

**T. S. Eliot is an artist who is highly interested in the experience and knowledge unique to his time, and devoted to its associated self-consciousness as well as a new kind of (anti-)representationalism of language. At a time when urban history is already beginning to make its mark, at a time when identities are to be achieved, negotiated, challenged rather than be bestowed or inherited, at a time when constructing an identity is running parallel to the civilizing process, it is to urban culture that people like Eliot turn.**

# **Rhapsody on a City of Dreadful Night**

## **The Flâneur and Urban Spectacle**

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## I. Introduction

Eliot always lives in the city by choice, and looks for the rare and frightening beauty in the desert of Metropolis as a focus for the immense range and variety of urban experience (Mayer 70; Gordon 43-9). Critics such as John T. Mayer claim that the Eliot who admires James Thomson, Charles Baudelaire, Jules Laforgue, Arthur Rimbaud is the Eliot who redirects the English distrust of and indifference to the city and who writes of a city of the dreadful night, a life in slummy streets bereft of dignity.<sup>1</sup> Most of the critics tend to agree that Eliot knows the city more at its worst than its best, focusing on a determinist view of the relations between capitalist materialism and urban space. Indeed, to read Eliot in terms of sensational realism or quasi-factual journalism, there appears a series of dark imagery together with a dramatic excess of “abysses,” “mean streets,” “low-life deeps”—so as to give rise to a predictable pattern, a journalistic or fictional account of the urban wasteland that features the underworld of the city with its poverty and toil, vice and crime.<sup>2</sup> However, such criticism seems to overlook the indeterminate nature of urban life experience, characterized by “a volatile juxtapositioning of uniformity and difference,” and “a fragile massing of mosaic pluralisms and temporarily grasped consensus.”<sup>3</sup> Arguably, the essence of Eliot’s urban representation lies in his sensibility in linking the risks and opportunities, the closure and openness, the uniformity and heterogeneity; arguably, the ferocity and liveliness in urban experience, the potential tension between the city as a site of freedom and agency and that of imprisonment and control, the inherent nature of interlacing indeterminacy and multi-faced uncontainability in Eliot’s urban representation has not received adequate critical attention. The important poems in Eliot’s first volume, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, such as “Portrait of a Lady,” “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” and especially “Rhapsody on a Windy Night,” are already sophisticated examples. Characteristic of this urban experience and illustrating Eliot’s urban poetics of rhapsodic textualism, “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” can be read as a travelogue of a way of being in the city,

***The whole poem unfolds against the chronotope that stands on the boundary between reality and fantastic invention, the chronotope permeated with grotesque, phantasmagoric realism.***

a new perspective on urban life, a paradoxical form of flânerie carried on by a wandering flâneur that rests on the boundary of exclusion and transgression, constraint and excess, temporal narrative and spatial analysis.

It follows that Eliot’s City is a bifurcated city of extremes of wealth and poverty, of cosmopolitanism and localism, of reality and fantasy that give rise to a disparate range of texts and heterogeneous practices in such urban topography. And there appears a spectator/flâneur

strolling across the divided space of the metropolis, be it Boston, Paris, or London, to render possible a literary construct of the city. For Eliot the city is both scene and subject, and in his poetry the city becomes part of his vision, characteristic of a kind of realism that stands on the boundary between reality and fantastic phantasmagoria, which perception Eliot learnt from Baudelaire and Laforgue at the very

beginning of his career as a writer, and which he later noted as “the possibility of fusion between the sordidly realistic and the phantasmagoric” and “the possibility of the juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact and the fantastic” (“What Dante Means to Me,” 1950, *TCTC* 126). For Eliot the flâneur, the city is the essential locale of contemporary experience: it is the urban sprawl of materiality, a vast artifact pregnant with sordid, quotidian facts of life, a labyrinthine urban topography characteristic of violent dislocations through which he journeys in quest of its bitter charm of multiplicity. For Eliot the poet, this is the new poetry of the modern metropolis, in which there is a fantastic combination of heterogeneous and incompatible elements of reality that leads to a building up of a transgressive space that “dislocates established frontier and forces apparent opposites together” (qt. Wilson 1995/2004: 80).

It has been pointed out that T.S. Eliot once projected a series of city poems under the title of “An Agony in the Garret.” It is a major group of poems that Eliot composed mainly in Paris and completed when he returned to America. As a group these poems are characterized by “the internalized quest of a sensitive observer [who] walks the streets in search of meaning” (Mayer 69-70).<sup>4</sup> As a group they are dense with the textures, decors, voices, glances of not so much of a pioneer explorer

who is either concerned with his own ego-identity or with the plight of his subjects, as an individual *flânerie* and a social process of inhabiting and appropriating urban space. Among them, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" distinctively represents a "psychogeography" of a solitary walker wandering through city streets from street lamp to street lamp and from hour to hour in the hours past midnight. It is conventionally common enough to read "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" as a Bergsonian poem, a poem written in 1911 when Eliot was just back at Harvard, when the experiences in Paris and the influences of Henri Bergson were presumably still strong enough to inform the poem. It is also unsurprising to read "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" in the light of French Symbolism. It is similarly predictable to read the poem as an alternative discourse to the Romantic grotesque: there is a parodic stylization of Romanticism and a voice of mocking it, refracted throughout the poem, and the fantastic journey of this deep night is aimed at unmasking and subverting the night of Romanticism.<sup>5</sup> However, much more complicated and less adequately appreciated, is the idea of the *flâneur* realized in the poem as the spectator and narrator of modern/postmodern life, moving through space and people to discover "alternative geographies," to open up a triple dialogic of time, space, and social being as well as the mapping of a "seen" chronology of the labyrinthine journey from the Romantic through Modernity to Postmodernity. I will argue that Eliot's *flâneur*/narrator, a nocturnal wanderer drifting from one hour to the next, abandons himself to the impression, to the urban spectatorship of the moment, which in turn provides a kind of anonymity, and experiences multiple oppositions: natural and unnatural; purposive and non-purposive; public and private; open and enclosing; solitary and crowded; familiar and fantastic. Eliot's "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" can be read as a "psychogeography" of the *flâneur*—a visual mapping of an unrouted travelogue of the city, characteristic of "the *dérive*," "detournement," and "the spectacle."

## II. The *Dérive* and the Rhapsody of a Dreadful Night

As the title suggests, the whole poem is a true "rhapsody"—a fantastic journey through the city between midnight and four o'clock in the morning, and a fantastic discourse between the first-person narrator and a street lamp. Being a fantastic journey, privileged with inventive freedom, it destroys the integrity of a normal represented life, and places the narrator/*flâneur* as a "mediating consciousness between the familiar and the unfamiliar" (Hollington 81). The defamiliarisation of the everyday creates a day/night, orientation/dislocation, nature/civilization polarized dialectic. One is the day world of precision and logic, the other is the night world filled with carnivalesque mysteries and contradictions,

leaping over all laws of life and reason. The process signals right from the very beginning an attempt to upset the familiar modalities of time, to shake up the normal cartographies of space.

The whole poem unfolds against the chronotope that stands on the boundary between reality and fantastic invention, the chronotope permeated with grotesque, phantasmagoric realism.<sup>6</sup> This is the "rhapsody" on a windy night, a title that in music suggests a composition of improvisational irregularity and diversity as well as free-form open experience (Mayer 80; Smith 24). Eliot's rhapsody here concerns a windy night on a street "held in a lunar synthesis," and the narrator/*flâneur* sees and walks, drifting around and drawn by the thick and thin of the terrain. The time of the poem is between midnight and four o'clock in the morning, when the lunar spell dissolves "the floors of memory," when the ordinary mental process, usual life course, and conventional hierarchical order is disrupted and suspended. The space of the poem is the city streets "held in lunar synthesis;" it is a grotesque scene composed of the door (opening "like a grin" [CPP 24] or opening onto the stairway [CPP 26]), gutters, shutters, corridors and a stairway, which are points of threshold, spaces adjacent to boundaries of the interior and the exterior. And in fact the narrator/*flâneur* on this windy night is suspended between the street as a landscape and living room, experiencing exterior and interior space on the street, and everything is leaping over comfortably habitable, stable space, and shuffling the normal sequence of biological life and time flow. Such a labyrinthine route of street reading of the sights of the urban sprawl renders possible a fresh vision, a decoding of the demonic or alchemic in everyday life. And in fact the narrator/*flâneur* is experiencing "downward mobility," attendant on the principles of "the *dérive*," "detournement," and "the spectacle" (Jenks 37).

Here alone in a metropolis, where objects seen and objects remembered slide into each other, Eliot's *flâneur* reflects and enacts approximately the practice of the "dérive," through which a kind of "psychogeography" is achieved. In terms of Debord, the "dérive," literally "drifting," is "a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances":

The *dérive* entails playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psycho-geographical effects; which completely distinguish it from the classical notions of the journey and the stroll. ... from the *dérive* point of view cities have a psycho-geographical relief, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes which strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones. (*Situationist International Anthology* 50)

As distinct from passive, inactive drifting, the “*dérive*” requires from the explorer of the city “a response to inducement, albeit unplanned and unstructured,” so much so that “psychogeographies” are realized by the walker’s “‘seeing’ and being drawn into events, situations and images by an abandonment to wholly unanticipated attraction” (Jenks 37).

Here, in Eliot’s “Rhapsody,” the nocturnal journey—on a windy night on a street “held in a lunar synthesis,” the narrator is returning to his lodgings—is filled with an endless phantasmagoric juxtaposition of fact and fantasy, which results in abrupt outpourings of dissolution/association/synthesis, disorientation/mapping/re-mapping. Linear time becomes a dream-web where past occurrences are yoked together with what happens today, where everything is present but without logical or organic connection or development. Thus the walker sees a whore and remembers seemingly unrelated trivia, sees a cat and remembers a young child and an old crab. A phantasmal floating of images, a grand twisted vision is thus created. Twisted images of present and past have drifted together: crooked eye, crooked pin, crooked tear in the woman’s dress, twisted branch and broken rusty spring (CPP 24). Then, propagated by the twisted are the automatic: cat reaching for butter that is rancid, child for a toy not his or scarcely desired, crab for a dry stick (CPP 25). The moon, which is the archetype of nature and romance, is twisted into the street prostitute, with feeble eye and smallpox-cracked face (CPP 25). It is another twisted vision of the universe that holds nothing but matter, a universe where every entity within the poem is objectified and exteriorized. Then, it is automatic habits and memories that take the walker back to his room, to his daily routines of the toothbrush on the wall and the shoes at the door. A crowd of twisted and automatic things finally drift together and converge on him leading to quotidian routine and the wait for the last twist of the knife (CPP 26).

Having started with a twisting of the temporal order, the night peregrination entails the mapping of an unrouted route, a mapping that projects the stages of a journey in terms of a temporal narrative, a mapping that suggests the orientation of space in time/history but ambivalently renders a sense of “placelessness” at the same time (as it were, not knowing where one is going or why one is going there) (Connor 227-8). It realizes a psychogeography, a mental map that highlights spatial intentionality and characteristics of the social life-stories concerned, a mental map that projects an investigation of the exclusions and invitations that the city seems to present (Jenks 37). Here held in “rhapsodic *dérive*,” Eliot’s city of the dreadful night seems to be pregnant with outpourings of unbreakable solitude, demimondaine sterility, and the spiritless continuum of the sign of stony rubbish, so as to uncover ambiguous responses towards

modern/postmodern existential desolation, materialistic aridity, and cultural chaos.

### III. *Detournement and the Twisting Counterpoint in “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”*

In its form, though it follows a temporal narrative sequence, “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” is essentially governed by its attempt to deconstruct the rigidly historical narrative, to subvert the temporal flow of language, so as to make room for the possible insights of an interpretive human geography, to render possible a triple dialogic among history, geography, and social being. The hard-edged mechanical sequence of hour after hour, street lamp after lamp is bent upon the principle of the twisting counterpoint, dissolved and held by a phantasmagoric synthesis of *avante-garde* “*detournement*.” As a matter of fact, “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” exemplifies a new mode of artistic visualization which results from a grotesque yet realistic collective of whatever is compatible or contradictory. That is, almost everything in this poem is countered by and juxtaposed with its double; there is nothing in the poem that could justifiably relax within itself, rest in its own self-enclosed context; everything is brought out of its own environment and enters into a zone of familiar contact to collide and dialogize with everything else. At the very core of the poem is an attempt to deconstruct/recompose the rigidly linear textual unfolding so as to “create more critically revealing ways of looking at the combination of time and space, history and geography, period and region, sequence and simultaneity” (Soja 2).

Let us examine the mode of compositional counterpoint that Eliot practices in “Rhapsody on a Windy Night.”

There are two structuring mechanisms in this poem. The clock time indicates the vertical passage of the temporal; the lamp-posts are the indicators of a horizontal succession of the spatial. However, the *chronotope* or “time-space” involved—the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships as well as the constant competition for domination between time and space—is much more complicated.<sup>7</sup> Just as temporal narrative here shapes and organizes the narrator/*flâneur*’s understanding and uses of the space, space in turn determines, re-defines, or subverts temporal narrative.

As has been widely discussed in the light of Bergsonian theories, there are two kinds of time in the poem: one is clock time, the other is called “lived time” or “duration.” The former is time relative in the mathematical sense and the latter relative in the human sense. Accordingly, there are also two kinds of space in “Rhapsody on a Windy Night”: one is the logically ordered empirical world, symbolized by the regularly spaced street lamps, the other is the non-logical world of

the stream of consciousness, the flow of reminiscence. In accordance with such a double-levelled chronotope, there appears the split between the non-carnival and carnival worlds. The day world, the waking life of man is one of precision and logic, representing the normal, ordinary and non-carnival world. The night world is itself outside the norms and order of ordinary life, in which the first-person narrator and the "muttering" street lamp come together to make up a rhapsody of carnival collective. Normal human behaviour and logic, rigid historical narrative have been subverted: there appears in the poem a human consciousness, which is normally regarded as an active participant in the human world, reduced to being a merely passive instrument, an inert recorder of perception and memory, directed completely by the "muttering" and "sputtering" street lamp.

The double-pattern that has been disclosed so far shall be regarded as an indicator of Eliot's alternative poetics which results in a poem whose "irreducible ambiguities compose a maze of language without exit," bearing comparison with some postmodernist texts.<sup>8</sup> The stylistic peculiarities and complexities that Eliot achieves in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" are based upon a double interwoven practice of simultaneous coexistence and intertextual counterpoint. Just as the linguistic complexities of the poem resist any mono-semantic finalizing definition,<sup>9</sup> the quintessence of intertextual counterpoint or "detournement" in Eliot's poetics expressed in the poem cannot be fully appreciated without a prior understanding of its dialogic opposition to and polemic with the Romantic conventions. "Detournement" is short for "detournement of preexisting aesthetic elements" and the "integration of present or past artistic production into a superior construction of a milieu" (*Situationist International Anthology* 45):

Detournement, the re-use of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble, has been a constantly present tendency of the contemporary avant-garde both before and since the establishment of the SI. The two fundamental laws of detournements are the loss of importance of each detoured autonomous element ... and at the same time the organization of another meaningful ensemble that confers on each element its new scope and effect. (*Situationist International Anthology* 55)<sup>10</sup>

It follows that "detournement" enables the flâneur to re-cycle, re-position, or re-employ the existing elements of art works into a new synthesis; so much so that it renders possible, firstly, a negation or the decomposition of previous artistic expression, and secondly, a re-assembly of elements to generate a wholly original image and new meaning structure for the parts (Jenks 38). Accordingly, attendant upon the law of "detournement" and acting

like an entire system of crooked mirrors, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" twists and negates the Romantic in various directions and to various degrees. It represents Eliot's most grotesque deflation, deconstruction, and recomposition of Romanticism.

In "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" Eliot calls up elements of Romantic poetry to function contrapuntally as the ghostly double of his own writing (or vice versa, his poem as the ghostly, deconstructive, carnivalistic double of the Romantic). The poem includes an excessive clustering of Romantic images—such as memory variously presented, a lamp as a source of light that produces speech because of the wind, a madman, a child, the moon, flowers, and so on. By employing "a lunar synthesis" of Romantic conventions, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" successfully puts its Romantic model into a new context in which these conventions are parodied and argued with, and in which they are to be seen in antithesis rather than in agreement.

As far as the style is concerned, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" bears clear relations to the Romantic lyric—"the descriptive-meditative crisis lyric" (Riquelme 47). Yet, the title already indicates Eliot's challenge to the Romantic viewpoint and poetics. It parodies both a favourite Romantic situation—a windy night which is generally associated with poetic inspiration—and the most dominant Romantic form, an ode, literary equivalent to a musical form. In the world of Romantic poetry, all that belongs to ordinary, commonplace life becomes meaningless, hostile and dubious. Therefore, the Romantics seek solution in a unified consciousness which will transform "the cold inanimate world" into "a warm world" united with the life of man, and which will convert "matter-of-fact" into "highest poetry" (Abrams 68). So the mind is worshipped as "a fountain," "a source of light," "a musical voice like that of a wind-harp"—that is, a mind which is able to revitalize the material and mechanical universe (Abrams 67). Here Eliot's "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" sticks closely to this philosophy and poetics, by subverting its improvisationalism into another kind of mechanism.

Instead of transferring the consciousness of the narrator to the things he observes, in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" the narrator/walker is objectified as an inanimate puppet-like figure who is jerked involuntarily by the street lamp; he is depersonalized as a passive, inert recorder who relies on the light cast upon him to release the associated memories. Ironically, it is not only the human narrator who loses the initiative of his personal memory, but also the moon, the key representative of the Romantic repertoire, that loses its viability as poetic inspiration. Conspicuously, the light in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" does not come from the "divine source" nor from the human poetic imagination, but from the street lamp, a materialistic, earthly invention of human

beings (Riquelme 54). The street lamp, under the spell of prosopopoeia (buffeted and inspired by the wind at midnight), becomes humanized and produces speech. The poem is a rhapsody about how the street lamp prompts the human consciousness to compose its rhapsodic music. Accordingly, memory in "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" has nothing to do with spiritual insight or poetic inspiration; instead, it is directed by the street lamp, and depersonalized by the stimulus-response mechanism (Riquelme 55). The poem is constructed as oscillating between what the street lamps says and what the consciousness, the memory, provides. The immediate objects of perception are mingled with memories from the past, and there appears a view of the city as a system of discontinuities lacking organic unity. As critics have pointed out, many of the details—such as the deserted, vaguely sinister streets after midnight, twisted branch and broken rusty spring, a soliciting prostitute, a scavenging cat, a city moon disfigured, the gathering torpor and entrapment in city interiors (the working-class bar)—evoke an urban atmosphere of unredeemed sterility and desolation, as well as the grim realities of city life in all its unromantic squalor and monotony (Smith 23, 84; Jain 67; Mayer 82). Yet, it can be argued that the nocturnal journey across the urban space is characterized by the sheer volume and speed of sensational impressions which lead to the accumulated shocks and distractions of the overstimulated metropolitan individual as Georg Simmel describes. What has been revealed here is a sense of "flat materialism" in the transitory and the contingent, in the immediacy of languages of tactile perception, in the instantaneous reality of the modern street, composed of a space of fragmentation and a time "without memory."<sup>11</sup>

The Romantic lyric, or the descriptive-meditative lyric, substitutes the presentation of world that is instinct with the poet's feelings for a mere description of natural objects, or for a mere delineation of natural feelings.<sup>12</sup> And the habitual reading of passion, life and physiognomy into landscape is characteristic of Romantic poetry (Abrams 55). Or, as Mayer points out in discussing the traditional differences between the French view of their capital and the English view of the city, although Blake portrayed the plight of the poor masses, especially the children, it was Wordsworth who set the dominant poetic attitude toward the city by escaping its pain through the "restorative powers of Nature" (Mayer 302n). Instead of the Romantic visionary Nature with restorative powers, here in Eliot's urban "rhapsody" there are no such Romantic escapisms, correctives to the urban whorl of fractured wreckages. Instead, there is a city moon disfigured, leading its lunar traveler into a rhapsody of sordid mechanism and sensual realism rather than one of spiritual enlightenment; there is a "madman [shaking] a dead geranium" as apparently a parody of the Romantic

images of poet as madman and poet contemplating nature; there is the child, the Romantic archetype of ideal inner humanity, to be reduced to and identified with the instinctive animal (the crab, the cat) through the shared mode of mechanisms of automatic behaviour; there are polished driftwood from nature and the machine-made rusted spring in a factory yard yoked together to decode "the alliance of nature and machine" that, as critics are used to complaining, twists the soul out of people in the hellish night of city life (Mayer 82).

Yet, I would like to argue that in the chronological/anachronistic movement from the Romantic forms and gadgets to the wrap-around reality of contemporary metropolitan life Eliot's *flâneur* and his *flânerie* permits both the criticism and the unforeseen possibilities of the urban experience. All these phantasmal floating images of the distorted and the worthless reveal an overload of urban stimuli, and decode the fundamentally constructed and fabricated character of the world. Nature here is experienced in urban everyday life as an altogether vague cultural or social referent. Nature is absorbed and rearticulated in and through the signs, languages, and contexts of urban culture: there is a particular metro-network inhabited by modern nomads as well as the fleeting form of commodities, representing not so much urban poverty, inner-city decay, industrial decline, as the residual, the abandoned, or the obsolete from an earlier epoch. A sense of the "otherness" of nature is stimulated and regurgitated by a series of metropolitan projections of simulacrum.<sup>13</sup> The city is surrounded by nature which is assumed to represent the site of origin and being, the source of resistance to the instrumental bodies of technology and subsequent alienation. Paradoxically, nature here in Eliot's "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" appears simultaneously as the authentic site of being and as a cultural and social construct. It is by means of "detournement" that Eliot's narrator/*flâneur* has to become receptive to the sign of urban stimuli, to proceed to a critical appreciation of the falsehood, fabrication and replication at the heart of modernity's/postmodernity's volatile network of meaning, a "simulation culture" in the consumer society (Jenks 36).

#### IV. The Spectacle and the Return of Everyday Practices

At the end of his labyrinthine journey, Eliot's narrator/*flâneur* initiates a rhetoric of walking not only to twist the visionary night of Romantics into a grotesque pantomime/masquerade of contemporary urban setting, but also to render possible a subtle shift of the sights of the city, from the spectacle of people and their place (space) which emphasizes the "visibility," the "seen-ness," and the "see-worthiness," to the return of everyday practices, a poetics of routine conduct that resists the spectacle (de Certeau 48-9). Here, Eliot's *flâneur* is not

so much an urban spectator/voyeur who gazes around like a consumer or a tourist in the lives of the collective other, but as an interactor, a constitutor of the crowd. His glance, therefore, involves the capacity to effect a re-balance between “distantiation” and “instantiation,” between “abandonment” and “immersion” (Featherstone 274-5). Finally, it results in the manoeuvre of the spectacle and its “counter-hegemonic espionage” (Jenks 39); a diatribe between the concept of the city and urban practices; a striking contrast between the “bird’s-eye” view of the planned and readable city and the “mole’s-eye” view of the city life practitioner, whose opaque and blind mobility realizes “another spatiality,” a system of closure which is self-referential and foreign to the “geographical” or “geometrical” space of visual or theoretical construction (de Certeau 46).<sup>14</sup>

The nocturnal walking of Eliot’s *flâneur* alone in a city is composed of a series of tours and detours that first inaugurate the spectacle of people and their space. Since the first stanza, Eliot’s “Rhapsody” has been strangely yet coherently structured by repetition through the alternation of what the animating street lamp says with what the depersonalizing (or objectifying) “totalizing eye” provides (de Certeau 45).<sup>15</sup> The journey into night is directed by the street lamp that commands the eye to see, to read vignettes of a modern urban text. Under the spell of a “rhapsody” of “lunar synthesis,” the streets become a theatre of phantasmagoria to see and to be seen, a “magic lantern” space<sup>16</sup> with nonrational access to a continuous exchange between externality and consciousness, time and space, localization and displacement. The lamp itself is one of the greatest human inventions, an emblem of urban civilization, and the lighting of the lamp represents human endeavour to civilize nature, to hold back the dark, to transform nature’s night into a human evening (Mayer 87). Therefore, directed by the “muttering” street lamp and the light cast on its flow, the “twisted” eye registers and the memory releases a crowd of “twisted” things, so much so that a sense of the (quasi-) “panorama-city” created by the voyeuristic “totalizing eye” is thus established. However, ironically and paradoxically, what has been seen and revealed is nothing but a jumble of disordered memories and devitalized matter: the eye of the prostitute which twists like a crooked pin evokes memories of “a twisted branch upon the beach” and “a crowd of twisted things,” which lead on to the “last twist of the knife” at the end of the poem (CPP 24-6). Arguably, it dramatizes the wrestling between the walker and the voyeur: the everyday has a surface to outline itself against the visible, to escape the voyeur’s totalizing and finalizing eye (de Certeau 46).

It follows that the dispersion of memory is a sort of displacement rather than localization. Fragments of the memorable come out of a past to indicate “the

presences of diverse absences,” to signify “the invisible identities of the visible” (de Certeau 58). Here, in Eliot’s “Rhapsody,” memory allows a certain play within a system of defined places which is “authorized” or “organized” by the demanding street lamp—memory might even invent or generate alternative and autonomous spaces. Manju Jain remains alone among very few critics to notice the possible connection among Eliot, Baudelaire, and Walter Benjamin on the eye of the prostitute, the eye of the city dweller that is “overburdened with protective functions” on its guard against the totalizing eye (Jain 73). Therefore, what has been spread out before the eye is nothing but a representation, an optical artifact, a facsimile: the empty eye of the child with nothing behind it to inform its seeing, the prying eye in the street trying to “peer through lighted shutters” (CPP 25)—it is the seemingly panoramic vision unable to reach beyond empirical fact, to see a reality beyond appearances (Mayer 82). What the perception offers is nothing but a spectacle of the empirical world of automatic mechanism and instinctive behavior: the automatic meaningless grasping after what is worthless—cat reaching for rancid butter, voyeur reaching for others’ lives, child for a toy scarcely desired, crab for a dry stick, the whore for a customer. What this results in is the spectacle of visual simulacrum and facsimile of people and their place—a grand twisted vision of the universe that holds nothing but matter, a grand twisted vision of the city masses as automatons that are driven by mechanical behaviorism.

However, if in the discourse between the speaking street lamp and the narrator/ *flâneur* the city serves as a totalizing landmark for socioeconomic stratification, urban practices (or the return of everyday routine conduct) permit the re-emergence of contradictory movements that counterbalance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power. It is arrestingly to be realized by the “last twist” manoeuvred by the narrator/*flâneur*, who is back to his lodging, to his daily routines of the toothbrush on the wall and the shoes at the door (CPP 24-6). In a particularly curious contribution to the poem’s odd quality, the one-line coda—“The last twist of the knife”—twists, complicates the mutual, uncanny contextualizing of the personified and the depersonalized, the spectacle and the everyday practice. As Riquelme rightly points out, the final phrase has a floating quality in both its grammatical and semantic indeterminacy.<sup>17</sup> Traditionally, critics tend to conclude that it is automatic habits and memories (under the command of the speaking street lamp) that take the narrator back to his room, to his quotidian routine and wait for the last twist of the knife; the relief of returning home to sleep amounts only to preparing for more of the same; the escape is cut off; all the images of twisted things converge finally on the last twist, as fragmented perceptions and recollections of unredeemed sterility,



automatism, and horror. Only a few critics, such as John T. Mayer and John Paul Riquelme, have tried to rescue the last twist of the last line. In terms of Mayer, this “last twist” of the poem “subtly subverts the engulfing automation,” because the narrator’s “very awareness” sets him apart from other automatic creatures that remain unaware of the mechanical behaviorism by which they are gripped (Mayer 84). Or in terms of Riquelme, who follows his own inspiring and challenging dialectics on Eliot’s quarrel with Romantic conventions in the poem “Rhapsody,” the last line suggests a linked contrariety of personification and “defacement,” a doubling involving the writing process, which once appeared unified is now arrestingly “doubled and revealed to be constitutively differential” (Riquelme 58-9).

I would like to argue that the finale of Eliot’s “Rhapsody,” especially the last line, is strikingly characteristic of subversive doubling and incompatible contrariety, inherent in the walking rhetorics of the narrator/flâneur. Indeed, the long poem of the walking of the narrator/flâneur manipulates the spatial organization initially authorized by the speaking street lamp—no matter how panoptic it may be—by creating shadows and ambiguities within it rather than conformity to it. Firstly, to walk is to lack a place, it is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper place, therefore, a sense of “ambiguous disposition/displacement” (phrases borrowed from de Certeau) is established to subvert, to divert the panoptic ministration from the speaking street lamp. Secondly and correspondingly, the walk is neither foreign to the spatial organization represented by the street lamp (obviously, the walk is taking place within the street lamp’s spreading ring) nor in conformity with it (the passing-by is makeshift so that it does not receive any identity from the spatial organization represented by the street lamp). Thirdly, the relationships between the direction of a walk and the meaning of its destination highlight two sorts of apparently contrary movements, one extrovert/centrifugal (to walk is to go outside), the other introvert/centripetal (a mobility under the stability of the signifier), both a near and a far, a *here* and a *there*—a linked contrariety of displacement/localization/appropriation of space realized by an “I” (de Certeau 54-5). Walking, therefore, tries out, transgresses, and affirms the trajectories it enunciates. In the spaces lit hallucinatingly by a speaking street lamp, proper names (numbered door, key at hand, open bed, toothbrush on the wall, shoes at the door, *CPP* 26) associated with home-coming carve out the poetics of everyday practice to make sense, to justify the movements. What this results in is the final twist of the linked contrariety of the spectacle and the resisting politics of routine conduct. In a further twist that continually disfigures the totalizing eye, the last line transforms, defaces the life of people and their place into a mask of everyday practice and

muteness which resists the spectacle.<sup>18</sup>

Here it is necessary to present further aspects of the flâneur’s visual activity with regard to visual convention and fixity of the spectacle. The spectacle as a concept shares a deep kinship with the previous ideas of “the *dérive*,” “*detournement*,” yet, it further emphasizes the representationality, visibility, and spectacularization of consumer society:

The world of consumption is in reality the world of the mutual spectacularization of everyone, the world of everyone’s separation, estrangement and nonparticipation. . . . [The] spectacle is the dominant mode through which people relate to each other. It is only through the spectacle that people acquire a (falsified) knowledge of certain general aspects of social life, from scientific or technological achievements to prevailing types of conduct and orchestrated meetings of international statesmen. . . . It answers perfectly the needs of a reified and alienated culture: the spectacle-spectator is in itself a staunch bearer of the capitalist order.

(*Situationist International Anthology* 307-8)

As critics have pointed out, social life is “degraded rather than honoured” by its transformation into the realm of the spectacle, because it is “the realist reduction at the core of materialist epistemologies” (Jenks 39). In a strong sense, de Certeau is arguing a poetics of routine conduct through which the inhabitants of the city manoeuvre to upset the totalizing representation of the spectacle, and thus remain as the subversive, indefinite, collective other outside the reach of panoptic power:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live “down below,” below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk—an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers . . . whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban “text” they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other’s arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognized poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of



trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other. (45-6)

As distinct from the detached, panoptic "bird-eye" view of the city of the planned and readable, the opaque and blind mobility of the city walker moving through the streets and passageways renders possible the "mole-eye" view from below, to realize the potential subversion of the collective other.

Therefore, Eliot's flâneur on the street in his walking rhetorics embodies and becomes aware of the equivocalness of spatial practices that undo the readable surfaces of private and public spaces, that create shadows and ambiguity within the well-planned-and-lighted city, and that insert multitudinous/peripheral references into the cultural system of space. Eliot's walker/flâneur, strolling along the seemingly infinite "reaches of the street" (*CPP* 24), witnesses the urban spectacle of the surfaces of things and scraps of human behaviour, as well as the return of everyday practices which resists interpretation and spectacularization. Drawing its form and theme from the city street, and despite its sinister undertones, "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" displays one of Eliot's serious attempts to explore the possible decent everyday self hidden beneath the spectacle of consumer society.

## V. Conclusion

The city as the environment for modern man begins to take shape in the nineteenth century. However, as Edward W. Soja points out, the nineteenth century is obsessed with time and history, obsessed with its themes of development and suspension, of crisis and cycle, obsessed with the ever-accumulating past and its dead great men (10). Yet, as Foucault argues, the twentieth century is "the epoch of space," an epoch of "simultaneity" and "juxtaposition" (22). Indeed, new human aggregates generate new sensations, problems, attitudes, and energies; meanwhile, they expose older perceptions, values, conventions, and limitations. Amidst all the literary and critical minds preoccupied with the emergence of the modern city, Baudelaire is considered to be the first to have given effective expressions to the new experiences of space, time, and sociality. Thanks to Walter Benjamin's reading of Baudelaire, there has been an ambiguity in, or a critical controversy over, the historical specificity of the figure of the flâneur. On the one hand, the flâneur is seen as a "bygone figure," living and dying on the streets of nineteenth-century Paris. On the other hand, the flâneur is used as a figure to illuminate "issues of city life irrespective of time and place" (Tester 13-6). Thanks also to Benjamin, we find the flâneur and his visual activity of street reading usually characterized or defined as follows: an urbane

boulevardier walks at will, freely and seemingly without purpose, yet simultaneously with an inquisitive wonder and an infinite capacity to absorb the activities of the collective Other, the crowd; seeing the city as "now landscape, now a room," now as open, now as enclosing, now familiar, now phantasmagoric, the flâneur combines the casual eye of the stroller with the purposeful gaze of the detective (1983: 35-66; Rignall 114). That is, the essence of the flâneur, as identified by most scholars, is his stance as the surveyor of the urban scene, the spectator of urban life who takes all into his leisurely gaze, while he himself remains invisible or indistinguishable from the crowd.<sup>19</sup> Being a creature of the past, how far does the flâneur retain contemporary significance? In terms of the neo-Marxist version of the post-Baudelairean flâneur, he is reduced to someone who is not serious, who is socially superfluous, a retreatist from great historical conflicts, or an addict who seeks an immersion in the sensations of the city, who seeks to "bathe in the crowd," to become lost in feelings, to succumb to the pull of random desires and the pleasures of scopophilia (Weinstein and Weinstein 1993, Jay 1993). Mike Featherstone, in a more sympathetic way, addresses the flâneur as the cultural specialist, the artist of life, or the social scientist or detective in terms of the aestheticization of everyday life as well as the characteristic of reflexivity (Featherstone 1992, 1998).<sup>20</sup> The flâneur in the contemporary city experiences the swings between the emotional immersion and sensational excitement of the street-level stroller as well as the decontrol of the social detective/cultural specialist, who carefully records and analyses the "random harvest" of impressions from the streets (Featherstone 1998: 913).

For Eliot and his flâneur, it is not a problem of engagement and retreat, but is an art of different forms of engagement. It is not to seek to escape from a commitment as the flâneur is generally criticized; the flâneur does not make public places into playgrounds, taking advantage of his class and gender which permit him to stroll safely and to be entertained by the human comedy or tragedy; instead, the flâneur and the flânerie will become keys to understanding the social and cultural milieu. For Eliot, the metropolis is not so much a labyrinth marked by fragmentation, insubstantiality, and unfulfillment, as a network of meaning, as a space of social construct that bespeaks an adventure, a disguise and transformation, and a home. His flâneur, grounded in everyday life, the stuff of mortality, is an analytic form, a narrative device, a walking methodologist who seeks knowledge of his milieu, his history, geography, and society. Eliot's urban narrative is not to exploit the sensational realism inherent in journalistic exploration of the socially generated evils within the low-life abyss of extreme deprivation and violence. Eliot's urban narrative is not to rest on the "blasé attitude" and visual

activity diagnosed by Georg Simmel—that the urban environment is perceived as a series of shocks; city life is distinguished by an overload of simulation, which results in constant nervous tension; the over-stimulated, stressed metropolitans take refuge in withdrawal into a blasé mentality of imposed individuation, anonymity, and estrangement (Benjamin 1983: 37-8; Simmel 1959, 1997). Instead, Eliot's urban narrative aims to quicken a critical discourse on the falsehood, fabrication, and replication in a society of spectacle, to encourage further debates on the forms of subjectivity and modes of aesthetic representation, on the identity and difference in the new text of the city—the city as a human artifact and a literary construct to be read, written, and interpreted.

### Endnotes

1. For example, as John T. Mayer points out, although Victorian novelists found rich material in London squalor, and Baudelaire saw hell in contemporary Paris, English poets until Eliot mainly turned away from the city. It was not until 1922 when *The Waste Land* was published that Georgian poetry, as well as its benign, pretty countryside, was finally displaced. See T.S. Eliot's *Silent Voices* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 302. After a thorough study of the history of nineteenth-century English poetry, G. Robert Stange concludes in his "The Frightened Poets" that the poets take little joy in the city, and that this is arguably resulted from a mix of Romantic gestures, aristocratic pastoralism, and middle-class prudery. See H.J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, eds, *The Victorian City: Images and Realities* (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), Volume II, p. 493. When Eliot looked back with a sense of special gratitude to poets whose works had deeply impressed him during his formative years, he paid handsome tribute to Baudelaire and Thomson. That it is French poets who let Eliot make the necessary leap to write of an urban poetry is a matter of critical consensus, critics such as Mayer, however, might question the Victorian poet James Thomson's possible contribution, arguing that Thomson's Dreadful City seems "too melodramatic to be influential" (Mayer 302). Other critics, such as Robert Crawford, highly celebrate Thomson's city as London functioning as a wider symbol of humanity in its horrific aspect. See Robert Crawford, "James Thomson and T.S. Eliot," *Victorian Poetry*, Spring 1985, pp. 23-41; Robert Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T.S. Eliot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 36-52.

2. Since the mid-Victorian period, thanks to literary outpourings, journalistic exposés, philanthropic surveys as well as reformist writings, London has been conceptualized and represented as the imperial capital of "Two Nations," characterized by colonial alterity, dark continents, and outcast Londons; it is a domestic society composed of multiple constructs and in danger of fracture. For example, see Peter Keating, ed., *Into Unknown England, 1866-1913: Selections from the Social Explorers* (Glasgow: William Collins and Sons, 1976); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in*

*Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). In her thorough urban study in relation to the issue of gender, Judith Walkowitz observes that the "fact and fantasy" of urban exploration has long been a telling feature of nineteenth-century bourgeois male subjectivity, and a powerful streak of voyeurism has marked a range of disparate activities, be they new commercial activities, new journalistic practices, social reform and policy when the "dreadfully delightful city" became a contested terrain of patriarchal ideology. See Judith Walkowitz, "Urban Spectatorship," in Chris Jenks, ed., *Urban Culture: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), Volume II: 87-9.

3. See Chris Jenks, "General Introduction," in Chris Jenks, ed., *Urban Culture: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), Volume I: 1.

4. See Mayer, "The City as Via Dolorosa" in T.S. Eliot's *Silent Voices*, pp. 67-96. In terms of Mayer, the city poem series includes: "First Caprice in North Cambridge" (1909), "Second Caprice in North Cambridge" (1909), "Fourth Caprice in Montparnasse" (1910), "[The smoke that gathers blue and sinks]" (1911), "Interlude: In a Bar" (1911), "[Inside the Gloom]" (1911), "[He said: This universe is very clear]" (1911), "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" (1911), "Interlude in London" (1911), "First Prelude in Roxbury" (1910), "Second Prelude in Roxbury" (1910), "Third Prelude in Roxbury: Morgendämmerung" (1911), "[Fourth Prelude]: Abenddämmerung" (likely 1911), "The Little Passion" (likely 1911). Mayer regards this series of fourteen poems as a travesty of the traditional meditations on the fourteen stages in Christ Passions that coincide with the fourteen stopping places along the Via Dolorosa (the route in Jerusalem which Christ is believed to have followed, from the judgement-hall of Pilate, where he received the sentence of death, to Mount Calvary, the site of the Crucifixion). All these early unpublished poems are available in Christopher Ricks ed., *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996).

5. For example, see John Paul Riquelme, *Harmony of Dissonances: T.S. Eliot, Romanticism, and Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 44-60. Riquelme has developed a thorough study of "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" and its allusions to Romantic poetry. Robert Langbaum is another critic who suggests that "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" read like a parody of Wordsworth. See *The Mysteries of Identity: A Theme in Modern Literature* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 106. I shall draw on Riquelme's compelling examination in the course of my argument.

6. See Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist trans., M. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84-5 for the term "chronotope." According to Bakhtin, the chronotope in literature not only has "an intrinsic generic significance," but also functions as "a formally constitutive category" which determines the image of man in literature. Bakhtin follows Kant's position in regarding space and time as indispensable forms of any cognition, beginning with

elementary perceptions and representations, but differs from Kant in taking them not as “transcendental” but as forms of the most immediate reality, forms which play an essential role in artistic cognition or visualization. See *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 85, footnote 2. The “time-space distancing/compression” manifest in Eliot’s poem is interestingly congenial with Bakhtin’s definition of chronotope as well as with modernist/postmodernist debates on time and space. For example, see Anthony Giddens, *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (London: Macmillan, 1981); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880-1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1983); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

7. The city as the environment for modern man begins to take shape in the nineteenth century. However, as Edward W. Soja points out in his *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, the nineteenth century is obsessed with time and history, obsessed with its themes of development and suspension, of crisis and cycle, obsessed with the ever-accumulating past and its dead great men (Soja 10). Temporal narrative, therefore, represents the modern domination of space by time. Yet, as Foucault argues, the twentieth century is “the epoch of space,” an epoch of “simultaneity” and “juxtaposition” (“Of Other Spaces” 22). Accordingly, much of such postmodernist concerns have been focused upon restoring space to the social analysis of urban studies. Instead of opposition and separation, time and space here in Eliot’s “Rhapsody on a Windy Night” coexist, competing with and supplementing each other.

8. See Riquelme, *Harmony of Dissonances*, p. 46 and p. 312n. Here, Riquelme has in mind Marjorie Perloff’s commentary on texts by Ashbery and Beckett in “Contemporary/Postmodern: the ‘New’ Poetry?” See “Contemporary / Postmodern: The ‘New’ Poetry?” in Harry T. Garvin (ed.), *Romanticism, Modernism, Postmodernism* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 1980), pp. 171-180.

9. For example, the third independent clause of the first strophe may be read as (1) through the spaces of the dark, midnight shakes the memory, or as (2) through the spaces of the dark midnight, the memory shakes, or even as (3) every street lamp beats like a drum and shakes the memory. See Riquelme, *Harmony of Dissonances*, pp. 48-9 for further analysis.

10. Chris Jenks, who is more supportive of the flâneur as “a vision bred of modernity” but equally adaptive to “the fragmentations of late-modernity,” further identifies in the Situationist International a practice of “détournement” as an essential characteristic of the flâneur (Jenks 32-3, 38). He, therefore, regards the flâneur as an analytic form, a narrative device, an attitude towards knowledge and its social context; the flâneur, though grounded in everyday life, provides a degree of reflexivity, a double metaphoric and methodological role for the analysis of urban culture. See Jenks, “Watching Your Step: the History and Practice of the Flâneur,” in Chris Jenks ed., *Urban Culture: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge,

2004), Volume II, pp. 30-2. Jenks further identifies a “seen” chronology of the flâneur’s labyrinthine journey from Baudelaire through Surrealism to the Situationist International (36-7). In terms of Ken Knabb, the translator and editor of *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), in 1957 a few European avant-garde groups came together to form the Situationist International. The SI has been devoted to an incisive and coherent critique of modern society and of its bureaucratic pseudo-opposition. Although the SI itself dissolved in 1972, situationist theses and tactics have remained influential worldwide (ix). Some preliminary definitions may be related. One is the concept of constructed situation, referring to “[a] moment of life concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambiance and a game of events.” The other is that of situationist, referring to the one “who engages in the construction of situation,” “[a] member of the Situationist International” (*Situationist International Anthology* 45).

11. Both the terms “flat materialism” and time “without memory” are terms borrowed from Siegfried Kracauer to serve my own purpose. See David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985).

12. See M.H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), pp. 47-69 for the section on “Romantic Analogues of Art and Mind.”

13. The concept of the simulacrum is associated with Jean Baudrillard. In terms of Baudrillard, we live in an age in which signs are no longer required to have any verifiable contact with the reality they represent. Baudrillard hence provides a handy and much-quoted synopsis of the four stages through which representation has historically evolved. First, the sign is the reflection of a basic reality; second, the sign masks and perverts a basic reality; third, the sign masks the absence of a basic reality; fourth, the sign bears no relation to any reality and is its own simulacrum. See Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Bleitchman, trans., *Simulations* (New York: Semiotexte, 1983), p. 10.

14. The terms “bird’s-eye” view and “mole’s-eye” view are borrowed from Mike Featherstone’s discussion on the physicality of the city. In terms of Featherstone, the city of the plan or map provides a “bird’s-eye” view of urban life in which the city is panoramic and readable, while the “mole’s-eye” view of the city favours the multitude of experiential pathways through the city. Featherstone uses de Certeau’s well-known article “Walking in the City” as an example of the mole’s-eye view from below of the city walkers who move through the alleys and passageways of the labyrinthine city, and who write the city without being able to read it (1998: 912).

15. According to de Certeau, the desire to see the city, to enjoy an “all-seeing power” has haunted human beings to continue to construct the fiction of the panorama-city that is a “‘theoretical’ (that is, visual) simulacrum ... whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices” (45).

16. See “After the sunsets and the dooryards and the

sprinkled streets/.../But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen" in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot* (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1978), p. 16.

17. According to Riquelme, the phrase is not tied to any specific tense or pronoun, and the agent and the object of the image of the knife being twisted remain indeterminate. Instead of sounding like a cliché carrying a trite meaning, the line offers certain possible interpretative options: (1) each instance of the speaking of the personified lamp may be considered as one in a series of twistings of the knife; (2) the relief of returning home to sleep amounts only to preparing for more of the same; (3) the last twist might be understood as referring to the conflation of the personified and the depersonalized in the final stanza, leading to a conclusion that throughout the poem the lamp and memory both twist the knife, though perhaps in different ways. In his thorough study of the tropic significance of *twist*, Riquelme suggests one more reading of the last twist in terms of etymology (the Indo-European root of the word) and argues that the last twist shall imply a doubling and a connection between antitheses. Please see Riquelme, *Harmony of Dissonances*, pp. 56-8.

18. In the course of my argument on the return of everyday practices in the finale of Eliot's "Rhapsody on a Windy Night," I am indebted greatly to Michel de Certeau's "Walking in the City" in Chris Jenks ed., *Urban Culture: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), Volume II, pp. 44-62, especially for the concepts of "walking rhetorics," "names and symbols," and "credible things and memorable things: habitability."

19. On the flâneur, see Wilson 1991 and 1995 reprinted in Jenks (Ed) 2004; Walkowitz 1992 reprinted in Jenks (Ed) 2004; Epstein-Nord 1995 reprinted in Jenks (Ed) 2004; Berman 1989; Benjamin 1983; Featherstone 1998; Tester (Ed) 1994. I have used "he" to address the flâneur here and throughout this paper. The question of the gender specificity of the flâneur is another issue for debate. See Wolff 1985, reprinted in Jenks (Ed) 2004; Pollock 1988; Buck-Morss 1986 reprinted in Jenks (Ed) 2004.

20. Featherstone suggests that the flâneur provides continuity between modernity and postmodernity in terms of the aestheticization of everyday life, which takes three forms. First, the movement of art towards life as in the work of the avant-gardes of the 1920s; second, the movement of life towards art as in the case of Baudelaire; third, the development of a consumer culture and simulation culture in which the flâneur becomes adaptive and receptive to the sign. In terms of Featherstone, similar to the nineteenth-century flâneur who combines the perspectives of "the stroller" seeking the aesthetic sensations and strangeness of the city places and crowds, and "the detective" searching for clues in the city which has become a vast labyrinth of information traces, the flâneur in the simulated data cities is able to adopt both modes (1998: 923).

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