emerges from the interaction of

the urban fabric and its society – an almost unconscious *operationality* of the city, for urban

somnambulists (e.g., one who says 'I know this city like the back of my hand'; or the office

worker who only 'awakens' after finishing their drive home).[21] This operationality derives from

representational space without itself signifying anything; yet the signing and countersigning of

pedestrians' operationalities entails a poetics that is of (even *beyond*) representation as such.

1.2.1. Illustrative fragments of a Concept-city's origins

This contrasts with the strategic idealization of the city, in the form of the Concept-city,

which stands above and paradoxically subsumes, in practical and formal terms, both the

material urban fabric and the operationality of the urban society it supports (while tacitly

accepting the fabric as its necessary substrate). With this contrast of the Concept-city as over

against its urban fabric and society, I draw especially on Certeau's characterization of the

Concept-city as 'atopia-utopia of optical knowledge' (1984: 93). The ideologizing of '"The city"',

he wrote, 'like a proper name, thus provides a way of conceiving and constructing space on the

basis of a finite number of stable, isolatable, and interconnected properties' (id.: 94). 'London's

name reflects the ambitious impetus of the family of grand imperial projects spearheaded by

John Graves Simcoe (Lieutenant Governor of Canada from 1791 to 1796) – he had only seen the

land on maps before he determined manifold purposes for it. These origins are illustrative of

---

[21] The image of 'urban somnambulists' is derived from Guy Maddin's 2007 mockumentary *My Winnipeg*, which partly inspired this project, as a reflection on the intersection of urban experience and urban mythologizing.

the *uses* to which a Concept-city may be oriented, while finding its enunciative footing in the proper tongue of imperial *representations*.[22] Indeed, Tausky (1993: 9) writes that Simcoe, not yet having set foot on the land, already had a sense of 'the ideal site for the capital of the new province: an inland point on the broad southwestern peninsula, where two rivers merged before travelling west towards Detroit.' In examining Simcoe's correspondence of 12 August 1791 to Henry Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (whose family name today is the name of a central downtown thoroughfare in London),[23] Mealing (57) found Simcoe had explicated in direct terms the analogical model he had in mind: 'A chain of military *coloniae* in the Ontario peninsula was to act as they had for the Romans on the Rhine; it was to ensure the security and allegiance and to mould the character of a frontier.' Similarly, Tausky (9) relates how the 'Thames' was 'already so named in deference to its imminent honour' by Simcoe's scouting expedition; one might may equally well say it was in deference to the paucity of the colonial imagination.

But perhaps the land's most auspiciously fateful day was the 2nd of March 1793, when Major Littlehales (acting as Simcoe's secretary) recorded their first real survey of the land at 'the forks of the river'; in addition to his oft-recounted phrasing that 'He [Simcoe] judged it to be a situation eminently calculated for the metropolis of all Canada', the strategic reading of the space of the site is manifest throughout Littlehale's description:

> Among many other essentials, it possesses the following advantages: command of territory,–internal situation,–central position,–facility of the water communication up and down the Thames into Lakes St.

---

[22] As Mealing (1958: 50) observed '[Simcoe] came to Upper Canada full of projects for the manufacture of hats, the development of iron mines, and the founding of a university; for the curing of pork – it took three successive boards of survey to save his troops from that experiment – and for shipbuilding; for the use of East India rockets, the growing of indigo, and a commercial sturgeon fishery.'

[23] Like the statues of John A. MacDonald and Egerton Ryerson, monuments and tributes to Dundas have come under scrutiny, particularly in relation to his having delayed the abolition of English participation in the slave trade for many years in the eighteenth century (City of Edinburgh Council, 2021).

Claire, Erie, Huron, and Superior,–navigable for boats to near its source, and for small crafts probably to the Moravian settlement–to the northward by a small portage to the waters flowing into Lake Huron–to the south-east by a carrying place into Lake Ontario and the River St. Lawrence; the soil luxuriantly fertile, –the land rich, and capable of being easily cleared, and soon put into a state of agriculture,–a pinery upon an adjacent high knoll, and other timber on the heights, well calculated for the erection of public buildings,–a climate not inferior to any part of Canada (1889: 12).

For all its conceived and perceived suitability, though, Tausky observes how the site 'remained virtually empty until 1826' (9). Unlike the representational space of the operational city, which is inconceivable without lived experience, that of the Concept-city requires only strategic perceptions and conceptions – put another way, the pure Concept-city requires only representational space and representations of space, without any formal need of actual spatial practice; but to the extent it is actualized, it must vampirically appropriate precisely what it lacks, namely, the spatial practice of subjects' lived experiences. As far as London, it is as though Simcoe's projection of the Concept-city that would become London hovered expectantly (spectrally) over the land, at the same time as it lay dormant as his brainchild, with the names his expedition projected over the landscape intimating the strategic intentions that were hoped for the future of the site's space. But the singularity and contingency of the proper name abides, and 'London' is at once its own London and yet no London at all (a would-be London – somehow always other to what it meant and means itself to be, yet maintaining the uniqueness of its imitation nonetheless), with its tenuous identity irreducibly situated at the forks of its pseudo-Thames, hitherto known as Askunessippi[24] (locus of an ambivalent conjunction of exclusive and inclusive disjunctions – either/or collides with and collapses into both/and: either London is its own city or a pale imitation of another; no, surely it is both one and the other!). All at once, it is not what it is and is what it is not.

---

[24] French fur traders of the seventeenth century less affectionately dubbed the river in question as 'La Tranchée' ('The Trench') (Celebrate the Thames 1999: 4)

1.2.2. Fragments of poetics: walking in the contemporary operational city

Evidently, as regards this earliest phase of its existence, London as Simcoe's Concept-city (metropolis of all Canada) is almost a celestial fiction in relation to the distinctly humbler Concept-city it has ultimately became (a famously indistinct consumer city, often treated as an ideal test market).[25] Its present specificities and contingencies deviate significantly from this original Concept-city – this is because the particular Concept-city, as representation, is historically dynamic, and so this reflection on the early stages of 'London' merely serves to illustrate the singularity of the relations of the Concept-city, its proper name, and conceived strategic interests. While the proper name of 'London' has remained constant, its existence as a Concept-city and the strategic interests of its representational space have been dynamic in relation to the city's society, its material urban fabric, and its operationality. It is true, as de Certeau (1984: 95) argued, that, in the contemporary period, 'The Concept-city is decaying', but the above reflection pertained to the *origins* of London as a Concept-city, and so a reflection on its contemporary status as a Concept-city (as the 'Forest City'), and its relation to the operational city, must be addressed as such. But in any case, the mutations of London as Concept-city in the interval between *then* and *now*, assure us of its contingency and dynamism.

As far as the contemporary operational city is concerned, however, we must distinguish phenomena themselves from their seeming origins and their effects. Social-scientific data is a great boon for concrete insight into the character of the operational city and its phenomena at a given time (of course, what is true of its phenomena at a given time may not hold for earlier

---

[25] The London Economic Development Corporation boasts on its website: 'As a nationally recognized test market city, London is an ideal place for companies to develop new products and services prior to nationwide launch. TD Canada Trust's "Johnny Cash" machines, RBC's debit card system, and Canada Life's Freedom 55 Financial concept were all tested here' (accessed at https://www.ledc.com/professional-services, December 2020).

or later times – a social-scientific slice of life is but a slice of space and time). How are we to address the pedestrian (which pedestrian?)? Certeau (1984: 97-98) captures the relations of the pedestrian's mode of movement and its formal structuring in a linguistic analogy: 'The act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to the language or to the statements uttered […] Walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it "speaks".' To begin to understand the patterned yet practically infinite variety of pedestrian enunciations, we must directly observe and talk to the inhabitants of the operational city, especially insofar as these inhabitants and their practices are made largely invisible by the marginalizing conditions they face. Bearing in mind the formulation by which de Certeau links pedestrianism with literality, we may initiate a critical reading of *passages* of lived experiences (which are no less *experiences* of passages).

Like the liminality wherein pedestrians are poised between 'everyman' and 'nobody', the sidewalk as the locus on which they are situated is liminal in that it is a place designed to be moved through – as well, it is a limit that distinguishes varieties of private space (storefronts, homes, etc.) from different layers of public space (such as the roadway): *qua* place, it is mostly a transient non-place – a place specifically by which to get someplace else, and along which different kinds of mobility and activity are regulated. Lingering is generally only permissible in the context of the circulation and consumption of money and goods. More than half a century ago, Jacobs (1961) wrote of sidewalks as "the main public places of the city" and "its most vital organs" (in Loukaitou-Sideris and Ehrenfeucht, 2009: 3). If we take this as true, then we must acknowledge how, over the intervening period, the contested character of such public spaces has meant their health, as urban organs, has been subject to various compromises in different

areas. Urban space entails a kind of interminable shifting of differentiations and divisions – both on an everyday basis and over periods of years: hence, 'the way that a space functions for a public is evaluated comparatively with other public spaces', and from these evaluations emerge 'complexity […] because multiple interests of various groups overlap on the same narrow stretches of sidewalk pavement.' Therefore, the development of this space is also the development of its control and regulation (id.: 7, 9-10).

Social-scientific researchers and social justice advocates in London have used qualitative and inductive methods of inquiry to understand the contexts, agents, and practices of the operational city, its space, and the different ways it is tactically navigated by different pedestrians. For example, recent research conducted in London (Orchard, Vale, Macphail, Wender, and Oiamo: 2016) has nuanced the understanding of the relationship of space and women in sex work, by using social mapping and interview data to derive insight on the spatial practices of sex workers outside of their working lives. The authors note that this is a topic relatively unaddressed by research which focused more exclusively on the work itself, while neglecting factors like intersecting identities, and familial and social roles; hence, the present research addresses 'how […] participants' gendered identities as women, alongside their identities as sex workers, structure their social practices, subjectivity, and capacity to resist the socio-spatial and legal regimes that exert considerable control over their lives' (id.: 1574). The qualitative approach to data collection in this study (and similar others) facilitates a more fine-grained understanding of how people themselves understand their spatial practices (operationalities) in relation to their multiple senses of identity – thus we can begin to

understand their lived experiences of representational space, especially insofar as they perceive and conceive of factors that help and/or hinder their spatial agency in the operational city.

The study area focused especially on the neighbourhood unofficially designated 'East of Adelaide' (or EOA) – as a contextual aside on this particular space *qua* representational space, it is noteworthy that this same geographic area corresponds with much of what is officially referred to as the Old East Village (or OEV) (particularly following the establishment of the Business Improvement Area for the Old East Village). These two acronyms – EOA and OEV: unofficial and official, longstanding and novel, the operational city and an introjection of the Concept-city upon it – effectively capture the spatial overlap and nominal-material tensions between the Concept-city and the operational city. At this point, and in this case, it no longer seems a mere analogy to understand the process of gentrification as segments of the Concept-city synergizing to *overwrite* the space and places of the operational city – this is what literally occurs. And if space as a palimpsest of class struggle no longer serves in this instance merely as a metaphor, but *also and at the same time* as a literal description of such struggle (written and legible in urban space), it is precisely because, among all the particularized, localized *topoi* – or common-places – of class struggle, one such *topos* occurs here, tacit but transparent, and precisely at the level of the letter: OEV or EOA? – it *spells out* the name and nature of the struggle in a single breath. And if this interpretation seems to put too much weight on the nominal aspect of the matter, the same problem is simultaneously articulable in more concrete terms: the growing pressure of what commentators regularly call an 'affordable housing crisis' in London (to say nothing of other Canadian cities) is underscored by the gentrification in East London that marginalizes people to the point of homelessness – while housing conditions leave

much to be desired, rent only ever goes up.[26] Moreover, in a period characterized by a

'historically low vacancy rate' in London, the average rental market vacancy for units at or

below the average market rent was less than the market average of 2% in 2018, while those

above average market rent also had above average vacancy rates (CMHA, 2018). That is, among

London renters, those who most need housing face the steepest obstacles.

Still, the research participants know the EOA area in clear operational terms, as both

'one of the main street-based sex work strolls' and as a 'highly policed area' (Orchard et. al.:

1576). The researchers' analysis of the social mapping data implemented layers in a geographic

information system (GIS) database, each of which 'contained geocoded location data

corresponding to the questions asked during the mapping portion of the interviews', in order to

illustrate 'how structural, social, and individual level factors intersect in the women's lives to

produce experiences of marginalization as well as the spatialized strategies they employed to

resist and negotiate these punitive forces' (id.: 1577-1579). As one respondent bluntly but

trenchantly said, in discussing avoiding the police: '"You have to be smart"' (id.: 1582). The

women's wherewithal in apprehending and tactically reading space is crucial for the possibility

of their spatial practices; conversely, this is because spatial strategies impede and marginalize

(when they do not criminalize) their practices. While de Certeau tells us that pedestrians

participate in writing out the urban text, he also tells us that this text is fragmented in its

experience and mostly invisible and illegible to its writers, whose consciousnesses it largely

eludes (at least at the strategic level, wherein pedestrians abstractly figure as manageable

flows). The strategic abstractions of the Concept-city continue as such, because, as Loukaitou-

---

[26] On the affordable housing crisis in London in general, and East London in particular (along with housing conditions), see Dubinski 2019.

Sideris and Ehrenfeucht argue, increasingly 'the idea of the city as an unfolding play where anything can happen has been replaced by the provision of safe and controlled spaces for strolling where consumption is an assumed payment for participation' (2009: 47). The privatization of public space into a consumer space already fragments and alienates the legibility of space (makes of it a fetishistic space) – wholesale alienation among the strategies of privatized consumer space, then, closes one off in a squared, second-order alienation (an alienation even from this primary alienation itself).[27] Otherwise, the experience of public space is restricted to inscribing public space's tactical margins, and to correlatively knowing how to 'be smart' in getting around.

Many of the women feel some combination of pushed and pulled to the EOA neighbourhood ('Living in rooms or apartments assigned to them by social housing agencies is common among our participants, and they are often located in the E o A Neighbourhood [sic] due to the cheap rent and abundance of rental units': id., 1579).[28] Nonetheless, they lead a liminal existence between EOA and the downtown (and especially south downtown) area, and certain other areas where the health and social services which they access are located: the authors delineate and describe a 'discernible spatial pattern' of activity, wherein locations of relevant services are key focal points (id.: 1579-1580). But this spatial pattern is restricted:

---

[27] That this experience of the local will resonate also in any number of cities across the globe perhaps points to a third *cubed* order of alienation, immanent to *global* space.

[28] Though we have seen how the rent has without doubt become less cheap in the years intervening since this study – still, it must be acknowledged that insofar as this trend of rising rates of rent is observable throughout the city, rates are indeed relatively lower in the EOA neighbourhood than in the rest of the city. But by the same token, this suggests those most vulnerable to the general trend of rent increases are geographically concentrated in these areas.

transport is scarce for respondents, as the cost of bus fare is 'prohibitive' (id: 1580).[29] One

observation of the researchers demonstrates a spatial articulation of subjectivity and

experience across respondents: 'The spaces related to violence are the only ones the women

exclusively associated with sex work' (ibid.). The respondents' answers offer more detail on this

matter, by conveying that areas to avoid (pockets of EOA and Hamilton Road) are more densely

clustered than spaces associated with violence (the broader neighbourhoods) – they cite risks

such as being triggered by drug abuse, or police surveillance and arrest, as reasons they try to

steer clear of the area (id.: 1581). Clearly the women's spatial practices and their broader

agency are fundamentally related to their lived experiences of London, as reflected in the

representational space of perceptions and conceptions which they assemble over time. Their

lived experience in the space of the operational city, concentrated as it is mostly between

downtown, south downtown, and EOA – whether this experience pertains to transportation,

housing, access to social services, or policing and surveillance – deeply problematizes any

smooth or glossy sense of London as a Concept-city. The tactical existence of their 'nomadic

subjectivity' (Braidotti, 2011, in Orchard, *et al.*) inversely reflects the Concept-city's strategies of

production, which seek not just to produce ceaseless flows of production and consumption

(constant, yet ever articulable and re-articulable), but also flows of marginalization and

immiseration, which accumulate as absolute surplus-value elsewhere in the city, increasingly on

its edges.[30]

---

[29] At the time of the study's publication, $2.75 – it has since gone up by 25 cents, or 9%. For an argument in favour of free, publicly controlled transit under the framework of Lefebvre's 'right to the city', see Vangeest 2020.
[30] *Cf.* thus Deleuze and Guattari (1983: 34): 'Marx termed the twofold movement of the tendency to a falling rate of profit, and the increase in the absolute quantity of surplus value, the law of the counteracted tendency.' *Cf.* thus also Toscano and Kinkle's *Cartographies of the absolute* (2015), especially 226-229ff. For example, they write of

These marginal enunciations of urban experience perhaps say as much as the city's main text itself: they offset the total and totalizing body of its main text with fragmentary exegeses, glosses, comments, qualifiers. Tactical and experiential fragments swarm the main text of the fictional city, swelling its interstices so much that we must squint as hard to make out the ghostly projections of the Concept-city, as to make out the fleeting but intense scrawl of the non-fictional marginalia that comprise the operational city. At such a point, we are free to choose which city we may *treat as* the more real, more non-fictional.

Thus, to augment the discussion of the themes and analyses presented by Orchard et al., I would like to take up here a similar recent study (Berkum and Oudshoorn, 2019), also situated in London. Besides its location (East London), this latter study is like the former one in pertaining to the lived experience of marginalized women in London, as they navigate and make sense of space. Berkum and Oudshoorn apply what is called a 'PhotoVoice' approach, wherein respondents can 'take photographs related to a community concern' (43).[31] The analyses of these photographs were a collaborative effort with the subjects themselves, who offered explanations of their photos, in group discussions which the researchers facilitated (in addition to individual, hour-long qualitative interviews). Group discussions drew on the mnemonic '*SHOWED*' (from Wang et al., 2000), which prompts respondents on how they might approach explaining their photographs: 'What do you *S*ee here [spatial text]? What is really *H*appening here [spatial subtext]? How does this relate to *O*ur lives [intertextuality]? *W*hy does

---

the post-World War II landscape of the city and suburbia: 'This indeterminacy of the landscape is most often coded as indifference: the indifference of modularity and iteration across social spaces, the indifference of concrete abstraction. It is an indifference remarkable for its ubiquity and magnitude, as well as for the sheer scale of its continued reproduction – tract homes all the way into a vanished horizon, container terminals that never sleep, banks of screens in a stock exchange; space is subsumed under the "infrastructure of accumulation".'

[31] This method is derived from studies by Wang and Burris (1997), and Wang, Burris, and Ping (1996).

this concern/situation/strength exist [exegesis]? How can we become *E*mpowered through our new understanding [critical hermeneutics]? What can we *D*o [operationality]?' The spontaneity of subjects was incorporated into analyses, e.g., 'as one participant took the initiative to create poetry to append to some of her photographs' (Berkum and Oudshoorn: 44). The first thematic heading that emerged from group discussion was titled 'On the margins': speaking to the intersectionality of one's socially accorded 'place' in space, 'participants identified how their social locations, such as being a woman, Indigenous, or homeless, contributed to oppression and feeling ostracized from their communities' (id.: 45). But the initiative they take in their self-expression is not without its obstacles. One participant was 'asked to leave' by police when she tried to take a photo of a street sign 'where she described being "sold for sex work"': 'She discussed her experience of being targeted and intentionally went back to the same location and photographed a picture of her outstretched hand to depict the limitations to her personal freedoms in public spaces' (id.: 46). This photo and its context resonated with other participants, who discussed 'the varying visibility of women's homelessness', which has its corollary in the covert and overt ways they are regulated and marginalized, such as 'through rules and policies targeted to individuals experiencing homelessness' (id. 47). Their very existence in space is perceived and treated as a problem, and their presence must be justified to interlocutors. The subject's hand in the photograph, foregrounded against the street sign, suggests a clash between different orders of space: the foregrounding posits a corporeal order of lived experience in representational space, as over against the abstraction and regulation of the space of the Concept-city, which can spatially organize pedestrians along arbitrary lines of 'belonging' (the predicate of a normalized subject-position).

Conversely, participants developed another thematic heading, 'Feeling at home'. While this included positive experiences of support, it was also fringed by struggle, but of a positive kind: 'participants focused on how women, including themselves, are mighty advocates for social justice'. The women engaged in critical reflexivity together, and 'challenged the current state of their city': in examining a photo of a derelict alley, they collectively chose the name 'Is this our forest city?' One participant linked structural factors of inequality to their socioeconomic condition: "It's almost to the point where it's a human rights violation, almost to the point where we're being used for the [the upper classes] to keep their social status and jobs" (id.: 48-9). This class configuration is largely predicated on an issue that is constant among participants (and those in similar demographics), namely, the 'lack of affordable, adequate, accessible, and permanent housing' – this gap is especially bitter for the participants to witness, considering so much continually vacant space in and around downtown, which they dub "wasted space" (id.: 51).[32] It is hard to argue with this description in the face of a mounting absence of affordable housing. Moreover, while the general underfunding of services leads to gaps and inaccessibility, participants otherwise describe 'restrictive service provision and rigid criteria which meant that services felt exclusive rather than inclusive'; in particular, the capacity of women's shelters is severely limited for women not seeking to leave intimate partner violence (id.: 52-3). This is corroborated by census data, which shows that in London, from 2016-2019, beds at emergency women's shelters (as distinct from emergency shelter tabulated

---

[32] The dozens of empty buildings in the mentioned areas have long been an 'elephant in the room' for the city – in particular, in the Fall of 2019, Ward 13 Councillor Arielle Kayabaga responded to complaints from constituents about Farhi Holdings Corporation having let both the Wright Lithographing (on Wellington Street) and the former public library building (on Queen's Street) sit vacant from 2004 to 2019. Coun. Kayabaga used no uncertain terms in explaining the effect such a large scale of vacancies has: 'If we don't do this, then we're basically continuing to kill our downtown…' Cf. thus Zandbergen, 2019.

under the category 'Violence against women') decreased from 31 to 10 (a drop of 67%); similar

beds in men's shelters decreased, in the same period, from 255 to 198 (a drop of 22%) – in

other words, for every twenty beds in an emergency men's shelter in London, there is one bed

in such a women's shelter.[33]

The sprawl of the city finds its counterpart in the degree of the hollowing out of the

downtown area since the second half of the twentieth century. This is evident, for example, in

the suburbanization of food retailers which increasingly move out of older, central-city

neighbourhoods in London, as shown by Larsen and Gilliland (2008). They investigate spatial

inequality of supermarket access in London over time, as it relates to socioeconomic inequality

– the emergence of the system of automobility[34] is argued to be a key contingency, as it

motivated the move to the suburbs, parallel to the push among major chain stores to maximize

profits (n.p.).[35] They show that many Londoners must use low-cost methods of transport –

walking or public transit – for intra-urban travel, in combination with their observation in much

of Central and East London of a 'large food desert' (which refers to 'socially-distressed

neighbourhoods with relatively low average household incomes and poor access to healthy

food'). This contrasts with the situation in 1961, when most census tracts (CTs) in the core had

more than 75% of the population with easy access to supermarkets, measured as a walking

distance of less than a thousand metres – while in 2005 this figure was less than 20% (ibid.).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most distressed neighbourhoods had the worst access by walking,

---

[33] See: Statistics Canada. Table 14-10-0353-01 Homeless shelter capacity, bed and shelter counts for emergency shelters, transitional housing and violence against women shelters for Canada and provinces, Employment and Social Development Canada annual (number). 2020 July 29.
[34] See Urry (2004).
[35] Unpaginated: under sections 'Background' and 'Urban development, grocery retailing trends and access to healthy food'.

while the least distressed have the best access.[36] Even adopting GIS methods to a network-based approach, which accounts not just for pedestrians on streets and footpaths but also public transit access (treated as a ride of ten minutes or less, along a route within 500 metres walking distance of one's residence), East London (in 2008) had below average access compared to the rest of the city. Similarly, Luciani's (2005) research not only corroborated that among community food program (CFP) clients, they are more likely to exist in households with children, in lone parent households, in households with greater degrees of economic distress – but, most significantly, the research found that there *is not* a need for *more* CFPs; rather, the problem lies in the distribution of the 55+ CFP programs, the majority of which are located in the core, at locations which CFP clients considered too far and/or expensive to reach. The work of these authors is crucial, in that it highlights how specific spatial variables express systematic inequalities over time, such as supermarket and CFP access. People make do, or fall short of this point, to varying degrees (a poetics of operationality); whatever else happens, the contingencies of lived experience articulate the dynamics of representational space (its perceptions and conceptions) for people who live in it.

Conclusion

As much as I have tried to draw on other data, so much of this chapter essentially draws on my own experience of 'London', which has become inextricable from my very approach to the city. But what I have tried to bring forth in this chapter more than anything else is not my subjectivity, but the intersubjectivity that I have come to know as true (to a great degree,

---

[36] '[C]ensus tracts were characterized by a composite index of socioeconomic distress comprised of four variables drawn from the 2001 Canadian census: low educational attainment (proportion of individuals that have not graduated from high school), lone parenthood (proportion of lone parent families versus the total number of families), unemployment (unemployment rate), and incidence of low income (proportion of households that fall below the low income cut-off according to Statistics Canada).

through theses and other academic texts on the city which restrictions of scope have prevented

me from addressing here). In thinking of my means and motivations in this project, the

impressions of a passage from Husserl recur constantly:

> For me real objects are there, definite, more or less familiar, agreeing with what is actually perceived without being themselves perceived or even intuitively present. I can let my attention wander from the writing-table I have just seen or observed, through the unseen portions of the room behind my back to the veranda into the garden, to the children in the summer house, and so forth, to all the objects concerning which I precisely 'know' that they are there and yonder in my immediate co-perceived surroundings (1969: 101).

I have tried to make my desk a place at which to temper subjectivity with reality, grounding

myself in theoretical texts and apparatuses, making illustrations from the data and evidence.

And this tempering, I believe, brings about a snapshot of intersubjectivity (albeit limited insofar

as it is *framed* or bounded, such as spatiotemporally) – or better, a collage of such snapshots.[37]

Any given snapshot has its bounds, but I must admit that this collage violates ideals of

spatiotemporal unity (among other unities). This is precisely because I have sought to

problematize any such unities through a *literal* peripatetic shuttling of experience between

subjectivity and intersubjectivity – going about in the *passages* of the city's spatial text, treating

its literality as something livable and, conversely, as something documented.

And looking out the window of the office in which I have researched and written this

chapter, I catch sight of an aspect or fragment of intersubjectivity, not so visible from the

street-level view of the operational city: I am talking about the 'two' courthouses in downtown.

---

[37] This idea of the illustrative value of such snapshots, on a social-theoretical level, may be read as literally as possible. Cf. thus Bell, Amy. 2015. "'We were having a lot of fun at the photographers': Hellmuth Ladies' College students in photographs, London, Ontario, 1885-1891". 107(2): 240-261, on the photograph's 'framing the visual details of their daily lives, while simultaneously allowing them a surface on which to fashion self-portraits.'

Of course, I say two, because one is functional (the brutalist brick stood on its end, with

forbiddingly bleak, blank walls, while the other is a historical landmark; they face each other,

and so, at most angles, one would have to turn around, or turn their head, to see one and then

the other). Its lengthy history is a context of its present-day existence: a commission was

established in 1826 to build a courthouse at the forks of the 'Thames River', at a cost of no

more than £4000; it was moreover formalized by Upper Canada's Parliament as District Seat of

what was called the 'Talbot settlement' (a large stretch of land in southwestern Ontario along

Lake Erie's northern shore); construction began in 1827 under the supervision of architect John

Ewart from the Town of York (Toronto), and concluded early in 1829, with Talbot's own

influence being visible in the oft-noted resemblance to the Talbot family castle, Castle Malahide

north of Dublin. In 1955, the site was recognized as a National Historical Site, notable not least

of all for preceding the Gothic Revival public buildings of Victorian England; in 1980, it was also

granted a Municipal Heritage Designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.[38] But at a vantage

point just a little higher up (I am only at a third story window), one can see over the short old

'London' buildings and hold both courthouses in a single gaze. To see them both at once this

way, one gleans a suggestive snapshot of the Concept-city (if, again, limited): both have served

as the local seat of justice, but only the newer one does so now. The elder building was an

anchor for the growth of colonial 'London', which had beforehand been a mere scattered group

of settlements for decades. But the present status of the old courthouse is a shadow of that: it

---

[38] On historical details of the courthouse, see: https://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=13537&pid=0 (a website which is a federal, provincial, and territorial collaboration); for other details and visual artefacts, see also: https://www.middlesex.ca/3dtour/tour/ (an annotated 3-dimensional tour of the courthouse, accessible by web browser). For the Municipal Heritage Designation, see: City of London Register of Cultural Heritage Resources (2019) (retrieved from https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2020-10/Register-2019-AODA.pdf) – it is notable that this designation indicates culturally-significant 'Interior attributes', to which one can only hope the developer will be sensitive.

has been sold for $36 million to private developers (York Developments), while certain public

officials tenuously maintain the positivity of this event.[39] John Ewart of York constructed it; York

Development of Toronto (formerly York) has come back to deconstruct it; capital makes these

colonial names and contents collide with each other haphazardly, though the axioms in play

must be discretely consistent and internally coherent.

The words of local historian John H. Lutman ring truer than when they were written,

more than thirty years ago, in discussing the uphill battle that historic preservation faces in the

city:

> The traditional core of the city has suffered from population pressures, auto traffic and the growth of the
> business district into the old residential areas. Many of the older business blocks and residences have
> given way to large office towers, high rise apartments, government buildings and parking lots. Thus, in the
> scramble of new development, many buildings of historic and architectural significance have been lost
> (1988: 1).

While 'London' may not lose its historical-architectural past in a wholesale manner, the

pressures of accumulation mean that this past is retained, primarily only as façade. Again, as de

Certeau wrote (1984: 93, 95), the Concept-city – the ideologically-enunciated atopia-utopia of

optical knowledge – is in decay; this is a quasi-natural (or naturalized) process, driven by the

organic development of the capitalist system. The anchor of the old limit (the city centre, and

within it, the courthouse) is displaced by the sprawling diffusion of the capitalist limit of

development: local and regional development companies are always constructing large sets of

houses on the fringes of the city.

---

[39] See Bicknell, 2021. Middlesex County Warden Cathy Burghardt-Jessen has speculated that 'I think actually it will
offer the opportunity to do something wonderful at that site, that perhaps being publicly owned you wouldn't be
able to do with public dollars. I think the vision for that property could be something *spectacular*' (emphasis
added).

Hence, the figure of the two courthouses serves as a meta-figure, or a figure which comments on itself. It expresses something essential in the development of capitalism, namely, that the limit which is asserted (the *last instance*, the margin beyond which there would be a qualitative shift) is very soon repeatedly repelled and even inverted.[40] Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 463) wrote that, 'As a general rule, the limits are all the more mobile if axioms are subtracted in one place but added elsewhere.' Hence we can understand the relationship between the relative hollowing out of the city centre, its struggle with urban decay, as over against its constant expansion along much of its boundaries: the old courthouse, one-time anchoring point of the limit of the local production-consumption nexus, is now the centre of the centre in what has become a hollow core, around which the city (r)evolves, and through which it moves – therefore, the old courthouse is demoted from a cause of the limit, to its effect. In other words, the limit finds its new form of expression in the form of private developments in place of the historic courthouse. The quantitative expansion of the city (in terms of its residents, and production-consumption flows) reacts back on its centre, and effects a qualitative inversion that resonates with distributive relays of accumulation and 'development': the cardinal foundation of the monopolist appropriation of land (the courthouse that established absolute rent in a definite local sphere) is subsumed by the ordinal spectrum of differential rent and becomes one more rentable property. Still, the operational city is as open (yet as obscure) as it has ever been. How to traverse and relate to its urban fabric, to

---

[40] Of course, I have in mind here Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 472) on 'the deepest law of capitalism: it continually sets and then repels its own limits, but in so doing gives rise to numerous flows in all directions that escape its axiomatic.' On the limit, see also (463): 'saturation is itself relative. […] Capitalism is […] an axiomatic because it has no laws but immanent ones. […] [A]ll it confronts are its own limits […] and [it] simultaneously displaces them.' See especially 443-4 on the three capitalist apparatuses of capture: land, work, and money (each with their relative and absolute aspects).

(re)present points of resistances and lines of flight, in contrast to the homogenizing action by which the organic composition of capital progresses (ever more constant capital, ever less variable capital)? *Answer*: through the margins, which are always amenable to irregular variations and extensions, and which thereby détourne the main text of the Concept-city in more-or-less surreptitious (sometimes explosive) ways, such as the footnote that overwhelms the main text. *But the Concept-city is already in decay, anyway*; to revolutionize it can only be the secondary (nominal) task, however important this may or may not be (indeed it is). 'London' as a Concept-city has already sold its mantle to capital (the currently functioning courthouse belongs to the province's jurisdiction); in formal terms, 'London' is merely a result or outcome (even if it materially effectuates itself through a local tax apparatus). Rather, *to cause* change[41] in the path of 'progress' that belongs to the juggernaut of capital, it must be resisted at the level of the operational city, on this field which is always shot through with more lines of flight than that for which the joint forces of capital and State can ever effectively account. A poetics of representation allows a theoretical footing into these margins, as a survey of *meaningful local doings of urban beings* (certain of the Situationist International might have called this a phenomeno-praxis). In this sense, I have tried to illuminate the operational city as just that: an *opera*-rational space, or a space of *doing* a thinkable *being*, wherein thinking and doing are mostly inextricably intermingled through their relationship in representational space, without their being altogether indistinguishable from each other.

---

[41] As *per* Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach.

Chapter 2: Jack Chambers and everyday poetics of representation

The issue of local experiential marginalities, which manifest as variations on shared

codes of social space, may be comprehended more concretely if we bear in mind the remarks

of a late local artist, Jack Chambers, concerning the broader sociohistorical context of North

American aesthetics, and its mental space:

> North America's first import was her own settling people: a coherent mental system removed from its organic container-body in Europe and deposited as a mind-import of uprooted human beings carrying the industrial heritage of the Renaissance to a carte-blanche opportunity at God-given pragmatism. [...] The displacement aspect of Duchamp's art reveals to North America its deeper sentiments about itself: its uprootedness. [...] The mannerism of North American art [...] lies in its repetitious *effort* to become art...
>
> Chambers, 1969; reprinted in Elder, 2002 (hereafter *FJC*): 42.

The plurally-conflicted and contradictory senses of this settler-colonial uprootedness is an

opportune lacuna through which to take up the poetics of representation – particularly insofar

as it opens onto a local site, situated in the cultural system of global capitalism. There is a kind

of vacuum at the core of the settler-colonial ethos, and so its orthodox representational poetics

can only survive in an expanding centrifugal orbit around it, or it falls back on its own

emptiness. But a reflexively critical poetics of representation – concerned with the local as a

site of creativity, conflict, and temporal flux – could address this emptiness. More specifically, it

could address the possibility of contesting the place of this vacuum, and of finally filling it – that

is, with a democratizing *generativity* and *reordering* of space for *all* its inhabitants. This is

especially urgent, on the one hand, considering how Londoners live in the wake of the brutal

history of settler-colonialism, and on the other, considering the Indigenous nations that still

inhabit the space of, and around, this land today. Account must therefore be taken of the

nature of concrete local changes of spatial legibility and constructability (and their contingent

potential). At such a point it will be instructive to turn to legible local spaces, as they appear in

the legible space of the framed images (the painting and the film frame) created and arranged

by Chambers.

2.1. Chambers's aesthetics of a local-universal

What do I mean by the legibility of space? Representational space moves through

intersubjective (social) space, such that they together come to dominate mental space, and

therefore subjective life: space is 'directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols'

(Lefebvre, 1991: 39).[42] In this sense, lived representational space is clearly analogous to the

experienced visual space of aesthetic images (the inference of movement or a delicate stillness

within the immobile painting's frame, the witnessing of the unfolding sequence of movement in

the film's frames): space and visual-aesthetic images are interlegible, in that the images and

---

[42] *Cf.* thus also what I have said above (p. 13) on the 'everyday historicity' of spatial experience.

symbols of the one may be read by those of the other. Thus, the editors of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1972 [1970]: 5-6) took for their object 'a certain number of "classic" films, which today are *readable* […] insofar as we can distinguish the historicity of their inscription: the relation of these films to the codes […] for which they are a site of intersection, and to other films, themselves held in an intertextual space': analysing the trajectory of the editors' thought, we may say not just that film (generally) partakes of intertextual space, but that space also partakes of intertextuality. The places and times of space, stratified ply over ply, re-ply in the chorus of city-space: we only most faintly discern them in everyday life, yet it is precisely their historicity and vitality which Chambers brings into stark relief, in the processual series of integrated moments of his 1970 avant-garde feature film, *The Hart of London*.

I will explore and reflect on this film most especially, because it basically figures as an 'other' film, or at least 'other' to the kind of continuity filmmaking[43] Chambers identifies when he says of its "descriptive time", that "Lawrence on his camel at sunset; Lawrence on his camel at dawn, equals Lawrence riding his camel all night" (in Woodman, 1967: 15), and because I believe it stands as the most emblematic statement of both his work and philosophy. The historicity of *The Hart of London* is legible – to varying degrees, at different points – within its own intertextual space (it fluidly assembles personal and found footage: occasionally, the place of the shot is readily identifiable, and at other moments, it conceivably seems to occur in any space and time), but it never suggests any reading as definitive, dominant, or exhaustive.[44] Moreover, the film's intertextuality only has the faintest concern with other films. The deeply

---

[43] On 'continuity filmmaking', see Bordwell and Thompson, 2013: 232-255. This style of editing is commonly typified by the shot-reverse shot patterning along a stable axis of visual action.

[44] This is not to discount the relatively emphatic quality of certain passages, such as the jump to colour in the slaughter scene.

particularistic *intersubjective intertextuality* which Chambers weaves brings the open-

endedness of the double articulation to its furthest extension: there is no synthetic third term

to neatly totalize a closed system of conceptualized meaning, to close off the processual

dynamic of place and time. Rather, perception – as experience and conception, unhitched from

stable iconic sign-concepts and no longer blinkered by them – is free, in the play of collapsed

binaries, to use and make the tracks and gestures it cannot but make.[45] This film therefore

seems a very apt example with which to illustrate the idea of a poetics of representation – even

of something like Bachelard's absolute poetics – especially insofar as it gives depiction to the

local representational space, in the context of its being dynamically situated within the fraught

and tenuously precious macrocosm.

2.2. Chambers's local aesthetics as metaphysics and mysticism

There is a significant amount of writing on Chambers's painting (as also on his cinematic

oeuvre), and especially on this film. While his painting and his other films will be discussed here,

the emphasis is on his *The Hart of London*, as a creative centre of gravity, especially for the

depth and capacity of its representational poetics. But to approach an understanding of this

poetics as it appears in the film requires that we begin by grasping the spirit of the procesually

evolving theoretical apparatus(es) which drove the rest of Chambers's oeuvre up to that point

in time, and afterwards. To my thinking, I can only properly discuss this film as a single

particularly intense point in the entire trajectory of his oeuvre. Indeed, one painting of his (from

1968) is titled *The Heart of London* and is a rendering of still-frames from the same CFPL

---

[45] For these observations on *intersubjective textuality*, as also on the materiality and ephemerality of film as medium (explored more in-depth in the coda of this chapter), I am indebted to Janelle Blankenship.

newsreels which appear in the film, done in his hallmark 'perceptualist' style.[46] Just as London

as a particular space cannot be understood in a vacuum separated from other particular spaces

or general theories of space, so this particular opus must be understood in terms of an oeuvre,

a milieu and an everyday historicity; and in terms of its relation to space(-time), not just, *viz.*, its

own contemporaneity, but also in the *haecceity* of a given present, and onward into the future.

This analysis will demonstrate *what* and *how* a poetics of representation can *do what it does*;

or, how it *procesually* opens up new fields and territorialities for other such poetics within the

local sphere.

2.2.1. The painting of 'tracks and gestures': from Surrealisms to local space

Chambers's early-period work in painting hints at the aesthetic values he would later

place on personal cinema, as well as the themes and modes that would permeate his

contribution to this cinema; conversely, his late-career autobiographical reflections help explain

the personal tenor that characterizes so much of his work up to that point.[47] His opuses of the

early 1960s evince a clear Surrealist influence (specifically, Veristic Surrealism),[48] while

intimating so many of his own later thematics, but in embryonic form here: for example, his

Surrealist Composition (1960) shows a scattershot yet clear interest in death,[49] as it 'depicts a

bouillabaisse of limbs, severed heads and mummified body parts against a charnelhouse

---

[46] As of that time, though, he termed it 'perceptual realism'. See Magidson (2002), in the volume edited by Kathryn Elder, *The films of Jack Chambers* (hereafter *FJC)*

[47] I refer the interested reader to Egleston (2008), in which certain films are compared in terms of their personal tenor, for example, those of Chambers and Brakhage; or, as to the genre of 'personal films', more generally: Mekas, (1978); and Sitney (1978). Woodman (2002) notes Chambers described his films as 'personal'.

[48] This identification is gleaned from Broomer, 2018: 39, fn. 14: '[R. Bruce] Elder specifically situates Chambers' art in the tradition of Veristic Surrealism, a tradition largely unique to Spanish Surrealism and concerned with the deliberate compromise of an exacting realism, or in other words, the realist illustration of a dream world. This connects Chambers' later photorealist paintings to his earlier, more explicit debts to Surrealism.'

[49] Broomer (165, fn. 1) relays 'a possibly apocryphal anecdote of his having been arrested for breaking into a London mortuary as a teenager, presumably in pursuit of a close encounter with death.'

backdrop' (Milroy, 10 in *FJC*). *Angel*, 'from the same period […] shows a shrieking pregnant

woman, her face and form grotesquely distorted. Life and death are collapsed into one' (ibid.):

this kind of collapsed structuration of binaries – life and death as interpermeating each other,

as also the local and universal (a richly particular life, as over against the death which comes for

everyone), and the continuous inter-imbrication of all these binaries – persists especially in his

films, if not as acutely in his paintings (at least after his early Veristic Surrealist period). We may

understand why he moved away from such thematic directness in painting, when he later

describes a work from this period (*Messengers juggling seeds*, 1962):
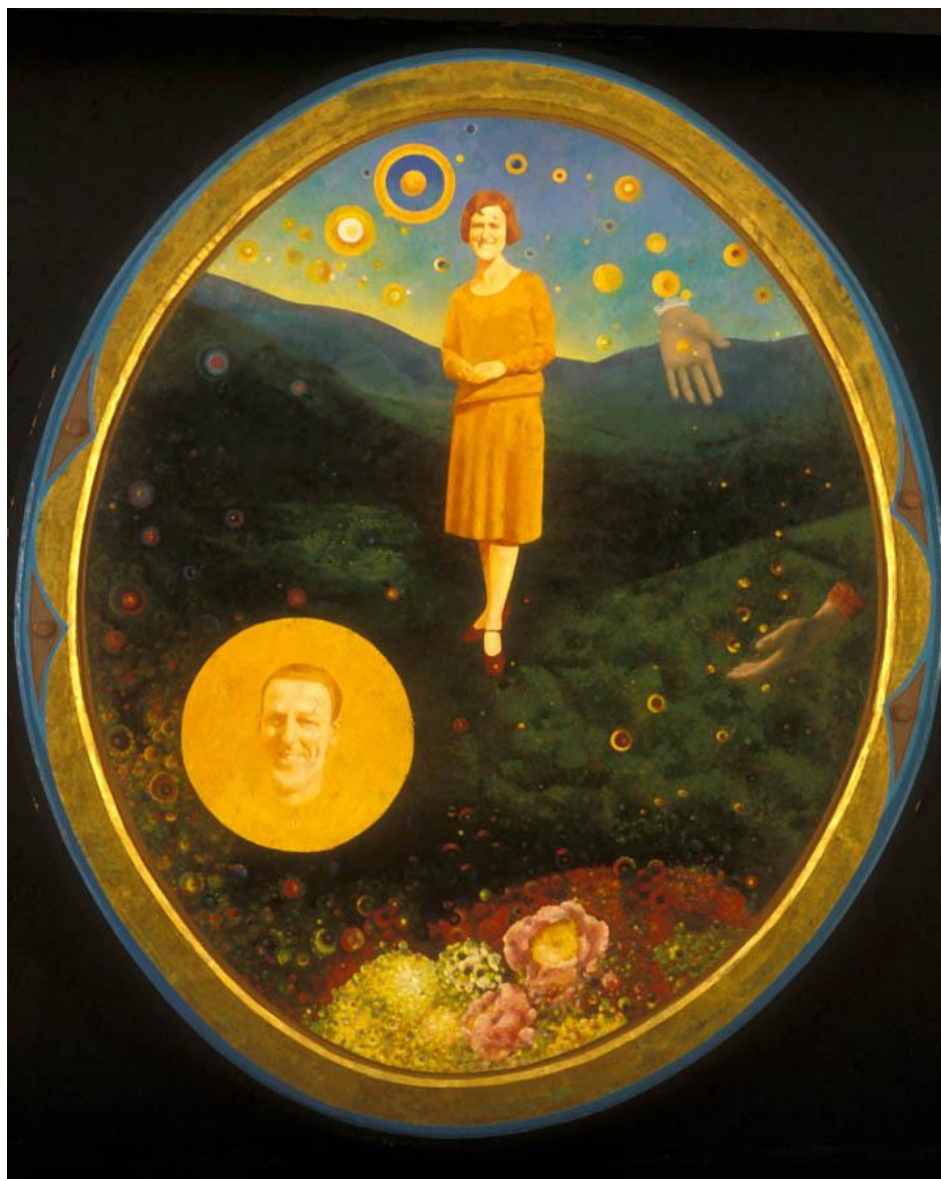
Illustration One.

Messengers Juggling Seeds, 1962.

Oil on plywood.

163.8 x 141 oval; image 137.5 x 115 cm.

National Gallery of Canada. Reprinted here courtesy of the Canadian Art Database Project at the Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art (CCCA) (retrieved from http://ccca.concordia.ca/c/images/big/c/chambers/chambers021.jpg).

The ability to draw well really amounted to being able to balance proportions so that the act of drawing is never noticeable for itself. Drawing is only *useful* when it produces a <u>thing</u>. I never held drawing valuable in itself. Nor painting either. Photographs and their derivative techniques eliminated them, as they do now, the effort and messiness of drawing on painted surfaces in order to produce the desired <u>thing</u>. I was no longer finding things in the surface space of the painting, as in <u>Messengers</u> [see Illustration One]. I now had possession of the things, usually in the photo, and I created a space for them within in the painted surface. Instead of a chaotic world from which I helped <u>things</u> emerge, I now prepared a space of order and assigned the <u>thing</u> to its *particular place*.

Chambers, 197-: p. 23.[50]
(Italicized emphases mine; underlined emphases are Chambers's).

What Chambers seems to describe hurling himself towards is a hybrid of self-abnegation for the sake of a pragmatic realism (the production of a *thing*),[51] crossed with a spiritualistic intensity of pure style that is totally unselfconscious and uncalculated, yet unmistakeably particular and idiomatic (the eponymous 'Tracks and gestures' of his autobiography, that *cannot but* carry us where and how they will). He also describes in more plain language the earliest nature of these ambitions, when he yearned for more rigorous training at the start of his career:

I was not interested in style as such, nor what one man had forged out of his experience for himself [such would constitute the opposite of 'tracks and gestures'].[52] I wanted something much more elemental, like basic training; some visible standard that was not made distinctive by personal vision or accomplishment. I wanted a realistic standard of ability which was craft and not art (id.: 6).

In terms of the schema of representational glossematics which I visualized in section I.ii, Chambers's words describe the doubly-articulated representational production of 'things': on one hand, as 'things'-signs, which he (re)produced *via* a craft that captured indexicality (hence the crucial utility of the photo for his poetics, which captures the particularity of things' places in a spatial ordering); and simultaneously, correspondingly, on the other hand, as 'things'-concepts which he produced *via* an oblique or indirect mode of artistic symbolism (which captures his notion of a preparedness of the spatial ordering, *wherein* things find their

---

[50] Final digit of year not given in source (see Bibliography).

[51] He said elsewhere that the aesthetic figure becomes 'an object into which you unload experience' (in Woodman, 1967: 5).

[52] Hence, Chambers similarly said of his experience with his first entrance exam in Spain: 'My sense of myself was a tough hound to lose' (197-:10).

particular place). The perceptualist painting captures the 'thing'-sign/'thing'-concept, both as a stable spatial order (an assemblage of perception-conception-experience as representational space – see Fig. 2) and a particularity of becoming; in this way, Chambers retains a degree of open-endedness, *viz.* the production of icon(s) *via* concept-signs – that is, no stable symbol or 'thing'-concept in his oeuvre is yoked to a simple sign to make a simple icon; no icons exist neatly for themselves in his work. For example, in a 1970 conversation with Dennis Young, he offered an explanation on his painting *Five Shepherds* (1961-62), saying that 'A lamb is an animal. But the thing is, it's an animal with all that has gone before, including any connotations that it could have had in an earlier time. It means a lot of things, you know. Once it becomes a lamb it's just open for just everything – that is, both victim, energy, innocence, you know, a force that is kind of invisible – *a kind of white force*, you know' (197-: 20; emphasis mine): this kind of icon rendered as *white force* (an entire spectrum of connotative affect) utterly transcends the simple or settled concept-sign, and creates a full space for the doubly-articulated play of 'thing'-concept/'thing'-sign as index-symbol. For Chambers, being able to tap so directly into the indexicality of the image meant an acutely deepening awareness of the perceptual relationship (the fruitful tension, or generative decay) between the particularity of things' places (indexical experience, or 'thing'-signs) and spatial orders (conceptualized symbols, or 'thing'-concepts); perception is the doubly articulated movement which makes symbols and indexes mutually interlegible. The key point here is the singular open-endedness of the double articulation (symbol-index) within his poetics of representation – inversely stated, his poetics is not a ternary closed system of meaning, occluded by the third term of concept-signs' synthetic productions of icons.

In terms of output, Chambers's Surrealist strains of the late 1950s and early 1960s are when he began his thematic foregrounding of death, which persisted through the rest of his career. On the other hand, being in Spain challenged his artistic sense of the local, which nonetheless began to develop in these years. After finishing his education at the Royal Academy in Spain, he wrote of his period in the Chinchòn of Francoist Spain, how his subjective life wrestled intensely with the intersubjective potentialities of his experiences there: 'Perhaps the unliveable conditions of the place contributed to the kinds of paintings that began to emerge. They were bleak and born behind my eyes. They owed almost nothing to the reality of sunshine and fresh air. They proceeded from the regions within me of dark and brooding emotions' (id: 15). If this autobiographical manuscript is a brief *Kunstlerroman*, then we may say at this point that the intersubjectivity of the local hindered the subjective development of the artist (even in his self-abnegating way): while he spoke lovingly of the face of the Castilian landscape ('The landscape was always a beautiful mystery: human odour seemed to reside in it…'), he considered it 'impenetrable' for himself (id.: 18).[53] Still, at least one experiential episode from this period had a deep and lasting impact on him, which was witnessing the activity of a slaughterhouse in Chinchòn: in a letter to his soon-to-be fiancée, Olga, he wrote

> The butchers are butchers of three meals, the necks thick, strong and purplish, the hands and feet wet with blood… A small lightbulb illuminates the big store room; the light is sickly. The bare-chested butchers stab in silence. The blood runs red and luminous onto the black floor. The air is hot and humid. After leaving one smells like blood and sweat.
>
> Id.: 18 (11 Sept. 1959).

This perceptual experience, so suffused with sense and sentiment, would percolate in Chambers's consciousness for years, to find its place as a bursting colour climax in the film, *The*

---

[53] 'There was an organism within an organism that appeared as landscape. But I knew I was not in it' (ibid.).

Hart of London.[54] It took many years, but this is where this intense experience would find a

symbolical form of expression.

In March 1961 he was called back home upon learning of his mother's flagging health,

and as 'death seemed immanent [sic!]', by next month he had returned to Canada by way of

the New York Central Railway, headed to St. Thomas, thence to London by taxi (id.: 18). Soon,

after this long absence in his hometown had ended, the intense *haecceity* of the moment and

place now reversed the relationship of subjectivity to intersubjectivity that persisted in Spain:

> It was while I was riding a city bus uptown [travelling while stationary – more liminal juxtapositions] that
> its slow smooth ride spoke to me of opportunity and comforts I could not expect in Spain. It was a *feel for
> the place* that *produced* my intention to stay on in London. It was also my home town [sic] and there
> were *spaces* here *along the river* and *in the landscape* that had become mine years ago and continued to
> be so. The memory of such places *multiplied* the *longer* I remained so *near* them and the images *wedded
> to their presence surfaced in me* like the faces of long lost friends. I also discovered at this time my
> own past, that of my parents and of their parents in the likenesses preserved by photographic magic.
>
> Id.: 17 (emphases mine).

A perceptual (conceptual, experiential) process, occurring over decades, contingently comes to

a head while riding the bus: an awareness of a *feel for the place* is *produced* as an intuitive

intentionality oriented to a local sphere. The spaces held in memory present and re-present

themselves (the memories multiply in relation to space, and 'the images wedded to their

presence surfaced in [him]' – indeed, they're presented as other subjects, long-lost friends).

The indexicality of photos is thus understood not just to be 'photorealistic', but also as

capturing an *intersubjective* depth – the indexicality and objectivity of the camera is crucially

identified by Chambers as *magic*, which might be interpreted as referring to its ability to

---

[54] This mix of sense and sentiment in experience is reflected in a quote from Merleau-Ponty, assembled for chapter
of his *Red and green* manuscript devoted to the distinction and relationship of 'Sight and Vision'. Merleau-Ponty
wrote that "Cézanne said that one could see the velvetiness, the hardness, the softness, and even the odor of
objects…. Perception is therefore not a sum of visual, tactile, and audible givens: I perceive in a total way with my
whole being; I grasp a unique structure of the thin, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once"
(1964b; quoted in Smart, 2013: 61).

mechanically capture the meaningful yet ineffable plenitude of objective space and light that

captures something like the singular faciality of a portrait-photo; or (stated another way), the

ability of the photo to capture both a perceptual affect and objective metrical-optical space.

Still, these are later reflections: if we look to the work of that period itself, we see how

Chambers's Surrealist sensibilities had settled into his own local space. For example,

Chambers's illustrations to a book of poems by Jack Reaney (*The dance of death at London,*

Ontario, 1963; see Illustration Two) are perhaps most emblematic of the fatalistic aspects of the

Surrealist tendencies that would carry into his later work.
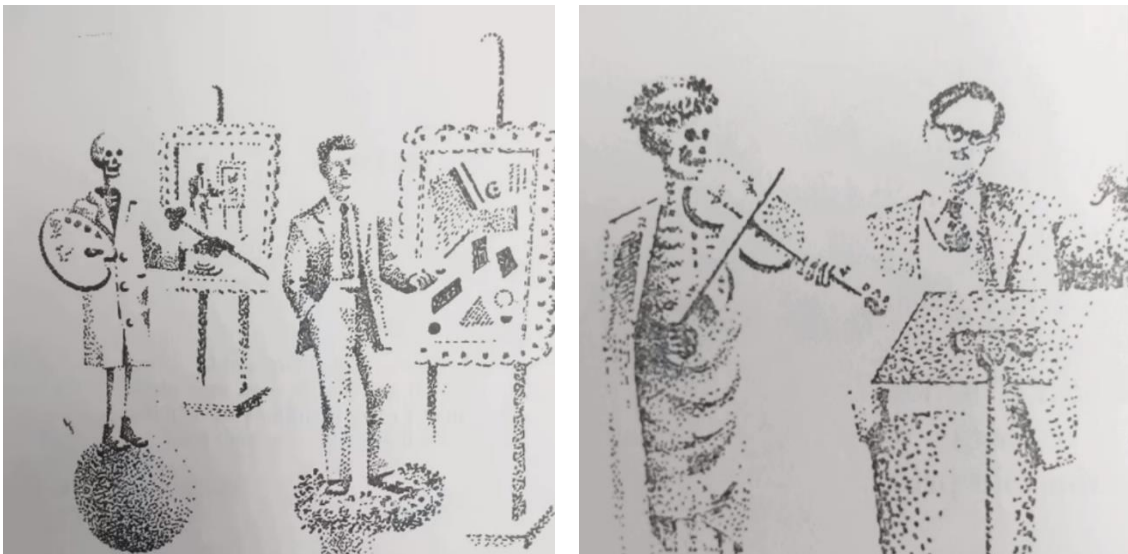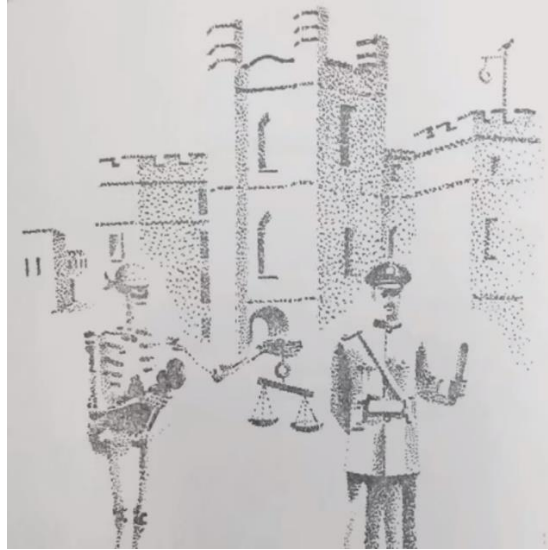

Illustration Two (a) Death and recursive reflexivity

A reflexive web of death permeates the pointillist illustrations: the *danse macabre*

draws all the living figures into a Manichaean local space, defined by the relationship of

everyday life to the ceremonies of the extra-ordinary (marriage; death; crime and

punishment).[55]

Illustration Two (b) Death as sponsor of ceremony and of law

Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeNpx3_zZHo (courtesy of Brown & Dickson Bookshop)

Chambers's autobiographical musings suggest other roots for these thematic concerns,

in a handful of epiphanic episodes from youth and adolescence:

> One day after school it became dark more quickly than usual and turned bitterly cold. It was too early for dinner and yet it was almost as dark as night. The houses were unlit and without their orange banners of human warmth the street looked abandoned of life.

197-: p. 1.

This is Chambers's experience of being caught in a haecceity of liminality (*too early…yet…dark*

as night).[56] The street, void of its tokens of life, intimates the ephemerality and delicacy of life.

---

[55] In terms of technical mannerisms, Chambers's use of the white of the paper as negative space (cf. Broomer, 2017: 174-5, fn. 18) in this work anticipates the silvered composition of the 'winter within a winter' at the start of *The Hart of London*, and the silvered chorus of historical Londoners.

[56] Similarly, in his autobiography, he writes of his return to London how 'the seasons uncovered images of myself still gesturing in the invisible' (1978: 33). The universal season cycle has a *haecceity* at a given place and year that can reveal insights about the self and/or the world.

The image depicted in this late-career recollection crystallizes the streak of muted tension

running through so much of his oeuvre, the fragility and fleetingness of the moment.

> My feet became numb with the cold as the day darkened and tough little grey flakes began falling from the sky. I looked around to find out what it was that had hurt me and all I saw was the dumbed houses, the glitter of steel through a crack in the closing sky and the hard snow [the *intense* glimpse of *immanence* – the obscurity of effects and the silence of God]. I knew that this, what I saw in the sky and falling from it, was the bowels and the heart and lungs, the guts of the child of winter. This was the truth of winter before it had learned to smile on me with its copious gay snowfalls sparkling with fun and sunshine. This numbing cold was the true child of the season before it had learned to give pleasure [in so many words, a perceptual sense of the cold indifference of the cosmic seasonal cycle: the winters of prehistory]. It was by this grey-dying and violent birth-giving light of the winter dusk taut with pain and the presence of danger that the regal paradox of Christmas was ushered in. For the next two months I dreamed in poignant anticipation of the bounty to come. […]

Id.: pp. 1-2

Paradoxes tend much more to be impetuses than obstacles for Chambers, and he often plumbs

the depths of collapsed binaries through carefully thematized juxtapositions of imagery. R.

Bruce Elder says of the images in the short-films *Hybrid* and *Mosaic* (though it holds true of

much of the rest of Chambers's work), that 'the images and their juxtaposition […] have a

discursive quality' (in *FJC*: 90). While we cannot be certain of what Chambers meant by

'Christmas as paradox' (the vital connotations of the solstice do come to mind), it clearly

pertains to a tenuous generative force for him, expressed in the juxtaposing of images: 'this

grey-dying and violent birth-giving light of the winter dusk'. The oneiric cast that he describes

after this encounter with intense immanence ('For the next two months I dreamed in poignant

anticipation') becomes more like a diffuse and dynamic gauze in his cinematic works, by way of

slow motion, double exposure, match cuts, and especially the varied superimpositions of

negative film footage (the silvered image: his unique and obscure contribution to cinema) –

these all convey the uncanny fascination of discursively juxtaposed dream-images (to use

Elder's language). Whatever else might be said of Chambers's written recollections, they offer a

clear gloss on the juxtaposed images of life-and-death which appear in so much of his visual

work, where they are alloyed by the studied yet intense detachment of his perceptual realist

technique.

> Around the time I was seven or eight, I became a child of the morning. Each day I awakened to a flooding of wonder and happiness that came into me each morning and there was absolutely nothing, no, nothing wrong ever with the world. I was so simply in love with my life […] that it was simply love without thanks. I just gloried in every day. My joy lasted till I was seventeen. One morning I awoke and found that I had become a father of night and its pleasures had replaced the child of morning. I tried, however, for many years to recover my fled glory through the instruments of its leaving and because of it I treated the landscapes of my world with some disdain. […] *While becoming more alone I liked places and things that seemed alone*. And when one day in the presence of dull trees, a road and some grey hills, I saw sunshine mount the earth like a bridegroom, the sight of it evoked an instant in me of that past glory. The glory only lived in me now because it lived in the world, and I identified its miracle with the things themselves and the world became dear to me. The familiarity and dullness in which the world often appears, was I remembered, at any moment a potential miracle. It could resurrect. This knowledge seemed also to imply a wild challenge: Turn everything in the world to love!
>
> Id.: 2 (emphases mine).

The insights here are precisely where one would not usually expect them, namely, in what

Chambers recounts of his adolescent 'disdain' for landscapes, which spells out with unusual

directness the spatial relationship of subjectivity to intersubjectivity: 'While becoming more

alone I liked places and things that seemed more alone.' The grandiloquent language seems to

return with this epiphany of the cosmic coition between earth and sun, but it is impetus to an

insight of much greater scope than this image *per se*: that temporal 'glory only lived in [him]

now because it lived in the world, and [he] identified its miracle with the things themselves and

the world became dear to me' – it is an acute awareness of the relationship that inheres in the

fulcrum between self and the world, which attains to the miracle of the mundane and the

mundanity of the miraculous ('The familiarity and dullness in which the world often appears,

was […] at any moment a potential miracle'). With these weighty phrases, we can understand in

a direct way how his perceptualist method could be so intensely ontic and spiritual at once.

The Surrealist vein runs through his oeuvre into the period of his filmmaking: for example, R. Bruce Elder (2002: 92) analyzes Chambers's first short film *Mosaic* in light of Riffaterre's point on how the Surrealists substituted "the conjunctive" (*and…and…*) for the synonym. When we consider Chambers's interest in the integrated aesthetic ordering of each *thing* in its particular place, the conjunctive synthesis makes it clear that 'the question of the relation of Chambers' films to Surrealism carries us to the heart of his artmaking…' This conjunctive synthesis effects a resolution of the division of immanence and transcendence (an in-here and an out-there): Chambers sought, with his work, to glimpse the continuum of temporality and eternity, of relativity and omnipresence. Thus, in this film, seemingly disparate elements are caught (by editing and *mise-en-scène*) in a continuity of space and time: a dead raccoon; snow falling; a woman picking flowers; a young male jogger running towards the camera in slow motion; a woman, also in slow motion, running from the background to an infant in the foreground; a woman scatters petals, which a cut turns into snowflakes, which another cut implies fall onto the dead raccoon – an elderly man walks where the young jogger was, and after a cut, we see the jogger again in the background while the elderly man is now in the foreground, as if he recollects his former self; cut: and the camera tilts up as the woman running towards it approaches, and the infant is cut off by the bottom of the frame; cut to a downward facing shot, and it isn't the infant but the dead raccoon again, in a worse state of decay; cut again, to the woman smilingly scattering more petals. Such metaphysical and spiritual juxtapositions ground his work (if less directly) from the early-1960s onward. As Brakhage (2005: 98) noted of his early work: 'it's infused with the ideas, the ideals of Surrealism'; but certain aesthetic strains of Surrealism stayed with Chambers throughout the

rest of his career – particularly the value of juxtaposition, and especially that of death and vitality. Hence, while Chambers credited Brakhage with his start in film, Brakhage in turn notes how Chambers's use of birth footage (probably inspired by Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving*) 'is unique in ways intrinsic to his making, that is to say that the birth is interwoven with death, the upsurging of life is interwoven with the clipping of it back, the stunting of its growth' (2002: 117). Collapsed binaries mean Chambers's thematics is entirely continuous with itself.

Ross Woodman ('who taught English to Chambers at the University of Western Ontario [...] and would become a frequent writer on the artist': Milroy, 11) offers something of an explanation (both biographical and spiritual) for Chambers's thematic concerns: "In North America, he saw one kind of death that was mechanical and meaningless. In Spain, he discovered another kind of death, a metaphysical death – an abundance of life, the essence of which was death" (in ibid.). Chambers had himself explained many years earlier to Woodman about 'the gradual change in [his] own taste and sensibility'; he said, 'I underwent a series of births' (in Woodman, 1967: 5). Alluding even more explicitly to the lines between biography, spirituality, and art, Woodman elsewhere (in Elder, 2002: 45) discusses a piece of lyrical prose (*Aircraft*) which Chambers had published in 1962 (though written in 1949), and which 'deals with [a narrator's] life in a garden that is at once the garden of Eden and a graveyard'; with remarkable directness, he informs the reader 'It is Chambers in London, Ontario, before he left for Spain.' Woodman attributes Chambers's shift in media (from painting to film) to an attempt to get away from the obstacles that professional demands presented for a creativity that was

robustly and authentically personal (id.: 46). [57] Woodman's accounts of Chambers's art and

motivations may sound interpretive but are consistent with the set of paradoxes that seem to

have driven Chambers's thinking, and which others identified in his work: for example, death as

the kernel of the abundance of life – and such paradoxes are ingrained in the title of his

manuscript *Red and green*, which (*viz.*, colour theory) at once invokes contrasts, conflicts, and

resolution. He explained the significance of his red-green system as follows:

> For some time it has seemed to me that all colours in painting can be derived from a red-green basis. That is, in mixing colours to affect [sic] an illusory difference on a flat surface, red and green can be used as basic ingredients to create polarity between one colour and another, since red and green are themselves complementarities. Two colours in a given area, black for instance, can be intentionally separated from one another while still remaining black by adding a little green to one and a little red to the other, but not enough in either case for the black to look like anything but black when seen alone. This complementarity approach to organizing colour maximizes our control over the subtle effects of distance and the obvious ones. For example, the vertical gradation of values in a sky from light horizon to darker zenith can ascend straight up like an elevator using the analogous approach of mixing a little white with blue at the horizon and less white with blue at the top. Whereas the up-and-in concave effect of real skies can be achieved by alternating light blue-pink at the horizon to darker blue-green in the middle to blue-purple at the top or by any number of such alternating red-green steps required to produce the up-and-in effect.

Chambers, 'Notes on Perception'. Quoted in Smart, 2013: 60.

And while this may sound exclusively oriented to colour and optics, we know that in

Chambers's view, actual visual *sight* cannot be separated from the fuller *vision* of multi-sensory

perception. Hence, in *Red and green*, he presents a quote on the psychology of cinema from

Merleau-Ponty, who wrote: '"I perceive in a total way with my whole being; I grasp a unique

structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once"' (quoted in

ibid.) Chambers's stylistic developments seem always to have been made with an eye towards

developing the aesthetic problematics of the tension between generativity and decay, within a

---

[57] Still, in discussion with Woodman, as to his motivations for leaving Canada, Chambers variously says, it was a matter of 'Indifference', and yet also 'a question of survival' (1967: 3).

quotidian local that leads into a cosmic eternal.[58] Chambers had experienced an unexpected

metaphysical 'death' in Spain and was ready for a second death (both metaphysical and

temporal), come when it may – but not before exhaustively charting, in perceptual terms, the

course of the spirit in the flux of generativity and decay.[59]

In the wake of his classical training in Europe, a naturalist bent inflected this Surrealism.

Olga and Mary Visiting (1964-65) (finished just as he began his short film, *Mosaic*) has a degree

of fidelity to the moments of its scenes' spaces (basically all the figures are readily discernible),

but it puts several such spaces of moments together in the space of a single moment: as

Chambers said, 'it's the accumulation of experienced interiors brought into focus' (in

Woodman, 1967: 11). This simultaneously challenges the sensibility of temporal flow in

sensorial, subjective, and intersubjective life: the painting suggests the tenuous balance of

familiar and alien, how we must have at some point cognized the social sense of such spaces

and times such that we could recognize them. We overwhelmingly remember this formative

process only in its results (just as the senses of its scenes appear to consciousness in a *flash* of

insight): seeing and remembering are inseparable aspects of the perceptual process. Chambers

explicated his sense of this, in saying that memory involves the 'visual appearance of

fundamental legibility': memory has a *vortex* and a *periphery*, with 'the periphery or

---

[58] Hence, Woodman's Edenic gloss of the London of Chambers's *Alphabet* might be tied to the Dantean ascent at the end of *Hart of London*.

[59] Indeed, Chambers's conception of the Spirit bears a significantly Hegelian influence, not least evidenced by his quoting Hegel in his *Red and Green* manuscript thus, in a section entitled 'Beyond the visible': "Nothing in the past is lost for it, for the Idea is ever present; Spirit is immortal; with it there is no past, no future, but an essential *now* … The life of the ever present Spirit is a circle of progressive embodiments, which looked at in one aspect still exist beside each other" (quoted in Smart, 2013: 140).

accompanying memories being absorbed into the centre of the essential gesture' (in id.: 7).[60]

He offered a description of the painting, at once direct and oblique:

> You are in a room, then in another room where you see an object being held this way, then you see it in motion, a week later a cup is tilting, the next day a finger curves in the air against a background, you hear a little clink, you swallow a cheese sandwich, something fragile, a cup touches its saucer, you see white… a woman rests one leg over the other, pink…. the thick rug is buff-orange [a detail which seems to verify the 1960s, North American domestic milieu of intersubjective life]. Sense combinations complement one another to enrich perception. (in Woodman, 1967: 13).

Like the form of the content of sense, this description which Chambers gives is tied to an emergent process of enrichment,[61] occurring in an already-ordered space. More directly, he said that 'Painting realistically is creating space'; he also said, conversely, that 'Spacial [sic] experience is one thing I consider real in painting' (in id.: 11, 7). This process occurs for a subject who gathers complementary sense combinations in apperception; such a grasp on the world, which attains to comprehension, offers a sense of the continuity between *perception* and *conception* in (interpellated) mental space. The vital contradiction of immanence and transcendence which inheres in the connection of subjectivity and intersubjectivity – the paradox without which perception would lack its impetus – begins to take shape as a key object of Chambers's aesthetic focus.

2.2.2. Visual dialectic of celluloid and paint

In a quote from a 1974 interview with Deborah Magidson included in an article for *Artmagazine*, Chambers provocatively troubles the relationship between his painting, the photograph, and (implicitly) the frames of film, saying 'I am not interested in photography as such', instead positing that 'the camera is a recording device, something mechanical' (reprinted in *FJC*: 27). In such a context, we have 'photography as a means of duplicating the physical

---

[60] The notion of 'fundamental legibility' of the visual obviously accords with the discussion of spatial legibility in section 2.1 of this chapter.

[61] Cf. thus Merleau-Ponty, 1964a, 171: 'Resemblance is the result of perception, not its mainspring.'

reference point for perception' (id.: 31). His own key 1969 essay, 'Perceptual realism',[62] offers

acute reflections on the balance of art and technology. Clearly comparable (if not directly) to

Lefebvre's conception of representational space as perceived-conceived-lived[63] Chambers

posited 'art [as]: 1. *Perception* 2. *Experience* 3. *Description*' – yet in the next lines of the essay,

also crucially calls it 'a craft of the natural like fruit growing on tress is a craft of nature' (id.: 33).

With this new sense of aesthetics, Chambers would cite *401 towards London* as his 'first work in

a style of realism [he] called "perceptualism"' (Chambers, 197-: 26) (see Illustration Three,

below).

Illustration Three: *401 towards London, no. 1.* 1968-69. Oil on wood, 183 x 244 cm. Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Retrieved from https://www.aci-iac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/art-books_5_jack-chambers-401-towards-london-no-1-kw5-2048x1539.jpg

Attracted by the sight in his rear-view mirror while driving to Toronto, 'beyond the Delhi

turnoff', he was struck by what he allusively called a "WOW" moment in the landscape, and had

---

[62] Also reprinted in *FJC*.
[63] See above, section ii.

to pull over to survey the scene, coming back some days later to recapture it photographically: 'That is the essence of perceptualism, and each of my paintings, using the photo as a tool, from this time on, has happened as a result of first my vision, then my memory, where it is accurately preserved by my camera' (ibid.).

Lefebvre (1991: 393) argues, by way of complement, that 'The "real" appropriation of space […] is incompatible with abstract *signs* of appropriation serving merely to mask domination' (for example, flags, which signify as abstract territorial markers). We may say then that Chambers's concern is with art's *generative* capacity, *viz.*, the order of representational space in lived experience – the moments and spaces (the *places* of a point in time) of nature's ineffable plenitude convening with ordered artifice: for example, the capability of a still-life to fascinate its viewer not despite but because of the thickness of its rendered simplicity, and the capability of the photograph to *aid* in (rather than *define* or *initiate*) this perceptual fascination. This is in contradistinction to the capacity of political economy to *produce* dynamic representational spaces of commodity-signs, in exploitative and alienating ways (experienced particularly in a subjective disposition towards the visible, which is dominated by the camera's ocularity and the re-cognitions of commercial iconicity).

In the spectrum that representational space opens between the creatively spontaneous generative ordering and the systematized production of space, where does photography lie? Chambers posed it at the intersection of art and science – of course, he goes beyond this truism, to assert that 'One has to realize the social function allotted to the eye as its specific and real utility' (in *FJC*: 39). This echoes Nietzsche's assertions on the separateness of the origin and utility of things: that nobody has made the hand to grasp nor the eye to see, but that they

do so all the same – which raises the question of the place of 'power-will', (Nietzsche, 2017: Second Essay, §12). As such, we must ask seriously why a given set of eyes see in a particular way. Moreover, to the relativity of the eye's utility, Chambers makes the case that 'The experience is what I see the description with' (Chambers, 1969 in Elder, 2002: 40). This is true insofar as, if description can project any vision through explication, it must do so through its basic modality of experience (explicative description is the shadow which experience casts under the lights of recollection and reflection).

In the flux of experience – both mundane and aesthetic (the distinction is suspect) – causal thinking (whatever its ultimate validity) is an *idée fixe* for perspectival aesthetics: '*Because* is the mental process of aesthetics, […] where kinds of appearances trigger conditioned aesthetic responses to fade out an otherwise potential perceptual impact' (id.: 41); this kind of causality reduces experience and keeps us bound to the interestedness of our conditioned response – it refuses other perspectival interests, thus also transcendence generally. Photography has a place in the poetics of representation, but for Chambers, this place is an overwhelmingly intermediate one: 'the integration value of the foto [sic][64] as a new tool for perceptual painting resides in the camera being able to do its descriptive job so well' (ibid.).[65] A photograph may be a gateway to perceptions, but it can never be either its first or its last word – experience has always-already described *something* of what the photograph describes, and this is how we can begin to perceive its contents at all.

---

[64] This spelling seems to come from the Spanish, *fotografía*.
[65] Some, such as Brakhage, have compared Chambers's *Hart of London* to Ruttmann's film *Berlin: symphony of a metropolis* – but, fittingly for the point on the intermediacy of the camera, Elder (1986: 158, n.4) notes of Ruttmann's views in this period, how he argued that 'photography is essentially a means for creating graphic films and it was on the basis of these graphic forms that films should be constructed.'

For Chambers, the potential of aesthetic experience is twofold (doubly articulated),

because while 'Integrating the experience with the description is a labour of analytical

contemplation' (id.: 39) (a matter of trying to parse out experience and description separately

before re-integrating them), perceptual realism strives to take this further yet, into the activity

of technological and aesthetic syntheses: 'Perceptual realism incorporates two systems of

technology (historic and industrial) and two systems of visibility (body and mind) to structure a

reflector-object of experience'; as an artistic mode, its value is in its ability 'to appropriate two

systems of available technology: organic-tradition and visual-mechanical; dimensional-mobility

and scientific-linearity; release and tension: in-out; breathing' (id.: 41). A key application of

Chambers's idea of perceptual realism is therefore to synthesize and appropriate space for a

more fully integrated experience. The camera is an indispensable instrument in this process:

'Deploying the foto [sic] as an integrated visual component thereby completes the closure of

these two extending systems which as closure creates its own object' (id.: 42). [66] The

perceptions emerging from the integrated quality of such contents bring forth their own proper

container-forms, and perception can fleetingly glimpse its own interestedness: 'The one-system

"take" is a significative manner by which we understand what influence is being elaborated'

(ibid.) – but the integration of two systems in Chambers's perceptual realism beckons us to go

beyond our perceptions, even if by first offering them to us in their fulness. We might say, then,

that the 'foto' frame inherently makes no single promise (certainly not Stendhal's '*promesse du*

bonheur') – rather, it contingently makes any and every promise it can. And as far as the

contingent local context is concerned, 'Where North American artists do embody an historic

---

[66] This 'closure' may be understood as a kind of integrity between the 'thing'-sign and the 'thing'-concept

dimension is in the medium of personal filmmaking' (id.: 43). While Chambers is most acclaimed and remembered for his painting, he nonetheless clearly intuited the singular intersection of the historical and the personal in the films of North American artists (the films of Brakhage made a deep impression on him, upon seeing them).

But Chambers's 'silver paintings' of the mid-1960s offer crucial insights into the nature and motivations of his media transition, being his pivotal period between painting on one hand, and photography and film on the other. He himself referred to these paintings as "instant movies": they were described by others as resembling 'solarized negatives' (Milroy: 13), and are indeed genuinely kinematic paintings, as 'Only the extremities of absolute light and absolute darkness are visible' (Magidson: 31), such that the apparently static contrasts become dynamic as the viewer moves around them. Again, Chambers's work exhibits an inextricable dialectic of expression and content, fringed by spirituality: 'I found that silver paint gave a positive/negative image pendant on the angel of light and/or the movement of the viewer' (Chambers, 197-: 23). As with *Mary and Olga visiting*, in the silver paintings, '[s]pace is a "felt" environment' (Chambers in Woodman, 1967: 11); but in these paintings, this percept is raised to a higher order, such that 'Space is the dimension created by the observer moving through the experience or in *waiting* for the experience when the work is lit by alternating light sources. […] Time as a new dimension has come into view.' Equipped with a new sense of the temporal dimension, Chambers was poised to create his major cinematic opus, which shined light on the relation of personal experience to representational spaces.

2.3 *The Hart of London*: between the temporal local and the universal eternal

Stan Brakhage, in a 1977 letter outlining his thoughts on Chambers's works, described *The Hart of London* as 'an epic in consideration of the city', comparing it to Vertov's *Man with a movie camera*, Ruttmann's *Berlin*, 'and especially Cavalcanti's "Nothing but the hours"' [*Rien que les heures*, more often translated as *Nothing but Time]* (1984: 43). Bart Testa (in Elder, 2002) resumes this train of thought, by positing that the film moves from an epic to a romantic scope. I think this viewpoint can be admitted, but also advanced further, and deepened: the film is indeed *epic* in its spatiotemporal scope, but I argue it is moreover a *modernist* epic, and is thus a stylistically polyphonic panoply, insofar as it examines the multifaceted nature of the dynamics of experience in the representational space of city life – in this regard, the film particularly bears comparison to *literary* modernist epics, such as William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* (focused on the Patterson Falls of Patterson, New Jersey), Hart Crane's *The Bridge* (focused on the Brooklyn Bridge), and most especially, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and even *Finnegans Wake*. These texts especially bring out the vital contradiction of immanence and transcendence as it exists in the historically legible *now* of city life, not unlike Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures* (1926), an experimental docudrama which draws on graphical forms to unflinchingly depict Parisian city life, with all the miseries this entails.

Hart is Chambers's final film, and indeed it works effectively as a summary statement of the aesthetic interest which the cinematic efforts of his perceptualism took in life, death, space, and time. But, for all the universality of such general problems, the film is inseparably bound to the city. Brakhage charmingly muses on his childhood misapprehension of the phrase "to bring coal to Newcastle", saying:

> I thought that there would be nothing more wonderful than someone who would bring incredible complexity and crystalline wonder of a hardened black (but multi-shaded black) and sudden glistening piece of coal to Newcastle people, and show them in all senses the wonder of something that they were producing for the world. (2005: 86)

Chambers's 'London' and Joyce's Dublin both converge on such a point: they are figurative reflections on the city and the character of its experience, as witnessed in the engagement of ephemera by a self-consciously polyvocal narration (the scrupulous authorial selectivity for an intertextual chorus of found materials), offered up to the city from which it originates.

Chambers was exceedingly clear on his methods and motivations: he explains how he 'publicly requested all Londoners to send me one snapshot to be used in the film. I received thousands of snaps and thought of the film as a municipal team effort' (197-: 29). He transparently sought to offer London a glimpse of its heart – but since this heart has only ever become more thoroughly grey (the ideal test market city, distinctly indistinct), it has become harder even (or especially) for Londoners to make sense of the process by which Chambers's film links local places to universal phenomena.[67] The vast majority of the found footage was obtained from the

---

[67] A contemporary review by local journalist and art critic Lenore Crawford (otherwise a champion of Chambers's work in visual arts) was not positive. She wrote on its cinematography that 'Description of the film misrepresents the film, though, for the film making too much of the time is poor in quality with resultant footage that is a bleary mass of white or grey with nothing visible, or so jerky that it is impossible to follow.' Of the soundtrack, she claimed 'Sound effects were monotonous – a constant roar which the film maker probably intended to represent the transition of life to death but which actually became a bore, and it's doubtful that Chambers wanted the impression that life is a bore'. This raises the question, of whether she had uncharitable ears or if the film was presented on an inferior sound-system, as her summary description of the soundtrack misrepresents its scope and subtlety; and while Chambers may not be saying simply that life is a bore, he has much to say on life through documents of quotidian life; in this sense, any boredom which the film exudes is part of a medium of aesthetic and philosophical problematics. She concludes that 'At present the film maintains a huge amount of artistic material in it, but it needs a huge amount of work to transform it into the visible creation with an impact which Chambers intended' (1970: 27). While Crawford understood Chambers's distinction between sight and vision, she did not comprehend how it was developed in this film.

Similarly, while Bob Beavers of the *London Free Press* gave strong reviews to Fraser Boa's short documentary *Chambers* and to Chambers's short films *Circle* (called *Circle 4* in the article, a working title) and *R34*, he noted of the audience that 'People were shaking their heads Wednesday night as they left South Secondary School after viewing three locally produced films that show another aspect of life' (1969: 23).

local CFPL archives, and (as pointed out by Broomer, 2018: 184) the found footage can always

be distinguished from Chambers's own footage by the circle punched in its upper-right corner.

Although it is less than a quarter-hour, the opening sequence of *Hart* (drawn from local

news footage, shot in 1954) resonates over the remainder of the film's duration. It begins *in*

medias res, fitting for its epic form.[68] Chambers economically describes the episode, as follows:

> A deer had strayed into the city and was trapped by fences in some Londoner's backyard. The deer had leapt several fences to get where it was and was now too exhausted from his fright to jump further. The police brought in ropes and harnessed him, then he was transferred to a wired enclosure, name unknown. The hart had been wounded by his frantic leaps and by the shock of it all and a huntsman was called in to finish him off. (ibid.).

This speaks to many sides of the 'uprootedness' which Chambers referred to in his 1969 essay:

the mind-import of European colonialism takes up its experienced notion of 'civilized' ordering

of space, which it feels it must fatally impose over the innocence of the landscape, and the

peoples and ecologies comprising it. The animal encounter threatens the city, just as the city

threatens the deer. This sequence effectively posits the city's figurative foundation on a scale of

epic-poetic time, yet also in terms of a basic affective resonance in representational space: as

exhibited in so much of the Canadian avant-garde, we see here the 'attempt to depict

emotional dynamics at the societal level' (Czernis, 1991: 156) – also typical of Canadian

experimental cinema and aesthetics generally, is this reckoning with nature. Although the

footage was literally shot in 1954, within the film, it is set off in a kind of primordial narrative

space: the constant sound of waves crashing and receding evokes the eons of cosmic time, and

as a review of the film (written just a few years after its release) noted, 'Printing multiple

exposures of positive and negative images and overexposing single images, Chambers creates a

---

[68] What would it mean to try to narrate London *ab ovo*? We would have to extend our scope of consideration to the much vaster interval of time when the space which comprises London today *was not* referred to as London. See Chapter 3.

winter within a winter of 1955 [sic]' (Feldman, 1976: 55). This recursive winter, defined by the

timeless struggle of innocence and experience, is at the heart of the film and the city. As the

deer moves deeper into the suburbs, leaping the boxed enclosures of backyard fences, it

becomes fatigued; two women keep an eye out from the street,[69] and as one points, the image

flips twice on its horizontal axis. Like the timelessness of the winter, the deer is hopelessly

trapped in space (the woman can point anywhere and fatally identify the deer, or the incursion

of nature, for city authorities). A hunter aims his rifle at the wounded hart through the chain-

link enclosure; footage in multiple exposure shows the deer lying dead.

The film proceeds from there, and (as Chambers puts it) 'resurrects some historical

Londoners in negative footage. Their historical footage of the city is brought forth in

overlapping negative and positive exposures of the same image until gradually, by repeating

themselves, they synchronize into clear positive pictures of the present' (197-: 29). The images

of the present appear before us in multiple exposure, variously negative or overexposed – this

sequence has a rhythm in its editing like the 'two-system take' of Chambers's perceptual

realism: the historicity of the everyday images of small-city life appear and disappear over one

another, with an organic pulse like systole and diastole and a mechanical metre of positive and

negative images, reflecting and provoking afferent and efferent flows of perception and

experience. While Brakhage's comparison of the film to a 'document of the city' highlights a

similarity to the poetic grappling with ephemera of *Ulysses*, this sequence also resembles his

recounting 'one theory of dreams, that they occur in a burst of synapting in our sleep' (in Elder,

2002: 118) – thus, like in *Finnegans Wake*, the city is intertextual in its being a collective dream,

---

[69] These frames are also the subject of Chambers's painting, *The Hart of London* (1968)

which we cyclically wake from and fall into.[70] The viewer is confronted with a rapid-fire deluge

of still images (the aforesaid snapshots collected from Londoners).[71] Interestingly, the flurry of

Londoner-images interjects near its end a picture of a severely burned Vietnamese child (which

appeared in Chambers's short-film *Hybrid*), thus cutting across time and space to link London to

global conflicts elsewhere. Through the systolic and diastolic rhythm of its cuts, the sequence

attains to the limpid order of positive images, but only after a brief filmed scene shows many

shot deer being arrayed by gun-wielding hunters who trudge around them – what was once a

single episode of a hart's tragic death, has been instituted and rationalized to the point of mass

slaughter. At such a point, the distinct landmarks of the city emerge out of its burgeoning

identity: the courthouse, the hill at University College, the Kellogg's factory, the McCormick's

factory, the Dominion Public Building – among which are interwoven shots of active subjects,

such as pedestrians, traffic vehicles (both automobiles and horse-and-buggies), a man spraying

an ice-rink with a hose, and so on. But they are scarce or diminished, compared to the

landscape and the buildings which seem to really inhabit the city (we see no crowds, in this

passage).

One shot (which consists of multiple exposures; see Illustration Three) has a spectral

prominence and resonance – namely, a shot of a horse-and-wagon in slow motion, overlaid

with its negative, which variously falls into, and out of, sync with the positive image.[72] It

---

[70] Guy Madden's urban somnambulists occur again.

[71] It is impossible to say what type or degree of irony Chambers was or was not indulging, when he told *London Free Press* entertainment columnist, Bill Webster, that 'If they send in lots of snaps and photos, I'll get on with it. The citizens of London are the stars, and I'll be the producer and director' (Webster, 1968: 43). Still, one gets the sense he is serious at least about the indispensability of Londoners' contributions.

[72] This shot, as well as several others (such as the man hosing the ice rink, and the shots of Richmond and Huron, discussed below) come from an abortive 1935 promotional film, *Welcome to London*, which (according to the late local documentarian-historian Chris Doty) was 'doomed from the start', as Carling Breweries closed during

becomes particularly poignant, in the light under which Czernis casts the entire film: 'Jack

Chambers' art is about looking for history, both personal and collective, in visual metaphors,

which haunt him like recurring dreams' (1991: 161). It stands as a relic of a bygone era (as over

against the then-burgeoning presence of the system of automobility); it is totally overlaid by

and burdened with its past, its negative image, and hence is caught in slow-motion. It is

replaced with other images of city life (a jackhammer tears up the street) and suburban

domesticity (a well-dressed family poses in front of their fine home and yard), and indeed, the

next animals to be seen are, again, the chorus of dead deer being piled on one another. This is a

kind of crucial turning point in the film, as characterized by Tscherkassky: 'at the moment of

transition, all of the film's sequences […] always make metonymical or metaphorical reference

to each other' (in Elder, 2002: 177). The film is so *determinedly open-ended* (precisely the kind

of paradox which Chambers relished and to which he gravitated) that one can understand any

point of its duration as referring to any other point, as its intense moments relate to its

extended duration. Hence a living beast of labour *becomes* dead beasts of leisure, and it is this

becoming that counts more than either beast-set alone. In Chambers's second chapter of his

unpublished manuscript, *Red and Green* (entitled 'Sight and vision: how to describe what is

seen and not seen in a single image'), he quotes Merleau-Ponty on the nature of the invisible,

viz., the visible: '"…the proper essence […] of the visible is to have a layer […] of invisibility

which it makes present as a certain absence"'

---

production. Moreover, the cameraman allegedly did not clean his equipment, resulting in most of the shots being of low fidelity (retrieved from https://dotydocs.theatreinlondon.ca/Archives/yesterday/lostfilm.htm, August 2021). My thanks to Janelle Blankenship for identifying the source of these clips.

Illustration Three. A horse spectrally overlaid with its negative image in *The Hart of London*.

(1964a: 187-188; in Smart, 2013: 49). Chambers does not make simple structural aestheticism from these words: the fact that the surface of each layer is the depth of the other, means that they emanate a genuinely ghostly being, in the perspective which he adopts. Still, it must be asked, 'how much of this is Chambers' dream and how much is the camera's?' (Czernis, 1991: 163). Of course, the oneirism is specifically designed to be ambivalent, as far as who the dreamer is. The past as a ghost comfortably inhabits dream-space, shared or otherwise: Chambers himself (in another section of *Red and Green,* titled 'The invisible') sought to discern precisely what a ghost might be (at least in terms of subjective perception): Tom Smart[73] concludes that Chambers was 'suggesting that the category of visions referred to as "psychic"

---

[73] Whom it was that 'decoded' this manuscript and made it publishable, *viz*., copyright law.

are most evident and real to the perceiver and are called up from associations, memories, and histories of a particular place' (2013: 53). The oneirism of the city means it is populated by at least as many ghosts as people; places that once were peoples' haunts retain molecular ghostly traces of this status and use.

Extreme close-up shots of samaras ape the ocular function of a microscope:[74] these shots become those of plants' shoots, finally turning to mature maples: a kind of arborescence takes root. This sequence-cycle starts over, but in the close-up rustling of foliage, the viewer sees a pair of pruning shears cutting back stems. If plants in this film are anything like the animals in it, then this scene also bears out the general and earliest concept of the film, which Chambers described in a letter (29 January 1964) to a potential distributor, Daryl Duke: 'The conception is cyclical: life begins, ends, begins again' (1984: 20). At this point, the waves on the soundtrack calm to the sound of a running river. These shots signal the conflict immanent to the socio-natural, the effort of self-conscious artificiality against fatalism, to shape the flows of vitality and mortality.

Like Tscherkassky tells us, metaphor and metonym are the threads which convey the thematics of the film to us, and the surrealist conjunctive is deployed by Chambers *via* match cuts between extreme close ups of cow and human eyes. The soundtrack also literally entails this fluidity, with the constant sound of a trickling stream ebbing and flowing: the process it carries on with the images flows together as a whole. In a black-and-white medium shot, a man in an abattoir slits the throats of lambs lain on a stone slab, while the shot captures their death

---

[74] Comparably, Chambers had said of viewing the Castilian landscape, that 'a vista of several miles in that clear and machineless light seemed a particle of torso under a microscope' (in Woodman, 1967: 7).

throes.[75] In close-up, a small herd of sheep stands waiting, looking indifferent. After an extreme

close-up of a knife, the image of a lamb fetus faces viewers, poised so tenuously between

generativity and decay – another collapsed binary of intensely immense immanence. The

footage of a birth-sequence confronts viewers: gloved hands and obstetrical instruments work

to extract an infant, requiring an episiotomy in the process.

The abattoir scene explodes back into the frame, in marvelous colour that conveys the

full force of the sensory experience of the Chinchòn slaughterhouse; indeed, as he put it in that

1959 letter,[76] we see how 'The blood runs red and luminous' and can almost smell the 'blood

and sweat'. The reiteration in colour (from the earlier black and white) stresses a processual

aspect, but in reverse to how it experientially occurs: giving viewers the footage firstly with

innumerable shades of grey anchors our approach in the 'white force' of the slaughtered lamb

as a symbol-index and allows us to appreciate the 'thing'-image as both symbol and percept.

Whereas to have firstly or only the colour footage, might chiefly produce a feeling of revulsion

or confounding in the viewer – and yet, it was just such raw sensory experience with which

Chambers saw precisely fit to create symbolically ordered spaces for things' particularities.

Colour, to Chambers, was a means of access both to this ordered space and to its particular

things: he characterized the use of colours as 'springboards and magnets' (in Woodman, 1967:

7).[77] And this symbolically ordered space does tend to dominate (again, as in much else of the

---

[75] These shots are of an abattoir that was part of a Spanish monastery, which Chambers shot – Broomer tells us that he 'travelled to Madrid Orense, La Touza, Sevilla, Huelva and La Antilla, in September and October of 1968, shooting footage for what would become *The Hart of London*' (2017: 169-70).

[76] See p. 62, especially the phrase which Chambers quoted from Merleau-Ponty in his *Red and green* manuscript: '"I perceive in a total way with my whole being; I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being, which speaks to all my senses at once".'

[77] Broomer effectively summarizes (without reductionism) the use of black-and-white and colour cinematography in *The Hart of London*: 'In *The Hart of London*, attention wanes and focuses by colour, allowing the viewer to slip

Canadian avant-garde cinema of the period), whether as landscape and buildings or as

intersubjective space.[78] Hence, we see footage of Londoners crowding to watch men pile and

burn a massive bunch of Christmas trees, while local firefighters look on nearby from their

truck.[79] In long-shot, the quasi-ritual blaze silhouettes on-lookers: in the light of the 'white

force' of the communal blaze, people become mostly flat silhouettes, like graphical shades on a

plane.

More syntagma carry us through this process: there is extreme close up footage of a

human fetus (dominant colour: red); Olga Chambers, with her and Jack's sons (Diego and John),

at a public pool (dominant colour: blue); like the title and content of *Red and green*, there is a

resolute contrast struck here, again held together by the intermittent trickling of a stream on

the soundtrack. A writhing mass of entrails is visual prelude to a day at the beach, presented in

colour albeit in fast-forward and at a low framerate: this makes it difficult to discern much

besides the sand and the water, though much passes by that cannot be grasped at an

apperceptive level on the first go round; but at the very least, the viewer can make out a

seaplane going one way over the water just by the shore, then going back the other way –

without lugging an excess of psychoanalytic baggage, one might say it is a reversed *fort/da* that

---

between a state of awareness and focus, and a state more open to the psychic activity of image association. […]
The montage of childbirth and abattoir mixes both, in a sequence that demands both forms of attention to invoke
what is simultaneously universal and particular' (2017: 193). Chambers's printing of the black-and-white footage
on colour film stock gives it a curious and ghostly blue hue.

[78] Broomer convincingly situates *The Hart of London* within an aesthetic of difficulty which was explored by other
contemporaries of the Canadian cinematic avant-garde, such as Michael Snow and Joyce Wieland.

[79] Broomer identifies the scene as a barn fire, though one notebook of Chambers's indicated footage of *both* –
Chambers's pink notebook has 'REEL #2 (cont'd.) ¶ Aug. 7. 54 – Barn fire –' (p. 3), which presumably refers to
found footage; later, in the same notebook, and under a section for 'HART OF LONDON' (above: ~~HEART~~'), there is
an entry, '5) Move into yearly sequence of TV NR [?] events: […] cutting Xmas trees – burning trees' (unpaginated).
This latter entry seems to have thematic resonance with the film, and I tend to identify it as the scene in the film;
but in truth we cannot be certain. (Notebook retrieved from Box 16-4 of the Chambers Fonds).

visually announces the coming-and-going of the brief sequence. From what Herman Goodden

conveys of Chamber's published autobiography,[80] he notes how childhood visits to Port Stanley

made such an impression on Chambers, not least 'because it was the first beach he ever knew'

(2016: 105). In Goodden's view, besides the qualities of these early memories ('primal and

indelible'), what drew Chambers to writing about this was – besides his not having visually

treated Port Stanley in his work – that 'the story he tells about that particular outing to the

beach encapsulates something essential about the animating principle – or the conceptual

dynamic' of his oeuvre (ibid.). I suggest the seaplane acts like a *da/fort* (here one moment, gone

the next), if only because of how much Chambers makes of childhood wistfulness at returning

home: '"The fading of the light made the evening sad, and I looked forward to getting back

home and remembering the sunshine and the water when everything was right"' (in id.: 106).

And we see just such dying evening light in *The Hart of London*, after the fast-forward beach

outing sequence: without belabouring the point, one can argue *this* was his visual treatment of

his Port Stanley experiences of youth (notwithstanding whether these shots were literally

produced there – the colour footage of fading sunlight seems to come from Chambers's 1968

visit to Spain). The whole fast-forward beach sequence expresses an allusion to the interlinking

of memory and experience, in and through time – the mental reel of memory wound,

unwound, rewound.

At least one sequence in the film cannot be separated from its autobiographical

significance for Chambers, by which I mean the young man swimming in Deshkan Ziibing during

---

[80] Of which 'The entire limited print run of 300 numbered and signed copies of *Jack Chambers* was pre-sold and distributed to its subscribers within a month of Chambers' death in May of 1978 at the age of 47' (Goodden, 2016: 103).

winter. It too coheres with so much of what we have seen in the film: as Brakhage puts it, when

the viewer watches this film, '[they]'re entering a world wilder than Brueghel's [which] is not

ordinarily seen as such because people are so used to reading this as if it were home movies –

"Oh, look at that, he's swimming the river in ice-cold weather." He probably died of pneumonia

next week' (2002: 122). His lament is spot-on, even if hyperbolic: the swimmer's actual fate is a

matter of indifference, because the sequence itself *mimes* death and, in this respect, even

jocosely thumbs its nose at it. An officer waits on the bridge above to apprehend the

transgressor (we can do little more than mock death, and so only a single ceremonial officer is

needed). It is not hard to see how this is a farcical representation of a childhood anecdote

which Chambers described:

> Cycling home on evening, the firemen had hooked from the river on the end a long pole a blond boy about my age. It was at the York St. bridge [which passes over Deshkan Ziibing]. I stopped to watch. They had hooked him under the left arm. Two firemen wrapped him in a rubber sheet in the boat and poled the boat to shore. We had fried eggs for dinner that night and when I put ketchup on the yoke and broke the yoke so that the yellow and red mixed, I felt nauseated and couldn't eat. I saw reproductions years later of old master paintings of the Descent from the Cross. I could see that boy being hoisted from the river, his arm and clothes hanging and his hair covering his face (197-: 2-3).

In Chambers's view, the force of the river has both vital and deadly capacities, such that its

effects can be captured in the liminal image of the Descent from the Cross, situated between

death and resurrection. In this light, the ironic tone of the found footage which Chambers

employs comes across like the parodic depiction of Christ's 'Second Coming' in Fellini's *La dolce*

vita, when a statue of Jesus flies over Rome, hoisted by a helicopter. But the transgression is

visibly gestural, not real, and so the swimmer deferentially climbs into the black police van

waiting for him, flanked by friends and families. This sequence obviously shares a number of

elements with the grave episode Chambers witnessed as a boy (the river; the presence of

emergency personnel; a young man in the river), but there are also significant differences. Most

especially, whatever tension there was in the 'red and yellow' of ketchup and yoke that so nauseated Chambers as a boy, had dissolved and resolved into a complex set of feelings about a given person's relationship to life and death. I believe this sequence expresses those feelings, as an index of difference to the nausea with which Chambers first responded to death (the red-yellow of the ketchup and yolk), while the intervening years allowed him to assimilate the experience more to his perceptual red-green system. This is an optical re-writing (re-righting? yet not an overwriting) of experience, such that it can be accepted without nausea. In this way, the sequence illustrates the modality of the tension which Chambers holds between vision and memory. As Smart (2013: 56) writes, 'A viewed scene for Chambers […] was accorded texture, substance and resonance through the association and memories generated by the viewing'; it is doubtless that the associations and memories of this boyhood event occurred to Chambers in his (re-)construction of this sequence. Because memory and vision exist in an inextricable dynamic, each becomes a mean to work through the other. The *use* (rather than the meaning) of this sequence is to assimilate the red-yellow horror of the personal encounter with death, into a more universal red-green system that accommodates the continuity of life and death.[81] The universalizing quality of the sequence derives from the use of found footage as an expressive form: it establishes death as both individual and communal.

Similarly, the gurgling of the river on the soundtrack carries us to a geographically far-removed scene: news footage from a Middle East nation shows men being extracted from a

---

[81] I emphatically *do not* intend the reader to consider Chambers's diagnosis of acute myeloblastic leukemia as the key to this sequence, though it came mid-way through the production of the film. Clearly, Chambers's work had had an interest in the tension between life and death well before this film, as shown in this study and others. If there is a *key* to this sequence, I argue that it is the anecdote of the drowned boy in Deshkan Ziibing – but what precisely this key would unlock in the associations, memories, vision, and experience of the viewer, I cannot say.

construction project (what looks to be a tunnel) which had been undergoing excavation. There are onlookers, a few outfitted in military uniforms, while the men extracted from the abyss wear Western-style clothing of civilians and workers; a man in traditional Muslim garb tearfully clutches one of the saved, expressing every ounce of his affect in his face and gestures. There is even a faint Orientalist trace here, positing this far-away land and peoples in contradistinction to those of North America and the Old World; still, this binary is invoked precisely to collapse it, in order tor reveal the mutual interpenetration of its (supposedly) exclusive terms. The difference in dress among all the persons is immaterial for them: the universality of death abides in any particular locality (whatever other differences are immanent to it), and so the silent gestures of the aftermath of this brush with death fully express themselves to any viewer – the fear of the eyes of the one born back into the world of the living, the tears of he who receives him. The *use* of this sequence is to expand the scope of Chambers's reflections, while still integrating the particularity of the local: in this way, Chambers both posits and transcends the reality of difference (the difference of reality) by expanding the scope of the relationship of the universal and the particular while supporting their mutual inextricability.

Various other found footage is presented to viewers (all black-and-white). We see many sailboats on a body of water, with a great striped sail standing out against the other white ones.[82] A person visible only from the waist, wearing something between smock and cassock (synecdochic for Chambers, or anyone who appreciates his process in this film?), crosses an improvised bridge of planks onto a construction site; after a match cut, a woman in heels does the same. Water-towers are prepared for demolition and knocked over (one falls from a

---

[82] There is another intertextual strain here within Chambers's own oeuvre, *viz.*, his *Regatta* mixed media series (1968), and especially *No. 1*, which features the striped boat and a stirp of film.

rooftop and crumbles devastatingly with a dusty exhalation; the next simply falls over into the dirt of the railyard in which it stands). A Canada Pacific train pulls into a railyard. Paratroopers leap out of a plane. A man in a greenhouse shows off some plants and their output. Men (most old, some younger) box in barrels in the middle of a field before a crowd; they run a wheelbarrow gauntlet under a bucket of water, trying to time and aim their joust to not be soaked (of course, neither the jouster nor runner is ever unscathed – a funny fatal gauntlet). A man shows off tremendous flowers under dozens of protective umbrellas in his front yard (like the river, the sun is both a vital and a fatal force; relatedly, the flowers stand as a convergence of vitality and aesthetics). As two young ladies appreciatively stick their noses into the flowers to sample their fragrance, it is difficult to not recall here (for one who has read it) one of Chambers's autobiographical descriptions of his childhood time spent living with his parents at his grandparents' house, at 646 Dufferin Avenue: 'In summer our garden was rich and beautiful. Grandad was a gardener. He grew huge peonies. I buried my nose into them for the aroma and always came out sneezing. […] I remember my grandfather leaning on his shovel and smoking his pipe' (197-: 1). Again, in the associative play of the black-and-white images of this found footage, it is hard to imagine Chambers did not bear these perceptual associations in mind; in considering these words, it is hard not to see the old man as Chambers's grandfather – yet not in a direct way, but through the associative play. Thus, the conjunctive surrealist function carries us from the paratroopers deploying, to the man in the greenhouse concerned with the fruits of his labour, to pseudo-Grandad Chambers: the parachutes of the military men are linked to the garden's umbrellas not just by their visual resemblance, but by the linkage of the man in the greenhouse. Therefore, I say the old man is not simply representative of Chambers's

grandfather; rather, the associative play Chambers has ingrained in the sequence shows the continuity of dominance and mastery in activities as varied as military operations and botany (which was specifically explored in his earlier film *Hybrid*, mentioned earlier), as with the absurd gambols and mock-combat of the old men.

A dog stands proud out front of its house: there is a plate of its silhouette over the house number. The dog follows her keeper in a well-shaped but still mostly lifeless backyard in early spring, and she picks a withered and dry leaf out of an empty flowerbed, proudly displaying it in the top buttonhole of her coat. A well-dressed elderly couple, seated, greet children who enter the shot, and the children kiss their elders in turn; relatives look on, smiling at the warmth of the scene. They crowd around a table, reminiscing about the early-twentieth century photos scattered over its surface, pointing out details for the camera, dropping photos, shuffling others, picking up still others. At a rural home during winter, hunters bring home their kill (a wolf) while a woman hangs laundry, watching their approach expectantly. They present it for her examination; they play with its limp limbs, finger its jowls, grin with dumb gloating glee over its corpse. A little girl pets a bird clutched in her grasp, surrounded by another dozen or more bird cages. People slip class photos into envelopes and slide them into the bottom of bird cages, all arranged for delivery. One is brought to a disabled boy in his home, of which quite a deal is made; he is sat up alongside the birdcage to have a look, and when looking at the camera, smiles as if it is what he knows he is supposed to do, but furrows his brow when looking into the cage. Bodies have been assembled by a dusty roadside, mostly covered by blankets but with some frozen faces still peering out. A rocket, a mere sliver, ascends the volume of the sky; a man puts on sunglasses and cups his hands over his eyes to get a better

look; for a moment, a flag that disappears into left-frame traces a parallel to the rocket's trajectory. On the soundtrack, a jarring change is made to the clucking of birds (from the organic to the biotic). On a snowy day, at Huron and Richmond Streets, the Public Utilities Commission takes the top off a monument to veterans of the Great War, to repair it (this monument also historically served as a boundary marker for the city): this illustrates the mutability, and the provisional nature, of expressions of communal identity.

In the final sequence of the film, the reflexivity of the process becomes absolute, *viz.*, Chambers and the viewer. Chambers himself is shown simply engaged in mowing his lawn, the most mundane of activities (naturally, other Londoners elsewhere would be mowing their lawns – if we were to get a diegetic soundtrack for the shot, we might well hear the purr of distant lawnmowers on other lawns, were Chambers to shut his off).[83] 'Hey, give me some', a young child's voice utters on the soundtrack. The flare of a tail of film alerts us to the re-arrival of colour footage in a burst. 'John… John, be careful with your movements!' It is Olga Chamber's hushed voice instructing John Jr., who we see scampering up a gentle slope of green grass. Chambers: 'Stay down, John; stay down.' Olga: 'Stay down, John… Here you go Diego; don't eat the seed yourself, give it to him!' The children run down the other side of the slope, approaching a herd of five or six deer in the tall grass by a fence. Chambers, again: 'Here, Diego. Come 'ere, Diego, I'll getcha some more.' Olga, again: 'Be very careful, he's going; he's going for you.' The children approach the proxemic boundary of the deer, who inch away at first but stop and stare back at the children, whose hands are outstretched in offer. The younger of the two boys looks transfixed in fear by the comparatively huge stag beside him (see Illustration 4),

---

[83] I have not been able to locate in the literature who it was that took this shot.

standing stock-still and moving only after his brother approaches and the deer relents. 'You have to be very careful': the soundtrack loops Olga's utterance. In medium shot, the two boys feed a deer from their palm: the younger turns to the camera with delight on his face. *Cut*: the soundtrack loops again ('Careful, be very careful, he's going for you'); the younger son feeds a remaining handful to the deer (left and right in a two shot, respectively), and edges away as it moves towards him, sniffing in the air for more, and overtaking the frame. The soundtrack begins to resonate with familiarity as it loops again; the two boys feed the deer (Diego sneaks a pinch for himself), and the deer sniffs their empty hands before it darts away. 'Here, Diego. Come 'ere, Diego, I'll getcha some more.. … Now, wait; wait a second. Don't give it to him yet.' The tail of the film strip comes again, and we are at the banks of Deshkan Ziibing; along with the looping of the lines of Jack and Olga Chambers, the sound of the river returns and finds its proper source. The shot looks at ground level, directly across to the opposite bank, and pans right, over the surface of the water, before tilting upward to the sky and panning back left towards a cluster of clouds. The same shot repeats, as Olga's trenchant utterance returns ('You have to be very careful…'). The same shot set-up (but a different shot) repeats the movements and captures the difference in the sky, a much clearer and broader expanse as the pan left begins but turns towards a sun that is lower in the sky, which makes the lens flare overwhelmingly in the shot. Again: 'You have to be very careful'. We see the same shot set-up a

Illustration Four 'You have to be very careful…': in the (poetic-epic) time between the hart's encounter with the city and the encounter of the Chambers' children with the deer, the relationship of animality and humanity *becomes* something other than what (or how) it began.

fourth time, but it is now late twilight, and all the riverine flora are silhouettes merely trimmed

by the faint remnants of scattered sunlight; the orange hues of light which cut a luminous strip

into the black water give way to the wispy cirrus clouds, which themselves give way to the vast

black expanse of sky. Once more, before the final shot cuts to black, Olga implores viewers (the

subject of address procesually shifts to us, in these repetitions): 'You have to be very careful…'

Coda: the absolute poetics of material becomings and becomings-animal

Chambers left off any further cinematic efforts for the remainder of his life, although he

expressed considerable fulfillment with the work; this was owing to a combination of certain

crucial factors, namely, the relative unprofitability of the films, his 1969 leukemia diagnosis, and

a determination to give a more robust bequest to his wife and children on his passing. But the

motives and insights of *The Hart of London* persisted with Chambers for the rest of his career

and life. Hence in 1972 he wrote:

> Perception in process is like a sound movie. Suddenly the picture freezes and loses focus. The sound goes. The de-focusing brightens and becomes white light. Then the focus returns, the sound comes back and the film starts moving again. That's the slow-motion version of what happens. The moment of 'white light' is the moment of perception. The frame returning to focus and the and the first returning sounds are the registration of object-world on the nerves as the senses recover. What the senses record and how and when they record it is an example of creation projecting its pattern on the world.

> Chambers, 1972: 31

The 'white light' is an open-ended iconicity driven by the distillation of the 'thing'-

concept/'thing'-sign in the perceptualist index-symbol. The way Chambers refigures Olga's

words ('You have to be very careful'), it is not difficult to see how this is Chambers imploring

the viewer to be careful both in the perceptual process itself (the perceptual constituting or re-

cognizing of the 'thing'-sign/'thing'-symbol) and in traversing the field of transcendent iconicity

('white force') which this local, concrete 'thing'-alloy enables. While Chambers was pressured

to divert his attention from filmmaking for economic reasons (his painting *Sunday morning, no.

2* was sold for $25,000 the then-highest price ever paid to a living Canadian painter for a

painting),[84] the two media were inextricably related in his work, both in theoretical and

practical terms (*The h(e)art of London* and *Regatta* each appeared both in paint and film – the

latter was both subject of a painting and of certain shots in *The Hart of London*).

More than that, I argue *The Hart of London* is the highest expression in Chambers's

oeuvre of his perceptualist ideals, but also that this is as an extension of, and in keeping with,

his paintings. Broomer goes so far as to say that 'Paintings such as *401 towards London, no. 1*

---

[84] See entry in Cheetham (unpaginated).

(1968-69), *Victoria Hospital* (1969-70), *Lombardo Avenue* (1972-1976),[85] and the *Sunday Morning* series (1968-1977), contrary to their meticulous form, were primitive riddles (2018: 166), yet it is not clear where *The Hart of London* leaves off this ostensible primitiveness (conversely, as noted, the *London Free Press* reviewer, Lenore Crawford, otherwise a champion of Chambers's visual work, bemoaned what she saw as both the technical crudity and thematic bluntness of the film). It seems more appropriate, to me, to characterize *The Hart of London* as an ideal-typification of his earlier perceptualist efforts, like a network of tangents shaved off so many of the circles that are the paintings of his *oeuvre*; this film (and to a lesser extent, Chambers's short films) are joined to his paintings by a series of infinitely fine perceptual-theoretical points (as with the links to *Regatta*). These points and their connections do not so much altogether make up primitive riddles, as much as they collectively compose a prismatic set of poetic illuminations of the visual-representational senses of everyday life.

While Broomer's (2018) examination of early Canadian avant-garde cinema situates *The Hart of London* not just within an aesthetic of difficulty, but also as an *absolute film*, this latter idea was independently drawn on, in relation to the film, by Camper (2002). He himself draws this idea from P. Adams Sitney's *Visionary Film* and characterizes it as 'to try to make the one complete film that would encompass all of cinema – and the entire cosmos' (133). He argues that *The Hart of London* typifies this idea (though it has mostly eluded recognition), particularly in how it 'enjambs' its shocking breadth of content (ibid.). He notes that the original version included a scene of Jesus's descent into the contemporary world but does not mention that this

---

[85] The street where Chambers resided with his family.

was into Chambers's own backyard.[86] The conjunctive (*and*) function clearly expresses an

absolute function in Chambers's storyboard notes: '(1) Jesus […] (2) becomes family entering

gate into yard […] (2) = (3) […] sheep waiting for slaughter […] (3) = (4) sunrise on lake (R)

[reverse?] […] (4) = (5) – animals: cows: horses, dogs, birds, etc.: chickens at roost – sunset on

hill; (5) = (6) Good shepherd card' (unpaginated).[87] Elsewhere in the same journal we see the

conjunctive elaboration of plant life, and the imitation of plant life: as over against flowers,

there are their relatives, the vegetables in the supermarket, and in relation to them there are

canned vegetables, as also wax fruits and fabric flowers made by machine and by hand. Camper

sees in such absolute conjunctions 'a dialogue between two Gnostic notions: the view that

objects in the material world are prisons for light and the idea that light […] represents a purer,

divine energy that underlies all things' (134). Therefore, we can say that if the hart is the film's

protagonist, it is so as a 'white light' that permeates every frame of the film: the hart is literally

in the projection itself, in its white light. Hence, most crucially, Camper sees every scene as a

recapitulation of the first (135). To my thinking, this is at once the simplest and most important

part of the film's formal expression, or its organization: every scene – indeed, every shot, every

frame, every percept – is a new encounter with the hart (or its iterative descendant, as it were).

In this sense, Olga's words echo over the entire film, well before they have ever even been

uttered (in this film, effects also precede causes): 'you have to be very careful' – the phrase

becomes as much a statement of both pragmatic and ideal truths, as something said to her

sons. The most audacious (if justifiable) thing I might say, is that the film also begins exactly

---

[86] Spiral notebook in Box 16-4 of Chambers Fonds.
[87] Chambers notes that the frame rate is supposed to change as the film moves out of the backyard, from slow (64 frames per second) to normal (24).

when it ends, that is, when viewers resume the white light (open-ended iconicity) for themselves (of course, not every viewer is sympathetic to the form of either the expression or the content).

Camper pithily states for us what becomes clear to an apperceptive viewer: 'by intercutting London with news footage from other locales, and by locating the largest themes in mundane images from London itself, Chambers also finds the whole world there' (136). But I think this is also accomplished in a way that is at once more direct for being more immanent (hidden in plain sight), namely, through the form of expression that is the medium itself: the celluloid and white light of the film and projector, respectively.[88] In a similar vein, Wees (1993: 32) argues that 'even the most painterly and abstract found footage films offer an implicit critique of the film industry's conventional, standardized representations of the world, and like other kinds of found footage films, they interrupt the endless recirculation and reception of mass media images.' Considering these words, we can confirm that the Chambers of the Perceptualist(/perceptual realist) period was not a painterly painter, even if a masterly one, and that he had a visual sense distinctly more classical than almost any of his contemporaries, only absorbing at a distance the idea(l)s of Surrealism; yet his critique of 'conventional, standardized representation' was implicitly but definitely accomplished as a critical collage of personal and found footage.

In his paintings, this critique is expressed in the perceptual acuity with which he recorded the 'WOW' moment, minimal and understated as it was in his paintings (what Broomer called a 'primitive puzzle', again, is closer to an immense immanence, which is so

---

[88] Again, for crucial this suggestion, I am indebted to Janelle Blankenship.

despite and *because of* its spartan limpidness)[89] – both a negative critique (*against* the mere

surface, which so captivated the American photorealists) and a positive critique (*for* inner

vision). And what this plenitude (the immense immanence of this inner space) meant for

Chambers can be understood in light of his 1957 conversion to Catholicism (while studying in

Spain), partly inspired by his reading of St. Teresa of Ávila, such as her *El castillo interior* (1577)

and *Camino de perfección* (c. 1567). Broomer summarizes their significance for Chambers: '*El

Castillo Interior* describes seven mansions, or states, of interior prayer, while *Camino de

Perfección* is a method for developing a contemplative life…. Both texts are founded on

metaphors of paths, ways, and dwellings' (2018: 38, fn. 11). Chambers's spirituality was

evidently closely tied to his sense of spatiality, both as immanence and everyday practice, but

likewise fanning out into a transcendent-eternal.

The materiality of the work itself belonged to Chambers's 'tracks and gestures', which

was the metaphor with which he identified his autobiography. The tracks and gestures of this

universal hart run throughout the length of the film, as through the city's past, present and

future. Broomer (170) gives a gloss on the medieval Christian iconography of the hart,

noteworthy not least because 'The term was […] already antique when Chambers began his

film.'[90] The hunt was 'elaborate and ritualized' (ibid.), and hunters dearly prized the hart: it was

subjected to persistence hunting and killed only once it had reached exhaustion. In this way,

---

[89] Broomer elsewhere captures very clearly the difference between Chambers's perceptualism and the superficially comparable American photorealists of the same period, such as Richard Estes or John Baeder. He writes: 'The "wow" moment is also distinct from Henri Cartier-Bresson's concept of the decisive moment in photography, for Perceptual Realism connects visual experience to inner vision, while those notions and works in photography and American photorealist painting that deal in the description of moments and the instant of taking are inevitably more concerned with surface, with the isolation of visual interest' (2018: 65, fn. 43).
[90] Broomer argues (170, fn. 10) that the scenes of the hart are replacements for the scenes of Christ's descent in earlier drafts (discussed above).

the hunters became (in a self-implicating way) participants in 'an allegory for Christ's ordeals',

as the hart's agony identified it with Christ (170). Most importantly, the cultural belief was that

harts lived for hundreds of years, and therefore had the 'wisdom of witness' (as well, they were

supposed to have a bone in their heart which prevented them from dying of fear). Thus,

through this central metaphor of the hart, 'Chambers would embark on a work of

environmental, moral, spiritual inquiry into the dread character of the present' (id.: 171). And if

Broomer (172) is correct that 'the aim of *The Hart of London* was […] to redeem perception' –

and with it, life – then this should reasonably be tied to Olga's imploring words to her and Jack's

sons: 'You have to be very careful'. The words pertain to the tenuousness of the encounter with

the deer, the likelihood of it fleeing or even the threat its majestic antlers intimates (the

helpless, frightened hart has iterated into a formidable deer). But on the soundtrack, these

words merge into the sound of the flow of Deshkan Ziibing, as we get the triple repetition over

the water and into the sky (a faintly Dantean, triptych-like ascent). The river is pluripotential

both on the soundtrack and as a socio-natural object. Considering the link to the

Anishinaabemowin name of the river (approximately: 'Antlered River'), the river as a choice of

object for the transition – from the scene with the deer, linked by Olga's words – is more apt

than even Chambers realized. *We have to be very careful*: situated in the material becoming of

the film is the becoming-animal of the plurally-iterative hart with which the viewer comes to

identify. We are face-to-face with this hart – ourselves, each other, place/space – in everyday

life, and if the gesture we extend to it is not to be met with fight or flight (reaction, regression,

chauvinism, etc.), then manifestly *we have to be careful* before these antlers.

Chapter 3 Plateaus of a rhizomatic river: the inclusive disjunctions of Deshkan Ziibing.[91]

With this chapter, I will address part of the landscape here in London, Ontario – namely, the river at its core, which has the English-language name 'River Thames' and the Anishinaabemowin name 'Deshkan Ziibing' (which, as stated, means 'Antlered River'). How to address, in writing, the material reality of this natural object with so many aspects and layers – literal and figurative, social and natural? I will articulate this essay especially in terms of the river's land-language link, or the contingent mutual entailments (conjunctions and disjunctions) of its names and its uses, as constructed by distinct cultures, at various times. I do this following the limited set of assumptions made by Latour's (1993) conceptualization of network analysis, wherein 'All the collectives similarly constitute nature and cultures; only the scale of mobilization varies' (Fig 4.4) and this 'common matrix defines […] the point of departure of comparative anthropology' (id.: 107) – this framework admits the forks of Deshkan Ziibing as the point of departure for a comparative anthropological (de)tour. And with the conjunctions of land-language and name-use, on the reverse of the medal are disjunctions, both real and nominal (the abstract formal equivalent of the concrete form of the river forks): inclusive (both/and), that is, the middle branch, into which flow both the north and south branches; and exclusive (either/or), that is, the forks, which determine that part of the water flow from either one fork or the other. Bearing these figures in mind, I will try to highlight how actual configurations of conjunctions and disjunction at the Forks asymmetrically include and exclude

---

[91] This chapter is a revised and expanded version of an essay written for Regna Darnell's Spring 2021 course at the Western University's Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism: 'Land, language, locative'.

each other, such that their relations can be thought out more explicitly. Taking as point of

departure(s) the rhizomatic perspective of Deleuze and Guattari – whereby, on one hand, 'The

multiple *must be made*, […] but […] in the simplest of ways, […] with the number of dimensions

one already has available – always *n* - 1' (1987: 6) and whereby, on the other, 'An assemblage is

precisely this increase in the dimensions of a multiplicity that necessarily changes in nature as it

expands its connections', and as it opens a supplementary dimension of *overcoding* (id.: 8) – I

will problematize the hegemonic status of the river by trying to understand this divergently

forked flow and how it is perceived and interacted with outside (and inside) the surrounding

colonial framework, thereby taking a step towards a fuller linguistic and ontological reading of

this site and its names. This reading (like Chapters 1 and 2) is *a poetics of representation*,[92] or a

survey of how effects of meaning are initiated and circulated, whether, *viz.*, space (abstractly

considered), aesthetic practice and theory, or land (concretely experienced). Hence in this

chapter I will highlight the river's contingent aspect as an assemblage of uses and meanings

before and after John Graves Simcoe, on a scouting expedition in 1793, imposed its status as a

colonial entity under the hegemonic name 'River Thames' (*cf.* Littlehales, 1889, 12-13: entry for

2 March). In a direct way, this will be a historical application of Deleuze and Guattari's idea of

'deterritorialization/reterritorialization' to a new domain (another plateau): what was once

Deshkan Ziibing becomes an ersatz 'River Thames'. But the discussion of a theoretical image-

concept of a nomad, *viz.*, the actually existing, traditionally semi-nomadic cultures which are

now settled in Deshkan Ziibing and environs, must be tempered by methodological

considerations which ensure that this theoretical frame does not become a pretext for facile

---

[92] Again, where a poetics is a 'label for any formal or informal survey of the structures, devices, and norms that enable a discourse, genre, or cultural system to produce particular effects' (Reed, 2016: 262).

generalizations about the ethnographic and ethnohistorical data. With this more integrated

sense of how the river has arrived at its current moment and how it may become otherwise yet

again (what has been reterritorialized may yet itself be deterritorialized), we can both literally

and metaphorically move downstream and begin amassing the connections of connections,

while always working to mitigate any totalizing unities (always n - 1).

3.1 The name of the river

If I am to discuss the name Deshkan Ziibing, I must do so at least within a cursory socio-

linguistic understanding of the concrete context of Anishinaabemowin, both historically and

more contemporarily, and thence draw towards a deeper understanding of the name Deshkan

Ziibing. I therefore think it most appropriate to begin by considering the traditional

Anishinaabemowin name of the river.

We can be assured from Valentine's (2001) voluminous reference grammar that

Anishinaabemowin is a language like any other which spreads over a considerable geographic

area, by which is meant that it is a tapestry of dialects, which intersect through mobility and

bilingualism, and according to which variations occur in 'vocabulary, pronunciation, and

grammatical patterns' (1). And, of course, such variations are not synchronic or static, but are

diachronic and dynamic, and reflected in the evolution of accumulated differences as

communities become more distant (id.: 5). As I will show, if we were to follow the west branch

of Deshkan Ziibing, the subdialect of Anishinaabemowin would change significantly by the time

we reach Walpole Island near Lake St. Claire, while still being mutually intelligible for two

different dialect speakers of this same language.[93] Minute linguistic differences may be richly (if

---

[93] Though Valentine notes the inherently provisional nature of a term like 'mutual intelligibility'.

not definitively) situated in considerably large areas of space. Hence, in further detailing

Anishinaabemowin dialects, on one hand, Valentine contextualizes 'Chippewa' as a 'term […]

sometimes used to designate Nishnaabeg in southwesterly Ontario whose ancestors moved

into Canada from the U.S. in historical times, many of whom have maintained their Chippewa

cultural identity' (id.: 15), while also characterizing 'Nishnaabemwin[94] [as] a recent

development of several distinct varieties of Ojibwe that were spoken on the shores of Lake

Huron and Georgian Bay, and inland points to the east' (17). Within this dialect, the distinctions

multiply and become more fine-grained in their offshoots, and these distinctions prove useful

to tell from where people come.[95]

Thus, two subdialects of Nishnaabemwin are distinguished by Valentine: 'Odawa (or

Ottawa), spoken in Michigan and along the shores of Lake Huron, and Eastern Ojibwe, spoken

in the area to the east', of which he says that Odawa diverges considerably from

Anishinaabemowin dialects, while Eastern Ojibwe differs only slightly from 'southern dialects'

of the US and border regions (ibid.). So, since we are setting out from Deshkan Ziibing in

London, we can put on our itinerary that we must set out, equipped at least with an awareness

of the Odawa subdialect of the Nishnaabemwin dialect. We can further orient ourselves

linguistically, within this broader area, by reference to Valentine, who infers that because

---

[94] 'Nishnaabemwin' is the word Valentine uses throughout for what I here refer to as 'Anishinaabemowin', or the language of the Anishinaabe peoples, which further divides into dialects and subdialects (although at times, as at page 17, he seems to use it in a more specialized sense, as situated along the shores of Lake Huron). He writes 'The language is here identified as NISHNAABEMWIN, because that is the term that its speakers, the NISHNAABEG (singular, NISHNAABE), typically use to identify their language' (1). I defer to the same principle in using the term Anishinaabemowin (for the broadest grouping), as this is the term I have most often read and heard used by Anishinaabe peoples; it may be supposed it has come to similar prominence in the interval of time since Valentine published his grammar. This development also neatly illustrates a snapshot of the diachronically dynamic linguistic development which Valentine implies in his discussion.

[95] By comparison, setting aside the particular intricacies, one may think of the great amount of variety of local dialects in England, which allow people to 'place' each other by speech.

'Manitoulin Island and Walpole Island […] represent opposite ends of the geographical range of Odawa', vocabulary observed in both these localities is probably shared by most of those between them.[96]

Indeed, the forks of Deshkan Ziibing seem well-positioned as a starting-point for a representative sampling of this geographical-linguistic continuum, situated as they are somewhere along a curve between Manitoulin Island and Walpole Island (albeit closer to the latter, to which the river circuitously connects). While Rhodes (1976) clarified the geographic contours of this subdialect (i.e., from about Manitoulin Island to Walpole Island), it is continuously recognizable by its 'characteristic pattern of vowel weakening' (Goddard, 1978 in Rogers, 1978: 760). This distinction is bifaceted, since, on one hand, it *categorically* distinguishes this subdialect from others (its external facet), and *continuously* distinguishes geographically bounded manifestations of the subdialect within itself (its internal facet), each one recognizable along the formal gradation of this vowel-weakening pattern. But this goes a bit far afield, considering we have just departed. To start, then, we may refer to Rhodes's (1985) *Eastern Ojibwa-Chippewa-Ottawa Dictionary*, which should be approximately suitable, given that he concurs on the occurrence of the Ottawa dialect in Michigan and southern Ontario (id.: x); moreover, Valentine (2001: 22) says of this work that it derives the greatest part of its data from Manitoulin Island, Curve Lake, and Walpole Island, and that 'As such, it provides good coverage of the two main sub-dialects of Nishnaabemwin'. So, we can be sure we are giving the matter of (sub)dialects at least something of its due, in referring to Rhodes (1985).

---

[96] Though this is a hypothetical-empirical claim, which cannot be effectively built on without sufficient data to verify it.

First: *deshkan.* Rhodes's dictionary (109) lists this word, albeit always prefixed by a

genitive nasal phoneme – i.e., '**ndeshkan** *na* my horn; *pl* **nde=shknag;** *loc* **ndeshknaang;** *dim*

ndeshkaans, ndeshknens'; *na* designates the word as an animate noun, while *loc* denotes the

locative case. Valentine (2001: 120) explains that this prefixed genitive phoneme is a personal

prefix which indicates a dependent noun (and hence, is also found for the words of most other

body parts) This entry does not have information on whether its words derive from Ojibwa,

Chippewa, or Ottawa dialectal use, implying its shared status among them – to confirm the

point more definitely, we may look to Valentine (id.: 117), who attests '*nd*eshkan "my horn"' as

belonging to a set of 'General [shared] Nishnaabemwin animate nouns' (see Section 3.2.

below).[97] While Rhodes's definition does not strictly correspond with the common rendering of

"*Antler(ed)* River', we can nonetheless accept it as generally correspondent, in that both horns

and antlers are protrusions on the skulls of numerous mammal species. It is noteworthy that

Rhodes records an instance of the locative case for the word (though the proper name Deshkan

Ziibing does not exhibit this case). This reveals a metonymic capacity in the word, or what

Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 35) consider its capacity as one entity to refer to another related one

– in this case, the bony protrusion of a mammal's skull to a natural feature of the landscape. It

seems that with this instance of the locative case of an animate noun, we have found one of

those symbolic metonymies that link the experience of everyday life to the coherent

metaphorical systems of a culture (id.: 40). If we consider what Lakoff (1987: 5) says elsewhere

– that 'There is nothing more basic than categorization to our thought, perception, action, and

speech' – we may argue that the world is not simply navigable as such, but that outcomes of

---

[97] Specifically, body parts are inalienably possessed in Algonquian languages (personal communication from Regna Darnell, 30 April 2021).

processes of similarity judgements (such as the metonymic locative *ndeshknaang*) reflect the

processual constitution of its navigability in a linguistically communicable way. As Hallowell tells

us of spatial perception: 'the role that differential linguistic and cultural factors play in the

processes through which the spatial attributes of things become abstracted, conceptualized,

expressed in traditional forms of speech, and made the basis of action, cannot be overlooked'

(1955: 185). In a sense, we are at the opposite end of this process, at the antlers' ends – not as

a *telos* but as a contingent yet patterned outcome: the entry in Rhodes's dictionary

(understandably) does not afford an understanding of the linguistic and cultural factors that

generated the locative sense of *ndeshknaang*, but it *does* highlight the possibility of the word as

a basis of action – for example, the metonymic grasping of the land, in thought and speech, as a

spatial orientation communicable *via* grammatical case (although this is an unconscious or

intuitive operationality of language for most speakers, while this is also something of which

others may well be conscious).

Second: ziibi. This entry is also not tagged according to the rich dialect grouping that

Rhodes (1985) deployed in countless other entries, suggesting a broader currency. He has for

this entry '**ziibi** *ni* river; *pl* **ziibiin**, **zii=bwan**; *loc* **ziibiing**' (id.: 404). I must admit, it came as

something of a surprise that this noun should be inanimate in Anishinaabemowin – but we seek

confirmation or disconfirmation to disabuse ourselves of just such naïve expectations. Here we

find that the locative case corresponds to the proper name Deshkan Ziibing, and the inanimate

noun to its alternate rendering as Deshkan Ziibi; but this distinction cannot be considered

clean-cut, as Anishinaabemowin speakers sometimes treat the two interchangeably. In any

case, Kilroe (1991) offers further insight on the orthographical variation of the locative case,

writing that 'Several spatial relations, including the locative ("at") […] are expressed in Ojibwa by the locative suffix [oŋ], orthographically -ong, and its morphophonological variants, represented orthographically as -g, -ng, -ang, and -ing […], also -k and -nk in certain varieties…' (194).[98] We now have a stronger sense of what is meant by being at the antlered animacy of this inanimate river.[99] But this is only a kind of surface reading of the name.

3.1.1. Animate, inanimate.
I must turn to the issue of (in)animacy as it pertains to the organization of Anishinaabemowin, because of its centrality to the language (although, here, I can only begin to deal with the [in]animacy of nouns and cannot consider that of [in]transitive verbs, as well). Nouns being animate or inanimate reflects the structuring of the obligatory *grammatical gender* which nouns partake of in Anishinaabemowin; this grammatical gender classifies all nouns as (usually) either animate or inanimate. This grammatical gender is not only recognizable *per se* (that is, in the very instances of classification), but in other parts of speech also. Hence, Valentine (2001: 115) offers us a means to assess the animacy of a noun: plural animate nouns end 'in «g» (or «k», depending on how one spells), and inanimates have plurals ending in «n».' Thus, if Rhodes (1985) by mischance were to have not included the grammatical gender of the noun *ziibi*, there is an informative redundancy built into the language through which we would still have been able to infer it by referring to the plural which he gives (*ziibin*), and which confirms (*per* Valentine) that it is inanimate. This grammatical gender is itself given to considerable variation

---

[98] Fascinatingly, Kilroe also focuses on the 'Temporal uses of the locative suffix', e.g., adverbially, or when a sub-span of a span of time is 'located in time in a manner analogous to the location of perceivable objects in space' (195-196), which perhaps even suggest a spatiotemporal matrix for metaphors. But I restrict myself here to the 'spatial relations expressed by the locative suffix' (id.: 194).

[99] Still, there are numerous subtleties of the grammatical system of animacy that cannot be covered here due to restrictions of length. For example, animacy is partly perspectival, and the same noun can shift, such that (in some dialects) a grounded plane is inanimate, but it is referred to as animate when in flight (personal communication from Regna Darnell: 30 April 2021).

as regards a given word, as Valentine illustrates with the different but 'usually related' meanings of certain words: 'On Manitoulin Island […] *zhibiihganaatig* as an inanimate noun means "pencil" and as animate, "pen". In some communities *mkizin* when inanimate is a shoe, but when animate, a tire. On Walpole Island, inanimate *biiway* refers to fur, or the hair of fur, but animate *biiway* refers to fur, wool, or yarn' (2001: 115). Valentine minutely observes such variations within and between (sub)dialects, illustrating the range and subtlety of the variations which occur within this structuring of grammatical gender.

Animacy seems to potentially prove a knotty area for many nouns if we are looking to take a synchronically representative snapshot of the language – which would necessarily risk obscuring the diachronic diversity of subdialects. Indeed, we would do well not to solely depend, e.g., on Rhodes's dictionary, of which Valentine (id.: 117) voices certain reservations: 'Most Anishinaabemowin dialects treat all words for hides […] as animate, but the few listings in the Rhodes dictionary (all from Curve Lake) consistently show these words as grammatically inanimate.' The structuring of the grammatical gender of animacy in Anishinaabemowin must be admitted as a contingently patterned and open-ended dynamism, and not as static essence. This grammatical gender is also given to a specific kind of shifting in narrative contexts. Valentine explains that an inanimate object will gain the animate 'ability to speak or exert spiritual power'; the opposite case is not attested, though theoretically possible (id.: 118-119). This shifting can also be broader and more general in the scope of its instances (as we saw with how the relation of dependent nouns to personal prefixes can shift gender), and it can be subtle and dynamic in these particular instances (e.g., local, contextual gender shifting of common nouns), in ways beyond my abilities to grasp for the purposes of this paper. As such, for the

benefit of my reflexivity in this work, I include here an unabridged quote from Odawa professor

Cecil King, on animacy in the Anishinaabemowin language, which Valentine cites:[100]

> My language is an Algonquin language, I am told, and it is structured by describing things as animate or inanimate, so I am told. English definitions of the terms "animate" and "inanimate" lead people to think of things being alive or not alive. Is this how our language is structured? I think not. In Odawa all so-called inanimate things could not be said to be dead. Does animate then mean having or possessing a soul? Is this a sufficient explanation? I think not. Is the animate-inanimate dichotomy helpful in describing the structure of my language? I think that it is limiting, if not wrong outright. For in Odawa anything at some time can be animate. The state of inanimateness is not the denial or negation of animateness as death is the negation of the state of aliveness. Nor can something have a soul and then not have a soul and then acquire a soul again. In Odawa the concept of animateness is limitless. It can be altered by the mood of the moment, the mood of the speaker, the context, the use, the circumstances, the very cosmos or our totality. English terms imprison our understanding of our own linguistic concepts (in Valentine 2001: 119).

Thus, there is a clear risk of reifying or fetishizing a simplistically static notion of animacy as a

grammatical gender that structures Anishinaabemowin and Nishnaabemwin. An awareness of

this grammatical gender may well inform our discussion, but its fluidity as a linguistic concept in

practice assures that we would go beyond the scope of our knowledge, to make any easy or

hasty generalizations. Still, even if fluid, we can regard these two categories as giving a key

bearing, as Valentine (2001: 119-20) argues that 'the distinction between these categories is

absolutely fundamental to the workings of the language, whatever we choose to call them.'

The case of the animacy of Deshkan Ziibing seems unsettled, then: '(n)deshkan)' ('[my]

horn') is animate, but 'Ziibing' ('River', locative) is not. But then, these are component words of

a proper name, and this latter must be accounted for as such. Thankfully, Valentine also gives

evidence of the variation of grammatical gender between nouns and proper names. He gives

the example of the normally inanimate noun, *mookmaan* ("knife"), rendered as '*Gchi-*

mookmaan, which literally means something like "big knife," [but] is the common designator

for an American, and when used with this meaning and reference, it is animate'; he also

---

[100] Although his bibliography inexplicably lacks any reference to what text of King's it referred.

explains that some words, when used as the name of a person, become animate, and that

certain placenames can be inanimate (id.: 120). Thus, we can readily understand what

Dahlstrom (1995) means when she writes that the grammatical gender of animacy in

Algonquian languages is semantically motivated but not semantically predictable. Considering

the foregoing, the ultimate status of the grammatical gender of Deshkan Ziibing as being an

animate or inanimate proper noun cannot be conclusively determined here. But we can be

certain that grammatical gender bears on it, either way.

3.2 Floating downstream in history

This river is also a conduit of history, a continuously flowing link between past, present,

and future. It is traversed by natural and social networks – 'pre'-modern, modern, non-modern

(*cf.* Latour, 1993), all three appearing, disappearing, reappearing along its course. But aspects of

the intersection of these networks are omnipresent. Hence, the historical understanding of

terra nullius looms over the river at all points, or as Asch (2018: 32-33) describes it, 'this

disjunction between the fact that there were people already living here in political society with

the representation of these lands as vacant.' This disjunction, like the networks, is *inclusive* (it

includes *both* the tacit, practical acknowledgment of the fact of the temporally-prior occupation

of these lands by Indigenous peoples, *and* explicit invocations of the juridical image of *terra

nullius*), though it is hegemonically presented as *exclusive* and already determined, as

theoretically and practically seamless (those who came before are gone and/or irrelevant; only

us moderns and our nation-states remain).[101] The river is continuous in both space and time,

not discontinuous. It belongs to a transparently inclusive disjunction, in contradistinction to the

---

[101] *Cf.* the Supreme Court of Canada's discussion of the case *R v Sparrow* 1990 in Asch, 2018: 32.

casuistic obscurantism of the modernist colonial vision, which artificially imposes a discontinuous break into history, and obscures and occludes the lines of flight of inclusive disjunctions, such that this juridical vison makes them exclusive and rigidly myopic.

The length of Deshkan Ziibing is a series of variously connecting and conflicting socio-natural assemblages (if we even begin to consider ecology, the richness of these assemblages become ineffable). The 'River Thames' exhibits the assemblages of the exclusive colonial disjunction; whereas Deshkan Ziibing holds forth a *much* older set of inclusive assemblages, which more directly face the river's Body-without-Organs. The river is what Deleuze and Guattari might call a great body-without-organs, where *degree zero* is always the principle of any kind of (desiring-)production among organisms, and where all intensities pass like transversal waves in a plane of consistency, a plateau connecting and connected to every possible proximate plateau (1987: 157-158). The river-in-itself is a transfinite substratum of becoming for every socio-natural network that encounters it (and which it encounters). It is itself ineffable, because it could only ever speak the language of things (and not of people). In highlighting the ineffability of the river-in-itself, I am drawing on Benjamin's distinction between language as such versus human language: 'The linguistic being of things is their language; […] the linguistic being of man is his language. However, the language of man speaks in words. Man therefore communicates his own mental being […] by *naming* all other things. […] – *It is therefore the linguistic being of man to name things*' (1996: 64, emphasis in original). We can see this in both names of the river, in both Deshkan Ziibing and the 'River Thames': in each case, what is communicated in the name is an anthropomorphic rendering of the river within culturally distinct but fundamentally linguistic understandings, and does not approach

the inarticulability of the river's being *in-itself*. The name is real, and it corresponds to

something that is real – but the name is *never any more real than* the river with no name (no

name it would recognize) to which the name corresponds, and of which I can hardly begin to

speak.

3.3 Connecting the flows.

Ziibing: At the River – in any case, a fine place to reflect on Borrows's overview of

Indigenous physical philosophy. Without essentializing on this basis, his language could find

metaphorical reflection in the river: like Heraclitus's river, 'Indigenous peoples are constantly in

states of settled flux' (2016: 21), reflected also in attitudes towards time: 'For example,

Anishinaabe people often try to understand the future by remembering the past', drawing on

the way in which time is regarded as cyclical (id.: 22) – knowledge can come upstream from the

past, and be built on and sent downstream, in a continuous (if sometimes choppy) flow.

I believe the socio-natural history of Deshkan Ziibing confirms this, with a human

heritage of interaction stretching back millennia (to around 9000 - 5000 BCE) when Paleo-Indian

cultures initiated human activities on the river, followed by those of the Archaic (circa 6000 -

1000 BCE), and Initial and Terminal Woodland cultures (*ca.* 1000 BCE - 1650 CE), to say nothing

of the cultural enrichment that occurred as a result of resettlement along the Thames by the

Moravian Delaware, Munsee Delaware, Oneida, and Chippewa peoples, during the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries, as detailed by McCallum (1998: 113-116). McCallum's presentation

of the river is arranged like a continuous yet distinctly tripartite triptych, as he divides images of

the riverine landscape of Deshkan Ziibing into historical thirds: 'The first, the Aboriginal, *is

present today* through relic features plus the cultural identity of the First Nations. The second

and third are two European landscapes, one rural and agricultural and the other urban, which overlap to create today's rich composite' (id.: 130, emphasis mine). Beginning with an overview of the archaeological record and continuing into the post-contact period, he summarizes the entire socio-natural lifespan of the river up to the present, situating it in this detailed triptych figure.

The end of the Wisconsin Glacial Episode occurred in southwestern Ontario circa 14,000 - 11,300 BCE, and this area was ice-free by 11,000 BCE; by 9,000 BCE, groups of Paleo-Indian hunters of large mammals had come into southwestern Ontario, with 'evidence suggest[ing] that they were constantly in the Thames watershed for between 3,000 and 4,000 years' (id.: 113),[102] though not continuously settled in any particular place therein. Between 700 and 1000 BCE, pottery was introduced alongside the development of the Woodland Culture, with 'The particular variant established in the Thames watershed [having] been called the Saugeen Culture or more recently the Meadowood (900-400 B.C. [sic])', with different kinds of archaeological evidence demonstrating the key importance of Deshkan Ziibing's spring spawn run (id.: 115). Around 500 CE, the Meadowood Culture was displaced to the north, and the Princess Point Culture subsequently emerged; this represented a crucial turning point for human activity in southwestern Ontario, as agricultural ways of life took hold in the wake of the arrival of 'Meso-American maize (corn) culture', which took some 6,000 years to spread this far (although fish and game were still crucial) (ibid.). McCallum's ethnohistorical genealogy of the area continues: a new culture was 'evolved', the Western Basin, predecessors of the Ontario Iroquois culture which took shape from about 900 CE onward. The account is increasingly fine-

---

[102] McCallum's sources for these data were drawn from the valuable essays found in Ellis and Ferris (eds.), 1990. Ferris provides the theoretical model.

grained as it delves into the following centuries (with some of the intervening centuries addressed here more closely in the following paragraph), with the upshot that 'around 1400 A.D. […] the Neutrals emerged as the independent tribal group that occupied the southwest'; they were 'defeated, dispersed or absorbed by the Iroquois League of Five Nations between 1649 - 1654' (ibid.). This marks the last major cultural transition in southern Ontario during the pre-contact period.

Human activity in the Thames valley was relatively diminished in scale for over a century, though the Chippewa established non-permanent lodgings there to pursue game, sometime prior to 1700 (they also engaged in the traditional springtime practice of making maple syrup, which they shared with later inhabitants, the Munsee Delaware); in the early 1700s, the Chippewa allied themselves with the French for the benefit of the fur trade, while they were allied with Tecumseh in the War of 1812 'in an attempt to protect the territory of the Thames.' Being party to war alongside colonist belligerents on either side therefore seemed more a matter of pragmatism than abstract principle, insofar as it aligned with the positive and negative interests of their basic autonomy as a people (that is, on the one hand, the exigencies of bolstering a valuable sector of economic trade with a trading partner that was sometimes bellicose towards other settler-colonial nations; and, on the other, the necessity of self-preservation by taking up arms against encroachment). Treaty negotiations from the 1790s onward saw the scope of their land claims increasingly dwindle, especially under external economic pressures; by 1832, the government moved the Chippewa onto a reserve, forcibly settling their nomadic way of life (id.: 128-129). This move deliberately and critically restricted

the Chippewa culture by spatially restricting the normally capacious range of their activities, but it could not extinguish the continuity of their traditional knowledges.

Now I shall turn to the Moravian Delaware, who also contemporarily live by the Deshkan Ziibing: in 1792, they were granted permission from the Indian Department to set up a mission post along the Thames River; this period represents a most curious inclusive disjunction of colonial and non-colonial ways of life, as McCallum's synthesis of sources demonstrates: 'In late 1792, the community of Fairfield was established with one hundred and fifty Christian Delaware inhabitants', according to a December entry from the journal of a Moravian missionary, Zeisberger. The town was described as the '"first European style town in southwestern Ontario"' [!] (McCallum, 115-117). Meanwhile, the Munsee Delaware had arrived earlier, in 1782, and by the 1790s had settled on the Thames, near the Chippewas, from whom they finally obtained a parcel of their own land ("a tract of 1,000 acres") in 1840 (id.: 122-124). If we were to assume for a moment that the issue of temporal priority of land-use was simple and unproblematic, then it should be noted that the Moravian settlement was established months before Simcoe's expedition renamed Deshkan Ziibing in passing through. In the simplest terms, *viz.*, the colonists, *the Indigenous peoples were here first*, whether our point of reference is any point in the eighteenth century, or pre-history. As well, even in the conventional terms of the common law private property system, the historical record shows, for example, that when the Oneida settled on the Thames in 1839, Chief Moses Schuyler and August Cornelius purchased the land of their settlement for $15,000 (id.: 126). Thus, by any (putatively) reasonable standard – even a classical liberal one which conforms to the binary oppositions of common law jurisprudence and private property – there are robust indications of priority and continuity of

cultures currently living in the environs of Deshkan Ziibing, coming well as they may have from elsewhere in North America.

The continuity of the river cascades into connections to multiple other continuities, such as that of the Ojibwe culture and language over the period of their historical migration as a people. Benton-Banai (1988) assembles Ojibwe oral histories in written form (in a book aimed especially at young readers, though informative for any audience), to relay the course of their line of flight (from around the tenth century CE, and lasting for about five centuries) (102), beginning when the prophecies of the Seven Fires began to prove true; at this time, the Ojibwe lived by 'the Great Salt Water in the East' (the Atlantic seaboard) (93). Not only was the thread of their history, heritage, and sacred teachings preserved and extended in space and time, but this also found its resonance in the content of their oral tradition: throughout their great migration, there was 'a group of men who were charged with keeping the "Manido ish-ko-Day" (Sacred Fire)' constantly alive throughout their journey; it was the source of all other fires for participants in the migration, and for those who settled at various points along the way (id.: 96). At the second major stopping place, *Kichi-ka-be-kong'* (Niagara Falls), an Iroquois offensive was rebuffed, and peace was ultimately made between these nations. In this period, three major groups emerged in the Ojibwe culture, between which their division of labours bound them in spiritual solidarity: the 'Ish-ko-day'-wa-tomi[103] (fire people) were charged with keeping the Sacred Fire', and 'were later called the O-day'wa-tomi,[104] and still later, the Potawatomi'; second, were the 'O-dah-wahg' (trader people), […] responsible for providing food goods and

---

[103] I have been unable to faithfully reproduce the orthographical arrangement of this word that Benton-Banai gives, albeit only one character (a grave accent over a hyphen).
[104] As with the preceding note.

supplies for all the nation', and who were later called Ottawa; and finally, 'The people that

retained the name Ojibwe were the faith keepers of the nation', and 'were later mistakenly [?]

referred to as Chippewa'[105]; collectively, these groups were known as the Three Fires and

metonymically stood for the whole of the Anishinaabe people (id.: 98). This is in

contradistinction to Chambers's representational poetics (which, in terms of glossematics, was

an open-ended system that jettisoned itself from iconicity, as part of his aesthetics), whereas

this poetics of representation which entails the symbolic-iconic metonym of the Anishinaabe

peoples (in the Three Fires) is a *total* representational system because any representational

double-articulation of symbol-icons is also necessarily subtended by indexicality. The

knowledge of this oral tradition, which has circulated in a continuous flow through generations

and centuries, and over vast areas of land, is of immense spatiotemporal scope, and my

understanding of it is necessarily cursory. Deshkan Ziibing – which speaks so much of and in the

language of things, and the rivered antlers which bespeak the ineluctability of the inclusive

disjunction between assemblages and their Body-without-Organs – cascades into waves of

intersecting connections with this people whose historical line of flight runs in many directions,

patterned like a rhizome (like stem tubers, rather than a neatly branching pattern).

    With these resonances of continuity – between Deshkan Ziibing, the Great Salt Water,

the Sacred Fire, and its 'offshoots [which] lit the landscape at night like stars' (id.: 96),

constellating a mobile figure stretching even beyond the far side of Lake Superior – a harmonic

series of historical flows emerges, of which we could never discern the fundamental tone, but

to which we could never cease contributing, as people residing along or near Deshkan Ziibing.

---

[105] Unfortunately, Benton-Banai specifies neither whose mistake it was, nor its nature. But his methodology and epistemology

The harmonic series that still resonates in this land began before any people came that currently inhabits it (or that ever did) – and will continue, so long as the river itself exists.

3.4 Nomads, literal and figural

In the foregoing, I have tried to move conscientiously through the data, by trying to limit my assumptions and inferences as much as possible, and by recognizing the lacunae of theoretically discussing, in writing, cultures that historically have been primarily oral. I specifically had misgivings about the looseness with which a concept of 'nomadism' might be applied. In addition to the methodological conscientiousness which I have tried to hold to above, I want to emphasize the link between contingency and continuity, which have never been treated as mutually exclusive here. The idea of contingency has been integrated here to work against any potential essentialism, but *not* to suggest that the socio-natural world (or any spatiotemporal subsection of it) is completely arbitrary and meaningless, as if phenomena of cultures and peoples occurred like Brownian motion. Rather, they are deeply meaningful, and these meanings are real (even if constructed, whether syntactically, semantically, discursively, etc., on one hand, or practically, on the other), and can only be so on the basis of some kind of continuity. Thus, I have tried to highlight here how the link between contingency-continuity pertains to an application of the theoretical Deleuzian-Guattarian nomad, to actually existing semi-nomadic cultures (for instance, the Algonquian ones around Deshkan Ziibing), such that the contingent contextual links between *where* and *how* they live(d) are understood as processual and dynamic, yet also meaningful and continuous (while not necessarily conforming to external models of continuity, such as those of the legal system).

I believe my descriptions have been consistent with Darnell's (1998) accordion model of the *semi-nomadic* Algonquian cultures, which are so closely yet dynamically tied to locality – in this article, it is argued that 'Surface differences in the forms of Algonquian social organization seem […] to arise […] from differences of scale'; the 'minimal distinctive features' of groups procesually comprised them as band, tribe, nation, as they expanded and contracted based on the needs of hunting-gathering activities, whereas notions of '*community*' became salient (in the cultures' own terms) particularly as an adaptation to the contingency of forced settlement (90-95, emphasis in original). Because "nations" in Anishinaabe philosophy are distinct from those of Eurocentric philosophy,[106] we must learn to account for such conceptions on their own terms. I have tried to take a step towards that conception here, by way of examining the land-language link that constitutes Deshkan Ziibing as a socio-natural site of riparian settlement and activity in the surrounding areas.

Conclusion

In addressing the poetics of representation belonging to the land-language nexus of 'London' and Deshkan Ziibing, I have tried throughout to not introduce any caesurae between modern and non-modern times and cultures, and not to break up any socio-natural continuities which were not objectively concluded, in terms of their extinguishment or extinction.[107] Hence, I have specifically striven *not* to make any binary break between 'pre-' and 'post-contact' periods critical to my arguments, although this kind of periodization might be salient to other questions. Rather, I have tried to deal here with the inclusive disjunctions that characterize the socio-natural lifespan of Deshkan Ziibing, up to the present. Thus, for example, in addressing

---

[106] *Cf.* Simpson, 2008: 39, n. 7

[107] In this context (like the phrase 'mutual intelligibility'), it must be admitted that the term 'objective' is provisional in its use here.

the name of the river, the discussion of Anishinaabemowin (with its dialects and subdialects) necessitated an appreciation of its geographical scope and its local particularities (e.g., Manitoulin Island and Walpole Island as opposite geographical ends of a diachronically dynamic pattern of vowel weakening). The structuring system of the grammatical gender of (in)animacy was also examined – although the gender of Deshkan Ziibing as a proper noun could not be determined, the subtlety and variety of this structuring system was highlighted (e.g., the contextual variation of the gender of a given noun within a single locality).

My point in all of this has been to highlight the *continuity* of the richness of Deshkan Ziibing, insofar as it is a site of overlapping connections and disjunctions, and especially, connections *through* disjunctions. On one hand, the middle branch of Deshkan Ziibing leads to Lake St. Clair, which by the Detroit River leads to Lake Erie; going from there by the Niagara River to Lake Ontario, the flows may go up the Saint Lawrence River into the Gulf of the same name, and finally into the Atlantic Ocean: through a kind of concrete abstraction opened by cartography and geography, the world itself opens for us at these forks, by intimating the connections of connections – a continuously recursive chain of being becoming being. On the other hand, we see here how despite a disjunction being exclusive ('River Thames'), it can still lead into a vast open-endedness (wherein the subject-navigators may contingently stop or go further at various given points). This recalls to me the continuous socio-natural network of the River Liffey (which has similarly existed under a colonial yoke) as it was painstakingly depicted by Joyce in his so-called 'modernist' comic epic, *Finnegans Wake* (though in reality this work is sufficiently resistant to any programmatic readings, that it is appropriate to call it 'non-

modern', à la Latour). Joyce highlights the inextricability of meaning and being in language by narrating the river's flow as a circle which ties the narrative's end to its beginning:

> There's where. First. We pass through grass behush the bush to. Whish! A gull. Gulls. Far calls. Coming, far! End here. Us then. Finn, again!. [...] A way a lone a last a loved a long the[/]riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs' (2012: 628/3).

Deshkan Ziibing has been the point of departure and it stands also as a point of return. While the river currently exists under a settler-colonial yoke, even (and especially) in its name, there is nothing that inherently precludes the possibility of the continuity and inclusivity of its disjunctions coming to the fore of sociocultural experience once again. But to recognize and begin to understand the deeper continuity of the river, reflected in its socio-natural history and the Anishinaabemowin name, is only to scratch the surface of what the settler-colonial patina obscures. Our understanding must be integrated within a praxis that recognizes – in increasingly practical and material ways – the autonomy of the living cultures discussed.

Afterword: *Labore et Perseverantia?*

In the course of this poetics, this survey of the representational and literal landscapes of 'London' (always so ready to spill into each other), where have we come from, and where are we going? I hope this thesis has served to highlight as many local connections as possible (both representational and material); though I am likewise sure it has fallen short of this purpose, yet neither can I say by how much. I have tried to problematize and critique space and spatial

ordering to get beyond it, yet without the heavy-handedness of blunt iconoclasm. Hence the

alternative *positive* example which I discussed was the open-endedness of place, as with mass

public demonstrations, in the 'ecstasy' of which participants can stand outside of themselves

and interpret and imagine a radical re-ordering of space.

I tried not to make my ternary visualization of Hall's representational schema (Fig. 1),

helpfully bolstered by Hjelmslevian terminology, into a Procrustean bed for interpreting social

phenomena. This was the reasoning behind incorporating the *double articulation* into this

model: as a ternary schema, a double articulation preserved its open-endedness, and entailed

the inductive flexibility of assumptions in light of evidence. Whereas to attempt an exhaustively

integrated reading would have been to failingly impose a total(izing) theoretical system.

There are many more facets to the discrepancies and tensions between the Concept-city

and the operational city than I have been able to address here. For example, this afterword

takes its title from the official motto of the city. The case of the two courthouses should serve

to put into question the relativity of this motto (*whose labour? perseverance for what?* and so

on). And this raises another fundamental axis (perhaps even more deeply seated than that of

global capitalism), namely, that of the nominal and the material: material can be and is named,

and conversely, that which is named can be and is materially effectuated (manifested and

recognized in substantive matter, or material effects). In terms of a nominal task of

decolonization, we must recognize the ersatz status of 'London', Ontario, as such (hence the

quotes: it can never not be an alienating imitation, at least insofar as it rejects, at the level of

the proper name, what is unique in its material life). Therefore, parallel to the argument of

Deshkan Ziibing being the name more appropriate to both the material character and socio-

natural history of the river in 'London' which is now officially called 'Thames', I would use the

extremely comprehensive map of Indigenous placenames in Canada conceived by Stephen J.

Hornsby, and executed by Margaret Wickens Pearce,[108] to suggest, for instance, the traditional

Anishinaabe name for 'London' as an alternative choice: *Baketigweyaang* ('At the side-flow'). Of

course, any opinion I might express is that of a settler; rather, I only echo this suggestion, as it is

not my own, but that of certain local Anishinaabekweg.[109]

While the nominal cannot be effectively discounted, by the same token neither is it ever

more than half of the *literal* landscape (it is no easier to imagine a name without a place,

without *some* effectuated materiality, than a place with no name). As has been observed for

decades, it would be all-to-easy for us settlers to excuse ourselves *via* some nominal

(performatively gestural) system. While 'progress' is an essentially contested concept,[110]

outside of totalizing systems (national or otherwise) which would appropriate this relative

term, it is certain that it requires material vectors of decolonizing praxis, as it requires material

vectors of anti-capitalist praxis (their trajectories have the chance to intersect at certain crucial

points, while retaining the integrity of their fundamental distinctions).

We have to be very careful in our vectors of useful activities and along our meaningful

trajectories, with all their connections, conjunctions, and disjunctions. At the forks of Deshkan

Ziibing there is a fraught and tenuous convergence and conjunction of perceptions,

---

[108] *Coming home to Indigenous placenames*. 2017. Canadian-American Centre, University of Maine. Retrieved from https://umaine.edu/canam/publications/coming-home-map/coming-home-indigenous-place-names-canada-pdf-download/. While this map is extremely comprehensive, it is not completely so – in this respect, its function is analogous to that of a dictionary, insofar as it is meant to describe, rather than prescribe, the use of placenames.
[109] See @waasizoanangkwe. 11 June 2020. Accessed July 2021. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/waasizoanangkwe/status/1271090643297763329.
[110] I take the phrase 'Essentially contested concept' from Gallie, W.B. 1956. 'Essentially Contested Concepts'. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 56* (1955-1956): 167-198.

conceptions, experiences. There is an *irreducibility* immanent to the meanings and uses of this part of the landscape, or what Tuck and Yang (2012) would call 'incommensurability'. More specifically, as they explain, there is an incommensurability between anti-capitalist movements and theories, and those of decolonization; yet the opportunity for 'strategic and contingent' solidarity lies precisely in what is incommensurable, in 'recogniz[ing] what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects' (id.: 28). We must literally unsettle the settler sense of innocence within the historical triad 'settler-native-slave'. In this regard, my own thesis is implicated throughout: its place-space critique is theoretically located on one side of an 'incommensurability of place-based, environmentalist, urban pedagogies with land education'. Chapter 3 was therefore written as the beginning of (or a footing for) a theoretical break with the settler-native-slave triad that Tuck and Yang identify. This is no true escape, though, as this 'break' quickly runs up against its own limits: writing (for my current purposes) restricts me to the nominal. And Tuck and Yang are by no means ambiguous: they title their piece 'Decolonization is not a metaphor.' Decolonization is both a literal and material process of undoing the process of colonialism. Changing the placenames of 'London' would *per se* be only a gestural move.

When I think of what *labore et perseverantia* in this city would entail, in relation to a contingent and strategic solidarity between incommensurables (as Tuck and Yang propose), clearly this is a set of positive tasks, as over against the negative (or problematizing) critique I have posited here. Tuck and Yang are most direct on their points as to the positive tasks of decolonization: 'Breaking the settler colonial triad, in direct terms, means repatriating land to sovereign Native tribes and nations [thus the abolition of the property form], abolition of

slavery in its contemporary forms [thus the abolition of the carceral state], and the dismantling of the imperial metropole. Decolonization "here" is intimately connected to anti-imperialism abroad' (id.: 31). The task thus pertains to an omnipresent, though minutely variable, global-local nexus of domination and exploitation among competing capitalisms (national and/or regional blocs).

True, these positive tasks are outside the theoretical scope of the negative critique of 'London' I have offered up to this point, because their concrete enactment cannot be theorized *a priori.* If I have accomplished the purpose of this negative critique, then the positive task is its incommensurable counterpart, and I therefore give it the last (after)word. 1) *To repatriate* the land of 'London' to the surrounding tribal nations as sovereign (the Deshkan Ziibing Anishinaabeg, the Minisink Lunaape, and the Onyota'a:ka)[111] and effect a renegotiation of pre-confederation treaties (namely, the McKee Treaty [1790], pre-Confederation Treaty No. 2; Between the Lakes Treaty [1792], pre-Confederation Treaty No. 3; London Township Treaty [1796], pre-Confederation Treaty No. 6; Long Woods Treaty (1822), pre-Confederation Treaty No. 25; and the Huron Tract Treaty [1833], pre-Confederation Treaty, No. 29);[112] 2) *to abolish* all elements and structures of the carceral state; and 3) *to dismantle* and reverse the processes of settler colonialism (as with placenames, *but never stopping there*) – these are the fundamental tasks of *revolutionary* progress in 'London' (or what may someday be officially called Baketigweyaang), and they remain to be confronted by a strategically contingent front of solidarities across incommensurable lines. For now, the tasks remain shrouded in abstraction,

---

[111] See D'Arcy, Stephen. 2018. 'London (Ontario) area treaties: an introductory guide'. Unpublished paper. Retrieved from https://works.bepress.com/sdarcy/19/
[112] See again D'Arcy.

overwhelmingly divorced from concrete action (I have not really done anything to clear the air on this matter). But I believe the tasks must be named before they can be materially enacted. As such, although the analytical position of my thesis is formally incommensurable with these tasks (restricted to the page as it is), my hope is that it will have served to name the crucial importance of these tasks. If there is any kind of material *labore et perseverantia* among local persons or groups that count themselves as committed to revolutionary progress, the tasks elaborated above are those to which they should be most fundamentally oriented.

Bibliography

1958. 'Preliminary problems in constructing a situation.' Originally appeared in issue *#1* of the French *S.I. Journals*. Pp. 43-45 in *Situationist International Anthology*. 1995. Edited and translated by Ken Knabb. USA: Bureau of Public Secrets.

1964. 'Questionnaire'. Originally appeared in issue *#9* of the French *S.I. Journals.* Pp. 138-142 in *Situationist International Anthology*.

Althusser, Louis. 2018. Selections from 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'. Translated by Ben Brewster. Pp. 1285-1310 in *The Norton anthology of theory and criticism*, third edition. Vincent B. Leitch, general editor. New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Bachelard, Gaston. 2014 [1958]. *The poetics of space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Benjamin, Walter. 1996. 'On language as such and on the language of man'. Pp. 62-74 in *Selected writings, vol. 1: 1913-1926.* Translated by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Massachusetts: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benton-Banai, Edward. 1988. *The Mishomis book: the voice of the Ojibway*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bicknell, Bryan. 15 January 2021. 'Sale closes on former historic courthouse to private developer'. *CTV News.* Retrieved from https://london.ctvnews.ca/sale-closes-on former-historic-courthouse-to-private-developer 1.5267994?cache=%3FclipId%3D104059%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3Fot%3DAjaxLayout

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. 2013. *Film art: an introduction.* 10th edition. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Borrows, John. 2016. *Freedom and Indigenous constitutionalism*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2000 (1972). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Braidotti, R. 2011. *Nomadic subjects: embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*. 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brakhage, Stan. 1984. 'Letter from Stan Brakhage to Edith (facsimile)'. Capilano Review (1)33: 43.

---. 2002. '"The hart of London": a document of the city.' Pp. 117-123 in *The films of Jack Chambers* [hereafter *FJC*]. Edited by Kathryn Elder. Toronto, and Bloomington and Indianapolis: Cinémathèque Ontario, in conjunction with Indiana University Press.

---. Spring 2005. 'On Canadian painting and cinema'. *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 14(1): 84-100.

Broomer, Stephen. 2017. *Codes for North: foundations of the Canadian avant-garde cinema*. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Film Makers' Distribution Centre.

Camper, Fred. 2002. '*The hart of London*: Jack Chambers' absolute film'. Pp. 133-139 in *FJC*.

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. 2018. 'Rental market report: London CMA'. Generated from https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/data-and-research/publications-and reports/rental-market-reports-major-centres.

CBC News. 6 June 2021a. 'A year after 10k marched through London chanting "Black Lives Matter", what has changed?'. *CBC News*. Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/ayear-after-10k-marched-through-london chanting-black-lives-matter-what-haschanged 1.6053312?fbclid=IwAR0qy7GYfznQ_kT0Ah8zAq6r_SWbJdAyELdU8btPe91if BkZ9JtDDSzWps

–. 6 June 2021b. 'Statue of Egerton Ryerson, toppled after Toronto rally, "will not be replaced"'. *CBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/statue-of egerton-ryerson-brought-down-1.6055676

–. 3 September 2020. 'Sir John A. MacDonald statue in Baden moved into storage'. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/sir-john-a macdonald-statue-baden-moved-storage-1.5711080.

Celebrate the Thames. *Booklet 1: 13,000 Years by the River*. Urban League of London. London, ON: Canada.

Chambers, Jack. October 1969. 'Perceptual realism.' *Artscanada 26*, no. 136-137: 7-13. Reprinted in *The films of Jack Chambers* [*FJC*]. 2002. Edited by Kathryn Elder. Toronto, and Bloomington and Indianapolis: Cinémathèque Ontario, in conjunction with Indiana University Press.

---. 197- [final digit of year not given]. 'chambers: tracks and gestures, 1931-1978 AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATION (draft selection)'. Box-file # 16-6 of the Jack Chambers Fonds in the E. P. Taylor ResearchLibrary and Archives at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

---. 1972. 'Perceptualism, painting, and cinema'. *Art and artists* 7(9): 28-33.

---. 1978. *Jack Chambers*. London: Nancy Poole.

---. [Published] 1984 [dated 29 January 1964]. 'Letter to Daryl Duke'. *The Capilano Review* 1(33): 20.

Cheetham, Mark A. 2013. *Jack Chambers: life and work*. Toronto: Art Canada Institute.

Cholette, Katie. 2007. *Memory and mythmaking: the role of autobiography in the works of Jack Chambers and Greg Curnoe*. Ph.D. dissertation: Carleton University.

City of Edinburgh Council. 2021 10 March. *Edinburgh slavery and colonialism legacy review group – an update.* Retrieved from https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/news/article/13127/edinburgh-slavery-and-colonialism legacy-review-group-an-update

Crawford, Lenore. 28 November 1970. 'London artists' films show sharp contrast'. *London Free Press*: 27.

Czernis, Loretta. Fall 1991. 'The Canadian experimental camera-child'. *Cinémas* 2(1): 155-167

Dahlstrom, Amy. 1995. 'Motivation vs. predictability in Algonquian gender'. Pp. 52-66 in *Papers of the twenty-sixth Algonquian Conference*. Edited by David H. Pentland. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba.

Darnell, Regna. 1998. 'Rethinking the concepts of band and tribe, community and nation: an accordion model of nomadic Native American social organization.' Pp. 90-105 in *Papers of the twenty-ninth Algonquian conference*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba.

D'Arcy, Stephen. 7 September 2018. *London (Ontario) treaties: an introductory guide*. Retrieved from https://works.bepress.com/sdarcy/19/.

Debord, Guy. 1957. 'Report on the construction of situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's conditions of organization and action.' Pp. 17-25 in *Situationist International Anthology*.

De Certeau, Michel. 1984. *The practice of everyday life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Dubinsky, Kate. 2019 May 24. 'London's housing crisis is getting "worse and worse", agencies say'. *CBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/london ontario-affordable-housing-crisis-1.5147252

Editors of Cahiers du Cinéma. Autumn 1972. 'John Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln*'. Translated by Helen Lackner and Diana Matias. *Screen* 13(3): 5-44. Reprinted from *Cahiers du Cinéma 223*, 1970.

Elder, Bruce R. 2002. 'Jack Chamber's Surrealism'. Pp. 87-115 in *The films of Jack Chambers*.

---. Summer 1986. 'Aesthetics, nature, and avant-garde film'. *Descant* 17(2): 135-159.

Egleston, Charlie. 2008. *The consequences of being there: the phenomenon of personal expression through the lens.* Master's thesis, York University.

Ellis, Chris J. and Neal Ferris (eds.). 1990. *The archaeology of southern Ontario to A.D. 1650*. London, ON: Occasional Publications of the London Chapter, Ontario Archaeological Society.

Feldman, Seth. Summer 1976. 'The hart of London'. *Film Quarterly* 29(4): 54-7.

Freud, Sigmund. 2002[1930]. *Civilization and its discontents*. Translated by David McClintock. Toronto, Canada: Penguin Books.

Goddard, Ives. 1978. 'Central Algonquian languages'. Pp. 583-587 in *Handbook of North American Indians.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution.

Goodden, Herman. 2016. *Three artists: Kurelek, Chambers, & Curnoe*. Canada: Elmwood Publications.

Gourgouris, S. 2016. '*Poiēsis*'. Pp. 273-275 in *The Princeton handbook of poetic terms,* 3rd edition. Edited by Roland Greene and Stephen Cushman. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1997. 'The work of representation'. Pp. 15-64 in *Representation: cultural representations and signifying practices*. Edited by Stuart Hall. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Hallowell, A. Irving. 1955. 'Cultural factors in spatial orientation'. Pp. 184-202 in *Culture and experience*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Husserl, Edmund. 1969. *Ideas: general introduction to pure phenomenology*. Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Joyce, James. 2012. *Finnegans Wake.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Kilroe, Patricia. 1991. 'Spatial-marking affixes and the expression of time in Ojibwa'. Pp. 193 202 in the *Papers of the twenty-second Algonquian conference*. Ottawa: Carleton University.

KitchenerToday Staff. 28 July 2020. 'Sir John A. Macdonald statue in Baden to be relocated'. Retrieved from https://www.kitchenertoday.com/local-news/sir-john-a-macdonald statue-in-baden-to-be-relocated-2596436

Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, George. 1987. *Women, fire, and dangerous things: what categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Larsen, Kristian and Jason Gilliland. 2008. 'Mapping the evolution of "food deserts" in a Canadian city: supermarket accessibility in London, Ontario, 1961-2005'. *International Journal of Health Geographics* 7(16).

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991[1974]. *The production of space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson Smith. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, UK.

---. 1996[1967]. 'The right to the city'. Pp. 63-181 in *Writings on cities*. Translated and edited by Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, UK.

---. 2013[1992]. *Rhythmanalysis: space, time, and everyday life*. Translated by Stuart Elden and Gerald Moore. New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Littlehales, Edward Baker (Major of Brigade, etc.). 1889. *Journal of an exploratory tour partly in sleighs but chiefly on foot, from Navy Hall, Niagara, to Detroit, made in the months of February and March, A.D. 1793, by his Excellency Lieut.-Gov. Simcoe.* Toronto: The Copp, Clark Company, Limited, Printers.

Loukaitou-Sideris, Anastasia and Renia Ehrenfeucht. 2009. *Sidewalks: conflict and negotiations over public space*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: the MIT Press.

Loux, Michael. 2006. *Metaphysics: a contemporary introduction.* New York and London: Taylor and Francis Group.

Luciani, Maren Rose. 2005. 'The geography of emergency food assistance.' Master's thesis. Western University.

Lutman, John H. 1988. *The historic heart of London*.

Magidson, Deborah. Fall 1974. 'The art of Jack Chambers: photography as visual reference.' *Artmagazine* 6(19): 19-21. Reprinted in pp. 27-31 of *The films of Jack Chambers.*

Mandel, Ernest. 1976. 'Introduction'. Pp. 11-86 in Marx, 1990.

Marx, Karl, 1867. 'Preface to the First Edition'. Pp. 89-93 in Marx, 1990.

---. 1990. *Capital, a critique of political economy: volume 1.* Penguin: London, England.

McCallum, Ian. 1998. 'Human heritage/First Nations: Thames River Watershed'. Pp. 112-132 in *The Thames River watershed: a background study for nomination under the Canadian Heritage Rivers System.* London, Ontario: Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

Mealing, S. R. 1958. 'The enthusiasms of John Graves Simcoe'. *Annual Report of the Canadian Historical Association* 37(1): 50-62.

Medin, Douglas L. and Robert L. Goldstone. 1995. 'The predicates of similarity'. Pp.83 110 in *Similarity in language, thought and perception*. Edited by Cristina Cacciari Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols.

Mekas, Jonas. 1978. 'The diary film'. Pp. 190-198 in *The avant-garde film: a reader of theory and criticism.* New York: New York University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1945[2012]. *Phenomenology of perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. New York, NY: Routledge.

---. 1964a. 'Eye and mind'. Translated by Carleton Dallery. Pp. 159-190 in *The primacy of perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history and politics.* Edited by James M. Edie. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

---. 1964b. 'The film and the new psychology'. Pp. 48-59 in *Sense and non-sense*. Translated and edited by Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

---. 1964c. 'The primacy of perception'. Translated by James M. Edie. Pp. 12-42 in *The primacy of perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history and politics.*

Milroy, Sarah. 2002. 'Jack Chambers: from camera to paint'. Pp. 9-17 in *The films of Jack Chambers*.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2017. '*On the genealogy of morality' and other writings*, third edition. Edited by Keith Ansell-Pearson. Translated by Carol Diethe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oduro, Kwabena. 30 August 2020. 'Montreal city officials remove toppled statue of Sir John A. Macdonald'. Global News. Retrieved from https://globalnews.ca/news/7306987/montreal-city-officials-remove-toppled-statue-of sir-john-a-macdonald/

'poet, n.' OED Online, Oxford University Press, June 2020, retrieved from www.oed.com/view/Entry/146521.

Reaney, James. 1963. *The dance of death in London, Ontario*. Illustrated by Jack Chambers. London, Ontario: Alphabet Press.

Reed, B. M. 2016. 'Poetics'. Pp. 262-269 in *The Princeton handbook of poetic terms.*

Rhodes, Richard. 1976. 'A preliminary report on the dialects of Eastern Ojibwa-Odawa'. Pp. 129-156 in *Papers of the 7th Algonquian Conference, 1975.* Ottawa: Carleton University.

-. 1985. *Eastern Ojibwa-Chippewa-Ottawa dictionary.* Volume 3 of *Trends in linguistics* (Ed.: Werner Winter). Berlin: Mouton Publishers.

Rogers, E. S. 1978. 'Southeastern Ojibwa'. Pp. 760-771 in *Handbook of North American Indians.*

Simmel, Georg. 1950. 'The metropolis and mental life'. Pp. 409-424 in *The sociology of Georg Simmel*. Translated and edited by Kurt H. Wolff. New York, NY: The Free Press of Glencoe.

Simmel, Georg. 1997. 'The sociology of space'. Pp. 137-170 in *Simmel on Culture*. Translated by Mike Ritter and David Frisby. Edited by Frisby and Mike Featherstone. London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Simpson, Leanne. 2008. Fall 2008. 'Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: precolonial Nishnaabeg diplomatic and treaty relationships'. *Wicazo Sa Review* 23(2): 29-42.

Sitney, P. Adams. 1978. 'Autobiography in avant-garde film'. Pp. 199-246 in *The avant-garde film*.

Situationist International. December 1966. 'The decline and fall of the spectacle commodity economy'. *SI 10*. Reprinted in pp. 153-160 of *Situationist International Anthology*. 1995. Edited and translated by Ken Knabb. Berkeley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets.

Smart, Tom. 2013. *Jack Chambers' Red and green: an artist's inquiry into the nature of meaning*. Erin, Ontario: The Porcupine's Quill.

Testa, Bart. 'Chambers' epic: *The Hart of London, history's protagonist*'. Pp. 141-173 in *The films of Jack Chambers*.

Toscano, Alberto and Jeff Kinkle. 2015. *Cartographies of the Absolute*. Winchester, UK and Washington, USA: Zero Books.

Township of Wilmot. 3 September 2020. 'Removal of the Sir John A. Macdonald Statue'. Retrieved from https://icreate6.esolutionsgroup.ca/230002_iCreate_NewsModule//Management/Attachment/Download/332785b8-dd0b-4548-8950-d38bac30b627

Tscherkassky, Peter. 'At the heart of London: Jack Chambers' *The hart of London*'. Pp. 175-179 in *The films of Jack Chambers*.

Tuck, Eve and K. Wayne Yang. 2012. 'Decolonization is not a metaphor'. *Decolonization: indigeneity, education, & society* 1(1): 1-40.

Urry, John. 2004. 'The "system" of automobility'. *Theory, Culture, and Society* 21(4/5): 25-39.

Valentine, J. Randolph. 2001. *Nishnaabemwin reference grammar.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Van Berkum, Amy and Abe Oudshoorn. 2019. '"Where to now?" Understanding the landscape of health and social services for homeless women in London, Ontario, Canada'. *Journal of Social Inclusion* 10(1): 42-58.

Vangeest, Ari. 2020. *Free public transit and the right to the city*. MA thesis.

Wang, C. C., and M.A. Burris 1997. 'Photovoice: concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment'. *Health, Education and Behaviour* 24(3): 369-387.

Wang, C. C., M. A. Burris, and X. Y. Ping. 'Chinese village women as visual anthropologists: a participatory approach to reaching policymakers'. *Social Science and Medicine 42*: 1391 1400.

Wang, C. C., J. L. Cash, and L. S. Powers. 2000. 'Who knows the streets as well as the homeless? Promoting personal and community action through photovoice'. *Health Promotion Practice* 1(1): 81-89.

Webster, Bill. 20 January 1968. 'On entertainment: Underground film on London planned'. *London Free Press*: p. 43.

Wees, William C. 1993. *Recycled images: the art and politics of found footage films*. New York City: Anthology Film Archives.

Woodman, Ross. 1967. *Chambers: John Chambers interviewed by Ross G. Woodman*. Toronto: Coach House Press.

Woodman, Ross. 2002. 'Jack Chambers as filmmaker'. Pp. 45-57 in *The films of Jack Chambers*.

Zandbergen, Rebecca. 8 November 2020. 'Vacant buildings: If we don't act, "We're basically continuing to kill our downtown"'. *CBC News*. Retrieved from https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/london/vacant-buildings-killing-our-downtown 1.5352943

Copyright statement

This is to notify readers that although copyright clearance has not been obtained for the illustrations reproduced herein, this is not considered an infringement of copyright law, pursuant to the 'Fair dealings' provision in s. 29 of the Copyright Act:

Research or Private Study

29. Fair dealing for the purpose of research, private study, education, parody or satire does not infringe copyright.

R.S., 1985, c. C-42, s. 29

R.S., 1985, c. 10 (4th Supp.), s. 7

1994, c. 47, s. 61

1997, c. 24, s. 18

2012, c. 20, s. 21

Criticism or Review

29.1 Fair dealing for the purpose of criticism or review does not infringe copyright if the

following are mentioned:

 (a) the source; and

 (b) if given the source, the name of the

 i.author, in the case of a work,

 ii. performer, in the case of a performer's performance

 iii. maker in the case of a sound recording, or

 iv. broadcaster, in the case of a communication signal

1997, c.24, s.18

The full act can be retrieved from: https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-42/fulltext.html.

Vita

Name: Alex McIntosh

Post-secondary   Western University
Education and   London, Ontario, Canada
Degrees: 2015-2019 B.A.

                        Western University
                        London, Ontario, Canada
                        2019-2021 M.A.

Related work   Teaching assistant
experience: Western University
                        2019-2020; 2020-2021

Publications: [As Alexander McIntosh] 'Benjamin, boredom, and cinema: dialectical
                        images of everyday life'. 2020. *The Scattered Pelican 5*: 51-67.