URBAN TOPOGRAPHIES: CONTROLLING THE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE IN FICTIONS OF DUBLIN, LONDON, AND LOS ANGELES

(Order No.)

DANIEL SILVERSTONE

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2004

Major Professor: Aaron Fogel, Associate Professor of English

ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers the connections among the rapid growth of urban spaces, social hierarchies, and forces of capital, focusing on Dublin, London, and Los Angeles. In the early twentieth century, particular strategies for monitoring, restricting, and controlling the movement of urban residents were developed; I investigate the ways in which a selection of modern British and American novels represent and examine these strategies, and whether the novel can offer any resistance or alternative to increasing levels of social domination.

Three separate case studies examine aspects of a particular city's development and some literary representations of that city. Each chapter begins by setting out some historical issues specific to a city, relates these to control over the movement of its urban population, and then discusses the ways in which those issues are reflected and investigated by one or more novels. Chapter one focuses on Dublin's electric tram network, which avoided certain poorer areas of the city while privileging radial journeys beginning or ending in the city center. The structure and narrative perspective of Joyce's Ulysses show signs of being influenced by the model of the tram network, challenging the author's own assertion to have represented the whole of Dublin. Chapter two

discusses the political expansion and population growth of London in the first half of the twentieth century. While the city was felt to be chaotic, a rigorous class-based stratification was always evident. Virginia Woolf (Mrs Dalloway), E. M. Forster (Howards End), and Henry Green (Party Going) all search for alternatives to this class separation, but none is successful, and Woolf in particular stresses that the experience of London is inflected by issues of sex and gender. The final chapter examines Los Angeles' obsession with representation and, reading Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One, Horace McCoy's They Shoot Horses, Don't They?, and Nathaniel West's The Day of the Locust, asserts that the experience of Los Angeles is structured around an opposition of movement and stasis, which leaves many of the city's residents unable or unwilling to effect any significant geographical or social change.