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> The yellow fog came creeping down
> The bridges, till the houses' walls
> Seemed changed to shadows and St. Paul's
> Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.
>   Oscar Wilde, "Impression Du Matin" (2000: 153)

> The practice of realism itself, and critical demands for truthfulness, suggest how central to the Victorian novel was the enterprise of knowledge seeking and truth telling, how often plots turn on the power of protagonists to develop the proper temper and state of mind to allow realistic confrontation with the "object" — what one might see as acquisition of the proper "method." One can only achieve truth through objectivity; one can only be objective by virtue of the moral strength of self-restraint.
>   George Lewis Levine, *Dying to Know: Scientific Epistemology and Narrative in Victorian England* (2002: 149)

Even bathed, as it seems to be, continually in fog, the literary depiction of London offers lines so clear that readers might easily envision a map. This is meant in a fairly concrete sense: the second epigraph shows just how central realism was to Victorian literature. As a result, texts render the urban setting of their narratives with such detail that to call this map-making is almost more literal than it is figurative. In many cases, all that remains is for the reader to take out paper and pencil.

Despite this clear delineation, the city in the Victorian novel has been described by a good number of critics as containing a central ambiguity. London held all the trappings of an imperial capital, yet seemed also constantly teeming with an unruly underclass ready to spill into real or, more disastrously, moral violence. This dichotomy was represented by the envisioning of London, with its central position on the world stage, as consisting of two separate spheres: "The 'two worlds' of London, one dark and mysterious, the other dazzling and ostentatious, were of increased public interest just because late-Victorian London was being

thought of more and more as a 'world city'" (Briggs 328). As Asa Briggs highlights in *Victorian Cities*, this duality in part manifested itself as an interest, on the part of the dazzling half, to achieve some kind of insight into the "dark and mysterious" other half.

Oscar Wilde's work lies at the heart of the literary expression of that interest. As an author whose increasing literary celebrity came paired first with accusations of the literary sin of plagiarism, and later with the revelation of sexual behavior deemed illegal by the Victorian state, Wilde was always to some degree immersed in both halves. While his incorporation of a queer London has been catalogued in various sources, Wilde's wider handling of place has been less closely examined, especially where it concerns the use of locations as a kind of representation (on the one hand) or a form of mapping (on the other) that projects the mental state of a character onto urban geography.

There is good reason to link this representation of characters' moral, emotional, and mental states to the metaphorical idea of mapping. Use of geography as a metaphor is by no means a unique or even rare feature of literature, and may be as easily found in Anglo-Saxon kennings as in Romantic fields of flowers. The idea that such use of spatial metaphor might cohere into a metaphorical map — tracing figurative relations just as the real map traces physical distance — is evident enough, and as a logical corollary, the Victorian realist literary practice can be expected to lend itself to metaphorical mapping. This includes toponyms acting as literary signifiers of the moral and emotional state of the protagonist.

This idea of mapping, especially if linked to morality, does not lack echoes in Victorian London. Lynda Nead, for instance, makes the following observation regarding the seizure of obscene materials: "it is possible to map a geography of London according to the locations of the shopkeepers [selling obscene materials] prosecuted in the early 1870s. This would include parts of central London and Westminster, as well as the City of London" (161). One might infer that the Victorians' view of moral decay could be traced reliably on the map, and, moreover, that the possibility of such a map suggests that the authorities themselves may have worked along these lines. Crucially, this goes beyond straightforward distinctions of rich and poor. There was, indeed, "an appalling, visible contrast between the way the rich lived, and the dreadful existence of the poor under their noses" (Picard 61), and a metaphor based solely on this distinction is itself clear. More telling is Nead's example, where areas of London (such as Westminster) acquire a metaphorical association with hidden moral decay.

At the time of Wilde's own highest fame, from the late 1880s to his trials in 1895, mapping remained a way to evoke the condition of the city. Pioneering work was being done by Charles Booth, who created a color-coded map of London that offered an evocative depiction of wealth and poverty. Booth's project was in part an attempt to demystify London; it "established the importance of empirically derived evidence. . . . The maps were a vital tool in this regard. In contrast with the sensational-ist accounts of 'darkest London' and the well-meaning studies that had preceded Booth, the maps provided a method for visualising a problem" (Vaughan 88). These maps provided, then, a moral statement of their own in showing rich and poor living in close proximity, and presenting the degree of victimization of the less fortunate Londoners. For Booth, the maps also had a moral function: as Pamela Gilbert writes in her work on medical mapping in Victorian London, "Booth's vision of the metropolis as a monstrous organism which has outgrown its inadequate circulatory system leads him to a distrust of a city large enough to have a true urban core: such a size leads inevitably to decay and corruption, skyrocketing land prices and overcrowding" (2004: 192).

Wilde himself was not obviously involved with these issues, and there is no clear record of his engaging with these developments in Lon-don; yet they came close to his professional life in the late 1880s, and he would certainly have been aware of Booth's project in a general sense. A strong indication here lies in Wilde's editorship of *The Woman's World* (1887–1889), which was aimed at "a middle-class female readership," of which "some worked as investigators for Charles Booth's massive social survey, *Life and Labour of the People of London* (1889–1903), tracing the root causes of urban poverty" (Maltz 186). Wilde's earlier change of the magazine's title from *The Lady's World*, famously in order to address a more middle-class audience, reflects a likely awareness of that audi-ence's interests in causes such as Booth's project.

Booth's maps related to an anxiety suffered in Late Victorian London, a city haunted by a difficulty of knowing the real nature of things and, to some degree, of people. Ged Pope has observed a "broader episte-mological shift, away from certainty toward a new paradigm that Carlo Ginzburg calls the 'conjectural hypothesis,'" which reflects anxiety "in tracing and knowing the individual in the metropolis" (62). Maps in this regard offer a sense of security: to trace the flâneur's course on a map is to know, as it were, the journey, and to mask to a certain extent the re-maining uncertainty about what goes on in the walker's mind, as in Poe's famous story "The Man of the Crowd."

Part of what facilitates the metaphorical conception of mapping is the fact that cities themselves are always already constructed, both from the street-level conception and from the centralizing principle of mapping. Following de Certeau, Sebastian Groes has described the "constructed and artificial nature of the city; the metropolis is a place that embodies and literalises *process*. Rather than a place that *is*, . . . London is a living metropolis, a healthy city that is laboured on constantly; it is the ultimate city of *Becoming*" (2). The city is in constant flux. This means that mapping can be conceived of as an attempt to assemble: a changing place that is constructed in part as it is captured, and, once captured, may already be outdated. Instead, the map (of London) is an invention, creating as much as it is representing. The place called London is one "we tend to think of as the 'purely real, purely representable' London. No such thing exists" (Groes 3). This is not to deny that there is such a thing as the city, but to say instead that this thing, whatever it is, is not available for complete representation by a map.

The emphasis on maps as representing not a real but a constructed or imagined city points to the fictionality of maps. "What authors, historians, and urban residents imagine when they invoke 'London' as an entity has to do with the imagined communities, identities, exclusions, and inclusions which write a multiplicity of Londons into history, both local and global" (Gilbert 2002: 2). London as invention engenders freedom: if it is imagined, and if it allows for a "multiplicity," then authors can use the idea of maps and the representation of the city to create and extend metaphor; this can happen regardless of whether the metaphorical mapping takes the shape of precisely traceable information or that of impressions and approximations.

This sets up a dichotomy, explored in this paper: that metaphorical mapping can have a concrete form, with realism and precise locations available as on a map, or it can have a vague form, with the suggestive taking the place of the specific. It is here that Wilde's work offers a useful case study. At times the stories, plays, and poems evoke real places in clear detail, while at others, the specificity of the location is not allowed to impinge on other elements of the narrative. This distinction highlights the works that are not predominantly realist; just as *Salome* is a symbolist play, the collection *A House of Pomegranates* takes the shape of fairy tales. In contrast, the society plays, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the short stories including "The Portrait of Mr. W. H.," and even the essays and some of Wilde's poetry make extensive use of realism as a narrative technique.

Placing part of Wilde's work on the side of realism is not without complications. To some degree Wilde was clearly reacting against, rather than adopting, the technique of realism. Essays such as "The Decay of Lying" and "Pen, Pencil, and Poison" emphasize a deviation from drab reality and an aversion to the morality traditionally associated with Victorian realism. Although there are some passages in *Intentions* that suggest a nuanced view, overall the collection of essays posits that realism "is the writer simply copying nature and society, and in doing so, recreating a cultural environment rather than improving it. Progress required the rejection of realism" (Helfand 193). For Wilde, art was more about realizing oneself and less about reflecting the world; only through such realization could an artist progress. This meant that realism represented stagnation and a failure to develop: "realism in art did nothing more than reproduce or imitate the unfinished and rather sad reality of nature and human nature" (194). Realism simply got in the way of self-realization.

Yet this hostility to realism as a mode of artistic endeavor clearly did not mean an abstention from using it in literary work. Although Wilde retained clear animosity towards the moral dimensions of realism, he made use of realism as a technique. For one, Victorian realism did not go quite so far as Wilde's seemingly unequivocal rejection of it suggests. The major Victorian "realist writers understood that no direct connection exists between words and things, and that an author's consciousness always mediates representations of objects" (Brown 4). Of course, this is perfectly compatible with Wilde's rejection of realism as essentially derivative, but it also shows that the version Wilde objected to was more radical than, at least, what realists thought they themselves were doing. This meant that Wilde rejected a version of realism that went beyond both what was commonly practiced by realist writers and by himself.

Secondly, Wilde wrote at a time when public appetites and artistic contexts had to contend with realism as a central mode of artistic expression. This was certainly a factor for his work as a playwright: "that Wilde's three plays before *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) are similar to realist plays on the Continent is not surprising given the general context of influences" (Waldrep 107). Therefore, it stands to reason that Wilde deployed at least some aspects of realism, even as he rejected it as an artistic philosophy, simply because it was a standard mode of dramatic and fiction writing at the time. Whether Wilde does so out of artistic conviction or financial considerations is not the point. In either case, the fact is that Wilde deploys realism at least to some degree, even as he agitates against it as a larger artistic project.

This paradox is central to considerations of Wilde's use of realism. The overarching ideas of realism were suspect in Wilde's eyes. In "The Decay of Lying" he states that "as a method, realism is a complete failure" (2007: 85). Yet it is exactly Wilde's phrasing — realism "as a method" — that signals the crucial distinction. There is, after all, a difference between using realism and writing a work of realism. In his philosophy of art, Wilde was agitating against the latter; but this did not preclude him from resorting to the former when it suited him. In fact, as will become clear, Wilde deployed exactly that technique of realism to play with morality associated with the larger "method" of realism.

In showing the "two worlds" associated with considerations of public morality in London, Wilde's interest lies clearly with the world of the upper class, and where he represents the other of the two social worlds, their rendering is decidedly one-sided. In this sense Wilde's treatment of lower- and working-class London must be qualified. As Regenia Gagnier reminds her readers, what is called great literature "does not give us the 'voice of the oppressed,' but rather objectifies the oppressed for its own (often liberal) ends. Therefore, what 'we' get from literature is not an expanded 'we' but more of the same old 'us'" (136). Wilde's depiction of the lower classes — really of any part of London that does not belong to his own class — is not, in this sense, about giving voice to another. At best it is didactically geared towards the middle class, as in the children's story "The Happy Prince."

One element of the London underworld which Wilde *was* familiar with was the subculture of male same-sex relations, rent boys, and male brothels. Morris Kaplan has evoked the dimensions of this "London demimonde," a "cruising scene" which "reflects the emergence of a distinctively modern and urban sexuality" (34). Along these lines, Wilde's use of London in conjunction with same-sex interests in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is well-documented — Matt Cook, for instance, writes that the book "evoked a secretive city of sensual possibility in the wake of a series of notorious cases" (2003: 35). Wilde's novel also assigns a queer meaning to its geography:

> The early part of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* focuses on Lord Henry Wotton, on his aesthetic tastes and on his West End circuit. Details of the latter — communicated through a description of an afternoon stroll through the West End — would almost seem superfluous except that the places mentioned were not merely fashionable but also had homoerotic resonances for those in the know. (35–36)

Here Wilde adds meaning to what the uninformed reader would assume is a description of a walk. To the initiated, the geographical references offer connotations, without the story literally identifying the main characters as having same-sex interests. Mapping Lord Henry's walk thus provides a clear instance of realistic metaphorical mapping.

Not all instances of concrete mapping, however, are placed in the realm of homosexuality. At a basic level, even *The Picture of Dorian Gray* presents a straightforward duality between the richer, supposedly superior parts of the city and its morally suspect and shadier parts. Basil Hallward's studio, the dingy theatre, and Lord Fermor's apartment at the Albany represent the more morally upright locations, while the streets and the opium den, usually evoked at night, represent the town's darker side. The descriptions in the novel are clear, although Wilde uses short references: by Ch. 7, for example, all the reader knows about the location of Dorian's home is its being at "the Square," and not until Ch. 12 does it become clear that this is Grosvenor Square (although the educated reader may have guessed). Meetings are precisely placed, as when — again in Ch. 12 — Dorian runs into Basil on the streets, "at the corner of Grosvenor Square and South Audley Street," identified precisely even though the night is foggy (2005: 291). In part this precision can be read as representing Dorian's heightened memory of the evening which will end in Basil's demise. However, by precisely locating the fateful meeting, the novel also highlights Dorian's moral decline, drawing attention to — pinpointing on the map — the moment when Dorian's unnamed sins have readied him for murder.

This level of topographical clarity is not the standard, however, and Wilde's descriptions of the London underworld, such as they are, do not touch much on details in quite the same way; realism in this case does not, as signaled above, mean the mirroring of reality. Even in the cases most evidently linked to the kinds of excess possible in Wilde's amoral aestheticism — substance use and sexuality — there is little resemblance to the topographical reality as it is sketched in modern historical overviews, such as Donald Thomas's evocative "Modern Babylon" in *The Victorian Underworld* (81–126). In Wilde's "The Sphinx Without a Secret," Lady Alroy has a house in a disreputable neighborhood of "shabby little streets," but it is not even named as Cumnor Street (which, though it appears to be fictional, is carefully situated between Piccadilly and Regent's Park) when the protagonist first comes across it (2010: 36). The only hint about the house itself is that its landlady is "a respectable-looking woman" (36), leaving no clear references to the place as chosen

to suggest scandal. Most other appearances of a London underworld actually constitute forms of trickery: the beggar from "The Model Millionaire" is really Baron Hausberg, who is so rich he "could buy all London to-morrow without overdrawing his account" (67). Similarly, in "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," Lord Arthur reaches out to the criminal underworld in the form of a bomb maker called Winckelkopf, who is wanted by Scotland Yard. In contrast to what might be expected of the pursuit of a wanted man, however, Lord Arthur secures an introduction from a Russian count (place of residence: Bloomsbury) in order to find him. Likewise, he locates the criminal not in a secret hideout in one of the dangerous places of London but rather just off Greek Street, a place more associated (then as now) with fine food and respectable public houses than with crime and secrecy.

In fact, the one real event involving the London underworld proper is Dorian's venture into the opium den in Ch. 16 of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The journey to Dorian's site of transgression — undertaken after he rejects the opportunity to take opium in the privacy of his own home — bears the hallmarks of a man occupied with particular needs. As the hansom is driven (the driver has to be bribed to venture to the place), Dorian lies back and observes:

> the moon hung low in the sky like a yellow skull. From time to time a huge misshapen cloud stretched a long arm across and hid it. The gas-lamps grew fewer, and the streets more narrow and gloomy. Once the man lost his way, and had to drive back half a mile. A steam rose from the horse as it splashed up the puddles. The side-windows of the hansom were clogged with a grey-flannel mist. (2005: 324)

Traditionally scholars have noted that the reference to getting lost is a sign of the driver having arrived in the rougher parts of London, often represented as labyrinthine. Yet the itinerary may be traced, given that Dorian starts off at his address in Grosvenor, hails the hansom at Bond Street, and ends up at a quay where a large steamer is loading coal, before taking a seven- or eight-minute walk to reach a small house "wedged in between two gaunt factories" (326). An author interested in keeping the journey entirely vague for aesthetic effect would have perhaps been more sparse on detail.

In fact, it is in key instances where Wilde's characters venture outside moral boundaries that the narratives are given a precise geography. The opening scene of "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime," for example, is set in Bentinck House. The source of Lord Arthur's woes, the cheiromantist

Mr. Podgers, lives in West Moon Street, and Lord Arthur will eventually rid himself of Mr. Podgers near Cleopatra's Needle by flinging him into the Thames. The cheiromantist is "washed on shore at Greenwich, just in front of the Ship Hotel" (2010: 30). Like all other locations in the story, even this place is real — it was at Church Street. The story is grounded in a very real London.

Likewise, in the plays, locations are provided to ground the action in specific places even where this is not strictly necessary. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, for example, Algernon's address is Half-Moon Street — a location near Buckingham Palace, while the rest of the play is set in Woolton, Herefordshire. Though Lady Bracknell's place of residence does not feature as a setting, it is given rather precisely as 104 Upper Grosvenor Street. Woolton does not appear to be a real place (the nearest Woolton is far to the north, near Liverpool) and only the London locations are precisely placed on the map. These serve to indicate the characters' social hierarchy; the play does not require the same for its generic country location. In a curious twist, it is the Woolton location that audiences might be aware of during a performance, as it is mentioned once in passing so that Algernon may discover where to go. Only those who encounter *The Importance of Being Earnest* in print can discover the relevance of Half-Moon Street, as its location is only given in the stage directions; the text itself is vague about what would otherwise be a rather concrete reference to the play's place on the London map.

In *Earnest* the immoral actions remain light, taking the shape of lying to relatives to avoid tedium, and keeping up appearances. However, *An Ideal Husband* tackles moral transgressions of a more severe kind. The play's main characters blackmail and commit fraud, and the play presents an especially complicated character in Robert Chiltern. Though he is undoubtedly one of its leads, and rewarded with public and private happiness by the play's end, Sir Robert gained his fortune by selling government secrets in a fraudulent affair and is entirely unremorseful, boasting instead that his criminal act was not weakness but rather strength:

> Weak! Do you really think, Arthur, that it is weakness that yields to temptation? I tell you that there are terrible temptations that it requires strength, strength and courage, to yield to. To stake all one's life on a single moment, to risk everything on one throw, whether the stake be power or pleasure, I care not — there is no weakness in that. There is a horrible, a terrible courage. I had that courage. (2008: 193)

What is striking is that the play that voices such a clearly articulated rejection of moral behavior is also the one that has by far the clearest locations. Sir Robert's home, containing the Octagon Room and the morning-room in which acts 1, 2, and 4 take place, is located at Grosvenor Square (in Dorian's neighborhood), while the play's other location is Lord Goring's home in Curzon Street. Both these London locations appear in the play's text, though Grosvenor is mentioned only in the stage directions of the play, much as Half-Moon Street in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Here again Wilde's text has no issue in placing (im)moral behavior clearly on the map.

In contrast to these moments, there are plenty of others in Wilde's texts that forego realistic precision in favor of impressionistic vagueness. This itself is also entirely in keeping with the Victorian literary tradition. Some Victorian novels provide a starting point for using the Victorian cityscape as a place to complicate rather than resolve issues of morality and identity that their characters are facing. This is readily evident, for example in Dickens's novels such as *Oliver Twist* or *Bleak House*. Indeed, the resistance to that resolution was always already present. Alan Robinson notes that Victorian literary London

> is one of inscrutability and mystery rather than panoptic regulation. Only in London could the transgressive existence of a Dorian Gray or the double lives of the male characters in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* remain temporarily unobserved, . . . London was characterised in this period less by panoptic control than laissez-faire and bureaucratic muddle. (13)

The boundaries of these "transgressive" areas may be outlined. This includes the aforementioned sites of Central London, Westminster, and the City of London. In Wilde's famous trials, as Matt Cook relates, the prosecution brought up Salisbury Street, Wilde's old house just off the Strand, noting that it was "rather a rough neighbourhood" and "a place where debased persons congregate." Cook continues: "Wilde countered that it was simply 'near the Houses of Parliament.' The courtroom exchange neatly emphasized what the city might throw together and how its spaces might be interpreted and presented in different ways — and here to incriminating effect" (2013: 51). This, if anything, shows that Wilde knew of the morally ambiguous sides of his city (even if he did not know the details of London's underworld). And while, as explored above, he did sometimes descend into the same detail as the prosecution did in his trial, linking place and morality, at other times he did not.

In part this was because some of Wilde's works are in direct engagement with the Gothic. With *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Wilde delivered what turned out to be a paradigmatic depiction of Gothic London, as for example Anne Witchard and Lawrence Phillips note when they write that "attention to nineteenth-century London Gothic writing has tended to focus on the dockside opium dens and labyrinthine slums familiar from the fin-de-siècle fictions of Wilde, Stevenson, Stoker and Machen" (3). Where Wilde's novel was straightforwardly Gothic, however, there were also other instances with less direct connections: "The Canterville Ghost," for example, adds a parodic layer to its Gothic ghost story by making its ghost approach its haunting much like a hammy actor approaches their craft, while "The Birthday of the Infanta" from *A House of Pomegranates* carries the sort of melodramatic, judgmental depiction of the Spanish court that is easily matched in classic Gothic novels such as Lewis's *The Monk* or Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*. This interest in the Gothic, then, may in part explain elements of vagueness in some of Wilde's texts, as Gothic works operate as much on the unspoken and on what they conjure up as they do on precise, graphic description.

In part, these Gothic omissions pertain more to plot detail than to geographical location in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Even the Vanes' house is, it is suggested, on or near Euston Road, leaving little doubt as to the physical base of most of the characters in the novel. Rather, the missing information has to do with key moral acts and ideas. The majority of Dorian's crimes and acts of debauchery can only be guessed at through the portrait's degeneration; Alan Campbell's secret is written on a piece of paper that the reader will never be privy to; the nature of Adrian Singleton's disgrace and descent into opium-stoked oblivion is never revealed. Characters' movements can be traced even when their thoughts and motivations remain unclear. Lawrence Danson suggests that in *Dorian Gray*, "the deferral of ultimate revelation invites the reader to go beneath the surface into the suggestive spaces created by the story's absences" (985); he also points to Wilde's caution, in the preface, against going beneath the surface. The recourse to vagueness in respect to many of the characters' actions and ideas is, in this reading, part of Wilde's deliberate strategy to place the interpretative onus on his audience.

Rarely does the novel select a location that it does not carefully situate, with the notable exception of Basil's study. As the setting of the first chapters of the novel, it is the subject of detailed description — Wilde takes a full page to note, among other things, "the heavy scent of the lilac," a "divan of Persian saddle-bags," "the gleam of the honey-sweet

and honey-coloured blossoms of a laburnum," as well as "long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect," in addition to the "sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass" and "the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty" (2005: 169). Yet in contrast to the other locations, no details are given to help the reader place the studio. The presence of London remains a "dim roar" (169). This place is the site of Dorian's fateful plea to have the portrait age and change in his stead, meaning that the incident that starts the fateful chain of events is one of the few that cannot be placed with any realistic certainty. In doing this, the novel sets aside this initial moment, signaling at least that it is worthy of consideration in a different category than the more straightforward sins occurring later in the book; and in this light, Wilde's famous self-identification with Dorian in a different age helps to suggest that the plea itself need not inevitably lead to the outcome given to it by the novel.

In *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, and in *A House of Pomegranates*, Wilde uses a similar absence of specificity as in the initial scene of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Unlike the stories in *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories*, the two collections of what are ostensibly children's tales do not situate their plots clearly. "The Happy Prince" is set in what is simply known as the city, with the only geographical reference being the name of a palace (Sans-Souci) placing the story's setting as most likely Prussia. All the reader can know of "The Nightingale and the Rose" is that it is set in a town that has a university; just as the central location of "The Selfish Giant" is the Giant's garden. "The Devoted Friend" seems to have no definite location, and all that transpires from the text of the final story, "The Remarkable Rocket," is that it is not set in Finland. Here the situation is the opposite of most of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: since each story is engaged in teaching a kind of moral or Christian lesson (even if, as in "The Devoted Friend," this is sometimes subverted), the locations fade entirely into the background, allowing the more idealized world to take center stage. This is also where the overlap with the opening in Basil's studio lies. In both instances what is foregrounded is ideas, with less emphasis on form and the shape they take in the world — be it Basil's idealized conception of Dorian or the Student's idealized conception of the daughter of the Professor.

Wilde's mapping is a little more complicated in *A House of Pomegranates*. Again, in all cases, the stories are set outside London and therefore lack the clear physical reference points to fit into a preexisting

map; yet on a more abstract level some of the stories involve the use of geography. "The Young King" and "The Star-Child" fulfill the same kind of parable-function as many of the stories of *The Happy Prince*; there, preciseness of location is sacrificed to give shape to their central ideas. Both stories involve children learning to become good rulers, and in both cases the qualities of a good ruler are presented as transcending any specific place. Not so, however, with "The Birthday of the Infanta" and "The Fisherman and His Soul."

While "The Birthday of the Infanta" places its story squarely at the court of Spain, and references several Spanish place names to give the story a sense of (historical) concreteness, it is "The Fisherman and His Soul" that fully draws on the 19th-century world map to evoke part of its ideas. In the first part of the story, the Fisherman falls in love with a mermaid and enlists the help of a witch in order to be able to unite with his love, a process that involves severing the connection with his soul, whom he sends off into the world. At this stage, the soul enacts a kind of reverse corruption: rather than the body going off and becoming corrupted through physical experience while the soul remains pure, it is the soul whose journeys corrupt it, while the Fisherman lives a quiet, almost ascetic life in loving devotion to his mermaid. This corruption, however, takes the shape of journeys to specific locations. At first the soul travels east, first to the Tartars, and then via Muslim lands to the banks of the Oxus, from where he wanders, naming such places as "the city of Illel," "Tyre," "Sidon," and, curiously, "the island of Syria" (2010: 183–84). After meeting and attempting to tempt the Fisherman away from his mermaid, he departs for the south, completing a similar journey involving Mecca and people from Syria, Circassia, and Armenia. Again the soul returns and fails to tempt the Fisherman away. From there, a third journey is undertaken and the story becomes vaguer about its specific location, homing in on the more abstract ideas of love, possession, and fear that ultimately drive the tale home; but in getting there, the list of the soul's destinations is telling. It takes no careful teasing apart of the text to note a kind of late-Victorian Orientalism at work in Wilde's story. The map of the soul's journeys, though hardly specific, would highlight many of the key sites of the British Empire, and Wilde repeats some of them from an earlier use in his 1881 poem "Ave Imperatrix," which also focuses on the role of the British Empire in the world. Crucially, this is at once vague and specific: the soul's progress is identified by country rather than street, and the vagueness that results from this allows Wilde to address a moral dimension to the story — suggesting a (post)colonial parable of a soul losing its way through the sensual exploitation of faraway lands.

In addition to the fading of location to facilitate a foregrounding of morality, it is also notable that Wilde's work lacks a depiction of family homes as concrete, locatable settings. Matches, children, and parenthood are all at the forefront of a good deal of Wilde's texts; yet, as Alison Hennegan has pointed out, "Wilde shared with his aristocratic characters a deep distrust of conventional familial domesticity. . . . He offers us very few brick-and-mortar 'homes' in his dramatic works'" (884). Hennegan's view allows, however, a distinction between house and home, between mappable geography and ethereal idea. Wilde's work has enough houses: the plays give their audience plenty of places of residence, with very few scenes not taking place in the living quarters of one of the characters (be it Algernon Moncrieff's rooms, the house of the Chilterns, or the residence of Mrs. Arbuthnot in *A Woman of No Importance*). Almost none, however, are family homes. If children appear, they are fully grown and not necessarily aware of their parentage, if they have one at all; mothers are often (hilariously?) uncaring as to the fate of their children, except where social prestige is concerned. In the worst possible reading, the father sexually pursues the child. It is here that one feature of Wilde's use of precisely mapped locations emerges: there is a sort of tug-of-war between specificity of location, often associated with amoral or straight-forwardly immoral behavior, on the one hand, and, on the other, absence of specificity of location and accompanying moral clarity. The site of the traditional family would be, especially from the Victorian viewpoint, an example of the latter.

This contrast between house and home extends beyond Wilde's plays. The short stories are full of children missing parents and parental guidance. As many as three of the four central characters in *A House of Pomegranates* have this problem: "The Young King," "The Star-Child," and "The Birthday of the Infanta" all feature royal children who have neither the ability to act as just rulers nor parental guidance on the subject. James and Sybil Vane have a familiar house that can be roughly located on the London map of *Dorian Gray*, but their mother does not understand motherhood except through the prism of stage-bound melodrama, and consequently they have no home. None of the characters from *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* have homes; the swallow from the eponymous story abandons the possibility of his in order to aid the prince, while the Selfish Giant must learn — at the cost of his life — that his garden was a true familial home all this time. In all cases, the home as a moral idea is not quite the same thing as the house as a specific location.

Connections between geography and morality in Wilde are also encompassed in his use of the idea of the flâneur. If the literary concept of the walker-wanderer of the city had enjoyed a heyday in Victorian times, "the late-nineteenth-century flâneur and his cool objectivity was increasingly compromised by modern urban life" (Sipe 71). The walker in the city had baffled Poe's earlier protagonist; by the late Victorian era, London as a vast metropolis simply offered so much that taking in the city in full became challenging.

One facet of this was that walking at night became more feasible. At the end of the 19th century, with all its innovations, it was no longer an act of hubris to take to the streets without criminal intent or proper preparation. Reflecting this, literary characters started undertaking crucial moral journeys at night. As Matthew Beaumont notes in his work on nightwalking in London, "in the past, as in the present, residually, walking at night is a means of uncovering the dark side of the city" (9). Characters move through the dark city when suffering inner turmoil, and are ready to see their own darkness reflected. When Dorian Gray is about to commit murder or surrender to his desire for oblivion, the reader finds him walking the streets "wrapped in heavy furs, as the night was cold and foggy" (2005: 291). Here, London is represented partially through the lens of the characters' own mental state: obscured and hidden in fog and with deathly chill foreshadowing death itself.

Likewise, Lord Arthur in "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime" wanders the streets twice. Once, he rushes from Bentinck House after learning that he is to commit murder. The second time, as he is in despair at failing to get the job done in a way that would not threaten his approaching marriage, the story places him, as mentioned above, at Cleopatra's Needle for a convenient appointment with fate. The first time around, Lord Arthur goes on a journey that is traced with precision. At first he stops at Hyde Park, where his realization of his murderous destiny spurs him on, signaling that he cannot remain in polite society with such a disgraceful act hovering over him. He then wanders past Oxford Street into "narrow, shameful alleys" where even the prostitutes make fun of him (2010: 12). He then reaches Marylebone Church, but pays this religious site hardly any attention before heading towards Portland Place and Rich Street, then wandering through "a labyrinth of sordid houses," and finally finding his bearings at Piccadilly Circus and heading home to Belgrave Square (13). All in all, it is a very specific route, one that is both traceable on a map and reflective of Lord Arthur's mental process of dealing with his new status as a murderer: expulsion, fall from grace, turning from

religion, and feeling lost all find their geographical echoes in his journey through night-time London.

Lord Arthur will, by the end of the story, embrace his fate with the murder of the very man who predicted his committing murder. The story expresses no particular attitude towards this, and if anything, it seems that Mr. Podgers has vaguely deserved his fate for burdening Lord Arthur with the prophecy to begin with. Lord Arthur's morality would be condemned in any society, Victorian or current. Yet the "happy" ending — for that is what it is — shows most clearly that Lord Arthur's failing, documented in terms of geography perhaps more thoroughly than in any other of Wilde's stories, reflects the Wildean contradiction between specificity of location and moral clarity.

Thus, in Wilde's work the precisely defined places and the possibility of mapping coincide with the presence of immorality or amorality. Throughout many of Wilde's narratives, there is an implicit tradeoff: when characters are located in such a way that they may be placed, often on a map, and often specifically on London's map, they tend not to conform to the moral codes of mainstream Victorian society, whereas the narratives with a more overt moral idea deploy vague geography that, at best, frustrates such mapping attempts. Of the former, there is a range, from the entirely immoral (Lord Arthur or Sir Robert Chiltern) to the simply cheerfully amoral (Algernon Moncrieff, and actually most characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest*). Of the latter, there is a concentration in the collections that Wilde designated as children's stories (even if he dedicated many of them to adults). Either way, the spread is considerable and consistent enough to signal a persistent association in Wilde's works between locations with mappable precision and immoral/amoral behavior.

Location, in the end, is part of an attempt in Wilde's work to resist the injection of morality through the use of realism. As discussed above, Wilde evokes (sometimes surprisingly middle- or upper-class) crime as exciting, makes use of tropes that signal same-sex interest to those in the know, and foregrounds aesthetic enjoyment, linked to vagueness and impression (partially through his essays "The Decay of Lying" and "The Critic as Artist"). If considered apart from geography or mapping, this does not say much that is new about Wilde's work — see, for instance, Yvonne Ivory's account of Wilde's sustained attempt to connect the "topoi" of "criminality, dissident sexuality, and the cultivation of the aesthetic" (524). A common theme in Wilde scholarship is the intersection of these three. Yet I argue that in the blending of the vague and precise,

in alternating between journeys that can be mapped out and a geography that does not lend itself to this practice, Wilde reconsiders the link between realistic specificity and ethical concerns. Wilde's texts can be perceived as employing one technique regarding specificity of location and another regarding specificity of morality. The two are sometimes yoked together, sometimes blended or blurred, and sometimes go in different directions. It would be tempting to suggest merely that Wilde was not fully aware of his own literary tendencies. In truth, it is more likely that in his rebellion against the traditional association of realism and morality Wilde refuses to adhere to the strict dichotomy. After all, Wilde loved contradiction, and probably delighted in drawing a moral map with some of its areas maddeningly blotted out.

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