TORONTOLOGY

by

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for the degree of **M.A.**

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Abstract

Torontology

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This thesis reads Toronto-based literature since 1968 against the theory of psychogeography, as used by Iain Sinclair. I begin with Gwendolyn MacEwen as a tutelary psychogeographer, and follow her totemisation of the CN Tower into more recent speculative fiction. The consideration of the parallel between buildings and books opens into consideration of Toronto's literary landscape as marked by alterity, working backwards to paradigmatic psychogeographical texts In the Skin of the Lion and Civil Elegies, which map the whole city as alternate. Drawing a theoretical statement for each chapter from psychogeography encyclopaedia city a-z, the thesis is divided along identity politics lines, considering different literary representations of the city, represented by carnivalesque, queer, Caribbean and adolescent Toronto(s), as they map onto different geographical areas. Following a coda on the career and mythology of Daniel Jones, the conclusion restates the literary ideation of Toronto itself as marginal, inclusive and proliferate.

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Noman's Land: Addressing the City

> To those who know Toronto, its street names are like poetry: Queen Street, Kensington Avenue, Harbord, Foxley. To find them in fiction makes them both more real and greater than real. We are amazed to discover the stories that happen here and we realize that this place might be more than it seems.
>
> Cary Fagan, Introduction Streets of Attitude 6

This thesis sets out to provide a contemporary and localized answer to the question that has been central to studies of Canadian Literature since Northrop Frye first uttered it, and Margaret Atwood reiterated it in Survival: 'Where is here?' In taking a specific location – the city of Toronto – and time period – 1968 to the present day – the chapters presented herein aim to discuss a potential Torontology that could provide a model for investigations into the psychogeography of Canadian literature. Keeping to the city limits, and to what could loosely be termed postmodernity, provides a focus for a literature that, even within those narrow bounds, is diverse and frequently contradictory. When Wyndham Lewis was resident in the city during the Second World War, he is said to have remarked to someone who disapproved of his residential address, "Madam, *Toronto* is an unfashionable address."[1] Since then, an address to the city has become increasingly fashionable. 1968 is the year of publication of Civil Elegies and T.O. Now, which mark a developing consciousness of the city, and of its manifestations in the work of its writers. Most of the works considered, however, come from the upper end of the period, many of them published in the last two years. This prevalence relates to one sense of the concept of psychogeography: the sense of a connection between the living city and the texts it presents to the critic. The psychogeographer allows the city to lead her to authors, events and books, reading the pattern of discovery as part of her evidence for understanding the city.

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[1] quoted by Margaret Atwood in her first Empson lecture, 'Orientation: Who do you think you are,' Cambridge Eng., 26 April, 2000. To be published Nov. 2001 as Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer Writing on Writing Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge UP.

Directions in Toronto are often given in the form of intersections. The title of MacEwen's "Sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor" captures this particular form of address. The poem itself is a metaphysical intersection, encapsulating the poet's particular experience of a specific time and place, marking the intersection of her consciousness of the city with her experience of it. The experience of reading this poem in Toronto marks another level of intersection, that between the reader's experience of the actual city, and of the city called into being on the page. Psychogeography posits that not only are our psyches shaped by living in a certain city, as Howard Stein argues, but that our subconscious desires shape the city, and furthermore, that the city itself has a psyche which determines both its topography and its sociology (Stein *passim*). This psyche is translated by writers and artists, sometimes consciously, as in the work of Ondaatje, and sometimes unconsciously, creating works which connect with alternate and invisible cities. This is where the concept of ontology becomes relevant. Each vision/version of Toronto called into existence by poets and novelists exists alongside each other version, and the actual city. Thus, this thesis is a study of a series of contingencies: the point at which visions intersect, and, as roads do at intersections, both converge and diverge from a meeting point.

These geographical intersections are often mapped over with cultural and personal intersections. These are sometimes exact and drawn from objective reality – for example, novels which make use of the gay neighbourhood around Church and Wellesley – and sometimes imagined or aleatory. Many of these works exhibit qualities identified with the work of the London-based originators of psychogeography such as Iain Sinclair: like the subway rider who looks up between Bay and Sherbourne and notices the MacEwen poem in her subway car, Torontonian writers are drawn to chance encounters between people,

locations and texts as central narrative or poetic moments. The topography of the city shapes personal encounters and the literary forms they take. The narrative of In the Skin of a Lion, for example, arises from a fortuitous meeting shaped by the unfinished construction of the Bloor viaduct. The Toronto landmark effects the conjunction of two characters, who in turn effect the intersection of two cultures, and a juxtaposition between official and imagined history. As in Ondaatje's other work, such as The English Patient and Anil's Ghost, the intimate relationship between various characters mirrors the larger political and historical drama. There is a sense in which their convergences even precipitate these larger occurrences, just as Patrick's final action has the potential to alter the topography of the city.

The iconic figures of Toronto literature – Patrick of In the Skin of a Lion, the deadbeat protagonists of Daniel Jones' writing, the elegiac voice of Civil Elegies, Grace for whom no other alias is ever given – could all be identified with Noman, the protagonist of Gwendolyn MacEwen's linked short stories in Noman and Noman's Land. These nameless, misnamed and marginal figures constitute an analogy for a certain vision of Toronto: a city with little or no history, still in the process of defining its landmarks and its identity. 'Where is here' shades into 'Who is here,' with all the ramifications of that question for Toronto's multi-ethnic, polylinguistic community. The proliferation of identities in the city appears to undermine an overarching understanding of Toronto as signifier. Toronto's role as cinematic body double for New York, Chicago and even London, perpetuates this sense of amorphousness. Yet the work of Ondaatje, Jones, Dennis Lee, Margaret Atwood and MacEwen (among others) has a firm locative grounding in the streets and sounds of Toronto. Their influence has extended over a younger generation of writers through their active participation in publishing – for example, the foundation of Anansi, Coach House and Oberon presses – reading and teaching in the city. They have fostered an anti-canonical

canon, one that identifies itself as Torontonian by resisting official definitions and histories and engaging with people, events and texts that dwell on the margins. Each writer discussed here consciously presents their vision as an *alternate* city, one that subverts or perverts not only the 'real' city but simultaneously the notion of literary realism long associated with city writing. Yet in doing so, they do not ignore contemporary political and social issues, but rather engage with them in opposition to the diluted social consciousness of the contemporary media and official histories. Frequently, as in Patrick's case, or for Verlia in Dionne Brand's In Another Place, Not Here, the personal and the political conjoin. These authors present rewritings that resist utopian tropes; their re-visionings occur at the axis of revisionist history and visionary fiction.

The clearest manifestation of this resistance is presented in a diverse group of works, which fall under the rubric "speculative fiction." Apocalyptic tropes are prevalent in Canadian literature, and the literatures of Toronto are no exception. In point of fact, the only recent film both set in and shot in Toronto, Last Night, follows a group of friends on the last day of the world. Although, unlike New York, Toronto lacks a strong science-fiction corpus, the Canadian Gothic is clearly no longer confined to "the haunted wilderness." As in Gothic, these novels take their central concern from the contrast between the natural and the man-made. For example, in Nalo Hopkinson's Brown Girl in the Ring the heroine Ti-Jeanne summons the Orisha forces of water, wind and storm to defeat the evil Rudy who has made the CN Tower his centre of operations. Although her novel is set in a speculative future Toronto, Hopkinson engages with contemporary municipal politics concerning homelessness, ethnicity, and the distribution of wealth. Her use of the CN Tower as a totem both of Toronto and of the supernatural forces of good and evil invites the reader to

perceive an alternate city gathered around this central landmark. It also introduces another important intersection, which arises in all the texts included in the first chapter: the meeting point of the horizontal and the vertical. Each author draws a contrast between progress along the streets of Toronto, and the progression of tall buildings in the downtown core. In Douglas Cooper's Delirium, this is manifestly a moral axis: tower dwellers and street dwellers oppose each other in a postmodern psychomachia. The hierarchy of heaven and hell is inverted; architectural aspiration – as in B.W. Powe's analysis of the 1987 crash – precedes a fall.

The familiar silhouette of the Gothic castle is mapped onto the skyline of Bay Street (Powe), the lakeshore (Hopkinson), and the university and Toronto's mental health institutions (Findley). In Headhunter, Robarts Library and the Metro Reference Library become aggregate symbols of the dangers of the intersections of fictional narrative with actual geographies. Findley's metafictional conceit is echoed in Cooper's structural contortions; both writers repeatedly use book and building as metaphors for each other. Resisting traditional containing and shaping of narrative/space results in an excavation of hidden or ignored spaces, such as the locked room at the base of the Letztesmann Tower (Cooper) and the secret corridors beneath the Parkin Institute of Psychiatric Research (Findley). Each of these buildings is a simulacrum: Cooper's is a conglomerate representation of Toronto skyscrapers with particular reference to Mies van der Rohe's T.D. Tower, while Findley's is a thinly-disguised satire on the Clarke Institute (now the Centre for Mental Health and Addiction). Both point to a Toronto caught at the crux between dream and reality. Findley performs a double manoeuvre, bringing characters from Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness to life in a fictional Toronto, thus questioning the ontological status of

his own fictional characters. By giving not only his protagonist Lilah, but several of his characters, mental health problems, Findley shows the characters themselves questioning their ontology, unsure if they or their city is wholly real.

Lilah, from whom we receive our first impressions of Toronto in Headhunter, is a character clearly on the margins of perception, in both senses. She is invisible to the majority of the characters who constitute the social milieu of the novel, and for this reason she often sees things that they do not, such as the 'ghost' of Susannah Moodie. Findley calls on canonical figures from Canadian and world literature to shape his metafictional critique of Toronto and Torontonian literature. By making Lilah and Amy the most sympathetic characters in his unpleasant world, he draws the reader to reject the social – and therefore literary – hierarchy exhibited by Kurtz and his cronies. Hopkinson, Findley and Cooper provide the requisite climax, but the world (the city) does not end. In each case, there is a rejection of the official, powerful city and redemption is achieved through a marginal figure. Lilah, Ti-Jeanne and Delirium's Bethany and Scilla become figures for the city itself. On the one hand, they present an oft-ignored social reality of the dispossessed in Toronto, and on the other, a revolutionary alteration which not only revisions history from below, but places power in the hands of the powerless, championing Toronto as the city of the underdog. By placing the traditionally marginal at the geographic and narrative centre of the city, and pitting them against the over-reaching ambition of Toronto's skyscrapers, these novels counter the moral, cultural authority of the vertical axis that dominates the city landscape.

The city's skyline, however, mixes business with pleasure. Alongside the phallic domination of the CN Tower, there are other landmarks, for example the Sky Dome and the

buildings and rides of the Canadian National Exhibition grounds. Seen from the perspective of a Ferris wheel, or a biplane, Toronto is seen not as a skyline, but as a relief map. Centre and periphery shift. Helen Humphreys' Leaving Earth transfers an imagined account of a nineteen-day endurance flight over the city by two women (the flight actually occurred in Florida) onto a detailed record of Toronto, summer 1933. The women's aerial perspective is relentlessly marginal: they perform the same loop around the lake every ten minutes for nineteen days, and the locations seen are those along the waterfront and the islands. This perspective intersects with that of a family working the Hanlan's Point Amusement Park. Humphreys makes clear the geographically and socially marginal nature of the Islands community, and the novel ventures no further into the city than the grounds of the Ex. In Derek McCormack and Chris Chamber's polymorphous Wild Mouse, where the Ex itself takes centre stage, we are offered a kaleidoscopic view (poems, short stories, photographs) which resists authorial hegemony. In Wild Mouse, the multiplicity of voices is identifiable with the Ex's polyvalence and resistance to city limitations, while in Leaving Earth, the Ex is contrasted with Hanlan's Point as an incursion of the official city on the margins.

The formal contrasts between Chamber's/McCormack's experimental collection and Humphreys' largely conventional narratorial practice points to a prevailing trope in her novel: marginal existences are only possible at one remove from the city. Yet Del and Rose are not safe as Jews, even on the Islands, and Grace and Willa's emotional and physical attraction is brought down by the gravitational force of the city. Both works exhibit a resistance to the media, which is identified with lies and trickery, and in Leaving Earth, the city is identified *in extremis* with the Toronto Fascists. Yet in equally formally conventional novels Soon to be a Major Motion Picture and Boys Like Us, a marginal lifestyle is central to

the novel and to the city. In both cases, the protagonists are doubly marginalized: as gay men and writers, they live within very specific geosocial boundaries. While the characters' residences are dispersed over the city, their social and sexual activity takes place in the 'gay village' around the Church and Wellesley intersection. Gay Toronto is presented as a series of in-jokes and hip places to be. Street names are fetishised like brand labels, and encode desires, whether sexual (Church Street) or material (Bloor West). This codification is taken further in the poetry of Sky Gilbert and R.M. Vaughan, anthologised in Plush, where street and bar names become poetic symbols almost divorced from the map.

In looking at the literature of queer Toronto, it is apparent that several communities and writing styles are being grouped under a single label, which is both political and theoretical. Chapter 3 explores the diverse ways in which this literature might be considered queer through its attitude towards the city. From Warren Dunford's use of the Park Plaza as a vertical expression of horizontal desire in Soon to be a Major Motion Picture to Margaret Christakos' Danforth butcher shop fantasies in Charisma, queer writers sexualise the city, identifying and imbuing specific locales with specific erotics. This erotics of place becomes an erotics of language in Christakos and Beth Follett, whose novel Tell It Slant features an itinerant protagonist Nora, 'borrowed' from Djuna Barnes' Nightwood and set adrift in contemporary Canada. Her encounter with male homosexual Toronto is set against a lesbian love affair in/with Montreal. Whereas McGehee and Dunford are formally and linguistically available (and, it is implied, sexually), Follett and Christakos present narratives and cities that are less immediately penetrable. Their landmarks are more diffuse and decentralised, from unnamed Queen Street coffee shops to the Scarborough Bluffs. The male writers locate their sexuality almost entirely within the 'village' – apart from one transgressive sex-in-the-suburbs

incident in McGehee – while in Follett, male homosexuality is located both on Church and on the margins. In Charisma, the city is pansexual, composed of many intersecting erogenous zones where both gender and sexuality are potentially altered. While the trope of landscape-as-body is toyed with and resisted, it is clear that there is a parallel between the identity of Toronto, and that of her characters: they are in formation, assimilating conflicting evidence. The city is fluid, a shifting signifier that alters through its relationships with the characters.

Her main character, Cameo, represents a process of intersection. She is divining her identity based not only on gender/sexuality, but on her Greek ethnicity. The exploration of both factors is locative, but also alimentary. The gustatory city appears in many of these novels, conveying the flavours and scents of Toronto's multi-ethnicity. There are countless poems about Kensington Market, which uses foodstuffs and smells as landmarks, identifying the cultural with the culinary. Because of the cultural distribution in Toronto, certain communities – and their food – are associated with specific areas, just as there is a gay 'village.' While for Christakos the issue of ethnicity is sublimated into the sexual desire, for others it represents a desire for home, a sensual nostalgia that draws parallels between here and 'there,' for example, a jerk chicken store at Vaughan and St. Clair, and Barbados. The smell and taste creates a sense of bi-location. Dionne Brand's work, like Christakos', is marked by a tension between sexual and ethnic identity, but in addition, Brand's characters are frequently first-generation immigrants to Toronto, and her work contrasts the sensual frigidity of Toronto with its social and political possibilities. In Another Place, Not Here, the reader is brought into the characters' sense of displacement through Brand's use of a double narrative voice and interchanging time structure. Verlia's and Elizete's narratives have twin

points of intersection: in the Caribbean, where we are given both women's versions of their encounter, and in Toronto, where their stories intersect but they do not.

This divided locus/focus also marks the work of other Caribbean-Canadian writers such as Austin Clarke and Marlene Nourbese-Philip. Like queer novelists, they are in the process of defining their place within the city while resisting being confined to that area. The division persists in the focus-grouping of many of the works examined herein: chapter 4, which looks at Brand and Clarke, could also have included Hopkinson as a Caribbean-Canadian writer, and Brand clearly has connections with the work of the authors in chapter 3. Locating these works followed a similar process to these authors locating themselves within the city. The conflictual aspect of Brand's work, which shifts between varied loci, voices, and narrative forms, represents a paradigmatic example of the exiled or diasporic writer in Toronto. Her geography has a lot in common with Clarke's: the protagonists of their stories and novels look at Toronto with a similar gaze. For example, Honest Ed's is a requisite centre of convergence: an attraction like the rides at the Ex, it is also sited as a long-term aspiration. Yet Toronto is not necessarily the apogee of desire in Clarke and Brand. Their characters are often restless and dissatisfied, existing in the Caribbean in their thoughts and dreams. It is both valid and necessary to site these writers in a Torontonian milieu, in order to understand their narrative strategies and allegiances, but also for a further revision of Toronto as "another place, not here" even as it *is* here.

The contrast between Elizete's and Verlia's engagement with Toronto demonstrates two different socio-historical aspects of the city. Verlia's involvement with the Black Power movement shapes her portrait of the city very differently than Elizete's alienation and lack of

political engagement. This implication of the larger narrative of the city in the personal narrative of characters is apparent in all the works discussed so far. Brand and Clarke use moments of social realism to convey the conjunction of their narratives and the historical struggle for racial equality in Toronto. This same struggle towards Toronto's identity as a multicultural, multi-ethnic city is evinced in In the Skin of a Lion, albeit somewhat differently. Ondaatje's characters are engaged not only in personal and municipal history, but in the formation of a founding myth. The narrative is less immediate: we are distanced by a frame device, and by a distance of half a century. Whereas Hopkinson, Cooper, Follett and others are witnesses to a potentially occluded present, Ondaatje uncovers an occulted past. He places the concerns discussed so far – the architecture of buildings and books, the location of the carnivalesque, the map of desire, and the geography of community – in a mythicised history, implying that these things lie behind the specific literary constitution of Toronto. He is simultaneously shaping literary and civic history, engaging equally with the recovery of histories of forgotten communities, and the creation of urban myth – in its whole range of meaning, from foundation story to the rumour of unlikely incidents.

These imaginary incidents are suggested by the topography of the city itself. Ondaatje is the quintessential Toronto psychogeographer in his ability to read potential histories from the city as it is constituted by streets, buildings and people both powerful and powerless. Iain Sinclair cites Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid on the first page of Suicide Bridge, his 1979 prose poem on the conspiracies behind London's centres of power. Ondaatje shares many of Sinclair's concerns with excavation, unwritten history, the occult, coincidence, photographs, and the intersection of personal and mythic histories as dictated by the dimensions of the city. They both construct sentences like ley lines, which

connect across cultures, and import hidden meaning, using language to convey the pace and variety of experiencing a city. Yet Ondaatje's most extensive use of Sinclair's favourite metaphor of excavation occurs not in In the Skin but in The English Patient and Anil's Ghost. In the Skin is primarily concerned with construction and destruction, with a city that has little to excavate. Patrick's work as a tunneller unearths less than his forays into the Macedonian community. It is Anne Michaels' Fugitive Pieces that uncovers the geological and historical bedrock of Toronto. Her main characters – Jakob, a poet obsessed with geology, Athos, an archaeologist, and Ben, an historian and biographer – are all specifically engaged in excavation, and they each bring this awareness of the buried to Toronto. Jakob himself was rescued from a bog by Athos, and remains fascinated with the hidden histories of the earth, and the relation between buried minerals, buried memories and the dead. These become intertwined in Michaels' precise and evocative lyric language, which draws metaphorical parallels and echoes across the text. Like Cooper, Michaels is fascinated by the dream-logic of encounters in the city, and the state between dream and waking is often invoked as a quality of Toronto.

This unformed dreaminess is associated in both Ondaatje and Michaels with the figure of a child – Hana and Jakob respectively – suggesting the nascent city, and its wealth of potential narratives. This becomes a strategy for resisting canonicity, like Ondaatje's alignment, through Patrick, with the Macedonian community. Even the most ostensibly canonical writers, such as Ondaatje, do not engage with a hegemonic vision of the city, either in terms of literary canons or mainstream histories. Margaret Atwood encounters Toronto through criminals such as Xenia in The Robber Bride and Grace Marks in Alias Grace. Dennis Lee, whose Civil Elegies represent the most direct poetic engagement with the

downtown core, and interrogation of mainstream politics, also described Toronto through the eyes of Travelling Matt, the intrepid Fraggle whose adventures in Toronto were broadcast on CTV in each episode of Fraggle Rock. Although Toronto is clearly being used as Everycity, it is interesting that Lee and bp Nichol, who also wrote for the show, bring a similar sensibility to the world of the Fraggles as they do to their poetry. The contrast between the artistic, carnivalesque Fraggles and their topographical superiors is carried over from Nichol's poetic strategies of resistance. The child's eye view of Toronto found in Camilla Gibb's Mouthing the Words, winner of the 2000 Toronto Book Award, continue the surreality of Nichol's vision of Toronto, but also the hyper-aware observation of Jakob in Fugitive Pieces.

By contrast, the post-adolescent characters of Mariko Tamaki's cover me, Yashin Blake's Titanium Punch, and Russell Smith's How Insensitive, inhabit a Toronto that is fetishised and totally available. Each book identifies a particular youth-oriented scene, which sprawls across Toronto, and projects its vision of the scene as both mirror of and contrast to the entire city. Their rejection of canonicity involves a rejection of literary consciousness: each novel engages more with popular music and mass media than, even implicitly, with other books. Lynn Crosbie's prose-poem autobiography combines this teenage nihilism with a wayward portrait of the 1980s Toronto literary scene. Her series of paranoid Polaroids of her adopted and adapted city offers an alternative topography of Toronto's poetry scene, a literary city that exists contemporaneously with the cities of The Robber Bride, Nightwatch and Outage. Many of the sections of Alphabet City chronicle, and draw their strength from, live performance – for example, the launch of her first book. As with the gigs described in

cover me and Titanium Punch – a band whose nickname T-Punch is a pun on Toronto's hip nickname T-Dot – the performances Crosbie records are essential to her oeuvre.

Toronto's live literature scene is as boisterous and varied as its live music scene. It ranges, in my experience, from sedate readings in Hart House Library to bottlings at the El Mocambo via community-oriented nights such as the lesbian bar Clit Lit and book launches at Cameron House, This Ain't The Rosedale Library, Free Times Café and elsewhere. That experience is central to both the shape and content of this thesis; many of the readings I attended have suggested intersections between certain authors, and coloured my perception of Toronto's literary topology. To quote Robert Fulford, Toronto is an "accidental city" that appears to be a straight up-and-down grid divided into clearly labelled districts, but the history of its formation – and the selection of texts presented herein – is shaped by personal passions, coincidence and secret passageways. In such a deliberately unindividuated urban landscape, the remarkable stands out as clearly as the CN Tower.

Like the CN Tower, certain writers establish themselves as lightning rods on Toronto's skyline. The failed hero is as much part of the contemporary Torontonian landscape as of Atwood's Survival. The anti-apocalyptic climax of In the Skin, in which critics have seen Patrick as a failed survivor, can be read against the deliberately apocalyptic life and death of Daniel Jones, whose work obsessively prowls the night streets of Toronto. According to Kevin Connolly, Jones was planning a magnum opus entitled The Invention of Toronto (Connolly, [12], Introduction, 1978). This non-existent book is the perfect symbol of Torontology. The city remains to be perpetually invented, resisting master narratives through a diversity of location, community and form in its literatures. Certainly, a full critical

history of literary Toronto remains unwritten. Greg Gatenby's Toronto: A Literary Guide features a series of walks that are contingent to this psychogeographical project, yet do not form a complete, or even cohesive, investigation. In the works examined, street names are (re)written as love poems, as political protest and as children's games. Language and the city are both altered by this: given liberty, made available, opened to plural interpretations. This critical project, like the works with which it engages, intends to remain resistant and idiosyncratic, making its excavations as particular as they are thorough. It is not so much a discussion of alternative Toronto(s) as called into being by texts, or which call writers to express them into being, but an argument that for Toronto *as* alternative, not only to New York or London or Vancouver, but as the embodiment of alternative. Each writer engages with the specifics of geography to locate Toronto's identity, yet also recognises that the availability of Toronto as literary resource permits a proliferation of co-extant ontologies. These visions intersect but do not merge in the city whose name means 'meeting place.'

Reclaim the Streets street party fly poster, Toronto August 2001.

"Sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor": Illuminating Toronto

Two forms of invisibility. That which is not seen because it is unknown.
And that which it is not seen because it is known too well but does not belong.
And that rare place, somewhere between, where vision is possible for a moment.
John Law and Ivan da Costa Marques 'Invisibility' city a-z, 121

When D.G. Jones comes to write the preface to Gwendolyn MacEwen's 1982 volume of collected poems, Earthlight, he sets her against "most Canadian poets" who

> focus on civil space, perceiving the social body in terms of its material syntax of streets and roads, buildings and rooms, the tangle of hydro and communication lines. Even if they wander, we can find them on the map, anchored in immediate local detail.

For Jones, the Canadian city poet is a cliché, one for whom the established map is a given, a referent of which their poems never lose sight. Yet there is a great difference between writing about the city, and writing the city. For the anonymous majority to whom Jones refers, the city is a metaphor for the "social body," not an autonomous body with its own wayward desires. For psychogeographers, the city is not a metaphor, except inasmuch as any character in a novel is a metaphor. It is, however, as MacEwen illustrates, a "cipher," a Noman, a riot of possible routes and meanings. Like Noman, the city is an ontological paradox; for long periods of time, it forgets itself and goes unobserved, and yet it continues to exist. For MacEwen, Toronto is both the hat and the rabbit that emerges from it. It is tempting to pigeonhole MacEwen as a magic realist (the postmodern version of MacEwen's hated designation 'mythopoeic poet') for, taken literally, it appears to capture her fascination with the magical and mystical while never losing sight of social reality. Yet the difference between her work, and that of magic realists such as Isabel Allende, is that one gets the sense that, for MacEwen, the real and the magic are inseparable. They meet, especially, in the moment of poetic observation; the magic is that which usually goes unseen behind the city most Torontonians observe every day.

Yet the dailiness of the city is not only inscribed in, but by, MacEwen's vision. When the TTC decided to include "Sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor" in their Poetry on the Way series, they brought to the fore the series of games and parallels produced in any poem about the contemporary city. By placing the poem in streetcars, buses and subway cars, Poetry on the Way mapped the location of the poem onto its temporal sequence. By this I mean that the *places* in which the poem was conceived/observed, written and read, are remapped onto the moments of similar incidents. The poem is explicitly concerned with the temporal and geographical location of "*right now*," and it thereby draws the reader to consider not only the circumstances of the poem, but their own circumstance, which becomes part of the poem's landscape (MacEwen 1987, 87). When a poem about a moment of sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor is made available to read in the sunlight of Sherbourne and Bloor, past and present collapse through the power of language and location: this is the project of psychogeography. In his work, Iain Sinclair repeatedly draws connections between the events and people who go unobserved in the present – the homeless, the insane – and the forgotten or erased events and people of the past. Any recovery and restitution of one is an inclusive gesture towards the other. MacEwen is most concerned with those who feel erased or elided by the present; her work is an act of witnessing things otherwise unnoticed, both grimly real and exuberantly miraculous. The mundane and the numinous are entwined in the sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor.

It is not until MacEwen's final books Noman's Land and Afterworlds that Toronto becomes the central locus for this intersection of observation and imagination. Earlier in her career, places as diverse as the Middle East and the Northwest Passage had served as landscapes for her writing (King of Egypt, King of Dreams and Terror and Erebus). It is on

her first trip abroad, to Israel, that she comes to the realisation that she belongs to a place and a generation, and has the potential to become their representative writer. She writes to her then-husband Milton Acorn from Safed: "I am committed to life – to the chaos and ambiguity of my generation – I see it in the city [Toronto], the buildings, faces of people" (quoted Sullivan 139). On her return, she began to work on the stories that would form Noman, and memories from her Israel trip are transferred to the character Kali in Noman's Land (see Sullivan 125, 132, 133). Her commitment to Toronto coincided with the city's awakening sense of its cultural potential. She had met Acorn through her attendance at the Bohemian Embassy, one of the city's first (and most notorious) literary salons, and throughout her life Toronto's counter-cultural literary scene would continue to provide friends, lovers, publishers and a context for understanding and presenting her own work. MacEwen's generation were arguably the first to create/be part of a Toronto 'scene,' and their sense of the city as their literary location is marked by such definitive texts as Dennis Lee's Civil Elegies and Margaret Atwood's The Circle Game. Yet it is MacEwen, who initially shies away from writing the city, who becomes its greatest interpreter, capturing the "chaos and ambiguity" that erupted from beneath the sedate surface of previous writers' highly "civil space."

MacEwen's first approach to this eruption is through fiction. Her earliest story, "The Twelve Princes," relocates and rewrites the biblical story of Hannah and Samuel in Toronto, and ends with our first encounter with Noman. Rosemary Sullivan documents MacEwen's autobiographical sources for the themes and contents of her fiction beginning with the locations and themes of this story, mapping MacEwen's highly idiosyncratic experience of Toronto, which began in the early 1940s and followed through the period of the city's

exponential development to the late 1980s. Noman and Noman's Land are chronicles of a becoming-city, to borrow a concept from Deleuze and Guattari. MacEwen encounters Toronto in a period of potential, and is intent on forming a city that includes all "chaos and ambiguity." According to John Johnston, writing about "The Waste Land," all city poems

> possess 'the latent principle of all-inclusiveness,' [...] commodious, discursive and full of what Samuel Johnson, in his definition of 'local poetry,' called 'embellishments': images myths, symbols, stories, reflections, adjurations, prescriptions. In conveying an authentic sense of place, [...] works convey the sense of a whole civilization (Johnston, 178).

MacEwen's postmodern Toronto conveys the sense, not of a whole civilisation, but of the fragments of many. The city, like Noman, is "a kaleidoscope, a collage" searching to authenticate its sense of place (MacEwen 1985, 14). The work of the psychogeographer is to respond to and simultaneously resist Ezra Pound's great project for modernism: IT ALL COHERES. MacEwen's kaleidoscope never settles; the collisions and revisions continue as she imagined and re-imagines a single character who contains multitudes. Noman's fractured identity, "a room composed of sliding doors and panels," gives him the ability to see the city as a kaleidoscope as well (1985, 14). His amnesia, in Noman's Land, causes him to experience everything anew. "The hallucinatory *presence* of things [...] he was consumed by something he called godfire. But he was also cursed with an awful inclusive vision, the painful ability to see everything at once" (20). The writer working on a "principle of all-inclusiveness" is "cursed." This is MacEwen's telling evaluation of her fate.

Toronto, however, is not just the subject matter of her stories, but in some senses its guiding principle, as the CN Tower becomes Noman's guide. Already in Noman, there is a powerful abstraction of the city onto the level of a mythic creature, as well as a constant and opposite reference to the city as marker of reality. In the widely anthologised "The House of

the Whale," two Native Canadians travel to Toronto from B.C. to find work. Instead, they find the city. Aaron reveals Toronto to Lucas when they arrive:

'Well, I'm telling you *this* is the House of the Whale, this city, this place. Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies. This, this is where you'll find your *psyche*.'
'My what?'
'This is where you'll find what you're looking for'

Place and *psyche* are brought together, and the soul of the city is, Aaron implies, the soul of the self. The whereness of place gives access to "what you're looking for" – the whoness of self. Looking down Bay Street, Aaron tells Lucas that that is where the whales live.

'The whales in our stories were gods,' I [Lucas] protested and you laughed.
'I wish I could tell you that this city was just another myth, but it's not. It smacks too much of reality' (1972, 14).

Toronto is invested with the power of a dislocated West Coast Native myth, and then returned to its violent "smack" of reality. The city is both power centre of reality, and displaced from its mythic origins. For this reason, MacEwen locates her characters "on the sweet circumference of things, looking into the centre" (1972, 13). Her inclusion of minorities such as Native Canadians as narrators in her stories is a facet of her kaleidoscope that unites social protest and awareness with her interest in the mythic. Lucas and Aaron are not merely bringers of mythic wisdom, allegories for Toronto's aboriginal past, but characters in the "civil space" negotiating their new geography through imagination.

Lucas says, "[t]he next day I imagined that the bank was a huge totem, or the strong man Aemaelk who holds the world up" (1972, 16). Again, the becoming-city has its power dynamic realigned: the force of capitalism is translated into spiritual and mythic conceptions of "hold[ing] the world up." This vertical axis of Toronto's reality is also encountered by Julian, who reappears in Toronto and winters at an abandoned fairground. He contests a personification of Reality, and refuses to allow the city to reside in the real. Although he

cannot create or believe in a mythic Toronto, he uses his physical presence to alter perspective, and therefore reality. He argues:

> Somehow I must relate to the city, let its chaos be my own. But no – I'm not going to be tricked into reality! I do a handstand and watch the people walking upside-down, their heads dipping down into the pale cobalt pool of the sky (1972, 70).

To stand on one's head is to stand one's surroundings on theirs, inverting the sky and the lake. The city is represented and resisted, valued as a House of Mirrors as well as a House of the Whale.

Julian is not the only one to disrupt the city through his body. The behaviour of the human body is often unsettling and inflammatory in these stories. In its ability to shape-shift, it contrasts with the city's fixity. Like so much city writing, MacEwen's stories and poems are written to the rhythm of walking, or riding a bicycle, but they include more extraordinary physical eruptions: fairground rides which offer seeming levitation, magic acts, casual violence, writing in the snow, dancing a *zembekiko*. Yet these all occur within their designated spaces. It is Noman who breaks the city's boundaries with his movements, swimming, for example, in the lake where (to quote Chris Chambers) "no one swims." Noman is the myth that lives uneasily within the city, threatening rather than creating its sense of self.

> Perhaps you have caught glimpses of the dark invisible dancer under the Bloor-Street viaduct or in such unlikely places as the Eglington subway station, Grenadier pond and so forth [...] To you who have no need for Fairy Tales, I offer this fiction (and nothing is fiction). He walks with the studied step of a dancer who may at any moment, without warning, dance (1972, 108).

This kaleidoscope of paradoxes – the glimpsed invisible, the non-fiction fiction, the walking dancer – encapsulates Noman the trickster, as sense itself shape-shifts. Noman's spontaneity disrupts the ordered pattern of city existence, such as when he grabs a busker's violin at Yonge and Bloor and "immediately g[ives] forth a brilliant rendition of Rimsky-Korsakov's

Hymn to the Sun" (1985, 18). His transgression of codes of property, social conduct and geographical locale effect a change in the city, as MacEwen saw it transform, from Toronto the Good to the House of (the Afro-Caribbean trickster god) Anansi, and this altered state comes to be aligned with Noman as we enter into his idiosyncratic vision.

The "all-inclusiveness" of that vision, his magic ability to metamorphose, comes to answer the pertinent question of who is able to/permitted to speak for the diverse city. The running joke of Noman's confused ethnic identity in "Noman" is intensified by his amnesia in Noman's Land. This, he decides, is what it means to be a Kanadian. At different intersections he meets the Caribana Sun King and Mackenzie King, fire and ice, and rejects both of them (1985, 51, 104). His vision of the city is repeatedly drawn away from its streets and skyline, and directed to the lake. "Sooner or later everything led to the lake. He would remember" this essential fact; the lake acts as a symbolic escape from the city – Mackenzie King's 'ghost' escapes Noman by setting sail on an ice floe – but also a symbolic death, as Noman watches King sink, and later experiences his own near-death (104). But in that last story, "The Other Country," Noman focuses on the city he is swimming *towards* and realises that this time he cannot die. "He was higher than the lightning, higher than the Tower which materialized in the jagged light. He knew that he was immortal; he knew it with absolute certainty. He had always been here and always would be" (1985, 135). The *form* of the city is material to the form of the narrative; the contrast between the flat, blank lake and the upright, illuminated Tower is not metaphor but a visionary moment of actuality inscribed as an epiphany – one available to all Toronto-dwellers.

MacEwen finds an accurate metaphor for the form of her fiction in her description of the intersection of King and Roncesvalles, where she lived in the mid-1960s (Sullivan

172). This "insane intersection" is a model for the "mad jumble" of contingencies, tangents and fantastic accidents that structure the meta-narrative of MacEwen's Toronto stories (1985, 119). The transition between the godlike European Julian and the unidentifiable, elliptical Noman, Noman's amnesia and insistence on reinventing himself and his friends, is captured in the layout of the intersection:

> Finally, somehow, one street subtly becomes another. It is hard to tell what happens exactly – Queen devours King? Roncesvalles surrenders to King? Anyway, it all sorts itself out, or braids itself together, depending on how you look at it (119).

Workers laying a streetcar intersection on Queen Street at Roncesvalles, 1910.
Careless, 184.

"Finally, somehow," the devouring and surrendering witnessed in the city, for example in "The Demon of Thursday" and in Noman's relationship with the "nightchild," meet and become one. Like the lines of the streetcar, the lines of Noman's Land "have been ripped up and rearranged a hundred times in the past" in the decade it took to complete the book, evolving as the city evolved, and receiving its final epiphany – Noman's amnesia – from a local human interest story in the Toronto Star (MacEwen 1985, 119; Sullivan 335). "All the places and people Gwen knew in Toronto are included in this book [...] How deeply Gwen knew the city, how deeply she claimed it and loved it; she had cycled every part of it" (Sullivan 336). Like Noman, MacEwen's engagement with the city is physical and inclusive;

Noman's Land is also Gwen's Land, her most enduring habitat and mental landscape. In her last books, like Noman she comes to see that Toronto can include "buildings that looked like Byzantine pavilions and Medieval castles" as well as Honest Ed's and the Gothic horror of the Clarke Institute (1985, 136).

The identifiable memories of MacEwen's attributed to Kali in Noman's Land, however, are mainly from her travels in the Middle East ("The Holyland Buffet"). When she comes to write her own memories, she resists relating the inexorable, autobiographical pattern of her own narrative by turning to poetry. Talking about the conception and execution of a poem, she imagines a boy at an intersection, jumping. "The poem is caught in that space between his feet leaving the ground and regaining it" (MacEwen 'Genesis,' Tean cladóir 1961, quoted Sullivan 116). The poem is a moment of suspension, the "right now." "Sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor" is the essence of this momentariness. MacEwen reworks T.S. Eliot's prophecies of time future and time present from Four Quartets in order to celebrate a particular and exact time and place. "Today has been Friday; that was its name – Friday – and the sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor completes the city," the poem concludes, identifying the co-ordinates of the "vital [...] profound [...] perfect [...] necessary [...] now." The moment is a leap into light and completion; the sun completes what the city planners could not – "that building across the street has been going up *forever*" – not by finishing it, but by illuminating, not gilding, the moment. In the "brilliant disorders" of this poem, there is a bridge and a ravine, but no Byzantine palace.

The city's presentness is its "logical outcome" but also its magic, a concept furthered by later poems in the sequence (1987, 87). In "Languages (2)," she records an adolescent

reminiscence of her and her girlfriend playing Bach on the Dundas streetcar, and speaking in languages "made up on the spur of the moment" (1987, 89). The poem has a similar sense of spontaneous invention, as does "Me and the Runner," written in a single eleven-line sentence of paratactic fragments that imitate the course of her cycling, directed only by desire for what happens next (93). MacEwen follows the runner from Yonge and Bloor to Woodbine and Danforth, where their "shadows have attained a perfect intimacy" (93). Yet this conjunction is also a departure. For the poet, the intersection signifies "intimacy," but the runner "turns a corner," reminding us that intersections are always a paradox of meeting and leaving. Again, it is the physical body that, by causing the disruption of desire, reroutes our course through the city.

The runner's movements are dictated by the shape of his conceptual map, which draws the attention of the poet, which creates the poem, which creates Toronto. MacEwen describes this process in an earlier poem, "Finally Left in the Landscape," which rejects maps and specifics as "a violated geography." The opening of the poem, however, presages both Noman and the runner:

Finally left in the landscape is the dancer;
        all maps have resigned, the landscape has
designed him. My lines can only
        plagiarize his dance   (1982, 39).

The maps may have "resigned" but the internal rhyme of "re*sign*ed [...] de*sign*ed [...] *line*s" figures the importance of maps as signs. In plagiarizing the dance, the poet is plagiarizing the landscape; the legal language seeks to return both land and art to self-ownership. To describe the city (or the dance), the poem implies, is to claim ownership over it: this is what the poem resigns. However, the poet does not resign its "chosen landscape," because she has to "journey to this naked country / to seek a form which dances in the sand." The poem is

both a record of this journey, and a journey itself, from the landscape with only a dancer, to a landscape with dancer, poet and deity. The poem ends: "Hear my dark speech, deity." From the "cipher of movement" comes the numinous and the will to speak of/to it. The poem, both in form and content, is rooted in the chosen landscape.

In the Noman stories, Toronto is vivid, recognisable, but the official maps have indeed "resigned." MacEwen takes the elements which sign our location in the city and re-invents them. Particularly prevalent, as I mentioned, is the CN Tower, which enacts the manifesto of "Sunshine" that "the future is utterly implicit in the present" (1987, 87). Noman finds himself before it, symbol of Toronto, in contemplation.

> Was this city somebody's rough diagram of reality, or was it pure mirage? He gazed at the Tower – tallest free-standing structure in the world – and it shimmered in the gray air, a monument to nothing, a space ship that would never have lift-off, a rocket without a launching pad (1985, 21).

The Tower is a "rough diagram of reality," a specimen of presentness, but it also speculates on a future of space travel – in fact, it is a monument to it, for space is after all "nothing." It is not a "cipher of movement" but a cipher in stillness, never having lift-off but going up forever. It will never become unrooted from the city, and thus is a perfect guide to shore for Noman when he swims the lake. In the moment of the lightning strike over the Tower, the illumination of "sunlight at Sherbourne and Bloor" is inverted and repeated, completing the city by revealing the future promise encapsulated in the moment of the leap. For MacEwen, this is always a "*right* now," a leap of faith into a potential suspended present in which not only the tower, but we as readers and city dwellers, are always ascending. The CN Tower is a compelling totem of this ascension, a psychogeographical node in which both the present and future enter the speculative realm. The Tower *is* a space ship, allowing our imaginations to travel upwards, and Toronto comes to embody the intersection of times past, present and

future alluded to in "Sunlight." "And the lake," MacEwen writes in "Tennis at Midnight," "which cared nothing for time, would often cast up strange relics of the future, as well as the past, upon its shores" (1985, 81). The lake is exempt from humans' concern with time, and transforms those who swim it into immortals. Thus Noman's glimpse of the CN Tower is a glimpse *outside* time, "that rare place [...] where vision is possible for a moment." MacEwen reworks the civil space of buildings and hydro lines in her poetry which calls the city "a form in the sand." The map on which we locate her is the one she drew herself, where Roncesvalles intersects with Mackenzie King, and sunlight has a permanent address at Sherbourne and Bloor.

Tall Stories: Beginning of the End

> The inert form of the city houses a multitude of little spatial histories told by bodies moving within it. Movement gives us the city in real time, a geography of memory as much felt in the body as seen in built forms. [...] These many paths through the city cannot be charted.
>
> Fran Tonkiss 'A to Z' city a-z, 2

In trying to determine 'where is here,' it is possible to exchange 'who' for 'where,' and examine Toronto not only in terms of its social dynamics, but in terms of who tells the stories of/for the city. As in MacEwen, often our guide is metonymy for the city itself: Noman represents the city that does not know itself, that chooses to have no history. Noman never speaks in the first person, as if the voice of the city has always to be mediated. Even when, as in Douglas Cooper's Delirium, there is a first-person narrator, we are offered a multiplicity of angles and voices. Cooper's novel is primarily about architecture as symbol of the human mind, and as such, he presents as many perspectives as would an architect. Ariel Price, architect of Toronto, is not the first-person narrator. Although the narrative traces his attempt to find and kill his biographer – sections of whose work appear in the text – Price is never given an opportunity to voice his own story.

The reader is halfway through the book before discovering that the omniscient meta-narrator is not outside, but within, the narrative. We have had glimpses of him, for example when Sarah tells Bethany the story of Saintes-Maries at the shelter, but Joshua Darlow does not reveal himself for another hundred pages. His first words in the first person are:

> I died in the city of Toronto. And I died because of what that city did to my family. There was something terrible at the heart of that city, written into it like a code beneath the skin [...] I wanted to find out what it was; what about Toronto that had done this to me.
>
> I had a sense that it was the man, whoever it was, who had made the city tall. It was his fault (117).

The narrator is a ghost. He possesses a detailed knowledge available only to the dead, and an ability to transcend temporal structures. He is aligned with other story tellers: the street child

Sarah, the writer Izzy Darlow (his brother), Price's biographer Theseus Crouch, and the punk performance artist Scilla, whom he leads to the secret space at the heart of the narrative. The novel converges there, in the hidden room beneath Price's masterpiece, the Letztesmann Tower. Cooper's use of space, his ghostly narrator, cast of deformed characters and moral agenda all suggest the influence of Gothic. The centrality of architectural space to the Gothic, where it is legible as the primary metaphor for the construction of the human psyche, frequently draws city writing towards the use of Gothic and related genres. Delirium presents not only a moral psychomachia but a contestation between architecture and inhabitants for the right to define urban space. For Cooper, the dominance of high-rise architecture in Toronto, "objects made by man that dwarfed even trees" that cause "sickness and awe," can only be narrated through Gothic horror (19).

Although MacEwen's stories are filled with magical and sometimes frightening events, she is not writing genre fiction. Yet some of her tropes – the lightning that strikes Noman, the ghostly figures who follow him around, his obsession with the CN Tower – appear in stories told of/by those more clearly in the territory of science-fiction or horror. Such literary territory frequently maps onto the areas of the city not privileged in traditional fiction – although, at least since Dickens, writing about the city has been concerned with the marginal and dispossessed. Central to contemporary genre fiction is a moral contest as old as literature itself: the war between good and evil. The good are almost always the economically and socially powerless; the evil, those with power, money and access. In the modern city of Toronto, that translates into a vertical scale. The traditional hierarchy of heaven and hell is reversed, with the forces of evil making their residence as high above the street level as possible. The streets belong to the masses, the underground to forces of resistance.

Narratives are built along this vertical axis rather than the traditional horizontal or grid-like form of the city novel, which takes its form from the pattern of streets. As MacEwen identifies, the CN Tower is the pivot and pinnacle of this genre of writing. For Nalo Hopkinson, in Brown Girl in the Ring, the Tower is a totem that allows her heroine Ti-Jeanne to make the Orisha gods visible and powerful in Toronto. The unnamed narrator of Outage perceives the Tower as a transmitter and receiver of communications, a secular minaret. For both, it is an iconic representation of a certain ideal of Toronto: one engaged with what Powe refers to as "a tremendous Canada of light" (Saul Bellow quoted 1993, 7). Both writers present the idea that the forces that create this light – electronic communication, municipal government, the increased globalisation of the business district – disclose a heart of darkness. The CN Tower, "a landmark where no one lives or stays," establishes its identity through exclusion (Powe 1995, 180). "Nothing," counters Cooper,

> can be cast away. And every attempt to remove from view aspects of the city that turn human will to sickness, simply creates another domain, a place beneath the light, equally complex and wilful and real as the city above, but charged with exile. Here terrible things find new strength in resentment (105).

The writers' response to this is to turn to genres that are to conventional fiction as the "place beneath the light" is to the Toronto offered to tourists and the International Olympic Committee. The use of horror is dictated by the "terrible things" alive in the actual city, and the novels become like the walls of buildings on Bay Street, mirrors which reflect actuality, subtly distorted by the imagination that designed them.

The dark side of the city is accessed in three ways in Delirium: buildings, dreams and books. Buildings are manifestations of the "*part of the soul that is illegible*," which "*breeds another city, gloomy and infernal and unknown to the light, a dark mirror*" (Cooper 111). In contrast to this, and also created by it, is, as Joshua tells Scilla,

'the city that Toronto dreams. This is the form the city takes in its mind at night: a city of garbage, narrow and evil and tall, dark in its ways and hard to know, the dream' (133).

The darkness of the soul that has infected the constructions, gives the city itself a dark space in its psyche in which to dream, "*a dark mirror.*" The dark space in Price's psyche is represented literally by the dark room he has constructed at the base of the tower in which the dancer Bethany is walled up alive. Toronto is often invoked as a grid-like city of sharply defined districts, with an equally grid-like moral sense of itself. Bethany, dancer and dispossessed, opposes this through her existence. Bethany's dancing in the square outside the tower, and Price's subsequent desire for her, synthesise to alter the state of the dreamt city. "This is how it was intended, there was to be no story. The Letztesmann Tower was to be the antithesis of narrative [...] But the girl had danced" (143). Bethany's gesture undermines the architect's "pure grid in three dimensions" and introduces narrative, making the novel possible (143). Cooper's narrative is anything but grid-like. It is fragmentary and contorted, and its Moebius nature is not fully revealed until the end, when we are told that Joshua has collected fragments of Crouch's unpublished biography and of Price's notebooks and sketches, and is transmitting them to his brother Izzy, who believes he is narrating an imagined story. The pages of the story are finally collated as the walls of a tent made by Jernigan Noer, an architect who lives with the ghosts beneath the Tower. He designs the prison that will hold Price, a personal revenge for Price forcing him to design the room where Bethany, then his lover, was walled alive. A final twist to the narrative draws us away from the straight up-and-down.

"You are lost? No, you are not lost. It all comes back to the tower. Through the center of the story, remember, grows a tower, and this will give our story structure" (147). The tower is the narrative, but also an oppositional structure against which the

deconstructed, non-linear story competes. This juxtaposition of the giddy heights of Toronto's skyline and the entwined narrative of secrets beneath its streets also marks Timothy Findley's Headhunter. Like Delirium, Headhunter is populated by the dispossessed – in this case, the clinically insane. Findley's central character, Lilah, has previously been institutionalised. She possesses the ability to conjure characters from novels into her actuality (the world of Headhunter). As in Cooper, this both is and is not the city of Toronto 'as is.' Again, buildings are its landmarks; here, the Queen Street Mental Hospital and the Clarke Institute, and, again, buildings are linked to books. Lilah, reading Heart of Darkness at the Metro Reference Library where she had formerly been employed, brings Kurtz into Toronto/Headhunter. Eventually, Marlow comes to join him.

Findley's game is as tortuous as Cooper's: by introducing two characters from a famously hallucinatory novel into his own through the agency of a borderline schizophrenic, Findley questions the ontology of *all* fictional characters. Setting these characters loose in the actual city, home to the author, further complicates the novel's position its on reality status. Toronto becomes a fictional character like Kurtz and Marlow, doubly fictionalised by its status as being quoted. Yet, just as Kurtz and Marlow are given a metafictional existence beyond Heart of Darkness, so Toronto is not reduced but extended, presented and represented throughout the novel as each character reveals his or her own cognitive map, each inflected by the darkness of their own hearts. Lilah's paranoid delusions are confirmed/executed by Findley, revealing that the Toronto presented is a manifestation of the writer's dark vision. The novelist is aware of his distinctly *psycho* geography, writing himself into the novel as a character, an analysand of Kurtz, who is a psychiatrist (142). 'Findley' draws a parallel between novelists and psychiatrists: "*We're both trying to figure out what*

makes the human race tick. And the way we do that – both of us – is by climbing down inside other people's lives" (142). The spatial metaphor of "climbing down" connects to the mapping of the psyche on architectural lines: the superego is the penthouse, the ego the street level, and the id the subterranean. Findley locates the space of the insane underground, both at Queen Street and the Parkin (the Clarke's pseudonym in the novel). Yet Kurtz, who of course lives in a penthouse, is as insane as those he treats. The unsavoury behaviour of most of the upper-echelon characters in Headhunter upsets the spatial hierarchy of sanity asserted by the class-driven society of the novel.

The contrast between Kurtz, high-society psychiatrist, and Lilah, downwardly mobile schizophrenic, is also seen in the different cognitive maps they have of the city. Lilah's street-level vision and Kurtz' ivory tower purview are united in the figure of Marlow, a colleague of Kurtz who is also a neighbour of Lilah's. Marlow and Lilah share a troubled and troublesome love of books, a love identified by Marlow with the strange calmness he feels in looking at the University of Toronto from his window at the Parkin. "He loved the St. George campus and was glad to be back on its greens again, beneath its Gothic horrors. *The buildings are so damned ugly*, he said, *you miss them for the charm of their deformation.*" The Gothic look of the city seems to dictate the mood of the novel. Yet Marlow continues to muse that "[t]his was not true of the newer buildings: the Library and the Parkin Institute. They were monstrosities of another kind altogether" (130). The Parkin disguises/discloses a more contemporary horror, one mirrored by the Robarts Library, which houses the books that cause so much trouble. For Ann Tracy, in her Gothic horror Winter Hunger, Robarts is the locus of a fatal *anagnoresis*. Her protagonist, Alan, an anthropologist spending the winter with the Native community of Wino Day (or Wet Dago) Lake, returns to Toronto after

Christmas, believing himself to be infected with a cannibal spirit. "Toronto's welcoming lights" eventually normalise him, but two visits to Robarts reinforce his sense of discomfort and difference (114). On the first occasion, he feels "pleasurably excited" as he approaches the building, despite the scale "designed to suggest super-human inhabitants" (134). The library remains unchanged since his previous visit, but the "last time he had been here [...] he had been someone else" (114). The building exerts its identity against his own, marking him as an outsider, a disturbance in its forces. Yet it reveals its secret to him, in the form of "Windigo Psychosis [...] E99/A35/T4" (135). The name and location of the book, conventional signifiers shared by every other book in the library, disguise its individual burden of horror, specific to Alan's experience. Naming the cannibal spirit within the confines of academia reinforces the psychosis. The book, as he discovers on his second visit, even renames (or rather, returns to its original name) the community where he has been working: Wino Day is a misapprehension of Windigo. "That windigo book was the only thing in Toronto that made Wino Day and his life there seem real," the book opposing the (sur)reality of the city beyond the ivory tower, where, as Alan observes, geese fly inside the Eaton Centre (144). The library/book returns him to Wino Day both figuratively and literally, as the information it reveals frightens him into leaving Toronto as soon as possible.

Alan's experience in the library, which reinforces his lack of sense of belonging, reiterates an experience of alienation common to much city fiction. Not only Bethany but Price himself are shown as alienated in/by the city in Delirium, and similarly, the city eventually rejects Kurtz, the impostor who has attempted to conquer it. Perhaps the fullest illustration of this sense of alienation *by* Toronto comes in B.W. Powe's Outage, where an unnamed narrator makes A Journey into Electric City, as the novel is subtitled. The narrator

returns repeatedly to the contrast between the illusion of connexivity and communication, and the alienation *caused* by the electrification of daily life in the city. Observing the behaviour of people in a club, seemingly united by the music, yet desperately alone and seeking connection, he encapsulates the nature of the modern city in a single word: *ex-stasis* (114). The word, derived from a Greek term for a spiritual madness, is appropriate to those affected by the city, who simultaneously experience a particular location – the club as *the* place to be – and dislocation, as they enter a world that, like Price's unindividuated towers, lack defined referents. Toronto, cinematic double for every North American city, is a paradigm of this effect whereby "every city approximately and incestuously map[s] onto every other. There is only one city and there is only one story" (Cooper 170). Yet Toronto is defiantly a city of more than one story: the CN Tower alone has 102 (Powe 1995, 157). Its exstasis stems from a multiplicity mapped onto a lack of founding identity. Noman is also potentially Everyman, a quality especially valid in a multicultural city such as Toronto, where any single definition of Toronto has only a short history but a sprawling present on which to draw. Therefore any definition of the city will, like the CN Tower, be exclusionary.

In their own way, each of these novels is a speculative fiction beginning from the question, what is the effect of exclusion, and what if a certain excluded group demanded access to the definition of Toronto. Nalo Hopkinson's Brown Girl in the Ring maps a geographical exclusion zone, known as the hole-in-the-doughnut effect, onto a future present Toronto.[2] Hopkinson's city is not the Toronto of the present, but they share many features. Hers is a worst-case scenario development, a warning that remains unheard by the

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[2] In a personal interview, Hopkinson referred to her reading of Jane Jacobs' The Life and Death of American Cities as influential on Brown Girl, particularly Jacobs' analysis of the middle-class residential and business abandonment of urban centres, which Jacobs calls the hole-in-the-doughnut effect.

current municipal government. It seems, however, that the city itself was listening. Shortly after Hopkinson finished her first draft, the flooding of an underground streetcar tunnel that triggers the city's desertion had a near-fatal echo in events in the actual city.[3] In the novel, the collapse of Toronto's infrastructure, due to cuts in civic funding and the impact of a Native land rights claim against the city, has caused the municipal government and middle classes to remove to the suburbs. The haunting *possibility* of these events is reinforced by their presentation as "The Making of the Doughnut Hole," an exhibition of newspaper headlines to give the reader backstory (11). The city has not been entirely deserted, however. As in actual American inner-cities, the previously excluded – ethnic minorities, homeless people, and criminals – have made Toronto, and the narrative, their own.

The psychomachia of the novel is embodied in a single family: Mami and her granddaughter Ti-Jeanne are Caribbean-Canadian healers who have converted Riverdale Farm into a bush hospital. Tony, the father of Ti-Jeanne's baby, works for Rudy, Toronto's crime overlord. Rudy literalises this position, ruling his empire from the observation floor of the CN Tower. He uses obeah to maintain his power, sacrificing those who displease him to a hungry spirit who does his bidding. At the climax of the novel, we discover that Rudy is Mami's ex-husband, and the spirit once belonged to their daughter, Ti-Jeanne's mother, who has become a street woman known as Crazy Betty. Mami had told Ti-Jeanne that "[h]er mother had disappeared into the craziness Toronto had become" (20). Crazy Betty becomes metonymy for the crazy city, robbed of its spirit by the crimes of the power-brokers, whose actions Rudy replicates. Ti-Jeanne uses her own obeah powers to invoke the voodoo gods and goddesses, who destroy Rudy with the natural forces of the city – water and weather.

[3] From personal interview.

She smashes the duppy bowl that contains her mother's spirit, thus returning it to her mother's body. The novel concludes with Ti-Jeanne and Mi-Jeanne (her mother) running the farm and taking care of Ti-Jeanne's baby. It is implied that the spirit has also been reunited with the body of the city, not only through the death of Rudy, but through the changed attitude of the provincial governor, who advocates a return of government to the city with the words " 'Something tells me we'll discover quite a few resourceful people left in Muddy York' " (240). The dispossessed – Ti-Jeanne's Caribbean community, Rom[a]ny Jenny, the street children who help Ti-Jeanne, and the other minority groups who have remained – are not only advocated as a resource for the city, but named by Toronto's historical name, Muddy York, and thus included in a history from which they had been excluded.

The city in which Ti-Jeanne has been living is one with no electrical power. Only the CN Tower and Yonge Street have escaped the symbolic castration of the city's loss of electricity. Yonge Street is the playground of suburbanites who fund its power, but other traditionally hegemonic areas of Toronto are gleefully trashed. Cabbagetown is rotting; Ryerson campus is a giant tent city; the cannon outside the Park Armoury Building has been turned into "a massive penis" (232). Hopkinson demonstrates however that apocalypse is not the end of the world. The influx from the margins enables reinvention. The eradication of the media and its political backers transfers the power of storytelling to the masses for whom they claim to speak and simultaneously erase. Convergence has resulted in meltdown; this is very much the argument of Powe's Outage. Whereas his essays in a tremendous Canada of light tend towards optimism, claiming that Canada has traditionally been a country of communication rather than apocalypse, Outage is the monologue of a man on the brink. Once again, the nameless narrator is an analogy for the city he narrates, revealing how

far the city narrates him. Looking up at the CN Tower, the narrator meditates on how those who write the city are no more than "inflamed receptors, moving in pools of electromagnetism" (Powe 1995, 157). Toronto is a 'City of Mirrors, City of Swarming' (chapter title Powe 1995, 182), a postmodern hallucination, as for Cooper, where it is impossible to determine agency and ontology because of the contorted reflections and relays of the electronic city.

"*Who's responsible for the push for power and space that I see?*" asks the narrator at the start of the novel, witnessing the 1987 stock market crash. "*The answer comes in the collective, 'We're here...dissolve into us...it's best to belong...'* " (4). The narrator's journey is a desire for, and conversely a resistance to, the collective. Similarly, the definition and narration of the city moves between visions of collective ideology – the crowds at a club, or in Chinatown (con)forming an inclusive definition of Toronto – and isolated/alienated philosophies. Not only the narrator, but his two acquaintances named Michael stand, like the CN Tower, for this singularity. Michael T., a student of the narrator's, driven insane by his theory that computers communicating with each other across the globe have conspired to cause the market's 1987 apocalypse, and Michael Senica, a Croatian exile for whom " 'Toronto is like Utopia' " (178), are both discovered destitute on the street in the course of the narrator's wanderings. While the former Michael is obsessed with – and almost possessed by – the connexivity of Electric City, the latter remains unconvinced. Their conversation returns the narrator to observing the CN Tower, this time from the window his study in Riverdale, where it distracts him from the books in which he is trying to find an explanation for Toronto. He compares the Tower to a minaret, but finds the comparison wanting. He looks for "new myths that are hard to articulate, thinking about Michael [Senica, and] his implicit

demand that I look for more than what's obvious, visible, there" (181). The "ghostly voices" of the collective, broadcast by the Tower, are too obvious and available a definition (141).

They are enough, however, to drive the narrator from the city, first to Banff, and then to Venice, where he finds perspective on Toronto. "'We've become maddened creators in that city [...] erecting towers that compete with the sky," he says, the apocalyptic myth of Babel implicit in the cacophony of voices, languages and media audible in the Toronto air, "that ricochet back to us, so that we ask, 'Who are we?' " (305). Constant attempts to communicate the nature of the city and its inhabitants create a hall of mirrors where images proliferate into "ignited life hovering on the edge of catastrophe" (305). This is a sentence uttered at a distance, for even at the start of the novel the narrator reveals himself as "withdraw[n] too far into a bookish chamber" (30). In all his journeys he stands apart as observer, resisting not only the seduction of the collective whisper, but the graft of collective life. Even Lilah in Headhunter, and Bethany in Delirium, find a form of community for/ through their delusion and isolation. In a sense, the narrator of Outage aligns himself with Rudy in Brown Girl, both figuring their self-definition, and definition of the city, on the CN Tower. It seems painfully obvious to point out that it is the male characters – Ariel Price, Rupert Kurtz, Rudy, the narrator of Outage – who map their identity onto the height of the city, while the female characters – Bethany and Scilla, Lilah and Amy, Ti-Jeanne – are part of the network of the streets. In exploring the who of Toronto, each of these authors posits an alternate city where exclusions based on mental health, gender and ethnicity have created a possible dystopia. Even those for whom Toronto is " 'like Utopia' " have to battle the merging forces of the collective, which would make Toronto like every other city, under the defence of making it more exclusively itself. By positing and resolving apocalyptic narratives

through the agency of diverse " 'resourceful folk' " who are usually excluded from the city's identity, Hopkinson, Cooper and Findley bring Toronto's tall stories back down to street level. The city tells its story through those close enough to the ground to hear it.

Ex Marks the Spot: The Carnival of History

> There are so many Xs in the city, it almost seems as if they are being deliberately collected there.
> [...] Maybe it is the city that is at the crossroads, not sure whether to stay or go.
> Steve Pile 'X-Rated' city a-z, 293

In the novels discussed in the previous chapter, readers were offered two alternative perspectives on the city: the view from the streets, which sought an inclusive definition of the city, celebrating anarchic gestures and traditionally shunned minorities by giving them central representation, and the view from the skies. The vertical and horizontal axes are contrasted as narrative structures, the former offering a monological map of Toronto in Outage, whose protagonist is drawn into an identification with the CN Tower. In a particularly vivid chapter, 'Ghosting In,' he dreams that he is "a silicon entity of the sky [...] joining the night seers who read the signatures and symbols on the ground" (Powe 1995, 165). His is the viewpoint of global satellites and other neutral, impartial conveyers of information. It reveals no topographical detail, no differentiation. Looking at the grid of light and darkness, an inversion occurs: "the city becomes an alternative galaxy, a surrogate Milky Way" (166). The city is now light years away from the narrator, whose detachment is total. Yet, as he comes to sense "how the grid could go supernova [because the] city is programming itself to make more megaliths and metallic brilliance," he begins to fall (166). The city has achieved independence, is "programming itself," threatening human obsolescence. This is the mind of the city wired up to "the primordial mind of electricity," rejecting the occult growth of organic cities in favour of imposing the hegemony of the grid (305). The notoriously grid-like plan of Toronto is presented as an aspect of the city's psyche. Yet a map of the city shows a clear contrast between the grid and the irregularities necessitated by the shape of the lakeshore. Looking down from above, Toronto is clearly more than one city.

Toronto also contests the strict grid of horizontals and verticals. The Sky Dome is the most recent entertainment venue that offers an alternate perspective, one that could be symbolised by the circularity of the Ferris Wheel, constructed not on the perpendicular, but on diagonals. In a traditional narrative method of thinking about geography, X marks the spot – the eventual quest destination of characters and readers – on the treasure map. This map posits the narrative as a journey from the characters' originary surroundings to a distant place, usually an island. In the colonial discourse of the nineteenth century adventure novel, islands represent locations of experience contrary to the daily life of Western city-dwellers; islands are idealised and amoral loci of treasure/pleasure, a discourse that carries over into twentieth-century ideologies of tourism. The cultural extrusion of the unruly carnivalesque beyond the bounds of 'civilisation' happens additionally on the microcosmic level of the city. Toronto has its own islands, centres – or rather, margins – of pleasure. Like the narrator of Powe's novel, the islands are both connected to and detached from the city. Like him, they are/experience an *exstasis*. Being set geographically beyond the bounds, they become by analogy places in which people can act 'beyond the bounds.' They are spaces of community, but also resources for the mainland city. Like Coney Island in New York, the Toronto Islands provide a locus for release – especially necessary for a city so long considered Toronto the Good. The view from the Islands is like the view from the sky: somewhat detached from the moral and social standards of mundane urban life. Those who live and work there are frequently those excluded from the city's corporate image of itself, differentiated by ethnicity, sexuality, artistic temperament, physical handicap or criminal pasts. This geographical marginalisation is an age-old literal differentiation; it creates two contrasting cities that mirror each other, as the carnival space and the city are in a mutual

socio-economic relationship. The city requires a place outside itself where its inhabitants can release energies and behaviours not appropriate to the city's self-image of good government (which extends, by analogy, to each individual citizen), and the carnival requires the city's financial input. Yet this includes the carnival space in the city by default.

This makes for dynamic psychogeography in Torontonian literature. Having a defined geographical locus where alternative behaviours and lifestyles occur, either permanently (for the carnival workers) or temporarily (for the customers), provides an excellent metaphor for examining the dynamics of Toronto's self-image, particularly in the era when Toronto considered itself, and was considered, an arbiter of morals rather than of fashion. Chris Chambers, Derek McCormack and Helen Humphreys all site their island narratives in the first half of the twentieth century. Yet even at the start of the twenty-first, the city's pleasure grounds lie along its margin, and the plans are to extend this usage of the lakeshore for sport and entertainment. In the title of their book Wild Mouse, borrowed from a ride at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds, McCormack and Chambers offer an oxymoronic analogy for carnivalesque Toronto. The city becomes, for the duration of the carnival, a mouse that roared. This is even clearer in Helen Humphreys' Leaving Earth, which is partially set at Hanlan's Point Amusement Park during the restless summer of 1933, at the height of the Depression and the start of overt Fascism in Toronto. All three writers draw the basis of their imaginative portraits from documentary sources, and a further contrast is developed between their usage of official history and the elaboration of their narratives. McCormack condenses his vision of the complex geographical, moral and social relations between the Ex and the city into short stories that draw their tone from Damon Runyon and their form from Fielding Dawson. For Chambers, this involves voicing

everything through the personal, taking in the history of the Ex from the perspective of a laconic lyric 'I.' Humphreys, utilising the larger space of a novel, offers multiple perspectives, developing several different narratorial voices as witnesses to the events gleaned from history books.

Both the CNE (also known as "the Ex") and the Islands are presented as distinct urban communities in Leaving Earth. One character describes the "protected happy *city* of the CNE" (157, my italics). The only alternative to urban dwelling is not, therefore, to dwell in a marginal area of the city, but to take to the skies. The central event of the novel, the nineteen-day endurance flight of Grace O'Gorman and Willa Briggs, which provides us with Willa's aerial perspective of the city for large parts of the novel, is a semi-fictional composite. The flight did occur, but not over Toronto. To paraphrase Marianne Moore, Willa and Grace are imaginary toads flying over a real garden. The events they witness are on the record. These are largely violent, signs that Hanlan's Point and the CNE are not an entirely efficient safety valve on a city under high pressure from increasing unemployment and scorching weather. In particular, Willa records "flying low over Sunnyside [...] see[ing] not one, but five painted swastika symbols" (147). Previously in the novel, Sunnyside has been associated with entertainments such as women's baseball games and its new amusement park (e.g. 55, 64, 146). Del and Simon, Jewish sister and brother who work at Hanlan's Point, discuss the situation in Germany, and Del points out that Toronto is equally rife with Fascism, to the extent of Jews even being excluded from living on the islands. The painting of the swastikas presages a later attack on Del by the Toronto Fascists (174). The group are reportedly rich mainlanders, and their name identifies their politics with their city. Their attack on Del symbolises an incursion of mainland politics into the distinct political

geography of the Islands. This contestation occurs in sharp relief to the endurance flight, which circles the harbour, thus uniting the mainland and the Islands in their circuit. The path the flight maps onto the city also unites the city-dwellers and the Islands' inhabitants in a fascination with the flight and its pilots. A skyogram of letters projected on an air balloon with a message to the pilots is visible to both communities, and addresses a shared concern. Del muses, "[e]ven the islanders were interested in this one. It was one thing that happened on the mainland that they could actually participate in" (173).

Although the flight occurs at such a distance from the ground, it is part of the sensual apprehension of the city's geography while it occurs. The noise of the plane is constantly audible, and the Moth itself is often visible. The relationship between those looking up and the pilots looking down, is drawn as reciprocal by the structure of Humphreys' narrative, which switches back and forth between the Willa's perspective, and the perspective of Del and her family, particularly her daughter Maddy who is obsessed with the pilots. Events are often reported from both perspectives, and imagistic echoes are created. Willa sees two women rehearsing a trapeze act at the CNE grounds, and later Maddy will see the same two women (157, 163). When Maddy sees them, the "diving woman has her arms outstretched like wings. Grace O'Gorman's Moth skims the rind of the sky above the roof of the grandstand" (162). The shape of the woman visually repeats the shape of the aeroplane flying above her, even as the incident recalls Willa's earlier vision. This both unites Maddy with the pilots, who are seeing the city that she is seeing, but not as she is seeing it, and thus reinforces their separation. Humphreys underlines the point that *seeing* the same city does not necessarily entail seeing the *same* city. Willa has the option to "avoid picking out familiar buildings and landmarks [so that] the city looks like rubble, like

something knocked down," whereas Maddy's view is always "across the expanse of the amusement park towards the ferry docks [revealing] large gaps between the exhibits and the rides, spaces where things used to be" (64, 13). From an aerial view, the city is in relief, lacking the drama of human perspective; from the ground, the view across the city has economic and personal implications. Willa is safe to imagine the impact of the swastikas, while Maddy's family experiences it.

Willa "can only imagine the reaction, the headlines in the papers. 'Swastikas at Sunnyside' " (149). The juxtaposition of politics and the pleasure beach recalls that both are aspects of the polis, while the inappropriate deadpan tone of the newspaper headline suggests the use Humphreys makes of the print media in Leaving Earth. Newspapers, the supposed recorders of correct and official history, are purveyors of fiction. Grace's husband Jack, holder of the previous endurance record, and co-ordinator of the in-flight refuelling, feeds false stories of aerial disaster to the newspapers, and then drops copies of the papers with the food bag each day. These stories are designed to undermine Grace, but they also undermine the reliability of the newspaper. Thus, Willa's imaginary headline comes from a confirmed distrust of print media. Similarly, the main character in "The Newshawk" and "The Carny," two of Derek McCormack's short stories in Wild Mouse, is revealed to be a journalist from the Peterborough Examiner. In "The Newshawk," which begins "The Ex was big news," the journalist is "assigned to livestock," and persists in inventing wild conspiracy stories in order to enliven his assignment (9). There is a sharp contrast between the curt " 'I got a story,' " uttered by a man at the poultry exhibit, and the series of questions and exclamations in the journalist's retelling: " 'Stolen!' I said. 'What I want to know is: Why? What was so special about that turkey? Who didn't want him to win?' I said: 'It's got poultry

ring written all over it!' " (13). In "The Carny," a trainee carnival employee is revealed as an undercover journalist out to learn the secrets of the carnival games (19-23). A parallel is both drawn and cancelled between the deception of the journalist and the dishonesty of the carny. The carny is the first-person narrator, and the story mainly consists of him revealing the tricks of each game, an honesty about duplicity set against the journalist's near-silence. Moreover, the form and tone of the stories reflects more the influence of carny oral storytelling than the excitability of the print media as satirised in the journalist's speech patterns. Both carnivals and newspapers make their money selling freaks and lies. Yet the lies of the former are entertaining – both Willa and Del note the increasing attraction of carnivals during the Depression – while the half-truths of the latter incite violence. The particular danger is that the opinions of the media come to be identified with the location of their printing. As with the designation the Toronto Fascists, the Toronto Star suggests a civic ownership of the paper's contents, owning the city by speaking for it, and being owned by the city-dwellers who accept its reportage as the truth.

For this reason, these works seek alternate sources of Torontonian history. Humphreys thanks the archives at the Ex in the acknowledgements of the novel, and McCormack and Chambers use photographs obtained from the archives in their book. The unusual form of Wild Mouse, combining lavish visual design, including a typeface that reproduces that used on carnival and circus signs, with poems and short fiction, imitates the multisensory experience of the carnival, its distinctive, heightened atmosphere. Chambers' Conklin Real World offers a suite of five poems that offer five different historical views of the Ex, paralleling the changes in the fairground with the narrator's growing up. Chambers' alternate source is personal experience. In the second poem, "August 1972," he is a child

arriving early with his father to avoid the crowds, an innocent experience concluded by "holding hands for safety" on the Giant Ferris Wheel (29). By "August 1982," the Flyer is associated less innocently with reaching Heaven "behind those trailers just once with Lucy" (33). The poet predicts the grotesqueness of "[n]ext year's million-dollar ad campaign," presaging the destruction of the Flyer in "20th of June 1992" in favour of larger, faster rides ([32], [36]). The first stanza of the latter poem contains references to one of Chambers' signature sources for historical authentication, popular music. In the context of the Ex, the names of the Cowboy Junkies and Iron Maiden sound like fairground rides. That early in the summer, however, Toronto's fun is elsewhere, but still in marginal spaces, at Ontario Place and the Coliseum ([36]).

In a later poem "Realizing Toronto," Chambers explores the double meaning of 'realizing' through both meanings' interaction in a memory (Chambers 16-17). Something about Toronto is both intuited and made real by the poet remembering the "night true love dawned on [him]" (16). He qualifies the epiphany:

Sexy Wendy Perkins sits beside me – age of nine – sister of my friend.
I figure it has to do with driving home, the end of August, realizing Toronto
is home. Being driven there by a neighbour.
I scan through my memory wondering why

this resonating night, why the frequency? (16-17)

The poignant line break between "Toronto" and "home" reinforces the poem's overall sense of nostalgia, particularly as the realization occurs not within the city but "driving west on the 401 around Bowmanville' (16). As in Conklin Real World, Chambers firmly locates his sense of Toronto *beyond* the city, and subsequently discovers – as the "resonating [...} frequency" implies – that the epiphanic moment is linked to songs, when he hears "Summer Breeze" playing in a deli, and remembers it as the song on the car radio. The two moments are united

by the "[s]ame station. 1050 CHUM" (17). Like a newspaper, the radio station is metonymic for its local area: Toronto. "Dawn of love all right," the poem concludes, implying an association between an awakening of the poet's erotic senses, and his personal grasp of the city. The poem makes a series of loose syllogisms: memories are like dreams; our grasp of dreams is like our grasp of the city; the city is like a first girlfriend; eroticism is partially sensual memory; sensual memory is triggered by music; music is the dream-voice of the city. In "Greatest Hits of Drinking Water," Chambers gives a mature map of the city discovered with and through his lover, using pop music, popular bars and even "Rowland Harris, Commissioner of Public Works" to compose this erotic vision of Toronto (Chambers 74-9).

In Leaving Earth, Humphreys also composes an alternate erotic language that can only exist above the city. Grace signs in a language developed between herself and Willa after their paper is destroyed in a rainstorm, and Willa writes on Grace's skin. This language composed of words "all the more vivid because [they have] travelled across other words to arrive at [their] meaning" comes to influence the way in which Willa perceives the city beneath her (167). "The worthiness of all the small words" is contrasted with the "small world," where Willa observes that the "waves scribble a loose calligraphy on the island beaches" (151, 198). This particular glance down, where Willa maps the text she has been creating on Grace's body onto the beach on one of the Islands, prefigures their imminent crash landing on that beach. The "loose calligraphy" is writing the conclusion of their story. Or rather, its inconclusiveness. We are never assured that Grace and Willa have defeated Jack's record, and, more importantly, the novel ends before Grace replies to her sense of Willa's undeclared love for her. Even more importantly, the novel ends without entry into the city. The Mutual Street Arena, where Simon fights an Irish boxer, is the least literally

liminal space to be included in the novel. Maddy spends a day at the CNE before it opens, where she is "excited at the journey" on the streetcar, hoping that later in the summer, her parents "will let her ride on the Ferris wheel, so high that she's sure it feels like a plane" (160). Even her entry onto the mainland is removed into the air where her beloved Grace is circling. Grace herself ends the novel on Ward's Island ferry, her declaration suspended beyond the bounds of both the narrative and the city.

The carnivalesque world recalled by Leaving Earth is compromised by the city it is set against, both by geography and literature. The incursion of anti-Semitic violence, which changes from rumours of Europe to anecdote from the mainland to personal experience on Hanlan's Point, presages the demise of the Islands as an established centre of alternate lifestyles as well as a seasonal pleasure outlet for Torontonians. The violent tendency of the summer – towards taking pleasure in burning a boat, for example – and Del's visions of the forthcoming war, introduce a warning note amidst the hedonism. The only mention of downtown Toronto is Willa's description of the queue of unemployed men outside the Dominion Boxboard factory (138-9), which identifies the city with economic reality. Similarly, Chambers records in "Listing" that

All my friends are stuck in Toronto.
No one has found work or changed jobs with joy
in years now (Chambers 46).

For those who are concerned with the pleasure offered on the margins of the city, and the spaces high above it, the downtown core is "beleaguered" (Chambers 46). Corporate identities which speak for the city, such as the Toronto Star, offer fraudulent visions of the city, which perpetuate worse deceits that those practised at the fairground by claiming to be objective and important, as in Chambers' "Egged on by Phil Marchand," where he takes

exception to a slighting review by Marchand of three Canadian poetry anthologies (Chambers 80-1). Humphreys, McCormack and Chambers each make manifest an alternate city through experiments with alternate languages, both verbal and visual. The meeting point of these, "[l]anguage as a visual echo," is the city scribbled in light, read either as a map from above, or as "big news" from below (Humphreys 167, McCormack and Chambers 9). X also marks the spot of reading, executed from a position of conflicting desires.

'Here is Queer': Sexing the City

Inspired to 'know' the city, our fragile understanding of urban and architectural space is framed by desire. Our attempts to reveal unknown aspects of known cities create new cities as we desire them to be.

Jane Rendell 'Knowledge' city a-z, 129

Each writer who talks about the erotics of Toronto begins with a location. Anne Michaels' oft-quoted aphorism from Fugitive Pieces, "we long for place, but place itself longs" has a particular relevance for those who relocate to the city in order to pursue their sexual desire (53). The relationship between the city and queer culture/community is one of mutual desire. In their cultural and material manifestations, alternate sexual identities relocate the city, mapping outwards from the designated cultural spaces allotted to them, thus diversifying both the actual city and its literature. In this chapter, I explore this diffusion, beginning with Peter McGehee's Boys Like Us, which makes consistent use of the Church and Wellesley 'gay village' and its cultural community to frame the linked stories that comprise the book. McGehee's work, drawing on Armistead Maupin's Tales of the City, begins to effect an identity shift for Toronto, as Maupin does for San Francisco, marking not only the village but the city as queer-positive, and, in some sense, altogether queer.

This is extended by Warren Dunford in Soon to be a Major Motion Picture, who successfully adopts/parodies Maupin's narratorial structure of co-incidences arranged/ caused by location. Dunford parallels Toronto's gay and artistic communities, making his three main characters a screenwriter, an actor and a painter, overwriting the city with their pop-cultural concerns. By writing parts of the novel as a movie script, Dunford flouts not only high literary style, but also the unwritten rule that movies cannot be set in Toronto (62-6). Mitchell and his friends frequently identify people they see in Toronto with Hollywood movie stars, and Mitchell describes the Yorkville section of Bloor Street as "(Toronto's film

stand-in for Fifth Avenue)" thus aligning Toronto, previously conceived of as staid and boring, with aspects of Los Angeles (film) and New York (Fifth Avenue), America's two defining cities (54). This process of making Toronto no more than a "stand-in" may seem reductive, as if Dunford is endorsing his character Kinita's view that " 'This city [Toronto] is one big inferiority complex' " (132). It can however be paralleled with queer culture's relationship with mainstream culture, whereby high-street fashion items and labels, such as denim and Calvin Klein, become markers of the gay subculture, just as Toronto 'borrows' aspects of New York and Hollywood in order to present itself as an alternative to them. Thus the "tall buildings" of Bay Street are 'queered' by Mitchell's gaze, fetishised as symbols of hyper-masculinity that skews their stance as symbols of the mainstream business culture (37). Dunford emphasises the material and sexual *availability* of Toronto, extending Robert Park's argument that "a 'moral' range of deviant behaviour would be very great in cities, no one nonviolent agency being able to limit nonconformers" to argue that the range of deviant behaviour in cities is co-extensive with the progress of capitalism (Sennett 1969, 16). Dunford repeatedly parallels gay desire and material fetishism as substructures of his characters' maps of Toronto, drawing them towards the gay village, but also beyond it into the sexual potential of the city.

Unlike Chambers, McCormack and Humphreys who, in setting their narratives in the past, had to set them on the margins of the city, the writers discussed in this chapter place sexual desire – and, more specifically homosexual and pansexual desire – in the centre of the city. Simona Chiose, The Globe and Mail's 'sex and the city' columnist identifies this centrality in her book Good Girls Do, when she begins a chapter on the perversity of the female gaze: "Along with a small troop of other women I'm walking up Yonge Street, a

somewhat seedy thoroughfare dividing Toronto in two" (19). As Chiose perceives, Yonge Street lies at the centre of Toronto's moral, erotic and geographical map, dividing Torontonians into two categories: those who do, and those who don't. For those who do, it is all about knowing where to find it. As Beth Follett writes of her protagonist Nora in Tell It Slant, "[y]ou take a job in a coffee shop on Yonge Street, and it isn't long before you learn the whereabouts of a gay bar around the corner" (109). Being in the right place reveals all of the city's secrets. Co-incidence, which drives narrative, hinges on location. Yet both Chiose and Follett demonstrate that queer Toronto is not confined to Yonge Street, but rather spreads both east and west, mapping the rest of the city from the perspective of Yonge.

In Here is Queer, his critical work on the literatures of Canada, Peter Dickinson argues that Yonge Street might be a good place to stand in order to answer Northrop Frye's infamous CanLit bugbear 'Where is here?' Dickinson retorts with Queer Nation's call to arms 'We're here, we're queer, get used to it.' His thesis is to

> uncover, or 'bring out,' what I see as Canadian literary nationalism's simultaneously othered and coupled discourse, to juxtapose against the predominantly nationalist framework of literary criticism in this country an alternative politics, one predominated by questions of sexuality, and more often than not, homosexuality (3).

This is equally relevant to Torontonian literary politics as they may stand, by metonymy, for the larger national dynamic. Dickinson's argument can be paraphrased as a determination to define Canadianness and CanLit as other, as a resistance to mainstream meta-narratives such as nationalism. He explores queer literature as a subset of, and metaphor for, this resistance. Certainly in Toronto, the influence of small presses such as ECW and Pedlar has seen an upsurge in queer and sexually dominated Toronto writing outside the mainstream, alongside monthly salons such as Louise Bak's The Box and Elizabeth Ruth's Clit Lit. Bak is the host of CIUT's sex talk show, and her highly sexual poetry has been published by Coach House.

The Box, which has moved from the Labyrinth Lounge to the Now Lounge, features writers chosen by Bak such as Mariko Tamaki and Margaret Christakos, whose work often displays a strongly sexual (dis)orientation. Clit Lit is a monthly lesbian performance forum held at the Red Spot on Church Street, which features work both transgenre and transgender. Ruth's novel Ten Good Seconds of Silence features a teenage heroine whose mother is a spiritual healer and lesbian in 1970s Toronto. This explosion of literature, which sees its primary concern in the diversity of desire, shapes and is shaped by its vision of the city.

Like the work of the writers already discussed, the novels and poetry of Toronto's queer writers maintain a tension between urban documentary and imaginative exploration. Witnessing the multiplicity of desire in the city is a fundamental part of the work of these authors. The grim realities of AIDS' depredation of the gay population forms the background to Peter McGehee's Boys Like Us, whose characters are drawn into connection by a central nexus, Rudy, who is suffering the first ravages of the syndrome. This function of witnessing suggests a race against time to secure the community's place in Toronto's social and literary history. AIDS' attack on the gay community and lifestyle, and the modern architectural development of city are paralleled when the drag cabaret where Searcy performs is threatened with destruction. " 'I tell you, honey, the Toronto of my youth has all but disappeared [...] We've got to stop this development before all our hopes and dreams vanish in one great swing of the ball' " (McGehee 131). Searcy's eloquent plea is for the spirit of queerness embodied by the cabaret, where gender is performed not only as celebration but as social protest. When Searcy and his fellow drag artists march on the mayor's office, McGehee laconically remarks that his actions don't " 'quite fit into his [the mayor's] image of Toronto-the-Good' " (142). It is when the protagonist Zero's boyfriend Clay straight-facedly

suggests buying a condo " 'Out Gerrard,' " thus participating in the image of Toronto-the-Good expected of him as a lawyer, that Zero decides to leave him (134). The pun on "out" is outmoded by the queer community's fashionable centrality in the city. Zero therefore returns to his community of friends on Church Street, of whom Clay has never really been a part, to his old job writing for the gay newspaper, and to his ex-boyfriend David. The novel ends as he "head[s] up Church Street to David's" (166). The novel is, in some sense, a narrative within the narrative, as Zero is offered a job writing " 'A column. Stories about Toronto. About the people, you know, the things you've seen,' " and the material of the novel and of the columns coalesce (156). Taking the quotation out of context, it is unclear that the column is intended for a gay paper, or will include gay subject matter. The stories are to be about " 'the people [...] the things you've seen' " in the city; only " 'you know' " hints that there may be a coded specificity to these stories. "Toronto," as McGehee's phrasing suggests, alludes to a contemporary urban culture of people and events, and by a process of reverse metonymy, of queer culture in, or even *as*, the city.

The use of the word *stories* returns us to the question of documentation by fictionalisation, which is not only evident in queer Toronto fiction, but the construction of the *desired* city raises potent questions about the representation of the actual and the fantasies created around it. In her discussion of shopping and the construction of city cultures, Sharon Zukin points out:

> In cities, relations between women and men are conditioned by commodities [...] commodities, as Walter Benjamin pointed out, embody dreams (Buck-Morss 1989). So city dwellers are dream walkers, too. They are [...] compelled to calculate their social relations by distance, by money, and always by some sort of cost, a dream deferred (Zukin 189).

Sexual and material desires are mapped onto each other by the omnipresent metaphor of commodification. When Zero rejects Clay and/as his condominium, he is answering Zukin's

question "Does identity depend on defining oneself with or defining oneself against the city?" by choosing the city with which he is going to identify: an alternate culture that has reclaimed the geographic city centre (197). In using this device, however, McGehee maps Toronto as a commodified city defined by house prices and expensive restaurants. Zero eats with his friends on Church Street, but with Clay at Winston's, a pricey downtown restaurant. They mark both the restaurant and the condo as queer territory through sexual acts, but more to the point, these markers of mainstream sophistication anchor McGehee's conceptual map of Toronto (52, 139).

This construction of the city is intensified in Soon to be a Major Motion Picture, where even the title represents a "dream deferred." The actuality of Toronto is recorded in Mitchell's conceptual map, on which his neighbourhood, the Annex, features large, but the gay village, Bay Street and Yorkville, representations of the unattainable, feature larger. Mitchell equally fetishises the Calvin Klein shirt he buys at Holt Renfrew and the Park Plaza Hotel (55). The penthouse at the Plaza represents both material and artistic dreams; the building itself is rendered as a desirable object, a "classic gold-brick tower [which is] a beacon above Bloor," but for Mitchell it also represents literary achievement, as the bar was historically "the celebrated meeting place for the Canadian literati" (55). The actual landmark represents a confluence of fictional desires, both a narrative and geographical high point as Mitchell drinks to his first screenwriting commission. His eye is drawn to the "most spectacular angle on the city skyline, looking directly south at the CN Tower and all the skyscrapers of the business district," which he had earlier associated with a sexual fantasy about "ambitious executives in Hugo Boss suits" (55, 37). Literary, sexual and commodity fantasies meet in Yorkville, symbolised by the "beacon" of the Park Plaza, an alternate CN

Tower. In a sense the Park Plaza bar has power over the CN Tower because Mitchell can gaze on the Tower as part of the skyline. Mitchell's second visit to Yorkville, accompanied by Ingrid (the artist), reveals that power in the city is directly related to the gaze. "People at chic outdoor cafés wore big sunglasses and stared out impassively at passers-by," thus making Mitchell and Ingrid, who are walking, feel like intruders (104). However, as seen in the gay village, the gaze is also a manifestation of purchasing power. The dialectic of watching and being watched at a gay bar relates all desire to the visual, a motif emphasised by Ingrid's art exhibition, and the language of commercial desire with which people discuss her paintings (12-14, 130-9). The body, works of art, and commodities are mapped onto each other, and all come to represent the city; commodities are drawn from Dunford's contemporary Toronto and serve as 'landmarks' for the local reader, while works of art are fantasies of or about these commodities. As Iain Chambers says, "bodies insistently speak of a city, a locality, a life, that is urgently real" ('Building' in Thrift and Pile eds., 23). Bodies, like buildings, are beacons of place, both real commodities drawn from observation of Toronto, and relocated in the fictionalised city by narrative fantasy.

This is taken further in Beth Follett's Tell It Slant, which relocates Nora Flood from Djuna Barnes' Paris to contemporary Canada. Although the substantive reworking of Nightwood occurs in Montreal, Nora's character develops through an extended stay in Toronto. Following the dominant photography metaphor of the novel, once could call Toronto Nora's dark room, for not only does she develop her skill as a night photographer there, but she herself 'develops' into a defined image. In the Toronto section of the novel, Nora is addressed as "you" by the narrator, emphasising that she is still under development,

not able to carry the narrative as protagonist and narrator. Nora begins to take photographs after she moves out of her grandmother's house.

> You move into a tiny apartment near High Park. You beg your camera and its lens to reveal to you their secrets, to reveal the accumulations of twenty years, the objects you looked on, then became.
>
> And then they do.
>
> You walk along the beach at Sunnyside after dark, a student of sound and audible season. Djuna visits you there, appearing, disappearing, reappearing [...] inventing you over and over, but as you walk home again past the darkened shop windows on Roncesvalles, you refuse all reflection (113-4).

Nora's relocation, her photography and her walk on the beach are all identified with her refusal of Djuna's continued ownership of her character. She rejects her "reflection" in shop windows, which would commodify her, make her available. Nora demands not to be witnessed, but to witness. She prowls the night streets of Toronto taking "furtive pictures of gay men" and connecting with no one, in her determination to remain unreflected (115).

Margaret Christakos reverses this moment in her novel Charisma, when the protagonist Cameo looks into the butcher's window, partially observing the meat, and partially Mike the butcher, whom she desires. Christakos notes that "when she [Cameo] stops to look *through* the plate glass, she finds her own face grafted *on* the plate glass looking back at herself, soft into the desiring hook of her eye" (24). Cameo's gaze is identified with the butcher's hooks that hang the carcasses, rendering Cameo herself as desirable, fleshly merchandise through the power of her own gaze. Cameo is not the only character to gaze; Calome, the only first-person narrative voice in the book, observes Cameo and her friend Mae having coffee, and invents sexual fantasies about them for the sex novels she writes (37-9). Calome subsequently describes herself as "a documentarian, an eavesdropper, a photographer, and not at all a serious writer of pulp fiction" (114). Unlike Nora, both Cameo and Calome act on their gaze, Cameo beginning an affair with Mike, and Calome

with Mae. Christakos' characters map the city through sexual encounters, not only with other people, but through fantasy and commodity fetish. The Hollywood stars whom Dunford fetishes are drawn into the novel when Cameo remembers that an ex-lover's sister went to school with Keanu Reeves, thus ruining her fantasy of his unattainability (15). Christakos is not label-obsessed like Dunford; her protagonists desire meat, cookies, steaming coffee. These mundane desires map a city of "great, good places," to quote Ray Oldenburg: cafés, butcher's shops and record stores, places of social interaction where men and women – and, for Christakos, women and women – trade their desires for each other for another cup of coffee. In Mike, however, Cameo satisfies several desires at once: not only does he sell her meat, he becomes her lover, and in their love-making she becomes both male and female, exploring her fantasies about gay male sex. He also provides a link to her Greek heritage, teaching her Greek and acting as locative: his butcher's shop on the Danforth comes to stand for some part of Cameo herself. The city is figured in and by her conflicting desires.

In a poignant image towards the end of the book, Christakos literally inscribes desire on the city. Mike has spent the Christmas weekend with Mae's ex-boyfriend Dustin, and, after visiting Cameo, they part.

Dustin and Mike's bootprints make parallel furrows in the snow for a couple of quiet blocks, overlap in a circular smudge, then veer up separate streets, inscribing a rather large Y in the cityscape for the amusement of the wish-weary angels floating around above (144).

Dustin and Mike make the mark of their male-male desire on the city, "inscribing a rather large Y" as a chromosomal representation of their meeting and separation. The social and biological dictates of gender are one of the book's main concerns, as it is revealed that both Cameo and her newborn child are hermaphroditic. Dustin and Mike, however, are defined and definite, undoubtedly amusing the angels/readers who have enjoyed Christakos'

narrative of polymorphous perversity. The city is (until fresh snow falls) witness to their conjunction, as they inscribe their personal intersection over the one created by the city planners. The city also becomes a partner in these sexual interactions, and even a sexual partner for the younger Cameo, whose arrival in the city is described as: "Cruising off the ramp into metropolitan Toronto, the bus presented her debutante body to the city whether she still wanted it to or not" (93). For Nora, on the other hand, Toronto represents a "dream deferred."

> You walk the Sunnyside beach on summer nights when the air in your one-room apartment turns to dust. A dare to yourself. [...]
>
> You walk the beach thinking about how love might turn your heart toward something further than tomorrow, the thought drawn into thin lines by your furtive scanning left and right (Follett, 134).

Nora's solitary life is "furtive" like her photographs, located on Toronto's margins because she is unable or unwilling to join those who desire, and therefore participate in the mainstream life of the city. The "thin lines" of the thought draw her further, her gaze taking in both the lake and the city, offering to open up the world of desire she is mapping in her photographs.

Love will eventually take her further, to Montreal, where she meets Robin, her lover from Nightwood. Toronto's significance in the Tell It Slant is distinct: it is the place in which Nora forms her lesbian identity, her ability to love and desire, through "furtive" glances. Follett is not alone in identifying the growth of desire from the power to gaze: it marks all the texts discussed in this chapter. This constructs the city as a place of observed desire, where works of art that take Toronto as their basis, incorporate recognisable, observed landscapes into their fictions. These fictions, and the city they eroticise, then become further objects of desire. Our experience of the city and our experience of desire are paralleled as we

contrast our own lives with those we observe in books. As Simona Chiose says, "[d]esire does not just live in private bedrooms but in the world, in every time we look at a couple crossing the street and even for a second, measure our love lives against them" (83). Desire cannot exist in a vacuum because its referents are things in the world, both actual commodities/bodies, and their manifestation in our dreams, fantasies and fictions. In mapping their fictions around the recognizable streets, communities and landmarks of Toronto, queer writers "create new cities as we desire them to be," not just celebrating urban diversity, but defining urban *as* diverse. This is their "dare" to themselves: to walk the city looking for love on both sides, taking sexual desire out of the bedroom and locating it on the street, upsetting the mayor's cherished image of Toronto the Good. By claiming not only Yonge and Church Streets, but the ravines and restaurants of the city as loci of queer desire, these writers demonstrate the power of the desiring gaze to inscribe its desire on whatever it sees. Although this is a power structure drawn from mainstream capitalist culture, queer fiction's active embrace of the gaze extends the parity of looking: even half-blind gay men can appreciate and buy a painting (Dunford 134). Toronto, with its sharply-defined architecture giving cue to a visual culture, and its defined neighbourhoods, is constructed in these novels through the "furtive" and transgressive gaze, which, looking into the plate glass window of the city, sees itself and its own desires.

In Another Place, Not Here: Being Toronto-Bound

"Part of the art, or science, of making maps in the city is the possibility of losing one's way."
Fran Tonkiss 'A to Z' city a-z, 1

When Cameo looks into the window of a butcher's shop on the Danforth and sees herself reflected, she is visualising her ethnic and sexual sense of placement in Toronto. Her Greek background and her pansexual desire allow her to claim the entire city as her mirror. Even Nora, displaced not only from her family but from her originary text, discovers a sense of place in Toronto through her photography, which enables her to "tell it [the city] slant." As the title of this chapter, borrowed from Dionne Brand's novel, indicates, for many immigrants Toronto remains a displacement, or even a non-place. For immigrants or exiles, 'here' becomes a negative designation meaning 'not home,' and this inflects their mapping of the city. Their strategies for urban survival are characterised by a double resistance, both to the often negative stereotypical identities prescribed for them by the dominant culture, and to the expectations invested in them, and in Toronto, by the culture they leave behind. For Caribbean-Canadians, as chronicled in the work of Brand and Austin Clarke, Toronto's mirrored buildings reflect back identities and commodities that cannot be possessed, proscribed by the perceived and real Anglo-Saxon dominant culture. These identities and commodities, however, are those identified with Toronto, and therefore expected of them by family and friends in the Caribbean.

Thus, unlike the protagonists of the writers in the previous chapter, who own their (sexual) identity by claiming the city as their own, Brand's and Clarke's protagonists are often aspiring to selves and objects denied them, simultaneously resenting their aspiration. Thus, they experience a splitting of identity, which is construed as a splitting of *desire* for the place they have left, and the place they have sought. Toronto and the Caribbean conflict for the

role of the "dream deferred." Toronto sells not only commodities to them, but also dreams and edited memories of home, which they can ill-afford. Verlia, one of the protagonists of <u>In Another Place</u>, wonders:

> Will she become one of those women standing at Bathurst and Bloor, looking into the window of some store, plastic bags in her hand, looking into the window but not looking, forgetting that she is looking into the window because she is seeing some other place, as if she is looking up a rain forest mountain road thinking 'When will I get a transport?' (197-8)

The women are caught in an ambiguous dream: it is unclear whether they are waiting for a transport back to the rainforest, or they are in the rainforest waiting for a transport leaving it. The window itself has become a "transport" from Bathurst and Bloor to "a rain forest mountain road," a reflection of the women's divided selves, whereby they always find themselves "in another place, not here." Yet in describing the "not here" of Toronto, both Brand and Clarke reflect with immediacy the city through which their protagonists move on what Fran Tonkiss calls "desire paths – those unofficial routes made by users rather than planners [...] Beating the city at its own game" (Tonkiss 'A to Z' Thrift and Pile eds., 1).

Certainly at times it seems more a war than a game that persists between the protagonists of Brand and Clarke's stories and the city, which takes on the character of a malevolent deity, confusing and outwitting its immigrant inhabitants who have yet to learn the rules or propitiations. Clarke's characters are quick to learn than material desire is the law of the land, and they pursue it, though winning the city's game often involves losing oneself, as in "Four Stations in his Circle" (Clarke 1971, 51-63). Jefferson Theophillis Belle succeeds in his desire to " 'own a piece o' Canada' " but in doing so, fails his mother and friends back in Barbados, as well as his Black friends in Toronto (51). This stark choice between owning/ being owned by Canada, and retaining one's loyalty to back home is diffused in Brand's work. In "Sketches in Transit...going home," Brand uses the plane flight back to the

Caribbean for Caribana to represent the limbo in which Caribbean-Canadians find themselves, drawn home to display their foreign gains, disguising the truth of their menial lives in Toronto (Brand 1988, 131-145). Verlia finds herself caught in this "transport" in In Another Place, a page after she has wondered at the women seeing rainforests in rainy Toronto.

> She is standing at a corner called Bathurst and Bloor looking into a store window, looking back from the sea, 'I'd better run across the street, take the bus to Vaughan. But if only this were here, the sea, well...' Here is not a word with meaning when it can spring legs, vault time, take you... (198-9).

Both the meaning and location of "Here" dissolve in Verlia's impossible desire to include both the corner at which she stands, and the sea by which she imagines herself. Whereas other words, such as 'sea,' derive their meaning from their ability to transport their user from the place where they stand into a fantasy, 'here' loses its meaning in doing so. The overlaying of the Caribbean on Toronto causes the idea of place-as-identity encapsulated in the word 'here' to lose itself. This, as Tonkiss suggests, allows a profitable redefinition, which can reclaim 'here' from its dominant and domineering meaning. 'Here' loses its way, but Verlia's desire for "this" to be "here," which leads her back to the Caribbean and to her love affair with Elizete, remaps its boundaries, just as Brand divides the 'here' of her novel between the Caribbean island where Elizete lives, and Toronto.

Verlia rarely names the city which "she is already in love with" upon arriving, referring to it as "this city" (Brand 1996, 138). Although she names and describes her conceptual map and specific views of Toronto, she says "it doesn't matter that it's Toronto or a country named Canada. Right now that is incidental, and this city and this country will have to fit themselves into her dream" (159). Verlia denies Toronto its uniqueness as a claim on her, and instead aims to bend the city to her dream, which is politically inspired by the

Black Power movement. She is in love with its potential for transformation, its availability for her dream. Brand describes Verlia's first encounters with political protest in the liminal space of the sleeping city. Verlia had arrived in Toronto at night, and explored it in pre-dawn, but the city's claim on her, and her claim on it, is palpable in the description of her first late-night postering session:

> The pavement under her feet. There's nothing like it. [...] the first time it was with paste in a bucket and a paint brush and running along the Danforth laughing... then along Bloor near Christie dodging...the cops she didn't know you had to dodge or else they'll charge you with defacing public property. The first time. A night after the first room. The poster rallying against the Klan in Riverdale. She was so nervous, the city all asleep because you had to poster then, late, with no one to see and call the police, no traffic, no people passing. Then just the three of them for the area around Christie and Bathurst (171).

The nervous exhilaration of illegal and important activity is caught in the rhythm of the sentences; the parataxis of "a bucket and a paint brush and running" inclines us to read the participle as a noun, another possession or attribute of the flyposters. The city is added to this list of possessions, as their night-time activity not only defaces public property, but erases the public who constitute the city. With "no one to see [...] no traffic, no people passing," the city belongs to "just the three of them," becoming no more than the topographical city of intersections and the "pavement under her feet." The city itself is "all asleep," as if Verlia and her friends are moving through its dreams, part of the city's subconscious come to light. In this space, they can assert their counter-presence. The narration acts as a protest against and erasure of "the Klan in Riverdale," whose practice of hiddenness is countered by the protestors' strategy of bringing their existence to light, by posting about them, while themselves remaining unseen. The posters become part of the visible city, for Verlia has found this group by following a poster. "Every other lamp post stapled with it all along College Street. *Free Brother Jamal*" (168). The poster has, in a sense, renamed the street, as Verlia frequently names the city by the intersection at which she

stands, or at which protest and change is occurring. "There's nothing like it." Her individual experience surpasses the sense that Toronto could be anywhere. In moving through its dreamscapes, she shapes the city to hers.

Verlia's arrival in Toronto coincides with the beginnings of the fight for racial equality, whispers of which have drawn her to North America in the first place. The city represents a paradox to her, containing "two worlds" (180). One is the white world of tall glass buildings, the official city.

> The other world growing steadily at its borders is the one she knows and lives in [...] Her streets of barber shops and hairdressers and record stores and West Indian food shops bend and chafe to this swing (180).

This is the world she sought on arrival, thinking that "[i]f she can find a street where her people are, she can find a room, find a way" (155). For Verlia, the 'other' world of Toronto is a community with which she can identify, a street of "her people," a community that – unlike the staidness of the white world – is continually in flux. It exists within the geography of the established city and, as the Black Power movement gains visibility, comes to have a claim over it through its facility for change. She records the progress of Black Power through the alterations it makes to language and landscape: "Henson-Garvey Park, we named it, right here in Toronto" (158). Yet when Elizete follows Verlia to Toronto, she discovers a city different again from Verlia's 'other' world, contingent to it but more desperate and marginal. It is not defined its commodities like West Indian hair products and records, nor by a positive sense of community. Brand structures the novel so that we receive Elizete's impressions of Toronto first. Although we are told that "[s]he did not know the city, would never know it because she wasn't looking at it," the city she does not see becomes part of her narrative (49). It is clearly also the city that does not see her. Riding the Jane Street bus,

she "notice[s] that nothing ties people together because [...] people don't talk to perfect strangers on a bus going up Jane Street" (65). Elizete's Toronto lacks the connexivity that Verlia finds, or makes, in her dream of the city.

The contrast between the women's quests is worth noting: Verlia has come to join a political movement, choosing Toronto because she has relatives in Sudbury, not because of its intrinsic qualities; Elizete has come seeking Verlia, wanting one specific commodity which can be found (as she thinks) only in Toronto. Many of Clarke's protagonists fall into the same quest as Elizete. Calvin, the protagonist of "The Motor Car" travels to Canada determined to buy a specific car, a *Galaxie* (Clarke 1971, 90-111). Like Jefferson Theophillis Belle, he achieves his quest but at a price. Clarke is an expert observer of the hidden prices of materialism, which can be identified with what another of Clarke's characters, Lonnie calls "*something [...] picked up up there in the States called 'sales tax' and 'luxuries tax'*" (Clarke 1971, 35). These taxes, like GST and PST in Ontario, are not included in the price tag, hidden until the purchase is complete. Calvin pays the price through the death of his Canadian girlfriend when he brakes suddenly in his brand-new car, but escapes the legal and moral charges. Other Clarke protagonists are not so lucky. A teenager who manages to buy himself a BMW through successful horse-betting is murdered by the police, who refuse to believe he is the car's legitimate owner, and this, echoing the story's title "Sometimes, a Motherless Child," throws into question the mother's versus the state's ownership of her son (Clarke 1992, 173-214). An over-zealous parking attendant discovers that a black man's car is his castle, and how, when it comes to possessions, as the narrator says, "[a]ll of a sudden I see how multiculturalism gone out the window now!" (Clarke 1985, 82). Yet the narrative drive of the stories frequently comes from the desire to own, and the fragility of the consummation of

that desire. In "Naked," a black judge is stripped of his dignity and identity by thieves casing his house for a burglary (Clarke 1992, 149-172). The story is an extended meditation on the way in which our possessions define us. For the judge, his self-definition as a successful man rests on owning decanters, silk shirts and such outward signs of luxury, defined and provided by the white world; to the thieves, whom we overhear talking at the end of the story, a single possession – an Afro comb – indicates that the owner of the house is black. This is the gulf of definition and expectation that leads the police to shoot the teenager with a BMW; if such commodities define success in the white world, they cannot rightfully belong to black people. Commodities colour, and are coloured by, the perceptions of the city, and therefore the geography of the city itself: Forest Hill, despite its black cleaners, is *white* because it 'belongs' to those who own property there.

For Clarke, the possession of such goods is analogy for possession of the city. Although each of his characters develops detailed and idiosyncratic maps of their personal city, they are symbolised by the protagonist of "The Man," who

> hits the streets, walking in the same two square miles from his home, rummaging through libraries [...] then along Bloor Street, Jarvis Street, College Street, and he completes the perimeter at Bathurst Street. His room is the centre of gravity from which [...] he wanders no further than these two square miles (Clarke 1985, 91).

He has been confined to this route by an earlier encounter with the police, who did not believe that a black man could be walking in Forest Hill Village at night without criminal intentions. The police cruiser drives him to the suburbs, "miles from any street or intersection that he knew" (92). He appears to be escaping his physical confinement by writing to world leaders and newsworthy figures, and has interested the University of Toronto in his collection of replies. As in many of Clarke's stories, the hubris of ownership defeats the owner: the collection burns in an excruciating final scene. This loss of documents

that associate his name with the names of men such as Gandhi, is a defeat similar to his extrusion beyond the city limits, and the limits of his knowledge of the named city.

The acquisition of the city is an acquisition of the power to name it, and rename it, as Verlia demonstrates. Elizete's initial sense of displacement in Toronto is caused by her lack of knowledge of the city and its names.

Nobody told her about Yonge Street or Avenue Road or Yorkville. Nobody told her what wasn't necessary or possible or important for a woman from nowhere [...] she didn't have a new card, a name to find her way into one of the places she was made for (Brand 1996, 49).

Elizete, who is living on the skids at the Gladstone, is unable to reach the parts of the city she cannot name. She cannot find a place in the city because she is "a woman from nowhere," lacking all sense of what 'here' might mean. Even after she has moved into and through a series of rooming houses for illegal immigrants around Palmerston, she finds that "[t]ruth is she hardly knew where she was" (87). The city lacks personal and social history for her, where "[y]ou can't look at the buildings and say ah! that's where [...] not one face says my mother went blind sewing sleeves" (65). It is only when she discovers the "[o]ld house turned into an office. The street pushed open diagonally from St. Clair Avenue. Vaughan Road," where Verlia worked in a counselling centre and shelter for Caribbean immigrant women that the city acquires resonance (99). The centre is described as dispatching its clients

with reminders on how to navigate the streets and the offices and the factories and the hospitals and husbands and boyfriends; how to navigate their wombs and the tempers of the men they lived with and the crying of their children and their evenings before going to bed [...] and their mornings waking at four or five and the cold rush of air as they left for a job and the subways and the tiresome walks home and the rage at the doorway once again (104).

The metaphor of navigation, which never specifies the streets and offices, demonstrates the sense of dislocation and need for direction, which marks every area of the immigrants' lives. Not only do their jobs and relationships construct the geographical space, their duty paths,

through which they move, but these things become spaces that require navigation as the process of finding their way in a strange city becomes the over-riding metaphor for managing their lives.

For Verlia, this navigational exercise is made possible by the material overlay of the Caribbean on Toronto. The area around Bathurst and Bloor is her focus point for its hairdressers and record stores, but also, she finds that it becomes a spiritual nexus. Just as the corner of St. Clair and Vaughan boasts a church and a spiritual store as well as the shelter, it is when Verlia considers her local obeah house that she realises that "[p]eople bring all that is useful to a new place [...] not only their bodies [...] but they bring whatever spirits will help them out" (181). This is verified by the powerful obeah woman "Blossom, Priestess of Oya, Goddess of winds, storms and waterfalls" (Brand 1988, 31-42). Blossom has become a priestess after a disastrous marriage, a failed job and a bout of psychological illness. Yet she remains in Toronto. "Quite here, Oya did search for Blossom. Quite here, she find she" (41). When Blossom turns from the conventional immigrant aspirations of job and marriage, Toronto ceases to be a deferred location, and becomes "quite here." The spiritual power she has brought with her from the Caribbean gives her a specific location not only in her Toronto, but on the maps of those who require her help, such as the story's narrator. It is the contrast, or seeming conflict, between obeah and conventional Toronto, where Blossom has failed, that gives the story its positive resolution.

By contrast, Clarke's protagonists find the Caribbean in Toronto through gambling and boozing. They also refuse or mock the political movements that empower Verlia to define her space in the city. In "Initiation," a university professor from the States teaching

Black History at York encounters the 'real thing,' his first Black Power revolutionary, at Jane and Finch (Clarke 1993, 25-54). His change of status from abstracted witness and commentator to participant is effected not through rhetoric, but through the consumption of alcohol, drugs and John Coltrane's music.

It was as if the music was a synopsis of all I had been exposed to outside on the street in this section of the city, Jane and Finch; and a summary of what was going on in this room. A synopsis of the smell, the hope, the fear, the joy, the liquor I had drunk, and the women, and the power of the city itself (26).

The power of the city is emotional and physical, experienced – or rather consumed – like alcohol and women. Jane and Finch, which the narrator characterises as the most dangerous part of the city, and therefore the most essential to experience in order to understand Black life in Toronto, becomes a power node for the whole city. Clarke's Jane and Finch stands parallel to Brand's Vaughan and St. Clair as a centripetal 'here' of black identity in Toronto. Music, dope and alcohol replace, or match, Brand's hairdressing and West Indian food as commodities that alter their owners' cultural and sensual apprehension of Toronto to one that resists the white world. This divergence also reveals the heterogeneity within the Black Canadian community, and its diverse literary and artistic representations. The professor is aware that he "could not be a part of this Toronto," despite his initiation, and Elizete never finds Verlia, nor the Toronto which Verlia had described to her (Clarke 1992, 33).

The ownership of space and commodities cuts through the community as well as cutting it off. In his poem "On Viewing Masala," included in Plush, an anthology of gay male poets, Courtney McFarlane navigates some of the complexities of defining identity and/by space in Toronto's marginal communities (Crosbie and Holmes eds., 50-52). The poem begins with the smell of roti on the Spadina bus reminding the poet of the rooming

house in which he lived, and this opens a perspective on his personal mapping of the city. Particularly fascinating is the central section in which the poet defines his identity as one of

us old wave West Indians
Second generation Canadians
Children of the diaspora

in an encounter with Somalian immigrants leaving a club (51). "They / the new Black people" are drawn to the sound of Bob Marley playing from the poet's "Third storey walkup/Ossington/Bloor," through a sense of cultural identification and ownership (51).

But Bob Marley is ours
Sorry, private party closed
cross culturally

concludes MacFarlane, enclosing Marley in the space of his private sexual encounter, as well as his specific cultural identity (51). Like Brand, MacFarlane is fascinated by the tension between sexual and racial identity. Music and the city define each other's cultural spaces, as McFarlane suggests through the ambiguity of "cross culturally." The claim of ownership cuts both ways: it enables cultural identification, but it also functions as a policy of exclusion. "The Man" cannot escape the two square miles that he has defined as his own, because they have come to define him.

Yet the crossing of cultures at "2 am Saturday night/Sunday morning" suggests that intersections are also transgressions (Crosbie and Holmes eds, 51). Whereas these sometimes result in further exclusion, such as 'deportation' to the suburbs, they can also be profitable. These meeting places are cruces not only of narrative, as Verlia's and Elizete's encounter in the West Indies is the formal and narratorial crux of In Another Place, but also of literature's representation of and influence on the socio-historical city. Narrative space and city space intersect as areas of exploration, exhibiting similar tensions of naming and possession. The

street names in the work of Brand and Clarke have a different resonance from the same street names in the work of, for example, queer writers. For Brand and Clarke, street names map an acquired knowledge of the city, often acquired through labour. The acquisition becomes a trap as readily as a liberty. Yet it also calls its authors to be precise witnesses to the specifics of what is "ours." By writing their "private party," Brand and Clarke invite us to attend, a protest against the closed world of white literature which, for example, did not accept Brand as a Canadian writer until the publication of In Another Place, Not Here by Knopf Canada. Despite this, "No Rinsed Blue Sky, No Red Flower Fences," a story from Brand's 1988 collection Sans Souci, is the only story to represent Toronto in Writing from Canada, a University of Cambridge teaching anthology (Brand 1988, 85-94; Rice and Hayhoe, 125-132). In this story, Brand's narrator dreams about the Caribbean qualities Toronto lacks – the sky and fences of the title – but realises that it possesses "the acute clarity of the real – the orange juice, the telephone, the white Toronto street in winter" (Brand 1988, 91). This "acute clarity" is what Verlia finds in her midnight journeys through Toronto, the sense of being "quite here" to which all of Clarke's and Brand's protagonists are aspiring, buying into the dream of "here and now," setting the specifics of the white world's streets and commodities against the personal navigation of the new world of the self, which, like the "other world," "bend[s] and chafe[s] to this swing" (Brand 1996, 180). The meaning of 'here' is no longer a private party at a closed address.

Growing In the Skin of a Lion: Toronto's Urban Myths

> This is the city as palimpsest: a space on to which meaning is inscribed and then obliterated as new meanings are inscribed on top of them [...] Sedimented into the city's very fabric, these meanings can be recovered only through a symbolic archaeology: *the act or art of memory*.
>
> James Donald 'Memory' city a-z, 150

For the protagonists of Torontonian immigrant writing, the city itself is a myth: the traditional folk tale vision of the city of opportunity and plenty, where the cunning and deserving will prevail. This trope is raised and dismissed repeatedly in Austin Clarke's stories of men (and, less often, women) defeated by their aspiration to fulfil this model. The Caribbean-Canadian immigrant can never act the part of the hero of a white folk tale. In Dionne Brand's work, however, there is an implicit revocation of this trope, a suggestion that the foundation myth of Torontonian social history may be something other than the Dick Whittington model. As Nalo Hopkinson demonstrates in Brown Girl in the Ring, it is possible to translate a folk tale from another culture – in this case, the P'tit Jean story common to West Indian cultures – onto Toronto, and produce a triumphant resolution. Beginnings, however, are more complicated than endings, and Hopkinson goes no further than demonstrating the making of the doughnut hole in her exploration of the city's past. Gwendolyn MacEwen suggests and refutes using Native Canadian mythology in her story "The House of the Whale," transposing a Western Canadian story onto Toronto through the eyes of two Native labourers from the West Coast (MacEwen 1972). In Thomas King's Green Grass, Running Water, Eli leaves Alberta for Toronto in order to forget (or at least neglect) his Native heritage, and teaches English Literature at the university. Toronto, it would seem, has as many stories as it has cultures, but no defining foundation myth.

In this chapter, I consider two novels, which specifically consider the necessity and problem of founding myths. Closely related in form, philosophy and language use, In the

Skin of a Lion and Fugitive Pieces present Toronto through characters caught between needing personal foundation myths, and being aware of their damaging effects. Jakob Beer, the focus of Fugitive Pieces, has seen first-hand the damage wreaked by the Aryan myth propounded by the Nazis, both on the present in the form of extermination of the Jews, and on the past in the form of altering or destroying archaeological evidence of developed non-Aryan cultures. Yet he is also aware of the importance of personal and social history in creating and maintaining individual and communal identity. Arriving in Toronto from Greece, he appears to be leaving the cradle of history for a country that is, literally, new. Michaels rarely refers to the social or architectural history of the city as explored by Ondaatje; her text complements his, however, in its interest in the literal foundations of Toronto, constructing the framework of her narrative on the city's bedrock. Yet Jakob's interests in the specific geology and topography of Toronto are an extension of an obsession both with geology and specificity. Michaels, in entitling chapters about Biskupin and Toronto/Etobicoke, "The Drowned City," imputes that all geographies are psychic. It is not so much that her characters internalise the city, as that Jakob is drawn to Toronto because its landscape matches his own. The floodplain of Biskupin is matched by Toronto's landscape of ravines, "the city's sunken rooms of green sunlight" (Michaels 1997, 98). Ondaatje's protagonist Patrick also finds himself under the city, but not in the light. His job as digger and dynamiter on the tunnel for the water filtration plant plunges him into darkness and into both the geological and architectural foundations of the city. This subterranean role is juxtaposed against Nicholas Temelcoff's aerial work on the Bloor Street Viaduct, and this furthers the contrast between the two men's defining participation in Toronto's history. Ondaatje is playing a palimpsest game, layering actuality and invention in order to question but also propound his foundation myth.

Ondaatje takes his title and epigraph from the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh, the oldest recorded epic, and the foundation myth of Babylonian society. At its centre is the contrast between Gilgamesh, the civilised man and urban king, and Enkidu, a wild man created in Gilgamesh's image by the gods, whom Gilgamesh subdues through a trick, and incorporates into the city. The resolution of this conflict allegorises, but also records, the increasing urban settlement of Babylonian society, and their consideration of this urbanisation as the root of their cultural identity. Ondaatje uses a similar mythicising strategy in In the Skin, where the intersection of the real Nicholas Temelcoff and the fictional Patrick Lewis mirrors Ondaatje's manipulation of fictional events within the framework of Toronto's recorded development history. The central narrative of the novel is embedded in a frame structure, in which Patrick is relating the events to Hana, his adopted daughter, as they drive away from Toronto. Through his relationship with her mother Alice, he is revealed as the linchpin between two very different facets of Toronto's history: the construction of the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant and the Macedonian community's struggle for recognition.[4] Patrick's unfinished final act of terrorism unites protest at Harris' claim to the city landscape and the concomitant erasure from it of others less powerful, such as the plant and Viaduct workers. Harris' reply affirms that *he* is in the process of building a foundation myth for the city. "We need excess, something to live up to," he argues (Ondaatje 1987, 236). He compares Patrick to Enkidu, "a lost heir [...] you stay in the woods," and thus casts himself as Gilgamesh, whose name is preserved in the title of the epic as Harris' is in the title of the filtration plant (238).

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[4] for details of Ondaatje's use of Macedonian community oral testimony, see Winifred Siemerling, ' "Scared by the Company of the Mirror": Temptations of Identity and Limits of Control in the Work of Michael Ondaatje.' in Discoveries of the Other: Alterity in the work of Leonard Cohen, Hubert Aquin, Michael Ondaatje and Nicole Brossard. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1994. 106-72.

The Harris of Ondaatje's invention, however, is no mere brass plaque. He and Patrick are in some sense a case of split personality, particularly with regard to the narrative voice. Inasmuch as Ondaatje is fighting Patrick's cause in writing a novel which uncovers the history of "those who built the intake tunnels," it is Ondaatje's name that appears on the front of the novel, and his novel which has become not only incorporated into, but practically metonymic for, the canon of Torontonian literature (236). In taking on the project of a founding myth, Ondaatje casts himself as Gilgamesh journeying to the underworld to rescue Enkidu, who stands for the lost narratives of Toronto. Ondaatje places the failure of this quest in the mouth of Harris, who gives a mesmerising account of his dreams of unbuilt architectural wonders in Toronto.

> Wonderful things that were said to be too vulgar or expensive [...] These *were* all real places. They could have existed. I mean the Bloor Street Viaduct and this building here are just a hint of what could have been done here (237).

Even fully realised projects, such as the filtration plant and the finished novel are "just a hint" of the city's possibilities. As Ross King writes on 'Labyrinths' in City A-Z,

> Architecture is also a translation in another sense: of dreams whose potential was never realised [...] for that great promise of architecture – an alternative, more fulfilling, emancipatory space of everyday life – is never achieved. Whatever we design, it seems, we memorialise the ruins of past dreams; and whatever we build are graveyards (134).

To Patrick, the filtration plant is literally a graveyard built on the bodies of its construction workers, but it also stands to memorialise his dream of destroying it. Metro Toronto's tour pamphlet on the plant maps the "Screen Room, Pumping Station" as the place "where protagonist Patrick Lewis entered the plant to confront R.C. Harris in the climax of Michael Ondaatje's acclaimed novel, In the Skin of a Lion" (R.C. Harris Filtration Plant, [4]). The plant is remapped by its fictionalisation, and the fact sheet does not differentiate between the historical Harris and the fictional Lewis as markers of the plant's history.

When Ondaatje comes to write about both the physical and social history of Toronto, he reveals his sources by sending Patrick to Riverdale Library in order to investigate Hana's photograph of workers on the Bloor Viaduct, as Linda Hutcheon points out (Hutcheon, 98-9). Patrick's perusal of the newspapers and journals mirrors the novelist's (re)search for his characters, and identifies him with Patrick who "used to be a searcher" (Ondaatje 1987, 114). Ondaatje's revelation of the hidden history behind the plant's construction, the lives of its workers, and its alternative use as a venue for political process also takes on Patrick's second career, "work[ing] dynamite" (114). His description of the precision of Patrick's explosive technique matches his narrative technique, his sudden revelation of events such as the death of Alice. Like Patrick, Ondaatje also does not detonate the final explosion, leaving the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant standing (unlike Hopkinson's imagined destruction of the CN Tower). Toronto exists in the tension he creates between fictional possibility and recorded reality. "Before the real city could be seen it had to be imagined, the way rumours and tall tales were a kind of charting," he has Harris think, aware that the whole novel is questioning the definition of "the real city" (29). The "tall tales" or urban myths, such as the nun who falls off the Bloor Viaduct, chart the development of the city through oral history, just as novels aid us to see all possible variations on the real city.

Ondaatje's ontology moves along "desire paths," perceiving that cities as well as women have erotic histories, reconfiguring the city's topography through "the tense and bitter conversations of lovers after they exit from the Greenwood bar [...] This battle for territory, Clara, ownership and want" (84). His apostrophe of Clara can also be read making

her an item on the list, part of the territory battled over. Here, Patrick's observed city and his fantasies of Clara merge in the figure of territory. Women are not only territory themselves, but also markers of territorial ownership, as Alice allows Patrick to claim certain areas of the city as his own. Later, Alice tells Patrick about her relationship with Hana's father Cato marked his claim to the city through his possession of Alice.

> He left something everywhere we made love.
> Such sexual archaeology (141).

Ondaatje's excavations reveal, or rather suggest, the personal and erotic maps that lie beneath the visible city. His invention/description of the political protests in the empty filtration plant evoke a city whose myths are being undermined at the foundation – perhaps part of whose foundation myth is its own subversion. "The *frisson* of urban space being haunted by unknown past events may be a clue to the way memory is inscribed in a city," theorises James Donald, consequently asking what "sort of act it is, then, to remember a city, to make the past city present?" ('Memory' Thrift and Pile eds., 149). Ondaatje's puppet plays are echoed by Cooper's dancer in Delirium. The eruption of artistic gestures *as protest* in supposedly public spaces is read as a defacement of public property as in In Another Place, Not Here, but also as a redefinition. In the centre of the book Ondaatje presents a paragraph that Maxine Hong Kingston rightly identifies as enclosing his manifesto.[5]

> Official histories, news stories surround us daily, but the events of art reach us too late, travel languorously like messages in a bottle.
> *Only the best art can order the chaotic tumble of events. Only the best can realign chaos to suggest both the chaos and order it will become* (Ondaatje 1987, 146).

In rewriting "official histories" through an event of art that records other art events, Ondaatje recognises both the monument and the graveyard beneath it. Patrick's fictional act

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[5] Her review of the novel, excerpted on the back of the Picador edition, quotes from this section, highlighting what she calls Ondaatje's "promise" to the reader.

of resistance has become a part of the recorded history of the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, as if the novel had freed the plant's own submerged dream of destruction.

Ondaatje's use of the submerged and underground city to figure the repressed or potential histories of the city is warranted by Hugh Hood's assertion that "In Toronto there are real labyrinths (make psychology of them if you please) which uncoil and connect all the way across town" (quoted Fulford 41). Hood is speaking about the ravines whose form is echoed and repeated by the network of tunnels and malls beneath the downtown, and by projects such as the filtration plant, which make of the city a literal palimpsest. Stephen Graham describes the many underground layers of cities, beginning with energy and water infrastructures and going down to the bedrock, as "giant lattices and webs of flow which [...] are usually taken for granted" ('Underground' Thrift and Pile eds., 271). Toronto is even more strongly identified with and by this underground nature because of its ravines which "have become Toronto's stamp of individuality," according to architect Michael Hough (quoted Fulford 36). "They are the heart of the city's emotional geography," the location for Alice and Cato's exploits of sexual archaeology, and the topography that allows Anne Michaels to map a palimpsest of Toronto and Biskupin (Fulford 37). For Michaels, an archaeological discovery extends the history of Toronto further than any other novel about the city, and extends the palimpsest of geography via archaeology, for the discovery reveals that Toronto's prehistoric inhabitants "the Laurentian People were contemporaries of the inhabitants of Biskupin" (Michaels 1997, 102).

Jakob encounters a Toronto that is older still, one that has, in Michaels' superb pun, been taken " 'for granite' " (100). Like Patrick in Union Station, Jakob perceives Toronto

through its stones, of which most people remain ignorant (Ondaatje 1987, 210). He records that his guardian, Athos

> showed [him] Toronto cross-sectioned, he ripped open cliffs like fresh bread, revealing the ragged geological past. Athos stopped in the middle of busy city streets and pointed out fossils in the limestone ledges of the Park Plaza Hotel [...] Instantly the streets were flooded by a subtropical sea (98).

In revealing to the reader, through Jakob, a history of Toronto that predates human life, Michaels contextualises the persecution Jakob has escaped, her vision, like Noman's, measuring the human span against her regard for the natural city. Yet it also points to the necessity of human witness to invoke meaning. Athos angrily demands that his Greek friends " '[s]end the tourists to burnt-out chorios. These are our historic sites now,' " and Jakob carries this need to witness with him to Toronto (70). He comes "to know the city" through its forgotten and marginalized spaces, such as the industrial landscape that Ondaatje evokes in In the Skin, but also the ravines (97). When Athos retreats to his study to contemplate the awful devastation of the Sho'ah, "the events we lived through without knowing," Jakob walks through Toronto (110). His vision is one that reclaims what might be lost or go without witness, as if this act can extend to the other events and moments that have not been recorded.

> I took in the cold beauty of Lakeshore Cement, with its small gardens someone thought to plant at the foot of each massive silo. Or the delicate metal staircase, a lace ribbon, swirling around the girth of the oil reservoirs. At night, a few lights marked port and starboard of these gargantuan industrial forms, and I filled them with loneliness. I listened to these dark shapes as if they were the black spaces in music, a musician learning the silences of a piece. I felt that this was my truth (111).

The unusual imposition of such a domestic and feminised metaphor as "a lace ribbon" on this industrial setting, is matched by Jakob's observation of the "small gardens." These are not presented as unlikely contradictions, but as complementary paradoxes, like music and silence. The dark shapes become like a photographic negative, like the underground

photographs of the tunnel workers in In the Skin, where "all else is labour and darkness" (Ondaatje 1987, 111). For Jakob, observing the silences is paramount, a form of his need for specificity, for bringing the unobserved into the observed. "Terra cognita and terra incognita inhabit exactly the same coordinates of time and space [...] The closest we come to knowing the location of what's unknown is when it melts through the map like a watermark" (Michaels 1997, 137). This is Jakob holding together both chaos and the order it could become, which he finds represented in the topography of Toronto, where the manmade both obliterates and reinscribes the pre-human. "Public parks hazy with subtropical memory, a city built in the bowl of a prehistoric lake" (89). Toronto is necessarily both terra cognita, the everyday world that requires strategies of knowledge for survival, and terra incognita, the mysterious world of night that, by remaining elusive, demands investigation.

This division between the Toronto(s) of night and day recurs in each text considered so far. Night is primarily identified with the alternative city, the city of dreams and the dispossessed. For Brand's Verlia, it is exhilarating; for Follett's Nora, it is both erotic and alienating. For Jakob, whose consciousness of both time and place has been disrupted and heightened by his childhood trauma, night is a time of sleeplessness and fear. It is only when he meets Michaela that he finds that "night heals gaps between us," merging their histories like the "unexpected [...] accidental" history of Salonika whose multiculturalism implies Toronto's (183). Returning to Zakynthos with Michaela, Jakob makes his peace with wakefulness, his role as observer: "one sleeps, one stares, both dream. The world goes on because someone's awake somewhere" (194). This vigilance also pervades In the Skin, where both Patrick and Caravaggio have formative encounters in the space between waking and sleeping. The narrative of In the Skin is related in just such a space, Patrick's device to keep

himself awake (Ondaatje 1987, 218-9 and 243-4). Starting his journey at three a.m. on Albany Street discloses the "houses at this hour beautiful and large [...] their privacy and character revealed, each room a subplot" (243). It is, as the word "subplot" suggests, the hour in which the writer best observes and composes the city. Jakob and Ben, both writers, experience "insomnia [as] an old agreement to keep watch" (Michaels 1997, 231). This vigilance is "a symbolic archaeology" designed to rescue – in both senses, salvage and set free – the unwritten histories of Toronto through their mythic potential. Ondaatje's quasi-documentary style captures perfectly this balance between the recorded facts of history and the plausible imaginary of the novelist's vigilance. "This is July 7, 1938. A night of no moon, a heat-wave in the city. The lemon-coloured glare from the waterworks delineates the east end" (Ondaatje 1987, 229). The historically verifiable weather conditions are illuminated by the symbolic "glare from the waterworks," infusing the scene with the unison of Patrick's destiny and destination. Again, the city night is a real garden, and Patrick an imaginary toad. Patrick's encounter with Harris, like Nicholas Temelcoff's encounter with Alice, has to happen at night because "night allowed scope" for events and matters as unlikely as the comparison between an industrial staircase and a hair ribbon (29).

In negotiating a foundation myth for Toronto, Ondaatje incorporates both the history of its physical development, and the recovered oral history of its marginal communities. The division of the narrative focus between Patrick, Caravaggio and Harris – although Patrick is ostensibly narrating the story to Hana – removes the focus from the hero-king as central to the myth. This myth holds communality, even of narration, as its foundation. Patrick "gathers" elements of the story that he could not have witnessed through the mythic potential of a sleepless night, as he gathers the ability to witness through

his relationship with Alice and Hana (1). Earlier, Clara and Alice make an aura drawing of him as he sleeps, unawares, but at the novel's climax he has garnered Jakob and Ben's insomnia of witness (75-6). The "triangle of light that seemed to chart the city on this Saturday night in the summer of 1938" is not just marked out by the city's physical details – the filtration plant, Yonge Street, the Yacht Club – but, as Ondaatje implies, by the triangulation of Patrick, Caravaggio, whose "parting in his dark hair is like Yonge Street at midnight," and Harris (221, 222). The narrative sets a triangle of light on the city's darkened history through the characters and actions it records. For Jakob, hidden histories and buried minerals are covalent with the dead, and recovering the city's geology is a displacement strategy for recuperating the deaths of his family, and of the millions of Jews whose deaths went unwitnessed and unrecorded. To take Toronto " 'for granite' " is to *not* take it for granted: to look beyond the human constructions of the surface into the meaning "[s]edimented into the city's very fabric." Michaels undoes the myth of Toronto down to its very foundations, stripping even the skin of a lion from the city. As Iain Sinclair writes of Ondaatje's The Collected Works of Billy the Kid, "Hands out of the entrails of time. Myths are lies [...] Retain those primary, first light, dramas of aboriginal creation: *getting*, how here [...] It is the length of what remains" (Sinclair 1979 [1995], 147). Unpressed by the urgent demand of "*getting*" Ondaatje and Michaels occupy themselves with "the length of what remains" as it stretches like Yonge Street through the city. They identify the seeds of a foundation myth as lights "port and starboard" in the dark, and sigh themselves into the dark spaces of silence between.

Postcards from Travelling Matt: A Child's Eye View

Children play games, step out of their home into the endless playground of the world.
The city makes this experience available to all once again, far beyond childhood.
In the city, everyone is wrapped up in their own make-believe.

Gargi Bhattacharyya 'Fun' city a-z, 80

Both Patrick of In the Skin of a Lion and Jakob of Fugitive Pieces apprehend the city through a child's vision. For Jakob, this apprehension is through the child he once was, whose malapropisms are penetrating observations that enable him to "take things 'for granite.' " Patrick finds his connection to the city, first through Clara's iguana which brings him into conjunction with the Macedonian community, thereby with Alice, and then through Alice's daughter Hana, whose gift to him of the photograph of the men on the Bloor Street Viaduct awakens Patrick's involvement with the city's history. The city that both Jakob and Ben are denied by the impact of the Sho'ah in Fugitive Pieces, the space of childhood make-believe and exploration, is embodied in the city that Patrick envies Hana. It is the city that Maddy possesses unawares in Leaving Earth, and the nostalgic city to which Chris Chambers returns in his poems. In this chapter, I consider how this child's eye view of Toronto pervades the city's literature, and how authors frequently use children as narrators or foci for alternate visions of Toronto. Like Jakob's ability to see to the bedrock, children in these works are often gifted with the ability to perceive the invisible essence of the city. They are aligned with the mentally unstable, immigrants and the dispossessed as gaining this facility to see to the true centre from/through their position on the margins. The marginalisation of literary writing subsequently aligns writers with those on society's peripheries, and the adoption of the child's eye view enables writers to speak out in a manner that reinforces the valence of this marginalisation. From Gwen MacEwen's concerns with the fascinations of childhood, particularly magic, to Dennis Lee's work for children, the canon of contemporary Toronto writing is strongly marked by this interest in, and validation of, a child's Toronto.

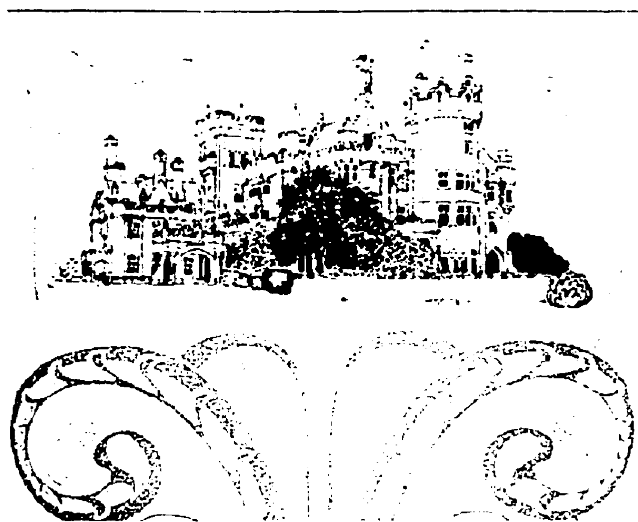
Throughout In the Skin, Patrick Lewis is represented as a man without a history, without a cause of his own – a man without co-ordinates. He has grown up in a town that is not on the map, and this becomes his defining feature (10). Like Noman, he is metonymy for the developing city of Toronto, which is both seeking and refusing its identity in others' meta-narratives – those of the city's communities are pitted against those of Toronto's governors and architects through Patrick's attempt on the filtration plant. The closest Patrick comes to a Toronto of his own is in the steam-baths, where the physical characteristics of his fellow workers are blurred, and the marks placed on them by their labour in the city are dissolved (Ondaatje 1987, 135). Yet Patrick moves easily through others' visions of the city, culminating in his aptitude for breaking into the water filtration plant, and conversing with Harris in the heart of his territory. The climax of the novel – Patrick in Harris' office, demanding a Toronto for himself and those who built it – can be traced back to his relationship with Hana, and his introduction through her to Nicholas Temelcoff. This is expressed through geography, and Patrick's desire for Hana's Toronto – not her vision of it, but her physical "desire path."

> Patrick wanted the city Hana had constructed for herself – the places she brought together and held as if on the delicate thread of her curiosity: Hoo's Trading Company where Alice bought herbs for fever, gaslit diners whose aquarium windows leaned against the street. They watched water-nymph follies at Sunnyside Park, watched the Italian gymnasts at the Elm Street gym, heard the chanting of English lessons to large groups at Central Neighbourhood House [...]
>
> But Hana's favourite place of spells was the Geranium Bakery, and one Saturday afternoon she took him there to meet her friend Nicholas (138-9).

The child's imaginative exploration becomes an act of "construct[ion]" equal to that of Patrick and Nicholas at work on Harris' projects, a projection that is co-extant with Harris' dreams, and equally valid. The "delicate thread of her curiosity" contrasts with the mud, steel and rivets of the labourers' construction, like the contrasting of the places, and the cultures

that are juxtaposed on her map, as they are on the city's. Hoo's Chinese store, American diners, water nymphs, Italians and Macedonians collide and connect in Hana's Toronto, "on the delicate thread" of her desire path. Harris' city is devoid of people despite his dreams of providing services and monuments for them. Hana's is full of them, defined by them. This is the city Patrick envies, where the human facets of the city, not its municipal monuments designed to attract the eye, are attractions for a child's "curiosity."

Hana, like Maddy, is drawn to the point at which the contemporary human city meets the timeless fantastical. For Hana, this is represented by the water nymphs at Sunnyside Park. The modifier "follies" expresses the dual position of such intersections in the world of Toronto: they are make-believe entertainments, and are therefore foolish. To Hana, they are part of the city, on the same level of actuality and necessity as diners. Dennis Lee captures this exactly when Casa Loma makes an appearance in the second poem of Alligator Pie.



Dennis Lee "Wiggle to the Laundromat" with Frank Newfeld's illustration, Lee 1963, 9.

In his "postlude," Lee writes that his aim is "not abolishing Mother Goose, but letting her take up residence among hockey sticks and high-rise" (1963, 63-4). While "Alligator Pie" includes a hockey stick, Casa Loma is far from a high-rise (8). In Frank Newfeld's illustration, it is presented as a fairy-tale castle surrounded by scrollwork familiar from nineteenth-century children's books. The contrast between the mention of a laundromat and the fantastical illustration – which nevertheless represents a real building in Toronto – functions both to create a child's vision of the city, and to suggest that a city that could include the baroque whimsy of Casa Loma must have been constructed with a child's sense of things. In the poem "Skyscraper," where the illustration dominates the two-stanza poem, its cartoon of the Toronto skyline suggests a city constructed by and for children (30-1).

Illustration by Frank Newfeld for "Skyscraper" Lee 1963, 30-1.

The CN Tower on the far left immediately identifies this as a poem rooted in Toronto. Although this poem makes no mention of a specific city, Toronto is verbally as well as visually present throughout the book. The first stanza of "Bed Song" is a chant of Toronto street names – "Yonge Street, Bloor Street, / Queen Street, King" – and the refrain of "Bump on Your Thumb" concludes "And tickle my tum in Toronto" (16, 23). Yet in the postlude, Lee suggests to parents that they "should feel free to relocate the place-poems as

drastically as [they] want. Put in the streets and places [they] know best" (63). "In Kamloops," "Kahshe or Chicoutimi" and "Tongue Twister" all use names of diverse cities across Canada to provide the rhyme and rhythm of their stanzas, but none contain the physical detail of the city found in "Skyscraper," "Wiggle..." and "Bed Song." While this imputes that the poet's intention is not to provide a Toronto-specific canon of children's literature, both the illustrations and the printed form of the book demonstrate the influence of Lee's geographical surroundings, and it is reasonable to suppose the impact of his vision of Toronto on children throughout Canada and the world.

Lee was also involved for a decade in the making of a children's TV series shot in Toronto, which included several episodes that used Hogtown as the locus of the 'real world,' or as the character Travelling Matt calls it, "the land of the silly people." Fraggle Rock, a co-production of the Jim Henson Company and CTV, was filmed in Toronto, and featured the work of several Canadian writers, including Lee (who wrote the theme song) and bp Nichol. For Nichol, working on Fraggle Rock was part of his resistance to the insistent codex-form of literature. In his Introduction to An H in the Heart, George Bowering describes Nichol being oppressed by the weight of books in Robarts Library where he worked, and deciding to find an alternate way of producing literature. "While he lived, he was the prince of difference," writes Bowering of the poet so much a part of the Toronto landscape that he has his own concrete poem of a lane (Nichol xi). Nichol's long poem "Familiar" asks us to "name names / place places," and his involvement in the city is marked in the name of his project with Steve McCaffery, the Toronto Research Group (18). Yet he also resisted nationalist and localist literary sentiments, and while his work places Toronto on the map as a centre of avant-garde poetics, he rarely has cause to map Toronto. His work on Fraggle

Rock, with its visual as well as literary interaction with the city, is perhaps the exception to this. In his episodes, Nichol makes free with the city's foibles, implying that its lack of folly is its folly, and plays in the imaginative space of Henson's underground city inhabited by the childlike Fraggles. The conception of the Fraggle landscape – the fun-loving Fraggles dwell underground, surrounded by the hard-working Doozers, while the large and evil Gorgs live above them – suggests a non-specific fairy-tale conception of urban space. It is the character of Travelling Matt, however, who brings a specific taste of Toronto to the series. The Fraggle world is not distinct from the human world, and their proximity is important in creating the show's moral themes. Each episode features a "postcard" sent from Matt to his nephew, the contents of which are shown on screen. These missives come from "the land of the silly people," or grown-up humans, which Matt is exploring. His experience of trying to understand a TTC bus is indicative of the way in which children view the city, but also of the way in which poets present it, as he perceives the bus as an animal which consumes its customers. Like Casa Loma, which both is and is not a fairy tale castle, this metaphoric perception makes the city strange, the major project of modernist and post-modern writing. If they are Toronto-dwellers, viewers then and now encounter fragments of the city in Fraggle Rock which make their daily experience strange to them, thus motivating them to look at the city with fresh eyes.

This is also the project of Lee's 1968 definitive Toronto text, Civil Elegies, which could be considered the founding manifesto of Torontonian literature. It is written in and from a specific geographical locus, Nathan Phillips Square, and its vision moves outwards through the city – by which I mean that it finds its route into speaking of Canadian and world politics, and also abstract concerns, through the landscapes and sociology of Toronto.

This brings us back to John Johnston's idea that the city poem, like the city, seeks to contain everything. For Jakob in Fugitive Pieces, this is a necessary theory, one that allows him to reconstruct the world of language shattered by the Nazis through reinvesting meaning in the material world. For Lee, it reinserts the *polis* into politics, and vice versa. It turns Toronto into a soapbox from which the whole world can be seen and spoken. Lee characterises the effect of public space in the city, implying that the poem itself is such a public space:

The wide square stretches out
serene and singly by moments it takes us in, each one for now
a passionate civil man [...]
[...] And here
once more, I watch the homing furies' arrival (First Elegy, n.p.).

These "homing furies" remind us of the birth of Western politics and literature in Athens, for it is the Furies who, in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, guarantee the successful reign of Athens as a centre of political debate and artistic achievement. In the First Elegy, the furies are "our unlived lives," and they arrive "condemning Toronto," yet by invoking them, Lee grants Toronto the stature of Athens as a platform from which to launch his manifesto. The city's "ordinary glory" is offset by the essential fact of its being inhabited here and now. "It is not much to ask. A place, a making, / two towers, a teeming, a genesis, a city," declares the poet, using parataxis to align his "making" with the place, seeing them both at their "genesis," both equal parts of the becoming-city (First Elegy, n.p.).

In the Third Elegy, another element of this genesis is added when Lee observes

children making their game of the city,
pelting across the square in tandem, deking
from cover to cover in raucous celebration and they are never
winded, bemusing us with the rites of our own
gone childhood; if only they stopped
mattering, the children, it might be possible, now
while the square lies stunned by noon.
What is real is fitful (Third Elegy, n.p.).

The children's games, "rites of our own / gone childhood," reinforce the sense of "unlived lives" through that line break, which separates the adults from their childhood, "rites of our own" suggesting a possession which is stripped away. The children "attach us" to our being-in-the-world, to observing not only the real, but that the "real is fitful." Like the children, it is "deking / from cover to cover," its "beautiful footholds / crumble" as they are written onto the page, transformed from buildings to metaphors. The poet, following the children in their climbing games, looks up and sees a cloud of pollution overhanging the city. This is pollution both physical and moral, and the poet relates his anger to the children: "It is the children's fault as they swarm for we cannot stop caring." Their active involvement in the city, whereby they do not just regard Moore's Archer as a civic landmark, but "climb over" it, involves the poet as he observes them. They are also symbolic of children elsewhere, as the pollution which affects them is a sign of Canada's complicity in the creation of pollution elsewhere. Again, Toronto is the viewpoint from which

> it is
> yank and chink and hogtown linked in
> guilty genesis it is the sorry mortal
> sellout burning kids by proxy acquiescent
> still though still denying it is merely to be human (Third Elegy, n.p.).

The fantastical play-city of Casa Loma is no longer the essence of Toronto, just as the playful but exact syntax and form of Lee's children's poetry is here eradicated by the savagery of his politics. The alliteration of "yank and chink [...] linked" both singles out and submerges "hogtown," whose own alliteration with "guilty genesis" refers us back to "a genesis, a city" in the First Elegy. Toronto's genesis narrative has its own original sin, one to which the presence of children recalls the poet, its complicity in "the scandal of being" (Third Elegy). Toronto's very urban quality of here-and-nowness, involves it in the national and international structures of power that burn other children, and, in doing so,

compromises the poet who is "safe in the square and watch[ing] the children dance" (Third Elegy).

The Furies, who protect particularly the relationship between mother and child, are undoubtedly condemnatory, and they speak through the poet – as the Eumenides did – in the heart of the place that they condemn. This elides the line between actuality and make-believe in the poem, as the children's games carry us into the less innocent 'games' of global politics. Both are encapsulated in the poem's "making," a word that conjures the childish art of "make-believe," but also the making that is "to fashion / other men's napalm" (Third Elegy). The poem is metaphor and actuality, a reminder that the city is our most potent metaphor for the "endless playground of the world." Thus, in Marlene Nourbese Philip's Harriet's Daughter, the intersection of St. Clair and Winona is the focus of a children's game based on the Underground Railroad. Nourbese Philip maps Toronto's historical location as eventual destination of the railroad onto children's methods of learning both the city and their cultural history through play. In the novel, Toronto represents two alternatives: historically, a safe haven from American slavery, and imaginatively, the geography of the railroad itself transferred onto the neighbourhood that was its eventual destination.[6] Like Lee, Nourbese Philip balances the carnivalesque liberties of the city against its complicity in historical narratives.

Comparatively, when Thelma, the protagonist of Mouthing the Words, moves back to Toronto and finds a job, it is her imaginary friend and child-self Heroin who initially goes to the office for her. Thelma's take on the world has been skewed by childhood sexual

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[6] For more on Toronto and the underground railroad, see George Elliott Clarke's introduction to Eyeing the North Star.

abuse, which has both forced her to grow up quickly, and arrested her defensively in a child's imaginative world. Heroin is Thelma's projected self for dealing with the city, and at the end of the novel, they coalesce as Thelma decides to enter a contract with the world represented by the urban space in which she is dwelling. She says:

> I am becoming increasingly curious about the world beyond my imagination. There is a code for living which is constructed strangely and perhaps there are maps and schedules to guide people through it. People appear to do it effortlessly; they have cracked the code unknowingly and they act as if the rhythm of living is their own. I don't know yet where their imaginary friends live. Not in offices, that's for sure (Gibb 153).

Thelma implies that people use their imaginary friends to crack the city's codes, and that maybe she has such a friend *instead of* the "maps and schedules" which guide "people" – i.e.: normal adults – through the city. Thelma's "people" are Travelling Matt's "silly people," those who presume themselves to be the dominant order "as if the rhythm of living is their own." Yet there is something about Toronto that makes it possible for those excluded from the "maps and schedules" to bring their "curiosity" and combine "the world beyond [their] imagination" with the world *of* their imagination, with powerful and visionary results.

In this way offices, the dominant feature of Toronto's downtown landscape as gently mocked by Frank Newfeld's illustration, may exclude imaginary friends, but the literature of the city, its other prime landmark, is full of them. From Lilah's relationship with her fictional friends in Headhunter to Travelling Matt, who moves through Hogtown unseen by the "silly people," the literatures of Toronto make visible not only those who are excluded, but the extraordinary things that they see. This is the gift that aligns the writer with the child, a game that both converts the city into somewhere else – a folly of water nymphs, the Underground Railroad – and plays on its sense of place. Like Patrick, we crave the child's city with its clearly defined desire paths, her vivid co-ordinates that imbue Toronto in turn with a sense

of clarity and individual definition. For the children reading, or being read, Alligator Pie, Toronto is both metonymic for all cities, as Lee advises parents to adapt poems, and absolutely itself as illustrated, representative of "hockey sticks and high-rise," the imagination-drenched here and now which these writers borrow from children, and with which they invest their work.

T-Dot: Write Here, R(eye)ght Now

> Perhaps the city is such a complex jumble of practices that it cannot be reported? [...]
> Then there is the question of what has to be left out of any account of the city.
> Can the pulse of bodies and the push of objects ever be captured in language?
> Nigel Thrift and Steve Pile 'Preface' city a-z, xiii.

If cities and countries can be said to have growth patterns like humans, then Toronto, in many ways, appears to be in an extended adolescence. In its literary search for an identity and an identity politics, Toronto can be represented as a bratty teenager consumed with the desire to makes its own desire paths. While many writers use children as narrators, or narrative foci, there is often a sense in which these figures – like Hana – are on the edge between child and teenager, between imaginative absorption and frantic consumption. Works as diverse as Russell Smith's How Insensitive and Margaret Christakos' The Moment Coming identify Toronto with a current of adolescent and post-adolescent desire to own: to possess oneself through possessing the city and its saleable goods. For Smith, this is a matter of being seen at the right clubs in the right clothes, and the novel presumably aims to be the "right" book to be read in these settings, borrowing its cachet from the hip knowledge it flaunts. Smith's is the novel-as-listings-magazine. Yet its claim to currency is defeated by its very immediacy: the moment of its publication is also the moment of its obsolescence. Each writer in this thesis explores a different strategy for escaping the conundrum whereby the here and now observed and transferred to codex becomes the then and there.

Smith's novel has retained a certain prestige due to its pre-eminence as a Canadian example of the fashionable and fashion-conscious Brat Pack novel practiced by Bret Easton Ellis and Jay MacInerney in New York in the late 1980s. How Insensitive, like MacInerney's Story of My Life, relates the story of an outsider colliding with the city's in-crowd. The cultural centrality of New York as representative of 1980s financial and personal excess is

lacking from Toronto, which is parodied on its own parochial terms. Smith's mocking insistence on the secret codes surrounding hipness is reminiscent of the playground rules encountered by children learning the city. Andrew Barry remarks on this symptom of city life in his piece "Networks (1)" in city a-z.

> Living in the city is a matter of developing a whole series of rather minor skills [...] To be alert to what might happen; and to be indifferent to what does [...] To develop quite a sophisticated idea of what it might be possible to know, and what it might be possible for others to know (162).

This is an excellent summary of the rules of hipness evinced by How Insensitive. The insider characters are consistently indifferent to the supposedly fashionable events and clothes they encounter, constantly seeking novelty, sounding out newcomers as sources of knowledge. Pushing the satire a step further, Smith makes his two male protagonists writers, one stalled working on a novel about city life, the other a playwright who writes a play about erotic encounters in Toronto, and produces make-work on Toronto architecture for local lifestyle magazines. His involvement with the literary scene is limited to one appearance on a television show, although the novel is perfused with the sense things in the city are built, performed or encountered in order to provide anecdotal and literary material. The novel consumes Toronto as another designer label, one so fashionable as to be as yet unworn by the cognoscenti. Compared to New York, Toronto certainly comes late to literary fashionability, but the plethora of short story and poetry anthologies in the late 1980s and early 1990s argues that Smith, like his protagonist who arrives in Toronto at the end of the rush, is jumping on the bandwagon rather than creating it. Yet, while Toronto has some claims to a tradition of being in fashion with writers, it is unusual for it to be written about on the basis of its pop cultural fashionability. Smith cannot decide, however, whether Toronto attains to the status of New York and London as cities of both literary and commodity fashion, or whether it is merely a dedicated follower. Unlike New York, Toronto

is an adolescent emerging awkwardly into prominence (both global-commercial and literary), and the end of Smith's novel leaves us as unsure as its protagonist as to whether Toronto is a highly desirable fashion item, or a cheap whore.

More recent fictions have a more celebratory take on Toronto's purchase power on the adolescent, who is like Johnston's city and city poem in her desire to include everything within her compass. Lynn Crosbie's A to Z of Toronto, Alphabet City, is a directory which seeks to encompass not only a single individual's view of the city, but to predicate the city from that single view, which of course takes in the city's coolest and most essential happenings. The essence of the city is coolness. In marketing jargon, "urban" means fashionable and cutting-edge, and in the work of Crosbie, Mariko Tamaki and Yashin Blake, as well as reading series such as the IV Lounge and Scream in High Park, Toronto presents a self that aspires to this condition of urbanity. These writers do not map the city through its literary or ethnic history, nor through its civic architecture or significant intersections, but through a combination of autobiographical anecdote and pop cultural fashion. For Tamaki and Blake, autobiography and style coincide in Toronto's music scene(s), which present an alternative to engaging with literary history. Although Daniel Jones had set a precedent of engagement with punk as a method of moving literature into alternative cultural realms, his work still offers a fierce critique of literary circles; the scorn it heaps on Morley Callaghan, Margaret Atwood and Jones' own involvement with the small press scene cannot and does not dispense with all mention of literature. Tamaki's and Blake's characters, on the other hand, do not even make self-parodic forays to the eighteenth floor of the Park Plaza Hotel, like Mitchell in Soon to be a Major Motion Picture. Their geography is a map of clubs, bars, record stores, apartments and gig venues, and within Titanium Punch, this geography is

recorded in an occult print culture of 'zines, comix, flyers, and lyric sheets that wrap the city into the music scene. Although Iqbal in Blake's Titanium Punch frequently refers to Toronto as "The City of Daggers," both for its skyline and its threat of racial gang violence, the novel celebrates the city's capacity for diversity through its (surprisingly) active and varied metal music scene. Iqbal and his friends represent a multi-cultural cross-section of Toronto life, and the metal scene is presented as uniting Christians, Muslims, gay black men, straight white feminists and Native Canadians. The novel's title, and band name, Titanium Punch, is frequently abbreviated to T-Punch, a pun on T-Dot, the city's nickname favoured by the listings magazines eye and NOW. T-Punch overwrites Toronto with the aggressive passion of heavy metal, and physicalises the contemporaneity of the city from a dot to a punch, a gesture of politicisation (Iqbal is a Black Muslim) cut adrift from its alignment by its use at metal gigs. Toronto is both violent and celebratory, and, like a physical gesture, caught absolutely in the now.

This sense of celebration and potential is linked to the city being symbolic of the here and now, and the diverse availability of the present moment. Margaret Christakos captures this when she writes about leaving Sudbury for Toronto in her late teens.

Life

Now her life was full-blown, pumped with oxygen and air freshener. She shopped along the Hard Edge of the Queen West Village, stopped at the Express Café to use the phone and then blew kisses at herself in the bathroom while waiting for her pesto and sun-dried tomato bruschetta to crispen. Life was marvellous (1998, 6).

In Toronto, life is at its peak, "full-blown," which conjures both a flower at the height of summer, and a strong wind, both growth and motion. The city is both life-giving like oxygen, and artificial like air-freshener. It is associated with the "Hard Edge" and with things "Express," which shows Toronto acquiring the aspects of a global city like New York where

speed and novelty are paramount. We are given a taste of the moment in "pesto and sun-dried tomato bruschetta," suggesting that taste dictates to our taste buds. This is reinforced in a later section of "Sudbury," **Classics**, where foodstuffs replace the literary canon as markers of urban knowledgeability (8-9).

> It wasn't the herbs themselves, it was the sensation of owning these things, of wearing them all the way home knowing you'd bump into friends from the Institute who knew their Classics but hadn't yet embarked on the Odyssey of International Cuisine, that gave her day a prime edge (8).

Christakos' punning reference to the Odyssey indicates her literary knowledge, even as it overlays it with her facility with herbs. The sensation of ownership is identified with having an "edge," becoming like the Hard Edge that is the essence of the city. "[H]er ethnic wake" has become a desirable attribute, just as Iqbal discovers that his double marginality as a black Muslim into heavy metal brings him into the centre of a certain map of Toronto (9). This is one of the most frequently described conditions of post-modernity, the coming of the margins into the centre. Yet both Blake and Christakos endeavour to preserve their marginal status even while asserting their presence in the city's cultural and geographical centre. This extends to Toronto itself, a marginal (colonial) city that, through its increased diversity and suburban incorporation, has become a global example of a functioning multi-ethnic city. Yet its writers continue to explore both Toronto's margins and Toronto as marginal, construing both the city and its literature as desirably eccentric.

Toronto's active small presses, magazines, reading series and performance spaces are a significant factor in both the visibility and marginality of literature in the city. The multiplicity of live literary happenings, ranging from leather-bound armchair readings at the Hart House Library, to bottlings and booings at Bite! at the El Mocambo, is matched by the diversity of writers in the city, from world-renowned and award-laden practitioners such as

Atwood and Ondaatje, to local heroes such as Gibb and Crosbie, to those who refuse mainstream publication such as Nichol, and those creating alternate forms and forums, such as broken pencil editor Hal Niedzviecki. Yet all of these are concerned with the contemporaneous value of writers, with promoting those who are novel, as this seems best to encapsulate the spirit of the city and its literature. Dennis Lee captured and perpetuated this when he entitled his 1968 anthology of new Toronto poets T.O. Now. Lee's judgement that "Toronto is still a kind of accidental site that people inhabit on their own" holds good today, the constructed city's accidental nature inflecting the form and attitude of its writers (Lee ed. 1968, iii). The word *accidental* neatly denotes the intersection between the printed page and performance, catching the transitional nature of poetry in Toronto – and Toronto in poetry – that pervades Crosbie's Alphabet City. Each section represents an accidental, or grace, note of movement between city, performance and page. Performance is an important route of access to contemporary Toronto poetics, as the site of the performance affects the reception of the work, and generates new strata of the cultural city. Unexpected works often intersect at readings, or present lines of investigation through the juxtaposition of content and performance (space). Each chapter herein has some connection to a live performance witnessed this year in Toronto, all of which form part of the psychogeographical structure of *this* piece of writing. Not only did they concur to establish a sense of the size and shape of the literary scene(s) in Toronto, but also they form a body of literary encounters with the city, and of encounters with the city indelibly marked by literature.

Blake and Tamaki achieve similar effects through their descriptions of live music gigs. Whereas Blake describes the sensation of watching other bands perform, Tamaki's protagonist Traci describes her own performance as lead singer of the band Cover, creating a

palimpsest of texts and times (Tamaki, 120-22). The novel's title cover me pre-empts the band's name, so-called because they perform cover versions. This textual layering is increased by Traci's description of the gig, which includes her misconstrued lyrics for Nirvana's "Come As You Are" (121). The ownership of text and performance is contested and asserted, mirroring Traci's assertion of ownership of her body against her parents' interference, and, in the last instance, her claim to Toronto. The novel's ring structure begins with Traci returning to Toronto from Montreal for a gig with Cover, and, enclosing her account of her adolescent nervous breakdown, ends with her performance at the Rivoli on Queen Street. Whereas in the first chapter she is hurrying to have lunch with her father, and the city is characterised by the office buildings where he works, "the Toronto business district. Penis country, my friend calls it, because of the plethora of phallic symbols and suits" and the East Asian restaurants that link Traci to her familial ethnicity, the book's finale brings her father into *her* Toronto (11, 135). Traci's performance, including a song called " 'Suburban Confessions,' " reclaims the city from which she had run away (134).

This acquisition of the city through performance is comparable to the Christakos' ethnic purchasing power which associates literary with culinary acumen. The multiplicity of poems about Kensington Market attests to this desire for possession of the diverse city; each vision asserts both the individuality of the poet, and of the city, negotiating the latter's being subsumed into the former. Louise Bak, Ronna Bloom, Eric Layman, Christakos and Crosbie are among those who produce poems from the produce exhibited in the Market, identifying the exoticism of the foodstuffs with the assortment of human drama that occurs there (Bak reading, Toronto, NOW Lounge. 4 Mar 2001; Bloom 54; Layman in pub. Whyte 1999, 83-4; Christakos 1998, 8-9; Crosbie 43-4). Bloom protests that the "produce on the sidewalk [is] just produce. / What goes on in there that counts," yet the human element and the

commodities are inextricably linked. As Layman witnesses, "[u]n-asked, transparent, / the daytime's images overlay the night," so that even after the Market is closed, it is still associated with the produce and labour visible there during the day (83). For Crosbie, the Market is a space of detritus, of human lives and objects thrown away. A junkie tosses his girlfriend's possessions out of the window late at night; Crosbie describes the girl: "her thin body an atlas, the street's colours, shapes, in relief and faceted" (44). She is the personification of Kensington Avenue, representing the street as an atlas does. Yet unlike an atlas, she is "in relief and faceted," risen up from the page in three dimensions to give not only direction but texture to the city.

For Crosbie in Alphabet City, this texturing is frequently effected by recording performance, comparing poetry readings with Elvis club nights. As Traci in cover me claims possession of Toronto through descriptions of her performances, Crosbie forms a city "in relief and faceted" by making connections between places and what is performed there. This gives texture both to the city, and to the printed page, which is invested with a temporal dimension through the poem's conjunction to the actual. The sections "Queen Street West (1150) 1992" and "Scream in High Park (July 19, 1993)" offer contrasting methods of recording live poetry performance (49-50, 52-3). The former draws a connection between literary and musical performance in its documentation of Crosbie and Jones' joint first book launch. Their "kind of punk marriage" is also a marriage of poetry and punk, a suggestion of the way in which performative elements both literalise and abstract poetry. "Dave Howard launches [their] books from a slingshot," performing the metaphor of a book launch with punk-inspired abandon (50). Yet Crosbie also points to the way in which Jones' work, by its corporeality is an enaction and "simulation" of his psychological "torture,"

his voice reciting his obsessions:

fuck it fit it kick kick it kick it (50).

The layering of actuality, performance, text and recollection resembles the palimpsest city evoked by In the Skin of a Lion. The physicality of Jones' recitation, emphasised by his wielding of a bullwhip, raises the poem from the page jaggedly, like the Kensington Market girl's "sharp vertebrae / like cat's teeth, tearing rotten flesh" (44).

"Scream in High Park" offers a total contrast, both as poem and theory of witnessing. Crosbie gives an alternative vision of an alternative event, pushing the first Scream both further towards the margins by her rewriting of literary history, and arguing its centrality by refashioning the night's events into the form of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Peter McPhee, in his introduction to Carnival: A Scream in High Park reader, describes the intention behind Scream of creating

> an eclectic meeting of background, viewpoint and writing style. A momentary blend of voices forming a single, unrepeatable expression of the possible. The carny wasn't asking us to buy, just to come and discover... (xi).

Again, the figure of the carny is invoked to suggest Toronto's alternative side. This time he is even more alternative, for he is without commerciality and merely an invitation to discovery. Like Ondaatje, McPhee identifies a difference between the purchasable city and the discovered city, and he wishes Scream to be part of the latter, an aspect of the city set free. He goes on to emphasise that the anthology "is an attempt to capture some of the magic that is Scream in High Park," not by tying the book to recording an exact version of events, but by simulating a codex version collecting what "each writer [...] would read if Scream were held today" (xii, xiii). We are not buying into a false representation of an unrecordable

event, but something more poetic: an evocation. McPhee recognises the palimpsest nature of the city, and imitates it in the way in which his book composes its representation thereof.

It is fascinating, therefore, to measure the 1993 section of the anthology against Crosbie's poetic description of the evening, measuring McPhee's "something unreal" against Crosbie's invocation of the Dream, excavating not the actual event but a sense of its impact and its position in Toronto's literary history (xiv). For the record, the biography at the back of Carnival describes Crosbie as the author who "showed the best fashion sense of anyone who has read at Scream In High Park. 'Dressed in a white pageant-gown. Head slightly shaved (asymmetrically), red synthetic hairpiece, penis-man earrings' " (187). The quotation is unattributed, but Crosbie's version in Alphabet City mentions "a white dress," "earrings that are little naked men" and a "hairpiece" (52). The poem replicates its author's fashion sense, and also her sense of the importance of fashion as marking a moment, a co-incidence of contemporary style and personal expression, like the form of her poetry which mixes prose, long-line lyric, and – in the Scream section – an homage in imitation "uv" bill bissett, another of the night's readers (53). The form as well as the content, therefore, chronicles the performance, establishing itself not just through the place and date included in the section's title, but through its use of fashionable form and timely content.

Works that refer to performance in Toronto, often aligning themselves with other performance forms such as music, and with alternative postures to the staid novelist aspiring to the literary canon, draw parallels between contemporary style, the city and the individual writer. Investing Toronto with a unique personality is paramount in the writer's creation of her own identity. Performance is essential to this: both Traci and Crosbie find their voice

through performance, and as Rosemary Sullivan frequently observes in Shadow Maker, the literary scene in Toronto developed not only social cohesion but literary diversity through the foundation of the Bohemian Embassy and other small jazz/poetry performance spaces in the 1960s. Scream, in which a part of the city itself, High Park, enters into the performance of poetry, is the latest permutation of Toronto's increasing literary performance of itself. The availability and attitude of performed poetry attracts both young writers and young readers, and the confluence of poetry and punk, which gave Toronto poetry a renewed sense of itself as underground and alternative, creates an important dimension in the literary canon, raising both the stakes, and the skin of the page. Performance constantly posits the question of the inclusion of "the pulse of bodies and the push of objects" in city writing, while Toronto, adolescent as it is, demands and desires both bodies and objects in its literature. It asks that the present moment, the essence of citiness, be represented in its entirety, the literary work drawing its form from an A to Z or a literary magazine in order to cover the "complex jumble" without untangling it, represent both the chaos and the order it will become.

The Invention of Toronto: Ending It

He reaches for himself and looks away ruined.
City seek's [*sic*] words in which everything is found. The numbers, bleeps envelopes and folds;
the digits and opposing thumb. The calls, the barcode, the postcode, the telegraph wire, the radio,
the programme, the maker, the pull to the centre, depot and warehouse
Adrian Passmore 'City' city a-z, 44

If Daniel Jones were to have written his address to Toronto, it would end with a bar code, not a postcode. In the Preface to his only poetry collection the brave never write poetry, he writes that he spent the time chronicled in the poems "reading widely, travelling, wandering the streets and hitting the bars of Toronto" (11). For him, everything of the city can be found in its bars, and at the bottom of a glass. Admitting that his literary forefathers are honorary Torontonians Ernest Hemingway and Malcolm Lowry, Jones – he adopted the single moniker that is the mark of canonical writers at the beginning of his career – perceives that his career is divided into wanting "a slice of the Can. Lit. pie" and deriding the poets of the Toronto scene, and never shies away from the contradictions this causes (12). Steven Heighton describes him (after his suicide) as "tangibly striving with a savage candour and clear-eyed irony for purity and simplicity of expression" (Heighton 116). His flytings against the city and the scene, fired by a scatological humour and corrosive honesty, are unique in conception and execution among Toronto poets. This uniqueness, combined with the iconic status granted by his suicide, result in his embodying *the* Torontonian poet for writers such as Heighton, Kevin Connolly and Lynn Crosbie, with whom he launched his first book. Yet Jones approaches the city with none of the fantastical, imaginative, archaeological or erotic energies of the writers discussed so far. In this sense, he is the least psychogeographical of all writers, describing deadpan the location of a fuck or a fight, mapping his way from bar to bed. Yet he writes obsessively about the city, planning a four-volume work of fiction entitled The Invention of Toronto (see Kevin Connolly, introduction to Jones, 1998 [12]; and Jones

1988, 23). In particular, Jones' involvement with the Toronto punk scene, chronicled in his posthumously published 1978: a novel, exposes a city like his prose, "stripped down to bare essentials" (Heighton 116). Street names, bar names, band names: the relentless writing and rewriting of the same anecdote with different degrees of distance reveals the superficiality of the city, making "Toronto" as banal as a swear word. It is a place to be, and Jones heaps scorn on the 'places to be' and the people who are there.

In The People One Knows: Toronto Stories – the title is borrowed from a Hemingway poem (Jones 1994, [158]) – Jones offers his most comprehensive mapping of the city through a collection of stories loosely related by characters and locations. The author's progress from alcoholic drop-out to professor of creative writing is staged through his movement around Toronto and encounters with similarly peripatetic people, such as Robert, the protagonist of the Hemingwayesque title story, who tells Jones he writes stories like Hemingway, and whose own song writing oeuvre goes undocumented, except by this story (119-127). Half of the collection is simultaneously confessional and meta-literary, as the author chronicles his own attempt to chronicle his writing life; half of the collection is a series of satires on the literary world. "The Poet's Wife" is an extended version of his poem "Jack and Jill in Toronto," intertwined sardonic views of the prevalence and sameness of writers in Toronto (77-88; Jones 1985, 60-62). The story ends with a launch party for the poet's wife Alison, who is a more successful poet than he is. Her book is launched at the Rivoli on Queen Street, then a fashionable launch venue, and it is attended by Chris Dewdney, Barbara Gowdy, Kevin Connolly and "Daniel Jones, the editor of *Paragraph* [...] Andrew had seen him on the television program *Imprint* only the week before" (85). This

ironic gesture, which turns Jones into one of "the people one knows," aligns him with the literary establishment his work satirises so voraciously.

In the brave never write poetry, he offers an explanation for his disappointment in the Toronto literary scene, a fault he lays at the feet of the city itself. "Why Good Poems Are Never Written in Toronto" casts its caustic eye over the location of writing in the city, something of which Jones himself is very conscious, to the point of including a picture of himself at his typewriter on a balcony in the brave (73; photograph 17, 57, 81). The significance of the writer's co-ordinates when conceiving his poem, and writing it, is one of the bases of psychogeography, as it interfuses the effect of the city on the poet, and of the poet's witnessing on the city. Jones' Toronto, given in full below, is curiously anodyne, nondescript even as it is described. Only "Harbourfront," frequently used by Jones as symbol of the literary establishment, indicates that the first stanza concerns Toronto. The poems, like the city, lack specificity, and the poets, whose names Jones usually drops like hats, are only rendered as "some."

Some write their poems in streetcars,
or libraries,
and some in university classrooms;
and some think of their poems
on downtown streets
and write them at their desks later,
or before expensive beers at the Harbourfront;
and others still write their poems
before windows in lonely apartments,
before lonely cups of coffee;
and then there are those
who leave the beds of lovers
and write their poems late into the night.

But none of these poems is ever good.

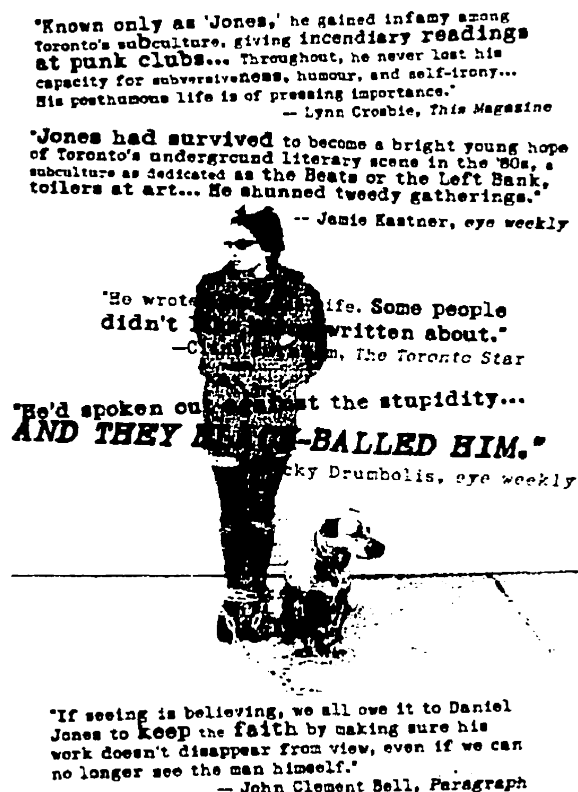
The good poems are written
early in the morning at a table

before a glass of brandy
or before a glass of draught beer.
But the bars in Toronto do not open
before eleven in the morning
and some not before the noon hour:
our best poets are lined up in the streets
in the early morning,
and when they try to write their poems,
the rock band is often too loud.

In a characteristic Jones manoeuvre, the poem both sets itself apart from the poems that are not good, and includes itself among them because there is no way for it to have been written successfully. He has described himself "before lonely cups of coffee" in other poems, and the inclusive line-up can be whittled down to one: Jones. His failures are passed off onto others. Thus the poem is both an attack on others, and a defence of himself. He implies that it is the city itself, in its manifestation as the Puritan and mercantile Toronto the Good, that is at fault. Poets are condemned to university classrooms and expensive beer if they wish to participate on the terms of the Toronto scene.

Jones defiantly does not. His mocking appearance at the Rivoli launch in "The Poet's Wife" is a manifestation of his punk attitude, which renders the city an establishment demanding destruction, through language acts that either banalise the potency of street names and the names of famous writers, or that enact sexual or scatological profanations on the literary conception of the city. 1978 juxtaposes hardcore punk and Toronto, effectively erasing the genteel city as imagined by Morley Callaghan and Robertson Davies. In "This Summer in Rosedale," the poet beats up Callaghan in Rosedale after the older writer's limousine almost runs him over; the violation is one of both a canonical poet, and his hallowed literary and class ground. Yet the poet is aware that such an act, even imagined, guarantees his own entry into literary history even as he attacks. " 'If you can punch that

drunken suicide / Hemingway, you can punch me,' I slurred," is the poet's challenge for literary supremacy to the older writer (1985, 66). Even the alienating prose of 1978 cannot hide its awareness that *épater le bourgeoisie* is a classic route to canonisation of its author as Angry Young Man. This is reinforced by Connolly's frontispiece to 1978, which gives a sound-bite biography of its author, concentrating on his posthumous establishment as an anti-establishment hero. Its punk-inspired typeface and layout gives it an affinity with 'zines and flyers, separating it from the rest of the book, and separating this book from others.



Frontispiece to Daniel Jones, 1978: a novel.

Jones "gained infamy among Toronto's subculture" by stepping outside the literary boundaries, both on the page and in the city (Crosbie), yet his very existence gave credence to "Toronto's underground literary scene [...], a subculture as dedicated as the Beats or the Left Bank" (Kastner). Crosbie and Kastner struggle with the problem of canonising a writer

who rejected all forms of canonicity in favour of "subversiveness, humour and self-irony" (Crosbie). Burnham's comment reveals that Jones was, in a sense, canonising himself, bringing himself to the forefront by causing controversy. It is his engagement with the actual that causes this. "Some people didn't like being written about" has a suggestive undertone of menace, picked up by the dramatic capitalisation and font size increase of "AND THEY BLACK-BALLED HIM" (Burnham; Drumbolis). The precisely retro punk layout of the frontispiece is a warning and incitement to readers, bringing the punk ethic into print as Jones had brought it to live performance.

His poem "Rock and Roll," which describes one of his punk performances, prefaces several poems about the Queen Street Mental Health Centre (1985, 40-41; 44-53). The punk club and the mental institution, both described from the inside, are placeless, transcending or overwhelming the city outside. This lack of co-ordinates conveys the lack of identity common to all the institutions in Jones' work; the university and the mental hospital are equally bland and lost, like their denizens. It is only when he comes to talk about bars and restaurants that Toronto begins to emerge as a specific sensual map. 1978 anchors the punk scene in the clubs of Queen Street and the LCBOs of the city. The People One Knows locates itself, as one of the stories is entitled, "In Various Restaurants" (1994, 51-66). Yet the restaurants are not dissimilar from the failed political protest in "Palestine," and the non-event Viletones gig in 1978, which descends into a riot and Kid describes as " 'Best thing ever happened in Toronto' " (1994, 27-35; 1998, 54). In a scathing epigrammatic summary of the ills of the city, Jones writes, "Toronto is like that. I find a place I like to eat and then it closes" (1994, 65). The city is constant in its inconstancy, and the speed of change deprives it of a clear identity. Significantly, it is a restaurant called "Viva" (life/live!) that has closed.

Jones identifies himself with this transience, because it is "all that [he] know[s] of Toronto. All that [he] can understand, all that [he] can grasp onto." Toronto is a city for "drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes," ephemeral and consumable (1994, 65). His stories become a series of Glenn Gould-like variations on Toronto, both because of and despite the city's dislocation, and its dislocating effect on the poet. The People One Knows is constructed on a ring structure whereby the book begins and ends with the poet's return from a Lowryesque sojourn in Mexico. His return to the city begins the spiral of destruction recorded in the book, yet Toronto is also the space in which he writes the stories that provide a sense of order to his experiences of losing himself to that chaos. The city remains central, despite its lack of co-ordinates. It is "all [he] can grasp."

In his essay "Jones," Steven Heighton grasps at the essence of a writer whom he met only once. The essay is part-memoir, part-eulogy, a negotiation with literary history on the behalf of both author and subject. Heighton, in a taxi, passes Jones at the intersection of Bloor and Brunswick, and draws a parallel between his last view of Jones, and the final paragraph of The People One Knows, where Jones is standing under Assa's window on Major Street at the end of "A Torn Ligament" (156). Heighton quotes this passage, in which no location is mentioned, as an epigraph to the chapter, and it seems as if the moment he sees at Bloor and Brunswick is Jones caught in the gesture he will document (or has documented) in "A Torn Ligament." Heighton writes that "Daniel kept gazing upward with an oblivious, bereft expression, as if recognizing the face, the silhouette, of an ex-friend or old lover framed in a high window across the way" (114). He inserts himself as witness into the moment in which Jones "felt like something made of flesh and bone and skin, like something human" (1994, 156; quoted Heighton 113). Thus, "the northwest corner of Bloor

and Brunswick" is invested with the psychogeographical numinous by Heighton, who reads the incident he witnesses back into Jones' story, and forward into Jones' suicide, of which at that moment he is – of course – oblivious (113). The double meaning of the essay's final sentence, with Heighton looking back out of the taxi "trying for a last glimpse" seals the sense of the snowy intersection as objective correlative of Jones' death (116). Heighton describes him as remaining at the crosswalk "like a greying monument," as if he were a statue erected to himself and already fading (114).

This sense of Jones' disappearance from the landscape, against which Bell warns on the frontispiece to 1978, appears to stem from Jones' own work, in which both writer and city are on the verge of disappearing. The first story in The People One Knows, "Richard's Last Flight," which Heighton published in Quarry, begins and ends with Jones and his friend Richard driving "north, away from Toronto" into snowy emptiness (1994, 11). " 'This whole city is going to pot,' " he remarks in "The Summer 1986 Bocci Season," which is in fact a non-season, despite the fact that bocci is " 'as integral a part of Toronto as the shoe on the statue of Timothy Eaton [...] more important that the race track or the CNE.' " Like so many other integral elements of Toronto, the bocci season is a failure, an integral emptiness. Jones continues his explanation of bocci's importance by stating that he " 'always write[s] his best poems after watching bocci games' " (1988, 18). Like the problem with licensing hours, the city's failure leads to the poet's. The story reads like a parody of Noman and Kali's trip to the Sunnyside tennis courts, yet the wonder with which the lake brings fragments of the past and future to the shore in MacEwen's story is entirely absent here (MacEwen 1985, 81). Each of Jones' works is a progressive erasure of the city that forms its subject matter. "No way to know for sure how much that decade cf paring down took out of Daniel," elegises

Heighton, referring to Jones' prose style (116). Yet he could equally be referring to the external landscape Jones was paring down, until in 1978 the litany of streets acts as neither map nor reference point, but as a vortex of drug-fuelled destruction. In erasing the city to the point where it could be invented, Jones was erasing himself.

Yet he must have found one bar that opened before eleven a.m., because Jack and Jill in Toronto, his chapbook collected in the brave never write poetry, contains one superb poem that fires the sexual and excremental verve of Baudelaire at the landmarks of Toronto, celebrating them while simultaneously celebrating the poet's power to overcome and redefine such markers of the mainstream city. The poem is a pastiche of Ginsberg, but the carnivalesque energy does not quite conceal the poet's self-deprecation. It is, however, an undeniably vivid piece of psychogeographical writing, not just re-envisioning the city's most famous landmark, but intuiting that landmark's symbolic potential and releasing it through his language act.

Things I Have Put into My Asshole

[...]
the intersection of Bathurst and Queen,
Honest Ed's Warehouse,
Hamilton Ontario,
and just today the CN Tower:

I came all over Bay Street,
as the world's highest disco
rotated upon my prostate.
YOU ARE FREE NOW TORONTONIANS!
It lies limp on the frozen surface
of Lake Ontario.
You can barely see the tungsten bulbs
spelling 'Eat a lobster'
through the film of K-Y Jelly.
GO FREE TORONTONIANS!
The small sacrifice
of a very large asshole (65).

Deliberately provocative, the poem creates an indelible scenario by building on the suggestion implicit in the phallic shape and dominance of the CN Tower. The assonance of "disco / rotated [...] prostate" is irresistible, making us complicit with the poet's arousal as we too enjoy the sacrilege. The poet sacrifices himself, asshole that he is, to deflate the Tower, obliterating its control of the skyline. Torontonians are now free, but they are also unmoored; as Noman discovers, the Tower is a reference point for those dislocated by the city. By collapsing the city's most notable landmark, Jones erases Toronto's identifiable skyline, and the assertion of his power is compromised by designating himself an asshole. Both Toronto and Jones are rendered detumescent, subverted, yet the reader's pleasure indicates the power of both the poem and the city-as-symbol.

By protesting the power and pleasure of being fucked-over by the city, Jones' satire acquires a political dimension. Punk, for all its incoherence, began as a working-class protest against the market-driven pleasantries and complacencies of popular culture. Lynn Crosbie describes this in "Geography (for Daniel Jones)," as "the fever of hatred that spikes as it turns inward / unsettling him" (146-7). The danger of all the bile spewed in 1978 is that it poisons not only the city but also the writer. Crosbie's elegy recognises this, and, in its title, identifies the city as fundamental to both "Love" and "Anger," as the poem's two sections are entitled. The first section moves within the "small parameters he drew for safety" on the beautiful conceit of Jones' street name: Grace (146). "To see him I would walk to Grace," Crosbie begins, the proper name becoming an abstract virtue by the poem's final stanzas, "approaching grace" (146, 147). As it loses its referent on the city map, grace abstracted "trace[s] the narrow / lines of the map" on the body, "divid[ing his] wrists into continents" (147). These marks, however, are "fault lines," threats of both destruction and error (147).

The city is necessary to ground the work/artist and prevent these fault lines from traversing, and destroying the body. The title poem of the brave never write poetry bears premonitory witness to this. The poet describes himself:

> alone in my room
> I am calling someone now, anyone. Someone give me
> the strength to be & not question being. Someone
> give me the strength to stay out of cafés &
> libraries. Someone [...]
> give me the strength not to write poetry
>
> But nothing. No one. The streets have not
> exploded. The streetcars pass.
> [...]
> It is springtime in Toronto. I am in love ([19]).

A sense of connection would obviate the need to write poetry, and the city's destruction would prevent the poet's own. Cafés and libraries, the placeless places of Jones' work, are all of the city that he can grasp, and they have no grasp on the city. The streets do not explode. But the poet does. Masturbatory, expostulatory, self-destructive, Daniel Jones disrupts Toronto, and in doing so, becomes an essential part of the geography he walked, drank and wrote so frequently, caught between love and anger, "approaching Grace."

Meeting Place: The Unfinished City

Or perhaps somewhere there is a transcendental map which, though it constantly shifts registers and locations, can act as a sort of compass for however brief a flash of time: the city's dream of itself?

Nigel Thrift and Steve Pile 'Preface' city a-z, xiii

Gwendolyn MacEwen was not wrong: the building of Toronto will be going up forever. The CN Tower, pointing towards the sky, lends its aspiration to Torontonian architects and writers. The literature of Toronto is nothing if not a record of aspiration: whether the dreams deferred of immigrants, the developing sexuality of queer culture and individuals, or the idea of the city's dream of/for itself which recurs in works as diverse as Delirium, Noman's Land, Fugitive Pieces, subject matter and Personal Effects. Toronto is developing an identity as a city developing an identity, one that resists completion, either by blueprints or galley proofs. For this reason, it would be spurious to pretend to draw a conclusion to this thesis. Even as I write this, there is a pile of new books unread on my shelf: Sarah Dearing's Courage My Love, set in Kensington Market, Elizabeth Ruth's Ten Good Seconds of Silence, which combines a child's and a lesbian perspective on 1970s Toronto, and Didier Kabagema's award-winning Toronto, je t'aime. There are perspectives on the city barely touched on herein: the East Asian and East Indian immigration experience, the Native Canadian perspective, the work of Morley Callaghan, Hugh Hood, Margaret Atwood, Al Purdy and others, the current explosion of anti-globalisation literature grounded in specific Torontonian politics, and so on. Like the novelists of the here and now, any critical writers attempting to define a contemporary moment or movement will always be falling behind the vanguard even as they appear to capture them.

Toronto's ability to generate new, and more importantly different, literature(s), however, is the signal point of this thesis. The city's own capacity for architectural, social and

ethnic change is now potentially its defining quality, a further sign of its ability to change, transformed from Toronto the Good to a city where anything is possible. This quality emerges in the work of contemporary writers who have moved away from, or parodied, the genteel Rosedale settings of the work of Callaghan and Davies, and set about both creating a Torontonian literary canon as grounds for critical debate – rather than Toronto novels being compared to those about, say, New York – and, in some cases, shunning literary circles altogether, taking literature into ever more alternative and marginal spaces. Yet, as in the downtown core, there is also a sense of convergence. Writers as different as Nalo Hopkinson and B.W. Powe are drawn to the same narrative space, both in geographical terms of Riverdale, the Lakeshore and the CN Tower, and in genre terms, working around science fiction centred on the presence or absence of electrical power in Toronto. Communities both literary and social are drawn into alliances by the city's form, finding in the intersection a key model for literary juxtapositions and narrative conjunctions. The meeting of feminism, queer politics and racial equality in the work of Dionne Brand is a crucial example of intersection, drawing its locus as it does from the multivalent intersection of Vaughan and St. Clair. This is the heart of psychogeography: the intuitive excavation of points of convergence in the city, and in the works of literature mapped onto it.

Thrift and Pile's ideation of a map which, like the city it represents, "constantly shifts registers and locations," is the perfect model for a critical examination of a city's literature, especially a city such as Toronto which identifies itself through and as a state of flux. Any formulation of Torontology would have to encompass the multiple, simultaneous ontologies argued into being by Torontonian writers. In some senses, the city's literary canon works like the municipal building policy whereby the developers of tall buildings have to buy allocations

of airspace from the shorter, older surrounding buildings. Jones' incorporation of the CN Tower, and Crosbie's rewriting of Scream, are two divergent examples of buying literary airspace. In each case, the writer employs specific co-ordinates locating their work – its inspiration, conception and narration – in Toronto, and simultaneously pushes towards the literary margins, refusing and rewriting canonical models of living in, and writing, the city. Ondaatje and Michaels disorient the reader who expects poetry and prose to be distinct; Clarke and Brand bring Caribbean patois from the street onto the page. Christakos merges the city's ethnic and sexual landmarks through an exploration of an unusual pregnancy, while Lee uses the figure of the child both to enliven poetry by bringing into it the contemporary city, and to reflect on the politics of the city's complicity in contemporaneity. Humphreys and Chambers bear witness to the alternative lifestyles and narratives enclosed even within historical Toronto. MacEwen, Cooper and Hopkinson work within an alternative genre, science fiction, but use the city's literary and social history to subvert genre boundaries.

The CN Tower, which is both an idiosyncratic subversion of the city's skyline, and a literary and personal reference, points the way. It defines Toronto internationally, and provides a visual co-ordinate for Torontonians. The city's literature faces a similar challenge: it has to continue to be part of the developing city, offering a location from which to observe the city below, but also as an orientation device for those on the streets, even as it comes to have international valence, whereby the modes of literary production seek to maintain a recognisable and saleable vision of the city. The literary city's dream of itself, "both chaos and the order it will become," can clearly be seen in the literature of Toronto, and the influence of writers such as Ondaatje is felt not only here but internationally. The formative influence of Torontonian literature is its ability to hold contradictions in

productive tension, to create intersections between geography and history that generate persuasive narratives not only from the visible and official, but from the interstices, and to make use of both of the city's lack of European-style history, and its current abounding mythologies and identity politics. Following Johnson's conception of the city poem, Toronto writers suggest the availability of other forms, locations and possible narratives, and imply the significance of recording these potential options. As psychogeographers, these writers recognise the impossibility of creating a total map. By stating the fragmentariness of their own contribution, they open the possibility for a collaborative "transcendental map," a collective dream always in process. Streets are forever being reclaimed each time they are (re)named in a piece of writing, extending them to the reader as space free for imagination. The geography of the city, like the tangle of streetcar lines at Queen and Roncesvalles, constantly presents readers, writers and critics, with a creative confusion of alternatives. To choose, not between them, but to include all of them, is the essence of Torontology.

EXTEND THE FREE SPACES IN THIS CITY

RECLAIM THE STREETS

Reclaim the Streets street party flyposter, Toronto August 2001.

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