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May 15th, 9:00 AM - May 17th, 5:00 PM

Housing Rhetoric: Argumentation and City Planning

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THE SPACE OF ARGUMENTATION: RHETORIC AND URBAN DESIGN

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Abstract:

When architects, designers, and planners map out the physical space of our urban and regional geography, they also map out the discursive space of our everyday lives. This paper is an exploration of the rhetorical norms implicit in contemporary urban design. I examine three theories of the "good city": Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (1977), and Peter Katz's *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community* (1994). I close by proposing a set of *civic* problems shared by designers and rhetoricians.

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"What makes a good city?" may strike some of you as an odd question for a rhetorician to be asking. Historically, however, the art of rhetoric and the self-governing city are closely linked; in some places and during certain periods, to think about one was essentially to think about the other. In such contexts, rhetoric served as the primary instrument of civic life; and the city served as the primary scene of rhetoric. The connection is evident in the story Cicero tells at the beginning of *De Inventione*. Long ago, he writes, men were dispersed, wandering at large in the fields and forests, and relying chiefly on physical strength to survive. Through one man's reason and eloquence ("*rationem atque orationem*") they were induced to assemble together, where they were subsequently transformed into a "kind and gentle folk" (I.ii.2). Speech continued to play a vital role in communal life, Cicero writes, even after this foundational act:

> [A]fter cities had been established how could it have been brought to pass that men should learn to keep faith and observe justice and become accustomed to obey others voluntarily and believe not only that they must work for the common good but even sacrifice life itself, unless men had been able by eloquence to persuade their fellows of the truth of what they had discovered by reason? (I.ii.3)

Rhetoric thus accounts for the origins of the city; and the city accounts for the origins of rhetoric. And, just as virtue cannot be voiceless (if it is to be effective), speech cannot be politically unanchored (if it is to be useful)— for Cicero, rhetoric is worthy precisely because it is subordinated to "civil" affairs (I.v.6). Similar myths describing a mutual relationship between rhetoric and the city are common in the classical era. Carolyn Miller (1993) has compared various Greek versions of the myth, showing how Plato and Aristotle tried to weaken the logos/polis bond first articulated by Protagoras and later re-affirmed by Isocrates and Cicero. "Protagoras' teaching," Miller writes "makes rhetoric and politics inseparable dimensions of each other: the democratic city requires rhetoric for its self-constituting operation, and rhetoric must take place within and concern the affairs of the city" (p. 223).

There may be some historical truth to the mythical connection between rhetoric and the city. According to Jean-

Pierre Vernant (1982), writing (re-introduced into Greece in the 9th C., BCE) made social and political decisions more widely accessible, allowing for the transference of political sovereignty from the monarch to a social space, the agora, where problems of general interest could be debated and resolved. And once you have the agora, Vernant writes, you have the polis, because the polis implies first of all the preeminence of speech (specifically, the antithetical demonstrations of public oratory) over all other instruments of power. What emerges is a reciprocal relationship between politics and logos: "The art of politics became essentially the management of language; and logos from the beginning took on an awareness of itself, of its rules and its effectiveness, through its political function" (p. 50).

Eugene Garver (1994) has made a similar point about Aristotle's rhetorical theory; it is, he claims, "embedded in the particular circumstances of the polis," a context which for Aristotle was "natural" but for us is "unnatural" (p. 55). Because we no longer live in the kind of city Aristotle lived in, we have transformed rhetoric into a portable *techne*, usable in all sorts of non-political contexts. For Aristotle, rhetoric was a restricted, civic art rather than a universal, professional one. It was the art of the citizen; and a citizen, for Aristotle, was someone unwilling to delegate the practice of rhetoric (p. 48). (On the relation claimed for eloquence and civic virtue in the Athens of the 5th and 4th C., BCE, see also Yunis, 1996; Murray, 1990; De Romilly, 1992; and Schiappa, 1991.)

The Italian Renaissance offered another sphere for this reciprocal relationship to be played out, especially in the independent republics of the Northern communes. Petrarch, for example, was aware of the virtues of the contemplative life but was also strongly attracted to rhetoric. He knew instinctively that to be a rhetor was to be committed to the practical affairs of one's city; and to be active in one's city was to be, almost by definition, a rhetor. "It is a peculiar characteristic of orators," he wrote, "that they take pleasure in large cities and in the press of the crowd, in proportion to the greatness of their own talents. They curse solitude, and hate and oppose silence where decisions are to be made" (qtd. in Seigel, 1968, p. 43). Vico also attempted to revive the Ciceronian equation of rhetoric and civic virtue. He believed, according to Michael Mooney (1985), that none of nature's gifts was more critical for the orator than a *civil* education: "simply growing up as part of a city's life, coming to know its streets and its buildings, learning its language and its lore, its history and its ways, and in time being trained in its schools, especially in the company of one's peers. There is nothing, he concluded, that can instruct one better in that *sensus communis*, which is the norm of all prudence and eloquence" (p. 84). Cartesian analysis, Vico thought, made students incapable of managing civic affairs; what they needed was the fullness and pliability of rhetoric.

Why does this coupling of rhetoric and the city seem so strange to modern sensibilities? Is it because the nation has become the central site for political discourse in our time? Because modern transportation and communication technologies seem to have made shared space irrelevant for social interaction? Because the public realm has become increasingly private? Because our urban centers have experienced such deterioration? According to Hannah Arendt (1958), the history of the West since the disappearance of the city-state is the story of the gradual abasement of the *vita activa*: "a way of life in which speech and only speech made sense and where the central concern of all citizens was to talk with each other" (p. 27). Thomas Bender (1984) depicts a crucial moment in this story, the time at the end of the 19th C. when the close connection between civic and scholarly culture in American higher education was broken. In the 18th C., Bender writes, learned associations typically included lay intellectuals as well as professional ones; but by the 1880s, academic scholarship had oriented itself towards national rather than civic associations. The result, Bender argues, was that the emergent professionals severed intellectual life from place, leaving Americans with an impoverished public culture.

Michael Halloran (1982) tells a similar tale about the rise and fall of rhetoric in American colleges. In the late

18th C., he argues, rhetoric was the central subject in the post-secondary curriculum; emphasis was given to the role of the English language in the world of practical affairs; oral communication (especially forensic disputation and political declamation) was privileged; and the ability to speak to diverse audiences, including local dignitaries, was a prominent goal. One hundred years later, rhetoric had been demoted to a minor place in curriculum, diminished by the concept of *belles lettres*, i.e., a concern for written, aesthetic language over oral, public discourse; the increasing specialization of the curriculum, in which general and public concerns dropped out of sight; and the changing role of education itself, which came to be seen not as the preparation of leaders for the community but the means by which individuals could advance in society.

The time may be ripe for a re-coupling of the logos/polis pair. The rhetoric revival of the past half century has reminded us that language is very much a communal affair; this has led, in turn, to a renewed concern for local knowledge and situated practice. In political philosophy, meanwhile, there has been a similar reawakening to community, to the role of local participation and deliberation in public life. Perhaps rhetoricians are searching for an ethical anchor that can only be provided by politics. And political philosophers, in turning to the local, participatory, and moral, have found in rhetoric their own lost appreciation for situated language. The two fields meet in the norms of argument theory, where notions of good reason and good community often commingle. Douglas Walton (1989), for example, claims that persuasion dialogue entails a double obligation: to prove one's theses from the concessions of one's interlocutor and to cooperate with his or her attempts to do the same (pp. 3-9). Jasper Neel (1988) offers a similar model. "Strong discourse," he claims, is discourse which has been tested in public life; it is strong both by finding adherents and by generating and tolerating competitor discourses (p. 208).

My question is: do such theories of discourse presuppose a certain organization of physical space? And when rhetoricians, political philosophers, and others talk among themselves about *community*, shouldn't they be talking with architects and urban designers as well? Scholars in all three fields seem to believe that the contemporary public realm is in decline. In design terms, this is manifest in critiques of the contemporary North American landscape: our cities (with their suburban sprawl and shopping malls) don't seem like "real" cities at all: they're socially fragmented, restlessly commercial, automobile-dependent, and centerless; they're ugly, depressing, and often scary; they lack livability and community. In the words of "edge city" residents asked by Garreau (1991) to describe their town, they are places without soul (p. 8) (see also Rybcyznski, 1995; Kowinski, 1985; Kunstler, 1993; and Sorkin, 1992).

I would like now to consider three theories of urban design, searching for underlying connections between good space and good discourse.

Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*

Jane Jacobs was an "urbanologist" who served during the 1950s as associate editor of *Architectural Forum*; her landmark 1961 book has a design appeal not found in other sociological analyses of the city. The book is an attack on orthodox urban planning of the 1950s, particularly the influence of such luminaries as Ebenezer Howard, Lewis Mumford, Sir Patrick Geddes, Clarence Stein, Raymond Unwin, and Le Corbusier. According to Jacobs, most city planning in her time privileged central control by experts and relied on the inappropriate model of the English country town. These theories evinced a hostility for large cities, a preference for low-density settlements, a preoccupation with private housing, and an obsession for simplicity, order, and self-sufficiency. Against all of this, Jacobs' model city is the old mixed-use, crowded streets of her own Greenwich Village.

For Jacobs, cities are by definition full of strangers. In this, she resembles Richard Sennett (1977), who would later make the presence of strangers in cities the key social fact behind the 18th C. rise of the public sphere. It is the absence of intimacy in public life that, for Jacobs, Sennett, Arendt, and others, creates the very possibility for "civilized" social behavior. Because she treats cities as places full of strangers, Jacobs emphasizes those places where strangers are most likely to meet: streets and sidewalks.[1] Good streets and sidewalks, for Jacobs, are diverse and lively places which generate three social benefits.

First, the good city is safe. Peace is kept by the people themselves; there is a clear demarcation between public and private space (the streets and sidewalks being public); people watch the public spaces ("their eyes are on them," in Jacobs' terms); and the sidewalks are in constant use. The streets of the safe city are store-, bar-, and restaurant-filled and therefore lively at all hours. "Under the seeming disorder of the old city," Jacobs writes, "is a marvelous order for maintaining the safety of the streets and the freedom of the city. It is a complex order. Its essence is intricacy of sidewalk use, bringing with it a constant succession of eyes" (p. 50).

Second, Jacobs' good city is one that generates contact. But note that this contact is neither the intimate contact of the home nor the formal contact of the assembly or courtroom. It is the casual contact of strangers and acquaintances. "Cities are full of people," Jacobs writes, "with whom, from your viewpoint, or mine, or any other individual's, a certain degree of contact is useful or enjoyable; but you do not want them in your hair. And they do not want you in theirs either" (p. 56). Such casual contact over time, among people on non-intimate but civilized terms, gradually builds up "a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need" (p. 56). Jacobs' description of this contact leaves no doubt that it is primarily discursive in nature: getting and giving advice, comparing dogs, admonishing children, admiring babies, complaining about landlords. The trust generated by such contact is illustrated by the old New York City custom of leaving one's keys in a neighborhood store for a guest or visitor. To be able to do this, Jacobs says, you must have someone whom you trust but who will not question your private habits (p. 60). In this way, a good street achieves a balance between an intimate society, where everything is shared, and a fragmented society where nothing is. It is also a place of great tolerance: in such a place, Jacobs writes, it is possible "to be on excellent sidewalk terms with people who are very different from oneself" (p. 62).

The third benefit of good city sidewalks, Jacobs argues, is the assimilation of children. Diverse city streets, because they are rich in interest, variety, and material for the imagination, are good places for children. They have a fascination for city streets, and sidewalks provide them with an "unspecialized outdoor home base from which to play, to hang around in, and to help form their notions of the world" (p. 81). And, because the incidental play of children on sidewalks is supervised by ordinary, untrained adults, in the course of carrying on their other pursuits, children learn from playing there that people without ties of kinship, close friendship, or formal responsibility will take a modicum of public responsibility for them (p. 82).

Besides the street, Jacobs' other units of social geography are the city district and the city as a whole. The neighborhood, much beloved by urban planners, is meaningless here; it is too large to possess the competence of a good street, too small to have the political power of a district, and never self-sufficient in a big city, where people can move around in a large area for services, friends, and goods.

What can designers do to produce this kind of place? First, the street must serve more than one primary function; it must contain a mix of uses, and not be limited to exclusively residential or commercial activity. Second, it must have small blocks and thus provide frequent opportunities for turning corners. Third, it must mingle buildings that vary in age and thus allow for varied economic yields. And fourth, it must have a sufficiently

dense concentration of people. Such a city, Jacobs argues, will be a place where very different people can live together on civilized terms.

From a rhetorical point of view, Jacobs' city is more than anything else a *talkative* city. It is a place of casual conversations among diverse, non-intimate but mutually dependent strangers and acquaintances. Her design principles can be seen, then, as creating and protecting space for informal talk. In fact, the Greek *polis* has been described as just such a place: Arendt calls the city-state the "most talkative of all bodies politic" (p. 26). But unlike Jacobs' city, the Athens of the 5th and 4th C., BCE, also had vital spaces for *formal* public discourse: the assembly, the law court, the theater, etc. Jacobs has nothing to say about these kinds of spaces. She does attempt at one point to draw a direct connection between informal and formal contact (see p. 56); but this is not emphasized and never clearly explained.

Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*

Like Jacobs, Christopher Alexander and his colleagues at the University of California at Berkeley propose principles for building and maintaining the good city. But if Jacobs' key virtues are aliveness and diversity and her enemy the dullness of 1950s urban renewal, Alexander's virtues are wholeness and health and his enemy the societal insanity of the 1960s and '70s (much of the funding for this 1977 book came from the National Institutes of Mental Health). The book is comprised of 253 "patterns," each pattern consisting of a problem that occurs in the human environment and a design guideline for solving the problem. It is the relationship among the patterns, however, that is the central message of the book: When you build a thing, Alexander writes, you "must also repair the world around it and within it" (p. xiii). The patterns proceed from the largest (#1 is work toward independent, self-governing regions in the world, each with a population between 2-10 million) to the smallest (#242 is build a bench outside your front door so people can watch the street). In between are patterns such as #190: vary ceiling heights throughout the building and #71: in every neighborhood provide still water for swimming. There are social and discursive norms underlying many of the patterns; for example, #159 is locate each room so that natural light comes from more than one direction. The reason? "Rooms lit on two sides create less glare around people and objects; [this] allows us to read in detail the minute expressions that flash across people's faces, the motion of their hands . . . [L]ight on two sides allows people to understand each other" (p. 748).

Alexander has much to say here about the relationship of geography to self-government that is of potential interest for a theory of discursive space. The book prescribes an intricate layering of political communities. First, there is the region of 8 million (#1). Such a region, Alexander writes, has natural boundaries and its own economy; it is autonomous, self-governing, and has a seat in world government. Beyond this size, people are too remote from the political process; smaller than this, the region has no voice in global affairs. Alexander writes of this pattern: "We believe the independent region can become the modern polis–the new commune—that human entity which provides the sphere of culture, language, laws, services, economic exchange, variety, which the old walled city or the polis provided for its members" (p. 13).

Second, there is the city of 500,000 (#10). Alexander argues that only with concentrations of 300,000 people or more, can you have a centralized business district with "magic," that variety of life that only great concentrations of population have. He's more interested, however, in the next layer of political space: the community of 7,000 (#12). Here the pattern language seems to support Plato's contention that the perfect community has a population of 5,040 (factorial 7); it also seems to accord with the old rule that in a polis everyone should be able

to gather in one place and hear an unamplified speaker; and it is about the size of the old direct democracies of New England. On this score, Alexander quotes Paul Goodman, whose rule of thumb for self-government is that no citizen should be more than two friends away from the highest member of a local unit; Alexander computes this to roughly 5,500 people, assuming 12 good friends per person. In spatial terms, the optimum size for the self-governing community is 75 acres, the size that can be walked in about 10 minutes; at a density of 60 persons per acre, this would amount to about 4,500 people. All of this, of course, sounds suspiciously like the "neighborhood" of modern planning lore, which is often defined as the population surrounding a single elementary school, and typically comes in at about 7,000 residents. Whatever the rationale, Alexander argues that in a city subdivided into communities of 5-10,000 people, there is the possibility of a direct connection between the man on the street and his local officials and representatives. Each such community should have the power to initiate, decide, and execute its own affairs (police, schools, welfare, streets, etc.). And Alexander recommends that local political forums be situated in highly visible and accessible places, so that each community has a political center of gravity, a place where each resident feels at home, and where he can talk personally to the person in charge.

Next comes the neighborhood of 500 (#14). People need an identifiable spatial unit, Alexander argues. Because most people limit their spatial home base to just a few blocks, roughly 300 yards across, and because human groups cannot coordinate themselves to reach basic agreements if they are too large, Alexander recommends neighborhood groupings of approximately 500. The fifth layer of political geography is the house cluster of 50 (#37). People tend to confine their local visiting, Alexander claims, to their immediate neighbors, so he recommends arranging houses to form identifiable groups of 8-12 households around common land and paths. "With one representative from each family, this is the number of people that can sit round a common meeting table" and make wise decisions (p. 200). Finally, there is the self-governing work or office group of about 10 (#80): de-centralized, autonomous, face-to-face, self-regulating, and personal.

In laying out this political geography, Alexander says very little about how self-government might actually work at the level of speech acts. He does, however, include several patterns explicitly devoted to political discourse. So, for example, #44 says that visible and accessible town halls need to be placed in each community of 7,000. Such places include common territory where people can debate policy and where they are encouraged to linger and gather. This territory, Alexander continues, should contain both a public forum, with sound system, benches, walls for notices, etc., and a "necklace" of community projects, including free office space, meeting rooms, office equipment, etc.

Also of rhetorical interest here are patterns that attempt to limit the intrusion of the automobile into human space (e.g., #11). The problem with cars, Alexander argues, is that they spread people out and keep them apart.

> It is quite possible that the collective cohesion people need to form a viable society just cannot develop when the vehicles which people use force them to be 10 times farther apart than they have to be. It may be that cars cause the breakdown of society simply because of their geometry (p. 66).

In another pattern, Alexander argues that no more than 9 percent of any 10-acre area be devoted to parking (#22). "People realize that the physical environment is the medium for their social intercourse . . . when the density of cars passes a certain limit, the environment is no longer theirs . . . social communion is no longer permitted or encouraged" (p. 122). The book also recommends that each community have a promenade, a place where people can go to see and be seen, to rub shoulders, and confirm their community (#31). And there is a pattern (#21) recommending that residential buildings be limited to four stories in the belief that people who live

in high rises are isolated from ground-level, casual society.

Alexander's project is more ambitious than Jacobs'; the casual contact of the street, with which Jacobs is exclusively concerned, is here integrated into a vision that also prescribes an intimate geography and formal, public spaces as well. And this, in fact, may be its weakness for our purposes; because he describes the good human landscape with an almost religious comprehensiveness, Alexander may not provide the vocabulary we are after if our primary concern is separating out public discourse as a bounded problem.

Peter Katz' *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*

If Jacobs' city is lively and diverse; and Alexander's town, whole and healthy; then the kind of space associated with the New Urbanism is meant more than anything else to evoke "community." The New Urbanism is thus self-consciously intended to repair a fragmented social landscape and should, in principle, be highly compatible with norms of public discourse.

Unlike Kevin Lynch's (1981) *Good City Form*, which is skeptical of a direct, primary relationship between settlement form and the quality of social life, proponents of the New Urbanism claim emphatically that bad urban design creates weak communities, and good urban design creates strong ones. Peter Katz (1994), for example, writes that suburban sprawl—a big enemy here, along with the automobile, modern architecture, and free-wheeling capitalism—has "fragmented our society—separating us from friends and relatives and breaking down the bonds of community that had served our nation so well in earlier times" (p. ix). Similarly, Peter Calthorpe (1994) argues that the 40-year growth of suburbs and edge cities in North America has left us with a "profound sense of frustration and placelessness" (p. xii). Our urban and regional geography, he writes, "seem to have an empty feeling, reinforcing our mobile state and the instability of our families" (p. xii). For Elizabeth Moule and Stefanos Polyzoides (1994), the traditional American model of city-making, in which a grid was cut for *both* public and private use, has been abandoned. Architecture is now about self-expression, transportation needs dominate planning, and the private realm is privileged over that which is common, the "shared space" which brings people together to relate to one another (p. xxi).

The New Urbanism, Katz writes, returns to a "cherished American icon": the compact, close-knit community (p. ix). Perhaps the most explicit statement of the New Urbanism has been developed by Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk (1994). Their focus is on what they call Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), which contains five principles. First, a neighborhood should have a center and an edge. This contributes, they argue, to the "social identity of the community" (p. xvii). The center is always public space (a square, green, or important intersection), and it is the locus of the neighborhood's public buildings (post office, city hall, day-care center, churches, shops, etc.). The edge is typically recreational open space or thoroughfare. Second, the optimal size of the neighborhood is a quarter-mile from center to edge, equivalent to a 5-minute walk at an easy pace. This makes the neighborhood accessible without cars. Third, according to Duany and Plater-Zyberk, the neighborhood should have a balanced mix or fine grain of activities: dwellings, shops, workplaces, schools, churches, and recreations all interspersed with one another. This is especially important for residents, like the very young and very old, who are unable to drive. The mix should also contain a range of housing types, from above-shop apartments to single family houses. Fourth, the neighborhood should structure building sites and traffic on a fine network of interconnecting streets. This shortens pedestrian routes, diffuses traffic, and slows cars down. And, because the streets are designed for both pedestrians and automobiles, casual meetings that "form the bonds of community" (p. xix) are encouraged. Fifth, priority is given to public space and to the

appropriate location of civic buildings (government offices, churches, schools, etc.). This, proponents of TND argue, fosters community identity and civic pride. To Duany and Plater-Zyberk's five principles, Calthorpe (1994) adds the tenet that the New Urbanism should be applied throughout the region, at any density, and also to the region as a whole (p. xi).

Seaside, Florida, is Duany and Plater-Zyberk's most famous design. Built in the early 1980s on 60 acres of seaside land, its projected population is 2,000, including 350 houses and another 300 dwellings in apartments and hotel rooms. According to Katz (1994), the overriding goal in the conception of the town was that of "fostering a strong sense of community" (p. 3) and reversing the trend toward alienation in suburban life. Seaside does this, he claims, by, first of all, asserting the primacy of public over private space. Located first in the plan were the public places: the school, town hall, market, post office, shops, etc.; attention was also given to the streets, the walks, and the beach, all of which are clearly *common* property. The houses are close together, each of a unique design, with consistent setbacks, required front porches, no garages, etc. And everything is within a 5-minute walk. To Vincent Scully (1994), Seaside has succeeded "more fully than any other work of architecture in our time has done, in creating an image of community, a symbol of human culture's place in nature's vastness" (p. 226). Scully is savvy enough to know, however, that the real force behind Seaside is its draconian building code: "Architecture is fundamentally a matter not of individual buildings but of the shaping of community, and that is done by the law" (p. 229). The law makes us free, Scully writes, by binding us together so we can live without fear.

Unfortunately, Seaside may be a bit *too* precious; "community" here turns out to be what people think community should *look* like and not necessarily a place of strong communal *action*. In addition, there's the problem of strangers, which Jacobs, Sennett, and others had posited as the social fact around which all urban thinking should revolve. There are no strangers in Seaside; and here we run up against another problem with "community." As Maurizio D'Entrèves (1994) has claimed about Hannah Arendt's project, politics is not about integrating individuals around a single or transcendent good, it is about active engagement and deliberation, which proceed best—given the unavoidable condition of human plurality—not in an environment of intimacy and warmth but in one of impartiality and trust.

Some design issues of interest to rhetoricians

What has emerged from this analysis, I believe, is a set of problems or issues in urban and regional design that are of potential relevance to those interested in discourse. Below, I articulate six spatial problems for rhetoric and suggest how each might be approached in terms of the argument norms stated above.

First, there is the problem of settlement *size*. Although, as noted above, there is a long tradition of philosophical speculation about the ideal size of towns, neighborhoods, and communities, what may end up being most important–and here I am following Alexander (1977)–is an intricate *layering* of political communities, so that individuals have a range of opportunities for voice but also for effectivity. A problem for public discourse now, of course, is the dearth of local opportunities for learning about, articulating, and testing political positions.

Second, there is the problem of settlement *density*. Although crowding in cities is one reason people prefer to live in suburbs and small towns, it may be density which alone can generate the liveliness, chance encounters, and gathering of heterogeneity needed for a diverse, and therefore dynamic, public sphere. Density implies a plurality of people sharing a common world; and this may be a necessary condition for the kinds of good dialogue and

strong discourse that we proposed above as normative principles. Because if good discourse is that which is made "rational" *for others* and that which is tested *in public* against competitor discourses, then a dense settlement will likely have greater potential than a sparsely-populated one for bringing interlocutors into fruitful contact.2

Third, there is the problem of settlement *publicness*. The issue here is how space is to be divided up into public and private realms. Clearly, good public discourse requires territory where all residents have the right to appear, to see and be seen, to hear and be heard. A place that lacks accessible, visible, lively *common* territory, is one without a public life. A participant in the 1990 *Harper's* Forum "Whatever Became of the Public Square" argued that the common space of New York City's subway system may be one reason there is less racial tension there than in Los Angeles: "Although the public interaction is inchoate—rolling our eyes together at fools or irate passengers, perhaps an occasional courtesy—at least the people *see* one another" (p. 51). As Jacobs, Sennett, Arendt, and others argue, a strong public life requires common space that is somewhere in between intimacy and isolation, between familial warmth, on the one hand, and absolute segregation on the other. These must be places, like streets and sidewalks, where we can appear to one another as strangers and acquaintances; but there must also be places, like libraries and political clubs, where we can learn and build factions, and places like town halls and courthouses, where we can debate differences and resolve conflicts.

Fourth, there is the problem of settlement *grain*. The issue here is how close we will allow the different parts of our lives to be to one another, how mutually accessible we want our residences, workplaces, shops, public forums, recreation spaces, etc. There would seem to be some benefit in a fine grain of use or mixed-use settlement, where public and private are close to one another, where our different practices are better integrated, where government is a visible part of our landscape. From a rhetorical point of view, this kind of grain would seem to make public discourse less opaque.

Fifth, there is the problem of settlement *scale*. The issue here is how "human" we make our landscape, how protective we are of our smallness and fragility. As a matter of scale, in other words, we might prefer to limit the intrusion of cars in our social space; to ensure that there is density but not too much; that there is mixed use but not chaos; that there is common territory but also privacy.

Finally, there is the problem of settlement *identity*. To what extent should we be committed to creating cities and communities that we collectively identify with, that we belong to, whose history we know, that have a soul, the kind of place that, as Lynch (1981) says, leads people to think "I am the resident of no mean city." From a discursive point of view, designers might, in attempting to deal with this issue, contribute to the tendency of rhetors to think more often in the first person plural.

My argument in this paper has been that the design of the built world is always, implicitly or explicitly, the design of the discursive world as well. In this regard, rhetoric and urban planning cannot and should not be neutral towards one another; as if we could talk about discourse without talking about a common world that both brings us together and separates us, or talk about buildings and towns as if they were not part of our social landscape as well. What I hope this project participates in is the development of a shared language among those interested in "good community." As Michael Sorkin (1992) has argued, the effort to reclaim the city is the effort to reclaim democracy itself; and what we may need in that effort is "a return to a more authentic urbanity," a city based on physical proximity, free movement, and a desire for collectivity (p. xv).

Notes

1. Whyte (1988) also gives primary place in urban studies to the street; for him, it is "the river of life of the city" (p. 7).

2. See Gordon & Richardson (1997) and Ewing (1997) for an exchange on the benefits and ills of "sprawl."

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