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"THE LINES OF INFLUENCE": THE OCCULT RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR'S CHURCHES IN *FROM HELL* AND *LUD HEAT*

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

BY

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Finally, cheers to you, Nicholas Hawksmoor. You sure know how to design a hell of a church.

ABSTRACT

“THE LINES OF INFLUENCE”: THE OCCULT RECONTEXTUALIZATION OF NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR’S CHURCHES IN *FROM HELL* AND *LUD HEAT*

BY KELSEY CHAN

Nicholas Hawksmoor was an 18th Century English architect responsible for building six churches in London as a part of the Fifty New Churches Act of 1711. Throughout time, a theory arose that the Hawksmoor churches are occult objects that cast psychogeographical forces onto the urban landscape of London. This thesis argues that the occult recontextualization of the Hawksmoor churches presents a resistance to the original intent of the churches as sites of surveillance and domination over the urban landscape of London. First, I introduce the concept of psychogeography, which is what drives the entirety of this thesis. Next, I will trace the history of Hawksmoor and his churches, paying close attention to how the locations and architecture enforce the Church of England’s intentions. Then, I will examine two London-based texts that center the Hawksmoor churches as occult objects: first, Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell’s 1989 graphic novel *From Hell* and then, Iain Sinclair’s 1975 poetry collection *Lud Heat*. Sinclair’s text was the first to introduce the theory behind the Hawksmoor churches as occult objects. This text then went on to inspire and influence texts such as Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell’s 1989 graphic novel *From Hell* — a fictional retelling of the Jack the Ripper murders that follows the popular Gull theory and centers the Hawksmoor churches as significant sites of occult power. And finally, I turn to London as a dynamic urban space and the ways in which psychogeography can be a tool to resist capitalism.

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Fig. 1 — Christ Church Spitalfields, Summer 2022

Photo by Author

INTRODUCTION

It is much more magnificent than I could have ever imagined; pictures really do not do it justice. I can see it at the end of the street, its brilliant white steeple gleaming in the distance. The church stretches higher and higher as I approach, almost like an optical illusion, until I am standing at the gates leading up to the grand portico. "But," I cannot help but think as I stand in front of Christ Church, Spitalfields on a balmy London summer afternoon, "I don't feel particularly evil here." There's a chipper guide to my left showing the church to a group of tourists. "This church was built by architect Nicholas Hawksmoor as a part of the Fifty New Churches Act of 1711! Can anyone guess how many churches were actually built?" My ears perk up at the mention of Hawksmoor, the topic I have been turning over in my head for months now, and I cannot help but to eavesdrop, fighting the urge to yell out "twelve!" I close my eyes and try again to ground myself, directing my focus on feeling the breeze brush past my cheek, feeling the ground underneath my feet, and feeling the energy of the city in my heart. Nothing. No urge to commit heinous acts of murder at all. The same thought carries throughout the rest of my journey around London as I seek out the other seven of Nicholas Hawksmoor's churches meticulously scattered across the city, trying my best to feel Hawksmoor's alleged grand design.[1]

"Psychogeography" refers to "the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals."[2] The term is often attributed to French philosopher and theorist Guy Debord, a prominent figure in the Situationist movement — a French art movement taking place in the mid-to-late twentieth century that was concerned with "the construction and perception of urban

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[1] It should be noted here that Hawksmoor fully designed only 6 churches but contributed to the designs of two others: St. Luke's, Old Street and St. John's, Horsleydown.

[2] Debord ("Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography")

space."[3] In his 1995 paper titled "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography" he defines psychogeography within the context of capitalism and anti-capitalism. As an anti-capitalist and Marxist, Debord believed that the capitalist organizations of urban spaces alienated the individual from the urban space — psychogeography, however, is a process that can reconnect the two. Debord's paper is a call to action that draws special attention to how the histories of urban space have affected one's ability to live and navigate within it. He suggests a revision of, and even a resistance to, the organizations of capitalized urban spaces: "It is thus not without political interest to publicly counterpoise such desires to the elementary desires that are endlessly rehashed."[4] Debord further elaborates on psychogeography in urban contexts in his text "The Theory of the Dérive": "cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed points and vortexes that strongly discourage entry into or exit from certain zones."[5] And the Situationists noted that "the subject's freedom of movement is restricted by the instrumentalized image of the city propagated under the reign of capital."[6] Crucially, the Situationists are only concerned with urban spaces, for example a city like London, because of capitalism's hand in the development of these places. Debord and the Situationists employ psychogeography as a practice that can be used by individuals to resist alienation from urban spaces, that one's conception of urban space not be prescribed by capitalist systems, but conceived by allowing oneself to be guided by the underlying psychogeographical contours of the city. It is this concept of psychogeography that drives a popular theory about Nicholas Hawksmoor's churches that arose as a result of the Jack the Ripper murders which began in 1888, all of which occurred near Christ

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[3] McDonough, 59-60; see SECTION III for more on the Situationists

[4] Debord ("Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography")

[5] Debord ("The Theory of the Dérive")

[6] McDonough, 60

Church, Spitalfields. This theory depicts the Hawksmoor churches as sites of occult or evil energy that allegedly have an influence over individuals who navigate those spaces. Some even believe that they could have had an effect on the Jack the Ripper murders.

In this paper, I will be tracing the historical origins of Hawksmoor's churches, paying close attention to the ways in which they were built as a response to the changing urban landscape of 18th Century London. I also discuss Nicholas Hawksmoor's life, architecture, and literary afterlife. In the following sections, I will focus on two London-based texts that respond to the emergence of the occult theory surrounding the Hawksmoor churches: first, Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's 1989 graphic novel *From Hell* and then, Iain Sinclair's 1975 poetry collection *Lud Heat*. Both texts recontextualize the churches as sites of evil or occult energy. In the section on *From Hell*, I will examine the character of Dr. William Gull and his obsession with Hawksmoor's churches and their supposed connections to the occult. In this text, the Hawksmoor churches play a dynamic role, both as sources of occult power and also as the backdrop for Gull's murders. In the third section of Iain Sinclair's *Lud Heat*, I will dive into the origins of the theory that the Hawksmoor churches hold an occult significance, look at Sinclair's usage of maps, and discuss the occult recontextualization of Hawksmoor's churches. Sinclair's theory has strong connections to psychogeography through his usage of occult energy and ley lines. However, the concept of psychogeography is intimately connected to anti-capitalism and Sinclair's theory rubs against the liberatory objective of the Situationists.

Through the exploration of Nicholas Hawksmoor's churches in both their historical origin and literary legacy, we can trace the warping of the churches' contextualization from conduits of domination and surveillance by England's state Church to occult objects that cast psychogeographical forces onto the urban landscape of London. It is through the occult

recontextualization of the Hawksmoor churches that a sense of resistance is created to the dominant narrative of domination and surveillance that were so central to the inceptions of the churches. This allows for the urban individual to reclaim geographical spaces from the alienation created by capitalism.

PART I: HISTORY

In 1666, The Great Fire of London destroyed 87 churches as well as thousands of other buildings throughout the city.[7] Following this tragic event, around fifty churches — fittingly referred to as the City Churches— were built or rebuilt in the City of London over the next forty years under the supervision of architect Christpoher Wren.[8] However, these rebuilt churches were utilitarian, "often small, cramped, or irregular; in some cases other buildings hid them from the street," and had modest amenities in line with the Church of England's requirements.[9] Though these churches fulfilled the Church's— and by extension, the State's— need to rebuild, many of the new churches were dilapidating or damaged by the beginning of the 18th Century and even the shiny new steeples towering across the London skyline could not contend with rising threats to the Church and State's power over the city. The Church of England operated potently throughout the socio-political climate of the country, especially in the metropolitan center of London. In England, there was (and still is) no separation of church and state — the Church is the State.[10]

In 1710, the Tories won the general election and wanted to strengthen the sense of religion in England given "the late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness.'"[11] The Tory party "deplored the licentiousness and infidelity of the age; it called for a renewed censorship of press and stage, and, as soon as more church accommodation should have been provided, the enforcement of the law against those who 'abstain from all sorts of religious

[7] "The Great Fire of London"

[8] Downes, 105

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] J. E. W. Jr., 305-307

[11] "Introduction"

tendencies'" and advocated "for the re-establishment of the Church of England."[12] And with the turn of the century, London's population was rapidly growing; what was once "a city of 200,000 in 1600" grew to "nearly 500,000 people, with some estimates even putting the number as high as 641,000" by 1700 with Londoners making up 10 percent of the nation's population.[13]

This influx of population was concentrated in the new districts and suburbs on the outer edges of the city.[14] Beginning in 1711 it was found that suburban areas such as Spitalfields, Wapping, Shoreditch, and Limehouse saw a great increase in population and "were either without churches or quite inadequately supplied."[15] Concurrent with London's economic and population growth at the time came a rising population of Dissenters — Protestant Christians separate from the Church of England — and other religious groups such as French Protestants or Huguenots, and Quakers.[16] However, these religious groups did not move into the main city, but concentrated around the new suburbs located on the outskirts of London, away from the city's center where all the new churches had been rebuilt in the wake of the Great Fire and, thus, on the periphery of the Church's scrutiny.[17] Not only were churches sites of religion and worship for the Church, but also sites of moral control and a means of surveillance for the State, with parishioners representing those who complied with the Church and State's ideologies. Thus, this physical and ideological dispersion to the outer reaches of the city by disparate religious and

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[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Hopkins, 59-60

[14] "Indeed the population of the City, as opposed to the rest of London, had actually remained fairly constant over the seventeenth century." (Hopkins, 60)

[15] "Introduction"

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

cultural groups contributed to the dilution of the Church of England's, and hence the State's, physical and ideological hold on the population in London.

FIFTY NEW CHURCHES ACT

As a result of all these factors, in 1711 Parliament created the "Commissions for Building Fifty New Churches."[18] It was determined that fifty new churches should be built in the suburbs of the city "to emulate Wren's achievements a generation before," referencing the building of the fifty City Churches after the Great Fire.[19] For this project, a duty on the importation of coal was put into place to help fund building and designating a commission to stake out sites for the new churches.[20] In response to the rise in population of Dissenters and other religious groups in the suburbs outside of the main city of London, "The Commission's churches were to be located in the new suburbs outside the City's medieval walls."[21] However, of the fifty originally planned, only twelve were built between 1711-1734 when the Commission was active.[22]

NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR

Nicholas Hawksmoor was an architect during the late 17th and early 18th Century.[23] He started as the "pupil, then the valued assistant, and perhaps finally the partner of Sir Christopher Wren" who was the renowned architect responsible for the fifty City Churches built in the forty years following the Great Fire of London and had "official residence as Surveyor of the King's

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[18] "Introduction"

[19] Hopkins, 59

[20] "Introduction"

[21] Hopkins, 59

[22] "Introduction"

[23] Downes, 104

Works."[24] In fact, "it was Wren who plucked Hawksmoor out of obscurity and moulded him as an architect[…] Hawksmoor was one of the best-trained architects Britain had ever seen."[25] Then, "in the last year of the seventeenth century and the first years of the eighteenth he worked for, and with, Mr (later Sir) John Vanbrugh" who was another notable architect of the time and was appointed "to the Controllership of Works" after "the accession of Queen Anne in 1702."[26]

At the time of his appointment to the Commission, Hawksmoor was around fifty years old.[27] He was a Surveyor — tasked to examine potential sites for the new churches. Through his status as a Surveyor, Hawksmoor was given priority consideration for having his designs for the new churches chosen by the Commission.[28] However, the Commission was initially populated by other architects, assuring that their own designs would be chosen and not Hawksmoor's. But, as a result of "the return of the Whigs to power in 1714, a totally new Commission had been appointed; this body included no architects" and thus, Hawksmoor's designs were eventually realized.[29] By 1733, Hawksmoor had designed six of the twelve churches and collaborated with fellow administrative architect John James on two additional churches: Christ Church, Spitalfields; St. Alfege's Church, Greenwich; St. Anne's Church, Limehouse; St. George's

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[24] *Ibid.*, 9, 15

[25] Hopkins, 25

[26] Downes, 9, 21

[27]Historians are unsure about the birth year of Hawksmoor. In *Hawksmoor*, Kerry Downes notes that Hawksmoor (legally, Hawksmore) "was very probably born in 1661," leading to the later statement that "in 1711 Hawksmoor was fifty." (12, 85). Yet in Owen Hopkins' *From the Shadows*, he cites Hawksmoor to be 49 in 1711 (58). However, there is no known dispute that Hawksmoor died in 1723.

[28] Downes, 104

[29] *Ibid.*

Church, Bloomsbury; St. George-in-the-East Church, Upper Wapping; St. John's, Horsleydown; St. Luke's Old Street; and St. Mary's Woolnoth.[30]

HAWKSMOOR'S CHURCHES

In order to reinstate the power of the Church of England in the suburbs, Hawksmoor's churches were strategically placed in areas with a high population of immigrants and competing religious identities.[31] Spitalfields is a prime example of the Church of England's purpose for the Act. Through the 1680's, Spitalfields was relatively underdeveloped, yet had a sufficient population to start making the area marketable.[32] The development of Spitalfields was controversial:

> These developments proceeded despite the continued apprehensions of the government at the eastward expansion of London, occasioned partly by the political and religious disaffection existing in such outskirts of the capital as Spitalfields. The 'liberty' immediately east of Bishopsgate Street was a refuge for dissidents and Spitalfields as a whole was a stronghold of Nonconformity: Baptists had early settled here, and an important Quaker meeting was established during the Commonwealth.[33]

Then, as a result of "the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685[…] French Protestants, driven by persecution from their own country, took refuge in England in large numbers."[34] In particular, these French Protestants, also known as Huguenots, settled in Spitalfields, bringing with them

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[30] *Ibid.*, 104-105; "List of Churches Built"

[31] An exception to this argument for the strategic placements of Hawksmoor's churches is St. Mary's, Woolnoth, which was damaged in the Great Fire and was rebuilt as a result of the 1711 Act. St. Mary's is located near the City center of London.

[32] "General Introduction"

[33] *Ibid.*, Nonconformity is another way of saying "Dissent"

[34] "Industries: Silk Weaving"

their professions, primarily silk-weaving, as well as their own churches — by 1700, there were seven French churches in Spitalfields.[35] Being on the outskirts of the City of London, Spitalfields already held a contentious position in the eyes of the government and the further religious developments of the Baptists, the Quakers, and then Huguenots posed an even larger threat for the loss of the Church of England's influence both religiously and politically. Evidently, "The increase of population caused two Anglican chapels of ease or 'tabernacles' to be erected at about this time, the Petticoat Lane tabernacle and Sir George Wheler's tabernacle just east of the Norton Folgate boundary."[36] And later, "in 1711 Spitalfields was chosen for the site of one or more churches to be erected by the 'Fifty Churches' Commissioners" leading to the building of Nicholas Hawksmoor's Christ Church, Spitalfields between 1714 and 1729 to further cement the presence of the Church of England.[37]

Besides Spitalfields, many of Hawksmoor's other churches are located along the River Thames near the docks — St. Anne's, Limehouse; St. Alfege's, Greenwich; St. John's, Horsleydown; and St. George's-in-the-East. Throughout London's history and development, the River Thames has played an invaluable role in London's commercial enterprises.[38] And with the commercial success of the River Thames, came a demand for people to work at the docks:

> The constant arrival and departure of the ships meant that the population of the East London parishes was constantly changing. Seamen were as important to the East End as the aristocracy was to Westminster[…] They came from all nations and were of all colours, which always attracted comments, particularly from the eighteenth century when

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] "General Introduction"

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Schwarz

> London's trade became truly intercontinental. There were Indians, Africans, even some Chinese, and of course over time there would be more and more. To the Londoners living in aristocratic Westminster, the port was a strange place[…] Ports tend to attract social extremes – on the one hand rich merchants, on the other hand a large mass of poor unskilled labour – and London has been no exception.[39]

During the 18th Century, immigrants made up a large portion of those living and working near the Docklands of East London. In fact, "during the early eighteenth century a quarter of London's population depended upon the port 'directly or indirectly'."[40] As a result of this large influx of immigrants — who brought their own cultures and, more importantly, their own religions — the Church of England would have most likely felt the need to establish themselves in this area as well. As such, "the parishes directly on the riverside and directly involved with the port had a total population in 1801 of 89,733, a tenth of the whole metropolis."[41] Here, we see that by the end of the 18th century, the churches which were located near the River Thames, of which included some of Hawksmoor's, had a substantial population. Thus, the Church's efforts to reach the new and developing parts of London had been realized.

In addition to their strategic locations, the unique architecture of Hawksmoor's churches also reflected the Church of England's desire to influence the population morally. Regarding the design of the new churches for the 1711 Act, architect Sir John Vanbrugh stated, "the new churches should not only enable the inhabitants to worship publicly, but also 'remain Monuments to posterity' of the Queen's piety and grandeur, 'ornaments to the Town, and a credit to the

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[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] *Ibid.*

Nation.'"[42] Even at the inception of these churches, the power of the State and Church were a priority consideration; Vanbrugh's comment was unabashed in stating the true purposes of these religious structures — not merely as sites of worship, but as sites of control and surveillance. Furthermore,

> the new churches should stand free of other buildings, for both dignity and security against fire, and be so sited that they made features in the town; they should be adorned with porticoes (both useful and magnificent) and towers; built in the most durable manner; and possess a 'solemn and awfull[43] appearance', not over-lighted by many windows.[44]

It is obvious from Vanbrugh's comment here that these churches were intended to make a statement, in stark opposition to the utilitarian City Churches built prior. And as such, there was an emphasis on decoration — "porticoes for the fronts most in view and handsome spires 'rising in good Proportion above the neighbouring Houses' would afford sufficient ornament to the town"[45] For example, one of Hawksmoor's best known churches — Christ Church, Spitalfields — to this day stands as a distinct reminder of the State's intentions for the 1711 churches. Once compared to "bleached bones" "reaching white into the sky,"[46] Christ Church stands at the end of the lane in modern-day Spitalfields, keeping watch over the surrounding squat commercial brick buildings. It is impossible to miss, commanding attention — the church is a brilliant white (and

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[42] "Introduction"

[43] "Awfull," meaning "invoking awe," not "awful"

[44] "Introduction"

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Chen, 5; quoting an article written by Catherine Wright which is no longer accessible

was probably even whiter when it was first built), tall and skinny, with a pyramid-shaped spire towering over the surrounding streets.[47]

The interiors of Hawksmoor's churches also conveyed the Church of England's agenda — "the pews [are] to be of equal height so that every one might be seen either kneeling or sitting—no doubt so that the beadle might rouse those sleeping during the sermon, or deal with graver offences against decorum."[48] This detail gives insight into the intentions of these churches beyond being a symbol of the Church of England's presence. There is an extreme emphasis on visibility; visibility creates the impossibility of anonymity, visibility allows for control. Even the beadle is a figure of policing, "rousing those sleeping during the sermon," implying that hearing and paying attention to the sermon is crucial to the purposes of these churches. What's more, if the parishioners are all visible, that implies that they must be visible from a certain point, creating a panoptic positionality where all may be seen from a single point and thus easier to be controlled and surveilled.

The architecture of Hawksmoor's churches was distinct and even strange for the time. Sir Christopher Wren, the architect who trained Hawksmoor, had a "king-like, monopoly[…] over public architecture" and was responsible for some of London's most notable architecture in the 18th century such as St. Paul's cathedral and all of the City Churches which were built following the Great Fire of 1666.[49] Wren, along with Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, worked in the English Baroque style which was popular in the late 17th and early 18th centuries.[50] However, despite his training in English Baroque, Hawksmoor's churches deviated from the style:

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[47] To quote Tim Curry's character Wadsworth in the 1985 film *Clue*, "I know, because I was there." (Lynn, 1985)

[48] "Introduction".

[49] Downes, 142-143

[50] Downes, 10, 18; "Introduction"

> Hawksmoor's six are all planned around intersecting axes; Hawksmoor's in particular are based on straight lines and rectangles. This means that their relation to the circular or oval centrally planned churches of the Renaissance and Baroque — and even to those on a Greek cross plan of four equal arms — is visibly limited and genetically indirect.[51]

Instead of taking inspiration from previous works such as Wren's St. Paul's Cathedral, Hawmsmoor opted for a more angular design that focused on aisles and axes.[52]

Most peculiar, however, was Hawksmoor's inclusion of obelisks and pyramids in the designs for his churches as seen on Christ Church, Spitalfields; St. George's-in-the-East; St. John's, Horsleydown; St. Luke's, Old Street; and St. Alfege's, Greenwich. Obelisks and pyramids appear frequently in Hawksmoor's churches — an important detail that becomes significant later on after a theory arises in the 20th Century that the Hawksmoor churches exude an evil energy as a result of the Jack the Ripper murders in Victorian London.[53]Although there is not much research or information on why Hawksmoor chose obelisks for these particular churches, besides potential influences from Egyptian mausoleums and monuments,[54] there is a document titled "The Explanation of the Obelisk" located in Blenheim's Long Library that is "unsigned, in a clerk's hand with corrections by Hawksmoor," about an obelisk that Hawksmoor had designed for Blenheim Palace around 1714-1715.[55] In this document, Hawksmoor explains the specifications of the obelisk, the designs on each face and panel, the history of obelisks, and

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[51] *Ibid.*, 108-109

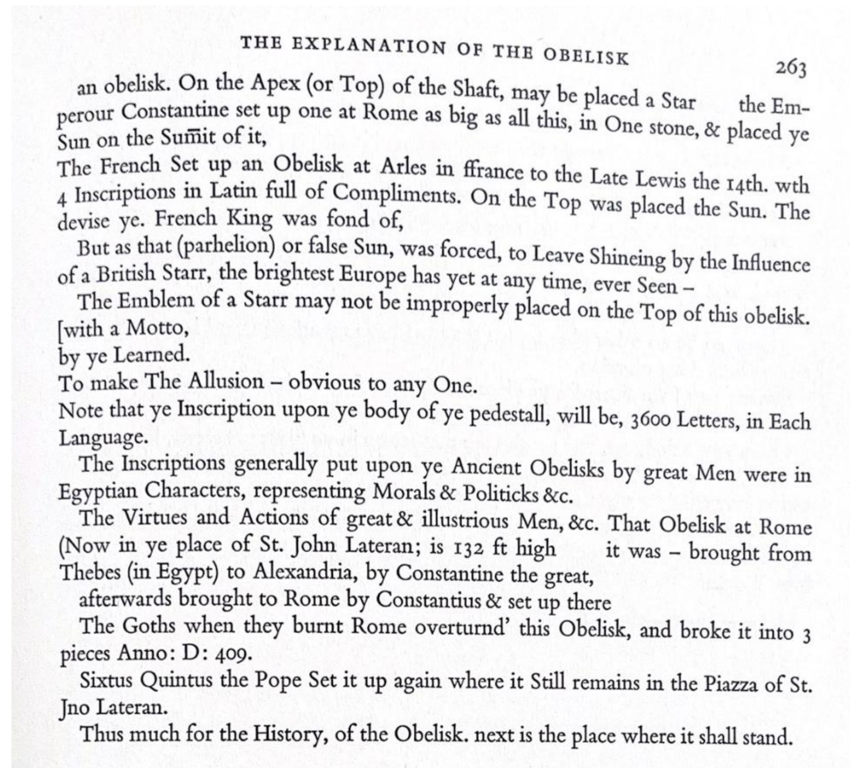
[52] *Ibid.*

[53] See SECTION II

[54] Downes, 184

[55] *Ibid.*, Downes (1959), 263; Apart from going to Blenheim Palace in England, the only other place that this document can be found is in Kerry Downes' 1959 version of *Hawksmoor*, whereas I have been using Downes' 1970 Thames and Hudson World of Art edition throughout the rest of my paper.

where the obelisk should be placed.[56] Hawksmoor's history of obelisks is perhaps the closest we can come to understanding why he was so interested in them.


THE EXPLANATION OF THE OBELISK 263

an obelisk. On the Apex (or Top) of the Shaft, may be placed a Star the Emperour Constantine set up one at Rome as big as all this, in One stone, & placed ye Sun on the Sumīit of it,
The French Set up an Obelisk at Arles in ffrance to the Late Lewis the 14th. wth 4 Inscriptions in Latin full of Compliments. On the Top was placed the Sun. The devise ye. French King was fond of,
But as that (parhelion) or false Sun, was forced, to Leave Shineing by the Influence of a British Starr, the brightest Europe has yet at any time, ever Seen –
The Emblem of a Starr may not be improperly placed on the Top of this obelisk.
[with a Motto,
by ye Learned.
To make The Allusion – obvious to any One.
Note that ye Inscription upon ye body of ye pedestall, will be, 3600 Letters, in Each Language.
The Inscriptions generally put upon ye Ancient Obelisks by great Men were in Egyptian Characters, representing Morals & Politicks &c.
The Virtues and Actions of great & illustrious Men, &c. That Obelisk at Rome (Now in ye place of St. John Lateran; is 132 ft high it was – brought from Thebes (in Egypt) to Alexandria, by Constantine the great,
afterwards brought to Rome by Constantius & set up there
The Goths when they burnt Rome overturnd' this Obelisk, and broke it into 3 pieces Anno: D: 409.
Sixtus Quintus the Pope Set it up again where it Still remains in the Piazza of St. Jno Lateran.
Thus much for the History, of the Obelisk. next is the place where it shall stand.

Fig. 2 — section scanned from *Hawksmoor* (Downes, 1959) APPENDIX B, pg. 263

This section of his "Explanation" seems out of place, sandwiched between paragraphs about the obelisk's specifications and its intended location. His history reads almost like poetry with its seemingly random paragraph breaks and vague lines — such as "with a Motto,/by ye Learned./To make The Allusion — obvious to any One." — creating a stark contrast to the rest of this document which reads more like prose.[57] Here, Hawksmoor begins with the French, noting the addition of the Sun, which carries on as a motif throughout the rest of his history. The Sun, or Starr, seems to mark a sense of importance, that "may not be improperly placed on Top

[56] Though this document was technically written by a clerk, I will be assuming that they were transcribed from Hawksmoor's own words in favor of my ability to analyze this text in terms of his work.

[57] Downes (1959), 263

of this obelisk," and even legitimacy, rejecting the idea of a "false Sun."[58] Regardless of whether or not Hawksmoor is speaking literally or metaphorically, the point still stands that in terms of a history of obelisks, the passage is sparse and vague, almost mystical. The intentions behind Hawksmoor's inclusions of obelisks in his churches remain shrouded in mystery.

LEGACY

Indeed, Hawksmoor's achievements were immense, but the question still stands: Why does Nicholas Hawksmoor remain in the shadows compared to his contemporaries Christopher Wren and John Vanbrugh? Why is his name delegated to a mere handful of books written about his churches, half of them fictional? Though Nicholas Hawksmoor is, to this day, not as famous as Wren and Vanbrugh, the idea that he lived "in the shadows" is merely a myth. Kerry Downes put it best in *Hawksmoor* — one of the few notable books about Hawksmoor and his architectural achievements:

> The hidden genius whose work supports the figurehead is sometimes a real character but always a romantic one. Wren and Vanbrugh were ready to give credit where it was due, but from Hawksmoor's own testimony — as well as much other evidence and indeed common sense — his artistic partnerships were in no way one-sided. There are abundant contemporary references to all three men, although not so many as to tell us all the answers; oblivion came after death[…] When Hawksmoor, the last of the three, died in 1736 his style, which belonged with Wren's and Vanbrugh's to the peculiar English late bloom of Baroque, was out of fashion in favor of the urbane Renaissance revival[…] Wren was too much a universal figure to be forgotten, and St Paul's Cathedral could not, as a national heirloom, be despised or ignored… Vanbrugh, whose name is bound to that

[58] *Ibid.*

> of Blenheim, was rehabilitated towards the end of the century by the open praise of Reynolds and Robert Adam. Hawksmoor's œuvre included no such cynosure.[59]

So while the idea of Hawksmoor living in the shadows of his contemporaries seems to be the most dramatic, allowing him to eventually emerge "from the shadows," it just so happened that the public's eye for architecture merely passed over his works during his lifetime, perhaps due to his lack of seniority at the time where more renowned structures were built such as Wren's St. Paul's Cathedral and Vanbrugh's Blenheim Palace.

Regardless of the misattribution of his modern unpopularity, Hawksmoor remains an elusive figure in contemporary academic publishing. Besides Downes' *Hawksmoor*, there are only two other notable non-fiction works on Hawksmoor's life and works: *From the Shadows* by Owen Hopkins and *Nicholas Hawksmoor: Rebuilding Ancient Wonders* by Vaughn Hart.[60] However, in addition to these books focused on the biographical and architectural readings of Hawksmoor, there have also been a number of deeply influential works of fiction and poetry written about Hawksmoor and his churches — particularly, the first portion of Iain Sinclair's 1975 poetry collection *Lud Heat* and the 1989 graphic novel *From Hell* written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Eddie Campbell which was later adapted into a film in 2001.[61] Indeed, it is through Hawksmoor's posthumous connections to the Jack the Ripper murders that gained his name popular recognition, which inspired works such as *From Hell* and *Lud Heat*.

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[59] *Ibid.*, 10; it should also be noted here that Downes does not directly cite any source to this point; in fact, his bibliography is merely a list of suggested works for those also interested in the topic of Hawksmoor's architecture.

[60] Of which I am only referencing Hopkins' work in my paper.

[61] There is also Peter Ackroyd's fiction novel *Hawksmoor*, but I will not be focusing on this text in my paper.

PART II: *FROM HELL*

From Hell is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore and illustrated by Eddie Campbell initially published in 1989. The text is a fictional retelling of the Jack the Ripper murders that occurred in London in the late 19th century. Jack the Ripper was a serial killer active in London starting in 1888 and said to be responsible for the murders of five sex workers: Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, and Mary Jane Kelly — all within the span of ten weeks.[62] In 1970, Dr. Thomas Stowell first proposed the theory that Jack the Ripper's true identity was Queen Victoria's personal physician, Dr. William Gull.[63] Another point of interest that proves to be relevant is the locations of the five murders — all in Whitechapel near Christ Church.[64]

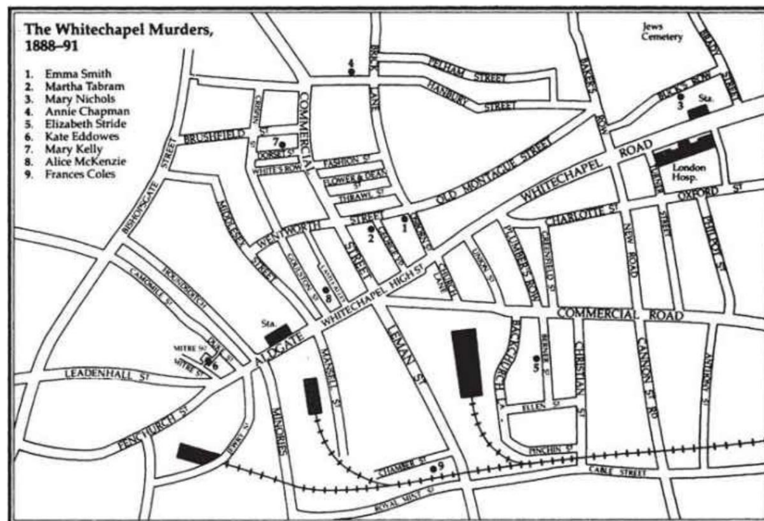

Fig. 3 — A map of the location of the Whitechapel Murders (the Jack the Ripper Murders) showing all five canonical and four non-canonical murders. Christ Church, Spitalfields is located to the right of #7 on the map, above Fashion Street. (Sugden)

[62] Walkowitz, 546-547

[63] Begg, 358-359; the theory is loosely supported by the fact that when questioned on the matter, Dr. Gull "admitted that he sometimes suffered losses of memory and had once come round to discover his shirt bloodstained."

[64] Hurren, 28

Moore and Campbell's portrayal of Jack the Ripper turns to the popular Gull theory, while incorporating potentially fictitious elements such as Gull's indoctrination into and involvement with the FreeMasons and his obsession with Hawksmoor and the occult. After rumors of an illegitimate royal baby, Queen Victoria tasks Dr. Gull with disposing four sex workers[65] at the core of the conspiracy that threatens the crown. The graphic novel heavily relies on Nicholas Hawksmoor's churches for its setting and engages with themes of crime, conspiracy, class, gender, and politics.

While the churches (primarily Christ Church, Spitalfields) serve as the physical setting of the graphic novel with their own historical and socio-political motivations, they also hold a thematic significance that generates psychogeographical tension — standing as looming reminders of the sinister energies permeating throughout the text. *From Hell* explores the concept of psychogeography through the connections between the physical and subliminal forces of the Hawksmoor churches and Jack the Ripper's murders in order to recontextualize the urban space of Whitechapel — and thus the Jack the Ripper murders — as passive and prone to the evil influences of the city's layout and architecture.

"THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL"[66]

Christ Church, Spitalfields stands as a recurring psychogeographical object and symbol throughout *From Hell*. The church looms over the scenery, with full page spreads illustrating the structure's stark presence. Christ Church's first major appearance occurs as the background to a conversation between Dr. William Gull and his acquaintance James Hinton regarding Dorset

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[65] In the graphic novel, Catherine "Kate" Eddowes is not a part of the four-woman blackmail conspiracy, but is mistaken for Mary Jane "Marie" Kelly and is thus also murdered by Dr. Gull.

[66] Moore, Chapter 4, Page 15; in reference to Nicholas Hawksmoor

Street,[67] commenting on the energies of the urban space. The scene opens as Hinton comments, "Dorset Street… the most evil in London, I'm told," to which Gull responds "At six in the morning its evil is evidently sleeping, Hinton, and we are quite safe."[68] During the 19th century, Dorset street was known as one of the most dangerous streets in London.[69] It was located in the East End which "became the focus of a great many general anxieties about unemployment, overcrowding, slum dwellings, disease and gross immorality."[70] Crucial to the plot of this graphic novel, Dorset Street was also known to house several brothels and sex work was common in this area.[71] Gull's comment connects Dorset Street's history to a theory of energy and psychogeography, which poses the question of whether Dorset Street is "evil" because of the lingering energies of its past or because of its superimposition on the city's underlying ley lines of energy and power.

This idea of evil energy is further developed as the characters arrive in front of Christ Church, Spitalfields at the end of the street, one such node of alleged occult power. The grand portico stretches far beyond the upper bounds of the panel, dwarfing the dark figures of Gull and Hinton, with nothing but inky blackness waiting beyond its columns — "I've always found it UNNERVING" Hinton comments.[72]

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[67] In London during the 19th century, Dorset Street (later named Duval Street in 1904) was located in Spitalfields. For more information about the history and transformation of Dorset Street, please see Nigel Jeffries' article "Looking Beyond the Ripper."

[68] Moore, Chapter 2, pg. 13

[69] Hurren, 6-9

[70] Begg, 1

[71] Hurren, 8

[72] Moore, Chapter 2, pg. 13

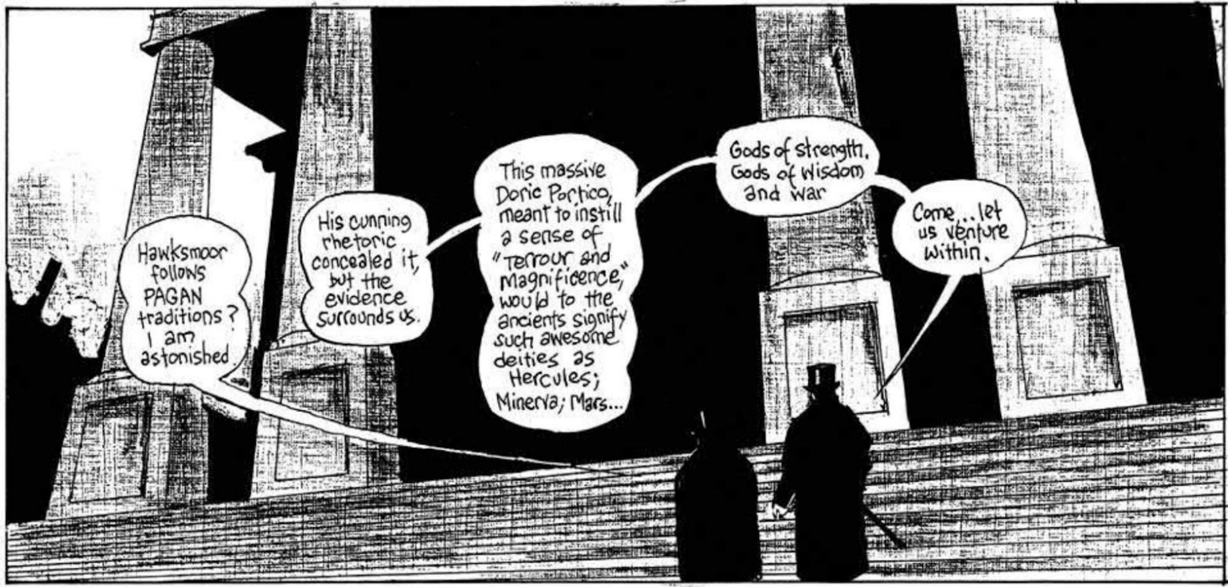

Fig. 4 — panel from *From Hell* Chapter 2, pg. 13

Gull proceeds to consider Hawksmoor and the inception of Christ Church: "Hawksmoor designed several London churches to be of 'solemn and awful appearance,'"[73] quoting architect John Vanbrugh's comments about the design of Hawksmoor's churches. However, here ends the historically accurate commentary; Gull's speech strays from history into the field of mythology: "following the Pagan traditions of the ancient Dionysiac architects[…] to suggest that certain symbols might subtly affect men's minds."[74] This analysis of Hawksmoor's intentions leans directly into the idea of psychogeography, claiming the design of Christ Church, Spitalfields as a source of influential energy. Furthermore, Gull muses, "Perhaps Hawksmoor gouged more deeply an existing channel of suffering, violence and authority. Such purpose."[75] Here, Gull alludes to the full extent of the Church's psychogeographical forces — the lines of influence run

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[73] *Ibid.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.* Chapter 2, pg. 15

deeper than merely Hawksmoor's design; that his placement, too, was intentional and taps into a rich vein of evil.

Interestingly, at this point in the story, Dr. Gull has yet to be contracted by Queen Victoria; however, he still acknowledges the evil energies of Whitechapel and Christ Church, Spitalfields. Is it this pre-existing belief in the evil energies imbued in Hawksmoor's designs that causes him to kill his five victims in increasingly gruesome manners? Or did the area's underlying occult energy somehow lead to his mental and ethical demise causing the increase of violence and his downward spiral into insanity?[76] For example, Polly Nichols is Gull's first victim. In the scene of her murder, Gull lures her into his coach, conversing with her before feeding her a drug-injected grape, and, after she dies, he disembowels her in a back alley just east of Christ Church, Spitalfields.[77] Though it is unclear if Nichols passes away due to the poisoned grape or if Gull asphyxiates her, the cause of her death is not a particularly violent nor gruesome one. However, as the plot goes on, his killings become increasingly violent and desperate. Take for instance the murder of Kate Eddowes, his fourth victim — Gull does not bother with the pleasantries nor poisons, he leaps out of his carriage brandishing his blade, and slaughters her openly on the street.[78] His attack is wordless, save for the occasional grunt. He becomes more depraved. A loss of the mind? A loss of control? The effects of his actions? Or the effects of subliminal forces?[79] There is a danger here. It seems that occult forces assume a direction of

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[76] Here, I would like to clarify that though Dr. Gull's plan to kill these four women was already gruesome, violent, and unethical; it is the manner in which he carries out these murders that I am focusing on in regards to the effects of the psychogeographical forces of Christ Church Spitalfields. Which is not to say that murder in of itself is "merely caused by psychogeographical forces" nor can it be excused as such.

[77] Moore, Chapter 5, Page 29-30

[78] *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, Page 37-39

[79] This is not to diminish the severity of murder nor to excuse those who commit the act of murder.

causation which encapsulates an interesting moment both within the fiction of the text and looking at the text within the historical context of the plot. According to Gull, the energies of the space cause Dorset Street to be “evil,” which creates the opportunity for murder. Here, Moore cements a distinct order of causation; it is not Jack the Ripper that taints the physical space, it is the space that creates the monster.

OF ANCIENT GODS AND OBELISKS

Commenting on the supposed occult energies of the urban space, Dr. Gull continues on his psychogeographical journey in chapter four when he takes his coachman, John Netley, on a tour around London, showing him important architectural and geographical sites. These sites in particular are a reference to Iain Sinclair’s map in *Lud Heat* of the Hawksmoor churches and other sites that he deems crucial to the psychogeography of the urban space.[80] This tour includes five more of Hawksmoor’s churches: St. Luke’s, Old Street; St. George’s, Bloomsbury; St. John’s, Horsleydown; St. Anne’s, Limehouse; and St. George-in-the-East as well as additional architectural and geographical sites and structures around London, paying special attention to the appearance of obelisks, during his tour with Netley.

The first obelisk they encounter is near the memorial marking the gravesite of notable Romantic English poet and engraver William Blake, who died in 1827. It should be noted here that this scene has been altered by Moore and Campbell; neither Blake’s grave nor grave memorial had been established in 1888 when this scene takes place — in fact, Blake’s grave and grave memorial sites were not found or established until fairly recently in the 21st century and

[80] See PART III: *LUD HEAT* below; furthermore, *Lud Heat* is, in fact, the foundational text that cemented and perpetuated the theory that the Hawksmoor churches have a psychogeographical significance in relation to the Jack the Ripper murders as it was the first work published to have introduced this idea.

has had a long history of dispute.[81] Though built in memory of English writer Daniel Defoe, the obelisk casts a shadow across Blake's gravestone, which seems important to Dr. Gull.[82] Gull takes this moment to introduce obelisks and their connection to the occult:"The obelisk is phallic, for the sun's a symbol of the male principle; of man's ascendancy."[83] Here, Gull assigns meaning to this architectural structure, making an argument that it has a greater occult or mythological purpose. With this precedent, Gull immediately turns to Hawksmoor's own St. Luke's, Old Street — located just a couple blocks north of the graveyard in Bunhill Fields — following this line of thought and pointing out the church's distinct steeple. Gull exclaims: "St, Lukes is up ahead. The church itself is unremarkable, but ah the steeple… Look at Hawksmoor's STEEPLE!"[84] Indeed, the steeple of St. Luke's, Old Street is an obelisk, pictured in the text in its own panel, looming watchfully above the tree-line as Gull and Netley drive by in their carriage.[85] And here, Gull addresses Hawksmoor's obelisk directly: "He built an obelisk: Another altar to the Sun and Masculinity, and Reason, with its cold erection stabbing at the sky."[86] Gull's obsession with the phallic imagery of the obelisk seems almost comically repetitive as he passes by St. George's, Bloomsbury; Cleopatra's Needle; and finally St. John's, Horsleydown, connecting all five obelisks a la Sinclair[87] to form a star or pentagram on a city's map.[88]

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[81] Tapper (2018)

[82] Moore, Chp. 4, pg. 12

[83] *Ibid.*; it is worth commenting here that Gull's entire tour has an underlying air of sexism, particularly at the beginning of his journey with Netley. Although a crucial theme within the text, I will not be focusing on this aspect in my paper, though it is worth exploring.

[84] Moore, Chapter 4, pg. 13

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] *Ibid.*

[87] See SECTION III below

[88] Moore, Chapter 4, pg. 36

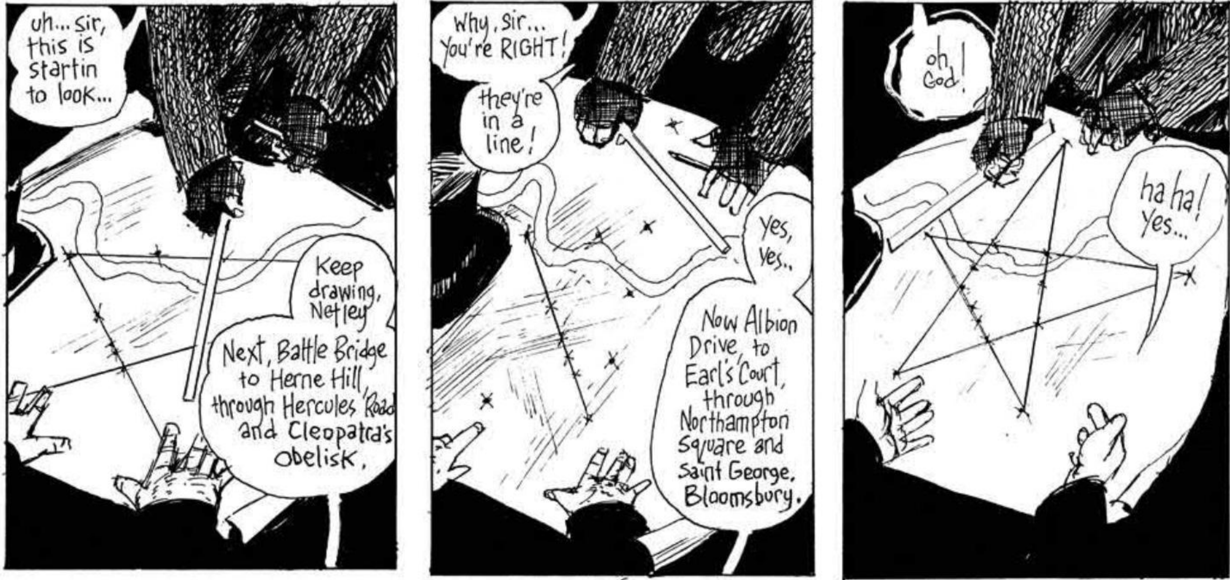

Fig. 5 — three non-consecutive panels from *From Hell* Chapter 4, pg. 36

In the tradition of *Lud Heat*,[89] Gull's mapping of the city completely disconnects the original intent of Hawksmoor's churches from his and Sinclair's theories about the occult; absent is the sense of the Church of England's power and control that was so prevalent throughout the construction of the churches. Gull even goes as far as to reframe Hawksmoor's own history as one of paganism and myth. Gull repeatedly references "Dionysiac Architects," "pagans," and "druids" whenever he brings up the topic of Hawksmoor, even going as far as to assert that "Hawksmoor maintained his strange designs were based upon "the purest forms of Christianity" which to his mind were those of the fourth century A.D."[90] Gull's intense occultist theories seem, in a way, to completely rewrite the real histories behind the churches, replacing them with theories of Hawksmoor's latent pagan intentions, blurring the line between fact and fiction. Here, Hawksmoor's churches no longer serve as conduits of the Church and State's power, but practically become characters and agents of domination themselves — they are living objects.

[89] See below for a more thorough discussion of Sinclair's *Lud Heat*

[90] Moore, Chapter 4, pg. 13

"WHAT IS THE FOURTH DIMENSION?"[91]

Another major motif throughout *From Hell* is repetition and cyclical time. During Dr. Gull and Hinton's conversation in Christ Church, the two discuss the concept of repetition in time being bound to a specific location — in this case, Spitalfields. As Gull muses about Hawksmoor's true mythological architectural intentions, Hinton replies "You know Gull, this puts me in mind of some theories that my son, Howard, proposed to me. They suggest Time is a human Illusion… that all times co-exist in the stupendous whole of eternity. Fourth dimensional patterns within eternity's monolith would, he suggests, seem merely random events to third-dimensional percipients… events rising towards inevitable convergence like an archway's lines."[92]

[91] *Ibid.*, Chapter 2, pg. 14

[92] *Ibid.* Chapter 2, pg. 14-15

Fig. 6 — panels from *From Hell* Chapter 2, pg. 15

Here, Hinton suggests a theory that Time exists as a structure or concept outside the human understanding of time. Namely, that this concept of Time exists in a pattern, an architecture, moving teleologically towards certain events, outcomes, or ends. And particularly, that Time can be and is tied locatively to certain events that occur in certain physical spaces. This latter point is crucial in understanding *From Hell* and its relation to psychogeography and thus psychogeography's historical and fictional relationship with the Hawksmoor churches. Hinton goes on to explain, citing Spitalfields as an example:

> Let us say something peculiar happens in 1788… a century later, related events take place. Then again 50 years later. Then 25 years. Then 12. An invisible curve rising through the centuries. Can history then be said to have an architecture, Hinton? The

> notion is most glorious and most horrible. Yet consider this church build upon "Ho-spital Fields," where plague victims were buried… plague that entered London barely a mile away. In the 1760s troops bloodily suppressing weavers riots were barracked here in Christ Church. Nearby, in 1811, the Ratcliffe Highway Murders engendered out police force, now imitated throughout Europe.[93]

Once again, this scene occurs prior to Gull being tasked by Queen Victoria, placing this scene and this discussion as a potential foreshadowing or scene setting for the events yet to transpire. Introducing this idea of repetition of time in a space reinforces the psychogeographical theory that Christ Church, Spitalfields is an evil, or at most psychically compelling, structure and force in both the physical and mental geographies of the urban space. The architecture of time curves forward; Gull's future actions but another link on Spitalfield's unfortunate chain of events. The urge of literary analysis contends with the forces within the text — does Hinton's speech serve to foreshadow what is to come? Or does it function to prove Hinton's theory true that Time has its own architecture — for what use is foreshadowing in a predestined fate but to state the obvious? This sense of foreshadowing is heightened by the repetition of the phrase "what is the fourth dimension?" throughout the entire graphic novel, first appearing even before Hinton's introduction of the theory, contracting time even within the text.[94] The text curls into its own fiction.

This theme of cyclical or repetitive time is not just a motif within *From Hell*, but also participates on a larger scale of repetition and cyclicity in both literary history and in the greater history of the inception of the Hawksmoor churches. By invoking London's literary past, *From*

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[93] *Ibid.* Chapter 2, pg. 15

[94] *Ibid.* Chapter 2, pg. 1

Hell places itself within London's literary history, which in of itself is already in conversation with Sinclair's *Lud Heat*, published fourteen years prior. In Owen Hopkins' *From the Shadows,* one of the few biographical texts on Hawksmoor, he discusses the idea of "synchronicity."[95] Here, synchronicity is defined as "the temporal connection between different events that appear to be otherwise unrelated."[96] In this section of the text's introduction, Hopkins even connects the concept of "synchronicity" to Peter Ackroyd's 1985 novel *Hawksmoor*.[97] Hopkins' mention of "synchronicity" also connects it to *From Hell*'s own discussion of cyclical time and repetition. Here, we can see literature on Hawksmoor and his works participating in the larger scale of not only literary history or even the churches' history, but also Hawksmoor's personal history. The thread of time cinches, contracting Hawksmoor's legacy with his past; it is impossible to talk about Hawksmoor's present without invoking his past and vice versa. Indeed, it is strange how seemingly unconnected an 18th century architect and a crime sensation can be, yet the two orbit each other in perpetuity, locked together in time superimposed on itself.

From Hell perfectly encapsulates its own mythos in form, fiction, and meta-textually. With a text so potently steeped in psychogeographical and occult themes, it is difficult to pick apart text from reality and it is precisely this that allows the text to participate in a larger history of resistance to the original intentions behind the Hawksmoor churches as sites of domination and control by the State. Working from the theory originally posed by Iain Sinclari in his poetry collection *Lud Heat*, *From Hell* and the entire lineage of related texts so effectively warp the Hawksmoor churches, recontextualizing them from sites of surveillance in the suburbs of a rapidly growing city, to monsters of evil and occult power. Though there are still dangers in

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[95] Hopkins, 19; See SECTION I for more on Hopkins's *From the Shadows*

[96] *Ibid.*

[97] *Ibid.*

ascribing causation between psychogeography and crime, it is through this link that *From Hell* traces Jack the Ripper back to the State. And perhaps rather than changing the historical narrative of the Hawksmoor churches and the Fifty New Churches act, the psychogeographic recontextualization of the Hawksmoor churches mirrors the original intent of these churches in a rather grisly fashion, using Jack the Ripper as a device to reflect the true horrors of a surveillance state.

PART III: *LUD HEAT*

Lud Heat is a foundational text that establishes the occult theory that the Hawksmoor churches exude or act as conduits of psychogeographical energy and the subsequent connections to the Jack the Ripper murders and its related theories. First published in 1975, *Lud Heat* is a poetry collection written by Iain Sinclair that focuses on Sinclair's own ideas of, and experiences with, psychogeography in East London. In particular, the first section of this collection titled "NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR, HIS CHURCHES" introduces the psychogeographical connection between the churches, other London landmarks, and the urban spaces they occupy. This recontextualization of Hawksmoor's churches ultimately changed the way in which they were viewed, from mere churches to sites of occult significance.

"THE SHAPE OF THE FEAR"[98]

Iain Sinclair proposes his theory in the first paragraph of this text: "the churches of Nicholas Hawksmoor soon invade the consciousness, the charting instinct. Eight churches give us the enclosure, the shape of the fear…"[99] Here, Sinclair introduces the idea of the churches, the "lines of influence" that connect them, and their greater participation within London's urban and psychogeographical landscape. In "NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR, HIS CHURCHES," Sinclair focuses on seven of the eight churches that Hawksmoor had a hand in designing for the 1711 Parliamentary Act, excluding St. Mary's, Woolnoth, and divides them into three sub-connections:[100]

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[98] Sinclair, 15

[99] *Ibid.*

[100] See SECTION I for a list of the eight churches designed by Hawksmoor; and see below for Sinclair's map which includes a mapping of the sub-connections.

> A triangle is formed between Christ Church, St Goerge's-in-the-East & St Anne's, Limehouse. These are centres of power for those territories; sentinel, sphinx-form, slack dynamos abandoned as the culture they supported goes into retreat. The power remains latent, the frustration mounts on a current of animal magnetism, & victims are still claimed[…] St George's, Bloomsbury, and St Alfege's, Greenwich, make up the major pentacle-star[…] These churches guard or mark, rest-upon two major sources of occult power: The British Museum & Greenwich Observatory[…] Then there is the sub-system of fire obelisks: St Luke's, Old Street, & St John's, Horsleydown. They form an equilateral triangle, raised over the water, with London's true obelisk — "Cleopatra's Needle," which is, of course, the obelisk set up by Thothmes III in front of the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis."[101]

This is the beginning of the association between the Hawksmoor churches and Egyptian imagery. In addition to Hawksmoor's inclusion of obelisks and pyramids, Sinclair takes this association and pushes it further, namely with the inclusion of other Egyptian imagery and of Cleopatra's Needle into the network of Hawksmoor's churches. The first usage of Egyptian imagery is in his description of the first triangle sub-connection between Christ Church, Spitalfields; St Goerge's-in-the-East; and St Anne's, Limehouse. Here, he uses the term "sphinx-form" to describe the churches as forces of power, choosing specifically to use Egyptian imagery, perhaps to amplify the feeling of grandeur and mystique that has already been associated with the churches. Furthermore, by including Cleopatra's needle in the obelisk "sub-system," along with St. Luke's, Old Street and St. John's, Horsleydown, Sinclair simultaneously ropes Cleopatra's Needle into the mythos of the Hawksmoor churches as another node of psychogeographical force

[101] Sinclair, 16-17

and, like with "sphinx-form," heightens the sense that the Hawksmoor church obelisks are part of a larger occult or psychogeographic plan. However, from this association that Sinclair has formed between Egyptian imagery and the Hawksmoor churches comes the more important question of how this connection leads to an association between the Hawksmoor churches and the occult — more specifically, why Egyptian imagery and Egyptology is seen as occult in the first place. Research into Hawksmoor's architectural history brings up nothing about potential connections between the architect and Egypt or Egyptology, aside from a singular mention of "the Egyptian Hall," which merely refers to a type of hall inspired by Roman interior architecture.[102] Other than this one example, which is only considered because of its name, there are no other threads of connection between Hawksmoor and Egypt. Given the lack of evidence otherwise, this is a connection fabricated by Sinclair, most likely to exaggerate the extent to which the Hawksmoor churches have any kind of occult significance. Furthermore, by making this artificial connection, Sinclair also encourages the similarly artificial connection between Egypt and the occult, perpetuating a potentially harmful stereotype about Egyptian culture and imagery as being related to the occult.[103]

Not only do the churches form this web of influence, but, in a psychogeographical fashion, they also somehow psychically influence individuals within the urban space, leading to repeating patterns of crime and violence throughout time in this singular space. Sinclair cites proof of this, using Christ Church and St. George's-in-the-East as examples:

> I spoke of the unacknowledged magnetism & control-power, built-in code force, of these places; I would now specify[…] the ritual slaying of Marie Jeanette Kelly in the ground

[102] Downes, 184

[103] I believe that this concept can be related to the larger issue of orientalism, which is the fetishization of the "East" or the "Orient" by the "West" ("Occident"). More about this topic can be explored in Edward Said's work *Orientalism* which first introduced and coined the topic.

> floor room of Miller's Court, Dorset Street, directly opposite Christ Church[…] the Ratcliffe Highway slaughter of 1811[…] where four roads cross to the north of St George's-in-the-East[…] the battering to death of Mr Abraham Cohen, summer 1974, on Cannon Street Road[…][104]

Sinclair establishes the area between the first sub-system of Hawksmoor's churches (the triangle) as a site that attracts, or even spawns, crime. However, Sinclair does not chalk these events up to random chance, but directly cites the churches as having some agency or influence over these events, even seeming to go as far as to absolve the individuals of motive: "It was a time of confusion & chaos, as in 1888, tangled motives, half-derived impulses. Nobody, guilty or innocent, seems to have quite known what they were doing. The transcripts of the witnesses are full of canceled stories, lies, wrong dates, infinitely adjustable times."[105] By painting the scene as a time of confusion and disarray, the agency of crime falls onto the physical space rather than the individuals who inhabit the space.

In fact, Sinclair argues that Hawksmoor himself potentially designed his churches to hold some sort of power, occult or otherwise. Sinclair writes:

> From what is known of Hawksmoor it is possible to imagine that he did work a code into the buildings; knowingly or unknowingly, temples of meaning, bands of continuing ritual[…] The buildings taken together, knotted across the city, yield a further word[…] His motives remain opaque; his churches are the mediums, filled with the dust of wooden voices.[106]

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[104] Sinclair, 23

[105] Sinclair, 26

[106] Sinclair, 19

Not only are the churches as object recontextualized as occult objects, but even Hawksmoor's own history and architectural motivations are looped into the mythos — Hawksmoor himself becomes recontextualized from a mere State architect to a master of the occult, shaping the psychic fabric of the city with his work.

"THE LINES OF INFLUENCE"

Most prominent in this section of *Lud Heat* is the illustration of Sinclair's psychogeographical map of the Hawksmoor churches titled: "Being a Map of the 8 Great Churches: The lines of influence, the invisible rods of force active in this city."[107]

Fig. 7 — Sinclair's map from *Lud Heat* pg. 20-21

[107] Sinclair, 20-21

The map includes the eight Hawksmoor churches, notable landmarks such as Parliament road and Cleopatra's Needle, and various lines of different weights and patterns connecting them.[108] Unlike other maps of London, the Hawksmoor churches are the main feature in Sinclair's map, supplemented by vague sketches of other geographical features — such as the River Thames — that show the relative positions of the churches in the city. Thus, the city is recontextualized in relation to the Hawksmoor churches, and not vice versa.[109] By remapping the city, Sinclair participates in the greater tradition of reclaiming urban space.

SINCLAIR AND THE SITUATIONISTS

Sinclair's map is reminiscent of the work of the Situationists, who notably used maps — like the piece "The Naked City," which was a rearranged collage of the *Plan de Paris* — in order to recontextualize urban spaces to resist capitalism. The capitalist system alienates the individual from the spaces they occupy; preventing a relationship between the space and the individual. The Situationists were extremely anti-capitalist and opposed the restriction of movement that came with a capitalist urban space. In his "Theory of the Dérive," Guy Debord, a prominent figure in the Situationist movement, cites Karl Marx: "Men can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is alive," resisting the argument that geography is independent of the individuals who exist within it and vice versa.[110] The history of the Situationist movement is one of resistance and of utilizing alternative readings — "the domination of psychogeographical variations by the knowledge and calculation of their possibilities" — in order to resist the dominant social script of capitalist urban space.[111]

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[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Parts of this section were grafted from a previous paper I had written on the same topic.

[110] Debord, 63

[111] *Ibid.* 62

However, Sinclair's theory of psychogeographical force-lines and energy fields rejects this idea of anti-capitalism. Though Sinclair takes inspiration from the Situationist tradition of recontextualizing urban spaces through mapping, this is where the two schools of thought deviate. Whereas the Situationists believed in the potential for the freedom of movement by resisting capitalist mappings and definitions of urban spaces, Sinclair takes the opposite approach, leaning into a nihilistic sense of "predestination." It is through the theory that the Hawksmoor churches participate in a grand web of influence over the city that restricts movement, rather than frees it. Though this restriction is not necessarily capitalist in nature, it rejects the concept of free movement; if these ley lines of influence have a hand in the various misfortunes and horrors that Sinclair claims, then what use is free movement, free thought, or even free will?

Yet, regardless of Sinclair's beliefs in the psychogeographical forces that rule London, the text still does resist the capitalist structures of domination and control. It is not that Sinclair's stylistic references to the Situationist movement allow for an anti-capitalist recontextualization of urban space, but rather that the recontextualization of Hawksmoor churches as occult and psychogeographic forces subverts their initial purpose as sites of surveillance and control by the Church of England. Taking a note from the character Hinton in *From Hell* and his theories of Time's architecture,[112] the literary legacies of the Hawksmoor churches (as seen through texts such as *From Hell* and *Lud Heat*) in of themselves resist the very purposes of the New Churches Act of 1711. Time's architecture connects the birth of the Hawksmoor churches back in 1711 to the 20th century texts that redefine them. And it is through this temporal connection, this genealogy, that we are able to see the true Architecture of Time — the arch that connects birth to

[112] Please see SECTION II for a more in depth analysis of this scene in *From Hell*

rebirth. It is not the strange conspiracy theories of a 19th century serial killer nor the attributions of seemingly random locations to nodes of power in East London, but the very act of reimagining the Hawksmoor churches, the physical spaces, as sites of power or poetry or even evil that rubs against a history of socio-political domination. It is this freedom of mental movement and recontextualization that creates the resistance. It is the Situationist ambition to take a physical space that has been claimed by capital — that has been given rules and restrictions that dominate and alienate the individual — and reconstructing meaning in order to reconnect the individual with the urban space, allowing them to resist capitalism's vice and to reclaim the urban space if not physically, then psychically.

SINCLAIR'S PERSONAL NARRATIVE

In the appendix of Alan Moore's *From Hell,* which took heavy inspiration from Sinclair's theory of the Hawksmoor churches to build the mythos of the graphic novel's occult underpinnings, Moore includes a note regarding Sinclair's map in *Lud Heat*:

> As part of the narrative, Sinclair includes *a map of the 8 Great Churches: The Lines of influence, the invisible rods of force active in this city,* which I believe was drawn by a friend of Sinclair's, the remarkable poet and sculptor Brian Catling. The map, while suggestive of many shapes, did not provide the shape that I was looking for until a couple of further points were added and verified as being of significance. After weeks of research and a day-long trip around key points of the diagram, only one point eluded me, this being the point on Sinclair's map that is labeled 'Lud's Shed'… Finally, in despair, I contacted Mr Sinclair himself, who informed me that the inclusion of Lud's Shed at the point on the diagram had been a personal reference shared between himself and Mr Catling. This, of course, knocked one of the points from my design unless I could find

> some verification for the significance of the London Fields beyond the map reference in *Lud Heat*.[113]

Here, this single note brings into question the entire legitimacy of Sinclair's theory; in particular, the shape that the connective lines between the churches, obelisks, and other landmarks make. This fact reveals that regardless of the locations' significance to proving or disproving the theory that the Hawksmoor churches are arranged in a way that is occultly significant, Sinclair, and Moore by extension, were primarily interested in maintaining the occult "ley lines" for their respective narratives.[114] The fact that one of the few points on Sinclair's map is a location personal to Sinclair and not necessarily a location or geographical object that has anything to do with the history or architecture of the Hawksmoor churches actually draws Sinclair himself into the narrative. Or rather, it shows that this text should not be separated from the author and thus should be read in the context of Sinclair's own personal experiences in East London. In fact, *Lud Heat* does not claim to be an authority on theories about Hawksmoor's churches at all, but a personal poetry collection written about Sinclair's time as an employee in the Parks Department.[115] This point is further proven when looking at all the other poetry in the text which takes a sharp turn away from the Hawksmoor churches and into poetry based off of Sinclair's personal journal entries among other things — even including photographs of Sinclair around East London. This, in turn, shifts the idea behind the Hawksmoor churches and their "lines of influence" from a supposed fact, or even theory, to a literary device that allows Sinclair to make a statement about London as an urban space based on his own experiences. But what is so

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[113] Moore, Appendix I, pg. 11

[114] See also SECTION II for an illustration of lines connecting points on a map (including some of Hawksmoor's churches) in *From Hell*

[115] See back cover of *Lud Heat*

significant about this point, is that *Lud Heat* does not exist on its own in London's literary history, but is intimately connected to texts such as *From Hell*, which was heavily influenced by Sinclair's theory of the Hawksmoor churches.

CONCLUSION

Urban spaces and their effects on the individual are no stranger to London's history and literature. Even as early as the 19th Century, an entire century before the Situationists, this sense of urban space as a dynamic character was already there, serving as a reminder of the changing socio-political landscape. The famous 19th Century English essayist Thomas DeQuincey addresses this topic in his 1821 book "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater." DeQuincey dedicates a particular portion of this text to his friend Ann, a sex-worker living in London at the time, and his meetings with her. However, as time goes on, DeQuincey finds that he has lost track of Ann and is unable to meet with her again. He laments this, "Meantime, what had become of poor Ann? For her I have reserved my concluding words; according to our agreement, I sought her daily, and waited for her every night, so long as I stayed in London, at the corner of Titchfield Street."[116] Even though DeQuincey is aware of London's geography and even has a meeting place set with Ann, he still finds himself lost and unable to find her. The city practically becomes a character in his narrative, a force that keeps them apart: "When I walk, at this time, in Oxford Street[…] I shed tears, and muse with myself at the mysterious dispensation which so suddenly and so critically separated us forever."[117] As DeQuincey recounts his experiences walking through the streets of London, there is a sense of disconnection. DeQuincey's feelings of alienation are a product of the changing urban landscape of the 19th Century — his reaction to the city's changes is not merely one of feeling lost, geographically speaking, but of feeling alone and isolated, of trying in vain to reconnect with others.

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[116] DeQuincey

[117] DeQuincey

The conception of London as a dynamic urban space continues on in contemporary literature as well, even past that of Sinclair and Moore. British author and artist Laura Grace Ford continues the tradition of psychogeography in her zine series *Savage Messiah* which was produced and published from 2006-2009.[118] Particularly, Ford focuses on the area of London known as the "Isle of Dogs" which is located in the Docklands, just north of the River Thames. As Griel Marcus states in his 2019 preface for Ford's collection: "read straight through, Ford's work is the most convincing follow-through there is on the project of poetic urban-renewal inaugurated by the situationists Guy Debord, Ivan Chtcheglov, and Michèle Bernstein."[119] Ford makes zines "chronicling a long walk through the back alleys and abandoned patches of a London remade through Thatcherist and New Labour gentrification and the evictions and new constructions of the then-looming 2012 Olympics."[120] Ford's work contends with feelings of isolation and displacement through her collages of text, illustrations, and images of the changing city. Even through the expanse of centuries, both DeQuincy and Ford get at this essential feeling of being unmoored by landscape that changes against the individuals within it, sweeping them up in tide to be lost at sea.[121]

As seen through *From Hell*, *Lud Heat*, and the works of DeQuincey and Ford, London is a dynamic urban space; yes, the city has undergone numerous changes throughout its history, but London is also dynamic in the sense that it has a living relationship with the individuals who inhabit and navigate it. In the midst of change, it is easy for the city to become elusive, slipping just out of reach, leaving you more lost than you started out, but with practices such as

[118] Ford, v

[119] *Ibid.*

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] Marcus even makes the connection between DeQuincy and Ford saying "On any given page, Thomas DeQuincey[…] might be holding Ford's hand[…]" (Ford, vi)

psychogeography that recontextualize not only the urban space but ones position within it, we can begin to resist this alienation and reconnect both with others and with the space that can seem antagonistic or even evil at times. In the texts I have examined in this thesis, I have explored the ways in which psychogeographical practices of recontextualizing urban spaces can lead to a resistance against domination and control. Even within the contexts of evil and occult energy, the individual remains intimately connected to the city; the forces of the individual and the urban space are unable to be separated, bound together as one.

I look back to the time I stood in front of Christ Church, Spitalfields, feeling so small under the towering white steeple, and think about how badly I wanted to feel something, some tug, some evil force, yearning for some connection. And now, as I finish writing this thesis, I realize that this yearning is what connects me and all the writers, poets, and artists I have spent so much time pouring over. Collectively disconnected, in one way or another, we will find our way back to each other in spite of the forces that drive us apart.

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