

**Timms, Edward and David Kelley, eds. *Unreal City: Urban Experience in Modern European Literature and Art.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985. Pp. vii, 269. 35 black and white illustrations, index. £26.50**

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universally scorned for a slavish devotion to harmony and balance by Victorian successors eager to rebuild. Moreover, even granting the pitfalls in selecting evidence alluded to by the author, there are still surprising omissions. There is, of course, Dickens describing London's wretchedness, but no mention of Smiles. Spengler's despair at urban civilization is here, but where is Sandburg's celebration of Chicago's brawling, sprawling robustness? There is Mayhew but not Mann, Priestly but not Proust, Harold Laski but not Sinclair Lewis.

In sum, scholars will find in Lees a mine of comment, observation and concern but are also likely find some disappointments. Despite the title, a large portion of the discussion is not focused on urban society, the city as organism, but on the physical mechanism — the familiar problems of sewers and slums. The years after 1918 are passed over briefly in the concluding chapter, despite the common assumption that these represented the 'golden age' of urban civilization. Commentary is catalogued uncritically, and the author's remarks are more summary than synthesis and analysis. In many ways *Cities Perceived* resembles its subject: diverse and absorbing, impressive yet uneven, fascinating but flawed.

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"This book analyses the responses of European writers and artists of the early twentieth century to the challenge of the city" (p. 1). It comprises fifteen essays which examine the variety of these responses while also trying to identify within them "underlying patterns of coherence." The approach is comparative and interdisciplinary, and the result is essentially successful. While emphasis is given to the writers' reactions to the city in the period 1900-1930, the editors have struck a happy balance between literature, painting, architecture and cinematography. And it is pleasing to find that the majority of the essays make precise reference to others in the book, thereby creating a sense of coherence which is often lacking in such collected works. Occasionally, however, the cross-references are incomplete, as on p. 182 where we should read p. 122 for p. 000; and similarly on p. 212 n. 18, where p. 3 should be substituted for p. 000.

The theme of the *Unreal City* is taken from T.S. Eliot's *Waste Land* and is examined in a broad European context with analysis of writers such as Apollinaire, Rilke, Pound,

Joyce, Brecht, Musil and Kafka, and with an extension to New York through Lorca. In each case we witness the authors' sense of disorientation and antagonism towards the city which may seem paradoxical given the apparently elegant civilisation of early 20th-century London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. And yet it is this facade of elegant reality that is dissolved by the avant-garde of the early 20th-century. Thus, for example, in chapter 15, Edward Timms takes Musil's *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (*The Man without Qualities*) and the writings of Franz Kafka as the jumping-off points to examine life respectively in the Vienna of the pretentious Ringstrasse facades, and the Prague of medieval alleys and baroque palaces. His exemplary analysis cites contemporary analogues in architectural, political and psychological thought, while parallels are made with Rilke's Paris, discussed by Naomi Segal in chapter 6; Joyce's Dublin, examined along with Eliot and Pound by Michael Long in chapter 9; and Döblin's Berlin analysed in connection with Brecht by David Midgley in chapter 11.

The duality between the apparent ideal of the built environment and the experience of life within it is expressed at a number of different levels by the writers and artists under consideration. Baudelaire, whose influence on many of the authors discussed in this book is stressed time and again, urged artists to adopt urban themes for their work. But his plea was initially only heard by illustrators — whose little-studied work is mentioned in passing by Frank Whitford in his excellent analysis of "The City in Painting" (p. 45) — of whom Daumier would give monumental expression to his themes like *Third Class Carriage* (c. 1865) (Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada). Impressionist and Divisionist versions of urban subject matter were more concerned with superficial luminosity than the depiction of human reaction to the city and as such contrast sharply with early 20th-century depictions of the urban experience, a point made forcefully by Whitford's juxtaposition of Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* (1873) and Meidner's Expressionist *I and the City* (1913) (pp. 47-49). While Meidner's angular formal language owes much to the Futurists, as did that of George Grosz (p. 60), their view of urban life did not conform to the Futurist glorification of the city as witnessed in the writings of Marinetti, the paintings of Boccioni and Carra, and architectural projects of Sant'Elia, discussed in chapters 3 and 4. As Timms observes, "For the Futurists the city is dynamic; for the Expressionists it is demonic" (p. 118). "Universal dynamism" and the perception of simultaneous sensations introduced in the "Technical manifesto of Futurist painting" of 1910 were expressed in Boccioni's *The Street Enters the House* (1911), and influenced Robert Delaunay's *City of Paris* (1912), while the concept of simultaneity is witnessed in Expressionist poetry (p. 119) and in Pound's view that "In the city the visual impressions succeed each other, overlap, overcross, they are cinematographic."

Infatuation with the city was not all-embracing among the Futurists as we learn through Judy Davies' analysis of

their poetry in chapter 4 which reveals both the enhancing and threatening qualities of the machine. Similar ambivalence is witnessed as yet another level in the minds of individual writers as, for example, with Brecht's reflection on Berlin and London as "impossible to live in, and impossible to leave" (p. 181).

Timms contrasts the English Georgian poets with the German Expressionists, and succinctly parallels their myth of rural England with the works of Elgar, Lutyens and Stanley Spencer (p. 125). But placement in a broader context is also relevant, for their recoil from industrialised urban centres is presaged by Augustus Welby Pugin in his 1836 publication of *Contrasts*, in the Arts and Crafts Movement of William Morris, and the architecture of Norman Shaw especially his Bedford Park project (See Kenneth Frampton, *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*, Oxford University Press, 1980, 46, for the "Ballad of Bedford Park"). From here it is but a small step to the Garden City developments like Letchworth begun in 1904; real or unreal city?

On a general level it should be observed that footnotes are short and strictly to the point, and, where relevant, cite the most recent work on the subject. Illustrations, other than line drawings, lack contrast, while consistent references are required to works of art not illustrated, especially in Peter Collier's *Nineteenth-Century Paris: Vision and Nightmare* (chapter 2). When such pictorial references are omitted, it is hard for all but the art historian of the period to judge the relevance of the works for the argument. But these are minor shortcomings; as a whole the book must be recommended to all urban historians who wish to explore the reactions of the European avant-garde to early 20th-century cities.

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Arrom, Silvia Marina. *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857*. Stanford, Ca.; Stanford University Press, 1985. Tables, figures and illustrations, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. Pp. vii, 384. \$47.50 (U.S.).

The lives of women in nineteenth-century Mexico City — let alone in the secondary cities of Mexico and Latin America — have only begun to be studied. Until recently, students seeking to place Mexican women in their history have had to search through thickets of stereotypical legal and moral prescriptions or through vignettes sketched by travelers, diarists, or novelists. However grateful one is to have the views of brilliant foreigners such as France Calderon de la Barca and Alexander von Humboldt, or the realistic backdrops sketched by the Mexican novelist, José Joaquín

Fernández de Lizardi, they are insufficient to dismantle the stereotype of docile wife, mother, or nun; secluded, trivialized, and dominated by men.

In this work, Professor Arrom gives us a more complex and more satisfying portrait of the women of the New World's largest metropolis. She shades in differences of place and role by race, class, age, and civil status. She shows variations and degrees of male dominance. She indicates how larger structures of law and custom interacted with individual situations and volition. Her period, 1790-1857, straddles the last years of the colony, the era of the Independence wars, and the early years of the republic to the mature liberal era called the Reforma. This breaks with the traditional practice of dividing Mexican history between 'colonial' and 'national' periods, offering instead a perspective of continuity underlying the ephemera of political events.

The structure of Professor Arrom's book is set by her sources. An introductory chapter, "The Mobilization of Women," uses published works of the period to sketch contemporary ideas about motherhood, work, public life, and the "social utility" of women. Chapter 2, "Legal Status," is a fascinating and freshly-drawn picture of the laws relative to women. Because Mexico maintained colonial law codes more or less intact after independence, Arrom must deal with the hispanic legal framework in a broad sense. To do so she draws on material from as far back as the thirteenth century but glosses it with commentaries and criticisms of legal matters by Mexicans. Censuses and notarial records are the bases for chapters 3 and 4 dealing with "Demographic Patterns" and "Employment." Here Arrom samples manuscript census schedules of a central and a periferal zone of the city for 1811 and 1848 to chart and compare women in the population by race, class, marital status, and place of origin. These censuses are also the basis of her discussion of the structure of the labour force by sex. Chapter 5, "Marital Relations and Divorce," is based on a sample of 81 ecclesiastical divorce files, a hitherto unmined treasure of vivid and sometimes intimate domestic detail that reveals aspects of women's experience in marriage.

The several groups of sources complement one another to give us the most complete picture yet for women in a nineteenth-century Latin American city. Accounts of the law, the mentalité of male hegemony, and generalizations sketched in from census data are fleshed out by individual voices recoverable from notarial instruments and divorce files. These latter also yield their patterns. Can the experience of women in Mexico City be assumed to apply to other Latin American cities? No, says Arrom, for its metropolitan sophistication, economic diversity, class-stratified population, and hispanic, but European-influenced, cultural values, set it apart from the rest of Mexico (and perhaps even the other major cities of Latin America), more than 90 per cent rural and strongly Indian.