

FEAR AND CITY BUILDING¹

Nan Ellin

Nan Ellin is Associate Professor in the School of Architecture at Arizona State University. She is the author of Postmodern Urbanism (1996, 1999) and the editor of Architecture of Fear (1997). She is currently exploring reconstructive and proactive urban design alternatives in her forthcoming book Slash City: Towards an Integral Urbanism.

Introduction

My interest in the relationship between fear and city building was sparked while doing research on the French new town of Jouy-le-Moutier sixteen years ago. This new town was an experiment in neo-traditional urbanism (or the New Urbanism), an effort to build a new town which looks and functions something like an old town. I wanted to discover whether or not this was a good strategy for city building, so I lived there and visited many of its inhabitants, inquiring about their likes and dislikes regarding the town. Invariably, the subject of fear arose despite the miniscule crime rate in the area. I initially paid little heed and simply waited for the conversation to turn back to the subject of my research. I soon realized, however, that the concern about insecurity was central to the nostalgia for the past that incited neo-traditional tendencies and to my evaluation of its success at Jouy-le-Moutier.

¹ Parts of this essay have appeared in my edited volume *Architecture of Fear* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997) and in my essay "Thresholds of Fear: Embracing the Urban Shadow," *Urban Studies Review* 38.5–6 (Spring 2001): 869–83.

Returning from the immaculate French new town, I saw New York City with different eyes. Living in my East Harlem neighborhood amongst abandoned buildings, crack houses, fortified housing projects, and scores of homeless people, I began reflecting not only upon the motivations for defensive urbanism but also on possibilities for diminishing the fear through design and other means. In this essay, I offer a brief history of fear and its relationship to city building in the West along with some new directions in urban design that respond to fear proactively rather than reactively.

Modern Fear and Modern Urbanism, Renaissance–1960s

Fear has never been absent from the human experience, and town building has always contended with the need for protection from danger. Protection from invaders was in fact a principal incentive for building cities whose borders were often defined by vast walls or fences, from the ancient villages of Mesopotamia to medieval cities to Native American settlements. Eventually, however, the cannon and, more recently, atomic arms rendered city walls feeble protection.

From being a relatively safe space, the city has become associated more with danger than with safety, especially over the last 100 years. The density of cities tends to intensify dangers such as civil unrest, crime, and contaminated air and water. And cities are not exempt from those dangers that strike everywhere equally, such as natural disasters, illness, domestic violence, and poverty. We persevere in seeking shelter from these dangers lurking in our midst through a range of architectural and planning solutions.

The insecurities incited by the transition from feudalism to capitalism led to numerous proposals for building. In the same year that the French Revolution began, the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham conceived the panopticon (Greek for “everything” and “place of sight,” or all-seeing), a cylindrical building for containing criminals with cells radially disposed around a central guardhouse. Bentham’s proposal allowed the inspector to see the criminals, but not vice versa, through strategically placed blinds. While this concept of the panopticon was

applied to the building of prisons in England, a bevy of English and French utopians were envisioning complete habitats reflecting similar notions of social engineering. Examples include the Saltworks designed by Ledoux (Salines-de-Chaux 1774–1804), Charles Fourier’s Phalanstery concept (1829), and James Silk Buckingham’s Plan of Victoria (1849). A number of attempts at realizing these plans were undertaken in the United States such as Robert Owen’s New Harmony in Illinois, Fourier’s phalanstery at Brook Farm, Massachusetts (1841), and dozens more. Whereas the 1700–1750s Enlightenment plans applied the language of natural reason (classical geometry to express triumph over nature), these 1750s–1900 plans drew from technical reason, which applied science and technology to bringing about social reform.

The predominant metaphors for cities at this time—the organism and the machine—guided urban designs, which were conceived in the spirit of performing surgical operations or repairing broken parts.² Countering the rationalist tendency of post-Enlightenment city planning, plans also began to incorporate elements of romanticism and the picturesque. These ideal plans influenced the redevelopment of European capital cities during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the most famous instance being the redesign of Paris from 1853–1872 overseen by Baron Haussmann, who was working for the Emperor Napoléon III.

The nature of fear continued to change during the early part of the twentieth century. In order to accommodate factory work, the day took on new rhythms as did the week, month, and year. The landscape evolved with the addition of railroads, factories, warehouses, skyscrapers, working class districts, new suburbs for the upper middle class, and the highways of the modern industrial city. At the same time, social and geographic mobility accelerated. Fear derived from this rapid change as well as from the unreliable and often substandard working

² Anthony Vidler, “The Scenes of the Street,” *On Streets: Transformations in Ideal and Reality, 1750–1871*, ed. Stanford Anderson (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1986) 29.

conditions of factory workers, consequent rioting by these workers, the cultural diversity of those who came to work in the factories, and the constant change in consumer tastes upon which mass production depended.

The means for coping with this new constellation of fear also evolved. The measurement and allocation of time and space grew ever more precise to allow for accurate prediction of labor output as well as worker and consumer behavior. Within the factory, time was used as a mechanism for control over others. Some companies, for instance, did not allow their workers to wear watches so they would not know how long they were working.³

The science of time management was introduced into the factory by Frederick Winslow Taylor in 1911. Henry Ford's moving assembly line incorporated space into this process in 1913. Since the nineteenth-century factory was no longer sufficient, the architect Albert Kahn provided Ford with a functional shell of steel, concrete, and glass for his plant, a formula for industrial plants which he and others reproduced all over the world.

Outside the factory, city building was profoundly influenced by new needs emerging from these changes and the infatuation with the machine. Modern architects and city planners modeled themselves after engineers and stipulated that "form should follow function." In an effort to make cities function like well-oiled machines, they called for the separation of functions (housing, work, recreation, circulation) through zoning regulations and regional plans.

But rather than follow function, form largely followed finance. In the United States, the real estate, building, and automotive interests lobbied for the Housing Acts of 1949 and 1954 and the Highway Act of 1954 that allowed for massive suburbanization along vehicular patterns.

³ E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" *Past and Present* 38 (December 1967): 56-97.

The suburbs to which Americans flocked after the Second World War proved less than satisfactory. Women, particularly, felt isolated and bored. One pharmaceutical company marketed its tranquilizers with an advertisement portraying an enervated housewife and the caption, "You can't change her environment, but you can change her mood." Workplaces also began moving to the suburbs as corporate headquarters moved from central cities to sylvan "office parks" or "corporate campuses." This trend reached a peak between 1955 and 1980 when more than 50 corporations left their New York City headquarters for greener pastures.

In the central cities of the United States, the national urban renewal program was unsuccessfully trying to retain investment. Given the architectural and planning theory of the time, this effort leveled older urban fabrics (areas regarded by planners as "slums"), replacing them with slabs and towers. With an eye towards security, these downtown urban renewal schemes turned away from the city around them. Amenities were usually limited to gigantic steel sculptures or fountains, often described as "plop art."⁴ Seating was usually nonexistent or improvised from ledges and steps. Not surprisingly, this kind of building proved largely inhospitable to the general public. It did not offer a sense of comfort; it magnified winds and blocked sunlight.

Most of what was built after the war in both the United States and Western Europe, then, consisted of isolated towers and slabs as well as unending blocks of mass produced individual houses. This modern urban development destroyed much of our urban heritage, disrupted established communities, displaced people from their homes and businesses, increased social segregation, diminished the public realm, harmed the environment, and created eyesores. The great failure of modern architecture has come to be symbolized by the dramatic demolition of the Pruitt-Igoe housing projects in St. Louis in 1972, designed

⁴ Steven Flusty, *Building Paranoia: The Proliferation of Interdictory Space and the Erosion of Spatial Justice* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design 1994).

by Minoru Yamaski (who, incidentally, also designed New York City's World Trade Center Towers 1966–77). Generally disliked, modern urban development was supplanted by other strategies.

Postmodern Fear and Postmodern Urbanism, 1960s–1990s

The late 1960s and early 1970s marked yet another caliber and level of uncertainty. The fear factor has certainly grown over the last several decades if measured by locked car and house doors, security systems, the popularity of gated communities, the purchasing of handguns, and the increasing surveillance of public spaces, not to mention the unending reports of danger emitted by the mass media. Some of the reasons for our increased sense of insecurity include an acceleration in the rate of change as well as the decline of public space, the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and the growing influence of intelligent machines. In addition, violent crime in the United States increased by almost 100% from 1960 to 1990.

Modern fear was tackled in a scientific manner, but the excesses of modernism generated a reaction to the scientific pretense to objectivity, leading to some different responses to postmodern fear. The ones I will focus on here are retribalization, nostalgia, and escapism, all of which are closely related and recall features of the pre-modern period.

Retribalization

As the mass media have made it seem a much smaller world—a global village—they have also instilled a desire to retribalize or to assert cultural distinctions. This has been apparent in the search for “roots,” tracing family lineages, resurrecting old customs, and even inventing “new” traditions. In building, it is apparent in attempts to design in local traditional styles (regionalism).

Retribalization is also apparent in the building of segregated communities, most blatantly in the growth of retirement communities beginning with Sun City near Phoenix. Though not officially exclusive, there are also neighborhoods comprised almost entirely of young families, racially/ethnically segregated communities, and income-specific communi-

ties. While providing a certain sense of security, such separatism can also contribute to an ignorance of others and less tolerance for difference. It feeds an us-against-them mentality and a tendency to defend one's borders, family, and self with gates as well as with guns. There are more than 200 million guns in private hands in the United States and over the last decade, the number of women with guns has doubled.

Nostalgia

Closely related to retribalization, the nostalgic response features a desire to return to the past in reaction to modernism's clean break from the past. The nostalgic response is apparent in the call to return to "traditional" values and institutions as well as the return to nature (environmentalism).

Contemporary nostalgia is apparent in the popularity of 1960s and '70s television programs, in feature films based on these programs (e.g., "Flintstones," "Addams Family") as well as movie remakes, in new renditions (or "covers") of old songs, in advertising that attempts to make products seem old or established, in "classic rock" radio stations, in the comeback of country and "lounge" music, in retro-clothing and furniture, in the diner, and much more. This fascination for the old has inspired producers of goods to "wear them out" in a mass-produced fashion. We can now purchase jeans that are pre-washed, pre-worn out, and ripped in the appropriate places. We can acquire furniture that is pre-distressed through the application of special finishes. This massive return may suggest a depletion of creative energies or a fear of being original.

The infatuation with the past has made renovation of old houses a popular past time. And it has had an impact on interior decoration. Despite the new technologies integral to contemporary homes, postmodern house forms and decor draw from the past, both an urban leisured past and a rural past of "abundant simplicity." The nostalgia is for city and country life, not suburban life. In contrast to the starkness of modern home design, certain postmodern homes are opulent and sumptuous, featuring, for instance, grand entryways, double staircases, chandeliers, scattered mirrors with gilded frames, overstuffed furniture, and the layering of fabrics, rugs, and window coverings, all in colors and patterns popular prior

to modernism. Other postmodern homes are inspired by “country living,” and seek to incorporate wood furnishings that are old or at least look old, living room/kitchens with large hearths, small floral-print fabrics, and other features considered characteristic of the rural house. Others still combine these aesthetics and more to produce a grandmother’s house-flea market-popular culture-anything goes aesthetic.

The creation of housing from old city factories and warehouses—or loft-living—offers another instance of nostalgia, but this time it is for our industrial past. Loft living not only represents nostalgia for an old building but also an old way of life, that of combining home and work in the same space as was common in the pre-industrial era. This nostalgia for our industrial past is apparent in interior décor inspired by the industrial aesthetic.

The retail sector has also retrofitted vacated structures of the industrial era for the creation of a new kind of urban shopping mall with shops, restaurants, pushcarts, and street performers. James Rouse, who was most influential in this development, called these “festival marketplaces.” This developer of the 1960s new towns of Cross Keys (Baltimore) and the much larger Columbia (between Baltimore and Washington, D.C.) first oversaw the conversion of Boston’s Faneuil Hall Market Place (originally built in 1742) and its adjacent Quincy Market (built in 1823). These were followed by other versions of the same formula in the conversion of a former chocolate factory into Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco designed by Lawrence Halprin (1964). Shopping districts have also been created anew but made to look old such as Harborplace in Baltimore and South Street Seaport in New York City, both developed by the Rouse Co., and Two Rodeo Drive (Via Rodeo) in Beverly Hills designed by Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz Architects/Planners.

On the scale of the city, the nostalgic impulse is revealed by the neo-traditionalist efforts since the 1970s, like the one I was evaluating in the French new town. These efforts seek to combine the familiarity and human scale of traditional townscapes with the benefits of contemporary technologies. The central motivation behind these efforts is to avoid the excessive separation of functions of modern urbanism along

with the social and environmental harm that accompanies them. Usually described as the New Urbanism, the most well known example in the United States is Seaside in the state of Florida.

Escapism

The third response to contemporary fear is escapism. Both retribalization and nostalgia could be regarded as subsets of escapism, but this category focuses on more extreme forms of retreat from the larger community or flights into fantasy worlds. Although perhaps most pronounced in the expanded use of personal computers and networking on-line, I describe here responses in our built environment.

In urban design, the impulse to retreat is epitomized by the growth of gated communities. The lack of sidewalks and cul-de-sacs of the earliest suburban developments were protective devices, but we have now taken this further by actually gating our neighborhoods and installing guards or video monitors at the entryways. A residential development of high rise condominiums called Desert Island, located east of Palm Desert, California is surrounded by a 25-acre moat. There are currently more than 20,000 gated communities in the United States housing over eight million inhabitants. Although the trend to build and live in gated communities is still going strong, recent research has revealed that gating communities has little effect on crime either within the gates or outside them.

Outside of gated communities, security signage is ubiquitous. When designing new homes or renovating, safety features are of paramount importance. Sometimes, a client asks for an appearance that conveys a “don’t-mess-with-me” attitude or that appears inconspicuous to conceal the residents’ wealth. These have been described as stealth houses (Mike Davis’s term). In the house he designed for actor Dennis Hopper in Venice, Brian Murphy set a bunker-like structure with a windowless corrugated metal facade behind a white picket fence mimicking those in the neighborhood. In a house around the corner (the Dixon house), Murphy simply left the shell of the existing dilapidated house, built a new house inside it, and pre-graffitied the facade to fit into the surroundings.

Other houses take the opposite tack and elaborately appoint their entry-way, perhaps in a show of intimidation. These houses assure protection through a variety of means such as sophisticated security systems, the posting of signs that warn trespassers not to enter or indicate “armed response,” and so-called “security gardens,” which group shrubs beneath windows and around yards specifically for the purpose of obstructing intruders. Increasingly, clients are requesting that their architects provide “safe rooms,” terrorist-proof security rooms concealed in the houseplan and accessed by sliding panels and secret doors, reminiscent of a James Bond movie.

The retreat reflex is also manifest in the suburban shopping mall, which has abandoned the central city and which turns its back entirely on its surroundings with a fortress-like exterior surrounded by a moat-like parking lot. Malls have their own on-site substations replete with holding cells.⁵ A shopping mall built in 1988 in South Central Los Angeles, for instance, includes fenced parking lots, total video coverage, contained loading docks, and a storefront police station that serves as base for 200 police officers.⁶

The rising tide of fear has transformed most public spaces into controlled and guarded places. To discourage people from sleeping on park benches, Los Angeles introduced the “bum-proof” bench that is barrel-shaped.⁷ To discourage people from sleeping in parks, the city has installed sprinkler systems that catch the innocent sleeper unaware only to wake up and find he or she is drenched head to toe.⁸ Meanwhile, public restrooms and drinking fountains have virtually disappeared from these public spaces. Sprinkler systems along with blaring Musak have been applied widely by convenience stores and other businesses

⁵ Steven Flusty “Building Paranoia,” *Architecture of Fear*, ed. Nan Ellin (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997) 52.

⁶ Flusty 52.

⁷ Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Verso, 1990) 233, 235.

⁸ Davis 233.

that do not want people hanging out around them. Roll-down steel shutters are also popular for businesses after hours. In fact, some of these businesses never raise them. Security monitors have become omnipresent thanks to their new affordability.

The corporate headquarters and department stores that began abandoning downtowns in the 1950s form an essential part of the new “edge cities” that emerged in the 1970s. This new kind of city—or what many regard as an anti-city—combines office parks with shopping malls, and perhaps some housing. Edge cities are the apotheosis of escapist urbanism. They abandon the central city and the unique quality of life it promised. In an effort not to lose the vitality of the city, the office parks in these edge cities try to incorporate aspects of urbanity. The General Foods headquarters, for instance, was designed by Kevin Roche (White Plains, NY; 1977–82) to include “office neighborhoods” and a “Main Street” with newstands and a restaurant. But it is a spurious urbanity, devoid of the unpredictable, spontaneous, widely accessible, and creative qualities of true urbanity.

Not incidentally, since the 1980s, commissions for corporate buildings have been declining (because of an office glut in most parts of the country), while commissions for prisons, police stations, and homeless shelters have been on the rise. “Prisonization”—or the increased building of prisons to deal with crime—is another example of retreating. This trend has been taken even further as many states have been moving their prisons to other states and privatizing them. There are currently 124 private jails in the United States, and the state of Texas has 38 of these. Florida ranks second. These states pay private companies to care for the inmates, an “industry” growing at an annual rate of 35%.

The other kind of escapism, into fantasy worlds, is apparent in the growth of theme parks (such as City Walk at Universal Studios in Universal City, California) and of megastructures devoted to leisure and recreational activities, particularly sports stadiums, convention centers, and mega-stores.

The escapist nature of all these undertakings—behind gates or prison bars; away from our downtowns; into the past, other places, or fantasy

worlds—may emit signals that the present is indeed unsavory. This rising tide of fear has led people to stay at home more. Activities that once occurred outside the home are increasingly satisfied now inside the home with the television or computer. And if we do go out, we do so in the strictly controlled settings of the shopping mall, theme park, or sports arena. We no longer go out to mingle with the anonymous urban crowd in the hope of some new unexpected experience or encounter, a characteristic feature of earlier urban life. Unexpected experiences and encounters are precisely what we do not want. We go out for specific purposes, with specific destinations in mind, and with a knowledge of where we will park and whom we will encounter.

Fear and Urbanism in the Third Millennium and New Directions

As change has continued to accelerate in recent years and we have grown increasingly mobile thanks to new technologies, the categories of time and space have grown less stable. This spatial and temporal unmooring has intensified our sense of insecurity. We are more fearful of falling off the treadmill by not keeping up with the 24/7 work pace or with the constantly-upgraded technological appendages and tools on which our work relies. Especially since 9/11, we are fearful of an elusive enemy; we don't know exactly who may strike or when. These recent sea changes regarding time and space have also, paradoxically, enhanced our sense of security. Increased mobility and flexibility along with instantaneity enhance communication, allow greater freedom, confer power to a larger number, and eliminate waiting. Also enhancing security of late are concerted efforts to respond to fear in a proactive manner, efforts perhaps elicited by the prevalent sense of anxiety and despair characterizing the last several decades. The events of 9/11 have both stepped up these efforts and contributed to the reactionary measures that ultimately redouble the fear. The result is two-fold: continued ultra-fortressing and surveillance, on the one hand, and a wide range of proactive efforts to eliminate the sources of fear, on the other.

These proactive efforts are being undertaken by urban designers as well as by private developers, elected officials, community organizations, business associations, and neighborhood groups. Some manifestations

of this broadbased evolution include the growth in regional governance, extensive building of mass transit, tremendous boosts to urban revitalization, “smart growth” initiatives to combat sprawl, the creation of quality public spaces, concern with preserving historical buildings and conserving the natural landscape, and the exponential increase in numbers of neighborhood associations, community gardens, and community land trusts.

Rather than dismantle boundaries and distinctions, as the modern period attempted, or fortify the city, as occurred during the postmodern period, these recent efforts retain the integrity of diverse parts of the metropolitan area (both neighborhoods and uses) while providing a permeable membrane between them. By allowing for diversity (of people, activities, beliefs, etc.) to thrive, this approach succeeds in re-integrating (or integrating anew) without obliterating differences; in fact, it celebrates them. Fear and insecurity are alleviated by the preservation of difference along with the ability to move freely through the city.

I call this collective evolution in the design of cities “Integral Urbanism.” The five qualities characterizing this approach include: hybridity, connectivity, porosity, authenticity, and vulnerability. Together, these qualities describe a shift from emphasizing objects and the separation of functions to considering the larger context and multi-functional places. They indicate a departure from the presumed opposition between people and nature, buildings and landscape, and architecture and landscape architecture to more symbiotic relationships. Integral Urbanism also veers away from master planning, which, in its focus on mastery (control) and efficiency, tends to generate fragmented cities without soul or character. Instead, Integral Urbanism proposes more punctual interventions that contribute to activating places by making connections and/or caring for neglected and abandoned “in-between” spaces. In the best case scenarios, these interventions have a tentacular⁹ or domino effect by catalyzing other

⁹ Tom Wiscombe, “The Haptic Morphology of Tentacles,” *BorderLine* (Austria: Springer-Verlag/Wien and RIEAeuropa, 1998).

interventions in an ongoing never-ending process. They can be applied to existing built environments as well as new development.

Integral Urbanism runs counter to the prevailing urbanism of free-standing, single-use buildings connected by freeways along with rampant (sub)urban sprawl and its attendant environmental, social, and aesthetic costs. In contrast to the master-planned, functionally-zoned city, which separates, isolates, alienates, and retreats, Integral Urbanism emphasizes connection, communication, and celebration. While integrating the functions that the modern city separated, this approach also integrates conventional notions of urban, suburban, and rural to produce a new model for the contemporary city. In doing so, it considers means of integrating design with nature, the center with the periphery, the process with the product, local character with global forces, and people of different ethnicities, incomes, ages, and physical abilities.

Integral Urbanism activates places by creating thresholds, or places of intensity, where diversity thrives. It allows people and activities to commingle and converge in ways that the separation of functions does not allow. Some contemporary integrations recall pre-industrial ones. Others are pre-industrial with a twist, while others still are completely of the moment. Emergent examples include the office building with basketball court and daycare center, the intergenerational community building (combining day care, teenage community center, continuing education and seniors center), the public school/community center, the integrated parking structure (into office buildings, retail centers, and parks), the movie theatre/restaurant, bookstore/coffeehouse (both mega-versions and small boutique versions), the cybercafé, the boutique/performance space/club (e.g., Rem Koolhaas's Prada store, NYC, 2001), the Dive-In (rafting and watching movies), the laundromat/club (Cincinnati and other college towns), and the urban plaza by day/movie theatre at night (e.g., Baltimore).

As many of these examples reveal, corollary shifts have been occurring in regulatory, real estate, and business practices. Epitomized perhaps by the Barnes & Noble/Starbucks partnership, the explosion in business partnering is not confined to books and coffee, but extends exponentially and virtually such that on-line services are partnering (developing

alliances) to garner larger market shares and to encourage “stickiness” (so potential consumers don’t click away to other “sites”). The buzzword “convergence” describes the increased integration of technologies (e.g., the wireless web or mobile internet). Convergence in residential building is described as “the ultimate integration of everything in the house”: security, lighting, mechanical systems, climate control, entertainment, and internet.¹⁰ Land-use regulatory practices that parallel this shift include “mixed-use” zoning (also called “integrated land use”) and “performance” zoning. The real estate marketing principle of “adjacent attraction” also encourages the hybridity or intensity that urban designers are seeking. Developers interested in providing pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use developments are retrofitting defunct postwar shopping malls around the United States into street-friendly shops and cafés with live-work spaces (“lofts”) or condos above them.¹¹ Although the motivations may diverge, good business (guided by businesspersons and the general public) and good design are converging fortuitously.

Sometimes, Integral Urbanism requires integration at another level, that of political and administrative units such as school boards, parks and recreation departments, neighborhood and homeowners’ associations, transit authorities, zoning boards, and real estate concerns. The outcome is the pooling of human and natural resources thereby conserving energy, time, effort, talent, money, water, fuel, building materials, paper, and more. These efficiencies result in reduced commuting, increased convenience, preservation of the natural environment, more quality public space, and greater opportunity for social interaction and integration.¹²

¹⁰ Julie V. Iovine calls them “smart-aleck houses” in “When Smart Houses Turn Smart Aleck,” *The New York Times* (13 January 2000): F1.

¹¹ Due to home shopping and big-box stores, 20% of the existing shopping malls from 1990 were out of business by the end of 2000. Some of these are being retrofitted such as a Pasadena mall dating from the 1960s with small shops at the ground level and 400 “lofts” above them. In Los Angeles (Fairfax and 3rd), a mall of discount stores was replaced by small shops, cafes, and more than 600 condos.

¹² Where does the New Urbanism fit into this? While taking a step forward towards integration, it may also take a step back if the integration it aspires to is an outdated one.

Although reminiscent of the consolidation and increased efficiency of the factory, this new integration could be accomplished without “tailorization” (or top-down oversight and control leading to dehumanization, demoralization, and class struggle). This is because the consolidation is not imposed by a central authority and because it allows a revitalized public realm thanks to time saved and public spaces created through integration. This public realm in turn allows for greater self-empowerment and self-determination. A *virtual* example is e-commerce, which permits recycling, redistribution, greater access to goods and information, and price equity (e.g., e-bay and other auction websites)—a form of democracy without surveillance. For instance, art online provides artists with a bigger audience, eliminates middle-persons, and allows consumers greater access to artistic production.

An *actual* example might be a children’s center: a 24-hour indoor/outdoor center equipped with a playground, indoor gymnastics equipment, library, arts & crafts, trained caretakers, and access to healthcare. Instead of 32 individual nannies/babysitters who may not be especially competent or enthusiastic about this sort of work, a children’s center could employ four experienced childcare workers in a beautiful well-equipped facility. Children would be with other children in a safe enriching setting with well-trained caretakers. They could benefit from numerous activities unavailable at home such as mounting their own performances or art shows, hosting guest speakers on various topics, and taking fieldtrips to local factories, farms, seniors’ centers, or the theatre. The caretakers would have a far superior work environment than if they were isolated in someone else’s home with one or several children, often leaving their own children behind in the care of others. Parents would not only be offered the assurance that their children are in a safe enriching environment, but would also be offered flexibility. As a 24-hour center that charges by the hour, the children’s center would accommodate a work schedule that departs from the conventional 9 to 5, a last-minute meeting, a night out, or an emergency. If the children’s center was located adjacent to other amenities, workplaces, and homes, and if some of its amenities such as the library were shared with the larger community, opportunities for social interactions (a public realm) would be in place. These opportunities would, in turn, catalyze other developments when the needs arise and resources allow.

We have been witnessing a shift from the machine and utopia as models to ecological models (webs, networks, thresholds, ecotones, tentacles, and rhizomes). In contrast to the earlier models that bespoke aspirations for control and perfection, these more recent models suggest connectedness and dynamism as well as the principle of complementarity. On the ecological threshold, for instance, there is competition, conflict, and contest¹³ but also synergy and harmony. There is fear but also adventure and excitement. It is not about good *or* bad, safety *or* danger, pleasure *or* pain, winners *or* losers. All of these occur on the ecological threshold if it is thriving.

From cells to cities, culture, and cosmology, theories are converging on the same universal principles of development and co-development, characterized by dynamic webs of interdependencies.¹⁴ While these understandings of connectedness have precedents in science, philosophy, and religion, there is something qualitatively different this time around in the emphasis on change as a constant and on the reconfiguration of space and time due to digitalization.

Conclusion

Fear has played a large role in city building from the beginning of human history to the present. From the first caves and rustic dwellings to the tallest skyscrapers, we have sought shelter from storms, the cold, and the heat. We grouped these dwellings together to offer mutual assistance and protection from enemies, but our need for protection evolved. Eventually, concentrating people was no longer strategically sound. At the same time, sources of insecurity started to bubble up within cities as we grew increasingly afraid of each other.

Whereas cities were once the cradles of civilization, they came to be known as places of unrest, stagnation, and decay. The inventions of the

¹³ James Corner, "Field Operations," *Architecture of the Borderlands*, ed. Teddy Cruz and Anne Boddington (Chichester: Wiley, 1999) 53–5.

¹⁴ Jane Jacobs, *The Nature of Economies* (New York: Vintage, 2001).

telephone, television, and computer allowed for communication without concentration, and the car and plane have made geography (where one lives) less important. So we have been dispersing, but as we abandon our central cities, we are also abandoning a certain quality of life.

The sense that we are poised on a threshold is widespread. Over the last decade, economist Francis Fukuyama intoned the end of history, philosopher Richard Rorty the end of philosophy, Arthur Danto the end of art, Jean Baudrillard and Homi Bhabha the end of modernity, Peter Eisenman the end of humanism (the classical), Peter Blake the end of cities, Richard Ingersoll the end of suburbia, and Michael Sorkin the end of public space.¹⁵ Some of these declarations are clearly despairing, while others are hopeful. Others simply mark a departure, the destination of which is as yet uncertain.

All mammals share three neurophysiological responses to fear and anxiety: freeze, flight, and fight. While the first two involve disengagement and distancing from the source of fear or anxiety, the third involves direct engagement with it, but in a might-equals-right kind of way. We, however, are capable of transcending these primal responses to fear and anxiety through several peculiarly human attributes. One of these is reason as expressed, for instance, in the popular 1952 movie "The Day

¹⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free, 1992); Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Arthur Danto, *After the End of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). According to Baudrillard, modernity was an "aesthetic of rupture," of the "destruction of traditional forms," and of the authority and legitimacy of previous models of fashion, sexuality, and social behavior. But because of this, modernity lost "little by little all its substantial value, all moral and philosophical ideology of progress which sustained it at the beginning, and [became] an aesthetic of change and for change...ultimately, becoming purely and simply fashion, which means the end of modernity" ("La fin de la modernité ou l'ère de la simulation," *Biennale de Paris* [Paris: Academy Editions, 1982] 28–33, my translation); Homi Bhabha, "Race and the Humanities: The 'Ends' of Modernity?" *Public Culture* 4.2 (1992): 81–8; Peter Eisenman, "The End of the Classical: The End of the End, The End of the Beginning," *Perspecta: The Yale Architectural Journal* 21 (1984): 154–72; Peter Blake, "The End of Cities," *Cities: The Forces That Shape Them*, ed. Lisa Taylor (New York: Rizzoli, 1982); Richard Ingersoll, "The Disappearing Suburb," *Design Book Review* 26 (Fall): 5–8; Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

the Earth Stood Still” in which the beneficent space man who had landed on the Washington mall announced to Earthlings: “I only fear that fear has replaced reason.” There is also creativity, the ability to combine things in a novel way to produce novel results. And there is the human spirit, which prizes togetherness, connectedness, and sanctity over separateness and the profane. This is what drives us to improve upon our world for future generations with the faith that things can and will get better. We now face the task of city-building in a way that nurtures the communities and the environment that ultimately sustain us. It is not an easy task. But it is an essential one.