7 From lines on maps to symbolic order in the city? Translating processional routes as spatial practice in nineteenth-century Sheffield

Sam Griffiths

Introduction
This paper considers the emergence in the English city of Sheffield of what the historian Gunn (2000, 231) has called the “processional culture” of the nineteenth-century city. It takes as its starting point the fact that processional routes have rarely been subject to systematic treatment despite their importance in accounts of processional topography (for example, Howe 2007, Vandeweghe 2011). Scholarly interest in processional activity as a mechanism for asserting symbolic order on the built environment (Gunn 2000, 230) proposes the processional route as a legitimate object of “topographical hermeneutics” (Lünen 2013, 118, after Sombart 1992). As such the task of decoding processional routes as mapped materialities of social practice does not appear secondary to that of deconstructing the symbolism of the procession itself. The effect of a too-exclusive emphasis on processional symbols, it is argued, is to close down critical consideration of the historical relationship between the emergence of symbolically privileged urban regimes and broader patterns of changes and continuity in the quotidian life of the city. Such an historical elision is especially unhelpful during a period in which rapid urbanization created new possibilities for spatial practice.

For the majority of historians principally concerned with the study of human subjects in the past, sources pertaining to the built environment are more likely to have illustrative or contextual value than to form a starting point for their investigations – the alleged ‘spatial turn’ in historical studies notwithstanding (Kingston 2010, Gunn 2001). When the built environment is directly addressed the critical effort is typically directed towards deconstructing the sources (for example, maps, photographs and art works) as representations of particular cultural discourses, as much as towards assessing what they can reveal about what actually happened in the past, an epistemological swerve that has been criticized by Ethington (2000). While many important questions of urban history are necessarily addressed in representational terms the difficulty of conceptualizing the agency of inhabited space in giving spatial form to social practices such as processions, increasingly constitutes a limitation on research into why the materiality of social life should matter at all. As Jerram (2013, 410–411) has argued, even Lefebvre’s otherwise useful notion of ‘spatial practice’, that is the unreflexive bodily performance of everyday life, struggles to articulate a sense of material agency that extends beyond the holism of bodily experience to become socially meaningful (Lefebvre 1991, 38). The consequence in research terms is a tendency to collapse the materiality of spatial practice into the representational domain (Griffiths 2013).

Whyte (2006) has proposed that built environment agency can be revealed by a method of translation from the architectural form to manifold meanings that arise in different social and historical contexts. Yet exactly what this process involves is unclear since spatial forms do not, in themselves, connote meaning in in any straightforward, referential, sense (Gieryn 2000; Hillier and Hanson 1984, 48–9). The danger is that such translation works only in reverse to work to render the built environment ‘as a text’. In fact, as Tschumi (1996, 20) has argued it is the very disjunction of spatial forms with their intended use (‘programme’) and actual use (practice) that asserts architecture’s particular claim to agency. The ‘translation’ of processional routes offered in this chapter therefore, is not intended as a neat mapping of meaning onto movement but rather to draw attention to the material contingency of processional culture as it emerged in a single nineteenth century industrial city.
Transposing and Translating Processional Routes

From the late-eighteenth century the routes of officially sanctioned public processions were usually published in advance in the local press. Once the procession had taken place newspapers would use the route as the organizing motif for their often exhaustive coverage of the event. Readers would be invited to re-live the procession on a street-by-street basis, identifying those stages at which they had been present and catching up on anything they had missed. They could, for example, read the detailed reports of the illuminated displays set up in shop windows on patriotic procession days, such as the coronation of a monarch. Processions not sanctioned by civic elites but which were of sufficient scale to be newsworthy (for example some Chartist demonstrations) would also be granted coverage, the exact nature of the reporting depending on the political sympathies of the newspaper.

Figure 7.1: Route of procession to celebrate the end of the Crimean War in Sheffield 1856

*Source:* Sheffield and Rotherham Independent 31 May 1856

The extent of local press coverage means that for most of the nineteenth century it is possible to be fairly confident of the exact routes that processions took. Familiarity with contemporary cartographic sources and a comparative sample of processional routes is usually sufficient to make it a relatively straightforward matter to supply omissions of small or ambiguously named streets in the press reports. Figure 7.1 shows the processional route for the celebration of the end of the Crimean War that took place in Sheffield in May 1856, as it was announced in the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*. The researcher can transpose the list of streets into a sequence of lines on a cartographic base map dated as closely as possible to the event itself. The result is a representation of the route inscribed on the map, as in figure 7.2 showing the routes and orientations of major civic processions in Sheffield 1798–1856.

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1 Such research would typically take place in a GIS; see von Lünen in this volume
How might these ‘lines on maps’ be deployed in historical research to provide an account of processional activity? A common approach is to identify sites of symbolic significance (for example, the town hall or a principal religious building) that indicate a given processional narrative with a definable origin and destination. This conception of the ‘route’ is consistent with the definition given by the anthropologist Ingold (2007, 79) who contrasts *routes* with *trails*: while the former implies surface movement as a series of connections between discrete points, the latter implies a continuous flow of bodily movement through the material world. Yet if the line of a processional route is certainly a ‘mapping’ of symbolic authority onto urban space, it is equally a trace of bodily movement through a built environment that was not *terra incognita* but familiar on a day-to-day basis to most of the many people taking part in processions as participants or spectators.

Allowing that these two aspects of the processional performance: the mapped route and the embodied trace, are mutually constitutive in some sense highlights the epistemological danger of interpreting the ‘meaning’ of public processions in isolation from the materiality of the city itself. Whether viewed primarily as symbolically charged “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm 1992, 1–15) or as ritual practices embodying a latent sense of social continuity, public processions in the nineteenth-century city served to ritually codify patterns and orientations of urban movement that were, in other contexts, already routine in terms of everyday street life. Connerton’s argument that even highly programmed mass
ritual activities can be regarded as “incorporating practice”, invoking the body rather than the text as the principal hermeneutical object, is significant in this light (Connerton 1989, 101–2). The anthropological emphasis on embodied agency, however, begs (perhaps somewhat paradoxically) the question of extra-somatic agency that extends beyond individual bodies in space and time to constitute the material domain of collective bodily action. Without such a notion it is hard to conceive how spatial practice can be realized as socially as performance. After all, the idea of performance invokes a concrete act of making in which the material conditions of spatial practice are implicated in realizing symbolic meaning. Indeed, the appropriation of what Hillier et al (1976, 180) refer to as the “pro-fane”, routine, social space of the street for ritualistic purposes was a distinctive feature of nineteenth-century processional culture that enabled it to adapt, materially and symbolically, to the rapidly expanding built environments of industrial cities. An interpretative opportunity is lost therefore, if the transposed processional route is deployed naively as a gazetteer of the procession. It is the absence of a sense of the material conditions of processional performance which means Harrison’s interesting description of urban crowd activity as “patterned” is not particularly well served by his account of processional routes as a linked sequence of symbolically significant sites (Harrison 1988, 166). The task of translating the symbolic topography of processional routes should be expanded to consider whether their symbolic articulation as processional culture can be explained in terms of incorporating practices with or against the grain of a city’s quotidian spatial culture, with its emphasis on the everyday materialities of social practice.

That the processional route might also serve an explicit symbolic purpose is clear from the way in which urban groups with different social and political agendas sought to enhance their status through the temporary occupation of principal thoroughfares in the nineteenth-century city (Goheen 1993, 142). Identifying the symbolism of a given route in particular urban contexts (one immediately thinks of Orange order parades through predominantly Catholic areas of Belfast; see Bryan 2000) is an essential aspect of the topographical hermeneutic of processions but it is not the main focus of this chapter. Rather, the proposition is that processional routes represented the periodic appropriation of the agency of urban street network for the performance of the “spatial infrastructure of the ritual” (Nejad 2013, 22). This ‘spatial cultures’ perspective implies a view of the nineteenth-century industrial city as a basically intelligible built environment with regard to everyday spatial practice. It therefore problematizes rather simplistic but pervasive representations of industrial cities as “fragmented” (56) or “amorphous” (Gunn 2000, 227) places in need of ‘ordering’. A too-exclusive emphasis on the procession as an ordering device, it is argued, works to negate, rather than engage with, the particular quality of built environment agency in catalyzing routine spatial practices that do not, in the first instance, possess representational significance. It effectively restricts the negotiation of symbolic forms to social groups (whether elite or popular) with power to assert ‘order’ on the city, excluding the larger number of people whose role in the emergence of processional culture can hardly be accounted for in these terms. The question is then: how to arrive at translations of processional routes that do not categorically separate the materially practised city from the symbolically meaningful procession? The approach advanced here is to disclose the hermeneutical potential of formal descriptions of built environment structure in order to decode their appropriation for processional performance.

**Space Syntax as a Spatial Hermeneutic**

This section reflects on conceptual and methodological insights from the space syntax perspective on architectural-spatial morphology developed by Hillier and Hanson (1984) and explains how these can contribute to the broader project of topographical hermeneutics raised by von Lünen. In space syntax research the formal spatial descriptions provided by analysis pertain not to pre-social material elements (which would be physical geography) but to material arrangements or spatial configurations that denote a pre-semantic (or “non-discursive” (Hillier 1996, 38) relational domain through which quotidian patterns of movement and encounter realize a basic social intelligibility. Although, as will be explained, spatial configurations can take a highly symbolic form reflecting a strongly normative programme of social organization, Hillier et al (1976, 180) holds that the agency of space is such that social life can never be entirely determined by socio-economic structures.

My argument is that a historicized interpretation of configurational descriptions can help to unlock the multiple dimensionality of the material world as an agent, though not a cause, of social meaning. This
requires unlocking the latent temporality of space syntax theory, so far largely repressed in Hillier’s work (Griffiths 2011). Space syntax analysis reveals how any given ‘location’ (imagine a dot on a map) is simultaneously implicated in any number of configurational descriptions extending in space and time. An historical perspective on this ambiguity reveals it as highlighting how descriptions of material arrangements are constantly being assembled and corroded, accumulated and dispersed, appropriated and displaced in accordance with changing social mores, in a non-linear temporal process. The agency of urban space lies in affording spatial form to performative practices in mediating material and representational semantics. It follows that while a given processional route reflects the agency of a particular social group to assert symbolic order, this assertion cannot be considered singular or absolute. At the least it is mediated by the degree to which the configurational possibilities of urban space affords symbolic emphasis to a given performance.

**Axiality Convexity**

The fundamentally ambiguous qualities of any given location in real world space are set out in an important passage in Hillier and Hanson’s *The Social Logic of Space*.

> Any point in the structure of space […] can be seen to be a part of a linearly extended space […] passing through [a] point, which represents the maximum global or axial extension of that point in a straight line. But the point […] is also part of a fully convex fat space, […] that is, part of a space which represents the maximum extension of the point in the second dimension, given the first dimension. (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 91 [italics are the original authors’])

While ‘axiality’ and ‘linearity’ are fairly conventional terms the notion of ‘convex’ space is peculiar to space syntax analysis. Formally, it can be defined as existing “when straight lines can be drawn from any point in the space to any other point in the space without going outside the boundary of the space itself” (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 97–98). Importantly however, convexity, like linearity, is a ‘scale free’ spatial description in that it does not conform to an ideal (or mean) standard. Its definition can be extended to refer to any approximately circular area of space characterized by a high degree of inter-accessibility between all the different points, for example, where urban blocks are relatively small and densely packed together (Hillier 1999, 117). At whatever scale they are constituted therefore, spatial descriptions that emphasize linearity are more likely to pertain to movement through an urban system and those that emphasize convexity are more likely to pertain to relatively static areas of social interaction within that system (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 17; Hillier 1996, 316). The fact that any given point in space has a spatial description pertaining to both its linearity and convexity and that these are also ambiguous with regard to the resolution of their description suggests how scales of spatial practice might acquire imbricated layers of hermeneutical significance when considered historically in particular social contexts (Griffiths and Quick 2005).

**Spaces of Production and Reproduction**

Hillier (1996, 215–232) distinguishes between two ideal types of descriptions of urban axes (linear extensions of space) – the symbolic and instrumental – which he argues, relate to cities of ‘production’ and ‘reproduction’ respectively. In *cities of production* social life is said to be perpetuated through urban form functioning to generate probabilistic patterns of movement and encounters associated with the rapid exchange of goods and information. In cities of reproduction, by contrast, ease of movement is considered less important than symbolic emphasis for the purposes of ritual performance. Whereas an *instrumental axis* will prioritize inter- and intra-urban accessibility, a *symbolic axis*, is likely to terminate at a right-angle to a building of symbolic significance constituted by a convex space (for example a cathedral on a square). If the category ‘city of production’ applies anywhere it must be to the ‘shock’ cities of the industrial revolution such as Sheffield. Certainly the first industrial cities did not invest resources in dedicated ceremonial sites. Even here, however, the evidence is that ritual forms of ceremonial performance developed at a rapid rate from the late eighteenth century. This raises the interesting historical questions of the extent to which instrumental and symbolic axiality co-existed within a single urban form, how far the balance between the two shifted over time, and how processional culture was enacted within largely ‘functional’ urban space.
There is therefore ambiguity in ‘instrumental’ and ‘symbolic’ spatial descriptions. The relationship of spatial culture and processional culture can be conceived in these terms.

**Distance Concepts**

Another source of ambiguity in spatial description derives from Hillier’s theory of ‘distance concepts’. Hillier argues that distance possesses three distinctive modalities: topological (directional change), angular resistance (relative straightness of path) and metric (units of geographical distance; cf. Hillier and Iida 2005a). Hillier and Iida contend that “our notions of distance are compromised by the visual, geometrical and topological properties of networks” (ibid., 476). Their research, based on observational surveys of traffic and pedestrian flows in London, suggests that both topological and angular descriptions correlate strongly with vehicular and pedestrian movement whereas metric descriptions do not. On this basis they conclude that metric distance is predictive of movement flows only at the most localized scale but that when considering space “above a certain threshold” people conceptualize distance through a mixture of topological and angular intuitions. Hillier (2005b, 19) characterizes this as a “phenomenology” of distance. The implication of this conceptualization (couched in largely cognitive terms) is far reaching. By demonstrating how distance concepts differentiate probable movement patterns at three modalities of scale, Hillier hints at how these variables tap into a multiplicity of configurational arrangements that are materialized in the spatio-temporal world as descriptions of possible spatial practice.

**Morphic Languages as Performance**

It is its essentially ambiguous quality that realizes spatial description in the syntactic sense as a legitimate hermeneutic object. The intrinsic ambiguity of space means social programmes (i.e. desired normative outcomes achieved by assigning social ‘meaning’ to space) instigated by hegemonic groups and their configurational description can never be entirely conflated. Hillier and Hanson (1984, 48-9) have convincingly argued why there is no straightforward sense in which buildings or cities can mean anything. They differentiate between space syntax as a ‘morphic’ language and the ‘natural language’ of the spoken word to support their claim that the characteristic feature of natural language, that it refers to things beyond itself (the referent), does not apply to morphic languages which refer only to themselves in denoting the material organization of space. Yet, as Netto (2015) has argued, these two languages, though epistemologically distinct, can never be entirely separated from each other as social practice. It follows that the translation of processional routes implies a process in which morphic and natural languages, actions and representations, are brought into relation with one another through processional performance.

**From Routine Journeys to Processional Routes: Changing Patterns of Home and Work in the Rockingham Locale, Sheffield**

An experimental phase of space syntax analysis was used to explore whether Hillier and Iida’s distance concepts could provide useful spatial descriptions to inform historical research into emergent modes of spatial practice during Sheffield’s eighteenth- and nineteenth-century urbanization (cf. Griffiths 2008; 2009). The idea was to constitute the spatial configuration of the city’s road network as an hermeneutical object, emergent over time and practised at different ‘modalities of scale’ – equivalent to the three contrasting descriptions of distance in Hillier and Iida (2005a). Specific spatial descriptions recoverable through formal analysis were deployed to decode persistence and change in Sheffield’s processional culture by illuminating the broader spatial culture in which such developments took place.

Figure 7.3(a-c) presents space syntax ‘segment-tulip analysis’ using Depthmap software (Tuner 2000–10).2 Tulip analysis calculates angles of incidence between road segments using a simplified algorithm that does not compute exact angles but places similarly sized angles into 1024 ‘bins’. This analysis was used to calculate the space syntax measure of ‘Choice’. Choice is a relational measure that calculates how often a given segment features on a path between all pairs of segments within a

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2 *Depthmap* is an open-source software project at University College London that can be accessed via http://varoudis.github.io/depthmapX/ (Accessed 7 April 2015)
specified network radius. This radius measure can be differently weighted according to the three distance concepts: angular (a), topological (b) and metric (c), representing angular deviation, number of turns and metric units respectively. The descriptions of network structure provided by Choice are useful to interrogate the different modes of network distance at which a street system emerged historically since it can identify, on an heuristic basis, the basic scaling properties exploited by subsequent urban expansion and developments in transport. On each of the maps in Figure 7.3 road segments are shaded on a gradient of white to black with the highest value segments in white visualizing the characteristic network structure of each distance concept.

Figure 7.3a: Distance concept (a) angular weighting, radius-\(n\).
Source: Griffiths.

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3 This radius is calculated in terms of the network structure rather than ‘as the crow flies’, where \(n\) extends to the entire system.
Figure 7.3b: Distance concept (b) topological weighting, radius-30.  
Source: Griffiths.

Figure 7.3c: Distance concept (c) metric weighting, radius-5.  
Source: Griffiths.
In figure 7.3a showing angular choice radius-\(n\) it is the highly linear centre-edge network structure, representing the oldest roads through Sheffield Parish, as well as more recent large scale interventions in the urbanized area, that are most evident. In figure 7.3b topological choice radius-30 (b) indicates how multiple local grid intensifications constituted a web of lateral connecting roads that gave network structure to the emerging suburban neighbourhoods on the periphery of the mid nineteenth-century town. Such lateral structures effectively connected local neighbourhoods with intra-urban accessibility structures, relating what Hillier (2009) calls the ‘background’ (i.e. residential) and ‘foreground’ (i.e. thoroughfares) structures of space. In figure 7.3c metric choice radius-5 presents a large area of intensive griddy development that covers the late-nineteenth-century suburbanization of Sheffield Parish. There is little consistent large-scale structure here and it is best thought of as representing multiple intensifications of local development or ‘noise’, where urban space is most densely packed. The details of the formal analysis matter less here other than to establish the conceptual point that all elements of a road network can be differentiated in terms of these three distance concepts and at different network radii. These manifold numerical descriptions, it is argued, offer a starting point not only for morphological heuristics but also for a topographical hermeneutics in which complex network analysis is brought to bear on re-conceptualizing the material agency of the built environment in dialogue with established sources pertaining to urban culture.

The separation of home and work is one of the master narratives of urbanization. Soja (1990, 151) has argued that it is an index of modernity itself because of its key role in structuring the human experience of space. In nineteenth-century studies the differentiation of home and work denotes the rise of suburbia (Thompson 1988, chapter 6), the separation of public and private spheres (Dennis 1984, chapter 4) the extension of intra-city urban transport connections (Kellett 1969) and the rapid development of the urban periphery (Dyos 1966). Alongside the appearance of new transport technologies (for example, the electric tram and the train) these developments gradually transformed the structure of ‘walking and horses’ cities during the second half of the nineteenth century (Dennis 1984, 113). Routine journeys lend themselves to being conceptualized performatively as ‘place ballets’ (Seamon 1979) or ‘choreographies’ (Pred 1977), in the spirit of Jacobs (1993) rather than through their association with any explicit codes of ‘meaning’. Identifying shifting patterns of home and work following Sheffield’s suburban expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century provides a vital key in translating formal syntactical analysis of spatial structure into an account of the quotidian life of the nineteenth-century city. These shifts are said to indicate a transformation in the scale of the city’s spatial culture, intelligible as time-space practices emerging at different modalities of scale in which larger scale movements emerged as symbolically privileged.
Table 7.1: Changing patterns of home and work in the Rockingham locale 1841–1905.

Source: White’s Directories of Sheffield (White 1841; 1905).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Artisan / skilled labour</th>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Merchant</th>
<th>Merchant &amp; manufacturer</th>
<th>Professional</th>
<th>Retailer</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Home / Work total [%]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1841 (home &amp; work in)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841 (home in – work out)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841 (home out – work in)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>53 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 1841</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>118 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905 (home &amp; work in)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>159 (93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905 (home in – work out)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905 (home out – work in)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>171 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 1905</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1 presents data on the location of home and work for everyone listed in White’s Directory for 1841 and 1905 as either living or working in the Rockingham locale (a neighbourhood in the heart of Sheffield’s cutlery industry) and who gave a separate address for both. Trade Directories are notoriously imperfect sources but they are useful to give a sense of trends in the changing pattern of home and work for tradespeople and the professional classes. Before 1841 the number of these listed in directories who gave separate addresses is negligible, indicative of how people lived and worked in close proximity - often in the same premises. The proportion of people listed as both living and working within Rockingham locale declined dramatically between 1841 and 1905. The relative absence of residential addresses listed in 1905 suggests how the residual residential population, the majority belonging to the poorer working classes living in back-to-back houses, would have become increasingly socially segregated from the professional and business-owning middle classes as suburbanization progressed. Figure 7.4 visualizes the data presented in table 7.1 for 1905. It is clear how the dense socially heterogeneous occupation of the Rockingham locale, characteristic of the early nineteenth century, was displaced by multiple spatialities of distance, redefining the home-work relation at different modalities of scale.
The change in the relationship between home and work in Rockingham locale 1825-1905 was characterized by the emergence of an urban place ballet that increasingly took the form of linearized movement at the maximally urban scale. The argument is not that localized forms of movement within and between proximate locales did not persist throughout the period but that the modality of scale that described linearizing movement was increasingly privileged over more local, circulatory forms by a dynamic, suburbanizing middle-class culture that asserted home and work as distinct origins and destinations. This middle-class separation of home and work increased social differentiation but also enabled new forms of sociability to be realized in a considerably expanded area of urban space.

**From Spatial Culture to Processional Culture**

The increased differentiation of home-work place ballets at different modalities of scale in nineteenth-century Sheffield produced novel time-space materializations of urban form that became available to the city’s elites to appropriate for symbolic purposes. Routine and ceremonial practices in Sheffield’s urban milieu were not therefore, categorically distinct but realized different representational potentials in spatial practice.

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**Figure 7.4:** Differentiation of home and work in the Rockingham Locale 1905.  
*Source:* White’s Directory of Sheffield (White 1905).
Figure 7.5: Routes of selected major public processions in Sheffield 1856–1908.

Figure 7.6: Routes of royal processions in Sheffield 1875–1905.
Source: Sheffield and Rotherham Independent 16 August 1875, 11 May 1895, 13 May 1895 and 22 May 1897; The Sheffield Daily Independent 4 July 1905, 8 July 1905 and 13 July 1905; Pictorial World 21 August 1875; Official Programme (1875; 1897).

Figure 7.7: Routes of selected public funeral processions of Sheffield notables 1856–1910. Source: Sheffield and Rotherham Independent 28 April 1865, 27 September 1873, 2 November 1880, 7 November 1885 and 5 October 1898; Sheffield Daily Telegraph 6 October 1898; The Sheffield Daily Independent 24 March 1910.
Figures 7.5-8 present a visual summary of systematic analysis of processional routes in Sheffield in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These routes (especially those in figures 7.5 and 7.6 which are most directly comparable) can be usefully compared to those in figure 7.2 with regard to the changing orientation and destinations of public processions. The intention here is not to give an exhaustive account of this research but to sketch some preliminary conclusions about the relationship of processional routes, spatial culture and processional culture arrived at through the method of translation that has been outlined here. Five points pertaining to the emergence of Sheffield’s processional culture as a material, embodied and representational phenomenon are highlighted.

1. The dominant circulatory orientation of major civic processions gradually extended to encompass a greater area of urban space endured until approximately the mid-nineteenth century when long linear routes and shorter routes restricted to suburban neighbourhoods became more typical. This shift in processional practice can be characterized in terms of urban-scale orientations of ‘departure and return’ giving way to routes of well-defined ‘origin and destination(s)’.

2. The early nineteenth-century orientation of processions of all types towards the historic urban centre was gradually reversed by an increasing orientation towards the suburban fringe and distributed neighbourhood centres.

3. The deployment of parks, recreation grounds, sports grounds and cemeteries as the point of ritual dénouement is increasingly evident in Sheffield from the mid-nineteenth-century. These destination venues were often situated proximate to historical access routes into the urban centre from the Parish and/or tram-route termini. The impression is one of movement along

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4 Further information on individual processions can be found in the “Appendix: Notes to Accompany Figures 7.4-7.”
4. The linearization of processional routes to destination sites entailed an active process of widening and straightening of Sheffield’s historical road network. This process was the consequence of transport engineering works, most notably to accommodate tram lines, and the removal of encroachments (Griffiths 2009). In a more fundamental sense, however, it can be explained as a materialization of the rescaling of the spatial practice of distance to a more linear mode through the separation of home and work and the suburbanization of nineteenth-century Sheffield.

5. There is significant continuity as well as change in processional routes over time and across different categories of ceremonial type. This indicates not only how some urban elements – notably those belonging to the early-modern town – sustained symbolic significance over time but also that they did so by functioning as processional spaces at different modalities of scale, enabling them to accommodate various changes in the spatial practice of processions.

While the symbolic significance of Sheffield’s early-modern centre endured throughout the nineteenth century, perpetuated through elite participation in social events such as the annual Cutlers Feast at the Cutlers’ Hall, mass participation processions increasingly re-orientated the city’s population outwards along linearized concatenations of historical roads towards bounded convex spaces located at the city’s periphery. At the urban scale public parks, sports grounds and especially the newly landscaped cemeteries possessed high symbolic potential for the performance of organized ritual practices (see figure 7.7). At the neighbourhood scale the popularity of Whit walks (see figure 7.8) and sings that took place simultaneously in parks and recreation grounds across the city was indicative of the emergence of a thriving suburban culture with its network of interlinked locales (see Enwistle 2012). While spatial practices at different modalities of scale were not mutually exclusive it was the larger-scale movements to suburban locations that signified social as well as bodily mobility that became symbolically encoded in processional activity. Early to mid-nineteenth century attempts to re-present the essential unity of Sheffield’s eighteenth-century urban community at a larger geographical scale, particularly evident in the great procession to celebrate the passing of the Reform Act in 1832 (figure 7.2), proved unsustainable once ongoing suburbanization decisively transformed the spatial culture of the city, clearly signifying the social distance between the middle classes and working classes who remained in relatively central locations. The possibility for symbolically privileged mass movement to focus in and around the central Township was increasingly undermined by an emergent urban-scale place ballet that went against the grain of the highly localized ‘shuffle’ of home and work that sustained the socially heterogeneous spatial culture of Sheffield’s workshop-based cutlery industry in its early nineteenth century pomp (Griffiths 2015a). Thus even within a fervently generative ‘city of production’ such as Sheffield gestated mechanisms of ceremonial ‘reproduction’ at the transformed urban scale of the mid-to-late nineteenth century city. The two were, in fact, intriguingly combined in royal visits, such as that of Queen Victoria in 1897, during which inspections of major industrial works were combined with a high degree of processional spectacle.

Conclusion
Nineteenth-century urban historians have tended to view processions as impositions of symbolic order on unintelligible industrial urban environments. This argument is premised on the assumption that the built environments of rapidly growing manufacturing towns possessed no agency of their own to sustain meaningful forms of social practice. This chapter has argued, to the contrary, that nineteenth century urbanization enabled, indeed necessitated, the discovery of new performative possibilities in urban space that was appropriated for a range of symbolic purposes. The danger of approaches to civic identity that allege their ‘invention’ or ‘imaging’ (after Anderson 1991) in symbolic terms is that the aspatial and totalizing concept tends to escape the time-space concreteness and mutability of spatial practice. The idea that spatial practice is articulated in morphic language with a material – that is a social – form problematizes the idea of ‘Invention’ since from this performative perspective it is more accurately described as an historical process of making and re-making. The anthropologist
Parkin notes that the very ‘doing’ involved in the performance, even of highly formulaic ritual practices, inevitably introduces “innovation” (Parkin 1992, 18). It is the intrinsic ambiguity of spatial forms that demands their continual fabrication as spatial practices that extend temporally and materially beyond individual bodies, and in that extension make continual demands on our social capacity to translate meaning into making and making into meaning. As Netto (2008, 359–60) has argued the agency of space has to do with enabling individualized action to become genuinely social or communicative as practice. This poses the historical relationship of morphological forms, performance and representation as a key area for further enquiry.
Appendix: Notes to Accompany Figures 7.4-7

Figures 7.4 to 7.7 are useful mainly to get a visual sense of the orientations of processional routes across the different categories of processional activity, consistent with the main purpose of this chapter. More information about the sample of processions represented in the Figures is given below to aid interpretation.

Figure 7.4
1856 – from Norfolk Park (F) to the Wicker (i), to celebrate the end of the Crimean War
1864 – Oddfellows procession from the Cattle Market (a) to the Botanical Gardens (D)
1883 – Salvation Army procession from Thomas Street (g) and to the Albert Hall (b)
1884 – Franchise demonstration from Attercliffe to Mar’s Hill (c)
1893 – parade of the Sheffield Engineers Corps to and from the Drill Hall (d)
1898 – parade of the Lifeboat Saturday movement from the Wicker (i) to Endcliffe Park (E)
1905 – parade of the Grand United Oddfellows from Attercliffe to the Albert Hall (b)
1906 – Temperance Mission procession from and to the Temperance Hall (e), through the Crofts area
1907 – Socialist demonstration terminates at the Castlefolds market (f)
1907 – procession to Hillsborough Park (A) for horse show
1908 – Empire Day pageant at Bramall Lane Sports Ground (C)
1908 – unemployed parade from Thomas Street (g) to London Road (h)
1908 – Socialist demonstration at High Hazels Park (B)

Figure 7.5
Sunday Schools from different areas of the city were organized by the Sheffield Sunday School Union into different divisions for their various processions which converged at different parks and recreation grounds for the annual Whit Sing. In 1903 these included Firth Park (A), Attercliffe Recreation Ground (B), High Hazels Park (C), Norfolk Park (D) and Crookesmoor Recreation Ground (E).

Figure 7.6
The figure shows six processions associated with four royal visits to Sheffield. The first two royal visits (1875 and 1895) lasted two days and featured processions with distinctive itineraries on both days.

1875, day 1 – procession of the Prince and Princess of Wales from Victoria Station (i) to Oakbrook (a) via Firth park (A)
1875, day 2 – procession of the Prince and Princess of Wales from Oakbrook (a) and back via Cyclops Works (j), Norfolk Works (k) Rodgers and Sons (g) and the Cutlers’ Hall (e).
1895, day 1 – procession of the Duke and Duchess of York from Victoria Station (i) to the Farm (m)
1895, day 2 – procession of the Duke and Duchess of York from The Farm (m) to Norfolk Park (B) via the Corn Exchange (h), Royal Hospital (c) and The Cutlers’ Hall (e)
1897 – procession of Queen Victoria from the Midland Station (n) to Cyclops Works (j) via the Town Hall (d) and Norfolk Park (B)
1905 – procession of King Edward VII from the Midland Station (n) to Vickers’ Works (l) via the Town Hall (d), University (b), Weston Park (C) and Parish Church (f)

Figure 7.7
1865 – funeral procession of Wilson Overend from New Haymarket to the General Cemetery (D)
1873 – funeral procession of the Rev. Canon Sale from his residence to the General Cemetery (D) via the Parish Church (C)
1880 – funeral procession of Mark Firth from his residence to the General Cemetery (D)
1885 – funeral procession of Alderman Robert Leader from his residence to Burngreave Cemetery (A) via Wicker Congregational Chapel (B)
1898 – funeral procession of Chief Constable John Jackson from the Town Hall via Collegiate Crescent (E) to Ecclesall Churchyard (F)
1910 – funeral procession of Sir Frederick Thorpe Mappin from his residence to Ecclesall Churchyard (F)