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Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem

Peter Preston, Paul Simpson-Housley

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`The expression of human experience it embodies ... includes all personal history'.
Saul Bellow's view of the city is far from that of classic geographical descriptions which look at growth or decline, demographic patterns, traffic flows and economic potential: these empirically conceived models of urban geography fail to accommodate the crucial human aspect of city life.
Located at the interface of geography and literature, *Writing the City* visualizes the city through the hopes, aspirations, disappointments and pains of international novelists and creative writers. From Manchester, Montreal and Sydney to Osaka, Varanasi amd Odessa, cities become more than their built environment, more than a set of class or economic relationships: they are also an experience to be lived, suffered and undergone.
Thus cities are seen in terms of the innocence of an Eden now lost, a threat of sinful Babylon and the promise of a New Jerusalem.

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