

# Desire Lines: Urbanity and Corporeal Ethics

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## Abstract

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This essay posits that the broad and varied formations of “body theory” furnish a means of investigating human ethical relationships that, in the face of postmodern or subjectivist critiques, may provide a new ethical foundation for urban planning. To make its argument, this paper outlines the relationship between urban spaces and human bodies, charting some of the major geographic insights of body theory. It concludes with an analysis of how body theory can be used to reframe contemporary urban planning, focusing on the issue of the planning of public urban spaces.

## Introduction

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Planning faces many contemporary challenges to its legitimacy. New forms of knowledge have received increased attention and validity. As an applied discipline, one that hopes to effect meaningful positive change, planning has a distinct interest in spanning the bridge from theory to practice. The situation, however, has become such that the gap between theory and practice is ever widening (Hamel, 1993). How, then, can planning assert any claims to expert authority? Planning finds itself in need of a renewed relationship between theory and practice; it needs a theoretical underpinning that can reinforce its practical lessons and adaptive procedures.

This exploratory paper aims to investigate this very question, positing that body theory is one such possible underpinning, one that will assist in providing an ethical foundation for planning in the face of postmodern, subjectivist critiques. To make its argument, this paper will outline the relationship between urban environments and human bodies, very briefly chart some of the major contributions of corporeal theory (to philosophy in general and ethical theory in particular), and finally proceed into an analysis of how body theory can be used to reframe contemporary urban planning, focusing on the issue of the planning of public urban spaces.

## Body / City Relationships

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To begin, it is well worth establishing the exact nature of what is urban, and what is body. What do we mean by urban? On one level, we can accept that cities are, in a fashion, a collection of masses of bodies. As one architectural theorist somewhat more grandiosely puts it: “The question of habitat thus becomes the question of the concretization of the great oneiric structures of our collective body (the communal body, if it has a monocentric structure, or the social body, if it has a polycentric structure). It is constituted in each case by the masses of our

bodies living in space.” (Mazzoleni, 1993, p.285) Despite some apparent presuppositions about the coherence of such a social body, Mazzoleni’s suggestion that the physical character of our urban habitats reflects the aspirations of our society can be recognized for the truism that it is.

Elisabeth Grosz, a philosopher, has devoted considerable thought to the relationships between bodies and cities, arguing that cities can be defined as: “a complex and interactive network that links together, often in an unintegrated and ad hoc way, a number of disparate social activities, processes, relations, with a number of architectural, geographical, civic, and public relations.” (Grosz, 1995, 108) Against this, she opposes the body, “a concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves and skeletal structure, which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and form through the psychical and social inscription of the body’s surface.” (Grosz, 1995, 107).

Contemporary theorists are quite happy to go on at length about the similarities, the linkages, between these two forms of organization. There is much hay to be made over the fact that we refer to the public arena as the body politic. The comparison can be taken to the heights of preposterousness; indeed, some would argue it already has (Harvey, 1998). Ultimately, however, we must realize that both body and city are intimately tied up in the means by which we forge and relate our identities.

## Postmoderni ty and Ethi cs

The postmodern era has meant a reconsideration of foundations, of underlying assumptions about the nature of ethical relationships. The combined failure of so many modernist projects, along with the (re)discovery of so many obscured identities has led us to question the value of societal inquiry. This holds repercussions not only for theorists, but also for those who would wish to transform said theory into practice.

In a pluralistic society, whose values will provide the defining symbols? Our contemporary concern with difference justifiably questions the applicability of universalism (Smith, 1997). How, then, do we go about constructing some sort of normative ethical models without resorting to a relativist framework that prescribes equal value for all moral codes. In considering postmodern planning Allmendinger, citing Honi Fern Haber, “In universalizing difference, post-modern politics forecloses on the possibility of community and subjects necessary to oppositional resistance,” (1998, 230).

To the extent that traditional wellsprings of ethical norms have lost their moral force, ephemeral communities of single-issue ethics, neo-tribes as they have been dubbed (Bauman, 1993), have come to fill the ethical vacuum left by the state. Yet neo-tribes can be a distinctly aspatial phenomenon, directly undercutting the possibility of any equitable arrangement of resources. Under this view, ethical quandaries can no longer be legitimately addressed from a universal viewpoint. Ultimately, individuals might be able to exist without having to confront competing ethical systems, were it not for the fact that despite all the rhetoric surrounding postmodernism, we are still forced daily to confront otherness, that which is unlike us. The physical form of the ‘Other’ forces us to recognize that there are inequalities and differences, in which we all share responsibility.

In this contemporary period of burgeoning competition amongst theoretical paradigms, there remain certain viewpoints that cut across these boundaries. Body theory may well prove to be one such grouping of theories. Most closely identified with feminist philosophies, it spans a great breadth of philosophical approaches. Its greatest asset in this situation is that it attempts to combine the subjectivity that reflects contemporary concerns with difference and otherness, yet provides a framework that resists a slide into absolute relativism. Put simply, we all have bodies, yet we also know that all our bodies are different.

## Urban Ethics

Despite these assertions of crises of identity, there are, of course, places that continue to present the 'Other' to us. The city is perhaps the best example of this. The city is a place where we are constantly confronted with differences; the diversity of experiences and persons found within ensure it. Expressed dramatically, it is the place that "links the affluent lifestyle of the banker professional to the squalor of the vagrant," (Grosz, 1995). It is here then, in the city, that we witness the seeds of a recuperative strategy for a shared (if not fully universal) public ambit.

Rob Shields (1996), arguing after the sociologist Georg Simmel, observes that the circulation of bodies in public spaces, what might be termed the basic form of urban sociality, provides a vital component in the construction of the public sphere. Central to this idea of urban civility is the notion that the circulation of individuals creates encounters with different others. These encounters, in turn, force us to recognize that, as Yi-Fu Tuan puts it, "beneath the surface layers of personality everyone is a stranger," (Tuan, 1988, p.324) ultimately providing a sense of shared experience, and breaking down the distinction between self and other. Continuing along this theme of urban morality, he notes:

Something opaque and mysterious resides even in the persons we believe we know very well. Recognition of this kernel of strangeness is not necessarily a defect in a relationship. On the contrary, it can be a virtue; it makes for respect, (p. 324).

Tuan elaborates on this idea of an urban ethic by expounding three separate lessons of the city. He argues that urban reciprocity is based on help from strangers, as compared to the condition of 'premodern' communities, where help is usually given with the expectation of a return of the favour. In this manner, urban reciprocity is less selfish, as the complex web of relationships means that favours are given without expectation of return from that particular individual, whereas rural reciprocity tends to be of a calculated or deliberate nature. Despite Tuan's enthusiastic exhortations, we must remember that urban bodies have traditionally produced ambivalent reactions from the 'urban bourgeoisie.' The body of the 'Other' has been traditionally suspected as the source of disease, and a threat to public health (Stallybrass & White, 1986). On the other hand, as the grouping of vastly different individuals that they are, cities can also help individuals to cast off those community ties that can be oppressive. Nonetheless, Tuan's central tenet stands firm: urban life has the strong potential for the promotion of mutual respect between very different people, cultures, and lifestyles.

## Body Ethics

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The fact of central importance to this line of reasoning is that cities are places where bodies encounter one another with great frequency. They are the places that afford us the greatest opportunity to come in contact with difference, and thus it is their spaces that provide the context for the development of many ethical relationships.

Feminist ethical theory has involved two specific notions of how we relate to others. The traditional notion of justice argues that morality is constituted in an impartial assessment of the rights of individuals. More recently, an ethics of care has been argued to exist, wherein moral responsibilities arise out of the needs of others in specific relationships (Gilligan, 1977). Although originally proposed as an ethical viewpoint specific to women, theorists have come to find that both justice and care systems support and reinforce one another, in such a way that it is now generally argued that the two are present in all ethical relations. As generally formulated, a subject must recognize an other as falling within their ethic of care so as to view that other as deserving of just relations.

Body theorists have argued that our bodies are central to the way in which we perceive others, and thus central in the way in which we form our relations to them. As Moira Gatens argues, “At a fundamental level ethical judgements amount to judgements concerning how this or that body *ought* to be treated. At a fundamental level ethical relations depend upon the recognition of another body that we take to be sufficiently similar to our own for us to have concern for it.” (Gatens, 1996, p.39, *emph in orig*) Gatens makes the point that this need not be taken as entirely anthropocentric, except to argue that we can not have ethical “relations of reciprocity” with animals or the environment. Gatens continues, noting that “it is this kind of concern for others that forms the *primitive core* of ethical concerns and judgements. It is this identification that makes ethics (and of course *cruelty*) a specifically human possibility.” (Gatens, 1996, p.39, *emph in orig*)

But beyond this, there is also the need to identify with others in what Weiss (1999) terms a “non-Kantian” fashion. By this, she means that, rather than using the body as a means to identify another rational, thinking, being, regardless of their “contingent corporeal features,” an “embodied ethics views these bodily experiences as a source of respect both for the moral wisdom they can provide as well as for the way that they contextualize our intracorporeal and intercorporeal relations.” (Weiss, 1999, p.158) Ethical decisions do not take place in a “phantasmic intellectual space,” but rather “our moral decisions themselves emerge out of specific, disciplinary practices and have material effects on the bodies of those who initiate them as well as those who are subjected to them.” (*ibid.*) Further, “there will inevitably be situations in which I am compelled to speak for others and not just for myself, and to do so effectively and appropriately, it is important, morally important, that I am attuned to the specificity of their situation and how it *differs* from my own, rather than (merely) to what we share in common.” (*ibid.*)

There are a great number of traditions of philosophical study into the nature of the relationships we form with others, and the role our corporeal experiences play in such relations. Given the limited scope of this paper, we will have to suffice with a very brief sketch of three of

the major traditions that have contributed to accounts of corporeal ethics: psychoanalytic theory, phenomenological theory, and post-structuralist theory.

## Psychoanalytic

Psychoanalysis aims to understand the emergence of identity, relating it to sexuality and desire. Feminist body theorists have had ample cause to critique psychoanalysis, largely because it has construed sexual difference as based on the phallus. In this way femininity has come to be identified in psychoanalytic thought as defined by a lack – the lack of the phallus.

Jacques Lacan, another prominent psychoanalyst, one who directed a return to Freudian thought (Pile, 1996) is also important to relational ethics because of his development of the ‘mirror stage’ in child development. This stage is the point in a child’s development (usually 6 to 18 months of age) where the child first recognizes her or his reflection in the mirror. This is the point where the child first discovers difference. This recognition of difference entails a sense of loss and separation, but is the basis for the formation of an individual identity. Feminist theory has also been critical of Lacan’s work, particularly the continued focus on the subject as inherently male. Feminists have sought to destabilize the dualism of phallus/lack by emphasizing female sexuality, and the dualism of self/other through the investigation of themes such as pregnancy.

The work of the French psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva has been instrumental in this regard, as she discusses the concept of the chora, a term taken from the work of Plato, and referring to a chaotic, womb-like space, that serves as the bridge between “intelligible and sensible, mind and body,” (Grosz, 1995, 112). Kristeva interprets the chora as the shared space between mother and child, and suggests that the fear of this, unrepresentable, infinite space leads to a phenomenon she names abjection. Abjection rises from the desire to preserve the sanctity of the self, manifest in taboos regarding cleanliness. Abjection thus becomes the state of perpetual surveillance and policing of the self’s cleanliness.

David Sibley (1995) explores the symbolic meanings of otherness as manifest in places. He notes the urge for individuals to make distinctions – to differentiate between the self and the other, and then to expel the other from personal space. Drawing on the work of Kristeva, he investigates the meaning of otherness in the form of abjection, or the “radically excluded” (Sibley, 1995, p.8). Sibley argues that abjection results in the transference of dangerous or unwanted feelings onto others, providing the motivation and the rationale for their exclusion.

## Phenomenological

Phenomenologists have also long been interested in the way we relate to our world, and thus also how we relate to others. In the phenomenological tradition, the self and the other are mutually created as entities through a relational process. And this relatedness is inherently spatial – geographers and others interested in the spatial relationships of bodies in places. David Seamon, a noted phenomenological geographer, viewed Jane Jacobs’ Greenwich Village, for example, as an example of what he referred to as a “place-ballet.” Seamon saw the many intertwined routines of individuals going about their daily lives as many people knowing their routines,

routines almost written into the core of their bodies, but a dynamism that depended on the density of population, to be sure (Pile, 1996).

Phenomenologists also view care as our means of spatial interpretation – as Martin Heidegger would argue, “our everyday being has the characteristic of unselfconsciousness involvement in a network of relationships, involvement or care is our very means of spatial apprehension, the means by which we locate everything, including ourselves, within the world.” (Steelwater, 1997, p.198) As Kelly Oliver describes, “My experience of myself comes through the narratives that I construct in order to tell myself and my life to another... It is the bearing witness to the other itself, spoken or not, that gives birth to the *I*.” (Oliver, 1995, 88)

Philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s conception of the lived body “locates subjectivity not in consciousness or the mind, but in the body,” (Longhurst, 1997) In his estimation, it is proximity that is essential to the generation of shared experience, the opening of the boundary between self and other (Oliver, 1995).

On the other hand, Emmanuel Levinas, while sharing Merleau-Ponty’s notion of intersubjectivity based on proximity, refutes the possibility of putting oneself in the place of the other. He also argues against Merleau-Ponty that proximity of two bodies is what generates the relationship, not intentional consciousness. From this, Levinas argues for ethical relations as the primary relation between subjects, as the basis for their constitution, in fact. Levinas further argues that it is through discourse that we encounter the other, not the gaze, as others such as JP Sartre have argued (Levinas, 1974). This discourse starts in the face of the other, for it is the face which ‘speaks,’ beginning all discourse. So for the phenomenologist, it is proximity that leads to care, and thus to ethics.

## Post-structuralist

There are also a variety of other means for apprehending the relations between space and bodies. Some of these may be grouped under the category of post-structuralism. This tradition views bodies as inscribed, as constructed by society. It ranges from the dense and highly theoretical approaches of philosophers such as Deleuze and Guattari, who marry the thought of Freud and Marx to produce schizoanalysis (Pile, 1996), through to the fanciful agitprop of 1960’s French situationists (Sadler, 1998).

This ‘school’ (if it can really be referred to as a school, given the vast diversity it entails) of thought also tends to view the body in a highly textual fashion, producing analyses such as: “The body, as opposed to language, is a fluctuating signifier, a zone of semantic disorder, something which is situated itself ‘beneath’ language... It is the body which makes metaphor possible, and which is at the centre of symbolic thought” (Mazzoleni, 1993, p.288)

A fuller account would detail the contributions of Michel Foucault, who argued that social control is implemented by controlling the physical movement of bodies, and furnish a fuller description of Henri Lefebvre’s method for analysing how bodies produce space – rhythmanalysis (although some of Lefebvre’s analysis of space will come into play later). However, post-structural works, as a whole have more to say about the study of bodies in space, and do not confront the self/other question as directly as the two previous traditions.

For example, take this illustration from the work of Gillian Rose. Ostensibly, she is detailing the whole of bodily relations when she argues that, there are two means of coming to know the Other. The first, she notes, is through fear of the Other, which produces a desire for distance and domination to ensure that distance, which Rose labels social-scientific. The second is through a desire for knowledge and intimacy, for closeness and humility, which Rose labels aesthetic (Rose, 1993, 77). Ultimately, though, these sound suspiciously like the two conflicting traditions of psychoanalysis and phenomenology in their orientations.

## Embodied Theory for Planning

The most traditional argument that can be attributed to a corporealist understanding of sexual difference is that of the dichotomization of knowledge. The argument suggests that the gender/sex distinction is essentially tantamount to the mind/body, culture/nature divisions that privilege the masculine (Bondi, 1998). The mind has traditionally been correlated with positive ideas, while the body is its underside, its inverted double (Grosz, 1995). From this, it can be argued that such divisions and the resultantly different kinds of bodies (male and female, for example) they help to construct, tend to naturalize social differences. That is to say that the assigned cultural meanings of bodies thus can be used to “legitimate certain power relations.” (Rose, 1993, 30) Quite clearly, a feminist viewpoint can not help but remark that the typically considered bodies have as a matter of course been masculine – think, for one small example, of Le Corbusier’s “Le Modular” (Sadler, 1998). The threat of violence, particularly the threat of bodily harm, keeps women and other ‘Others’ in their traditionally assigned places, ultimately making public spaces white, masculine, heterosexual places (Wilson, 1991). The public/ private sphere furnishes an assumption of duality; questions of the quality of citizenship are raised as women are assigned to a private role. In the greatest sense, then, the aim of an urban planning that is sensitive to questions of embodiedness is to help to destabilize our traditional imposition of either/or dichotomies. Here, it can help to break down our assumptions about difference, leading to a broader, more inclusive, social sphere, legitimating knowledges that come from those who have historically been identified by their bodies.

## Planning for a Corporeal Ethic

Urban planning then, should take notice of corporeal ethics to the extent that cities are the locus of an ethics of encounter. If cities are to be the source of the contact that will furnish a respect for difference, we must address the fact that very rarely today do we address the other in the street in a fashion which might permit such an ethical encounter. Richard Sennett isolates this variation, focusing his observations on that fabled site of difference, Jane Jacobs’ Greenwich Village. He finds its contemporary reality to have changed significantly – the diversity remains but not the interaction: “Difference and indifference co-exist in the life of the Village; the sheer fact of diversity does not prompt people to interact. In part, this is because, over the last two decades, the diversities of the Village have grown more cruel, in ways *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* did not envision.” (Sennett, 1994, 357) One truth may well be that now it is our ostensibly ‘private’ spaces (such as work environment) where we are most able to, or perhaps rather most forced to encounter difference. Like one of Mies van der Rohe’s ‘floating’ buildings, there is no longer any apparent support for public ethics – its base, it seems, is missing.

Planning, as with any socially oriented discipline, has clearly suffered from the challenge of postmodernity.

Sennett continues, arguing that our cities have lost their neighbourliness, their interactivity:

“In the course of the development of modern, urban individualism, the individual fell silent in the city. The street, the café, the department store, the railroad, bus, and underground became places of the gaze rather than scenes of discourse. When verbal connections between strangers in the modern city are difficult to sustain, the impulses of sympathy which individuals may feel in the city looking at the scene around them become in turn momentary – a second of response looking at snapshots of life.” (Sennett, 1994, 358)

It is important here, though, to reckon the extent to which Sennett is waxing nostalgic. For indeed, there are those who argue vociferously that this whole notion of the public sphere is as a much historical imaginary as a true former state (Deutsche, 1996).

Nevertheless, one aspect of Sennett’s analysis rings soundly true. Cities have come to be designed for the efficient movement of bodies. Planning for speed, for movement, does not allow the same sort of social relations to occur. As Sennett puts it, “the logistics of speed... detach the body from the spaces through which it moves.” To argue for the implications to city planning, Sennett draws on the work of semiologist Roland Barthes, linking his work on image repertoire to the work of Lynch, who uses such image inventories to examine how people locate a sense of belonging in places. The whole of this work suggests that public space should be slowed down, that the circulatory ambitions of planning must be sublimated, redirected to a process that gives greater consideration to the experience of places and their occupants. The circulatory ambitions of contemporary planning must also allow for the contact that forms the basis of urban democracy (Sorkin, 1999).

If corporeal issues are to be focused on public spaces, if only for the sake of practicality, we must surely begin with due consideration to the distinction between what is public and what is private space. Feminist arguments have typically investigated spaces as specifically public or private, and, it seems that private spaces still tend to be associated with feminine roles, in part, because in this case, it is possible to examine these spaces in a traditional fashion. Here, women are not seen as being out of place. Feminist critique of public space, on the other hand, tends to take on a more radical position, challenging the status quo, and documenting the means by which these spaces are coded to exclude women. Either way, though, women are at risk. In the home, violence is a private matter; outside the home, it is deserved (Rose, 1993). As Jo Beall notes, “The arrangement of urban space has commonly been used by planners to ‘put people in their place’, defining appropriate spaces for particular groups,” (1997, p.4). Beall does continue, though, to note that, we should not plan entirely for a particular group (if it can be said that this has been done for men, then it at least should not be repeated in the name of women). She quotes Clara Greed: “You can never plan entirely separately for women (or for men), and it is a sign of dichotomised thinking (and pillarisation) to imagine so. We all live in the same urban space.” (Greed, cited in Beall, 1997, p.17)

These arguments need not be limited to the notion of femininity. Any bodily difference can provide a basis for analysis, a motive for exclusion. McCann (1999), while noting the powerful role that racism plays in the formation of subjective identities, suggests that Henri Lefebvre’s



twin notions of ‘the right to the city’ and ‘the right to difference’ hold out hope for the grassroots development of antiracist urban public spaces.

Lefebvre also deals more explicitly with the question of embodiment, arguing that in the contemporary city, where it is “dominated by overpowering forces, including a variety of brutal techniques and an extreme focus on visualization, the body fragments, abdicates responsibility for itself – in a word, disappropriates itself.” (Lefebvre, 1974, 166) Lefebvre uses this term, ‘appropriation,’ distinguishing between two opposed types of space: dominated space to appropriated space. Appropriated space resembles a work of art, while dominated space is controlled. There is an obvious link here between Lefebvre’s concept of appropriated space and the practice of *détournement* espoused by the Situationists, of whom Lefebvre was an early associate (Sadler, 1998). Although Lefebvre cautions against a confusion of *détournement* with appropriation, he accepts that they both can teach us about the production of new urban spaces. Of course, these two spaces lead Lefebvre back into some of the murkiness of binarism – indeed, it would seem that he equates these spaces with particular (gendered) functions, arguing that “In the best circumstances, the outside space of a community is dominated, while the indoor space of family like is appropriated.” (Lefebvre, 1974, 166)

Davina Cooper (1998) argues that the definition we suggest for public is also part of the problem here. She argues that the traditional definition of public spaces as areas permitting access to all is insufficient. She argues instead for a conception of public space as space that creates a public, a space that provides for praxis. She notes that very often, present uses of public space are performed as though they were in private, noting the level of discomfort and suspicion we accord to the approach of strangers. What she is missing is the undergirding principle. Why are spaces of openness places where individuals can form regard for one another? Perhaps it is that the answer seems obvious. Cooper does go some way toward an answer, suggesting that uniting experiences in public space are usually constructed in opposition to official practice. This, strategy however, falls back into the old habit of defining a community by identifying a common other. More hopeful is Cooper’s observation that public spaces can create community by shared experiences – be it a delayed train, a demonstration, a snowstorm.

How is this to be done? By encouraging heterogeneity of uses, Cooper recommends. She is careful to note that plurality alone is not heterogeneity – it is not enough to permit a tidy separation of uses in close proximity, uses must overlap. She uses an example to illustrate – that of city streets, arguing (after Boddy) that the segregation of uses has meant the banishment of the body from the street (in favour of the car, say). If uses are not privileged, then bodies are not privileged either, going some way toward a situation where equal regard can be fostered.

As much as this section has focused on public spaces, it is important to discuss a few points about private space as well. First of all, the distinction between the two types of space are becoming increasingly blurred, at least in the traditional sense given to public space (rather than Cooper’s articulation). Private spaces are becoming an increasingly important place for the majority of citizens, and private spaces must be recognized as also having some sort of emancipatory potential. Cohousing might be one such example of a private space that is open to a degree of difference. However, given the traditional attitudes towards those who “don’t belong” in public space, let alone private space, as well as the increased technological means to

survey these places (Graham & Marvin, 1996, p.227), it seems unlikely that such spaces are able to accept bodies of any type.

## Planning for Bodies and Pleasure

At first glance, the notion of play, of pleasure, as the basis of a new articulation of planning seems disingenuous. But if we consider the argument that planning has arrived at its current situation through an emphasis on safety, the critique of play makes more sense. Play in this sense becomes a radical critique, opposing itself to the notion of cities as efficient machines. Shields notes the straightforwardness and simplicity of a body approach, as compared to, say, a psychological approach. Shields suggests that planners ought to address the need to 'choreograph' bodies in public spaces, recognizing that at times this will be in dealing with the crowd, at other times, as self-contained individuals (Shields, 1996). To return to Lefebvre again, we might say that planning, despite Lefebvre's cynicism, should aim to create a new appropriated space. He opines: "A true space of pleasure, which would be an appropriated space par excellence, does not yet exist. Even if a few instances in the past suggest that this goal is in principle attainable, the results to date fall far short of human desires." (Lefebvre, 1974, 167).

It seems that this pleasure (and for some authors, pain as well) notion is central to understandings of bodily relations. While Sennett would have us plan spaces where we can recognize pain in others, providing a transcendental moment, and acknowledging there is "no remedy for its sufferings in the contrivings of society" (1994, 376), there are those who take almost the completely opposite tack, suggesting that only by planning for pleasure can we overcome Freud's pleasure principle, and the resulting tendency to avoid the discomfort of 'otherness.'

Returning to the Situationist take on urbanism, it might be worthwhile here to look at some of their suggestions for urban areas, as outlined in an anonymous Lettrist International member in an organizational leaflet: (quoted in Sadler, 1998, p.109) "Open the metro at night after the trains stop running. Keep the corridors and tunnels poorly lit by means of weak intermittently functioning lights. With a careful rearrangement of fire escapes, and the creation of walkways where needed, open the roofs of Paris for strolling. Leave the public gardens open at night. Keep them dark. (In some cases, a weak illumination may be justified by psychogeographic considerations.)" So here, we find a radical suggestion for the re-ordering of urban space, but an unabashedly masculinist one. Personal safety is the obstacle here. In areas that lack Jane Jacobs' "eyes on the street," women, quite rightly, have taken notice of the codings that public spaces are available to them only at great risk (Wilson, 1991).

Another theorist who has adopted this pleasure viewpoint suggests that the aim can be represented in the word conviviality (Peattie, 1998), argued after Illich's (1980) "tools for conviviality" to be the opposite of industrial productivity. Peattie argues that happiness may very well have something to do with planning, although it surely is not normally addressed from this viewpoint. She cites the example of eating together – and Ray Oldenburg's (1989) book on 'third' places – and sees these informal settings as the essence of playfulness. Inclusiveness can be problematic for some in this instance, raising the question of whether conviviality must always be inclusive. Not always, Peattie contends. She points out that "Conviviality is not

always a warm fuzzy thing. It is human energy, a resource that can be used, can be contested and can turn against its handlers.” (Peattie, 1998, p252) Ultimately, “Conviviality is not a way to solve problems but a way to rise above them by celebration. Conviviality is something that can happen when resources are scarce and when the serious problems do not go away. Civil rights protestors sing in their cells. Dirt-poor Indian peasants borrow to throw glorious weddings. British workers get drunk on Saturday night. In these evil times, planners might learn from the example of those stubborn survivors and see the creation of settings for conviviality as a central purpose.” (Peattie, 1998, 253).

The meaning we give to play is crucial, however, for a naïve acceptance of any amusement orientation in planning as critique runs the risk of missing the point. Conviviality certainly has a downside, as illustrated by David Ley, where fun exists in the absence of content. (Ley, 1996) Perhaps, to commit a minor change to another of Ley’s concepts (Ley & Mills, 1993), what we are looking for is a ‘conviviality of resistance.’ This, more than anything, is the test for any planner wishing to entertain embodiment.

## Conclusion

If, indeed, urban planning aims to be a philosophy of the city, (Hamel, 1993) we would do worse than to explore the nature of this relationship. Public space is not necessarily the radical humanizer we may have hoped for, and indeed it is disappearing. We may eulogize it and accept the ‘horror’ of its passing, but we may also turn to these ‘new’ ‘empty’ ‘ephemeral’ and ‘pregnant’ spaces as a source of ‘delight’ in the absence of what has in the past been seen as good form (Betsky, 1998).

As such, rationalist planning can be identified as in direct opposition to a body-based approach. Take, for example, Hausmann’s imposition of a ‘moral’ order on the streets of Paris, one with which (certainly not only) feminist critiques have a veritable field day (Hooper, 1998, for example). If contemporary cities are about the return of disorder, can we say that this provides a need for a fragmentation-based approach? Does Dear and Flusty’s (1998) theory of Keno capitalist urban development, in which each parcel of land bears little relation to neighbouring uses have some application here?

Ultimately, a corporeal understanding of planning issues does not necessarily lead to any radically new ideas. However, the lens of embodiment provides another viewpoint, a means for unifying planning’s aims in the face of difference, and yet maintaining that sensitivity to difference. We continue to learn the value of communal spaces, to understand how participation in a public space can foster inclusion in the public sphere.

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