

Strange Fugitive, Strange City: Reading Urban Space in Morley Callaghan's Toronto

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The City is of Night; perchance of Death, But certainly of Night
(Thomson 34)

I am ... a citizen of no mean city (Acts 21:39)

IF, AS STEVEN MARCUS CLAIMS, "the city continues to be a text," it is a text fraught with ambiguities, paradoxes, and contradictions (234). Marcus goes on to articulate the contradictory tensions inherent in reading the city-as-text by noting that "the city is at once sordid, corrupt, ruinous, terrible, contaminating, and still a place of wonders, magic, marvels, and 'reality'" (233). The illegibility of the city, moreover, is partially explained by Louis Wirth's comment that "instability and insecurity" are at the very heart of the modern metropolis (497). Although these comments refer specifically to major American cities, such ambiguous discourses find their way into Morley Callaghan's 1928 novel *Strange Fugitive*. In fact, even the dust-jacket of *Strange Fugitive* resonates with ambiguity: "Toronto of the late 1920s," the cover announces, was "narrow" and "provincial," but was also "the era of jazz, flappers, speakeasies, and bootleggers." This sentence unites a so-called "provincial" city with images that are reminiscent of Fitzgerald's "Jazz Age" New York. These seemingly paradoxical descriptions signal a more general conflict in 1920s Toronto, a conflict between the contemporaneous conceptions of the city as both a decadent urban centre and an unsophisticated "city of churches." I would not suggest that these two urban models are mutually exclusive; however, the dust-jacket's blurb articulates a refiguration of the discourses that defined Toronto as an urban space — a refiguration that *Strange Fugitive* explores and disseminates.

As Canada's first urban novel, *Strange Fugitive* is an important text not only for exploring the rhetorical changes in articulations of Toronto, but also as a document that constructs and manipulates conceptions of

urban space within the Canadian cityscape.¹ In this paper I want to examine how Callaghan's representation of 1920s Toronto is indebted to early twentieth-century discourses and representations of the modern North American city, representations that were developed by such urban critics as C.S. Clark, Josiah Strong, Frederick Olmsted, and Louis Wirth, as well as such novelists as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Theodore Dreiser, and John Dos Passos. My interest in this paper will be to examine how Callaghan's rhetorical strategies attempt to undermine the threatening characteristics of 1920s Toronto while simultaneously using the urban tropes of gangsters, bootlegging, and murder to sensationally entice his reader. Central to my analysis is the fact that, like the conflicts and ambiguities implied by the dust-jacket, Callaghan's use of American urban discourses become unique when placed in the context of the Toronto scene. Borders, boundaries, taxonomies, structures of difference — these are some of the textual devices that Callaghan uses when adapting American models of urban representation to confront 1920s Toronto.

Toronto the Good?

C.S. Clark first published his book *Of Toronto the Good: A Social Study* in 1898, coining a phrase that would live on long after his death. In this "social study" Clark constructs a vision of Toronto that is free from the "rampant evils" of the modern metropolis; "the city of churches," according to Clark, is "a refuge for some higher morality" (23). Although he includes chapters on "Drunkenness," "Street Walkers," and "Thieves," Clark's image of Toronto foregrounds a conception of the city that distinguishes it from other more "corrupt" urban areas such as New York and Chicago. Built into the structure of Clark's narrative, in fact, is a line that is drawn between "the outside world" of urban corruption and the domestic, "moral" space that he defines as "Toronto the good" (White 5). Such rhetorical borders steer our perceptions of Toronto away from the modern urban images of poverty, crime, corruption, and decay by positioning Toronto as an alternative to the New York of Josiah Strong, whose 1885 best-seller *Our Country* painted urban space as the degenerate "storm centre" of modern life, and the "most serious menace to our civilization"² (129).

Josiah Strong's reactionary text spoke to those who feared the rapid urban growth and immigration that he refers to as the equivalent of "social dynamite" (132). Fears arose out of the massive social upheavals that transformed American cities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: mass immigration, population growth, secularization, technological

development — these were a few of the social changes faced by the modern American city (Trachtenberg 104). Clark's *Of Toronto the Good*, though, presented Toronto as a "friendly city" by marking its difference from crime-ridden American cities; Clark was thus able to reinforce the boundaries separating American and Canadian trends in urban development.

By the 1920s, however, public perceptions of Toronto started to contradict Clark's model of the city. An increase in immigration, crime, poverty, and drug abuse became prominent public issues in Toronto during the decade following World War One. Furthermore, 1920s Toronto was faced with a population boom: the 1921 Census of Canada marks Toronto's population as 522,000; by 1929, though, the city's population had jumped to 826,186 (White 204). Mass immigration of Western, Central, and Eastern Europeans to Toronto from 1919 to 1930 accounted for this population increase; and, although the majority of the population still identified themselves as Anglo-Saxon, immigrants of Jewish and Italian backgrounds began to form vibrant communities in the city (Zucchi 39).³ One of the social changes that began to transform popular conceptions of "Toronto the good" arose out of the growth of the downtown "Ward" district, which served as affordable housing for the city's Jewish and Italian citizens. It was not long before this neighbourhood became associated with the same "menacing" and "ominous" tropes of New York's Bowery district (Maynard 167). Xenophobia and racist public policies arose out of this mass immigration, and, during this period, the Federal government tried to limit Toronto's multicultural demography by imposing "head taxes" on various racial groups.⁴ Another attempt to manipulate social development in Toronto emerged in the form of the Ontario Temperance Act, which banned the sale of alcohol from 1916 to 1927 — a development that figures prominently — the narrative of *Strange Fugitive*. Controlling the sale of alcohol and limiting immigration were thought to contain the social problems that many Canadians considered menacing in American urban areas; nonetheless, Toronto's increase in population and immigration (while relatively small in comparison to New York and Chicago) represented a substantial change in the way Torontonians conceived of their city.

Strange Fugitive reflects these urban shifts. Throughout the text, for instance, the narrator describes the ethnic topography of the city, and Harry Trotter's movement through Toronto's streets comprises a textual tour of Italian, Jewish, and Chinese neighbourhoods. Unlike Clark, though, Callaghan does not present these areas of Toronto to show "Toronto the good"; instead, he presents the Ward district as a "foreign" space for his middle-class readership, a space that was always potentially "corrupted"

by crime and dishonesty. Such an image of Toronto dismisses Clark's late-nineteenth-century presentation of the city by adopting contemporaneous American discourses surrounding the modern metropolis.⁵

Although American novelists had been publishing texts based on the "great American city"⁶ as early as 1900, the mid-1920s marked an important moment in the development of the American urban novel: in 1925 Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, and Dos Passos's *Manhattan Transfer* appeared, all of which construct the city as a lurid space of mystery and anxiety. Urban space, for example, partially clouds Nick Carraway's judgments and forces him to question his ethical choices and introspective identity; Clyde Griffiths's experience of the modern city is one of theft, sex, and murder; and Jimmy Herf's life in Manhattan leads to alcoholism and nihilism. These texts also sensationally posit the modern city as a space where bootlegging, speakeasies, and sexual promiscuity are commonplace, resulting in an image of urban space that becomes a way of dealing with and contributing to the mysteries, fears and anxieties of the "great city."⁷

It is important to note that by the 1920s, Callaghan had become involved in what Robin Mathews refers to "the new colonialism," whereby "Canadian identity" shifted "away from a British influence towards the influence of the power and culture of the U.S.A." (Mathews 78). Such a shift is central to *Strange Fugitive*, for Callaghan turns to the models of an American urbanism in an attempt to capture 1920s Toronto. F. Scott Fitzgerald, in fact, supported *Strange Fugitive*, and, after reading the manuscript, he urged Scribners to publish the text in 1928 (Callaghan, *That Summer* 62). It is not surprising that Fitzgerald endorsed *Strange Fugitive* because, as in his own novels, speakeasies, and bootleggers pervade Callaghan's text. But unlike Fitzgerald, Torontonians were not ready to conceive of their city in this way, and newspapers such as the *Mail and Empire* declared that the novel was "a success in New York," but a flop in Toronto: "One book dealer even went to the length of returning his copies to the publisher with the remark that the style was not for him. It was not quite the thing, though it dealt with life in Toronto" (qtd. in White 197). Callaghan's first novel, in other words, was rejected by many Torontonians because it did not comply with the traditional notion of "Toronto the good."

Urban Realism

The city as it is presented by Callaghan — as well as by Fitzgerald and Dreiser — is partially allied with the urban spaces that were used as both

setting and subject of American realist fiction at the turn of the century. Callaghan's presentation of violence, crime, and corruption reverberates with William Dean Howells's novels, which treated the seamy side of urban life as the touchstone of "the real" itself. This tradition established the "realistic" city as degenerate and "corrupt"; as such, the more slums, poverty, crime, and corruption, the more realistic the novel was thought to be. As Amy Kaplan notes, however, late-nineteenth-century American realism also presented an alternative image of urban space that was mysterious and "unreal":

[In] late nineteenth-century writing ... "the city" often signifies "the unreal," the alien, or that which has not yet been realized. Represented by what it might become — by its potential, its threat, its promise — "the city" figures as a spatial metonymy for the elusive process of social change. (44)

For Callaghan and his American contemporaries, then, representations of the city engendered a desire to combat the mysteries and otherness of this elusive "spatial metonymy" by fixing its protean changes within the confines of a coherent narrative form. Callaghan, then, confronts Toronto's otherness — the site and sign of social change — through a manipulation of urban topography whereby different districts of the "unreal" city become classified and categorized in an attempt to control their threatening features within the narrative.⁸

I would suggest that Callaghan's attempt to manage and control these threatening features forces a narrative tension that results in an ambiguous model of the city. That is, like the dust-jacket's articulation of Toronto's narrow provincialism and urbane Jazz Age culture, Callaghan interlaces the realist literary modes of crime and corruption — the "unreal" and mysterious qualities of the modern city — with the domestic and secure space of "Toronto the good." *Strange Fugitive*, for example, opens with the narrator's comment that "Harry Trotter ... was determined everybody should understand he loved his wife" (3). This introductory sentence places Harry within the secure realm of domestic space, a security that the second paragraph furthers with a description of Harry "in bed one night, listening to Vera breathing and thinking he loved her so much no other woman could ever give such satisfaction" (3). Domestic space, however, soon gives way to Callaghan's presentation of the cityscape when an argument erupts between the couple, and Harry decides to take a long walk through the city and sit on a park bench. The introduction of the city, then, occurs only after a disruption arises in the

domestic realm, for, on the park bench, Harry feels “absolutely alone” and contemplates leaving his wife. The narrative transitions — moving from domestic bliss to an argument and then to a description of the city — textually structures urban space as threatening to the domestic sphere of the Trotters; Callaghan thus launches *Strange Fugitive* by constructing an artificial binary between domesticity and the city, a binary that he returns to throughout the novel.

Such a domestic-urban opposition calls attention to the construction of the narrative itself. Images of the city rupture the narrative continuity of the domestic scene and the city is thus constructed as an unwieldy space that must be brought under conceptual control. By opening the text with Harry’s expressions of love, Callaghan struggles to present a domesticated and nonthreatening terrain; dispute, however, refigures the textual spaces by incorporating a threatening city that, in turn, ruptures the domestic plot. The narrative, though, works to contain this sense of the city as a threat by assimilating the social conventions that establish the park as a retreat from urban stresses and steering Harry to a pastoral space where he is able to think about his future with Vera. This scene in the park, then, complicates the narrative’s domestic-urban opposition in that the park constitutes an “in between” space which is nonthreatening and secure as well as urban. Moreover, the image of the park serves as a further example of Callaghan’s participation in American discourses of urban space; American urban planners such as Frederick Olmsted conceived of city parks as prime features of a system of order and security and also as a means of control and stability. An urban park, according to Olmsted, should be a space that exists between domestic and commercial areas — a space where one could retreat from the mysteries of the modern city and yet remain outside of the home (Olmsted 110). Embodied in the concept of the park lay a desire to eradicate *the threatening mystique* of urban space by providing a pastoral area that was consistent with the ideals of middle-class domesticity. The fears and anxieties of urbanism, therefore, were thought to be limited and controlled through a green space that could defuse urban tensions and undermine the potential threats of the street.⁹

Callaghan uses this conception of green space as an urban refuge throughout *Strange Fugitive*. In the first section of the text, for instance, Harry visits numerous parks and travels to the edge of the city for relaxation and comfort.¹⁰ After a day at work, Harry finds the pastoral nature of the park relaxing: “in the park he leaned against the rail ... he liked the way it took his mind off his work” (12). Callaghan develops this image of the park when Harry and Vera have a picnic at a ravine in the eastern

end of the city. Here, Callaghan temporarily interlaces domesticity with green space:

The two of them [went] out east and up the railway tracks in the country to a wooded ravine with a slow twisting river.... They followed the tracks between the hills until the bank on the right flattened out and they stood at a steep path looking down at the dark ravine. They walked on to the next path, Vera strutting happily on the ties.... She giggled, slyly putting an arm around his waist, and kissed him. (38)

This green space echoes Olmsted's theory of parks as an alternative to the anxieties and mysteries of urbanism; Callaghan paints this park's image in the form of a natural innocence that is contrasted with the lost innocence of the city where Harry becomes the "strange fugitive." Such complex presentations of urban space, however, eventually complicate the park's pastoral imagery, for, while the park generates emotional renewal, there is an underlying tension that suggests another side to the urban park. This tension arises when a sinister impression merges the park with the threatening aspects of the city; the narrator tells us that Vera and Harry "stayed in the ravine till twilight when night noises in thickets and occasional sounds of someone moving on the hill scared her and then they climbed ... down [to] the street" (37).¹¹ This ambiguous vision disrupts the narrative continuity and forces tensions that confuse the boundaries dividing the city into distinct areas based on categories such as domesticity, urbanism, and green space. The infiltration of a threatening person "moving on the hill," that is, ruptures the artificial line that Callaghan uses to chart the domesticated and nonthreatening terrain of the park. A closer look at Callaghan's manipulation of pastoral and urban spaces will show how he attempts to generate particular strategies to distinguish and categorize areas of Toronto in order to bring the city under conceptual control and thus undermine that which is considered "unreal" and mysterious.

Manipulating Urban Space

Toronto's parks (spaces that are prominent in the first section of Callaghan's novel) become less conspicuous in the second and third sections when Harry takes to a life of crime; it is not long before the city parks disappear completely. The second section, for instance, focuses on the urban rather than the pastoral descriptions of the city by concentrating on Harry's aimless walks throughout the downtown streets:

He [Harry] walked down Yonge to Albert Street.... In the crowd across the street a high-pitched voice grew louder and more powerful and became a wail of despair. Slightly startled, Harry stopped but did not cross the street. He had walked as far as Albert Street and stood at the corner, looking along the street.... On Sunday night the city was quiet but many loud voices cried out on Albert Street. (53)

Opening the second section with this passage is a significant narrative strategy in that it contextualizes Harry's movement away from the relative safety of the city's parks. Here, Harry confronts an imaginary border in the topography of Toronto, a line that separates the middle-class, "Anglo-Saxon" areas of the city from the "menacing Ward district."¹² Harry, standing at the corner of Yonge and Albert, occupies the borderline of the Ward; the symbolism of this movement is expressed through the spatial configuration that signals Harry's movement away from domesticity into a space defined by crime and alienation. The scene also presents Harry's ambivalent reaction to the Ward: he experiences a simultaneous attraction and repulsion to the mysteries of this neighbourhood. But the fascination is fleeting, for Harry remains on the boundary, refusing to penetrate its borders.

Callaghan manipulates his images of Toronto by constructing distinct areas that become important objects of knowledge. The recognition of the Ward's boundary, for instance, makes the city visible in greater detail by limiting Harry's sight in the first half of the text to particular neighbourhoods. Such a line thus functions as a guiding principle to steer Harry through the streets and distinguish between the threatening and nonthreatening areas of Toronto. Callaghan, through this structuring of urban space, frames a coherent picture of the city that contains the mysterious and threatening aspects of otherness within the confines of a specific district; the power of the line relegates the Ward to a peripheral category that cannot threaten Harry's domestic world unless he crosses over to the other side of the boundary.

The mysterious urban terrain of the Ward, however, is partially attractive to Harry: it is here that domesticity and green space are overpowered by the "high-pitched screams" and "many loud voices" that cry out, but the alienation, poverty, and crime spark Harry's curiosity and speak to his desire for change. If, as Kevin McNamara states in relation to American cities, change in the cityscape is a central trope of the "fluid urban social structure ... [because it] allows the freedom to negotiate ... [the] field of differences and reconstruct one's self through changing net-

works of affiliations," Harry's attraction to the Ward becomes a symptom of his desire to "reconstruct" himself by entering into a new network of social interaction (3). Such an attraction becomes paramount as the narrative evolves, for Harry's introduction into the world of bootlegging corresponds with his movement over the line that divides the Ward from the city's domestic realms and green spaces. Harry and Jim, for example, understand that the market forces for illegal alcohol are driven by the Italian, Jewish, and Chinese restaurants of the Ward district; Harry, therefore, becomes immersed in the Ward, and the domestic life of the opening section fades into the background.

Callaghan's manipulation of Toronto according to these boundaries implies that Harry has overstepped a line between "us" and "them," between domestic reality and criminal corruption. By crossing this line, Harry shatters his relationship with Vera, and the narrative shifts away from domestic themes into the realm of criminal action and adventure. For Callaghan, then, navigating the course between domestic and criminal spaces becomes a major strategy for manipulating urban images and undermining the potentially threatening mysteries of the city. The drawing of boundaries offers Callaghan a narrative solution to the ideological question of how to represent and control the social conflicts inherent to 1920s Toronto. The border between the Ward and the rest of the city divides Toronto's urban space into two separate but unequal camps and veils the antagonism between them so that the social nature of the division fades from view. Such a manoeuvre functions as an attempt to undermine the city's mystique and provide Harry with the agency to choose which side of the line he wishes to inhabit.¹³

Harry's movement across the line, however, reveals a tension in Callaghan's representation of the city, for a sense of the city as a nonthreatening, common experience depends upon a relegation of the "other half" into a confined area of the cityscape. By moving into the Ward district, Harry complicates the conceptual control inherent to the Toronto-Ward opposition by confounding the distinctions between the domestic and threatening areas. This narrative tension corresponds with the development of Harry's alienation and subsequent decline in social agency. As he becomes more involved in bootlegging in the Ward, that is, Harry loses the essential sense of self that he experienced with Vera:

restless and uncertain of himself he [Harry] wanted to run and feel himself lurching along, his feet thudding, going on, further away from all his thoughts that had bothered him. But instead, stopping

on the opposite corner, he leaned against a post, suddenly tired and hungry and unimportant, so that his thoughts seemed trivial. He had lost all identity, nothing he did was of any consequence. (114)

Here Callaghan, resounding with Dreiser's naturalist depictions of urban space, presents Harry's life in the Ward as erasing his individual identity based on a collapse of the "us" and "them" distinction. As such, Harry's induction into this area turns him into "an almost amoeba-like creature" or "a kind of automaton, unable to express himself, scarcely conscious of the passions and social forces that mold and impel him" (White 136). Social forces, in fact, become insurmountable once Harry enters the Ward, and his anti-social crimes isolate him from a sense of community or connections to those outside the Ward district. Harry's immersion in this anti-social space engenders another narrative tension in a slippage that moves from "Callaghan's 'realist' philosophy and technique" to a Dreiserian naturalistic portrayal of urbanism wherein Harry loses his social agency and is ruled by the external forces of the city (Mathews 83). While in the Ward, that is, Harry longs to return to his domestic life with Vera, but he finds he is unable to leave this space, and thus he tries to put Vera out of his mind. He cannot forget her, however, and even while "walking up the street his thoughts flowed rapidly, the old thoughts of Vera he had been trying to avoid" (115). Ironically the Ward's streets function to generate both a nostalgia for his old life as well as a reminder of the boundaries that separate Harry from Vera. Even though Harry desires to return to his domestic life, he is unable to leave the Ward, thus lacking agency when confronting the district's social forces.

If, as Harold A. Innis notes, violent action becomes a way of restructuring space, Harry Trotter's violent crimes may be read as responses to the naturalistic forces that he encounters in the Ward. Innis notes that physical force reconstitutes "the spatial concept and organisation of society in terms of space rather than time and continuity" (106). Such a restructuring in terms of spatial dimensions speaks to the separation of the Ward from the rest of the city in that this district is conceived of as a violent threat to the surrounding domestic spaces. Moreover, by turning to violent crimes, Harry attempts to reconstitute the space he inhabits and regain his social agency. When he murders Cosantino, for instance, Harry is conscious of his power and identity, for he becomes "aware of his own body" and "conscious of his own being" to the point of overcoming his feelings of alienation and loneliness (153). This murder, then, reconstitutes Harry's relationship to the Ward by engendering feelings of

agency and self-confidence; according to the narrator, the murder caused Harry to "became confident and sure of himself ... and [he] began to talk pompously ... [and] authoritatively" (157). Violence, then, functions as a counterforce to the Ward's naturalist forces, a means of reshaping the space where he is confined. Paradoxically, though, Harry's act of murder alienates him further, and such violent acts become insufficient for controlling naturalistic forces — forces which are ultimately responsible for his death.

Structures of Difference

Differences in ethnicity, combined with Harry's acts of violence, become important determining factors in the spatial structuring of the text. From its opening pages, the narrator refers to the recent immigrants to the city as "wops," "Chinks," "niggers," and "kikes" (5, 28, 183, 199). Such racist language constitutes markers based on ethnic and national identities to distinguish between the regions of the city. Harry's voice echoes that of the narrator; he consistently articulates his dislike of Toronto's immigrants by calling them "dirty old wops" and by stating that there are "too many Jews" in the city (5, 90). Callaghan's narrative deploys structures of difference by rhetorically constructing dividing lines of ethnicity that parallel the text's other borders and boundaries. These dividers function to dispossess the city's immigrants by foregrounding an allegiance of the assumed British-Canadian reader with the narrator and Harry. Categorization based on ethnic difference subsequently relegates the immigrant communities to a position of otherness, and attempts to conceptualize the cityscape by hierarchically dividing the different racial groups inhabiting Toronto. These structures, like the boundaries separating the Ward from the rest of the city, function as textual strategies to make 1920s Toronto knowable and to subdue the unsettling foreign forces.

Such divisions are furthered in the fight that develops between Harry and Tony in the lumber-yard. When Tony throws a plank at Harry, the anger of the two men erupts in violence — an eruption that results in Harry's dismissal. The narrator describes the fight as follows:

Tony took one step backward and Harry poked him three times in the jaw.... *The big wop* fell sideways and tried to crawl away from the kiln.... *The wop* shook his head, rolling until they banged against the kiln wheel-track.... Punching and gouging Harry worked loose. Get his head against the rail, bang it, bang it, the skunk!.... Harry rubbed his heel, looking indifferently at *the big Italian* who moaned, trying to get up on his knees. (33; emphasis added)

Here, the continual references to Tony as “the big wop” and “the big Italian” not only function to remind us of his ethnicity, but they also illustrate an anxiety that runs throughout the text. That is, by referring to Tony in terms of his generalized physicality, the narrative diffuses his individuality; Tony comes to stand in for the physically threatening Italian presence in 1920s Toronto. Such xenophobic ideologies imply that Tony’s ethnicity is responsible for the altercation; only a “big dirty wop,” the narrator states, could attack Harry in this way (33). Furthermore, *Strange Fugitive* constructs the Italian characters as threatening to the domestic spaces inhabited by “Anglo-Saxon” Torontonians; for instance, it is this fight (instigated by Tony) that results in Harry’s dismissal and, in turn, ruptures his domestic life with Vera.

Callaghan also presents Jewish Torontonians as social threats when another fight erupts at a dance hall. Here, Harry becomes upset because there are “too many Jews” at the club, and he lashes out in violence on the dance floor (90):

The elegant young man with trimmed eyebrows passed gracefully, a nice Jewish boy.... [Then] the lipsyled young man, holding the smile as long as possible, ... deliberately bumped him again.... Suddenly hating, he swung his open palm and caught the young Jew across the mouth.... A little Jew with oiled hair dived at his legs.... The slim boy with the rouged cheeks looked at Harry, hesitating.... A big Jew with wide heavy shoulders jumped on Harry’s back, and feeling his knees sagging, Harry dropped quickly to his knees. (91)

Harry, as in his fight with Tony, eventually overpowers those who assault him on the dance floor. Here though, the narrative constructs the Jewish men as effeminate; the narrator describes them as “slim,” “graceful” and “lipsyled” with “oiled hair” and “rouged cheeks.” Such effeminate characteristics further the textual strategies that undermine the threatening social position of ethnic otherness. The feminization works to disempower the Jewish characters and becomes a structure of difference that distinguishes between the boundaries of “us” and “them” — boundaries that are central to the spatial ordering of the novel. By moving across the line into the Ward district, however, Harry complicates the ethnic patterns, and forces another ambiguous representation of Toronto’s topography; because the Ward of the 1920s was the principal home of Jewish and Italian immigrants, Harry’s symbolic entrance into this neighbourhood places him in intimate contact with the very ethnic groups that inspire his anxieties. Although this spatial shift does not change Harry’s

racist assumptions, the displacement does result in relationships with Jewish and Italian characters such as Angelo, Angelina, Cosantino, Weinreb, and Asche. While relationships partially collapse the boundaries of ethnicity that the text works to establish, the narrative moves to resolve this potential conflict by defining the ruptured boundaries as dangerous and hazardous. The text's conclusion, for instance, results in the murder of Harry by Weinreb and Asche, suggesting that only corruption, violence, and murder unfold when a character enters a forbidden area of the city.

As well as borrowing strategies of ethnic taxonomy from his American counterparts, Callaghan adopts American gang warfare for the action of the text — action that comes out of the tradition of Al Capone and Bonnie and Clyde. Such an adoption includes an acceptance of what Robin Mathews refers to as “idealised independence” and a “traditionless immediacy” (84). However, his debt to American influences is not simply “traditionless.” Callaghan's text, in fact, exploits an intermediary space between the traditional nineteenth-century conception of “Toronto the good” (through the domestic spaces of the city) and the twentieth-century American impression of the modern city as a transgressive terrain. The inevitably ambiguous depictions of Toronto that arise out of this coupling call attention to the representational strategies that modernist writers used to construct visions of the modern city and bring it under conceptual control.

NOTES

¹ Callaghan's later novels are also concerned with images of urban Canadian space: *A Broken Journey*, *They Shall Inherit the Earth*, and *Such is My Beloved* all explore life in Toronto.

² For more on the texts that established the city as a space of corruption see Trachtenberg.

³ For more on Jewish and Italian immigration during the 1920s see Stephen A. Speisman's *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* and John E. Zucchi's *Italians in Toronto: Development of a National Identity, 1875-1935*. It is interesting to note that Jews and Italians were the largest “non-Anglo-Saxon” groups in Toronto of the 1920s; perhaps this accounts for their conspicuous presence in *Strange Fugitive*.

⁴ While “head taxes” had been introduced as early as 1900, the most extreme anti-immigration legislation was introduced in March, 1923 when the federal government placed a ban on Chinese immigration (White 59).

⁵ Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century representations of American urban space often adopted the form of the travel narrative whereby a white middle-class character would journey to the poor areas of the city and report his experiences for a middle-class readership. Horatio Alger's *Ragged Dick*, Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives*,

Henry James's *The American Scene*, and Stephen Crane's "Bowery Tales" illustrate this form of urban representation.

⁶ Trachtenberg makes an important distinction between "the city" and the "great city" based on the "sheer intensity of growth, in population, in territory, [and] in material shape" of the early twentieth-century metropolis (104).

⁷ The discourses establishing the city as a lurid space can be traced back to John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the biblical Sodom and Gomorrah.

⁸ Fitzgerald's depiction of 1920s New York employs a similar form of spatial categorization whereby certain neighbourhoods are separated from others by physical and psychological boundaries; the privileged Long Island suburb of West Egg, for example, is estranged from the urban threats of New York by the "desolate area of land" that the narrator calls "a valley of ashes" (27).

⁹ Olmsted even goes so far as to claim that the tranquillity provided by city parks has the power to weaken the negative impulses responsible for riots, crime, and alcohol abuse. Citing Jeremy Bentham, Olmsted claims that the "open landscape" of a city park could "weaken the dangerous inclinations" of certain urban dwellers (111).

¹⁰ Green space, in fact, was an important attribute of 1920s Toronto. Because Toronto was bordered by the lake and ravines, Torontonians could easily escape from the urban scenery; at this time, for instance, Don Mills Road led through farmland (Woodcock 22).

¹¹ For more on crime in Toronto's parks during the 1920s see Maynard.

¹² The 1920s Ward district was bordered by Yonge, Queen, University, and College streets (Speisman, "St. John's" 107).

¹³ It is important to note that Harry's ability to transgress the borders of the Ward are central to his privileged position as a middle-class "Anglo-Saxon" character; many of the Italian and Jewish immigrants, because of poor economic conditions, were unable to move beyond these same boundaries.

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