Chapter 7

The City as Imperial Centre: Imagining London in Two Caribbean Novels

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I propose to examine, here, the representation of the urban as it occurs in the highly convention-bound creative discipline of novel writing. The central aim is to highlight the creative activity of imagining cities as potentially a problematic undertaking, occasionally at odds with the surroundings imagined, and inevitably involving the nonrepresentation or imaginative exclusion of aspects of an urban totality.[1]

The materials I have chosen for this task are Samuel Selvon's novel *The Lonely Londoners* and V. S. Naipaul's *The Mimic Men*. Following a brief summary of the two novels, I will attempt to isolate the imaginative context producing the portrait of the city, the city in this case being London. The main part of the chapter discusses some of the problems encountered in the literary mediation of urban settings. I will use my concluding remarks to engage the question of whether we should look to literary works to enhance our critical knowledge of urban environments.

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Samuel Selvon and V. S. Naipaul are arguably the most distinguished of the generation of Caribbean writers who rose to prominence during the 1950s. Selvon's 1956 work *The Lonely Londoners* has been called 'one of the seminal West Indian novels'. Its loosely structured episodic narrative relating the adventures of a group of Caribbean immigrants living in London broke new ground in being among the first to address the topic in fiction. The novel's linguistic inventiveness, especially its favouring of the syntax and vocabulary of Caribbean diction over the conventional narrative voice of the English novel, marked a watershed in the development of a distinctive Caribbean literary aesthetic and made it a classic work of cultural decolonisation. *The Mimic Men*, V. S. Naipaul's 1967 novel, is the autobiography of Ralph Singh, a former government minister of the fictional Caribbean state of Isabella who, manoeuvred out of political office, turns over the events of his life from a hotel room in the English Home Counties. *The Mimic Men* has been acclaimed by post-colonial literary critics for its documenting of the damaging impact of imperial structures on the psyche of the colonised subject. Detractors

criticise its unflattering portrait of Third World societies, attributing it to the novel's entrapment within the system it sets out to analyse.[2]

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I want to begin by describing the spatial idea monopolising the portrait of the city in the two novels. In *The Mimic Men* and *The Lonely Londoners* there is one term which seems to dominate and restrict the portrayal of London. This is the notion of the 'Motherland' or the 'imperial centre'.

The dominance of the 'Motherland' category in Selvon and Naipaul's texts results in a very specific construction of London. In these works the image of the city is inextricably associated with the 'mother country'. The city in their novels, is immediately identified with the nation, and the nation's imperial identity in particular (or exclusively). It is the place which the original Greek word embodies (metropolis = mother + city/state, i.e. *metro* + *polis*, *OED*). This view of London as an undifferentiated expression of the British nation as a whole (with the nation-state itself defined as merely the location or venue for the reproduction and enjoyment of imperial privilege) is not confined to the novels.

Use of the term 'metropolis' to describe a national territory as opposed to a large urban settlement coincides with distinctions peculiar to the geographical ordering of the imperial realm. In English, this usage dates back to at least the sixteenth century. The French variant 'la métropole' carries the same meaning. The national territory the word refers to is in each case the parent state of a colony.[3]

In addition, independent of the contingencies of language use, Britain does experience, over time, a veritable convergence of metropolitan and national space. Use of the term 'metropolis', undeniably, recurs as propaganda: the establishment of this and other links to the ancient empires of the past belongs to a larger rhetorical system functioning to dignify modern acts of territorial expansion and political and economic hegemony. On the other hand, the term is applied quite legitimately in the sense that from the late nineteenth century onwards little, if anything, remained of a Britain untouched and unenhanced by the profits of overseas conquest. The Marxist literary critic, Raymond Williams, in his study *The Country and the City* isolates this particular definition of the 'metropolis':

> In current descriptions of the world, the major industrial societies are often described as 'metropolitan'. At first glance this can be taken as a simple description of their internal development, in which the metropolitan cities have become dominant. But when we look at it more closely in its real historical development, we find that what is meant is an extension to the whole world of that division of functions which in the nineteenth century was a division of functions within a single state. The 'metropolitan' societies of Western Europe and North America are the 'advanced', 'developed', industrialised states; centres of economic, political and cultural power. In sharp contrast with them, though there are many intermediate stages, are other societies which are seen as 'underdeveloped': still mainly agricultural or 'under-industrialised'. The 'metropolitan' states, through a system of trade, but also through a complex of economic and political controls, draw food and, more critically, raw materials from these areas of supply, this effective hinterland, that is also the greater part of the earth's surface and that contains the great majority of its people. . . . Thus one of the last models of 'city and country' is the system we now know as imperialism.[4]

London, in this and other versions of the 'metropolis', designates moreover an ideal type. Any part of Britain may of course claim an imperial identity in the sense that it enjoys a material advantage or infrastructural dominance over its equivalent in the subordinate region. The distinction, however, is conveyed by some places better, or less ambiguously, than others. Indeed, the 'metropolis' is a more tangible proposition as a composite of the landscape – 'Englands of the Mind' to use Seamus Heaney's phrase[5] – elevated and separate from the inferior world of the periphery, comprising a similar condensation of topographic variety and inter-/intra-regional discontinuities. London, for example, as Britain's capital, expresses this comparative supremacy with relatively few qualifications. Other sites, besides London, also amplify the division.

Numerous examples from *The Mimic Men* and *The Lonely Londoners* register the assimilation of London to the features of the 'Motherland'. The conflation is achieved, for instance, with reference to a utopia/dystopia organisation. Images which exalt the city are evident in *The Lonely Londoners* in this extract concerning the character, Sir Galahad:

> He had a way, whenever he talking with the boys, he using the names of the places like they mean big romance, as if to say 'I was in Oxford Street' have more prestige than if he just say 'I was up the road'. And once he had a date with a frauline, and he make a big point of saying he was meeting she by Charing Cross, because just to say 'Charing Cross' have a lot of romance in it . . . Jesus Christ, when he say 'Charing Cross', when he realise that is he, Sir Galahad, who going there, near that place that everybody in the world know about (it even have the name in the dictionary) he feel like a new man. It didn't mater about the woman he going to meet, just to say he was going there made him feel big and important, and even if he was just going to coast a lime, to stand up and watch the white people, still, it would have been something. (pp. 83–4)[6]

The depiction of Piccadilly Circus in Selvon's novel registers a similar fetishised image, conferring on the 'big city' both the ideological attributes and the radial configuration of a centre:

> Always, from the first time he went there to see Eros and the lights, that circus have a magnet for him, that circus represent life, that circus is the beginning and ending of the world. . . . Galahad Esquire, in all this, standing there in the big city, in London. Oh lord. (p. 90)

Proof that *The Mimic Men* venerates London can be gleaned from the portrait the novel produces from the use of such synonyms as 'the great city' (pp. 19, 26, 27), 'the big city' (p. 45), 'the great city, centre of the world' (p. 18), 'the city of magical light' (pp. 229, 243) and 'a city of such a miraculous light' (p. 26).[7]

Stigmatising of the periphery, reinforcing this version of the imperial centre, is evident in both novels. Trinidad is scornfully described as '[t]his small place' based on 'small-time village life' in *The Lonely Londoners* (p. 94). Disordered (pp. 55, 118, 192, 206), obscure (pp. 118, 146), fraudulent (pp. 50, 118, 146), and barbarous (p. 118) are some of the many faults attached to Isabella in Naipaul's novel.

Formulations of the imperial centre dominating these literary accounts of London are also highlighted by the distinctive narrative preoccupations of each novel. *The Lonely Londoners*, for example, in presenting its principal subject of Britain's

post-war Caribbean settlers, constructs the city as a landmark of an inside/outside spatial order, that is to say, as a destination enclosed within the British Empire. The novel makes no attempt to connect settlement in Britain to the contemporary occurrence of Caribbean emigration to other parts of the world. There is one reference to a former girlfriend of one of the characters absconding to Venezuela from Jamaica (p. 67), but otherwise *The Lonely Londoners* suppresses any mention of the continuing flight of West Indians to the North American and South American mainland. Similarly, the chart defined by the immigrants' journey does not accommodate other movements of labour to Britain. Insofar as the novel avoids portraying the immigrants as guest workers recruited by the British Government, it does not invoke the supply lines of surplus labour supporting the British economy, which in the decade after the war encompassed the British West Indies, but also overlapped the imperial sphere to include labour intakes from Eire and Southern and Eastern Europe. Typically, as in the view asserted by the main character Moses, the map of Empire dominates the narrative setting, on the one hand, uniting the location of arrival and departure, and on the other prescribing the notion of 'abroad' and the circumstances in which Britain can be classed a foreign country: 'In fact, we is British subjects and he is only a foreigner, we have more right than any people from the damn continent to live and work in this country, and enjoy what this country have, because is we who bleed to make this country prosperous.' (p. 40)[8]

The effect of the dominance of this geographical convention is firstly the editorial exclusion or non-representation of aspects of the urban totality. The permanent equating of London with the 'Motherland' or the imperial state – in other words, the construction of a narrative setting defined or over-determined by the centre-margin metaphor – registers a continuum which is vertical, its particular items ranked in a hierarchy in which London and the imperial capital are absolutely identical to the extent that competing spatial languages which signify London as another kind of place are subordinated.

The failure of vision in these terms adopts the form of absent or missing spatial registers. Some of the geographical styles marginally placed by the 'London–Mother-country' continuum in these works might be listed as follows: the north–south of England divide invoking London in regional terms; the capital city system of political geography in which London signifies the national capital of England in relation to Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast – the capital cities of the other countries in the United Kingdom; the world economy's alignment of sites in which London as a supranational figure of trade exists only in relation to Tokyo, New York, Paris, Zurich and Bonn; the structure of concentric rings differentiating the city in terms of 'Central London', the 'inner city' and 'the outer London Boroughs'; the mosaic made up of the local cultures of North, East, West and South London; the historical geography delineating London from the provincial towns of the industrial revolution, the nineteenth-century garden cities, the mid-twentieth-century greenfield conurbation and the commuter towns of the mid-twentieth-century, and the contemporary hyperpolis (e.g. the autonomous, self-enclosed universe of the shopping city, the industrial estate, the theme park, the multi-complex entertainment village, and so on).[9] There are many other contexts distinguishing the city's other identities. The point to emphasise, however, is not the infinite range of urban discourses available for creative adaptation, but the scale of repression necessarily involved in

privileging a single geographical style. The concepts the novels employ to invoke the city – 'London', 'the mother country', 'the old Brit'n', 'the centre', 'the centre of the world' – insofar as they are interchangeable in these works register this diminution, in that linguistically a spatial order distinct from a geography of overseas territorial conquest is unattainable, but also to the extent that they make up a vocabulary whose words fail to delineate a multi-faceted view of place. The lack of a more varied account of London only partially describes the imaginative deficiency. In addition to the failure to accommodate and synthesise an inclusive account of city life, these literary portraits of the imperial centre contain other problems.

A second effect of London's assimilation to the features of the Motherland is the inability of the novels to register territorial borders. A third effect is the imaginative loss of the sense of the 'local', that is to say, the loss of the creative facility to conceive surroundings as unique and original. Landscape, regardless of where the narrative action occurs, all appears the same, that is to say, is alike, repetitive, ubiquitous. Instead of the perception of the local and locality, the narrative consciousness is unable to cohere a distinction between places, or register a sense of having moved when geographic boundaries are crossed.

The Mimic Men with its emphasis on dislocation and placelessness documents this loss of a certain spatial order, or of a symbolic geography suspended in a state of dismemberment:

> I thought that this absurd disorder, of placelessness, was part of youth and my general unease and that it would go as soon as I left Isabella. But certain emotions bridge the years. It was unease of just this sort which came to me when I began this book . . . the red brick houses became interchangeable with those others in our tropical street, of corrugated iron and fretted white gables, which I had also once hoped never to see again. Certain emotions bridge the years and link unlikely places. Sometimes by this linking the sense of place is destroyed, and we are ourselves alone: the young man, the boy, the child. The physical world, which we yet continue to prove, is then like a private fabrication we have already known (p. 154).

The mode of perception which categorised the colonial society of Isabella as derivative and unreal, an inferior copy of the real world of the metropole, similarly resists inscribing, first the metropole, and then the hotel from which Ralph Singh composes his memoirs, with any distinguishable individuality.

The Lonely Londoners also registers this blurring of geographic difference:

> Ah, in you I see myself, how I was when I was new to London. All them places is like nothing to me now. Is like when you back home and hear fellars talk about Times Square and Fifth Avenue, and Charing Cross and gay Paree. You say to yourself, 'Lord, them places must be sharp'. Then you get a chance and you see them for yourself and is like nothing (p. 85).

Here, creativity is trapped or preoccupied by the process of undermining the definition of landscape, so much so that although particular locales receive intense narrative attention – for instance, the topography of Isabella is vividly detailed – it is nonetheless very difficult to bridge the gap between the meaninglessness of place insisted on by the narrator and the meaningful expression of place in the text, that is between on the one hand the rejection of geography as a trick of ideology (colonial

or otherwise), and on the other the status that might be ascribed to an image of London still possible to assemble from a discourse analysis of the landmarks comprising the narrative setting: the attic room, the factory, the cinema, the bomb site, the pub, the registry office, the weather, and so on.

The problem, in this last sense, is deciding whether these signposts contradict or affirm a narrative commentary that is asserting the artificiality of the specifically local. Do these landmarks amount to a description of place – a grim, depressed capital, symbolising Britain's decline as an international power; or a shabby, seedy landscape subverting the illusion of a cultured civilisation which, despite claims to the contrary, is seen to suffer the same problems as the dysfunctional colony on the periphery? Or are these spatial motifs anti-representational/counter-discursive, expressions of the fictionality or the ultimate illusion of the idea of 'London', in the sense that while located within the city limits, the landmark itself is arbitrary, not inevitably synonymous with London, that is to say, a symptom of the city's lack of originality?

This inability to conceive London as a place different from other places is particularly acute in *The Lonely Londoners* with its depiction of a Caribbeanised London, indistinct from Port of Spain, or Kingston or Bridgetown. The novel derives its narrative idiom from cultural sources specific to the West Indies – the novel, for example, is narrated in a Caribbean linguistic register eschewing standard English, the narrative style is based on the calypso ballad, and the conventions of fête or carnival define the structure of the novel's set-piece scenes. As a consequence, the novel fails to attach a symbolic system to place that provides access to the local. The imported forms seemingly domesticate London, serving to mystify or exclude environmental features which exceed their descriptive capability. At the same time, this naturalising manoeuvre reproduces London in Caribbean terms. 'Selvon's characters', as one commentator notes, 'reconstruct the language of the lime and through imposing their language on the great city, they remake it in their own image'.[10] The domestication of the local and the diminishing of its specificity through this impressionistic technique is illustrated in these passages describing Tanty's excursions in Harrow Road:

> Well Tanty used to shop in this grocer every Saturday morning. It does be like a jam-session there when all the spade housewives does go to buy, and Tanty in the lead. They getting on just as if they in the market-place back home: 'Yes child, as I was telling you, she did lose the baby... half-pound saltfish please, the dry codfish... yes as I was telling you... and two pounds rice, please, and half-pound red beans, no, not that one, that one in the bag in the corner...' (p. 78).

> She used to get into big oldtalk with the attendants, paying no mind to people waiting in the queue. 'If I know Montego Bay!', she say. 'Why, I was born there, when I was a little girl I used to bathe in the sea where all those filmstars does go. If we does have a Winter there? Well no, but it does be cold sometimes in the evening. Not like this cold! Lord, I never thought in my old age I would land up in a country like this, where you can't see where you going and it so cold you have to light fire to keep warm! Why I come to London? Is a long story, child, it would take up too much time, and people standing in the queue waiting. But I mind my nephew from when he a little boy, and he there here in London, he have a work in a factory...' (p. 80).

A symbolic landscape dissimilar to the Caribbean is only recoverable in this sense to the extent that the narrative setting dominated by a Caribbean identity also constructs an exterior segment absent from the novel, formed from the symbolic surplus including the missing or excised signifiers of London's geographical difference, i.e. the local. The novel's imaginative organisation, therein, distinguishes with regard to the definition of place a fugitive or insular aesthetic: a way of seeing that is, perhaps, provisionally useful as an aid for self-location and orientation in new surroundings yet with prolonged and uninterrupted use suggesting a defensive and petrified rhetorical convention, that is to say a refuge from, or avoidance of other formal languages which represent the world differently. Both novels' mediation of London from an initiate's perspective – in other words, a portrayal from the viewpoint of a first-time encounter, and hence the domination of its codification by the narrow circumstances of the narrative event in which akin to virgin territory it is as it were discovered and named – should be mentioned here in addition to the techniques of Caribbeanisation as a further conceptual device employed in the erosion of geohistorical depth and detail.

The fourth and ultimate creative failure *The Lonely Londoners* and *The Mimic Men* distinguish in their representation of London is the inability to imaginatively access the world of the metropolis, and, especially, to register an informed understanding of the city's geography of economic, ideological, and political power. The outsider's perspective mediating the image of London in both novels (not to be confused with the penetrative vision of an excluded subject documenting mainstream society from the periphery), is here consistent with the stranger or alien's outlook, in the sense of a gaze denied admission and barred from inspecting the universe of the ruling executive. It is an untrained perspective, unfamiliar with and incapable of detecting the identity and location of institutions of power. London mirrors the lack of his tiny island, London, Ralph Singh decides – it is an absent centre, 'the greater disorder, the final emptiness':

> Here was the city, the world. I waited for the flowering to come to me. . . . Excitement! Its heart must have lain somewhere. But the god of the city was elusive. The tram was filled with individuals, each man returning to his own cell. The factories and warehouses, whose exterior lights decorated the river, were empty and fraudulent. I would play with famous names as I walked empty streets and stood on bridges. But the magic of names soon faded. Here was the river, here the bridge, there that famous building. But the god was veiled. My incantation of names remained unanswered. In the great city, so solid in its light, which gave colour even to unrendered concrete – to me as colourless as rotting wooden fences and new corrugated-iron roofs – in this solid city life was two-dimensional (pp. 18–19).

This perspective in failing to depart from the impoverished fringes of the host society to engage the metropolis is restricted to merely displacing the centre, as distinct from disproving its authority or effectively challenging its existence. Passing off the demimonde for the totality of the city, the rhetorical manoeuvre bars from its portrayal all but the landmarks of the immigrant's milieu. Metropolitan power is based on no more than a *myth* of superiority that is possible to abolish by *demythologising* the centre. The inability to conceive the social and political interior of London and in

particular to apprehend and represent the network of power that resides there seriously compromises the decolonising claims of both novels.

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The above assessment of literature's ability to imagine the city has engaged imaginative practice in the restricted sense of the task of synthesising the poetic and the critical. Works of fantasy were asked to present facts, to contribute and support the production of critical knowledge. Imaginative acts which did not satisfy the formula were presented as instances of imaginative failure, of a perceptual block, a creative deficit. Expecting fictional texts to discharge such duties might seem unrealistic. Literature is after all no better equipped to contribute new knowledge of the city than more conventional branches of learning. It teaches nothing about cities which cannot also be discovered through the research of non-literary materials. There are limits, in other words, to what urban studies can hope to learn from literary works.

It would also have to be conceded that the representation of place in literary works serves a variety of rhetorical ends unrelated to an accurate or truthful account of urban surroundings. Narrative setting, for example, is, finally, a technical device which together with other textual artefacts such as character, plot and theme is subordinate to the task of conveying a story. Structurally defined, these narrative elements are, moreover, not bound to any particular content. Thus, in Balzac's writing for instance, it is 'the city', according to one commentator that takes the role of the 'main character'.[11] Besides narrative production, the mediation of place in literary works can perform other creative duties too. For example, it has been observed that the description of Rouen in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* serves no material purpose apart from the ideological function of promoting the impression that the text depicts reality.[12] Instrumentalised in such ways, a spatio-linguistic register appears to have the potential to support literary effects without necessarily advancing a knowledge of urban settings.

Literary works nevertheless are engaged in producing knowledge about cities which invite evaluative responses. Technical criteria such as those referred to above may well determine the features chosen to comprise the portrayal of place. At the same time, processes of editorial selection seem also to define the identity of the setting. A referential value or information item is cohered for critical reception, notwithstanding the formal role it might also be asked to fulfil. It is evident, for example, that recognising the city in literature involves attaching to certain language items a lived and/or a learnt knowledge of urban space. The associating of words with an actual place or at least its topographical type is a convention of language use. As with all language artefacts the meanings invested in these words are decided by their immediate enunciative context as well as the cognitive value language users recall from one or more of their former investments in these words, whether in an occurrence of creative/non-creative writing or in a speech situation.

Context-led investments tend to be regulated and arbitrary. These are passive investments on the whole, influenced to a large extent by the text's own agency. Accounts of place with an identifiable textual function – i.e. those responsive to recuperation and integration in the overall work – are dependent on this type of preordained anticipated participation in the creation of meaning.

Exogenous investments, meanwhile, whereby individual words receive a semantic load, comprised of the meaning language users have known them to express, are much harder to predict and anticipate. This much more active investment, may potentially invite language items to display their full repertoire of referential values.

These two types of codifying practice may, inspite of their differences, produce identical meanings: versions of place privileged by the text's symbolic economy may well coincide with the reader's own notions of place. Literature operates, in such circumstances, to affirm and reinforce the expectations and beliefs of an 'implied', 'intended'/'ideal' reader. This said, textual endorsements should be weighed against their strategic quality. The authority conferred on particular readers may be no more than tactical – a device, for example, which enlists and licenses the knowledge of particular readers in order to entrust creative responsibilities to them elsewhere in the work, thus freeing texts to economise on the information content of narrative details, and exploit the productive tensions of ellipsis and allusion. Place, in this alternative sense, offers a resource for engaging an individual, or community of reading subjects potentially for the purposes of challenging their value systems at a later point in the work.

These two types of encoding activity are also potential occasions of dispute. Instances exist of disjunction between syntagma-derived and paradigm-derived inscriptions of place. In post-colonial literary studies, these instances of conflict furnish very fertile conditions for critical intervention. It is evident, for example, in Chinua Achebe's analysis of *Heart Of Darkness* that Achebe's personal image of the African Congo is vastly different from the setting militated by the formal arrangement of Conrad's novella. Unauthenticated by the text, this other knowledge of Central Africa informs a wide-ranging polemic on the reactionary bias of both the work and its author.[13] In this case it would seem that a personal knowledge of place ceases to fulfil a compositional role in the work, and instead supplies the evidence of the distortions of place the work's rhetorical organisation invites. It appears, in addition, that this sensitivity to the empirical flaws in the portrayal of place is a direct, albeit uninevitable, product of the symbolic regime which prevents or obstructs particular acts of creative investment.

If aesthetic disciplines lack unique insights to contribute to urban studies, these last remarks should indicate the important role the specialist knowledge of urban scholars and geographers can have in heightening critical thinking about, and experience of, cultural objects. Greater attentiveness to the existence of literary artifice is encouraged, simply by the depth and diversity of urban scholarship highlighting the constructed, arbitrary quality of the city's representation in literary works. Of course, an increased materialist emphasis needs to be combined with the practices of formalist critique. Understanding the depiction of urban space is only obscured by ignoring the wider textual ends the mediation of these representations can be found to serve: the current reductive applications of Foucauldian theories of 'representation' are clearly not sufficient, in this respect, for studying the variety of rhetorical work the city is employed to undertake in literary works. On the other hand, a materialist perspective must not be restricted by self-censorship. Social science has to avoid setting artificial limits on the application of its training and subject knowledge. A materialist input needlessly undermines its authority and diminishes its benefits, if disengaged from the reading project. Traditional empirical

research about cities needs to be deployed not merely in critical but also compositional labour – even when the latter is invested at the expense of cohering meaning. Raising the standard of debate concerning writing and the city starts with the totality of the reading experience, with all its contradictions, being reported.

NOTES

1. I use the term 'totality' to mean 'all of it', to refer, that is, to an intact entity made incomplete by an event of repression or exclusion. The word is also employed in the Marxist sense of a critical definition of 'reality', that is, to describe the product of an evaluative facility whose aspirations oppose analytic methods which perceive the various ways of knowing urban space as equally valid.
2. A selection of critical responses to the two novels can be found in Susheila Nasta, ed. *Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon* (Three Continents Press: Washington, 1988), Edward Baugh, ed. *Critics on Caribbean Literature: Readings in Literary Criticism* (George Allen and Unwin: London, Boston and Sydney, 1978), and Bill Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, (Routledge: London and New York, 1989, repr. 1993), pp. 88–91.
3. See *OED* and *Le grand Robert de la langue Française*.
4. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Hogarth Press: London, 1993), p. 279.
5. The phrase is the title of Heaney's 1976 lecture collected in Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968–1978* (Faber and Faber: London, 1984), pp. 150–69.
6. Page references are taken from Samuel Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Longman: Harlow, 12th imp., 1993).
7. Page references are taken from V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (Penguin Books: London, New York, Victoria, Toronto, Auckland, 1969).
8. A summary of research into the factors governing Caribbean emigration to Britain can be found in Margaret Byron, *Post-War Caribbean Migration to Britain: The Unfinished Cycle* (Avebury: Aldershot, Brookfield, Hong Kong, Sydney, Singapore, 1994), pp. 6–7. Examples of Britain's overseas recruitment programmes together with data on the ethnic breakdown of British immigration in this period is presented in Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871–1971* (Macmillan: Basingstoke and London, 1988), pp. 210–28.
9. The place 'Hyperpolis' in J. M. G. Le Clézio's 1973 novel *Les Géants* is a vast supermarket similar to a British Tesco Superstore. I am extending its original meaning to include other buildings, firstly, because its lexical properties seem already to refer to hyperreal Baudrillardian amusement parks, and secondly (and more importantly) because its association in Le Clézio with technocratic terror, regimented consumerism, and sublime social control offers a useful proper noun to label this insidious architectural aesthetic.
10. See Gordon Rohlehr's essay in Baugh, pp. 159–60.
11. See Italo Calvino, 'The city as protagonist in Balzac', *The Literature Machine: Essays*, tr. Patrick Creagh (Secker and Warburg: London, 1987), pp. 182–9.
12. See Roland Barthes, 'The reality effect' in Tzvetan Todorov, ed. *French Literary Theory Today* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1982), pp. 11–17, tr. R. Carter from Roland Barthes, 'L'effet de réel', *Communications*, 11, (1968), pp. 84–9.
13. Chinua Achebe, 'An image of Africa: racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*', *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays* (Doubleday: New York, 1989), pp. 1–20.