

Titel der These

Thesis  
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades  
Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)  
im kombinatorischen Bachelor of Arts  
der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal

Teilstudiengang:

vorgelegt von

Erstprüfer/in:  
Zweitprüfer/in:

Datum

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# 1 Introduction

New York,  
Concrete jungle where dreams are made of,  
There's nothing you cant do,  
Now you're in New York,  
these streets will make you feel brand new,  
the lights will inspire you,  
lets hear it for New York, New York, New York<sup>1</sup>

These lines from the song *Empire State of Mind* (2009) by the famous American rapper, record producer and entrepreneur Jay-Z, who himself was born in Brooklyn, New York, reveal the challenge of capturing the City of New York in words. New York City is on the one hand celebrated as a "[c]oncrete jungle", but on the other hand also as the place, "where dreams are made of", whose "streets will make you feel brand new" and whose "lights will inspire you".

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<sup>1</sup>Jay-Z ft. Alicia Keys *Empire State of Mind*. <http://www.magistrix.de/lyrics/Jay-Z%20ft.%20Alicia%20Keys/Empire-State-Of-Mind-405440.html>. (September 25, 2011).

## 2 The City as Setting

## 3 New York Topography through the Centuries

## 4 Pictures of New York City

### 4.1 Panorama of the City

#### 4.1.1 John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*

### 4.2 Into the City

#### 4.2.1 The Polarized City of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* and Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*

#### 4.2.2 The Ethnic City of Abraham Cahan's *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* and Rudolph Fisher's *City of Refuge*

## 5 Conclusion

## 6 Primary Literature

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