



'Night Cruiser, Lower Manhattan' (1983) by Willy Spiller

Between 1977 and 1985, the Swiss photographer Willy Spiller travelled back and forth between America's East and West coasts, casting an outsider's eye over the contemporary scene.

The images that resulted – gritty New York streets and relaxed poolside scenes in Los Angeles – offer a vibrant tale of two cities. While his pictures of LA emanate a quiet energy, Spiller's images of New York present a city defined by survival. Following economic recession and a fiscal crisis

that had almost led to its bankruptcy, New York was crime-ridden, beset by mass unemployment and on the brink of collapse. From the subway to the dance floor of Studio 54, Spiller found his way into the city's dark underbelly, capturing its speed and danger, but also its life.

Charlotte Irwin

Willy Spiller's 'Street Life' is at the Bildhalle Gallery, Zurich, until January 28 2018

The fairytale ending in need of a reverse makeover

Jo Ellison
Trending



In the Disney adaptation of the real-life romance starring Harry Windsor and Meghan Markle, we have now reached the point in the script where we find our princess-in-waiting looking soulfully in the mirror. (OK, the likelihood of her becoming a princess is pretty slim, but no Disney executive would ever countenance the title of duchess.) Standing there in her favoured vegan leather trousers and California casual Pilates gear, our heroine realises she cuts an unusual figure in the palace. She's American, she's mixed race, she was once a part-time freelance calligrapher – and she's chatty. Her free-spirited beliefs and self-affirming aphorisms clang along the corridors of the house she now inhabits. She has some understanding of the ways of the Windsors but yet, she realises, there are many more codes to learn. What she needs is a well-meaning confidante who will share with her the secrets of royal élan.

In the movie, here would follow a long makeover scene, an extended musical montage describing her re-education as a "proper" royal. We would see her learning how to wear a fascinator, or distinguishing different species of grouse or clan tartans. We would definitely see her practising her royal wave. Each scene would affirm her aptitude for public duty, and her natural warmth and radiance.

Ever since the fairy godmother summoned up a pair of glass slippers for Cinderella, the magic of metamorphosis has become a favourite cultural motif. From storybook heroine to reality show star, the wonder of transformation seduces us all. Often, the makeover precedes some meet-cut plot line – girl uses eyeliner; girl gets boy. But in more ambitious stories the makeover proposes something even more alluring: the certainty of social mobility and advancement. Under the tutelage of Professor Higgins, the cockney flower-seller Eliza

Doolittle can pass through court society. With the help of a kindly hotel concierge, *Pretty Woman's* Vivienne can quit prostitution for a sweet hereafter of polo matches and platinum-coloured credit with her property tycoon prince.

Markle is now poised to undertake the same real-life transformation that attended the royal weddings of Grace Kelly, Kate Middleton and Charlene Wittstock (who did eventually become Princess of Monaco through "tears of joy" following – according to disputed reports in the French press – three attempts to flee the altar before the big day). Already, she has been thrust into a narrative that is insisting on her metamorphosis with fetishistic glee. "See Markle's style transformation" exhort the fashion sites. Witness her "ladylike touch" as she eschews the bandeau dresses and opts for a calf-length skirt. Relish how Markle has "married royal sophistication with trendy pieces since meeting Harry".

She's already dropped the acting. She's shut down her blog. But the makeover may not run so smooth

One tabloid even offered her a "cheat sheet" on how she could "master the rules" and "truly become a member of the firm". They included always walking behind her future husband, ditching the ripped jeans, and – yes – working on her royal wave.

And things are changing. She's already dropped the acting career. She's shut down her blog. For her first public engagement she swapped her leather biker jacket for a demure knee-length navy coat that matched her fiancé's; a small but subtle act of mirroring that suggests the Windsor assimilation is well under way. The world has murmured approvingly. But the Markle makeover may not

run so smooth. As the daughter of a social worker and a lighting designer, she has a different perspective on the world. She's older than her groom-to-be, she's divorced, and she's had a successful career. More importantly, she has a voice. Watching her being interviewed on television last week, her easy confidence was almost startling. Where the Windsors flinch before the cameras as though being subjected to an especially gruesome medical examination, Markle shimmers on screen.

Her cool telegenic manner is refreshing, as is her candour. She described the Queen as Harry's "granny". She was strangely comfortable discussing how she felt about Diana. While the Duchess of Cambridge has always offered a more simpering line in matrimonial duty, Markle is calm and self-assured.

How wonderful would it be if, instead of following the same predictable storyline, Markle were to turn it upside down? Makeovers may be the stuff of fairy tales, but they also acknowledge a world still obsessed with codes and uniforms and the act of "fitting in". Surely no one, in 2017, should really need to look the part. And what is the part anyway?

Rather than conform to a list of barren protocols, I'd like to see a royal makeover in which the Windsors become a bit more Markle instead: yoga-loving, articulate, quinoa-munching members of a modern establishment. I want to see a movie montage in which Markle shows the Duke of Edinburgh how to meditate, encourages the Duchess of Cambridge to dump the nude-coloured shoes and teaches calligraphy to the Queen. Let her wear ripped jeans. Let them all eat banana cake. And as for the matching his'n'hers wardrobe – I for one am praying to see Prince Harry in a pair of vegan leather trousers.

@jellison; jo.ellison@ft.com

Master Suite: inside London's most expensive hotel suite

What does £24,000 a night get you? In the first of a new video series on the world's most luxurious hotel suites, the FT's travel editor Tom Robbins visits the Langham Hotel's Sterling Suite in London. Its palatial accommodation offers butlers, banquets and bespoke minibars, among other luxuries.



The past few years have seen an arms race between top hotels competing to provide the most opulent suite for wealthy clients.

Go to FT Weekend's video channel at www.ft.com/ftlife to watch and subscribe to more videos in the Master Suite series.

What cities owe to the migrants from within

Janan Ganesh
Citizen of nowhere



French Protestants in the 17th century, Irish journeymen in the 18th, Russian Jews in the 19th, Bengalis in the 20th and international hipsters in the 21st have settled in Spitalfields, an area either side of London's Commercial Street that must be, square metre for square metre, among the most migrated-to places in the world. It is so dense with stories that Dan Cruickshank's 750-page history of this "handful of streets", published last year, feels too short.

Some of those stories start in the rest of Britain. The artists who helped to lift Spitalfields from its late-20th-century malaise include Tracey Emin (who grew up in Margate), George Passmore (Plymouth) and the writer Jeanette Winterson (Lancashire). The city's dining trends are now set by chefs who started in the local Ten Bells pub, such as Isaac McHale (Scotland). Over the road is the rocket-like church designed by the dark visionary Nicholas Hawksmoor (Nottinghamshire).

The most unsung migrants in the world do not cross a national border. They just move from the provinces to the metropole, and remake it. In the current obsession with globalism, they are being forgotten. Foreigners, whether cherished by liberals or abused by nationalists, are assumed to be the people who make modern cities what they are. But their dynamic effect is often equalled or bettered by arrivals from elsewhere in the same nation.

Looking at friends who fit this profile, I can only theorise as to where their spark comes from. When a foreigner moves to a big western city, they are often forced by mortal fear

or by economic pressures. They might come with no great anticipation. In some cases, they applied for several destinations before ending up wherever would have them. But for the vagaries of 1980s immigration law, I might now be a Torontonian or a Sydneysider.

For a domestic migrant, the experience can be very different. It is the fruition of a childhood dream. For a restless youth looking at New York from the Pennsylvania rust belt, or at Paris from Picardy, the prize is gallingly close as they grow up. They are near enough to see the city baying to them,

For the restless youth from the Pennsylvania rust belt, New York is a tantalising mirage on the horizon

but too far to taste it. By the time they arrive, they are ravenous. They never had anywhere else in mind.

Perversely, they sometimes find less of a support system. An arrival from, say, Nigeria, can track down the local Nigerian population, visit the Nigerian churches, shop at the Nigerian market stalls. For a domestic migrant, there is no community of such internal coherence. London has no Middlesbrough churches. Berlin has no Rhineland-Palatinate barber shops. Big cities force internal arrivals into atomised self-reliance, which makes purer urbanites of them.

Some of the most fanatical Londoners I know come from the Isle of Man, Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Kent and Wales. Most felt stifled in their childhood

communities; some actively hate them and dread the imminent return for Christmas. I am eligible for citizenship in three continents, but these people espouse a metropolitan chauvinism that can leave me feeling like a yeoman 10 generations bonded to the same rural estate. They are uncynical about urban life because it was a tantalising mirage on the horizon until they first touched it at 18 or 21.

Readers will know (or be) the type. You have to look hard for the last vestiges of their outsidership. City slang can stump them. As pedestrians, they struggle to work the angles and spaces of a congested street. But the spirit is there as they set up businesses, visit cultural treasures, date in the most enthusiastically colour-blind way and exploit opportunities that locals take for granted.

Their marginalisation from the discourse about migrants is something recent. In the 19th century, even as millions heaved across borders, the provincial newcomer to the big city was the most recurring character in literature. Think of Pip in *Great Expectations*, Rastignac in the works of Balzac, Julien Sorel in *The Red and the Black*. Their stories were epic and morally complex, with the metropolis depicted as a place of emancipation and corruption at the same time. Similar stories are told now but the protagonists are people who vault entire continents. In a sense, I am over-represented in modern culture and my friends are under-represented. It is a strange kind of progress.

janan.ganesh@ft.com; @JananGanesh
More columns at ft.com/jananganesh

OVERSEAS
AN INVITATION
TO TRAVEL

OVERSEAS
CHRONOGRAPH

VACHERON CONSTANTIN
GENÈVE, DEPUIS 1755