09 2016

URBANISM, SPIRITUALITY & WELL BEING SYMPOSIUM

SIMPOSIO URBANISTICA SPIRITUALITA' E BENESSERE

Immagini di copertina
1. *Growth of the Isfahan Bazaar*, Iran, 17th c.
Source: *Courtesy of Drawing by Nader Ardalan*
2. *Kumbh Mela ritual cultural ceremonies*, India, 21st c.
Source: Courtesy of Siddiqui Ganesh Danesh

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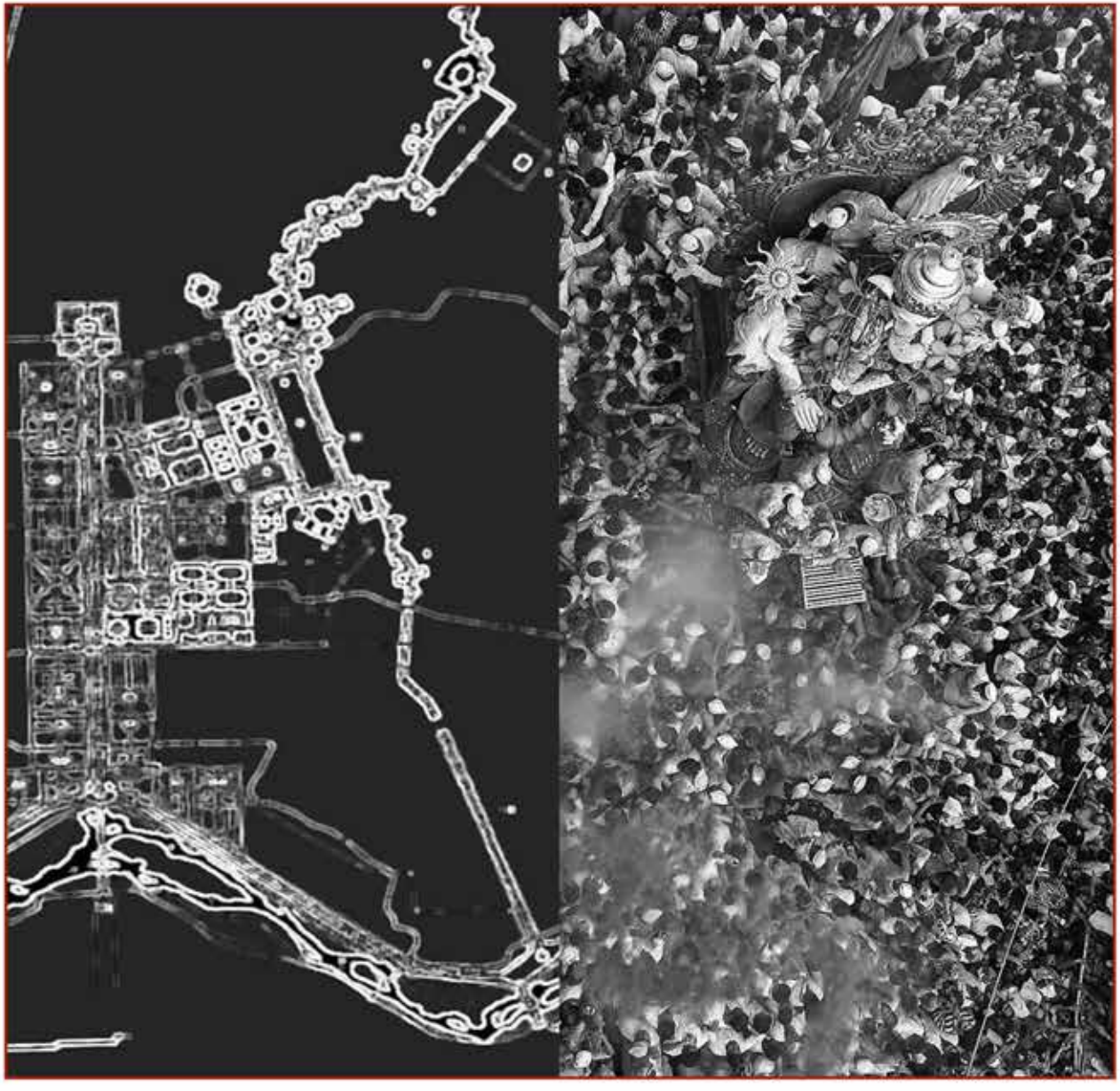

Ricerche e progetti per il territorio, la città e l'architettura
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Prefazione

Sono davvero molto lieto che la nostra rivista possa ospitare Thomas Berrie e Nader Anderlan come curatori di questo numero dedicato ad una serie di contributi selezionati con un processo di Blind peer review a partire dalla sempre più numerosa rete di studiosi e ricercatori coinvolti nell'ACSF – Architecture in Culture and Spirituality Forum (www.acsforum.org). Sono particolarmente orgoglioso di questo numero perché esso aderisce particolarmente alle tematiche a cui in_BO vorrebbe dedicarsi concedendoci così l'opportunità di specificare maggiormente l'identità e gli intenti della nostra rivista, ossia promuovere riflessioni, dibattiti ed anche provocazioni sull'architettura e il suo significato. Ciò che infatti distingue l' "architettura" dalla più corrente "edilizia" è la presenza di un senso, l'anelito ad un significato. Per queste ragioni l'architettura trascende la sua apparenza sensibile che deve essere considerata come il suo epifenomeno, come il suo corpo fisico. Dalla metafora di lungo corso tra lo spazio dell'architettura e corpo umano, deriva anche che così come l'uomo non può essere ridotto al proprio corpo, altrettanto l'architettura è molto di più del mero costruito. Viceversa, è proprio da questa metafora che l'aspetto metafisico dell'architettura emerge come uno dei suoi elementi intrinseci. L'architettura, sia essa presenza permanente o effimera, si origina dalle idee, dalle culture e da ciò in cui gli uomini credono. Questo fenomeno struttura gradualmente quanto chiamiamo paesaggio in una stratificazione archeologica generata dalla continua sedimentazione di significati, così come anche la psiche umana si è dimostrata essere il risultato di una sovrapposizione di molteplici percezioni ed esperienze. In tal modo l'ambiente diventa una rappresentazione complessa dell'uomo, tanto dei suoi pensieri, quanto dei suoi comportamenti e delle sue abitudini personali e sociali. Di questa rappresentazione complessa dell'umano la collezione di contributi che compone questa uscita restituisce un affresco eccellente, grazie a saggi e casi di studio provenienti da un orizzonte territoriale molto vasto. Anche questo è un aspetto che corrisponde particolarmente alla nostra rivista, perché anche questo numero collabora a modellare in_BO come uno strumento utile a promuovere e sostenere un dibattito ampio e globale sull'architettura e sui suoi significati.

Foreword

I am very pleased that our Journal hosted Thomas Berrie and Nader Anderlan as editors for this issue dedicated to a selection of peer-reviewed papers coming from the ever-expanding network of Architecture in Culture and Spirituality Forum (www.acsforum.org). I am particularly proud of this issue because it gives us the opportunity to highlight once more the specific nature of our journal, that is, debating, reflecting and also provoking on meaning in architecture. That which distinguishes "Architecture" from widespread "building construction", is precisely the presence of meaning. Therefore architecture transcends its physical presence which has to be thought of as an epiphenomenon, as its physical body. From the long course metaphor between space of architecture and human body derives that since human beings cannot be described only through their bodies, likewise architecture is much more than its buildings. It's vice versa exactly through this metaphor that the metaphysical aspect of architecture emerges as one of its intrinsic features. Architecture, both in its permanent displays and in its ephemeral ones, grows according to human beliefs, ideas, and cultures. This gradually structures that which we call landscape as an archeological stratification of meanings' sedimentation, exactly as human psyche has demonstrated to be the resulting overlap of different perceptions and experiences. Thus environment becomes a complex representation of man and of both his private and collective thinking and behaviours. The collection of papers that compose this issue assembles an excellent fresco of the above mentioned human complexity by means of essays and key-case studies coming from a broad range of countries. This is also an aspect which particularly aligns with our journal, since this issue also collaborates in shaping in_BO as a useful tool to promote and support worldwide debates about meanings in architecture.

Luigi Bartolomei

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Theme Issue Introduction

Nader Ardalan, Thomas Barrie

Leon Battista Alberti in De re aedificatoria *stated, "the city is like some large house and the house is in turn like some small city."[1] Five centuries later Alberti's analogy was poetically expanded by Aldo van Eyke as "start with this: make a welcome of each door and a countenance of each window. Make of each a place; a bunch a places of each house and each city, for a house is a tiny city, and a city a huge house."[2]*

What do they mean by these assertions? In Book 1 *of Alberti's treatise he states that architecture requires "compartition." Its success depends on the harmonious relationships between its parts in service of a Vitruvian inspired goal of a "single, harmonious work that respects utility, dignity and delight."[3] In* Book 5 *he goes on to describe the goals of the city and the house as the same. "It should be extremely healthy, it should offer every facility and every convenience to contribute to a peaceful, tranquil, and refined life." In* Place and Occasion *(1962) Aldo van Eyke wrote, "Start with this: make a welcome of each door and a countenance of each window. Make of each a place; a bunch a places of each house and each city, for a house is a tiny city, and a city a huge house."[4] Van Eyke's statement is very similar to Alberti's, but when one examines his further commentary it is clear he meant something very different.[5] Van Eyck was suspicious of any "system" that suggests a structured or formal autonomy divorced from how humans interact with the each other and the built environment, and from the human conditions itself.[6] A talk by van Eyck in 1963 is perhaps clearest in articulating his humanist position when he states, "The job of the planner is to provide built homecoming for all, to sustain a feeling of belonging. I would go so far to say that architecture is built homecoming." [7]*

Alberti's and Van Eyke's domestic urban constructs, though similar, actually present complementary aspects of the city – one instrumental, organizational, and rational; the other poetic, experiential, and humanistic. As such, they may provide productive means to re-conceptualize the contemporary city where often culturally prejudiced, disciplinary truncated, and overly instrumental solutions neglect, misunderstand, or minimize issues of spiritual, physical, and emotional health. Furthermore, the house-city metaphor suggests the fundamental human need for establishing an ontological foothold in the world, where cities not only reconcile the social, environmental, and political imperatives of our time, but also materialize the world and our place within in. That is, cities that effect our spiritual homecoming.

By 2030 there will be almost five billion people living in cities, with much of the growth occurring in developing countries. This accelerating global urbanization prompts reconsiderations of the city. It also suggests reconsiderations of how cities are assessed, conceived, and built. Given the sobering pressures of growing populations, climate change, resource depletion, and fiscal insolvency of global cities, new perspectives and multidisciplinary approaches are required. It demands of society to awaken to the fact that for a species to remain viable, it must establish a niche for itself that is holistically beneficial both for itself and for the well being of its surrounding context. This "beneficial niche" needs an attitudinal change, a transformation to what some have termed an emerging Ecological Age that may succeed the Technological age and foster a deep awareness of the sacred presence within each aspect of the universe and man's integral part in this web of existence.

The Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality Forum (ACSF) *was created in 2007 with the expressed intention of*

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addressing the interrelationship of culture, spirituality, and the built environment. Its members believed then, and continue to profess now, that contemporary global culture requires insightful studies, reflective making, critical assessment, and open dissemination regarding the transcendent in the built environment. By 'transcendent' they mean considerations associated not only with the sacred or metaphysical, but also ones that also facilitate human health and well being, care for the environment and other beings, and nurture interpersonal connections and community. Its members believe that the design and experience of the built environment can assist the spiritual development of humanity in service of addressing the world's most pressing issues.

In 2013 the Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality Forum, *in partnership with faculty at Harvard University, convened on campus and at Glastonbury Abbey the* Urbanism, Spirituality & Well being Symposium *with the goal of expanding the contexts, sources, and dialog regarding contemporary urbanism. The symposium convened participants from the fields of design (architecture, landscape design, urban planning), religious studies, public health and other related disciplines to address the ways in which the social, cultural, and built environments of cities can support collective and individual wellbeing. It focused on the potential of the city to contextualize our shared "human condition" as well as provide connections to the transcendent dimension of existence through architecture and urbanism. Periodically, over a span of several months from April to June, a three part series of public lectures, luncheon workshops and group discussions took place. They were structured as follows: research and investigations into how such potentials had been successfully realized in the Past; case studies of how they are being realized in the Present; and a review of trends of how they may be accomplished in the Future.*

This organization is reflected in the following papers that comprise this special volume dedicated to urbanism, spirituality, and wellbeing. There were over forty papers presented at the symposium and public lectures, all the result of a strict peer review process. Of these, eight were chosen for this publication, and are as follows:

Harvey Cox, the Hollis Research Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School, provided the opening keynote of the symposium. In **The Monastery, the City, and the Human Future**, *he outlines the historical and contemporary phenomena of pilgrimage. Important contemporary sites such as the Camino to Santiago de Compostella, Glastonbury, and Lourdes are examined in the context of our secular age and the secular city. Cox contextualizes contemporary pilgrimage as congruent with an emerging spirituality, which he incisively outlines. All to argue that the future city, which will become increasingly important, should support not impede this resurgent and ultimately hopeful, spirituality.*

Two essays discuss cities of the past and how perennial traditions have, and continue to, influence them, as explored through selected cities of the Middle East and Asia. In the article **Urbanism of Detachment**, *Rahul Mehrotra and Felipe Vera describe how in recent years, there has been an extraordinary intensification of pilgrimage practices, which has translated into the need of larger and more frequently constructed urban structures for hosting massive gatherings. The case of the Kumbh Mela, a legendary Hindu festival in India, sets the standards for understanding alternative ways of building cities that are transitory and with a temporality aligned with the ephemeral nature of massive human flows. The Kumbh Mela, which occurs every twelve years, creates the biggest ephemeral megacity in the world accommodating 3 million pilgrims. The scope of this extreme case prompts us to think about future cities more broadly.*

Nader Ardalan in **The Transcendent Dimension of Cities**, *focuses on two pivotal questions regarding urban environments: "What are the transcendent foundations that have given birth and historically sustained great cities of the Middle East over the last ten millennia, and what can we learn from them that may inform and influence the holistic transformation and life patterns of our cities today and their future?" Through case studies ranging from one of the earliest human settlements, Gobekli Tepe of the tenth-century BCE,*

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to Mecca, Jerusalem, Fez, and Isfahan of the seventeenth-century CE, he traces the key, perennial cultural and urban design principles that have characterized these traditionally transcendent cities.

Next are essays that present aspects and attributes of contemporary urbanism. Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago may date from the nineteenth-century, but its ideas are firmly positioned in the contemporary, as demonstrated by Kristen Schaffer in **Heaven on Earth: Swedenborgian Correspondences in the Plan of Chicago**. *She presents how Burnham's lifelong and devoted Swedenborgian faith informed his plan of Chicago – a largely unknown, but important history. Swedenborg was an eighteenth-century mystic whose prolific visionary writings, though not universally known, proved influential. Two Swenborgian concepts were particularly important to Burnham:* correspondence *and* uses, *or divine models and public benefits and how they might be realized in the contemporary city. Schaffer demonstrates how both were reflected in the Chicago plan and the public works it included, and suggests their contemporary relevance.*

In his essay, **In Search of Spirituality in the Places of Urban Decay: Case Studies in Detroit** *Joongsub Kim examines the phenomenon of urban decay in Detroit to offer a surprising aspect of spirituality and urbanism. Even though Detroit's recent history of population loss, disinvestment, and urban decline are not minimized or romanticized, Kim demonstrates how, paradoxically, the urban environment provides for a certain kind of spirituality, and he outlines its particular aspects, such as memory, community rituals, and the desire to do good works. In spite of, or even because of, Detroit's often-bleak cityscapes, these spiritual aspects provide unique perspectives regarding how the contemporary city might be reconsidered.*

In **Transitioning Natures: Robert Schuller's Garden Grove Experiment**, *Antonio Petrov presents Robert Schuller's innovative Garden Grove Church in Riverside, California to describe a particular, and pervasive, twentieth- and twenty-first century spirituality. Of these, placeless and diffuse contemporary spirituality results in a repositioning of traditional roles of sacred architecture. Through the lens of Richard Neutra's innovative design of Garden Grove, Petrov demonstrates how the architecture responded to, expressed, and facilitated very large participants in religious practices with implications regarding their relevance to sacred places in the contemporary city.*

Two final essays address the future city. Maged Senbel in **Utopian thinking and the intercultural co-creation of urban futures**, *argues for a renewal of utopian thought and aspiration, in the context of the urban challenges we face and which will become increasingly challenging. Senbel outlines specific examples of applied utopian thinking – from the bio-physical to the eco-social – and community-building as effective means to formulate them. All to suggest how the future city might be productively reimagined and transformed.*

Similar to Senbel, **Arguments for a Spiritual Urbanism** *by Julio Bermudez, outlines the compelling challenges humans face in the near future – and how they might be addressed through spiritual urbanism. He outlines the ways in which spirituality has grown and broadened to demonstrate its potential to transform how we conceptualize and build our cities. But perhaps most importantly, Bermudez presents how the future city may assist in individual and communal spiritual development. This leads to specific recommendations and a hopeful vision of how we might build the future city to support the advancement of human consciousness.*

As Harvey Cox insists in the introductory essay, the numerous challenges of a rapidly urbanizing world demand that "we must do better" in creating our cities than we have in the past. Julio Bermudez points out all of the benefits of our globalized, modern culture, while recognizing the immense challenges this has produced. Global climate change, economic disparity, resource depletion, and a certain kind of materialistic ennui are unfortunate, but inevitable, outcomes of the success humans have enjoyed in shaping and transforming their environments to fit their needs. The rapidly urbanizing world, however, illustrates that the old ways no longer work

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and our current habitations on the planet are unsustainable. That much is clear. How to proceed is more difficult.

Marshall Berman suggested that modernism was the "struggle to make ourselves at home in a constantly changing world." Perhaps the most fruitful way to begin is to cultivate a growing awareness of the sanctity of our home planet, and the necessity of subtle, or not so subtle, shifts of consciousness this recognition demands. So-called nature writers have traditionally articulated the sanctity and fragility of the natural world. But what about our urban environments – cannot they also be similarly conceptualized? It is through the agency of projecting human consciousness onto the natural world that it is ordered and rendered comprehensible. Conversely, our built environment materializes that same consciousness. Both are sacred – both may assist in the development of human consciousness. In this manner, cities can serve to sustain us and support our spiritual lives, while also expressing the spiritual ascendancy we have realized. That is the promise of new, integrative, and ultimately hopeful visions of the city included in the essays of this volume.

Endnotes:

1. Alberti, Leon Battista, (trans. Rykwert, Joseph, Leach, Neal, and Tavernor, Robert, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988, *Book 1*, p. 23. See also Tavernor, Robert, *On Alberti and the Art of Building*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
2. Van Eyck, Aldo, (Ed. Ligtelijin, Vincent, and Strauven, Francis, *Aldo van Eyck: Collected Articles and Other Writings, 1947-1998*, Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2008, from "Place and Occasion," 1962, p.471.
3. Alberti, Leon Battista, (trans. Rykwert, Joseph, Leach, Neal, and Tavernor, Robert, *Book 1*, p. 23.
4. Van Eyck, Aldo, (Ed. Ligtelijin, Vincent, and Strauven, Francis, *Aldo van Eyck: Collected Articles and Other Writings*, 1947-1998, Amsterdam: Sun Publishers, 2008, from "Place and Occasion," 1962, p.471.
5. For example, van Eyck's rebuttal to Christopher Alexander's 1966 article "A City is Not a Tree" challenged the part to whole hierarchy of Alexander's "Semi-lattice" theory as overly systemic, "oversimplified," and ultimately "unpoetic." van Eyke, p.447.
6. van Eyke, op cit., from *Team 10 Primer*, 1968, p. 447.
7. "Leaving 'home' and going 'home' are difficult matters both ways. Both house and city, therefore, should impart a feeling of going (coming) home whichever way you go. To go in or out, to enter, leave or stay are often harassing alternatives. Though architecture cannot do away with this truth, it can still counteract it by appeasing instead of aggravating its effects. It is human to tarry. Architecture should, I think, take more account of this. The job of the planner is to provide built homecoming for all, to sustain a feeling of belonging. I would go so far to say that architecture is built homecoming." Van Eyke, op cit., from "How to Humanize Vast Plurality?" p. 442.

PROLOGO
PROLOGUE

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Il monastero, la città e il futuro dell'umanità

The Monastery, the City and the Human Future

Harvey G. Cox, Jr.
Hollis Research Professor of Divinity at Harvard, where he began teaching in 1965, both at HDS and in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. An American Baptist minister, he was the Protestant chaplain at Temple University and the director of religious activities at Oberlin College; an ecumenical fraternal worker in Berlin; and a professor at Andover Newton Theological School. His research and teaching interests focus on the interaction of religion, culture, and politics. Among the issues he explores are urbanization, theological developments in world Christianity, Jewish-Christian relations, and current spiritual movements in the global setting (particularly Pentecostalism). He has been a visiting professor at Brandeis University, Seminario Bautista de Mexico, the Naropa Institute, and the University of Michigan. He is a prolific author. His most recent books are How to Read the Bible (HarperCollins, 2015) and Lamentations and the Song of Songs: A Theological Commentary on the Bible (with Stephanie Paulsell; Westminster John Knox Press, 2012). His Secular City, published in 1965, became an international bestseller and was selected by the University of Marburg as one of the most influential books of Protestant theology in the twentieth century.

Nonostante i nostri tempi siano etichettati come "età laica", continuano a comparire impreviste correnti di spiritualità, contemporaneamente in nuove, vecchie e contrastanti forme. I molti luoghi, i pellegrinaggi sono ricomparsi spesso verso tradizionali luoghi sacri in Europa, America e Asia, ma con nuovi significati stratificati su quelli più vecchi. In questa fenomenologia del pellegrinaggio, l'autore classifica alcune delle caratteristiche di questi viaggi post-laici. Essi attirano persone convenzionalmente religiose, persone alla ricerca di qualcosa, aderenti New Age, storici dilettanti, salutisti, amanti della natura e turisti che insieme costituiscono un nuovo e diverso tipo di "comunità", che, come molti aspetti del mondo di oggi, è temporanea, in continuo mutamento e in movimento. Essi spesso mostrano aspetti di commercilità, ma suggeriscono una sorta di spiritualità "post-laica". Questo fenomeno rappresenta una sfida per architetti, urbanisti e studiosi di religione.

Despite our times being labeled "secular age," unanticipated currents of spirituality in both new, old and mixed forms keep appearing. I many places pilgrimages have reemerged often to traditional sacred sites but with new meanings layered onto older ones in Europe, America and Asia. In this phenomenology of pilgrimage the author catalogs some of the characteristics of these post-secular journeys. They attract conventionally religious people, seekers, New Age adherents, amateur historians, health buffs, nature lovers and tourists who together constitute a new and different sort of "congregation," which like many aspects of the world today is temporary, in flux and in motion. They often exhibit an element of commercialization, but hint at one kind of "post-secular" spirituality. This phenomenon presents a challenged to architects, urban planner and scholars of religion.

Parole chiave: **Pellegrinaggio; Età laica; Rituali in movimento; Cammino di Santiago; Stato di ricerca; Homo Viator; Papa Francesco**

Keywords: ***Pilgrimage; Secular Age; Ritual in Motion; Camino (Santiago); Search mode; Homo Viator; Pope Francis***

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This paper emerged from an ambitious project to, at long last, bring together architects, city planners, public health officials, theologians, philosophers, builders, and engineers, who all have something to do with the immense task that lies before all of us, which is the following: the next 20-25 years we human beings have to build as many cities as now already exist all around the world. The growth in population, especially the growth in population in urban areas is going to make that necessary. And frankly, if you look at the cities we built in the last 25 to 50 years, and done to the ones we have, the news is not particularly good. There are many very thoughtful architects and city planners and others who all agree we have not done a good job at this. We have to do better. One of the reasons we have not done a good job is because we haven't been talking to each other enough. The theologians live in one silo, public health people live in another, and architects live in another and we hardly ever meet each other. So now we have decided enough of that. We need to have a new and constructive conversation because of this enormous responsibility we have as human beings.

I want to say a word or two about myself and why I have any qualification to be part of this conversation. It is almost universally agreed now by the people who design, build, and think about cities that spirituality is an essential dimension in human community. That wasn't always the case. Forty years ago people were talking about marginalization and disappearance of religion. Now there seems to be a consensus that the spiritual is a component of the human condition that simply has to be included. It has to be included not just in our minds, but in the way we design cities and how we live together; how we meet each other; the spaces we have to meet each other, and the places where we can encounter God's nature. We are at a critical moment in urban history.

I teach at Harvard Divinity School. I also teach in the world religions program in Harvard College. I have been one of the faculty members associated with the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard where we bring scholars together of various world religions. They live together, they eat together, they talk, they worship together, they visit our classes, they get to know each other and I've got to know a lot of them. Part of what I can offer is what I have gleaned over the years, especially recent years, from some of these colleagues, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and all the rest who gather in Cambridge and make our lives richer. So that's the project: future cities and what we have to do about them.

The road in between the monastery and the city is, let me use the Spanish term, the Camino.[1] There is a surprising and the unanticipated resurgence, in our so-called secular time, of interest in pilgrimage, in visiting old holy sites. Lots and lots of people are doing it. And it is an indication of something that is happening in our whole culture, something that takes us beyond the definition of ourselves as a secular people, and into what I like to call the post secular city. This is the new spirituality that is emerging in our time, a configuration in which spirituality is expressing itself in unanticipated and unexpected ways. The resurgence of pilgrimages all over the world, not just Christian traditions but various religious traditions, is a sign and indication of a new spirituality that is dawning in the twenty-first-century. It is a continuity with existing old spirituality, but also with new elements brought in, reconfigured, recombined, resulting in something that has not quite existed before in the world of spirituality. It's an embodiment of this new spirituality. It's a hopeful and welcome sign.

First I will present the "phenomenology of pilgrimage," which poses questions such as: What are the main features of pilgrimage? What attracts people to them? What is it about them that speak to us - not quite secular, not quite religious, but a

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kind of wandering searching stage that we seem to be in nowadays? Second, I will discuss the implications of this new spiritual constellation that is emerging in our time regarding the way we plan and build future cities. My intent is to set up the picture of the emerging spirituality for the planners and designers of cities to respond to this emerging, unexpected spirituality.

Let's start with a wonderful pilgrimage site – Glastonbury Abbey in Somerset, England, which was built in the seventh-century and taken over by the Normans. It seems that somebody discovered what they thought was the tomb of King Arthur at Glastonbury Abbey. The gravestone read *"Hic Yachet Sepultus Includus Rex Authurus Ensua Avalona."* For those of you down on you Latin a little bit that means "Here lays the body of King Arthur". Admittedly, we do not know when that was carved. It doesn't say much about Guinevere, and it doesn't say a word about Lancelot.

Now, in recent years, Glastonbury has gone through a very interesting transition. It's now a pilgrimage site for Anglicans, Protestants, Roman Catholics, and what might be called New Age people. They all seem to be welcomed there. No one is turned away at the door. For me, this is an interesting example of this emerging spirituality of the radical pluralism which seems to be acceptable even to people who are part of major religious traditions. Listening to the other, listening to other voices, has become part of the pilgrimage process. We are all to some extent on pilgrimage. We are on a Camino. We are moving along something and are not quite sure what the objective is. It's a little hazy. But we are on a spiritual journey with each other. There are a variety of people with us. It is a metaphor for, an indication of, one of the principal characteristics of the emerging new spirituality of the post secular city. I knew something was in the air about the Camino de Santiago Compostela when I read the other day that 270,000 people walked it that last year. And that is only the ones that registered for the Compostela certificate! There are probably another 300,000 who walked without registering.

What does this say about "secular" Europe when hundreds of thousands of people go to an old Christian Catholic pilgrimage route to the tomb in Santiago? Something is going on here. It does not fit into the secular model. But that is only part of it. I knew it had reached a certain threshold when Harvard University sponsored a pilgrimage to Camino de Santiago. I could hear the bodies of the Puritan founders rolling in their graves in Cambridge! What has happened to our "Puritan" university? This is only one symptom of what is going on. Let me quickly list some other indications. Norway has reinstituted an old medieval pilgrimage site of Saint Olav at Trondheim in Norway. Thousands of people are taking the various pilgrimage paths leading there. There is Washingham[2] in the UK that I will come back to. I had a student a couple of years ago who spent some time at Lourdes[3] because Lourdes has become so popular. He interviewed a lot of people and discovered that many of those he talked to are not church goers. Why? What are you doing here? he asked, and they said, "Well, something speaks to me here."
Lourdes is like many others. Think of the millions of people each year who go to the Holy Land, to Jerusalem and Galilee. I have made that pilgrimage and discovered it's a little different for Catholics and Protestants. Catholics love to see the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; Protestants want to go see where the Sermon on the Mount was preached. They come to "jog where Jesus walked", as one guide quipped. The Holy Land is also sacred for the Muslims who come to Jerusalem; so it is a very ecumenical center. Of course, every year the Hajj in Mecca draws millions of pilgrims from around the world.

It occurred to me that the death site in Memphis of Martin Luther King, Jr is becoming a pilgrimage site. Hundreds of people every day visit that motel – its little room and the balcony where King was

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shot. Hundreds of thousands of people visit Auschwitz, which has also become a pilgrimage center. People stand there quietly remembering the awful tragedy that was inflicted on the Jewish people. Places like Auschwitz are not happy places; but are places to remind us of the tragic element of human life and Christian history.

What mood are pilgrims in? Remember that rather raucous pilgrimage that we read about in the Canterbury Tales where the pilgrims were headed for the cathedral where Thomas Becket was killed? He was murdered for standing up for the freedom of the Church against the King. It was a martyr site. Some people said to me that now the people who go to these sites are just vacationers, tourists. In the old days they were religious and spiritual. Go back and read the Canterbury Tales. This is a group of pilgrims, but as they tell their stories you have to keep the children out of the room. They were telling their own stories to each other and some were quite bawdy. But what was happening as they moved along on the route to Canterbury was that they were becoming a kind of a congregation: various different kinds of people there who were charmed by the old story of the Nun's Priest's tale and the Merchant's tale, and the tale of the Wife of Bathe who is looking for another husband.

I hope I have made the case that what we now have happening is a significant phenomenon in the post secular city. It configures a larger spirituality that combines elements of the past with elements of the future. I want to characterize the nature of this newly emergent world of spirituality by the following points.

Think for a moment of all those people you know who say, "Well, I am not religious, but I am spiritual". How many times have you heard that phrase? What they generally mean is "I want to have some connection with the great mystery, maybe with God, but I do not like the packaging or the superstructure by which it is delivered these days. I am not an atheist, but I want that connection without the packaging". Now, I think that there are plenty of things to object to about the packaging, we all have our discomforts and there are people who have taken it to another step. Here are the qualities of this emerging spirituality:

First, they are more open to the mystical and transcendence of faith, but they are suspicious of the institutional and doctrinal. Not just Christianity by the way. My young Jewish students and Muslim students tell me the same thing.

Second, they are much more oriented towards experience: they want to feel, taste, touch spirituality. Not have someone else tell them about it, but to experience it themselves.

Third, they want to continue questioning, so are not suitable for the kind of catechism that many of us knew – the "here is the question and here is the answer." No, they want to continue questioning. One of my students said: "You have to occasionally buy books on Amazon and know what being in 'search mode' means. You have to press a little button to put it in the basket. We are still in 'search mode'." I do not think there is anything wrong with 'search mode', even when you are comfortable with a tradition that you are part of. You are still searching and looking and still open to new interpretations and new possibilities.

Fourth, the new spirituality involves being rather suspicious of the high walls that have been erected between the various religious traditions, especially when those high walls involve an element of exclusivism. I will tell you we are not going to get too far in the next generation making this exclusivist claim, of which they have a deep suspicion.

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When I think about future historians of religions looking back at our time of the twentieth and twenty-first-centuries and picking out really significant religious personalities of our era; they are going to think about Martin Luther King Jr. being deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu, who was influenced by Leo Tolstoy, an unorthodox Christian. They are going to think about Thomas Merton, who as you may recall was a Roman Catholic monk, a Trappist, and who died when he was in Cambodia to pray with Buddhist monks. I think these are the significant breakthrough figures who are illustrative of this movement. If you ask in college bookstores what is the most popular poetry book on the poetry shelf, it is the poetry of Rumi, the Muslim Sufi mystic. This is something new that is happening. This is an understanding of spirituality, which has left behind that exclusivity. This is an example of John XXIII saying: "let's open the window and the doors." I have high hopes for Pope Francis. He has done the right things so far. He did a very daring thing to take the name of Francis, the first Pope to ever do so. He is writing his own agenda and a very large check, which he will be expected to, at least in part, cash. I admire him for doing that.

Fifth is spirituality, which is open and welcoming to the vastly expanded universe and vastly expanded sense of time that has come to us through science. Our grandfathers and grandmothers did not have a clue about this. We now have this enormously expanded sense of the universe; that this is just one of many universes. One of the icons of the new spirituality is the image of the tiny little blue planet taken from the moon. There it is, our tiny little home against this vast endless darkness. It evoked within in me a sense of love for this little planet, of sympathy and recognition of its fragility. Our grandparents did not have that but it is part of this emerging spirituality. This is a conversation that has emerged between theologians and scientists and the warfare between the two seems to have been left behind. We are listening to each other. We are learning from each other and trying to help each other take the next step.

Finally, and very importantly, is the deepened sense of responsibility of the people of faith for the poor, brokenhearted, and marginalized people of the world. Pope Francis has a grasp of that, for which I am grateful. If we really exist as people of faith, we are responsible for those who are left out and are suffering. I think we are witnessing now the emergence of the very interesting new phase of spiritual development of human beings.

I now turn to what this might mean for future cities. Think about a pilgrimage that you have been on and heard about. It is a ritual in motion. There is an element of mobility. You are moving when you are on a pilgrimage. You are going from here to there. This means that something is connecting the inner with the outer. They are being fused. The changes in location, and inside of you, somehow support each other. I am told that people often walk the Camino to try to leave behind some horrible thing that has happened to them: the death of loved ones, a broken marriage or a lost job. They often bring along with them something they can leave behind. On the Camino there is an iron cross where you can leave something you brought, as if to say "I'm moving on." Remember, people used to go on pilgrimage for

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penance. From what I understand part of the intent of the sacrament of penance is to leave behind something and move on. It is not to wallow in your wrongdoing, but to confess it, to get it off your chest, to receive and be reminded of forgiveness. It is a sacrament of movement, which is what the pilgrimages are. They are flexible and they serve the needs of different people. I've been on a couple of pilgrimages with a wide variety of people – believers and non-believers, some of them skeptics, all walking along the path together. A new community emerges as we eat and sleep together and tell our stories to each other. Also, remember that on a pilgrimage you leave the noise, confusion, and demands of your normal life for a little while – the pace, the expectation, the information overload. As you walk you have an opportunity for things to settle. You meditate and pray, if you pray, and drink in nature and receive its spiritual refreshment. Leaving it all behind, not to escape it, but to go somewhere for renewal so you can go back into it. You get away from the crowded ways of life in order to come back to it with a renewed spirit. No wonder so many people are going on pilgrimages: to renew their spirit and take part in the liturgy if they want to. By slowing down and moving slowly pilgrims make small contributions to the sanity of the world.

One of the fondest memories I have is when I visited the pilgrimage site of Delphi in Greece where the oracle of Apollo used to speak. I was in a group, and along with the group was a colleague, the famous psychologist Eric Erickson. As we were going up the hill towards the Oracle of Delphi the bus stopped at the Castalian Spring, where you are supposed to cleanse yourself before approaching the Temple of Apollo. So, we all got off and did a little bit of cleansing. I started to get back on the bus, but Eric said, "Don't get on the bus. We are going to walk this last mile." He was in his 80s, but that's part of it, to walk. He said, "Slow down, approach it slowly, so when you get there you are ready for something to happen," very wise words of a wise man.

However, there are possible dangers. Some pilgrimages are to places that can have positive and negative connotations. For example, take the case of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland, a figure who inspired the resistance to the Communist regime in Poland.[4] However, as soon as that nasty business was done and Poland was liberated, within a few years the most right wing elements in Polish society kidnapped the Lady of Czestochowa and made her a symbol of the right wing clericalist platform they wanted to enforce in Poland. These appropriations can happen. It can go either way. Recently, the Prime Minister of Japan visited the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo[5]. He is not supposed to do that type of thing, but wants to reclaim Shinto. That was the state religion used to power Japanese militarism. Pilgrimage can also be corrupted by business and politics. Some of the people who are pleased with the emergence of the new pilgrimages are those who own the hostels and hotels and, of course, those who sell souvenirs and trinkets. I came back from Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal a few years ago with a Madonna who lights up when you press a little button. My wife said: "You like this type of religious kitsch? A Madonna that you can light up? Don't you think that's a bit too much?" I had her put it away.

Finally, I think there are enormous implications of this newly emerging spirituality for the way we think about, plan, and build our future cities. For this reason, cities should nurture and support, rather than discourage or deny, human spirituality. You have to do that from the outset in the way you plan the cities and not just add things after they are built. So, what does that include? Think about these mixed congregations of pilgrims I described. You do not know who will be in your group. Will the future city that our grandchildren live in be a place of ghettos built to separate by race or class, or will it be a city that will welcome people of various backgrounds that

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can be integrated into the city? What we are building into them now is not that. What we are building now is the gated community concept. I close my gate; I do not want you to come in.

What about nature, which is becoming very important for many people? People love to be out in nature, the countryside, and along the Camino and other places – seeing trees and birds. Camino pilgrims also like the little churches along the way: the architecture, the music, the art, and these are people who normally don't go into churches. It says to me something about the sensitive architectural design of our churches, which can convey a deep meaning, even to people who get turned off by sermons. It says something on a deep spiritual level. Will that be a part of the future cities or will it be overlooked and even banned? What about parks? It's interesting when we pick up the paper today and read about the riots in Istanbul, which started when they tried to close a park and build a shopping mall. Think about that... "don't take away our park!" So, think about all these possibilities. We are talking here about historical preservation, about what you have to maintain so people can get a sense of the history of a city and can have *a sense of its future*.

I think that the ecumenical and interfaith beliefs of the new pilgrimages are very important. Different religious traditions? – everyone is welcome. Nobody is excluded because they do not wear the right badge. The only entrance requirement is to be willing to be open and go on the trip; to be willing to share your stories and listen to the other stories. That is going to make a big difference in religion, in both the ecumenical and inter-religious phases. Pilgrimages that respond not only to the religious but spiritual needs are an expression of the fusing of the inner and outer movements. They are also particularly effective ways of reminding us that we are all on the way. We have not yet arrived. We are *Homo Viator*. This whole idea of the mixed congregation that is easy to drop in and out of, says something about church and religious architecture. We should widen the threshold and raise the ceiling higher, and don't make the step "in" a demanding one, but a little more porous. Maybe, the storefront church, which one can walk by and see what's going on inside, tells us something about that. Change in architecture is called for: a chance to break away from the chain of routine; to be refreshed and bring nature back into the picture, to leave behind things you want to leave behind; and move on to whatever the future holds for, and moves, you.

We need to build cities in the next 25 years that will reflect and support this kind of spirituality and not squelch it, because the people who live in these cities have a right to have their spirituality respected and sustained, and not erased. There are also a lot of implications here for public health, as spirituality is now recognized by the world health organization as one essential component of wellbeing and good health. Everyone is welcome. You are all fellow pilgrims with us. We are all on the way on the Camino – from the monastery to the city. There is no turning back.

If we can't quite discern with any real clarity what that future world city will look like, I suggest that we take some comfort in the words of John Bunyan.[6] *The Pilgrim's Progress* begins with a pilgrimage that is about to commence, and he doesn't know which way to go. So the Spirit comes to him and says:

"Do you see yon city?"

"No, I don't".

"Do you see yon wicker gate?"

"No."

"Do you see yon glimmering light?"

"Yes."

"Follow it then."

Today, you don't quite see the city or the gate, but a little light is on and I hope we can follow it.

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Endnotes:

1. The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, is the name of any of the pilgrimage routes, to the shrine of the apostle St. James the Great in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain.
2. The village of Washingham in Norfolk, UK is famed for its religious shrines in honor of the Virgin Mary and as a major medieval pilgrimage centre.
3. The Virgin Mary appeared at Lourdes in 1885 to the peasant girl, Marie-Bernadette Soubirous, who was later canonized. Today the pilgrimage site of Lourdes hosts around six million visitors every year from all corners of the world.
4. The icon of Our Lady of Czestochowa, also known as the Black Madonna, has been intimately associated with Poland for the past 600 years. The Virgin Mary is shown as the "Hodegetria" ("One Who Shows the Way"). In it the Virgin directs attention away from herself, gesturing with her right hand toward Jesus as the source of salvation. In turn, the child extends his right hand toward the viewer in blessing while holding a book of gospels in his left hand.
5. Yasukuni Shrine is a Shinto shrine in Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan that was founded by Emperor Meiji and commemorates anyone who had died in service of the Empire of Japan.
6.John Bunyan was a seventeenth-century English writer and Baptist preacher best remembered as the author of the religious allegory *The Pilgrim's Progress.*

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L'urbanistica del distacco

Urbanism of Detachment

Negli ultimi anni, c'è stata una straordinaria intensificazione delle pratiche di pellegrinaggio, che si è tradotta nella necessità di strutture urbane più grandi e più frequenti per ospitare enormi raduni. Il caso del Kumbh Mela, *una leggendaria festa indù in India, fissa gli standard per la comprensione di modi alternativi per costruire città transitorie con una temporalità in linea con la natura effimera di enormi flussi umani. Questo massiccio raduno culturale, che risulta la più grande mega città effimera del mondo e accoglie 3 milioni di pellegrini ogni 12 anni, genera un caso estremo che ci costringe a riflettere profondamente sul modo in cui possiamo pensare più ampiamente le città del futuro e da cui possiamo estrapolare diverse lezioni per quanto riguarda un "concetto aperto" di architettura, di progettazione urbana e di politica di pianificazione più elastico.*

In recent years, there has been an ex¬traordinary intensification of pilgrimage practices, which has translated into the need of larger and more frequently constructed urban structures for hosting massive gatherings. The case of the Kumbh Mela, *a legendary Hindu festival in India, sets the standards for understanding alternative ways of building cities that are transitory and with a temporality aligned with the ephemeral nature of massive human flows. This massive cultural gathering, resulting in the biggest ephemeral mega city in the world accommodating 3 million pilgrims every 12 years, generates an extreme case that forces us to reflect deeply about the way we may think of future cities more broadly and from which we can extrapolate several lessons regarding more resilient, "open concept" of architecture, urban design and planning policy.*

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Parole chiave: **Kumbh Mela; Urbanistica effimera; Paesaggio; Temporalità; Tempo**

Keywords: ***Kumbh Mela; Ephemeral Urbanism; Landscape; Temporality;Time***

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Andrea Branzi's ten recommendations for the construction of a 'New Athens Charter' offered critical provocations for radically re-thinking the urban as more holistic and less a Eurocentric project. Out of the ten recommendations he makes, his third recommendation seems to point directly to the construction of a new notion of 'time' in a city that should be thought as a place for 'cosmic hospitality' in which designers would "encourage 'planetary coexistence' between man and animals, technology and divinities, living and dead" and that would look in particular to Indian landscapes as models for cities that are "less anthropocentric and more open to biodiversity, to the sacred, and to human beauty"[1]

While it would be easy to argue that the modern rational, which has been the basis of design practices and generated productive conversations and outcomes in the past, today is insufficient for thinking at the current condition of cities. The world expanded and became connected in a way that forces us to rebuild a set of certainties that previously had as referents Europe and North America, pushing us to open the discussion to include the great potential and intellectual wealth that one can gain from looking closely at the geographies below the line of the equator. What would happen if we follow Andrea Branzi's advice and schizophrenically start to seriously embrace lessons from these geographies and apply them to the production of the contemporary city; if we decide to replace some of the rational dynamics inherited from modernity? What could we learn?

An urbanism of detachment, as stated in the title, would be a mediator, an invitation to search for nuances; to negotiate the forces through which the city truly expresses itself; to soften the social divide; to advocate for blurring limits between the contemporary and historic and; to create provocations that overcome the separation between the static and the kinetic, or the permanent versus the ephemeral, in the production of cities.

In recent years, for instance, there has been an extraordinary intensification of pilgrimage practices, which has translated into the need of larger and more frequently constructed structures for hosting massive gatherings.[2] Extreme examples of temporary religious cities are ephemeral constructions set up for the Hajj, as well as a series of temporary cities constructed in India for hosting celebrations such as the *Durga Puja*, *Ganesh Chaturthi*, and *Kumbh Mela*—the last a religious pilgrimage that, according to official figures, supports the congregation of more than 100 million people. These events are an expression of a range of ephemeral configurations deployed to accommodate gatherings that celebrate religious beliefs.

Looking at the whole ecology generated by human flows there is one case that stands out as an extreme condition: *The Kumbh Mela*. Probably mobilizing the biggest pilgrimage in contemporary times, religious in most cases but also non-religious in many cases, the *Kumbh Mela* sets the standards for understanding alternative ways of building cities; albeit transitory and with a temporality aligned with the ephemeral nature of massive human flows. This massive gathering resulting in the biggest ephemeral megacity in the world, generates an extreme case that forces us to reflect deeply about the way we think about cities more broadly, and from which several lessons and ideas can be extracted.

This paper reflects on two key attributes of the ephemeral city of the *Kumbh Mela* and the lessons we can extrapolate from it to architecture, urban design and planning. When we look at the impressive images of the ephemeral city, we tend to fix the eye onto the incommensurable extension the city has when it is in operation. However, what is most remarkable about the *Kumbh Mela* is that not only is it constructed in such a short period of time, but also that it has the ability to be as quickly disassembled. The *Kumbh Mela* raises a nuanced set of questions about how 'reversibility' could be better imagined in the production of future cities. In a matter of weeks

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the biggest public gathering in the world deploys its own roads, pontoon bridges, cotton tents serving as residences and venues for spiritual meetings, and a spectrum of social infrastructure — all replicating the functions of an actual city. This pop-up megacity serves 5 to 7 million people who gather for 55 days, and an additional flux of 10 to 20 million people who come for 24-hour cycles on the five main bathing dates. Once the festival is over the whole city is disassembled as quickly as it was deployed, reversing the constructive operation, disaggregating the settlement to its basic components and recycling a majority of the material used.

The *Kumbh Mela*, a legendary Hindu festival, occurs every twelve years in four Indian cities: Haridwar, Allahabad, Nashik and Ujjain. The mythological origin of the festival comes from a legend, which narrates that during a battle between gods (*devas*) and demons (*asuras*), four drops of the sacred nectar of immortality, *amrit*, fell in the four cities where now this festival is performed. It is believed that the relationship between the planet Jupiter and the sun replicates the celestial map that witnessed the battle and the sacred rivers in which the drops fell acquire the power of providing enormous spiritual benefits. On these dates millions of pilgrims gather during the month of *Magha* to dwell in the site of the *Kumbh*. Holy men, devotees, pilgrims, foreigners and various

Fig. 1 - Aerial view of Ganges River at Allahabad site of *Kumbh Mela*
Source: Courtesy of Allahabad Kumbh Administration Authority

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Fig. 2 - Figure 2. Ritual cultural ceremonies
Source: Courtesy of Siddiqui Ganesh Danesh

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kinds of people get together in the world's biggest public gathering for experiencing these perceived sacred benefits. (Fig. 1, 2)

The *Kumbh Mela* is more important, more sacred, and more visited when it happens at Allahabad, at the confluence of three sacred rivers. Today two of those rivers are visible, the Ganges and the Yamuna, while the third is a mythical river named *"Saraswati"* that appears only in the sacred texts and currently is assumed to be under ground. The attention given to this festival in relation to other points of pilgrimage, in the Sanskrit text known as *Puranas* and *Vedas*, has legitimized the importance of this festival since the Gupta period. Holy narratives that relate gods and their events with geography connect sacred places denominated as *tirthas*, which are conceived as points in which the thresholds between the divine and the mundane get blurred.[3] Among the *tirthas* Allahabad has the category of *tirtharaja* that means "the king of the sacred places." This place is said to be the holiest place existing in the three worlds: heaven, earth, and netherworld.[4] *Prayaga* (original name of Allahabad) is also known as the *Triveni*, which means the encounter of three sacred rivers *Ganga – Yamuna – Saraswati*. The temporary city of Allahabad is situated right on the floodplain and its development is coordinated with the shifting condition of the ground. Without seeing images of the *Kumbh Mela*, one could hardly believe that a complex (ephemeral) mega city of such extensive scale could be even deployed at such a short and compressed time span – even using all the technological instruments and disciplinary knowledge that we currently possess. However, it is precisely in the lack of technological specificity and reversibility, as an a-priori constraint for deployment, where its robustness relies. Therefore, one of the most valuable lessons offered by the *Kumbh Mela* is in the implementation of tactics that allow the deployment of a whole city as a holding strategy for temporary urban processes that does not aspire to be permanent. It is in the non-permanent solution for a non-permanent problem that is the *raison de etre* of the city. This alignment between the temporary nature of the problem (in this case to host millions of people for 55 days) and that of the solution, is something, we could, and should, incorporate as a basic protocol for the cities we reshape and create in the future.

Reversibility can be examined in two contrasting dimensions. On one hand, in its material aspects this translates into a physical reversibility of the constructed armature that supports the existence of the *Kumbh Mela*. On the other hand, the immaterial agreement frames a reversible political and institutional framework that supports the construction and organization of the ephemeral city. While in the context of more permanent settlements, institutions associated with urban processes take time to form and are created often not as malleable and flexible structures; in the case of the *Kumbh Mela* a flexible temporary governance system is quickly created. It plugs into a pre-existing urban management system at the state level and draws its expertise from existing institutions – often pulling together for a short period of twelve months the best administrators in the state. During the festival the area of the *Kumbh Mela*, in terms of its institutional framework, becomes an autonomous city managed by several temporary governmental agencies that have jurisdiction over the site. (Fig. 3)

The institutional structure that manages the city evolves, depending upon the stage in which they operate. The deployment of the city can be then divided into four main stages that affect the nature of its governance. The four phases are as follows: First is an initial phase of planning, which is held outside the physical space of the *Kumbh* and that involves government authorities that range from the local to the national level. This is followed by the implementation phase that happens both in the peripheries of the site while the river is still high and on site when the river Ganges and Yamuna recede. Third, the process phase of management takes place that

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corresponds to the period in which the city is in operation. The challenges of this phase include handling the vast crowds of people and the administration of a river that might fluctuate or shift in its trajectory by thirty feet per day. And finally the deconstruction stage starts after the last bathing day and is the process that reprograms the space into agricultural fields for a few weeks before the Ganges floods again in the monsoon and reclaims the site of the city.

The administration of the city is implemented by an organizational structure that is not only impermanent – which is something one could expect given its temporal condition – but that is also flexible, allowing the progressive appearance of transversal links of communication across diverse hierarchies. This is clear when one examines the nature of the meetings and the authority each member has during different moments of the city's deployment. Relations of power and connections vary depending of the stage of the deployment. During the planning stage interactions are framed in departmental meetings, which are small in scale and where the authority mostly resides in representatives of the state. In this process twenty-eight departments from the state of Uttar Pradesh are engaged as well as seven different central departments from the national government. When the implementation stage arrives the

Fig. 3 - Highly heterogeneous handmade, modular built environments
Source: Courtesy of Felipe Vera

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governance system gets more dynamic, articulating constituencies at different levels that get represented on-site. During the implementation stage diverse mechanisms of feedback among different levels within the hierarchies get set up in order to deal with the need for quick decisions of adjustment to the materialization of the plan. The dynamism of the structure reaches its climax while the city is in operation. At this time authority shifts from the high levels of the management pyramid that operate at the state and regional levels, to the ground based administration of the *Kumbh*. Crucial is the fact that the *Kumbh* administration meets on the ground each evening during the festival in a dynamic that connects with every single level of the otherwise hierarchical administrative structure. This gives the administrator for the event the capacity to react to any unpredicted incident or requirement of the city quickly and effectively, bypassing when necessary inefficient bureaucratic clearance processes. Once the whole process is over administrators are often promoted and get reappointed again into the pre-existing governmental structure. The whole institutional framework that temporarily supported such an enormous operation vanishes like the traces of the city when the river washes over the terrain during the flooding from the seasonal monsoon rains.

Reversibility is also the main attribute of the physical deployment of the city. The implementation strategy, which is generic and employs low-tech constructive technics, allows the most amazing buildings and morphologies to be shaped, leaving open the possibility of reversing such operations once the festival is finished. This strategy also allows the building materials to be reincorporated into regional economies and local industries. Each of the few building techniques implemented at the *Kumbh* are based on the repetition and recombination of a basic module with simple interconnections. This is usually a stick (approximately 6 to 8 feet long) that by aggregation generates diverse enclosures in a wide range of forms, from small tents to complex building paraphernalia, which give expression to diverse social institutions such as theaters, monuments, temples, hospitals, etc. Most of the materials come from the state of Uttar Pradesh, as does the workforce. The architecture of the city is often constructed out of the same elements: bamboo sticks used as framework; to laminar materials, such as corrugated metal and fabric. The simplicity of the building systems not only facilitates the attributes for assembly, reconfiguration, and disassembly on site, but also facilitates the logistics and channels of distribution for each component and piece. One person or groups of people provide the modulation of every material such that they can be carried and handled in absence of heavy machinery. Material components are small and light enough to be easily transported and distributed to every corner of the settlement in a rapid and efficient manner, facilitating construction and reconstruction, as well as formation and reabsorption into the various ecologies and geographies of the region. Everything is constructed and afterwards deconstructed with equal ease. (Fig. 4)

The whole *Kumbh nagri* (or township) starts to get dismantled after the last major bathing. The disassembly of *akharas's* camps and Ashrams start with the devotees taking their things by different means – cars, trucks or tractors – while chief organizers of each religious order and their *chelas* (juniors) stay until the last day. When a religious order is ready to leave the *Kumbh*, they get in touch with the contactor that constructed their camp, doing so either directly, if they paid for the camp themselves, or through the sector magistrate if the camp was constructed with funding from the *Mela* administrator. Days are arranged for trucks and workers to arrive to remove all the material – the tents, plywood, and steel sheets that formed fences, bamboos, and every component of the camp. Once disassembled, the material is taken to the compounds to be stored, counted, and sorted for damaged pieces. After that, different elements are sent to tent

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suppliers all over India in trucks, with every truck carrying one specific type of material.

A great part of the infrastructure is also disassembled once the *Kumbh* is over. For instance, by digging up wastewater and water supply pipes *Jal Nigam* contractors removed all the tap connections. In the same way that tents are deconstructed and separated by materials to be returned to their original supplier, tap connections, motors, and pipes return to the Jal Nigam store from which they were ordered. Once there, the materials are reused in different locations of Uttar Pradesh in other Jal Nigam projects. The tube wells get a meter long pipe welded to their top in order to extend their height and prevent the river from filling them up.

Parts of the infrastructure remain on site. Sewage pits, for instance, get uncovered from their bamboo structures, treated with chemicals and covered with sand; the same is done with water reservoirs. Other kinds of infrastructure, like sandbags and toilets, get removed. In the case of the toilets built by the *Mela* administration, which is one of the most dispersed infrastructure of the site, the sweepers community is in charge of removing the ceramic seats to take to the main health store location. The rest of the materials, like bricks and bamboo, are sold to different contractors to be reused in other locations. The same happens with electricity infrastructure. Wires are taken

Fig. 4 - Generic building solutions always open to combinations
Source: Courtesy of Felipe Vera

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down and wound up, and concrete poles and metal pieces are disassembled and taken back to storage. Special electricity boards keep a digital inventory in which every item is registered.

Roads and pontoons are also taken apart sector by sector and taken to three main storage locations in the area, one in the parade ground, the second near the railway yard, and the largest in Jhusi, next to the bus stand. Bridges are broken up into parts, first the railings are dismantled, then the plates, and finally the joists and pontoons. Once all the material is disassembled the state government decides where to allocate the bridges and roads, depending on the different district needs but mostly in villages with mud roads and prone to flooding. Once decided, the infrastructure is distributed and reconstructed in diverse locations of Uttar Pradesh.

Not only construction material gets reused after the *Mela* ends, but even waste becomes a resource to be taken off site. A large number of scavengers from areas in and around Allahabad arrive at the site. They dig up waste coal dumped by restaurants to use as fuel; they empty the sand bags from which the *ghats* were constructed to make ropes. They take any discarded wood or bamboo to burn on their fires. Scavengers take almost everything, cleaning up the site completely. Organic material that is left behind, such as sandbags and bamboo poles, gradually disintegrate. Over time winds blur remaining patterns in the landscape. Once the deconstruction activity is over the site begins to reestablish its yearly patterns. People from villages around the site start preparing beds for planting seasonal vegetables like cucumber and seasonal gourds. Thick grass left by holy men is burned for making the soil more fertile and small wells are built nearby. The cremation ground on sector five is reestablished and every day uses of the river border recolonize the space.

Looking at the process just described, one is reminded that perhaps the most revolutionary opportunities for redefining the ways in which we produce the built environment perhaps lie in much simpler low-tech tactics. What is most remarkable about the *Kumbh* is not that it is constructed in such a short period of time, but also that it has the ability to get disassembled just as quickly. Multiple, highly heterogeneous, structures are organized around combinatory systems that rely on minimal building strategies. Construction techniques used also allow greater degrees of flexibility. The generic condition of basic elements like sticks connected by rope, or simple nails in both orthogonal and diagonal relationships, offer infinite possibilities of recombination. The strength is in the capacity of achieving specific and determinate forms with a couple of indeterminate solutions applicable in different contexts and that are re-adjustable at any moment. On account of this 'a kit of parts' approach, the material used for erecting tents, gathering spaces and even monuments that are several meters high can be afterwards reused in other constructions. (Fig. 5)

This reversible condition becomes in a way a counterpoint to our contemporary building culture, to the one aspect that has been notoriously absent from the current debate, the afterlife of the things we build once they are not useful anymore. Today buildings are constructed to last as long as possible and usually the need for transformation, the smart incorporation of weathering and the provision of options for reconfiguration in cases of obsolescence are not appropriately factored in the designs. We have developed a highly articulated technique for constructing and assembling all sorts of structures, which allow us to handle more complex and efficient construction processes. However, very little has been imagined in relation to advancing in the development of more efficient ways to disassemble and deconstruct the things we build. Paradoxically, what we can learn from the *Kumbh Mela* is that the most unsustainable practices do not rely on the construction of the built environment, but in how inefficient

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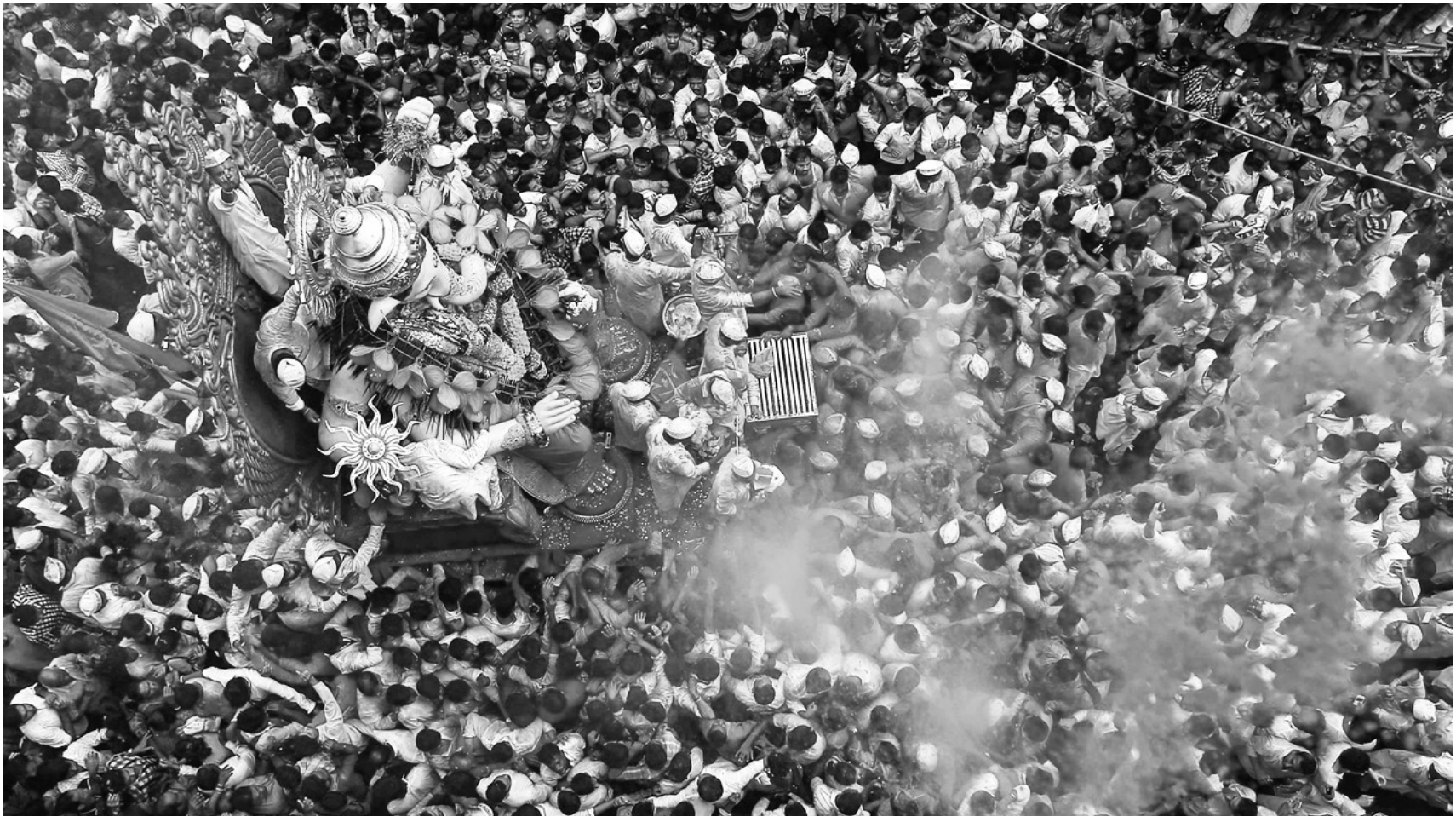

Fig.5 - Globe Trading Company: People gather near the empty historic Globe Trading Company building to participate in a community event.

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we are in dealing with the reconfigurations of the space that we already have built. Unfortunately, in more permanent settings demolition has been the generalized answer for opening up space that the city requires for growth and adapting to new needs. In short, the lack of incorporation of strategies for disassembly as an inherent part of the design imagination, as well as construction protocols, obstruct the fluid and sustainable metabolism of contemporary urban space.

Therefore, in a context in which the introduction of digital tools in the production of the built environment has undoubtedly become an unstoppable force behind innovation in the disciplines associated with the construction of the built environment, perhaps the most revolutionary opportunities for redefining the ways in which we produce the constructed space are much more fruitful in simple and low-tech tactics. Downscaling to the more specific technical elements that allow the deployment of the ephemeral city, we can see how the technology implemented at the *Kumbh* can provide several lessons as well as challenging several assumptions of current design practices.

The city of the Kumbh Mela challenges the idea of design as a linear, top down, over-determinate, equilibrated, integrated, and contextual effort. As Charles Waldheim thoughtfully describes in 'On Landscape, Ecology and other Modifiers to Urbanism',[5] under current conditions, incompletion and spatial-temporal openness is becoming central when addressing urban questions in contemporary cities. It is in this context that temporary urban intensity – vis-à-vis permanent and accomplished density– has only gained in agency in successfully shaping urban spaces. Acknowledging that – unlike what happens in landscape practice – the focus in urbanism is still mostly placed on the achievement of discreet close solutions rather than on generation of open-ended systems. Hence, today we are forced to rethink what we consider being a desirable outcome of urban design at multiple scales, under the light of current, extreme conditions. In parallel, over the past decades, technology has empowered designers with the ability of controlling form and matter in a way that we never imagined before. Also, we now have the capacity to anticipate the future by modeling natural and artificial processes using mapping techniques, and representing complex dynamics informing design operations. The emergence of a complete new world of possibilities, especially in digital design and fabrication, has come with the promise of a stronger capacity of design for dominating form, space, growth, and performance of the city. Fueled by the ambition of being able to 'make almost everything' new techniques present the opportunity for restructuring design and planning processes around immaterial or 'paperless' fictions, rendering the project of design increasingly as a much more specific and complete construction.

However, challenging this tendency, several aspects of the *Kumbh Mela* reminds us of how important and powerful it is to understand design as an incomplete, circular, and intentionally unbalanced operation. The process by which the city of the *Kumbh Mela* is assembled, managed, and deconstructed presents an opportunity for learning about scenarios in which cities, as unfinished open systems, accommodate diverse temporalities as part of their own material discourse, and where time is at heart – indeed perhaps the heart itself – of the city's construction, form, and technique.

According to Richard Sennett, for example, in a city 'open' means: incomplete, errant, conflictual, and non-linear.[6] In the same line the *Kumbh Mela* settlement presents us with a project that is not just made for people, but one in which the guidelines of the city are given to people – literally – as an open template to be developed, transformed, and materialized. In this regard it is interesting to see how the city of the *Kumbh Mela* as a project is not defined in detail as a fixed plan; it is neither a closed definition of buildings or plots, but something in between an idea and a map. It is thought more as a set of relationships

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between components that get organized and progressively specified, after the city –as a conceptual drawing– lands in the shifting geography of the floodplains. The stage of physical materialization is also informed by several negotiations, happening on the ground, between *Akharas*, dwellers and other visitors that last until a spatial agreement is reached. The adaptation to dynamic geographical processes and the dialogue between diverse agents help to progressively complete the form of the city.

Once the project of the city gets grounded and completed several limits start to appear within the *nagri*, designating spaces, all diverse in nature and function, generating all sorts of forms and morphological expressions. It is useful to see how when comparing open and closed systems at the urban scale, Sennett distinguishes that "the closed city is full of boundaries and walls" while "the open city possesses more borders and membranes." In this case, the almost complete absence of massive walls, replaced by thin sheets of different kinds, nuances much more the divide between spaces. Every limit is in a way almost completely permeable and at the same time functions as a separation. Even though the border condition is still recognized as a divider and contributes to create diversity in size, permeability is omnipresent in the character of the space. At the *Kumbh* divisions are not just separations, but actually vertical limits that are porous layers mediating connections, relationships and creating ephemeral, but powerful, spatial narratives.

The porous borders at the *Kumbh* manifest not only in the physical and planning structure of the city, but also in interesting patterns of space occupation and internal organization, which are motivated by a deep sense of communality.

In the ephemeral city, public, private, and sacred spaces are at the same time blended and distinguished. For instance, one of the aspects that exemplified this most clearly is the patterns of space occupation generated by how food is arranged at the *Kumbh*. Very few shops, stalls, and street vendors are seen along the temporal roads of the *Kumbh*. While there was some interesting commerce on the streets comprised of a few small cafes and stalls selling shampoo, religious items, and trinkets, typically clustered at major intersections, big stores for food trading were completely absent. Unlike what one would think, the *Kumbh* does not have an established formal trading system inside its boundaries. Food is brought by religious orders, pilgrims, and visitors, and a great part of it is distributed for free in large tents that cover big spans providing big free spaces for people to sit in rows and eat together. Outside the limits of the settlement at the border of the permanent city, markets are set up for trading very different things, ranging from food to clothing. Talking with vendors we realized that sometimes stalls are rented for several years and the same people run small businesses in different *Melas*, most of them from nearby Uttar Pradesh cities. Most of the goods are brought from the Jhusi market and vegetable stalls provide interim help by covering the gap between what is needed and what religious orders can bring with them. In addition, some of the vending and transactions occur through small stalls that are spontaneously set up along some avenues. Interestingly, this form of market is not as omnipresent as one might expect, and occurs on only a few streets that house the large *Akharas* or are part of major thoroughfares of the temporary city. Perhaps the frugal nature of the way most people dwell at the *Kumbh Mela* diminishes the compulsion to buy. For most visitors it is essentially a retreat or religious pilgrimage.

The three million people that normally dwell at the *Kumbh* get their food in the *Langar* where massive communal meals are hosted by each *Akhara* three times a day, at which, according to some of our interviews, over 100,000 pilgrims eat a simple meal during the busiest days of the *Mela*. Each *Akhara* and Ashram has its own corps of volunteers that organize these gatherings, cook the

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food, take care of supplies, and the cleanup. They draw upon the regional resources of the *Kumbh*, sending representatives several times a week to wholesale markets in the outskirts of Allahabad, Jhunsi and Naini to purchase fresh vegetables from local farms. They also aggregate the small amounts of fresh vegetables, rice, and flour that many pilgrims bring as contributions. Finally, although the *Mela* Administration organizes shops for grain, rice, and oil, *Akharas* and Ashrams bring their own sticks of rice, flour, and firewood from their Ashrams in Punjab, Kashmir, and every corner of India. Each *Akhara* is, in a sense, a self-contained managerial cell for shelter and services of its members and guests.

The porous limits of the *Kumbh* are not only physical, but are also constructed by vertical elements, such as flags placed in the center of the *Akharas* designating sacred space, defining a completely different set of rules structured by immaterial demarcations. In accordance with tradition, the area for each sect is organized around an identifying flag that, standing in the center of the space, is clearly visible from the street. The flag shows the identity of the *Akhara* and the older one, *Juna Akhara*, has a bigger flag. So far, we have identified this as a highly particular kind of demarcation that is used for the *Kumbh Mela* as a strategy not only for demarcating space, but also for constructing place. Areas for the tents of the gurus and their followers are distributed around the flag, with the most prominent gurus located along the path from the main entrance to the flag. The importance of each guru is connected with the number of devotees he attracts, which is manifested spatially in the organization of space at the *Kumbh Mela*: locations with prime exposure are given to more prominent gurus, allowing them to gather more potential followers. When one teacher's followers become too numerous for the allotted space, a new 'suburban' *Akhara* is created with its own space and flag. The *Akharas* themselves are also arranged within the sector according to their prominence, with *Juna Akhara*, the biggest and oldest of the sects, occupying a privileged spot while next to it were the *Mahanirvani* and *Niranjan*. Some of the most interesting and complex spatial textures of the *Kumbh Mela* are found walking across these religious orders. It is interesting to see that while virtually everything changes from one version of the *Kumbh* to the next, the spatial configuration of the *Akhara* remains the same, keeping the same structures and strictly preserving spatial relationships and internal configurations. Continuing with Sennett's ideas, the *Kumbh* could be a refined example of his argument that, "growth in an open city is a matter of evolution, rather than erasure."

At the *Kumbh Mela* openness manifests at different scales and stages from the scale of the constructive detail to the scale of the master plan, as well as from the planning to the deconstruction stage. However, perhaps the most powerful moment in which openness gets expressed in the deployment of the city is when one recognizes that such a mega operation receives its robustness and resilience exactly from being conceived as an open work, as text that is written in dialogue with users complementing the pragmatism of the officials with the appropriation of devotes, *kalpavasis* and saints. Such a fluid openness is based in an implicit contract of confidence, glued by common religious purpose. Again, in Sennett's words the ephemeral city of the *Kumbh*, unlike the closed city, is resilient exactly because it "is a bottom-up place; it belongs to the people." Challenging, current trends and as an extreme case of design and planning with uncertainty, the *Kumbh Mela* shows us how improvisation and incompleteness can become fundamental parts in the construction of strength.

Scaling down, openness also manifests in how the city gets materialized. The power of constructive methods implemented is actually an extreme generic solution, which is always open to combinations. For instance, the modularity of steel plates that can be carried by four men is what allows them to

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be deployed anywhere a road is required. The simplicity of hand-stitched cotton tents stretched over lightweight bamboo frames enables them to be concatenated into the skeleton of a megacity, whatever shape it may need to take, and in whatever colors and patterns may be desired. Heavy machinery and advanced technology are, for the most part, not required, nor are highly trained specialists. Highly heterogeneous structures are organized around combinatory systems that rely on few building strategies. The construction techniques occupied grant the designs greater degrees of flexibility. The strength comes from the capacity of achieving specific and determinate forms with a couple of indeterminate solutions applicable in different contexts and that are re-adjustable at any moment. Therefore, the material used for erecting tents, gathering spaces and even monuments that have several meters of height can be afterwards reused in other constructions. Each of the few building techniques implemented at the *Kumbh* are based on the repetition and recombination of a basic module with a simple connection. All of them are constructed out of the same elements: bamboo sticks used as framework to laminar materials, such as corrugated metal sheets or fabric.

The simplicity of the building systems not only shows the attributes to the assembly, reconfiguration and disassembly on site, but also facilitates the logistics and channels of distribution for each component and piece. The modulation of every material is provided in a way that it can be carried and handled by one person or groups of small people in absence of heavy machinery. Materials are small and light enough to be easily transported and distributed to every corner of the *nagri* in a rapid and efficient manner facilitating construction and reconstruction, as well as formation and reabsorption into the various ecologies and geographies of the region. Therefore, it is a strategy that serves not only the *Kumbh Mela*, but also the whole regional economy, because after the festival ends, the city is dismantled and its components are quickly and effectively recycled or repurposed, with metal and plastic items finding their ways either to storage or to other festivals and construction projects. Biodegradable materials, such as thatch and bamboo are left to reintegrate with the site, which nurtured by the floodwaters, serves as valuable agricultural land for the eleven monsoon cycles between festivals. This open condition of planning, urban design, space occupation and constructability could also be applied to other non-permanent settlements such as refugee camps or disaster relief efforts, as well as to future urban design and redesign projects.

While, recently we have witnessed some anxiety about finding new forms to incorporate the unspecific as part of the tendency in architectonic projects to embrace randomness, incompleteness, and incrementalism as a design strategy, at the urban scale this operation could be more developed. The aspiration of almost absolute control, brought by the empowerment of new technologies, has started to be challenged by some practical and conceptual efforts that have placed incompletion and incrementalism as more effective strategies for dealing with the natural entropy that exists outside the certainties of the digital world. Therefore, in the same way that we have learned from experiences of incremental social housing at the scale of the city of the *Kumbh Mela,* we could certainly extract some applicable lessons in openness that could work in more permanent cities at the urban scale.

Looking at these two dimensions of the *Kumbh* and thinking about how we can learn from this occurrence, one could suggest that it is time for urbanism, and design more generally, to find new ways for effectively factoring in temporalities as a critical component of its institutional and technological repertoire. For engaging in this discussion the exploration of temporal landscapes opens a potent avenue to explore through research by questioning permanence as a univocal solution for

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urban conditions. Instead, one could argue that the future of the cities depends less on the rearrangement of buildings and infrastructure, but more in the ability for us to imagine material, technological, social, and economic landscapes in a more reversible and open way. That is to say, we should perhaps design cities (or at least parts of cities) as holding strategies, which grow out of a close alignment of the temporal scale and solutions we conceptualize in our urban imaginary.

The form of urbanism that emerges after the construction and occupancy of the Kumbh provides what John Kaliski[7] describes as missing in the temporal dimension of contemporary permanent cities – they incorporate elements that remain elusive: ephemerality, cacophony, multiplicity, and simultaneity. The *Kumbh Mela* offers a flexible model of spatial construction that is temporal, cyclic, in constant advancement, ready to spring into motion as the environment changes and to make way for the needs of pilgrims. As we have seen, the *Kumbh's* design anticipates elasticity, building robustness through the capacity to articulate diametrically opposed indices of population, velocities, and concentrations, which it does without having to erase the spatial manifestations of the religious practice or restrict them. The city is constantly designed to frame the human experience, making its religious component a core determinant of its form.

An inspiring thought that comes after having examined the construction and disassembly of the city is perhaps that design must incorporate the anticipation of diverse temporalities into its imaginary. In single buildings as it is in master plans, the embracing of change as an active dimension in spatial production is something that architects and planners need consider in their processes and outcomes. Change is everywhere and the intellectual wealth that one can gain from the close analysis of this case relies on understanding that every city constantly goes through processes of internal reformulation and is constantly in the process of disassembly. Whether perceptibly or imperceptibly, different materials fade at different paces and geographies change at different speeds. The modulation of change through design processes allows for the production of flexible, elastic, and weak structures at any and all scales. Therefore, something, we can learn from this city is that for an urbanism that recognizes and deals better with the ephemeral nature of the built environment a more intelligent management of change is an essential element. In this case, several layers of changes were managed and negotiated, whether they be flooding, inconsistent human flows during religious celebrations, or the afterlife of materials involved in sacred death rites. It should inspire more flexible designs for cities, which, like rivers, are shifting.

Besides the technical refinement that has already been highlighted through this study, one should also have a glimpse of how the *Kumbh* experience is actually lived and perceived from within. So, while we were with the group on the rooftop of our camp on a hilltop with a great view of the *Kumbh*, a short but powerful observation by one member crystalized the spirit behind all the spectacular deployment we found. From afar it was impossible to guess that the city was, in fact, ephemeral, a prowess of planning, engineering, and construction raised in a couple of months, but soon to be just as quickly disassembled. We were silently observing and thinking how best to map and understand this ephemeral city, completely focused on understanding tents, streets, infrastructure; impressed with the fluidity that the most elementary components of the everyday city could acquire. Then someone put a question to the owner of the camp, a *sadhvi* or woman priest: "So... the whole plain in which the city is constructed is actually flooded by the river? Are the banks inaccessible during the monsoon?" "No", she responded sharply. "Once a year, the mother Ganga retreats and lets you sit on her lap." A powerful lesson in imagining detachment.

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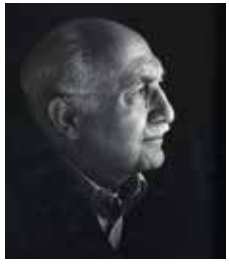

La trascendente dimensione delle città

The transcendent Dimension of Cities

Nader Ardalan
Nader Ardalan is a practicing Architect with over five decades of award winning international experience. He was Senior Research Associate at GSD, Harvard University; co-author of *The Sense of Unity*, Chicago University Press; author of *Blessed Jerusalem*, Harvard University; and founding member Steering Committee, Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

Presi tra passato, quando le credenze religiose tradizionali strutturavano la maggior parte delle visioni del mondo, e l'attuale regno della quantità e del consumismo materiale, che sta minacciando l'esistenza stessa della vita sulla terra, rimaniamo in trepida attesa della prossima fase ancora sconosciuta della coscienza umana per contribuire a mitigare le emergenti sfide della vita. Così, gli esseri umani esistono in una situazione di transizione che è precaria eppure piena di potenzialità. In questo panorama, l'articolo si concentra su due domande meno impegnative, tuttavia cardine, per quanto riguarda i nostri ambienti urbani: "Quali sono i fondamenti trascendenti che hanno dato i natali ed hanno sostenuto storicamente le grandi città del Medio Oriente negli ultimi dieci millenni e che cosa possiamo imparare da loro che possa informare e influenzare le trasformazioni olistiche e i modelli di vita delle nostre città di oggi ed il loro futuro? "

Caught between the past when traditional religious beliefs structured most world views and the current reign of quantity and material consumerism that is threatening the very existence of life on earth, we remain in anxious anticipation of the yet unknown next phase of human consciousness to help mitigate life's unfolding challenges. Thus, human beings exist in a transitional situation that is precarious and yet full of potential. Within this panorama this paper focuses on two less challenging, yet pivotal questions regarding our urban environments: "What are the transcendent foundations that have given birth and historically sustained great cities of the Middle East over the last ten millennia and what can we learn from them that may inform and influence the holistic transformation and life patterns of our cities today and their future?"

Parole chiave: **Cosmologia; Ecologia; Metafisica; Spazio; Trascendente**

Keywords: ***Cosmology; Ecology; Metaphysics; Space; Transcendent***

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Learning to manipulate clay, stone, marble, and wood, man penetrated their properties, and his techniques gave expression to his aspirations toward the divine. In architecture, environmental harmony was known to the Chinese, the Indians, the Greeks, and others. It produced the temples of Karnak, the great mosques of Islam, and the cathedral of Chartres in France.
Hassan Fathy [1]

Introduction

In the course of human cultural and scientific development, we can identify five transformational phases of history to the present.[2] From the Paleolithic and Neolithic we evolved into the phase of the Classical-Traditional cultures of the great religions. In the last five hundred years we have gradually transformed into the Scientific-Technological phase and have now reached a threshold where the dominance by science and technology under the control of modern corporations and their reign of quantity and material consumerism is now threatening the very existence of life on earth.[3] Yet, we are still hesitant to awaken to the fact that for a species to remain viable, it must establish a niche for itself that is holistically beneficial both for itself and for the wellbeing of its surrounding context.[4] This "beneficial niche" needs an attitudinal change, a transformation to what some have termed an emerging Ecological Age that may succeed the Technological age and foster a deep awareness of the sacred presence within each aspect of the universe and man's integral part in this web of existence.[5]

Caught between the traditional past of religious beliefs and the yet not fully formed and comprehended new cosmology of the next phase of human consciousness, human beings exist in a transitional situation that is precarious and yet full of potential. Traditional Abrahamic religions have taught that the Divine is transcendent to the natural world; therefore they hold that we must negate the natural world as a locus for the meeting of the Divine and the human. This makes the conception of the natural world as merely an object to serve man's material needs and this attitude has led to the plunder and near destruction of the natural resources of the earth by contemporary society.[6] In Islam, this tendency is somewhat mitigated since man's responsibility toward the natural environment evolves from his role as God's *Khalifa* (inheritors or vicegerent) on earth. In this regard the Quran says, 'He is that has made you inheritors in the earth: if, then, any do reject, their rejection (works) against themselves'.[7] The Hadiths frame this responsibility within the two principles: unselfish utilization of natural resources and preservation of the natural balance as good stewards of nature.[8] However, even these worthy cultural precedents are mostly not heeded in contemporary thought and action by decision makers in the Middle East and the rest of the Islamic world.

Perhaps, the social revolutions being experienced around the world and most recently over the last two generations in the Middle East, highlighted by the recent "Arab Spring," are testaments to the material pressures of a world that has multiplied to seven billion population and is now 50% urbanized; water and food supplies have become increasingly more scarce; and issues of income discrepancies, unemployment, financial crises, and civil injustice characterize a growing number of contemporary societies. Faced with these daunting, disruptive forces, we seem to have no common ground visions or functional cosmology to guide us to viable solutions. Yet, at no time in history have humans had such access to the vast qualitative and quantitative knowledge made available to us that could discipline and generate sustainable new directions for a noble human survival.

Within this panorama and the limits of this article, my interest is to focus on one pivotal question related to the future of our urban built environments: How can holistic approaches to ecological spirituality inform and influence the form and life patterns of

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current and future cities in the Middle East? What is the potential of the city to spiritually uplift the human spirit, contextualize and symbolize our shared "human condition," accommodate inclusive communal activities and rituals that give meaning to our lives, and provide connections to knowledge and understanding of the transcendent dimension of existence in architecture and the urban setting?[9] Perhaps, one way to do that is to look at positive examples in the past and elicit key design principles; observe the shortcomings of this subject in the present; incorporate the vast new knowledge available to us about ecological urbanism and then proceed to suggest what innovative design paradigms might help produce the sustainable and spiritually inspired city sublime of the future in our region of the world? What have been the holistic environmental, social, cultural, economic forces, and urban design policies that have produced the sublime places, the beautifully vital cities of the world, and the architecture that we cherish and are transformed by?

Once we have explored and understood the elements of such transformative places that produce in us a sense of "wondrous awe" and integrated them with new criteria of ecological spirituality, we may proceed in the next phases to study how these considerations, as basic principles, might help produce the transcendent city of the future and rehabilitate our existing cities. Within the limits of this short essay, might it be possible to gleam some lessons of what has been the role of spirituality in the more memorable and beautiful built environments of the Middle East? What are the highlight 'spiritual' foundations that have given birth, sustained, made grow, and (when lacking) caused the death of cities in this region over the last ten millennia?

Once upon a time, we (Geographers) had this ridiculous argument: `Was the first city a market, a storehouse, a temple or a fort?' Paul Wheatley challenged that notion, arguing that 'Religious and cultural factors may have been just as important as economics in turning cities into cornerstones of modern society.' They were products of 'Cosmo-magical thinking'.
Paul Wheatley [1]

Selected Case Studies

Gobekli Tepe
The recent excavations of Gobekli Tepe, located in the mountains of the Kurdish districts of southern Turkey at the headwaters of the Tigris River and dated from 9600 BCE, are regarded as an archaeological discovery of the greatest importance since they could profoundly change our understanding of a crucial stage in the development of human societies.[11] It seems that the erection of monumental complexes was within the capacities of Neolithic hunter-gatherers and not only of the latter sedentary farming communities in Mesopotamia in the third-century BCE, as had been previously assumed. In other words, as excavator Klaus Schmidt of the German Archaeological Mission puts it: "First came the temple, then the city," a revolutionary hypothesis but one that will have to be supported or modified by future research. The site contains 20 round, (now) subterranean structures (four of which have been excavated). Each stone building has a diameter of 10-30 meters with massive T-shaped limestone pillars decorated with carved animal figures. The tallest are 6 meters high and are the most striking feature of the site. (Fig. 1) These temples articulated belief in gods only developed 5000 to 6000 years later in Mesopotamia. As described in an article in National Geographic entitled: *The Birth of Religion*[12] at Gobekli Tepe the need to share awe for the divine or give thanks to the ineffable may have propelled the building of mankind's first sacred spaces and thus the nucleus of a settlement. The article proposes that it may not have been the accumulation of goods and wealth during the Neolithic time (as today's narrative goes), but the deep and

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Fig. 1 - Excavations of Gobekli Tepe Site, Turkey, 9,600 BC
Source: Photograph courtesy of Zhengan, 2012, Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 4.0 International License

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pure desire to be with others in a profoundly and spiritually inspiring place that was at the root of man's first settlements. The impulse to return to being at oneness with their origins, and also being many in collaboration and peace, may have been the spiritual source.

Mecca

Between the volcanic peaks of the Sirat mountains in a desert valley of the Hijaz region of Arabia, Islamic tradition has it that it was Adam who laid the foundation of the *Bail Al Atiq* (the Ancient House), the *Ka'ba*. It was to this holy house that Ibrahim was later guided to leave his wife Hajra and their infant son, Ismael. Ibrahim was then given the task of rebuilding this sanctuary for mankind, with the help of Ismael.[13]

Over time, the various pagan Arab tribes of the region would declare a truce once a year and converge upon Mecca in an annual pilgrimage to pay homage to the ancient shrine and to drink water from the adjacent, sanctified Zamzam Well. Here disputes would be arbitrated, debts would be resolved, and trading would occur at Meccan fairs. These annual events gave the tribes a sense of common identity and made Mecca an important spiritual focus and a city of trade for the peninsula.[14]

Mecca was the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in 570 CE and the place where the *Quran* was first revealed to him. Therefore, it is regarded as the holiest city of Islam and the annual pilgrimage of the *Hajj,* the rituals around the *Ka'ba* and the rites of *Safa* and *Marwah* are obligatory for all able Muslims. The rite of *Tawaf,* a circumambulation around the *Ka'ba,* is accomplished through seven counter clockwise, circular movements; three times at a racing gate and four times at walking pace. Historically, this ritual, open space has been defined by the *Masjid Al Haram*, originally in the shape of a circle, and then extended as an octagon, followed by a square and in the fourteenth-century by the Great Ottoman Mosque designed by Sinan.[15] The site remained more or less in this form until major extensions were made in the twentieth and twenty-first-centuries to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims.

The town, with its residences, souks, and lodgings for pilgrims, had grown contiguous to the Masjid Al Haram in a compact and human scaled urban form. However, during the most recent, vast expansions of the Masjid Al Haram and the related city developments, Mecca has lost much of its sacred landscape, its human scale and some of its historical structures and archaeological sites. Today, more than 15 million Muslims visit Mecca annually, including several million during the few days of the Hajj. (Fig. 2a, 2b)

Fig. 2a - Tile with Great Mosque of Mecca, Turkish glazed tile, 17th C
Source: Courtesy of Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Updated License

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Jerusalem

The Old City is symbolically the archetypal "City on the Hill". Situated at the ecological threshold between Mediterranean and desert bio-climatic regions, the hillock location lies in a basin bounded by the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus that run north-south. Immediately to the east of the walled city is the Kidron Valley, and to the west and south, the Hinnom Valley. With over a 5,000-year history, this Holy Land, with Jerusalem at its center, is sacred to the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam - which means it is the site of sacred pilgrimages for more than a third of the world's population. The urban form is characterized by environmentally adapted, compact limestone building volumes of one to three stories terminating against the sky with domes, vaults, minarets, and steeples organized spatially around public and private courtyards and squares to which access is gained by shaded, winding pedestrian only pathways. The rich textures, small and human scaled parts of the city are contained by massive city walls that are punctured by seven gateways leading to its four quarters, near the center of which sits the historic Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Dome of the Rock with its golden hued cupola. The special aura of the Old City has had much to do with

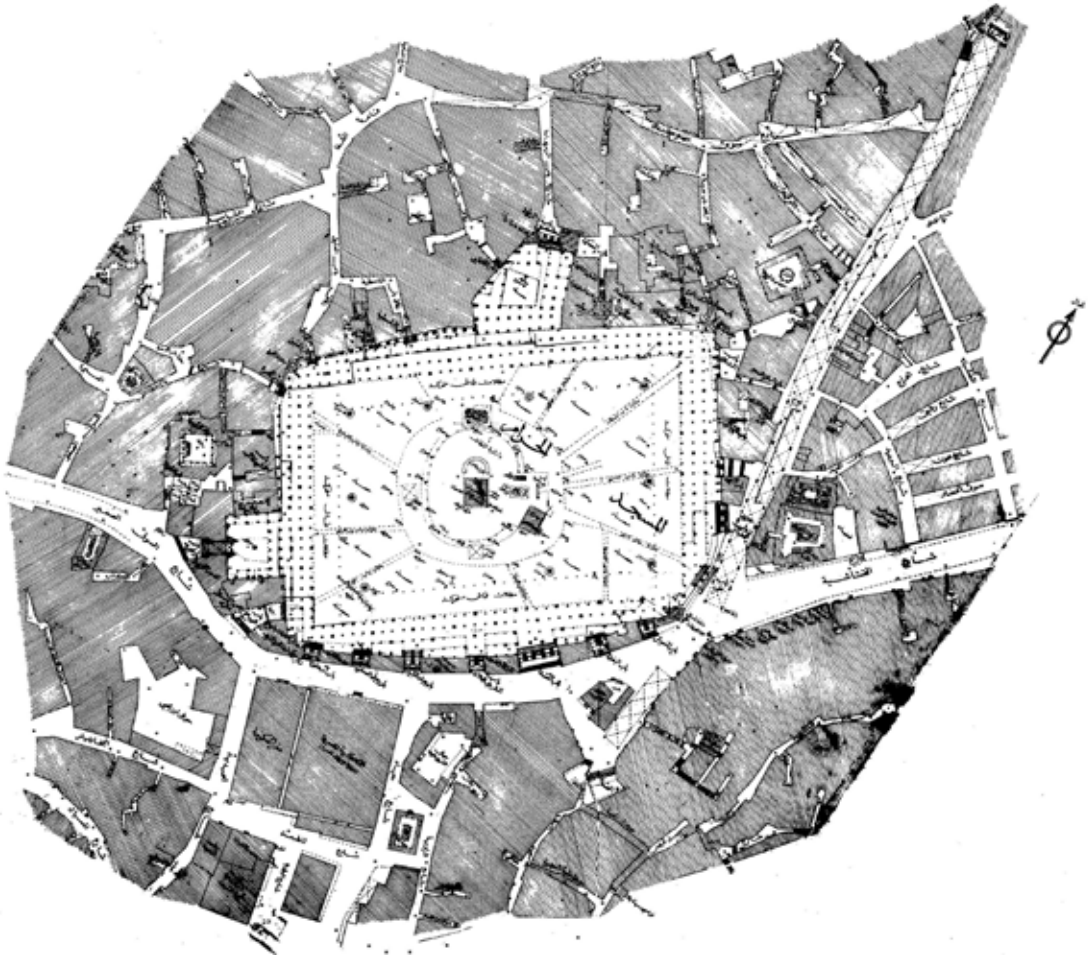

Fig. 2b- Plan Drawing of Mecca, 1954
Source: Courtesy of the Author & ACE

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the balanced social patterns and behavior of its residents of all faiths, ethnic origins and income groups who have followed a rather traditional and pious way of life. This traditional way of life, together with its related rituals, life forms, and images are subject to the changes of contemporary opportunities and maintains its vitality precisely because it is not static.[16] (Fig. 3)

Fez

The city was founded by Berbers on a bank of the Fez River in the Atlas Mountains in 789 CE. Fez, which features a Mediterranean climate, with hot dry summers and chilly wet winters, might well be the largest and most enduring medieval Islamic settlement in the world. With its compact, courtyard texture of built forms, it is ecologically well adapted and sustainable in its context. It is indisputably Morocco's spiritual and cultural heart. Fez is considered to be the soul of Morocco, "the last bastion of what Morocco really is." You need only watch the daily procession of candle-toting mourners entering the tomb of the city's founder, Moulay Idriss II — believed to be a great-great grandson of the prophet Mohammed — to feel the city's connection to its past. Kairouyine mosque, one of the oldest and largest in Africa, was built together with the associated University of Al-Kairouyine in 859 CE. Fez's Golden Age was in the fourteenth-century, which still continues to pervade the spiritual life of the country. Few places on Earth seem so imbued with buried meanings: in the patterns of hand-knotted carpets; in the tattooed faces of Berber peasant women; in the cosmic swirls of carved plaster in its architecture; in the voices of traditional Sufi and Gnawa singers; in the techniques of expert craftsmen; and in the ingredients of its cuisine.[17] (Fig. 4)

The city plan follows the rule of five concentric rings: at the center are the religious places; after those are the working places like the souks; next the residential areas; and finally the walls of the city, beyond which are the gardens, orchards, and cemeteries. Some 30,000 craftsmen ply their trades in small stores and back-alley workshops. For the Sufis, Islam's most mystical followers, Fez has long been a hallowed land. The nooks of the medina are filled with Sufi sanctuaries known as *Zaouias*, where brotherhoods meet, worship, and sing. Their musical chants are the soundtracks of Fez, the sonic analog of the city's deep spirituality.

Isfahan

Isfahan is situated in a hot/arid, fertile valley between two mountain ranges in north-central Iran. These ranges act as macro scale walls whose melting snows

Fig. 3 - Plan of Old City, Jerusalem, 2,000 BC
Source: Courtesy of the Author

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nourish and define a regional place (*Makan*) through which a great river, the Zayandah Rud, runs adjacent to which the positive shape of the city has evolved from pre-Islamic times. The historical growth and change of Isfahan from the tenth-century Seljuq period through to the seventeenth-century Safavid period of Shah Abbas I, where its population grew to nearly 600,000, and up to the present time, manifests the accrued realizations of its citizens for over a period of nearly eight hundred years. The special architectural and unique urban beauty of the city owe greatly to the encouragement of its Safavid rulers, who were both Shiite Muslims and descendants of the Safawiyya Sufi Order who perpetuated certain symbolic and formal concepts for the built environment. The city also flourished due to the presence of many Persian, Christian, and Jewish scholars, artists and craftsmen. That which is perceptible today of the traditional city is a rich tapestry of coherent, transcendent urban forms. It is a spiritual coherence based upon faith in permanence within change, the hidden within the manifest, and, above all, the profound sense of unity within multiplicity. Within this historic panorama, sixteenth/seventh-century Isfahan is considered as a supreme example of the superconscious level of harmonic order making, in

Fig. 4 - Morocco, Medina of the City of Fez, 789 AD
Source: Courtesy of Michal Osmenda, 2011; Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 2.0 Generic License

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which a sense of total order on both the macroscale and the microscale has been communally manifested in a time-space synthesis.[18](Fig. 5)

It can be seen in Isfahan that the major systems of the city were the responsibility of those who governed, while the "in-fill", or body proper of the city, remained in the domain of the populace. But this traditional society created cultural boundary conditions within which all the city's inhabitants acted. Taken at their various levels of individual comprehension, they acted within a spiritual framework that motivated an ecological balance through an insistence on the study of nature and her mode of operation at the same time as it inspired and united the creative realizations of that society.

The macroscale orders of the primary movement system of the bazaar, the secondary organic movement pattern of the residential pathways, the tertiary order of waterways nourishing paradise gardens, together with regional bioclimatic dictates, constituted unique design determinants. The microscale orders of social conduct, oriented space (to Mecca, to the solar path and prevailing wind directions), the concept of positive space continuity of form making, the world of relevant symbols (shapes, geometric/arabesque surface patterns, color and calligraphy), in conjunction with materials and traditional adaptive technologies, established a superconscious design basis that served as a point of departure for the individual within which to act. Here, then, a definite rhythm was set into motion which generated the central theme of the city's composition while allowing for a myriad of related variations – a theme so powerful that it directed for centuries the general urban pattern and aesthetic motif, its growth, its harmonic transformations and renewal.

We find ourselves to be most truly human when we are raised to the level of the divine. Thus in a single act we accomplish the double movement of entering into ourselves and going out of ourselves which brings us back to the paradisiacal state for which we were originally created.
Where is this place? It is not a place, it is God.
Thomas Merton[19]

Key Principles of transcendent Cities

From these brief glimpses of some of the most sublime cities in the Middle East, we may observe some key characteristics that may point toward the perennial principles for achieving greater urban transcendence in our future cities and possible means of transforming and uplifting the existing

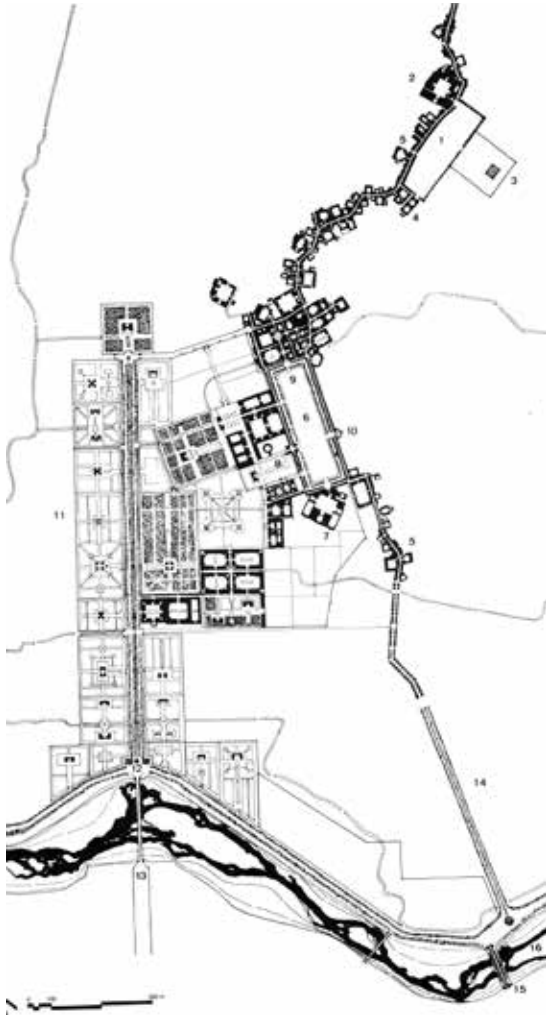

Fig. 5 - Isfahan, Iran- Plan of the Growth of the City 10th -17th AD
Source: Courtesy of the Author

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fabrics from the phenomenal and spiritual decay into which most have fallen. It might be asked: Can the surge of religious movements today in the Middle East also bring a resurgence of spiritualism, or is the potential of that dimension overshadowed and stifled by radical fundamentalism?[20] The answers depend upon the level of illuminated consciousness brought to the question by each person, the supportive and inspired leadership provided in those societies, and the creative imagination of its poets, artists, and architects to utilize the perennial wisdom of their inheritance.

The Structure of Being

Traditional man tends towards a mode of comprehension, which provides both a metaphysical and phenomenal interpretation of life. This complementary interpretation affects all of his perceptions because it begins by situating him in the universe. Initially, this interpretation determines his awareness of cosmic space as an externalization of the macrocosmic creation, which is analogous to his own microcosmic self. This traditional Hermetic concept forms part of the world view incorporated into the Islamic perspective, a view in which the space of the universe is structured on a phenomenally manifest macrocosm and a metaphysically hidden microcosm, each containing five great divisions. The Microcosm of human nature is conceived as being structured in concentric circles consisting of the body, the soul, the heart, the spirit and an ineffable essence. Similarly, at the core of the Macrocosm lies the Essential Nature of the Absolute in its un-manifest, indescribable quality. This Essence manifests itself outwardly toward the phenomenal world and human nature through a series of Archetypal stages. Henry Corbin observed that Archetypes serve as symbolic veils that both hide and reveal the Divine Essence.[21] (Fig. 6)

Orientation in Space

In such a structured space, man knows where he is and it provides him with a strong directional sense. It is only with reference to the heavens, the rising and setting sun and moon, the rotation of stars and the prevailing breezes that the infiniteness of space can be quantifiably and qualitatively grasped. The order of the spheres and their movements through the six directions of north, south, east, west, up (zenith) and down (nadir) constitute a primary coordinate system within which all creation is situated. The quality of "Place Making" in the Islam is further enriched by the terrestrial magnet of the daily direction of ritual prayer toward Mecca.[22]

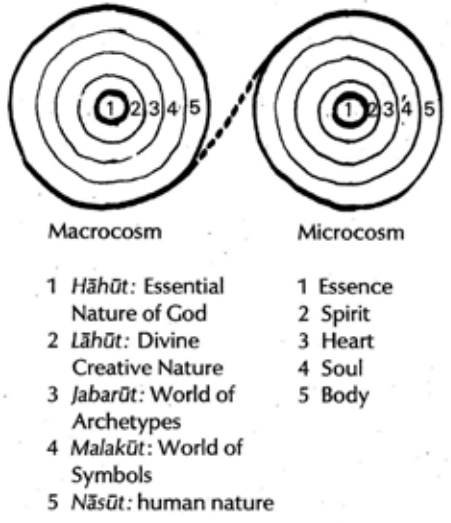

Fig. 6 - Macrocosm/Microcosm Diagram
Source: Courtesy of Diagram by the Author

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The Sense of Place - Sustainable Urbanism

When order in cosmic space is achieved, the interpretative mind seeks regional order. Here adaptation to environmental context, the impact of memorable natural settings, such as distant mountain peaks, ocean views, river valleys, unique landscapes – the *genius loci* of a place – inspires and motivates the primary setting out of the urban form, its density and texture, and its pivotal visual axis.

While bioregions of the Middle East have certain geographic boundaries, they also have certain mythic and historic modes of self-identification. This bioclimatic cultural identity can form the basis of a spiritual ecology for our cities – both the emergent new urban centers and the self-healing retrofitting of our existing cities. The most difficult transition of consciousness will be to change from our current anthropocentric world view of progress to a bio-centric norm.

Ancient Origins

Somehow the more ancient the origins of a city's founding date, the more imbued are these urban places with a cosmic consciousness, perhaps due to the influencing motivations of the founding fathers, whose mystical participation with life was more pronounced than ours today, while being equally conscious of security and defensive motivations in their city locations. What about new cities that will characterize so much of the new urbanism? As the world population continues to increase from the present 7 billion to more than 9 billion over the next 50 years, more than 60 % will live in urban centers. Here modern science and astronomy's search for humanity's and the earth's cosmic origins may provide some direction for answers. Can the cosmic story of the "Big Bang" and the drama of the expanding universe theory provide a new and profound narrative to impact city forms? Certainly we know that historically great cities became the abstract manifestations of man's world views, spread large upon the surface of the earth. Commencing with the most ancient archaeological discovery of Gobekli Tepe, through to the Elamite cities of Chogha Zanbil and onto Ecbatana in North West

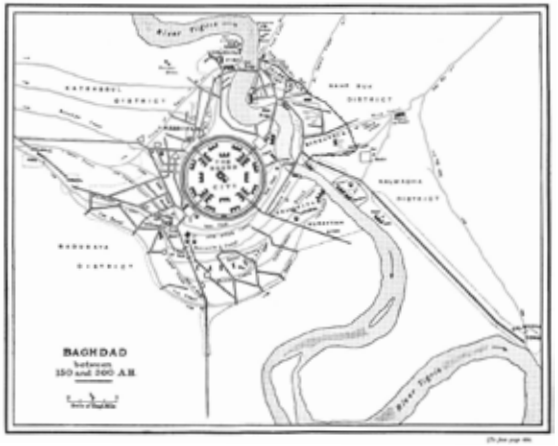

Fig. 7 - Chogha Zanbil Ziggurat, Dur Untash City, Iran 1,250 BC
Source: Courtesy of Pentocelo, 2008; Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 3.0 unported License

Fig. 8- Baghdad, Iraq - Circular City of Caliph al Mansur, 762 AD
Source: Courtesy of William Muir, 1883; Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike License

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Iran to the circular city of Baghdad by Caliph-al-Mansur and Heart, Afghanistan in the twelfth-century CE, the geometric city was a recapitulation of the diagram of the conceptual structure of the universe, as understood at the time. (Fig. 7, 8, 9)
The quest was to manifest the idea of unity (*tawhid*), but the contemplative mind can also conceive of unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity, as evidenced by the dynamically harmonic, linear order of the cities of Isfahan and other Iranian cities in the sixteenth-century.[23](Fig. 10)

Can such contemporary macrocosmic consciousness motivate new city forms, while also accommodating the microcosmic scale of the individual, the family, and the social unit of the neighborhood?

Sacred Paths, Places of Religion & Pilgrimage - Places of Knowledge

Without exception all the cities cited above shelter one or more sacred sites, shrines, or religious places of pilgrimage. Thus the sanctity of spirituality pervades their key places and the boundaries of sacredness resonate throughout their urban precincts. Their sacred pathways or historic routes weave throughout the fabric of the city.[24] Often, over time such cities have also become places of knowledge and centers of academic learning and become associated with a certain sense of wisdom.

Fig. 9 - Herat, Afghanistan - Plan of the City after P.W. English
Source; Courtesy of the Author from Ardalan & Bakhtiar, The Sense of Unity, University of Chicago Press, 1973 (after P.W. English "The Traditional City of Herat, Afghanistan" Paper, 1970)

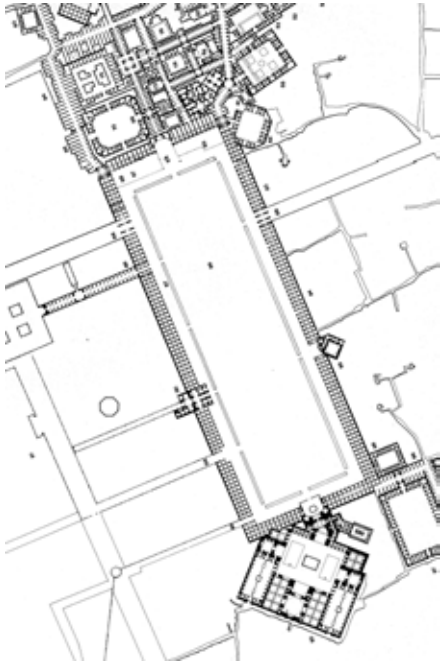

Fig. 10 - Isfahan, Iran - Plan of Bazaar and Maydan i Naghsh i Jahan, 17th C. AD
Source: Courtesy of the author

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This aspect has naturally created city nodes of student life that give these cities an active, artistic, and intellectual vigor.

Urban Space - Public Realm - Paradise Garden - Human Scale

The positive and vital concept of space generates many of the cities cited. This concept that space, not shape, should lead in the generation of form is one of the characteristics of these great cities. The dense urban fabrics of these cities, such as those in Isfahan, Iran, are often complemented by public realm places, be they linear bazaars, open plazas or public gardens; they honor the pedestrian and bow to the human measure.(Fig. 11) They are walking cities; cities of scalable motion and human activities where speech, song, and music may be heard; they are organic, living urban entities of mixed use, averaging about two to four story volumes of compact courtyard textures, shaded pathways and unexpected vistas, at times focused upon symbolic architecture of quality.[25]

Multi-cultural integrated Communities-Significant political History & economic Vitality

The quality of openness to multiculturalism where people of different faiths can commingle is another characteristic of a

numinous city where the cosmopolitanism, the universality, and the mosaic of world cultures living side by side, activates the uniqueness of such cities. Perhaps the common ground of a deeper foundation of spirituality, beyond the particularities of a given faith, is a vital characteristic of the sublime city. Yet, these are not monastic cities. On the contrary, they contain sensual and artistically motivated centers; they are often seats of political power or of regionally significant influence;[26] they are thriving economic places characterized by such city components as the *Souk* or *Bazaar*, as exemplified by the *Khan el Khalili* in Cairo (Fig. 12)

Quality Architecture

"The process of creating Archetypes" is one definition of the purpose of architecture. All other definitions generate mere buildings that lie qualitatively

Fig. 11 - Isfahan, Iran- Positive Space of Maydan i Naghsh i Jahan, 17th C. AD Source: Courtesy of the Author from Ardalan & Bakhtiar, The Sense of Unity (photograph by E. Schmidt, Flights over Ancient Cities of Persia, University of Chicago Press, 1940)

Fig. 12- Cairo, Egypt, Khan el Khalili, Bab al-Ghuri, 16th C. AD Source: Courtesy of Joel Suganth, 2009; Wikimedia Creative Commons Attribution- Share Alike 3.0 unported License

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and aesthetically at levels far below, if conceived within a pyramid with quality on top and quantity on the base. Cities that have nurtured the beautiful and the good, in Aristotelian terms, glow with a subtle elegance not determined by material wealth spent upon them, but by the essence of their conception and realization. Here proportion, the use of numbers and geometry recall the Archetypes, as in the Platonic "world of hanging forms" or in the Islamic terminology, the *Alam-i-Mithal*.[27] The Hermetic traditions of alchemy provide the architect with guidance for the use of matter and its transformation from basic heaviness to elegant lightness, through a depth of understanding of the proper use of symbols, colors, mathematics, and geometry situated in elegant Paradise Gardens, such as the seventeenth-century Bagh-I Fin, Kashan. (Fig. 13)

Transcendent Symbolism

Traditional man has a propensity for symbolic expression, which is deeply ingrained in both the Persian and Arabic languages. In Persian, it is said that a person has *Ham-dami*, or inner resonance and sympathy with the hidden (*batin*) qualities of the creation. Symbols are regarded as the theophanies of the absolute in the relative, phenomenal world. Symbolic forms, which are sensible aspects of the metaphysical reality of things, exist whether or not man is conscious of them. "Man does not create symbols, he is transformed by them."[28] Thomas Berry notes that traditional man has an intimate communion with the depths of his psychic structure, which is one of the main differences with the psychic functioning of the Euroamerican in modern times. "We have so developed our rational processes, our phenomenal ego that we have lost much of the earlier communion we had with the archetypal world of our own unconscious."[29] However, as the Pulitzer Prize winning scientist Edward O. Wilson writes in *Consilience*: "The brain has a strong tendency to condense repeated episodes of a kind into concepts, which are then represented by symbols."[30] He believes that these genetic, neural activity patterns are representative of the basic unit of particular cultures that he terms *memes*. His research indicates that people tend to gravitate to environments that reward their hereditary inclinations to these memes. "The message from geneticists to intellectuals and policy-makers is this: Choose the society you want to promote, and then prepare to live with its heritabilities."[31] Nicholas Wade in the book: *the Faith Instinct* traces how such a meme, the spiritual or faith quest, became hardwired from ancient times into

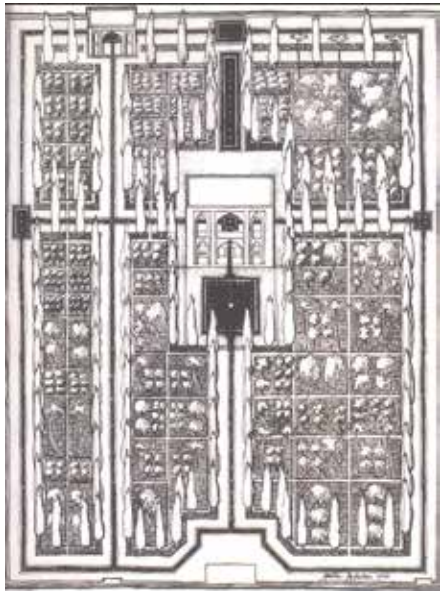

Fig.13 - Bagh-I Fin, Kashan, Iran, 16th C. AD
Source: Drawing courtesy of the Author

Fig. 14 - Mandala symbol, as shown in the Mausoleum Plan of Khawaja Rabi, Mashhad, Iran, representing the integration of the parts with the whole.
Source: Drawing courtesy of the Author

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the human genes as an instinct for survival. Despite the rise of secular societies today, that faith continues to be one of the key forces that fortify and maintain the social fabric.[32] Therefore, as the psychiatrist Carl Jung observed, the world of symbols, such as the mandala,, the circle, Pythagorean geometries and mathematics, colors, the *Ouroborous*, mythic legends of heroic personalities, natural forces, and the Earth Mother archetype are forever subliminally present for those that have the conscious eyes to see.[33] (Fig. 14) The challenge to our societies of the Middle East is to reawaken to our transcendent heritabilities and the symbolic forms and meanings that help nurture a more relevant and profound quality of urban life.

Concluding Observations

Such then is the nature and framework of this quest to shift our cities and their architecture from a kind of machine-inspired functionalist aesthetic to a more cosmic, ecological, and spiritually inspired design approach. The resolutions of these values and aesthetic questions remain elusive, but provide profound inspirations for more meaningful answers that touch the individual soul and collective humanity.

When you become the pencil in the hand of the infinite,
When you are truly creative... design begins and never has an end.
Frank Lloyd Wright[34]

To truly understand the key issues of sustainability and cultural identity, we need to begin with a cosmic, systemic awareness of the context of human existence on both a tangible, phenomenal level and the less tangible, cultural level. We need to become aware of the particular world views of indigenous civilizations, the *genus loci* of places, and the optimum ecological fit of cities with their context. The mandate for good design is to elegantly realize this holistic vision in physical reality. Such an approach may provide an important methodology by which common ground can be found between the profound world views of traditional civilizations and the highest aspirations of contemporary innovations in art and architecture. Without such a common ground, the new architectural creations lack a sense of place, are environmentally unsustainable, and appear as alien usurpers of an existing civilization, thus causing the identity crisis that is observable in the cities of the Middle East as a whole, and particularly in the new developments of the Persian Gulf region. Instead, the momentum of the new resurgent urbanism urgently needs to find new ways of designing in harmony with nature and our culture.

"Every advance in technology has been directed toward man's mastery of his environment. Until very recently, however, man always maintained a certain balance between his bodily and spiritual being and the external world.
Disruption of this balance may have a detrimental effect on man, genetically, physiologically, or psychologically.
And however fast technology advances, however radically the economy changes, all change must be related to the rate of change of man himself. The abstractions of the technologist and the economist must be continually pulled down to Earth by the gravitational force of human nature."
Hassan Fathy [35]

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Il Cielo sulla Terra: le Corrispondenze di Swedenborg nel Piano di Chicago

Heaven on Earth: Swedenborgian Correspondences in the Plan of Chicago[1]

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Daniel Hudson Burnham, l'architetto e urbanista di Chicago, è conosciuto per il suo lavoro sull'edificio alto per uffici americano; per la costruzione della World's Columbian Exposition del 1893; e per i suoi piani urbanistici per Washington, Cleveland, San Francisco e Chicago. È anche ricordato per la citazione "Non fate piani piccoli." Ciò per cui non è ricordato è la sua fede swedenborgiana, né come abbia influenzato il suo lavoro. Emanuel Swedenborg era uno scienziato svedese e ingegnere che, a partire dalla metà degli anni '40 del 1700, ha subito un risveglio spirituale. Il focus del suo lavoro è cambiato per gli aspetti mistici dell'esperienza umana. Egli credeva che tutte le chiese cristiane fossero morte ed avessero bisogno di una rivitalizzazione e che la chiave per essa si trovasse in una nuova interpretazione delle Scritture. I suoi seguaci fondarono la Chiesa della Nuova Gerusalemme, a volte indicata come Chiesa Nuova o la Chiesa Swedenborgiana.

Daniel Hudson Burnham, the Chicago architect and city planner, is recognized for his work on the development of American tall office building; for the construction of World's Columbian Exposition of 1893; and for his city plans for Washington, D.C., Cleveland, San Francisco, and Chicago. He is also remembered for the quote "Make no little plans." What is not recalled is his Swedenborgian faith nor how it influenced his work. Emanuel Swedenborg was a Swedish scientist and engineer who, beginning in the mid 1740s, underwent a spiritual awakening. The focus of his work changed to the mystical aspects of human experience. He believed that all Christian churches were dead and in need of revitalization and the key to revitalization was to be found in a new interpretation of scripture. His followers founded the Church of the New Jerusalem, sometimes referred to as the New Church or the Swedenborgian Church.

Parole chiave: **Burnham; Piano di Chicago; Swedenborg; Nuova Gerusalemme; Corrispondenza; Usi**

Keywords: ***Burnham; Plan of Chicago; Swedenborg; New Jerusalem; Correspondence; Uses***

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Daniel Hudson Burnham, the American architect and city planner, is possibly best known for the quote attributed to him: "Make no little plans." He is well known for his work on the development of the tall office building in Chicago with his early partner John W. Root; for the organization and construction of World's Columbian Exposition of 1893; and for his city plans for Washington, D.C., Cleveland, San Francisco, and Chicago.[2] What is not so well known is how his Swedenborgian faith influenced his work, especially his 1909 *Plan of Chicago*. Burnham's encompassing large-scale view was related to his religious beliefs that posited the correspondence of the physical realm to that of spiritual, and Burnham's planning work sought to make that correspondence manifest.

Swedenborg

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a Swedish scientist and mystic. A Lutheran, he was called the Buddha of the north by D.T. Suzuki, and by others the Leonardo da Vinci of his era. Although most people know little or nothing about Swedenborg today, he was well known in his own day and throughout the nineteenth century. His ideas influenced American artists Hiram Powers and George Innes, and American architects John Root and Louis Sullivan, as well as Daniel Burnham.

Swedenborg's early scientific studies included chemistry and physics, and his engineering work centered on mines and canals. Beginning in the mid 1740s and continuing into the 1750s, Swedenborg underwent a spiritual awakening and the focus of his work changed to the more mystical aspects of human experience. He sought to understand the nature of the human soul and find its location in the human body. From this specific search he developed a generalized theory that all external physical form was generated and sprang from an internal spiritual origin. This became an essential tenet of his writings. The most important part of this spiritual emergence was Swedenborg's belief that he had communicated with angels and experienced revelations that gave him insight into the celestial realm. Swedenborg interpreted these experiences as a message from God that he was to deliver. He believed that all Christian churches were dead and in need of revitalization and the key to revitalization was to be found in a new interpretation of scripture. Here it is important to note that Swedenborg's emphasis on hermeneutics influenced Burnham's interpretation of the physical world as spiritually significant.[3]

Swedenborg was prolific in turning his revelations into prose. Between 1749-56 he published his eight-volume *Arcana Coelestia*, published in English in 12 volumes as *Secrets of Heaven* from 1783–1806. He followed that with *Heaven and Hell* (1758, translated 1778), *New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* (1758, 1780), *Last Judgment* (1758, 1788), *Divine Love and Wisdom* (1763, 1788), *Divine Providence* (1764, 1790), *Revelation Unveiled* (1766, 1791), and others. Based on his extensive writings, his followers founded the Church of the New Jerusalem, sometimes referred to as the New Church or the Swedenborgian Church.[4] The Church of the New Jerusalem is named for the heavenly city of the second coming described in The Revelation to John, more commonly known as the Book of Revelation.[5]

Burnham's Swedenborgianism

While we may not readily call to mind Burnham's religious beliefs, those who knew him understood that it was an essential part of his character. For instance, in his Autobiography of an Idea, Louis Sullivan remembers Burnham as:

> *a sentimentalist, a dreamer, a man of fixed determination and strong will — no doubt about that — of large, wholesome, effective presence, a shade pompous, a mystic — a Swedenborgian — a man who readily opened his heart if one were sympathetic ... He liked men of heart*

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as well as brains. That there was so much loveliness in nature, so much hidden beauty in the human soul, so much of joy and uplifting in the arts that he who shut himself away from these influences and immured himself in sordid things forfeited the better half of life. It was too high a price to pay, he said. He averred that romance need not die out; that there must still be joy to the soul in doing big things in a big personal way, devoid of the sordid.[6]

It is Sullivan, too, who reminds us that, from the outset of his career, Burnham strove to obtain big projects for his firm. Sullivan associates this with Burnham's emulation of the contemporary practices of large business corporations, "for in its tendencies toward bigness, organization, delegation and intense commercialism, he sensed the reciprocal workings of his own mind."[7] This is one of the underlying dualities of Burnham. As Swedenborg was both an engineer and a seer, Burnham was, as one colleague put it, a visionary with sound business judgment.[8]

Burnham's parents were well-known Swedenborgians in the New England and upstate New York religious communities, and his maternal grandfather was a minister in the New Church. When the family moved to Chicago, his parents helped found the New-Church Society there. As a child, Burnham went to both public and Swedenborgian schools; Snow's Swedenborgian Academy in Chicago, and later the New Church School in Waltham, Massachusetts. He was also tutored for university entrance exams by the Reverend Tilly B. Hayward of Massachusetts.[9]

As a young adult, Burnham joined the Swedenborgian Church and gave thought to entering the ministry, but instead found his calling in architecture. He wrote to his mother about his career choice, describing architecture as the "striving after the beautiful and useful laws God has created to govern his material universe." Burnham believed that the study of architecture would "open [my] mind more and more to the Great Architect of the Universe the more I study it in simplicity of mind and ask Him to help me."[1] Burnham related his discipline to the laws of the material universe created by God. Even as he was rising in the profession, distracted by work commitments and ambitiously building his firm, he wrote to his mother that he could not live "without a steady religious life."[11] Ultimately, he was not a regular church attender, but he read Swedenborg throughout his life, sometimes holding services or readings at his house.[12]

Burnham's spirituality was evident to Edward H. Bennett. Burnham's protégé and coauthor of the *Plan of Chicago* (Fig.1), Bennett worked closely with Burnham on the design of the Chicago parks

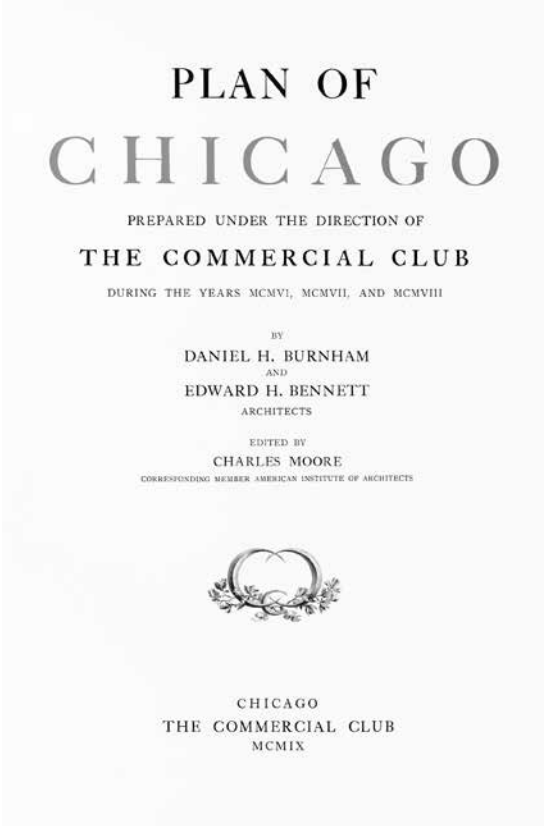
PLAN OF
CHICAGO
PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMERCIAL CLUB
DURING THE YEARS MCMVI, MCMVII, AND MCMVIII
BY
DANIEL H. BURNHAM
AND
EDWARD H. BENNETT
ARCHITECTS
EDITED BY
CHARLES MOORE
CORRESPONDING MEMBER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
CHICAGO
THE COMMERCIAL CLUB
MCMIX

Fig. 1 - Title page of the 1909 *Plan of Chicago* [*Plan of Chicago*, title page]

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fieldhouses.[13] He described Burnham as "a blazing human spirit of pure gold ... [who] flooded [my] life with its warmth and inspiring faith for years."[14] He recalled their spiritual discussions and Burnham's belief that men were at their best when they channeled some higher force.[15] After visiting a hospitalized Burnham, Bennett noted that "[w]e talked of Swedenborg or rather I listened to him discourse on the subject and came away strengthened in purpose."[16] According to Bennett, the "laws of spiritual correspondence were often in [Burnham's] mind;" that he believed "in the infinite possibilities of material expression of the spiritual" and "consciously or unconsciously no great work can have been conceived without a sense of an underlying spiritual meaning."[17] Burnham himself linked his plan for San Francisco to Swedenborg's idea of "correspondence." Bennett recalled that while they working on that plan, he had seen Burnham trace "the correspondence of spiritual powers and ... municipal powers as indicated in the physical lay-out."

Therefore, in order to understand how Burnham's religious beliefs related to his planning activities, two of Swedenborg's concepts must be introduced, *correspondence* and *uses*. Correspondence relates to Burnham's work, especially his planning work, and the meaning he invested in it. Uses concerns Burnham's attitude toward his work, his values and motivations.

Correspondence

Swedenborg believed that when he communicated with angels, they had revealed to him the divine structure of the universe and the organization of the spiritual realm. He also believed there was a correspondence, a meaningful connection, between the various planes of being, and that everything we perceive in nature symbolizes something in the spiritual world.[18] Correspondence is Swedenborg's theory of the relationship of the natural (or material or physical) world to that of the spiritual realm. He believed that "everything outward and visible has an inward and spiritual cause."[19] He wrote:

> *The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world ... It must be understood that the natural world springs from and has permanent existence from the spiritual world, precisely like an effect from its effecting cause.*[20]

In the spiritual world, the character of the surroundings corresponds to the states of mind of the inhabitants and in some way is created by them. In the natural world, that which corresponds to the divine order is able to manifest spiritual goodness and convey that spiritual goodness to the inhabitants.

In the spiritual realm, Swedenborg identified three heavens: the innermost, most perfect or third heaven; an intermediate or second heaven; and an outermost or first heaven. Beyond the outermost heaven is the world of spirits, and beyond that is hell with its three divisions. The concentric configuration of his description is pronounced and its analogy with our solar system makes it clear.[21] Both the spiritual and material realms have a sun at the center. The Lord is the sun in the spiritual world, radiating divine love (heat) and divine wisdom (light). This corresponds to the sun in our natural world, whose heat and light are merely physical emanations.[22] The spiritual exists on a different plane and is made of a different substance.

In terms of human production, the goal was to produce the highest, most noble representations that would elevate, refine, and purify the mind. One such vehicle for the spiritual was beauty in art and architecture.[23] When the natural (or material) world is formed by people to more closely resemble the spiritual one and when people live according to heavenly doctrines then, and only then will the holy city, the New Jerusalem, come down to earth.[24]

As an architect, Burnham saw the plan as a vehicle of correspondence between this material realm and the spiritual one, and that it need not be limited to the concentric plan of heaven. He wrote of the correspondence

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between the design of the Court of Honor at the World's Columbian Exposition (Fig. 2) and the vision of heaven in the New Testament's The Revelation to John.[25]

Burnham, as Director of Works, had control over almost everything at the Fair, as it was commonly known. He supervised the design, construction, engineering, and landscaping. He also helped to make possible the World's Parliament of Religions at the Fair by a direct gift and by raising subscriptions. According to his first biographer, Charles Moore, he had hoped that the religious congress would "bring about, if not a universal creed, certainly a universal code of morals," applicable to all.[26] The World's Parliament of Religions brought together representatives from many faiths, including Catholicism, Protestant denominations, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, Shintoism, and Confucianism, and introduced Bahaism to the United States.

Many visitors to the Fair called it the Celestial City, the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem. Writers at the time also made this analogy, and it seems to have been one that struck a chord with Fair goers.[27] For instance, Frances Hodgson Burnett made the point in her book *Two Little Pilgrims' Progress*, that the design of the White City (as the Court of Honor was called) represented an earthly realization of John Bunyan's

Fig. 2 - Court of Honor of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicago [*Wikipedia Commons*]

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Celestial City in *The Pilgrim's Progress*.[28] The authors of a book of photographs of the Fair remarked that its builders "must have been very near to God."[29] And a character in one of the number of novels that referred to the Fair thought that the builders "believed in God and put Him and their enlightenment from Him into what they did."[30]

It was not only in the popular press that such a heavenly allusion was made. Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard University Professor of Fine Arts, also saw the possibility of the parallel, but posed it as a question. He saw that the Fair was "full of material promise." But:

> *Was it full also of spiritual promise? Did the way through it lead to the Celestial City? Was it, indeed, but the type and promise of the New Jerusalem, or was it rather like the great city of the Book of Revelation, full of 'the merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones...* [31]

Norton himself had no sure answer but another did. Elizabeth Burnham, Daniel's mother, "saw in it a vision of the New Jerusalem," in the working together of artists and capitalists to create this wondrous city.[32] And Burnham himself wrote a sermon on the Court of Honor, describing its correspondence with heaven as described in The Revelation to John, II: The Prophetic Visions.[33]

Burnham's sermon repeats verses from Revelation and after each responds with a verse of his own relating it to the Fair. Burnham introduces it with: "Before closing this door forever, let us look at the spiritual import of this beautiful court of honor, and see how it is portrayed in heaven." This is followed by Rev. 4:1, in which St. John sees "a door opened in heaven." Burnham follows this with "All who entered the Court of Honor, especially after dark, saw this door opened in heaven." This pattern is continued for all eleven verses. Following Rev. 4:2, Burnham identifies the throne as the Administration building, and the one sitting on it as "the *Unity* of power to *produce* and *preserve* all that is beautiful, elevating, uplifting, which is true of this Court of Honor." Here Burnham makes the identification of this "unity" with that which is divine.[34]

Revelation 4:6 speaks of "a sea of glass like unto crystal" before the throne, and surrounded by four beasts. Burnham responds that the Grand Basin is such a beautiful sea; and that the four beasts are "the four great buildings, the Manufactures, the Agricultural, the Machinery and the Electricity." In response to Rev. 4:7, Burnham links the Manufactures Building to the lion, "leading all in size and strength." The calf Burnham links with the Agriculture Building, a "type of food and sacrifice." The "beast with the face as a man" is associated with the Machinery Hall, "where the faculties of Intelligence are especially required." Finally, the eagle is linked to the Electricity Building.[35] After Rev. 4:9 Burnham speaks of the "infinite and eternal" power that creates beauty. And after Rev. 4:11 Burnham, speaks of the presence of God in "that which is beautiful and uplifting," and explains that "the same power which created all things, has created this scene, never-to-be-forgotten..."[36]

It is very clear that, for Burnham, the creation of the Fair had a divine aspect, and that the men who made the Fair were channeling a higher power. Burnham would later say that:

> *our souls were played upon by a higher hand, and the outward forms we built were expressions of enduring, everlasting law ... The contemplation of the expression of law is good for man ... Therefore let the masses often see the peristyles and waterways and be set longing for a constant life consonant with such manifestations of the beauty of the face of the creator.*[37]

The overwhelming (that is not to say unanimous) response to the Fair's beauty and harmony reinforced Burnham's ideas on the ability of architecture to represent and manifest universal laws.

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Reporters, without such overt references to the divine, did note that the Fair seemed to have an effect on the behavior of Fair goers. One writer observed of the crowd:

> *They stroll through the crowded halls, glancing casually at some striking object and then yielding to the invincible fascination of the exterior, wander by the lake and the lagoons, returning again and again to the entrancing Court, which satisfies the unspoken aspirations of the soul for unattainable beauty and will be forever luminous in memory.*[38]

Many others observed the effect of Fair on the conduct of the "commonplace crowd," which was remarked to be "orderly and well-behaved," that is to say, possessing "hitherto uncommon characteristics." Credited with elevating the conduct of Fair goers and arousing "their higher consciousness," the Fair was judged to have provided an artistically and morally uplifting environment. That the Fair seemed to promote positive feelings and behavior also made it important from the social point of view that design could promote a better society.[39]

People had found themselves drawn to the order, the unity, the beauty of these forms, perhaps without knowing why. Burnham understood that the Court of Honor in this physical realm corresponded to John's description of heaven. It manifested spiritual goodness and had an effect on those who experienced it.

Again, we know from Bennett that Burnham believed "in the infinite possibilities of material expression of the spiritual," and that these "laws of spiritual correspondence were often in his mind."[40] We know that Burnham himself linked his plan for San Francisco to Swedenborg's idea of correspondences. In the *Plan of Chicago* we can expect to find similar correspondences.[41]

Burnham included in the *Plan of Chicago* Eugene Hénard's diagrams of the essential configurations of Paris, Moscow, London and Berlin. The Paris diagram (Fig. 3), with its concentric rings, most closely resembles Swedenborg's description of heaven.[42] Burnham remarks in the *Plan* that "the universal mind recognizes" in Paris "that complete articulation which satisfies the craving for good order and symmetry in every part."[43] The phrase "universal mind" indicating, I would argue, that Burnham is proposing a Swedenborgian correspondence between this and the spiritual realm, and that he sees in the diagrams evidence of Swedenborg's divine configuration in the historical record in the plans of the Western world's most important cities.

Appearing shortly after the Hénard

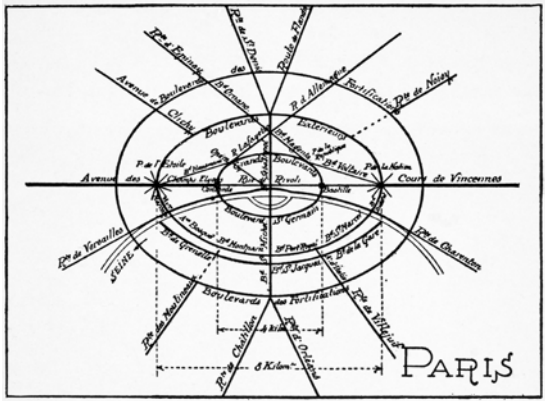

Fig. 3 - Eugene Henard's theoretical diagram of Paris [*Plan of Chicago*, fig. XCVII]

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diagrams in the *Plan of Chicago* is the plan of the new Chicago (Fig. 4), depicting the concentric configuration with encircling routes and color variation emphasizing the different territories. This plan, it seems not unreasonable to conclude, represents the concordance of the Chicago plan not only with that of Paris, but also the correspondence of the new Chicago with the three heavens of Swedenborg's description. This is the inscription of divine order on Chicago.

The motivating factor behind Burnham's commitment to remaking this world to be in correspondence with that of the spiritual realm is the second of Swedenborg's principles, uses.

Uses

"Uses" indicates the Swedenborgian principle of service to one's community.[44] Uses, in many instances, could be one's employment. To be "in uses" through one's work means that instead of paying attention only to one's own benefit, one would instead attend to the larger sense of the work and how such work is mutually beneficial to the worker in providing a living, and to the larger community in providing for its needs. Uses could be the pursuit of one's work as long as the focus was not on individual gain, but on benefit to the community.[45] For Swedenborgians, it is important to "discharge with fidelity

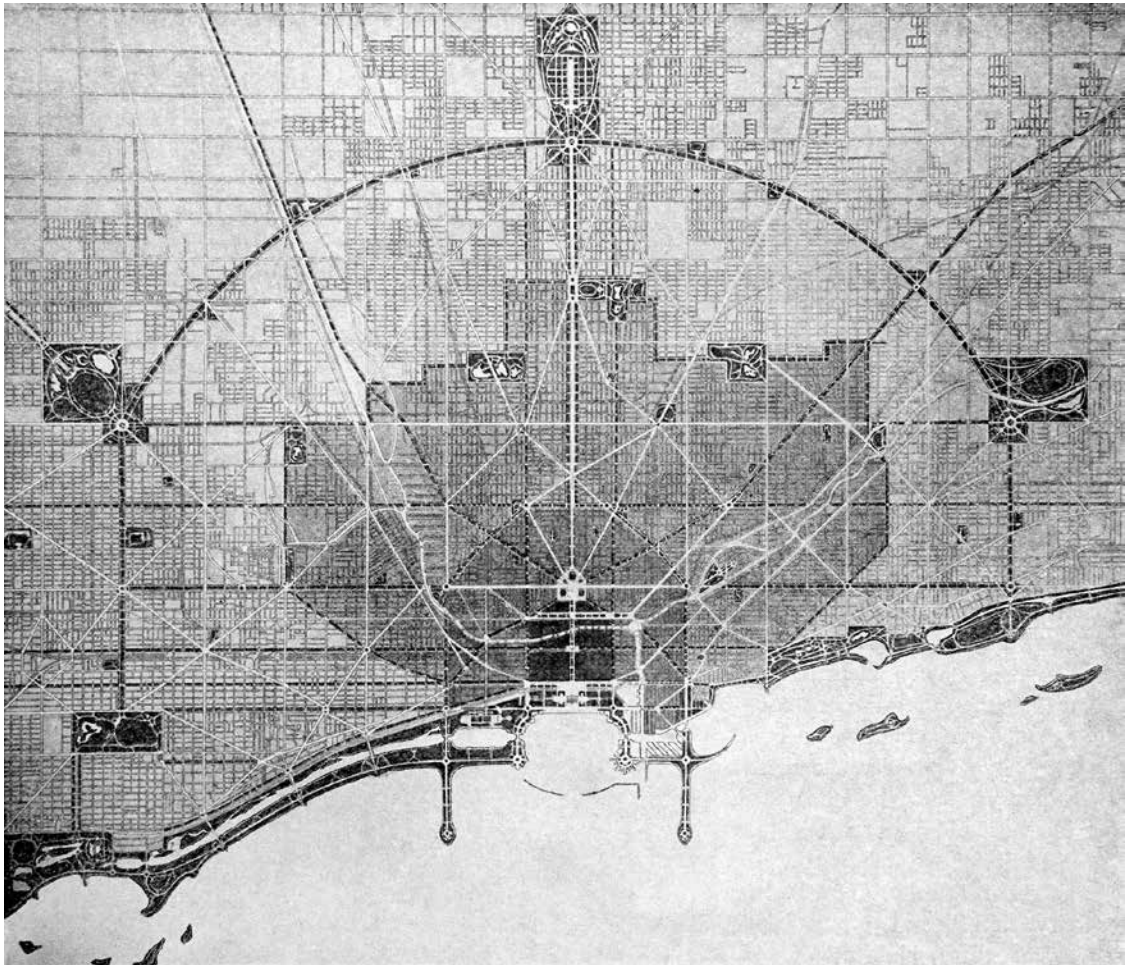

Fig. 4 - Plan of the City of Chicago, showing the system of parks and boulevards, both existing and proposed, with colors showing the concentric areas [*Plan of Chicago*, fig. CIII, Chicago]

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the functions of [one's] employments, and the duties of [one's] office, and to make [oneself] in all things useful to society."[46] Swedenborg did not discourage success. On the contrary, success was valued because the successful person had more to contribute to the welfare of others. However, success had to be pursued in the right frame of mind, balanced by a sense of duty to community and neighbor.[47]

Uses are a "spiritual function." They have been characterized as "loving kindness in action." Swedenborg believed that "God designed the universe as a use and even a series within series of uses." With these two statements – that uses are "loving kindness in action" and that "God designed the universe as a use" – the concept of "uses" links the individual's acts of loving kindness to the essence of God's design.[48] The individual is linked to God's creation through uses, or loving kindness in action.

Uses can also be related to the provision of material goods. Swedenborg explains that good uses are "providing the necessities of life for oneself and one's dependents" as well as to appropriate aspirations, such as "wanting a great deal for the sake of the nation and the sake of the neighbor, whom a wealthy person can benefit in far more ways than a poor one can." Such aspirations draw the mind away "from an idle life, which is a destructive life."[49] He further explains:

> *By uses not only the necessities of life are meant, such as food, raiment and habitation for oneself and one's own, but also the good of one's country, community and fellow-citizens. Business is such a good when it is the end-love and money is a mediate, subservient love ... [and] when the businessman shuns and is adverse to fraud and bad practices ... [0] therwise when money is the end-love ... this is avarice, which is a root of evils.*[50]

Swedenborg identified things "derived from the human ego" as "actually a hell ..."[51]

Swedenborg, like other Christians, speaks about charity, faith, and good works, and forges an essential relationship among them. He explains "all elements of faith and charity dwell in good work,"[52] and goes on to say that what people have not realized is that good works is the "aggregate and containment" of faith and charity.[53]

Swedenborg said simply and clearly: "there is no happiness in life apart from activity,"[54] and Burnham agreed. In the context of a discussion of family matters, he wrote to his wife Margaret that:

> *Work is the one thing that tells in this world, isn't it dear? We both know the real good of it, do we not? Without it life would be nothing.*[55]

Useful work is "the simplest and most powerful method for personal spiritual growth."[56] And one pursues one's work as "a way of reaching out and learning." If one focuses attention on the small works and uses, one will gain insight into the larger design.[57] In one of his youthful letters to his mother, Burnham wrote that he believed that "everything will come right if I only put in my best strokes and do all I can to forward the good of those around me." [58]

Burnham's city planning work was his uses. He did it (with one exception) without remuneration.[59] Burnham would get no payment for his work on the Plan of Chicago, but did it for the good of the community. It was his act of loving kindness that linked him to God's design. It fostered his own personal spiritual growth, as he believed he was contributing to neighbor and community. His Swedenborgian religious beliefs were the source of his commitment to public service, to donating his time to the planning projects that he saw as having a public good. And the donation of time was not insubstantial. The development of the plan of Chicago occupied Burnham for almost three years.

It was not just Burnham's donation of his time that constituted his use. Burnham hoped that his city planning work would improve the lives of his fellow citizens. If we can see past the lush rendered perspectives in the *Plan of Chicago*, we can hear Burnham's concern in the text. For instance, in the *Plan*, Burnham declares that:

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The slum exists to-day only because of the failure of the city to protect itself against gross evils and known perils ... Chicago has not yet reached the point where it will be necessary for the municipality to provide at its own expense ... for the rehousing of persons forced out of congested quarters; but unless the matter should be taken in hand at once, such a course will be required in common justice to men and women so degraded by long life in the slums that they have lost all power of caring for themselves.[60] [emphasis mine]

We also see Burnham's concern in the few photographs of the neighborhood parks, fieldhouses, and the activities (Fig. 5) they supported in some of the city's poorest neighborhoods.

The manuscript draft of the *Plan* argues more persuasively for Burnham's social concerns. That draft includes, sometimes almost verbatim, what was published; but more to the point, it includes a great deal that was not published, including a plan for social and public services.[61]

Fig. 5 - Mark White Square, now called McGuane Park, Chicago [*Plan of Chicago*, fig. LXV]

The Manuscript Draft Of The Plan Of Chicago

Burnham's draft of roughly 300 pages of notes, outlines, and text was completed by 1908. The first half of the draft contains almost all the major elements to be found in the published *Plan* and in approximately that order. In the second half of the draft Burnham discusses issues that do not find full expression in the published document, as well as topics that have no representation at all: power plants and public utilities; manufacturing and business districts; schools, hospitals, and orphanages; cemeteries, pollution, and the security of municipal utility bonds as investments.[62] Almost all of Burnham's more overt social mission was excised from the published version.

Among the city services that Burnham proposes in the draft, child care for working mothers is perhaps the most unexpected. He sees it as urgent, important, and says that it "has intimately to do with the self respect of great numbers of women, women who are willing to and do work, and who cannot do it and take care of young children at the same time."[63] Burnham argues that it is important to "preserve [the] self respect of these working citizens, and help keep them from dependence" for "[d]espair and hopelessness in the citizen is a danger to the public."[64] Throughout the draft, Burnham

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maintains that the relationship between the individual and the larger community is an essential one, and that improvements in the individual condition will result in improvements to the larger society.

In the draft Burnham developed his argument about the importance of school playgrounds, and the opportunity they give teachers to observe the social development of their charges.[65] Similarly, neighborhood parks could benefit both adults and children by providing a public place, which would

> *bring not only the children and the youth but the adults also into the open. They conduce to association, discussion, good manners and moderation on the part of all. In short they have a profound effect on good citizenship; there cannot be too many of these neighborhood parks. The more there are the safer and sounder our democracy will grow because they tend to cultivate those qualities which are the most important for a citizen to possess.*[66]

Burnham argues we are at our best when we are with and are seen by others, and that "the safety of the community is enhanced by keeping the activities of the citizens open to the public gaze."[67]

Burnham applies this idea to the police as well when he concerns himself with the redesign of stations so that "the policeman can do nothing to any prisoner while hidden from view." He argues that "it would be beneficial to good police service, to open up the stations to observation" because "where men are hidden from public gaze they do not exercise the same control over themselves as when their actions can be seen."[68] Here, observation is intended to prevent the misuse of power by representatives of the state. By exposing all to public view, both the citizens and the authorities would be at their best in Burnham's city.

When writing about the Lakefront Parks Burnham thinks not only at the grand scale of the entire park for a greater public, but he also considers those of limited means. He explicitly calls for free bathhouses, and for restaurants with a variety of prices so that all classes can afford refreshments.[69] He directs that mass transit service should be convenient to the recreational piers so that "at very little cost" the piers will be "within the reach of even the poorest men and of their families."[70] This direct and compassionate statement in the draft is reduced in the published *Plan* to: "provision is made for transit lines reaching to the ends of the piers, so as to make these places parks of decided value."[71] Thus, even when the topic of equality in public access to the lake front is addressed in the final version, the overt empathetic social content has been emptied.

Burnham envisioned a mutually advantageous relationship between the city and the citizen, a social ideal in which both society and the individual would benefit.[72] Burnham's attitude can be summarized by his criticism of those who have made colossal fortunes "as the result of undue advantage," and who use it "in ways that increase the inequalities of life instead of mitigating them."[73]

Why would Burnham want to mitigate "the inequalities of life?" It is because of Swedenborgian religious beliefs. City planning and his design and concern for public parks and places was his uses. It was Burnham's contribution to the creation of a physical realm to better correspond to that of the heavenly; not only in configuration but in kind.

Conclusion

The teachings of Swedenborg proffered a belief in the relationship between the physical and spiritual worlds, and Swedenborgians endeavored to make this world more in accordance with the spiritual. If the physical surroundings exhibit spiritual order and manifest divine goodness, this environment will influence this world's inhabitants for the better. When people live according to heavenly doctrine, and the world more closely resembles the spiritual one, then the holy city, the New

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Jerusalem, will come down to earth.[74]

Frank Sewall, a Swedenborgian minister and friend, wrote a remembrance of Burnham. It concerned a trip Sewall had taken to Chicago. Burnham had guided Sewall around the city and through the parks and fieldhouses (Fig. 6) of the South Park District. Burnham showed the most pleasure when Sewall expressed his appreciation of "the finely conceived district playgrounds and assembly halls and of every provision which had for its aim the pleasure and the good of the whole citizenship without any possible distinction between rich and poor." Sewall wrote that Burnham kept this point "ever uppermost" in all his work.[75]

Sewall wrote that no one in his time but Burnham:

> *conceived on so large and grand a scale and in so humane a spirit of the function of the art of building as one of the great humanizing and ... edifying ... instrumentalities in human advancement ... For Mr. Burnham was a builder of cities pre-eminently, and this in all the highest and spiritual meaning that can be attached to this term. Whatever he built ... was ... conceived in a certain large civic spirit, which means the spirit of a citizen who loves his neighbor and delights in making his neighborhood a healthful, beautiful and happy one ... [T]his trait of building for the people's delight and uplift ... [of] building for use and beauty ... was the distinguishing mark in Mr. Burnham's genius ... his whole life was so truly consecrated [to the cause of] ennobling, beautifying and humanizing our public monumental and building art.*

Sewall saw in their Church's "conception of Charity ... as the love of the neighbor" the inspiration for Burnham's professional life and work. He said Burnham conceived his "art as a function of true charity in the civic sense."[76]

A life of good works and continuous service, of making oneself useful and the world a better place,[77] was a way of facilitating the coming of the New Jerusalem. Burnham, as an architect, could also facilitate this by inscribing the physical world with designs of heavenly correspondence. Through both uses and correspondence, Burnham endeavored to make this physical world more in accordance with that of the spiritual. Burnham's professional work, both as a service and a design, was a sacralizing of space, a way of bringing spiritual order to the socio-economic free-for-all of early twentieth-century Chicago. It was his act of loving kindness that linked him to God's design. In the overall good design of the city he saw the material expression of the spiritual. For Burnham, his Plan of Chicago was an imprint of heaven on earth. "Make no little plans."

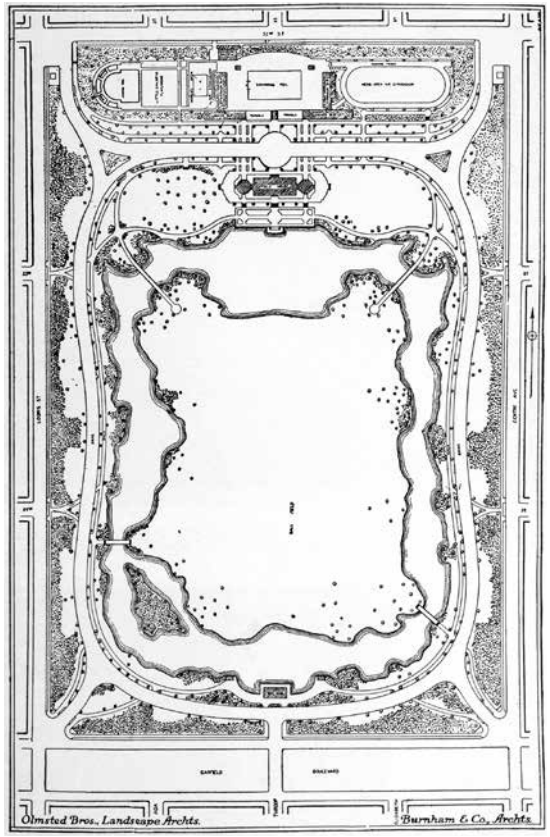

Fig. 6 - Plan of Sherman Park, Chicago. [*Plan of Chicago*, fig. LXIV]

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Endnotes:

1. I would like to thank Tom Barrie for his close reading of this text and especially for his encouragement, patience, and support; Karen DeWitt and her staff at the Design Library of North Carolina State University, especially Barbara Brenny for her help with the images that illustrate this article; and Karen Feil and her former colleague Lily Gaines at the Swedenborg Library, Chicago, for their generous enthusiasm.
2. Still the essential works on Burnham are Charles Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*, DaCapo Press, New York [1921] 1968, and Thomas S. Hines, *Burnham of Chicago: Architect and Planner* The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1974. See also my *Daniel H. Burnham: Visionary Architect and Planner*, photographs by Paul Rocheleau, introduction by Scott Tilden, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., New York, 2003, and and my introduction to the facsimile reprint of the *Plan of Chicago, "Fabric of City Life: The Social Agenda in Burnham's Draft of the Plan of Chicago,"* in *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel H. Burnham & Edward H. Bennett, edited by Charles Moore Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1993 [1909], pp. iv-xvi. The quotation is attributed to Burnham by Moore, vol. II, p. 147, although its first known appearance is on a card made by Willis Polk, a former Burnham employee.
3. See my "*'The Beautiful and Useful Laws of God': Burnham's Swedenborgianism and the Plan of Chicago*" in *Planning Perspectives: An International Journal of History, Planning and the Environment* (U.K.) April 2010, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 243-252. This article is an expansion of that earlier one.
4. I have relied heavily on a number of sources: Emanuel Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, George F. Dole, trans., Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1979, and his *The Path of Life*, John C. Ager, compiler, J.B. Lippincott Co., 1913; Sig Synnestvedt, ed., *The Essential Swedenborg*, Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1977; Brian Kingslake, *Swedenborg Explores the Spiritual Dimension*, Seminar Books, London, 1981; and George Trobridge, *Swedenborg: Life and Teaching*, rev. by Richard H. Tafel, Sr. & Richard H. Tafel, Jr., The Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1992 [1907]. See also Wilson Van Dusen, *Usefulness: A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth*, Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, n.d.
5. William Ross Woofenden compiler, "*Glossary of Swedenborgian Terms" in Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision*, Robin Larsen, ed., Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., New York, 1988, pp. 515.
6. Louis H. Sullivan, *The Autobiography of an Idea*, Dover Publications, Inc., New York, 1956 [1924], pp. 285-286. For Sullivan's own interest in Swedenborg, see Narciso G. Menocal, *Architecture as Nature: The Transcendentalist Idea of Louis Sullivan*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1981, pp. 24-34.
7. Sullivan, p. 314.
8. William E. Parsons, "Burnham as a Pioneer in City Planning," *The Architectural Record*, July 1915, XXXVIII, p. 14.
9. Hines, pp. 10-11.
10. Burnham to his mother, Elizabeth Burnham, 24 November 1867 & 1 December 1867, Burnham Papers, Art Institute of Chicago (AIC). Burnham had some doubts about entering the ministry, but about what he does not say. He tried 'trade', or business, but when he later discovered architecture, he had no doubts: "I am perfectly in love with my profession. And for the first time in my life I feel perfectly certain that I have found my vocation. I don't feel the most secret doubt now that it is the place for me ... For my whole heart is for the first time I ever remember in my work ..." And in architecture, he was not surrounded by the "evil and deceit" as he had been when in trade (and "there is a great deal of evil there," he says), for "there can be none (of that, no evil, no deceit] in a man's striving after the beautiful and useful laws God has created to govern his material universe."
11. Burnham to Elizabeth Burnham, n.d., Burnham Papers. The letter concerns his intention to move to Evanston and his hopes for organizing a church there. Therefore the letter must date from c.1886.
12. Hines, pp. 135, 265.
13. See Joan E. Draper, Edward H. Bennett: *Architect & City Planner*, 1874-1954, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1982. Burnham and Bennett worked together from 1902, when Burnham hired him to work on a competition, and Burnham's death in 1912. It seems that the two become quite close, in part because of their spiritual beliefs.
14. Edward H. Bennett, recollection, pp. 1-2. Bennett Papers, AIC
15. Edward H. Bennett, recollection, p. 2.
16. Bennett Diary entry for Wednesday, 26 February, 1908. Bennett Diaries, AIC.
17. Bennett, "Statement on Daniel H. Burnham," n.d., Bennett Papers, AIC; also reproduced in Moore, II, p. 170. Hines, p. 326. Bennett Diaries, Thurs. 5 March 1908. Bennett's signature over Burnham's name, letter to Carrie G. McKnight, 2 November 1907, Bennett Papers.
18 Robert Avens, "*The Subtle Realm: Corbin, Sufism, and Swedenborg*," excerpted and compiled by Kate Davis, in Robin Larsen, et al., eds., *Emanuel Swedenborg: A Continuing Vision*, Swedenborg Foundation, Inc., New York, 1988, p. 385.
19. Trobridge, p. 83.
20. Swedenborg, *Path of Life*, p. 124.
21. Kingslake, pp. 39-41; Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, pp. 43-45 §29-33.
22. Swedenborg, *Path of Life*, pp. 27, 39-40, 125-126; and *Heaven and Hell*, p. 98 §116-117.
23. Richard Silver, "*Spirit in American Art: The Image as Hieroglyph*," in Larson et al., pp. 64-67.
24. Swedenborg, *Path Of Life*, pp. 125-126; Kingslake, p. 39.
25. Burnham, ""The Court of Honor,"," p. 1, n.d., typescript. Burnham Papers.
26. Moore, II, pp. 164-65.
27. David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1976) pp. 113 & 290-294.
28. Burg, pp. 290-291.
29. Quoted in Burg, p. 113, from James W. Shepp and Daniel B. Shepp, *Shepp's World's Fair Photographed*, 1893.
30. Quoted in Burg, p. 293, from Clara Louise Burnham, *Sweet Clover: A Romance of the White City*, 1896.
31. Quote in Moore, I, p. 88, from Norton's lecture manuscript "Art in America." The great city that Norton refers to is Babylon, in Rev. 19:12.
32. James Gilbert, *Perfect Cities* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991) p. 100.
33. Burnham, "The Court of Honor" but referred to as the "Sermon," n.d., typescript. Burnham Papers. The work seems to date from about the time of the Fair's closing. Burnham simply refers to Rev. c. 4 and v. 1 to v. 11.
34. Burnham, "The Court of Honor," p. 1.
35. Burnham, "The Court of Honor," pp. 2-3.
36. Burnham, "The Court of Honor," pp. 4-5. At the end, there is added a paragraph that deals with the preservation of the Fair buildings from a more pragmatic point of view.
37. Burnham, "Uses of Expositions," pp. 47-48.
38. John J. Ingalls, "Lessons of the Fair," *The Cosmopolitan Magazine,* December 1893, XVI, p. 143.
39. Arthur Sherburne Hardy, *"Last Impressions," The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, December 1893, XVI, p. 198. Author of *Wealth versus Commonwealth*, Lloyd's remarks are quoted by Burnham in his "Uses of Expositions," p. 28, a speech given to the Literary Club, 15 April 1895, Burnham Papers, AIC. John J. Ingalls, *"Lessons of the Fair," The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, December 1893, XVI, p.

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143. Henry Van Brunt, *"The Columbian Exposition and American Civilization," The Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, May 1893, LXXI, but cited here in its reprinted source, William A. Coles, *Architecture and Society: Selected Essays of Henry Van Brunt*, The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969, pp. 309-310. Thomas A. Janvier, *"The Chicago Legacy," The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, December 1893, XVI, pp. 248-249.
40. Bennett, "Statement on Daniel H. Burnham," n.d., Bennett Papers, AIC; also reproduced in Moore, II, p. 170. Hines, p. 326. Bennett Diaries, Thurs. 5 March 1908. Bennett's signature over Burnham's name, letter to Carrie G. McKnight, 2 November 1907, Bennett Papers.
41. The scholar Irving Fischer has also argued that the divine order of heaven is represented in these plans. Fisher, based on his reading, developed his own diagrams to posit the limits of the heaven. While I agree with his basic supposition, I disagree with his diagrams. Given the scale at which Burnham liked to work, and since he offers what I understand to be his own diagram, I see no need to offer an alternative. Irving D. Fisher, *"An Iconology of City Planning--The Plan of Chicago,"* in Erland J. Brock et al., eds., Swedenborg and his Influence, The Academy of the New Church, Bryn Athyn, Pennsylvania, p. 1988, pp. 449-464. A much expanded version of that article was published as *"An Iconography of City Planning: The Chicago City Plan"* in Larsen et al., pp. 245-262. For Burnham's description of this divine order, see the Plan, pp. 95-96; and Burnham, Manuscript Draft, pp. 51-59.
42. Daniel H. Burnham & Edward H. Bennett, *Plan of Chicago*, The Commercial Club, Chicago, 1909, pp. 89-91, plate CIII.
43. *Plan of Chicago*, p. 89.
44. For this discussion I have relied on the work of Wilson Van Dusen especially *Usefulness: A Way of Personal and Spiritual Growth*, Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, n.d., pp. 2, 5 & 4. Van Dusen's small pamphlet is an excellent introduction to the topic of uses, but his citations often do not match other published versions of *Divine Love and Wisdom*, for example.
45. Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, chap. 39 para. 361.
46. Synnestvedt, p. 52. *"Rules for Life From the manuscript of Emanuel Swedenborg,"* para. 4. Burnham Papers.
47. Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*, William Frederic Wunsch, trans., Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1986, para. 11. Also see his *Divine Love and Wisdom*, George F. Dole, trans., Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1985, paras. 214-215, 297, 230.
48. Van Dusen, pp. 2, 5 & 4.
49. Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, para. 361.
50. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Providence*, William Frederic Wunsch, trans., Swedenborg Foundation, New York, 1986, para. 11.
51. Emanuel Swedenborg, *Divine Love and Wisdom*, George F. Dole, trans., Swedenborg Foundation, West Chester, Pennsylvania, 1985, para. 298.
52. *Divine Love & Wisdom*, para. 214.
53. *Divine Love & Wisdom*, para. 215 & 214.
54. Swedenborg, *Heaven and Hell*, para. 403.
55. Burnham to his wife Margaret, n.d., fragment. Burnham Papers, AIC.
56. Van Dusen, p. 1.
57. Van Dusen, p. 1. This is Van Dusen's explanation.
58. Burnham to Elizabeth Burnham, 1 December 1867.
59. Burnham took compensation for his work on the Cleveland Group Plan of 1903 so as not to embarrass co-planners Arnold W. Brunner and John M. Carrere. Hines, p. 162.
60. *Plan* 108-109.
61. See my "Fabric of City Life: The Social Agenda in Burnham's Draft of the *Plan of Chicago*," introduction to the facsimile reprint of the *Plan of Chicago* by Daniel H. Burnham & Edward H. Bennett (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993 [1909]).
62. Draft, pp. 199-211; *Plan*, p. 68.
63. Draft, pp. 172-174.
64. Draft, pp. 172-174.
65. Draft, pp. 156, 150 & 159-162.
66. Draft, pp. 108 & 110. There is no 109.
67. Draft, pp. 163-165.
68. Draft, pp. 163-165.
69. Draft, p. 141.
70. Draft, p. 140.
71. Draft, pp. 139-40; *Plan*, p. 111.
72. Draft , p. 174.
73. Typescript draft for a "Chapter I," Bennett Papers.
74. Swedenborg, *Path Of Life*, pp. 125-126; Kingslake, p. 39.
75. Frank Sewall, "Daniel Hudson Burnham, A.M., LL.D.", *New-Church Messenger*, 3 July 1912, pp. 12-13.
76. Sewall, pp. 12-13.
77. Synnestvedt, p. 52.

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Alla ricerca della spiritualità nei luoghi del degrado urbano: Casi studio a Detroit

In Search of Spirituality in the Places of Urban Decay: Case Studies in Detroit

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Questo articolo esplora la spiritualità nel degrado urbano e suggerisce che la spiritualità dei luoghi nel degrado urbano può essere definita in quattro modi: i luoghi nel degrado urbano possono essere spirituali, perché ispirano le persone a fare cose buone per la comunità (catalizzatore); possono essere spirituali, perché sono consolanti (terapeutico); possono essere spirituali, perché aiutano a connettere gli individui alla loro interiorità (riflessivo); e possono essere spirituali, perché mettono in relazione le persone in modi diversi (impegnativo). La letteratura trascura l'aspetto catalizzatore, pur sostenendo gli altri aspetti. I risultati di questo studio suggeriscono che l'idea di spiritualità in architettura debba essere ampliato nella società post-industriale. L'articolo suggerisce che il ruolo giocato dai luoghi spirituali nel degrado urbano, nel creare luoghi, soprattutto in città contratte come Detroit, meritino ulteriore attenzione degli studiosi.

This paper explores spirituality in urban decay. This paper suggests that the spirituality of places in urban decay can be defined in four ways: places in urban decay can be spiritual because they inspire people to do good things for the community (catalytic); places in urban decay can be spiritual because they are consoling (therapeutic); places in urban decay can be spiritual because they help connect individuals to their inner selves (reflective); and places in urban decay can be spiritual because they connect people in different ways (engaging). The literature neglects the catalytic aspect, while supporting other aspects. The results of this paper suggest that the idea of spirituality in architecture needs to be expanded in post-industrial society. This paper suggests that the role that spiritual places in urban decay play in place-making, especially in shrinking cities such as Detroit, deserve further scholarly attention.

Parole chiave: **Rovine urbane; Spiritualità; Post-industriale; Catalizzatore; Terapeutico; Riflessivo; Impegnativo**

Keywords: ***Urban ruins; Urban decay; Spirituality; Post-industrial; Catalytic; Therapeutic; Reflective; Engaging***

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This paper[1] suggests that people find spirituality even in the midst of urban decay and ruins. It is a noteworthy phenomenon deserving research, particularly in the context of shrinking cities in post-industrial regions, which face significant urban decay as a result of growing numbers of vacant properties. This paper sheds a new light on people's attitudes towards urban disinvestment and decay, and illustrates the virtues of urban ruins without trivializing the hardships faced by inner city residents. The paper's central thesis suggests the value of engaging urban ruins, typically at a community level. To support its thesis, the paper discusses the need for specialized studies and approaches to investigating spirituality in urban decay, proposes four types of engagements with urban ruins, and uses interdisciplinary and combined methods coupled with Detroit-based case studies. Although the lessons learned from the general fields of spirituality in architecture informed this research, it differs from others in that it repositions prevailing attitudes about urban decay by exploring more social, psychological, and behavioral perspectives on urban decay. While mankind's fascination with ruins, in many parts of the world and throughout the human history, has been has been the subject of extensive writings, this study is focused on urban decay, and social scientific methods and findings to investigate spirituality in urban ruins. However, this paper does not engage in the shallow "Ruin Porn" characterizations of Detroit. Instead, it focuses on different interpretations and potential benefits of urban decay to promote more constructive dialog about the future of urban ruins.

It is useful to briefly touch on Detroit's unique context in which this study is situated. Detroit, once called "Paris of America," reportedly has hundreds of thousands of vacant parcels of land as a result of several decades of population loss, recently became the first major city in America's history to declare bankruptcy. The city's financial demise received national and international attention from the mass media. Consequently, it is no surprise that Detroit has become a city of urban decay and ruins. This fact led the author to inquire about whether or not people experience spirituality in urban decay. Considering the fact that it often symbolizes disappointment, despair, failure, or hopelessness,[2] one may not consider urban decay worthy of a meaningful inquiry. However, Spittles[3] and Davis[4] maintain that urban ruins can cultivate positive responses and behaviors. Similarly, this paper proposes different ways in which ruins in urban decay can also be beneficial.

Even though Detroit residents might want its urban ruins to be eliminated, the reality is that a complete eradication of urban ruins is impractical, even impossible. Despite strong and honest efforts by many organizations (see for example Longo's writing on General Motors' Renaissance Center[5]), and the people of Detroit, urban ruins have existed for many decades. Therefore, it is likely that residents of underserved areas in Detroit will continue to face urban ruins for many years to come. Arguably this situation forces us to think about how to manage the urban ruins until they are eliminated. This paper suggests that exploring spirituality in places of urban decay is one way to address such a challenging situation.

What makes some urban ruins in urban decay take on a spiritual aspect? What are the key characteristics of such ruins? These questions led the author to review the literature on architecture, culture, spirituality, and phenomenology, but also social sciences. This paper focuses on types of interventions, place typologies, and the impact on the study of spirituality and scientific rigor in the study of spirituality, more than the impact of religion, as the first two contributions are more relevant to the author's present research.

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Passive vs. Active Interventions

Some writers focus more on the physical or visual aspects of urban decay than its spiritual aspects. This paper explores the spiritual dimension of urban ruins mainly with respect to their constructive aspects. It investigates scholars and practitioners who have shed new or positive light on urban ruins, some who practice passive interventions, others who engage in active interventions. One kind of passive intervention is to comment on urban ruins and decay through art, design, or writing. An example is the conveyance of the idea of an ominous, yet sublime, End Times, by connecting decay to a post-apocalyptic state (which resembles some parts of Detroit) via "urban ruin" photography.[6] Adding new structures to urban ruins, modifying some part of ruins, or using landscapes to "treat" urban ruins in an aesthetically pleasing way or in an attempt to make them meet modern functions[7] would be considered an active intervention. Both types of interventions attempt to do something about urban ruins. Both are often incremental or piecemeal, but are nevertheless constructive because they are searching for positive, lessons, meanings, or unknown potentials of the ruins, or because they look forward to bringing about new changes to the urban ruins or to their larger context.

Typologies: Place vs. Visitors

According to the literature, place typologies is one of the approaches to studying spiritual places. However, as I will argue, the current typologies are limiting, and many studies (see for example studies by Price, Britton, Eduardo, Glanville, and Barrie)[8] focus on spirituality in exotic places that possess striking natural beauty, or popular, well-known tourist attractions, and well-maintained places that have long histories as traditional urban environments. They leave out the recent rise in international tourists' curiosity about the urban ruins of Detroit. The number of Detroit organizations that provide tours of its ruins, both free and for a charge, have steadily grown recently.[9] These groups provide packages that include guided tours of industrial, residential, school, and other types of urban ruins.

Gleaning from the essays of writers[10] who have observed Detroit's urban ruins for a long time, the motivations of tourists are as follows: those who are motivated by a "morbid curiosity" about Detroit's malaise; those who come because of intellectual curiosity or commercial interest since some of the ruins are of significant historic value or are on the market for sale; and those who are attracted to the potential of Detroit's urban ruins, as evidenced by a recent surge in the number of proposed commercial developments in the places in urban decay. Despite growing intellectual, spiritual, or commercial interest in urban ruins and their potentially positive impact, the literature on spirituality rarely focuses on urban ruins, especially in postindustrial cities such as Detroit that have experienced decades of significant blight and decay.

Considering that the current literature on spiritual place typologies are based primarily on tourist attractions, this paper stresses the need to include urban ruins. For example, Millington[11] suggests typologies of urban nature (results of urban decay) in Detroit. This place typology approach illustrates the significance of understanding the unique physical characteristics of a given place (e.g., place attributes), and the various ways they impact people who live, work, or visit there (e.g., their activities and conceptions about place).[12] Here, Canter's[13] place model is useful to a place typology approach. Canter's place model advances the study of spirituality by looking at it in terms of human behavior, as well as the relationship that exists among a spiritual place, human behavior, and perceptions associated with it. These behavioral and perceptual dimensions motivated the present study and will be further discussed in the Results section.

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Scientific Rigor

The advancement of scientific investigations on spirituality in architecture has been achieved by other disciplines. Studies by Bergmann,[14] Sterrett and Thomas, Britton, Todres,[15] as well as various works, especially in the field of phenomenology by McGrath and Wierciński, Tilley, Seamon and Mugerauer,[16] provide robust studies on spirituality. Some of the recent studies have also advanced the general areas of spirituality in architecture, religion and spiritual places, particularly through more grounded studies (e.g., Barrie, Mugerauer),[17] systematic inquiry (e.g., Todres),[18] and empirical investigation (e.g., Britton).[19]

While *Architectural Research Methods* by Groat and Wang[20] does not focus on research on spirituality, it has an expanded discussion on case studies, interpretive-historical research, qualitative research methods, and combined strategies. Some of these methods are informed by recent advancements of the general areas of spirituality and religion in architecture, and phenomenology. In particular, an increased use of combined strategies and cross-disciplinary approaches in some spirituality-related studies (e.g., studies that explore the deep connection between religion and spiritual places, such as Bergmann 2009, Barrie 1996)[21] are noteworthy and encouraging, as they can attract more collaboration and more cutting-edge strategies to examining spirituality research in architecture. These combined and cross-disciplinary methods informed this paper. But despite these valuable lessons and accomplishments (e.g., place typologies, scientific rigor, the impact of religion, combined strategies, and cross-disciplinary approaches), spirituality literature has neglected the spirituality of places in urban decay.

While studies on the general areas of spirituality in architecture and spiritual places were beneficial to the author's research, emerging studies in the field of anthropology, landscape urbanism, urban ethnography,[22] environmental psychology,[23] social entrepreneurship,[24] public interest design (Abnedroth and Bell)[25] design activism,[26] public health, and eco-tourism were also useful. These fields, by way of cross-disciplinary and combined strategies, examine urban decay with a fresh outlook and draw new and interesting lessons.

I next turn to a discussion of the research methods used in this study. To address the research questions posed earlier, this study conducted a) in-depth interviews with people who possess long-term familiarity with Detroit's areas of urban decay, b) focus groups, and c) in-depth physical investigations of place. The respondents were longtime (e.g., 20 to 50 years) residents of Detroit. This approach also used the earlier-mentioned place model proposed by Canter,[27] which holds that place emerges from the complex interaction of physical attributes, human behavior, and human conceptions. His model is useful for understanding the way the study participants view place or act upon it (e.g., fixing it); for example, participants in the author's preliminary interviews often talked about how places spiritually affected them, or other people, especially their worldviews, ideas, work, and activities.

After the literature review, the author conducted face-to-face interviews with residents who were familiar with the urban ruins in Detroit that have received much media attention. In total, 22 people participated in the interviews, which included both open-ended and close-ended questions, such as "What kind of emotional reaction do you have when you see the urban ruins?" Based on the results of the interviews, 14 people participated in three focus groups (either four or five participants in each focus group). The focus groups were also used to examine or clarify the interview responses. Students at the Detroit Studio + Community Outreach Program, where the author teaches, conducted several site observations, focusing on the surrounding contexts, the condition of the sites, and pedestrian and vehicular circulation. The

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results of the interviews and focus groups were transcribed and grouped according to several distinct categories, and, themes that recurred in the interviews, focus groups, and site observations were identified. The participants' various responses were grouped according to ten categories, further refined to four partially overlapping themes that ran through the interview narratives.

Spirituality of Urban Ruins

Interview findings regarding the urban ruins are split between positive and negative emotions. For example, in response to the question of why the urban ruins may evoke a spiritual feeling, residents made the following comments:

"Some of these places have enduring interesting qualities....They inspire me, my neighbors, or other people to do something nice for their community, whatever it may be."

"they [urban ruins] encourage us to fix them, improve our homes and playgrounds, or clean up the streets in our community...It is almost as if these ruins yell right at you like 'do something!'... It is like they wake you up in some way."

"Some of the ruins have become a kind of shrine to me and Detroiters...like sacred places...I used to go there and pray that things will get better...They are also places that bring me a lot of memories....good and bad...You know these places may deteriorate rapidly and eventually disappear any time...but they will remain in my mind forever as long as I live...You feel attached to some of these places."

A common thread that runs through the respondents' comments is the dimension of spirituality. Moreover, several common themes include senses of hope, energy, and empowerment; senses of community, collective responsibility, and permanence; sacredness and religious experience; senses of place and attachment; ethics; and soulfulness, among others. In response to the question of why certain urban ruins are spiritual or how they can be spiritual, four primary themes stood out more strongly than others: catalytic, therapeutic, reflective, and engaging. While there are overlaps among them, these four dominate the participants' responses.

Catalytic

The participants felt that some of the urban ruins have an element of spirituality because they feel that those places motivate people to take actions, including improving urban decay, making a political or social statement, or bringing awareness to local residents, politicians, community groups, or civic leaders of potentials of the ruins.

One respondent stated.

"North End community residents got together with college students and other supporters and help artists to create [a mural] on a large empty building on the main street of the community...The mural spans the [building's nine stories] with blast of colors that stream down from the sky like falling tears [symbolizing] a growth of new community, community empowerment, a spirit of hope, sense of community, sense of unity, sense of change, and sense of future."
(Fig. 1)

Another resident commented that "strong graphic images of the ruins warn people about safety, educate them about public health and welfare, and constantly provoke us about doing something, not just talking and complaining about the decay." According to several of the respondents, many of the urban ruins, especially well-known ones, are spiritual because they can transform people's behavior to bring about positive changes, such as improving the undesirable situations and collaborating with others on art, installation, and design projects. Currently, there are several new projects planned or begun by grassroots groups and by individual residents or artists in the North End community and other underserved areas in Detroit.

Affecting change is a more aggressive aspect of the catalytic domain of spirituality. An example is in Souther's case study in

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Fig. 1 - "Illuminated Mural 101" (Artist: Katherine A Craig).

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Cleveland,[28] where educational institutions worked with communities to fight urban decay, which eventually mobilized other industries such as the medical sector to revive the decaying city. Similarly, Ho[29] calls for collaborative grassroots-based regeneration and rehabilitation efforts to bring about a catalytic impact. On the other hand, Haggard's article[30] takes spirituality a step further and explores how being spiritual eventually circles back into stewardship within the community, promoting sustainable lifestyles that combat urban decay. Several provide another important aspect of the catalytic dimension, examples of making social and political statements about urban decay to inspire people to bring about positive changes. Such social or political statements can be made by connecting the proactivity of seeking happiness in decaying environments (see for example Dreyer's article)[31] or by using public art as a tool to be critical of the current status, stir social consciousness, raise awareness, or inspire changes (see, for example, Mantracity's work)[32] Awan et al.[33] in their book *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*, and other scholars (e.g., Lepik)[34] illustrate several examples where everyday people take a significant risk to transform their hopeless situations into more desirable environments, which requires a tremendous leap of faith of a spiritual journey to an uncharted territory.

Therapeutic

A number of respondents stated that many of the urban ruins induce spirituality because they are places for consoling themselves, their family members, their friends, or their neighbors. Some of these places have become shrines of sorts, places where residents pay a visit and commemorate, meditate, or pray, roles similar to visiting a loved ones' grave at a cemetery.

One of the participants commented that:

> *"when the weather is nice, especially after my church services, I go to a block which [used to be] a community center, not far from where I grew up...This is a place where my grandparents used to take me to various community stores...They have been empty for many years...but not too long ago, residents created a pretty flower garden in an empty lot near the stores...You can sit near the garden and watch beautiful flowers...It is a place for healing for me and many others."*

Another respondent, who occasionally visits Michigan Central Station, stated, "A new massive garden created in front of the empty building comforts visitors...It is like healing the old large scar of the city." Michigan Central Station (also known as Michigan Central Depot or MCS) opened in 1913 but closed in 1988. At the time of its construction, it was the tallest rail station in the world[35] (Fig. 2). Other participants mentioned various other urban ruins that were considered places for healing and consoling.

To fully appreciate the experiences of the study participants, it is helpful to learn from social science disciplines such as public health, psychology, and religion. Canel-Cinarbas[36] reports that visiting shrines benefits mental health. Cinarbas, and others,[37] suggest that religion can be defined as the search for significance in ways related to the sacred, and that the word spirituality is used to refer to the inner experience of a search for the sacred. These definitions support remarks made by the study respondents that visiting a decaying site after church services is therapeutic, just as visiting shrines and nostalgic places is therapeutic and becoming a part of religious culture or practices in addition to evoking an inner experience.. On the other hand Arndt[38] presents nostalgia as a sense of emotional connection or spiritual associations with old times, childhood, or past environments. The nostalgic feelings described by the study connects the feeling of nostalgia to therapy.

Gockel's report[39] deals with people who use spirituality to cope with times of difficulty and healing. Such a healing process is therapeutic and works similar to the way residents in this study seek spirituality in the

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midst of urban decay in order to handle more effectively the environment and quality of life under unfortunate circumstances. Gockel suggests that spirituality can aid growth and adjustment, due to its therapeutic effect. Similarly, the respondents in the study who experienced spirituality provoked by urban decay developed a sense of growth or adjustment through the therapeutic journey of healing. Horowitz[40] suggests that people use meditative spaces as a way to process their grief, anxiety, or longing. In this case the spirituality of place may bring about changes in the residents' mental states and to play a therapeutic role in meditating, remembering, or grieving processes.

Notably, many of the urban ruins cited for their healing and consoling effects have a green component, such as a garden or a park. Landscape Urbanism,[41] and research on natural environments in environmental psychology[42] and landscape architecture (e.g., Constant, Fenton, Krinke),[43] have received much attention from scholars because of the spiritual, therapeutic, or healing effects of green landscape on urban residents.

Reflective

A number of respondents shared their views that the urban ruins can be spiritual because they help them reflect on their lives and their communities—past, present, and future. A key difference between the therapeutic dimension and the reflective dimension is that the former focuses more on the healing and consoling aspects of spirituality. Although there may be areas of overlap between the two, the therapeutic process is more active than the reflective process.

One participant stated:

"I participated in free tours of Detroit's famous ruins organized by non-profit groups in Detroit... It is a nice way of re-discovering your own community and your city...It is a journey that takes me to my roots...I also see a glimpse of [a] better future of Detroit and my community... Despite all the bad things and tragedies [that have] happened, I feel the positive spirit and hope of [the] city is there... When I tour it...the tour tells a story, which makes me think about many things."

Another commented:

"My kids and I attended a tour of Detroit hosted by a community organization, which included...urban ruins, urban gardens in vacant properties, and other revitalized places... Through this kind of tour, we learn about where we are from and where we are heading...and changes, both good and bad...It is educational and also inspiring."

Fig. 2 - Michigan Central Station.

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A number of participants talked about the benefits of having a "story-telling" tour where they learn about the city's past, however unfortunate or tragic it may be to some, and also learn the importance of moving forward. A "re-discovery" type tour of Detroit's ruins was mentioned by many participants as a useful way to reflect on the spiritual aspects of their cultural heritage and how it can help bring about new, desirable changes to the city.

Among many writings on the power of reflection, Tilburg's work[44] is most relevant to the reflective dimension of spirituality. Tilburg argues that nostalgia fosters creativity and takes people back to a glorified past, but with impacts on the present and the future.[45] Tilburg contends that nostalgia helps one cope with discomfort, increases empathy, breeds inspiration, and raises optimism, all of which allows nostalgia to harness the past for the purpose of engaging with the present and future.[46] The birth of the urban ruin tourism industry in Detroit is attributable to thinking differently about ruins, defying the popular view of them, and turning them into something positive and profitable, which in many ways is a creative endeavor. It can be argued that a transition from nostalgia to creativity can be employed as a mechanism to provide creativity in a reflective way. Rowland[47] explores the concepts of a post-apocalypse era in a manner comparable to urban decay in Detroit, and suggesting that the idea of the post-apocalypse can also be spiritual. Rowland discusses post-apocalypse imagery through painting, where the act of painting may be seen as an active venture, but the act of experiencing the painting is more reflective.

Reimer[48] argues that "spiritual identity is dependent on a narrative...Whether the issue is moral identity or ethnic identity or whatever, what is critical is the meaning we attribute to this story, what it means to the self, and how the narrative shapes our behavior into the future." Scholars that use story-telling, participatory action research, and urban ethnography in the fields of urban planning, sociology, and anthropology, have studied spiritual journeys and stories told by local people, who used them to re-connect to their roots in terms of both time and place (e.g., Hayden), pursue reflection in action, and find new meanings in life or in the current environment. It is clear that the "story-telling" that is occurring in Detroit through the methods described above provide stories of identity (e.g., African American identity, Detroit identity, community identity, a resident's identity), but also integrate people within the story, causing reflection on how to think about a city of the future.

Engaging

While the reflective dimension connects individuals to their inner selves, the engaging dimension connects them to other people. Many participants described an "engaging" aspect of spiritual urban ruins and the social aspect of urban decay.

One respondent's comments reflected sentiments shared by many others:

"If there is one thing that many urban ruins we have in our city, big or small, famous or not well known, have done to the city, it is the fact that they have brought people together... not just residents but also outsiders, college students, volunteers, community organizations, philanthropic groups, and even tourists from other US states and countries...They come to our community, places of urban decay... One thing they all share is that they want to do something about urban decay."
(Fig. 3)

Another stated:

"Not all engagements result in real changes or successes but there is something special about these urban ruins...They connect people from all walks of [life]...connected thorough warm heart and spirit."

Sekine[49] discusses "urban footprints" and "pavement shrines" in India and other

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Fig. 3 - Globe Trading Company: People gather near the empty historic Globe Trading Company building to participate in a community event.

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countries, and suggests that these types of shrines built on public land promote social interaction among the citizens, and often bring awareness to politics or society. Sekine discusses the various types of shrines, their function (religious, spiritual, social, environmental, all often overlapping), and their ability to harness social engagement. While the urban footprints and pavement shrines are not the same as examples in Detroit, the basic concepts of the former seem applicable to shrines (e.g., urban ruins), urban environments (e.g., public space), and social activity discussed or mentioned by the participants in this paper.

Gutierrez and Mattis[50] stress the significance of volunteerism in a fight against environmental decay. In particular, Gutierrez suggests that volunteerism driven by empathy and acts of social outreach, connect environmental decay with spirituality, specifically within an African American context. Volunteerism is likely to encourage people to attend to the plight of others, promote social norms that reinforce involvement, and maximize the likelihood that they will extend themselves to help those in need.[51] In this sense volunteerism is essential to the engagement dimension of spirituality. Allen[52] supports the idea that hope is an experience felt by aiding others. He proceeds to argue that we are social creatures and as such seek attachment and interaction to alleviate suffering.

There is extensive literature in the fields of environmental psychology,[53] natural resources and environments, and community psychology on the benefits of social interaction or civic engagement and how such activities can lead to helping behavior and social support. In particular, Kaplan and Kaplan[54] and other landscape scholars have written about the benefits of nature, greens, open lands, parks, and gardens (e.g., the positive impact of the spirituality of such places on people's social interactions and reasonable personal behavior).

Discussion and Conclusion

While there are many studies about spirituality in architecture, there is a lack of study on spirituality in urban decay. Based on the results of this research, this paper suggests that the spirituality of places in urban decay can be defined in four ways. Some places in urban decay can be spiritual because they inspire people to do good things for others and the community (catalytic); some can be spiritual because they are consoling (therapeutic); some can be spiritual because they help connect individuals to their inner selves (reflective); and some can be spiritual because they connect people in many different ways (engaging).

Robinson (2012)[55] discusses two modes of environmental experience, the contemplative mode and the active and participatory mode, and advocates for a multi-sensory, actively involved perceiver who is a contributing part of the aesthetic environment. While Robinson's two modes and this paper's four dimensions share a few commonalities, I argue that the latter advocates for a greater number of finer degrees of the multi-sensory experience and thus is more applicable to understanding spirituality in places of urban decay, especially at a community level. On the other hand, Walker (2013)[56] discusses the history of spirituality in architecture through architectural movements, and proposes four aspects regarding levels of spirituality; contemplative (inner growth, esoteric, narrow path), reflective-active (active life enhanced by self-examination), active (selfless action, right doing, service), and neglectful (not regarding inner self, unmindful, selfish). While Walker's typologies are insightful and correspond to some of the typologies of spirituality proposed by this paper, they may be too broad and are insufficiently applicable to Detroit, particularly at a community level.

One of the key implications of the author's present study is that the places in urban decay can be spiritual and also can have positive effects on people. While other places that are fully revitalized and

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significantly improved can be equally, if not more, spiritual and positive, I suggest that scholarship on the spirituality of ruins is equally beneficial to cities such as Detroit that suffer from extensive shrinkage, vacant land, deterioration, and other chronic urban ills. The revitalization of Detroit requires an enormous amount of time, efforts, and resources (i.e., long-term, major projects) to undo the damages done to the city over the last several decades. In other words, it can be argued that what the city most urgently needs is short-term, incremental, and grassroots-level interventions. Many of the urban ruins that are cited by the participants in the author's study are the ones involving small-scale, piecemeal changes at a community level that are spiritual. Often, they are not government-directed but citizen-initiated, and not always sophisticated to the eyes of experts but nevertheless empowering, engaging, and inspiring. Taken together, this study argues for the value of engaging the ruins, typically at a community level.

While the literature in the general areas of spirituality in architecture and religion tends to support the therapeutic and reflective aspects of spiritual places more than the engaging aspects of spiritual places, it often neglects the catalytic aspect. The results of this paper suggest that the idea of spirituality in architecture needs to be expanded in a postindustrial society, in which the old or traditional built environment will continue to decay even as some residents find spirituality in places of urban decay during their daily lives. And while there are negative aspects (e.g., pessimism) of spirituality in urban decay, there are many constructive effects of spirituality in urban decay. This paper suggests that both aspects of spirituality and the role that spiritual places in urban decay play in place-making, especially in shrinking cities such as Detroit, deserve further scholarly attention.

Some of the study respondents also shared conflicting emotions about the urban ruins because sometimes they summon simultaneously both good and bad memories, and also because those memories can be personal (e.g., involving their families or friends in past unfortunate or tragic incidents). Furthermore, studying spiritual aspects of urban decay can be tricky or risky, especially in cities such as Detroit, where residents are still struggling to survive. Despite signs of recovery, albeit weak, the jobless rate in many of the challenged communities still remains far higher than the national average. In the meantime, the crime rate remains among the highest in the nation, and the physical environment, including urban ruins, continues to deteriorate. These are some of the challenges faced in the study of the spirituality of places in urban decay. Perhaps cross-disciplinary research via collaboration among architecture and other disciplines could address those challenges (e.g., Juhasz).[57]

It is especially noteworthy that eco-tourism, social entrepreneurism,[58] guerrilla urbanism,[59] the grassroots design movement, landscape urbanism, public health, public interest design, ethics,[60] and place-making,[61] are increasingly receiving interest from scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in design fields. The lessons from, and accomplishments of, those fields can help shed new light on the spirituality of places in urban decay.

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Endnotes:

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Nature in cambiamento: l'esperimento del Garden Grove *di Robert Schuller*

Transitioning Natures: Robert Schuller's Garden Grove Experiment

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Attraverso la visione del Garden Grove drive-in walk-in church, *del reverendo evangelico Robert H. di Schuller, questo articolo si propone di esemplificare come la sua architettura abbia trasceso le aree geografiche esistenti, a lungo ancorate all'epistemologia di ciò che può essere definito come tradizionale architettura "religiosa". Questo articolo esamina come Schuller strumentalizzi i più ampi grovigli di contesti politici per modificare o manipolare il soggetto religioso tradizionale. Esso presenta anche come l'esperimento del Garden Grove di Robert Schuller riconcettualizzi il "territorio" come dimensione ideologica in evoluzione; non come una traiettoria o spazio transitorio, ma come terza natura abitabile. La mia sfida analitica stabilisce letture dell'architettura religiosa come manifestazioni interiorizzate. Per fare ciò, pone le seguenti domande: in che modo questa dimensione meta-geografica getti nuova luce su questioni di estetica architettonica (tradizionale) nell'architettura protestante? Quali spazi e quale politica produce? La terza natura ha una sua storia?*

Through the lens of Evangelist Reverend Robert H. Schuller's Garden Grove drive-in walk-in church, this paper aims to exemplify how his architecture has transcended existing geographies that have long been anchored by the epistemology of what can be referred to as traditional "religious" architecture. This paper examines how Schuller instrumentalized broader imbrications of political contexts to change or manipulate the traditional religious subject. It also presents how Robert Schuller's Garden Grove experiment reconceptualized "territory" as an evolving ideological dimension; not as a trajectory, or as transitory space, but as inhabitable third nature. My analysis challenges established readings of religious architecture as being interiorized manifestations. To do so, it poses the following questions: how does this meta-geographical dimension shed new light on questions of (traditional) architectural aesthetics in Protestant architecture? What spaces and politics does it produce? Does the third nature have a history of its own?

Parole chiave: **Territorialità umana; Geografie sacre; Terza natura; Superordinario; Chiesa drive-in; Religione al dettaglio; Robert Schuller; Richard Neutra**

Keywords: ***Human Territoriality; Sacred Geographies; Third Nature; Superordinary; Drive-in Church; Retailing Religion; Robert Schuller; Richard Neutra***

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The world interior of capital is not an agora or a trade fair beneath the open sky, but rather a hot house that has drawn inwards everything that was once on the outside. The bracing climate of an integral inner world of commodity can be formulated in the notion of a planetary palace of consumption. In this horizontal Babylon, being human becomes a question of spending power, and the meaning of freedom is exposed in the ability to choose between products for the market- or to create such products oneself. [1]
Peter Sloterdijk

For thousands of years "world interiors" operated as a metaphor to describe a space in which the world revealed to us is "not the real world but only a poor copy of it."[2] In a passage of *Phaedo*, Plato described the world as a common set of geographically captured territories that evolve beyond limitations in which the "world" is very large. For geographer Robert David Sack, the world is not a matter of scale but one that is distinguished by "two natures."[3] In his book *Human Territoriality*, Sack describes the first nature as an abstract system of beliefs and values, the second as social geography that includes rules, regulations, and physical structures. He argues that both spheres are not simply things located in space, but are "places set apart and within which authority is exerted and access is controlled. In other words, they are territories."[4]

My current work is interested in developing frameworks for understanding Protestant architecture, in terms of their positioning within territories and new aesthetics that result from the territorialization of its architecture. My analysis challenges established readings of religious architecture as being manifestations that are "multiscalar, territorially differentiated, and morphologically variegated."[5]

Through the lens of Evangelist Reverend Robert H. Schuller's drive-in walk-in church my goal is to demonstrate how his architecture transcended existing geographies long anchored by the epistemology of traditional "religious" architecture. Designed by Richard Neutra, the Garden Grove Community Church is a unique example where the environment the church is part of creates an aesthetic I refer to as "superordinary."[6]

This paper examines how Schuller instrumentalized broader imbrications of political contexts to change or manipulate the traditional religious subject. It also presents how Garden Grove reconceptualized "territory" as an evolving ideological dimension, not as a trajectory, or as transitory space, but as an inhabitable third nature. To do so it poses the following questions: how does this meta-geographical dimension shed new light on questions of (traditional) architectural aesthetics in Protestant architecture? What spaces and politics does it produce? Does the third nature have a history of its own?

Superordinary

For more than half a millennium, or at least since when Leon Battista Alberti and Andrea Palladio designed villas for their patrons, architecture has lost its ability to critically mediate between ethical positions, value systems, and aesthetic formulations. As a result, what was termed "extraordinary architecture" has existed in its own "ghetto of theory."[7] It is a bounded condition where stereotypes, idiosyncratic characterizations, and oxymoronic problematizations of larger, mostly theoretical, subjects only indicate how circumscribed architecture and its discourses are. My account will not attempt to clarify the contested relationships between history (and theory) of architecture, in which "architecture" is subsumed by the "extraordinary" and extends itself through it. Rather, I negotiate new geographies between extraordinary and ordinary, or what I have termed "superordinary,"[8] and how—in all of its compelling forms—it appropriated, adopted, or adapted in the social, cultural,

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and political realms beyond the presumed qualities of the extraordinary.

But, what exactly do I mean by superordinary? Who wants to have the ordinary if they can have something extraordinary? Can the superordinary be defined as the absence of something, or as something without identity, style, or originality? Or is it just the opposite of extraordinary, only at a super-scale?

Superordinary is an oxymoron, in which the super opposes the ordinary. It is "super" beyond "extra," or the absolute opposite, in which the superordinary determines the superlative of ordinary to its greatest degree in its ontological form. Although the meaning of "ordinary" is something "normal" with no special features, in the context of superordinary, however, they are anything but ordinary.

Social Geography

The characteristics and qualities of superordinary become most evident in what Henri Lefebvre declares as "implosions and explosions."[9] Initially, a characterization of the generalization of capitalist urbanization processes, Lefebvre's phrase illuminated the mutually recursive links between capitalist forms of agglomeration and broader transformations of territory, landscape, and environment.[10] In the context of religious architecture, especially the Protestant

Fig. 1 - Joseph Paxton, Crystal Palace, London, 1850-1851

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architecture of the United States, my interest lies in illuminating how Schuller mediated traditional aesthetics and the politics that held them together. Schuller's architecture stands out not only because of the way he reconceptualized the material differences between interior or exterior, but also his distinguishing of what keeps them apart.

Bruno Latour and Michel Serres use the analogy of a "crumpled surface of a handkerchief once folded and stuffed into a pocket"[11] to describe a territory where the distance between the here and there becomes less about the territory that holds it together, but how visible and invisible systems shape it. In such mediated environments, it is not the actual movement across the territories that flatten them, but how it is recomposed by the relationships involved (across scales), which extend, if not merge the two natures across the territory.

In the 1960s such polarities characterized the world in which new cultural sensibilities and social visions formed the "mass consciousness of the modern world."[12] Despite these tensions the time was also synonymous with the expansion of existing realities in almost every aspect of human life. Expressions such as John Cage's "Everything we do is music," Allen Ginsberg's "Everything is holy!", and Joseph Beuys' "Everything is art," conjured an existential optimism in the shadow of the Cold War. In his 1962 manifesto, *Absolute Architektur*, Austrian architect Hans Hollein criticized architecture as a "ritualistic expression of pure elemental will and sublime purposelessness."[13] Here, he questioned whether, in times of conformism and cultural crisis, architecture had the capacity to extend the means of its own determination beyond built statements. In a later proposal from 1968, *Alles ist Architektur,* he eliminated any definitions of architecture at all, arguing that it was the truth of everything and was determined only through active processes of social redefinition, which leads to the emergence of an unbounded, undivided realm.

Schuller similarly advanced religion as "everywhere and in everything."[14] His philosophy of "retailing religion"[15] appropriated the postwar (urban) territory as an ideal condition to take religion "outside." While the production of identity in the postwar era assumed many guises across the globe, the burgeoning American middle class was particularly steeped in a postindustrial logic of mass consumerism, which consequently, informed every aspect of the built environment.[16] Religious architecture in the United States was no exception, and the postwar era found many congregations abandoning traditional iconic landmarks for more 'recognizable' structures that blended with the consumer landscape. In anticipation of these changes in the structures and practices of worship, and anxious about the continuing place of religion in a secular landscape, Schuller confronted existing Protestant models by ushering in new religious typologies and challenging perceptions of where (exactly) religion might be located.

Garden Grove Experiment

Schuller's endeavor began in 1955 when he first arrived in Southern California from Illinois, where he had, in only five years, successfully grown a church from 38 members into a congregation of over 500. On the heels of this success but with no money, Schuller moved to Orange County where he saw the opportunity to establish a new Reformed church, but first used a drive-in movie theater that was vacant on Sunday mornings to serve his purposes. He preached, rain or shine, from the roof of the concession stands, his message delivered via the standard drive-in theater radio attached to the cars. His drive-in service was so popular that by 1959 Schuller had enough funds to build what he called the "Garden Grove experiment"[17] and make his dream of a "walk-in, drive-in" church come true.

Inspired by nineteenth-century revivalism and early-twentieth-century modernist visions of mobility, Schuller imagined a church embedded within the

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secular world without compromising the moral objectives of religious practice. Unlike the nineteenth-century revivalists who relied on camp meetings in the unfamiliar wilderness for the spiritual renewal and change of mindset of the emerging urban population, Schuller familiarized the seeker using modern commodities such as the automobile and television as part of an all-encompassing immersive evangelical experience. His ideas to simplify, and perhaps primitivize the religious environment made him the "most formidable ecclesiastical patron of the postwar period and the first therapeutic rather than fundamentalist evangelist."[18] With a willingness to dematerialize the traditional architectural subject and transform religion into a popular cultural institution, Schuller's vision changed general perceptions of the Protestant church.

For revivalist preachers "when the people wouldn't come to church, then the church would have to come to the people."[19] Schuller's understanding of religion and the secular world, however, was that they were not mutually exclusive, which became most evident in the architecture he envisioned. Schuller's evangelization sought to update and even overcome traditional forms of symbolic meaning and politics in religious architecture.

Historically, traditional religious architecture was filled with spiritual meanings and philosophical references. The church buildings functioned, more or less successfully, as links between human existence and divine spiritual orders. The architecture served as a formal manifestation of this theological framework in the built environment. Schuller did not neglect this aesthetic as just a representation of subjective projections of a mental state that neutralized, or at least minimized, the boundaries between reality and divine orders, but saw it as a condition, like he saw "sin as condition." Instead, ideas suspended the traditional dichotomy of form and function that negotiated between the inward and outward desires of a liberated postwar self—between hermetic autonomy and environmental immersion. If religion could be "retailing," it could potentially be everywhere without being bound to what was understood as a traditional church. Though he certainly advocated valuing the divine over the laws of the market, he did not reject the "commercial aesthetics"[20] that came with the rise of capitalism. He sought to extend and integrate his church so as to render it compatible with secular processes, which he aimed to shape.

He claimed that traditionalist leaders were tragically missing the connection between successful, mid-twentieth century "retailing" and church growth. "Much as it may offend many leaders in the Christian church, the truth remains that the parish church is in the business of 'retailing religion.'"[21] Schuller seized upon the idea of "retailing" as a new religious service that would bring "goods and services to the consumer in contrast to wholesaling, which packages products or ideas but doesn't deal directly with the consumer."[22] In this model, national church headquarters and theological seminaries were "wholesalers," while the local church was the "retailer."[23]

He was also famous for inspirational sermons where he encouraged people to achieve great things through God and to believe in their dreams. His message of "positive thinking" was founded on his belief that dreams are the direct outcome of an unquestioned belief in progress.[24] As he wrote in his pamphlet *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*, "If you can dream it, you can do it!"[25] Schuller's message focused on what he believed to be the positive aspects of the Christian faith. He deliberately avoided condemning people for sin, and believed that Jesus "met needs before touting creeds."[26] However, in order to deliver this cheerful message to the people he knew he needed "inspiring, impressive, and beautiful architecture" that could support his ambitions. Known as the father of the "dreamer-movement", Schuller was in

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search of someone who could materialize his vision. His search for the ideal architect led to Richard Neutra, then "perhaps the only architect in California to match Schuller's ambitions,"[27] and skilled enough to develop his complex ideas. Neutra and his fame brought additional attention to the church, and was integral to Schuller's marketing and retailing religion strategy.

What began on top of the drive-in snack bar became the image of a humble preacher merged with that of a "heroic movie star silhouetted in a close-up on the big screen."[28] (Fig. 2) Despite the immanent contradictions between the modest traditions of Protestantism and what Schuller imagined, the opening of the Garden Grove drive-in church in 1961 gave the Christian world a glimpse into the future of modern religious architecture. Transparent glass facades, lush gardens with water features, a car amphitheater, and a summit chapel on top of the tower, signified the beginning of a new era.

A few years later, with the erection of the *Tower of Hope* in 1968, Neutra completed Schuller's West Coast Gesamtkunstwerk. The 90-foot tall structure further emphasized Schuller's claim of expanding into new territory in evangelizing the secular world. He started the first 24-hour live telephone counseling center in America, reachable by dialing N-E-W-H-O-

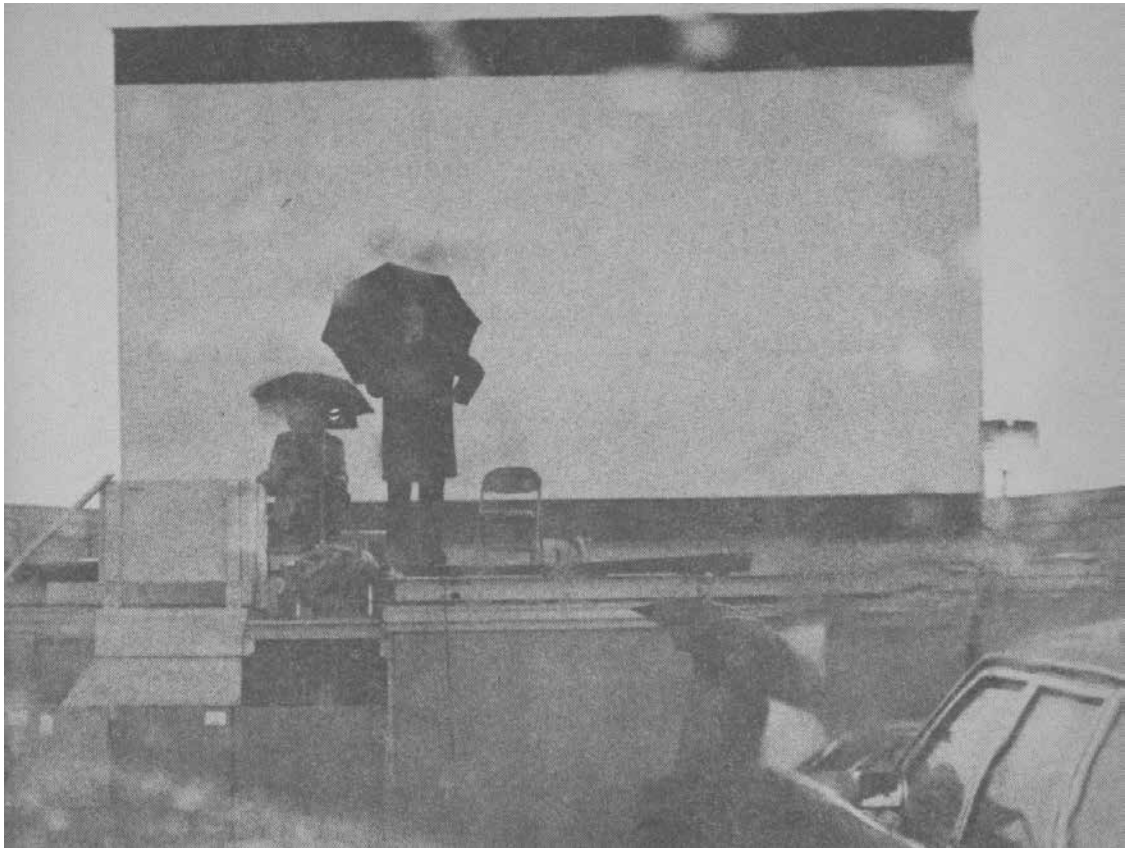

Fig. 2 - Schuller on top of a snack bar at drive-in theater.
Source: Your church has real possibilities. Glendale, Calif., G/L Regal Books.

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P-E, in keeping with his promise that, "The little chapel in the sky would be a twinkling diamond of hope in the black, night sky at the freeway hub of this great county."[29] *The Tower of Hope* was Schuller's symbol-in-space that would transmit Christ to the public by telling them "there is an eye that never closes, there is an ear that is never shut, and there is a heart that never grows cold."[30]

His church transmitted a new shining image of Christ to the public and provided a visual pivot for the intensified sensory perceptions of an expanded religious experience conducted over radio waves. By emphasizing physical characteristics such as accessibility and location, Schuller recognized that churches, like businesses, needed to accommodate a steady flow of people, which required surplus parking. "With the development of shopping centers, Americans had become used to the convenience of easy parking. But a look at reality gave evidence that parking wasn't always easy for churchgoers at 'superchurches'."[31] In his church, parking was staged as a crucial aspect of his religious practice and of the larger architectural ensemble. In fact, parking was such an integral part of his philosophy that it presented a direct analogy for the extension of his church into the physical and media landscapes, connecting the

Fig. 3 - "Parking", Garden Grove Community Church, Garden Grove, CA.
Source: Your church has real possibilities. Glendale, Calif., G/L Regal Books.

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larger geography with the collective and the self. (Fig. 3)

For Sunday service the ritual of opening the large-scale glass sliding doors of his church not only symbolized Schuller stepping out of traditional religious frameworks, but also signified the expansion of new horizons, exemplifying that the inner and the outer world of a church should no longer be accepted as separate realms. The mutual immersion between inside and outside, pews and cars, the self and the body (of the church), all connected by shared radio signals, produced an environment for worship that was at once novel and primal. When Schuller preached to those sitting in the traditionally designed pews and to the worshippers sitting in their cars he merged both spheres into an undivided realm. Within this choreography, the building, as an extension of Schuller himself, performed as a node in a seemingly infinite world interior.

Henri Lefebvre was interested in transparency as a means to experience the different dimensions and dynamics of the outside and inside. He argued that buildings are not purely architecture, but rather a blend of internal and external expressions, separated by the transparency of the window. Neutra's design gave Schuller and his congregation a completely new sense of reality, one that came to life through transparency. Informed by the merging of inside and outside; here and now; reality and spiritual reality; Schuller challenged general and traditional notions of interiority as spaces for "inner pre-occupations."[32] Even though the glass facade allowed for communication between the interior and exterior, the exterior of the church, including the garden and the parking lot, were designed to support Schuller's idea of the extended interior.

The remote interior space of the car became the key element of a new and expanded interiority within a field of permeable transparent membranes signified by the façades and the windshields of cars. But there was also another interior overlapping within Schuller's philosophy, the world interior of consumerism. Neutra's design was an expression of a capitalist form that presupposed the enclosure and operationalization of the entire (consumer) territory. Traditional designs have captured these extended processes through marginalization and the remoteness of being enclosed. Neutra's design, however, shifted the passive role of the congregant-as-viewer to that of an active participant in the processes of religious production: "This apparatus is better, the more consumers it is able to turn into producers—that is, the more readers or spectators into collaborators."[33] The participatory spectacle of church services was not only determined by the charisma of the presenter, but a collaborative product with a causal relationship between individual and collective agency. Creativity emerged from the audience and the ambience of the performance merged with the stage, which expanded beyond the spatial boundaries of the church and was mediated by traditional images, location, labels, language, and signs.

Visitors to Schuller's church encountered a composition that gave equal weight to the exterior and the interior through a site plan that organized the auditorium as continuous with the semi-circular fan of the parking lot. The asymmetrical, cantilevered truss system of the glass wall drew the eye away from the normal focus on the altar to the open parking lot. Instead of what would conventionally be a triumphal arch framing the altar's peripheral vision, revealed the drive-in audience. The church was embedded in an ensemble of landscape, amphitheater, and movable glass façade that not only expanded the outer into the inner, and the inner into the outer, but also established a visual narrative underlining Schuller's intentions of an expanded interior that merged the earthly and supernatural requirements of a church. (Fig. 4)

Framed by a garden, the church and Schuller's pulpit took center stage and functioned as the vanishing point for all

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horizontal and vertical lines. While all lines led to Schuller, the central axis was the pathway for walk-in worshippers that led to a small garden in front of the pulpit balcony. Schuller's image was reflected in a pool just below the pulpit, where twelve water jets symbolized the twelve apostles.

The location of the Garden Grove church and its unique steeple gave Schuller exactly what he was looking for: marketable religion expressed through unique architecture. His decision to open the building's east wall with a sliding-glass façade so people could see "the world out there"[34] instituted a new dimension in sacred architecture, where the sanctuary was no longer divorced from daily life. The building, situated in the middle of a garden, was surrounded by an amphitheater filled with an audience of cars, and a Tower of Hope that stood solidly "as a monument in a field of frictionless space."[35]

In a conversation with Schuller, Neutra asked "why did the churches ever get into the custom of building structures that obstruct from their view the outside, secular world?" Schuller supposed, "It would come from the concept that God is in the sanctuary or in and around the altar." Schuller felt enlightened by Neutra's response: "But Christians sought fellowship with Jesus on the mountaintop, in the out-of-doors. They had experiences

Fig. 4 -"Exterior-Interior", Garden Grove Community Church, Garden Grove, CA.
Source: http://leadnet.org, on Septmber 16th, 2016.

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with Christ under the open sky and in the sanctuary and on the beach. Then why did Christians develop the kind of church that they did?" Neutra then proceeded to answer his own question: "in the early days, the Christians were forced underground... in the dark underground caverns, candles were required to give light. Consequently, little children...were raised to have religious experiences in a setting were the world was shut out and only candles flickered. So, when these Christian children became adults and finally emerged into the sunlight ... they designed the structures that would recreate what, in their minds and experiences, was a religious mood...The buildings were designed to be dark, with flickering candles on a gloomy altar at the end of the corridor....So, in planning a church, they are unconsciously seeking to impress those who were raised in a church—instead of trying to design a structure that would make an impression on non-churched, secular Americans...Hundreds of thousands of churches are designed to stimulate, not the positive emotions of joy and hope that come with the fall of the sunlight in the room; rather they are designed to stimulate the negative emotions of darkness, dreariness and gloom!" Schuller criticized, even felt "painfully sorry," for pastors who tried to impress modern and unchurched Americans, when the biggest impression they made in their communities was "colored and influenced by an out-of-style, out-of-this-world architecture," churches which announced: 'This church is old fashioned, out of date, from bygone generations without any exciting plans for the future.'" Winning people for Christ should be the main emphasis, so if a church's structure stood in the way of growth, "then remove, remodel or relocate the structure."[36] Schuller believed that the evolution of one's soul and spiritual life was more significant and beautiful when integrated with the secular world:

> *"If a sanctuary is designed first of all to impress non-churched people, then it must be remembered that these meaningless symbols only confuse and distract Christians. There are those who argue this point with me. But I know of no one who disagrees with my position on this issue whose church is growing faster than ours! And I have observed that those who quarrel with this position on church architecture and insist on letting it be dark and gloomy, resplendent with all sorts of mysterious symbolism, are themselves pastors of churches that are not for the most part meeting with enormous success of winning and converting the unchurched person."*[37]

Apart from his modern interpretations of evangelical revivalism, Schuller understood that the ideological separation of secular and traditional religious values created a breeding ground for new religious views. He believed that his philosophy, fostered "the evolution of the soul and spiritual life as more significant and beautiful"[38] when integrated with an architectural framework connected to the secular world. This meant the way religion was communicated had to change, and the architecture with it. He wanted to give the impression that going to his church was a form of beauty for everyone, which particularly addressed the secular population who turned their backs on traditional churches.

> *Beauty is practical as well as desirable. That's why I could envision the walk-in, drive-in church being designed so attractively, so beautifully, that people would magnetically drawn to it. People run away from ugliness; people run to beauty. Beauty marshals enormous support. I envisioned reflecting pools, fountains, and green grass with splashes of flower gardens. I envisioned award-winning futuristic architecture.*[39]

The increasing popularity of this new and convenient form of religious "service" was part of Schuller's strategy to establish a characteristic identity for his church. He strongly believed that the unchurched demanded honesty and needed to be

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impressed with real beauty in a world that was filled with images concentrated on consumer products. In his manifesto, *Your Church has Real Possibilities*, he argued that many churches suffer from terrible design judgment:

> *For example, not a few unchurched people who come into a church are impressed—negatively—with the phony props that adorn the auditorium; the artificial lighting; carefully contrived staging; the sentimental solemn effect. These features are designed to manipulate a person's emotions into an unreal religious mood. Non-churched people see through this. People are impressed by the honesty of the entire architectural arrangement.*[40]

Third Nature

Schuller's idea to create "superb" architecture not only sought to change the church's imaginative and visionary image, but also strove to evoke "honesty" through an architectural expression that "hopefully becomes inconspicuous and nature becomes the center of attention. Consequently one is impressed with the sky, the water, the flowers, the trees and the green grass. All of which means that the structure becomes a vehicle for effective communication."[41] He saw communication as a powerful instrument for marketing his church, "the successful communicator attempted to put every communication objective in positive terms that were designed to stimulate positive emotions in the hearer."[42] He believed that one's spiritual life could become more meaningful when integrated into an architectural framework that was in constant communication with the secular world. Along with this desire came the yearning to restore harmony between the "mechanical and natural world."[43]

Similar to the parables in the Bible, Schuller's architecture aimed to find equilibrium between what is perceived as the inside and outside, the natural and artificial, and the extraordinary and ordinary. The parables, and the previously mentioned third nature, are a result of Jesus' teachings and responses to questions asked by people challenging him. In his teachings he never responded with yes or no, here or there, this or that. Rather, his parables, metaphors drawn from nature and life, arrested "the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought."[44] Paul Ricoeur describes parables as "the conjunction of a narrative form and a metaphoric process."[45] But they also prompt new thinking, and an indirect form of communication intended to open a new avenue of truth, a new nature. Philosopher Søren Kierkegaard argued that indirect communication was important for conveying, "but learning is more than information, especially when people think they already understand."[46]

Schuller's expanded idea for religious worship into the consumer landscape was a direct form of communication to channel a new understanding of reality. He redefined the church, the garden, and the larger ensemble leading to it with a new understanding of aesthetics and relationships. His logic was based on the proportional analogy between the interior and the expanded interior, and how they could form a viable third nature: "if meaning the value assigned to a set of relations, parables provide new sets of relations that enable us to see in a fresh manner."[47] Schuller's third nature, like parables, functioned as a lens to see the truth and correct distorted vision; to see what one would otherwise not see.

In times of decentralized suburban cultures and de-regulated religious ecologies, his vision embraced larger cultural geographies and defined new horizons in evangelizing Americans. His infinite production of new images and lifestyles reflected changing cultural paradigms that, in turn, engendered new processes of redefinition and the emergence of a new self as determining factors of the

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way they pass through religion, and religion passes through architecture.

And, even though he desired to move beyond ideology, Schuller's church nonetheless fused traditional values with the media of culture and entertainment into a postwar consumer phenomenon that could be characterized as "the cult of the new"[48]—an obsessive belief that the new is always better than what came before. Probably the most radical aspect of the postwar era, a cultish desire for novelty, was intensified by developments in mass media that blurred the distinction between communion and communication in an already very dense world interior.

In order to sustain the success of his church Schuller needed to position it squarely upon the screens where political and religious campaigns battled for the attention of American families. The American home—a place "where a man could display his success through the accumulation of new consumer goods"[49]—created the ideal ground for Schuller's operations. It was where Schuller perfected his "sales strategy" for religion by packaging sermon together with architecture and new consumer-oriented services. The first episode of Schuller's weekly *Hour of Power* would air in 1970, leveraging architecture as an instrument of a nascent televangelism that would come to define the image of Protestant worship in a secular media landscape. In the immediate postwar era, the seemingly infinite production of new images and means of representation reflected changing cultural paradigms, which in turn engendered new processes of "redefinition and [the] emergence of a new self and a medium of expression that expanded the field."[50] Schuller's vision of the spatial mobility of the Word coincided with these processes and generated a new topological diffusion for evangelicals with multiplied connections, from the parking lot to the home, the city, the region, and the third nature. As much as his church is a provocation to speculate on what world interiors actually are, it is also a solicitation to think through what they are not. Robert Schuller's desire to develop a new architectural framework in which the self could interlock with the larger geography marked a new chapter in the evolution of evangelical performances, and their architectural settings.

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FUTURO
FUTURE

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Pensiero utopico e l'interculturale co-creazione di futuri urbani

Utopian thinking and the intercultural co-creation of urban futures

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Così come le città affrontano le pressioni ambientali e sociali riferite al cambiamento del clima, così richiedono una rapida trasformazione. I sistemi ambientali e sociali globali sono tesi sotto la pressione degli stili di vita di una borghesia estremamente consumista, particolarmente in Nord-America. La continua crescita ed il consumo peggiorano la questione. Il pensiero utopistico ci permette di concentrarci sulla speranza, piuttosto che sul conflitto e sulla disperazione. Esso permette di considerare i cambiamenti fisici in forma localizzata ecologicamente che integra i sistemi urbani e di considerare i cambiamenti sociali nella forma di un'utopia eco-sociale partecipativa. Utilizzando un approccio funzionale siamo in grado di trasformare le sfide della differenza e della diversità in opportunità per enfatizzare l'inclusione, e il pluralismo culturale e religioso, nella co-creazione di visioni reciprocamente vantaggiose del futuro urbano.

As cities face environmental and social pressures related to climate change, they require rapid transformation. Global environmental and social systems are stretched under the strain of highly consumptive middle class lifestyles, particularly in North America. Continued growth and consumption make matters worse. Utopian thinking allows us to focus on hope, rather than conflict and despair. It allows us to consider physical changes in the form localized ecologically integrated urban systems and social changes in the form of a participatory eco-social utopia. Using a capabilities approach we can transform the challenges of difference and diversity into opportunities for emphasizing inclusion, and cultural and religious pluralism, in co-created, mutually beneficial visions of urban futures.

Parole chiave: **Pianificazione urbana; Utopia; Inclusione sociale; Pluralismo; Multiculturale; Comunità ecologica**

Keywords: ***Urban planning; Utopia; Social inclusion; Pluralism; Multicultural; Ecological community***

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This essay is about using utopian thinking in the service of envisioning an improved urban future. We face environmental calamities, in the form of climate change and ensuing ecological degradation, and face social calamities partly brought on by climate change and our fearful reaction to it. The antidote is visionary thinking that includes the thoughtful integration of diverse voices. I begin by discussing the merits and limits of utopian thinking to address seemingly intractable ecological and social challenges. I argue that eco-social utopian thinking should be applied to co-created intercultural visions of the future. I also present how a capabilities approach, whereby the unique perspectives and capacities of individual citizens are included, can empower citizens and enhance the processes of urban transformation.

In this essay I focus on the procedural democracy of co-creating urban environments so that they may be less consumptive and more egalitarian, acknowledging that a more complete tapestry of societal transformation should be examined for any utopian construct to adequately inform our long-term thinking. However, this is merely a starting point that will hopefully invite other strands of the tapestry to be more fully explored. I also focus primarily on urban and social conditions in North America with the hope that many of the arguments can be extended by others to similar conditions in other locations.

North American cities suffer an indolence of aspiration. They may function adequately but do little to add meaning or inspiration to society. Antiquated notions of pioneer homesteading have left many cities abysmally inefficient and bereft of character and culture; and produced an aesthetic of disposability and one-dimensional functionality. The prevailing dispersed low-density urban pattern is both ecologically dangerous and allegorically distressing. Many have rigorously and productively addressed the material extravagance and unsustainability of North American settlement patterns.[1,2] My critique comes from the intellectual and moral anxiety about the loss of hope that these cities exemplify. The antidote, I posit, is eco-social utopianism that cultivates hope through urban transformation that prioritizes resilience over idealism.

The merits of utopian thinking and the limitations of utopian communities

EUtopianism gives us hope. We lack stories of hope and the stories we do have are anemic in their consideration of the full spectrum of today's urban populations. Political utopian experiments, which were perhaps our most deliberate attempts at crafting a future beyond war, famine, servitude and psychosocial toxicity, failed in fulfilling their own ideals and in meeting their societies' needs.[3] Escapist utopia is not useful, as it quite simply cannot apply to a significant proportion of contemporary society. Experimental utopias of prescribed order, or freedom from state control but subservience to communal doctrine are similarly problematic.[4] Even town-sized experiments, such as Arcosanti and Auroville, both models of considerable achievement, have failed even if judged by their own criteria.[5,6] Moreover, they fail by a larger and perhaps more important criterion of not influencing the collective imagination of contemporary society. Yet they provide invaluable models that illustrate fundamentally improved ways of living and a radically improved quality of life for their members. As Critchley states, "to abandon the utopian impulse in thinking and acting is to imprison ourselves within the world as it is and to give up once and for all the prospect that another world is possible, however small, fleeting and compromised such a world might be."[7]

The utopian dream remains compelling in its audacity to imagine radically different systems of living that are ecologically synergistic. Ecologically speaking, radical social transformation is what is required to help us avoid tragic environmental and

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climatic consequences.[8] Many communes and intentional communities may have indeed achieved some measure of radical transformation at a small scale but are not replicable at the scale of cities. The relative isolation and abundance of fertility, autonomy, and liberty that communes enjoy is available to very few. For our purposes here utopianism is not about constructing a paradisiacal retreat in lush isolation. What then can we harvest from this utopian dream? If, as Critchley suggests, twentieth-century utopianism is dead, then what would breathe life into twenty-first-century utopia? What attributes of utopian thinking are useful for scaling utopian experiments up to an urban scale?

Hope and aspiration are important in that they provide us with the imaginary space to consider radical transformations in our cities. Hope frees us from the constraints of pragmatism and elicits positive emotions such as delight, care, and compassion. But hope for what and in the service of what? If we consider that global climate change produces two converging crises – scarcity and conflict – then utopian thinking can imagine futures that would diminish the intensity of these twin threats.

Insofar as both climate science and economics have often left us with a vision of the world in which alternative futures are scarce or non-existent, history's role must be not only to survey the data about responsibility for climate change, but also to point out the alternative directions, the utopian byways, the alternative agricultures and patterns of consumption that have been developing all the while.[9]

Kraftl argues that the utopian construct has historically been broad enough to include "notions of abundance, healthiness, rurality, nostalgia, community, and social order(ing)".[10] But utopia is also about the dark and unsettled, as a counterpoint that helps define what is desirable, and a necessary condition of agitation, upheaval, and revolution that can unravel contemporary problems.[11] The utopian condition may also be unsettling if they require eliminating unsustainable material comforts, and may be unsettled if climate change renders all human settlement vulnerable to unpredictable natural hazards and therefore in a constant state of adaptation. Utopian thinking therefore requires consideration of the physical attributes of future cities.

The bio-physical challenge of utopia

The implicit promise of globalization and cultural hegemony assumes that more and more of the world will eventually attain the material comforts of the Global North.[12] But this promise cannot be fulfilled, and in fact, the reverse has to happen. The affluent Global North has to achieve levels of energy and material consumption that approximate those of the less affluent Global South.[13] This underscores our need for a radically different approach to thinking about our aspirations for the future.

The tabula rasa of utopian thinking allows us to be unconstrained by the current configuration of urban systems or infrastructure, and provides opportunities to refashion and reconstitute some of the basic features of urban environments. For example, reducing material and energy consumption may simply result from the localization of nutrient and water recycling. That means growing food, composting waste, and harvesting and purifying water locally. From Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature*, to the Farallones Institute's *Integral Urban House*, to Mollison and Holmgren's permaculture, to John Lyle's regenerative design we have numerous blueprints for integrating small-scale agriculture, aquaculture, and animal husbandry with the recycling of nutrients and water. They all include human habitation with a localized source of consumption, which has the dual advantage of making consumption conspicuous and enabling people to live with a much-reduced footprint.

However, these pioneering examples require more land areas than is available

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in our populated cities. The bio-physical challenge is to transpose the theoretical and practical lessons of designing with nature, permaculture, and regenerative design to an urban metropolitan scale. For example, the Victory Gardens of WWI,[14] and 1990's Havana are testaments to responding to scarcity with innovation and adaptation. In Havana, any space or place with solar exposure became an opportunity to grow plants that provided food and enabled residents to endure the international embargo.[15] This transformation would be far more difficult in cities with greater densities and harsher climates. Can agriculture, nutrient and water recycling become systematically supported at different scales in all new design and construction? At what scale should localization occur? For example, to produce heat, hot water, and electricity; solar panels, micro-hydro,[16] and multi-directional wind turbines provide local power production at a building scale, but a biofuel power plant is only efficient at a neighborhood scale. Similarly, the processing of sewage that relies on compact marshes in the form of green houses to filter water is most efficient when it serves dozens of units.

A survey of global settlements reveals other ways that the human capacity to adapt can be instructive for our conception of a bio-physical utopia aligned with the ecological capacity of the earth. Informal settlements around the world demonstrate ingenuity, austerity, and adaptability. The per capita ecological footprints of low income countries are far closer to the earth's per capita ecological capacity than high income countries.[17] We have to be careful not to romanticize poverty or to mistake it for sustainability, because the kind of extreme poverty that often characterizes informal settlements is riddled with disease, death, violence, and hardship.[18] A pragmatic approach, however, would have us work in both directions: constructing an eco-social utopia by building up quality, stability, and comfort from a low-income baseline; and reducing consumptive behavior from a high-income base line.

The eco-social challenge of utopia

Utopianism that is in the service of addressing the dual goals of ecological health and cultural co-existence must reconceive society in a way that does not leave the majority of human and non-human life suffering the vagaries of rampant consumerism. We have to rethink the extreme hierarchies of social class that permeate urban settlements today. What manner of human relationships and biophysical relationships can uphold utopian ideals in the messy and often oppressive conditions of our cities? How can material and energy flows be reduced, refined, and made more efficient while simultaneously giving more people access to energy and materials? How can vast disparities in wealth, power, and privilege be reduced or harmonized. How can political and economic powers be persuaded to reduce their continued hegemonic dominance?

Dwelling on deeply troubling and intractable questions is more likely to fuel dystopian feelings than utopian problem solving. But, what if we imagined social changes in the service of social justice with the understanding that solutions cannot gain traction without thousands of experiments and iterations? Most utopian social constructs imagine a vastly reduced hierarchy with less material wealth and more sharing of that wealth. Michael Albert[19] presents an economic utopia of sorts, with a detailed plan of how our professional and labor classes can be reorganized with a more egalitarian distribution of resources and greater access to fulfilling jobs. Numerous fiscal and policy instruments characterize prosperity without growth and recast the basic distributive tenets of socialism for reduced consumption within the ecological capacity of the earth.[20] As painstakingly detailed as they are, these ideas remain on the fringes of mainstream discourse and continue to be politically unfeasible. They elicit an instinctive reflex of fear of

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communist atheism, particularly in the United States.[21] Therefore, a transformative utopianism must contend with political, religious, ideological, cultural, and socio-economic diversity. This is a delicate dance, for with religiosity comes self-righteousness and exclusion. A deep kind of inclusivity that does not preclude religiosity, theism, agnosticism, or atheism requires Hibbard's ecumenical secularism,[22] whereby minority rights, irrespective of faith, are relentlessly defended against the potential tyranny or violent oppression of the majority.[23]

While there is some disagreement about the causal relationship between climate change, scarcity, migration, and war[24] there is some evidence that the recent violent conflicts in Syria and Iraq – causing one of the largest refugee crises in decades[25] – is the direct result of local climate change. The ensuing rise of xenophobic and violent religious fundamentalism on one side, and equally xenophobic nationalism and religious discrimination on the other, represent a fear-laden response to climate change. The war-centered violent defense of ideological self-supremacy undermines international treaties, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and any kind of peaceful co-existence. Here we must also recognize that for about 12% of the world's population living in extreme poverty, the source of the next meal is far more important to them than any thought of maintaining the integrity of ecological systems.[26]

William James[27] challenges peace activists, and by extension utopians, to create an edifice to peace that is at least equal to war in its capacity to capture men's primal psyche. For utopia to become the moral equivalent of war, it must present a heroic vision of transforming the tendency towards plunder to compassion and love. According to Min-Sun Kim[28] even our inquiry into intercultural communication is laden with implicit objectives to dominate, devour and destroy the "other". A culture of peace requires upholding diversity and supporting difference, and should be mutually conceived, crafted, and owned.

Given that the majority of the world's population either has faith in a higher power or follows some religious worldview, then eschatology, or the study of end of time stories, is relevant to an intercultural discussion of the future. Eschatology often drives the values and actions of adherents regarding the possibility of a collective future, and thus has to be integral to the construction of such a future.[29] A study of the multiple narratives of the future, especially as interpreted by extreme adherents, reveals that they often are mutually exclusive.[30] Some interpretations explicitly imagine a future of confrontation and domination over other ideologies. Our cities, and our framing of multicultural urban narratives, do little to challenge this. Because typical urban epistemologies are removed from a sense of place, many choose to cultivate cosmological and cultural identities based on ideology irrespective of who their neighbors might be and what relationships of reciprocity they could build with them. In the global competition for scarce resources, exclusionary claims to righteousness and truth justify battles for a larger share of finite resources. Instead, we need to be able to imagine a more positive and inclusive future.

Faith leaders can help adherents reconcile their ultimate values to bridge gaps of difference, and stimulate the imagination of a less polarized and more mutually respectful future. Planners must likewise ask themselves if cities can, through the deliberate interlacing of their ecological and social functions and the intercultural symbolism of their design, cultivate narratives of a genuinely pluralistic and ecologically balanced future. However, if a vision of a pluralistic inclusive city is to compete with the contemporary visions of the consumptive city, it cannot just be a vision created by urban planners, and has to be compelling enough to be sought, co-created and owned by multiple voices. In outlining some of the basic governance qualities of the *good city*, which he characterizes as a defense of utopian thinking, John Friedmann

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writes:

> *Genuine material equality, Maoist-style, is neither achievable nor desirable. Whereas we will always have to live with material inequalities, what we must never tolerate is a contemptuous disregard for the qualities of social and political life, which is the sphere of freedom. A good city is a city that cares for its freedom, even as it makes adequate social provision for its weakest member."*[31]

Of course, there has to be enough of a common ground to enable cohabitation with others and other species, but there must also be opportunity for individuated practice. The imagined cohesive future must include opportunity for different worldviews, ideologies, values, incentives, lifestyles and behavior. How can residents of a secular intentional community such as Skinner's fictional Walden Two,[32] for example, be given opportunity to read scriptures, meditate, or pray? At the urban scale, how can devotional needs of devotees of diverse religious practices be given as much priority as recreational needs? How can the unintended homogeneity of intentional communities, that Aguilar[33] describes, be made more inclusive of difference and diversity?

Some homogeneity of aspiration, or common ground, is essential of course. To realize his vision of a reinvigorated utopian thinking Friedmann states "[t]he protagonist of my visioning is an autonomous, self-organizing civil society, active in making claims, resisting and struggling on behalf of the good city within a framework of democratic institutions."[34] I suggest that the common ground of the good city, from which any future utopian project should not deviate, is the goal of significantly reducing levels of consumption and preserving ecosystem richness and balance. Every worldview must somehow reconcile its directives with the fundamental imperative of living within the ecological carrying capacity of the earth.[35] There is ample evidence that religious and faith groups have the capacity for this kind of alignment. A strategic approach towards the future would require us to find ways to cultivate co-created visions that are utopian in their hopefulness but pragmatic in their attention to the procedural challenges of working together across difference.

The Challenge of an Intercultural Co-Creation of the City

Utopian thinking applied to the process of creating visions of future cities brings us to forms of urban and community planning that directly engage the voices, ideas, intellects, and energies of citizens. Participatory planning processes have generally progressed from an emphasis on deliberative, negotiated, and dialogical processes with multiple stakeholders, to a more recent emphasis on highly technical and resource intensive approaches to engagement.[36] A recent trend in collaborative design workshops, often called charrettes, has helped increase interdisciplinary participation.[37] But it has not successfully engaged a diverse public, and tends to lead to predictable design outcomes that undermine the claim of participatory design.[38] In the social planning sector, innovative communicative processes that seek to empower low income populations tend not to have sufficient resources for turning their local efforts into larger municipal development goals.[39] In the area of social services, innovative approaches to promoting intercultural interaction are likewise underfunded and hampered by complex bureaucratic and policy constraints.[40]

Innovations in real estate development planning have tended towards well funded exploratory computational and visualization tools.[41] As cities grapple with the challenge of planning for climate change, they increasingly employ more technical tools and performance indicators in the service of achieving specific goals and targets.[42] Decision makers increasingly rely on these indicators to judge the merits of competing plans or visions.[43] Performance indicators illustrated through graphic and multi-

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media visualizations make citizens feel less ambivalent, and more empowered in the face of complex problems like climate change.[44] Planning practitioners have also turned to visualization tools to help articulate more explicit links between neighborhood development and complex technical information.[45] Using a variety of digital 3D simulations can also help make spatial relationships more accessible to a diverse public with limited knowledge of urban design and planning.[46] In my own public engagement work I have found that using multiple pathways of engagement, including fun and entertainment, can lead to higher levels of understanding, participation, and long term changes in consumptive behaviour.[47]

A multi-pronged approach in which people have an opportunity to engage issues through whatever strengths, interests, media, ideas, or even ideologies they have, empowers them to take control, act, and ultimately contribute to collective change efforts. Our creative diversity is a rich resource and, rather than inadvertently constraining it through singular approaches to public engagement, we have an opportunity through the deployment of digital and social media to facilitate a myriad of approaches to expressing visions and harnessing the knowledge they bring. In practical terms, an appreciation of the priorities that different cultural groups might have for urban land-use underscores the importance of measuring variables of cultural amenity, diversity, social inclusion, and accessible social networks, all of which are poorly addressed in the new generation of digital tools.[48] Realizing an eco-social utopia requires integrating these avenues of accessibility to create an inclusive, adaptive, and relatively low cost approach to the co-creative engagement of diverse residents.

A capabilities approach to eco-social utopia

The capabilities approach introduced by Sen[49] and developed further by Nussbaum[50] is consistent with co-creative public engagement. The capabilities approach is an alternative to both development indices and human rights codes. Its advocates claim that rather than focusing on raising the total average GDP as a measure of development and progress we should focus on measuring the work and output that improves people's individual lives.[51] Nussbaum,[52] argues that liberalism stands opposed to all governance structures that perpetuate and normalize power hierarchies. The opposite must take place in fact and "all, just by being human, are of equal dignity and worth, no matter where they are situated in society... the primary source of this worth is a power of moral choice within them, a power that consists in the ability to plan a life in accordance with one's own evaluation of ends."[53] This has direct implications for public engagement in the planning of our future cities and the possibility for co-creating an intercultural vision.

Nussbaum's focus on the dignity of the body with all its senses, imaginations, thoughts, and emotions and her emphasis on the "ability to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life [including] protection of the liberty of conscience and religious observance,"[54] serve to add richness to our understanding of individual citizens who envision, inhabit, enliven, and co-create our cities. These are not treated as theoretical constructs but rather as basic rights for every citizen in the service of emancipatory and egalitarian justice. The realization of these rights is cumulative and not absolute. For example, the capabilities approach focuses on people's experienced improvements rather than theoretical ideals of justice that have little likelihood of being implemented.[55] For an intercultural co-created vision of urban futures that means building discernable *improvements* of access and inclusion within the context of the lives of diverse marginalized groups and also the capacities of those institutions that seek to include them. Neither the dismantling of oppressive institutions,[56] nor minimum

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requirements of emancipatory justice,[57] are prerequisites for action. The capabilities approach allows us to incorporate opportunity and positivity in a pragmatic conceptualization of urban futures,[58] while avoiding the naïveté of status quo urbanism and its resultant trajectories.[59] A hopeful future alleviates marginalization through a set of inclusive urban policies and design characteristics,[60] and trans-disciplinary, multi-sectorial, and socio-economically diverse understandings of social support systems.[61] An intercultural vision should therefore be grounded in the lived realities and capabilities of residents, policy makers, and urban development planners engaged in the processes of city building.

The provision of an open and inclusive process does not end with plans, but rather by the enhanced capability of the intended user to use the results of those plans.[62] Utopian hope making notwithstanding, it is the concrete situation that matters, not the intention, nor the potential.[63] A dual level capabilities approach, after Hall,[64] allows a focus on individual and collective values, abilities, constraints, and opportunities for diverse members of society, as well as individual and collective values, abilities, constraints, and opportunities for those who plan and design for them. A truly intercultural co-creative process sheds light on the myriad consumptive profiles that make up cosmopolitan cities and informs the project of transformation for the sake of vastly reduced ecological footprints.

An eco-social intercultural vision also upholds a powerful and inspiring construct of a compelling future for cities that simultaneously reduce their ecological burden and increase their intercultural inclusivity. What is needed is utopian thinking that is grounded in grassroots community and service delivery work, and procedurally driven by the lived experiences of diverse participants and embraced by the inhabitants of the city. Our minds, constrained by today's realities, must not balk at imaginings of a future that seems naïve. We must ask ourselves, what is the story that we want for our society and our cities? What kind of relationships do we want for our progeny, with our human and non-human, and animal and mineral, cohabitants of the planet? Is it a post-strife world; is it a fortressed from strife world; or is it a world that proactively worked to reduce the possibility and intensity of strife?

Utopian thinking opens a window for imagining transformation and constructing some of its critical components. I presented complex, interconnected, and seemingly intractable ecological and social challenges that cities are facing and showed how we have to become radically less consumptive in order to live within the ecological limits of our planet. I argued that eco-social utopian thinking has to not only conceive of specific relationships between urban ecological and social systems, but also has to directly acknowledge and facilitate cultural, ideological, and socio-economic diversity. To help foster restorative peaceful futures an intercultural vision of the future has to empower a diverse citizenry. I presented the capabilities approach as a mechanism by which the contributions of individual citizens are treated as a basic inalienable right of residence in a community. Given the deep challenges that cities face, I call for employing the aspirational and transformational elements of utopian thinking to empower individuals and communities in the processes of crafting and implementing transformational visions of hopeful urban futures.

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Argomentazioni per un'urbanistica spirituale

Arguments for a Spiritual Urbanism

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L'ambiente costruito può e deve essere utilizzato per affrontare gli straordinari problemi che affliggono la civiltà contemporanea. Questa ipotesi segue una logica su quattro livelli. In primo luogo, l'umanità si trova ad affrontare una crisi senza precedenti in termini di velocità e di scala. In secondo luogo, una risposta seria richiede una visione del mondo secondo ed accrescendo la spiritualità. In terzo luogo, i credi tradizionali non riescono a causare il necessario trasporto spirituale alla velocità o al livello necessario. Pratiche spirituali più fervide e di successo ricavate dalle religioni e validate scientificamente hanno maggiori possibilità di ampia diffusione e quindi d'impatto. In quarto luogo, l'ambiente costruito è ben configurato per indurre e rafforzare alcune di queste "nuove" pratiche spirituali dato (1) il suo ruolo conformante in questioni culturali; (2) l'umanità come fenomeno urbano, e (3) l'enorme crescita della popolazione del prossimo mezzo secolo.

The built environment may and should be utilized to address the extraordinary problems afflicting contemporary civilization. This speculation follows a fourfold logic. First, humanity is facing an unprecedented crisis in speed and scale. Second, a serious response demands a worldview depending on and advancing spirituality. Third, traditional faiths cannot effect the necessary spiritual shift at the pace or degree required. More intense and successful spiritual practices extracted from religions and scientifically validated offer better chances for wide deployment and therefore impact. Fourth, the built environment is well suited to induce and reinforce some of these 'new' spiritual practices given (a) its shaping role in cultural affairs; (2) humanity being an urban phenomenon, and (3) the huge population growth of the next half century.

Parole chiave: **Spiritualità; Crisi; Scienza; Religione; Ipotesi**

Keywords: ***Spirituality, Crisis, Science, Religion, Speculation***

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1. Our troubled condition

Looking at today's civilization we can't help but marvel at human accomplishments. We have made remarkable advances in science and technology; arts and philosophy, law, and commerce; health, food and shelter; and education and communication. All these and many others have brought an era of prosperity at a scale never experienced by humankind. But, there is another, darker side. Who can ignore the unprecedented magnitude and speed of the challenges we are facing? The list is long and overwhelming: massive environmental pollution and destruction; global warming and climate change; runaway consumerism, greed, and materialism; global economic inequality and instability; accelerating population growth and human migration; planetary terrorism; rising xenophobia; technological and scientific breakthroughs of uncertain impact; and media-anesthesized societies oblivious to it all. Looking into the future suggests an impending civilizational crisis with significant threats to the welfare, health, and even existence of vast numbers of human and non-human beings.

What is the source of our problems? We cannot blame some recent mutation in human nature. Desire, hope, fear, anger, love, seeking happiness, ignorance, greed, and the many other human traits remain inexorably the same and tied to who we are. What has changed is the culture enabling old and new expressions of those archetypal drives. And it is hard not to assign responsibility to *modernity*, especially late (i.e., twentieth-century) modernity. After all, it was modernity's ideology, attitudes, practices, and social norms, along with market capitalism and industrialization that pushed aside millennia-old traditions in a matter of decades. Modernity's agenda of progress, rationalization, secularization, centralization, industrialization, urbanization, materialism/commodification found fertile ground in a Western civilization tired of inequalities, poverty, religious abuse, dogmatism, disease, and manual labor.[1] The incredible progress and challenges of today are the mixed blessing of the rise of modernity.

The point here is not to castigate modernity because, as said, there is much to be thankful for. Still, the limitations and dangers of the modern project are now all too obvious and call for significant correction. Plenty has been written and debated about the flaws of modernity and even its "end". Who doesn't remember when, more than a generation ago, *postmodernity* was being hailed as the new critical perspective that would point at, if not mend, the modern debacle?[2] Yet, something happened over the intervening years that stopped any significant correction. With hindsight we could say that the largely intellectual and ineffectual stance of postmodernity never was a match to counteract the huge and inertial forces behind modernity. In fact, the relativistic, nihilist, and practically disengaged, and tautological attitudes of postmodernity insidiously exacerbated the stronghold of modernity. The fact that the rise of postmodernity coincided with the explosive adoption of the modern project across the world, notably in Asia, didn't help either. With little actual impact in the world beyond a few liberal enclaves, postmodernity lost its allurement, even among progressives. This is not to say that today's world is like the heydays of late modernity, it is not. But it is to acknowledge that despite much discussion, legitimate criticism, and well-intended changes, for all practical (and even ideological) purposes, we still dwell under the auspices of some 'advanced' form of modernity — what many now call hypermodernity or supermodernity.[3]

2. In need of spiritual development

The tragedy of today's immense crises is not only that they ethically undermine the way of life we have come to expect but, worse, fail to fulfill us.[4] After all, it is hard to find satisfaction in the materialistic, skeptical, market driven, always busy, stressful,

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and analytical reality of modernity, or the fragmented, politically-correct, nihilist, and cynical world of postmodernity. Actually, we squizophrenically move back and forth between both unfortunate existential conditions. And if feelings of disenchantment, anxiety, insecurity, distraction, loneliness, and being lost are certainly not unique to our zeitgeist, their overwhelming presence defines our age. They are indicators of a profound dissatisfaction with and misunderstanding of our contemporary condition. At heart, the sickness of our time is a crisis of meaning.[5]

It is perhaps for this reason that, in spite of (or because of) the power and spread of supermodernity, religion continues to be the ethical, existential, and aesthetic compass for most people around the globe. For example, according to a 2012 WIN-Gallup International poll on religiosity and atheism, 59% of the world's population is religious, 23% are not religious (but not 'atheist') and only 13% are atheist. Indeed, a very recent study of the future of religion based on demographic data conducted by the Pew Research Center (2015) shows no expected decline in the role of faith in the world until 2050 and beyond.[6] As scholars have argued, far from moving to a secular age (as we were once told modern 'progress' would inevitably lead), the world has remained stubbornly religious. Hence, many describe our time as a post-secular age, where religion retains power and must be considered regarding issues of any importance.[7]

Faced with this unavoidable presence (and relevance) of religion, modernity has fortressed itself by pointing at the many mistakes, failures, horrors, absurdities, and prejudices of religion to call for more rational, secular, and instrumental approaches. Postmodernity, which is also highly critical of religion (but for other reasons), has only furthered such negative attitudes and generalized repression or disdain for spiritual beliefs and practices in most professional, academic, and research fields.[8] Underlying all is the expressed or tacit belief that whatever challenges we may face, they can be tackled using the tools and ideology of modernity. Yet, approaches that have put us in today's quandary cannot take us out of it. To the contrary, our contemporary civilization exhibits a dangerously narrow understanding of our place on Earth and what constitutes human development that must be urgently corrected – a correction that, paradoxically, religious wisdom is very capable of initiating if it is carefully and insightfully approached. Simply put, a religious outlook depends on an all-encompassing harmonious context of reference, one from which, at least in principle, today's intractable problems could be reframed within the ultimate meaning, wholeness, or trans-personal nature of reality and all beings. It also provides each person with teachings, practices, aspirations, and attitudes to guide their actions, thoughts, feelings, and relationships beyond selfish, tribal, and other narrow interests. Besides, because matters of God and the spirit are crucial concerns of the majority of people, religion is a fertile environment from where to build a new paradigm.

Some contemporary scholars speak of religion as particularly well suited for helping us to address our troubled world. Philosopher Ken Wilber has articulated how religion could serve as a 'conveyor belt' to bring large numbers of people into the higher levels of spiritual development necessary to respond to today's maladies.[9]

A couple of examples may illustrate how spiritual development could make a difference. First, let us consider the result of a massive, heartfelt adoption of a sacramental view of the world. If reality were truly believed to be sacred (e.g., as a sign of an active God, by virtue of having been created by a now disengaged God, or by being God itself as in pantheism) it would demand our outmost attention and care. Such reverential attitudes would invariably lead to a more sustainable, ethical, and meaningful living.[10] Second, consider the outcome of applying spiritual sensibilities to today's unquestioned belief on economic/material growth.[11] While no

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one can deny the importance of the material world in human life, reducing humanity to only this is superficial. Economist Manfred Max-Neef makes an excellent distinction between growth and development.[12] Growth is a necessary biological, material process that living organisms undergo during their infancy and youth but one that eventually comes to an end. Development, however, is something that naturally continues until the end of organic life as it involves learning, relationships, and experiences. Growth imposes significant demands and effects on the environment whereas development is much more benign as it is largely interior. Spiritual understandings of human nature could contribute to re-aligning the aims of our civilization toward development instead of growth.

Consequently, I assert that responding to our contemporary crises necessitates that humanity develops spiritually through returning to religion for wisdom. But, we should not be naïve about faith traditions. Religions have been often reluctant, if not resistant, to recognize or adopt many positive offerings of our secular world. Without openness to contemporary technologies and ideologies, religion risks being stuck in regressive positions and practices that are inappropriate or counterproductive. In other words, religion also needs to listen and change. At the same time, we should remember that the depth and breath of secular civilization reach and include all people, including religious individuals. This implies that any significant correction of the current conditions must not only have the appropriate values and practices but also, and harder, be developed and presented in ways that contemporary people, even those spiritually inclined, can assimilate.

2.1 the necessary conversation between contemporary culture and religion

Resolving our quandary demands building bridges between supermodernity and religion. Such an effort requires a serious and lengthy philosophical, theological, and scientific debate, something that has begun.[13] I will argue that the initiative to start a productive relationship between the two parties must come from secular culture for three reasons. First, because the contemporary is dominated by modernity, we must work within it. Second, since modernity is in the strongest position it is more likeable to listen and adjust without being overly defensive, particularly if it sees benefits from it. Third, modernity has historically proven to be more flexible than religion, especially if presented with empirical or rational evidence.

Applying secular methods to faith suggests using its rules and language to scrutinize the most significant claims put forward by religious wisdoms. Key in selecting a claim for testing would be its (1) reliability, determined by its being held by many faith traditions; and (2) relevance, determined by its potential to address today's challenges. Although this instrumental approach to religious wisdom will not please everybody, it would nevertheless legitimate the reality and usability of religion in the eyes of most people (even many skeptics), offer real opportunity for application, and thus advance the agenda of 'spiritualizing' contemporary culture. This approach is not new. Over the past three decades, scientific research has been probing religious matters and finding a wide range of positive effects of active spiritual beliefs and practices regarding human learning, health, and wellbeing. These include the scientific literature in nursing,[14] medicine,[15] higher education,[16] psychiatry and psychology,[17] and brain-mind sciences.[18]

As an example, let us consider a spiritual practice common to many religions, contemplation. Despite their wide variety (e.g., meditation, prayer, visualization, etc.), contemplative practices share important traits and outcomes. Rigorous scientific experiments have found strong evidence that contemplation significantly improves cognitive and affective performances as well as cultivates a sense of wellbeing;[19] enhances immunological response;[20]

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fosters brain growth and plasticity;[21] reduces stress, depression, loneliness, and anxiety;[22] increases motivation; and raises pain thresholds.[23] These scientific discoveries have been so impressive that scholars and practitioners speak of a 'mindfulness revolution',[24] hundreds of centers around the world offer mindfulness-based therapies for a variety of disorders,[25] the US military is actively investigating such practices for combat performance improvement and PTSD treatment,[26] politicians began to include the topic in the national agenda,[27] schools, hospitals and even prisons are slowly adopting them in their programs,[28] and a growing number of individuals and groups are devoted to meditation practices.[29] Although, doubts have been raised regarding whether or not spiritual 'techniques' (such as mindfulness) work without the 'sacred container' of a larger set of beliefs and practices;[30] and whether the scientific experiments conducted on small numbers of people apply to large groups, the empirical validation of religious practices does suggest the possibility for their widespread application in society. The hope is that such deployment will move large parts of humanity towards better mental, physical, social, and spiritual health and in doing address the problems of our time.

2.2 Defining Spirituality

'Spiritual' and 'spirituality' are terms used to describe experiences or considerations of meaning, transcendence, wholeness, awe, aspirations, values, and the sacred. Spirituality is interpreted as less interested in external or institutional responses (i.e., religion) than in living or exploring those concerns. In this sense, spirituality constitutes a more universal and open-ended human experience than religion. Spirituality usually includes (1) the 'transcendental' or beyond the understanding, limits, or control of individual consciousness; (2) a fundamental connectedness of self with others, nature, and/or possibly (but not necessarily) a divinity; (3) some type of practice, ritual, and/or experience with the capacity to access (1) and/or (2); and (4) a sense of existential meaningfulness based on any of the previous three.[31]

3. Traditional religious practices are not enough to elicit the spiritual development to address current challenges

As said, responding to our unprecedented problems necessitates that humanity develops spiritually. Yet, this transformation must inevitably start and unfold person by person and, as developmental psychology informs us, follow a relatively simple process: if an individual in a certain stage of cognitive/affective development begins to experience a state of a higher stage often enough and in the sufficient quantity, they will naturally and permanently shift to that higher phase of development. Since there are similarities among individuals, pedagogies may be designed and implemented to facilitate group development. This is a fundamental principle of education. Spiritual development is no exception and therefore demands active, continuous, and lengthy engagement to have transformative effects. We must recognize that the frequency and intensity of traditional religious observances (once a week, one hour long ritual/visit to a temple, and other occasional celebrations) are not sufficient to deliver significant developmental results. But let us also acknowledge that even motivated people willing to commit time and effort will still face challenges in their spiritual practice. Take the example of contemplation, to follow the case study of mindfulness used earlier. We do know that meditative practices are difficult to implement and maintain for multiple reasons: they take time, discipline, and effort; may require training and company; are usually within the realm of the individual and/or small communities; and are not supported by today's way of life. In other words, the spiritual practitioner often finds more hurdles than in other types of personal development practices. This is also true for advancing human dignity, loving-kindness toward other beings, or any

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other type of spiritual attitude, response, or aspiration. Therefore, even if we had a contemporary world receptive to 'empirically proven' religious practices and many such initiatives were offered, we would still have a hard time using traditional religious methods (even if scientifically enhanced), particularly at a large scale and in a relative short period of time.

Not surprising, we are not the only age or people that discovered the major liability hindering subject-driven methods of spiritual development: they demand personal effort to prosper. Many major faiths and wisdom traditions learned long ago to resort to external methods to facilitate people's access to religious experiences.[32] The great advantage of this technique is that it demands little or no work on the part of individuals. The myriad examples of sacred art and architecture represent an uncontestable record of religions exploiting these externally induced effects. The impacts of means such as iconography, artifacts, architecture, and gardens exceed assisting the faithful in ritual, prayer, or meditation because other teachings are also promoted within sacred spaces. Sometimes larger urban interventions have been used, such as Vatican City, Bodhgaya, or Mecca. Low exertion, externally assisted spiritual practices and teachings offer attractive ways to advance spiritual development, and is the topic of our next section.

4. The built environment may assist the spiritual development of individuals and societies

If spiritual states may be externally induced, can the built environment be utilized to advance spiritual practices? The built environment establishes conditions to facilitate certain behavioral, social, and/or psychological responses, and its stability guarantees their repetition. By exercising such influence, the built environment may not only have a pedagogical role and consequent developmental effects on people but, potentially, even an evolutionary impact.[33] And since it is a product of people living together, under shared beliefs, habits, expectations, stories, and language, the built environment is tangible culture calling forth tangible (e.g., behaviors) and intangible (e.g., meaning) culture.[34] Thus, instilling a spiritual pedagogical agenda through the built environment is fundamentally and inevitably a cultural operation. Besides, there is a well-known fundamental relationship between culture and religion, although positions regarding the influence of one over the other differ based on ideological and disciplinary perspectives.[35]

The built environment as a means of spiritual development leads to urban considerations. Cities are not only where most people do and will dwell but also much urban design and development will occur in the next decades, the result of the fast population growth and urbanization underway worldwide.[36] The inevitable increase in human density will either exacerbate the already negative trends of today or help combat them. In other words, if there is a solution to our crisis, it will need to be found in the city.

Developing our urban environments towards spiritual principles, practices, or teachings has not been discussed very much. The reason may be found in the avoidance or repression of spirituality in the academy and professions (argued earlier), the controversial and political difficulty of the topic, and/or its seemingly indefinable, immaterial, and immeasurable nature.[37] But these obstacles shouldn't deter us. We can draw parallels to the struggle and delay in recognizing the central role that culture plays in cities. Let us make a short pause to consider how this limiting view was overcome, as it may indicate how to advance our proposal.

Even though there were many discussions on the interdependent nature and effects of culture and human settlements during the twentieth-century,[38] it took the UN adoption of the "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage" (or 'tangible culture') in 1972, and

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the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage" in 2003, to make this realization broadly applicable.[39] But this was not enough. Building on these documents and starting in the mid 1990s, UNESCO and UN-HABITAT began to publish definitions, expectations, and metrics for the 'cultural', 'wellbeing', 'human development', 'creativity', and other such immaterial but essential dimensions of dwelling.[40] Other organizations followed suit and provided urban metrics related to culture and other psycho-social aspects of human living such as the 'Better Life Index', the 'Global City Indicators for Culture', and the 'World Values Survey'.[41] Recently (2012), UN-HABITAT recognized the importance of 'quality of life' as one of five factors necessary to assess the prosperity of cities.[42] While these 'indicators' and metrics are pragmatic and limited (and sometime misleading), they do show a growing and healthy acknowledgement by the world community that purely quantitative, materialistic, economic, and even environmental metrics are not enough to account for human life and development.[43] In fact, many of these indicators have language and components that could be associated to spirituality. Let us notice that many of the most sophisticated metrics didn't surface until around 2010 and that the term 'cultural planning' was not much used until this millennium.[44]

Although it took time for the world to accept culture as an important dimension of cities, the time could be ripe for a next generation of cultural gauging that considers spiritual factors. This is not as radical as it may sound. Since 1983 the World Health Organization (WHO) has been recognizing the important role that the non-material or spiritual dimension performs in human health.[45] In 1998, WHO developed the 'WHOQOL Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs (SRPB) Field-Test Instrument' to measure people's mental health, which was used later to collect data in 18 countries and published in 2006 with results showing statistically significant correlations.[46] While discussions on this topic continue,[47] there is momentum for considering 'spirituality' as relevant to urban life and, possibly, a new vision and design of the built environment to advance it.

Joel Kotkin points at the big role that the sacred historically played in the city.[48] Supporting arguments for a 'spiritual city' also come from already cited Philip Sheldrake who states that "purely instrumental or utilitarian responses to the future of cities are not sufficient. We desperately need to develop a compelling urban, moral, and spiritual vision."[49] Planning researcher Maged Senbel approaches this challenge from a large scale and spiritually sensitive perspective of sustainability. He offers what he calls "reverential urbanism", that is, "a form of urbanism that facilitates a deep sense of respect and awe for nature and for other human beings... a practice that requires the poetic cultivation of hope alongside empirical analysis and inductive reasoning." This 'reverential urbanism' fosters city living that encourages an "ethics of conservation over consumption [and of] spiritual growth over material growth."[50]

4.1 Preliminary Guidelines For A Spiritual Urbanism

Defining guidelines to create urban environments that facilitate spiritual development is, of course, the next step but not within the scope of this article. However, a few things may be said. For starters, any such effort will have to be based on design principles and outcomes grounded on spiritual practices, teachings, and goals common to most religious traditions. The following list is only an indication of what these shared values could be (a substantive list would have to be rigorously developed with wide interfaith participation):

— Truth / authenticity / honesty
— Goodness / ethics
— Beauty / aesthetics
— Voluntary simplicity / humility
— Human dignity / equality
— Empathy/ loving kindness / compassion
— Contemplative attitude / mindfulness /

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prayer
— Respect for / celebration of nature and all life
— Belongingness / attachment / connectedness to community and universe
— Security / safety / peace
— Transcendence (of self, culture, ethnicity, reality, etc.)
— Meaningfulness / unity / wellbeing

These general values ought to be considered in their most sacred, inspirational and humanistic sense, and not through religious dogma. Our definition of 'spirituality' clarifies the underlying intention. After securing such shared ground of spiritual motivation, and based on the arguments presented thus far, we could risk saying that a spiritual urbanism might:
— Reveal, express, and celebrate a city's *genius loci* in order to bring the uniqueness and sacredness of a particular natural place and its beings into urban life;
— Choose development (i.e., 'thickening' the existing urban fabric to improve living conditions and opportunities) over growth (i.e., building new fabric);
— Prioritize opportunities for simple, spirit-growing and non-consumption oriented dimensions of communal and individual life;
— Avoid pollution, support health, and advance sustainability;
— Instill a contemplative attitude by slowing down daily routines, offering a rich (aesthetic) present, and having destinations of transcending value and experience;
— Hold beauty as a fundamental value and goal for urban development and life;
— Advance what Sheldrake calls "urban love":[51] by enabling equality, encouraging spontaneous and planned connections among (all kinds of) people, and cultivating the common good, sense of community and belongingness, and respect/tolerance towards others.[52]
— Consider the repetitive and ordinary dimensions of tangible/intangible culture as essential to its success while paying careful attention to their special and extraordinary expressions.[53]

Other potential guidelines for a spiritual urbanism may be drawn from current knowledge in environment-behavior research, evidence-based design, evolutionary psychology, as well as successful examples of New Urbanism and Landscape Urbanism. However, these resources need to be carefully considered as they do not usually take into account spiritual concerns. A reasonable course of action would be integrating these knowledge bases with scientific findings in neuroscience, medicine, and other fields regarding spiritual practices.

Another source for insightful clues towards advancing spiritual urbanism could be found in empirical studies of successful religious buildings, landscapes, and other sacred spaces that determine why and how they work.[54] A related and also productive line of inquiry would be translating scientifically validated spiritual teachings into experiential and design qualities of built environments. For example, what kind of spiritually arising behaviors, perceptions, mentations, and relationships are to be encouraged? If, say, we would want to foster a contemplative attitude; a reverence to nature and life; or the promotion of human dignity, empathy, humility, and authenticity, then, the research goal would be to establish built conditions and features that may induce them.

5. Conclusion

In many ways there is nothing new in what is happening today. We have always exploited and polluted our environments, grew population, fought wars, developed technology, built cities, and so on. What is different and worrisome this time is the speed and scale at which our actions are impacting the world and ourselves. At the same time, our dire situation offers opportunities for innovative and transformative architectural and urban work. The reason is simple: since the constructed world has major and constant energetic, economic, environmental, and cultural repercussions in society, a significant positive shift could have huge beneficial impacts. Hence our dilemma

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today is not how to address particular problems, but rather to urbanistically harness this incredible moment to leap forward in human development and thus strike at the causes and effects of our very difficult circumstance. In particularly, as argued, the capacity of the built environment to repeatedly nudge people into certain types of experiential states may help to move a good portion of society into a higher stage of development, ideally of a spiritual kind.

The question is how to begin to move in that direction. In this sense, whereas much can be said about using spiritual values and arguments for directing urban policies and growth toward, for example, meaningfulness, connectedness, conservation/reverence, authenticity, contemplation, transcendence, social equity, or beauty, we must recognize that it is a much better strategy to resort to science to make the case for them. Simply put, empirical data will always have more power than logical or moral arguments in our supermodern civilization. Hence the call for a strategic collaboration between spirituality and urbanism through the judicious use of science. But even then, a balanced (wide and deep) pursuit of spiritual urbanism would still demand interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approaches; systems thinking;[55] an integral philosophy;[56] along a committed, nuanced, and strategic engagement of religion, culture, and the highly qualitative dimension of human life.

The irony should not be lost nonetheless. Ever since the Enlightenment, Western civilization has witnessed the progressive escalation of the struggle between science/reason and religion/faith to occupy the central role in explaining and guiding our relation to the world. While modernity was the clear victor, we now find ourselves humbly returning to religion for meaning and insight to guide our way out of the fallout from science's triumph. If successful, the ensuing 'spiritualization' of our contemporary secular culture will herald a new and more integral way of life that will mitigate, if not avert, an otherwise bleak future.

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30. Lizzie Widdicombe, *"The Higher Life. A mindfulness guru for the tech set"*, in The New Yorker, July 16, 2015.

31. A good discussion of spirituality vis-à-vis religion is offered by two American universities to their students. The University of Minnesota: http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/purpose/spirituality/what-spirituality ; and Georgetown University: http://nccc.georgetown.edu/body_mind_spirit/definitions_spirituality_religion.html (accessed Dec 27, 2015) Other references include: Jane Dyson, Mark Cobb, and Dawn Forman, *"The Meaning of Spirituality: A Literature Review"*, in *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 1997, 26, pp.1183-1188. Ruth Tanyi, *"Toward Clarification of the Meaning of Spirituality"*, in *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 2002, 39(5), pp.500-509.

32. Sigur Bergmann, *Theology in Built Environments*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 2012. William A. Dyrness, *Senses of the Soul. Art and the Visual in Christian Worship*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2008. Gesa Elsbeth Thiessen, *Theological Aesthetics. A Reader*, Eerdmans Publishing, Cambridge, UK, 2004. Alejandro Garcia-Rivera and Thomas Scirghi, *Living Beauty: The Art of Liturgy*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, Lanham, MD, 2008. Kevin Seasoltz, *Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art*, Continuum, New York, 2005.

33. Arguing for some type of evolutionary impact of the built environment in the human species is controversial. However, we do know that environmental adaptation plays a central role in the evolution of all organisms. Since humans are fundamentally cultural beings and have been increasingly dwelling within designed (i.e., symbolic/cultural) contexts, a case could be made that such artificial surroundings may more rapidly affect not only individuals' development but perhaps the human evolutionary path. For a good exposition of this position refer to Harry F. Mallgrave. *"Embodiment and enculturation: the future of architectural design"*, in *Frontiers in Psychology*, 2015, 6(1398), DOI=10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01398.

34. Recently, urban designer Peter Calthorpe used a good computing analogy to clarify this point: *"Culture is the software of cities just as the built environment is its hardware."* Citation in Todd Meyer, *"Exploring Cultural Urbanism"*, in Planning, 2014, April, pp.14-19.

35. Christopher Dawson, *Religion and Culture*, the CUA Press, Washington DC, 2013. Sue Ann Taylor, *"Ritual, Belief, and Meaning in the Production of Sacred Space"*, in Julio Bermudez, *Transcending Architecture*, the CUA Press, Washington, DC, 2015, pp.160-169.

36. According to the UN, a majority of people already lives in cities and their numbers are to increase significantly given the population growth and urbanization in the developing world as well as the cultural trends favoring city-dwelling in the first world. It is expected that nearly 70% of humanity will live in urban centers by 2050 (about 85% in the more developed regions and 64% in the less developed areas). Source: the United Nations' *World Urbanization Prospects, the 2011 Revision*, available at http://esa.un.org/unup/index.html (accessed Dec 26, 2015)

37. Regarding the bias of our discipline towards spiritual matters, see Michael Benedikt, *God, Creativity and Evolution: The Argument*

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from Design(ers), Center for American Architecture and Design, Austin, TX, 2008. Karla Britton, *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred Space*, Yale School of Architecture, New Haven, CT, 2011. Michael Crosbie, *"The Sacred Becomes Profane"*, in T.Barrie, J.Bermudez, and P.Tabb (eds.): *Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality*, Ashgate, New York, 2015. As an expression of this invisible and latent bias, consider the following recent good book covering 'Quality of Life' in urban environment that basically ignores religion and spirituality altogether: Robert Maran and Robert Stimson, *Investigating Quality of Urban Life: Theory, Methods, and Empirical Research,* Springer, New York, 2011.

38. For example: Lewis Munford, *The Culture of Cities*, Hartford Press, New York, 1970. Amos Rapoport, *Human Aspects of Urban Form*, Pergamon Press, Elmsford, NY, 1977.

39. The text of the two conventions is available at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/ and http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention (accessed Dec 27, 2015)

40. See UNRISD/UNESCO, *Towards a World Report on Culture and Development*, Geneva, Switzerland 1997. Terry McKinley, *Cultural Indicators of Development*, UNRISD/UNESCO, Geneva, Switzerland 1997. Prasanta K. Pattanaik *"Cultural indicators of well being: Some Conceptual Issues,* UNRISD/UNESCO, Geneva, Switzerland 1997. For more recent and influential work, refer to the series published by UN-HABITAT: *The State of the World's Cities 2001, State of the World's Cities 2004/2005 – Globalization and Urban Cutlure, and State of the World's Cities 2008/2009 – Harmonious Cities.* All these documents are found online if searched under their names (accessed Dec. 26, 2015)

41. The 'Better Life Index' was developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development – OECD (http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/); the 'Global City Indicators for Culture' produced by the Global Cities Institute --GCI (http://www.cityindicators.org/themes.aspx#Culture); the 'World Values Survey' by the World Values Survey Association (http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org);'A Study on Creativity Index' by the Home Affairs Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, Hong Kong, 2005 (http://www.uis.unesco.org/culture/Documents/Hui.pdf); and the 'Happy Planet Index' by the New Economics Foundation (http://www.happyplanetindex.org). For initiatives measuring cultural phenomena and adopted by a large number of cities, refer to committee on culture of the world association of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), *Agenda 21 for Culture*, (http://www.agenda21culture.net/index.php/documents/agenda-21-for-culture) For further references on cultural indicators: Maria Rosario Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquín Herranz, *Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators*, The Urban Institute, Washington DC, 2006. Marnie Badham, *"Cultural Indicators: Tools for Community Engagement?"*, in *The Int'l Journal of the Arts in Society*, 2009, 3(5), pp.67-75. (All websites accessed on Dec 26, 2015.

42. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), *State of the World's Cities 2012/2013 Prosperity of Cities*, Nairobi, Kenya, 2012 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/745habitat.pdf (accessed Dec 27, 2015)

43. Most of these indexes have very pragmatic goals such as gauging how culture affects urban economical productivity or social, environmental, and political development. At least one has been adopted by the general UN assembly: the *Human Development Index*, and produced by the Human Development Report Office --HDRO of the UN Development Programme (http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi) (accessed Dec 26, 2015)

44. For instance, see Meyer, *"Exploring Cultural Urbanism"*. Manuel Guardia and Javier Monclús, *Culture, Urbanism and Planning,* Ashgate, UK, 2012. Malcolm Miles, *Cities and Cultures.* Routledge, New York, 2007. Collin Mercer, *"Cultural Planning for Urban Development and Creative Cities"*, 2006, http://burgosciudad21.org/adftp/Shanghai_cultural_planning_paper.pdf (accessed Dec 30, 2015)

45. Thirty-seventh World Health Assembly, Resolution WHA37.13. Geneva: World Health Organization; 1984. See also the general report on the issues discussed in the meeting to develop a World Health Organization Quality Of Life (WHOQOL) module on spirituality, religiousness and personal beliefs, held in Geneva on June 22-24, 1998, available at http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/70897/1/WHO_MSA_MHP_98.2_eng.pdf (accessed Dec 27, 2015)

46. World Health Organization, *WHOQOL and Spirituality, Religiousness and Personal Beliefs Field-Test Instrument*, 1998. Available at: http://www.who.int/mental_health/media/en/622.pdf (accessed Dec 27, 2015). The presentation and discussion of its result is published in: WHOQOL SRPB Group, *"A cross-cultural study of spirituality, religion, and personal beliefs as components of quality of life"*, in Soc Sci Med., 2006, 62(6), pp.1486-1497.

47. For example see: Komatra Chuengsatiansup, *"Spirituality and health: an initial proposal to incorporate spiritual health in health impact assessment"*, in *Environmental Impact Assessment Review,* 2003, 23(1), pp.3–15

48. Urbanist Joel Kotkin says that there were three fundamental functions that cities historically fulfilled: (1) providing security, (2) allowing commerce, and (3) creating sacred space. Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History*, Modern Library, New York, 2006

49. Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City*, p.201

50. Maged Senbel, *"From Bioregional to Reverential Urbanism"*, in Julio Bermudez, *Transcending Architecture*, the CUA Press, Washington, DC, 2015, pp.63-73

51. Sheldrake, *The Spiritual City.*

52. Most faiths acknowledge that our god-given potential is continuously undermined by our many human weaknesses that we try to ignore or avoid. The city offers us the best chances for spiritual growth precisely because it constantly presents us with the "other" and in so doing invites us to discover and transcend our limited perspective, behaviors, strengths, and more.

53. This dialectics between urban 'background' (everyday or habitual) and 'monuments' (unique and symbolic) was considered by the Krier brothers in the late 1970s and 80s and based on their investigation of Western historical urbanism. See Leon Krier and Richard Economakis, *Leon Krier: Architecture & Urban Design 1967-1992*, Academy Editions, London, UK, 1992. Rob Krier, *Urban Space*, Academy Editions, London, UK, 1979.

54. A good example of this type of research is Julio Bermudez, David Krizaj, David Lipschitz, Debborah Yurgelun-Todd, and Yoshio Nakamura, *"fMRI Study of Architecturally-Induced Contemplative States"*, in *Abstracts of the 2014 ANFA Conference*, Academy of Neuroscience For Architecture, La Jolla, CA, 2014, pp.18-19. URL: https://www.academia.edu/10346400/fMRI_Study_of_Architecturally-Induced_Contemplative_States_ABSTRACT_ (accessed Dec 28, 2015)

55. A good example of the necessary type of systems thinking is made clear in Donald Foley's systems matrix. Refer to Donald Foley, "An Approach to Metropolitan Spatial Structure." In M.M. Webber et al: *Explorations into Urban Structure*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1964.

56. Ken Wilber, *Integral Spirituality*. See also his *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality*, Shambhala, Boston, 2011