TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

POSTGRADUATE REVIEW 2017

Published by the Graduate Students' Union
of the University of Dublin, Trinity College.

Printed in Ireland by the Thesis Centre.

ISSN: 2009-9185

The following article may be cited as:

Burke, Eva. "Nowhere to Go: Masculinity, Mobility, and the Death Drive in Dorothy Hughes' *In a Lonely Place*." *Trinity Postgraduate Review* 16, (2017): 30-45.

'Nowhere to Go: Masculinity, Mobility and the Death Drive in Dorothy Hughes' *In a Lonely Place'*

By
Eva Burke[i], B.A., MPhil.

Abstract
This essay examines Dorothy Hughes' 1947 noir crime novel *In a Lonely Place* in terms of the extent to which it simultaneously problematises and reinscribes the parameters of the urban landscape in relation to the white male protagonist. Hughes' characters frequently negotiate the urban space via automobile or public transport; this private-yet-public interaction with the urban space characterises the fragile dichotomy on which paradigms of post-war masculinity rested; this is a contained and shared mobility, facilitating a potentially troubling re-gendering of public spaces even as it allows him to traverse the streets with greater ease. This democracy of movement and its link with female autonomy is emblematic of the modernist cityscape, according to Christopher Breu: "[the frustration of the white male] appears directed not only at women in public space but at a whole public culture in general that we associate with the modernist city, of which mass public transit and female mobility and autonomy are two crucial emblems."[1] Hughes' novel works to explore this frustration and the pervasive violence it gives rise to through what may be read as a hierarchy of mobility; the shifting ideological topography of the American city compounds many of the anxieties around this perceived hierarchy.

Keywords: Noir, masculinity, mobility, urban, postwar.

---

[i] School of English, Trinity College Dublin, County Dublin, Ireland. Email: Burkeev@tcd.ie.

[1] Christopher Breu, 'Radical Noir: Negativity, Misogyny and the Critique of Privatization in Dorothy Hughes' In a Lonely Place', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 55.2, (2009), 199-215, p.205.

This essay examines Dorothy Hughes' 1947 noir crime novel *In a Lonely Place* in terms of the extent to which it simultaneously problematises and reinscribes the parameters of the urban landscape in relation to the white male protagonist. Hughes' characters frequently negotiate the urban space via automobile or public transport; this private-yet-public interaction with the urban space characterises the fragile dichotomy on which paradigms of post-war masculinity rested; this is a contained and shared mobility, facilitating a potentially troubling re-gendering of public spaces even as it allows him to traverse the streets with greater ease. This democracy of movement and its link with female autonomy is emblematic of the modernist cityscape, according to Christopher Breu: "[the frustration of the white male] appears directed not only at women in public space but at a whole public culture in general that we associate with the modernist city, of which mass public transit and female mobility and autonomy are two crucial emblems."[2] Hughes' novel works to explore this frustration and the pervasive violence it gives rise to through what may be read as a hierarchy of mobility; the shifting ideological topography of the American city compounds many of the anxieties around this perceived hierarchy. Hughes' exploration is facilitated by the appropriation of the noir genre, which Greg Forter identifies as a literary space in which "manhood [defines] itself against a femininity whose proximity demands that it be ambivalently repudiated – and in which that femininity often returns, with all the violence of the initial projection, to perforate, shatter and dissolve the male ego."[3]

The novel centres on Dix Steele, an ex-war pilot whose comfortably bourgeois existence in post-war Los Angeles is frequently disrupted by his own homicidal impulses; Dix, we soon learn, is a 'sexual psychopath', an opportunistic predator who regularly stalks, rapes and kills young women. His murderous career is complicated by a reunion with former comrade Brub, a newly-minted detective with

---

[2] Christopher Breu, 'Radical Noir: Negativity, Misogyny and the Critique of Privatization in Dorothy Hughes' In a Lonely Place', *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, 55.2, (2009), 199-215, p.205.

[3] Greg Forter, *Murdering Masculinities: Fantasies of Gender and Violence in the American Crime Novel* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.3.

the Los Angeles police force whose wife Sylvia disturbs Dix with her muted prescience. Dix's dalliance with neighbour Laurel ultimately proves to be his downfall: it is revealed that his relative affluence is nothing more than borrowed grandeur from their mutual friend Mel Terriss, a wealthy Princeton classmate (and seemingly Dix's only male victim) whose convenient disappearance has allowed Dix to appropriate his lifestyle. It is Sylvia and Laurel, both of whom have been violently objectified over the course of Dix's narrative (most notably during their initial encounters with Dix; he is first introduced to Sylvia in the marital home she shares with Brub, describing her as "a slender girl in a simple beige dress, curled in a large wing chair by the white fireplace."[4] He observes her as a decorative part of the domestic tableau and rather abruptly dismisses her as 'not beautiful'. Likewise, when he first meets Laurel, he devotes a significant portion of his inner monologue to her symbolic dismemberment, poring over discrete physical characteristics long before learning her name – in the early stages of their acquaintance, she is known only as 'the redhead'.) who orchestrate his capture. The novel ends with a tearful confession; Dix, aware that his luck has finally run out, declares his guilt with regard to the earlier murder of a former sweetheart, Brucie, a girl he deems "the only decent one… there wasn't any girl worth getting upset over. They were all alike, cheats, liars, whores… there'd only been one decent one and she was dead. Brucie was dead."[5] The murder of Brucie is posited as something of a catalytic moment for Dix; the moment when his capricious rage against the 'cheats and whores' hardens into irrefutable violence. The only murder he expresses any remorse or regret for does not take place against the glare and bustle of Los Angeles but in a secluded cove in rural England; his fraught relationship with the urban space seems to exacerbate his sociopathic indifference to the women he preys upon.

The link between 'machine culture' and serial murder has been explored by Mark Seltzer, who argues that our increasingly intimate relationship to mechanical devices may foster a "disarticulation of natural bodies… a transcendence of the natural body and the extension

---

[4] Dorothy Hughes, *In a Lonely Place* ((New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947), p.10.
[5] *Ibid.*, p.165.

of human agency through the forms of technology that supplement it."[6] The ubiquity of the American automobile in the years following the war (and its links to masculinity and social mobility) may account, to some degree, for Dix's fixation with his borrowed car and the degree to which it allows him to negotiate the streets of Los Angeles, secure in his semi-private sphere of mobility while punishing the women who implicitly challenge his self-assurance by refusing to remain in the domestic realm. Throughout the novel, he is noticeably disturbed by certain markers of modernity; the ringing of the telephone and the drone of a vacuum in particular seem to evoke profound psychological turmoil; the "hideous siren" of the vacuum cleaner disturbs him almost as much as the oppressive clamour of a bus or an oil truck. The emotional disturbances he is subject to are indicative of post-traumatic stress disorder, a relatively common affliction in the postwar years (the symptoms Dix exhibits include night terrors, disturbed sleep, misplaced rage and the aforementioned sensitivity to loud noises). Such a disorder would seem to account for much of his behaviour, but Hughes problematises such a tidy interpretation by describing Dix's wartime experience as a personal triumph rather than a tragedy; his interludes of furious distress are juxtaposed, for example, with fond reminiscences of his days as a pilot: "[he missed] the sense of being lifted high above crawling earth, of being a part of the wildness of air. Something too of being closed within an unknown and strange world of mist and cloud and wind."[7] He also reflects, at one point, that the war years were "the first happy years he'd ever known… Because you didn't give a damn and you were the best God-damned pilot in the company with promotions coming fast… you didn't need a car, you had something better, sleek, powerful planes. You were the Mister… the world was yours."[8] The distinction he draws between the machinery of war (technology which makes him feel Godlike, powerful and liberated) and the machines which intensify his cognitive dissonance (the vacuum cleaner and the bus) is a gendered one; in a

---

[6] Mark Seltzer, *Serial Killers: Life and Death in America's Wound Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), p.69.
[7] Hughes, p.1.
[8] *Ibid.*, p.114.

sense, these domestic innovations are no less revolutionary than the military aircraft he is so captivated by. By the end of the war, appliances like the home refrigerator and the automatic washing machine, in conjunction with the wider availability of public transport, had allowed American women to reconfigure their role in the broader social sphere – 'women's work' was no longer a necessary impediment to a life (and even a career) outside the home[9]. During an encounter with the Jepsons, a married couple who Sylvia and Brub have befriended, Dix likens Maude to "a stupid little talking machine."[10] This comparison underscores his profound aversion to the machinery which had blurred the distinction between private and public spheres and extended the parameters of female orality. Dix uses his personal automobility and the machinery of the car as a safeguard against these women and the danger they pose – over the course of the novel, he invites only three women into his car: Sylvia, who he does not see as a threat; Laurel, who (he believes) is thoroughly beguiled by his façade, and Mildred Atkinson, who he intends to destroy.

The car is a space he can control, in which the power dynamics of interpersonal relations are heavily weighted in Dix's favour, distinctly unlike the crowded streets or the city bus, which is usually infested with the kind of plain women who incite his fury. He repeatedly emphasizes the seclusion of the private garage in which he stores the car – this has practical advantages, in that it allows him to come and go unseen, while further compounding the distinction between the indiscriminate mobility of public transport in the urban space (frequently used by women going about business Dix dismisses as worthless) and the personal automobility enjoyed by Dix. The car and

---

[9] While women were encouraged, in the years following the war, to re-embrace domesticity and emotional labour (usually via motherhood), many continued to pursue employment outside the home; research conducted by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labour in 1946 indicated that 75% of women employed during wartime expected to continue working afterwards, and although unmarried or widowed women made up a significant percentage of the numbers working purely to support themselves, 57% of married women surveyed expressed a desire to continue earning an independent wage (Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, and Susan Reverby [ed.], *America's Working Women: A Documentary History, 1600 to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), p.263.

[10] Hughes, p.49.

the homicidal impulses associated with it may be hidden at will and so his driving becomes a somewhat furtive endeavour, the interior of the car a space in which his insanity is both confined and nourished. In a behavioural pattern which calls to mind the Baudrillardian concept of hyper-reality (the process by which simulated reality begins to supplant the material reality of the subject's surroundings, resulting in an existential dissonance of sorts, as the subject struggles to discern 'real' from 'hyperreal'), Dix seems to regard the external urban space as capricious or ephemeral, simultaneously violable and violating, a panorama of turmoil in which "the only profound pleasure [is] keeping on the move."[11] Having been confronted with the memory of Brucie's murder, he retreats to the safety of the car and immerses himself in psychopathic contemplation: He drove away not knowing where he was going or why. Only to get away. He did not know how far he drove or how long… with his fingers clenching the wheel and the waves crashing in his ears. He didn't once stop the car. He drove until emotional exhaustion left him empty as a gourd. Until no tears, no rage, no pity had meaning for him.[12]

When Brub and Lochner, the Captain of the police force, accompany Dix to a crime scene in his car, he derives perverse enjoyment from the threat of discovery; their proximity to his madness excites him; the fact that they are in *his* car gives him a vicious thrill. When he learns about the possibility of trace evidence, he begins to fixate on the possibility that his tire tracks may implicate him: "a quick shot of thought jabbed him. The tires. They were good tires, no patches, no distinguishing marks. Only somewhere in the back of his mind, he remembered that all tires had distinguishing marks, like fingerprints."[13] Ironically, his refusal to avail of public transport and become part of the "slow-moving mass" proves his downfall; fingerprints and stray hairs from the dead girls are detected in the interior of the car and used to condemn him.

Just as his wartime aircraft allowed him to transcend the heaving mass of humanity; the car, according to Shelby Smoak, "offers privacy

---

[11] Jean Baudrillard, *America* (New York: Verso, 1988), p.53.
[12] Hughes, p.113.
[13] *Ibid.*, p.43.

to its occupants at the same time that they are "in" public such as open highways, city streets, parking lots, parks and the like."[14] This privacy also evokes the potential for a clandestine sexual encounter: "from the safe interior of the car, fictional characters are allowed to commit illicit acts with the car functioning as a protective shield or alibi; the car becomes a private safety zone existing outside public law… the automobile becomes [a motif for] illicit sex."[15] Dix's sexual transgressions take place in and around this zone of privacy; the drive-in diner he frequents is a mediated space, which allows him to scope out potential victims from within the car. Brub, while reflecting on the movements of the killer, unconsciously vocalizes the practical and psychological advantages of this method of selective predation: "That's the point of a drive-in. You don't have to get out of your car."[16]

Significantly, Dix is reluctant to take Laurel to the drive-in; he is aware, on some level, that the conflicting spatial and sexual relationships which propel his psychosis are dependent on a hierarchy which is gender- and class-based; the type of women he chooses to victimize in the urban domain are usually working class, un-glamourous girls for whom eating alone at a drive-in diner is customary. Laurel, from his perspective, exists on a separate plain: "'save your money.' She yawned. 'You can take me to a drive-in tonight.' She was still yawning. He stopped short. Slowly he turned to look at her. 'I won't take you to a drive-in.' He stated it flatly… 'We're not going up to the drive-in!' He didn't mean to shout. It came out in spite of himself."[17] The idea of Laurel transgressing the constructed social norms which govern his troubled existence serves only to intensify his emotional discord.

Ironically, the social and sexual power wielded by Dix throughout the novel is illusory – he lives off the charity of a taciturn uncle and expressly refuses to work. Having succeeded at Princeton by toadying for his wealthier peers, he philosophises that "latching on to boys with

---

[14] Shelby Smoak, 'Tails, Gunfights and Murder: The Role of the Automobile in the Noir Fiction of James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 29.2, (2011), 40-46, p.41.
[15] *Ibid.*, p.41.
[16] Hughes, p.47.
[17] *Ibid.*,p.121.

money [was wise]… they really were stinkers; Mel Terriss was a good example of the breed. But they had money… as long as you toadied, you had a pretty good life."[18] The borrowed finery of Mel Terriss (including his clothes, which Dix has tailored to fit) allows him to maintain the lifestyle he thinks he deserves. For all that Dix enjoys criticizing the cruel excesses of the American bourgeoisie, his ultimate ambition is to become one of them; Mel's money allows him to appropriate a version of middle-class masculinity which (he believes) will compensate for his humble roots and bolster his rapidly fragmenting sense of self. Certain signifiers of normative male identity (often overlaid with class identity) had become increasingly prevalent in the years following the war, with the lingering memory of the conflict giving rise to a certain ambiguity of purpose, according to Mike Chopra-Gant: "military service provided men with a clear sense of identity, but the corollary of the certainties provided by military life was increased uncertainty about the meaning of masculinity as these ex-servicemen began to move into a postwar civilian world in which the sureties of the military milieu no longer held sway."[19]

The role of solider arguably encapsulated a necessary performativity, an adaption of a specific moral code, conformity to which was marked by the uniform. This particular brand of performed masculinity quickly became outmoded in the years following the war; the return to civilian life often involved a period of readjustment and reconstruction of identity, which many found difficult. The reconfiguration of the American landscape and the rise of "car culture" had given way to a drastically altered social context in which the emphasis on personal freedom triggered a wave of ontological uncertainty (this confusion was initially countered with an impetus towards "traditional family values" and conventional gender roles). According to Megan Abbott, the marginal white male in the years following the war was a troubling signifier: "loners like [Dix]… how can one be sure of them? Who are these men who are not fathers, not

[18] *Ibid.*, p.104.

[19] Mike Chopra-Gant, *Hollywood Genres and Post-War America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.96.

husbands, not domestic patriarchs, and not company men? [They] occupy an increasingly uncomfortable position in post-war America with its compulsory models of appropriate masculine function."[20]

Dix responds to this uncertainty with a cathartic re-enactment of his military identity; his attempt at relocating these experiences on the streets of Los Angeles (the potency of flying replaced with automobility) involves an elimination of the autonomous female subject whose increased visibility disturbs the equilibrium of this performed masculinity. The narrative perspective chosen by Hughes is that of third-person limited omniscience; the reader is privy not only to Dix's thoughts and anxieties but to his (often warped) perception of others – it is only when he is confronted by Sylvia, Brub and the captain of the police at the climax of the novel that the echo chamber of his egomania begins to collapse.

Sylvia is revealed to have been nursing suspicions against him for some time. Dix's furious desire to maintain control over his environment is reflected in his narrative wrangling; the reader is left with little choice but to invest in his version of events, even as he unconsciously begins to mimic the narrative patter of hard-boiled heroes like Philip Marlowe in his attempt to reinforce his perception of himself as a man under siege in a dangerously liminal urban milieu. This selective interpretation of events, couched in Dix's fractionally omniscient narration, serves to lull the reader into a false sense of certainty with regard to the sequence of events; the narrative is so entrenched in his psychosis that the schism between experiences as he interprets them and events 'as they are' proves difficult to overcome.

He professes his intention to write a detective novel; this both serves as his cover story and analogises his desire to shape and contain the topography of his story. He confides to Brub that he uses the typewriter on a daily basis. Like the automobile and the plane, this is a technology which allows him to redevelop the paradigms of his own masculinity and selectively engage with reality. Although his detective novel is a fabrication, he uses the typewriter to communicate with the miserly Uncle Fergus, often playing on his status as an ex-serviceman to garner

---

[20] Megan Abbott, *The Street Was Mine: White Masculinity and Urban Space in Hardboiled Fiction and Film Noir* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p.74.

sympathy and money – the ease with which he invokes the latent trauma of the war is further indicative of a regressive yearning to be perceived in relation to a specific type of masculinity, one grounded in the working-class tradition but tempered with a pathological elitism; what Christopher Breu describes as "an expression of residual solidarity with the nineteenth-century working-class ideal of the autonomous artisan-labourer [and] a fully pathological version of American individualism, one that repudiated connection and community at every turn."[21]

As Dix reminds us at every turn, he doesn't *want* to work – the egalitarianism of his wartime experience ironically serves only to exacerbate his impotent craving to belong to the social circle of people like Mel Terriss. His psychotic frustration with the postwar landscape of Los Angeles and the conflicting class dynamics embodied within it is expressed through his violence against women like Mildred Atkinson. Dix is not a writer, but he imbues his acts of brutality with a kind of twisted authorial power – the public unmaking of these troublesome women is an attempt to reorder the narrative space and to inscribe his confusion and fury onto the cityscape.

In his narrative, Laurel is not the concerned friend of Mel Terriss (and survivor of an unhappy marriage), but "a girl who could set him jumping… her mouth was too heavy with lipstick, a copper-red mouth, a sultry mouth painted to call attention to its premise… she wasn't beautiful, her face was too narrow for beauty, but she was dynamite."[22] His narrow conceptualisation of her as a femme fatale character gives the lie to his willfully myopic interpretation of events: Laurel consistently voices her worries about Mel's disappearance to no avail; when she fails to adhere to the romantic trajectory Dix has envisioned, he begins to spitefully reflect on her imagined persona: "he'd known what she was the first time he'd looked at her. Known he couldn't trust her, known she was a bitchy dame, cruel as her eyes and her taloned nails. Cruel as her cat body and her sullen tongue."[23]

---

[21] Christopher Breu, *Hard-Boiled Masculinities* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p.2.
[22] Hughes, p.25.
[23] *Ibid.*, p.149.

His misreading of Laurel and Sylvia is informed, in part, by the residual discourse of wartime propaganda; he perceives both women as cagey and slightly hostile, infused with feline energy. Popular images of women disseminated during the war (usually via propaganda posters) had underscored the potential danger of female sexual autonomy and vocality; slogans like 'Loose Women May be Loaded With Disease' and 'Her Careless Talk Costs Lives' played on the threat of female disloyalty and dishonesty, while campaigns aimed at recruiting working-class women to pursue manual labour as part of the war effort emphasized the need for patriotic solidarity and the interdependence between the (primarily female) domestic workforce and the armed forces (a number of posters exhorted women to 'Do The Job HE Left Behind', reminding them that 'The More WOMEN at Work the Sooner We WIN!'). The pervasive distribution of such images in conjunction with the gradually evolving political status of American women reinforced the anxieties of men like Dix: such conflicted propaganda had pushed women to move beyond the home even as it stressed the necessity of gender hegemony: "the notion that women had a right to be treated as individuals or to compete equally for positions of power ran counter to the major goal of war propaganda, which was to discourage individualistic, self-interested attitudes in order to produce a collective spirit of self-sacrifice on the home front."[24]

Much of Dix's aggravation seems rooted in this dogmatic bipolarity – the 'cheats and whores' for whom he feels such profoundly violent distaste are emblematic of a burgeoning cultural shift; the gendered social status of these women had been re-examined and modified during the war, and so an abrupt re-drawing of the borders of homogenous womanhood was necessary in order to offset the likelihood of further societal upheaval afterwards. The political process of putting these women 'back in their place' (achieved via a renewed emphasis on the virtues of domesticity and suburban living in popular culture, according to Joanne Meyerowitz: "television moms projected images of fulfilled and fulfilling white motherhood onto recently acquired screens across the country, and these representations of

---

[24] Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War II* (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), p.6.

motherhood frequently prevailed despite increases in women's labour force participation."[25]) is obscenely emulated by Dix, whose degradation of these women is also a repositioning of sorts – his sadism reduces them to tawdry, meaningless victimhood and initiates the tabloid erasure of their narratives; one of his early victims is explicitly referred to as "a girl that didn't matter."[26] Stripped of the nominal authority she may have acquired during the war, this type of woman is violently relegated to marginality in service of Dix's need to feel "safe". The recoding of public and private space is described by Christopher Breu as "an ideological privatization of femininity… the streets were rendered safe again for (because they were symbolically, and at times literally, emptied of everyone but) right-thinking white men."[27]

Much of Dix's violent behaviour is glossed over in his narrative; this serves to emphasise both the psychological disjunction at the heart of the novel and the disturbing ubiquity of the casual misogyny underpinning such violence – the reader is privileged with a degree of intimacy which throws into sharp relief the quieter, less explicit instances of offhand cruelty. Newspaper reports on Dix's victims are interchangeably punctuated with his personal musings on the girls; his reflection that being raped and murdered is possibly the most interesting thing to have happened to these women is implicitly validated by the other male characters, who are so inured to the subtle hostility of gendered public discourse that they fail to recognize the homicidal turn which Dix's rage has taken. The relationship between casual misogyny and femicide has been explored by activist Joan Smith, who has argued that "only a culture which nurtured and encouraged a deep-seated hatred of women could produce a mass killer of [this] type, and when it did, it was hardly to be wondered at that its agents were unable to distinguish him from the mass of its products. The discrimination and denigration and violence that women suffer are no historical accident but linked manifestations of this hatred; [we] inhabit

[25] Joanne Meyerowitz, *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p.264.
[26] Hughes, p.142.
[27] Breu, 'Radical Noir: Negativity, Misogyny and the Critique of Privatization in Dorothy Hughes' In a Lonely Place', p.202.

a culture which is not simply sexist but *occasionally lethal* for women."[28] Dix seems to take particular pleasure in victimizing working women, many of whom he encounters on a day-to-day basis; as mentioned above, the war had necessitated a mobilization of female labourers and subsequently destabilized the gendered demarcation between public and private spheres.

The maid who cleans Dix's apartment provokes his disgust with a frequency which indicates an obsessive anxiety with regard to this newly autonomous female workforce[29]: "the maid was a shapeless sack with heavy feet… He didn't know the maid's name; he wouldn't have recognized her on the street."[30] The murderous rage with which he confronts these women (usually as they are engaging in work, returning from work or otherwise inhabiting the urban space in ways which make Dix feel threatened) is frequently mediated in terms of their mobility. If they are moving, it must be on his preferred terms; on two occasions, he is given the choice to drive or be driven by Sylvia and Laurel, respectively, and on both occasions chooses to be driver rather than passenger. Their acquiescence to his powerful desire to control their mobility means neither woman is ultimately targeted by Dix's self-righteously violent misogyny. William Brevda notes that the character consistently fixates on seeing and being seen; at one point, he observes Sylvia watching him with "a look behind the look."[31] Brevda reads this fascination with visual perception as a dramatization of Sartre's confrontation with the Other via the arresting gaze. His phenomenological confrontation with the Other revolves around his desire to transcend subjectivity and "capture the freedom of the

---

[28] Joan Smith, *Misogynies* (London: Faber & Faber, 1990), p.14.

[29] Hughes' choice of name rather ironically prefigures this anxiety: Dix 'Steele' is affronted by the gendered redistribution of labour which had been primarily driven by military production and the flourishing steel industry. According to Maureen Honey, "10.6 percent of [female factory workers] were engaged in steel production." (Breu,*Ibid.*, p.21.).

[30] Hughes, p.19.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.37.

victim."[32] Perhaps his obsession with female mobility is a consequence of this ontological power struggle – his "lonely place" a product of the unending struggle to avoid the captivity of the female gaze.

In conclusion, Hughes' novel offers an insightful exploration of the postwar urban space and the troubled negotiation between gendered public and private spheres. The omnipresent emblem of the American automobile is imbued with a compelling subversiveness which complicates interpretation of the public/private divide at the heart of the novel. Dix's problematic relationship with his own masculinity infuses the narrative with a disturbed self-awareness which renders it progressive and existentially complex. The ideological anxiety at the core of *In a Lonely Place* reflects an urban landscape frequently at odds with its own rapid advancement; this discordant milieu and the emergent technology which sustains it provide a symbolic lens through which Hughes explores the concept of embattled postwar masculinity.

Bibliography

Abbott, Megan, The Street Was Mine: White Masculinity and Urban Space in Hardboiled Fiction and Film Noir (New York:Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

Baudrillard, Jean, America (New York: Verso, 1988)

Betts, Raymond, A History of Pop Culture: More of Everything, Faster and Brighter (New York, Routledge, 2004)

Berger, Michael, The Automobile in American History and Culture (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001)

Brevda, William, 'The Phenomenology of Noir Perception: Dorothy B. Hughes's In a Lonely Place and Cornell Woolrich's I Married a Dead Man', Clues: A Journal of Detection, 26.4, (2008), 63-71

Breu, Christopher, Hard-Boiled Masculinities (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005)

[32] William Brevda, 'The Phenomenology of Noir Perception: Dorothy B. Hughes's In a Lonely Place and Cornell Woolrich's I Married a Dead Man', *Clues: A Journal of Detection*, 26.4, (2008), 63-71, p.67.

Breu, Christopher, 'Radical Noir: Negativity, Misogyny and the Critique of Privatization in Dorothy Hughes' In a Lonely Place',MFS Modern Fiction Studies, 55.2, (2009), 199-215

Cherne, Leo, 'The Army Changes Men', Collier's Weekly, 27May 1944

Chopra-Gant, Mike, Hollywood Genres and Post-War America: Masculinity, Family and Nation in Popular Movies and Film Noir (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)

Dimendberg, Edward, 'Down These Seen Streets a Man Must Go: Siegfried Kracauer, "Hollywood's Terror Films", and theSpatiality of Film Noir', New German Critique, 89, (2003), 113-143.

Freedman, Estelle, "Uncontrolled Desires": The Response to the Sexual Psychopath, 1920-1960, The Journal of American History, 74.1,(1987), 83-106

Halttunen, Karen, Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998)

Halttunen, Karen, A Companion to American Cultural History (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2008)

Hoberek, Andrew, The Twilight of the Middle Class: Post-World War II American Fiction and White-Collar Work (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005)

Honey, Maureen, Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class, Gender and Propaganda During World War II (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984)

Horsley, Lee, The Noir Thriller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

Hughes, Dorothy, In a Lonely Place (New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1947)

Jenkins, Philip, Using Murder: The Social Construction of Serial Murder (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1994)

Jones, Manina and Walton, Priscilla, Detective Agency: Women Rewriting the Hard-Boiled Tradition (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999)

Irwin, John, Unless the Threat of Death is Behind Them: Hard-Boiled Fiction and Film Noir (Maryland: John Hopkins UniversityPress, 2006)

McCarthy, Elizabeth, "Others Had the Making of Me": The Cultural Construction of Serial Murder (PhD Thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2008)

Meyerowitz, Joanne, Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994)

Miller, Abbott, Inside Cars (New Jersey: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001)

Rabinowitz, Paula, Black & White & Noir: America's Pulp Modernism (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002)

Sartre, Jean-Paul, Being and Nothingness (Washington: Washington Square Press, 1943)

Schwartz, Richard, Nice and Noir: Contemporary American Crime Fiction (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2002)

Seltzer, Mark, Serial Killers: Life and Death in America's Wound Culture (New York: Routledge, 1998)

Smith, Erin, Hard-Boiled: Working Class Readers and Pulp Magazines (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000)

Smoak, Shelby, 'Tails, Gunfights and Murder: The Role of the Automobile in the Noir Fiction of James M. Cain and Raymond Chandler', Clues: A Journal of Detection, 29.2, (2011), 40-46

Smith, Joan, Misogynies (London: Faber & Faber, 1990)

Smith, Johanna, 'Hard-Boiled Detective Fiction: Gendering the Canon', Pacific Coast Philology, 26.1/2, (1991), 78-84