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Philosophical Urbanism and the Predilections of Urban Design

Abraham Akkerman

Department of Geography & Planning, and Department of Philosophy
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK
Canada

1. Introduction

The scholarly thrust of urban planning is its use of, as well as its contribution to, social science. As a discipline bordering with civil engineering, furthermore, urban planning has always carried also an important cross-disciplinary message beyond social science. Yet the association of urban planning with *humanistic* disciplines and the fine arts has been undervalued or ignored altogether. At a time when the vast majority of humanity resides in cities, however, this association is implicit in the primary purpose of urban planning, as a constituent of contemporary social, scientific and technological progress, aimed at the advancement of both society as well as the individual human being.

Epitomizing the bond of urban planning with humanistic concerns and the liberal arts is urban design, sometimes considered a sub-discipline of urban planning, at other times viewed as an extension of architecture or landscape architecture. Also due to the long history of built form, urban design has a tradition of thousands of years. Whereas urban planning usually traces its origins to the nineteenth century, the deliberate design of built urban form goes millennia back, to Çatalhöyük, Mohenjo daro and Jericho.

The purpose of the present chapter is to explore urban design from the perspective of two of its historical, albeit overlooked, aspects: philosophy and psychoanalysis. Focusing on the historical perspective of urban design the present chapter aims precisely upon these two aspects as presently missing links. Philosophical concerns and psychoanalytic backdrop that throughout history have been instrumental in the built urban form have been largely ignored in discussions surrounding urban design. Yet urban design, and by extension, urban planning in general, ought to consider these two missing links in the construction and understanding of our built environments not only as historically significant, but also as guiding considerations in the planning and design of human habitat in the third millennium.

Some recent reflections upon the built environment have related urban design with what has been termed by Friedrich Nietzsche as the Dionysian and Apollonian dispositions of the arts, and with the philosophical urbanism of Walter Benjamin. The present chapter will explore the nature of this linkage suggesting a psychoanalytic discourse related to foundational gender aspects in the process of urban design. In the contemporary milieu of

urban society, policy and politics, such a discourse has its own significance if only for its implications upon gender representation in the built environment.

Much of the discussion on gender in urban design had focused on operational significance and the underlying social, economic and political reasons for the historical lack of fair consideration of gender in the built environment. The gender discourse in urban design, however, has been lacking a fundamental, philosophical insight that would serve as a self-reflection for the designers themselves, rather than a mere operational guidance for the design process and its objectives, as has been the case so far.

The present chapter addresses the notion of philosophical urbanism as cognizance of a spatio-temporal progression whereby city-form and the mind are intensely intertwined. Philosophical urbanism focuses on this progression as a historical interaction projecting gender features upon the built environment, and in return, absorbing features of the existing built environment into mind's own thought-processes, of which urban design is only one facet. The recognition of gender-based myths is paramount in this context. Two such myths have been shaping the history of ideas as well as evolutionary change in city-form. The myths of the *garden* and the *citadel* are the intertwined agents of cerebral progression of minds and the transformation of built environments in a spatio-temporal interaction process that had commenced in prehistoric times and is still ongoing over our very own geographic space. It was during the early Greek antiquity that the myth of the garden had transformed into the Dionysian deity, and the myth of the citadel into representations of the god Apollo. While the feminine *garden* and the Dionysian have always represented nature, the masculine *citadel* and the Apollonian have been transmuting onto the myth of the ideal city. But whereas city-form has evolved mainly due to the myth of the ideal city, over historical times the myth of the garden has become subdued. Gradually throughout history of the built environment the myth of the garden has been replaced by the allegory of the Grand Designer as a companion myth to the ideal city.

Environmental allegories are universal imprints of the mind, and urban planners and designers ought to recognize the significance of such allegories and myths within their own consciousness as it projects itself upon the environments they plan and design on behalf of others. The underrepresentation of the garden myth in contemporary urban environments, in particular, is critical. In the spatio-cerebral amalgam, the mind-city composite, and in present-day urban civilization, the garden allegory ought to constitute a vital component. The functional aspect of recognizing the significance of the garden myth is not so much in the promotion of urban gardens and green spaces, but mainly in the endorsement of serendipity and surprise through safe walking opportunities in the city. At the profound level of self-reflection, not only designers but urban planners too may recognize their own place in the historical feedback between mind and city-form.

2. Origins of urban design and the human form

During the late Renaissance, inspired by the work of the Roman Marcus Vitruvius Polio, *De Architectura*, Leonardo da Vinci penciled a well-known male figure circumscribed by a square and a circle. Leonardo's drawing of the Vitruvian Man, itself a source of later inspiration in the fine arts, depicted proportions in the human body as a guide to both applied and aesthetic appeal in human-made artifacts. It is very likely that the impetus to

Leonardo's drawing was the discussion of human proportions by Leon Battista Alberti in his handbook on sculpture, *De statua*, published in mid-fifteenth century.[1] It is also of more than passing notice that Alberti's short treatise appears as well to have inspired the Tuscan painter and engineer Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1439 – 1501) who in his own treatise, *Trattati di architettura, ingegneria e arte militare*, showed the physical form of a human body as a standard for the optimal layout of an ideal city.

The Canadian art historian, Domenico Laurenza, has suggested that di Giorgio Martini and Leonardo had met in the late fifteenth century in northern Italy, where they would have also likely discussed the Vitruvian Man. The meeting with Leonardo took place at least several years following the publication of Francesco's treatise where his drawing, in Figure 1, appeared. [2] To whomever of the two Renaissance artists the antecedence in the Vitruvian-inspired drawing of a man is claimed, there could be little doubt that Francesco had been the first to advance an allegory of likeness between ideal urban features and the human body.

Resident at Florence, Francesco would have been familiar with, and very likely influenced by, the Florentine academy, led at the time by Marsilio Ficino (1433 – 1499). It would have been through adherence to the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the Florentine academy that Francesco's anthropomorphous city-form appears to have been also an alteration of the very first western concept of the ideal city – one by Plato in the 4th century BCE. In his ten volume philosophical treatise, *The Republic*,[3] Plato had detailed the social structure of his ideal city through an analogy with the makeup of the human soul. Plato had used the city-soul correspondence to advance his own vision of social stratification within the ideal city, but had said relatively little about the ideal city's physical structure. By extending Plato's city-soul analogy onto a city-*body* analogy Francesco, presaging Leonardo's pictorial notion of human body's outline corresponding to the circle and the square, had addressed the gap left by Plato:

> *I will describe the various parts of city areas and how they have the same structure and form as the human body. First, thinking of a human body stretched out on the ground, I will place a thread on the navel, and pull it in a circular motion around that body. Similarly, squared and angled the design shall be. Moreover, just as the body has all its parts and limbs with perfect measure and size, the same should be noted of those cities [4]*

In Francesco´s urban planning proposal, and certainly in Plato´s own philosophical doctrine, the Ideal City notion instills flair of universality to the fusion of minds with their built environment. Plato saw his ideal city both as a mirror of the human soul, as well as an impression of a cosmic prototype of the city found in heaven.[5] The fabled view that the city should reflect cosmic qualities was further developed by the Stoics who, a century later, extended Plato's view by conferring an organic character to the cosmic notion of the city. In the Stoic myth, advanced by Zeno of Citium (334 - 262 BCE) and Chrysippus of Soli (280 - 207 BCE), cosmopolis – the universe as a city – had been likened to an immense animal: The sun as its soul, the stars as godly creatures. [6]

The view that the terrestrial ideal community ought to mirror the cosmopolis was inherent in the teachings of the Stoic Cleanthes (c. 331-232 BCE), Zeno's successor.[7] Cleanthes furthered the myth depicting cosmos as a vast, rational animal, into an elaborate scheme where *pneuma* (fire or soul), which accounts for the structure of the universe and for the

destiny of individual things, resides in the sun. This fabled view sees a measure of *pneuma* in each thing on earth, and the highest measure of it in humans. Creatures which most closely approximate the entirety of the universe, are rational life-forms – humans and gods, the latter being stars in heaven. [8]
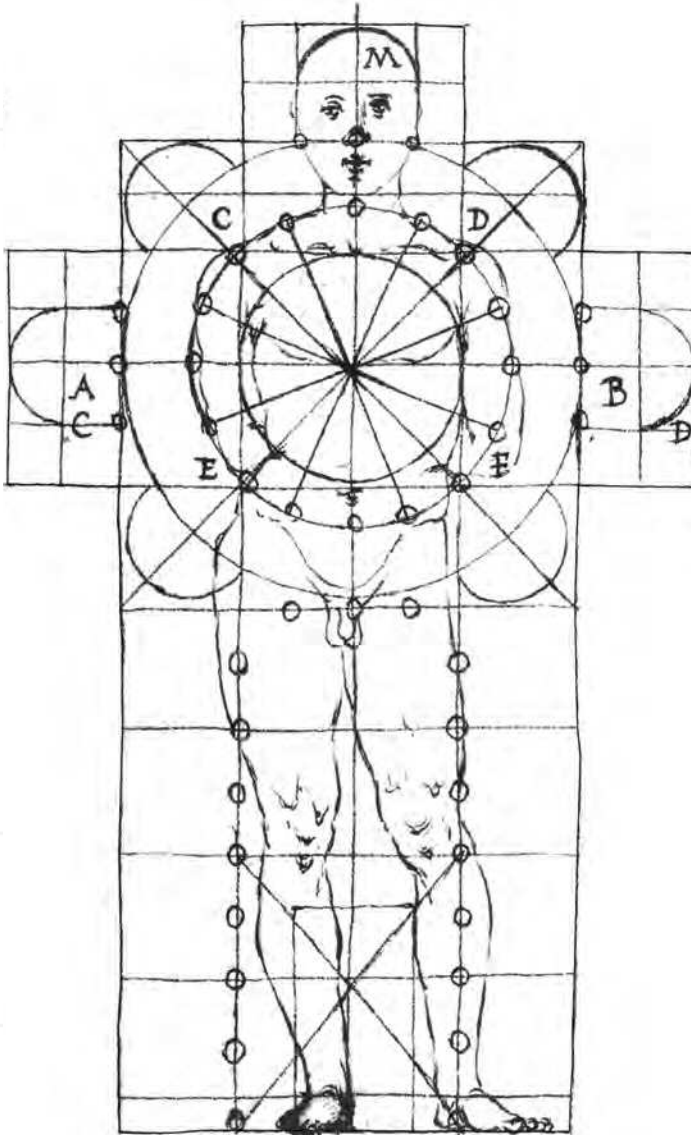

Fig. 1. Outline of an Ideal City. Francesco di Giorgio Martini (1482), *Trattati di architettura, ingegneria e arte militare*, Tomo I, Tomo II, transcrizione di Livia Maltese Degrassi (Milan: Ed. Il Polifilo, 1967).
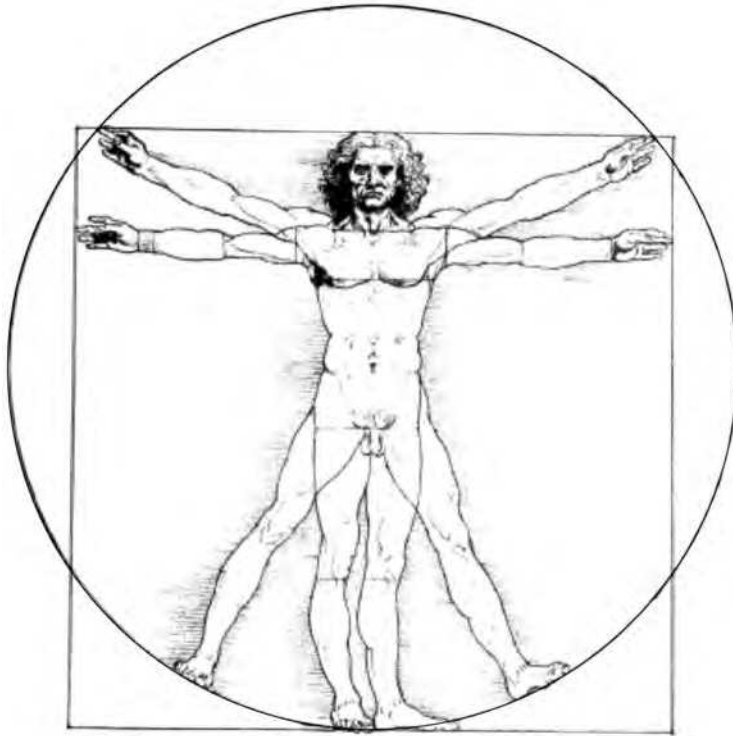
Fig. 2. The Vitruvian Man. Leonardo da Vinci (1490), "Vitruvian Man," pen, ink, and watercolour over metalpoint, 334x245mm (Venice, Italy: Gallerie dell'Accademia).

The organic penchant of the illusory cosmopolis may have seeped into Stoicism from a much earlier, Sumerian marriage myth of the Sky Father and the Earthmother. Both myths, it has been pointed out, are fundamental to the allegory of *hieros gamos*, central in Carl Jung's interpretation of the terminology of alchemy. [9] Francesco's urban concept, thus, seems to have embraced two mythical traditions of the ideal city: The one Platonic, in which he pictures the ideal city in an anthropomorphic analogy; the other, Sumerian-Stoic, in which the ideal city reflects an organic perfection of the cosmos itself.

3. The mind-city composite

The city-form of Siena, where Francesco was born and raised may have been conducive to his notion of an ideal city as a mechanistic analog to the human body. Said to exhibit to this day "planned organicism" [10] Siena, in spite of having been overtaken by neighboring Florence in 1484, had successfully and consistently retained urban features quite different from those of Florence. Striking among them, still today, is the absence of urban foliage in Siena, on the backdrop of the city's centuries-long close relationship with its agricultural hinterland. Siena's curved streets from the time of the Romanesque through to early Renaissance appear to extend the randomness of surrounding nature onto the built environment of the city. Siena's physical features, therefore, seem to have been instrumental

in Francesco's own organic outlook of his ideal city, where ongoing interaction between the built environment (that of Siena) and an early concept (the Platonic and Stoic myths of ideal communities) evidently yield a new concept (Francesco's city-body analogy), which ultimately translates into a new urban landscape (or Francesco's proposal for one).

A feedback sequence pattern between city-form and thought, one that the example of Francesco's project seems to imply, has been alluded to throughout the twentieth century, but never pursued to the full extent. The immediate origin to inquiry on the mind-city interaction can be traced to Marcel Poëte[11] and Walter Benjamin [12] in the first half of the twentieth century, and such inquiry has been recently labelled, *philosophical urbanism*.

Poëte put forward the conjecture that the history of each city is reflected in its layout and projected upon its city-form. On this view, differences in current layouts between cities were said to inherently indicate their different histories, the innate memory of an early settlement being imprinted in its urban descendant centuries later. In a blend of mysticism and philosophy Poëte has been seen to bestow the flair of a living organism upon the city, implying a single hybrid of city-form and the minds within it. [13]

Similarly, but drawing on Carl Jung's notion of the collective subconscious, Benjamin observes "elements of ur-history" wedded in an epochal feedback pattern, producing in their contact with contemporaneous urban environment a newly shared ideal, or common elements in the visioning of a utopia. The shared elements of a community's image of a utopia stamp their mark upon contemporaneous configuration of urban objects, "from permanent buildings to ephemeral fashions." [14]

Arguably, the notion of a mind-city composite could be detected already in Plato's city-soul analogy, where the ideal city, as the Form of a city, is a universal paradigm shared by all mankind.[15] The broader context of inquiry could be seen reaching to the cultural geography of Carl O. Sauer in the first half of the twentieth century and to the psychosocial context of place offered recently by Charles Withers.

In "The Morphology of Landscape," Carl Sauer[16] advanced the notion of a cultural landscape as the imposition of culture upon nature. Culture, as defined by the shared myths, beliefs and behavioral standards, manifests itself in a cultural landscape, *i.e.*, in human intervention upon natural landscape. The urban landscape of Francesco's Siena, as an example of a cultural landscape, illustrates Sauer's insight on the ongoing feedback: human impact upon physical landscape yields a return sway in the reverse direction. Landscapes modified by human action, an aspect of culture, impact culture itself, whereby the feedback interaction between culture and landscape as a progression in time defines much of the history of civilization. Francesco's urban contemplation shows, as a case in point, how urban landscape feeds back onto Francesco's mind. Francesco's urban contemplations, then, are only a link in a feedback chain. On this view the mind-city composite is a spatiotemporal construct of which an urban landscape at a point in time is only a single "snapshot" instance of a cultural landscape.

On the other hand, too, philosophical urbanism comes to complement the contextualization of place as recently articulated by Charles Withers,[17] particularly in the foundational sense of location. To Withers the importance of place is within the context of two questions emanating from both myth and religion: *Who am I?* and, *How have I come to be?* The cornerstone of philosophical urbanism, both as a theoretical concept as well as an urban

design issue, is addressed within the context of the question, *Where am I?* Withers posits his two questions as being of fundamental significance in the understanding of scientific revolutions, and in the interpretation of cultural change. The recognition that place is, in essence, an evolutionary-subjective entry in geographic space, rather than a posted static-objective structure, is at the heart of the dynamic interaction that emerges with the notion of the mind-city composite.

The notion of *urban* place as evolving through subjective experience is evoked by Michel de Certeau in his 1980 essay, "Walking in the City." An individual's memory forges a subjective urban milieu and transforms urban space into a mythical text.[18] De Certeau views streets as words, both of which involve "hollow places in which a past sleeps." Streets to him are non-verbal allegories which call upon our memory. Only through walking, the one mode of travel almost entirely overlooked by 20th century urban design and planning, can we, according to de Certeau, preserve the communal memory of urban places, thus conferring meaning to them and the streetscape enveloping them. This view has been echoed more recently by Rebecca Solnit.[19]

De Certeau's essay reiterates account given by the philosopher Henri Bergson some 60 years earlier. In his *Introduction to Metaphysics* Bergson gives an example of a continuum flow of human experience contrasted against discrete snapshots of the same experience.[20] The example Bergson chooses is a walk through a city, and the contrasting comparison is between the continuum of the experience of walking through a city against a series of separate photographs along the same walking route. The additional useful comparison Bergson had made was to match his city example with another example – the reading of a Homeric poem. The wholesome experience of the poem, contrasted with detached lines from it, is the analogy Bergson offers to his earlier example of a city walk against a series of discontinuous observations of the city.

4. The rise of environmental myths

The Bergsonian insight emerges from the Beaux-Arts architecture and urban design of the turn of the twentieth century, and the ensuing philosophical urbanism ought to be seen as rooted in the Europe of that time. Prominent within this context is Le Corbusier's urban scheme, The Radiant City (*Ville radieuse*). Joint with his cousin, Pierre Jeanneret, the 1931 project[21] is striking in its blueprint of zoning in parallel bands, from offices at the top end of the drawing, through housing in the centre, to industry at the bottom. In the words of Kenneth Frampton, the plan of the Radiant City is nothing but "a humanist, anthropomorphic metaphor […] inserted into this model".[22] The resemblance to the allegoric project of Francesco's ideal city five centuries earlier is unambiguous. Permeating through the blueprint of Le Corbusier's Radiant City is an outline of a masculine super-creature, his entire plan thus standing for an anthropomorphic metaphor recalling the Platonic myth of the demiurge.

A mechanistic myth is evidently also behind the Modulor, Le Corbusier's own version of the Vitruvian Man, showing proportions within the human body as corresponding to the Golden Section ratio in two different series of anthropometric ratios. Both series, referred to as the Blue and the Red, constitute the guideline for Le Corbusier's design of furniture and urban dwellings.
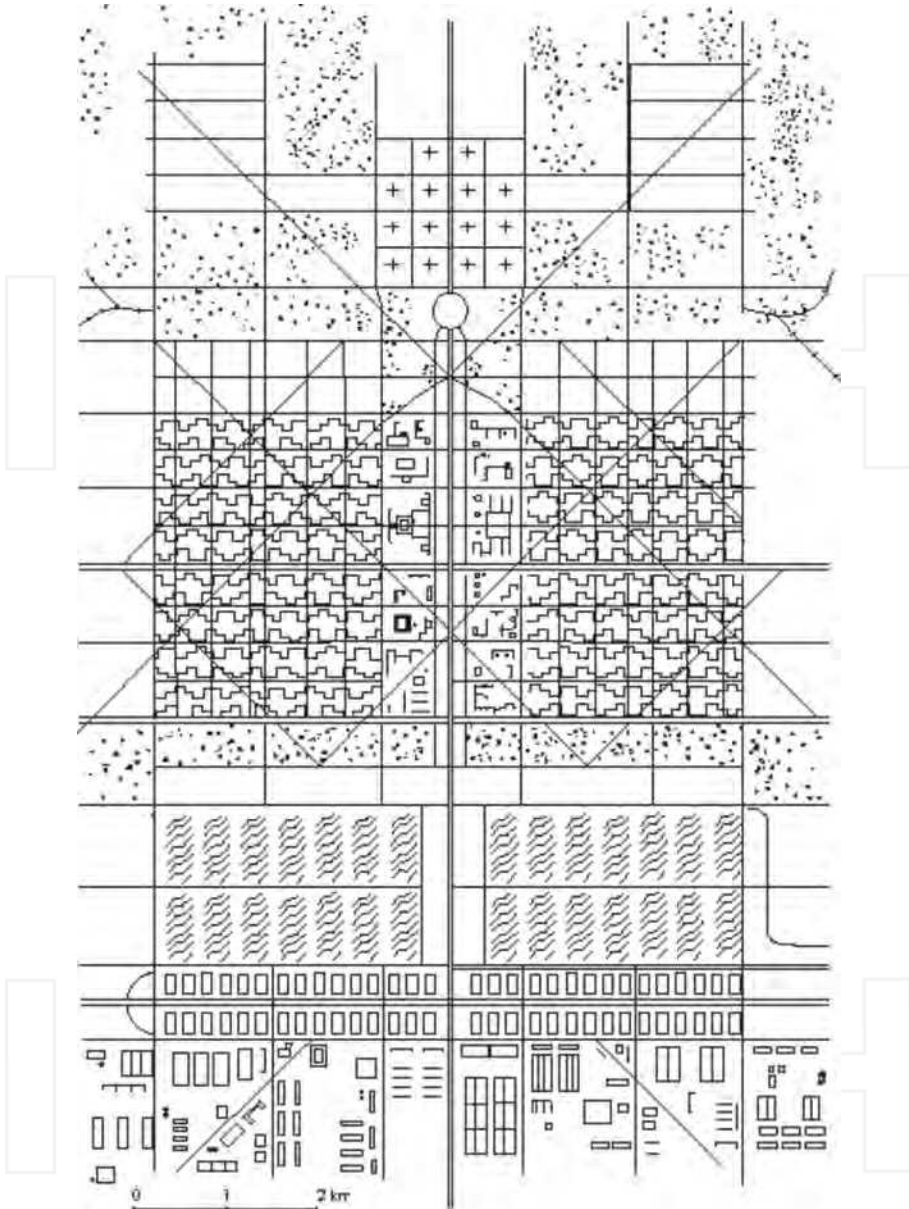
Fig. 3. *Ville radieuse*, an ideal city plan, showing offices at top, housing at middle, and industry at bottom. Le Corbusier (Charles Edouard Jeanneret) and Pierre Jeanneret (1933), *The Radiant City*, translated from the French by Pamela Knight (New York: Orion Press, 1967).

A symbiotic fusion of human minds and city-form, mutating through historic time and geographic space, the mind-city composite, as a pre-rational, spatio-temporal hybrid, gives

rise to the notion of the ideal city.[23] This evolutionary outlook is premised upon the standpoint that the human mind possesses a prehistoric environmental imprint traceable to the Earthmother, a primordial feminine paradigm that Jung had identified in the 20th century. [24] On this view, *two* geographical and gender-related myths arose from the Earthmother. The feminine myth of the garden had evolved from the nurture-giving Earthmother symbolizing the female gatherers of fruits and vegetables. Contrasted with the comfort and nourishment of the Earthmother, the menace of nature's ever changing fortunes as well as male-made violence gave rise to the masculine myth of the citadel.[25] Through actual construction of citadels as man-made shelters and sanctuaries, both the myth and the stature of the citadel came to feed upon each other in an ongoing environ/*mental* progression.
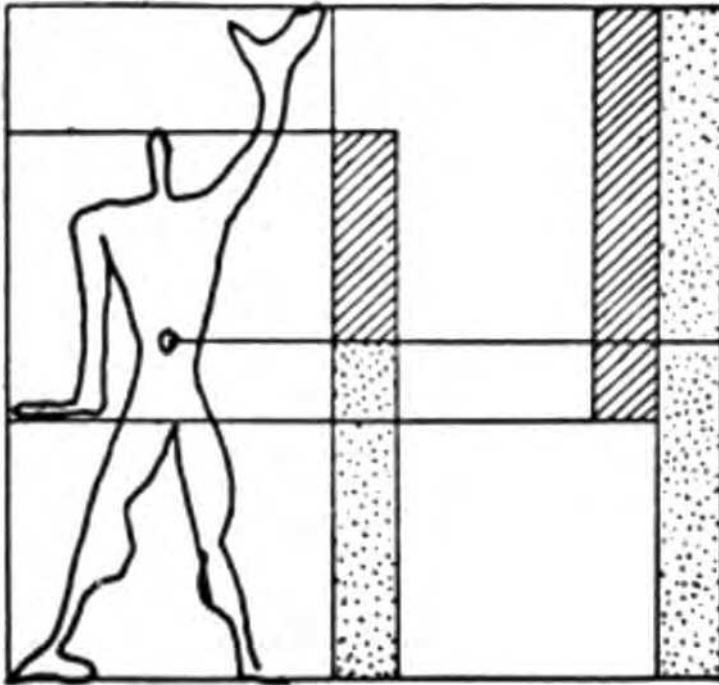

Fig. 4. Le Corbusier's Modulor (reproduction).

For the early man the source to the idea of construction, the creation of shelter in particular, was twofold. On the one hand, the flight for survival from the existential threat of scorching heat or violent storms, came to be attributed to the varying temper of the sky. On the other hand, equanimity and the feeling of safety had emerged from the observation of fixed stellar configurations in the sky, detectable through calm, clear nights. Emerging over millennia, verifiable observational tradition of the nightly sky inspired the notion of a conscious building scheme in early man. The observation of the pole star and its envisioning as a pivot round which sky vault revolves each calm night, or upon which the universe had been built, became the perceptual origin as well as inspiration to the idea of a plan and judicious construction.

Fig. 5. Apollo – the Greek god who personified masculinity, city-walls and colonies, prophecy, music, light, medicine and hunting.

Evidence to the link between the universe so envisaged and the myth of the ideal city can be thus sought in the pole star. While the emergence of early modern humans, some 120,000 years ago is believed to have originated in southern Africa between the Equator and the Tropic of Capricorn[26] the vast majority of urban civilizations had evolved in the northern hemisphere. As against the sky of the southern hemisphere a unique feature of the northern sky is that during the 26,000-year period of the precession of the equinoxes, northern direction of the earth axis points virtually continually to a pole star, a clear orientation beacon to migrating humans. The southern celestial pole, on the other hand, is almost never marked by a bright star, and when bright stars of the southern hemisphere, Canopus (Alpha Carinae) and Achernar (Alpha Eridani), come close to the southern pole (within about 10° c. 12000 BCE, and 8° c. 4000 BCE, respectively) they appear so close to the gleaming Milky Way of the southern hemisphere that their brightness contrast is lost to the naked eye.[27]

Northward street orientation has been ingrained in urban environments throughout history. The first sign of systematic urban design is an orthogonal grid plan of street blocks evidenced in the Indus Valley civilization of the third millennium BCE. At Mohenjo-daro, c.

2600 BCE, twelve orthogonal city blocks, each measuring 1200 x 800 feet were formed by three 30-foot wide avenues, forming a north-south axis, and two streets crossing them at right angles.[28] The careful observance of cardinal directions at Mohenjo-daro is evidenced in other early cities as well.

Excavations of cities as ancient as Jericho (9000 BCE) or Çatalhöyük (7500 BCE), seem to reinforce the notion that since the Mesolithic in the Near East humans have projected the myths of the garden and the citadel, or the ideal city, upon their environments, thus accelerating their own cerebral development. The built environment, along with much of the rest of material culture, has attained corresponding feminine and masculine facets. Ongoing attempts to ensure protection as well as strife towards envisaged perfection in newly built environments fed back onto the myths of the garden and the citadel with new observations and contemplations. Evolving into antiquity, during Greek classicism gender facets of myth and material culture came to be expressed, in Nietzsche's coinage, in the Dionysian and Apollonian dispositions of the arts.[29]

Fig. 6. Dionysus – the Greek god of fertility, wine and ecstasy.

5. The ideal city and the Grand Designer

With capricious skies overhead, and unpredictable nature at his surroundings, the prehistoric man's plight for survival was contrasted with the permanency of a pole star as cornerstone and axle of the nightly sky vault. Emerging from this contrast was the myth of the Sky Father. Through the Platonic myth of the demiurge and the Stoic allegory of the cosmopolis, almost two millennia before Francesco and Leonardo, the Sky Father had transmuted into a parable of the Grand Designer, an anthropomorphic creature of a cosmic scale.

In *De Opificio Mundi* (*On the Creation of the World*), written about the year 30 CE, Philo Judaeus (20 BCE – 50 CE) had reiterated a contention that came to be known as the Argument from Design, the professed proof for the existence of God. In his attestation Philo uses a line of reasoning that historically traces to Cicero's *De natura deorum* [30] and that came

to be known in modern age as the evidence for "intelligent design" of the universe.[31] In his statement Philo says:

> *(VI) … It is manifest also, that the archetypal seal, which we call that world which is perceptible only to the intellect, must itself be the archetypal model, the idea of ideas, the Logos of God, already occupied in the creation of the world; for neither is a city, while only perceptible to the intellect, anything else but the reason of the architect, who is already designing to build one perceptible to the external senses, on the model of that which is so only to the intellect. [32]*

On Philo's view the cosmos can be compared to a perfect urban design of an architect, and God is seen as the cosmoplast, a Grand Designer much in the image of the Platonic demiurge.

Leaving aside criticisms against the Argument from Design, notably those of David Hume [33] and Immanuel Kant [34] the Argument itself has a psychoanalytic aspect. The question as to whether or not the Argument from Design is a valid proof becomes secondary in significance, once a terrestrial craftsman is put forward as an analog to deity. The idea of God, as the designer of the universe, compared by a human being to the image of self or of another human being, is, arguably, a subliminal expression of an individual's megalomania.

Fig. 7. Statue of Alexander at 'The Mount Athos Colossus' in Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach, *Entwurf einer historischer Architektur* (*Sketch of Historical Architecture*), (Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek - Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, 1721).

It is edifying that Philo, himself known for humility and modesty, was hounded by persecution of the Jewish community of Alexandria, a city founded some 400 years earlier on a plan by Dinocrates of Rhodes, to serve the grandeur of Alexander the Great and his stature as divinity. Intended as a showpiece of Alexander's power, the meticulously planned

metropolis was built instead of a hallucinatory proposal for gargantuan statue of Alexander that was to be sculpted in the flank of Mount Athos in northern Greece. According to Vitruvius, in Book II of his *Ten Books of Architecture*, Dinocrates bragged to Alexander that he had prepared a colossal design for Alexander's statue in whose left hand a most "spacious city" were to be fashioned. [35] It was also in Egypt where the oracle of Amun, the King of gods, declared Alexander as the new Master of the Universe.[36] Such particular settings from which Philo's version of the Argument from Design had emerged show the allegory of the Grand Designer as a veiled response, and place it as a companion myth to that of the ideal city.

The two myths, the ideal city and the Grand Designer, have been two evolutionary forces that have molded city-form – the configuration of spaces, edifices and infrastructure. City-form throughout the history of civilization, could be thus seen more an expression of an ongoing projection of allegories rather than the strict product of reason.[37] The lineage of mutual feedback between the myths of the ideal city and the Grand Designer ought to be seen, therefore, as genealogy of the mind-city composite reflected in the history of city form and in the history of ideas.

The myths of the ideal city and the Grand Designer have been essential in cerebral progression of humans, and in the evolution of city-form, to this very day. In the history of built environments intervention by a sovereign or by a community's representative, have pointed to aspiration for an ideal city, while the mythical image of the ideal city has undergone adaptation following the actual change in the built environment. This ongoing process has continually molded the myths of the ideal city and the Grand Designer, much as it has also continually transformed city-form.

There could be little doubt that Francesco, as well as, modern architects or planners such as Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, George-Eugène Haussmann, Robert Moses, Frank Lloyd Wright, or Le Corbusier, saw their own projects as urban ideals by a grand designer.[38] Architects or planners bending over their three-dimensional urban models, of course, do not necessarily point to a subliminal version of the Dinocratic delusion at Mt. Athos. But self-image and ostentation of the designer frequently elucidate the background of such projects from past times. It is for this reason too that superficial attempts in more contemporary urban design to counter mechanization and monumentalism by imitating medieval city-form have met with dismissal. Frampton has gone as far as dismissing New Urbanism as megalomaniac.[39] Impact of the existing city-form upon the forging of the myths of the ideal city and the Grand Designer, and the return feedback of the two myths upon the design of urban landscapes defines philosophical urbanism as a meeting point of philosophy, psychology and urban design.

6. The *garden* as a missing preconception in urban design

Uncovered by Jung as archetypes of femininity and masculinity, Anima and Animus are each inherent in the gender of its counterpart: All men carry a subconscious feminine component within their persona, and all females similarly carry a subconscious masculine ingredient.[40] Jung's finding had followed on the heels of Friedrich Nietzsche's classification of Greek art as having Dionysian, feminine, or Apollonian, masculine, attributes [41] The myths of the garden and the citadel can be viewed, in fact, as precursors of Dionysian and Apollonian dispositions not only in the arts, but as ecompassing much material culture. Inevitably, the suggestion that edifices and open spaces, intertwined within a city, represent

masculine and feminine urban features is a reasoned extension. Furthermore, a grid, or any other predictable pattern of streets implies measurability or masculine imposition upon open space, while a labyrinthine street pattern paraphrases nature's surroundings of the city, implying retention of the city's feminine trait.

It was the practical and the mythical that had conjoined as a gender projection in ideal city-form from antiquity through to the pre-industrial age. Throughout urban history compass directions and grid layout of streets have addressed the need for navigation, for protection from sun or wind, or for other thermal comfort, and for measurement of land in ownership, all consistent with the desire for the geometrically regimented urban ideal mirroring the perfection of the cosmos. But countering such universalist intentions was topography, lack of advanced technology, incremental intervention by property owners, and deliberate curvature of streets against armed intruders. Throughout the ages these two opposing forces behind the construction of cities cast the ancient and medieval city-form into a fascinating maze of lanes and open spaces. The desire for regimentation and predictability in streetscapes of the ideal city simply gave way to joint dynamic impact of myriad mundane small changes continually occurring over centuries in cities and towns, such as Siena.

The myth of the ideal city can be thus viewed as emerging from the *citadel* in an interplay with the myth of the Grand Designer, the latter having evolved from Jung's archetype of the wise old man, possibly through end of the Neolithic.[42] The myth of the citadel, progressing into the ideal city sometime during the late Bronze or early Iron Ages across the Fertile Crescent and the Indus Valley, had remained the prime constituent in the organization, growth, development and defence of human communities throughout the ages. This is how primal city-form had arisen during the late Bronze Age and early antiquity. Giambattista Vico's contention that the myth of the citadel arose through the outlook of warfare [43] further illuminates masculine features in city-form throughout history. The consolidation of masculinity in city-form in the west appears to have, indeed, continued intact from antiquity through to the post-industrial age and modernity.

It was the archetype of the Earthmother that gave rise to later allegories of the garden and the citadel. Whereas the masculine *citadel*, the initial consort of the *garden*, had evolved into the ideal city to become the driving force in the history of urban design, the feminine myth of the garden had turned sometime in the late prehistory into a secondary premise, and has become increasingly and gradually subdued ever since. By late Renaissance the myth of the garden had been all but ousted from city-form by the *citadel*'s emerging escort, the Grand Designer, a latter day version of the Sky Father and the archetype of the wise old man. Throughout much of history city-form has been thus moulded by visions of the Ideal City and the acumen of the Grand Designer. Through the two myths, both interacting and continually transmuting into new allegoric imprints, city-form, has been subject to corresponding historic transformations. Architectural and streetscape styles, historic or current, are therefore best looked upon as facets of the mind-city composite, rather than being simply viewed as observable features of an objective, physical reality of edifices, spaces and infrastructure. [44]

Epitomizing the garden allegory, green spaces within cities until early modernity have usually not been within the public domain. Since antiquity there has been only a sporadic record of *public* gardens, parks or green commons within cities. During the French

revolution the royal Garden of the Tuileries was opened to the public, after the mob stormed it in 1792. In Britain successful park design in early 19th century's London by the architect John Nash, preserving nature within the city, may have inspired Patrick Geddes into becoming one of the most influential urban thinkers for whom natural wilderness was a key ingredient of the urban environment.[45] But in spite of the recognition Geddes has received in the annals of modern urban planning, the allegoric *garden*, as a public space, has continued to be only a secondary component in modern urban design. Best exemplified by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City concept from the turn of the 20th century, this ideal city was a forerunner of the North-American suburb intended to provide acceptable living conditions to the English working class.[46] But the brilliantly simple idea to inject nature into a small-size city almost immediately became a commercial success, and the two garden cities in England, Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth, had become exclusionary pieces of real estate space sought out by anyone but the working class.[47]

In contemporary city urban green spaces designed or designated for public use have usually fulfilled attendant function to the mechanized and automated city-form.[48] Even in cities where deliberately carved green spaces constitute their centre-piece, such as New York's Central Park, Vancouver's Stanley Park or Sydney's Botanical Gardens, safety and security concerns deem them anything but 'open.' The Apollonian overrun the Dionysian, Nietzsche might have said of twentieth century's city form.

And yet, even as a subdued and discarded parable, unassumingly throughout history, inefficiently and submissively, the Dionysian myth of the garden has been perched, as if in a slumber, against the Apollonian myths of the ideal city and the Grand Designer. As a spontaneous, authentic trait the *garden* could hardly be sought out in urban spaces purposely devised and assigned, but as spatial allegory the garden has never been entirely expunged from city-form; not even from the contemporary city. In fact, irrationality, spontaneity and authenticity, ought to be seen as fundamental ingredients of the *garden*, and they emerge in forsaken and overlooked places in every city still today.

Furthermore, it is not due to a defined space that the *garden* in the city endures, but rather due to *time* that is unstructured, immeasurable and entirely subjective, void of clock or calendar, marked by accidental events and sporadic surprise in urban spaces of abandon. It is, in truth, precisely this irrational aspect of city-form that is being assailed to be expunged from planned, "rational" city-form still today. Spontaneously emerging small urban spaces, neglected by planners, have become places of abandon throughout cities, while twentieth century urban design had focused on an Ideal City of the superscale: Brasilia of Oscar Niemayer; Chicago of Daniel Burnham; Canberra of Walter Griffin, to cite only a few examples.

Towards the end of the twentieth century the failure of the Ideal City had become evident through the increasingly frequent ad-hoc attempts to maintain mass transit between homes and workplaces, safety and public health in streets, to ensure the physical and economic survival of urban dwellers. Within the process of urban design, from a mythical Ideal City onto a city-form aimed at maintenance and survival, alienation arose turning the city into a community of reclusive strangers. And yet, it appears to be precisely alienation, urban dysfunction and the urban place of abandon, along with the immeasurable temporality of encounter with such places or events, that becomes the new fertile ground of the myth of the garden in city-form.

7. Self-reflection in planning and design

The pre-modern, pre-industrial city, as exemplified by Siena, is in stark contrast to the surprise-free, controlled and solemn Ideal City, or its modern version, the Rational City. The streets of Siena, much as those of extant Romanesque, Gothic or early Renaissance old-town sections throughout many European cities, exude organic ambience, and an ongoing opportunity for a fortuitous encounter. Security, along with transportation efficiency and safety, are the overriding concerns in the industrial and post-industrial city, where surprise has become tantamount to danger.

As facets of amorphous time and space medieval streetscapes offer anticipation and surprise as their very essence. The sense of authenticity in the streets and squares of urban places, such as Siena, appears inspired or absorbed from surrounding nature. Siena's maze of streets has no foliage or green spaces. Instead of an omniscient or benevolent "grand designer" behind its city-form, Siena's urban spaces were carved each with a startling originality through the profusion of edifices by individual builders of the past. Centuries-long accumulation of ongoing small changes in the built environment of Siena have introduced humane measure of disorder and unexpectedness into its streetscapes, but also genuine civic places of spontaneous encounter, as against solemnity and control of the ideal, envisaged in the Rational City of the twentieth century.

On the contrasting backdrop of the example of Siena, heroic slogans such as "Make No Small Plans" (Daniel Burnham) or "A City Made for Speed Is a City made for Success" (Le Corbusier), point to the state of mind prevailing during the twentieth century. The ultimate goal of the individual has been to optimize returns from participation in the urban community. But whereas the overarching goal of the twentieth century designer-planner has been to control or streamline the urban crowd, the goal of urban dwellers has been to extrude themselves from imposed crowd control and the corresponding rigidity of city-form. The urban public comprising such individuals has created, in turn, a runaway discordance: Traffic congestion, line-ups, systemic failures, inadvertent breakdowns or wanton vandalism are the overt symptoms of the disparity between minds and their built environment. From mere nuisance in the city of the mid 20th century, these manifestations have turned into defining traits of city-form at the present time.

In the escalating cycle of cacophony, individuals focus on ever-new means at extrusion from the rest of the crowd and at insolence against city-form. In this *super*conscious state individuals' extrusion from the crowd continually amplifies the conflict between the crowd and a city-form intended to streamline it – only to make incoherence and malfunction increasingly acute. The bewildering trait of the urban superconscious is that all attempts to escape it through extrusion only ascertain its very perpetuation and intensification. Focused on urban superstructures, automation and mechanization, twentieth century urban planning had paid its own tribute to the ghost of the superconscious.[49]

Within the post-modern urban context of spiraling incoherence, it is the self-reflection of the designer, the recognition of his or her own humanity and the attendant, unavoidable exposure to myth and existing city-form alike, that fashions thought – and within it, urban-design ideas too. It is within this discernment that one may recognize existing city-form as the culmination of the Apollonian attempt to rationally structure and configure urban *objects*, rather than focusing on the *voids* between them. The juxtaposition of a structure against a void, quite analogous to the contrast between the masculine and the feminine,

between the Apollonian and the Dionysian, is also the contrast between the Citadel and the Garden, between noise and silence.

From the depth of one's own consciousness emerges the premonition that urban void ought to become the new sanctuary in the postmodern city. The focus of urban design in the 21st century ought to shift from urban superstructures to the understanding of urban voids. The acceptance of urban voids by favoring, first and foremost, their mindful preservation could constitute a much needed paradigm shift in urban design – a shift from the failings of the Apollonian to the ascent of the Dionysian.

The Apollonian-Dionysian split within city-form has, indeed, not only spatial but also a temporal manifestation. In the industrial and post-industrial city amorphous, unstructured time has become an impediment to the construction of urban environments, and to survival within them. The fashioning of modern city-form could not have occurred without the structuring of time through the ability to measure small temporal sequences within the diurnal cycle. As an ultimate affront to the *garden*, the industrial and post-industrial city-form has turned temporality in the metropolis into compartmentalized or – in the words of Henri Bergson – mechanized and spatialized sequence.[50]

As opposed to the amorphous time, as a medium to events in the medieval streetscape, time in the metropolis came to be considered an adversarial entity, objective and measurable, that could be confronted only through scheduling, optimization or another human scheme.

Yet against the measured, segmented and wholly objective time of clocks and machines in the planned city-form, there is the authenticity of subjective, emotive experiences of an individual. Hardly noticeable through an objective, measurable observation, seldom shared with or communicated to others, unstructured temporality, referred to as *durée* by Bergson, [51] is a lasting and unique quality of any living individual. In its organic vitality the subjective, internal and unstructured temporality supervenes on feelings, perceptual episodes, or individual experiences and provides a vital contrast to the mechanized form of the contemporary city. The challenge to urban design is to address traits that constitute our very humanity: To reintroduce amorphous time into city-form, to bring authenticity and spontaneity back into the city's streetscapes.

8. Myth of the Rational City

A hybrid evolving in geographical space and in historical time, the mind-city composite has given rise to the myth of the Rational City, and with it, to twentieth century city-form of the superscale featuring the urban superconscious as its own psychosocial trait. This latest transmutation of the myth of the ideal city can be viewed as constituting a transition stage of urban environments that were built to perform through mechanically structured time. This transition stage, expressed in Apollonian adherence to an ideal-city concept of structured temporality has led the contemporary city-form to the verge of urban dysfunction. Failure in attempts at planning and control of the city and its multitudes of people has been increasingly manifest in conflict and contradiction due to, exactly, attempts – necessary as they are – to structure time round clocks and rules of safety and security. One of the important traits of the modernist myth of the Rational City becomes thus the occasion to juxtapose the fable of the well-functioning city against the reality of the *mal*functioning city.

It is the pandemonium itself, along the disarray and incomprehension of present-day metropolis that seems to be turning into fertile ground to the rise of the Dionysian garden

paradigm, inherent in the city-form of medieval communities such as Siena. The words of the Czech-French writer Milan Kundera resonate of a commonplace yet deep, shared and intense experience epitomizing the contradiction of the garden and the citadel, and its impact upon the human individual in the metropolis:

> *She said to herself: when the onslaught of ugliness became completely unbearable, she would go to the florist and buy a forget-me-not, a single forget-me-not, a slender stalk with miniature blue flowers. She would go out into the streets holding the flower before her eyes, staring at it tenaciously so as to see only that single beautiful blue point, to see it as the last thing she wanted to preserve for herself from a world she had ceased to love […] She said to herself: the world has arrived to the frontier of something disastrous; if it crosses it, everything will turn to madness: the people will wander through the streets with forget-me-nots in their hands or will kill each other on sight. It will take very little, the drop of water that overflows the glass: just one car, person or decibel more.*[52]

It is the attempt to eradicate amorphous time from the midst of structured city-form that has brought the metropolis to the verge of collapse. This observation leads Kundera to make ominous distinction between human authenticity implicit in natural and spontaneous walk, and human automatism ensuing from mechanized and automated urban transportation of contemporary city-form:

> *Before roads and paths disappeared from the landscape, they had disappeared from the human soul: man stopped wanting to walk, to walk on his own feet and to enjoy it. What's more, he no longer saw his own life as a road, but as a highway: a line that led from one point to another, from the rank of captain to the rank of general, from the role of wife to the role of widow. Time became a mere obstacle to life, an obstacle that had to be overcome by ever greater speed.*[53]

Kundera's is a call to recognize time and change, not as a problem to be measured, structured or confronted, but as the golden rule of our world. Most of twentieth century urban design, including Ebenezer Howard's Garden City adaptations,[54] has never been attuned to such a stance, solidifying instead the Platonic myth of the ideal city and the Neo-Platonic notion of a solemn perfection. As another aspect of this disregard, mainstream urban planning has seldom acknowledged the failure of planned public parks and gardens, even as the very notion of twentieth century's *private* suburban garden, into which Howard's concept had evolved, has become mainly parlance of possession, division and control.

During the 3rd century BCE in Athens, Epicurus had established an arboretum known as the Garden, where women and slaves would be welcome to join in debates. About the same time, near a public park where the statue of Apollo-Lyceus, the effeminate Apollo, was standing, Aristotle had founded his *lyceum*. Aristotle's was a *peripatetic* philosophy, taking its very name from the boardwalk in his *lyceum* where walking was the physical complement of thinking and discoursing. A generation after Aristotle, and frequently at odds with his teachings, the Stoics had emerged in Athens fostering their own thought by simultaneously strolling *and* debating. On the north side of the city's agora the Painted *Stoa* stood, and it was there where Zeno of Citium used to discourse pacing up and down the painted colonnade: "[…] Hither, then, people came henceforth to hear Zeno, and this is why they were known as men of the Stoa."[55]

A million years ago, bipedalism detached breathing from striding in the early humans, thus facilitating the advent of speech, and the progress towards orderly observation and

thought.[56] Throughout millennia, walking, perception and thought have become intertwined and integrated. The automotive and automated city-form of twentieth century's urban superscale had minimized, sometimes effectively eliminated, walking in the city. The automated superscale brought with it not only the frenzy of the urban superconscious, but it also perturbed an important kinetic-cognitive link in humans. Mechanized, automotive and automated city-form of the superscale leads to automatism in human behavior, promoting a course of severance of the cognitive process from kinetic propensity. Whether such development could lead, in the longer run, to weakening in the cerebral cortex of humans throughout metropolitan areas of the industrialized world, is a disturbing question that is yet to be answered.

In his *Laws* Plato envisions people in the ideal polis as if made out of waxwork.[57] The array of absolutist doctrines later in history, inspired by Plato's designed society as pointed out by Karl Popper,[58] could conceivably include some portions of twentieth century's urban planning. The lone voices of Jane Jacobs and Camillo Sitte, [59] inclined more to the dynamics of the community than to the wisdom of the planner, have been always politely received, but seldom acted upon. From the dawn of civilization onward the faith in a being (or beings) behind the design of the universe found, a matching, self-reflective notion in the priest or the overlord on their own role as the Grand Designer – or his faithful intermediary. The myth among the folk was reinforced by priests through cultic rituals that in time became automatic, uniform and universal. Mimicking a technological project and borrowing from the image and spirit of inventiveness twentieth century's myth of the Rational City has been an attempt at a surprise-free city – automated, uniform and universal, at times also celebrating the "grand designer" behind it.

Provided that, first and foremost, one sees a genuine human predicament in present-day city-form, the breaking away from automation and uniformity in city-form could hardly be found in yet another set of objects. If urban edifices are a masculine trait of city-form, while urban voids are its feminine quality, one cannot but recognize that a structure evokes association of a sedentary function, while urban void suggests movement, calling to mind a processual, rather than sedentary, function. Siena is an excellent example of such a processual attitude in city-form, where feminine essence has been preserved, as if the myth of the garden had prevailed in it.

Five hundred years after Francesco's treatise urban planning and design ought to be able to assimilate also the wisdom, knowledge and reflection that humankind has gained, uncovered or discerned since. It is to a large extent due to the spiralling dysfunction of the post-industrial city-form that urban design has begun to address human scale, and walking in particular. That myth has been behind the failure of the contemporary city-form is admission only seldom made; and unheard of entirely would be the suggestion that another myth could come to the rescue. Yet a comprehensive stance recognizing the presence of myth in city-form, and recognition as well as acceptance of its measured impact, much as acknowledgment of the mutual impact between mind and city-form as an integrated, ongoing and vital dynamics, can no longer be ignored in urban planning and design.

9. Conclusion: Recognizing the urban subconscious

City-form and human cerebral development, in their mutual and ongoing impact, confer an ambience of affirmative, hybrid interaction between minds and their built environment. This, in turn, puts a heavy responsibility upon the planners and designers of urban places.

Such responsibility starts with the recognition that informal, veiled urban landmarks in old dilapidated neighborhoods, never subject to deliberate plan, have *always* been the keepsakes of communal memory. Elisabeth de Bievre has called such communal memory the urban subconscious, the "sum of physical circumstances […] and historical events, experienced collectively by a group of people living for several generations in the same environment." [60] City-form within which shrines of communal memory are preserved, doesn't resolve urban dysfunction, but provides a respite from one. Through perpetuation of authentic urban places, human authenticity too can be addressed. The entire scope of human disposition within city-form, from authenticity to alienation, can be in fact viewed in correspondence with the full range of urban infrastructure, edifices and voids, seen as conduits to human experience.

The photographer Ryuji Miyamoto, in his *Architectural Apocalypse* (1986), has called urban subconscious the decay of architecture disintegrating into ruins – either by way of deliberate destruction, through planned urban growth and modernization, or as a consequence of a natural disaster. Similar flair emerges from places for which the architect Ignasi de Solá-Morales coined the term, 'terrains vagues,' landscapes of contempt: large, empty, disused, and abandoned spaces of the city's fringes – monuments of the urban subconscious. [61] Bursts of entreaty that sometime emanate from such places of contempt, are due to disruption in control and rule inherent in mainstream city-form, but also from the silence these places imbue.

To Helen *Armstrong* the bizarre, unsightly voids, the various instances of urban decay manifest a peculiar kind of the subconscious, as if reiterating "Freud's argument that the power of the uncanny place of dereliction is that it ought to remain hidden; [yet it] keeps coming to light." [62] The dereliction of urban decay to Armstrong expresses passage of time – not as an object frozen in time, but as a living, organic continuum of change. Urban decay, seen as the urban subconscious is the city's forgotten feature, the *other*, often unacknowledged face of the city, the contrasting facet of urban perfection, or in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, the French philosopher, the city's *reverse* side. Armstrong considers landscapes of contempt, places of urban decay, as the most foundational, albeit overlooked, urban voids in the contemporary metropolis. The urban subconscious, in its various interpretations, and human authenticity are tied in a bond that does not seem to be subject to a clear definition. Yet recognition of this nebulous link is perhaps the first step to a genuinely successful urban design, not so much through projection of yet another ideal-city concept, but through self-reflection of the planner and the designer.

A major dictum of twentieth century's urban planning was the fight against urban decay and its various manifestations in the city. One common such manifestation, undoubtedly, has been graffiti and the constant fight for its removal. Pointedly, in his documentary satire, *The Subconscious Art of Graffiti Removal* [63] the filmmaker Matt McCormick lampoons the masking or erasing of graffiti as an expression to the suppressed artistic desires of city planners. Indeed, city planners are human too. And it is precisely for this reason that self-reflection and recognition of the alienation automated city-form carries onto one's own psyche is perhaps the very first step that urban designers and city planners ought to undertake in the road towards successful city-form in the twenty-first century. In his novel, *Nausea*, Sartre expressed thus the feeling of recognizing one's own alienation in the automated city against the authenticity of a landscape of contempt:

I am on the curb of the Rue Paradis, beside the last lamp-post. The asphalt ribbon breaks off sharply. Darkness and mud are on the other side of the street. I cross the Rue Paradis. I put my right foot in a puddle of water, my sock is soaked through; my walk begins. [...] I am cold, my

ears hurt; they must be all red. But I no longer feel myself; I am won by the purity surrounding me; nothing is alive, the wind whistles, the straight lines flee in the night. The Boulevard Noir does not have the indecent look of bourgeois streets, offering their regrets to the passers-by. No-one has bothered to adorn it: it is simply the reverse side. [...] [64]

In his urban-design classic, *Learning from Las Vegas*, [65] Robert Venturi had taught city planners the significance of the urban ugly, not as a quality to be subjected to acceptance or rejection, but as an urban feature from which one can learn to produce a *successful* city-form. Venturi's observations of Las Vegas are mainly those of an automobile driver. In similar vein Sartre's *Nausea* should be seen as a secular guide to walking. The authenticity of human experience, described in the short excerpt from *Nausea*, could never have taken place other than through the simple act of walking.

A city walk is the quintessence of *human* disposition in urban void as it encompasses change, variety and diversity. Not solely a mode of occasional urban recreation, but again as the main means of access in cities, walking could bring back human spontaneity, creativity and serendipity. Recognition that city-form is a symbolic, gender-based landscape deriving from primordial allegories could be an important *step*, indeed, towards forging a city-form conducive to favorable development of human communities. Permeating urban voids, the myth of the garden, subdued and irrational, can be brought back to the fold of urban communities and their built environments, in a city-form emerging anew from the old. Walking, a biosocial expression of change, is as profoundly inherent a human component of *any* garden, as it is a forceful, cumulative process against urban uniformity. The greatest challenge to urban design in the 21st century is to fashion urban voids to strolling rather than to arterial transportation flows, and crafting quiet voids for listening and tranquillity rather than devising noise barriers against urban decibels. Self-reflection might be the utmost skill required by designers and planners if they are to achieve the goal of building livable, and living, cities.

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[48] Abraham Akkerman and Ariela F. Cornfeld, "Greening as an Urban Design Metaphor: Looking for the City's Soul in Leftover Spaces," *The Structurist* 49/50 (2010): 30-35.

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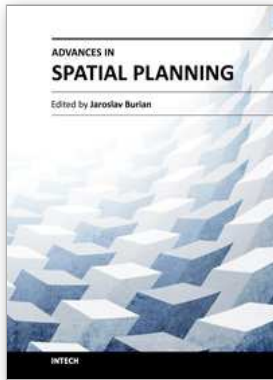
Advances in Spatial Planning

Edited by Dr Jaroslav Burian

Spatial planning is a significant part of geosciences that is developing very rapidly. Many new methods and modeling techniques like GIS (Geographical Information Systems), GPS (Global Positioning Systems) or remote sensing techniques have been developed and applied in various aspects of spatial planning. The chapters collected in this book present an excellent profile of the current state of theories, data, analysis methods and modeling techniques used in several case studies. The book is divided into three main parts (Theoretical aspects of spatial planning, Quantitative and computer spatial planning methods and Practical applications of spatial planning) that cover the latest advances in urban, city and spatial planning. The book also shows different aspects of spatial planning and different approaches to case studies in several countries.

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Abraham Akkerman (2012). Philosophical Urbanism and the Predilections of Urban Design, Advances in Spatial Planning, Dr Jaroslav Burian (Ed.), ISBN: 978-953-51-0377-6, InTech, Available from: http://www.intechopen.com/books/advances-in-spatial-planning/philosophical-urbanism-and-the-predilections-of-urban-design

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