



The Bud may have a Bitter Taste

How the Industrial City is Transformed from Utopia to
Dystopia by the Use of the New Jerusalem in Annus
Mirabilis and Hard Times.

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Introduction

Let the river run,
let all the dreamers
wake the nation
Come, the New Jerusalem
Trembling, Shaking
Oh, my heart is aching.

Carly Simon

The concept of the city has changed immensely in the last few centuries, especially during the Industrial Revolution, which took place in England from approximately 1760 – 1820. In this particular period, the city changed into a metropolis. There was a transition to new manufacturing processes, going from hand production to machines. Alison O’Byrne argues that during this period there was a contradictory view on the city. She claims that in all literature during that time the city is “a place to see and in which to be seen” (57), indicating that the city had a certain status. Most early utopian texts focus on the role of religion in the city, and how religion will bloom within such a city. These early texts use the city as a tool to convert the inhabitants to the Christian belief. A famous example of such a society is portrayed in *Commentarioulus de Eudaemonensium republica* (1553), written by Caspar Stiblinus. The protagonists visit the island Macaria, which follows Christianity and celebrates censorship and social control. At the beginning of the seventeenth century this concept was linked directly towards the New Jerusalem, the most famous description being found in Samuel Gott’s *Nova Solyma*, where the protagonists visit the New Jerusalem and describe the living within this holy city in detail. This text advises his readers to educate their children in the characteristics of the New Jerusalem, in order to create a better city here on earth.

However, O'Byrne also argues that the metropolis was beginning to change roles in society. On the one side it was seen as “a polite, refining sociability”, and on the other side “a den of vice, chaos, and social disorder” (57). The refining side of the city, according to Byrne, came into being because in the city “men become spectators of one another, each [beginning] to live in the eyes of the world [...] conscious that his performance is observed by others” (60). This caused an attachment, as well as an estrangement from the other inhabitants of the city. As William Wordsworth also describes “[I] said/ unto myself, ‘The face of every one/ That passes by me is a mystery’” (ll. 628-29). The social disorder in the city was due to the large gap between worker and master, as is also described in various Victorian novels such as *North and South*, describing the difference between the country and the city through the eyes of the characters in the novel. According to Tristram Hunt, this double perspective was very common among the Londoners. Still, he claims that eventually the gap between love for and despising of the city became wider and “The city was decreasingly regarded as an arena to be celebrated, reformed, or rebuilt along ideological or aesthetic principles but instead as a mode of existence best rejected altogether” (386). Descriptions which were first elevating, almost utopian, suddenly became horrifying, bearing more dystopian marks than ever before, after the Industrial Revolution.

Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* in 1516, but various other utopian text and societies were published far before the sixteenth century. The core of the utopian thought lies in the biblical prophesies of the New Jerusalem (“Utopia” *Moderne Encyclopedie van de Wereldliteratuur*). A society created by God himself to save His people from suffering, tears and hardship. This city is described in Revelation 21. Various other texts have used the New Jerusalem to present their readers with a utopian or dystopian view on the city. Utopia is a term that is hard to define. Even

though the *Moderne Encyclopedie van de Wereldliteratuur* assumes that utopia is always meant as a place that does not exist, Fátima Vieira explains that it is a neologism. First used by Thomas More, it could be defined in multiple ways. Thomas More first used the word *Nusquama* to describe his ideal society. *Nusquam* means ‘nowhere’. Would More have used this word, then he would deny the possible existence of a utopian society. According to Vieira, More thus used the word utopia to “convey a new idea, a new feeling that would give voice to the new currents of thought that were then arising” (4). Utopia, as a term in itself, can be read as *Eutopia*, which means good place, or simply as *Utopia*, which means non-place (Vieira 5).

The opposite of the utopia is the notion of a dystopia. Dystopia is derived from the word utopia and, according to Gregory Claeys, could be defined as the “negative utopia”, portraying a society “in which evil, or negative social and political developments have the upper hand” (107). The Englishman Joseph Hall was the first to introduce this concept with his *Mudus Alter et Idem*, published in 1600. This dystopian work can be read as a satire on the utopia, and dystopias should therefore always be considered as portraying reality in a harsher way than necessary, to show the reader that life on earth is not always utopian. This genre thus mirrors the utopian thought, by taking the same concept of a possible society, but reversing it to a living hell on earth. Even though the concept of the dystopia was already used for centuries, John Stuart Mill was the first to introduce the term. According to Michael S. Roth, Mill introduced the term to “describe a situation or a government that would be the ‘worst imaginable’” (230). The term was first used in 1868, shortly after the Industrial Revolution, and also after Dickens’s *Hard Times* was published. Mill’s concern with the term dystopia shows that it was a concept that was often used by Victorian novelists.

These terms, however, become intertwined when we look at the use of the New Jerusalem in literature. It can be either used as utopia or as dystopia. It becomes more complicated when it is taken into account that for some Christian believers the New Jerusalem is already a place that exist, which makes it a realistic city. This notion would erase the emotions and feelings that are always portrayed in a utopia. Then the New Jerusalem does not fit the description of a utopia anymore, because it is not a “non-place”. However, it still is considered to be a “good place”, bearing several characteristics of the utopian society as first described in detail by Thomas More. This utopian place is vibrant and can be used to describe almost every earthly society. This is well portrayed in literature and the description of cities, often taking the New Jerusalem as the core of their description of an urban environment.

This thesis aims to investigate this, almost contradictory, use of the New Jerusalem in the description of a metropolis in *Annus Mirabilis* and *Hard Times*. Its hypothesis is that the view on the metropolis, vibrant and alive, changed from utopian to dystopian, and the thesis lays out and examines the evidence to be found for this transformation. *Annus Mirabilis*, written by John Dryden, uses the New Jerusalem to glorify the New London, praising the trade and industrialization that will bloom in the new city. Charles Dickens’s *Hard Times*, takes the same structure, but uses it to describe an industrialized town in the dystopian manner. The first chapter focuses on the New Jerusalem and its utopian role in biblical literature. The second and the third includes a case study concerning *Annus Mirabilis* and *Hard Times*, specifically focusing on the description of the cities and how this is related to the description of the New Jerusalem.

The New Jerusalem as Utopian Concept

Lo, I would fly to heaven above,
And in the New Jerusalem's love
Find shelter from the storms of life,
From envy, and from jarring strife.

Margaret Patullo

Alister E. McGrath writes that the New Jerusalem is the “vision of heaven that has captivated the Christian imagination” (1). He claims that the New Jerusalem is the ultimate end of all human longing, and that the inhabitant of the New Jerusalem will finally see unflawed happiness. John Bunyan writes that the New Jerusalem has a “natural glory” (Bunyan *Pilgrim* 162), and when the Christian first sees it “he with desire fell sick” (Bunyan *Pilgrim* 162).

The New Jerusalem, however, is definitely not the only utopia that is used in the Christian tradition. At least three utopian societies are described in the Bible. The first is the Garden of Eden, the paradise out of which Adam and Eve were driven after the fall (*King James Version* Gen. 1-3). The second is the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey (*King James Version* Ex. 33:3), where the Israelites lived after the end of their slavery in Egypt. The third, and the only utopia that is yet to come, is the New Jerusalem. There is, however, a significant difference between the first two utopias and the latter. Both the Garden of Eden and the Land of Canaan were agricultural states. The New Jerusalem is the only biblical utopia that centres a city. However, there are some aspects of the city that refer to a garden. In Revelation 22:1-3, the Apostle John writes that he also saw trees, but they were situated within the city. However, even though it seems insignificant, these trees are the foundation of the city. They are called “trees of life”, and they provide “healing of the nations” (*King James Version* Rev. 22:2).

Even though all earthly cities are blessed with trees, the trees in the New Jerusalem have a very important role. They provide the inhabitants with “an unending stream of abundant blessing and joy” (*Introduction to Revelation, ESV*). These trees, in a sense, are the bearers of the utopian qualities of the New Jerusalem. The Garden of Eden and the Land of Canaan were both founded upon the agricultural society. The New Jerusalem, however, combines the agricultural with an urban society. According to the biblical tradition it is the complete utopian society for believers, featuring all aspects of life on earth.

The New Jerusalem is not a utopia that is based upon a previous society. There are two different cities described in the Bible, before the coming of the New Jerusalem. There is the Old Jerusalem, the home of the chosen, yet subject to corruption and thus condemned by the prophets. The Old Jerusalem will have to be purified before the inhabitants can live in the New Jerusalem. The second city is Babylon, a fallen city filled with greed and disobedience to God (Weitzman 471), this city will cease to remain after the destruction. The relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible is that the Old Testament condemns the Old Jerusalem and gives hope to the inhabitants by referring to the coming of the New Jerusalem through the sacrifice of Christ, whilst the New Testament describes the life of Christ and promises the non-Israelites that they can become part of this particular covenant. Bunyan writes that the coming of the New Jerusalem is only after “the [old] city was broken up, the walls pulled down, the gates burned”, more specifically after the old city became a place “of wasteness and desolation” (Bunyan *New Jerusalem* 401). Saint Peter states that before this city will come down to earth: “the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (*King James Version* 2 Pet. 3:10). The New Jerusalem does not take root in a greedy society, it does not rise out of the ashes of the old world like a Phoenix. A complete new earth is created, so all the greed and

disadvantages that the inhabitants of the Old Jerusalem in the old earth were experiencing will be destroyed.

These characteristics of the New Jerusalem, without the influence of a greedy world, also explain the context in which specific references to the New Jerusalem are made. The historical time-line in the Bible shows that promises of the New Jerusalem were usually made in a period in which the Israelites suffered from political corruption and war (Dennis 1232). The first, most specific, references to the New Jerusalem, and thus not to Canaan or the Garden of Eden, are in Isaiah (11:6-9,15-16; 65:17-25), Jeremiah (31:1-17, 38-40), and Ezekiel (36-48). These three prophets have one historical aspect in common, all three of them prophesied shortly before or during the exile of Israel to Babylon. Isaiah, most likely, prophesied during the days of King Ahaz, who permitted Israel to offer to false Gods. As a result, God punished Israel with an exile to Babylon (c.f. *King James Version* ps. 137). Jeremiah and Ezekiel were prophets during this exile. There is a striking comparison to be made between the visions of the New Jerusalem in the Old Testament and St. John's vision of the New Jerusalem in the New Testament. St. John writes in chapter 1 of the book Revelation that he is the preacher of the early Christian congregations, a "companion in tribulation [...] on the isle that is called Pat'-mos" (*King James Version* Rev. 1:9). According to the introduction in the King James Version of the Bible, St. John was exiled to this isle by the Roman authorities ("Introduction Revelation" *King James Version*). In both the New Testament and the Old Testament God prophesies the New Jerusalem during a time of war and exile.

The historical context of these prophecies somewhat explain the use of the New Jerusalem as a utopia in literature. During troubled times in England, which could then still be called a Christian nation, the thought of the New Jerusalem was easily remembered. The English

have always cherished this thought, and used this utopian city in their literature. However, it depended on the social context whether this city was used in a utopian or dystopian manner. The dystopian, as well as the utopian, use of the New Jerusalem in English literature shows the pain and regret that had to be endured due to the industrialization. It is as if the writers held the New Jerusalem before the eyes of their readers and promised them a better life. They held up a mirror, comparing the earthly city with a heavenly city, and they painfully pointed out the flaws of the earthly, industrialized city. England, and its writers, “shall not cease from mental fight [...] Till we have built Jerusalem/ In England’s green and pleasant land” (Blake ll.13,16-17).

Annus Mirabilis and the New Jerusalem

Well I heard of a beautiful city,
The street was paved with gold.
Oh, Lord, I've been told.
Ain't no grave can hold my body down.

Odetta Holmes

In 1666 London citizens suffered because of the destruction caused by the Great Fire and many people referred to the New Jerusalem. London, after years of civil war and poverty, was now burnt down and the entire city was to be rebuilt in a most glorious way. In *Annus Mirabilis*, written by John Dryden in 1667, London as it was after the fire is described similarly to the biblical description of the New Jerusalem. There is the ungodliness and unrighteousness in the old cities and a similarity in how the rulers respond to the destroying of the city, combined with the mercy of God, who promises preservation and allows the rebuilding of the city. Secondly, the New London is described as being as glorious as the New Jerusalem: both cities will be the centre of the earth. Trade will flourish and the cities are a secure place for the inhabitants, because there will be no enemies. The New London, however, will be built in a post-lapsarian world and the New Jerusalem will come down to a new, purified earth. The life in and prosperity of both the cities comes from one particular source: the river that flows through the city providing the ability to gain wealth.

The use of the New Jerusalem in Dryden's poem has to effects on the reader. First of all, it has to be considered that the New Jerusalem was preceded by the Old Jerusalem, which was

still filled with greed. The utopia is thus a direct result of a dystopia. Dryden's use of the New Jerusalem as concept for the New London shows that the Old London was not yet perfect, and thus not utopian in Dryden's eyes. When this is connected to the dystopian vision on the industrial city in *Hard Times* it becomes evidently clear, that there is a vicious circle between dystopia and utopia concerning the city. A new city is created in the hope that it will be better than the previous one. The new city, however, will also disappoint, and therefore there is again the longing towards a better city.

Dryden was born in a Puritan family. Puritanism was a strict form of Christianity which emphasized the purifying of the believer so that the Christian could enter the New Jerusalem holy and unblemished. The New Jerusalem was often mentioned in this circle, and especially the puritans have clarified the book of Revelation for the next generations. Despite the fact that Dryden wrote a commemoration of the death of Cromwell in 1659, he also celebrates the return of Charles II. Even though this seems contradictory, it should be remembered that Charles II promised more religious freedom than his father had ever given. Famous puritans, such as Christopher Love, were anticipating the return of Charles II and the freedom that he promised the dissenters during that time. *Annus Mirabilis* was written in 1667. 1666 was a difficult year for the Londoners, suffering from a fire and a plague, and yet it was a "wonderful year" (Noggle & Lipkin 2208). The year 1666 opened the possibility to create a new city. The Londoners were quite hopeful that they could create a more magnificent, more industrialized, city. They were creating their own metropolis out of the ashes of the previous city.

Even though Dryden was mainly a playwright during 1664 and 1681, *Annus Mirabilis* is a commemoration poem. It celebrates the return of the king, as well as the victories of the English navy over the Dutch. It emphasizes the fortitude of the Londoners during the Great Fire.

The poem is written in an ecstatic style, copying the heroic stanza of Ovid. Like Augustus, Charles II will also rise like a phoenix out of the ashes to rule a better, more achieved city than Oliver Cromwell ever did. Paul Hammond claims that London, together with its king, will be “transformed as by alchemy into the New Jerusalem” (xv). John Dryden uses the New Jerusalem to create a utopian view on London, its ruler, and eventually the country as a whole.

Dryden’s poem *Annus Mirabilis* could be divided into two parts of equal length (see Appendix A), and according to McKeon these two parts “bear a relation to each other similar to that which exists between the Old and New Testament” (162). First there is the condemning of the Old London, and secondly there is the glorious description of the New London. Although the New Jerusalem and the New London will come again, there will first be a complete purification. Most of the Londoners thought that the fire was purifying London, just as the earth has to be purified in order to prepare it for the coming of the New Jerusalem. Although Robert Hubert was hung on 27 October, 1666 for starting the fire, many Londoners actually believed that the fire could “not [be] the result of human scheming” (Dolan 392), and thus it had to be God’s judgment. There were two, opposite, opinions about why God would want to punish London. Gilbert states that the royalists assumed that London was punished for the beheading of Charles I (January 30, 1649), and the puritans thought that the new Stuart court had “sorely tried the patience of a benevolent God” (325). Dryden combines these opinions and concludes that exactly the fighting of these two groups was the cause for punishment. London was “profaned by civil war” (l. 1103) and “Heaven thought it fit to have it purged by fire” (Dryden l. 1104).

Charles II’s reaction on the destruction of London, as described by Dryden, is according to McKeon one of “Justice and Mercy” (65). In the Bible the true representative of Justice and Mercy is Jesus. Jesus is the descendent of King David (*King James Version* Luke 3:31), who

could also be considered as a righteous, merciful king. David was king of Israel at a time when God announced a coming punishment because of ungodly politics and leadership, and David's reaction on the possible destruction of Jerusalem is quite similar to how Charles II reacts on the Great Fire of London in *Annus Mirabilis*. Jerusalem suffered two disasters after each other: in 2 Samuel 21:1 a famine is described, and 2 Samuel 24:1 reads that "again the anger of the LORD was kindled". King David is eventually ordered to choose one of three punishments: famine, invasion of enemies, or the pestilence. David asks if Israel could fall in "the hand of the LORD", begging God if He will not let them "fall into the hand of man" (*King James Version* 2 Sam. 24:14). The fire, which is the second disaster in a short time, forces England's king to his knees asking if God himself will "give the stroke/ And let not foreign foes oppress [His] land" (Dryden ll. 1079-1080). David acknowledges his sin (*King James Version* 2 Sam. 24:10), that caused the punishment, and Charles II acknowledges that "we all have sinn'd" (Dryden l. 1060), but he begs God if He will "bind his sentence" (Dryden l. 1074). When the punishment has been fulfilled God "cast[s] a pitying eye" (Dryden l. 1117) on London. He would allow the rebuilding of "a city of more precious mold" (Dryden l. 1170). It is true of both London and Jerusalem that they are "a desolation [...] burned up with fire: and all pleasant things are laid waste" (*King James Version* Is. 64:10-11). Yet, the angel of death finally holds back his sickle and the new city can be build.

After London was destroyed, it was to be rebuilt by, among others, Robert Hooke and Christopher Wren. Michael Cooper writes that when the city was restored Hooke and Wren "saw revealed [...] the work of God" (220), comparing their own work to the New Jerusalem. In the Bible it is indicated that the New Jerusalem will be God's creation, and this glorious city is described as placed on a hill, with a thick and secure wall around it. The walls are described to

be made of jasper, the gates of pearls and the city itself will be of pure gold (*King James Version* Rev. 21:18, 21; Gundry 261). Dryden describes London, after she has risen from her ashes, as “with silver paved, and all divine with gold” (l. 1172). This New London has “widening streets” and “opening” she “[flies] into larger parts” (Dryden ll. 1179-1180). The New Jerusalem is also described with open gates, never to be shut again (*King James Version* Rev. 21:25). There are two reasons why the gates of the city never have to be closed again. The first is that there will be no real need to protect the city against invaders. At that time, England was suffering because of a civil war, but also a war on sea to be able to sail to the best countries to trade goods and spices. Especially the Dutch navy was a feared enemy of the English navy during that time. Paul Hammond claims that this trade-war is used as a “metonymy” by Dryden to describe the glory of the New London and the country as whole (xv). *Annus Mirabilis* describes the Dutchmen as “crouched at home and cruel when abroad” (Dryden l. 2), and thus their trade and wealth is “like blood” (Dryden l. 5). However, after the destruction of the fire is overcome by London the English “powerful navy shall no longer meet, / The wealth of France or Holland to invade” (Dryden ll. 1201-1202). The trade spotted with blood will be ended, and the war that is described earlier in the poem will be over. The English Standard Version of the Bible claims that the gates of the New Jerusalem never have to be shut because “there will be neither foe nor night to assist hostile invaders” (*ESV* footnote Rev. 21:24-27). In both cases the cities will have complete safety, and therefore the gates can remain open.

The second reason is that the glory and honour of the nations can be brought in through these gates (Rev. 21:26), and therefore they should be open. Trade will flourish, there will be wealth and the city will be the capital of the entire world. Dryden promises wealth for London, just as the New Jerusalem will be the centre of the earth because of her enormous wealth. Brean

Hammond writes that London is beautified in *Annus Mirabilis* and even becomes the emporium of the world (72). However, even though the New London is similarly described as the New Jerusalem, the fact that London receives her wealth by sailing the seas is an important difference between the two cities. Saint John writes in Revelation 21 that: “there was no more sea” (*King James Version* v. 1). The New London existing in the post-lapsarian world cannot give its citizens wealth without them shedding sweat and feeling pain in gaining the wealth. The New Jerusalem, however, has trees “which bore twelve manner of fruits [...] and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation” (*King James Version* Rev. 22:2). The inhabitants have nothing to fear because “they shall freely eat of it, and live forever” (Boston 444). The New Jerusalem is like the golden age, described by Ovid, where “the towns were not entrenched for time of war” (Ovid 1:18) and “man content with given food” (Ovid 1:26) gathered the fruits which fell down “from the spreading tree of Jove” (Ovid 1:34). The main similarity between the New Jerusalem and Dryden’s description of the rebuilt London is that the inhabitants will feel safe, and that the city will be the wealthiest city on earth. The gates of both cities will always be open. Enemies, such as the Dutch or the French, will fear the new city because of its strength. However, the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem do not have to sail the seas to receive their wealth, they can simply gather the fruits of Jove’s trees without having to toil.

Inside the city is indeed wealth, yet this wealth comes from one particular source in both cities. The first reference in *Annus Mirabilis* that combines the sea-trade and the rising of London is in lines 601-604 where Dryden writes that:

The goodly London in her gallant trim
 (The Phoenix daughter of the vanish’d old).

Like a rich bride does to the ocean swim,
 And on her shadow rides in floating gold.

Dryden makes a reference to a ship called the *HMS London*, which exploded on March 7, 1665 near Southend-on-sea in Essex. It was built for the Cromwellian navy and it was part of the fleet that brought Charles II back to England. Just two days after the Second Anglo-Dutch war broke out (1665-1667) the ship accidentally exploded, killing over 300 people (English Heritage “The London”). Samuel Pepys writes in his diaries that: “this morning is brought me to the office the sad newes of ‘The London’” (1536) which Sir Lawson wanted to bring to sea “but a little a’ this side the buoy of the Nower, she suddenly blew up” (Pepys 1536). Whatever the actual cause of the explosion might have been, the city of London financed a new ship which was called the *Loyal London*, launched on June 10 in 1666. The *Loyal London* is the ship to which Dryden refers as “the Phoenix daughter of the vanish’d old” (l. 602), and the only time when he uses the word Phoenix in the rest of his poem is when he is referring to the New London. To show the glory of this new city, he describes this *Loyal London* not merely as a ship, but as a “rich bride” (Dryden l. 603). The table in Appendix A indicates that the restoration of this ship is indeed the central event of the poem, and in the inner structure it is placed opposite to the restoration of the city of London. The Phoenix-like return of the *Loyal London* could thus be considered as a representative of the glorious future for London.

There is also a striking comparison between this ship and the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem. In the Song of Solomon, the relation between Christ and His people is described as the relation between a bridegroom and a bride. According to the notes of the Dutch Bible translation the bride will be taken to a banqueting house, which refers back to the houses in the New Jerusalem. Saint John writes that with the coming of the New Jerusalem “the marriage of

the Lamb has come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (*King James Version* Rev. 19:7). By comparing the *Loyal London* to a bride, London also becomes a bride and thus the chosen from God who will inherit the New Jerusalem.

There is a second reference to water in the poem, concerning the river Thames that flows through London. Through the New Jerusalem flows “a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (*King James Version* Rev. 22:1). This biblical water is always purifying and a source of wealth runs through the streams. Saint Augustine claims that this river is a promise of God that “He will flow down as a river of peace” (387). Because of this water the summer will fear no drought, yet “the farther it pursues its course/ The nobler it appears” (Cowper *Living Water* ll. 3-4).

Dryden describes London’s return after the Great Fire almost identically to how the New Jerusalem is described in the book of Revelation. The main comparison is that the old city first has to be destroyed, and cleansed from impurity. The new cities are wealthy, flourishing with trade and envied by all their enemies. The source of the wealth of the cities is the river that flows through the city. However, there are some differences: the main reason for London’s wealth will be the sea-trade, yet in the new earth of which the New Jerusalem is the capital there will be no sea. London had to work for the wealth, whilst in the New Jerusalem there will be no toil to gain the fruits. London rose from the ashes, and the New Jerusalem comes down from the sky. The New Jerusalem is described in the last book of the Bible, and the Christians have the strong, living hope that it will soon happen. The Londoners had the same hope, yet the Londoners had to be disappointed. Instead of a city similar to the New Jerusalem, the confused, filthy London of *The Beggar’s Opera* was created. Old father Thames once again ran through a vile and impure

city. Again the church had to preach that it will be justified if: “God should bring us to Dust, nay, even turn us to Ashes too, as our Houses” (Sancroft qtd in Gee 84).

Hard Times and the New Jerusalem

When I was young I lived in the country
Clouds were my friends I cannot answer why
Now that I've grown I live in the city
And heaven is so far, I cannot reach the sky.

Melanie Safka

The Industrial Revolution changed the role of the city in the English society. Raymond Williams describes this change in the first chapter of his book *The Country and the City*. He claims that the Industrial Revolution was based upon “a highly developed agrarian capitalism” (340), and that it marks the next step in the evolution of men. The modern city, marked by Industrialization and oversea relationships, is a place that is “moving in feelings and ideas, through a network of relationships and decisions” (Williams 344). Williams describes the modern city as “the capital, the large town, a distinctive form of civilization” (339). Cities mirror the expectations of the inhabitants, they form the inhabitants, and especially the modern city shows how the view on the city is different for each person.

Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley state that to write a city one has to hold up a mirror. The city only exists when it is contrasted, either implicitly or directly, to the country. The mirror of the city is that the utopian side always reflects the dystopian side of living within the urban society. They claim that the Industrial Revolution caused writers to focus on the dystopian side of the modernized city. Writers, such as Charles Dickens, begin to focus on the homelessness, gender differences, the urban violence and economic, social, and political chaos. Whereas Dryden could still refer to the city as a refined place, Dickens has to focus on the chaos that was produced by the yearning for progress.

Hard Times (published in 1854) portrays the dystopian view on the city that the Industrial Revolution had caused. Dickens describes Coketown similarly to the New Jerusalem, but he changes the characteristics to unpleasant features of everyday city life. Dickens also refers to the promises of the New Jerusalem in *The Book of Common Prayer*, but again he reverses the roles. The novel was first published in 20 segments in Dickens's literary magazine *Household Words*, and only afterwards was it printed in whole (Flint xxxix). Dickens's style is thus a style that still bears oral marks. Ong wrote that nineteenth century novelists "reveal a lingering towards orality" (146), and this is partly because they so heavily depend on biblical structures. Dickens made use of several well-known Christian sources of his time, but he also referred to the oral part of the Sunday service. *Hard Times* displays several oral characteristics, but it would be wise to investigate the foundation of the novel, which is not orality but the use of Christian oral-based sources. According to Ong's description of oral novels, one could argue that Dickens copies the already known structures so that people could remember the main plot of his story, since it was first printed serialized.

Dickens description of Coketown is similar in structure to how Saint John describes the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 (see Appendix B). Starting with the visual description, which is presented in exactly the same order as the visual description of the New Jerusalem. Dryden stopped after copying the outward characteristics, but Dickens also describes the inhabitants. They live in "large streets all very like one another" (Dickens 27), and they are presented as entirely the same. There is no mention of any individuals. Coketown consists of one massive group of labourers, all similar to each other. Saint John describes the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem also as being one massive group. All inhabitants will "see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads" (*King James Version Rev. 22:4*). The description ends by

mentioning the concept of time. Dickens describes that every hour and every year is the same in Coketown. Saint John promises that there will be no more time in the New Jerusalem, it will simply be “for ever and ever” (*King James Version* Rev. 22:5). Despite the minor differences (such as St. John’s including of the measurements) the main structure of the two descriptions remain similar. Dickens still used the same structure as Saint John, but he used it in an opposite way to make his own creative, dystopian version.

In the nineteenth century the church began to lose authority. The factory workers often had to work on Sunday and few masters would lose profit for the salvations of their men’s souls. Dickens writes that the workers walk over the streets of Coketown on Sunday morning “gazing at all the church and chapel going, as at a thing with which they had no manner of concern” (29). Going to church became an activity for the elite, the bourgeoisie, and not so much as for all people who believed in the same God. Therefore, in order to reach the working class, the church began to rely on other sources of information than just the Sunday sermon of a preacher. Songs, prayer books, and pamphlets were created so that the men could consult these sources of information instead of going to a Sunday service. One very well-known example of this are *The Olney Hymns*, written by John Newton and William Cowper. They wrote over a hundred hymns which could all be remembered easily during working hours.

The Book of Common Prayer was another source used for this purpose. This catalogue of prayers, including a description of how they should be used during the church services, was published by the Church of England to create order in the Anglican worship. It was, as some people call it, the catechism of prayers. Many prayers have the same structure, and a recurring theme in all of them is: “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost”. This is said out loud by the preacher, and the congregation responds with “as it was in the beginning, is

now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen". Dickens, however, finishes his description of Coketown with: "was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen" (Dickens 28). The world without end refers to the coming of a new life. This world will not perish for the righteous, but they will receive a much more precious world that will never end. This world will be "as it was in the beginning", referring back to the pre-lapsarian state in which Adam and Eve once dwelled. This state was, will be found now in the righteous, shall always be, even in the new world. However, Dickens reverses the structure. He writes that what could not be "stated in figures [...] was not, and never should be, world without end, Amen" (Dickens 28). That which could not be explained by scientific manners, will never be a part of this world, nor the coming world. That is the description of Coketown and her inhabitants.

There are direct references to the end of the world in *Hard Times*. The most prominent references are used to describe the difference in opinion between Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind. Louisa, tired of a life filled with facts, and desperately wanting to escape the environment of the metropolis, has to decide whether or not she wants to marry Mr. Bounderby. The narrator then explains that her father, is incapable of overcoming the "barriers" (Dickens 99), that he himself had set as rules to survive life. The narrator claims that Mr. Gradgrind simply does not understand that "the last trumpet ever to be sounded shall blow even algebra to wreck" (Dickens 99). Instead of focusing on his daughter, and her distress, Mr. Gradgrind then says "Are you consulting the chimneys of the Coketown works, Louisa?" (Dickens 99). The comment of the narrator in combination with Mr. Gradgrind's remark show that he is only focused on the earthly city, and the earthly promises of the metropolis. He is not so much concerned with the consequences that this city has for most of his workers. Louisa, however, changes the subject back to religion and the end of the earthly city. She claims that Coketown is a town with

chimneys in which seems “nothing there, but languid and monotonous smoke. Yet when the night comes, Fire bursts out, father!” (Dickens 99). She is referring to a parable Jesus once spoke, in which He refers that the ultimate division between heaven and hell will be at night, when everybody is asleep (*King James Version* Mat. 13:35-37). Louisa sees the ultimate end of Coketown, the city described as the complete opposite of the New Jerusalem, as bound to end up as the other complete opposite of the New Jerusalem, hell. Out of this place, the fire will burst out in its highest fury during the night in which Jesus will return to create a new heaven and a new earth. Her father, again, fails to see further than the earthly city. He claims, not looking at his daughter, that he does “not see the application of that remark” (Dickens 99). And “to do him justice he did not, at all” (Dickens 99). This vision ties in with the description of Coketown, claiming that the city will never be a “world without end” (Dickens 28). The Coketowners can no longer put their trust in a world that will come, and that will be better. In comparison to *Annus Mirabilis*, the vision of the masters of Coketown are short-sighted. There is no hope anymore, they simply have to put their trust in that which already is, they cannot gain comfort out of that which is to come.

Michael Wheeler claims that because of this particular scene in the novel, Mr. Gradgrind is portrayed as God during the last judgement (89). Mr. Gradgrind sits in his room, but he does not have to look out of the window to know that there are people out there. The narrator even claims that he can “settle all their destinies on a slate, and wipe out all their tears with one dirty little bit of sponge” (Dickens 95; cf. *King James Version* Rev. 21:4). Again, the narrator reverses the role of the God of the utopian New Jerusalem to a completely dystopian Mr. Gradgrind, who is only able to see statistics and not the happiness of human people. Wheeler then explains that all these intertextual references to the hell and the last trumpet represent “the inner hell-on-earth”

(90), most present in Louisa, but comparable to the situation of the men working in the factories of Coketown. Wheeler claims that Dickens shows a society, using biblical references to the New Jerusalem, to portray “the way in which the dense social web of the modern world is woven” (90). Michael Lowy and Robert Sayre claim that Mr. Gradgrind is the ultimate reference to “the cold, quantifying spirit of the Industrial age” (36). If, Mr. Gradgrind, would thus be a God on judgment day he would create a New Coketown, which is completely dystopian. Only “a mere question of figures, a case of simple arithmetic” (Dickens 10), without looking at values and feelings that cannot be represented in figures.

Dickens reverses the role of the New Jerusalem, portraying a dystopian Victorian city. He also refers to common sources which did refer to the New Jerusalem, and he explains that these sources were not used by the factory workers anymore, since religion was only for the masters. However, these masters fail to see further than their earthly city. This creates a society that is completely hopeless, almost visionless, without the anticipation of something new and better to come.

5 ~ Conclusion

Oh, to hear the call again,
"All is peaceful, all is well",
Upon every rock and mountain,
In the land of Israel.

Johnny Cash

Annus Mirabilis which praises the New London, and *Hard Times* which laments the Industrial city, both use the New Jerusalem as stepping stone towards their description of the metropolis. The physical appearances of the cities portray the hopes and disappointments of the inhabitants. Dryden used the New Jerusalem to create a sketch of the New London as the empire of the world, connecting it closely to the British sea-trade of the seventeenth century. However, this Industrialization process and the wealth that the sea-trade brought created the need for mass production. The Industrial city was created, after the Industrial Revolution that began in the late eighteenth century, and the factories were opened. Charles Dickens explains that this new creation, the metropolis, was in every way the opposite of the New Jerusalem. It was far from Dryden's view of a civilized, utopian society within the city. Instead there were class conflicts. The greed of the masters and discomfort among the working class created a more dystopian than utopian society.

In this particular thesis there is a strong emphasis on the biblical intertextuality in both texts. However, if one would compare the two texts to other utopian and dystopian sources, such as *Utopia* or *The Handmaid's Tale* and how these texts use the utopian and dystopian societies, far more could be found about the change in perspective on the city during the Industrial

Revolution. In this research two texts of an entirely different time span were used. *Annus Mirabilis* which is written in an elevated style, will because of its style bear more utopian characteristics than another text about London written in the same time may portray. Coketown and London are not similar. Coketown represents several metropolises, such as Preston and Manchester in Northern England, and a more detailed view on London itself may be advisable for further research. Using the New Jerusalem as core theory for the description of cities is in itself a limitation. This city is portrayed as a tabula rasa in the bible, and its utopian characteristics are complex because the bible only specifically describes the outward appearance of the city. However, this description of the city can be seen as bearing utopian characteristics for all people, and therefore this thesis laid a strong emphasis on the physical appearance of all the cities discussed.

The Bible is an important tool to analyse literary works. It, however, also limits the research since there is only one source used to understand the intertextual connections which could then explain cultural movements. The New Jerusalem is an important description of a utopia, being used in several works. Even though Dickens lamented the city, the New Jerusalem is also described as a city. The metropolis nowadays is far more expanded than Dickens could ever imagine. In the future they might even be more vibrant, and more alive, than we understand the city today. Whatever the role of the city in the future may be, it will always be solid and liquid, air and stone at the same time.

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Appendix A¹

Stage	Subject	Stanzas numbered correct order.	Stanzas numbered reverse order	Subject	Stanzas numbered correct order
A			B		
1	Restoration of the <i>London</i>	151	151	Restoration of London	154
2	Refitting of the fleet	142-150	141-150	Progress of shipping and navigation	155-164
3	Resting in God's will	139-141	139-140	Prophecy of the Royal Society	165-166
4	Fourth day of the battle	120-138	120-138	Preparations for the fight	167-185
5	Third day of the battle	103-119	102-119	St. James's Day Fight	186-203
6	Second day of the battle	72-102	93-101	Transience of felicity	204-212
7	First day of the battle	54-71	68-80	Progress of the fire	225-237
8	Charles delegates his power	47-53	44-67	Charles fights the fire	238-261
9	Charles's diplomacy	39-46	35-43	Charles's prayer: "diplomacy"	262-270
10	Bergen and münster: inscrutability of fate	24-38	23-34	Fire: prayer answered	271-282
11	Lowestoft: war heroes	19-23	15-22	Fire and war: mutuality	283-290
12	Comets	16-18	13-14	Comets	291-292
13	Prophecy: war and trade	1-15	1-12	Prophecy: end of war and trade	193-304

¹ McKeon 162

Appendix B

Coketown and the New Jerusalem.

Coketown	New Jerusalem
The material of the outside town. Dickens 27	The material of the outside town Revelation 21:11-21
Source for the filthiness of the material Dickens 27	Source for the glory of the material Revelation 21:22-27
The filthiness of the rivers Dickens 27	The clearness of the river Revelation 22:1
The work of the citizens Dickens 27	Without curse; no work Revelation 22:2-3
The inhabitants Dickens 27-28	The inhabitants Revelation 22:3-4
Time Dickens 28	No time Revelation 22:5-6