6-29-1979

"The Urban Enigma: America's Urban Alternatives"

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Portland State University

[recording begins amid background chatter from audience]

CHRISTOPHER SALTER [in foreground, to someone off mic]: …Good academic statement. Yeah.

DAVID [last name unidentified]: Good morning. Sorry that there was a room change that we couldn't announce to a lot of people. We kept getting sixty-degree temperatures in the auditorium and other kinds of problems, so we moved here, and ultimately we will continue our series of lectures related to Earth Resources Limited. [background noise] They'll be […] in a little […] here that if you don't see it, it doesn't quite come through, but that's all right. We're really very pleased to see the other groups come in from the Geography area. I think some of the geographers with us hail from the lectures of previous days on ecosystems and the like, but […]

The speaker this morning is Christopher Salter, associate professor of geography at UCLA. He's an enormously magnetic and exciting person; I think you'll find what he has to say especially instructive. He has commenced this summer another project; and we're lucky that he was able to move away from it for a while, which is the Urban Environmental Education program in L.A., and we hope we'll be able to have a discussion on that separate from the nine o'clock and one o'clock lectures. So I present, and incidentally we've urged this thing to be informal so that's a reason to keep the introduction short and get at the speaker in discussions after eleven o'clock. So the people that are here are welcome to come back at eleven o'clock and further and get into depth with Dr. Salter. And I present, Chris Salter.

SALTER: Thank you, David. There are two important announcements. One is that since the house is so well-filled, the geographers are allowed to leave now. The demand on you to come and help fill out the room has now been met, [laughter] and you can go back to your offices and grade your summer papers. The second thing was, the reason the auditorium got so cold was because the geographers were changing that environment to give you some sense of anticipation of how big of an impact environment can have on learning. I see you really failed miserably at sixty degrees, really; as an energy conservation item has driven you out to this classroom And we know even in Oregon, not all is well with environmental response, which is probably okay.

Let me give you a very simple thesis that I want to share with you, and perhaps lambast you with this morning in the first of these two talks, and that is my concern are primarily landscape. You've had elements of landscape given to you all week by the prior talkers. We move like ship pass in the night. I've never met any of the people that I'm in this session with; it's organized in such a way that you never know what's been said before, and you hope you don't know what's been said after you leave. I guess there's some wisdom in that, divine or otherwise, but it is, in any case, that kind of an operation. But I find from talking to David that you've been exposed to a range of things, only a few of which have come perhaps in direct focus upon man, upon society, upon humankind.

And my concern today, partially as a cultural geographer and partially as a person coming to laud cities as a human form, is to make you turn if not anew, at least again to the idea of the landscapes that create the human environments we all deal with, and look at the processes as well of the human decision-making, the values, the institutions, the mechanisms, the technology, the economics, the desires that go into creating modified landscape. Because this has been the trait, certainly the trait of the human species has been the creation of cultural landscapes. We've been as busy as we can be since Australopithecus, trying to shape the environment just a little bit differently, so it would meet our short-term needs.

Earth Resources Limited was put together around the thesis that these short-term needs now can no longer be the criterion by which we design landscape, by which we interact with the environment, by which we interact with ourselves. And cities, then, comes in as one of the logical interfaces of this question of society and environment. And the reason that landscape, that word, the reason that landscape comes on as a focus, the reason I'm going to turn to that almost immediately in a short series of eleven slides is that landscape is ubiquitous. That you want to realize whether you're an undergraduate at Portland State, or whether you're a

secondary-school teacher trying to design new curriculum packages for an inner-city or suburban or any kind of school, or whether you're an academic involved in the department of geography here, you realize the constant need for finding materials that serve as vehicles for pushing ideas along, or trying to get people to think about themselves, or for themselves, or to think what in fact has gone on in themselves. Landscape is ideal for that, because it is ubiquitous.

Landscape also in the cultural sense, the cultural landscape, that is, the natural landscape as modified by human effort. The cultural landscape stands as a beautiful vehicle for any kind of education, because it represents philosophies, it represents technologies, it represents economic systems and political systems. It represents virtually every expression, every component of human organization and human thought. Because the things that you have strong feeling about, you try to manifest in some tangible way, whether you're talking about interpersonal relations or whether you're talking about the near deification of Frank Lloyd Wright and the importance of a civic center in a community, whether you're talking about keeping the downtown retailers healthy through a pedestrian mall. All of these things, if they are significant in our thinking, end up as some kind of a landscape manifestation. Although you have to admit that cultural geographers probably tend to be more relaxed in the landscape definition than would either a landscape painter perhaps or a pure theoretician. I'm not concerned about that; I'm concerned about trying to get you to see the environment around you, because again, as a final word of introduction, if you don't have a sense of the environment around you, the whole process of what you've been exposed to in Earth Resources Limited becomes trivial. It becomes triflingly academic unless you see, and respond to, and react to, either negatively or positively, the kind of environment that you daily interact with, or that you read about, or that you see on the television.

So with that in mind, the first thing I want to turn to is one of the things that I had in the reading packet for you to go through, for those that are involved in this course in a more formal way, you have a copy, a short copy, a copy of a short article by a man named Donald Meinig. Donald Meinig is a professor of geography at Syracuse University. He's one of the few geographers who can turn a phrase with some grace in the written language; he did this very nicely in an article called "The Beholding Eye" in *Landscape Architecture*, a quarterly out of Louisville, Kentucky, edited by Grady Clay. He produced this in January '77, a year and a half ago. And it's a concept, like so many good articles, it's a concept that you say, *Oh yeah, well gosh. I thought of that; damn, I wish I had written that first*. Academics particularly know that agony, it's better never to read; then you're safer in your writing. Meinig has tied together the idea that there is no objective landscape in one sense, there is no objective definitive landscape. There are only the landscapes of our minds. There are the landscapes of

perceptions, that when we talk about landscape you can conjure up, as you should, all kinds of varied and sometimes highly personal elements of the physical environment and the cultural environment that come together to form the setting that we're living in, the landscape. And Meinig chooses ten, ten kinds of landscapes. Now I'm going to run you through them fairly quickly, because whether we're talking about American cities this morning, or whether we're talking about Third World cities this afternoon, again and again, you come back to the fact that if you can read the landscape, you've made the first step towards some kind of intelligent environmental response, as the first step toward some kind of evaluating. And it is the creation of values and looking at the choices values generate, or looking at the values that choices demand, that we're concerned with at Earth Resources Limited. So if I can have the first slides and a little darkness, we'll go through ten views of landscape.

Would you mind getting my coffee from over there, I can't stretch out that far. Oh, right, thank you. Thank you. How about lights? Can we darken it up a little bit, if not, I'm going to make even more demands on your abilities, if in fact the whole landscape becomes academic. If anybody knows where a switch is... A month and a half ago, I was asked to do the keynote speech at the state convention of California geographers, and they had it in a cafeteria as well, and the talk began about an hour and a half after it was supposed to begin because of an entertainment group that played a very long time, which was swell, but after you've given a group a full dinner and then a full dessert, then an hour and a half of singers and then they say, "OK, now, Salter, get up and tell them about the Chinese city," you think well, this is gonna be tough. I took stage, it was all a slide show, no one could find the light switch for twenty minutes. [laughter] And you talk about trying to hang on to a house. It was rigorous. Now I don't see this well, but do you see it, can you see it adequately? All right, then, that's… then that's what we're after, if you can see it adequately.

Meinig's first sense, and the most logical place to begin with the idea of landscape, is landscape as nature. That is when the term landscape comes into your aural senses, you probably in most cases see landscape as the product of a John Constable painting or some kind of Grandma Moses painting, some sort of landscape imagery through landscape painting. And nature plays an important role in that. When we talk about landscape as nature, it becomes important too when we want to hear about people's mental maps or hear about the designs they have of what they might call the ideal landscape. Meinig begins then with a sense of nature. And you would see a sea coast, this interface of the continent and the ocean, as an ideal place to have a natural landscape, although if you wanted to play with this enough you could point out if you had the right kind of scale, some of the mooring marks where there have been great dredges cabled to this part of the Pacific coast in central California right above San Francisco. But basically, we're talking about a fair sense of nature. And landscape as nature should be a

beginning place, because in virtually every landscape that you study, one of the things you've got to ask yourself about as an environmentalist, whether its uppercase E or lowercase e, is what's happened to the natural scene, what has transpired to change it.

The second is landscape as habitat. That is one of the most primary concerns in this short-term modification program that society has been characterized by, has been the changing of landscapes to accommodate man's needs for settlement. And yet, you can still find in a scene like this, for example, a great deal of nature, you would call that, probably in a general sense, a nearly natural scene, although as your geographers among you would point out, we're talking about introduced grasses, we're talking about fencing, we're talking about introduced trees, and we're talking about various aspects of agrarian technology that represent a good deal more than just a pristine setting. But habitat then, landscape as habitat, becomes a second concern for the way in which you can view landscape.

Third is landscape as artifact. If you realize that in the creation of the cultural landscape, the process that we're talking about is the process of redesigning either a natural landscape or a previously used, or as they say in used cars, the pre-owned. Utilizing the pre-used landscape, you get an artifact, you have landscape building up as an accretion upon an accretion, layer after layer of human interfacing with a more natural environment. But artifact can also conjure up a sense of disuse, a sense of it being sort of the garbage of the past, and since cities is our focus for today, or cities are our focus today, the idea of landscape as artifact and part of the artifact being urban disuse is another aspect of a perception of landscape.

Landscape as system is the fourth of Meinig's suggestions and system is important because you want to realize, and this is important to underline thought with any city concern, system represents the fact that the creation of landscape has been made by a series of rational decisions, the majority of which have been couched in a framework in which you felt this was the best of all possible ways to utilize the resources you had to make the kind of change you wanted to. So that idea of system, the idea of order, the idea of planning is not new to say, the urban environment. When we talk about urban planning, we're not really talking about for the first time, for the first decades, a sense of the city being planned, we're talking about a change in scale. We're talking about now a scale that will supposedly encompass a much larger area of single individual focus planning than we've ever known before, except in the places of imperial and majestic cities where you had whole cities laid out. Most of the cities of mankind have been accretions, agglomerations of individual, frequently unrelated, generally unrelated, small-scale decisions. But you get systems and you get landscapes then like this, where you have a systematic decision made to modify landscape toward one goal that creates, then, a very special kind of scene; in this case, a railroad switching yard where the geometry is totally controlled and the landscape totally modified, totally humanized, a truly cultural landscape.

Landscape as problem is another common way to view landscape, partly because we're a problem-oriented profession, in that academically you find yourself almost like journalists, more interested and probably responded better to if you talk about problems and try to point out where they come from, although we all seldom can venture solutions, you come back again and again to the concept of problem. Problem, like all other value terms, is a highly personal perceptive term, a term of perception. In this case, landscape as problem represents the problem of interfacing with nature. The idea of an elevated freeway overpass built in a seismically unstable area, then threatened by in fact seismic activity, produces this kind of a relic landscape that suggests what can happen, one of the problems that's associated with landscape modification and the creation of a cultural landscape.

What you might note from this if you think for a second, is that any one of these slides could really be used to discuss any one of the terms. Because landscape is again, back to not only Meinig's observation but many others, there in a sense is the potential for being almost no objective reality, there is always a series of perceptions. If we have seventy-four people in this room, we have seventy-four potentially different perceptions at this second, and those seventyfour could change just in the matter of the next five minutes or in that of the next five seconds, depending on whatever thought processes interplay with that perceptual process. This is a landscape of system. This is also landscape of habitat, I use it here as an example of Meinig's landscape as problem.

Landscape as wealth is one that you may know well because you're involved in a city environment. And the city environment was traditionally, or early on at least, early on in the history of civilization, which means by definition the urbanism of mankind, it was the city that was the locus of conspicuous wealth; it was not the countryside, the peasantry, the villages, it was the city. And the city today continues to exist in many ways as the secular citadel of wealth, and city landscape elements are designed very much to represent wealth. Let me give you a little comment on this that shows one of the few satisfactions you can get as a teacher. I was asked to speak at Riverside about a month ago, and I opened up my comments on a different talk by saying that landscape created billboards for people, billboards for cultures, billboards for corporations; that there were works upon the land that acted as kind of logos for whole corporations and sometimes whole people. And someone in the audience said, "No, that's not true," and when I happened to show this slide, I said, "This is the Bank of America building in San Francisco, and you can see how the Bank of America has chosen to put a lot of capital into a very special design to create a kind of billboard," and that same person said, "No, no, no, that's Transamerica, that's not the Bank of America," and I said, "Thank you very much. It in fact is the Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco," and it does exist, not from this perspective as well as

from a distance in the shot you'll see in a minute, as an element of landscape as wealth. This of course can also, like so many of the things we're talking about, can be changed in terms of scale. Landscape as wealth is something you know very well as suburban residents, the bulk of you, and the signs of wealth that we attach to our houses are important as personal expressions of our own tastes.

Landscape as ideology is perhaps one of the most important concerns that I'd like you to hang on with this morning, because there's nothing neutral, again, in landscape; that you can read landscape, the verb meant to be is active and vital as possible; you can read landscape to try to understand the nature of the political system in which a socialist nation may work, or the nature of an economic system that individual free enterprise society can work within. Landscape as ideology is also pinpointed as simply as how you garden your front lawn, telling us whether or not you decide to devote part of your Saturdays or all of your Saturdays to maintenance of a lawn, et cetera. This slide I like particularly because as a cultural geographer, it does a great deal to deal with what we call environmentalism or environmental determinism, the concept that it is truly environment that shapes institutions, it's environment that shapes the nature of ultimate landscape creation. And I love this one because you can say in a geographic sense, we're talking about uniform soils, uniform climate, uniform resources of a general nature, and yet institutionally, culturally, we have two utterly distinct landscapes. That's obvious, that we see on the one side this control of the people by the philosophy to control the landscape, to trim it, to pluck it, to weed it, to trim it on the wall, to fertilize it so it grows so you can mow it so it stays short; to in essence show your dominion over that landscape is their guideline, is their absolute keystone or one of the keystones, if you can have one of the keystones, is one of the primary driving forces to them. And the other couple, the slide is called "Neighbors," it's a Swedish print, the other couple has decided that landscape should be utilized just in the most casual way, let it grow the way it wants to, spend rather your time developing interpersonal relations within the more relaxed setting of a landscape that is unmodified.

Now that's the obvious response. The thing that perhaps is hidden in this is fully as important as your visual acuity in talking about the differences of those two scenes, is that both groups think that they are absolutely right. That neither group could be argued down. You could hear the arguments. I could pause it and just divide you by the light of this projector, and say on this side, I want you to defend the people over here. And you could build a case, if you were demanded to—although college students and faculty are probably the poorest population to get to defend this side of the slide—but you could if you were exhorted to demand or to support that, you could, in fact, show why that is a philosophy that is very important for American urban and suburban landscapes. At the same time, I could ask the other side of the

room to deal with this, and you'd have an even more fun time talking about that. The important lesson in that is that it is how you perceive it, it is what you are thinking about, its landscape as ideology that is the message there.

Landscape as history is perhaps one of the most common means of landscape utilization, particularly when you're talking about cities. Trying to read the changes, trying to read the past, trying to read the present, near present, and in this case, trying to anticipate what might be future designs upon the urban landscape. It doesn't even matter what city you're in; it doesn't even matter whether or not you know the age of these two buildings, or these particular two that you're talking about. What matters is that you can understand and develop some visual appreciation for, because that stimulates then philosophical appreciation, some visual appreciation for the nature of the differences. I was just intrigued as I was driven by Dave on to campus this morning with the sense of a new urban entity being expressed in the middle of what was at one time either the CBD, the margins of the CBD for Portland. I came in late last night and got scooped away this morning so I've not really seen any of the city at all. But the sense that you, just by walking from science to geography, are probably able to intersect visually a hundred and fifty years of urban history with just a little bit of thought, is an intriguing thing and the fact that your Montgomery Market here is… looks healthy enough, at least it's painted at the bottom level, to suggest some sense of a plan to maintain that, gives you landscape as history in a very personal intimate way.

Landscape as place brings us closer to the end of the series. Actually, landscape as anything would bring us closer to the end of this series, but landscape as place brings us closer to a personal level in that there are all potentials, all kinds of potential that exist for how you interact with landscape and it can accommodate like a canvas for an artist, like a score for a composer, it can accommodate your particular expression. And by accommodating your particular expression, landscape as place then becomes very important to you. You develop a special sense of it. The analogue to this, this idea of giving yourself to it, hence it becomes part of you, you become a part of it, can be very fleeting. It can be just one experience at a place, where you proposed, where you first made love, where you got mugged, whatever it is you're thinking of, there's some sense of place identification. That happens in airport lobbies, when you'll sit next to somebody with all of your gear, all the stuff you've chosen is important enough to carry, you put it down and say to some person you've never seen before, "Are you going to be here a minute," yes, "Would you watch it, please, for a second, I'm going to the head," and the person says "Swell." You walk off safe in your sense that because I've established an identity, a territory, that place, and because I've made eye contact with that person, I probably am safe in leaving this here. This is a crazy kind of thing, if you outlined it in abstract terms, you would say it's unlikely that you would come to somebody you didn't know at all and leave your

camera and a briefcase with your lecture notes and your tea bags all there unwatched. Anyway, landscape as place, in this case, these are the Watts Towers in South Central Los Angeles, the product of a man who gave himself twenty years or gave twenty years of himself, more accurately, to creating a special place that now has become a special place for a community, the community of Watts, and really a special logo, if I may use that term again, for the city of Los Angeles. These are towers built out of fundamentally cast-off, it's the recycling or the throwaways of old ceramic bits and quarter-inch lead pipe and other kinds of metal, all wrapped in a concrete mortar cocoon that Simon Rodia, a man who was a both a tileist and a phone company employee, created across these years. The one funny story to add to this creation of landscape as place: he wanted to involve the neighborhood children in the creation of this special place, so he said, "Bring me your broken dishes and stuff, and I'll pay you a penny a piece for the shards, or for a collection of shards, so that I can make these mosaics," all of which are made up of basically throwaway pieces. That was okay except the kids started going home offering to do dishes and then dropping the whole package of dishes and saying, "Oh, I'm sorry mom," and then packing them out to Simon, and very soon the parents of the community said this won't do at all. [laughter]

We turn then to landscape as aesthetic, the final one, and that really in a sense takes us back full circle. Landscape as nature, landscape as aesthetic. I offer this up just because it's one of those nice scenes where you might think of it as being a natural landscape, but of course, it's not natural at all, it's an orchard that's been planted very explicitly, it's got mustard grasses that are an introduction into the California landscape. It's got, however, the gentle gracefulness that we sometimes think of as "That's the place I want to get out of the city to go to, that's really where I'm happier, that's really where I'd be a healthier person," but in fact basically eighty-five percent of the population has chosen not to go to that very scene, and rather come to a scene like this or an extension of this.

All right then, for our final slide, we end up with the burden of trying to understand what are we saying about landscape. What we're saying is that landscape can be seen in a variety of ways, and must be seen in a variety of ways if what we're after is a greater sense of environmental concern for America's urban space, or for the city as a cultural landscape, then we've got to be willing to see landscape in a number of ways. I use this slide as a final slide because—and I can take any slide from the set; I'd be happy to have you bring a slide up over the break and we can try working with our collective mind to look at it as landscape as all those things. In a sense, this is landscape as nature, because you have the general sense of what you see there is a greenery, the idea of green representing a natural scene, the idea of growth, nature exists there. Habitat, this landscape as habitat that works in the personal scale here of this itinerant, this bum sleeping in Los Angeles on what is the relic part of Bunker Hill right at

the margin of Angels' Flight, for those who know L.A. this is by 3rd and Hill just over the tunnel the Angels' Flight used to go up, so it's habitat at that scale. Landscape as artifact, you get a sense by looking at the hazy back there some gold concrete foundations for buildings that used to exist there, and that were burned down and then torn down, so the artifact evidence is there. Landscape as system is suggested by the rectilinearity of the streets you see in the background there, the order of the buildings all faced in the same orientation; you get the idea of a systematic growth of urban space through buildings and streets represented on the part of this corner of the slide. Landscape as problem is suggested by the fact that here a man has to find a grassy throwaway area to sleep; for whatever purposes, it represents the problem of urban America's unhoused people and it could be discussed in that way solely. Landscape as wealth, it becomes a curious thing, because just the wealth necessary to create city space at all meaning, in a broader sense, this wealth has to be derived from a productive agricultural population or a distant population paying taxes into some kind of a tribute system, no matter whether it's called IRS or whether it's called the [...] D ministry, in either case, we have to have wealth to create urban space; it has to be a surplus generated. Landscape as ideology: it can be picked up on, just the presence of the cars if you're able to see this slide more clearly, just the fact that most of what you see there that not buildings is cars, most of the space you see that's not building is parking lot, suggesting the ideology there that's predicated upon automobility and its importance in America's urban space. Landscape as history is obvious by, again, the sequence of things visible there in the relic old buildings, the artifact, and the newer buildings. Landscape as place, for this man, he, I'm sure, feels particularly good having found a place like this to bag it during the day as opposed to the doorway of the YMCA or the Rescue Mission. His sense of place is probably that is some territory that he's very conscious of and is proud to have found. Then landscape as aesthetic; you could handle this almost as a kind of aesthetic scene in that you get in a middle of a city this kind of natural growth, a greening of America in a kind of a spontaneous volunteer grass way, with the whole spectrum, from a bum sleeping off a ripple hangover—that's only inferred, I don't know—to the excitement of Hill Street in Los Angeles or any street in that urban scene. All right, that represents… and that's all the slides for a few minutes… that represents a first statement, then, that I hope will be operative for you for the rest of the day, both in the talks that I've got to give and the discussions that we have. The concept of landscape as a resource to read and to make thoughts from and thoughts and response to, and the obvious secondary comment there, as landscapes as personal and perceptual frameworks for reaction.

Let me give you one other medium, just to get us into the city, that plays on the variety of images; in this case, not just landscape but that cities can generate. Because when we talk about Earth Resources Limited or talk about the urban enigma, America's urban alternatives, or talk about lessons from the landscape, third-world city building. Or whether we just talk about

cultural geography and the importance of being environmentally literate. You've come again to the problem with image: how do you see the city, how do you—for this group especially I would say, since you are in many cases teachers or potentially teachers—it's critical to ask yourself how you see these things in different contexts. As a lecturer, you may see landscape, you may see cities, you may see neighborhood, you may see traffic in one very distinct mode. However, in your decision-making as where you're going to go for a restaurant, where you're going to go for dancing, where you're going to go for whatever it is you go for, you may react very differently to the very kinds of things you've talked about. Or perhaps more aptly, you may talk about energy conservation very articulately in the morning, and still leave the water on as you brush your teeth or shave. This is no big thing, I'm not telling you something new; it's important though that you understand that the perceptual framework changes from role to role from time to time.

Let me give you another medium to bring you into the city focus that we're here for, and that is through some poetry. I want to read five short poems to you, six short poems to you, that will conjure up different attitudes, different aspects, and I hope you'll see the differentiation, about the city. Let me start with the idea of, first of all, modification. That city is the very basis, the basis for being concerned as a cultural geographer, or being concerned as a 1978 academic, or someone who walked in off the street and thinks this is "How to utilize real estate foreclosures for your own personal benefit" and has gotten caught and can't figure out the door. Let me have you think a minute just about the images here that come. This is a little-known Robert Frost poem called "A Brook in the City."

The farmhouse lingers, though averse to square
With the new city street it has to wear A
number in. But what about the brook
That held the house as in an elbow-crook?
I ask as one who knew the brook, its strength
And impulse, having dipped a finger length
And made it leap my knuckle, having tossed A
flower to try its currents where they crossed.
The meadow grass could be cemented down
From growing under pavements of a town;
The apple trees be sent to hearth-stone flame.
Is water wood to serve a brook the same?
How else dispose of an immortal force
No longer needed? Staunch it at its source
With cinder loads dumped down? The brook was thrown

Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone
In fetid darkness still to live and run --
And all for nothing it had ever done
Except forget to go in fear perhaps.
No one would know except for ancient maps
That such a brook ran water. But I wonder
If from its being kept forever under, The
thoughts may not have risen that so keep
This new-built city from both work and sleep.

"But I wonder if from its being kept forever under, the thoughts may not have risen that so keep this new built city from both work and sleep." The idea that by having to modify the brook, what do you do? Do you dump cinders into the spring? What do you do, do you culvert the brook, you send it away, you send it below, you hide it so it serves as only here or there or not at all until it pours into the sound or into the ocean. The first step then, modification, and you get right away this tension between the natural landscape as we romanticize it to some degree, or as it existed, and the geometry of man making a city. The geometry of urban space. The order, the system, the artifacts, all of these things that you've thought of. Secondly, getting people to the city, what are the forces that bring people to the city, and how are they reviewed? This is by Carl Sandburg; it's called Population Drifts."

New-mown hay smell and wind of the plain made her
a woman whose ribs had the power of the hills in them
and her hands were tough for work and there was
passion for life in her womb.
She and her man crossed the ocean and the years that
marked their faces saw them haggling with landlords
and grocers while six children played on the stones and
prowled in the garbage cans.
One child coughed its lungs away, two more have adenoids
and can neither talk nor run like their mother, one is in a
jail, two have jobs in a box factory.
And as they fold the pasteboard, they wonder what the
wishing is and the wistful glory in them that flutters
faintly when the glimmer of spring comes on the air or
the green of summer turns brown:
They do not know it is the new-mown hay smell calling
and the wind of the plain praying for them to come

back and take hold of life again with tough hands and
with passion.

In just five stanzas, you have really the whole history of the last fifteen decades. The
fundamental removal of American people, either as immigrants or American-born Native
Americans, removal from the countryside to the cities. And this last thing, this… as a student
once said, these songs give me nostalgia for something I never even knew. That almost none of
you have had any farm experience at all probably, and yet this last line. "They do not know it is
the new-mown hay smell calling and the wind of the plain praying for them to come back and
take hold of life again with tough hands and with passion." The idea again, this tension that the
city helps create and that we as academics and as students tend to stimulate and elaborate and
articulate; this tension between the natural landscape accommodating us in a genteel way, and
the artificial landscape of the city accommodating us only with struggle.

The sounds of the city. The sounds and the feelings of the city: also by Carl Sandburg, called "A
Teamsters Farewell," subtitled "Sobs En Route to a Penitentiary."

Good-by now to the streets and the clash of wheels and locking
hubs,
The sun coming on the brass buckles and harness knobs. The
muscles of the horses sliding under their heavy haunches,
Good-by now to the traffic policeman and his whistle,
The smash of the iron hooves on the stones, All the
crazy wonderful slamming roar of the street-- O
God, there's noises I'm going to be hungry for.

"All the crazy wonderful slamming roar of the street, O God, there's noises I'm going to be
hungry for," and you begin to get in that sense, as you got in the Sandburg poem of "Population
Drifts," this almost inexplicable, and certainly irrational, response to the city, the images you
get. You can talk all day about the negative aspects of it, but you get this funny gut feeling, this
visceral sense of there is however an excitement, there is however a dynamic to it that
apparently works, because I'm still living here.

Then one of the most common ones, un-adjectived for you, but one of the most common ones
to see how it plays across your mind in terms of urban images. By Carl Sandburg, and we've all
been through this in tenth grade, "Chicago."

Hog Butcher for the World,

Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling, City
of Big Shoulders:

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have
seen your painted women under the gas lamps luring the
farm boys.
And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it
is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill
again.
And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the
faces of women and children I have seen the marks of
wanton hunger.
And having answered so I turn once more to those who
sneer at this my city, and I give them back the sneer and
say to them:
Come and show me another city with lifted head singing
so proud to be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on
job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little
soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as
a savage pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,
Shoveling,
Wrecking,
Planning,
Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white
teeth,
Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man
laughs,
Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never
lost a battle,

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and
under his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of
Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog
Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads
and Freight Handler to the Nation.

All the gutsy, exciting sense you can get in terms of at least early twentieth-century poetry, is manifest in that one short comment of Carl Sandburg's ode to Chicago. And it also shows this magnificent dichotomy in the way in which we can react, or polychotomy, in the way in which we can react to a city. That it is all these things, the killer kills and goes free, the wanton hunger in the faces of the women and the children, and the terrible brutality. But at the same time this vital sense, this almost muscular sense of a metabolism all of its own, handling the tasks of mankind, toolmaker, freight handler, hog butcher, et cetera.

Let me read you two other ones that are very contemporary, and see how they work on your images. You've looked through your ears at the idea of the brook being modified, i.e. nature being modified on account of the city. You've seen the "Population Drifts," the people sort of almost like leaves on a stream moving towards a city with perhaps neither conscious direction, oh well that's not true, and not understanding quite how they feel so wistful when the spring grasses begin to have the smell of new-mown hay. Here's one called "Southbound On The Freeway" by May Swenson.

'A tourist came in from Orbitville, parked
in the air, and said:

The creatures of this star are
made of metal and glass.

Through the transparent parts you
can see their guts.

Their feet are round and roll on
diagrams or long

measuring tapes, dark
with white lines.

They have four eyes.
The two in back are red.

Sometimes you can see a five-eyed one,
with a red eye turning

on the top of his head.
He must be special--

the others respect him and
go slow

when he passes, he winds behind
and among them.

They all hiss as they glide, like
inches, down the marking

tapes. Those soft shapes, shadowy
inside

the hard bodies--are they their
guts or their brains?

I'm going to do it one more time so you got the image and just follow it through.

"Southbound On The Freeway."

A tourist came in from Orbitville, parked
in the air, and said:

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Through the transparent parts you
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their hard bodies--are they their
guts or their brains?

Kenneth Boulding once said if somebody came from outside and saw American cities, they
would say the creatures had detachable brains that got out of them and walked away. Here's
the last one, by Earle Birney, and it's called "i think you are a whole city" and it takes us kind of
to the point that we're concerned with your personal sense of city space.

i think you are a whole city

and yesterday when i first touched
you i started moving thru one of
your suburbs where all the
gardens are fresh with faces of
you flowering up some girls are
only houses maybe a strip
development woman you are
miles of boulevards with supple
trees unpruned and full of winding
honesties so give me time i want i
want to know all your squares and
cloverleafs im steering now by a
constellation winking over this
nights rim from some great
beachside of you with highrises
and a spotlit beaux arts i can hear
your beating center will i make it
are there maps of you i keep
circling imagining parks fountains
your stores back in my single bed i
wander your stranger dreaming i
am your citizen'

"I think you are a whole city." All right, we've created… we've created as a people a very interesting sense of response to a city. We have, whether we look at landscape and its tenfold, or really *n*-fold, perceptions, or whether we look at poetry which always opens our minds up a little more to the idea of images, we find that we can't help but see a city in many ways. What I'd like to do is give you just a few thoughts on very simple changes that have brought us to the city that we have, and then give you a sheet that I call "Themes in urban contradiction," and look at six facets of contemporary cities or the city as an urban, as a cultural phenomenon to set us up for some other graphics on contemporary American city space.

First of all, there's really just two facts to understand that you've got to put somewhere into your consciousness, and that first fact is, in 1800 the population of the Earth was probably less than two percent urbanized. In 1800, we're talking about fewer than two percent of the people

being urbanized, and that's using the criterion of two thousand five hundred as an urban threshold. And yet in 1978, or really 1975, or take this current year right now, we're talking about between fifty-five and sixty-five percent of the world characterized as urban residence. That means in those seventeen decades again, that I mentioned a few minutes ago, we've seen an absolutely extraordinary demographic shift, in that the movement away from the peasant villages, from the rural hamlets, from the small, usually unincorporated residential centers, has been almost complete for America. We only have four percent of our population involved in rural activities right now in a farming sense, although we talk about ourselves being seventyfive to eighty percent urban, that is a really hard distinction to make. In those seventeen decades, we've moved away almost entirely from the fact that we have in our past a rural background that occupies most of our history and in a sense our prehistory.

So you've got to see the city as an experiment that has a very short time span in both cultural evolution and certainly physical evolution, or the evolution of the landscapes of the planet; it's a very short term experiment that may in fact fail. That what we sense right now as we read so many things into our landscapes that are negative, and we find ourselves thinking so frequently about the plight of the city, may be in fact a lesson that suggests to us it is a blind alley, that this kind of gregariousness, this kind of agglomeration of people is inefficient and leads to scales of human density or leads to intensity of human clustering that we cannot accommodate. But I want you to realize at least that we're talking about a relatively new phenomenon. The origins of cities themselves you can push back just another six or seven thousand years, to experiments on the Indus river, Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. You can bring it into the North African Nile Valley, three or four thousand, maybe five thousand years ago. You could take it to the east part of the Mediterranean, the Levant, four thousand years ago; into the Chinese experiments some three thousand plus years ago, and to Mesoamerican new world experiments, maybe at the best two thousand years ago. We're talking about a timeline of some two million years, approximately, in a very general sense, for humankind, so that the whole idea of city, this particular clustering, has to be viewed as an expression of the last five or six thousand years ago in a specific sense, and what we call real urbanization, not urbanism but urbanization, that is this proliferation of cities, is a product of then a much shorter time period.

A second fact to add to that, to give that some vital quality, is that it only took about a century to go from a billion people to two billion people, 1830s to 1930s. We were able to double our population, and Harrison Brown of course is the giant in all these numbers games, and you heard all this yesterday, the 1930 to 1960 doubling again gave us our three billion, 1975 gave us our four billion. So that we're talking about not only a change from countryside to city side in our demography, were talking about a whole logarithmic upswing, or geometric upswing in the tempo of reproduction, which means it's not just academically interesting to look at the new

patterns created by people living in cities as opposed to people living in the countryside. We're looking at a problem really of a tremendous crush of numbers in these urban spaces.

Let me give you one other fact that's in the abstract paper that I sent to Earth Resources Limited, that I'm not sure whether you've seen or not. Have you received two fifteen-page papers from me in your packets? No, it's not in that packet. You haven't? Okay, well the best is yet to come, then, people, you'll get those mailed to you probably after you did the final assignment or something, or pay your credit costs or whatever it is. From 1900 to 1970, while the American population increased about a hundred and thirty million people, from seventyfour million people to two hundred million plus. 1900 to 1970, guess how many American counties lost population. Not proportionately, but absolutely lost population. From the figures they had in 1900 to 1970, how many counties—we have three thousand counties more or less. What percentage of those counties do you think lost population while the American population added a hundred to thirty-forty million people? What would you guess? Pardon? [unintelligible remarks from the audience] Fifty percent is offered.

AUDIENCE: Ninety.

SALTER: Ninety. [unintelligible voices in background] Eighty, eighty is about it. Eighty percent. You're an educated audience to guess that high, because people will ordinarily stay at fifty or sub fifty, figuring that with all that population growth, you can't have eighty percent of the places losing numbers. And of course, you have it because of one single phenomenon, and that is again this thing that "Population Drifts" talk about in the Sandburg poem. The movement not only out of the countryside to the city, but almost more critically, because it leads to the kind of scale problems we're talking about, out of the smaller cities to the major cities. Twenty percent of the counties have been recipients of the bulk of the population increase that our country has realized since the turn of the century.

All right, that gives us then two dynamics going here demographically. One is, in the American sense, the continued departure from the countryside, or the replacement of the countryside with a very different kind of folk than we think of as our sort of Edgar Lee Masters or Sherwood Anderson countryfolk of the 19th and early 20th century, or John Steinbeck's Joad family people. The other thing is that not only are we getting new urbanism, we're getting megalopolitan urbanism, that is, a tremendous crush of people that creates these places we talk about humorously as Bos-Wash, meaning Boston to Washington as one conurbation, or San-San meaning San Francisco down to San Diego, and any other number of things that you

can… that suggest to you the idea of a tremendous sprawl. Living in Los Angeles, I have a fairly immediate sense of this.

All right. That is enough. That is enough in terms of knowing the dynamics, that you've got a world of stuff to read in this packet. But in terms of trying to put together the kinetic forces that have created these urban problems, it is that movement of people that has to be seen as one of the primary bases for understanding why we're faced with the kind of urban crunch we are. Let me give you, with the help of a few of you, these handouts to look for a minute at, then, some of the elements that produce this thing we call enigma. I can see that I am effectively restrained from passing these out [laughter]. When I talk about urban enigma, and that again is in this other paper, what I'm trying to do is suggest the fact that we have a real paradox here. There is no more human environment than the city. There is no other manifestation that is as clearly the product of human decision-making, of human ideals, of desires, of technology, of resource utilization, than the city, because it is a totally artificial environment. Even the grasses that you saw there in that eleventh slide where I said landscape as the whole totality, showing the bum sleeping in the grass, those are also introduced grasses, those aren't natural grasses for the hills of central L.A., the basin of Los Angeles. So we're talking about a contradiction, a paradox in the sense that if in fact, this is the zenith of man's abilities to create artificial environments, why then do we end up with such a product, or a product that we so frequently deprecate and speak poorly of or speak harshly of?

I've got a few more if you need them. All right, some of that paradox is shown by these six items that I suggest to you as the product of initial urbanism. Not urbanization, but urbanism. That is, when the city began, it set in motion processes, cultural social processes, that produced even at their outset, thank you, a kind of paradox and contradictory response. Let's look at them for a second. We'll use these as bases, I hope, for discussion later on. I want to go through them now for a second, and then show you one other set of slides before you have your chance to organize your own thoughts.

First of all, private property. Prior to the city, we have a general pattern of village subsistence containers for the great bulk of humankind, and village subsistence farming units were built around, generally, a series of mechanisms that disallowed private wealth. That there was a sharing of land through what is often called a swidden agriculture or a shifting cultivation, where the title to a field was tied primarily to the labors you put into it. And you drew the fruits from your labors, you drew the fruits from your land, but you had no sense of real private sense of that land, only in relationship to your investment of labors. Because before the city, almost by definition of pre-urban conditions and post-domestication of grain conditions, we're talking six or seven or eight thousand years, the general expression was of semi-permanent

settlements built around peasant ideology, which fundamentally did not allow a strong class stratification, with perhaps the exception of the shaman and the medicine man, perhaps the leader.

So private property then came as part of the city, and as private property developed as part of the city, because of a specialization of labor and a specialization of craft responsibilities and direct responsibilities to the leadership of the city, you got the things we used to talk about here, an opportunity for greater productivity, that is both the idea being that if in fact you own this land and you know for sure what's going to happen to this land, you're more inclined to invest more in dressing the land up, preparing your field more completely, and that can lead to greater productivity. You have individual expression, perhaps afforded or accommodated more easily by the idea of, again, private property. Meaning that what I do to this represents me, and so I will do it perhaps more carefully, and maybe also more productively and more idiosyncratically, and you also get the development of wealth. It's private property that begins to set in motion the real accumulation on the part of some city dwellers, as well as, and this thing spilled over to the farming lands outside the city, to some farming populations.

You began to see wealth work as a status barrier, an impediment to a real uniform, to a real homogenous population, the city generates that. The negative aspect, the contradictory aspect in a sense, was that you began to set in a division of energies, then, between peoples, or began to see the competitive use of natural resources because of private property, and it was more difficult to have an easy flow and sometimes a more efficient flow of energies toward land preparation or resource utilization because of the private barriers. You had competition as a basis for warfare set up more easily, because you had this dichotomy working between the non-wealthy and the wealthy. There was a greater apparency, a greater visual apparency, a greater landscape imagery to the elements of wealth because of private property, and you began to see the origins of major social disequalities that tie, in their genesis, to a stimulation of some wealthy classes at the cost of either slaveholding, slave classes or subordinate classes trying to support, having to support because of city structures, city tax structures, city […] labor demands, the majority population.

Territoriality generates the same kind of contradiction in pairs. You get the city as home of the nation-state, giving you a very clear sense of locus, of locus of power or territory. You get a clear definition of domain and culture space… [audio skips forward and resumes] …special finite space and place, that is, there was a clearer sense of being different, of being potentially competitive, and this sets in motion the origins of warfare, which have in many ways at least culminated and focused on the things generated by the city form. The god king, the god king really as perhaps the single most important element of the genesis of the city, allowed the city

to have a focus around an individual who was seen to have divine powers, and in the contradictory sense, because of the investment in unprecedented power in a single individual, you had a new taxation and tribute schemata set up, a scheme set up that created the social stratification that separated more powerfully than ever before one block of people from another within the same broad social group, within the same urban population.

Writing, giving you a better ability to maintain a continuity of record of human events, is sometimes or most frequently also made concurrent with the beginnings of the city, that it was the need for accountability for tax records, for granary supply records, that gave birth to this symbolic use of symbols. That's a poor phrase, this *special* use of symbols. And that's a part on the positive side; the negative side of writing also further stimulates the social gaps between different classes. To be illiterate took on, of course, a meaning that had a heavily negative status connotation to it, and we see the city emerging then still more as a divisive force in populations.

Secondary relationships, meaning that instead of the kinship relationships and the intravillage relationships that characterized most of humankind activity before the beginnings of the city, you have relationships built around statutory and required relationships, that is, the taxpayer to the state, the slave to the slaveholder, even the craftsmen to the ceremonial ministers; and it was this kind of secondary relationships that really were the genesis, some several thousands of years ago, to what we now talk about as fundamental alienation in a city; that is, this disassociatedness that we characterize as part of urban space, because we have, instead of a primary relationship with the people around us of interrelationship and co-responsibility, we have fundamentally a well-defined separatist responsibility, both in a vocational sense and to some degree in a social sense. There's a responsibility of a certain social class that we're in because of these first five things. And finally then urban madness, I offer as the last one, just representing the fact that we saw the city as allowing performance and individual behavior that would've been unaccepted in a village society, because in a village society you had these primary relationships of responsibility where you had a control one on the other; you had a sense of family control, you had a sense of clan control, and when you institutionalize that control by a police force and by a statutory container, that is, the municipal codes of the city, you begin to allow a different kind of personal behavior. We talk about it as urban anonymity, we talk about it as urban madness in the sense that it's one of the ways you will characterize a city. And the negative part of that madness, that is, the anonymity which has some positive aspects to it, is a loneliness, indifference, and institutional concern rather than personal concern over each individual's welfare and well-being. That is the anomie, the alienation we feel.

All right, those we'll come back to; let me conclude this thing with one set of slides and I want to relate to a final element that you've had put in your reading booklet. I have an article out of *Landscape* magazine in your reading by Betty Chmaj, and it's called "The Cities of our Minds." And it comes back to this concept that I want to ride through the day with, that you've got to realize we're talking about perceptions, we're talking about your particular reactions. And Chmaj points out five rather interesting containers for city imagery that relate to these things and I'll mention them again; the frames you know, and then I'm going to try to represent them to you a little bit in some of these graphics, again, coming back to reading the city yourself. The first is the city as problem, the city as problem, what she's talking about here is saying we have to realize the city represents a fundamental problem. A whole population of journalists, a whole population of urban ecologists, a whole population of lay people as well, will see the city fundamentally as ready to break down, and productive basically only of crisis and problem. This is tied nicely to graphic representations of riots, of traffic congestion, of strong color lines in urban neighborhoods, of urban and gang warfare or gang warfare in urban centers; all these things can represent one set of responses to a city. And she outlines this; there are a few visual aspects that come up for the city as problem.

The second is city as technology. The city represents the summative expression of man's technology. As Carl Sandburg calls Chicago "toolmaker," and Ben Franklin was so good in calling the humans "toolmakers" as a way to define and differentiate them from earlier species, as we think about ourselves as being fundamentally toolmakers, so to the city then represents the consummate comment that we've made with our tools. It represents axial and the very best technology we have because again, simply it is the most artificial of landscapes, and being artificial, it has to be supported by a series of techniques and technologies that are geared to maintaining the life forces in this urban expression. And it may be that very technology that's taken us this far that may have maxed out. There are those who would say technology can't create any further, but there are more that would say: technology has gotten us into this, technology will find some way to extract us from it.

Her third thing is the city in history, idea to the city. Looking at the city in a rather abstract academic way as an expression of cultural activity, cultural experimentation by humankind, with the result being that you can get kind of a passive, storybook diorama-like view of the city if you want to. It's a very safe view, it's not a particularly involved view, it's not a particularly personal view if you feel the city.

Fourthly and next to last, the city as community, a focus that, in a smaller scale, has as much popularity as the city as problem, that is, while a ghetto may produce kids playing in the streets with stickball around abandoned cars, as opposed to walking or riding their ten-speeds on

greenways between small shopping enclaves, there is nonetheless a community generated by this stickball, street-side, sidewalk-sitting population. There is a social coherence and a cohesion that exists in these ghettos, in these cities, and this is not only a source of some positive response, it's a source of a good deal of excitement. And there are many who would view the city as being an agglomeration of communities, and what we have to do is touch in on those communities again and stop looking at the city really as a whole urban network, but rather try to parcel it out at least in one social sense at the community level.

And then finally, she says, she sees the city as triumph of industry, or what she calls the dynamic city. And that is simply, not only technology, but technology *cum* the productive forces of mankind to put new landscapes together. To bring goods to an urban population that is not farming. To bring your lettuce from the Salinas Valley into the New Jersey market so you can produce a hoagie for a New York population that's just recently migrated in from Maine. Tying it all together in some sort of combination of technology and economic philosophy and social philosophy so that you have a dynamic, ever-changing city.

All right, so you have city as problems, city as technology, city as the city in history role, city as community, and the city as the triumph of industry or dynamics. Let's look at some landscapes of these and see if we can enhance our own images.

You can see that, huh? Okay, good. All right, the city as problem. The city as problem has a whole variety of ways in which it can be viewed. I use this wall mural as one comment on it because a) it's using city space in a way to create, to diminish a problem. By using a city wall space as artist canvas, you begin to change right away responses to a city. But the more important part of this is the message in that mural, that is, the city being rebuilt through this process of urban removal, usually called urban renewal. Question? Oh, OK. The image here being that the 'dozer with the goggled driver almost like one of the characters in "The Grapes of Wrath" pushing down the sharecroppers' homes coming in, collapsing this small dwelling that now in Los Angeles would draw a hundred and thirty five thousand, actually, [laughter] squeezing the lady out, pushing her out of her known space and the crowd looking on, a mixed crowd looking on with some alarm at what's going on, and in the left hand side, putting the graffiti on the wall before somebody else puts the graffiti on the wall, "stop the pigs," spraypainted on the wall by one of the people there. All right, the city as problem then can represent the problem of deterioration and removal.

The city as problem can represent the tremendous loneliness you can get by the accommodation of people so poorly in some spaces. Here you have a freeway underpass, or an overpass rather, that has replaced part of an old residential area in an American city, and you

have a person who's taken up to living under that pass right next to the ivy that's planted by the city landscapers, and you get the problem then of what do you do with the people as you bring those 'dozers in and push away the old throwaway parts of downtown, and you build a new part of downtown which is always predicated upon improved access, that is, the freeway, that makes it easier to come back downtown for entertainment or to come back downtown for retailing or to come back downtown for work. And you get then a population left with the strangest kinds of problematic home sites.

You get the city as problem in that when you have a small community, just barely a city, invaded by people who have left an urban area. The migrants bring with them certain idiosyncrasies that are allowed in a city. In this case, this is a cafe opened by two gays in a small California lumber town; and the two gays in the urban environment of San Francisco were very comfortable, or relatively comfortable, not very comfortable or they wouldn't have moved, they were relatively comfortable. But in taking that urban quality of being acknowledged as gays and not being hassled because of it, taking those same qualities to a small lumber community, they found their bar burned out just about a week after they'd finished refurbishing an old cafe and bar; and it was done very clearly, although it's not proven, done very clearly by a local population that just did not want the gays coming up into the area. So you have the city as problem in two phases here. One is that when the people develop urban habits, when they develop an urban sensitivity, it doesn't translate particularly well to a nonurban scene, and you get then this kind of a response to migration.

The city as problem stands here as something as simple as how do you handle the drainage of water across a landscape that is forty to sixty percent covered with concrete, asphalt, or roofing materials? Just the drainage flows, the hydrologic cycle is modified so seriously by the creation of an urban landscape; and you get then the garbage of the city as one aspect of the problem, and the ponding of water even after the most innocent of rains. If you think a second about the nature of the urbanized hydrologic cycle, and you think about the fundamental cycle of water that's going to work in a natural system, with the precipitation generated by the movement of air gasses generally freed up from evaporation from the sea source, and then precipitation caused by both orographic and convectional features that is the elevating of air, the cooling down, the reaching of dew point and precipitation. This general cycle of water then hitting the ground and flowing back to the sea, taking salts back, bringing up freshwater, et cetera. You take that cycle and you begin to modify it by a city, and you realize that you've got all kinds of new things that, again, in every case represent a modification that is artificial. The whole byword for "city" has to be seen in your mind as cultural landscape, or artificial landscape, or artificial ecosystem, or the ecosystem created by this very specialized human adaptation to settlement. And you, just to flash quickly on this thing, the idea of your recycled water, your

waste treatment plant, your water purification, your evaporation leaving a new residue on the land, the particulate matter that goes up through the smog and air pollution adding to the raindrops that come down, making polluted rain a very real part of some urban landscapes. The pumped irrigation water, both depleting a natural supply and returning chemicals through washed-off fertilizers and pesticides to the natural water body, just shows you that we're talking about a very different kind of hydrologic cycle, and this is part of the city as problem.

Another part of city as problem is people that find themselves incapable of coping with the demands of the city; although it looks like he's coping pretty well actually in a sense. The winos that are a regular part of an urban population of any major city stand out so frequently as a disproportionate part of our sense of a city. They represent a very small population, but they're very graphic and they're very photographic, and they're very video-graphic, so that they come on the scene as, "and here's part of our problem," the minority people often, but certainly not in any exclusive way at all, that occur on the skid row of any American city. I was impressed here because he had Kamchotka for his vodka; just to go with vodka as opposed to Thunderbird Ripple or Night Train Express suggests some kind of upgrading of this population. And I don't mean that… it is totally levity. And then the problem city as problem, the Blacks and whites as a regular part of this scene, the derelict building, and the garbage, just the garbage, the throwaway of the city. But I remind you again, this is not unique to American cities, nor is it unique to the cities of the 1970s. That the city from the very beginning has been locus of struggle and it's been a locus of garbage. All the things that you can list in a litany of things that you find painful about the city are unfortunately part of this human experiment in settlement. And finally, relics of the past, the city as problem, the problem of facilities in the city.

All right, I offer this as a transition, the city as problem, because like so many of the things we've got to deal with, this represents a problem because transportation is one component of the city that is always problematic. How do you handle the cars, how do you park the cars, how do you handle the air pollution? But at the same time, these very same cars represent tremendously creative modes of expression for urban populations. They become as important to a city population as sandlot baseball has been to our sort of early 20th century growing up population.

All right, we go then to the city as technology, and what grander scope of technology do you get then the great cloverleafs and elevated freeways and the totally modified landscape. The totally modified landscape, covered with asphalt and concrete and parking of cars. You can imagine the scene from afar would create a very special kind of geometry that would be interesting to try and speculate as to its significance, if you were innocent of our own culture. Technology, however, has its cost, as we all know; and one of the costs that you looked at this week is this

cost of energy. The whole concept of creating the artificial urban ecosystem—that's really redundant—creating the urban ecosystem, was predicated upon initially charcoal power, and then coal power; but more critically in the last twenty-five years, it's been based upon the ease of access to inexpensive petroleum fossil fuel sources. That we have had a decade, and in the 50s we used more petroleum then we used in all the prior history of mankind, and in the 60s we did it again. We used all the more than we've ever used before, including all the great batch of the 50s. Then at the same time in America we have come to this crisis situation where we have an increasing amount drawn from without, and a diminishing amount generated by domestic production, which is not our concern today except that these things cannot be separated out like pieces of bread from a loaf; they've got to be looked at in their ecologic whole, and technology is based upon power sources of all kinds and the one that we've fallen into an easiness with is petroleum.

A chart of the past shows again some of the things that have brought us to the present. Some of the elements of technology… and those who are taking the course, you have these slides in a little kit of your own, so you can make use of them at your leisure… and then suggesting what's going to be forthcoming as we continue to work with technology. And this whole concept right here, we might turn to this in one of the discussion times, is worth talking about because of its speculative nature and what it means for the city and one of the themes I've written about in the packet for you. I could focus that, but you'll be surprised. [chuckles] It seems almost busy, just as busy. The idea that when we talk about the city and technology, we come back to the idea of trying to interrelate nature and man, man and society, society and shells, and by shells, it's ekistics terminology: shells meaning the edifices of buildings, of edifices of mankind and networks; the linkages that tie all these things together. And you can, with that kind of a graphic, again to be worked out with some leisure, you can see the sort of complexity that has to be dealt with to make a city work. That if we're going to spend a whole day crying about, or decrying, the nature of urban success, we should spend at least part of the time patting ourselves on the back that we've gotten as far as we have in urban structure, because of this kind of complexity, and again, its interrelationship, which is of course the very byline of ecological concern.

All right, the city and technology then ends up with this idea of our attempt to blend with the natural landscape in some ways. Here you have the southern post of the Golden Gate Bridge, and I love this shot just because it is an attempt to interface the systems of mankind, the systems of human settlement development around a city. The bridge is only there for the city, it's not there to have Healdsburg be able to reach San Jose—no disregard to San Jose. We have this raw rock, the native rock, blended in with the concrete block, the chain link fence, this great pillar of concrete, and the structure of the metal. All right. Another force, the city of

technology, this idea of the attempt to tie nature together with the concrete of an urban present in a hotel or to change the scale; the idea of a grand hotel like this, totally artificial space, but in every way meaning to show off technology, meaning to show off our system, show off our city; and finally taking that same technology and stretching it across not just a fifteen-year redevelopment period, but rather a sixty, seventy-two year period of redevelopment. You get this kind of utterly dense, complex, idiosyncratic, but frequently very exciting kind of urban expression.

What was the third in "Cities of our Minds"? It was city in history dynamic, this is more of the same technology. All right, if we look for a second at the changes in density, this is the city in history, this academic part; you can just see the obvious progression found man individually first, and then nomadic settlements to ag settlements to urban ag to towns and cities to metropolis, ever-increasing the scale of our packages: dwelling, dwelling groups, small neighborhoods, town, city, et cetera, and, excuse me, Doxiadis the Greek wonder man with urban settlements in his "Ekistics," the study of human settlements, saw us going toward these things that the red has not yet reached, but in fact we have reached, certainly with conurbation, megalopolis, urban region; these things are already realities on the American landscape and on part of the European landscapes.

City in history is also shown by just the sprawl of an urban area: here's London from 1820 to 1962, the grid of course the same on all sides, it can be just the lateral spread. The idea of an 18th century setting that's been maintained for two centuries, Newburyport, Massachusetts, a renewal project that seems to have worked. What's happened of course is as you renew you change function; it becomes a tourist… not a tourist trap, but it becomes a tourist area and tourists pay the dollars to maintain landscape features better than many do. This is an example of that, the city in history, and finally, my favorite city in history shot is simply this crazy thing that you'll find… this happens to be from Westwood, in West Los Angeles, but here you get the elements of European architecture, so boldly expressed in the turrets and the balconies and the chalet-like architecture of an intersection, that is now paying for itself by thirty eight hundred dollars a month rent being generated by this billboard up on top, which shows our own past, this great machismo need we have to be cowboys, to be part of the big sky country and to smoke, all manifest in this Marlboro man, and it lies in front of one of the most graceless parking structures you could possibly have, which represents the reality of current urban renewal, the necessity to accommodate cars; and here it is in a regular corner, to be seen by all but seen by almost none.

The city in history then finally concludes with this idea of how things are always dynamic. Here you get this relic downtown, the old ficus tree that's still there, part of a parking structure that's

really just now the understructure of a building that's been torn down, and in the background a new, very exciting internally, an exciting urban structure. All right, the city as in history is then finally shown by making a parking lot out of grass. Trying to also hang onto the past by using grass clovers, grass crosses in the parking lot of Home Savings and Loan, is nothing more than trying to tell people: yes, you can have both worlds. You can hang on to the sense of the grassy past, the Rousseau-ian pastoral natural pleasantness, and still come in and get your banking done totally electronically in downtown Los Angeles.

And finally, the city as community. Here's a man in skid row whose created his own garden outside of his house. Outside of his house—it's not a house, it is a shop that's been closed down—he lives in the shop. He put plywood over the windows, and he's gotten throwaway rock from around the area, mortared it up together, and hoses it by attaching a hose to his kitchen sink, running it through his living room and waters the garden. It is the community in an area that would ordinarily be discussed as a throwaway area. Here's a lady who's taken a small house in what is described as a transition area and she's created a garden that gives her whole life meaning. She spends the bulk of her day working that garden and at just the drop of a camera lens, or lens cap rather, she'll talk at length about what that garden means.

City as community. This man is what you call a ragpicker in Panama City, he's a ragpicker in an American city too. He does it because he keeps the community clean. He's retired, he has a social security check, he gets some money for stuff he collects, but basically he's on a circuit every day as part of his community, trying to dress up the city streets. The market activity that takes place and provides somewhat of a community focus: this man moving watermelon, others move oranges and fresh fruit. Coming through as part of a focus for the city as still the primary social center. Pershing Square, the more formal sort of community center or an urban center, all kinds of things that go on here that take in […] We see everything from this man who had a chemistry set that he'd either stolen or bought from a drugstore nearby, was burning paper bags by a magnifying glass and twenty-five feet away somebody's shooting heroin into their veins, a twenty-two-year-old gal. And a Black and white cop on the beat in the far corner who are busting a drunk who was sleeping, and other folks having bona fide Hyde Park-like arguments. A part of the community. The reality in a downtown civic center.

All right, other aspects of community. Taking old homes and redoing them around a collective focus. St. Elmo community, a collection of ten substandard homes that were dressed up not by federal aid, not by a state grant, not by Arco, but rather by a half-dozen families saying, there's no reason we should live in this kind of stuff; we can get paint together, and they've made it a community village now for artists and for regular folk, and they make money by having tours through there and get donations from interested civic organizations and corporations that see

it as a good expression in urban renewal. Gas stations being renewed as local markets. Santa Monica farms, nature's power station. Finally, people enjoying the city as reading the community, reading the sense of positive vitality in the city; and we come back to the Watts Towers, that is, the dynamics of city changed through individual decision-making and individual commitment.

If you don't know the wonderful story, and I'll just wrap up with this, of the Watts Towers. The Watts Towers, after the 1979 earthquake, the city council said they probably should come down, because they're bound to be dangerous and will fall over on the empty streets near there. And there was a tremendous brouhaha about it and trying to stop it, so they got one of these long extender cranes on a multi-wheel bed, and took it out and they attached the top of the boom to the top of the tower, and they tried to pull it, and the crane tipped in every case toward the towers. And they backed off and said fine, the Watts Towers will continue to exist. [laughter]

All right, we have gardens, then, and rabbits, as other expressions of community revitalization in an inner city, and we have school populations: "Have a little pride, stash your trash," also trying to develop and foster a sense of community in the city. I think what I'll do is… in reading your sense of "That's enough now," we'll break here, and there are some things we can deal with either in the discussion hour or as part of this afternoon's session.

[voices in background]

[program ends]