

The Other Side of the Panopticon: Technology, Archives, and the Difficulty of Seeing Victorian Heterotopias

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Abstract

Can digital methods resolve major debates in the historiography of political agency? In recent decades, historical scholarship in British politics has identified an era of expert rule at the cost of seemingly losing the thread of successful movements from below after 1815. The talk will outline the failures of the linguistic turn and the subsequent return of British social history back to the state. An emerging consensus now describes an era of modern expert rule characterized by the state's presence in every domain of everyday life, including infrastructure, public health, crime, poverty, and housing. Historians in this tradition routinely describe Britain 1848 as a nation where the subaltern features chiefly as the subject of surveillance, management, and repression. Much more rarely do these stories successfully describe subalterns after 1848 as political actors in their own right. Political historians are thus challenged by questions first raised by Karl Polanyi, Michel Foucault, and Jurgen Habermas. Is the hegemonic power of the state in the modern world complete? Where can one find evidence of structural or continuous resistance? Successfully identifying agency from below demands a redefinition of political agency and new methodologies for sorting the masses of texts opened up for mining by the digital era. Such questions require us to excavate methodologies from late nineteenth-century philosophers of language like Ernst Cassirer, mid-century geographers like Peter Gould, scholars of mobile structure like E. J. Hobsbawm, and anarchist writers like Colin Ward. These methods, I shall argue, foreground the potential of language mining for identifying spaces of emergent publics where agency from below has been expressed over the long duree.

Applied to digital texts, landscape methods can enhance the depth and breadth of research on alternative agency. A program for digital research is presented, together with a database on the heterotopias of late nineteenth-century London, designed to highlight the spatiality of state surveillance, the land reform movement, theosophists, slumming, sexual and ethnic subcultures, bohemia, and hobohemia. Preliminary maps of places named in the database will be presented in conjunction with a discussion of how such a method might address larger historiographical concerns.

Introduction

Can digital methods solve major crises in the historiography of political agency? In the grand cross-fertilization of computer science and the humanities, a premium on visualization and experiment has been less useful to historians than to disciplines like literature and folklore where the success of new work depends principally upon pattern-finding alone.

Historians are different. Any unique cultural pattern or economic event may be utterly meaningless in the light of further historical research. What matters in history is showing change over time; what matters to the individual historian is contributing to a collective understanding of the chronology of events and offering some new insights about the relationship of evidence to historical consensus.

Such revolutions in historical thinking tend to capitalize on at least one of two basic styles of innovation. The first is a historiographical revision that reframes our understanding of an era, for instance showing that a so-called epoch of laissez-faire actually demonstrated the hand of government throughout. The second is a methodological innovation, which may involve the discovery of a new archive (for instance, previously unutilized town archives showing the process of nationalist thinking through the countryside), or the use of new materials previously unconsidered as archival materials, for instance the reading of ballads and fairytales as sources for peasant mentality.

Both of these problems—asking new questions of old sources and finding new sources—are all the more difficult in an overwritten literature like that of British political history, where two hundred years of social, political, and economic history have critiqued and dismantled seemingly infinitesimal questions of party, diet, wealth, and radicalism. The stakes of playing the game are therefore very high, and the meaningful questions already negotiated. Merely showing something beautiful with sources is insufficient to persuade historians of its use: rather, the competent marshaling of large numbers of documents becomes essential.

Postmarxism's Mandate to History

For political historians of my generation, there is perhaps no more central problem than the issue of vanishing agency from below. The origins of this problem date from the revisions offered by midcentury social history, when E. P. Thompson and others applied the new methods of structural analysis to working-class politics, using ballads and pamphlets as texts. By the 1970s and 80s, these methods, now routine, were applied to radical Chartism and working-class music halls, where social historians discerned the remnants of radical traditions, surviving even amidst the suppression of political difference from above.¹

Yet something was wrong with this story. Anyone who came of age in Britain in the era of the Nationality Act of 1982 and the Brixton Riots of 1985 was struck not with the success of British radical idealism but rather its violent suppression. According to leftist historians like Gareth Stedman Jones, the most stunning historical fact about Thatcher was the absence of a working-class critique of these issues. British working-class radicalism, rather than challenging local government and eventually being absorbed into a class-friendly welfare state (as Sydney and Beatrice Webb had prophesied from the 1920s), had in fact been crushed by the disciplinary functions of the welfare state, with its stunning success at stifling Irish and working-class dissent. Gareth Stedman Jones forwarded the depressing conjecture that this tradition of state suppression meant that working-class politics had become meaningless in his own day.²

¹ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society, and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1980).

² Gareth Stedman Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900; Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 460-508. On the Brixton Riots and their suppression: Ian Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) and Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London: Routledge, 1988).

The result was a full-scale realignment of historical interest away from the thick description of working-class culture and towards a history of the state, state surveillance, and state suppression of political dissent. By the 1990s, their efforts, regarded now as the British version of the “linguistic turn,” were revealing not Thompson’s triumphant account of a working class in the make, but rather the grim triumph of the state over an oral culture of constitutionality, family, and locality, too often co-opted by local administrators and official language.³

This new set of concerns provoked a shift of attention from every-day languages to official ones. Under the influence of Foucault, post-Marxism defined how an expanding logic of expertise had operated through public health acts, contagious disease acts, schools, council housing, the mechanisms of abstraction and assortment, control-isolated women and minorities, and the poor for special surveillance. Historians learned to read maps for the traces of state surveillance; they pillaged the papers of parliament for the evangelical prejudices of inspectors and social reformers, and they added great heaps of new primary sources to the canon of historical argumentation.⁴

The result was a new consensus about the rise and progress of the state stamped with a new pessimism about political agency from below. As James Vernon summarized the work of a decade, “the mid-Victorian language of popular politics” had increasingly defined “the poor, the sick, the residuum, the ethnic ‘Other’... as objects of sociological study” thus denying them “a sense of themselves as acting political subjects.”⁵ The work of the last three decades in British history—my own concluded—has exhumed the story of the state’s reach and the bootlessness of struggle from below. Favoring anecdotes about the representation of the state, it has eschewed local experience and alternative cultures as having left any mark on the grand sweep of history.

Very rarely do British historians admit candidly what a dark story we have been telling. For our current consensus suggests that the only form of agency that matters is that which defines participation in the nation, and that just this form of agency is impossible in the modern era. The one point upon which we all agree—we historians of bureaucracy, state surveillance, infrastructure, and post-colonialism—is the lack of agency of the poor over their own destiny in the modern era.

This, then, is the problem I have summarized as the question of vanishing of agency from below. After 1848, did no minority have control over their own destiny?

³ James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, C. 1815-1867* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1848-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). James Epstein, *In Practice: Studies in the Language and Culture of Popular Politics in Modern Britain* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

⁴ Especially relevant are Vernon, *Politics and the People*, and C. Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800-1854* (Cambridge University Press, 1998). Judith R Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003). Mary Burgan, “Mapping Contagion in Victorian London: Disease in the East End,” in *Victorian Urban Settings: Essays on the Nineteenth-Century City and Its Contexts*, eds. Debra N Mancoff and D. J Trela (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 43–56.

⁵ James Vernon, “Who’s Afraid of the ‘Linguistic Turn’? The Politics of Social History and Its Discontents,” *Social History* 19, no. 1 (January 1994): 81-97.

Now, important questions about the pervasiveness of control in the modern era have been raised from outside the discipline of history. Geographers such as David Harvey and Miles Ogborn have theorized that both capital and liberalism had geographic limits characterized by “spaces of resistance” or “heterotopias.” The latter term, initially a phrase of medical practice, was borrowed by Foucault to describe the sites where radical practice emerged, and developed by Michel de Certeau as a method for studying the social practices of the politically oppressed.⁶ In the hands of historical geographers, investment in political resistance from below turned scholarly attention to the heterotopias where alternative politics emerged, however briefly, in the history of the state’s rise to power. In such spaces—for instance the coffeehouse, barricade, or back-to-the-land movement—the state’s influence was limited and forms of working-class self-organization existed that seem to describe an alternative turn within history.

Such conjectures have enticed a range of historians grappling with the chronology of political agency. James Epstein and Simon Gunn presented the geographers’ theory to historians, raising the possibility of discerning physical sites like coffee houses and working-class meetings where politics was contested in practice. Numerous studies document the expansion of cartography from eighteenth-century military and naval surveying into disease control, crime, and poverty, they explained. They advocated a fuller inquiry into spatial agency, simultaneously from below and from above, using landscape as the lens by which to deconstruct the omnipotence of state agency in the modern era.⁷

Such a systematic analysis is not easily come by. The “spatial turn” has rather documented, piecemeal, micro-histories of neighborhood and representation. Studies of resistance concentrate on the making of identity on East-end streets, of the nature of the Jewish East End and the spatiality of Tamil nationalism. They tend to illustrate the diversity of possible ways of life in late nineteenth-century Britain, but none synthesized anything like a systematic view of agency in relationship to the state.⁸

The challenge for historians is to demonstrate the breadth and continuity of such alternative spaces. A single Fourierist settlement or Theosophist movement does little to challenge the dominance of nineteenth-century industrialization, surveillance, and repression. But utopias beget other utopias; working-class music more working-class music. In number and diversity, these alternative movements comprise the other side of modernity, and they are just as much a reality of life in the modern nation as panopticism. Conducting a survey of this depth and creativity requires new

⁶ Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London’s Geographies, 1680-1780*, Mappings (New York: Guilford Press, 1998); David Harvey, “Spaces of Hope,” *California Studies in Critical Human Geography* 7 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowicz, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22-27; and M. De Certeau et al., *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Univ of Minnesota Pr, 1998).

⁷ Simon Gunn, “Knowledge, power and the city since 1700,” *Social History* 27, no. 1 (2002): 59; S Gunn, “Knowledge, power and the city since 1700,” *Social History* 27, no. 1 (2002): 59.); and James Epstein, “Spatial Practices/ Democratic Vistas,” *Social History* 24, no. 3 (October 1999): 294-310.

⁸ Benjamin J. Lammers, “The Birth of the East End: Neighborhood and Local Identity in Interwar East London,” *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 2 (2005): 331-344; Sumathi Ramaswamy, “History at Land’s End: Lemuria in Tamil Spatial Fables,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59, no. 3 (2000): 575-602; and Nils Roemer, “London and the East End as Spectacles of Urban Tourism,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no. 3 (2009): 416-434.

methods. Rarely have historians managed the consistency and tenacity to conduct a broad-range survey of alternative modern developments.

We have then the seed, but not the systematic analysis, of a history of freedom in the modern era. What would be needed to *persuasively* prove the historical existence of alternatives to panoptical modernity would be a continuous, systematic analysis of cultural space that allowed the juxtaposition of power from above with alternatives from below.

Critical Theory Offers a Strategy

I began by asserting that major revisions in historical narrative depend upon two forms of revision: an accumulation of new sources and the application of new questions to those sources. When we describe the dialectics that characterize thinking about political agency in modern Britain, we look back over an expanding set of sources—the songs and ballads of working-class experience, the maps and official papers of the state, and the documents of nineteenth-century social reformers—each new expansion in the archive driven by the ideal of historical revision pushing forward the history of agency in some new way.⁹ Is it possible, then that the “spatial turn” would be driven by just such a methodological expansion in the digital humanities?

Digital humanities promise just such enhanced archives for the purposes of research. The search for agency from below demands new methodologies and a redefinition of political agency based upon different categories of evidence.

Faced with the context of the “spatial turn,” two methods in the digital humanities are particularly relevant: First, the individual researcher’s expanding scale of access to texts, and second, the researcher’s enhanced abilities to analyze the role of space in human societies. What historians need is the blending of these two resources—synthetic searches across mass digitized archives, and spatial analytics on the databases thereby created—to make real contributions to ongoing conversations about the life of political agency.

⁹ For songs and ballads see Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*; Joyce, *Visions of the People*; and Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974). For maps and official papers, see J. H. Andrews, *A Paper Landscape: The Ordnance Survey in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Oxford University Press, 1975). Richard Helgerson, “The Land Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England,” *Representations*, no. 16 (Autumn 1986): 50-85; R. J. P. Kain, *The Cadastral Map in the Service of the State: A History of Property Mapping* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Matthew H Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); and Michael Biggs, “Putting the State on the Map: Cartography, Territory, and European State Formation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41, no. 2 (April 1999): 374-405. For social reformers and their documents see Keith A. Cowland, “The Identification of Social (Class) Areas and Their Place in Nineteenth-Century Urban Development,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 4, no. 2, New Series (1979): 239-257; Raymond A Kent, *A History of British Empirical Sociology* (Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower, 1981); Andrew Lees, *Cities Perceived: Urban Society in European and American Thought, 1820-1940* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985); Felix Driver, “Moral Geographies: Social Science and the Urban Environment in Mid-Nineteenth Century England,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 13, no. 3, New Series (1988): 275-287; Ross McKibbin, “Class and Poverty in Edwardian London,” in *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press, 1990); Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities: notes on the spatialisation of virtue,” *Environment and Planning* 17, no. 1 (1999); and Christopher Hamlin, “Edwin Chadwick and the Engineers, 1842-1854: Systems and Antisystems the Pipe-and-Brick Sewers War,” *Technology and Culture* 33, no. 4 (2009): 680-709.

These assertions about the role of digital history come out of my own experience in the stacks. Like all dissertation-writing graduate students, I went to the archives; but midway through my project, I began to realize that the very parliamentary debates upon which my work focused were more available online than off. As my work became more centered upon digital repositories, inscape became an avenue for raising questions about the meaning of digital databases for historians in particular.

Most important among these expanding horizons was the possibility of synthetic search. In 2007-8 Google Book Search launched, introducing the possibility of keyword searching mass digitized databases not merely in the constrained, subject-limited sense of an ECCO or EEBO, but across fields and over centuries. Keyword searching, by allowing scholars to sort through larger numbers of texts for the mention of trace events, settings, figures, or practices, allows the historian to propose longer questions, bigger question. That suggests the shifting of graduate dissertations from five years of parliamentary reports to 500 years of text. From 2004, I kept a blog named ‘inscape,’ where I routinely discussed my dissertation research, and I began to document the way mass keyword searching was allowing me to extend my archival project on the history of surveying to tell a 125-year history of the British road network and its engineers, administrators, and travelers.¹⁰

Yet around the same time, scholars in archaeology, anthropology, and literature began to press the internet’s ability to perform spatial analytics on large data sets. Because place names are frequently unique spatial identifiers, digital scholars have been able to analyze historical events on a spatial level, identifying new geographical alignments. Just this sort of pattern-finding has been marshaled by the geospatial scholars at the Scholars’ Lab in the service of the Tibetan and Himalayan Library, allowing archaeologists and scholars of religion to work together to discern patterns in geography, religion, and politics. Similar projects have proved how the spatial analysis of traditional databases may act as a spur to further research.¹¹

The application of such work to historiographical questions—not to say historical datasets, but rather the problem of historical revisionism—is not entirely straightforward. Yet in the context of the “spatial turn,” historians have a new opportunity to contemplate the imbedded questions of center and periphery, borderland and boundary within deeply traditional discussions in history. Consider, for instance, the historiography of the Industrial Revolution. Spatial analytics of the railways raise questions about the creation of new, isolated peripheries within Britain. In 2009, I began mapping those places not visited by the rail in 1847 as a key to raising further questions about the boundaries between inclusion and exclusion in advancing industrialization.¹² Basic questions like this one may give way to more imaginative question about the role of borderlands in the composition of British nationality. In 2010, I mapped the places that registered as “crumbling cities” in the imagination of writers in the “long depression” of the 1870s. They mention the declining industrial towns of the north of Britain, as well as the new ghost towns left behind by collapsing rail

¹⁰ Jo Guldi, *Roads to Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

¹¹ <http://thlib.org>, <http://spatial.scholarslab.org>.

¹² “Places Left Behind by Rail,” http://landscape.blogspot.com/2008_11_01_archive.html.

lines in the American West, but they also mention the ruined cities of India, Egypt, and Persia—evidence of an imaginary landscape by which the possible decline of empire was being measured.¹³

These tools do not lend themselves to every debate equally. Mass search and spatial analytics share a particular homology with questions of change over time and the creation of imagined communities—issues at the heart of historical study over the last two hundred years. Expanding archives and spatial analytics are thus perhaps the two tools best suited to the work of the historian writing in the face of a canonical tradition.

But it is the scale and power these tools allow the individual researcher that should cause historians to pay the most attention. Synthetic analysis over broad periods of time and spatial comparison gives the individual historian, faced with a tradition, the possibility of engaging a literature as rich as that of British political history with a database rivaling those that took Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson decades to assemble. By mere dint of scale, such digital methods put the young historian in a position to raise a major critique of historiographical problems. Where digital methods correspond with historiographical critique, they raise the young scholar to an equal playing field with the tweed-jacketed dons and silver-haired radicals who have ingested hundreds of texts over the course of a lifetime. Such an expansion of access and malleability is unprecedented in the history of history. It reduces the barriers of archival travel, tabulation, and data collection that previously separated the leisured ivy-league scholar from his colleague at the distant university. It grants to young scholars—with potentially revolutionary ideas outside of the historical question—the tools to break open historical canons not merely on the decade scale but also on the scale of centuries.

These stakes are serious enough that the methodology of handling such large amounts of data must be taken with extreme care. This means, of course, not reading texts out of context; sufficient biographical study on the authors and agents involved, and due recourse to secondary sources and the historiographical canon. For the purposes of a history of heterotopias, methods may be refined even further. We can even further qualify the kinds of methods best suited to the study of political agency by returning to late nineteenth-century anthropology.

The first of these methods is attention to the logic of place-making as a cultural practice. The need for such a history was first proposed by Thomas Carlyle, who in 1837 urged that only a radical history of perception and identity was capable of explaining events so dramatic as the French Revolution. Carlyle impressed upon nineteenth-century historians the necessity of writing a history of the imagination, urging that the “world” of the modern era was “not fixable” but rather fabricated from fictions, even “the very Rocks and Rivers” being re-sculpted by “inward sense.”¹⁴ Under Carlyle’s influence, nineteenth-century historians as venerable as Thomas Macaulay devoted

¹³ “Ghost Towns of the Nineteenth Century,” <http://landscape.blogspot.com/2009/12/ghost-towns-of-nineteenth-century.html>.

¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution: A History*, 3 vols (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1837), 1:6.

chapters of their books to the sensuous differences made by the transport revolution on body and sociability.¹⁵

The study of place-making was only refined into a science in the hands of late nineteenth-century anthropology. In 1893, a young Harvard graduate student, Franz Boas, was investigating the Kwakiutl, a “sea-faring people to whom the forms of land and water and the dangers of the sea are all-important.”¹⁶ They oriented themselves, he found, according to the direction of the coastline and rivers. By writing down each place name and each constitutive category of place, Boas created a language-map that allowed him to reach generalizations about Kwakiutl foodways, settlement patterns, and even cultural values. Their language had “innumerable terms for islands,” including “island at the foot of a mountain,” and “island in the neck of a river,” the latter of which could serve as a metaphor for an impediment in an argument or a marriage. Locations could be described in terms of their vista: a “place of looking all around” as opposed to a “place of looking inside.” Boas concluded that “geographical names, being an expression of the mental character of each people and each period, reflect their cultural life and the line of development belonging to each cultural area.” Not only that, but the “form of each language limits the range of terms that can be coined.”¹⁷

In his exposition of semiotics, philosopher Ernst Cassirer foregrounded the Kantian constraints of space, time, and number as the three categories which early language everywhere described. Cassirer’s *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (3 vols., 1923-1929) described the different cosmologies of the ancient world from the Babylonian four-layered Akkad to the Rigveda’s Purusha with its correspondence to the human body. The structural variety of imagined landscapes offered Cassirer an illustration of how different languages directly alter the interpretation of a shared reality. For Cassirer, any sense of place beyond sun, moon, and stars was a cultural construct, constantly evolving from the “perpetual transition” between the culture’s “sense of place” and the individual’s “sensuous distinctions provided by immediate sensation.”¹⁸

This sense of space was ultimately about the process of defining self and other, caught up in the simultaneous roles of architecture and religion in defining a new community. Each culture, Cassirer

¹⁵ The smallest trip involved “such a series of perils and disasters as might suffice for a journey to the Frozen Ocean or to the Desert of Sahara,” and “it happened, almost every day, that coaches stuck fast, until a team of cattle could be procured from some neighbouring farm, to tug them out of the slough.” Macaulay suggested changes of magnitude by implication rather than by fact. The sticking coaches and deserts of the imaginary past were described in detail; the contemporary improvement was left vague. The historian preached that the seventeenth-century “mode of travelling” on coaches sticking in the mud “seemed to our ancestors wonderfully and indeed alarmingly rapid,” quoting seventeenth-century advertisements for the first flying coaches. In contrast, contemporary Englishmen placed on the same vehicles would regard them as “insufferably slow.” Everything had been improvement, he argued, castigating the past. So too, Macaulay alluded to an even more important shift of morals, away from “stupidity and obstinacy,” when travel was imperiled by danger and highwaymen, towards a new age of modern travel characterized by “luxury,” “liberty,” and “jollity.” Thomas Babington Macaulay, *History of England* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1849), i: 296, 332, 370-374.

¹⁶ Franz Boas, *Geographical Names of the Kwakiutl Indians*, Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology v. 20 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), i-ii.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 3:90.

argued, at some point in its history therefore developed a sense of “mythical space” closely akin to the “perceptual space” of an individual, or what any individual in that culture would recognize as salient terms in describing himself, his origin, and his purposes. While cultural senses of place evolved, Cassirer conjectured, they did so slowly, for culture, not individual experience, dictates the character of spatial perception.¹⁹

Moments of historical evolution of a new sense of space, Cassirer thought, occurred in travel, agricultural adaptation, and political change, whenever individuals endowed with “the independent energy of consciousness” “graft[ed]” new form onto “material impressions” already shared by the culture. To prove this cultural determination of perception, Cassirer referenced the wide variation of cultural systems for describing landscape. The categories of space, he argued, varied wildly from culture to culture: the number of cardinal directions, their deific associations, the primary regions of the world, their cultural resonance, and the sensory content about landscape used for wayfinding. Synthesizing a vast array of anthropological research, Cassirer referenced the “seven directions” of the Zuni, the fourfold mythical geography of ancient Babylon, the Roman system of sacred threshold, *cardo*, and *decumanus*, and then modernity: the age of the “straight line ‘as such.’” In theory, an exhaustive catalogue of spatial terminology would be sufficient to explain a deeply cultural history of the world.²⁰

But only late in the twentieth century was this method exploited for the purposes Cassirer envisioned: the writing of history for a people who had no written history. In the 1980s, anthropologist Keith Basso traveled over the American southwest, talking with Apache consultants and hearing the stories associated with each place in their tradition.

Basso reached the same conclusion as had Boas and Cassirer: “If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of doing human history, it is also a way of constructing social traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities.” In a world with no written traditions, place names offered “evidence of change in the landscape.”²¹ Earlier historians had failed to recognize the Apache historical tradition, expecting an epic of characters and events, when instead history was hidden in place names. The story of the people was in fact their story about the land—their memory of sites of veneration where they had once lived and of associations linked with places now vanished.

In this exploitation of the language of space, anthropologists pioneered an important lens for understanding the changing culture of people who did not write their own history in a traditional sense. The methods suggest that in studying place names we expand from gazetteer definitions to basic spatial concepts such as frontier, boundary, and borderland. It challenges us to track the emergence of new communities and spaces, and read in these imaginary realms the history of the political imagination.

Applying these methods to vast numbers of texts opens up the possibility for self-identifying emergent political groups whose intellectual motions gave way to physical movement, propelling

¹⁹ Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Form*, 3: 83.

²⁰ Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Form*, 3: 93, 95, 199.

²¹ Keith H Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 7-13.

them to possess neighborhoods of the city and there refine their political ideas. Indeed, it suggests that historians take seriously the reality of imaginary and literary places, from the Zion of Pilgrim's Progress to Middle Earth to hobohemia, insofar as they motivate real travels and constitute political boundaries, policed and enacted in architecture and ritual.²² To give one such example, consider bohemia. Classically, in Paris, London, New York, and Chicago, "Bohemia" is just such a place—representing, as Arthur Ransome explained, the movement of all individuals alienated from the evangelical values of small towns and suburbs, attracted to city cosmopolitanism, who there forged a new attitude towards sexuality understood to have catalyzed the spread of women's sexuality, homosexuality, and psychotherapy.²³ As I shall explain below, this mandate to excavate imaginary places formed a first criterion for the construction of my database of nineteenth-century heterotopias.

A second methodology is the search for mobile communities held together by a linguistic understanding of space. It has its origins with the seventeenth-century German historians of the medieval wandering of tribes, their ideas consolidated into Hegel's idea of "movements" both intellectual and physical in history and taken up by writers like Henry Mayhew as an explanation for the appearance of Jews and gypsies in modern London, before being developed between 1890 and 1910 into a theory of French, American, and English identity by geographical determinists under the influence of Ratzel—including, most notably, the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner.²⁴

The theory was, however, only directly applied to the history of political radicalism in 1884, when J. J. Jusserand penned his influential *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages*, which argued for the role of the outlaws in perpetuating international exchanges of ideas after the fall of Rome. Jusserand explained, "At a period when for the mass of mankind ideas were transmitted orally and travelled with these wanderers along the roads, the nomads served as a true link between the human groups

²² There are examples of historiography that takes imaginary places seriously. For pilgrimage, consider V. Turner, "The Center out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12, no. 3 (1973): 191–230; W. H. Gerdtts, "Daniel Huntington's Mercy's Dream: A Pilgrimage Through Bunyanesque Imagery," *Wintertur Portfolio* 14, no. 2 (1979): 171–194; and Isabel Hofmeyr, "How Bunyan Became English: Missionaries, Translation, and the Discipline of English Literature," *Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 84–119. For fantasy literature, J. K. Wright, *The Geographical Lore of the Time of the Crusades: A Study in the History of Medieval Science and Tradition in Western Europe* (New York: American Geographical Society, 1925); Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Kathleen Raine, *Golgonooza, City of Imagination: Last studies in William Blake* (Lindisfarne Books, 1991), http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=tsQo4-7PAkEC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=Golgonooza,+City+of+Imagination:+Last+Studies+in+William+Blake&ots=qgohP5ZqJc&sig=h_6OVr8bb8ry34kEv6Q11eF1uJE; and Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments, 1900-1945*, Studies in History, Planning, and the Environment (London: E & FN Spon, 2000).

²³ Arthur Ransome, *Bohemia in London* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1907); Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, 1st ed. (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000); Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); and Chad C. Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

²⁴ G. Hegel, *The Philosophy Of History* (New York: Colonial Press, 1902), 11-12; Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 4 vols. (1861-1862; rpt. ed., New York: Dover, 1968), I, 2-3; Raphael Samuel, "Comers and Goers," in *The Victorian City*, eds. H. J. Dyos and Michael Wolff, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1976), I, 124, 152-153; Rachel Vorse, "Vagrancy and the New Poor Law in Late-Victorian and Edwardian England," *English Historical Review* 92 (January 1977), 73; and Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (London: Penguin, 1971), 88-90.

of various districts. It would be therefore of much interest for the historian to know exactly what were these channels of the popular thought, what life was led by those who fulfilled this function, what were their influence and manners.”²⁵ Jusserand’s book was widely absorbed by Anglo-American elites, and in 1888, Thomas Wentworth Higginson would use the same conceit to retell the story of America as a history of New England vagabonds, runaway slaves, and maroons.²⁶

This conceit of how outcast wanderers had shaped an alternative, radical modernity received new life with the blossoming of the Anglo-American counterculture after the second world war. By the 1950s, Jusserand’s influence appeared in the works of Kenneth Allsop, E. J. Hobsbawm, and R. A. Leeson, who discerned in the movement of radical monks, journeymen, tramping artisans, and hobos the currents that carried radical ideas of union organizing and anarchy across nineteenth-century Europe.²⁷ Higginson’s suggestions were taken up by scholars like Hugo Leaming, Richard Price, and later Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, who argued for the existence of interracial diasporas of runaway slaves, radical sailors, and native Americans.²⁸ Incidentally, the most radical version of the theory to date was the version offered by Rolling Stone journalist (and Berkeley history graduate) Greil Marcus, whose *Lipstick Traces* (1990) linked dada and punk rock to the roving radical monks of the thirteenth century.²⁹

The radical traveler thesis proved immensely important to understanding radicalism and place-making in a globalized modernity. Postcolonial scholars like Leila Gandhi and Sumathi Ramaswamy have discerned how transnational exchanges of theosophists and Indian and Tamil nationalists depended upon the imagination of an alternative, shared space where members of their community could address each other on equal terms—frequently envisioned as the astral plane or Lemuria.³⁰ Working-class historians like Humphry Southall have called attention to the actual spaces of tramping artisans and their role in disseminating the politics of trade unions.³¹ My first book, *Roads*

²⁵ J. J. Jusserand, *La Vie Nomade Et Les Routes d'Angleterre Au XIVe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1884), translated as J. J. Jusserand, *English Wayfaring Life in the Middle Ages (XIVth Century)*, 2nd ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1890), 31.

²⁶ Thomas Higginson, *Travellers and Outlaws, Episodes in American History*, (Boston; New York: Lee and Shepard; C.T. Dillingham, 1888).

²⁷ Kenneth Allsop, *Hard Travellin': The Hobo and His History* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1967); E. J. Hobsbawm, “The Tramping Artisan,” *The Economic History Review* 3, no. 3, New Series (1951): 299-320; and Robert Arthur Leeson, *Travelling Brothers: The Six Centuries' Road from Craft Fellowship to Trade Unionism* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1979).

²⁸ H. P. Leaming, *Hidden Americans: maroons of Virginia and the Carolinas* (Garland Pub., 1995); Richard Price, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas*, 1st ed. (Garden City, N.Y: Anchor Press, 1973); and Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000).

²⁹ Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989).

³⁰ Sumathi Ramaswamy, *The Lost Land of Lemuria: Fabulous Geographies, Catastrophic Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); and Leela Gandhi, *Affective Communities: Anticolonial Thought, Fin-De-Siècle Radicalism, and the Politics of Friendship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

³¹ Humphrey R. Southall, “The Tramping Artisan Revisited: Labour Mobility and Economic Distress in Early Victorian England,” *The Economic History Review* 44, no. 2, New Series (May 1991): 272-296; and Humphrey Southall, “Agitate! Agitate! Organize! Political Travellers and the Construction of a National Politics, 1839-1880,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21, no. 1, New Series (1996): 177-193.

to Power, followed tramping soldiers, Methodists, and artisans over their converging and diverging paths through eighteenth-century England. Borrowing from Cassirer, it drew attention to the role of imagination in constructing their sense of space and ultimately of community. For Methodists, heavenly Jerusalem formed the imagined destination of all ordinary journeys, and Zion was structured into their songs, meetings, and sermons as a constant reminder of what it meant to be a people apart from contemporary Britain, united principally by their use of the roads.

Both methods I have described—the mining of spatial names as categories for communal values, and the scrutiny of movements of travelers united by a common identity or imaginary place—lend themselves imminently to text-mining and geoparsing on the digital web. Common identifiers like “hobohemia” or “trampland” or indeed “bohemia” itself point to a shared perception of identity mapped onto space, frequently with reference to unique geographical identifiers of the kind found in a gazetteer.

In theory the nineteenth century, with its major works of popular fiction, legal treatises, and social reform entirely digitized and freely available, should lend itself to text mining on a grand scale. Ideally, a rich database of nineteenth-century texts would lend itself to showing the emergence of such autonomous, spatially-identified communities, whether populated (as bohemia was) principally by elites, or (as trampland was) principally by the working class. The task before me was therefore to identify the kinds of places, real and imaginary, which unified emerging forms of political agency in the nineteenth century.

Trial Databases

The Heterotopia Database represents a preliminary attempt to analyze the emerging spaces of late nineteenth-century London. It was assembled on the basis of twelve months of reading primary and secondary sources together in an attempt to define, at least preliminarily, some of the spaces of the nineteenth-century city. Folders were intuitively formed from reading, querying, and repetition; like any scholarly endeavor, folders force consistency across eras. The databases allow constrained searches within particular tribes that allow the scholar to more easily sort for a common language.

The goal of the database is to ease the description, comparison, and analysis of heterotopias. The heterotopias include those (like bohemia) self-identified in the contemporary literature, those (like slumming) identified after the fact by later scholarship, and finally imaginary places (like the deep England common to Masfield, Lewis, and Tolkien, or the Lemuria of the Theosophists) identified in the literature.³² These places are categorical and constructed: they may be named with reference to the type of places that appear in gazetteers—for instance, bohemia may be defined in relation to Fleet Street. But they are chiefly interesting as the kind of emergent space of connections identified by scholars of the history of mobility as an abstract place which unites travelers in a common movement.

The simplest transformation is keyword searching. Constraining the search to a single heterotopia helps the process of analysis, for example looking for discussions of bohemia in the literature on hobos.

³² For Bohemia, see C Graña and M Graña, *On Bohemia: The Code of the Self-Exiled* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990); for deep England, see Hardy, *op. cit.*; for Lemuria, see Ramaswamy, *op. cit.*

A more complicated transformation is mapping the place names. I'm using the Zotero Maps plugin as my geoparser, which searches texts for place names, compares them with a gazetteer, and produces a map. The maps should allow us to characterize different movements and places; maps aid in synthesizing information about these movements (they force the reader to present the span of a hundred years next to each other) and maps aid in comparison (the suggestions that arise when different subcultures appear to drastically overlap or not). A modest suggestion would be that maps might aid the imagination, but the methods of research are the same.

The maps are merely generative: real analysis comes from reading. The maps provide clues for what to keyword search: "Irish" in slumming literature or "Scottish" in fantasy literature. The searchable database constrains the search to a finite archive. Patterns discovered can then be properly researched: using newspaper archives, Google Books, and traditional biography-based archives. Even a few place names open the door to traditional primary research—this is after all how British studies proceed in the traditional form, mirroring Lynda Nead's study of interactions along the social boundary that is Regents Street, or Epstein's characterization of eighteenth-century coffeehouse life.³³ Standard place-name signifiers are useful in locating a particular social scene that remained similar over stretches of time.

First, a few important caveats must be wrapped around any keyword search endeavor. There is enormous room for technological improvement in the mapping software. The texts are OCR'd rather than keyed; ocr is 90% accurate at best. Second, Zotero Maps is in beta, and I have limited information about how well it works. cursory comparisons of Zotero Maps with the texts in question suggest that for texts this large only perhaps 10% of place names are making it onto the map. Alternative software demonstrates what improvement might look like: Gutenkarte is a good example, and Geomaker is actually quite good; neither can handle new texts of the size in question (500 page studies, novels, in sets of 10-30). The results of this preliminary trial are therefore impressionistic at best—my conclusions heavily couched by recourse to the traditional method of reading secondary sources and coming to my own conclusions. Nonetheless—couched in secondary readings as they are—the preliminary results are suggestive, and some tentative avenues for future research may be forwarded.

Even Preliminary Databases Suggest New Connections in the Literature

The maps allow us to see new connections. Sometimes several movements intersect in space and time, bending the same physical to different movements. The standard secondary literature on the East End emphasizes it not as heterotopia but as the physical site of the fashioning of sociological expertise, where Charles Booth and Helen Bosanquet developed many of the metrics for measuring poverty and deprivation that would later be employed by the welfare state.³⁴ These studies tend to read intensively in a small body of sociologists' literature without contextualizing the spatial dynamics of the social explorers' travels.

³³ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) and Epstein, "Spatial Practices / Democratic Vistas," op cit.

³⁴ Mary Burgan, "Mapping Contagion in Victorian London: Disease in the East End," in *Victorian Urban Settings: Essays on the Nineteenth-Century City and Its Contexts*, ed. Debra N Mancoff and D. J Trela (New York: Garland Pub, 1996), 43–56 and Ross McKibbin, "Class and Poverty in Edwardian London," in *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford [England]: Clarendon Press, 1990).

In contrast to the standard literature, the maps emphasize first of all the spatial distance between East End and West. We know from the literature on public health and mapping how isolated the social and economic practices of the two sides of London became after the building of the “sanitary cordon” of Regent Street in 1815. The rise of social explorers, driven forward from the 1820s by sexual interest, was encouraged in the 1850s by a journalistic literature exoticizing the “tribes” of the East End, and these impulses gradually gave rise to the Settlement House movement and to sociological explorers.³⁵ Merely mapping the texts is sufficient to remind us that sociology still partook of a transgression into a space that was still a heterotopia. If we map the other texts that highlight the division between East and West, the significance of border-crossing becomes all the more clear.

Bohemian London, for instance, was zone of transgression enough for most London elites. Concentrated around the theater district of the Haymarket and the writers’ haven of Fleet Street and the Temple, bohemia stood for the possibilities of aesthetic radicalism. But bohemia was barely East, hardly East at all. The preliminary maps, mapping bohemia, demonstrate a concentration of references to the area around the Temple and the City.

The maps of spiritual movements demonstrate more references to sites further east. It was so much further to go into the East End proper. The more radical movement east united sexual tourists and Settlement movement workers with free-thinking feminists and theosophists like Annie Besant, whose career as a union organizer, advocate of birth control, and theosophist guru spanned all the movements of the East End. Such texts tend to foreground the East End as a site for studying divergent world views and the nature of phenomenological difference itself. Theosophist texts like Leadbeater’s *Devachanic Plane*, which foregrounds the possibility of psychic intuition of distant places and events, raise the question about whether girls in the East End are as competent psychics as those in the West.³⁶

By reading intensively within each literature about its use of the East End, we receive a very different picture of the uses of the East End than that traditionally presented in the historiography that stresses social exploration, sexual commodification, and official reification of minorities and women in East London. Rather, other texts stress the East End as the site of the sensitization of radicals to a broader and international politics.

A map of “hobohemia,” gleaned by references to places made in texts by and about tramps, suggests another scene of association between different classes where slumming led elites further east. These interactions may have differed in nature and kind from those of charity movements and settlement houses, as the narratives in the texts suggest. First transgressing eastward to bohemia could thus lead to a more serious encounter east later. George Borrow, author of *Lavengro*, was notorious for taking pasty bohemian writers with him to trampland to get into first political arguments and then fist fights with hobos. These connections between east and west, between bohemia and trampland, were being actively cultivated by the end of the century in a literature on vagabondage. W. H. Davies, a poetry-writing tramp whose leg had been crushed hopping trains in

³⁵ See Kent, Heap, Koven, McKibben, op. cit

³⁶ On Besant, see Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Geoff Ginn, “Answering the ‘Bitter Cry’: Urban Description and Social Reform in the Late-Victorian East End,” *The London Journal* 31 (November 2006): 179-200; and C. Leadbeater, *The Devachanic Plane* (London, 1896).

Canada, tried in vain to publish his poetry until discovered by the bohemian and social explorer George Sims. Other tramps too became celebrities only after contact with bohemia. Flynt was a runaway from juvenile reform school, who had left his immigrant family behind in order to seek the wandering tramp culture of Germany and England, when he befriended the poet and essayist Arthur Symons in London. Symons urged upon Flynt the example of George Borrow and Richard Burton, attempting to persuade him to record his travels, as he eventually did.³⁷ The journey from hobohemia to bohemia was made in reverse as well. A modern culture of slummers in disguise began with journalist Greenwood's overnight stay in East London, but was followed by other journalists and social reformers. Jack London's year disguised as working man in East London converted him from Nietzschean individualism to socialism.

In exploring the interpenetrating journeys that defined heterotopias, a new definition of political agency opens up. Rather than telling a story about commodification and exoticization from above, these stories open up the possibility of political alliances of elites and subalterns. The maps may help us to better identify the individuals who acted as social bridges in a real sense. Tramps and reformers both took to vagabonding as a means of exploring the social reality. Part-time criminals, beggars, and sailors like Flynt, Davies, and Masefield were converted to literary celebrity as they attempted to convert their early experiences for a popular audience, and bohemians like Sims, Symons, and London became part-time tramps in the search. The exchanges between both worlds—motivated by working-class individuals' desire to reap the rewards of distribution and income on the one hand, and literary individuals' desire for exposure to other worlds—defined both trampland and bohemia as imagined community.

Small journeys eastward could lead, in this telling, to even greater journeys east. Max Pemberton's *Aladdin*, for instance, urges his boy readers to see East London as the nexus of international connections between anarchist, Jewish freedom fighters who have fled the purges in Poland. The hero, Albion, a casual laborer working at the docks, comes to understand his own political commitments only as a result of following these international journeys, and learning to see the Jewish East End not merely as a site of compassion but of political acumen. The book is a veritable travel manual of entering and escaping London's heterotopias, for Albion is an urban explorer of worlds above his own as well as below. Pemberton describes him this way: "He loved to roam afar in quest, not of material booty, but of mental sensation. An imagination that was simply wonderful helped him upon his way."³⁸ Albion cavorts with Polish anarchist emigres, flunkee heroin-addicted ex-clergy, prostitutes, and a pansy boy named "Betty" in the courts and alleys of Whitechapel. With their aid, he descends into the labyrinthine subterranean passages underneath Pall Mall and the Haymarket, discovering there "a city below a city."³⁹ Many of these heterotopias have further connections. The Jewish East End turns out to be connected to anarchist plots to free Poland from Russian control, and Hampstead bankers' finance of the Czar links the pogroms of Russia with London high society. When Albion arrives in Warsaw, searching for the anarchist he loves, his contacts lay out for him the heterotopias of that place too: "Every public square stands for an insurrection. The castle is fortified not against the stranger but the citizen—those guns you tell me

³⁷ Josiah Flynt, *Tramping with Tramps: Studies and Sketches of Vagabond Life* (New York: The Century Co., 1899) and George Robert Sims, *My Life* (London: Eveleigh Nash company, 1917).

³⁸ Max Pemberton, *Aladdin of London; or, Lodestar* (New York: Empire Book Company, 1907), 23.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

about were put there by Nicolas to remind us that he would stand no nonsense.”⁴⁰ The czarists draw even more explicit connections between London’s heterotopias and the map of the world: “You preach civilization instead—and we point to your Whitechapel, your Belleville, your Bowery. Just think of it, your upper classes, as you yourselves admit, are utterly decadent, alike in brains and in morals; your middle classes are smug hypocrites—your lower classes starve in filthy dens. This is what you desire to bring about in Russia under the name of freedom and liberty.”⁴¹ At the end of his adventures, wedded to the anarchist he loves, Albion concludes of his adventures high and low: “while I lived in Wonderland, I never gave much thought to it; How could I shut myself up in a citadel of riches and know that so many of my poor people were starving not ten miles from my door. I would feel as though I had gone into the enemy’s camp and sold myself for the gratification of a few silly desires and a whole pantomime laugh at.”⁴² The possibility of movement east, across London and across the continent, stood for the possibility of attending to the culpabilities of privilege and class. Pemberton urged upon his teenage readers just this form of movement and responsibility, framing in the persona of Albion a new model for British identity as socially-conscious explorer.

These movements from eastward exposure to international movements east had correlates in real life as well. After her success leading the 1886 matchgirl workers’ strike, Annie Besant poured her efforts into Theosophy, which she saw as offering the swifter means of race and class reconciliation through immediate, spiritual transcendence of world view. Her conversion took her to Calcutta, where she helped to launch the first interracial university. Besant’s example drew other theosophists after her, and the movement from west London to East End to India drew an increasing movement of countercultural explorers in a train across the globe.⁴³

Such connections tell us something about the local heterotopias that were points of connection for Londoners moving towards the international politics of human rights. They also suggest how international and multifaceted the programs of outreach were, and how peculiar the points of contact. The creation of new worlds and their increasing interpenetration evidences the continuous and evolving reality of political agency from below.

Furthermore, international connections between heterotopias raise further historiographical questions about the nature of heterotopias and their relationship with each other. Indeed, these international journeys help us to understand earlier heterotopias in a new light. The best-read text of the nineteenth century after the Bible was an allegory of a traveler on the path, that is, John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, first published in 1678. The classical allegory of the wanderer resonated with seventeenth-century itinerant preaching communities of which he was a member; it later became a key text and a rich metaphor for wandering Moravians and Methodists. By the nineteenth century, it became the single most published text in Britain after the Bible. The dissemination of Bunyan to the British colonies began around 1848 as missionary activity intensified and Bunyan became the seminal text of the movement. Isabel Hofmeyr describes the variety of ways that Bunyan was promoted, from jigsaw puzzles to sermons, within the Nonconformist context. *Pilgrim’s*

⁴⁰ Ibid., 236.

⁴¹ Ibid., 203.

⁴² Ibid., 292.

⁴³ “Annie Besant,” Dictionary of National Biography.

Progress was disseminated by mission societies and translated into 130 languages. She theorizes that one reason for Bunyan's popularity was a common worldwide culture of the hero's journey. Contemporaries declaimed upon the fact that everyone around the world had read the same story. In fact, the context of his conquest in Britain aligns more with the popularization of "poor man's classics" in workingmen's and Nonconformist celebrations of English literature (as opposed to classical or ancient languages) between 1848 and 1932.⁴⁴ The progress of John Bunyan shows how the idiom of travel was capitalized upon for the purposes of creating new, international connections, literally driving the movement of missionaries abroad to recast the journeys of strangers in light of their allegory. As late nineteenth-century travelers moved eastward to bohemia, East London, eastern Europe, and ultimately India, the shape of their travels was increasingly paralleled by the international distribution of copies of Bunyan. As the travelers spread, their imaginary kingdom of travel spread with them, translating the idea of the traveler to new realms. One could further reference the experience of Bunyan in America and work on the dissemination of *Robinson Crusoe*. My point is that if we take exchanges between heterotopias seriously as a point of the production of radical politics, each of these sites of distribution becomes another possible site of inquiry. We can explore international connections even further by looking at the maps of other heterotopias with global connections.

The places mined for imaginary worlds constitute one such broadening of the imagination into distant worlds. In 1851, George Borrow, a law-school dropout who spent most of his time talking to tramps and travelers on Mousehold Heath, published his *Lavengro*, a story of a wanderer who falls in among the gypsies and learns to appreciate from them the possibility of a radical reconciliation with nature, free from the patterns of consumption and social pressure that typified city life. According to George Behlmer, "Gypsies were monuments to the Victorian ideal of *mens sana in corpore sano* (a sound mind in a sound body)."⁴⁵ *Lavengro* became one of the most popular texts of the century, along with Borrow's other writings about gypsies, and ultimately launched a culture of Romany language enthusiasts, cataloguers of gypsydom, other would-be gypsy travelers, and biographers of Borrow himself. Most of these enthusiasts were armchair or local travelers, but their catalogues of gypsy history took them on imaginary journeys around the whole of Europe and as far as India as they recorded oral histories and employed historical linguistics to the purposes of tracing possible gypsy heritage. So great was the lure of this imaginary alterity, writes Behlmer, that it launched a literal movement of would-be vagabonds. "So salubrious did the wandering life appear that during the last two decades of the century, fresh-air-starved gentlemen began to hire or buy caravans in which they spent holidays on the road, 'Romany-style,'" thus anticipating the back-to-the-land movement that gained traction in the early decades of the twentieth century.⁴⁶ The map of places referenced in gypsy writings suggests the breadth of imaginary journeys; gypsies, like Jews,

⁴⁴ Isabel Hofmeyr, "How Bunyan Became English: Missionaries, Translation, and the Discipline of English Literature," *The Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 1 (January 2002): 84-119.

⁴⁵ George K. Behlmer, "The Gypsy Problem in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1985): 239.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

represented a wandering nation who embodied by another route the cosmopolitan exchanges of civilization and empire. It was an alternative imagination of the geography of empire.⁴⁷

The maps help us contextualize gypsydom against even still other alternative empires being propagated at the same time. We would expect a map of deep England, drawn from the writings of George Macdonald, Andrew Lang, John Masefield, J. R. R. Tolkien, and C. S. Lewis, to constrain the alternative England to a smaller geography in which empire's alternative is worked out with reference. But indeed, the intriguing thing is actually not so much familiar England as the old colonial periphery of the north, where Macdonald and Lang had turned as a source for a new peasant culture, entrenched in magic, connected to nature, and uncorrupted by modern civilization.⁴⁸ Far different are the sites of deep England located in the narratives of Thoreau's British followers who studied sea, light, and forest in an attempt to recapture a spirit of place.⁴⁹ Different again are the enthusiasts for local village politics like Miss Mitford, who began to appear with an upsurge of enthusiasm for local government towards the end of the century.⁵⁰ If we mine the texts for images instead of place names, the patterns are still deeper. Romantic walkers moved in a different visual world entirely than antiquarians or village appreciators; land reformers were rarely in the places where there were social explorers.

⁴⁷ George Henry Borrow, *Lavengro: The Scholar--the Gypsy--the Priest* (London: John Murray, 1851); Clement Shorter, *The life of George Borrow* (London [u.a.]: Dent [u.a.], 1919); Robert Hopkins, *George Borrow, lord of the open road*, (London: Jarrolds, 1922); George K. Behlmer, "The Gypsy Problem in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 28, no. 2 (Winter 1985): 231-253; I. Duncan, "Wild England: George Borrow's Nomadology," *Victorian Studies* 41, no. 3 (1998): 381-404; Deborah Epstein Nord, *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); and Angus Fraser, "Borrow, George Henry (1803-1881)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.d

⁴⁸ George Macdonald, *Lilith; a Romance* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1895); Dennis Hardy, *Utopian England: Community Experiments, 1900-1945*, Studies in History, Planning, and the Environment (London: E & FN Spon, 2000); Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion* (London: Longmans, Green, 1887); William Donaldson, "Lang, Andrew," *Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); John Masefield, *The Box of Delights; or, When the Wolves Were Running* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1935); J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit; or, There and Back Again* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938); and Matthew T Dickerson, *Ents, Elves, and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Culture of the land: a series in the new agrarianism (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

⁴⁹ Vernon Lee, *Hortus Vitae; Essays on the Gardening of Life* (London: J. Lane, The Bodley Head, 1904); Robert Louis Stevenson and Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Ebb-Tide: A Trio and Quartette* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1911); Vernon Lee, *Genius Loci; Notes on Places, 2nd ed.* (London: John Lane, 1907); and Phyllis Mannocchi and B. Harrison, eds., "Paget, Violet [Vernon Lee] (1856-1935)," *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, September 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/articles/35/35361-article.html?back=#cosubject_35361.

⁵⁰ Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery*, New ed. (London: Bell & Daldy, 1871); Frederic Seebohm, *The English Village Community Examined in Its Relations to the Manorial and Tribal Systems and to the Common or Open Field System of Husbandry: An Essay in Economic History* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1883); Oliphant, *Neighbours on the Green* (London; New York: Macmillan, 1889); Samuel Whitfield Thackeray, *The Land and the Community* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1889); Robert Hunter, *The Preservation of Open Spaces, and of Footpaths, and Other Rights of Way: A Practical Treatise on the Law of the Subject* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896); Harold Peake, *The English Village, the Origin and Decay of Its Community; an Anthropological Interpretation* (London: Benn Brothers, Limited, 1922); C. Dewey, "Images of the Village Community: A Study in Anglo-Indian Ideology," *Modern Asian Studies* 6, no. 3 (1972): 291-328; and Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology, and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993).

We see something then like the fissioning of heterotopia into a series of isolated worlds—each reading intensively a set of texts, each moving in a geographically isolated sphere. Few of these worlds—deep England, romantic walking, and village appreciation—corresponded in any deep sense with the other heterotopias. These are the topoi of isolation, and their proliferation towards the end of the nineteenth century

The analysis of disconnection allows a scholar to more systematically engage some of the spatial questions about the nature of class, race, and culture in nineteenth-century Britain. From very early in the century, a common theme in this literature is mutual invisibility. Cobbett complained about the invisibility of the poor from the new highway system in the 1820s; Engels echoed him in describing Manchester in the 1830s. By the 1840s, it was commonplace for literature to describe the “two nations” of rich and poor, city and country, and to worry about their fate. Contemporary historians have likewise called attention to spatial distance between the dwellings of the poor and the rich as one of the features shaping class and race experience in the nineteenth century.

This fissioning landscape represents one foundational force in history—the rise of invisible boundaries that divided the British nation, increasingly separating the landscape not only by gender, race, and class, but also by aesthetic inclination and political subparty, into a hundred heterotopias that rarely coincided with each other in space and time.

Against this force moved, dialectically, the efforts of those social bridge-makers like Davies, Flynt, and Besant, whose journeys unified heterotopias rather than remaining confined in them. Borrow’s journeys begot Symon’s journeys, and Besant’s were followed by those of Gandhi’s white disciples and ultimately the whole of the twentieth century counterculture.

These then are a pattern for seeing agency from below: those from below who retreated into separate worlds, building up the boundaries around them, further defining race, class, gender, and subculture into a thousand fissioned worlds; and those who became social bridges, moving across entrenched boundaries, exploring and taking others with them. Political agency, in such an account, was not simply crushed by the abstracting and assorting mechanisms of the state, and limited to a few violent encounters. Rather, the agency to transform the social, political, and economic landscape of division lay with those few activists like Annie Besant who actively bridged and broke down the barriers of class and race, forging new connections out of their own journeys.

The new methodology here relies upon new sources. In the study of this form of agency, new sources indeed become important: imaginary places are evidence of the political imagination, and everyday journeys are evidence of political movement. Those sources can only be rigorously studied in more than the anecdotal and impressionistic sense here with the help of new, digital methods that sort masses of texts.

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