

***Cities of Affluence and Anger: A Literary Geography of Modern Englishness.*** By Peter J. Kalliney. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2007. 266 pp. \$59.50 cloth, \$22.50 paper.

In *Cities of Affluence and Anger*, Peter Kalliney revises the modern city as a critical rubric of twentieth-century British fiction. While this subject is a

familiar one, Kalliney's multi-faceted study explores the city as a symbol and repository of national culture as its status grows over the course of the twentieth century. Kalliney focuses on London (with a brief foray into Nottingham) and its literary invocations throughout the century to register shifts in Britain's national imaginary. Organizing his book by theme, Kalliney examines Forster's *Howards End* and Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*; Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*; John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Alan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*; Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*; and Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*. In his account, London begins the century as the embodiment of an imperial metropolis and ends as an urban node in an emergent global order, taking detours as national capital and provincial town along the way. The book argues that with these changes (and the increasing association of London with England as a whole) during the century of dramatic imperial contraction, a particular "domestic class system" that arose with the city came to signify English national identity, i.e., what was "intrinsically and mysteriously unique to England" (6). Althusser's distinction between the real, imaginary, and symbolic orders appears frequently to remind readers that the author does not simply see class as a lived experience; it is also an irreducibly ideological representation and at times, the stuff of fantasy. In his conclusion, Kalliney accordingly refers to class as a category that is constantly "in motion" (220) and as a "marker of both unassimilated difference and cultural cohesion," one that has allowed "Englishness" to be understood "as a distinctively urban condition" (215).

There is much to recommend here for scholars of twentieth-century British fiction. The dual lens on city and class enables Kalliney to provide fresh contexts for canonical novels. For example, Kalliney explores the ways in which *Mrs. Dalloway*, in its attempt to create a "culturally specific" or "English modernism" (99), inscribes the contemporary discourse surrounding London parks as spatial means of recruiting imperial subjects. To form this argument, he gathers together archival maps, reform movement documents, and urban histories, successfully revising prevalent readings of Peter Walsh as a typical flâneur. As Kalliney explains in a footnote, he is "skeptical of attempts to use the flâneur or its theoretical offspring to explain the urban aesthetics of postcolonial texts" (229). The book thus backs away from the predictable summons of Benjamin in studies of the city in modernist and postmodern fiction. The analysis also prepares the way for an inspired pairing of *Mrs. Dalloway* with *The Lonely Londoners* that usefully decenters modernist studies. The readings aptly demonstrate how high modernism should be understood as a transition rather than the apex of twentieth-century literary history. Indeed, throughout the book, as if taking a direct cue from *The Lonely Londoners*, Kalliney reads the products of high modernism as evolving components in national culture throughout the century. The unusual pairings of Forster with Waugh, and Woolf with Selvon, illuminate hidden dimensions of the earlier texts that speak to the postwar, postcolonial,

and ultimately global contexts of the later texts. Thus, modernism is not read as a hermetic movement, nor is World War II understood as the unbridgeable gap between modernist and postmodern or postcolonial fiction.

The expansive interdisciplinary materials Kalliney intersperses throughout the book—archival documents of early twentieth-century sociology, architectural planning, and urban planning, as well as urban class ethnographies—facilitate a historically informed exploration of less frequently discussed works such as those by Selvon, Sillitoe, Lessing, and Osborne. At some points, however, the archival materials, although creatively deployed, seem superfluous. For instance, Kalliney precedes a reading of Forster and Waugh with an excursus on Ebenezer Howard, an urban reformer who headed the “Garden City” movement, in order to distinguish their works from the pastoral nostalgia embedded in some twentieth-century country house novels. In the end, however, the presentation of Howard and the reading of Forster remain unintegrated, so that the point of the juxtaposition seems simply that “*Howards End*, like the work of land reformers like Ebenezer Howard, is a profound attempt to imagine Englishness as a postimperial condition” (63). And in the reading of Sillitoe, a tangential foray into the architectural design of a “two-up, two-down” (127) typical postwar urban working-class house precedes a reading of Sillitoe’s commentary on “working-class masculinity” (128). Citing an architectural historian, Roderick Lawrence, Kalliney makes the claim that “with the help of this architectural style, working-class masculinity became strongly linked with supporting a family, both in reality and in fantasy” (128). I am not convinced that the presentation of domestic architecture or its history is necessary to assert this rather obvious conclusion; instead, Kalliney’s fascinating assertion that Sillitoe’s novel can be read as a “rehabilitation of domestic melodrama” (142) would have benefited from more literary history and analysis. Nevertheless, Kalliney’s revision of these genres—country house and “Angry Young Men” fiction—recuperates them and renders them much more complex as a whole.

Some possibilities for further connections come to mind. Sillitoe includes immigrant characters in his narrative, and Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* directly invokes and challenges *Mrs. Dalloway* as an urban narrative of class and immigration. That these appear to be missed opportunities, however, is probably just evidence of the richness of Kalliney’s themes and methods. Furthermore, the questions that linger from his study concerning the efficacy of globalization as a model for understanding postcolonial cultural production (208) are welcome ones for the renovation of modernist and postcolonial studies and readings of postmodern space and fiction. *Cities of Affluence and Anger* will appeal to readers interested in challenging the critical boundaries between these ways of understanding twentieth-century texts.

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