

Reconceptualizing the Suburb: A Phenomenological Approach

by

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by Cheryl Oakden (1989).

ABSTRACT

The suburb represents a state of mind founded on imagery and symbolism of the modern paradigm. The myth evoked no longer responds to the present concerns of our culture. A return to more humanistic issues can lead to a new vision of man and environment. Through phenomenological interpretation the qualitative elements and images that are integral and instrumental to establishing the "new" suburb are effectively disclosed. The study addresses the thinking that has influenced the evolution of the modern suburb. It is an exploration of the paradoxical conditions of the suburb that have contributed to its lack of place and of community. The thesis develops a basis for a new conceptualization the suburb as revealed through a phenomenological approach.

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INTRODUCTION

The Premise

This study began as an attempt to reconcile personal and emotional disdain brought about by my perceptions and experiences of the suburban landscape. As such, it searches for the essence of an environment where efficiency and economy have contributed to the standardized and sterile spaces of our city's fringe. Disenchanted by the pre-industrial city as presented by Leon Krier and the Disneyland imagery of Seaside as viable answers in a North American prairie suburb, I seek notions of place that have collective meaning in a holistic concept of community.

We cannot deny the suburb as a critical aspect of the contemporary metropolis. They are important manifestation of a culture's traditions and aspirations, a mythological ideal, revealing both the spirit and character of modern civilization. The suburbs began as monuments of the middle-class, ambivalent symbols embodying beliefs composed from structured images and values of a desired "lifestyle."

The suburban ideal represents a multifaceted vision of the modern family freed from the "corrupt" city to be restored in harmony with nature. The inherent contradictions of the suburban vision are met by architects, historians, theorists, speculators, builders, developers, investors, and home-buyers in an attempt to create imaginative utopias. These images are based upon two cultural identifications, a suspension between agrarian society and industrial society. Such diametrically opposed visions set the stage for an inevitable series of paradoxical conditions of the dialogue between man and environment. The suburbs chaotic sprawl and consumer approach to built form manifests as the expression of morality for the 20C North American family. It is an environment which lacks the critical expression of location or "lived space," the sense of place implicit in dwelling.

Suburban imagery relies on technologically adequate environments in which static applications of elements neglect the importance of identity and orientation within a community. These environments perpetuate *en masse* at the periphery of our cities with no regard to boundary or limits. Suburban developers and planners adhere to functional concepts of efficiency and economy in transportation and land use distribution to create these standardized sterile environments in which people live. This situation has reduced the suburb to a condition of means and ends where, as expressed by Hannah Ardent, "utility established as meaning generates meaninglessness."¹ The result has been "community without propinquity" supporting a state of human alienation, a lack of a social existence, necessary to establish a sense of place and a public network conducive to the survival of community.

The suburbs are described and pictured through propaganda and stereotypes with little sense of how they do or do not connect to personal let alone collective activities,

¹Hannah Ardent from Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism," In *The Anti-Aesthetic*, p. 17.

responsibilities or memory. They indicate an absence of any true public realm and the detachment of community from architecture. As long as the myth is being generated and supported by the suburban process, its image will proliferate the fringe of our cities. There is a need to restore a sense of place and of community to centre stage in the suburban syntax, where new ideas (design) interrupt the suburban narrative and address place making. The relationship of landscape to place and to home becomes the humanization of built and spatial form concerning the multidimensional needs of the individual, the group, the society, and nature.

The evolution of suburbia is represented by a radical rethinking of the meaning of the city. The suburban form contradicted the principal assumptions which organized the premodern city, challenging traditional ideas of centre and periphery. This required a total transformation of urban values. However, the images and symbols of suburbia are no longer concomitant with emerging concerns of man and environment. Thus, we must question the basic premise upon which the suburb lies.

Intent

It is at this point in man's evolution that we must again challenge basic ways of thinking to respond with appropriate forms in the city. A new paradigm which questions assumptions and preconceptions of the suburb is at the fore. Towards this end, a phenomenological approach may provide this essential interpretation of the suburb. Phenomenology presents a basis for a moral and ethical relationship between man and environment, and between built and spatial form for place making. Focusing on the multidimensional nature of people and environmental experience the critical aspects of community are revealed. Emerging from a process of inquiry based in intuitive insight and description, these essential qualities of a community become; boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image. By describing these aspects in relation to the suburban environment, a deeper understanding of place and of community is disclosed. This approach presents the experiential and the personal "reality" as sources for community, and as a new way in which to view the world. One in which the process of community is better met by images of a collective memory enabling man to interpret and orient himself within an environment. Images of shared reality evoke memories of sound, smell, touch, and space that translate to a person's understanding of dwelling and of community. A reconceptualization of the suburb revealed through phenomenology attempts to grasp at this reality. And, it is from this expanded reality that we can transform the myth and disclose relevant images which respond to dwelling in the North American suburb.

Approach

The history of the evolution of the modern suburb represents a quest for an image of the 'ideal' lifestyle. The freestanding house on a treelined street with curving roads and tended lawns become the dominant impression of such a community. Chapter one discusses a multitude of factors which contributed to this pattern of urban form, as constituted by significant directions architecture and planning energies. The traditional suburban image is primarily based upon conceptual visions of the 'ideal' community exemplified by the utopias of Le Corbusier *La Ville Radieuse*, of Ebenezer Howard *The Garden City*, and of F.L. Wright *Broadacres*. These structures were fundamental to the modern paradigm, to anthropocentric principles of exclusivity, internalization, and the individual, which generated the form of the picturesque suburb. However, the precedents of these men, along with their antecedents, have largely failed to provide an adequate structure for the notion of community to exist and perpetuate in post WWII society.

Upon examination of the history of the suburban form, the principle concerns affecting community arise. The second chapter of this study examines four fundamental issues which contribute to the suburbs lack of place and of community. They are: town and country ideologies, public realm, spatial definition, and architecture as commodity. From these concerns a direction for appropriate expression is brought into the realm of phenomenology, as presented in chapter four.

Phenomenology offers an encompassing and holistic relationship of viewer to thing and man to nature through immersion in the world. It is a descriptive science grounded in careful looking, seeing, and understanding. Its primary substantive focus is a description of human experience and meaning as they are lived. Its main vehicle is intuitive insight. There are many key philosophic figures associated with this method, however, this study focuses on Martin Heidegger's explorations. His discussions on being-in-the-world and dwelling are a primary impetus to other phenomenological inquiries on architecture and environment. These are exemplified by the work of David Seamon, Christian Norberg-Schulz, Karsten Harries, Kenneth Frampton, and Neil Evernden. By focusing on the four areas presented in chapter two, phenomenology prescribes solution through holistic notions of: boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image.

From a reflective and intuitive process we cannot assume a "right" version of reality. It does not indicate a need to provide a particular substitute. It discusses the issues which one should respond to upon 'immersing' oneself in an endeavor of experiential interpretation. It returns to the personal to penetrate the surface forms of landscapes to reveal something of its inner character, its mood, its atmosphere. It responds to the fact that we identify with place for personal reasons.

This study is a dialectic process which merges the concept of the traditional suburban with broader issues of man and environment through phenomenology. The process provides a general foundation for the reconceptualization of the suburb as a community. In

the epilogue these ideas are presented through more specific images. But, it in no way exhausts the phenomenological interpretation of the suburb, it only attempts to address the main issues which require extensive research through a phenomenological approach. The thesis points to new directions in which others may wish to follow in prescribing to a fundamental and holistic understanding of man and environment.

EVOLUTION OF THE SUBURBAN IDEAL

THE PROTOTYPICAL SUBURB

The history of suburbia is a history of a vision. A vision which encapsulates the cultural evolution of conscious choice based on bourgeois values and 'ideal' images of home and family life. These images are deep in the structure of the North American 20C city and are the active forces which have transformed the urban landscape. The foundation which set the pattern for suburban imagery was an adaptation of existing structures to new functions, a collective formation of familiar elements to create an original synthesis made through *bricolage*. The prototypical suburb and its subsequent, exemplary developments created the images which still define the present suburban tradition.

The origins of the modern suburb can be traced back to the expansion of London under King George III. During this period the newly prosperous merchant class built small houses in emulation of the gentry's estates and associations with life in the country. The Romantic movements of the early 19C based on Renaissance ideals also contributed to the rise of suburbia. The picturesque tradition gave structure to the architectural forms and to the landscapes in which they were situated. Motivated by Evangelical ideologies of the family and by economics, the move to the periphery was made possible and supported through the expansion of transportation systems for the ease of commuting from home to work.

The bourgeoisie were attempting to appropriate prestige and the pleasures of the aristocracy with their migration to the country. Fishman observed that reactions from defenders of established values and traditions saw it as a clumsy imitation of aristocratic fashion by plebeians incapable of understanding them. Scenes were depicted with overweight merchants and wives clumsily ill at ease in villas that combined every current fashion without an ounce of taste.¹ However, this assimilation constituted a transformation of image and meaning which survives today in the notion of the substantial house surrounded by its own land. Such an image implies that the land, which began as agricultural revenue for the elite, has been transformed by the bourgeoisie into 'pretty' space, i.e. unproductive. This condition symbolizes superior social and economic status without performing the intended functional purpose. Thus, *myth and reality became transformed in the suburban paradox*, where the bourgeoisie were recreating a contrived version of the feudal, patriarchal, idyllic village environment which they were in fact destroying.

The Villa

The classical villa, an antecedent of the ancient Roman villa, became the distinct style of the merchant estate and ultimately the style of suburbia. Villa Suburbanae ringed ancient Rome in 1 B.C., establishing patterns of the elite building pleasure houses set in

¹Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, p.

picturesque gardens outside the city. These ideas were revived during the 15C Italian Renaissance and again in 19C London. During 15C Italy, the zenith of Renaissance Villa design was represented by the work of Andrea Palladio (1500-1580). The notions embodied in his Villa Rotunda express Palladio's purest classicism of the true villa suburbana designed for elegant leisure. It is a cultural expression of civilization conceived as order. The plan is a perfect square, where each facade is identical, and is combined with a symmetrical arrangement of interior spaces and a central circular dome. The building is set on a hill to command the landscape equally, demonstrating the domination of the built environment over the natural.

It is important to consider a small vestige of this ideal, the civilized house in nature, which survives in the most modest suburban developments. A scaled down version of this Palladian ideal was introduced to English domestic design in the 19C by Indigo Jones. It became known as 'georgian' and was associated with a symmetry and balance set in a solid brick structure. Columns and porticos were reduced to detailing, maintaining traditional elements with an elegant simplicity of design. Although the villa has evolved and transformed through a series of styles, its basic characteristics remain prevalent in the single family home of the late 20C.

The Garden

The Italian Renaissance ideal of the 15C saw ordered nature combined with order in architecture. However, the 18C gardens of the picturesque tradition proved to be a radical departure from the Italian villa and garden precedents. Such an ideological shift expressed a significantly different concept of nature. The symmetry and formality of the Renaissance garden was replaced by gentle curves and planned irregularities to capture a sense of 'wilderness.' Within rigid rules, an attempt was made to imitate nature. The picturesque sought to recreate images presented in the romantic paintings of Claude Lorraine, Turner and many others of their time. These painters worked from idealized visions of the classical age; the myth of the age in which man lived on fruits of the earth, peacefully, piously and with primitive simplicity.

It was in the early history of suburban development and landscape architecture that the ideologies of the picturesque style were brought together with notions of urban environmental reform to create new communities beyond the cities edge. The viability of an aesthetic theory and principles of composition emerged in the school of informal and picturesque landscape gardening. William Kent, Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton represent key figures of this garden style, the culmination of which was represented by the work at estates of Stourhead and Stowe. The basic design principle became one of natural intricacy and informal groupings as opposed to the formal clarity and rigid geometry found in the Italian Renaissance garden.

The basis of the picturesque developed from the idea of land organized for consumption not production (a notion still present today in our consumer society). This

represents the source of its deep appeal for suburbia. The presentation of 'pretty' space, the view, the ordered proprietary repose, and the prospect all became associated with a landscape carefully designed to represent consumption of property by viewer/owner. This passive enjoyment is precisely the relationship of suburbia to its environment.

Such imagery presents the basis of the prototypical suburb where an all encompassing garden surrounding the houses and a balance of public and private property each contribute to a total landscape of "house in a park." The picturesque style could embody the irregular, spontaneous and irrational quality that made the home an emotional refuge from the urban center. In only such a "natural" setting could one find security, trust, and protection from the strife found outside such a situation. The aesthetic of the picturesque has become synonymous with the design vocabulary of suburbia with its winding roads and park like scenery. To complement the picturesque garden, the preferred style of home was gradually transformed from the formal villa into the *Old English cottage*. The asymmetrical outline, mix of elements, and associations with antiquity presented by this style, all expressed notions of stability, simplicity, domesticity and retreat.

From the foundation of the villa and the garden styles of the mid 19C, all of the elements which define the essential suburban image and its subsequent development towards a new urban form were in place. What was to follow was a progressive adaptation of the principles of large scale landscaping in the picturesque style to the changing needs and tastes of suburbia.

Villas in a Garden

As early as 1811, the prominent Englishman, John Nash, employed the aesthetic and compositional principles of the picturesque in his designs for Blaise Hamlet, Regents Park and Park Village. Nash brought together all the varied elements of the suburban style into a unified arcadian ideal. He created groupings of distinct cottage houses, similarly sized, surrounding a village green with no provision for commercial activities. The arcadian scale of house to lot presented a vision where the houses appeared as incidents within small clearings of the forest, achieved only through very low densities, generous plantings, and strict control of design. Nash created a basic formula which could be readily followed, making possible the transformation of vacant land into middle-class residential communities. He transformed suburbia into a commodity, a product that could be reproduced indefinitely. . . . And it was.

In America, the imagery of the New England Village combined with Thomas Jefferson's notion of the "gentleman farmer" formed similar prevailing visions for housing. Religious leaders, writers, and liberal reformers sought ways to address social problems that rapid population growth and industry had created in the cities. In addition, advocates of this suburban ideal successfully presented and marketed it as the unequivocal

choice for American dwelling. Travellers across the Atlantic Ocean, in particular F.L. Olmsted, A.J. Downing and Calvert Vaux, instigated and promoted designs based on those of John Nash and Joseph Paxton. While Nash established a vocabulary and style for the arcadian suburb of privilege, Paxton applied similar principles of the picturesque aesthetics to recreational parks for the working class suburb, exemplified by Birkenhead Park. Both of these ideals were to become personified in the North American suburb where communities embodied notions of the picturesque, the villa, and the arcadian ideal as a means to develop exclusive, healthy communities beyond the city centre.

Paralleling the introduction of suburban ideals to the American landscapes was the rise of industrialism. Due to this factor, plus an increase in the demand for the suburban lifestyle, the notion of designing a true suburb emerged. Such a deliberate approach to suburban development was necessary to allow the suburbs to flourish for the general populace. In particular, industrialization contributed four significant factors, intensifying the development of the suburbs. These factors are laid out by Robert Stern in his article, "La Ville Bourgeoise." Stern states that on the one hand industrialism brought increased prosperity for many and better public transportation (allowing freedom of choice of where to live), but at the expense of unprecedented environmental and moral problems in cities, which was seen in the minds of some, as damaging to family and spiritual life. Virtues of education and home life were directly reflected in the spirit of the house where positive moral influence and physical surroundings were embodied in the suburban single family home. Ideals of the "suitable home" became the subject of popular magazines and journals (Family Circle, Happy Home, Parlor Magazine) in the form of stories and poems. The qualities associated with domestic and spiritual virtue were enshrined in the suburban home.

Andrew Jackson Downing became prominent in this reform movement by changing the physical environment to improve the quality of life of the city's inhabitants. He saw public parks as the means to provide relief from congestion through recreational and spiritual refreshment found when in contact with nature. Downing advocated and marketed the suburban ideal of the time, giving suburban domesticity its architectural expression. He derived his theories from the convictions of John Claudius Loudon, an influential English writer in the 1830's who commented upon middle class domestic architecture and landscape. Loudon spoke of the importance of social segregation in neighborhoods to avoid isolation either from a pretentious appearance or an inferior means, supporting the notion of homogeneous neighborhoods. Loudon expressed the significant values associated with the suburban neighborhood, regardless of class, as variety and intricacy in consort with an intimate relationship between architecture and landscape.

Downing expounded on this premise developing appropriate architectural forms. His eclectic designs were the most influential domestic architecture of their time, extolling the virtues of the suburban ideal. Through his books on country houses and garden styles, he

popularized the image of the house in the country, interpreting and translating precepts of the picturesque to the building of suburban homes. Downing established principles of asymmetry, crystallizing the character of the Anglo-American suburban ideal satisfying both beauty and utility. In addition, Downing demonstrated the importance of creating a house with 'feeling';

whose humble roof, whose shady porch, whose verdant
lawn and smiling flowers all breathe forth to us, in true earnest
tones, a domestic feeling that at once purifies the heart
and binds us closer to our fellow beings.²

By virtue of the evolution and prevalence of the idyllic suburban image, the modern suburban house has proven to be a specific type in its own right. It is a decisive response to satisfy the necessities of efficient domesticity and the need to reconcile scale of house with associated forms of suburban transportation. The suburbs offers its users a comprehensible image of independence and privacy while accepting the responsibility of community; explicit in the nature of front, back, and side yards.

Specific house styles have been the result of eclectic inspiration with reference to a local vernacular and to a recognizable cultural context. Architects have drawn on examples of the past to establish a continuity, consistency and familiarity of experience within the open countryside. They have presented a domestic architecture which emulates styles of the pre-industrial age. The gradual development of house styles expanded in response to diverse cultural needs, nationwide. Consequently, design strategy based on regionalism began to emerge concurrent with the increase in suburban development.

In southern California, an Hispanic style was adopted while in eastern Canadian a French Provincial style emerged. In the Mid West, and throughout the prairies, Frank Lloyd Wright fabricated the popular "prairie style." Wright attempted to connect back to imagery of the New England Village while simultaneously invoking the houses of the pioneers within a limitless landscape. Regionalism was apparent in entire suburban districts where all houses would emulate, duplicate and encompass a common style. Implicit to this approach was the idea of presenting a particular mood or character which a prospective owner could identify with as symbolic of his own nature.

As an architect, F.L. Wright has had the most profound influence on the modern suburban house and community structure. In relation to the house, his notions of centralized massing of the floor plan led to the abandonment of traditional gable or temple-fronted building in favour of a very low hip roof. A new relationship was established, based on a simultaneous inward/outward focus of interior and exterior spaces composed of volumes in accord with principles of centrality and rotation. Consequently a new house type was required, transforming the sense of verticality of the squeezed-in Italianate style, to an American domestic architecture which recaptured the horizontal.

²Andrew Jackson Downing from Robert Stern, "La Ville Bourgeoise," *A. D.*, 1985, p. 6.

The narrow but relatively deep lot, characteristic of 19C suburban development, was not suitable for Wright's new "prairie house" type which de-emphasized the traditional static relationship of front, back and side. To better accommodate the new prairie house, suburban lots became square in plan. Wright's Usonian Houses established models for the ranch house which began to typify suburban development. By the 1930's the single storey, low hipped roof house complete with carport began to gradually transform the landscape and townscape of traditional suburban streets.

Wright's formal intentions were acceptable and accessible to the middle class clientele because, in many ways, his ideas were quite traditional. However, during the 1930's, many architects became involved with an anti-sentimental modernism of the adversary culture. These modernists' sensibilities and ideologies opposed traditional bourgeois culture in whatever form it took. Ultimately, those architectural elements most intimately associated with traditional values were thus relinquished and banished from the modernists' vocabulary. A result of this split in modernism and a loss of conviction on the part of the traditionalists saw the pursuit of design issues of the suburbs and the suburban house being largely abandoned by architects.

Paralleling these conflicts of ideologies was the unprecedented burgeoning of the suburbs. At a time when 'good' design in suburbia was urgently needed, our best talents were pursuing issues of architectural mass production or attempting the 'one-off' houses as monuments in hopes of establishing a reputation. Within this climate, the subject of the suburb was left to ordinary practitioners confused and alienated in the crossfire of modernist polemics and to speculative builders and developers interested in economical gains. The resultant precedents of standardization and efficiency began to preclude attempts at capturing an existential sense of place or of community in suburbia.

PLANNED SUBURBS

Industrial Villages

Both the rapid growth of urban areas and progressive technological changes associated with the Industrial Age brought about unprecedented social and physical conditions of urban squalor. Trying to cope with housing demands, transportation, water and sewage disposal, cities became cluttered, overcrowded, and polluted. Attempts to alleviate these dilemmas resulted in badly built accommodations generating additional social and economic problems. In response to these inhuman conditions, socially responsive architects and planners saw a need for social and economic reform.

The industrial village, a planned community, took architecture beyond its preconceived image of social irresponsibility and elitism. The response was rooted in two differing perceptions of city problems; deteriorating living conditions leading to new patterns of less congested situations, and the deteriorating appearance of the city supporting the redesign of major streets and squares. In this spirit of reform, the planned industrial

village was developed to alleviate and annihilate negative situations occurring within the urban areas.

While the single family home was identified with individual taste, wealth, villa and estate; the housing *developments* were identified by professional interest in reform, affordable working class housing, model developments, garden suburbs and subdivisions which arose primarily from European influences. A prevailing integration of architecture, planning and landscape architecture was evident in the support and concern for the cumulative importance of community. The ideas generated by architects' and planners' responses to a need for new forms of housing has had pronounced effects on the evolution of the suburb. First, the need for *responsible housing* that would provide socially and economically better living conditions for the working and middle classes. Second, the notion of a coherent, *pre-planned* community in its entirety. Third, the developments became a catalyst to reshaping the structure of the metropolis into a society that was wholly suburbanized; the repercussions of functional zoning where elements of the city were segregated according to activity (a central business district (CBD) devoid of residents, a polluted factory zone which stood between the CBD and the residential zone, suburbia). And fourth, the push for mass produced, efficient and economic building which eventually resulted in a standardization of home and community.

In the mid 18C, development at Manchester and Soltaire, England exemplified the typical industrial village containing; factory, workers' community, and various social service facilities. The village imagery, dense population, provision of a large park, and location of nearby open country became indicative of this and other industrial villages. Smaller and less comprehensively scaled developments began to flourish outside major centers until the late 19C. The restructuring of the city's components in the industrial villages, as well as in the arcadian planned suburbs like Riverside and Bedford Park, contributed to the evolution of the garden suburb. The garden suburb, a significant manifestation of socially responsible residential planning, presented an approach to community planning which attempted to provide more amenable living conditions while maintaining the status-quo, suburbia.

Ebenezer Howard and Parker & Unwin were among the prominent figures of the garden suburb's evolution. Within the spirit of reform during the mid 19C, they set out to improve deteriorating urban conditions by building model industrial villages in the pristine countryside. The industrial village symbolized a return to ethical and moral ideals, an affirmation of a new humanism reaffirming man's altruistic nature. They not only attempted to provide healthy environments through dispersing populations into smaller concentrations outside the metropolis, they also promoted a "romantic vision" that the dynamic processes of the industrial revolution were controllable.

The Garden City

Ebenezer Howard envisioned the Garden City (1898) as a satellite or new town concept. The Garden City was a unit of reasonable size based on sociological considerations and concern for public health. It was a self sufficient community which provided for greater private and public green spaces. Howard outlined a *balanced community* where;

each house would have its own garden, each neighbourhood its own area for schools, playgrounds, gardens, and churches, and the whole town its surrounding "garden" or agricultural estate . . . There would be a strong town centre with a town hall, concert and lecture hall, theatre, library, museum, and hospital, as well as a large public garden and ample room for shops. Each neighborhood would be bounded by major avenues and would house about one-sixth of the population, or about 5,000 people, in individual or group housing and be only about one and one-half kilometres in greatest extent.³

By adopting the self sufficient community of various housing densities, a viable town centre, and ample public amenities, a city would grow *not* by adding layer upon layer of suburb around its periphery but by establishing a ring of satellite *garden cities*. It was, however, the *garden suburb* which flourished as the standard process of urbanization. This was mainly due to the proliferation of the private automobile, the exclusive use of the single family house type, and the communities' relentless dependence on the city centre. The result was a city of gardens as opposed to Howard's vision of a city in a garden.

Parker & Unwin, planners, collaborated with Howard and attempted at a grand scale to transform the visions of a garden city into reality at Letchworth (1904). Unwin fused axial symmetry of the baroque with the open layout of the picturesque, a sort of romantic medievalism. Within this layout, the cul de sac, a particular feature indicative of the traditional suburb, was introduced for economic reasons. It has since defined the suburban pattern which breaks from the traditional monotonous grid iron layout of streets. The resulting symmetrical groupings of houses and long streets set within an exaggerated height to width ratio could not fuse the architecture and landscape into a coherent whole. Letchworth failed to combine all the elements, residential neighborhoods, town center, and village green, into an ordered, planned city. The vision was not wholly realized and from its inception functioned as a commuter suburb of London, 34 miles away.

The massive undertaking at Letchworth was ironically indicative of the physical and economic problems which would beset 20C large scale suburban planning. A situation clearly stated by Robert Stern in his article the "La Ville Bourgeoise" where, philanthropy was rejected in favour of a capitalism which brought with it the kind of land speculation and market-based aesthetics all too familiar in the post WWII era.⁴

³Gerald Hodge, *Planning Canadian Communities*, p.

⁴Robert Stern, *op. cit.* p. 58.

In America several industrial towns were built which achieved the romantic imagery of those in England. These models were used to provide an increased demand for housing during WWI. The well constructed homes of this era, unfortunately did not continue in the same tradition during WWII. The response to rush housing during the 1940's set the standards for post WWII development. Standardization and efficiency were quickly incorporated into suburban developments. Smaller lots and increased densities maintained a small portion of land attached to the residence, containing all that was 'essential to happiness.' In reality these homes were often as cramped as their urban counterparts. The industrial villages dispersed populations but maintained densities up to ten times that proposed by the arcadian suburb standards. The homes within these villages were described as a place where without moving you could stir the fire, ring the bell, close the door, and open the window all from the same chair. In an attempt to provide everyone with a home, these communities contributed to a growing level of inhuman living conditions, which was in fact what they were trying to alleviate.

The City Beautiful Movement

Simultaneous to the developments of Ebenezer Howard were the activities of those who set out to improve the deteriorating appearance of the cities. The City Beautiful Movement saw to the redesign of major streets and squares of existing urban centres. Civic grandeur was the aim of the City Beautiful idiom, the principles of which governed the design of city halls, railroad stations, civic centers, boulevards, and campuses. The same standards and ideals quickly became synonymous with the design of the proverbial suburb, supporting and generating a more refined vision of the garden suburb.

The innovative work of Frederick Law Olmsted helped lay the foundation for the City Beautiful Movement. It resurrected principles of symmetry, coherence, perspective and monumentality from the Baroque Renaissance. Through their approach, the City Beautiful planners had also identified the main elements of a communities physical form with which the planner and designer worked; street pattern, public buildings and parks (all those elements under public control). Subsequent suburban designs; the garden suburb, the neighbourhood unit, and the greenbelt town, melded ideas from both the Garden City and the City Beautiful aesthetics. However, many of these suburbs (Hampstead Garden, England; Shawnessy Heights, Vancouver; Forest Hills, Toronto) were never conceived to provide housing for the masses. Instead, in an attempt to retain the natural setting, lots were matched carefully to the sloping ground, landscaping accentuated the terrain and often fencing was prohibited so as not to spoil the vista. As a result, these planned suburban communities established a low density pattern, an arcadian ideal. A suburb of privilege.

The "romantic vision" alluded the industrial villages as the cultural ideal became inextricably linked with the profit motive. The suburban ideal was not just a 'natural' world of godliness and morality, it was also a world of class privilege. Access to clean air

and water must be bought and was available only to a few. As such, the industrial villages became typified by the terraced buildings of the modern era and the garden suburb flourished for the affluent bourgeois.

La Ville Radieuse

In the early 20C, urban preferences of modernist architects began to alter and contradict the prevailing standards of accommodation and taste. Virtually all sense of street or enclosed space was abandoned along with complexity and variety of the built environment. Ideas of the garden city were acknowledged by the modernists and provided the major source for their theories on urbanism. However, they did not accept the traditional forms of its architecture, criticizing it as being sentimental, historical and familiar. But, they did fix on certain aspects of its compositional principles, extrapolating and manipulating the ideas to coincide with their own. The culmination of these interpretations are represented in the work of modernists like Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius.

Le Corbusier set isolated wedges in vast open spaces, flooded in sunlight and awash in greenery. His ideas for La Ville Radieuse (the Radiant City) contrasted prevailing notions of the *balanced community*. His utopian vision was based upon the concept of the city as a huge park where sixty storey buildings rose on stilts to allow park space to flow underneath and to provide quick horizontal travel time. Both Gropius and Corbusier justified this building form and layout on two basic criteria; amount of site area used and improved daylight. They found that available daylight increased in proportion to the number of stories, a somewhat biased propaganda for the construction of terraced buildings and vertical cities. The new values produced by the modernist approaches offered bleak, faceless homes of convenience, machines for living, set in vast, undifferentiated space.

Misinterpretations of the garden city as a self sufficient community gave rise to unforeseen impacts of urban sprawl. Proposals dissolved traditional urban form and created villa landscapes which made a lasting impact on modern town planning. By isolating buildings their three dimensional quality became more significant, overshadowing the overall community plan. Terraced buildings were repeated on vast scales disregarding former grid systems. The result was the removal of basic points of orientation which conflicted with the way people identify with their environment. There was no recognizable configuration of urban space. Towns were opened up by separating functions and introducing more open space. Compartmentalization of functions and connections between elements were too fragmentary to create an integrated system, the consequent loss of spatial continuity was inevitable. Such an approach to town planning negated community as a spatial concept where environmental experience was a critical qualitative aspect of the public realm.

The Railroad Suburb

The tradition of *planned suburbs* became the central concern of architects and planners at the turn of the century. The suburbs, which arose at the periphery of American industrial cities, exemplified the model which subsequent suburbs have imitated. Their form evolved from the combination of imagery which surfaced in urban expansion projects like Nash's Regents Park and the development of modern transportation. The evolution of the suburb as a wide spread phenomena remained as an entity separate from the city. Yet, through streetcar and railroad systems, the city centre was easily accessible. The growth of transit systems enabled convenient commuting, allowing the expansion of the suburb as a popular planning concept.

Frederick Law Olmsted was a key figure and founder of the suburban ideal who sought a harmonious balance between natural and built environments. Olmsted united a strong philosophic base and a design formula to produce beautiful, sensitive, life enhancing landscapes. His ideas still dominate the practice of landscape architecture today where the ideal of the picturesque remains operative in specific situations particular to and characteristic of suburban developments.

Frederick Law Olmsted was one of the earliest designers to consider the suburb as a development type. He saw the suburbs as;

the most attractive, the most refined and the most soundly wholesome forms of domestic life, and the best application of the arts of civilization to which mankind has yet attained. . . and that the demands of suburban life, with reference to civilized refinement, are not to be a retrogression from, but an advance upon, those which are characteristic of town life, and that no great town can long exist without great suburbs. It would also appear that whatever element of convenient residence is demanded in a town will soon be demanded in a suburb, so far as it is possible for it to be associated with the conditions which are the peculiar advantages of the country, such as purity of air, umbrageousness, facilities for quiet out-of-door recreation, and distance from the jar, noise, confusion, and bustle of commercial thoroughfares.⁵

To improve upon the flourishing, but fragmentary, suburbs, Olmsted and other designers established building standards and design controls for the suburb. Rules governed lot size, building placement and property rights. In addition, communal architectural styles of planned suburbs began to influence the form of small villages which had spawned into large suburbs after the arrival of the railroad. The notion of *theme town* became akin to the romantic vision of the New England Town or European Village. This approach is still evident today in many new communities and transforming older ones. A sense of community is supposedly fostered through image association which presents a distinct *town image* through restricted choice of architectural styles and elements. The name

⁵Robert Stern, *ibid.*, p. 10.

of the streets and of the development itself try to fulfill the dream of a preconceived image.

The railroad suburb represents the classic suburban form which most closely approached the bourgeois monument and utopia. It evolved at a time when bourgeois civilization was most prosperous and self confident. The railroad suburb exemplified the central meaning and contradiction of the suburb; a natural world of greenery and family life that appeared to be wholly separate from the great city yet was in fact wholly dependent upon it.⁶ The railroad tracks held the city and suburb in precarious equilibrium. The station was at the heart of the community, accessible by all commuters and within a fifteen minute walk. A compact plan, with radial systems was necessary to accommodate this requirement. The railroad village developed into a community with its own identity and natural unity, limited in space and surrounded by the open countryside.

Ideas of appropriate scale and form of these communities became a central concern of designers involved with planned suburban development. Many followed the planning ideas and aesthetics of the Garden City and City Beautiful Movements in search of a workable unit of human scale. From such a specific 'grouping,' housing and community services could be structured. The provision of community centres, curving streets to define neighborhoods, and a substantial home set in a garden became the focus of these planned villages. Transportation became a significant factor in the nature of their structure being the strongest physical organizing principle. The primary aims were to insulate a neighborhood from traffic yet provide links for the social need of the family to their environment. A sense of community, socialization and their own homes allowed the bourgeoisie to express their individuality within a framework that society accepted and identified with.

It was within this context that Olmsted's design innovations could be assimilated and disseminated on a wide scale. The guidelines he established proved instrumental and essential to this process. His work presented an integration of architecture into nature where the landscape, not the individual house, established itself as the true monument of the *bourgeois utopia*. Olmsted's influence in landscape architecture was capable of giving expression to a new vision of the world and our place in it.

The evolution of his ideology piqued in the design at Riverside (1869). The Riverside plan expresses the ideal relationship of urban conveniences combined with the charm and advantages of rural life. Olmsted was attempting to achieve a balance between family and community within a pleasant setting where suggestions of a refined and secluded domestic life were not far from the life of the community. Public spaces provided opportunities for socialization fostering relationships and interdependence between families. Public services within the town center, railroad station, hotel, water towers etc. became symbols of the community. Riverside was to provide the American Suburbian a counterpart to Hausmann's parisienne boulevards, where circumstances for promenade and congregation, within a defined public realm, were offered to its residents while still

⁶Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, p. 134.

allowing for a multitude of vistas to the surrounding countryside.

Olmsted's design encapsulated the ideas and images of the traditional suburb. His work established the principle of a planned community as a unit which would retain its identity within the engulfing conurbation protected by greenbelts, gates and other barriers. Such a community was set apart and internalized within a picturesque pastoralism. Olmsted employed curvilinear streets to distinguish the community within from the surrounding prairie. To create the picturesque landscape he set into action specific guidelines for the residents and developers of the *village*. In his attempts to eliminate the 'madhouse' effect he saw occurring all over England, he prohibited high walls or fences. By establishing standard set back requirements of house from front walk, Olmsted began a tradition which has governed suburban development since. In the case of Riverside, a suburb of arcadian densities and privileged few, the set back was a generous thirty feet. This provided areas for elaborate tree plantings on both sides of the streets, transforming a vast open prairie into a picturesque setting.

As the suburbs flourished, Olmsted's sons began to work in the same vein as their father. They expounded on his ideas in their design of Forest Hills (1912), but attempted to introduce suburban ideas to a more urban situation. Originally planned as a lower income neighborhood, it was soon transformed into an exclusive community due to rising property values in the Manhattan district. It is a sequentially ordered village based on successive linear movement from the railroad station to the park; a metaphoric journey from town center to open country, incorporating essential public spaces to ensure a viable public realm.

The layout of Forest Hills contradicts earlier, more romantic and antiurban suburbs like Riverside. Atterbury and the Olmsted Brothers abandoned these more amorphous layouts, preferring the cozy, domestic character of gently curving streets. The plan of Forest Hills enabled the community to establish a balance between individual expression and communality. This achievement inspired Clarence Perry, a resident, to base his highly influential planning strategy, the neighborhood unit, on his experience there.

Even long after the railroads have been bankrupt, the classic railroad suburb remains a sought after monument. It represents an aesthetic achievement in both landscape and domestic architecture. A temporal entity dependent upon a precarious balance between city and country and between the community and the individual.

Auto Suburb

From the earliest suburban prototypes of 18C London to the elaborate railroad suburbs of the late 19C, the suburbs remained subordinate elements in the city. They were a refuge for the privileged minority. Its design stood apart from and in contrast to the centralized structure of the modern city. A significant theme which differentiates the 20C

suburb from its antecedents is the attempt to secure for the whole middle class the benefits of suburbia. Previously restricted to the bourgeois elite. This attempt changed the basic nature of both suburbia and the metropolis. A form, based on the principle of exclusion was being organized and transformed to include everyone. This paradox is exemplified in the basic unit of these sprawling metropolitan regions, the decentralized auto suburb.

By the 1920's an interrelated technology of decentralization had begun to operate which inevitably loosened the ties which once held together urban functions to defined cores. The automobile was opening up new patterns of residential settlement. The mobility of the car along with other technological developments which reduced dependency on city centers; cinema, radio, telephone, television all combined to produce an independence and freedom never before available to the residents of railroad and streetcar suburbs. The location and the necessity of compaction was no longer dependant on walking distances. It was the beginning of a ubiquitous residential sprawl, a single contiguous pattern with no defining boundaries and a certain degree of independence from the commercial center.

The pattern of suburbia was drastically altered, fed by building programmes and increased car ownership. Stable and insured network of savings and loans institutions made possible through federal housing innovations and mortgage financing promoted long term commitments to the development of subdividing land and building houses. This fundamental change in process introduced economies of scale and of speed in the suburbanization process. Such rapid paced building required simplified house designs which were attractive to buyers and uncomplicated to build.

The dominant theme was one of modern simplicity as interpreted by land developers and construction contractors. The suburban house gained a new impetus from modern methods of functional mass production. An aberration of modern architecture, populist aspirations, and requirements of the market came together in suburbia. However, reformers like Lewis Mumford and Catherine Bauer Wurster saw the contradiction between the requirements of modern building and living and the procedures of speculative house building. Wurster proclaimed;

small builders, front-foot lots, miserable straggling suburbs, and ideology of individual home ownership must go. In place must come a technique for building complete communities, designed and administered as functional units and constructed by large scale methods.⁷

Critical to her assault on the suburbs is the notion of resurrecting "complete communities," where design, planning and construction become a synthesized process. It was not until the post WWII era that the corporate suburb would follow such a process. However, large scale development was no assurance to quality communities or to the end of "straggling suburbs."

⁷Robert Fishman, *ibid.*, p.

Within the context of suburban sprawl, the influence of the private auto became central to North American life in the early 20C. The car was the main design determinant of planning strategies for suburban communities. As it was accepted and incorporated into suburban developments it began to raise critical issues regarding the relationship between the automobile and the pedestrian in community planning.

Clarence Perry addressed the issue of the car as a key feature to the layout and organization of *neighborhood units*. He saw the need to keep these units protected and insulated from their urban surroundings. Perry employed main streets to surround and service the area, not dissect it, and as such act as buffers for the internal community. The central feature of each unit was an elementary school supported by a community of 5-6,000 inhabitants and within a fifteen minute walking distance. The essential elements of the neighborhood unit outlined by Perry have been used in the design of communities with populations ranging from 3-12,000 people. However, such approaches still support the notion of a *city of gardens* as opposed to the self sufficient satellites of a *garden city*. These somewhat vacuous communities still depend upon a central commercial district and industrial sectors outside of the unit for essential services.

In the search for the suburban ideal, the consequent approach to suburban development continued to reinforce the car as a necessary commodity. Their structural organization and relationship to their surroundings depended upon private transportation. New designs became even more internalized and separated from their environs. Innovative planning approaches began to look at new ways of accommodating the car within the confines of the enclave.

A more elaborate and comprehensive approach to suburban development was represented by the work of Clarence Stein, a major exponent of the Garden City movement in America. Together with Henry Wright, they addressed both aesthetic and social issues in their influential community plan for Radburn (1928). Their approach was responsive to local site conditions, to housing densities, and to concerns for accommodating the private automobile. To alleviate the potentially disruptive effect the car had on communities they presented a unique solution, offering residents a choice of transportation within the community's boundaries. Their ideas pioneered alternative residential designs establishing new relationships between precedented elements: houses, roads, paths, gardens, parks, blocks, and neighborhoods.

The main organizational components of the Radburn plan incorporated 12-20 ha. superblocks structured within a hierarchy of roads. Major roads were peripheral to the community while internal access was restricted to specialized traffic roads to reduce impact on the community. A pedestrian system of walkways was separated from automobile routes and intersections maintained separation through different levels of crossing. Houses were turned around to face gardens and parks instead of streets. These streets became mainly service lanes for clusters of houses. The entire development was structured within

a system of open spaces creating a continuous park in the centre of the superblocks. Within this unique 'front yard' environment the pedestrian was free from conflict with automobiles.

Even this innovative approach to suburban design was met with criticism. Most significant has been the impact of its incomplete town centre which decreased the vitality of the community. Reinforcing this notion is the fundamental layout and resulting spatial environment, or lack thereof. Still others deal with more superficial components like; its choice of domestic architecture, an innocuous colonial style. Resident and architect Alden Christie, writes in his article "Radburn Reconsidered,"

The layout of the dwelling in the superblocks creates a network of intensely developed spaces which abruptly evaporate into a shapeless common, too vaguely defined to suggest an extension or expansion of private yards, too wide to command a directional tendency towards a local point, too sparsely landscaped to invite the refuge from the tight complex of houses . . . The dwelling complexes surrounding the open green in effect are drawn away from it. The automobile has been made such a dominant feature that life is more oriented towards the peripheral access road . . . than towards the common.⁸

The principles of Radburn have been repeated in the greenbelt towns of the 1930's and have influenced the design of metropolitan suburbs planned since the end of WWII. The significant issues that the Radburn plan presents evolve around the provision of a public network and its subsequent design. Such a system cannot be wholly dependent upon the pedestrian nor can it be isolated from necessary services which support the viability of the public realm. It must encourage and incorporate uses which are part of an individual's essential needs. As was the case at Radburn, the necessity of the private car effectively maintained its dominance, turning the public space away from the manicured park to the service lane.

Broadacre City

Urban preferences of *modern architects* held the relationship of car to house as one to be hidden and subverted, addressing the car as a problem not a virtue. In opposition to this prevailing modernist trend, F.L. Wright saw the advantages and positive aspects of a technologically progressive approach to urban planning and residential design. By utilizing the notion of modern transportation, Wright envisioned a transformation of the prairie landscape on a momentous scale, allowing unprecedented communication and contact throughout entire regions.

F.L. Wright designed residential schemes which accepted the automobile, the grid, and the prairie. Reacting to the inhuman overcrowding in contemporary suburbs and urban centres, his ideal vision was a decentralized form of settlement which restored man's contact with nature. Wright consciously attempted to merge and connect new developments

⁸Alden Christie from Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

with their surroundings, making the enclave integral with external neighborhoods. As the auto became the dominate mode of transportation, his work, ironically contributed significantly to the development of the suburbs he despised. Even though some of his best ideas were inappropriately interpreted, the resulting sprawling suburbs sacrificed the spatial system of the town, just as his utopian scheme of Broadacre City.

Broadacre City (1935) presents Wright's extreme vision, the apotheosis of the *arcadian suburban ideal*. It represents a vision at a vast scale which articulates principles of a new kind of planning adjusted to the potentials of the car. Wright's ideals present in his utopian Broadacre City have governed suburban development since 1945. The pragmatism inherent in the site plans, together with a house type of a nomenclature derived from the number of cars parked under its carport, are characteristic of Anglo-American traditions, familiar and symbolic.

Wright's dream, however, was based primarily upon the assumption that 'good' architecture would assure a 'good' life. But, it was at this point in suburban development that leading architects were abandoning the planning issues of the suburbs. The ambivalent and capitalistic nature of land speculators and developers dominated the suburban scene, creating a plithora of abhorrent parodies on Wright's ideas. Without the significant intervention of architects and planners, the burgeoning auto suburb developed along two general forms. Either it was an enlargement of older suburbs or the thoughtless surrounding of the city with blankets of low density housing interrupted by sporadic strips of commercial development. But everywhere one could identify with the 'one car' dwelling, the constituent American type.

Suburban homes became a symbol of position in society, a middle class status symbol. They were of a recognizable style, attuned to the romantic ideal of suburbia and cheap to build. Development of the communities, a by product of land speculation, class conflict and the alluring image of the bourgeois utopia, was soon left to surveyors, estate agents, financiers, and building contractors. These people saw little need to spend *supplemental* money on architectural fees. House designs were standardized, a pattern book sufficed, and the gap between designers, planners and speculative builders widened. The standardization rampant throughout the suburbs, was in turn fed by the emerging service sector and the consequent mentality of the 20C consumer culture.

Simultaneous to the rapid transformation of the landscape into a decentralized low density residential pattern was the dissolution of the nuclear family. The 'new' family entered into a period of crisis which contradicted and belied the togetherness implicit in the classic suburban house. The family once seen as a devine institution was replaced by uncertainties associated with feminism, divorce and disbelief. In contrast, the single family detached house metaphorically escaped the periphery and became the central element in the structure of the metropolitan region. Again, *myth and reality were transformed in the suburban paradox*. All other land uses became subordinate to the provision of a maximum

number of residential lots supporting and popularizing the single family house. The sprawling suburbs redefined the modern city in its own image creating decentralized urban forms serving the needs of a vast region at the sake of the individual family.

THE DECENTRALIZED SUBURB

The Post World War II Situation

Scale and speed predominated post WWII growth as urban centres increased in population densities and land area at unprecedented rates. Negative images and captions gradually superseded the favorable characterization of suburban developments where prevailing integration of architecture, planning and landscape architecture supported a cumulative impression of community, manifest in projects like Forest Hills. The profit motive began to govern suburban development setting new standards for suburban "sprawl."

Significant social and economic forces combined to produce the present metropolis. Migrating and emigrating populations, economic forces expanding jobs and incomes, and the vast expansion in automobile use were all brought together and directed according to prevailing values and ideals. Thus, the ever expanding suburbs, built in easily accessible areas at the periphery, were the preferred choices for living. In this context, the Palladian aristocratic ideal reached its ultimate expression. No longer was this image confined to the leisure life of the aristocrat or bourgeois elite, the 'villa' home gave to all classes the opportunity for leisure, family life, and union with nature.

The momentum of suburbanization during the prosperous years of the 40's and 50's, became a powerful phenomenon that obliterated all precedents. Post war growth shattered any state of equilibrium maintained by the cities of the railroad era. Demands for housing swallowed up limitless open space destroying the balance between agricultural and residential land uses. The city was seen as a conglomeration of heterogeneous communities of local centers and garden suburbs, an environment of single family houses linked by highways, accessible from all points. As suburbia set out to eliminate congestion of the industrial city, it in turn created its own form of decentralized congestion. No single spot was reinforced as the core. Instead a single great decentralized city, the epitome being Los Angeles, was emerging.

The creation of the decentralized city was less a conscious quest for innovation than an attempt to preserve older values under conditions that threatened their existence. The success of the suburb occurred at a point when the downtown maintained its significance and a complementary extreme of city and country were reconciled in an urban form, the railroad suburb. The resulting congestion of the attempts to preserve this advantage through new strategies which supported the use of the private car were disastrous.

The pressure for expansion led to rapid decision making and simplified solutions. House patterns were reduced to a minimum and building technology was stifled for economic reasons. New housing and community forms began to follow new patterns of development, deriving intellectual inspiration from the idealized plans of Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, and F.L. Wright. However, functional, constructional and capital concerns governed their approaches. Post war suburbs became a crude pastiche of the three seminal planning concepts; high rise apartments, green strips and concrete streams echo notions of the Radiant City while endless rows of houses on 60 x 100 foot lots present a mockery of the Garden City and Broadacre City utopias. Abberations of these planning forms were the inspiration for contemporary suburbia where the erosion of urban space occurred in the guise of technological progress.⁹ Planners turned to notions of green space infused around each house while developing whole communities as internalized units. Every measure which contributed to this phenomenon was justified by profit.

The momentous reshaping of the city during the post WWII era dramatically affected the physical planning of communities. The dilemma which resulted from; the desire to live close to the country creating ever increasing rings of suburbia which in turn moved the country farther away, was establishing the sprawling city as a major concern for planners. In addition, cities were becoming less compact due to progressive and sophisticated transportation and communication systems available. Planners were beginning to enlarge the scale of their approach to include the entire metropolitan region. They were considering the interdependency of the various parts on the whole conurbation. Ideas which were initiated as early as the 19C by Patrick Geddes, who observed the need to plan together all the features of a *region* and all the needs of a population, were being considered. Even the work of Ebenezer Howard and F.L. Wright were based on the concept of how best to organize a region, whether by concentrating populations in satellite towns buffered by open spaces or by spreading a prairie grid of low density housing across the land highlighted by commercial centers.

Planners responded to the concerns of the growth and spread of cities into the countryside together with a subsequent concern for the development and conservation of natural resources. To achieve a balance between human and natural factors, the foundation of their approach to planning required that; people, place and economy of a region must be taken into account. Metropolitan wide planning efforts were established, acknowledging the importance of balancing all the parts, particularly between the central city and the suburb. It was evident that desired urban forms should give coherence and cohesion, possibly a sense of community, to the exploding metropolis.

The new patterns of development also centered on an auto-oriented society and were established in accordance to the decentralized city; the need to consolidate amenities of the city and country, and the need to provide accessibility to all the parts. Accommodating the

⁹Rob Krier, *Urban Space*, p.8.

automobile had profound effects on the scale, location, and physical form of the suburb and its relationship to the metropolitan center. The expressway, the shopping mall and the industrial park re-oriented major community functions away from a single dominant center. These conditions were all features of the four patterns of metropolitan growth which gained prominence in the 1950's and 60's, as indicated by Gerald Hodge in his *Planning Canadian Communities*, (1986). Hodge lists the four urban patterns as: the concentric city, the central city with satellites, the star-shaped or finger plan city, and the linear or ribbon city.

The *concentric city* is based on sustaining the primary business centre where new residential development and other activities occur at equal distance to the centre. The aim is to keep travel distance to work at a minimum for all sectors of the community. Such a system relies on the efficiency of mass transit. Eventually however, the growth of suburbs reach limits where travel to the center for all major activities becomes inefficient. At this stage there is a need for sub-centers or new towns, similar to the satellites envisioned by Howard. Such a theme rests on the notion of *cities within the city*, as expounded on by Leon Krier, a Rationalist who has used this approach in his visions for restructuring cities in Europe and North America. A system of subcentres within the city region maintains efficiency while reinforcing communities of "reasonable size," with their own centres and public realm.

The key feature of the *city with satellites*, a greenbelt of parks, agriculture, and ex-urban development, distinguishes it from the concentric city. Derived from Howard's idea of the garden city, this element establishes limits to the physical expansion of the central city. Beyond the greenbelt several satellite towns are planned to surround the center and absorb its new growth and industrial development. High speed transportation systems connect the two components where the satellites still maintain a high degree of self-sufficiency. The towns range from 30,000 to 60,000 in population and afford residents quick access to the countryside.

The concentric city and the city with satellites recognize the significance of individual community identities within the metropolitan region. These planning approaches differ only in the use of the greenbelt which separates the center from satellites or towns. The concentric plan, if recognizing local situations would serve to integrate urban development with natural features more responsibly while maintaining a relatively compact approach to urban growth. It would also create a variety of individual centres which could sustain a public realm and generate a sense of community. Both the linear and star-shaped city utilize space inefficiently by trying to maintain quick access to the country for all residents. The resulting dispersed form, along the lines of F.L. Wright's Broadacre City, does not contribute to a community oriented atmosphere of defined public spaces as does the concentric or satellite approach.

Not only were innovations in city planning a factor of new growth patterns, but the

development process itself was being restructured to accommodate the corporation and profit motive more efficiently. At first, the private industry was seen as the main initiative to provide rapidly increasing housing needs. Suburban land developments were viewed as "improvements," and as such, were supported and financed by National Insurance Acts. However, the small businesses confronted extreme cost and supply problems with rising material and labor costs which in turn increased the price of the individual home. This form of construction interfered with the ability to supply all income levels the right of a new home. In an attempt to alleviate this situation, construction costs were reduced as opposed to land costs or developers profits.

Within this context, E.G. Faludi, a planner schooled in Italy, attempted to create viable communities in the suburbs. He proposed ideas of blending low density housing with green space and commercial uses. His ideas of a new community were to resemble a town, a place with a certain degree of self sufficiency, not unlike Howard's Garden City. Faludi also introduced a new form of house based on the ideas of Wright; a bungalow set broadside to the street, on spacious lots, using strong design elements. These ideas were at variance with the existing matchbox bungalow and mutual drive set row after row on the street line.

Faludi was also concerned with the layout of the development which he felt should be in accordance to the natural topography of the site. The terrain would determine a natural order of lot lines in accordance to maximum available light. These elements were then derived from the least expensive building methods. The result was a new housing style reinforced by building controls similar to Olmsted's method at Riverside. However, Faludi's ideas were set in a climate of economic uncertainties of private industry who could not risk expenditure on utopian visions. Thus, many of Faludi's ideas were not immediately incorporated into suburbia's design.

As a result of the economics of small scale production, large scale house construction companies were rationalized due to their ability to effectively reduce construction costs. Prefabrication and similar techniques became popular in accordance with large scale production and the corporate suburb. Concurrent to this process was the inevitability of standardization. Humphrey Carver made a prophetic conclusion with regard to large scale producers in his *Houses for Canadians* (1948);

projects on large scale provide opportunities for less stereotyped design and more imaginative planning, which in turn should stimulate the demand for housing.¹⁰

Ironically, what was to follow was to be considered the most prolific, monotonous approach to suburban design across Canada via the corporate plan and the Don Mills model. Once profits were realized no one was willing to experiment on new housing and community forms for better living. They went with a sure thing, diminishing the

¹⁰Humphrey Carver from Sewell, *City Magazine*, p.23.

opportunity for unique and innovative design solutions.

Carver elaborated on the new approach to community planning occurring in Canada which emulated the ideas of Clarence Perry and his *neighborhood unit*. Carver saw the house building programme as inseparable from community planning because the planning process imposed an order to the building process. Such an observation was to lay the groundwork for standardization to rapidly sweep over all suburban development. Carver perceived community planning as similar to any other industrial process, a mechanization of objects where community planning;

may be compared with the designing of the process by which the component parts of automobiles are delivered to the assembly line in a rational sequence so that the finished products can be brought to completion as economically and rapidly as possible. ¹¹

The fetish of consumer goods with built in obsolescence was successfully transferred to architecture and community planning. Dwelling became a commodity, a fast food industry available to our consumer culture in whatever form the market supported. Such a phenomenon characterized an ideology acknowledging temporality in building allowing mediocrity in the built environment to flourish. Qualitative and experiential notions and thoughts on community were not considered in the approach offered by the corporate plans. Cities were viewed as a collection of neighborhoods from which component land uses fell into place. The approach to community planning was to identify existing neighborhoods to improve or new ones to develop, then to identify desired densities and areas for neighborhood units to be planned. Incorporated into this process was the notion of greenbelts or greenspaces to link larger neighborhoods with the metropolis. Quantity and required services supported by the neighborhood became the determining factors of the community's structure.

While new housing prevailed as low density, single family, the physical form of both housing and community changed dramatically. Public planners and private developers, who were the significant forces in new housing developments, abandoned the straight street, narrow lots, two story houses associated with public transportation and adopted curvilinear streets, wide lots, one and one and a half storey houses, and room for a car beside every house. They utilized the principles of the neighborhood unit, secure insulated and centred on a public school and park within walking distance. The common grid was forsaken for the superblock. Loop streets, crescents and cul de sacs became the suburban vocabulary across North America. Pre-industrial images were abandoned for conformity and mediocrity of the corporate subdivision.

The Corporate Subdivision

Significant work undertaken, at this time, was in the form of complete new communities, satellite towns at the outskirts of cities. These developments signify the

⁹Humphrey Carver from Sewell, *ibid.*, p. 25.

dramatic change in the structure of real estate and of the house building industry. Once characterized by small scale independent entrepreneurs, they became transformed into an industry of a few enormous, highly profitable, corporate organizations whose collective actions have significantly impacted the growth patterns and price levels of suburbia. The new role of the corporate owner allowed complete control of the entire site, selling off parcels to individual builders while reserving the right to approve community layout and house designs. Don Mills, outside of Toronto and Sherwood Park, outside of Edmonton are examples of the first large scale corporate developments in Canada. They represent efforts to establish entire communities containing several neighborhood units, shopping districts and areas for future industry. However, the results have not been conducive to establishing quality environments or self sufficient communities; i.e. satellites. They are, instead, commuter suburbs separated by greenbelts to maintain the community's individual identity from the encroaching city.

Don Mills (1947-56), a suburban community envisioned by land developer E.P. Taylor, exemplified the revolutionary direction suburban development was to take after WWII. It instigated new planning ideas and development processes that would be initiated across Canada in subsequent planning projects. Don Mills, built on a 2,000 acre site, was the first comprehensive community built in Canada. The Don Mills model was to radically alter the shape of housing and property industries nation wide. These institutions were subsequently reduced to a few major corporations who would alter the face of the Canadian landscape, surrounding cities with blankets of suburban sprawl.

Five elements, outlined by John Sewell in his article on "The Suburbs," were established and became synonymous with community planning through the "innovative" Don Mills model. These include;

1. the neighborhood principle, four separate neighborhoods with their own schools surrounding a central shopping and service core.
2. attempts to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic through pedestrian walks and hierarchy of streets in a maze or labyrinth configuration to discourage outside traffic.
3. emphasis on green spaces for walkways; preservation of mature trees; a street system structured to take advantage of existing topography.
4. work opportunities provided by industry thus maintaining affordable housing both for factory workers and commuters.
5. consideration given to architectural and other design elements, approval by corporation for materials, colors, etc. to ensure community has 'own feel' until more established.¹²

To achieve a desired diversity within the enclave, a variety of builders were employed in the construction of Don Mills. Also significant to the spatial and experiential quality of this new community was the unconventional approach to lot and house forms. A 60 x 100

¹²John Sewell, *ibid.*, p.31.

foot lot provided choice by accepting houses broadside or narrow side to the street. Elbow room was created and seen as desirable because it allowed for increased spatial interest! The majority of the lot was given to the front where maintenance was essential to community image. Insulation at the front also meant less area at the back which was usually poorly maintained. There was more land immediately surrounding each house allowing separate driveways for each. This distinct look to a new community provided for more windows thus direct light to the interior spaces. Many of these ideas had been illuminated by Faludi decades earlier.

In addition, Don Mills incorporated a collage of other ideas already in practice, including elements from the elite arcadian suburb to its spatial extreme, the industrial village. The idealistic nature of this eclectic plan was to provide the best possible living and working environment, but not at the sake of effectual gain. Don Mills was attempting to prove that good planning *was* compatible with good business. However, many of its *good planning* intentions were never realized as the profit motive prevailed.

Sewell identifies some of the invalid assumptions made by such a model which contribute to its inadequate solution for community design in the suburbs. He refers to its inability; to be a self sufficient community as opposed to a commuter suburb of Toronto, to provide housing for all ranges of incomes, to serve the automobile efficiently (the pedestrian was considered paramount), to create 'sense of place' through design and color control as opposed to dominating the inhabitants at the early stages of development. Unfortunately all of these premises and good intentions were ultimately forsaken due to natural evolution, or to cost control by the corporation. Even the originally planned cornerstores elluded the reality of the corporate suburb. Thus, the corporate plan inevitably superseded the planners' plan and any sense of community that may have been generated was relinquished for capitalistic ventures.

Don Mills defined the basic design elements and business practices used in contemporary suburban development. This model has since been emphatically replicated across the country with slight alterations to accommodate local conditions and individual land holdings. From this process, seven main planning principles remain constant to community development at the fringe of our cities.

1. residential and industrial split making enclave theoretically self sufficient
2. open space is the predominant design element creating an undifferentiated spatial environment
3. grid system of roads abandoned for a hierarchy of streets, separating traffic functions and insulating the neighborhoods creating voids instead of places
4. euphemistic town center providing minimal support services is surrounded by a ring road and high density housing
5. central to each "neighborhood" of 6,000 inhabitants is a school, however the sense of neighborhood and community appears just on paper, not in reality
6. house forms similar throughout the enclave despite the attempt for architectural diversity, each provides a space for the auto
7. business practices between developer and builder specify time frame for;

houses to be built, materials to be used, sale price of house and land, design of house etc. (The builder becomes little more than an agent for the developer, and his ability to make a profit is circumscribed by developer controls. The only opportunity for builders profits are on houses themselves, therefore, they inevitably cut corners on construction costs.¹³

These seven principles have formed the foundation of the suburban planning model for Canada. Since the inception of Don Mills, few other models have been generated, and the previous city of compactness, diversity of uses, grid systems, flexible residential arrangements, and viable public realms has been abandoned. The Don Mills model has been adhered to slavishly and the city has been left behind.

Subdivision Control

To alleviate problems inherent to corporate suburban development, planners have developed tools to guide and control the subdivision process, with regards to cost and functional and practical concepts of quality. Such a process supports and reinforces the Don Mills model and the process of corporate development. Subdivision control ensures ease of access, proper drainage, conformity of services, etc. where misguided interpretations of spatial and environmental context are forsaken for misguided interpretations of quality. Within this system, place making is seen as subsequent to or a product of 'control.'

All development plans must be approved by meeting local standards for health, safety and convenience in order to be registered and certified for future sale. The two basic components of subdivision control include both procedural (monitoring process) and substantive evaluations where the latter is an attempt to obtain high-quality physical environments through "appraisal of content" according to planning and engineering standards. "Good design" has become obsolete within this process.

The *procedural component* satisfies the corporate developers approach to land subdivision providing legal constraints and procedures for the division and selling off of parcels of land. Ideally;

the subdivision plan review process is the community's opportunity to have a direct effect on the outcome of the development of a portion of its physical environment. It can, at this stage, ensure that the development will be compatible with its surroundings in terms of type of structure, land uses, demands on existing services, and impacts on already built-up or planned areas in the vicinity.¹⁴

Often corporate decisions and financial independence override community empathy, and the given situations very seldom offer innovative ideas for community development. Instead the monolithic cycloptic vision of the Don Mills model is expounded on for method and

¹³Sewell, *ibid.*, p.37-38.

¹²Gerald Hodge, *Planning Canadian Communities*, p.

design, and continues to permeates the Canadian landscape.

The *substantive component* of subdivision evaluation contributes to the development of standards which examine design and appraisal of layouts. They are scrutinized according to; *planning criteria* pertaining to the form and density of housing, street systems, open space and essential community services and to; *engineering criteria* pertaining to drainage, road construction, and utilities. Manuals and handbooks are provided to set forth design standards, part of a continuing effort to promote good quality subdivision design. However, such an ideal is much easier to advocate than achieve. There remains a pervasive utilitarianism about subdivision planning according to this approach. The consequent standard design, based on the Don Mills model, is evident largely due to: the use of guidelines and manuals as opposed to good designers; and the fact that subdividers concentrate on yield of lots often at the sake of the natural environment.

A lack of designers from the planning process together with a desire for corporate profits override benefit to the natural environment. However, there have been attempts to reach better solutions and good subdivision design based upon environmental grounds. Such approaches utilize a variety of lots, interesting layouts, public open space, buffered housing from highways, and respect for topography, but all depend upon economical solutions in terms of construction and maintenance of the public components. Other factors being considered when appraising subdivision designs include; energy conservation, access for pedestrians, availability of public transit. But the 'approved' form of these elements are maintained by the conservative approach of the Don Mills model. This imagery which supports the appraisal process contributes to the ultimate quality of the residential environment as per the corporate plan. None of the solutions begin to question the fundamental basis of the suburb as an appropriate planning type and its ability to establish a community or sense of place. Nor do they deal with the community as a whole. They still focus upon the parts at the sake of holistic place making.

The overview of concerns for reviewing residential proposals reinforces the conformity and redundancy of the standard pattern where spatial definition and built environments do not contribute to the community and its elusive 'sense of place'. They also do not consider three dimensional, perspectival, experiential qualities of the place. Instead, everything is determined according to the Don Mills precedent where measurements and engineering standards supercede quality of environment. Superficial definitions and imagery seem prominent without regard to the more deep structure of place. Such standards continue to be criticized due to their lack of recognizing the community and its place within the urban environment, i.e. the public realm.

THE ANTI-SUBURB

The premise of the suburban ideal, popularized and available to everyone, shaped the direction of metropolitan growth in the post WWII era. From this growth there developed a central ambiguity to the suburban layout; an internalized community which expressed a conflict between the self sufficiency of each house and the desire for a unified environment of the whole. As the pattern intensified, the open plan of lawn and gardens, associated with Olmsted's pastoral picturesque, was dissolved and replaced by the tradition of walls surrounding each house. In favour of individualism and exclusivity, the general objective became one of shutting out everything belonging to the neighborhood which would indicate that there was any other proprietor in the vicinity. The suburbs became secluded and internalized, each an enclave supported by particular income levels.

Complex systems of roads throughout the metropolis made possible a diverse distribution of functions, regardless of type or distance to the center. Suburbia was everywhere. Developers were indiscriminately subdividing land. Soon, distinction of privilege became associated with proximity to natural elements. It also meant being free from commercialism and business enterprise, completely engulfed by suburbia's vacuous space. This new sense of unlimited urban space, responding to the automobile and to the location of residences, was being characterized by strip malls and department stores. Metropolitan functions were exploding over the landscape with no relation to a coherent or defined centre. Instead, the family became its own core within this decentralized city.

The tract house and freeway attempted to maintain the commitment to the single family home carrying the decentralized environment to its logical technological conclusion. This form of city was based on the premise that the whole metropolitan region must be amenable to the single family house, each with rapid access to every other part of the region. Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta exemplify this 20C city planned from the freeway to the suburb, where the four lane road makes its way through the landscape prior to any form of residential or commercial development. These urban regions are characterized by sprawling suburbs connected by a matrix of highways which contribute little to a qualitative experience of place or to a viable public realm. The pedestrian has been left behind.

As the significant urban institutions spread beyond the core, the suburb became part of a complex 'outer city' which now included industrial, commercial and residential uses. The car became ubiquitous and commuting a way of life. Communities were developing without proximity to public transportation systems, thus being entirely dependent on the private auto for travel within their own boundaries. Seeking escape from both the growing congestion of the core and the formless monotony of prevailing suburbia, the wealthy built homes farther out in the country on one acre tracts of land. Thus, a rural suburbia was being established, at the benefit of land speculators, which was no different in character to

the monotonous suburbs being left behind. Suburbia was being embraced by all as the preferred choice for living *in* the city.

In response to unprecedented demands, building became an assembly industry, not a craft industry which used local materials and traditions. Prefabricated elements, entire homes in some cases, were creating the post war vogue. Recognizable regional character which may have established a sense of place was all but lost. Houses; repeated, duplicated and mirrored, became a series of patterns stamped across the landscape with no regard for location or for the individual owner. Mass production and ease of transportation destroyed local architectural idioms.

The garage began to have a significant impact on the layout of houses, requiring more space between homes to accommodate both the private drive and connected garage. The bungalow's apparent size was exaggerated by the addition of this obtrusive appendage. Paved surfaces became fragmented floorscapes which interrupted the flow of boulevards, paths, and plantings. From this more dispersed and open plan, the already indeterminant public spaces and streets became even less defined. Such changes in physical form only aggravated the ugliness of suburbia's silhouette.

The suburb continued to be built up as a standardized and simplified sprawl, a consumer of time, of space, and of resources. For the most part, it has destroyed not enhanced the natural and urban landscape. It has been built on two great extravagances; a waste of land (inherent in the detached single family home) and a waste of energy (dependence on the private auto). It has been costly to municipalities and tax payers where services are subsidized, distribution of costs per capita are high, and maintenance and public transportation are almost unfeasible. Regardless, it continues to perpetuate in its decentralized pattern, pervading the unassuming landscape.

Robert Fishman interprets the massive building, which began in 1945, as representing not the culmination of a 200 year history of the suburbs but, rather its end. The extensive change in direction of urban growth is not suburbia at all but a creation of a new kind of city with principles directly opposed to those of the traditional suburb. The growth of suburbia had always meant a strengthening of specialized services at the core, it was always functionally dependent upon it. But this new form of city saw the suburbs evolving towards a decentralized and dispersed form where similar problems of internalization, privatization, and a lack of community were reinforced and continued to permeate its design.

The Technoburb

The basic concept of the suburb as a privileged zone between city and country no longer fit the realities of the post war era. The suburb lost its traditional meaning and function as a satellite community dependent on the central city. Post war peripheral communities no longer excluded industry and large scale commerce. The simultaneous

movement of housing, industry, and commercial development to the periphery created perimeter cities that were in effect functionally independent of the urban centre. In contrast to the traditional suburb, these communities contained all the specialized functions of the core; industry, shopping centers, hospitals, universities, cultural centers and parks. According to Fishman this unique phenomenon presents us with a new form of city, not suburbanization, but the *technoburb*, the basis of which is the invisible web of technology and telecommunication. With the rise of the technoburb, the history of the traditional suburb comes to an end. Fishman describes this new form of city as;

a peripheral zone, perhaps as large as a country, that has emerged as a viable socioeconomic unit. Spread out along its highway growth corridors are shopping malls, industrial parks, campus like office complexes, hospitals, schools, and a full range of housing types. Its residents look to their immediate surroundings rather than to the city for their jobs and other needs; and its industries find not only the employees they need but also the specialized services.¹⁵

In this transformed urban ecology the true centre is located within each residential unit. From here, members of the household create their own city encompassing a multitude of destinations within a suitable driving distance to accommodate a variety of activities. These crucial changes have consequently transformed the meaning and context of the house, but its image and figure have not been similarly modified. Within this context of technological change and new urban forms, traditions and conventions remain persistent. The suburban tract house of the 1950's, like its predecessors, existed precisely to isolate the family from urban life. It defined an exclusive zone of residence situated in the middle ground, between city and country, presenting mediocrity in all its forms. In the late 20C we are still bound by the images and ideals of suburban dwelling established as early as the 18C.

Within this context, the suburban home has become more personalized, internalized and "enshrined" in an attempt to satisfy all the needs of man. However, the critical component, that is his relationship to others, sociability, has not been appropriated. Centres have become a condition of the individual, internalized and exclusive like the suburban enclaves themselves. The connections of the public realm are transformed to invisible entities within the complex web of telecommunication and technology. The subsequent built environment reinforces man's need for privatization but consequently denies his need for socialization. As conferred by Fishman's description of the technoburb which precludes face to face communication and physical movement of the pedestrian. There are no public places associated with the suburban home that support a realm conducive to socialization and the making of place. In the technoburb people have become dependent on the umbilical cord of the private auto allowing indefinite destinations where the getting there becomes a predetermined and an unconscious condition.

¹⁵Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopia*, p. 184.

Fishman indicates that the technoburb is the inevitable outcome of urbanization. He supports this notion by paralleling it with the futuristic writings of H.G. Wells and F.L. Wright. However, Fishman contradicts some of the basic premises that Wells maintains. Most critical is the pedestrian, an entity which Fishman's technoburbs do not accommodate. Wells claims that the post urban city will be "essentially a bazaar, a great gallery of shops and places of concourse and rendezvous, a pedestrian place, its pathways reinforced by lifts and moving platforms, and shielded from the weather, and altogether a very spacious, brilliant and entertaining agglomeration."¹⁶ Wells' description is more akin to the suburban shopping mall or domed city as a way of life. But, from Wells' words, the significance of a viable pedestrian environment is evident.

Wells also foresaw the consequences of technological changes and their effects on urban densities and distribution. He saw growth and diffusion as unlimited to the point that the antithesis between town and country disappeared. However, his vision of the metropolis as a series of villages with small houses and factories set in an open field connected by high speed rail transport clearly promotes the proliferation of the private automobile. This notion is supported by his optimism about the appearance of these regions where he envisioned an individualistic suburbia of districts developed by differences of type and style. The best of the suburban ideal. A scene very similar to the wealthier commuter areas of many metropolitan regions. Their imagery presents a series of enclaves within the city, where distinct villages preside over the landscape. Such a vision of unlimited diffusion continues to support the notion of recognizable centres as integral to the growth of the metropolis, not of the undifferentiated sprawl of the technoburb.

Conversely, Wright presents us with a more radical view of a decentralized city. One which he saw as the adversary to the congested suburbs he despised. According to Wright, the suburb represents the essential extension of city into countryside, where as, Broadacre City represents the disappearance of all previously existing cities. It is a uniform dispersal of the city's functions over the landscape where no significant centre presides over the entire region. Broadacre City is based on universal auto ownership combined with a network of super highways and the premise that there is no need for congestion at any particular point. The city is spread out along a structured grid system to allow low density dwelling, one home per acre, to accommodate agriculture and immediate access to highways, jobs and services. The crossing of the highways possess special status, natural sites for roadside market and cultural exchange; a premonition of the proverbial suburban shopping mall.

Both Wells and Wright maintain the inevitability of decentralizing tendencies inherent in modern technology and society. Although their prophetic forms and images differ, their insights have revealed specific conditions and effects decentralization has on the urban

¹⁶H.G. Wells, "The Probable Diffusion of Great Cities," *The Works of H.G. Wells*, from Fishman, *ibid.*, p.

structure, thus establishing new patterns of urban life. But due to economic centralization, it is unlikely the extreme visions of Wells and Wright will come to fruition in their idealized forms. Centres continue to validate importance and power of large corporations and subsequent support services. They also provide a place for the less fortunate who cannot afford the privileged position in the suburb and who will continue to support the need for an urban centre. However, the reliance on a significant centre is diminishing.

The suburb of the pre WWII era was always dependent on the centre, supporting it both culturally and economically. It strengthened the core as the heart of an expanding region. Now, the structural discontinuity of the decentralized city, physically, socially, and culturally, reinforces a certain detachment from the centre city. It has begun to change the relationship between the suburb and the centre. In its extreme form, represented by Fishman's notion of the technoburb, it has become profoundly anti-urban and autonomous. The only centres it supports are those within each individual home and within each individual. The urban centre has become ephemeral, unconfined by communities or village greens.

Based on this elusive and perpetually transient centre, Fishman states that the technoburb is capable of generating urban diversity without traditional urban concentration. But this diversity is still dependent upon functional zoning and restricted to a public realm within the private auto. Dispersal based strictly upon technology cannot create conditions which support diversity and complexity within the built and spatial environments, critical to the public realm of the pedestrian. As such, the technoburb may obliterate any precedents of suburbia or its tenuous connection to a plausible and viable public realm. The suburban ideal and its traditional imagery are in a precarious condition, awaiting extinction by the technoburb, to ultimately become an anachronism.

Within this transformation of structure, the suburb remains a material and social product of a society which distributes a narrow range of products over large areas. Materially it embodies large scale organization and mass production in its relentless uniformity, with its use of a narrow range of designs repeated endlessly without true variation or relief. Socially it is dominated by "organization men," whose personalities are formed by requirements of working smoothly in large groups.¹⁷ The result is a crucial loss of texture in modern society; an end to individualism. Precisely what the traditional suburb was always striving for, inherent in its preoccupation with the single family home. *Again myth and reality are transformed in the suburban paradox.*

From this uniform sprawl of suburbia, urban growth has generated a pseudo-city, too spread out to be efficient, too superficial (in terms of form and content) to support a true culture. This development promotes socially sterile environments where amenities of communality are lacking. The informal meeting places taken for granted in the city and town are not present. Diversity and complexity have always been supported by the inner city, but the suburbs have not been able to generate this same level of environmental

¹⁷William Whyte from Fishman, *op. cit.*, p.

experience. Isolation forces everyone to drive to a place for "natural gathering." Within this undifferentiated landscape where, nowhere is somewhere, "culture is necessarily reduced to a lowest common denominator, the crass conformity of which will act as a barrier to individualism and freedom."¹⁸

F.L. Wright saw the city as the heartland of conformity and decentralization the path to renewed individualism. Conversely, Whyte sees decentralization as ultimately destructive of a critical density upon which high culture depends. The decentralized audience is the perfect consumer of standard products where the television ads have glorified the single family house as the standard American home enshrined to the low density neighborhood while presenting negative pictures of the inner city as a haven of crime and deviance. Whyte sees that, ultimately, the need must be for concentration and an urban form which supports the opportunity for more choice within an expanding urban environment. His ideas support a diverse city where a series of unique centres generates rich built and spatial environments. A pattern of cities within the city where the persistent image must become one of the technocity as a cultural wasteland, mired in standardization and conformity unable to generate individuality. A cultural disaster. A loss of rich and diverse architecture where place making is obsolete. A trivialization of North American culture, and a destructive threat to the only environment in which culture can flourish, our cities.

Thus, we must try to recapture the critical aspects of the traditional suburb that support viable centres and a structured public realm in terms of process, form, and context. Such an approach should anticipate technological advantages which do not obliterate the precarious condition of the equilibrium between; man and environment, city and country, the individual and community. We must begin to effectively transform myth and reality in the suburban paradox; to ultimately resolve a condition where visual oxymorons permeate a profoundly ambiguous way of life.

¹⁸Fishman, *op. cit.*, p. 200.

SEARCH FOR PLACE IN THE SUBURBAN PARADOX

THE LOSS OF PLACE

From the massive alterations in urban and rural landscapes, due to suburbanization and a reluctance to accept its total domination of city life, the suburbs have been under attack for decades. Criticisms on economic, physical, cultural, social, and aesthetic realms fuel the growing disenchantment with the current chaos of conventional suburban communities, designed and built according to economic and engineering formulas. We are beginning to recognize the suburb as an environment where prevailing layouts based on the modern practice of zoning and reliance on the private car have become unacceptable. There has been a subsequent denial and loss of any sense of urbanity and sociability in the suburbs. Community designs lack significant spatial and experiential qualities of place. This critical condition is due for reconsideration. We must break from the modern pattern of dispersing populations and services throughout the countryside creating undifferentiated landscapes at the fringe of our cities.

Visions of new urban types, demonstrated by Robert Fishman and Robert Stern view the suburbs as an image and an attitude of the bourgeois culture, created by choice and made possible by technology. In their visions, they maintain the prejudices and preferences of American culture for homogeneous, low density conurbations. Fishman indicates that certain deficiencies in the present decentralized suburb, psuedo-technoburb, may be attributed to the fact that it is a new urban type. An obscure and clandestine type still to emerge from the city just as the classic suburb of the railroad era evolved out of disorder of 19C metropolitan growth. Nash and Olmsted recognized and rationalized the process devising appropriate aesthetic formulas to eventually guide the development of the railroad suburb. Speculative builders captured the basic idea and individual property owners eliminated discordant elements to bring communities close to a suburban ideal.

Justifiably, all new city forms evolve from early stages of chaos. As such, this sprawl may have functional logic which, if understood imaginatively, perhaps a matching rational aesthetic could be devised. Fishman credits the technoburb as a viable structure, logical and efficient in what appears as jumble. He sees the renewed link between work and home being contained within this decentralized environment, a relative efficiency in a multidirectional nature. However, this condition does not reconcile the problems of ecological exhaustion even if planned with respect for natural topography and geography of a region. Nor does it resolve or raise the pedestrian from the present state of alienation and possible extinction. In addition, Fishman relies on a process dominated by corporate developers and the profit motive, which is the main crux of the suburban problem. In his scenario the architect/designer continues to be left behind as the developer (client) and consumer govern the direction of growth of the built environment.

In contrast to Fishman's technoburb, Robert Stern identifies the railroad suburb as a viable and appropriate prototype for economical housing within the 20C city. In

rediscovering the virtues of suburbs as a type he reintroduces historical and cultural allusions into the design process. Invention is confined to the realm of shape and symbol, where reliance upon familiar and associative elements of the past generate meaning in the built environment. Stern suggests earlier North American suburbs, like Forest Hills and Baldwin Hills, as typical models to guide development in areas within proximity of convenient transportation to business and cultural centres. He sees the underutilized area between the centre and the sprawl as ideal for accommodating future development and conducive to the railroad model. All the critical elements of the railroad suburb; a distinct centre at the station, housing within a fifteen minute walk, streets and squares directed and structured in accordance with a vibrant centre, identifiable private and public space, must all be maintained together with a realization of our present technologically based society. His vision represents the search for an ideal state of equilibrium between the past and the future states of man and of his relationship with technology, with nature, and with the city.

Stern contradicts theories held by physical and economic planners by not responding with increased densities to fulfill the suburban ideal. By utilizing existing urban structures in underutilized areas, affordable housing, based upon railroad models, may establish rich environments of diversity and complexity traditionally associated with increased densities. In support of this approach which goes beyond current practices and beliefs, is Robert Stern's credo:

there will be no new ideas about cities and their suburbs until our thinking frees itself from the biases and orthodoxies of our recent architectural and urban theories, especially those peculiar cultural biases and cultural prejudices which have encouraged us to see old cities and old buildings - not to mention traditions and recognizable forms - as worthless and wrong.¹

Stern advocates a process that resurrects traditional and historical associations found in typological approaches. He sees the renewed urban centre surrounded by a series of "villages" emulating the design of the railroad suburb. From his scenario, Stern begins to address some of the fundamental problems indicative of the master-planned suburb, reinforcing the observations presented by Arthur Edwards in his *Design of Suburbia*. Arthur Edwards identifies the central problems inherent to suburbia which contribute to its prevailing lack of contextual and spatial character. They include;

- suburbia's duality of content, which is an inevitable aspect of the suburban ideal except at arcadian densities;
- its monotony, caused by the need to provide large estates of virtually identical dwellings;
- its weakness of scale, caused by the fact that economy and convenience set a limit of two stories to the height of these dwellings, while the cost of land, the need to avoid overshadowing, and the householder's preference for private, rather than communal gardens, deny suburbia the space for tall forest trees;
- its restless silhouette and formless spaces, which result from a multiplicity of detached or semi-detached houses; and

¹Stern, "La Ville Bourgeoise," *A.D.*, p. 12.

- its fragmented floorscape which is caused by man's desire for a garage, [and subsequently a drive], beside his home.²

These problems, demonstrated by the process of suburbanization, present the main qualities being condemned, in terms of scale, spatiality, and an overabundance of underutilized land. His observations, together with those raised by Stern and Fishman, illustrate the controversial climate in which we find suburban design. These prevalent concerns can be categorized according to four fundamental notions:

1. The attempt to fuse two opposing ideologies of *town and country* leading to unlimited growth and ecological exhaustion.
2. A lack of any viable *public realm* due to restricted zoning and little relation to an effective sense of centrality within each enclave.
3. The proliferation of undifferentiated space due to the lack of well defined urban spaces, the traditional street and square, which contribute to a coherent *spatial design* of qualitative public and private environments allowing orientation within a structured layout, (figure/ground).
4. The industrial rational for speed and efficiency of design together with an ardent, consumer society has led to a loss of architecture which is replaced by an *architecture of commodity*.

All of these factors contribute to the lack of *place* and of *place making* in the suburbs.

Town and Country

The town and the countryside are antithetical notions. They are the basis of what the bourgeoisie set out to capture in their idealized suburban setting. The suburbs attempted to fuse these two opposing ideologies but the effective dissolution of both was the inevitable consequence. Unlike Wells' vision of the antithesis of town and country, the present form is not an idealized version or condition. For a suburban society, no land is big enough to satisfy its greed or reconcile its paradoxical condition. "Suburban sprawl aggresses both city and countryside and proclaims *urbi et orbi* (what is yours will be mine)."³ It conquers and consumes both city and country, destroying them at the sake of continued unrest, unable to be at peace with itself. It knows no limits, it has no centre or structured form; it is only a fragment, incomplete and unresolved. The suburbs demonstrate that you cannot destroy the city without destroying the country; as they are strangling and draining the centre, they are simultaneously destroying the rural periphery. Due to its unrelenting parasitic growth, the suburbs are no longer distinguishable in the present metropolis, the 'anti-city'.

Rational functional zoning based upon infinite territorial sprawl and proliferation of

²Arthur Edwards, *Design of Suburbia*, p. 259.

³Leon Krier, "Houses, Palaces, Cities," *A.D.*, Vol. 54, No. 11/12, 1984, p. 78.

private transportation has determined the fragmentary and dispersed form of suburbia. Based upon the myth of unlimited technical progress and industrial development of our limited resources, the 'no limits to growth' precept has led to a state of critical ecological exhaustion. Mechanical segregation of the city into monofunctional, sub-urban zones has produced an anti-city which ignores organic integration. Production, consumption and reproduction has contributed to a process of reduction which is encouraged through urban forms, like the suburb, supporting notions of isolation, fragmentation, separation, and restricted choices. The significance of this process is its contradiction of social, ecological and aesthetic rationalization thus transforming citizens into potential and involuntary agents of waste causing effective daily mobilization of a society in its entirety to perform the simplest of tasks.

The consequence of such a process has contributed to maximum consumption of time, space, energy, resources, and equipment in order for any urban functions to occur. The principle activity of cities has become the circulation of people, equipment and information. Arterial systems of transportation and its principle instruments, the necessary extensions of the human body (car, computer, phone), figure prominently in the design of cities. Mechanical transport becomes the principle function in the industrial metabolism of man with nature, where the mechanical processes are at odds with more sensitive issues of an organic system. Multiply vs growth; quality vs quantity; and organic vs mechanic, aptly describe the theoretical dichotomy as presented by Leon Krier who sees functional zoning as the impetus and the villainary means which is destroying the infinitely complex cultural and economic fabric of urban life. This system does not allow an organic order of the city to exist within its mechanical 'logic' and 'rational.' It is, by nature, amoral, asocial and anti-ecological. The result has been the effective dissolution of both the idea of country and of city reducing rural and urban communities, nature, and artifacts to mere commodities. In the efforts to maintain one centre and a periphery, the city has no clear definition. It has no limits.

Both John Sewell and Leon Krier contend to a reconstruction of territory to precisely redefine a strict physical and legal separation in order to clearly establish what is city and what is country. Sewell sees "the attacks on the suburb and the key to its demise, lie in removing the profit element from land development on the fringe, and defining in clear and absolute terms what the limits of the city will be."⁴ Sewell states that accordingly, three assumptions of the omnipresent property industries and their consequent approach to growth must be challenged. These include; city has no limits, there is no such a concept as 'appropriate use of land,' and the country can be assumed into the city. All of these issues deal with a critical association to the land and a subsequent responsible approach to urban growth. Relevant responses must change myths about land use as a function of land values (just a rationalization by developers for making profitability the only criterion for

⁴John Sewell, "The Suburbs," *City Magazine*, p. 55.

development decisions) and the myth of suburb as country ideal. This attitude, an attempt to tie country and city, leads to the belief that lower densities are better, and is fostered by the North American middle state mentality.

A uniquely anglo-american urbanism has resulted from the juxtaposition of these two divergent ideologies; urban/rural, city/wilderness, by defining the physical and cultural contexts of America. This condition is presented by MacDonald and McNally Bushman in their article, "The American Pastoral Paradox;"

The agrarian and pastoral ideal embodies Jeffersonian ideas of the landscape, the victory of individual free will, the hope inherent in a new world, and the power of the wilderness. The industrial and urban ideal embodies faith in the perfect ability of political and urban man's industrial ingenuity, in the wilderness as an [unlimited] resource and in the power of industry.⁵

They relate the interplay between these seemingly polarized ideals, as the desirable human condition represented by the notion of the "middle state". The idea of an American middle ground suggests the dialectics inherent in New World ideas; wilderness/city, savage/refined, agrarian/industrial, where "Americans in fact live their lives in a middle state between ideals of untamed wilderness and individualism on one hand, and ideals of refined urbanity and social contrast on the other,"⁶ responding to and satisfying both contextual realities. As such, the middle state reinforces man's social and private being within the context of both spiritual and physical domains.

The middle state represents a non articulated realm where conditions of resolution or compromise are avoided as each ideal is appreciated and remains complete. This middle state is not a physical description of spatial relationships, it is a unique American frame of mind. But, as such, it has influenced American understanding of space and consequently the way in which American cities and their ubiquitous suburbs are built. Thus, the suburbs represent a physical and philosophical condition where attempts are made to merge and reconcile these two dialectics. Evolving out of this 'frame of mind,' the suburb successfully avoids resolution between the ideals of landscape as wilderness and city as industry; the pastoral paradox exemplified by the "middle state".

The middle state is personified and manifest in the prairie grid where its natural tendency and characteristic is to forestall the resolution of town and country. The grid has provided a mechanism for structuring the urban and rural realms of most American cities, allowing for the decentralization of institutions and density of the city. Its structure indiscreetly relates urban and rural orders, yielding a dialogue between architecture and nature which occur within the precinct of a public network. The resulting form presents a multi-centred urban matrix of landscape and public realm where the conflict between man and nature continues to be unresolved. However, as the picturesque aesthetic emerged and gained momentum during the modern movement, in consort with technological progress,

⁵MacDonald and Bushman, "The American Pastoral Paradox," *A.D.*, Vol. 56, No. 9, p. 11.

⁶*ibid.*, p. 11.

any sense of equilibrium in North American community planning was threatened.

The critical structural and ecological condition of the present decentralized suburb is due to its adherence to a sprawling labyrinthian matrix which attempts to resolve town and country based upon conscious choice for particular aesthetic values in the pastoral landscape. Perpetually consuming land at unprecedented rates, the effect of suburbanization has proven to be terminal. Any form of resolution is impractical and impossible at the present densities and technological levels of our society. Fundamental preconceptions of the picturesque must be questioned in order that community development present a continuing dialogue between man and nature allowing orientation within a comprehensible and rational structure based upon location and context. This new and appropriate landscape aesthetic must support and express concern for the ecological condition of the site and subsequently adhere to limits of urban growth. The need for a new aesthetic is evident from the growing criticisms toward the ideological premises of modernism and a search for new ways of thinking about how and where we dwell in the city.

The Public Realm

The labyrinthian structure of the 20C suburb rarely allows for or promotes a viable public realm to support or to generate special places within its fabric. Nor does the design of these communities support the notion of a defined centre within each enclave. The extensive monotonous and restless silhouette of the pervasive decentralized suburb occupies enormous area without contributing to a qualitative sense of place. Few areas are set aside at strategic locations in a community for civic and religious buildings in order to provide a mix of functions and points of orientation for the inhabitants. These critical elements for varied activities create natural meeting places which, in turn, enhance the social milieu of the neighborhood and the complexity and variety of its built and spatial form. The resulting habitable public areas establish a complex network of the public realm and the notion of place. However, this condition is not met by the present suburban situation.

Immediately apparent within suburban enclaves is the scarcity of places for informal socializing and the opportunities for such activity to occur. The present subdivision process limits the possibilities for vibrant pedestrian connections throughout a community and for working or shopping within a community. Public spaces are rarely defined and articulated to invite people. Streets and walkways suffer from additional deficiency by not connecting to things and events people need in their everyday lives. This lack of connection, except by auto, to and throughout residential communities is partly due to the process of subdivision layout. The major components of a subdivision; curved spine road, recreational amenities, residential quarters, are all fixed within the development. Each

quarter (building pod) is assigned to a builder who organizes the street and walkway layout in virtual isolation from surrounding neighborhoods. The pod becomes a village of 10-20 acres, its size reflecting the developer's desire for specific densities and the builder's desire for a tract easily marketed within two years. Often the result is a village too small to have services within its boundaries and too isolated to provide easy pedestrian access to outside amenities.

The public realm relies upon a structured layout of well defined streets and squares that incorporate and integrate all that is necessary for orientation within a walkable community. In its attempts to create an image of "community" and of "garden," the suburban plan adheres to critical misconceptions of *ordered* layout dominated by the precedents of curvilinear streets, undifferentiated space, natural groupings of plants; in other words the picturesque aesthetic. The circulation systems associated with these master-planned communities meander capriciously, possible of generating only confusion. Orientation within these developments is futile. Arbitrary street organization makes locating one's villa within this incomprehensible maze truly frustrating. Within a society based on mobility it is ironic that streets in so many developments hinder the ability for such an activity to occur effortlessly.

The dominance of the auto has threatened the pedestrian environment to virtual extinction. This condition is reinforced by the poor spatial design of suburbia in which the exterior spaces are not shaped into coherent, genuinely decisive inviting 'places' where pedestrians would be apt to traverse. Buildings are situated such that open space is not clearly defined. Often one design is stamped out and repeated several times across the landscape with little regard to terrain or to creating a legible environment. The lack of a convincing order from irregular configurations of buildings and open space does not provide surprise, complexity or variety to the viewer/participant. The buildings, regardless of architectural merit and aesthetics, along with their associated open spaces, are rarely arranged to create enclosed places which may contribute to the public realm and as such become special. Experience of the suburban development is thus provided by the private auto, a refuge from the inhuman environment. Seldom an attempt is made to create the secure, private environments into walkable public environments generated by a mix of activities occurring close together so people feel safer (eyes on the street), and are more apt to explore their surroundings.

Secluded, internal landscapes are the product of the majority of planned communities throughout suburban America. They are planned and promoted as a refuge from everything beyond their boundaries. It is ironic that these communities are increasingly becoming predominantly based upon exclusivity in attempts to establish suburban living for everyone. This condition is emphasized by setting the planned development physically apart from its surroundings affecting both spatial and social realms. The more discordant the surroundings, the more severe are the barriers which establish this private world of outdoor spaces and shared amenities excluded to nonresidents. These self-contained units

are found behind gates, introduced as symbolic gestures but rapidly gaining acceptance as 'access control devices.' Together with a continuous fence, the entire development is physically set apart and thus becomes internalized. The communal and spiritual aspects of the community become equally internalized as there is little opportunity or concerted effort to socialize. This situation is supported by the consequences of technology, the private auto and fear.

The embalmed landscape on view within the controlled enclave, is meant to symbolically and metaphorically project an image of community, a tranquil meandering garden, consistent and coordinated and promoted by the model home. Such imagery contributes to a *secure* and *charming* neighborhood versus a more accessible, open type of community which is likely to be more socially active. In contrast, the premodern city was structured around significant urban spaces which constituted places to see and to be seen. Density and communication was aestheticized, revealing the city to itself as a scene to be enjoyed. All of society mingled in the openness of the city. A range of experiences were possible offering a variety of activity choices, strengthening social life and community through a vibrant public realm of defined urban spaces.

The challenge of resolving the conflict between pedestrian and automobile, while maintaining a compact, stimulating and walkable community which reinforces the social and built environment, must be met. The denial of the pedestrian in suburban communities or of providing appropriate pedestrian routes throughout a neighborhood can no longer be accepted. Nor can the intolerable, undifferentiated stretches of asphalt which create bleak oceans between pedestrians and services. In essence, the atmosphere generated by urban spaces of a viable public realm was what Olmsted attempted to incorporate into Riverside. However, the necessary intensity could not be achieved using arcadian densities together with undefined spaces. Instead he developed a scenic alternative, the *pastoral picturesque*.

From the specific design conditions of this new aesthetic, Olmsted inadvertently generated one of the greatest American landscape institutions, the front lawn. The front lawn did not evolve into an active family space. It belonged to the community, contributing to the suburban landscape as a whole. Family members would only venture out onto it to maintain it, fulfilling their civic duty and moral responsibilities. In conjunction with roadside trees, the front lawn created an illusion of park, capable of transforming the urban street into a country lane complete with greenery and reinforced by the streets' curvilinear form. However, being a private space, the lawn insulates the house from passersby who would not dare venture on to it for fear of committing an abhorrent behavior. The lawn thus maintains a balance of public and private which is the essence of the mature suburban style made possible only through decisive use of energy consuming paraphernalia (lawnmower, hedge shears, etc.).

"Lawn Culture," as acknowledged by J.B. Jackson, is associated with activities and social morals surrounding the suburban community and controlled by observation from the

porch. The culmination of this lawn culture is evident in the residential golf and country clubs or lake retreats, the suburban equivalent of urban parks. They are the late 20C suburbs closest approach to genuine public space, notwithstanding, the suburban shopping malls. These spaces are a perfect realization of a cultural ideal epitomized in the picturesque tradition. This form of public space is an institutionalized means to define social boundaries where public space becomes enshrined as a symbol. In reality it is strictly private. Nature itself has become the instrument of social snobbery and of racial and religious prejudice perpetuated by the suburban ideal. Prejudice and aesthetics has helped form the insulated and internalized communities where the dream of property, family life, and union with nature could be fulfilled at the sake of functional centres and a viable public realm.

The Elusive Centre captured by the suburban mall

At present, the public focus too often turns to strip mall retail and consequently a distinct lack of symbolic and functional centres within suburban communities. Contemporary models of suburban development offer an elusive centre, public place or square, personified in the shopping mall. The mall represents a post WWII phenomenon, a response to rapid growth in the suburbs and increased demands in consumer goods. Now the mall incorporates all types of activities under one roof. Its culmination has been depicted by the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta where anything is possible, except perhaps casual meeting and sociability. The mall exemplifies places which could be anywhere but feel like nowhere in particular. They are cold, overwhelming and impersonal spaces that a suburban community can *really* identify with as a unique "town centre." As such, there are symbolized by a name, calculated as friendly, attempting to evoke a sense of comprehensible community within its intimate inter-connections and scale.

Public places in the suburbs have been consumed by the increasing importance of these shopping centres, either strip mall, cluster or courtyard development, as focal points within the community. Developers promote an image in consort with the overall conceptual impression for the community. This commercial *center* generated by suburbia is completely internalized, not unlike the communities themselves, and dependent upon the automobile. External pedestrian walkways have become less important than their counterparts, the simulated interior streets. Courtyards and mixed use malls mimic a village-look but still lack accessibility and scale of a public gathering place for people. Along with their associated parking lots, they have become the 20C equivalent to the public square.

The sense of drama and theatre relegated to Baroque open space has now become fabricated by the suburban supermalls, the theatres of consumption. Bound to the rhythms of commerce, these self-contained, internalized spaces are completely controlled and predictable. Visual uncertainty is exiled. The idea of street is severed from its reality and

its 'market place image,' . . . " wrapped up, sanitized and packaged for consumption."⁷ Both private and public place has succumb to the corporate hand, no longer do residential neighborhoods evolve within a complex web of services structured to involve the community. The corner store has been abandoned, razed to the ground.

The malls are indicative of a generation weaned on the television dial. And like the television, they sell illusions and promote fantasies encouraging a desire for an experience just beyond ones reach. The mall must perform not only a commercial function, but fill the vacuum created by an absence of social, cultural and civic spaces within the vast suburban landscape. Suburbia was thus envisioned to be an ideal world without the visual distress of cities, an architectural concept that offered variety without confusion, gaiety without vulgarity. All of its elements were designed, coordinated and brought into a disciplined pattern - the shopping mall.

Even though the mall imitates the basic street experience it lacks its main components and its expressive quality of place. The street provides a sense of messy spontaneity while the stacked effect of building facades and depth adds to its quality and interest for the spectator/participant. The mall attempts a certain energy and spirit which coordinates individual desires to meet with the whole; ideally, conformity without uniformity. However, intentional juxtaposition of elements creates little visual interest and little sense of a real streetscape. Rather it is an exaggerated, internalized, and programmed theatrical experience which remains out of scale with the pedestrian. Seldom can one find exclusive pedestrian access associated with these centres where huge parking areas surround the internalized buildings. The town centre appears imposed upon the community rather than a warm friendly market place which grows out of a community. The simulated town has become the focal point more than the town itself. The idea of a place has become the place, introverted, hermetic, sealed off from the outside.

The traditional suburb enhanced and contributed to the historical centre of the city, dependent upon it, as expressed through peripheral growth. The breaking up of this structure, through means of transportation and zoning, saw a gradual disintegration of the notion of centrality and subsequently of the reciprocal interaction between centre and periphery. As the attitudes of an ideology based upon decentralization and rapid, mass construction became active and popular in the mid 20C,

a disintegration or decomposition or a "deconstruction" of the city began. The public realm (always concerned with centrality of some sort) became progressively attenuated; and then as capitalist greed - or indiscretion found it agreeable to become associated with the intellectual formulations of early Modernism, and as these ideas became embodied in legislation and bureaucratic code, there came into existence that mish-mash world, compounded of convenience, sheer incapacity and unspeakable inattention which is today.⁸

A survey of the visual and physical evidence, from an era where building occurred too fast

⁷Victoria Geibel, "A Simulated Town, Stamford, Connecticut," *Metropolis Magazine*, Oct. 1988, p.

⁸Colin Rowe, "Revolt of the Senses," *A.D.*, p. 9.

for thoughtful understanding, discloses this significant influence most profoundly manifest in the suburb.

Such an account of the present situation reveals a chaotic condition in a world where a perceptible field must stimulate the senses and contribute to the good of all, spiritually and physically. A new approach is mandatory. We must perpetuate and support new ideas which introduce lateral thinking and begin to acknowledge processes which accept them as new ways to restructure the city. The ever enclosing fence can not continue to be given priority in suburban enclaves. The centre can no longer be left behind due to construction costs, time or it never being planned at the outset. In our search for place we must appeal to the sentiments of Leon Krier;

"A beautiful centre is a necessity;

A beautiful boundary is a luxury."

Even the illusions upon which the enclaves themselves are based endeavor to satisfy the requirements of creating place. However, by perpetuating modernist ideologies and aesthetics they elude any recognizable form of a true public realm. Attempts of market strategies use specific names for communities to indicate them as *special places*. Association is created only through static elements not spatial, participatory reality. A namesake cannot create place. A grouping of houses are typically referred to as a village, an old English Town, or a house in the country complete with rolling hills, ravines, and rivers (if you can locate them). Unless you can afford the privileges of *natural* environment, lakes and golf courses etc. (often manmade), the intended owners get only those images conjured up in the mind, left to live out the dream vicariously. In reality it is a house, like any other suburban house on a street much like any other suburban street, where no unique qualities exist to substantiate its namesake. In the suburban paradox, *the sake of place has successfully become a commodity*. A nonplace where the illusions and contrived situations attempt to capture a sense of place and of community. They are, however, only a pretense; intangible places which continue to exhibit conformity and mediocrity inherent to the suburban phenomenon.

Spatial Definition

Imperative to the design of the public network, in terms of quality of environment conducive to habitable pedestrian places, is the notion of spatial enclosure, provided through well defined spaces. Contemporary town planning has effectively demonstrated a total disregard for spatial problems. Coinciding with the current sociopolitical climate, priority is consistently given to traffic and other deceptive devices of technology rather than a people's need for a tolerable urban environment. While the suburban phenomenon was gaining momentum, little attention was paid to the subsequent aesthetic and spatial implications of its design. Derived from practical requirements of road safety and daylight

(70' rule), the code of practice justified the basis of design. Thus, townscape was and continues to be approached as a matter of space and scale but one of form and line.

A 20C phenomenon; the compulsive addiction to unarticulated and brutal gigantism, has produced an environment of identical elements repeated on horizontal and vertical planes with little variation. And in the suburb, opportunities for spatial contrast are further restricted due to the exclusive and intense proliferation of the single family home for everyone. The spatial design of suburban layouts has been, primarily predetermined by transportation, single use zoning and housing and street bylaws incorporated into master plans. These factors have led to undefined spatial patterns and consequently to the loss of precise urban spaces. The dissolution of the city as a complex spatial continuum is evidence of the embrace of modern architecture's ideologies which have led to the demise of "traditional town planning and the urban space as an external reality decipherable in aesthetic terms."⁹ This obsessive emptiness of modern urban spaces has ultimately led to the general deterioration of our environment.

As early as the 1940's, some practitioners recognized the desirability of spatial enclosure in community planning and its effect on the quality of environment. Thomas Sharp's, *The Anatome of the Village*, studies the principle of spatial enclosure, as it pertains to the English Village, an essay in the tradition of Camillo Sitte's *Art of Building Cities*. Sharp felt that by understanding the design principles which gave villages their beauty and vibrant character he may well elucidate principles which could be useful in new housing developments, while acknowledging the social and technological changes occurring in the post war era. Whether the village type was recognized as roadside (linear) or squared (courtyard) the common elements which contributed to its character and quality were: quiet simplicity, building scale and continuity, manner of adapting to the site, and natural setting (including mature vegetation). But, most significant, was the principle of spatial enclosure, the character of their street-pictures which gave the villages their special charm. This observation directly relates to notions of urban space as presented by Sitte's typological description of space.

Thomas Sharp observed that the villages seem to contain their road, transforming it into a place where one enters and leaves, not merely an incident on the roadside. Such a discovery influenced suburban layout, re-establishing the principle that spatial definition provides the aesthetic basis of housing layout. Unfortunately, many planners' and developers' interpretations became a series of complex labyrinths where curvilinear streets, cul de sacs, and T-intersections did little to weave together a coherent structured community. Defined spaces eluded the scale and proportion of the villa landscape.

Suburbia failed to bring together built and spatial forms in accordance to the making of place.

Apart from street configuration was the fundamental denial to address the relationship

⁹Rob Krier, *Urban Space*, p. 89.

between figure and ground, solid and void. This resulted from too many buildings for the landscape to dominate and buildings too loosely grouped and of insufficient scale to enclose space. Within these environments, spatial perception is deceived by the surrounding abundance of open space within the sparsely occupied land. In reality, what *real* open space is there. This condition is manifest and supported by the tradition of both front yard, unoccupied and private, and side yards which cannot accommodate anything. In addition, underutilized land due to street allowance, excessive set backs and wide lots create a multitude of left over spaces. Suburban spatial design proves to be inadequately defined and distributed, lacking any element of traditional urban space. The present situation contributes to and perpetuates the social vacuum of suburbia's built and spatial environment, which in turn subscribes to the lack of a viable public realm.

Cubist Space

In his article, "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space, and Landscape Architecture," Micheal Condon distinguishes between two basic types of space which he refers to as Cubist and Volumetric. It is his contention that theoretical supports from various fields have allowed modern ideologies, thus cubist space, to flourish. This condition is endemic to the decentralized suburb. Disguised by superficial notions of the "natural" and "diversity," picturesque aesthetics attributed to the modern movement (extrapolated and modified from 18C renditions of the 'romantics'), have pervaded man's expression of dwelling.

The modernist notion of space emerged at the turn of the century by disclaiming Cartesian terminology of space and time as being separate and static entities. These anthropocentric philosophies saw existence as a state of mind, "I think therefore I am," which led to the isolation of mind from matter, thus man from nature. The essence of matter was interpreted as extension, i.e. spatiality, where space was an order and the role of design was to reveal the essential and rational symmetry in three dimensions. The palladian villa with its elaborate garden was the logical expression for dwelling and proved to be the ideal image the bourgeoisie choose for their suburban communities. The importance of street and square within these Baroque principles were essential to its ideology and maintained man at the centre of the universe. This support of Cartesian/Darwinian ideals continued

until enlightened romantics sought to free the trees along with the people, the habit of planned order was the model for paradise, gardens, palaces and for the avenues and perimeter blocks of great cities. In order to escape this formal setting, revolts were necessary, the most significant being the modern movement, evident in both planning and architecture. This paradigm retained the vocabulary of an earlier revolt. It reconsecrated romantic nature and floated its new socially beneficial technological objects in this escapist myth. In order to preserve its virginity the romantic garden needed to face away from the white tower and meander vistalessly. The landscape was fractured into twomorally opposed sets of images. There was *natural* nature found and

free (made by God and the English), and another, man-made and ordered (forced, authoritarian and French). The ordered, man-made (and glorious) landscape became identified with the authority of the man-made (and diseased) city. Technology was separated from the opium of wild nature. The existing city was black; the utopian countryside was green. The rebellion against any repetition of undesirable historic precedents from the city and its building became a rebellion against the repetition of planting trees in straight lines.¹⁰

Various converging cultural forces reflecting these conflicting dialectics provoked new beliefs and attitudes about the way space was being interpreted and articulated in all artistic expressions and mediums. Justification for this spatial reversal was based on formal/perceptual grounds and by the imperative to bring nature into the city. Significant to this changing climate was the promotion of materialism, scientific determinism, which supported the belief of an absolute cause and effect governing all relations in the realms of nature and of man. The obvious implications to restrictions on free will inherent to materialistic conceptions became the impetus for artistic temperaments to react. The idealistic alternative which was seized upon saw "the cognitive power of the singular intellect as the only true essential." Form was seen as a "relative state simultaneously substantial and insubstantial through the permeation of space."¹¹ Through this interpretation, the modernist contend that space and time are inextricably interrelated, a notion which first surfaced in the artistic movement of Cubism, exemplified in the work of Picasso and Braque. The Cubists transcended the evident, abstaining from representation of three dimensions in attempts "to paint the more *real* symbol of the more *real* mental state." ¹²

However, in their valiant attempts to oppose the material, their ideal only presented a different view of the same image. Both approaches supported a tendency toward radical reductionism where truth was found through examination of the most basic level of phenomena. Characteristically hierarchical, medieval approaches (Cartesian) did not discover essentials below the materially evident. Instead essence was within the synthetic structures and processes of a spiritual nature. It was precisely this spiritual premise of Cartesian beliefs that contrasted sharply with modernist ideology. In modernism everything was reduced to scientific study and analysis, what could not be explained did not exist. There was a total disregard for the spiritual, the magical, the unknown. Man separated himself from beliefs in the possibility of omnipresent realities (truths) of the spiritual world and the psyche. The implications of this theoretical shift toward a material reality have pervaded man's interpretation of the natural world, his relationship to it and his

¹⁰"Views:Various," *Design Quarterly*, 120, 1982, p.11.

¹¹Micheal Condon, "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space, and Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 7,

No. 1, Spring 1988, p.4.

¹²*ibid.*

place within it.

Through its varied expressions, modernism was effectively proving the material world as less real than the invisible. Blurred distinctions between matter and energy (subatomic electrons) and between space and time (Einstein's theory of relativity) permeated artistic exploration, where space was formed by the experience of time. This space/time continuum approach abandoned a single point of reference, as in the one point perspective image. Instead, objects were viewed relatively, expressing qualities of simultaneity, articulated by the penetration of inner and outer space and interpenetrating hovering planes. The possibility of making space through simple enclosure was ignored. Space became entirely relative and associated primarily with the observer rather than the forms which created it.

Le Corbusier was the first to translate Cubist principles to architectural form supplemented with value of economy and efficiency in his search for universal invariables over individual expression. The influence of his *Ville Radieuse* on community planning has been far reaching. Traditional urban space, explicitly bound by building to form a continuous wall at the street edge, was radically transformed. Buildings were placed as objects on an undifferentiated field "obliterating the street as a figural spatial entity and consuming space without context."¹³ Nature was allowed to flow freely, under and through buildings depicting a scene similar to the romantic paintings of Claude Lorrain. A categorical split between the "modern" expression of architecture and the "natural" (picturesque) expression of landscape presented two opposing personalities designed on the one hand for the collective man/machine and on the other for the individualist man/animal. This perceptual and cognitive duality between the paradigms for a modern approach to architecture and to landscape reflect the middle state mentality and the need to respond to both man's social and private being.

Modern space concepts illustrated by Corbusier were supported by many other practitioners. Particularly significant to planning and community design were the ideas of Lynch, *The Image of the City* and Cullen, *Townscape*. While appearing to react in opposition to the modern contentions of "space as an ever changing perceptual field associated with the viewer rather than as positioned volumes formed by solids,"¹⁴ both presented interpretations and renditions of urban imagery in support of these precepts. From their observations and narrations the very essence of urbanness is missing; the experience of moving through canyons of space formed by building walls. Space is determined as good or bad by "the quality of the changing pictorial views experienced over time, rather than the meaning and scale of enclosing urban walls." The urban taxonomies offered by these theorists are difficult to conceive without the dialectics of spatial enclosure; "the vista without the promontory, the node that is not a plaza, the city landmark without its

¹³*ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴*ibid.*, p. 7.

container, or the city path that is not an elongated volume of definitive corridor space."¹⁵

No space theory counterpoint is offered, instead, only ways to enrich the environment through filling the modernist vacuum with a profusion of kiosks, street furniture, rich paving patterns and other *place making* elements. Our consumer society responds to this ploy as evidenced by the profusion of superficial "streetscape" and "Main Street" projects.

Their theories for urban composition concentrates on the parts while neglecting the whole. As such, they are incomplete strategies and approaches to the spatial design of the environment, an activity which demands a comprehensive response.

These same ideas have been demonstrated by Lawrence Halprin at Nicolette Mall, Minneapolis, a paragon of cubist space. In this design Halprin has successfully disguised notions of variety, interest, movement, and sense of place within a Cubist space/time continuum.

The mystical relationship of time to space to motion renders the physical materials and volumes of the existing city invisible and insubstantial or again, in a word: Cubist."¹⁶

This has been further reinforced through Halprin's design terminology. He has established parallels between dance and landscape architecture where notions like scoring, choreography, incomplete designs and non-complete spaces that move into each other form the basis for his creations of illegible spaces.

According to Condon, in landscape architecture, space has continued to be interpreted by modernists ideologies even as theoretical shifts have begun to question and discredit their premise. This is evident in the growing support for a traditionalist approach in the field of architecture and urban design. Based upon urban precedents and Camillo Sitte's urban space typology, the traditionalists oppose modernist faith in "unique solutions." Instead, they focus on historicism and typological interpretations to express meaning in the built and spatial environment. This approach to community planning has not fully impacted the suburbs due to developers initiatives and adherence to their own interpretations of the essence of modernism. Cubist space is alive and well in the suburban paradox. Motion, spatial dynamism, singularity of perception are all evident and hail the modernist aesthetics ingrained in the front lawn culture.

Suburbs go on forever creating a disorienting landscape where the fundamental characteristic is a lack of spatial definition, a deficiency that no amount of asymmetrically "naturally" composed planting groups can cure.¹⁷

Assault on the suburbs has been directed toward this ambiguity and lack of spatial definition due to the continued expression and persistent strength of a functionally dead theory of design; modernist aesthetics formed by cubist space. This illogical lapse of insight must be rectified.

Explorations into contemporary society, at large, are beginning to question the

¹⁵*ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶*ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷Micheal Condon, p. 14.

basis of modern era ideologies and their relevance to 20C culture, particularly in the realms of ethics, process, and meaning. It is Condon's contention that the emerging paradigm, environmental holism, has weakened the philosophical underpinnings of modernist aesthetic principles influencing the resurrection of urban space thus, supporting a foundation for volumetric space. This ethical view provides the foundation from which new ideas and new ways of thinking about man and his environment can emerge. From Condon's interpretations, it supports the traditionalist approach for the validity of volumetric space as the figural media for creating experiential places in our built environment.

The critical contrasting precept governing the opposing ideals of Modernism and Environmental Holism is the value of the individual relative to the group; the parts relative to the whole. Modernists viewed humans as the masses, as suggested by Darwinian's principle "survival of the species," and evident in the preoccupation with mass housing. Environmental holism supports complexity and interdependency in the biosphere and the merging of knowledge and existence as presented by metaphysics. This shift resurrects Cartesian terminology of spatial representation through the use of historical precedents and traditional forms. It also concedes to possibilities within a spiritual and psychic realm of existence. However, man is no longer viewed as separate from nature, instead, the world is perceived as a complex continuum where man and nature are integrated within a holistic and interdependent system. To see the landscape vision, nature, as one with mankind, an integrated and active human component within the biosphere, "requires a revision in the way that space is presumed to exist."¹⁸ This theoretical reformation must be evident in the new suburban aesthetic.

Architecture as Commodity

The institutionalized, heterogeneous and addictive nature of consumerism has dictated built form in the urban environment throughout the 20C. The suburbs are characteristic of and indicative to this phenomenon. Traditional approaches to planning and building have been sacrificed to a "chaotic pseudo-democratic and pseudo-humane urban ideology"¹⁹ where capital control wields power for its own dubious purposes. The ulterior motive of industrialization of building has not been a commitment to material comfort but instead to maximization of short term profits and the consolidation of economic and political monopolies. The last thirty years have represented an unprecedented rapidity of the built environment where pressure for expansion led to hasty decision making and simplified solutions, consequently, many underlying ideas were left unresolved. The focus was on a complex interplay of function, construction, form and capital concerns. Inevitably,

¹⁸*ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹Rob Krier, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

mediocrity prevailed in manufacturing, in design and in consumer demands. House plans were reduced to a minimum, building technology was stifled for economic reasons; *Architecture* was seen as a low priority. However, the manipulation of these elements and processes are not purely functional in character. Ethical, social and cultural implications are also part of this complex web, not to mention the infinite and perpetual repercussions to the natural landscape.

The majority of recent building and planning has been dictated by financial plans of the client (often a developer), producing disastrous results due to unwarranted pressures on design teams and planners. The shape and control of urban living is fashioned according to dictates of market research strategies. Planners and designers submit to demands of the client; if the client believes a suburban shopping mall with vehicular access is more efficient and yields greater profits, the planners' and designers' opinions on suitability (on the precept that one is consulted) are rarely sought. The monopoly of planners have succumb to temptations of free market economy where "too much in too little time by too few" prevails.²⁰ This situation represents the triumph of the multi-national corporation. What could be more abstract, distanced and universal, modern and Cartesian.

Architecture is successfully being marketed like any other consumer product.

Architecture, however, is not a fashion to be dictated by consumer demands or the profit motive where superficial styles prevail at the sake of fundamental features and traditional elements, familiar and symbolic, built from a history of craft industries. The critical problem is the precept that buildings are viewed as objects and the production of objects are viewed as abstractions.

They [developers, speculators] are not interested in living in their buildings and they're never going to. More over, they're not ultimately interested in the quality of life in these buildings. They see them as abstractions which will sell for certain prices and return a certain amount of money. This is a pretty violent operation. It's not mediated by those positive aspects of bourgeois civilization, which I think are still quite, for all the exploitations, readily detectable, in the bourgeois city, and clearly, of course, that city for which Leon Krier has so much nostalgia [the pre-industrial European City].²¹

The resulting character, or lack there of, exhibits repetition with little detail or texture, economy of styles and no relation to location. Such a condition contributes to a hackneyed architecture of monotony and commodity where architecture has fallen victim to a demigogic process.

Within this process, the use of two distinct principle modes, random form and uniform, have successfully destroyed meaningful form. These phenomena are both products of an industrial mentality where "meaningless uniformity of mass products and the uniform meaninglessness of modern architecture produce sterile urban environments."²² This mechanical composition of form is depicted by: planned dis-

²⁰*ibid.*, p. 90.

²¹Kenneth Frampton, "Regionalism," *The Fifth Column*, Vol.3, No.3/4, 1983, p. 56.

order, coercion, modernism, decomposition as style, rationalism as style. Cloned mechanical symmetry of industry only results in the part under the whole or the whole under the part. Degenerated to a form of pseudo kitsch, it is in direct opposition with organic composition where classical order and symmetry grow out of its location. An organic system supports natural symmetry and hierarchy, vernacular crafts, nature, classical arts, and the individual. Such an approach introduces an integration of the part and the whole; rationalism becomes the means not the end. It is time to react to the level of crass conformity in which architecture finds itself, or we may forever be caught in the musical rift;

little boxes on the hillside,
little boxes made of ticky tacky,
little boxes on the hillside,
little boxes all the same. . .
little people in the houses,
all went to university,
where they were put in little boxes,
and they all came out just the same, . . .²³

Another condition of the present state of architecture is represented by the North American sensibility where people do not build with a sense of permanence. Always prevalent is the notion of buy, sell, buy, sell, buy, etc., leading to the presumption of a disposable architecture. The house has become a commodity; it is not a place where the family is going to live. Such is the impact of mobility via technology. Kenneth Frampton proposes that regionalism and education may provide a way to begin to deal with the reality of this difficult situation.

One way may be to develop a generation of younger people and architects who have, somehow, the equipment to take a subtle approach to this problem at the level of the discipline itself. Hence emphasis on specificity of material, the quality of sound, the possibility of having fenestration that isn't sealed, *the possibility of resisting*.²⁴

Frampton illustrates a direction toward "good design," an *architecture* where quality of the depth of analysis is combined with appropriate sources for inspiration; concerns for history, light, sound, sensitivity to users, to culminate in the expression of truth. But, he adds, we must go beyond "good architecture" to embody the specificity of the *place*: i.e. critical regionalism. In order to address those aspects that are contingent upon the specificity of the place, that is, the transformation of the given topography, or the given morphology, i.e. the transformation of reality, the problem becomes one of having a sensitivity to the complexity of that reality. In other words, acknowledging the given situation to become familiar with and influenced by the location or site. History and

²²Leon Krier, *op. cit.*, p.

²³from "Little Boxes," song made famous by Pete Seeger, written by Malrina Reynolds, copyright 1962 Schroder, from Stern, p.4.

²⁴*ibid.*, p. 57.

typology often becomes an option for forms of regionalism where typology is a simple method of classification, reducing the world into manageable categories. But, what must occur is a transformation of types which must reflect the dialectic between good architecture and specificity of place, between the tangible and intangible, between the permanent and temporary.

Often we deal with images in terms of history and typology, even populist vernacular images can be successfully transformed, but done wrong they become ridiculous ornament. This occurs through appropriation of images or the buying and selling of images and sticking them on places they do not apply, as evidenced by European solutions being directly applied to the North American landscape and urban morphology. The meaning and interpretation of the images can not elicit appropriate responses from the inhabitants as they do not possess the history or memory of the forms being used.

However, significant American typologies have developed (many from European models) through a process of *transformation*. This condition is indicative of the urban/rural dichotomy, a dialogue which produced the American residential street and porch. Within this vernacular dialect, rural and urban elements are juxtaposed and unresolved, emanating from the middle state mentality. Urbanity is maintained through spatial definition of the *street*, facades placed tight against the sidewalk, and of the *entrance*, through the porch as mediator between garden and house. This "arrangement of the archetypal American residential street, made by closely spaced houses with porches, set along a street of trees; is American urbanity defined with an interpretation of rural elements."²⁵ These ideals are incorporated into the vernacular vocabulary expressing and embodying the *pastoral paradox* and the *middle state* "by providing a place to stand between house and landscape, between man made and natural order." This relationship between nature and built form is maintained and represented by the porch, a highly developed American building idea. Recognition of the porch is essential in defining the dialogue between nature and the American house. But, decentralizing tendencies of urban and rural dialogue has exploded, there is no reciprocity and both the city and nature have suffered. The urbanity offered by defined streets and the transition space offered by the porch have disappeared in the decentralized suburb. Thus architecture, as expressed by typology and historicism and made possible through transformation, must be resurrected. A suburban vernacular resulting from "good architecture" and critical regionalism must be part of a new suburban aesthetic.

SUMMARY

The investigation comes full circle as the interdependency of the four issues become

²⁵ MacDonald and McNally Bushman, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

relevant to a new suburban aesthetic. It is apparent that a search for place in the suburb requires a fundamental reintroduction of the seminal concern; man's interpretation of his relationship with the world. As such, the four issues must be addressed through an encompassing ethical view. From the inherent problems facing suburbia, several significant factors have emerged and are beginning to alter prevailing practices and presumptions of how to plan suburban communities. Social, cultural, economic, aesthetic and physical realms are in a state of reform. Initial concerns and actions have been sporadic and symptomatic, dealing with the cost of land and housing which have been inflated to the point that the suburban ideal of the traditional villa standing alone can no longer be used exclusively and remain economical. More encompassing are the interests in the perception of the built and spatial environment, particularly to the pedestrian. And critical to all of the concerns is the attention toward an advocacy for responsible planning, acknowledging limiting resources and man's spiritual well being. Common suggestions for new approaches to development hail traditional methods for increasing densities through efficient land use planning and reducing lot size. However, such concerns centre on replicating existing forms and structures as opposed to addressing the basic foundation and premise upon which the traditional suburban ideal lies.

If we are to discontinue the impending sprawl on the fringe of the city, we must free ourselves from the belief that new suburban ideas can only grow on virgin land beyond the edges of existing development. In addition, if developers are to continue to control the majority of suburban growth, they must be inspired by broad visions rather than hampered by political fears. Consequently, a common theme associated with the search for and discovery of a new form and a new aesthetic for the prevailing ubiquitous suburban sprawl requires a significant change in certain attitudes, assumptions, perceptions, and preconceptions. We must challenge current practices and processes so we may begin to resolve and reconcile the inherent problems of the master planned corporate suburb.

Critical issues recently being addressed by critics and designers focus on the need for a regional and holistic approach to urban planning limiting uncontrolled urban sprawl. Such a process identifies significance of location, supporting environmental sensitivity together with a return to traditional forms and urban space (historicism and typology) to reconcile the suburb with an identifiable centre and character akin to the traditional town or village. Homes are situated within proximity to offices, shops and other services to establish a viable public realm; a truly integrated community with more tightly defined spaces and respect for the natural environment. Such a condition has given some prototypical suburbs like those of the railroad era their magic and charm, setting the standard against which 20C sprawl is judged. A new way of thinking will form the basis to new ideas for planning suburban communities.

Critical to this process is an advocacy for the designer as a key figure in community planning, central to increasing and improving the imageability of the suburb. Many designers and critics have acknowledged that problems distinct to the suburbs, surfaced

and intensified as the gradual separation between designers, planners and developers increased and which has now been effectively severed with the rise of the multi-national corporation. It is imperative that designers are reintroduced to the process of community planning. A subsequent renewed interaction of designers, planners, and independently minded developers can begin to tackle the question of how we accommodate residential growth in our cities. And as designers we must respond to the necessity of choice offered through diversity. There will always be those seeking cultural excitement only found in urban centres and those who choose family oriented life presently offered at the periphery. "The suburbs will not go away, nor should they."²⁶ As such, the combining of the designer; architect and landscape architect, *together with* planners and developers to the process of town planning may contribute to a positive image of suburbia. This integration could prove beneficial in terms of creating quality environments that generate a distinct sense of place within suburban communities

²⁶Stern, "The Anglo-American Suburb," *Architectural Design*, p. 12.

SUBURBAN PLACE AND PHENOMENOLOGY

The suburb, a condition of the modern paradigm, needs restructuring through a reconceptualization brought about by a new way of thinking. Phenomenology provides that direction. The fragmentation of functions and endless sprawl brought about by attempts to fuse opposing ideologies of town and country; the lack of a viable public realm and a defined centre, focused on the pedestrian; the lack of defined spaces; and the loss of 'architecture'; all contribute to the inevitable loss of community, of place, thus, of place making, in the suburban process. Place making acknowledges the multidimensional needs of the individual, the group, society, and nature. It is the humanization of built and spatial form. Phenomenology offers the basis for understanding relationships between built environment and place making through man's relationship with the world.

Place Making

The suburban situation is endemic of the paradoxical circumstance in which 20C man finds himself. From the antithesis of his technological mastery, man has become quite separate from the earth and from his own human being; 'an unsettling nexus of domination and homelessness.'¹ The critical aspects of existence, who we are, through qualitative experiences are not being sufficiently addressed. What is being ignored in the face of 'technological construction is dwelling; homogeneous and mathematized space is place; and planetary raw material is environment,' (Nature).²

The plethora of critical commentary on the inherent problems of suburban landscapes rest on the sterile environment resulting from the application of the Modern paradigm constituted by picturesque aesthetics and conventions in consort with prevailing technological aspirations. The open spaces, ranging from vast parking lots and shopping centres to the layout of housing developments, attest to these conditions. These spaces represent speculative real estate development, where "the productions of space as commodity" prevails.³ Corporate control of contemporary capitalism determines development on the fringe where present attitudes pertaining to the profit motive suggest that it is not possible to combine good housing with good business.

Architectural critic, Ada Louise Huxtable has written of the *slurbs*, "it is cliché conformity as far as the eye can see, with no stimulation of the spirit through quality of the environment."⁴ Her sentiments are echoed by numerous writers and designers who view the present form of growth where districts with no clear boundaries, exhibit discordant rural, urban and suburban elements. The built environment continues to be scattered at

¹David Seamon, "Dwelling, Place, and Environment: An Introduction," p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Deloris Hayden, p. 19.

⁴Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, p. 26.

random over an undifferentiated and unassuming landscape. Even the planned developments which appear harmonious from the inside, are only fragments within a fragmented environment. Single elements may well be 'good' design, but a truly integrated public realm and sense of community set within a location is usually lacking or is completely commercialized.

The deep structural reality of the built form is also attacked on grounds of superficiality evident in recent attempts of purely ornamental treatments which cannot hope to solve or cure the suburban enigma. Observations by numerous critiques ultimately resort to the profound and timeless statement of Gertrude Stein; "there is no there there," to aptly describe the legendary euphemism suburban landscapes have acquired; recognized and criticized as *placelessness*.

The enduring resolution invoked from the perceptions of these discerning adversaries of the suburb hail a significant deficiency in the process itself. The critical process missing from suburban development is the activity of *place making*, "the search to uncover or to create a specific identity for every building, object, district or whatever it is [being made.] And to expand, clarify and elaborate that identity as much as possible . . . to give places a depth of personality and meaning."⁵ Such an interpretation perceives the landscape as more than a juxtaposition of picturesque details; it becomes a gathering, a meeting, a lived moment. "There is an internal bond, an 'impression' that unites all its elements. The bond is one of human presence and concern; landscapes therefore take on the very character of human existence."⁶ Subsequently, the quest for place is most stridently sought in environments in which we dwell. Its interpretation should apply to new ways of approaching design of the suburbs.

The search for a sense of place, or *genius loci*, has been the preoccupation of designers for the last few decades. But the notion of "endowing places with special qualities is certainly not a new one and is perhaps as old as man's emergence from his preoccupations with survival."⁷ However, such an idea was successfully suppressed during fifty years of Modernisms' rhetorical polemics. The basis of its interpretation began to re-emerge and has since resided within the realm of philosophical inquiry of man and environment relationships. These relationships are the foundation of place making. It is the identification and interpretation of these relationships which has gained significant momentum, depth, and credibility with the recent theoretical writings and works of Heidegger, Bachelard, and Merleau-Ponty. Expanding on their ideas have been people like David Seamon, Edward Relph, and Neil Evernden who expose the relevant contribution and unique perspective of a phenomenological approach to research in various aspects of man and his relationship to the world. More recently, the realm of phenomenology and the

⁵Robert Allsopp, "Memories are made of this," Proceedings CSLA Congress, 1983, p. 1.

⁶Dardel from Relph, "Geographical Experience and Being-in-the-world," p. 23.

⁷Relph, *Ibid.* p. 1.

insights it offers has become widely recognized in the literature of design through the work of Karsten Harries, Norberg-Schulz, Leon Krier, Rob Krier, Kenneth Frampton, and Micheal Condon and through the town planning ideals of Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Douglas Duane.

This resurgence of a concern for site and place (identity), as stated by Rosemarie Haag Bletter, is "precisely because site and place are no longer a given element in our man-made environment. Only after we have lost something do we begin to search for it."⁸ Design utopias increasingly address themes endemic in our post world war II society, abandoning finite qualities of harmony and completion, for flexibility, mobility and change of disharmonious centres in a decentralized society. But these utopias constitute "no place," they are everywhere and nowhere. Mobility becomes the ultimate expression to the point where architecture is soft and impermanent, packaged (Archigram, the mobile home). The machine has become the service core and architecture no longer has a place. By embracing technology, the inevitability of a tragic loss of place and of location have become subsequent to the significance of the machine.

Haag Bletter views the plight as a condemnation. The search for place and meaning cannot evolve from processes which are based upon increased mobility. The result will ultimately be the obsolescence of our culture. Technologically adequate environments produce human alienation. We have become a paradox within the world, with no sense of context or relatedness 'capable of material existence but not of community commitment.'⁹ Our world has become too transient and impermanent to develop place. So we grasp at the past, to things which we feel are meaningful and which serve the notion of community. However, we are beginning to turn to situations which rely on a tendency to evoke the elements of the past, of permanence and of place as mere image, often nothing more than a mirage as seen in built environments which still focus on the elusive nuclear family, the security and privacy as emulated by model homes. We use "the presence of the past [as] a soothing image when almost everything is mobile." Within this mirage we find security in knowing we are part of the group. But, the public we have turned to is not 'community' it is the 'they' the collective reassurance of participation in mass society. By being one of the crowd and immersing ourselves in trivia of mass existence we attempt to conceal our placelessness from ourselves.

Within this context of contrived historicism, *place and location have become myth*. And no where has this paradox been observed and adhered to as in the suburban landscape where, ironically, nowhere is somewhere. A deeper understanding of authentic place is thus central to designing suburban environments and this search has led to a more philosophical basis for its foundation. The concept of place has thus become a major phenomenological focus.¹⁰ Place has the power to synthesize individual environmental

⁸Rosemarie Haag Bletter, p. 26.

⁹Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien*, p. 110.

qualities (natural vs built, individual vs group) into one focused concept relating to the sense of place, *genius loci*. Such studies are concerned with the less observable qualities of the environment, mood, character, atmosphere, focussing on qualitative aspects which fuse into that particular place and with which one makes his/her identity. This presents the notion of intangible realities which make a place special and has been for centuries expressed in the writings, poetry, and images of artists; the spiritual nature which positivist science has intentionally reduced to myth, non-reality, and nonexistence. This sense of place gives character to space keeping it from becoming placelessness, allowing people to identify with it for personal reasons. The suburb as a vernacular landscape can serve as a means to explore the essential nature of environmental experience and place.

The Phenomenological Paradigm

As we become more aware of our impending situation within the world, the struggle to bring us toward a new attitude, a new way of thinking has been emerging within various professional fields in the search for a more humane relationship with places, environments and the earth (a better understanding of who we are and what we truly need and want). A deep understanding of this man/environment relationship is being sought through a phenomenological process of inquiry. From its philosophical basis, phenomenology is a descriptive science which focuses on concern, openness, and clear seeing.

"Phenomenology offers an illustration of how one might go about establishing an understanding of man-in-the-world which transcends the limits normally imposed by our Cartesian presuppositions,"¹¹ which lend themselves to man's present state of alienation; a world of the subject-object dualism.

Principles of exclusivity, individuality, internalization all reveal a persistence in the modernist approach to design as represented by 20C landscapes and the proliferation of the sprawling suburbs. However, these recent philosophic trends, which filter into the daily aspects of our lives, science, politics, etc., no longer give support to modernism but, rather, discredit it. This is evidenced in the areas of ethics, process and meaning which endeavor to seek a more meaningful understanding of man and environment relations. David Seamon has contributed extensively to this field of study.

David Seamon describes the phenomenological approach as a method of study in which one seeks "to explore various aspects of the person-environment relationships through qualitative description and interpretation."¹² Phenomenology is a way in which

¹⁰refer to the work of Christian Norberg-Shulz and Edward Relph.

¹¹Op. cite. p. 57.

¹²David Seamon, "Phenomenology and Environment-Behavior Research," *Advances in Environment, Behavior and Design*. Vol.1, p. 3.

to discover the various underlying structures and patterns that portray essential human experience; transcendental structures which mark out essential invariant fields of meaning. This interpretive process is grounded in comprehensive seeing, vigorous thinking, and accurate description as a way to convey the complex relationship between person and world. "Its primary substantive focus is a description of human experience and meaning as they are lived."¹³ The initial aim is clear, thoughtful description of the phenomenon where the viable method is contingent upon the nature and needs of the phenomenon, making context and method inseparable. Insightful descriptions illustrating qualitative elements and aspects of a phenomenon result.

This philosophy advocates a return 'to the things themselves' a tradition which originates with Edmund Husserl in his search for an understanding of persons in the world. Husserl attempted a new way of thinking in response to the disproportionate level of scientific thought applied to all areas of endeavor which consequently denied other avenues of thought. His ideas have been embraced and transformed by many thinkers since the 1920's as evidenced in the pioneering work of Martin Heidegger (being-in-the-world, dwelling), Bachelard (life-world), and Merleau-Ponty (body-subject, perception). Seminal to phenomenological research, is a new and more encompassing relationship of viewer to object and man to nature, through immersion in the world. The foundations of their discussions offer a rich blend of the 'rational' with the 'sentimental' or of the physical with the spiritual. Such a process evokes a need for a more holistic way of understanding the world, distinct from the conventional reductionist or positivist scientific approaches. The groundwork towards a phenomenological interpretation and approach to man and his place in the world, 'the phenomenology of daily environment,' has thus been established. These ideas present the need to go back to primordial meanings of reason (geometry) and of spirit (use) to create a metaphorical foundation for building.

Phenomenology deals with existential meanings having deep roots that go beyond socio-economic conditions of a culture. These meanings are determined by the fundamental structures of our "being-in-the-world," a deep "sense of who and what we are essentially as people," as examined by Martin Heidegger in his influential book *Being and Time*. Heidegger's reflections on thought and being prod imaginations toward horizons beyond the taken-for-granted. Heidegger develops his ideas by extending the essential nature of human experience and existence to relationships in the built environment, building and dwelling, as expressed in his book *Poetry, Language, and Thought*. Expounding on the early writings of Husserl, his philosophy and ontological excavations into the nature of human existence and meaning, provide the foundations to new approaches not only in philosophy but in the realms of science and design of the built environment. He has helped us evoke and understand things through a method which allows them to come forth as they are, "the process of letting things manifest themselves." Particular emphasis and influence

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 4.

has occurred in the fields of geography, environmental psychology, and architecture where common undercurrents of thought surface in interpretations of wholeness, dwelling, seeing, authenticity, and care.

Reconsidering the nature of the person-environment relationship through the phenomenological process implies that it is misleading to speak of an isolated self, surveying a world, for the person is, from the start, *in* the world. The world is the evidence we have of our own involvement. By shifting attention from the reality of the world, which Descartes was forced by his assumptions to attempt to prove, to the *meaning* of the world, phenomenology disposes of the distance between the thinker and his object. And given this different point of departure, one is free to ask quite different questions.¹⁴ Neil Evernden, Christian Norberg-Schulz, David Seamon, Karsten Harries and Edward Relph all work from this phenomenological basis to interpret and reflect upon the specific situations and conditions of man and nature in terms of the built environment. Their writings have contributed to a deeper understanding and expression of Heidegger's concepts of dwelling and place for designers.

It is important to draw from the work of noted theorists as a point of departure and of direction for a more in depth interpretation of this realm of thought. As stated by Relph, who turns to Heidegger's work in search of an appropriate way of thinking; 'I merely try to absorb and understand his thinking, not apply it deliberately and hope it reemerges in a not too distorted form in my own writing.' He points out the difficulty and perseverance required to begin to comprehend Heidegger's ideas which are in no way commonplace and which offer new insights upon each reading. The possibilities in the way one conducts one's thinking and being are thus opened up. It is this quest that I begin in my attempt to unfold new ways of thinking and seeing in relation to the suburban landscape.

A Phenomenological Method "seeing, thinking, describing . . ."

The core of phenomenological inquiry is authentic knowing, doing and being where the major focus is seeing and saying accurately and thoughtfully. A holistic intuitive dimension beyond intellect is discovered through dedication, reciprocity and a wish to see. The main vehicle of a phenomenological study is intuitive insight where "to see implies a relationship in which what is seen is opened up to the viewer through the viewer's opening up to what is seen."¹⁵ It is a reflective study which emphasizes the intangible, immeasurable and unobservable, incorporating human beings and the environment. As described by Neil Evernden, it is a kind of deliberate naivety through which it is possible to encounter a world unencumbered with presuppositions. It requires a return to things

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 59.

¹⁵*op. cite.*, p. 7.

themselves, to a world that precedes knowledge and yet is basic to it, as a countryside is to geography. To the phenomenologist, all that is admitted is experience, what causes it is not at issue; what it means is. The first requirement is not explanation but description.¹⁶

Relph interprets this process, as it relates to landscapes, as one of seeing, thinking and describing. One sees with insight and understanding through sensitive observation of phenomena. By deliberate effort of concentration and wonder about the nature of things, it is possible to see in greater detail, to discern hues and textures, literally to develop a greater acuity of vision. This new way of seeing is synonymous to a comparison of the alternative landscape scenes offered by Turner to those by a traditional Romantic, Lorrain. Trapped in anachronistic visual conventions and easy habits of seeing people are led to admire the inaccurate generalizations in Lorrain's paintings, where as Turner offered new and different interpretations of landscape. Turner depicts each element as different, not a generalized rendering of 'trees' or 'rocks' but of each rock and each tree with its own qualities.

Experiential interpretations of places are integral to his work. This aspect contributed to the notion that accurate seeing demands continuous expenditure of effort requiring particular attention and open-mindedness to what exists in all of its aspects and qualities, tangible and intangible, going beyond the elements to the things themselves. Such a process grasps connections and implications to allow the things to manifest in their own being, not approached as a tabula rasa. And thus, Relph is drawn to the phrase of Ruskin, "to see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one."

Seeing is held in tension with thinking. Thinking involves being aware of one's biases, recollections and intentions which influence our thoughts. This calls for reflexive and meditative thinking which enables the landscape to think itself through the observer. This does not restrict one to the notion of a right way, thus many forms of interpretation are possible. To better understand this process Relph draws on Heidegger's pool of ideas and arguments. This way of thinking requires a continuous effort so one does not impose arbitrary *a priori* ideas and lets things be themselves. The tangible product becomes a description of what things are as we understand them to be. What is described makes sense if the seeing and thinking can penetrate the surface forms of landscapes to reveal something of their inner character; genius loci. Even the act of describing may cause one to think about a place differently revealing it in a new light. Through this method it is impossible to see without thinking, or to describe without seeing. Phenomenology, as such, is a harmonious endeavor in which the significant element becomes one of reciprocity, between all processes, like theory and practice, thinking and doing, dwelling and building, natural and human environments. To support and extend this form of 'authentic seeing, thinking and describing,' such metaphorical relationships must also relate to the world of policy and design.

A major point of union between theory and practice is in design, through which sensitive seeing and building grounded in dwelling would strengthen the world

¹⁶Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien*, p. 58.

ecologically, humanly and spiritually.¹⁷

Man's relationship with Nature is of primary importance and it is to this relationship that we must look. As such, phenomenology presents itself as a method which may foster deeper and clearer seeing through efforts to direct intuitive insight toward a particular topic or focus of environmental experience and architecture as place making, pertinent to a deeper understanding of the 20C North American Suburb. In the suburbs we are dealing with an attitude, a way of life evolving from bourgeois values and beliefs based upon myths, ideals and images of the modern paradigm. Perception of this 'reality' presents a 'technical' world within the confines of Cartesian thought, positivist science and a world of objects. The type of approach and interpretation that phenomenology offers towards a new suburban aesthetic is implicit in and inextricable to the relationship between the structure of the built environment and place making according to man's relationship with the world. The nature of human environmental experience in the suburb occurs on many different levels and in many different ways; bodily, emotionally, perceptually, from car, sidewalk and house. A focus on the complex, multidimensional nature of people and environmental experience is necessary due to the fact that people and environments are multifaceted which extend from tangible to less visible qualities of atmosphere, spirit and ritual.

However, a phenomenological study is difficult to undertake in the complex arena of the 20C Western World where we are insulated by layers of technological, societal, and economic infrastructures keeping us from direct association and reliance on our environment. The socio-technical infrastructure penetrates and maintains our modern style of existence in almost all ways, representing existential non-essentials which we must go beyond to discover the things, meanings and events which truly matter, those that are basic and essential to existence. To portray the world in terms of peoples day-to-day living (life world) we must begin to break down the material aspects of this world and determine the critical existential elements to deal with in order to interpret the vernacular environment of 20C suburb.

being-in-the-world . . .

Our single-minded preoccupation with humanity has dramatically altered our understanding of the world and ourselves, and has jeopardized both. Heidegger presented a radically different understanding of being human, through a phenomenological description, as he strived to see deeply into the realm of existence. Heidegger believes that our way of thinking about the earth and ourselves has become distorted leading us into the

¹⁷Seamon, Intro, p.11.

abyss of misunderstanding and irreparable wrong with regard to the man-environment relationship. Heidegger sees the only way to alleviate the situation is to go back to the point at which the chasm occurred and the wrong direction taken, that is, ancient Greece. According to Heidegger, it was here that the decision of what it means *to be* had been ill-conceived and misunderstood. Heidegger proposes that we set aside our presuppositions and presumptions and begin to think it through again, as Heidegger asks 'why is there something, rather than nothing.' Heidegger attends to Being rather than to beings. He gives us the 'essence' of how we are. Having made no pretense of accomplishing it, he has made provocative beginnings.¹⁸

Heidegger offers an alternative trend to Western thought which seeks to transcend the limitations imposed by the conventional view offered by Descartes and Cartesian methods, and in so doing leaves open the possibility of seriously addressing the concerns of both the sciences and the arts. Our first mistake is subsequently to assume that there is a correct version, or view of the world, to which we should aspire. There is no correct way or one 'right' version of reality. Criticizing the dominant paradigm does not necessarily indicate a desire to provide a particular substitute. There are many ways the world is, many facets of reality to be explored. It is through discovering as many of these ways as possible that one achieves an approximation of the world.

Heidegger's approach validates the experiential and intangible reality as a viable way to view the world. What we perceive is not neutral due to the properties of consciousness, intention and constitution. As such, our perception is the result of our active involvement in grasping the world. There is no class of perceptions which are real and another which are fanciful, all are derived from the same source and are equally valid experiences of the world. And so, both logic and intuition must be viewed as significant to our understanding and interpretation of the world, ultimately affecting the design of the built environment.

As history attests, epistemological revolutions have significant effects on man's interpretation of his relationship to the world. During the Renaissance anthropocentric philosophies and positivist science directed man to view himself as separate from the world surrounding him and destroying symbolic meaning in architectural form which up to that point had inspired building design. Even throughout the rise of modernism and its reign, man was estranged from the environment and the individual reached new heights as man maintained his presence at the centre, separate from nature. Critical to this shift in theoretical ideology was the simultaneous denial of the synthetic structures and processes of a spiritual nature, the mythical and intangible were thought to be unreliable, untrue and unknown. Positivism was characterized by the belief that reality is present in appearances, objects exist independent of observers and can be measured to form the basis of laws which are verified with recourse to empirical fact.

¹⁸Op. cite., p. 62-63.

... space, dwelling, boundary

Heidegger's interpretation of the *world* resides in both physical and spiritual realms. It has two critical attitudes which embrace existence; presence-at-hand and readiness-to-hand. In his article on "Geographical experience and being-in-the-world," Relph has deciphered these as something more than mere objective and subjective terms. He views the former as self-conscious, a feeling of separation from matters, an element of self-awareness which inserts itself between subject and world; and the latter as a more fundamental mode of Being. By virtue of making, considering, participating, discussing, moving around, producing something, attending to something, and looking after it beings are always and already in a world with which they are concerned, in a direct and immediate relationship with the world, the primordial form therefore lies in using. These two forms do not represent alternative attitudes one can adopt or reflect at will. They are descriptions of different modes of closeness and involvement with the world, a part of existence. Both attitudes are part of the unitary whole of being-in-the-world.¹⁹

These attitudes relate to our experiences of environments. From this perspective, place becomes critical to the realm of feelings, acts, and experiences in our distinct relationship with the environment. Place demands involvement of the individual through his emotions, habits, and body and is so complete that it becomes unobtrusive and inconspicuously familiar. Place is an integral aspect of being-in-the-world. It is an experiential dimension, qualitatively different from space in that it is 'constituted in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations.'²⁰ Place is time-deepened and memory qualified whereas space is part of any immediate encounter with the world. How do we approach place as designers? Often designers only manipulate space where attempts to create authentic place has been futile. Unless we begin to probe deeper into the nature of relationships and associations with nature will place emerge. Heidegger's themes offer a foundation for a more sensitive approach to design which engages the spiritual and emotional realms of man bringing us closer to place.

A place is an origin and each individual feels part of a particular place in their own way. Regardless of how we know places, with affection or as mere stopping points, they are set apart in time and space because they have distinctive meaning for us. As Relph indicates, academic geography (presence-at-hand) presents us with places which are reduced to mere points and locations but our geographic experience (readiness-to-hand) presents the overlapping aspects and qualities of the fundamental unity of human beings with their total mundane environments where landscape, space, region, place are geographical modes of existence. The two are related in complementary tension in which both contribute to our understanding and appreciation of the world. However, at present

¹⁹Relph, "Geographical Experience and being-in-the-world," p. 19.

²⁰Relph, Ibid., p.15.

an imbalance has developed within this tension and simultaneous unity. Abstract technical thinking has submerged our geographical experience and thus the readiness-to-hand. Once one attitude achieves significant priority over the other, important possibilities for existence are denied. "The power concealed in modern technology determines the relation of man to that which exists. It rules the whole earth."²¹ Thus leaving man within a subject-object totality, distanced from experience of environment. To redress this situation Heidegger has offered us the essence of existence which unfolds in a multitude of relationships with nature, thus "sentimental" attitudes cannot be dismissed because they are not of a technical nature. Thoughtful and careful attitude allows us to adopt a disposition toward all forms of technical thinking, understanding their necessity but denying them the right to dominate us. Such a state of mind requires at the very least a heightened awareness of the character and qualities of one's own environmental experiences and an attempt to convey the fundamental importance of these to others. What it means to live in the suburb.

The impasse in contemporary environmental design posits the fragmentary approach to formal (aesthetic/beauty) and functional (practical/life) needs against Heidegger's proposal in the need to return to primordial and symbolic meanings of geometry (structure) which inspired building before the Galilean and Newtonian revolutions. To discover a new *metaphorical architecture*, the theme of place, particularly its phenomenological interpretation, offers a direction paralleling that of a reconciliation between the demands of beauty and life found through experiential and symbolic qualities of form and space as they express meaning to man. The validity of these ideas are supported from a variety of perspectives, the ethic and moral foundation of which lies in environmental holism. The avenues include; boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image, all contribute to place identity to reveal and enrich vital human experiences within the inhabited landscape. This is evidenced in recent figural trends of neo-primitivism, neo-traditionalism, and rationalism. "The place is the concrete manifest of man's dwelling, and his identity depends on his belonging to places."²² As such place is evidently an integral part of existence where locality/context are inextricably linked; the concrete term for environment is place. Place must always be considered as a whole. It is a totality, a qualitative "total" phenomenon which cannot be reduced to its specific qualities without losing its concrete nature.

The perpetual failure of modernist concepts in architecture, represented by the chasm between formalism and functionalism, has rendered an appropriate integration of man/environment impossible in the quest to establish vital human environments. The distancing of man from nature is critical in his understanding of nature and in forming the relationships which subsequently merge. The subject-object world in which technological, economical, and social structures exist which sever finished products from the processes

²¹Dardel from Relph, Ibid. p. 29.

²²Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, p. 6.

which produced them. Previously, designer was builder, maker, and user from which the bonds between form and process, surface and depth, perception and action were more readily maintained. The result was a meaningful connection between thing and human world. The pragmatic approach 'form follows function' has led to a schematic and characterless environment with insufficient possibilities for human dwelling.²³

Phenomenology offers a philosophical alternative to the positivist approach and a means to return to the nature of everyday environmental experience and behaviors. Heidegger leads us out of the impasse of scientific abstraction and back to what is concrete, the things themselves. Significant, is the everyday world of the taken-for-granted, the *lifeworld*, of which its invariant structures constitute the basis of all higher order systems of thinking and action. Underlying *lifeworld* foci is the wider structure of dwelling which joins people with environment and provides a link amongst past, present, and future. Heidegger tackles the mystery of what it means to dwell on earth. To Heidegger, dwelling involves the process by which a place in which we exist becomes a personal world and home. 'Dwelling incorporates experience, landscape and place but extends beyond them, signifying our inseparable immersion in the present world and the possibility of reaching beyond to new places, experiences and ideas.'²⁴ Dwelling is an intimate bond between people and place. Its phenomenological interpretation focuses on a description of human experience and meaning as they are lived, i.e. being-in-the-world. This is the basic state of human existence indicating everything which exists has an environment.

Dwelling involves both physical and spiritual control of the environment, a condition of man's existence, his being-in-the-world. This state of immersion is a multifaceted and complex notion of inhabiting the world. It is a visualization of truth, restoring the artistic dimension and hence, human significance. Such a view leads to an authentic understanding of human environments, the inhabited landscape. And it is the inhabited landscape which is manifest in what Heidegger terms, the fourfold, constituted of the earth, sky, mortals and divinities. Heidegger's concept of dwelling is a gathering of the fourfold and as such is the essential feature of humanness. The gathering is inextricably linked to context and opens up a world making aspects of the world visible, aspects which are thus brought into presence. These aspects are comprised in the concept of spatiality, a property of being-in-the-world. Spatiality describes a domain of things which constitutes an inhabited landscape, the fourfold. The components of the fourfold mirror each other, constituting the world of concrete things. As such landscape cannot be isolated from human life and from what is divine. It is a space where human life takes place, therefore, it is not a mathematical isomorphic space but a lived space between earth and sky. It is a location which *admits* the fourfold and *installs* the fourfold. The inhabited landscape is therefore a manifestation of the fourfold, and comes into presence through buildings which bring it close to man. It is denominated the spatiality of the fourfold which becomes manifest

²³refer to Karsten Harries, "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture."

²⁴Seamon, *op. cite.*, p. 4.

as a particular *between*, of earth and sky, that is, as a place.

This *between* is mirrored by man's *being-in-the-world*, life takes place, and its boundaries, are constituted of natural and man made things. Thus, boundaries embody characters which mirror man's state of mind at the same time as they delimit a precinct which admits man's actions. Thus the spatiality of the fourfold is disclosed through bound space; it admits life to happen in a concrete plan and embodies life in a concrete elevation (the plan mirrors admittance the elevation mirrors embodiment). Christopher Alexander attempted to account for this ephemeral quality, describing it as a cyclic pattern of "something without a name" as the quality being revealed. Merleau-Ponty presents a similar element and process of presence where context is inextricable to existence, in relating to vision. 'It is a precession of what is upon what one sees and makes seen, of what one sees and makes seen upon what is.'²⁵ This describes a situation in which two conditions occur simultaneously within each other and because of each other; what is acts upon the being and the being sees acts upon what is; a dualism. This quality brings the inhabited landscape close to man and lets him dwell poetically, which is the ultimate aim of design. The place receives extension and delimitation through the work of art; the hidden meaning it possesses is thus revealed by the work of art. Heidegger uses the observation of the bridge which makes a place come into presence at the same time as its elements emerge as what they are. 'Dwelling preserves the fourfold by bringing the presence of the fourfold into things; the bridge.

The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream . . . The bridge swings over the stream "with ease and power." It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream . . . Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighborhood. The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream.²⁶

Thus, things (landscape, earth, etc.) are disclosed through the gathering of the bridge making a place come into presence. The presence of the bridge is hence determined by its being between earth and sky as a sculptural form. As such a simultaneous opening and keeping presents a conflict which is the intimacy with which opponents break apart; it brings the opposition of measure and boundary into their common outline; the world offers a measure to things, the earth as embodiment provides a boundary. A place is thus determined by its boundary, and 'the boundary is that from which something begins its presence.' A boundary can also be understood as a threshold, an embodiment of a difference. The threshold carries the unity and difference of world and thing (earth), it

²⁵refer to Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind."

²⁶Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, p. 152.

separates while it simultaneously unites an outside and an inside. What is alien and what is habitual, as described by Heidegger in *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, in his interpretation of the poem by Trakl, "A Winter Evening."²⁷ Threshold is a gathering middle where an outlook on the world is opened up and set back on earth.

Boundary and threshold are constituent elements of place. They form part of a figure which discloses the spatiality in question. The "rift" (conflict between opening and keeping) is fixed in place by a plan and elevation whereby the twofold nature of spatiality (admittance and installment) again become apparent. Together plan and elevation, a figure or Gestalt, as the structure in whose shape the rift composes and submits itself, this element has successfully been transformed or replaced by 'image' within our modern world of commodity and technology.

²⁷refer to Heidegger, Ibid., p. 202.

TOWARDS A NEW SUBURBAN PARADIGM

The search for new ways of thinking about how and where we dwell in the city expresses an inherent need for a new suburban paradigm. This need is evident in the growing criticisms toward the ideological premise of modernism. The interdependency of the four issues examined in the chapter two exhibit the need for a holistic process to point to new solutions for suburban communities. This chapter attempts to reconcile four essential elements of community through fundamental notions of man and environment, stressing their significance in the places in which we dwell.

Reconcile Town and Country: boundary

(towards environmental holism where limits satisfy physical and spiritual conditions of man in the urban environment)

Beyond corporate realities of space as commodity and an overwhelming sympathy for the corporate profit motive, the realities of the periphery display a subsequent disregard for nature. Precisely the word "sprawl" exhibits a criticism of suburbanization's environmental impact. Responsible community planning must begin to acknowledge the ecological concerns regarding our limiting resources. Inefficient suburban sprawl should be restricted to protect agricultural and ecologically sensitive land. This must come from determining appropriate sizes and organizations of communities and from setting distinct divisions of form and content between city and country.

The right form of the city exists only in the right scale, thus it must have limits. When there are no natural limits as in functional zoning which relies on mechanical means of transportation, man never tires. The boredom which befalls man in this situation makes him forget his sense of limits in time and space which is further aggravated by the senseless monotony of suburbia. He becomes oblivious and unconscious to his natural world. Technological affluence has alienated man from the world and it is contingent on the design of communities to reintegrate and reestablish this critical reciprocal relationship. Since man is the reason cities are built they must be designed in accordance to his dimensions which subsequently puts limits on the size of rural and urban communities. The human body is the vehicle for expression of lived experience, thus human scale encourages us to interact with the environment as opposed to being separate from it. Such a complex structure for community existed in elements of traditional settlement. Thus, the loss of the traditional settlement has consequently meant the loss of place. By advocating a return to more traditional forms, participatory emotions are evoked which encourage a sense of shared human experience. Man as measure for community encourages place.

Environmental Holism

These concerns for limits of urban growth are fundamental to the more encompassing environmental ethic and philosophy constituted within phenomenology. Central to phenomenology is the identification and description of wholes; 'complexes of pattern and meaning which outline the underlying, continuing order of things, processes, and experiences.'¹ Phenomenology asserts that reality is understood through holistic acceptance of phenomena as they appear, through emphatic looking and seeing. The whole, an elusive concept, must escape fixation and articulation. We cannot restrict insights to limited categorical familiarity. Instead, we must allow the whole to come to presence through a careful reading of the parts, where the parts are not lost or disjointed within the whole. As observed by Anne Buttimer, Heidegger points toward a wholeness as he writes, "poetically, man dwells . . ." He describes an horizon, not a destination, 'a horizon which recedes as the journey through life unfolds.'² Buttimer speaks to this and sees the challenge as 'not one of rationalizing or analyzing how particular "wholes" are constituted or held together, rather it is one of discovering ways beyond them toward a broader vision of humanity and world.'³ Studying wholes promotes a clearer observation of phenomena and generates a deeper compassion and reverence for nature and environment. This notion of holism is integral to the phenomenology of man-environment relationships. As such, phenomenology provides the foundation which is fundamental to an ethical view as anticipated by Heidegger's fourfold.

Mortals are in the fourfold by dwelling. But the basic character of dwelling is to spare, to preserve. Mortals dwell in the way they preserve the fourfold in its essential being, its presencing. Accordingly, the preserving that dwells is fourfold.⁴

The environmental paradigm is manifest in an environmental movement where acceptance requires new conceptions of nature and of man, man as an integrated and active component, precepts with regard to the value of the individual to the group; metaphysics, complexity and interdependence in biosphere. *Environmental holism* is the movement initiated from this basis. It provides the framework which subsumes assaults on man's relationship with the environment established through the modern paradigm.

The ideals and perceptions generated by environmental holism submits to the possibility for an evolution where standardization gives way to a better balance of standardization and diversity. The possibility may lead to a growing rejection of a mass culture that erases all such distinctions of location or place. According to Howett and

¹Seamon, Intro, p. 9.

²Anne Buttimer, "Nature, Water, Symbols, and the human quest for wholeness," p. 260.

³Ibid.

⁴Heidegger, *Peotry, Language, and Thought*, p. 150.

Evernden, this direction may be less in areas of traditional culture and in that of the environment. To build in sympathy with nature where feeling for beauty of the terrain is a fundamental qualification for new forms and an increased understanding and respect for the landscape of each region is basic to its framework. The city will thus be perceived, understood and built as an organism.

The impetus of a new aesthetic based on environmental concerns has been raised in the theories, plans and drawings of noted designers and ecologist decades ago. Most notably, those of Patrick Geddes, F.L. Wright, and Ian McHarg. Geddes' ideas were prevalent at the turn of the century (along with Howard and Wells). Being a biologist, he contemplated an all embracing theory of civic planning. Critical to his approach was the geographic setting; the surroundings. He envisioned cities as living organisms, where, imperative to the intrinsic characteristics of a place was the study of the habits and needs of the people who were to dwell there in order that a symbiotic relationship between man and nature could be met. These ideas were followed and extrapolated on by Ian McHarg who presented them in his influential book, *Design with Nature*. However, their images contradict the modern aesthetics of the picturesque and have not been widely disseminated in North American landscapes.

Frank Lloyd Wright's vision was a reaction to overcrowding in the hopes for an ideal decentralized form of settlement. He encapsulated the 'organic' with ideas of the modern demonstrating the significance of the environment as a critical component within a technologically based society. However, man's contact with nature was only restored at the sake of the traditional spatial system of the town. The public realm and traditional urban spaces were sacrificed to satisfy an industrial society. Conversely, the synergetic relationship between man and nature, as that envisioned by Geddes, could not occur while the automobile maintained its dominance, as was the case in the vision of Broadacres. It may be that we cannot approach community planning as a holistic relationship with the world if such an unbalanced system continues.

The necessary approach must begin to reconcile the elements of decentralizations logical technological conclusion with older ideas (traditional) of community and combine these with an increased understanding and respect for the landscape of each region. Rob Krier sees town planning as a regional concern where methods and administrative structure must begin to facilitate 'regional planning,' a scale appropriate to today's problems. Transport has adhered to this scale without consult with town planners and will continue with faster transport systems. Highways must be seen in perspective, subordinate to the needs of the human community. However, we must still develop urban forms which accommodate the private automobile and house building technology but as secondary to community and qualitative environments.

Such an approach will provide a holistic awareness of built and natural environments and their capabilities for further expansion through renewal and adaptation. A concern for

the past must be demonstrated by the need to restore a continuity of spatial experience within the urban context. City planning innovation must be governed by logic of the whole and in design terms must offer a formal response to pre-existing spatial conditions. The frightening move towards uniformity in town planning brought about by the machine age is slowly eroding where faith in wonders of technology are being questioned due to its subsequent contribution to the rise and rapidity of environmental decline. Such a condition confronts the positivist approach of modernism to the present suburban form which exhibits images and values of Cartesian 'logic' and Anthropocentric ideologies. Notions of the individual, exclusivity, undifferentiated space, investigative research, measurable, and quantifiable objects, conformity, uniformity all aptly describe the condition, supporting myths upon which the suburbs rely.

In *The Natural Alien*, Neil Evernden examines the affairs of the mind which hinder the ability to support the cause of the environment. He discusses our biased and predisposed view of the world and postulates on how we might expand this view to new ways of thinking. Environment and belief are inextricably linked and therefore, 'our perceptions and expectations of environment are inseparable from our moral commitment to particular beliefs and institutions.'⁵

Environmental holism signifies a critical divergence, a return to notions of the spiritual and philosophical realms where inclusivity, communality, reflectivity, experientiality, qualitative, subject, volumetric space (traditional urban space) all replace the modernist alternatives. Responsive to the theoretical shifts throughout various ideological posits, dialectics, and paradigms, this proposition filters into the various aspects of the world of man; science, politics, ethics, aesthetics, culture, etc. Environmental holism offers a new view of the world which affect significant changes in the way we think about how and where we live. Community design must respond to these changes. The ideals of a new man-environment relationship must also be met by appropriate images and values which will effectively change or reconcile the town/city dualism based on the modernist paradigm. Our situation has become too precarious and our relationship with the environment is too critical to our existence; It is our existence.

Heidegger presents a new and yet familiar world where we see ourselves as the experience of being rather than the thing called man by describing us as a being for whom Being is an issue and whose way of relating to the planet is through 'care'.⁶ Evernden uses the metaphor of a 'field' to describe this idea which encompasses something going on yet nothing tangible or visible. By conceiving of a 'field of care' or of concern we may gain partial understanding of Heidegger's description of human being. Heidegger uses the term 'Dasein' ('Being-there,' in German) and the Being of Dasein itself is to be made visible as care. We respond to the things which affect our region of Being with which we feel vitally involved as we respond to our name being called. 'Whether it is the housewife

⁵Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien*, preface.

⁶Ibid., p. 63.

who defies the chainsaw to rescue a tree that is beyond her property yet part of her abode, or the elderly couple who unreasonably resist expropriation of their home . . . or the naturalist who fears extinction of a creature he has never seen, the phenomenon is similar: each has heard his own name called, and reacts to the spectre of impending non-being.⁷ Being such a field means more than being a body; it means being-in-the-world, and it implies a different sense of environment.

As explained by Evernden, because we are reliant on the earth we inhabit the 'world.' World is that part of earth which is open to human understanding - our region of significance and meaning. Within this world we are surrounded by the knowable and the ready-to-hand. World is full of instruments of use, and with significant places. The 'objectively' existing things, presence-at-hand, or merely present, are the things with which we have no involvement. Our contemporary bias is to emphasize mere presence-at-hand which is heavily reinforced through technology, shaping our understanding and limiting our possibilities rather than encountering the world as a field *for* the use of tools. Technology gives us nature as a 'standing reserve' and makes us capable of manipulating this vision. This represents our way of thinking about the world, culminating in the images and attitudes of how we live.

This view of technology presents us with an interpretation of nature as a collection of neutral objects. It deprives the world of its "worldhood". But, if we expand our perception of nature for it to become integral to our lives, as something ready-to-hand; Nature becomes quite different. Where as,

If we encounter nature as natural resources, then we deny it any of the character of worldhood. And we simultaneously deny ourselves access to it as home. It is characterized by space, not by place. There is no human involvement and therefore no sense of significance in such a nature.⁸

Evernden explores how Heidegger addresses a radically different relationship between humans and earth. He appeals to environmental advocates in his attempts to overcome thinking which supports exploitative technology and worship of objective sciences. Specific statements by Heidegger render this new situation germane to the environmental movement.

mortals dwell in that they save the earth . . . Saving does not only snatch something from a danger. To save really means to set something free into its own essence. To save the earth is more than to exploit it or even wear it out. Saving the earth does not master the earth and does not subjugate it, which is merely one step from boundless spoilation.⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 64.

⁸Ibid., p. 66.

⁹Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, p. 150.

An extension of man's immersion in the world and of being with other persons must realize a further transcendence of concern-for, and -with, a human ethic of concern.¹⁰ To Heidegger, understanding of ourselves, however, is the first task of ethics and the ethics we derive will thus depend upon our understanding of being. Therefore, there is no possibility of an environmental ethic within a society dominated by the technological vision of the world. The appropriate ethical limits can only arise within a new ethos, a new paradigm for understanding what we and other beings are which is the fundamental task of thinking.

The illusion of an unconcerned, dispassionate human master, as depicted by Big Brother in Orwell's *1984*, or Frederson in Fritz Lang's "Metropolis," is replaced by Heidegger's totally involved agent of Being. The phenomenological method requires an attempt to divest oneself of expectations so as to observe what is simply given, the method is of less interest to us than is the rejection of assumptions that the method entails. As Merleau-Ponty describes through the body-subject, our *experience* is the ultimate process by which we gain our knowledge of the world. This new way of looking at things reverses the relative positions of the clear and the obscure, a triumph of experience over belief; revelation. If we encounter the world in its overwhelming solidity -Being gives "thereness" and makes our own existence inseparable from that of all others, nearness is recaptured. Wonder and reflection tells us of an intensity of presentness. The alternative is depicted by the 'characters of mechanical relations, the quality of inhabitation in the schematically stratified environments offered by Fritz Lang in his screen gem *Metropolis*, as graphic a presentation of citizenry mechanized as art has offered.'¹¹ Our only hope is that such a scene does not evolve into the new suburban vision.

Boundary

Directly related to the ideas of environmental holism are Krier's aim for appropriate size and limits of communities. Leon Krier describes a process by which minimum and maximum limits may be qualified. This measure not only concerns geometrical dimensions of spaces and built objects of the city but also the size and scale of human communities. He appropriately quotes Aristotle:

To the size of cities there is a limit as is the case with everything, with plants, animals, tools; because none of these can retain its natural power if it is too large or too small for it then loses its nature or it is spoiled.¹²

¹⁰Op. cite., p. 67.

¹¹Micheal Sorkin, p. 32.

¹²L. Krier, "The Reconstruction of the European City," *A.D.*, 1984, p. 79.

The basis of determining limits was found in the *truth*; evil belonged to the realm of the limitless and good belonged to that which was limited. Aristotle employed this attitude as fundamental to everything; philosophy, ethics and by consequence to politics and culture. From this Krier generates a vision of the city as an organic form where;
just as proper measure is a condition of all life, so the vitality of a community overdevelops or atrophies according to the number of its inhabitants; a city can die by an abnormal expansion, density or dispersion.¹³

Unlike Fishman's technoburb, Krier fears for the inevitability of the antithesis of city and country where the industrial mentality suppresses the artisan city of the individual and the community. This antithesis is encapsulated in Western technology which has demonstrated a somewhat violent relationship with nature, essentially being demonstrative. And is exemplified in Fritz Lang's scenario. But through appropriate and judicious geographic distribution of autonomous and finite cities and communities, free and harmonious growth of urban civilization may be accomplished. It is thus imperative to distinguish limits or boundaries to urban growth. "Only then will cities know how to respond to the economic functions of a community and satisfy the highest aspirations of the spirit."¹⁴

To approach a solution for the form of the city, Krier proposes the city, as an organism, a finite object with a maximum and minimum size. The city is a geographic centre integrating all urban activities. Krier posits a reorganization of the city into units of complex and integrated functions together with the precise planning of new urban spaces. Combined with existing types, this process will eventually lead to a new urban culture. The city, as a region, can be presumed into a hierarchy of forms, "both in surface and in volume, in plan and silhouette, in the number of inhabitants it can house and the number of activities it can allow and perform."¹⁵ Krier illustrates these ideas in his vision of the polycentric city.

Within this new urban form, the *city* is made up of urban quarters, independent and autonomous. Its structure reduces the need for transportation by serving a-periodic needs thus transportation becomes an instrument of privilege and pleasure, not necessity. The city provides national and international networks where its activities occur along parks, streets and squares which separates it and form its boundaries. A maximum of *four urban* quarters form the city and each is a true *city within the city*. As *a part*, it contains features and qualities of *the whole*. It is capable of providing for all local, daily, and weekly urban functions within a limited piece of land. Its size does not exceed 33 hectares and 1500 inhabitants, accessing everything by a comfortable ten to fifteen minute walk. This structure allows for an intelligent energy consumption policy made possible by integrating

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁵Leon Krier, "Houses, Palaces, Cities," *A.D.*, 1984, p. 18.

major urban functions into quarters of limited size, encompassing dwelling, working and leisure. Krier also contends that all of the levels which make up the urban form must have a *centre* and well defined *limits*. "Each quarter must have its own centre, periphery, and limit. Each quarter must be a city within a city."¹⁶ Such a form and process reconciles many of the qualities and elements Heidegger anticipates in his phenomenological endeavors.

Viable Public Realm: centre

Attempts have been made to circumvent the problems inherent to the suburb in a variety of ways. Often one element is sacrificed at the sake of others in order to satisfy new ideas, supporting the familiar adage; you can't have your cake and eat it too. This idea extends to the notion that good community design and good architecture do not allow for good business. Who would profit by such a venture?

Focusing on the recent surge and interest in historicism and typology as a way to rediscover place, is the trend toward the order and charm of new town planning ideals being initiated in suburban developments. Many, however, are only superficial efforts, not substantive enough to generate a significant sense of place. Shopping malls are coined as the 'town centre' and are dressed up in old fashioned architectural ornament. Some efforts which prove to be more serious, begin to integrate stores and office complexes, but the residential component remains isolated from the community's 'symbolic centre.' The perception of built form and the spatial environment, particularly to the pedestrian, continues to support an elusive public realm.

Master planned suburbs provide an organized, comprehensibly designed community, on paper, which attempts to exhibit a 'special' character that many people are willing to pay extra to acquire. All of these communities present common traits in terms of: shared amenities (golf course, man-made lake or stream, park etc.), building and design restrictions (codes), and a flexible zoning plan allowing for public open space (in compensation for high density housing within the development). But solutions to new forms of communities must address not only basic design principles and superficial treatments they must be capable of generating and establishing a viable public realm. Viable prototypes which reflect and support the notion of 'village' or 'town' or 'cities within the city' must not only appear like a town but function as a town.

This means that we must go beyond present developments built on the fears and vanities of bourgeois values and start to deal with the more basic needs of dwelling. Human contact (sociability), conveniently situated services, appropriately formed open

¹⁶Leon Krier, op. cit., p. 78.

spaces (special places), and a defined centre present a basis to providing significant experiential qualities within the community's public realm. A public network of defined streets and squares reminiscent of historical urban space which has been lacking in 20C modern environments will form the fundamental tool to a significant public realm of place in the suburb. Within this communal approach, designers must still consider man's private self and the opportunity for genuine individuality.

The making of public place is what any community development - inner city or suburban - should be about. The emphasis should be on encouraging an appealing urban environment with vital human places; a public realm where casual meeting and participation occur as part of the taken-for-granted. In addition one must still consider the elements which provoked the decline of traditional methods of town planning and with it the erosion of urban space. This may be met by satisfying the desire to escape compact living conditions while still providing conveniences which were abundant in the premodern city. Within this process, the notions of functional zoning must be abolished. Instead, integrated functions of urban life are supported, as in Krier's notion of a polycentric city constituted by urban quarters. A shift toward more compact living environments of limited size situated within a mix of urban activities with each focused on a symbolic and functional centre will begin to satisfy demands for more efficient living while being responsive to environmental concerns.

Inherent to Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world is the function of ethics, the fact that Being means we have an attitude of care. This attitude also extends to the community. As such, the problem of man-environment relationships can only be addressed when all join in a common understanding of what human existence is to be. Karsten Harries suggests that being-in-the-world is both a being with the self and a being with others, one aspect cannot be sacrificed for the other. They will always coexist where building recognizes and respects this tension of the public and private being. However, the suburban landscape, built on the aspirations of the individual, privatized and secluded, does not reflect this dualism which is necessary for man's physical and spiritual well being.

Being-in-the-world strengthens man's natural sense of place as man is immersed in the world, not a subject facing a mute world of objects which he then endows with meaning reducing experience to a relation of subject to object. 'First of all, man finds himself not before the world, confronting it as if it were a picture, but in the midst of things, experiencing them from a particular place.'¹⁷ To articulate this sense of place and its essential public and private realms, are the elements of boundary and threshold (admittance and installment). These give form and meaning to what is essential, what is natural, found in the invariant qualities of man's existence. What we find natural, hence inevitable, is determined by region and history, nature and culture. This is strengthened by how an individual is *bound* to a particular place in space and time, within the physical and

¹⁷ Karsten Harries, "Thoughts on a Non-Arbitrary Architecture," *Perspecta* 20, p. 17.

spiritual context. The weaker the determination the greater the uncertainty about what is to count as 'natural.' Hence man is distanced and alienated from his surroundings, from what is essential to his sense of place.

The modern city, and in particular the suburbs, are reflective of a less 'bound' social system. This in turn affects man's interpretation of what is natural or essential. In the modern paradigm the proliferation of arbitrariness in building displays the inherent distance between man and his environment. The inability for individuals to bind to particular places, in space and time, is due to the ethos communicated by such an architecture which strikes us as one dimensional (ornamental) and dehumanizing which stem from aesthetic sensibilities carrying ethical implications. Therefore, the paradigm is capable of determining how people are to exist, i.e. man's relationship with nature as presented by the Romantic picturesque and the framed landscape. This evolving 'ideal image of man' is implicit in our idea of what constitutes 'good architecture.' Historical conventions and this image are still bound to Renaissance thinking. We determine this image as representative of man's relationship with nature and community. Within these relationships our sense of belonging is lost, we are alienated from the environment and exist within the subject-object world. Through images and symbols architecture has transformed meaningless reality to grant us illusions of meaning which is thus arbitrary, a subjective whim as a departure from tradition.

The symbols which man has chosen are those appropriate to communicate his particular ideal of being-in-the-world. He affirms natural symbols which are constituted within the natural language of architecture which in turn communicate this particular ideal through built form. It is a language that first addresses the senses and imagination. It needs to be felt before it is articulated in words. An exploration of this language is offered through images where poetry and painting may help to teach us what to listen to. To illuminate and shape the space of everyday life, building must open itself to these natural symbols. We are left to articulate what is essential-natural. A return to what is essential can be expressed through a metaphorical architecture which is capable of doing justice to the requirements of dwelling dispelling the current practice of arbitrary building. Harries suggests that such a direction is found in the tension between conventional wisdom and what more profoundly claims and affects us, (what we feel we should say/do as opposed to what we do say/do), hence dreaming is indispensable. Such a proposition means going beyond the realm of scientific research to a state of wonder and surprise, to an atmosphere and an attitude supporting and enriching man's spiritual and artistic nature, to the essential and invariant qualities of human living.

This articulation emerges from the ideals of dwelling which are bound to both physical and spiritual control of the environment. 'One task of architecture remains an interpretation of the world as a meaningful order in which the individual can find his place in the midst of nature and in the midst of a community.'¹⁸ In keeping with Hegel's

description; The highest function of all art is to articulate this binding world view, an ethical function which reveals time and space in such a way that human beings are given their dwelling place, their ethos. Thus, building which resists the dominant paradigm cannot be reduced to furnishing occasion for aesthetic delight. Authentic building is part of a whole, it is a process not an art-object or a self-justifying whole. It shapes time and space of a lived experience.

From this foundation, Harries determines that to feel at home in our natural and social environments, the private and public realms become significant to existence, thus, to dwelling. These two realms relate specifically to the ethical function of building, the first of which is public. Dwelling incorporates both foci, public and private, creating an ellipse. These two grounding points provide man a way to identify with a place. The two fulcrums (pivot points) are represented by; home, a world of the individual, family, habituality; and church or temple, a world of sociability, publicness, and festivity. Energies once focused on the church are now more appropriately directed to public areas of street, square, and park. This element provides for a community with a centre from which the individual gains a sense of place by relating dwelling to that centre.

The ellipse constitutes man's need for physical control (in the private home) and for spiritual control (in the street and square) as well as for satisfying his private and public being. These will always coexist in dwelling. But if the distance between the two foci is reduced, the public and private world carry no distinction. As value has presently been increasing on the home, it takes on the symbolic and sacred quality of the church. We are left with a circle, a single focus, denying the public, ethical function which is critical to man's dwelling, his being-*in-the-world*. The corollary, "home as castle," becomes indicative to our present situation. Subsequently, genuine community disintegrates into a multiplicity of individuals and families; the 20C suburb, a less bound social system.

Thus, the ethical foundation gives meaningful order where an individual finds his place both in the midst of nature and in the midst of a community, satisfying both spiritual and physical control. This condition articulates the binding world view. Heidegger describes this as dwelling; regional and generational. Harries determines that in order to resolve the present loss of the ethical function in building, we can no longer turn to arbitrary aesthetic whims based on history or typology. It requires a joining between architects and who they build for in their understanding of what human existence is to be. 'Architecture [design in the natural and built environment] should not subordinate itself to moral philosophy; the philosophical words are less likely to touch inner nature than the built environment whereas architecture is at least as likely to edify [benefit spiritually] as philosophy.¹⁹

David Seamon works from the essential, everyday world to determine what critical aspects of the public realm are missing from community's in order to understand the basis

¹⁸Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 19.

for establishing more meaningful places. Within the empty communities of the suburb, everyday activities cannot be performed, yet these activities should provide the basis for our built environment. Feeling-at-home within the environment is an experiential quality of place established both by the built and spatial environment and by a social environment and interpersonal contact. All are integral to communities which sustain dwelling and a sense of place.

Seamon's article, "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballet," deals specifically with varying scales of everyday bodily movement in space. This experiential character introduces a phenomenological alternative to conventional behaviorist and cognitive theorists approaches. Seamon relies on actual description of experience as opposed to analyzing cause and effect. He presents a way to interpret our natural and built environment as being part of it, participating in it, not being subject to it. Seamon articulates the body-subject to explore the environment through experience. He refers to the notion of the body-subject, as interpreted by Merleau-Ponty (1962), as the 'inherent capacity of the body to direct behaviors of the person intelligently, and thus function as a special kind of subject which expresses itself in a preconscious way usually described by such words as, 'automatic,' 'habitual,' 'involuntary' and, 'mechanical.'²⁰ The body, as an intelligent subject manifesting in its own fashion calls into question the concept of stimulus-response. This presents a body-subject as an intelligent, holistic process which not only reacts but directs. Thus the body-subject, a stabilizing force, allows people to gain freedom to expand their horizons as it houses complex behaviors which extend over time and space.

David Seamon relates this concept to our daily lives which are synthesized into a series of 'body-ballets', patterns of activity directed by the body-subject. These ballets comprise time-space routines which support physical environments fused into a larger whole. Seamon terms as these environments as place-ballets. Such an immersion of body-environment results in environmental vitality which generates a strong sense of place due to its continual and regular human activity. This continuum generates friendliness and familiarity as individual routines come together in community.

Seamon's notion of body-ballet, time-space routines, and place-ballet join people with space, place and time. This experiential process transcends particular social and temporal contexts and are found in all human situations, past and present. Out of these daily, taken-for-granted, interpersonal dynamics, spaces of activity, evolves a sense of place that each person does his small part in creating and sustaining. Such a place is experienced without deliberate and self-conscious reflection yet is full with significance due to habitual patterns meeting in time and space. The dynamism of that place is largely in proportion to the number of people who share in its space and thereby create and share in its tempo and vitality. Thus it is no wonder the suburbs lack this essential element of place.

²⁰Merleau-Ponty from Seamon, "Body-Subject, Time-Space Routines, and Place-Ballet," p. 155.

There exist no elements which generate place ballets within the community. All activity is first packaged then transported and delivered to a separate site without benefit of spatial experience.

We must first recognize that space is grounded in the body; the everyday world. In modern society patterns are a fragmentation of space and time where home is separated from the market (in fact all daily activities) and neighborhoods are split by expressways or walls, isolated as islands. There is a growing alienation, a loss of nearness in many aspects of our lives and the gradual breakdown of community results. Since community is a significant component of satisfying human existence the fact that it is being eroded is crucial to man's future and his impending condition. It is important to determine how phenomenological interpretations of community, like Seamon's, can help to reveal the situation.

Place ballet is an environmental synergy in which human and material parts unintentionally foster a larger whole with its own special rhythm and character.²¹ Place ballet has a bearing on the nature of neighborhood, relating to the fact that place is grounded in a bodily scale. This is strongly supported by Leon Krier's ideas of the polycentric city and the urban quarter, the walkable community based on the measure of man. The elements of the public realm must be situated and designed appropriately such that they link with or reinforce existing conditions to complement what is there. They have the ability to create distinctive places within the overall development by utilizing the notions of connection and extension of what is familiar. These places will contribute to the community as a whole as opposed to concentrating on a private and secluded orientation. It is imperative to consider the quality of the open space which ultimately gives the development its overall character.

This interpersonal continuity found through man's direct relation to environment is familiarity, feeling at home. This familiarity comes from unself-conscious regularity which does not mean predictable neighborhood layouts, repetitious, monotonous and oozing with conformity. Rather, it provides the foundation from which can arise surprise, novelty and unexpectedness; wonder. Thus, order, in terms of place, establishes a pattern of regularities around which a progression of shifting events and episodes can occur. Place requires regularity and variety, order and change. Place-ballet is one means by which a place comes to hold these qualities. However, this commentary on the suburb reveals that many of these critical qualities are eroding. The trend is toward an environment with few significant places, toward a placeless geography and a meaningless pattern of buildings.

Place is a dynamic entity with an identity as distinct as the individual people and environmental elements comprising that place. Together these foster their own special rhythm and character. Place-ballet joins people, time and place in an organic whole and portrays place as a distinct and authentic entity in its own right. It provides a notion around

²¹David Seamon, *Ibid.*, p. 163.

which to construct policy and design. It provides an articulated concept which might be of value in creating, regenerating and protecting places.

Ways in which elements of the built environment contributes to a sense of place and dwelling, return to a warmth and human appeal in design. This aspect is demonstrated and illustrated by Christopher Alexander in his *A Pattern Language*, a tool to rediscover an attitude of care toward building and thus reestablish the "quality without a name." The element which both Heidegger and Ponty refer to as essential to being, the cyclic pattern of reciprocity, it exists in us, when it exists in our buildings; and it only exists in our buildings, when we have it in ourselves. This *thingness* is able to present itself to the observer by being a part of him/her. The action and the space are indivisible providing mutual support, they form a unit, a pattern of events in space where both relate to a culture and a context. This is community, the viable public realm free from commodity and economy.

Structured and Defined Spaces

The attitude of focusing housing developments on the celebration of the public environment is predicated on the notion of injecting dignity, order and human activity into cities through the organization of buildings around public streets, parks, and squares. Opposing a more reclusive attitude of securing a private, internalized domain, these projects serve as prime instigators toward an integrated approach to community design, valuable in determining alternative models to suburban development. The viable public realm is thus supported, not only by a mix of activities within a community, but by structured and traditional urban open spaces, the street and the square, the primary objects of orientation which are essential to a community. The thrust of ideas for new communities therefore, focuses on this need for the restoration of precise urban spaces within an urban morphology as opposed to the dispersed wasteland of fragmented landscapes.

The significance of traditional urban space to community planning is an essential element of the public network and contributes to the ability for design to generate and establish a sense of place. By recognizing the community pattern as a whole, critical elements of the built and spatial form, together with the social environment, can begin to establish better communities through a holistic process. To generate these patterns we must look to examples of the past which have gone into oblivion due to the cultural amnesia caused by modernist polemics and the simultaneous rise of technology. The past and the present should be incorporated with sensitivity toward an equilibrium which does not deny the elements of today or try to recreate a past no longer appropriate. The key is to establish appropriate technology and to balance significant forms of the past with those of the present to determine meaningful forms of a particular culture and context. These forms will thus reflect man's relationship to the environment and the direction of its future evolution. If such a structure has its foundation in the measure of man, it will help restore a symbiotic

relationship between man and environment, bringing man closer to the world surrounding him. Critical to this process is the resurrection of traditional urban space.

The Greek and Roman cities employed devices within town planning to indicate spatial relationships and to improve legibility, as densities and the number of streets increased. Within the public realm, they emphasized arterial roads within a homogeneous network to create 'special streets' within a community. Through the use of arcades, entries, and particular architectural features, functional connotations of a commercial or symbolic nature were invoked. Orientation throughout the public network was made possible through well defined urban spaces which were associative and symbolic creating special places within the community, making place identity possible.

To establish an ordered and formal public environment assumes assaults on modern planning patterns particular to the 50's and 60's which increasingly fragmented cities through the dissolution of traditional urban space. The resulting undifferentiated space, where arbitrarily placed buildings and towers pull away from each other intending to form the street, instead created vast areas of open and undefined space. According to Rob Krier, in his book *Urban Space*, the process through which traditional urban space has been eroding in the 20C, began with the decline of the city wall around the time of the French Revolution. The wall, the regulator of urban space, had a well defined role in traditional town planning. Its demise coincided with the rise of industrial development, exemplified in the proliferation of the terraced building, repeated on a vast scale, disregarding the grid system and removing basic points of orientation. A multitude of processes forced the city's growth into unprecedented decentralized patterns. These spread over the countryside changing the familiar grid pattern around centres into an undifferentiated sprawl of the villa landscape. The resulting form had no recognizable configuration of urban space. This pattern displayed a lack of continuity and of qualitative differences so critical to urban orientation and was in conflict with the way people identify with their environment. This condition was supported by many modern architects including Le Corbusier, and in particular his *Ville Radieuse* which served as one of the abstract prototypes. In the 1960's a reaction against this intolerable complexity of the city resulted in the zoning of functions. This was, in part, due to the nonexistence of historical precedents needed to respond to the rapid growth and technology that ensued. A balance of public and private realms began to erode. This erosion of urban space, in the guise of technological progress, brought about the demise of town planning in 20C. Thus, the present suburban form fails to promote vibrant human environments for man to dwell. The impact that the erosion of urban space has had on the development of the suburbs has been terminal.

As congestion and lack of time for the two worker family has become intolerable, the demand has surmounted for re-integration and a new urban form. Concerns regarding the public space in the urban context have intensified. The focus has become an attempt to reconcile built and spatial form through acknowledging *both* space and built form, the

figure/ground, as a basis from which to work toward new expressions of community.

In his book, *Urban Space*, Rob Krier determines that the concept of urban space, focusing on history and typology, retains legitimacy in contemporary town planning. His ideas recognize and resurrect Camillo Sitte's observations, which criticized the artistic impoverishment of urban space occurring around 1900, noting the necessity of aesthetic repertoire of architectural resources to shape urban space. Krier maintains that Sitte's proposals for the use of urban space continues to have a validity which is independent of time and style and enormously valuable in community planning. It provides the basis for a typological definition of urban space, precedents, forms, uses, etc. It is Krier's contention that history has supplied us with all the discoveries in architecture, the problems have merely changed their dimension. As long as man needs two arms and two legs, the scale of his body must continue to be the measure of size for all building, from single dwelling to community planning. This premise should also apply to the North American suburb.

From historical precedents and typological forms, Krier classifies urban space without making value judgements, enumerating the basic typological forms which constitute it. These include the elements of; *the street* and *the square*, where the aesthetic quality of each is characterized by the structural interrelation and integrity of their detail, thus, their boundaries determine their quality. It is only the clear legibility of its geometrical characteristics and aesthetic qualities which allows us consciously to perceive external space as urban space.²² The fundamental elements of urban space are products of a natural evolution of settlement allowing for orientation within our environment. This idea is illuminated and revealed in the theories of Christian Norberg-Schulz who looks at settlement and its constituent element, enclosure, as being essential to man's being-in-the-world and to dwelling.

Dwelling is the purpose of building in that it helps man find a foothold in space and time. It is a complex function which means the establishment of a meaningful relationship between man and a given environment which develops through an act of identification; a sense of belonging to a certain place, feeling at home. When dwelling is accomplished our wish for belonging and participation is fulfilled and a settlement results. Settling allows for four modes of dwelling to occur, establishing the place where the life of the community may take place, thus collective dwelling is enacted. By extending the concept of dwelling to the realm of settlement, a domain, he derives four distinct yet multidimensional levels of dwelling which are necessary for settlement. In dwelling, man's needs focus on; the individual, the group, society, and nature. All of these modes of dwelling must be satisfied within each community. Thus, the designer's responsibility becomes harmonization through built form and space of the multidimensional needs of the four levels; private, collective, public, and natural. Design is not just an abstract organization of space. In order for the built environment to become meaningful and essential, design must become "place

²²Rob Krier, *Urban Space*, p. 15

making." Settlement, incorporated into the concept of village, functions as a place of encounter, of meeting. Traditionally, urban space (the street and square) has been the stage where human meeting has taken place.

The act of settling is imbued with symbolic meanings and associations of place and organization of dwelling; a projection of the world of the spirit. The settlement, as place, is an interaction with and expression of a specific environment revealing and cultivating a relationship between the things and the spirit. Settlement interprets the site and transforms it into a place where human life can exist, interweaving man's present experience with his past through psychological resources of physical forms (regionalism). Thus man's relationship to the site is both symbolic and of direct physical cooperation making contextual relevance to life experiences implicit in this relationship. Therefore, prevailing attitudes are expressed through built form.

Schulz determines that the distinctive quality of manmade place is *enclosure*; its character and spatial properties are determined by how it is enclosed, its *boundaries*. These boundaries of which Heidegger speaks, establish the relationship 'between earth and sky' and the point at which "presencing" begins. The concepts of centre and path, basic to settlement depend upon the continual presence of their boundaries for identity. Schulz also introduces a third element, that of domain. Domain is a type of enclosure or district. Together, the three spatial structures; centre, path, and domain, form complex totalities and serve man's need for orientation and identification in his environment. These typological elements relate to order in three distinct ways; as centralized forms, linear forms, and groups. All are based upon the proximity of elements which comprise our built domain. Together with private and public dwelling they increase our understanding of place as a living totality. They form the figural properties of a settlement, characterized by street, square, and community.

There are three general patterns which determine the layout of a settlement; cluster, row, and enclosure. All are interactive in terms of built and spatial form. Each configuration acknowledges both space and form. Both are seen as essential to the other, and are equally important to establishing the relationship of the figure/ground. The aim of architecture is to establish meaningful relationships between the configuration of site and the spatiality of the human fellowship (community). Such a task is facilitated by the fact that basic settlement patterns follow Gestalt Laws of Organization, that is, man perceives and organizes according to the same principles; proximity, continuity and closure. These basic forms of organization are further characterized by the *topological* patterns; cluster, row, and enclosure. Together, the notions of proximity/centre/enclosure; continuity/path/row; enclosure/domain/cluster create settlement, a physical and spiritual endeavor which acknowledges natural site and location.

Topology is the sites natural spatiality in which notions of visualization (juxtaposition or contrast) offer a counterpoint of topological patterns achieved through complementation (similarity or uniformity). The way elements are grouped, either through complementation

and/or visualization, is conditioned from without and within, that is, by the configuration of the given site as well as the social structure of the community. Any geometric pattern aims at revealing a general order in contrast to the topological nature of the individual place. When purely geometrical layouts occur without regard to natural site (i.e. prairie grid or suburban labyrinth) they are imposed upon the situation. There is no agreement or reciprocity between the two. This implies no clearly defined centres and paths which are necessary for a shared form of life. What is thereby lost is the basic form of MEETING; collective togetherness becomes public order and the settlement an expression of an accomplished choice.

In general we may say that the settlement lives in the tension between meeting as simple togetherness and meeting as chosen or imposed agreement. Thus a combination of geometry and topology create a hierarchy, an ordering system or network which reveal various qualities of a location to function as centres of human identification which tend to possess pronounced individuality for the town or village. However, in the suburb, relationship is governed by pure geometry and logic, little sense of topological aspects of a given site are emphasized or even recognized, unless the budget dictates.

The figurative identity of the urban morphology and the topology of site unite to create a 'type.' The type becomes manifest as an image or figure relying on recognition and memory of urban spaces. Therefore, one must be familiar with the place as a whole. Typological entities represent what is general. An individual world or a community is created as a variation on the typological theme making a circumstantial adaptation manifest, that is, to present what is local. The suburbs present intervening domains or communities as extraneous elements, which usually remain more or less unknown. They are not contained by structured enclosures, the street and square. One can only partake in environmental image as generalized textures, not places. The lack of urban space in the suburb denies an environmental image, making orientation within such a domain impossible. Social contact is not facilitated and the image of neighborhood cannot be perceived of as a unit. Multiples of neighborhoods comprising a community require perceptual boundaries not fortified walls and gates. Their overall size is too large and spatially erratic that they cannot be perceptually grasped and remembered to install collective dwelling. The act of casual meeting, of public and private dwelling are primary generators of significant form. These forms must be integral to suburban community design.

The meaning of a settlement is revealed by its silhouette, its figural properties which unify to form one conspicuous characteristic. The figural quality is determined in relation to the surrounding landscape, thus it requires density and clear delineation depending upon built form and organization of space. Therefore, the scattering of elements with no sense of proximity, characteristic of the suburbs, results in a loss of identity and orientation. Such an unstructured organization of built and spatial form is incapable of delineating an

area to create an inside which is safe and enclosed. Man needs to possess an environmental image through patterns of togetherness which make collective dwelling manifest. This allows for orientation which in turn allows us to attain spatial images of the place to define patterns of movement hence discovery and choice. Without identity and orientation we ramble with no any sense of belonging. Thus, Schulz refers to the essential need for a hierarchy of elements which are both topological (of nature and spirit) and geometric (of logic and Gestalt).

A legible landscape of defined spaces is a necessity to allow for meeting. Therefore, traditional urban space is critical to the spatial structure of community. Density, variety, and continuity are the critical properties of urban space which allow for meeting and choice. The urban morphology of built form and spatial boundaries, together with topology create the patterns of centre, path, and domain within a community. These organizations relate directly to the functions of square, street and community.

The two basic elements which compose the physical features of urban space and act as their primary sources of orientation, are the street and the square. These give a space its distinct character through the proportions of the things that bound them; floor, ceiling and walls. The square, produced by grouping houses around an open space was the first way man discovered of using urban space. It was integral to dwelling and to community, controllable and defensible. The courtyard came to bear symbolic value as holy places and as state arenas. Its spatial pattern was repeated as a model for future development. By virtue of its size and location it became an attractive place to pass time, a natural public gathering place.

The street is the product of the spread of a settlement, once growth necessitated going beyond the central square. It provides the framework for the distribution of land giving access to individual lots. The traditional street was planned to the scale of the human being, the horse and carriage. At this scale, it is unsuitable for the flow of motorized traffic if it is to maintain appropriate to human circulation and activity. The channels which serve the movement of cars exclude all other users and retains no connections with original significance of the term street. The street rarely acts as an autonomous isolated space, rather it is perceived as part of a network where an inexhaustible diversity of spatial relationships has been demonstrated by complex layouts of historic towns.

The characteristic functions of the square both private and public have been suppressed, largely due to the loss of its original function and symbolic content as public architecture. The public square awaits rediscovery where the importance of poetic content and aesthetic quality of space and building will be resurrected. These places must be endowed with meaningful functions and planned in appropriate places within the overall community layout.

The function of the street in residential areas are seen as places for public circulation and recreation. In North America, the excessive distances that houses are set back from the street reduces the ability of achieving attractive spatial situations. Contemporary

conditions have led to traditional streets that only function in their traditional capacity when they are part of a system in which pedestrian access leads *off* the motorized channel. The complete breakdown of traditional patterns of urban space thus reached its culmination with the separation of pedestrian and automobile. This separation, due to obvious conflicts of interest between demands of the machine and those for man, isolated the pedestrian zone and associated activities became part of the motorized enclave. The resulting lack of continuity and qualitative differences in the environment so critical to orientation and identity, was inevitable.

Krier describes the significant planning errors which contributed to the loss of traditional urban spaces, which reinforce the more unsettled environment of the decentralized suburb. The critical concern to the street is the loss of vital activity due to pedestrian flow between car and house which does not integrate or impinge upon the street space. This results in a state of competition between internal and external urban space where the degree of public activity taking place in each area is at odds with each other. They do not reinforce or integrate a common system. The separation of play spaces in isolated areas with the sole justification of preserving the intimacy of the residential zone, again deprive the street of significant activity. A second concern regards the establishment of public open spaces which are often sacrificed, thus priority and visual appeal of space resorts to gimmickry items like street trees, paving, and street furniture, none of which can adequately create 'enclosed' qualities necessary for communities and urban space. The aesthetic quality of the built and spatial environment is also necessary to fulfilling precise cultural roles in the functional coherence of the street and square. This element relies on a balanced scale of harmony and care of houses, and of the adequate demarcation of streets. The need to meet the towns function of 'poetry of space' should be as basic as the need to meet any technical requirements.

Many theorists and designers advocate the resurrection of defined urban spaces in landscape architecture to appropriately structure our environment. According to Micheal Condon, *volumetric space* provides the foundation to the formation of urban types critical to establishing place, perceptible to the senses and the mind. This process is necessary and appropriate within the urban environment, and in particular, the suburb.

Micheal Condon exposes and questions an approach to space disposition in landscape architecture, which he feels threatens our professional viability in his article, "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space, and Landscape Architecture." He refers to the present use of space as maintaining a modernist vision instead of responding to the fundamental shifts in thought which support volumetric space as being more capable of creating place. The validity of volumetric space as the figural media for creating experiential places is also supported by the ideas of environmental holism. Micheal Condon relates the changes in thought, which brought about the emergence of this ethical paradigm, to having direct influence upon conceptions and interpretations of space, as evident in modern architecture

and landscape architecture. He stresses the importance of how we view space because it is imperative to holism that we do not separate the aspects of place. Space must be viewed in context, as part of a greater whole, integral to community and location. Built and spatial form interwoven with public and private realms must be restructured to evoke a sense of place and authenticity; a renewed environmental integrity.

The ambiguity and lack of spatial definition inherent to cubist space ideologies and the suburban landscape, adheres to the essence of modernist aesthetics found in; motion, spatial dynamism, and singularity of perception which filter all aspects of life. The appropriate use of space must evolve beyond theoretical idioms of modernism's superficial notions of 'natural' and 'diversity' which have been the source of the picturesque aesthetic dictating the stereotype ideal of "home." This new ethical view sees the landscape vision, nature, as one with mankind. It requires a revision in the way that space is presumed to exist.

This revision, as presented by the field of phenomenology, offers a new interpretation for perceiving space, as constituted in Merleau-Ponty's description: I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all the world is all around me not in front of me. The question is to make space and light, which are there, speak to us.²³ It is in this type of space that we contribute to perception (ethical and philosophical) and place making which establish the basis of images and attitudes toward a new relationship with the world, how we dwell. Such an understanding goes beyond Camillo Sittes urban space foundations of enclosed geometric space. But uses them as the framework for built environments that are more meaningful and are integral to man and environment relationships, as described by Schulz and Condon.

The critical associations grounded in the way we live and their implications to space-shaping reflect the relationship we have with nature. This relationship, endowed with moral and ethical foundations, presents ideas which should be fundamental to a new suburban aesthetic. The significant precept now evident in environmental holism, contrasting the modern paradigm, is the value of the individual relative to the group. Through holistic acceptance of phenomena as they appear. Space becomes less abstract and consequently more immediate. As noted by Condon, within Heidegger's writings, space definition draws from the deep structures of perception; the logic of archetype of shared existence.

What the word for space, Raum, Rum, designates is said by its ancient meaning. Raum means a place cleared or freed for settlement and lodging. A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary . . . A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing.²⁴

²³Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 178.

Schulz builds on this phenomenological conception of space and makes environmental design theory more relevant to the way space is normally experienced. He argues that space is a dimension of human existence rather than that of perception or thought. Schulz proposes a concept of existential space where 'we no longer move through an impersonal world of objects in dynamic relation one to the next, perceived equally by identically perceiving persons; rather we move through a highly personalized (although not individual) "lifeworld" cognitively ordered in relation to our total existence (individual, cultural, archetypal) on the planet.'²⁵ From this Condon interprets that we move from the clearing to the park where clearing denotes the archetypal space with inborn meaning (volumetric types) and park denotes the culturally conditioned structure with learned meanings. In consort with the idea of culturally and personally determined space is the notion of the insideness-outsideness dialectic which enables the sense of place to be revealed within space. This is at the base of Condon's argument where, the conceptual categories of this notion; here-there, me-you, I-thou, connotes the existence of enclosing space separation and are thus volumetric.

Immense opportunities for future development in landscape architecture are offered through phenomenological logic, a holistic approach toward landscape perception. 'The problem,' as seen by Condon,

'with all of our landscape spaces, from the shopping centre parking lot to highways, is the total lack of definition between space. The "suburbs" go on forever, creating a disorienting landscape where the fundamental characteristic is a lack of spatial definition, a deficiency that no amount of asymmetrically "naturally" composed planting groups can cure. A design approach that accepts the palpability of space has the power to create "place" in our sprawling urban landscapes. No amount of individual kiosks, fountains, ornamental trees, or decorative lighting can possibly have such strength.'²⁶

The city is at an impasse, a direction must be chosen either for infinite decentralization or toward a resurrection of pre-industrial notions. Appropriately, we must see the industrial city and culture return to a more symbiotic relationship with nature, to a proper existence and expression of man, as expressed in the premodern city. This requires a reconstruction of public space taking into consideration its quality, its type, its measurements and its proportions.

The essential elements of enclosure represent the significant qualities of place which allow us to conceive of community as a multifaceted whole. Placelessness thus results as

²⁴Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, p. 154.

²⁵Micheal Condon, "Cubist Space, Volumetric Space, and Landscape Architecture," *Landscape Journal*, vol.7, no.1, Spring 1988, p. 12.

²⁶Condon, *Ibid.*, p. 14.

geometry and extraneous patterns dominate suburban design. The community disintegrates with the loss of defined spaces which generate meeting. As community design tries to impose a sense of place, the notion of "village" is reconstituted through propaganda and real estate paraphernalia. The suburb must transcend this image of village which is reborn only as a sales hype, emptying the term 'village' of all meaning. Thus, the arbitrariness which Harries refers to, infiltrates communities where vague and trivial symbols are used to recreate mythical ideas. Such activities represent and play with destitute symbols of the past which are in turn devalued. Authentic building has not been recovered to allow man to feel at home, to return to what is essential. 'Village' once had meaning as a place of visual and social coherence. In an attempt to recreate this ambience, kitsch and disney land imagery prevail. Designer's seek to incorporate those elements which express the values of privacy; exaggerated roof, spreading houses, secluded open space; into a townscape that would provide a sense of the public realm. This paradoxical situation does not achieve the 'true village,' it presents it in name only. The suburb must surpass this image of village and attempt to capture a critical aspect of place, the viable public domain of the street, the square, and the community which have been lacking in 20C suburban design.

Image has become endemic to the tragic loss of place in post war society. The presence of the past, conjured up in imagery, reinforces the privatization of society. To build on *authentic place* we must transcend place and location as myth, a product of contrived history. We must work with the elements of urban space carefully and with deep understanding of who we are. Kurt Forster supports and extends this notion to the application and design of space. He identifies a contradiction which lies at the basis of our understanding of and associations of space. Space is either seen as pure emptiness or as a product of a commodity. In its first relationship, it is "culturally unafflicted and an undefined abstraction" a typological definition. In the latter instance, it is "the reality of space at any particular site" relating to context, culture, environment, imbued with technology and the modern paradigm, a stereotyped ideal.²⁷

Typology is a method which can work in terms of inscribing history through imagery in a more profound way. But each type must be mediated or reflected by the full level of the context into which the type is set, which means to some extent, it has to be mediated by the specifics of the programme to respond appropriately to the specificity of site. Thus, we go beyond the image to the more intangible elements of place found in the spiritual and emotional qualities of location. Types are transformed under the impact of circumstantial things such as topography, geology, urban morphology, or something specific to the programme. This transformation of type relates to regionalism where its point of departure may be in recognizing and interpreting a sensitivity toward; light, surfaces, detail, material, sound, air movement, etc., in order that we develop components which are to be experienced in a state of totality; by all the senses, the mind, and the spirit.

At present, Forster intimates that too often, historical models (typological space) are

²⁷Kurt Forster, p.27.

seen as containers and are used without regard to the transitory, ephemeral and impermanent elements that relate to the particular type and location. The impermanent elements that are then injected into those spaces appear at odds with and interfere with our abstracted and conceptualized notions of typological space. Creating place thus requires more than accepting appropriate historical typologies of urban space to give meaning to the place. Forster sees the mistaken assumption that historical meaning coincides with instantaneous significance. "There is no conceivable communal or historical reality to it," and one can feel only as a tourist in such a contrived space, siting Epcot Centre as an example.

The making of a space in such a [pre]determined way does not rest upon its singularity and exclusiveness but ultimately produces as a true result a typological scheme . . . and typological schemes are incredibly 'portable'.²⁸

To establish meaning through replication and transformation in connection to the original site, approaches must go beyond superficial applications of typology. We cannot assume the place is "instantly" created, the meaning of which is both communally based and significant at the public scale, while at the same time being resolved, contained and enshrined within a fixed and permanent design of good architecture. The figural quality is not only a question of images but relates to the demand for places where daily life may take place. The loss of figuratively defined settlement has brought about a weakened sense of human belonging and thus a loss of identity. The identity of the place is determined by the given space and form as a particular relationship between earth and sky. Man must reveal and interpret what is there. Place identity refers not only to the cognition of the person's physical environment but includes; memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meaning, conceptions of behavior and experience. It is a mix of cognitive and emotional modes. We must get in touch with the full range of experiences related to a particular place. It must be with extreme caution, an open mind, and extended perceptual awareness that we not only apply confined ideas of typology and historicism to the design of communities. But a new suburban paradigm must also attempt to embody the essence or sense of a culture and a time. It must exhibit a concern toward the environment, recognizing the existence of man, a sense of belonging giving place identity a strong moral foundation.

The phenomenological proposition builds on this understanding of the intangible elements of space. This perspective presupposes space as organism dependent and as part of the world of the subject. That is, the qualitative mosaic we experience as individuals as related to our own world as a set of characteristics that have meaning for us. This notion is eminent in Heidegger's writings, stating that, "The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, strictly thought and spoken."²⁹ Spaces open up by the fact that

²⁸*ibid.*, p.27.

²⁹Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, p. 157.

they are let into the dwelling of man; mere geometrical space becomes place. 'Space is in essence that for which room has been made, that which is let into its bounds. . . Spaces receive their being from location and not from "space." '30

Ungers states, 'Architectural space, in contrast to nature and cosmic space, must be defined, This requires a rational concept, an idea, or an expression of the intellect. Before one can create a space, one must first give it sense.'³¹ If we start with appropriate geometrical spaces and endow them with the qualitative elements necessary to place, revealing man's immersion in the world, only then will design contribute to meaningful place. The notion of immersion reveals the essential need for enclosed space as disclosed from Heidegger's themes and Schulz's interpretations. Enclosed space is imperative to place and to being-in-the-world, as man must dwell and feel at home in the world. This need is both rational and spiritual and calls for a dialectic between man and environment which in turn requires the creative dialogue between architecture and its surroundings. 'The change in space types occurs within the dialogue between the idea and the place. The place generates the idea and the idea creates a new place.'³²

Appropriate Image

The proliferation of replicas has alienated human creativity from a more cultural dimension. Simulation has now become the aim of building, and is omnipresent in the suburb. The imagist architect has allowed architecture to become simulation, oblivious to sensory essence where things exist only to represent something else. Such an architecture is practiced through the art of concealment, thus resistance of the dominant paradigm takes form in an architecture of revealing. It is an architecture of matter and tactility which aims for such a poetic. Relationship of detail to mass establishes a surface intensity parallel to the emotive aspect of poetry, and the emotive side of human nature is aroused by appropriate proportions and the tactile dimension. 'The link of perception through matter to the tactile is taken up in an effort to create qualities over quantities. Through an awareness of the necessity of craft in construction, we question the concept of our art. In ancient Greece, art was fused with the tasks of life. The word *techne* referred simultaneously to art, to a sense of philosophy, and to the skills of a craftsman.'³³

Today, people are too used to the commercial conformity of the present built environment. They see it as tangible, useful and practical creating cosiness indoors and a

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 154.

³¹O.M. Ungers, "The Janus Face of Architecture," *A.D.*, 56, 1986, p. 9.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 9.

³³Steven Holl, "Phenomena of Relations," *Design Quarterly*, 139, p. 17.

status symbol outdoors. Anything more is 'icing on the cake.' Rob Krier's sentiments are directed to the situation in which architecture has been degraded to mere commodity. He maintains "that a stage in history when architecture is not granted its full significance show a society in culture crisis . . . contemporary music expresses [this tragedy] adequately."³⁴

Kenneth Frampton also responds to this universalization of architecture. He sees the appropriate direction through the idea of resistance. Frampton focuses on the domination of universal technology taking Paul Ricoeur's 1961 article, "Universal Civilization and National Culture," as his point of departure. Ricoeur speaks of the destruction of mankind through attrition of past cultural resources expressed through the spread of a mediocre civilization, of which the suburbs epitomize. Our basic consumer culture has been stopped at this subcultural level. 'Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machine, the same plastic or aluminum atrocities, the same twisting of language by propaganda, etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse a basic consumer culture, were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level.'³⁵ Such a condition threatens the 'creative nucleus of great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, . . . the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind.'³⁶ In our attempts to modernize we have chosen to relinquish the cultural past. We are ultimately left with the paradox which filters all aspects of our life: how to become modern (take part in scientific, technical, and political rationality) and at the same time return to the source (soil of past, spiritual and cultural). Accordingly, we can no longer practice the ideals of a single truth, that is, the domination of modernism. 'We are in a tunnel, at the twilight of dogmatism and the dawn of real dialogues,'³⁷ a condition of change and of transformation, between modernism and a new aesthetic. We must approach an authentic dialogue, at the heart of which, 'Ricoeur implies, everything will depend on the capacity of regional culture to recreate a rooted tradition while appropriating foreign influences at the level of both culture and civilization.'³⁸ Holistic processes and re-interpretation through the past, present, and future are concomittant with this reprise, as is the necessity to resist.

Frampton offers an architecture which assumes an arriere-garde position, one which distances itself equally from technological progress and from unrealistic impulses to return to purely architectonic and typological forms of the preindustrial past. The arriere-garde has the capacity to resist. It is an expression of form which encompasses man's spiritual and rational nature. It transcends domination of commodity, literal expressions of nostalgia, and kitsch ornamentation.

³⁴*ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁵Paul Ricoeur from Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," *The Anti-Aesthetic*, p. 16.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p.16.

³⁷Kenneth Frampton, "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism," *Perspecta*, p. 148.

³⁸*Ibid.*

Heidegger's thinking on architecture as a visualization of truth, restoring its artistic dimension and hence its human significance, is fundamental to Frampton's ideas. The pragmatic approach 'form follows function' has led to a schematic and characterless environment with insufficient possibilities for human dwelling. By means of Heidegger's concept of dwelling, we are led out of the impasse of scientific abstraction and back to what is concrete, the things themselves. This approach brings us closer to an authentic understanding of architecture and of designing vital human environments. Functionalism is being abandoned while a new architecture of images is emerging; moving toward a metaphorical architecture of meaning.

Such an architecture reveals. It opens up a world, making aspects of that world visible. The work in which it brings into presence consists in what it gathers, therefore, it is inextricably linked to context. This aspect of architecture is comprised in the concept of dwelling, a property of being-in-the-world, which can only take place in a domain that is clearly bounded, where the essence of a place depends upon the concrete, clearly defined nature of its boundary. This constitutes the inhabited landscape as a manifestation of the fourfold which is not isolated from human life or what is divine. When confronted with the ubiquitous placelessness of our modern environment, we are brought to posit after Heidegger, the absolute precondition of a bounded domain, in order to create an architecture of resistance. Only such a boundary will permit the built form to stand against the endless succession of change in the metropolis.

The focus becomes the relationship of built form to space, or the space between buildings, the terrain, the sky, the axes of movement. It is the experience of the space to which we turn. Here, perception and the senses are intertwined with the material, space, and light of urban form. Revealed is the structure of experience, largely free of assumptions and preconceptions. The emergence of the spiritual realm of man and environment. The process thus becomes one of relating phenomena; time, matter, light, space.

Conversely, the technocratic solution is met by the bulldozer. It is the *tabula rasa* tendency of modernization of an irregular topography into a flat site. Such a gesture can only aspire to a condition of absolute placelessness. Ideas inherent to phenomenology and environmental holism demand a cultivation of the site, allowing the capacity to embody, in built form, the myriad of processes over time which transformed the site. Frampton suggests that through a layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality or inappropriate image.

An architecture which affects all the senses begins to suggest a potential strategy for resisting the domination of universal technology. Such an architecture is developed by the ideas of Kenneth Frampton and his notion of critical regionalism. This form of expression seeks to enrich commonplace visual experiences by re-addressing the tactile range of human perceptions. The reliance on sight has set self-imposed limitations which contain

sight in the realm of reason, and as such, presupposes a conscious suppression of the other senses; smell, hearing, touch and taste. Consequent to the domination of vision as our most reliable sense, is the distancing from more direct experience of the environment. Such a condition relates to what Heidegger termed, 'loss of nearness.' This loss of intimacy is a growing schism between people and their objects and between people and their built environment.

This loss of nearness extends to the relationship between people and their world and person and person. Coupled with the escalation of the suburb, results in the gradual disappearance of both the public and private realms of the human-made physical and social environment. Architecture reinforces alienation by a serious disregard of existential qualities such as imageability, memorability, inhabitability etc. Therefore, there is an urgent need to reinstate the conditions for the development and cultivation of sensitively differentiated, yet commonly shared value systems which in architecture are rooted in and represented by concrete human places. It is this human significance of the environment which is what phenomenology investigates, describes and promotes. To Kenneth Frampton, this is found in a critical regionalism.

In attempts to counter this loss, architect must return to the poetic expression of construction. Such an involvement in built form raises technical expression to an art form, acknowledging craftsmanship. The point of departure is found in sensitivity toward; surfaces, detail, material, sound, air, movement, light, developed to be experienced by all the senses. Such an architecture has the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of technical standardization. It suppresses the domination of universal technique indicative of the fixed structures and standardized elements, typical of the suburb.

Critical regionalism is a dialectical expression, 'it self consciously seeks to deconstruct universal modernism in terms of values and images which are locally cultivated ...³⁹ It goes beyond functioning as a communicative sign to evoke the desire for a critical perception of reality. It goes beyond 'good' architecture. The aspects which are contingent upon the specificity of the place, that is, the transformation of the given topography or given morphology are integral to this architecture. This allows built and spatial form to reflect that which is local and that which is universal. Type plus specificity of site brings about this transformation, responding to a context, a region.

The central principle of regionalism is a commitment to place rather than space, in Heidegger's terminology, to the nearness of *raum*, rather than the distance of *spatium*. The universal Megalopolis is patently antipathetic to a dense differentiation (diversity, complexity) of culture. It intends, in fact, the reduction of environment to nothing but commodity.⁴⁰ What Frampton suggests instead is an hallucinatory landscape in which nature fuses into instrument and vice versa. Critical regionalism offers the possibility of resisting the rapacity of technology, 'its salient cultural precept is place creation,

³⁹Ibid., p. 149.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 162.

appropriate model is found in enclave [enclosure or settlement, meeting and community], the bounded fragment against which the ceaseless inundation of a placeless alienating consumerism will find itself momentarily checked.⁴¹ The appropriation of images, buying and selling them and sticking them on places they do not apply can no longer be an acceptable level of meaning in architecture. References to place of origin maintaining a substantive basis must be fundamental to symbolic building, to appropriate image.

In the language of symbols there can exist no misunderstanding. In classical architecture things are always called by their names or purpose. Symbols and meaning, type and style, are not a mere passing convention. Appearance must establish an evident relationship of truth.⁴²

The significant contribution of the designer to this new expression of built form will ultimately begin to change the conventional suburban form. If undertaken in a process suggested by Frampton, it will be capable of transcending the preconceptions of modernists polemics. Such a condition demands that we remove commissioned architecture from clients preconceptions and introduce an architecture of conviction and commitment where quality outbids profits. At present, such an outrageous demand is met only by poets and dreamers, by the visionary artists.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Leon Krier, "Names and Nicknames," *A.D.*, p. 109.

ALTERNATE MODELS

Phenomenology offers a new way of thinking about man and environment as discussed through the notions of boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image. The emerging ideas of community which illustrate these ideas are found in two different models; Leon Krier's Polycentric City and Duany/Plater-Zyberk's Seaside. Both designs demonstrate the phenomenological approach and share aspects of centre, boundary, defined space, and appropriate image in a manner that is relevant to their unique contexts.

The Polycentric City

We turn here to a 'visionary artist, maker of myths, poet, dreamer, receptor of a pre-industrial past,'¹ the polemicist, Leon Krier. His rhetoric irrevocably express his feelings on modern architecture, "the vulgarity of our industrial age, and the drudgery of the life it has created." Krier has severed the umbilical chord from the figural and structural components of modern architecture. His writings and drawings demonstrate an innovative stance in matters of architecture and urban planning. His ideas also extend to more profound matters of morality and lifestyle; A condemnation of the mythology of Western urban values. His attack upon traditions of positivist planning are responses of the heart, intuition and spirit. They are of a phenomenological nature. His ideas point to the integration of architect and planner and the needed materials and tools for the design of our built environment.

The images that crowd the mind's eye are of nature and buildings and men and beasts, together in some serene, ecologically healthy landscape - an idealized mythic past which is so often the most powerful and compelling vision of the future for an overindulgent and corrupt culture.²

Krier responds to a universal strategy with an ethical and moral frame of reference where ecological insights are woven throughout his proposals of physical planning. He has restored utopia in his European city, the polycentric city, devoid of metaphysical pretensions disclosing a profound conviction and enthusiastic embrace of Classicism and reaffirmation of traditional values. Krier is concerned with the comprehensible community which has been effectively destroyed by agencies of industry and technology and by the multi national corporation. The finality of urban industrial development can only correspond with the extinction of humanity and environment as we have come to know it.

It exists only as a moment of hypertrophy and of fragmentation of artisanal culture, of its technology and of its instruments and tools.³

The comprehensible community, based upon traditional urban spaces, has been superceded by the 'anti-city,' of a mechanical and industrial attitude, destroyed by the

¹ Jacquelin Robertson, "The Empire Strikes Back," *A.D.*, vol. 54 p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³ *ibid.*, p. 103.

massive problem of transport and by the segregation of functions. Transportation and fragmentation represent the two principle means which continue to support the prevailing suburban ideal. Conversely, the cities which created traditional urban spaces in all its elements and parts, were the principle instruments of an artisanal culture where the construction of the pre-modern city was both a means and an end.

Krier's areas of study and insight, therefore, revolve around his model of the traditional European City. To Krier, the pre-industrial city was the setting for a productive, pleasurable and morally sane life, the basis of which lies within authentic traditions of the renaissance humanists. So Krier turns to the pre-industrial European city to determine the particulars of urban space. As such, the roots of his vision are to be found in building tradition. In the ordinary and anonymous building which forms "the flesh of the city and the skin of its spaces." Krier uses this ideological bases to vision his polycentric city and urban quarters.

Krier supports the pre-industrial city as a proven successful form, enduring 1000 years of change. Its form presents a viable way to approach the goal of establishing cities for the well being of its citizens. The moral criterion of a public well being is his main argument for this urban paradigm. As such he opens up a moral dimension in the debate about the essential nature of the city and consequently of its suburbs. To grasp this dimension Krier utilizes two main ideas; tradition and reconstruction.

Tradition is not a spurious restoration but the discovery of traditional elements of a society that are capable of fostering the new. New in terms of the process of transformation of knowledge and merit where the ultimate criterion rests upon the public well being, through good social institutions and by extension good city plans. They will be those plans which are best able to instill in man a social existence and to translate the moi into a moi-commune, a collective moral self. This idea reflects Harries' notions which recognize not only the individual but responds to man's social being, the communal. To Krier, it is the structure of the pre-modern city which contributes to the antagonism between moi and moi-commune where a balance of public and private spaces and buildings are able to provide the framework for the life of its citizens. Conversely, the 20C decentralized city aggravates the antagonism between these realms. It lends domination to the individual, the internalization of man to his private world, the single family home.

Reconstruction is the character of action Krier supports. It is a coherent and powerful process that has clear commitment and direction, not a sentimental utopia. It rests upon a revitalization of craft as practical reason, *techne*, as opposed to its degenerated form, technique. Technique represents the simple application of any technical know how, represented by standardization and conformity. The present suburban process lends itself to the restricted horizon of technique. Both Frampton and Krier defend *techne* against the domination of universal technique. Reconstruction is concerned with a practical and moral project where the relation between means and ends are diametrically opposed to that of

urban renewal. Reconstruction's aim is toward an ethical and moral commitment of community. It does not focus on a particular end product but on the processes and relationships themselves.

Krier's approach is largely phenomenological, incorporating a holistic vision of man and the environment where the order of the whole gives meaning to the order of the parts. 'Architecture is about how buildings relate to one another in patterns that support communal life in a spiritual and ecologically healthy way.'⁴ These patterns emanate from our past and we cannot afford to forget or lose them. Buildings grow out of the city's order and requirements, it is the city that is a work of art not its individual buildings. Its art is founded in an integrated view of culture as a whole. Krier attests to return of the luxuries of the 'well planned, modest precinct' where 'the pleasures of walking or the splendour of sitting in an intended public place, contemplating a public monument and the dialogue of buildings with landscape,'⁵ is little sacrifice if at the sake of "modern" conveniences.

From these processes Krier establishes the polycentric city of independent communities. It is the product of the moral power of free and self-confident human beings . . . one's who dare cross the wall of conformity and societal norms.⁶ The struggle between the model of a polycentric city and the almighty industrial model of urban sprawl is grounded in the issue, as stated by Leon Krier, 'of whether our cities continue to be converted into lands of exile or whether architects become more involved with designing cities which represent "Heimat" home, dwelling. But what can the protectors of landscape and Heimat achieve in their leisure time when in their professional life most of them, though with bad conscious, participate in the industrial exploitation of nature and mankind.' His cynicism cuts deep at the heart of our moral, paradoxical condition.

Through his radical intentions, Krier has effectively overstepped the bourgeois values and images of conformity and overturned contemporary real estate development practices and public policy. However, it is these kinds of radical shifts which are critical and essential to forming new ways of thinking about communities, and about the suburban. The acceptance of them, however, must come from each individual. The present situation of architecture supports the notions of impermanence and arbitrariness which confuses contemporary society's intellect. However, these are met by Krier's more sentimental images;

Krier evokes our collective cultural memory of low, dense, small, simple buildings, defined streets, great squares and high roofed public halls; of tree-lined escarpments and distant views, a setting once timeless and archaic yet startlingly fresh and new . . . Krier has changed the way we see.⁷

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

⁵Ibid., p. 13.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 12.

Krier's protest against the modern transformation of the city is met by his notion of a global alternative plan of reconstruction, a critique with a vision. Within this vision, the architects role must be redefined to establish the authority of architecture as art not as commodity. No longer can short term budgets dictate the form of architecture and the city but architecture and the city must dictate the form of long term budgets; the city is a moral project not an economic accident. We cannot continue to subject ourselves and generations to the production and consumption of an environment of futile objects, the value of the processes and elements inherent to the pre-industrial city must be recognized. Only global economic, technical and cultural efforts can halt a process of global destruction, achieved only if these efforts prove competitive in quality to their industrial alternatives. The demand for an appropriate ethical expression which acknowledges universal concerns and processes but resists domination of the technological solution is required. However, many view the urban paradigm of the pre-industrial city as unconvincing and too sentimental. The main reservations are based on its apparent set back to ideas of progress; economically, culturally, and politically. The structural logic of the complexity and scale of historical towns has thus been ignored in modern suburban community design.

Krier's utopian vision of the polycentric city and urban quarter represents an art founded in an integrated view of his culture as a whole. It is universal in its application. To be appropriate within the North American context, his ideas must be transformed by place. The influence of geography, climate and other characteristics of location must invariably be considered. A certain degree of 'fit' within the environment is critical to establishing the specific character and quality of a place. In addition to site, appropriate interpretation of prototypes is necessary to distinguishing relationships to conditions of location and to elements of design.

The neo-traditionalists' trends in residential design bring many of his ideas to fruition. These schemes are being influenced by grid plans, narrow streets, intimate scale and convenient commerce. For some communities, the prototype for neo-traditionalist community design has become the turn of the century American town, as opposed to Krier's pre-industrial European city. This return to traditional town planning is affecting development of both the inner city and the suburb where the ideal of harmoniously organized streets and squares is being pursued. The conditions appear promising and will present opportunity for positive changes in the new form of the North American suburb.

Even with a traditional approach, a strategy that incorporates the lures of the modern American family living in the 80's must be addressed. The critical elements necessary for convenience as well as those elements which provoked the decline of traditional methods of town planning cannot be denied. However, they must be curtailed through appropriate use and form responding to the measure and intricate relationships of man and environment, not machine. The need to be modern yet return to sources illustrates this central paradox of the new suburban paradigm.

Seaside

Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk have emerged as the most prolific practitioners with regard to the 'traditionalist' approach in community design. Motivated by Robert Stern's historical study of the Anglo-American Suburb and by prevailing attitudes of theorists like Leon and Rob Krier, their approach advocates a return to small town development and human scale environments.

Their recent development at Seaside in Walton County, Florida (1978-83), demonstrates a site specific approach to community design which generates formal layout, dimensioning and planting to distinguish open spaces and together express a sense of enclosure to the community as a whole. They have utilized site identification and familiarity to locate specific streets which connect significant points (public places and squares) and result as a network more distinctive than a grid laid out. They attempt to describe the street and square as ordered, volumetric spaces, providing the community with a spatially defined environmental experiences relating to a distinct location.

Duany and ^{Plater}Zyberk work within a programme and site of approximate size and components of a small town. To establish patterns and prototypes for each location, they study typical towns throughout the area. Together with Robert S. Davies, developer of Seaside, they attempt to set into reality the idealized vision of the turn of the century town and its intended character. Robert Davies is an anomaly among developers, free of the monetary pressures which impel contemporary developers to maintain routine and conservative ideas of housing development. Within this approach a critical aspect thus becomes the active participant of the designer (architect and landscape architect) in consort with planners and developers. The result at Seaside is a conscious turn toward the methods of traditional American urbanism as opposed to contemporary corporate real estate development methods, typified by Don Mills. As Duany himself describes this development in Philip Langdon's "A Good Place to Live;" it is a compact, urbane, walkable community, with shopping and employment close to housing, not only encouraging sociability and a less hurried way of living, it also makes financial sense.⁸ Such a place realizes the fundamental visions of Leon Krier.

A master plan complete with zoning code provisions was established by way of design guidelines, enforcement mechanisms for 'stylistic uniformity.' These guidelines attempt to represent a complex interaction of the concept of the public welfare. The values it represents are both spiritual and physical, aesthetic and monetary. At Seaside, the guidelines seek to preserve sensitive aspects of nature and environment and also the villages traditional scenic character. The zoning permits different intensities of development within the same district depending on the carrying capacity of the land and

⁸Philip Langdon, "A Good Place to Live,"

requirements of the master plan. It is an integrated system that layers all the needs and characteristics of the community and the land.

The guidelines are derived from elements to be found in any subdivision; streets, lots, set backs, and yard requirements, plus offering a choice among a range of models. All of these elements are stylistically and figuratively based upon images of small towns in the same area. Thus they respond to the more intricate qualitative aspects of the community. In order to reproduce the physical characteristics of the old towns, designers and developer determined specific qualities which make the towns visually appealing and socially engaging. Seaside's imagery and fundamental order is thus established by the use of this design code, whose basic principles are the result of observations and measurements taken from 'successful' towns.

According to Langdon, the building and urban design codes have proven effective in the coordinated development of Seaside. It contributes to a balance of order and diversity within the built and spatial form of the community. The codes reinforce the ideal of an active public realm within the community through spatial definition established by height, massing and setbacks of buildings. They establish a specific character where unifying elements of specific materials (clapboard siding, metal or wood shingle roofs), components (substantial front porch, picket fence, pitched roofs), and colors all adapt to a simple beach house vernacular. Systematic and clear guidelines for specific proportions, dimensions, and materials ensures coherence and consistency. By choosing a multitude of designers who work within established design codes a certain degree of individuality through building design is possible.

A contrived community of 'genuine' variety and 'authentic' character is thus generated with sympathy to a regional vernacular. However, such ideals are often costly to maintain and have been attempted throughout the history of suburban development. Results rely upon dedicated responsible designers and developers who prioritize environmental and community concerns above the more prevailing profit returns. Such a combination is difficult to achieve in the modern metropolis.

A reform advocated by new town planners supports a comprehensible street system complete with landmarks to orientate people throughout the development. Placed in alignment, the streets are straight and partially enclosed through the placement of fences and house facades set back a short distance from the pavement. The result is a public room appropriately delineated to be a 'place,' not a void between buildings. The straight street is not allowed to stretch out endlessly across the prairie but focuses on a visual termination after a few blocks. The emphasis is on sufficient order of streets allowing buildings, fences and trees along it to create and form the public room. To encourage and reinforce sociability, they lead to useful places, a specific terminus of public use and daily needs that create natural and evolving gathering places.

Civic amenities (public buildings, CBD, town hall, square) and a mix of residential

developments set within an ordered public realm are the integral components of this site. Significant and familiar elements found in towns prior to 1940's become the chosen parts which establish the structure of the prototypical community. At Seaside some of these elements include: Main street, four storey buildings with courtyards, warehouses, the Charleston single family house, picket fences, and gateways. Everything is situated within a 10 minute walk from any other part, a compact layout as found in the railroad suburb. Houses are close together on lots ranging from 40 x 100 to 70 x 130', situated close to the street with detached garages located at the rear. Such a layout allows for spatial definition and sociability while maintaining private space for each resident.

Spatially defined streets are a product of narrower proportions, reducing the conventional 40' width to 35' with only 18' being paved. To accomplish this, developer and architects rejected traffic engineering standards of typical municipalities and fought to change the prevailing standards. The streets are still able to service low speed two-way traffic and on street parking but critical to its impact on spatial experience, the built environment is at once at scale with the open spaces of the streets. Garages are kept as separate structures to the rear of lots, exerting as little influence as possible on the atmosphere of the street. As noted by Langdon, the streets have been so successful in attracting the pedestrian, that the specialized footpaths through the middle of most blocks are seldom used.

Requirements of the code opts for each house to have a front porch and a picket fence. The porch was intended to reestablish 'front-porch society' encouraging neighborly chatting and cooperation. However, this intention has largely failed. The American family has looked toward the back yard for several decades and the ability to shift such a gaze has not occurred.⁹ It remains a gesture which attempts to fulfill the street as a public place through proximity. The fence helps give the street an intimate scale and maintains the front yard as private space. The order of architectural elements and spaces between house and street allow for useable porch and easy conversation with pedestrian while making the street space at scale with the inhabitants.

Seaside is one of the most influential community developments being realized on the Florida Panhandle beachfront. The image of Seaside is at once reminiscent of a picturesque 19C community where typical emblems of modern homebuilding (vinyl siding, picture window, attached double garage) are largely prohibited. Instead, the image presents a vernacular architecture of commonplace building of the past which embodies craftsmanship of design and construction. However, to some degree the restrictions of the code may have stifled innovative design resulting in a fabricated and contrived environment, which gives Seaside a Disney Land image. But the code allows for approved variances which presents architects with the ability to challenge traditions being set and may encourage a 'better' environment since a multitude of designers are involved. Hopefully all share a concern for

⁹refer to Langdon.

a sense of community, as a whole as opposed to the individual monument.

The whimsical and 'cloying' nature of traditional details of Seaside's imagery is less important, however, than the innovative urban planning ideas it presents and the possibility of new approaches to suburban development and urban growth. The unfortunate cultural amnesia of architects and planners who abandoned turn of the century planning ideas and concepts is responsible for the present modernists approach that developers and governments who make the majority of planning decisions are undertaking at the fringe of our cities. Instead, Seaside responds to the sensitivity of the land while still promoting certain modern aspects of life which we find "essential." By living in such places reliance on these technological devices may be curtailed to more productive means and reinforce a more symbiotic relationship with nature.

Duany and ^{Peter}Zyberk indicate the significance of the dissolution of a shared vocabulary about urban space within the modernist conventions resulting in disastrous fragmented streetscapes and undifferentiated spaces. Conversely, the approach to community planning at Seaside re-addresses the issue of creating 'place,' which is significantly different from the way people live in usual corporate suburbs. Seaside has become a proving ground for theories about suburbia and subsequent attempts to generate alternate models of the typical subdivision. The idea of employing means which extend the tradition of town planning and place making found in earlier suburbs while maintaining critical components of 20C life. By using a traditional town planning approach one re-addresses and resurrects notions that generate a community which fosters a friendly and stimulating social atmosphere through creation of inviting streets and squares (public realm) which conveniently supply inhabitants daily needs. One which achieves a visual order while treating the natural environment intelligently and with respect, as an integral element of man and world, a symbiotic process.

The problems at Seaside have been expressed in its sense of 'overcrowding,' (a somewhat relative term), small lots and the prevalence of the private auto due to the popularity of on street parking, contribute to this image.¹⁰ However, familiarity and conformity of the conventional suburban scale, where one is situated in vast open undifferentiated spaces, may have a lot to do with the crowded feeling when in actuality it is more a sense of defined and enclosed space. Social and economic problems of exclusivity and transient populations of this resort may indicate that consideration to alternate ideas must be given to allow similar development approaches within affordable conditions and situations throughout the country. However, the sentimental aspects of Seaside, its pastels and sense of "cuteness", are still the ultimately governed by peoples choices. The consumers are in control, dictating the direction of future developments.

Presently, the impact of neo-traditional town planning ideas are seen as novel. There is evidence that adherence to the more superficial elements of ornament may be followed

¹⁰refer to Langdon.

blindly with little regard to location or critical place. It is therefore imperative to stress the inherent holistic quality of this traditional approach and its attempts to meet various differing needs of a community supported by ideas of convenience, efficiency, aesthetics, integral relationship with surroundings (natural and manmade). The neo-traditionalist approach to suburban design begins to alleviate significant problems associated with present planning of suburban communities. Most critical is the re-assertion of the designer within the process of community planning and their close association with developers and planners. Other concerns include aesthetics, environment, appropriate scale, spatial definition (figure-ground), architectural integrity, complexity and variety.

The main design principles which are established from the process at Seaside are as follows:

- 1) extrapolating street structure from development patterns of surrounding neighborhood, acknowledging context and community as a whole and its 'fit' within the environment.
- 2) a comprehensible street system with landmarks for orientation supported by donated land at strategic locations for public buildings.
- 3) well defined pedestrian oriented outdoor spaces, the public realm, to generate informal community activity, not merely a community image; employing notions of volumetric space and place, and the notion of the figure/ground.
- 4) street and walkway connections to specific and necessary places or things which people need in their everyday lives
- 5) integration of shopping, office, and residential use together with a variety of densities.
- 6) making all areas of the entire community accessible without necessity of the private auto, structured on the measure of man.

The dream of a hometown is almost realized at Seaside where modern myths about "home" and "town" are challenged. It almost appears as a timewarp or an episode of the Twilight Zone, a dreamland vision of another world only accessible through its imagery and spatial experience. Seaside reminds people of places they have been or think they have been. Perhaps they have seen such a place in a photograph or at the movies. Memory and vision are stimulated by a "place" which seems so familiar. Like a story which is told so many times it becomes real. To experience it is like taking a trip back in time to a world before convenience stores and highway strip malls.

The contemporary North American suburbs have been the result of prevailing attitudes which took root after WWII. A new generation of modernist inspired architects began to employ a notion of town planning based on segregation of functions into living, shopping and working. The inevitable sprawl not only took up unprecedented areas of land but required the necessity of the car to reach even the basic services. It is essential to the traditional town planning approach that one realizes even railroad suburbs or European medieval towns can deal with the car. But more significant is the development of a

'community attuned to the turning radii of people.' We must also consider what is being regarded in contemporary design. Trivial material elements like, doorknobs, have become more carefully designed than 100 acre housing tracts. Even if one is wrestling with the American middle class, there must be room for the designer, architect and landscape architect in consort with conscientious developers, within the suburban landscape.

CONCLUSION

In the suburb, the quest for an ideal image of home has been slanted, manipulated and monopolized into the development and marketing images of economy and control. The suburb requires a liberation from the propaganda and stereotyping which has ensued, debasing it to its present decentralized form. It requires a new dialectic that focuses on man's relationship with the world, responding to limiting resources as well as to man's spiritual well being.

The first chapter described the evolution of the suburb, focusing on the inherent contradictions of its image and on the beliefs which proliferated the myth of the ideal home. The image of suburbia represented a radical rethinking of the relationship between centre and periphery. It constituted a new way of thinking which was expounded upon by the modernists of the time and manipulated by overriding issues of technology. Thus, the suburbs resulted in an undifferentiated sprawl surrounding the city.

The second chapter focuses on the inherent problems of community within the suburban landscape. It presents the concerns that developed from; opposing ideologies of town and country, the lack of a public realm, the lack of spatial definition, and the reduction of architecture to mere commodity. Inherent to these issues was their underlying foundation in the principles of modern ideologies. They contributed to the lack of place and of community in the suburb. Such aspects of community required a new perspective. Thus, the search for an appropriate expression of community lead to the notion of a new way of thinking, to phenomenology.

The third chapter introduced the process of phenomenology as a viable method for interpreting the more intangible qualities of place. This process recognizes the multidimensional needs of man and of environment through a holistic approach based upon intuitive insight and description. Within this process, the work of Heidegger provides the foundation for a new way of thinking about man and environment. His insights offer new interpretations of the environments in which we dwell.

The fourth chapter begins to reconcile the insights offered through phenomenology and the four aspects of the suburb which contribute to its lack of place. Interpretations of the notions of boundary, centre, space, and appropriate image are offered through this new way of thinking. These ideas contribute to a deeper understanding of man and environment, stressing the notion of relationship. Relationships are encountered on every level of our spiritual and physical being. Through phenomenology, an attempt is made to reconcile man with his spiritual self. To go beyond the rational and logical world of reason to the ephemeral and intangible world of the spirit.

The nature of relationship suggests that there will always be a dialogue between contrasting notions. As such, we are always in a precarious state of equilibrium, always attempting to determine what is the appropriate balance and how to express it in our

environment. The modern paradigm has effectively set technology and our reliance on vision as two dominating forces which alter our perception of the world. Phenomenology attempts to bring us out of narrow minded precepts to the things themselves, to the relationships which constitute our place in the world.

The paradoxical conditions, or differences are thus met through notions of inclusion, reciprocity and presence. These provide new ways to interpret the relationships between boundary and centre, built and spatial form. As such, they provide a direction for new forms of community.

The fifth chapter discusses two visions of community which have addressed these issues. Even though they are from two radically different contexts, Europe and North America, they both recognize the notions of boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image. The Polycentric City of Leon Krier represents a utopian vision. It is a form of community which finds its prototype in the pre-modern European City. Krier's vision offers ideas of community which respond to a phenomenological perspective, they arise from intuitive thought and emotional commitment to man and environment.

Seaside is a built community which has taken many of the fundamental notions of Krier and applied them to the North American landscape of the Florida coast. Its structure and organization of built and spatial form respond to the measure of man. The inherent desire to approach a more human environment exhibits concern for the land and for the community. These ideas are fundamental to phenomenology. However, Seaside presents a contrived image that appears over designed. It has been standardized through guidelines which seem to restrict imagination and spirit. This aspect may be enriched through time, as people become more immersed in the place, the place will express a stronger personality and sense of community.

Community and meaning are often sacrificed for speed and efficiency. Reinforced through man's technological wizardry, the focus to transcend the inevitability of man's mortality. But, it is time, that enables us to become immersed in a place, to discover the essential qualities which comprise it. Thus, processes and relationships must be encouraged, together with cooperation and collective effort, which will contribute to more varied and multifaceted landscapes. This is possible through a holistic and ethical approach to community.

Communities must be recognized as an entity of complex webs comprised of people, places, and environment which contribute to a pattern of nature. They constitute a process over time which expresses growth through an additive transformation of the past, present, and future. To reveal an authentic expression of community, an image, context and relationship must be reinforced to reveal values shared by the culture. These are often presented in complex and contradictory images which encompass meaning on several levels. These images represent both regional rootedness and historical continuity.

The meaning of a community is revealed in its figural properties, its silhouette. This

image relies on the surrounding landscape of both natural and man-made forms. Density and clear delineation strengthen this image. It is through a relationship between juxtaposition, a counterpoint to the dominant pattern, and complementation that the community is perceived as a unit. The variations on the dominant pattern provide orientation and identity throughout. Cultivation of the site, the capacity to embody in built form the past, the present and the transformation across time strengthens this identity to a particular context. The imagery is perceived as a unit grounded in both the land and the body. As such places come into presence as the elements emerge as what they are.

Embodying both man and spirit such places gather and bind people to environment, linking past, present, and future. In the suburb, newly developed areas, the need for images of a real or imagined past, can be expressed through elements capable of gathering and generating myths. These images must be capable of eliciting memory to reinforce deeper meanings of place. Creating myths through new images establishes significant elements people can identify with in a community. These should be fostered through intimacy and immediacy of environment.

Within people's day-to-day lives, their experience of place is strengthened and enhanced by collective involvement of the individual through emotions, habits, and body. From these personal associations to space, the notions of boundary, centre, defined space, and appropriate image provide a framework for elements to emerge. These elements are constituted in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. They are constituted in myths.

Place is determined by boundary, a threshold, an embodiment of a difference, a paradox. One's feelings of identity are strengthened by boundary, which not only defines an edge but encompasses and connects communities. It is inclusive and reciprocates to surrounding neighbors. Just as a fence defines movement along the street it binds communities. The fence distinguishes between public and private, allowing for informal conversation from the porch. Similarly the lane provides a connection which enables informal meeting and playing. While enriching one's environment through inclusion, it also creates a division between backyards and functions. Climate adds another dimension to boundaries. Rivers that create divisions in the summer reciprocate by providing links across in winter. Thus, opening up the perceived boundary of the place to places beyond.

The ambiguity and change in the nature of the boundary reinforces the complementary need for a centre, a gathering middle. It binds people to places as a process which shapes time and space in a lived experience. The centre, structured within a network of the public realm, allows for man's private and social being, for physical and spiritual control. The centre is strengthened by images which appeal to more public associations, like an axis mundi, it can be understood, at one level, through immediate perception.

The relationship between the centre and the boundary are met by different scenarios. The centre can evolve from a purely man-made environment, the linear street in which the structure of the community dissipates to its encompassing boundaries. Or, the centre can

serve as a green space in which the boundary becomes the encompassing streets. The clearing in the forest is just as effective as a park or as an urban square or street.

The structure of community emerges from the centre and the boundary through a series of connections and gathering points. Thus, they must provide critical links to both. Proximity and appropriate use allow these areas to become active as social centres giving them human dimension. The daily activities and patterns of people become part of a multifaceted continuum generating friendliness and familiarity as individual routines come together in community. Community is a significant component satisfying human existence fostered through nearness and intimacy of environment.

The images which are associated with these defined spaces come to be known through familiarity of place and of continuity. They constitute the community pattern as a whole and determine its intimacy. They are mediated by context; topology, geography, and urban morphology.

Articulation of appropriate image resides in an environment perceived from the individual (pedestrian) experience of space. It relies on harmony and care, demarcation of the street and square, a balanced scale; the poetry of space. This quality is inextricably linked to context but is constituted in an equilibrium of both technical solution and the preindustrial past. It responds to a sensitivity toward multifaceted aspects of surface, detail, material, sound, air, movement, and light. Community is strengthened by continuity and a degree of consistency among elements which accentuate a distinction amongst neighborhoods, reinforcing their relationships to boundaries and centres.

The thesis is a dialectic exploration of a relationship between thought and form. Through these endeavors, I have gained a deeper understanding of form, as expressed by the suburb and by phenomenology. The thoughts expressed in this thesis provide a framework from which to address design problems in the suburbs. It stresses the importance of not blindly accepting 'style' or aspects of conformity but to begin to question and understand the sources of thought which initiated the form and style.

Upon reflection, I am struck by the importance of the myth, the image of an "ideal" version of reality which has effectively transformed the landscape. The strength of the image is constituted in a way of thinking, an elusive aspect of our interpretation of the world.

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