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James Barke

Politics, Cinema and Writing Scottish Urban Modernity

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Keir Elder

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Chapter 3 – City: The Fundamental Human Drama

Mr Barke is to be congratulated on the triumph of a technique that has enabled him to carry forward several stories and a host of characters until the moment for their fusion, and to keep the background of polychromatic Glasgow vividly present even while the incidents in the foreground are most exciting and critical.¹

Edward Scouller (1936)

A person does not end with the limits of his physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially.²

Georg Simmel (1903)

It will be argued in this chapter that the lived experience and conception of the modern city is of central relevance to Barke's most innovative novel. In the following chapter this argument will be developed to suggest that a cinematic consciousness also prevails in the author's approach. These two chapters, similarly to the chapters on politics and aesthetics, have a thematic overlap and cross-refer. Each of these elements, I contend, serves to inform *Major Operation*. Arguably, the rationale for Barke's use of experimental literary techniques is that radical form was the most apposite way of rendering the city's sensory assault and the elusiveness of linear coherence in that modern urban environment: the modern city remains particularly resistant to stable cognitive ordering by its inhabitants. It could safely be asserted that authentic literary representations of the city, and in particular the Scottish city, proved equally elusive. In a Scottish

society that was relatively new to large-scale urbanisation, the creation of stable, robust personal and public narratives became a problem of the age of modernity and required new forms of literature to articulate and reconcile them. While the country became a modern one increasingly dominated by its large centres of population, the literary culture tended to move far more sluggishly, lagging behind in croft, field and glen.

The Haptic City

In her essay ‘Haptic Space: Film and the Geography of Modernity’ Giuliana Bruno notes an ontological evolution in the city in the wake of modernity resulting in a distinct shift in the philosophy of space, imagination and perception. Bruno considers the way in which the very fabric of the lived environment became fundamentally re-ordered in the individual and collective consciousness. This ontological aspect of the modern metropolis is a process she describes as having ‘embodied a form of fluid, emotive geography [...] sensuously associative in connecting the local and topographic to the personal, it enhanced the passionate voyage of imagination.’³ Jean-Jacques Wunenburger provides a useful description of this process, one that can be referred to as the ‘urban imaginary’ or ‘mythopoetic’ city:

The city has secreted a rich and abundant imaginary, both literary and iconographic [...] Whatever the material, economic and functional motives may be that have presided at the founding of a city, in almost all of the great traditions of civilization urban logic has secreted configurations of spaces, volumes, plays of inside and outside, of high and low, which have no equivalent in the experience of rural civilization. Building grand palaces and temples for princes and gods, endowing the great institutional entities (law, army, etc.) with monuments, planning economic businesses and private dwellings around a registered system of plots of land arranged according to the cardinal points,

perforating spaces saturated by houses with huge empty squares, etc., constitute so many imaginative acts and unprecedented inventions that produce new objects to be perceived, conceptualized and imagined. Facades, streets, squares, monuments, towers, perspective views and panoramas, river banks, gardens and hills assembled into a single whole turn a city into an artificial contrivance that gives rise to emotions, visions, expectations and new dreams, compared with the environment of an agrarian world in which built artefacts are piecemeal, separate and on a human scale.⁴

In Wunenburger's essay we uncover an important facet of the argument for a changing consciousness precipitated by the modern metropolis. The 'artificial' city is built to a plan to fulfil expectations, invention and conceptions. Its 'imaginative acts,' intrinsic to a design beyond a 'human scale', elicit an emotional drama and 'new dreams.'

The development of a 'sensualist theory of the imagination' in the treatment of 'literary to visual and spatial configurations,' Bruno claims, has its roots in the journey literature of the eighteenth century and its outcome in the era of urban modernity. Over the span of this era, she identifies the growth of the haptic consciousness, which entails two core elements: the apprehension of space by reciprocal contact, 'turning contact into a communicative interface,' and a 'sensory interaction' in kinesthesia where our bodies can 'sense their own movement in space.'⁵ Thus the experience of the city is an active process in which the city imposes itself on the inhabitant, who equally becomes inscribed on (or part of) the urban milieu. There is also a heightened awareness of presence in the city, a self-consciousness of sorts where the sense of movement is continually thrown into relief by the scale and design of the built environment. Bruno regards this haptic consciousness as involving space being joined with desire: 'it effectively "located" affects in space and articulated desire as a spatial

practice.’ The visual interaction with various ‘-scapes’ created a ‘collective attraction for views’ which, informed by a more spatially developed visual consciousness, she claims, ‘proleptically led to the cinema.’⁶ The haptic consciousness created an interaction with the city environment that existed in a suggestible and contingent ‘cluster of multiple, diverse maps’ in the minds of its inhabitants: fixity of vision was freed and developed a highly mobile visual imagination. This is the fundamental principle of the subjective city increasingly informed by cinematic discourse that supplements lived experience. The city streets are formed like an early film actuality and the wider variety of potential views inform the perspective and sense of place.

The compulsion to try to organise the lived experience of the city cognitively is aided, but not entirely reconciled, by the cinema experience. James Donald cites what he feels is Michel de Certeau’s ‘all too tantalising and elliptical account of the psychic processes involved in our imaginal, metaphorical and poetic negotiation of urban space,’⁷ as offering a partial explanation as to why the lived experience of the city is allied to, but not seamlessly co-ordinated with, cinema. While not a failsafe remedy, cognitive ordering can be to some extent satisfied by adopting a cinematic consciousness abroad in the urban milieu; cinema tends to support the necessary psychological view that truncates, compresses and ideologically ‘codifies’ the city and flows from the assumptions and experiences of the citizenry. Offering more than merely a cognitive model, Edward Soja described how spatial terms explain the manner in which ‘relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparent innocent spatiality of social life,’ and the way in which ‘human geographies become filled with politics and ideology.’⁸ Every area carries at

least the potential of an ideological implication, howsoever inscribed, and therefore can be the location of a degree of political tension.

For a class-conscious writer like Barke, the city was a place that at every turn bristled with ideology, presented in a stark binary of class opposition. Supplementing the divisions that are enforced by the visible badges of class, the urban environment is also a place rife with perceived boundaries and psychological divisions overlaid onto the topography. Certain areas, like certain items of clothing, are invested with assumptions and expectations. The streets Barke mentions prominently in *Major Operation* – Gordon, Buchanan and Saint Vincent Street, situated between the Kelvingrove and George Square areas of Glasgow – are the centres of commerce and business. To wear the bowler hat here is to assert one's class credentials and make a statement about one's integral role in the high-powered economy of the city.

But bowler hats are not the only ideologically loaded items of apparel in the City. Barke's narrator takes the opportunity to level his sights at Americanised, 'jazz age' fashions:

Only the flappers of the Second City were clad against the heat. A foundation garment consisting of a mere handful of artificial silk, a suspender belt and, for the unfashionable ones with breasts bigger than the allotted duck's eggs, a brassiere: a thin dress barely reaching the knee, gossamer stockings, shoes, some jewellery and voilà: tout ensemble!⁹

Barke's curmudgeonly narrator castigates a fashion that has been culled directly from the American jazz scene, via the big screen, and grafted on to Scottish culture, though his criticism does seem to be underscored by a hint of erotically-charged approval. More convincingly, he rounds on the ideology that underpins the newly developing fashion industry taking its place in the hierarchical owner-

worker relations of the capitalist economy. The fashion industry, argues Barke's narrator, manufactures a constantly shifting desire for commodities that are only briefly in vogue, thereby ensuring the perpetuation and growth of the market. It may be worth clarifying here that Barke and the narrator of *Major Operation*, though maybe not always one and the same, usually reveal themselves (to use an appropriate metaphor) to be cut from a similar cloth. Of course, this critique of the fashion industry is equally a more general critique of the fundamental constant growth imperatives of capitalism.

The underpinning tenets of all relations of power seemed to derive from the visible divisions of class etched onto the city. All the more pronounced for their physical proximity, the psycho-geographic demarcations are observed in a commentary by Barke's authoritative narrator in *Major Operation*:

There is a fundamental human drama in a crowd. But crowds no more than individuals mix. The crowd in Sauchiehell Street was a middle-class crowd: the crowd in Argyle Street was a working-class crowd. In Dumbarton Road the crowd was more finely divided. On the north side paraded the better working-class: on the south side the slum dwellers. Between, ran two sets of tram lines. They might have been a barbed wire entanglement.¹⁰

For Barke's narrator, every crowd has a specific character – no crowd can be just a haphazard mix of the citizenry. Here there is no genuine obstacle in the urban environment at these locations that prevents a more heterogeneous mix of pedestrians. The tram lines themselves are embedded in the roadway and do not act as a physical barrier, but as a visual one they do serve to demarcate the psychological barrier more tangibly and reinforce the notion of a class-segregated city. Barke's use of the barbed-wire imagery emphasises the

adversarial nature of the divide, describing an ‘entanglement’ that corresponds with the complex and inextricable nature of class relations in the city’s fabric.

In this urban setting, these eternal strangers are, in David Clarke’s description, ‘immediately proximate in *physical* space yet distant in *social* space,’¹¹ [emphasis in original] with this segregation establishing a paradigm of ideal conditions for the capitalist city to flourish. Quoting Georg Simmel’s prescription to ensure capitalism’s necessary efficacy of monetary circulation, Clarke explains, that ‘the desirable party for financial transactions [...] is the person completely indifferent to us, engaged neither for nor against us.’¹² Estrangement is not simply an unfortunate by-product of the city but one of the prerequisite conditions that ensures effective commerce. The flourishing capitalist metropolis must, by evolution if not design, promote this estrangement, and estrangement between the classes is amply demonstrated by Barke in *Major Operation*. In his novel, very few areas seem to enjoy a neutral status, each area carrying a degree of class designation. Under normal circumstances, i.e. without protest marches flouting the capitalist-underpinned class demarcations and setting in motion events that conspire to land both Anderson and MacKelvie in hospital, the sense is that despite Anderson’s downward social trajectory, their paths would certainly not have crossed. When these ideal conditions are bucked in some small way by the happenstance of George Anderson’s cross-class meeting (and eventual comradeship) with MacKelvie, the transgression puts this microcosm of the system under pressure and ultimately has particularly dire consequences for Anderson. Having encountered MacKelvie as he led a march through the streets of the business district of the city, Anderson’s next encounter,

due to his condition and impoverishment, is in the working-class venue of Glasgow's Eastern Hospital.

The Scottish City

In 1926, Hugh MacDiarmid had observed that 'the over-whelming urban developments of Scottish life have scarcely yet given rise to any attempted literature,'¹³ yet by 1936 this situation had continued unchecked. The sense that at the very least, a realignment of consciousness was required to shake Scottish society out of its torpor was one more broadly expressed by editors David MacEwen and J. H. Whyte. In the introductory editorial of *Outlook*, a cultural magazine launched in 1936 by the amalgamation of the *Modern Scot* and *Scottish Standard* magazines, they state:

We believe that the political and cultural movements in Scotland today have ultimately the same object – prosperity for Scots of all classes and freedom wherein their native genius can fully develop. The methods advocated for attaining these objects differ both in degree and style. There are some who hold that nothing short of a Soviet Scotland will effect the radical changes in the life and thought of the people so widely desired. Others maintain that no political change of any sort is necessary or desirable. All that is needed, they seem to say, is a re-orientation of our view-point, a greater concentration on things Scottish within the framework of the present system [...] We are optimists, however. We hold that the bickering between the different factions [...] the sooner we get rid of it the better.¹⁴

Fittingly for self-declared optimists, their editorial piece strikes an up-beat and inclusive note, assuming an as yet untapped 'native genius' awaiting discovery. They also sound their appeal across class division and to both ends of the political spectrum, calling for unity for the greater good of Scottish culture.

James Barke's *Major Operation* was published just a few months after the launch of *Outlook* and seems a fitting response to both the editorial plea and to MacDiarmid's earlier complaint. One reviewer congratulated the author that, 'in 150,000 words Mr Barke has presented a remarkably full picture of Glasgow's life – the kaleidoscopic existence of the million.'¹⁵ The *Daily Worker* review was more effusive in its praise, perhaps encouraged by the politics:

George Anderson, the capitalist, is depicted sympathetically, for Barke knows the business men of the Second City as well as he knows the working-class [...] All the background of the Second City is here [...] No reader of the *Daily Worker* could put it down once he started to read it, and he would find himself inspired and enthusiastic that such a powerful writer as Barke should have made the cause of the working class his own.¹⁶

What this review also reveals is that Barke was not the only author writing about the city around this time – interesting treatments of city life include Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *Grey Granite* (1934), Edwin Muir's *Poor Tom* (1932), Dot Allan's *Hunger Strike* (1934) and George Blake's *The Shipbuilders* (1935) – though there remained in some quarters the tendency to rely on singular and well-worn aspects of the city:

[Glasgow] has been receiving a fair amount of attention from novelists recently. Its gangsters are depicted in one novel, its shipbuilders in another, and the smell of slums minutely described in a third.¹⁷

Barke's novel is notable for its rounded treatment of the city portrayed in a 'series of short, vivid sketches.' His was an approach that enlivened the modern cultural scene in Scotland and promoted social and political change as it did so. This revitalising form designed to fulfil Scotland's need for a modern city novel wrong-footed one reviewer who dismissed the author for '[writing] in an

impressionistic style which is meant to be much more effective than it is.’¹⁸ In failing fully to appreciate the enterprise of Barke’s project, this rather grudging judgement sums up the disdainful attitude that had held much of Scottish literature in the grip of cultural conservatism for so long.

An early signal of the innovative approach to the city novel is seen in Barke’s break with the traditional technique ‘in urban literature [that] identifies the writer with the figure walking through the streets.’¹⁹ Instead, his novelistic introduction to the city resituates the narrative perspective as a mobile, initially elevated eye at once more cinematic and more authoritative. From this opening precedent, the level gradually shifts down into the city streets where the dynamics of perspective provide a more intimate sense of the city’s incessant movement. René Clair’s 1930 musical comedy, *Sous les toits de Paris*, provides a filmic precedent for this technique in its opening scene where the camera is initially positioned above the roof tops. In a long tracking shot the perspective gradually drifts downwards toward street level until the camera is situated amongst a crowd (fig. 5a – 5g). From the relatively tranquil detachment hovering high above this down-at-heel district of Paris, the noise and bustle of the street come more to the fore as the perspective shifts, the viewer being insinuated into the working class crowd. Ruttmann’s *Berlin* employs a similar technique (fig. 6a – 6f) as does King Vidor’s *Street Scene* (1931), its opening shots described thus: ‘The film opens with the camera panning left to right across the skyline and rooftops of New York City settling down on a street in a lower class ethnic neighborhood of Manhattan, and one tenement building in particular.’²⁰ Barke’s novel provides a literary equivalent to exactly this technique. Considering the narrative perspective in *Major Operation*, Andy Croft suggests the narrator

appears as ‘everyone and no-one, a hand-held camera,’²¹ a description which concisely conveys the anonymity of the observer and the textually economic yet lucid detail in which the inhabitants are at (simulated) random captured as if on celluloid. The reader gains a sense of the city ‘caught in snapshots, snatches of conversation and thought,’²² that emulates the experience of traversing urban streets with its imperative of constant change and motion, resistant to rest.

In conflict with the idea of the narrator as mobile camera and typifying one of the formal tensions in the novel, the narrative voice occasionally interjects with partisan political commentary, for instance predicting the inexorable onset of a Marxian Age. Similarly, on occasions the narrative voice turns to overt social commentary and critique. This interjecting narrator is one of the main divergences from Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the inspirational novelistic template Barke used for his own representation of the city. Commensurate with the general feelings of anxiety at the shaping of world events in the mid-1930s, Barke adopts a more interventionist role and appears at times compelled to explain rather than just show.

Not only was Barke writing within a context of wider global concerns of impending conflict, but he was producing his fiction in Scotland at a point when there had developed, according to Amy Kaplan, ‘a class-based system structured by relations of production to a culture of consumption and surveillance.’²³ Kaplan identifies this as a common feature of all modernising, capitalist societies. This system had swept the whole network of ‘social relations into a vortex of commodity and spectacle.’ Kaplan argues that precisely this process had occurred earlier in the century in American cities, and that this was an inevitable consequence for any society participating in increasingly rampant

consumer capitalism. The transforming modernisation of Scotland's social relations and the redefinition of its class structures were arguably only a peripheral, and possibly delayed, part of the global system of capitalism, but they were nonetheless inevitable. Thus, to encompass the reality of urban Scotland, the author had to address the deep-rooted issue of 'traditional' class relations. These relations were being simultaneously challenged and consolidated, but undoubtedly complicated, by modernity's producer / consumer power dynamics and by increasingly technological, pervasive media through which ideology could be both transmitted and resisted. The city – as per Bruno's description, already an inherently alienating and all-encompassing haptic experience for the inhabitant – was the locus where all this ideological, commercial, cultural and class tension was brought together, the collision being manifest for the citizenry.

Moving through the modern city was no longer simply to traverse urban space but to become immersed in the spume of sensual interaction; starburst sensations of the city environment represented the very essence of the haptic experience. This can be contrasted in simple terms by the depictions Barke provides in the rural episodes of *Land of the Leal*. When the characters inhabit rural space they indulge in personal, introspective ruminations more detached from their environment, an environment that does not have the irresistible immediacy and imposition on the senses of the urban one:

Sitting on an outcropping rock, pleasantly warmed by the late autumn sun and sheltered from the light breeze by a fringe of whin bushes, Tom Gibson had been comfortable and at peace with nature, man and God. Never for a moment, despite his peace and comfort, had he forgotten about the Lord's day. Indeed he had been quietly ruminating on the wisdom and significance of the Day of Rest and how necessary it was for the peace and happiness of man.²⁴

In contrast, in *Major Operation* the description of George Anderson's journey through the streets of Glasgow is enlivened by the character's haptic consciousness. He is aware of the multiplication of views in the city and 'frames' himself in the perception of others, sensitive to his own movement. In a sense, he situates himself as part of the constantly shifting urban spectacle:

Just now he is a City man, walking down Hope Street and about to turn into St Vincent Street. Much like any other business man in uniform, carrying a sober, concentrated look in his eyes, a look of importance, a result of unconscious self-justification.²⁵

At this point the reader can follow the focalisation as it moves from an exterior (though informed) observer and shifts into George Anderson's consciousness, where his interior monologue reveals his engagement with the city:

The counter-flapper smiled, thanked him and remarked upon the awful pleasantness of the weather. She was a nice girl: lovely eyes: radiant smile: charming voice. Very pleasant to buy tobacco here.

The paratactic structure that represents the internal voice suggests visual stimulation, which in turn indicates the contrast between Anderson's sober outward appearance and the sensual engagement as he makes his journey. Leo Bloom's peregrination through Dublin has a striking equivalence as he too 'feels' his way round the city, and feels the city round him: he makes an impression on the city and vice versa. This equivalence is attributable to more than Barke's emulation of, or admiration for, Joyce's novel, and is rooted in a certain uniformity of experience in the fast-paced communications and capitalist nexus of the modern city. Consequently, though Barke responds to literary influences, there are certainly environmental ones equally at play.

In the initial passage where Anderson walks through the streets, the currency of the urban gaze is doubled in the suggestion of both a constant external gaze and George's confidence in performing his own visual presence. The reader is privileged as both detached onlooker and confidante, made aware of the unconscious process of self-justification involved in moving among the city throngs. Once the perspective situates solely in his consciousness, the erotic undercurrent felt by George to be embodied in this quotidian commercial transaction is obvious. He is subject to simultaneous yet opposed compulsions that suggest a negotiation to in-part repress in-part indulge the heightened charge of sensuality. Again, the similarities with Bloom's commodified voyeurism in Dublin are apparent, never more overtly than in the 'Nausicaa' episode when he is transfixed by Gerty McDowell's knowing display on Sandymount Strand.²⁶

The Cinema and the City

Derived equally from the precept of the city's voyeuristic frisson and the influence of a cinematic sensibility, the lothario Blazes Boylan is another Joycean character that appears to enjoy the commodified erotic spectacle of the city. In both the 'Wandering Rocks' and 'Sirens' episodes, Boylan, endowed with considerably more self-confidence than Barke's George Anderson, eschews meek repression in favour of indulging the voyeuristic tendency. Having stopped at the fruit shop where he furtively and lasciviously 'looked into the cut of [the] blouse'²⁷ worn by the shop assistant, Boylan visits the pub where he takes a fancy to the barmaid:

Boylan eyed, eyed. Tossed to fat lips in his chalice, drankoff his tiny, chalice, sucking the last fat violet saucy drops. His spellbound eyes went after her gliding head as it went down the bar by mirrors, gilded arch for ginger ale, hock

and claret glasses shimmering, a spiky shell, where it concerted, mirrored bronze with sunnier bronze.²⁸

Integral to the mercantile function of the city, the barmaid is commodified along with the wares. She is subsumed as merely a sexualised, human component in the lustre of the ‘shimmering’ display of polished glass and metal; a highly stylised, ethereal vision that is suggestive of cinema’s captivating light-show. Boylan’s ‘spellbound eyes’ are testament to the power of the spectacle.

In George Anderson’s more modest encounter with a shop assistant she is still objectified for his gratification, subsumed by the mercantile processes and reduced to the synecdochic touchstones of screen-idol attractiveness: ‘lovely eyes: radiant smile: charming voice,’ all disembodied from the girl in close-ups (in so far as internal voice may be an ‘aural’ close-up). City space becomes the extension of the cinema’s attraction of images – and equally the cinema is a distilled version of the city’s visual pleasure; wherever encountered these images are as much a commodity to be enjoyed by the eager consumer as tobacco, coffee or alcohol. In her essay ‘Joyce, Early Cinema and the Erotics of Everyday Life’, Katherine Mullin considers the titillating staples of the cinema of attractions and how these pervade *Ulysses*, film having ‘transformed the actuality into something more exciting by sexualising women’s bodies against a performative backdrop of “everyday life”.’²⁹

This is apposite when considering the erotic undertones to George Anderson’s transactional dealings with the girl in the tobacconist’s; that episode is juxtaposed with a considerably earthier episode of visual ‘entertainment’ for the men of the shipyard.

The Sunflower, slipping into the dock, bared to view a stretch of the opposite bank. Now there was revealed a spectacle that held the leaders' interest. A woman, with a child in her arms, was lying in the grass making love and being made love to by a man. Presently she laid the infant aside [...] The comments of the leaders, if lurid and of intranscribable obscenity, were nevertheless of the highest moral and ethical standard.³⁰

While at pains to establish (if in rather equivocal terms) the working men's ostensible moral opprobrium at the prurience of the scene revealed to them, the episode equally implies the captivated gaze of the leaders. Although this is a more explicit scene than that available in the cinema, the woman is nonetheless considered in merely sexual terms, a not unexpected extension of the cinema's tendency (however implicitly) to objectify the female. The men have no compunction in watching the scene as if in the privileged position of unseen spectator whereas they are in fact equally visible. The anonymity of the environment offers detachment in a simulacrum of the experience of cinema with its spectacle of the absent presence of actors on a screen.

Using the established formal montage technique to heighten the meaning of each scene and to act as an implied mutual commentary for episodes in collision, the viewpoint makes a spatial leap from the riverbank to the bedroom of Mabel Anderson. Mabel and the woman on the bank effectively have their characters matched by their narrative juxtaposition, the author implying and inviting a comparison between the two established by the montage of episodes. The most obvious analogues between the characters are that each cuckolds her husband and they both appear to eschew the conventions of the role of nurturing mother, sharing an evidently lax approach to childcare. Having noted that 'Mabel had no deep affection for the child of her womb,' she then 'looked at herself in

the mirror: posed: did a few mannequin turns: practised her ravishing smile.³¹ That Mabel Anderson is so obviously conscious of her appearance to the potential gaze equally suggests that the woman on the bank perhaps was more aware of the impact of her public act of coitus than the crew of leaders would have imagined. The matching of the characters invites the reader to consider the prospect that both these women are using very visual displays of sexual allure and access in an exercise of power: again, Gerty McDowell's mimicking of peep-show exhibitionism is called to mind.

Throughout *Major Operation*, Mabel repeatedly comports herself as if replicating scenes from a Hollywood movie, playing the part of the object of the adoring and lustful male gaze; what the woman on the bank gains from her liaison is open to speculation. At the gathering on Rowatt's yacht Mabel considers how 'she would parade the deck and admire the view' then would 'stand by the taffrail and let the slight breeze play with her dress,' for 'Mabel Anderson had an eye for effects and the courage to exploit them.'³² Her eye for effects seems honed by an exposure to mainstream cinema and the exotic grandstanding of Hollywood's female stars. Equally, the breeze that plays with her dress references a standard erotic element of early cinema, most notably established in Thomas Edison's faux-actuality 'sex comedy' *What Happened on 23rd Street, New York City* (1901) and reworked all the way to Marilyn Monroe.³³ This short film could be regarded as an early cinematic embodiment of the principles of Bruno's haptic theory of city life. Here is demonstrated a sensual aspect in the interaction between body and the city, whereby the woman is suddenly spectacle in the urban environment: city space and desire are in

collision in the most base conceptualisation. There is a correlation between human spectacle and the city spectacle, and the combination is an irresistible one.

Particularly in the silent era, the gravitational pull for the filmmaker was toward the city: urban settings for films that contained little or no narrative storytelling suggest the degree of drama inherent in the city streets. Therefore the city as real-life film protagonist dates from the earliest days of silent cinema, a genre of city films providing numerous ‘art-film documentaries with a limited admixture of staged and quasi-fictional elements,’ in which urban life was depicted, according to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, in ‘more or less celebratory mode.’³⁴ The most notable of these and possibly the films Nowell-Smith had in mind when he described the ‘celebratory’ portrayal of city life are Ruttmann’s *Berlin*, Alberto Cavalcanti’s *Rien que les heures* (1926) and Dziga Vertov’s *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Each of these films use exactly that limited admixture of staged and quasi-fictional elements to augment what are stylized montages of actuality footage.

Using *Berlin* as an example, there are a few moments of contrived narrative set-pieces – the staged scenes (the quasi-fictional elements to which Nowell-Smith refers) of a street argument; the surreptitious, wordless ballet of the initial negotiations between prostitute and client carried out, symbolically, through a shop window; and the suicidal woman (fig. 6g – 6i). However, these moments possess no more heightened dramatic tension than the apparently less obtrusively observed, ‘naturally’ unfolding scenes of the city left to its own devices. If anything, the staged scenes, with their obvious directorial orchestration, chip away at the verisimilitude and actually detract from the shifting dramatic flux of a day in the life of Ruttmann’s protagonist, Berlin.

Taking his cue from the 'city as protagonist' cinematic genre, Barke's equivalent literary method produces a novel that apes the montage structure, and contains a wealth of characters in meaningful juxtaposition to provide a sense of Glasgow as a city. The aggregate of perspectives elucidates the character of his chosen protagonist, the modern Scottish cityscape, retaining its 'Scottishness' but recast as a space of equivalent international modernity and a template that carries the assumption of certain generic aspects or urbanism: stark class divisions, accelerated communications, the forum for capitalism at its most rampant, man-made (as opposed to natural) and frenetic rhythms of life. On this template the idioms of Scottish city living are overlaid.

Describing the effects of early cinema that contribute to the creation of this equivalent space, David Trotter argues that 'the actualities created a zone, or dimension, in which the "common life" could come into its own as the "real" life.'³⁵ This proposes a 'democratising' effect contained within the early cinematic form where space is appropriated and becomes an aspect of entertainment; this is a commodity accessible to all for the price of cinema admission. The mystique of the civic space shown on screen is heightened in the moment by its shadowy absent-presence; yet it is simultaneously and paradoxically diminished by the overt commodification of the city and defamiliarised mode of apprehension being made available to the viewer. Also, as Trotter observes, 'in cinema, unlike the theatre, actors and audience never coincide; for one party to be present, the other must be absent.' Indeed, he identifies what he refers to as the paradoxical non-coincidence between the cinema experience and the highly visual modes of the urban social nexus when he says that, 'encounterlessness within the mutually acknowledged relationship

of viewer and viewed was the medium's founding principle.³⁶ This is a facet that overflows from the cinema into the city street. The paradox of the city streets is that though they shift with the warp and weft of human life, the citizen has the constant sense of the encounterlessness through proximity but lack of intimacy in this hive of activity.

Psychogeography

Making a point about William Dean Howells' (pre-Modernist) socialist novel *Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890), Amy Kaplan describes the way in which modern descriptions of the streets 'make no distinction between things and persons, who are signified synecdochically by parts of their bodies or the sounds of their voices.'³⁷ Similarly, in *Major Operation*, the episode 'Red Music in the Second City' could be said to be an example of this same radio-phonetic technique, using what could be termed an auditory close-up. It could be argued that this episode is a rudimentary replication of Joyce's 'Sirens' episode in its technique. In it, each sound is layered onto the scene but detached from a narrative whole, frequently an echo of a character or set of circumstances previously encountered by the reader. It captures the essence of the city's psychogeography, an amalgam of the 'mental, mnemonic and affective fabric'³⁸ that signifies the chaos and represents the experience of the modern cityscape.

Playing on the psychological process of mind in collision with the city environment, Barke's episode produces an aural kaleidoscope of intrinsically isolated experiences with additional sensory stimuli at once constructing and awakening elements within the consciousness:

Ah, the bhoys would rather have a night with Red Bidy than a night with Burns. With Labour on the bench, me bhoy. It's a darlin' party the Labour

Party: a darlin' Party. I wonder, now, if them flutes will be Orange or Hibernian?

Now you, No-mean-citizen-of-no-mean-city: you said something just now about boiling cans? Sorry and all that...

You're canned if you ask me.

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan –

Kubla Khan? I've got you, mister. In the 3.30? I can take you on, sir, up to twenty quid. Pay out in the lavatory of Tim Rafferty's bar at six o'clock. James MacMaster, sir, a God-fearing bookie's runner at your service. Kubla Khan is a good thing [...]

Getting fresh, are you? My name's Sarah. Sarah Cannan. Call a flute band music?³⁹

As with the city environment the consciousness becomes a palimpsest upon which experience continually builds to augment the residual and recurring fragments of the past. In the above excerpt these are represented in a free association of phonemes and semantics. Barke's novel presents these fragments as retaining a significance which can recur unchanged or be modified by further overlaying elements. The city cannot be experienced entirely objectively as it is never free from the observer's subjective glossing, each area or feature retaining differing measures of signification and associations. As with Baudelaire's *flaneur*, the 'flux and motion of street life' in which the subject moves produces effects that must also be considered 'aesthetically,' and not just ideologically.⁴⁰

The cinematic relationship between viewer and viewed is an approximate simulacrum of the city's similarly anonymous relationships. The highly visual dimension of the city is enabled in the experience of cinema, lending the inhabitant a confidence in approaching the city as unseen observer voyeuristically partaking in the spectacle. However, the city inhabitant is at once removed from but also inescapably part of the shifting *mise-en-scène*.

Additionally, the demarcations of city space are provided with a cinematic fillip as these zones of ideological signification are appropriated as potential areas of 'real life' and become a matter of constant negotiation. To elaborate: the geography of the city is truncated or compressed in the montage technique of cinema to reveal tensions and inequities which put pressure on the stability of designated zones. Extending this from the personal to the political, the possibility for revolutionary action is enlivened by the very presence of class interlopers occupying these zones and breaking down class delineations on the screen. As an example, Eisenstein's most iconic scene in *Battleship Potemkin*, in which citizens are massacred on the Odessa Steps, has resulted in the Steps being regarded as a memorial to the events of 1905.⁴¹ In fact, the events occurred elsewhere in the city but Eisenstein's film impacted in collective memory to alter the perception of historical fact and effectively relocated them. It can be imagined that fictional footage of crowd disturbances in George Square may similarly refigure the significance of that space for Glasgow's inhabitants.

In general terms, the experience of cinema affords - compels even - a new way of organising space/time, scale, light and speed of motion. Bringing both the cinema and urban space together, David Clarke offers an explanation of the coinciding effects of cinema and city in his introduction to an edited collection of essays, *The Cinematic City*:

The urbanization that accompanied the expansion of industrial capitalism was both a direct manifestation of, and itself seemed to shape, the historical transition towards a specifically *modern* mode of social living. Whilst both documenting and providing commentary on these developments, cultural forms such as the cinema and its various precursors were themselves implicated in such changes. Thus, the spectacle of the cinema both drew upon and contributed to the increased pace of modern city life, whilst also helping to normalize and cathect the frantic, disadjusted rhythms of the city; reflected and helped to

mould the novel forms of social relations that developed in the crowded yet anonymous city streets; and both documented and helped to transform the social and physical space that the modern city represented.⁴²

As a description of the dynamic interaction between social, physical space and cinema, this strikes a particular chord in relation to Barke's novel. With the industrial and social action of the inter-war years in Glasgow the demarcations of city space were under considerable pressure. Stable commercial areas and the civic grandeur of George Square were routinely traversed by mass marches that brought social disparity into focus for the marchers and onlookers alike. One of the effects of this class interloping in other areas of the city was that the privileged minority experienced a highly-charged, visible manifestation of the disenfranchised subjects of capitalism and were shown that they were clearly prepared to invade this socio-ideologically coded realm. It could be argued that this mass action was as much a challenge to ordered space as a demonstration of the depth of feeling and that this was an essential facet of social and political revolution. Clarke's assertion that the spectacle of cinema 'helped to mould the novel forms of social relations' tends to suggest an integrational effect. However, there is an argument for a more agitational effect if the demonstrations and protests of the inter-war years are considered in light of film of revolutionary action (whether narrative cinema or documentary reportage) and of the montage techniques that illuminated capitalism's inherent social injustices.

Like the city environment itself, the body of the citizenry is available to be ideologically inscribed, and with the advent of cinema came a medium that possessed both exacerbating and mitigating tendencies in this aggregation. On the one hand, the breaking down of delineated physical space and the

homogenisation of collective cultural experience provided a common bond; on the other, the privilege of detached observer set apart from (and frequently above) the street served to increase the traditional fear-of-the-monstrous-crowd response to the city. This physical or spiritual elevation of the observer is an element that can be utilised to manifest a specular form of class division and appears as a motif in both Dot Allan's *Hunger March* and *Major Operation*.

Barke wrote:

As the thousands marched up Union Street and along Gordon Street their presence was felt in the inmost business sanctum. Sir Alexander dropped the typist from his knee and went to the window. Indulgence in senile sensuality was over for the afternoon. His typist was grateful to her class.⁴³

Though played as a satirical burlesque on the exploitative nature of capitalism, this scene does broadly highlight the idea of class division in the spectacle that posits the working class at street level and the middle classes viewing from above.

The very presence of socio-ideological coding in the city is partly located and sustained in the consciousness of the citizenry in both a collective and individual sense. Individuals form their own subjective and unavoidably class-informed cognitive spatial aesthetic in the city; commonality of experience broadens the limits of these demarcations so that certain of them become shared. How these spatial aesthetics are formed can be an infinitely complex process, but for the purposes of this study, a city's discursive presence – in this case Glasgow – in novels exerts some measure of influence on the conception of its class-delineated topography. Equally forming and reflecting the cognitive shaping of the city, so binding are these discursive accounts, Colin McArthur asserts, that 'post-Industrial Revolution accounts of the city [...] begin to articulate the

Glasgow discourse [...] to become hegemonic.’⁴⁴ These are the discursive bonds that Barke sought to loosen.

As MacArthur observes, early on in cinema the more prominent urban locales of modernity, such as New York and Paris, were ‘functioning discursively.’ Those discourses enlivened questions of the ‘quality of the “natural” and the built world’ and the imposition of meaning ‘on the transition to modernity.’⁴⁵ Accelerated development of the metropolises had implications for the individual and society as a whole, the pace and scale of the city environment being more easily understood and resolved through cinematic depictions of the city. It can be regarded as more than coincidental that one of the major developmental centres of cinema technology was New York, where Edison worked on the kinoscope and later amalgamated the Biograph, Vitograph and Edison companies under the Motion Picture Patents Company banner in 1908.⁴⁶ Similarly, though the Lumière brothers were located in Lyons, they took their portable camera, the cinématographe, out onto the streets of Paris from around 1895 to record street scenes. As such, these locales were established as common subjects very early in the development of cinema and their respective cityscapes became familiar to a worldwide cinema-going audience. The cityscapes were seductive, highly accessible due to their function as modern transport hubs and acted as the shorthand for Modernity’s inherent sophistication.

The Discursive City

While Rob Lapsley considers it a ‘cliché of contemporary writing’ to suggest that the modern city is ‘constructed as much by images and representations as by the built environment, demographic shifts and patterns of

capital investment,⁴⁷ it remains no less valid an assertion. There is a positive benefit derived from the mitigating effect a discursive construct of the city has on the otherwise alienating and eternally challenging environment. Nonetheless, it is hard for the citizen to square the reality of experience of life in the city and the city as mediated to the imagination; Lapsley describes 'a non-coincidence between the actually existing city and their ideal,' which fosters only a 'sense of non-belonging.'⁴⁸ The discursive city sits at a point midway between these states, eluding reality and defying expectations, askew from the subjective experience, though always helping to form it. It seems to offer a constant dialectic for the utopian, with the imaginative possibilities interacting with the lived reality.

What we can say of such discursive constructions of the city is that, specifically for Glasgow, film representations were decidedly limited. Glasgow's modern narrative during the era in which Barke was writing had an increasingly obvious gap, with imaginative cinematic representations virtually non-existent. There were some local topicals, usually covering events such as royal visits, ship launches and parades, but no imaginative fiction, i.e. feature films or City Symphony documentaries. There simply were no mainstream cinematic explorations of Glasgow in the early 1930s, positioned as it was on the margins of the modern world and like many peripheral urban locales, seemingly beyond the lens of film-makers. While Scotland was not entirely absent from film, Glasgow was posted missing. For what did exist of Scotland on film, Alastair Michie points to a lineage that began with 'a rapid cinematic colonisation of [Scottish] literature,' with Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson being

‘prize territories.’ He lists the more notable cinematic visions of Scotland up until the Great War:

Quentin Durward: Pathé, February 1912. *Lady of the Lake*: Vitagraph, August 1912. *Ivanhoe*: Imp, July 1913; Zenith, July 1913. *Heart of Midlothian*: Hepworth, April 1914 [...] *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: Nordisk, September 1910; Imp June 1913; *Kineto*, June 1913. *Treasure Island*: Vitagraph, April 1908. *The Black Arrow*: Edison, January 1912, and *The Suicide Club*: B & C, July 1914.⁴⁹

As modernity applied its shaping principles to culture and society, Scotland on screen remained rooted in a bygone and romantic age. All of these films – generally re-workings and adaptations of historical novels – were made by American, English or European film companies and were providing a retrogressive image of a ‘tartan and heather’ Scotland. Michie identifies the conversion to sound cinema around 1929 and the associated escalation in costs as the point at which there was a loss of any faint hope that Scotland could exercise autonomy in film production. Following what amounts to a hiatus in the 1930s and continuing throughout the war years, the next high-profile appearance of Scotland on film came with a renewed upsurge of twee Tartantry by virtue of the Hollywood-produced *Brigadoon* (1954), and Ealing’s two Scottish excursions in *Whisky Galore* (1949) and *The Maggie* (1954), none of which could be mistaken by the indigenous population for an attempt at documentary realism.⁵⁰

By virtue of this prevailing artistic (and economic) dearth, and as a result of general lack of cinematic representation, Glasgow’s own ideological urban space was to some extent available for occupation. In this arguably privileged situation, where authors had not been usurped by more visually immediate screen appearances of the city streets, Barke (and others) could assume the

mantle of modern literary architects of discursive Glasgow. Assimilating the techniques of cinema into his writing, Barke could subliminally tap into the wealth of ideological capital invested on either side of the broad political divide of the film industries of both East and West. Though he did not find himself vying with specific cinematic representation to create elbow room for his subject, as shall be explored in-depth in the following chapter, film did very much inform Barke's visual perception of the city and found its way into his literary form. In some respects the absence of an economic or artistic will to represent Glasgow in film served Barke well as there were no easily-accessed, mass-audience encroachments that commandeered the city or its inhabitants with definitive depictions. On the other hand, there was a receptive cinematic consciousness in the population that produced an increasingly sophisticated visual imagination, which allowed the writer to attempt to precipitate an ideological shift using the beneficial aspects of cinema, but not to be overwhelmed by them.

Resonant of Raymond Williams' definition of naturalism, there was a potent ability for cinema to explore 'the fabric of contemporary urban spaces [to] articulate the dynamics of contemporary power.'⁵¹ The visual textual organisation of city space expressed in film and literature is a manifestation of the phenomenon identified by Walter Benjamin when he posited the 'camera as the machine opening up the optical unconscious.'⁵² This newly tapped visual consciousness had become available to the novelist for considerations of modern urban Glasgow.

Glasgow's Novel

What Barke did in *Major Operation*, in effect, was to attempt to write the film of the lives of the citizenry, revealing relations of power and exploitation in the process: part documentary, part propaganda film, part political-topical and part dramatic fiction, all driven by the underlying techniques of cinema. As Barke's interpolating narrator explains in one episode which considers mainstream cinema entertainment, 'Variety in Love': 'had the citizenry seen a film of their own lives, of their own country, they would have been amazed and possibly felt cheated.'⁵³ There is a telling ambiguity in this statement. Though the central meaning appears to point to the political and social system as the agencies that let the citizenry down, there is an underlying possibility that the filmmaker too would likely fail in the adequate representation of their lives. This may be an expression of disillusionment and pessimism by the author in light of the existing body of work that rather garishly portrayed a distorted vision of Scotland on film.

In Scotland then, the re-inscription of the cityscape was an active function that arose in part from the cinematic experience. Some screen representations of the modern city, received with considerable enthusiasm as evidenced in the number of cinema admissions, may have indirectly alerted the population of Glasgow to their city's own dichotomous aspects, in particular the iniquitous network of ideological relationships. Films such as King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928), with its depictions of constant financial pressures and claustrophobic atmosphere created in the motif of cramped living conditions, would inspire the informed cinema-going public to superimpose another discursive city model on their own. As the cinematic cities – New York, Berlin,

Paris – were immersed in ideological signification revealed and compounded by film representation, the opportunity to visualise Glasgow beyond its one-dimensional ‘No Mean City’ tag could enter into the public consciousness. In the face of this, the deterministic view of a dystopian Glasgow propagated in literature up to this point was put under pressure by the exposure of the contingent nature of ideological urban space and its susceptibility to challenge. The characteristics of cinematic spatial compression involving the collision of images were ideally suited to reveal the diverse social conditions in the city. These stimulated an informed mode of visual imagination, one that seeks causal factors and is more alert to the contrived juxtapositions designed to expose capitalism’s inevitable disparity of co-extant excess and deprivation. In effect, the exposure to a film medium that as part of its intrinsic technique tends to montage scenes of urban opulence and poverty becomes a habit-forming, ideological prompt to the viewer’s active imagination to look beyond ‘real life’ to consider its causal or corollary social opposite. What the cinematic sensibility potentially affords is a prism through which the visual imagination may be reconciled with urban modernity, though not necessarily with the social injustice that results from the city’s capitalist imperatives.

As useful as class-conscious montage could be in highlighting social inequity, in mainstream culture there remained a tendency, rather than to reveal class divisions, instead to perpetuate the conventional motifs of the city: many representations of the city struggled at the hands of filmmakers to break from a tradition of dystopian imagery. Though ‘cities were now typically enclosed, over-crowded, noisy, tense,’ in their essay ‘Of Plans and Planners; Documentary Film and the Challenge of the Urban Future 1935 – 52’, John Gold and Stephen

Ward claim this feature was exacerbated, as the ‘impression of oppressiveness would be reinforced by juxtaposing such scenes with romanticised images of a bucolic countryside.’⁵⁴ One of the films of the era that traded on this opposition, in fact making it central to its plot, was Brecht’s left-wing feature *Kuhle Wampe* (1932). Telling the story of a family’s move, following the suicide of their unemployed son, from crowded Berlin to a model socialist community in the nearby countryside, the spiritual edification and health benefits of the countryside as compared to the city are integral to the narrative. Scotland too traded on the central message of the physical and spiritual benefits of country life, to produce films promoting the idea of escape from the crowded city tenements. Distinctly different in tone and register from *Kuhle Wampe*, Pathé Pictures produced *Tam Trauchle’s Troubles* (1934), sponsored by the Glasgow Corporation Education Department. This was ‘one of a series of fund raising appeal films produced for the Glasgow Necessitous Children’s Holiday Camp Fund to raise money to help send poor children on a holiday during the summer break.’⁵⁵ The film was designed to encourage adults and children to take healthy breaks at camps in the countryside in order to escape the crowded slums of Glasgow; collection tins were passed around at screenings to garner funds for the camps.⁵⁶ Though Tam Trauchle’s obvious stress at looking after two young boys, coping with financial hardship and the claustrophobia of tenement life is portrayed with a comedic thrust, there is no doubt that the film implies the health problems germinating in the city were two-fold, physical and psychological. Thus the city, even with the best intentions as in this case, continued to be demonised on all fronts as antithetical to healthy living.

To some extent, though his central objective was the illumination of class injustice (best illustrated in the urban setting) Barke too could not be acquitted on charges of occasionally falling back on the pastoral convention of vilifying the city. At first glance he certainly appeared to rely on this precept in the alternating episodes that compare the bustle of the city with the calm of the Anderson party enjoying a visit to Rowatt's yacht. However, Barke's use of the motif could, in fact, be argued to subvert the tradition as a parodic anti-pastoral based on money and class privilege highlighted by the emphasis on access to leisure. Amplifying the ideological implications, the middle-class group escape the crowds and oppression of the city to occupy the now rather anaemic, post-agricultural countryside, where their leisure time passes unmarked and untroubled by the unnatural city environment. In contrast, the workers are shown as slaves to the clock in an high-pressure atmosphere of hard graft and grim hand-to-mouth home-life. This seamy urban environment versus natural countryside dichotomy was accentuated and perhaps exaggerated in film and wider culture, never more than in depictions from kailyard and Highlandism schools of literature, which contrived to consistently obfuscate the actual nature of the modern city.

Using as an example one of the kailyard's principal authors, we can see how an illusory and tendentious portrayal of country or city is propagated. Whereas Glasgow remained a largely antithetical topos resistant to gentrifying aesthetic depictions, J. M. Barrie's explanation of the inspiration for his fictionalised version of Kirriemuir – 'there was something quaint about my native place'⁵⁷ – shows how a sentimentalising instinct can distort the reality. What is implied in Barrie's explanation, when considered in light of his literary

works, is that Kirriemuir was discursively constructed and ideologically appropriated by greatly exaggerating select features to the exclusion of others. Metaphorically speaking, Barrie viewed Kirriemuir from the manse window and organised his fictional portrayal on this principle. Similarly, the aspects of Glasgow that, if reportage and fictional rendering are to be taken as a combined measure, unfailingly suggested themselves to inhabitant and visitor alike were the unseemly ones. Despite this emphasis, this is not all there was. By the same process that invested Barrie's literary fiction with a kailyard aesthetic sensibility and transformed the 'imaginative' Kirriemuir into an emblem of parochial Scottishness, Glasgow became a distinctly one-dimensional dystopia. This formed part of the reinforcing binary that validated the kailyard depictions as a literary embodiment of the essential Scottish character latterly under siege by modernity and capitalism, with its complex network of power relations criss-crossing the purported antithesis of authentic nationhood, the city. Barke's novel, seemingly refuting the literary claim on Scottish identity, attempted to map this network of power in the cityscape, or certainly to map the culture as the experience of a lived social reality that enacts and reveals the relations of power. This was a break from the kailyard and in this respect was a form closer to social realism that arrived via modernist innovation.

Additionally, there was a change in 'core-periphery relations' that shaped Scotland with the establishment of a 'global system *between* the cities.'⁵⁸ Glasgow's 'Second City of the Empire' epithet is relevant here as Barke looked outward on the simultaneous decline of a fading empire and the advent of a new system of comparative relations enjoyed by the modern city; this was beyond the outmoded country / city opposition and beyond the traditional Glasgow / London

relationship. The start of the decline of empire coincided with Scotland being drawn into a new (i.e. Trans-Atlantic) network of trade and political relations. Seen in these terms, there was no opportunity to preserve an isolationist Scottish cultural identity as the modern world and global ideology moved on apace. As something of an aside, it is interesting to note that Joyce also referred to his former home city as ‘the second city of the Empire,’ though Dublin vied for this status at a different point in history. To Jacques Mercanton, Joyce described the place that remained his fixation, one that Seamus Deane cuttingly (and not a little unfairly) notes was ‘sustained by his never indulging it by actually paying it a visit.’ For Joyce, ‘Ireland’s and Dublin’s squalor and glamour were always intertwined.’

[Ireland is] a wretched country, dirty and dreary, where they eat cabbages, potatoes and bacon all year round, where the women spend their days in church and the men in pubs [...] Dublin is the seventh city of Christendom, and the second city of the Empire. It is also third in Europe for the number and quality of its brothels. But for me it will always be the first city of the world.⁵⁹

The fact that Joyce regarded Dublin as a city of the world strikes a chord with the modern outlook. Joyce also gestured toward the demotic components of Dublin but encompassed these as part and parcel of a still great city. Throughout Joyce’s life, Dublin would remain forever ‘embedded in all his other cities, Trieste, Rome, Zurich and, most especially Paris,’ which suggests certain homogeneous aspects to the city that cut across national cultures.

In finding a similarly earthy allure to his home city, Barke’s writing generally deviates from the established cultural traditions of comparison to the rural. His exposition allowed the city to take its leave from this binary and measure itself against other modern urban centres. With modernity in a sense

leaving the country behind, as has been argued, the city was free to grow to something like its full potential by looking beyond the surrounding countryside to other cities in its quest for increased political and mercantile power. As the relationships in foreign trade developed there arose a new system that re-ordered the comparison between these opposed rural/urban realms. The relationship remained in some form between the urban and the rural, but it became conceived in a renewed and economically deterministic mode. The rural provided the sustenance for the city and the city provided the essential agencies of government and trade in what has been described as an ‘organically linked [...] mutual necessity of profit and power.’⁶⁰ Situated as merely a peripheral element caught in the urban capitalist web, the country underwent a shift in its economic status as it became more and more politically, economically and culturally redundant. What remained for the rural was to be the locus of recuperation and respite from the all-important business of the modern city but with diminished significance. The countryside became occupied by the monied classes of city dweller for the pursuit of their leisure-time activities.

As Mark Shiel claims of the new relationships of modernity’s ‘network of semi-autonomous cities and megacities,’ they ‘relate primarily to other cities in the network rather than to the particular national or regional space in which they are physically located.’⁶¹ In a transformation from its traditional function as foil to the comfortably parochial, by the 1930s Glasgow had become aligned to an international network whereby it related to New York, to Dublin, to Belfast, to London, and other European metropolises more so than it related to the rest of Scotland. In the minds of the outward-looking Scottish Modernists, there was an elevation, as it were, into the ranks of a diverse but similarly functioning peer

group of international cities. Paradoxically, membership of this international network of cultural centres did not necessarily entail a seamless homogeneity feared in some quarters as resulting from the ‘thorough colonization of daily life (including most areas of culture) by capital.’⁶² In its new guise as a modern Scottish city in a global economic system, Glasgow, much like Joyce’s Dublin, nonetheless retained a distinctive economy, culture and society. In fact, the onset of this multi-national network of cities could be argued to be the starting point for an evolved brand of urban cultural nationalism in Scotland. Unlike the backward-looking nationalism that manifested in kailyard and tartanry aesthetics, this cultural nationalism was underpinned by a forward-facing, modernising spirit increasingly located in the urban.

On this point we encounter a particular tension nesting in Scottish cultural nationalism during the 1930s. Working against urban modernity’s potential to deliver a distinctive Scottish national and cultural identity, Tony Fitzmaurice identifies ‘a growing homogenization of the image’ that, he argues, caused the ‘disappearance from representation of the special specificity of real cities and places.’ In Fitzmaurice’s hypothesis, this loss of representation was replaced by Gilles Deleuze’s formulation of ‘the “any-space-whatevers” of the generic city.’⁶³ The appeal of such an ‘any-space-whatever’ to anyone promoting a large-scale unifying internationalist socialist agenda in the 1930s is clear. It may be contended that this is exactly the universalising impulse suggested by Dot Allan in her novel *Hunger March*, where she attempted to render Glasgow a generic city – an any-space-whatever – and extend its significance beyond a restrictive individual identification, thereby reaching out to both imply and provoke an international mass experience. In any case, the setting of Allan’s

novel is clearly recognisable as Glasgow (which may be a case of playing both sides at once). Also, it may be argued that novels such as *Major Operation* and *Ulysses*, while using some of the common touchstones of city representation to emphasise the universalised experience or urban modernity, did not divest themselves of their distinguishing national and local characteristics.

In these representations of the city, the specific agenda driving a combined socialist and nationalist impulse is brought to bear. Crafting a new cultural and political nationalism can either be an end in itself, establishing Scotland as an independent country distinct from its colonising neighbour, or to effect the break from traditional ties and allow the country to assume a place in an international soviet system. Barke's approach to nationalism was certainly motivated by the latter, longer-term agenda. The desire to establish a progressive Scottish nationalism and consolidate the city-to-city relational scheme had, for Barke, a communist political aspiration at its core.

However, Barke remained ambivalent about a universalised culture – which in practical terms meant an increasingly Americanised mass culture – and tended to portray it as, at best, a double-edged sword. *Major Operation's* narrator delivers the critique:

New times, new machinery. Mass production, mass culture, mass gutter journalism – what could Loch Lomond mean? The bonnie banks had had their day in the consciousness of drawing-room ballad writers. The world isn't a drawing-room any more for the Gentlemen of Culture. But thousands haven't even a bit of a room to themselves: and the drawing-room for them is also the kitchen and the coal cellar. Holding up the corner of the street palls like any other job. A sixpence gets a packet of fags and leaves enough for a seat at the cinema. There the wise-cracking of Hollywood gets into the brain and the blues rhythm gets into the blood for there's nothing else to keep them out. So

America becomes the cultural centre of the world. Even the Jap can tell you about Charlie Chaplin and Greta Garbo.⁶⁴

The circulation of capital and exploitation of its human cogs had its effects represented in the social and cultural ordering of the fabric of the city; traditional life was destabilised. Scotland's self-image, for better or for worse, was undergoing a change and there had emerged a mass real life that bore no resemblance to the one portrayed in established representations. A saturation of American culture filled the void created by the city's propensity for alienating its inhabitants and Barke here reveals an intrinsic link between class division, deprivation, unemployment and cultural colonisation. But the passage also suggests a measure of vibrancy, the description of the 'blues rhythm' possessed of an allure and vitality. All these conditions combine to render the city the locus of a shifting energy which must encourage the political radical.

Red Clydeside

After visiting Glasgow in the early 1920s, English journalist William Bolitho published his experiences in a book he titled *Cancer of Empire*, documenting what he considered the potent political threat simmering in the social degradation of Clydeside's slums:

The Red Clyde, the smouldering danger of revolution in Glasgow, owing to the swift development of political affairs in Britain, has ceased to be a local anxiety, and become an interest and an alarm to the whole civilised world [...] There is something deeply wrong with the Clyde; the whole middle-class of England knows it [...] The Red Clyde will remain the focus of English politics, until it has been cured, or definitely appeased; or until first Scotland, then industrial England, becomes fully infected by it, with momentous effects on Britain, the British Empire, and the rest of the world.⁶⁵

The writing unmistakably situates Bolitho's perspective as that of a visitor from the 'civilised' world visiting the untamed periphery; as a middle-class Englishman, the journalist would have found it difficult to have written authentically from any other perspective (with cognisance to Orwell's notion of 'going over'). In this piece Bolitho identifies housing as the factor above all others that was likely to precipitate serious unrest on the Clyde, claiming that the blight of poor housing 'festers and complicates itself, in numberless vicious circles, feeding on [the population's] vigour of Scottish character.' Bolitho extends his cancer metaphor throughout the book which is 'an impassioned denunciation of the social and political circumstances from which the slums derive.'⁶⁶ The ambiguity in the title – Glasgow is *afflicted* by a cancer resulting from the economic organisational principles of Empire; Glasgow *is* a cancer metastasising from Red Clydeside and affecting the Empire – amply reflects the equal measures of social outrage and fear of revolution expressed by the author. At the time Bolitho was writing, Glasgow had already fired its revolutionary warning shots across the bows of government in the wake of the unrest of 1919, and there were very real concerns (articulated in this case by Bolitho) that Glasgow would be the starting point for an eventual countrywide Leftist revolution.

The unrest of 31 January 1919 saw 60,000 demonstrators descend on George Square to hear the Lord Provost's reply to the workers' demands for a 40-hour week and to show their support for the strike.⁶⁷ When mounted police attacked the demonstration the crowd retaliated and a day of bloody skirmishes throughout the city followed. Such were the incumbent national government's concerns that there might be a workers' uprising in Glasgow (and bearing in

mind recent events in Ireland) an estimated 10,000 English troops and a number of tanks were deployed to keep order. This particular event was seen by many commentators ‘to mark the high point of the revolt and political consciousness’⁶⁸ on Red Clydeside. That this insurrection was quelled by the threat of military force indicates the government’s belief in the potential for revolution and must have provided those such as Barke – in 1919 an idealistic young man who had only recently moved to the city – with encouraging signs that the political will and activism of the Scottish people could be stirred to effect change. However, a question arose that the young author may have later pondered: had this level of activism been sustained and even gathered momentum throughout the 1920s and on into the 1930s?

Encouragingly for those of a radical disposition there were numerous large-scale marches in Glasgow throughout the 1920s and 1930s; these continued throughout the time during which Barke was writing *Major Operation*, making the novel highly topical. In particular, in March 1934 delegations of hunger marchers from all over Scotland converged on Glasgow to call for a meeting with the Secretary of State for Scotland. The numbers were estimated at around 160,000 marching from George Square to Glasgow Green; an 80,000 strong demonstration marched to city chambers the following day with a deputation meeting with the Lord Provost. Notably, one member of this deputation was Peter Kerrigan, believed by some to be the activist on whom Barke based his Jock MacKelvie character, though it seems as likely that the character was an amalgam that incorporated at least a measure of homage to John MacLean.⁶⁹

These events are fictionalised in *Major Operation* when the workers occupy George Square and a delegation visits Council officials. The novel is

informed not just by these latter real-life events but by the tradition of demonstrations that had built up in the city throughout the inter-war years.

The demonstration was marching to George Square to give mass support to a deputation that would interview the Lord Provost and members of the Council. While the deputation would be in the Chambers, MacKelvie would be the main man outside: a hundred thousand workers could not be left without a leader [...] But the police were not so foolish as to draw batons at this early stage. The Second City was difficult to police. If trouble started in the centre of the City, the districts would be in an uproar before evening. Garngad, Possil, Gorbals, Govan, Partick and Whiteinch: it would need more than treble the police to deal with trouble in the Second City once it broke out. And even though they would get the upperhand in the end, thousands of pounds' worth of damage could be done before order was restored.⁷⁰

Glasgow not only had the potential to be the seat of a revolution – it had the mass labour-force, the poverty, the political activism, the latent nationalist sentiment – but also the resources and infra-structure to establish itself as a post-revolutionary hub of an independent nation within the ever-developing network of modern, industrial cities. However, Bolitho maintained that rather than economic opportunism or aspiration for independence, the class-based, small-scale reality of housing problems was the single most emotive issue in Glasgow and the factor most likely to light the revolutionary touch-paper. From his perspective, the English journalist characterised the effects on Glasgow as ‘some sort of creeping malady, an affliction of the body or soul.’ Here social conditions are conflated with the physical and in common with much of the commentary of the era the city retains associations with a ‘heightened sense of personal disgust.’⁷¹ This is a familiar and enduring theme of Glasgow fiction as well as a reflex frequently entailed within documentary accounts.

Deriving from the discourse that perpetuated industrial Glasgow's association with its 'demonised' underclass, the element that dominated in the discursive city was of a place peopled by tough, heavy-drinking, violent working men and their put-upon spouses. Having no small part to play in this discourse were the newspaper reports of gang violence, usually between warring factions organised on a territorial basis. In between-the-wars Glasgow the 'folkloric embellishments' of gang violence led to, in McArthur's account, 'a monstrous Ur-narrative [...] when anyone (not least, it should be said, Glaswegians themselves) seeks to describe or deal imaginatively with the city.'⁷² Through sheer repetition, this narrative gained an unprecedented authority and tightened its grip on the popular imagination.

A crystallisation of the narrative, and one that was to become even more stubbornly lodged in the Scottish public consciousness was the novel *No Mean City* (1935). Though actually a work of fiction, the book announced its own verisimilitude and claimed to be a first-hand account of life in the slum tenements of Glasgow. Reinforcing the illusion of its documentary form, the novel enlisted the device of including actual newspaper reports of violence to augment the realism and thus the credibility of the fictional tale. Thus the dominant discourse served to obscure the reality of a multi-perspectival, diverse human cityscape and became a falsely privileged mark of thematic authenticity: as McArthur puts it, 'the image of the "Hard Man" beckon[ed] Circe-like to any who would speak or write of Glasgow.'⁷³

The Second City was not the only one to suffer from this pejorative characterisation in the cultural consciousness, with metropolises uniformly held to be possessed by the 'dystopian alter ego of modernity's telos.' In their

dichotomous co-existence, the potential for manifestations of an urban utopia in cultural representation was always subordinate to the assumption of the city as ‘powerful, recurrent nightmare.’⁷⁴ In literature and cinema the results of this positioning generally saw the city depicted as the machine of capitalism necessarily equipped with a subterranean ‘engine room’ and an elevated ‘bridge’, reflecting the paradigm of a vertically ordered class-system. The seminal cinematic representation of this material reality can be seen in Fritz Lang’s expressionist masterpiece, *Metropolis* (1927). There are equally compelling literary antecedents in H. G. Wells’ *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899) and *The Time Machine* (1895). In the former the futuristic city becomes an imaginative, prophetic extension of its extant features; in the latter this has evolved *in extremis* resulting in a post-urban, post-human dystopia, the city infrastructure having atrophied and the insouciant Eloi existing in a sinister faux-Arcadia.

Closer to home, the vertiginous organising principle of the city, as well as the metaphor of city as machine, are brought together in a contemporary Scottish literary context in Dot Allan’s opening sequence to *Hunger March*:

You can hear it, if you have a mind to listen, above the throbbing of piston-rods, the plunging dynamos, the scream of escaping steam, the fierce shudderings of electric road-drills, the thunder blasting [...] You will see nothing, however, if you go forward to look into such a chasm, but a scattering of men controlling monster cranes operating great buckets which they then draw upwards to dispose of in trolleys before seeking the underground again [...] The Machine Age concentrated in this chasm of mechanical industry.⁷⁵

Allan represents the city’s ideological blueprint drawn up with the capitalist class system integral to the design. Always built to commercial imperatives, the

‘chasm’ encompassed the slum areas of Glasgow and the heavy industry that carried on nearby. The slums were peopled to facilitate the industry and there was a blurring of the lines between home and work; the smells and sounds of the shipyards blanketed the areas of housing, and the stench of the slum extended reciprocally to the gates of the yards. The underpinning ethos for the social organisation of housing was that the workers’ homes were built ‘around the places of work, so that the dominant relation was always there.’⁷⁶

By this pragmatic approach to urban planning, the organisation of political and social standing became built into the very fabric of the city and helped to establish the idea of inevitability and permanence in the ideological relation between worker and employer. As one of the first theorists to consider the economic and social power relations of the modern city, Engels regarded the city as the ‘social and physical consequence of capitalism.’ His theory developed to incorporate the idea that

this process of disturbance and exposure, in these particular forms, had created a proletarian and a socialist movement which could end capitalism and create different social relations and different kinds of human settlement [...] these relations of centralisation and dependence had created conditions for revolution.⁷⁷

Engels recognised that the organising principles of capitalism were embodied in the fundamental bricks-and-mortar of the city and thereby revealed its otherwise abstract ideology; this could be a source of power for the forces of the Left.

In essence, the constructed capitalist city, in its physical but also to some extent in its conceptual sense, contains areas where workers toil and reside, and areas from where the directors of the system can supervise the maintenance of the operation. Social distance is entailed in this, protecting the owners of

production from the inevitable social deprivation signified in the unsightly shipyards, factories, warehouses and slums. In addition to this capitalist binary, the rampant commodification of space in the city sees an underpinning ‘determining dimension’ in money – and frequently money from ‘elsewhere.’ Areas are owned by figures from that shadowy elsewhere and the built city facilitates the generation and exchange of money; more than signifiers in their own right, there is the sense that the very topography is sustained by this absentee ownership and control. Detachment becomes a defining characteristic: ‘detached capital, detached income, detached consumption, detached social intercourse.’⁷⁸

Themes of alienation, surface appearances and connection to capital are all implied in this bleak assessment of the geography of the lived environment, comprising the ideological fabric and social relations that are so apparent in the city. Houses are merely rented space, another opportunity for the exploitation of the people, in which they can temporarily play out their lives of thwarted ambition and daily squalor. In Glasgow (and in *Major Operation*) unseen bosses pay barely-living wages for the building and repair of ships that facilitate capitalism’s trade round the global network of economic centres. The never-seen shipyard boss of MacKelvie’s sometime place of work is a prime example: ‘And then Boreland, the directorial brain of the company was at the moment in London fixing up fresh business. Boreland was a holy terror of a cat to the managerial mice.’⁷⁹ Boreland is the shadowy background figure, the guiding hand directing the capitalist operation tracked here with an effect of simultaneity and embodying the ‘elsewhere’ of the financial power.

Barke's depiction of Glasgow's class-organised topography accentuates the imposing material 'indices [...] such as busy thoroughfares, familiar architectural landmarks, and other conventional cosmopolitan signifiers,'⁸⁰ to gesture toward the ideological aspects of ownership and usage. The established order of the city's business and retail districts contrasts with the urban decay and overcrowding of the working-class and slum areas. *Major Operation* responds to this idea of a fractured social landscape in which 'characteristic behaviour is apparently linked to characteristic surroundings.'⁸¹ The occupants of the smart office buildings near George Square look down on the marching workers as an underclass and are aggrieved that this political furore is fermenting in their surroundings as a direct challenge to the demarcated limits within the city. In contrast, the working and unemployed men of the slums are shown by Barke to be potentially roguish types exhibiting behaviour characteristic of their surroundings, where life is caught between shipyard, pub and the paucity of rented tenement property.

They were raw but they were genuine – when you got to know them. They weren't angels of course. Razor slashers, wife beaters, incestmongers, adulterers, drunkards, blackmailers, gangsters [...] But a man, morally rotten, didn't work long with Mackelvie.⁸²

Raising the question as to what habits or character traits would, in fact, indicate true moral rottenness, the deviant behaviour of the men is implied as taking place in the socially-deprived areas. Set in an environment of decaying housing, industrial shipyard, public house and the transitional zones between, the depiction of drunkards, wife-beaters and philanderers appears to reinforce dominant connotations of such spaces.⁸³ Far from Barke adopting a derivative middle-class depiction of the working-classes causing the degeneration of an

area, the cause-and-effect is reversed to suggest that the vagaries of life in Glasgow's slums is the factor that sets in motion a downward spiral of eroding moral integrity.

The Anderson party's trip to Inverary offers a contrasting reinforcement to the theory that all areas have a 'socio-historic signification'⁸⁴ and that certain areas lend themselves to certain actions, even instigate them. For the leisured middle class the countryside becomes an extension of their homes and gardens. Furthermore, showing the middle classes at play in the countryside implies an ironic re-colonisation of the rural domain that had, in historical terms, been previously emptied by political and economic forces.

The beauty of Glen Croe did not impress them. Had the glen been in Wester Ross or in the remote corners of Sutherlandshire they would have rhapsodized about it. But Glen Croe was merely an extension of Loch Lomond: a place familiar to every motorist, cyclist and hiker.⁸⁵

In *Major Operation* exclusivity is one of the demands the middle classes make of their country retreat. They expect the urban class delineations to extend out into the countryside, and Glen Croe's common accessibility, in the minds of the middle class, sees it tainted by the colonisation of the increasingly mobile lower orders. Here again we see the tension of the demarcations of class division. Barke develops the idea of geographical significations to suggest how they are created from an historical palimpsest, formulated in the urban environment and broadened in application by the simulation of a Scottish rural tradition.

Literally exporting the fragmented consciousness of the city-dweller into the countryside, the novel allows the reader to ascertain the geographical components in a shared cultural memory.

In Cathedral Street buses were loading up with sightseers bound for Scotland's more famous beauty spots. The three lochs: Lomond, Long and Gore. The Burns Country (incidentally the dullest stretch in Scotland). The Falls of Killiecrankie, the Trossachs and Royal Braemar [...] The exploitation of national beauty and romance: Scotland calling: Land of the Bens, the Glens and the Heroes: Land O'Cakes and Rabbin Burns: Land of the Mountain and the Flood: Ca' the Ewes tae the Knowes ye Braw Lads...Hail Caledonia!⁸⁶

The hackneyed elements of a fading discursive Scotland integral to national identity, the stuff of Highland romances, are aestheticised and shown to etch themselves on the cultural psyche. Places and phrases merge to become signifying touchstones of identity and cultural value, the referent for an otherwise elusive sense of Scottishness. This sense of identity hinges on an historic pastoral tradition.

The Spiritual Inheritance

Solely on the basis of his own personal experience of the decline of economic life in the rural areas supplanted by life in the urban, for Barke there was no return to the already dubious idea of a romantic Arcadia: the imperatives of history's dialectic had driven society on to the next stage. In a notable thematic break from his previous novels, and one that suggests the author recognised the transition of militancy into the modern urban locale, there is no consideration by any character in *Major Operation* (nor the merest suggestion by the author in his more directly didactic passages) that a return to traditional rural modes was either sustainable or desirable. This would be an exclusively urban novel. The class tensions that pervade *Major Operation* instead pit the culture of the working class against the detached materialism of the middle class in a

modernised reformulation of Scotland's traditional land-oriented, rural class divisions. The fundamental rural class opposition of land-owner and worker/renting-occupier retains a residual material and psychological presence in the transplanted class divisions of the city, where the workers rent cramped tenement or 'single end' homes from the middle and upper classes. They, in turn, are the absentee landlords discrete from the workers and resident in their commodious houses in the more salubrious locations of the city. Barke's novel illuminates this environment where, though still alienated from their labour in the Marxist sense of the term, the working class are depicted as closer to the means of their existence in a geographical sense. Contrasting with this, the middle class exist in wholesale detachment from the material processes of capitalism and are thus abstracted from any community impulse.

Writing in opposition to the bleak ideological implications of novels such as *No Mean City*, Barke's more optimistic portrayal of the city's potential saw it as the locus ripe for root-and-branch political and societal change. The progressive, world-minded view of the modern city that co-existed with the more pejorative conception was expressed by George Simmel. Though he recognised the existence of oppressive 'manifestations of power,' he also suggested how in the city agency was 'enacted within the field of possibilities defined by this environment: its space, its population, its technologies, its symbolisation.'⁸⁷ These features propose a positive – or at least more optimistic – view of the city as politically and socially dynamic, driven by an inherent tension at its core. Undeniably, the nexus of governmental, capitalist and social control exists more palpably in the urban than it ever can in the rural. The sense that the otherwise invisible hand of guiding power at least betrays traces of its influence in the

bricks and mortar of the city renders it the best available locus for contesting that power. The very notion of the presence of that power leads to an awareness of ideological forces moulding the city to a prescribed design. Pointing to the disjunction that can arise in the modern metropolis, James Donald asserts the existence of an ‘uncanny specific [...] in the disquieting distinction between the city as object of government and the city as frame of mind.’⁸⁸ This posits the alienation and entrapment that co-exists in the social mass of the city along with the potential for unified, radical politics. So there is a tangible and unsettling difference between a discursive and a lived experience. The material city comprises the indices of government and commerce, which offer opportunities for political transgression and resistance. Protest marches, for instance, clearly garner more political poignancy in the very locations where manifestations of capitalist and state mechanisms are most obviously visible.

Far more than merely a comparative moral hinterland to the valorised rural existence, the appropriation of the ‘high ideological valency of the discursive city,’ with all its inherent ‘volatility of meaning’ has seen the city itself ‘diversely mobilised within the great transitions of history.’⁸⁹ These great transitions are informed by the ideological shifts from: ‘the rural to the urban; the agrarian to the industrial; and – the big one – the feudal to the capitalist.’⁹⁰ The city is there to be contested and appropriated by competing forces in an ideological battle, to organise the city’s signifiers into new exigencies of binary hierarchies. Taking the River Clyde as a practical example, one of the most dominant signifiers in Glasgow’s ideological cityscape, it can be regarded variously as the artery maintaining the economic life of capitalism in the city; a signifier for industrial Glasgow, synonymous with the toils of the working class

as the location of the shipyards and nearby tenemented, slum districts; or a demarcating feature that symbolically separates north from south, the working class from the middle class. It is this range of signification that sees the ideological demarcations under pressure and ‘up for grabs’ in the moulding of the discursive city.

In representing a city that defied a cohesive functional symbolism, Barke provided a large cast of characters with numerous, diverse discourses in an effort to emphasise this aspect through representative cross-sectioning. The effect was to depict the whole in as cognitively ‘digestible’ a literary package as was possible. In his mitigation of the disjunctive effects of the city, Barke appeals to the citizenry of this city, possessed of a ‘hypertrophic common identity [...] the slaves of capital,’⁹¹ who must form the revolutionary cadre that achieves social justice and instigates deep-rooted ideological change. How to forge a unified social entity – or in Raymond Williams’ terms, a ‘knowable community’ – from this disjunctive and disparate mass was one of the daunting problems that dogged the theorists of the consistently fractured Left. This political division was reflected in cultural terms in the social realism / modernism split. How to configure the reality of these conditions in literature was one of the endeavours undertaken by Barke in *Major Operation*.

The following chapter endeavours to explain one of the factors that Barke drew upon in tackling this project. Considering the role played by that most modern of art forms – cinema – it will be demonstrated that the experience of the moving picture had a lasting impact on the author, filtered through into his fiction and facilitated his literary depictions of the Scottish metropolis. On a more general level, the rise of cinema entertainment will be analysed for its

cross-fertilisation with an urban environment; the political power of cinema will be considered (particularly in relation Barke's own writing); as will Scotland's relationship with film.

- ¹ Edward Scouller, 'So This Is Glasgow!', review of *Major Operation*, *Outlook*, 1.8 (November 1936), p. 79.
- ² Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903), in *Georg Simmel: On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings*, ed. and introduced by Donald N. Levine (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 335.
- ³ Giuliana Bruno, 'Haptic Space: Film and the Geography of Modernity', in *Visualizing the City*, ed. by Alan Marcus and Dietrich Neumann (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 13 – 30 (p. 24).
- ⁴ Jean-Jacques Wunenburger, 'The Urban Imaginary: An Exploration of the Possible or the Orinary?', published in the Centre of Contemporary Culture Barcelona 2003 exhibition catalogue *The City That Never Was*, CCB 2003, http://www.cccb.org/rcs_gene/urban_imaginary.pdf [accessed 11 February 2011].
- ⁵ Giuliana Bruno, 'Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film', http://www.ville-en-mouvement.com/chaire_universitaire/telechargements/articles_parutions/publications/ville_avec_flux/conferences/Guiliana_Bruno.pdf [accessed 11 February 2011].
- ⁶ Giuliana Bruno, 'Haptic Space: Film and the Geography of Modernity', p. 19.
- ⁷ James Donald, 'The City, The Cinema: Modern Spaces', in *Visual Culture*, ed. by Chris Jenks (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 77 – 95 (p. 81).
- ⁸ Mark Shiel, 'Cinema and the City in History and Theory', in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 1 – 18 (p. 5).
- ⁹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 19.
- ¹⁰ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 85.
- ¹¹ David B. Clarke, 'Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1 – 18 (p. 4).
- ¹² David B. Clarke, p. 4.
- ¹³ J. Harrison Miller, in a letter to the editor on the subject of the Scottish Novel, *Glasgow Herald*, 2 December 1961, retained in James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ¹⁴ David MacEwen and J. H. Whyte, introductory editorial, *Outlook*, 1.1 (April 1936), p. 7.
- ¹⁵ Gordon Hope, 'Middle-Class Glasgow Goes Communist: Remarkable Novel of Life in the Second City', in an otherwise unidentified newspaper cutting, dated 17 October 1936, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ¹⁶ J. R. Campbell, 'Two Worlds in the 2nd City', *Daily Worker*, 18 September 1936, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ¹⁷ J. R. Campbell, 'Two Worlds in the 2nd City'.
- ¹⁸ Gerald Gould, 'The Second City of the Empire', *The Observer*, 20 September 1936, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ¹⁹ Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 47.
- ²⁰ John Greco, 'Twenty Four Frames: Notes on Film by John Greco', <http://twentyfourframes.wordpress.com/2010/01/31/street-scene-1931-king-vidor/> [accessed 6 December 2011].
- ²¹ Andy Croft, *Red Letter Days: British Fiction in the 1930s* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), p. 278.
- ²² Andy Croft, p. 277.
- ²³ Amy Kaplan, p. 1.
- ²⁴ James Barke, *The Land of the Leal* (London: Collins, 1939; repr. Edinburgh: Cannongate, 1987), p. 143.
- ²⁵ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 24.
- ²⁶ In this episode, Bloom fails to disguise his furtive observation of Gerty MacDowell, whereupon she engages in flirtatious flashing of her garters for the benefit of the now (relatively) discreetly masturbating Bloom. This is clearly a less restrained outcome that results from the erotics of the city spectacle, but nonetheless emanates from the same charge.
- ²⁷ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922)(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 219.
- ²⁸ James Joyce, p. 256.
- ²⁹ Katherine Mullin, 'Joyce, Early Cinema and the Erotics of Everyday Life', in *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010), pp. 43 – 56 (p. 45).
- ³⁰ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 32 – 33.
- ³¹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 35 – 38.
- ³² James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 65.
- ³³ Katherine Mullin, p. 43.
- ³⁴ Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, 'Cities: Real and Imagined', in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 99 – 108 (p. 104).
- ³⁵ David Trotter, 'Virginia Woolf and Cinema', *Film Studies*, 6 (Summer 2005), 13 – 26 (p. 15).
- ³⁶ David Trotter, p. 20.
- ³⁷ Amy Kaplan, p. 52.
- ³⁸ Giuliana Bruno, p. 26.
- ³⁹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 121.
- ⁴⁰ Adrian Rifkin, 'Benjamin's Paris, Freud's Rome: whose London?', *Art History*, 22 (November 1999), 619 – 632 (p. 621).
- ⁴¹ As an indication of the enduring and discursive tenacity of cinema, these steps are now commonly referred to as the 'Potemkin Steps'.
- ⁴² David B. Clarke, p. 3.
- ⁴³ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 133.
- ⁴⁴ Colin McArthur, 'Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: tracking the elusive cinematic city', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 19 – 45 (p. 19).
- ⁴⁵ Colin McArthur, p. 19.
- ⁴⁶ 'History of Film Industry – Film Art Emerges', <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/6534/Film-Industry-History-of.html> [accessed 15 February 2011].
- ⁴⁷ Rob Lapsley, 'Mainly Cities and at Night: Some Notes on Cities and Film', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 186 – 208 (p. 187).
- ⁴⁸ Rob Lapsley, pp. 192 – 193.

- ⁴⁹ Alastair Michie, 'Scotland: Strategies of Centralisation', in *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. by Charles Barr (London: BFI, 1986), pp. 252 – 271 (p. 255).
- ⁵⁰ Alastair Michie, pp. 258 – 259.
- ⁵¹ Tony Fitzmaurice, 'Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context', in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 19 – 30 (p. 19).
- ⁵² David B. Clarke, p. 3.
- ⁵³ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 93.
- ⁵⁴ John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners: Documentary Film and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935 – 52', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 59 – 82 (p. 61).
- ⁵⁵ *Tam Trauchle's Troubles: Life in a Single End Tenement Flat in the 1930s*, (Pathé Pictures, 1934), Scotland on Screen, <http://scotlandonscreen.org.uk/database/record.php?usi=007-000-000-051-C> [accessed 19 July 2011].
- ⁵⁶ *Tam Trauchle's Troubles: Life in a Single End Tenement Flat in the 1930s*.
- ⁵⁷ William Donaldson, *Popular Literature in Victorian Scotland: Language, Fiction and the Press* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1986), p. 145.
- ⁵⁸ Mark Shiel, p. 6.
- ⁵⁹ Seamus Deane, Introduction to James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin, 1992), p. xxvii.
- ⁶⁰ Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 51.
- ⁶¹ Mark Shiel, p. 7.
- ⁶² Mark Shiel, p. 9.
- ⁶³ Tony Fitzmaurice, pp. 22 – 23.
- ⁶⁴ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 108 – 109.
- ⁶⁵ Ian Spring, *Phantom Village: The Myth of the New Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p. 64.
- ⁶⁶ Ian Spring, p. 64.
- ⁶⁷ 'Red Clydeside: The Battle of George Square (Bloody Friday 1919)', <http://gdl.cldr.strath.ac.uk/redclyde/redclyeve14.htm> [accessed 24 October 2010]
- ⁶⁸ John Foster, 'Red Clyde, Red Scotland', in *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, ed. by Ian Donnachie and Chris Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), pp. 106 – 124 (pp. 111 – 112).
- ⁶⁹ John Manson, 'Did James Barke Join the Communist Party?', *Communist History Network Newsletter Online*, <http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/chnn/CHNN19BAR.html> [accessed 11 October 2011]. Peter Kerrigan was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and a member of the Glasgow Strike Committee during the General Strike. He rose to the CPGB's Scottish Organiser and joined the International Brigades in Spain, later returning as a correspondent for the *Daily Worker*. He spent the next twenty years on the CPGB's Central Committee as Industrial Organiser. In an echo of Barke's fictional character, Jean MacKelvie, Kerrigan's wife, Rose, explained: "I have never stopped my husband...because I have the same views as him...I've always just turned out and done my bit to keep the finances going and keep our heads above water as it were financially." 'Biography of Peter Kerrigan', *Spartacus Educational*, <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/TUkerrigan.htm> [accessed 11 October 2011]. John MacLean (1879 – 1923) was a political activist who successfully organised strikes and demonstration throughout Glasgow in the early 1900s. His central political principle was that 'the socialist revolution could be carried out peacefully by the adequate political education of the working class not by the violent overthrow of the system by an elite group'. As the SDP lecturer in economics he conducted numerous classes for the education of the workers of Glasgow and outlying districts. MacLean was imprisoned for his anti-war stance in 1916 and again in 1917, acts which saw large demonstrations of workers take to the streets in support of the activist. As the Consul for Soviet Affairs in Britain, MacLean was again arrested in 1917 and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment, during which time his health deteriorated due to periods of hunger strike. On release from prison and until his death MacLean continued to run political campaigns as a republican candidate for the Gorbals district of Glasgow. 'John MacLean: Radical Glasgow', Glasgow Caledonian University Website, <http://www.gcu.ac.uk/radicalglasgow/chapters/johnmclean.html> [accessed 11 October 2011].
- ⁷⁰ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 134 – 135.
- ⁷¹ Ian Spring, p. 68.
- ⁷² Colin McArthur, pp. 19 – 20.
- ⁷³ Colin McArthur, p. 20.
- ⁷⁴ David B. Clarke, p. 6.
- ⁷⁵ Dot Allan, *Hunger March* (London: Hutchison, 1934), pp. xiv – xv.
- ⁷⁶ Raymond Williams, p. 220.
- ⁷⁷ Raymond Williams, p. 303.
- ⁷⁸ Raymond Williams, p. 249.
- ⁷⁹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 29.
- ⁸⁰ Mike Mason, 'Naked: Social Realism and the Urban Wasteland', in *Cinema and City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. by Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 244 – 253 (p. 244).
- ⁸¹ Mike Mason, pp. 246 – 247.
- ⁸² James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 41.
- ⁸³ Mike Mason, p. 247.
- ⁸⁴ Mike Mason, p. 249.
- ⁸⁵ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 54.
- ⁸⁶ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 20.
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Fig. 5a



Fig. 5b



Fig. 5c



Fig. 5d



Fig. 5e



Fig. 5f



Fig. 5g



Fig. 6a



Fig. 6b



Fig. 6c



Fig. 6d



Fig. 6e



Fig. 6f



Fig. 6g



Fig. 6h



Fig. 6i