

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Moulin de la Galette* (1876)



# Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Modern Life” (1903)

“The psychological basis of the metropolitan type of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli... **the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions.**”

# Tom McCarthy

I was probably about 18 or 19 when I read *ULYSSES* and that taught me how to write. As Leopold Bloom wanders around town, you get his complete thought processes, but it's threaded through the whole city. What Joyce is doing is creating electricity. He's wiring a whole territory – both the book and the city – with these connections and nodes and transfers and switches. Everything becomes this huge network in which any division between outer space and inner space collapses. There's a total consistency and continuity. And I love that – it's what life is actually like. It's what literature should try and somehow produce.

# Marcel Proust, *A la recherche* (vol. 1)

pressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shiver ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me.

And I begin again to ask myself what it could have been, this unremembered state which brought with it no logical proof, but the indisputable evidence, of its felicity, its reality, and in whose presence other states of consciousness melted and vanished. I want to try to make it reappear. I retrace my thoughts to the moment at which I drank the first spoonful of tea. I rediscover the same state, illuminated by no fresh light. I ask my mind to make one further effort, to bring back once more the fleeting sensation. And so that nothing may interrupt it in its course I shut out every obstacle, every extraneous idea, I stop my ears and screen my attention from the sounds from the next room. And then, feeling that my mind is

# Marcel Proust, *A la recherche* (vol. 6)

bles of the restaurant in Paris. Always, when these **resurrections** took place, the distant scene engendered around the common sensation had for a moment grappled, like a wrestler, with the present scene. Always the present scene had come off victorious, and always the vanquished one had appeared to me the more beautiful of the two, so beautiful that I had remained in a state of ecstasy on the uneven paving-stones or before the cup of tea, endeavouring to prolong or to reproduce the momentary appearances of the Combray or the Balbec or the Venice which invaded only to be driven back, which rose up only at once to abandon me in the midst of the new scene which somehow, nevertheless, the past had been able to permeate. And if the present scene had not very quickly been victorious, I believe that I should have lost consciousness;

for so complete are these resurrections of the past during the second that they last, that they not only oblige our eyes to cease to see the room which is near them in order to look instead at the railway bordered with trees or the rising tide, they even force our nostrils to breathe the air of places which are in fact a great distance away, and our will to choose between the various projects which those distant places suggest to us, they force our whole self to believe that it is surrounded by these places or at least to waver doubtfully between them and the places where we now are, in a dazed uncertainty such as we feel sometimes when an indescribably beautiful vision presents itself to us at the moment of our falling asleep.

Life does not say to you: in 1914 my next-door neighbour, Mr Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted it with Cox's green aluminium paint ... If you think about the matter you will remember, in various unordered pictures, how one day Mr Slack appeared in his garden and contemplated the wall of his house. You will then try to remember the year of that occurrence and you will fix it as August 1914 because having had the foresight to bear the municipal stock of the City of Liège you were able to afford a first-class season ticket for the first time in your life. You will remember Mr Slack – then much thinner because it was before he found out where to buy that cheap Burgundy of which he has since drunk an inordinate quantity though whisky you think would be much better for him! Mr Slack again

Ford Madox Ford



**Teju Cole** ✓

@tejucole



Following

1. Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself. Pity. A signature strike leveled the florist's.

