Paradoxical Urbanism: an anti-urban undertow in modernism

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Although at one level they refer to the same entity, the terms urban and city have different nuances. Urban suggests an everyday realism. City implies an idealised image of a human settlement, traditionally a place of safety – a citadel – surrounded by walls against invading armies and with grain stores to defend against the vicissitudes of nature. The city was also a centre of power, and from the seventeenth century in Europe tended to a planned ordering of space in rationally proportioned facades and orthogonal street patterns. Urban lacks the romance of city, then, but perhaps especially in English culture. If urban denotes conditions of mobility, proximity and diversity – all aspects of a modern city – these are viewed through different lenses in different societies, either celebrated or seen as a threat (or both).

I became aware of this difference of perception at a conference in Barcelona in 2003, which included a discussion with the city's planners of what they called an urbanisation project. In England this might be taken as an extension of the built area, urbanising the not-yet urban; in Barcelona, the project was located in the inner-city district of Poble Nou. As it transpired, urbanisation indicated, not an extension of building to non-urban sites, but an ordering of space according to an assumed (in this case unstated) idea of what cities should be like. One side of this set of assumptions concerned the general facilitation of high-density dwelling, mobility, and relation between zones of residence, work and leisure. The tendency here was to mixed-use zoning, but there was also another side to the set of assumptions which could be expressed as improvement. The planners, that, is saw their function as improving the city's fabric, which led to urbanisation projects. In other cases this included freer movement

of road traffic, or integration of public transport. In all this, form followed function, as it did in modernist architecture and planning, and particularly in Le Corbusier's notion of the city as a machine for living.

But there was a further issue: the improvements proposed (and implemented) by the city's planning department were largely top-down, not without consultation (in collaboration with an academic at the University of Barcelona) but reliant on professional expertise. This, too, was the case with modernist planning, and reaches an extreme point in Le Corbusier's Voisin Plan for Paris, which entailed the demolition of the old city and its replacement by towers in green spaces. It was opportunist but not accidental that Le Corbusier published the plan in the French fascist newspaper, since only a totalitarian regime could have delivered it. The Poble Nou proposals were humane, and balanced between conservation of elements of the industrial past and insertion of signature architecture, plus the remodelling of blocks for low-rise mixed-use spaces, including for new technology firms. A subterranean mall and café were seen as a place for young people to meet. The proposal was, in effect, a progressive gentrification of Poble Nou as a hub of the knowledge economy. Gentrification excludes old publics, whose presence becomes either residual or terminated, as it brings in new, more affluent users; but I also read Poble Nou's urbanisation in context of Barcelona's extension in the 1860s, after the demolition of its city walls, which followed rational spatial principles, as in Eixample's tree-lined avenues, generous pedestrian spaces, and regulated facades, following the 1859 Cerda plan. The plan was humane, but also an imposition designed not only to alleviate the city's dire housing conditions but, in improving the material conditions of workers, to lessen the frequency of epidemics of contagious diseases which reduced their productivity, and to reduce the likelihood of insurrection after a series of strikes in the 1850s (and events in Paris in 1848).

Urbanisation, then, can be understood as evolving according to prevailing political trends as well as delivering efficient uses of space. When it overlaps with gentrification this indicates a political climate of liberalism in the nineteenth century or neoliberalism today. In England, however, urbanisation is more often be read as invading the green belt, a threat to be sent elsewhere (not in my back yard). This rests on a presupposition that the urban is mundane, dreary or unsettling, an undertone of inner-city dereliction. Indeed, the term urban is used in music and fashion to mean inner-city culture, and aligned to graffiti in what art dealers call urban art. Proximity, mobility and diversity remain essential urban qualities, but instead of being celebrated they are feared.

This fear, leading to pretended denial, of the urban produced the half-timbered terraces and semis of sprawling Tudorbethan suburbs, and the Garden Cities. Urban has a negative tone, suggesting a fear of high density living and the ephemeral, shifting relations it breeds, and now, increasingly, a fear of diversity. This is cultural as much as it is economic or political. Weekend city breaks are popular among middle-class tourists but travel agents tend not to advertise urban breaks. All this is a legacy of nineteenth-century industrialisation, which took place earlier and more rapidly in Britain than in many other European countries (not all of which were countries before the 1860s). Having said that I must qualify my argument by noting that there are tree-lined suburban developments in cities across Europe, in some cases with characteristics not unlike English garden suburbs. In England, however, urban conditions were lent an especially negative tint in literature, as in the writing of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, Joseph Conrad and the (now obscure) poet James Thomson. The impact of this widely consumed literature – when adult literacy rose, and printing costs were reduced by the steam press – was that urban sites were lent universally bleakness: dire housing, poverty, disease, dirt, crime and dereliction, bad material conditions linked

directly to moral turpitude. The conditions were real conditions, however, not literary figments. James Donald summarises:

> In the early decades of the nineteenth century, many British towns and cities underwent a process of radical and often traumatic transformation. So did the ways in which they were perceived and represented. The emergence of industrial modes of production was accompanied by unprecedented population growth. At the same time, there was a massive migration of rural populations into urban areas. These factors, in culmination, led to the establishment of new class relations and new patterns of urban segregation in terms of work, residence, class, occupation and ethnicity.[1]

Industrialisation

Thomson introjects the conditions of industrial urbanism with its smoke, fog and the dark, narrow alleyways which figure, too, in detective stories (such as Conan Doyle's stories of Sherlock Holmes). While other writers projected narratives of moral failure onto such dark conditions, Thomson projects them instead onto his own mental state, exacerbated by his depression and alcoholism, in *The City of Dreadful Night*[2] and *The Doom of the City*, both based on London in the 1860s. Planning academic Peter Hall describes *The City of Dreadful Night* as an, 'overlong, sub-Dantesque excursion into the underworld.'[3] London becomes an artificial Hell loosely referencing Dante's inferno; and Hall reads it as an accurate description of big cities such as London, Liverpool or Manchester at the time.[4] To give an extract of *The City of Dreadful Night*:

> Although lamps burn along the silent streets,

Even when moonlight silvers empty squares

The dark holds countless lanes and close retreats;

But when the night its sphereless mantle wears

The open spaces yawn with gloom abysmal,

The sombre mansions loom immense and dismal,

The lanes are black as subterranean lairs.[5]

The lanes were fog-bound, as noted in Thomson's diary entry for 23 November 1874, 'Cold. Third day of fog … dismal, bewildered and melancholy.'[6] Few would now read *The City of Dreadful Night* as good poetry but it was widely read when published, and serialised in the *National Reformer*, a Malthusian journal (following Malthus' theory that over-population leads to species decline, another kind of bleakness). Thomson's biographer, Henry Salt, notes, 'It … attracted more attention than any of Thomson's other works, was reckoned as a very remarkable work … and received notices from the *Spectator* and the *Academy*.'[7]

Thirty years previously, Friedrich Engels visited Manchester in an investigation of working-class housing conditions. Engels writes,

Immediately under the railway bridge there stands a court, the filth and horrors of which surpass all the others by far … Passing along a rough bank, among stakes and washing-lines, one penetrates into this chaos of small one-storied, one-roomed huts, in most of which there is no artificial floor; kitchen, living and sleeping-room all in one. In such a hole, scarcely five feet long by six broad, I found two beds … which, with a staircase and chimney-place, exactly filled the room … Everywhere before the doors refuse and offal.[8]

And in London, nearly forty years after Engels' report, Christian reformer Andrew Mearns' found not dissimilar conditions in London, described in *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*:

> Walls and ceilings are black with the accretions of filth which have gathered upon them through long years of neglect. It is exuding through cracks in the boards overhead; it is running down the walls … Every room … houses a family, often two … A sanitary inspector reports finding a father, mother, three children, and four pigs! … seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little child lying dead in the same room.[9]

It appeared that despite decades of attempts at reform, and legislation to improve the material conditions of the working poor, little had changed beyond urban expansion. For Mearns, there was a clear correlation between poverty and the twin ills of crime and moral dereliction, a point noted by a Royal Commission on housing in 1884-85.

The Commission's members included Edward, Prince of Wales, and Lord Salisbury; it found that previous housing legislation was not enacted, while, 'evils of overcrowding, especially in London, were still a public scandal, and were becoming in certain localities more serious than they ever were.'[10] The Commission's report lent a higher profile to housing reform, one outcome of which was the building of model estates, such as the Millbank Estate behind the Tate Gallery, its streets named after British artists. Such reforms – including the opening of the Tate Gallery as a temple of art where the deserving artisans living in the nearby model housing (and wider working-class publics) might mix with middle-class museum-goers and absorb their manners – were aimed – as in Barcelona in the 1860s – as much at improving the productivity of the working class as improving their bodily or moral health, and as lessening the likelihood of civil unrest (a perpetual fear among the governing class, after disturbances in the West End earlier in the century, and the Paris Commune of 1871).

Fear of cities

Together, empirical investigation and literary elaboration produced a negative image of cities in England. There were equivalent bad conditions in European cities such as Berlin and Vienna, and efforts to build model housing there – using the tenement, from a model of military housing, seen as enabling a mixing of social classes although leading in many cases to overcrowding – but somehow the inner-city became especially feared in English culture, extending to white North America. Richard Sennett describes the fear of outsiders in white North American suburbs in *The Uses of Disorder*, pointing out its irrationality but also its reality. Sennett reads a simplification of perception in suburbs as, 'the logical end in the decline of diverse communities … that has occurred as people become more affluent.'[11] If poverty levered negative traits in the nineteenth century, then the affluence of the mid- and late-twentieth century – the consumer society – breeds false ideas of community while the suburbs to which white families fled actually house social atomism, and enable denial of the dysfunctionality of suburban family life. Sennett looks to a psychological explanation:

> Why progressive notions of city planning have taken on this tone has to do … with what planners feel about the complexity possible in city life. Their impulse has been to give way to that tendency, developed in adolescence, of men [sic] to control unknown threats by eliminating the possibility for experiencing surprise. By controlling the frame of what is available for social interaction, the subsequent path of social action is tamed. Social history is replaced by the passive product of social planning. Buried in this hunger for preplanning along machinelike lines is the desire to avoid pain, to create a transcendent order of living that is immune to the variety, and so to the inevitable conflict, between men.[12]

Sennett universalises the tension between the changes of real life and the static quality of the suburban dream, but he draws out a paradox: cities have always been where strangers meet and form new, voluntary kinds of association, freed from the ties to land and kin of rural life; suburbanisation denies this, offering only an ersatz rurality on the city's margin. inside-out. This follows early sociology's contrasting of rural feudalism to urban freedom. Nonetheless, the three qualities of being amid crowds, moving around and possibly moving through the class scale, and being aware of people from different backgrounds, remain the foundations of city life.
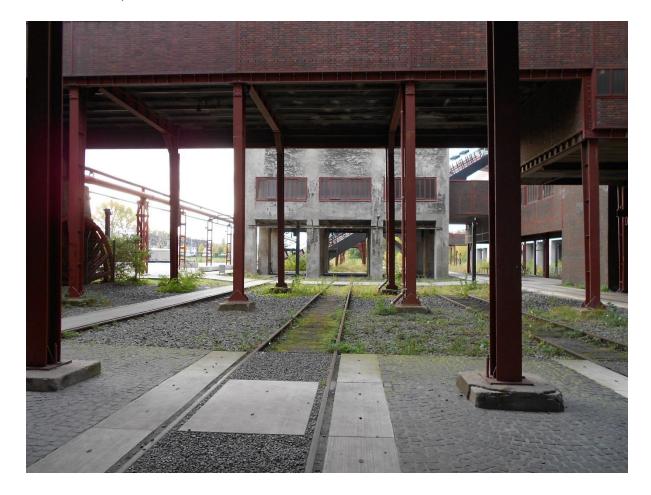
From the nineteenth century onwards, this allows a sense of anonymity which is distinctly modern. This was a feature of my own adolescence, living in the western suburbs of London, which I loathed, an only child of an unhappy marriage, in the cloying homogeny of the 1930s streets of terraced and semi-detached houses with neat gardens and wooden beams in the gables. My flight was to walking on solitary footpaths by the Thames, especially at night, and to mainline railway termini where everyone was no-one, and you could get tea even if you were not going anywhere. That aside, Sennett points to a now ingrained mechanism which began in the 1920s-1930s when planners and urban sociologists of the Chicago School used a biological analogy from plant growth to describe a city's expansion, and normalised the idea of conflict in transitional zones, beside a suburbia identified with a new affluence. E. W. Burgess' diagram of concentric rings – based on Chicago, with its Central Business District contained by the loop of the elevated metropolitan railway, transitional zones and outer, white middle-class suburbs – was universalised, not description but prescription.

Burgess and his associates saw planning expertise as exempting city development from the political control they saw as feeding conflict, just as biological analogies relocated it outside history: the planning of suburbia was a reaction to fear of conflict, and to lack of control.

In the late twentieth century, de-industrialisation changed the image of the industrial city in a further way: hectares of redundant industrial buildings made cities seem wasted, sites of dereliction and re-wilding. Post-modern ruinscapes have a certain appeal hence the growth industry of books on the new ruins of Detroit. Art historian Christopher Woodward recalls a visit. As his taxi passed, 'empty brick mansions and rows of wooden houses, then derelict Modernist factories and Art deco skyscrapers,' the driver asked why he was there; he said he was lecturing on ruins but the driver replied, 'These are the wrong kind of ruins.'[13] The coffee-table books of ruin photography romanticise the plight of de-industrialisation; yet a certain frisson attaches to scenes of dereliction. Coincidentally echoing Sennett's interest in regulation as a strategy of purification, a group of geographers in Manchester including Tim Edensor write of the informal uses of contemporary industrial ruins:

> A lack of regulation is a key attribute of ruins, important in relation to play since this provides a space outside the structures of health and safety, systematic surveillance and material maintenance. Commonly conceived by planners, business people, local politicians and residents as the derelict vestiges of former industry, when industrial sites are closed down and abandoned they are unmoored from "stabilising networks which ensured an epistemological and practical security.' Though high fences often deter would-be visitors … these measures are toothless. Usually, somebody will already have found a way past the defensive barriers … the ordinary control of the human and non-human is missing, and plants and animals rapidly move in and colonise space from which they were formerly expelled.[14]

Again, there is a paradoxical relation between the imperatives of building and production which fuelled the modern city and the post-modern reintroduction of wild growth and informal occupation, now a normalised element of the urban landscape. Construction and

destruction seem not so far apart, and in a few cases – as in the landscaping of the Rhur, for instance at Zolverein near Essen, and Duisburg Nord Landscape Park – post-industrial ruins are popular leisure sites. I share the attraction, and spent an enjoyable day at both Duiburg Nord and Zolverein – once the most modern combined mine, coking plant and power station in Europe.

Such places have new kinds of aesthetic appeal. And, again, there are literary precedents, in this case from the mid-twentieth century. I want to look briefly at one, then to construct a wider argument on a negative undertow in modern urbanism.

Waste Lands

T. S. Eliot's epic poem *The Waste Land* (1922) is a modernist lament for the city, in particular for London after the 1914-18 war – in which Eliot was a reluctant non-combatant, working

in Lloyds Bank. The poem is modernist in using a montage of different voices, and at the same time a Romantic escape looking beyond present reality to another world, for Eliot in a mix of Western and Eastern religions, which relieves present anxiety by transcending it, as if the metaphysical is more real than the physical. (It isn't).

The fractured language of *The Waste Land* polarises everyday life and myth in a babel of voices which denies any likelihood of unity or coherence. Meaning is broken by the war, or by aspects of Eliot's personal life, or both at once. There is a pervading nostalgia regardless of the poem's siting in London in the immediate post-1918 years. Edmund Wilson reads Eliot as drawing on seventeenth-century metaphysical verse and nineteenth-century Symbolism, and, 'a typical product of our New England civilisation' with its mix of prudence and idealism which leads to, 'excessive fastidiousness.'[15] Wilson reads Eliot as intensifying a theme from Flaubert and Symbolism, of the present's inferiority against the distant past: 'the Romantics had discovered the possibilities of the historical imagination; with their thirst for boldness, grandeur, and magnificence, they had located these qualities in past epochs.'[16] It helps, I suppose, when the past in question is remote enough to accept almost any projection, in effect of present loss or absence. Eliot, Wilson says, transposes the idea of a better past (or lost Eden) to a world seen through the lens of a New England temperament:

> The Waste Land of the poem is a symbol borrowed from the myth of the Holy Grail; it is a desolate and sterile country ruled by an impotent king, in which not only have the crops ceased to grow and the animals to reproduce, but the very human inhabitants have become incapable of having children. But this sterility we soon identify as the sterility of the Puritan temperament. … We recognise throughout … the peculiar conflicts of the Puritan turned artist: the horror of vulgarity and the shy sympathy with the common life,

the ascetic shrinking from sexual experience and distress at the drying up of the springs

of sexual emotion, with the straining after a religious emotion which may be made to

take its place.[17]

Eliot further utilises a notion of archaic vegetation rites drawn from J. L. Weston's *From

Ritual to Romance* (1920), which he reworks in terms of a modern world depleted by the

moral and intellectual equivalent of drought. For F. R. Leavis, fertility rites in *The Waste Land*

evoke a, 'rich disorganisation' while the poem's disjointedness and literary borrowings and

allusions, 'reflect the present state of civilisation.' [18]

The Waste Land, then, is an indisputably modern poem in its techniques, as Leavis argued

strenuously, and a retro- take on an imagined past – citing Elizabethan England at one point,

with an image of Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester on a gilded boat riding a clean, sparkling

Thames, in contrast to the oil-slick and drifting barges of the present – which Eliot uses as a

lost world, a polarity to the world as possessed. There is no evidence he read it, but the tone

of Eliot's epic is not unlike that of Thomas Elyot's *The Governor* (1532):

> Moreover take away order from all things, what should then remain? Certes nothing
>
> finally, except some man would imagine eftsoons Chaos, which of some is expound a
>
> confused mixture. Also where there is any lack of order needs must be perpetual conflict
>
> … nothing of himself only may be nourished; but when he had destroyed that wherewith
>
> he doth participate by the order of his creation, he himself of necessity must then perish,
>
> whereof ensueth universal dissolution.[19]

The world is broken; the centre which does not hold and the land devoid of nourishment or

succour, let alone salvation, is London in 1922 (the date of publication) or … (the date of

reading). But while the collages of modernist art, notably in Cubism and Dada, reflect the

proximity, mobility, diversity and everyday reality of cities, could be called urban in a positive, European sense, Eliot reverses the role of such fabrication and looks instead to a light at the far side of apocalyptic burning and destruction of this world, probably humanly unattainable, like heaven (for a poet who says the mermaids did not sing for him), in the end as self-denied as the joys of sex to a poet carrying a pre-emptive guilt in such matters. But I must leave the story there,[20] simply citing *The Waste Land* as an epic – although in my reading unsuccessful – poem of the modern city's innate dereliction. The point, there, is that the city's dereliction is not external to modernity but can be found within it, a fear of the very conditions a modern city exemplifies.

Gardens and Retreats

I have tried, briefly and speculatively, to establish that a paradoxical current runs through modern representations of cities, on one hand locations of freedom, on the other hand of decline and all manner of ill effects. This is prominent in Victorian and modernist writing. I have also alluded sketchily to a current in modern planning which instantiates a fear – of conflict, and of politics as a realm of conflicting ideologies – which produces a generalised suburban conformity. I accept that many post-1945 suburban housing schemes were seen as progressive, and were humane and well-designed; and that most dwellers were keen to inhabit them.[21] In a few cases, such as the Byker Wall in Newcastle (1969-1982), designed by Ralph Erskine, prospective residents from the condemned Victorian terraced housing it replaced were consulted on design decisions (but not on whether the old terraces should be demolished). Urbanist Anna Minton writes that only a minor proportion of those dwellers eventually moved into Byker Wall; but accepts that it was an exemplary case of progressive design.[22] Still, the presiding image of cities now revolves around processes of displacement

and marginalisation, increasingly as the global urban redevelopment industry clears sites of social housing tenants to make way for yuppies. In some cases, picking up a fragment of the Garden City idea, converted warehouses and gated compounds are now marketed as urban villages, as if the community projected onto rural life might be resurrected there. There are, anyway,, many grounds for objection to how cities are being remodelled today, emphasising security via exclusion, and producing widening divisions of class and opportunity after the abandonment of the post-war Welfare state by successive governments since the 1980s. My concern here, however, is with a longer-term negativity which I read within modern English urbanism. The Garden City Movement represents this, developed in the 1900s to rehouse urban populations in country settings while providing employment and civic facilities. This produced Letchworth and Welwyn, and Hampstead Garden Suburb; and in the post-war years the new town of Milton Keynes, which has no centre except a shopping mall, where built areas are spaced out over a vast green area, and social differences are not mitigated. Car(or in my case taxi) use is more or less unavoidable. Once, on a coach tour as part of a meeting of public art professionals, the guide pointed to two estates astride the road: 'Volvo drivers on that side, Fiesta drivers over there.'[23]

A more recent product, probably seen as progressive by its advocates, and with a premium on house process compared to Dorchester (the market town in southern England of which it is a suburb, is Poundbury, a pastiche of styles drawn from a vague elsewhere and an equally vague, compound past. The first streets built, in the 1980s, consisted of cottages in Georgian and Victorian styles, with generous green areas in front, like a village green; later additions included Georgian-style terraces, and some strange buildings looking like a memory of pre-modern middle-Europe, designed by Leon Krier. There were positive aspects, such as the integration of affordable housing, and low energy consumption (now electric buses), and a

regulation of shop fronts in keeping with an overall design approach. But regulation also extends to a code of behaviour, not intrusive but still requiring conformity. The most recent construction, Queen Mother Square, combines pseudo-Georgian façades with post-modern building techniques (the silver insulation lining under the stone facing, for example), all on a grand scale.

Walking around Poundbury several times over a decade has been a strange experience. I have never been to Disneyland, but it might be a reference. Another could be the Disney Corporation's venture into North American New Urbanism, Celebration, Florida (which I have not visited, either), a corporate-managed town without the normal civic institutions, controlled by a fiercer code than Poundbury's, designed in overwhelmingly nostalgic terms looking to the unreal past of civic harmony symbolised by the white picket fences, the one-room rural school, and happy families. References might also include the villages and small towns of Dorset, most using the local sandstone, but also, despite the intended look and feel of village informality, the proportions and street plans of modern planned cities. And that is my point: underneath the surfaces of English modern urbanism is an anti-urbanism which rejects the rationality of enlightenment in favour of olde-worlde nonsense, and the

complexities of urban living in favour of a mirage of nice representations of rurality. Those complexities, inherent in proximity, mobility and diversity, seem too much reality to bear, to borrow a phrase from Eliot; yet unless they are addressed, and forms of democracy found which enable people to deal with them, cities will split into a realm of shiny towers and gated compounds for the rich, and marginal warehousing of the poor. In the Victorian city, the non-productive – children, the poor, the ill, the mad – were confined in institutions as a means to clear them from the city's visible spaces and prevent trouble. Today they are expected to fend for themselves on the city's social, economic and geographical fringe.

Anti-urban urbanism?

Perceptions matter. Literary images condition how cities are understood and how they are redeveloped, as well as how proposals for redevelopment are received. In London, post-war planners demolished inner-city streets they saw as slums, where people had little space, outside lavatories (often shared), and leaking roofs, beside the bomb sites filled with weeds. In fact, despite poor material conditions, these streets generally housed viable communities, where children were watched by neighbours as they played in the street, and patterns of habitation and mutual assistance were invisible to outside professionals. The result was that populations were moved to new estates where community links were lost, not effectively replaced by the streets in the sky of tower blocks which designers modelled on their ideas (or ideals) of village life. Inner-city streets were demolished because they were perceived as *slums*, in a legacy of a Dickensian city image; and because planners and designers could image a better life only on the clean slate of new sites. Similar processes occurred in North America. In Washington DC in the 1900s, legislation was introduced to demolish city alleys despite, Margaret Farrar writes, evidence that, while densely populated, these alleys were

relatively safe.[24] Farrar says, 'while the public discourse about alleys focused explicitly on overcrowding, sanitation, and disease (conditions threatening to the physical body), reformers were quick to associate these problems with the social body.'[25] As in Victorian London, density leads to moral decline. The dystopian view predominates, a key factor in the anti-urbanism which leads developers to brand sites as urban villages – because they see an appeal in retreat to a fantasy past – just as it led Ebenezer Howard to imagine a Garden City purified of urban dirt and ill health. To be fair, Howard was progressive and well intentioned, looking to a benign future urbanism involving shared ownership of land, which never happened, and common civic benefits for a more mixed population than actually moved to what have become largely middle-class settlements. Having said that, the residents of villages which were absorbed into Letchworth were suspicious of their new urban neighbours with their sandals, shorts and beards – a bohemian lot.

My argument, speculative and only sketched here, is that a prevailing anti-urbanism runs through English culture, leading to a negative tinting of urban sites, in turn producing the redevelopment schemes which are branded as urban villages or more generally presented as retreats from the diversity, mobility and high-density occupation of a modern city. One way this happens is through literary and other cultural representations. Another is I suggest inherent in modernist planning and architecture, in the *instrumentalism* by which the city's built fabric is read as an object for manipulation in the interests of efficiency, and in some cases to eliminate traces of poverty and dereliction.

Eliminating the visible signs of poverty is not the same as giving money to the poor, or providing work, even less empowering them. The failure of post-war housing schemes was not low specification but in part their peripheralisation of urban populations; and in part

their privileging of design over living – the consolidation of a process of abstraction which, while well-intentioned, led to a new kind of exclusion – from debates and exchanges which determine a city's or a neighbourhood's presiding image as an expression of shared values (which might more meaningfully be called community than the provision of high-level walkways on tower blocks). Part of this, in turn, was the privileging of professional expertise over the tacit, non-intellectualised knowledges of dwellers. If cities are sites of proximity, however, then that implies recognition of those tacit knowledges, and their inclusion in democratic processes of development. The dream of a better world remains. But it is little use if displaced either to Eliot's quasi-religious after-world, or to fantasies of lost rural Edens where all families are happy (and everyone knows their place). In cities, proximity means that people live amid the changing perceptions of others; mobility means people negotiate their own place; and diversity means interchanges with people not dismissed as Other.

[1] Donald, J., 1999, *Imagining the Modern City*, London, Athlone, p. 28

[2] Thomson, J., (1874) 1880, *The City of dreadful Night and Other Poems*, London, Reeves and Turner

[3] Hall, P., 2001, *Cities of Tomorrow*, updated ed., Oxford, Blackwell, p. 14

[4] Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, ibid

[5] Thomson, *The City of Dreadful Night*, verse 3

[6] Salt, H.S., 1914, *Life of James Thomson,* revised ed., London, Watts, p. 90

[7] Salt, *James Thomson*, p. 80

[8] Engels, F., (1845) 1892, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, London, Allen and Unwin, pp. 45-54, cited in Donald, *Imagining the Modern City*, p. 35

[9] Mearns, A., 1883, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Conditions of the Abject Poor*, London, James Clarke, p. 4, cited in Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, pp. 16-17

[10] Royal Commission on Housing, 1885, I, 4, quoted in Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, p. 19

[11] Sennett, R., 1996, *The Uses of Disorder: Personal Identity and City Life*, London, Faber and Faber, p. 70

[12] Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, p. 96

[13] Woodward, C., 2012, 'Learning from Detroit, or the wrong kind of ruins,' Jorgendsen, A. and Keenan, R., eds., *Urban Wildscapes*, London, Routledge, p. 17

[14] Edensor, T., Evans, B., Holloway, J., Millington, S. and Binnie, JH., 'Playing in industrial ruins,' *Urban Wildscape*s, p. 66, citing Edensor, T., 2005*, Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality*, Oxford, Berg, p. 313

[15] Wilson, E., (1931) 1961*, Axel's Castle: Essays on Yeats, Valéry, T S Eliot, Proust, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein*, London, Fontana, p. 87

[16] Wilson, *Axel's Castle* [1961 ed.] p. 85

[17] Wilson, *Axel's Castle* [1961 ed.] pp. 89-90

[18] Leavis, F.R., (1932) 1967, *New Bearings in English Poetry*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp. 70-71

[19] Elyot, T., (1532) 1970, *The Book named The Governor*, ed. Lehmberg, S.E., London, Dent, p. 2

[20] See Miles, M., 2019, Cities and Literature, London, Routledge, pp. 112-118

[21] Grindrod, J., 2013, *Concretopia: A Journey around the Rebuilding of Postwar Britain*, London, Old Street

[22] Minton, A., 2015, 'Byker Wall; Newcastle's noble failure of an estate, *The Guardian*, 21 May [accessed on-line, 26 August 2018]

[23] Personal memory, c. 1993

[24] Farrar, M. E., 2002, 'Making the City Beautiful: Aesthetic Reform and the (Dis)plsacement of Bodies', Bingaman, A., Sanders, L. and Zorach, R., eds., *Embodied Utopias: Gender, social change and the modern metropolis*, London, Routledge, p. 45

[25] Farrar, 'Making the City Beautiful' p. 47