

Contents

1	Introduction	11
1.1	Setting the Theme: Intelligibility and Legibility	11
1.2	‘New’ London (1997-2007)	15
1.3	Selecting the Literary Corpus	20
1.4	The Present State of Research	24
1.5	Structure and Approach	31
	Theory and Methodology	37
2	Theories and Categories of Mentality	39
2.1	The Definition of Mentality	39
2.1.1	The History of Mentalities	39
2.1.2	Historical and Contemporary Social Constructions of Reality	44
2.1.3	Mentality as Organon and Rhizome	46
2.2	Determinants of Mentality	51
2.2.1	Collectivity and Collective Mentality	52
2.2.2	Time and Temporal Mentality	55
2.2.3	Space and Spatial Mentality	57
2.2.4	Collective Space-Time Compressions	70
2.3	The Concept of Mentality	72
3	Theories of Urbanity	75
3.1	City and Urbanity	76
3.1.1	Definition of the City	76
3.1.2	Urbanity as the Metropolitan Way of Life	77
3.1.3	Metamorphosis of the City and Transformation of Urbanity	82
3.2	Urban Theoretical Approaches to Mentalities	83
3.2.1	Georg Simmel’s Sociology of Modern Urbanity	84
3.2.2	The Chicago School of Urban Sociology	90
3.2.3	New Urban Political Economy and City Culture	95
3.2.4	The Contemporary City and Postmodern Urbanity	100
4	The Concept of Urban Mentality	111
4.1	Ambivalences of Urban-Generic Mentality	114
4.1.1	City and Country	115

4.1.2	Public and Private	116
4.1.3	Sociability and Anomie	118
4.1.4	Heterogeneity and Homogeneity	119
4.1.5	Familiarity and Strangeness	120
4.1.6	Community and Individualism	121
4.1.7	Indifference and Involvement	122
4.1.8	Apathy and Vigilance	123
4.2	Factors of Influence on Urban-Specific Mentality	126
4.2.1	Culture	127
4.2.2	Imaginary	129
4.2.3	Image	132
4.2.4	Text	134
4.2.5	Narrative	137
4.2.6	Atmosphere	139
4.2.7	Emotion	143
4.2.8	Identity	144
4.3	The Model of Urban Mentality	145
5	Methodological Implications	149
5.1	Methodological Approaches to Mentality	149
5.1.1	Quantitative and Qualitative Methods	150
5.1.2	Literary and Cultural Studies and the Concept of Mentalities	153
5.1.3	Narratological Approaches	154
5.2	A Spatio-Narratological Analysis of Mentality	163
5.2.1	Literary Topographies	166
5.2.2	Boundaries	169
5.2.3	Chronotopes	172
5.2.4	Metaphors	177
	Analysis of London Mentality	187
6	Cityscape	189
6.1	Public and Private	190
6.1.1	Interpenetrations of Public and Private Drama	191
6.1.2	Private Dereliction and Public Regeneration	199
6.1.3	Enclosed Privacies in the Global City	206
6.1.4	Public ‘Aparthide’ and Search for Intimacy	216
6.1.5	Isolationist Structures of Mentality	221
6.2	Underground London	225
6.2.1	Isotopic, Utopic, and Heterotopic Space	229
6.2.2	Subterranean Sociability	238
6.2.3	The Metropolitan (Un)Conscious	251
6.2.4	Deep Collective Space-Time Compressions	257
6.2.5	Subterranean Structures of Mentality	264
6.3	Navigating the Flux	269
6.3.1	Mapping the Metropolis	271

6.3.2	Touring the Streets of London	277
6.3.3	Sensing the City	284
6.3.4	Apprehending Urbanity	291
6.3.5	(Sub)Textual Structures of Mentality	301
6.4	The Palimpsestuous City	304
6.4.1	Historical Layering	305
6.4.2	Psychogeographical Tracing	311
6.4.3	Socio-Cultural Re-Con-Textualisation	325
6.4.4	Intertextual Writing	335
6.4.5	Hypertextual Simulation	339
6.4.6	Palimpsestuous Structures of Mentality	347
7	Socioscape	353
7.1	Urban Sociability	353
7.1.1	Networks of Human Interrelation	355
7.1.2	Urban Islands of Loneliness	368
7.1.3	Metropolitan Voids and Millennial Anomie	375
7.1.4	Transcultural Contact Zones	381
7.1.5	Mental Structures of Relational Fluidity	391
7.2	London Metropolarities	392
7.2.1	The Urban Middle-Class Crisis	394
7.2.2	(Un)Homely Cosmopolis	400
7.2.3	Gendered (Dis)Orientations	410
7.2.4	The Urban Pariah	425
7.2.5	Mental Structures of Deviation	432
8	Idioscape	435
8.1	The City and the Citizen	436
8.1.1	Identityscape and Performativity	437
8.1.2	Bodyscape and Psychasthenia	454
8.1.3	Mindscape and Screening	467
8.1.4	Hypertrophic Structures of Mentality	472
8.2	The Urban State of Mind	475
8.2.1	Simulated Anxiousness	476
8.2.2	The Spectres of Terror	486
8.2.3	Millennial Apocalyptic Visions	501
8.2.4	Terror Structures of Mentality	510
9	Conclusion	513
	Works Cited	531
	Primary Literature	531
	Further Primary Sources	532
	Secondary Sources	532
	Appendix: London Novels (1997-2007)	561
	Index	573

1 Introduction

1.1 SETTING THE THEME: INTELLIGIBILITY AND LEGIBILITY

An array of British writers have commented on the illimitable, inexhaustible, multifarious, ineffable character of London and thereby emphasised the uneasy impression that the metropolis¹ is unintelligible and illegible, which ultimately leads to the disorientation of the urbanite or the loss of the Self. Initially, the quest for urban intelligibility and legibility is born of the desire to make sense of the urban experience, to re-establish spaces of everyday life and regenerate identity. Early discourses on knowing London, a space seemingly defying any logic and described by Charles Dickens as an “unintelligible mess” (1998: 237), were hence either preoccupied with gathering “intelligence” (Sicher 2003: 5, 43) on the actual living conditions of urbanites or stressed intellectualisation as a dominant response to the city. However, far more than intellectual conception, sensual perception makes it possible to establish orientation in the urban realm and constitutes a vital force in the construction of identity. In this respect, reading becomes a metaphor for perception as a process which orders and stabilises urban experience in a meaningful way.

Legibility of urban space has been an ongoing concern in Urban Studies (e.g. cf. Lynch 1977: 9; Sharpe & Wallock 1987: 16-17; Balshaw & Kennedy 2000: 1; Amin & Thrift 2002: 7; Sieverts 2003: 52). The legibility of the encoded cityscape stresses how images condition urbanites’ responses to the city and play an important part in shaping their understanding of the metropolis. Therefore, New Urban Geographers, in regard to the semiotic notion of culture in which the text functions as a *pars pro toto* for all cultural representation, consider the sign system of the city as text which can be decoded and read (e.g. cf. Duncan 1990; King 1996). The legible metropolis thus denotes the way Londoners perceive and give meaning to their city. What is more, however, the notion that the perceived city must be interpreted emphasises that “[l]ike a literary text [it] has as many interpretations as it has readers” (Sharpe & Wallock 1987: 17). In this sense,

1 | In the following the terms metropolis, city, and the urban will be used almost interchangeably.

the city becomes inseparable from its representations. Hence, the urban must be seen as “*trans-discursive*” (Shields 1996: 234) in the sense of being produced and producing its own texture of representations – material, social and mental forms and practices. Because of London’s illimitable dimensions, the metropolis must also be imagined.

Aesthetic literature on the metropolis provides selective representations of the city: it creates metaphors to encompass its vast nature, maps narratives that describe urban experience, offers myths that help to locate the Self, and consequently re-imagines collective urban identities. Fiction shapes our understanding of the city while simultaneously generating an idiosyncratic knowledge on the urban. Because literature offers a most fundamental tool for making us understand the world, Sebastian Groes (2011: 16) emphasises the need for the city novel as writers become “interpreters and translators of the various, often conflicting discourses the city offers [...]” It is thus not the vastness of megapolitan structures alone that renders the urban illegible and ultimately unintelligible, but as Sharpe & Wallock (1987: 27) stress, if “the city recedes in contemporary urban fiction, its deracinated inhabitants lose their ability to interpret themselves or the world around them.” The London novel makes the metropolis intelligible, legible, imaginable, and ultimately also “inimitable” (Wolfreys 2004: 236).

Often, Charles Dickens is cited as **the** novelist of London, not only because most of London fiction is indebted to the author, but because he invented our conception of London by providing a “controlling language through which the city can be read” (Balshaw & Kennedy 2000: 12). In his effort to write faithful to the condition of London, Dickens’ descriptions of the city, for example in *Bleak House* (1853), not only chart the physical cityscape and encompass the chance encounters of its social relations, but expose London’s mental framework – the forms of thought, world views, memories, psychologies, emotions, etc. Consequently, the city is inseparable from its representations because they resonate with processes between the material and mental spaces of the metropolis as well as depict urban nonconscious structures of thinking (cf. Sharpe & Wallock 1987: 6; Balshaw & Kennedy 2000: 3, 6). In “Cities of Mind, Urban Words” Ihab Hassan (1981: 95) characterises the metropolis and its fictions as an “inscape of mind”. Correspondingly, Jerry White (2003: 1) argues:

London has been peopled as much in the mind as in its streets. No city has been written about more. Nowhere else have novelists more frequently chosen to plot narratives, set characters and explore circumstances. [...]. Perhaps, indeed, London and Londoners can be most truly realized in fiction.

This vital dialectic relation between urban literary and city life is further commented on by Jaye and Watts (1981a: ix): “The literature of the city yields experiences that become integral parts of our lives through time; we seek to revisit, discover, locate, avoid, or create those imaginative impressions and journeys anew.” Through reading, an image of the city moulds itself onto the mind of its inhabitants. Thereby the metropolis constitutes an internalised landscape equipped with a certain metropolitan sensibility – a particular frame of mind.

Due to the cultural contrast between city and country as two “fundamental ways of life” (Ray. Williams 1985: 1), the metropolis has not only generated a new ontological model opposed to the country, but has also developed generic cultural practices and

specific forms of thinking. Moreover, the “axioms of the metropolitan mind” (Mumford 1997: 258) as a particular “mode of feeling, thinking, acting” (*ibid.*: 263) – and I add ‘imagining’ – are particular to every single metropolis. Thus, London not only constitutes a geographical region (city) but also presents a specific way of life (urbanity) with its idiosyncratic norms, values, and mental dispositions. Due to the metropolis’ particularities – be it its social, historical or topographical nature, or images of its cultural memory – Londoners can be differentiated from inhabitants of other metropolises, by local-specific mental dispositions – or London mentality.

This study on *The Intelligible Metropolis* sets out to investigate urban-generic mental dispositions and attempts to identify urban-specific structures of mentality in contemporary London fiction. It construes how the physical, social and mental urban realm is constructed and shows characteristic ways of thinking, feeling, imagining, and acting. The purpose of the study is to demonstrate that it is the tool of mentality which offers orientation in order to manoeuvre the postmodern urban realm and enables urbanites to gain a common understanding of the metropolis. For the decoding of mental structures, this exposition develops a model of transference regarding urban mentality which can also be employed in the context of contemporary metropolises worldwide. Starting from the hypothesis that London is narratively known, I analyse mental dispositions as represented in twenty London novels published during the Blair era (1997-2007). Beyond the selected corpus, this study presents a thoroughly researched bibliography of recent fiction set in London. With its focus on the regional mentality of metropolitan London, the argumentation particularly takes into account theories of space and spatial semantics against the background of the Spatial Turn and supplements methodological approaches of mentalities with a spatio-narratological analysis. Overall, the objective of *The Intelligible Metropolis* is two-fold: first, I argue that Mentality Studies of literary sources, cultural practices and beyond under the preliminaries of the Spatial Turn offer a particular fruitful approach within Cultural Studies. Second, it is my contention that the concept of mentality presents a missing link within Urban Studies which helps to enhance the understanding of postmodern urban cultures. Insofar, the present study wishes to promote the concept of mentality (“mental turn”) as a new interdisciplinary and synergic paradigm of urban experience especially within Urban and Cultural Studies.

The main constituent of Cultural Studies² has been the assumption and analysis of cultural difference. Cultural Studies strives to reconstruct culture as a system of interdependent variables by clarifying cultural difference in habits in correspondence to socio-political, economic and cultural structures. According to Jürgen Kamm (1996: 96), Cultural Studies endeavours to acquire “*cultural meta-knowledge*”, thus to perceive the lifeworld from the standpoint of the Other and consequently to unravel another society’s knowledge. Insofar, Mentality and Cultural Studies are closely connected through their common “hypothesis of [...] alterity” (Bonheim 1994: 2) as they both try to make contact with otherness. Striving for an understanding of the foreign mental world of different people, mentality and cultural studies either concentrate on the different attitudes and values of social collectives or historical epochs and/or geographical regions. Second, one of the main objectives of Cultural and Mentality Studies alike is to reconstruct the

2 | Cultural Studies is understood with Raymond Williams (1984: 63) as a “study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life”.

mental dimension of a culture. These significant “standardisations of thinking” (Hansen 2003: 88) are commonly known by the term mentality (cf. Kamm 1994: 37; Kamm 1996: 96; Kamm 2007: 37).

Etymologically, ‘mentality’ derives from the Latin term *mens* meaning mind, spirit, psyche (cf. *Online Etymology Dictionary*). The *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Anon. 1908: 342) characterises mentality as “nature of the mind or mental action”, while today it is defined as a “[m]ental character or disposition” (Anon. 1989: 612) by *The Oxford English Dictionary*, “mode of thought” (*Merriam Webster Online*) or “characteristic way of thinking” (*Oxford Dictionary Online*). The latter is also implied when mentality is used as popular colloquialism or fashionable buzzword. The *Google* hit list for mentality registers results in which way of thinking denotes specific attitudes and values (e.g. siege mentality) that can be of economic (e.g. throwaway mentality), political (e.g. liberal mentality), and social nature (e.g. herd mentality) or refer to a particular habit (e.g. contraceptive mentality). Moreover, these phenomena can be encompassed by a certain philosophy of life which is often connected to a specific space (e.g. ghetto mentality) or region (e.g. Eastern mentality). Often the term is used to identify the way of thinking or thought characteristic of a specific group of people (e.g. peasant mentality) which can be narrowed down to the perceived religious character trait (e.g. Jewish mentality) or gender marker (e.g. male mentality). In this colloquial sense, mentality is used, often pejoratively, in reference to common knowledge.

Under the assumption that every culture has its particular philosophy of life, mentality is today a widely used concept in both popular and academic works which analyse the otherness of thinking as a cultural phenomenon. Hutton (1981: 237) goes so far as to argue that mentality has developed into “a code name for what used to be called culture”. This is particularly apparent in the abundance of Cultural/Mentality Studies which concern questions of national character and constructions of national identity.³ Here the term mentality points towards a national stereotype or collective (‘flat’) character such as under assessment by cultural xenology (cf. Vester 1996: 11, 113). Bernd Lenz (2002: 52) argues that “[t]he analysis of mentalities should [...] focus on discursive structures, social and cultural aspects, processes of identity formation, auto- and heterostereotypes.” In his article he explicates that “Britain’s mentality has been moulded [...] by insular experience” (*ibid.*: 51) and that the consequent ‘insular mentality’ constitutes an integral part of a British national identity. Jürgen Kamm and Gerold Sedlmayr (2007: 7) pay heed to the idea of ‘insular mentalities’ as a “pertinent collective way of thinking that stresses a belief in the country’s strength, superiority and steadfastness”.⁴

3 | See for example Ake Daun’s exemplary study on *Swedish Mentality* (1996) or for the German mentality see Bernhard Nuss (1993), *Das Faust-Syndrom. Ein Versuch über die Mentalität des Deutschen*. Lately, the interest concerning mentality has seen a revival due to the need of understanding different cultural work ethics such is the objective of international management, cross-cultural management and intercultural communication. See for example Jürgen Beneke (1992), *Kultur, Mentalität, Nationale Identität*; Guntram Danne (1996), *Die Rolle von Mentalität und arbeitsbezogenen Wertstrukturen in Transformationsgesellschaften*; Christoph Barmeyer (2000), *Mentalitätsunterschiede und Marktchancen im Frankreichgeschäft*.

4 | Other structures of British mentality refer to traditionalism, pragmatism, freedom, and economy, but also national pride, humour, and the British Empire. For more see Wilhelm Di-

Although London is the capital of the United Kingdom, it has always been argued that the British *mater polis* is neither typically British nor typically English (cf. Kamm & Lenz 2004: 58). Due to its leading role as both national capital and global city⁵, London as metropolis⁶ has formed a genuine character which stands apart from the national identity traditionally located in the country.⁷ This particular distance between Britain and London, according to the historian Jerry White (2008: xii), has “never been wider than at the end of the twentieth century.” As the setting of significant socio-political and cultural events, the experience of urban life in London – physically, socially, and mentally – has undergone a dramatic transformation around the millennium.

1.2 ‘NEW’ LONDON (1997-2007)

Writing on London in the beginning of the 1990s most authors seem to share a pessimistic view on the metropolis’ recent decline.⁸ In his social history of London first published in 1994, Roy Porter (2000: 1) stresses the crisis, deterioration, and disintegration of the contemporary city and detects “a new pessimism, a new anxiety” (*ibid.*: 470). The social, economic, cultural and environmental maladies suffered by the city

belius (1923), *England*; Richard Weight (2002), *Patriots. National Identity in Britain 1940-2000*; Kate Fox (2004), *Watching the English. The Hidden Rules of English Behaviour*; Julian Baggini (2008), *Welcome to Everytown. A Journey into the English Mind*.

5 | Especially see Jonathan Schner (1999), *London 1900. The Imperial Metropolis*; John Eade (2000), *Placing London. From Imperial Capital to Global City*; Saskia Sassen (1991), *The Global City. New York, London, Tokyo*. For a comparison of London’s status to other metropolitan areas see Arjen van Susteren, ed. (2005), *Metropolitan World Atlas*.

6 | For London the term metropolis was first used in 1830, at a time when the city counted more than one million citizens (cf. Hertel 1997: 24). In the beginning of the twentieth century, population had grown to over eight million making London the largest metropolis in the world (cf. White 2008: xvii; Black 2009: 370). After the Second World War, Greater London’s population declined gradually to around 6.8 million during the 1980s. Since the mid-1990s population figures have risen steadily again and today Greater London houses 8.3 million inhabitants (2012). In 2000 London had a similar population to 1914, but was geographically twice as large (cf. Phillips 2006: 2). While for some scholars, the urban sprawl of postmodern London presents a megalopolis (e.g. cf. Teske 1999: 27; Deny 2009: 49) this study refutes the notion of the city as dominated by an urban agglomeration with satellite cities in regard to London and consequently further employs the term metropolis, its leading role apparent in the etymological origin as the ‘mother city’. For more on London’s topography see for example Keith Hoggart, & David Green, eds. (1991), *London. A New Metropolitan Geography*.

7 | See for example the historian of mentalities Fernand Braudel (1958: 737) who claims: “Vivez à Londres une année, et vous connaîtrez fort mal l’Angleterre.”

8 | For more see Patrick Wright (1991), *A Journey through Ruins. The Last Days of London*; Andy Thornley (1992), *The Crisis of London*; Iain Sinclair (1997), *Lights Out for the Territory*; Peter Hitchens (1999), *The Abolition of Britain. The British Cultural Revolution from Lady Chatterley to Tony Blair*.

on a colossal scale (cf. Inwood 1998: 937) and the accompanying urban structures of feeling during the 1990s, for example, finds vivid expression in Patrick Keiller's doom-laden film *London* (1994). However, only one year later the American author Bill Bryson (1995: 33) wonders why "Londoners fail to see that they live in the most wonderful city in the world" and subsequently enthuses over London's multiple attractions:

It is [...] far more beautiful and interesting than Paris and more lively than anywhere but New York – and even New York can't touch it in lots of important ways. It has more history, finer parks, a livelier and more varied press, better theatres, more numerous orchestras and museums, leafier squares, safer streets, and more courteous inhabitants than any other large city in the world. (*Ibid.*: 34)

This eulogy of London was taken up by *Newsweek* in 1996 rediscovering London as "The Coolest City in the World" (White 2008: 350). McLeod (2004b: 160) argues that "the optimistic tone of the article points to an important and predominant way of thinking about London's fortunes in the 1990s which had become prevalent by the decade's end." The earlier *fin-de-siècle* mood was replaced by a new "millennial optimism" (*ibid.*) as the decade was closing. The city seemed to have taken on a renewed self-confidence, energy and resolve. In his seminal biography of London, Peter Ackroyd (2001: 777) therefore contends: "If London were a living thing, we would say that all of its optimism and confidence have returned. It has again become 'the capital of all capitals' in every cultural and social sense. The world flocks to it and once more it has become a youthful city."

Although Britain's economic recovery following the recession of the early 1990s was already initiated in the decade before, the landslide election of Tony Blair's New Labour government⁹ on 1 May 1997 in general serves as the historio-political event that particularly symbolises the threshold between pessimism and the "*New Dawn*" (Tönnies 2006: 120) of revived optimism. It not only marked the end of eighteen years of Conservative rule, but specifically terminated the debate on the great decline and created a new sense of euphoria, excitement and expectation at this change of government (cf. Kavanagh 2007: 3). Blair pushed the ideological notion of change and renewal by consciously employing media marketing strategies and rhetoric. Merle Tönnies (2006: 119) shows how

⁹ Tony Blair was the longest serving Labour Prime Minister winning three general elections in a row (1997, 2001, 2005) until handing over his post to Gordon Brown in 2007. Mediating between Old Left and New Right he reconciled free market conservatism and state socialism under the new coinage of Third Way politics. For more see Tony Blair (1997), *New Britain. My Vision of a Young Country* and Tony Blair (1998), *The Third Way. New Politics for the New Century*. And although the era Blair does not feature as the cutting edge of political transformation, critics overwhelmingly agree that Blair's silent revolution changed Britain for the better: more economically competitive, more socially just, and more tolerant (cf. Kavanagh 2007: 5). For more on Blairite politics see Mark Perryman, ed. (1996), *The Blair Agenda*; Brian Brivati (2007), *The End of Decline. Blair and Brown in Power*; Anthony Seldon, ed. (2007), *Blair's Britain. 1997-2007*; Terrence Casey, ed. (2009), *The Blair Legacy. Politics, Policy, Governance, and Foreign Affairs*.

New Labour spin doctors built a “web of positive connotations” encompassing ideas and images of modernisation, development, innovation, originality and newness, for example in slogans such as “New Labour” and “New Britain” (cf. Kamm & Lenz 2006: 10-13).

In the centre of Blair’s first term especially stood the re-branding of London as the showpiece of “Cool Britannia” to a ‘New’ and ‘Sexy’ London in which to enter the third millennium (cf. Wolfreys 1998: 201; Chilton 2007: 17; Black 2009: 395).¹⁰ As one of the first initiatives a strategic authority for London, the Greater London Authority (GLA), was re-established in 1999 and one year later “Red” Ken Livingstone became its first directly elected mayor.

The most visible transformation of the metropolis was, however, the facelift of London’s cityscape through architectural development, cultural reclamation and reinvention of the image of London that was to lead to the metropolis’ reincarnation and make a “Spectacle of London” (Levenson 2002: 225). The millennium was marked by extensive funding by the National Lottery in order to construct London as a “pleasure nexus” (White 2008: xvii). The epitome of this development was the Millennium Dome (1999) in Greenwich, which was to host the millennial celebrations and has become a monument of world-aspiring ‘Cool Britannia’. Overshadowed in its first years by miscalculations and mismanagement, the Dome reinvented itself as the O2 Arena in 2005 and has since become a major performance venue (cf. Levenson 2002: 227; Kamm & Lenz 2006: 19). Similarly, the Docklands developments, particularly that of Canary Wharf (2003), and the interconnected transportation projects such as the extension of the Jubilee Line (1999) or the Docklands Light Railway (2005, 2009) were controversial. But while White (2008: xv) criticises the Docklands’ “non-London feel”, the area has developed into a thriving new centre for the financial and media sector.

Most particularly, the advent of the new millennium has prompted a rush of new cultural developments along the South Bank, bringing attention to the rejuvenated riverside “so that the Thames is once again a cherished and spectacular highway through one of the great cities of the world.” (J. Richardson 2001: 5) The old Bankside Power Station was converted and now houses the Tate Modern Gallery (2000). It is connected by the pedestrian Millennium Bridge (2000) to St Paul’s on the opposite side of the river. Upriver is the British Airways London Eye (2000), at 135 metres the world’s largest revolving passenger wheel. The newly erected City Hall (2002) is surrounded by the *More London* development reaching towards the building sites around London Bridge Borough. The Lloyd’s Building (1986) now merely constitutes a forerunner of the architectural Postmodernism taking hold on the historical City from the 1990s which emphasises metropolitan identity and urban “spectatorial visibility” (Levenson 2002: 231).¹¹

10 | It seems as if the spin doctors of New Labour had actually responded to the visions of contemporary urbanism as proposed by Sharon Zukin in her *The Cultures of Cities* first published in 1995. Therein she argues that urban street style cycled through the mass media of MTV or fashion magazines are divorced from their social context and “become images of cool” (Zukin 1997: 9), while the high visibility of stars and other members of the culture industries “underlines the ‘sexy’ quality of culture as a mother of economic growth.” (*Ibid.*: 13)

11 | Newly built or converted institutions further include MI5’s Thames House (1994) or MI6’s SIS building (1994), the Eurostar International Terminal at Waterloo (1994) since moved to St Pancras (2007), Somerset House (1997), the British Library (1997), the Royal Opera House

The changing skyline of London during the Blair era and the ongoing projects suggest that the metropolis is more and more turning into a vertical city of skyscrapers.¹² The third line of development is that the manifold building projects since the early 1990s have charted a certain shift towards East London. These found partial completion with the regeneration of the area in the course of the XXX Olympics in 2012 (accepted 2005).

Levenson (2002: 231; emphasis N.P.) contends that “[a]s London tries to imagine a new millennial future, it holds to a vision of the total metropolis, the splendid, but also the **intelligible**, city – a fit site for a liveable community.” With Tony Blair’s decision to alter national identity, multiculturalism and race relations became a central concern in his project of rebranding Britishness. In this respect, McLeod (2004a: 230) argues that “at the beginning of a new century London was emerging from its long diasporic history with new possibilities of social and cultural transformation”. Half of the current net immigration of the United Kingdom flows to London (cf. Black 2009: 370). By 2001, forty-five percent of ethnic minorities lived in London, where they made up twenty-nine per cent of all residents (cf. *National Statistics*; Cuevas 2008a: 61). It is estimated that 300 languages are spoken throughout the city which is inhabited by about thirty communities, the largest groups of which are Indian, Polish, Irish, Bangladeshi and Nigerian. Particular Brick Lane in London’s East End has regained prominence as a centre of multiculturalism and “London’s Curry Capital” (Black 2009: 386).¹³ But the eastern neighbourhoods of Tower Hamlets (Spitalfields, Banglatown) and Hackney are also London’s deprived neighbourhoods, while the City of London and Richmond upon Thames remain Britain’s most affluent local authorities.

Besides London’s renewed role as national, global and cosmopolitan centre, the metropolis between 1997 and 2007 was also the setting of major historical events that moved the world. The widespread public mourning for the ‘People’s Princess’ “provide[d] an object lesson in this idea that it is in the audience watching events that shared identity is created.” (Crang 1998: 166) Otherwise, the concomitant nervous break-down of a whole nation and the silence, grief and bitterness that encompassed London in days

(2000), the Great Court at the British Museum (2000). The latest buildings making an impression on the London skyline are the City Point (2000), HSBC Tower (2001), Barclays Tower (2004), and Swiss Re Tower (2004) popular known as the “gherkin” on account of its startling form. For more on London’s millennial architecture see Samantha Hardingham (1996), *London. A Guide to Recent Architecture*; Ken Powell (2010), *21st-Century London. The New Architecture*.

12 | Projects that were planned since 2000, but construction only began after 2007 include Strata SE1 (The Razor and locally nicknamed as Isengard), Bishopsgate Tower (The Heron Tower, informally also referred to as the Pinnacle) and The Shard (completed in 2012). With 306 metres The Shard is currently the highest building throughout the EU.

13 | For more on London’s recent developments as a nexus of international migration see for example Anthony D. King (1990), *Global Cities. Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London*; Susan S. Fainstein, ed. (1992), *Divided Cities. New York & London in the Contemporary World*; Jane Jacobs (1996), *Edge of Empire. Postcolonialism and the City*; Susan Okokon (1998), *Black Londoners. 1880-1990*; Mike Phillips (2001), *London Crossings. A Biography of Black Britain*; Geoff Dench, Kate Gavron & Michael Young (2006), *The New East End. Kinship, Race and Conflict*.

after Lady Di's death must be seen as part of London's structure of feeling that subcutaneously persisted under the new veneer of the city beyond the millennium, despite an overall optimism.

Significantly, as the only immediate reaction in London to the terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Centre, the tower at the heart of Canary Wharf, One Canada Square, was evacuated. But the globalised urban terrors engendered by 9/11 had one major effect on the London public: in response to the widespread public anxiety about terrorism, the government decided to install the "Ring of Steel" – a network of closed circuit television cameras (CCTV) mounted on the eight official entry gates that control access to the City. At the latest when Britain alongside with the United States went to war in Iraq in 2003 and even 750,000 protesters in London could not change the course of history, the metropolis became number one of Europe's terror targets. On 7 July 2005 home-grown terrorists detonated a number of suicide bombs on three London Underground trains and a bus on Tavistock Square that injured 700 people and killed 56.

The incident proved a major setback for multicultural Britain and the postcolonial cosmopolis because it led to a resurgence of faithism and Islamophobia in the city where eight per cent of the population are Muslim. Also the latest student demonstrations (2010) and riots (2011) are violent signs of how the millennial optimism has not lasted (cf. McLeod 2005: 39) and the feeling of uncertainty has entered a new phase of gloom, particularly with the financial crisis (2008) and the consequent rise in unemployment and return-migration (cf. Black 2009: 406-407). In the period under analysis, London was hailed as "Manhattan-on-Thames" (*ibid.*: 395) and decried as "Reykjavik-on-Thames" (*ibid.*: 399), was seen as a most successful multicultural metropolis and described as "Londonistan" (*ibid.*: 395) after the terrorist attacks. Despite this ebbing of 'Cool Britannia', a fall in self-confidence and recurrent bleak future prospects for London, the city's latest chronicler, the historian Jeremy Black (*ibid.*: 399), ends his book on the note that London "muddles on" because "[t]he vibrancy, the life and the buzz are all still there." (*Ibid.*: 416)

Indeed, it is topical for London's history that extraordinarily destructive periods, for example the Great Plague (1665) and the Great Fire (1666) as well as the Blitz (1940-1941), have always been followed by phases of reconstruction and inventive rebirth.¹⁴ This notion of London as being caught in a cycle of creation and decline was already captured in John Dryden's allegorical poem "Annus Mirabilis" (1667), in which he envisions London's rise like a phoenix from its ashes. This London trope has persisted until the metropolis of the third millennium. Due to London's process of self-transformation, the city, for Julian Wolfreys (2004: 21), needs to be "understood as *becoming* constantly". That the metropolis is predominantly a process of urban crisis and urban renaissance is not only to be seen in spatial and social, but particularly in mental terms (cf. Teske 1999: 37). Consequently, the concept of (urban) mentality pays heed to both mental persistencies and transformations. In this sense, we might understand the Blair era (1997-2007) as a threshold not only between two millennia but also between two world orders (that of the Cold War's closure and the rise of a new age of international terrorism), and a change

14 | The earliest history of London is John Stow (1598), *Stow's Survey of London*. For recent histories of the metropolis particularly see Inwood (1998), J. Richardson (2001), White (2008), Black (2009).

of urban realities constituting an encompassing “time-space compression” (Harvey 1990: 306).

Kamm and Lenz (2006: 16) argue that New Labour’s 1997 landslide victory was possible mainly because the party was particularly able to place its political agenda of change and newness within the more general mood of cultural renewal. The numbers show that the creative industries grew constantly especially during Blair’s first term in office (cf. Löw, Steets & Stotzer 2008: 136; Black 2009: 387-388). Because representations and cultural agents were central to Blairite Britain, but also to the urban renaissance of London, this particularly opens the approach to transformations of urban mentality and its literary poetics (cf. Tönnies 2003: 8; Kamm & Lenz 2006: 15).

Metropolitan London has always had a strong hold on the literary imagination. Nevertheless, critics have argued that after the grand London novels of the Victorian era and the first thirty years of the twentieth century, the city has been marginalised in English literature, while American metropolises have stayed at the heart of its fiction (cf. Breuner: 1991 17, 195). But even though there might not have been the one great London novel, at least since the 1980s the metropolis has seen the “fetishization of [...] the London writer.” (Gibson 2003: 292). Especially since the 1990s it is fair to say that English urban fiction has experienced a “London Revival” (Coverley 2005: 134). Critics suspect that the reason for this enhanced status of London-based novels and its subsequent steady increase of publications lies in the re-branding of the city in the course of the ‘Cool Britannia’ campaign (cf. Coverley 2005: 134; Cuevas 2008a: 12). And while literature during Thatcherism, such as Martin Amis’ *Money* (1984), Margaret Drabble’s *The Radiant Way* (1987), Peter Ackroyd’s *Hawksmoor* (1985), Ian McEwan’s *The Child in Time* (1987) or Iain Sinclair’s *Downriver* (1991) presented London as a capital under strain, towards the millennium urban fiction proved remarkably optimistic (cf. McLeod 2004b: 162, 188; Black 2009: 386-387).

1.3 SELECTING THE LITERARY CORPUS

The literary corpus of twenty contemporary London novels was selected under the provision of the following criteria: (1) the novels must be wholly or substantially set in London; (2) the texts must have been published between 1997-2007; (3) the temporal setting must lie in the 1990s and 2000s or the near future; (4) they should be city novels in the narrow sense, conveying a picture of urban life, atmosphere, or character; (5) this includes urban genre novels that are considered London fiction by convention; (6) the novel should thematically, stylistically, and narratologically centre on representations of urban mentality; (7) the selected corpus of twenty works should guarantee a certain heterogeneity; (8) the texts chosen should reveal recurrences of bordering practices, chronotopic construction, and metaphoricity.

(1) The novel’s main setting had to be London, and for the contemporary aspect (2) I chose a publishing date of the novels between 1997 and 2007 according to the specific cultural-political period described above. My research of London novels was based on extensive search in London and Oxford bookshops, British and German library catalogues, online search at *Amazon.co.uk* and the *Fantastic Fiction* website. Without claiming to be exhaustive, the chronological list of “London Novels (1997-2007)” in the

appendix encompasses 403 titles and provides an apt picture of the production of London fiction during the decade under analysis. With an average of forty novels published every year, the output, in correspondence to London's verve around the millennium, reaches its height with fifty novels published in the year 2000 alone.¹⁵ My choice regarding the year of publication thus excludes authors who dominated British urban fiction during the 1980s and early 1990s, particularly Iain Sinclair and Peter Ackroyd. While the former has of late rather concentrated on non-fiction writing, the latter's *The Plato Papers* (1999), *The Clerkenwell Tales* (2003) and *The Lambs of London* (2004) are exempted from the corpus under analysis, because they are not set within the timeframe stipulated by the third selection principle.

(3) In order to convey connections between London at the turn of the century and its fictional representations, the novels had to be set in the 1990s or the near future. This criterion narrowed the selection of novels down to approximately 200. Unfortunately, this also exempted a large amount of recent bestselling historical novels on the city, for example, those written by Sarah Waters and Lee Jackson. Other important London fiction published between 1997 and 2007 thereby necessarily disregarded is Alan Hollinghurst's exploration of (gay) London during Thatcherism in *The Line of Beauty* (2004) or post-colonial novels such as Andrea Levy's *Small Island* (2004) depicting other eras of the (post)imperial metropolis.

(4) However, not all fiction set in London is to be defined as London novel in the narrow sense. According to Blanche Housman Gelfant's (1954: 6) definition the difference between a city novel and a local colour novel lies in the active part which is prescribed to the city where it becomes more than a mere setting and urban life is presented as an organic whole. The city in the novel acts as a "physical place", an "atmosphere" and as a "total way of life" (*ibid.*: 4), hence its physical topography makes an impression upon the mind, affects emotions and the frame of mind and notably moulds characters and their destinies. Consequently, the genre of the city novel for Gelfant (*ibid.*: 1-10) has to fulfil three main criteria: (1) the main setting is the city, (2) characters and plot are defined by the city and (3) the formal elements (style, plot, tone, theme, structure) convey a particular attitude towards the city.

Furthermore, Gelfant (*ibid.*: 11) distinguishes three forms of the city novel: the "portrait", the "synoptic" and the "ecological" study. The portrait novel follows a certain

15 | By comparison, Michael Breuner (1991) merely charts ninety novels about London published between 1896 and 1985. A similar number per year is only reached by the New York novel at the height of the great depression. For more see Robert Nelson Burrows (1959), *The Image of Urban Life as Reflected in the New York City Novel. 1920-1930*. Moira Burgess' bibliography on *The Glasgow Novel, 1870-1970* (1972) encompasses about 190 titles. Wolfram Motz' analysis of the construction of identity in the Scottish novel during the conservative rule between 1979 and 1997 offers an alphabetical bibliography of about 730 titles. For more see Wolfram Motz (2000), *Die Konstruktion von Identität im schottischen Roman während der Ära des britischen Konservatismus 1979-1997*. The latest and largest bibliography in regard to genre to my knowledge is Ansgar Nünning's two-volume genre-study on British historical fiction and historiographical metafiction since the 1950s which includes about 250 works. For more see Ansgar Nünning (1995), *Von historischer Fiktion zu historiographischer Metafiktion Teil I: Theorie, Typologie und Poetik des historischen Romans*.

protagonist in the city and depicts the change of character, as the urban environment impresses its meanings, values and manners on the figure's mind, such as in a novel of development (*ibid.*: 11-12). Hassan (1981: 107) goes as far as to argue that fiction and the urban have been complementary since the rise of the *Bildungsroman*. From the perspective of an analysis of mentalities, these novels chart an individual's acculturation to the urban way of life and through conformation or repudiation reveal the mental mould that determines the modern city man. Moreover, the newcomer to the city leads a certain threshold existence in the metropolis and thereby reveals the boundaries of thinking. In the synoptic novel, the city itself is a protagonist representing the complex patterns and dynamics of the city and its impact on modern sensibility (cf. Gelfant 1954: 14). In her definition of urban literature Diane Wolfe Levy (1978: 66) finds that great city novels which "depict the realities of city life [...] are all primarily novels of character, of experience *in* the city rather than experience *of* the city." In order to show the metropolitan way of life, atmosphere and social relations in unison, the synoptic novel by contrast adheres to a strong urban symbolism as a means of condensation and the focus on innovative linguistic and formal representations of the urban then often takes precedence over character (cf. *ibid.*). While the synoptic is a comprehensive type encompassing the whole city, the ecological novel is a partial type which focuses on a spatial unit of the city, such as a neighbourhood or a single apartment house. The interest lies in the relationships and manners of the social group depicted. With this sociological point of view the "ecological novel can reveal city life as it exists for the native city dweller" (Gelfant 1954: 13). Paying attention to the particular use of language by the characters, this type of city novel directly makes a statement on the state of mind and hence "allows for a comprehensive portrayal of how urban people think, act, and feel." (*Ibid.*)

Consequently in the city novel, the urban not only serves as a background setting but becomes the dominant prospect in the theme, structure, or style of writing, stressing that the city needs to constitute an irreducible element – thematically and structurally – of the text (e.g. cf. Hoffmann 1978: 396; Klotz 1987: 10; Breuner 1991: 9; Mahler 1999: 12; Coverley 2005: 9-12; Cuevas 2008a: 14). This active participation of the urban in structuring the narrative casts a "shift from 'narrated cities' to 'urban narratives'" (Tygstrup cit. in Tinkler-Villani 2005a: xii). Accordingly, paradigmatic city novels that are narratologically connected to the metropolis must be considered, in Wolfgang Hallet's (2009: 84) terms, "*fictions of space*" in the sense that they also devise new forms of spatial constitution or problematise the arbitrariness of spatial constructions. The semantisation as well as the depiction of consciousness is predominantly formed by spatial relations. Hallet (*ibid.*: 108) defines fictions of space as narratives in which: (a) space is the focus of the story, (b) processes of consciousness are imitated by spatial semiotics, (c) intradiegetic and extradiegetic commentaries are explicitly directed towards the issue of space, (d) the fictionalisation of space is connected to individual and cultural constructions of space and reveals this constructive moment.

(5) While these definitions can be a helpful orientation within literary analysis, the London novel is not entirely limited to the 'genre' of the city novel as defined above (cf. Klotz 1987: 10; Hertel 1997: 19). Strictly following such categories of differentiating 'London writing' from a 'writing about London' would lead to a neglect of urban fictions which are considered London novels by 'convention' (cf. Coverley 2005; Pleßke 2006: 56-60). This includes, for example, nineteenth-century city novels of social critique (i.e.

Arthur Morrison's *The Child of the Jago*) which had their revival in the political engagement with the effects of Thatcherism or in contemporary neo-realist ecological novels by first- and second-generation immigrants (cf. Coverley 2005: 14-15; Cuevas 2008b: 385). In regard to the latter also postcolonial writing can be said to have developed into a sub-genre of the London novel, from Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) telling about the experiences of early migrants to the post-war city to visions of the multicultural metropolis in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). Besides these, especially genre fiction has originated idiosyncratic London novels: Urban science fiction evolves H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) offering alternative images of future Londons beyond everyday experiences. Optimistic and pessimistic projections of the city are fictionally created in utopias and dystopias, for example in George Orwell's *1984* (1949), and combine political critique of London with a belief in the city's brighter future (cf. Hoffmann 1978: 398; Coverley 2005: 16). The detective novel can count as the urban narrative form *par excellence* because the genre which became popular with Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories (1887-1927) is particularly suited to London's labyrinthine system of streets. Conversely, occult writing, particularly towards the end of the nineteenth-century, such as Robert Louis Stevenson's prominent *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), brings to the fore urbanites' psychological state while the Gothic or London noir revival since the early 1990s has produced manifold examples of that urban sub-genre (cf. Coverley 2005: 18, 26). Moreover, Wachinger (1999: 299-300) stresses that in the postmodern city novel these various sub-genres merge into a new hybrid genre of the London novel charting urbanity indirectly in a hidden dimension of its texture.

I therefore argue that urban London genre fiction proves extremely fruitful for an analysis of mentality, also because, according to Highmore (2005: 114), genre fiction is able to register the ordinary "in its distracted gaze on the urban everyday and its adjustments within the genre". Science, horror, fantasy and utopian fictions open the world of the unfamiliar and depict the nonconscious conflicts in certainties to make the seemingly inarticulate both legible and intelligible. Rosemary Jackson (1981: 4) comments that the fantastic "traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" thereafter "making visible the un-seen, of articulating the un-said." (*Ibid.*: 48) In this sense, genre fiction in general traces the limits of a culture's epistemological and ontological frame (cf. *ibid.*: 23). The transgression of these mental boundaries implies the breach of standardisations of thinking. This aspect is particularly relevant for an analysis of urban mentality, as "[t]he city suggests a creative disorder, an instructive confusion, an interpolating space in which the imagination carries you in every direction, even towards the previously unthought." (Chambers 1996: 189) However, in my selection I left out mystery and detective series (e.g. Barry Maitland's *Kathy and Brock* or Anny Perry's *William Monk* and *Thomas Pitt* novels) as well as designated children's novels and youth fiction (e.g. China Miéville's *Un Lun Dun*).

(6) From that vantage point I am inclined to agree with Coverley (2005: 11): the definition of what constitutes London writing in a sense remains a subjective choice dominated by the topic of the interpretation. Here, in choosing the titles for analysis I specifically scrutinised works that emphasise the idiosyncrasy of London, its whole way of life in general and its physical, social and mental spaces in particular as representing a particular urban frame of mind. I was mainly interested in contemporary London fic-

tion that shows a certain connection between urbanity and literature, hence novels that translate the urban experience in both its aesthetic concept and dominant theme. The choice of novels thereby focussed on the selection of texts which exposed concrete ways of thinking. Moreover, I particularly took into account my findings of an urban-generic and urban-specific mentality. Already Gelfant (1954: 24) argues that because the actualities of city life shape a novelist's vision of the urban, the theories of urbanism offered by modern sociology help in understanding the character of the city novel. Insofar, the selection of the literary corpus under analysis was oriented on notions of how strongly the texts conveyed urban-generic ambivalences and urban-specific factors of influence in regard to a construction of a metropolitan mindset. About 100 works fulfilled all the criteria mentioned so far, eighty of which were critically read and underwent a basic analysis; they therefore also inform my knowledge on recurrent themes.

(7) To further narrow the choice of primary literature to twenty London novels I applied the criterion of heterogeneity: the selected corpus should be heterogeneous and represent a wide spectrum of London prose that narratively conveys diverging – social, temporal, and topographical – perspectives of the metropolis in order to avoid one-sided views on mentality. This parameter made me choose from male as well as female authors to avoid a specific gender-related gaze, applying the same to the generational aspect of the authors. As a further principle of selection the twenty novels were compiled from bestseller, marginal, popular, highly aesthetic, and debut writing. This meant that I wanted to include paradigmatic or canonical contemporary London novels (e.g. *Saturday*, *Brick Lane*, *Millennium People*), but also pay tribute to famous authors whose city novels have not been critically perceived (e.g. Brooke-Rose, *Hornby*). Moreover, I considered the debut novels of authors who have since become famous in their own right (e.g. Williams, *Lott*). Importantly, following the notion that “[m]ost great writers have been by birth or adoption, city men” (Brogan 1977: 148), I disregarded the place of birth or nationality of the authors discussed (i.e. Canadian Geoff Ryman). Another aspect was to include all forms of the city novel mentioned by Gelfant – portrait, synoptic and ecological – and to draw texts from various London sub-genres. And finally, (8) as a last principle of selection, I looked for particular recurrences regarding certain mental structures strongly conveyed within the single texts and throughout the chosen corpus (see “Primary Literature”).

1.4 THE PRESENT STATE OF RESEARCH

Due to the notion of London's illimitability it is self-evident that the state of research concerning London literature is abundant. Since Perry H. Boynton's *London in English Literature* published in 1913, thus long before Virginia Woolf's or T.S. Eliot's imaginaries of the modern city, research on literary London has been extensive reaching from epochal and genre-specific to comparative and interdisciplinary studies¹⁶ These provide

¹⁶ For example see Jeanne Gabriel Clark (1957), *London in English Literature, 1880-1955*; Max Byrd (1978), *London Transformed. Images of the City in the Eighteenth Century*; Gail Kern Paster (1985), *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*; Ralph Hanna (2005),

a good base for the understanding of certain trends and disruptions in the aesthetisation of the city. A majority of studies has been concerned with specific authors¹⁷, with the emphasis certainly on Charles Dickens¹⁸. A significant book on contemporary authors is Alex Murray's *Recalling London. Literature and History in the Work of Peter Ackroyd and Iain Sinclair* (2007). London writing by Peter Ackroyd, Iain Sinclair together with Martin Amis, Michael Moorcock, Will Self or women authors such as Maureen Duffy as well as Penelope Lively has received much attention and is by now covered by extensive research. The most relevant collections that encompass various perspectives on twentieth and twenty-first century literary representations of London are Pamela Gilbert's *Imagined Londons* (2002), Susana Onega and John Stotesbury's *London in Literature. Visionary Mappings of the Metropolis* (2002), Lawrence Phillips' *The Swarming Streets. Twentieth-Century Literary Representations of London* (2004) as well as Vanessa Guignery & François Gallix's *(Re-)Mapping London. Visions of the Metropolis in the Contemporary Novel in English* (2008). Besides these, the plethora of literary anthologies and literary guides on London not only proves the city's illimitable writerly inspiration, but these recent publications are further evidence of the important place the study of London literature has gained in the last decades.¹⁹

London Literature 1300-1380. For a recent analysis of London poetry consult Peter Barry (2000), *Contemporary British Poetry and the City*. Recent publications on the Gothic and London see Lawrence Phillips and Anne Witchard, eds. (2010), *London Gothic: Place, Space and the Gothic Imagination* or Sara Wasson (2010), *Urban Gothic of the Second World War. Dark London*. Comparative studies are particularly found in feminist studies on the city. See for example Squier (1984), Sizemore (1984), Weigel (1988, 1995), Parsons (2000). For interdisciplinary examples see Lawrence Manley (1995), *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*; Cynthia Wall (1998), *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London*; Nicholas Freeman (2007), *Conceiving the City. London, Literature, and Art 1870-1914*.

17 | Recent examples are Sara Haslam, ed. (2005), *Ford Madox Ford and the City* or Jean Moorcroft Wilson (2000), *Virginia Woolf's London*.

18 | An exemplary recent study on Dickens is presented by Sicher (2003), but in all the main collections on the city and representation encompass at least one article on Dickens' London, i.e. in the books edited by Sharpe & Leonard Wallock (1987), Balshaw & Kennedy (2000), Tinkler-Villani (2005).

19 | Paul Bailey's paradigmatic *Oxford Book of London* (1995) charts literary London from the twelfth-century monk William Fitzstephen to Angela Carter. Other examples are A.N. Wilson's *The Faber Book of London* (1996); Barnaby Rogerson, ed. (2004), *London. A Collection of Poetry of Place*; Anna Adams' *London in Poetry and Prose* (2005), Silvia Mergenthal (2006), *Poetischer London-Führer*, and Heather Reyes' *city-lit London* (2009). The latter also encompasses contemporary novels such as Xiaolu Guo's *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers* (2007) and Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008) and verse by Grace Nichols or Benjamin Zephaniah. London short story collections include Maria Lexton, ed. (1993), *The Time Out Book of London Short Stories*; Maxim Jakubowski, ed. (1994), *London Noir*; Oscar Zarate, ed. (1996), *It's Dark in London. Graphic Short Stories*. Also see literary guides to London, such as Peter Vansittart (1992), *London. A Literary Companion*; Ed Glinert (2000), *The Literary Guide to London*; Anna Quindlen (2004), *Imagined London. A Tour of the World's Greatest Fictional*

A general overview of London literature is provided by Nick Rennison's *Guide to London Writing* (1999) which reaches from examples by John Skelton (1460) to those of Nicholas Royle and Geoff Nicholson (1997). Instead, Merlin Coverley (2005) thematically sketches thirty essential London novels temporally closing with Anthony Frewin's *London Blues* (1997) and Nicholas Royle's *The Director's Cut* (2000). A long-awaited contribution which again marks the current prominence of London writing is the recent *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London* (2011) edited by Lawrence Manley. This collection unifies experts on literary London, such as Cynthia Wall, William Sharp, Peter Barry, John Ball, John McLeod and James Donald, who offer contributions on medieval urban literature to twenty-first century images in poetry, drama, prose, visual culture and film. Only the probably most productive contemporary researcher on the city, Julian Wolfreys, who has published three volumes on *Writing London* (1998, 2004, 2007), is not listed. Despite this, the book is not only interdisciplinary but cutting-edge in regard to the spatial theories employed for analysis. A very current chapter on twenty-first century city fiction is offered by John McLeod (2011) who particularly takes into account Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) and Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2007).

Instead, earlier studies on the contemporary British city novel, such as Michael Breuner's "*Hunger for Place*" (1991), Bernd-Peter Lange's *Die Großstadt in der britischen Gegenwartsliteratur* (1995) or Lawrence Phillips' *London Narratives* (2006) do not expand into the revival era of city fiction during the 1990s. By contrast, Sebastian Groes' current *The Making of London* (2011) charts the work of major London authors as early as the 1970s, but the book also echoes his innovative findings from earlier articles on the latest city novels by McEwan and Ballard (cf. Groes 2008, 2009). Unfortunately, the single chapters are arranged according to particular London authors and thus the analysis, while offering significant insights into particular novels and the transformation of the writers' works, is less informative as concerns topical similarities or stylistic tendencies. Another useful base for this book is offered by Doris Teske's (1999) discursive analysis of different textual constructions of the twentieth-century metropolis in urban theory, city essays and urban fiction (1980s & 1990s). Teske (1999: 1, 196) particularly pays attention to their similarities in devising connections between space and identity and the subjective imagery. The study is also interesting because she is able to prove the longevity of collective constructions of urban reality (*ibid.*: 194). Hence, while the approach to include the theories of Urban Studies in the analysis of London fiction is not a new one, *The Intelligible Metropolis* can build on the interconnection of Urban and Literary Studies devised in Teske not only in regard to the urban renaissance but also the Spatial Turn.

Despite the latter, few studies consciously employ spatial theories in the analysis of contemporary London novels. Based on a Lotmanian approach to spatial semantics, Dagmar Dreyer (2006) looks at the topographical and socio-cultural as well as symbolic

City; Eveline Kilian (2008), *London. Eine literarische Entdeckungsreise*; Graham Norton, Janet Street-Porter & Dan Cruickshank, eds. (2010), *London Walks. 30 Walks by London Writers Volume 1*; Robert Elms, Robert Appleby & Bonnie Greer, eds. (2011), *London Walks. 25 Walks by London Writers Volume 2*. Brief anthologies published by Reclam include Adolf Barth (1988), *London Poems*; Tobias Döring (2003), *London Underground. Poems and Prose about the Tube*; Adolf Barth (2003), *London Stories*.

images in two synoptic and four postcolonial London novels published during the 1990s and Martina Deny's (2009) book negotiates urban constructions of identity and post-modern tendencies of fragmentation referring to canonical novels from 1985 to 2003. In difference to Dreyer's study this present publication expands on the notion of the geographical and social cityscape, while in contrast to Deny's analysis it concentrates on mentality rather than means of identity construction and thereby shows that a particular frame of mind assists in countering the dominant perceptions of loss and disorientation in the postmodern metropolis. Furthermore, although this analysis displays overlapping elements with respect to the analysis of Geoff Nicholson's *London Bleeding* (1997) and Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003) no major study to this date expands its main corpus of London novels beyond the millennium's threshold. While Ali's, McEwan's and Ballard's novels are well documented in single essays, *The Intelligible Metropolis* still offers first-time or in-depth analyses on so far largely neglected texts, such as *The Matter of the Heart*, *Tunnel Vision*, *Corpsing*, *A Long Way Down*, *The Red Men* and *South of the River*.

In her study on literary perception of urban reality within the context of spatial, socio-topographic and narrative perspectives in London novels between Naturalism and Modernism, Kirsten Hertel (1997: 16) exemplifies three major threads in the scholarly research concerning English urban fiction: (1) the psychological-archetypal approach about the psychology of characters and symbolism of the city, (2) the aesthetical-thematic one about the relation between the city described and the narrative techniques applied, (3) and the socio-historical one concerning the interrelations between society, city, and novel. Within the socio-historical approach, the strongest culturally related analytical works concerning literary London have been those concerning the postcolonial metropolis, most importantly by John Ball (2004), John McLeod (2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2007, 2011) and Susanne Cuevas (2008a, 2008b).²⁰ In *Babylon or Golden City*, Cuevas deals with eight Black and Asian novels in a time frame between 1996 and 2003, which presents a useful basis for the fictions of migration analysed in this monograph. Otherwise, many studies that relate to migrant, diaspora, multicultural, postcolonial, or Black and Asian British literature since the 1990s (i.e. Sommer 2001; Reichl 2002) also refer to London fiction, where incidentally most of these texts are set.²¹ Tellingly, the proceedings of the 2000 *Anglistentag* in Berlin included a single section on "London: Multiculturalism and the Metropolis".

The fact that London literature has gained in interest for literary and academic writers is additionally emphasised by the establishment of *The Literary London Journal* in 2003, which publishes reviews and interdisciplinary representations, and the founding of *The Literary London Society* in 2011. Furthermore, an increasing number of conferences con-

20 | For other examples see Joseph McLaughlin (2000), *Writing the Urban Jungle. Reading Empire in London from Doyle to Eliot*; Sukhdev Sandhu (2003), *London Calling. How Black and Asian Writers Imagined a City*; Annette Müller (2007), *London as a Literary Region. The Portrayal of the Metropolis in Contemporary Postcolonial British Fiction*.

21 | Also see Susheila Nasta (2002), *Home Truths. Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain*; James Procter (2003), *Dwelling Places. Postwar Black British Writing*; Mark Stein (2004), *Black British Literature. Novels of Transformation*; Jan Rupp (2010), *Genre and Cultural Memory in Black British Literature*.

cern the literary metropolis, while London Literature/Studies are now well-established courses at British universities. Thanks to the Cultural/Spatial/Urban Turn also cultural theorists have become increasingly interested in representations of the city particularly in connection with architecture, art, film and of course literature. Therefore, this study has also profited from works which present innovative interdisciplinary approaches on the urban by combining research of space, culture, literature, film, and other media (e.g. Brooker 2002).

Moreover, this growing scholarly interest in the city is not only to be seen in the light of the millennial optimism and the large output of primary sources since the 1990s, but must also be considered against the background of the Spatial Turn and the revival spatial fiction in general or British spaces in particular. For instance, David James' *Contemporary British Fiction and the Artistry of Space* (2008) introduces issues of space and place in literature by paying specific attention to the new relations between spatial description and the aesthetics of readerly engagement by charting major topographical sites in recent British fiction. James (2008: 168) argues that "[a]n emerging body of novelists are taking responsibility for creating a *poiesis* of space that can re-envision the landscape of everyday life, receptive to the social and historical forces under which new habitats are forged." And therein again urban visions play a pivotal role (cf. *ibid.*: 68-95), as "the city itself presents a more familiar but no less complex scenery upon which to focus a survey of space in contemporary fiction." (*Ibid.*: 33)

However, while Haubrichs (1982: 1) delineates three major tendencies on the research of the literary metropolis, namely (1) the changing images of the city, (2) the functions of literature in the city and (3) mentality as represented in texts, I gather that few scholars have attempted to systematically concentrate on urban mentality. By contrast this present study particularly engages with the concept by taking into account both the recent research on urbanity and fictions of space implemented by the Spatial Turn. To this day the concept of narrative space has remained quite vague also because, as James (2008: 26-27) elucidates, landscape descriptions are employed as narrative innovations, the poetics of space necessarily remain in flux. Whereas James exceptionally employs Joseph Frank's idea of "Spatial Form", but also literary theories by Georg Lukács and Michel de Certeau, this treatise inquires into recent publications in narratology, such as Ansgar and Vera Nünning's (2002) collection on new approaches on narratology or that of *Narratology in the Age of Cross-disciplinary Narrative Research* (2009) edited by Sandra Heinen and Roy Sommer. Katrin Dennerlein (2009) presents a useful overview of spatial narratology based on an understanding of space as absolute, and therefore the essays in Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann's (2009) important collection on Literary Studies and the Spatial Turn prove more applicable to the analysis of urban spatialities as represented in city novels. This argumentation also takes into account the notion of literary topographies as devised by Hillis Miller (1995) and variously developed by Hartmut Böhme (2005); it especially expands on the concepts and tools for spatial narratology as offered by the seminal works of Yuri Lotman (1973, 2001), Mikhail Bakhtin (1998, 1968), Gerhard Hoffmann (1978), Gaston Bachelard (1994) and Michel de Certeau (1988). These are necessarily adapted not only in regard to the spatial relevance of the city, but additionally assessed with reference to the studies of mentalities. All in all, this analysis methodologically builds on the confluence of qualitative and quantitative studies of the history of mentalities, Cultural Studies and Literary Stud-

ies as portrayed by scholars of British culture and literature like Ursula Peters (1985), Friederike Meyer (1989), Jürgen Kamm (1994, 1996), Herbert Grabes (1996, 2004), Ansgar (2004a, 2004c) and Vera Nünning (2001, 2004).

Since the 1990s, the history of mentalities has certainly developed into an integral part of Cultural Studies. As was shown above, mentality as a complex phenomenon of culture can mostly be found in research which is not primarily ascribed to the studies of mentality. In British Cultural Studies the correlation between mentalities and Cultural Studies mainly exists within research concerning British historical epochs or national identity. For example, historical British mindsets are an important part of Jürgen Kramer's *Britain and Ireland. A Concise History* (2007), while *Thinking Northern. Textures of Identity in the North of England* (2007) edited by Christoph Ehland presents a regional study concerning British mentalities. But whereas the main title *Thinking Northern* suggests the mental side of culture, the subtitle puts the concept on a level with identity. And although Kramer (2002: 39) chooses the heading "Cultures and Mentalities" in his presentation of the book project, the monograph renames the chapter "Cultures and Ideologies" (Kramer 2007: 139, 157). Also for Lenz (2002: 54) the aforementioned 'insular mentality' ultimately constitutes an ideological construct. In the context of Cultural and Literary Studies, a pre-defined mentality such as insular mentality, 'empire mentality', or the 'mentality of sensibility' has more often served as an instrument to decipher the meanings of the culturally coded texts and explore discursive practices, but has seldom been a direct result of mentality study (c e.g. Kamm & Sedlmayr 2007; A. Nünning 2004a, 2004c; V. Nünning 2001, 2004).

Insofar, this book strives to systematise the theory of mentalities and reassess the concept through drawing on studies by the historians Peter Burke (1990, 1991, 1992, 1997) and Patrick Hutton (1981, 1988, 2002), two pre-eminent representatives of the English-speaking scientific community who generally focus on socio-historical, socio-psychological and anthropological questions of mentalities (cf. Spode 1990: 41-45).²² However, the most fruitful research concerning mentality is evidently offered by historians of mentality such as the founding father of the *Annales* School Lucien Febvre (2003a, 2003b) and later representatives Fernand Braudel (1958, 1976, 1988), Georges Duby (1961, 1985), Robert Mandrou (1972), Michel Vovelle (1982), Jacques Le Goff (1985, 1986, 1990), Roger Chartier (1988, 1991) and Philippe Ariès (1988, 1991). There exists an array of useful articles by medievalists who scrutinise the main elements of the concept of mentalities (cf. Reichardt 1978; Tellenbach 1982; Schulze 1985; Graus 1987; Spode 1990; Dinzelbacher 1993; Kortüm 1996; Kuhlemann 1996), yet unfortunately, although they offer clarifying systematisations, these adepts lose track of significant assumptions for contemporary Mentality Studies in the context of Cultural Studies. For a systematisation of the theory of mentality, I will mainly draw on articles by the historian Volker Sellin (1985, 1987) as well as refer to the scholars who have written in this tradition within Cultural and Literary Studies, particularly Jürgen Kamm (1994, 1996, 2007, 2010).

But despite the focus on the city from the perspective of Cultural and Literary Studies scholars have obviously neglected the potential of Mentality Studies. As Berking and

22 | For the reception of the histories of mentalities in Britain particularly see Burke (1990: 96-98).

Löw (2008a: 11) explicate, the Cultural Turn has formulated questions in regard to the confluence of cultural and material urban structures, aspects of collective memory, local structures of feeling, urban habitus, city biography and urban mental atmosphere, these have remained largely unanswered. Research concerning urban mentality chiefly exists by historians as brief articles regarding the city of antiquity, the middle ages, and modernity (e.g. cf. Schulz 1980; Darnton 1984; Oesterle 1988; Rossiaud 1990; Barceló 1995; Mohrmann 1996; Schilling 2003). They either diachronically or synchronically chart the *conditio humana* of urban denizens against the background of urban development as part of the history of civilisation. However, these studies while exposing certain lines of tradition in regard to urban life do not draw a coherent image of concrete structures of urban mentality. Most of the systematic work on urban-generic ways of thinking has been conducted by modern urban sociology, such as the seminal works by Georg Simmel (1971, 1992) or Louis Wirth (1967, 1969) and Robert Park (1928, 1931, 1967) of the Chicago School. A reassessment of these texts is deeply interesting because from the point of view of the Spatial Turn their theories offer novel and surprising insights not only, but especially for Mentality Studies. To further delineate a notion of urban mentality, this analysis draws on neo-Marxist scholars of the city, for example Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1996, 2003, 2004), Manuel Castells (1979, 1989), David Harvey (1973, 1985, 1990) as well as postmodern urbanologists such as Edward Soja (1998, 2000, 2001, 2006), Marc Augé (1988, 1995, 1997), Guy Debord (1955, 1994), Jean Baudrillard (1997, 2000) and Celeste Olalquiaga (1992).

For an understanding of urbanism as a whole way of life, especially Lewis Mumford's anthropological *The Culture of Cities* originally published 1938 serves as a guidance updated to the contemporary metropolis by Anton C. Zijderveld's *A Theory of Urbanity* (1998) and Simon Parker's *Urban Theory and the Urban Experience* (2004). These are complemented by cultural analyses of Postmodernism, geography, and the city (e.g. cf. Chambers 1990, 1996; Featherstone 1991, 1996; Robins 1993, 1998; Jarvis 1998). For an understanding of urban-generic mentality, this work mainly draws on the general notion of a sociology of urban life (cf. Fischer 1984; Karp, Stone & Yoels 1991; Löw 2001, 2008; Häussermann & Siebel 2004; Schroer 2006) and the specific findings of important sociologists, such as Richard Sennett (1977, 1994, 2000) and Lyn Lofland (1973, 1998). The notion of urban idiosyncrasy and urban-specific mentality is based on Helmuth Berking and Martina Löw's concept of the "Eigenlogik der Städte" (2008a), while the idea of factors that influence the metropolitan character is predominantly informed by texts from New Cultural Geographers and urban semioticians (cf. Lynch 1977; Gottdiener 2005; Sharpe & Wallock 1987; Daniels and Cosgrove 1989; King 1996; Zukin 1997; Amin and Thrift 2002; Highmore 2005; Degen 2008).

As the present state of research shows, Cultural Studies have largely concentrated on mentality as a synonym for national character or identity. Cultural historians have emphasised the mental structures of the past. While urban sociologists were interested in the urban way of life and urban mindset, many scholars ignored the potential literature has for an analysis of urban mentality. Although the recent cultural analysis of London certainly proposes urban-specific mental structures it is not the central focus of their analysis. Literary Studies have often relied on pre-defined mentalities to support their literary-historical analysis or inform their discursive studies. Literary Studies of London novels in the last decades have been immersed in questions of metaphor, history and

identity without penetrating the structures behind, namely the urban way of thinking that these themes reveal. Consequently, an analysis of contemporary fiction regarding a specific mentality has not been published yet. While, according to cultural semioticians, novels are extremely useful for the extrapolation of an urban-specific mentality, none of the works mentioned is primarily concerned with a London mentality as represented in contemporary city novels.

1.5 STRUCTURE AND APPROACH

This present study consists of eight chapters and two parts. The first part (chapters 2-5) sets the theoretical as well as the methodological scene for the subsequent analysis of London novels in the second part (chapters 6-9).

On the basis of the history of mentalities, chapter 2 first develops a definition of mentalities as historical and contemporary social constructions of reality particularly by referring to sociological and cultural understandings of the term (2.1.2). The further delineation of the concept's categories is seen as indispensable in order to be able to differentiate mentality from notions of culture, ideology, identity, or habitus. Hence, a third step (2.1.3) devises mentality as both agency and structure: as an organon mentality has the function of organisation, orientation, relief of strain, alignment, regulation, integration. Mental structures understood as a rhizome of dispositions of thinking, imagining, feeling and acting are incorporated by ways of socialisation and acculturation. Through the assumption that mentalities are mainly defined by four parameters of the habitat, namely collectivity, time, space and collective space-time compressions (as their confluence in cultural dynamics), the second sub-chapter thoroughly elaborates on these determinants (2.2). Of particular importance is the spatial component, which due to contemporary post-positivist notions of space must be considered as relative and relational, dynamic and fluid, as well as culturally produced and productive. Moreover, with regard to the Spatial Turn the spatial manageability of daily life by mentality is shown to expand beyond the physical understanding of spatiality to social and mental conceptions of space. Henceforth, mentality can be defined as a rhizomatic organon of dispositional orientation functioning by ways of nonconscious axiomatic sets of thought, emotion, imaginary and behaviour which are determined by collectivity, time, space and compression. In summary, "The Concept of Mentality" (2.3) therefore offers a catalogue of eleven characteristics for framing the concept in allusion to Kamm's (1994) ten-point list on intercultural meta-knowledge.

From the vantage point that the twentieth century must be regarded as the urban age, chapter 3 reassesses various "Theories of Urbanity" for notions of inner urbanisation (3.1). Because the history of mentalities does not offer a sufficient analysis of urban mentality, this study largely builds on the findings of modern urban sociology and those of contemporary (cultural) urbanologists. On the basis of Georg Simmel's "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben" (1903) and "Exkurs über den Fremden" (1907), urban mentality in its functions of orientation and relief of strain can be interpreted as a protective mechanism against the overload effect exerted by the metropolis' multiple stimuli (3.2.1). Expanding on this early example of the Spatial Turn *avant la lettre*, the urban ecology of the Chicago School (3.2.3), most importantly Robert Park and Louis

Wirth, also conceptualises theories of urbanism as a way of life. Of special interest for urban mentality this writing identifies the notion of moral regions, the inbetweenness of the marginal man, social disassociation and anomie, role-play and schizophrenia. The analysis of assumptions by the New Urban Political Economy (3.2.3), especially Henri Lefebvre, Manuel Castells and David Harvey, brings into perspective the transformations of urban life in the post-Fordist and globalised metropolis of the late twentieth century. Their findings are important for an understanding of tendencies such as spatial fluidity, social disfragmentation, globalised economies, cultural symbolism, as influencing post-modern urbanity (3.2.4). The exploration of the postmodern city, mainly in reference to Edward Soja's discursive analysis of the Postmetropolis, exposes particular physical, social and mental consequences of ambivalent trends, such as the architectural voids or palimpsestic memories, urban non-places or *lieux de mémoire*, postmodern overload of violence or psychasthenia, which notably take their toll on the mental life of the contemporary metropolis.

From the preliminary categories of mentalities and theories of inner urbanisation, chapter 4 develops "The Concept of Urban Mentality" and devises an urban-generic and urban-specific model for the analysis of the mental side of city culture in order to be able to differentiate a general urban mentality from London-specific mental dispositions. By reference to the new approach to cities of "Eigenlogik der Städte" (Berking & Löw 2008a) it is illustrated that contemporary cities are still identifiable as entities with a particular culture and that each city is defined by its distinctive way of life. Hence, the first section (4.1) takes into consideration the macro-level of an urban-generic mentality and regards the particularity of urbanism as construed by eight ambivalences: city and country, public and private, sociability and anomie, heterogeneity and homogeneity, familiarity and strangeness, community and individualism, indifference and involvement, apathy and vigilance. Insofar, this study takes the city's "unresolvable ambivalence" (Fiedler 1981: 115) as a preliminary for the analysis of urban mentality. The second section (4.2) identifies a cluster of eight factors of influence that determine the particularity in between these polarities on the meso-level of an urban-specific mentality in order to differentiate the mindscape of *The Unique City* (Rasmussen 1937) from that of other cities. The idiosyncrasy of a regional metropolitan mentality specified by culture, imaginary, image, text, narrative, atmosphere, emotion and identity is delineated particularly from the theories of the New Urban Geographers on representation. Finally, these theoretical findings are summarised in a model of urban-generic mentality and one of urban-specific mentality for the 'N-Metropolis' (4.3).

The overall methodological approach to mentality described in chapter 5.1 lies on the interface of the history of mentalities, Cultural Studies, and Literary Studies. Following Kamm's (1996) proposition that particularly the instruments offered by Literary Studies, such as narratology, assist in the analysis of mentalities, this book proposes that texts (in the wider sense), aesthetic literature, but notably narratives and novels present viable sources for the examination of mental structures. Moreover, narrative fiction is of special interest due to the affinity between the city and the novel as described by Volker Klotz. The general narratological prototype approach is adjusted to the focus on spatiality and spatial fiction in the second sub-chapter "A Spatio-Narratological Analysis of Mentalities" (5.2) in order to provide specific tools for the later analysis of the 'spatial mentality' of London. For the delineation of literary topographies I particularly rely on boundaries

as devised by Yuri Lotman's idea of spatial semantisation (5.2.2), chronotopes defined as particular space-time relations by Mikhail Bakhtin (5.2.3), and metaphors as narrative elements of great importance for the analysis of both mentality and urban fiction (5.2.4).

Against the background knowledge provided by these four chapters, the second part sets out to analyse twenty contemporary London novels for their representation of urban-generic and London-specific structures of mentality. The spectrum covered by the textual analysis gradually moves from a focus on the topology of the city, to social relations in the contemporary metropolis to the spaces of the urban individual and its psychology. To make apparent the shifting level of discussion, the eight analytical sections are subdivided by three larger chapters: "Cityscape", "Socioscape" and "Idioscape". The suffix 'scape' allows to scrutinise the cultural production and representation of the city in regard to the physical image of London as a whole, its social relations and spatialities, as well as the personal, corporeal and mental spaces of the urban Self, while simultaneously taking into account the fluid and irregular shapes of London's signifying culturescape (cf. Soja 2001: 210). With reference to Gelfant, the choice of texts in the single chapters then largely pays heed to the sub-genres of the city novel: "Cityscape" concentrates on the symbolic value of London's character corresponding to the synoptic novel, while "Socioscape" in its interest on social interactions between an array of urban characters mainly takes into account ecological novels and "Idioscape" with its focus on the spatialities of the urban Self is particularly fruitful when based on portrait studies or novels of development and their depictions of identity formation. However, as a study of mentalities involves a multi-level process of reading and interpretation that strives to decipher recurrent structures of thinking, imagining, feeling and acting, the thematically structured analysis must necessarily refrain from too strictly devised classifications. While particular focus will be on the paradigmatic novels by Ali, McEwan and Nicholson, but also the lesser known texts by Brooke-Rose and Miéville, longer analyses moreover concern Ballard, de Abaitua, Gee, Royle, and Ryman.

Chapter 6 reads the cityscape from the perspective of four dominant representations in contemporary London novels to decipher their underlying mental dispositions. "Public and Private" (6.1) builds on an intrinsic urban-generic ambivalence to explore the significance of topographical but initially also topological (b)ordering practices in the post-modern metropolitan realm. The separate analysis of four major city novels, namely Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005), Maggie Gee's *The White Family* (2000), Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2003), and Christine Brooke Rose's *Next* (1998) especially exposes structures of feeling that are oriented towards the privatisation of urban life. This must initially be read as a defence mechanism against the penetration of privacy by the public (i.e. habits, language, media, city imagery), while conversely the atomisation of urban society leads to an intensive search for intimacy in the semi-public spaces of urban anonymity.

While this sub-chapter basically takes into view the whole cityscape and its internally shifting boundaries of the public and the private, "Underground London" (6.2) only refers to the partial spatialities of the subterranean city. Drawing on five novels predominantly set beneath the metropolitan surface, China Miéville's *King Rat* (1998), Geoff Ryman's *253* (1998), Tobias Hill's *Underground* (1999), Keith Lowe's *Tunnel Vision* (2001) and Conrad Williams' *London Revenant* (2004), the analysis elaborates on London's underground not only as a major topos, but as particular trope in contemporary urban fiction. In regard to different sections with a thematic focus on the physical,

social, and mental implications of the underground, throughout the novels the uncanny features as a dominant motif which resembles the urban-generic ambivalence of familiarity/strangeness between the known and the unknown or Self and Other.

Also the following sub-chapter enters the discussion of *The Intelligible Metropolis* here with regard to altered forms of spatial conception and perception of postmodern London by examining the dynamics of the contemporary cityscape. “Navigating the Flux” (6.3) explores Geoff Nicholson’s *Bleeding London* (1997), Christine Brooke Rose’s *Next* (1998), China Miéville’s *King Rat* (1998) and Ian McEwan’s *Saturday* (2005) for their respective forms of urban orientation: mapping, touring, sensing and apprehending. While the first two build on de Certeau’s panoramic and street-level focalisation as the difference between reading the abstract city and writing urban everyday life, the latter novels envisage the opposites of somatic/emotional and literary/intellectual navigation. Taken as a whole, the four city novels show an emphasis on the textual knowledge of London.

Insofar, the palimpsest, taken into consideration in sub-chapter 6.4, is of particular interest because the city trope is able to represent the interaction between city, text, and mentality. In “The Palimpsestuous City”, I argue that the city as palimpsest constitutes London’s contemporary master metaphor and therefore a dominant structure of thinking. Under the lead analysis of Geoff Nicholson’s text another seven city novels, amongst them Jane Stevenson’s *London Bridges* (2000), Nicholas Royle’s *The Matter of the Heart* (1997), and Matthew de Abaitua’s *The Red Men* (2007), not only prove the dominance of the trope, but also show the thematic transmutability of the concept. Interpretations of the historical, psychogeographical, socio-cultural, intertextual, and hypertextual palimpsest underline London’s idiosyncrasy and urban-specific mentality incorporated in the personification of typical urban figures.

In reference to urban sociologists, chapter 7 “Socioscape” analyses the culture of the city with respect to human interrelations in the urban realm. “Urban Sociability” (7.1) particularly engages with the urban-generic ambivalence of community and individualism, sociability and anomie. The first two sections analyse three ecological novels, namely Tim Lott’s *White City Blue* (1999), Nick Hornby’s *A Long Way Down* (2005) and Blake Morrison’s *South of the River* (2007), for networks of urban interrelations in various forms of primary and secondary relations on the one hand (7.1.1) and phases of isolation, loneliness and individualism on the other (7.1.2). On a second level, J.G. Ballard’s *Millennium People* (2003) and its depiction of postmodern London on the verge of anomie (7.1.3) is compared to Monica Ali’s vision of a new transcultural sociability in *Brick Lane* (7.1.4). Therein, the city’s social life is shown to adhere to a relational fluidity that emphasises Londoners’ mental flexibility.

The second sub-chapter “London Metropolarities” (7.2) takes into view the multiple axes of urban hegemonies and inequalities. Thematically arranged according to stratifications such as class (7.2.1), gender (7.2.2) and ethnicity (7.2.3), the single sections compare representations of familiarity and strangeness. The eight novels under analysis, besides others also Patrick Neate’s *City of Tiny Lights* (2005) and Gautam Malkani’s *Londonstani* (2006), bring to the fore the crisis of the middle-class, male, white citizen who is traditionally seen as the urbanite *per se*. Whereas modern sociology often regards other forms of identity as deviant, the last section, “The Urban Pariah” (7.2.4) not only emphasises a third tendency of twenty-first century representations of London (e.g.

cf. McLeod 2011) which brings into focus the contemporary metropolitan underclass, but as I shall argue, the novels envisage the ‘deviant’ as best equipped to navigate the contemporary city.

Chapter 8 “Idioscape” explores the spaces of the Self, particular those of identity and psychology. “The City and the Citizen” (8.1) first concentrates on the relation between the individual and the urban. Besides texts analysed in previous chapters, this section additionally takes into consideration Toby Litt’s London novel *Corpsing* (2000). The first sub-section (8.1.1) focuses on constructions of identity and exposes performativity and role-play as dominant forms of self-fashioning which strongly influence the mental life of contemporary urbanites, for example in regard to schizophrenia. From the spatial perspective on the city’s organism and the urbanites’ corporeality, the next aspect puts emphasis on the bodyscape (8.1.2) and draws on Olalquiaga’s notion of postmodern psychasthenia to show that anthropomorphic conceptions of the contemporary city are anything but obsolete. Similarly, the mindscape (8.1.3) represented in the texts echoes the possibility of the city’s intelligibility. All three aspects hint towards an analogy of the metropolis with the urban Self where this mutual referentiality creates certain hypertrophic mental structures.

The final analytical sub-chapter on “The Urban State of Mind” (8.2) turns the analysis of contemporary London novels to the depths of the urban psyche and uncovers a dominance of structures of feeling based on terror. Taking its vantage point in the ambivalent attitude towards London as expressed in the ‘attraction of repulsion’, the first section particularly concentrates on the profusion of criminality in city novels (8.2.1). The urban *conditio humana* as dominated by uncertainty and fear becomes especially pronounced in the analysis of “The Spectres of Terror” (8.2.2). This section first continues on the motif of the uncanny and exposes the visions of disasters in the London Tube already before the actual terrorist attacks of 7/7 as a London-specific form of expectancy fear. The direct reactions of post-9/11 London literature similarly uncover this sense of unease under the veneer of the city’s alleged coolness. With the last aspect under analysis the argumentation moves to London’s “Millennial Apocalyptic Visions” (8.2.3), which contextualise metropolitan mental structures of terror in the continuous circle of the city’s death and resurrection.

The conclusion (9) first comments on trends in contemporary representations of London and then sums up the eight structures of mentality identified in the course of the analysis, underlining significant aspects yielded as a result of the literary examination of contemporary London novels. Moreover, it offers a chart which maps London-specific mentality in the model of urban-generic ambivalences. The concluding remarks ponder on the possibility of introducing the approach of mentality as a new paradigm for a more inclusive and interdisciplinary study of the urban which helps rendering the metropolis truly *intelligible* – namely in a synergetic response of urban intelligibility and legibility.