Myth-Making Modern Cities: Paris and London in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* and Penelope Lively's *City of the Mind*

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> Each space determines, or at least encourages, its own kind of story… Space is not the 'outside' of narrative, then, but an internal force, that shapes it from within. (Franco Moretti 70)

Abstract: Focusing on Paris and London in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* and Penelope Lively's *City of the Mind*, I investigate how modern cities function as myth-makers. By drawing on urban theory and spatial analysis, this study explores how cities, as living and evolving beings, create stories and reflect the way people treat them and how they profoundly influence the lives of their inhabitants. In *Playtime*, Tati criticizes the dehumanizing effects of modernist architecture and rapid urbanization on cities and their inhabitants. I investigate how Tati's Paris as a Frankenstein-like city, with its fading historical past, manipulates and distorts the lives of its residents. The film delineates how removing the historical identity and replacing it by sterile and impersonal spaces can create myth-making cities narrating their own stories. This erasure of the past not only detaches inhabitants from their collective heritage but also cultivates environments that feel inherently unstable. The research underscores that a city's vitality and human connection are inextricably linked to its historical layers, arguing against a modernity that disregards its past and foundations. Similarly, Lively's *City of the Mind* depicts how London as a city fractured between its historical past and its gentrified present embodies the duality of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This research argues that the erasure of past and historical memory or separating past and present in urban spaces can create foreboding and uncontrollable cities mirroring the anxieties of modern life. Analyzing these texts, I explore the relationship between space and time and the importance of the integration of history and modernity in urban planning. Without this

balance, cities are on the verge of becoming monstrous and alienating spaces failing to nurture human spirit.

Keywords: heterotopia, Frankenstein, Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde, modern urban spaces, memory and space, psychogeography

Cities can be considered as texts that can be read and analyzed. Much like characters, cities can be studied to see how they make or produce different myths and how modern cities and literature are mutually constructed. The cinematic depiction of myth-making Paris in Jacques Tati's *Playtime* and the literary description of myth-making London in Penelope Lively's *City of the Mind* have been chosen to provide a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of the myth-making in modern cities than merely focusing on a cinematic or a literary text.

The modern myth-making cities recount myths such as Prometheus, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Sisyphus, and Frankenstein. For instance, works such as Christopher Frank's *Mortelle*, Julian Barnes' *Metroland*, Jon McGregor's *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*, and films like Ben Wheatley's *High Rise* and Godard's *Two or Three Things I Know about Her* offer fertile ground for analyzing how these cities' mythic roles manifest in fiction and film.

The changes in the appearance of modern cities over the course of time – much like the changes of the human face; the transformation from a young face to an old one, and back again, as a dynamic and living entity – strengthen Charles Jencks' ideas, which revolve around a Darwinian idea of natural selection to produce a model for the development of the cities (Bentley 176). Jencks suggests that cities "develop through a perpetual change of structure and shape and survive by jettisoning dead tissue in order for new growth to emerge" (cited in Bentley 176). This dynamic interplay between urban evolution and mythic narratives underscores how cities' physical transformations – including architecture, signs, billboards, bridges, advertisements, skyscrapers, cathedrals, streets, gardens, parks, houses, and other urban elements – collectively form a myth-making entity that profoundly shapes literary texts.

Expanding on these ideas, David Spurr's definition of modern mythology as "the set of symbols and narratives through which society gives meaning to itself" (1) aligns with the idea that architecture plays a role in creating myths. Walter Benjamin further reinforces this idea by asserting that architecture "bears witness"

(zeugt) to hidden mythologies, rendering them interpretable in concrete form (1). Meanwhile, the role of a wanderer interpreting these spaces should not be forgotten. The wanderer or the flâneur or flaneuse – originally introduced by Baudelaire and later maneuvered upon by Benjamin – is not only the product of that space but also shapes the myth by interpreting the urban landscapes.

Nick Bentley, in "Postmodern Cities", also explains this interaction between the flâneur and the postmodern cities functioning as narratives encompassing overlapping histories. Working on the mythical, gendered, and emotional aspects of urban spaces and employing psychogeography, writers such as Haruki Murakami, Peter Ackroyd, Will Self, Iain Sinclair, Doris Lessing, and Angela Carter investigate how the interplay of diverse histories and identities shape urban spaces (176). Therefore, architecture and urban spaces serve as the sources of making mythic narratives, while the flâneur or flâneuse acts as the interpreter of these narratives by revealing their hidden myths and giving meaning to them.

Methodology

Cities, buildings, spaces, and different architectures are narratives telling stories and representing different myths; the cities we inhabit shape the narratives we create. Therefore, for many architects, form follows fiction, not function. Moreover, considering the role of space in literature, literary critics have paid little attention to urban theory until the 'spatial turn' of the 2000s and 2010s. In recent years, many researchers have been investigating literary texts by employing urban theories proposed by different scholars, such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau – who were under the influence of Michel Foucault – Gaston Bachelard, David Harvey, Amos Rapoport, Marc Augé, and Edward Soja.

Historically, from Plato's time, there has been a difference between space and place. In this context, the concept of space hides the idea of interaction. Kim Duff argues that "while a 'place' can be a library, an airport, a building in the city, or any other location that is materially measurable and locatable, space is the thing that produces identity" (8). Yi-Fu-Tuan also in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* differentiates between place and space: "if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (6). Similarly, a perspective central to Soja's *Postmodern Geographies* is that "today, however, it may be space more than time that hides consequences from us, the 'making of geography' more than the 'making

of history' that provides the most revealing tactical and theoretical world. This is the insistent premise and promise of postmodern geographies" (1).

Building on this, Henri Lefebvre explains that space actively produces and is produced by social relations. According to him, throughout history, from ancient Greece to the present time, every society is characterized by its mode of space production. Furthermore, the birth of the modern novel coincided with the emergence of cities. Lefebvre elaborates that the space of representations "has an affective kernel or center: Ego [sic], bed, bedroom, dwelling, house; or, square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action and of lived situations, and thus immediately implies time" (42). He adds that space can direct and relate social processes since it is by nature empirically subjective, flexible, and vibrant (ibid).

To Lefebvre, each era shows "a logic of visualization" which is telling of the distinct features of that period of time: for instance, the gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages or the Baroque architecture of the seventeenth century show the spirit of the time. As another example, scholars have observed that "Gothic style embodied the influence of London's past …. That is why the Law Courts were constructed in Gothic style as a way of instilling the authority of time upon the judicial deliberations of the present; it is also the reason why London churches of the mid-nineteenth century were invariably in the Gothic style" (Ackroyd 712). Besides, Michel de Certeau states that "this is the way in which the Concept-city functions; a place of transformations and appropriations, the object of various kinds of interference but also a subject that is constantly enriched by new attributes, it is simultaneously the machinery and the hero of modernity" (95).

Based on the ideas of the scholars such as Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault, Edward Soja proposes Thirdspace as an inclusive and hybrid space of human experience. He explains that it is different from and at the same time incorporates the Firstspace (perceived, divided, designed, and mapped by an objective, rationalistic approach) and Secondspace (conceived, ideational, subjective conceptualization of the first). Soja notes that Thirdspace calls into question "all conventional modes of spatial thinking" (Soja 1996, 163). As he further clarifies, in Thirdspace, a range of different, sometimes contrasted, factors gather together: "subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history" (56–7).

Therefore, in Thirdspace proposed by Soja, time is intermingled with space.

This idea resonates with David Harvey's concept of "time-space compression." He uses the term to emphasize the revolutionary processes that radically change the objective character of space and time and, subsequently, we have no other choice but to modify and revise the ways the world is represented (240). Harvey further argues that the word "compression" signals that "the history of capitalism has been characterized by speed-up in the pace of life, while so overcoming spatial barriers that the world sometimes seems to collapse inwards upon us" (ibid.).

Similarly, the concept of psychogeography – coined by the Situationist International in the 1950s – also explores the interplay between space and human experience. Catharina Löffler argues that psychogeography, rooted in new urbanism, examines how urban spaces actively shape individual perceptions and experiences. Coined by the Situationist International in the 1950s as a response to mass consumerism, psychogeography emphasizes individual expression and awareness of the urban landscape. As the term suggests, emotional and psychological engagement lie at its core; when exploring urban spaces, psychogeography focuses on subjectivity as well as on human emotions and feelings. Although the Situationist International disappeared in the 1990s, psychogeography gained more attention in academic, artistic, and public spheres. Over the course of time, it has evolved into a versatile concept which has been widely recognized and applied to different contexts (Löffler 6,7).

In agreement with this perspective, Amos Rapaport's classification for understanding human interaction with the environment provides a useful framework for analyzing modern urban spaces. His classification aligns with the perspective that emphasizes the complex interplay between humans and their environments: (a) environmental determinism emphasizes how environment determines human behavior (b) possibilism focuses on the possibilities and limitations the environment offers along with the choices individuals make based on the cultural and environmental factors (c) probabilism puts emphasis on probabilities and the likelihood of certain choices within specific physical settings, rather than emphasizing the dictating force of the environment (2). These notions become more significant as the interaction between the environment and human agency grows increasingly complex.

This complexity is further illuminated by Foucault's concept of "heterotopia" describing spaces that defy conventional categorization, where "things are 'laid', 'placed', 'arranged' in sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to find a common locus beneath them all" (Foucault xix). Another

unconventional categorization of spaces was proposed by Marc Augé. Augé's idea of "non-places" puts emphasis on the transitory nature of these places such as airports, where relations, history, and identity are rendered irrelevant. These two concepts highlight the fragmented and disorienting nature of modern urban environments often lacking historical identity and instead creating the myth of Frankenstein, piecing together disparate elements into a disjointed whole. Besides, for Koolhaas, junkspaces are also examples of non-places but in their extreme forms. He describes the junkspace of super-modernity as an excess of non-places; shopping malls, precincts, leisure space are some examples he suggests. Junkspace has appropriated the strategies proposed by the situationists for whom the ambiance is significant. In this context, Rapaport's classification helps us understand how individuals make choices within these heterotopic and non-place environments, where the physical settings paradoxically constrain and enable behavior and reflect culture and the society.

Argument

Cities often serve as myth-making agents, shaping literary texts and cultural narratives through their unique geographical, social, and historical characteristics. In Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Edinburgh plays a crucial role as the source of inspiration for Stevenson to explore duality in human beings. Geographically and socially, Edinburgh is divided into two distinct sections: on one hand, the upper ground and the underground, and on the other hand, the new and the old towns. Historically, the underground was plagued by crimes, robberies, and murders, including the infamous rumors of Burke and Hare, the serial killers, who sold corpses to medical schools. This division between the corrupt underground and the wealthy upper ground delineates the duality of the psyche of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Therefore, scholars studying Edinburgh and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, have shown, the city's structure and its history play a crucial role in shaping myths and narratives, often becoming a central character in the narratives they inspire. However, this phenomenon is not unique to Edinburgh; different cities create different myths, and their fictional and cinematic representations interact with the people who inhabit them. For instance, Walter George Bell, in *Unknown London*, observes: "I have climbed down more ladders to explore the buried town than I have toiled up City [London] staircases, which may lead to the impression

that there is more beneath than above" (qtd. in Ackroyd 691). This suggests that cities, with their structures, cultures and histories not only shape their people's psyche but also shape the myths and interesting narratives.

The importance of place in shaping cultural and national identity is further explored by Stefan Horlacher in his analysis of John Fowles' *Daniel Martin*. Horlacher argues that England is portrayed as a society that "flees from camera reality," presenting itself as a country where "all optical phenomena are deceptive" and where "the continual evasion of the inner self, the continual actual reality of saying one thing and thinking another, has become the national character" (2018, 709). In contrast, Horlacher notes that California's images "do not distort, they do not deceive, and they hide nothing" (2018, 711). As another example, Horlacher refers to Los Angeles portrayed in *Daniel Martin*, in *America*, and in "The Precession of Simulacra", as a flat, superficial place. It is like a never-ending camera pan or a huge stage set, similar to the sprawling, artificial town of San Narciso in Thomas Pynchon's San Narciso. This juxtaposition highlights how different places – such as Edinburgh, London, Los Angeles, England, California – function as myth-making agents shaping not only literary narratives but also cultural and national identities. These examples demonstrate the profound influence of place on the stories we narrate and the ways we understand ourselves and others.

Similarly, in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Victor Frankenstein, a scientist, creates an intelligent monster, evoking Victor's sense of regret and guilt. The core of the story lies in the discrepancy Victor sees between what he meant by creating it and what he has created, which is the cause of his disillusionment. This narrative is not unique; it is a very familiar story heard repeatedly in different literary texts. For instance, in Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle*, Felix Hoenikker creates ice-nine, which is another example of creating an uncontrollable substance.

Much like Frankenstein's intelligent monster, the modern cities we inhabit are the man-made intelligent beings that frequently arouse feelings of guilt and regret because of the discrepancy modern man sees between what he meant by creating modern cities and what he sees in reality. These cities embody what Foucault calls "other spaces", or as he mentions in *The Order of Things*, "heterotopias". Bentley elaborates on this idea by proposing that "the cultural geographer David Harvey has stressed the unplanned and spontaneous nature of the postmodern city by evoking *modernist tropes of the metropolis as unpredictable and potentially dangerous, where crime is rife and the darker human desires find release*" (italics mine 2014, 176).

Despite their apparent rationality, modern smart cities – while showcasing the rational identity of modern man and his boastful talent – shape a new, foreboding myth. This myth is reflected in fiction and film, portraying man's guilt, regret, and disillusionment. David Spurr beautifully captures the tension between reality and imagination (art). His observation echoes Plato's ideas that the artisan is superior to the poet, whose work is at least two steps away from reality. According to this view, what the artisan has in mind is the Ideal, while with the embodiment of his ideas, he gets at least one step away from reality. In the same vein, the same story unfolds to the modern man who builds modern cities, which become the source of disillusionment and regret for him. As Spurr explains, modernist architecture, with its extreme rationality, functionalism, and rejection of the past, reflects the objective conditions of modernity that modernist literature often critiques. The rationalist and functionalist principles of 20th-century architecture seem fundamentally at odds with the emphasis on subjective, nonrational experiences in much of 20th-century literature. This contrast highlights the fragmentation of meaning within modernity itself, echoing Theodor Adorno's concept of the negative dialectic between art as imaginative creation and the experience of objective reality (*Architecture and Modern Literature* 2012, 5).

Tati's *Playtime* and the Myth of Frankenstein

Tati's film was released in 1967 when the situationist movement was active. The activity of this movement dates back to the late 1950s until the early 1970s when the dominant discourse was psychogeography, "a term that originated in the French postwar avantgarde" (Löffler vii), in which the influence of space on the psyches of the people was studied. That is why ambiance was a key term in the ideas suggested by the situationists and those who were working on non-place and junkspace.

This focus on space and ambiance was particularly relevant in the context of post-war France, which was undergoing significant transformations. Following the Second World War, France saw massive housing construction and a huge wave of modernization and Americanization. Moon argues that in France "urban and architectural planning during the second reconstruction (1945-) displayed mass-production, temporary houses, prefabricated buildings, grands ensembles, and American lifestyles" (92). After the Second World War, Europe had been invaded by American culture and France was not an exception.

The influence of American culture was not limited to consumer goods but extended to urban planning and architecture. After World War II, the culture of Western Europe was under the influence of American culture, specifically through the Marshal Plan and such events as "Exposition on American Techniques on Housing and Urban Planning" of 1946 and also a new wave of Haussmannization and urban renewal in France between the 1950s and 1970s. Postwar Paris was transformed into "neobourgeois space". Therefore, as Guen-Jong Moon defines "Americanization was the price paid for liberation. Among the commodities exported by the United States were not just refrigerators and washing machines, televisions and Coca-Cola, but also corporate architecture" (92). These were among the many other factors that undermined France's traditional culture, entrenched modernism, and sparked the May 1968 uprising.

This cultural and architectural shift is reflected in Tati's *Playtime*, where the ambiance of movement, transition, and mobility dominate. Hilary Powell like Tati emphasizes how surreal and comic is the city's condition: "Monsieur Hulot struggles to get to grips with the 'acquired culture' of movement in the city. The clumsy Hulot highlights the surreal nature of the city with comic assault" (Powell 207). As Tschumi suggests: "spaces are qualified by actions just as actions are qualified by spaces. One does not trigger the other, they exist independently. Only when they intersect do they affect one another" (130). Rapaport also emphasizes that "the built environment provides cues for behavior and that the environment can, therefore, be seen as a form of non-verbal communication" (italics are original 3) as demonstrated in *Play Time*.

In this context, the city itself becomes a central character, shaping the identities and actions of its inhabitants. In Tati's film, the main character is Paris and the other characters in the movie (like Mr Hulot, Barbara, …) are the peripheral characters manipulated by Paris and its structure and architecture. The protagonist is the city and the other characters are marginalized and their identities (in this film) are meaningful only in relation to Paris. The main role of the film is Paris and its modern space and architecture.

The theme of modernity and its effect on identity is also reflected in *Playtime* through the idea of *non-places*. The film, originally titled *Re-creation*, begins with a group of American tourists arriving at Orly Airport. The setting is deliberately ambiguous, leaving the audience unsure whether it is an airport or a hospital. Both spaces, as defined by Marc Augé, are examples of *non-places* – environments of transition where people pass through rather than inhabit. Augé argues

that such spaces are marked by a lack of permanence, which prevents the formation of identity, memory, and history.

The act of navigating these spaces is likened to reading, as proposed by De Certeau. In *Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau metaphorically compares walking in the city with reading the city. In the film, the camera or the flâneur narrates Paris filled with symbols of modernity, which often alienate its inhabitants. Tati's *Playtime* is replete with modern symbols in architecture. Skyscrapers and high buildings whose façades and even interiors are made of glass, frequently, operate as a mesh in which people are engulfed; it becomes comically complicated for them to find their way in or out of the buildings. The inhumanness and sterility of modern architecture and unfamiliar and inhuman interiors lacking regional uniqueness suppress human activities.

Tati uses these architectural elements to critique modernity and its dehumanizing effects. Tati uses mirrors to creatively show and emphasize the misleading aspects and social connections of the modern city (Powell 204). Mass produced buildings and lack of identity are the very problem Tati refers to in *Playtime*. Without the images of the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, and Sacré Coeur which are haphazardly reflected in glass windows, we do not understand that the city portrayed in this film is Paris and this is the very problem of the modern cities deprived of their history and their past. Like Paris, De Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life* says that New York is a modern city ignoring its past: "unlike Rome, New York has never learned the art of growing old by playing on all its pasts. Its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future" (91).

This critique of modernity is further emphasized through the metaphor of Frankenstein. Paris reflected in this film is like Frankenstein who cannot be controlled by its creators. Landrum states that architectural studies of Tati's *Playtime* have emphasized "the film's comic critique of modernity" (64). This modern Paris which is made by modern people is a living creature manipulating the lives of the characters who are living in or even better to say who are living with it. Although modern people have created Paris, Paris has also created them and there is an interaction between this newly born creature and the people. Therefore, the myth-making city of Tati's Paris and the characters living with it are mutually constructed.

The city's control over its inhabitants is both comical and tragic. Paris is comically controlling the characters by its architectural environment and the

restrictions it imposes on them. As Rapaport says, the restraining behavior of cities is more than their facilitating behaviors (3). People do not communicate well in *Playtime*; they are just moving and walking; they not only pass time idly but also pass the places, the same way. However, these moments of failure in modernity ironically lead to human connection. As we see, when examples of modernity and technology fail, communication begins. For example, when the facilities malfunction in the nightclub scene, people come together, start dancing, and real communication emerges. People are trapped in the hands of a manipulator – the city and its features – which have hoodwinked people and trapped them in their meshes. This paradox highlights how the very systems and structures designed to modernize and enhance the quality of life can sometimes isolate individuals, and their breakdown can foster genuine human interaction.

Similarly, the deceptive nature of modernity is exemplified by the use of glass in modern architecture. Glass act as an invisible wall, compromising privacy after dark, when interiors are exposed to outside view (Moon 95). Visitors constantly lose their way because of the transparency of the glass and their reflections. As Landrum notes, "Mr. Hulot strives to meet Gifford, a busy executive, but a barrage of modern conveniences impedes his pursuit" (65). This confusion and inefficiency, which are caused by the materials meant to symbolize progress and transparency, ironically lead to lack of communication. Just as the failure of technology in the nightclub fosters connection, the perplexing effects of modern architecture might also create moments where people are forced to interact, seek help, or confront challenges together. This way, they bridge the gaps that modernity has created.

This interplay between the deceptive qualities of modernity and its ability to foster connection in its failure is further highlighted by the way historical monuments are ironically and fleetingly integrated into the urban life. Landrum argues that grand Parisian monuments appear only fleetingly as reflections in glass and they get lost amidst the mundane, everyday activities of the characters. The Eiffel Tower, symbolizing 19th-century innovation, is glimpsed as Barbara enters an exposition of modern gadgets, while the Arc de Triomphe, honoring Napoleon's conquests, emerges as tourists arrive, reflecting neo-colonial tourism. The Obelisk at Place de la Concorde, tied to revolutionary violence and foreign plunder, appears when tourists leave for a nightclub, suggesting historical and future unrest. Meanwhile, the Basilica de Sacré-Coeur, a site of art and spirituality, is reflected when a deliveryman

and a street sweeper share morning greetings, blending monumental history with daily life (Landrum 74). These reflections of monumental history in glass surfaces highlight the deceptive transparency of modern architecture, creating an illusion of a narrative where past and present ostensibly coexist. However, these reflections are not of the genuine past; they are just distorted images and fleeting reflections of the past that distort and misrepresent the memory and historical context of the city. It seems as if the film conveys to the reader that there is no access to the past and the historical memory of this city, and its only accessibility is in/the reflections, illusions, and replication of the past, not the very past and history of this city. Therefore, the glimpses of fragmented historical symbols in glass reflections serve as a reminder that history is stripped of its substance. The erasure of the past reduces history to mere reflections and replications rather than allowing its genuine identity to show itself.

Landrum considers these reflections in the glass doors as the fusion of the past and the present in Paris. But how is it possible to call it the fusion of the past and the present when tourists do not visit these classical monuments and they are just reflections and illusions? These glass surfaces are the symbol of a modern city attracting tourists' attention and preventing them from visiting the classical monuments in Paris. How strange it is that tourists visit Paris but they do not see such places as the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, Sacré Coeur, Seine River and Notre-Dame Cathedral. "The reflections are historical apparitions which have temporarily crossed the boundary into a modernist universe where they no longer fit" (Hilliker 326). This architecture functions as both a hindrance and an allure; while its absorbing, reflective surfaces captivate passersby, they also entangle them, diverting attention from the historical monuments of Paris. For example, in one scene, when Mr. Hulot tries to meet Gifford, he is misled by the building's reflections. In another, a stranger is obstructed by glass panels when he seeks a doorman's help to light his cigarette.

This playful yet critical depiction of modernity continues as the film explores how the collapse of modern facilities fosters human connection. It is shown that when the facilities collapse, people are released from the sterility of technology and modern architecture, and communication begins. Modern architecture is one of the obstacles which is beautifully shown in this film. As another example, when Mr. Hulot accidentally causes the ceiling and partition walls to collapse in the nightclub, the party begins; a new friendly space is created and the people cheerfully dance and communicate with one another.

A character without a past – or one whose past exists only as a faint, diluted echo – lacks a meaningful sense of self. Without the past, there can be no present. As Martin Heidegger argues in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*), the past is always already part of the present: "'the past' has a remarkable double meaning; the past belongs irretrievably to an earlier time; it belonged to the events of that time; and in spite of that, it can still be present-at-hand now" (Heidegger 378). Landrum suggests that "conceived as a satire of postwar urbanization, *Playtime* depicts the city of Paris bereft of distinctive historic architecture" (64). Identity is shaped by fragments of the past – by history and memory. When these are absent, the character becomes incomplete, fragile, and vulnerable. In *Playtime*, Paris is depicted as a modern behemoth, a newly born creature forged by its modern inhabitants. Yet this Paris is stripped of its past, its memories, and its history, which are deliberately absent from Tati's portrayal. How formidable, foreboding, uncanny, and alien a character – or a city – becomes when severed from its past. Without history, there is no presence; and without presence, no coherent identity can emerge.

This identity crisis is further explored through the metaphor of Frankenstein, a creature devoid of history and memory. Myth-making modern city in this film is Paris, whose past, historical monuments and identity is purposefully disregarded to sarcastically make a creature which is much like Frankenstein, the newly born creature whose eerie identity is foreboding and can no longer be controlled by its creator. Landrum argues that "he [Hulot] is completely caught up in the midst of situations, while remaining strangely aloof from them; and the circumstances in which he meddles are not of his own devising – he is wholly involved, to be sure, but the scope of transformation is beyond him" (67).

This absence of identity and history raises the question of whether Paris, as depicted by Tati, can still be considered a heterotopia. In the preface to *The Order of Things*, Foucault describes heterotopias as spaces fundamentally opposed to utopias – sites that defy coherence and resist any singular order. He defines them as "the disorder in which fragments of a large number of possible orders glitter separately in the dimension, without law or geometry" (xix). In *Playtime*, the history and memories of Paris seem to glitter faintly in the reflections of glass doors and windows – isolated fragments, deliberately severed from the city's present, disconnected from the continuous flow of time and history.

The hindrances imposed by modern architecture extend beyond glass to the structures that obscure Paris's historical monuments and diminish the role of nature in this film. Not only is the past of Paris missing, but the natural world

outside the city is also rendered insignificant. As Mackenzie observes, "The natural materials of the old city, such as stone and wood, are absent" (Mackenzie 9), replaced by cold, artificial constructs prioritizing function over fiction and history. Paris is stripped of its organic elements; instead, artificial, man-made elements representing modernity are prioritized in the film. Mackenzie further notes, "Nature has become abject, resulting in its removal from the city" (2), leaving behind a sterile environment which is devoid of beauty.

That is why Tati's Paris does not align with the characteristics of Thirdspace as proposed by Soja. Paris is not created as a holistic creature; it is not conceived as a healthy, balanced entity, but rather as a fragmented space deprived of its past, its memories, and its connection with the natural world. The omission of nature and of historical structures reduce Paris to a fragmented and soulless space.

This depiction of Paris as a machine-like entity devoid of history underscores its fragility. This Frankenstein-like character is created without paying attention to its historical past and the deep layers of its nature, history and its genuine identity. The only significant feature in manufacturing this creature is its appearance and its body. It has no depth, no history, and no heart. That is why without history and memory, its exterior is fragile and superficial.

The city's playful yet disdainful interaction with its inhabitants highlights its monstrous nature. Paris, the Frankenstein-like character, reacts disdainfully to people by playfully impeding their ways and enmeshing them in these tasteless, cold, dull, rigid, formal, sterile, and uncomfortable spaces. Men and women creating this creature are now in the hands of Paris, a monstrous creature. The people are like puppets in the hands of this myth-making, Frankenstein-like figure.

The characters' aimless wandering reflects their lack of connection to the city and their own identities. Mr. Hulot as a flâneur wanders in the city along with the other characters and tourists. It is as if all the characters in this city were created without history and past and they, comically wandering through it, reflecting the confusion that is one of the significant features of modernity. The way they have made (played with) Paris is precisely the way Paris plays with them; the people's circuitous paths of wandering in the city show how Paris mutually plays with the people who have created it without paying attention to incorporating its past, its memory, and its history.

The film's depiction of office spaces further emphasizes the dehumanizing effects of modernity. How comical are the office cubicles! It is as if the people are lost in this mechanical city and they do not have the slightest sense of belonging.

Offices are shown as separate, partitioned boxes, in which people are working. Apart from offices, hotels, bars, nightclubs, restaurants, streets, buses, and airports, we see no glimpse of houses in Paris—no evidence of homes, permanency, stability, communication, interaction, warmth, or family.

From a psychogeographic perspective, Bachelard's insights poignantly reveal the catastrophic condition of Paris's urban landscape. In *The Poetics of Space*, Bachelard argues that the primary gift of the house is its capacity to shelter daydreaming, offering a space where the dreamer can withdraw and find peace. For Bachelard, human values are shaped not only by thought and experience but also by the profound, self-validating power of daydreaming – a joy that arises simply from its own existence. These spaces of reverie become vessels of new dreams, and because our past dwellings linger in memory as daydreams, they remain eternally within us (6). In contrast, the sterile, impersonal environments of *Playtime* deprive their inhabitants of such spaces, severing the intimate ties between memory, imagination, and place.

Thus, the film is replete with examples of non-places which are prime examples of modern places. Augé in *Non-Places* argues that "a person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer, or driver" (103). Signs of permanence are scarcely found in this film. Mobility, motion, temporality are the very features of this modern city. Like Frankenstein, a grown-up creature without his past and memory who is stitched together from disparate parts, modern Paris in Tati's *Playtime* is depicted as an accumulation of skyscrapers, airports, and modern structures, devoid of memory, and a past that would lend the city its genuine identity. Like Frankenstein, who craves love and affection, Paris yearns for intimacy, love, and the past. People's relations in Tati's Paris are fleeting and transient; even the love between Mr. Hulot and Barbara is short-lived, devoid of past and history. In a fleeting and symbolic gesture, Mr. Hulot offers Barbara a flower when, as a tourist, she is ready to leave Paris which is symbolically telling of a transient and fragile nature of their connection. While this scene of love, near the end of the film, offers a glimmer of hope, it is not enough to suggest that Paris, as a modern city, is truly alive with love. By showing this short-lived, tender scene, Tati tacitly suggests that for modern cities there might be little hope and a faint possibility of reclaiming their past, and history, though he vividly shows that modernity stamps out even the faintest hope.

Penelope Lively's *City of the Mind* and the Myth of Dr Jekyll Mr Hyde

> A city is an organic growth and here the profoundly arrogant assumption was being made that you can bulldoze the past, replace it with new constructions and expect the result to be anything other than the semblance of a place. (Lively 98)

The novel was published in 1991 and Mathew, the flâneur, is reporting on a city already undergone a 10-year gentrification of Thatcherism. Based on Thatcher's strategies, the Right to Buy Scheme passed in 1980 and it encouraged the tenants to buy their flats at low prices, but London was not yours if you were not an English citizen and homeowner. Duff recounts that "Margaret Thatcher's Conservative political policies during the mid-1980s radically altered the *use* of city spaces in Great Britain, and in doing so rewrote the British city for the postmodern era (4). Jerry White describes Post-Industrial London from 1980 to 1999; he says that the 1980s were London's most socially turbulent, dangerous, and paradoxical decade in the twentieth century. The city split into two stark realities: one of decline, with crumbling industries, neglected public spaces, and widespread unemployment, and another of prosperity, marked by booming finance, office expansions in the East End, and the rise of the affluent "yuppie" culture. These opposing forces created a deeply divided city. Only by the century's end did a tentative resolution begin to mend some of these fractures (111).

Matthew Halland is captivated by modern London and constantly drifts away into his memories of London's past. He is the flâneur who goes to different parts of London, reporting on what he sees. London is the city of his mind. London is portrayed through Mathew's lens – an architect equipped with the knowledge to interpret the city and its architecture. From the very beginning of the novel, the emphasis is on the relation of time and space and how these two are interwoven to shape a place, London.

> Driving through the city, he [Mathew] is both here and now, there and then. He carries yesterday with him, but pushes forward into today, and tomorrow, skipping as he will from one to the other. He is in London on a May morning of the late twentieth century, but is also in many other places, and at other times. (Lively 21)

As Mathew says, the city is shaped in our minds as a either a tamed or a wild creature. That is why the novel is entitled *The City of the Mind*. Johanna Fokken notes that "there are also ways of making the city your own. The enormous wild beast can be tamed into a space that, at least partly, feels like it belongs to oneself" (1). This reciprocal relationship between people and the city is further examined as the narrative reveals how the city, in turn, shapes its inhabitants. Not only do people shape the city, but the city also influences its inhabitants. "The city as… uncontrollable organic force. Sometimes it seemed to him as though the building rose despite him, despite all of them, that to commit a pattern of lines to a drawing board had been to unleash an unstoppable power" (Lively 31). This depiction of the city as a living, autonomous entity stresses its ability to grow and evolve beyond human control and to shape its inhabitants as much as it is shaped by them. This idea is further elaborated when he says: "the city feeds his mind, but in so doing he is manipulated by it; its sights and sounds condition his responses. He is its product and its creature. Neither can do without the other" (Lively 96). These statements reveal the city's dual role as both a nurturing force and a manipulative power demonstrating the complex and interdependent relationship between urban spaces and the people who live in them. The city, as an uncontrollable force, influences the minds and behaviors of its people. The city has the power of creating a dynamic in which neither the city nor its inhabitants can exist independently.

Lively extends this idea by personifying the city: "If the city were to recount its experience, the ensuing babble would be the talk of every time and everywhere, of persecution and disaster, of success and misfortune" (Lively 21). This personification of the city as an uncontrollable force is particularly evident in the construction of Frobisher House. Mathew and his team do not know whether people will like the project of building Frobisher House or not. They build it, and it takes on a life of its own, moving forward in an uncontrollable manner. Thus, the modern city becomes a creature which has its own life, and it has the power to construct or to destroy the people who are living with/in it. It becomes the Prometheus unbound with the only thing able to harness it is its head/mind, which is, symbolically, its past and its memories that give it identity; otherwise, it can be destructive if it is metamorphosed to a monster with a new body with no head/mind (past and identity), like how Paris is portrayed in Tati's *Playtime* or the way the newly rebuilt parts of London are delineated in Lively's *City of the Mind*.

The transformation of London during the 1980s and 1990s is depicted as a process of decay and resurrection. As Mathew reports in the novel, it is the time when

London is under construction and in the process of gentrification: "Bulldozers… dinosaurian monsters unleashed to wreak their mechanical will upon the London clay" (Lively 25), "the buildings have been stripped down to the bone, and are reborn" (Lively 186). Modern London of 1980s and 1990s is the embodiment of the myth of resurrection. "It is a landscape of simultaneous decay and resurrection; glass, steel and concrete rear from the mud and rubble of excavation" (Lively 30). It is resurrected the way Mr. Hyde is resurrected out of Dr. Jekyll. Lively says that London's past seemed to shrink and warp within the gleaming surfaces of its modern transformation (133). This duality of decay and resurrection mirrors the uncomfortable coexistence of the ancient and the modern in London. Philips argues that "the ancient and the modern live in uncomfortable proximity in the imaginary of London" (3). This explanation is very much reminiscent of the myth of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in which these two personalities are living in uncomfortable proximity in the imaginary of one person.

When the history and 'pastness' of the modernized city are ignored, humiliated or degraded, what emerges is a degraded, abnormal creature – an urban monstrosity. As Soja argues, "social being [needs to be] actively emplaced in space and time in an explicitly historical and geographical contextualization" (1990, 11). The past should be seen in all parts and layers of the city. It should be woven seamlessly into its present rather than being isolated as a separate domain. Memory functions as the head of the city controlling it, giving guidance and coherence. If the people cut it apart from the body, the body without head and memory, becomes an uncontrollable monster that harms the people living with/in it.

This loss of memory and identity is likened to the collapse of a massive star, creating a void in the city's consciousness. The modern part of London, in Lively's novel, forgets its past and its memories; it is without a head; in some parts of London, Mathew sees architecture dedicated to the abolition of time. Lively says that its landscape, a chaotic mix of brick and stone, merges styles from centuries and decades, defying the order of time. Past and present collide in a disorder that erases temporal boundaries (78). When the old buildings and old architecture are renewed in a way as if there was no great past and no memorable outstanding buildings, a huge dark hole is constructed in the head of the creature gradually being devoid of any meaningful identity relating it to its roots and origins. As Lively says in the novel, this situation is much like the situation of losing massive stars. "When a massive star collapses it creates the phenomenon known as a black hole" (92).

The contrasting perspectives of Mathew and his daughter Jane highlight the fragmented nature of the city as well. Mathew is wandering in the city with his child Jane, "a child of the city, street-wise in every sense" (Lively 95), a child who is wise of the present not the past and the memories of the city. Their viewpoints are totally different. One of the interesting issues in this novel is that the city is being looked at not only by an architect, Mathew, but also by a child with no background of the city, no history and memory. Lively portrays the father and child who ride through the city and each perceives it differently. Jane, who is unburdened by rationality and expectations, views the city as an anarchic, provocative playground, absorbing advertisements, signs, and logos while she is instinctively observing other children. Her world revolves around herself and is free from adult biases, which allows her to interpret the city on her own terms. Meanwhile, Matthew's perspective is shaped by experience and thus is inflexible, though he is wiser (Lively 95).

Like Tati's Paris, Lively's London is depicted as a heterotopia – a fragmented, contradictory space. Like Tati's Paris, which is an example of Foucault's heterotopia, Lively's London is another example of heterotopia in a different way. The deformed body of London is another caricature-like creature whose deformity is shaped by modern architects, materialistic ideologies and discourses which dominate modern Londoners' perspectives. Foucault in *The Order of Things* discusses that "a passage from Borges kept me laughing". It raises suspicion that not only does a deeper disorder exist there beyond mere incongruity, but unrelated things are also forced together. This is the chaos of the heteroclite where fragments of countless possible orders shine and glimmer independently while they are unbound by any law or structure. (Foucault xix).

The caricature-like London is a character whose members are "linking together of things that are inappropriate". The head and the body of London are parted from each other and a new sarcastic body is shaped by the so-called modern thought and modern people. This character has lost its holistic form; it is dichotomized into two different, opposing sections belonging to two different classes: wealthy and poor people. Therefore, London is differently defined by people who are living with/in it. For some, it is a source of joy and pleasure and for the others the source of suffering and grief.

The fragmented nature of London is further emphasized through its depiction as a city of binary oppositions. London is blown apart. It is a shattered parody of itself. London is a good example of what we see in modern linguistics and

in the Saussurian perspective. It is a city of binary oppositions: binaries between old and new, old quarters of the city for immigrants and the new gentrified parts for the rich. London is both. It is a myth-making city of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

The division of the city mirrors Mathew's personal struggles, creating a parallel between his life and the city's condition. Mathew's failed relationship and his recent separation from his wife, Susan, is very much reminiscent of the division of the city into old and new, past and present, history and the modern materialistic facades and architecture and generally speaking the separation of the head and the body of the city. Susan's and Mathew's split life is the reflection of the divided condition of the city. Chalupsky contends that "one of the most original narrative strategies in the British fiction of the 1990s is psychogeography, the literary mapping of the psychological effects a particular physical geographic milieu produces on the individual" (19). The very melancholic condition of Mathew is reflected in the condition of the city and the split modern city of London is reflected in his life. The identity of the city and Mathew's are mutually constructed. Fokken argues that the city deepens Matthew's melancholy, making it harder for him to recover. In its fragmented, dichotomized city, he loses not only his wife and his best friend but also his home and sense of belonging. Without that part of London, he once claimed as his home, he is left with only sorrowful memories (1).

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Edinburgh's past is hidden underground. That is why the foreboding pastness of the city is blown up and shows itself symbolically in the form of Mr. Hyde. Like Edinburgh, London is the city of dualities – of underground and upper ground. It is well explained that "'certain it is that none who know London would deny that its treasures must be sought in its depths'; it is an ambiguous sentence, perhaps, with a social as well as a topographical mystery associated with it" (Ackroyd 691). Its history is recorded in *London Under London* by Richard Trench and Ellis Hillman. The city with this background is particularly vulnerable to division and new forms of dichotomy, and consequently manifesting the myth of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. London is the city of mysteries. Sebastian Groes recounts that "in a letter to Frank Budgen, Joyce wrote: 'London isn't a city. It is a wilderness of bricks and mortar and the law of wilderness prevails. All Londoners say, "I keep to myself."'" (6). Irving S. Saposnik, in his analysis of Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, portrays late Victorian London as an ideal backdrop for mystery and violence. He references Michael Sadleir's depiction of the1860s London

as a "three-part jungle", where danger lurks in every corner, alley, and shadow. Nighttime, in particular, transforms the city into a perilous space, as illustrated by characters like Oliver Twist, who face the risks of getting lost or harmed after dark. This urban nightscape underscores the city's duality – both alluring and treacherous (Giles 114).

London's fractured identity haunts Matthew, the architect who built its gleaming facades but now questions their cost and doubts the worth of his job as an architect. "The ancient and the modern live in uncomfortable proximity in the imaginary of London" (Philips 3). Mathew thinks that his job provides opportunities for rich people to make more money and the history and memories of the city are killed for the sake of gaining more money and he gets disillusioned.

The commodification of the city and its architecture leads to the loss of history and memories. Thus, the history of some parts of the city is removed and the city's condition profoundly affects the psyche of its inhabitants. As Philips notes, "the horror is accentuated when no origin is evident at all and devolves into myth and mystery" (6). This absence of clarity deepens the psychological toll on those who inhabit these spaces, as they see the modern parts of London that have lost their history, and their sense of belonging.

Mathew's disillusionment stems from his belief that modernization should not come at the cost of erasing history. Mathew is not against gentrification and refurbishment of the city, but he opposes the idea of gentrification that does not care about the history of the city and that does not embrace the past and the memories as part of the identity of the renewed city. For instance, he says that terraced houses identify the unique architectural feature of London and should not be eliminated from the urban spaces. Mathew in his own project in Dockland wants to renovate it in a way that the past is not eliminated. He, as an architect, is the advocate of modernity and refurbishment, preserving the past and remaining faithful to the historical parts of the city. By seeing the very dire situation of London, Mathew becomes disillusioned and he emphasizes refurbishing rather than constructing new buildings. He observes a resemblance between refurbishing and making over the old buildings and what his mother does with clothes:

> My mother used to do something with clothes called making over—turning collars and cuffs inside out, putting in new elbows. We're making over."

> "We're making money, too," said Jobson, and roared again. "Making money for other people, that is."
> "We're also keeping the place ticking over. Why don't we just pull the lot down and start again, after all?" (Lively 41)

This emphasis on preserving the past is exemplified in Mathew's admiration for Covent Garden. For Mathew, Covent Garden is an example of preserving the past while a new space is reborn:

> He liked Covent Garden. You could not but warm to an area that had *so successfully been reborn* [italic is mine]. The place teemed with people, on this warm spring afternoon. It was international, multi-cultural, eclectic—*it was all the things you were supposed to be* [italic is mine], in this day and age. . . . For of course Covent Garden *was also doing what it had always done* (my italics, Lively 48)

The part of the city, devoid of its memory and history, becomes a body without a head; it becomes a monstrous and uncontrollable force. Sometimes, Mathew thinks that the city is against him and at any moment it has the power to rise up and rebel. He fathoms the city as "some uncontrollable organic force. Sometimes it seemed to him as though the building rose despite him, despite all of them, that to commit a pattern of lines to a drawing board had been to unleash an unstoppable power" (Lively 31). Thus, the architect, Mathew, feels alienated from the creature he has created and the city has taken on a life of its own.

The fragmented structure of the novel mirrors the fragmented identity of Lively's London and reflects the dichotomized nature of the city. The narratives within the book, much like the city's structure, are split between past and present; so, as Moran says "Lively's method is to play out the scene from the sub-narrative and then to return to the main narrative and pick up where it was left off" (113). This duality is encapsulated in Mathew's saying when he asserts that "this city is entirely in the mind. It is a construct of the memory and of the intellect" (Lively 25). Mathew refers to two forces shaping the city: on the one hand, the memory representing the city's history, past, memories, and, on the other hand, the intellect embodying modernity and the desire for gentrification and reform. However, these two elements do not blend harmoniously in Lively's London; they exist independently and are applied separately to the city. This

lack of integration leads to a threatening structure which is divided, with two identities reminiscent of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Therefore, the novel's fragmented structure not only reinforces the fragmented identity of the city but also underscores the tension between its historical roots and its modern aspirations. Lively's London is a city of the mind, a place where memory and intellect coexist but fail to unite.

Conclusion

These texts reveal that space is rendered meaningless without the dimension of time; the past must be interwoven with both space and the present to create an ideal modern city with a coherent identity. This research underscores the importance of integrating time and space in urban development, as cities without connection to their history risk becoming monstrous, alienating spaces. Tati's Paris, devoid of its historical identity, is a Frankenstein-like monster. It is a heterotopia manipulating and alienating its residents through its sterile and modernist architecture. In contrast, Lively's London is a fragmented city embodying the duality of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, where past and present coexist uneasily, exposing the social and spatial ruptures of a rapidly gentrifying landscape. Both works highlight the critical role of historical memory in shaping urban spaces and the dangers of destroying the past in the pursuit of modernity.

This division between past and present creates two distinct urban realities. When the past is eliminated from the space, cities like Paris in Tati's *Playtime* emerge. Conversely, when a space reflects only the past without signs of renovation, it often becomes deserted or inhabited solely by marginalized groups, such as the poor or low-income immigrants. In *City of the Mind*, there are some places in London that are inhabited by people with low incomes and London is portrayed as a city split into two distinct spaces: one that fully embodies the past, steeped in memory and history, and another that is entirely severed from it – an anonymous, modernized landscape devoid of identity, memory, or historical continuity. Accordingly, the split London with two personalities appears.

The modern cities of Paris and London, as depicted in these two texts, are rendered meaningless without the integration of time. In Tati's Paris and Lively's London, the modern cities take on their own lives and impose their powers on the people living with/in them. In Tati's myth of Frankenstein, modern Paris, a new Frankenstein, a new heterotopia, without its past, is created, and in Lively's myth

of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a new Dr. Jekyll, split from but at the same time mingled with its Mr. Hyde, is reborn as a new form of Foucault's heterotopia. Finally, this study proposes a holistic approach to urban planning. For modernizing cities and urban spaces, it advocates integrating the past and the present by maintaining the historical monuments and keeping the memories by refurbishing the cities instead of removing the historical monuments completely. Following this approach, we have the cities which are not only functional but also soulful, humane and meaningful. By doing so, cities are not changed to foreboding monsters of modernity; instead, they become the spaces of connection, identity, and belonging.

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