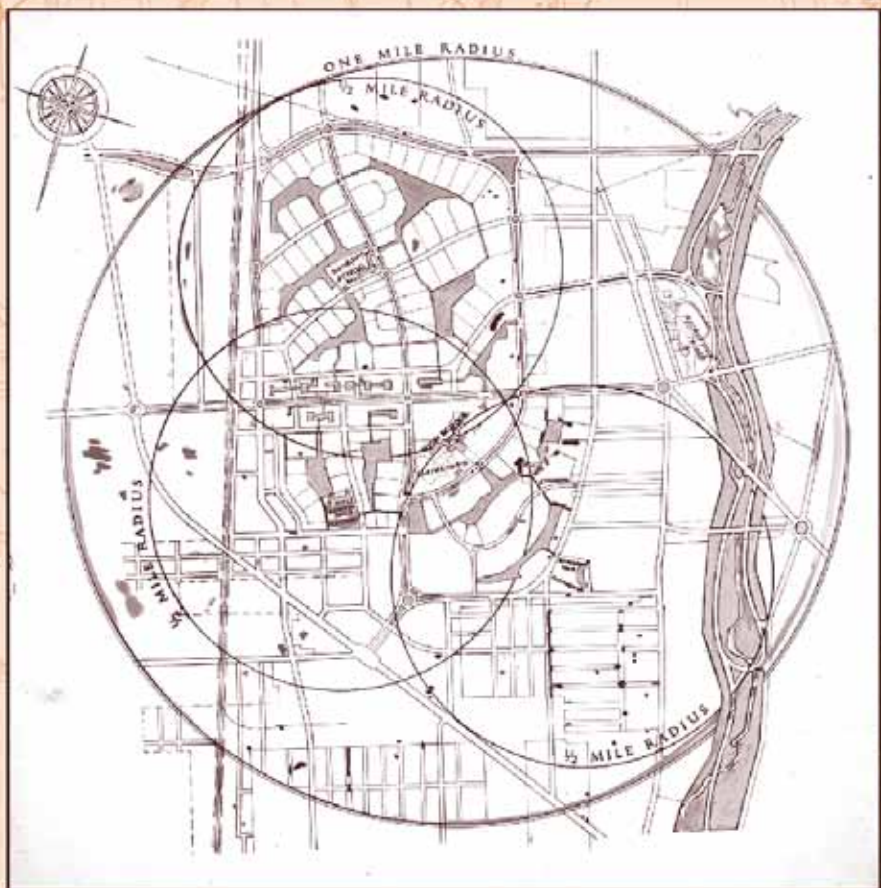# Cityscapes in History

Creating the Urban Experience

Edited by **Katrina Gulliver and Heléna Tóth**

CITYSCAPES IN HISTORY

This page has been left blank intentionally

Cityscapes in History

Creating the Urban Experience

Edited by

KATRINA GULLIVER
University of New South Wales, Australia

HELÉNA TÓTH
Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, Germany

ASHGATE

v

Contents

List of Figures, Tables and Boxes

Figures

Tables

Boxes

This page has been left blank intentionally

Notes on Contributors

Susanneh Bieber received her PhD in Art History from the Freie Universität Berlin. Her area of research is modern and contemporary art with a focus on the interactions between art, design, architecture, urbanism and geography. She is currently a fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, where she works on her book *Construction Sites: American Artists Engage the Built Environment.* As curator at Tate Modern, London, and the Fresno Metropolitan Museum, California, she organized numerous exhibitions. She has published essays on Max Beckmann's concept of space in the artist's retrospective catalogue (Tate, 2003), on Minimalism in *Variations on a Theme* (Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 2004), and on site-specific art in *Off-Site* (Fresno Metropolitan Museum, 2006).

Richard Dennis is Professor of Human Geography at UCL, where he teaches urban historical geography. He is the author of *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930* (Cambridge University Press, 2008) and of numerous articles and book chapters, especially dealing with flats/apartments in London and Toronto; the representation of London in the writings of the Victorian novelist George Gissing and, most recently, the cultural geography of the pre-World War I London Underground.

Ivana Dobrivojević works as research fellow at the Institute of Contemporary History, Belgrade, Serbia. She is the author of *State Repression during the Dictatorship of King Alexandar, 1929–1935* (2006) and *Village and City. The Transformation of Serbian Agrarian Society, 1945–1955* (2013). Her fields of interest include urbanization and modernization processes in socialist Yugoslavia and the life of ordinary people under communism.

Konstanze Sylva Domhardt holds a PhD in American and European History of Urban Design (2008) and a Master's in Architecture (2000) from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. Currently, she works as a research associate and lecturer at the Institute of History and Theory of Architecture at the ETH and as townscape curator in the Department for the Preservation of Historic Buildings in Basel. Her primary research fields deal with the CIAM discourse on urbanism, the transatlantic dialogue among planners in the twentieth century, and historical and current approaches to the conservation

of the urban heritage of modernism. She is the author of *The Heart of the City: Die Stadt in den transatlantischen Debatten der CIAM, 1933–1951* (Zürich, 2012).

Philip J. Ethington is Professor of History and Political Science at the University of Southern California, Multimedia Editor of the journal *Urban History* (Cambridge University Press), and Co-Director of the USC Center for Transformative Scholarship in the Digital Age.

Michael R. Glass holds a PhD in Geography from Pennsylvania State University. He is currently lecturer in Urban Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. His research focuses on the development of political spaces in American city-regions and the use of performativity theory in political geography. He is co-editor of *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space* (Routledge, 2014).

Katrina Gulliver holds a PhD in History from Cambridge University. She is currently a lecturer in History at the University of New South Wales in Sydney. She is the author of *Modern Women in China and Japan: Gender, Modernity and Global Feminism between the Wars* (Tauris, 2012), and the founding editor of *Transnational Subjects: History, Society and Culture.*

Ella Howard is Assistant Professor of History at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia. She is an urban historian whose work focuses on the history of poverty, the built environment and tourism.

Neil Murphy is Senior Lecturer in Early Modern European History at Northumbria University. His research interests are principally focused on the history of late medieval and early modern France. He has written a range of articles on the urban history of late medieval and Renaissance France, and he is currently working on a monograph on the development of the royal entry ceremony.

Nicholas Temple is Professor of Architecture at the University of Huddersfield, having previously taught at the universities of Lincoln, Nottingham, Liverpool and Pennsylvania. A graduate of Cambridge University, and a Rome Scholar in architecture, he was recently awarded the Paul Mellon Centre Rome Fellowship (2012). He has published books and articles on aspects of the history and theory of architecture and urbanism, including *Architecture and Justice: Judicial Meanings in the Public Realm* (Ashgate, 2013), *renovatio urbis: Architecture, Urbanism and Ceremony in the Rome of Julius II* (Routledge, 2011), *Disclosing Horizons: Architecture, Perspective and Redemptive Space* (Routledge, 2007) and co-edited a volume with Soumyen Bandyopadhyay, Jane Lomholt and Renee

Tobe entitled *The Humanities in Architectural Design: A Contemporary and Historical Perspective* (Routledge, 2010).

Heléna Tóth holds a PhD in History from Harvard University. She is currently a post-doctoral research fellow at the Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, where she is working on her new book project on the history of secular rites of passage in East Germany and Hungary, 1949–1989. She has published several book chapters on the history of migration and secular rites of passage. Her book *The Revolutions of 1848 and an Exiled Generation: German and Hungarian Émigrés, 1848-1871* is scheduled to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2014.

Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom is Chancellor's Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine, and the editor of the *Journal of Asian Studies.* A frequent contributor to newspapers, magazines and online journals of opinion, he is the author of books such as *Global Shanghai, 1850–2010* (Routledge, 2009) and *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2010 and 2013 editions).

This page has been left blank intentionally

Foreword
Cityscapes of the Living Past

Philip J. Ethington

Cities do not sit still for portraits. A 'still life' – *nature mort* – portrait of a city is a death mask from life. While there are many cities of the dead, there has never been a dead city. Cities team with life: the collective living energy that makes a city's every feature. Every action by every individual is necessary to the constitution of its forms, products, ways of life, its *milieu*, its *sense* as a region, and its relations with all other regions, cities and places of the globe. Seen as an entity that is defined by the uncountable actions of all of its inhabitants, cities in the modern era are necessarily limitless in their extent – interacting in myriad ways with all of the other cities on the globe. In terms of travel and migration, telecommunications, distribution of goods and services, and not least, the long reach of ancient institutions of governance and culture, no city is untouched by another. The human world, if seen on the scale of millennia, is one vast network of urban nodes, stretching the entire history of human experience in technique and self-governance to every compact, semi-permanent settlement. Even those that lay isolated for many centuries have worked to maintain – essentially through storage – the institutional roles, rules and forms spread by earlier cultures and states, from those of Mesopotamia, Mesoamerica, to Han China, Augustan Rome, the Hapsburg Empire of Spain, the age of Philip II, the Ottoman Empire, or the empire run by the twenty-first-century United States.

The chapters in this volume attest to the impossibility of stably classifying, bounding, naming, landmarking or performing the cityscapes of the urban world. The living city writhes and wrings free of such frozen frameworks. Boundaries, in this volume, are fittingly portrayed as mental projections onto the topographical landscape, imaginaries that shape the urban experience. In themselves arbitrary, boundaries violate the principle of the living city. Freedom is embodied, enacted and declared with all crossings of boundaries. Boundaries, attempting to prevent or to restrain certain motions of bodies, ideas, images, practices, property rights, aesthetics or standards of justice, can be seen as *reactive* to an intent to transcend them, or merely to a will to pursue dreams that never contemplated the regime of rules that powers have imposed. The arrogance of the state was magnified in

the age of empire, as Katrina Gulliver explains, subjecting colonial cities to the temporal and geographic 'othering' perceptions and prescriptions. But colonial cities ultimately, she shows, defy the pretensions of empire. Gulliver's colonial cities and 'colonials' were marginalized in the same act as defining a 'city' and a 'colony'. Those acts of definition also inscribed disciplinary planning as a modern intellectual tradition.

A great challenge in writing about the world's cityscapes – great and small, at every scale and for every subject matter – is to avoid inscribing new boundaries on them through static portraits. Intellectuals have written about cities for many centuries, laying foundations, as it were, for a global metropolis of urban imaginaries. Every writer about cities belongs to this metropolis, knowingly or not. Its haunted mansions are filled with the collective memory of restrictions, regulations, repressions. Its many bright spaces are also densely populated, by visions of hope and human emancipation. The chapters in this volume expose and explicate the contours of dynamism across the cityscapes of the globe, explicating how conceptual boundaries have attempted to grasp something in motion, whether the city of 'hurry' or its opposite, a contemplative, balanced city of content citizens. Aristotle's *polis* is the home of *zoon politicon* – the political *animal*. That embodied notion of denizen-citizens foregrounds the mortal biology of all the actions that create the city, and the necessity of eventual death in all the individuals who carry it out. That tension between life and death may be the ultimate author of the city as a living past. The great majority of every cityscape's being is the labour of a thousand generations stored up below its surface. The surfaces of today are the outer layers of a living reef, and to map this adequately requires something more like cinematography than cartography.

The authors included here vividly storyboard the active motions of the myriad people who created cityscapes on every continent in many centuries. While as diverse as the city neighbourhoods, monuments, temples, forms and events so richly explored here, they all attest to the transient, ever-dynamic quality of all things urban – built form, meaning, habitation, self-representation, imaginaries, boundaries and practices. Nicholas Temple's study of ritual architecture depicts the active process of constituting urban form 'in the inter-relationships between spaces and the actions that take place within them'. Rituals in this sense are more generally practiced throughout the city, making homes, neighbourhoods, districts, the durable – yet ever plastic – things that they are. 'Plans' for cities, by ancient architects, by medieval clerics, early modern 'Law of the Indies', the Modernists of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (Domhardt), by nineteenth-century American capitalists in Pittsburg (Glass), are conceptual maps of intended futures. If implemented, plans become interventions into a dynamic cityscape, channelling motion in new ways, by demolishing the fabric

of many lives, or by setting up new roles and rules. Thus even the spaces of cemeteries, where life is stilled, are actively produced and contested. As Heléna Tóth shows, the Communist Hungarian state intervened in a long-running effort to plan these final resting places, toward goals of hygiene, spirituality, and even the income produced by cemeteries. Citizens in death still play a role in the great collective urban *oeuvre*.

Perhaps the pulse of the living city can be measured on scale of velocities. From the methodical welcoming of sixteenth-century French monarchs (Murphy) to the 'hurry' of capitalist London (Dennis), from the migrations of rural agrarians to Yugoslavia's Socialist cities (Dobrivojević) to the confinements and foragings of twentieth-century New York City homeless (Howard), the cityscapes of any era are performances (Glass) of a living and very deep past. Like Oldenburg's proposal for a monument of wrecked ships in the Hudson Bay (Bieber), the meaning of every cityscape is built from its living past.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Acknowledgements

This page has been left blank intentionally

Introduction

Katrina Gulliver and Heléna Tóth

The field of urban history has grown exponentially in the last 30 years as the experiences of different social classes and ethnic groups have come to be focused on as part of the historical narrative. Interdisciplinarity has characterized the field of urban history from the beginning. The influence of the Chicago School of sociology since the 1920s, and thinkers such as Richard Sennett since the 1960s have changed the approach of academic historians towards the city, and the idea of the urban as a specific cultural factor. Cultural theorists in particular have made a significant impact on how historians, geographers or sociologists think about the urban, both as space and as a cultural creation. Henri Lefebvre drew a distinction between the *city*, a 'present and immediate reality, a practico-material and architectural fact', and the *urban*, 'a social reality made up of relations which are to be conceived of, constructed or reconstructed by thought.'[1] For Michael de Certeau, the city existed at the intersection of space and practice as a paradigmatic site of 'the practice of everyday', which comes into being through an interplay between a planned space and the multifarious, often unpredictable, ways its inhabitants use it.[2] Today, advances in digital technology and satellite mapping are changing our understanding of both space and practice. Scholars are now able to explore (and virtually recreate) the city of the past, they can map various stages of urban development onto each other and come to new understandings of the historical dimensions of the urban experience.[3] In many ways, the academic genealogy of the field reflects its object of study: there is no single narrative of urban reality.

How do we define the urban experience? What are the qualities that make living in a city different to living elsewhere? The answers to these questions are historically specific, their common denominator being perhaps a deep cultural ambivalence towards the city. Cities have been characterized as sites of progress and rationality but also of crime and decay, as a space, where immigrants enter a new society and come to be seen as drivers of innovation and change but also as

---

[1]   Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford, 1996), p. 103.

[2]   Michael de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 93.

[3]   See the *Hypercities Project* at www.hypercities.com and Philip J. Ethington's upcoming work: *Ghost Metropolis: Los Angeles since 13,000 B.C.*

intruders, depending on the vantage point of the observer. Raymond Williams considers the evolution of attitudes to cities together with the evolution of the city as space:

> we have to notice the regular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century association of ideas of the city with money and law; the eighteenth-century association with wealth and luxury; the persistent association, reaching a climax in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with the mob and the masses; the nineteenth- and twentieth-century association with mobility and isolation.[4]

Such paradoxes are an essential component of the concept of the urban also for David Harvey: 'the city is the high point of human achievement ... It is a place of mystery, the site of the unexpected, full of agitations and ferments, of multiple liberties, opportunities, and alienations; of passions and repressions; of cosmopolitanism and extreme parochialisms; of violence, innovation, and reaction'.[5] In fact, it is precisely a basic historical awareness that provides the raw material for a shared community imaginary, which M. Christine Boyer and Gyan Prakash consider as a defining feature of the urban.[6]

Ambivalence has also been the key characteristic of efforts to understand the specific behavioural and cultural patterns that are at the core of urban existence. Georg Simmel's urban psychology described the blasé urban dweller, surrounded by so many distractions that he came to be bored with it all. For Simmel, the city created a sense of loneliness and atomization in its inhabitants, the same way as it was a site with the most radical division of labour. The sensory overload that Simmel associated with the city in a negative way became an attractive feature of the urban environment in Walter Benjamin's reading. Benjamin's *flâneur* is a controversial figure. Just like Simmel's urban dweller, he is alone: 'someone abandoned in the crowd. In this, he shares the situation of the commodity'.[7] Benjamin did not consider urban alienation necessarily debilitating: his emblematic urban dweller was ultimately 'as much at home among the façades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls'.[8] Scholars such as Robert Park locate the key psychological characteristic of the urban environment precisely in the fact

---

4   Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London, 1973), p. 290.

5   David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore, 1985), p. 250.

6   Gyan Prakash, 'Introduction', in Gyan Prakash and Kevin M. Kruse (eds), *The Spaces of the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics and Everyday Life* (Princeton, 2008); M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 1994).

7   Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London, 1973), p. 55.

8   Ibid., p. 37.

that it offers a range of ways in which urban dwellers can 'feel at home'. In their reading, part of the city's attraction is that 'in the long run every individual finds somewhere among the varied manifestations of city life the sort of environment in which he expands and feels at ease; finds, in short, the moral climate in which his peculiar nature obtains the stimulations that bring his innate dispositions to full and free expression'.[9] The urban phenomenon therefore amounts to a collaborative cultural experience with a potential to accommodate and also attract new urban dwellers. One of the drivers of migration to cities in the modern period has been cultural affinity, as well as economic prospects.

In this volume, we look at both the physical and the social 'scapes' of the city. The term 'cityscapes' refers to three dynamics that shape the development of the urban environment: the interplay between conscious planning and organic development, the tension between social control and its unintended consequences and the relationship between projection and self-presentation. These three dynamics form the core of the sections of the book. The chapters examine these themes through case studies drawn from a range of historical periods and geographical locations. The red thread that connects these chapters across space, time and disciplinary conventions is an emphasis on the multiple, often competing valences of the concept of the urban.

The Chapters

The chapters come from a range of disciplines, including geography, history of art, architecture and history. They are in conversation with each other both within and across the thematic units. The chapters are revised and expanded versions of papers presented at the international conference 'Cityscapes in History: Creating the Urban Experience', held at the Ludwig Maximilian University in July 2010.

The City Planned

Chapters that comprise the first part of the book, 'The City Planned', examine issues related to agency, the transfer of knowledge and the construction of space. A common characteristic of these chapters is that they all treat basic elements of the urban landscape such as 'municipality', 'monument', 'neighbourhood' and

---

9   Robert Park, 'The City', in Richard Sennett (ed.), *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (New York, 1969), pp. 91–130.

ultimately, the very concept of 'urbanity' as unstable categories whose meanings are constantly contested and negotiated.

Michael Glass analyses the creation of municipal units in the Pittsburgh city region between the Pennsylvania Constitutional Conventions of 1837 and 1873. This period was characterized by a 'liberal attitude toward municipal incorporation', before the Constitutional Convention of 1873 decided on a stricter redefinition of 'what constituted local political definitions of "city", "town" and "borough"'. In the rapidly urbanizing Pittsburgh city region, the lax legislation before this had 'established the context for a burgeoning array of geographical imagining', some of which were defined in terms of their relationship to industrialization (by expressing a rural or industrial identity), while others focused on a particular way of life (the suburb of Wildwood or the moral project of Temperanceville). Building on performativity theory, Glass considers the founding of these municipalities as 'space acts' and stresses the importance of naming, since 'new geographic communities are constituted through a declarative performance, provided the right conditions exist for them to arise'. As Glass shows, a broad range of identities were embodied in the experiments to carve out spaces in the urban landscape in mid-nineteenth-century Pittsburgh.

If Glass' work demonstrates the broad variety of ideas that came to be incorporated into municipal units in nineteenth-century Pennsylvania, Kostanze Domhardt focuses on the evolution of one particular concept of the urban landscape, 'the neighbourhood unit'. Domhardt analyses the work of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) from 1928 to 1959 to show how the members of this organization changed their understanding of 'neighbourhood' as they were confronted with the realities of urban planning in America. Key members of CIAM fled Europe during the Second World War and continued their work in the United States. Domhardt argues that the concept of the neighbourhood emerged 'as a bridge between the analytical-scientific view of the city developed in Europe and the cultural influences of America'. In her analysis, Domhardt considers this post-war encounter as a further chapter in an already ongoing transatlantic architectural discourse and calls attention to the limitations of the American influence on European planners, notably in the area of aesthetics: 'CIAM circles [remained] fascinated primarily by the use-specific interpretation of urban spaces, and not by a specific aesthetic quality, such as the experience of the urban space by its residents or the visual perception of the city'. Although the concept of the neighbourhood proved useful for the members of CIAM, it did not shift the priorities and emphases of the organization: the city as built environment kept its primary position as '"The Functional City" of the early Modern Movement ... morphed into a socially defined space and thereby

again obtained a hierarchically articulated structure'. Notably, 'the question of urban identity only entered these debates through the backdoor: if one espoused planning for the community, it was first necessary to explain what constituted this community in the first place and what encouraged its formation'.

Susanneh Bieber's chapter demonstrates the inherent instability in the definition of another element of the urban landscape, the monument. Bieber takes as her starting point the post-war discourse on monuments in the United States in which 'functionalist' and 'preservationist' attitudes collided. As Bieber shows, for all their differences, these attitudes 'were both premised on the monument as stable in its relationship between form, function'. Claes Oldenburg and Robert Smithson represent a third position in this discussion, as they 'insisted on the instability of the concept of monument in their art' by focusing on the 'process of becoming a monument' in their works. Bieber shows both the extent and limitations of these experiments. She argues that by considering a fleet of rusting Liberty vessels as a monument to the Second World War or by proposing obstacle monuments which would obstruct traffic in New York City, Oldenburg and Smithson constantly challenged assumptions about the construction of public space. At the same time, their works 'ultimately recovered the impact of monuments as carriers and makers of meaning'.

What constitutes urban identity? This is one of the central questions in Ivana Dobrivojević's chapter on urbanization in Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Dobrivojević finds that 'Yugoslav socialist urbanization was, in some way, in accordance with the Marxist theories of the disappearance of the differences between cities and villages. Still, the Marxist ideal and Yugoslav practice were far from each other. Instead of urbanizing the countryside, Dobrivojević argues that socialist policies ultimately ruralized the towns. The process of urbanization in Yugoslavia was characterized by a series of paradoxes: despite the professed aim of the Communist Party to make housing available to all, 'socialist urbanization was a synonym for social segregation in practice', as newly founded socialist companies tried to lure engineers and other experts with the promise of comfortable housing and most workers had to contend with living in the barracks in factory colonies. While in theory the new residents of the city, just arrived from the villages, were supposed to adopt an urban lifestyle, in practice they made their urban environment conform to rural practices of living (e.g. keeping livestock in their homes). The reason behind these contradictions Dobrivojević identifies in a fundamental paradox: Party officials who were expected to be the major drivers behind modernization and urbanization processes 'were intimidated by a city and could hardly adopt the urban way of life'. Party officials faced the conundrum that while cities functioned as sites of socialist modernization, they also challenged socialist ideology, especially in the

area of family relations and moral standards. While spatial elements of the city could be manipulated, socialist planners in Yugoslavia (just as the founders of Temperanceville in the chapter by Michael Glass) found it an insurmountable challenge to establish a reliable correlation between a particular kind of urban environment and the actual behaviour of its inhabitants.

The City Lived

While the chapters in the first part of the book look at city planning primarily from the perspective of the planners, the chapters in 'The City Lived' take the perspective of the inhabitants of the urban environment. What defines the perception and self-perception of a city? How does the perception of time influence the transformation of space? What unintended consequences does the regulation of space have as a form of social control? The chapters in this part explore the urban environment in colonial cities (Gulliver), Britain and Canada (Dennis) and the United States (Howard) in finding an answer to these questions.

Katrina Gulliver examines the emergence of colonial urban identities through the examples of New Orleans and Sydney. Colonial cities, Gulliver argues, 'helped to create the – at least rhetorical device – of the European city'. Questions of identity and reputation gained significant importance for the residents of colonial towns in this process as they were reacting against labels ascribed to them from the outside and as they were creating new social structures. 'Particularly in the case of cities that had been penal colonies, the reputation clung to them of being inhabited entirely by felons (even when this had never been true)'. In this context Gulliver looks at the proliferation of duels, libel suits and other instances of what she terms 'reputation defence strategies' and argues that they were 'indicative not of disorder but in fact of a different order from that in Europe, resulting from different conditions and priorities'.

Building on E.M. Forster, Richard Dennis introduces the term 'the architecture of hurry' to describe the development of the urban environment in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. 'Two of the foundational statements about the character of capitalist urbanization come together in "the architecture of hurry": the concepts of time-space compression and creative destruction'. Dennis conceptualizes the 'architecture of hurry' along different time scales: 'the speeding up of everyday life', 'the hurry of an individual's career-long social and residential mobility', and 'the hurry inherent in the acceleration of advanced capitalism – the speeding up in the circulation of capital, the global dissemination and accumulation of information, the destruction and reconstruction of successive physical and

imagined environments'. The concept of time underlying the architecture of hurry does not only refer to pace. Dennis distinguishes between speed and hurry: 'There is a nervousness, an anxiety, a breathlessness, a disorder to "hurry" which is absent from the efficiency and single-mindedness of speed.' Examples drawn from a wide range of literary and visual sources, as well as data on residential mobility in England, the United States and Canada, illustrate that contemporary observers reacted to the accelerated pace of change in the urban environment with both enthusiasm and alarm. The ambivalent attitude towards the changing cityscape, Dennis argues, was to a large part due to the fact that residential mobility in this quickly changing world closely correlated with social mobility: the high rates of population turnover were characteristic for the apartments for the middle classes, while flats inhabited by the working classes were often considered 'a goal achieved rather than a stepping stone to something else'. Ultimately, however, 'lodging of those on the bottom of the social ladder often fell victim to the "creative destruction" that accompanied urban development'.

Downward social mobility and its spatial aspects are the central themes in Ella Howard's piece on homelessness in New York City. 'The phenomenon of spatial dispersion of the homeless is historically specific and results from a series of relatively recent changes in the politics of homelessness and urban space'. At the end of the nineteenth century, the homeless were primarily housed in skid rows, which 'served to regulate, limit and reform the behaviour of the homeless, through both the provision of structured resources and the enforcement of geographic containment'. The support networks that emerged in these areas depended on a broader understanding of the reasons for homelessness. Howard draws on the contemporary medical discourse to show how, by the 1960s, a correlation between alcoholism (considered a treatable disease) and homelessness came to be widely accepted and as a result, 'the homeless were increasingly seen as individuals who were worthy of assistance and thus had a right to exist within the city'. By the 1970s, however, with the rise of a 'new' kind of homeless group, which included African Americans, more women than before (mainly widows and divorcees) and also an increasing number of young substance-abusers, the city's standard policies of containment turned into more aggressive eradication efforts. As gentrification reached the Bowery, the homeless 'were increasingly displaced'. Howard shows that the urban presence of the homeless – 'the conflation of the poor and the place in which they lived' – (whether confined in a skid row or on the streets) was at each stage closely connected with the broader understanding of homelessness as a phenomenon. She argues that ultimately, 'the spatial decentralization of homelessness created a new landscape of poverty'.

The City as a Stage

The city has traditionally been a place of representation; it has often served as a stage for forming, displaying and solidifying power relations. The ritual and ceremonial aspects of the urban experience have recently received renewed attention from scholars from various disciplines, ranging from theatre studies to architecture. The chapters in the third part of the book, 'The City as a Stage', explore the potential of the city as a space of ritual or ceremony.

Nicholas Temple studies the concept of ritual as it is applied to the built environment. How does a space become a site of ritual? Temple compares sites of pilgrimage in antiquity to contemporary buildings, which fulfil similar functions, yet are not considered ritual spaces. The common denominator between old and new is, as Temple argues, 'the principle that certain kinds of spaces and their ordering "equipment" (furniture, exhibits, framed views etc.) invite us to re-orientate ourselves within the city, beyond the immediate confines of the building. The resulting reciprocity between local and distant, the tactile and the visual, serves as one of the key qualities of ritualized space'. Temple probes what makes us feel so uncomfortable about the term 'ritual' and examines how the concept of civic participation has changed over time. He suggests that the 'historical role of prosaic experience, as a background condition receptive to the appropriations of sacred or civic rituals, has become in the modern world the dominant experience of the city, against which no alternative seems conceivable – at least not from the perspective of the consumer/urban dweller'. Reading contemporary architecture while considering ritualized space as an analytical possibility leads Temple to conclude that 'the idea of the participatory dimension of urban life, as a concretization of exemplary "mytho-historic" models, arguably still pervades the city today, albeit latently in the often unremarkable – or overlooked – situations of everyday encounter'.

The two last chapters in the book present case studies when the city was literally turned into a ceremonial stage: Neil Murphy looks at the royal entry as a spectacle in Renaissance France and Heléna Tóth examines the connection between the cemetery regulations of 1970 and the development of socialist burial rites in Hungary.

Rather than focusing on the allegorical meaning of the performative elements of the royal entry, Murphy is interested in how the residents 'prepared the ceremony and transformed the urban space', thus drawing a connection between the power and social structures of the urban environment and the modes of representation. The preparations for the royal entry transformed both the public and the private space as streets were cleaned, vagrants were expelled, the city walls were repaired and wealthy residents of the town were required to open their

houses to the royal entourage. Moreover, buildings in bad repair or obstructing the projected processional route were removed. The image cities projected of themselves was therefore radically different from their actual functioning. As Murphy points out: 'the monarch was not looking at a "real" urban landscape representative of day-to-day urban life, but a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem. Indeed, the "real" town was almost entirely hidden from view during an entry.' Yet even if this elaborate transformation remained only a camouflage, it reflected very precisely the power relations on which the social structure of the city was built: 'The process of preparing a ceremonial welcome permitted town councils to display the full range of their power and authority over the urban fabric, which was then reinforced on the day of the entry itself by their ability to walk in procession beside the king, which was denied to the vast majority of the urban population'. The preparations for the royal entry thus solidified (or tested) the political and social structure within the towns, while the actual royal entry symbolically embodied the place of the town in the larger body politic.

Taking the cemetery regulations of 1970 in Hungary as her starting point, Tóth connects the discussion on the ownership of cemetery grounds to the broader discourse on constructing 'proper' socialist burials. She argues that a 'close reading of the cemetery regulations of 1970 reveals both the extent and the limitations of the socialist state's attempts to ... chip away at the ideological influence of religion'. She points out that elements of the cemetery regulations, notably the fact that they were framed in terms of modernization and hygienic requirements, should be understood as part of a broader discourse on cemetery administration that goes back to the Enlightenment. 'Equally importantly, however, [they] also reflect a characteristic of the relations between Church and state in Communist Hungary, namely, the fact that abstract questions in the ideological battle between Marxism-Leninism and the so-called "religious world view" were concretized through negotiations regarding space.'

As we seek new understandings of urban communities in the past, our aim in this volume is to initiate a dialogue between works from different disciplines and to present them in a framework that cuts across temporal, geographical or disciplinary categories. The connection between chapters that we have made is only one of the many ways in which the chapters are in conversation. Indeed, the juxtaposition of research on different parts of the world, thinking about 'comparing the incomparable', opens up new directions for research.[10]

---

[10]   Jeffrey Wasserstrom, 'Comparing "Incomparable" Cities: Postmodern L.A. and Old Shanghai', *Contention: Debates in Society, Culture, and Science,* 5/3 (1996): 69–90.

This page has been left blank intentionally

PART I
The City Planned

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 1

Performing the Geographical Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Pittsburgh

Michael R. Glass

Pennsylvania's nineteenth-century state politics established the context for a burgeoning array of geographical imaginings in communities across the Commonwealth. Following an initially permissive attitude by the state toward the right of local communities to develop their own vision regarding land use and local identity, the period between the state Constitutional Conventions of 1837 and 1872–73 saw the rapid evolution of urban political geographies – notably in the city of Pittsburgh and the surrounding Allegheny County. Pittsburgh's community leaders envisioned and codified the city in various ways: as an agrarian region, an industrial power, a bucolic suburbanizing city and as an exemplar of temperance. The codification of new urban political boundaries in Pittsburgh through the courts thus represent particular 'performances' wherein competing visions for new urban spaces occurred during a period when the state legislature unwittingly enabled the local experimentation with different forms of municipal government. This era of experimentation waned after the 1872–73 Constitutional Convention, as legislators sought to control an urban hierarchy characterized by a cacophony of geographic visions, which did not necessarily coincide with the state's vision of a modernizing Pennsylvania.

The period of this case study demonstrates what can occur when the unleashing of community imaginations about their own geographies collides with non-local imaginings of the same. The prime example at the state scale was the unleashing of new geographic visions in 1834 with the legal devolution of municipal incorporation powers to the county scale, and the consequent tightening and redefinition by state politicians in 1872–73 over what constituted local political definitions of 'city', 'town', and 'borough'. At the local scale, the devolution of incorporation powers enabled entrepreneurs to define their own spatial practices within geographic spaces which they constructed at the stroke of a pen. Such spatial representations of community ideas and ideals remain visible in historic maps of the city, and enable researchers to identify

the dynamism and vigour with which urban communities developed new spatial practices and senses of the places they inhabited.

In the next section I discuss the urban experience in Pennsylvania, where different conceptions of urban space were attempted – from the official scale of the state, to the communities of practice, which sought to codify their own notions of land use. The years between 1837 and 1872–73 (the years of Pennsylvania's two Constitutional Conventions) mattered greatly for the geographical imaginaries which occurred. I describe the performance of urban identity by local communities as geographical performances, and describe how Jacques Derrida's concepts of iterability and citationality can be helpful in explaining the rupturing of spatial forms seen in Pittsburgh during the nineteenth century, and in the unceasing efforts of communities to shape and reshape new geographical imaginations as they search for the perfect performance of spatial form.

Pennsylvania's Constitutional Conventions – Shaping the Urban Hierarchy

By the mid nineteenth century, a new phase of urban expansion had begun in the United States, requiring states to find new political methods for controlling and developing their territory.[1] Whereas the original colonies (including Pennsylvania) derived their systems of government and land use from the English system, state-by-state approaches had begun to diverge by the nineteenth century, depending on local needs.[2] Nevertheless, a common feature across the American states was the increasing prominence and significance of local governments, which gave rise to conflicts between localities (which claimed the rights to administer local affairs) and the states (which claimed the rights to supersede local authority). Such conflicts were exacerbated by local population growth, the state's desire to connect territory by improving infrastructure, and the problems created by special-act charters. All these conditions created situations which eventually required judicial intervention.[3]

---

[1]   Chapter 6 of Denis E. Cosgrove's Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape (Wisconsin, 1998) discusses how America's landscape stimulated attempts to articulate new forms of social relations. See also Eric Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban* (Berkeley, 1988), pp. 73.

[2]   See Akihiro Kinda, 'The Concept of Townships in Britain and the British Colonies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 27/2 (2001): 137–52 for an explanation of the emerging systems of land use across former English colonies.

[3]   Jon Teaford, *City and Suburb* (Baltimore, 1979) provides a classic account regarding conflicts between state and locality.

Pennsylvania followed the national trends in governance reform during 1820–74, with relations between the state and the municipalities shifting in accordance with the spatial and demographic changes characterizing the state during the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the period, state legislators did not need to exert much energy on the affairs of local municipalities given the sparse settlement across much of the state. The city of Philadelphia and the few other urban areas required some additional attention, but the main goal of the state legislature was to ensure that county-level government functions were adequate for handling administrative, judicial and police functions. As rural, urban and suburban worlds begun to emerge from formerly undifferentiated and natural spaces, the legislature needed to adapt to the diversifying landscape of the state. County courts were granted powers of incorporation in 1834, meaning that local communities could apply to create new minor civil divisions (townships, boroughs or cities) without the need to obtain state sanction. The 1838 Pennsylvania Constitution codified this stance, emphasizing the freedom of governments to conform to local conditions, and reasserting the long-established role of the county as an administrative proxy between local communities and the state.

By the time of the 1837 Pennsylvania Constitutional Convention, the liberal attitude toward municipal incorporation had created a situation whereby the political map of the eighteenth-century city region was changing appreciably. In the south-western corner of the Commonwealth, Allegheny County's original seven townships were fragmenting into multiple municipalities because communities demanded smaller political units which would (in theory) be more responsive to local needs.[4] Whereas the county performed an essential intermediary role between local administrators and the state, community identity was performed at a more local scale – at a scale smaller than of the original townships, given the haste with which these began to fracture into new socio-political spaces, created at the behest of local communities. The eagerness to erect new townships suggests the desire to assert some greater degree of local identity, and also indicates unwillingness on the part of locals to be contentedly subsumed under a larger political unit created by the state legislature (and their local proxies) for administrative reasons.

Despite the activity in the formation of new political spaces across Pennsylvania after 1834, the state legislature's attention seldom dipped below the county level between the Constitutional Conventions of 1837 and 1872–73, and legislators maintained a laissez-faire approach to local rights for self-government. For its part, the average Pennsylvania county of the mid nineteenth century lacked either the capacity or will to generate a regional identity which could direct local municipal

---

[4]   See Figure 1.3 for the map of municipal boundaries and names in Allegheny County, 1855.
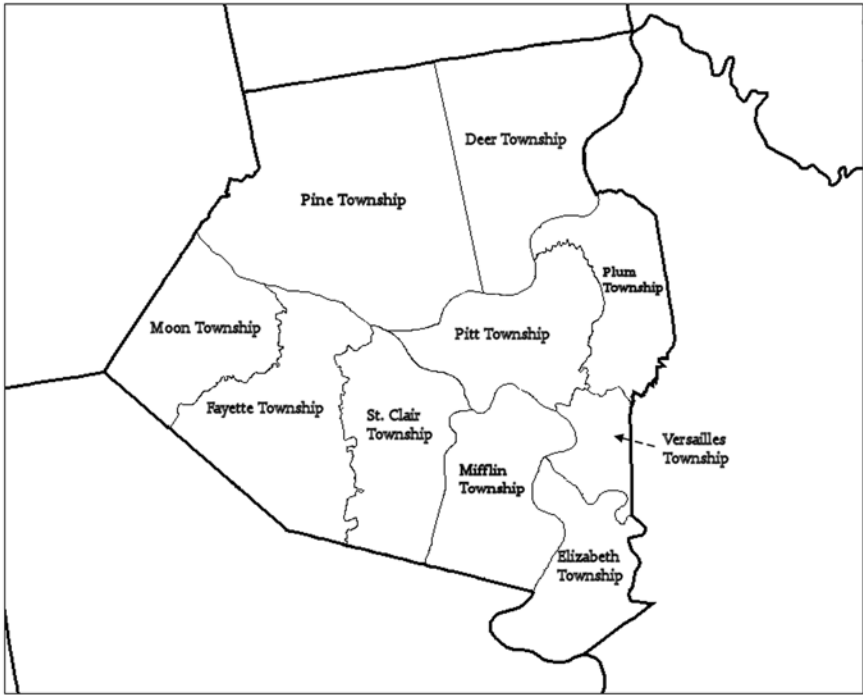
Figure 1.1   Allegheny county townships, 1800. © Michael R. Glass

affairs. In the early nineteenth century, the United States county was responsible for routine matters of governance such as tax assessment, rural policing, road administration and judicial affairs. None of these powers necessitated inter-governmental coordination, or strategic planning to the extent required of twenty-first century counties.[5] State and county inattentiveness to local governance provided a fertile environment for the continual restructuring of social and political space by local leaders, entrepreneurs and communities who saw little utility in retaining the township lines inherited from the previous generations of settlers and surveyors (Figure 1.1). This context paved the way for local communities to conceive and perform distinct geographical imaginaries.

By the 1872–73 Constitutional Convention, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was becoming much more urbanized; 30.8 per cent of the population lived in urban areas in 1870, compared to 15.3 per cent at the time of the 1830 Census (Table 1.1). Urbanization was causing significant and rapid changes to the social and political composition of the state, and compelled

---

[5]   Herbert Sydney Duncombe, *Modern County Government* (Washington, 1977), p. 24.

Table 1.1   Pennsylvania population, 1830 and 1870

Census year	Pennsylvania population – urban	Pennsylvania population – total	Pennsylvania population – % urban	Pennsylvania population density (per sq. mile)
1830	205,964	1,348,233	15.3	30.1
1870	1,312,833	3,521,951	30.1	78.6

Source: Dodd, *Historical Statistics of the States of the United States* (Cambridge, 1993)

the legislature to reconsider their role relative to local municipalities. Initial debates at the Constitutional Convention centred on the amount of latitude given to local communities in incorporating new urban charters. Since 1834, communities held the right to declare themselves cities based on simple majority votes of the local population and subsequent ratification by the county court. Whereas this had seemed appropriate in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the increasingly complex urban landscape of Pennsylvania made this freedom of incorporation less appropriate in 1873, at least as far as state legislators were concerned.

The essential concern among state-level politicians was the fear that they were losing control over Pennsylvania's urban hierarchy. The influence of judicial rulings such as the 'Dillon Rule', which sided with the state when local powers were ambiguous, led to greater codification of municipal rights than had appeared in prior state constitutions. The problems of special-act legislation were also the subject of heated debates over the governance arrangements for Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and other cities in Pennsylvania.

The permissive attitude to municipal incorporation that the state had maintained since 1834 led to delegates raising strong objections at the 1872–73 Constitutional Convention, raising concerns over the potential for so-called abuse by small towns seeking the glory of a big-city charter. Article XV of the 1874 Pennsylvania Constitution concerned Cities and City Charters (Box 1.1). In its final form the article was restricted to two issues – when cities could be chartered and how debt could be contracted and repaid. However, the debates concerning this article had covered a much broader array of issues concerning urban governance, including why it was necessary to create a restrictive legal definition of the 'city', the amount of legislative autonomy local municipalities were to be granted, and the importance of the State Legislature retaining the flexibility to pass laws governing local areas.

During the initial debates, an early section stipulated that '[t]he Legislature shall pass general laws whereby a city may be established whenever a majority of the electors of any town or borough voting at any general election shall vote in

Box 1.1   The Pennsylvania Constitution, 1874. Article XV – Cities and
              City Charters

Section I: Cities may be chartered whenever a majority of the electors of any town
or borough having a population of at least ten thousand shall vote at any general
election in favor of the same.
Section II: No debt shall be contracted or liability incurred by any municipal
commission, except in pursuance of an appropriation previously made therefore by
the municipal government.
Section III: Every city shall create a sinking fund, which shall be inviolably pledged
for the payment of its funded debt.
Pennsylvania State Constitution (1874), pp. 1328

---

favour of the same being established'. This formulation faced strong objections
from delegates who were concerned that small towns would 'abuse' the ease with
which they could attain a big-city charter. Mr Dodd, Delegate at Large from
rural Venango County in north-west Pennsylvania, typified state opposition to
this local power. Dodd warned that small towns would ignore the 'cumbersome,
useless and expensive' nature of city charters when used to govern smaller
communities. Dodd's home county of Venango was replete with several small
settlements with names such as Oil City. He argued that:

> if every town, no matter what its population may be, can obtain a city charter as
> will be the case if we adopt this section, every little town in the oil region, because
> they are ambitious, will vote for a city charter. They are all called cities now. We
> have in our county Allamagoozlam City, Pithole City, Shacknasty City and many
> others which by any name would not smell sweet. They are cities in name, but
> they will soon become cities in reality if this passes. They all start up in a day and
> they fall in about a week.[6]

He went on to claim that 'hundreds of the unimportant towns of the State will
obtain city charters, and will have an honorable mayor and an honorable council
under salary.'[7]

There were two reasons for Dodd's resistance to local communities
establishing a city charter. First and foremost were the costs of maintaining city
status. Pennsylvania city charters required communities to adopt additional
elected and paid offices, creating Dodd's concerns about the capacity for small

---

[6]   *Debates of the Convention to amend the Constitution of Pennsylvania* (vols 1–8,
Harrisburg, 1873), vol. 6, pp. 215–16.

[7]   Ibid., vol. 6, p. 216.n.
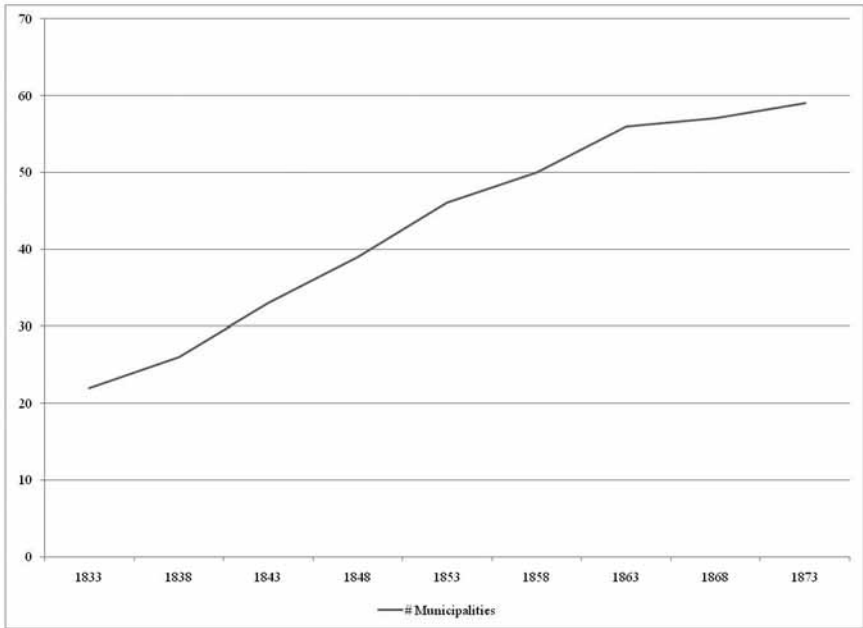
Figure 1.2   Allegheny County municipal incorporations, 1834–73. ©
              Michael R. Glass

towns to meet the legal requirements for cityhood. In addition, Dodd's remarks are also telling in their opposition to any potential shifts in the urban hierarchy of the state, despite the rapid urban growth of economic boom-towns in the north-western corner of the state; the very chance that Shacknasty City could jump the queue and join places such as Pittsburgh and Philadelphia was a situation state legislators were unwilling to allow. Consequently, an article was eventually passed and ratified in the 1874 Pennsylvania Constitution, which provided that towns have at least 10,000 residents before they could become cities.

Such was the political context for incorporations in Allegheny County in the middle of the nineteenth century: a diversifying social geography, state debates over economic sectionalism and local authority, and evolving political conceptions of governance. As state legislators debated their stance concerning the governance of local areas at the 1837 and 1872–73 Constitutional Conventions, local communities and municipal leaders were shaping their own opinions about the role of local communities and governments within the Pennsylvania political system, resulting in the creation of 38 new minor civil divisions during the period (Figure 1.2). These community opinions often led to the performance of new geographical imaginations within parts of the

Pittsburgh city region – performances which were codified as new municipal spaces within the nineteenth-century cityscape.

Identity, Performance, and the City

Understanding how specific urban identities emerge and evolve has been the subject of intense study in various disciplines across the social sciences. For scholars interested in the varied dimensions of urban identity, there are many potential analytical perspectives. For instance, some studies describe the expanding modernity in western cities, charting the development of sewers, housing, or streetscapes over time.[8] Marxist analyses emphasize the spatial imprint of the capitalist process, whereas poststructural approaches focus upon the re-iterating nature of space. Other perspectives evaluate spatial identities as 'geographical imaginations', or focus upon the social construction of concepts such as scale for defining 'community'.[9] More recently, geographers have turned their attention to studying how conceptions of urban space can change over time as part of shifting political conditions and found theories of performance and performativity particularly useful as a basis for an analytical framework.[10]

The study of performance and performativity has a long tradition in the social sciences, with theorists including J.L. Austin, John Searle and Jacques Derrida, illustrating the utility of understanding how and why social practices and conventions are created and re-created through speech.[11] Foundational works by Austin and Searle emphasized the power of the speech act to create and empower new concepts. Austin's essential argument was that, on occasion, words become actions which can create something in the world. Arguments based on speech act theory have travelled through fields as diverse as theatre

---

[8]   Relevant examples of the expansion of modernity in Western cities of the nineteenth century are provided by David L. Pike, *Metropolis on the Styx* (Cornell, 2007); David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, 2003); and Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity* (Cambridge, 2008).

[9]   For an example of Marxist perspectives on the geographies of capitalism, see David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Los Angeles, 2006: 1982). Edward Soja, *Thirdspace* (Malden, 1996) showcases the postmodern perspective on the construction of urban identities, whereas Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Malden, 1994) engages directly with the notion of a 'geographic imaginary'. For an introduction to debates over the social construction of geographic concepts such as 'scale', see Sallie A. Marston, 'The Social Construction of Scale', *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (2000): 219–42.

[10]   Luiza Bialasiewicz, D. Campbell, S. Elden, S. Graham, A. Jeffrey and A. Williams, 'Performing Security: The Imaginative Geographies of Current US Strategy', *Political Geography*, 26/4: 405–22.

[11]   James Loxley, *Performativity – The New Critical Idiom* (New York, 2007).

studies, critical theory and economics, generating interest in the ways that subjects produce, reproduce and alter practices. Geographers have found speech act theory useful for evaluating how specific spatial practices such as parades, for example, can convey either identity or territory,[12] how new identities are constituted in spatialized practices,[13] for understanding the development of institutions such as new municipal spaces, or for interrogating the ways in which features of the built environment are chosen or rejected.[14]

Derrida's writing on speech act theory emphasized the process whereby ruptures could occur in the repeated performance of specific practices. He asserted that the creation and acceptance of a concept relies on the capacity for it to be performed repeatedly, which Derrida calls 'iterability'.[15] In addition, he was conscious of the need for particular power relations to be at work in order for new institutions or concepts to arise through speech acts. For example, he famously questioned where the United States' Declaration of Independence claim to 'We the People' arose, given that the people did not exist prior to the declaration taking place. He noted that '[the people] do not exist as an entity, the entity does not exist before this declaration, not as such. If it [The People] gives birth to itself as free and independent subject, as possible signer, this can hold only in the act of signature. The signature invents the signer.'[16] While Derrida's evaluation focuses on political theory, this position reflects something profound about geographic imaginations, and in particular, how new geographic communities are generated, insofar as a political map does not provide any indication about the nascent spaces or communities which may emerge over time. It is the declarative performance of new communities which enables them to occur, provided the right conditions – physical, historic, and social – exist for them to arise.

As political geographers continue exploring the capacity of theories about performance and performativity to evaluate how political spaces are constructed,

---

[12]   Michael Woods, 'Performing Power: Local Politics and the Taunton Pageant of 1928', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 25/1 (1999): 57–74.

[13]   Nicky Gregson and Gillian Rose, 'Taking Butler Elsewhere: Performativities, Spatialities, and Subjectivities', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18/4 (2000): 433–52; David Crouch, 'Spacing, Performing, and Becoming: Tangles in the Mundane', *Environment and Planning A*, 35/11 (2003): 1945–60; M.E. Thomas, '"I think it's just natural": The Spatiality of Racial Segregation at a US High School', *Environment and Planning A*, 37/7 (2005): 1233–48.

[14]   Michael R. Glass & Reuben Rose-Redwood, *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space* (Routledge, 2014).

[15]   Jacques Derrida, *Limited, Inc.* (Northwestern, 1988).

[16]   Jacques Derrida, *Without Alibi* (Stanford, 2002), pp. 49.

a central challenge is describing how new social or political spaces are successfully legitimated through performances in multiple registers, by multiple groups, and at multiple scales. Such nuanced readings of the performances of geography are important since performances and counter-performances will occur when a community or group seeks to develop a new conception of space. The development of the Pittsburgh region's cityscape in the nineteenth century provides examples of the performativity of political spaces. The use and reuse of this developing space reveals how imaginative geographies and counter-geographies are performed. The legal construction of political spaces, along with the published designations and social affirmation of new communities was used to construct a specific vision of the legitimacy and vitality of their new urban space. Such official declarations of the new community were, however, subject to re-interpretation by other groups which might co-opt the space by alternative performances, acting in ways which contradicted the intended uses of the space.

Performing Nineteenth-Century Pittsburgh – Four Vignettes

Historical research into the performance of urban boundaries is complicated by the disappearance of transient practices and actions which contemporary studies of performativity rely on as source material. Whereas contemporary studies into place formation might use ethnographic methodologies which engage with those performing specific practices, urban-historic research into the formation and reformation of geographic communities requires a greater emphasis on the artefacts which cartographic and secondary research can uncover. For the Allegheny County case study, five indicators of performative acts were sought using historic atlases, legal documents, and local histories. The first three indicators use the cartographic record of changing municipal boundaries in Allegheny County. Newly mapped spaces, newly named spaces, and change over time in the municipal boundary lines all reflect the performance of newly imagined communities. Rapid political change (such as through the erection of a new political space, followed by swift failure or annexation by a neighbouring municipality – Figure 1.3) could indicate the rejection of a particular vision for local land use. Finally, contested visions for the city of Pittsburgh and its environs were sought by evaluating different land use patterns or the different reasons given for the erection of new municipal spaces.
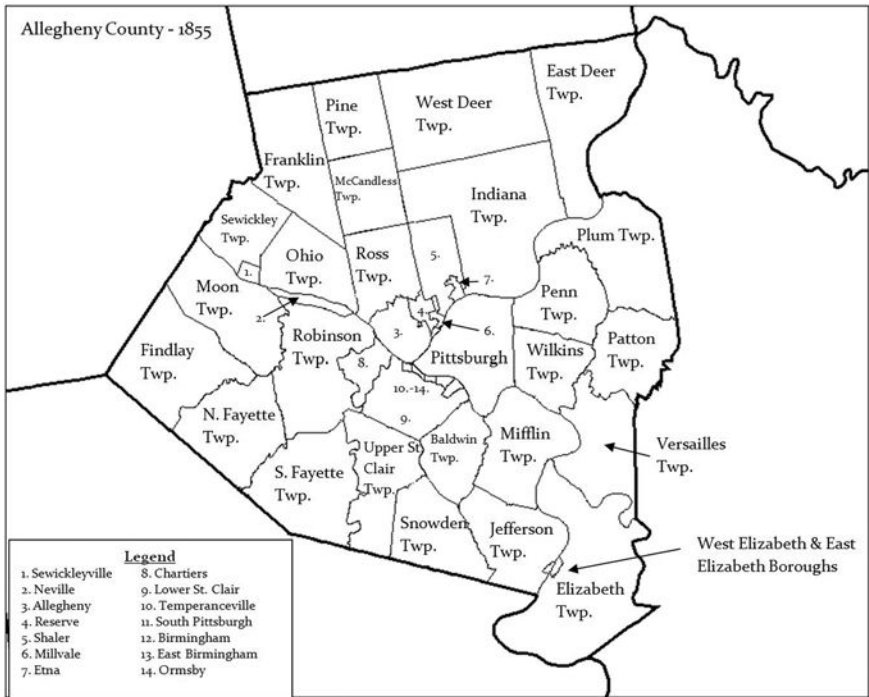
Figure 1.3   Allegheny County municipalities, 1855. © Michael R. Glass

Rural Identities – Northern Allegheny County and Sewickley Borough

In Northern Allegheny County, the large and sparsely populated townships carved from the Depreciation Lands (tracts of land provided for bearers of Depreciation Certificates, which were used as forms of payment during the Revolutionary War) became the setting for political actions instigated by entrepreneurs seeking power over space. The newly formalized township boundaries of 1800 were no barrier to entrepreneurs who identified some political or economic gains to be made in those areas of the county. Their visions for a new venture or activity took shape through appeals to the Allegheny County Court for further subdivisions. This type of political speculation led to the establishment of both Richland Township and McCandless Township. Richland Township was erected by decree of court in 1860, from West Deer and Pine.[17] Charles Gibson Jr. argued for the creation of the township, pleading the

----

17   Thomas Cushing, *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1889; 1999), pp. 141.

cause of 'political autonomy' for local enterprise, in which he held significant interests. Gibson's interests in creating the new township may well have been influenced by the location of his steam-powered flour mill; according to the *Atlas of Allegheny County*, his land holdings included property in the centre of the new township (west of the largest settlement at Bakerstown), and east of the Pennsylvania Northwest Railroad in the south-east corner of the township.[18] Division into the new townships would, therefore, favour Gibson's economic interests. Redrawing the township lines was simplified by the sparse settlement of the area. The land was originally secured in large tracts by investors from the north-east for speculative purposes, and had not received attention by settlers until later. Similarly, the creation of McCandless Township was the result of political opportunism. The township was erected at the request of local leaders, who sought to create a more convenient election district out of the southern half of Pine Township. In this instance, there was significant recorded hostility against the creation of the new township. Objections to the plan were based upon the number of already existing election districts, and the questionable merit of any further districts being created.[19]

Within the rural spaces of Allegheny County's northern tier, there were also instances where the development of new settlements and townships was shaped by migrant communities seeking to assert ethnic and national identities in their new locales. In the sparsely settled Depreciation Lands, such performative expressions of identity were enacted by the naming of new settlements, and by the (re)naming of topographical features. Naming these nascent urban spaces was a declaration of identity, enabled by the comparative lack of local contestation over the rights to name geographic features. It was also facilitated by the lack of a centralized political and bureaucratic structure which could constrict community preferences. Whereas the earlier settled portions of the county were developed by communities with English and Scottish origins, communities in the north established spaces were associated with groups at the margins of nineteenth-century society such as Irish settlers from Talleycavey. These settlers founded a new town in Hampton Township and named it after their place of origin.

As the area became integrated within the broader political and social context of Allegheny County, local rural settlements gave rise to industrial and residential developments. In the early stage of this process, relationships between townships intensified leading to a more tightly knit system of settlements than had occurred in earlier periods. Railroads were established along the river

---

[18] Edward K. Muller, *Atlas of the County of Allegheny, Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, 1988; 1876). This was later the site of the town of Gibsonia.

[19] Cushing, *History of Allegheny County*, p. 171.

valleys and to the north toward Lake Erie, providing a means for easy and fast transportation across the county and enabling a sense of regionalism that earlier modes of transportation did not create. In addition to the transportation system, regional nodes were developing for infrastructure. For example, the water works servicing Sewickley Borough was constructed in the neighbouring Aleppo Township, although it carried the name 'Sewickley Water Works'. Similarly, educational facilities such as the Sewickley Academy catered to children of the social elite from across the region, until they were of age to be sent to preparatory schools on the East Coast for further instruction in the rituals of the upper class. Joseph Rishel argues that tendency among Pittsburgh's elite to send children to non-local colleges increased during the nineteenth century, as families sought to enhance their social acceptance among the upper class of the East Coast to improve both social and commercial contacts, construing a distinct form of social reproduction with broad implications that go beyond the scope of this chapter.[20]

Industrial Identities – Birmingham

At the same time as rural spaces in the northern part of Allegheny County were being rearticulated to conform with local demands, nascent manufacturing spaces were emerging adjacent to the city of Pittsburgh. Rather than a simple monotonic expansion of Allegheny County's urban core, these boroughs were established because of what Walker and Lewis term the 'politics of space', as industrialists sought greater control over the land containing their manufacturing operations.[21] Founded with names evoking an industrial heritage from England (such as Manchester and Birmingham), these economic spaces were distinct from the larger cities of Allegheny and Pittsburgh in terms of their higher degree of economic specialization, their smaller land area, and the limited number of entrepreneurs profiting from their success.[22]

Across from Pittsburgh, on the other shore of the Monongahela River, the boroughs of Birmingham and Sligo were developing as industrial spaces (Figure 1.4). Insurance maps from the mid nineteenth century reveal a built environment

---

[20]   John N. Ingham, 'Steel City Aristocrats', in Samuel P. Hays (ed.), *City at the Point* (Pittsburgh, 1988), pp. 265–94. Joseph Rishel, *Founding Families of Pittsburgh: The Evolution of a Regional Elite* (Pittsburgh, 1990).

[21]   Richard Walker, Robert Lewis, 'Beyond the Crabgrass Frontier: Industry and the Spread of North American Cities, 1850–1950', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 27/1 (2001): 3–19.

[22]   The 11 boroughs of Pittsburgh's south side were contained within a land area of 4.2 square miles.
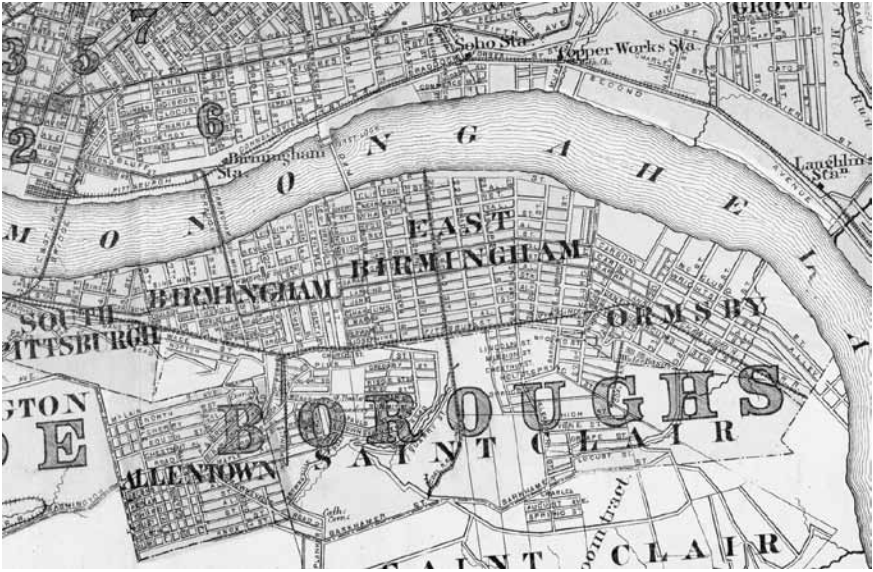
Figure 1.4   Industrial identities – Birmingham. Source: Detail of plate 12, G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas* (1872). Courtesy of Archives Service Center, University of Pittsburgh

of densely platted streets which aligned tightly with the essential transportation infrastructure afforded by the river and the Pittsburgh, Virginia and Charleston railroad lines. Whereas the beneficial geography of the river valleys explains the establishment of industrial suburbs in these locations, the names given to the new towns and the depictions of activity in these places indicate that locals performed, and hence asserted, a particular identity in a place which held no real urban history yet to speak of. For instance, the founders of, and visitors to, Birmingham, Pennsylvania described the new borough in unequivocally economic terms.[23] The Pennsylvania chronicler Sherman Day, who travelled throughout the Commonwealth during this period, emphasized the economic character of these spaces. He described the borough of Sligo from an overtly industrial perspective, emphasizing the presence of ironworking, boatbuilding and glassmaking enterprises. Although Day points out that Birmingham has a 'beautiful' location, his account of this space focuses primarily upon the manufactories situated in the borough:

---

[23]   Edward Muller explains the geographic basis of Pittsburgh's industrial suburbs in 'Industrial Suburbs and the Growth of Metropolitan Pittsburgh, 1870–1920', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 27/1 (2001): 58–73.

Its location is a beautiful one; and in manufacturing interest it partakes of the character of its English namesake – having within its limits four glass manufacturing establishments – two of all kinds of window and green glass, belonging to Messrs. C. Ihmsen and S. M'Kee & Co., and two flint glass works ... there are also two extensive iron establishments belonging to Messrs. Wood, Edwards & M'Knights, a large lock factory belonging to Mr. Isaac Gregg, several extensive coal establishments, and breweries, together with artisans of various kinds – the whole constituting as useful and industrious a population as any place of the size in our country can boast of.[24]

The boroughs on the Monongahela River's southern shore underwent great demographic and structural changes during the period 1850 to 1870 as a consequence of the success of these local manufacturing enterprises. The population density of the southside boroughs in 1870 was much higher than the city of Pittsburgh, although this was due to the fact that Pittsburgh annexed the sparsely populated estates of the East End in 1846.[25] Bernard Sauer notes that the population of Birmingham and East Birmingham increased by 338 per cent during this period, fuelled in part by the employment opportunities created by an expanding core of coal, glass and iron-making establishments. Sauer's analysis drew upon nineteenth-century maps to quantify the growth of the south side's industrial base. He notes:

in 1852 only one iron producing factory existed in East Birmingham. By 1872 machine shops, planning mills, foundries and eight factories related to the iron industry were in operation. New services were necessary for the increasing population; the map of 1872 shows the establishment of two gasworks, a sawmill, and three lumberyards.[26]

As in other cities across the United States, the declaration of progress, urban change and an emerging industrial system were defined in Pittsburgh through material artefacts such as maps and travel accounts.[27] These items constituted

---

[24]   Sherman Day, *Historical Collections of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1843), pp. 89.

[25]   See Joel Tarr, 'Infrastructure and City-Building in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', *City at the Point: Essays on the Social History of Pittsburgh* (Pittsburgh, 1988), pp. 213–64. The South Side communities had a population density of 11.7 persons per acre in 1870, compared to the city of Pittsburgh's population density of 5.8 persons per acre.

[26]   Bernard J. Sauer, 'A Political Process of Urban Growth: Consolidation of the South Side with the City of Pittsburgh, 1872', *Pennsylvania History*, 41/3 (1974): 264–87.

[27]   Richard Schein, Representing Urban America – 19th Century Views of Landscape, Race, and Power', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 11/1 (1993): 7–21.

declarative performances, enhancing the representation of Birmingham as an industrial space which had been initiated through a named association with its more storied British namesake.[28] An overall sense of busy-ness is constructed in Sherman Day's account of Birmingham, with categorical lists of the services and products created by the named industrialists. The G.M. Hopkins insurance atlases also emphasize the importance of commerce in this area, and are part of a broad performance which focuses upon the economic vitality and strength of these small industrial spaces adjacent to Pittsburgh. Robert Churchill notes, '[M]aps often are made not on the basis of the territory itself but on some preconceived sense or vision of the territory. Informed by these maps, subsequent actions move the territory toward the vision'.[29] Such was the case for Pittsburgh's industrial suburbs. The sense of progress and growth created by the development of roads, railways and manufactories, recorded in both maps and memoirs would eventually become synonymous with the entire Pittsburgh region.

Suburban Identities – Wildwood

As rural and industrial spaces were being articulated throughout Allegheny County, alternative spaces were being proffered which were neither completely urban (such as the industrial boroughs of Pittsburgh's south side) nor completely rural (such as the townships of the Depreciation Lands). Places such as Penn Township and Plum Township can be considered the initial performative expressions of an American suburban ideal. These places housed communities which were striving for the performance and protection of specific urban identities. As with the industrial and rural spaces described above, the nascent suburban spaces would ultimately require the redefinition of local political boundaries to protect and sustain the philosophy of space which they depicted. However, such imagined spaces would not always become successfully stabilized, as the cases of Wildwood and Temperanceville indicate.

Derrida's formulation of the speech act emphasizes the potential for declarative acts to create a new concept or grouping. Famous examples for such declarative acts include the 'I do' statements in the Christian wedding ritual, or the 'We the People' formula, which declared the foundation of the American nation state. Derrida's theory suggests a way that new geographic communities are constituted through a declarative performance, provided the right conditions exist for them to arise. The 1876 *Atlas of Allegheny County* includes evidence that

---

[28]   As Katrina Gulliver explores in Chapter 6 of this volume, colonial cities often served as 'uncanny doubles' or counterparts of European urbanism.

[29]   Robert R. Churchill, 'Urban Cartography and the Mapping of Chicago', *Geographical Review*, 94/1 (2004): 1–22.

the declaration of new spaces does not automatically guarantee their immediate or future success. For instance, the *Atlas* includes plans for a new suburban space, called Wildwood, platted intentionally a mere one-quarter of a mile beyond the city of Pittsburgh's eastern border. Wildwood was designed by James Boyd in the mould popularized by Llewellyn Park in West Orange, New Jersey (founded in 1857) and Riverside, Chicago (founded in 1869) – the landscape style subsequently referred to as 'romantic suburbs'. The American romantic suburb arose from English planning traditions and offered a compromise for middle-class communities between the urban amenities of America's rapidly expanding cities and the bucolic rural world which was being eroded by the onset of late nineteenth-century modernity. By the 1850s certain design principles had been codified for romantic suburbs. As John Archer relates, an editorial in *Harpers* magazine declared 'roads in suburban towns "ought to wind", in order to preserve "quiet" and facilitate "rural enjoyment"'.[30] Other principles included easy access to transportation from the city, low-density development, park-like surroundings and amenities such as gas, water, schools, footpaths and shrubbery.

The plans for Wildwood are an iterative 'space act' linking this prospective community to the middle-class ideals embodied in Llewellyn Park. Wildwood was planned to include all of the essential elements for a romantic suburb (Figure 1.5). The generally curving drives provide respite from the grid street pattern associated with areas that were either already urban (such as the city of Pittsburgh), or which had urban pretensions (such as Hitesville or Tarentum).[31] The plat included 250 square acres, with 177 plots ranging in size from one-quarter acre to 10 acres, ensuring that the residents of Wildwood Village would have sufficient room for the 'rural enjoyment' as imagined by the editor of *Harpers*. The site provided views of the Allegheny River and the 'unparalleled surrounding countryside', and as was common with other romantic suburbs, the names associated with the plan were often arboreal or topographic: Chestnut Street intersected with Bluff Street, and prospective buyers could also purchase lots on the bucolic streets of Branch, Vine and Walnut.[32]

A significant aspect of the suburb's design was its adjacency to the political limits of the city of Pittsburgh. The platting of Wildwood to within one-quarter

---

[30]   John Archer, 'Country and City in the American Romantic Suburb', *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 42/2 (1983): 139–56.

[31]   Given the hilly terrain of the site, the curving street pattern was also better suited to the topography than a grid pattern would have been.

[32]   Krieger discusses residential 'Elm Streets' in the United States, considering them to be a compromise between the public good and private prerogative, embodying 'a fragile harmony of architecture and landscape, 'see Alex Krieger, 'The American City: Ideal and Mythic Aspects of a Reinvented Urbanism', *Assemblage* 3 (1987): 38–59.

Figure 1.5   Suburban identities – Wildwood. Source: Detail of plate 67,
              G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas* (1872). Courtesy of Archives Service
              Center, University of Pittsburgh

of a mile of the city's eastern edge demonstrated both propinquity to, and
separation from the city. Easy access to Pittsburgh and Verona was suggested by
the sharing of a common boundary and was directly supplied by the Allegheny
Valley Railroad. The Wildwood plan formed a crescent with two rail stations
(Wildwood Station and Sandy Creek Station) at either point; the accompanying
sales pitch for properties in Wildwood described the stations to be 'within 30
minutes ride of the Union Depot and accessible hourly by all trains, Express and
Accommodations'.[33] As with other suburban developments, accessibility to the
opportunities of the city was but one aspect of the Janus-face of city and country.

---

[33]   Commuter railroads in Allegheny County began to open in 1851. The Pennsylvania
Railroad began service between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia in 1852, and the Pittsburgh,
Fort Wayne, and Chicago Railroad opened in 1856. See Joel Tarr, *Transportation Innovation
and Changing Spatial Patterns in Pittsburgh, 1850–1934* (Chicago, 1978), Essays in Public
Works History, no. 6.

The notion of separation from Pittsburgh was the final selling point for this proposed suburb, and it is indicated at the end of the description for Wildwood: 'being just outside the limits of the City, the smoke and the more to be dreaded taxation'. This was the hook: to enjoy the prestige and amenities of a suburban life while still remaining within the urban world of production that enables a middle-class standard of living. Dissatisfaction with taxation or overcrowding or the increasing pace of modern life led to the demand for new political spaces containing the social composition most appropriate to a given constituency – in the case of Wildwood, to businessmen resentful of the higher taxes required by an expanding and modernizing city.[34] For example, provision of water for sanitation, industry and fire prevention was a major concern for industrial cities of the late nineteenth century. Between 1850 and 1895, Pittsburgh had expanded the water supply network from 21 miles of water pipe to 268 miles – this capital expenditure was the greatest cost to the city during the period, and a factor in the increasing tax burden on city dwellers.[35]

Despite the varied performances used by the developer to entice residents – such as the name, the plat, and the evocative descriptions – the Wildwood settlement was ultimately unsuccessful. By 1880 the settlement numbered about hundred residents before failing. The reasons for the decline of the planned settlement are unavailable, although the failure of the plan coincides with the demise of Allegheny County's other romantic suburb, Evergreen Hamlet. Begun by a group of businessmen in the mid nineteenth century, the planned collective at Evergreen fell apart through internal discord, possibly stymieing the plans for the much larger Wildwood. Another potential reason for Wildwood's failure was a matter of timing. By 1870 the estates on Pittsburgh's eastern fringe were still sparsely developed, making the urban-rural division indistinct at the political border separating Pittsburgh from Wildwood. Hence, the performative utterance of 'avoiding smoke' within the advertising material, and the provision of artificially natural streetscapes and pastoral symbolism may not have conformed to the demands of prospective residents at that point in history.[36] Fittingly perhaps, the area proposed to be set out as Wildwood Village continued as a space for middle- and upper-class consumption into the twenty-

---

[34]   In this sense, developments like Wildwood are responses to the forms of 'hurry' outlined by Richard Dennis in Chapter 5 of this volume.

[35]   See Joel Tarr, 'The Metabolism of the Industrial City – The Case of Pittsburgh', *Journal of Urban History*, 28/5 (2002): 511–45.

[36]   Whereas the industrial cities of England were contrasted to the countryside in pejorative terms by the early -to-mid nineteenth century, Pittsburgh's association with the environmental and social perils of industrial urbanism occurred later, and would be cemented in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. See Raymond Williams, *The Country and*
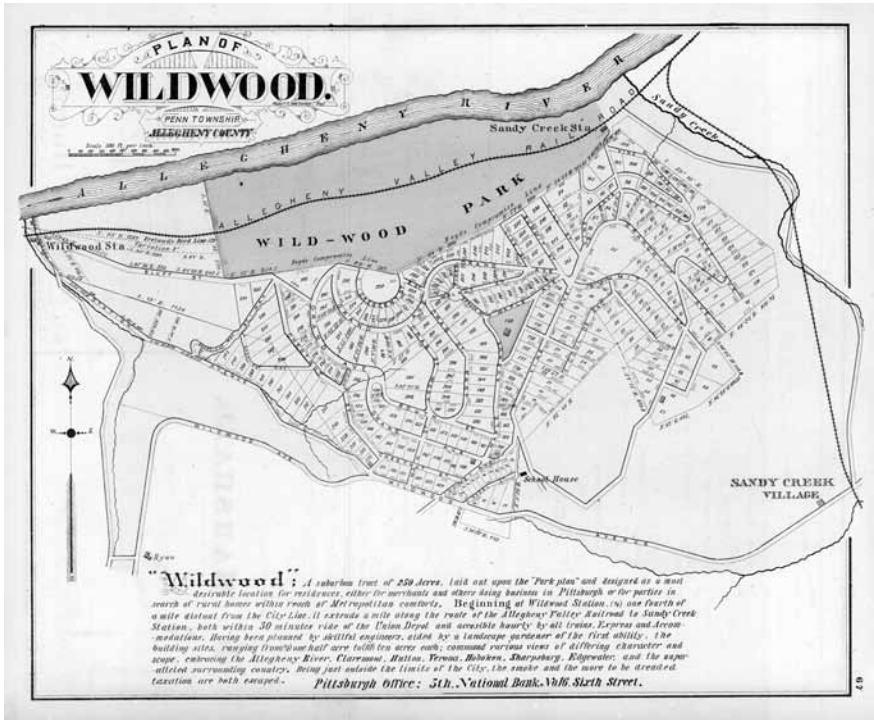
Figure 1.6   Moral identities – Temperanceville. Source: Detail of plate
               110, G.M. Hopkins, *Atlas* (1872). Courtesy of Archives Service
               Center, University of Pittsburgh

first century as the exclusive Longue Vue Country Club, at a period when the city
of Pittsburgh's eastern boundary had become a more distinct line of division.[37]

Moral Identities – Temperanceville

Not all the emergent suburban political spaces across the Pittsburgh
cityscape had economic antecedents. Temperanceville is one example of a space
founded on an imaginative geography based on social motivations, heralded
by the explicitly declarative action embodied in its name. Located to the west
of the industrial boroughs of Sligo and Birmingham, Temperanceville was
created in 1835 by a group headed by local steam engine manufacturer John B.
Warden, which purchased and subdivided land from the estate of West Elliot
(Figure 1.6). While this land development was presumably executed with the

─────────────────────────

the City (New York, 1973) for description of the developing relationship between urban and
rural spaces in England.
    [37]   Frank Toker, *Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait* (University Park, 1986).

intent to create profits for the proprietors, the sale of land was originally tied to the temperance movement which was gaining attention in Pittsburgh.[38] The Pittsburgh *Gazette* advertised lots for sale in 'Temperance Village' with property sales made contingent on the condition that liquor should never be sold on the premises.[39] As the sparse settlement of the town plat suggests, this agreement did not guarantee success for the development, and there are indications that the temperance covenants were never honoured.[40] However, this episode is notable for the early social engineering attempted by the land developers, and for the declarative and novel manner in which the area was branded, so as to differentiate itself from the industrial spaces with old-world names such as Sligo, Manchester, and Birmingham.

Performing the Historical American Cityscape

Between 1834 and 1872, the low legal barrier to erecting new municipal spaces resulted in a socially constructed mosaic of contrasting geographical visions for the Pittsburgh region. From the local perspective, this enabled the community to express urban imaginaries that diversified and expanded Pittsburgh's nineteenth-century cityscape. The new communities formed during this period were declared through artefacts persisting in the historical record, such as the petitions for erection made to Allegheny County's court, and performative acts such as topological renaming, cartographic representation, and patterns of land use. Community ideals are also expressed through the accounts of visitors to suburbs such as Birmingham, where the industrial pretence intimated in the borough's name was codified through the high density of manufactories located there, as found by Sherman Day during his travels.

From the perspective of state legislators, the rapid development of Pennsylvania's urban mosaic was less a fascinating expression of urban imaginaries, and more a threatening cacophony of visions. As legislator and Constitutional Delegate Samuel Dodd noted, 'they are all cities now'. The proliferation of minor civic divisions during the years between the two state Constitutional Conventions of the nineteenth century conflicted with the state's own vision of what modernity should entail for Pennsylvania. Initially, the state focused its own performative

---

[38]   The appropriately named Mrs Lusher operated a popular Temperance Hotel on Hand Street near Penn Avenue in Pittsburgh – see Lloyd L. Sponholtz, 'Pittsburgh and Temperance, 1830–1854', *The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 46/4 (1963), pp. 347–79.

[39]   Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City, 1750–1865* (Pittsburgh, 1937).

[40]   Baldwin notes Temperanceville eventually bore the reputation of having more saloons in proportion to its size than any other place in the county.

acts to promote modernization on the development of broad infrastructural works of the mid nineteenth century, including the Pennsylvania Canal system and rail networks. Thus, the burgeoning expression of geographical imaginaries by local communities had gone unnoticed and unchallenged until 1872. It was only then that the presumption of growing towns to name themselves a 'city' created a conflict with the state's broader vision for Pennsylvania's urban hierarchy.

How can the inscription of political lines across the cityscape be understood? This chapter suggests using Derrida's reading of speech act theory, and in particular the notion of declarative acts to examine Pittsburgh's developing cityscape. By identifying the subjects who were performing diverging geographical imaginations, such perspective helps to comprehend why and how multiple conflicting visions emerged in the same region. Performativity is a theoretical approach born of an interest in the capacity of words to bring new concepts and institutions into being (such as nationhood or marriage). Historical geography finds this concept useful for modelling the dynamic processes of evolving city regions. Whereas standard accounts in performativity theory evaluate the speech act, this chapter has considered the performance of 'space acts', whereby new communities arose through their inscription as new political spaces. Through the declarative acts examined here, actors in the Pittsburgh city region created new political spaces with great success between 1834 and 1872, because of the permissive attitude of the state toward incorporation.

At the same time, performativity holds that there is no such thing as a perfect performance of identity, and that slippage of concepts or practices can occur. As in other performances, whether understood at the scale of the body through expressions of gender, or at the scale of the nation through expressions of national identity, the search for the elusive and perfect expression of identity propels consecutive performances. At the scale of the city, the creation and codification of new political spaces propel local communities toward new geographic imaginaries, which compete and contrast against neighbouring municipal spaces. The later history of Pittsburgh is characterized by episodes of municipal fragmentation, annexation, and consolidation – all suggesting the restless nature of a city's political map.[41] The performance and counter-performance of urban space are more evident in contemporary settings through the fleeting utterances, actions, and signs of modern life which are captured in countless media. However, these performances are nonetheless evident in the maps and accounts of the historical cityscape, and provide a partial account for the dynamism of nineteenth-century Pittsburgh's political geography.

---

[41]   Michael Glass, 'Metropolitan Reform in Allegheny County: The Local Failure of National Urban Reform Advocacy, 1920–1929', *Journal of Urban History*, 37/1 (2011): 90–116.

<p style="text-align:center">Chapter 2</p>

Towards the Humanization of Urban Life: CIAM Planners as Advocates of the Neighbourhood Unit Concept in the 1930s and 1940s

<p style="text-align:center">Konstanze Sylva Domhardt</p>

The Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) from 1928 to 1959 was an unconventional working group and a complex laboratory of progressive ideas for the design of the city.[1] Over three decades, CIAM united architects, town planners, artists, historians, sociologists and publicists. Their approach to problems of planning had an enduring influence on the European debate on town planning during the twentieth century. CIAM exercised such influence despite the fact that, in comparison to extensively ramified organizations such as the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning and renowned institutions such as the National Conferences on City Planning in the United States of America, it represented only a small group of progressively minded figures, who were, moreover, rather limited in the

---

[1]   In the following the official congresses of CIAM are listed: CIAM 1 ('foundation congress'), 26–29 June 1928 in La Sarraz/Switzerland; CIAM 2 ('Die Wohnung für das Existenzminimum'), 24–26 October 1929 in Frankfurt on the Main/Germany; CIAM 3 ('Rationelle Bebauungsweisen'), 27–29 November 1930 in Brussels/Belgium; CIAM 4 ('The Functional City'), 29 July–13 August 1933 between Marseilles and Piräus on board the steamboat *Patris II* and in Athens/Greece; CIAM 5 ('Logis et Loisirs'), 28 June – 2 July 1937 in Paris/France; CIAM 6 ('Reunion Congress'), 7–14 September 1947 in Bridgwater/England; CIAM 7, 22 – 31 July 1949 in Bergamo/Italy; CIAM 8 ('The Heart of the City'), 7–14 July 1951 in Hoddesdon/England; CIAM 9, 19–21 July 1953 in Aix-en-Provence/France; CIAM 10, 3–13 August 1956 in Dubrovnik/Croatia. For a detailed description of CIAM's activities, see Martin Steinmann (ed.), *CIAM: Dokumente 1928–1939* (Basel/Stuttgart, 1979); Nestorio Sacchi, *I Congressi Internazionali di Architettura Moderna: CIAM 1928–1959* (Milan, 1998); Eric Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928–1960* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); and Konstanze Sylva Domhardt, *The Heart of the City: Die Stadt in den transatlantischen Debatten der CIAM, 1933–1951* (Zürich, 2012).

fields of their practical experience. It was primarily the emphatically analytical and conceptual character of their studies for a 'comparative town planning' – and not, as often assumed, a trend-setting programme – that helped CIAM become so enormously influential. Its in-depth study of established principles of town planning – such as its efforts to standardize graphic techniques, scales and methods of representation – won the organization recognition from the leading international representatives of the discipline as early as the 1930s. After the Second World War, CIAM was confirmed as a circle of experts that steered contemporary planning activity by educating young planners and encouraging international relationships. In that process, CIAM's theoretical ideas remained open to numerous interpretations; after all, they offered a helpful basic foundation for formulating ideas about town planning, but not a concrete model of the city. CIAM's writings on a 'Functional City', in particular, were considered the core of modern urban theory, and they considerably influenced the living environments built in Europe and the United States of America from the 1950s to the 1970s.

In the research on CIAM, it is often ignored that the organization never attempted to establish a consensus with regard to the foundation on which the 'Functional City', a city in which all the different parts are organized and separated according to their functions – housing, work, recreation, circulation – could have been built.[2] Already during the 1930s and 1940s a view developed within the organization that clearly opposed a purely rational understanding of the city. In the run-up to the Second World War, CIAM members propagated a 'humanized city' and created new public urban realms that served as a social binding agent, and hence, as a 'civic landscape'. This joint effort to modernize the built environment on a social basis was the result of a transatlantic dialogue among CIAM members on both sides of the Atlantic. From the mid 1930s onwards, key figures of the organization, such as Walter Gropius (1883–1969), the former director of Bauhaus, and the Catalan architect José Luis Sert (1902–1983) emigrated to the United States.[3] Other members of CIAM, as for example Sigfried Giedion (1888–1968), the Swiss art historian and general

───────────

2   For a detailed discussion of this thesis, see Domhardt, *The Heart of the City*, pp. 17–39.

3   For Gropius's teaching activities in the United States, see Reginald R. Isaacs, *Walter Gropius: Der Mensch und sein Werk*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1984), pp. 845–995; Anthony Alofsin, *The Struggle for Modernism: Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and City Planning at Harvard* (New York / London, 2002), and Jill Pearlman, *Inventing American Modernism: Joseph Hudnut, Walter Gropius, and the Bauhaus Legacy at Harvard* (Charlottesville, 2007). For the work of José Luis Sert in America, see Xavier Costa and Guido Hartray (eds), *Sert: arquitecto en Nueva York* (Barcelona, 1997); Josep M. Rovira, *José Luis Sert, 1901–1983* (Milan, 2000), pp. 289–363; Josep M. Rovira, *Sert, 1928–1979, Complete Work: Half a*

secretary of the organization, and Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (1905–1983), planner and member of the English CIAM branch, the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS), also shifted their focus across the Atlantic.[4] As a result of the exchange of ideas between Europe and North America, a reform of the structure of the city at all scale-levels was propagated within CIAM. Its representatives discussed urban planning solutions that enabled urban functions to penetrate each other, to be expanded and to be spontaneously rebuilt. The goal was not to separate residential areas, business areas, community and cultural centres, sports grounds and parks in isolated zones, but to combine these forms of land use within one continuous city space and, furthermore, relate them to the context of their surroundings. The idea that an integrated city model had to be created that addressed social issues and weighed them against the backdrop of a rapidly changing society formed the core of CIAM's debates. Thus, the discussion of concepts for the city centre became the primary task of urban planning.

The questions raised by CIAM are of great relevance to understanding current discussions in planning theory concerning the quality of urban life and the mix and density of urban functions. The CIAM debate on public space – the recognition of its social and cultural dimension – and the challenge to recentralize urban areas acquires new importance not only among historians of urban design but also among representatives of other disciplines, such as urban planning, architecture, sociology and building preservation. By examining CIAM's perception of the American city and its interpretations of the neighbourhood unit concept, this chapter will explore how, within the course of two decades, 'The Functional City' of the early Modern Movement morphed into a socially defined space and thereby again obtained a hierarchically articulated structure.

In 1952, CIAM published a book entitled *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life*.[5]

At the beginning of the 1950s, the last joint statement of the congresses lay a decade and a half in the past. Although the organization did appear in the specialist press during the second half of the 1940s with various documentations of its congress work, it had not yet contributed much of substance to the

---

Century of Architecture (Barcelona, 2005), pp. 108–227; and Jaume Freixa, *Josep Lluís Sert* (Barcelona, 2005).

4   For the emigration of German architects and planners to America, see Bernd Nicolai (ed.), *Architektur und Exil: Kulturtransfer und architektonische Emigration von 1930 bis 1950* (Trier, 2003). The most comprehensive insight into the emigration of former Bauhaus members to the United States gives Gabriele Diana Grawe, *Call for Action: Mitglieder des Bauhauses in Nordamerika* (Weimar, 2002).

5   Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, José Luis Sert and Ernesto Nathan Rogers (eds), *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life* (London, 1952).
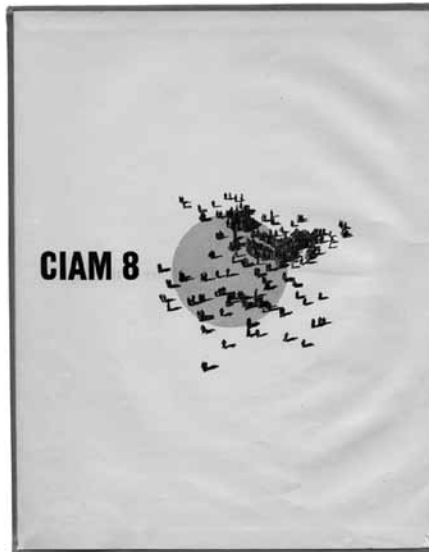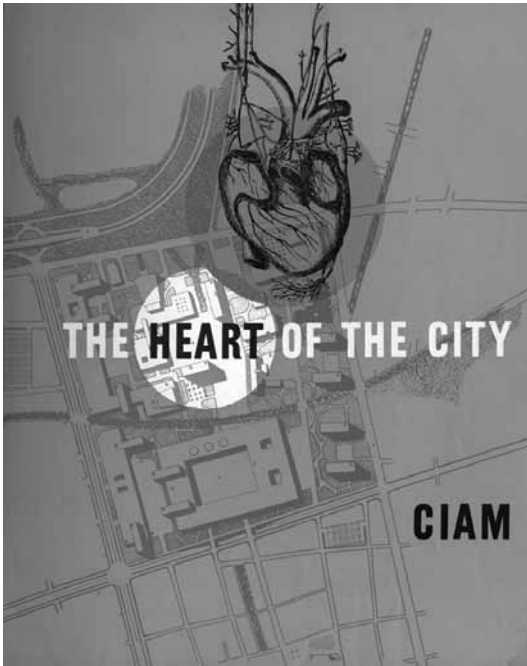
Figures 2.1–2.2   Cover and front page of the congress publication *The Heart of the City: Towards the Humanisation of Urban Life* by Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, José Luis Sert and Ernesto Nathan Rogers, Lund Humphries, 1952 (© Ashgate Publishing Limited)

Attributes of The Core: The Human Scale

We believe that CIAM can fulfil a useful role by showing modern society how it can equip itself with means to activate its members; means that must always retain the human scale and simultaneously be multiform in character, accessible to all, and widespread throughout the community.

Attention must be paid to the physical, intellectual, and also the sentimental needs of human nature, and places and buildings must be created that are equipped with everything necessary and sufficient for these ends. These words necessary and sufficient do not mean that it is sufficient simply to present the material elements of modern technical skill, nor that it is necessary to assemble the most advanced mechanical marvels – which are often out of reach on account of their cost. The words necessary and sufficient imply that common sense must be exercised in the selection of the equipment.

The human scale should pervade all the constituent elements of the Core. Apart from this there are no standard dimensions for these elements. As everything, from the smallest scale to the largest, should be able to take place here, the authority should endeavour to put sufficient material means at the disposal of the citizens to enable them to display and to declare their spontaneous reactions by bringing into play their powers of action, participation and invention.

These places and buildings, equipped with those elements that are necessary and sufficient, should be distributed in town and country wherever a centre of vitality occurs.

The expression of the Core must interpret the human activities that take place there: *both the relations of individuals with one another, and the relations of individuals with the community.* Only full development of both these relationships can safeguard the dignity of individual life.

Attributes of The Core: Spontaneity

The Core must express a human geographical focus – either already in being or desiring an outlet. *Its function is to provide opportunities – in an impartial way – for spontaneous manifestations of social life. It is the meeting place of the people and the enclosed stage for their manifestations.* It is also the safety valve for any emergent expressions. Here spontaneous activities, whether momentary or expressing a decisive outpouring of emotion, again become possible.

The people must be given a means by which they can express their feelings or give vent to spontaneous reactions. It is these spontaneous expressions that will give a vitality to modern society. It will not find this in universities or professional organisations, but here in the Core; where an idea can suddenly gush forth – free, independent, creative; large or small, the visible and touching witness of a new society which has begun to balance what it is with what it might become.

The plastic and spatial expression of the Core will be complex; its various parts may sometimes be separated or even isolated, and some may well be vanquished by alterations in the centre of gravity

146

147

Figure 2.3   Attributes of The Core: The Human Scale – Attributes of the Core: Spontaneity, double page from the congress publication, *The Heart of the City,* 1952 (© Ashgate Publishing Limited)

post-war discussion of urban development. Now planners, but also interested laypeople, held in their hands an impressive volume whose suggestive visual language and didactic text contributions addressed the design of the city centre and of urban public spaces. As the principal publication of the eighth congress of the organization in 1951 bearing the same name, the book acknowledged the importance of 'a civic landscape of enjoyment of the interplay of emotion and intelligence', and stated the claim that 'CIAM does not ignore the great movement of social renewal that, under different aspects, occupies all the peoples of the world'.[6] This publication advocated a city space with new qualities that the urbanite would experience spontaneously, creatively and comprehensively; a city space that would reflect the social composition and intellectual heft of the people who used it. In the collage on the book's cover, the design for a modern city centre, the 'heart' metaphor, and the depiction of a human heart condense into a memorable cipher for the viewer. In addition, the general graphic layout of the book, sketches by Saul Steinberg, and countless photographs of everyday scenes, suggested 'as much popular appeal as possible' and illustrated vividly the new strategy for analysing and planning a city: focus on its social and cultural functions.[7] By defining a stable 'urban infrastructure' and designing 'fixed points' in the body of the city, the new strategy was aimed at producing an environment that fostered communal living. This 'humanized environment', as CIAM called it, was emerging – as the sequence of powerful graphic spots on the cover and title pages suggested – everywhere where the city was establishing the necessary preconditions. The congress publication, *The Heart of the City*, put a complex and conceptually open debate visually into a nutshell.

Although CIAM members were increasingly active in the mainstream of the profession after the war, CIAM's conceptual phase was already over by the time the Second World War ended. At CIAM 6 – the organization's first post-war meeting in Bridgwater in 1947 – fully developed urban concepts for the spatial recentralization of the city were discussed. All the subsequent congresses would be dedicated to this topic. CIAM 8 'The Heart of the City', the third meeting after the war, was expected to be an occasion to take stock, to look back at the previous decade and a half of intense occupation with problems of urban development, and so it was not considered as a time to depart for new shores. Indeed, the integrative conception of the city presented by the organization in the early 1950s was not a product of the post-war period. Hidden beneath the demands of CIAM 8 lay

---

[6]   'A Short Outline of the Core', in Tyrwhitt, Sert and Rogers, *The Heart of the City*, p. 168.

[7]   Letter of José Luis Sert to Jaqueline Tyrwhitt from 8 August 1951, CIAM-Archive, Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture, ETH Zurich (CIAM-Archive) [CIAM 42–JT–9–281].

a continuous development whose roots reached back to the second half of the 1930s – a period when most of CIAM's members experienced a cultural and geographical displacement through emigration. Whereas conference reports, press releases and publications on behalf of the organization draw a coherent picture of the official activities of the organization in Europe,[8] the correspondence between the CIAM protagonists and the memos of informal meetings behind the scenes reveal that the development of CIAM's urban planning theory in the 1930s and 1940s was motivated by a constant transatlantic exchange of ideas rather than by the European congress work. In the broader research on CIAM, one finds the assumption that the American planning debate supplied essential guidelines for the work of CIAM. Eric Mumford stated that 'the experiences of Gropius and Sert in the United States altered CIAM's post-war direction', and Jos Bosman considers CIAM's idea of the city centre to be the result of a 'transition experience' of the CIAM emigrants in North America.[9] Nevertheless, there are only a few examples of systematic research on the perception of American planning theories within the congresses.[10]

In the 'New World', as they called it, CIAM members oriented their work towards new concepts in the development of the city. Sert, vice-president of

---

[8]   These sources have been the subject of various studies, see among others, Jos Bosman, 'CIAM 1947–1956', in Katharina Medici-Mall (ed.), *Fünf Punkte in der Architekturgeschichte* (Basel/Boston/Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 196–211; Jos Bosman, 'Jenseits des Textes: Die Charta von Athen im Lichte der Projekte der Nachkriegszeit', *Werk, Bauen + Wohnen*, 80/4 (1993): 8–17; John R. Gold, 'In Search of Modernity: The Urban Project of the Modern Movement, 1929–39', in James Peto and Donna Loveday (eds), *Modern Britain 1929–1939* (London, 1999), pp. 40–51; Volker M. Welter, 'Post-War CIAM, Team X, and the Influence of Patrick Geddes', in Kenneth Frampton (ed.), *CIAM – TEAM 10: The English Context. A Report on the Expert Meeting, Held at the Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, on November 5th 2001* (Delft, 2002), pp. 87–112, and Annie Pedret, *CIAM and the Emergence of Team 10 Thinking, 1945–1959*, PhD thesis (Massachusetts Institute for Technology, 2001).

[9]   Eric Mumford, 'CIAM Urbanism after the Athens Charter', *Planning Perspectives* 7/4 (1992): 413, and Jos Bosman, 'CIAM after the War: A Balance of the Modern Movement', *Rassegna* 14/52 (1992): 8.

[10]   A discussion of potential sources of CIAM's intellectual reorientation in the 1940s is included in Volker M. Welter, 'From locus genii to heart of the city: Embracing the spirit of the city', in Iain Boyd Whyte (ed.), *Modernism and the Spirit of the City* (London/New York, 2003), pp. 35–56, and Eric Mumford, *Defining Urban Design: CIAM Architects and the Formation of a Discipline, 1937–1969* (New Haven, 2009), pp. 20–61. The transatlantic exchange of ideas within CIAM is analysed in detail in Konstanze Sylva Domhardt, 'Transatlantische Beziehungen – stadtplanerische Netzwerke: Lewis Mumford und Clarence Samuel Stein als Wegbereiter für einen Städtebau der CIAM', in Burcu Dogramaci and Karin Wimmer (eds.), *Netzwerke des Exils: Künstlerische Verflechtungen, interdisziplinärer Austausch und Patronage nach 1933* (Berlin, 2011), pp. 355–72, and in Domhardt, *The Heart of the City*.
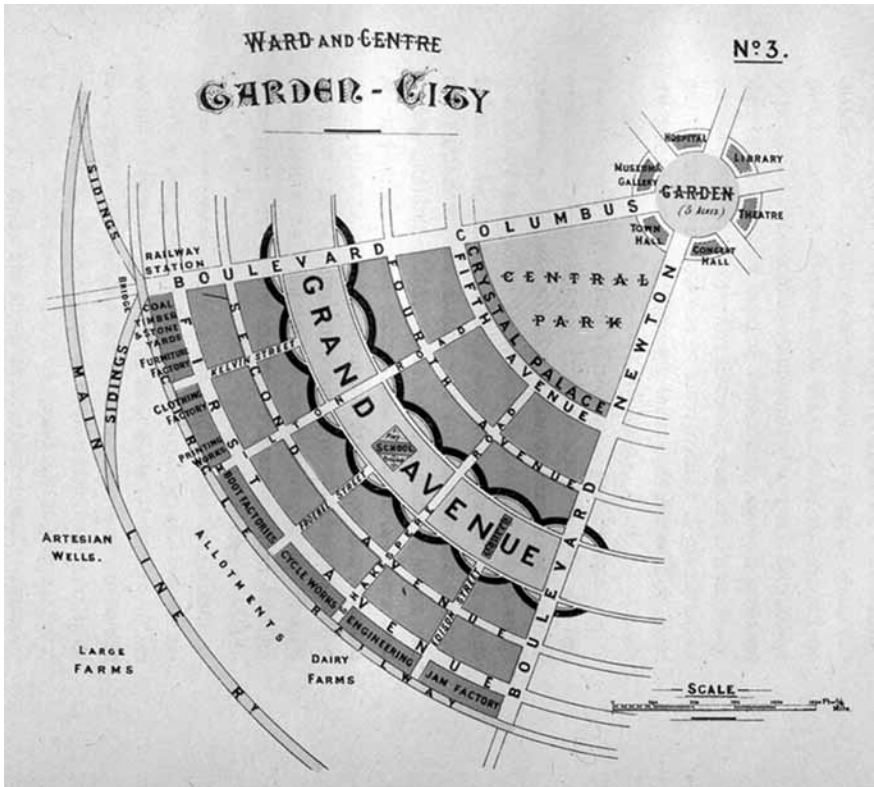
Figure 2.4   Ebenezer Howard, Ward and Centre, from *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform,* 1898

CIAM since 1937, who arrived in the United States in 1939, and immediately afterwards established an architectural business in New York, characterized the impact of emigration on the work of CIAM as follows: 'As a consequence of this dispersion CIAM has broadened its scope, and its views had to be broadened accordingly'.[11] At the same time, the representatives of CIAM did not, as is often assumed, break with the tradition of planning in developing their concept of the future city. They wanted to view urban planning as 'community planning'. The concepts that served as CIAM's model to that end had emerged out of a dialogue among European and American planners since the turn of the century, and to some degree, had already been tried out by the protagonists of the congresses during their academic training, such as Ebenezer Howard's 'Garden City' and

---

[11]   José Luis Sert, 'Centres of Community Life', in Tyrwhitt, Sert and Rogers, *The Heart of the City*, p. 4.
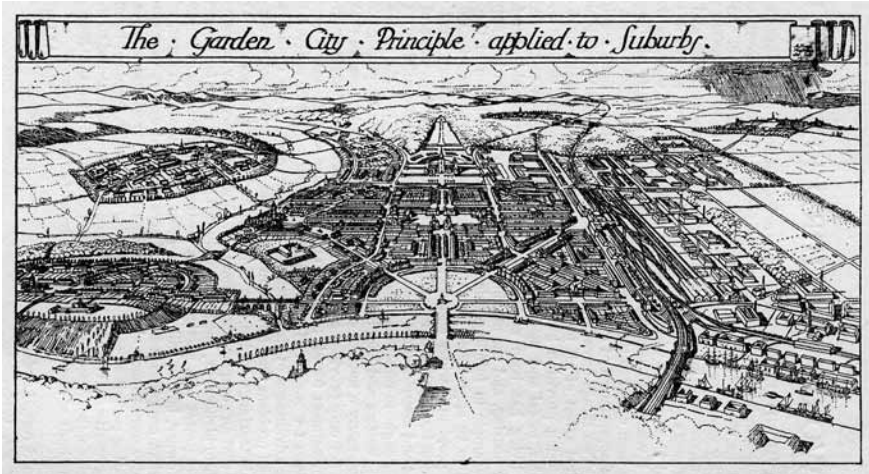
Figure 2.5   Raymond Unwin, The Garden City Principle Applied
               to Suburbs, from Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An
               Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs,* 1909

Raymond Unwin's interpretations of it, but also Patrick Geddes's 'city-region' and Lewis Mumford's 'polynucleated city'.[12]

Because European immigrants in the United States found themselves confronted with a perspective that focused on urban space and various ways of forming social and urban identity, these approaches continued to be part of CIAM's debates on urban development. The American adaption of the neighbourhood unit concept in particular was acknowledged by members of CIAM as an important design strategy for the city of the future.

The evolution on both sides of the Atlantic of the idea of the neighbourhood can be divided into two phases: a founding phase (1890–1910), which grew out of the nineteenth-century critique of society and whose analytical view articulated the city into intelligible spatial units in order to achieve more profound social transformation, and a subsequent consolidation phase (1910–30), which studied neighbourhoods with the methods of the social sciences and elevated them to an operative concept for urban development.[13] Around the

---

[12]   Ebenezer Howard, *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London, 1898); Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* (London, 1909); Patrick Geddes, *Cities in Evolution: An Introduction to the Town Planning Movement and to the Study of Civics* (London, 1915), and Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York, 1938).

[13]   The first comprehensive account of the genesis and the international adaption of the neighbourhood unit concept is included in James Dahir, *The Neighborhood Unit Plan:*

turn of the century, social reformers of the English Settlement Movement and the American University Settlement Movement, under the spiritual leadership of Samuel Augustus Barnett and Robert Archey Woods, strongly encouraged a view of the city that considered the spatial distribution of social groups. As teachers and educators, middle-class settlement workers fostered community life in poor urban areas and tried to implement hygienic and educational reforms by establishing 'settlement houses' which served each neighbourhood. For Woods, for example, the neighbourhood, as the primary social unit of cities, metropolises and metropolitan regions, represented a 'social organism' that offered every resident a feeling of rootedness and protection from the relentless clutches of industrial society.[14] In the second decade of the twentieth century, the discussion of concepts of the neighbourhood was already taking place on both sides of the Atlantic, thanks to the active travelling of leading representatives of the international planning scene, amongst others being Unwin's regular stays in the United States to lecture and study. Another venue for the exchange of ideas between the continents was the conferences of the International Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, which was founded in London in 1913.[15] Key figures of the international planning scene, like Raymond Unwin, Patrick Abercrombie, Thomas Adams, Clarence Samuel Stein and Fritz Schumacher, met here on a regular basis. In the 1920s and 1930s, the interpretation and practical implementation of the idea of the neighbourhood were a preferred topic of this effective discussion forum.

Its Spread and Acceptance. A Selected Bibliography with Interpretative Comments (New York, 1947). For an overall idea history of the concept, see Christopher Silver, 'Neighbourhood Planning in Historical Perspective', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 51/2 (1985): 161–74; Dirk Schubert, 'Heil aus Ziegelsteinen. Aufstieg und Fall der Nachbarschaftsidee: Eine deutsch-anglo-amerikanische Dreiecks-Planungsgeschichte', *Die alte Stadt*, 25/2 (1998): 141–73, and Donald Leslie Johnson, 'Origin of the Neighbourhood Unit', *Planning Perspectives*, 17/3 (2002): 227–45.

[14]   In his speech 'The University Settlement Idea' at the School of Applied Ethics in 1892 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, which is included in Henry C. Adams (ed.), *Philanthropy and Social Progress* (New York, 1893), pp. 57–97, Woods delivered a detailed introduction in the methods of his work and in the origins of the University Settlement Movement. With his widely read compendiums *Handbook of Settlements* (New York, 1911) and *The Settlement Horizon* (New York, 1922), the author introduced planning as a social task. For Barnett's ideas for a social reform, see his collection of essays *Practicable Socialism: Essays in Social Reform* (London, 1888), and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Katia Frey and Eliana Perotti (eds), *Anthologie zum Städtebau*, vol. 1.2 (Berlin, 2008), pp. 926–32.

[15]   The organization changed its name in 1924 in 'International Federation for Town and Country Planning and Garden Cities' and in 1926 in 'International Federation for Housing and Town Planning'.

As a result of this transatlantic dialogue, first attempts at deliberate planning in order to stimulate interaction between people and personal contact on the basis of neighbourhood patterns were made. In Europe and North America housing estates were planned with a unified design concept and limited size, grouped around central facilities for recreation and communal activity. In the United Kingdom, numerous examples were created as part of the Garden City Movement, which adopted Howard's 'ward' as the smallest urban unit. Although, as Howard conceived it, every 'ward' should have a direct spatial relationship to the city centre, it also had its own palette of public facilities, in which schools played a central role as sites for the community: '... the school buildings might serve, in the earlier stages, not only as schools, but as places for religious worship, for concerts, for libraries, and for meetings of various kinds ...'.[16] The largest forum in North America for discussing planning questions against the backdrop of the social sciences was the Russell Sage Foundation, an independent research institution founded in New York in 1907, whose numerous publications, studies and public discussions referred to ideas from the University Settlement Movement. Between 1908 and 1917, the Russell Sage Foundation supported the pioneering design experiment Forest Hills Gardens, built in the New York City borough of Queens and based on designs by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. and Grosvenor Atterbury. Forest Hill Gardens were modelled on Letchworth (1903), the first Garden City planned by Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin 31 miles from London. In *Town Planning in Practice* (1909), Unwin describes its planning principles:

> In any but very small sites there are likely to be required some buildings of a larger or more public character than the dwelling-houses – such, for example, as churches, chapels, public halls, institutes, libraries, baths, wash-houses, shops, inns or hotels, elementary and other schools; and it would probably be well ... to group them in some convenient situation, and of them to form a centre for the scheme.[17]

As an example for an ideal neighbourhood, Forest Hills Gardens, with its expansive green spaces and curving streets, was the first larger housing project to deviate from the restrictions of New York's grid pattern for buildings, and it

---

[16]   Ebenezer Howard, *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London, 1898), p. 38.

[17]   Raymond Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs* (London, 1909), p. 290. Letchworth was planned according to 'Garden City Building Regulations'. They are documented in Charles Benjamin Purdom, *The Garden City: A Study in the Development of a Modern Town* (London, 1913), pp. 302–15. For profound research on Letchworth, see Mervyn Miller, *Letchworth: The First Garden City* (London, 2002).

created residential and recreational spaces for the metropolis's middle class.[18] Many of the approaches to social reform in Europe, especially in the United Kingdom and Germany, that concentrated on developing neighbourhoods pursued a policy of building residences on the periphery of cities. Whereas these planning initiatives followed an antiurban ideal, in North America the comprehensive planning efforts resulted in the Community Centre Movement. Its advocates made the neighbourhood community centre to the cornerstone of an urban culture. The term 'community centre' was already widespread in North American urban planning in the early 1920s, and it shaped the debate over the formalization of the idea of the neighbourhood. The label 'neighbourhood unit' lent its name to an urban planning concept that was widely followed in Europe as well.

In 1916 the Chicago architect William Eugene Drummond (1876–1946), who had worked for Frank Lloyd Wright for many years, presented for the first time a formal design concept called the 'neighbourhood unit' for planning neighbourhoods. A well-founded theoretical basis for neighbourhood planning came only later, proposed by the American educator and social reformer Clarence Arthur Perry (1872–1944). In his essay 'The Relation of Neighborhood Forces to the Larger Community: Planning a City Neighborhood from the Social Point of View' (1924), Perry condensed the findings of the social sciences up to that point on the social cohesion and interaction of neighbourhoods in an urban context and thereby provided parameters for urban planning.[19] For a hypothetical neighbourhood on 64 hectares, located about halfway between the centre and periphery of a city with less than 100,000 residents, Perry designed a catalogue of formal and functional principles. Perry saw the precisely planned spatial coherence of such a residential unit and its size as the pivotal determinants for producing strong social cohesion and a feeling of community. A child's route to the closest playground (no further than a quarter of a mile) and primary school (no more than half a mile) were considered crucial factors in determining the extent of a neighbourhood. Only tangential to larger traffic arteries and not

---

[18]   For the planning premises of Forest Hills Gardens, see Clarence Arthur Perry, 'The Neighborhood Unit: A Scheme of Arrangement for the Family Life Community', in Committee on Regional Plan of New York and Its Environs (ed.), *Regional Survey*, vol. 7: *Neighborhood and Community Planning* (New York, 1929), pp. 90–100, and Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York, 1990), pp. 117–21.

[19]   For the development of the comprehensive planning idea in North America, see Konstanze Sylva Domhardt, 'Von der City Beautiful zum Regional Planning. Der ganzheitliche Planungsansatz im amerikanischen Städtebau', in Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Katia Frey and Eliana Perotti (eds), *Anthologie zum Städtebau*, vol. 2: Das Phänomen Grossstadt und die Entstehung der Stadt der Moderne (Berlin, forthcoming spring 2014), and Domhardt, *The Heart of the City*, pp. 62–75.

AREA IN OPEN DEVELOPMENT PREFERABLY 160 ACRES •• IN ANY CASE IT SHOULD HOUSE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO REQUIRE ONE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ◦ EXACT SHAPE NOT ESSENTIAL BUT BEST WHEN ALL SIDES ARE FAIRLY EQUIDISTANT FROM CENTER

A SHOPPING DISTRICT MIGHT BE SUBSTITUTED FOR CHURCH SITE

SHOPPING DISTRICTS IN PERIPHERY AT TRAFFIC JUNCTIONS AND PREFERABLY BUNCHED IN FORM

ONLY NEIGHBORHOOD INSTITUTIONS AT COMMUNITY CENTER

TEN PERCENT OF AREA TO RECREATION AND PARK SPACE

INTERIOR STREETS NOT WIDER THAN REQUIRED FOR SPECIFIC USE AND GIVING EASY ACCESS TO SHOPS AND COMMUNITY CENTER

HIGHWAY — MAIN — BELT — HIGHWAY — SHOPS AND APTS — COMMUNITY CENTER — MAIN — TO CIVIC CENTER — APTS AND SHOPS — RADIUS — ¼ MILE — TRAFFIC JUNCTION

← TO BUSINESS CENTER — ARTERIAL STREET

Figure 2.6   Clarence Arthur Perry, A Summary of Neighborhood Unit Principles, 1929. Courtesy of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

parcelled but rather arranged around a centre, Perry's neighbourhood units and their spacious recreational spaces were grouped to form a city with a cellular structure. Perry's early texts described in detail the object of planning and his design principles but did not yet include drawings, which help explain why the urban planning scene, in contrast to social reform circles, did not immediately take notice of these approaches to making neighbourhood planning systematic.

Not until 1929 did the author offer a visual scheme for such a ground plan in his extensive essay 'The Neighborhood Unit: A Scheme of Arrangement for the Family Life Community' in the report for the *Regional Survey of New York and Its Environs* by the New York Regional Plan Association, whose studies he had contributed to as a member of the Social Division since 1924.

It was above all Perry's colleagues at the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA), a group of architects, engineers, landscape architects, sociologists, economists, conservators, real-estate agents, and journalists in New York between 1923 and 1934 that recognized his principles as more than just conceptual inspiration. The members of the RPAA were dedicated to studying the social, economic and aesthetic challenges of the built environment as well as the technical possibilities for creating new living spaces to meet these challenges.[20] Important impulses for CIAM's urban development debates came from an intense exchange with Lewis Mumford, the spokesman and intellectual head of the RPAA, and the urban planner Clarence Samuel Stein, who was extraordinarily successful on the East Coast; they were important champions of the idea of the neighbourhood in the United States into the 1950s. Mumford saw Perry's 'neighbourhood unit' as an urban planning unit and became the *spiritus rector* of the most influential example of American model planning in the interwar period: Radburn in New Jersey. This innovative new city 15 miles northwest of Manhattan was built from 1928 on under the planning leadership of Stein and Henry Wright with Raymond Unwin and the British planning pioneer Thomas Adams, among others, contributing as consultants. As a 'town for the motor age', it was designed to put into practice the concept of the 'neighbourhood unit plan' and to adapt it to the new needs of a society increasingly relying on automobiles. It is clear that the planning of Radburn responded to the challenges of its time with a radical revision of the relationship between buildings, streets, paths, gardens, parks, neighbourhoods, and the overarching units, even though the Great Depression meant that the original plan to create an autonomous housing development could not be realized in every respect. Stein took up Perry's ideas. He defined neighbourhoods with a radius under half a mile and concentrated each of them around a school, forming school districts of 7,500 to 10,000 residents. In 1949, Stein documented the elements of his design: '(1) The Superblock; (2) Specialized Roads Planned

---

[20]   Lewis Mumford, Clarence Samuel Stein, Henry Wright, Benton MacKaye, Stuart Chase and Catherine Bauer acted as central figures of the RPAA. For their determining the direction of community development in the United States, see Roy Lubove, *Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America* (Pittsburgh, 1963).

Figure 2.7   Clarence Samuel Stein and Henry Wright, General Plan Showing
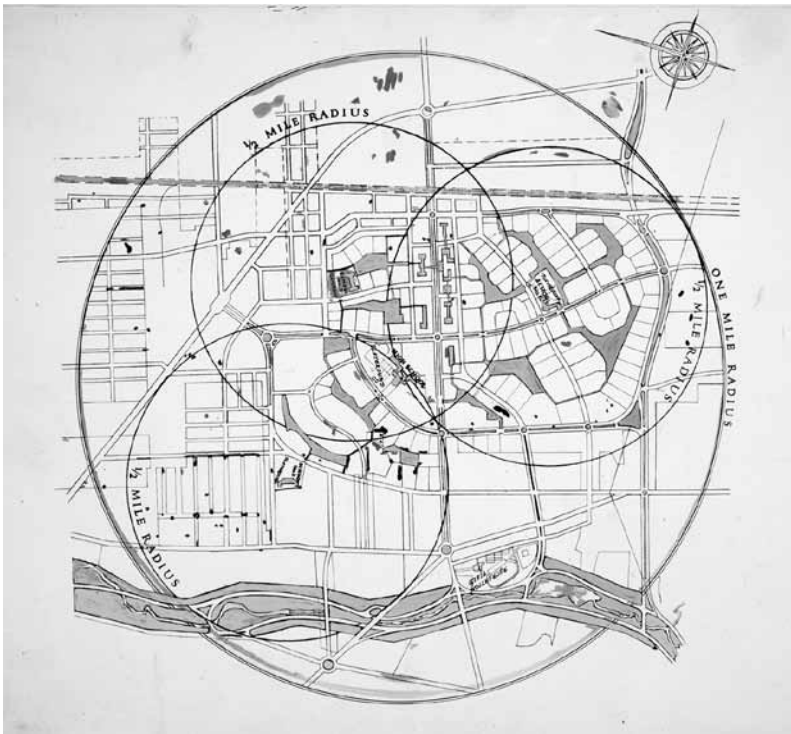   Neighborhoods, Radburn, 1949. Courtesy of the Division of
             Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

and Built For One Use Instead of For All Uses; (3) Complete Separation of
Pedestrian and Automobile; (4) Houses Turned Around; (5) Park as Backbone'.

Following Perry, Stein defined the 'superblock' as an element that
creates diverse connections between the individual residences, within the
neighbourhood, and in the larger context of the city.[21]

Over the 1930s, therefore, a concept of urban development became
internationally accepted that advocated the decentralization, subdivision and
organization of the urban fabric and to that end interpreted the idea of the

---

[21]   Clarence Samuel Stein, 'Toward New Towns for America', *The Town Planning
Review*, 20/3 (1949): 225–6. Radburn is documented at length in Clarence Samuel Stein,
Toward New Towns for America (Liverpool, 1951), pp. 37–69. See also Daniel Schaffer,
Garden Cities for America: The Radburn Experience (Philadelphia, 1982) and Eugene Ladner
Birch, 'Radburn and the American Planning Movement: The Persistence of an Idea', *Journal
of the American Planning Association*, 46/4 (1980): 424–39.

Clarence S. Stein and Henry Wright, Architects Associated

Courtesy of City Housing Corporation

Figure 2.8   Clarence Arthur Perry, Preliminary Study of Two Super-Blocks
              at Radburn, New Jersey, 1929. Courtesy of the Division of Rare
              and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library

neighbourhood in a variety of ways.[22] Many representatives of the Modern Movement in Europe adapted the concept of the neighbourhood for their own work. At CIAM 3 in Brussels in 1930, the American plan for Radburn attracted the interest of delegates to the congress. It was discussed as a case study ('Radburn U.S.A. 1929') and documented in the illustration section of the publication for the congress, *Rationelle Bebauungsweisen* (1931). The most influential congress of the pre-war years, CIAM 4 in 1933, also alluded to works from RPAA circles under the premise of a 'beneficial subdivision of residential grounds', under the slogan 'The Functional City'. In the 'Statements of the Athens Congress' ('Feststellungen zum vierten Kongress') from 1933, the architect was given the task of 'starting from a thorough grounding in the housing unit and the residential area at its correct size, he must formulate the relationship between dwelling, work and recreation and order it in space'.[23] In the debates at the congress, however, no one commented on the fact that defining residential space as 'a rational concentration of living cells' missed the central point of the Radburn model.[24] The planning unit of the 'Wohnviertel' (residential quarter) proposed by CIAM may have represented an alternative to the building type of the 'Siedlung' (housing settlement), but that alone did not make the concept an equivalent of the 'neighborhood unit', since it tried to anchor the idea of neighbourhood exclusively in dwelling. These early interpretations of the American 'neighborhood unit' within CIAM's joint European congress work remained incomplete, since they did not connect the various urban functions to one another to encourage social exchange of urban dwellers.

Within CIAM, Walter Gropius in particular had personal contacts with various representatives of the RPAA.[25] He met not only Mumford but also Stein on his first trip to America in 1928; the latter's partner Henry Wright gave him a tour of the grounds of Sunnyside Gardens (1924–28), the first planning experiment of the RPAA, which, like Forest Hills Gardens, was built in the

---

[22]   Already in the 1920s and early 1930s, Radburn was intensively discussed in European planning magazines; see for example: Cornelius Gurlitt, 'New Yorker neue Siedlungen', *Stadtbaukunst* 10/2 (1929): 27–31, Robert Lederer, 'Die Stadt Radburn', *Städtebau* 25/11 (1930): 529–30, and Jan Otto Marius Broek, 'Radburn, de "Town for the Motor Age"', *Tijdschrift voor Volkshuisvesting en Stedebouw* 11/4 (1930): 81–7.

[23]   *Feststellungen zum vierten Kongress*, in Martin Steinmann (ed.), *CIAM: Dokumente 1928–1939* (Basel/Stuttgart, 1979), p. 163 (translations, unless otherwise indicated, are mine).

[24]   The provisional programme for the fourth congress 'Die internationalen Kongresse für neues Bauen laden zum 4. internationalen Kongreß in Moskau (1.–10. Juni 1933) ein', CIAM-Archive [CIAM/4–2–72D].

[25]   For the relationship of individual CIAM members to Mumford and Stein, see Domhardt, *Transatlantische Beziehungen*.

New York City borough of Queens.[26] Mumford's and Stein's interpretations of the concept of the neighbourhood provided important inspiration as the protagonists of CIAM sought to come to terms with American 'community planning'. The example of Gropius makes it clear how the urban development ideas of specific representatives of CIAM transformed under the influence of the American debates on planning. After moving to the United States in 1937, where he taught at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Gropius became the leading figure in a debate that revolved around the design of urban communal spaces as part of an all-encompassing 'community planning'. Together with his students, he defined an urban planning model – the 'organic neighbourhood unit' – whose dimensions were derived, as Perry and Stein had also done, from the radius of its residents' activities. He integrated the 'organic neighbourhood unit' into a hierarchy of social networks in which Ebenezer Howard's planning unit of the 'ward' is also found: by linking the smallest social cells, families, various social units are formed: 'a street community' (80 people), 'a ward community' (400 people), and 'a neighbourhood community' (5,000 to 8,000 people), all of which combine to form a 'township' of 25,000 to 75,000 residents. Various 'townships' can be combined into a larger association: the 'countyship'. This idea of a continuous transition between the 'township' and the 'countyship' corresponds to Howard's urban ideal of a 'Town-Country'.

In Gropius's urban planning model of the 'township', communally used spaces were supposed to be given priority over the dwelling, which had occupied the centre in Gropius's pre-war work. Gropius identified the community centre as the most crucial task of urban planning: 'The heart of the communal organism, coordinating these potentialities of a rich, diversified life, is the neighbourhood civic centre or "core" from which stem the social arteries that determine the character and strength of the whole group'.[27] Gropius borrowed the term 'core', which, along with the aforementioned 'heart', would become very significant in CIAM's work during the second half of the 1940s, from Stein's descriptions of Radburn. There, every 'superblock' surrounded a park, the 'central core', which was accessible only by pedestrian paths. As the various descriptions of the 'township' make clear – for example, in Sert's 1942 book *Can Our Cities Survive?* and in 'A Program for City Reconstruction', published by Gropius and Wagner in *Architectural Forum* a year later – it includes a central sector, the 'community centre', with public facilities such as a school, sports complexes, auditoriums,

---

26 For a detailed description of the design principles of Sunnyside Gardens, see Stein, *Toward New Towns for America*, pp. 23–36.

27 Walter Gropius, 'Mis-en scène pour l'habitation organique', unpublished typescript, 1942, p. 3, Walter Gropius Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University/Cambridge, MA [bMS Ger 208–57].
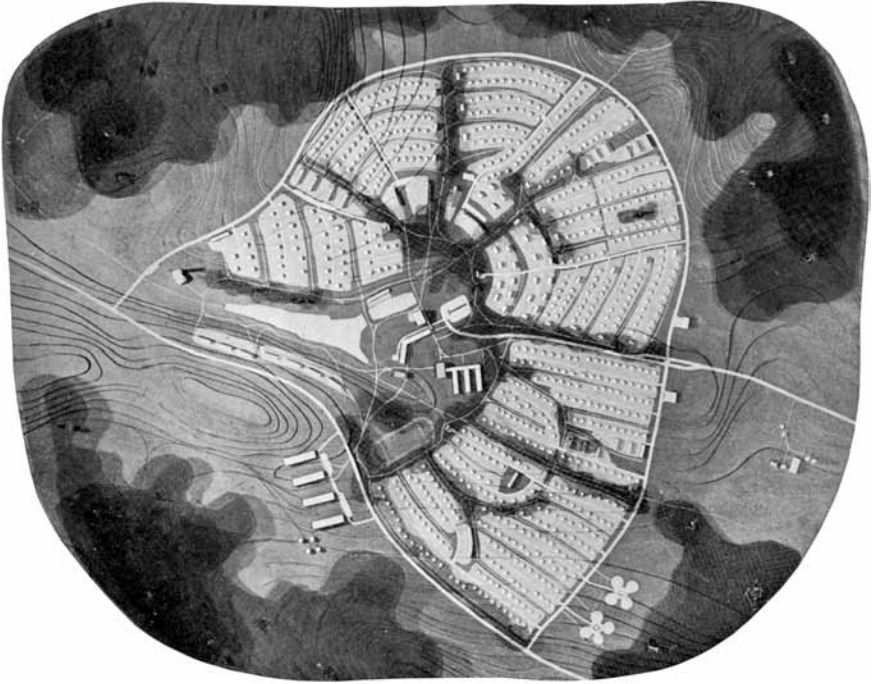
Figure 2.9   Walter Gropius and Martin Wagner, Design Model of a
              Township, 1943, from Gropius and Wagner, 'A Program for City
              Reconstruction', *The Architectural Forum*, 79/1 (1943): 81

shopping opportunities, hotels and restaurants, surrounded by residential areas.
This 'community centre' is embedded in a system of green spaces intended not
just to mediate the urban space but also to connect the community socially.[28]

In order to encourage social interaction of city dwellers with the city's spatial
and functional qualities, the new city was supposed to have a hierarchically
articulated network of main and subsidiary centres. In the run-up to CIAM's
first post-war congress, the term 'urban constellation' was coined to describe this
urban structure. There was a desire to limit the growth of the city, to centralize
its structure and to base it on manageable units. The last were not supposed

---

[28]   José Luis Sert, *Can Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, their Analysis,
their Solutions* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1942), p. 213, Walter Gropius and Martin
Wagner, 'A Program for City Reconstruction', *The Architectural Forum*, 79/1 (1943): 75–86,
and Walter Gropius and Martin Wagner, 'Housing as a Townbuilding Problem', unpublished
typescript, 1942, p. 45, Special Collections in the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University
[SC/Rare NA2300.H37G76x].

to be of equal value but rather to be organized into a system of public 'centres' that would represent spatially the social relationships of the city's residents. CIAM's 'urban constellation' directed attention to 'the town as a whole' and filled a gap in the organization's theoretical edifice.[29] Whereas the focus of its pre-war work had been on housing, the interpretation of the 'neighbourhood unit' served the protagonists of CIAM as a bridge from the house to the city, moving from the analysis of individual functions to their interrelationships in the urban development design. This was an essential step in the development of CIAM's own theory: traffic would no longer be the ordering element of the city, as it was the case in the 'Functional City' of the early 1930s but rather a sequence of public spaces in which the user preferred to walk. In addition, it was CIAM's achievement to embed the concept of the neighbourhood into an urban hierarchy with the city centre on top. The functional taxonomy of CIAM's early work thus entered the shadow of a taxonomy of social space that included all scales for urban planning.

The concept of the neighbourhood no doubt helped CIAM achieve a more comprehensive perspective on the city. Nevertheless, the interpretation of the American model was subject to limitations in certain respects. For example, CIAM circles were fascinated primarily by the use-oriented interpretation of urban spaces, and not by a specific aesthetic quality, such as the experience of the urban space by its residents or the visual perception of the city. They adopted the concept of the neighbourhood with an eye to subjecting urban development to a system of structural articulation, as this affirmed a conviction from the congress's early work – namely, that the city could be generated by means of abstract principles. The work of CIAM's protagonists remained tied to the fundamental methods of their early study of urban development. A 'synthesis of the city' could only be derived from a systematic grasp of those forces that drove urbanist developments. Producing a logically comprehensible connection between analysis and design remained the aim. Hence the design process continued to be a theoretical construct and the city a problem of organization. Nevertheless, CIAM's protagonists focused their attention on urban public space. The goal was to separate out specific sites where an 'urban community' could assemble. They were convinced that community spirit could only develop if spaces that made communal life possible were created.[30] The

---

[29]   For the theoretical construct of the 'urban constellation', see Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, 'The Constellation & the Core. Talk Given to the Council for Planning Action in Hunt Hall, Cambridge, November 27th, 1951', unpublished typescript, CIAM-Archive [SG/43–T–15–1951], and Tyrwhitt, Sert and Rogers, *The Heart of the City*, pp. 103–107.

[30]   How green open space was understood by CIAM members as a means to confine the city and guide its future development, while at the same time creating new public urban realms that served as a social binding agent, and hence, a 'civic landscape', is discussed in

user of the city no longer appeared alone but always as part of a group. Planning took not the individual but the family and the residents of a neighbourhood as its starting point.

Thus the question of urban identity only entered these debates through the backdoor: if one espoused planning for the community, it was first necessary to explain what constituted this community in the first place and what encouraged its formation. But there was no consensus on this issue within CIAM: Gropius, for example, wanted to influence the dwellers' behaviour and to control it in a targeted way by means of clear guidelines. Sert studied the 'chaos of the city' to find opportunities for modern human beings to develop, though Sert simply presumed their creative activity and their need to establish contact with their fellow human beings. In Jaqueline Tyrwhitt's view, the formation of community was best left alone, after creating freely usable spaces for it. It was therefore difficult to outline the object of CIAM's discussion on the city centre in the early 1950s. Depending on the delegates' ideas, the centre of the city could exist as a whole urban area, as a square, as a building, or as a purely intellectual construct. It was assigned attributes such as 'creativity', 'spontaneity', and 'temporality'. On the conceptual level in particular, a unified approach was never found: thus terms such as 'civic heart', 'pedestrian realm', 'urban core', 'heart', 'community centre', and 'civic landscape' were used as synonyms at the congress.[31] According to CIAM's theory, the city centre remained an 'open space' without an architectural contour. The urbanist debates offered a startling response to the question of what would lend it a special character: It was not the form of urban space that would ensure that a distinctive living environment will develop. Urban identity resulted less from the architectural or landscape design of urban space than from the diverse varieties of its use. With the 'urban constellation', CIAM defined an urban development principle – a structural framework – for the city of the future: ideas for satisfying this principle architecturally were, however, never discussed. Interest in the city centre was thus not an interest in architecture.

Nevertheless, in their congress publication *The Heart of the City* (1952), the different identities of the city, including its historical one, are openly addressed. CIAM sought in the urban fabric of the past rules for renewing the contemporary city. In its discussions in preparation for and during the congresses and in publications, the historical city is repeatedly presented as a concrete reference.

Konstanze Sylva Domhardt, 'From the "Functional City" to the "Heart of the City". Green Space and Public Space in the CIAM Debates of 1942–1952', in Dorothee Brantz and Sonja Dümpelmann (eds), *Greening the City: Urban Landscapes in the Twentieth Century* (Charlottesville, 2011), pp. 133–56.

[31] All terms are included in 'A Short Outline of the Core', in Tyrwhitt, Sert and Rogers, *The Heart of the City*, pp. 164–8.

It was by no means coincidence that a drawing by Saul Steinberg of the Piazza San Marco in Venice frames the book for CIAM 8. References to the urban planning qualities of the Piazza San Marco could be found in the theoretical contributions of CIAM members since the early 1940s. For example, Ralph Tubbs mentioned the Piazza San Marco as a reference for his design 'The Heart of the City' in the exhibition *Living in Cities* (1940) and commented on an aerial photograph of the Piazza with the words: 'Perfectly balanced but informal grouping of buildings and spaces – expression of the free spirit'.[32] In Maxwell Fry's book *Fine Building* (1944), the explanation of an illustration of the Piazza San Marco reads: 'Piazza San Marco, Venice, for the grandeur and nobility of a connected architectural setting for a city centre'.[33] In 1951 Jaqueline Tyrwhitt chose the Piazza San Marco as the model for her design of a city centre, 'The Heart of the Town', in the Town Planning Pavilion of the Festival of Britain and summed up its unique spatial experience in these effusive words: 'Passing under a heavy arcade suddenly the bright piazza opens before one's eyes, an explosion of space and light; an oasis of space maintained against the pressure of surrounding life by a wall of uniform and hence inviolable facades'.[34] At CIAM 8 (1951) there was little discussion of the specific qualities of the Piazza San Marco for architecture and urban planning. In the meanwhile it had become the epitome of a place for urban community, so that the president of CIAM, José Luis Sert, could exclaim enthusiastically yet noncommittally: 'We all admire the Piazza San Marco. It is one of the most wonderful places in the world'.[35] Considering the historical city and imagining the new city did not coincide on the level of design theory and practice, though, the Piazza San Marco became the model for a well-proportioned urban square, a symbol of a stimulating collective urban life and of a place for the community.

As for the 'functional city', a manifesto for the 'humanized city' was never formulated. The reasons for that should be sought above all in the nature of CIAM. Its long existence was made possible first and foremost by a faith in a uniform working method that was the basis for its debates. It was only the agreement on the approach to studying planning problems – and not a conformist program for design – that made it possible for the individual views of specific players in CIAM to remain bound by a shared discussion platform over the years. Nevertheless, CIAM managed not only to formulate questions but also to imagine a city of the future. The occupation with the American concept

[32]   Ralph Tubbs, *Living in Cities* (Harmondsworth, 1942), p. 35.

[33]   Maxwell Fry, *Fine Building* (London, 1944), Plate 49.

[34]   Jaqueline Tyrwhitt, 'Form of Exhibition', RIBA British Architectural Library Drawings and Archives Collection, London (TyJ/14/9).

[35]   Tyrwhitt, Sert and Rogers, *The Heart of the City*, p. 76.

Figure 2.10   The Piazzetta, Venice, page from the congress publication *The Heart of the City,* 1952 (© Ashgate Publishing Limited)

of the neighborhood served as the vehicle for that. It provided the principles for a collectively advocated model of the city and at the same time it offered the various CIAM protagonists enough latitude for their own interpretations. It functioned as a bridge between the analytical-scientific view of the city developed in Europe and the cultural influences of America.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 3

To Become a Monument: Artworks by Claes Oldenburg and Robert Smithson[1]

Susanneh Bieber

The artist Claes Oldenburg created his first monumental sculptures for urban plazas in the late 1960s, but by that time he had already conceived numerous public monuments in the form of texts and drawings. He had proposed a monument to immigration for Upper New York Bay as early as 1961, describing it as follows: 'The monument would begin as a reef placed in the bay; a ship would sail in, hit the reef, and sink; soon another would do the same; and after awhile, there'd be this big pile of wrecked, rusting ships which, as it grew, would be visible from quite a distance.'[2] At once outrageous and tongue-in-cheek, it is not surprising that this proposal was never realized. The monument to immigration exists merely as a verbal description and perhaps as a visual image in the reader's imagination.

From 1965 to 1967 Oldenburg devoted a sustained effort to the design of monuments, creating more than 80 drawings in which he visualized his ideas with a skilled artistic hand. Made with swift, fluid lines and loose washes of colour, Oldenburg's ideas appear effortlessly in front of the viewer's eyes, as for example in a monument proposal that resembles a gigantic hot dog or another in the shape of an enormous block of concrete (Figure 3.1 and 3.2). Are these drawings proposals for monuments to be actually built or are they idealistic visions of an artist who has lost touch with reality? While these questions seem rhetorical and one may dissolve them by simply identifying the drawings as 'art,' this chapter recovers how Oldenburg as well as fellow artist Robert Smithson produced

[2]   Oldenburg interviewed by Paul Carroll, 22 August 1968, published as 'The Poetry of Scale', in *Claes Oldenburg: Proposals for Monuments and Buildings, 1965–1969* (Chicago, 1969), p. 13. See also Barbara Rose, *Claes Oldenburg* (New York, 1970), p. 104.

works that interacted very specifically with the contemporaneous discourses of building, destroying, designating and protecting public monuments in the 1960s. I argue that the artworks themselves were makers of meaning within their historical context, and as such had social and material implications.

In the decades after the Second World War, the conventional monument, understood as a large sculptural structure placed in the environment to commemorate events and people of national significance for posterity, lost favour with architects and urban planners working in the United States. It was eclipsed, on one hand, by new modernist structures that were constructed as monuments, be they bridges, skyscrapers or community centres, and on the other hand, by old historic buildings that were restored. While these approaches to the making of monuments, roughly characterized as functionalist and preservationist attitudes, were fiercely opposed to each other in that the latter attempted to recuperate the past and the former was oriented towards the future, they were both premised on the monument as stable in its relationship between form, function and meaning. Oldenburg and Smithson participated critically, yet not without humour, in the virulent fights concerning public monuments by creating artworks that encompassed material, aesthetic and social changes. Their works not only called into doubt an enduring, grand and unified image of American nationhood, but also produced new meanings by framing specific contemporary issues. Despite the fact that these artists insisted on the instability of the concept of the monument, their art, consisting of texts, drawings, photographs and tours, ultimately recovered the impact of monuments as carriers and makers of meaning.

Commemorating Immigration

Oldenburg's proposed monument to immigration wittily defies conventional notions of a monument: it neither pretends to be permanent nor glorifies immigration. Once the reef would be in place, ships would run aground one after another and slowly accumulate. After some time, the stranded shipwrecks left in the salty waters of the bay would begin to rust and eventually crumble, while new ships would arrive following the same process. The monument thus would continuously change its size, shape and material composition. This transformation of stately ships hardly conveyed the grandeur of the American nation, where immigrants hoped to fulfil their dreams of a prosperous new life

after an arduous journey. It rather presented an image of material disintegration and social wreckage.[3]

To create the monument to immigration, Oldenburg envisioned ordinary, functioning ships losing their intended purpose while becoming carriers of new meaning, a process he had observed when encountering the mothball fleet at Jones Point.[4] About 40 miles north of Manhattan, when driving on Highway 9W along the slopes of the Hudson River's west bank, one used to see a group of nearly 2,000 Liberty and Victory Ships. They were part of the National Defense Reserve Fleet, more colloquially referred to as the 'mothball fleet'. After serving as cargo ships during World War II, they were moored at Jones Point for possible future use, but since the fleet's service was rarely called upon, efforts to maintain or even modernize it had low priority. In the mid 1960s, when the outmoded vessels of the Reserve Fleet were needed for the Vietnam War, commercial ship builders referred to them as 'rust buckets'.[5] Although they were becoming functionally obsolete, the large ships stationed at Jones Point drew the attention of passing drivers, who frequently pulled over their cars to take a closer look. The sight of the Hudson fleet was so popular that the New York State administration built a number of rest stations off Highway 9W and at one of these points installed a small plaque describing the fleet's historical significance, thus establishing the ships' status as a monument.

The mothball fleet at Jones Point functioned successfully as a monument, even though the ships were not built for such a purpose. The enormous ships with their grey hulls fabricated of steel, each measuring about 450 feet in length and 60 feet wide, stood out majestically from the horizontal surface of the river. They were, despite accumulating rust and becoming dilapidated, physically large and easily visible structures, thus drawing the public's attention. In addition, the moored ships were admired because they carried with them historical meaning. They had actively participated in the Second World War, an event of national

---

3   For a historical overview of monuments see the first part of the entry 'Monuments' by Marita Sturken, in Michael Kelly (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (Oxford and New York, 1998), vol. 3, pp. 272–6. Oldenburg's *Monument to Immigration* shares characteristics with 'countermonuments', a term developed in James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 17–48; and expanded in Young's part of the entry 'Monuments,' in *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, vol. 3, pp. 276–8. Diverse monuments by Oldenburg are discussed in Mark Rosenthal, '"Unbridled Monuments"; or, How Claes Oldenburg Set Out to Change the World', in *Claes Oldenburg: An Anthology* (New York, 1995), pp. 254–63.

4   Oldenburg mentions the fleet in 'Poetry of Scale', p. 13.

5   Edward C. Burks, '"Rust Bucket" Fleet Is Criticized', *New York Times*, 23 May 1966, p. 63. For the fleet's history see Scott Webber, 'The Hudson River National Defense Reserve Fleet', *South of the Mountains*, 16/2 (1972): 8–10.

significance as the United States emerged from it as the leading military power, and also received credit for liberating Europe from fascism. The fleet, however, was not moored at Jones Point to commemorate and celebrate the US role during the Second World War. It was an 'unintentional monument' that gained historic status with the public only over time, by having been there, by having witnessed, even participated in a distant event.[6] Indeed, the patina of the ships, such as flaking paint, rusting steel and damaged rigging, facilitated rather than hindered their appreciation as authentic objects that had come from the past. The plaque ensured that the fleet's specific history was available to people no longer familiar with its role during the war.[7]

For his imagined monument Oldenburg cleverly and intentionally used this process of monumentalization – of becoming a monument – not only to commemorate the history of immigration, but also to situate that history in contemporary discourses. By proposing an island of ships accumulating in Upper New York Bay, the artist incorporated objects and locations that were directly involved in what was popularly conceived as the typical experience of American immigrants. Sailing on large ships from Europe to the eastern shores of the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, over 12 million immigrants arrived in Upper New York Bay. Steerage passengers disembarked at Ellis Island, where the federal immigration centre had been located since 1892. The island's main building, the Immigration Station, was designed in the then fashionable Beaux Arts style and completed in 1900. With over 2,000 immigrants arriving on the Station's first day of operation, additional structures were built shortly thereafter to accommodate the immigration procedures.[8]

Ellis Island has become a popular, even iconic, monument commemorating the history of US American immigration, but many visitors are surprised to learn that since the 1920s the Immigration Station was no longer welcoming immigrants. In 1924 a new law was ratified that restricted the number of

---

6   Alois Riegl succinctly described the overlapping yet distinct categories of intentional and unintentional monuments in 'The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin' [1903], trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions*, 25 (1982): 21–51.

7   The later story of the Hudson fleet exemplifies the changing existence of a monument: the fleet was dismantled in 1971, an occasion upon which the small plaque that had identified the fleet was replaced by a memorial marker commemorating the now absent fleet. The new monument consists of an approximately four-foot tall rock with two anchors leaning against it; embedded in the rock is a plaque with a photographic image of the fleet and a text recounting the fleet's history.

8   The history of Ellis Island is detailed in Thomas M. Pitkin, *Keepers of the Gate: A History of Ellis Island* (New York, 1975), and Barbara Blumberg, *Celebrating the Immigrant: An Administrative History of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, 1952–1982* (Boston, 1985).

immigrants and reassigned their processing to American consular offices abroad, thereby eclipsing the intended function of the Ellis Island centre.[9] The Immigration and Naturalization Service continued to use the buildings, mainly as a detention facility – for illegal entrants awaiting deportation, enemy aliens during World War II and immigrants suspected of politically subversive convictions in the post-war period – but with the end of the McCarthy era in 1954 such a site was no longer feasible and the island was abandoned. The buildings began to deteriorate, but rather than falling into oblivion, a heated debate ensued over the future and past of Ellis Island.

In 1956 the federal government, owner of Ellis Island, offered the plot of land with its buildings for sale in the *Wall Street Journal*. The advertisement touting 'one of the most famous landmarks in the world' as suitable for manufacturing, warehousing or an oil storage depot, generated – along with a number of lowball offers – outrage among the public.[10] Many people valued the island with its buildings as a historic landmark, because it was the place of arrival for millions of immigrants and as such marked the beginning of many inspiring stories of success in the United States. They called for Ellis Island to be declared a national monument and for the Immigration Station to be restored and preserved. Others countered that the island was a valuable plot of real estate with buildings that had become outmoded and dysfunctional. Why not allow a private business to destroy these structures and replace them with new and efficient ones, such as a hotel or business centre that would produce economic profits?

During the late 1950s and early 1960s public opinion in New York City galvanized against the functionalist project in which existing buildings were razed indiscriminately in order to erect modernist structures. Realizing that alarmingly large parts of their historical city were vanishing owing to ambitious urban renewal projects, many New Yorkers together with the help of preservationists and urban activists fought against the widespread demolition of old buildings and neighbourhoods. Efforts to save, for example, Pennsylvania Station from the wrecking ball were highly publicized and received broad public support. Even though the old Penn Station, designed at the turn of the century by the architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White in the Beaux Arts style, was demolished in 1963 to make room for a modernist entertainment arena atop an underground train station, preservationists achieved a major victory two years later, when the New York City legislature established the Landmarks Preservation Commission, a municipal government agency with the power

---

9   John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2002).

10   *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 September 1956, quoted in Blumberg, *Celebrating the Immigrant*, p. 96.

to denote historically significant buildings as protected monuments. Other cities and states, as well as the federal government followed suit in establishing comparable commissions.[11]

While Oldenburg's monument to immigration starkly contrasts with functionalist ideals, it also refrains from any preservationist fervour. By restoring a building to its original pristine condition, preservationists attempted to objectively recuperate history. But which criteria were used to determine the original material state of a building? Already during its first 20 years of operation the Ellis Island Immigration Station had continuously changed as it was used by millions of people effecting tear and wear, as damages were repaired and structural additions were built. Was the Ellis Island Station in 1920 less 'original' than the one in 1900? Preservationists not only had to choose one particular historical time, thereby deleting many other original historical moments, but also aspired to a material ideal that could not be realized, since their restoration activity required adding and subtracting material, paradoxically, to undo any change. Their efforts to recuperate the 'original' building for posterity eschewed history's own processes of change over time and its continuous effects of material reconfiguration.

Even before settling on one material state for a building's restoration, preservationists had to decide, which structures were worthwhile to be protected and thus merited the public resources that a restoration would consume. At the time when the landmark commissions were established amidst rapidly transforming cities, the criteria for admittance into the canon of architectural history were themselves changing. In the early twentieth century modern architecture developed as the dominant style that was to express the concerns and conditions of the times. Practitioners spurned the preceding Beaux Arts manner, because it did not conform to notions of efficiency and technological progress, which were understood as fundamental to human progress. By the 1950s and 1960s this rejection had largely turned into a matter of aesthetics independent of social concerns, and modern architecture became one style among many, whereby others could claim equal status.[12] Thus the landmark commissions attempted to save outstanding architectural examples of a variety of historical styles, including, or even particularly, Beaux Arts buildings. The

---

[11]   Joseph B. Rose, 'Landmarks Preservation in New York', *Public Interest*, 74 (1984): 132–45; and Anthony Wood, *Preserving New York: Winning the Right to Protect a City's Landmarks* (New York, 2007). The comparable federal law, the National Historic Preservation Act, was signed in 1966.

[12]   For an understanding of modern architecture as a style see Robert A.M. Stern, 'Relevance of the Decade', and Catherine Bauer Wurster, 'The Social Front of Modern Architecture in the 1930s', both in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 24/ 1 (1965): 6–10, 48–52.

preservation of the Ellis Island Immigration Station, however, was by no means guaranteed, since many historians and architects considered it a minor example of the Beaux Arts style. But in addition to diverse aesthetic styles, the socio-historical significance of buildings came to play a more dominant role when evaluating the reasons for architectural preservation.[13] Under these premises the Immigration Station was an important building due to the role it had played within the history of immigration as much as its recently revalued style.

In fact, the efforts to save the historic Ellis Island Station were congruous with the contemporaneous social re-evaluation of immigration. During the early 1960s the United States Congress set out to reform the current restrictive immigration laws, which were based on the origins quota system from the 1920s and gave preference to immigrants from Western Europe. The suggested reforms, which resulted in the Hart–Celler Act of 1965, focused on merit and family reunion rather than nationality as the main criteria for admittance. The proponents of the reform bill understood their effort as applying the ideals of equality, fundamental to US American democracy and at the time espoused in the civil rights movement, to immigration policies by rectifying what they called a decidedly un-American law. In contrast to the nationalist mistrust of foreigners during and after the Second World War, immigration and the concomitant national diversity of the American people were now portrayed as a positive and foundational aspect of the United States.[14]

In accord with such re-evaluations Ellis Island was declared a national monument in May 1965. Since Ellis Island was under federal jurisdiction, President Lyndon B. Johnson executed this task by signing Proclamation 3656. During the dedication ceremony, Johnson emphasized the positive side of immigration and national diversity, surely aware of the current fine-tuning of the Hart–Cellar Act, which was to be presented for a final vote to Congress later that year. In his speech, Johnson reminded his listeners that millions of immigrants had come to the United States 'through the open doors of Ellis Island'. He continued: 'These men, women and children from many lands enriched the American melting pot. They made us not merely a nation, but a nation of nations'. Ellis Island, he suggested in a visionary tone, is to become a 'handsome shrine'.[15]

---

[13] Eric WM. Allison, 'Historic Preservation in a Development-Dominated City: The Passage of New York City's Landmark Preservation Legislation', *Journal of Urban History*, 22/3 (1996): 350–76.

[14] David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York, 1992).

[15] President Johnson quoted in Blumberg, *Celebrating the Immigrant*, p. 103.

Oldenburg's monument proposal seems an unlikely contender to fulfil the national image of immigration and unity, at least as presented by the President. While the artist dedicated his monument to immigration, thus acknowledging the significance of immigrants in shaping a culturally diverse nation, his proposal mischievously posits the arrival of people from foreign lands and cultures in the United States as a process characterized by social and material collision. He created a site of tribute, but one that conveyed the complex realities of his times, when the social history and political future of immigration were at stake. Indeed, the struggle over Ellis Island did not end in 1965, when in accord with Oldenburg's proposal many others questioned which history was to be commemorated in a national monument. Was the Ellis Island Station not also a place of humiliation for immigrants, where steerage passengers were inspected to assess their eligibility for admittance into the country after first-class travellers had already debarked the ships directly for Manhattan? Were immigrants not detained on Ellis Island for potentially harbouring subversive political opinions during 20 years of the building's operation? And was 'a nation of nations' with people of different races, religions and cultures indeed a harmonious and handsome unity? While the continuing transformations of a white, Protestant, American population and the concomitant clashes have remained part of US immigration debates, the Ellis Island Immigration Station was eventually restored in the Beaux Arts style to open as a museum of immigration in 1990, informing visitors not only of the Station's glorious past, but recounting other, less-celebrated histories.

Drawing Attention to the Common

In 1965 when President Johnson officially declared Ellis Island to be a national monument, Oldenburg made two monument proposals for the island, which adeptly combine the use of text and image: one is known as *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island – Shrimp*, and the other as *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island – Frankfurter with Tomato and Toothpick* (Figure 3.1).[16]

The titles inform us of the location, and hint at the designs and the approximate sizes, while the drawings provide more details regarding the colours, shapes and proportions of the proposed monuments. Even though we presumably have not seen a shrimp or hot dog of such dimensions, the artist allows us to visualize these fantastic monuments in their specific location by skilfully applying crayon and

---

[16]   Cat. nos. 230 and 231 in Gene Baro, *Claes Oldenburg: Drawings and Prints* (New York and London, 1969), p. 257.
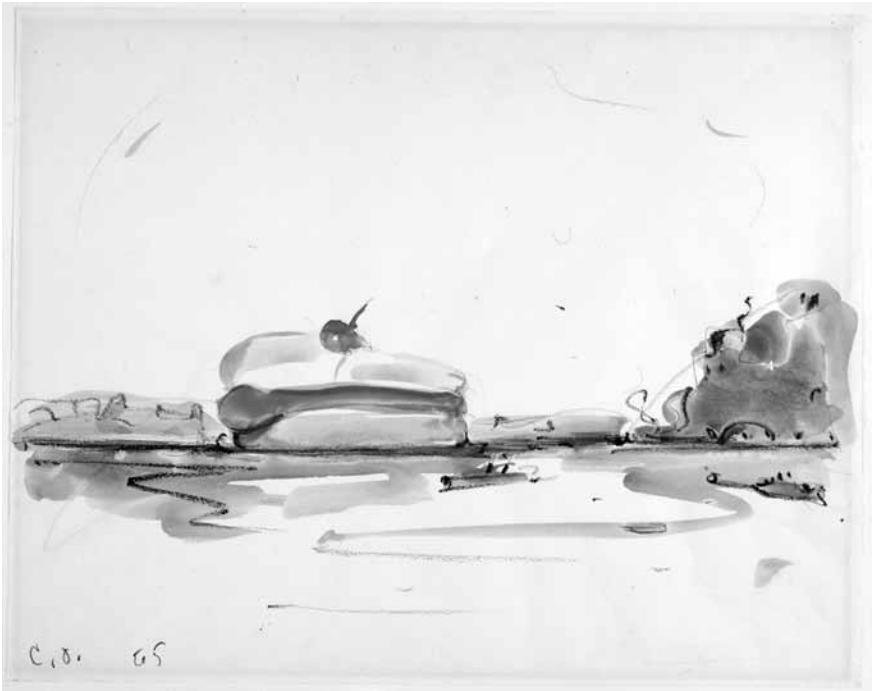
Figure 3.1   Claes Oldenburg, *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island –
              Frankfurter with Tomato and Toothpick*, 1965
              Crayon and watercolour, 19 1/8 × 24 in. (48.4 × 60.3 cm)
              Collection: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Gift of Mr Michael
              and Mrs Dorothy Blankfort, Los Angeles (to AFIM) © Claes
              Oldenburg. Photo Credit: The Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photo
              courtesy the Oldenburg van Bruggen Studio

watercolour to a sheet of paper. In *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island –
Frankfurter with Tomato and Toothpick* the monument sits in the middle of Upper
New York Bay with a couple of ships sailing past, Lower Manhattan appears to the
right, and the New Jersey shoreline extends across the horizon to the left.

In both drawings Oldenburg monumentalized an ordinary food item,
thereby not simply representing it, but giving it importance and new
meaning. The Frankfurter with tomato and toothpick, rendered in one of
the drawings, is a tasty finger food that millions of Americans eat every day,
but it has become colossal and stands out in relation to its environment;
even the ships, in contrast to their appearance in the earlier text proposal,
are tiny in comparison. Oldenburg draws the viewers' attention to a hot dog,

not so much for it to be eaten but to be considered anew in its ordinariness, as a thing drawn from the realm of the common, shared by the American people. The common that can be used, eaten, seen or experienced everyday by everybody, rather than by a few who are privileged due to their heritage, power or wealth, is fundamental to notions of democracy and equality in the United States. As such, the hot dog in Oldenburg's proposal becomes a national symbol that paradoxically endows the common with extraordinary, or monumental status.

At the time when Ellis Island became a national monument, Oldenburg's proposals marked a challenge to the architectural canon to expand beyond the recuperation of diverse fine art traditions. While many architects and preservationists at the time came to appreciate old styles, these were firmly rooted in the Western tradition of the fine arts, or – using the French term – the 'beaux arts.' Just as the lavish nineteenth-century artistic style had in particular symbolized the wealth of European nations, the political efforts of developing an art for art's sake in the United States were closely linked to its rise as a superpower in the post-war era. Fine art as separate from the toils of daily life, as not bound to material and social conditions, was seen as the prerogative of a rich and powerful nation, and as such became itself a symbol for an advanced culture. Once fine art achieved such symbolic status, it could easily be used and abused without fulfilling any of the social and political aspirations that had been fundamental to the notion of artistic advancement during the early twentieth century. Thus, the re-evaluation of Beaux Arts architecture during the 1960s was in line with an emphasis on aesthetics and the fine arts, as much as with aspirations towards the equality of different historical styles. In 1965, for instance, preservationists paid little attention to common, vernacular buildings, such as the ferry terminal and the hospital quarters on Ellis Island, which stood plainly next to the stylish Immigration Station.

Oldenburg's work confronted this tradition in fine arts not only by transforming the ordinary into the monumental, but also by producing additional meanings that undid the monuments' status as heroically American. Purposefully calling the hot dog a Frankfurter, the artist posits this common finger food as not so monolithically American after all and more generally alludes to the American cuisine as distinctly shaped by the foreigners that have immigrated to the United

States.[17] In addition, the term 'hot dog' colloquially denotes a person showing off, a meaning corroborated by the food's shape and colour that resembles the male genitals. But in *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island* the hot dog does not stand in the erect position typical of monuments, such as the numerous obelisks and columns that function as heroic markers; it rather lays horizontal and flat. The 'shrimp', which Oldenburg rendered in the other *Proposed Colossal Monument for Ellis Island*, similarly has a double meaning: the word is informally used to describe a small and physically weak person, and the roundish, soft form of the skin-coloured seafood with an opening at the centre, as depicted in the drawing, allows for associations with a vagina. The shrimp takes on monumental form, at once celebratory, unseemly, and highly political. Created, as they were in 1965, these artworks cleverly intervene with several contested hierarchies: male and female, US American and foreign, of fine art and common culture.

Oldenburg often selected common things for his monuments to also work in visual analogy to typical features of the proposed site. He explained, for example: 'the giant Frankfurter on Ellis Island has a shape in common with the ships that pass down the Hudson into the bay'.[18] In a drawing entitled *Proposed Colossal Monument – Fan in Place of the Statue of Liberty* (1967), the artist created a visual analogy between the shape of Liberty's radiating crown and the rotating blades of a ventilator.[19] Such visual relationships and transformations might not be obvious without recourse to the artist's explanations, as in the case of *Proposed Monument for the Intersection of Canal Street and Broadway, N.Y.C. – Block of Concrete, Inscribed with the Names of War Heroes* (Figure 3.2).

Oldenburg recounted that this idea was inspired by a baked potato, which in the United States is typically slit open with a cross-shaped cut and served with a square slab of butter at the centre.[20] The block of butter visually corresponds – albeit on a much larger scale – to the rectangular slab of concrete placed on a street intersection. While changing, multiple and often hidden from plain sight, the meanings of Oldenburg's drawings are far from arbitrary.

---

[17]   Oldenburg changed the title of the drawing, which was subtitled *Hot Dog with Toothpick* when first exhibited in 1966; see *New Work by Oldenburg* (New York, 1966). Oldenburg was himself an immigrant. He was born in Stockholm in 1929, grew up in Chicago, and became a US American citizen in 1953.

[18]   Oldenburg, 'Poetry of Scale', p. 15.

[19]   Barbara Haskell, *Claes Oldenburg: Object into Monument* (Pasadena, CA, 1971), p. 162.

[20]   Oldenburg, 'Poetry of Scale', p. 11.

Figure 3.2   Claes Oldenburg, *Proposed Monument for the Intersection of Canal Street and Broadway, N.Y.C. – Block of Concrete, Inscribed with the Names of War Heroes*, 1965
Crayon and watercolour, 16 × 12 in. (40.6 × 30.5 cm)
Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Bequest of Alicia Legg © Claes Oldenburg. Digital Image © the Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY

Making Traffic Obstacles

Proposed Monument for the Intersection of Canal Street and Broadway N.Y.C. – Block of Concrete, Inscribed with the Names of War Heroes seems to fit more comfortably with the conventional notion of monuments. Not only is the depicted block of

concrete enormous in size, but its simple rectangular shape is easily associated with an architectural structure. Like a traditional monument, it would be dedicated to a heroic subject matter and made of a solid, durable material that conveys a massive scale. The monument proposed for New York City would measure 150 feet in width, be uniformly cast in grey concrete, and list the names of soldiers who died for their country during wartime. This colossal monument would garner the attention of millions for many years to come.[21]

Rather than eliciting awe and admiration, however, the monument's realization would more likely cause dismay and disorder owing to its proposed location. The colossal slab of concrete would completely occupy one of the busiest intersections in New York City, where Canal Street crosses Broadway, thus blocking all traffic and causing a major congestion. Canal Street was one of the main east–west arteries through Manhattan: it connected Brooklyn via the Manhattan Bridge in the east to Holland Tunnel, leading underneath the Hudson River to New Jersey in the west. The junction with Broadway provided access to the financial district in downtown, while Broadway itself was one of the major north–south streets running the full length of Manhattan. To erect a monument hindering all traffic flow at this crowded intersection would be a nightmare for motorists. It would stand bluntly in the way; it is, to quote Oldenburg, 'a true obstacle monument'.[22]

Such obstacle monuments were anathema to architects and urban planners, who subscribed to the premises of functionalism. Applied to urban planning, the aim of functional architecture was to build an efficient and rational city. Large, traditional monuments vying for attention were distracting in such a plan. Anticipating the commission of numerous war memorials after the Second World War, professionals in the architectural field as diverse as Percival Goodman, Lewis Mumford, Robert Moses and Philip Johnson argued against the viability of conventional monuments. In his article 'Real War Memorials', published in the *Herald Tribune* in 1944, Goodman disparagingly labelled the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, along with the monuments at London's Trafalgar Square and New York's Columbus Circle as 'sites for traffic congestion'.[23] Already in 1937 Mumford had written an essay entitled 'The Death of the Monument', criticizing particularly those memorials which immortalized the dead without

---

21   Oldenburg described this monument in *Claes Oldenburg: Skulpturer Och Teckningar* (Stockholm, 1966), n.p.

22   Oldenburg in Haskell, *Object into Monument*, p. 17. Already the earlier monument to immigration discussed above, qualifies as an obstacle monument with the newly installed reef causing shipwrecks and disrupting naval traffic in Upper New York Bay.

23   Percival Goodman, 'Real War Memorials', *New York Herald Tribune*, 17 May 1944, p. 18.

any benefit to the living.[24] In a 1968 interview Oldenburg explicitly referenced one of the negative examples Goodman had discussed: he compared his monument for the intersection of Canal Street and Broadway to the Arc de Triomphe, which he described as 'an aggressive obstacle in that traffic must be rerouted around it'.[25]

Like Goodman and Mumford, Robert Moses disdained conventional monuments. As the so-called master builder, a title denoting his many influential roles in the New York City and State administrations, he was intent on modernizing the metropolitan area of New York by constructing a network of expressways, tunnels and bridges. The Lower Manhattan Expressway (LOMEX), conceived as the main east–west artery to ease traffic congestion on Canal Street, was one of his major projects slated for construction during the 1960s. The eight-lane thoroughfare was to provide motorists with a route free of traffic obstacles, be they stoplights, pedestrians or monuments, when driving across Lower Manhattan.[26]

Designed to serve the city's greater good, the building of highways through densely populated areas also had devastating consequences for the affected neighbourhoods and residents. On the positive side, LOMEX would initially relieve the surface streets of heavy traffic, making short trips in the area faster and more pleasant. An increase of business due to better access would lead to higher property values, attract investors, spur new construction, and result in more real estate tax revenues to benefit the entire city. The predicted improvements were thought to be significant, because the concerned areas, namely the neighbourhoods of SoHo, Little Italy, and Chinatown, showed declining business activities, included many rundown buildings, and had depressed property values. On the negative side, the project called for the eviction of almost 2,000 households and over 800 businesses, with many of them depending on the low property values of the area, which meant affordable rents. Having to relocate generally came with an increase of cost or a decline in living standards, even if a one-time financial compensation was offered. Moving a manufacturing shop, such as a small textile or printing business, including its heavy machinery, was a costly undertaking often concomitant with a loss of established clientele

---

[24]　Lewis Mumford, 'The Death of the Monument', in James L. Martin, Ben Nicholson and Naum Gabo (eds), *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art* (London, 1937), pp. 263–70.

[25]　Oldenburg, 'Poetry of Scale', p. 25.

[26]　Hilary Ballon and Kenneth T. Jackson (eds), *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York* (New York, 2007), p. 213. The publication reevaluates the negative reputation of Moses that had been entrenched by Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York, 1974).

and thus economically not feasible for shop-owners already in financial duress. In addition, if new businesses succeeded in the area, the expressway would eventually bring overall more traffic, noise and air pollution.[27]

The announcement of the imminent construction of LOMEX was met with intense public resistance. Opponents consisting mainly of residents from the affected areas organized into the Joint Committee to Stop the Lower Manhattan Expressway and actively voiced their opinion during public hearings, in newspapers, and with their political representatives. The work of writer, urban activist and New York City resident Jane Jacobs played an important role in mobilizing grassroots resistance to the established practices of large-scale urban renewal in the city. Her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* presented strong arguments for the social and economic vitality of old, densely populated, inner-city neighbourhoods, which were to be destroyed by such projects as LOMEX.[28] The New York City Board of Estimate and Mayor Robert Wagner were not unsympathetic to critics of the expressway project. They were particularly apprehensive of the negative impact on families and businesses having to relocate. A final vote was delayed for years, but by May 1965 the advantages seemed to trump the concerns and the board gave green light to the construction of LOMEX.[29]

Exhibited during the same month in 1965, *Proposed Monument – Block of Concrete* took on specific local and contemporary significance. Oldenburg's drawing not simply rendered a fantastic monument as a roadblock on Canal Street causing traffic chaos, but stood in direct opposition to the city's looming plans to construct LOMEX at that location. In his drawing the artist shrewdly used the simple, functionalist forms that were to modernize the city, to very different effects, revealing that technological and economic, even cultural advancement did not necessarily lead to social progress, equality and better living standards for all.

But is the monument depicted in the drawing not dedicated to war heroes thus glorifying the victories of the regime in power rather than critically evaluating its policies? According to Oldenburg, the names of servicemen who died for their country, would be inscribed on the surface of this massive monument. Honour rolls had been typical parts of war memorials since the late eighteenth century, as for example in France, but the meaning of this practice significantly changed over the years. The Arc de Triomphe erected in 1836 includes only the names of high-ranking officers, while by the beginning of the twentieth century, it was common

27   Charles R. Simpson, *SoHo: The Artist in the City* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 111–52.

28   Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York, 1961).

29   Clayton Knowles, 'Wagner Orders Building of Manhattan Expressway', *New York Times*, 26 May 1965, p. 1.

for monuments to list the names of all servicemen who had died, no matter if an admiral or a private, thus not only becoming more democratic but also signifying the great human cost of war.[30] A World War II memorial enumerating all dead American servicemen would comprise over 400,000 names. This is a shockingly long list when visualized on a monument.[31] In his work Oldenburg bluntly acknowledged devastation, no matter if caused by war or urban renewal.

One might further charge that Oldenburg's proposed block of concrete would be detested for the same lack of social concern that marred large urban construction projects, such as LOMEX. While depicting a massive and overwhelming monument, however, the artwork itself is small and light. It is drawn with crayons and a few washes of colour on a sheet of paper that measures no more than 16 by 12 inches.[32] Nevertheless, the drawing allows the viewer to imagine the depicted monument as real, to move between the realms of imagination and reality, between a quick gesture of witty mischief on paper and understanding the consequences of building. Indeed, it is not the monument to be built but the drawing that is material, it is the drawing that marked resistance as part of a broader coalition that fought against the construction of LOMEX.

Touring to the Periphery

Given Oldenburg's continued preoccupation with drawing monuments on paper that intervened in urban discourses, it is not surprising that he travelled to see the monuments, which the artist Robert Smithson presented in the essay 'The Monuments of Passaic', published in *Artforum* in December 1967.[33] Accompanied by photographs, the essay describes Smithson's journey to the suburban town of Passaic, which is located about 12 miles north-west of New York City. The trip begins at the Port Authority Building in Manhattan, where the artist boards bus number 30 towards the suburbs. When arriving at the Union Avenue Bridge, which

---

[30] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley, 2009), pp. 195–248.

[31] The World War II memorial in Washington DC, which was dedicated in 2004, diminishes this impact by displaying 4,048 stars on its Freedom Wall, each of which stands for 100 Americans who died in the war. See Savage, *Monument Wars*, pp. 297–306.

[32] For the challenges of moving from drawings to the production of public sculptures see Tom Williams, 'Lipstick Ascending: Claes Oldenburg in New Haven in 1969', *Grey Room*, 31 (2008): 116–44.

[33] Robert Smithson, 'The Monuments of Passaic' , *Artforum*, 6/4 (1967): 48–51, reprinted as 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey', in Jack Flam (ed.), *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings* (Berkeley, 1996), pp. 68–74.

leads from Rutherford over the Passaic River, Smithson exits the bus, strolls along the river's west bank, where Route 21 is being constructed, and then makes his way to the centre of Passaic town. On his walk he encounters numerous ordinary structures, which he photographs and identifies as monuments. A number of them are part of the printed essay, among them *The Bridge Monument*, *Monument with Pontoons*, and *The Fountain Monument* (Figure 3.3 to 3.5). In addition to publishing the article, Smithson organized a number of tours to Passaic for friends and fellow artists, such as Oldenburg, who joined him in January 1968.[34]

When considering *Monuments of Passaic* as an artwork, it is difficult to define precisely what constitutes the work: is it the actual structures described and represented, the photographs, the published article including the reproductions, the artist's journey, or the subsequent tours? While all of these objects and activities can be posited as art, they gain their full potential in relationship to each other. The artist encounters ordinary structures, which he presents as monuments by looking, photographing and writing, he makes his activity public in a printed article, which functions as a guide for additional encounters during which the structures are again seen as monuments. These various processes incorporate the material, visual and conceptual and closely intertwine reality, its interpretation and presentation.

Smithson's designation of monuments might initially seem wilful and humorous, but it is a practice not uncommon in the history of twentieth-century memorial design. This type of design gained particular traction in the United States after the Second World War when architects received the task of commemorating the nation's role in the war. Building functional structures as monuments provided an alternative to erecting conventional memorials, which were despised not only due to being traffic obstacles, as discussed above, but also because they were perceived as indulgent and wasteful, as corroborating the bourgeois tradition of the 'beaux arts'. The architectural community proposed the construction of 'living memorials', that is of functional structures, such as a bridge, a highway or a veterans' hall.[35] This solution seemed appropriate to honour the thousands of US American men and women who had sacrificed their lives during the war not only to achieve national glory or realize US American imperialist ambitions but also to rescue Europe from the throes of fascism. In accord with progressive democratic

---

[34]   Philip Ursprung, *Grenzen der Kunst: Allan Kaprow und das Happening, Robert Smithson und die Land Art* (Munich, 2003), pp. 242, 231–5. For a detailed description of Smithson's trip see Jennifer Roberts, *Mirror-Travels: Robert Smithson and History* (New Haven, 2004), pp. 60–64. Smithson was intimately familiar with the area. He was born in Passaic in 1938 and lived in neighboring towns before moving to Manhattan.

[35]   Andrew M. Shanken, 'Planning Memory: Living Memorials in the United States during World War II', *Art Bulletin*, 84/1 (2002): 130–47.

The Bridge Monument Showing
Wooden Sidewalks

Monument with Pontoons:
The Pumping Derrick

Figures 3.3, 3.4, 3.5: Robert Smithson, *Monuments of Passaic*
Three of six photographs from 126 format black and white negatives shot with
an Instamatic 400 camera, first printed in Robert Smithson, 'The Monuments
of Passaic', *Artforum,* December 1967. Collection: Museet For Samtiskunst,
Norway © Estate of Robert Smithson/licensed by VAGA, New York. Image
courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York/Shanghai

principles opposed to authoritarian rule, a 'living memorial' would serve the
surviving on the path of social advancement, instead of aggrandizing a victorious
nation. Such pragmatic monuments concurred with the initial modern, functional
ideals in architecture and urban planning, which were to bring about better living
standards for all rather than the select few.

A number of architects and planners, however, despite their dismay with
traditional monuments, argued that 'living memorials' were unlikely to edify
people. Philip Johnson provided a compelling example for this attitude in his
article on war memorials. He quoted Eleanor Roosevelt, allegedly writing on
her last night in the White House: 'I have always looked at the Washington
Monument out of my bedroom window ... That simple shaft, so tall and straight
has often made me feel during the War that, if Washington could be steadfast
through Valley Forge, we could be steadfast today in spite of anxiety and sorrow'.
Johnson then commented: 'It is hard to believe that Mrs Roosevelt would be
equally inspired by the George Washington Memorial Bridge. Driving across

The Fountain Monument: Side View

that bridge, she would be much more apt to concentrate on the traffic ... Calling a bridge a memorial does not make it one'.[36]

In *Monuments of Passaic* Smithson took on that challenge with humour, shrewdness, and sincerity, as he transformed a bridge into a monument. The design of the Union Avenue Bridge over the Passaic River can indeed be compared to the George Washington Bridge, as both are skeleton-frame structures with distinct diagonal crisscrossed bracing. The latter, however, is a famous and admired engineering feat that boasted the longest main span of any bridge in the world, when it was completed in 1931.[37] By comparison, the late nineteenth-century Union Avenue Bridge is a rather ordinary and obscure counterpart. But by looking, photographing and publishing the article, Smithson endowed the ordinary example with significance, and thus upended, similar to Oldenburg's efforts, the hierarchies between large and small, between the famous and the ordinary, the exclusive few and the commons.[38]

---

[36] Philip C. Johnson, 'War Memorials: What Aesthetic Price Glory?', *Art News*, 44/11 (1945): p. 10. Johnson does not provide a source for Eleanor Roosevelt's quote.

[37] Darl Rastofer, *Six Bridges: The Legacy of Othmar H. Ammann* (New Haven, 2000).

[38] While the transformation of ordinary objects into monuments is reminiscent of Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades, the approach of Smithson and Oldenburg is distinctly different in that it does not result in an art for art's sake. Smithson's *Fountain Monument* wittily repudiates Duchamp's *Fountain* of 1917, the infamous urinal. For Smithson's critique of Duchamp see Moira Roth, 'An Interview with Robert Smithson [1973]', transcribed by Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, in *Robert Smithson* (Los Angeles, 2004), pp. 81–94.

Smithson even drew attention to a nameless pumping derrick and a set of pipes that were temporarily put in place for the specific purpose of constructing a highway. The building activity in Passaic was to complete the last section of Route 21, which connected Newark in the south with Paterson Country to the north, as part of the long-standing endeavour to realize an extensive network of highways through and around New York City. Rather than focusing on the road itself, Smithson shifted attention to the periphery, to the diverse requirements and conditions of building, such as the pumping derrick and pipes that were necessary because the Passaic River was to be rerouted as part of the construction project. Such auxiliary yet significant circumstances as digging a new riverbed and redirecting the flow of water, and more generally, the use of material and human resources are rarely remembered, be it by the users of Route 21 or viewers of impressive monuments. What are the resources and hidden costs to build a highway or a bridge, and where indeed does this road lead to, what are its effects? Could the highways and bridges built in the 1950s and 60s qualify as 'living monuments', were they constructed to benefit the people as a whole?

Smithson did not erect what is generally considered a physical structure to make *Monuments of Passaic*, but the work still existed materially and in a specific social context. The artist's activities of touring, looking and photographing, of writing and making public produced materials, such as photographs, reproductions and an article, that drew attention to the periphery thus creating new social meanings. *Monuments of Passaic* enabled, even encouraged, viewers and readers to consider what was before them in material and social terms. Indeed the artistic activity of looking and framing as used by Smithson is a powerful means of producing public monuments. Up to 1967 the Union Avenue Bridge was seen, if at all, by locals driving over it day in, day out, but through Smithson's work it became known beyond its boundaries to the more than 10,000 readers of *Artforum*, and since then to countless others.[39] By devoting his or her attention to things, the artist endowed them with significance and gave them public exposure. Smithson, however, went further in that he aspired to act in the interest of the people by considering a work, including his own art, in its material and social conditions. Such work consciously affected its own present, and as such also shaped how viewers conceived the past and built the future.

From the seemingly immaterial proposals and texts, to the drawings and photographs, to the actual tours, the art made by Oldenburg and Smithson impacted how and what people saw. In 1970, a few years after the artworks were created, the New York City Preservation Commission deliberated for

---

[39]   In late 1967 the circulation of *Artforum* reached 10,918. See Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum, 1962–74* (New York, 2000), p. 88.

the first time about protecting industrial vernacular structures. The 26-block area of iron-frame buildings and garment factories in SoHo that was under consideration received landmark status three years later, thus officially becoming a public monument.[40] This decision foreclosed, at least for the immediate future, any plans to build LOMEX through this densely populated district. While this may confirm the impact of Oldenburg's obstacle and Smithson's tour to the periphery alongside the efforts of preservationists, social reformers and residents, their work was not interested in arresting the built environment in time. Indeed, as SoHo has become a bustling and high-end neighbourhood, the artists' work seems to invite the readers, viewers and visitors to continuously inquire if a historic landmark, a living memorial or an artwork still functions as a public monument.

---

[40]   Matthew A. Postal (ed.), *Guide to New York City Landmarks* (New York, 2008), pp. 38–40; and Simpson, *SoHo*, pp. 224–6.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Urbanization in Socialism: Everyday Life in Yugoslav Towns, 1945 to 1955

Ivana Dobrivojević

The liberation of the Yugoslavia in May 1945 marked the end of the Second World War in the country, but not the end of the revolution.[1] The Communist Party continued to struggle for control. With the return of peace, the Party was able to regroup its resources to focus on social questions, and in particular on the creation of the 'new', 'socialist' man. Party officials, members of the war generation, intoxicated with Communist ideology and ready to create a new society and a new world, entered the social and political scene. In every sphere of life (social, political and economic), the Soviet prototype was taken as an ideal, 'and in many cases forced on the country with ruthless energy, regardless of the cost and human suffering'.[2] Under the guise of modernization and cultural progress, Yugoslav society, mainly agrarian and patriarchal, was being reshaped in accordance with the Party's programme. This rapid modernization was a dogmatic experiment which ran its course until 1950, when the Yugoslav Communist Party broke openly with the Cominform.[3] The reforms encompassed improvements in the areas of education and sanitation but also shattered, and at times outright eradicated, the 'old' society and the

---

[1] Josip B. Tito, *Socijalistička demokratija mora imati snažnu ekonomsku podlogu, Govori i članci*, vol. 6 (Zagreb, 1959), p. 176.

[2] R. Jarman, *Yugoslavia: Political Diaries 1918–1965* (London, 1997), p. 742.

[3] Until the summer of 1948, Yugoslavia was under Soviet control. The Yugoslav regime was trying to create a completely new society and destroy the remains of bourgeois traditions. Agrarian reform, the first and second waves of nationalization (in 1946 and 1948), repression and terror against political enemies and opponents were some of the most prominent characteristics of the new regime. The Soviet state system became a model which was imitated everywhere and at every level of governance–in industry, agriculture, the army, education and culture. Things dramatically changed when the Cominform issued a resolution (June 1948) in which the Yugoslav Communist Party was accused of 'anti-Soviet' policy, and labelled as the 'kulak party'. As a response, party officials in Yugoslavia were trying to prove their loyalty to the Leninism by demonstrating 'ideological purity'. The dogmatic and rigid politics of the Party manifested in violent collectivization and the requisition of agrarian products.

'old' ways of life, as hastened industrialization led to mass migration, and as nationalization, expropriation, violent collectivization, mobilization for work in factories and the struggle against 'kulaks' and 'class enemies' destroyed social structures. Agriculture was widely neglected in the haste for industrialization, which resulted in a dramatic collapse of the standard of living. In this period, an era of 'great revolutionary rapture for some and of fear for others',[4] Yugoslav citizens were forced to be reconciled to the poverty surrounding them and to give up the little comforts of the present for the sake of building a new, 'happier' society and a bright socialist future.[5] The great dreams and unrealistic plans of the Party, its ruthless repressive measures towards all political enemies, including extended surveillance and control of all non-sympathizers, together with strained circumstances, indigence and people's fear for both existential and physical survival created a bleak atmosphere of insecurity where everyday 'reality resembled the ideal less and less'.[6]

Urbanization and the process of industrialization that European countries had gone through in the nineteenth century took place in Yugoslavia only after the Second World War. The hastened de-agrarization, industrialization and the forced transformation of peasants into workers led to an abrupt expansion of urban areas, but also to their ruralization. The drastic decrease in the number of shops as a consequence of the Party's policy of destroying the 'speculators', the low level of service, chronic shortage of goods, dirty and dusty shop-windows with political posters, which were changed only at state holidays, neglected, deteriorating cinemas and restaurants all spoke volumes of the temporary decay of the urban way of life.

Towns were developing without any sort of zoning laws, and at times, they even grew against them.[7] The chaotic expansion of the cities after the war continued, to some extent, the unplanned urban development of the pre-war era. Being aware of the accumulated urban problems, the new regime decided to establish town planning institutes on the state and regional level in 1946. However, politics intervened in all spheres of life, and thus, even urbanism had distinct political dimension. According to the dogmatic views of Party leaders, urban planners were expected to harmonize urban development with the 'general plan of economic, political and social development of the country'.[8] It was determined that Belgrade and the cities of federal importance had to have a

---

[4]   Ljubodrag Dimić, *Istorija srpske državnosti. Srbija u Jugoslaviji* (Belgrade, 2001), p. 344.

[5]   Josip B. Tito, 1959, *Ostvarimo socijalizam u našoj zemlji, Govori i članci*, vol. 5 (Zagreb, 1959), p. 8.

[6]   Dobrica Ćosić, *Piščevi zapisi*, (Belgrade, 2000), p. 23.

[7]   *Obrazloženje*, Archive of Yugoslavia (AJ), 50–78–157.

[8]   *Zadaci i organizacija urbanističke službe*, Archive of Serbia (AS), G 125–53.

general regulation plan. Still, socialist reality was strikingly different. Although the press pompously announced a complete transformation of urban settlements into the modern towns, only several plans were completed until 1952.[9] Moreover, despite the existence of the town planning institutes, the opinion of urban planners was rarely taken into consideration by the development of residential and industrial construction plans. Although the locations of industrial and residential objects were often selected against the basic principles of urban planning, planners were compelled to give their formal approval. Otherwise, they would be perceived as 'the blockers of the construction work'.[10]

The war destruction together with the chaotic development of the urban space had disastrous consequences for the country. Yugoslav socialist urbanization amounted, in some way, in accordance with the Marxist theories, ultimately to the eradication of the differences between cities and villages.[11] Still, there was a huge difference between the Marxist ideal and Yugoslav practice, and instead of the urbanization of countryside, we find that towns became ruralized. Ruralization was most apparent in the overall lack of hygiene; in the behavioural and communication patterns of the provincial migrants who essentially kept their rural habits, only slightly adjusting them to the urban conditions; in the chaotic and half-finished development of the suburbs; in the provisional architecture; and ultimately, in a dramatic decrease of cultural opportunities. Towns were under enormous pressure as a result of the Party's political and social programmes. According to estimates, around 2 million people (out of 17 million in total) moved from rural areas to the towns during the period 1945–61.[12] The level of urbanization varied widely across the country, with the capital city Belgrade attracting the most newcomers as the centre of administration, economics and university life. The Party implemented various ways to limit population growth in the capital, including the expulsion of so-called 'unproductive citizens' who had moved there after 1941, and the issuing of special residence permits.[13] Nonetheless, the process could not be stopped once it gained momentum and the population of Belgrade doubled during the period

---

[9]   'Listajuci urbanističke planove. Buducnost naših gradova', *Borba*, 11 August 1952.

[10]   *Odnos planske privrede i urbanizma. Referat arhitekte Dimitrija Marinovića*, AS, G 125–53.

[11]   'Edvard Kardelj o komunalnoj politici. Izgradnja socijalizma znači u konačnoj liniji definitivnu likvidaciju suprotnosti između sela i grada', *Narodno prosvećivanje* 1/2–3 (1948), pp. 6–7. See also: Gregory Andruss, Michael Harloe and Ivan Szelenyi (eds), *Cities After Socialism: Urban and Regional Change in Post-Socialist Societies* (Oxford, Cambridge, 1996), p. 116.

[12]   Ivanka Ginić, *Dinamika i struktura gradskog stanovništva Jugoslavije. Demografski aspekti urbanizacije* (Belgrade, 1967), pp. 86–7.

[13]   In order to obtain the residence permit, migrants had to prove that they were employed by state institutions or companies, or demonstrate that their moving to the capital served the 'public

1945–61. A similar population increase was noted in urban centres across many Yugoslav republics: Zagreb, Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Skoplje.[14] Small towns, where socialist factories were popping up overnight, were also expanding fast and chaotically. The abrupt population growth in towns was not accompanied by the adequate development of infrastructure and the quality of urban life was quite low. The lack of electricity and water, a poorly functioning sewage system, supply problems of every sort, shortage of shops and restaurants, few public transport vehicles, disrepair and dirt everywhere were just some of the problems that urban dwellers faced on an everyday basis.[15]

The most difficult problem, however, with the most immediate effect on the quality and culture of living, was the dramatic shortage of flats. Housing facilities were insufficient even before the Second World War and were badly damaged during the fighting. As objects of heavy industry were devouring the scarce financial means available, the reconstruction of houses and flats lagged behind after the war. In addition, bad housing policy was destroying the existing resources, as rents were drastically decreased in accordance with the Party's goal to make living affordable for all. The rents constituted only 4–5 per cent of the total costs of living, so landlords had neither means nor interest to maintain the tenement houses.[16] According to the official statistics (which must always be taken with a pinch of salt for this period), a worker had to work only 12 hours in order to pay the monthly rent for a one-room flat, the same amount of time necessary to earn enough to buy two kilos of pork.[17] The great poverty, unavailability of construction material in free trade, but also the attitude that the government had up to the beginning of the 1950s that the aspiration to own a private house or a flat was an expression of 'petty-bourgeois pursuits', resulted in the fact that in the first post-war decade the state was practically the only constructor of new flats.[18] Thus, while people had enough money to pay for housing in theory, there was very little housing to be had.

The combination of rapid population growth, slow building and poor quality of housing maintenance led to a constant decrease in the amount of urban dwelling space available. Thus, in the period between 1949–50 and 1954,

---

interest'. 'Zakonom je regulisano koja će se lica iseliti iz Beograda", 20. Oktobar, 27. October 1947, p. 6.

[14]   Savezni zavod za statistiku, *Jugoslavija 1918–1988. Statistički godišnjak* (Belgrade, 1988), p. 52.

[15]   *Izveštaj o stanju u 17 gradova u Srbiji* (29 March 1949), Archive of Serbia (AS), G125– 61.

[16]   Despite of the first and second nationalizations, small and modest tenement housing stayed in private hands.

[17]   *Problemi životnog standarda*, Archive of Josip Broz Tito (A JBT), KPR III–A–1–b.

[18]   *Ekonomski problemi stambene izgradnje*, A JBT, KPR III–A–4–x.

the amount of space available to an individual on average dwindled by as much as 22 per cent (i.e. from 11.6 to 8.7 square metres)[19], which was far below the minimum defined in the sociological theory.[20] The shortage of housing space was exacerbated even further by the needs of the state administration and industry: previously expropriated houses and flats were often allocated for office use by government administrators and socialist companies.[21] The only solution the Party was able to offer to the housing space crisis was the institution of the 'communal flat.' However, communal living represented more than just a practical solution to the housing crisis. It also fit into the ideological agenda: the Party was not only trying to create a classless society, but also punish, repress and place under surveillance the members of the old bourgeoisie defeated in the revolution. Thus, according to the newly created social hierarchy, workers, military officers and all other members of the partisan movement were regarded as the most meritorious citizens who were entitled to living in flats completely or partly expropriated form the pre- war owners.

Shared flats, especially in big cities, became so common that the government in the mid 1950s estimated that more than 30 per cent of all flats were shared by two or more families.[22] The right to private property was not given much recognition, and at times, whole families were moved out of their homes and accommodated somewhere else.[23] In the first years after the war, urban dwellers lived with the constant feeling of insecurity and fear, as an eviction decree or an unwanted cotenant could be expected at any moment. Tenants developed various strategies to keep living conditions relatively bearable: they brought friends and relatives, some of them fictitiously, to inhabit empty rooms.[24] Since space was such a coveted commodity, it quickly became a liability in the atmosphere of strict surveillance. The number of denunciations with regards to vacant flats or empty spaces within flats skyrocketed.[25] The heads of the Party used newspapers to appeal to city dwellers to report on their neighbours who seemed to have

---

[19]   *Pregled životnog standarda–nacrt*, A JBT, KPR III–A–1–b.

[20]   According to urban sociologists and psychologists, each person should have at least 14 square metres of the flat at its disposal. Sreten Vujović, Mina Petrović, *Urbana sociologija* (Belgrade, 2005), p. 58.

[21]   *Izveštaj o delatnosti Ministarstva komunalnih poslova za AP Vojvodinu za 1948*, AS, G 125–57.

[22]   *Pregled životnog standarda–nacrt*, A JBT, KPR III–A–1–b.

[23]   *Rad na donošenju regulativnih pravnih propisa iz oblasti stambeno–komunalne delatnosti*, AS, G 129–9.

[24]   'Ne koristi se odluka o sporazumnom useljavanju u nastanjene stanove', 20. oktobar, 26. 7. 1946.

[25]   *Izveštaj Slobodana Stanojevića o izvršenom službrnom putovanju do Kragujevca, Vrnjačke Banje, Trstenika i Kruševca*; AS, G 125–68.

surplus housing space,[26] so ensuring the 'correct' usage of flats was declared each citizen's obligation and 'responsibility'.[27] The members of the People's Front[28] had a particular 'responsibility'[29] to be 'massively organized in finding enough under-utilized housing space', but also to identify those people who 'according to the regulations and the law should not be living in Belgrade and take up the space of our military officers, workers and clerks'.[30] The campaign for revealing surplus housing space assumed the form of a real pursuit where the newspapers reported on the names and addresses of the people who, according to the Party standards, 'used their flats uneconomically'.[31] Should a flat be reported, several inspections a week followed. This practice deprived the old and the sick of their flats and these people often became homeless as they could not find alternative housing.[32] Of course, there were exceptions. The supposedly socially righteous Party protected its own officials: the size of their flats and its utilization could not be called into question.[33]

Although the housing law clearly stipulated that only the living and bedrooms were to be inhabited, thus not the ancillary premises, additional tenants were often moved into other people's lobbies, laundry-rooms, lumber rooms and studies nonetheless.[34] Consequently, two-bedroom flats in Belgrade often housed up to seven or eight persons.[35] Shared flats brought about the loss of privacy and intimacy, as different families, on their way to the kitchen or bathroom, passed through each other's bedrooms.[36] Complete strangers sharing ancillary premises in a cramped space led their everyday lives in an atmosphere of

---

[26]   'Treba ukazivatni na neiskorišćenje stanove', *20. oktobar*, 17. 6. 1949.

[27]   'Pitanja koja najčešće dolaze pred stambene organe', *Politika*, 2 April 1951.

[28]   People's Front was a mass organization organized by the Communist Party. It gathered members of the trade unions and women anti-fascist organization. However, in order to avoid problems with the authorities, almost all citizens had to join the organization; Mr Stevenson to Mr Bevin (24 January 1946), Jarman, *Yugoslavia: Politicial Diaries 1918–1965*, vol. 3, p. 582; 'Samo na području Srbije razdeljeno je 1 725 000 članskih karata Narodnog fronta', *Glas Narodnog fronta Srbije*, 28 February 1947.

[29]   'Pitanja koja najčešće dolaze pred stambene organe,' *Politika*, 2 April 1951.

[30]   Referat Rata Dugonjića, *Stenografske beleške sa konferencije Glavnog odbora Narodnog fronta održane*, 23 September 1948, AS, Đ 75–47.

[31]   'Zbor birača u Trećem reonu traži da se popravljaju zgrade i pravilnije iskorišćuju stanovi,' *Politika*, 7 January 1951.

[32]   *Rad na donošenju regulativnih pravnih propisa iz oblasti stambeno–komunalne delatnosti*, AS, G 129–9.

[33]   I AB, 1. 4. 42–96.

[34]   AS, G 129–1.

[35]   *Izveštaj o izvršenoj proveri zgrade u ulici Obilićev venac* br. 23–5, IAB–1. 4. 42–98.

[36]   *Žalba Save Mašića*, IAB1. 4. 42–98.

constant skirmishes and conflicts, so tenants, dissatisfied with their co-tenants, incessantly turned to the authorities, and even the Public Prosecutor's Office, for intervention.[37] In fact, through their constant complaints, the tenants were strengthening the position of the authorities and created possibilities for even stricter surveillance of the urban population.

In addition to causing a decrease in the quality of life and loss of privacy for the tenants of communal flats, the government's housing policies also directly led to the destruction of the precious few buildings available. Tenants lived in constant fear of being moved at short notice, with people and movables crammed into small rooms. This atmosphere of forced permanent provisionality encouraged neither the desire nor the will and interest to regularly maintain the premises. Despite the policy of maximum cramping in flats, the shortage of housing space was still so dramatic that even state officials were sometimes homeless and lived in administrative buildings.[38]

While newspapers reported almost daily on the state building new flats, the construction in the early 1950s, even according to the official statistics, reached only 70 per cent of the pre-war rates.[39] Paradoxically, the members of the political elite who presented themselves as the leaders of modernization and progress contributed to the increasing ruralization of towns. Modestly educated and focused only on the formal fulfilment of the quotas determined by the Five Year Plan, Party officials did not care much about careful spatial planning or the quality of the construction work performed. 'Construction statics should be subordinated to our political goals and fulfilment of the plan', explained Party official Batrić Jovanović on his visit to the New Belgrade construction site.[40] Thus, the housing construction in the first decade after the war became a byword for bad, non-functional and half-finished flats.[41] During the construction, political directives were more important than the technical regulations and expert opinion regarding the projects and the pace of the work. New settlements were built on the outskirts of towns and usually had no electricity, water, paved streets, or the most essential infrastructure. The construction would be started without the necessary preliminary projects, and the plans regarding the exterior, the interior and even the purpose of the buildings were changed and adapted during the construction work. Architects warned that the new settlements were 'plain and ugly', and strongly criticized the absence of any, even minimal,

---

[37]   I AB, 1. 4. 42, folders 87, 88 and 89.

[38]   *Godišnji izveštaj sreskog komiteta sreza pomoravskog*, AS–Đ4–1.

[39]   *Stanovi*, A JBT, KPR III–A–1–b.

[40]   AJ, A CK SKJ, V, k–IV / 30.

[41]   The heavy industry and the production of consumer goods were functioning on the same principles–most products were of poor quality, since the only goal was to fulfil quantity targets.

efforts to fit the newly erected structures into the broader architecture of the surroundings.[42] Dark buildings with small entrances, poor insulation against moisture and draught, without basic sanitary infrastructure and with temporary outdoor toilets were built all over Yugoslavia.[43] Constructors would run out of money before completing the buildings, so tenants had to move into unfinished objects standing in the middle of an empty and undeveloped lot, kilometres away from streets, public transport, shops, factories and schools. Such ill-conceived building projects were typical especially for big cities. Thus the residents of the Belgrade suburbs Tošin bunar,[44] Karaburma,[45] Železnik and Rakovica moved into flats without plumbing, electricity and also without floor.[46] The negligence of construction companies seemed to have no limits, so 'economizing' was the excuse for the fact that there were no protective fences on the terraces of a building in Belgrade.[47] As temporary and provisory solutions were usually becoming permanent in socialist Yugoslavia, tenants had no option but to either try and finish the work themselves or simply reconcile to the situation. Since the housing standard in the country was rather low – in 1954 30.2 per cent of all the flats had no kitchen, 83 per cent had no bathroom and 71.2 per cent had no plumbing,[48] moving into half-finished and isolated suburbs for the majority of Yugoslav population did not necessarily mean deterioration, given the already low standard of living.

Although in theory the Communist Party wanted to provide cheap housing for everyone, paradoxically, socialist urbanization became a synonym for social segregation in practice. Despite the scorn felt for the intellectuals and the salary policies which favoured manual work, the situation was quite different when it came to flat distribution. In overwhelmingly strained circumstances it was almost impossible 'to remove the common workers from the basement'.[49] Newly founded socialist companies fought with each other for the few available engineers and expert technicians who, as a condition for accepting the job, demanded a solution to their accommodation problem. In such circumstances, living in uncomfortable settlements or cramped communal flats was a sheer

---

[42]   'Savetovanje arhitekata i urbanista u Dubrovniku 1950', *Arhitektura*, 11–12 (1950), p. 25.

[43]   *Izveštaj o stanovima i stambenim zgradama podignutim u Beogradu u vremenu* 1947–1951, AS, G 125–53.

[44]   *Izveštaj o stanju i problemima gradenja Novog Beograda*, A JBT, KPR III–A–4–x.

[45]   'Nove zgrade nad kućercima,' *Borba*, 3 May 1951.

[46]   AS, G 125–53.

[47]   Ibid.

[48]   *Pregled životnog standarda–nacrt*, A JBT, KPR III–A–1–b.

[49]   *Zapisnik sa sastanka komisije za plaće i životni standard pri Republičkom odboru metalskih radnika Hrvatske, održanog dne 18. X. 1956 u Zagrebu*, A JBT, KPR III–A–1–b.

luxury in comparison with the quality of life in primitive and provisory factory colonies. For workers, 'the heroes of socialism' and shock workers,[50] the stories of whom filled the columns of propaganda newspaper articles every day, living in factory huts actually meant living on the margins of society. In the remote suburbs, completely isolated from the town and any sort of urban life, workers spent their time in factory halls and scantily furnished communal rooms without sanitation, which housed up to 10 people.[51] These temporary accommodations were so small that at times two people had to sleep on the same bed. Rooms crawling with lice and bedbugs,[52] food scraps covering the floor and toilets that had not been cleaned for months,[53] muddy courtyards, pigsties and coops right under the windows[54] were just some of the characteristic elements of the arduous everyday life of the residents of the workers' quarters. Even the service flats at the factory colonies were similarly dreary where 'the workers were breaking up floors and wardrobes to keep up the fire'.[55]

Rapid urbanization transformed also social relations, in particular family life and family relations. The destabilization of social structures that resulted from migration (voluntary and involuntary) ultimately challenged the patriarchal family structure, and led to the emancipation of women. This process had mixed consequences: a growing divorce rate, the general neglect in upbringing children but also sexual liberation. The Party authorities therefore quickly concluded that the hastily built workers' huts were not only 'a necessary evil' but also the centres of 'immoral offences'.[56] Collective housing made it difficult to draw boundaries for intimacy and privacy, so that young people often came to the conclusion that these boundaries were superfluous in the first place. There were cases in Belgrade workers' settlements of 'girls bringing young men to shared rooms ... and having sexual intercourse in full view of everybody'.[57] At the Party conferences it was stated that, as soon as girls from the country came to town, they became 'suitable prey' to 'ladies' men and lovers' as it was 'hard to resist their promises and

---

[50] In Russian 'udarnik'. The title of shock workers was given only to very productive and enthusiastic workers who, owing to their diligence and Stakhanovite efforts, were supposed to have special privileges and favourable treatment in the society.

[51] *Analiza života i rada radničke omladine*, AJ, 114–92.

[52] *Izveštaj o stanju radničke omladine u Mladenovcu*, AJ, 114–382.

[53] *Izveštaj sa obilaska gradilišta 'Magnohrom' u Rankovićevu i Valjaonice bakra u Sevojnu*; AS, Đ2–19–1.

[54] *Zapisnik sa partijskog aktiva X reona od 11. 7. 1950*, IAB–136–350.

[55] *Izveštaj o stanju radničke omladine u Mladenovcu*, AJ, 114–382.

[56] *Moralno vaspitanje omladine*, AJ, 114–76.

[57] Ibid.

sweet words'.[58] The destabilization of social standards brought about numerous problems. 'The new type of (socialist) woman'[59] was meant to play an active and equal role in the reconstruction and development of the country,[60] but her private life was not taken into consideration. Despite the alleged political rights that were given to women, double standards prevailed when it came to emotional life and sexual morals: boards of companies and trade unions were rather insensitive when it came to firing single mothers.[61] The patriarchal perception of women was only slowly being altered even among the Party officials. Thus, the District Party Committee in Belgrade discussed at length that both the Party and their immediate social environment were accusing pregnant girls, 'the majority of whom were from the homes for war orphans', of 'low morals', without considering 'the very low morals of the male comrades from the working-class environment who were the ones to blame for such situations'.[62]

The low level of urban development prior to the war, wartime destruction, and the limited financial resources, poor planning and the forced urbanization after the war contributed to the chaotic development of infrastructure. Neither the infrastructure nor the municipal and service sectors expanded fast enough to accommodate the changes caused by the abrupt expansion of the urban population. This led to a 'most serious endangering of the citizens' health'.[63] The water supply and sewer networks were inadequate, worn out and untended. Statistics from 1951 show that out of 94 Serbian towns in total only 42 had reliable fresh water supply, and only 40 had a sewage system.[64] The situation was similar in the rest of Yugoslavia: for example, in Smederevo, a fast-growing industrial town in Serbia, there were only about two litres of clean water per person available a day. Consequently, 'long queues at fountains and complaints of citizens due to the unresolved problem posed a serious political issue in the town'.[65] However, local authorities were generally indifferent to the municipal problems. According to lower-rank Party officials, the priorities of local authorities were not the improvement of sanitation and infrastructure in general,

---

[58]   Ibid.

[59]   Josip. B. Tito, 'Danas se stvara žena novog tipa', in *Izgradnja nove Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (Belgrade, 1948), p. 130. The author refers to Tito's speech about the new duties, obligations and rights of the women in socialism.

[60]   Josip B. Tito, 'Govor na drugom kongresu AFŽ -a', in ibid., p. 111.

[61]   *Izveštaj o stanju radničke omladine u Mladenovcu*, AJ, 114–92.

[62]   *Izlaganje Mihajla Švabića, Zapisnik sa sastanka plenuma Gradskog komiteta SKS, održanog* 24 November 1952, IAB, 136–45.

[63]   *Godišnji izveštaj Komiteta komunalnih poslova NRS*, AS, G 129–9.

[64]   *Stanje vodovoda na teritoriji NR Srbije*, AS, G 125–68.

[65]   *Izveštaj ekipe CK KPS o radu Gradskog komiteta Smederevo*, AS, Đ 2–30.

but the struggle to complete the Five Year Plan and meet compulsory delivery quotas; the 'reckoning' with the supporters of the Cominform and the remains of the pre-war elite; as well as fighting the influence of the church and religion in general. Although commissions for municipal services were established in all People's Councils on the local and the county level, their responsibilities were broadly defined and often included tasks related to industry, agriculture, traffic, so all these organs 'worked on everything else but municipal issues'. The drastic neglect of hygiene in numerous places all over Yugoslavia is illustrated by the fact that only one person was in charge of urban sanitation maintenance in Kosovska Mitrovica, a town with the population of 16,000.[66]

It was in the area of sanitation, where the ruralization of towns and the aggravation of the communal services became most apparent. Even the Party officials had to admit that the 'situation with the sanitary conditions in towns and suburbs was worse than before the war'.[67] The streets were cleaned in the most primitive way, using the physical workforce, and the trash was collected by horse-drawn carts, since there was hardly any cars. A great number of People's Committees were satisfied with mere administrative 'solutions' to municipal problems, since no attention was paid whatsoever to the actual implementation of the regulations regarding the improvement of the level of hygiene on the municipal level. Moreover, in many places the same horse-drawn carts were used for forced eviction, firewood transportation and all sorts of other purposes that had nothing to do with sanitation maintenance.[68] Poor sanitary conditions caused periodical outbreaks of infectious diseases: dysentery, diphtheria and typhoid fever. For example, in the Croatian town of Slavonski Brod, the well-water was mixed with the sewage, provoking periodic epidemics of typhoid fever in 1947. General filth in this town was visible all over the place, and the residents carelessly threw 'watermelon and other fruit scraps' in the streets.[69] There were similar conditions in other Yugoslav towns: two thirds of the streets in Zenica were not cleaned at all,[70] and in Brčko the sewage flowed into a dirty town stream where half-naked kids were playing.[71] Even the capital, Belgrade, was no exception: according to the sources, the city was practically buried in trash during the whole of 1945.[72] The chaotic municipal conditions all over the country were not just the consequence of war havoc. They lasted for years and

---

[66] *Godišnji izveštaj Komiteta komunalnih poslova NRS*, AS–G 129–9.

[67] AS, G–129–9.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Br. 6–1947–Pov, AJ, 31–23–42.

[70] AJ, 31–24–43.

[71] *Izveštaj ekipe koja je obišla srez i grad Brčko u vremenu od 9–14. jula 1950*, AJ, 141–33–187.

[72] *Sanitarne prilike u Beogradu*, AJ, 671–1–1.

can, at least in part, be read as evidence for the habits and mentality of the new city dwellers. Legal provisions in particular, which addressed hygiene in cities, identified living habits as one of the reasons for the poor conditions. These provisions were often created as a result of negative experiences, so it is telling that they forbade 'pouring out water, slops, and other contaminants in the streets',[73] 'letting the cattle stray through parks and along streets', 'damaging taps and the plumbing',[74] 'letting horses and other cattle drink at public fountains',[75] 'taking out and throwing dead animals in the streets', but also relieving oneself 'in the street and other public places'.[76]

The state of neglect and lack of hygiene resulted not only from a general indifference to the built environment but also from the newcomers' inability to adapt to urban life. For rural immigrants the city remained strange. A report from 1950 stated: 'The attitude of a lot of tenants, holders, superintendents and house owners to the present housing facilities is such that it can be characterized as harmful and criminal'.[77] The *Borba* chronicled that even in new buildings in Belgrade, populated mostly by rural migrants, the halls were dirty and the walls stained. Besides the inflow of the workforce necessary for the socialist planned economy, the migration from villages to towns had numerous other consequences which, in a way, destroyed the urban way of life. The habits acquired in rural surroundings which were appropriate for village life were kept in urban circumstances as well, so in many tenement houses bathrooms and maid's rooms served as storerooms for firewood or were used to dry meat.[78] *Politika*, a prominent Yugoslav daily, wrote: 'To think how many times we have witnessed such a scene in the street – a sawyer who's just sawn wood takes an axe and starts chopping logs in the middle of the pavement'.[79] The basements in the new tenement houses, where the newcomers from villages mostly lived, were being turned into pigsties and coops which were rarely if ever cleaned.[80] Cattle were kept not only in the pastures in the suburbs of Belgrade,[81] but also in

[73]   *Odluka o održavanju čistoće u Raškoj* (8. 6. 1950), AS, G 130–10.

[74]   *Odluka o održavanju čistoće i reda u gradu Ivanjici* (26. 6. 1950), AS, G 130–10.

[75]   *Odluka o održavanju čistoće u Kosovskoj Mitrovici* (8. 6. 1950), AS, G 130–10.

[76]   *Odluka o održavanju čistoće u gradu Đakovici* (28. 7. 1950), AS, G 130–10.

[77]   *O čuvanju postojećeg stambenog fonda*, AS, G 129–9.

[78]   'Ružne slike u našem gradu', *Borba*, 6 September 1952.

[79]   'Malo se brinemo o izgledu svoga grada', *Politika*, 19 June 1954.

[80]   'Nove zgrade u stambenim kolonijama nemilosrdno se upropašćuju', *Politika*, 27 June 1951.

[81]   'Tamo–amo po Beogradu. Čudna čuda traju po voždovačkom kraju', *Politika*, 22 December 1952.

the central municipality, Stari grad.[82] Inhabitants ruined their flats so frequently that the authorities helplessly stated:

> It is common practice that, when moving out, people take door handles and entire locks, bulbs, keys, switches, sockets and other electric material ... Window-panes are broken, and sometimes even the wooden frames of windows and doors, too. The new tenants are so happy to get the flat that they don't even notice these trifles ... Reports [to the authorities] on such ruining are truly scarce.[83]

However, in some towns it was not only the residents who abused the housing facilities but the local authorities did so as well: there are records of tenement houses in Peć falling in due to years-long lack of maintenance and care.[84]

Another area of urban life that transformed drastically in Yugoslavia after the Second World War was cultural life and entertainment. A new social structure emerged in the towns as a consequence of labour migration and created an audience with very little disposable income and aesthetic expectations that differed from that of pre-war urban population. The Party had ideological accounts to settle in the first decade after the war and had a strict dogmatic attitude towards culture in general: the only acceptable and appreciated works were ones with an ideological or educational message, while the rest were regarded as empty, worthless and harmful entertainment. Thus, the abrupt growth of the urban population was not followed by an increase in the number of cultural and entertainment facilities. A cinema ticket 'was a real rarity', whereas going to the theatre was possible only 'thanks to good luck or a resourceful friend'.[85] Even the official press, which was highly skilled in glossing over reality, reported on the scarcity of possibilities for going out in Belgrade:

> There are enough coffee-houses, but there are few nice and cosy ones. There are very few restaurants, and even fewer comfortable ones for longer stay and evening amusement. The number of theatres is quite enough but the repertory and specific qualities of the programme are below the minimum. There are a dreadfully few cinemas, including open-air theatres.[86]

---

[82] 'Sprovođenje odluke o držanju domaćih životinja i prenate živine', *Politika*, 22 December 1952.

[83] *Izveštaj o komunalnim problemima autonomne oblasti Kosova i Metohije*, AS, G 129–13.

[84] Ibid.

[85] 'Problemi glavnog rada. Šta nedostaje Beogradu?', *NIN*, 17 June 1951.

[86] 'Kuda izlazite, kako se provodite?', *NIN*, 8 August 1954.

Owing to the heavy influx of rural immigrants, two cultural worlds emerged and existed alongside – the world of theatres, concert halls and galleries, and the world of 'inns, cafe songs and folklore'.[87] Although the Party tried to perform a cultural revolution by spreading literacy among the illiterate newcomers and educating them, migrants' cultural socialization remained difficult to change.[88] Pubs continued to be the most important form of entertainment and escape from the gruels of everyday life just as they had been in the villages. Paradoxically, the attempts to bring culture to the masses led to a decrease in the quality of cultural life overall. Disregarding the real cultural habits and needs of the majority of modestly educated urban dwellers as well as the actual financial resources of the municipalities, the authorities opened theatres in improvised buildings throughout small towns. Theatre companies were founded without professional directors and actors performed commonly staged comedies. These establishments were mostly dilettantish experiments rather than professional theatres.[89] Wishing to make theatre performances socially engaged, politically educational and ideologically 'suitable', Party officials pruned the theatre repertories, so they did not include any performances, which should be avoided due to their 'worthlessness, lack of ideas, insignificance or reactionary quality'.[90] The politically motivated, but at times, nonetheless, noble attempts to bring 'high culture' to the illiterate masses faltered on the fact that the intended 'audience [was] not used to the stage reality', and was thus unable to create a distance between themselves and the stage. Rather, they took part in the performances by fidgeting, subdued shouts and sometimes inappropriate laughter.[91]

If the world of theatre suffered from labour migration and the Party's cultural policies in general, urban youth enjoyed other forms of entertainment the towns had to offer. American films, dancing parties with jazz music, and light literature were favourite ways to spend free time among young people. Adventures, melodramas and Latino rhythms distracted the attention of young girls and boys who had just come of age, helped them escape the dull realities of everyday life: the half-empty shops, long queues and rationing coupons one could get almost nothing for.[92] The cinema was a particularly eagerly visited place: a public-opinion poll conducted in Belgrade and the interior in 1953

---

[87]   *Neki problemi u oblasti kulture i prosvete*, AJ, 507–VIII–2–c–71 (1– 5) (k 19).

[88]   According to the statistical data from the 1948 census, 25, 4 per cent of the population (older than 12 years) was illiterate. *Jugoslavija 1918–1988. Statistički godišnjak*, p. 39.

[89]   *Konferencija o pozorišnim pitanjima*, AJ, 317–81–114.

[90]   Ibid.

[91]   'O našoj novoj pozorišnoj publici', *Književne novine*, 9 November 1948.

[92]   See also Ivana Dobrivojević, 'Život u socijalizmu. Prilog proučavanju životnog standarda građana u FNRJ', *Istorija XX veka*, 1 (2009): 73–86.

showed that even children had seen as many as 103 films in a year, meaning every single film in the programme.[93] The most popular films were the exciting ones with special effects and full of modern jazz music.[94] The film 'Bathing Beauty' (filmed in 1944) attracted both young and old viewers. Its specific aesthetics (mainly in extravagant water sequences), unfamiliar to the Yugoslav audience, made the movie a unique success. Some people watched it as many as 16 times.[95]

The Party workers and officials, keepers of ideological and social purity, watched with particular disapproval and distrust how much young people loved movies from the West, above all from the United States, which dominated Yugoslav cinemas in the fifties. This fear was justified, since the film, as a powerful suggestive-propaganda medium, sent an unmistakable (political) message to the Yugoslav viewers: residents of Western countries lived in a welfare which was simply unimaginable in socialist Yugoslavia. The propagation of the image of comfortable and regular life in the West did not suit the Communist Party by any means. Images of comfortable living were considered 'foreign propaganda providing the young with cloying images of the circumstances in those countries', whereas they were not being told 'how many unemployed and mentally sick people lived there'.[96] The young officials of the Party were particularly bothered by the fact that young people enthusiastically imitated their idols from Western films. Carried away by the cowboy films, boys jumped over benches, 'fired' from improvised guns and imitated Stewart Granger's clothes, haircut and his manner of walking. The Party considered such behaviour decadent, and recognized the emergence of 'the petty-bourgeois spirit' in wearing 'cigarette trousers', 'Tarzan haircuts',[97] 'earrings', 'dying hair',[98] in exhibiting 'perverse movements while dancing',[99] the 'inclination toward empty entertainment and vaudevilles' in general, and 'taking everything that comes from abroad at its face value'.[100]

Dancing parties, another favourite pastime of the urban youth besides the movies, were equally notorious in Party circles for their 'decadence' and propagation of Western influences. To the minds of Party puritans, dancing

---

[93] *Stenografske beleške sa diskusije u Centralnom komitetu Narodne omladine sa pedagoškim radnicima održanr 24. juna 1953*; AJ, 114–76.

[94] *O pitanjima kulturnog rada i života u organizaciji Narodne omladine Beograda*; AJ, 114–78.

[95] *Moralno vaspitanje omladine*; AJ, 114–76.

[96] *Stenografske beleške sa proširenog plenuma Gradskog komiteta SK Beograda sa sekretarima opštinskih komiteta (25. januar 1956)*; IAB, 136–52.

[97] *O radu na vaspitavanju omladine u duhu jugoslovenstva*; AJ, 114–72.

[98] *Zapisnik sa sastanka biroa Gradskog komiteta KPS za Beograd, održanog 29. marta 1952. godine*; IAB, 136–46.

[99] *O radu na vaspitavanju omladine u duhu jugoslovenstva*, AJ, 114–72.

[100] *O kulturno–zabavnom životu omladine*, AJ, 114–78.

to jazz music was a synonym for fights and arguments, hard drinking, rude behaviour and 'grotesque way of dancing, declared a modern American dance'.[101] Tito had no sympathy for jazz either: he thought the majority of jazz compositions were 'non-aesthetic' and represented 'pornography in music'.[102] Police interventions commonly interrupted dance parties, since local authorities stipulated that 'there could be no events without programmes', in other words without an educational purpose, which meant there could be no dance parties either.[103] The press joined the campaign against this type of entertainment, and a journalist of the magazine *NIN* remarked that the samba and other modern dances that could be seen at Belgrade dancing parties 'looked so nasty that there is no decent word to describe different figures of bending made by dancers with red faces and bright eyes, clinging tightly to each other'.[104]

Although the hastened and forced urbanization brought changes in the family and family relations, and weakened old patriarchal structures and moral standards, the Party identified popular culture and entertainment as the only culprits for the sexual liberation of young people. The greater sexual freedom of young people coming to age after the war made older generations brought up according to different moral standards feel uneasy. The fact that students were starting their emotional lives earlier than the previous generations, made the teachers in smaller social environments turn into 'keepers and protectors' of the students' morals, so they even used administrative measures in order to limit and obstruct 'often inoffensive and platonic' love.[105] Preventing high-school students from expressing their awaked sexuality sometimes brought about comic situations: there were separate entrances for boys and girls in the grammar school in Aranđelovac, the pupils of a school in Bor could only go to the cinema accompanied by their teachers who were sitting between them, and the head-master of a school in Kragujevac had the students' letters controlled. What's more, teachers in some places considered their duty to 'chase' smitten high-school pupils in parks.[106] The increased number of extramarital pregnancies, inexpertly done abortions and the rise of venereal diseases made certain Party officials start thinking of the necessity of introducing sexual education as a school subject.[107]

---

[101] *O pitanjima kulturnog rada i života u organizaciji Narodne omladine Beograda*, AJ, 114–78.

[102] *Prijem delegacije III plenuam CK NOJ kod predsednika Tita u Beogradu 11. 2. 1954*, A JBT, II k -15 J.

[103] AJ, 507, VIII, II/ 5–a–9 (k 26).

[104] Jedna anketa o životu omladine. Igre i igranke', *NIN*, 27 January 1952.

[105] *O nekim problemima vaspitanja omladine*, AJ, 114–72.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid.

Ultimately, the migration processes initiated and forced by the Party led to a profound transformation of society. They contributed to the reduction of agricultural overpopulation, economic progress and overall modernization as well as changes to the urban landscape. With time, however, it became clear that the Party was unable to control the processes it had set into motion. One survey of rural youth, conducted at the end of 1957, showed that more than 70 per cent of young people were keen on moving to towns in order to find employment.[108] Thus, the pressure on towns increased as unemployment rates rose. From the mid 1960s the Party tried to solve the accumulated social problems by partially controlling and directing migration from the village, and even 'exporting' the surplus non-qualified village workforce to Western Europe. However, although the pace of urban development was fast – in 1948 the urban population was 19.8 per cent of the total, in 1953 21.9 per cent, in 1961 28.3 per cent, in 1971 38. 6 per cent and in 1981 46,6 per cent – the overall level of urbanization in Yugoslavia remained low in comparison to other European countries, right up to the breakup of the country in 1991.[109]

Conclusion

Instead of the necessary modernization and improvement of the quality of life in cities, Yugoslav socialist urbanization brought about the decay of towns in the first post-war decade. A hastened and forced industrialization led to mechanical urbanization and a rather chaotic expansion of urban space. The spatial and demographic growth of cities was accompanied neither by an improvement in infrastructure nor by spreading of the urban way of life. Constant shortages of goods, the extinction of private shops and the dramatic collapse of the standard of living, along with the provisional architecture, the absence of aesthetic criteria, the half-constructed suburbs and municipal negligence led to a certain dehumanization of Yugoslav socialist towns. Moreover, the political and economic pressures imposed by the Party (trials, arrests, surveillance; confiscation, first and second nationalization) were ruining the remaining pre-war urban population. In such circumstances, rural migrants were not encouraged to adopt the urban way of life, and consequently, the effects of urbanization remained limited. Guided but also blinded by their ideological premises, Party officials were not able to realize that the mechanical increase of the size of the urban population alone could not automatically lead to economic

---

[108] *Anketa CK Narodne omladine Jugoslavije sprovedena od 15. 10 do 4. 11. 1957. među seoskom omladinom*, AJ, 114–95.

[109] Vujović, *Urbana sociologija*, p. 403.

progress and the modernization of a society at large. In the conditions of general poverty, the large city did not offer to the majority of newcomers great economic prospects. Neither the speeches of high Party officials, which declared the importance of caring for migrant workers nor the mainly symbolical efforts in the field of workers' education could disguise the fact that in this society of allegedly equal opportunities, some were more 'equal' than others. Housed in the provisional and unsanitary factory slums, migrants often ended up living at the very bottom of the society. The old, patriarchal norms and behavioural models were slowly being abandoned while the new urban ones were hardly adopted. Not quite belonging anywhere, being too 'classy' for their home villages, and too ill-equipped for their new environment, the new city dwellers were condemned to having a perpetual status of newcomers.

The hastened migrations were not the only cause of the ruralization of cities, however. The revolutionary change led to the shattering and eradication of the 'old' society and the 'old' way of life. The modest level of education and strict dogmatic political views of the Party officials, most of whom came from rural areas, were bound to make their mark on the development of urban centres and the entire society. Paradoxically, it fell to the Party officials, the majority of whom were intimidated by a city and could hardly adopt the urban way of life in a true sense of the meaning, to become the leaders of the urbanization and modernization processes in socialist Yugoslavia after the Second World War. The question remains whether urbanization could have been substantially different in such a poor and predominantly agrarian country. In the long run, (socialist) urbanization enabled a modernizing progress, significant economic growth and the better quality of life for the most of the population. However, the transition process from rural to urban society, never to be completed in socialism, came with a high price and its long-term consequences are still visible in today's cities.

PART II
The City Lived

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 5

City as the Site of the Other: The (Dis)Ordered Colonial City

Katrina Gulliver

This chapter examines cities as the site of the 'other', particularly discussing colonial cities, which were seen as challenging to the natural order, as well as being inhabited by individuals who transgressed in various ways.[1] This is of course a simplistic generalization, but the disdain shown by metropolitans for the 'colonial' was true across European empires. As well as looking askance at those in the colonies, their cities became the focal point for a combination of fetishization, criticism and fascination. The cities focused on here, primarily from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries, evolved over time when the meanings of both 'colonial' and 'city' were themselves contested. Political relationships between those in the New and Old worlds were changing, and the first truly big cities were forming.

Urban Disorder

As Louis Wirth famously claimed, 'The city has thus historically been the melting-pot of races, peoples, and cultures, and a most favourable breeding-ground of new biological and cultural hybrids.'[2] Urban spaces have often been viewed ambivalently, as sites of freedom, but also as sites of moral lassitude.

---

1   I would like to thank Andrew Devenney and Michelle Moravec for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter. In this discussion of how colonies were perceived from Europe, I direct the reader to Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford, 2009); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion 1560–1660* (Oxford and New York, 2008); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (London and New York, 1995).

2   Louis Wirth, 'Urbanism as a Way of Life', in Richard Sennett (ed.), *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities* (New York, 1969), pp. 143–64.

Cities as sites of commerce also left them open to moral criticism from those who scorned business and trade.

For cities to be the site of the other, there had to be outside observers. Historically, this role was often played by rural people – the traditional audience for accounts of urban evil. As the world gradually (and then rapidly) urbanized, the idea of urban evil began to be attached to particular cities rather than urban space in general. Urban evil may have been pervasive, but some cities were worse than others.

The same London of which William Lee wrote in 1771, 'I am well convinced that London is an exceeding improper place for boys or young men, more especially when not under the immediate controul [*sic*] of their parents' contained people who would have regarded with horror the prospect of going to a colonial outpost, for similar reasons.[3]

Perceptions of Colonies

Colonial cities were often seen, from the vantage point of Europe, as particularly disordered. First, they were established at the fringes of the known world, often bordering unknown territories. They were populated by people both 'like us', and 'not like us': the indigenous, the imported labourers and the European others, including convicts and indentured servants. It was not a large mental leap to the concept that the whole reason these people had been sent away from Europe was that they did not belong, so the sites to which they were dispatched were framed as negative.

So what marked these cities' otherness? Their alikeness to the home site could disconcert visitors as much as their difference. This seems perhaps to have accelerated the vigorous distancing of 'colonials' by those in the home country. Swati Chattopadhyay has argued that 'the unfamiliarity of the colonial city could on occasion even pass as novelty. What irked the colonizers most was not the unfamiliarity, but the suggestion of certain familiar practices in unexpected places. Such uncanny presence threatened to destabilize colonial narratives of savagery in need of civilization.'[4] Of course, this applied to 'colonials' everywhere, but it was the cities that presented the greatest challenge to metropolitan superiority. It was cities, with their economic success, visible wealth and cultural

---

[3]   William Lee to the Rev. Dr Lee of Winchester College, 26 October 1771. William Lee Letterbook, Lee Family Papers, Jessie Ball DuPont Memorial Library, Stratford Hall, Stratford, Virginia.

[4]   Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta* (London, 2005), p. 23.

development that posed the greatest challenge to an imperial hierarchy with the metropole at the top.

Just as these cities held a zone of acquisition for colonial powers – and were constructed as such in popular account – they were sites of both plunder of local resources and wealth generation through trade. On a personal level, this could be a destination for a man who wished to 'make his fortune' – and then to return triumphant to Europe. Imagined to be places unlimited by restrictions on upward social mobility, they in fact became sites of the Lord of Misrule, where people who would be of no account in Europe were elevated.

Visitors remarked on how the cities differed from (normal) Europe (which of course was hardly monolithic in terms of its urban cultures – the first travel guide books in different languages discussed the various European capitals in positive and negative ways for their differences from the assumed readers' expectations). Nonetheless, such colonial cities helped to create – at least the rhetorical device of – the European city. The European city came with the invention of European people as a group, against the indigenous or exotic other.

For this chapter, I look particularly at Sydney and New Orleans, because they held seedy reputations while developing sophisticated local social systems. These sites were places that could be visited and judged by outsiders in different terms from European cities. In the case of New Orleans, the East Coast of the United States became the Old Country for the American arrival 'colonists' after the Louisiana Purchase.[5] For the purposes of this piece, I argue that New Orleans remained a 'colonial' site through much of the nineteenth century, the Louisiana Purchase being simply a transfer of colonial authority, and the Civil War being in effect a recolonization.[6] Sydney was a settlement based on the exile of convicts, and eighteenth-century ideas of social improvement.

Colonial cities were seen as being unmoored from tradition, lacking in what was considered to be 'good society'; they were seen as provincial at best, and at worst as semi-lawless outposts. Particularly in the case of cities that had been penal colonies, the reputation clung to them of being inhabited entirely by felons (even when this had never been true). These were not shining cities on a hill, as much as glowing red lights of debauchery. Penny Russell has discussed this state of anxiety in nineteenth-century Melbourne, where the attempts to

---

[5]   For this issue in American westward expansion, see David Hamer, *New Towns in the New World: Images and Perceptions of the Nineteenth-Century Urban Frontier* (New York, 1990), p. 7.

[6]   Mary Ann Heiss, 'The Evolution of the Imperial Idea and U.S. National Identity', *Diplomatic History*, 26/4 (2002): 511–40.

maintain a social hierarchy were underpinned by insecurity regarding the status of colonial society.[7]

Meanwhile those resident (or born in) such places would also carry the mark of being 'fictive' Europeans.[8] Spending time in such colonies became a permanent brand. 'As images of the tropically tainted Bertha Mason Rochester screaming in her Yorkshire attic and of the fugitive convict Abel Magwitch following Pip about London suggest, what went out to the West Indies and Australia often came back – in the instances of Bertha and Magwitch, in frightening, unwelcome form'.[9]

Ambivalence within the metropole through the nineteenth century is a key factor, in a world in which ever more people emigrated to colonial zones from Europe, and at the same time such zones were subordinated with 'colonial' as a pejorative term. This is when the terms of identity previously applied to the indigenous began to be applied to the local whites (such as referring to colonists in North America as 'Americans' and in Australia as 'Australians'). This transfer of identity meant not only the appropriation of identity from the previous occupants of the land, but also a distancing of the white colonials from their ethnic identity.[10] By end of 1830s, the English abroad started to be called Anglo-Saxon (by the English), another form of this distancing strategy.[11]

Meanwhile, residents were faced with resisting or accepting their subjugation in such a hierarchy. Benedict Anderson's view of the Spanish empire could apply equally to the French and British attitudes towards 'colonials'. Creoles shared the:

> fatality of trans-Atlantic birth. Even if he was born within one week of his father's migration, the accident of birth in the Americas consigned him to subordination – even though in terms of language, religion, ancestry, or manners he was largely indistinguishable from the Spain-born Spaniard. There was nothing to be done about it: he was irremediably a creole.[12]

This critical othering of the non-European-born white is more intimate, occurring in the security of the white-only zones: tracing a difference not always

[7]   Penny Russell, *A Wish of Distinction* (Melbourne, 1994), p. 61.

[8]   Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC, 1995), p. 102.

[9]   Deirdre David, 'Imperial Chintz: Domesticity and Empire', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 27/2 (1999): 569–77.

[10]   See Richard White, '*Inventing Australia* Revisited', in Wayne Hudson and Geoffrey Bolton (eds), *Creating Australia: Changing Australian History* (Sydney, 1997), pp. 12–22.

[11]   Robert J.C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford, 2008), p. 182.

[12]   Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, 2006), p. 58.

discernible to the colonized, for whom Europeans (local born and new arrival) fulfilled the same role.

This intersects with the colony/metropole discourse, and the role of colonials in white cultures. Greg Dening has described the situation:

> In the view of those at the centre of empires, of course, distance made everybody a little "native". The changed accent and vocabulary, the social awkwardness, the unstylishness of dress and behaviour marginalized the Colonials as somewhat strange, as having given deference to something uncivilized.[13]

Such temporal and geographic othering allowed the locations of these people's residence to be objectified. Indeed, 'Colonials are always grotesque because they lie in the liminal space between being stylishly modern and nostalgically antique.'[14] The nexus was this:

> A colonial was suspect for leaving the mother county and being ready to live in a crude society with doubtful associates. The native-born colonial was a degree more alien, lacking the anchor of metropolitan birth and the instincts that were assumed to flow from it. The immigrant colonists, under suspicion themselves, could lord it over the native-born because of the immigrants' superior birth and metropolitan experience. The native-born responded with apology or boasting.[15]

It was in the colonial city particularly that such encounters and negotiations took place. This was a way of maintaining metropolitan power while making it clear to those in the colonies that they were second-rate, and that their children's whiteness and identity would be subject to question.

These cities were unusual, both due to their origins as penal sites, as well as various local characteristics. Louisiana was not seen as a desirable destination for emigrants from France; similarly, New South Wales was far more expensive than North America for emigrants from the British Isles, meaning that the wealthy went to Australia and bought 10,000 acres, while the huddled masses went to New York.[16] In the cities, gender imbalances were remedied by enterprises such

---

[13]   Greg Dening, 'The Theatricality of Observing and Being Observed: "Eighteenth-Century Europe" "Discovers" the? Century "Pacific"', in Stuart B. Schwartz (ed.), *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 470.

[14]   Ibid.

[15]   John Hirst, *The Sentimental Nation: The Making of the Australian Commonwealth* (Melbourne, 2000), p. 33.

[16]   Jennifer M. Spear, *Race, Sex, and Social Order in Early New Orleans* (Baltimore, 2009).

as the 'casket girls' sent to New Orleans and assisted emigration programmes from Britain to New South Wales. Once such cities grew into successful trading ports, this generated a pull factor for migrants and business. For New Orleans, cotton, and for Sydney, wheat, wool and gold turned them into booming towns.

For Americans of the same period, New Orleans was a city of vice, which had been brought into the Union. As one traveller in the nineteenth century wrote:

> I was proceeding to New Orleans, a city two thousand two hundred miles off, where fate uniformly demands nine out of ten of every visitant; and that, should I escape this destiny, 1 should still be six thousand miles from home, and have, in that distance, to meet with other numerous dangers, presenting themselves under every form that could manifest a terrific appearance.[17]

A report of the city's exoticness became standard: 'A characterization of Congo Square became obligatory for any traveller's report or fictional account of the oddities and otherness of Creole New Orleans'.[18] Congo Square was where slaves had met to trade and remained an important cultural and social centre for the black community. It became associated for visitors with the opportunity to observe African-influenced music and dance.

Challenging Their Reputations

Cities everywhere were seen as sites of disorder: paradoxically, for the greater infrastructural control, in fact the teeming masses offered spaces to hide, and opportunities for wrongdoers. But visitors to colonial cities were often surprised on two levels: one, that there was a social hierarchy; and two, that it did not parallel that of home. Emigrants, misled (and perhaps disappointed) by guides selling Australia as an arcadia, were often brought up short when they realized their expectations of a casual, carefree society would not be met.[19]

One of the challenges of colonial dominion was to control social order and classification. This included defining who the other was, and how groups related to each other. The opportunity for liminality of identity offered by the urban site challenged these hierarchies, while offering an audience and a venue for

---

[17]   Thomas Ashe, *Travels in America, Performed in the Year 1806, for the Purpose of Exploring the Rivers Alleghany, Monongahela, Ohio, and Mississippi* (London, 1809), p. 67.

[18]   Shirley Elizabeth Thompson, *Exiles at Home: The Struggle to Become American in Creole New Orleans* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 2009), p. 106.

[19]   Margaret Maynard. *Fashioned from Penury: Dress as Cultural Practice in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 137.

displays of status and power. Creoles were aware of this discrepancy, and sought recognition that would be considered equivalent Empire-wide.[20] According to John Hirst, 'Every aspiring emigrant was conscious of the audience he had left behind.'[21] This is part of where the disordered reputation came from, the perception that any upstart could claim a social rank not available to him in the Old Country. Those who could afford the costume could be gentlemen, demanding the social deference that this entailed.[22]

In Nicholas Thomas' words, 'Colonising constantly generated obstacles to neat boundaries and hierarchies between populations, exemplified by "degenerate" half-castes and frontier whites who were anything but civilized.'[23] This may or may not have been a choice (some are born Creole, some become Creole, and some have Creole identity projected upon them), but a response to receiving the subordinating metropolitan gaze. Seeing this as nascent nationalism is too simple and too binary, as an assertion of colonial identity was not necessarily an extra-imperial nationalism. Particularly in the British Empire, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders wanted to be seen as senior players within the Empire.

These cities could be perceived as having markers of disorder, in comparison with European cities, by virtue of their different populations. In as far as the colonies served as a place of self-reinvention and escape (as well as exile) these cities (which were the point of arrival if not the final destination) were the site of beginning a new life. Port cities in particular had a difficult image to overcome:

> Whether escaping imperial or personal despotism, citizens of the greater Caribbean transformed port cities into the terrestrial equivalent of smuggling ships. While not 'masterless spaces', they thrived on a freedom of movement and a jumbling of people that meant liberation for many in the streets and disorder to a few on the balconies.[24]

However, visitors to Sydney in the nineteenth century regularly commented on their revelation that it was not a crime-ridden ghetto, but a prosperous and pleasant town. In the 1850s, Godfrey Mundy wrote:

---

[20]   David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism* (Oxford, 2002).

[21]   John Hirst, 'Egalitarianism', in S.L. Goldberg and F.B. Smith (eds), *Australian Cultural History* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 58–77.

[22]   Ibid.

[23]   Nicholas Thomas, *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Princeton, 1994), p. 2.

[24]   Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire* (Chicago and London, 2008), p. 133.

Much has been spoken and written by influential persons in England about the hideous depravity of the Sydney populace. I do not think they deserve that character. Although the streets are ill lighted, and the police inefficient in number and organization, Sydney appears to me to have on the whole a most orderly and well-conducted population ... I do not believe, in short, that person or property, morals or decency are more liable to peril, innocence to outrage, inexperience to imposition, in Sydney than in London or Paris. On the contrary, I am convinced, that from our own country, not only might come to New South Wales, but actually and frequently do come, individuals of every order of society – from the practised débauché of high life to the outcast of the London back-slums – capable of giving lessons in vice, in their several degrees, to the much-abused Sydneyites, and who do absolutely astonish the colonials by their superior proficiency.[25]

The signs of wealth and apparent respectability seemed particularly of note:

Sydney is certainly a wonderful place, considering that its foundation may be said to have been but of yesterday. Indeed, if we keep in view its original history, of which we must never lose sight even for a moment, it must be considered perhaps the most extraordinary city in the world ... People from all the different nations of the world now find their way there; so that in addition to our own countrymen, and a few of the aborigines, one meets almost daily in the streets of Sydney, Tasmanians, Polynesians, Chinese, East Indians, United States Americans, Spanish Americans, New Zealanders, French, Germans, and the natives of the Manillas and Otaheite. To witness, also, the number of gentlemen's carriages, – some occasionally with four horses, of gigs and tandems, the crowds of people of all sorts on horseback, from the Governor down to the mounted police, or the stock-drivers from the bush, with their long whips ... when one reflects that little more than half a century before, the very spot where all this splendour, all this bustle, and all these tokens of wealth and civilization are now displayed, was but a dreary and pathless wilderness, untrodden by the foot of civilized man, and the retreat only of the oppossum, the native dog, or the kangaroo.[26]

Here we see the author's amazement at ethnic diversity, signs of wealth, the presence of 'gentlemen', above all a level of 'civilization', and how rapidly this has been achieved.

Those residing in such sites were hardly unaware of their image. Indeed, colonial cities like Sydney and New Orleans saw a high rate of what I term

---

[25]   Godfrey Charles Mundy, *Our Antipodes: or, Residence and Rambles in the Australasian Colonies* (London, 1857), p. 9.

[26]   Alexander Marjoribanks, *Travels in New South Wales* (London, 1847), p. 19.

'reputation defence strategies': these included libel and slander cases (which were taken to court at a far greater rate than in Europe), and the duel – which lingered in colonial and frontier settings after it had faded in Europe. Reputation defence strategies are indicative not of disorder but in fact of a different order from that in Europe, resulting from different conditions and priorities. Thus we can see the 'disorder' as a reconfiguration of order, and the othering as a response to the slipping of traditional bounds of control. These cities offered the past, present and future. They challenged hierarchies and expectations.

Without heritage and community to appeal to in order to shore up a reputation, as Shannon Dawdy has written:

> when knowledge of an immigrant's origins was hazy, a shadow of suspicion could trail his or her new life. As a result, Lousianans may have reacted more defensively to a casual remark than their counterparts in France or the other French colonies. Someone might just believe they really were a former thief, bugger, or slut.[27]

Of course, 'One of the surest ways to confirm an identity, for communities as well as for individuals, is to find some way of measuring what one is not'.[28] And in New Orleans, what one was most likely to be mistaken for was a convict. The same was true in Sydney, and other penal sites, where the free residents were particularly eager to disambiguate themselves from the disreputable, and the discharged convicts were often just as determined to insert themselves in the respectable community. Civil actions over insults to reputation were increasingly common.

Such incidents regularly made the papers, even in distant cities, bolstering New Orleans' reputation for duelling, as in this *New York Times* report from 1852: 'A duel occurred here yesterday between two young creoles, of good family, one of whom was killed. The weapons used were guns.'[29] The same paper published a lengthy eyewitness account of another duel in 1873. In this case, the unnamed spectator had received a telegram in Mississippi City (now part of Gulfport, around 70 miles East of New Orleans) announcing the event, and travelled to attend the duel. He refers to Rigolets as 'the usual meeting place', conveying that the planned events were following a familiar pattern. The two principals, Judge Cooley and Colonel Rhett, travelled by rail to the designated spot and were accompanied by 'twelve or fifteen' friends. The weapons were double-barrelled shotguns, with the men standing 40 yards apart. After their

---

[27]   Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire*, p. 171.

[28]   Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York, 1966), p. 64.

[29]   'Fatal Duel at New-Orleans – Death of Judge Larue', *New York Times*, 2 September 1852.

first simultaneous volleys (a doctor officiating the event gave the order to fire, and then to halt), neither man was harmed:

> Neither party being hurt, the friends of Col. Rhett demanded another shot, which was promptly accorded, and the seconds at once reloaded the pieces.
>
> At the second discharge the same formula was repeated, and both guns were simultaneously discharged. With a convulsive turn to the left, Judge Cooley fell.

Cooley died as a result of a 1 oz, 13/100ths of an inch, ball to the chest. His body was wrapped in cotton obtained from a nearby house, and taken back into the city by his seconds and friends. The observer concluded that 'both gentlemen ... exhibited the utmost coolness throughout, and not a nervous tremor, from first to last, could be detected in either'.[30]

The cause of this dispute was that Cooley (a retired judge) was acting as counsel for the plaintiff in a libel suit against the *Picayune*, of which Rhett was the editor. Their spat had spread to the letters page of the paper, and finally Cooley had called Rhett a liar and braggart in a letter published in another New Orleans paper, the *Times*. Rhett responded by demanding satisfaction.

In Sydney in 1851, a dispute leading to a duel had been similarly played out in public, when the correspondence involved was forwarded to a newspaper for publication. Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Thomas L. Mitchell and Mr Stuart A. Donaldson, MLC. Donaldson had apparently claimed in a hustings speech that the Surveyor-General (Mitchell)'s department cost £40,000 per annum. Mitchell evidently took this as an outrageous insult, possibly insinuating that he was an embezzler. Apparently friends of the pair had tried to mediate, but 'The omission or retention of an apparently trifling word in the proposed draft of another note on the part of Sir Thomas was found to be a difficulty which neither of the principals would remove, and a hostile meeting was declared the only alternative.' After shots were fired, neither of the duellists had been hit (although Donaldson's hat apparently took a bullet). 'The seconds then interfered, and the combatants left the ground.'[31]

An 1880 duel was reported with some amusement in the *New York Times*, with the subheading of 'A BLOODLESS DUEL NEAR NEW-ORLEANS – INSULT, WOUNDED HONOR, PISTOLS, AND, PRESUMABLY, COFFEE FOR TWO'. The parties concerned were rival newspaper editors, Major Hearsey of the *Daily States* and E.A. Burke of the *Democrat* (Burke was also State Treasurer). Burke was challenged by Hearsey for something insulting

---

[30]   'The New-Orleans Duel', *New York Times*, 8 July 1873; a brief account had been published a few days earlier, 'The Duello', *New York Times*, 2 July 1873.

[31]   'The Late Duel', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 September 1851, p. 2.

that had appeared in his paper (specifics are unclear, although we are given a detailed narrative of the various named seconds couriering messages back and forth between offices and apologies by third parties being rejected). The duel finally took place in Metairie, with duelling pistols at 10 paces. The article concludes with a signed statement given by the seconds for both parties:

> After the second shot, in consequence of representations and expostulations made by mutual friends present, and in a parly [*sic*] called by the seconds of Major Hearsey, it was proposed by them and agreed to by the seconds of Major Burke that the latter, on behalf of their principal, should express their recognition of Major Hearsey as a gentleman of honor and courage, upon which Major Hearsey's friends declared themselves satisfied, and hostilities were by general consent terminated.[32]

The fact that such disputes occurred so publicly (with all those who had participated named in the newspaper) shows they were hardly regarded as illicit.[33] Once again, the major players were newspapermen themselves, therefore opinion-makers in the city. That the *New York Times* would give over space to such lengthy accounts demonstrates a fascination with such incidents, and indeed New Orleans' reputation as a duel-crazy place.

Meanwhile, the litigiousness and libel cases showed a well-developed urban legal apparatus, operating alongside a social order that respected duels as a method for dispute resolution. They also demonstrated a greater paranoia about identity and guarding it than existed in the metropole. This is perhaps due in part to the fact that these communities were initially a long way from home. The siege mentality that they sometimes demonstrated could perhaps be compared to that which contributed to witch mania in New England, of which Kai Erikson wrote 'In the process of defining the nature of deviation, the settlers were also defining the boundaries of their new universe.'[34] 'Feuding and litigiousness' were the results of a social order where the traditional standards were set aside and new criteria were under debate.[35]

Their location meant there was a greater need to depend on one another. As with anxiety in New Orleans about slave uprisings, anxiety about shortages (which haunted most colonies in the early stages) meant it was more important

---

[32] 'Editors on the Field of Honor', *New York Times*, 28 January 1880.

[33] The avoidance of shame before a public audience can be a motive for the duel, see Kenneth S. Greenberg, 'The Nose, the Lie, and the Duel in the Antebellum South', *American Historical Review*, 95/1 (1990): 57–74.

[34] Erikson, *Wayward Puritans*, p. 23.

[35] Hirst, 'Egalitarianism', pp. 58–77.

to know, and have it known, where you stood, who you could trust: who, when push came to shove, would have your back. Going home was sometimes out of the question, and even just moving on could not offer escape from social stigma, as internal migration sometimes did in Europe. For a crucial period of these cities' development, a critical mass of people who had their origins in a variety of places, were stuck there, forging and defending their own social order.

Meanwhile, duelling was already losing popularity in England by the 1830s, and the last publicly recorded duel took place there in 1852.[36] However, as well as defending their status by European laws, residents of colonial cities developed their own social hierarchies. Just as colonials were often bilingual intermediaries, they became culturally bilingual, code switching between the social order of the colonial city and that of the metropolis. Although they may have looked the same, they were not.

Conclusion

The colonial city is a site of re-encounter. As with all cities, in which the surrounding crowds of strangers create the urban experience, the colonial city offered both layered and mediated encounters. For the European, these cities were a place for meeting the indigenous other, and third group others, in a space defined and mapped as a colonial possession. Despite being the new arrival, this European is on 'home turf'. This home ground advantage gives him experiential confidence, to assert his superior identity as he interprets the encounter. However, this can also be subverted by the returned gaze. The 'natives' in these encounters are not fugitive but fixed residents. It is the European visitor who is transient. When he became a resident, a local, he merged into the Creole, another group of other subjected to a different type of scrutiny by Europeans.

These cities – and their otherness – also became cultural reference points for debauchery, criminality and undesirability. The colonial city amplified the sense of urban other, being places that even (or perhaps particularly) city dwellers in the Old Country could sneer at. Meanwhile, these cities were developing their own local cultures, diverging daily from practice in the parent land – partly because things were changing in the Old World too. The colonial cities had different pressures and priorities in developing social ranking and practices, even as much as the social elite, at least, maintained their loyalty to the colonial power.

---

36   James N. McCord, Jr, 'Politics and Honor in Early Nineteenth-Century England: The Dukes' Duel', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 62/1–2, 1999: 88–114.

These cities put outposts of Europe far from the home site, as proud symbols of imperial expansion. They also challenged European ideas of social order, while maintaining some cultural and linguistic practices after they died out in the Old Country. Among a diverse population, whiteness became a badge – especially in New Orleans – more than elsewhere. Where land ownership meant little (in terms of social status), military rank counted for more, with such men accorded higher social esteem than they would be at home.

As Europe's uncanny doubles, colonial cities served as counterparts, as sites of implied comparison and as (anti-) exemplars for a changing world at home. At such a distance, they were safe for Europeans to contemplate, to mentally (and indeed literally) consign the undesirable, but they also served as storehouses of the desired: sites of monetary gain, cultural creativity, racial admixing, and technological progress. The tension remained between the colonial city representing the national identity of the metropole, versus their identity as the site of the exotic. Colonial cities transgressed, were full of transgressors, and were either derided or looked to hopefully by those who wanted to escape the structures of the Old World.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 6

The Architecture of Hurry

Richard Dennis

> And month by month the roads smelt more strongly of petrol, and were more difficult to cross, and human beings heard each other speak with greater difficulty, breathed less of the air, and saw less of the sky ... In the streets of the city she [Margaret Schlegel] noted for the first time the architecture of hurry, and heard the language of hurry on the mouths of its inhabitants – clipped words, formless sentences, potted expressions of approval or disgust.[1]

So wrote E.M. Forster part way through *Howards End*, his novel of 1910, set mainly in and around London. Like George Gissing a generation earlier, Forster is a perceptive but pessimistic observer, condemning of and depressed about most characteristics of life in modern cities. The 'architecture of hurry' is an inspired phrase on Forster's part, as inspired as the more famous epigram, 'only connect', inscribed on the novel's title page. 'Only connect' was an injunction that, to Forster, related to the connections between mind and body, and between social classes – between the business class represented by the Wilcoxes and their involvement in imperial trade, the intellectual middle class represented by the Schlegel sisters, and the aspiring lower-middle class represented by Leonard and Jacky Bast. But it is also an epithet that can be applied to the social areas and built environment of the city they inhabit – the 'Babylonian flats' and Chelsea town house occupied by the Wilcoxes, the West End home of the Schlegels across the street from the flats of 'Wickham Mansions', the inner-suburban model dwellings occupied by the Basts, the farmhouse of Howards End, threatened by London's creeping suburban growth. So Richard Sennett in his book *Flesh and Stone* used Forster's London as the basis for his chapter on 'Urban Individualism', where Sennett ends by exploring 'the virtue of displacement', the necessary and, indeed, desirable consequences of being made uncomfortable by the ruptures and contingencies of modern city life. Sennett comments that 'even as the people in *Howards End* lose certainty about themselves, they become physically aroused by the world in which they live and they gain more awareness of one another'. And he concludes that 'Displacement thus becomes something

---

[1]   E.M. Forster, *Howards End* [1910] (London, 2000), pp. 92–3.

quite different in this novel from sheer movement, the detestable, meaningless movement epitomized for Forster by the automobile.'[2] There are good sorts of displacement as well as bad. But the 'architecture of hurry', like 'the civilization of luggage' – another of Forster's pithy summations of modern life – is seldom to Forster's liking.

We can conceptualize 'the architecture of hurry' at different timescales:

1. the speeding-up of everyday life – the bustle of commuting and the clipped words of everyday exchanges on the streets, in the subway, in the marketplace; today, no doubt, Forster would have railed against the clipped words and emoticons of text messages, and the hurry displayed by people speaking on their mobiles at the same time as they walk the city streets;

2. the hurry of an individual's career-long social and residential mobility, the 'ladder of life' of sociological analyses,[3] of 'snakes and ladders' competitiveness, updating the medieval iconography of human beings caught between angels and devils ascending and descending (and note in passing the different meanings of the word 'career' – as a noun, 'a person's course or progress through life', and as a verb: 'to gallop, run or move at full speed');[4]

3. the hurry inherent in the acceleration of advanced capitalism – the speeding-up in the circulation of capital, the global dissemination and accumulation of information, the destruction and reconstruction of successive physical and imagined environments.[5]

Two of the foundational statements about the character of capitalist urbanization come together in 'the architecture of hurry': the concepts of time-space compression and creative destruction.

Creative destruction is normally seen as the replacement of one built environment that has been adjudged obsolescent by a more profitable and usually higher-value use. The process may involve a deliberate disinvestment in the prior use, thereby ensuring its redundancy becomes apparent for all to see: the creation of a rent gap between what the site is currently worth and what it might

---

[2]   Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (London, 1994), pp. 349–54.

[3]   Constance Perin, *Everything in Its place: Social Order and Land Use in America* (Princeton, 1977).

[4]   Definitions from *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2010).

[5]   David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford, 1989).

be worth if redeveloped.[6] A period of inactivity, an absence of 'hurry', makes the subsequent burst of frenetic activity, the subsequent 'hurry', appear all the more desirable. We could apply these ideas to nineteenth-century slum clearance and redevelopment, to commerce replacing residential uses in the City of London or in Lower Manhattan, to twentieth- and twenty-first-century gentrification (class upgrading) following a period when the previous owners and lower-status occupiers were denied access to mortgages and capital for improvements.

But we can also see creative destruction at work where slums were demolished to make way for new streets, or for urban infrastructure such as trunk sewers, or new railway lines: developments which might not, in themselves, seem very profitable, but which stimulated the upgrading and revaluation of wide areas in their vicinity, because they promoted their accessibility, in other words, because they contributed to time-space compression.

Time-space compression, then, is not just a speeding-up of travel or of the movement of commodities, through the building of new streets and railway lines, or of information, through the improvement of postal services, or the construction of telegraph, telephone or radio networks, but a stimulus to creative destruction, by facilitating a revaluation of land and property brought into new configurations of spatial relations. Thus, the automobile in *Howards End* creates an 'architecture of hurry' not only by its material presence on the streets of central London, but also by bringing Howards End, the Wilcoxes' Home Counties home, into the orbit of London's urbanization, making the fields of Hertfordshire ripe for the 'red rust' of suburban development that Helen Schlegel observes at the end of the novel.[7]

Flats

Another aspect of the 'architecture of hurry' is the 'Babylonian flats' which threaten creative destruction on the Schlegel sisters' elegant but now dated townhouse; and Babylonian flats not only hurry the capitalist revaluation of the West End, but also accommodate a life of hurry. Mrs Munt, the sisters' elderly aunt, enjoys looking out of the window at Wickham Mansions, the flats already built across the road from the Schlegels' home, watching the comings and goings of the 'flashy type of person'

---

[6]　On creative destruction, see Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity* and 'Modernity as Break', Introduction to David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (London, 2003). For the concept of 'rent gap' see Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City* (London, 1996).

[7]　Forster, *Howards End*, p. 289.

that they housed.[8] Mansion flats, or middle-class apartments in North American cities, embodied an architecture of hurry, designed for residents who were mostly in a hurry, both day-to-day and in their desire to get on in life. Flats and apartments were for new arrivals, new immigrants just off the boat or transcontinental train in North American cities, or newly arrived from the continent or the colonies – home on furlough or retirement, or visiting dignitaries and diplomats – in London; people who might only stay for a few months while they sorted out 'proper' and permanent homes elsewhere in the city or the surrounding countryside. Or they were for other folk whose household circumstances were still unresolved – bachelors and spinsters; so-called 'active' widows (on the look-out for a new catch, with either new wealth or new status); childless couples; people who needed a metropolitan pied-à-terre; people who travelled, who wanted a secure home that could be left under the watchful eye of a concierge or janitor; people who had neither the time nor the inclination for domestic chores as they hurried between employment and leisure.[9]

We can gain some idea of the clientele for middle-class flats by examining how they were advertised. In Toronto, luxury apartments promoted during successive building booms in the early 1910s and late 1920s, were invariably associated with the latest fashions and the latest forms of private transport: stylishly dressed women boarding or alighting from the latest convertible automobiles, perhaps backed by a sunburst and complemented by 'moderne' or 'art deco' detailing. In late Victorian London, modest flats for clerks and teachers were aggrandized by the suffix 'mansions' or 'gardens'. More luxurious buildings were advertised in postcards which displayed the view afforded by high-rise living (of Buckingham Palace in the case of Queen Anne's Mansions, an obvious case of status by association on the part of an externally ugly but internally lavishly decorated 13-storey block close to St James's Park) or more directly conveyed the fashionable status of tenants leaving their building by private carriage (as in the case of Artillery Mansions, an 1895 block, on Victoria Street, Westminster).[10] Next door to Artillery Mansions, the more modestly equipped Marlborough Mansions sought the attention of 'Members of Parliament and those requiring a Pied à Terre', emphasizing 'the advantage of excellent attendance, valeting, and a bright and charmingly decorated Coffee Room' compared to a conventional 'Flat with Kitchen', and noting that 'Tenants' Chambers can be Let at good

[8]   Ibid., p. 68.

[9]   This and the following pages draw on material I have discussed in detail in chapter 9, 'Mansion Flats and Model Dwellings', in Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930* (Cambridge, 2008).

[10]   On Queen Anne's Mansions, see Richard Dennis, '"Babylonian Flats" in Victorian and Edwardian London', *The London Journal*, 33 (2008): 233–47.

rentals during absence, either for long or short periods, so that those requiring only partial use during the year can rely upon paying only a nominal rent'.[11] Some Victoria Street flats came equipped with division bells so that Members of Parliament could relax at home until summoned to vote, hurry down the street to pass through the division lobbies, and then return before the food or the company had turned cold. St Ermin's Mansions had its own private access to St James's Park underground station, facilitating instant getaway anywhere by way of the Circle Line and its connections to most of London's mainline termini.

In the 1890s and early 1900s, George Gissing was in no doubt about the association of flats with 'nomadism', which he thought spelt the end of civilized life![12] And to this end the characters he installed in flats in his novels included the economically and morally insecure Hugh and Sibyl Carnaby, recently returned from Queensland, Australia, who occupy a flat in the real Oxford and Cambridge Mansions in *The Whirlpool* (1897); the reclusive Lord Polperro, who has abandoned his wife and lives the life of a middle-aged bachelor in a flat in 'Lowndes Mansions', Sloane Street, Chelsea, in *The Town Traveller* (1898); and the scheming, active widow – Mrs Widdowson – in a flat in Victoria Street, in *The Odd Women* (1893):

> a handsome widow of only eight-and-thirty, she resolved that her wealth should pave the way for her to a titled alliance ... her flat in Victoria Street attracted a heterogeneous cluster of pleasure-seekers and fortune-hunters, among them one or two vagrant members of the younger aristocracy. She lived at the utmost pace compatible with technical virtue.[13]

In North America, apartment-living was increasingly associated with another group of mostly temporary residents, so-called 'women adrift'. In Toronto, in 1881 there were only about 6,400 women in paid employment (in a city of around 180,000 inhabitants), but by 1911 (when the population was approaching 400,000), there were more than 42,000 women in paid work, nearly all unmarried, of whom 15,000 lived 'adrift' – away from their parental home.[14] Their housing options included boarding with distant relatives, lodging with people with whom they had previously had no contact at all, living in a

---

[11]   Westminster City Archives, 1277/2/1, 'Order to View', Marlborough Mansions (1904).

[12]   See especially G. Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* [1903] (London, 1912), p. 8.

[13]   George Gissing, *The Odd Women* [1893] (London, 1980), p. 118.

[14]   Carolyn Strange, *Toronto's Girl Problem: The Perils and Pleasures of the City, 1880–1930* (Toronto, 1995).

hostel or residential club like the YWCA or, increasingly, sharing a flat with other women like themselves. In Sinclair Lewis's novel, *The Job* (1916), set in early twentieth-century New York, Una Golden moves from a boarding house on Lexington Avenue to the 'Temperance and Protection Home Club for Girls' near Madison Square, to a three-room flat which she shares with a friend she has made at the Home Club. Una's ascent through the housing market is matched by her progression in the job market – from $8 a week copy-typist to $13 a week chief stenographer, to $21 a week secretary. A less fictional example that unites my interests in Toronto and New York is provided by 'Lady Gay', a columnist on the weekly *Toronto Saturday Night*, who reported on 'Four Girls in a Flat':

> A girl writes me that she and three other girls are going to New York to live in a flat together – presumably to obtain those situations which are always ready to drop into the lap of the young girl who goes to New York to make her fortune. These girls got the idea of life in a flat from some United States paper.

Lady Gay urged caution:

> The flat may be a paradise; it is more likely to be a shabby, rusty-looking, cramped, unlovely box, where you walk sideways to pass the bed, and see a network of fire-escapes and a spider web of clothes-lines from the back windows, and where you meet curious looking women and awful looking men going in and out; where the janitor is a burly negro or a stolid Swede, who neither knows nor cares if you lie dead in your flat, or come home at three in the morning.[15]

YWCA-type hostels were unlikely to appeal to such 'girls in a hurry', who wanted more independence. In Toronto, a more attractive solution was offered by the developer, William E. Dyer, who promoted a company by the name of Home Suite Homes Ltd., building both 'Midmaples', a '4-storey brick and steel ladies' residence' for 'lady teachers, nurses and business women', and also 'Allan Gardens', 'a bachelor residence with cafeteria'. Publicity for the latter, featuring both a roof garden and the latest open-top automobile drawn up outside the building, reinforces the impression that this was an architecture of hurry.

A final literary example on this theme, set in interwar Toronto, is Shirley Faessler's short story, 'Henye', written in 1971 but set at the end of Prohibition (a few years earlier in Canada than in the United States). After Henye dies, her husband, Yankev, remarries. His new wife is his daughter-in-law's mother, 'an active widow, a big woman, who drove her own car, spoke English [not Yiddish],

---

15   *Toronto Saturday Night*, 14 April 1900, p. 8.

and lived in an apartment'. Yankev goes to live in her apartment, evidently an up-market block, since it has an elevator. He soon learns about her routine:

> all day, busy. Busy, busy, busy. With what? To make supper takes five minutes. Soup from a can, compote from a can – it has my *boba*'s [grandmother's] flavour. A piece of herring? This you never see on the table, she doesn't like the smell. A woman comes in to clean – with what is she busy, you'll ask? With gin rummy. True, gin rummy. They come in three or four times a week her friends, to play gin rummy. They cackle like geese, they smoke like men. Dear, my wife says to me, bring some ginger ale from the frige [*sic*], the girls are thirsty – she hasn't got time to leave the cards. Girls, she calls them. Widows! Not one of them without a husband buried in the ground ... Drives a car like a man.[16]

Remarkably, this passage echoes a report in the *Toronto Globe* in 1928, in which a woman protestor, lobbying the council not to grant permission for a new apartment building, claimed that 'If there were fewer apartment houses, women would not be coming home from bridge parties at 6 o'clock with their husbands' supper in a paper bag.'[17]

But the apartment house not only connected with the everyday performance of 'hurry'. It also, as hinted in the frequent residential mobility of Una Golden in *The Job*, related to individuals hurrying through the life-cycle. Rates of residential mobility were higher among apartment tenants than among the occupiers of single-family dwellings. In Toronto, only 22 per cent of apartment tenants stayed at the same address for the five years from 1909 to 1914, compared to 42 per cent of the residents of houses living in streets adjacent to the apartment houses. In a later five-year period, 1930–35, 15 per cent of apartment-dwellers but 38 per cent of residents of nearby houses stayed at the same address.[18]

In fact, there is an interesting dichotomy here. Apartments for the middle classes and upwardly mobile were associated with high rates of population turnover. For example, fewer than one in five of the heads of household resident in Oxford and Cambridge Mansions in 1891 had been there seven years earlier; fewer than one in ten of the 1891 occupants of Cornwall Mansions (a more modest block of flats behind Baker Street Station, and George Gissing's home from 1884 to 1891) had remained so long. By contrast, the residents of 'model

---

[16] Shirley Faessler, 'Henye', in Morris Wolfe and Douglas Daymond (eds), *Toronto Short Stories* (Toronto, 1977), pp. 50–73.

[17] 'Apartments Blamed for Hungry Hubbies: Paper-Bag Suppers Cited by Woman Deputant Objecting to Permit', *Toronto Globe*, 9 March 1928.

[18] Richard Dennis and Ceinwen Giles, *Modernity and Multi-Storey Living: Apartment Tenants in Canadian Cities, 1900–39* (ESRC, 1999).

dwellings' (blocks of flats for the working classes, owned by philanthropic agencies like the Peabody and Guinness Trusts and limited-dividend companies like the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company and the East End Dwellings Company) were rather less nomadic, more inclined to see their flats as a goal achieved rather than a stepping stone to something else. These buildings were intended to reduce transiency, to make the working classes less migratory, to obviate the moonlit flits and random evictions that characterized working-class renting in the slums of Victorian London. At Farringdon Road Buildings, a block of model dwellings vilified by George Gissing in *The Nether World* as 'terrible barracks … crushing the spirit as you gaze',[19] thirteen per cent of males on the electoral roll in 1884 were still in the same flat seven years later, and as many again had moved flats, but remained within the Buildings. At the Peabody Trust's Herbrand Street estate in Bloomsbury, households who moved in when the estate opened in 1885 stayed an average of 6 years 8 months in the same flat, but 9 years 2 months in the estate. James and Eliza Reynolds lived on the estate from 1885 to 1911 and again from 1914 until 1939, but in that time they occupied 15 different flats, on five different staircases, one flat on two separate occasions. As they hurried from flat to flat, they were, at another scale, utterly immoveable, spending 51 of their 54 adult years on the same estate. Their experience may have represented the extreme of short-distance mobility, but there were numerous other cases of Peabody tenants living in half a dozen different flats in the same estate over the course of a couple of decades.[20] Perhaps this is a characteristic of much 'hurry' in the modernizing city – it generates a lot of surface movement but little underlying change.

Apartments and model dwellings also embodied the 'hurry' of capitalist development, in their mode of financing and in the application of the logic of the production line and principles of scientific management to the production of the built environment. This is demonstrated by a photograph from the Canadian magazine, *Contract Record*, captioned '2,000,000 bricks in this pile,' showing a row of eight apartment blocks in various stages of construction, erected by John W. Walker, one of the leading apartment-house builders and owners in interwar Toronto.[21] We can visualize Walker's building workers following one another down the street, digging foundations, pouring concrete, bricklaying, working as carpenters and joiners, roofers, tilers, plumbers, glaziers, electricians, decorators, landscapers, producing a block of flats as slickly as Henry Ford's workers produced each Model T.

---

[19]   George Gissing, *The Nether World* [1889] (London, 1973), p. 274.

[20]   These, and other, life histories are recoverable from the Peabody Trust's Tenant Registers, now held in the London Metropolitan Archives: ACC/3445/PT/07/050–051.

[21]   *Contract Record* 36 (17 May 1922), p. 437; Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 245–6.

2,000,000 Bricks in This Pile

The east side of one short block on Kendal Ave., Toronto, has already accounted for over two million brick. Building activity in apartments, as shown in this picture, has probably never been exceeded anywhere in the Dominion. The building in the foreground, nearing completion, will house twenty-six families. Seven other apartments in the row, of varying size, bring the total number of suites to 113, varying in size from four to seven rooms. These apartments have been erected by J. W. Walker, 250 St. Clair Avenue West.

Figure 6.1   '2,000,000 bricks in this pile'. Source: *Contract Record* 36, 17 May 1922, p. 437

Nor was London very different from Toronto in this respect, at least in Forster's view. Writing of the area where the Basts lived, in the 'semi-basement' of a block of flats in Camelia Road, somewhere in inner south London:

> A block of flats, constructed with extreme cheapness, towered on either hand. Farther down the road two more blocks were being built, and beyond these an old house was being demolished to accommodate another pair. It was the kind of scene that may be observed all over London, whatever the locality – bricks and mortar rising and falling with the restlessness of the water in a fountain, as the city receives more and more men upon her soil. Camelia Road would soon stand out like a fortress, and command, for a little, an extensive view. Only for a little. Plans were out for the erection of flats in Magnolia Road also. And again a few years, and all the flats in either road might be pulled down, and new buildings, of a vastness at present unimaginable, might arise where they had fallen.[22]

In London, many new model dwellings for the working classes were erected on slum clearance sites under the auspices of the Metropolitan Board of Works or the London County Council. As such, they represent a state-sponsored form

---

[22]   Forster, *Howards End*, p. 40.

of creative destruction, hurrying the erstwhile residents into relocation. It was rare for occupants of dwellings that were demolished to move into the model dwellings. For one thing, there was usually a delay of a year or two between demolition and the completion of the replacement buildings. For another, the trusts and companies that owned model dwellings would not countenance the levels of overcrowding (and, therefore, low rents *per inhabitant*) that had characterized areas targeted for clearance. Only 11 of 167 families displaced from the last phase of slum clearance in the Metropolitan Board of Works' Whitechapel and Limehouse Clearance moved into new Peabody Buildings intended to provide replacement housing. When Charles Booth's assistant, George Duckworth, visited Bishop's Court in Clerkenwell in 1898, he found 'all doors open [a sign that the inhabitants had no "proper" idea of the differentiation of private from public space] – windows dirty and broken – children dirty and pale. Vagabonds'. The policeman accompanying him opined that 'Allen St and Little Sultan St [two nearby streets marked a mixture of blue and black – the very poorest – on Booth's 1889 Poverty Map but mostly demolished by 1898] would have come here naturally when they were displaced'.[23] So a fresh wave of mobility and displacement was initiated by each new scheme, even when provision was made for rehousing, and the customary result was the creation of new districts of overcrowded and insanitary dwellings.

Streets

Earlier in the century, no rehousing was required for displacements caused by the building of new roads and railways. The housing reformer, Lord Shaftesbury, painted a scene of confusion surrounding the building of Victoria Street in Westminster, opened in 1851:

> when the time arrived for pulling down the houses in that neighbourhood – Duck-lane and High-street – he remembered being on the spot, and seeing the disorder and confusion occasioned by the progress of the improvements. That part of the town appeared as if it had been taken by siege. People were running about to see where they could find shelter. Some of their houses were pulled down over their heads; and he knew, from inquiries he had made only two days ago, that those very persons so turned out of their houses were now living in the

---

23   Charles Booth Archive, LSE: Police Notebook B353–148/149 (walk with PC Zenthon, 23 June 1898).

actual neighbourhood, but in houses tenfold more crowded than those which they inhabited before.[24]

For the poor, then, there was little if any 'virtue' in displacement.

In the case of clearances for new streets and railway lines, we might think of these new lines of communication as direct evidence of a landscape of hurry, improving circulation and connectivity across the city. Yet many new London streets – and certainly, Victoria Street – were more concerned with speeding up processes of moral, social and economic improvement than with speeding up the traffic. And, as in Haussmann's Paris, early Victorian street improvements such as New Oxford Street, Commercial Street (Spitalfields) and Victoria Street relied on the issue of shares and bonds to finance the purchase of land, assuming that builders and businesses would quickly take up vacant sites fronting the new streets, thereby yielding a good rate of return to private investors.[25] When these assumptions proved unfounded, as in the case of Victoria Street throughout the 1850s, investors faced financial ruin and government was urged to nationalize improvement companies in the public interest.[26]

The architecture of hurry lining the streets, when it did at last take off, especially from the 1860s, embraced a utilitarian landscape of new commercial buildings, banks, police stations, gin palaces for 'perpendicular drinking' (where there were few seats and drinkers were encouraged to down their drinks standing at the bar and quickly move on, making way for other customers), cafes and teashops where office workers and shoppers could grab a quick meal served, from the 1920s, by waitresses known as 'nippies'. Actually on the streets, a variety of street furniture was designed to make life more efficient – public conveniences, drinking fountains, telephone boxes, postboxes, traffic islands, and, later in the twentieth century, traffic lights and pedestrian crossings; and the ultimate architecture of hurry, the petrol station.

All these features were assiduously plotted on Ordnance Survey maps and fire insurance plans, successive editions of which show the transformation of the built environment associated with new or widened streets. In the case of Tower Bridge, opened in 1894, major engineering works associated with the bridge and its approach roads were complemented by smaller-scale changes – a new police station and magistrates' court (1906), a new gin-palace public house (the Tower Bridge Hotel (1897), now The Pommelers Rest), a new bank (London and

---

[24] 'House of Lords', *The Times*, 19 March 1853, p. 2.

[25] On Paris, see Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, esp. chapter 5; on London, Geoffrey Tyack, 'James Pennethorne and London Street Improvements, 1838–1855', *London Journal*, 15 (1990): 38–56.

[26] *The Times*, 21 August 1860, p. 9.
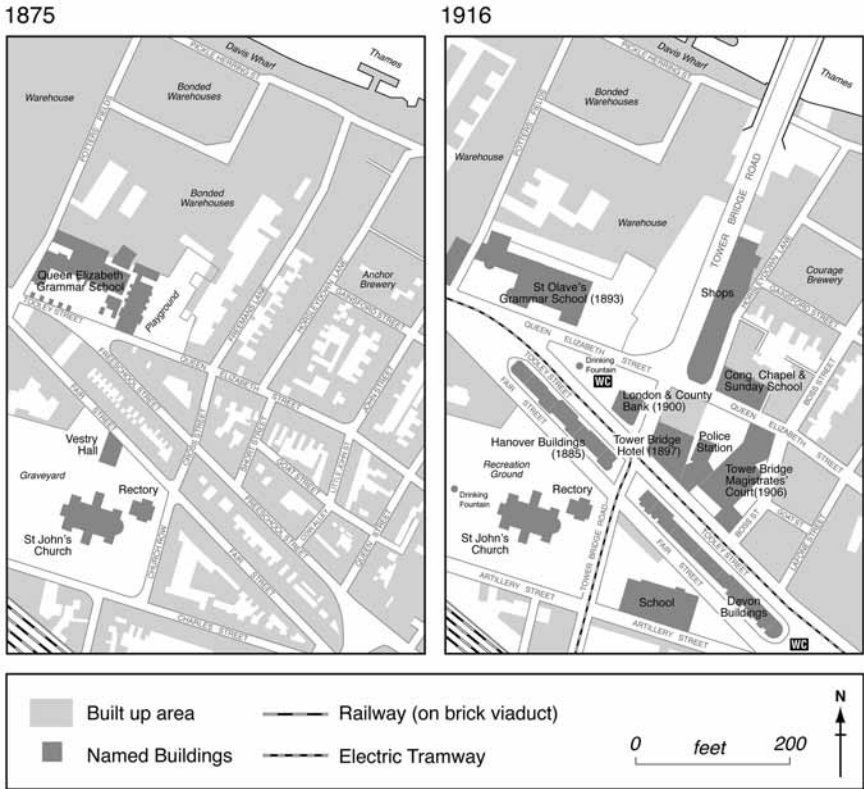
Figure 6.2　　Before and After the Building of Tower Bridge © UCL
　　　　　　　Geography Drawing Office and Richard Dennis

County Bank, 1900), a drinking fountain, an underground public convenience,
flats (Hanover Buildings, 1885, later renamed Devon Mansions), electric trams
(1904) – variously designed to speed up the administration of justice; to speed
up access to refreshment (both 'natural' and alcoholic); to speed up access to the
relief that too much refreshment necessitates; to speed up access to money; to
speed up access to access.

Hurry in Word and Picture

For Forster, the 'architecture of hurry' was not only a literal bricks-and-mortar
architecture. It was also the architecture of street-talk: 'clipped words, formless
sentences, potted expressions of approval or disgust', a language which created

problems of transliteration for correct writers like Forster. How should the language of hurry be represented in literature? Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* and, more recently, Nicholas Freeman in *Conceiving the City* have considered how writers like Arthur Morrison, George Gissing and Somerset Maugham coped with Cockney and slang in their working-class characters' speech patterns. Williams suggests they convey 'a new sound of the city … a briskness, a narrative directness'.[27] Forster, however, 'cannot reproduce such a discourse, only catalogue its existence'.[28]

Literary *form* was also complicit in the language of hurry. Compare the measured couplets of nineteenth-century poetry or the circumlocutions that were second nature to Dickens or Henry James with the baldness of Ernest Hemingway or, in the case of Toronto, the Canadian urban novelist, Morley Callaghan.[29] 'Clipped words' were paralleled by clipped narratives. And if the typical nineteenth-century urban novel had sprawled over decades of births and deaths, war and peace, comings and goings, both *Ulysses* and *Mrs Dalloway* were concentrated into a single day, clipped down to streams of consciousness, strings of adjectives and participles.

The architecture of hurry in *Mrs Dalloway* is especially experienced on the streets: Clarissa crossing Victoria Street at the beginning of the novel, making her way up Bond Street, where a limousine backfires violently as it accelerates out of a traffic jam; Peter Walsh's leisurely but also impossibly brisk walk up Whitehall, across Trafalgar Square, and then by way of Haymarket, Regent Street and Portland Place to Regent's Park; and Elizabeth's impulsive bus-ride from Victoria Street along the Strand. Here is a bus trip that still engages the senses:

> Buses swooped, settled, were off – garish caravans, glistening with red and yellow varnish … Suddenly Elizabeth stepped forward and most competently boarded the omnibus, in front of everybody. She took a seat on top. The impetuous creature – a pirate – started forward, sprang away; she had to hold the rail to steady herself, for a pirate it was, reckless, unscrupulous, bearing down ruthlessly, circumventing dangerously, boldly snatching a passenger, or ignoring a passenger, squeezing eel-like and arrogant in between, and then rushing insolently all sails spread up Whitehall.[30]

---

27 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York, 1973), pp. 225–7; Nicholas Freeman, *Conceiving the City: London, Literature, and Art 1870–1914* (Oxford, 2007).

28 Andrew Thacker, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester, 2003), p. 52.

29 Richard Dennis, 'Morley Callaghan and the moral geography of Toronto', *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 14/1 (1999): 35–51.

30 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* [1925] (London, 1992), pp. 176–7.

Figure 6.3   Claude Flight, 'Speed' (1922). Reproduced with permission of
                Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, and the estate of
                Claude Flight

'Pirate' was not just a metaphor: unofficial 'pirate buses' in London in the early 1920s competed with regular services provided by the London General Omnibus Company. They were notorious for reckless driving, racing to beat rivals to the next stop, and sometimes changing their route in mid journey if prospective passengers wanted to go somewhere different from their advertised destination![31]

The spirit of Woolf's description also appears in Claude Flight's linocut, 'Speed' (1922), except that he depicted regular London General buses rather than a 'pirate.'

Flight was inspired by Italian futurism's enthusiasm for speed and dynamism to depict a succession of red double-decker buses, the foremost of which is passing so quickly out of the front-right of the picture that we can only catch the letters 'S P E E' on the advertising panel along its side. Pedestrians in the left foreground hurry across the road, shepherded by a policeman, while the six-

---

[31]   Jerry White, *London in the Twentieth Century* (London, 2001); Theo Barker and Michael Robbins, *A History of London Transport*, vol. 2 (London, 1974).

storey building running the length of the street in the background has a sinuosity that also suggests a view glimpsed at speed.[32]

After 1925, the introduction of double-deck buses with covered tops and glazed windows throughout meant that even passengers on the upper deck would have been insulated from the sensations of the outside world; and the London Traffic Act of 1924 signalled an end to the wild behaviour of pirate buses. Combined with the smoother, quieter ride guaranteed by pneumatic tyres, suspension, and improved road surfaces, buses could now travel more quickly, but the sensation of speed was diminished.

The most obvious and potent architecture of hurry in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the 'city railway', whether underground, on the surface, or elevated. In London, many of the earliest railways ran atop brick-built viaducts, for example out of London Bridge south-east to Greenwich, out of Waterloo south-west through Vauxhall, and – in an extension of the 1860s – west from London Bridge to Charing Cross, slicing across inner south London. Like elevated railways in New York a generation later, they offered the opportunity for panoramic surveillance, a de Certeauesque view from above,[33] captured most memorably in print by a succession of observations into the slums of the East End – for example, by G.W.M. Reynolds in *The Mysteries of London* (1845), and by Gissing in *The Nether World* (1889).

The chief characteristic of these descriptions is their voyeurism – offering a window into an 'other' world, to be observed from a safe distance; and 'hurry' may not seem to be part of the argument. Indeed, travelling too fast would blur the impression. In Reynolds' account, there is a tension between the transitory, glimpsed nature of the view and the detail he claims to observe:

> The traveller upon this line may catch, from the windows of the carriage in which he journeys, a hasty but alas! too comprehensive glance of the wretchedness and squalor of that portion of London. He may actually obtain a view of the interior and domestic misery peculiar to the neighbourhood; he may penetrate with his eyes into the secrets of those abodes of sorrow, vice and destitution. In summertime the poor always have their windows open, and thus the hideous poverty of their rooms can be readily descried from the summit of the arches on which the railroad is constructed.[34]

---

[32]   Clifford S. Ackley (ed.), *British Prints from the Machine Age: Rhythms of Modern Life 1914–1939* (London, 2008).

[33]   Michel de Certeau, in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, 1984) compared the 'concept city', mapped or viewed from above, with the 'textured city', experienced at street level.

[34]   G.W.M. Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London* (1845), chapter 42, quoted in Rick Allen, *The Moving Pageant: A Literary Sourcebook on London Street-Life, 1700–1914* (London,

Reynolds went on to describe women cooking, swearing and quarrelling, and men 'all the day long smoking': an amazing amount of detail from a hasty glance from a moving train! But 'hurry' is an implicit part of the argument; the fact that the train keeps moving means we don't stay long enough to be infected by miasma, physical or moral. The train offers us the opportunity to escape all this. In *The Nether World*, the context is a holiday journey from the slums of Clerkenwell to the Essex countryside which, en route, allows its travellers to look down on an environment similar to the one from which they have just, temporarily, escaped:

> Over the pest-stricken regions of East London, sweltering in sunshine which served only to reveal the intimacies of abomination; across miles of a city of the damned ... stopping at stations which it crushes the heart to think should be the destination of any mortal; the train made its way at length beyond the outmost limits of dread, and entered upon a land of level meadows, of hedges and trees, of crops and cattle.[35]

The appalling physical and moral degradation is tempered – at least, for us – by the promise of nature and goodness at the other end of the line, much more so than is possible if we were merely, as in another Gissing novel, *Thyrza* (1887), to make the same observations from the top of a tramcar.[36] Despite the viewpoint from above, just as on the railway viaduct, the tram – at this time a horse-drawn tramcar – is embedded in its environment.

The advantage of the train is obvious in Gustave Doré's famous engraving of 'Rails over London' (1872), where the viewer, apparently perched on the rooftops, looks through the arches of one viaduct, past rows of tightly packed, endless, terraced houses to another railway viaduct on which a train is speeding away from the metropolis. The implication is that the speeding train will take you away from the poverty, meanness and congestion of the city.

There is a similar message, though now we are escaping from gridlock and the congestion of business rather than the congestion of lungs, in another of Doré's most famous images: 'Ludgate Hill: A Block in the Street'.[37] It should be noted, however, that the direction of train travel here, and in paintings of the same scene by William Logsdail (1887), John O'Connor (1887), Jacques-Emile Blanche (1910) and Christopher Nevinson (1930), is into, rather than

---

1998), p. 120.

[35]   Gissing, *The Nether World*, p. 164.

[36]   Gissing, *Thyrza* [1887] (Brighton, 1984), p. 319.

[37]   Doré's illustrations are in Gustav Doré and Jerrold Blanchard, *London: A Pilgrimage* (London, 1872).
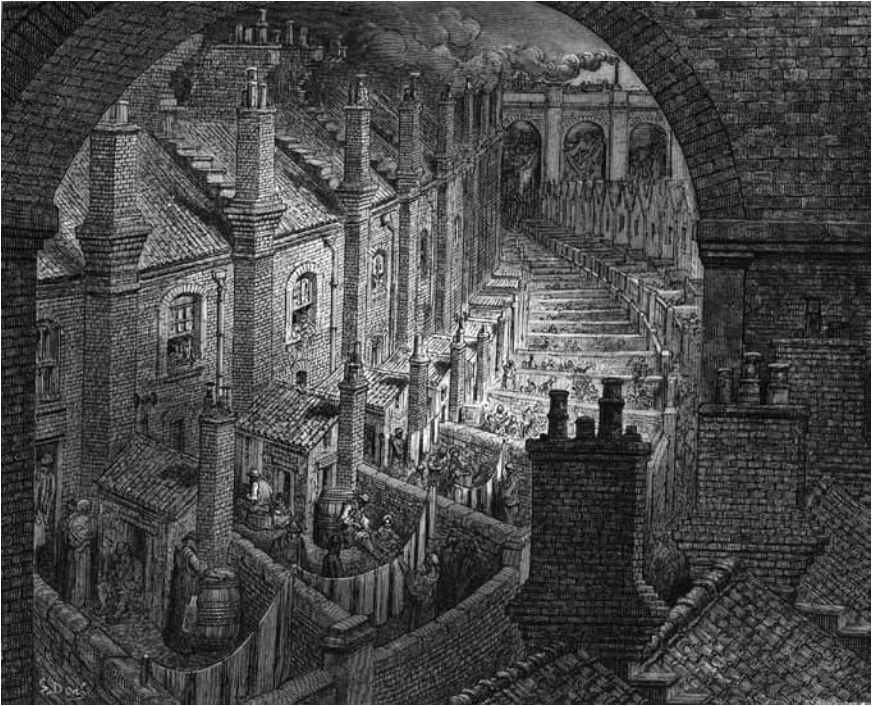
Figure 6.4   Gustave Doré, 'Over London by Rail' (1872)

away from, the maelstrom of central London. Nonetheless, in each case the train makes smooth progress across the picture while traffic on the street is at best congested and at worst (in Doré's illustration) in complete chaos.

In representations of the elevated railway in New York, speed is one of several important themes.[38] One recurrent trope was the romance of the el, highlighted by night-time word-pictures and paintings.[39] Another was the surveillance afforded by the view from the el – looking through the second- or third-floor windows of tenements:

> the *fleeting* [my emphasis] intimacy you formed with people in second and third
> floor interiors ... [March] said it was better than the theatre, of which it reminded
> him, to see those people through their windows: a family party of work-folk at
> a late tea, some of the men in their shirt sleeves; a woman sewing by a lamp; a

---

[38]   This section draws on 'Networked cities', chapter 12 of Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*.

[39]   For example, William D. Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* [1890] (Oxford, 1990), p. 145; William L. Sonntag, *The Bowery at Night* (*c.*1895), watercolour in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York.

mother laying her child in its cradle; a man with his head fallen on his hands upon a table; a girl and her lover leaning over the window-sill together. What suggestion! what drama! what infinite interest![40]

It was also implicit in paintings and engravings by John Sloan and Edward Hopper, e.g. each artist's 'Night Windows' (Sloan, 1910; Hopper, 1928), where the train was absent but inspiration came from the voyeuristic opportunities offered by the elevated viewpoint.[41]

Another theme was life under the el, emphasizing the stoic survival of the poor under the oppression of a social and economic structure mimicked by the physical structure of the railway. The poor seek refuge beneath the el, but the el casts its prison-like shadows across the space they occupy. But we also have to reckon with the sheer excitement of the speed of the electric train, whether by contrast with the more leisurely streetcar and the less 'driven' nature of life under the el, or as a means of escaping the chaos and congestion of downtown.[42]

Many of these pictures represent the el just at the moment when it had become yesterday's technology, superseded by the subway and soon to be dismantled. The el is depicted slicing through the city, yet by the 1910s and 1920s, the real incision was underground. Reginald Marsh's subway painting – 'Why Not Use the "L"?' (1930) – reproduced a contemporary poster displayed in subway trains:

> The Subway is fast – Certainly
> But the *Open Air Elevated*
> Gets you there quickly, too
> – and with *more comfort*
> **Why not use the 'L'?**

Both Subway and El offered scope for Marsh's pictures of the uneasy mix of fellow passengers. In London, the deep-level 'tube' offered more opportunities for picturing: the profile of tunnels and trains could become a vortex of change drilling into the established order of things, as in Cyril Power's linocuts of 'Tube Station' (1932) and 'Tube Train' (1934). Perhaps Power's most striking images

---

[40]   Howells, *Hazard*, p. 63.

[41]   William C. Sharpe, *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography* (Princeton, 2008), esp. pp. 272–8.

[42]   Douglas Tallack, *New York Sights: Visualizing Old and New New York* (Oxford, 2005), esp. chapter 3.

of the architecture of hurry were illustrations of escalators, including 'The Escalator' (1929) and 'Whence and Whither? (The Cascade)' (1930).[43]

The first escalator in London – at Harrods in 1898 – was little more than an inclined moving carpet but, following the installation in 1911 of an escalator connecting the surface-level District and 'tube'-level Piccadilly platforms at Earl's Court, they soon became ubiquitous on the London Underground. Wolmar notes that 'from 1913, all new deep-level stations were fitted with escalators rather than lifts',[44] and *The Times* (4 October 1911) observed: 'There need be no waiting on the part of the passenger for conveyance to or from the trains. He can step on the stairlift at once …'.[45] Escalators were still enough of a novelty, certainly for visitors to London, for Anthony Asquith to make a visual joke about them in his silent film drama, *Underground* (1928).[46] Nevertheless, the escalator was a quintessential architecture of modernity. Its efficiency involved not only speed but also discipline: in London, stand on the right, let people walk past on the left; don't try walking up the down escalator or down the up escalator. And once you're on, you can't get off! The escalator is a metaphor for modern social mobility and for suburbanization.

Conclusion

There is another explicit reference to 'hurry' half way through *Howards End*, when Margaret Schlegel 'forgot the luggage and the motor-cars, and the hurrying men who know so much and connect so little'.[47] Hurry is linked to the civilization of luggage, the constant flux of moving from house to house and place to place, but also to the inability to use knowledge to the benefit of humanity. Hurry in this case is not quite the same as speed. There is a nervousness, an anxiety, a breathlessness, a disorder to 'hurry' which is absent from the efficiency and single-mindedness of speed. One reading of the proverb, 'More haste, less speed', is that being hasty, rushing into things without thinking, being told to 'hurry up', ultimately leads to less speed, taking longer to do things properly. Hurry becomes one human reaction to the processes of modernization – trying to adjust, to keep up with the speed of economic, political and technological change; it may be the only practicable reaction, but in the end it is as effective as King Canute. It is not 'tactical' or

---

[43] Ackley, *British Prints from the Machine Age*, esp. pp. 91–113.

[44] Christian Wolmar, *The Subterranean Railway* (London, 2004), p. 206.

[45] Quoted in Stephen Halliday, *Underground to Everywhere* (Stroud, 2001), p. 86.

[46] J. Malvern, 'Mystery over Tube Etiquette Cleared up by Restored Film', *The Times*, 21 October 2009.

[47] Forster, *Howards End*, p. 174.

'transgressive', not so much a representational space of counterculture as a spatial practice moulded to the form of advanced capitalism.[48]

I have identified some component parts of an architecture of hurry in later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cities, arguing that there is a connection between processes of time-space compression and creative destruction at a variety of temporal and spatial scales – the everyday, the life-cycle of individual citizens, and the life-cycle of the city itself; and I have suggested a distinction between 'speed' which may signify efficiency, but not always to the benefit of the human spirit, and 'hurry' which is our attempt to come to terms with modernization. Hurry is what pedestrians do, trying to cross the road, in the face of traffic, which is speeding up (as in Flight's depiction of 'Speed'). At the least, the result is Baudelaire's 'loss of a halo';[49] rather worse was the rising loss of real human life in the face of modern traffic. The number of persons injured on London streets increased from 2,677 in 1872 to 25,822 in 1913; there were 222 fatalities in 1906, 367 in 1910, 625 in 1913.[50] Also worse was the increasing spatial segregation of peoples, functions and activities in modern life, all running counter to Sennett's and Forster's pleas for connectivity.

This may seem too negative an assessment of modernity in general and the architecture of hurry in particular, perhaps reflective of my principal witnesses, especially E.M. Forster and George Gissing, neither of whom shared the delight in spontaneity or the surreal that characterized more modernist writers or the iconoclastic enthusiasm for overturning the existing order associated with Futurism. Forster and Gissing were more concerned with the personal than the structural implications of restlessness. Forster's perspective was reflected in his observation in *Howards End* that 'We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet.'[51] For many poor families, the technology of speed and efficiency promised a modest affluence, the affordability of healthy living, an opportunity to commute from new suburbs, or to travel on annual holidays to the seaside; although, for others, marginalized and deskilled, even these benefits were denied. Gissing's increasing social conservatism, especially exemplified by his semi-autobiographical fictional reminiscence, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, has to be set alongside the 'unclassed' nature of his early adulthood, his enforced mobility

---

48   Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*; and Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1991).

49   Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (London, 1983), pp. 155–64.

50   James Winter, *London's Teeming Streets 1830–1914* (London, 1993), p. 48; Stephen Inwood, *City of Cities: The Birth of Modern London* (London, 2005), p. 271; White, *London in the Twentieth Century*, p. 14.

51   Forster, *Howards End*, p. 38.

and insecurity.[52] His closest acquaintances were equally rootless and transient, so it is unsurprising that he was more sensitive to the disruptions of modernity than to its opportunities. However, it is worth noting that in his own occupancy of a flat, 7K Cornwall Mansions, between December 1884 and January 1891, Gissing exploited the opportunities it afforded for mobility. In his first three years there, Gissing was away from home for only 51 nights, but in the following three years he was absent more often than he was at home.[53] The new freedoms offered to many, especially women, by an architecture of hurry embodied in flats and apartments, and by employment in financial, catering and communications industries that serviced hurry, cannot be denied.

Returning finally to the third scale of 'hurry' – the scale of creative destruction, and of speeding up in the circulation of ideas, information and capital – and from the perspective of 2014, with popular-science speculation on the potential 're-wiring' of the human brain in the face of constant exposure to instant electronic communication, and ongoing financial crises arising from the instantaneous circulation (or collapse of circulation) of fictitious capital, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century modes of circulation may appear almost stationary. But from the perspective of a Forster or a Gissing, they were a first step on an escalator which now seems less like a magic carpet than the entrance to a Piranesian prison.

52   Paul Delany, *George Gissing: A Life* (London, 2008).
53   Calculated from entries in his diary, published as Pierre Coustillas (ed.), *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Hassocks, 1978).

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 7

The Spatial Concentration of Homelessness on Skid Row

Ella Howard

On the streets of contemporary American cities, one becomes accustomed to interacting with homeless people, whether in the public library, in the parks, on the sidewalks, in the subway stations, on buses and trains, or in the vestibules of apartment buildings.[1] The phenomenon of spatial dispersion of the homeless is historically specific and results from a series of relatively recent changes in the politics of homelessness and urban space. This chapter explores this theme by briefly surveying the rise and fall of the Bowery as New York City's homeless district. Such 'skid rows' derived their name from the paths used by workers to drag timber. They accommodated the workingmen dislocated by the upheaval of modern industrialization.

From the late nineteenth century through the early 1980s, in many American cities the homeless were housed on skid rows. These poverty districts were filled with religious missions, inexpensive hotels, employment agencies and shabby restaurants and bars. These regions served to regulate, limit and reform the behaviour of the homeless, through both the provision of structured resources and the enforcement of geographic containment; survival on skid row required following rules specific to the area. By the 1970s and 1980s, skid rows would fall to the forces of urban renewal and gentrification. In their wake, the homeless would find a new freedom, but also a new isolation.[2]

---

[1]   Portions of this chapter are drawn from Ella Howard, 'Skid Row: Homelessness on the Bowery in the Twentieth Century', PhD thesis (Boston University, 2007).

[2]   This chapter seeks to add to the portrait of urbanization painted by other chapters in this collection. It offers a sketch of a region of 'vice', similar in some ways to nineteenth-century New Orleans as analysed by Katrina Gulliver. More significantly, the very nature of a stable district housing 'transients', often for decades at the same address, probes the complex nature of the 'architecture of hurry' described by Richard Dennis.

The Development of Skid-Row Homelessness

The Bowery, home to New York City's homeless population, was the most infamous of American skid rows. Spanning 16 blocks, from Chatham Square at its southern tip to Cooper Square at its northern end, the Bowery became synonymous with homelessness. During the nineteenth century, the Bowery had been a popular entertainment district housing dance halls, beer gardens, and other working-class amusements.[3] But by the turn of the century, the neighbourhood had assumed a new primary identity as a skid row. In the midst of the Lower East Side's tenement buildings designed to house immigrant families, some building owners established facilities for single male workers. Skid rows had begun to form in similar fashion in cities across the country as a result of the rapid development of the nation's economic and labour systems. As industrialization expanded, displaced workers migrated in search of jobs. Their journey was aided by the growth of the nation's railroads during the decades after the Civil War. Skid rows developed when some of the travelling workers and roaming tramps of the nineteenth century settled down in specific areas of major cities and labour hubs. Housing solutions that had been designed as a temporary arrangement to meet the housing needs of labour migration turned into a permanent method of accommodating the city's homeless.[4]

On skid rows, the homeless crowded into existing buildings, many of which were increasingly subdivided into progressively smaller and more individualized lodgings. Accommodations ranged in size and level of quality, with the most extreme examples of tight quarters being small, single chambers topped with chicken wire. Such spaces were often male dominated, and by the dawn of the twentieth century, the Bowery was home primarily to white men. The Bowery housed limited women's facilities, such as the Glendon Hotel, which accommodated 60 women. That said, skid rows, in general, remained home to a largely male population for decades.[5] The populations of skid rows reflected the broader racial demographics of the cities in which they were located. In New York City, homeless African Americans clustered on the outskirts of black neighbourhoods, such as Harlem, but few were welcomed on the Bowery. Skid-

---

3   Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, 1986).

4   Kenneth L. Kusmer, *Down and Out, On the Road: The Homeless in American History* (New York, 2002). See also Ivana Dobrivojević's chapter in this volume on the permanence of originally temporary planning solutions in Yugoslavia.

5   Catherine Brody, 'New York's One Hotel for Old Women Only', *New York Herald Tribune*, 26 October 1924.

row institutions followed patterns of racial segregation, as homeless whites shared much of the racism common to all of the city's social classes.[6]

Assistance to the poor was provided by city agencies, at first through designated rooms in local police stations, and later, in the city's Municipal Shelter, which moved to the Bowery in the 1920s. Many religious missions were also present on the Bowery, providing food and lodging to those homeless people who were willing to listen to a sometimes lengthy sermon. The Salvation Army and the Young Men's Christian Association, among other organizations, helped thousands of homeless people annually. The YMCA on East Third Street alone could lodge 350 men per night by 1915 in its seven-story facility complete with a cafeteria, five-cent restaurant, laundry, tailor shop, barber shop and employment department.[7]

This aid resulted from a different philosophy than that which had motivated the late nineteenth-century Charity Organization Society (COS). That reform group had begun in the 1870s to assist the nation's poor and homeless with the intention of not promoting any dependency on relief. The homeless received special attention from COS administrators, who saw in them an utter lack of self-sufficiency. At the COS facility in Manhattan, homeless men were asked to chop firewood for hours in order to earn meals and lodging for the night. Homeless women were sent to work in the facility's laundry. The religious missions and the modern Municipal Shelter, by contrast, did not require strenuous labour from aid recipients, in large part because they did not assume that all homeless people lacked a work ethic, or that dependency on relief was the worst possible outcome of helping the poor. They were joined by the 1920s by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Emigrant Mission and Emigrant Home, which offered temporary lodgings to arriving immigrants.[8]

The onset of the Great Depression propelled many more homeless individuals and families into the city. The existing lodging system was overrun and proved unable to assist the crush of new arrivals. For a brief time, the federal and state

---

[6]   Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, 'Or Does it Explode?', in *Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York, 1991).

[7]   Nels Anderson, *The Homeless in New York City: A Study of Their Needs and of the Community's Resources for Assisting Them*, Welfare Council of New York City Research Bureau, February 1934, pp. 74, 76, 89–92; Community Service Society Papers, box 132, Columbia University Archives; Lieutenant William C. Davis, 'Nomads: The Salvation Army Method of Dealing with the Homeless Man Problem', *The War Cry*, 21 January 1933, pp. 4, 13.

[8]   Kusmer, *Down and Out, On the Road*, pp. 73–98. Mark Wischnitzer, *Visas to Freedom: The History of HIAS* (New York, 1956); Marc Dollinger, *Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America* (Princeton, 2000); Beth S. Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression: Uncertain Promise* (New Haven, 1996); *New York Charities Directory* (New York, 1920), p. 206.

governments intervened, feeding and housing many of the migrant homeless in large, congregate shelters. Younger homeless men and women were sent to work camps and shelters outside the city, where fresh air and labour might restore some of their dignity lost through years of poverty and begging. Skid rows had formed during the late nineteenth century as a means of accommodating migrant labourers descending on industrializing cities in search of work. By the 1930s, that trend had expanded dramatically, although fuelled less by the prospect of better employment than by the utter desolation of the countryside.[9]

As the decades passed, remarkably little changed on the Bowery and the nation's other skid rows. The New Deal Federal Transient Program ended in 1935, when the Roosevelt administration turned away from relief programmes toward those grounded securely in 'earned' benefits, such as the Works Progress Administration and the Social Security Program.[10] In order to garner support for the implementation of a cluster of social insurance programmes that significantly expanded the role of the federal government in American life, officials drew a dramatic distinction between 'welfare' and contributory benefit programmes. Many homeless single men remained on the country's skid rows, left out of much of the burgeoning welfare state.

Inhabitants of skid rows sometimes chose to stay in these districts, where they found the restaurants, bars, cheap hotels, and employment agencies that were relevant to their lives, and which provided a matrix of support and opportunities they learned to navigate. That said, the homeless soon learned that a different choice was often simply not possible. Homeless individuals who violated community norms by appearing to be intoxicated or urinating or sleeping in public were removed from other neighbourhoods by the police and returned to the Bowery even against their will. The Bowery thus protected middle-class New Yorkers from facing their homeless neighbours by keeping the destitute contained, isolated and distant.

Given these constraints, homeless people found much greater freedom on skid row than they did outside the neighbourhood. Public intoxication was often ignored on the Bowery, as was public urination and other behaviours that would merit arrest and fines or jail time in other areas of the city. The legal codes governing the activities of the homeless would be revised in the middle of the twentieth century. As part of the wave of liberal legal decisions enhancing the rights of individuals regardless of their racial or class status, homeless ordinances loosened considerably.

---

9   Joan M. Crouse, *The Homeless Transient in the Great Depression: New York State, 1929–1941* (Albany, 1986).

10   Ibid., pp. 203–28.

The liberal Warren Court ruled in *Gideon v. Wainwright* that an indigent defendant accused of any felony was entitled to an attorney, expanding significantly the legal options for homeless people accused of crimes. Clarence Earl Gideon, the homeless defendant, had been accused of larceny after a burglary at a nearby poolroom. Gideon had been seen in the area, and was in possession of money that triggered suspicions. Gideon's request for an attorney was denied because he had not been accused of a capital crime. The court's 1963 decision expanded the right of an indigent person to an attorney to include all types of crimes. In the famed 1966 *Miranda v. Arizona* decision, the court ruled that the accused were to be informed of their rights during arrest, further expanding the legal rights of the poor.[11]

The liberal courts also dramatically softened existing laws governing public vagrancy. Vagrancy had been a crime since the 1830s, when the Supreme Court had ruled that the homeless could be barred from the city because of the dangers they posed to other residents through their criminality and 'moral pestilence'. Vagrancy had remained illegal into the post-war years. By the 1960s, though, those laws were being challenged. In *Fenster v. Leary*, the New York Court of Appeals ruled that vagrancy ordinances were inappropriate because they allowed officials to contain homeless people within skid row areas by arresting them when they left those designated zones. The real crime the homeless were committing, then, was that of disturbing the cities' middle classes by infiltrating their neighbourhoods. The Supreme Court would rely on the Fourteenth Amendment's protection of equal rights under the law to overturn the last vagrancy laws by the 1970s.[12]

The homeless were also frequently arrested on charges of public intoxication. In some cities, such as Atlanta and Washington, D.C., drunkenness laws were strictly enforced. As a result, such arrests overwhelmed the cities' justice systems, making up over 75 per cent of all arrests. The courts of this era reversed this trend in a series of cases that reconsidered habitual drunkenness or drug-use to be symptoms of the progressive disease of addiction. In so doing, the courts were following the lead of the medical community.[13]

---

[11]   Robert G. McCloskey, *The American Supreme Court*, 4th edn (Chicago, 2005), pp. 148–94.

[12]   Harry Simon, 'Towns without Pity: A Constitutional and Historical Analysis of Official Efforts to Drive Homeless Persons from American Cities', *Tulane Law Review*, 66/4 (March 1992): 632–76.

[13]   'Drunkenness Offenses', chapter 9 in *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society: A Report By the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice* (U.S. Government Printing Office, DC, Feb. 1967), pp. 233–8.

These court rulings and the new attitude towards alcohol consumption forced a reconsideration of the causes of homelessness. The theory undergirding the work of the COS in the nineteenth century had been that homelessness originated in fundamental laziness. Now, officials asked if some sort of sickness was plaguing the poor. They wondered how the homeless could be called upon to control their own behaviour. If they were able to regain control over their lives and give up drinking, they might be able to reintegrate into society. The homeless were increasingly seen as individuals who were worthy of assistance and thus had a right to exist within the city.

Even as the Bowery and other skid rows offered a measure of freedom to the homeless, skid-row life could also be a profoundly limiting experience. One might be allowed to survive and perhaps offered assistance, yet one was seen increasingly as a person whose life was shaped by a single issue. The answer to the question of how to cure the problem of homelessness increasingly came in the form of an alcohol treatment programme. Homeless individuals often complained that social service workers simply assumed that alcohol was the sole cause of an individual's problems, rather than poverty, or a sudden life trauma, such as the death of a spouse, or the loss of a job. Researchers found that the homeless drank at higher rates than did the general population. They also underreported their drinking, in part because of the heavy drinking norms on skid row. But many homeless might have remained integrated into mainstream society, as did many middle- and upper-class heavy drinkers, had they not lacked financial resources.[14] The homeless had always comprised individuals, each with his story and reasons for finding himself on skid row, and no single trait united them, besides their extreme poverty. Educational programmes, vocational training and casework approaches largely fell to the wayside as the emphasis of reformers focused on substance abuse.

The deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill further destabilized the existing system of homeless assistance programmes. The movement toward deinstitutionalization had stemmed from liberal health care policies that sought to improve patient care by ending warehousing programmes and placing thousands of individuals on outpatient medication programmes.[15] Once on the street, however, many individuals did not continue their drug regimens, and experienced symptoms of mental illness that made it nearly impossible for them to keep their scheduled appointments and pursue employment. Officials

---

[14]   Robert Straus and Raymond G. McCarthy, 'Nonaddictive Pathological Drinking Patterns of Homeless Men', *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 12/4 (1951): 602–607; *Donald* J. *Bogue, Skid Row in American Cities* (Chicago, 1964).

[15]   Christopher Jencks, *The Homeless* (Cambridge, MA, 1994). Steven Vanderstaay, *Street Lives: An Oral History of Homeless Americans* (Philadelphia, 1992), pp. 117–36.

struggled to agree even on an estimate of the number of former mental patients who were living on the streets and in the city's shelters. Adding to the complex tangle of problems surrounding the homeless of the 1970s were their rapidly shifting demographics.

The 'New' Homelessness of the 1970s

The rising tide of urban homelessness attracted widespread media attention. This popular interest stemmed, in part, from the shifting demographic composition of the homeless. By the late 1970s, the nation's homeless were no longer a population composed overwhelmingly of white, middle-aged and elderly, male substance-users. Instead, the 'new' homeless emerged from different backgrounds and required distinct programmes and services. Popular concern over their plight also originated in their new, more visible, public locations.

By the late 1970s, homeless men requesting assistance at the Municipal Shelter averaged age 41.[16] A decade earlier, the average age of an applicant had been more than 50 years. This new, lower average reflected the mixing of two distinct populations on the city's streets and in its shelter system. The traditional group of older, mainly white men was joined by increasing numbers of younger men, including large numbers of African Americans and Latinos. While many of the older men remained alcoholics, many younger homeless used heroin and cocaine. The two groups did not always mingle easily; many older men reported that they were the victims of violent robberies and assaults, easy prey for young, desperate drug-users. An observer described the Municipal Shelter, a principal site of interaction between the two groups, as resembling 'a way station to hell'. Even the Municipal Shelter staff protested the situation, staging a 1981 strike in pursuit of safer working conditions.[17]

By the early 1980s, younger men with substance abuse problems joined the group of older men living outside New York City at Camp LaGuardia, a facility in Chester that had been used by the City Department of Welfare as a homeless shelter intermittently since 1934. The younger men were posing problems for administrators charged with providing services appropriate to the diverse population. While the older men would have been well served by recreational facilities and a reading room, the younger residents required more intensive job

---

[16]   Randy Young, 'The Homeless: The Shame of the City', *New York*, 21 December 1981, pp. 26–32; 29. 'Help is Urged for 36,000 Homeless in City's Streets', *New York Times*, 8 March 1981.

[17]   Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York City* (New York, 1981), p. 46.

training programmes if they hoped eventually to reintegrate themselves into the work force. Program staff noted that the new homeless displayed more severe problems than those of previous generations. While in the past, many men had succumbed to alcoholism, most had done so only in middle age. Narcotics, by contrast, claimed the lives of young individuals long before they had even learned a trade, leaving them with few employment prospects even if they successfully overcame their substance use.[18]

The dawn of the crack cocaine epidemic proved especially devastating to the city's African American population. Its quick, cheap but short-lived high and highly addictive nature propelled many young people into homelessness. In his memoir of living on the streets of New York City, Lee Stringer eloquently chronicled the dramatic effects of his crack addiction, for which he sacrificed his social relationships, money, career and home, eventually living for years in the abandoned tunnels and passageways of Grand Central Terminal. Stringer described the methods used by two young men to rob an older Municipal Shelter resident, testifying to the intergenerational strife fuelled by drug addiction:

> At one point I opened my eyes to see a pair of young slicksters straddling some old geezer who was off somewhere in dreamland ... They stood there, one on either side of their quarry, scowling and hissing at each other, until whatever was their bother got itself resolved. Then the guy on the right reached out and, holding taut the fabric of their mark's trousers with one hand and wielding a single-edge razor like a surgeon with the other, neatly laid the pocket open.[19]

The epidemic devastated the city's entire homeless population, harming not only the drug-users, but also their victims. The increasing rates of violence within the shelters and hotels lodging the homeless drove vulnerable individuals back to the streets.

Many observers were surprised by the 'new homeless', which included large numbers of homeless African Americans. Since the 1950s, the number of homeless African Americans had increased as a result of the continued racial inequalities in employment and earnings. During the 1970s and 1980s, broad cuts to social programmes coupled with the relative popularity of

---

[18]   'A Quiet Retreat for the City's Homeless', *New York Times*, 9 June 1981.

[19]   Michael Duneier, 'Sidewalk Sleeping and Crack Bingeing', in Dalton Conley (ed.), *Wealth and Poverty in America: A Reader* (Malden, MA, 2003), pp. 201–10; Excerpt from Duneier, *Sidewalk* (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1999). Duneier analysed the logic of homeless street vendors, considering the individual decisions involved in spending money and choosing a sleeping place. Lee Stringer, *Grand Central Winter: Stories from the Street* (New York, 1998), p. 36.

highly addictive drugs within the African American community to leave many individuals impoverished and some homeless.[20] The new homeless community of African Americans was not only larger than before, it also differed in terms of its gender composition. African American women increasingly appeared among the homeless. Traditionally employed in low-paying professions, many African American women lacked the financial resources to secure housing after losing a job or becoming too old to continue working.

Studies of the broader homeless female population of all races conducted during these years revealed many to be widows, an economically vulnerable population.[21] Widows were joined by divorcees who similarly lacked the job skills necessary to obtain employment or the work history required to collect social security benefits. Such women remained outside the realm of the era's work-based welfare state. Many also suffered from the social problems that traditionally plagued women, including abusive relationships and marriages, assaults and sexual harassment. Some recalled histories of mental illness or substance abuse. Most, regardless of their mental status, slipped from some level of domestic stability to depending on the public welfare system, and from there onto the streets.[22] Having come of age during an era when many regarded formal education for working-class women as frivolous, these women found themselves unable to remain economically self-sufficient after the loss of a husband, an injury or the onset of simple old age.

Other, younger women became homeless after fleeing abusive partners. One woman described her departure from a home shared with a heroin addict boyfriend who had beaten her severely on a regular basis: 'I gave him fair warning but nothing changed. Finally, I waited until he fell asleep one night and then I got out of the house. I took what I had on, that was it. I had no money.'[23] With no possessions, she began life anew on the streets and in the shelters, hoping to prevail against long odds, find employment and secure an apartment.

Many of the era's homeless women carried their remaining belongings in shopping bags. Indeed, the scruffy woman burdened by such sacks became an icon of the era. Media reports dwelled with fascination on the appearance and habits of such 'bag ladies'.[24] Congregating in the restrooms of the Port Authority

---

[20] Kusmer, *Down and Out, On the Road*, p. 243; Kim Hopper, *Reckoning with Homelessness* (Ithaca, 2003), pp. 169–71.

[21] Ann Marie Rousseau, *Shopping Bag Ladies* (New York, 1984; originally published, 1981).

[22] Ibid.

[23] Jean Louise Collins, quoted in ibid., p. 85.

[24] Alix Kates Shulman, 'Bag Ladies', *New York Times*, 29 September 1981. 'Alone and Homeless, 'Shutouts' of Society Sleep in Doorways', *New York Times*, 26 October 1971.

bus terminal and on the streets around Grand Central commuter rail station, in populated and well-lighted areas where they felt safer, the increasing numbers of homeless women shocked many observers. The media reported rumours that some homeless women were secretly wealthy eccentrics who concealed valuables in their dirty bags, but went on to debunk such myths with detailed accounts of the mundane possessions inventoried in some women's sacks.

Programme administrators struggled to find ways to help women change their lives. The life events that led many women to the streets and shelters were rooted in the social inequality of women and, often, in the flawed public welfare system. Women became homeless due to the effects of public policies, socially constructed gender roles, the dramatic wage disparity between the jobs available to unskilled men and women, and rising levels of substance abuse. Their homelessness reflected the deeply ingrained hierarchies of American society. As such, simple services would rarely bridge the gap between homeless women and a stable life off the streets.

As the 1980s dawned, city officials would try to implement programmes reaching out to homeless women unable to protect themselves on the streets. New programmes developed during these years sought to meet the needs of the growing female homeless population. New York City, for instance, planned a storefront centre, aiding 'shopping-bag ladies'. More traditional programmes also continued to operate, as the women's shelter and other facilities provided meals and beds as well as referral services. The number of applications for admission to the women's shelter nearly quadrupled from 1971 to 1977.[25] The spike in the number of applications to women's shelter was an indicator of an even more drastic increase in the number of women on the street.

The Decentralization of Homelessness

The expanding homeless population overwhelmed the existing shelter facilities and many took up life on the streets. By the mid 1970s, the media reported significant numbers of homeless people in neighbourhoods including Rockefeller Center, Columbus Circle, Central Park and Times Square.[26] The police continued to move them from more exclusive neighbourhoods to parks and middle- and lower-income areas. Nonetheless, middle-class New Yorkers increasingly came into contact with the homeless in the course of their daily

---

[25]   'Facilities for 'Shopping-Bag Ladies' and Battered Women are Planned', *New York Times*, 26 May 1979; Baxter and Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces*, pp. 63–5.

[26]   'Vagrants and Panhandlers Appearing in New Haunts', *New York Times*, 6 August 1976. Public drunkenness was officially decriminalized in 1976.

activities. Responses to panhandlers remained varied, some passers-by choosing to offer money or goods. But as more homeless individuals appeared on the streets, not while asking for assistance, but instead merely sitting, pacing, reading or talking to others or to each other, many city residents gradually developed the ability to look away. The homeless shared a geographical space with other New Yorkers in a new way, but the two groups rarely interacted.

The 'muni' overflowed, as almost 1,300 men arrived each day. Media coverage highlighted the facility's first-floor 'Big Room', where up to 250 men slept each night in chairs when beds were scarce. The press also frequently relayed the dramatic survival strategies developed by the homeless. For example, journalists became fascinated by the groups of men who lived in the subway tunnels and steam pipes below the Yale Club and the Waldorf-Astoria, the ironic contrast between the clientele of such elite establishments and the invisible subterranean dwellers beneath their feet fuelling a portrait of a city content to ignore its poor. Such exposés ironically harmed their subjects, as city agencies responded by raiding such encampments.[27]

This trend was not limited to New York City. Nationwide, cities struggled to deal with rapidly rising rates of homelessness. The Salvation Army alone operated facilities assisting 42,000 homeless individuals across the country. Some observers compared the swelling ranks of the homeless to those of the Great Depression, as even the tradition of riding the rails was revived during the 1980s, as increasing numbers of homeless individuals resumed illegally riding freight trains, now mingling with thrill-seeking middle-class college students.[28]

Cities and states sought to pass the problem of homelessness to their neighbours. Officials in several states allegedly sent mentally ill homeless individuals to Southern California, providing them with only a one-way bus ticket, in a practice sarcastically termed 'Greyhound therapy'.[29] San Diego and San Jose officials pushed the homeless out of downtown areas, in hopes of pursuing urban renewal projects. Other cities opened new homeless facilities. In Houston, Texas, approximately 1,000 individuals were assisted by the Travelers

---

[27]   'Mental-patient Release Program Leaves Many to Face Harsh Fate', *New York Times*, 18 November 1979; *Village Voice*, 20 June 1968; Baxter and Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces*, pp. 57, 75–7; 'Maze of Tunnels Remains Refuge of the Homeless', *New York Times*, 17 March 1980; 'Hobo Colony Lives Mole-Like in an Inferno of Pipes under Park Avenue', *New York Times*, 29 November 1977.

[28]   Jonathan Alter, 'Homeless in America', *Newsweek*, 2 January 1984, pp. 20–23, 25–9; 25. Martin Kasindorf, 'A New Breed of Hobos', *Newsweek*, 16 August 1982, p. 30.

[29]   William L. Chaze, 'Behind Swelling Ranks of America's Street People', *U.S. News & World Report*, 30 January 1984, p. 57.

Aid Society each month. Washington, D.C., home to only 200 municipal shelter beds in the late 1970s, boasted nearly 1,000 by the early 1980s.[30]

Developments at the federal level propelled many individuals into homelessness nationwide, as successive administrations slashed benefits programmes. Between 1980 and 1984, over 200,000 individuals lost their Supplemental Security Income benefits alone; the federal income supplement aided the aged, blind and disabled. Although many suffered from mental illness, federal regulations classified them as employable. The number of individuals housed in mental hospitals dropped from nearly 560,000 to only 125,200 by 1982.[31] Even many individuals who did receive government benefits could not afford to secure an apartment in cities like New York. One resident of the Palace Hotel on the Bowery received both social security and veterans' benefits, but could not find other accommodations.[32] Others experienced difficulty navigating the welfare and benefits system.

The 'New Federalism' adopted by the Reagan administration led to reductions in the federal assistance provided to state and local governments. In 1980, New York City drew one-half of its general operating expenses from federal and state coffers. By 1989, that figure had plunged to 36 per cent.[33] Even the benefit programmes that were protected from federal cuts suffered during Reagan's tenure, as he placed limits on them that reduced actual cash payments. As the federal government provided less support for the nation's cities, they teetered under the weight of the decade's burgeoning problems. Scholars have ranked the Reagan era's most severe urban crises to be AIDS, crack cocaine and homelessness. The three together devastated the city's impoverished communities and alienated many individuals from mainstream society.

The 'new' homeless population that emerged in New York City and across the nation in the late 1970s reflected the era's persistent social inequalities. African Americans remained on the city's economic margins, and many continued living in poverty. Women of all races, too, comprised an increasing proportion of the homeless population. Unskilled, undereducated and ill-prepared for independent life, many widows and other single women were without resources. As the city's homeless lined the passageways of the city's subway and commuter rail stations, and slept in the vestibules of residential buildings, their presence

---

[30]   Judith Cummings, 'Surge of Homeless People in Nation Tests Cities' Will and Ability to Cope', *New York Times*, 3 May 1982.

[31]   Alter, 'Homeless in America', p. 21.

[32]   Baxter and Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces*, p. 41.

[33]   Demetrios Caraley, 'Washington Abandons the Cities', *Political Science Quarterly*, (Spring 1992): 1–30; 9.

moved many New Yorkers to criticize the city's seeming indifference to the suffering of its residents, and some to envision a new system for their shelter.

By 1981, a landmark legal decision had been reached that changed the rules governing the city shelter system. According to *Callahan v. Carey*, the city was required to provide shelter to all who requested it. Advocates for the homeless had argued that the language of the New York State constitution obligated the state to provide assistance for its poor. New York struggled to open adequate facilities to meet the demand during the winter months. The Ed Koch administration set up a programme to reach out to mentally ill homeless and convince them to accept assistance. In 1987, they took 40-year-old Joyce Brown off the streets of the city and transported her to a treatment facility. Brown protested against her detention, arguing that she was sane. The State Supreme Court freed Brown, declaring that her homelessness did not signify mental illness. Traits such as public urination, hostility and destroying cash donations were not considered proof of mental illness.[34] These undesirable traits, which reformers and city officials had long wanted to banish from the city, did not necessarily connote mental illness. Just as not all homeless individuals of the 1950s had demonstrated traits of alcoholism, the homeless of the 1980s were also a more complex community than many anticipated.

By the 1980s, however, skid row had been destroyed in many cities, for varying reasons. In Minneapolis and other cities, the federal urban renewal programme of the post-war decades had demolished skid rows and replaced them with business districts or middle-income housing. In New York, where urban renewal efforts on the Bowery had failed, gentrification had pushed the homeless from the area, as artists and trendy rock clubs had begun to appear in the 1970s.[35]

Rather than consolidating the homeless into a single district, New York and other cities allowed them to fan out across the streets. The spatial decentralization of homelessness created a new landscape of poverty. Even in the prosperous neighbourhoods of Manhattan, homeless individuals were undeniably present. In this new setting, their behaviour seemed far more aberrant than it had on skid row. In the past, homeless residents of skid row had developed certain patterns of behaviour as a way to gain access to vital services. In order to secure meals and lodging, for instance, many homeless attended religious services in area missions. In so doing, they willingly subjected themselves to the policies of those institutions, which often included bans on the consumption of alcohol,

---

[34]   Richard Campbell and Jimmie L. Reeves, 'Covering the Homeless: The Joyce Brown Story', *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 6/1 (1989): 21–42.

[35]   Joseph Hart, *Down & Out: The Life and Death of Minneapolis' Skid Row* (Minneapolis, 2002), pp. 39, 40–42; Christopher Mele, *Selling the Lower East Side: Culture, Real Estate, and Resistance in New York City* (Minneapolis, 2000), pp. 217–19.

among other regulations. Within the skid-row districts, police officers generally tolerated a higher level of 'disorder' than they did outside the area.

Now dispersed, the presence of the homeless could no longer be denied. All New Yorkers saw and interacted with the indigent during their daily commute. By the 1990s, Mayor Rudy Giuliani would be fighting to prevent the homeless from sleeping on the city streets, under threat of arrest. He argued that the homeless did not have the right to claim sidewalks and other spaces within the city, because their actions were disturbing to other city residents.[36] In the new urban landscape, however, with skid rows largely demolished, the homeless had no designated place to go. In New York, many homeless men migrated to the city's outer boroughs, where policing efforts remained less stringent. Other cities actively sought to drive the homeless from their communities altogether.

The skid row era, then, was a complex one in American history. The behaviour of the homeless was regulated in several ways during the decades from the turn of the century through the 1970s. The poor had to follow directions in order to receive organized assistance. They had to listen to sermons, and navigate arcane administrative systems in exchange for food and lodging. Nearly all facilities banned the consumption of alcohol, further limiting the behaviour of relief recipients. Those who slept in bars and single-residence hotels followed the rules dictated by the owner or operator, while those who preferred more freedom often slept in the open air.

In the bigger picture, though, the boundaries of skid rows themselves created another regulatory system. As long as the poor were not allowed to leave the area for any significant length of time, they remained tied to the poverty zone of the Bowery. The conflation of the poor and the place in which they lived limited the ways in which homelessness was understood. They became a people apart, who lived differently and followed different rules. They were often seen as a homogeneous mass, whose actions were assumed to have caused their situation. They were 'skid-row bums', who belonged on the Bowery. This simplified understanding influenced efforts to aid the homeless during the 1980s, even after the close of the skid-row era, as the homeless were increasingly understood as mentally ill substance-users. As city residents learned to ignore the homeless among them, they replicated the earlier pattern of distancing that was a legacy of the skid-row era.

Urban homelessness has changed in recent decades due to several shifts in both geography and demographics. Many contemporary homeless are children and families, navigating the shelter system, marginally housed and one step

---

36   David M. Herszenhorn, 'Citywide Sweep Leads to 23 Arrests of the Homeless', *New York Times*, 22 November 1999.

from the streets. Because of these changes, proposals to revive skid rows have received little support. Many homeless are also immigrants, day labourers and other younger men looking for a better life than the one they left behind. Even though the creation of a homelessness district might provide such people with easier access to social services and lodging, it would not be suited to the needs of the broader contemporary urban homeless population. Skid rows functioned well enough to survive for most of the twentieth century, but with their demise, ushered in a new era in urban homelessness, where solutions wait to be found.

This page has been left blank intentionally

PART III
The City as a Stage

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 8

Rites of Intent:
The Participatory Dimension of the City

Nicholas Temple

Introduction

The study of ritual in architecture has recently attracted renewed interest by anthropologists and architectural historians.[1] This attention, no doubt, has been partly a response to a growing recognition of the importance of ritualized space in deepening our knowledge of cultural practices and belief structures. Important questions inevitably arise from such enquiries about the role architecture has played historically in shaping, even defining, ritual itineraries. Perhaps the most familiar question is the following: to what extent can architecture be understood as 'frozen ritual'? Or to put it another way, when certain religious or civic ceremonies are no longer performed, but their architectural and iconographic legacies remain, can these physical and visual references serve as repositories of the earlier rituals, which can in turn be made legible in some way?[2] The question could be likened to an analogous argument that certain period instruments preserve their own musical traditions and heritage, even when that music is no longer performed.[3]

---

[1]   See in particular Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*; *vol. 1: Monumental Occasions: Reflections on the Eventfulness of Religious Architecture* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); *vol. 2: Hermeneutical Calisthenics: A Morphology of Ritual-Architectural Priorities* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); Catherine Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford, 2009); Roland L. Grimes, *Readings in Ritual Studies* (Prentice Hall, 1995); *The Princeton Journal, Thematic Studies in Architecture*, ed. J. Bourke, vol. 1, *Ritual* (Princeton, 1983).

[2]   'A ritual implies a near frozen relationship between space and event.' Bernard Tschumi, 'Sequences', in *The Princeton Journal: Thematic Studies in Architecture*, p. 34.

[3]   The notion of sounds that are consonant with the timbre of an musical instrument, residing within the vessel of the instrument's body, has its origins in the Pythagorean idea of the 'music of the spheres' where the universe itself operates as a kind of musical instrument resonating harmonic sounds. See Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres: Music, Science and the Natural Order of the Universe* (London, 1995).

In this study I do not aim to address this question directly but rather to examine a broader related issue concerning what knowledge and understanding we can gain from examples of the past when considering the question of ritual space today. My reliance here on a comparative method of investigation, to elicit the key aspects of ritual space, draws inspiration from Lindsay Jones's seminal study of ritual in sacred architecture.[4] The intention of this hermeneutical enquiry is to draw upon examples from the period of Early Christianity to explore the idea of a syncretic 'morphological pattern' of ritual architecture, not, however, in the sense of the stylistic or formal characteristics of a building, but rather in the inter-relationships between spaces and the actions that take place within them. As Jones states, in the context of sacred architecture, a hermeneutical understanding of ritual space must 'of necessity, be constituted (or problematized) in terms of what I term ritual-architectural events rather than in terms of static constructional entities'.[5]

The Contemporary Situation

In order to set the context of this historical investigation in the contemporary situation I would like first to refer to an episode that took place in 2002. The incident, as will become clear, sheds some light on current attitudes towards the role and meaning of ritual in contemporary architectural practice.

Whilst teaching as an assistant professor at the University of Pennsylvania I was present at a lecture being delivered by Adam Caruso, from the well-known British architectural firm Caruso St John. Following the presentation I asked a question relating to Adam Caruso's recently completed New Art Gallery project in Walsall, near Birmingham in England. Located at the end of a canal near the centre of an economically depressed town (in an area of warehouses and factories), the building has been heralded by architectural critics and the profession alike as one of the most important post-war projects in Britain. The gallery, which houses the Garman Ryan Collection, is considered by many to have the potential to 'redeem' the town of its past economic and social failures, by raising the aspirations of its citizens.[6] Considering the special importance of the New Art Gallery in the rehabilitation of Walsall, not just as a cultural facility

---

4   Jones, *Hermeneutical Calisthenics*, pp. 1–13.

5   Ibid., p. 2.

6   The following is a selection of critical appraisals of the gallery: Peter Allison, 'Gallery Square in Walsall', *Baumeister,* October, 2000, pp. 46–55; Peter Buchanan, 'Caruso St John in Walsall', *Architecture Today,* 103 (1999): 20–36; Jonathan Glancey, 'Nothing is too Good for Walsall', *The Guardian G2*, 12 January 1998, pp. 12–13.

Figure 8.1   External view of the Walsall Art Gallery (courtesy of Wikimedia
Commons, Photo © Andrew Dunn, 2004)

but also as a catalyst for redefining the city's self-image, I asked Caruso whether
the building and its surrounding space could over time acquire a certain 'ritual'
purpose for the citizens of Walsall.[7]

My enquiry was prompted by two observations about the building. Firstly I
was struck by the way its dominating presence in the city, and its topographical
connections to the surrounding urban terrain, grants the building a quality
redolent of the classical notion of *civitas* – or 'civic ordering' – more typically
associated with public spaces in Trecento and Quattrocento Italy.[8] Against

---

[7]   As conventional forms of ritual observance, typically expressed in religious and civic
spaces, become less prevalent in contemporary life, it seems plausible that new demands and
expectations will be placed upon certain public buildings, like the Walsall New Art Gallery,
to facilitate alternative forms of collective participation.

[8]   St Augustine's *The City of God* (*De civitate dei*) provides the most insightful
examination of the meanings of *civitas* in relation to *urbs*; between the idea of the
community of the faithful and the physical city. For a comprehensive study of the theological
and philosophical backgrounds to *civitas* see Peter S. Hawkins (ed.), *Civitas: Religious
Interpretations of the City* (Atlanta, 1986). In the classical/humanist tradition, *civitas* was

a background of ill-conceived urban development in the city, the New Art Gallery takes on a reforming role, from which all future urban and architectural proposals could ultimately be judged. Secondly, I suggested that this quality of civic ordering extends to the internal arrangement of spaces, that allows the visitors' encounter with works of art to be partly informed by their spatial (even thematic) relationships to the surrounding urban landscape, as revealed through various window openings in the perimeter spaces.

Departing from the conventions of the gallery/museum as a pavilion, consisting principally of horizontally linked spaces, the Walsall New Art Gallery is designed unusually as a tower, whose arrangement of six floors (of varying heights around a central circulation route) means that the visitor is drawn into an ascending movement, with discernible points of reference both near and distant. In the course of this vertical 'procession', the visitor acquires familiarity with both the city and its collection.[9] The implication here of a visual reciprocity between art work and view, orchestrated within the domestically scaled interiors of the gallery, suggests a correlation between artistic production and urban regeneration. Hence, questions of urban 'renewal' (*renovatio urbis*) are given contextual bearings through the location and content of individual art-works, a point that is particularly germane to the Garman Ryan Collection which has long been associated with the city of Walsall.[10]

---

more directly related to the concept of the ideal city, in which the Augustinian model was brought into dialogue with the principles of decorum drawn from Cicero and other ancient Roman writers.

[9]   This relationship between view and exhibited work is highlighted in a recent review of an exhibition of the work of Christopher Le Brun at the Walsall Art Gallery. Here, the critic makes the following observation: 'From the fourth floor of the New Art Gallery, you get a view of the architectural mix and match of this Midlands city: mosque, parish churches, multi-storey car park, Next, Powerhouse, Asda … Inside, as you examine this 30-year retrospective of the paintings, sculptures and etchings of Christopher Le Brun, you seem to have shifted back in time to a world more familiar to Tennyson, Browning and other 19th-century medievalists.' Michael Glover, 'Christopher Le Brun, New Art Gallery, Walsall', *The Independent* (Arts and Entertainment section), 5 March 2008.

[10]   The collection, which contains works by eminent twentieth-century British and European artists including Jacob Epstein, was donated to the city of Walsall by Lady Epstein (Kathleen Garman) in 1973. The creation of a new venue for the collection, and for visiting exhibitions, was motivated by the ideas of Peter Jenkinson, first director of the Gallery and client of the project, who fervently believed that art should be a shared experience for all sectors of society. Consequently, the Gallery and its art collection *become* the town, acting as a catalyst for restoring civic life. For an examination of *renovatio urbis* in the context of Renaissance Rome see Nicholas Temple, *renovatio urbis: Architecture, Urbanism and Ceremony in the Rome of Julius II* (Abingdon, 2011).
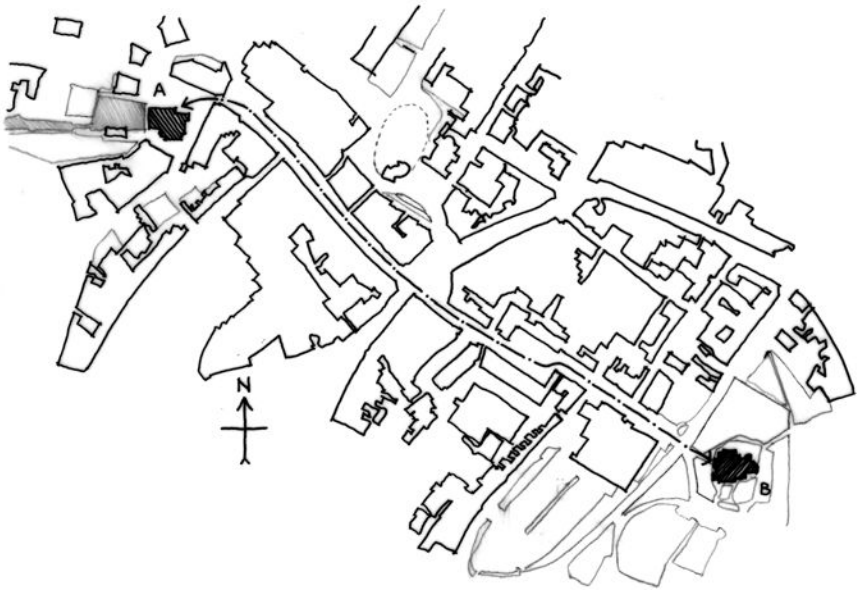
Figure 8.2   Plan of the central area of Walsall, indicating location of the
             New Art Gallery (A) in relation to St Matthew's Church (B) via
             the 'processional route' of Park Street, Digbeth and High Street
             (drawn by author)

There is, moreover, evidence to suggest that the adoption of a vertical structure for the gallery was motivated by a larger urban vision, which sought in various ways to 'restore' – or at least facilitate – the civic life of the city. On the one hand, the decision to limit the footprint of the building on the site was in order to free the surrounding urban terrain to create a generous public square that both maximizes the visibility of the building and orientates the visitor towards its monumental entrance.[11] At the same time this arrangement was conceived in order to connect, both visibly and spatially, the New Gallery to a medieval church (St Matthew's) located at the other end of town to the east, via the principal commercial thoroughfare (Park Street, Digbeth and High Street) and its old square and market place.[12] Highlighted in an early model of

---

[11]   The public square facing the Gallery was later designed by Richard Wentworth and Catherine Yass.

[12]   In am grateful to Alun Jones, one of the project architects for the Walsall New Art Gallery, for providing this information about the initial design concept.

the project, the tower of the gallery was intended to 'answer' to the church spire, thereby serving as a catalyst for a coherent urban/civic structure.[13]

What can be concluded from this investigation of the New Art Gallery is that some form of processional route underlay the project, even if this is not made explicit by the architect; passing from the church to the gallery (via the marketplace), the visitor then ascends through the building itself, finally arriving in a triple-height restaurant space with elevated views back along the route to the lofty spire of St Matthew's.

Underlying my interpretation of the building is the principle that certain kinds of spaces, and their ordering 'equipment' (furniture, exhibits, framed views etc.), invite us to re-orientate ourselves within the city, beyond the immediate confines of the building. The resulting reciprocity between local and distant, the tactile and the visual, serves as one of the key qualities of ritualized space, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter. At the same time the example of the Walsall New Art Gallery raises the more general issue of whether contemporary architecture can somehow endow ritual purpose, without necessarily the support of traditional ceremonial or liturgical itineraries.

In spite of all the indications of a larger urban processional strategy in the design of the gallery, Caruso flatly rejected my suggestions, making it clear that no such ritual intention underlay the project. Understood in general terms, Caruso's response to my line of questioning provides an intriguing instance of how contemporary architects are either indifferent or averse to the inference of ritualized space. Operating in a cultural milieu that gives priority to the immediacy of things, as opposed to their latent possibilities, attempts to articulate a hermeneutical perspective of urban space are easily dismissed as 'superstition', for what is otherwise argued as little more than a compositional device. Related to this scepticism is the impact of the modern preoccupation with individual freedom on architectural thought, which problematizes the concept of predestination (or any associated culminating focus). In our modern mastery of space, questions of ritual 'observance' – or obligation to collective participation – are seen as largely antithetical to the desire for unhindered choice and personal fulfilment.

These doubts, however, about the legitimacy of ritual in contemporary architecture reflect as much a misunderstanding of the nature and meaning of the term, as the desire to emancipate architecture from its bearings in the historic city. My argument in this investigation is that it is precisely through a hermeneutical framework that we are able to recognize both the limitations and

---

[13]   The model was roughly constructed in cardboard with a cut-out of the street and church spire, with the gallery abbreviated in the form of a simple squat tower. As far as I know the model was never published. I am grateful to Alun Jones for this information.

possibilities of a participatory dimension of contemporary architecture without which we are left 'at sea', relying only on our personal ontology to make sense of our physical surroundings.

Definition and Evocation

It would perhaps be helpful, at this point, to revert to some clear definitions of ritual, given that the term has been variously (even carelessly) applied to a range of different – sometimes conflicting – situations and contexts. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ritual can describe 'a prescribed order of performing rites; or a 'procedure regularly followed'.[14] In the first definition, rites (or customary observances) become ritualized when they are arranged in a set order that is intended to fulfil some expected outcome. We see this most clearly in the liturgy of the Early Church where the rites of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist were originally performed in sequence as a single ritual so that the observer progresses from being a catechumen, then a neophyte and finally a full participating member of the Church community.[15]

The second definition – ritual as recurring procedure – underlines its more typical usage in the modern age, to designate tasks that are regularly undertaken or performed. Put simply, this definition suggests that the repetition of certain prescribed activities automatically gives them ritualized status in time. This straightforward correspondence, however, conceals a more complex set of relationships that underlie the development of ritual practices throughout history. To begin with, rituals are not always performed by the same person, as is often the case for example with everyday tasks or chores. Rather, participation in rituals is a shared experience that can involve different people over time, and be associated with specific locations or situations. Moreover, for the ritual to have meaning and integrity, it requires certain efficacious or desired outcomes; from spiritual rebirth and conversion in the Christian rites (referred to earlier) to personal/collective fulfilment in the dramas of civic festivals. In other words, implicit in most rituals is some form of eschatological process, where a previous state of existence is either transformed or renewed.[16]

---

[14] Della Thompson (ed.), *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford, 1995), p. 1189.

[15] For discussion of the Early Christian rites and their inter-relationships see Jean Daniélou S.J., *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Ann Arbor, 1979).

[16] For a detailed examination of eschatology in Judeo-Christian testament see Hans Schwarz, *Eschatology* (Grand Rapids, Cambridge, 2001).

This brings us to perhaps the most important aspect of ritual that concerns its symbolic role as a re-enactment of something; from a primordial event (such as Creation) to more local – place specific – occurrences (such as the scene of a battle or a miracle). Through their re-enactments, rituals perform the crucial task of ensuring continuity of prevailing social systems, belief structures or communities, giving sustenance and purpose to a 'way of life'. But can the mere repetition of an act have the potential to give it re-enacting status or meaning; or to put it another way, does the act itself, if it is worthy of repetition over a long period of time (and without any claim to an originating meaning), constitute the makings of an exemplary event? We will return to this issue later in the investigation.

More critical perhaps to the present line of enquiry is the purpose of re-enactments in ritual, and why they are important to ritual meaning. This directs us to arguably the most contentious aspect of ritual, namely its relationship to myth. Examined in Alan Watts' seminal text, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity*, the idea of rituals re-enacting certain mythical events would seem to be untenable in our technological age, where questions of truth are more typically aligned with matters pertaining to facts.[17] However, as Watts reminds us:

> For the word 'myth' is not to be used here as meaning 'untrue' or 'unhistorical'. Myth is to be defined as a complex of stories – some no doubt fact, and some fantasy – which, for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstrations of the inner meaning of the universe and of human life. Myth is quite different from philosophy in the sense of abstract concepts, for the form of myth is always concrete – consisting of vivid, sensually intelligible, narratives, images, rites, ceremonies, and symbols. A great deal of myth may therefore be based on historical events, but not all such events acquire the mythic character.[18]

Outside the realm of abstract philosophical or scientific concepts, and removed from the more narrow and prosaic understanding of history (as a chronology of validated/proven events), myth embodies the world-view of a culture – or what Watts describes as the 'inner meaning of the universe and of human life'. This deeper significance goes some way to explaining why certain incidents, that are merely 'said' to have occurred in the past (according to folklore or popular belief), have the capacity to shape culture in sometimes profound ways. Like the creation of a crafted artefact the formation of a culture is partly accomplished by recurring events that draw upon a particular cultural *topos*.

---

[17]　Alan W. Watts, *Myth and Ritual in Christianity* (London, 1959).
[18]　Ibid., p. 7.

As Watts further implies, ritual constitutes a symbolic reconstruction of mythical episodes, whereby the various gestures and motions performed by the participants serve to revive – and thereby re-invigorate – the ontological dimension of these episodes. We can see this for example in the underlying cosmological meanings of courtly and religious ceremonies that variously seek to re-affirm a prevailing authority or belief structure.[19]

Through the agency of symbol, the meanings of myth can be understood at many levels, from their most concrete experiential level – as a revelation of the forces of divine nature – to their more interpretive level as allegorical narrative. Such an understanding of the relationship between myth and ritual is, however, remote from our modern sensibility, which seems no longer to possess the kind of mythic structures that informed earlier traditions.[20] This is not to say, however, that the radically immanent culture of modernity is not endowed with some form of mythic dimension. The writings of Georges Bataille, T.S. Eliot, André Breton and James Joyce, and the works of such diverse artists and architects as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Frederick Kiesler and Le Corbusier clearly demonstrate the pervasiveness of this mythical dimension; albeit reflective of a 'hidden tradition' rather than one transmitted through the agency of cultural and religious practices and verifiable by means of collective (participatory) experience.[21] Often inspired by mythological figures and motifs, as we see for example in Picasso's enduring interest in the minotaur and Le Corbusier's association with the raven, the modern assimilation of ancient mythology has provided a fertile source for individual creative work in the modern world.[22]

---

[19] See in particular Douglas Rutledge, *Ceremony and Text in the Renaissance* (Newark, 1996) and Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton, 1997).

[20] Perhaps the first signs in the early modern world of a move towards 'self-preservation' as a cultural concern can be seen in the Renaissance where notions of *vita activa* (active life) begin to take precedence over contemplative existence (*vita contemplativa*). '[T]he invention of the world and the notion of making through utopias, magic, science, art, and the theatre. These are the imaginative elements that characterise the paradigm shift from the Middle Ages to the modern age ushered in by the Renaissance ... The Middle Ages are under the sway of the *vita contemplativa*. In the Renaissance, by contrast, primacy is given to the *vita activa* or the act of making.' Giuseppe Mazzotta, *Cosmopoiesis: The Renaissance Experiment* (Toronto, 2001), p. xiii.

[21] On the study of myth and its influence on art and literature see in particular Joseph Campbell, *The Mythic Dimension: Selected Essays 1959–1987* (Novato, CA, 2007).

[22] The association of the raven with Le Corbusier is underlined by the architect's own name; 'corbeau' meaning raven in French. On Picasso's interest in the minotaur see Ralph Goldstein and Barbara Harborne, 'Picasso's Minotaur Series Reconsidered in the Light of Animus and Anima', in Ralph Goldstein (ed.), *Images, Meanings and Connections: Essays in Memory of Susan R. Bach* (Einsiedeln,1999), pp. 83–103.

As Richard Kearney reminds us, in his recent work *On Stories*, fictive narratives have helped shape our modern history: 'storytelling may be said to *humanise* time by transforming it from an impersonal passing of fragmentary moments into a pattern, a plot, a *mythos*'.[23] Kearney uses the word *mythos* here in its original Greek sense to mean a traditional (primordial) story. The capacity, however, of myth to carry shared meanings in the modern age, and thereby give sense to our collective experience of the city, is perhaps more contentious. Against a background of increasing subjectivity in modern thought, and the dominance of technology as the driving force behind social and political order, various attempts have been made in the twentieth century to communicate a mythic horizon to a wider public sphere, outside the 'hermetic' environments of artistic circles.

One such case, which is often misinterpreted, is Le Corbusier's Philip's Pavilion at the World Expo in Brussels in 1958.[24] Here, the architect, with the assistance of Edgar Varese and Iannis Xenakis, created an 'Electronic Poem', where the audience was subjected to an intense performance of sound, colour, light and moving images drawn from an array of theatrical and documentary sources. Housed in a complex structure, in the form of intersecting hyperbolic parabolas, this 'synaesthesic' exercise, created by the visual and audible effects of electronic media, was an early attempt to create a distinctly modern (technologically driven) theatrical experience where actual and virtual converge. Le Corbusier was no doubt seeking to assign an almost mystical aura to the operations of technology, reminiscent of early modern automata. But in doing so we are presented not so much with a legible ritualized space, given the absence of any explicit itinerary for public involvement (beyond the viewer's projected presence through the luminary effects of his/her silhouette), but rather a modern spectacle that seeks to 'induce' a form of collective reverie.

This instance of an architectural 'experiment' in electronic media highlights both the opportunities and challenges of modern culture when seeking to 'construct' spaces for meaningful (memorable) participatory involvement, outside the realms of conventional religious practice. The problem, it seems, of ritualized space in the modern city resides not so much in the absence of a mythic dimension (however fragmentary or obscure this may be), but rather in the impoverishment of forms of architectural settings that can situate these events within the public domain. Perhaps a contributory factor to this impoverishment is what Adolf Loos considered as the 'modern privatization of the sacred'.[25]

[23]   Richard Kearney, *On Stories* (London, 2001), p. 4.

[24]   On the Philip's Pavilion see Marc Treib, *Space Calculated in Seconds: The Philip's Pavilion, Le Corbusier and Edgard Varése* (New York, 1996).

[25]   Karsten Harries, *The Ethical Function of Architecture* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), p. 367.

Recognizing Benjamin's search, in his messianic philosophy, for a world redeemed of the spectacle of the commercial city, the experience of architecture and urban space today demands more insight into the hermeneutics of representation (its historical and cultural underpinnings) than that afforded by the random and ephemeral effects of image to entice consumers to purchase goods.[26] It is in this context that we should recognize the significance of building projects like the Walsall New Art Gallery – referred to earlier – in their capacity to offer ways of redefining one's sense of the city as a civic space.

A different situation, however, prevailed in early modern societies. The public's involvement in the ceremonial or festive life of the city assumed some degree of individual or corporate commitment to the prevailing religious/political/social order. Indeed, participation was, in every sense, an outward expression and demonstration of citizenship. This is explored in Richard Trexler's *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, where the author examines the complex alliances and relationships between citizens and those in positions of power in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Florence.[27] He highlights how commercial life was inextricably intertwined with religious observance. As he states: 'The pilgrim coming for the indulgence while selling his wares at the market did not lay aside his bargaining techniques when he approached the altar. The city became a center of trade in salvation as it did for material commodities.'[28] The typical (everyday) situations, therefore, of the marketplace were not seen as operating in opposition to (or in competition with) ritual time – as it pertains to religious and civic festivals – but rather as its necessary temporal context to facilitate corporate redemption.

This historical role of prosaic experience, as a background condition receptive to the appropriations of sacred or civic rituals, has become in the modern world the dominant experience of the city, against which no alternative seems conceivable – at least not from the perspective of the consumer/urban dweller. The rhythms of cyclic time in earlier societies (summarized in Mircea Eliade's expression 'the myth of the eternal return'), which once gave order to urban space through civic and religious ceremonies, contrast with the unchanging and homogeneous spatial-temporal realm of the modern corporate city.[29]

---

[26]   On Benjamin's thesis of messianism see John McCole, *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 106–109.

[27]   Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, 1991).

[28]   Ibid., p. 7.

[29]   Mircea Eliade, *Myth of the Eternal Return: Cosmos and History* (Princeton, 2005).

Ritual Topography

Given this radically different urban condition in the contemporary city it is perhaps difficult for us to appreciate the all-pervading nature of ritual in earlier societies, in particular the manner in which everyday urban life was periodically transformed into an 'occasioning of time', brought about by religious/civic observance. This observance, however, was not restricted to the formal processions within the city – with their ceremonial protocols, territorial limits and rehearsed time-spans – but also extended to broader (less constructed) horizons of experience. Indeed, an intriguing aspect of ritual, as an ontological concern, is its varying degrees of formality and spatial-temporal range. This is implied in St Augustine's idea that Christian conversion and participation are not simply an affair of formal rituals, but more crucially constitute a lifelong pursuit requiring spiritual as well as physical preparation – or *peregrination*.[30] The Latin word *peregrinatio* is especially germane here, given that the term connotes the act of 'roaming', and was adopted by the Church to refer to the penitent's pilgrimage to the venerated religious sites of saints and martyrs. However, as applied in Augustinian theology, *peregrinatio* does not initially assume a predetermined destination, but rather a journey that progresses from a state of doubt or uncertainty to one of deep faith and longing. We should understand therefore that the religious pilgrimage involved a twofold journey; a physical procession to distant shrines and religious centres and an accompanying spiritual re-orientation. Recognizing that ritual operates at many scales (from a distant geographical destination to an intimate interior), and using different points of reference (from the constellations of the heavens to one's sense of touch), it could be argued that topography constitutes its primary horizon of experience.

The case of the monumental pilgrimage centre at Qal'at Sem'an (the mansion of Simeon) in Syria, dating from AD 480–490, highlights how this idea of ritualized topography provided the setting for revealing St Simeon's particular (and extreme) acts of piety and self-sacrifice. Constructed on the site of the saint's legendary column, on which it is said he remained perched for 36 years until his death in AD 459, Qal'at Sem'an continues to attract pilgrims from around the world.[31]

The most famous of the so-called 'pillar-hermits', Simeon the Elder became one of the most venerated saints in Christendom, having been consulted by

---

[30]   St Augustine, *De trinitate libri XV*, ed. Eligius Dekkers and Johannes Fraipont (Turnhout, 1968), 14.17, p. 454.

[31]   Jean-Luc Biscop and Jean-Pierre Sodini, 'Travaux à Qal'at Sem'an', in *Actes du XIe congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne* (Rome, 1986), vol. 2, pp. 1675–95.
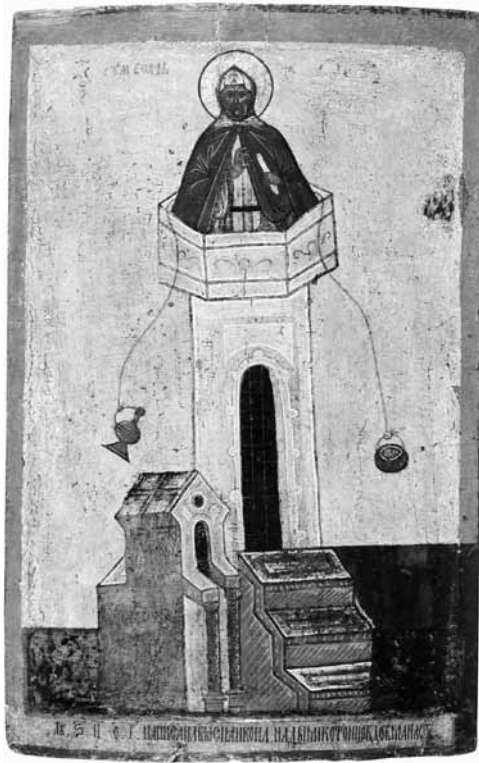
Figure 8.3   Icon painting representing St Simeon Stylites, anonymous, 1465
(courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

emperors and bishops.[32] Initially located in an open space, the column, which
was rebuilt at various times during the life of the saint to increase its height,
could be seen from a great distance. According to contemporary accounts,
the saint had a balustrade built around the platform at the top of the column,
from which he would give sermons to his devoted followers and survey the
surrounding landscape.

Constructed about 20 years after St Simeon's death, the complex of buildings
and walled courtyards that surround the column were laid out along the axis of
the existing pilgrimage route (the *sacra via*) that extended south from a local
village (Deir Sema'an – Telanissos). The principal buildings (assembly halls or
basilicas) are arranged in the four arms of a cruciform plan that extend out from

---

[32]   David T.M. Frankfurter, 'Stylites and *Phallobates*: Pillar Religions in Late Antique
Syria', *Vigilae Christianae*, 44/2 (1990): 168–98. Susan Ashbrook Harvey, 'The Sense of a
Stylite: Perspectives on Simeon The Elder', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 42 (1988): 376–94.

a covered octagonal space centred on Simeon's column. This central space served as the terminating focus of the whole complex:

> The plan of the structure ... focuses attention dramatically on the monumental and tangible relic of the ascetic's life [the column] ... The south arm ... would have been the part of the structure first encountered by visitors approaching from the direction of the local village along the main pilgrimage route ... Advancing along the road, up the slope, into the monastic compound, through the monumental entrance of the south façade of the cross-shaped building toward the stylite's column, and then, turning right past the relic to the altar at the east end of the east arm, visitors moved into increasingly sacred space.[33]

What we encounter at Qal'at Sem'an is a building complex that has evolved out of a pre-existing ritual structure that was already firmly inscribed in the landscape. Hence, Qal'at Sem'an could be considered an example of architecture as 'frozen ritual', referred to at the beginning of this chapter, in the way the sequence of spaces recapitulates the various stages of pilgrimage. The exceptional scale, complexity and longitudinal layout of the pilgrimage centre reflected the particular circumstances of Saint Simeon's religious following and the topographical characteristics of the site. At the same time, the non-orthogonal arrangement of the cruciform plan may have been the result of other external factors not related to the religious practices of Qal'at Sem'an. Located on the top of the so-called Sim'an Ridge, which forms part of an 80-km-long geological fault, the deflection of the eastern arm of the cruciform complex (that houses the altar), from 3 to 9° to the north, may partly be the result of what geologists describe as the 'distributed co-seismic or post-seismic deformations' created by the St Simeon Fault.[34]

In this combination of man-made and natural influences, Qal'at Sem'an reveals the way ritual procession, architecture, topography, and the effects of shifting geological terrain, contributed to the particular and unique qualities of an Early Christian pilgrimage centre, located in a remote part of northern Syria. We can also appreciate, from the legacy of this extraordinary building complex, how ritual itself would have been experienced as a series of episodes. This could briefly be summarized as follows: (1) firstly, from the initial approach road – with the distant (slightly oblique) northerly view of the walled monastery;(2) then the pillar of St Simeon comes into view along the axis of the south basilica

---

[33] Ann Marie Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult, and Community* (Cambridge, MA, 2009), p. 171.

[34] A.S. Karakhanian et al., 'Seismic deformation in the St Simeon Monasteries (Qal'at Sem'an), Northwestern Syria', *Tetonophysics*, 453 (2008): 122–47.
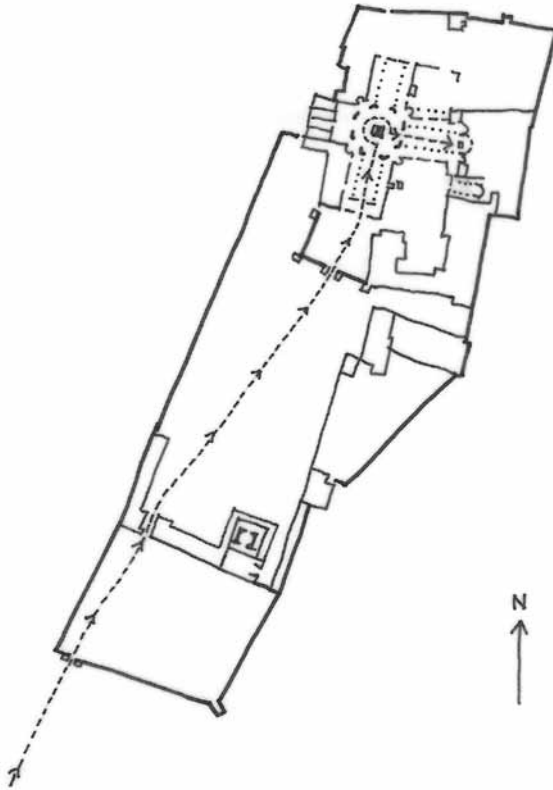
Figure 8.4   Plan of the Qal'at Sem'an complex, Syria, indicating pilgrimage
route to St Simeon's Pillar and adjacent church altar (drawn by
author after Biscop and Sodoni)

that aligns with the adjoining gated court; (3) the pilgrim then comes into direct
physical contact with the monumental column shaft that rises in the middle of
the covered octagonal hall; (4) finally the pilgrim processes into the eastern
basilica, located slightly off axis from St Simeon's pillar.

Besides delineating the actual procession to the cult shrine, the pilgrim's
journey should also of course be understood in analogous terms as conveying
the penitent's spiritual transformation to salvation, in the way described earlier
in the context of Augustinian theology.[35] It must be pointed out, however, that

---

[35]   To help us understand how the re-enactment of St Simeon's own journey to religious
piety could be transcribed into a pathway of redemption, a useful source is St Bonaventure's
famous thirteenth-century meditation, *Itinerarium mentis in deum*. Bernard McGinn,
'Ascension and Introversion in the *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*', in *S. Bonaventura 1274–
1974* (Rome, 1973), pp. 535–52. St Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in deum*, Cap.V, 1.

Figure 8.5   View of the Pillar of St Simeon from the main nave of the
              Basilica at Qal'at Sem'an. Institute for the Study of the Ancient
              World (courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

the pilgrim's quest for salvation would not be fulfilled by simply visiting the relic of the Stylite saint. He would also have been expected to participate in the Mass of the Eucharist in the nearby south basilica. Simeon's column therefore becomes not the final destination of the pilgrim's journey but its penultimate stage, at which point the relic prepares the penitent (by its venerated presence) for the central mystery of the Church; the sacrament of the Eucharist. Implicit therefore in Qal'at Sem'an is the conflation of physical (corporate) processional and spiritual (personal) ascent, communicated through the inter-relationships between architecture, topography and ritual.

The construction of the pilgrimage centre and monastery of Qal'at Sem'an, as other pilgrimage sites during the Early Christian and Byzantine periods, comes at the end of a period that has been variously described as the 'Age of Anxiety'.[36] Against the backdrop of sustained decline of the Roman Empire, with its political and social unrest, religious syncretism and territorial incursions, eremitic existence emerged as a legitimate alternative to the corruption and confusion of urban life. The resulting abandonment of the Roman city (*urbs*), and its supporting institutions, was later to form the basis of the monastic tradition of the Middle Ages, with its network of pilgrimage routes across Europe and the Middle East.[37] In such circumstances ritual was not just a formal demonstration of religious devotion, but also a vitally important connective tissue that cemented relationships between otherwise isolated communities.

Ritual as Repeated Action

From this examination of religious practice in Early Christianity we can draw a number of important conclusions about the nature and meaning of ritual: firstly, ritual gives both continuity of beliefs or values and ensures a degree of cohesion of a particular social or religious order; secondly, ritual is always grounded in a topography or setting, whether locally (in the form of liturgical or ceremonial responses to particular artefacts within a space such as a religious rite or a meal) or extra-territorially (through the navigation of architectural or topographical features within a landscape or urban space); thirdly, ritual constitutes in some form a re-enactment of a primordial event or significant act.

This last point, however, requires further clarification, not least when we consider the question of ritual in our modern immanent secular world. The emergence of a largely homogeneous (non-hierarchical) view of space in modernism was accompanied by a desire for greater transparency between public and private spheres, and a new interest in (even veneration towards) domestic life and technological progress. It is apparent how, as a result of this ideological shift, the mere repetition of everyday acts – whether in the workplace or at home – acquired a certain ritual status; in the sense that repetition allows us to recall previous undertakings, whether through personal memories/histories or certain exemplary historical/fictive models.

---

[36] Eric Robertson Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in the Age of Anxiety: Some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge, 1991).

[37] Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000–1150* (London, 1984).

We should not overlook, moreover, the impact of the emerging industrial/ technological world on the meaning of everyday acts, given that repeated tasks became expressions of a productive and progressive society. But to what extent can industrial production have any bearing on ritual events? Whilst it would be naïve to directly equate mechanized actions with those activities more commonly associated with rituals (where the task in-hand permits some degree of interpretation or personal imprint), the difference is not as clearly self-evident as one would assume, at least from the perspective of artistic intervention or re-interpretation. We need only recognize Marcel Duchamp's erotic machines (in particular the *Large Glass*), as reproductive (ritual) instruments, to appreciate the manner in which forms of mythic narrative can be transmitted to the iconography of machine parts.[38]

Certain repetitive actions, moreover, have the potential to transform the mundane and forgettable into the exemplary or memorable. David Leatherbarrow implies such a transformation in the context of the everyday meal. Following on from a discussion of the sacramental meal Leatherbarrow makes the following observation:

> But often the meal is only understood prosaically. Though shorter than sleep and longer than a shower, most servings are similarly matter-of-fact. Whether seen as a re-enactment or repetition, each lunch or supper is both a recall and a prompt of others. The meal's extended temporality complements its levels of disclosure, from tacit to outspoken.[39]

This twofold mode of disclosure 'from tacit to outspoken', constitutes one of the richest and most rewarding aspects of ritual activity; by adhering to certain rites or protocols, ritual observance leaves open opportunities for declaration of personal involvement through gestures. The resulting dialogue, moreover, between understood and declared actions are communicated by means of their dimensional settings that draw influence from the surrounding space(s). Again, Leatherbarrow provides an illuminating example of this spatial-temporal field of relationships:

> Yet the stability of the situation is not guaranteed by the objects alone, for the most durable aspects of the layout are the (implied) positions of things that

---

[38]   As Octavio Paz makes clear, Duchamp's treatment of the machine is both an exercise in irony and a critique of the modern world where 'there are no ideas … only criticism'. Octavio Paz, *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare* (New York, 1990), p. 78. Paz further states that Duchamp's irony 'is the element that turns criticism into myth'. Ibid., p. 76.

[39]   David Leatherbarrow, *Architecture Oriented Otherwise* (New York, 2009), p. 124.

answer to the reach and habits of the bodies around the table, as they variously but systematically follow and diverge from traditional protocols ... Some items may occupy the horizon of the tabletop, which is stratified according to surfaces that are variously clean and polished. Other items may occupy the horizon of conversation, normally at eye level, a horizon of glances toward other diners, pictures on the walls, mirrors, and so on.[40]

Leatherbarrow's description of the setting of the meal, in which objects – near and far – are brought into union through the manifold gestures and actions of the conversing participants, further underlines my earlier point about the topographical context of ritual, even at the scale of the dining table. Hence, whether disclosed in a landscape, a room, or the surface of a table, the sacramental objects of ritual are brought into a sustained dialogue through the interaction between their various topographical settings and the bodies of the participants present.

Art as Pilgrimage

From this examination of the various aspects of ritual in architecture, from both an historical/hermeneutical perspective and in the context of the prevailing conditions of modernity, I would like to return to the issue – raised at the beginning of this chapter – of the role of contemporary architecture in eliciting ritual involvement. By way of comparison to the Walsall New Art Gallery, I will refer to another building that houses works of art; the Galician Centre for Contemporary Art in Santiago de Compostela, by the Portuguese architect Alvaro Siza.[41]

Here, we can see how the insertion of a modern art gallery within a pilgrimage city provided opportunities for redefining the notion of ritual in the experience of works of art. Located at the north-east edge of the medieval quarter, just outside the boundary of the old city wall, the Galician Centre for Contemporary Art is sited adjacent to the Convent of S. Domingo de Bonaval, one of a number of satellite religious communities surrounding the Cathedral of Santiago that serves as a hospice for visiting pilgrims. To the north of the gallery are the remodelled convent gardens, with their multitude of fountains and water-courses that terrace down to the platform of the museum.

The internal arrangement of spaces of the gallery is partly generated by the external topographical conditions. It is as if the location and form of the building amplify the notion of ritual procession, by virtue of its layout and its

---

[40]   Ibid., p. 127.

[41]   For a more detailed examination of this building see Nicholas Temple, *Disclosing Horizons: Architecture, Perspective and Redemptive Space* (Abingdon, 2007), pp. 150–59.

Figure 8.6   The Galician Centre for Contemporary Art, looking west from
                the convent garden with distant views of the spires and domes
                of the Cathedral of Santiago above the roof-line (photo by
                Claudia Lynch)

relationship to the trajectory of pathways of the adjacent terraced garden and
the nearby pilgrimage road (Il Camino) which enters the city from the north.

The building is conceived as a series of semi-enclosed spaces on various
levels, connected by gradually ascending ramps and stair passages. The journey
concludes with a roof terrace where works of art are displayed against the
backdrop of the city, with the spires and domes of the Cathedral of Santiago
visible to the south-west. The topographical relationship between gallery and
cathedral (the location of the relics of St James and therefore destination of
the famous pilgrimage route) is further underscored by the orientation of an
inverted triangular space on the south-west face of the building, the principal
entrance side of the building. From this aperture, wedged between two principal
volumes of the building, a perspective field of view is created that encompasses
the cathedral in the distance.[42]

In the journey therefore from garden, building interior, to roof terrace, the
visitor engages in a form of procession that, whilst not constructed in a liturgical

---

[42]   Ibid., p. 155.
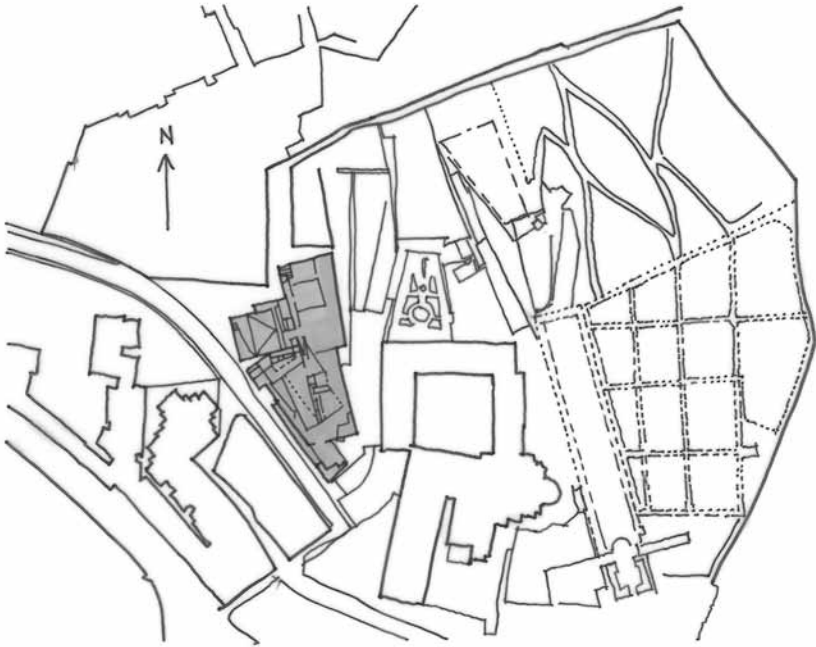
Figure 8.7   Ground floor plan of the Galician Centre for Contemporary Art
in the context of adjacent buildings and convent garden (drawn
by author after Siza)

or ceremonial sense, raises expectations of some culminating point of reference. This is not dissimilar to the spatial directives of the Walsall New Art Gallery, explored at the beginning of this chapter. Drawn from the ritual significance of the city, the spatial articulation of this procession conceives works of art as 'prompts' that enable re-orientation within the building, and in the city at large. Indeed, it seems that the architect saw the experience of art itself as a form of pilgrimage, which draws inspiration from the surrounding topography of Santiago de Compostela.

Siza's project raises important issues about the relationship between architecture and ritual, in particular the reliance on an existing urban landscape, already steeped in religious significance, to reinforce the processional trajectory of spaces in and around the building. This urban context is, of course, rather different from that of Caruso St John's gallery in Walsall. The nature of this difference, moreover, tells us something important about the roles that both buildings play in the life of their respective cities. In the case of the Galician

Centre for Contemporary Art, the building clearly draws many of its associated meanings from its topographical relationship to the Cathedral of Santiago. As if tacitly acknowledging the traditions of the pilgrimage city, and recognizing its subservience to the hallowed shrine of St James, the gallery forms part of a constellation of earlier buildings that have historically provided shelter and sustenance for visiting pilgrims. In the case of the Walsall New Art Gallery, on the other hand, we are presented with a building that more self-consciously draws attention to itself by 'answering' to the spire of St Matthew's Church at the other end of town. Courageous in its ambitions to act as a catalyst for urban renewal, the Walsall New Art Gallery serves as both a symbolic and a topographical fulcrum of the city in the twenty-first century.

Notwithstanding these differences, both contemporary galleries demonstrate how questions of ritualized space – even when understood as a latent possibility – can serve as an effective platform for redefining civic and cultural life. In each case, whether intentional or otherwise, the arrangement of art work constitutes an itinerary of visual and corporeal experiences, along a journey that could be likened to the ritual objects of earlier civic and religious ceremonies and whose destination is ultimately the city itself.

Conclusion

What I have sought to argue in this study is firstly the usefulness of comparative historical investigations, in exploring the potential meanings of ritualized space in contemporary architecture. The case of Qal'at Sem'an reminds us of how the participatory dimension of the classical city, which faced a crisis at the end of the Roman Empire, was revitalized by a new redemptive perspective of topography driven largely by the transmission of biblical narratives to actual geographical locations. Secondly, the idea of the participatory dimension of urban life, as a concretization of exemplary 'mytho-historic' models, arguably still pervades the city today, albeit latently in the often unremarkable – or overlooked – situations of everyday encounter. From these often repeated encounters emerge forms of ritual – different from the rehearsed ceremonies of bygone ages – which continue to provide the 'glue' that gives cohesion and meaning to an existing way of life, and at the same time open doors to other potential horizons of collective experience.

Whilst we do not have the kinds of participatory structures, and their ritual itineraries, that once defined the Medieval and Renaissance cities, we have the benefit of an expansive and profound historical knowledge of ritual space (meaningfully framed through the lens of hermeneutics) that can deepen our

understanding of urban life. What seems clear from this comparative study is the need for architects, urban planners, politicians, and even event organizers, to be more attuned to this hermeneutical perspective as the basis for a more creative and imaginative engagement with the contemporary city.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 9

Building a New Jerusalem in Renaissance France: Ceremonial Entries and the Transformation of the Urban Fabric, 1460–1600

Neil Murphy

From the late fourteenth century, French towns transformed themselves into a New Jerusalem in order to welcome their monarch. Ideas of the heavenly Jerusalem influenced conceptions of urban space during this period, and, as Gordon Kipling has demonstrated, these ideas underpinned the symbolic programme of royal entries across Europe.[1] Contemporary accounts of the ceremony used the metaphor of the celestial Jerusalem to describe the effect achieved by the urban decorations during a royal entry.[2] When Charles VIII entered Troyes in 1486, for example, he was welcomed as Christ and led into 'his celestial city' by the townspeople.[3] From about 1520, the use of biblical imagery in French entries was increasingly set aside in favour of a reception informed by knowledge of classical texts, but as Michael Wintroub has reminded us, while the imagery of the decorative programme may have changed, entries continued to '[aim] at transforming the kings who travelled along their procession routes into the universal emperors who would mediate the arrival of the terrestrial

---

[1]   Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theater, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), especially chapters 1 and 2. On the iconography of the transformation of cities into the celestial Jerusalem for an entry, see Ernest H. Kantorowicz, 'The "King's Advent" and the Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina', *Art Bulletin*, 26 (1944): 207–31. For the use of ideas on the New Jerusalem in medieval city planning, see Keith D. Lilley, *City and Cosmos: The Medieval World in Urban Form* (London, 2009), pp. 15–73.

[2]   Kiping, *Enter the King*, pp. 14–15.

[3]   'Que JESUS CHRIST le Roy tres glorieux, En sa cité celeste voult entrer': *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515*, ed. Bernard Guenée and Françoise Lehoux (Paris, 1968), p. 274.

paradise of the New Jerusalem'.[4] In order to achieve this goal, the king was guided along a set processional route which had been decorated for the entry. The urban fabric was transformed from its usual day-to-day state in order to convey a carefully conceived series of messages, by means of which the elite townspeople who controlled the form of the ceremony hoped to communicate their conception of good kingship. If royal entries were a dramatic representation of the contemporary literary genre of a mirror of princes, in this chapter I want to peer behind the mirror and examine the social realities lying behind the smooth surface of the ceremony. Most studies of ceremonial entries concentrate on the symbolism of the pageantry, complex iconographical displays and the cultural world of the elites who produced the spectacle.[5] In contrast, this study will examine the process by which the town was prepared in order to receive the royal guest. To accomplish this, rather than examine festival books, which detail and explain the allegorical messages conveyed in the elaborate pageants and decorations, this chapter will make use of the municipal deliberations and financial accounts of the towns that produced the spectacle. These sources give a nuanced account of the means by which the urban population prepared the ceremony and transformed the urban space.

In the days and weeks prior to the entry, the town was a bustle of activity, with the setting up of the preparations for the entry acting as a kind of spectacle itself. Indeed, in 1610 Henry IV was assassinated as he watched the Parisians hurry to complete the preparations to receive his wife, Marie de Medici, who was due to enter the city on the following day.[6] Once municipal councils learned that a member of the royal family intended to visit their town, they began to organize the initial preparations for the reception. This necessitated the mobilization of many urban groups, who were called upon by the civic administration to dedicate time and effort decorating the urban landscape. The transformation of urban space was crucial to the success of the entry, and kings were sometimes prepared to wait outside towns until the necessary preparations were complete. For example, the Burgundian chronicler Georges Chastellain tells us that Louis

---

[4]   Michael Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 2006), p. 109.

[5]   See, especially, Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986); Kipling, *Enter the King*, and Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror*.

[6]   François Bayrou, *Henri IV: le roi libre* (Paris, 1998), pp. 490–96; Robert Mousnier, *The Assassination of Henry IV: The Tyrannicide Problem and the Consolidation of the French Absolute Monarchy in the Early Seventeenth Century*, trans. Joan Spencer (London, 1998), p. 22.

XI waited outside the walls of Paris for the townspeople to finish dressing the streets for his post-coronation entry in 1463.[7]

One of the first actions taken by town councils when preparing the town was to clean the streets. Urban populations of medieval and early modern towns lived in cramped and enclosed spaces. Some parts of the town were more unhygienic than others, particularly those streets in which butchers and dyers traded, though refuse and animal waste were common to all areas. Large piles of filth were found in front of houses, as residents were allowed to gather manure for eventual sale as fertilizer.[8] Environmental pollution and a lack of good sanitation made towns unhealthy places, and only the houses of the very wealthy possessed toilets, with most people disposing of excrement by simply emptying their chamber pots from windows or urinating from the upper stories directly into the street. There were open cesspits throughout the town, and the municipal council of Noyon had to order against the disposal of human waste in disused houses, drainage ditches and the towers of the urban fortifications.[9] Such unsanitary conditions, while never favoured, were a normal feature of day-to-day urban living. However, town councils deemed the usual condition of the streets to be unacceptable for a royal visit, and one of the early measures taken by town councils when preparing for an entry was to organize teams to clean the streets and dispose of the waste. In most towns, the widespread cleaning of the urban fabric was a transitory phenomenon, and after the departure of the important guest the streets would return to their normal condition until the next royal visit.[10]

Municipal councils subdivided towns into administrative areas, which were placed under the responsibility of a sergeant appointed by the council. For ceremonial entries, these officials organized the street cleaning in their neighbourhoods. The cleaning of the town was one way in which the general urban population participated in the production of the spectacle, and sergeants organized the residents of their districts to clean the area in front of their

---

[7]   *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove (4 vols, Brussels, 1863–66), vol. 4, p. 75. See also *Journal de Jean de Roye: connu sous le nom de Chronique scandaleuse, 1460–1483*, ed. Bernard de Mandrot (2 vols, Paris, 1894–96), vol. 1, p. 23.

[8]   Christopher R. Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City, 1450–1750* (London, 1995), p. 262; Andrée Guillerme, *The Age of Water: The Urban Environment in the North of France, A.D. 300–1800* (College Station, 1988), p. 166.

[9]   Ibid., p. 332.

[10]   However, in some towns, especially those containing a royal palace, an entry could be the catalyst for a period of prolonged cleanliness. The palace at Compiègne was a favoured residence of Francis I, and at a meeting of the municipal council held shortly after the departure of Eleanor of Austria from the city in October 1531, the councillors gathered together to discuss the cleaning of the town for the duration of the king's stay at the palace: Archives Municipales (AM) Compiègne, BB 18, fols 103v–104v.

residence. The sergeants were the face of municipal power in the neighbourhoods of the town and they possessed the authority of the town council. There were neighbourhood rivalries and sergeants competed with each other to make their district the best for a royal entry. Such considerations could lead sergeants to go beyond the accepted limits of their power. In Châlons-en-Champagne, for example, the town council appointed delegates to monitor the constables preparing the streets, as numerous instances of sergeants abusing their position in a bid to outdo neighbouring areas were brought before the town council.[11]

Vagrants were routinely rounded up and put to work cleaning the streets, before being expelled in advance of the actual entry, with some town councils issuing threats of public strangulation should they return.[12] In towns that did not customarily conscript vagrants, considerable pressure was exerted on the general population by the town council to make sure that the job was done well. Instructions issued by Tournai's town council for Louis XI's entry in 1463, for example, informed the residents to make sure that the cleaning was done 'so diligently that no fault could be found, on pain of severe punishment'.[13] Some urban groups were targeted more than others and faced harsher punishments. Preparing to receive Louis XII in 1500, the municipal council of Troyes instructed the dyers not to throw their waste into the street 'on pain of imprisonment and fine'.[14] The harsher punishments levied against the dyers can be explained by the nature of their work. As part of their industry, dyers made use of many products, including blood and urine, which made the smell of their streets more pungent than others. Indeed, in some towns barrels were placed outside dyers shop-fronts for townspeople to urinate into.[15] In the pre-modern city the smells of streets and neighbourhoods identified the social groups living and working in these areas. Bonfires were lit on crossroads throughout the town during a royal visit. While they had great symbolic value, town councils also strategically placed them in industrial areas of the town to combat stench during royal visits.[16] Stench was strongly associated with disease, and urban physicians

---

[11]   *Registre des deliberations du conseil de la ville de Châlons-en-Champagne*, ed. Sylvette Guilbert (Châlons-en-Champagne, 2001), p. 192.

[12]   Albert Babeau, *Les rois de France à Troyes au seizième siècle* (Troyes, 1880), p. 10.

[13]   Amaury de La Grange, 'Les entrées des souverains à Tournai', *Memoires de la société historique et archéologique de Tournai* 19 (1885), p. 47.

[14]   Babeau, *Troyes*, p. 11.

[15]   Friedrichs, *The Early Modern City*, p. 262; Guillerme, *Age of Water*, pp. 150–51, 160.

[16]   Jo Wheeler, 'Stench in Sixteenth-Century Venice', in Alexander Cowan and Jill Steward (ed.), *The City and the Senses: Urban Culture Since 1500* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 28.

were well aware that Hippocrates had prescribed the burning of bonfires as a measure to counter plague.[17]

The most effective way to combat unpleasant smells was to dispose of the waste beyond the city walls, often in privately owned vehicles requisitioned by the town council for this purpose. In January 1464, for example, Amiens's councillors confiscated all the carts and wagons in the town to bring the refuse outside the city walls in preparation for Queen Charlotte's entry, disrupting usual trade and business in the town.[18] Waste products were commonly dumped outside the city walls, and at Bordeaux in the sixteenth century these refuse piles reached such a height that an attacking force would have been able to use them to climb over the city walls.[19] For Louis XII's entry into Troyes the waste was to be carried at least a 'quarter of a league beyond the town'.[20] It had to be disposed of far enough away from the walls so that the royal guest did not see piles of filth while entering the town, as the presence of large mounds of human and animal waste would have spoiled the effect of entering a New Jerusalem.

Once the streets had been cleaned, sand and greenery were laid on the surface of the processional route. On the one hand, this was a practical measure designed to prevent horses stumbling and falling on the uneven and hard surface of the streets. Should a horse stumble and the king or a member of his entourage fall, the consequences could have been devastating for the town. The use of greenery in royal entries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was also done in emulation of the palm leaves laid out before Christ when he made his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.[21] Through this tradition, the processional route was transformed into the space of both Christ's *adventus* into the historical Jerusalem and the return of the heavenly Jerusalem. Towns were decorated not only by town councils but also through the efforts of households and individuals, and in the lead up to an entry échevins placed the responsibility of ensuring that the streets were covered with flowers and greenery on the townspeople living in houses on the processional route. When Louis XI came to Abbeville in 1463, the municipal council ordered the townspeople to 'spread grass out on the roads'.[22] In preparation for Louis's entry into Tournai in the same year, the town council appointed a special commission to ensure that this greenery was spread along the processional route.[23] The participation of all residents living on the route was necessary if the job was to

[17]   Wheeler, 'Stench in Sixteenth-Century Venice', p. 28.

[18]   AM Amiens, AA 12, fol. 58v.

[19]   Freidrichs, *The Early Modern City*, p. 262.

[20]   '... ung quart de lieue plus de la ville': Babeau, *Troyes*, p. 11.

[21]   Kantorowicz, 'King's Advent', p. 211.

[22]   Ibid., p. 106.

[23]   La Grange, 'Entrées de souverains', p. 47.

be completed quickly and effectively. For Henry IV's entry into Mâcon in 1595, the town council ordered proclamations regarding the entry to be 'published in the crossroads and other public places of the town so that nobody could pretend to be ignorant of the order'.[24] All residents who did not comply with these municipal directives were to be fined the considerable sum of 20 écus. It was normal for only the processional route to be covered with flowers and greenery, though for Louis XII's entry into Mâcon in 1501 the aldermen instructed townspeople to spread greenery out on streets across the entire town.[25] This may have been an attempt by the town council to transform the entire town into a New Jerusalem, as was commonly done during the Corpus Christi processions which influenced the development of the French royal entry ceremony.[26]

Although processional routes were in part determined by the requirement to pass the areas of the town where the urban elite resided, the social geography of early modern towns meant that they were often divided by occupation rather than wealth. In addition, housing was often divided by level, with the poorest occupying the higher floors, while the wealthier families were closer to street level. It was the wealthier residents who were targeted by town councils when it came to decorating the facades of the houses in preparation for a ceremonial entry, as they possessed the rich cloth used to decorate the streets along the processional route. Town such as Paris, Arras and Tournai were centres of tapestry production during this period and this is reflected in their ceremonial welcomes.[27] Kings entering French towns in the sixteenth century gazed on a sea of tapestry, which covered every available surface and served to hide the actual urban landscape from view.[28] We should remember that the monarch was not looking at a 'real' urban landscape representative of day-to-day urban life, but

---

[24]   Jean Louis Bazin, 'Les rois de France à Mâcon', *Société des arts, sciences, belles-lettres et d'agriculture*, 7 (1890): 114.

[25]   Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', p. 66.

[26]   For Corpus Christi processions, see Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 243–71.

[27]   It should be noted, however, that most French towns, not just centres of tapestry production, ordered residents living along the processional route to display their tapestries and fine linens on the facades of their houses during a ceremonial entry.

[28]   Georges Kernodle writes that fabrics were first hung on houses during the ninth and tenth centuries, though he does not give any examples nor state any sources: George R. Kernodle, *From Art to Theatre: Form and Convention in the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1944), p. 70. The use of cloths as decorations is certainly evident in the thirteenth century. For example, the townspeople of Arras 'decorated the town' with fine cloths for Philip III's entry into the town in 1271, and when he entered Paris later that year the streets were decorated with green and grey linens: *Les Grandes Chroniques de France*, ed. J.M.E. Viard (10 vols, Paris, 1920–53), vol. 8, p. 40.

a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem. Indeed, the 'real' town was almost entirely hidden from view during an entry. It is clear that not only were the facades of the houses decorated with tapestries and other fine cloths, but that the street was enclosed with a roof of fabrics. This formed one long canopy for the royal procession to progress through. When Louis XII entered Lyon in 1507, for example, the streets had been covered with tapestries and yellow and red cloths (the colours of the king) 'without any interruption', except for the bridge which was decorated with banners.[29] Beautiful tapestries were also on display on the annual Corpus Christi processions and, like the presence of the canopy, they were used to similar effect at ceremonial entries and transformed the streets and squares of the town into a ritualized space.

Royal entries were occasions when the very best and most expensive tapestries were displayed and the proliferation of tapestries in sixteenth-century entries pushed town councils to ensure that they had a sufficient number of high-quality textiles to display. For Louis XII's entry into Mâcon in 1501 the Abbot of Cluny loaned one of his precious tapestries for the town council to use.[30] Cluny's loan of this tapestry became customary and at Henry IV's entry into the town in 1595, almost 100 years later, the town council were still borrowing this tapestry from the abbot.[31] Where items of tapestry could not be hired or loaned, municipal councils would compel citizens to provide them. For Francis I's entry into Lyon in 1515, the town council requisitioned tapestries from the townspeople to display at the entry.[32] Town councils wanted the best articles of tapestry and fabric to be displayed, and for Henry II's entry into Paris in 1549 people living on the processional route were ordered to display their best tapestries on the front of their houses during the entry.[33] A profusion of good-quality tapestry and cloth made the town appear both beautiful and prosperous and townspeople could expect to be punished should they fail to meet the standards expected by the municipal council in decorating the facades of their houses.

While the use of tapestries and linens can be found in royal entries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, significant innovations were made in the

---

[29] *Relation des entrées solemnelles dans la ville de Lyon, de nos rois, reines, princes, princesses, cardinaux, légats, & autres grands personnages, depuis Charles VI, jusques à présent* (Lyon, 1752), p. 6.

[30] Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', p. 70.

[31] Ibid., p. 109.

[32] *L'entrée de François premier, roy de France, en la cité de Lyon, le 12 juillet 1515*, ed. Georges Guigue (Lyon, 1849), pp. x, xxii.

[33] '... decorate the front of their houses with beautiful tapestries on the day of the said entry': *Registres des délibérations du Bureau de la ville de Paris, vol. 3: 1539–1552*, ed. Paul Guérin (Paris, 1886), p. 82.

street decorations during the sixteenth century. Statues, pyramids and especially triumphal arches were constructed for sixteenth-century entries.[34] The shift to designing a ceremony that was more concerned to recreate the New Rome than the New Jerusalem can partly be attributed to the development of linear perspective, which came as a result of contemporary developments in optics and geometry. The two key influences on the development of perspective came from Filippo Brunelleschi (1337–1446) and Leon Batista Alberti (1404–1472), both of whom came from Florence. In his De re aedificatoria (1452), which was the first architectural treatise of the Renaissance and closely modelled on that of the Vitruvius, Alberti outlined an architectural system that aimed to achieve proportional harmony.[35] For Alberti, proportion, symmetry and balance could be used in order to approach the divine in architectural works. Artists and architects of the Renaissance wanted to build the ideal city (see, for example, Picenza), while the designers of French entry ceremonies made use of proportion and temporary architectural features to create a vision of the ideal city for the duration of the king's visit. Foremost amongst these new decorative innovations was the use of triumphal arches, which were first incorporated into the structure of a French ceremonial entry for Francis I's reception at Lyon in 1515. The first arch was placed at the Bourgneuf gate, where the king entered the town, and the second was at the church of Saint-Jean, where the public entry was concluded. By placing the arches at these two positions, the town council used them to demarcate the start and finish of the civic entry. The king was greeted at the first arch by a delegation of councillors and a canopy was raised above him. The councillors then led Francis in procession through the streets until they reached the second arch at Saint-Jean, where the king was passed out of the hands of the town council and over to the archbishop of Lyon and members of the cathedral chapter.[36] The adoption of triumphal arches was part of a conscious move away from medieval symbolism, with the designers of Renaissance entries becoming concerned to present an image of the ideal town to the monarch which was now based on symmetry and balance.

Triumphal arches were a regular feature of entries into Italian towns during the fifteenth century, and we find that Lyon's position on the road to Italy

---

[34]   For statues, see Marie-France Wagner, 'Lieux de l'éphémérité: statues équestres des entrées royals de François Ier à Rouen et Louis XIII en Avignon', *Memini. Travaux et documents*, 5 (2001): 29–50.

[35]   See Spiro Kostof, *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* (New York, 1995), pp. 404–7; David Watkin, *A History of Western Architecture*, 4th edn (London, 2005), pp. 211–21.

[36]   *Entrées royales et* fêtes *populaires à Lyon*, p. 70; *Entrée de François premier*, Guigue, pp. ix–x.

allowed it to act as the conduit for new decorative ideas following the onset of the Italian wars in 1494.[37] With the establishment of French power in Milan and Genoa during the period from 1500 to 1525, French power elites were exposed to the new developments in architecture and design that had been taking place in Italy during the second half of the fifteenth century. This led to the adoption of such techniques in France, as Italian artists and books returned over the Alps with French armies.[38] Lyon was one of the wealthiest towns in France and could well have afforded these new and costly decorations. The urban elite were dominated by wealthy merchants and financiers with close links to Italy, who gained numerous economic privileges in return for the considerable financial support which they gave to the French kings during the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[39] The use of triumphal arches may have been introduced into Lyon by some of these merchants in order to honour the French kings who had so privileged them. However, their adoption by towns across the kingdom owed more to the increased availability of the translation of the architectural works of Vitruvius and Sebastino Serlio in the mid sixteenth century than it did to an emulation of Lyon's civic receptions.[40] As we move through the sixteenth century, we also find an increase in the number of arches erected for an entry. When Henry II entered Paris in 1549, seven arches were placed at eight locations along the processional route.[41] The designer of this entry, Jean Martin, had previously translated Vitruvius' De Architectura and his knowledge of classical architecture clearly informed the decorative programme of the entry.[42]

While increasingly elaborate decorations were placed on the arches through the sixteenth century, there was no guarantee that the king would understand the

---

[37] For the spread of triumphal arches across European ceremonial entries during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Zdzislaw Bieniecki, 'Quelques remarques sur la composition architecturale des arcs de triomphe à la renaissance.', in Jean Jacquot and Elie Konigson (eds), *Les fêtes de la renaissance, vol. 3: Quinzième colloque international d'études humanistes, Tours, 10–22 juillet, 1972* (Paris, 1975), pp. 200–15.

[38] Kostof, *History of Architecture*, p. 429.

[39] Henry Heller, *Anti-Italianism in Sixteenth-Century France* (London, 2003), p. 12.

[40] Stijn Bussels, 'Jaunty Joys and Sinuous Sorrows: Rhetoric and Body Language in a *Tableau Vivant* of the Antwerp Entry of 1549', in Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene (eds), *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th–16th Century)*, Studies in European Urban History (1100–1800), vol. 5 (Turnhout, 2005), p. 262; Mary Ann Fruth, 'The Royal Entry: A Study of Tradition and Change in the French Festivals of the Sixteenth Century', PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 1970, p. 29.

[41] These locations were the 'Porte Sainct Denis, le Ponceau, la Porte aux Paintres, du Rinoceros, devant le Sepulchre, le Chastelet, que aux deux boutz du Pont Nostre Dame' : *Registres, Paris*, vol. 3, p. 162.

[42] Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror*, pp. 76, 185.

intended meanings behind them. In order to minimize the risk of the king and other educated spectators misreading the complicated allegory, town councils hired experts to place explanations of the scenes on the triumphal arches. For Henry II's entry in 1549 and Charles IX's entry in 1571, Paris's town council hired Pierre Ronsard, member of the Pléiade and the foremost poet in the kingdom, to design the inscription for the triumphal arches.[43] Such a commission would have forced Ronsard to work with new thematic and technical challenges, as poetry on triumphal arches was designed to be read – not heard – and had to be made within strict limits of space.[44]

Entries could be very expensive to stage and town councils recycled decorations, adapting them to suit changing trends and fashions. Between the reigns of Charles VIII and Francis I there was a move from decorations informed by biblical allegory to the adoption of classical imagery. For Charles VIII's entry into Troyes in 1486, the town council had ordered the construction of a giant, who was to be used to represent Goliath in one of the performances. When they came to plan Louis XII's entry in 1510, they decided that the giant would be used again, but this time it was to represent Hercules.[45] Once the entry was finished, the giant was carefully taken down, filled with straw so that it would not get damaged, and stored to use on another occasion.[46] In 1531, the giant was brought out of storage for Eleanor of Austria's entry and again dressed as Hector, but when they went to use it for Henry II's entry in 1548 the councillors found that its head had been damaged.[47] Not to let the construction go to waste, they used the damaged giant to represent Atlas, as much of the head was covered by the globe carried by Atlas on his back.[48] Through a process of change and adaptation, Troyes' town council cleverly used this giant during four royal entries over a 60-year period, adapting it to suit changing trends in the decorative programme.[49]

---

[43]   The municipal council of Tours also hired Ronsard to design the inscriptions for Charles IX's entry into their town in 1576: Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou, ''Ronsard et le roi de gloire', in Jean Céard (ed.), *Cité des hommes, cite de Dieu: travaux sur la littérature de la Renaissance en l'honneur de Daniel Ménager* (Geneva, 2003), pp. 233–43.

[44]   John Tristan Dalton Hall, 'Ronsard's Court Poetry, 1549–1585', PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 1977, pp. 290–91.

[45]   Babeau, *Troyes*, pp. 14–15.

[46]   Ibid., p. 18.

[47]   Ibid., p. 40.

[48]   Ibid., p. 45.

[49]   Some towns were not so lucky in maintaining their decorations. Dijon's town council paid for the construction of expensive decorations for sets when they learned that Charles the Bold was to visit the town in 1469. However, Charles the Bold did not come to Dijon for another five years, and when the town council went to take the sets out of storage to use, they

On the day of the royal entry, a series of pageants were performed along the route of the procession and in these performances symbolically important architectural features of the town acted as part of the set. The first stage was customarily placed just inside the gate of the entry, which was ornately decorated for the occasion. Not only were gates associated with urban liberties, they also provided features that could be incorporated into the performance to make it more spectacular. The strategic placing of stages at gates allowed the performances to take on a vertical dimension, which was important as space was limited at ground level in the crowded streets. The height of gates allowed for actors to be lowered down from on high to greet royals as they entered the town. When Louis XI came to Tournai in 1463, he was met at the gate by a young woman who 'descended by machinery, and after saluting the king, threw aside the robe from her breast, and displayed a well-made heart, which burst open, and there came out a golden flower de luce, of great value, which she gave to the king, in the name of the town, saying, "Sire, I am a virgin, and so is this town, – for it has never been taken, nor has it ever turned from its allegiance to the kings of France."'[50] We find that young virgin women regularly dramatized the idealized symbolic relationship existing between the town and the king during royal entries. In imagery reminiscent of the Song of Songs, the town is the pure bride who awaits the king to penetrate her walls during an entry. This dramatic feature of the royal entry ceremony acted as one of the key aspects in the town's transformation into the New Jerusalem. In the Apocalypse of St John we read: 'And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband' (Revelation 21:2). Virgin women were only a feature of inaugural entries, as in later visits the town has already been 'taken' for the first time by the king. By the clever use of urban space and technology, during a royal entry actors dressed as angels also descended from the celestial Jerusalem to offer the monarch a heavenly crown as he entered the town.[51] As well as greeting the king, angels were placed in the galleries raised along the processional route in order to sing to welcome the monarch as he moved along the processional route.[52] Trumpeters, which heralded the coming of the New Jerusalem in the Apocalypse of St John, were also positioned along these galleries, especially those constructed at the gate of

---

found that they had been destroyed by damp and were unusable: Henri Chabeuf, *L'Entrée de Charles le Temeraire et les Funerailles de Philippe le Bon* (Dijon, 1902), p. 316.

[50]   *The chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, ed. Thomas Johnes (12 vols, London, 1810), vol. 10, pp. 156–7.

[51]   See here also Kipling, *Enter the King*, p. 15.

[52]   See, for example, Charles VIII's entry into Rouen in April 1485, *Entrées royales françaises*, ed. Guenée and Lehoux, p. 248.

entry which was the location at which the decorations transforming the town into the New Jerusalem began.

The performances continued right along the processional route and were located in close proximity to important buildings, which were incorporated into the *mise-en-scène* of the New Jerusalem. When Charles VIII entered Troyes, for example, the side of a church lining the processional route was used to display Christ in heaven.[53] The belfry, town hall and other civic buildings symbolic of the town council's authority were also commonly used as the location for performances during an entry. This allowed the town council to focus the gaze of the king, his entourage and the general urban population on buildings strongly invested with the authority and legitimacy of the town council. These symbolically significant buildings and structures within the town received special attention in preparation for an entry. At Compiègne, the municipal clock was painted and gilded in time for Eleanor of Austria's entry in 1531, while the town hall of Troyes was painted in expectation of Henry II's entry in 1547.[54] Stages could also be constructed outside townspeople's houses, thus incorporating them into the pageantry of the entry. When Mary of Hungary came to Compiègne in 1531, the town council constructed a performance stage outside the house of Jean Langlois, who was in charge of a local charitable foundation and an important person in the social hierarchy of sixteenth-century Compiègne.[55] As Gordon Kipling notes, the dramatic performances took place on stages 'designed according to the symbolic architecture of heaven', which, alongside the use of galleries and decorations that sought to mirror the celestial, transformed the streets of French towns into the sacred space of the New Jerusalem for a royal entry.[56]

The town council also exerted control over the use of space in private homes along the processional route on the day of entry. In particular, they instructed women to line these galleries and windows. The people watching from the galleries and windows of houses tended to be of higher status than those people watching from the streets, as bourgeois living quarters tended to be found on the first floor of town buildings. While there is a blurring of the lines between public and private space, women's presence at the windows of houses may also be in reference to idealized gender roles of the time. Unlike the female performers who acted on the stages, the place of good bourgeois women was in the domestic space of the home,

---

[53] Joël Blanchard, 'Le spectacle du rite: les entrées royales', *Revue historique* 305 (2003): 482.

[54] AM Compiègne, BB 18, fol. 2.

[55] AM Compiègne, BB 19, fol. 13.

[56] Kipling, *Enter the King*, p. 206.

while their fathers, sons and husbands were lining the streets of the public space of the town, in which business and politics were normally conducted.

The control of private spaces extended to providing lodging for those riding in the royal entourage. As the size of royal entourages grew considerably during the fifteenth century, rooms in numerous houses had to be given over for their use. Municipal councils tried to accommodate nobles in the most spacious and beautiful houses in the town, often against the wishes of those who lived there. Visiting nobles frequently caused trouble when visiting towns and municipal councils often had to compel townspeople to welcome these guests.[57] In May 1549 the Parisian town council received a letter from Henry II instructing the councillors to ensure that the 'best rooms of the most beautiful houses' of Parisian elite were used to house members of his entourage when he made his much delayed post-coronation entry into the capital.[58] Shortly after receiving this letter, the councillors informed residents of those wealthy houses to prepare to receive the king's officers, and should these instructions be disobeyed the residents were to be compelled to leave their houses.[59] Houses destined to receive members of the royal entourage were physically marked out from their neighbours in the days before the royal entry, normally by use of flags or other markers. For many townspeople, the attaching of a marker to their house was not a badge of honour and we find many resistances to their use. At Tournai in 1513 people caught disfiguring or removing these signs were to be imprisoned or banished, while Tournasiens resisting the lodging of Charles V's followers in 1531 were to be fined as an example to others'.[60]

Preparing a ceremonial entry could also lead to a more destructive transformation of the urban fabric. In the run up to a royal visit, town councils pulled down private residences and shops which they deemed to be unsafe or unsuitable for the entry. This control extended beyond the walls of a town, into the suburbs, where ramshackle collections of buildings often grew up. These houses were destroyed for aesthetic reasons or to clear space for temporary structures and buildings to be used for the pageantry of the entry. The most

---

[57] Robert J. Knecht, 'The Court of Francis I', *European Studies Review* 8 (1979): 14–15; Robert A. Schneider, *Public Life in Toulouse 1463–1789: From Municipal Republic to Cosmopolitan City* (Ithaca and London, 1989), p. 30; Malcolm Vale, 'Provisioning Princely Households in the Low Countries during the Pre-Burgundian Period, *c.*1280–1380', in Werner Paravicini (ed.), *Alltag bei Hofe: 3. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Ansbach 28. Februar bis 1. März 1992*, Residenzforschung 5 (Sigmaringen, 1995), p. 39.

[58] *Registres, Paris*, vol. 3, p. 162.

[59] Ibid.

[60] La Grange, 'Entrées de souverains', p. 83.

targeted area, however, was the processional route. Groups composed of royal deputies and municipal officials would make a tour of the route in advance of an entry in order to make sure that there were no impediments to the *cortège* as it passed through the streets. The refashioning of the city's thoroughfares was necessary to prepare for a royal entry, especially as it could be difficult to ride down urban streets because of the protruding galleries, which jutted out far into the street. This situation was compounded by the ornately decorated facades of shops found in the wealthy parts of the town through which the procession would pass. In 1521, one of Francis I's procurators remonstrated with Amiens's town council regarding the excessive decorations on buildings throughout the town. The municipal deliberations state that:

> Many merchants, residents and inhabitants of this town, having taken [it] upon their own authority and without our consent, have placed on their houses many lines of large and great size and have attached to the front of their said houses ... [so] that in some places it is with great difficulty that men on horseback and wagons loaded with hay or bundles of wood can pass.

Some merchants had decorated so excessively that 'their shops and workshops were in darkness', while the goods piled up in front of their properties had all but blocked the streets.[61]

Prior to Louis XII's entry into Troyes in 1510, an inspection committee ordered not only the removal of obstacles such as benches and gables, but they also specified that two residences situated on the grain market were to be destroyed.[62] Such destruction of buildings is not regularly found prior to the late fifteenth century. During the Renaissance, ceremonial entries became increasingly elaborate affairs, as the designers began to include temporary buildings and structures, such as triumphal arches and ornate pageant stations in the ceremonial welcome. These decorations were on a grand scale and tended to take up considerable room in the often already cramped streets of the town.

The condition of buildings lining the processional route was of great concern not only to town council but also to those royal officials who rode ahead of the royal entourage to inspect the town in advance of an entry to secure the safety of the king. As such, infractions against the orders issued regarding buildings could bring townspeople to the notice of both the town council and the king's officials. In 1564 the town council of Troyes received a letter written on behalf of Charles IX ordering all owners of residences on the processional route to

---

[61]   AM Amiens, BB 22, fol. 56.
[62]   Babeau, *Troyes*, p. 11.

ensure that their properties were in a good state of repair, especially with regard to trap doors and cellars. The letter ended with a threat of punishment and the instruction that the names of those who refused to obey the order were to be taken down and brought to royal officials for punishment.[63] While the sanction of royal officials endorsed the town council's ability to remove decrepit property quickly, municipal councils did not implement all such demands by the crown. Those royal officials who checked the streets of Troyes in 1510 wanted numerous galleries found on the processional route to be brought down, and they called for the immediate release of a general ordinance from the town council calling for the extensive destruction of private property they deemed dangerous along the processional route.[64] However, the town council only ordered the destruction of few galleries and then only those in a hazardous condition.

The state of the urban fortifications concerned municipal councils much more than galleries on merchants' houses. City walls and towers were regularly inspected by kings when they visited, and in preparation for an entry the ramparts were hastily repaired by teams of workmen. Sometimes these repairs were cosmetic, with towers and gates simply being touched up.[65] Other times, the problems were more serious and masons were employed to make more significant repairs. In 1535, for example, Amiens' town council had to rebuild large sections of the ramparts prior to the entry of Francis I. Such repairs were not always thorough or long lasting, and when Francis returned four years later further work had to be done on the town's fortifications.[66] It was necessary that all building works were completed in good time for the entry, and municipal councils took strict measures to ensure that it was done so. For Henry IV's entry into Mâcon in 1595 deputies appointed by the town council monitored the workforce as they cleaned the fortifications. Craftsmen employed for this entry were expected to work a 14-hour day, from 5 a.m. until 7 p.m., for the wage of 20s. per day for a master and 17s. per day for an apprentice. They were not permitted to leave the worksite except for one hour a day when they could have lunch. The carpenters were unhappy with these conditions and one of their number, Louis Gerard, was sent to the municipal council to demand a wage of 30s. for each master. The town council refused to pay the extra amount, and the disgruntled workers downed tools and went on strike. The aldermen told the men that they were being paid a fair price and instructed them to return to work on the following day or be physically compelled to do so. Under the threat of such punishment the men reluctantly returned to the site. To prevent

---

[63] Ibid., pp. 55–6.

[64] Ibid., *Troyes*, p. 11.

[65] Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', p. 55.

[66] AM Amiens, BB 23, fol. 7v.

the further loss of such valuable time, the municipal council appointed deputies to monitor the men while they worked.[67] Municipal councils were particularly concerned with repairing the walls and towers, as they had to convince the king that the considerable tax remissions granted to them by the crown to maintain their fortifications were being used for this purpose. By the sixteenth century, these tax remissions formed an important part of the urban budget. Although some of the revenue generated in this way was used to pay for the maintenance of the fortifications, the bulk tended to be used to pay for a range of other municipal projects, including the financing of royal entries.[68]

By the mid sixteenth century the French royal entry had reached its apogee. In chronicles and festival book accounts of ceremonial entries, it often seems as if the king's presence alone was enough to conjure into existence the numerous decorations and entertainments which were central to the success of the ceremony. However, town councils began their preparations for a civic reception weeks or even months before the entry was due to take place and the bulk of the town's efforts were expended before the royal even came into sight of the town. Town councils had to possess effective authority to have the spectacle complete in good time for the guest's arrival, and it was necessary to mobilize numerous urban groups to make the preparations. The New Jerusalem was the archetype of the ideal city, which urban populations used to shape their conception of the physical space in which they lived.[69] Through the transformation of both public and private space along the processional route, town councils were able to demonstrate their control over the urban fabric.

The ability of urban elites to design and produce impressive civic receptions reflects the increasingly important role that they were playing in the life of the realm during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The process of preparing a ceremonial welcome permitted town councils to display the full range of their power and authority over the urban fabric, which was then reinforced on the day of the entry itself by their ability to walk in procession beside the king, which was denied to the vast majority of the urban population. However, we should remember that while entries were festivals dominated by the civic elite, they were not simply elite festivals. The active participation of townspeople from a

---

[67] Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', pp. 104–5.

[68] Robert Favreau, 'Fiscalité d'État et budget à Poitiers, au XVème siècle', in *L'impôt dans la cadre de la ville et de l'état. Colloque International* (1966), p. 125; Albert Rigaudière, 'Le financement des Fortifications urbaines en France au milieu du XIVe siècle du Xve siècle', *Revue historique*, 273 (1985): 53; Michael Wolfe, 'Siege Warfare and the *Bonnes Villes* of France during the Hundred Years War', in Ivy A. Cortis and Michael Wolfe (ed.), *The Medieval City under Siege* (Woodbridge, 1995), p. 62.

[69] Lilley, *City and Cosmos*, pp. 15, 23.

range of social and occupational backgrounds was necessary to the success of the entry, and they played much more than a marginal role. While town councils issued threats of punishment in order to encourage people to participate in the entry, records of such infractions are rare and much of the success of the occasion was due to the efforts of townspeople in preparing the cityscape. In most instances, it was by means of a combination of persuasion and coercion that town councils managed to transform their town into a New Jerusalem and wait with expectation for the king's arrival.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Chapter 10

'It Must Not Look like Expropriation': The Cemetery Regulations of 1970 in Communist Hungary and the Spatial Aspects of the 'Battle between the Religious and the Materialist World View'[1]

Heléna Tóth

'It is of the utmost importance and it cannot be stressed enough that the consultation with the [church leadership] and the eventual agreement must avoid even the thought of expropriation; it must be an agreement or, in this case, a voluntary offer. We must underline what advantages such an agreement would have for the upper and the lower clergy.'[2] This quotation comes from a position paper on the ownership of cemeteries from the State Office of Church Affairs in Hungary, written in 1969.[3] The authors of the paper argued that the expropriation of cemeteries, the majority of which at that point were still church property, would have created too much tension in the relationship between the churches and the state in the late 1960s. Such a radical change in ownership would also have upset the population and it would have overstrained the administration as well. At the same time, the authors of the paper argued

---

[1]   I would like to thank Charlotte Lerg and Sándor Horváth for their insightful and helpful comments on this chapter.

[2]   State Office of Church Affairs (*Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal*), Magyar Országos Levéltár (MOL) XIX-A-c 002–1-47–7d, 9 January 1969, 29, p. 2.

[3]   The State Office of Church Affairs was established in 1951 to act as a liaison between officially acknowledged religious denominations and the socialist state. Its tasks included negotiating official agreements between religious institutions and the state, coordinating the distribution of state subsidies (the amount of financial support decreased over time), surveillance of religious activities, the press, ministers and priests. In addition, the Office also exercised significant influence on decisions regarding the filling of religious posts. Edit Köpeczi Bócz, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége* (Budapest, 2004), p. 14.

that priests and pastors could and should be persuaded to consider offering cemeteries to local councils and if such an offer was made, the councils should take the cemeteries over. According to the scheme, the churches would have been financially compensated: they would have received 10 to 25 per cent of their projected income from graveyards for the following 10 years. If the financial incentive were not strong enough to move priests and pastors to offer their cemeteries to the state, the State Office of Church Affairs also suggested a heavier emphasis on prescribing the modernization of cemeteries: build a road from the village to the cemetery; make sure the cemetery was fenced off, closed and guarded after visiting hours; build facilities for storing dead bodies until the funeral; and, if there were no hospital within a certain distance, build facilities appropriate for carrying out dissections that might be necessary if the cause of death was uncertain. Investments in facilities on this scale could have financially ruined local parishes in Hungary at the end of the 1960s.

The deliberations of the State Office of Church Affairs were laying groundwork for a set of new regulations, passed a year later, that codified key aspects of funeral practices in Hungary and had important implications for the ownership and operation of cemeteries.[4] Studying the broader context of the cemetery regulations of 1970, this chapter makes two arguments. First, it shows that the deliberations in 1969 and the regulations of 1970 fit into a longer trajectory of cemetery administration in Hungary, and indeed in Central Europe, that can be traced back to the eighteenth century: a discursive tradition built on and around arguments of hygiene.[5] Secondly, and equally importantly, the chapter argues that the discussions in the late 1960s preparing the way for the cemetery regulations also reveal a characteristic of the relations between the churches and state in Hungary under the Communist regime: that abstract questions in the ideological battle between Marxism-Leninism and the so-called 'religious world view' were concretized through negotiations regarding space. The extended discussions about establishing a specifically socialist sepulchral culture and the deliberations about sanitary regulations and land ownership were all parts of the same discourse. By 1970 the relationship between churches and the state in Hungary reached a certain equilibrium, even if an uneasy one; a close reading of the cemetery regulations of 1970 reveals the dynamics behind this seemingly stable status quo by showing both

---

4   '10/1970. (IV. 17.) ÉVM-EüM számú együttes rendelet a temetőkről és a temetkezési tevékenységről' in *Hatályos jogszabályok gyűjteménye, 1945–1987*, vol. 2 (Budapest, 1988), p. 208. 1008/1970. (IV. 12.) Korm. számú határozat a temetők fenntartásáról és a temetkezési tevékenységről. In ibid., p. 752.

5   Klaus Feldmann, *Tod und Gesellschaft. Sozialwissenschaftliche Thanatologie im Überblick* (Wiesbaden, 2004).

the extent and the limitations of the socialist state's attempts to further chip away at the ideological influence of religion. It is a case study that helps us understand the system of forced compromises that lay at the basis of the 'soft dictatorship' of the Kádár era.

The 'Modernization Argument': A Discursive Tradition

Since the eighteenth century, the concept of hygiene had stood at the core of cemetery reforms. Efforts to dispose of dead bodies in a way that prevented the spread of disease led to a radical re-conceptualization of the cemetery as space. In the Middle Ages burials took place in and around the church building – wealthy patrons were buried in the building itself (under the floor or in the walls), while others found rest in the cemeteries around the church.[6] The cemetery grounds were church property. This meant that the cemetery lay beyond the jurisdiction of secular law, so the resting ground of the dead often became a refuge for those who had a reason to flee secular authorities. The cemetery was, therefore, a liminal space in multiple senses of the word: a space between this world and the next and also a space outside the boundaries of secular law.[7]

The close bonds between the church building and the burial grounds were permanently severed during the Enlightenment. In the eighteenth century, several European states passed laws which stipulated that new cemeteries had to be established outside the city's boundaries to ease the pressure on already overcrowded burial grounds and to control the spread of epidemics.[8] In the Kingdom of Hungary, the first such law was passed by Maria Theresa in 1775. The new law set into motion a very slow process. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that newly established cemeteries outside the city borders were taken into use.[9]

The new cemeteries differed not only in location from the old ones but also, at least in part, in ownership: the new burial grounds often belonged to the municipal authorities. In 1876 a new law was passed which required that each larger municipal unit operate a communal cemetery. One of the many implications of the secular ownership of cemetery grounds was an impact on

---

[6] The bond between the church building and the burial ground dissolved only in times of crisis, such as during the outbreaks of the plague.

[7] Philippe Ariès, *Geschichte des Todes* (Munich, 1985), pp. 83–5.

[8] Antónia Jolán Fehér, *Budapest székesfőváros temetőinek története* (Budapest, 1933), p. 71. On the broader European context Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones (eds), *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford, 1997), p. 755.

[9] Fehér, *Budapest székesfőváros temetőinek története*, p. 71.

ritual practices. For example, a law opened up communal cemeteries for all Christian denominations in the Hungarian capital 1868.[10] Although religious tolerance was practised by certain Habsburg rulers, notably Joseph II at the end of the eighteenth century, Catholics had been heavily favoured in the Habsburg Empire in general. Thus, the law of 1868 was an important step towards establishing equality between Protestants and Catholics. The Jewish community operated separate cemeteries.[11]

Moving the cemeteries farther away from densely populated areas was part of a broader transformation of mortuary practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Not only the burial but all aspects of death were being reformed and modernized under the aegis of hygiene.[12] For example, while as late as the middle of the nineteenth century the wake was usually held at the home of the dead person, a new regulation passed in 1879 stipulated that a wake at home was allowed only if the dead person could be safely separated from the rest of the family. Taking Budapest as an example: considering that at least 54 per cent of the apartments had only one room at this point and that 25 per cent had two rooms but poor ventilation, holding a wake at home became impossible for a large part of the population.[13] It was now the responsibility of newly established cemeteries to build facilities where holding a wake was possible. Thus, as death gradually passed from the home to the hospital, from the private sphere to the public, both the location and the infrastructure of cemeteries changed radically.

Both nineteenth-century developments – that the state could influence ritual practice in the cemeteries owned by the municipalities and that the state framed its responsibilities regarding cemeteries primarily in terms of hygiene – were imbued with new meanings after the Second World War.

---

[10]   Ibid., p. 73.

[11]   Péter Hanák, *A kert és műhely* (Budapest, 1999), p. 53. The most important communal cemetery in Budapest, the Keresztúri köztemető, was established in 1886 and was built explicitly as a multi-confessional cemetery. Only the military had a separate section on the burial grounds. Next to the Keresztúri köztemető, the city also opened a large cemetery for the Jewish community. Fehér, *Budapest székesfőváros temetőinek története*, p. 88.

[12]   Klaus Feldmann writes about the process of recasting physical death in terms of natural science ('Vernaturwissenschaftlichung des Todes') in *Tod und Gesellschaft*, p. 23. Norbert Elias, *Über die Einsamkeit der Sterbenden in unseren Tagen* (Frankfurt a. M., 1982); Aries, *Geschichte des Todes*, p. 725; Hanák, *A kert es műhely*, p. 52.

[13]   Hanák, *A kert és és műhely*, p. 57.

The Spatial Aspects of the 'Battle between the Religious and Materialist World View'

The establishment of the Communist government in 1949 resulted in changes to cemetery administration. Although the key concepts of the discourse remained hygiene and modernization, the political stakes of the spatial re-conceptualization of cemeteries changed significantly.[14] The discussions about who was in a position to operate cemeteries in an appropriate way amounted to the spatial manifestations of the so-called 'battle between the religious and materialist world view'.[15] The establishment of municipal cemeteries and the institutionalization of death in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries already infringed upon areas of life which traditionally belonged under the jurisdiction of the Church. At times this process had a decidedly anti-religious agenda: Emperor Joseph II, for example, ordered the closing of funeral chapels which were built on newly established burial grounds in 1786.[16] These instances of radically secularizing cemetery grounds, however, remained the exception rather than the rule before the Second World War. For example, when the Greek Catholic community in Budapest was asked to give up their own confessional cemetery in the late 1840s and use the then newly established Kerepesi municipal cemetery instead, the regulation was not aimed against the Greek Catholics in particular. Its purpose was to concentrate burials on the new cemetery grounds for all Christian religious communities.[17] The role of the churches in public discourse and their symbolic power in politics went through several changes during the decades of the dual monarchy, and later, in the Horthy era. The social and economic standing of the churches as well as their hold on the funeral as a rite of passage, however, remained strong until after the Second World War.

The discourse on modernizing cemeteries after 1949 was framed in familiar terms, but was now part of a larger campaign aimed at undermining the influence of religion and the churches in everyday life. Even prior to the establishment of the one-party system, the ideological battle between the Marxist and the

---

[14]   On the close connection between hygiene and modernity outside Europe see the thought-provoking work of Ruth Rogasky, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley, CA, 2004).

[15]   The religious composition of Hungary after the Second World War: Roman Catholic, 67.8 per cent; Greek Catholic, 2.7 per cent; Calvinist, 21.9 per cent; Lutheran, 5.2 per cent; Jewish, 1.5 per cent. Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században* (Budapest, 2005), p. 318.

[16]   Fehér, *Budapest székesfőváros temetőinek története*, p. 72.

[17]   Ibid., p. 89.

religious world views had decidedly spatial elements.[18] Statute 600/1945 of the prime minister, published on 17 March 1945, ordered a large-scale land reform in Hungary, in which, amongst others, churches lost a significant part of their property.[19] The statute resulted from a broad agreement among political parties that land reform was necessary. The fast pace and radical extent of the actual reforms, however, had much to do with the pressure the Soviet army exercised on Hungarian politics after the war. As a consequence of the land reform, the Roman Catholic Church, the largest landowner in Hungary after the Second World War, lost 89 per cent of its real estate. Land was an important source of income for the churches in general. Income from agriculture covered the salary of priests and ministers, supported religious educational institutions, monastic establishments, and a broad range of charities.[20] In the late 1940s, the state also expropriated religious social, charitable and educational establishments, thereby ultimately reducing both the sources of income and the financial responsibilities of the churches. Nonetheless, the maintenance of church buildings and the salaries of employees in the church apparatus, even in its reduced form, were considerable financial burdens, thus churches became heavily dependent on financial support from the state. After the establishment of the Communist regime, the Hungarian state made a commitment to pay subsidies to the churches for the following 15 years, and so it created a bond between ecclesiastical and secular institutions that was arguably even closer than the one that existed before the Second World War.[21]

Although the constitution of the People's Republic of Hungary promised Hungarian citizens freedom of conscience, the Party's aim was, to use the language of the era, to enclose religious influence 'within the church walls'.[22] The

---

[18]   For an interesting analysis of spatial metaphors in the language of Stalinism see Katerina Clark, 'Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space', in Evgeny Dobrenko and Eric Naiman (eds), *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space* (Seattle, 2003), pp. 3–18. For post-Stalinist socialism see the 'Introduction' in David Crowley and Susan E. Reid (eds), *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford, 2002), p. 16.

[19]   Romsics, *Magyarország története*, p. 283.

[20]   As an example: in 1945 the Roman Catholic Church used its income from agricultural production to pay the salary of over 6,000 people employed in and around church buildings, 12,000 teachings staff at religious schools, the general maintenance of 1,500 parishes, 200 Catholic social institutions and roughly 2,000 retired and lay employees.

[21]   Mészáros, *Kimaradt tananyag, a diktatúra és az egyház, 1945–1956* (Budapest, 1994) p. 35.

[22]   Mészáros writes about 'vestry Catholicism' (*sekrestye-katolicizmus*), ibid., p. 35. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the state even subsidized the rebuilding of some churches damaged during the war. Lajos Ordass, *Önéletrajzi írások* (Bern, 1985), p. 159.

spatial metaphor was probably not a conscious choice in this formulation, but it nonetheless accurately points to the fact that the ideological battle between the churches and the newly-established state came to be concretized in discussions about church buildings. Of course, it was not only the building that mattered. All that happened inside the church did not go unnoticed either: 'agitation' against the state was in no form tolerated. Beginning with the establishment of the State Office of Church Affairs in 1951, sermons were systematically observed, politically suspicious (or extremely popular) priests and ministers were persecuted, sent into prison or were put under pressure through the threat of withholding their salary subsidies. Churchgoers, too, faced sanctions: they were put at a disadvantage at the workplace and their children were not allowed to attend university. The Party prohibited its members to attend religious ceremonies – a prohibition that had only limited success – but since the constitution explicitly stated the freedom of religion and faith, the state was not able to completely ban religious life. The 'workers' state' found it difficult to come to terms with the fact that even workers had religious culture. For example, in May 1950, the political department of the Hungarian State Railway Company wrote with dismay that the collective of the local railway company helped to restore a church building in the town of Hegyeshalom.[23]

Nonetheless, in many ways the church building literally embodied the place of religion in the new, socialist society. Inasmuch as the state considered religion to be a necessary evil in this 'period of transition,' the church building was seen as the proper place for communication between priests/ministers and their congregation. In fact, according to Party officials, the church building was the *only* place where such communication should take place, while other venues such as private homes or public spaces in general were automatically considered suspicious.[24] The level of maintenance of the church buildings was seen as an easily identifiable marker for the strength of the congregation: the success or failure of collections for restoring church buildings, for example, was interpreted as a sign of strong or weak religiosity.

The beginnings of de-Stalinization after 1953 and the revolution of 1956 made a major impact on the dynamics of the conflict between the religious and the material world view in Hungary. In an effort to build a new basis of

---

[23]　Magyar Államvasutak Igazgatósága, 'Jelentés a Budapesti Vasútigazgatóság területén működő politikai osztály munkájáról', dated 12 May 1950. In MOL, MDP Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának ülései, XXXV. 95. a. 19 öe, p. 175.

[24]　On the importance of the family as a site of religiosity, see Mészáros, *Kimaradt tananyag*, p. 61. Also István Regőczi, *Isten vándora* (Budapest, 1991). As Crowley and Reid rightly point out, often the most inconspicuous places became (or were considered) the most dangerous sites of dissent. 'Introduction' in Crowley and Reid (eds), *Socialist Spaces*, p. 16.

legitimacy after the revolution, the Communist Party, now renamed the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, changed its tactics in the struggle against church and religion. In 1958, the Central Committee of the Party identified rites of passage (rituals marking landmark events in a person's biography: birth, becoming an adult, marriage, death) as a primary front in the battle against the religious world view. A Party directive formulated in July that year confirmed like many others before that there was an 'irreconcilable conflict' between Marxism-Leninism and the 'religious world view', but it shifted the emphasis from fighting against the church as an institution to the necessity of investing into creating a socialist personality. While the Party's efforts in fighting against the clerical enemies of the state could bear fruit as soon as in the next five years, so the authors of the directive argued, the fight against the religious world view might take generations.[25] What this meant in practice was that the Party continued to ruthlessly eliminate outspoken enemies of the regime, but in terms of general ideological questions, it was willing to invest more into developing socialist alternatives.[26] Considering that religious denominations were forced to confine their activities to the most strictly defined areas of ritual practice, the intense investment into the development of socialist rites of passage meant that the state tried to chip away at the last vestige of the social function of religion in Hungary. This was a risky project. The state was painfully aware that the churches had an advantage on this field, almost impossible to match: as Party officials wrote, it was difficult to argue against 2,000 years of experience.[27]

Following the Party's new program regarding everyday life, the Institute for People's Education (*Népművelési Intézet*) worked out elaborate scenarios for a number of socialist rites of passage, including the funeral.[28] The socialist funeral was meant to be recognizably different from the church rites both in

---

[25]   Mészáros, *Kimaradt tananyag*, 48, 55.

[26]   Romsics, *Magyarország története*, p. 415. On the subject of the restrictions on religious education in schools: Mészáros, *Kimaradt tananyag*, pp. 72–80. Friedrich Hainbuch, *Kirche und Staat in Ungarn nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1982), pp. 40–44; Jason Wittenberg, *Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 115–45. Priests who devoted too much time to educating children could end up in prison even in the early 1970s. István Regőczi, *Isten vándora* (Békés, 1988), pp. 415–18.

[27]   In this sense Ervin Goffman's theory of rituals as vehicles of risk management seems highly applicable for socialist rites of passage. Dietrich Harth, 'Ritual and Other Forms of Social Action', in J. Kreinath, J. Snoek and M. Strausberg (eds), *Theorizing Rituals: Issues, Topics, Approaches, Concepts,* vol. 1 (London, 2006), p. 23.

[28]   Other rites included a name-giving ceremony to replace baptism, a socialist wedding, a ceremony for receiving the personal identity card and numerous others to replace church festivals. Many of these rites never gained broad popularity.

content and in form. There would be no reference to the Bible in the service and cremation was promoted as the most fitting form to dispose of dead bodies in a socialist society. Secular funerals had precedents in Hungary that went back to the nineteenth century, and explicitly socialist funerals had already been taking place between the establishment of the Communist regime after the Second World War and 1958 – members of state, members of the armed forces, or Communists who died in the revolution of 1956 were buried in great socialist pomp. The Kerepesi cemetery, a municipal cemetery, which already in the nineteenth century started to acquire the reputation of a national pantheon, was now officially declared as the resting place of the heroes of communism, and while at the other municipal cemeteries all kinds of burial rites were allowed – confessional and non-confessional – this did not apply to the Kerepesi cemetery where religious rites were expressly forbidden after 1956.[29] Since this cemetery came to be preserved for the political elite and included a Pantheon of the Labour Movement (established in 1959), this restriction made sense: as a powerful symbolic embodiment of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', this cemetery became the site of the dictatorship of secular burial rites.[30] Nonetheless, until the late 1950s, no systematic thought was given to proper socialist rites that could be applied on a large scale to average citizens. Nothing illustrates more the novelty of the Party's concentrated effort to develop socialist rites of passage starting in 1958 than the fact that the planners of Sztálinváros (Stalin town, today Dunaújváros), an industrial town that had been built less than a decade earlier, did not include a cemetery.[31] Sztálinváros was supposed to function as a shop window for the socialist way of life and create an ideal environment for the 'unfolding of a socialist personality'. In the early 1950s, not much thought was given to a socialist way of burying the dead: the dwellers of this socialist city had to use the cemetery of Dunapentele, the tiny village next to which the town was built. The new emphasis on developing socialist rites of passage, however, brought new momentum into the discussion about religious space, including the ownership of cemeteries.

---

[29] On the Kerepesi cemetery as a site of national memory see Vilmos Tóth, 'A Kerepesi úti temető másfél évszázada' in *Budapesti Negyed* 24 (1992/2): 1. István Rév, *Retroactive Justice, Prehistory of Post-Communism* (Stanford, 2005), p. 10.

[30] On the Pantheon of the Labour Movement see Péter Apor, 'Immortalitas imperator: A Munkásmozgalmi Pantheon születése' in *Aetas* 17 (2002/2-3): 179-205.

[31] Sándor Horváth, *A kapu és a határ: mindennapi Sztálinváros* (Budapest, 2004), p. 74.

'It Must Not Look Like Expropriation:' The Dynamics of the Soft Dictatorship

The Party's interest in rituals started out as a partly theoretical issue in the late 1950s, but by a decade later, when the State Office of Church Affairs was looking into the possibility of taking over cemeteries, it had gained new urgency. The reason for this was partly profane: by the late 1960s the oldest generation of Communists was slowly dying out. Party officials considered the funerals of 'old Party members' (*régi párttagok*) to be important public events – after all, these funerals provided good opportunities to showcase and celebrate sound, socialist biographies. Usually, the local chapter of the Party organized the funeral ceremony for such old members and also bore the costs. These costs added up to a significant sum. For example, in 1971, the Budapest chapter of the socialist party spent a total of 563,113 Ft on 175 funerals.[32] This means that they paid over 3,000 Ft on average per funeral. This amount was nowhere close to the sum of over 60,000 Ft the state paid for the funeral of Zoltán Kodály, the highly respected composer and cultural icon, in 1967 – an amount that equalled the price of three new Trabant cars. But it was still a little more than state-owned companies were willing to pay to subsidize the funerals of their employees in case of the funeral of a distinguished employee or the victim of an industrial accident.[33] The Hungarian State Railway Company (*Magyar Államvasutak*), for example, paid around 1,500 Ft on average for funerals of workers who died in accidents at work. In some special cases, the company was willing to pay up to 3,000 Ft for a headstone in the cemetery in the 1960s.[34] The number of 'old Party members' dying increased every year. Discussions about the organizational details and costs of their funerals as well as the impact of such events on the broader population became a permanent fixture in the meetings of Party organizations.

---

[32]   Meetings of the Executive Committee of the Budapest chapter of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (*MSZMP Budapesti Végrehajtó Bizottságának ülései*), dated 10 March 1972, MOL, XXXV.1.a.4., 373 öe., p. 19.

[33]   The receipt of the Fővárosi Temetkezési Vállalat on Kodály´s funeral, dated 11 April 1967 in MOL, XIX I-4–96307–10. The total amount was 60 344 Ft.

[34]   For example, in the case of Mrs István Kun, the MÁV paid 1,569 Ft towards the costs of the funeral. This was a religious funeral and while the company was willing to pay the full costs for the flowers, the grave, the washing and dressing of the deceased, it paid only a part of the costs of the 'religious ceremony'. Archive of the MÁV, 3011/1969, p. 4. In the case of the deaths of Ms János Koncsor and her son, the MÁV paid the costs of the funeral with the exception of the flowers that the family had ordered in addition to the wreaths the company provided and also 3,000 Ft towards a headstone. MÁV, 6992/1968, p. 2. I am grateful to Sándor Horváth for sending me these sources.

Local Party functionaries counted the funerals of 'old Party members' as important occasions for setting inspiring examples for the immediate social environment of the deceased. However, grieving families often resisted the secular rites and insisted on a religious funeral. Party functionaries considered religious funerals detrimental to the Party's image. In particular, they feared the impression such funerals made on the young generation, who would be confused if a distinguished Party member had been laid to rest in the presence of a priest. As one member of the Executive Committee of the Party in Békéscsaba noted: the religious funeral of an 'old Party member' 'causes a break in the education of young people, who used to talk to them about their activities in the labour movement'.[35] Although manuals on secular funeral rites never tired of pointing out that the graveside was not the proper place for convincing people of the superiority of the socialist system, secular funerals in general and the funerals of 'old Party members' in particular, were nonetheless considered as important occasions where the Party's public image was shaped.[36]

One of the main reasons for the populace's resistance to secular funeral rites, Party officials concluded, must be the ownership of cemeteries: 'It is a problem that only about 40 per cent of all cemeteries in the country belong to the councils, the rest is operated by various confessions. This split is a negative influence on the spreading of funerals without religious ceremony on a large scale'.[37] Indeed, in contrast to farmland and other real estate, confessional cemeteries and the actual church buildings remained church properties even after the land reform of 1945 and the expropriations after 1949. According to the statistics of the Institute for People's Education, around 75 per cent of all cemeteries were owed by religious denominations in 1972. (This statistic probably counted all cemeteries, including those that were no longer in use.)[38]

Nonetheless, it was a simplification to blame the limited success of secular funerals solely or even mainly on the mixed ownership of burial grounds. It was

---

[35]　The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the MSZMP in Békés county, 10 January, 1969, 314 őe., p. 6. Accessed through http://archivportal.arcanum.hu.

[36]　Zoltán Rácz, head of the division of the Institute for People's Education responsible for the development of new, secular rites of passage, pointed out repeatedly that the graveside was not the right place for condemning political enemies. Internal memo at the Institute for People's Education dated 10 July 1961, Népművelési Adattár (currently housed in Magyar Művelődési Intézet és Kepzőművészeti Lektorátus), 2033, p. 1. This view is reflected in the numerous manuals Rácz wrote through the years to the 1980s.

[37]　Files of the Committee for Agitation and Propaganda of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (*MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottságának iratai*), 24 June 1969, MOL 119. őe., pp. 10.

[38]　Confidential report of the Institute for People's Education, in Népművelési Adattár 4361/72-VII, MOL, XIX-A-21-c 002–002–1-41–7d, 34, p. 10.

a fact that secular funerals spread much slower than expected. In the year 1969, 10 years after the first experiments with the introduction of socialist forms of rites of passage, 82 per cent of funerals were still religious, 10 per cent of funerals were conducted according to secular rituals, and the rest, 8 per cent, had no ceremony at all.[39] The unfamiliar style of the socialist ritual and the lack of well-trained public speakers, an endemic problem through the entire period, led to embarrassing blunders and made secular rituals, not just funerals but other rituals too, especially name-givings (the socialist version of baptism), the object of public ridicule. A well-known actress at the time, Irén Psota, for example, organized a name giving ceremony for her nine dogs. The ceremony was televised and made the evening news.[40] Humorous reports about secular funerals in the countryside also made the pages of the contemporary satirical journals, and a member of the Party's Executive Committee in Budapest reported indignantly to his colleagues that he read in the daily paper about a secular funeral orator who rode his bike across the largest municipal cemetery in Budapest to arrive to his appointments in time, appalling grieving family members.[41] An exasperated bureaucrat at the State Office of Church Affairs summed up the first ten years of secular rituals in a report in the early 1970s: the churches picked up on the internal critique of the Party and 'they refer to this [criticism], saying that even the Communists think so [i.e. ridicule their own rites]. Is this then the way we should bury our dead?'[42] Even those Party officials who blamed the church ownership of cemeteries for the problems at the funerals of 'old Party members' had to admit that the socialist rites were rarely a match in quality to the religious ones.[43] Their expectation that people would choose secular rites not because they

---

[39]   As grounds for comparison, in 1987, the last year for which I have statistics, 78 per cent of the funerals were still conducted according to a religious rite and only 16 per cent were secular. Statistics from Köpeczi, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, p. 129.

[40]   This particularly angered the Party. The case was discussed as a disgraceful example for disrespecting the new rites. Point four at the session of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest (*Budapesti Tanács Végrehajtó Bizottsága*), 20 November 1968, Budapest Főváros Levéltára (BFL) XXIII 102, a, p. 130.

[41]   Ibid., p. 125.

[42]   Notices to the 'Report on the State and Tasks of the Socialist Rites', n.d. in MOL XIX-A-c 00002–002–1-41–7d, 30, p. 6.

[43]   Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party in Békés county, 6 September 1968, 305 őe., p. 7. Socialist eulogies received much criticism through the entire period. There were efforts to professionalize the profession, but, according to the research of ethnographers in the 1980s, the quality remained quite low. Márta Halasy, 'Polgári temetések 1980-ban Budapesten a farkasréti temetőben,' in Mihály Hoppál (ed.), *Halottkultusz* (Budapest, 1982), p. 383.

were superior in quality but because they expressed the right ideology remained unfulfilled, however.[44]

The 1970 regulations on cemetery use were supposed to create an environment that was conducive for the new, secular rites, but the regulations were framed in the familiar discourse on modernization and hygiene. The regulations started with a long list of requirements regarding basic cemetery infrastructure: building and maintaining a fence; ensuring the proper guarding of the premises; making the cemetery grounds easily accessible, and providing facilities for storing dead bodies until the funeral. Following the list about the responsibilities of the operators of a cemetery, point two of the new regulation stated:

> should the proprietor of a *confessional* cemetery be unable to fulfil the requirements and should it therefore – *or for another reason (for example, the size of the congregation decreases in the given settlement)* – offer the rights of ownership of the cemetery in its possession to the State, endorsed by the church authorities, this [offering] can be accepted by the executive committee of the town (municipal) council as the representative of the State. [emphasis mine][45]

This point rested on two assumptions which were in full accordance with the tenets of Communist ideology regarding the trajectory of religion but bore little relation to the realities of funeral practice. The first assumption was that the size of congregations would continue to shrink as new generations grew up which had been socialized in the atheistic education system. The statistics might have even suggested this trend when they looked at the rates of church attendance and enrolment figures in religious education. However, when it came to funerals, it was not only regular churchgoers who wanted to be buried with a religious ceremony. As mentioned above, even veterans of the Party often had a religious funeral, as a result of either their family's or their own wishes.

The second assumption behind this point in the cemetery regulations was that *only* confessional cemeteries might have problems fulfilling the basic hygienic and infrastructural requirements set by municipal authorities. This was a particularly cynical point for three reasons. First, the financial difficulties preventing the churches from modernizing their cemeteries stemmed from the fact that the complex economic system they had operated was destroyed by the

---

[44] Even Party functionaries disagreed about the extent to which new rites should be aggressively propagated. As a Party official said in a session of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest in 1968: 'A marriage is a question I have to settle with my wife. It is not a social matter.' Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest, Point 4, 20 November 1968, BFL XXIII 102 a, microfilm 10959, p. 126.

[45] *Hatályos jogszabályok gyűjteménye*, p. 752.

expropriations after the Second World War. The church-owned cemeteries were not and were not meant to be independent enterprises. Secondly, the Ministry of Building and Urban Development and the State Office of Church Affairs circulated a joint internal memorandum on the execution of the new regulations in which they advised local councils to accept the confessional cemeteries offered to them only in three cases: 'a. if the cemetery is not closed and not full yet, b. if the congregation has multiple cemeteries and offers one [which is not in the worst condition], c. the city needs the cemetery property for urban development'.[46] In other words, the state did not want cemeteries that were old, full and in need of repair. Those cemeteries, therefore, which were already a financial liability for the churches, were to remain the responsibility and the financial burden of the churches. Thirdly, towns soon realized themselves how difficult it was to keep cemeteries solvent on their own, and municipal cemeteries were often in no better shape than confessional ones. The author of a report on the Kerepesi cemetery, the above-mentioned national pantheon, complained in 1969 that even this most symbolic of cemeteries was in abysmal condition and that the monuments were badly in need of repair and renovation.[47]

The emphasis on the 'voluntarism' of the offer had a bitter ring to it, as many people remembered all too well what the consequences of refusing to participate in 'voluntary' projects used to be in the 1950s. Yet the Kádár era of the 1970s was fundamentally different from the Rákosi system 20 years earlier. By the 1970s, state and social controls of everyday practices were coming increasingly closer to each other. This meant that, instead of direct coercion, a complex system of rewards and punishments was supposed to drive social (and cultural) change.

So far, I have argued in this chapter that the deliberations on the ownership of cemetery space should be read against the background of the socialist state's efforts to create a new sepulchral culture. The worries in Party circles about the failure of this project can help us understand why the issue of cemetery ownership became so important in 1970. The cemetery regulations mentioned sepulchral practice only at one point explicitly: when they discussed questions related to cremation. In this point, too, control over space was supposed to enable the state to influence sepulchral culture. Cremation had a long tradition in free-thinker communities in Central Europe since the middle of the nineteenth century. The Protestant churches quickly made their peace with this new form of burial and accepted it, while the Vatican prohibited cremations until the 1960s. The first crematorium in Hungary was built already in the early 1930s in Debrecen, but

---

[46]   Joint memorandum of the Ministry of Building and Urban Development and the State Office of Church Affairs, dated Budapest 20 July 1970, MOL XIX-A-21-e-4d, p. 1.

[47]   Point 4 in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest, 9 July 1969, BFL, XXIII 102 a, vol. 464, pp. 237–43.

the Catholic Church lobbied so successfully against cremation as a form of burial that the building, fully operational, stood abandoned for the 20 years following its completion. Only two years after the establishment of the Communist regime did the crematorium in Debrecen start to work in 1951.[48] The first crematorium in the capital city was built only in 1968, after the one in Debrecen could not cope with the increasing demand any longer.

To popularize and promote cremation as the proper, socialist way of disposing of dead bodies, the Party adopted the arguments free-thinkers developed in the previous century: cremation saved cemetery space, it was hygienic and cost-efficient. The fact that socialist cemetery reform built on arguments developed in the nineteenth century was not uniquely characteristic to Hungary. Cemetery reformers across the Eastern bloc, notably in Czechoslovakia and East Germany, strongly promoted cremation as the modern form of funeral, and the discourse about cremation in both states had long-term historical roots.[49] The official propaganda for cremation, however, remained restrained in Hungary in comparison to the GDR or Czechoslovakia. Some prominent Communists were cremated, such as Ferenc Münnich in 1967 for example, and this was mentioned in reports about their funeral.[50] Cremations were also often mentioned in short announcements about funeral services that family members of regular citizens of socialist Hungary put into the newspapers. Cremations thus received much publicity but were not forced.

The cemetery regulations of 1970 underlined the publicity of cremations: §23 (4) of regulations stated that cemeteries had to reserve their most central locations ('next to a major road or square') for those who 'distinguished themselves in state, political and social activities – including those who fell

---

[48]　Article on Hungary in *Encyclopedia of Cremation*, ed. Douglas J. Davies and Lewis H. Mates (London, 2005), pp. 251–6. Discussions in the 1930s about building a crematorium in Budapest to solve the capital's endemic problem of cemetery space came up against strong opposition from both Catholics and the Jewish community. Fehér, *Budapest Székesfőváros temetőinek története*, p. 92.

[49]　Olga Nešporová, 'The Rhetoric of the Secular Funeral in an Historical Perspective (A Czech Republic Case Study)', presented at the '10th Conference of Death, Dying and Disposal' at Radbound University, Nijmegen, 9 September 2011; Zdeněk R. Nešpor, 'The Cremation Movement in the Czech Lands in the Twentieth Century', presented at the same conference; Zdeněk R. Nešpor and Olga Nešporová, '"V žáru lásky se život započal – v žáru ohně se končí". Čtyři pohledy na vývoj kremačního hnutí v české společnosti', forthcoming in *Soudobé dějiny* 18/4 (2011). On the ideological background to propagating cremation in East Germany see Barbara Happe, 'Urnengemeinschaftsanlagen. Zur Bestattungs- und Friedhofskultur in der DDR', *Deutschland Archiv* 3 (2001): 436–46.

[50]　'Nagy részvéttel búcsúztatták Münnich Ferencet' in *Népszabadság*, 3 December 1967, p. 1.

in battle and the members of the Hungarian People's Army – and for placing urns'[51] Thus, the regulation stipulated two scenarios in which a member of the community should be held up as an example for the rest of society in the context of sepulchral practice. The first scenario was based, understandably, on the particulars of a biography (service to state and society). The second scenario was based on the participation of the family in at least one aspect of modern sepulchral culture; cremation did not necessarily go together with a secular funeral but it fitted into the modernization discourse in general. In many ways, the fact that urns received a distinguished space in the cemetery embodied perfectly the political culture of this era. Following the dictum 'who is not against us is for us', even indifference was reinterpreted as a form of political consent. Thus, choosing cremation over inhumation was rewarded in the spatial hierarchy of sepulchral space regardless of the actual motivations of the families behind choosing this form of disposing of their dead.

Overall, the reformers of sepulchral culture recognized that changes in this field would have to be slow. With regard to cremation, §11 (5) of the cemetery regulations recognized that the disposal of dead bodies was a potentially contentious issue within the family of the deceased. It stated that if the relatives could not agree on the form of the funeral but one of them was willing to make arrangements for inhumation, the body must not be cremated.[52] In other words, cremation had to be the result of a broad consensus within the family. In other areas of sepulchral practice, too, slow changes were promoted. While the aesthetic elements of secular funerals were considered a key to their success, Party officials as well as specialists working out ritual practices, warned from rash, radical changes to the aesthetic conventions of sepulchral culture. The socialist aesthetic of death was supposed to convey the message that, unlike the religious world view which supposedly put too heavy of an emphasis on life after death, socialism, or to be more precise, socialist humanism, was a celebration of life. Thus, lighter, crème colours were to take the place of black as an appropriate colour for modern funerals, but red, the colour of the Communist Party, was to be used only sparingly.[53] Covering the walls of funeral halls in cloth was to be phased out but only gradually. Newly built, 'modern' funeral parlours boasted of bare walls, but drapes in already existing locations were tolerated.[54] If the drapes remained, their colour was to be changed: 'instead of the black colour reminding

---

[51] *Hatályos jogszabályok gyűjteménye*, p. 211.

[52] Ibid., p. 209.

[53] Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest, Point 1 on 28 December 1962, BFL, XXIII 102 a, microfilm 10946, p. 17.

[54] Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest, Point 4 on 20 November 1968, BFL, XXIII 102 a, microfilm 10959, p. 124.

one of magic, the use of lighter [pastel] colours is spreading'.[55] In terms of music, too, public taste was not challenged excessively. 'Heroes of labour' traditionally had a brass band playing at the grave, but besides the *Internationale*, the repertoire of funeral orchestras contained hardly any new pieces of music which could have radically challenged the aesthetic sensibilities of the funeral guests. Although there were new pieces written specifically for the purpose of expressing grief in a modern way, they could only rarely be performed by the small bands (no more than six people), which usually played at secular funerals.[56]

Conclusion

What was the effect of the cemetary regulations of 1970? Statistical data from the early 1980s shows that the overall ownership-structure of cemeteries did in fact change. In 1983 only around 48 per cent of the 4,571 cemeteries then functioning were owned by the various churches.[57] Whether this change of ownership actually resulted in an improvement in cemetery infrastructure, the purported main incentive behind the regulation, is hard to say. While state-owned cemeteries were usually better equipped, it is nonetheless telling, for example, that only around half of the cemeteries (regardless of ownership) had direct access to water in 1983.[58] Ritual practices also changed during this decade: in 1983 16.4 per cent of all funerals were secular, which was a 6.4 per cent increase compared to 1970.[59] This number has been gradually, slowly increasing through the decade and reflected without a doubt the cumulative effect of a range of factors: the fact that old priests were often not replaced after they died, that secular education in schools was slowly making a broad impact on society and that secular rituals were professionalized over time. The ownership of cemeteries was thus one among many variables, but one that the reformers of sepulchral culture considered important.

---

[55]   Report on the state of burial services, the condition of cemeteries and the development of this field prepared by the Housing and Communal Services Department of the Ministry for Building and Urban Development (*Építésügyi és Városfejlesztési Minisztérium Lakás- és Kommunálisügyi Főosztálya*), dated January 1984, MOL XIX-A-21-c 0002–002–1-41–7d, 32, Appendix 4, p. 1.

[56]   Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of Budapest, Point 1.2 on 28 December 1962, BFL, XXIII 102 a, microfilm 10946, p. 18.

[57]   Cemetery statistics, 31 December 1983, in 'A Családi és Társadalmi Események Országos Koordinációs Bizottsága anyagából', in MOL XIX-A-21-c 0002–002–1-41–7d, 24, p. 1.

[58]   Ibid.

[59]   Köpeczi, *Az Állami Egyházügyi Hivatal tevékenysége*, pp. 127–8.

Two important jubilees were celebrated in Hungary in 1970: Lenin's centennial and the twenty-fifth anniversary of Hungary's 'liberation' by the Red Army. The celebrations focused on the achievements of socialism since the end of the Second World War and stressed ideological continuities, especially the contemporary and continued relevance of Lenin's work. Yet the 'real, existing socialism' of the 1970s could not be explained by simple ideological formulae. The cemetery regulations of 1970 should be read as a new chapter in a particular discursive tradition of cemetery reform (framed in terms of modernization and concerns regarding public health), which, at the same time, embodied the complex system of partial compromises that characterized the Kádár era.

Afterword
The New Geography of Hurry

Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom

Beijing is bursting with explosive energy...

As nineteenth-century London reflected the mercantile wealth of Britain's Industrial Revolution, and twentieth-century New York showcased the United States as commercial and cultural powerhouse, Shanghai seems poised to symbolize the twenty-first century...

   Excerpts from 'The Best City Reads of 2011', Atlantic Cities.com, 21 December 2011

For the first time in history, there will be more urban dwellers than rural residents in China, according to the 2012 Blue Book on China's Society... [This] will mean not only a structural change in the nation's demographics, but also changes in people's ways of life, consumption behavior and personal values ... the pace of urbanization will accelerate conspicuously, injecting tremendous vitality into the economy.

China Daily, 21 December 2011

In 'Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol,' Tom Cruise's super spy Ethan Hunt scampers up the façade of the Burj Khalifa, the needle-like structure that punctures the clouds high above Dubai...Audiences have been delighted by Cruise's stunts... But as cinematic symbols go, the Burj is an oddity. Most action sequences set astride modern skyscrapers happen considerably west of here...

Los Angeles Times, online edition, 21 December 2011

These three quotations, chosen from disparate works that happened to appear online on a single day in 2011, all point to special features of the contemporary urban scene that set it apart from that of earlier times. Many of the points raised in the engaging chapters of this historically minded volume still apply to the present era. And certainly, the main arguments in its stimulating and wide ranging 'Introduction' are important to keep in mind when contemplating the nature of twenty-first-century urban life. Still, it seems fitting to devote this 'Afterword' to some thoughts on how the ground has been shifting when it comes to the frantic pace of contemporary urban life and thinking about where

cities may be heading. We need to take stock of what it means that, for some time now, we are living in an era when the 'architecture of hurry' limned so elegantly in an earlier section of this book is no longer something that is a feature only – or indeed even mainly – of Western cities.

What exactly has changed? There have been shifts that have altered the stories we tell and ways we think about individual nations. Most notably perhaps, as the middle quote provided above reminds us, China is no longer a predominantly rural country, so the old habit of describing it and representing it as a land of villages needs to be discarded. There have also been transformations in the global pecking order of urban centres. It is no longer safe to assume, as it once was, that the places where skyscrapers shoot up highest, the pace of life is fastest, and the next mega-event of global importance (from the Olympics to the Expo to the World Cup finals) will be held in Europe or North America. Or even in those locales plus Japan, the first place where a non-Western 'architecture of hurry' took hold. The cities which tend to be described as 'bursting with explosive energy' are now as likely to be found in Asia and South America as on any other continent, and while it can still mean a lot to an urban centre (and the nation state to which it belongs) when it joins the grand roll call of sites that have hosted a top-tier mega-event, it is no longer a complete novelty when a Rio joins a list that at one point contained just North American and European cities and Tokyo.

In addition, as the last quotation offered above shows, a change has occurred relating to skyscrapers and cinematic representations of the futuristic. Hollywood's love affair with beloved soaring Western 'cinematic symbols,' such as the Eiffel Tower, shows no sign of abating. Indeed the best-known Parisian icon, which when built was the tallest structure on earth, got adoring treatment in not just one but two of the films nominated for the 2011 Academy Award for Best Picture. And yet, when the Burj Khalafi took centre stage in the latest 'Mission Impossible' film, it was not quite as much of a novelty as the *Los Angeles Times* report suggested. After all, Tom Cruise had inspired similar headlines with the acrobatic stunts he performed on the side of Pudong skyscrapers in the previous installation in that same series, and we have grown used to seeing spy thrillers and adventure films that use still other cities located outside the West, such as Hong Kong and Singapore, to represent state-of-the-art forms of urban modernity. In 2012, James Bond would make his first visit to Shanghai on-screen, something that seemed overdue more than unexpected by that point. Similarly, in another 2012 Hollywood production, it was hardly jarring (though still good for a laugh) when the character Jeff Daniels played in the time-travel film *Looper* shook his head when the character played by Joseph Gordon-Levitt spoke of fantasizing about living in Paris in the future, and counselled

the younger man to go to China instead. Nor did this comment by the film's director, Rian Johnson, have the kind of shock value it would have had a quarter of a century ago, when China's biggest city was far from one of the world's most futuristic looking one: 'In many ways Shanghai was a more natural setting for a sci-fi movie than my beloved Paris' (*The Guardian*, 1 October 2012).

Something else is also worth noting: when the Eiffel Tower and some New York skyscrapers are shown now, it is as likely to suggest nostalgia for an earlier phase of modernity as to encourage us to ruminate on the nature of the present. Here, the two lauded 2011 Hollywood films that featured the Eiffel Tower, *Hugo* and *Midnight in Paris*, offer cases in point. Each of these finds a director associated with New York's past and present telling a tale set, mostly in one case and exclusively in the other, in the France of the early 1900s. Fast-paced action tales can still be set in cities once associated with the 'architecture of hurry,' but you no longer have to move from them to the countryside to invoke a sense of slower paced and more leisurely times.

To get a clearer sense of how the present differs from the past, where the themes I have introduced are concerned, here is a quick summary of some basic features of the conventional wisdom among many present-day historians concerning urban trends of the mid 1800s through to the early 1900s. Few would quarrel with the statement that it was an era when Paris and London were seen as the world's leading cities, and that they maintained their status as such in large part owing to the roles they played as capitals of major empires, centres of international finance, and hubs of global trade. They also for a time monopolized playing host to high-profile, world-class events, including the first International Expositions, the predecessors to the World Expos of today that were to that time what the Olympics are to this one.

Many would also accept that the period in question was an era when key urban centres in the United States – the country that was then the great power on the rise to watch – made dramatic surges toward world city status. They began to sport some of the world's tallest buildings, to host World's Fairs (as International Expositions increasingly started to be called), and to hold Olympics (as these began to rise in importance and sometimes be held in conjunction with World's Fairs).

In short, it was an epoch when both the established leading cities and the main places to keep an eye on, for those interested in the latest developments in city living, were all located in the West. And when people questioned the livability of urban existence and worried about overcrowding, polluted air, and so on, they also focused on those locales, places like Paris and London at the top and the age's 'wannabe global cities', to borrow a phrase John Rennie Short has used for more recent times, such as Berlin, New York, Vienna and Chicago.

There were, to be sure, famous cities located outside the West, but they tended to be seen as representing the urban *past* rather than the urban *present*. They certainly did not seem places that offered a frightening or exhilarating window onto the urban future – though Western-run enclaves in colonial and quasi-colonial cities could play that function, as Chinese commentaries of the day on the International Settlement of Shanghai, with its bright lights and strange machines, feeling futuristic, suggest. In the light of this, it is no accident that, up until the early 1900s, when cityscapes were integrated into utopian and dystopian works that worried or enthused about what lay just over the horizon, the settings were nearly always Western ones. This was true of novels, such as those of Jules Verne, and, a bit later, of the first futuristic urban films, *Metropolis*, for example. It was in the Western cities that things were built most quickly, new technologies of movement (such as trams) and communications (such as telegraphs) took hold soonest, and the pace of life generally was most frantic.

A commonplace way to describe what has happened since then is that cities in the 'East' have begun to compete with those in Europe and North America in all of the metrics just described. If you now want to move quickly, send messages fast, and look down on a city from a great height, you can go to Tokyo (with its bullet trains), Seoul (with its unusually speedy Internet), and Singapore (with its giant Ferris wheel). In film, now, the urban future is as likely to be represented by a shot of the Hong Kong skyline as of the Manhattan one. When Beijing hosted the Olympics, much was made of how futuristic the venues for the events looked. And when commentators worry about the cost to the environment of rapid urban development, they are likely to reflect on the difficulty of breathing the air in China, not Los Angeles.

It is too simplistic, though, to see all this in terms of the rise of the 'East' – with the global South also in the mix (thanks to developments in places such as Rio, which is on deck to host the upcoming Olympics, now that London had its turn playing that familiar role again in 2012) – as the geographical movement is actually better described geographically as a long term *westward* move. To summarize things a bit too neatly, there was the era of London and Paris, then of cities located across the Atlantic to the west of Europe, such as New York. After that, the most important claimants to be seen as 'cities of the future' in the middle-to-late 1900s were further west still: Los Angeles and Tokyo. Furthest west were still later competitors for the title, such as Shanghai and now Dubai, a pair of cities whose features director Michael Winterbottom rolled together when making *Code 46*, a film he wanted to have set in the future but filmed in contemporary locales that viewers would think could not possibly already exist. Where to next?

It is silly to put too much stock in the game of figuring out which city has the fastest pace of life, which should be placed at the top of global metropolis-ranking games, and so forth. But the 'westward' shift does show up in so many areas that it is worth factoring into any discussion of cityscapes through time. Cities like London, Paris and New York have not lost their power to shape ideas about urban space, but now there are other places in the mix as well. We need to remember this, but also remember, contrary to the largely positive spin on places 'bursting with energy' and characterized by 'vitality' in the quotes I used to open this short chapter, that modern cityscapes have always inspired nightmares as well as dreams. This has never been more true than today, when the fear linked to the 'architecture of hurry' is not just about people moving too fast for their own good, but much more profoundly global resources running out too quickly.

This page has been left blank intentionally

Index

Note: Entries in **bold** refer to figures